

Reconstruction Work in the Reference Library

EDWARD CARROLL—whoever was he? I have never heard of him! So say I to myself as I come upon the name when reading through extracts from “The Journal of Richard Smith” in preparation for the printer of *The Journal of the Friends Historical Society*.

During the Yearly Meeting of 1823 Richard Smith meets the Committee for African Instruction—such well known Friends as Luke Howard, Robert Forster, Peter Bedford, George Jones, *et al.*, but including Edward Carroll. I look in J. J. Green’s index to *The Annual Monitor* and there I find “Carroll, Edward, Cork, died 1865, aged 80”—the same name. Perhaps he was attending Y.M. from the Sister Island and was asked to represent Irish Friends on the Committee. I’ll look at the Y.M. Minutes for 1823, he may be mentioned among representatives from Ireland. No, he’s not there, but what is this? The name appears among the representatives from London and *Middlesex Q.M.*! Then was he a London Friend? I must have the London and Middlesex Registers searched. Result—no Carroll among the births of the period or among the deaths, but among marriages, there is this entry :

Carroll, Edward, Uxbridge, Co. of *Middlesex*, [son of] Isaac and Ann Carroll, City of *Cork* in Ireland [to] Anna Lowe [at] Uxbridge 1816. 12. 18.

So here we have *Cork* and *Middlesex* brought together—so much to the good, but another entry in R. Smith’s “Journal” seems to indicate *Tottenham* as E. Carroll’s home. Anna Carroll! Perhaps I can work now through the wife. Consult again *The Annual Monitor* index. Yes. There’s an entry of the death of Anna (corrected from Ann in the copy in **D.**) Carroll in 1850, aged sixty-

four, but the place of residence is given as *Reading*. Perhaps *The Annual Monitor* itself will give some help. This I turn up and find :

Anna Carroll, Reading, 64. 12mo. 6 1850. Died at *Brighton*. A *Minister*. Wife of Edward Carroll.

Yes, Anna, wife of Edward, will do, but what about *Reading* and why *Brighton*? I write off to one of the oldest Friends in Brighton, who replies that she remembers the name but cannot recall particulars. I now know that Anna Carroll was a Minister. Was there perchance a Testimony issued? Down I go to one of the strong-rooms to the place of the volumes of Testimonies, seven folios in a row, all in writing, and I soon have before me the answer to many questions: "A Testimony of Reading and Warborough M.M. Anna Carroll was the eldest daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Lowe of Worcester and was born on the 18th of First Month, 1787. . . . In 1816 she was married to our friend Edward Carroll, and after a short residence at *Uxbridge*, they settled at *Tottenham*, where they resided several years, as they did also subsequently at Liverpool, Birmingham, and *Reading*. . . . She accompanied her husband to *Brighton* in the 11th Month, 1850, . . . but after being there a short time she . . . died and was interred in Friends' Burial Ground there."

So far so good. The question now comes—how am I to connect the Edward Carroll of *Reading* in 1850 with the Friend of the same name who died in *Cork* in 1865 aged eighty. In the first draft of my note I have: "On the death of his wife . . . he may have returned to his native country." But further investigation proves the exact opposite to be the fact and I erase this gratuitous statement!

According to the card-catalogue there is among John Thompson MSS. a paper endorsed "Edward Carroll re his imprisonment at Osbaldwick, Yorks, 1851." In the earlier stages of this reconstruction this reference seemed to have little if any meaning, but now that we have brought Edward Carroll down to the end of 1850, the card assumes more importance, so I get up from the depths of the New Strongroom the volume of manuscripts containing the above paper and find that it is

a quarto sheet, closely written, frequently underlined, and crossed toward the end. It begins "Osaldwick dreadful Prison n^r York @ Thos. Allis's¹ place of awful solitary confinement 8th month 1851, from most awfully afflicted wretched and miserable Edward Carroll," refers to "cruel wicked Jas Backhouse in bringing me to & placing me in this dreadful abode of death,"² and contains the sufferer's urgent request to be allowed "to go to *Cork* my native place and assist my Brother in his business there." Doubtless the same man and yet how changed! I must leave him in this private asylum while I seek confirmation from other sources.

From Edith Webb, Recording Clerk of Friends in Ireland, I learn that Edward Carroll, son of Isaac and Ann Carroll³ of Cork, was born in that city in 1784. "We have no record of his marriage [because he was married in England]. He died in 1865 at Bloomfield *Retreat*, Dublin, aged about 80½ years."

So, identification is complete, and the poor man was sent back to his native Island, but did not recover his mental equilibrium.

The question now arises what effect the publication of these facts would have upon any living descendants or friends? I write to J. Ernest Grubb of Munster Province and ask his view on this, and he kindly communicates with Friends of Cork and district. The result is that the Record Clerk of Cork M.M. supplies valuable dates, and a collateral descendant of Edward Carroll states that "he was sent from *York* with a caretaker to Abram and Jane Fisher of Youghal. My mother remembers him there well. We have a daguerreotype of him. We have no objection to publication."

Two questions remain unsolved. Was Edward Carroll a Minister? and what produced his mental trouble? With regard to the first. While these

¹ For Thomas Allis (1788-1875), see xiv. 120 n.

² This reference to James Backhouse (1794-1869) of York, is explained by the fact that he married Deborah Lowe (1793-1827), sister of Anna (Lowe) Carroll. Elizabeth (Allis) Lowe (1757-1821), mother of these sisters and other children, died at Tottenham at the house of the Carrolls. See *Select Family Memoirs*, by James Backhouse, York, 1831.

³ Isaac Carroll married Ann Fisher, of Youghal, in 1783.

researches were in progress I went down to Wellingborough at the request of the Gravely family to see some Quaker literature and brought back *inter alia* a MS. account of London Y.M. 1825, in which I find that Edward Carroll visited the Women's Meeting, and later delivered "a sweet communication in meeting," but a further confirmation of his position was to come in a remarkable way.

The great German air raid on London took place on Saturday, July 7th, and among the victims was a gentleman and his daughter who were both killed in the destruction of their office. A son of the deceased gentleman called at Devonshire House shortly after and stated that his father had purchased an ancient desk from a Quaker living, he thought, at Tottenham, and in it, he, the son, had found some old Quaker papers. He brought two to Devonshire House as specimens, thinking that they might be of interest to Friends, and one of them proved to be the original document liberating "our friends, Edward and Anna Carroll, *ministers* in good esteem" for service in Sussex and Surrey and signed by numerous Friends of Tottenham M.M.!

As to the second undecided point I have, at present, no evidence. I can only suppose that the death of Anna Carroll in some way contributed to her husband's mental breakdown.

ADDENDUM.

Since the last paragraph was written "evidence" has come to hand, contained in letters written from London to the South of Ireland, 1821 to 1835, that for some years E. Carroll had been out of health and that business troubles had weighed heavily on his mind.

The above is presented as a specimen of successful research, but success in one case is often counterbalanced by failure in another. Nevertheless we never despair of any man.

NORMAN PENNEY.

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