BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN LACEY AND THE PENNSYLVANIA MILITIA IN 1778

It is well known that the Continental army under General George Washington spent the winter and spring of 1777-78 encamped on the west side of the Schuylkill River at Valley Forge. It is less known that during that same period, while the British occupied Philadelphia, Washington ordered the Pennsylvania militia to guard the region north of Philadelphia between the Schuylkill and the Delaware rivers. Washington instructed the militia to prevent the farmers in Philadelphia and Bucks counties from traveling into the city, where the British paid high prices in gold for farm goods. In addition, the militia was to defend those residents who were sympathetic to the American cause from the nightly attacks of the British raiders who rode out from Philadelphia to capture known patriots or to destroy their property.

During the first months of the British occupation of Philadelphia, Brigadier General James Potter was the commander of the Pennsylvania militia, but in early January 1778, Potter requested leave of absence to visit his family in Cumberland County, whom he had not seen in many months. The Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania granted Potter his leave and began to search for a replacement to lead the militia. On 7 January 1778, the council voted to appoint Colonel John Lacey as the militia’s commander. In addition, the council promoted the colonel to brigadier general, because they wanted to avoid future friction between Lacey and the older, more experienced colonels over whom he now had command. The new brigadier general was only twenty-five years old.¹

A few days later, Lacey received a letter at his father's home in Buckingham, Bucks County, from Thomas Wharton, the president of the council. The letter, which informed Lacey of his appointment and promotion, presented a dilemma to Lacey. He was uncertain of whether he wanted to return to the military from which he had retired at the close of the campaign of 1777.

Lacey had been fighting in the war since 1775, first in a small company of Bucks County patriots that had been incorporated into the Pennsylvania Line, then at Fort Ticonderoga under Colonel Anthony Wayne's command, and most recently in several minor skirmishes in Chester County and in the battle of Germantown. Although he had served well and had risen to the rank of colonel in those two and a half years, it had been a disturbing period for Lacey. In March 1776, Lacey, who had been raised a Quaker, was removed as a member of the Buckingham Meeting, because he had "so far deviated from the principles of Friends as to learn the art of war." Another disturbing incident occurred in 1776 at Fort Ticonderoga, when his commander, Anthony Wayne, ordered Lacey arrested for disobeying a minor order. Although he was not court-martialed, the incident caused an intense hatred to develop between Lacey and Wayne, souring Lacey's entire experience in the Continental army.

Now, in January 1778, Lacey was reluctant to leave the calm existence of rural Buckingham and to alienate himself further from the Quaker meeting, and he was also apprehensive of the responsibility of the council's appointment. On the other hand, he had strong feelings about the movement for independence. He felt that British rule in America had been "unjust, tiranical, and oppressive," and he wrote that "patriotism beat high in my breast."

He was still undecided when he received a letter from General Potter, requesting him to visit his camp at Graham Park, just south of the county line near Horsham. Lacey rode to Graham Park on 22 January, intending to discuss the militia's situation with Potter before he made his final decision to accept or to reject the council's appointment. Instead, when he arrived, he discovered that Potter had already left for Cumberland County. Finding the militia without

4. Ibid., pp. 348-54.
5. Ibid., p. 3.
a leader, Lacey felt that he now had no choice but to remain at Graham Park and to accept his appointment to command the militia.\(^6\)

Lacey received a letter from General Washington three days later that outlined the militia’s objectives. Washington wrote:

I must request that you will exert yourself to fulfill the intention of keeping a body of troops in the Country where you are posted. Protecting the Inhabitants is one of the ends designed, and preventing supplies and intercourse with the Enemy is the other.\(^7\)

The British raiders intended to prevent Lacey and the militia from achieving these objectives. The raiders were led by three British officers: Captain Thomas, commander of a small group of Bucks County Tories operating independently of the British army; Captain Hovenden, commander of a division of light dragoons composed of volunteers from Philadelphia County; and Major John G. Simcoe, commander of the Queen’s Rangers, a band of infantrymen composed of 360 Tories from various colonies. Simcoe and the Queen’s Rangers roamed through the territory that was guarded by Lacey and the militia with orders from General Howe that were the antithesis of Lacey’s orders from General Washington. Howe ordered Simcoe to “secure the country and facilitate the inhabitants bringing in their produce to market.”\(^8\)

In February 1778, these British officers led numerous raids into Bucks County despite the presence of Lacey and the militia. On the night of 13 February, Hovenden and his dragoons rode to Bensalem and captured several patriots and a large quantity of supplies. That same night the Queen’s Rangers rode up Old York Road to the Red Lion Tavern and captured its owner, Joseph Butler, and his entire stock of liquor. From there, the Rangers traveled to Major Wright’s Tavern at Whitemarsh and took Wright and a number of other patriots prisoner. The following night Hovenden’s dragoons rode up the Bristol Road, taking fourteen prisoners, while Thomas’s volunteers rounded up eleven prisoners along Bustleton Road. Also on

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that night, Simcoe's Rangers came up to Smithfield, attacked a group of eighty militiamen stationed there, and captured forty of them.\textsuperscript{9}

As a result of these raids, several individuals expressed their fear and anger over the lack of protection from the British. Colonel Joseph Kirkbride of the Bucks County militia wrote to Thomas Wharton complaining of the numerous British raids and of the militia's inactivity under Lacey's command. Robert Levers, the chief notary for Northampton County, wrote to Wharton from Easton describing the chaos throughout

the greater Part of Bucks County, . . . seemingly wrapped up in a lethargic sloth, no Guard, but a few decrepid Invalids, dying for want of clothing, and the Public Stores, more or less, pillaged for want of a sufficient Guard.

Colonel Francis Murray of the Continental army, stationed with twenty men in Newtown to guard more than 2000 yards of confiscated cloth, wrote to Washington on 13 February, expressing his fear over the unguarded roads in Bucks County and indicating that Lacey and the militia were camped some distance away in Warwick. Five days later, Murray, the twenty men with him, and the 2000 yards of cloth were all captured by a British raiding party of forty men led by Hovenden and Thomas.\textsuperscript{10}

However, the most serious instance of the militia's inability to halt the British raiding parties occurred in the last week of February. On 23 February, a herd of 130 cattle arrived in Lacey's camp. The cattle had been gathered together by Lacey's personal enemy, General Anthony Wayne, who had been sent into New Jersey by Washington to gather a large herd for food at Valley Forge. This herd had been sent ahead by Wayne with several drovers, while he and his men continued to gather cattle in New Jersey. Wayne had instructed his drovers to cross the Delaware at Coryell's Ferry, to find Lacey's camp, and to request the militia commander to supply an escort to Valley Forge for the herd.


Lacey refused to grant the requested escort for the cattle on the evening of 23 February. He simply instructed the drovers to keep well north of the city and to travel through upper Bucks County, where he felt they would be safe from British raiders. The next morning Captain Hovenden’s dragoons, informed by local spies, captured the entire unguarded herd on Skippack Road, eleven miles from Valley Forge.  

Washington was extremely angry at the loss of the cattle. When he learned that the drovers had requested an escort and had been refused, Washington demanded of Lacey, “I shall be glad to know whether it is so, and if true, what could be your reason for refusing.”

Lacey defended himself to Washington by arguing that when he received the request for the escort, he had only 400 men, most of whom had just arrived unarmed from York and Cumberland counties. He claimed that sending an armed escort with the herd would have left his camp unguarded and exposed, but that in advising the drovers to keep back in the country, he thought they would be safe. The loss of the cattle seems to have been the result of this miscalculation of the area’s safety, for even Lacey admitted, “... had I suspected the least of Danger from so great a Distance from the Enemy, I should have sent such men as I had Equipt with them.”

Washington was concerned about these successful British raids from Philadelphia. He advised Lacey to move his camp closer to the city to discourage the British operations. However, as early as 24 January, Lacey had expressed fear that his force was too small and that the British would attack his camp. For this reason, Lacey made his camp along the Neshaminy Creek or at Doyle’s Town in upper Bucks County.

Unfortunately, the number of men under Lacey’s command grew smaller as each week passed. The periods of enlistment of many of his men had expired, and they had returned home before the arrival of the replacements which council had ordered. When Lacey took command on 22 January, six hundred men were in his camp. By mid-February, Lacey’s numbers were between sixty and one hundred.

He wrote to Washington, explaining that these inadequate numbers were responsible for the militia’s lack of activity in the area.\textsuperscript{15}

Washington, in turn, complained to Wharton about the militia’s lack of accomplishment in Lacey’s territory since the absence of General Potter. Washington stated that this was the fault either of Lacey’s ineptitude or of the low number of militiamen in that region. He went on to remind Wharton of the agreement made between Washington and the council several months previously that stated that the council would keep 1000 men of the Pennsylvania militia in the region between the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers during the winter.\textsuperscript{16} Wharton replied to Washington that when the council had appointed Lacey to replace Potter in January, they had also called out enough classes of militia to give Lacey 1500 men. However, these classes of militia had been delayed for various reasons: the York and Cumberland county militias by bad weather and difficulty in crossing the Susquehanna River, the Northumberland County militia by Indian attacks at home, and the Northampton County militia by the carelessness of a messenger who had misplaced the order of council. Wharton also reminded Washington of Lacey’s inexperience, asking the commander-in-chief to be patient with Lacey and to give him occasional advice.\textsuperscript{17}

However, the lack of replacements was not the only explanation for Lacey’s low numbers. Early in February, Lacey dismissed a class of Berks County militia and part of a class of York County militia weeks before their periods of enlistment were due to expire. Lacey made this crucial decision, which further weakened the militia, after two Hessian and five British soldiers, who were deserting from the British, stumbled into Lacey’s camp. Lacey felt that it was important to prevent these deserters from returning and informing the British how poor the conditions and the discipline of the militia were. Therefore, Lacey gave the deserters large shares of food to impress them favorably and treated them better than his own men. But because there was a food shortage in the militia and because some of the militiamen began murmuring about the impressive treatment given to the deserters, Lacey released the Berks and York county militias early, cutting his force down to sixty men.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{15} John Lacey to George Washington, 11 February 1778, \textit{Washington’s Papers}.
\textsuperscript{18} Wildes, \textit{John Lacey}, p. 52.
On 23 February Lacey's camp was enlarged to 492 men by the arrival of the replacements from York and Cumberland counties. However, despite this considerable increase in his force, Lacey encountered two problems as the spring approached: his personal lack of rapport with the militiamen, and the antipathy of the local residents toward Lacey and the militia.

Lacey, a veteran of the Continental army, disliked the militiamen, regarding most of them as cowards and thieves.

Truly a soldier ought to have a heart like steel to brave danger and court death in the execution of his orders, and to obey his Commander. A soldier inspired with such ideas, would despise inhumanity, and cheerfully share the last Crum with a fellow mortal . . . but, unhappily for America, and themselves, they fall far short of that character.

The militiamen did not live up to Lacey's ideals, and he did not hesitate to show his contempt to them. At one point, Thomas Wharton suggested to Washington that the inactivity of the militia was partly caused by the men's disgust with serving under Lacey and other Continental officers who constantly insulted them. Lacey's insulting attitude and the resentment of the militiamen to taking orders from a twenty-five year old brigadier general produced such bad rapport between the commander and his men that even Lacey admitted, "Our discipline is poor."

The distrust of the militia by the local inhabitants was another constant problem for Lacey. Many residents in the area disliked Lacey personally because they believed that he secretly allowed members of his own family and his own commercial agents to pass into Philadelphia to do their trading. Lacey later denied such rumors, explaining that those individuals whom he did allow to pass into the city were his spies. However, the rumors continued, and Lacey's reputation continued to suffer. The presence of the militia was further resented because Lacey was unable to control the frequent pillaging and thievery of many militiamen. Washington had advised Lacey to encourage the vigilance of the militiamen by allowing them to keep the goods of any farmer captured while going into the city, but this

20. John Lacey to Joseph Hart, 11 February 1778, Memoirs and Correspondence of John Lacey.
practice quickly evolved into an abuse whereby many militiamen turned into highway robbers. Newspaper accounts of cruel punishments inflicted against those farmers who were caught taking goods into Philadelphia further excited the bad feelings of the local residents against the militia.22

Major Simcoe and the Queen’s Rangers were more careful in cultivating the good will of the residents in the region. Simcoe stressed to the men in his command the importance of allying the inhabitants as spies for the Rangers. Increasingly, the militiamen were regarded by the citizens as a band of robbers, and many farmers sought Simcoe’s protection when they took their goods to market.23

A further deterioration of relations between the militia and the local residents developed in late March following a meeting between Lacey and General Lachlan McIntosh at the Springhouse Tavern. Lacey, McIntosh, and several other officers had been discussing the unfriendly manner of the inhabitants in the area. The group hatched a plan to solve the problem. All persons living north of Philadelphia and south of Lacey’s camp on the Neshaminy Creek would be forced to move into the back country, and a fifteen mile area between the Delaware and Schuylkill rivers would be completely devastated.24 Lacey concluded that this would stop any intercourse between the country and the city, and that British raiders would no longer be aided by local spies.

To discover how much resistance would be excited by this plan, Lacey sent out word with his scouting parties that all the inhabitants within fifteen miles of Philadelphia would have to move north of the region by 1 April. Naturally, the inhabitants opposed the plan. The residents held meetings to decide how to deal with the situation, and one such meeting sent two Quakers to Lacey’s camp to express the opinion of the community. “They complained heavily,” calling the plan “impracticable, cruel, and . . . evil,” and they announced that this was one insult which the people of the region would not accept from the militia.25

22. Wildes, John Lacey, p. 55; John Lacey to Colonel Kirkbride, 10 March 1778, and Colonel Kirkbride to John Lacey, 14 March 1778, Memoirs and Correspondence of John Lacey; George Washington to John Lacey, 8 February, 1778, Washington’s Papers; and Pennsylvania Evening Post, 26 February 1778.
Lacey wrote to Washington, hoping to get approval of his plan despite the public uproar. Washington flatly ordered Lacey not to attempt to carry out the plan. Washington told Lacey that to depopulate the entire region was both too difficult and too horrible to execute. Yet, Lacey had already succeeded in arousing further enmity in the inhabitants of the region.

In late March and April, Lacey's men began to stop individual farmers entering Philadelphia with greater frequency. Washington advised Lacey to court-martial one of the repeat-offenders, to sentence him to death, and to execute him as an example to other farmers of the penalty for trading with the enemy. One such farmer, John Burks, who often spied for the British, was captured, tried, convicted, and sentenced to be hung. However, before the sentence could be carried out, Burks escaped from Lacey's camp. Another farmer, named Worrel, was also tried and convicted, and he was executed before a group of Continental soldiers and 150 of Lacey's men. Other Tories in the area were court-martialed by Lacey, sentenced to six months imprisonment, and sent to the council for jailin.

However, none of these measures stopped the farmers from trading with the British in the city. They began to avoid the main roads where Lacey stationed his patrols and to travel cross-country through fields and along private paths. In the spring, women traveled more frequently to the city to trade, since they were more successful in avoiding scouting parties.

The British responded to the militia's harassment of the farmers by conducting more frequent raids into northern Philadelphia and Bucks counties in April. On 7 April, Captains Hovenden and Thomas led an attack on a group of Continental soldiers at Smithfield, killing eight men and capturing nine. That same night, Simcoe's Rangers attacked a small group of Lacey's soldiers north of Germantown, killing five and capturing one. On the morning of 17 April, a British raiding party rode to Bristol, capturing a number of patriots in that area.

By this time Washington was extremely upset with the situation east of the Schuylkill. He wrote to Wharton in April, reminding him once again of Pennsylvania's pledge to keep 1000 militiamen between the Delaware and the Schuylkill. Washington announced that if necessary, he would soon be forced to embarrass the state by calling on the militias of New Jersey and Maryland to serve in that region, since the Pennsylvania militia was inadequate. He suggested that Wharton call out more men for Lacey.

In addition, Washington was very displeased with Lacey's performance. The commander-in-chief expressed hope that General Potter would soon return from his leave to replace Lacey, "as his [Potter's] activity and vigilance have been much wanting in the course of the winter."

In late April, Lacey's force was once again very small. On 19 April, he had 251 men under his command, and fearing a British attack on his camp at Neshaminy Creek, he pulled all of his scouting parties and patrols into one large body. Two-thirds of the periods of enlistment of these men were about to expire, and none of the replacements ordered out by the council on 25 March had yet arrived.

Beginning on 20 April, Lacey and his unified body of militiamen conducted a series of zigzagging maneuvers throughout northern Philadelphia County. Because he had pulled in his scouting parties, Lacey's intelligence on the enemy raiders was very poor, so for the next week the militia marched over the entire area following up rumors of enemy movements. They marched first to Edge's Hill on 20 April, then to Chestnut Hill on 22 April and to North Wales on 23 April, and then back to Edge's Hill on 24 April. After three more days of such marches, Lacey arrived with a total of fifty-three exhausted men at Crooked Billet on 27 April. Lacey decided to make camp there for a few days, to await replacements for the men who had returned home.

One group of exhausted militiamen that was returning to the main body of men at Crooked Billet after the week of grueling movements was attacked by British dragoons. The militiamen had been traveling to the camp leisurely with their guns piled on the wagons

33. Wildes, John Lacey, p. 58; John Lacey to General Armstrong, 28 April 1778, Memoirs and Correspondence of John Lacey.
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and with a few men sleeping on the wagons. The small group was surprised by the British, and twelve Americans were killed, six were taken prisoner, and two baggage wagons were captured.\(^3\)

Major Simcoe of the Queen's Rangers was increasingly anxious throughout April to mount a major attack on Lacey and the militia. Simcoe visited General Howe to seek permission for the attack, and Howe gave his approval, leaving the entire operation in Simcoe's hands. When spies from northern Philadelphia County informed Simcoe in the last days of April that Lacey was camped at Crooked Billet, Simcoe made plans to attack the camp on 1 May.\(^3\) The Queen's Rangers, and 200 cavalymen and mounted infantrymen under Lieutenant Colonel Abercrombie began the journey from Philadelphia to Crooked Billet on the afternoon of 30 April.

That night, Lacey took careful measures to prevent a surprise attack on his camp, now comprised of 400 militiamen due to new arrivals from York and Cumberland counties. Lacey ordered Lieutenant William Neilson to leave the camp between two and three o'clock in the morning to patrol the area and to fire a signal to alert the camp if he spotted any British raiders. In addition, Captain Thomas Downey's brigade was on alert for action at short notice.\(^3\)

However, Lacey's precautions were unsuccessful in preventing the surprise attack. Lieutenant Neilson disobeyed orders and remained in bed until near daybreak. When he and his patrol finally left the camp, they were only a short distance away when they spotted some of the British infantrymen being led by Abercrombie. Neilson's patrol hid but did not fire the signal to warn the camp, because they feared being captured by the British. Instead, Neilson sent a runner back to the camp to give the warning, but he never arrived. Neilson was later court-martialed for disobeying orders and was cashiered from the militia.\(^3\)

The British force had split into two groups. Simcoe and the Queen's Rangers planned to attack the camp from the north and east, while Abercrombie and the British infantrymen were to attack from the west and south. However, Abercrombie's men arrived in position too soon, and attacked before Simcoe's Rangers could surround the camp. Abercrombie's men reached within 200 yards of the

\(^3\) Wildes, John Lacey, p. 59, and Valley Forge, p. 374.


\(^3\) J. Zeamer, "Battle of the Billet," Carlisle Daily Volunteer 29 June 1908.

\(^3\) John Lacey to George Washington, 2 May 1778, and John Lacey to Thomas Wharton, 4 May 1778, Memoirs and Correspondence of John Lacey.
camp and fired into the chaotic militiamen as they scrambled from their blankets.\textsuperscript{38}

The Americans were outnumbered and nearly surrounded, so Lacey ordered a retreat to the north, leaving all their baggage and supplies behind to the enemy. After fighting forward for two miles, the militia finally escaped the enemy's fire north of Warminster. Lacey then ordered his men to return down the Old York Road, hoping to arrive back in Crooked Billet to catch the British off guard. However, the British had already left for the city.

Lacey recorded that twenty-six Americans were killed, and fifty-eight were missing. Simcoe estimated that fifty to sixty Americans were killed or captured, while one Philadelphia newspaper reported that up to one hundred were killed and sixty were captured. A number of dead militiamen were found in a pile of buckwheat straw which had been set aflame. Several citizens claimed to have seen the British pushing wounded militiamen into the burning straw. Several other militiamen were found, who had been burned alive or bayoneted after they surrendered, including Captain Downey who was found with a hand cut off and his head slashed in several places.\textsuperscript{39}

Within two weeks of the battle of Crooked Billet, Washington wrote Lacey that he was being relieved of his command of the Pennsylvania militia due to the return of General Potter. Potter arrived two days later on 13 May and relieved Lacey, although Lacey remained with Potter for several weeks to help Potter reacquaint himself with the region.\textsuperscript{40} Then Lacey left the militia and retired back to his home in Buckingham, where he remained in private life for the remainder of the war.

By mid-June General Howe and the British withdrew from Philadelphia, bringing an end to the occupation of the city and to the mission of the Pennsylvania militia to guard the region north of the city.

The militia failed to achieve either of the objectives that Washington had hoped they would achieve.\textsuperscript{41} The men under Lacey's com-


\textsuperscript{40} George Washington to John Lacey, 11 May 1778, \textit{Washington's Papers}.

\textsuperscript{41} This conclusion sharply departs from what William W. H. Davis wrote about Lacey and the militia in 1854. He wrote that "the obstacles he [Lacey] had to contend
mand had not deterred the British raiders from harassing and capturing many of the patriots who lived in northern Philadelphia and Bucks counties; in fact, they were so ineffective in stopping the raiders that by late April Simcoe felt confident enough in his own strength to mount a major attack on the militia itself. Additionally, the militia could not interfere, to any great extent, with the flow of farm goods which continuously traveled from the region into the British held city. Lacey’s drastic plan in late March to depopulate the entire area indicates that all prior efforts by the militia to stop this intercourse had not succeeded.

There were several important factors which contributed to the failure of the militia. The first obstacle was the small size of the militia due to the slow arrival of replacements. Lacey had a wide area to cover with the militia, and his numbers never came close to equalling the 1000 men which the council had promised to him and Washington. A second obstacle was the hostility of so many of the local residents to Lacey and the militia. This hostility was natural and not necessarily a reflection of the region’s political stance on the revolution, since part of the militia’s mission was to disrupt the ordinary economic cycle of trade between the goods-producing farmland and the goods-consuming city. By attempting to interfere with the farmers’ source of income, the militia’s efforts were naturally met with resistance and, in some cases, betrayal.

However, the major obstacle to the militia’s success was its commander, John Lacey. Lacey was only twenty-five years old when the council appointed him to lead the militia, and he was inexperienced in leading soldiers and making important military decisions. Lacey did not respect his men, because he tried to apply to the raw, untrained militiamen his ideals of what a good soldier should be. As a result, he was unable to stop their pillaging which contributed to the already hot resentment of the local residents to the presence of the militia.

42. In addition to contradicting Davis, this conclusion differs from Wildes’s studies of Lacey. Wildes explained the militia’s problems in terms of bad luck or ill-fate. Describing the militia’s commander as “luckless John Lacey” and “the darling of bad luck,” Wildes wrote that “whenever fate opposed the American cause, poor Lacey was the goat,” and “if I have given the impression that all this was due to Lacey’s inefficiency, I am extremely sorry, for John Lacey was only the victim of the disordered colonial army system.” John Lacey, p. 242, and Valley Forge, pp. 51, 53.
Washington certainly had doubts about Lacey's competence. He was particularly displeased by the loss of the herd of cattle in February because Lacey had underestimated the danger of the area from British raiders and had refused to give the drovers their requested escort. In addition, Washington was irritated by Lacey's continual reluctance to move his campsite closer to the city, where the militia might have been in a more effective position to discourage the British raids. By the end of the winter, Washington could only hope for the speedy return of General Potter.

Finally, Lacey's decisions often produced the unfortunate result of worsening those already serious obstacles with which the militia had to contend. By allowing the Berks and York county militias to go home weeks early so that he could better impress seven enemy deserters, Lacey cut his own strength at a moment when his numbers were already critically low and when the British raids were rising to their greatest frequency. And by informing the local residents of his plan to depopulate the entire region, he unnecessarily aggravated the already unfriendly feelings of the inhabitants toward the militia.

It is impossible, of course, to know whether General Potter or any other officer could have made better use of the militia in the face of the difficulties that the militia faced in the winter and spring of 1778. But when taking into consideration Lacey's youth and inexperience in commanding, his arrogance toward the militiamen, his inability to control their thievery, and the mistrust of the residents toward Lacey personally, it must be concluded that the council might have made a better choice in appointing a commander for the militia than the reluctant warrior from Buckingham.

43. George Washington to John Lacey, 2 March 1778, and 18 February 1778; George Washington to Thomas Wharton, 12 February 1778; George Washington to John Armstrong, 27 March 1778, Washington's Papers.