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Belle Burrell

Charles Carroll was born on September nineteenth, 1737 in Annapolis, Maryland. He was born into a wealthy Catholic family and his father was a tobacco planter.

At age ten Charles along with his cousin went to Bohemia Manor in Maryland for schooling. Then in 1748 they went to St. Omer. After a year and a half at St. Omer, Charles went to Louis Le Grand in Paris for four years. After that he went to London pursuing English law. While still in London, on March 12, 1761, Charles' mother died.

When he came back to Annapolis in 1764, Charles was given his father's manor in Carrollton and so from that time on, he was known as Charles Carroll of Carrollton. In 1768 he married his cousin named Mary Darnall, a good tempered young lady. Together they had seven children. Sadly, four of them died in infancy or early childhood.

One day Charles heard about a division among the colonies. Many of the colonial people wanted to have their own governmental system with freedom to live apart from the rules of the King. Charles Carroll became interested in that because, since he was a Catholic, he wanted to be free from the oppression that sometimes singled out the Catholics. He wanted religious freedom. In 1774 a ship loaded with two thousand, three hundred twenty pounds of tea arrived in Annapolis. Some men got together and decided to burn the ship. In 1775 Charles

was made a delegate to Maryland's patriotic convention and in 1776 he and a group of men inscribed Maryland's state constitution. On the twenty-eighth of June a convention was held and the group of men including Charles Carroll wrote a paper that stated they wanted to join the colonies for America. Then on the fourth of July he and some other people were elected to congress. Two days later the convention finished the Declaration of the Delegates of Maryland. On July nineteenth Charles was chosen to be on the Board of War. On August second the phenomenal Declaration of Independence was signed by all who were within the walls of that building, including Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who was 38 years old. When the twenty-seventh person had finished signing the Declaration of Independence, Judge Chase soberly remarked: "Having taken this step, we must hang together." Then Franklin merrily replied "If we don't do that, we will hang separately."¹ In September 1776 the Board of War had to make a strategy of military operations and make resolutions for enforcing discipline in the army. Carroll helped this process.

Sadly, in 1782 Mrs. Carroll died at the age of 35, one year before the Revolutionary War ended. In 1801 Charles retired from politics. He had hundreds of slaves but eventually turned against slavery and freed many of them.

¹Quoted in: Leonard, Lewis A., *Life of Charles Carroll of Carrollton* (Moffatt, Yard, and Company, 1918), pg. 139.

On November fourteenth, 1832 Charles Carroll of Carrollton at age ninety-five died. He was strong, bold, and a sacrificial man. He was the only Catholic to sign the Declaration of Independence and he outlived every other signer. Two of Carroll's influential friends were George Washington and Colonel John Fitzgerald, who was a member of Washington's staff.

Dear Carroll family,

I am sorrowful for the loss of your dear family member Charles Carroll, of Carrollton. I know you must be sick at heart about him. He was a wonderful man. "No one had more to lose in the desperate venture of rebellion and revolution than himself, yet none was more unflinching in his actions."² He was strong, bold, religious, and very sacrificial. He was sacrificial with his life, which was long, and his fortunes which, between you and me, let's just say he had a lot. He was if not the richest, one of the richest men of his time. Also, his honor, which he sacrificed, he gained in time. Again I'm so heartbroken about the news. I want to show you a verse from the Bible that I think he applied himself to. It's from Joshua 1:9: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever

²Quoted in: Barton, David, *Wives of the Signers* (Wallbuilder Press, 1997), pg. 231.

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you go."³ Some of Carroll's most patriotic accomplishments in his day were being made a delegate to Maryland's convention, agreeing to and signing Maryland's state constitution, and don't forget the most remarkable, wondrous, and astonishing: signing the Declaration of Independence.

I think one of Mr. Carroll's greatest accomplishments to our country's present and future was when he succeeded in providing us, the Catholics, with our religious freedom. I think in the future he will be remembered and that people will still be free to be a Catholic, or whatever faith they choose, thanks to him.

Well, I hope I have encouraged you and that you will feel like yourself again soon.

Your dear friend,

Hanna

³ *Holy Bible*, Student Edition, ESV. (2011) Life Publishers. Pg. 246

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