

John F. Carroll (1858-1917)

By James Louderman

John F. Carroll, the managing editor of the *Evening Telegram*, was a strong advocate for civic improvement. His most recognized contribution to Portland was his campaign for a public market.

John Francis Carroll was born in St. Clair, Pennsylvania, on June 15, 1858. One of his first experiences as a journalist was covering the Molly Maguire cases in Pottsville, Pennsylvania. After leaving his home state, he moved around the Midwest working at different newspapers, including the *Missouri Republican*, the *Omaha Bee*, and the *Cleveland Leader*, where he achieved his first editorial position.

Carroll wanted to move west, and in the late nineteenth century he became editor and part owner of the *Cheyenne Leader* in Wyoming. Famously, his newspaper was boycotted by so-called cattle barons after he had spoken out for small cattle owners in the region during what was known as the "Rustler's War." The failure prompted him to take a job as head editor of the *Denver Post*, where he helped reinvigorate the struggling newspaper. At the *Post*, Carroll also helped promote Paul Laurence Dunbar, an influential African American poet of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Arriving in Portland in 1903, Carroll worked at the *Oregon Journal* for three years before moving to the *Evening Telegram*. Shortly after taking the position at the *Journal*, his editorials were placed in statewide newspapers, positioning him as a prominent figure in the city. His editorials were candid, and he considered his role a public service. Carroll also raised money for institutions such as the YMCA, advocated for public schools, and was one of the first people to promote the idea of the Rose Festival. Until his death in 1917, he served as vice president of the Rose Festival committee.

Beginning in April 1913, Carroll launched a series of editorials advocating for the development of a public market. Citing Pike Place Market as an example, he believed that a public market in Portland was necessary to attract new landholders. Such a market would lower prices for consumers, he believed, and give fair prices to producers. He found support for his crusade from the Commercial Club, where he was a member, and the Progressive Business Men's Club. By April 1914, they had created two public markets, one in the Albina district and one on Yamhill Street between Third and Fifth.

The market on Yamhill, named the Carroll Public Market in honor of John Carroll, lasted nearly twenty years as a streetside, open-air market before being shut down and replaced by the Portland Public Market. The Carroll Market never had a losing year, and at times it boasted over two hundred vendors in a single day.

John Carroll died on December 4, 1917.

Sources

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