

THE WILMINGTON MERCHANT, 1775-1815

By

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PREFACE

In 1914 Christopher L. Ward published a charming and informal essay which he called "Leaves from the Log-Books and Letters of James Hemphill, Mariner and Merchant of Wilmington, 1793-1797." The material for the essay, which appeared in the Papers of the Historical Society of Delaware, was drawn from a large collection of family papers which Mr. Ward had in his possession. The article presented a delightful view of a time "one hundred and twenty years ago," when:

Walnut street, Washington, then called Pasture street, Eleventh or Elizabeth street and the Christiana River formed a parallelogram enclosing all the other streets, lanes and alleys of the little borough of Wilmington.

This was a time in which "the river, the seas, and the shipping" drew goods into Wilmington from the surrounding countryside and sent them out to distant ports; it was an era in which "its commerce on the high seas was the most interesting fact in the history of the city." The following thesis, "The Wilmington Merchant, 1775-1815," represents an attempt to expand and to document the picture of Wilmington's commercial life in the late colonial and early federal periods so ably given by Mr. Ward. I have used both the Hemphill manuscripts, generously donated by his widow to the Historical Society of Delaware, and the papers of other Wilmington merchants. If some of the charm of the story has evaporated under this increased exposure,

it is hoped that instruction will serve where delight is wanting.

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SUMMARY

In the years from 1775 to 1815 the community of Wilmington, Delaware, experienced a period of growth and commercial expansion carried on under the invigorating influences of a thriving trade, an expanding flour-milling industry, and a vigorous and extensive maritime commerce. The Wilmington merchants who engaged in business in this age in which commerce dominated the economic life of America were largely responsible for the initial growth and development of the town in which they lived. The initiative and energy which they displayed in finding markets for the products of the Delaware area and in distributing the varied and sometimes exotic return cargoes were crucial stimuli in the metamorphosis which transformed Wilmington from "an upstart village lying on a Neighboring Creek," as a New Castle minister termed it in 1750, into the "large town . . . pleasantly situated on an eminence, commanding a view of every sail passing on the river," that it had become by 1795.

The crest of Wilmington's importance as a commercial center was reached in the years from 1790 to 1807 when European wars stimulated a demand for American flour and provisions. Merchants and shipowners eagerly scanned the newspapers for news which might affect the course of their business. They sent cargoes to France, England, India, Java, Spain, China, and above all to the West Indies. Shipping such local products as flour, bread, beef, pork, cheese, and lumber, they brought

back Irish linens; West Indian coffee, rum, molasses, and sugar; Indian cottons; Chinese tea, china, and silk; Eastern spices; and European wines. Wilmington thus served as a market center which drew produce to it for export and distributed imported goods over a wide area. Merchant families like the Hemphills, the Warners, and the Mendinhalls worked hand-in-hand with the Brooms, Shipleys, Tatnalls, and Leas of the Brandywine mills as shippers and commercial entrepreneurs in these years in which trade formed the lifeblood of Wilmington's economic life.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, however, Wilmington underwent an economic transformation. By 1815 it was a young industrial center, "likely to become one of the most important manufacturing towns in the United States." Merchants, millers, and ocean ships no longer dominated the Wilmington scene. From 1807 to 1815 the community's commercial activity had declined as a result of the trade restraints imposed by the War of 1812 and by the hostility and tension leading up to the conflict. Manufacturing, on the other hand, was stimulated by the embargoes which temporarily removed foreign competition and by the tariff restrictions which followed the war. Wilmington became a center for the manufacture of gunpowder, paper, leather, and textiles, and continued to be an important flour-milling community.

Although he had now lost his former pre-eminence to the industrialist, the merchant had played a leading role in the

development of Wilmington. A fortunate combination of mills, markets, and transportation gave Wilmington the potential for growth, but it was the entrepreneurial skill of its merchants and millers that helped it to realize the promise of its location. These early citizens laid the foundations for its future importance as an industrial city.

CHAPTER I

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BEGINNINGS

A pretty town on the River...
in a good position for trade.

From the last decade of the eighteenth century through the first decade of the nineteenth, "merchants, millers, and ocean ships" color the history of Wilmington, Delaware.¹ In these years the city experienced a period of growth and commercial expansion carried on under the invigorating influences of a thriving trade, an expanding flour-milling industry, and a vigorous and extensive maritime commerce.² By 1790, the community which in 1735 had possessed but fifteen or twenty houses and "languished for want of settlers"³ had over two thousand inhabitants.⁴ Even as early as 1775 it presented the picture of a small but thriving town with "as many houses as Hartford . . . well built with brick . . . with two Presbyterian, one Quaker, and one Swedish Church in it."⁵ The mills of the Brandywine and the sailing ships of the Christina had brought into being a new and important commercial center. They were to nurture it in its infancy and to provide the seed for its growth. Trade, especially the export of Brandywine flour, was the lifeblood of Wilmington in these early years.⁶

A Wilmington newspaper of September 20, 1798, advertised for sale:⁷

Jamaica Spirits, French Brandy, Molasses and Sugar, Coffee in bags, Cotton in bales, Ginger and Spanish Hides . . .

Peach, Apple and Rye Liquors, Hispaniola and Havanna Molasses, Coffee, Cotton, Coarse and fine Salt, Madder, Allum, Copperas, Brimstone, Pepper, Allspice, Chocolate, Indigo, Spanish Segars by the Box, Candles, Soap, Tobacco, Snuff, Rice, Rasins, Currents, Powder, Shot, Flints, Corn, Butter, Pork, Lamp Oil . . .

The list goes on; there are products of distant lands, of the sun-swept islands of the Caribbean, of the Spanish settlements in South America, of tidewater Carolina, of India, of Ireland, and of the rugged New England coast. There are also local products--wheat, corn, pork, beef, lumber, and seed--drawn to Wilmington from the rich Pennsylvania farmlands of Lancaster and Chester counties, and from the forests and farms of Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland. These products testify to Wilmington's active role in the world of commerce and to its vigor in reaching out beyond its own borders. These cargoes, and others like them, helped Wilmington to grow in the last half of the eighteenth century from "a pretty village"⁸ into the largest city in the state of Delaware,⁹ and one having "all the appearance of one of the English county towns."¹⁰

The story of the Wilmington merchant from 1770 to 1815 is, in a large measure, the story of the city of Wilmington in its formative years. It was the merchants, millers, and

ocean ships of Wilmington that laid the foundations for the future development of the area and gave the impetus for its initial growth. The story of the Wilmington merchant is a fresh and colorful tale, set in the "golden age" of sailing ships and maritime trade which flourished in Wilmington in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹¹ It is also a significant one, for in the years from 1775 to 1815 a state and a nation were taking shape.

The Wilmington merchant was engaged in trade in a formative era of American history: the years of turmoil during the American Revolution, the period from 1782 to 1789 under the Articles of Confederation, and the years of the Napoleonic wars in Europe from 1793 to 1815.¹² The merchants had to contend with war, with business depression, and with the disruptive influence on trade of the American non-importation agreements and embargo acts, and yet they not only survived but actually expanded their operations.¹³ The wars in Europe stimulated a demand for American flour which encouraged neutral shipping and caused Wilmington's commerce to expand.¹⁴ Only at the end of the period was the steady growth of American commerce checked by the naval disturbances which led to the War of 1812.

Even though their business was expanding in the years from 1775 to 1815, the merchants filled their letters with complaints and dire predictions. William Hemphill, for

instance, characterized his "Hatia" trade of 1792 as "a poor business indeed," and anticipated "a considerable loss" on the sales of his cargoes.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Broom, Hendrickson, and Summerl of Wilmington in that same year wrote a merchant on the island of St. Eustatius that "we have it in contemplation" to enter the West Indian trade. They were seeking a West Indian agent because they were encouraged by the profits made by "one of our fellow citizens" (possibly William Hemphill himself) who had formed "a similar connexion" two or three years earlier.¹⁶ Trade was uneven, cash was scarce, and bills were often very difficult to collect; even so, the merchant continued and at times prospered.¹⁷ The history of Wilmington business ventures during this period suggests that the early years of American commerce were more a period of growth and expansion than has commonly been supposed.¹⁸

A close study of the Wilmington merchant of this period may therefore serve to cast some light upon the commercial history of the times. Just as Wilmington's mills and millers may be used to illustrate the growth, expansion and industrialization of an American town,¹⁹ the sailing ships and merchants of Wilmington may provide in microcosm a picture of American commercial expansion. An examination of the Wilmington merchants and the way they went about their business may help answer some of the questions of who merchants were, how they operated, what they sold, and where they traded. It may also serve to illustrate

some of the changes in the nature of merchant activity which took place in the transition from colony to country. Here, in Wilmington, we see one step in the gradual attainment of commercial independence from Great Britain: the emergence of an American merchant, trading on his own account, initiating large ventures financed with American capital, and coming into possession of the commercial institutions--banks, insurance companies, and corporate organizations--which would soon make large-scale American investment possible.²⁰

Although Wilmington carried on a lively trade, often through the port of Philadelphia, it was not itself a large port. It could not compare with New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, or Charleston. For instance, in 1810 the amount of tonnage owned in these ports was as follows:

Boston	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	149,121	Tons.
New-York-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	268,548	"
Philadelphia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	125,258	"
Baltimore	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	103,444	"
Charleston	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	52,888	"

In the same year the entire state of Delaware had only 8,190 tons registered in her ports.²¹

The limited size of Wilmington, however, is an asset for our purposes of study. It enables us to grasp at a single view the whole panorama of Wilmington's commerce without being lost in a maze of detail. Still, the city's commercial activity was sufficiently broad that it may be studied as representative of American trade in the early national period. Wilmington's

size yields two other important advantages. It enables us to give attention to the smaller merchants whose activities would be unnoticed in a large city, and permits us to study a town whose commercial history has not already been systematically analyzed.

A laudable desire to stay close to original sources has led historians to emphasize the role New England, New York, and Philadelphia merchants played in commerce to the neglect of those from other cities in the middle and southern colonies. Even though these cities carried on a considerable amount of trade in the late colonial and early federal periods, little direct evidence for this activity has survived. Most of the information about it is indirect; details must be gleaned from chance remarks in the papers of other merchants from large cities where manuscript material has survived, and from occasional scattered documents. There is evidence, however, that smaller cities and areas other than Philadelphia, New York, and New England played an active role in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Their story needs to be told.

The historian often tends to work with large manuscript collections, and these naturally give more weight to the role of the great entrepreneur. Yet there were many American trading ventures conducted on a small scale--especially in the West Indian and the coasting trades²²--and these played an

important part in the commerce of America. Although many of the larger North American merchants who dealt with the West Indies trade relied upon British capital, there were others who traded on their own initiative and on their own account. These were often the smaller men who imported few goods from Europe and so were not as likely to be in debt to London merchants.²³ In their hands, West Indian business was able to make an original and independent contribution to the formation of American capital.

The story of the small merchants is difficult to untangle. They were usually involved in many ventures and in many types of business. Their records are scattered and often incomplete. Few accounts show separately the profits and losses from particular branches of trade, a fact making it difficult to separate any one aspect of their business from all of the others. Again we find Wilmington's size an asset to our study, for in this city, too small to support any great merchants, we find surviving some of the records of the smaller, more typical American merchants. Wilmington is fortunate in having available at the Historical Society of Delaware a considerable collection of Wilmington business manuscripts, among them a fairly complete collection of the papers (1784-1806) of William Hemphill, a Wilmington merchant and shipper. Thus, Wilmington is able to provide rare direct evidence of the trading activities of a small city. This collection also affords an unusual opportunity

to investigate the trade of an average entrepreneur.

The Wilmington merchant's initiative and energy, in finding markets for the Brandywine valley products and in distributing the varied and sometimes exotic return cargoes, were crucial stimuli in the metamorphosis which transformed Wilmington from an "upstart village lying on a Neighboring Creek,"²⁴ as a Newcastle minister termed it in 1750, into the "large town . . . pleasantly situated on a eminence, commanding . . . a view of every sail passing on the river,"²⁵ that it appeared by 1795. By that year the port of Wilmington boasted "about thirty square rigged vessels, beside sloops and schooners" and scores of smaller craft lining her Christina wharves.²⁶ Indeed, nearly a decade earlier Wilmington was a considerable port with eleven sloops and brigs in the West Indies trade and seven ships in the overseas trade with Ireland.²⁷ Through a detailed case study of William Hemphill's merchant activities and a glance at those of his fellow Wilmingtonians, we may shed light on the growth of a city and upon a neglected class of American merchants--the small businessman.

America was so predominantly rural in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century that the very existence of a city at Wilmington calls for some explanation. The answer may be sought in Wilmington's location and found in the fortunate

combination of natural resources, nearby markets, and convenient means of transportation which the area offered. The town, laid out by Thomas Willing in 1731, is situated on a rise of ground between the Brandywine and Christina Rivers, about two miles above the Christina's entrance into the Delaware River.²⁸ The confluence of these two rivers, "the one adapted to navigation and commerce, the other to mills and manufacturing establishments," provided Wilmington with access to water power and water transportation.²⁹ These were two important resources in the age of sailing ships and turning mill wheels, and they made Wilmington's growth possible.

The Brandywine River, rising in the Welsh Mountains of Pennsylvania, crosses the rich farmlands of Lancaster and Chester counties. It unites with the Christina just below Wilmington and then flows into the Delaware River.³⁰ The Brandywine formed the northern boundary of the city of Wilmington in its early years.³¹ Along its northern bank, just opposite Wilmington, a little cluster of mills and millers' homes sprang up. This settlement, known as Brandywine Village, eventually became a part of the larger city.³² Milling industry was drawn to the Brandywine by its rushing waters; the river falls one hundred and twenty feet within four miles as it approaches Wilmington.³³ Here was abundant water power. Furthermore, the lower stretches of the Brandywine were navigable for vessels carrying 2,000 bushels of wheat as high up the stream as the

mills of Brandywine Village.³⁴ Tidewater and the fall line met at Wilmington on the Brandywine, providing an ideal setting for milling which was to give Wilmington "the most notable concentration of mill industries in the colonies."³⁵

The Christina River formed Wilmington's southern boundary in its early years.³⁶ Approaching the city from the southwest, it was navigable for sloops of fifty tons for about ten miles beyond the city, as far as Christina Bridge.³⁷ It provided Wilmington with a sheltered harbor which gave her port an advantage over New Castle, whose vessels had to lie in the Delaware,³⁸ and it provided Wilmington with an avenue to world trade. Peter Kalm, a Swedish botanist who visited Wilmington in 1748, described the Christina and its advantages in these words, giving us a pretty picture of a busy stream lined with lush meadows:

A little river called Christina-kill passes by the town and then empties into the Delaware. The river is said to be sufficiently deep so that the greatest vessel may come right up to the town, for at its mouth or juncture with the Delaware it is shallowest, and yet its depth even there when the water is lowest is from two to two and a half fathoms. But as you go higher its depth increases to three, three and a half and even four fathoms. The largest ships therefore may safely with their full cargoes come to and from the town with the tide. From Wilmington you have a fine view of a great part of the river Delaware and the ships sailing on it. On both sides of the river Christina-kill almost from the place the redoubt is built to its juncture with the Delaware are low meadows which yield a great quantity of hay.³⁹

Mills, markets, and transportation were the secret of Wilmington's early prosperity.⁴⁰ The Brandywine turned the mill wheels and the Christina carried the sloops and shallops which provided transportation. Markets were readily available. Just down the Christina lay the Delaware and beyond it the ocean seas. Wilmington was located in the heart of the wheat-growing area of America in the late colonial and early federal period, and in close proximity to the greatest flour port--Philadelphia.⁴¹ As Philadelphia grew, it provided an increasingly attractive market to the Wilmington merchants and millers,⁴² and as the milling operations along the Brandywine expanded, more distant markets were sought. Ships went from the Christina to the West Indies, to France, to Ireland, to Calcutta and to Java, bringing increasing trade and wealth to the young city.⁴³

Wilmington's geographic advantages were soon recognized. Quaker merchants and millers from the Philadelphia area began to move down to "Wilmington," as it was first named in 1731.⁴⁴ William Shipley was among the first to settle there. He came to Wilmington from Ridley, Pennsylvania, in the spring of 1735 at a time when the settlement had only fifteen or twenty houses, bringing with him fresh capital which greatly stimulated the growth of the town.⁴⁵ In 1736 Shipley built a Market House at the corner of Fourth and Shipley Streets; a second Market House was built that same year on Second Street.⁴⁶ Market days were held to allow the people of the surrounding countryside

to bring in their provisions for sale, and later, after the town was granted a charter in 1739, provisions were made for semi-annual fairs. By 1740, Wilmington was beginning to take on the character of a market town. It was then a country center of about six hundred souls, with two markets and one public building, "the cage," or prison erected on Market Street above Third.⁴⁷ By 1744 Wilmington appeared to be nearly "the largeness of Annapolis," and by 1750 this "upstart Village" seemed likely to surpass New Castle in size and importance.⁴⁸

The formative period from 1735 to 1750 was a critical one in Wilmington's history. It laid the groundwork for the first major expansion of the flour industry, which was to occur in the 1750's.⁴⁹ As we have seen, the town began to grow as badly-needed capital was brought in by such men as Shipley, and as the distribution of goods was facilitated by the erection of market houses. In 1740 the semi-annual fairs were instituted, the town government set up, and the first election held.⁵⁰ Two more subtly-related events of importance to Wilmington's future growth took place in this decade: the building of the Wilmington and the coming of Oliver Canby to the Brandywine.

In 1740 William Shipley, David Ferris, Joshua Way, Griffith Minshall, and others built along the Christina the brig Wilmington.⁵¹ Small shallops and barges had been built earlier, but this was the first vessel for foreign trade

built along the Christina, and it marked a new era in Wilmington's history--an era in which many more ships would be built to sail from Wilmington bound for distant ports.⁵² The Wilmington was loaded with a cargo of flour, ship-bread, white and black oak staves, and barrels of butter and beef and sent in the summer of 1741 to Jamaica.⁵³ Her voyage marks the beginning of a West Indian trade which was to play an important part in Wilmington's commercial life.

About the same time that the Wilmington was launched, Oliver Canby came to Wilmington and purchased an interest in the grist and bolting mills of Samuel Kirk along the Brandywine.⁵⁴ Canby's arrival marks the beginning of merchant milling along the Brandywine. Canby's was not the first flour mill on the stream, but it was the beginning of the cluster known as the Brandywine mills.⁵⁵ Soon wheels would be turning up and down the stream, grinding the flour which would make the Brandywine "famous all over America for its Merchant Mills," and make "Brandywine superfine flour" an important article on the world market.⁵⁶ Along the Christina, the brig Wilmington was waiting, ready to carry the cargoes of flour and lumber and to draw to Wilmington the commerce that would make it a bustling market and milling town. In this decade the power and potentiality of the Brandywine and the Christina began to be exploited, and Wilmington started to grow from "a pretty town on the River"

into what would appear by 1814 to be "one of the most important manufacturing towns in the United States."⁵⁷

The years from 1740 to 1775 were ones of quiet growth for Wilmington. Other Quaker families, the Tatnalls, the Leas, the Mortons, and the Pooles, came down from Bucks and Chester counties in Pennsylvania to join the Canbys and Shipleys who had already settled in the Delaware port.⁵⁸ New mills were built along the Brandywine. Oliver Canby's mill was built in 1744,⁵⁹ and in 1762 Thomas Shipley bought property from Samuel Kirk and erected another mill.⁶⁰ A bridge was built across the Brandywine in 1764, supplementing an earlier ferry which spanned the river at French Street to connect with the Philadelphia post road on the north bank of the creek.⁶¹ Brickyards and tanyards were in operation in the city, and in 1762 a printing shop was established.⁶² There were many inns and taverns to serve travellers and seamen.⁶³ By 1777 Wilmington was a town of 335 houses and 1,229 inhabitants,⁶⁴ "in a good position for trade, and inhabited principally by Quakers . . ."⁶⁵

The West Indian trade proved profitable, and other ships joined the Wilmington. Among them were the Nancy,⁶⁶ of Revolutionary War fame, and the Dolphin.⁶⁷ The Nancy had made seven West Indian voyages by 1775, carrying flour and lumber to the islands and bringing back wine, rum, sugar, molasses, coffee, and chocolate.⁶⁸ Voyages were made by the

Wilmington vessels to Lisbon, the Canaries, and the Azores, as well as to the Caribbean islands.⁶⁹ They found markets for Delaware produce and brought back tropical goods in return.

The river trade was also lively. Shallops brought grain and produce from landings along all of the navigable streams of southern Delaware and from the New Jersey Cape.⁷⁰ These shallow-draft vessels could mount the smaller streams to pick up cargoes at country wharfs, and also engaged in traffic along the Delaware. A shallop channel was marked on the maps, closer to shore than the regular channel.⁷¹ A Delawarean in Philadelphia could usually be sure of finding, as Thomas Rodney did, one of "our County Shalloop men in town," so frequent was the river trade by small river craft between Philadelphia and Wilmington.⁷² By 1774 Wilmington had become a market town of such consequence that it could support a weekly packet line between the city and Philadelphia. Samuel Bush began such a line with the sloop Ann, taking Wilmington goods to the Philadelphia markets and filling local orders for Quaker City merchandise.⁷³ Conestoga wagons from Pennsylvania farms rolled into Wilmington with their loads of grain, some for the Brandywine mills and some for the Christina wharfs, and the Philadelphia markets for the Bush packet line made Wilmington a convenient avenue to Philadelphia. Lancaster county farmers found it cheaper to send produce to Wilmington and thence to Philadelphia than to travel the long, slow land route.⁷⁴

Silas Deane, travelling from the Continental Congress in 1775, found Wilmington a compact town, well built of brick with four churches and a flour milling industry which "would render it a large place were it not too much in the shade of Philadelphia."⁷⁵ Here was "the most notable concentration of mill industries in the colonies . . . where an ample and reliable water-power in the chief grain growing district of America was united with river and ocean navigation."⁷⁶ There were always "Several Top-sail vessels at the wharfs" ready to load a cargo for Philadelphia, for the British West Indies, or even for Europe.⁷⁷ "Nearly all the leading citizens . . . owned or were interested in one or more sailing vessels."⁷⁸ The merchants and the Quaker millers of Wilmington seem beyond doubt to have been heavily engaged in the "smart trade" carried on with the West Indian islands.⁷⁹

This activity was interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1775, and it was not until after the Revolution that the overseas trade of Wilmington revived.⁸⁰ Local trade, however, continued.⁸¹ The Brandywine mills ground flour for the Continental troops.⁸² They stopped operation for a short while in 1777 when word came that the British troops under Lord Howe had landed at the head of Elk River and were marching overland to Philadelphia. Orders came from General Washington to dismantle the mills, and the grindstones were removed and hidden until the danger of British occupation was lessened.⁸³ When

the danger had passed, the mills began to grind again.

The merchants suffered more seriously than the millers from the interruption of commerce during the Revolutionary War. As we have seen, they had built up a vigorous trade with the West Indies during the colonial period, and had also sent vessels to ports in Europe and off the coast of Africa. This overseas trade collapsed under the combined pressures of the British blockade and American embargo acts and non-importation agreements.⁸⁴ British ships controlled the Delaware River and Bay from 1777 to 1778 and frequently captured American vessels or forced them ashore.⁸⁵ In 1777 Samuel Bush was forced to scuttle his sloop Ann to avoid British capture, but the vessel was raised after the British evacuation of Philadelphia and resumed trade on the river.⁸⁶ Even after the British evacuation in 1778, Loyalist privateers continued to make shipping hazardous along the Delaware.⁸⁷ A few Loyalists were suspected of collusion in allowing British to capture their vessels, and one, Jonathan Rumford, suffered injury at the hands of an angry Wilmington mob for his suspected dealings with the enemy.⁸⁸ Local trade continued, and after 1780 the "Delaware Navy," set up to protect shipping on the bay and river, gave some degree of protection to the sloops and shallops engaged in river trade.⁸⁹ The mills continued to operate and the merchants engaged in local commerce, but it was not until after the peace in 1783 that large-scale commercial life was resumed in Wilmington.

Trade began to revive in Wilmington soon after the end of the war. In 1784, William Hemphill was sending cargoes to the West Indies and receiving shipments from Ireland.⁹⁰ The river trade was re-opened and Samuel Bush's packet line was again running on schedule.⁹¹ Delaware wheat, corn, lumber, and flour flowed to the Philadelphia markets once more. Shallops left from Duck Creek, Jones Creek, "Apoquinimick," and Black Bird Creek for the Brandywine mills with their loads of grain.⁹² Wilmington storekeepers hastened to re-stock their depleted shelves.

In 1783 Delaware trade still flowed largely through Philadelphia.⁹³ Philadelphia was at that time the largest flour port in the nation, and Wilmington, just a few miles downstream, was in many respects but "its hardworking servant."⁹⁴ Although the connection between the two ports remained intimate, Wilmington gained some measure of independence from Philadelphia in the years following the war and began to establish a promising ocean trade of its own.⁹⁵ Under the Articles of Confederation each state had the right to regulate its own export and import trade. Consequently, laws varied slightly from state to state. Fortunately for Wilmington's West India trade, Delaware's laws were less restrictive than those of Pennsylvania. In 1785 Pennsylvania passed a high protective tariff; the Delaware legislature countered by passing a law making Wilmington and New Castle free ports.⁹⁶ This encouraged shippers to send their goods direct from Wilmington rather than via Philadelphia,

and it thus contributed to the growth of the port of Wilmington.

By 1789 Wilmington had several vessels engaged in foreign trade, particularly with Ireland and the West Indies.⁹⁷ The schooners Isabella and Pratt sailed from Wilmington under the command of Captain Parks and Captain Thomas Mendinhall. There were, in addition to these, the sloops Hannah (Capt. Samuel Lovering), Industry (Capt. Hill), Sukey and Polly (Capt. Ingham), Hope (Capt. T. Newbold), and Polly (Capt. Congdon), as well as the brigs Polly and Betsy (Capt. Andrew Morris), Munton (Capt. Staunton), Maria (Capt. Fort), and Kezia (Capt. Collins), all involved in the West India trade. In the trade with Ireland, Wilmington had five vessels: the brigs Brothers (Capt. Jefferies), Keziah (Capt. Brown), and Sophia (Capt. Thomson), and the ships Happy Return and Nancy under Captain Erwin and Captain Crawford.⁹⁸ These vessels were in addition to the packet ships and shallops which crowded the Christina wharves.

In 1772 regulations were passed by the Delaware legislature restricting the dimensions of the Christina wharves,⁹⁹ and by the 1780's these were the scene of a lively commerce. The wharves lined the north bank of the Christina, and belonged to the merchants and shippers of Wilmington. There was John Foudray's wharf, Isaac Harvey's (later purchased by Thomas Mendinhall), John Shallcross's (later William Hemphill's), Robinson's, and

Jonathan Rumford's Wharf.¹⁰⁰ Here cargoes were loaded and unloaded; here were the warehouses with their sacks of grain and barrels of flour; here was the nerve center of Wilmington's commerce.

What were the types of trade that Wilmington carried on? How did the merchant mills of the Brandywine influence Wilmington's growth and commerce? These two questions must be answered before we can go on to describe Wilmington's era of expansion in the 1790's, for the seeds for the city's growth have already been sown in this earlier period. In Wilmington, commerce and milling worked hand in hand. One was essential to the other, and neither could have flourished alone.¹⁰¹ By the 1770's the flour mills along the Brandywine had evolved from custom mills to merchant mills. They no longer ground the farmer's grain for toll as earlier mills had done, but bought grain outright in large quantities and sold flour as a commercial venture. Local grain and local markets could not fill the needs of the merchant mills, which had to look farther afield. By 1789, the port of Wilmington was exporting 21,783 barrels of flour a year.¹⁰² According to Silas Deane, it sent 30,000 barrels of flour to Philadelphia in 1775.¹⁰³ The mills on the Brandywine had grown to eight in 1764,¹⁰⁴ and there were thirteen by the 1790's.¹⁰⁵ Even earlier, in 1788, a traveller was impressed to find that there were "in one view on the brandewine, ten mills, with not less than 20 pair of stones, capable of grinding 2,000 bushels per diem."¹⁰⁶

Wilmington was about to enter upon her "golden age" of commerce.¹⁰⁷

For the mills of the Brandywine, transportation meant access to raw materials: to the wheat and corn of Lancaster and Chester counties, of Kent and Sussex, and of Maryland and Virginia. It also meant access to markets: to Philadelphia, the flour capital of the colonies; to the sugar islands of the West Indies; and even to Europe and the Far East. The abundance of navigable streams along the Delaware Bay and River opened up wheat-growing areas to the mills, and Wilmington's fortunate location along the Christina provided the town with a protected harbor and an avenue to trade. Wilmington was situated in one of the best grain areas of America, with access to transportation which enabled it to tap the entire wheat belt of the middle provinces as well as to serve both New York and Philadelphia, the two principal flour ports of the late colonial and early national periods.¹⁰⁸ This fortunate location, providing access to raw materials and markets together with a tremendous source of water power, allowed Wilmington to develop and maintain a vigorous trade and a thriving milling industry in the last decades of the eighteenth and first decades of the nineteenth centuries.

Just as transportation and commerce were necessary to the mills, the mills were necessary to the Wilmington merchant. Flour was the staple export of the port of Wilmington.¹⁰⁹ In 1786, 20,783 barrels of superfine flour, 457 barrels of common

flour, 256 barrels of middlings, and 346 barrels of ship stuff were exported from the Brandywine mills.¹¹⁰ Although many millers were involved in shipowning and mercantile activities,¹¹¹ much of Wilmington's commerce was handled by men who considered themselves primarily merchants--William Hemphill, Isaac Hendrickson, Jonathan Robinson, John Earle, and John Moore, the Warners, the Summerls, the Shoemakers, the Mendinhalls, the Stocktons and the Craigs.¹¹² These are some of the merchants whom we will be discussing; they are men who made a significant contribution to Wilmington's early growth and development.

CHAPTER II

SAILING SHIPS AND MERCHANT MASTERS

Landing at Wilmington
From on board the ship NEPTUNE:
JAMAICA SPIRITS, FRENCH BRANDY,
MOLASSES and SUGAR

From 1775 to 1815 Wilmington was a city of sailing ships and merchant masters. Its merchant-mariners "piled the wharves and filled the warehouses of Wilmington with coffee and tea and cocoa, with wine and rum and Hollands, with salt and Muscovado sugar."¹ This was an age in which square-rigged vessels left their Christina docks to slip down the Delaware bound for exotic foreign shores.² By the last decade of the eighteenth century, the Brandywine millers, "purchasing large Quantities of Wheat and Manufacturing the same into Flour for distant markets,"³ had helped Wilmington grow from an "Infant place"⁴ into a burgeoning industrial center "Famous all over America for its Merchant Mills."⁵ Ships crowded the wharves of the city and carried the name of Brandywine superfine flour to the far corners of the world--to Great Britain, to the West Indies, to France and to Java.⁶

Stimulated by the easy access to markets and ample water power of the Wilmington area, new mills sprang up along the Brandywine. In 1791 there were twelve large flour mills, six saw mills, a paper mill, a barley mill, a slitting mill, and a

snuff mill along its banks.⁷ Increased manufacture meant increased trade and wealth for the city. In 1794 Wilmington exported \$207,985 worth of goods,⁸ and could boast over thirty "square-rigged vessels, besides sloops, and schooners"⁹ belonging to her port. A lively ocean trade was under way. These years, in which sailing ships and their merchant masters dominated the commercial life of Wilmington, seemed to Christopher Ward to be "the most interesting . . . in the history of the city."¹⁰

"The river and the seas and the shipping"¹¹ drew to Wilmington the produce of the surrounding countryside, and made it a distribution and marketing center as well as a milling town. The Wilmington merchants and shippers provided the Brandywine merchant mills with an outlet for their flour, and farmers with a market for their produce. They traded with Amsterdam, Dublin, Havre, and Calcutta, with St. Kitts, Martinique, and Belfast, carrying from Wilmington the staples of the "bread colonies"--beef, pork, lumber, flour, and bread. To these they added flaxseed and potash designed for the Irish market, and sometimes rice and indigo acquired through trade with the southern colonies. They brought back to their Christina wharves rum, sugar, and coffee from the Indies, linens and glass from Ireland, china, tinware, and trinkets from Britain, Indian cottons and oriental rugs from the East; and equally important, they brought back new people, new ideas, and new ways of doing things.¹²

Even before the Revolution, the lower counties had experienced some immigration. The majority of Delaware's inhabitants in 1774 were of English stock, but there was a large Scotch-Irish element as well. These were Presbyterians who had emigrated from Northern Ireland to the colonies.¹³ Philadelphia received most of the newcomers, but New Castle was also a popular port of debarkation and this area became a center of Scotch-Irish influence. The oldest Presbyterian churches in the Philadelphia area are those in Delaware. New Castle, which had its first Presbyterian pastor in 1703; Head of Christiana Church, founded in 1708; Pencader Presbyterian Church, formally established by Welsh parishioners in 1714; White Clay Creek Church, founded in 1724; and Wilmington's two Presbyterian churches, First Presbyterian (1740) and Second (1774): all testify to the influx of Scotch-Irish into New Castle County in the eighteenth century.¹⁴

Immigrants came to this country from the north of Ireland in large numbers after 1700. They were discouraged by British policy toward them in Ireland, by the denial to them of the benefits of the Navigation Acts, by the closing of English markets to Irish cattle, and by what they considered the inequities of the Act of Toleration of 1719 which denied Presbyterians the benefits given to those who were members of the Established Church.¹⁵ The Scotch-Irish settlers formed an independent element in the American colonies, restless under British

restrictions, hardy and ambitious.¹⁶ They were among the staunchest opponents of such colonial regulations as the Stamp Act, and among the most enthusiastic advocates of the patriotic cause in the Revolution.¹⁷ The majority of those who landed at Wilmington and New Castle in the eighteenth century did not remain in Delaware. Some sold themselves as indentured servants for a period of seven years to pay their passage, but most headed, as soon as possible, for the Pennsylvania and Appalachian frontier farmlands, eager to establish themselves as independent land owners.¹⁸ Those who stayed, however, seem to have exercised an influence disproportionate to their numbers.¹⁹ In his work Federalist Delaware, Professor John Munroe observes that from their members came the first printer of Delaware, the first chancellor, the first president, and the founder of the state university.²⁰ From their ranks came also the Wilmington merchant whose activities we will examine in the greatest detail-- William Hemphill, born near Belfast, Ireland, in 1743.²¹ These "Irishmen, just landed from the sea," formed a rising class in early Federalist Delaware, a significant and ambitious minority which challenged the established Quaker-Anglican pattern of Delaware society.²²

The 1790's saw an increase in Wilmington's commercial life, wealth and population. The city had about twelve hundred inhabitants in 1777,²³ and over forty-five hundred by 1797.²⁴ The sailing ships which entered Wilmington's port sometimes brought

immigrants in addition to their rich cargoes. The vessels which plied between the West Indies and the Brandywine mills brought French planters fleeing the Santo Domingo slave uprising of 1791.²⁵ From France came refugees from the terror of the French Revolution.²⁶ In Wilmington, a subscription fund was set up to relieve the families of French planters who had fled the islands impoverished after seeing all of their property destroyed and their plantations laid waste.²⁷ Over forty refugee families settled in the southeastern section of the town--so many that Willing Street became known as French Street.²⁸ The influx of new people was so sudden that eggs and butter doubled in price and wood was scarce for a while.²⁹

Among these immigrants from the West Indian islands were Jean-Pierre Bauduy and John Keating. Fauduy, a merchant and a refugee from Santo Domingo, later became a partner of Eleuthère Irénée du Pont in his powder works along the Brandywine, and the designer of Wilmington's "new" Town Hall, constructed in 1798.³⁰ John Keating was a member of an Irish family which had migrated to France in 1766. He came to America from Santo Domingo, where he had been serving as an officer in an Irish regiment, and settled in Wilmington in 1792. There he married Eulalia des Chapelles, the sister of Mme. Bauduy.³¹ The presence of the French Haitian colony drew other Frenchmen to Wilmington. Anne Louis Toussard, a French officer who had served with distinction in the American Revolution, became a leader in Wilmington's

French community, which by 1797 numbered three or four hundred.³² The Revolution in France drove Louis Philippe to these shores. Later Emperor of France, he served in Wilmington as a teacher of languages and mathematics.³³ Dr. Joseph Capelle had lived in Wilmington since the American Revolution;³⁴ Jean Garesché du Rocher joined the French already settled there, as did Pierre Chetard and Pierre Didier, two French physicians.³⁵ Peter Provenchère, a former tutor to the Duc de Berri, arrived in 1794.³⁶ In 1802 the du Pont family came to Wilmington.³⁷ Some of these immigrants brought fresh capital to the Brandywine Valley; others came as servants, as teachers, as farmers or as tradesmen. Although the French refugee group had lost its separate identity by 1808, it left its mark on Wilmington and brought a new touch of sophistication to the quiet Quaker milling center.³⁸

The merchant ships also brought immigrants from Ireland, along with linen and glass from Belfast, Londonderry and Dublin. The brig Brothers, which landed in 1789, brought one hundred and seventy passengers.³⁹ In the eighteenth century these passengers were usually Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, Ulstermen; later in the nineteenth century Irish Catholics began to be brought in. Eventually, the Irish were to form one of the chief "articles" imported at Wilmington and New Castle.⁴⁰ Wilmington in 1789 had eleven sloops and brigs in the West Indies trade and seven carrying goods to and from Ireland.⁴¹ Hundreds of Scotch-Irish and Irish were to land at Wilmington and New Castle

during the next twenty years.⁴² The immigrants, often drawn to Wilmington through the agency of the merchants who consigned their cargoes to this port, contributed greatly to the city's growth and prosperity. As Wilmington became an industrial center, the Irish and Scotch-Irish provided the bulk of its work force.⁴³

Just as the merchant mills of the Brandywine provided the impetus for Wilmington's growth and the basis for its industrial wealth in this early period, so also the merchant shippers greatly stimulated Wilmington's early intellectual and commercial development. Their counting-houses served as important economic adjuncts to the flour-milling industry, and the square-rigged vessels which left Wilmington for distant ports provided it with a window on the world which kept the city from becoming a narrow, provincial backwater, "a town merely of butchers of meat, bakers of bread and makers of candlesticks."⁴⁴

Wilmington merchants found their most profitable trade connection to be with the West Indies. This commerce was a widespread preoccupation of American businessmen. In the period before the American Revolution, more North American shipping was employed in the British West Indian trade than in any other; every North American port, and nearly every North American merchant, had something to do with it.⁴⁵ West Indian goods occupied a conspicuous place in early newspaper advertisements.⁴⁶ They seem to have reached most American families.

The commerce was one based upon contrasts, upon differences in climate and in social organization. The West Indian planters concentrated on raising sugar under a plantation system and did not attempt to grow their own food supply. Beef, flour, pork, and corn to feed the slaves had to be imported either from England or from the American colonies. Lumber was also scarce on the islands, and black and white oak staves were in demand to make casks for the crude muscovado sugar that the islands transported. These could be supplied in abundance by the North Americans who in turn sought the tropical goods--rum, sugar, molasses, and coffee--that they could not produce themselves.⁴⁷

Although London merchants played a very direct role in the early colonial trade--trading in their own ships to North America and the West Indies--shipbuilding in the colonies soon led to colonial ships entering the trade and gradually edging out the English vessels.⁴⁸ At the end of the colonial period the British merchant had almost disappeared from the North American-West Indian trade, and the American merchant had assumed a much more independent and active role than he had held during its seventeenth-century beginnings.⁴⁹ The role of the West Indian planter had also changed. Once a dominant figure in the trade, he had become more dependent on British capital and less active in the employment of shipping.⁵⁰ The victims of a one-crop economy, the planters saw their fortunes rise and fall with the price of sugar. By the 1790's this commodity was glutting the

European markets, and the planters had fallen into a pattern of debt.⁵¹ The fixed expenses of a large plantation were enormous, and planters, living on a credit economy, were perpetually overdrawn on their accounts with English merchants. Little actual money passed through the planter's hands; instead he operated on a barter economy, which bred wastefulness and extravagance.⁵²

On the other hand, the Americans who supplied provisions to the islands were not faced with the problem of a large, single crop which had to be disposed of at any price. They were free to withdraw from trade with the islands anytime it proved unprofitable. Since they supplied the islands with necessities and received from them luxury goods, Americans were able to maintain a favorable balance of trade with the West Indies.⁵³ The middle colonies, especially, gained from their commerce with the islands. They had no agricultural staple, such as tobacco, which could command a good market in Europe, and until the time of the Napoleonic Wars Europe grew its own grain supply and did not provide an outlet for American flour. The West Indian islands, however, did provide a market for American produce, and a means by which Americans might accumulate surplus capital for investment in European trade.⁵⁴

Although British shipping would have liked to monopolize the West Indian trade, the Americans enjoyed a geographic advantage which made them the logical suppliers of foodstuffs

and lumber to the sugar islands.⁵⁵ By the time of the Revolutionary War the West Indian trade had assumed a prominent place in American merchant activity. It was the basis of the commercial life of the Philadelphia-Delaware area.⁵⁶

Wilmington had been directly involved in commerce with the British West Indies ever since the 1740's when the brig Wilmington was launched along the Christina to be employed in trade with the sugar islands.⁵⁷ Earlier, Wilmington had been involved indirectly in commercial intercourse with the West Indian islands. Grain and flour had been sent, and continued to be sent even after 1740, to Philadelphia for re-shipment to foreign markets.⁵⁸ Philadelphia was one of the greatest of American ports, surpassed only by New York in the late eighteenth century.⁵⁹ It was the only port in the Delaware River district with a harbor of sufficient depth to allow ships of more than eighty or ninety tons to enter.⁶⁰ Consequently, it enjoyed the largest share of the Delaware River shipping, and it drew the bulk of commerce. Wilmington merchants were closely tied to Philadelphia; Wilmington millers were allied with Philadelphia Quaker families by blood, by marriage, and by business partnerships.⁶¹ Even shipowners were connected with Philadelphia; vessels built at Wilmington were often taken to Philadelphia to be registered.⁶² Flour from Brandywine mills and Delaware grain were often sold in Philadelphia, and Wilmington merchants frequently obtained their British and European goods from

Philadelphia markets rather than importing these products themselves.⁶³ It is not surprising to find that much of Wilmington's early trade with the West Indies was an indirect trade carried on through the port of Philadelphia.

It seems probable that Wilmington had another indirect commercial contact with the West Indies, less openly acknowledged than the trade carried on through Philadelphia markets. Smuggling and the reception of contraband goods undoubtedly gave the Wilmington area its earliest indirect contact with the West Indies.⁶⁴ This enterprise is difficult to trace, although it is of greater antiquity than the legitimate intercourse. Documentary evidence is scarce. Smugglers kept no records and for the most part the scholar must rely on such hostile witnesses as the British Colonial Office reports which reflect frustrated attempts to enforce the Navigation Acts along the Delaware River and Bay.⁶⁵

The motive for contraband trade in the colonial period was the fact that the Americans were forbidden to trade with any but the British possessions in the Caribbean. This shut them off from a lucrative commerce. In this period, especially in the years before 1763 when British enforcement of the Navigation Laws became more stringent,⁶⁶ illicit trade with the Dutch, Spanish, and French West Indies was rampant, and the Delaware district was a center of smuggling enterprise.⁶⁷ The many small creeks and tiny islands in the Delaware River made it easy for shippers

to evade the customs inspectors at the ports by landing the contraband portion of their cargoes at way-stations along the river before putting in to Philadelphia. Often small boats would come out into the river to meet them.⁶⁸

"Christian Creek," as a veteran smuggler termed the Christina, seems to have been a favorite port of embarkation for illegal goods.⁶⁹ The shippers who dealt in contraband were not as a rule based in the Wilmington area. The Delaware merchant or shallopman who dealt with them played a subsidiary role as a receiver of illegal shipments rather than as an initiator in this indirect trade with the West Indies. The Wilmington merchant's role in transactions of this type was probably slight. Smuggling antedated the settlement of Wilmington and most likely declined as an increased population along its banks made the Christina too open to observation for the landing of forbidden cargoes.

Nevertheless, merchants and mariners were always open to temptation to evade laws which restricted or heavily taxed their business. During the American Revolution Wilmington merchants were occasionally involved in trade which evaded the letter of the law. Some were suspected of having arranged to have their ships "captured" by the British in order to trade with the enemy,⁷⁰ while others ran British blockades to bring in supplies to the Americans.⁷¹ Even after the achievement of American Independence opened the Dutch, French, and Spanish West Indian

islands to legitimate American commerce, illegal trade was prevalent. A British order in council of July, 1783, attempted to secure the English a larger share of the West Indian carrying trade by requiring that all food and other supplies from the United States go to the West Indies in British rather than American vessels.⁷² Despite such efforts, the English found it impossible to keep American shipping away from British West Indian ports.⁷³ The planters wanted to buy American goods, and the Americans were eager to sell. The result was irrepressible smuggling and connivance between American ship-owners and local officials.⁷⁴ The trade continued, and the restrictions served only to make American supplies more expensive for the British West Indian planters.⁷⁵

During the Napoleonic Wars many American merchant-shippers reaped the benefits of neutrality. European shipping and commerce were disrupted by the hostility between France and England; American shipping had the opportunity to step in and meet some of the demands for goods and produce that were going unanswered because of the war.⁷⁶ The West Indian possessions of the belligerents were in a particularly vulnerable position, being dependent upon an outside food supply. The Americans who had always brought in a great deal of the islands' provisions continued to trade with both the British and French West Indies in spite of the danger they ran of having their ships and cargoes seized by privateers if they were caught carrying "enemy" goods.⁷⁷

Wilmington merchants, who had discovered that there were profits in store for those willing to court danger, continued their West Indian trade during the years of disturbance. Occasionally they ran into trouble. Isaac Hendrickson of Wilmington suffered the loss of his brig Pratt in 1795 when she was seized by the French.⁷⁸ Others were more fortunate. In 1793 James Hemphill of Wilmington sailed for the West Indies as supercargo aboard his father's brig Isabella and Ann carrying a cargo of flour valued at £1659 4s. 3d. His orders were cautiously worded; they warned him "not to take on board any property on any account belonging to any of the powers at war, which might be attended with detention and trouble," but they left the actual destination of the brig to James' discretion.⁷⁹ The Isabella and Ann was stopped twice during the voyage by privateers. Outward bound she was boarded by the English (August 16, 1793), and homeward bound by the French (September 6, 1793).⁸⁰ It was a stroke of good fortune for the Hemphills that the second privateer was French, for the brig was loaded on its return voyage with French passengers and goods from Martinique, and it would surely have been confiscated by a British privateer. As it was, the French were satisfied with a small present of sugar and wine, and let the ship pass with their best wishes for a safe passage.⁸¹

Foreign restrictions on commerce were not the only ones disregarded by shipping interests. Later, American embargo acts

provided a barrier to trade that merchants were tempted to circumvent. In October of 1809 Thomas Shipley of the Wilmington firm of Callender and Shipley wrote indignantly to a deputy-collector of customs protesting the seizure of his schooner for trading with "San Domingo" in July of that year, in defiance of government restrictions.⁸²

American trade tended to flow in whatever channels it found most profitable. Merchants and shipowners eagerly scanned the papers for news which might affect the course of their business. "The prospects of the disturbances at St. Domingo being likely to be speedily settled," had a direct effect upon the price of rum, sugar, and molasses in Wilmington. Flour might rise or fall in cost with news of foreign wars. Captains brought information from distant ports; there was news of ships captured by the Barbary pirates, of British hostility to American ships, and of French losses in the Napoleonic Wars. Privateers, storms, and ships lost at sea occupy a prominent place in the journals of the day. News traveled the sea lanes. Even in the West Indian trade, where most voyages were short runs yielding fair profits, accurate news was of vital importance to the merchant and mariner.⁸³

Wilmington merchants in the West Indian trade usually made two voyages a year, one in the spring and one in the fall. More trips could be made if cargoes sold quickly in the islands, but the business of selling goods and obtaining returns was generally

time-consuming. Shipowners liked to avoid having a vessel among the islands in the hurricane months, August to October,⁸⁴ and ice on the Delaware River usually prevented the departure of vessels from January to early March.⁸⁵ Here Wilmington enjoyed a small advantage over Philadelphia. As Broom, Hendrickson and Summerl observed, the Wilmington merchant had found that:

many times in the Winter, we can send our Vessels out from hence when it is not practicable from Philadelphia and always at the breaking up of the Winter, our Vessels can depart several days sooner than from thence. The advantages derived from those circumstances, are too obvious to need a recital.⁸⁶

A few days' head start might indeed prove of value to a businessman dealing with the small, easily glutted West Indian markets, and Wilmington shippers were careful to press their advantage.

Cargoes from Wilmington were sometimes sent out on freight, but more often they were loaded on the "account and risque" of the owners of the vessel.⁸⁷ The ships were usually owned by partners, but sometimes the West Indian agent would have a share. For instance, William Hemphill of Wilmington, Robert Ralston of Philadelphia, and Jacob Clarkson of "Statia" each owned one-third of one ship.⁸⁸ This had the advantage of interesting all parties equally in the dispatch of the vessel, although it also tended to restrict her to trading with a particular island.⁸⁹ In this case William Hemphill sent most of his ventures to "Statia" or St. Kitts, where he had business connections.⁹⁰ For the most part the West Indian trade routes varied with demand, and it

was not uncommon for a ship to touch at several islands in the process of selling a cargo and purchasing returns, although custom duties and port fees made it unprofitable to make too many stops.⁹¹

The vessels employed in the West Indian trade were usually small. Those trading only between the islands and Wilmington might be of fifty to eighty tons burthen, while others, which took an occasional cargo to Europe as well as to the islands, might average from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and forty tons.⁹² The size of the West Indian markets tended to limit the size of ships involved in the trade.⁹³ Most of these markets were so small that one very large cargo could glut them even without any competition from other sellers.⁹⁴ This favored the small vessel and made the game of "returns via the West Indies" one that almost any merchant could play. The small markets also made a certain amount of variety in the assortment of cargoes necessary, a fact which kept the Wilmington merchants from becoming mere flour transporters for the Brandywine mills. Vessels going to the islands carried flour and bread as a matter of course, but they also took beef, pork, lumber, shoes, Windsor chairs, carriages, and other luxury goods for the planters.⁹⁵

Since flour was a staple export to the islands, many millers became directly involved in shipping cargoes to them. Joseph Tatnall and Thomas Lea used the brig Christianna to trade with St. Christopher, Antigua, Martinique, and Surinam.⁹⁶ William

Shipley was one of the principal owners of the brig Wilmington, which initiated the city's direct trade to the Caribbean islands in 1742; he was also the founder of a milling family.⁹⁷ John Morton, Vincent Gilpin, Joseph Shallcross, and William Pyle, as well as Tatnall and Lea, were interested in the voyages of the Nancy and the Dolphin of Wilmington to the West Indies.⁹⁸ Jacob Broom, another miller, was one of the owners of the Pratt.⁹⁹ Other Wilmington merchants bought grain and flour from the millers to ship on their own account. Jonathan Rumford, John Foudray, Isaac Harvey, Thomas Mendinhall, John Shallcross, Jonathan Robinson, and William Hemphill were all merchants who owned wharf property along the Christina and played an active role in Wilmington's commercial life.¹⁰⁰ Thomas Gilpin was a storekeeper and merchant in Wilmington before he became a miller.¹⁰¹ Still other men, such as David Nelson, who had a store "next door but one to the Rose and Crown" in Wilmington, seem to have been primarily storekeepers.¹⁰²

The Wilmington merchant engaged in a variety of activities in the years from 1775 to 1815. It would be misleading to imagine that all merchants were cut from the same pattern, or that all trade went to the West Indian ports. We shall have occasion to discuss the implications of the term "merchant" and the variety of forms that Wilmington merchant activity exhibited, but first we must stop and examine some of the avenues Wilmington trade took in addition to the well-traveled route to the West Indies.

Probably the most important was the coasting trade. Tar, pitch, turpentine, hides, tallows, rice, and indigo were brought from the Carolinas to Wilmington.¹⁰³ From the New England ports Wilmington merchants imported plaster of Paris, beef, pork, potatoes, whale oil, spermaceti candles, smoked salmon, and other fish.¹⁰⁴ In addition to this activity, there was a local trade. Grain was often brought to the Brandywine Mills by Wilmington merchants, sometimes from as far away as Virginia, but more often it was brought by shallopmen down the creeks that emptied into the Delaware and provided access to inland Delaware, Pennsylvania, and eastern-shore Maryland.¹⁰⁵ In return, Wilmington remitted the staple Brandywine Valley products: flour, corn meal, grain, beef, pork, and cheeses, as well as some goods obtained in trade with Ireland and the West Indies.¹⁰⁶ It thus served as a distribution center of foreign and domestic goods for the inland areas. The coasting trade provided for a constant circulation of merchandise, and it gave employment to Wilmington ships when the island trade was dull.

Trade with Ireland was also important to the Wilmington merchant. In 1789 about one-third of the ships from Wilmington engaged in foreign trade were involved in carrying goods to and from Hibernian ports.¹⁰⁷ This trade continued to be important to Wilmington for many years, and was vital to Ireland. The Philadelphia-Wilmington area supplied much of the flour that Ireland imported, and virtually all of the best flaxseed and

potash.¹⁰⁸ Ireland, with a population that had grown from an estimated 2,000,000 in 1740 to one of 5,000,000 in 1800, was dependent upon importing part of its food supply.¹⁰⁹ American flour was therefore necessary to the Irish economy. In return, Ireland exported linen and glass to the American continent.

Linen production was closely allied to the Irish-American trade. It tripled in Ireland between 1740 and 1770, in an era of increasing trade with the colonies; declined during the American Revolution; and then doubled once more between 1780 and 1800.¹¹⁰ As more fields were put into flax cultivation, Ireland's need for American goods increased, for this continent became its chief supplier of seed for planting, and potash for bleaching the finished cloth. By the end of the eighteenth century, American ports were sending nearly 300,000 bushels of seed a year to the Irish markets.¹¹¹ Such seed could not easily be produced in a country devoted, as Ireland was, to flax cultivation, for the flax plant is one which must be grown for either seed or fiber. If it is harvested when the fiber is at its best, the seeds are not yet ripe; and if the seeds are allowed to ripen, the fiber is no longer suitable for linen. The Irish harvested their flax for linen and chose to buy seed abroad. In America, especially on farms in Delaware and Pennsylvania, flax was grown widely for a seed harvest.¹¹² This harvest was then sold to local merchants for export to Ireland, or, if the supply was too great and the price too low, sent to an oil mill

to be pressed.¹¹³ In Wilmington, Isaac Hendrickson, William Hemphill, John Moore, and Jacob Broom often advertised that they would pay cash for seed.¹¹⁴ These merchants then shipped the seed to a larger port, usually New York, for export to Ireland.

Although Wilmington was actively interested in the Irish trade and had several ships engaged in it--one, the General Washington, was built just for the trade--most of its flaxseed was sent from the port of New York.¹¹⁵ This was a matter of geographic necessity. Flaxseed was harvested in late autumn and usually shipped in early winter, at a time of the year when the Delaware River was often frozen over. Since New York had a harbor free from winter ice, the seed produced in the Delaware district was gathered by Wilmington merchants who paid the farmers cash for the product, and then shipped from New York on the merchant's account.¹¹⁶ Some Wilmington merchants were so heavily engaged in the flaxseed trade that they would even supplement their Delaware purchases with additional supplies bought in New York.¹¹⁷ In the winter months the ships left their New York harbors for Ireland carrying seed for the spring planting, as well as cargoes of lumber and flour.¹¹⁸

These ships returned from Ireland in the spring or early summer, laden with linen, glass, whisky, woolens, hides, goose feathers, and books for the American market, as well as one of Ireland's staple products--people.¹¹⁹ The ships could make two voyages a year. In the early summer, they loaded cargoes of potash produced in America and took them to Ireland to be used

in the bleaching of linen cloth. They then returned in early autumn and prepared to load for their winter trip with flaxseed.¹²⁰ This trade was important to the economy of the whole Delaware district, as it provided the farmers with a cash crop, the merchants with access to European goods, and the millers with another market for their flour. It also provided an avenue for Irish emigration to America.

Ireland and the West Indies attracted the bulk of Wilmington's foreign commerce, and, with the exception of Great Britain, were its only legitimate commercial outlets outside of the colonies in the years prior to American independence. They continued to loom large in the Wilmington merchants' commercial activity after the separation from Great Britain. The British permitted the Americans to retain their old privileges in English ports after 1783, and trade with Ireland and England resumed immediately after the cessation of hostilities.¹²¹ Bond and Lees of New Castle and William Hemphill of Wilmington imported English goods from Liverpool.¹²² Broom, Hendrickson and Summerl sent the General Washington to Belfast and Londonderry.¹²³ American preference for English goods, and the tendency to follow proved routes of trade, kept much of Wilmington's commerce focused toward the British Isles.

In the 1780's new opportunities for trade opened up to Americans. With the coming of independence the commerce of the United States was no longer limited to the British Empire.

American merchants suddenly found themselves with access to wide-ranging markets--France, Holland, and the Orient. For some it proved heady wine, and the period immediately following the Peace of Paris was one of commercial crisis for many American merchants who imported so much that they glutted American markets with European goods.¹²⁴ For the most part, however, the expanded commercial outlook proved a boon to Americans, and an incentive to trade.

Americans, eager to extend the scope of their commerce, met with encouragement from European nations anxious to capture a share of the trade with America hitherto monopolized by the English. Wilmington merchants were soon attracted to the French and Dutch islands in the West Indies--to "Statia," as they called St. Eustatius, to Montserrat, Martinique, and Santo Domingo.¹²⁵ Americans were given special privileges in the French West Indies, and they soon dominated the provisions trade to these islands, easily underselling those who brought supplies from France.¹²⁶

The French also sought to encourage direct trade between France and the United States,¹²⁷ and Wilmington merchants were drawn into this avenue of commercial enterprise. Warner, Stockton and Craig of Wilmington outfitted a vessel for Bordeaux.¹²⁸ The Neptune and the Mercury made several trips to France.¹²⁹ William Hemphill sent his brig Sally to France twice in 1795-1796.¹³⁰ In general, however, the French trade did not occupy as large a place in Wilmington's overseas commerce as did the West Indies,

Great Britain, and Ireland. The French demand for American provisions was greater than the American market for French goods, and in spite of some purchases of French brandies, wines, vinegars, silks, linens, and gloves, a part of the returns from France were usually in specie.¹³¹

The favorable balance of trade with France proved a stimulant to American commerce.¹³² Although tobacco was America's largest single export to France during the years of the Confederation, flour, bread, and grain made up the bulk of a Wilmington merchant's cargo to France.¹³³ War in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries made hitherto self-sufficient grain-producing nations turn to America for some of their provisions. For instance, flour, which in 1787 had accounted for twenty-five per cent of American shipments abroad, rose to account for over half of the nation's exports soon after the beginning of the French Revolution.¹³⁴ The middle colonies shipped most of this commodity.¹³⁵ Wilmington merchants were involved in the trade both directly, sending their own vessels to France loaded with flour, and indirectly through the port of Philadelphia, which led the nation in exports to France.¹³⁶

As we will see later as we trace William Hemphill's commercial ventures to Nantes, the course of Franco-American trade did not always run smoothly. Credit was less easily obtained from French than from British merchants; French goods did not sell as well in American markets as English manufactures; and

Americans found French business methods less compatible with their own than those of the London, Bristol, and Liverpool merchants with whom they were accustomed to dealing in Europe. The Wilmington merchant's ventures to France have a tentative, experimental air about them. They were neither as safe nor as likely to yield a steady profit as the short run to the West Indies; they were not as regular and seasonal as the Irish flaxseed and linen trade. Trade with France was well established from the port of Philadelphia in the late 1700's and Wilmington merchants were willing to try their hand at it, but no local vessels became "constant traders" to France as some did to Ireland and to the West Indies; instead, the voyages remained occasional, separate adventures.

France was not alone in her effort to attract a share of the American trade in the early years of the Republic. Holland, a great trading nation and the banking center of Europe, was also eager to participate.¹³⁷ The Middle Atlantic ports of Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore attracted most of the Dutch shipping; it has been estimated that more than half of the Philadelphia and Maryland newspaper advertisements offered Dutch goods for sale.¹³⁸ The Wilmington newspapers also showed Dutch and German goods being sold by local merchants, but most of these were probably obtained in Philadelphia and merely distributed locally.¹³⁹ Wilmington, however, did have some direct trade with Holland. The Hemphills sent the Benjamin Franklin there in 1804-1805,¹⁴⁰ and Warner, Stockton and Craig sent their ships the Mercury and the Eagle to

Amsterdam and Hamburg.¹⁴¹ Still, the Dutch were most successful in attracting American merchants to their islands in the Caribbean. The Dutch free port of St. Eustatius was the destination of many local vessels. It figures prominently in the manuscripts of the Hemphills; the letter-books of Broom, Hendrickson and Summerl; the Stockton papers; the Lewden papers; the Shipley papers; and the Tatnall and Lea letter-books.¹⁴²

Trade with the Orient was probably the most exotic avenue of commercial exchange that opened up to Americans after the attainment of independence. The Empress of China, which sailed from New York early in 1784 and returned from Java and Canton fifteen months later, brought the riches of the East to the American market in an American ship for the first time.¹⁴³ It was soon followed by other adventurous New England sea captains eager to gain a foothold in the lucrative Cantonese trade.¹⁴⁴ In January of 1786, Israel Brown of Wilmington was advertising that he had India goods from the Empress of China for sale in his shop.¹⁴⁵ Such merchandise found a ready market in the Delaware district. Canton and Calcutta goods occupied a prominent place in the local newspaper advertisements of 1798. In the September 20, 1798, issue of the Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser, James Hemphill's store "opposite the Bird-In-Hand Tavern" offered "Hyson, Young Hyson, Souchong and Bohea TEAS" for sale as well as East-India sugars, pepper, and all-spice. In the same issue Robert Ralston advertised "Calcutta Goods, in Bales," "Tea Setts of China," and "a few hundred pieces

of yellow ~~Nankeens~~."

By 1803, some local merchants seem to have been emboldened to enter the Asiatic trade directly. William Lees of Liverpool (formerly of New Castle) sent his ship the Active from Canton to Philadelphia in 1803.¹⁴⁶ William Strawbridge of Wilmington left on the ship New Jersey for Batavia and Canton that same year.¹⁴⁷ Robert Ralston of Philadelphia and William Hemphill of Wilmington, partners in many business ventures, were interested in sending their ship the Benjamin Franklin to Calcutta and Java. The vessel sailed in February, 1803, with James, Hemphill's oldest son, as supercargo on a voyage that was to last nearly two years.¹⁴⁸ In late April of 1806 a younger son of William Hemphill's, John, sailed as principal supercargo aboard a vessel bound for Canton.¹⁴⁹ These ships brought back a rich assortment of oriental goods to Wilmington. They helped make the city a marketing center for the whole New Castle County district, a place where "every necessary is to be procured . . ., and no-where else in this part of the country."¹⁵⁰

This growth did not change certain long-standing relationships. In particular, Wilmington continued to enjoy a peculiarly close liaison with the city of Philadelphia. John A. Munroe has outlined in his essay, "The Philadelawareans," some of the strong cultural, social, and economic ties which bound Delaware to the greater port to the north.¹⁵¹ As we have seen, Philadelphia enjoyed the advantage of a deeper and more commodious harbor

than either Wilmington or New Castle.¹⁵² Economically, it had the advantages of a large population, an established trade, and well-developed commercial institutions.¹⁵³ Culturally, it appeared to its admirers to be the new "Athens of Mankind."¹⁵⁴

Wilmington's roads and its waterways led naturally to Philadelphia.¹⁵⁵ Much of its ocean trade with France, Java, England, and Canton was carried on through the port of the larger city.¹⁵⁶ Shallops regularly made their way from Wilmington to Philadelphia, and several lines of fast sailing packet boats provided service for passengers and goods between the two ports.¹⁵⁷ A quick survey of the Wilmington area ships registered at Philadelphia from 1737 to 1756 shows that almost three-fifths of the vessels were under twenty tons, and that one-fifth were of less than ten tons burthen.¹⁵⁸ These shallops and sloops were largely employed in "the regular commerce between Wilmington and Philadelphia" which Moreau de St. Mery remarked upon in his 1794 visit to Wilmington.¹⁵⁹ In spite of their own brisk ocean trade in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it seems likely that Wilmington merchants still shipped the bulk of their flour and produce to Philadelphia for re-shipment.¹⁶⁰ These merchants often had agents or partners in the Quaker City, and their ships were frequently registered at the port of Philadelphia.¹⁶¹ A vessel belonging to a Wilmingtonian might both load and disembark at Philadelphia, or it might merely stop at Wilmington on its way down river to pick up a part of its cargo,

discharging some goods in the Delaware community on the return voyage.

The intimate relationship between Wilmington and the Quaker City makes it difficult to gauge accurately the importance of the Wilmington merchant's role. Port statistics for Wilmington are few in this period, and even these do not tell the whole story, for local merchants sent ventures from the port of Philadelphia which are not reflected in local tabulations. Nevertheless, Wilmington was not "too much in the shade of Philadelphia" to grow.¹⁶² It was by 1794 "the most important city in Delaware," with a grain, flour, and lumber trade that could be called "considerable."¹⁶³ If we are to estimate the full significance of Wilmington's commerce in the years from 1775 to 1815, however, we must turn from statistics to the journals, letter-books, and ledgers of the men who actually engaged in Wilmington's trade during this period. The Wilmington merchant must tell his own story.

CHAPTER III

A CASE HISTORY: THE HEMPHILL FAMILY

WILLIAM HEMPHILL

At his store in Market-Street, Wilmington, has lately imported in the brig Polly and Betsey, Capt. Morris, schooner Isabella, Capt. Richardson, from St. Eustatis and St. Martins, sloop Industry, Capt. Hill, and sloop Sukey and Polly, Capt. Ingham from St. Kitts

A quantity of St. Kitts, Montserat and Grenada RUM of an excellent quality; Muscovado SUGAR of the first and second quality; best green COFFEE, and Allum SALT.---

Also in the brig, Maria, Capt. Thomas Fort, from Londonderry, a compleat and general assortment of best Coleraine IRISH LINENS from 7d to 2/6 sterling per yard, and a few pieces of CAMBRICKS: all of which are for sale on the most reasonable terms for Cash or Produce.

N. B. Wanted a Quantity of good clean FLAX-SEED.

This advertisement, copied from the Delaware Gazette of August 8, 1789, may serve to introduce the principal subject of this chapter: William Hemphill of Wilmington, merchant, trader, shopkeeper, and shipowner. He and his sons are interesting as representatives of an era in which commerce dominated Wilmington's life as it never had before and never would again.¹ The Hemphills afford a fortunate and convenient example of a Wilmington merchant family. They were successful, but not so successful as to be phenomenal rather than typical. They followed an established and recognizable pattern of merchant

activity, and therefore have illustrative value for the commercial practices of their age. Although flour was their main item of export, they did not operate as mere transporters for the millers, but engaged in a varied and significant commercial enterprise on their own account.²

Wilmington was destined to become an industrial rather than a commercial center, and its era of commercial predominance was brief. The story of the Hemphills as a merchant family is able to encompass it neatly. William Hemphill's career coincides remarkably well with what has been described as Wilmington's "golden age" of commerce--the years from 1790 to 1810.³ His considerable success as a merchant was at least partly due to the fact that he started in business at the right time and retired just before Wilmington's shipping began to wane. It is significant that his sons established themselves as merchants in Philadelphia.

On the whole, therefore, the study of the Hemphill family is rewarding because its members illustrate so well, in the method, scope, and variety of their business, the activities of a Wilmington merchant shipping family in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Such a study also affords an interesting illustration of a Delaware family which belonged to a rising rather than an established class. The Hemphills were of "Scotch-Irish" Presbyterian descent, a fact which provides an interesting side light to their business and social relation-

ships. Finally, the Hemphills typify the pattern of Wilmington merchants and of Delaware society in general in their close connection with Philadelphia and Philadelphians. As such they afford another portrait for the growing gallery of "Philadelphians," and a worthy subject for our study.⁴

Little is known about William Hemphill's early years. A handful of the letters which passed between him and his mother have survived.⁵ They remain to tell us what we know of him as a young man. His obituary and a few short biographical accounts tell us something of his family background.⁶ There is little more. Furthermore, the problem is complicated by the factor of distance. Not only do the years intervene, lowering a veil between us and the boy who was William Hemphill, but the seas separate us from Ireland, his homeland, and from the church records, diaries, government documents, and local histories that might tell us something of his early life.⁷

William Hemphill was born in Coleraine, near Londonderry in Northern Ireland, on January 4, 1743.⁸ His father is described as a successful linen merchant,⁹ and no doubt he may have expected his sons to enter a similar trade. Coleraine was well known at that time as a small linen-weaving center which also manufactured hats, stockings, and shoes.¹⁰ The linens which sold under the name of "Coleraines" were an important Londonderry export item.

The Hemphill papers tell us very little about William Hemphill's family, or about his early life. They do not even reveal his father's name. We do know from his letters that his mother's name was Mary; that he had at least two brothers, John and Curtis; and that a married sister of his lived near Dublin.¹¹ His father was probably James Hemphill of Camus in Macosquin Parish, Londonderry. A will probated under that name in August of 1758 mentions the deceased's wife, Mary, his eldest son, John, and another son, James. It also indicates that there are several other children not named.¹² Mary Hemphill's letters to her son after he came to America were sent from Camus, a small village near Coleraine, and William Hemphill named his sons John and James. These coincidences make it seem very likely that the family described in the will was his own. The document was proved on August 23, 1758, indicating that his father died when William was a boy of fifteen. There is no indication that his mother ever remarried.

William Hemphill's relationships with his brothers were important; he was apprenticed to one of them for a while, and later acted as a business partner in several shipping ventures with the other. This latter brother was Curtis Hemphill, who remained in Coleraine, perhaps to carry on his father's linen business. It was Curtis with whom William corresponded from 1784 to 1805, and with whom he entered into the linen trade between Ireland and America.¹³

John Hemphill, an older brother of William's, settled in Dublin as a linen merchant and storekeeper; it was to him that William was apprenticed as a young boy. William lived with him in Dublin, helping out in the store until 1761. In March of that year his mother, Mary Hemphill, wrote him that his brother was going out of storekeeping and into the wine business. Since he would no longer have a place for William, the latter would now have to go out on his own.¹⁴

William Hemphill was then eighteen years old. Apparently he did not lack for employment long. By September of that same year, Mary Hemphill was writing to her son, "William Hemphill at Wm. Lynams in Gorvis Street, Dublin," and urging him not to neglect his new master.¹⁵ The Lynams, two brothers who were merchants in Dublin, were well known to the Hemphills in Coleraine and may have come from there, for Mary Hemphill speaks of them visiting her family at home and seems very well acquainted with them. Joseph Lynam seems to have owned property in and near Coleraine as late as 1794.¹⁶ It is probable that William continued to serve the sort of apprenticeship he had begun with his brother John in Dublin, perhaps learning book-keeping and various forms of mercantile activity as well as storekeeping.

The year with the Lynam brothers in Gorvis Street was the last William Hemphill was to spend in Ireland. Like many of the Scotch-Irish of his day, he emigrated from Northern Ireland as a

young man and came to North America. There were many reasons, both economic and ideological, which encouraged such a move, and young Hemphill may have been influenced by some of them.¹⁷ As a Presbyterian, he may have chafed under the disadvantages imposed by the established Anglican church and wished to enjoy the freer air of America.¹⁸ As an ambitious young man, he may have felt that America, which then carried on a lively trade with Ireland, would offer him his best opportunity for business success. He may not have intended to stay in America; many young men crossed the Atlantic to improve their fortunes and then to return home.¹⁹ It was common for young clerks to sail as supercargoes in charge of the selling of their master's goods and the buying of a return cargo, or even to serve as factors, or resident agents, in distant ports. In any case, William Hemphill came to America at about the age of nineteen and never, as far as we know, returned to Ireland.²⁰

Although the precise status of Hemphill when he came to America is unclear, he says nothing in his letters to indicate that he was acting as an agent either for his brother or for the Lynams.²¹ He therefore seems to have been on his own, although it is quite possible that he was still relying on contacts made through his family or business associates back in Ireland. As we have seen, the Irish linen merchants had frequent occasion to deal with merchants in American ports, for the colonies not only imported Irish linens but also exported pot and pearl ash and flaxseed to Ireland. The Hemphill family may thus have

had some American acquaintances.

William Hemphill first settled in New York City, which led American ports at this time in trade with Ireland.²² He wrote his mother on February 20, 1763, from New York telling her that he now lived with a Mrs. Carrick and did "all her business . . . having sent several large ventures abroad."²³ Apparently he was gaining his first experience as a commission merchant, doing business on another person's account.²⁴ Although well satisfied with Mrs. Carrick's treatment of him, the young man was impatient with the limited scope of his merchant activity and eager to find a position with more opportunity for advancement. Already his correspondence shows the merchant's keen interest in political affairs and their possible effect upon the business scene. His first impression upon arriving in New York was that "business is very dull here since the Advt of the Peace," but he hoped that it would soon begin to stir again.²⁵ A letter possessed by the Historical Society of Delaware, evidently a draft of the message William actually sent his mother, bears an interesting correction. The passage indicated above continues:

However it will not be the place it has been for these some Years Past, as the War was of Great Service to it, & Numbers of Merch^t who Came Over Here at the Commencement of the wars & Time will now Return Home.²⁶

This part is crossed out in the draft. It is interesting to speculate why William may have hesitated to express to his

mother this hard-headed judgment of one effect of war upon commerce.

Hemphill was soon successful in his search for a more promising situation. In a draft dated "Philadelphia, 1763, August 18," he informed his mother that he had left New York and was now engaged with a Philadelphia merchant. He was pleased with the new position, and believed that it offered possibilities for advancement.²⁷ His new employer was Francis Wade, a Philadelphia entrepreneur who was to become a friend of John Dickinson and Caesar Rodney, and a supporter of the patriot cause in the American Revolution.²⁸ Hemphill was probably serving as a kind of clerk--or even an apprentice--in Wade's counting house, for the latter bought him new clothes and treated him as one of the family.²⁹ In any case, Hemphill's hopes for advancement were well-founded, for after five years of service he appears in 1768 as a partner of his former master.³⁰

It is not certain when William Hemphill first moved from Philadelphia to Wilmington. Christopher Ward states that he arrived in Wilmington about 1764.³¹ By 1768 advertisements for Wade and Hemphill's Store in Wilmington were appearing in the Pennsylvania Gazette offering "flour, middlings, ship stuff and bran" for sale.³² William Hemphill was married in Immanuel Church, near Wilmington, in May of 1770.³³ This year marks the beginning of really large-scale flour milling along the Brandywine.³⁴ Hemphill was then twenty-seven. It would have been a

good time for an ambitious young merchant to seek his fortune in a rapidly-growing community in which commercial opportunities were constantly expanding.

Hemphill's bride, with whom he was to share over fifty years of married life, was Elizabeth Allison (1745-1825) of Christiana Hundred.³⁵ Since death claimed many children in those days, it is not surprising to discover that the Hemphills' first born, Sarah (1771-1776), lived only a few short years, and that yet another child, Elizabeth (1777-1787), died a young girl; their second son, William (June-August, 1783) lived only a few months.³⁶ Three children, however, did survive. James Hemphill (1774-1833), their first son, and John (1784-1837), their youngest child, lived to follow in their father's footsteps as merchants. The Hemphills' beloved daughter, "Miss Molly," Mary Hemphill (1779-1834) lived to marry Morgan Jones and to settle down in Wilmington near her parents in a house provided by her father, thus proving a comfort in his old age.³⁷

A Wade and Hemphill ledger survives from 1775, and affords some clues concerning the business William Hemphill was transacting at this time.³⁸ It shows him serving as a merchant and a storekeeper dealing in drygoods, rum, sugar, flour, and boards. References to payment for "work done on the schooner" may indicate that he owned a boat at this time and perhaps engaged in the West Indian trade--exchanging flour and lumber for rum,

sugar, and coffee. A mention of payment "for mowing" also indicates that he may already have owned his farm along Shellpot Creek as well as his city home and shop at this time.³⁹ The ledger shows that he received payments in cash, by bond, in goods, and in services. Most of his customers appear to have been Delawareans, although some were Philadelphians.⁴⁰ The references to old accounts, many of them carried over from ledger "B," show that this volume was one in a series probably dating back to 1769.

We can only conjecture as to how Hemphill achieved his success as a merchant and "became a considerable landowner in and about Wilmington" in this early period.⁴¹ Documentary evidence is too scarce to permit any conclusive judgment. He took the oath of allegiance to the United States government on May 6, 1778.⁴² Francis Wade, his former partner, gave up his regular business during the Revolution to act as a supplier of provisions for the Continental Army, but there is no indication that Hemphill followed his example.⁴³ It is evident that the young Wilmingtonian's business was well enough established to survive the war years and emerge vigorously after the peace in 1783. Letters and documents which date from 1784 refer to trade already thriving; Curtis and William Hemphill are engaging "on joynt account" in the Irish trade, William sending flax-seed and potash and Curtis remitting "2 bales linens on the ship Mary Cap Stevenson," while Sanderson & Gray in the West Indies are writing to William in reference to a cargo on the brig

Alexander.⁴⁴ By this time Hemphill owned a wharf along the Christina and had a shop "opposite the Bird-in-Hand" on Market Street.⁴⁵ In short, by 1784 he appears to have become a well-established entrepreneur, a middle-aged man, ambitious no doubt to have his sons carry on his business.

The term "merchant" covered a variety of activities in the late eighteenth century. Properly speaking, it connoted a person who bought and sold commodities in wholesale quantities, or who traded commercially by exporting or importing on his own account. Retailers, storekeepers, agents, factors, brokers, and "warehouse men" were not considered to be merchants under this strict definition.⁴⁶ Indeed, in this age in which "seafaring and trading interests dominated the economic life of the country,"⁴⁷ shopkeepers and artisans ranked far below merchants on the social scale.

In actual practice, however, there was a great deal of overlapping of function. Although large cities had entrepreneurs who dealt only in one article, or with one country--such as West India merchants, China merchants, linen merchants, or wine merchants--most traders were general merchants dealing in various articles. Many Americans who called themselves merchants would not fit a precise definition of the term.⁴⁸ William Hemphill acted as a storekeeper and as a warehouse man, as well as buying and selling goods in wholesale quantities, and he sometimes traded as a commission agent rather than on his own account;

nevertheless, he was always considered a merchant, and as such occupied a position of respect and influence in Wilmington.⁴⁹ The freedom with which the term was used in this case was a product of circumstances. Wilmington was not a large enough port to permit a high degree of specialization; a merchant had to be flexible and adaptive in order to succeed in his business.

When William Hemphill first came to Wilmington, he was serving more as a commission agent, or factor, than as an independent merchant. A factor, in the terminology of the day, was an agent employed to transact business on another person's account.⁵⁰ Usually, such a man did not reside in the same place as his principal, but in a foreign country, or at a distance.⁵¹ In consideration for his services, he received a fixed salary as well as a commission on the business he transacted, and was often empowered to conduct the business in his own name, just as if it were on his own account.⁵² Since Francis Wade, William Hemphill's Philadelphia employer, kept his residence and principal place of business in that city, it is quite likely that William Hemphill originally came to Wilmington as an agent acting for Wade and later went into business for himself.⁵³ An advertisement in the November 3, 1768, issue of the Pennsylvania Gazette lent credence to this theory. In it Francis Wade offers to give:

the highest price for good clean barley, delivered at his Brewery, near the Drawbridge, or at Wade and Hemphill's store in Wilmington, or Thomas Wade's at Christiana Bridge . . .

This would indicate that Thomas Wade may also have been acting as a factor.

It was not long, however, before Hemphill was acting as a merchant on his own account, and engaging in a variety of activities. If we tried to label him in this early period, we might call him a West India merchant, for he dealt for the most part in goods from the islands, but this was not his only trade. Since he sent flaxseed and potash to Londonderry and imported Irish linens, he might also have claimed to be a linen merchant. The two trades were inter-related; returns via the West Indies were often used to provide the currency needed to balance payments in Ireland. For instance, in May of 1787 William Hemphill shipped on his own account in the brig Christian 50 barrels of superfine flour consigned to Sanderson and Gray at St. Kitts in the British West Indies.⁵⁴ He requested that the net proceeds from the sale of flour be remitted in a bill of exchange to his brother Curtis at Coleraine.⁵⁵ The two men regularly balanced their accounts and divided the profits of their business.⁵⁶ In this case the bill of exchange was sent through a London house with whom Sanderson and Gray had business connections. By August of 1787 it had found its way to Curtis in time for him to purchase linens and ship them aboard the Dublin Packet on "joynt account" with his American brother.⁵⁷

William Hemphill remained involved, throughout his career, with both the Irish and the island trade, and the latter always

formed the backbone of his business. In addition to these, however, he was constantly engaged in the local, inland, and coasting trades. These other avenues of commerce were necessary adjuncts to his overseas business; they provided him with his outbound cargoes and furnished a means of marketing his imported goods.

Flour and provisions formed the bulk of Hemphill's cargoes shipped to the West Indies, and flaxseed and potash the basis of those sent to Ireland. Flour produced in the Brandywine mills was regularly preferred in the West India market,⁵⁸ and Hemphill's business manuscripts show purchases from the Brandywine millers, especially from Tatnall and Lea.⁵⁹ Hemphill also bought flour and grain from Jonathan Rumford and Abijah Dawes in Philadelphia; Mann and Thomas, on Duck Creek; John Ricketts at Head of Elk; George Latimer, of Newport; John Roberts, of Georgetown Crossroads; Arthur Matthews, of Cecil County, Maryland; James Fisher, of Fredricksburg; William Thomas & Co., from Head of Chester in Kent County, Maryland; and from other businessmen who resided as far away as Virginia.⁶⁰ Flour and grain were brought to Hemphill's wharf by wagon from the back country, by shallop from the creeks of lower Delaware, and by packet boat from Philadelphia;⁶¹ they formed the largest part of his exports.

In 1792, William Hemphill entered the flour commission business, selling flour in Philadelphia through the firms of James and Shoemaker, and Offley and Paxson.⁶² The terms he

offered to Daniel Offley and Timothy Paxon were so disadvantageous to them (he wished to reserve the right to sell his flour in Wilmington if the price happened to be better there) that they were moved to remind him of the Christian doctrine, "Do unto others . . .," and to declare that they accepted such stipulations only because they were just starting in business.⁶³ This agreement seems to have lapsed after a year's trial, and is not representative of Hemphill's usual mode of business. He continued to ship flour to the West Indies on his own account, and seems to have found this a more satisfactory means of carrying on trade.⁶⁴

Flaxseed and potash were also secured locally. For instance, in November of 1788 Israel Reynolds wrote to William Hemphill announcing that he had seed for sale and offering to buy rum and coffee.⁶⁵ In the same month David Brown of Strasburg, Pennsylvania, sent some of his seed to Hemphill and some to the "Oyl Millers" lest too large a quantity flood the market.⁶⁶ Some firms, such as Alexander Lawrence and Son of Philadelphia, preferred to ship flaxseed on their own account. In December of 1788 the Lawrences wrote to Hemphill asking him to:

acquaint us what time your Brig is to sail from your Port for Londonderry, if she is arrived from the West Indies, & what freight you'll charge for Flaxseed. We expect to have from thirty to fifty Hogsheads which we are in hopes will be soon in . . .⁶⁷

Potash was often obtained through Robert Ralston in Philadelphia, and on occasion from Samuel Hopkins or Henry Bell of the same city.⁶⁸ When local supplies were insufficient, additional seed

and potash were sometimes purchased through such New York agents as Smith and Mickett or Joseph Byrnes for direct shipment to Ireland.⁶⁹ Byrnes had also acted as a factor locally. In September of 1790 he wrote to William Hemphill from Philadelphia enclosing an account of his sales, less commission, of sixty-one barrels of limes.⁷⁰

Local trade formed a network through which goods were distributed. As a merchant, William Hemphill usually sold his goods in wholesale quantities from his warehouse and Market Street store.⁷¹ Those who bought the rum, sugar, molasses, linens, cocoa, coffee and spices that he advertised for sale were retailers. Goods went out from Wilmington by shallop, wagon, and pack horse to downstate Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

Thomas Parke and Thomas Burrows were two of the retailers with whom Hemphill dealt. They bought imported goods wholesale in Wilmington and sold them around the countryside for cash or country produce. A letter written by Thomas Burrows to Hemphill on January 4, 1788, gives some insight into their method of doing business:

It is not for want of a hearty desire to discharge your generous account that I have been unavoidably obliged to be this long without doing so, but thru the real want of a means . . . I have a sufficiency of good business but the Farmers here are of that close disposition that it is the next thing to an impossibility to get even what Cash will be necessary to buy materials for my business--but as for conveniences sufficient for living easy I have them in a moderate

share. I have got a good Cow and horse, the last of which tho to some may seem rather a superfluity, yet I really would not do without it, for not like Wilmington I here cannot procure a Creature for love or money for a day's ride & my Customers who live wide scattered thru the country must be attended else my business will decline--⁷²

Thomas Parke also had a difficult time securing cash and often paid his debts in produce. "I believe it is impossible for me to collect wheat or money this Fall from those indebted to me," he wrote Hemphill in November of 1788, "but this I can and will do . . . furnish you with as many Barrells of Beef and Pork . . . as will pay you off."⁷³ These products he promised to deliver by "the Last Running of the Shallop."⁷⁴ Sometimes he sold wheat to pay for his orders of West India goods. For instance, "2 hogsheads of Antiqua Rum, 1 hogshead of good sugar and 1 Bagg of Coffee" were paid for by a bill on Tatnall and Lea for thirty-five pounds payable in thirty days.⁷⁵ This bill of exchange was probably backed up by a sale of grain to the Brandywine millers.

Some of the retailers, unlike Parke and Burrows, were large-scale entrepreneurs. James Butcher of Church Hill, Maryland, is described as a successful local merchant and a man of consequence,⁷⁶ who served as acting governor of Maryland from May 6 to June 9, 1809.⁷⁷ James Hemphill stopped to visit him in 1802 on a trip to Maryland.⁷⁸ He appears in the Hemphill correspondence for 1792 as a purchaser of brown sugar, molasses, lemons, rum, and Irish linen.⁷⁹

Many of the dealings with various retailers involved Hemphill in trifling accounts. In June of 1792, Lewis Jurey ordered a barrel of Muscovado (crude, semi-liquid) sugar sent to him at Appoquinimink in lower Delaware.⁸⁰ That same summer William Thomas wrote from Head of Chester in Kent County, Maryland, to add to his order a request that the person bringing his goods also call on Mr. Hays, Jacob Broom, Mrs. Springer and Mr. Samuel Hog to bring each of them two boxes of candles.⁸¹ Not all of William Hemphill's goods were sold so close to home; many found their way into the Lancaster area. Offley and Paxon sent Hemphill two hundred broadsides, printed in English and German, for this trade in 1792.⁸² James Hemphill, who succeeded his father in the grocery business in 1798,⁸³ continued this local trade; his journal for October 22, 1802, makes reference to "a collecting jaunt" to Lancaster as a necessary part of his business.⁸⁴

James Hemphill first appears in his father's business correspondence in 1791. In May of that year he made a voyage to the West Indies aboard his father's brig Isabella and Ann. The vessel went loaded with scraped flour and corn meal "of the yellowest kind," for the latter type of meal was preferred in the St. Kitts market.⁸⁵ Robert Ralston of Philadelphia, who served as a partner of William Hemphill's in many ventures in the years from 1788 to 1805, helped prepare for this voyage by purchasing flour and corn in Philadelphia to be shipped to

Wilmington.⁸⁶ One lot was shipped to Wilmington on Captain Foudray's packet, and the other on Captain Bush's. The brig also carried shingles, taken from the Jersey shore, and barrels of pork and superfine flour. It returned in July from St. Kitts and St. Eustatius with several passengers as well as a cargo of rum, sugar, and molasses.⁸⁷ This appears to have been James' first trip to the islands. He was seventeen years old, and ready to enter his father's business.⁸⁸

By October of 1792, James had made his fourth voyage to the West Indies, this time as supercargo aboard the schooner Kitty.⁸⁹ This vessel was owned by Joseph Warner of Wilmington, whose son John was the other supercargo for the voyage. The two young men were on their own for the first time, entrusted with the sale of a cargo which was a joint venture of the two fathers, and the purchase of goods for the return voyage. They were about to become factors, settling in Martinique and remaining there as partners in the commission business. William Hemphill's letter of instructions to the two supercargoes included some fatherly advice. He warned them that as they were "boath young and not much acquainted with different characters," they must use caution in dealing with strangers, and he urged that they be "particularly careful of the company you keep, that you get not into the habitt of gaming, which invariably ends in the ruin of those that practice it."⁹⁰

The two young men remained in the islands until the spring of 1793, and handled their duties capably. William Hemphill sent the brig Isabella and Ann to them in October, loaded with flour on his and Warner's joint account; in December he wrote of the brig's return to Wilmington, congratulating the young men on their business ability:

Your accounts, were very correct and does you much credit and I hope you may persevere in your attention to business and in the end you will find your friends increased and have inward satisfaction and an approving mind.⁹¹

The Isabella and Ann went back to the islands in January, 1783, with flour valued at £1765 11s. 5d. on Hemphill's part and probably an equal amount on Warner's account. The Kitty followed with flour and pork. However, the sales of the cocoa sent as return cargoes were disappointing, and after the two vessels had each made one more trip the boys dissolved their partnership and returned home to Wilmington.⁹²

On February 1, 1793, the French Republic declared war against England, Holland, and Spain.⁹³ Trade in the West Indies, which had been dull earlier in the year, picked up by the summer of 1793 under the impetus of wartime demands.⁹⁴ Since the slow-moving convoys which brought goods from Europe were harried by privateers and men-of-war, provisions became scarce in the islands.⁹⁵ Europe, which had heretofore grown its own grain supply, faced desperate shortages.⁹⁶ To the Americans fell the golden fruits of trade that neutrals may reap in time of war.

In 1793, the exports of American wheat reached almost 1,500,000 bushels, besides over 1,000,000 barrels of flour--in contrast to the usual average of 426,000 bushels of wheat and 703,000 barrels of flour per year in the decade 1791-1800.⁹⁷ Over half of the flour and bread exported from the United States came from the Middle Atlantic States.⁹⁸ Commerce in Wilmington rose to new heights in these years.⁹⁹

The disastrous yellow fever epidemics which broke out in Philadelphia late in the eighteenth century also brought new trade to Wilmington.¹⁰⁰ In 1793, Robert Ralston, along with many other Philadelphia merchants, temporarily moved his business to Wilmington.¹⁰¹ His agent wrote that the great city was strangely quiet, "so many have fled this scene of death."¹⁰² In Wilmington, commerce flourished; the whole town was perfumed with the odor of boiling tar and pitch, and tall ships crowded the wharves.¹⁰³

In 1797, when the plague struck Philadelphia once more, refugees poured into Wilmington.¹⁰⁴ In 1798, and again in 1802, Robert Ralston moved to the Hemphills' home in Wilmington to escape the fevers raging in the Quaker city.¹⁰⁵ The Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser of September 30, 1798, was crowded with the advertisements of Philadelphia merchants transacting their business in Wilmington. In both 1798 and 1802, however, the fever also broke out in Wilmington, forcing many of the inhabitants to flee the city.¹⁰⁶ In September of 1798 the Hemphills and Ralstons left Wilmington for a short stay in nearby

Newport to avoid the sickness, and in October of 1802 the Hemphill family again moved out of town "in consequence of increased alarm of the Yellow fever & its approaching nearer to our house."¹⁰⁷ There were no severe epidemics after 1802, and the trade proceeded without interruption.

The European wars which stimulated the island trade also encouraged overseas transactions, and in 1795 the Hemphills loaded a vessel for France.¹⁰⁸ The brig Sally, owned jointly by William Hemphill and his son James, sailed for Nantes in early July of 1795, loaded with flour, hams, cheese, and leather on the account of William and James Hemphill, Robert Ralston of Philadelphia, Thomas Byrnes & Co. of New York, and the Messrs. J. H. and J. Star, Wilmington tanners.¹⁰⁹ On the outbound trip the Sally passed a convoy of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred British ships without incident, and the vessel reached the Loire River safely.¹¹⁰

At the entrance of the Loire, however, the ship came under the guns of Belle Isle, an island fortress which guards Nantes' harbor.¹¹¹ The French commander, being short of provisions, forced James Hemphill, who was acting as supercargo, to unload 1050 barrels of flour, 32 barrels of bread, 1165 pounds of ham, 9 barrels of pickled fish, and 400 pounds of cheese, the bulk of his cargo. General Boucret, who had commandeered the goods, paid very generously for his food supply, giving thirty dollars a barrel for the flour at a time when it was selling for twelve

in Wilmington, but he paid with an order for payment on the French government, not in cash.¹¹² "I flatter myself," James wrote his father, "if I get home safe with my payment, that we shall make the greatest voyage ever made out of Wilmington in my remembrance."¹¹³

James' optimism soon faded as he found the money difficult to collect. In September he wrote Robert Ralston, "it don't seem I am any nearer to being paid now than when I first came here."¹¹⁴ He finally sent the Sally back loaded with 277 casks of wine, 18 cases of liquors, 2 quarter chests of young hyson tea, and 30,000 quills.¹¹⁵ Mr. Dobrée, the American vice-consul, aided him in his efforts to collect the debt, but much patience was required. The long hours in Nantes were whiled away by flute lessons and instruction in French, but boredom still set in. In December James wrote William Warner, "this is the most tiresome place I ever was in."¹¹⁶

James had a long, frustrating wait. He found other Americans for company, many of whom had been stranded in France even longer. He befriended a Captain Buffington of Salem, whose resources had been all but exhausted while he waited for payment, and wrote indignantly to his father of other "starving Americans" suffering in France.¹¹⁷ His fortunes were not improved by the fact that Captain Mitchell disposed of the Sally's second cargo in December of 1795 in the same way as the first had been--by selling it at Belle Isle at an inflated price in

promissory notes. This time the Sally was chartered for a short run from Crosic to Havre loaded with salt and then sent back to Wilmington in ballast. James urged his father not to send her to France again.¹¹⁸ In November of 1797, James finally embarked at Bordeaux in the ship Benjamin Franklin bound for Philadelphia. He had succeeded in collecting only a small amount of the money due him. Mr. Dobrée was given a power of attorney to sue for the rest.¹¹⁹ Seven years later, August 5, 1805, the Hemphills received payment in full of the balance due.¹²⁰

Upon his return to Wilmington, James entered the wholesale grocery business, taking over his father's store at the lower end of King Street and selling all sorts of imported goods as well as grain and lumber.¹²¹ The next year he started a packet line running regularly between Philadelphia and Wilmington.¹²² For a few years James remained in Wilmington at his store and counting house, regularly sending vessels to the islands, and keeping a close watch on the river trade. His journal records all arrivals and departures of vessels from the port of Wilmington from January, 1799, to February, 1803.¹²³ As an independent merchant he had vessels of his own engaged in commerce; the brig Eagle and the schooner Delaware were well established as constant traders to the West Indies, each making at least three voyages a year.¹²⁴ In addition to these James was part owner of the Concord, the Hope, the Sally, and the Mary Ann. He sent cargoes to Boston, New York, and Ireland as well as to

the sugar islands.¹²⁵ Agents were engaged to handle young Hemphill's business in distant ports. George Kennard and David Walker handled the trade of the Delaware and the Eagle; Davenport and Tucker served as agents for the Boston trade, sending pork, beef, whale oil, and spermaceti candles in return for Hemphill's flour and Windsor chairs. Thomas Buckley and Peter Bauduy were involved in James' New York business. Robert Ralston, William Hemphill's former partner, corresponded regularly with the son from Philadelphia.¹²⁶

William Hemphill's retirement from business was not complete. He continued to handle much of the Irish trade, and initiated a trade with Liverpool in 1800 which he carried on for several years through William Lees, a former resident of New Castle who had returned to England to carry on his business.¹²⁷ The Liverpool trade added English china to the list of goods the Hemphills imported.¹²⁸ William also continued his correspondence with Robert Ralston.¹²⁹ Their letters now took on a more informal tone, and they spoke more often of their families. Hemphill's family was growing up. His daughter was a young woman. James was already on his own, and John, his youngest son, was gaining business experience in Mr. Ralston's counting house in Philadelphia.¹³⁰

The elder Hemphill was now able to devote himself more to public affairs as his business decreased. He was one of the first directors of the Bank of Delaware, founded in 1795; one

of the directors of the Agricultural Society, organized in 1804; and one of the first directors of the Wilmington Bridge Company, being appointed in 1808.¹³¹ He also served as chairman of the corporation for the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington.¹³²

In 1803, James Hemphill gave up his wholesale grocery business to his former apprentice, John Gordon, in order to undertake a long and ambitious voyage to the East Indies.¹³³ Robert Ralston and William Hemphill had long discussed the possibility of such a venture, and in March, 1803, they applied to the Bank of Delaware for funds with which to finance a Calcutta voyage, the Bank of Pennsylvania already having refused them a loan.¹³⁴ Financial assistance was finally secured through Tatnall & Lea, and preparations were made to dispatch the Benjamin Franklin, a ship owned jointly by Ralston and the firm of Tatnall & Lea.¹³⁵ James Hemphill and Robert Murdoch were given the responsibility of serving as supercargoes on the long voyage, which was to last more than a year.¹³⁶

The Benjamin Franklin set sail on March 18, 1803. James carried \$12,000 in Spanish dollars on the account of Robert Murdoch and himself, together with a letter from his father giving instructions for spending part of the money.¹³⁷ Friends also made small requests. Mrs. Keating sent samples of cloth she wanted to have matched in Calcutta, and Peter Bauduy wrote to add to her order. Jacob Broom sent money to be invested in

goods abroad.¹³⁸ The list of the return cargo indicates that other local merchants also had an interest in the voyage.¹³⁹

In India, James savored the exotic flavor of the East. He saw an elephant, an Indian sword swallower, native bazaars, nautch dancers, and even an eclipse (which terrified most of the population).¹⁴⁰ In his Log Book he kept a list of all American vessels that entered or cleared the port of Calcutta from January to November of 1803, carefully recording their home ports, captains, supercargoes, and the goods they took home. He tended to his own business as well, and by November of 1803 he had a cargo ready for the return voyage. His bills of lading show him shipping piece goods to Robert Ralston, together with goods on William Hemphill's account valued at £4199/2/10 and merchandise on his own account worth £1873/14/9.¹⁴¹ The report and manifest of the cargo also shows rugs, indigo, piece goods, sugar, twine, candles, and fans being shipped to Jesse and Robert Waln, Wharton & Lewis, Samuel Howell, John Stille & Co., Godfrey and Ebenezer Hazard, Joseph Lownes, Anthony Kennedy, Joseph Eastbourne, William Haslett, Alexander Laurence, William Osmon, and Robert Murdoch.¹⁴² The risk of the voyage was evidently well dispersed. In April of 1804 the Benjamin Franklin again returned to Philadelphia, having had a good voyage from the East Indies.¹⁴³

The owners seem to have been well pleased with the results of their first venture and eager to project a new one, for James set sail again in June of 1804 as supercargo on the

Benjamin Franklin, bound this time for Batavia on the island of Java.¹⁴⁴ This voyage, lasting nearly two years in all, took him from Java, to Cowes, England, and from there to Antwerp, Paris, Amsterdam, and London before returning to Philadelphia. After arriving home in Wilmington James resumed his West India trade for a while, sailing in the brig Jane to Barbados, Guadeloupe, and Martinique.¹⁴⁵ Robert Ralston wanted him to continue in the overseas trade, but James had tired of the sea. He wrote to Curtis Hemphill in June of 1806:

Four or five days after my arrival my brother John sailed on a voyage to Canton in the East Indies as principal supercargo. He will be absent from home 11 or 12 months. As there appears to be no opening at present for my undertaking business ashore I propose to spend this summer making voyages to the West Indies . . . next spring if John should be restored safe to us we intend to commence business together in Philadelphia.¹⁴⁶

These plans were carried out and the Hemphills soon ceased to be a part of Wilmington's business life. It was not long before a Philadelphia directory listed James and John Hemphill as merchants at 45 Dock Street.¹⁴⁷ By 1814 William Hemphill, although still a director of the Bank of Delaware, had completely retired from business. The Wilmington directory for that year gives his residence as 102 Market Street and his occupation as "gentleman."¹⁴⁸ He had led a long, active, and successful career as a merchant. One might hope that his life had brought him that "inward satisfaction and an approving mind," that he had recommended so highly to his son, James.¹⁴⁹

CHAPTER IV

NINETEENTH CENTURY TRANSFORMATION

Going on about a mile, we arrived at a cotton mill of 600 spindles; a grist mill, barley mill and a saw mill on the west side and on the east side a woolen manufactory.

The Hemphills and their fellow Wilmington merchants witnessed the economic transformation of their city in the early years of the nineteenth century. By 1815 Wilmington appeared "likely to become one of the most important manufacturing towns in the United States."¹ Merchants, millers, and ocean ships no longer dominated the local business scene; a new class of entrepreneurs had come to the front. The town which had once been "a pretty village . . . in a good position for trade," was now a young industrial city.²

Milling and manufacturing had formed important facets of Wilmington's economic life even in the eighteenth century. It had been apparent from the city's first settlement that its location, which gave it access to navigable streams, convenient markets, and abundant water power, made it well suited for either a maritime or a manufacturing town.³ As early as the 1770's the mills of the Brandywine were "famous all over America,"⁴ and the basis of Wilmington's commerce, as we have seen, was the exportation of flour.⁵ By the 1790's there were "several

fulling-mills, two snuff-mills, one slitting mill, four paper-mills, and sixty mills for grinding grain," as well as a cotton mill and a bolting cloth manufactory in New Castle County within a short distance of Wilmington.⁶ Although seafaring and trading interests continued to dominate the economic life of the country in the years from 1790 to 1807, industrial growth was underway.⁷ Wilmington's emergence as a manufacturing center in the nineteenth century came as the culmination of a long-evident trend.

The years from 1807 to 1815 mark a relative decline in Wilmington's commercial activity. The trade restraints imposed by the War of 1812 and by the hostility and tension in the years leading up to the conflict discouraged commercial activity. Manufacturing, on the other hand, was stimulated by the embargoes which temporarily removed foreign competition and allowed America's infant industries to enjoy a sheltered growth. During these years the du Pont powder manufactory saw its first great expansion,⁸ and textile factories, the harbingers of the industrial revolution, began to mushroom along the Brandywine.⁹ In addition to the numerous flour mills in the Wilmington area, there were establishments for the manufacture of cotton, wool, snuff, paper, wire, iron, and gunpowder. Machines that make machines are markedly characteristic of an industrial complex, and a factory for the making of wool and cotton machinery was well established in Wilmington by 1815.¹⁰ Still, the Brandywine's potential was not exhausted. It was estimated that although the

works on the stream already utilized thirty-six water wheels in 1815, there was sufficient power of water and fall remaining for nearly an equal number within five miles of Wilmington.¹¹

The city grew in these years to have a population of about 5,000 and seven hundred and fifty houses, "principally brick."¹² It had nine churches, an academy, and twenty-one schools.¹³ Wilmington's prosperity, begun in the era of millers and merchants, continued in the age of industry. E. I. du Pont wrote in 1815 of the contribution that "manufactures on the Brandywine" had made to Wilmington's progress. Since 1803 he observed that there had been:

New houses, and new wharves . . . built in town every year; two fine bridges have been constructed; the rate of rent in town is more than doubled; five turnpikes leading in every direction from our town . . . have been undertaken and compleated; and in the course of four or five years the price of land has more than trebled.¹⁴

It would be a gross error, however, to assume that the Wilmington merchant simply disappeared from the scene, or that he was completely replaced by the Wilmington manufacturer between 1807 and 1815. In many cases the merchant became an industrial entrepreneur. The Gilpin paper mills, erected in 1787 and comprising one of the earliest manufacturing enterprises along the Brandywine, were founded by brothers who had been active Wilmington merchants.¹⁵ The Broom cotton-spinning mill, founded in 1795, was also the work of a man closely involved with Wilmington's commercial life.¹⁶

Even when merchants did not actually go into manufacturing, they contributed to it indirectly by providing capital which facilitated industrial growth. Many of the improvements which E. I. du Pont observed in 1815 had been initiated and supported by merchants. The wharves built in town represented commercial investment, and so did the bridges and turnpikes. We have already mentioned William Hemphill's role in encouraging the building of the Brandywine Bridge.¹⁷ Merchants were interested in many kinds of internal improvements, and Hemphill's will shows that he owned stock in both the Kennett Turnpike and the Wilmington and Christiana Turnpike as well.¹⁸

Although John and James Hemphill moved to Philadelphia early in the nineteenth century, they maintained an active interest in Wilmington affairs, and contributed to the industrial growth of northern Delaware. John Hemphill, for instance, appears in 1835 as one of the directors of the Brandywine and Christiana Manufacturing Company,¹⁹ and again in the same year as one of the purchasers of the Gilpin mill along the Brandywine.²⁰ Three years later he was a director of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad, as well as a stockholder with 373 shares of Wilmington and Susquehanna Railroad stock.²¹ The surplus capital of such merchants as the Hemphills was also invested in insurance companies, bank stock, and real estate.²²

Various Wilmington merchants can be used to illustrate the same shift in emphasis exemplified by the Hemphills. The

Robinsons, once a shipping family,²³ were Morocco leather manufacturers by 1826.²⁴ Thomas Lea became a cotton mill owner.²⁵ By 1823, John Brinckle's dry goods shop on Market Street was featuring "Wilmington Manufactured Goods," brown shirtings, sheetings, plaids and stripes, indigo checks, "Wilmington stripes," and tickings rather than imported goods.²⁶ Here we see the merchant playing a vital role in aiding the local textile industry by selling its products.

Delaware newspapers verify the change from a commercial to an industrial economy. From 1775 to 1807, commerce and shipping dominated the news and the advertising pages. In these years, West Indian, Irish, British, and East Indian goods stocked the shelves of Wilmington shops, and ship arrivals and departures were reported in detail. As early as 1805, however, shipping began to suffer from British and French hostility on the open seas. In this year the ship Active, a constant trader to Wilmington, had a large part of its cargo condemned by a British judge at Antigua for carrying French goods.²⁷ Still, commerce went on. In one issue of the Mirror of the Times, John Warner and Company featured "Queen's Ware" china imported in the ship Maria from Belfast. William Pluright sold rum, sugar, and molasses; John Hedrick and Company dealt in fine Liverpool and coarse Lisbon salt, English, country, or German steel, coffee, molasses, pork, and sugar. There were few evidences of manufacturing interests. George Sutton, a craftsman, advertised

carpenters' tools, mill saws, and files for sale, but most of the advertisements were placed by merchants. With the notable exception of the "country" steel and a few provisions, most of the items offered imported goods.²⁸

By 1812, the balance had shifted. Patriotism forbade, and the law disallowed, commerce with the enemy. There were no advertisements of imported goods. Lenord and Geddes reflected the spirit of the times with their notice of a "Commission Store for Domestic Manufactures," featuring a general assortment of DuPont, Bauduy & Co.'s cloths and cassimeres.²⁹ David and Joseph Evans advertised leather goods of local manufacture, and John Hagany offered to make shoes.³⁰ The one shipper who apparently did attempt to carry on business as usual ran into trouble. Legal notices in the American Watchman related that George Read had suffered the seizure of part of the cargo of the ship Amazon "as being imported contrary to act of Congress!"³¹

After the war commerce revived, and for a while British manufactures threatened to swamp the native American industries. Wilmington industrialists, however, joined their counterparts elsewhere in demanding, and achieving, tariffs to protect them from such competition. Delaware's largest community had been marked as a manufacturing town, and commerce never dominated its economic life again.³²

The Wilmington merchant of the late colonial and early federal period, with his ally the miller, had played a leading role in the American society of his day. A fortunate combination of mills, markets, and transportation gave Wilmington the potential for growth; the entrepreneurial skill of its early settlers helped the city realize the promise of its location. The merchants and millers laid out the streets of Wilmington, ran its town government, established its banks and commercial institutions, founded its library, and built its roads and bridges. They interested themselves in its churches and schools, and helped provide for its poor.³³

Clearly, these early business pioneers had played their parts well in the creation of a prosperous center of trade. In the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth they had given Wilmington a place in international commerce; carried the fame of Brandywine superfine flour to the far corners of the world; and brought back coffee, sugar, spices, teas, and chocolates from distant lands for Wilmington families.³⁴ Foreign capital was drawn to Wilmington through their agency,³⁵ and immigrants came in their ships to work in the Brandywine mills and manufactories.³⁶ The enterprise and ingenuity of Wilmington's merchants and millers saved the city from becoming a sleepy agricultural village, "a town merely of butchers of meat, bakers of bread and makers of candlesticks,"³⁷

and their capital contributed to its later success as an industrial town. Wilmington's future progress lay in the hands of their successors--the manufacturers and industrialists.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

Subtitle: The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell (New York, 1924), p. 160; E. H. Tatum, Jr. ed., The American Journal of Ambrose Serle, Secretary to Lord Howe, 1776-1778 (San Marino, Calif., 1940), p. 256.

1. Peter C. Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships: The Components of an Early American Industrial Town," Delaware History, VII (September, 1957), 319-336. "In the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth, its Wilmington's commerce on the high seas was the most interesting fact in the history of the city . . ." Christopher L. Ward, "Leaves from the Log-Books and Letters of James Hemphill, Mariner and Merchant of Wilmington, 1793-1797," Papers of the Historical Society of Delaware, LXVI (Wilmington, 1914), 5.

2. Peter C. Welsh, "The Brandywine Mills: A Chronicle of an Industry, 1762-1816," Delaware History, VII (March, 1956), 17-36.

3. Wilmington "languished for want of settlers with sufficient capital and enterprise to give life and growth to the new establishment." Benjamin Ferris, A History of the Original Settlements on the Delaware (Wilmington, 1846), p. 203.

4. J. Thomas Scharf et al., History of Delaware, 1609-1888 (Philadelphia, 1888), II, 643.

5. Deane Papers, Collections of the New York Historical Society (New York, 1886), I, 56.

6. ". . . the basis of its commerce is the exportation of flour." J. P. Brissot de Warville, New Travels in the United States of America Performed in 1788 (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1919), p. 250.

7. Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser, September 30, 1798 (Wilmington, Delaware).

8. Andrew Burnaby, Travels Through the Middle Settlements in North America in the Years 1759 and 1760 (Reprinted from the third ed. of 1798, New York, 1904), p. 88.

9. Duke de la Rochefaucauld Liancourt, Travels Through the United States of North America . . . in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797 (Second ed., London, 1800), III, 491: "Wilmington, though not the capital of the state of Delaware, or of the county of Newcastle in which it is situated, is the most populous city in the state."

10. Philip Padelford, ed., Colonial Panorama, 1775: Dr. Robert Honeyman's Journal for March and April (San Marino, Calif., 1939), p. 11.

11. Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 5; C. A. Weslager, Delaware's Forgotten River: The Story of the Christina (Wilmington, 1947), p. 78.

12. The dates 1793-1815 represent the years during which Britain and France were at war. See C. Northcote Parkinson, ed., The Trade Winds: A Study of British Overseas Trade during the French Wars 1793-1815 (London, 1948), p. 16.

13. The commercial depression in the post-war years following the American Revolution was not as severe in the Philadelphia area as in New England. See Robert A. East, Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era (New York, 1938), p. 243. Economic recovery was evident by 1783. See Merrill Jensen, The New Nation: A History of the United States During the Confederation (New York, 1958), Ch. IX, X.

14. Ferris, Original Settlements, pp. 234-235; Samuel F. Bemis, Pickney's Treaty: A Study of America's Advantage from Europe's Distress 1783-1800 (Baltimore, 1926), passim; Jensen, The New Nation, pp. 196-197.

15. William Hemphill /to Hardtman and Clarkson, July, 1792/, Letter-Book, 1792-1806, Historical Society of Delaware (hereafter referred to as HSD).

16. Broom, Hendrickson and Summerl to William Stevenson, April 4, 1792. Letter-Book, 1792-1794, HSD.

17. Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 5.

18. This suggestion has been made by several writers. See East, Business Enterprise, p. 238; David MacPherson, Annals of Commerce (London, 1805), III, 719; Jensen, The New Nation, passim.

19. Peter C. Welsh, "The Brandywine Mills," pp. 17-36.

20. Richard Pares, Yankees and Creoles: The Trade Between North America and the West Indies before the American Revolution (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), p. 146.

21. Timothy Pitkin, A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States of America (New Haven, 1835), p. 392.

22. Pares, Yankees and Creoles, p. 163.

23. Ibid.

24. Rev. George Ross to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, New Castle, March 27, 1750, S. P. B. Mss. as quoted in Nelson W. Rightmyer, The Anglican Church in Delaware (Philadelphia, 1947), p. 21, and cited in John A. Munroe, Federalist Delaware 1775-1815 (New Brunswick, N. J., 1954), p. 23. See also Edgar Legare Pennington, "The Reverend George Ross," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, n. s., XL (1936), 281-312.

25. Thomas Twining, Travels in America 100 Years Ago (New York, 1894), p. 70.

26. William Priest, Travels in the United States of America, Commencing in the Year 1793, and Ending in 1797 (London, 1802), p. 21.

27. Anna T. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware: Three Centuries Under Four Flags (Rutland, Vt., 1937), p. 130.

28. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 70; Ferris, Original Settlements, p. 193.

29. Ferris, Original Settlements, p. 192.

30. Henry Seidel Canby, The Brandywine (New York, 1941), pp. 14-15.

31. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, "Map of Wilmington as of 1772," end papers.

32. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 22.

33. Ferris, Original Settlements, p. 193.

34. Ibid.; Twining, Travels . . . One Hundred Years Ago, p. 70; Isaac Weld, Jr., Travels Through the States of North America and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, During the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797 (4th ed., London, 1807), I, 34.

35. Victor S. Clark, History of Manufactures in the United States (New York, 1929), I, 185.

36. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 70.

37. Ferris, Original Settlements, p. 193; Weslager, Forgotten River, p. 171.

38. With "no Wharf or Dock where Ships can ride out of the strong Current, it does not seem probable that this Town New Castle will ever grow (at least not grow rapidly) into Consequence." Serle, Journal, p. 257; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 22.

39. Adolph B. Benson, ed., The America of 1750: Peter Kalm's Travels in North America (New York, 1937), I, 82-83.

40. Clark, History of Manufactures, I, Ch. I, IV, and V; Mary Alice Hanna, "Trade of the Delaware District Before the Revolution," Smith College Studies in History, II (July, 1917), 248; Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," p. 319.

41. Canby, Brandywine, p. 88; Charles B. Kuhlmann, The Development of the Flour-Milling Industry in the United States (Boston, 1929), pp. 32-34; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 28; Pares, Yankees and Creoles, p. 26.

42. Weslager, Forgotten River, p. 71.

43. William Hemphill, Letter-Book, 1792-1806; James Hemphill, Letter-Books, 1795-1797, 1801-1803, 1805, 1806-1814, HSD; Ward, "James Hemphill," passim.

44. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 70.

45. Ferris, Original Settlements, pp. 203-5.

46. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, pp. 72-73.

47. Ibid., p. 74.

48. Carl Bridenbaugh, ed., Gentleman's Progress: the Itinerarium of Dr. Alexander Hamilton, 1774 (Chapel Hill, 1948), p. 15; Rev. George Ross, quoted in Rightmyer, The Anglican Church in Delaware, p. 21.

49. Carl Bridenbaugh, The Colonial Craftsman (New York, 1950), p. 59; Kuhlmann, Flour-Milling Industry, pp. 33-35; Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," p. 321.

50. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 74.

51. William Shipley, Ms. book, fitting out brig Wilmington, 1743; Ferris, Original Settlements, 231.

52. Ferris, Original Settlements, 231; Weslager, Forgotten River, 72.

53. Ferris, Original Settlements, 231.

54. Henry Seidel Canby, Family History (Cambridge, 1945), p. 26; Canby, The Brandywine, pp. 83-84; Ferris, Original Settlements, pp. 302-303; H. C. Conrad, History of the State of Delaware (Wilmington, 1908), p. 488.

55. Kuhlmann, Flour-Milling Industry, p. 23; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 28.

56. John B. Reeves, ed., "Extracts from the Letter-Books of Lieutenant Enos Reeves of Paline," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XXI (1897), 239; Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 4.

57. The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, p. 120; "Borough of Wilmington," Niles' Weekly Register, VI (1814), 277.

58. Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 631-634, 734-735, 786.

59. Ferris, Original Settlements, pp. 302-303; Conrad, History of Delaware, p. 481; Canby, Family History, p. 26.

60. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 264.

61. Ibid., p. 75.

62. Ibid., pp. 76-78, 265; J. Leander Bishop, History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860 (Philadelphia, 1861-1868), I, 443, 461; Conrad, History of Delaware, II, 680-681. The printing shop was that of James Adams. "He printed laws and other government materials, almanacs, religious works, and educational books . . . he established the first and only pre-Revolutionary Delaware newspaper, the Wilmington Courant . . . printed for less than a year. No copies of it are known to survive." Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 66; Dorothy Hawkins, "James Adams, the First Printer of Delaware," Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, XXVIII (1934), pt. 1, 29-30.

63. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 133ff.; Weslager, Forgotten River, p. 78ff.

64. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 86; E. B. Greene and V. D. Harrington, American Population before the Census of 1790 (New York, 1932), p. 123.

65. Serle, Journal, p. 256.

66. Thomas Lea and Sons, Account Book, 1773-1787 (Microfilm in Hagley Museum Library, Wilmington, Delaware), pp. 39-40; Lea Daybook Ledger, 1775-1783, entries from February, 1775, to March, 1776, HSD; Elizabeth Montgomery, Reminiscences Of Wilmington (Philadelphia, 1851), p. 178; Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 773; Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," p. 332; Weslager, Forgotten River, p. 69.

67. Thomas Lea and Sons, Account Book, 1773-1787, pp. 39-40; Lea Daybook Ledger, 1775-1783.

68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, pp. 32-33, 131-132.
71. "Westermost channel used only for shallops . . .," J. Honeywood, "Map of Delaware River and Bay," c. 1782 (Photograph from original in Yale University Library, HSD).
72. Thomas Rodney, bound MS. journal, HSD; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 33.
73. Weslager, Forgotten River, p. 68; Samuel Bush, Freight Book, 1789-1794, HSD.
74. Memorial to George W. Bush, Bush Family Papers, HSD; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 34.
75. Deane Papers, I, 56.
76. Clark, History of Manufactures, I, 185.
77. Cited in Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," p. 330.
78. Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 749.
79. Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), April 6, 1774.
80. Ferris, Original Settlements, p. 232.
81. Lea and Sons, Account Book, 1773-1787; Lea Daybook Ledger, 1775-1783. See also Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," p. 333; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, pp. 32-33.
82. East, Business Enterprise, p. 153; Legislative Papers, January-February, 1792, Petitions, Misc., Delaware State Archives, Dover, Delaware (hereafter referred to as DSA).
83. "Washington to Brig. General Potter, Headquarters 3 Oct. 1777," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XVIII (1894), 469; Conrad, History of Delaware, II, 418; Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 264; Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 787.
84. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, pp. 99-100; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, pp. 34-35. "As the war continued, pressure was brought, unsuccessfully, on the Delaware government to lift the embargo, especially on the exportation of flour." Munroe, p. 35.
85. Montgomery, Reminiscences, pp. 176-178.

86. Weslager, Forgotten River, p. 69.
87. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 34; Montgomery, Reminiscences, pp. 176-178, 181-183.
88. Montgomery, Reminiscences, pp. 168-170.
89. Delaware Archives (Wilmington, 1911-1919), II, 920-930; Laws of the State of Delaware (New Castle, 1797), II, 771.
90. William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1806; Curtis Hemphill, Daybook, 1784-1807, HSD.
91. Samuel Bush, Freight Book, 1789-1794, HSD.
92. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, map facing p. 265.
93. Ibid., p. 133.
94. Kuhlmann, Flour-Milling Industry, pp. 33-34; Views Respecting the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal By A Citizen of Philadelphia (Philadelphia, 1824), p. 16.
95. "A great deal of . . . flour goes from the port of Wilmington to the West Indies, and even to Europe." Dr. James Tilton, "Queries on the Present State of Husbandry and Agriculture in the State of Delaware," American Museum or Universal Magazine, V (April, 1789), 381; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 133.
96. Frank F. Stephens, The Transitional Period, 1788-1789, in the Government of the United States (Columbia, Mo., 1909), p. 85; William W. Bates, American Navigation (Boston, 1902), pp. 33, 35; Laws of the State of Delaware, II, 831.
97. Ferris, Original Settlements, p. 232.
98. Ibid.
99. Weslager, Forgotten River, p. 84.
100. John Filson, Map of Wilmington, 1786, HSD.
101. Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," p. 321.
102. Ferris, Original Settlements, pp. 231, 234.
103. Deane Papers, I, 56.
104. Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 787.

105. Joseph Scott, A Geographical Description of the States of Maryland and Delaware (Philadelphia, 1807), pp. 170, 178-179.
106. Tilton, "Queries," pp. 184-185.
107. Ward, "James Hemphill," pp. 5-6.
108. Kuhlmann, Flour-Milling Industry, pp. 33-34.
109. Brissot de Warville, Travels, p. 421.
110. William Winterbotham, An Historical, Geographical, and Philosophical View of the United States of America, and of the European Settlements in America and the West Indies (New York, 1796), II, 466.
111. Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," pp. 319-336.
112. William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1806, HSD.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER II

Subtitle: Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser
(Wilmington), September 20, 1798.

1. Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 5.
2. Ibid.
3. Petition of January 2, 1783, Legislative Papers, DSA; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 124.
4. Alonzo Brock, ed., "Journal of William Black, 1744," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, I (1877), 239.
5. Reeves, "Extracts from the Letter-Books of Lieutenant Enos Reeves," p. 239.
6. Montgomery, Reminiscences, p. 210; James Hemphill, Letter-Books, 1795-1797, 1801-1803, 1805, 1806-1814, HSD; William Hemphill, Letter-Book, 1792-1806, HSD.
7. Alexander Hamilton Mss. (Library of Congress) as copied in H. Clay Reed, ed., Readings in Delaware History: Economic Development (Mimeographed, Newark, 1939), p. 39; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 121.
8. Pitkin, Statistical View, p. 50.
9. Priest, Travels, p. 21.
10. Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 5.
11. Ibid., p. 6.
12. The letter books of William and James Hemphill mention these ports. Letter-Books, HSD, passim.
13. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 17.
14. J. B. Spotswood, A Historical Sketch of the Presbyterian Church at New Castle Delaware (Philadelphia, 1859), p. 15; James L. Vallandigham, A Historical Discourse Delivered July 2nd, 1876, at Head of Christiana Church (Wilmington, 1876), p. 5; Henry G. Welbon, A History of Head of Christiana Church (Wilmington, 1933), p. 5; Henry G. Welbon, A History of Pencader Presbyterian Church, Glasgow, Delaware (Wilmington, 1936), p. 7;

William D. Mackey, White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church (Wilmington, 1876), p. 11; Charles D. Kellogg, The History of the First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, Delaware (Wilmington, 1865), pp. 3-4, 7.

15. Richard Webster, A History of the Presbyterian Church in America From Its Origin until the Year 1760 (Philadelphia, 1857), pp. 96-97; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 17; Guy S. Klett, Presbyterians in Colonial Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1937), passim.

16. Montgomery, Reminiscences, p. 163.

17. The minister of White Clay Creek Church found it necessary to apologize to his congregation for seeming lukewarm about the patriotic cause. Mackey, White Clay Creek, p. 25.

18. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, pp. 17-18. In the period from 1800 to 1812 the movement of Scotch-Irish toward the frontier was so marked that a Presbyterian minister in Delaware complained that "many of our churches were threatened with utter extinction." Mackey, White Clay Creek, p. 26.

19. In the 1790's the Scotch-Irish formed 6.3 per cent of Delaware's white population. American Council of Learned Societies, "Report of the Committee on Linguistic and National Stocks in the Population of the United States," Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1931, pp. 122-124; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 148.

20. James Adams, William Killen, John McKinly, and Francis Alison, respectively. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 18.

21. Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 6.

22. The Delaware Gazette, or the Friendly Centinel (Wilmington), July 4, 1789. Some came on ships which carried immigrants as their principal cargo. The brig Brothers, whose safe arrival at Delaware is celebrated in the line quoted above, brought 170 passengers. Other vessels brought a few immigrants in addition to their cargo of Irish goods; for example, the ship George Washington of Wilmington brought a few each trip. See Isaac Hendrickson, Account Book, Ship General George Washington, 1794, HSD. The brig Keziah brought 163 passengers the same month from Londonderry. Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), July 25, 1789; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, pp. 18, 213.

23. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 86.

24. Liancourt, Travels, III, 491-492.

25. Frances Sergeant Childs, French Refugee Life in the United States, 1790-1800 (Baltimore, 1940), pp. 13-16, 44; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 149. Captain William Hampton, for instance, brought back fourteen Frenchmen from the islands on his return voyage to Wilmington in June, 1792. See William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

26. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 130.

27. Liancourt, Travels, III, 518-519; Childs, French Refugee Life, p. 16.

28. Liancourt, Travels, III, 518-519; Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 130; Montgomery, Reminiscences, p. 66.

29. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 300, states that Caesar Rodney wrote to his father at this time, "requesting him to send a sloop-load of wood from Kent County as 'the French had bought up all the wood.'"

30. Childs, French Refugee Life, p. 47; Ferris, Original Settlements, p. 235; Montgomery, Reminiscences, pp. 286-287.

31. Childs, French Refugee Life, pp. 43-44.

32. Ibid., pp. 41-42; Liancourt, Travels, III, 491-492.

33. Childs, French Refugee Life, pp. 29-30; Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 130.

34. Scharf, History of Delaware, I, 481.

35. Childs, French Refugee Life, p. 47; Scharf, History of Delaware, I, 482-483; Montgomery, Reminiscences, p. 250.

36. Childs, French Refugee Life, p. 194; Montgomery, Reminiscences, p. 267.

37. B. G. du Pont, E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company: A History, 1802-1902 (Boston, 1920), pp. 2-15.

38. Childs, French Refugee Life, pp. 44, 194-195.

39. The Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), July 4, 1789.

40. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 148; see arrivals mentioned in Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), June 26 and July 24, 1790; August 2, 1796; and in the Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser (Wilmington), July 12 and August 30, 1794.

41. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 130; Ferris, Original Settlements, p. 232.

42. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 130.
43. Nuala M. Drescher, "The Irish in Industrial Wilmington, 1800-1845" (Unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Delaware, June, 1960), passim.
44. Ward, "James Hemphill," pp. 4-5.
45. Pares, Yankees and Creoles, p. 163.
46. See Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser (Wilmington), September 30, 1798.
47. The Navigation Acts forbade the British West Indies to import produce from any countries but England and the English colonies in North America. Pares, Yankees and Creoles, pp. 9, 11. For a discussion of American exports to the West Indies see Percy Wells Bidwell and John I. Falconer, History of Agriculture in the Northern United States 1620-1860 (New York, 1941), pp. 135-137.
48. Pares, Yankees and Creoles, p. 8.
49. Ibid., pp. 8-12.
50. Ibid., p. 11; Lowell J. Ragatz, The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763-1833 (New York, 1928), gives the fullest discussion of the relationship between the British West Indies and America.
51. Ragatz, Fall of the Planter Class, pp. 287-288.
52. Ibid., p. 101.
53. Pitkin, Statistical View, pp. 212-217.
54. Bidwell and Falconer, History of Agriculture, pp. 42, 133.
55. Hanna, "Trade of the Delaware District," p. 273.
56. Ibid.
57. Ferris, Original Settlements, p. 231; William Shipley, Manuscript Book, 1743, HSD. The Navigation Acts made it illegal for the colonies to trade with the Dutch, Spanish or French West Indies. Nevertheless, illicit trade was often carried on.
58. Hanna, "Trade of the Delaware District," p. 244; Samuel Bush, Freight Book, 1789-1794, HSD.

59. Philadelphia was the leading flour port in the period from 1749-1790. In 1770 Philadelphia led in total tonnage employed in shipping with 47,000 tons as against Boston's 38,000, Charleston's 27,000, and New York's 25,000. Robert Greenhalgh Albion, The Rise of New York Port, 1815-1860 (New York, 1939), pp. 4-5; Jensen, The New Nation, pp. 214-215. For comparative statistics on port figures, see Virginia D. Harrington, The New York Merchant on the Eve of the American Revolution (New York, 1935), Appendix "G."

60. Pennsylvania Historical Society Memoirs, II, 216; Hanna, "Trade of the Delaware District," p. 244.

61. See Henry Seidel Canby, Family History (Cambridge, Mass., 1945), passim; Frederick B. Tolles, Meeting House and Counting House: The Quaker Merchants of Colonial Pennsylvania (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1948), passim; John A. Munroe, "The Philadelphareans: A Study in the Relations between Philadelphia and Delaware in the Late Eighteenth Century," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXIX (1945), 128-149.

62. Hanna, "Trade of the Delaware District," p. 255; Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," p. 331. See also "Ship Registers for the Port of Philadelphia, 1726-1775," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XXIV (1900); XXV (1901); XXVI (1902); and XXVIII (1904), passim.

63. For instance, Chalower and White, Philadelphia merchants, purchased flour for the Continental Army during the Revolution from the mills of the Brandywine and Elk rivers. East, Business Enterprise, p. 153. Francis Wade of Philadelphia purchased Delaware flour for Philadelphia markets through Thomas Wade of Christiana Bridge and William Hemphill of Wilmington. See Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), November 3, 1768.

Wilmington merchants also bought goods from Philadelphia. For instance, William Hemphill's account book for 1775 shows purchases made from Philadelphia merchants who in turn imported the goods from England; Wade & Hemphill Ledger "E," 1775, HSD. John Wilday of Christiana Bridge, and David Nelson and Thomas Gilpin in Wilmington also seem to have sold articles imported through Philadelphia; see Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), November 3, 1768; October 17, 1771; and March 21, 1771.

Thomas Rodney, in the mercantile business in Dover from 1773 to 1775, bought "nails, cinnamon, pepper, powder and shot, glassware, chinaware, snuff, tea, shoes, skillets, stationery, chocolate, nutmeg, twine, sugar, tobacco, . . . , molasses, coffee, rum, rugs, English blankets, and buckram" from Philadelphia. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 32; Thomas Rodney, bound Ms. journal, HSD.

64. Hanna, "Trade of the Delaware District," pp. 245, 265-267, 271.
65. Ibid., p. 272; Jensen, The New Nation, p. 198.
66. Hanna, "Trade of the Delaware District," p. 273.
67. Ibid., p. 272; Pares, Yankees and Creoles, p. 140.
68. Hanna, "Trade of the Delaware District," pp. 267-271.
69. Ibid., p. 267.
70. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, pp. 34-35; Stevens, The Transitional Period, pp. 97-98.
71. Major George Bush, April 28, 1786, Bush Ms. folder, HSD; "Memorial to George W. Bush," December, 1900, Bush Ms. folder, HSD.
72. Jensen, The New Nation, p. 198.
73. Ibid.
74. Ragatz, Fall of the Planter Class, pp. 183-184; Jensen, The New Nation, p. 198. "Only one conclusion can be drawn regarding the paths of commerce in the eighteenth century. Governments marked them out by law but provided only the weakest means of enforcement. Merchants and ship-owners followed the paths if they seemed profitable. If not, and if greater profits could be found elsewhere, the laws be damned." Jensen, The New Nation, p. 213.
75. Jensen, The New Nation, p. 200.
76. This was sometimes resented. See James Stephen, War in Disguise, or the Frauds of Neutral Flags (/London/, 1806) cited in Parkinson, Trade Winds, p. 167.
77. Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 5; Parkinson, Trade Winds, pp. 173-174. Great Britain allowed imports of flour from the United States contrary to the principles of the Mercantile System, because supplies from the Mother Country were uncertain and limited. Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 11.
78. Hendrickson Ms. folder, HSD.
79. William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.
80. James Hemphill, Log Book, 5th Voyage to West Indies, 1793, HSD.

81. Ibid.
82. Thomas Shipley, October 30, 1809, Shipley Ms. folder, HSD.
83. William Hemphill, July 28, 1792, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD; Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 17. Newspaper references are to the Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), June 29, 1785, January 26, 1793, September 28, 1793, August 31, 1793, April 12, 1786, and April 2, 1791.
84. Pares, Yankees and Creoles, p. 18. "I must Begg & Request from the Danger of Laying in your Road at the Approaching Season that Captain Hampton of the brig Isabella and Ann may have every Despatch in your power . . ." William Hemphill, Wilmington, to Hardtman and Clarkson, St. Eustatius, August 13, 1792, William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD. Insurance rates in London doubled on ships remaining in the islands after July, and the ordinary policy stated that they must sail before August 1. Parkinson, Trade Winds, p. 183.
85. Parkinson, Trade Winds, p. 210. A ship's orders might suggest taking it into New York if ice blocked the Delaware, particularly if the Wilmington merchant had an agent in that city. See William Hemphill's sailing orders to Captain William Hampton: "If you cannot get into the Delaware on return go to the port of New York and there call upon Mr. Joseph Byrnes, Mercht . . . & give me early advice." William Hemphill, October 15, 1792, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.
86. Broom, Hendrickson, and Summerl to William Stevenson, April 4, 1792, Letter Book, 1792-1794, HSD.
87. Shipowning and merchant activity were often identified with each other in the Delaware district. This is in marked contrast with the organization of English merchant activity, in which differentiation between trading and shipping interests was becoming more and more marked in this period. Parkinson, Trade Winds, p. 27. Wilmington merchants sometimes shipped on freight. There were regular packets to Philadelphia for this purpose, such as those operated by the Bush family, by Thomas and Adam Mendinhall, by Bond and Lees of New Castle, and by Eleazer McComb and Nehemiah Tilton. "Memorial to George Bush," Bush Family Papers, HSD; Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser (Wilmington), June 28 and August 9, 1794; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 132. There are occasional references to Wilmington merchants shipping cargoes on freight to the West Indies, but most of the merchants seem to have been shipowners and to have employed their own vessels in trade. See Bill of Lading, November 4, 1786, for freight paid to Thomas Fort of the Polly and Betsey, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD, or Robert Ralston letter, July 29, 1791,

Hemphill Ms. Folder, HSD, for references to freight. See "Ship Registers for the Port of Philadelphia, 1726-1775," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XXIV-XXVIII (1900-1904), for merchant-shipowners. Wilmington merchant-shipowners might seek to obtain cargoes on freight, especially if the markets were bad and they did not care to ship themselves. See sailing orders for the brig Isabella and Ann, October 15, 1792, William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

88. I believe this was the case with the schooner Isabella. See letter from Hardtman and Clarkson, St. Martins, to William Hemphill, Wilmington, July 5, 1789, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD. Robinson and Hemphill, of Wilmington, and Sanderson and Gray, of St. Christopher, seem to have owned shares in a brig trading between Wilmington and the West Indies in the 1780's, perhaps the brig Pollies. See Bill of Lading, June 8, 1784; letter from Sanderson and Gray, St. Kitts, to Robinson and Hemphill, Wilmington, October 29, 1786; "Account Current of 6th and 7th Voyages," Joseph Sanderson, St. Christopher, to Robinson and Hemphill, Wilmington, February 29, 1788, in Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

89. Pares, Yankees and Creoles, pp. 8, 16.

90. Most of William Hemphill's letters are addressed to Sanderson and Gray, St. Christopher (i.e. St. Kitts), and St. Eustatius (1786-1788); Benjamin Amory & Sons, St. Kitts (1790-1796); or Hardtman & Clarkson, St. Martins (1789-1795). See Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD, and William Hemphill Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

91. Sy Smith, Disbursements for the brig Peggy, 1793, Ms. book, HSD, shows a voyage in which several stops were made and the owner complained of the extravagance of his captain.

92. Pares, Yankees and Creoles, p. 17. The brig Hetty, owned by John Shallcross and Jehu Hollingsworth of Wilmington and registered December 29, 1797, was of 116 tons burthen. Hollingsworth Ms. folder, HSD.

93. Pares, Yankees and Creoles, pp. 16-17. The markets were easily glutted. See William Gray, St. Christopher, to William Hemphill, Wilmington, November 9, 1786, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

94. Pares, Yankees and Creoles, p. 16.

95. William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 134; Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), June 27, 1789.

96. Thomas Lea, Ledger "A," 1784-1809, HSD.
97. Ferris, Original Settlements, pp. 231-232; Account Book of William Shipley for fitting out the brig Wilmington, 1739-1743, HSD.
98. Thomas Lea and Sons, Account Book, 1773-1787, microfilm in Hagley Museum Library, Wilmington, Delaware, pp. 39-40; Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," pp. 331-332. "Mostly utilizing the brig 'Christianna,' Joseph Tatnall and Thomas Lea traded with merchants of St. Christopher, Antigua, Martinique, and Surinam. . . . The West Indies were not the only markets where the millers did business. They shipped flaxseed to Ireland and received linen in return. When ocean commerce was not pursued, there was always the river or the coasting trade. In Philadelphia, Tatnall and Lea dealt with the Dawes brothers; while in New York City, Smith and Wyckoff handled their business." Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," pp. 334-335; Thomas Lea, Ledger "A," 1784-1809, HSD.
99. Sailing orders for Capt. Robert Bail of the brig Pratt, July 10, 1793, Broom, Hendrickson, and Summerl Letter-Book, HSD.
100. Weslager, Forgotten River, pp. 84-85.
101. Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), December 30, 1770; March 21, 1771. He had for sale rugs, blankets, broadcloths, nails, pepper, "cinnoman," "oxenbrigs," cutlery, haberdashery, iron mongery, linen, pins, iron plate, hand saws, and Indian blankets.
102. Ibid., November 3, 1768; October 17, 1771. He offered for sale broadcloths, both coarse and fine, rugs, camblets, tammies, calicoes, buckles, buttons, bearskins, printed linens, glassware and books "by the most noted authors in divinity."
103. Weslager, Forgotten River, p. 73.
104. James Hemphill, May 25, 1801, Letter Book, 1801, HSD, lists beef, whale oil, spermaceti candles, and pork acquired in the Boston trade, and mentions flour shipped there from Delaware. See also Weslager, Forgotten River, p. 73.
105. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 28.
106. Ibid., p. 134.
107. Ferris, Original Settlements, p. 232.

108. Parkinson, Trade Winds, p. 210.
109. Ibid., p. 207.
110. Ibid. Besides wheat and some corn, flaxseed was America's most important agricultural export to Europe. Bidwell and Falconer, History of Agriculture, p. 134.
111. Parkinson, Trade Winds, p. 210; Kalm, Travels, I, 255.
112. Parkinson, Trade Winds, p. 210; Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 134; Kalm, Travels, I, 255.
113. David Brown, Strasburg, to William Hemphill, Wilmington, November 17, 1788, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD: "the rest of my flaxseed I have sold to the oyl millers as I was afraid to Send two much least it could not be sold."
114. Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), September 25, 1790; October 23, 1790; and December 31, 1791.
115. Isaac Hendrickson, Account Book, Ship General Washington, HSD; the Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), December 31, 1791, announces that the General Washington will soon sail from New York to Londonderry. Hemphill letters also indicate that seed was sent from Wilmington to New York. See William Hemphill, December 9, 1788, in Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD. The Wilmington, owned by Broom, Hendrickson and Summerl, also traded with Ireland. See Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser (Wilmington), September 20, 1794.
116. Parkinson, Trade Winds, p. 210.
117. William Hemphill, January 12, 1789, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD; Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), December 31, 1791.
118. Parkinson, Trade Winds, pp. 210-211.
119. Ibid., p. 211.
120. Ibid.
121. Jensen, The New Nation, p. 197; Samuel F. Bemis, Jay's Treaty, A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy (New York, 1923), Ch. VII.
122. See Bond and Lees' advertisement, Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), January 5, 1793; William Hemphill, 1799, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

123. Broom, Hendrickson, and Summerl, Letter Book, 1792-1794, HSD.

124. The Middle Atlantic States suffered less than the New England States from this post-war depression. Jensen, The New Nation, pp. 191-192.

125. William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD; Broom, Hendrickson, and Summerl, Letter Book, 1792-1794, HSD.

126. Edmond Buron, "Statistics on Franco-American Trade, 1778-1806," Journal of Economic and Business History, IV (1931-2), 574; Jensen, The New Nation, pp. 201-202.

127. Jensen, The New Nation, pp. 166-167, 201. Brissot de Warville's Travels seem to have been written to encourage Franco-American trade.

128. James Hemphill, June 3, 1801, Letter Book, 1801, HSD.

129. William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

130. James Hemphill, Letter Book, 1795-1797, HSD.

131. For instance, the Bill of Lading for William Hemphill's brig Sally, returning from Nantes on September 11, 1795, lists its cargo as wine and Spanish silver. Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD. See also Pitkin, Statistical View, p. 185.

132. Buron, "Statistics on Franco-American Trade, 1778-1806," p. 574.

133. Jensen, The New Nation, p. 204. See James Hemphill, Letter Book, 1795-1797, HSD, for a Wilmington merchant's exports to France.

134. Buron, "Statistics on Franco-American Trade," pp. 576-578.

135. Kuhlmann, Flour-Milling Industry, p. 71.

136. Clark, History of Manufactures, I, 237.

137. Albert L. Kohlmeier, "The Commerce Between the United States and the Netherlands, 1783-1789," Indiana University Studies in American History, XII, nos. 66-69 (Bloomington, 1926), passim; Jensen, The New Nation, pp. 205-207.

138. Kohlmeier, "Commerce Between the United States and the Netherlands," pp. 17-23.

139. See John Hayes' advertisement, Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), January 31, 1789, and Peter Brynberg's in Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), December 13, 1790.

140. James Hemphill, Logbook, 9th Voyage to Batavia, 1804, HSD.

141. James Hemphill, Letter Book, 1801-1803, HSD.

142. Hemphill Ms. Collection, HSD; Broom, Hendrickson, and Summerl, Letter Book, 1792-1797, HSD; Stockton Papers, DSA; Lewden Papers, HSD; Shipley Papers, HSD; Tatnall and Lea, Letter Books, HSD.

143. Jensen, The New Nation, p. 208.

144. Ibid.

145. Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), January 18, 1786.

146. Robert Ralston to William Hemphill, November 16, 1803, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

147. Ibid., September 2, 1803.

148. James Hemphill, Log Book, 8th Voyage to Calcutta, 1803, HSD.

149. James Hemphill, June 2, 1806, Letter Book, 1806-1814, HSD.

150. Liancourt, Travels, III, 517.

151. Munroe, "The Philadelphareans," pp. 128-149.

152. Hanna, "Trade of the Delaware District," pp. 244-245.

153. East, Business Enterprise, pp. 291, 297.

154. "Poetical Description of Philadelphia in 1730," Historical Magazine, IV (New York, 1860), 344, cited in Munroe, "Philadelphareans," p. 129.

155. Munroe, "Philadelphareans," p. 132.

156. Ibid., p. 130.

157. Ibid., pp. 130-131.

158. "Ship Registers for the Port of Philadelphia, 1726-1775," XXIV-XXVIII, passim.

159. Kenneth and Anna Roberts, tr., Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey, 1793-1798 (New York, 1947), p. 88.

160. Munroe, "Philadelawareans," p. 130.

161. An example of this would be the long-standing partnership between William Hemphill of Wilmington and Robert Ralston of Philadelphia. See Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

162. Deane Papers, I, 56.

163. Views Respecting the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal By a Citizen of Philadelphia, p. 16; Johann David Schoepf, Travels in the Confederation, 1783-1784 (Philadelphia, 1911), I, 377.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER III

Subtitle: Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), August 8, 1789.

1. Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 5; Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," p. 324.

2. See Hemphill papers, HSD, passim.

3. Weslager, Forgotten River, p. 78; Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 6; Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 655. A sizeable body of Hemphill manuscript material, the gift of Mrs. Christopher Ward, is in the library of the Historical Society of Delaware. These documents provide a considerable amount of information about the Hemphills' business activities from 1784 until the year of William Hemphill's retirement, 1805. Furthermore, scattered manuscripts appear dating from the years prior to 1785 and those after 1805. These items make it possible to project the probable course of the Hemphill merchant activity beyond the limits of the main body of correspondence in the collection.

4. Munroe, "The Philadelphawareans," pp. 128-149.

5. These five letters (March, 1761-August, 1763) are in the Hemphill collection in the Historical Society of Delaware. The first three (written between March, 1761, and February, 1762) are from Mary Hemphill to her son William Hemphill; the last two (February, 1763, and August, 1763) are William's drafts of letters to his mother. The originals were presumably sent to her in Ireland.

6. Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 655; Ward, "James Hemphill," pp. 6-7.

7. Mr. Brian Trainor of the Public Record Office of Belfast, Northern Ireland has been very helpful in this respect, and most generous with the information at his disposal.

8. Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 655; Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 6.

9. Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 655.

10. Harold B. Hancock and Norman B. Wilkinson, "An American Manufacturer in Ireland, 1796," (Unpublished manuscript, Hagley Museum), pp. 14-15.

11. Mary Hemphill to William Hemphill, March 6, 1761, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD; Curtis Hemphill Daybook, 1784-1807, HSD; William Hemphill to Curtis Hemphill, June 2, 1804, William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

12. T808/7801, Derry will made August 12, 1758, and proved August 23, 1758. Public Record Office, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

13. Curtis Hemphill Daybook, 1784-1807, HSD.

14. Mary Hemphill to William Hemphill, March 6, 1761, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

15. Mary Hemphill to William Hemphill, September 4, 1761, in ibid.

16. Deeds D486/1, D573/2, and D639/6, Public Record Office, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

17. Homer L. Calkin, "American Influence in Ireland, 1760-1800," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXXI (1947), 104-118.

18. Ibid., p. 116.

19. William Hemphill comments upon this fact in a letter home, February, 1763, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

20. William Hemphill, draft of a letter to Mary Hemphill, New York, February 20, 1763, in ibid.; Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 655, mistakenly gives Hemphill's age as about fifteen.

21. William Hemphill, February 20 and August 18, 1763, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

22. Harrington, New York Merchants, pp. 356-360.

23. William Hemphill, draft of a letter to Mary Hemphill, New York, February 20, 1763, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

24. Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 655.

25. William Hemphill, February 20, 1763, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

26. Ibid.

27. William Hemphill, August 18, 1763, in ibid.

28. "Francis Wade," Manuscript Card File, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
29. August 18, 1763, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
30. Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), November 3, 1768.
31. Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 6.
32. Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), November 3, 1768.
33. Delaware Marriage Records, Vol. 87, p. 115, DSA.
34. Munroe, Federalist Delaware, p. 134.
35. Delaware Marriage Records, Vol. 87, p. 115, DSA; "List of Names and Monuments and Tombstones in Graveyard of First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, Delaware," HSD.
36. "List of Names and Monuments and Tombstones," HSD.
37. Ibid.; William Hemphill's will, New Castle County Wills, Wills & Adms. File, DSA.
38. Hemphill Ledger, 1775, HSD.
39. Ibid.; James Hemphill, Letter Book, 1801-1803, HSD.
40. "List of Bad Debts, 1775," included in the Hemphill Ledger, 1775, HSD, is helpful. It lists names, addresses, and occupations in many cases.
41. Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 6.
42. Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 655.
43. "Francis Wade," Manuscript Card File, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
44. Curtis Hemphill Daybook, 1784-1807, HSD; June 5, 1784, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
45. Ward, "James Hemphill," pp. 6-7.
46. Joshua Montefiore, A Commercial Dictionary (London, 1803), n. p., cited in Norman Sydney Buck, The Development of the Organization of Anglo-American Trade 1800-1850 (New Haven, 1925), pp. 5-6.
47. Clark, History of Manufactures, I, 237.

48. Buck, Anglo-American Trade, pp. 5-6.
49. Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 655; Ward, "James Hemphill," pp. 6-7.
50. Buck, Anglo-American Trade, pp. 6-7.
51. J. R. McCulloch, A Dictionary, Practical, Theoretical, and Historical, of Commerce, and Commercial Navigation (London, 1834), p. 568, cited in Buck, Anglo-American Trade, p. 7.
52. George Caines, Lex Mercatoria Americana (New York, 1802), p. 388, cited in Buck, Anglo-American Trade, p. 7.
53. Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), November 3, 1768; Hemphill Ledger, 1775, HSD; Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
54. Curtis Hemphill Daybook, 1784-1807, HSD.
55. Ibid., May 30, 1787.
56. Ibid., passim.
57. Ibid., August 10, 1787.
58. Bidwell and Falconer, History of Agriculture, p. 139.
59. August 8, 1792, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
60. October 2, 1790; November 26, 1788; April 14, 1789; March 27, 1789, and February 28, 1790; March 27, 1789; June 16, 1792; March 1, 1789; August 24 and September 12, 1792; and November 23, 1790, in ibid.
61. November 17, 1788; November 25, 1788; and February 28, 1790, in ibid.; Samuel Bush, Freight Book, HSD.
62. June 12 and 28, 1792; July 3 and 10, 1792, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
63. Offley and Paxon, July 3, 1792, in ibid.
64. William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.
65. November 13, 1788, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
66. November 17, 1788, in ibid.
67. December 9, 1788, in ibid.
68. December 29, 1788; December 31, 1788; and November 23, 1790, in ibid.

69. January 24, 1789, in ibid.; William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

70. September 21, 1790, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

71. Ward, "James Hemphill," pp. 6-7; Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), August 8, 1789.

72. January 4, 1788, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

73. November 6, 1788, in ibid.

74. November 6, 1788, and December 12, 1788, in ibid.

75. November 18, 1788, in ibid.

76. Frederic Emory, "Queen Anne's County, Its Early History and Development" (Mimeographed, Baltimore, 1936), p. 266, cited in John A. Munroe, "James Hemphill's Account of a Visit to Maryland in 1802," Delaware History, III, (September, 1948), 68.

77. Heinrich Ewald Bucholz, Governors of Maryland from the Revolution to the Year 1908 (Baltimore, 1908), pp. 68-69, 284, cited in Munroe, "Visit to Maryland," p. 68.

78. October 31, 1802, James Hemphill Log Book, 1793-1803, HSD.

79. July 11 and 25, 1792, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

80. June 16, 1792, in ibid.

81. June, 1792, in ibid.

82. July 10, 1792, in ibid.

83. Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser (Wilmington), September 20, 1798.

84. October 22, 1802, James Hemphill Log Book, 1793-1803, HSD.

85. Robert Ralston, May 5 and 12, 1791, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

86. Ibid.

87. Robert Ralston, July 29, 1791, in ibid.

88. Robert Ralston, May 5, 1791, in ibid.; Hemphill Family Bible, HSD.

89. William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD; James Hemphill, Log Book, 5th Voyage to the West Indies, 1793, HSD.

90. Ward, "James Hemphill," pp. 8-9; William Hemphill to Messrs. Warner & Hemphill, October 6, 1792, William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

91. William Hemphill to Messrs. Warner & Hemphill, December 23, 1792, William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

92. Ibid.

93. Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 11.

94. March, July, 1793, William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

95. Parkinson, Trade Winds, pp. 188-193.

96. Bidwell and Falconer, History of Agriculture, p. 134.

97. Ibid.; Pitkin, Statistical View, p. 96.

98. Tench Coxe, View of the United States of America (London, 1794), pp. 413ff.

99. Canby, The Brandywine, p. 115.

100. For a full and interesting account of the most famous epidemic and its social and economic consequences, see J. H. Powell, Bring Out Your Dead: The Great Plague of Yellow Fever in Philadelphia in 1793 (Philadelphia, 1949), passim.

101. John Welsh to Robert Ralston, September 4, 1793, Misc. Collection, HSP.

102. Ibid.

103. Ferris, Original Settlements, p. 234; Montgomery, Reminiscences, p. 210.

104. Montgomery, Reminiscences, p. 210.

105. Robert Ralston to the Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green, September 27, 1798, August 31, 1802, Ms. American Merchants Series, HSP.

106. Montgomery, Reminiscences, pp. 211-212; Ralston to Green, September 27, 1798, American Merchants Series, HSP; John Vaughan, A Concise History of the Autumnal Fever, which Prevailed in the Borough of Wilmington in the Year 1801 (Wilmington, 1803), pp. 4-8.

107. October 21, 1802, James Hemphill, Log Book, 1793-1803, HSD.
108. William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD; Voyage of Sally to Nantes, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD; James Hemphill, Log Book, 1793-1803, HSD.
109. William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.
110. July 15, 1795, James Hemphill, Log Book, 1793-1803, HSD.
111. July 31, 1795-August 3, 1795, in ibid.; Ward, "James Hemphill," p. 19.
112. Ward, "James Hemphill," pp. 19-20.
113. James Hemphill, Letter Book, 1795-1797, HSD.
114. Ibid., September 12, 1795.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid., December 19, 1795.
117. Ibid., April 15, 1795.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid.; Copy of Official Documents, May 24 and 28, 1797, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
120. James Hemphill, Letter Book, 1805, HSD.
121. Delaware and Eastern Shore Advertiser (Wilmington), September 20, 1798.
122. Mirror of the Times and General Advertiser (Wilmington), November 20, 1799.
123. James Hemphill, Log Book, 1793-1803, HSD.
124. James Hemphill, Letter Book, 1801-1803, HSD.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.; William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802; Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
127. William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

128. Ibid.
129. Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
130. Ibid.
131. Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 732; Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, pp. 247, 219.
132. Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
133. James Hemphill to Nimrod Maxwell, October 16, 1802, James Hemphill, Letter Book, 1801-1803, HSD. John Gordon appears in the 1814 Wilmington Directory as a merchant living at 7 Market Street, with a store at 7 West Front Street. R. Porter, printer, "A Directory and Register for the Year 1814 Containing the Names, Professions and Residences of the Heads of Families, and Persons in Business, & c., & c., of the Borough of Wilmington and Brandywine" (Typewritten copy, HSD), n. p.
134. Robert Ralston to William Hemphill, March 4, 1803, Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
135. Ibid.
136. James Hemphill, Log Book, 1803-1804, HSD.
137. "Voyage of the Ship Benjamin Franklin to Calcutta--1803," Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
138. John Keating to James Hemphill, March 17, 1803; Peter Bauduy to James Hemphill, March 20, 1783; and Jacob Broom to James Hemphill, March 20, 1783, in "Voyage of the Benjamin Franklin," Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.
139. "Report and Manifest of the Cargo . . .," in ibid.
140. James Hemphill, Log Book, 1803-1804, HSD. This source also gives evidence of some of the amusements called upon to pass the long hours on shipboard. There are three pages of riddles and rhymes. One of the verses is as follows:

As Radius
Is to the distance run
So is a pound of sugar
To a bottle of Rum.

As the difference of latitude
Is to the departure
So is the lime juice
To the water.

As the length of the scale
Is to the bottom of the can
So is the strength of the liquor
To the body of the man.

141. Invoices of November 25, 26, and 30, 1803, in "Voyage of Benjamin Franklin," Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD.

142. "Report and Manifest of the Cargo," in ibid.

143. James Hemphill, Log Book, 1803-1804, HSD.

144. James Hemphill, Log Book, 1804-1806, HSD.

145. Ibid.

146. June 2, 1806, James Hemphill, Letter Book, 1806-1814, HSD.

147. John A. Paxton, The Philadelphia Directory and Register for 1813 (Philadelphia, 1813), n. p.

148. Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 643; Porter, "Directory," n. p.

149. William Hemphill to Messrs. Warner and Hemphill, December 23, 1792, William Hemphill, Letter Book, 1792-1802, HSD.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER IV

Subtitle: "Wilmington Delaware and its Vicinity," in Niles' Weekly Register, IX (1815), 93.

1. "Borough of Wilmington," in Niles' Weekly Register, VI (1814), 277.

2. Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, p. 160; Serle, Journal, p. 257.

3. Porter, "Directory and Register," p. iv.

4. Reeves, "Extracts from the Letter-Books of Lieutenant Enos Reeves," p. 239.

5. Brissot de Warville, Travels, p. 421; In the eighteenth century, merchant milling was second only to lumbering as the most profitable industry providing products for export from America. Clark, Manufactures, I, 99.

6. William Guthrie, A New System of Modern Geography; or, A Geographical, Historical, and Commercial Grammar; and Present State of the Several Nations of the World (Philadelphia, 1795), II, 459.

7. Clark, Manufactures, I, 237.

8. William S. Dutton, Du Pont: One Hundred and Forty Years (New York, 1942), pp. 41-51.

9. It was also stated that "cotton mills are prepared or are preparing for 21,000 spindles." "Borough of Wilmington," p. 277.

10. Ibid.

11. "Wilmington Delaware and Its Vicinity," p. 93.

12. Ibid., p. 92.

13. Ibid.

14. E. I. duPont to Isaac Briggs, December 30, 1815, P. S. duPont Papers, Longwood Foundation, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, cited in Welsh, "Merchants, Millers, and Ocean Ships," p. 324.

15. Canby, The Brandywine, p. 136.
16. Ibid., p. 137.
17. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 219.
18. Estate of William Hemphill, February 19, 1823, in Wills and Adms. File, DSA.
19. Governor's Register, 1674-1851, State of Delaware, (Wilmington, Delaware, 1926), I, 327.
20. Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, pp. 183-184.
21. Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad Minute Book, December 22, 1837, Pennsylvania Railroad Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, pp. 80-81.
22. Estate of William Hemphill; Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, pp. 183-184.
23. Hemphill Ms. folder, passim, HSD.
24. American Watchman (Wilmington), April 14, 1826.
25. Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), February 25, 1832.
26. American Watchman (Wilmington), February 14, 1823.
27. Mirror of the Times (Wilmington), February 27, 1805.
28. Ibid.
29. American Watchman (Wilmington), May 13, 1812.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. See especially Joseph Bruce Sinclair, "Delaware Industries: A Survey, 1820-1860" (Unpublished research report, Hagley Museum), p. 9 and passim.
33. For instance, William Hemphill served as the town treasurer, was a director of the Bank of Delaware, a director of the Wilmington Bridge Company, and a stockholder in several turnpike companies. He was also one of the supporters of the Wilmington Academy and a prominent Presbyterian. He was noted for his charity and public service. Delaware Gazette (Wilmington), September 9, 1789 and July 15, 1809; Scharf, History of Delaware, II, 732; Lincoln, Wilmington Delaware, p. 219; William Hemphill,

in Wills and Adms. File, DSA; Hemphill Ms. folder, HSD;
American Watchman (Wilmington), February 14, 1823.

34. Ward, "James Hemphill," pp. 5-6.
35. Canby, The Brandywine, pp. 109-132.
36. See above, Chapter II, passim.
37. Ward, "James Hemphill," pp. 4-5.

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