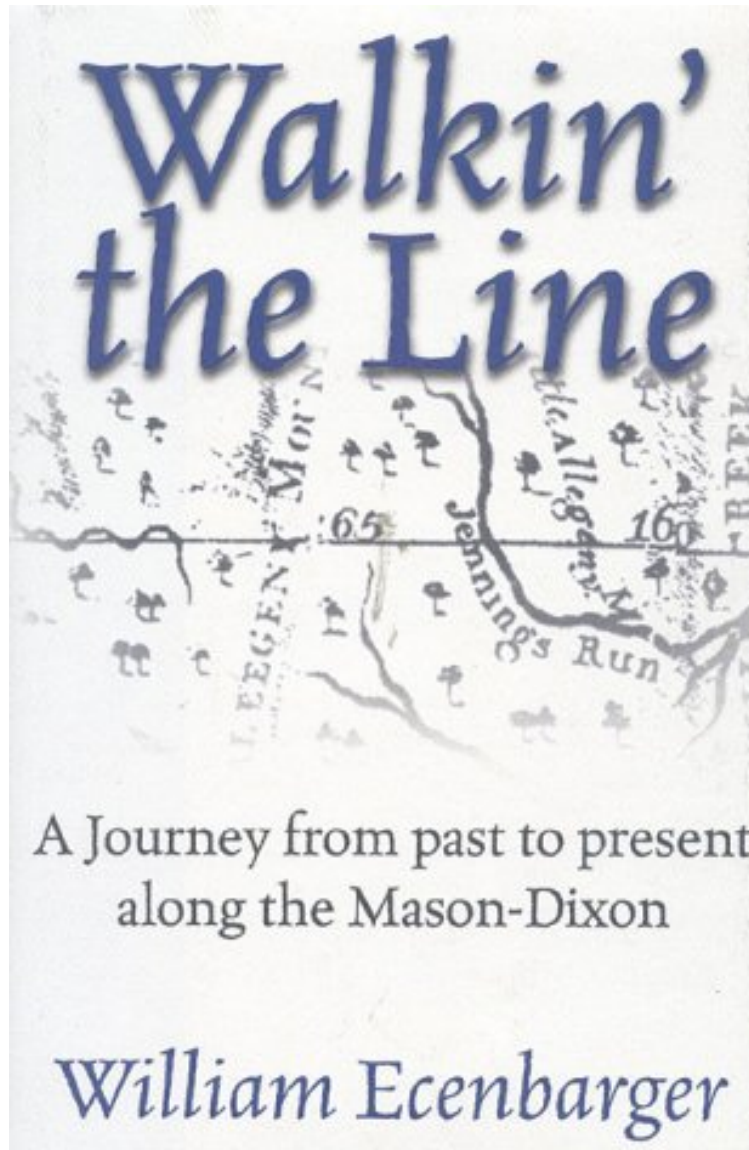


[Free download] Walkin' the Line: A Journey from Past to Present Along the Mason-Dixon

Walkin' the Line: A Journey from Past to Present Along the Mason-Dixon

Bill Ecenbarger

*audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#2026990 in Books M. Evans n Company 2000-06-28Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.22 x .80 x 6.12l, .91 #File Name: 0871319101222 pages | File size: 41.Mb

Bill Ecenbarger : Walkin' the Line: A Journey from Past to Present Along the Mason-Dixon before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Walkin' the Line: A Journey from Past to Present Along the Mason-Dixon:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. First-person research with real walkingBy James DennyWilliam

Ecenbarger's "Walkin the Line" is the story of the famous surveyors Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, who in the late Colonial period were recognized as top British experts in the field of geodesy. The two did much of their survey work with instruments by the stars, "star-gazers" as they came to be known. The two men were hired to survey and mark the boundary line that would once-and-for-all set the boundary between William Penn's grant (Pennsylvania), from that of Cecilius Calvert, the Second Lord Baltimore's grant, (Maryland). Delaware, once known as the "three lower counties" of Pennsylvania would gain its full identity as a separate and independent colony as a result of the Mason-Dixon survey. There was much more to this work than the classic east-west line that still separates Maryland on the south from Pennsylvania on the north. Some people may believe that the main east-west line was the only line surveyed and marked by the two surveyors. Actually, there is the cross-Del-Mar-Va Peninsula line, bounded at the geographical mid-point between the Delaware River and the Chesapeake Bay. This line separates Maryland on the south from Delaware on the north. There is the north-south line that separates Maryland on the west from Delaware on the east. There is the tangent line, a short stretch along the circumscribed 12-mile arc from the New Castle Courthouse. There is one more short north line that joins the classic Mason-Dixon east-west line. The three states of Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania meet at this exact point. In addition to these lines surveyed by Mason and Dixon, there is the main 12-mile circular line which which pre-existed the Mason-Dixon survey. Its point of origin was the cupola of the original New Castle, Delaware courthouse. This is the nation's only circular boundary. This line separates Delaware and Pennsylvania. Ecenbarger traces each of these lines and describes the survey techniques used to map them. He explains where subsequent and modern survey work found the lines to be only slightly off, emphasis on the word, slightly. The survey work done by Mason and Dixon in the 1760's was remarkably accurate, especially considering the difficulty of the work and the technology available at the time. He locates boundary stones found at each mile marker along with the crown stones at five-mile intervals, the latter with Calvert and Penn family crests inscribed on them. In his narrative, he often tells a story about each stone as he finds it. Included in his research are off-line junkets to surrounding towns or historic sites that figure into a larger narrative. There is a considerable emphasis on slavery since Maryland and Delaware were slave states up until the Civil War and Pennsylvania was not. "Crossing the line" was the difference between slavery and freedom for literally thousands of blacks in the antebellum period. When the Fugitive Slave Act was passed and signed into law in the 1850's, it made crossing the line into freedom an act of far less assurance, since slave-catchers could come into Pennsylvania with the law on their side to catch and return fugitive slaves. Such kidnappings were not limited to escaped slaves as sometimes, freemen or freed women would be captured with the idea of returning them to slavery via a slave sale or auction. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The maps, photographs and Ecenbarger's level-of-detail information makes this a valuable work of American history, not simply a narrative of the survey work done by Mason and Dixon in the 18th century. Finally, Ecenbarger brings his narrative right up to the dawn of the 21st century. He delves into sensitive race relation issues that persist along the border, differences in political culture among the border states and how things evolved along the border throughout the 20th century. Five stars!

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Personalizes basic geography
By Corinne H. Smith
The recent book "Drawing the Line" by Edwin Danson details the technicalities of the work done by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon in marking the boundaries of Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania in the 1760s. Nearly two and a half centuries after that land survey took place, William Ecenbarger travels along the famous border not only to reminisce about that task but also to document some of the lives that have lived there since. It's not a pristine picture. Race relations loom large in his findings. Reverse Underground Railroaders snatched free blacks from the North and sent them south during the 1800s. KKK activity seems to thrive along the line, even up through recent times. For whites who are under the impression that civil rights and equality were successfully achieved by blacks either after the Civil War or in the mid-1960s, the accounts relayed here may be disturbing to read. Jarring, but necessary. Black and white photos of people, buildings, and places add much to the text, and the map at the end of the book is a handy resource to consult. Though Ecenbarger seems to have a fascination with more of the negative stories than the positive (i.e., while he mentions Mercersburg, Penna., he doesn't note that PA's only president, James Buchanan, was born there), this book remains a real eye-opener to those of us who resided nearby and never knew the truth.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A delightful piece of stimulating literature
By Efs Danson
Bill Ecenbarger's Walkin' the Line is a delightful stroll along the entire Mason-Dixon. Whether its dropping into a bar for a chat with the locals or reminiscing about some long past tragedy, Mr Ecenbarger employs his considerable journalistic skills to deliver to us the unique record of the historical perspective of Mason and Dixon extraordinary achievement. As a treatment of the Underground Railroad, by which slaves from the South ostensibly sought freedom, Walkin' the Line is essential reading. The book is an engrossing, often poignant, reminder of days gone by and of slowly changing attitudes towards race and culture. The conversations with the people he met during his journey are written in a lively and colourful style and fairly represent modern attitudes, feelings and symbolism for this, the most famous border in America and, probably, the world. Read it and enjoy a rare piece of honest and entertaining writing.

This unique history/travelogue examines the influence of this great divider which remains the most powerful symbol separating Yankee from Rebel. Most boundaries between states and nations have been determined by land features,

such as rivers and mountains. But the Mason-Dixon Line does not follow anything palpable; it runs along uneven latitudes and longitudes, and at no point does it touch any prominent landmark. Except for its stone markers, it is invisible -- an arbitrary and man-made demarcation, direct and true, but without dimension. Ecenbarger calls it "simultaneously, a product of reason and a national landmark."

From Publishers Weekly In 1763, two astronomer-mathematicians, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, came to the U.S. from England to mark the border dividing Maryland and Pennsylvania and settle a land dispute. Their surveying project took more than four years to complete, and helped shape the course of American history especially in the early 19th century, when their Line came to symbolize the distinct ideologies of the slave South and the free North. Using the infamous Line as his guide, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ecenbarger travels across the region, investigating the history of race and culture in the U.S. Drawing on published sources and interviews, as well as his own observations of its architecture and geography, Ecenbarger tells the Line's often tragic story. Meanwhile, he introduces readers to the people who've lived along the dividing line, including Kay McElvey, an African-American teacher in Hurlock, Md., who traced the history of the local black community; Quaker Thomas Garrett of Wilmington, Del., a 19th-century abolitionist who wouldn't quit working on the underground railroad even after he was heavily fined for his activities; Daniel Logab, Garrett's ethical opposite, who made his living capturing runaway slaves and selling them south; and Sarah Bulah, an ordained minister, who lived on the Line and joined other blacks to fight segregated schools. (Her case became part of the 1954 Brown vs. the Board of Education case.) Part travelogue, part historical essay, this book is a well-written and dramatic examination of history, geography and race. Bw photos. (Sept.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The Mason-Dixon Line was originally drawn in 1768 by two British surveyors, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, sent to settle a land dispute. The line later became the dividing point between the free North and the slaveholding South. Ecenbarger, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, walked the accessible parts of the 365-mile line and sought out people with stories to tell that would shed light on the line's historical and racial significance. Ecenbarger also cites Charles Mason's journal, courthouse records, and interviews with residents of Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania who live along the line. The Mason-Dixon Line represents racial tensions and mirrors animosities that have persisted through slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the civil rights era, and even today, with some towns practicing unofficial racial division. Highlighting this checkered history, Ecenbarger visited Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad and the site of reverse operation, where free blacks were sold into slavery in the South. This is an interesting look at a national landmark that is "embedded in the national psyche as a powerful racial symbol." Vanessa Bush Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Using the infamous Line as his guide, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ecenbarger travels across the region, investigating the history of race and culture in the U.S. Part travelogue, part historical essay, this book is a well-written and a dramatic examination of history, geography and race." -- Publishers Weekly "This is an interesting look at a national landmark that is embedded in the national psyche as a powerful racial symbol." -- ALA Booklist (Starred) Winner of a Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism Award "The Mason-Dixon Line divides North and South, and Ecenbarger decided to explore its social and cultural significance by walking along this survey line to see the differences on either side. Although intended as a division, the line also serves as something to bind the nation, and Ecenbarger's engaging style draws us into this journey. -- Society of American Travel Writers Foundation "A fascinating trip into the past that illuminates the present. A tasty feast of heroes and rascals, myths and legends." -- Philadelphia Inquirer "Part travelogue, part historical essay, this book is a well-written and dramatic examination of history, geography, and race." -- Publisher's Weekly