



Extended History of Collection M-020: Carroll, Charles

Special Thanks to Roman Beuc, Library Docent, for researching and compiling this document

1.0 Charles Carroll (1737-1832), known as **Charles Carroll of Carrollton** to distinguish him from his similarly-named relatives, was a wealthy Maryland planter and an early advocate of independence from Great Britain. He served as a delegate to the Continental Congress and later as a first United States Senator for Maryland. He was the only Catholic and the longest-lived signatory of the Declaration of Independence, dying at the age of 95.

Carroll was the grandson of **Charles Carroll the Settler** who emigrated from Ireland. The Settler had just one son, also named Charles (born 1702). To distinguish the father from the son the son was known as **Charles Carroll of Annapolis**. Our Charles Carroll was born in 1737, in Annapolis, Maryland, the only child of his father and Elizabeth Brooke (1709-1761).

He began his formal education at the age of 8, when he was sent to attend the **English Jesuit College at St. Omer** in Artois, France. The school was founded to educate English subjects who were Catholics. He graduated the College of Louis the Grande in Rheims at age 17. He continued practical studies in Europe until, at age 28 (c 1765) he returned to his Annapolis home. His father granted Carrollton Manor to his son. It is from this tract of land that he took his title, "Charles Carroll of Carrollton".

As a Roman Catholic, Carroll was barred by Maryland statute from entering politics, practicing law or voting. This did not prevent him from becoming one of the wealthiest men in the Colonies, owning extensive agricultural estates, most notably the large manor at Doughoregan, and providing capital to finance new enterprises on the Western Chesapeake Shore.

Carroll was elected to the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, and remained a delegate until 1778. He arrived too late to vote in favor of the Declaration of Independence, but was present to sign the official document that still survives today. Throughout his term in Congress, he served on the Board of War.

While in Congress Carroll was involved in two commissions of major importance. In the spring of 1776 Carroll was asked to serve as a commissioner with **Benjamin Franklin** and **Samuel Chase** of Maryland to travel to Canada to try and convince the Canadians to join the American Rebel cause. Although the rebel army still held Montreal, the Americans had previously alienated the Canadians and insulted their Catholic religion. Carroll was asked to participate because of his Catholic faith and because he was fluent in French. The commission reached Montreal but very shortly realized the cause was lost. By the end of 1776 the American invaders had been driven out of Canada.



The second commission was concerned with the the “Conway Cabal”. This was a conspiracy by some members of Congress and the Army to have George Washington replaced as Commander-In-Chief - probably with **General Horatio Gates**. Carroll and his fellow commissioners spent many weeks at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777-78 investigating. Carroll strongly supported Washington and the Cabal was firmly squashed.

Carroll returned to Maryland in 1778 to assist in the formation of a state government and when the US government was created in 1789, the Maryland legislature elected him to the first United States Senate.

Carroll lived to be 95 and during the balance of his long life continued to actively participate in public and business affairs. After both **Thomas Jefferson** and **John Adams** died on July 4, 1826, Carroll became the last living signatory of the Declaration. At the time he was one of the richest men in America.

(This letter is obviously a dun letter requesting payment by John Morrow of the balance he owed Carroll on his original £300.)

2.0 John Morrow (b. 1750) - Findings on John Morrow indicate that his father was **Thomas Morrow**, who was in the French and Indian War and drowned trying to cross the Susquehanna River. His sons **John, William and Charles** were probably born in Lancaster County, PA. Col John Morrow later migrated to Kentucky.

The three Morrow brothers had served in the American Revolution, and were engaged in the general mercantile business in Shepherdstown, Virginia, (now West Virginia). The town is on the upper Potomac River. They had moved there from Martinsburg VA. *(It can be assumed that it was Col John Morrow that borrowed the £300 from Carroll.)*

3.0 Events relating Colonel John Murrow, George Washington and an enterprising engineer-inventor-

innkeeper named **James Rumsey** are a fall out of research for this letter and are reported below.

3.0 James Rumsey (1743-1792) was an American mechanical engineer living in Bath (now Berkley Springs), WV. The brothers, John Morrow and Charles Morrow, then living in Shepherdstown WV, at the time, were involved in Rumsey's Steam Boat project on the Potomac River



In September 1784, when **George Washington** was staying at Bath, in Rumsey's Inn, he contracted with Rumsey to build a house on property he owned in the town. Rumsey showed Washington a working model of a mechanical boat which he had designed. Washington had been developing plans for making the Potomac navigable since before the Revolution, and a company was soon to be formed for the purpose. Rumsey's "pole-boat", which promised to be able to ascend the the river's chutes and swift currents, must have seemed a godsend to Washington, who wrote a certificate of commendation for Rumsey. After many design iterations and test failures Rumsey finally converged on a steam driven pump design which provided propulsion by ejecting water out the stern of the boat (a jet boat!). On December 3, 1787, the boat finally made a very successful public demonstration on the Potomac at Shepherdstown before a crowd of notables, including George Washington and Horatio Gates and the Morrors. (*This occurred 20 years before **Robert Fulton** constructed and demonstrated the Clermont.*) The idea of jet propulsion was not Rumsey's alone. **Daniel Bernoulli** (1700-1782) originated the idea of propelling watercraft using that method.

Rumsey later spent four years in England. On December 20, 1792, on the eve of a demonstration of his new steamboat, the *Columbia Maid*, he had just finished delivering a lecture to the Society of Mechanic Arts. Suddenly he was stricken with a severe pain in his head and died the next morning.

It is unknown if John Morrow repaid his debt to Charles Carroll.

References:

Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Ellen Hart Smith, Harvard Press, 1942, UMSL Library (E302.6.C3S56)

Life of Charles Carrollton, Lewis A. Leonard, Moffat, Yard & Co, 1918, UMSL Library (E302.6.C3L5)

Charles Carroll of Carrollton: The Making of a Revolutionary Gentleman, Thomas O'Brien Hanley, The Catholic University of America Press, 1970

Revolutionary Statesman: Charles Carroll and the War, Thomas O'Brien Hanley, Loyola University Press, 1983

Historic Shepherdstown - Danske Dandridge, c 1910, (Google online book)

Doughoregan Manor, Near Ellicott City, Maryland

www.oldandsold.com/articles15/shrines-46.shtml