JOHN B. C. LUCAS, PHYSIOCRAT
ON THE FRONTIER

HUGH G. CLELAND

IV. The Whiskey Insurrection

Lucas returned from the Illinois country in the summer of 1794 to find his neighbors flirting with rebellion. Since he returned through Kentucky and by way of Fayette County, he could hardly have been unprepared for the conditions he found at home. At any rate, the hostility of the western country to a federal excise tax on whiskey had been developing for several years.

Within a few days of Lucas’ arrival, on the twelfth or thirteenth of July, Hugh Henry Brackenridge paid him a visit. “A miscellany of news [was] reciprocally given” between the two friends, who had not seen each other for more than a year. Lucas described the separatist agitation he had witnessed in Kentucky, while Brackenridge outlined the situation in Western Pennsylvania. Brackenridge expressed strong disapproval of the Kentucky radicals—with well-grounded premonitions, no doubt, about conditions in Western Pennsylvania.1

The storm broke within a few days. Angry farmers fired on a United States marshal serving summons on recalcitrant distillers. By the next day, an irregular body of rural militia was attacking the home of the Federalist excise collector, John Neville. The home was burned only after one of the attackers had been killed.2 Shortly thereafter, the radicals began to realize the danger of their position. If they turned back, they would be in danger of severe punishment; if they pressed ahead in defiance of the federal authority, they would need to involve the entire area in their cause if they were to succeed. To plot a course of action, a meeting was called at the Mingo Creek meetinghouse in Washington County.

1 Lucas affidavit, in H. H. Brackenridge, Incidents of the Insurrection... in 1794, 3:106.
2 Leland D. Baldwin, Whiskey Rebels: The Story of a Frontier Uprising, 113-120 (Pittsburgh, 1939). Because the Whiskey Insurrection has been treated at length by competent scholars in recent years, only such details will be repeated here as are essential to an understanding of the role that Lucas played. For a concise account, see Russell J. Ferguson, Early Western Pennsylvania Politics, 126-131 (Pittsburgh, 1938). For the most recent observations on one aspect of the uprising, see Alfred P. James, “A Political Interpretation of the Whiskey Rebellion,” ante, 33:90-101 (September-December, 1950).
It was at this juncture that a new development took place, one that was to be decisive in the course of the insurrection. Responsible men in the area, now fully aware of the extent of the disaffection among the farmers, realized that they must join the popular movement in order to lead it back to safer grounds. This, the moderates were able to do eventually, although not without many moments of anxiety and even danger.

Not unnaturally, the man pushed forward for unofficial leadership in the undertaking was Brackenridge. As a quick-witted and agile-tongued lawyer with democratic leanings, he was a natural choice, although many others shared the role to a greater or lesser degree. It was as a prominent member of this group of moderates that Lucas participated in the ensuing events.

Brackenridge attended the Mingo Creek meeting in order to try to moderate its tone. Shortly thereafter, he sought out Lucas to apprise him of the events and to outline the strategy of the moderates. The plan as described to Lucas was to try to "defeat any violent measures." At the same time, Brackenridge expressed considerable alarm at the "serious turn" that the Mingo Creek meeting had taken.

Aside from violent but vague fulminations, the Mingo Creek meeting had postponed further action until a more representative body, comprising delegates from every township in the excise collection district known as the Fourth Survey, could meet. This meeting was to take place at Parkinson's Ferry on the Monongahela on August 14.

In the meantime, however, the more militant leaders of the westerners took things into their own hands. In order to ascertain if the citizens of Pittsburgh—the local Federalist stronghold—were sending information to the national government, a party of radicals robbed the mail. The surmise of the radical party was correct; several hostile persons in Pittsburgh were uncovered by the move. Thereupon, the extremists, led by David Bradford and others, issued a call for the militia of the Fourth Survey to assemble at Braddock's Field several miles east of Pittsburgh. The plan was to march on Pittsburgh, seize the offending letter writers in order to jail them, and at the same time seize the government arsenal at Fort Fayette in the city.

It seems highly probable that Lucas was at Braddock's Field. He

4 Lucas affidavit in Brackenridge, Incidents of the Insurrection, 3:106.
would have gone in his capacity as a militiaman, if for no other reason—even the Pittsburgh militia found it expedient to turn out. The Braddock's Field muster, high point of the disorders, finally subsided with no more damage than a burned barn, although no little skill on the part of the moderates was expended before the danger to Pittsburgh was past.5

About this time, Brackenridge, both to put himself in a good light and to apprise the federal government of conditions in the area in the hope of steering the executive away from too harsh a course, wrote to Tench Coxe, the federal revenue commissioner. Because Brackenridge feared the extremists might again intercept the mail, he couched the letter in radical terms. Perhaps for this reason, he explained the nature of the letter to Lucas. Brackenridge already apprehended his own trial for treason and, as a good lawyer, was lining up his witnesses. When Coxe's reply indicated that Brackenridge's equivocal language had been misunderstood, Brackenridge again hastened to Lucas to discuss the situation. Lucas afterwards warmly defended Brackenridge's conduct. Brackenridge's warning to Coxe that the rebels might march eastward if provoked, declared Lucas, was not without foundation. He wrote: "The discontent that had prevailed through the minds of a considerable number of people, in the Counties of Bedford, Cumberland, Franklin, Northumberland, and in some parts of Maryland &c. this deponent is at present fully persuaded, had the leaders of the insurgents thought of such measures, and given execution to it . . . might have been literally a fact, and considers that the hint Mr. Brackenridge had so justly given of the impending danger . . . must have been of a great use to the executive, if justly appreciated."6

One suspects that Lucas exaggerated a bit in the interests of personal and political friendship—and, indirectly, in exculpation of his own actions.

As the Parkinson's Ferry meeting approached, the moderates throughout the western counties worked to pack the meeting with their delegates and thus to head off the fire-eaters who hoped to swing the meeting to open military hostility. The delegation elected in Pittsburgh was made up of Brackenridge, Lucas, Lucas' good friend and fellow Frenchman Pierre Audrain, General John Wilkins, and George Wal-

5 Baldwin, Whiskey Rebels, 137-139, 145-164.
lace. Before the meeting, Lucas and Brackenridge put their heads together over a moderate resolution the Pittsburgh delegation hoped to put forward. The resolution proposed that the western Pennsylvanians should obey the laws generally if only the President would suspend the excise tax. A few minutes later, word arrived that the President had already sent commissioners. Therefore, the resolution was not introduced.  

At the meeting, Brackenridge by indirection and Gallatin by candor and blunt reason opposed the violent party. Finally, a standing committee was chosen by the convention to make policy for the western counties. A later meeting would review the situation at Brownsville. Lucas was chosen a member of the standing committee. The standing committee then selected three delegates from each county to comprise a conference committee to deal with the federal and Pennsylvania commissioners. Again, Lucas was chosen.  

The conference committee, made up as it was predominantly of moderates, quickly agreed to recommend acceptance of the terms proposed by the federal and state commissioners. It was undoubtedly at these meetings that Lucas first met Thomas McKean, then chief justice of the state supreme court and a Pennsylvania commissioner. Later, McKean, as the first Republican governor of the state, was to appoint the erstwhile “insurgent” commissioner, Lucas, to the bench.  

The terms accepted by the conference committee of the westerners still had to be approved by the standing committee. The meeting to hear the report of the conference committee took place at Brownsville on August 28. Lucas and Brackenridge rode off together to that conclave, not at all heartened by the liberty poles which the extremists had erected along the way at frequent intervals.  

As feared, the report of the conference committee was sullenly received. In order to let tempers cool, the moderates fought for and won adjournment of the meeting until the next day, when the report would be voted upon. The conference recessed with tempers none too
sweet. The obscure and often nameless men who were the backbone of the radical party could not stand up to the oratory and tactical maneuvering of the lawyers, clergymen, and politicians arrayed against them. However, more than once in the preceding weeks, they had made up for these deficiencies through the force of numbers violently applied. With this possibility very much in mind, Brackenridge and Lucas retreated across the river for the night, “to be out of the way, if, in consequence of dissatisfaction with our report, any personal violence, to the committee of twelve . . . should be meditated; a thing which I thought not at all improbable,” to quote Brackenridge. Gallatin, also, he tells us, “was not without apprehensions, and he had reason.” Lucas and Brackenridge spent the evening discussing the next day’s vote—and the night’s peril—with “anxiety and dissatisfaction.”

Before the session on the second day opened, Gallatin, Brackenridge, and Lucas conferred together on strategy. It was finally agreed that Gallatin would speak first for the moderate camp and Brackenridge would then reinforce Gallatin’s arguments. The plan was followed successfully. The level-headed men carried the day and the insurrection—but not the consequent unpleasantness of the arrival from the east of a federal army—was virtually at an end.11

The account above has pointed out primarily Lucas’ collaboration with Brackenridge. Since that gentleman was the chief chronicler of the events, more is known about his actions and his associates than is known of some of the other participants.

However, Lucas was apparently also working with Gallatin throughout the anxious months. William Denny, a neighbor of Lucas, remembers Gallatin stopping at the Lucas farm to discuss resolutions adopted at one of the many “conventions” of the period—which one is not clear. Of the resolutions, Lucas declared: “In my opinion, they are too strong.”

“I think so, too,” replied Gallatin. “It was not my fault that they are so.”12

In fact, the role of Lucas throughout closely paralleled that of Gallatin,13 although Lucas was, of course, less prominent. His sympa-

thies were with the West, but, like Gallatin, he stopped short of unconsti-
tutional resistance and gave what proved to be wise counsel. At the
same time, Lucas apparently escaped the suspicion that Brackenridge
earned through his complex and devious role.14

Denny summed the situation up very well. "It was well known,"
he wrote, "that Lucas, as well as Gallatin, was identified with the popu-
lar cause . . . at the same time, neither he nor Gallatin were in favor
of extreme measures."15 It was a reputation destined to serve both men
in good stead politically.

V. Speculator versus Squatter

Lucas spent the better part of the next year of 1795 on another
trading voyage to the West, described in an earlier chapter. As the new
year of 1796 began, Lucas plunged into that most vital and perennial
of all western questions—the land problem. In one form or another,
his future political career was linked to this interest.

Until 1792, the part of Pennsylvania north and west of Pittsburgh
was almost completely unsettled. This area was bounded by the Ohio
on the south and by the Allegheny River and Conewango Creek on
the east.16 On April 3, 1792, the Pennsylvania legislature enacted a
law which opened up the area to settlement.17 The law provided for
sale either to eastern investors or to western settlers. Further, it was

14 An instructive comment on both Brackenridge's book and
Brackenridge himself is found in the draft of a letter, in the Lucas
Papers, that Lucas wrote to Gallatin but apparently never sent. Lucas
wrote: "He asked me on a certain day if I had heard you [give?] an
opinion on the merits of his book intitled [sic] Incidents on [sic] the
Western Insurrection. I answered him I had heard you say that he
had represented your own conduct in such a manner as to be very
satisfactory to you but that he had laboured hard to make it appear
that himself had acted with more art than candour throughout the
whole of this incidents [sic] which could but create a general distrust
of him in the minds of the people, to which he replied [sic], in writ-
ing this book I had the government in view and not the people."

15 Denny, Military Journal, 23.

15. The recent historical literature on this area and period is ex-
tensive. The chief works on the subject of the land question in
northwestern Pennsylvania are the one cited above and Paul D.
Evans, The Holland Land Company (Buffalo, 1924). Both authors
used extensive manuscript material not available locally. A concise
account is to be found in Ferguson, Early Western Pennsylvania

17 James Dunlop, comp., The General Laws of Pennsylvania from
the Year 1700 to Oct. 1852, 186-190 (Philadelphia, 1853).
drawn in such a way as to lead both speculators and settlers to acquire title to the same land, or, at the least, to acquire some claim to title. That speculators could acquire any land at all was a defeat for the small-holding settlers of the western part of the state, who hoped the land would be reserved for actual settlers only. The inevitable result of the legislation was voluminous, bitter, and long-lasting litigation in the courts. As a concession to the West, it was provided that each tract of 424 acres had to be actually settled upon and improved within two years of the date of the warrant. 18

Immediately upon the enactment of the law, eastern speculators and foreign investors began to buy up warrants for over a million acres. These speculators were speedily organized into two large companies, the Holland Land Company and the Pennsylvania Population Company. 19 The land companies must have realized from the start that they would not be able to comply with the law. They held more land than could possibly be settled upon and improved within the two years prescribed by law. After two years, unentered land would be forfeited and put back on the market. Settlement, however, was somewhat hazardous in 1792. The Indian federation under Little Turtle was in its ascendancy and the borderland, which included northwestern Pennsylvania, was subject to savage raids. 20

This situation was to prove a boon to the land companies. The act of April 3, 1792, provided that the requirement of settlement within a two-year period was inoperative in the event settlement was prevented through force of arms of the enemies of the United States. 21 Thus, the Indian danger provided an excuse for the companies to hang on to their titles.

Despite the Indian danger, settlers did remain in the area throughout the period at Franklin and Mead’s settlements. Many more entered the area long enough to select a location and build a cabin. 22 In 1794, Wayne defeated the Indian federation, and with the ratification of the resultant Treaty of Greenville late in 1795, settlers began to pour into

20 Frederic L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier, 1763-1893, 74-78 (Boston, 1924).
21 Dunlop, General Laws of Pennsylvania, 190.
the area. Within a few months, these settlers numbered in the thousands. As these land-hungry frontiersmen read the law, the companies had already forfeited their lands.23

In the meantime, the political spokesmen of the western part of the state fought the land companies by whatever means they could. Gallatin was one who took up the struggle. On April 1, 1794, John Nicholson of the Population Company wrote fellow stockholder John Hoge about Gallatin that “that troublesome fellow hath been endeavoring to raise difficulties.” In 1795, the people of Westmoreland County protested to the legislature over the land policy.24

The western cause seems to have triumphed even in the federalist breast of Alexander Addison. He seems to have been won over more out of consideration for public order than for the rights of settlers. On February 3, he wrote Governor Mifflin that squatters were moving onto the unsold part of the reserved tract at the mouth of Beaver Creek and suggested that a quick public sale on the site should be considered to avoid lawlessness. On March 11, 1796, he urged such a sale and the immediate establishment of local government in the area. He wrote: “The idea of a new county ought to be fixed and prosecuted as soon as possible. I dread the consequences of the flood of mad people who have gone over the Allegheny and Ohio to make settlements. Their number is inconceivable, and they will perhaps be dangerous unless law can be brought in among them.25

Among this “flood of mad people” was John Lucas. He had purchased rights to a tract of land on Beaver Dam Run26 from one John Wolf. Wolf had already begun improvements on the land. Late in February in 1796, together with Robert and William Oldham and Jacob Shroat, Lucas went to the tract. He finished a cabin begun by Wolf and stayed in it for a short period. Leaving his tools in his cabin, he left the property to get provisions, after declaring his intention to return and continue residence. In the meantime, apparently, an agent

23 Hale, “Pennsylvania Population Company,” 75-76.
25 Addison to Mifflin, February 3 and March 11, 1796, transcripts in Lucas Papers.
26 Apparently a tributary of the Beaver River. No Beaver Dam Run appears on contemporary maps or on earlier maps consulted by the author.
of one of the land companies entered, or re-entered, the land.27

Perhaps it was Lucas' new found status as a settler on the edge of the Indian country that prompted him at this time to support the Jay treaty. Gallatin, the district's representative in Congress, was opposing the treaty on constitutional grounds, as the executive in concluding the treaty had obligated the House of Representatives to make an appropriation. Gallatin felt the executive was intruding on the rights of the legislature.28

Addison and Brackenridge, however, were for the treaty. Through their efforts, the grand jury of Allegheny County had petitioned Gallatin to give up his opposition. Addison wrote a defense of the treaty, which he sent to Brackenridge for criticism. Brackenridge found most powerful the argument that the treaty would decrease the Indian danger. He showed the article to another partisan of the treaty, who, of course, approved.

Proof of the persuasiveness of the article, however, came from its effect on an opponent. "But John Lucas has read it," Brackenridge wrote Addison, "and though before thoroughly attached to Gallatin's opinion having read his speech, and now gives it up, and acknowledges himself a convert."29

The incident throws light on several matters. That Brackenridge, Lucas, and Addison should find themselves on the same side of a question shows that party lines were not yet tightly drawn. Further, the activity of Brackenridge in this matter negates the assertion that Brackenridge went into political retirement between 1794 and 1798.30 "I wish to undermine Gallatin," wrote Brackenridge at that time, "and get into Congress."31

In the dispute over title to his settlement, Lucas sought legal advice. He went to Brackenridge and asked him to take the case. Brackenridge explained that he could not take a single settler's case,

27 Lucas to Jacob Shroat, October 10, 1803, draft in Lucas Papers. The letter is a request to Shroat to appear in court for Lucas. Apparently Lucas never received title; at least Mr. Warren J. Daniel, director of the land office of the Pennsylvania department of internal affairs, has informed the author that Lucas does not appear in the records of that office.
30 Claude M. Newlin, in his Life and Writings of Hugh Henry Brackenridge, 198 (Princeton, 1932), makes this assertion.
because it would be relatively unremunerative and, at the same time, prevent him from taking cases for the companies. For the same reasons, he advised, no lawyer would take the case of one settler alone. He suggested that a large group of settlers band together so as to be able to make a "liberal contribution." This, at least, is Brackenridge's story. The Federalists then and later accused Brackenridge of going to Lucas with the suggestion that the settlers be organized. Brackenridge denied it. Either version of the story may have been true. It would have been natural for Lucas to come to Brackenridge for legal aid, or, Brackenridge could have been quite capable of introducing the matter, counting on a retainer either from the settlers or from the thus embattled companies. He was an expert at fishing in the troubled waters of early land litigation. Earlier he had solicited "a handsome retaining fee" from Bernard Gratz, a rich Philadelphia land speculator. He must have failed in this bid for employment by the speculators, for he later acted as attorney for a group of squatters on property owned by George Washington.

At any rate, Lucas set about energetically organizing the settlers. On August 31, 1796, delegates of the angry frontiersmen met at the home of James Scott in the Beaver Creek settlement to organize against the companies. Out of their deliberations came an organization which was to be a power in Western Pennsylvania politics and a backbone of the Jeffersonian party for years to come. The remarkable agreement drawn up at this meeting tells much of the organization. All "actual settlers" who subscribed to "this instrument of writting" [sic] were to receive benefits and owe obligations described therein for five years. The organization was to be called the Pennsylvania United Settlers, although in practice it became known as the Actual Settlers.

An agent was to be chosen to receive money for legal defense, to sue any member who did not provide his quota, and to make recovery if necessary. This agent would also have the power to choose attorneys, to confer with them, and to manage all suits brought by the companies against the settlers from the time the first process was served until the case was settled. The agent was to receive pay by the day from the

32 H. H. Brackenridge to an unnamed correspondent in Washington, Pennsylvania, n. d., in Brackenridge Papers. The correspondent was probably Addison, with whom, at that time, Brackenridge carried on a great deal of correspondence. See also Pittsburgh Gazette, April 17, 1801.
33 Newlin, Brackenridge, 62-63.
defense fund for his time. The amount of pay was not specified.

The agent in turn was responsible to a committee of four members, which was to meet at least every four months. The agent would account for his expenditures and report on his work to them. The committee then could approve the agent's work and appropriate money to meet the agent's expenses, or could refuse to do so, in which case the committee was empowered to convene the entire organization and select a new agent.

Upon joining the organization, each settler paid a flat fee of an unspecified amount. Thereafter, he would be assessed every four months to meet whatever expenses had been incurred. The agent was charged with enlisting the greatest possible number of settlers in the organization. Subscribers had to agree not to settle individually with the companies without the consent of the committee of four and the agent. The penalty for any such unauthorized settlement by a member was to be three thousand dollars. How this sum was to be collected by the united settlers was not made clear. Perhaps members were required to sign a note or to give the agent a mortgage on their holdings. Possibly no means of actual enforcement other than the pressure of public opinion among the settlers was devised.

The organization was launched at a meeting on August 31, 1796. Seven delegates were present representing an unspecified number of settlers. The companies "conspicuous for power and wealth also for the extent of their speculation" were unanimously castigated by a resolution. The delegates noted a pamphlet that the companies had issued presenting the companies' point of view in the case. The agent was directed to write a reply to this piece of "erroneous reasoning and evasive arguments."

The seven delegates who signed this instrument were Abraham Powers, James Hillman, James Boysce, John Johnston, Jr., William Plumer, Abner Lacock and John Lucas. Lucas became the agent. Four men—Powers, Hillman, Johnston, and Boysce—then signed a second time, indicating, probably, that they were elected as the committee of four.34

34 Instrument of the Pennsylvania United Settlers, in Lucas Papers. The document is in Lucas' handwriting, except for the signatures. Many passages were scratched out and rephrased or otherwise emended, indicating that the delegates went over the document line by line.
The names of the delegates show that this group provided a training ground for future leaders of the Republicans. Lucas, the agent, became perhaps the best known. John Johnston, Jr., had already served as an assistant burgess of Pittsburgh in 1794. His name was linked with the Republican cause throughout the period. He continued to be an active party leader at least until 1805. Lacock later served in the state legislature in the early 1800's, went to Congress in 1810 and 1812 and in 1812 was sent to the United States Senate. Nor were these original delegates all who became prominent. The organization continued, other men stepped into positions of leadership, and they in turn often proceeded to political office. They will be discussed subsequently as the Democratic-Republican movement gained and consolidated power on the basis of rising agrarian and western political consciousness.

There was plenty of feeling in the western country to support the new organization. So deep was the animosity that settlers in the area began to accuse company agents of having murdered and scalped settlers in order to bolster the companies' contention that an Indian danger had existed. This charge, which was an article of faith with the settlers, was never proved. The companies were not, however, beyond questionable tactics. For example, deputy state surveyors in charge of northwestern Pennsylvania, who supposedly were to guard the interests of settlers under the 1792 act, were actually on the pay rolls of both the Holland Land Company and the Pennsylvania Population Company.

Lucas immediately threw himself into the work as agent of the settlers. His papers are full of notes taken on the case of this or that settler, showing dates of entry, witnesses, locations, and other circumstances. On May 13, 1796, the companies, alarmed at the flood of settlers invading the territory, had issued and distributed a pamphlet warning the settlers off and citing legal opinions in favor of the companies. Lucas replied to this early "public relations" effort with a stinging broadside, published in three installments in the weekly Pittsburgh Gazette, beginning with the issue of September 17, 1796. A perusal of his reply shows that he possessed not only a thorough understanding of western outlook and prejudices, but also the talent for ridicule and
sarcasm employed so effectively by his French mentors, the writers of the Enlightenment, the *philosophes*. Parts of this eloquent frontier document appear below (misspellings and all), beginning with the following excerpt from the first installment:

To the several companys of grantees by warrants under the authority of the law of Pennsylvania, since null and forfeited in pursuance of the same law,

GENTLEMEN, sundry of the actual settlers to whom you have addressed your obliging pamphlet dated May 13th, 1796, have red it, and did direct me by one of their resolves of their committee . . . to address you on their behalf, an essay on the explanation of the law; before alluded to also some observations on the queries and answers contained in your pamphlet; that you may have no reason to blame them for want of gratitude. They do sincerely wish they were able to offer you something worthy of your notice. But what can you expect from frontier men? your eastern friends and all the new manufactured petit writers of your opulent city, will tell you, that except the bear skin which the frontier men lay upon and his gun, he is a stranger to everything else; be then indulgent, gentlemen; add this last virtue to so many others you are already possessed of. You have bestowed upon several of your western fellow citizens, sundry copies of a pamphlet containing the law 3d of April, 1792 you have added to it, what you call the opinion of the oracles of the Eastern Barr thereon; and as you express it, all that at your own expense!!! what prodigious zeal, of gratitude you do discover in instructing gratis your ignorant fellow citizens! in advising them to relinquish their actual settlements, and give you their land gratis! no doubt but what your patriotism shall be known far and wide.

Lucas then launches into a lengthy legal argument against the companies. In the next installment (September 24) he observes, among other things: “It is well known that the real endeavours which the population company, the Holland company, &. &. &. are persisting in, are to scare the poor actual settlers”; and in the last installment (October 1), after asserting “that all speculators on a large scale on the unappropriated land of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania . . . are intruders,” he concludes with a note of encouragement to the settlers, as follows:

It is hard to raise money in a new country, and it is much more, so when a whole settlement, is at the same time, groaning under the pressure of heavy payments. Once more fellow citizens, dont give away to despondency, at the appearance of the combined companies of moneyed men? dont let fall from your hand, into the abyss of wealth, the freehold, the shelter, providence has bestowed upon you, and your posterity. If a storm rises from the east against you? if some partial cloud seem unauspicious to you in the west? are you not conformed [sic] by the consolatory idea that you are to abide by the verdict of a jury of your country, and that the western Barr afford learned and philanthropic lawyers ready to advocate your cause.

By order of the committee,

John Lucas Sec’y.
The threat to orderly trials implied in this pronouncement—"you are to abide by the verdict of a jury of your country"—was too plain to escape the Federalists. A legal man, probably Judge Alexander Addison, wrote to Brackenridge from Washington, Pennsylvania, about the Lucas article. The writer charged that the settlers' organization was illegal since it obviously intended to make impossible unbiased juries. Brackenridge replied, suggesting that the settlers had as much right to organize as the companies and suggested that a change of venue would solve the jury problem.37

That the organization of "actual settlers" was effective is testified to by the correspondence of the Population Company. On February 23, 1797, the company managers wrote to Ennion Williams, a company agent, that "the machinations of adverse settlers and their adherents aided by Lucas as it affects you is extremely disagreeable."38

The strategy of the well-financed land companies was to employ all the better lawyers in the Pittsburgh area so as to keep them out of the employ of the settlers. The companies especially feared Brackenridge; for that reason, the Holland Land Company successfully hired him for one of their cases for $1,000, although they disliked the man and found the sum a "truly disagreeable expense."39 The Pennsylvania Population Company soon followed suit, also for a $1,000 fee. With all due regard for the nature of the legal profession, the settlers must have considered the action something of a betrayal. The Federalists never tired of pointing out that Lucas had been a cat's-paw for Brackenridge, and that Brackenridge had sold him out.40

As late as 1803, Lucas' claim was still in the courts. It is probable that, like many other disputed claims vigorously pressed by settlers, the companies made a compromise settlement.41 Lucas left Pennsylvania before the complicated legal tangle was finally settled. His activity on behalf of the other settlers, however, bore immediate political fruit.

[To be continued]

39 "Il a fallu se soumettre a cette veritablement desagreable de-

40 Hale, "Pennsylvania Population Company," 130-131; Pittsburgh Gazette, April 17, 1801.