now marketing it. So the book is also a monument as a publishing venture.

But what happened when there was a publisher's meeting and Dr. Karl Arndt, compiler, and Karl Arndt, editor, and Karl Arndt, stylist, and Karl Arndt, printer, and Karl Arndt, publisher, assembled to decide the scope of the book? The meeting most certainly was a harmonious one, but unfortunately, I do not think such a committee could do justice to such a book and it shows. There are documents with citations from unknown sources, misspelled words, strikeovers, documents referred to and left out, documents that would have better been left out, a limited index, and no scholarly apparatus. For a book aimed at an American market, having all the pertinent text in German is not going to prove too useful to most researchers. The book is rather overpriced as well.

Should you buy this book? If you have a research library on Western Pennsylvania, the Harmony Society, or the communitarian movement in the United States and an easy reading knowledge of German (Swabian), the book will prove invaluable. It is not quite the thing one sits down at night and reads by the fire, but it is a useful reference work. The book is dedicated to Gayle Thornbrough, the editor of the Indiana Historical Society, and it would have been better if she had had a chance to edit this work, but this does not detract from a great piece of scholarship.

Washington Crossing Historic Park Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania


The American West has always had a fascination for Americans and peoples all over the world. Whether it has been the frontier of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Tennessee or that of Texas, Wyoming, and Oklahoma, the West has been a mystical and a mythical place. The struggle against the wilderness and against the allegedly barbaric Indians has created tales of supermen with the strength of ten and the courage of many more. Folklore has often created what never was, but humankind apparently needs to believe it once existed.

William Darby was a man of the early nineteenth-century West.
He was both a participant in its exploration and settlement, and he was an important promulgator of its mythic qualities. He was born on the Pennsylvania frontier near Harrisburg in 1775 and experienced the hard life of that region. During the course of his seventy-nine years of life, he explored and published geographical books about the West from Louisiana to Pennsylvania and Ohio. He also wrote stories for nineteenth-century journals extolling the awesome beauty of the frontier and the special kind of man it created.

Professor Kennedy, a member of the English department at Louisiana State University, divides this book into two sections. The first section is a biographical sketch of Darby's life, while the second section is a collection of excerpts from Darby's geographical books and his historical fiction. Kennedy points out that there were several major themes in Darby's publications. He was a man both of science and of romanticism; he wrote rationally and emotionally. He believed that the westward movement was beneficial for the nation and supported internal improvements because he believed they facilitated this essential expansion. As a self-taught man, he was committed to continued learning; as a believer in the necessity of internal improvements, he was a thoroughly partisan Whig. All his life he remained a nationalist and castigated any and all sectional sentiments. He always looked to the West for inspiration; he returned to it constantly for his important geographical work and for more basic psychic needs. He stood in awe of nature — he was the "Astonished Traveler," yet he stood in even greater awe of the growth of civilization where once there had only been wilderness.

Kennedy argues that Darby was "a prototypical figure . . . who dreamed one of the compelling dreams of his age: to know the American West and to achieve fullness of experience in that cultivated garden" (p. 127). In Darby, he says, we can "understand in personal terms the wonder and passion which the opening of the West once inspired" (p. 128).

Professor Kennedy has successfully accomplished difficult detective work in discovering the long hidden information on this intriguing individual. In writing about William Darby, Kennedy concretely illuminates the powerful attraction of the American West. Readers of this journal will particularly want to note Kennedy's descriptions of Darby's life on the Pennsylvania frontier.

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