

Despite the worrisome rejection at the polls of some of Charley's important allies, particularly Thomas Johnson, the seventy-eight men who formally assembled as the ninth convention in mid-August remained solidly representative of Maryland's traditional political and economic elite. On August 17, these delegates appointed a committee to draft a declaration of rights and a new state constitution.¹¹ Chosen along with Charley for this task were four of his old fee controversy allies, Matthew Tilghman, William Paca, Charles Carroll, Barrister, and Samuel Chase, and two men of prominent planter families, Robert Goldsborough and George Plater. The committee had barely begun its work, when Charley experienced the first major shock of just how volatile Maryland's politics had become in their new Revolutionary setting. On August 22 the *Maryland Gazette* would print a series of instructions that had been sent to the delegates of Anne Arundel County. Signed by 885 freeman, these directives called for a more open and democratic form of government. Unable to ignore such a large number of freeholders, the county's delegates prepared responses on August 19 for publication in the same issue of the newspaper. One delegate, Papa's Elk Ridge neighbor Rezin Hammond, did not object to the freemen's proposals, but the other three, Samuel Chase, Brice T. B. Worthington, and Charles Carroll, Barrister, voiced their opposition to the demands because of the danger they posed to property and liberty. With the express hope that the people would reconsider and rescind the instructions, Chase, Worthington, and the Barrister called for a public meeting on August 26.¹²

It is a measure of Charley's growing anxiety that he tried to stage-manage this gathering to prevent the faction behind the instructions from turning the occasion to their own purposes. For the younger Carroll, countering the threat meant neutralizing the influence of the fourth Anne Arundel County delegate, Rezin Hammond. Entering Maryland politics in 1774 as a delegate to the first convention, Hammond, a substantial planter, quickly became known for his aggressiveness both in opposing England and in behalf of democratic reforms. Once characterized by Papa, with whom he had engaged in numerous bound-

would probably not elect either Thomas Johnson, William Paca, or Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Council of Safety to the Maryland Deputies, Aug. 2, 1776, in Browne et al., eds., *Archives of Maryland*, XII, 163, quoted in Ronald Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland* (Baltimore, 1973), 170.

11. Edward C. Papenfuse and Gregory A. Stiverson, eds., *The Decisive Blow Is Struck: A Facsimile Edition of the Proceedings of the First Constitutional Convention of 1776 and the First Maryland Constitution* (Annapolis, Md., 1977), n.p.

12. *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis), Aug. 22, 1776.

ary disputes, as “a Noisy obstinate fool,” Hammond subsequently behaved in ways that solidly confirmed the elder Carroll in that opinion.¹³

During the summer of 1776, Hammond endorsed a lengthy “sketch of a form of government” prepared and circulated by members of the Anne Arundel County militia. This document advocated such democratic innovations as the popular election of local officials and militia officers. Then he campaigned successfully for a seat in the ninth convention by urging militiamen “to lay down their arms if they were denied the privilege of voting for it was their right and they ought not to be deprived of it.”¹⁴ Well aware of Hammond’s activities, Charley feared that, “unless gentlemen will take some trouble and exert themselves a Governnt. will be formed most destructive to Liberty & Property.” Indeed, it was the “duty” of such men “to their country . . . to exert their utmost endeavours to save it from the danger with which it is now threatened by the secret machinations of evil and designing men.”¹⁵

On August 20, two days before the announcement in the press of the meeting called by Chase, Worthington, and the Barrister, Hammond busied himself “persuading the People” not to attend. Urging Papa to prevail upon his neighbors to be present in Annapolis on the appointed day, Charley underscored his belief that the stakes were high: “If two or 3 hundred of the substantial freeholders were to mee[t] a check might be given in time to the desperate designs of the Hammonds & such fellows who are endeavouring to involve the country in the utmost confusion in this time of danger & distress.” On August 23, two days before the gathering, he warned his father again: “Unless the Howards and gentlemen of Character [&] property will bestir themselves, and counteract the malicious falsehoods that are propogated about this county, & other counties, it will be impossible to have a good governnt.” Charley had begun to comprehend the dangerous instability of the situation amid which he and other like-minded members of Maryland’s Revolutionary leadership intended to devise and then impose a new system of governance. He now saw that other men — men he believed by birth and breeding ought to know better — might embrace a more democratic governing structure to secure popular support for their bid for power. They would surely enflame the people and threaten the fragile authority

13. CCA to CCC, Nov. 26, 1773, Carroll Papers, MS 206.

14. *Md. Gaz.*, July 18, 1776; Deposition of Thomas Henry Howard, Aug. 27, 1776 (*Calendar of Maryland State Papers*, no. 4, *The Red Books*, part 2 [Annapolis, 1953], 82). Samuel Godman gave similar testimony about Hammond on the same day. For more information on Hammond, see Hoffman, *Spirit of Dissension*, 170–177.

15. CCC to CCA, Aug. 20, 1776, Carroll Papers, MS 206.

that the governing authorities currently exercised. “Men of desperate fortunes, or of desperate & wicked designs are endeavouring under cloak of procuring great privileges for the People to introduce a levelling scheme, by wh they (these evil men) are sure to profit.”¹⁶

Despite Charley’s efforts, the three delegates lost their bid to rescind the instructions and resigned. New elections on September 4 returned Chase and Worthington but replaced Charles Carroll, Barrister, with John Hall, a supporter of Rezin Hammond and a member of the faction that had precipitated the entire episode. Apparently resigned to saving two of the three contested positions, Charley remarked to his father two days later: “Our internal affairs, I mean of this Province, seem to be but in an indifferent way — I am afraid there are some men in our Convention not so honest as they should be. It is certain we go on very slowly.”¹⁷

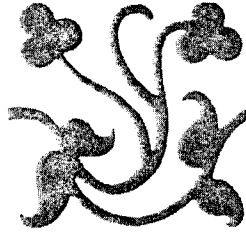
Throughout the Anne Arundel election dispute, the committee constituted by the convention to draft a plan of government continued its deliberations. When Charles Carroll, Barrister, lost his seat, the convention added Thomas Johnson, Jr., and Robert T. Hooe to the committee. The presence of Johnson, who had been rejected by the Anne Arundel County voters on August 1 but was subsequently elected from Caroline County, might have compensated somewhat for the Barrister’s absence. On August 24, the drafting committee submitted to the convention the forty-four articles of the Declaration and Charter of Rights and within a fortnight reported their “Constitution and Form of Government.” Giving the documents only a cursory reading, the convention postponed consideration to a later date to allow Johnson, Chase, and Paca to attend Congress in Philadelphia. Uncertain about the reception the plan of government would receive, the younger Carroll worried to the elder that the proposal did not seem to enjoy widespread support within the convention. He was further dismayed when the plan’s opponents passed a resolution that the documents be printed and distributed throughout the province for “the consideration of the people at large.”¹⁸

The ideological preferences of the committee, unmistakable in the document it devised, were the basis for the most conservative of all state constitutions developed during the Revolutionary era. By a series of high property qualifications, the draft restricted officeholding exclusively to the wealthy, propertied elements

16. CCC to CCA, Aug. 20, 23, 1776, *ibid.*

17. CCC to CCA, Sept. 6, 1776, *ibid.*

18. CCC to CCA, [Sept.] 13, 1776, *ibid.*; Hoffman, *Spirit of Dissension*, 180; Papenfuse and Stiverson, eds., *Decisive Blow Is Struck*.

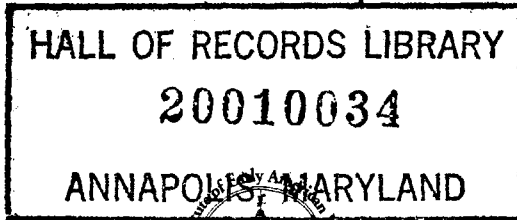


Princes of Ireland,
Planters of Maryland

A Carroll Saga, 1500–1782

Ronald Hoffman

in Collaboration with Sally D. Mason



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