



HERITAGE FREDERICK EXHIBITION CATALOG

READING BETWEEN THE LINE:

The Mason-Dixon Line

that Borders North and South



Heritage Frederick

24 East Church Street
Frederick, MD 21701
301.663.1188

www.frederickhistory.org

Catalog Editors

Mary Rose Boswell, *Executive Director*
Shuan Butcher

Design and Print Management

Sass Studios

Photography

Tim Jacobsen

Presenting Sponsor

Frederick County Bank

Project Sponsors and Partners

Carlson Family Foundation
Betty (BJ) Starr
Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area
Historical Society of
Washington County
Visit Frederick

This catalog is produced by Heritage Frederick. Copyright © 2018 by the Historical Society of Frederick County, Inc., dba Heritage Frederick.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the copyright holder, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in an essay or review. Printed in the United States of America.

The Historical Society of Frederick County, Inc., dba Heritage Frederick, is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit educational organization. Dedicated to local history, research and education, Heritage Frederick honors the significant impact Frederick County, Maryland, has on our state, our nation and the world. Heritage Frederick excels in offering engaging and interactive experiences that are relevant, accessible and meaningful to everyone. Established in 1892, Heritage Frederick is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

HERITAGE FREDERICK Board of Directors

OFFICERS

Yvonne G. Reinsch
President

Jillian DeShazer
Vice President

Charles G. Mann
Treasurer

Michael G. Bunitsky
Secretary

DIRECTORS

Shuan Butcher
Kathleen A. Costlow
Carrie A. Delente
Griffith W. Garwood
C. Richard Miller, Jr.
Terri Perry
Linda S. Roth
Jocelyn E. Stephens
Adriane E. Wodey

NON-VOTING

Roger Wilson, **Alderman**
City of Frederick Representative

STAFF

Mary Rose Boswell
Executive Director

Jennifer Winter
Program & Education Manager

Anastasia Suryaputri Diggs
Registrar

Kaitlyn Shorter
**Education & Research
Center Coordinator**

Melissa Henemyer
Program and Event Coordinator



**Special thanks to the
Carlson Family Foundation**

**2018 PRESENTING
SPONSOR**



Frederick County Bank

PROJECT SPONSORS

The Carlson Family Foundation

Betty (BJ) Starr



Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area



Visit Frederick

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBIT

Shuan Butcher
Washington County Historical Society

**DONORS TO THE
MUSEUM OF FREDERICK
COUNTY HISTORY**

M. Kenneth Starr
Francis Scott Key
Memorial Foundation

SPECIAL THANKS

Thomas G. Boswell
Shuan Butcher
Anastasia Suryaputri Diggs
Michael L. Dixon, MS., M.A.
Dr. George E. Lewis, Jr.
Kaitlyn Shorter
Betty (BJ) Starr
Leslie Starr
Jennifer Winter

FRONT COVER

Circumferentor, detail.
Collection, Heritage Frederick.

MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

Since its founding in 1892, Heritage Frederick has followed its mission to preserve and share Frederick County's history through research, exhibitions, publications, programs and various media. Reading *Between The Line: The Mason-Dixon Line that Borders North and South* has all of the above, thanks to the vision of the late Dr. M. Kenneth Starr (1922-2011).

Over the years, Heritage Frederick has amassed an impressive collection of objects and documents. One that is internationally significant, but has received relatively little attention until now, is the Old Stones and Black Tigers Collection donated by Dr. M. Kenneth Starr in 2007. Beginning in 1993, Dr. Starr, who was later joined by his friend Dr. George E. Lewis, Jr., traveled many miles to locate boundary markers starting from the early days of European settlement. To document his research, Dr. Starr meticulously made paper and ink rubbings of the stone markers. The collection eventually included 143 rubbings of stone inscriptions along the Old National Road and the Mason-Dixon Line and mile boundary stones between Frederick, Montgomery and Washington Counties, as well as markers and inscriptions on modern buildings.

Dr. Starr had a strong affiliation with Heritage Frederick. He was from Frederick County with family dating back here for many generations. He joined the board of Heritage Frederick in 1992 and was an internationally renowned scholar. His academic reputation led him to become president of the American Association of Museums (known today as the American Alliance of Museums). He, in fact, encouraged Heritage Frederick to become accredited by the institution, a process that required meeting the rigorous standards of AAM for collections' care, programming, building maintenance, and visitor service. Few museums pass the test. In 2003, Heritage Frederick became the first, and was for many years the solitary, county historical society in the state of Maryland with AAM accreditation. Today, Heritage Frederick is one of only 64 history museums in the United States operating on a budget of \$350,000 or less, that is so accredited.

With many stone markers having been robbed or destroyed, Dr. Starr's project takes on even greater historical value. In 2016, Dr. Lewis approached me about creating an exhibit recognizing this important work. Research Center Coordinator Kaitlyn Shorter and I quickly agreed to focus on the Mason-Dixon Line, as it has played a significant role in our history, and the nation was recognizing the 250th anniversary of its completion.

Once we proposed our idea to Dr. Lewis, he introduced us to James N. Norton, representing the Carlson Family Foundation, Inc. In a few months we learned this foundation would generously fund the exhibition, a catalog and searchable index, as well as proper storage of the collection and conservation of the nine rubbings related to the Mason-Dixon Line. Three workshops for children and adults also were included.

Additional financial support came from Dr. Starr's widow BJ Starr and the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area. We assembled a talented team: Heritage Frederick Resource Center Coordinator Kaitlyn Shorter; Registrar Anastasia Suryaputri Diggs; Dr. Starr's daughter Leslie; Janice Stagnitto Ellis, Ellis Conservation of Books & Paper, LLC; volunteers Olivia Mullunzi and Nicholas Jones; Michael L. Dixon, M.S., M.A., Guest Curator; and Shuan Butcher, member of the Heritage Frederick Board and chair of our Collections Committee.

We hope you enjoy the many facets of this project.

Mary Rose Boswell
Executive Director

A Boundary Through Time: The Mason-Dixon Line

ON THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY THE DEPARTURE OF THE ENGLISHMEN

As you travel through Western Maryland's small towns, villages and hamlets, you often run into a well-known boundary, the Mason-Dixon Line. Nearly everyone has heard of it, and most Frederick Countians cross it regularly. But few people know about its beginning. Today, the Mason-Dixon Line is most commonly seen as the demarcation line separating north from south, a cultural boundary in the modern age.

Since it is deeply rooted in Frederick County's heritage, with a story that predates the Civil War by some 100 years, let's revisit this enduring boundary and the often-forgotten narrative about its origin and original purpose. The story spans our history, from the settling of Maryland and Pennsylvania, to the creation of the United States. Cultural symbolism associated with the line developed in later centuries, as it became a boundary with many different meanings.

The line was designed to settle a boundary dispute between the proprietary colonies of Pennsylvania and Maryland, much like a neighborhood boundary quarrel, but with far greater implications. In 1632, King Charles granted Lord Baltimore the province of Maryland containing land extending from north of the Potomac River to the 40th parallel. The difficulty arose some 50 years later when, in 1681, King Charles II granted the province of Pennsylvania to William Penn. It soon was discovered, or claimed, that the original deed put a large part of Philadelphia in the colony of Maryland – not Pennsylvania – and that was a major concern.

The Crown's conflicting charters gave both proprietors legitimate claims to this valuable land expanse that stretched from the Delaware River and Philadelphia to the western territory on either side of today's state borders, consequently entangling the colonial proprietors in lengthy and disagreeable controversies generated from the overlapping grants. Since the territorial limits were in one place for the Penns and another for the Calverts, imagine what occurred when the proprietors' taxmen showed up to collect assessments from settlers who lived along the border. These disputes resulted in generations of litigation, and intensified as Pennsylvanians and Marylanders moved into the contested regions, often spilling blood on the border.

The Calvert family responded to the ongoing conflict by granting Thomas Cresap 500 acres on the west bank of the Susquehanna River near Wrightsville, Pennsylvania. Cresap operated a ferry at this Maryland outpost. He conducted other business there and began collecting taxes for the Calverts. When the Lancaster Sheriff attempted to arrest Cresap, the Marylander opened fire on the posse. The Calverts responded by appointing Cresap a captain in the Maryland Militia. Pennsylvania authorities later surrounded Cresap's house with an armed company of 24 Pennsylvanians led by the Lancaster County Sheriff. Captured only after the sheriff's men set his house on fire, Cresap was taken to Philadelphia and imprisoned, only earning his release once the king intervened. After that, Col. Cresap settled in Western Maryland.

It wasn't until the Crown's intervention that the long-standing dispute ended. Once the British royal court issued its final decree sorting out the boundaries and titles, English mathematician-surveyors Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon arrived in late 1763 to survey the boundary. The following year, the duo began running the line up the Delmarva Peninsula that separates Maryland from Delaware, which was, at that time, part of Pennsylvania. They then moved on to the western work and, by the summer and autumn of 1765, the Englishmen were chaining out the country west of the Susquehanna River.

As the surveyors proceeded, they meticulously recorded the homes and farmsteads along the way as property owners along the border learned, perhaps for the first time, whether they were in Maryland or Pennsylvania. When the Englishmen crossed Antietam Creek in 1765, they wouldn't have held any notions about the troubles that would rip the nation apart some 100 years later or the bloody battles that would ensue nearby.

During the winter break of 1766, Mason explored the countryside, as was his custom. On the night of February 25, he spent the evening in Frederick, Maryland, before heading south to enjoy the pleasures of Alexandria, Virginia. As a new season approached, he wrote of returning to his work via "... Frederick Town, arriving at Captain Shelby's plantation in time for the vernal equinox." The winter break being over, work on the boundary continued and the surveyors proceeded toward the Allegany Mountains.

October 1767, the survey party lost its Seneca escort, and Mason reported they had recently crossed a warpath. They

The line was designed to settle a boundary dispute between the proprietary colonies of Pennsylvania and Maryland, much like a neighborhood boundary quarrel, but with far greater implications.

called a halt to the western survey at 233 miles, 176 chains, 48 links from the post marked west, which was some 30 miles beyond Maryland's border. Back in Philadelphia, they spent months wrapping up projects, settling accounts and socializing before bidding farewell. On a warm morning, September 11, 1768, after four years and 10 months in America, the two boarded a packet bound for England. "Thus, ends my restless progress in America," Mason wrote.

Although centuries have passed since the line was put down, representations of Mason and Dixon's work, some physical and others culturally symbolic, remain. Alongside western Maryland roadways, historical markers, carefully laid weather-worn crown stones carved with Penn and Calvert coats of arms, 1920s obelisk monuments and modern enterprises, illustrate this history. In time, the line grew to represent a color line, a place between slavery and freedom. Since its beginning more than 250 years ago, the Mason-Dixon Line has evolved to become an enduring symbolic boundary with geographic, cultural, scientific, and social meanings.

SURVEYORS CHARLES MASON AND JEREMIAH DIXON

Charles Mason (1728-1786) and Jeremiah Dixon (1733-1777) were chosen for the job because they were skilled astronomers, mathematicians and surveyors. They were well respected by their colleagues and had access to state-of-the-art equipment. Because they were British, they had no claim to either side of the argument.

The son of a baker, Mason showed prowess as a mathematician, which led him to work at the Royal Greenwich Observatory, near London, at age 28. A "meticulous observer of nature and geography," he studied Mayer's Tables of the Moon, to improve navigation at sea. In 1761, he was assigned to observe the transit of the planet Venus as part of an international effort to determine the distance between the earth and the sun.

The son of a wealthy coal mine owner and Quaker, Dixon also showed early promise. He worked for established scientists and

was recommended by the Royal Astronomy Society to assist Mason on the expedition to study the transit of Venus. Their travels took them to the Cape of Good Hope, and when they returned to England, they were hired to come to America.

Their work in America is considered to be one of the most outstanding scientific and engineering feats of its time. They calculated their way by the stars and hauled heavy equipment over hundreds of miles, facing a hostile environment of wilderness, Native Americans and wild animals. After they were discharged on December 26, 1767, they returned to England on September 9, 1768. Mason and his family returned to Philadelphia in July 1786, where he died the following October. Dixon died in England in 1779.

Michael L. Dixon, M.S., M.A.,
Guest Curator



Alongside western Maryland roadways, historical markers, carefully laid weather-worn crown stones carved with Penn and Calvert coats of arms, 1920s obelisk monuments and modern enterprises, illustrate this history.

Memories of My Father

DR. M. KENNETH STARR

My father, M. Kenneth Starr, was born in Libertytown in 1922, and always felt a very strong tie to Frederick County. He and my grandmother, Nelle Gray Fisher Starr, moved to Frederick following the death of my grandfather when my father was three years old. My grandmother had been teaching in a one-room school in Libertytown and wanted to earn more money. While in Frederick, she married another teacher, Charles Dudderar. My father was about six years old when the family moved to Baltimore.

My father was encouraged to pursue the best education he could. He attended Duke University and Yale University, where he earned his master's degree and a doctorate in anthropology. Cultural anthropology was his area of interest. China was his specialty. He learned Mandarin Chinese and, following graduation from Yale, he and my mother moved to Chicago when I was two months old. He was offered the position of curator of the Asian collection at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History. There, he discovered a huge collection of Chinese rubbings and a small library of publications dedicated to them.

While working with the Field Museum rubbings, my father began writing a book, *Black Tigers: A Grammar of Chinese Rubbings*. There were no English language books on the process and history of Chinese rubbings, and it took nearly 50 years for him to complete it. He could only work on it after hours and on vacation. The book was a labor of love that combined his academic knowledge, research, and development of his skill, with the technique of this very special art form.

My father made regular business trips to Washington, DC, and to Baltimore to visit his mother. He often took an extra day to go to the country and visit town halls and cemeteries, looking for his Starr ancestors.

When my father was close to retirement, it became clear that he had no intention of considering settling anywhere other than in Frederick. When he finally retired and returned to Frederick in 1991, he found he could combine his interest in family and Frederick County history with his scholarly specialty, and began doc-



umenting two kinds of "old stones" in the Frederick countryside – boundary markers and mile markers, including the Mason-Dixon markers he encountered. The work was a way to explore the countryside, which he loved, and to document things that might not exist forever. As Chinese rubbings were both an art form and a way to document the past, this work allowed him to capture something that was important to him.

I've always thought that, like a homing pigeon or a salmon, my father felt some kind of a biological imperative to return to the place of his birth. He was very sad not to be able to spend his very last years in Maryland, but understood that having no other relatives in the area, it was prudent to move to Connecticut where I live. My father used to mention a Chinese term that referred to one's ancestral home. My mother remembered it sounding like "lao-ja" and might be spelled I oji. The Chinese worship their ancestors and my father's ancestors were very important to him, as was his home in Frederick County.

Leslie Gray Starr, Berlin, Connecticut

Memories of My Husband

DR. M. KENNETH STARR

Shortly after our marriage in the mid-1940s, Kenn got the opportunity to go to China to teach history at the Tsing Tao American School in northern China. So, off we went. I taught kindergarten, art and music. Shortly after we arrived, the school's principal was transferred and Kenn assumed that responsibility, along with being a history instructor and teaching Chinese language to older students. The school was, as we used to call it, "the little UN", with students from all over the world. A significant number of American military kids, including the admiral's son, were among them.

As our time in China was coming to an end in the winter of 1949, Kenn met a representative of the American Counsel in Shanghai who had been sent to Tsing Tao to help organize the evacuation of Americans (including me) back to the US. The young man was Coblentz Swank. He and Kenn were of similar age, and when Coby asked where Kenn was born, Kenn told him Libertytown, Maryland. There was a smile on Coby's face as he responded that he too was from Frederick County. Further conversation revealed that each of their mothers had been a music teacher and both of their grandfathers had been bank presidents. The world is small.

I left China in December 1948 on a large freighter, along with many other American families. Kenneth stayed in Tsing Tao for a few more months to ensure that his seniors were able to finish their studies and graduate, so they could attend college – and they all did go to college. Kenn was one of the last Americans to leave mainland China before the Communists took over the country.

Kenneth was never interested in making rubbings of grave-stones, as that generally was frowned upon because it could damage them. He was looking for boundary stones. The old stones included boundary markers and mile markers, which were important before the advent of GPS and odometers. People wanted to know how far away they were from their destination.

Kenneth once gave a talk for the Frederick County Historical Society. Afterwards, one of the attendees approached him and asked if he could come along on one of his outings because it sounded interesting. Although a bit hesitant because he generally preferred to work alone, Kenn agreed, and that was the beginning of having George Lewis accompany him. George had worked in the Far East, so there was a shared interest in Asian culture. George was a very reliable companion who became increasingly helpful by driving his truck and assisting Kenn in carrying equipment and supplies. Many of the places they

visited were farms. It was helpful to have George along because he was a veterinarian and accordingly comfortable with, and knowledgeable about, animals.

One day Kenn and George knocked on the door of a farmhouse to inquire about a boundary marker they wanted to find. A young woman wearing a long dress, white cap and boots met them at the door. She looked to be in her early thirties and must have belonged to a German Baptist household. The young child next to her appeared to be a bit fearful. Kenn introduced himself, explaining he was only looking for some old stones on the property, and not to be afraid. The woman agreed and asked some of her older children to show the men where the stones were located. Kenn and George did their work. After a few hours, several rosy-cheeked children brought them some delicious apple dumplings, hot from the oven. At the end of the day, Kenn stopped at the house to say goodbye, and learned that this young mother had 10 children. She baked 20 loaves of bread each week, and did all the cooking, cleaning and sewing for the family. Kenn would drop by their house occasionally to visit, and at Christmastime we brought them fresh oranges. One year we took them some children's books and a set of encyclopedias. I remember the books were accepted with grace, but may never have made their way to the children, perhaps being deemed inappropriate for them. The family eventually moved to Indiana, where the husband's brother lived.

Kenn used to enjoy talking with local surveyors, and gave a few talks to groups of them. They loved that someone else was interested in some of the same things that interested them, and told him about many markers they had found in the course of their work. Their suggestions gave him new places in the countryside to explore, and may have piqued his interest in documenting the Mason-Dixon markers.

Betty (BJ) Starr, Bloomfield, Connecticut

Stone Marker Rubbings

IN THE EXHIBITION

Over time, Dr. M. Kenneth Starr created 143 paper and ink rubbings, of which nine are related to the Mason–Dixon Line. The captions shown here are exactly as Dr. Starr recorded them. Additional remarks from the editor of this catalog are in italics. The rubbings, and his copious notes, are in the collection of Heritage Frederick.



LEFT:

#89 Blue Ridge Summit, Pa about 200 yards East of Southend Maryland Avenue (Formerly Gearhard Ave.) on the East side of town. A couple hundred yards North of Old Sabillasville Rd. Stone was in marshy area of heavy undergrowth. Stone broken off at base, leaning.

BELOW:

South marker of Mason–Dixon Line (detail). The “M” indicates the Maryland side of the Mason–Dixon Line.





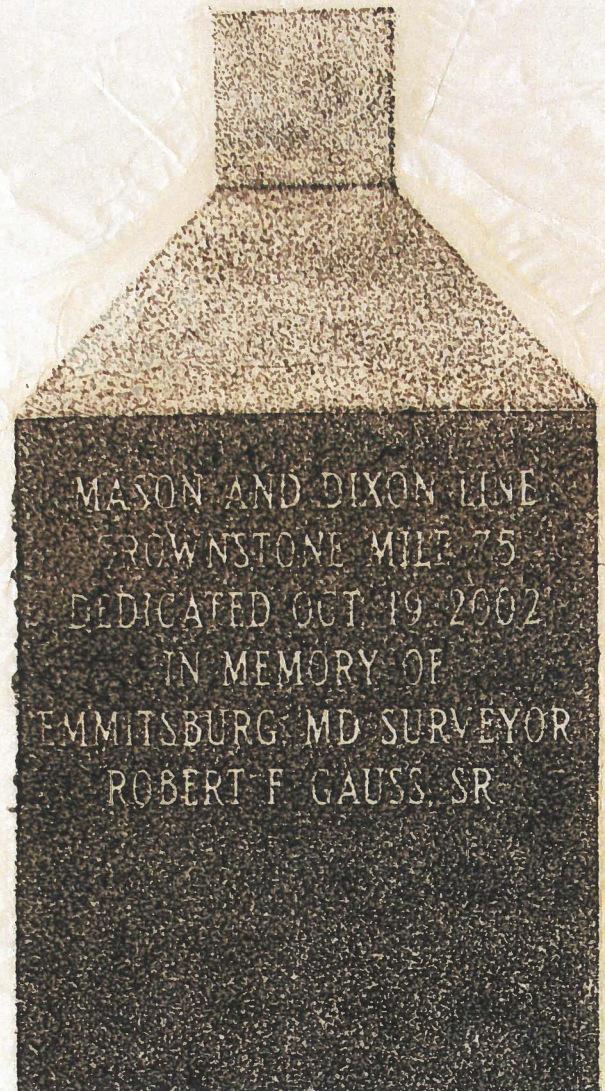
Mason-Dixon marker #85 at Friend's Green. Crown Stone, facing the Maryland (South) side.

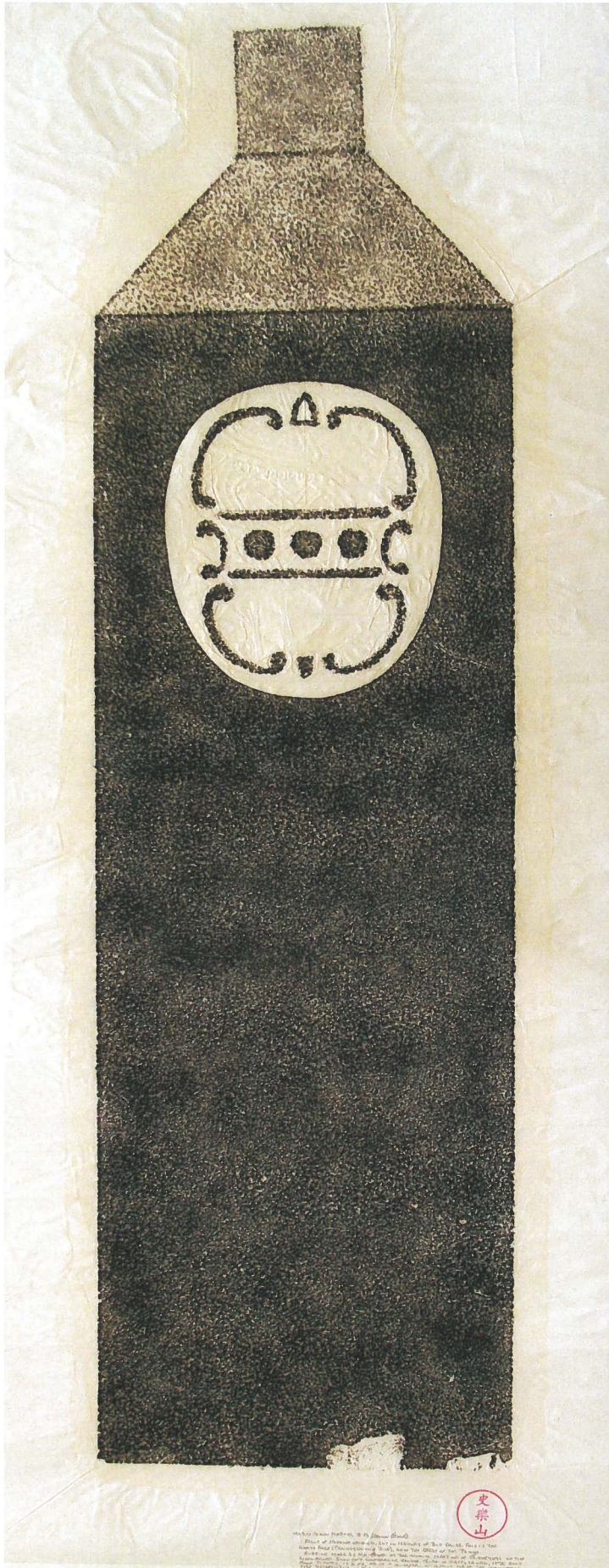
LEFT:

#75 Recut of missing original, cut in memory of Bob Gauss. This is the South face with the tribute of Gauss. Rubbings made by Kenneth Starr at the annual meeting of surveyors at the Eisenhower Inn and Conference Center. South of Gettysburg. Second of four rubbings.

BELOW:

#75 (Detail.) Recut of missing original, cut in memory of Bob Gauss. This is the East face with the tribute of Gauss. Rubbings made by Kenneth Starr at the annual meeting of surveyors at the Eisenhower Inn and Conference Center. South of Gettysburg. First of four rubbings.



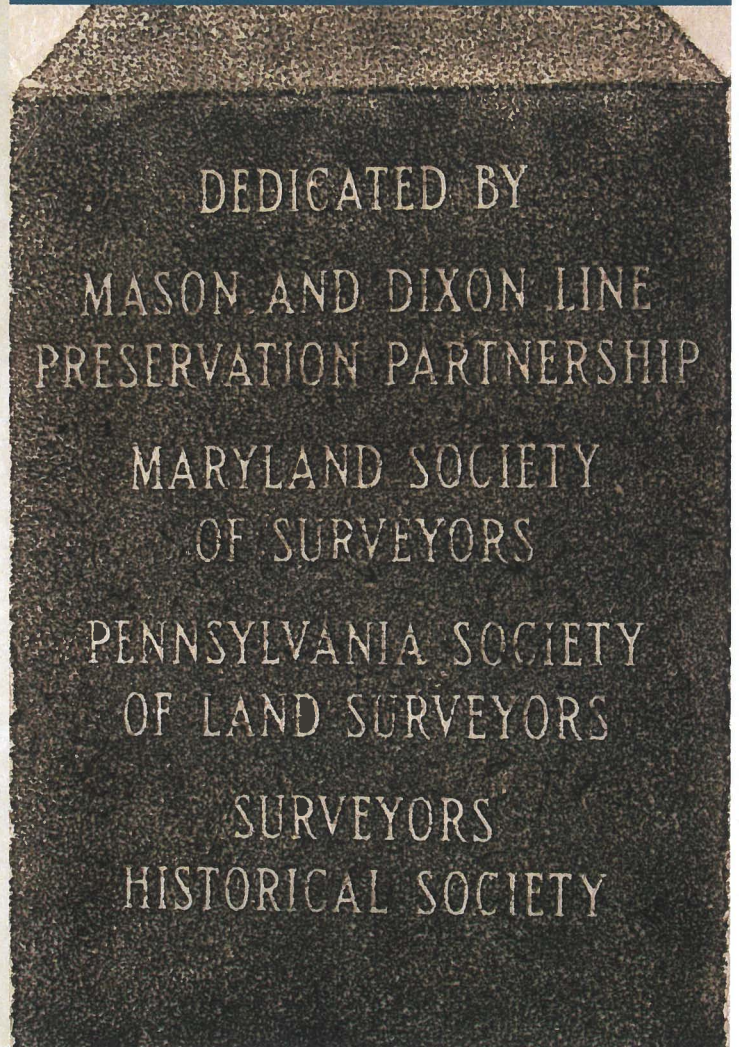


LEFT:

Mason–Dixon marker #75. Crownstone. Recut of missing original, cut in memory of Bob Gauss. This is the North face (Pennsylvania side) with the crest of the Penns. Rubbings made by Kenneth Starr at the annual meeting of surveyors at the Eisenhower Inn and Conference Center. South of Gettysburg. Three of four rubbings.

BELOW:

#75 (Detail.) Recut of missing original, cut in memory of Bob Gauss. This is the West face with the tribute of Gauss. Rubbings made by Kenneth Starr at the annual meeting of surveyors at the Eisenhower Inn and Conference Center. South of Gettysburg. First of four rubbings.



© 2011 Surveyors Historical Society of Pennsylvania
 Photo of Mason-Dixon Line by Kenneth Starr
 Surveyors Historical Society of Pennsylvania
 All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the Surveyors Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Tools

OF THE TRADE

In 1763, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon began surveying and mapping out the boundary that separates Maryland from Pennsylvania and present-day Delaware. On Maryland's northern boundary, they had to chart a 233-mile straight line westward across rivers, over mountains, and through forests and fields.

Eighteenth century basic surveying instruments included the compass and chain. The compass, mounted on a tripod, was used to determine the bearing of the survey line. Distance was measured using an iron chain called a Gunter's chain. The chain consisted of 100 links, each link measuring 7.92 inches. Thus, when Mason noted in his journal that they had a post at 48 miles, 22 chains, 8 links, it meant they had measured 48 miles, 485 yards, 2 feet and several inches from their starting point.

To accomplish this impressive engineering feat, Mason and Dixon brought along a valuable shipment of the best instruments from England. Heading the list were two transits, measuring horizontal and vertical angles, and a Hadley's quadrant which calculated the altitude of the sun and other celestial bodies. Astronomical clocks, star tables, Gunter chains, ten-foot measuring rods, and a Zenith sector completed the list.

The sector was their most precious instrument, a telescope capable of measuring the angular distance to the stars. Mason and Dixon's sector was built by John Bird in London. It was a scaled-down version of the most accurate astronomical instrument then in existence, the twenty-five-foot zenith sector at the Royal Observatory. The sector pointed directly into the sky. A telescope rotated on a pivot and allowed astronomers to measure the "zenith distance" (the angle between the star and the highest point in the sky) of celestial bodies.

The transit had a compass and a telescope that allowed Mason and Dixon to take vertical and horizontal measurements. Using trigonometry, they could compute the distance, eight and angles over differing levels of terrain.

Michael L. Dixon, M.S., M.A., Guest Curator

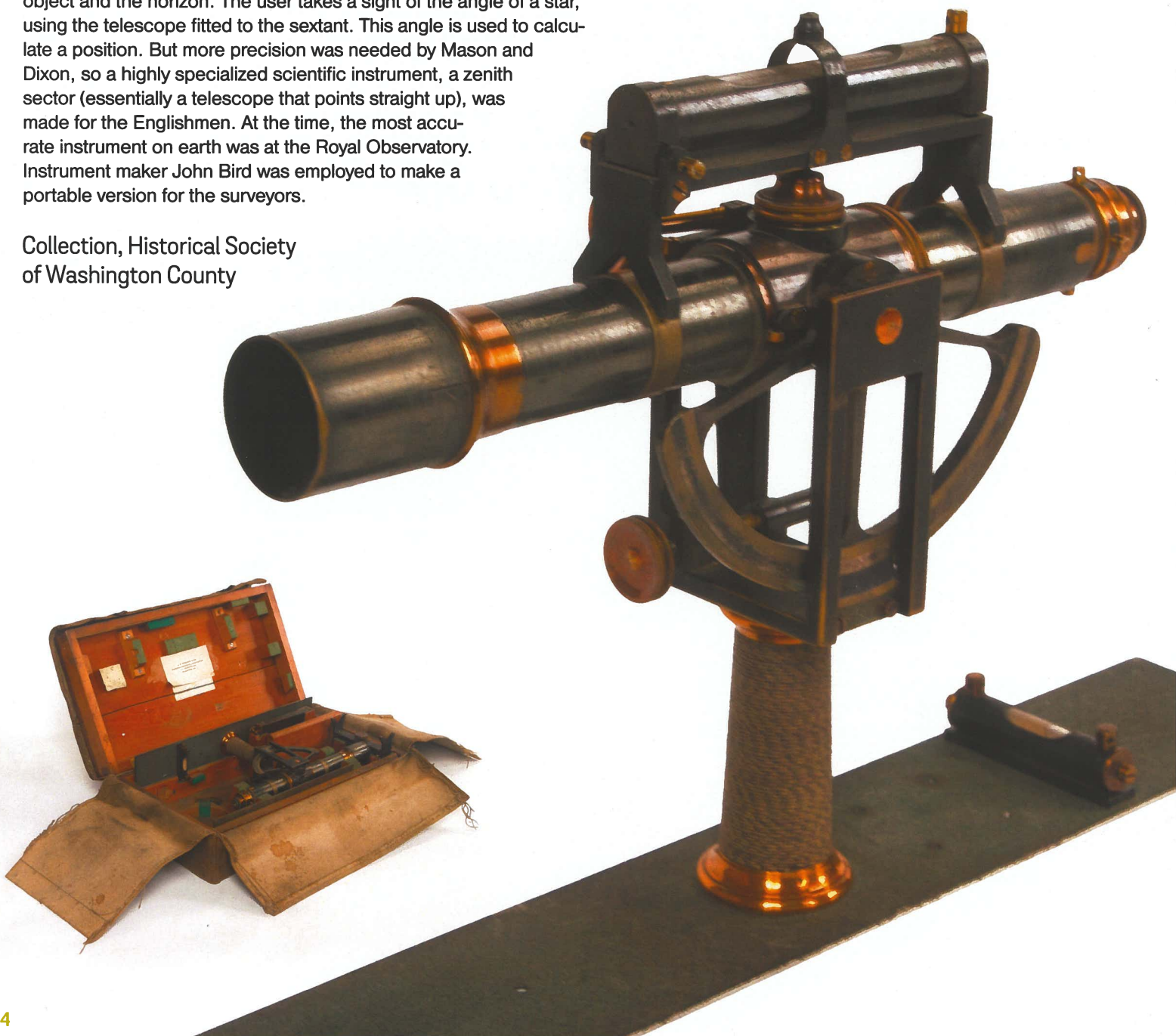
Tools

IN THE EXHIBITION

SEXTANT

The sextant measures angular distances between an astronomical object and the horizon. The user takes a sight of the angle of a star, using the telescope fitted to the sextant. This angle is used to calculate a position. But more precision was needed by Mason and Dixon, so a highly specialized scientific instrument, a zenith sector (essentially a telescope that points straight up), was made for the Englishmen. At the time, the most accurate instrument on earth was at the Royal Observatory. Instrument maker John Bird was employed to make a portable version for the surveyors.

Collection, Historical Society
of Washington County





GUNTER'S CHAIN

Distance was measured by the sixty-six-foot-long metal Gunter's chain. This instrument had 100 links, each exactly 7.92-inches long. One chain bearer anchored the end of the chain at a starting point, while the other carrier walked with the other end toward a distant stake. When the chain was fully extended, one chain had been completed. Eighty chains equaled one mile, so when Mason noted in his journal that they had a post at 48 miles 22 chains and 8 links he meant they had measure 48 miles, 485 yards, 2 feet and several inches from the starting point.

Collection, Historical Society of Washington County

CIRCUMFERENTOR

The circumferentor is a large compass with a built-in level and two upright bars used to determine the bearing of the survey line and sight distances. The circumferentor was mounted on a large base, and the arms, set opposite each other, were extended. At the end of the arms were sighting vanes consisting of an oval and a narrow slit with a thin wire stretched over one end, providing precision in sighting. The surveyor sighted the compass by peering through the slit in one end and lining up with the horsehair in the oval of the other vane with a target in the field.

This instrument was made by Frederick Heisley, between 1784 and 1795. He came to Frederick from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1783. He and his father-in-law George Hoff bought property on North Market Street. He later moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where he advertised that he made "all kinds of Surveyors' Instruments."

Collection, Heritage Frederick



PORTABLE DESK

The surveyors would have needed a portable desk to record their findings and report on their day. This desk belonged to Judge George French (1841-1901) of Hagerstown, Maryland.

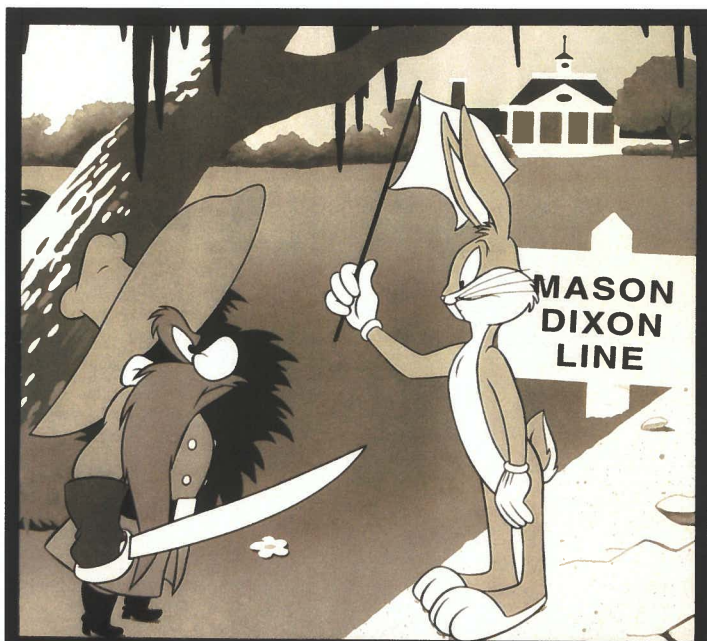
Collection, Historical Society of Washington County



THE LEGACY OF

The Mason-Dixon Line

Long after Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon completed the survey of what some call the “most famous border in America,” the colonial line became a symbolic landmark, a boundary with legal, cultural and political meanings unrelated to the Penn–Calvert dispute. Influenced by political differences and regional tensions, popular entertainment perceptions of the line blurred.



The modern association continued in the post World War–II era as the line appeared in the 1953 Bugs Bunny cartoon, “Southern Fried Rabbit.” The rabbit headed toward the plentiful carrot crop in Dixie, but encountered trouble when he met Col. Yosemite Sam who was under orders to let no Yankee cross the Mason–Dixon Line.

Composer Daniel Decatur Emmett created the song “Dixie” in 1859, and it became the prevalent moniker for southern states. However, Emmett never coined the word and there are competing theories about the term’s origin. One postulates that “Dixieland” first emerged as a phrase referring to territory south of Jeremiah Dixon’s line. Additionally, during the first half of the 19th century, the line became a formal borderline between southern slave states and free states of the north.

Following the Civil War, the Mason-Dixon Line became a boundary with vastly different connotations. South of Pennsylvania, Jim Crow Laws limited access to public accommodations for African-Americans. Meanwhile, as the entertainment industry grew at the top of the 20th century, songs about the line cemented popular associations. The song, “I’m All Bound ‘Round With the Mason-Dixon Line,” written by composers Sam M. Lewis and Joe Young, was released in 1917, while Jimmie Rodgers and Walter Ryan produced “Somewhere Down Below the Mason-Dixon Line,” in the 1920s. Later in 1955, Johnny Cash impatiently asked “Hey Porter, Hey Porter How much longer will it be until we cross that Mason-Dixon Line?”

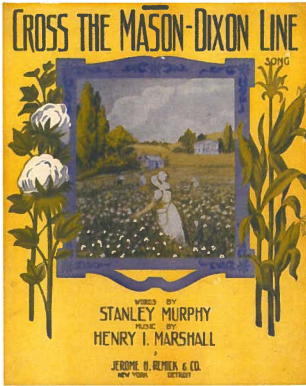
The modern association continued in the post World War–II era as the line appeared in the 1953 Bugs Bunny cartoon, “Southern Fried Rabbit.” The rabbit headed toward the plentiful carrot crop in Dixie, but encountered trouble when he met Colonel Yosemite Sam who was under orders to let no Yankee cross the Mason-Dixon Line.

As time and circumstances changed over the centuries, the symbolism of this ancient, enduring Frederick County landmark evolved from a boundary with scientific and geographic meanings to one with political, legal and cultural connotations.

Michael L. Dixon, M.S., M.A., Guest Curator

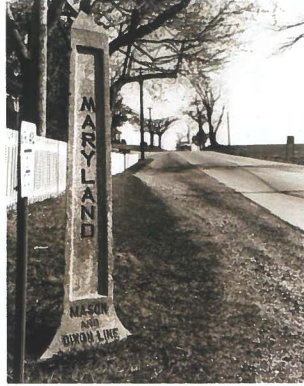
Artifacts:

POP CULTURE/MODERN DAY OBJECTS (MAPS, ETC)



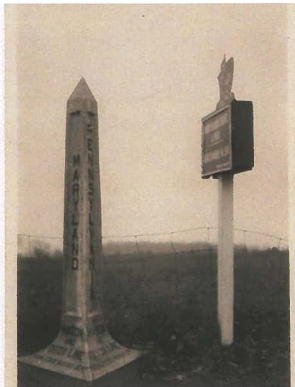
"Cross the Mason-Dixon Line." Lyrics by Stanley Murphy, music by Henry I. Marshall, published by Jerome H. Remick & Company.

Photo credit:
The University of Illinois at Chicago



Traveling along north of Hagerstown sometime in the 1950s, a motorist headed into Pennsylvania gets ready to cross the line.

Photo credit:
Western Maryland Room, Washington County Free Library



Mason-Dixon marker on the Maryland-Pennsylvania State Line. Photo taken on November 28, 1927. Photographer- Jesse S. Wooley.

Photo credit:
The University of Miami



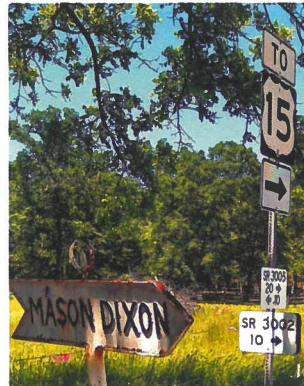
1917 Sheet music. "I'm all Bound 'Round with the Mason-Dixon Line." Lyrics by Sam. M. Lewis & Joe. Young; Composed by Jean Schwartz.

Photo credit:
Library of Congress



1917 Sheet Music. "I'm all Bound 'Round with the Mason-Dixon Line." Lyrics by Sam. M. Lewis & Joe. Young; Composed by Jean Schwartz.

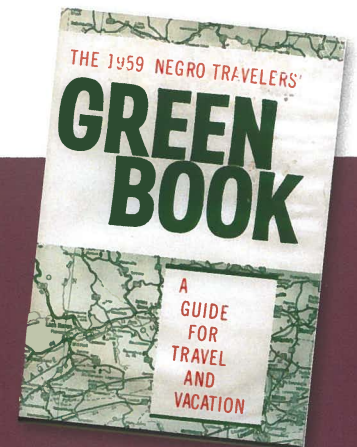
Photo credit:
Library of Congress



Just over the Mason-Dixon Line north of Emmitsburg, a sign points out the direction to Route 15 and the Mason-Dixon Farm. Summer 2014.

Photo credit:
Mike Dixon

Green Books helped African Americans travel safely before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which ended all state and local laws requiring segregation. Selected African Americans would travel to different locations and visit restaurants, hotels, parks and other public places. If they were not rejected, they would add the establishments to the Green Book. By doing this, other traveling African Americans would know that these places were safe for them to visit. There are several Frederick locations listed in the Green Books.



Prologue

When most of us cross Frederick County's northern border into Pennsylvania, we don't think twice about the Mason-Dixon Line. Living here, we take it for granted. But the line settled an important geographic dispute 250 years ago and became a cultural dividing line in this country during the Civil War. In the early 20th century the line provided an opportunity to draw tourists who were venturing out to see America in their new vehicles. So the Mason-Dixon Line has meant much more than the geographic boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania or Frederick County and Adams County.

Although this exhibition focuses on the Mason-Dixon Line, Dr. M. Kenneth Starr's rubbings were not exclusive to it, as he focused amassed a series of rubbings from various other stones and markers. Thanks to Dr. George E. Lewis, who suggested we increase awareness of this unique collection, we are able to showcase a small part of Dr. Starr's accomplishments here. After retiring from a distinguished military career, George attended an interesting lecture by Kenn Starr. Given his own love of history and the outdoors, George offered to tag along and assist Kenn with any of his research or field work.

George accompanied Kenn on numerous field trips in search of old stones or markers. He estimates they could have visited upwards of 70-80 homes, with one out of every seven or so

paying off—meaning they found the marker or stone they were trying to find. George would often find himself clearing the brush or, as he put it, “other grunt” work that he was willing to do, some of the stones and markers were impossible to find, and George says several of them probably hadn't been seen for 50-60 years. Most landowners were very welcoming when approached by Kenn and George in their quest for old stones and markers, but George does have some interesting and funny stories about the experience as well.

These rubbings, and the supplementary research and notes for them, provide numerous benefits to us today as well as into the future, so it is important that they are inventoried and conserved. Specifically, George wants to make sure researchers can access them. They not only provide insights into the Mason-Dixon Line and other boundary stones and markers, but also highlight the work of an individual whose family has been located in Frederick County for generations.

Kenn Starr was also a purist and meticulous in his record keeping. As such, we not only have insights into history, but his rubbings and field notes can shed light into geography, geometry, and much more. The rubbings themselves represent an ancient art form that not only crosses local jurisdiction boundaries but global ones.

We are fortunate that the rubbings indeed are a part of Heritage Frederick's collection for future generations to enjoy and learn from.

Shuan Butcher

Bibliography

Bedini, Silvio A. (2001). *With Compass and Chain Early American Surveyors and Their Instruments*. Professional Surveyors Publishing Company: Frederick, MD.

Danson, Edwin (2001). *Drawing the Line: How Mason and Dixon Surveyed the Most Famous Border in America*. NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Bayliff, William H. (1959) *The Maryland-Pennsylvania and the Maryland-Delaware Boundaries*. Maryland Board of Natural Resources: Annapolis.

Ecenbarger, William (2001). *Walkin' the Line: A Journey from Past to Present Along the Mason-Dixon*. M. Evans and Company, Inc: New York.

Scharff, J. Thomas. (1882). *History of Western Maryland: Being a History of Frederick, Montgomery, Carroll, Washington, Allegany, and Garrett Counties from the earliest period to the present day. Vol. 1*. Louis H Evans: Philadelphia.

Stein, Mark (2008): *How the States Got Their Shapes*. Harper: New York.

BACK COVER

Map of Frederick County (1858). Drawn three years before the Civil War ripped the nation apart, Isaac Bond's map shows the old boundary line, which had never meant to do anything more than separate two colonial proprietorships. But, as the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad cautioned that same year, "it has assumed a far higher grade of importance in the political word" as circumstances had "nearly buried in oblivion its original and simple character as a boundary. . . It now figures in American political discussions and involves itself with some of the most difficult and dangerous questions, which agitate the public mind." The header cartographic illustration shows the Frederick County section of Mason and Dixon's original work for the plan of the west line drawn in 1768. The line now had a meaning that would have been totally unfamiliar to Mason and Dixon. *Collection, Heritage Frederick.*

