

Revised Version



John
Nelson

Darby

CHAPTER ONE

Max S. Weremchuk

In Way of Explanation

I began the revision of my John Nelson Darby biography back in 2003 and part of the first chapter was posted on www.mybrethren.org in 2005 as well as my work in progress "Research Papers". That site has been offline now since November 2017.

To continue to make the material accessible to persons still interested Michael Schneider was so kind to post both my Research Papers and the revised first chapter on his website at www.bruederbewegung.de. He brought both items together into one file and into the much more appealing format typical for his site. At the same he checked the validity of the hyperlinks to websites I had referred to in the texts and exchanged them where necessary. For this and other corrections I am very grateful to him.

The present paper is a revision of the revised first chapter which was posted on the www.bruederbewegung.de site. I have added more material as well as illustrations to it and Michael and I both thought it would be better to separate it from the Research Papers (they remain available as an extra file) as a standalone file. In doing so I have used a different format from that initially used by Michael, but thank him once again for his proofreading of the text. The present work is not one for commercial or profit purposes, but rather to make material available to other researchers. Nevertheless I have endeavored to obtain permission for all images used here where I was not sure if they are in the public domain or not.

The portraits of John, Anne and George Darby are courtesy of Charles and Glenys Darby and may not be reproduced without permission.

Max S. Weremchuk

May 2018

July 26 2018: Some references to and remarks on Admirals George and Henry d'Esterre Darby have been added on pages 5 and 6. Thanks to the kind help of one who prefers to remain anonymous I also now have a more accurate transcript of the Darby letter in Appendix C.

Chapter 1: Beginnings

Family Tree

Birth. On Wednesday morning, Mrs. Darby, of Great George Street, Westminster, of a son.

So read the small announcement in the lower right hand corner of page 3 of the London Times for the 20th of November 1800. The baby, John Nelson Darby, born on the 18th of November 1800, was Mrs. Darby's sixth son and eighth child.¹ (Her last child, a daughter, Letitia Lovett, would be born in 1802).

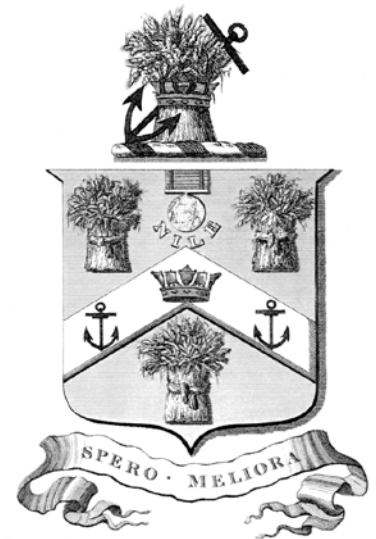
John Nelson Darby descended from the Darby family connected with Leap Castle in Ireland, but the early history of the family is somewhat of a mystery. In the first English publication of my biography in 1992 I had written:

The Darbys were an old family. Records in England go back to the fifteenth century and to Gaddesby (near Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire). The church in Gaddesby contains an altar tomb from the fifteenth century with graven figures of the knight William Darby and his wife.

This information needs to be corrected. The book *Leap Castle: A Place and Its People* written by Marigold Freeman-Attwood (a Darby descendant) has cleared up a number of discrepancies in the family history. Contrary to what one may find elsewhere, John Nelson Darby's family line does not appear to have any connection with the Darby family of Gaddesby, Leicestershire, which died out in the mid-1300s.

Charles Darby (a descendant of John Nelson's brother George Darby) and his wife Glenys of New Zealand have been most helpful to me in my new research into Darby's background. They have investigated the Darby family history by accessing contemporary records and original material from the times under study. They have come to the conclusion that the published records of the past 140 years are in error on key points. These conclusions are based upon original evidence which they viewed in person, and they were able to identify unproven aspects of family history as such. Though Gaddesby can now almost certainly be eliminated as the homeland of Darby's family prior to the mid-1500s, the actual family homeland remains a mystery. Nevertheless, extensive circumstantial evidence does suggest that the family origins lie in East Anglia rather than in the Midlands, at least from the 12th to the 16th century.

¹ Here, right at the beginning, we find one of the many discrepancies that will turn up in the study of John Nelson Darby's life. 18th of November 1800 was not a Wednesday, but a Tuesday.



Darby Coat of Arms

Motto: Spero meliora
- I hope for better things -

Azure on a chevron argent between three garbs or a naval coronet azure between two anchors sable, in the center chief perdet from a ribard argent fimbriated of the field a representation of gold medal conferred on Admiral Sir Henry d'Esterre Darby, KCB, beneath the medal the word "Nile" in gold letters on the field.

Crest: A garb or banded with a naval crown azure in front of an anchor in bend sinister sable.

Charles Darby wrote to me:

The belief that the Darby family of Leap Castle (and later Sussex) originated from Gaddesby, Leicestershire, stems from the Burke's "Landed Gentry" publications. However, there is no evidence to support this belief and much to refute it. There was indeed a Darby family of Gaddesby, but they died out long before the time of John Darby of Leap and there is no evidence of any connection between the two families.

So if JND's family did not come from Gaddesby, where did they come from? There is much circumstantial evidence suggesting that his family originated in the southern Lincolnshire villages of Leake, Leverton, Wrangell and Bennington, and that in the 13th–14th centuries parts of that family moved to Norfolk, Suffolk and possibly elsewhere.

Leap Castle

In my original biography I had written: "The connection between the Darby family and Ireland began in the sixteenth century when a John Darby, son of Edmund Darby, served under the Earl of Sussex as a Captain of Horse in his campaigns there, either in the year 1557 or 1559. The Earl besieged the castle of Leap² belonging to the family of



Leap Castle

from the Court

(Source: Shoemaker, *Wanderings in Ireland*, London, 1908, p. 84.
Photo by W. Leonard)

² Leap Castle's exact origin is not known, nor the exact meaning of its name, Leim Ui Bhanáin, or Leap of O'Bannon. In all probability it had been built in the 14th or 15th century on the site of an earlier fortification as a tower house, with additions and alterations later. It came to be considered as the most haunted castle in Ireland until its destruction in the 1922 revolution when it was bombed. It was a ruin for some time, but has since been restored and is occupied once again. See Appendix A for a description of the castle and countryside.

Years ago, during my research for the revision of my biography on JND I was happy to have made contact with a person from the Exclusive wing of the Brethren who was very helpful in supplying me with information not readily had otherwise. During one exchange concerning Leap Castle – and I include it here in reference to "most haunted" above – he wrote to me:

Now, I want to tell you a story my late father told me. He said that JND was staying at "a very old house" and was resting – but awake – in bed, when he was suddenly aware of "a presence" in the room, a hooded(?) man, who indicated silently (by pointing) that he wanted something out of a drawer or cabinet in the corner. JND responded by saying words to the effect "Take what you want", and the "spirit" then went and opened the said drawer (or similar) and removed some item. Having turned to acknowledge JND, the figure then vanished, no sound having been made, and JND had no rational explanation for the event. (I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the words my father used, as it was told me some 25 years ago, but I record it as best I can.) I have no authority whatever for this story other than my late father, who as an Exclusive brother professed no belief at all in ghosts, but did think there was some possibility of visible "evil spirits", which might be visible at times. And I have no idea from where or whom my father heard the story; and yet I do not believe he would pass on something about someone he revered as he did JND, which he thought was untrue. Yet I have never heard the tale from anyone else.

It does occur to me that Leap Castle would be one possible place for such an event to have occurred, it is alleged repeatedly that various "monk like" ghostly figures have been seen there over the centuries.

the O'Carrolls of Eile in the part of Ireland later known as 'King's County' but today as Offaly."

Charles Darby wrote:

Although very little evidence survives from those days before the formality of church records, a document in the British Museum provides an important clue. A John Darby is named in "Officers Commanding the Queen's Forces, Anno 1569", a list of "The Names of the Principal Officers and Captaynes" of an army commanded by the Earl of Sussex (who, despite his title, was from East Anglia). Also named are a number of John Darby's fellow-officers from the same area of Lincolnshire where the Darby family is believed to have originated. Although the John Darby connection with Leap Castle is not confirmed by this document, it does prove that there was indeed a Captain John Darby in the "army" of the Earl of Sussex in the mid-1500s, and that he probably came from East Anglia. Further, if he had gone to Ireland with the Earl in 1557, he must have returned to England by 1567. This ties in with the fact of the O'Carroll family returning to Leap after 1557.

[. . .] The Earl of Sussex was a major player (if not the main player at army-commander level) in the intensifying English occupation of Ireland that took place during Queen Elizabeth's reign.

There is an alternative theory that the first Darby to reach Leap was a soldier with Oliver Cromwell's forces, and that he may have received the Leap estates in lieu of pay. Again, this theory is not proven, and indeed Cooke in his *History of Birr* (1875) casts doubt on it by recording that the Darby family of the time "appear to have remained faithful to the King" and "valiantly resisted Cromwell's forces". Unfortunately, since Cooke's evidence for this assertion is not quoted, it carries no greater authority than does the "Gaddesby theory".

A legend remains in the Darby family connected with Leap Castle. Yes, it is a legend, but legends are usually based on some historical fact. Returning to the siege of Leap Castle mentioned above, the story goes that during one of the attacks on the castle John Darby was captured and held prisoner in the castle in a room measuring four by seven feet. Food was passed to him through a hole in the wall. This was the duty of O'Carroll's young and beautiful daughter Finola. Not surprisingly this contact led to their falling in love with each other. When Finola discovered that her father planned to hang John Darby she helped him to escape by unbarring his door. As Darby was racing down the stone stairs to expected freedom he was confronted by Finola's brother, who sounded the alarm. Darby turned and ran back up and out onto the battlements. From there he jumped into the branches of a large yew tree and escaped. The siege of Leap Castle continued and ended in its finally being taken by the English forces.



Leap Castle

by Harold J. Graham, 1906
(Courtesy of Dr. David Dickson)



Leap Castle
Artist unknown
(Source: National Trust for Scotland)

John Darby later married Finola O'Carroll, the heiress of the castle, and through her acquired a part of the Leap estate.³

Concerning this connection to Leap Castle, Charles Darby remarked in contrast to Marigold Freeman-Attwood's book:

[. . .] like us, Marigold had concluded that the Gaddesby origin was not supported by any evidence whatsoever and thus she dismissed that part of the Burke's publications as a fabrication. In that situation, she settled upon the earliest "official" records as being indicative of the time that a Darby first went to Leap, i.e. the presence of High Sheriff Jonathan in the time of Oliver Cromwell, and his demise in 1684. While that may be correct, it is not evidence that Jonathan was the first Darby at Leap.

Where we differ from Marigold is that, given the proven existence of Captain John Darby in the militia of the Earl of Sussex in 1567, we believe that the story of a John Darby going to Ireland with the Earl of Sussex in 1557 cannot be dismissed, especially as the O'Carrolls are known to have re-occupied the Leap estates after 1557.

Once again, in my original publication I had written:

The greater part of the estate remained in the possession of its Irish proprietor. John Darby died in 1608. The Irish portion of Leap was later confiscated for the use of the English King James I (1603–1625), but the Darby part remained in the Darby family. In the rule of Charles II (1660–1685) the confiscated portion was sold to a certain John Holland. The Darbys later bought this part from him and so the entire Leap estate passed into Darby hands.

Charles Darby had some helpful insights here as well:

This is interesting. I have seen a reference to the effect that the Leap estate (or part of it) was mortgaged to John of Holland, not sold to a Mr. J. Holland.

Remember here that "Holland" was the generic name for that part of low-lying, swampy southern Lincolnshire because it resembled the nation that we now call Holland. And all of our research indicates that our Darby family originated from that part of Lincolnshire once known as Holland, spreading into Norfolk and Suffolk and possibly also elsewhere in the 13–14C.

³ Sources of information on Leap Castle and Darby family: *The Clans of Ireland. Their Battles, Chiefs, and Princes*, Dublin (Sullivan) n. d.; *Burke's Irish Family Records; The Landed Gentry: Ireland*; George Cunningham, *Roscrea and District. Illustrated Guide*, Roscrea (Parkmore) 1976; Thomas Lalor Cooke, *The Early History of the Town of Birr, or Parsonstown*, Dublin (Robertson & Co.) 1875; Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, *Armorial Families*, London (Hurst & Blackett) 1929; James Fleming, "Historic Irish Mansions, no. 51: Leap Castle, Co. Offaly, Seat of the Darby Family", in *Weekly Irish Times*; Dermot F. Gleeson, *Roscrea*, Dublin (Sign of the Three Candles) 1947; Irish Tourist Board, Dublin; John Feehan, *The Landscape of Slieve Bloon*, Dublin (Blackwater Press) 1979; Leicestershire Library Division for Melton Mowbray; Edward MacLysaght, *More Irish Families*, Dublin (Irish Academic Press) 1982.

So if Leap was mortgaged to John of Holland (rather than simply to a certain Mr. Holland), that provides another bit of evidence linking the Leap Darbys with Lincolnshire.

In 1745 the owner of Leap, Jonathan Darby (the eldest son always bearing that name), married Susannah Lovett. Susannah was the daughter of Robert Lovett of Liscombe House in Buckinghamshire (the family seat), who also held a property at Dromoyle in King's County (Offaly) and at Kingswell, in the county of Tipperary some 74 kilometers south of Leap Castle. He served as the High Sheriff of King's County in 1727. The High Sheriff was the British Crown's judicial representative carrying out judicial, electoral, ceremonial and administrative functions and executing High Court Writs.

In the course of their marriage Jonathan and Susannah had eight sons and one daughter.⁴ Their third oldest son, Henry d'Esterre (born 1749), joined the Navy and won a name for himself through his gallant conduct as the captain of the ship *Bellerophon* in the battle of the Nile in 1798. He was a very distinguished man, said to be Lord Nelson's favorite commodore. In 1819 Henry became an admiral and was later knighted.⁵ The inheritance of Leap Castle fell to him after the death of his oldest brother Jonathan (Robert, the second oldest, had died earlier, in 1764).

Henry d'Esterre's younger brother of three years was John Darby (born 9th of December 1751). From Charles Darby I have copies of letters written by Jonathan Darby from Ireland to his son John in London dating from the 25th of May 1770 to the 5th of July 1773. In these letters "Harry" is often mentioned. ("Harry" being a popular nickname for Henry in England since Medieval times.) When considering Henry's rise to fame in later years it is interesting to note that it didn't start off as all too promising. Here several excerpts from the above mentioned letters:

⁴ There were several intermarriages between the Darby and Lovett families. Susannah's younger sister Letitia (Lettice) married Jonathan Darby's younger brother Damer Darby. Robert Lovett's grandson Jonathan married John Darby's sister Sarah and his granddaughter Eleanor married John Darby's brother Jonathan (who in 1787 was High Sheriff of King's County). See John Burke and John Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England*, London. 1838. My thanks to Noel Guerin for his help in regards to the history of the Lovett family.

⁵ See *The London Gazette* for Saturday, 1st of July 1820, p. 1430 and Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, *History of Orders of Knighthood of the British Empire*, London (John Hunter) 1842, vol. 3, p. 151 and Appendix p. xlv.

Charles Darby wrote to me:

In 1820, Betham (the incumbent Ulster King of Arms) granted Admiral Henry Darby the right to augment his family coat of arms with a naval coronet, an anchor and the word NILE in recognition of his naval service. That family coat of arms, and variations of it, was used by Admiral George Darby in the mid-1700s, and was used by Darbys in Suffolk, Norfolk and Lincolnshire going back to the 13C. I do not know exactly how these East Anglian Darbys tie in with my Darby family.



Henry d'Esterre Darby Esqr.
(1751–1823)
Captain of His Majesty's Ship
Bellerophon 1st of August 1798

Published by B.B. Evans, January 1801.
Mezzotint printed in colours by Richard
Earlom (1743–1822) after Sir William
Beechey



A younger Henry d'Esterre Darby
© National Maritime Museum, Green-
wich, London

12th of September 1770

Harry is going once more to try his fortune in the navy. I am unfortunate in not being able to procure him a Lieutenancy [. . .] I think there can be no doubt but America will one day be a great Empire, if Harry cannot in a reasonable time fix himself in the navy it occurred to me as a scheme not infeasible for him to go to America [. . .]

5th of February 1772

Harry is probably with you now. I am much distressed on his account. He is deserving but has got into that kind of profession that neither my interest or money can promote him which distresses me much.

25th of March 1772

I am in great distress about my dear Harry not being able by any means in my power to obtain him a Lieutenancy in the navy so that I believe he must after so much time spent in the navy turn his thoughts another way.

That Jonathan had difficulties in helping his son Henry obtain a desirable position is interesting when one considers that his (supposed) brother George (1720–1790) was in the navy. George Darby was promoted to Rear Admiral in 1778 and Vice Admiral in 1779.⁶

John Darby



John Darby
(1751–1834)

Courtesy of Charles and Glenys Darby

John Darby (John Nelson's father) was born on the 9th of December 1751 and seems to have spent most of his life in England. Jonathan's younger brothers Damer and Japhet were merchants in Dublin⁷, but John, from May 1770 at the latest, was an apprentice with "Messrs Read & Rigby's, Merchants, Old Jewry, London" who were linen mer-

⁶ For more see <https://morethannelson.com/officer/george-darby/>. That George was Jonathan's brother and thus Harry's uncle is rightly questioned by Marigold Freeman-Attwood in her book "Leap Castle" (p. 78). Apparently he was a more distant relative. Charles Darby wrote to me:

Admiral George is a bit of a mystery to us too. We are quite certain that he is indeed one of the Darbys of Leap, but we do not know where he fits in with the family tree. We accept (but have not confirmed) that he was not a son of one of the Jonathans who, in succession, inherited Leap. More likely, we believe, he was the son of a second or third (or later) son of his grandfather. That would automatically mean that he could not inherit any part of the Leap estate, and thus would have had to make a living independent of the inheritors of Leap castle.

There are contemporary written references to Admiral George as "Uncle". However, we believe that these references do not mean he was a son of the previous Jonathan. More likely, we think, they are "courtesy titles" much as a modern child might address as "Uncle" an adult who is an unrelated but close friend of his/her parents. Thus the term uncle was not intended in the strictly genealogical sense of referring only to a male sibling of one's own mother or father.

⁷ *Burke's Irish Family Records*, p. 321.

chants.⁸ The letters from Jonathan to his son during this time convey the impression of a concerned and loving father. John seems to have held a special place in his affections as the following extracts show:

14th of October 1772

[. . .] I am persuaded I have not any child who sooner cooperates with me in providing for the rest of the family if they stood in need of it than John would [. . .]

14th of June 1773

I rejoice exceedingly in having so good and promising a son.

Apparently John's younger brother Christopher was with him or at least nearby, as father Jonathan often asks of his well-being and is very concerned that he begins in some profession.⁹ To John himself he gave the following advice:

27th of July 1771

Yet there is one thing I would if I could guard you against, which is a too hasty desire of being rich. The sure and certain mode is industry, perseverance and a mode of acquiring something by degrees.

1st of October 1771

[. . .] bought experience if not at too great a price very often turns out profitable to young men and frequently convinces them of the truth of what precept cannot enforce.

As was the case with Henry so in regards to John as well, Jonathan was concerned that he could not help more:

⁸ Fine quality Irish linen was used for sheets, tablecloths and clothing. During the time period in question linen was not produced in towns or factories, but was a rural cottage industry with the women and younger children spinning yarn while the men and older sons worked on the looms in their homes. The linen was then sold to bleachers and exported to England and elsewhere. Merchants located in Dublin controlled the export trade, but beginning in the middle of the 18th century an important change took place when shipping also went out from Belfast. Irish linen was imported duty free to England and by the end of the century made up about half of Ireland's total exports, though there was a serious downturn in trade during the early 1770's – just the time John was in apprenticeship.

For more detailed information on Irish linen and the linen trade see: "History of Irish Linen" at <https://www.fergusonirishlinen.com/pages/index.asp?title2=history-of-irish-linen&title1=about-linen> and "Linenopolis: the rise of the textile industry" by Emily Boyle at <http://www.irelandseye.com/irish/history/belfast/linen01.shtm>.

⁹ Christopher eventually decided on a career in the army. His father was not very enthusiastic about this decision writing on the 29th of May 1773:

He [Christopher] wrote me a letter some time ago letting me know he chooses the army. My poor child little knows or thinks of the consequences of such a choice. It is now the worst department in the state unless a man had interest and very great at Court, so my friend Colonel Darby assures me. [. . .] and being a perpetual servant without any time which a man can call his own. This makes it the dearest purchase in the world. However if he preserves in it he shall have it.

Christopher did preserve and entered as an Ensign on the 26th of November 1775 (*Gentleman's Magazine* for February 1832, p. 177) steadily rising in the ranks until he became a General.

25th of May 1770

I approve much of your resolution of making yourself agreeable to every person and endeavoring to make connections. I have none to help you where you are [. . .]

John's apprenticeship ended sometime in 1773:

2nd of February 1773

[. . .] probably you will be out of your apprenticeship soon
[. . .]

Read & Rigby had always spoken highly of John in their letters to or meetings with his father. The letters dating from March and April 1773 deal with John's considerations in becoming a shareholder with the company and Read and Rigby's offer of a partnership. Father Jonathan was cautious, but John did become a partner.

The "Middlesex Journal and Evening Advertiser" Issue 830, for the 21st to the 23rd of July 1774, listing linen imports from Dublin to London reads: "Read, Rigby and Darby". In "The London Gazette" number 12202 for Tuesday the 26th to Saturday the 30th of June 1781 on page five, left hand column at the top is the notice:

London, June 30, 1781. The Term of Partnership between Mess. Read, Rigby, and Darby, of the Old Jewry, London, expiring this Day, Notice thereof is hereby given; and that all Debts due to and from the said Partnership will be received and paid by them, at their Compting-house, No. 31, Old Jewry. [Signed] John Read. Geo. Rigby. John Darby.¹⁰

The "Directory of London and Westminster, & Borough of Southwark" for 1794 has "Read, Darby & Co., Merchts., 31, Old Jewry".

The Vaughans

When cautioning John about becoming a business partner father Jonathan mentions his friend Benjamin Vaughan as someone who could advise him. In his letters to his son, Jonathan repeatedly mentions Samuel, Benjamin, and John Vaughan as good friends and often asks John to greet John Vaughan (Samuel's brother) and his family.

Samuel Frier Vaughan is of particular interest as John Nelson Darby's maternal grandfather.¹¹ He was born in Ireland on the 23rd of April 1720 as the fourth and youngest son of Benjamin and Ann (Wolf) –



Samuel Frier Vaughan
(1720–1802)

Portrait by Robert Edge Pine
(Source: Wikipedia)

¹⁰ <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/12202/page/5>.

¹¹ When working on the first edition of my biography many years ago before the arrival of the internet I could find nothing on Samuel Vaughan, the father of John Nelson Darby's mother. Since then I've have received much material. Many people have been very helpful in supplying information and material or pointing me in right directions. I have already mentioned Charles Darby and his wife Glenys, but I must also mention Philip McNair, Danny D. Smith, Timothy Stunt, Ron Kley, and Richard Clarke. I am especially indebted to Ron Kley, the Curator/Archivist at the Vaughan Woods and Historic Homestead in Hallowell, Maine, for new information relating to Samuel Vaughan, information which has required rewriting previous accounts of Samuel Vaughan's early life. Much of what is now contained here I have him to thank for.

their twelfth and last child. Benjamin was the son of William Vaughan (1620–1698), a London merchant who was an “adventurer” or speculative investor. As a dividend for his investment in support of a British war against Ireland he received the Ballyboe Estate near the town of Clonmel in County Tipperary, some 90 kilometers south of Leap Castle.¹²

Some accounts say that the Vaughan family related to the Darbys through marriage came from Golden Grove, Ireland, but this is incorrect. There is a strong undocumented family tradition which traces the Vaughan lineage to a Welsh ancestor, one Gryffyll (or Gryffydd) Fychen (Fychen transliterated to Vaughan by the British, meaning small or son). He was allegedly one of several Welsh archers who rescued British King Henry V at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415.¹³

The Vaughan family was quite wealthy, a wealth amassed from sheep farming in Ireland and commodities trading in wool, fish and timber, but as the twelfth son Samuel stood no chance of inheriting this wealth. He was apprenticed to Mather Corr, a merchant involved in the West Indian Trade, for five years on the 2nd of October 1736, and went with him to Jamaica.¹⁴ According to Sally V. Eagle, Samuel Vaughan was sent to Jamaica via Boston by his company to attend to the export business there.¹⁵ During this apprenticeship period he would receive no pay, but “clothing, room and board, along with instruction in the basics of mercantile trade – buy low, sell high, keep good records with accurate arithmetic, understand the complexities of buying/selling on credit and calculating rates of interest, manage the calculations involved in bartering of goods and/or services, be able to carry on negotiations in different languages and currencies, and maintain personal integrity in the process.”¹⁶

This was a very favorable time for Samuel to enter the business world as the British islands in the West Indies were becoming major sources of wealth, mainly from the production of sugar, but also rum, coffee and spices among other agricultural products. By 1746 or 1747 Samuel Vaughan, some 5 years after his apprenticeship, had attained some wealth and was probably the owner of at least one Jamaican plantation at this time. He was now wealthy enough to marry Sarah Hallowell on the 1st of February 1747 in New South Church, Boston, Massachusetts, by Rev. Joseph Sewall D.D. Together the couple would have a total of eleven children.

¹² Information supplied by Ron Kley. See also Burke’s “Landed Gentry” (1939 edition, p. 2950) which gives the Vaughan location in Ireland as being at Ballyhoe, Clonmel, in Tipperary.

¹³ Information supplied by Ron Kley.

¹⁴ Joseph Jackson Howard, *Miscellanea genealogica et heraldica*, London (Mitchell Hughes and Clarke) 1886, vol. 4, p. 87.

¹⁵ At <http://genforum.genealogy.com/hallowell/messages/284.html>.

¹⁶ Information supplied by Ron Kley from the work-in-progress paper “Samuel Vaughan in Jamaica”.



Sarah (Hallowell) Vaughan
(1698–1773)

(Source: Wikipedia)

Sarah Hallowell (born 26 February 1726) was the daughter of Benjamin Hallowell (1698–1773), the King’s Naval Commissioner, who was a major shareholder in a land company owning 1½ million acres in central Maine in America. The newlyweds went from Boston to Jamaica, where son Benjamin was born in January 1751. (He was raised in London and educated at Cambridge and Temple Inn. He became acquainted with Joseph Priestley while a student at Warrington Academy where Priestley was an instructor and boarded with his family. Benjamin Franklin he knew while still living at home where Franklin was a frequent guest. At university, he became associated with the group including Jeremy Bentham, and William Petty, the Earl of Shelburne.) Samuel obtained his own coffee and sugar plantations in Jamaica as well as breeding and raising cattle. Most of these plantations were along the inland rivers of St. James Parish (with its capital at Montego Bay).

I quote here at length from *Samuel Vaughan in Jamaica* as to one of these plantations:

The plantation of unknown name was of diminutive size (a mere 37 acres), but may well have been the most elegant in terms of its situation. It was located on a hill overlooking the ocean just south of the present city center of Montego Bay. Its major features, including Samuel’s “Mansion House” are shown on a 1765 plan drawn by Samuel himself (#22035 in the Vaughan Homestead collection is a black & white photographic copy of the original colored plan at the Peabody Essex Museum, which was probably once bound into the Samuel Vaughan folio that is now at Bowdoin).

Lady Maria Nugent’s Jamaican journal entry for April 9, 1802, described Montego Bay as being “situated in an amphitheater of very high hills. In front a most beautiful bay, full of vessels, and open to the sea. On the hills are all the gentlemen’s houses...interspersed with gardens, palms of all sorts, &c. So that, from the town, quite up to the tops of the hills, you see nothing but villas peeping out from among the foliage.” Samuel Vaughan’s plantation and mansion, as shown in his 1765 plan, must have occupied one of the choicest sites of all.

Of course the maintenance of these properties could not be kept up without the help of slave labor. Some accounts say that Samuel Vaughan eventually owned 300 slaves.¹⁷

¹⁷ “Hundreds of slaves, including African-born Negroes and Creoles (Jamaican-born Negroes or Mulattoes) provided the labor force on these plantations, as well as the household staff for the owners’ or overseers’ residences. An 1815 letter from Samuel’s son, Samuel Jr., (#3987 in the Homestead collection) gives 732 as the maximum total number of slaves that his father had “put on” to his plantations during his lifetime. Given the natural attrition of slave populations due to age, disease, injuries, etc., however, it is unlikely that Samuel’s slave ownership exceeded 550 or 600 at any single point in time. The same letter indicates that Samuel had actually purchased only 39 individual slaves during his lifetime, indicating that the plantations he owned had been acquired as “going concerns” complete with crops, buildings, pro-

From 1736 to 1752 Samuel Vaughan was in Jamaica, after which the family went to London, where he opened his own merchant-banking firm.¹⁸ Anne, the Vaughans' fifth child, was born on the 24th of October 1757. The Vaughans were Unitarians¹⁹ and not Church of England. Two of the sons, Benjamin and William, were tutored by Joseph Priestley²⁰ at Warrington Academy (an Arian academy established in 1757). Anne Vaughan was baptized in Crutched Friars, a Dissenting Church in London.²¹

Samuel returned to America with his wife and three daughters in 1783 and arrived in Philadelphia on 8 September. He was elected one of the Vice Presidents of the American Philosophical Society there in May 1784. In September 1786 his wife and daughters returned to London while he remained in America for some time. He went to Jamaica in 1787 for more than a year, then back to America in 1789 and finally to England in 1790.²²

As mentioned above, Samuel Vaughan and his family were Unitarians, and he seems to have been more interested in architecture and gardening than religion. Samuel left his mark in America in many ways through his friendship with George Washington and others. He even commissioned a portrait of Washington, which is apparently the only one showing him with his natural teeth, and sent him a marble mantelpiece from his home in London. His involvement in gardening extends from landscaping Independence Square (then known as "State House Yard" or "State House Garden")²³ to being instrumental in the publication of *Arbustum Americanum: The American Grove, or, An Alphabetical Catalogue of Forest Trees and Shrubs, Natives of the American United States, arranged according to the Linnæan system* by Humphry Marshall.²⁴ The following can also be found: George Washington and Samuel Vaughan, "Serpentine Double-Row Tree Al-

cessing equipment and their existing enslaved workforce." From *Samuel Vaughan in Jamaica*.

¹⁸ Samuel Vaughan ("and Son" added in 1783), Dunster's Court, next to Clothworkers Hall, off Mincing Lane. Information supplied by Philip McNair. In my previous work I had referred to Samuel Vaughan as becoming a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Scriveners in 1746, which would have required his being in England. This information was based on research by others who had, it now seems, confused two different Samuel Vaughans - a not uncommon name in England at the time. As Ron Kley informs me, Samuel Vaughan was, as letters for the time period prove, intermittently in Jamaica from the 1730s through to the 1760s.

¹⁹ From the "unity of God", i.e. the belief that there is only one person in the deity and not three as in the Trinity. Unitarianism stresses individual freedom and the use of reason in religious matters.

²⁰ Well-known and authoritative spokesman for Unitarianism. Denied the Immaculate Conception and believed Jesus to be a man and not divine. Famous for discovering oxygen in 1774.

²¹ On the 21st of November 1757 by the Rev. Dr. George Benson, Pastor of the Crutched Friars Presbyterian Church. Information supplied by Philip McNair.

²² Decades later John Nelson Darby would travel to Maine and Jamaica visiting groups of the Brethren there.

²³ https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/hh/17/hh17f.htm.

²⁴ <https://specialcollections.nal.usda.gov/series-x-marshall-note-usda-history-collection>.

lée”, *Plan For Mount Vernon, Virginia* (1787) and Samuel Vaughan, *Plan for a Public Garden*, Pennsylvania State House, Philadelphia (1785–1787).²⁵ Nevertheless religious matters were not completely uninteresting for him. In George Willis Cooke’s *Unitarianism in America: A History of its Origin and Development* under the heading “King’s Chapel becomes Unitarian” we find:

[. . .] Rev. William Hazlitt, the father of the essayist and critic of the same name, who had been settled over several of the smaller Unitarian churches in Great Britain. In the spring of 1783 he visited the United States, and spent several months in Philadelphia. He gave a course of lectures on the Evidences of Christianity in the college there, which were largely attended ... He gave in Boston his course of lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, and it was received with much favor by large audiences.

The winter of 1784–85 was spent by Mr. Hazlitt in Hallowell, Me., in which place was a small group of wealthy English Unitarians, led by Samuel Vaughan, by whom Mr. Hazlitt had been entertained in Philadelphia.²⁶

Much more can be said about the Vaughan family which is of great interest – especially the lives of some of Samuel’s sons (some are mentioned in the *Dictionary of American Biography* and *American National Biography*) – but that would detract here where it does not have direct relevance to Darby and his immediate family.

Marriage

Just when the friendships between the Darbys and Vaughans began is difficult to say. Certainly in Ireland, but how and when I have not been able to determine. Jonathan in a letter to his son John mentions a certain transaction involving Benjamin Vaughan in 1768. This Benjamin is most likely Samuel Vaughan’s brother (1713–1786)²⁷ and not his son (who would have been only 17 years of age at the time) and Jonathan also writes of remaining indebted to him. In Jonathan’s letters he mentions family visits to their Lovett relatives at Limscombe in Buckinghamshire and Kingswell in Tipperary – the Vaughans as noted above were also in Tipperary. Possibly there were connections there, or maybe they came about through business dealings in Dublin. In any case it is clear that John Darby had been acquainted with the Vaughans for a long time, maybe even since his early childhood.



Anne (Vaughan) Darby
(1757–1847)

Courtesy of Charles and Glenys Darby

²⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20080724152537/https://www3.nd.edu/~tschlere/Tjschlereh/chapteroutlinea.htm>.

²⁶ <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/8605/8605-h/8605-h.htm>.

²⁷ Richard Clarke, whose wife Anne is a direct descendant from this Vaughan family line, wrote to me: “Benjamin Vaughan married Hannah Halfide [. . .] While Benjamin was born in Ballyboe where he became a scrivener and ship broker, he married Hannah at St Bennets, St Paul’s Wharf, London [January 17th 1735] and is buried at Gt Pardon Essex. In London he was involved in the Calico dyeing trade with his wife’s family. They had a factory at Merton in SW London.”

Family Vaughan members were in London while John was apprenticed at Read & Rigby's.

The Darby Archives in East Sussex make mention of a trip by John Darby to America ("during his absence in America"), but without any exact dates.²⁸ I began to search for possible references elsewhere and archives in America proved to be of help. Besides finding an extensive exchange of letters between Samuel Vaughan and his sons with George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin during my research, I also came across one letter written by a John Darby to George Washington from Boston dated the 2nd of August 1783²⁹. This John Darby mentions letters of introduction and letters from friends for Washington and his own wish to meet him personally. Could this John Darby possibly have been John Nelson's father?

I had never been able to find John and Anne Darby's marriage papers. Other researchers' efforts had been just as futile. We were all looking in the wrong places. Danny D. Smith came to my help and supplied the necessary information: John Darby and Anne Vaughan married in America, not Great Britain.

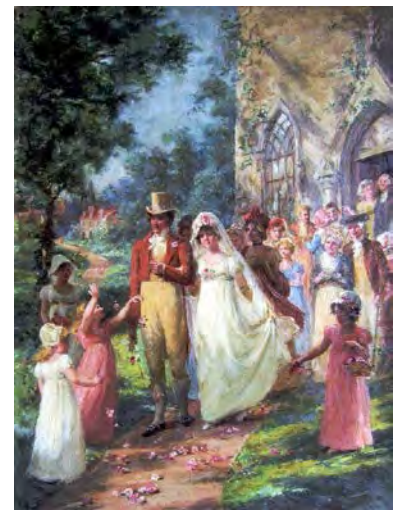
John Darby was married to Anne Vaughan on the 21st of July 1784 by the rector of Trinity Church Parish, New York, Rev. Samuel Provoost.³⁰ (Its sister Church is St. Mary-Le-Bow in Cheapside, London, very close to Old Jewry, where John Darby lived. Today this area belongs to the parish of St. Mary-Le-Bow, but it didn't in 1784.) A newspaper account states that the marriage took place in Flushing, New York, on Long Island,³¹ very probably at St. George's Chapel or possibly St. Paul's Chapel as Trinity Church had been destroyed by fire in 1776 and the new foundation stone not laid until the 23rd of August 1788 – by Rev. Provoost. Anne Vaughan brought a dowry of £2,500 with her into the marriage.

But July 1784 is not August 1783 so maybe it was a completely different John Darby writing to George Washington, though the Vaughan connections seem to make that a possibility. (Samuel Vaughan's wife was from Boston.) I then had the good fortune of being contacted by Ron Kley, the Curator/Archivist at the Vaughan Woods and Historic Homestead in Hallowell, Maine (USA). He informed me of a large col-



Rev. Samuel Provoost
(1742–1815)

(Source: <http://anglicanhistory.org>)



Colonial Wedding Scene

painting by Jennie Augusta Brownscombe (1850–1936), known for her genre paintings, including revolutionary and colonial American history.

(Source: Wayne County Historical Society)

²⁸ Mentioned in item no. 194 "Letter from John Darby to George Lambert, Bedford Row [17 Dec 1821]", East Sussex Record Office, AMS 6146, Archive of the Darby Family of London and Markly in Warbleton 1789–1894.

²⁹ George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741–1799: Series 4 "John Darby to George Washington, August 2, 1783".

³⁰ Rev. Dr. Samuel Provoost was appointed Rector of Trinity in 1784 and in 1787 he was consecrated as the first Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of New York. He represented the rationalistic mentality that became the Broad Church Party.

³¹ "On Tuesday was married at Flushing, on Long-Island, by the Rev. Dr. Provost, John Darby, Esq., of London, to Miss Vaughan, eldest daughter of Samuel Vaughan, Esq., of Philadelphia." *The New York Packet and the American Advertiser*, Thursday, 22 July 1784, p. 3, col. 1. (With thanks to Joseph Ditta, Reference Librarian at The New York Historical Society.) As was the case with John Nelson Darby's birth announcement this presents a problem as well: Tuesday was not the 21st, but the 20th.

lection of correspondence between the Darbys and Vaughans and was so generous to supply me with copies and other information related to their contents, and I am greatly indebted to him. This collection contains a letter written by John Darby which proves that he was in America not only in 1784, but also in 1783.

As noted above, Samuel Vaughan was in America with his three daughters from September 1783 on and Darby, as the above mentioned letter shows, since December of that year at the very latest, so he could easily have been in America since August and thus the author of the letter to George Washington. Whatever John Darby's feelings for Anne Vaughan may have been before he came to America cannot be determined, but one thing is sure: things came to a head while he was there.

Ron Kley also directed me to the Charles Vaughan (Anne's younger brother) collection of letters in the Special Collections Division of the Bowdoin College Library in Brunswick, Maine, and I am very thankful to the Archivist Caroline Moseley for providing me with copies of those I was interested in. The official designation for the Charles Vaughan papers is M-180. Ones containing interesting Darby references are outlined as:

Box 1, Folder 12

10 December 1783: Letter from John Darby in Philadelphia to Charles Vaughan at Montego Bay, forwarded to him c/o William Vaughan at Mincing Lane, London.

Topic(s) opaque, but forwarding indicates that Charles Vaughan has made an unexpected trip to London. Darby says in this letter that he has been rejected by Anne (Charles's sister). Anne did, however, eventually marry John.

Box 1, Folder 13

12 December 1783: Letter from Anne Darby to Charles Vaughan at Montego Bay.

She apologizes for her stupidity in failing to heed Charles's advice (perhaps in regard to her rejection of John Darby).

Box 1, Folder 20

5 August 1784: Letter from Sarah (Hallowell) Vaughan in Flushing, Long Island, New York, to Charles Vaughan in London.

She is concerned about Charles's health and that he has left Jamaica (apparently for health reasons) when his presence there was essential to his father's interest. Reports that her daughter Anne and her husband (John Darby) have left for England and suspects that she will never see Anne again. (At this time Sarah Vaughan thought that her family was relocating permanently to Philadelphia.)

I return now to the copy of the John Darby letter I received from Ron Kley (No. 3156 in the collection) which he wrote to Anne's brother

Charles while he was at sea on his way back to England. It has no other date than December 1783, but judging from its contents it was written after the one in Box 1, Folder 12 in the Bowdoin College Library dated the 10th of December 1783. In this letter Darby mentions a ball held for General Washington among others (a further point to suppose he was the author of the August letter), and he writes of his strong profession of love for Anne – using her family nickname of “Nancy”. He describes how Anne held him off at first and how heart-broken he was, but how things then developed for the better and how he could have hope saying, if he ever returned to Philadelphia he would not leave it again a single man. This clearly suggests that it was written after the December 10th letter where he spoke of rejection. Since then something had happened. He begins this letter with reference to one he obviously had written shortly before and it is probably not wrong to assume it was the December 10th one he was referring to. When reading this second letter one gets the strong impression one is reading a draft or basis for a Jane Austen novel. Here I allow myself to quote Ron Kley’s excellent description of it (see Appendix B for a complete transcript of the letter):

I think you’ll find the first of the letters to be quite a treasure. It was written at sea by John Darby after a rather traumatic parting with Anne in Philadelphia. It seems that her parents and siblings were united in their affection for John, but “Nancy” wanted nothing more than his “brotherly” affection. The letter provides an almost breathless play-by-play of who said what to whom on the occasion of their “final” meeting at a grand social event. I don’t know how much of this you might want to incorporate into a straight-faced biography, but it has to rank as one of the most personally revealing and unreserved letters among the thousands of very decorous and reserved communications that we’ve seen among family correspondence.

I have also been able to trace some Darby family letters at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia written after John and Anne had married and returned to England. Among them is a letter by Anne Darby from 1787 to her sister Rebecca, who was staying with the well-known Unitarian Dr. Priestley at the time in Fair Hill (Birmingham).

It contains advice on proper feminine behaviour. At the close Anne mentions her daughter Susan, who must have been two years old at the time.³²

Whereas Anne’s 1787 letter gives one the impression that she had a detached attitude to religion at that time in her life – she advises her sister not to overdo it in religious matters and tells her to seek Priest-

³² American Philosophical Society, Benjamin Vaughan Papers 1746–1900, “Darby, Ann, ALS to Vaughan, Rebecca [Merrick] Letter of advice. 1787 June 19. 4 p.”

ley's recommendation on which books to read – her children Jonathan and Susan seemed to have been very religious.³³

Whatever Unitarian influences there had been in Anne's life, she was later very definitely Church of England. Through Philip McNair I have learned that letters existed which she wrote to her son John Nelson Darby after he had left the Church, stating that she could well defend the Anglican position against the one he had taken. John and Anne's first three children, Susanna (1785), Jonathan (1787) and William Lovett Henry d'Esterre (1788), were all baptized in St. Olave, Jewry.

John Darby moved from Old Jewry to a large house at St. John's, Cambridge Heath, Hackney, in rural Middlesex. He had his business at 7 Russia Row, Milk Street, in Cheapside, at first as John Darby & Co., Merchants, and later as John Darby, Gibb & Co., Merchants.³⁴



St. Olave Jewry, Old Jewry

Engraved by William Watkins from an original study by Thomas Hosmer Shepherd in Shepherd's series "London and its Environs in the Nineteenth Century" (London: 1829–1832).



³³ I have a copy of a letter by Susan Darby, then Pennefather, from 1809 describing her brother Jonathan's illness and death. American Philosophical Society, Benjamin Vaughan Papers 1746–1900, "Pennefather, Darby, ALS to her relatives [1809 September]. 4 p."

³⁴ Information supplied by Philip McNair. See also the *Introduction* to the Darby archives (AMS 6146) in the East Sussex Record Office. Benjamin Wills Newton said that John Darby, through his brother Henry d'Esterre, was aided by Lord Nelson in getting orders for supplying the Navy with foodstuffs (Fry Manuscripts, large book, p. 61) – a very lucrative business at the time.

<http://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/nonconform~91~1~393922~163594?qvq=q%3ACBA+7049&mi=0&trs=1>.

Westminster

In 1800 the family, then numbering seven children, moved to a house in Westminster (London) as under-tenants, number 9 Great George Street,³⁵ which was leased from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey and John Darby eventually bought the lease in 1814. Great George Street was a private speculation by James Mallors, who obtained Parliamentary powers to have it built. The first houses were erected in 1755.³⁶ The street was built shortly after the erection of Westminster Bridge which opened on the 18th of November 1750 and linked Westminster on the west side and Lambeth on the east side of the River Thames. Great George Street covered ground which had once formed at an arm of the Thames, the tide flowing from Bridge Street into the canal of St. James's Park. The Darby house was on the western end of Great George Street, close to Storey's Gate, the entrance to St. James's Park³⁷ and number 9 stood on the south side of the street. It was not occupied until 1761, and the Darbys were the 9th occupiers.



Storey's Gate St. James Park 1820 – Engraved by John Greenaway (1816–1890) from a study (based on an earlier source) by William Henry Prior. Originally produced for *Old and New London, Westminster and the Western Suburbs*, vol. 4, p. 43. (London: 1873–1878). Behind the gate is Great George Street and the Darby house is about at the position behind the tree on the far left side of the picture. (Source: Ash Rare Books, London)

It was here, on the 18th of November, that John Nelson Darby was born. He was baptized fifteen weeks later on the 3rd of March 1801, at St. Margaret's Church, (more-or-less "just around the corner"), according to the rites of the national church. In 1874 he wrote, "The

³⁵ Ca. 1825 the street was renumbered and 9 was changed to 10.

³⁶ Isobel Watson, *Westminster and Pimlico Past*, London (Historical Publications) 1993, pp. 41 and 49.

³⁷ Edward Walford, *Old and New London, Westminster and the Western Suburbs*, London (Cassell Petter & Galpin), 1873–1878, vol. 4, pp. 30 & 47.

circumstances of my own baptism, though done bona fide, and in the main with right intentions, were not such as I should wish, but I do not think it can be repeated.”³⁸

His first name John was in keeping with a long tradition of “Johns” in the family. His middle name, Nelson, certainly was given to him because of his uncle’s connection with the man by that name who at the time was the active head of the Navy and hero of the British people. No evidence has of yet been found, but from earliest accounts of his life it was said that Lord Nelson was Darby’s godfather. If he was, he was not present at the baptism. One Darby biographer claimed that Nelson held the baby over the baptismal font himself. Besides the fact that Nelson at the time had only one arm, having lost the other at the battle of Teneriffa, he was on his ship, the *St. George*, at Spithead on the 3rd of March 1801; the *St. James Chronicle* reported him to have been at Yarmouth on the 4th of March, and not in London at all. Yet this does not mean that Lord Nelson could not have been Darby’s godfather. William Kelly, a close friend of Darby’s in later years, stated this as a fact in one of his letters dated the 22nd of June 1899. Nelson was probably represented by a sponsor at the actual baptism, which was permitted then as it is today.

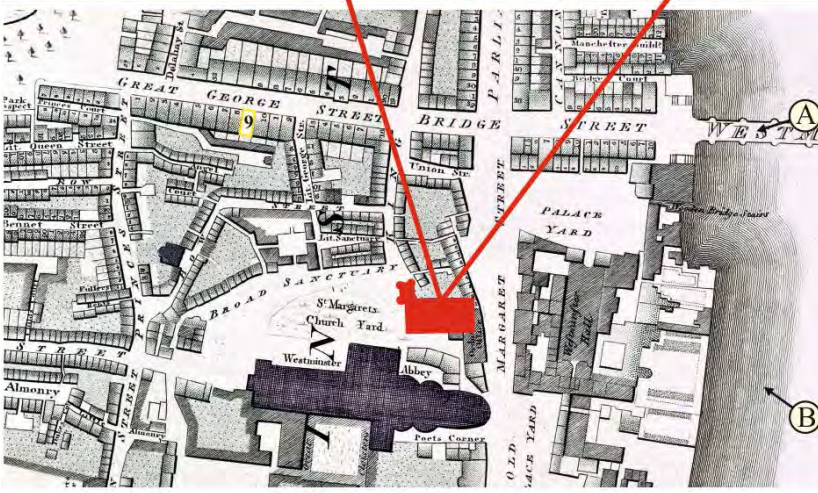
Great George Street No. 9 no longer exists, but photographs at the London Metropolitan Archives showing the exterior and some interiors from the 1920s as well as a description in *Survey of London* (pp. 30–31) still do.

The general exterior of the premises is of plain brickwork, relieved at the level of the third floor by a modillion cornice, while plain flat bands indicate the levels of the first and second floors. The entrance doorway has side lights, with a semi-elliptical fanlight over.

The main staircase walls at the first-floor landing are decorated with plaster panels enriched with foliated scrolls and swags of fruit and flowers, while the line of the modillion cornice is continued around the well with a moulded stringcourse enriched with foliated scrolls. The tracery treatment at the head of the panels is interesting, and records the Gothic motifs in use at this period. The main cornice to the stair-well below the elliptical lantern-light is heavily moulded, and has a coved frieze with a scroll ornament. The back staircase has turned balusters and moulded close strings. The front room on the first floor contains a moulded and carved white mantelpiece with fluted Corinthian columns. The wood skirtings, chair-rails and linings are moulded and carved with a fret.

The back room to this floor contains a decorative plaster ceiling in low relief, which is now intercepted by a partition.³⁹

³⁸ *Letters of J. N. D.*, Lancing, Sussex (Kingston Bible Trust) n. d., vol. 2, p. 292.



Top left: The Church of St Margaret with Westminster Abbey in the background. Top right: Interior of St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, dated 1809. Both prints are from Ackermann's *Repository of Arts*, an illustrated British periodical published from 1809 to 1829.

Center: Map from *Plan of the cities of London and Westminster: the Borough of Southwark, and parts adjoining, shewing every house* issued 1799.⁴⁰

Bottom left "A": "View on Westminster Bridge" from Thomas Malton's *A Picturesque Tour Through the Cities of London and Westminster, illustrated with the most interesting Views, accurately delineated, and executed in Aquatinta*, published between 1792 and 1801. Bottom right "B": "View of Westminster Hall and Bridge" from Rudolph Ackermann's *Microcosm of London* (1808–10).

One interesting piece of information supplied to me by Danny D. Smith is the account of a cousin of Darby's from America who visited his relatives in England in 1801. He mentions Darby's mother and his getting along quite well with Darby's brother Jonathan and sister Susan (Susanna).

³⁹ *Survey of London: Volume 10, St. Margaret, Westminster, Part I: Queen Anne's Gate Area*, (London County Council), London, 1926.

⁴⁰ *Map of London* <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/c6c5fde5-e721-4bbc-e040-e00a18067bd1>.

From *Early Recollections of Robert Hallowell Gardiner 1782–1864*, Hallowell, Maine (White & Horne) 1936:

Immediately after taking my degree, my name was entered as a student at law in the office of Mr. John Lowell, and I went to spend the summer in Kennebec. My health had been delicate from infancy, and it was feared that the same disease which had carried off my mother and sisters was commencing its ravages upon me. Instead, therefore, of going into a lawyer's office I was advised to travel in Europe till I should attain my majority, when my presence would be necessary here. Unfortunately, I was not prepared for foreign travel. I could read French but was unable to speak any language but my native tongue, and I had little knowledge of the literature, manners, or customs of continental Europe. My letters of introduction were only to merchants and might be considered merely as bills of exchange for a dinner. And tho' I became acquainted in England with a few country gentlemen and their families, this acquaintance was quite limited, and I was introduced to no literary or scientific society. I went to England with the family of Mr. Dickerson, an English merchant who had made a large fortune in this country, to which he had become attached, and would not have left it but for the urgent solicitations of his father.

On my arrival I went immediately to Mr. Wm. Vaughan's⁴¹ [1752–1850, Director of Royal Exchange Assurance Corporation from 1783–1829], who kept bachelor's hall in London. He received me into his house in the most friendly manner and after a few days dispatched me to his mother, my aunt [Sarah Hallowell/Vaughan], who spent part of the year at Brighton with her aged husband and two unmarried daughters. She had a fine understanding and great dignity of character, and that Christian kindness and courtesy which are superior to all artificial polish of manners, and was strongly endued with that most useful of all qualities, common sense.

I arrived there at tea time and was received with the cordiality to be expected for the only son of a beloved brother [Robert Hallowell]. After many enquiries about my health and habits, finding that I did not wear flannel, without saying anything to me on the subject, she had a suit made up that evening and placed at my bed side ready to put on in the morning. Mrs. Darby [Anne Darby], the oldest daughter of Mrs. Vaughan, was staying at the same time at Brighton with some of her children,

⁴¹ "Note of R. H. G. 2nd. Father used to tell us that when he first arrived in London and was staying with Mr. William Vaughan, he suggested to Mr. V. that as he had two or three months at his command, he would like to go into his counting room and learn bookkeeping. Mr. V. answered 'learn bookkeeping in three months! Why you could not think of doing it under seven years, and that would be scarcely time enough.' And to this father added to us the remark, Mr. Vaughan kept five distinct sets of books, and contrived to bookkeep away the whole of his own and the family estates, and died a bankrupt."

and I there first became acquainted with them. Mr. Darby belonged to an Irish aristocratic family possessed of valuable estates, but as a younger son he was without fortune. Disregarding the prejudices of his class he established himself in London as a merchant, and from his own character and the standing of the family, he became the principal agent of the extensive linen manufacturers in the neighborhood of the family estates and acquired a handsome fortune. He had a family of eight children, with several of whom I subsequently became intimate.

When I was staying with them at my aunt's at Hackney, I formed a particular friendship with Susan [Darby], the oldest daughter, an uncommonly fine woman, who subsequently married Mr. Pennyfether [Edward Pennefather], an eminent Irish barrister, who became Chief Justice of Ireland with the title of Baron Pennyfether [the Baron reference is incorrect, that was Edward's brother Richard]. The oldest son, Jonathan [Darby], was a young man of most excellent character but died soon after I left England. Mr. Darby's oldest brother, an Admiral in the British navy [Henry d'Esterre Darby], was never married, and upon his death the extensive Irish estates descended to Mr. Darby's son, William Henry, being then the oldest. (pp. 48–50)

[. . .]

Upon my return to London I spent some weeks among my relations in the vicinity of that city. At my Aunt Vaughan's, I renewed my intimacy with the Darbys, one or more of the children being constantly with their grandmother. With Jonathan, a young man of high principle and with Susan, afterwards Mrs. Pennyfether [Pennefather], I became on the most friendly terms. (pp. 54–55)

Family Life

We do not know enough about John Nelson Darby's parents to be able to accurately describe the atmosphere that ruled in the house. Given how Anne Darby valued Joseph Priestley's opinion, as noted above, one wonders if his works had any influence on how the Darby children were raised, considering the fact that Priestley also wrote on education and the raising of children, e.g. his *Considerations for the Use of Young Men and the Parents of Young Men* (London, J. Johnson, 1776). His *Miscellaneous Observations Relating to Education*, which contains a lengthy dedication to Anne's father Samuel Vaughan dated 1778, deals at length with the raising of children. I quote here just one passage:

The reciprocal duties of parents and children, and especially those of children to parents, should be particularly insisted upon, in the education of persons of large fortunes. These affections, which, next to the conjugal ones, are the most valuable

ingredients in the cup of human life, have not the same opportunity of being properly formed, and of coming to their due maturity, in the highest, as they have in the middling, or even in the lowest classes of life: for the circumstances which most eminently contribute to their formation and growth are frequent intercourse, and mutual dependence.

It is the constant, hourly attention a mother gives to her child, an attention that commences, on her part, even before it is born, and not anything properly instinctive, that is the cause of the idea of it becoming associated with almost every idea and affection of her soul, which is the source of maternal tenderness, a kind of tenderness that the father seldom feels anything of till some months afterwards, when it is acquired by the same attention. Hence it is that a sickly child generally gets the largest share of its parents' love. It requires, and gets, the largest share of their attention. For the same reason, also, nurses, who are not mothers, feel more of this tenderness than the mothers who send their children out to nurse. The same familiar intercourse that endears a child to a parent, does, likewise, endear the parent to the child; and to expect these affections without such intercourse and attention, is the same thing as expecting the harvest without the previous seed-time.⁴²

Before the term "nanny" came into general use "nurse" was the more common one. Children of upper class families would have had one and this person was the main caretaker of the children from birth to about five years of age and at times longer. Nurses, or nursemaids, often served a family for years and became very attached to it. Besides feeding and bathing the children, the nurse instructed them in proper manners, teaching them to walk, took all meals with them, played with them, began their basic education and so forth. We know the name of the nurse employed by the Darby family – Miss Hutton. Miss A. M. Stoney (the daughter of James Butler Stoney, a close friend of John Nelson Darby among the Brethren) passed on an account of her written by someone who knew Miss Hutton personally entitled *Story of Miss Hutton who was a Nurse to Mr. Darby when He was a Child*.⁴³ This account states that Miss Hutton was in the Darby family when the children were infants and for years during their childhood. Later she left for Keswick, Cumberland and also became a member of the Brethren. She greatly valued Darby's writings and recommended them to others. Apparently Darby visited Keswick two or three times for the express purpose of seeing her. She had definitely left a lasting impression upon him and the fact that she shared his views certainly strengthened any attachment there was between the two, one perhaps stronger than between direct family members who did not. It is regrettable that we have no

⁴² *The Theological and Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Priestly, L.L.D. F.R.S. &c.*, vol. 25, p. 56.

⁴³ See <https://www.brethrenarchive.org/people/john-nelson-darby/>.

known accounts written by her concerning Darby as they would be most valuable in giving us a glimpse of the boy behind the man.

One thing we do know about Darby's childhood: he never had to take music lessons. Writing to someone near the end of his life in 1881 he remarked in a discussion about music:

I am very thankful your conscience has been exercised about the music. I can sympathise with you, for as far as ear goes, music had the greatest power over me, though never taught to play.⁴⁴

And in an earlier letter he expressed the opinion: "It [music] may have to be taught or learned where worldly parents require it."^{45 46}

In the past I had very scant information on John Darby. Information which led me to reach the rather hasty and unfair conclusion that John Darby was not a pleasant man. But this was based mainly on his

⁴⁴ *Letters*, vol. 3, p. 475.

⁴⁵ *Letters*, vol. 3, p.36.

⁴⁶ Of great interest here is Lidia A. Chang's *Cultural Subtexts and Social Functions of Domestic Music-making in Jane Austen's England*, (2016. *Masters Theses*. 340. https://scholarworks.umass.edu/masters_theses_2/340), from which I quote the following:

The English, [. . .] favored music that could be played and enjoyed in their drawing rooms [. . .] (p.3.)

Developing musical cultivation at home was thus a primary means by which members of the merchant class could climb the social ladder. (p. 9.)

The kind and quantity of musical materials that were produced and consumed in England during the Georgian era reveal an extraordinarily vibrant musical culture. They also expose a tremendous and complex cultural shift in the wake of the Industrial Revolution that resulted in music becoming largely associated with women and domesticity. (p. 13.)

[. . .] the flute was the second-most-prevalent instrument in England, and was played primarily by middle and upper class men. An 1829 review in *The Athenaeum* (an English literary magazine) claimed, "We take for granted that one man out of ten plays the flute," (p. 10.)

[. . .] Additionally, the flute might have appealed to the upwardly mobile men of the mercantile class because of its popularity among the English nobility, played by such figures as George III and several members of the Peerage. (p. 11.)

So why was son Darby not taught to play an instrument? One can only speculate, but perhaps the answer lies in what Lidia A. Chang's refers to here:

In spite of (or perhaps because of) the popularity of the flute among middle-upper class men, the conduct books insist that men should not cultivate musical skill: [Quoting Lord Chesterfield]

If you love music, hear it; go to operas, concerts, and pay fiddlers to play for you; but I insist upon your neither piping nor fiddling. It puts a gentleman in a very frivolous, contemptible light; brings him into a great deal of bad company; and takes up a great deal of time, which might be much better employed. Few things would mortify me more, than to see you bearing a part in a concert, with a fiddle under your chin, or a pipe in your mouth. (pp. 18–19.)

Perhaps father Darby followed the advice of one of the numerous conduct books produced at the time, which were meant to instruct young people on proper behavior and etiquette, and which viewed playing, in contrast to listening to, music as something feminine and not manly.

business letters or business dealings. For example, while still living in Hackney he leased six small houses adjoining his premises “for the express purpose of not permitting improper persons to get into possession of them.” He allowed a man by the name of William Griffin to live in one of these houses and asked him to collect the rent from those living in the other houses. In 1816 Mr. Griffin himself was behind in paying his rent. Even against the advice of his solicitors, Darby had this man arrested and sent to prison.⁴⁷ Viewed superficially, that appears to be very hard and uncompassionate. But I have been able to obtain somewhat more information on the case and it appears that Mr. Griffin was not a very trustworthy person. So there can be very good reasons for Mr. Darby acting as he did. In addition to that there are accounts of Mr. Darby saving other persons from ruin.

One mistake we are all in danger of making is applying our feelings and opinions of the 21st century to the 19th. Doing so we will misunderstand many things. John Darby may not have been a father prone to romping about the livingroom with his children, but that need not make him to be an unconcerned or unloving father either. The letters which have come to light regarding his romance with Anne Darby (and which Ron Kley, who from his handling letters from this period has attained a certain expertise in, described as “one of the most personally revealing and un-reserved letters” seen thus far) reveal a very “romantic” and warmhearted John Darby and not just a cold, calculating “businessman”.

John Nelson Darby’s close friend James Butler Stoney, already mentioned above, once noted an interesting incident: “When J. N. D. was a young man, and exposing the defects of others, his father said to him: ‘I say, John, improve the world by one man.’”⁴⁸ One can only surmise that John Darby had applied the principles his father Jonathan had passed on to him and so he demonstrated a very practical approach to life and perhaps viewed his son’s spiritual exuberance somewhat skeptically, reminding him that changes begin with oneself before one can attempt to change the world.⁴⁹

Among the Darby letters at the American Philosophical Society mentioned above there is one from Anne (Vaughan) Darby to her brother Benjamin Vaughan dated the 4th of March 1806 in which she writes: “I can add with pleasure that our children are generally esteemed wherever they are known and none of them deficient in abilities.”⁵⁰

John Nelson Darby’s relationship with his mother has been the subject of some confusion. In one of the earliest books dealing with Darby’s life W.G. Turner writes that his mother died while he was still a

⁴⁷ From unfinished draft of *The Darby Influence in Warbleton, 1819–1939*, by Elizabeth Doff, p. 7 and East Sussex Record Office AMS 6146 items 70 to 72.

⁴⁸ *Letters from J. B. Stoney*, Lancing, Sussex (Kingston Bible Trust) n. d., vol. 2, pp. 267–268.

⁴⁹ The need for John Darby’s advice to his son seems confirmed when one reads that Benjamin Wills Newton recalls William Henry Darby calling his brother John Nelson “potted arrogance”. (*Fry Manuscripts*, large book, p. 216)

⁵⁰ American Philosophical Society, Benjamin Vaughan Papers 1746–1900.

child⁵¹ and 18 years later in the 1944 edition of the same book he is even more precise, stating that she died when he was only five years old. The difficulty with Turner's biography in its various editions (at least three) is that he gives no sources. Of course his work was not meant to be a scholarly study, but rather for the edification of readers who were, at least, sympathetic towards Darby and his views. Why does Turner make this claim when we know without a doubt that Anne Darby died in 1847 (as I will proceed to show) and not in 1805?

Darby himself is the cause for this confusion. In a work published in 1853 he wrote:

I have long, I suppose, looked at the portrait of my mother, who watched over my tender years with that care which only a mother knows how to bestow. I can just form some imperfect thought of her looks, for I was early bereft of her; but her eye fixed upon me that tender love which had me for its heart's object – which could win when I could know little else – which had my confidence before I knew what confidence was - by which I learnt to love, because I felt I was loved, was the object of that love which had its joy in serving me – which I took for granted must be; for I had never known naught else. All that which I had learnt, but which was treasured in my heart and formed part of my nature, was linked with the features which hung before my gaze. That was my mother's picture. It recalled her, no longer sensibly present, to my heart.⁵²

This is a very touching account. Too touching to be a personal revelation in a publication dealing with, in Darby's view, theological errors and meant for a wide reading audience. It is a personal revelation untypical for the time and untypical for Darby himself. Philip McNair and Timothy Stunt have aptly demonstrated that Darby is here arguing hypothetically⁵³ – the decisive word here is “suppose”. Darby is “supposing” a situation to make a point and not describing an actual one.

It could be that Turner, aware of the “I was early bereft of her” comment in the above quotation had somehow heard of the death of Darby's grandmother Susannah (Lovett) Darby who died on the 17th of November 1805 and erroneously combined the two. He was certainly not the last to do so. I was guilty of the same and even took the error one step further. During my initial research back in the 1980s I came across references to papers related to the Darby family in Warbleton, East Sussex (referred to above in connection with John Darby's trip to America). The files there are very extensive and mainly

⁵¹ W.G. Turner, *John Nelson Darby: A Biography* (London, 1926), pp. 14–15.

⁵² In *The Irrationalism of Infidelity* in J. N. Darby, *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* (Lancing, Sussex: Kingston Bible Trust), vol. 6, p. 37.

⁵³ Philip McNair in his unpublished biography of Darby and Timothy Stunt in private correspondence with me and elsewhere.



MARKLY

As found in *The History, Antiquities, and Topography of the County of Sussex*, by Thomas Walker Horsfield, 1835

contain letters of a business nature, particularly as regards the Markly Estate in Warbleton which John Darby purchased in 1819 with the purpose of qualifying for a grant of arms which he received in 1820.⁵⁴ It is there that Anne Darby, after a few days illness, died of influenza on the 29th of December 1847 aged 90,⁵⁶ and she is buried in the Warbleton Churchyard, the tombstone inscription reading: "In Memoriam. Anne, widow of John Darby of Leap Castle and Markly, died December 31st, 1847, aged 90."⁵⁷ (John Darby died in 1834.)

My discovery back then was something of a shock. At the time I only had Turner's statements at my disposal and not the faintest idea that Darby's own statements were not to be taken literally. So I drew the only, I believe, logical conclusion: if Anne Darby did not die when Darby was five years old his statement that he was early bereft of her could only mean they had somehow become separated. Anne Darby, so to say, banned to Markly. A completely misinformed and incorrect conclusion on my part.

During the time I was working on what would become my initial John Nelson Darby biography I was greatly impressed by Darby and his teachings, seeing in him an exceptional "servant of the Lord" as I had been raised in the "Brethren" tradition. So I was very biased, thinking him right and others wrong. Within the Brethren fellowship I found myself at the time the general attitude towards the other members of the Darby family was negative, as they, the family, for the most part did not share Darby's theological views. Darby's father may not have been viewed as a villain, but the rumors that he had disinherited his son seemed to support the view that he was a man of bad character. So the fact that Anne Darby lived much longer than supposed and Darby, allegedly, spoke of losing her as a child, seemed to point to something sinister. Nothing could be further from the truth.

⁵⁴ <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/d44ac86e-1582-4d06-8414-077ed35671c7> and http://www.thekeep.info/collections/getrecord/GB179_AMS6146.

⁵⁵ The estate is described as: "Close to Rushlake is Markly, the beautiful residence of John Darby, Esq. of Leap Castle, King's County, who purchased it from the executors of Robert Hawes, Esq., who, during his abode there, made many additions. It is now a pleasant and convenient mansion." in *The History, Antiquities, and Topography of the County of Sussex*, Thomas Walker Horsfield, (Sussex Press), 1835, p. 571.

⁵⁶ *Sussex Agricultural Express and County Advertiser*, 1 January 1848, referenced by Philip McNair. *The Gentleman's Magazine* for February 1848, p. 222 also has this date and cause of death.

⁵⁷ As so often, so here as well, this December 31st date is incorrect. Not only that it differs from the date given in the papers mentioned in the preceding footnote, but also from the inscription on the John Darby memorial in the church in Aghancon, Ireland which reads: "Also of Anne his wife / who departed this life / Wednesday 29th Day of December 1847." (Michael Schneider kindly provided me with a copy of Anne's entry in the Sussex district's death registry which also confirms the 29th of December date.) Aghancon Church is situated on an elevation just across the fields from Leap Castle about 1.5 km away and can be seen over the valley. It was built in 1786, at the joint expense of Dr. Pery, then Bishop of Limerick, and Jonathan Darby (John's brother), *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, (S. Lewis & Co.), London, 1840, second edition, vol. 1, p. 17. There are numerous memorial plaques to the Darby family in the church and the Darby family tombs lie in the churchyard very close to the church. John Darby is buried here.

John Darby, in his will dated the 25th of September 1832,⁵⁸ left his wife Anne the lifelong use of Markly, all his ready money in his house in Great George Street or Markly, and an annuity of £500, and, expressly in a Codicil dated the 14th of September 1834, his portrait still hanging in the house in Great George Street – hardly the actions of a man towards an estranged wife. And as to John Nelson Darby supposedly not seeing his mother again I give here in full Philip McNair’s mention of Anne Darby’s exchange with her son regarding his ecclesiastical position, which I have already referred to above, as found in footnote 94 of McNair’s unpublished biography on page 58:

The late James B. Stonebridge, Esq., CBE, Legal Advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, told me that he had seen a letter from Anne Darby to her youngest son, written after he had left the Established Church in which she complained that she no longer knew how to address him – whether The Revd John N. Darby, or Mr John N. Darby, or John N. Darby, Esq., or just John N. Darby. In the same letter she stoutly maintained that she would be more than capable of answering his objections to Anglicanism.

McNair and Stunt have also pointed out a remark made by Darby in a letter dated the 3rd of August, 1843⁵⁹ in which he says that on his return to England from Lausanne he had been in Sussex and they are very probably correct in their assumption that he did so to visit his mother at Markly.

If we take Darby’s statements as to the effects of the loss of a mother on a young child as hypothetical and not a description of his own situation, that is not to say that they do not reflect what his own feelings would have been in such a situation. That he felt the relationship between a mother and her child to be important is evidenced in other examples or comparisons he used:

I have a charming portrait of my mother, which reminds me of her just as she was. If I am told of the canvas or the colouring, I should feel that those who spoke thus knew nothing about it. That would not be my mother. That which is precious in it to me is my mother herself; and they turn my attention from her to the means employed to recall her to me; and the reason is, that they have no idea of what my mother is to me. The portrait has no value except as far as it is a good representation of her who is not there. I say, It is my mother. I could not throw it aside as a mere piece of canvas; I discern my mother in it. I cherish this portrait; I carry it with me; but if I stop at the perfection of the painting as a work of art, the link with my heart is lost.⁶⁰

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⁵⁸ Public Record Office, Will of John Darby of Westminster, Middlesex. Reference: PROB 11/1841/135, <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D281706>.

⁵⁹ *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 79.

⁶⁰ *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 15–16.

A mother, be she ever so sick, is always an immense loss: the bond of the house or family is broken. An eye and a heart are there which, even if they cannot do much, those that make the family refer to, and run in solicitude through all. A man cannot be this in the same way, however kind a father. Still God does all things well, and can turn, however deeply felt, an evil into real and better blessing. Still no one can be a mother but a mother, but God can be everything to us and towards us in all our cases.⁶¹

It is true that in later years Darby would take a reserved stance toward human relationships:

The affections and duty towards parents are precious and lovely in their place; but the redemption of Jesus has placed us in a new creation, and if He calls us, according to His sovereign rights as Redeemer, to work for Him, we must be wholly given up to it. No man can serve two masters. This is not despising the parental claims; on the contrary, it is recognising them. If I place myself in this relationship, I ought to recognise it as from God Himself; but then I cannot be entirely at the service of Jesus. Called by Him, I am in another sphere, where family relationship does not enter. If it exists, it is obligatory. This is what was manifested in Jesus. He was subject until He commenced His ministry. From that time He did not know His mother. When His work was ended He recognised her indeed, and with the most exquisite tenderness, even while suffering on the cross. It is not the destruction of the affections, but the power of the Spirit, that carries us into a world the interests of which absorb us. "Salute no man," said the Lord. "I know no man after the flesh," said the apostle.

For my own part, even while desiring to use all courtesy (for charity demands it), I am unhappy whenever I find myself on the ground of human relationships, however lovely they may be: it is not my Master.⁶²

But this does not mean that as a child he did not feel differently, i.e. felt as in the "supposed" descriptions he gives of his mother and his relationship to her.

When giving the following advice to a young mother in his later years one cannot but think that Darby was speaking from his own experience as a child and not about something he had missed:

I hope you have learned to nurse your baby: we heard bad accounts of you in this respect. It is a charge the Lord has given you for higher purposes than this world; and thorough confidence in the parents, begotten by tender care and laying oneself out a little for them – is what creates it under God's good-

⁶¹ *Letters*, vol. 3, p. 89.

⁶² *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 195.

ness, though of course your little one is too young to be much in your care now; but affection begins early.⁶³

Persons sympathetic towards Darby's views and/or members of the so-called "Brethren" may see a certain unwarranted harshness towards him from his parents and siblings and attribute it to the attitude of the world as opposed to dedication to Christ and his truth, but that is simplifying things. Darby's older brother Christopher chose an ecclesiastical profession and was a Curate in Delgany, Ireland from 1817 to 1820 – the exact same place Darby would be active in some years later. This never seems to have been a problem within the family, i.e. that a career in business or the navy or the army would have been preferred. William Henry Darby, the heir of Leap Castle, was supposedly engaged with the Roman Catholic Church for a time which apparently did not create any problems within the family.⁶⁴ Later he joined the "Brethren" and even contributed to their vast literature.

(George Darby, John Nelson Darby's three years older brother, later inherited the Markly Estate. Judging by John Darby's correspondence it would appear that George held the same place in his father's affections as his father had in his father Jonathan's – it is interesting to note that they were both 4th sons).

Contrary to popular opinion in certain circles, John Darby did not disinherit his son John Nelson. Actually he received interest for life. The family was not the difficulty. To put it somewhat simply, they were quite "normal". My readings of their family letters have made them very sympathetic to me. John Nelson Darby was the odd man out. His attitudes as expressed in the above quote involving affection and courtesy could only estrange him from others. It was not so much "them" as it was he himself. This could lead to extremes, such as not attending his father's funeral. Not because of lack of affection or a personal falling out, but, as he himself says:

As to funerals, I would not go to any where the clerical system is kept up, I did not to my father's.⁶⁵

⁶³ *Letters*, vol. 3, p. 427. Compare the following statements by Priestley: "If this be the true theory of the human affections, and experience sufficiently establishes it, filial affection cannot be generated without the frequent perception of kind offices done by a parent to his child, which supposes frequent intercourse. [. . .] Besides, frequent intercourse with our children, and a constant attention to their welfare, is necessary in order to interest ourselves in their happiness, and to generate parental affection." *The Theological and Miscellaneous Works*, p. 41.

⁶⁴ I am once again indebted to Noel Guerin who was so kind to supply me with a copy of a letter written by John Nelson Darby to his brother William Henry. Though Darby did not include the date it carries a postal stamp for the year 1823. In it he writes about the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland, yet not in a controversial sense, but rather with a view to unity: "embracing every actual opportunity for union with individuals who feel separated from me and going further towards them in general unity with willingness in my mind to see if more decided step towards them ought not to be made." The whole tenor of the letter is one of friendly exchange and he is eager to know his brother's opinion. See Appendix C for a transcript of the same.

⁶⁵ *Letters* vol. 3, p. 479.



George Darby
(1798–1877)

Courtesy of Charles and Glenys Darby

This attitude could be carried over to influence behavior within normal, everyday relationships:

I should not frequent my uncle's house, as I might meet the infidel there; did I find him there I should not stop. What deference to his relationship demanded I should show, but should not be free with him while he makes no difference with an unbeliever.⁶⁶

That this kind of behavior did not endear him to "outsiders" or his family is quite understandable. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. I return to earlier and less controversial days, namely Darby's

School Days

School days are very formative in a young child's life, but we have nothing as to Darby's experiences during that time or anything about friends he might have had there. Whatever was to become of him in later years, he was a boy first just as much as anyone else. And, as author Stephen King has one of his characters in his story "Stand By Me" say: "I never had any friends later on like the ones I had when I was twelve." There is probably much truth in that statement.

As noted, we have no written accounts of Darby's childhood. No letters, no diaries. The only account of his public school days is found in Turner's biography where he claims that Darby's time spent there passed by uneventfully – so much so that one of his masters, being questioned years later, could well recall a boy by that name, but could not think of anything worthy of special notice and actually did not know what had become of him. Considering Darby's later controversial activities within the ecclesiastical field and who his headmaster had been (more as to him shortly) this is strange, but Turner gives no source or authority for his statements and so it is impossible to validate them in any way.

J. N. Darby once wrote to a father:

I am very glad that your dear boy is getting on so well [. . .] It is said the child is father to the man: this is true as to certain faculties, but in many reflective and working qualities it is not the case; they are hidden, and come out by being called on, so that a clever boy is not always a distinguished man. Acquiring may come early, but the reflective use of what is acquired comes later [. . .]⁶⁷

Perhaps as an old man of 73 he was remembering his own time at school. Was the child the father to the man in his case?

On the 17th of February 1812, J. N. Darby entered Westminster public school. It is perhaps helpful here to make a distinction. A public school in North America, where children are educated through a state funded system administered by the local government, is not the

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 256.

same as one in England. In England a public school is an independent school charging fees and selecting students, they are not funded by public taxes and belong to the private sector. They are “public” in the sense that any who could pay could attend. In the past they were all-male boarding schools educating sons of the upper and middle classes.⁶⁸

The school was, as in the case with St. Margaret’s, just around the corner and down the street from where J. N. Darby lived. All the sons of Mr. Darby attended this school. Though it was not unusual for pupils from nearby families to board at the school, it cannot be confirmed that John Nelson did. His older brother George, who was a King’s Scholar (see below), certainly did because that was a prerequisite for being a Scholar.⁶⁹

Westminster School is located within the precincts of Westminster Abbey on an ancient site and its history as an educational institution stretches back to before the 12th century, possibly as far back as AD 960. Its continuous existence is certain from the early fourteenth century onwards. William Kelly considered it to be one of the greatest, though not the most fashionable, of English public schools.⁷⁰ Many later celebrities had their early education here, e.g. before Darby’s time Charles Wesley. During Darby’s time 260 to 300 boys attended with scholarships that provided free education for forty of them (called either King’s or Queen’s Scholars depending on the reigning monarch at the time). The classes were conducted in a large open hall, one class beside the other along the walls of the building; the students sat on terraced benches with their teachers in front of them. Instruction was given by clergymen, and the subject matter consisted almost exclusively of Latin and Greek, with some English composition. Discipline was very severe, and in keeping with the times; the boys were beaten by the headmaster with a birch rod for misbehavior.

The headmaster at the time from January 1803 until his retirement in December 1814 was William Carey, later Bishop of Exeter (1820–1830).

If we have no direct accounts relating to Darby, we have very many dealing with the school at the time Darby was there, give or take several years. I quote now from several volumes to convey a picture of the time and place. First as to outward appearance:

The approach to the School, which stands in Little Dean’s yard, and is graced by a stone portal, attributed to Inigo Jones, is through a low Gothic arch of the latter part of the thirteenth century. On the right side of the yard are the residence of the Under Master and two boarding-houses, and at the opposite end, adjoining the entrance to the School, is the dormitory of



Location of Westminster School



Little Dean's Yard Westminster School

⁶⁸ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_school_\(United_Kingdom\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_school_(United_Kingdom)).

⁶⁹ Personal email from Elizabeth Wells, Archivist and Records Manager at Westminster School to the author.

⁷⁰ W. Kelly, *Kelly Letters*, February 22, 1901.



School Room
Westminster School
Augustus Charles, engraved by
Joseph Constantine
In *History of Westminster School*,
R. Ackermann, London, 1816, p. 22

the College. On the left is Ashburnham House, memorable to the lovers of learning as the place where the manuscripts of Sir Robert Cotton were kept before their removal to the British Museum, and where many invaluable treasures were destroyed by fire October 23, 1731.

The School, originally the dormitory of the monks of St. Peter's, is of great antiquity: it has a massive roof of chestnut, and a semicircular apse or recess at the upper end, once, perhaps, the site of an altar. This apse is termed the "Shell," the name given also to the form next below the sixth, who sit there. The same appellation is adopted at Harrow, at the Charterhouse, and elsewhere. Around the School (till some recent detestable innovations had defaced the time-honoured aspect of this room) were four tiers of benches, one above another; and on the side walls, over the Shell, and in every other available space, are carved or painted the names of those who have been educated at the School during several generations (in one instance, if our memory serves us truly, six such generations are still legible) – endearing records of many who have since made their names immortal in the annals of their country.⁷¹

The room itself is one of the noblest in the kingdom. The roof is very handsome, similar to the roof of Westminster Hall. According to Dean Stanley's statement, in his "Memorials of Westminster Abbey" it is of the thirteenth century. One of the windows (the one at the far end on the right-hand side as you enter) the same authority states to be of the eleventh century. In 1799 the walls still exhibited portions of the Confessor's masonry, on which more recent alterations had been engrafted, and around the periphery of the room were still to be seen the roughly hewn stones and wide-jointed masonry of the Normans.

The walls were rebuilt in brick in 1814. The present school-door was put up by subscription, the Chapter contributing fifty pounds. The stone porch in Little Dean's Yard is said to have been designed by Inigo Jones. The present dimensions of the room are, length, about 110 ft.; breadth at end near door, 32 ft., at farther end, 31 ft.; height to top of wall, 24 ft., to top of roof, 44 ft.⁷²

As to the curriculum at the school:

Dr. Vincent, in his "Defence of Public Education," published in 1802, gives an account of the religious teaching in the school.

In the Under School the boys translated the Psalms almost daily; they then proceeded to the gospels; then to a collection of

⁷¹ Howard Staunton, *The Great Schools of England*, (Sampson Low, Son, and Mars-ton), London, 1865, pp. 121–122.

⁷² Frederick H. Forshall, *Westminster School. Past and Present*, (Wyman & Sons), London, 1884, p. 406.

“Sacred Exercises,” appropriate to the school, and finally produced a composition in verse from the Psalms, every Monday. The Catechism, or Archbishop’s Wake’s exposition was regularly repeated on Monday morning.

In the Upper School the “Sacred Exercises” were used for compositions in verse. Greek Testament, Grotius, and the Hebrew Psalms, and throughout the year, a history or other portion out of the Scriptures was appointed for a Bible exercise in verse.⁷³

As to the headmaster himself:

If Carey’s belief in the hardening process was excessive, he had a genuine earnestness in the cause of education. He was a strong supporter of national schools. An epigram of 1813 commends his efforts to soften by religion and honesty the fierce spirits of plebeian England. Nor were his own pupils unable to combine gentleness with fortitude.

Though Carey did not spare the rod, he won the affection of his boys. With some exaggeration they compared his features to Punch, and contrasted them favourably with the fierce lineaments of Page, who succeeded him in 1814.⁷⁴

The following descriptions offer a glimpse into what school life was like and if they do not necessarily involve things young Darby himself was active in they can give us an idea of his environment at the time:

The School had never rejected very young boys, but in Carey’s time the number of them was perhaps larger than before. Augustus Short, afterwards Bishop of Adelaide, came at six years of age, and Lord Albemarle at eight. Infantile games flourished among them. A contemporary declamation names the top, the hoop, and the marble, to which Lord John Russell adds the peashooter. It might be thought that the tender children, who could delight in such sports, would receive some protection from their Masters. Carey took a different view of education, and the infants had to fight their own battles. Nor were the battles merely metaphorical. Carey encouraged fighting, and a “mill” [fight] in “fighting green” was accounted an adequate reason for adjourning school. “When I was a boy at Westminster,” wrote the Bishop of Adelaide, “the boys fought one another, they fought the Masters, the Masters fought them, they fought outsiders; in fact, we were ready to fight everybody.” Short himself, as a child of seven, was compelled to do battle with a chimney-sweep, and to fight the only friend he had in the School.



William Carey
(1769–1846)
(Source: Wikipedia)

⁷³ Ibid. p. 419.

⁷⁴ John Sargeant, *Annals of Westminster School*, (Methuen & Co), London, 1898, pp. 223–224.



Westminster Scholar

In *The History of the Colleges of Winchester, Eton, and Westminster; with the Charter-House, the Schools of St. Paul's, Merchant Taylors, Harrow, and Rugby, and the Free-School of Christ's Hospital*, R. Ackermann, London, 1816. (Source: www.albion-prints.com)

Fagging was a no less onerous duty,⁷⁵ but never obtained from the authorities the recognition accorded to the art of self-defence. Lord Albemarle relates how he had to brush the clothes, clean the boots, and fill the basin of his fag-master – a kinsman who was less than kind. Even with a gentle master a fag lived a slave's life. Short admits that his misery found some alleviation from the kindness of Charles Longley, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, whose "breakfast fag" he was; but in his old age avowed that his first year at School was the most wretched in his life. When, in the early days of the colony, carpet-curates in South Australia complained to their bishop of the hardness of their work, "You ought," he said, "to have been a fag at Westminster."

The evils of this system are sufficiently patent. The timid boy – the owl forced upon the daylight – perhaps suffered less from the fagging of his elders than from the persecution of his co-evals. The worst effect of fagging was on the intellect. The continual call prevented the mind from working in other ways, and the release from it invited a slumber which sometimes outlasted the school career.⁷⁶

On Saturdays boys often went to the theatre, and on other days, when leave was not to be had, it was often taken. Lord Albemarle used to get over the wall into College Street, leaving a dummy in his bed. Detection at last led to his removal. Lord William Lennox, after names were called, escaped from Mrs. Packharness', actually passing through the Master's room, spent the evening at Covent Garden Theatre, and slept at an hotel. Such was the laxity of discipline in the days of Carey and Page.⁷⁷

Carey had a great belief in the "hardening" system, so long in vogue at Westminster, and as a consequence he openly encouraged fagging and fighting – or "milling," as it was called: "Mills in Green" became a recognized institution, and were not put a stop to by either masters or monitors. Lord John Russell, who was at the school in 1803, has left us an interesting record of the roughness of the times. "At Westminster School," writes he, "physical hardihood was always encouraged. If two boys were engaged to fight during the time of school, those boys

⁷⁵ "Fagging was a system whereby younger boys acted as servants to the older boys. Duties ranged from keeping their kit clean and tidy to helping them with their exam revision. In return the senior boy was supposed to protect the youngster. Fagging was supported because it was thought to encourage an ethos of service similar to that found in the Army and Navy. It also helped to save the school from the expense of employing more domestic servants."

From: http://clutch.open.ac.uk/schools/willen99/w_education/Westm/trad.html.

⁷⁶ *Annals of Westminster School*, pp. 215–216.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 218–219.

who wanted to see the fight could always get permission to leave school for the purpose. Westminster School was a rough place." [. . .] But Carey's belief in the "survival of the fittest" method did not detract from his zeal for sound education, a fact to which the careers of William Mure, Sir David Dundas, Lords Ebury, Westminster and Dover, and the famous Crimean General, Lord Lucan, amply testify, for a sketch of the school work done at the beginning of last century we turn again to Lord John Russell, who thus sums up his daily occupations: "We go into school every morning at eight: the sixth, shell, second and petty come out to breakfast at nine and stay till ten. The fifth, fourth, and two thirds come out at ten and stay till eleven. On Tuesdays, school is up at eleven, on other days at twelve; on whole school days we go in again at two and come out at five." A far more human, if less energetic, curriculum than under Busby. Again: "The teaching in the under school consisted entirely of Latin – Latin grammar, Latin verses, and translations of extracts from the New Testament into Latin. We were not taught writing or arithmetic, and we used to go on half-holidays to a writing-master in Great Dean's Yard to learn these necessary arts." But he adds: "So little, however, had I learned of arithmetic, that when my father gave me two sums to add together, one of which contained a farthing, and the other a halfpenny, I was obliged to ask him what those odd signs meant." From this it would appear that mathematics had not been thoroughly introduced into the lower school, though, as we have seen, the upper school had had this addition made to its curriculum for some years.⁷⁸

- - -

Any account of Westminster life would be incomplete without some allusion to the Play. The time-honoured custom of performing at Christmas some Latin comedy has existed in College ever since the foundation of the school; and its annual recurrence is always looked forward to with interest, not merely by the actors themselves, or members of the school, but by many old Westminsters, to whom the play is an invaluable opportunity of meeting old friends and renewing old associations.⁷⁹

The boys from Westminster seem to have enjoyed a certain notoriety outside of the school walls, as is seen in Dickens mention of them in his "The Pickwick Papers":

And at seven o'clock P.M., Mr. Pickwick and his friends, and Mr. Dowler and his wife, respectively retired to their private sitting-rooms at the White Hart hotel, opposite the great pump room, Bath, where the waiters, from their costume, might be

⁷⁸ Reginald Airy, B.A., *Handbooks to the Great Public Schools, Westminster*, (George Bell & Sons), London, 1902, pp. 45–47.

⁷⁹ Charles Eyre Pascoe (editor), *Everyday Life in Our Public Schools*, (Griffith and Farnan), London, 1880 (?), pp. 135–136.

mistaken for Westminster boys, only they destroy the illusion by behaving themselves so much better.⁸⁰

In a letter William Kelly remarked that Darby felt that public schools trained boys for the world, with little or no fear of God.⁸¹ Darby himself commented: "My education was in my judgment not well *directed*, save by God."⁸² He was not entirely opposed to education, and he believed that a Christian was free to seek the necessary improvement and cultivation for his secular work and position.⁸³ What he was opposed to was education for its own sake as a goal for Christians. He did not want to have humanity educated, but God known, as he himself put it.⁸⁴ Which is of interest when one considers that the curriculum at Westminster involved intensive occupation with biblical contents.

For many people today and in the past John Nelson Darby is/was a very important person. Some would call him a spiritual giant, or, as his once friend Francis Newman observed: "Indeed, but for a few weaknesses which warned me that he might err, I could have accepted him as an apostle commissioned to reveal the mind of God."⁸⁵ But he was a boy and a struggling young man before he became all that. We can imagine him at home in the circle of his family, making family visits to relatives⁸⁶ or getting into trouble at school – and it is good to do so.

When writing the following in old age one wonders what Darby himself felt when reflecting on his childhood:

With unconverted children [. . .] health has to be considered in cheerful exercise, occupation of mind without overstraining, and so on. But where there is wise interest of parents in them, they can, while providing for this, lead children to find their enjoyment with themselves, in kindly care of the poor, and a thousand healthful enjoyments and occupations; and this I have seen done, and children grow up attached to home and family.⁸⁷

The Darby's were a wealthy family and young John Nelson certainly knew no want. The quote above referring to the effect of Dr. Carey's

⁸⁰ Charles Dickens, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, (Wm. H. Colyer), New York, 1838, vol. 2, p. 80.

⁸¹ *Kelly Letters*, February 22, 1901.

⁸² *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 205.

⁸³ *Collected Writings*, vol. 14, p. 330.

⁸⁴ *Collected Writings*, vol. 9, p. 19.

⁸⁵ Francis Newman, *Phases of Faith*, (Trübner & Co.), London, 1874, p. 21.

⁸⁶ In my original Darby biography I allowed myself the rather rash statement that John Nelson Darby probably never visited Leap Castle, which is only evidence of the scant information I had at the time or my lack of apprehension or more probably a combination of both. From what I have read and studied in the intervening years I would like to correct that statement. After having read through the family letters several times where visits to relatives are often mentioned I would be inclined to say, that Darby as a boy very probably did make visits to Ireland with his family.

⁸⁷ *Letters*, vol 3, p. 36.

teaching method at Westminster, “Nor were his own pupils unable to combine gentleness with fortitude”, is interesting in connection with Darby’s attitude towards the poor (those not working or not working regularly) and less fortunate which he expressed in later years:

Christ preferred the poor; ever since I have been converted so have I. Let those who like society better have it. If I ever get into it, and it has crossed my path in London, I return sick at heart.⁸⁸

His “ever since” does seem to suggest that it had not been so before, that in the past as a boy he had taken a different attitude towards the “poor”, those below his own status in society, but that may be reading too much into his statement.

Compared to our own it was a completely different world back then, with servants and class distinctions,⁸⁹ restraints, conventions, strict conformation to the then current social etiquette, and so forth. What can help us picture the time of Darby’s boyhood today, even if we do not have any personal items such as letters or diaries, are novels such as those of Jane Austen or the many films based on her stories. They are not always historically accurate, that is true, but they can definitely convey a feeling for those times. They can help us realize how different, how very different, things were.

In a certain sense Darby’s boyhood came to an end when his time at Westminster ended in 1815 and he left the security of home in London for Dublin where he entered Trinity College on the 3rd of July. Writing at the age of sixty-nine to someone who had also left his home he said: “Your very leaving home has become the tale for you; it did once for me. I remember yet my desolation once on leaving it.”⁹⁰ Home for him obviously entailed all the good meanings which that word implies or he would have been relieved rather than desolate on leaving it.

In the 4th volume of the Greek New Testament set containing Darby’s handwritten notes he writes at 2 Timothy 3 that he came to a personal faith in Christ either in June or July of 1820 or 1821 (while he was studying to enter the legal profession).⁹¹ Later in life he would

⁸⁸ *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 204.

⁸⁹ Class distinctions at the time were: 1) Upper Class – including royalty and officers of state, 2) Second Class – baronets, country gentlemen, knights, persons with high incomes, 3) Third Class – doctors, bankers, clergyman, large scale manufacturers and merchants, 4) Fourth Class – second class merchants and manufacturers, lawyers, teachers, ship owners, artists, builders, shopkeepers, 5) Fifth Class – shopkeepers, innkeepers, publicans, people of various occupations, 6) Sixth Class – craftsmen, working mechanics, agricultural laborers, 7) Seventh Class – poor and destitute, tramps, beggars, gypsies.

⁹⁰ *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 45.

⁹¹ On the reverse side of the page for notes following page 412 of the printed New Testament. At Heritage Imaging Manchester:

<https://chiccmanchester.wordpress.com/2011/09/29/darby-bible-digitisation-project/>.

Reference No. JND/3/5 (316-487).

remark: "Before I was converted, I believed there was Christ as much as I do now."⁹² His upbringing at home did not bring about this conversion. His time at Westminster School did not bring him to that point either. Nor did his time at Trinity. It was only much later that his beliefs would become of such importance to him that they would radically change his life and his relationship towards his family. But he was taking definite steps that would bring him to that point.

If it is true that his time at Westminster was so uneventful that he was a student who could be easily forgotten or lost sight of, his time at Trinity would be quite different.

⁹² *Collected Writings*, vol. 27, p. 368.

Appendix A

Excerpt from *Wanderings in Ireland*, by Michael Myers Shoemaker, (G. P. Putnam's Sons), New York and London, 1908

p. 106

[. . .] We gather in two of the ladies and speed off over the slippery highway to Leap Castle. Now Leap, I would have you know, is THE ghost castle of Ireland, owning more spooks to the room than all the others together. Enroute thither we pass under the shadow of "Knockshigowna" or hill of the fairies, and it would seem on this shadowy morning that the ruin on its summit shows signs of a strange agitation; perhaps the shades are aware of our approach to their favourite castle in the valley and trust that we may tarry until night falls and their dominion maintains, – for until then, they must stay where they are, high up on yonder hill, which is the centre of all the fairy romance and legend of the island. The forest is dense here and we roll under the bending boughs, heavy with the night's dew, and glittering in the sunlight. At the end of a long green tunnel the tower of Leap Castle blocks the way.

Leap stands overlooking a fair valley, a great square tower to which have been added wings on either side. It was one of the most ancient seats of the O'Carrolls, who seem to have left a most excellent memory hereabouts as expert sheep-stealers. All of these ancient castles were composed of simply one great strong tower. Everything else is of much later date. We have seen a dozen such in the past few days. Leap is no exception. Fortunately its owner, Mr. D[arby], is at home and welcomes us to what has been [p. 107] in his family since the days of the Restoration, a period when many of the Irish castles passed into the hands of Englishmen.

We enter the lower floor of the great tower, which in the days of the O'Carrolls was evidently the great hall, where many of those weird, barbarous feasts one associates with such places must have occurred. To-day its appearance is peaceful enough. Pictures anything but terrible surround us and no ghosts can stand this clear light of day.

From its windows you enjoy a superb panorama, and from its terrace one of its ancient owners leapt his horse when pursued by some enemy – hence the name. He was a rider superior to any even Ireland can show at the present time for the drop is quite thirty feet.

The wings of the castle flank the tower on either hand, but aside from containing cheery rooms with much fine old furniture, are not of interest, at least when compared to the hall, around which a gallery circles in the second story, to which stairs in the thickness of the walls conduct one. In one of the angles there is an oubliette to anywhere below, – in another a stair mounts to a chapel in the top, dismantled and disused now save by the ghost of a priest which walks here with his head under his arm, and it is reported that one of the chatelaines of the castle fled here from following footsteps which she

could not understand, and flinging the great door to behind her [p. 108] used her fair arm as a staple, only to have it broken in two by a force no mortal could withstand. She fainted, but before losing consciousness saw passing by her the shadow of the headless monk. If you sleep in one of those chambers below there you will awaken to find your hand drawn over the bedside and blood slowly dripping from your fingers, – there are stains on the old oaken flooring even now. Which ghost does that is not stated.

No direct heir ever inherits “Leap,” and when misfortune is following fast on the footsteps of the family, a ghostly sheep appears and with a claw of great length (that kind of sheep have “claws”) scratches on the panels of the great oaken portals. Every properly self-respecting house in Ireland has a ghost, but Leap has more than its share, and no peasant of the island would venture to pass a night alone in the dungeon under its great tower. There was nothing ghostly about the very good Irish whiskey which we had there, – so toasting all ghosts malign or beneficent and bidding our host a thankful adieu, we depart under the dripping skies and return to peaceful-looking Wingfield, only to learn that it too has its ghost, but a friendly one, being a great white goose which walks around the walls of the home park and so wards off all evil from the occupants.

Appendix B

Letter in the possession of the Vaughan Woods and Historic Homestead in Hallowell, Maine (USA) from John Darby (aboard ship returning to England) to Charles Vaughan in Philadelphia, No. 3156

My thanks to Curator/Archivist Ron Kley for his help with the following transcript which is given with the lines, spelling, punctuation and corrections as in the original. ("Nancy" was the family nickname for Anne.)

[p. 1]

At Sea

My good fellow –

I can not tell what sort of I wrote
you last – but if I am to judge by the state of my
mind – it was very affectionate, very friendly, very stupid
& very sad - I rode to town how I declare I can hardly
tell, thinking of you your kindness and her then coldness.
Cursing my fate – resolving to bear it – resolving not to bear
& so I got to town – you took so much interest in my
misfortunes that I presume you will not be displeased
to hear the good tale of my good fortune – You
will recollect that the tuesday after you parted
there was a ball at the ministers that eve
I contrived to spend in Chestnut Street & said somewhat
but not much, on the thursday there was a ball
for Gen Washington at the city tavern after a dinner.
I desired your sisters to make their convenience of one at
this place if any one came to ask them whom they
did not like & promised to be near them. I urged, I pressed
Cold as marble – esteem, regard friendship in a word
everything but what I wanted – at last she went so
far as to say she loved me like a brother and after
such a confession if I loved her as much as I said I did

[p. 2]

– If I meant to oblige her or to continue the part I had
acted I should never speak more to her during my stay
in America – then Madam I never will & I kissed her
hand – the darling trembled as if I had dared to
touch her lips – Sir you have wronged Ben – I believe not
I explained myself, so did she – I had – I think I
had better go to the City Tavern – I owe so much complai-
sance to your sisters – Yes you had better – Will you give
me leave to stay? Yes but you ought to go – I bowed and
went – I communicated this to your Mother and said never
shall a word more escape my lips – but before I go do
speak to her once more I am persuaded she is not indif-
ferent to me – I will said your good Mother – but this
must be the last time – I am ashamed to tell you how
much I was affected but I know if I had not used
hartshorn⁹³ plentifully that – I dare not put to paper what –
Saturday came a ball at Mr. Hills all the family went

⁹³ A preparation of ammonia made from shavings of deer's antlers (thus "hart") and used as smelling salts.

N[ancy] and all – I danced with Sarah – Nancy seated on a sofa at the lower end of the room – when I approached this end of it I neither knew what to do with my hands or feet & dare say – I looked like a fool I know I felt preciously awkward – Mr. Hill asked Sarah to dance one dance she consented and I sat down on the sofa beside Nancy I was leaning my hand on my head wrapped in thought when up comes Gov Morris – By God, you are either deeply in love or more like it than any man I ever saw – You shall not have that to say very long said I handing him the glass to shew him his own face – he drew from me – Is he not Miss Vaughan deeply in love – I know not Sir, Mr. Darby does not do me the honor to make me the keeper of his secrets – what say you Miss Bond who was on my other hand. I can only say what Miss Vaughan has said – why then

[p. 3]

considering all things if he is not in love with one of you he is a blessed stupid fellow to sit as he did – Can you conjecture the delectable, feel I must have enjoyed – Nancy – behaved like an angel – going to supper no one took her hand Sarah said will you attend to my sister – welcome sound to my ears – I offered her my hand – Sir I am very well able to take care of myself, with some degree of steadiness & the darling maid blushed – I did to my fingers ends – Sarah said going down stairs Mr. Darby you are cold you tremble – little guessing the truth which was I was burning – they sat one of each side of Mrs. Stewart who was called away almost as soon as she sat down – I got into her seat with out much delay – and was as happy as I could be – they went home all but your father and he was as kind as if I had been his child – said he wished to call me such – gave me advice which I think I never should have followed – indeed concluding the matter settled I had already taken my measures – home I went, not to sleep, that pleasure had fled me some time dear Sir. On Sunday morn I went to your house – At seven Mrs. Vaughan came down - Are you here? I am come to receive my doom. I have not seen Nancy – tis well, but I will before you go – I am going in an hour or two, & tho I had resolved I would not go away without saying my last adieu to her whom I love as my parent, tho I can not call her by that name – but I do not desire to see any of the girls I am so much weakened that I could hardly be answerable for my conduct – We sat down to breakfast – Your mother went up & returning down said that my former answer must be confirmed & yet – seemed to, I do not know what – if my friend the harthorn bottle had not been nigh – I should surely have fainted – Then it is fit I should go – I believe I did not say much – but whatever gratitude, honor – friendship could inspire I felt – I hung on her neck and bid her adieu with as nearly a prayer – for God to bless her as ever was went from the mouth of a child – Your father

[p. 4]

perfectly hugged me – I went into the outward parlor to wipe my eyes – got some water after staying some minutes I went into the street – I had not proceeded

twenty steps when your brother followed called after me – what do you want? Come back. I hesitated. Come back I say, he said not a word but I will be down presently – I was hanging leaning my head on the chimney piece when who should make their appearance but Nancy & Becky – This indeed Miss Vaughan is a pleasure I did not expect – she retired. I told Becky to go. My heart was to full I was ashamed to be seen – she was retiring when in came the darling maid – I thought she came to Sooth me – never shall I forget the agony of my love – in the name of God my dear Nancy go away your presence can only torture yourself & distract me – so my darling maid & with averted head and body I put my hand back, she approached the fire place – Sir you have half broke your word. me madam – my Mother spoke to me and if – and if – Delight of my Soul if there is an if you are mine – Mine forever – Then Charles I did kiss her – she talked to me of not quitting her family in truth I do not know of what – to which I generally replied I would not promise more than I had done, that if, she chose the rocks of Marblehead⁹⁴ I would go there – her mother came in but my head was so much confused that I can hardly tell what I did. Only I know I was persuaded to pursue my voyage and in half an hour I set off for Chester do not hate me for going – Nancy desired it. Your Mother desired it & your father & brother urged me and I – I am ashamed to say consented – forgive me my dear Charles – I was beside myself with joy – indeed I knew not what I did and you know how I was enervated by what I had undergone – if I get to P[hiladelphia]. again all the inhabitants of it shall not get me out a single man. I do triumph we will be as happy as Princes and I will remember to my latest hours the friendship of my dear Charles It is a punishment for my leaving my darling maid – I have had the Devils own passage gales of wind that lasted 14 days – Adieu – your faithful John Darby To drink the health of our friend I send your worship a puncheon of Porter Written Dec. 1783 – The family were living in Philadelphia from 1783 to 1786 -.

⁹⁴ A coastal New England town in Massachusetts so called because the settlers mistook the granite ledges for marble. At the time of this letter it was important for its fishing industry.

Appendix C

Letter by John Nelson Darby to his brother William Henry Darby at Leap Castle, Postmark 26 June 1823.

[Page 1]

My dear William

The deed is executed by my Father

its nominal parties are my Father, You and Mrs WHD, George⁹⁵ & Mr William Curteis, and George Bennett & Edward Curteis,⁹⁶ the two latter parts for trusts & terms to effectuate trusts tho your question is answered in the first paragraph I add that & that there is a power of leasing in each tenant for life the lands for 1 life or 21 years except the Castle park & the Ground between it & the park & I think Tullaroe. Will you [(I write by Edwards directions in this [])] tell Horatio⁹⁷ he would wish him to make inquiry if Messrs Palmer & Fawcett are about signing & sending the corrected list of wine which I last forwarded to them by Edwards direction it is an ungracious office he will perhaps be aware for it is urging a reluctant person who undertook an office on request but as a servant he will I suppose feel at liberty It is clear there is no diff[erence] to us as to meats I think there may be in respect of offence ~~I think total~~ I believe the principles I should state as those on which I would proceed are perfect liberty in oneself and consequently towards men obedience in respect of the Church and deference to the feelings of

⁹⁵ Probably John Nelson Darby's older brother.

⁹⁶ William Henry Darby married Laura Charlotte Curteis on April 11th 1822. (<http://www.sussexrecordsociety.org/dbs/esm/church/2760/>).

She was the daughter of Edward Jeremiah Curteis and this may well be the Edward Curteis mentioned here (or her brother). Edward Jeremiah Curteis (1762–1835) was a lawyer and a Member of Parliament representing Sussex in 1820 and 1826. Lord Sheffield described him as “a useful country gentleman of a family rather above the yeomanry, very rich”.

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/curteis-edward-1762-1835>.

See also: John Burke, *History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland*, London, 1836, vol. 1, pp. 314–315.

Curteis was at Windmill Hill in East Sussex just some 7 kilometers from Warbleton where the Darbys had the Markly Estate and of which George Darby would one day be the heir. He was “well known as a most useful and active magistrate, and as one who thoroughly understood the local interests of the county.” (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, London, May 1835, pp. 544–545)

The Catalogue description of the archive of the Darby family at the East Sussex Record Office states (AMS6146): “In 1819, at the age of 68, [John] Darby having decided to buy a country estate, chose Markly in Warbleton. The reasons for his choice are unclear: he does not seem to have had any obvious links with Warbleton before the purchase, although his friend (and from 1827 [the correct date is 1822] his son William Henry's father-in-law) Edward Jeremiah Curteis of Windmill Place in Wartling was indirectly related to the last owner of Markly's second wife, Harriet Luxford, and he may have been able to give John Darby some first-hand information about the estate.”

⁹⁷ Probably John Nelson Darby's older brother.

[Page 2]

those who do not feel themselves at liberty I think generally total abstinence affords the clearest road to meet all affording I am persuaded a link of more force than would be supposed in point of fact with Roman Catholic Brethren in the way which seems to me most valuable but where I have felt occasion to eat on whatever account looking to the other as the general rule I have for their sakes made a difference so as not to eat what they would object to but the first I would follow distinctly as a general rule and shall be glad to hear what you say as to diff[erence] in practice in order to pursue this union or does the principle exclude this. obedience safe it is sometimes an object of Charity not to raise the question in the minds of those to whom it will be matter of meat

& drink obedience frustrates their taking it up so and this I feel to be a great point what I say is rather in the way of Comment on a common principle in aid of your thoughts for when you say "offering evidence of your obedience in the sight of all making in this by total abstinence an agreement between the two Churches"? you offer the principle to which I quite accede & go upon, adding the way of its observation "by total abstinence" which is a question of ulterior discretion & I separate as such adopting it generally as what I have found most faithfully fulfilling the law of Charity but on occasion acting otherwise⁹⁸ on which I shall be glad to hear from you. As to the Church of Ireland I should be most glad to say more that I might learn more the way in which I stand is feeling assured of what I do & embracing every actual opportunity for union with individuals

[Page 3] (this page contains holes which makes filling in the text guesswork) who feel separated from me and going farther towards them in general unity with willingness in my mind to see if more decided step towards them ought not to be made & fear of failure in practice in this respect in principle at present I feel no doubt it seems to me a matter of fault in individuals respectively & this is of quite a plainer thing I feel Catholicity to be above both one & the other & both one & the other I speak not in judgment except of the principle of my own conduct to be as separated from each other anti Catholic and this I think brings it much to a matter of individual conduct of every day practice and in point of fact I find the principles of one & the other of disunion dissolve before a plain confession of this at least very much so I do not mean that falsehood gives free place to truth and then I do not believe the ord[inan]ces to be wanting in the one or the other ~~and~~ and looking upon the [piece missing, perhaps sep]aration as evil in both I seek in practice [piece missing]

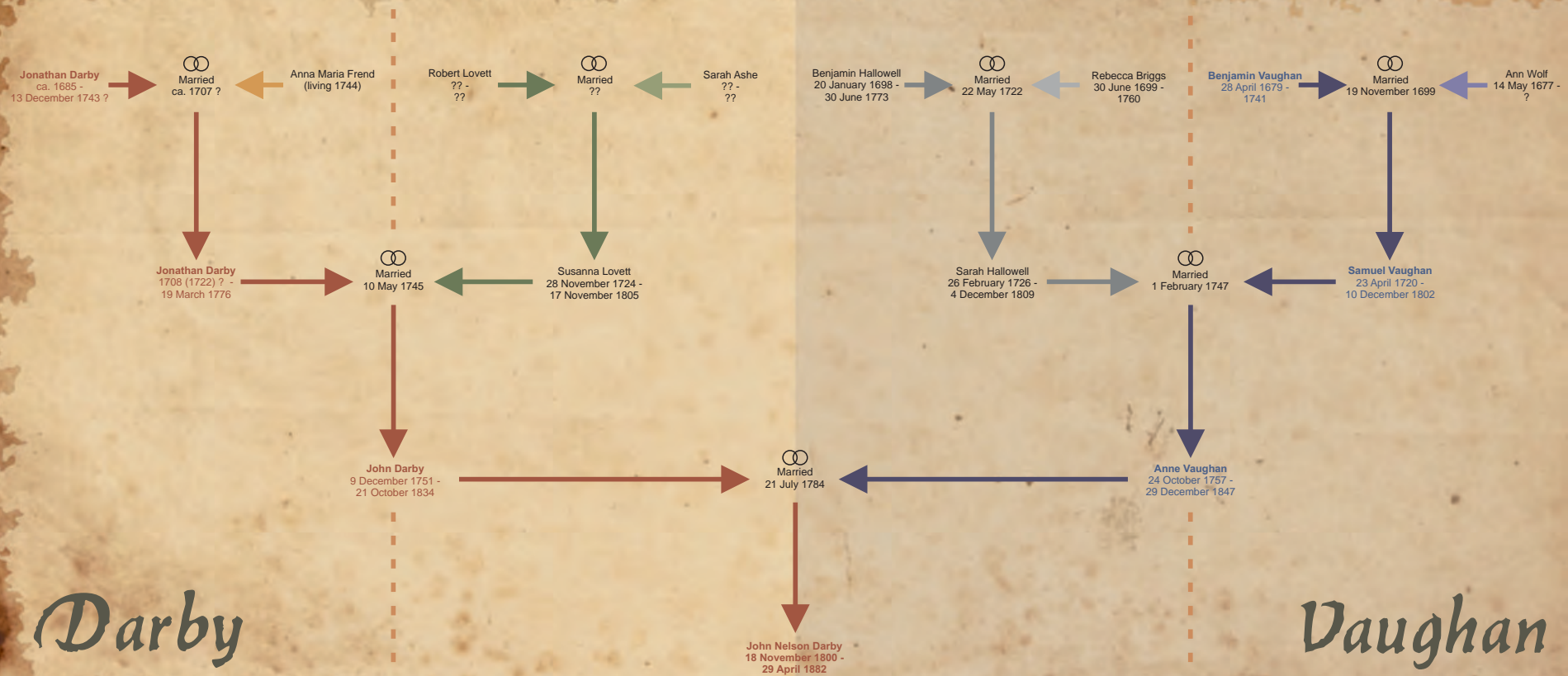
spirituality which alone can make both one in spirit and [piece missing] not learnt will take general effect and with humilia[tion, piece missing] at this feeling how little can be done (but it is everything to me) the question of going to Church is one of wisdom & I am not at all sure but shall be most thankful to hear upon it that going to Chapel would not be directly contrary to that wisdom & to the faithful work of unity as the servant of the common Lord. I have been very hurried to say this and must conclude I am my dear William
Your affectionate Brother JN Darby

⁹⁸ An abbreviation for "otherwise".

Simplified John Nelson Darby Family Tree

(only direct line, i.e. without listing of siblings)

Question marks directly behind a date mean that it is found in some records, but is not certain.



Darby

Vaughan