

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?
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In early 1776, the news from Canada that the military campaign launched during August of the previous year, was going badly for the Americans. Congress appointed a committee to attempt to accomplish diplomatically what could not be done militarily. The Congressional committee composed of Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase, and Charles Carroll of Carrollton was designated to win Canada to the side of the provinces in revolt. Accompanying the committee was the Rev. John Carroll, a Catholic priest and cousin of Charles Carroll, it was thought the presence of a priest would be welcomed in French Canada.

This was a powerful group of patriots, Ben Franklin's exploits are well known; printer, inventor, writer, politician, and signer of the Declaration of Independence. Charles Carroll was the wealthiest man in America, reputed to own seventy to eighty thousand acres in Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey; later was an organizer of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, a U.S. Senator, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. He outlived all the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Samuel Chase like the Carrolls was from Maryland, a lawyer, signer of the Declaration of Independence, member of the Continental Congress, and in 1796 was appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States. Charles Carroll was designated as the Chairman of the Committee.

Although not a member of the committee, the presence of the Rev. John Carroll was important to the potential success of the mission. Like most children of wealthy Catholics, John and his cousin Charles of Carrollton were sent to France to receive their education at St. Omer, a Jesuit school. John Carroll furthered his studies at the English Cottage in Liege and was ordained 14 February 1761. He remained in France until the suppression of the Jesuits by Pope Clement XIV in 1773. Thus, his return to Maryland and his mother's home at Rock Creek, where his brother Daniel built a chapel and on Sundays, he said Mass. As a result of discriminating laws against Catholics, there was no public Catholic Church in Maryland.

In March of 1776 this band of patriots began their journey to Canada by way of the Hudson River – Lake Champlain route to St. John's. This journey was especially difficult for the seventy-year-old Franklin. The British government learned of the mission almost as soon as it began. None other than William Franklin, (Ben's, son), informed Lord Germain, the English overseer of the American war, of his father's movements, company

and purpose. It is suggested that their main purpose was to prevail on the Canadians to enter into a confederacy with the other colonies and to send delegates to the Continental Congress. At St. John the party spent two nights in a war damaged house, before proceeding.

At Montreal they met with General Benedict Arnold. From Arnold the commissioners learned of the discouraging prospects of American forces along the St. Lawrence. The problems of supporting a military invasion so far from home, was creating a political problem. American forces were living off the land. Sometimes officers took what they needed with a promise to pay. Lacking funds, the officers were unable to pay for their supplies. The Army was expecting the commissioners to bring the money necessary to maintain the army in the field. Without money to pay for supplies, the American army was hated by the Canadian people. With the British army arriving to reinforce the Canadian garrisons, the situation with the Americans was becoming precarious. The Congressional committee was facing a deteriorating situation. An army unable to accomplish its mission and facing a rout, with the arrival of British reinforcements.

A number of hostile events began to become apparent to the commission.

1. The Quebec Act of 1764 was widely accepted by the French Canadians. The Act did not restrict the practice of Catholic worship or maintaining property.

2. The Commission did not bring money to support the Army in Canada. Therefore the Army was left on its own to obtain food and supplies.

3. The resistance of Bishop Joseph Briand, who forbade the clergy from meeting with the Commission and Fr. Carroll.

4. The New England colonies had maintained the Protestant church as the established religion.

5. News of John Jay's inflammatory amendments introduced in the New York assembly had already reached Canada. These amendments and his remarks were anti-Catholic.

6. Only four colonies (Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland) had done away with the penal laws, and allowed Catholics absolute equality with other citizens.

7. Some Continental officers and soldiers had shown hostility toward the Canadian clergy, further deteriorating a declining relationship between the parties.

The Quebec Act allowed the French – Canadians liberties from the discriminatory practices that were still in effect in many of the American

colonies. Although two regiments of Canadians served in the American Army and a number of Canadians moved south across the border, the damage to negotiations between Canada and the colonies had been done.

It is estimated that less than one per cent of the American population was Catholic at the time of the American Revolution. Maryland having the most Catholics followed by Pennsylvania, Virginia and Delaware, between 23,000 to 24,000 persons were being served by 22 priests. The rank and file of the Continental Army contained numbers of Catholics. Pennsylvania sent Colonel Moylan, Captain Barry of the Navy, Colonel Doyle and Captain Michael McGuire; while Maryland contributed Neales, Boarmans, Brents, Semmes, Mattinglys, Brookes and Kiltys. A Catholic Chaplain commissioned by the Continental Congress served one of the regiments made up of Canadians.

By May 1776 it became apparent that the Commissioners had failed in their mission to Canada. The military campaign was going badly toward the Americans and British reinforcements were beginning to arrive in Canada. Ben Franklin was ill and with the company of Fr. Carroll started the journey southward. Fr. Carroll attended Franklin and a lasting relationship was formed between the two. The end of May saw them return to Albany where they were provided a coach by General Schuyler for the trip to New York. The other members of the Commission soon followed as the Army was routed in early summer, bringing the Canada campaign to an unsuccessful conclusion. This was now a war between the thirteen colonies and the British crown.

The Commission represented the best talent in presenting the case of American diplomacy. It is doubtful that such a talented group would ever again represent the country. Ben Franklin and Charles Carroll would sign the Declaration of Independence, Samuel Chase would later serve on the Supreme Court, and John Carroll would become the first American to become Archbishop in the Catholic Church. This talented group served the country well during the Revolution. Franklin would go to France to obtain the assistance of that country both financially and militarily during the war. Samuel Chase would serve in the Continental Congress, and the Maryland court before his ultimate appointment to the Supreme Court. Charles Carroll of Carrolton would distinguish himself in many areas during and after the peace. He served in the Continental Congress, the Senate of the United States, and signed both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. His development of canal and railroads and other internal improvements help to speed the westward movement.

Not enough can be said for Bishop Carroll. He was a patriot whose exploits could be another paper. It was Carroll's leadership that has given the Catholic Church in this country a distinctive American character. Rome through the French foreign minister approached Ben Franklin (the American representative in Paris) about church matters in America. When Franklin informed him that the Holy See was free to make any arrangement with the new nation it wishes, Congress would have nothing to do with religion. It was Franklin's recommendation that the Pope name John Carroll, "Superior of the Mission in the thirteen United States" on June 9, 1784. Carroll faced the task of bringing together a loose group of congregations. Many of the clergy had been members of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), representing different nationalities.

On August 15, 1790, John Carroll was consecrated Bishop of the new diocese of Baltimore. He was raised to the episcopacy in the chapel of the Weid family in Dorset, England. In November of 1791, Bishop Carroll held the only synod of his twenty-five year episcopacy. The synod concerned itself with the administration of the sacraments and support of the Church. The destructive character of the French Revolution toward the Church and clergy, served to moderate attitudes born of the American Revolution. Carroll as bishop, contributed more to the ecumenical spirit that stamped the early national period. He developed close friendships with almost all the leaders of other denominations. The leadership he exerted in promoting civic improvement accomplished this.

Bishop Carroll, served on the board of trustees for St. John's College in Annapolis, board of Baltimore College, Library Company of Baltimore, Baltimore General Dispensary, Baltimore Female Humane Association, and the Maryland Society Promoting Useful Knowledge. He pushed for the creation of Georgetown University, St. Mary's Seminary and St. Mary's College in Baltimore, and Mount St. Mary's College and Seminary in Emmitsburg. He encouraged Elizabeth Seton to establish the American Sisters of Charity for the education of girls. Without informing Rome, he led to the restoration of the Jesuits in Maryland by an affiliation with Russian Jesuits, whom Catherine the Great had protected. Bishop Carroll's example led other Catholics to immerse themselves in the affairs of the larger community. During Bishop Carroll's episcopacy the Diocese of Baltimore was expanded into four Dioceses, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Bardstown, KY. Which saw the ascendancy of Carroll to Archbishop.

The research for this paper was completed in the libraries of local colleges and universities as well as the Indianapolis Public Library. Most of the information on the Canadian campaign pertains to the military experience. The Continental Congress's diplomatic efforts in Canada during the Revolutionary War have not been examined in detail. The biographies and autobiographies of the members of the committee give a paragraph to less than a page to the efforts of the committee. Maybe the reason so little has been written is due to the failure of the committee to establish a favorable agreement with the Canadians. All the members of the committee had many successful accomplishments, in later years, which are more interesting and informative.

The influx of American Tories into the Maritime and Ontario providences during and after the American Revolution did not aid in the establishment of good relations between the two countries. Boarder disputes in the Western United States between Canada, Irish invasions from the United States, the War of 1812 all have contributed to trying relationships between the two countries. These have diminished over the last century with both countries having to deal with the Cold War, two World Wars and the Economic Depression. Canada had to deal with the Quebec separatist movement, and other internal problems. The boarder between the two countries continues to be the longest nonmilitarized zone in the world. Until recently you could travel from the United States to Canada without a passport.