
Joseph Gardner Andrews, a graduate of Harvard, was schoolmaster at Dorchester, Massachusetts, until he enlisted as surgeon’s mate in 1792 and joined General Anthony Wayne’s army near Pittsburgh. Following Wayne’s victory over the Indians at Fallen Timbers, August 20, 1794, he was assigned to Fort Defiance. This outpost, overlooking the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize rivers, was the strongest of those constructed by General Wayne as he moved northward against the enemy. And here at the American army’s crossroads fort, Andrews sensed the general uneasiness which was still manifest until the Indians returned loaded with trinkets from the peacemaking at Greeneville in 1795.

As surgeon’s mate, Andrews faithfully looked after the health of the garrison; just as faithfully, he recorded everything which impressed him. He made trips up the Maumee to Fort Wayne for supplies, handled a large correspondence, and even planted a garden. He preferred to dine alone in his quarters and was not slow in expressing his pleasure at this rare occurrence. Andrews usually ate at general mess, however, and there he frequently met Indian chiefs and traders. His journal is full of comments on their manners and character. But it was not until November 3, 1795, that the first American merchant reached Fort Defiance. He was Abijah Hunt from Cincinnati.

At the beginning of each month Andrews added a report on the “State of the Garrison of Fort Defiance.” He tabulated all sick and well, noting what disorders were present. Dysentery from improperly cured beef was prevalent in the winter; late summer and early fall brought malaria. On October 1, 1795, the sick list was almost twice that of the well, approximately two-thirds of the garrison. Although he had no thermometer, which he duly lamented, Andrews made meteorological observations. He recorded the kind of weather (rain, snow, cloudy, fair) and the direction of the wind for each day of each month. And as one reads his observations and compares them with today’s average weather in the area, he notes that there is not much difference.

Packed with the action of daily life at Fort Defiance, Andrews’ vivid account is superior to those of his contemporaries. The clear and concise English in which it is written testifies to his educational background. Just twenty-seven when he wrote the journal, Andrews gives evidence of the wisdom and stability of his New England ancestors. Indispensable to the scholar, this small volume is a delight to historian and layman alike.

Richard C. Knopf, historian of the Anthony Wayne Parkway Board, has provided commendable editing and an excellent introduction. The notes are ample and accurate. The index is generally adequate; however, a few important names are missing, notably that of Little Turtle. The Andrews Journal was published through the courtesy of the Division of Manuscripts of the Library of Congress and first appeared in the Ohio Historical Quarterly in January, April, and July, 1957.

Indiana University

Frederick A. Schminke