Except for a handful of items such as the journals of Elijah Fisher and Joseph Clark and the narratives of Joseph Plumb Martin and John Joseph Henry, published literature presenting the first-hand experiences of Revolutionary War rank and file has been extremely sparse. These quoted and requoted sources suffer from the limitation of dealing with only a few aspects of a long and far-ranging war. Further, as reflections of the literate minority of enlisted men they offer a fragmentary and not necessarily representative picture.

This final volume of the Clements Library's invaluable bicentennial series goes a long way toward remedying those deficiencies. Using affidavits submitted to support claims under the Pension Act of 1832, the editor presents a selection of accounts, in the veterans' own words, covering all theaters of operations and every phase of the war. Because these affidavits could be dictated, they represent the illiterate as well as the literate. Because the affidavits had to follow a prescribed format, essential points are not overlooked and a helpful degree of uniformity in the organization of the accounts is provided.

Some inevitable problems remain. As the editor points out, it must be borne in mind that the statements came from old men recounting events over a half century in the past. The same objection, however, applies to other first-person accounts which have long been accepted as basic sources on the Revolutionary experience. Another point, not emphasized to the same extent but at least equally significant, is that since the majority of the affidavits represent militia service, a careless reader could attribute to the militia a role in Revolutionary War combat which is disproportionate to the reality. The explanation for the book's emphasis on the militia is that, prior to the 1832 act, pensions had been authorized only for Continental service (which, being documented by official records, required no affidavits), for disability, or for poverty. Consequently, it is primarily militia service which provides material of the narrative type featured in this book. These disadvantages, however, are insignificant in comparison with the value of the material in question.

Extensive detail is provided on the activities of Pennsylvania troops, covering not only the conventional campaigns in the east —
Long Island, Fort Washington, Trenton, Brandywine, and Germantown— but also the operations against Indians on Pennsylvania's northern and western frontiers. The latter narratives include several which should be of particular value to anyone interested in the history of Western Pennsylvania.

In brief, this book may well prove to be the most broadly appealing of all the Clements Library series. Dann has made a significant addition to Revolutionary War literature. Perhaps even more important, the sampling he has offered will spread awareness of the vast quantities of comparable narratives which can provide the basis for further research along a wide diversity of lines. In both respects, he has rendered an extremely valuable service.

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This volume of The Diaries is primarily a record of farm management, continuing the daily statements begun in January 1785. Unlike the pre-Revolutionary diary entries, Washington no longer dwells introspectively on “where & how my time was spent.” Each day includes three temperature recordings. Washington’s rides from Mount Vernon to his five nearby plantations form the main theme of almost every entry. Details of planting, cultivation, and harvest are laid out, although there are no references to the business success or failure of the operation as a whole. Washington’s penchant for agricultural experiments is conspicuous. Breeding stock, seeds, skilled laborers, treatises, and letters of advice flow to Mount Vernon from Europe. One has the impression that Washington believed that he was gradually improving his land. Details of crop rotation and planting methods appear often, in a technical but abridged style. Undoubtedly these were intended for reference in later years. Construction of fences, building maintenance, and arboreta arrangement were faithfully recorded. Weather and moisture played a critical role in the annual farming cycle along the Potomac. During these years the mercury