which separated numerous Indian tribes from their French attachment, was
made possible by the constant pressure exerted by Forbes, which involved his
“downright Bullying of Sir William Johnson.” Incidentally, Forbes did not
hold Johnson in very high estimation; in fact, Indian officials generally were
looked upon “as the most imposing Rogues that I have ever had to deal with.”

In short, we have here a set of documentary sources which must be used
by every student of the period, whether his interest lies in the details of the
purely military aspects of the campaign, in Indian relations, or in the history
of army organization and procedure. To the volume Professor James has
contributed a sketch of the life of Forbes and also textual annotations which,
although confined mainly to brief identifications of persons and references
to the location of documents referred to in the text, are sufficient. There is
also an adequate index. The Allegheny County Committee of the Pennsyl-
vanian Society of the Colonial Dames of America is to be congratulated not
only for making possible the publication but likewise for its very handsome
appearance.

Department of State, Washington, D. C.  CLARENCE E. CARTER

Whiskey Rebels: The Story of a Frontier Uprising. By LELAND D.
BALDWIN. Decorations by WARD HUNTER. (Pittsburgh, University
of Pittsburgh Press, 1939. ix, 326 p. Map.)

In 1794, the four southwestern counties of Pennsylvania became the seat
of a popular uprising directed against the authority of the federal government.
The source of the discontent was a federal excise tax upon distilled liquors
designed to defray the cost of Alexander Hamilton’s assumption program
and thus balance the federal budget. Revenue officers were tarred and feathered;
stills were smashed; friends of the central government maintained a
discreet silence or prudently left the country. At length the president called
out the militia of several of the Eastern states and suppressed the insurrection
by the threat of armed force. In his study Dr. Baldwin assigns himself the
task of examining the factors that brought the Monongahela country to the
point of armed defiance, developed personal feuds that lasted in some cases
for over a half a century, and evoked this signal evidence of the strength
of the new government.

Many of the popular issues of the present day are reflected in this contest.
Dr. Baldwin interprets the Whiskey Insurrection as being more than simply
a taxpayers’ filibuster. It was, he says, one of a series of agrarian uprisings
akin to the Regulator Movement and the Populist Revolt in which frontier individualism was arrayed against the expanding might of plutocratic individualism. The small business man was concerned, too, lest the excise tax drive the small distiller out of business and convert the distilling industry into a monopoly for the few. But to Eastern conservatives, the Whiskey Insurrection was the French Revolution at their doors. Already Democratic societies founded on the model of the Jacobin clubs had appeared in the West, and it was easy to surmise that they were at the root of the trouble. The German population of the region remained generally aloof from the excitement. The Presbyterian Church, the all-powerful local sect, while critical of the excise, refused to countenance violent tactics on the part of the “Whiskey Boys.”

Some of the best features of this study are the descriptive sketches of the prominent figures involved in the uprising: John Neville, the excise inspector, and the “Neville connection”; David Bradford and John Holcroft, popular leaders of the insurrection; John McMillan, “the leader of Presbyterianism in the West”; and Albert Gallatin, a rising political leader of the backwoods democracy. But these are overshadowed in Dr. Baldwin’s treatment by the figure of Hugh Henry Brackenridge, Pittsburgh lawyer, politician, and man of letters, who became dangerously compromised by his parleys with the rebels and narrowly missed being made the scapegoat for the whole proceedings. Brackenridge’s viewpoint as expressed in quotations from his Incidents of the Whiskey Insurrection is strongly emphasized, perhaps too much so, for of the 298 footnotes in the book, 111 deal with or are taken directly from that source. On the other hand, Gallatin’s part in sabotaging the program of the insurrectionists at the meeting at Parkinson’s Ferry on August 14 and again at Redstone on August 28, 1794, is passed over rather too easily. William Findley and other historians of the insurrection have argued that the secretary of the treasury, Alexander Hamilton, conspired to bring about the trouble in the West in order to prove the necessity of a standing army and to draw discredit upon the Democratic societies. The author of Whiskey Rebels dismisses this charge for lack of proof but finds grounds for the suspicion that Hamilton looked upon the rebellion as a “heaven-sent opportunity” and proceeded to utilize it for his own purposes.

Several questions remain unanswered in the mind of this reviewer. Why did three years elapse between the passage of the Excise Act and the uprising of 1794? Why did Bradford and the “Whiskey Boys” refrain from attacking the garrison at Fort Fayette when they marched on Pittsburgh from Brad-
dock’s Field on August 2, 1794? And finally, who were the leaders who stood behind Bradford and stiffened his resistance against counsels to retract? Dr. Baldwin suggests the names of David and Daniel Hamilton and Benjamin Parkinson but admits that they were purely local in their influence. A curious aftermath of the insurrection unmentioned in this book, perhaps because it lies outside the range of the topic, took place one night in February, 1799, when a whiskey pole was erected in Greensburg in Westmoreland County near the home of Benjamin Wells, the local excise collector. Tacked to it was an inscription in the German language containing the slogan, “Tom the Tinker, Liberty and no Excise,” followed by various profane expressions concerning the collector and voicing vague threats. The pole was removed by the authorities the next morning, and responsibility for the outrage was placed upon “a few sneaking, cowardly reptiles” who crept into the community by night and then stole away. This was evidently a sporadic outburst for there is no record of any similar occurrence after that.

The physical features of the Baldwin study include a substantial binding, a handsome jacket, and excellent typography. No available source of information seem to have been overlooked. The student of western Pennsylvania history will find in this volume, conforming as it does to the high standards established by the earlier publications of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey, a scholarly treatment of an episode that has been in large part neglected by the guild of professional historians. The casual reader will enjoy a pleasant excursion into the traditions of the Monongahela Valley at a time when communications with the East were tenuous and the Indian was a familiar sight in the streets of little Pittsburgh.

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J. Cutler Andrews


In a brief but satisfactory preface, the editor says, “In its own way, the journal is but a sample of ‘new material’ that may be found in the Gage Papers.” The value of the possession of the Gage Papers is well illustrated by this small, well-edited and well-printed volume. Much work has, it is true, been done on the British régime in the Mississippi Valley, notably by