

Borders and Boundaries:

THE MASON-DIXON LINE

March 25-June 29, 2008



"A Plan of the Boundary Lines between the Province of Maryland and Three Lower Counties on Delaware," 1768, Drawn by Charles Mason, engraved by J. Smith, printed by Robert Kennedy, Philadelphia. MdHS Library Calvert Papers. MS 174, Document 1051



THE PROVINCE OF PENNSYLVANIA



THE PROVINCE OF MARYLAND

As part of a city-wide Festival of Maps, the Maryland Historical Society will put on display one of its cartographic treasures: an original map of the "boundary between the provinces of Maryland and Pennsylvania," printed by Robert Kennedy in Philadelphia in 1768.

In 1763, Lord Baltimore and the Proprietors of Pennsylvania hired two British experts to lay stone markers between their two colonies: astronomer Charles Mason and surveyor Jeremiah Dixon. Placing stone markers imported from England every mile, the two men took almost five years to complete the survey. Commissioners for both colonies signed this print of Mason and Dixon's "true and exact" plan in 1768 and affixed their wax seals. (Three of the commissioners were later to sign the Declaration of Independence.) The boundary line represented

on this map is 244 miles long, beginning at 15 miles south of the southernmost tip of Philadelphia and following a constant latitude west. The map itself measures 76" long by 27" wide.

The exhibition will feature additional historic maps and documents recording the eighty-year dispute between Maryland and Pennsylvania, alongside examples of surveying instruments of the type used by Mason and Dixon.

The Festival of Maps will include a major exhibition at the Walters—developed with the Field Museum in Chicago—and smaller exhibits at many other locales. The concept of maps will be interpreted broadly, from traditional cartography to modern scientific mapping of the universe or atlas of the human genome.

—Jeannine Disviscour

Mason-Dixon Line Boundary Stone. Quarried on the Isle of Portland, Dorset, England, 1766. MdHS Museum, Gift of William J. Burton, 1886.3.1

