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JOHN B. C. LUCAS, PHYSIOCRAT
ON THE FRONTIER¹

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I. *The French Beginnings*

J EAN BAPTISTE CHARLES LUCAS DESPEINTREAUX was born in Pont-Audemer, a Norman town on the Brille river in France, on August 14, 1758.² His father, Robert Joseph Edouard Lucas, was first magistrate of the district. His mother was a member of the nobility before her marriage, Lady Elizebeth Jeanne Victoire Felicite Larcher.³ The Lucas family was very old; it has been traced through the English Domesday Book, the roll of Battle Abbey and several other ancient records.⁴

From the will of Lucas' mother, it is possible to get a picture of the social and economic status of the family. At the death of Madame Lucas in 1789, she owned a town house with a garden where she employed two servants as well as a country home with some farm land

1 A thesis submitted to the graduate school of the University of Pittsburgh, in 1952, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of master of arts.—Ed.

2 *Biographical Dictionary of the American Congress, 1774-1949*, p. 1481 (Washington, 1950). In America, Lucas anglicized his name by adopting the form John B. C. Lucas.

3 J. B. C. Lucas passport, and Lucas Family to Lucas (on the settlement of Mrs. Lucas' estate), 1789, both in French, in the Lucas Papers at the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis. Microfilms of these and of other Lucas papers cited below are in the Darlington Library of the University of Pittsburgh.

4 William Hyde and Howard L. Conrad, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, 3:1315 (St. Louis, 1899).

attached where one servant was kept. Both houses were very substantial. From a partial description of the furnishings bequeathed by her, it is possible to picture the standard of living of the family. Mentioned were 10 pounds of table silver, 68 napkins, 17 tablecloths, 32 sheets, jewelry, an inlaid chest of drawers, fine china, silver candlesticks, an extensive library, various drapes and laces, and much fine furniture.

The will of Mme. Lucas also tells us where the six Lucas children were in 1789. The oldest, Gaspard Joseph, was titular priest of the Chapel of St. Margaret. The next oldest, Mlle. Douce Félicité, was at home. Then came John, in Pittsburgh, followed by Louis Hippolyte of Petit Frou, Santo Domingo, in the French West Indies. The next brother, Edouard Victor, was a merchant of Rouen who also traveled in England, for he wrote to John from there. The youngest, Robert Paul, was at home in 1789.⁵

John was educated in the law with the intention that he should assume his father's position. He attended the Honfleur and Paris law schools and was graduated from the law department of the University of Caen in 1782. Thereafter, he practiced in Pont-Audemer. His education, he later told his daughter, "was not acquired by steam, but was exceedingly thorough."⁶

At Honfleur, he met and married Anne Sebin, the daughter of a cloth manufacturer of that city. According to Lucas' daughter, her mother "was a very handsome, well-educated, and, in many respects, a remarkable woman; and although she was beneath him socially, being the daughter of a cloth manufacturer, still he was so taken with her personal charms and mental endowments, that he made her an offer of his hand and heart, and was accepted." The daughter also relates that this marriage displeased Lucas' family, which had planned another for him, and that the resultant friction was the cause of Lucas' emigration.

5 Lucas Family to Lucas, 1789, and Edouard Lucas to John Lucas, June 30, 1797, in Lucas Papers.

6 Anne Lucas Hunt, "Early Recollections," in Missouri Historical Society, *Glimpses of the Past*, 1:41 (May, 1934); *Biographical Dictionary*, 1481; Lucas passport and diploma, in Lucas Papers, in French.

This tale may be one of several fanciful romances that have grown up around the affair.⁷

There are several reasons given for Lucas' desire to come to America. Besides the story told by his daughter there is another. McDermott writes that "tradition . . . has also declared that he left home because he could not reconcile his republican principles with the royalist sympathies of his father." But this, he continues, "is without foundation, for the older Lucas died in 1783, more than a year before his son left France."⁸ McDermott gives no source for the story. At any rate, the elder Lucas had died in 1783, so the story could not be true.⁹

Apparently, Lucas first was stimulated by a friend in Honfleur, Jacques le Ray de Chaumont, *fils*, to consider emigration to the new world seriously. This young man was the son of the landlord of Benjamin Franklin, the American envoy to France, then staying at Passy. Both the elder le Ray de Chaumont and his son were staunch friends of America and, of course, quite friendly to Franklin. The son was planning to come to America and urged the idea on Lucas.¹⁰

7 Hyde and Conrad, *St. Louis*, 3:1316; Hunt, "Early Recollections," 41. For another account, see Claude Francois Adrien Marquis de Lezay-Marnesia, *Lettres ecrites des rives de l'Ohio*, 114-137 (Paris, 1801). Lezay-Marnesia came to America to found a colony in Ohio in 1790 and lived in Pittsburgh for a while in 1791. For him, see *Bibliographie Universelle Ancienne et Moderne*, 24:437-438 (Paris, n.d.). In his *Lettres* he gives a fanciful account in which Lucas' wife has another name, a different city of origin, and a different social background; the date of the death of Lucas' father is different; the source of the capital Lucas used to come to America is different; and Lucas' port of embarkation is different. Extant documents contradict almost every detail of his story. For another commentary on the latter, see John F. McDermott, "John B. C. Lucas in Pennsylvania," *ante*, 21:210-211 n. (September, 1938). McDermott concludes, and the author concurs, that the Lezay-Marnesia account is "in the main a literary indulgence."

8 McDermott, "Lucas," 210.

9 Lucas to Benjamin Franklin, in French, January 9, 1784, in Franklin Papers, 31:14, in the library of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia. Photostats of this and other Franklin letters mentioned below are in the Darlington Library of the University of Pittsburgh.

10 Hyde and Conrad, *St. Louis*, 3:1316; Edward E. Hale and Edward E. Hale, Jr., *Franklin in France from Original Documents*, 1:83-84 (Boston, 1888). Young le Ray de Chaumont came to America later; for glimpses of his activities here, as businessman and land-speculator, see summaries of his letters in I. Minis Hays, ed., *Calendar of the Papers of Benjamin Franklin in the Library of the American Philosophical Society*, 3:324, 387, 400; 4:12, 138, 145, 357, 363 (Philadelphia, 1908).

At any rate, on January 9, 1784, Lucas journeyed to Paris to see Franklin and from there wrote to near-by Passy requesting an audience. He was bent on emigrating to the United States and wished advice. His letter to Franklin reveals much of his political philosophy, as well as his own personality and background.¹¹

Until the American revolution had taken place, he wrote, he had never thought of leaving his homeland, despite the objections he had to Bourbon France. The American revolution which had been concluded successfully only a few months before, however, made him determined to seek out this nation of high principles, enlightened patriots, and free land.

Since his father had died the year before, the family estate had been divided between his mother and the six children. Lucas was concerned that his share—worth about fifteen thousand francs—might not be enough for the undertaking. "It is with this modest sum," he wrote, "that I wish to seek in your country the inestimable happiness of a life free, comfortable, and, in a word, natural."

Unlike so many European gentlemen who dreamed of quick riches or vast holdings in the new world, Lucas had a surprisingly sound approach to life in the United States. He wrote:

I venture to inform you that if this sum seems to you limited, my expectations are not very great. I have heard that there is yet much uncultivated land in your country which one can obtain from the government for the cost of clearing. Well, sir, if that is so, provided with the sum which I have had the honor of telling you that I can furnish for the expenses . . . in forming, in the most economical manner, a small establishment in your country to exploit there enough land to support me frugally, with the aid of the necessary slaves or servants, all my desires will be fulfilled. . . . My aim is to hold the middle way. This state will maintain me in a certain activity that will have nothing of the indolence of the rich nor the despondency of the miserable.

Although Lucas felt constrained to deny that his project was "the work of a head warmed by the illusions offered by romantic descriptions or by the philosophic mania by which some in our century are worked up," his entire letter reflects the influence of the physiocratic view that agriculture was the highest calling and the allied notion of the *philosophes* that an equalitarian society was the happiest.

To assure Franklin, further, that he was not a foolish romantic,

11 Lucas to Franklin, January 9, 1784, in Franklin Papers, 31:14, in French. For the complete text of this letter, in a translation largely followed by the writer, see McDermott, "Lucas," 211-214.

Lucas added that as a youth he had spent a great deal of time in the country and both understood at first hand and liked farming. All the more attractive, he felt, would be farming in the new republic. Of his early acquired love of country life he wrote:

This first taste has never left me and I shall satisfy it with so much the more pleasure in your country where neither tithes, nor feudal dues, nor the scorn which is attached to the country dweller, nor privilege, nor so many other abuses authorized by the constitution of my country will be able to follow me.

Lucas was, of course, granted an audience. In a later letter to Franklin, he recalled this first meeting:

I presented myself at your residence and you received me with the kindness and benevolence which distinguish you; you satisfied all my doubts perfectly. I learnt of you a thousand things of which I was entirely ignorant—with particular goodness you even promised me that when I was ready to leave you would give me a letter of introduction to one of your friends in Philadelphia. I availed myself of your kindness to me; on the 20th of March following I had the honor of paying my respects to you at Passy, you gave me a letter of introduction for my wife and myself to Mr. and Mrs. Bache at Philadelphia.¹²

On March 13, 1784, Lucas received a passport at Pont-Audemer for himself and a young servant who accompanied him. In it he is described as five foot two and one-half inches tall, long and thin of face, with brown eyes, a long nose, and black eyebrows and lashes.

On the 20th of March, as indicated above, Lucas had a final audience with Franklin. Shortly thereafter, he sailed, apparently on an English ship, for carefully preserved in his papers is found the receipt for his passage money which reads: "Received 5th of May 1784 of Mr. Despeintreaux Thirty Guineas in part of Sixty Guineas for the passage of himself, his wife and servant in the Bloodhound [*illegible word*] for Philadelphia.—Geo: MacKireth, Broker."¹³

12 Lucas to Franklin, July 28, 1788, in Franklin Papers, in French. The date of this letter is apparently wrong, for Franklin received it sometime before July 20, and his grandson replied for him on that date. See Franklin Papers, 48:52.

13 Lucas passport in Lucas Papers, in English.

II. *The Woods of Pennsylvania*

The Lucas family arrived safely in Philadelphia and went with their letter of introduction to see Franklin's daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bache. They were well received. Bache suggested Pittsburgh as a likely place to settle. There is also the possibility that Albert Gallatin influenced Lucas' choice of a destination. Several early writers make this assertion. The account may be true. Gallatin had gone to school with Richard Bache's son, B. F. Bache, in Geneva. In the spring of 1784, Gallatin was in Philadelphia, and may very well have called on the Bache family. If so, he may have met Lucas, or have given Bache information which Bache later passed on to Lucas.¹⁴

At any rate, Lucas proceeded to Pittsburgh. He remained there awhile and then purchased a farm not far from the town. It was, he declared, "a plantation too small for a covetous settler, but sufficiently large for a reasonable man. It is agreeably situated on a height, at the foot of which is the left bank of the Monongahela, in Washington County six miles from Pittsburgh." This would place the land approximately opposite the foot of the present Rutherglen Street and the plant of the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation. At the time of the sale of the farm some years later, it consisted of ninety-four acres. The place was called Montpelier.¹⁵

The records of Lucas' early years are meager.¹⁶ He made it a point to study the language, history, constitution, and laws of his adopted

14 Lucas to Franklin, July 28, 1788, in Franklin Papers, in French (cf. note 12 for date); Louis Houck, *A History of Missouri*, 3:41 (Chicago, 1908); Hyde and Conrad, *St. Louis*, 3:1316; Henry Adams, ed., *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 2:649 (Philadelphia, 1879); Henry Adams, *Life of Albert Gallatin*, 54 (Philadelphia, 1879). Adams gives no source for his statement that Gallatin was in Philadelphia in the spring of 1784, declaring that all Gallatin records for this period are lost.

15 Lucas to Franklin, July 28, 1788, in Franklin Papers, in French (cf. note 12 for date); Hunt, "Early Recollections," 41; Allegheny County Deed Book 21, pp. 481-483. In 1788, four years after Lucas settled there, this old Washington County farm was absorbed by the newly established County of Allegheny.

16 Lezay-Marnesia, in his *Lettres*, 113-135, gives a fanciful account of the Lucas family in Pennsylvania. Although published in 1801, his account was written in 1791 when he was promoting a French colony in Ohio. Perhaps this fact accounts for what he wrote. At any rate, his description of Montpelier sounds much more like a treatise on the Garden of Eden than on frontier Pennsylvania. The unreliable nature of his book has been indicated above, in note 7.

country. Gallatin was an occasional caller at the Lucas home: it was his custom to stop off at Montpelier for the night when traveling from Pittsburgh to New Geneva. How early this relationship started is not clear. Hugh Henry Brackenridge also seems to have been an early acquaintance, for in 1795, Lucas declared that he had known Brackenridge for over ten years. The intellectual Brackenridge, apparently, did not have too many fellow spirits in the area. Perhaps that is why he sought out Lucas. At any rate, he declared in 1795 that he had long cultivated Lucas' acquaintance "in consideration of his . . . philosophic knowledge, and knowledge of the Roman Civil law, and the local jurisprudence of France."¹⁷

Lucas divided his time between farming and trading voyages in the upper Mississippi valley. His trading will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. On the farm, oats, corn, hay and potatoes were grown.¹⁸

The Lucas home was naturally a mecca for French travelers. Besides Lezay-Marnésia, the French traveler Antoine Saugrain made his acquaintance.¹⁹ Saugrain, brother-in-law of Dr. Joseph Guillotin, was a physician, scientist, and naturalist, and a good friend of Franklin.²⁰

From time to time, Lucas received additional sums of money from the estates of relatives in France. They were forwarded through B. F. Bache. Lucas invested the money in land. In 1791, Mrs. Lucas received a shipment of goods in Philadelphia from Le Havre, probably an inheritance. Apparently Mrs. Lucas went to Philadelphia to receive the goods, for she transacted other business there at that time.

As a result of this trip, Pittsburgh acquired one of its best-known early citizens, John Marie. On July 12, 1791, in Philadelphia, Mrs. Lucas, acting as her husband's attorney, signed indenture papers with Marie. Marie was to work for Lucas for three years, after which he was to receive seventy-five acres of land. Marie later became known as a Pittsburgh tavern-keeper; his place was a favorite meeting place of

17 *Dictionary of American Biography*, 11:485-486 (New York, 1933); Ebenezer Denny, *Military Journal*, 23 (Philadelphia, 1859); Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Incidents of the Insurrection in the Western Parts of Pennsylvania, in 1794*, 3:108-109 (Philadelphia, 1795).

18 Mrs. Lucas to Lucas, no date, in Lucas Papers.

19 Saugrain carried a letter to Franklin in Philadelphia for Lucas. See B. F. Bache to Lucas, July 20, 1788, in Franklin Papers, in French.

20 *Dictionary of American Biography*, 16:377-378. For Saugrain's visit to Pittsburgh in 1788, see "Dr. Saugrain's Notebooks, 1788," in *American Antiquarian Society, Proceedings*, n. s. 19:221-238 (Worcester, Mass., 1909).

Republican committees.²¹

There are other glimpses of everyday life in early Pittsburgh in the Lucas Papers. The scarcity of money is shown by a receipt John Scull gave Lucas for a subscription to the *Gazette*, Pittsburgh's first newspaper. Lucas paid his bill with flour worth fifteen shillings. Evidence that Lucas was a member of the militia is provided by a call to muster on an unspecified date "at 10 o'clock with your arms and acutriments [*sic*] in order as the law directs."²²

On January 24, 1794, the schoolmaster, William Gillilan, found it necessary to dun Mrs. Lucas. "I must make free to trouble you for a little money," he wrote in a fine flourishing hand, "as I have had some from almost all the rest of the employers. If you can oblige me with two dollars, you very much oblige your William Gillilan." This bill also noted that a spelling book was still unpaid for. Dr. Nathaniel Bedford attended the childhood illnesses of the family and also presented his bill. Nor was culture wanting. When Hugh Henry Brackenridge sent an order in 1796 for some law books to his bookseller in Philadelphia, he instructed that gentleman to include the volumes in the shipment to Mr. Lucas.²³

During these years, the Lucas family was increasing. The first son, Robert, was born in 1788. Charles followed in 1792; then Adrian in 1794. The only daughter, Anne, arrived in 1796. William, the fifth child, was born in 1798, and James in 1800.²⁴

These increasing responsibilities undoubtedly kept Lucas and his wife hard at work to make ends meet. Yet, his daughter later wrote of her father that "he was considered a rich man, simply because he took care never to be in anybody's debt, and always managed to keep a little money by him to help a friend in need; although in reality he was far from being what would be considered wealthy, even in those days."²⁵

Lucas was keeping to the middle way he had set for himself.

21 Lucas to B. F. Bache, February 20, 1798; bill of lading, the *Pennsylvania American*, in French; indenture agreement of John Marie, in French and English—all in Lucas Papers; Leland D. Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 167-168 (Pittsburgh, 1938).

22 Receipt of John Scull, April 27, 1792, and militia muster notice, in Lucas Papers.

23 Gillilan to Mrs. Lucas, January 24, 1794, and bill of Dr. Nathaniel Bedford, in Lucas Papers; Hugh Henry Brackenridge to an unnamed bookseller in Philadelphia, June 29, 1796, in the H. H. Brackenridge Papers in the Darlington Library of the University of Pittsburgh.

24 Frederick Billon, *Annals of St. Louis in Its Territorial Days, 1804-1821*, 213-216 (St. Louis, 1888).

25 Hunt, "Early Recollections," 42.

III. *Trading on the Western Waters*

An important part of Lucas' early life in Pennsylvania was his trading activity in the Mississippi valley. Like so many of his contemporaries, he augmented his income from farming by trading in the vast and sparsely settled region down the Ohio. His French background was a distinct advantage in the upper Mississippi valley, the home of many French traders, trappers, merchants, and rivermen, as well as clusters of French farmers scattered through the Illinois country and upper Louisiana. The knowledge and experience thus gained in this area, which would soon play such a vital role in the unfolding of his adopted nation, was of great importance to Lucas in his later political career. It was indicative of the opportunities available in the new country that this man, who visited upper Louisiana in the 1790's as an obscure and modest trader, would some day be its governor.

The first trip Lucas made for which an account exists took place in 1792.²⁶ It seems highly probable that he had made earlier trips, for in that year Lucas' friend, Hugh Henry Brackenridge, sent his five-year-old son, Henry Marie, down the river with Lucas to learn French in residence with a French family in upper Louisiana.²⁷ It seems unlikely that even so stern a father as Brackenridge would have intrusted his young son to a man who had had no previous experience on the river. Also, it seems unlikely that a prudent man like Lucas would have accepted so delicate a charge unless he was familiar with the journey.

Young Brackenridge has left the chief account of this trip.²⁸ Lucas and the boy left Pittsburgh in the spring in a flatboat with thirty soldiers and an ensign bound for Cincinnati. The soldiers were a rough and brawling crew. Along the way, the boy's trunk was broken open and robbed. Young Henry, however, was having too much trouble be-

26 Billon and McDermott say that Lucas made a trip in 1791, but records in the Lucas Papers show that this is almost certainly erroneous. A receipted account of payments made to ferryman Jacob Bausman, who operated the "Middle Ferry" on the Monongahela near the foot of Wood Street, Pittsburgh, shows that Lucas used the ferry regularly throughout both 1790 and 1791.

27 Claude M. Newlin, *Life and Writings of Hugh Henry Brackenridge*, 110-111 (Princeton, 1932).

28 Henry Marie Brackenridge, *Recollections of Persons and Places in the West*, 13-22 (Philadelphia, 1868).

coming accustomed to a diet of pork, chocolate, and ship biscuit to be greatly concerned. In ten days, Cincinnati was reached. From this point, the two travelers together with another man and small boy proceeded by canoe westward. This stretch was particularly dangerous because of Indians, so extreme caution was the rule.

The travelers proceeded directly to New Madrid, a small settlement on the west bank of the Mississippi south of the mouth of the Ohio. Here Lucas left the boy for several weeks with a French or Spanish family while Lucas absented himself on unknown business. Lucas returned with horses and a guide for the journey to St. Genevieve, where the boy was to stay. Young Henry Marie was provided with a pony. Although St. Genevieve was also on the river, being on the west bank of the Mississippi north of the mouth of the Ohio, the journey was made overland—perhaps because it was upstream and because the river between the two settlements was very winding. At any rate, the party traveled the hundred odd miles through the wilderness on horseback. The trip took about ten days. An Indian village was passed on the way without event. In St. Genevieve, a village whose French inhabitants divided their time between farming, trading, and lead mining, the boy was left with a well-to-do villager named Beauvais. Lucas departed the same day. There is no chronicle of the remainder of Lucas' trip for that year. By October, however, he was back in Pittsburgh.²⁹

In the spring of 1793, Lucas again went west. In preparation for his trading activity, he bought late in March 198 gallons of whiskey and six barrels from one Valentine Kinder for seventy dollars. In the main, he sold whiskey and bought furs and lead in the west, although flour and tobacco also figured in his trading. He left Pittsburgh in the latter part of May. By July 27, when the French traveler Andre Michaux visited Pittsburgh, the latter noted that Lucas, "an excellent Democrat," who "passes for an educated man with legal knowledge," was a resident of Pittsburgh, but was absent at the time.³⁰

29 Lucas' account with Bausman's Ferry shows that he did not use the ferry between April 5 and October 16, 1792, and that he last used it, before starting on his next trip west, on May 18, 1793.

30 Receipt of Valentine Kinder, in Lucas Papers; Andre Michaux, *Journal, 1793-1796*, 26-32 (Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels*, vol. 3—Cleveland, 1904). Account books of these trips are preserved in the Lucas Papers. They are in abbreviated French, have apparently been wet, and are therefore almost illegible. They do indicate, besides the nature of Lucas' dealings, that he kept an account of expenses incurred for Henry Marie.

This trip, like the earlier one, was made in a government boat as far as Cincinnati. The boat was carrying troops under one Captain Bond.³¹ From Cincinnati Lucas proceeded to Louisville in company with another river trader. There he wrote to his wife of the events of the trip thus far and of the news in Louisville. He had picked up some effects he had left there the year before—further evidence of his trip in 1792. A number of traders had already gone on down the river to New Orleans. The chief news was that the Indians near Vincennes were angry at a fellow trader, Francesco Vigo, who, they believed, had brought smallpox to their village, as alleged in stories spread by rival traders, according to Vigo, for commercial reasons.³²

Turning to personal matters, Lucas wrote affectionately and at length to his wife and of the children. The Lucas family seemed never to have let their sometimes crude surroundings or frequent long separations interfere with the happiness they had come to find in the new world or with the social niceties they had brought as cultured people from the old. Material considerations could not be forgotten, however. "Be as diligent as you can," wrote Lucas, "and I shall do as much for my part."³³

Lucas then proceeded to New Madrid. Toward the end of the trading season of 1793, he became ill. By the time he recovered, winter was too far advanced to permit the long journey home. Therefore, he spent the winter with various friends in the western settlements of Kaskaskia and St. Genevieve. He returned, starting on May 24, 1794,

31 McDermott, "John B. C. Lucas," 220; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 3:41 n.; H. H. Brackenridge, *Incidents of the Insurrection . . . in 1794*, 3:104-109. McDermott cites a letter by Lucas in the *Missouri Republican*, January 5, 1825, as the principal source of information about this trip, but apparently gives the wrong date, for according to competent authority there was no issue of that newspaper on that date. Houck has also used the letter, giving an account identical with that of McDermott, but without giving his source. Another account by Lucas, quoted by Brackenridge (p. 105), agrees with both accounts as far as it goes. The writer has attempted, thus far in vain, to locate the original document.

32 *Dictionary of American Biography*, 19:270. Joseph Maria Francesco Vigo was an Italian who served in the Spanish army in Louisiana and accepted his discharge in New Orleans to enter the fur trade. He was a friend of the United States, being instrumental in helping George Rogers Clark wrest the Northwest Territory from the British. He traded throughout the Mississippi Valley in the 1780's and 1790's.

33 Lucas to Mrs. Lucas, June 9, 1793, in Lucas Papers.

by way of Vincennes, Louisville, and Lexington, Kentucky.³⁴

At Lexington, if he was not already aware of it, Lucas learned of the unrest seething in Kentucky and the West. The Kentuckians had multiple grievances. With the rest of the West, they were incensed over the excise tax on whiskey. They were impatient with the federal government for not securing for them from the hated Spanish the right of free navigation of the Mississippi. They were anxious also to settle accounts with the Indians whom they knew the British (still in possession of some forts in the Northwest) and the Spanish were stirring up and arming against them.

This dissatisfaction was further heightened in the agitation of the Democratic-Republican societies which had mushroomed in the West under the twin inspirations of the French Revolution and the whiplash of federal power in the hands of Hamilton and the Federalist East. During 1793 and early 1794, Kentucky volunteers had been preparing to join with revolutionary France in military action to free Louisiana from the Spanish. They had been thwarted by the threat of military suppression on the part of the carefully neutral United States government and by the failure of the French minister to the United States, Edmond Genet, to provide promised aid.³⁵

Lucas recorded the furor he had seen in the form of an affidavit published in H. H. Brackenridge's account of the Whiskey Insurrection, and quoted here in part as follows:

This deponent perfectly remembers, that amongst other things, he mentioned to Mr. Brackenridge, that while he was passing through Kentucky, he had heard that numbers of people in that state was displeased at the conduct of the federal government towards them; that several committees had been held there, and had already went to a great length; that this said deponent had read a printed paper, pasted up at a public place in Kentucky, containing several resolves of a committee, and especially one by which the people of Kentucky, were invited at large to meet, and take in consideration the circumstances of the country; that some talked of a separation from the union, others thought of other measures to be adopted. Upon which account so given by this deponent to Mr. Brackenridge, he appeared to this deponent to be highly displeased, and asking this deponent who might be the leaders in that system of reform. . . . This deponent further says, that he told Mr. Brackenridge he

³⁴ McDermott, "John B. C. Lucas," 222-224; Houck, *History of Missouri*, 3:41 n.

³⁵ For an excellent account of this situation, see William F. Keller, "American Politics and the Genet Mission, 1793-1794," 430-469, a doctoral dissertation in manuscript (University of Pittsburgh, 1951).

had heard of several lawyers, distinguished in their talents, who were at the head of these committees, and many other persons of good standing in Kentucky. . . .³⁶

There were two conspiracies afoot in the Mississippi Valley at the time, both centering around the western desire for free access to the Mississippi. Edmond Genet and George Rogers Clark were raising a volunteer army to wrest Louisiana from the Spanish. The Spanish governor of Louisiana, Baron de Carondelet, was in league with the traitorous General James Wilkinson in trying to detach the West from the United States and make it an independent ally of Spain.

Although Lucas' report on the state of affairs in Kentucky appears to be that of a detached observer, one wonders whether or not he himself was involved in one of these movements, the Genet intrigue. As a French immigrant, a western American trader, and a democrat, he would be a likely candidate. Moreover, almost every business associate of his in the West was involved. The Beauvais family, the Pittsburgh trader Pierre Audrain, and John Edgar of Kaskaskia, all friends of Lucas, seem to have been involved with Genet and Clark. Pierre Tardiveau, another friend, was interpreter to Clark. On the other hand, Thomas Power, Michel Lacassagne of Louisville, and Barthelemi Tardiveau (brother of Pierre) were in the pay of Wilkinson. Lucas dealt with them all. Another friend, Jean Pratte, was an informer for Carondelet directly.³⁷

But a careful search through the voluminous records of the intrigues has revealed no evidence that Lucas was involved. His papers also give no evidence, although this fact could be ascribed to discretion. That he was at least in part aware of all that was stirring, there can be little doubt. Beyond that, only speculation is possible. "No documents, no history."

From Lexington, Lucas went to Danville, where he waited until a party had gathered to journey together through the Indian-threatened wild country of eastern Kentucky. He then proceeded and was back in

³⁶ H. H. Brackenridge, *Incidents of the Insurrection . . . in 1794*, 3:105.

³⁷ For further information about Beauvais, Audrain, and Pierre Tardiveau, see American Historical Association, *Annual Report* for 1896, in "Correspondence of Clark and Genet," 1:1047, 1049, 1096; for Edgar and Pratte, Barthelemi Tardiveau and Lacassagne, *Annual Report* for 1945, in Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794," 3:191-192, 4:xxxvi, 245-247, 287.

Pittsburgh by the thirteenth of July, for on that date he saw H. H. Brackenridge there. The excitement Lucas had witnessed in Kentucky was to serve as an introduction to affairs in his own section, for much the same fever was agitating the Monongahela country. A few days after his return, the Whiskey Rebellion was in full tilt.³⁸

In the next year, 1795, towards the end of May, Lucas again went down the Ohio.³⁹ For his trip down there is no record. In Louisiana, however, he picked up young Brackenridge to bring him back to Pittsburgh, and the latter has left an account of the return trip.⁴⁰ The boat, he recalled, was "of the description commonly used for ascending the western rivers, but of a small size, and laden with lead and peltries." Down the Mississippi from St. Genevieve, at the south of the Kaskaskia, Lucas and his unnamed boatman left the boy and another traveling companion, Thomas Power,⁴¹ on the shore while Lucas journeyed up the Kaskaskia to the settlement of that name to sell some of his cargo.

Young Henry did not find the journey overly pleasant:

Our boat was very badly contrived to encounter inclement weather. At the stern there was a small cabin, if such it might be called, formed by a canvas drawn over hoops something like those of a covered wagon. But the space it covered was too narrow to shelter more than four or five persons. The hull of the boat was entirely filled with peltries. One night, when it rained incessantly, so many crowded in that I was fairly crowded out, and lay, until daylight, on the running-board (a plank at the edge of the boat, on which the men walk in pushing with the pole), exposed to the falling torrents of rain, accompanied with incessant thunder and lightning.

The reference to four or five persons in the cabin would indicate that on the voyage from the mouth of the Kaskaskia to Louisville, the party was joined by other travelers.

This leg of the return was often marked by hunger. The travelers had expected to buy provisions from boats coming downstream, but met none. Apparently the furs were so important that even room for food

38 H. H. Brackenridge, *Incidents of the Insurrection*, 3:104-105. Lucas' role in the rebellion will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

39 The invaluable records of Bausman, cited above, show that Lucas did not use the ferry between May 25 and October 27, 1795.

40 H. M. Brackenridge, *Recollections*, 26-32.

41 Although Henry Marie and perhaps also Lucas did not know it at the time, Power was a confidential agent of Spain in the Mississippi Valley, as mentioned above. He had devious and protracted dealings with the notorious General Wilkinson in the 1790's. See James Ripley Jacobs, *Tarnished Warrior, Major General James Wilkinson*, *passim* (New York, 1938).

had been sacrificed. As a result, the party stopped to hunt successfully when some buffalo were sighted near the Wabash. They also bagged an occasional wild turkey and once a bear which was swimming in the river, the latter not without considerable excitement and danger.

At Louisville, Lucas sold most of his cargo and also, apparently, his boat, for here he bought a canoe. He loaded some unsold furs into this and hired a "stripling from the Monongahela" to help pole.

Above Louisville, the three travelers now encountered an early snow. By this time, Henry Marie was very ill. Fearing to expose the boy further to the rigors of life on the river, Lucas stopped at the next settlement, Gallipolis. Here Henry Marie was left with Lucas's old friend, Dr. Saugrain. Lucas then continued to Pittsburgh.

Young Henry spent the winter, spring and most of the summer with Saugrain in the struggling village of Gallipolis where cultured and urbanized French colonists were waging a bitter battle to adjust to the inhospitable wilderness. Soon fully recovered, Henry Marie was finally picked up by the luxurious barge of General James Wilkinson who was traveling east from Cincinnati in the fall of 1796. Now in his tenth year, the boy was finally again united with his father.⁴²

[To be continued]

42 H. M. Brackenridge, *Recollections*, 38-41; Thomas R. Hay and M. R. Werner, *The Admirable Trumpeter, a Biography of General James Wilkinson*, 150, 153, 156 (New York, 1941); McDermott, "Lucas," 219 n. Apparently McDermott's dating of Henry Marie's return journey—Ste. Genevieve to Gallipolis in 1794, thence to Pittsburgh in 1795, is a year too early in both cases: in 1794, Lucas, his escort to Gallipolis, went from Louisville to Pittsburgh *by land*, whereas Henry Marie describes a return *by the river*; Henry Marie wrote of snow falling on the journey, yet in 1794 Lucas was back in Pittsburgh by July 13, and he and his ward more probably encountered said snow on his next return, late in October, 1795; Wilkinson could not have picked the boy up at Gallipolis in the fall of 1795, because the general was in Cincinnati at that time, and his ostentatious trip up the river was made a year later, or in the fall of 1796.