



MASON-DIXON STARGAZER STONE

NEWLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

October, 2019 Vol. 2, no 6

PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE NEWLIN TOWNSHIP AREA OF THE BRANDYWINE VALLEY

Executive Committee -- President: RoseLynn Malarek, Vice-President: Muriel George, Secretary: Diane McGowan,
Treasurer: Sandy Reber, Members: Kathy Conway, Bill McGowan, Kate Roby, Consultant: John O'Neal

NEWS FLASH!!! Next general meeting of the Historical Society will be Saturday, November 9 at 7 PM at the KAO Campground Community Building off Embreeville Rd. (Rte. 162). Special guest speaker will be Todd M. Babcock, noted authority on the Mason/Dixon line, a topic of special interest and significance for Newlin Township.

The following information has been provided by Todd:

I am a professional land surveyor currently living near Pennsylvania's northern boundary in Athens, PA. Prior to relocating to northern Pennsylvania, I resided in Berks County where I became involved with a project conducting an inventory of the stones on the Mason and Dixon line between Pennsylvania and Maryland. After attending a presentation by fellow surveyor Charles F. Bitler, Jr. describing his 20+ year quest to locate stones marking the boundary, I joined with other surveyors from Pennsylvania and Maryland to form the Mason and Dixon Line Preservation Partnership (MDLPP) in November of 1990. For over 25 years the MDLPP worked together to protect, preserve, repair and replace the stones that mark the boundary. We also conducted an inventory of the stones describing their location and condition. Nearly 100 of the stones on the line were surveyed using the Global Positioning System (GPS) to document an accurate Latitude and Longitude position of the stones. From this information, much was learned about the techniques and precision of the work performed by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon during the survey they performed between 1763 and 1768.

For my presentation to the Newlin Historical Society, I will discuss the history of the Mason and Dixon Line and how Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon came to be involved with a survey of a boundary line that now bears their name. I will focus on the time that Mason and Dixon spent in the "Forks of ye Brandywine" where they worked and lived for a significant part of their five years in the colonies. During their time in Newlin Township, they made many nighttime astronomical observations, performed experiments, and conducted scientific study. Life for Mason and Dixon in Newlin Township was not all about survey, astronomy and science. They also spent the winter season lodging with the John Harlan family where they spent the day performing experiments and weather observations and the evenings warming themselves by the stone hearth of a fireplace that still survives.

I will also discuss the location of the "Stargazers' Stone," long thought to be where Mason and Dixon constructed their observatory to take astronomical observations. Through study of Mason and Dixon's Journal and a bit of forensic retracement surveying the line surveyed 250 years prior by Mason and Dixon, I discovered that the observatory was actually located adjacent to the Harlan house in the middle of the present day Stargazer Road. – TMB

If you plan to attend this meeting, I strongly urge you to RSVP me (roselynn831@gmail.com) at your earliest convenience to ensure your space!

From the President's Desk...

Greetings Everyone,

This is a good time to recap the history of the Newlin Historical Society. The NHS was officially inaugurated in July, 2018, and since then, we have made steady and substantial progress in establishing the Society as a productive resource for researching and preserving Newlin History. This year alone, we will have published 6 issues of the Newsletter (your president also serves as newsletter editor), featuring 6 articles relating to Newlin, researched and written by members of the Executive Committee (also the defacto Action Committee). The Newsletter will henceforth be published quarterly. We have an active and growing website (<https://www.newlintwphistory.org>) managed by Diane McGowan, who is also the Society's secretary. You can find us on Facebook managed by Sandy Reber, also our treasurer, where you will find photos taken by Sandy of historical places of interest and other scenes showcasing the natural beauty of Newlin, as well as up-to-date information and comments about the Society. Our VP Muriel George and EC member Kathy Conway interviewed a long-time revered Newlin resident (see last issue of the Newsletter), and there are plans to interview other notable Newlin residents in the near future. EC member Bill McGowan represents Newlin on the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force. Finally, our upcoming general meeting will be our third meeting so far with guest speakers, and we plan to hold at least two such meetings every year.

These are pretty impressive accomplishments in a relatively short time considering that at present, there are just six active members on the Executive Committee, also called the Action Committee because that is exactly what we are. We are solely responsible for initiating projects, growing the Society, and researching Newlin's history to bring it alive for all Newlin Residents. And now we need help. If you are receiving this Newsletter and are not a member, please consider joining us now. (Membership information is at the end of this Newsletter.) If you are not interested in becoming a member of the Society, please respond to this letter by simply hitting "Reply" and write "Stop," and I will remove your name from our contact list. Those of you who have joined, a hearty "Thank You!" If you joined for just one year, you're up for renewal. New and renewing members may also sign up with Sandy at our November meeting.

While we need and appreciate our members, we really need help on the Action Committee to help organize and deliver our many activities. We meet in each other's homes, and meetings usually last between 1 and 1 ½ hours. We are a convivial group, and we get a lot done in a relatively short time, so please consider joining us. We are also looking for anyone interested in researching and writing articles for the Newsletter, so even if you can't join the Action Committee, please consider writing an article for us. We also would love to have contributors send us any information on anything pertaining to Newlin's history. If you would like to contribute to the Society in any way, please email me at roselynn831@gmail.com, and thank you!

RoseLynn

ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE – I gathered the information for the following article from various sources on the Internet and cannot verify 100% accuracy, but I think it does give enough accurate background on Mason/Dixon to whet your appetite for Todd's presentation. Enjoy.

MR. MASON AND MR. DIXON ARRIVE IN EMBREEVILLE

Boundary disputes have existed since the beginning of mankind. Perhaps no dispute in our local history has had more impact and attention than the dispute in the late 17th and early 18th centuries between William Penn and Charles Calvert (3rd Baron of Baltimore) and their heirs over the boundary line between Pennsylvania

and Maryland, a dispute that lasted some 80 years over generations and several British monarchs. Boundary disputes were particularly prevalent in the early development of the Northeastern United States, which is no surprise. Grants were given by the British Crown to favored friends and supporters, such as William Penn and Lord Calvert. Some early boundaries could easily be determined by rivers, bays and oceans, but east/west boundaries were difficult to establish, particularly when both parties were convinced their claims were legitimate and opposing claims were not. Over the next 50 years, the dispute escalated. Claims and counter-claims were filed with the British Crown, the little-known Cresap's War between the factions went on sporadically, there were several failed attempts at compromise, and neither side could agree on surveys conducted by Colonial surveyors. Eventually, all parties, tired of the prolonged and unresolved conflict, decide to hire two English surveyors and once and for all determine the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland. In 1763, the two factions entered an agreement with British surveyors Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon to finally establish the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Mason and Dixon arrived in Philadelphia in late 1763 and spent several weeks establishing the latitude of the southernmost point of Philadelphia taking astronomical data from observations of the stars. The Pennsylvania and Maryland factions had already agreed to a latitudinal line 15 miles south of the southernmost point of Philadelphia. In order to avoid having to cross the Delaware River twice and work in New Jersey, Mason and Dixon decided to travel 50 kilometers (about 31 miles) west to the Brandywine Creek having the same latitude as the southernmost point of Philadelphia. That point turned out to be on the farm of one John Harlan in Embreeville. On January 14, 1764, Mr. Mason and Mr. Dixon arrived in Embreeville, moved in with the Harlan's, and used the house as the base for their operations. They established a temporary observatory near the Harlan house, and thus was born the Star Gazer Stone. – RLM

Any comments or questions, or you wish to preregister for our next meeting, feel free to email me at roselynn831@gmail.com.

DONORS: Special thank you to our generous patrons!

STARGAZER - \$500.00 and Above

Anonymous

Jack Fisher

LENNI LENAPLE - \$250.00 - \$499.00

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FRIEND OF NEWLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Up to \$150.00

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MEMBERS

Those who joined for 1 year are up for renewal.

Phyllis Allen – 1 year

Lewis Barnard – 3 years

Kathy and George Conway – 3 years

Susanna Davison – 3 years

Betsy De Marino – 1 year

Jack Fisher – 3 years

Muriel and Chester George – 3 years

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John Kelly – 1 year

RoseLynn and David Malarek – 3 years

Diane and Bill McGowan – 1 year

John and Judy O'Neal – 3 years

Sandy and Martin Reber – 3 years

Pamela and Wolf Reischauer – 3 years

Kate Roby – 3 years

Michael Temin and Ann Hearn – 3 years

Ruth Thompson – 1 year

Harriet and Jim Tupitza – 3 years

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

One year individual - \$10.00

One year household - \$14.00

Three years individual - \$28.00

Three years household - \$39.00

Make checks for membership or to become a donor payable to NHS and send to Sandy Reber, NHS Treasurer, 1657 Embreeville Rd., Coatesville, 19320.