

# SCHWARTZ *Report*

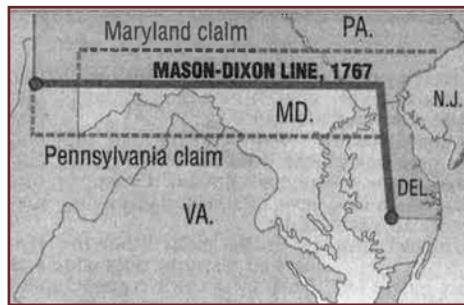


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## IN SEARCH OF MASON AND DIXON

When astronomer Charles Mason and mathematician Jeremiah Dixon disembarked at Philadelphia from England in 1763, their task was straight forward in concept though arduous in its execution. These two men, whose names would become far more famous than they could imagine, were tasked with surveying north to south and east to west lines to settle a three generation old land dispute between the Calverts of Maryland and the Penns of Pennsylvania whose royal deeds overlapped.



In 1632, King Charles I granted Cecil Calvert (Lord Baltimore) lands up to the 40th latitude line for his holdings in Maryland. Fifty years later, King Charles II granted William Penn the land down to the 40th parallel for his Pennsylvania holdings. Both proprietors, thereby, had overlapping claims to the same territory. It was to sort out this dispute that the aforementioned Mason and Dixon were recommended by the director of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich. Their task was to mark out the 233 mile border line between the Penn and Calvert grants. Delaware at the time was known as the lower three counties of Pennsylvania and not a separate entity until 1776.

To do the survey Mason and Dixon not only brought along their equipment but also limestone markers for the purpose. These stones came over from England as ships' ballast. According to the Delaware Geological Survey, there is no record of another boundary in the world marked with so many foreign stones. Starting their work at a colonial marker known as The Middle Point at the extreme southwestern end of Delaware near present day Delmar, they made their way through farmer's fields over countless creeks and streams, across marsh and woodland laying out the line. With them trekked a survey team that included Native American guides, tent and chain carriers, and ax men who cut trees to clear a 24 to 27 foot wide "vista" so that telescope sightings could be made. The stones came along later to replace the original wooden markers.

So how did a line, marked with foreign stones, that no longer separates family proprietorships cross form boundary marker into legend? Perhaps some of the blending of the Mason-Dixon Line and its anti-bellum distinctions between north and south began in Congress with a debate over the Missouri Compromise of 1820. The Pennsylvania and Maryland portions of the line were used in that context to establish a figurative boundary between the free states of the North and the slave holding states of the South. South of the Mason-Dixon Line meant Dixieland. Some say this may have been contrived from Dixon's name itself. Those who know their Civil War history will recall the difficulty that Abraham Lincoln had getting through Baltimore when traveling to Washington for his inauguration in 1861. By that time, seven slaving-holding southern states had already seceded from the Union and more were to follow. As president, Lincoln kept a careful eye on both Delaware and Maryland which as boarder states he hoped would not secede. The Mason-Dixon Line had thus become the invisible border between Southern and Yankee factions.

What many folks don't focus on these days is that while it is in common use to say north or south of the Mason-Dixon Line, it is also possible to be east or west of it as well. Eighty some miles of the original 233 surveyed is an east to west border between Delaware and Maryland known as the Tangent Line.

The western most property line of the original Schwartz family farm was located along the aptly named Dixie Line Road just east from Red Hill in Maryland. The Old Post Farm, as it was known, fronted on Old Baltimore Pike and was nearly smack dab on the Delaware/Maryland line. There's a development there now which takes its name from that of the original homestead. Looking at the 1964 General Highway Map published by the Maryland Department of Transportation, I'd calculate that the western boundary of the Old Post Farm was also located somewhere between mile marker 80 and mile marker 81 on the Mason-Dixon Line.

I fondly recall summer excursions to the farm when youthful enthusiasm and energy were often devoted to looking for these markers. Like some juvenile Outlander expedition we'd set off in search of the stones. The search party was always lead by my cousin Ted whose mother and father owned the farm at the time. He was usually joined by my sister Cheryl and me, sometimes Veda Doyle who lived across the road and often our honorary cousin Jay Price, if his family happened to be visiting his grandmother in Elkton. Perhaps other members of this little group will remember if we ever found the stones. I can't recall that we did. Looking back over all these years, however, it seems to me that every bump, bruise, insect bite, poison ivy rash, etc. was worth the trouble. Besides it was fun. To us the journey was as important as the destination.



Just a few miles back up the Old Baltimore Pike towards Newark is Cooch's Bridge, site of the only Revolutionary War battle fought in Delaware and a reminder that a scant ten years after Mason

and Dixon completed their work the revolution would make the original purpose of their survey moot. Nevertheless, the line lives on in story and song and in the hearts and minds of young and old alike.



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