

**Correspondence and accounts of the
Mason and Dixon survey, 1758-1769
1758-1769
Mss.B.M381**

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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Title	Correspondence and accounts of the Mason and Dixon survey, 1758-1769
Date [inclusive]	1758-1769
Call number	Mss.B.M381
Extent	0.25 Linear feet
Extent	21 photocopies; 1 microfilm reel
Location	LH-B-19-9; LH-MV-E-3 (B M381.1)
Language	English
Container	1
Container	1
Abstract	Correspondence from Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon to Thomas Birch, and Nevil Maskelyne to Charles Mason, relating to the survey, and the transits of Venus (1761,1769).

Background note

Charles Mason (Oakridge Lynch, Gloucestershire, April 1728– Philadelphia, October 25, 1786) was an English astronomer who made significant contributions to 18th-century science and American history, particularly through his involvement with the survey of the Mason-Dixon line, which came to mark the division between the northern and southern United States (1764-1768).

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Acquired, 1947; provenance unknown.

Original Location

Originals in British Museum, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Maryland Historical Society, and Royal Society.

Related Materials

Related Material

See also: [Minutes and papers of the Mason and Dixon survey, 1760-1768 \(Mss.974.8.P383\)](#).

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- General Correspondence
- Maps and Surveys
- Official Government Documents and Records

Geographic Name(s)

- Maryland -- Boundaries.
- Mason-Dixon Line.

- Pennsylvania -- Boundaries.
- Venus (Planet)

Personal Name(s)

- Birch, Thomas
- Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811

Subject(s)

- Colonial Politics
- Government Affairs
- Meteorology.
- Pennsylvania History
- Science and Technology
- Surveying and Maps
- Surveys.
- Transits.

Other Descriptive Information

The Mason and Dixon Survey Collection at the APS consists of 1.) two volumes relating to their work drawing a border between Pennsylvania and Maryland and 2.) a box of correspondence. The portion of the collection being described here consists of the correspondence. This part of the collection is a box of photostats, mostly from 1761 and 1769, that include field reports and other correspondence.

The other portion of the Mason and Dixon Collection (Mss.974.8.P383) contains two volumes. One details the Penn family's costs, which goes into specific details about items purchased and used for the venture. The second volume is a manuscript copy of the commissioners' minutes from 1760-1768. The commissioners, who were representatives of both Baltimore and Penn, gave directions to Mason and Dixon. The minutes contain negotiations between the commissioners, which provide insight into surveying methods and the various disagreements between the two sides about boundaries, particularly as they relate to the Delmarva Peninsula. There are a few mentions of Indians and diplomacy, especially around 1767 when Mason and Dixon were extending the line into the Ohio Country.

21 items photostats and typescripts. 1758-1771

Collection Inventory

**21 items photostats and typescripts.
1758-1771**

Mason, Charles, 1728-1786

May 1, 1758

8" x 13"

Memoranda to Revd. Dr. [James] Bradley

Greenwich, Typescript of D. 1p. Memo. relative to alternations made on astronomical instruments, July 5, 1742-July 1753. From original in Bodleian library.

Dixon, Jeremiah

Oct. 2, 1760

Letter to [Thomas Birch]

Cockfield, Photostat of A.L.S. 1p. From original in British Museum.

Mason, Charles, 1728-1786

Nov. 24, 1760

Letter to Tho[ma]s Birch

Portsmouth, Photostat of L.S: C. Mason, J. Dixon. 1p. and add. Scientific instruments. From original in British museum.

Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811

Nov. 29, 1760

Letter to Charles Mason

London, Photostate of A.L.S. 4p., add. Instructions for observing the Transit of Venus. From original in Maskelyne Collection. Greenwich observatory.

Dixon, Jeremiah

Dec. 1, 1760

Letter to Tho[ma]s Birch

Portsmouth Point, Photostat of A.L.S. 1p. and add. Everything in readiness for sailing except orders from the directors of the India co. From original in British Museum.

Dixon, Jeremiah

Dec. 8, 1760

Letter to Tho[ma]s Birch

21 items photostats and typescripts. 1758-1771

Portsmouth, Photostat of A.L.S. 1p. and add. Capt. Smith's sailing instructions. From original in British Museum.

Mason, Charles, 1728-1786 Oct. 23, Oct. 5, 1760, 1761

Mason and Dixon's expences &c. to the
account of the Royal society

Photostat of D. 2p. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich observatory. Contains also:
Receipt from Charles Mason to Nevil Maskelyne; Jan. 2, 1762.

Dixon, Jeremiah Jan. 12, 1761

Letter to Tho[ma]s Birch

Plymouth, Photostat of A.L.S. 1p. and add. Report to the Royal Society on the condition of his vessel
after an encounter with a French ship; impossible to now reach Indian in time for the observations.
From original in British Museum.

Dixon, Jeremiah Feb. 27, 1761

Letter to [Thomas] Birch

St. Cruz in the Island Tenarif, Photostat of A.L.S. 1p. and add. Report to the Royal Society on the
voyage thus far. From original in British Museum.

Dixon, Jeremiah May 6, 1761

Letter to Tho[ma]s Birch

Cape of Good Hope, Photostat of A.L.S. 1p. and add. Making all possible dispatch to erect an
observatory in time for the Transit. From original in British Museum.

Mason, Charles, 1728-1786 Jan. 2, 1762

Receipt for ten pounds from Nevil
Maskelyne

St. Helena, Photostat of A.D. (On same sheet with Mason and Dixon's expences...Oct. 23, 1760-Oct.
5, 1761) From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich observatory.

Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811 Jan. 31, 1769 8 1/2" x 11"

Letter to Charles Mason

21 items photostats and typescripts. 1758-1771

Greenwich, Typescript of L. 2p. Terms settled for Mason's visit to Ireland to observe the transit of Venus. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich observatory.

Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811

Feb. 7, 1769

8 1/2" x 11"

Letter to Cha[rle]s Mason

Greenwich, Typescript of L. 1p. Astronomical instruments. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich observatory.

Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811

May 8, 1769

Letter to Charles Mason

Greenwich, Photostat of A.L.S. 3p. and add. Astronomical observations and instruments. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich observatory.

Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811

May 23, 1769

Letter to Charles Mason

Greenwich, Photostat of A.L.S. 3p. and add. Astronomical observations; Transit of Venus. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich observatory.

Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811

June 24, 1769

Letter to Charles Mason

Greenwich, Photostat of A.L.S. 3p. and add. Astronomical observations; Transit of Venus. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich observatory.

Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811

Aug. 7, 1769

Letter to Charles Mason

Greenwich, Photostat of A.L.S. 3p. and add. Astronomical observations; Transit of Venus; mentions Dr. Smith of Pennsylvania. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich observatory.

Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811

Sept. 7, 1769

Letter to Charles Mason

Greenwich, Photostat of A.L.S. 3p. and add. Astronomical observations. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich observatory.

Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811

Oct. 6, 1769

21 items photostats and typescripts. 1758-1771

Letter to Charles Mason

Greenwich, Photostat of A.L.S. 3p. and add. Astronomical observations. Mr. Winthrop and Transit of Venus. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich observatory.

Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811

Nov. 9, 1769

Letter to Charles Mason

London, Photostat of A.L.S. 3p. and add. Observations of the Transit of Vernus made by various persons including [John] Winthrop. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greewich observatory.

Mason, Charles, 1728-1786

Jan. 30, 1771

8 1/2" x 11"

Letter to Nevil Maskelyne

Tetbury, Typescript of L. 1p. Astronomical affairs. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich observatory.

Maskelyne, Nevil, 1732-1811

Undated

8 1/2" x 11"

Letter to Charles Mason

Greenwich; Tuesday morn. Typescript of L. 1p. Transit of Venus of June 6, 1761. From original in Maskelyne Collection, Greenwich Observatory.

21 items photostats and typescripts. 1758-1771

B M381.1 Journal (copy), 1763-1768	1763-1768	1.0 Reel(s) 1 Reel 1 microfilm copy (from microfilm) of original in the National Archives.
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Original Location

Originals in the National Archives.
