

BOOK REVIEWS

The Reconstruction of Fort Ligonier, The Anatomy of a Frontier Fort. By CHARLES MORSE STOTZ, F.A.I.A. (A monograph published in the *Bulletin of The Association for Preservation Technology*. Vol. 6, No. 4, 1974. Pp. 104. Foreword, illustrations, appendices. \$4.50.)

Along the Loyalhanna Creek in the foothills of Laurel Ridge in Western Pennsylvania is the site of a mid-eighteenth century fort. It is one of eleven important frontier forts built, some by the French but most by the English, in an effort to control the routes to and the headwaters of the Ohio River. Fort Duquesne was the stronghold held by the French at the strategic junction of the three rivers and was the object of a massive campaign by the English to drive them from it.

General John Forbes was assigned the task of taking the fort. He decided on a route westward from Fort Bedford instead of the old Braddock Route from Fort Cumberland. In extending this new route the problem was to get the army through and to supply it with food and munitions en route. Forbes, not wishing to repeat Braddock's mistake of not having a fortified post to fall back on in the event of reversal, ordered the construction of a fort halfway between Fort Bedford and Fort Duquesne at what is now the town of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. The fort was designed to be a refuge in case of disaster and a supply depot for the campaign itself. Like other frontier forts, Fort Ligonier was not intended to be a permanent installation. Therefore, not being built of durable masonry but rather of the products of the local forests, in time, having served its purpose, it fell into disrepair and eventually practically disappeared.

Stotz's monograph is a fascinating and complete account and record of the trials, tribulations, research, methods, and accomplishments in the complete reconstruction of Fort Ligonier. An indication of the care and work in research and craftsmanship involved may be gleaned from the fact that even with all of late twentieth century's technology it took three times as long to reconstruct as it took to build originally in an eighteenth-century wilderness. We are taken by the author in his usual clear and scholarly way through the various steps of the project; from the initial gleam in his eye to the day of dedication of the completed work. The author says, "The primary purposes of this work [the monograph] is to offer those engaged in similar projects such aid as they may gain from my experience in this field."

True, few of us can look forward to reconstructing or restoring a frontier fort, and even though the extent of such ambitions is limited

to refinishing grandma's settle, it's great fun to read and see how someone else has done it. And that is what this monograph really is — not a how-to-do-it manual but a detailed factual account of how it was done. The work is addressed specifically to those who may be engaged in one way or another in a similar project, but its interest applies equally to all builders and would-be builders, craftsmen, historians, and just plain lovers of other people's projects. Rather than show us the working drawings and details making up the contract documents from which the work was executed he shows us beautifully delineated and complete *measured drawings* made from the finished work *after* completion.

By this method he records for all time the accomplished result instead of the wishful intent. Thus, accompanied by the appropriate photographs, we have a complete record of what was built, the true anatomy of a frontier fort, built as exactly like the original as dedicated research and meticulous craftsmanship can accomplish. As Stotz says (even after doing such scholarly reconstruction projects as Drake's Well in Titusville and the bastions of Fort Pitt and Fort Duquesne at Point State Park on the original sites), "None of the reconstruction projects in which I have been engaged has been pursued in the same depth and detail and none can compare in interest with the restoration of Fort Ligonier."

The monograph format is that of the bulletin of APT where it occupies the entire issue. Forty-seven pages of typescript are followed by fifty-four pages of maps, measured drawings, and photographs. These ninety-nine illustrations, with the exception of reproductions of historic maps and a few of the photographs, are the exclusive handiwork of the author. In this sense alone the work is something of a tour de force. The measured drawings are a delight to examine and admire. In lucid style, clarity of line, and thoughtful composition, embellished and annotated with his characteristic architect's lettering, they remind one of that other more monumental work of the author, *The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania*.

The Association for Preservation Technology (APT) is to be congratulated on the presentation of this work on Fort Ligonier in its bulletin. Without criticism of the magazine format perhaps we can hope the monograph will again appear some day in an edition set in a handsome type face and bound between hard covers, a fit companion for that other work.

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