

"An 1806 Letter Reveals Anxiety For New County"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Tomorrow is the 161st anniversary of the founding of Carroll County, created from parts of Frederick and Baltimore Counties. Not surprisingly, the creation of the new county in 1837 came only after several decades of intense political maneuvering and a number of failed attempts.

As the following letter from David Shriver, Jr. to his father Sen. David, Sr. in Annapolis relates, there was great uncertainty during one the earlier efforts to establish a new county as geopolitical factions jockeyed for position:

"Dear Father Westminster 23rd December 1806

I received from Mr. Brooks an encloshure of newspapers & c. yesterday, by the paper find that the Baltimore County petition for a division is handed in. I wished you to inform me whether you thought our Subscription for raising money for Court House and Jail in this place would answer any purpose as a preventative to the Baltimore County petition, as we have not time to petition, it might be shewn out of doors, but you do not say a word about it. I am fearful of getting into hot water about it, as all the subscribers are frequently calling on me to know whether you have not wrote on the subject, & c. & c. There is now actually subscribed \$3325 by the following persons.

Jacob Sherman	\$400
William Durbin, Sr.	\$60
David Fisher	\$300
Ludwick Wampler	\$300
John Yingling	\$150
Jacob Powder	\$100
James McHaffie	\$100
Manny Shilling	\$100
Jacob Utz	\$40
Josias Stevenson	\$180
Daniel Weaver	\$40
Luis Weaver	\$20
David Keefer	\$50
John Logsdon	\$100
Jacob Copenhaver	\$50
David Barnhart	\$20
Richard Gorsuch	\$75
Abraham Curts	\$20
Thomas Wells	\$100
John Carol	\$50
John Definbock	\$100
Michael Waggoner	\$100
John Coe	\$50
Josheph Hawkins	\$10
Jacob Harman	\$40
Leonard Zep	\$50

John Mathias	\$100	
Ulry Akler	\$100	
Peter Royer	\$100	
----- Cover	\$75	
Nicholas Lamon	\$75	
Daniel Arter Senr.		\$100
Henry Brown	\$50	
Andrew Powder	\$40	
John Waggoner	\$100	
Abraham Richards		\$30
Jacob Fringer	\$50	
\$3325		

My subscription, I. Wampler, Joseph White, [Joshua?] Gist, [Washington] Van Bibber and not less than 50 or more that will average \$75. or more I am certain upwards of \$8000 may be easily raised for I never was so much surprised as I now am from the great anxiety that prevails for a division of the county. And I really dread the consequence at the next election. Please let me know whether sending the Subscription will answer any purpose. We and all your concerns are yet well.

I am Dear Father your affectionate son
David Shriver, Jr.

P.S. We wish nothing more than a division on Condition that the subscribers build the public building at their own expense. D.S."

At the time the letter was written David Shriver, Jr. was a candidate to the Maryland Assembly and his father was a long time state senator and a leader of the Pennsylvania Germans of Western Maryland. The list of subscribers includes many of the prominent local Germans with a sprinkling of others. The concerns that the Baltimore County faction would succeed in making a division that would be unfavorable to the local subscribers were soon relieved. The above mentioned effort to divide the county failed, but was periodically renewed until the new county was formally founded on January 19, 1837.

Photo caption: Prior to the formation of Carroll County in 1837, the Baltimore/Frederick County Line was periodically marked with boundary stones such as this one which was photographed in 1957 behind 295 E. Main St. in Westminster. The opposite site was marked "F C". Historical Society of Carroll County collection.