BOOK REVIEWS


The publication of Fort Laurens, 1778-9: The Archaeological Record, by Richard Michael Gramly, fills a major gap in the history of Ohio's only Revolutionary war fortification. The book is a general account of the 1972-73 archeological excavations and the subsequent interpretive analysis. Gramly has provided a fine example of how archeological data can be transformed into a highly readable history that appeals to the general reader as well as scholars. Moreover, the book illustrates how historical and archeological research, each supporting the other, increase our reliable knowledge of a historical period.

The author is to be commended for publishing his report within a reasonable length of time following the fieldwork. Both the historical and archeological material is presented in a forthright and understandable manner that is unclouded by jargon and obtuse statements. Good illustrations also assist in understanding the complexity of this eighteenth-century military site. One of the more fascinating results of this research is the archeological substantiation of the tremendous gap in living conditions between officers and enlisted men that prevailed in eighteenth-century American frontier garrisons. This knowledge should assist in the study of the social forces at work in the Revolutionary army.

In the historical introduction, the author gives a concise and readable account of the history of the area. A few errors — the 1764 date for Christian Frederick Post's mission, and attributing the decline of Tuscarawas County to the decreasing fortunes of the Ohio-Erie Canal — require a careful and critical reading of the text but otherwise do not mar the usefulness of the book.

The book does leave some questions unanswered, and the author advances certain interpretations that require closer examination. The plan of the fort does not present sufficiently detailed information on the structures within it, nor are individual features always given the detailed treatment in the text that one would find in a full-site report.
The author acknowledges the difficulty of locating post molds under the prevailing soil conditions, but there is no indication that attempts were made to highlight such features by wetting the soil. More important, soil samples were not floated to obtain plant and seed remains. This could result in undue reliance on faunal remains for dietary reconstructions, skewing the analysis away from plants and cultigens as food resources. The attribution of log molds outside the fort walls to the hospital, while indeed possible, is based upon scanty and inconclusive evidence. The interpretation of the circular feature (number 38) as a granary appears to be largely conjectural; flotation of soil from this feature might have substantiated or disproved this conclusion. These criticisms are relatively minor, however; the book is informative and is recommended to the general public and to students of frontier history and Revolutionary war archeology in the Old Northwest.

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At long last a definitive biography of the somewhat obscure Tench Coxe is possible. Previous to the publication of this well-researched monograph, anyone desiring information on Alexander Hamilton's able and energetic treasury assistant had to consult either general histories of the Federalist period or biographies of Hamilton himself or read Harold Hutcheson's biography (*Tench Coxe: A Study in American Economic Development*. Baltimore, 1938), which is now outdated and published without benefit of access to the voluminous Coxe Papers. Now Professor Jacob E. Cooke, given exclusive access to the heretofore unavailable Tench Coxe Papers, has produced a first-rate study of this important early American political economist and treasury aide. Formerly an associate editor of *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* and the author of a thoughtful and well-received article on the relationship of Hamilton and Coxe ("Tench Coxe, Alexander Hamilton, and the Encouragement of American Manufactures," *The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series, 32 (July...