

Sir

I am informed that in
contempt of decency and truth
you have publicly abused
General Washington in the
grossest terms. The ^{relation} in which
I stand to him forbids me to
pass such conduct unnoticed.
I therefore demand that satis-
faction which I am entitled to
and desire that as soon as you
think yourself at liberty - you
will appoint your time and place
and name your weapons.

John Laurans.

Philadelphia
3^d Decem^r 1778

Major General Lee

Sir

An unexpected call from Camp
the cause of which you will soon
learn - obliges me to go out of town
immediately - from the tenor of
the letter which you did me the
honor to write, it is more than
probable I shall return before
you are ready for the rendezvous
which we have given each other -

in the mean time

I am Sir

Your most obed^t
humble Serv^t

John Dawson

Philadelphia

7th December 1778

Major-General Lee —

Narrative of an affair of Honour between General Lee and Colonel Laurens

General Lee attended by Major Edwards and Col. Laurens attended by Col. Hamilton met agreeable to appointment on Wednesday afternoon half past three in a wood situated near the four mile stone on the point road — Pistols having been the weapons previously fixed on and the combatants being provided with a brace each, it was asked in what manner they should proceed, Gen. Lee proposed to advance upon one another and each fire at what time and distance he thought proper. Col. Laurens expressed his preference to this mode and agreed to the proposal accordingly — They approached each other within about five or six paces and exchanged a shot almost at the same moment as Col. Laurens was preparing for a second discharge Gen. Lee declared himself wounded Col. Laurens as if apprehending to be more serious than it proved advanced towards the General to offer his support the same was done by Col. Hamilton and Maj Edwards under similar apprehensions Gen. Lee then said the wound was inconsiderable and less than he had imagined at the first stroke of the ball and proposed to fire a second time. This was warmly opposed both by Col. Hamilton and Maj Edwards who declared it to be their opinion that the affair should terminate as it then stood, but Gen. Lee repeated his desire that there should be a second discharge, and Col. Laurens agreed to the proposal — Col. Hamilton observed that unless the General was influenced by motives of personal enmity he did not think the affair ought to be pursued any farther, but as General Lee seemed to persist in desiring it he was too tender of his Friend's Honour to persist in opposing it — The combat

was then going to be renewed but Major Edwards
again declaring his opinion that the affair ought to end
where it was Gen. Lee then expressed his confidence
in the Honour of the Gentlemen concerned as seconds;
and said he should be willing to comply with whatever
they would coolly and deliberately determine on
Col. Laurens consented to the same Col.
Hamilton and Major Edwards withdrew and
conversing awhile on the subject still concurred
fully in sentiment that for the most cogent reasons
the affair should terminate as it was then circum-
stanced - This decision was communicated to
parties and agreed to by them upon which they
immediately returned to Town; Gen. Lee
slightly wounded in the right side

During the interval a conversation
to the following purport passed between Gen. Lee
and Col. Laurens - On Colonel Hamilton's intima-
ting the idea of personal enmity as before mentioned -
Gen. Lee declared he had none and had only met
Colonel Laurens to defend his own honour that
Mr Laurens best knew whether there was any
on his part - Colonel Laurens replied Gen. Lee
was acquainted with the motives that brought
him there which were then he had been informed
from what he thought good authority General Lee
had spoken of General Washington ~~within~~ in the
most opprobrious terms of personal abuse which
he Colonel Laurens thought himself bound to resent,
as well on account of the relation he bore to
General Washington, as from motives of personal
friendship and respect for his character. Gen. Lee
he had given ^{his} opinion against General Washington's
military character to his particular friends and
might perhaps ~~repeat~~ ^{do} it again he said every man *
~~do~~ but said he never had spoke of Gen. Washington

in the terms mentioned which he could not have
done both because he had always esteemed General
Washington as a man as because such a abuse would
be incompatible with the Character of he would
ever wish to sustain as a Gentleman -
* He said every man had a right to give his sen-
timents freely of a Military Character and that
he did not esteem himself personally account-
able to Colonel Laurens for what he had done
in that respect - Upon

a piece of justice to the two Gentle-
men to testify that after they met their conduct
was strongly marked with all the politeness
Generosity coolness & firmness that ought to
characterize a transaction of this nature

Alex Hamilton

Philadelphia December 23 1778

Co. Edwards