

## **Elementary Social Studies Lesson: Mount Clare Museum House**

**Lesson Title: If the Walls Could Talk -- Mount Clare Museum House**

**Grades:** 3, 4 and 5

**Class Periods/Duration:** 60-90 minutes

### **VSC Standards/Indicators:**

Grade 3 –

5.A.2.a Collect and examine information about people, places, or events of the past using pictures, photographs, maps, audio or visual tapes, and documents

Grade 4 –

2.B.2.a Describe the similarities and differences of religious, ethnic, and economic groups in colonial and contemporary times

Grade 5 –

5.B.2.b Compare the political, economic, and social lives of people in New England, Middle and the Southern colonies

**Objective:** Students will be able to use a variety of primary sources from a historic house to draw conclusions about the lives of the people who lived there.

### **Vocabulary:**

Barrister – a lawyer (technically a lawyer who is a member of England's Inns of Court)

Chatelaine – a metal hook with chains for fastening small objects such as keys worn by women in the 1700s and 1800s

Chyrurgeon – surgeon

Document – a written or printed paper

Eighteenth century – the 1700s

Enslaved African American – an African American who is considered the property of another person and who must work for that person without pay

Floor plan – a diagram that shows the rooms of a building

Gentry – upper class

Object reading – the process of analyzing an object to see what it tells us about the people who made and used it and the time in which it was used

Parlor – a room in a house used when visitors come over, like a living room

Primary source – a first hand or eyewitness account of a person, place or event, such as a diary, photograph, letter, will, census, etc.

Will – a legal document in which a person describes what he or she wants to happen to his or her property after death

**Materials/Resources:**

1. Color photocopies of objects for each student group:
  - a. Photograph of dress
  - b. Photograph of portrait of Charles Carroll, Barrister
  - c. Photograph of chatelaine
  - d. Photograph of parlor
2. Black & white photocopies of documents for each student group:
  - a. Excerpt from 1774 list of supplies ordered from England
  - b. Excerpt from Margaret Carroll's Will
  - c. Floor plan and sketch of Mount Clare
3. Transparencies of all primary sources
4. Copies of Primary Source Worksheet for each student group

**Teacher Background:**

Mount Clare Museum House is located in Carroll Park in Southwest Baltimore. Today it is a historic house that preserves the home and belongings of its wealthy owners and interprets the lives of the gentry, indentured servants, and enslaved African Americans of the mid-eighteenth century.

Mount Clare was the home of Charles Carroll, Barrister, and his wife, Margaret. Charles was a member of Maryland's wealthy and powerful Carroll family. His father, Charles Carroll, Chyrurgeon (surgeon), had emigrated from Ireland in 1715 for political reasons and settled in Annapolis. In 1723, their first of three children, Charles, was born. Because the American colonies offered few sophisticated educational opportunities, Charles went to Europe at the age of 10 to study and remained there for twelve years. He returned to Annapolis, where he enjoyed the city's vibrant social life and learned about the management of his father's farms and mills, but he returned to England at the age of 28 to study law. In 1755, Charles, now a Barrister-at-Law, returned to Maryland to stay. When his father passed away three months after his return, Charles became one of Maryland's wealthiest men.

Among Charles' inheritance were 800 acres on the Patapsco River called "Georgia Plantation" and part ownership of the Baltimore Iron Works, established on adjacent lands originally owned by his father. The Barrister began construction of the Mount Clare mansion there in 1756. In 1763, at forty years old, he married Margaret Tilghman. Margaret, then 21, was the daughter of The Honorable Matthew Tilghman of the Eastern Shore's Rich Neck Manner, one of Maryland's wealthiest landowners. The Carrolls, who never had children, lived in Annapolis for most of the year and used Mount Clare as their summer home, although Margaret lived at the estate year-round following Charles' death in 1783. Mount Clare was a working plantation, where enslaved African Americans tended tobacco and grain crops. Charles and Margaret Carroll were unique among Maryland slave owners in the large number of

enslaved people they owned. At one point, the Carrolls owned over two hundred enslaved people, including blacksmiths, basket makers, cooks, carpenters, wood cutters, sailors, and others. Enslaved African Americans also performed household chores and worked at the iron works.

In 1766, to avoid confusion with the many other Carrolls living in Annapolis, Charles took on the name “Charles Carroll, Barrister.” He played a leading role in America’s struggle for independence from Great Britain. His political experience began soon after his father’s death, when he was elected to fill his father’s seat in the Maryland Assembly’s Lower House. During the American Revolution, Charles was a member of the Provincial Committee of Correspondence for Anne Arundel County, the Council of Safety, and the committee that prepared the instructions for Maryland’s delegates to the Continental Congress in 1776. He was the President of the Maryland Convention of Delegates and a member of the Convention that met on June 21, 1776 to vote for declaring the colonies’ independence. Charles was one of seven distinguished men appointed to prepare Maryland’s first constitution and served in the Continental Congress in November 1776, taking the place of his cousin, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence. He was elected to the first Maryland Senate in 1777, where he served until his death in 1783.

*Source: Mount Clare Museum House website (www.mountclare.org)*

## **Lesson Development:**

### Motivation

1. For homework the day before doing this lesson, ask students to find an object at home and bring it to class the next day.
2. Pair students (preferably with someone with whom they are not close friends), and ask them to exchange their objects.
3. Direct students to use all of their senses except taste to examine the object to try to figure out as many details as possible about their partner’s life. Students should make a list of their conclusions. For example, if a student brings in a basketball trophy, his partner might conclude that the student plays basketball, the student is good at basketball, the student is a competitive person, and that the student has free time. It would be helpful for you to demonstrate the activity using an ordinary classroom object.
4. Have volunteers share their objects and conclusions with the class, and then ask their partners how accurate their conclusions were.
5. Explain to students that we can learn a lot by analyzing objects. This is a skill called “object reading.” Tell them that historians use objects and documents from the past to learn about the lives of the people who owned and used the objects. These objects and documents from the past are called primary sources. A primary source is a first-hand or eyewitness record of a person, place, or event in history. Object reading is especially valuable in learning about people who left few written records, such as Native Americans and enslaved African Americans. Because it is possible to draw wrong conclusions from just one primary source, it is always best to study as many primary sources as possible.

### Procedure

1. Tell students that they will be examining some primary sources from a historic house called Mount Clare in Baltimore to learn about Charles and Margaret Carroll, the people who lived there in the mid-1700s.
2. As a class, ask students to list as many details as they can about colonial Maryland to orient themselves in time. You can prompt them with questions such as: “Did the United States exist in the mid-1700s?” “What country controlled the Maryland colony?” “Were there cars in the 1700s?” “Was there electricity?”
3. Divide the class into groups of four students. Distribute a packet containing all of the primary sources and a primary source worksheet to each group. Have each group select a person to fill in the worksheet. (Depending upon the students’ abilities and time constraints, you may choose to assign just one or two of the primary sources to each group and then, using the jigsaw method, have each group report on their sources to the rest of the class.)
4. Direct students to examine each primary source, one at a time beginning with the objects, and analyze it to fill in the worksheet. Allow students about 30 minutes to examine the sources.
5. Come back together as a class. Ask groups to volunteer to present their findings about one source to the class. Begin with the objects. Ask other groups to contribute their own comments. Fill in a master worksheet on the overhead with students’ responses.
6. Ask students to discuss what these primary sources tell us about life at Mount Clare for the Carroll family. Possible conclusions include:
  - a. The Carrolls were wealthy.
  - b. Charles Carroll was an educated man. (He sits at a desk with a pen.)
  - c. The Carrolls owned enslaved African Americans.
  - d. The Carrolls owned a lot of pretty things.
  - e. The Carrolls went to or held fancy parties. (Margaret’s dress is a formal one.)
  - f. Mount Clare was a large, fancy house.
  - g. Margaret Carroll like to garden.
  - h. The Carrolls grew some of their own food.

**Assessment:**

Ask each student to draw a picture that represents the Carrolls’ life at Mount Clare. The pictures should incorporate information gleaned from the primary source exercise. Have volunteers share their pictures with the class.

**Closure:**

Ask students to share their feelings about analyzing primary sources to learn about the past. Was it easy or difficult? Was it fun or boring? What kinds of questions do they have about life at Mount Clare that the primary sources did not answer? How might they be able to find the answers to those questions?

**Extension:**

Take students on a field trip to the Mount Clare Museum House, where they can learn more about the lives of Charles Carroll, Barrister, and his wife Margaret. Students can also learn about the experiences of the servants and enslaved African Americans who worked at the estate. Visits to Mount Clare can be arranged by calling 410-837-3262.

## PRIMARY SOURCE WORKSHEET

### **DRESS**

How would you describe this dress? \_\_\_\_\_

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When do you think Margaret would have worn this dress? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does this dress tell us about Margaret? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **PAINTING OF CHARLES CARROLL, BARRISTER**

How would you describe Charles Carroll based on this painting? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do the things on Charles' desk tell us about him? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **CHATELAINE**

How would you describe this object? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you think this object was made of? \_\_\_\_\_

What does this tell us about the Carrolls? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you think this object was used? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A chatelaine is something a women wore around her waist with hooks to hold keys. What does this tell you about Mount Clare and Margaret? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **PARLOR**

What kinds of things do you see in this room? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you think the Carrolls used this room? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does this room tell you about the Carrolls? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**LIST OF SUPPLIES**

What kinds of things did the Carrolls order? \_\_\_\_\_

Were the seeds that they ordered used for food or decoration? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think Charles or Margaret Carroll wanted the seeds? \_\_\_\_\_

What does this order tell us about the Carrolls and life at Mount Clare? \_\_\_\_\_

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**MARGARET'S WILL**

What sorts of things did Margaret give away in her will? \_\_\_\_\_

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What can we learn from what she gave to Mr. Brice and Mrs. Smith?

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What can we learn from what she gave to Mr. James Carroll?

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What can we learn from what she gave to Mr. Brice and Mr. Tilghman?

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**SKETCH AND FLOOR PLAN OF MOUNT CLARE**

How would you describe the outside of Mount Clare? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does the floor plan of Mount Clare's first floor tell us? \_\_\_\_\_

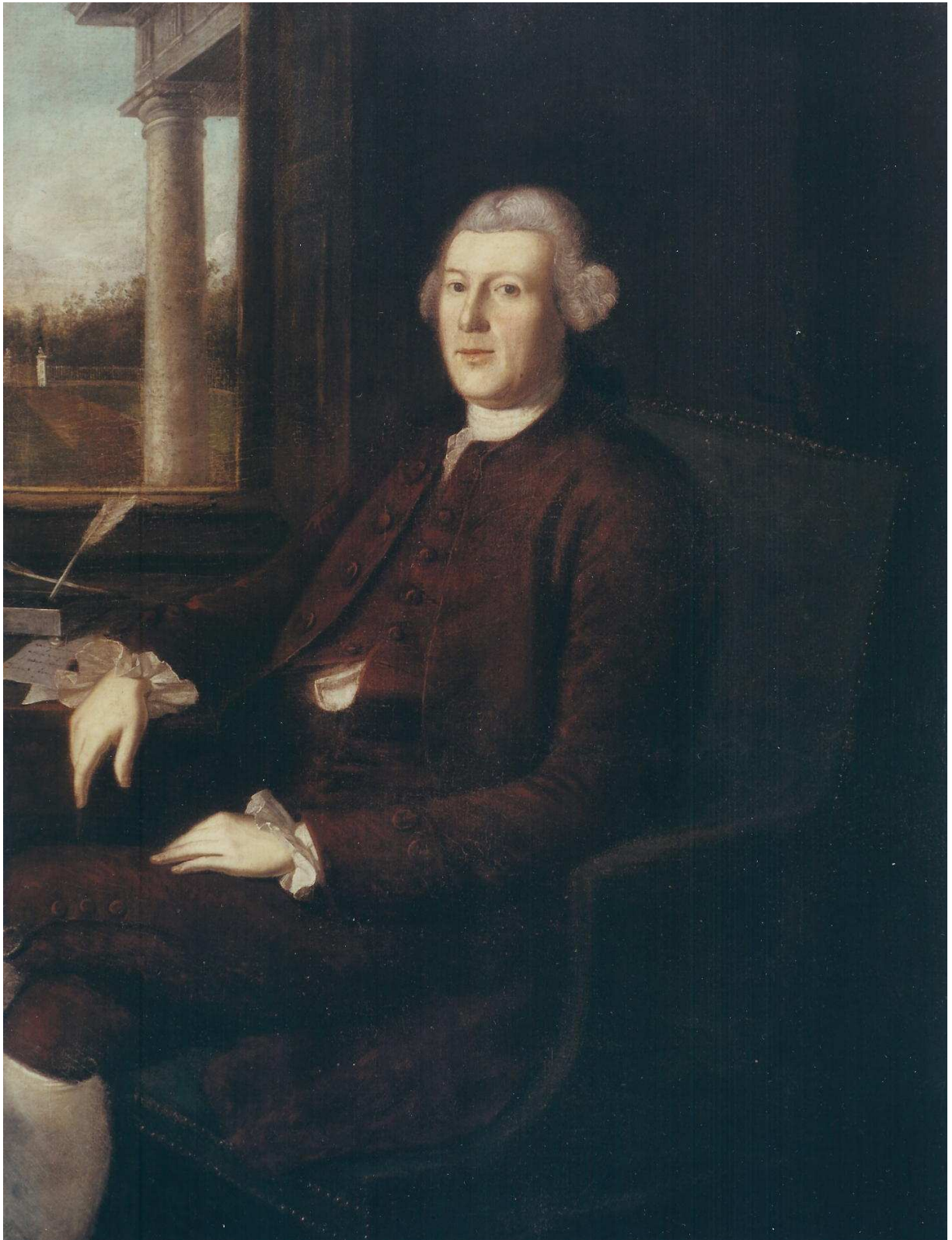
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**Dress**

*Image courtesy of Mount Clare Museum House*



**Painting of Charles Carroll, Barrister**  
*Image courtesy of Mount Clare Museum House*





**Chatelaine**

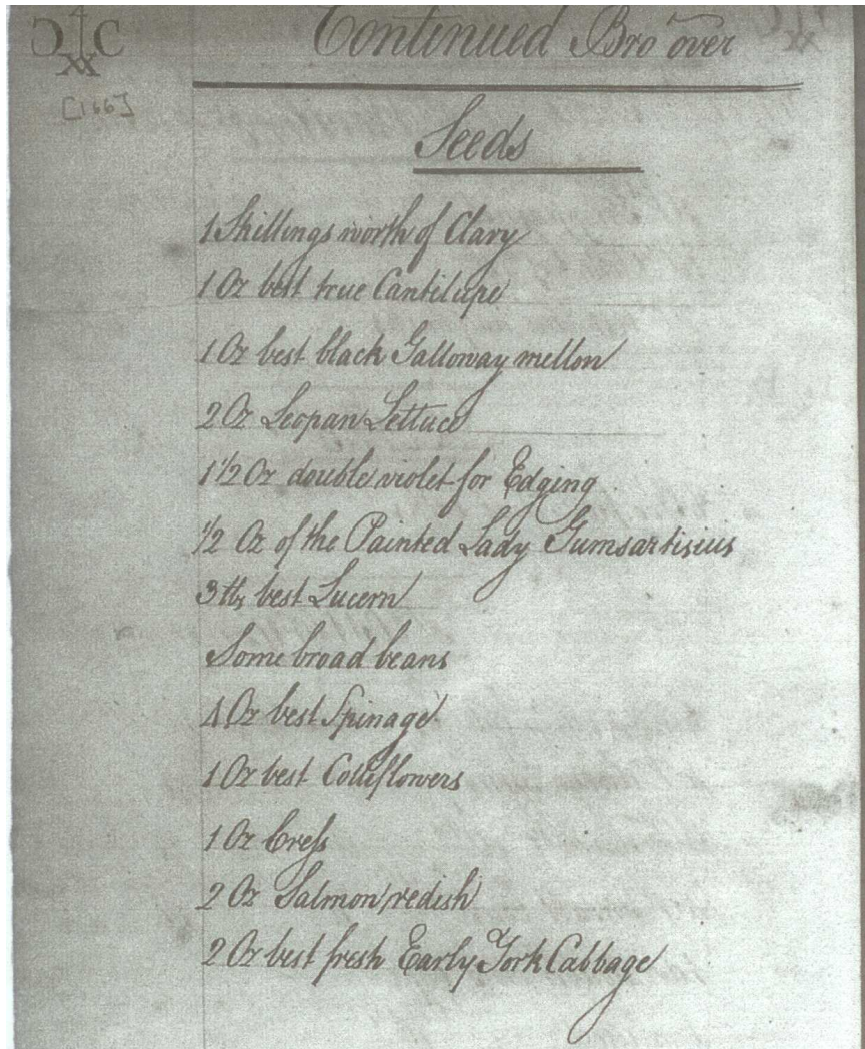
*Image courtesy of Mount Clare Museum House*



### **Parlor**

*Image courtesy of Mount Clare Museum House*

PAGE FROM LIST OF SUPPLIES ORDERED FROM ENGLAND IN 1774



Seeds

- 1 Shillings worth of Clary (a spice used to flavor wine)
- 1 Oz best true Cantilupe (cantaloupe)
- 1 Oz best black Galloway mellon (melon)
- 2 Oz Leopan Lettuce
- 1 1/2 Oz double violet for Edging
- 1/2 Oz of the Painted Lady Gumsartisius
- 3 lbs best Lucern (alfalfa)
- Some broad beans
- 4 Oz best Spinage (spinach)
- 1 Oz best Colliflowers (cauliflowers)
- 1 Oz Cress (plant used in salads)
- 2 Oz Salmon redish
- 2 Oz best fresh Early York Cabbage

*From the Collection of the Mount Clare Museum House*

Parts of the  
**Last Will & Testament of Margaret Carroll- March 12, 1817**

To Mr. Nicholas Brice: my silver coffee urn

To Mrs. Margaret Clare Smith of Georgetown: my large silver waiter

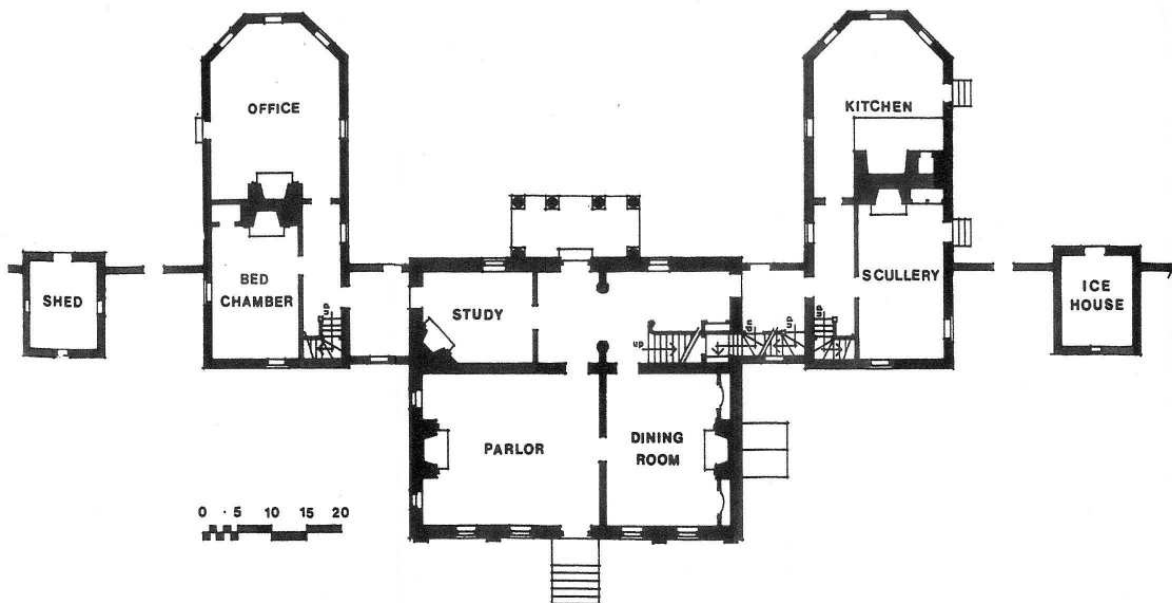
To Mr. James Carroll: Give my Green house trees & plants

To Mr. Henry Brice and Tench Tilghman, my Executors: All my negroes and slaves, in trust that they will set them all free in such ages, and on such terms as they deem best under all circumstances

*From the Collection of the Mount Clare Museum House*



# Sketch and Floor Plan of Mount Clare



*From the Collection of the Mount Clare Museum House*