

Zoe Burrell -HS

When in the course of human events it becomes mandatory that a man must no longer be forgotten, a tribute to this man must be attempted. Mister Charles Carroll of Carrollton was a man of unwavering virtue. A man of his eminence and influence should never be forgotten.

Charles Carroll of Annapolis married Miss Elizabeth Brooke and had a gross worth of more than eighty-eight thousand pounds and sixty thousand acres. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, an only child, was born on September 19, 1737. The seventeenth century was an epoch of bitter prejudices. All Catholics were denied religious, political, and educational freedom. The Carroll family, although being staunchly Catholic, was exempted from most of these unjust laws. Young Charles was sent to Bohemia Manor, a Catholic school in Maryland, when he was ten years old. In 1748, Carroll was sent to St. Omer's, another Catholic school, in England. Carroll then studied at Louis Le Grand in Paris. He completed his classical education in France and prepared to study law in London. After four years at Paris, Carroll advanced to London for further study. In 1760, Carroll's father wrote that the young man must study for four more years. Charles Carroll possessed a keen interest in his country and read the local Provincial newspaper while he was in Europe. Carroll always listened to every side of an argument before he inserted his opinion. Carroll returned to America when he was twenty-six years old, but not without sorrow. Tragically, Carroll's mother died while he was in London.

When Carroll returned to Maryland, his father bestowed the ten-thousand acre plot of Carrollton to him. Soon after Carroll's arrival in Maryland, the Governor was involved in a scheme to illegally procure higher taxes. Attorney General Daniel Dulany was submitting articles in defense of the Governor's actions. Suddenly another writer under the alias of the "First Citizen" confounded Dulany's arguments. These arguments lasted from January 7 to July 1, 1773. This patriot was none other than Charles Carroll. This young American understood that war with England was inescapable and relayed this message in simple words to the general populace. In the year 1768, thirty-year-old Charles Carroll married his cousin Mary Darnall. The couple had a total of seven children. In the year 1776, Carroll was a member of Congress, the Maryland Assembly, the Convention for a new state Constitution, three different Provincial committees, the War Board, and a Commissioner to Canada. Carroll also had the occupations of a husband, father, and landowner. Charles Carroll was sent as a Commissioner to Canada along with other men including a close friend, Benjamin Franklin. Discouraging, the mission to persuade the Canadians to the American cause utterly failed.

When Carroll returned, he took his seat in Congress. Charles Carroll was the first man, the wealthiest man, and the shortest man to sign the Declaration on August second. Contrary to popular belief, Charles Carroll always signed his name "of Carrollton." Perhaps the most important thing that Carroll performed

was the Treaty of Paris. Carroll wanted to stay "in the background,"<sup>1</sup> so he worked through his director of affairs in France, who was named La Fon. People that La Fon worked with were Vergennes, head of the French Department of Foreign Affairs, and Beaumarchais, a man who King Louis XVI listened intently to. It would not do for Carroll, a Roman Catholic, to be known as openly vouching for Catholic France.

In 1777, Carroll was desperately fighting alongside his friend Colonel Tilghman to keep George Washington's position as Head General of the United States Army. Carroll often rode to Valley Forge to visit the melancholy General. Congress was decidedly against Washington, but Carroll saved his good friend. Charles Carroll, along with his companions Robert Morris and Samuel Chase, helped save America's finances. Carroll also was for the gradual abolition of slavery and even had an African-American child in a family picture. Carroll's father died on May 30, 1781 and his wife on May 10, 1782. In the antebellum years, Carroll helped bring about a railroad through Maryland and Virginia and was influential in conceiving the United States Navy. The distinguished Lafayette was also entertained by Charles Carroll. Perhaps the most paramount accomplishment in Carroll's life was witnessing Amendments one through six, which promised total and religious freedom. Charles Carroll of Carrollton was a

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Leonard, Lewis A., *Life of Charles Carroll of Carrollton* (Moffat, Yard and Company, 1918). Pg. 175.

patient, understanding, and kind man who held fast to his integrity. Should we not remember him?

Dearest Mary,

I regret to hear of your father's death in Baltimore just ten days ago. Ninety-five years of wisdom has now passed! You must think of your father's legacy! He has established a stable government for us. Think of when he signed that Declaration. He signed away millions! Our children will forever sit under the happy sunshine of your father's legacy and the freedom he has fought for. In spite of all this, he said his greatest accomplishment was that he "practiced the duties of [his] religion."<sup>2</sup>

I am,

Your Friend,

Prudence Greenwood

Annapolis, Maryland, November 24, 1832

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<sup>2</sup>These are often quoted as Mr. Carroll's last words, quoted in Leonard, Lewis A., *Life of Charles Carroll of Carrollton* (Moffat, Yard and Company, 1918), 234.

## Bibliography

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