

GEN. WILKINS TO SECRETARY DALLAS.

PITTSBURGH, *August 8th*, 1794.

SIR:—I received a few lines from you, Directed to A. Tannehill & myself, Requesting that we Would Exart ourselves In Bringing to Justice those who were concerned in Burning Gener'l Nevel's Buildings. I can, at present, say no more than that Our Laws, Property & all suffers the moment the Smalest attempt is made In Bringing forward any one person who Opposes the Excise Law. The people in this Part of the united States Seem determined. I hope mild Measures, by the heads of Government, may be adopted; if otherwise, God alone knows the Event. I Supose you will, through Sundry Chanals, hear such Reports as may convince you & His Excellency the Governor, that it is not in our power to put your orders into Execution.

I'm, with Esteem, your

Most obedient Hum. Ser't,

JNO. WILKINS.

To A. J. DALLAS, Esq., *Sec'y, Philadelphia.*

H. H. BRACKENRIDGE * TO TENCH COXE.

PITTSBURGH, *August 8th*, 1794.

SIR:—Have received no papers from you; your letter by the post is the first I have heard from you. I take the opportunity

* HUGH HENRY BRACKENRIDGE, was a native of Campbelton, Scotland, where he was born, in 1748. At the age of five he came with his father to Pennsylvania. He became a tutor at Princeton, having graduated at that College in 1771, and was master of an academy in Maryland when the Revolution broke out. He removed to Philadelphia, and having studied divinity, became a chaplain in the army. Relinquishing the pulpit for the bar, he edited for a time, the *U. S. Magazine*. In 1781 he settled at Pittsburgh. In 1786 was sent to the Legislature to attain the establishment of the county of Allegheny. Was made a judge in 1789, and from 1799, until his death, was judge of the Supreme Court of the State. The part he took in the Insurrection made him prominent. His course, in that affair, he vindicated in his "History of the Whiskey Insurrection," published the year after. Washington, Hamilton and Mifflin well understood his position. He published a poem on the "Rising Glory of America," 1774; "Eulogium of the Brave who fell in the contest with Great Britain, delivered at Philadelphia, July 4, 1779;" "Modern Chivalry, or the Adventures of Capt. Farrago," 1796, an admirable satire; "Oration, July 4, 1793;" "Gazette Publications collected," 1806. He died at Carlisle on the 25th of June, 1816.

to give you, in return, a summary of the present state of this Country, with respect to the opposition that exists to the Excise law. It has its Origin, not in any Anti-Federal spirit, I assure you. It is chiefly the principles and operations of the Law itself that renders it obnoxious. Be this as it may, the facts are these:

The opposition which, for some time, showed itself in resolves of Committees, in representations to Government, in Masked attacks on Insignificant Deputy Excise Officers—for only such would accept the Appointment—did at length, on the appearance of the Marshal, in this County, to serve process, break out in an open and direct attack on the Inspector of the Revenue himself, General Neville. These circumstances you will, by this time, have heard from the General himself, and from the Marshal, Major Lenox. Subsequent to their departure from the country, notice was given of a meeting on the Monongahela River, about 18 miles from the Town of Pittsburgh. Six delegates, of whom I was one, were sent from this Town. Nothing material was done at this meeting, but the measure agreed upon of a more general meeting, on the 14th August, near the same place, to take into view the present State of affairs of the Country.

Subsequent to this the Mail was intercepted. Characters in Pittsburgh became Obnoxious by letters found in which sentiments constructed to evince a bias in favour of the Excise Law were discovered. In consequence of this it was thought necessary to demand of the Town that those persons should be delivered up or expelled or any other obnoxious character that might reside there; also, that the Excise Office, still kept in Pittsburgh, or said to be kept there, should be pulled down; the House of Abraham Kirkpatrick burnt or pulled down, other Houses also that were the property of persons unfavourable to the cause. For this purpose, Circular letters were sent to the Battalions of the Counties, detachments from which met on Braddock's Field to the amount of at least five thousand Men on the second of the month. It was dreaded, on the part of the Town, that from the rage of the people involving the town in the general odium of abetting the excise law, it would be laid in Ashes. And I aver that it would have been the case, had it not been for the prompt and decisive resolutions of the Town to march out and meet them as Brethern, and comply with all demands. This had the effect, and the Battalion marched into Town on the third, and during their delay there and Cantonment in the neighbourhood, with a trifling exception of a Slight damage done to the property of Abraham Kirkpatrick, in the possession of his Tenant, which was afterward compensated, behaved with all the regularity and order of the French or

American Armies in their March through a Town during their Revolution with Great Britain.

The Town of Pittsburgh will send delegates to the meeting of the 14th instant. What the result will be I know not. I flatter myself nothing more than to send Commissioners to the President with an address, proposing that he shall delay any attempt to Suppress this Insurrection, as it will be stiled, untill the meeting of Congress. This will be the object, simply and alone, with all that labor to avert a Civil War.

On the part of the Government, I wou'd earnestly pray a delay, untill such address and Commissioners may come forward. This is my object in writing to you this letter, which I desire you to communicate, either by the *Gazette* or otherwise.

It will be said, this insurrection can be easily suppressed. It is but that of a part of four Counties. Be assured, it is that of the greater part; and I am induced to believe, the three Virginia counties this side the Mountain will fall in. The first measure, then, will be the Organization of a New Government, comprehending the three Virginia Counties and those of Pennsylvania to the Westward, to what extent I know not. This event, which I contemplate with great pain, will be the result of the necessity of self defense. For this reason, **I earnestly and anxiously wish that delay on the part of the government may give time to bring about, if practicable, good Order and Subordination. By the time the Congress meets, there may be a favourable issue to the Negotiation with regard to the Navigation of the Mississippi, the Western posts, &c. A suspension of the excise law during the Indian War, a measure I proposed in a publication three years ago in Philadelphia, may perhaps suffice.** Being then on an equal footing with other parts of the Union, if they submitted to the law, this Country might also.

I anticipate all that can be said with regard to the example, &c. I may be mistaken, but I am decisive in opinion that the United States cannot effect the operation of the Law in this Country. It is universally odious in the Neighbouring parts of all the Neighbouring States, and the militia, under the Law in the hands of the President, cannot be called out to reduce an opposition. The Midland Counties, I am persuaded, will not even suffer the militia of more distant parts of the Union to pass through them.

But the Excise Law is a branch of the Funding System, detested and abhorred by all the Philosophic Men & the yeomanry of America, those that hold certificates excepted. There is a growling, lurking discontent at this system, that is ready to burst out and discover itself everywhere. I candidly and decidedly tell you, the Chariot of Government has been driven Jehu-like, as to the

finances; like that of Phæton, it has descended from the middle path, and is like to Burn up the American Earth.

Should an attempt be made to suppress these people, I am afraid the question will not be, whether you will March to Pittsburgh, but whether they will March to Philadelphia; accumulating in their course and swelling over the banks of the Susquehanna like a torrent, irresistible and devouring in its progress. There can be no equality of Contest between the rage of a Forrest and the abundance, indolence and opulence of a City. If the President has evinced a prudent and approved delay in the case of the British Spoilations, in the Case of the Indian Tribes, much more humane and politic will it be to consult the internal peace of the Government, by avoiding force, until every means of accommodation are found unavailing. I deplore my personal situation. I deplore the situation of this Country, should a Civil War ensue.

An application to the British is spoken of, which may God avert. But what will not despair produce?

Your most obed't h'ble serv't, &c.,

H. H. BRACKENRIDGE.

TENCH COXE, Esq., Philadelphia.

CONFERENCE AT THE PRESIDENT'S.

Saturday, the 9th [2d?] August, 1794.

PRESENT:

The President,	The Governor,
The Secretary of State,	The Chief Justice,
The Secretary of the Treasury,	The Attorney General of the
The Secretary at War,	State,
The Attorney General of the	The Secretary of the Common-
U. S.	wealth.

The President opened the business by stating that it was hardly necessary to prepare the subject of the conference, as it was generally understood, and the circumstances which accompanied it were such as to strike at the root of all law & order; that he was clearly of opinion that the most spirited & firm measures were necessary to rescue the States as well as the general government from impending danger, for if such proceedings were tolerated there was an end to our Constitutions & laws. He then observed that there were some papers besides those already communicated to the Gov'r which would throw additional light on the subject, and he presented them to the Secretary of State who read them aloud.