

Dunmore County

On March 24, 1772 the Virginia General Assembly approved the division of Frederick County into 3 separate counties. It became Frederick, Berkeley (now in West Virginia) and Dunmore, the original name of Shenandoah County. At that time the county included our own Shenandoah, about half of present day Warren and about two-thirds of Page County.

The county was named for John Murray, the Earl of Dunmore, appointed by the king as governor of Virginia in 1771. From John Wayland's book, " A History of Shenandoah County, Virginia", we learn that he quickly became a popular governor for returning various fees for commissions from the state to the local governments and for promoting enterprises in the state that included the navigation of the Potomac River, constructing a canal around the falls of the James at Richmond and a deep waterway through Williamsburg to connect the James River with the York.

The name Dunmore lasted for five years, during which much happened . The Boston Tea Party took place in 1773, the battle at Lexington, Massachusetts and Governor Dunmore's seizure of the powder magazine in Williamsburg occurred in 1775, and the creation of the Virginia Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence in 1776. By 1777 after battling with the Royal Governor, his burning of Norfolk and his expulsion from Gwynn's Island, the Virginia General Assembly, and presumably our local citizens, were not too keen to have the county named Dunmore. Thus in 1777 Dunmore County became Shenandoah.