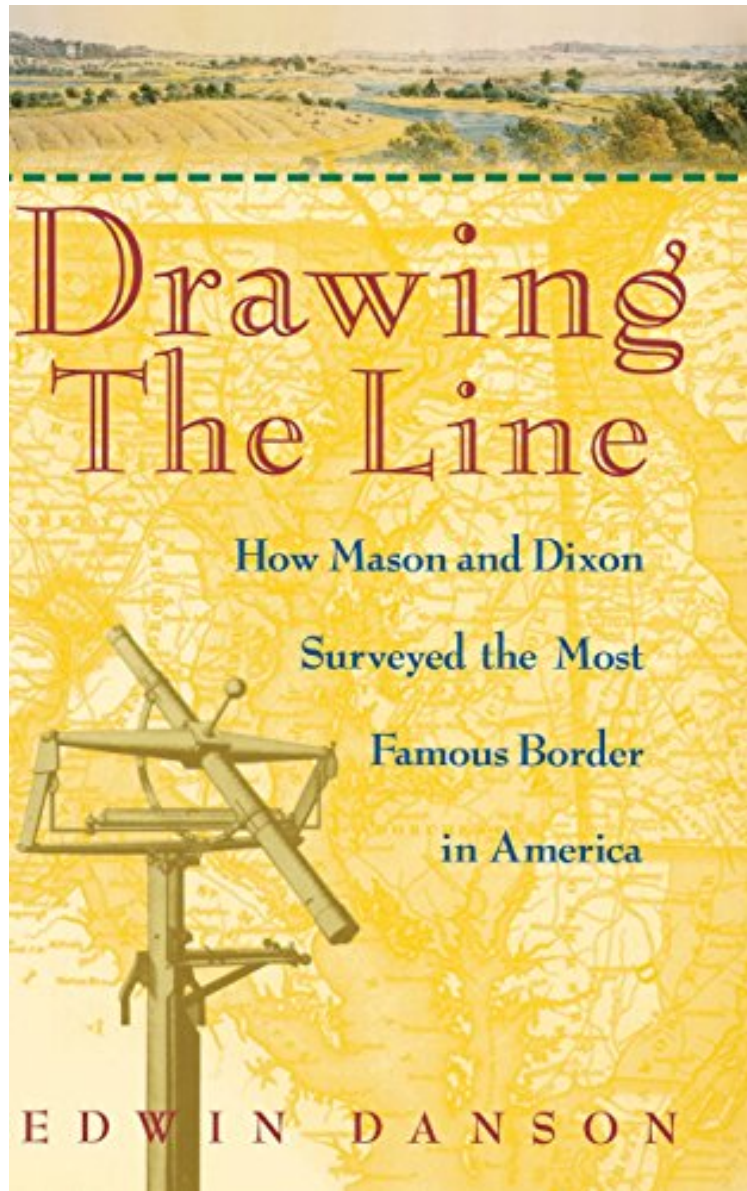


(Download) Drawing the Line : How Mason and Dixon Surveyed the Most Famous Border in America

## Drawing the Line : How Mason and Dixon Surveyed the Most Famous Border in America

*Edwin Danson*

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**Edwin Danson : Drawing the Line : How Mason and Dixon Surveyed the Most Famous Border in America**  
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## How Mason and Dixon Surveyed the Most Famous Border in America:

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A rare look into the applied astronomy of the 18th century..By John RummelMost people have probably heard of the Mason-Dixon line, though they may not be aware of where or exactly what it is. I grew up less than three miles from the famous line that separates Maryland from Pennsylvania, and was aware that there were stone monuments spaced every mile along the boarder - but I had no idea of the origins of this line. Danson weaves the historical backdrop that necessitated the survey and follows Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, two British astronomers, as they traveled to the colonies with their telescopes, quadrants, and mathematical expertise. A surveying job such as this required exquisite accuracy in the determination of latitude and longitude - a job for skilled astronomers in their day.For the more technically inclined, appendices are provided that go deeper into the methods surveyors use to shoot the lines. Given the amount of astronomy involved in such a surveying job, I wish the author would have provided more detail about the instruments Dixon and Mason used to accomplish their task. I'm sure it was not Danson's intention to cover this sort of technical instrumentation in detail, but in my (biased) opinion, it would have enhanced the story. Still an excellent book and one any person interested in the history of science should read.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Amazing what they were able to accomplishBy City BakerIt's hard to imagine how much work Mason and Dixon had to put into this. Danson weaves an engaging trail to make it clear. Amazing what they were able to accomplish. Traveling with a grandfather clock, trunks, cutting down trees for a clear line of sight? It's all there.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHINGBy richard e whitelockLongitude, latitude, English Kings, Protestants versus Catholics, 200 Years of World History, and finally the contribution that Mason and Dixon made in drawing an accurate boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania.. This book has it all and doesn't mind discussing it all. Abolition, slavery, freemen are all a part of the dialog. Plenty of maps and sketches and for the reader who enjoys metes and bounds and boundary lines, this will be a real enjoyable and revealing journey.Read it today, but remember I warned you, it's not for the faint of art. This book is well researched and when all is said and done, you will be far more informed and educated in "Whatever." I actually enjoyed reading this book. But be made aware I warned you.

**THE FIRST POPULAR HISTORY OF THE MAKING OF THE MASON-DIXON LINE** The Mason-Dixon line—surely the most famous surveyors' line ever drawn—represents one of the greatest and most difficult scientific achievements of its time. But behind this significant triumph is a thrilling story, one that has thus far eluded both historians and surveyors. In this engrossing narrative, professional surveyor Edwin Danson takes us on a fascinating journey with Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, two gifted and exuberant English surveyors, through the fields and forests of eighteenth-century America. Vividly describing life in the backwoods and the hardships and dangers of frontier surveying, *Drawing the Line* discloses for the first time in 250 years many hitherto unknown surveying methods, revealing how Mason and Dixon succeeded where the best American surveyors of the period failed. In accessible, ordinary language, Danson masterfully throws the first clear light on the surveying of the Mason-Dixon line. Set in the social and historical context of pre-Revolutionary America, this book is a spellbinding account of one of the great and historic achievements of its time. Advance Praise for *Drawing the Line* "Drawing the Line combines a fast-moving story, a human drama, and a clear account of surveying in the era of George Washington. An intriguing interaction of politics and science."—CHARLES ROYSTER, Boyd Professor of History, Louisiana State University, and Winner of the Bancroft Prize in History

From BooklistHailed as one of the "greatest scientific achievements of its time," and destined to designate the boundary between free states and slave states, the Mason-Dixon Line remains an extraordinary feat in the annals of the science of surveying. Commissioned to establish a borderline between Maryland and Pennsylvania in 1763, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, two young British astronomers, toiled for more than four years in order to settle a century-old boundary dispute between the Calverts of Maryland and the Penns of Pennsylvania. Employing revolutionary survey techniques and laboring under often extreme conditions that included harsh weather, mountainous terrain, and Indian warfare, they ventured 325 miles into the American wilderness, accomplishing their task at great risk to their personal safety. A spirited, painstakingly researched account of the first comprehensive geodetic survey ever completed. Margaret FlanaganCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "...thoroughly researched... a good story shines through..."(Sunday Times - Book of the Week, 18th March 2001)From the Inside Flap"Made famous as line between free and slave states before War Between the States. The survey establishing Maryland-Pennsylvania boundary began in 1763; halted by Indian wars 1767; continued to southwest corner 1782; marked 1784." Behind these words, inscribed on a solitary monument in southwest Pennsylvania, lies the complex, compelling tale of the most famous surveyors line ever drawn. Originally created to settle an eighty-year border dispute between two aristocratic colonial families, the Mason-Dixon line not only became one of the greatest scientific achievements of its time but, nearly a century later, came to mark the monumental boundary between free and slave states. In the first nonfiction chronicle of this ambitious undertaking, professional surveyor Edwin Danson takes us on

a grand tour through a world now mostly lost to us. *Drawing the Line* reconstructs the making of the Mason-Dixon line, from the infamous quarrels between the patrician Baltimore family of Maryland and the powerful Penn family of Pennsylvania to the harrowing fields and forests of eighteenth-century America, where we accompany Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, two young, exuberant English surveyors, as they risk their lives to resolve the epic border feud and establish a precise survey that had begun to seem "impossible for the Art of Man." After five grueling years in which the two intrepid Englishmen faced heavy rains and freezing sleet, along with angry Indians, they finally completed their assignment. Their great boundary survey was the first and, for many years, the most ambitious geodetic survey ever conducted. It set a precedent for the precise measurement and mapping of vast land distances. In addition to surveying 325 miles of boundary lines, Mason and Dixon measured the first degree of latitude and took the first scientific gravity measurements ever recorded in America. In ordinary language, Danson introduces us to the fascinating science of surveying, revealing for the first time in 250 years many long-lost surveying methods and finally answering the question of how Mason and Dixon succeeded where the best American surveyors had failed. Weaving revelations about surveying into an engrossing historical narrative that captures the spirit of pre-Revolutionary America, this book accomplishes for the making of the Mason-Dixon line what Dava Sobel's *Longitude* did for John Harrison and the science of time measurement. Exhaustively researched and vividly written, *Drawing the Line* presents a brilliant exploration of how two men solved one of the most formidable problems of eighteenth-century America and revolutionized the way we have come to map America's grand landscape.