

SCHWARTZ *Report*

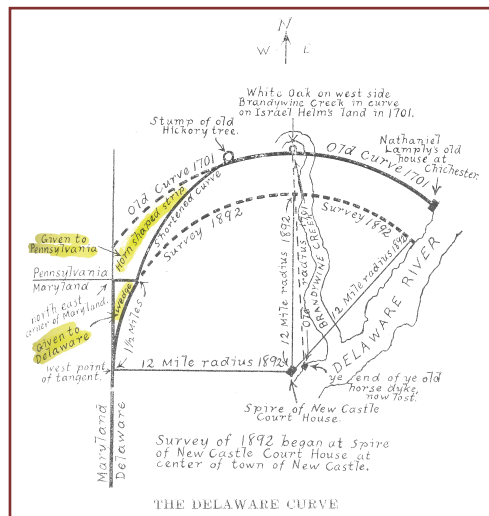
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STOP THE PRESSES

Lest I be accused of beating a dead horse (or horse dike), I want to respond to a request from a long-time friend and Schwartz Report reader. He asked for additional clarification on points raised by the successive surveys. It should be remembered that it took nearly 200 years to resolve the various Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania boundary claims. So I beg your indulgence while I spend a little more time and revisit the Mason-Dixon Line, the Delaware Curve, the Horn and the Wedge. My friend's actual question was in two parts: Why was the Wedge not in Maryland and how does it relate to the horn shaped piece of property that eventually was traded to Pennsylvania by Delaware for it?

The first question goes back to the reason for the Mason-Dixon Line. You will recall that survey was occasioned by the overlapping claims by the Penn's of Pennsylvania and the Calvert's of Maryland. Successive royal grants to Calvert (Lord Baltimore) of land up to the 40th parallel and to Penn of lands down PAST the 40th parallel set up that conflict. This was sort of like trying to sell the same piece of property to two different people. I seem to recall reading somewhere that Charles II was habitually short of cash and may even have been



implicated at one point when an attempt was made to heist the crown jewels from the Tower of London, a location that had a more permanent impact on his father. But I digress. After that survey was completed in the mid 1760's, the Calvert and Penn camps agreed that any land east of the north/south portion of the Mason-Dixon Line would be part of Pennsylvania's Lower Three Counties on the

Delaware. Therefore, the Wedge was destined to never be part of Maryland. The jump ball for the Wedge would be contested between the State of Delaware and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania after 1776 when each became separate entities.

To sort out the other question, I reflected that there were actually four separate surveys involved (1701, 1764, 1849 and 1892), three of which bear directly on the Wedge and the Horn. The best sketch that I have seen dealing with the succession of claims can be found in Judge Walter Powell's 1928 *A History of Delaware*. It shows all of the lines and points that one could ever want to see. Get out your magnifying glass for this one!

The original Penn sponsored survey of the Delaware Curve conducted by Isaac Taylor and

Thomas Pierson in 1701, used "ye end of ye old horse dyke, now lost" as the center point of its arc. This is noted on Judge Powell's illustration. That location either slipped into the river or became lost over time. The center point for the survey of 1892 was moved to the top of the Court House in New Castle about a mile give or take from where the horse dike may have been located. My geometry is a little fuzzy but I'd say that if you change the center points of a circle and then measure the same radius distance from either point, you will come up with two different looking semi-circles.

The 1892 radius shortened and flattened the Delaware Curve. This appears in Powell's drawing to have moved the horn shaped piece of property from the Delaware to the Pennsylvania side of the curve. The Wedge, however, remained in its same relative position. The 1892 survey does not appear to have settled the argument over ownership of the Horn or the Wedge which would take until 1921 to resolve. Resolution was accomplished with some good old fashioned horse trading.



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