

several persons in England, who expressed a strong desire of putting them to the press, which the avocations of the person to whom they were entrusted, and his not being acquainted with such undertakings, had caused him to neglect."

It is likely that Langworthy took without Goddard's permission the manuscript which they had prepared from the Lee papers for their three volume edition and sent it to an acquaintance in England for publication soon after their partnership ended.⁸ Isaiah Thomas wrote:

"Goddard did not publish the work he had projected; as a person whom he had engaged as an associate in the publication, and who was entrusted with the manuscripts betrayed his trust; for instead of preparing them for the press, he sent them to England, where they were printed and sold for his sole benefit, and formed the imperfect work, which is entitled *Memoirs of the Life of the Late Charles Lee.*"⁹

As soon as Goddard learned of the unauthorized and abridged edition, he disclaimed all responsibility for it in a letter to Washington.

"Removed to the humble Vale of rural Life, it was but recently that the "Memoirs of the Life of Charles Lee, Esquire," &c &c fell under my Observation—and as I once announced a Design of publishing a Work nearly similar in Title, though far different in Contents, I am impelled by the most unfeigned Respect to your Character, as well as Justice to myself, to address you on the Subject, presuming upon the Liberality and Candor I have formerly experienced from you, that you will give due Credit to my Assertions, when I utterly disclaim, as I now solemnly do, all Share, or Concern, in the printed "Memoirs", that have been so improperly ushered (via London) to the Public Eye.

The Editor, while I was absent, clandestinely took the Manuscripts of General Lee from my House, and urged by his Necessities and Avarice, hath, without Judgment to discriminate, compiled, and sent abroad, a heterogenous Collection of Letters, Essays and Fragments—even private Letters, written to and by distinguished Characters, at Periods of Friendship and Confidence, which ought, and I am persuaded, was the Wish of the Writers, to have been buried in Oblivion.

When I contemplated the Publication of the Memoirs of the late General Lee, my Design was to publish certain literary and Military Papers, with such epistolary Writings, as would, I judged, by interesting the Public, at once promote my own Interest, as a Printer, and inhance the Fame of a departed Friend, who, it must be allowed, inherited, from Nature, a rare and brilliant Genius, and possessed a cultivated Understanding—It was, indeed, foreign to my Design to introduce an Essay, a Letter, or a Sentiment, that would wound the Feelings, or excite the Disapprobation, of a single worthy Person— or cast the least Blemish upon the Reputation of General Lee, by sporting with his lively Sallies, and unguarded (because confidential) Communications—or even to give Currency to a single Line, that, "dying, he would wish to blot."

Sensible, Sir, of the great Importance (particularly at this Juncture) of your Avocations, I shall not presume longer to obtrude on your Time, having, I hope, been sufficiently explicit to exculpate myself from an Imputation of Disrespect to a Character for whom, with applauding Millions, I feelingly accord my humble, tho' sincere Tribute of grateful Veneration.

[signed] William Goddard.

Johnston (near Providence)

Dec^m 16, 1793.¹⁰

⁸ The English edition was reviewed in the *Monthly Review*, VIII (1792), pp. 469-471.

⁹ Thomas, *History of Printing in America*, 1810, Vol. II, p. 355.

¹⁰ The Washington Papers. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.