The Carroll Family of Maryland

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IT IS MY PLEASURE to address the semiannual meeting of the American Antiquarian Society this afternoon. My subject, as requested by John Hench, is the Carroll Family of Maryland, a topic that has absorbed a great deal of my time for many years. As you perhaps know, I am the editor of Charles Carroll of Carrollton's papers, and in 2001 the University of North Carolina Press published, for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, the first three volumes of a projected six-volume edition. Entitled *Dear Papa, Dear Charley, The Peregrinations of a Revolutionary Aristocrat, as Told by Charles Carroll of Carrollton and His Father, Charles Carroll of Annapolis, with Sundry Observations on Bastardy, Child-Rearing, Romance, Matrimony, Commerce, Tobacco, Slavery, and the Politics of Revolutionary America*, the first set of books covers Charles Carroll of Carrollton's correspondence from 1749—when, at age ten, he was sent away from home for sixteen years of study abroad—until 1782, the year that his father, Charles Carroll of Annapolis ('Papa') who was his most constant correspondent, died. My staff is now at work on the three volumes that will complete the series. Tentatively titled 'A Patriarch in the Early Republic,' this part of the edition focuses on the last fifty years of Carroll's life, 1782–1832.

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In one way or another, the records produced by Charles Carroll of Carrollton and his family have driven my scholarly pursuits ever since I came across the truly extraordinary correspondence between 'Papa' and 'Charley' in the course of researching my dissertation on the Revolution in Maryland at the University of Wisconsin in the late 1960s. In those days my work centered primarily on how the seminal event in American history unfolded in the Chesapeake, and I found in the letters that the Carrolls exchanged in the critical years between 1774 and 1782 an unusually detailed and remarkably intimate account of what was at stake for the various participants in the conflict and how people with dramatically different agendas jockeyed to gain or retain the powers and positions to which they passionately believed themselves entitled. I certainly knew then that the Carroll manuscripts were a unique set of documents and that the information they provide not only delineates important dimensions of the Revolution but also helps us see that history from an intensely human perspective. What I did not fully appreciate until I took on the task of editing the Carrolls's papers was the context that informed the writing of those letters, which shaped the two men who wrote them and grounded the Revolutionary experience they shared with other men of similar class and ambitions in their compelling memories of their family's Irish past. My understanding of that context came much later, after many years of research in the family's native Ireland, and it forms the core of my book, *Princes of Ireland, Planters of Maryland: A Carroll Saga, 1500–1782*.

My quest to reconstruct the Carrolls's history on both sides of the Atlantic actually began with a mystery—the case of a missing document. In 1975, while working on Carroll manuscripts in the Maryland Historical Society, my research associate and collaborator, Sally Mason, came across a folder labeled: 'Marriage Certificate of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, 1757.' How curious, she thought. In 1757 Charles Carroll of Carrollton was studying in France. Although he was born in 1737, he did not marry until June 1768. Opening the folder, she found a slip of paper bearing an

even more peculiar message: 'Document removed and locked in the safe.' Very strange, indeed. Was there an earlier marriage of Charles Carroll of Carrollton that was being covered up? And why was the document locked in a safe?

Her curiosity aroused, Sally showed the file to the Society's curator of manuscripts, and asked him what he knew. The gentleman responded that he hadn't a clue, but he promised to look into it. When Sally arrived at work the next day, the curator of manuscripts reported that he had located the document—a marriage certificate that had been tucked away, out of sight, for many, many years. And what an interesting document it was: 'I Mathias Maners a Priest of the Society of Jesus do hereby certify that I did on the 15th day of February in the year of our Lord 1757 marry Charles Carroll Esq: and Elizabeth Brooke Daughter of Clement Brooke Esq. late of Prince Georges county deceased.'[1]

So the marriage that occurred in 1757 involved not the nineteen-year-old Charles Carroll of Carrollton but his parents, Charles Carroll of Annapolis and Elizabeth Brooke! Suddenly other odd pieces of evidence that Sally had noticed fell into place, confirming her suspicion that Charles Carroll of Carrollton had been born out of wedlock. Now his mother's pre-1757 habit of signing her name 'Elizabeth Brooke'—even in letters to her son, Charley—made sense. After her wedding, she closed her letters to him 'Yr Affect Mother Eliza. Carroll.'[2] Charles Carroll of Annapolis's similar letter-signing practice also became clear. Having closed his letters to Charley, 'Mo: Affly Yrs, Chars. Carroll,' before the wedding, he switched to 'Yr Mo: Afft: Father, Cha:

1. Ronald Hoffman, Sally D. Mason, and Eleanor S. Darcy, eds., *Dear Papa, Dear Charley: The Peregrinations of a Revolutionary Aristocrat, As Told by Charles Carroll of Carrollton and His Father, Charles Carroll of Annapolis, with Sundry Observations on Bastardy, Child-Rearing, Romance, Matrimony, Commerce, Tobacco, Slavery, and the Politics of Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, the Maryland Historical Society, and the Maryland State Archives by the University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 1: 41.

2. Elizabeth Brooke to Charles Carroll (CC), September 30, 1754, in *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 24–25; Brooke to CC, September 8, 1756, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 37–38.

Carroll' thereafter.[3] Taking great care to dispel any notion that a valid marriage existed, Elizabeth witnessed a will in 1754 as 'Elizabeth Brooke,' but at probate, in October 1759, two-and-a-half years after she and Charles wed, she identified herself as 'Elizabeth Carroll, late Elizabeth Brooke.'[4]

But if documenting an unusual domestic arrangement between Charles Carroll of Annapolis and Elizabeth Brooke proved relatively straightforward, accounting for it posed a much greater challenge. The suggestion that the situation arose because there was no priest available in Maryland to officiate at weddings was easily dismissed—priests celebrated Mass regularly in the Carrolls's private chapels throughout the colonial period. The possibility that Charles and Elizabeth had previously contracted a 'sacramental marriage,' which did not require clerical sanction, was decisively laid to rest by the 1757 marriage certificate.[5] The priest who signed the document asserting that he had married them could not, according to canon law, have taken that action if a sacramental marriage had already taken place.[6]

Other significant clues came from Charles Carroll of Annapolis himself, in the letters he wrote to Charley, the only child he ever had, while the boy was at school abroad from 1748 to 1764. His instructions to Charley about every aspect of his appearance and his deportment, in addition to his moral, religious, and intellectual development, confirm that he meant to mold the lad into a worthy heir. The correspondence confirms beyond doubt that Charley fully understood his position, and lest he forget, his father's letters

3. Elizabeth Carroll to CC, November 30, 1757, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 53. For the elder Charles Carroll's signature before his wedding, see, for example, Charles Carroll of Annapolis (CCA) to CC, October 10, 175, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 20–23; CCA to CC, September 30, 1754, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 25–28. For CCA's signature after his wedding, see, for example, CCA to CC, July 17, [1757], *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 46; CCA to CC, January 1, 1758, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 58–60.

4. Ronald Hoffman with Sally D. Mason, *Princes of Ireland, Planters of Maryland: A Carroll Saga, 1500–1782* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 135.

5. Hoffman and Mason, *Princes of Ireland*, 138

6. Hoffman and Mason, *Princes of Ireland*, 138.

pointedly reminded him of his vulnerability whenever he felt the occasion demanded it. 'All the Letters I have or shall write to you or concerning you to any o[ne] are carefully entred in a Book,' he wrote fifteen-year-old Charley in the fall of 1752, 'so that in case you should be so unfortunate [as to] return not improvd in proportion to the Money Time and Care laid out on you [they] will at least be undeniable Testimonies of my Attention to your Welfare and a cons[tant] Reproach to you for not correspondg on your part to that attention.'[7]

Equally explicit evidence of the elder Carroll's strategy is found in a letter written to him by an old friend, Onorio Razolini, in the fall of 1757, congratulating him on his marriage. A friend of Elizabeth Brooke and Charles Carroll of Annapolis from his days as armorer of the province of Maryland, Razolini had returned to his native Italy in August 1741, just before Charley's third birthday. 'I am glad that Miss Brook that was, is now Mrs. Carrill,' wrote Razolini in November 1757. Then he added the 'clincher': 'If you remember I told you that your Son would answer all your expectations.'[8]

Although I had documented the fact of the illegitimacy and the most apparent reasons for Charles Carroll of Annapolis's deliberate use of it, the sense that there was something more to this story—something that still eluded me—persisted. There must be another force, more powerful than I had yet discerned, that drove Charles Carroll of Annapolis to this remarkable course of action. Could it have anything to do with the echoes of Ireland that I sometimes heard in the Carrolls's letters? Persuaded by this intuition to look more carefully at the forebears of these Maryland Carrolls, I decided to begin with the first member of the family to emigrate from Ireland—Papa's father, Charles Carroll the Settler, who arrived in Maryland in 1688. I did not anticipate an extensive investigation—just a quick sketch of this Carroll's background,

7. CCA to CC, October 9, 1752, in *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 19.

8. Onorio Razolini to CCA, November 17, 1757, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 50–52 (quotations, 51).

why he came to Maryland, and perhaps how the experience of Ireland influenced his conduct and the raising of his family.[9]

Live and learn—this 'short' excursion into Irish history took nearly seven years. And, as I peeled back layer after layer, generation after generation, I came to see the saga of the family in a wholly different light—as a story informed not only by the harsh realities of eighteenth-century Maryland but also by the powerful sway of the conscious memory and subconscious influence of Ireland.

Carl Jung theorized that strong family figures establish behavioral characteristics that carry over multiple generations. I discovered such figures in the Carrolls's Irish past, and I recognized in them the same determination to survive and prevail in the face of grave perils that motivated their Carroll descendants in Maryland.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton's grandfather, Charles Carroll the Settler, a defiant and ambitious Irish Catholic, left the old world for the new in 1688, because the Carroll family had been ruined by the confiscation of their ancestral lands in Ireland in the aftermath of the English conquest. And it is only within the context of that history that we can fully understand the forces that shaped the descendants of that family and grasp the meaning of their behavior as they sought to secure a place for themselves in the world of Revolutionary America. Unwilling to renounce his religion and become a Protestant in order to ingratiate himself with the English, the Settler resolved to seek his fortune in Maryland, a colony that, from its founding had welcomed Catholics and extended to them civil rights, including the vote and the ability to hold office and practice law which were denied to members of their faith in England and Ireland. However, the proverbial 'luck of the Irish' did not hold for this Carroll. He had hardly set foot on Maryland's shores when a rebellion, engineered and led by militant Protestants, radically changed the position of Catholics. The net result of this disturbance was to replace the toleration that had characterized the colony since

9. This other force, though not fully explicated here, is discussed in Hoffman and Mason, *Princes of Ireland,* 139–43, along with the meeting of expectations.

its beginnings in 1634 with anti-Catholic laws that made Maryland after 1690 one of the most intolerant of all the thirteen colonies. Ironically, by the time of his death in 1720, Charles Carroll the Settler was, in terms of his civil rights, no better off than he had been before he came to Maryland. He could not vote, could not hold public office, could not practice law, could not worship publicly, and could not educate his children in their religion, because the Maryland assembly had enacted legislation making all of these activities illegal for Roman Catholics.[10]

The punitive measures against Roman Catholics passed by the Maryland legislature were built on longstanding legal precedents known in England and Ireland as the penal laws. These dreaded statutes had literally broken the Catholic landowning class in both of those countries and had impoverished many great families, among them Charles Carroll of Carrollton's Irish ancestors. But there was one major difference between the situation of Catholics in England and Ireland and those in Maryland: despite periodic threats, the Maryland assembly never managed to enact any laws depriving Catholics of the right to own land or inherit property. As a result, the Carrolls were able to build and preserve their fortune, even though they remained second-class citizens in terms of their civil rights.[11] Nevertheless, anti-Catholic feeling was always a force to be reckoned with, and during the 1750s it became so intense that the assembly seriously debated a number of new restrictions. The enactment of one of these—a law that doubled the tax levied on Roman Catholic landowners—so alarmed and enraged Charles Carroll of Annapolis that in 1757 he made a serious effort to trade all of his property in Maryland for a comparable estate in the French Catholic colony of Louisiana. While the most stringent threats posed by other legislative proposals did not materialize, the civil disabilities that became law between 1690 and 1720 remained in effect until the American Revolution, when Charles

10. Hoffman and Mason, *Princes of Ireland*, 39–97.
11. Hoffman and Mason, *Princes of Ireland*, 81.

Carroll of Carrollton became the first Roman Catholic in eighty-four years to hold public office in Maryland.[12]

What, precisely did these laws mean for Catholics 'on the ground? ' Unlike Protestants of comparable wealth, whose security and status were grounded in English law and practice and who enjoyed as the most fundamental of their civil guarantees the right of property, Maryland's Catholic gentry were imperiled rather than protected by the legal system. Catholics constituted less than 10 percent of the colony's population. Nevertheless, the economic success of the richest Catholic families—ten of the colony's twenty largest fortunes belonged to people derisively known as 'papists'—loomed disproportionately in the consciousness of the non-Catholic majority and periodically became a focus for local discontent and official jealousy. Until England's Glorious Revolution of 1689 assured that only Protestants would henceforth succeed to the throne, Maryland's Catholics had been spared the effects of the penal codes. First enacted under Elizabeth I, these laws had destroyed most of Ireland's great landholding families—and many of England's as well—by confiscating their estates and redistributing them to Protestants. The events of 1689 brought the threat of the penal statutes to Maryland, so that by 1720 laws had been enacted in the colony that denied political recourse to Catholics, thereby placing their property constantly at risk.[13]

A number of Maryland's Catholic families simply became Protestant to avoid the penalties imposed by anti-Catholic laws, but the Settler's descendants would never bend. Indeed, Charles Carroll of Carrollton's sixteen years of education in France and England were intended to prepare him for survival in a militant Protestant society. Having run that gauntlet, it is no wonder that he particularly cherished the distinction of being the only Roman Catholic among the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence.

12. Hoffman and Mason, *Princes of Ireland,* 270–78.
13. Hoffman and Mason, *Princes of Ireland,* chaps. 1–2.

The Carrolls's papers do far more than document the economic and political resurgence of this remarkable family. The same correspondence, ledgers, account books, and other manuscripts that record the Carrolls's rise to wealth and prominence in Maryland also tell us the equally important and compelling stories of other often less visible people—the African slaves and white tenants upon whose skills and labor the Carrolls's success, and that of other similar families, depended. Through these records we come to know the world that the Carrolls and their bondsmen and women inhabited—a complex world of reciprocal relationships and shared experiences, a world of enormous richness and diversity. One of the most priceless gifts the Carroll manuscripts offer us is a window on the world that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Marylanders—black and white, bound and free—made together.[14]

Careful sifting and analysis of the Carrolls's papers has allowed us to reconstruct the genealogies of most of the slaves the Carrolls owned. We found that, with only a few exceptions, these people descended from one of twelve matriarchal lines—those of Old Grace, Old Fanny, Rachel, Goslin Kate, Battle Creek Nanny, Banks Nanny, Old Moll, Suckey, Nan Cook, Old Peg, Old Nell, and Sam's Sue. Appendix III, in Volume Three of *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, contains the inventories the Carrolls made of the enslaved people on their various properties—Doohoragen Manor, Poplar Island, Annapolis Quarter, and their Duke of Gloucester Street house in Annapolis—between 1773 and 1781. In 1773–74, 330 slaves lived on the ten quarters that composed Doohoragen Manor, the Carrolls's principal plantation, which is, you may be interested to know, the only home of a signer of the Declaration of Independence still lived in by a direct descendant. Combining these men, women, and children with another twenty-six at Poplar Island in

14. In 1991 the Charles Carroll of Carrollton Papers mounted an exhibit to illustrate these themes: 'A Priceless Legacy: Charles Carroll of Carrollton's Papers and the History of Maryland,' in the Maryland State Archives. The panels from this exhibit are on permanent display in the Miller Senate Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland.

the Chesapeake Bay, seventeen at the Annapolis Quarter, and the thirteen who served in the Annapolis house brings the total number of slaves owned by the Carrolls on the eve of the American Revolution to 386 and makes the man who signed the Declaration of Independence, thereby risking his fortune and his very life in behalf of the cause of 'liberty,' Maryland's largest slaveholder.[15]

In offering us materials that expose us to the contradictions embedded—but too often overlooked—in the ideals of freedom that our founders so bravely espoused, the Carrolls's papers tell a story of the American Revolution that greatly complicates traditional perceptions of that seminal event. Papa and Charley's letters speak compellingly of the anxiety and uncertainly that permeated the Revolutionary experience. Although to us, the outcome of the Revolution may seem preordained, the ultimate triumph of which was never in doubt, the Carrolls tell a very different story. Within a few weeks of signing the Declaration of Independence, Charley feared that he had made a tragic mistake. By the fall of 1776 rampant social disorder destabilized Maryland. The turmoil of revolution spread, bringing reports of slave uprisings, militia mutinies, and mob violence, and Maryland's provisional government proved unable to fill the power vacuum that the departure of British officials had created. As his letters make clear, Charley believed that complete social disintegration was at hand. The nightmare that he and his family might lose all of the wealth they had striven over three generations to accumulate tormented his mind. 'It is probable . . . ,' he wrote his father in August 1776, 'Anarchy will follow as a certain consequence; injustice, rapine & corruption in the seats of justice will prevail, and this Province in a short time will be involved in all the horrors of an ungovernable & revengeful Democracy, & will be died with the blood of its best citizens.'[16] Should the British win the war, he faced the risk of losing not only

15. *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 3: 1571–81, 1583–84.

16. Charles Carroll of Carrollton (CCC) to CCA, August 20, 1776, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 2: 941.

his property but also his life. And even if the British threat could be contained, he still confronted the very real possibility of suffering equal losses at the hands of Maryland's increasingly angry people, many of whom disagreed with the war and resented the demands being placed upon them by the men of wealth and privilege who led the patriot cause. Thus he came to believe that only an accommodation with England could save his family and its fortune, and he predicted that if such a reconciliation did not take place, the colonies would 'be ruined, not so much by the calamities of war, as by intestine divisions and the bad governts. wh I foresee will take place in most of the united States: they will be simple Democracies, of all governts. the worst, and will end as all other Democracies have, in despotism.'[17]

These were dire words for dire times, times that demanded sacrifices that neither Charley nor Papa ever anticipated. To encourage support for the war and to preserve the upper class's leadership position, Charley and his political allies concluded that they would have to make major financial adjustments to clearly demonstrate the willingness of wealthy gentlemen to bear their fair share of the heavy burdens of revolution. 'I have long considered our personal estate, I mean the monied part of it, to be in jeopardy,' he wrote his father in the spring of 1777, 'If we can save a third of that, and all our lands & negroes I shall think our selves well off.'[18] Six months later he stated the reality even more bluntly: 'No great revolutions can happen in a State without revolutions, or mutations of private property.'[19] The chaotic conditions that threatened to overwhelm the cause of independence taught Charley painful lessons: 'there is,' he told Papa grimly, 'a time when it is wisdom to yield to injustice; and to popular frensies & delusions: many wise and good men have acted so. When public bodies commit injustice, and are exposed to the public & can not vindicate themselves by reasoning,

17. CCC to CCA, October 18, 1776, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 2: 957.
18. CCC to CCA, April 4, 1777, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 2: 988.
19. CCC to CCA, November 8, 1777, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 2: 1079.

they commonly have recourse to violence & greater injustice towards all such as have the temerity to oppose them, particularly when their unjust proceedings are popular.'[20]

Today we know that the Americans won the War for Independence and that Carroll did not lose all of his money, nor the Maryland aristocracy its monopoly of political power. So what meaning do the records of the upheaval that took place more than two centuries ago hold for us? First, these documents show us that our founding fathers, although men of extraordinary talent, were still only human beings and that they, like us, suffered from doubts, limitations, frailties, and uncertainties. Second, these manuscripts remind us that no enterprise, however nobly and hopefully conceived, is certain of success. Third, such papers reveal that even in the most altruistic of causes, human beings are motivated by a complicated mixture of idealism and self-interest. Carroll believed in the ideals of the Revolution—that men had inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But at the same time he also intended to retain his position of privilege and power in the new social order the Revolution brought and to continue to profit from the work performed by the human beings who, in that new social order, remained his slaves. Fourth, manuscript collections like the Carroll Papers reveal to us an American past that is fraught with alarming difficulties, excruciating contradictions, great victories, and terrible failures. In short, such records humanize our history by acquainting us with the very human-ness of the beings who made it.

This last is important because, for all of the illumination of momentous events that the Carroll Papers contain, it is the way that these manuscripts convey the most intimate details of the lives of the writers that ultimately makes the letters so interesting and compelling for lay readers as well as for scholars.

The letters exchanged by father and son between 1749 and 1764 reveal dramatically—and often poignantly—the details of the

20. CCC to CCA, November 13, 1777, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 2: 1082.

strategy by which Papa molded Charley into a worthy heir and the role that illegitimacy played in the process. To survive and prosper as a Roman Catholic in a Protestant environment, Charley must accomplish the rigorous educational program laid out by his father—eleven years of study at Jesuit institutions in France and another five at London's Inns of Court. And should the younger Carroll not become a man of strict self-discipline, sound faith, a master of mathematics, the humanities, commerce and business, and, most of all, of the law—what then? The legitimacy that would confirm his inheritance of the Carroll legacy would not be conferred upon him. Though he might complain or protest against some parental instruction that caused him unhappiness—like that which kept him so long in London studying the law, a subject he disliked intensely and which seemed useless to him, given the laws that prevented Catholics from being called to the bar—Charley never openly defied Papa's orders.

This is not to suggest that the younger Carroll did not have a deep desire to come home—during all of his years in Europe Charley's most intense dream centered on his reunion with Papa and Mama. Warmth, playfulness, and genuine affection suffuse the letters between mother and son. Mama's chief joy, always, was news of Charley, and his letters never arrived frequently enough to suit her. 'I wish we cou'd hear from you every Month,' she told him in March 1759; 'no[t]hing wou'd give me more pleasure.'[21] She treasured the snuff box he sent to her, proudly informing him that 'every Body that sees it says its a very genteel pretty one & commends yr taste.'[22] Wishing to absorb every detail she could glean, 'I perused,' she confessed, 'all yr letters to yr Papa & those to me with the utmost pleasure, they are so full of tenderness & affection for us that they cou'd not fail to delight & at the same time to draw Tears from me . . . You are always at heart my dear Charly & I am never tired asking yr Papa questions about you[.] some

21. Elizabeth Carroll to CC, March 4, 1759, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 97.
22. Elizabeth Carroll to CC, May 5, 1760, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 162.

times to tease, he answers me that you are a good for no thing Ugly little fellow, but when he Speaks his Real Sentiments of you there is not any thing [that] can give me greater Comfort.'[23]

Nowhere is the depth of the bond between the Carroll son and his parents more painfully revealed than in Charley's letter of June 10, 1761, in which he expressed his anguish and despair upon learning that his beloved Mama, whom he had last seen as a boy of ten, had died three months earlier:

> Dr Papa,
>
> I received yesterday the afflicting news of my dear Mama's death. Yr. Letter, if any thing cou'd, wou'd have given some comfort: but what comfort can there be for so great a loss. I loved my Mama most tenderly: how strong how cogent were the motives of my love! How affectionate, how tender, how loving a mother was she to me! What fond delusive hopes have I entertained of seeing her again! I was too credulous: all my imaginary Joys are vanished in an instant: they are succeeded by the bitter cruel thought of never seeing more my loved lost Mother: the greatest blessing I wished for in this life was to see to enjoy my Parents after so long a separation to comfort to support them in an advanced age: one is for ever snatched from me! May God almighty Dr. Papa preserve yr. health & grant you a long life: were you to leave me too, oh then I shou'd be compleatly miserable indeed: death wou'd then be the only comforter of a sad, distressed, unhappy son. Pray Let not yr. loss affect you too deeply: it may impair yr. health: remember you are now my only consolation in this world.
>
> You do not mention in yr. letter my Mama's speaking of me in her last sickness: I must certainly often have been the object of her thoughts & subject of her conversation: did she not frequently wish to see me? Did she not so much as say remember me to my dr. absent son? How little does he now think of his dying mother! What grief what affliction will my death give him! Oh had I seen her in her last moments to take a last farewell that had been some sad relief: even this was denied me.[24]

23. Elizabeth Carroll to CC, [August 29, 1758], *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 77.
24. CC to CCA, June 10, 1761, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 212–13.

In his pain, Charley begged Papa to allow him to return home, but despite his own grief and loneliness, Papa would not be moved. Charley must master the law before coming home. For the elder Carroll, the inevitability of parental mortality simply affirmed the fundamental wisdom of his plan for producing a worthy heir. The very size of the Carroll estate, he told his grief-stricken son, made it 'lyable to Many disputes, Especially as A Roman Catholick stands but a Poor Chance for Justice.'[25] Precisely because adherence to Roman Catholicism prevented Charley from being called to the bar, he must be even more skilled in the law than the Protestant lawyers retained by the family. You must, wrote Papa, master the ability 'to transact yr: affairs . . . to state yr: own Cases, to instruct those you employ.'[26]

The taut leash held, and Charley remained in London to complete the course Papa had set for him. But Mama's death exacted a greater toll than Papa realized. The eager young man so open and eager to please, so full of joyous affection and love, disappeared. After Mama's death, Charley drew inward, closing down his feelings to become an intellectually able, coolly competent, but emotionally distant man whose distaste for intimacy would ultimately exact its heaviest penalty upon his marriage. The letter with which our three-volume edition ends effectively portrays this aspect of Charley's mature personality. Within the short space of three weeks in 1782, Charley lost first his father and then his wife Molly. His marriage of fourteen years had been arid and strained, and his emotional reserve contributed to Molly's unhappy addiction to opium that led to her early death. By contrast, his relationship with Papa had been all consuming—an involvement of immense power and intimacy that absorbed the greatest portion of Charley's attention and affection. Profoundly alone, despite his glittering public achievements, he wrote these lines to one of the family's longstanding mercantile correspondents:

25. CCA to CC, September 9, 1761, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 225.
26. CCA to CC, June 29, 1762, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 1: 225.

> Since mine of the 11th May I have had the Misfortune to lose my Father & Wife within a very little time of each other, My Father died the 30th of may Suddenly and my wife on the 10th Ultimo [that is, of June] after a Short but very painful illness.
>
> Be pleased to carry to my Credit when paid the undernoted Bill of Exchange, Wishing you health & prosperity I remain Gent.
>
> yr. Mo: Humble: Servt.
>
> C:C of C[27]

The sending and receiving of letters became a lifeline of Charles Carroll of Carrollton's existence when, as a boy of ten, he was sent from Maryland to school in France. During the sixteen years he studied abroad, he exchanged more than 300 letters with his father, who generally had his copied out in triplicate in the hope that at least one would survive the trans-Atlantic crossing. Upon returning to Maryland, Charley continued to correspond with his English friends, as well as with his father, and it is from these letters that we know how he regarded the worsening conditions between Great Britain and her American colonies. As the situation fragmented into armed conflict, Charley's correspondence documents the coming and prosecution of the war in dramatic detail and (as I have already mentioned), gives us a picture that differs substantially from the popularized view of the War for Independence. Beyond an intimate portrayal of Revolutionary politics, the Carroll letters provide a magnificent panorama of life in colonial and Revolutionary Maryland. When we consider that Charles Carroll of Carrollton continued to write extensively to his children and grandchildren until his death in 1832, we begin to grasp the extraordinary chronological sweep of this correspondence—from pre-Revolutionary times through the age of Andrew Jackson. I can think of no other collection of documents with comparable range and continuity.

As I mentioned earlier, my staff, based at the Maryland Historical Society here in Baltimore, is engaged in editing these documents

27. CCC to Wallace, Johnson, and Muir, July 9, 1782, *Dear Papa, Dear Charley*, 3: 1526–27.

for publication. The crux of this correspondence encompasses the letters the Signer wrote to his son, Charles, whose beautifully restored house, Homewood, you will visit this afternoon, and those he exchanged with three of his granddaughters—Mary Ann Caton Patterson Wellesley, Elizabeth Caton (later Lady Stafford), and Louisa Caton Hervey-Bathurst, who eventually became the seventh duchess of Leeds. The relationship between Charles Carroll of Carrollton and his only son, Charles Carroll of Homewood, as poignantly revealed by the elder Carroll's letters—unfortunately, few of those from son to father seem to have survived—differed dramatically from that between Charley and Papa. Although Charles Carroll of Carrollton essentially followed the same regimen with his son that Papa had imposed upon him—with the notable exception of illegitimacy—it simply didn't take. Young Charles, sent away, like his father, at the age of ten for schooling abroad, proved a charming lad but a desultory student. Reporting to the youngster's cousin, Archbishop John Carroll, in 1785, soon after the boy arrived at the academy of the English Jesuits at Liège, John Laurenson, his tutor, noted that his 'progress has hitherto been but slow,' a circumstance that he attributed to Charles 'not having been habituated to a serious application before he came over.' Nor was Laurenson pleased with young Carroll's 'coarseness of accent and enunciation, of which I fear I shall find it hard to break him.' Notwithstanding these 'defects,' Laurenson maintained that Charles's 'cheerfulness & good-nature render him agreeable to his school-fellows, as his docility & virtuous inclinations gain him the affection of his Superiors,' and averred that he had 'not a doubt but what He will do well, & one day prove the comfort of his illustrious parents.'[28] This did not prove to be the case. Disrupted by the conflicts spawned by the French Revolution, the Jesuit academy at Liège closed in 1794, and its students

28. John Laurenson to John Carroll, November 20, 1785. John Carroll Papers, Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

and teachers fled. Many went to England, where the school, reconstituted as Stonyhurst, continues to this day, in Lancastershire. However, Charles, aged twenty, returned to Maryland, and as his life subsequently proved, his sojourn among the Jesuits did not produce in him the rigorous self-discipline that had honed his distinguished parent.

Nevertheless, his charm and personality won him the hand of Harriet Chew of Philadelphia in 1800, and judging from her correspondence with her siblings, the marriage began well—shortly after the birth of their son, another Charles, in 1801, she praised the 'affectionate attention & watching anxiety of my kind husband.'[29] You will doubtless hear the story of what Charles Carroll of Carrollton deemed his son's reckless extravagances in building Homewood during your tour of that beautifully restored house this afternoon. Ultimately, however, the great tragedy of this father-son relationship lay not in financial irresponsibility, of which there was plenty, but in Charles's inability to restrain his consumption of 'wines and fermented liquors.' By 1814 the situation had led Harriet and their four daughters to return permanently to Philadelphia, to escape, in the words of her father-in-law, 'the afflicting scene she has daily witnessed.' Repeated attempts to reform himself did not hold, and Charles Carroll of Homewood predeceased his father, dying of acute alcoholism at the age of fifty in 1825.[30]

If his only son caused Charles Carroll of Carrollton the deepest anguish of his post-Revolutionary years, his three Caton granddaughters provided his greatest delight. Known in the popular press as 'The Three Graces,' these women—Mary Ann, Elizabeth, and Louisa—dazzled society on both sides of the Atlantic by forging brilliant connections to British aristocracy. The Caton women made their initial foray into England in 1816, a

29. Harriet Carroll to Benjamin Chew, Jr., August 19, 1801. Chew Family Papers, Box 50, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

30. For a brief discussion of Charles Carroll of Homewood's disappointing life, see Hoffman and Mason, *Princes of Ireland*, 389.

trip from which only Mary Ann came back—reluctantly—to Maryland, doubtless because she was then married to a Baltimore merchant named Robert Patterson, the brother of the unfortunate Betsy, whose brief marriage to Jerome Bonaparte had been annulled by the emperor. By the time of Mary Ann's return, her sister Louisa had met and married Felton Hervey-Bathurst, an aide-de-camp to the Duke of Wellington. Louisa's wedding was held at Wellington's Apsley House, in London, and the great hero himself gave the bride away. Elizabeth Caton remained in England with Louisa, and although they corresponded faithfully with their grandfather, neither of them ever saw him or Maryland again. Some years after Hervey-Bathurst's death in 1819, Louisa remarried and by that union subsequently became the seventh duchess of Leeds. (From the correspondence with Charles Carroll of Carrollton involving her 'dowry,' it is clear that Louisa's prospective in-laws preferred a cash settlement to her portion of Carrollton, the Signer's 10,000 acres in Frederick County, Maryland.) Elizabeth once hoped her grandfather would sell his Maryland properties and move to England, where he could maintain a townhouse in London and a country house as well. In 1836, four years after Carroll's death, she became the consort of Sir George William Jerningham, 8th Baron Stafford. But it was Mary Ann, the widow of Baltimore merchant Robert Patterson, who most pleased the aging Signer. Returning to England following the death of Robert Patterson in 1822, Mary Ann in 1825 wed the Duke of Wellington's older brother, Richard Colley Wellesley, whose titles included second earl of Mornington and Marquess Wellesley. It was, in the words of her envious former sister-in-law Betsy Patterson Bonaparte, 'the greatest match a woman ever made.'[31]

In a remarkable way that the old Signer particularly enjoyed, Mary Ann's marriage brought the Carroll saga full circle. Lord Wellesley was viceroy of Ireland, and Mary Ann returned to

31. Hoffman and Mason, *Princes of Ireland*, 390.

Dublin with him as vicereine. There she openly attended Mass, in the land from which her great great-grandfather, Charles Carroll the Settler, had fled a century before her birth.

Thus are succeeding generations moved, unawares, to complete the unfinished agenda of those who preceded them.[32]

32. Hoffman and Mason, *Princes of Ireland.*