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**"The satisfaction of arriving to a good market": Richard Vaux
and the eighteenth-century world of trade**

Guffin, Robert A., Jr., M.A.

University of Delaware, 1991

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**"THE SATISFACTION OF ARRIVING TO A GOOD MARKET"
RICHARD VAUX AND THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY WORLD OF TRADE.**

**by
Robert A. Guffin, Jr.**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of
Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts in Early American Culture**

December 1991

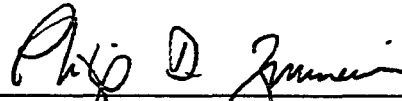
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by

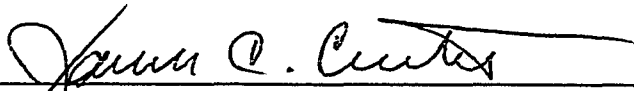
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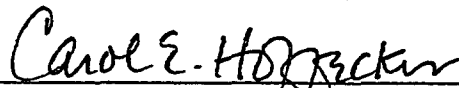
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Now, as always, one nod from Plutus - the god of Wealth and Abundance- turns everything sacred or profane upside down. By his decisions wars, peace, empires, plans, judgements, assemblies, marriages, treaties, pacts, laws, arts, sports, solemnities (I am almost out of breath) - in short all public and private affairs are governed.

Erasmus, The Praise of Folly, 1509.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore the life and business organization of a merchant involved in the selection, transportation and sale of English goods during the turbulent period of the American Revolution. As a component of the eighteenth-century English economy, the export of manufactured goods and farm produce to the Americas is a subject worthy of historical inquiry. This thesis is an examination of Richard Vaux's business papers and personal correspondence at the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. These primary documents provide an opportunity to analyze the mechanics of trade during the 1770s and 1780s, explore the social and material history of an important segment of the transatlantic mercantile community, provide additional information on period names, and speculate about the importance of goods during this period.

INTRODUCTION

As a major component of the eighteenth-century English economy, the export of manufactured goods and farm produce to the Americas is a subject worthy of historical inquiry. While archaeological fragments and the analysis of probate records have documented the widespread distribution of these goods, the mechanics of the trade still require further investigation. The presence of Richard Vaux's business papers and personal correspondence at the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania provides an opportunity to gain new insights into the mechanics of trade during the complex Revolutionary period of the 1770s and 1780s, examine the social and material history of an important segment of eighteenth-century society, provide additional information on period names, and offer some speculation about the various factors that increased the importance of goods during this period.

In 1714, Bernard Mandeville authored The Fable of the Bees and set off a storm of controversy that continues to reverberate today. The central thesis of this essay was that greed, envy and vanity, long regarded as vices, were in

actuality vital ingredients fueling the English economy. Mandeville sang the praises of fickleness "that strange ridic'ulous Vice [which] was made the very Wheel, that turn'd the Trade."¹

Even as this concern with fashion and its capricious dictates was being reviled by religious authorities such as John Wesley, and satirized by artists such as William Hogarth, the English economy was experiencing unprecedented growth. One group that certainly would have agreed with Mandeville was the sugar planters of the Caribbean islands. These pioneering mercantilists benefited profoundly from England's increasing appetite for their exotic elixir. While revenues from sugar were initially generated by the re-exportation of sugar from England to the Continent, by the 1750s the vast majority of the approximately 110,000 hogsheads of sugar exported to England were aimed at domestic markets.² By the mid-eighteenth century, the luxuries of tea and sugar had radically altered both the diet and social behavior of English consumers, transforming these "exotic" commodities into perceived "necessities" of life.

¹ Quoted in Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, eds., The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 17.

² Sidney W. Mintz, Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History (New York: Viking, 1985), p. 39.

Consistent with this new reliance on the production and sale of luxury goods was an increased emphasis on the development of new markets, both domestic and foreign. While many scholars disagree concerning the relative self-sufficiency of seventeenth-century American colonies, few if any would deny that by the eighteenth century, a widespread "consumer revolution" had profoundly altered America and England.³

The genesis, mechanics and impact of this consumer revolution on America's material culture and social organization has become a primary concern of scholars of eighteenth-century society. The movement of goods and produce was itself a result of the vast migrations of people out of their original homelands; these migrations have been described by one historian as "Arguably, the defining event of the last

³ See especially James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: Mentalities in Pre-Industrial America," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., XXXV (1978): 3-32, and Michael Merrill, "Cash is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States," Radical History Review, IV (1977): 67-68, nn. 9-13, for an anti-market emphasis. This pro-entrepreneurial view is well represented by James T. Lemon, The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania (Baltimore, 1972), chaps. 6 & 7. A much needed synthesis of these two positions is provided by Richard L. Bushman, "Family Security in the Transition from Farm to City, 1750-1850," Journal of Family History, VI (1981): 238-243.

millennium of Western History."⁴ Wide-scale migrations served both to supply the necessary raw materials for the developing manufacturing economy, and provided a ready-made market for these goods.

Complementing, or sometimes refuting the preponderance of earlier studies of American material culture that focused their attention on locally produced objects, recent scholarship has begun to focus on the impact of English produced goods on the American domestic environment. Previous generations of scholars saw the industrial revolution as the major force behind the explosion of goods that characterized nineteenth-century American life. New models place increased emphasis on the demand side of the equation. It must be remembered that the shift to a market economy was very subtle and reflected an evolution rather than a revolution. Attempts to determine an exact date for the consumer revolution reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the phenomena. As with most social phenomena, the adoption of a new form of behavior required more than an awareness of its existence. Certain preconditions were necessary for its selection, and different segments of society incorporated the new patterns at different rates.

⁴ Bernard Bailyn, The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), p. 4.

Equally significant was the fact that entry into the market economy was often initiated by the purchase of small luxury items, such as specialty foods, personal adornments and objects necessary for the new etiquette of dining.⁵

Being able to choose from a multitude of goods provided many consumers with a new sense of power that enticed them ever deeper into the net of consumerism. The cumulative impact of these small purchases was a fundamental transformation of the domestic environments of eighteenth-century, middle-class homes. A gentleman traveling about the English countryside complained of the wasteful extravagances he observed:

Everything about the farmhouse was formerly the scene of plain manners, and plentiful living. Oak clothes-chests, oak bed-steads, oak chests of drawers, and oak tables to eat on, long, strong and well supplied with joint stools. Some of the things were many hundred years old. Now everything was new: 'some showy chairs and a sofa; half a dozen prints in gilt frames hanging up; book-shelves with novels, many wine decanters and wine glasses and a 'dinner set' and a 'break-fast set' and 'desert knives'... and worst of all a parlour.⁶

⁵ Neil McKendrick, "The Commercialization of Fashion," in The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England, p. 53.

⁶ W. Cobbett, Rural Rides, entry for October 25, 1825, p. 226. Quoted in McKendrick, "The Commercialization of Fashion," pp. 27-28.

Individual merchants, such as Vaux, played a pivotal role in the economic and physical transformation of Europe and America. Vaux's life, as described in his business records and letters, provides a valuable opportunity to explore the interaction of the social structural, ideological and technoeconomic subsystems. Vaux's education, choice of residence, fraternal associates, marriage partner and political orientation reflect both the legacy of the past and the demands of a developing market economy.

PHILADELPHIA, 1768-1776

Apprenticeship

In 1768, seventeen-year old Richard Vaux sailed from London bound for Philadelphia to begin a career as a merchant. Following the well developed pattern of learning a trade by serving an apprenticeship under someone in that trade, young Vaux was hoping to be placed with a prominent Philadelphia merchant. His father, Doctor George Vaux, had facilitated his son's journey by writing Edward Pennington of Philadelphia to solicit his assistance in placing Richard with one of his city's "principal houses" of commerce.⁷

In choosing a career for his son, Dr. Vaux was influenced by both economic and social considerations. As a Quaker, Vaux's opportunities were severely restricted. After Cromwell, the Clarendon Codes had forbidden any member of a non-Anglican denomination to hold a position in local government,

⁷Dr. George Vaux to Edward Pennington, February 24, 1768, Vaux Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. As used in the previous quotation a "principal house" was a leading mercantile firm, see OED, 418, s.v. "house."

the civil service or the universities. Denied these traditional avenues of advancement, nonconformists pursued occupations in the burgeoning market economy of the period and soon carved out a dominant role in trade and finance. Barred from attendance at the established universities, Quakers studied at the dissenting academies of England and Scotland, where they pursued a curriculum based on experimentation and problem solving, rather than an analysis of classical texts. In addition to the benefits of a practical education, Quakers also took advantage of a close-knit network of co-religionists all over the English speaking world that provided a ready-made supply of economic partners and customers.⁸

Philadelphia in 1768 was the most populous English speaking city in the Western Hemisphere and the fourth largest in the British Empire.⁹ In spite of the fact that numerically the Quakers were a minority of the city's population, they continued to play a dominant role in its economy.¹⁰ Given these

⁸On the significance of the Dissenters to the development of the English consumer and industrial revolution, see James Burke, The Day the University Changed (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985), pp. 163-195.

⁹Theodore Thayer, "Town into City, 1746-1765," in Philadelphia: A 300-Year History, ed. Russell F. Weigley (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), p. 69.

¹⁰James A. Henretta, The Evolution of American Society, 1700-1815: An Interdisciplinary Analysis (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1973), p. 102.

economic advantages, and the presence of Friends to whom Dr. Vaux could entrust his son's moral, as well as occupational, development, Philadelphia was a logical choice in which to begin his mercantile career. Fortunately for Dr. Vaux and his young son, Edward Pennington, after consulting with a number of merchants, was successful in placing Richard with the firm of Samuel Sansom and Son.¹¹

The responsibilities of an apprentice were commonly specified in the contract of indenture. One pre-Revolutionary era indenture required the apprentice to agree that he would:

his said master faithfully... serve, his secrets keep, his lawful Commands gladly every where obey; he shall do no Damage to his said master, nor see it to be done of others, without letting or giving Notice therof to his said Master.¹²

In addition to these obligations, an apprentice was also commonly prohibited from marrying, gambling or attending alehouses, taverns, or playhouses during his apprenticeship. An individual willing to accept the responsibility for an apprenticeship was charged with vocational training, securing the necessities of life - meat, drink, washing, lodging and

¹¹Edward Pennington to Dr. George Vaux, May, 19, 1768, Vaux Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. (Hereafter cited as HSP).

¹²Diana Ross McCain, "The Connecticut Apprentice," in Early American Life, (December, 1989): 6.

apparel - during the period of indenture and overseeing the moral development of the apprentice. Given the responsibilities enumerated in these contracts, a conscientious merchant would carefully evaluate the character of an apprentice before agreeing to the indenture.

In return for accepting this responsibility, a merchant commonly expected to receive a cash payment in addition to the unpaid labor of the apprentice. For example, in 1779, Vaux visited Christ's Hospital in London and "received twelve pounds seven shillings owed Captain E. Lawrence on account of his having taken John Hollensworth an apprentice."¹³ Later that same afternoon, he called on Mrs. Hollensworth to deliver the young man's Certificate of Indenture and a copy of the apprenticeship agreement.

Disagreement about the amount of payment could, and often did, result in the failure to find a position with a successful firm. Writing on behalf of the Philadelphia firm of James and Drinker, one correspondent advised a London firm that "the merchants of this place do their business either by apprentices with whom they have handsome fees or clerks well

¹³Richard Vaux's Memorandum Book (Hereafter VMB), March 31, 1779, Vaux Papers, HSP.

versed in Bookkeeping and Business..."¹⁴ In Richard's case, an attempt was made to secure the desired apprenticeship in exchange for goods that could then be sold in Philadelphia. However, Edward Pennington advised that it would be "most proper for many reasons to draw on thee for the money."¹⁵

Another difficulty in locating a suitable position for Vaux was the length of time the young man was to be bound out as an apprentice. While many historians have asserted that the absence of guilds and a shortage of manpower in colonial America led to increased flexibility on the part of an individual to determine the length of his service, it appears that in Philadelphia this was not always the case.¹⁶ Initially, Vaux wished to terminate his apprenticeship upon his twenty-first birthday, an apprenticeship of sixty-two months. Pennington wrote of his inability "to get anyone to take him for so short a time," as "apprentices here are generally bound for seven years [and] seldom less than six."¹⁷ Others appear to have been more flexible, James Smith was hoping to secure "...a

¹⁴James and Drinker to Neate and Pigou, November 29, 1762, James and Drinker Letter Book, HSP.

¹⁵Edward Pennington to Dr. George Vaux, May 19, 1768, Vaux Papers, HSP.

¹⁶For example, see Carl Bridenbaugh, The Colonial Craftsman (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1990), pp. 134-135.

¹⁷Edward Pennington to Dr. George Vaux, May 19, 1768, Vaux Papers, HSP.

smart, young lad of about 14 or 15 years of Age..." for an apprenticeship of "3, 7, or 8 years as may best suit the Parent, Guardian, Overseers or otherwise and find him Cloaths [sic] and all necessaries."¹⁸

Richard Vaux was fortunate to secure a position with the dry-goods firm of Samuel Sansom & Son. Years earlier, the elder Sansom had immigrated to Philadelphia from London in the hope of bettering himself, and quickly established himself as a major factor for English textile firms. Acting as a factor, buying and selling merchandise on behalf of another merchant for an agreed sum per every hundred pounds worth of goods, was a common strategy by which ambitious young men gained experience, secured capital and reduced the risk of insolvency as a result of bad debts and unprofitable sales.¹⁹ By carefully investing his commissions in real estate and ships, and by marrying the only child of the merchant William Callandar, Sansom established himself as one of the most prosperous merchants in Philadelphia. Upon his death, he left his son, Samuel Sansom, Jr., an estate assessed at over £92,000.²⁰ Most

¹⁸James Smith to Daniel Tyson, November 5, 1773, Joseph Downs Manuscript and Microfilm Collection, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware [hereafter cited as JDC].

¹⁹Berg, "The Organization of Business in Colonial America," 162.

²⁰Elva Trooker, Nathan Trotter: Philadelphia Merchant, 1787-1853 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 37.

likely, the young man who sailed from London in 1768 was aware of the success of merchants such as Samuel Sansom and must have harbored the hope that his efforts would prove equally profitable.

Bookkeeping

A principal requirement for doing business in the eighteenth century was to be very exact in recording accounts. Although many merchants continued to utilize a relatively simple single-entry bookkeeping system, as early as the fourteenth century, merchants in Venice had developed the practice of double-entry bookkeeping. So completely was this bookkeeping technique associated with Italy, that in the eighteenth century it was often referred to as "keeping books by way of Debtor and Creditor, or (as some call it) after the Italian manner".²¹ In Philadelphia, Anthony Lamb spent over a quarter of a century training the youth of the city in the art of "Italian" bookkeeping.²²

²¹Hatton, The Merchant's Magazine..., p. 159. For a complete discussion of the development of double entry bookkeeping, see Frank J. Swetz, Capitalism & Arithmetic: The New Math of the 15th Century (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1987), pp. 15-21.

²²Thayer, "Town into City...", :p. 85.

Seventeenth and eighteenth-century merchants utilized up to eleven books to record their business activities. The wastebook and the journal were both daybooks. A merchant would hastily record in his waste book, so called because it was commonly composed of ordinary or waste paper, all his financial transactions. The waste book was often the most detailed record of a particular economic activity. When the opportunity presented itself, a merchant would transfer all entries from the waste book to his journal. The journal also recorded daily economic activities, but in a more careful and abbreviated manner.²³

While the daybooks contained a detailed record of an individual's accounts, it was the ledger that was the cornerstone of the bookkeeping system. In fact, many people utilizing a single-entry system did not seem to feel the need to record their transactions anywhere but the ledger. Store keepers, artisans and farmers often neglected to record credit entries, limiting their activities to maintaining a record of their debtors. Also absent from these ledgers was a record of simple cash transactions, as there was no need for future action. In the absence of a complete record, a balance could be obtained only by comparing the ledgers of the two parties. Once

²³ Hatton, The Merchant's Magazine..., pp. 160-164.

the two parties reached a satisfactory reckoning, they would note the settlement in their ledger and affix their signatures to the account.

Single-entry bookkeeping was not sufficiently detailed to provide an adequate system for a merchant such as Vaux, who, in addition to his own adventures, acted as a factor for a number of merchants. Instead, Vaux relied on a double-entry format to record his economic transactions. The principal advantage of double-entry bookkeeping lay in its ability to determine an accurate financial record. By recording each entry twice in the ledger, on the left page under the debit heading and on the right page under the heading of credit, a merchant could determine his true financial position.²⁴

The more complicated double-entry form of bookkeeping necessitated the use of a number of additional books. In the cash book, a businessman would record all cash expenditures on one side of the book and all cash receipts on the other, thereby allowing him to quickly determine his cash position. While operating as a factor, a merchant detailed reimbursable

²⁴For a more complete discussion of the subject see William N. Hosley, Jr., "The Theory and Practice of Bookkeeping in America During the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries and the Application of Surviving Business Records in the Study of Material Culture," (Hist. 804, University of Delaware, 1979).

expenses relating to the sale of a cargo in the book of Charges on Merchandise. Commonly these charges included expenses incurred as a result of "Custom, Freight, Ware-House Room, Postage of Letters, Porterage, Cartage, Warsage [wharfage], Books of Accompts, &c."²⁵ Approximately once a month, these charges were totaled and transferred to the debit side of the account to be repayed to the factor. Records of goods shipped to other merchants were recorded in an invoice book (also sometimes referred to as a book of factories). In addition, a merchant would record all letters sent or received in one book, all bills of exchange accepted and their conditions in another, and would carry a small pocket book, referred to as a Memorandum book, on his person in which to record business transactions that took place away from the office.

Not surprisingly, given the central role of bookkeeping, contemporary portraits and engravings of merchants often portrayed their sitters entering material in their ledger, writing letters, or standing by the desk and bookcase that held their business papers and documents. The reliance on written records placed a high premium on superior penmanship for an aspiring merchant. Vaux's letters contain many complaints about the time he spent writing. For example, in a letter to Dr.

²⁵Hatton, The Merchant's Magazine..., p. 163.

Thomas Park, Vaux relates that he has been "writing since six o'clock this morning [and] it is now near that hour in the Evening and I have two letters to write still for St. Croix."²⁶

In addition to being literate and possessing adequate penmanship skills, a merchant required rudimentary mathematical knowledge in order to carry out his business transactions. For example, those commodities that allowed for the deduction of trett (waste) required a number of mathematical operations to determine the maximum allowable weight. First, a merchant determined the gross weight of a cargo, and then subtracted the weight of the bag, cask, chest, barrel, etc. (its tare weight), in which it was packed to determine its "suttle" weight. Next he would determine the amount of trett, or impurities, in a shipment and deduct that amount from theuttle weight to arrive at the net weight. In cases where trett is not allowable, the gross weight minus the tare weight yields the net weight.

To determine the tare anduttle allowable for a given shipment, Vaux used predetermined mathematical formulas recorded in period accounting treatises. For example, how does one determine the net weight of 9 C. 2 Qrs. 7 lbs. Gross, when

²⁶Richard Vaux to Dr. Thomas Park, August 28, 1783, Vaux Papers, HSP.

the allowance is 14 lbs per hundred weight (as of almonds, steel and hemp)? There were a number of different methods available. One formula recommended for its brevity advises the merchant to:

Multiply the Hundreds by the Tare to be allowed for 1 Hundred; and for the Quarters and Pounds in the Gross-weight, take a proportionable Part of the said Allowance for one Hundred, and the Summ is the Tare in pounds; which you may either reduce into Hundreds, and deduct it from the Gross-weight, or the Gross-weight into pounds, and then deduct the Tare in Pounds.

C. Q. lb.

To find what tare is to be allowed for 9 2 7 Gross,

	C.	Q.	lb.
Tare at 14 Pounds per 112:			
multiply	9:	2:	7 Gross
by	14		
For 9 C. you have			126 lb.
For 2 Quarters =			7 lb.
For 7 Pounds =			03/4 lb.

Tot. Tare = 133 1/4 lbs.

Given these various formulas, a merchant was only required to know the tare weight of a cargo and the allowance for the particular commodity being shipped in order to determine either theuttle or net weight.²⁷

²⁷For a complete description of this and other mathematical operations utilized by merchants, see Hatton, The Merchant's Magazine..., pp. 111-117.

In Vaux's case, these requisite skills were further enhanced by a knowledge and interest in such specialized fields as medicine and law. The development of an international trade, with its varying local customs and laws regarding economic transactions, placed a much greater emphasis on the courts to settle economic disputes. While in London, Richard attended lectures on civil law and is known to have argued points of law with officials in both England and the Islands.

Political turmoil

Despite Vaux's preparation and skills, his career in Philadelphia was disrupted by the worsening political dispute between England and her North American colonies. Just prior to the Declaration of Independence, a wide variety of political opinions were expressed by the various groups that comprised Philadelphia society. The Pennsylvania Committee of Safety was especially suspicious of the large Quaker community. While this committee's mandate had originally been limited to the regulation of economic activities, by 1775 their emphasis had shifted from economic regulation to the active suppression of dissent.

As the most influential Quaker Meeting in the colonies, the Philadelphia community sought to persuade other Friends to remain committed to their religious principles and avoid involvement in revolutionary activities. Beginning in 1775, Quakers and others viewed as potential British sympathizers were pressured to conform to the revolutionary position espoused by the more radical elements of the community. As a result of this harassment, many of Philadelphia's most prominent citizens left the city in 1776.²⁸ Large numbers of these loyalists settled in London, where they continued to lobby the Parliament to protect their interests.

Vaux's own problems with the powerful Committee began with the publication on February 11, 1775, of an "Extract of a Letter from Kent County on Delaware," in The Pennsylvania Ledger, a loyalist newspaper published by James Humphreys, Jr. This letter contained such pro-British pronouncements as:

I believe the Friendly Address, and other performances of the moderate stamp, have done much good, in opening the blind eyes of many, and when people come to taste feelingly of the hardships, which a suspension of trade will occasion, they will all change

²⁸For a complete description of Philadelphia's political situation at the time of Vaux's initial residence, see Harry M. Tinkcom, "The Revolutionary City, 1765-1783," in Russell F. Weigley, Philadelphia: A 300-Year History (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982), pp. 109-154.

sides, nay, I believe, if the King's Standard were now erected, nine out of ten would repair to it.²⁹

Despite the fact that many citizens of Philadelphia would have supported the generally moderate tone of this letter, it caught the attention of the politically powerful Committee of Observation. Based on the testimony of Mr. James Humphreys, this particular letter was believed to have been either the work of Richard Vaux, or at least conveyed by him to the publisher. After an exchange of written questions and answers, the Committee of Observation unanimously resolved that Vaux's answers were unsatisfactory, in tone, if not in law, making Vaux's continued residence in Philadelphia precarious.³⁰

While Vaux never admitted the legality of the Committee's mandate to force him from the city, his later letters provide ample evidence of his concern with gaining their permission to return. Despite numerous pleas to his brother James in Philadelphia to lobby on his behalf, he confided to one correspondent that:

It cannot at present be determined how far the

²⁹The Pennsylvania Ledger or General Adviser, February 11, 1775. The "Friendly Address" mentioned in this letter refers to a statement issued by the Yearly Meeting in London entreating their American brethren to remain uninvolved in any rebellious activities and to continue to act as spokesmen for moderation.

³⁰ For Vaux's own view of this incidence see Appendix A.

Laws of the Land could protect an individual, if the members of the Committee should choose to expel such a character as they thought unworthy to be a citizen.³¹

Vaux's letters also indicate an increasingly cynical view of human nature. After receiving an optimistic report from his brother, James, detailing a recent meeting with the Committee of Safety in Philadelphia; Richard wrote a friend in Philadelphia with a much more skeptical view of his chances:

...James tells me Mr. Morris and himself were received very kindly, but the request was inadmissible. James has not seen quite so much of the World as Mr. D and Mr. M otherwise he surely must have discovered the nature of the kindness.³²

As Vaux feared, he was frustrated in his pleas for leniency from the Committee of Safety and his permission to return to Philadelphia had to await the end of hostilities.³³

³¹ Richard Vaux to Dr. Thomas Park, August 28, 1783, Vaux Papers, HSP.

³² Richard Vaux to Dr. Thomas Park, April 3, 1783, Vaux Papers, HSP.

³³ John Strettle to Richard Vaux, June 10, 1785, Vaux Papers, HSP. Strettle wrote "I presume your license from the Committee of Safety is now of no use, but I shall not destroy without orders."

EXILE, 1776-1783

England

An eighteenth-century trading venture was in the most peaceful of times a risky undertaking. Fluctuating markets and the ever present danger of natural catastrophe could and often did reduce a merchant to insolvency. War compounded these problems, placing a high premium on timely military and political intelligence. While in London Vaux sometimes attended the House of Commons to learn of "the common state of relations."³⁴ In 1778, Joseph Whitehall wrote to Vaux to request that he forward a copy of "ye King's speech as soon as published."³⁵ In seeking to ship a cargo from the Caribbean to France, Vaux sought information on whether Bermuda vessels were secured by treaty and was pleased to find that they were "unless found going to or coming from Great Britain."³⁶

³⁴VMB, June 9, 1782, Vaux Papers, HSP.

³⁵Joseph P. Whitehall to Richard Vaux, November 14, 1778, Vaux Papers, HSP.

³⁶Joseph P. Whitehall to Richard Vaux, August 10, 1778, Vaux Papers, HSP.

Another letter illustrates how intertwined the political, military, and economic spheres were in the eighteenth century. While residing in Bordeaux, Joseph P. Whitehall wrote his London-based business associate Vaux to advise him that a number of ships from the American colonies had arrived at that port bearing cargoes of tobacco and that "the English cruisers do not intercept all the vessels." Aware of the fact that information such as this possessed both military and economic utility, he requested that Vaux keep this correspondence to himself as "it may be alleged I'm giving Intelligence." His concern was so pronounced, that he refused to sign any further correspondence with Vaux, "as I do not want it known I write any letters to London."³⁷

The premium placed on timely information and economic networking may also help explain the prominent role coffeehouses played in the eighteenth-century world of finance. One of the most famous eighteenth-century coffeehouses was Lloyd's coffeehouse of London. Originally established as a small room where underwriters and insurer's of ships' cargoes could meet for refreshment and conversation, by 1776 it had relocated to the more spacious northwest corner of the Royal Exchange. Here in the elegant new "Subscription" rooms the

³⁷Joseph P. Whitehall to Richard Vaux, April 16, 1779, Vaux Papers, HSP.

"most eminent merchants, shipowners, underwriters, insurance, stock, and exchange brokers" met to obtain "the earliest news of the arrival and sailing of vessels, losses at sea, captures, recaptures, engagements, and other shipping intelligence..."³⁸

There was also a great deal of gossip; favorite topics of conversation included "the relative merits of the merchant's various English suppliers [as well as] the price and quality of the wares and the terms on which they were exported..."³⁹ Upon leaving the Royal Exchange, Vaux commonly retired with his associates to a nearby tavern where they would continue to discuss their current business concerns over dinner. While dining at the Shakespeare Tavern in Covent Garden, Vaux noted the arrival of Mr. Bond Fieldings, "noted thief taker," who sought an audience with one of the merchants at the table. In other instances, taverns served as the locus for sales of damaged goods. On January 18, 1782, Vaux wrote:

...called a public vendu [sic] to dispose of the above mentioned damaged goods, attended myself at Halsey's tavern and there put the same up as I [Vaux] thought most for the benefit of the under-

³⁸John Timbs, Clubs & Club Life in London (London, 1827), p. 291.

³⁹Thomas M. Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 18.

writer and they commanded a much better price than expected and all the money was collected at the place of sale.⁴⁰

The lifestyle of a merchant of Vaux's station was itself a statement of fashion and served to advertise the latest styles in dress, furnishings and manners to the general public. One eighteenth-century wit advised his readers to visit a coffeehouse because:

You shall know there what fashions are,
How periwigs are curl'd [sic];
and for a penny you shall hear
All novels in the world;
Both old and young, and great and small,
And rich and poor you'll see;
Therefore let's to the Coffee all,
Come all away with me.⁴¹

Not surprisingly, given this emphasis on public display, cosmopolitan merchants such as Vaux spent a great deal of time outside the traditional confines of the home and office. Vaux's Memorandum Book contains numerous entries detailing his walks about London. For example, on the evening of March 16, 1779, Richard and his brother George took a leisurely stroll "round the India House, which was lighted up..." before

⁴⁰VMB, January 18, 1782, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁴¹Timbs, Clubs & Club Life..., p. 289.

retiring to the New York coffee house.⁴² Vaux and his business partners also demonstrated their sophistication by visiting and patronizing the most illustrious artists then working in London. On one afternoon in 1778, Vaux "went to Mr. Copleys, to see his paintings, after which we called at Sir Joshua Reynolds and looked at his collection, after which we went to Benj. West's the painter, and looked at his paintings..."⁴³ After visiting a number of studios during his stay in London, Vaux chose to have Gilbert Stuart capture his likeness.

One French visitor to London in 1772 described the lifestyle of the London-based bankers and merchants in these words:

They rise a little of the latest; and pass an hour at home, drinking tea with their families; about ten they go to the coffee-house, where they spend another hour: then they go home, or meet people about business: at two o'clock they go to change: in their return they lounge a little longer at the coffee-house, and then dine about four...they give the remainder of the day to their friends.⁴⁴

⁴²VMB, March 16, 1779, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁴³VMB, August 24, 1778, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁴⁴Pierre Jean Grosley, A Tour of London; or New Observations on England and Its Inhabitants (1772).

The same emphasis on networking was reflected in the popularity of Fraternal organizations in the eighteenth century. Richard Vaux was a member of a number of such voluntary associations, including the Disputing Society, the Fire Company and the Fishing Club. Most significant, on February 21, 1781, after dining with Mr. Amery, a prominent banker, Vaux attended the Jerusalem Free Mason Lodge, where he "was made a free and accepted Mason."⁴⁵ That Vaux took his association seriously is indicated by his purchase of a book of instruction and the fact that by May 2nd Vaux was "raised to the degree of Master Mason."⁴⁶ While Vaux may have been interested in the good company offered by the lodge, it could not have escaped his attention that membership in the Freemasons would also provide him with access to many prominent citizens throughout the English-speaking world.

Other associations were even more directly related to occupational concerns. Vaux periodically attended meetings of the West India Merchants at the London Tavern.⁴⁷ His papers indicate that while Pierre Jean Grosley, the perceptive French visitor, specifically designated the hours between eleven and

⁴⁵VMB, February 21, 1781, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁴⁶VMB, May 2, 1781, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁴⁷VMB, April 6, 1781, Vaux Papers, HSP.

two for business, the bulk of Vaux's day was actually devoted to business concerns of one sort or another. Promenades across London could include stops to examine "some India Prize goods," and conversations over dinner could lead to the purchase of "some handks (sic) and Gingham."⁴⁸

A Life of Travel

Recently an investigator of Philadelphia's economic activities during the Revolutionary War period asserted that between 1776 and 1781 "Richard Vaux apparently spent almost as much time at sea as on land."⁴⁹ In fact, Vaux was in almost constant transit between Philadelphia, England, a number of islands in the Carribean, France and Holland during the five years he was exiled from Philadelphia. Furthermore, Vaux's correspondence with his fellow merchants give clear evidence that his mobility was not at all unusual among this occupational group.

Given this highly mobile lifestyle and the responsibilities of his position, it is not surprising that a great deal of Vaux's time was spent aboard ships. What were Vaux's duties while responsible for a ship? These responsibilities

⁴⁸VMB, March 18, 1779, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁴⁹Thomas M. Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise..., pp. 222-223.

included, in addition to selecting a cargo; securing transportation, or portage, to the ship; overseeing the construction of the casks and other coopered products necessary to hold the cargo; and supervising its packing and loading into the hull of the ship. Seaports were hectic locations with dock-workers loading cargos into ships' holds, carpenters carrying out last-minute repairs to ships, coopers constructing wooden containers, pursers outfitting ships with salt beef and pork and laborers transporting the goods recently imported to the warehouses.⁵⁰

After all this activity, Vaux may have breathed a sigh of relief on June 17, 1779, when his heavily laden ship weighed anchor at St. Helens and began a voyage to the West Indies under the command of Captain Carey. Based on the size of Vaux's cargo and his references to "topsails," the *Providentia* was probably a two- or three-masted ship with a complex arrangement of sails. The rate of a ship's progress depended on the number and arrangement of sails, the quality of its rigging, the skill and expertise of its crew, and the prevailing winds.

⁵⁰For a more complete discussion of the activity characteristic of eighteenth-century seaports, see Marcus Rediker, "The Anglo-American Seaman as Collective Worker, 1700-1750," in Stephen Innes, Work and Labor in Early America (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 254.

The widespread operation of privateers at this time necessitated that the *Providentia*, join a fleet of thirty others traveling under the watchful eye of the frigate *H.M.S. Pallas*. This naval escort proved well-advised when, five days out, a privateer sloop sailed among the fleet and only retreated when the *Pallas* shortened her sail in preparation for firing.⁵¹ Despite the threat of privateers, most of Vaux's days seem to have been spent quietly overseeing routine maintenance projects carried out by the ship's carpenter, or sailmaker.

On July 3rd the fleet arrived at Madeira. Vaux described his first impressions of the island as "very barren & mountainous but [it] was a pleasant sight to all in our company."⁵² While on shore, Vaux visited the Customhouse to clear his cargo, secured fresh provisions and arranged to ship a number of pipes of Madeira to St. Eustatia.⁵³ Free time was devoted to sightseeing, and he spent one entire day visiting "several

⁵¹VMB, October 24, 1781, Vaux Papers, HSP. Vaux himself was to fall prey to the privateers, when Thomas Benson of Salem captured his ship and put "...five hhgds of water and a keg of rum on board the *Providentia*, put in a Prizemaster with ten seamen and sent her for Salem."

⁵²VMB, July 3, 1779, HSP.

⁵³Hatton's Merchants Magazine, informs us that a "pipe" was a standard capacity used in wine-measurement and equal to 126 gallons.

convents of different orders, likewise a considerable Nunnery." ⁵⁴

Although not specifically discussed in Vaux's writings, it appears there was considerable hostility between the various nationalities that stopped at Madeira. Upon entering the Customhouse, "a fellow having the appearance of a gentleman struck Mr. Cooper [a sailing companion of Vaux] without the least provocation in the world. The circumstance was so singular that I cannot help mention it and must sincerely hope to hear Mr. Cooper has called him to account."⁵⁵ Apparently, in Vaux's world, a personal account, like a business account, could not be left unpaid without a loss of individual credit.

While on the Island, Vaux also learned of potential problems with Captain Carey. After Vaux returned to the ship, he noted that:

The Captain continues to carry himself at a great distance & is guilty of some very mean actions, such as are called by Germans in America Spike

⁵⁴vMB, July 6, 1779.

⁵⁵Vaux was probably visiting the customhouse to secure a Bill of Entry for his cargo. Hatton's Merchants Magazine... defines a Bill of Entry as "an account of the goods entered at the customhouse, both inwards and outwards, in which is expressed the merchant exporting or importing: the quantity of goods and sorts, and whither transported or from whence."

Actions.⁵⁶

This tension was probably the result of confusion about the relative authority of Vaux and Captain Carey. It appears that both of these individuals thought of themselves as the true master of the ship. Judging from the responsibilities commonly ascribed to the master, it is easy to see where the confusion lay.

The ship's master was the "representative of merchant capital," normally hired to "manage the navigation and everything relating to [the ship's] cargo, voyage, sailors, etc... He possessed near-absolute authority."⁵⁷ In this case, Vaux and Captain Carey divided the responsibilities of ship's master and in the absence of a clear line of demarcation, they appear to have constantly jostled for authority.

Vaux's expertise in medicine proved useful during his many long sea voyages. His brother Jeremiah was a physician, and Vaux often accompanied him on his rounds. During one visit to the Birmingham workhouse, Vaux observed "the operation of cutting for the stone, which was performed by Dr. Tomlinson on

⁵⁶Possibly Vaux means "spitz," a German word that means "a biting action." Prof. E. Klatt, Dr. D. Roy, G. Klatt and H. Messinger, Langenscheidts Standard German Dictionary, New York: Langenscheidt, 1991), p. 1138.

⁵⁷For a complete discussion of the organization of a ship's labor force, see Rediker "The Anglo-American Seaman as Collective Worker, 1700-1750," pp. 259-262.

a dead subject."⁵⁸ While there are no references to his ever using such radical new surgical procedures to treat gall stones, there are numerous instances of his treating crew members for broken bones, pleurisy and most commonly smallpox.⁵⁹ Apparently, even a passing familiarity with medical practices enabled Vaux to convince others, as well as himself, of his skill. He also felt qualified, should his ministrations fail, to deliver the necessary religious rituals.

Amusements aboard the ship for the passengers consisted of eating, drinking, conversing and fishing. The cramped quarters of his cabin, described as "...so very much lumbered, we have hardly room to get our meals," led Vaux to spend the majority of his time on deck. There is little indication of any fraternization between crew members (other than the Captain) and Vaux. That Vaux believed the crew hostile to him is apparent in his entry of September 23rd where he recounts:

I missed our little cat this morning and on enquiry it was not to be found...there is great reason to expect some of ye people threw it over board in the

⁵⁸VMB, April 25, 1780, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁵⁹For example, on June 29, 1779 Vaux recorded the following passage in his Memorandum Book, "The sailor sick with pleurisy getting worse it became necessary that he should lose some blood & as no other person choose [sic] to operate I consented to bleed him."

night.⁶⁰

Given this perceived hostility, it is no wonder that Vaux was quite content to limit his conversations to those of comparable economic and social status. What references there were to the crew usually focused on a particular incidence of misbehavior or detailed their medical problems.⁶¹

St. Eustatius

A state of hostilities further complicated the lives of merchants by restricting access to ports, and adding the threat of privateers to the already long list of potentially disastrous natural factors that plagued those involved in overseas trade.⁶² Not surprisingly, even level-headed merchants could find themselves waxing poetic about a neutral port such as St. Eustatius. Its neutrality allowed for unimpeded trade between merchants of belligerent nations, and English goods often

⁶⁰VMB, September 23, 1779, Vaux Papers, HSP. That incidents such as this may indicate a deep-rooted hostility towards bourgeois society is investigated by Robert Danton, "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Severin," in The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History (New York: Random House, 1984), pp. 75-104.

⁶¹For example on July 24, 1779 Vaux described a recent problem: "Peter Lawson one of our sailors has behaved in a very uncommon manner and abused the Captain and Mate, threatening them he would be revenged on them--at eight o'clock he came to the wheel and in two minutes, he put the ship in the wind, all the sails being a back, we had like to have lost all our masts over the side."

⁶²On April 3, 1783, Richard Vaux wrote to Dr. Thomas Park, "What a Novelty it must be to an American or a Britain to make a Voyage in perfect safety," Vaux Papers, HSP.

passed through this island enroute to the American colonies.

Vaux described traveling to the island:

in company with a large Fleet bound for the West Indies we came out under cover of St. Charles Hardys Squadron consisting of thirty-six sail of the line, besides Eight Frigates &c. &c. - we visited Madeira, Barbados, & Antigua on our way to this Island at which place we arrived on the 5th instant...My cargo is large and I have the satisfaction of arriving to a Good Market which you know is every thing to a Merchant.⁶³

Later in the same letter Vaux described his new base of operations as:

a little Island, three miles long, two miles broad and it is computed to contain 10,000 Whites, 30,000 Blacks...however it is a place of much Business and here you have an opportunity of seeing the greatest Enemies meet peaceably, and the Flag of every Power is displayed in the harbor.⁶⁴

Although this island is today far from the major trade routes, it still contains the ruins of warehouses which in the eighteenth century stood three deep along its shore and earned the

⁶³Richard Vaux to Dr. Thomas Park, September 24, 1779, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁶⁴Richard Vaux to Dr. Thomas Park, September 24, 1779, Vaux Papers, HSP.

island the titles "Emporium of the Caribbean," and "the Golden rock." One Scottish traveler described the island's activities:

never did I meet with such variety; here was a merchant vending his goods in Dutch, another in French, a third in Spanish, etc. They all wear the habit of their country...From one end of the town of Eustatia to the other is a continued mart, where goods of the most different uses and qualities are displayed before the shop-doors. Here hang rich embroideries, painted silks, most exquisite silver plate, the most beautiful indeed I ever saw, and close by these iron-pots, kettles and shovels."⁶⁵

Unfortunately, the "opportunity of seeing the greatest Enemies meet peaceably" was viewed as a threat by the English admiralty. They became convinced that St. Eustatius was a continuing threat to the British war efforts. This "neutral" harbor was suspected of funneling military supplies to the hard-pressed American armies. In addition, St. Eustatius was known to serve as a conduit through which American foodstuffs could reach the British Leeward Islands and therefore secure the specie needed to fund the colonies' war effort. Once convinced of this threat, the British were quick to retaliate. In February of 1781, a fleet of British ships entered the harbor

⁶⁵Janet Schaw, Journal of A Lady of Quality: Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal, in the Years 1774 to 1776, ed. Evangeline Walker Andrews (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), p. 87. Quoted in Margaretta M. Lovell, "Such Furniture as Will Be Most Profitable: The Business of Cabinetmaking in Eighteenth-Century Newport," Winterthur Portfolio 26, no. 1, (Spring 1991): 61.

under the command of Admiral George Brydges Rodney and seized the fort that protected the harbor. The conquerors found wealth beyond their expectations, reporting that it was "one vast magazine and storehouse of commodities worth more than three million pounds sterling."⁶⁶ The British capture of St. Eustatius was to reduce trade to a trickle of its previous flow. By 1783, Vaux chose to operate out of St. Thomas, another neutral port, rather than return to British controlled St. Eustatius.

Given the prominent role this small, neutral island played in the trans-Atlantic trade, it is little wonder that Vaux chose to establish himself there after a short lay-over in Antigua. While at Antigua, Vaux met with a number of merchants and visited the local "Negro markets." He was especially interested in the impact of the war on the prices of foodstuffs, noting "fresh provisions are very scarce and at a high price at this island..."⁶⁷ Upon reaching his destination, Vaux rented a store and spent the next two months arranging for the sale of his remaining cargo.

⁶⁶Richard B. Sheridan, "The Crisis of Slave Subsistence in the British West Indies during and after the American Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly: 628.

⁶⁷YMB, August 15, 1779, HSP.

Selling a cargo in a bustling market such as St. Eustatius was normally a simple matter, but receiving payment was often a more complicated process. Few transactions were carried out on a cash basis. The majority were based on the extension of several months' credit. Vaux informed his friends in Philadelphia that he knew:

not when it will be in my power to leave this Island for America, every thing will depend on my receiving my out standing Debts - indeed some have been discharged remarkably quick lately particularly amongst some of your Hebrew acquaintances - scarce a night but one or more of this tribe push off.⁶⁸

Apparently, Vaux's anti-Semitic attitude was shared by the English navy, who after securing the island were to reserve their harshest measures for the island's Jewish merchants. They were immediately deprived of their property and, without warning, sentenced to banishment. To add to their humiliation they were also subjected to being stripped and searched for hidden money.⁶⁹ The failure to secure payments from clients combined with the economic turmoil of the period, led Vaux to complain that:

...never were people more disagreeably circumstanced

⁶⁸Richard Vaux to Dr. Thomas Park, May 10, 1783, Vaux papers, HSP.

⁶⁹Franklin Jameson, "St. Eustatius in the American Revolution," American Historical Review, VIII (1903), : 705.

than the itinerant Merchants here. The Shopkeeper must dispose of his goods to a loss of 10 or 12 PrCt and of course many must break - there is notwithstanding a great deal of kindness to be discovered in the recovery of Debts one from the other, great respect is paid to persons. A Gentleman who has done considerable Business was yesterday conducted to the fort, for Debt and there he will remain until his Father who is worth 100,000 £ Stg. kindly opens his purse for his deliverance. ⁷⁰

When Vaux was successful in securing payment from his customers they normally paid in either specie or bills of credit. Specie consisted of either gold bars, silver coins, or gold coins and were sent to England in iron bound casks (branded with the initials of the merchant to which they were consigned). Inside these casks were coins packed in sealed bags or gold bars in sealed cartridges. Vaux shipped "Old Spanish milled and cob dollars" (the silver Spanish peso de plata, or plestra), commonly referred to as the "piece of eight," and "Joes" (the gold Portugese dobra de quatro esqudos, or peca).

Vaux specified that some of the "Old Spanish dollars" he shipped were "cobbed" meaning that they had reduced metal content. This reduction could be the result of natural wear or the intentional alteration of the coin. This alteration could be

⁷⁰Richard Vaux to Dr. Thomas Park, April 3, 1783, Vaux papers, HSP.

accomplished by "clipping" a coin by removing metal from its edge, a practice that led some mints to "mill" the edge of their coins. Less easily detected techniques included cutting the coin in half and removing a small strip of metal and chemically leaching out some of its metal content.⁷¹ Not surprisingly, given the widespread occurrence of these techniques, merchants were reluctant to accept coins at face value and relied on scales and tables of assay weights to determine value.⁷²

Coins, like other commodities, rose and fell with their availability and Vaux received letters from business partners advising him of current exchange rates. John Strettle advised him that

the dollars are not yet up - which I am sorry for as they are falling in price fast & and as they are now coming in from all parts they will be lower. I have this day Sold some at 5/6 per oz but that price cannot be obtained tomorrow. I think they will get down to about 5/4 per oz. I maean the new ones- the Old ones or those with two Pillars are worth one penny each more....⁷³

⁷¹A more thorough description of these various techniques can be found in John J. McCusker, Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775: A Handbook (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), p. 8.

⁷² On September 28, 1784 William Woodross notified Vaux that "Mr. Parkinson declined your Guinea because it has been clipt, altho very nearly of full weight." William Woodross to Richard Vaux, September 28, 1784, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁷³ John Strettle to Richard Vaux, August 6, 1783, Vaux Papers, HSP.

Vaux was expected to keep current as to the changing value of specie in other locations and to select his remittances to maximize profits. In a few cases, Vaux decided that a return cargo would prove most profitable. Normally, the return cargo consisted of rum. However, in at least one case Vaux shipped a cask of tortoise shell to London.⁷⁴

More commonly Vaux accepted bills of exchange to settle his accounts. Bills of exchange were promissory notes drawn on a third party to satisfy a debt. In order to settle a debt, an individual (the buyer) contacted a merchant (the drawer) with a credit balance at a prominent mercantile house and asked the drawer to secure a bill for a specified amount drawn on that house (the seller). In exchange for the bill, the buyer promised to repay the drawer the amount of the bill plus an agreed upon rate of interest. The particular rate of interest depended upon a number of factors including, the maturity date of the bill and the reliability of the mercantile house upon which it was drawn. The drawer requested that the seller forward multiple copies of the bill of exchange to the merchant owed payment by the buyer. These multiple copies were sent by various means of

⁷⁴Richard Vaux's Invoice Book, St. Thomas, April 5, 1783, Joseph Downs Manuscript Collection, H. F. du Pont Winterthur Museum.

conveyance to reduce the chance of their being lost in transit.⁷⁵

There were two major benefits in utilizing bills of exchange. Ships sent from the colonies to Europe often fell prey to hostile forces, both natural and human. Shipping specie could result in a total loss, and required additional efforts to dispose of the foreign coins at the best rate of exchange. A bill of exchange drawn on a prominent London mercantile house greatly reduced the possibility of loss during transit and, equally important, facilitated the transfer of credit from the mercantile house to the possessor of the bill. The major drawback of this system was the possibility that the mercantile house might declare bankruptcy and the submitted bill of exchange would be noted for non-acceptance. The period of the American Revolution, with its disruption of trade and the inability to collect money owed by American customers, caused unprecedented numbers of English mercantile houses to fail. One result of these failures was a heightened concern with the security of the bills of exchange accepted. Vaux was advised that while prompt remission was desirable, it would

⁷⁵John J. McCusker, Money and Exchange in Europe and America..., pp. 19-24.

be better to delay remittance rather than accept questionable bills.⁷⁶

Vaux's business activities on the island apparently left him little time for social activities. His correspondence mentions only the occasional social engagement with friends for dinner and long walks. Exceptional was the celebration of December 25, 1781 when "...being Xmas Day dined at Mr. Smith's in company with about 40 ladys [sic] and gentlemen...in the evening I went again to Mr. Smith, found the company dancing, stay till 10 o'clock but did not dance."⁷⁷

In this case it appears that Vaux maintained a suitable Quaker demeanor. However, letters from Philadelphia give evidence that many were concerned that Vaux's immersion in the fashionable world was undermining his spiritual foundation. Richard's friend, Nancy Emlen, wrote from Philadelphia to advise him to cultivate "...an increasing desire for the growth of that regard to religion which a time of ease and prosperity had nearly stifled & which can alone draw down the

⁷⁶ Jnos. Brickwood notified Vaux of the difficulty he experienced in collecting on some recent bills, and advised Vaux of "the necessity of your being circumspect in the choice of what bills you do remit...." Jnos. Brickwood to Richard Vaux, April 26, 1783, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁷⁷VMB, December 25, 1781, Vaux Papers, HSP. Vaux also provides a glimpse into the social history of the island's slave and laboring population, when he notes on New Year's Eve: "this being the last day of the year there was much noise amongst the negroes," and the next day that: "being New Year's Day, there has been much Confusion & Noise amongst the Lower Classes of People."

favour of Heaven."⁷⁸ Vaux's life was a continuing struggle between the fierce individualism of a market economy and the emphasis on community and humility espoused by pious Friends.

⁷⁸Nancy Emlen to Richard Vaux, January 24, 1779, Vaux Papers, HSP.

TRADE GOODS

Produce

The wealth of the New World was to a great extent the wealth of the Caribbean. Vast fortunes were generated as a result of the production of sugar and other expensive natural resources that were very much in demand in Europe. Just how wealthy were these estates? In 1775 Jamaica boasted an average net worth per white person of £12,000, approximately nine times the wealth of the relatively prosperous plantations of the southern continental colonies.⁷⁹ While the wealth of the islands varied greatly, there is little doubt that vast amounts of discretionary money flowed out of these plantations.

Merchants in Europe and the North American colonies were quick to focus their energies and resources on supplying this lucrative market. Ranging from such exotic luxuries as natural, black and white fox tails and colored plumes to more mundane objects such as horn lanterns and food, the ships that

⁷⁹ Jack P. Green, Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 160.

arrived at the Caribbean ports came bearing a full range of trade goods.

On February 5, 1779, the Philadelphia merchant Enoch Story, residing in London, wrote Vaux in St. Thomas in hopes of enticing him to participate in an "adventure" to the West Indies.⁸⁰ Story's letter contained a detailed list of the goods to be sent to the island. This list, supplemented by other documents, allows us to examine a number of questions about the nature of the trans-Atlantic trade in the third quarter of the eighteenth-century. What type of goods did Vaux export to the islands? How were these goods packed and transported? What particular sales and merchandising strategies were employed? How did Vaux pay for the goods he secured on credit?

Generally, the cargo was divided between food provisions and English manufactured goods. Since plantation owners were unwilling to devote valuable land and labor to the growing of food, they relied heavily on food imports. Unfortunately, these supplies were greatly reduced in 1774 when the Continental Congress of America called on the colonies to withhold all commercial intercourse with Great Britain, Ireland, and the

⁸⁰While today the term "adventure" normally conjures up images of swashbuckling heroes, in Vaux's time it commonly described a pecuniary risk of some sort. OED, 136, s.v. "adventure." Story's letter is transcribed as Appendix B.

West Indies until Parliament felt compelled to repeal their cruel and oppressive acts. The efficiency of this call was made painfully clear in a letter from a plantation manager on Antigua to his absentee plantation owner in England:

This Island was never so much threaten'd with Famine as it now is, we can get nothing from North America, and the Weather is so dry that we can raise no kind of Provisions here. Pray God send us better times. I beg you will not forget to order out a supply of Oats and Beans as soon as possible, particularly the latter. You have more than five hundred Negroes to feed, who will eat your Cattle and Mules, if they have nothing else to eat, and cut my throat if I attempt to prevent them. ⁸¹

By 1778 the situation had deteriorated even further and a number of islands had come to rely on the few neutral entrepots, such as St. Eustatius, and St. Thomas, for their foodstuffs. Many individuals were "without any kind of Food for their Negroes, nor do we know from whence any is to be bought, St. Eustatius excepted, where there are only a few hundred Bushels of Beans, and a Gentleman is gone to purchase them...A great many Slaves have died for want of Food, and I am sure many more will die."⁸² Compounding the food shortages were a

⁸¹Richard B. Sheridan, "The Crisis of Slave Subsistence...", pp. 623-624.

⁸²Richard B. Sheridan, "The Crisis of Slave Subsistence...", pp. 623-624.

series of devastating hurricanes and earthquakes that struck the West Indies beginning in 1780.

Story's proposed cargo included five hundred barrels of fresh flour, each barrel constructed of well seasoned casks. A constant source of concern with shipping food to the islands was the possibility of spoilage. In this case, Story sought to reduce the risks posed by high humidity by having a lining hoop placed at the end of each barrel. A lining hoop sealed the two ends of a barrel to prevent water condensing inside the barrel and spoiling the flour. The same concern led Story to inform Vaux that "sacks would not be advisable, as in this kind of package [ie. good seasoned casks], it [flour] will not so soon get hard."⁸³ While Story does not specify the quality of flour to be shipped, flour was commonly available in superfine, common, white bread and brown bread grades.

In addition to flour, Story recommended the cargo include one thousand nine hundred and twenty gallons of "good mess beef," two thousand one hundred and sixty gallons of "good mess pork" both to be full pickled and packed in casks of tierce (42 gallons), barrel (36 gallons) and half barrel (18 gallons) sizes, forty-eight hams (1 puncheon) plus twenty-four dried

⁸³Enoch Story to Richard Vaux, February 5, 1779, Vaux Papers, HSP.

Neats tongues and six firkins (approx. 9 gallons each) pickled tongue.

In an age before refrigeration and canning, foods were commonly preserved by smoking, drying or pickling.⁸⁴ Consequently, Story was recommending that the beef, pork and some of the tongues be shipped immersed in a salt and water (brine) solution (pickled), and the hams and other tongues be well smoked (cured). As a further measure to protect the valuable cargo from decay, Story advocated that the cured meats be packed in "dry chaff" to absorb excess moisture.

Although not included in this particular cargo, Vaux's account books indicate an island preference for tripe - normally the first or second stomach of an ox - as a meat dish.⁸⁵ The only vegetable to be included in the proposed cargo was the eighteen bushels of split peas to be shipped in firkins.

In addition to these meats and vegetables, Story recommended the inclusion of approximately 750 pounds of cheese and 10 or 12 half firkins of butter - although warned of a current heavy importation from Ireland - and a number of

⁸⁴The first canned meats appear to have been developed by the Frenchman Nicholas Appert to supply Napoleons troops. Audrey Noel Hume, Food (Williamsburg, Virginia: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1978), p. 37.

⁸⁵OED, 374, s.v. "tripe."

thirty pound wheels of Cheshire cheese and ten pound wheels of Gloucester cheese. These cheeses were to be carefully packed, not more than five Cheshire or ten Gloucester per cask, with an inch oak board of circumference equal to the cheeses placed between each Cheshire and every two Gloucester cheeses.

While the fact that the rich farmland in the midland area of England had long been famous for the quality of their cheeses, their availability outside that locality was the result of changes in transportation that profoundly affected the diet of the English-speaking world. In 1757, the first major canal was built between the Mersey and St. Helen's rivers in Lancashire. Despite the fact that these early canals were initially utilized for the transportation of coal, by 1775, a widespread network of canals connected the interior of the country with the major English coastal communities and facilitated a greater exchange of all kinds of goods.

So great was the impact of this increased trade that foreign visitors commented that the English were "better clothed [sic], better fed, and better lodged than elsewhere."⁸⁶ By the third quarter of the eighteenth century, it was common to find stores in London advertising "Cheshire, Gloucester,

⁸⁶Quoted in James Burke, The Day the Universe Changed, p. 183.

Double Gloucester, Cheddar, Wiltshire, and Stilton cheeses" and by the 1780s English cheeses were available throughout the trans-Atlantic world.⁸⁷

Liquid provisions were also included in the proposed cargo. Prior to sailing from London to the West Indies, Vaux met with Mr. Edward Clark to inquire of the "quantity of beer he would ship by me to the West Indies."⁸⁸ The final cargo included two thousand one hundred and sixty gallons of Old Porter, a kind of beer distinguished by its "dark brown color and bitterish taste, brewed from malt partly charred or browned by drying at high temperatures."⁸⁹ Especially popular were the porters produced at the Shone, Parker or Curtis breweries. While porter could be shipped in casks of barrel or puncheon capacity, Story recommended that in this case they be sent in two-gallon bottles and packed in hampers. Hampers of wickerwork construction packed with straw would secure the bottles without undue danger of breakage and were common packing cases for glass objects. A special concern was that the continuous motion of the ship would cause the fermenting beer

⁸⁷J.C. Drummond and Anne Wilbraham, The Englishman's Food: A History of Five Centuries of English Diet (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), p. 232. See also Audrey Noel Hume, Food, p.50.

⁸⁸YMB, May 5, 1782, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁸⁹OED: 1142, s.v. "porter."

to pop its cork. In order to prevent this occurrence the bottles were to be "well corked and Brass double wired."⁹⁰ In addition to Old Porter, Vaux's account book also recorded the sale of Dorchester Beer, Fine Taunton Ale and Fine Old Cyder.

Another popular liquid refreshment commonly included in the cargoes sent to the West Indies were pipes of wine and brandy. Casks designed to hold liquids, required the specialized skills of tight-barrel, or wet, coopers and were most likely constructed from well aged white or red oak staves and heads.⁹¹ Vaux himself often monitored the production of the coopered containers necessary to transport these liquids. On March 1, 1781, Vaux "attended all day to the coopering and shipping the Brandy on board the sloop, we put on board this day 52 pipes and 18 were coopered and stored."⁹²

Manufactured Goods

The other major component of the cargoes bound for the Caribbean was manufactured goods. These could be divided into those aimed at the slave population and those directed at the

⁹⁰Enoch Story to Richard Vaux, February 5, 1779, Vaux Papers, HSP.

⁹¹Paul B. Kebaran, American Woodworking Tools (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1978), p. 171.

⁹²YMB, March 1, 1781, Vaux Papers, HSP.

white population of the islands and, in many cases, the rebellious colonies.

Vaux's business records indicate that dry goods were the single largest category of manufactured products included in his cargos. In comparing these dry goods to those imported to South Carolina, it appears that the majority of fabrics were destined for the large slave population of the islands.⁹³ For example, the coarse, unbleached oznabrigs, named after the town of Osnabruck, Germany, where this coarse unbleached linen or hemp cloth was first manufactured, probably ended up as work clothes for laboring peoples.

In most cases, textiles were imported as bolts of fabric (E11s) of various dimensions, to be fitted by a local tailor or seamstress.⁹⁴ However, slave holders could reduce the cost of clothing their work force by importing garments pre-tailored in England to general sizes. In addition to reducing the cost, ready-made clothing distinguished the slave population from those who could afford to have their clothes individually tailored. This may also have hindered slaves from attempting

⁹³Audrey Michie, "Goods Proper for South Carolina: Textiles Imported, 1738-1742," (MA Thesis, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, 1978).

⁹⁴For example, Hatton's Merchant Magazine... gives the standard measure of an English E11 at forty-five inches, while a Flemish E11 was twenty-seven inches.

to disguise themselves as free persons. Whatever the motivation, Vaux's account book documents the importation of two hundred and forty oznabrig frocks and three hundred and thirty six oznabrig trousers.

Six pieces of "Russia Duck", a thick linen glazed fabric noted for its water repellent capabilities, could have been used for boat sails, tarpaulins, tents or a number of other purposes.⁹⁵ In this case, the lighter grade specified in the cargo would most likely have been used for apparel, although other uses are also documented.⁹⁶ Other coarse linens included in the proposed cargos, such as German dowlass, ticklenberg and Russia drilling, were also commonly worn by the lower classes.

For his more fashion-conscious customers Vaux was urged to include approximately fifty pounds worth of gauzes, catsgut, ribbons, and silk flowers. Catsgut in this case most likely refers to a form of gauze commonly used to fashion the foundation of a bonnet rather than its other common meaning of

⁹⁵Described by Florence Montgomery in Textiles in America, 1650-1870 (New York: Norton, 1984) as a "strong, thick linen cloth, finer and lighter than canvas. So called because its glazed surface sheds water"; s.v. "duck."

⁹⁶See Florence Montgomery, Textiles in America..., s.v. "dowlass."

a base fabric for embroidery.⁹⁷ Of particular interest were the three or four "caps ready made, and dressed with ribbon &c. to direct the fashion." In order to spur sales, Vaux was urged to display these caps so that a fashion-conscious lady could see the latest English fashion and decide to purchase the supplies necessary to create one herself.

Stimulating sales of textiles and related materials by appealing to the customer's desire to keep up with the latest fashion was referred to by contemporary merchants as the "Art of Puffing."⁹⁸ Grant McCracken discusses how sophisticated merchandising and advertising techniques enticed consumers to make "impulse" purchases that then required further purchases of companion goods. This so-called "Diderot effect" is defined by McCracken as "a force that encourages the individual to maintain a cultural consistency in his/her complement of consumer goods."⁹⁹ The purchase of one fashionable object, would necessitate the purchase of others to prevent aesthetic

⁹⁷Florence Montgomery, Textiles in America..., s.v. "gauze."

⁹⁸The various techniques utilized in eighteenth-century advertising are thoroughly discussed in Neil McKendrick, "George Packwood and the Commercialization of Shaving: The Art of Eighteenth-Century Advertising or "The Way to Get Money and be Happy," in The Birth of a Consumer Society..., pp. 146-202.

⁹⁹For a more complete discussion of the "Diderot effect," see Grant McCracken, Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1990), p. 123.

dissonance. Most likely, it was this desire to unify and harmonize an environment that led to the development of chambers and parlors described as "en suite".

Other fashionable wardrobe accessories shipped to St. Eustatius included black Barcelona handkerchiefs in various patterns. These fine twilled silk handkerchiefs must have been popular with eighteenth-century patrons as one cargo contained over twelve hundred handkerchiefs. The adjective "twilled" describes a particular type of weaving, distinguished by its pattern of "parallel diagonal ridges or ribs, produced by causing the weft threads to pass over one and under two or more threads of the warp, instead of over and under in regular succession, as in plain weaving."¹⁰⁰ A slightly less expensive choice was the "fine blue paste" handkerchiefs. The bright blue color of these handkerchiefs was the result of being dyed in a powdered and fermented solution of *Isatis tinctoria*, commonly known as "woad."¹⁰¹

Also imported in large numbers were the mens' and boys' hats that came in a bewildering variety of trims, including velvet bound, velvet edged, gold & silver laced, gold & silver

¹⁰⁰OED: 530, s.v. "twill."

¹⁰¹OED: 238, s.v. "woad."

bound, fancy edged and colors, including black, brown, green and white. These hats were shipped nested in sumpter trunks - originally a trunk designed to be carried upon a pack horse - covered with canvas.

One hundred sets of silver plated buckles and twenty-four cards of "moca links" represented additional wardrobe accessories. "Moca" links appear to have been buttons of mohair [mocayare] favored by tradesmen and other civilians. In fact the popularity of these buttons led some members of the military to refer to civilians as "mohairs."¹⁰² The forty-eight "scarlet cardinals snailed" listed were short, hooded cloaks popular with ladies in the third quarter of the eighteenth century.¹⁰³ Originally all cardinals were scarlet in color; however, by 1782 a variety of colors were available, thereby necessitating that Vaux specify "scarlet" in his records. These cloaks were further enhanced by being "snailed," a term that referred to a pattern believed to resemble the meandering path left by a snail. To obtain this effect, the cloth was passed between hot copper rollers with an engraved pattern, thus transferring the distinctive pattern to the cloth. Other textiles such as moreen and harateen, utilized a similar process

¹⁰²OED: 562, s.v. "mocayare," and OED: 581, s.v. "mohair."

¹⁰³OED: 339, s.v. "cardinal."

to create a waved or stamped finish.¹⁰⁴

Some of the textiles were designed to be used in the homes of Vaux's customers. Copperplated fabrics were first manufactured in England from 1756 when Francis Dixon of Drumcondra brought the technique from Ireland to London.¹⁰⁵ They were available in purple, red and blue and a variety of patterns. A patron could choose from such naturalistic images as "fox glove, grapes, birds, pheasant, or large fir;" chinoiserie themes: "pagodas, Japanese, Japanese figures, tigers and Chinese;" pastoral subjects: "shepherds & shepherdesses, huntsman & dogs, and cobbler;" or historical and exotic subjects such as: "Greek Ceres, Indian Queen, Jamaica, castle and Diana."¹⁰⁶ While copperplate textiles were used both for clothing and domestic furnishings, these copperplate textiles were most likely destined to dress a bed. The calico bengals available in gold, red, blue and purple stripe included in the cargo could also have been utilized to dress a bed, but it was

¹⁰⁴Florence Montgomery, Textiles in America..., s.v. "moreen."

¹⁰⁵For a more complete description of the copperplating technique, see Florence M. Montgomery, Printed Textiles: English and American Cotton Linens, 1700-1850 (New York: Viking Press, 1970), pp. 212-286; and Montgomery, Textiles in America..., s.v. "copperplating printing."

¹⁰⁶Examples of many of these patterns can be found in Montgomery, Printed Textiles..., pp. 212-286.

apparently also a popular material for lining coats and for petticoats. ¹⁰⁷

In addition to the dry-goods noted, Vaux often included other household furnishings in his cargos. One shipment contained a wide variety of glassware designed for elegant dining and drinking. Drinking vessels were most numerous, with wine glasses and tumblers most frequently mentioned. Wine glasses were available in plain, double flint bumper, and cut & flowered varieties. "Flint" glass (or lead glass, as it was sometimes called) was a lead-formula composition noted for its weight and brilliance. It also possessed the advantage of being less subject to the crizzling that had characterized earlier soda glass.

The "double flint bumper" wine glasses were created by drawing out the cup to form the stem and adding an extra-thick foot. The absence of a separate stem reduced the likelihood of breakage and made these glasses especially popular with tavern owners. Following English patterns of conviviality, patrons of the taverns would often thump their glasses down after toasts earning these drinking vessels the common name

¹⁰⁷Florence Montgomery, Textiles in America..., s.v. "bengal."

"firing" glasses.¹⁰⁸ The "flint mason glasses" were probably firing glasses engraved with inscriptions or iconography related to the fraternal organization known as Freemasons.¹⁰⁹ A tumbler was a barrel-shaped glass cups without a handle or foot.¹¹⁰ Vaux's cargo included tumblers in one half pint [eight ounces], gill [four ounces] and one-half gill [two ounces] capacities .

The cut, fluted and flowered decanters listed in Vaux's accounts became associated with fashionable entertaining in England after 1750. Cut and fluted glass, with its decorative faceting, was especially successful in highlighting the brilliance of lead-formula glass. "Flowered" refers to wheel-engraved glass. Originally, a technique brought to England by immigrant German craftsmen in the 1700s, engraving became especially popular during the rococo period. Wheel-engraving allowed craftsmen to decorate glass products with the naturalistic decoration then in fashion. The popularity of floral decoration led to the wide-spread adoption of the term

¹⁰⁸Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design Museum Notes, Vol. 60, No. 4, (January 1974), p. 50.

¹⁰⁹ For a likely example of this "mason" glass see p. 217, fig.8 of Arlene Palmer, "'To the Good of the Province and Country:' Henry William Stiegel and American Flint Glass," in The American Craftsman and the European Tradition: 1620-1820, edited by Francis J. Puig and Michael Conforti (Hanover: The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1989), p. 217.

¹¹⁰OED: 459, s.v. "tumbler."

"flowered" to describe any engraved decoration on glass.¹¹¹ In this case, the decanters probably were engraved with the name of the liquor it was to hold.

Fine glass tablewares provided a fashionable complement to interiors, especially by candlelight. Robert's House Servants Directory suggested a proper arrangement for the sideboard:

All the spare glasses that are for dinner must go on the sideboard, with your champagne, hawk and ale glasses. When all these are properly arranged they make a grand display. Your glasses should form a crescent or half circle, as this looks sublime. If you should have a light on your sideboard, you must leave a vacant place behind your glasses for it...¹¹²

Special orders, possibly for Vaux's own use, included twelve "wash hand finger cups engraved to match" and six "fine high cut salts." It is certainly tempting to believe that the two "Mahogany cases with Ivory handled Knives & Forks" appraised at six pounds at the time of Vaux's death were the same described in Vaux's earlier cargo as two sets of "green ivory table knives & forks silver capd" and stored in two "neat mahogany cases with silver rings & escuts (escutcheons)". Absent from Vaux's Probate record was a solid mahogany case

¹¹¹Arlene Palmer, "To the Good of the Province and Country...", p.219.

¹¹²Robert Roberts, The House Servant's Directory (1827; reprint, Philadelphia: Historic Publications, 1969), p. 48.

on frame "neatly inlaid," mounted on brass box casters with brass handles, partitioned into compartments lined with green bays and holding "fifteen white [clear] flint half gallon bottles with ground & cut stoppers," also special ordered to St. Eustatius.

Why the explosion of goods? More important, why so many choices and such a wide range of goods that satisfied the same need? Any of the seven different whips included in Vaux's cargo would have successfully motivated a horse to move if applied in the normal fashion. Any of the multitude of hats would have served to cover the head, regardless of their particular trim.

The significance of the wide variety of trade objects available may have been a direct result of the increased mobility that characterized eighteenth-century society. The more transient nature of social contacts in cities and port communities required new methods of social demarcation. One indication of this concern was the reliance on letters of introduction that merchants often presented upon entering a new community. In a world of strangers, elegant or sophisticated behavior was also believed to provide a reliable indication of an individual's social standing.

Specialized consumer goods were required as props in the display of refined behavior. For example, when Vaux furnished his home in Philadelphia, he selected a full complement of accessories necessary for elegant dining. Six matching mahogany chairs, twenty-four "Queens Ware" dishes and plates, and twelve wine glasses and tumblers would have allowed the diners to illustrate their mastery of correct etiquette while reinforcing feelings of group identity. For an individual to convey proper demeanor through his clothing and domestic artifacts, he or she required areas of self-determination and choice. If only one type of cup was available, obviously, the choice of drinking vessel would not serve to convey information about its owner. The greater the variety available, the more successfully an individual could project a specific public persona. A transient society with an economy based largely on credit required new techniques to distinguish the reliability of potential customers. Letters of introduction, fraternal association and the selection and use of specialized consumer goods all represented adaptations to a highly mobile society.

PHILADELPHIA, 1783-1790

Peace

With the signing of the Peace of Versailles in 1783, Vaux secured permission to return to Philadelphia and alerted his English suppliers of his imminent return. Upon his return, he found a city still full of discord despite the formal peace treaty. Being authorized to secure long-neglected debts owed London's merchants, Vaux once again found himself confronting a hostile populace. *The Pennsylvania Packet or General Adviser* of September 23, 1783 contained a letter to "the True Whigs of America," alerting them that:

...lately arrived from England...a number of persons empowered by the British Merchants to collect monies due them in this city...I did not believe they would have been thus early in the business. Can they suppose America has already forgot the infernal conduct of Britain towards her? Do they think the operations of the tomahawk and scalping knife on defenceless women and children...is still not fresh in the memories of her Virtuous sons? I will venture to assert, these men will find themselves much mistaken, if they think those matters already buried in oblivion. The principals or agents who are now here...will perhaps have the hardiness to sue for the debts due them: should this

be the case, I hope there is a sufficiency of the Spirit of 1776 left among us to make them repent their rashness: for this you may rely on, this species of animals have been no more your friends than were the infamous refugees you have refused a residence among you...¹¹³

Ironically, just as England's manufacturers were seeking to collect on old debts, they were also creating future problems by indiscriminately extending credit and cargos to Philadelphia's merchants. Vaux's letters from London in the 1780s are full of complaints about the condition of the market. His relative, John Strettle, wrote:

I observe with concern you confirm the general complaints of over stock'd [sic] Markets, want of Cash & backwardness of payment of Old Debts & reverently pray for a happy alteration in the times, the Glut of Goods is an evil that I think must cure itself, tho [sic] with fatal Consequences to some of the Shippers, as well as to many Importers.¹¹⁴

Why the English merchants flooded the Philadelphia market with easy credit has not been determined; however, at least one Philadelphia merchant attributed it to the fact that:

The merchants in England are such fools that if they can Possibly get Credit for the goods they will be shipped so long as the People are Roges

¹¹³The Pennsylvania Packet or General Adviser, (Philadelphia) (September 23, 1783).

¹¹⁴John Strettle to Richard Vaux, November 19, 1784, Vaux Papers, HSP.

[sic] anough [sic] here to write for them when they know they cant [sic] pay for them, and be assured we shall not cease to have enough of such Roges [sic], so you see between the Folly of England & the Vilynay [sic] of this country we are likely to be ruined.¹¹⁵

Many English wholesalers tried to cut their losses by shipping goods to Philadelphia to be auctioned off at low prices in public vendue. An infusion of credit, combined with public auctions, resulted in a widespread glut of goods. In 1794, Tench Coxe looked back on the economic status "at the Peace of 1783" and noted:

We were, by much, the first customers for British manufacturers; for it appears by their exports for 1784, that the greatest value was shipped to the United States, being £3,648,007 Sterling, including no raw articles...¹¹⁶

This situation complicated an already precarious economic picture in Philadelphia, and many established merchants found themselves facing bankruptcy.

Ultimately, the over-stocked market in Philadelphia reduced the amount of capital available for trading ventures. In

¹¹⁵Stephen Collins to David Knox, March 8, 1785, Stephen Collins Papers, Library of Congress, LXI, 158.

¹¹⁶Tench Coxe, A View of the United States of America (Philadelphia: William Hall, 1794). Quoted in Montgomery, Printed Textiles..., p. 36.

explaining his decision to forgo any further trading ventures, John Strettle wrote:

...indeed the accounts I receive from my most judicious Friends, of the Political, as well as the Mercantile State of Affairs in your Province, are very far from warranting extensive agreements, even those carrying the most inviting appearance, especially at a time I am making 5 1/2 percent Interest on my Money on the best Security in this Kingdom, which has induced me to invest a few Thousands this Spring, in preference to attempting Mercantile Speculations in such precarious times.¹¹⁷

Despite Strettle's desire to withdraw from the trade, Vaux continued to press him for goods and credits. Finally Strettle was forced to claim personal infirmities as the primary motive for his decision to cease economic ventures; he advised Vaux that:

I have been extremely ill this Spring & at this instant by no means well, all our efforts having hitherto fail'd [sic] of removing the Gout from Stomach to the Feet, and am myself convinced my future days must partake of much debility, & considerable application to business be no less unsuitable than undesirable; I have therefore resolv'd [sic] to draw my Commercial Connexions [sic] into a smaller compass, & am happy you have not sent me any Orders, as the wretched state of business in your States

¹¹⁷John Strettle to Richard Vaux, July 30, 1784, Vaux Papers, HSP.

renders it too precarious for a man of my years...¹¹⁸

The fact that Vaux was a Quaker had an economic significance that might easily escape a student of eighteenth-century economics. The collection of debts between independent nations that had recently fought a long and bitter war was precarious. In this environment, courts were notoriously unreliable mechanisms to settle debts. Vaux's letters from London evidence a concern with using the pressure of the Meeting to secure payment of debts. The London firm of Birkbeck & Blakes wrote Vaux in Philadelphia to request that he:

take such measures either as members of Society or at Law as may be necessary, for if we cannot have redress in the first we must take the latter. In the first place please to inform them that if they do not settle the account to your satisfaction we have desired you to complain of them to the Meeting they belong to of their injury to us.¹¹⁹

In some cases individuals were denied access to the Meeting as a result of failure to meet their economic debts. The possibility of such extra-legal measures helped insure repayment and may explain the emphasis on religious affiliation in determining economic partnerships. In a like manner, marriage

¹¹⁸John Strettle to Richard Vaux, May 31, 1785, Vaux Papers, HSP.

¹¹⁹Birkbeck & Blakes to John Warder and Richard Vaux, December 4, 1789, Vaux Papers, HSP.

patterns also served an economic function by strengthening the ties between individuals and reducing the likelihood of an individual failing to meet his economic responsibilities. The importance of group membership in facilitating economic partnerships may also help explain the importance of fraternal organizations in the eighteenth century.

A Domestic Life

Upon his return to Philadelphia, Vaux married his fiancée, Ann Roberts. Ann was the daughter of a prosperous Philadelphia merchant and brought to the marriage both economic benefits and a solid reputation among the Friends for her religious devotion. Ann gave birth to two children during their marriage, Susannah and Roberts. It appeared that Vaux was about to begin a more settled period of his life and enjoy the material benefits he had worked so hard to obtain.

Unfortunately, the years of travel and the stresses of the market were to cut short Vaux's life and he died at the age of thirty-nine years. On November 28, 1790, shortly after his death, three gentlemen of Philadelphia were charged with the mission of supplying an accurate record of his property. The estate was divided between his house on Arch street and his store on Front street.

In post-revolutionary Philadelphia there was not a clear-cut separation between domestic and occupational spaces. In 1785, for example, the prominent Philadelphia merchant Clement Biddle attempted to rent his house on Water Street. This house, located between Arch and Race streets, possessed such valuable features as front stores for goods and dry cellars underneath, with a kitchen and other necessities to provide an arrangement "fitting for the family of a merchant either in the dry or wet goods business."¹²⁰

Based on his 1790 Probate Record, Vaux stored the majority of his goods at his store on Front Street rather than at his domicile. At the time of his death, Vaux had in excess of £1900 worth of movable property at his store. Given the presence of the "shelves and sash of 30 Pains on the East End of the Store," Vaux's store apparently possessed a bow window for the display of his goods. Inside the store, customers might have admired the merchant's wares elegantly displayed in a glass case, examined the textiles carefully stacked in black leather trunks or inspected those folded and placed in the "mahogany painted case of drawers." Business ledgers and correspondence might have been stored in the "upper part of a

¹²⁰ Appendix C contains a transcript of the advertisement from The Pennsylvania Packet & General Adviser, (Philadelphia) (March 8, 1785).

mahogany bookcase and drawers," the lower section of which was at Vaux's home.

Vaux's store contained many of the same types of goods he had earlier shipped to the West Indies. His customers could choose from a wide range of fabrics, hose, buttons, knives, blankets and other products.¹²¹ The ever-present fear of robbery explains the presence of two padlocks on the front door and two small padlocks at the window.

Vaux not only supplied customers with English goods and produce, he also was a consumer for these goods and through his use stimulated interest among his contemporaries. The role of the merchant in satisfying the new appetite for luxury goods in "the latest fashion," and in setting the style for their less cosmopolitan neighbors deserves attention. The London Tradesman of 1747 advised an aspiring merchant that his:

Fancy must always be on the wing, and his wit...
a fashion hunting: he must be a perfect Proteus,
change shapes as often as the moon, and still find
something new, for the continual Flux and Reflux
of Fashion, obliges him to learn something new
almost every day. He must be a perfect Connoisseur

¹²¹A comparable range of goods is listed in Daniel Tyson's advertisement, as described in The Philadelphia Ledger or General Adviser (Philadelphia)(September 30, 1783) and is included as Appendix D.

in Dress and Fashion.¹²²

The home of a wealthy merchant was a source of constant comment by his neighbors. They scrupulously noted every alteration of interior decoration, method of dining and mode of entertainment.

Vaux's house located on Arch Street was valued at £900 in 1789, an evaluation consistent with other three-story brick townhouses in a desirable commercial neighborhood. Following conventional patterns, the house was divided into a formal front area and an informal or utilitarian rear area. It also evidenced a strict vertical hierarchy with the "best chamber" located directly above the "best parlor." Less expensive, and possibly out-of-fashion furniture, was used in the private areas of the house, while the more costly pieces found a prominent place in the public rooms on the first and second floors.¹²³

Vaux's house possessed an elegantly furnished first floor parlor, distinguished by the presence of a mahogany dining table and cover, a set of six mahogany chairs with hair bottoms, and a painted floor cloth. Here Vaux could have hosted

¹²²Richard Campbell, The London Tradesman (1747), p. 192.

¹²³ For a complete transcription of Vaux's probate see Appendix E.

formal dining parties that provided the opportunity to demonstrate his sophistication and engage in refined conversation.

A less elegant room on the first floor served as Vaux's office. Furnishings in this room consisted of a six plate iron stove and pipe, a pine writing desk, two inexpensive chairs and the base of a chest of drawers. An unusual feature of the room was the "iron chest fixed in the chimney stack." Here Vaux likely stored his valuables and important papers, protecting them from threats both natural and human.

Vaux's house served his economic undertakings by conveying his well-cultivated demeanor as a man of solid character and sophistication to his economic partners and his customers. In a highly individualistic economic system, the possession of an orderly, well-furnished house conveyed a sense of prudence, temperance and self-control to potential business partners.¹²⁴ Ideally, these impressions were further reinforced by the merchant's behavior while hosting the various social activities that took place at his home. The material and social environment in which Vaux lived and worked was carefully structured to produce a desirable

¹²⁴ The preface to Edward Hatton's *The Merchant's Magazine...* London, 1719, contains an extended discussion of the personal characteristics of a successful merchant. I have included an extract from this description as Appendix F.

impression among the public and reinforce Vaux's own sense of success and competency.

How do we judge the success of a merchant such as Vaux? The 1789 Philadelphia Tax Survey informs us that Vaux was residing in a house appraised at £900 and possessed seventy ounces of silver plate. These totals indicate that Vaux's home and possessions were of a somewhat higher value than other Philadelphia merchants of comparable age. Based on Vaux's probate record, his three-story house was well supplied with the necessary appurtenances, furnished in an up-to-date manner and was considered very convenient and fitting for the family of a merchant. At the time of his death, Vaux appears to have been well situated to secure the position of prominence he had labored to obtain. John Strettle, Vaux's cousin and occasional trading partner, probably provided the best criteria for judging an individual's success in the eighteenth-century world of trade:

I hope the commissions you drew at St. Eustatius were sufficient to prevent at any loss, which if you escaped, I think all circumstances considered, you have done well."¹²⁵

¹²⁵ John Strettle to Richard Vaux, March 31, 1783, Vaux Papers, HSP.

CONCLUSION

There is no single explanation for the explosion of goods that poured into eighteenth-century America. Increased wealth as the result of bumper crops in both England and the American colonies provided the discretionary money necessary to purchase new goods. The mere availability of a cash surplus does not, however, explain the willingness of consumers to purchase these new objects. Based on the fact that luxuries comprised a large proportion of the goods available to eighteenth-century American consumers, it appears that choice rather than necessity motivated consumers to part with their money.

Cultural conditions, characterized by increased mobility—both social and geographic—created a need for new mechanisms of social demarcation and group identification. Whether from nation to colony, or country to city, men and women were participating in a series of massive migrations. The goods that filled the holds of the merchant's vessels that sailed between England and the colonies served a vital function in maintaining a cultural identification threatened by distance. Eating the same foods as their English contemporaries;

drinking the same porter that flowed from the taps of English pubs; and following the fashions then popular in London society maintained the colonists' identification with their distant homeland.

Other goods served not to integrate populations, but to shore up a social order freed from its traditional constraints. The wide variety of goods available to eighteenth-century consumers provided a mechanism by which individuals of "the better sort" could distinguish themselves in a society that placed a high emphasis on individual demeanor. While anyone with the necessary funds could purchase goods, it required training to use the new goods in a sophisticated manner. Dance instructors and fencing masters found employment teaching their skills to an affluent clientele that hoped to solidify their newly acquired social position or gain the requisite skills necessary for further social advancement. Choosing from among the eight different varieties of horsewhips available required knowledge of the various forms of equestrian activities currently popular and the style of whip currently in vogue for each activity. The possession of the required skills and the necessary paraphernalia allowed individuals to demonstrate their genteel accomplishments and distinguish themselves from the lower estates.

While Richard Vaux's life was certainly interesting and eventful, it is not his uniqueness but rather the fact that he was representative of a group described as the "pacemakers of cultural change," that makes him a fit subject for historical investigation.¹²⁶ Merchants such as Vaux supplied the expertise and energy necessary to maintain the lifeblood of their economic system. This study has attempted to discuss the specific information and practices that distinguished this occupational group.

¹²⁶ Margaretta M. Lovell, "Reading Eighteenth-Century American Family Portraits: Social Images and Self-Images," Winterthur Portfolio 22, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 243.

Appendix A
Richard Vaux's Account of his interview
by the Committee of Safety

February 21st 1775

Gentlemen,

To prevent any mistakes or misapprehensions in this Affair it may not be amiss to state the several Transactions as they happened...

On Monday about 10 OClock Messrs. John Cox, John Shee, Thomas Barclay & James Mease acting on behalf of the Committee called on me to know if I was the Author of a certain Letter published in the Ledger of the 11th Instant I desired the Question might be put down writing...in about half an hour they returned with it...about 3 OClock I delivered them at Dr. Cox's house the following Answer present. John Cox, James Mease, Thomas Barclay and part of the Time Joseph Read Esq.

Gentlemen

In Answer to your Queries to me as follows Vizt:

"Sir

As you have been given up to the Committee by Mr. James Humphreys as the Person who handed to him for Publication the Extract of a Letter said to be written from Kent County on Delaware.

The Committee have directed us to wait on you & ask whether you Acknowledge yourself to be the Author of said Letter.

If you do not acknowledge yourself to be the Author the Committee desire to know from whom you received said Extract.

Philadelphia 20th February 1775
Mr. Richard Vaux"

I think the first Question you have put to me is derogatory to my Honour and Character as a Man of Business, nevertheless, I answer to the second Question, I hereby acquaint you that the Gentleman who assured me he received the Letter in Question from Kent and gave me an Extract thereof to hand to the Printer has since called at his Office to give up his Name, who being out of Town he has sent a Letter to said Office to that Purpose when the Printer returns you will make such application to him as you may judge proper, as I now consider myself altogether out of the Question.

To Messers.

John Cox, John Shee, Thomas Barclay, James Mease, acting on behalf of the Committee.

Philadelphia 20th February 1775

About 6 OClock John Cox, John Shee, Thomas Barclay & James Mease, came to my lodgings and informed me it would be more agreeable to them if I would alter the Stile of my answer to the first Querie. As I was desirous of giving them every reasonable satisfaction in my Power, I made my Answer as follows, which about 7 OClock was left at Doctor Cox's House.

I do not wish to put a wrong Construction on the meaning of our first querie, will not suppose you intend any reflections on my Character, therefore I answer that I am not the Author of said Extract. In answer to the second Question I hereby acquaint you, that the Gentleman who assured me he received the Letter in Question from Kent and gave me an Extract thereof to hand to the Printer, has since called at his Office to give up his Name, who being out of Town, he has sent a Letter to said Office to that purpose, when the Printer returns you will make such application to him as you may judge proper.

Having thus answered the questioned proposed I apprehend my Conduct will appear entirely inoffensive & justifiable on the Principles of honor and friendship.

Appendix B
Enoch Story to Richard Vaux, February 5, 1779

Marybone February 5th 1779

My Dear Sir,

On the other side you have rough scetch [sic] of some particular Merchandise, that I presume will need a reddy [sic] sale in the West Indies. The trade between Antigua and St. Eustatia is very capital, and perhaps an Adventure to the West Indies by considering the extensive trade of the Dutch and Danish Islands, may be benefitted by making up his Assortment in some manner suitable for the trade of these Islands, can I be in any shape servicable to you in this or any other matter I beg you will freely Command My Dear Sir

Your most Obedient &
Humble Servant

Enoch Story

Supposed Assortment, of a Cargo for the Island of Antigua &c.
 500 Barrels of fresh flour, light pack'd, in good season'd Casks,
 to have a lining hoop at each end. Querry, if some part of it is
 in Sacks, would not be advisable, as in this kind of package,
 it will not so soon get hard.

20 lieres.....Good Mess Beef, in tight Casks, full pickled
 20 Barrels.....N. this circumstance should by all means be
 20 half Barrels....attend to, as the Island laws prohibit a
 Merchants pickling Salt Provisions

50 Barrels.....Good Mess Pork, ship'd in same good Condition
 as 20 half Barrels...is recommended for the Beef as above.

24 sound well cured hams not to exceed 12lbs. wt. each } Packed in
 24 do do do do 10lbs. wt. each } Casks
 with
 24 large, neat cut well dried Neats Tongues } dry chaff

6 firkins Pickle Tongues, middle size, carefully put up.
 12 firkins Split Peas, one Bushell each
 12 half firkins do half Bushell each

20 sound Cheshire Cheeses not to exceed 30 lbs. each } pack'd in
 Slight

10or12 thick Gloster ditto not to exceed 15 lbs each } Casks not
 more than 5 Cheshire or 10 Gloster in a Cask, and if not too expensive, an inch Oak
 board of equal Circumference with the Cheese plac'd between each Cheshire, and
 every two Gloster cheeses.

30 hampers Containing each 3 doz. old Porter, well cork'd Brass
 double wired.

(Shone, Parker, or Custis is most in repute)

10or12 half firkins of Butter, N. the importation from Ireland is very great

Perhaps an Assortment of Dry Goods to the amount of five hundred pounds Sterling first Cost, would admit of a reasonable profit, and if approved, the following may be a part of the Adventure vizt.

6 pieces of Russia Duck No. 1	6lb. Scots thread.....No. 8
6 pieces of best strong Ticklenberg	6lb.....do.....9
6 pieces of Hempen Sprig linnen	6lb.....do.....10
6 pieces of Flaxon Ozenbrigs	3lb.....do.....14
6 pieces Irish Ozenbrigs	3lb.....do.....16
6 pieces stout Scotch do	6m London needles from #1to4
6 pieces brown Russheeting	6m.....do.....#1to6
6 pieces stout low-priced German Dowlass	10m.....do..... #1to10
6 pieces stout brown Droheda linnen	4m square point do from #1to6
6 pieces Russia Drilling	10m round blue point do do#1to10
12 pieces low-priced 3/4 Garlix	150 half packets Pinns #4 1/2
12 pieces do. tandem Garlix	150 do do do #4
12 pieces yd. wide Irish linnen @ 13	50 do do do #11
6 pieces do do do do @ 15	50 do do do #12
6 pieces do do do do @ 18	50 do small ditto
6 pieces 3/4 linnen check	assorted
6 pieces yd. wide linnen do	About L50 Sterling worth of Gauges,
6 pieces 7/8 Cotton do	Catgut, Ribbons, wire artiffical flowers,
3 pieces yd. wd. do. do. @ 14	(Tiffany &tc) with three or four sorts
3 pieces yd. wd. do. do. @ 15	of Caps ready made and dressed with
	ribbon &tc. to direct the fashion.

Appendix C
Advertisement from
The Pennsylvania Packet & General Adviser,
(Philadelphia)(March 8,1785)

TO BE RENTED

THE HOUSE THAT CLEMENT BIDDLE

esquire, now occupies, being in Water street, between Arch and Race streets; it is a 30 feet front house, with front stores for dry goods, good cellars underneath, kitchen and other necessaries very convenient and fitting for the family of a merchant, either in the dry or wet goods business: also, the wharf and stores below the same, which may go together or separate, as may be agreed upon, Enquire of WILLIAM SMITH, next door but one to the premises, for further particulars.

March 7.

Appendix D
The Philadelphia Ledger or General Adviser
(Philadelphia)(September 30,1783)

IMPORTED IN THE LAST VESSELS FROM ENGLAND AND HOLLAND,
AND TO BE SOLD BY,
DANIEL TYSON

AT HIS STORE IN WATER-STREET BETWEEN MARKET AND
ARCH STREETS, A GENERAL ASSORTMENT OF
EUROPEAN AND EAST-INDIA GOODS.
AMONG WHICH ARE THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES--

BROAD CLOTH
FLANNELS,
SWANSKINS,
DRUGGETS,
SHALLONS,
VELVERETS,
DUROYS,
SERGES,
HOSIERY,
HATS,
HATTERS TRIMMINGS,
SHOES,
BOOTS,
QUEEN'S WARE,
GLASS WARE,
SHEETINGS,
DOWLASS,
IRISH LINENS,
RAVENS DUCK,
BRITANNIAS,
CHECKS,

MUSSLINS,
BOULTING CLOTHS,
CALLICOES,
REDTICKS,
WRITING PAPER,
PRINTING TYPES,
BLACK PEPPER,
WINDOW GLASS,
CUTLERY,
IRONMONGERY,
JOYNERS FURNITURE,
PEWTER,
OZNABRIGS,
LAWNS,
CAMBRICKS,
SILKS,
MEDICINES,
IRON WIRE,
TIN PLATES,
AND A VARIETY OF OTHER
ARTICLES.

ALSO FOR SALE

A QUANTITY OF JAMES RIVER AND RAPPAHANOCK TO-
BACCO, A FEW PIPES LONDON PARTICULAR MADERIA WINES,
AND A GREAT VARIETY OF CUTLERY, IRONMONGERY, GLASSWARES,
PLATED SIDE BOARD FURNITURE, ETC. ETC. BY THE PACKAGE.

Appendix E
Richard Vaux's 1790 Probate Inventory

Inventory of Furniture Effects &c. in the Dwelling House of
Richard Vaux late deceased.

In the Garret

1 Mattrass, 1 Bolster & 2 old Blankets	1	00	00
2 Large Pine Chests		07	00
in Do 1 pr Rose Blankets	1	15	00
1 coverlet		04	00
1 Tin Tea Kettles		04	00
2 Tin Camp Kettles with covers	3/9	07	06
1 Short handle Iron Frying Pan tind inside		03	09
6 Tin Stew Pans with handles & covers	3/6 1	01	00
2 Tin Kettles with handles & covers		17	06
1 Tin Roasting Oven		03	09
1 Tin Dripping Pan		03	00
1 Tin Spice Box & 1 Tin Dust Pan		03	00
1 Old Feather Bed	1	05	00
1 Cedar Tub, 1 Half Bushell, 1 Iron Kettle			
1 Tin Warming Pot, 1 Bag Corks		12	06
a bridle, a pair boots & a shot bag		06	00

Third Story
Front Room

a maple Chest of Drawers	2	02	06
2 Green Painted Chairs		06	00
1 High Post green bedstead with Sack Bottom & green check Furniture Curtains	4	00	00
3 Demy Johns & a broken Glass Lanthorn		12	06
4 Princes metal Candlesticks	1	00	00
1 Plated Tea Urn	3	00	00
1 varnished Paper Bread Basket & 3 Bottle Castors		08	04
1 Basket containing a complete * Tea & Coffee Set of China	4	02	06

In the Passage between Front and Back Rooms

1 Mahogany Dining Table	3	00	00
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In the Back Room 3rd. Story

1 Old green Bed Stead & Sacking		10	00
1 good Feather Bed Bolster & Pillows	2	05	00
1 pair Sheets, 1 pair blankets, 1 green rug & coverlet	2	08	00
1 Old Chest of Drawers		03	09
2 Old fashion leather bottom chairs		03	00
1 small looking glass		01	00
carried over	5	10	09

Over the Kitchen
Third Story in Two Rooms

1 Suit Furniture Curtains (purp.) with Topels & lines	5	00	00
1 Suit (China Blue) Field bed Do.	2	10	00
1 Suit (Kenting) Musketo Curtains	1	05	00
12 Chair covers		09	00
1 pr. Furniture Cotton	3	00	00
3 Remnants printed Cotton	1	05	00
an old Trunk			
old boots & shoes	1	00	00
Two Cedar Tubs & Old Oak Bench		04	06
Three Old Chairs		03	09
2 pr. New Boots 3 pr Shoes	4	10	00
3 Table Covers 15/, 2 Bed Side Carpets 5/	1	00	00
1 Large Wilton Carpet	15	00	00
24 Sheets 15/, 1 Hair Trunk 7/6	18	07	06
7 Ditto 10/,			
5 coarse huckabuck Table Cloths 2/26	4	12	06
130 Napkins coarse & fine Damask & Huckabuck 2/6	16	05	00

42 Pillow Cases 2/9	5	15	06
31 Large & Small coarse & fine Table Cloths (4 Diaper & 27 Damask) 15/	23	05	00
1 Large * Pine Table		10	00
3 Chairs & 1 pan		11	03
1 Blue Bed Stead & Sacking 7/6, 1 Cradle Bed & Pillow &c. 15/	1	02	06
The Wearing Apparel of the Deceased	45	10	06
2 Hair Trunks		15	00
1 Chair Whip 2/6, a Box with an old Suit Curtains &c. 8/4		10	10
6 Tambour'd Chair Covers 15/ 1 Tambour'd Bed Spread 45/	3	00	00
1 Twilled Dimmity red printed Bed Cover	2	10	00
1 Marsailles Bed Quilt	3	15	00

2nd Story of Dwelling House
Front Room

6 Mahogany Chairs & 1 Easy Arm Do.			
1 Do. High Post Bed stead Sacking & Curtains and 3 window Curtains	30	15	00
1 very good Feather Bed, Tick & Cover			
1 pair good Rose Blankets & a Cotton Counterpane	8	00	00
2 Walnut Stools 10/, 1 Dressing Glass 37/6	2	07	06
2 Oval frame Gilt Frame Looking Glasses	10	10	00
2 Pictures King & Queen in Glass Frames		12	00
1 Bureau Dressing Table 60/, 1 Japd. Waiter 9/	3	09	00
1 Scots Carpet	2	00	00

Silver Plate

1 Silver Coffee Pot			
1 Silver Chocolate Pot			
2 Silver Quart Tankards			
2 Silver Pint Cans			
1 Silver Tumbler			
3 Silver Waiters			
2 Silver Porringers, 2 Silver Butter Boats			
4 Silver Salts 1 Silver (Child's) Cup			
1 Silver Punch Strainer, 4 Silver Salt Spoons			

18	Silver Table Spoons, 6 Silver Pap Spoons			
1	Silver Punch Ladle, 2 Silver Soup Spoons			
1	Silver Marrow Spoon			
25	Silver Tea Spoons, 1 pr. Silver Sugar Tongs			
4	Silver Labels, 1 silver Slop Bowl			
1	Silver Tea Pot, 1 Silver Sugar Dish			
2	Silver Cram Jugs, 1 pr. Bottle Coasters			
	Weighing 367 ounces 4 dut. at 8/4	153	00	00
1	Sett Plated Candlesticks,			
4	Polished Steel Candlesticks	4	04	00
1	Varnished Paper Waiter		03	09
1	Pair Steel Snuffers		03	09
1	Silver Watch with a gold seal	6	00	00
1	pr. Silver Shoe Buckles,			
1	pr. Silver Knee Do.	1	17	06
1	pr. Gold Sleeve Buttons		17	06

Back Room

1	Blue High Post Bed Stead & Sacking	2	05	00
1	Feather Bed, Bolster & Pillows	3	15	00
3	Rose Blankets, 2 Sheets & 1 Coverlett	3	07	06
6	Mahogany Chairs	6	15	00
1	Furniture Cotton Window Curtains		12	00
1	Scotch Carpert 22/6, 1 Looking Glass 80/	5	02	06
1	Bureau Dressing Table 60/,			
1	Mahagony Medicine Chest 30/	4	10	00

Room Over Kitchen

1	Green Jointed Bedstead & Sacking	2	05	00
	Bed, One Sheet, Blanket & Rug	4	00	00
1	Walnut Bureau Table 30/,			
1	Dressing Glass 22/6	2	12	06
2	Green Windsor & 1 Old Walnut Chair		09	00

Store Room Over Kitchen

Furniture & Implements		6	00	00
On the Stair Case				
1	Lanthorn		07	06
In the Yard				
6	Fire Buckets, 1 Basket, 1 Bag	2	10	00
1	Water Cask, 1 Bottle Rack, 1 Clothes Horse		15	00
1	Wheel Barrow, 1 Pale & 1 Bucket		10	00
In the Wash House				
1	pr. End Irons, 1 pr. Shovel & Tongs		15	00
1	Toaster, Pot Trammels, a pine table			
1	Chair, etc.		10	00
Kitchen				
	a Mahogany Dining Table & Cover	3	15	00
	a Walnut Small Breakfast Table		15	00
2	Green Windsor Chairs		05	06
1	Large Brass kettle	2	10	00
3	Iron Tea Kettles		15	00
5	Small Iron Pots, 1 Iron Dutch Oven	1	15	00
1	Bell Metal Pot		10	00
1	Grid Iron, 1 Cleaver, 1 Dripping Pan,			
3	Pot Covers, 4 Pot Hooks		07	06
3	Pair Candle Sticks 5/		15	00
1	Cheese Toaster & Cover, * Pans, 2 tin *			
2	Iron Ladles, 1 Skimmer, * *			
1	Funnel, Snuffers		17	06
1	Coffee (jap'd.) Urn with silver cock,			
1	Copper Sauce Pan	1	10	00
2	Tin Sauce Pans, 2 Tin Fire Fenders			
1	Roasting Jack & Spit Etc.	4	00	00

1	Mahogany Tray		03	09
1	Jap'd Waiter		02	06
2	Window Blinds		03	00

In the Back Celler

1	Safe, 1 Iron Post Coffee Mill, 1 Cedar Tub			
1	Iron Fender	1	00	00

In the Back Parlor
1st Floor

1	Mahogany Tea Table	1	12	06
1	Mahogany Dining Table & Cover	3	05	00
6	Mahogany Chairs with Hair Bottoms	6	15	00
1	Large Pier Looking Glass	5	10	00
1	Mahogany Stand		12	06
1	pr. End Irons, & 1pr. Shovel and Tongs	4	00	00
1	pr. Brass Sconces		07	06
1	Picture		05	00
1	Mahogany Knife Case and a Lott Ware in Closet	1	00	00
1	Doz. China Plates 15/, 2 China Bowls 15/	1	10	00
8	Small Do. Bowls 5/,			
24	Queens Ware Dishes & Plates		18	00
5	Glass Decanters 12/6,			
12	Wine Glasses & Tumblers 12/6	1	05	00
1	Set China (a Tea Sett) 20/, a Cady 7/6	1	07	06
1	Worsted Window Curtains		12	06
1	Painted Floor Cloth		12	06

In the Back Store

1	Six Plate Iron Stove & Pipe	3	00	00
1	Pine Writing Desk		07	06
1	Fowling Piece	1	15	00
2	Chairs		05	00
1	Chest of Drawers, the Book Case of Which is at the Store in Front Street			

1	Iron Chest Fixed in the Chimney Stack	5	00	00
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In the Front Parlor

6	Mahogany Chairs blue Moreen Bottom	6	15	00
2	Ditto Arm Do.	3	10	00
1	Windsor Arm Chair & Cushion		07	06
2	Mahogany Card Tables	5	00	00
1	Mahogany Breakfast Do.	2	05	00
	China on Side Board Table	1	02	06
1	Large Pier Looking Glass	6	10	00
1	Jap'd. Tea Urn Silver Cock	2	05	00
1	Do. Waiter		07	06
1	Black Tin Plate Warmer	1	10	00
11	China Coffee Cups & Saucers		12	06
1	Large jap'd. Paper Waiter	1	02	06
2	Mahagony Cases			
	with Ivory handled knives & Forks	6	00	00
2	Green Venetian Blinds with Cords Complete	2	05	00
3	Pictures in Glass Frames		11	03
2	Lacquered Sconces		07	06
1	Scots Carpet in Grain (3 pieces)	5	00	00
1	pr. Brass End Iron			
1	pr. Iron head Shovel & tongs and Iron Bar	4	00	00
	a Bay Horse in Stephen Page's Stable	25	00	00
	Riding Chair	30	00	00
	Total	630	05	11

Appendix F
Extract from "The Preface to the Reader,"
Edward Hatton's *The Merchant's Magazine* ..London, 1719.

...and I hope the whole will prove not only pleasant, but profitable; especially to the Younger sort of most Professions, and more particularly to the Merchant, for whose Province it was chiefly calculated; well knowing, that whatever conduceth to the facile and speedy Carrying on of Trade, does also contribute to the Augmentation of the Bulk thereof, and consequently to the Riches and Grandeur of the Nation; For as the ingenious and accomplish'd Merchant, Sir Josiah Child, says, *The Greatness of this Kingdom depends on Foreign Trade; and therefore the Interest of Trade is not unbecoming Persons of the highest Rank.* 'Tis observable of the *Dutch*, that they Erect the most Noble Tombs and Statues to the Memory of their Famous Sea-Commanders; which is a certain indication, that they are sensible of the vast Advantages, which accrues to 'em by their Shipping, and I heartily wish we in this Nation were not less apprehensive thereof, we should not see so many Eminent Persons of competent Fortunes, squander the same away, because they know not how to employ or improve 'em, and that caused by their Parents looking on their Extract to be above the Sphere of Commerce. Indeed the ill Practices of Some Traders (especially the meaner Sorts of Retailers) such as Lying and Cheating, are the two great Causes of bringing an Odium on that Name: But if it is to be considered on the other Hand, that such Immoralities are not Essential to Trade, and that here are many, and I hope the greater part, that may and do grow rich by Traffick, who make Justice their Rule, and their Word a strict Obligation; than such Objections against Tradessmen [sic] will seem vain and frivolous: But 'tis the Foreign Trade, or Merchandizing, that I would chiefly here perswade [sic] some of our Persons of Quality to have a due Esteem of: Other Arts or Mysteries they usually value, according to the Profoundness and Excellencies of their Nature, or else to the Advantages usually attending them; for both which, the Employment of a Merchant is as valuable as that of a Lawyer, Physician, or any other Profession whatsoever: For if the necessary Perfections and Qualities of a truly accomplished Merchant be considered with respect to his

Natural, Moral, and acquired Parts, it will place him (in the Opinion of the Judicious) far above contempt.

For such a Merchant, as to his Natural parts, must have a quick Apprehension, a solid Judgement, and a sound Constitution of Body; his Apprehension to capacitate him for the Understanding all that great Mystery of his Honorable Calling; his Judgement to secure him from being easily deceived and imposed on by those with whom he has Dealings, and a good Constitution and Soundness of Body, that he may do Variety of Business in different Places in a short Time.

His *Morals* must likewise be no less evident, his *Fortitude* such as gives him undaunted Courage to Adventure his Estate at Sea, notwithstanding all Dangers; and also to correspond and discourse not only with Foreigners and Barbarians, but with Princes and Statesmen; and (in short) to insist on his Right from all Persons in all Places whatsoever. And as his *Fortitude* must be great, so his *Prudence* sets Bounds thereto, that it neither Degenerate into Impudence nor Fool-hardiness; for 'tis by this that a just Balance and a due Poize [sic] is kept in all his Actions; this is the Pole-star that directs him how to steer in his many Novel and Momentous Concerns; by this he first fixes on the most probable and secure way of enriching himself, and then prosecutes his Designs by the most proper Methods: This teaches him how to manage all his Domestik [sic] Concerns according to the various Mutations of things abroad; and 'tis his Prudence, whereby his Importations, Exportations, Buying, Selling, Exchanging by Bills, Bartering, Accompts, and all his Dealings are so ordered and carried on, as tend not only to his own, but the Interest of Trade in general. And as his *Prudence* makes him act wisely, so his *Justice* makes him *act* honestly. This restrains him from affirming a Commodity to be good, when 'tis bad; or Weight and Measure when deficient; of if he does so through Ignorance of such Defects, he scruples not to make a proportional Abatement. This also makes him punctual to his Word in all his Affairs, which procures and encreaseth [sic] his Credit; his Credit augmenteth the Bulk of Trade, and that Riches; and as an ingenious Author has it, *The Merit of the Merchant is above all other Subjects; for while he is untouch'd*

in his Credit, his Handwriting is a portable Coin for the Service of his Fellow-Citizen, and his Word the Gold of Ophyr to the Country where he resides. This Merchant is not only accounted an honest Man by his Neighbors, (which is sufficient for others) for his Character is well-known in Foreign Parts, as his Name or the Commodities he deals in; and by acquiring the Epithet of a *Just* Man, he can carry on as great a Trade, as he, that wants that, can do with treble his Stock. And if we consider his Temperance, Gravity, and Affability, they are such as improve his spacious Capacity and Intellect; the first makes him able to perform the most intricate part of his Business at any time; whenever it occurs; the second makes him suited to, and become his high and honorable Employment; and the third of an easy Access, gains him Love and Affection, and makes all that knows him delight to deal with him.

And as this Merchant is thus qualified with respect to his Natural Parts and Morals, so his Acquired Parts are such as fit him for the Practice of that great and copious Undertaking, to perform it with Ease and Satisfaction, and makes him a fit Correspondent or Companion for the most Noble or Judicious. To instance in some of the necessary Accomplishments which properly denominate him a Merchant: He understands not only the Language, and Customs (with respect to Trade) of the Place where he Resides; but also those of such Parts of the World where he has any considerable Traffick: He writes a fair and legible Hand, and the Matter in a good Style, for satisfaction not only of Foreigners, who may not well understand his Dialect, but of Judges and Magistrates (in Case of Contest) who may be unacquainted with the Mysteries of Merchantile [sic] Concerns: He is likewise well versed in Accounts, whereby he can do his business the shortest and surest Way: And in *Book-keeping*, by Debtor and Creditor, which informs him with Ease and Certainty how matters stand at any time with respect to *Men, Money or Merchandize*, and to Profit and Loss, whether he goes forward or backward, Rich or Poor. He is likewise a good Proficient in Mathematical Learning, as in *Geometry*, by which he knows how to measure Board, or Timber, or other Things, relating to his Trade; as gauging Wine and Oyl Vessels, &c. In Navigation, whereby he knows the Distance and Rombs [sic]

leading to the most noted Ports or Places of Trade which are of use to him in discourse and Agreements with Masters of Ships, &c. In *Geography*, thereby to know the Situation of the most remarkable Places of Traffick [sic], what Commodities they produce, and also the Customs, Subsidies and Impositions paid upon Exportation or Importation, the manner of Buying and Selling, with the Value of their Coins, Weight and Measures. Add to all this the clear Notions he has of the Great Mysteries of Exchange; the Reason of its Rising and Falling, the Laws and Customs used in the Drawing, Accepting, Endorsing, and Protesting Bills of Exchange, and the Quantity made up for sale, Quality and Use of the most material and best Commodities, together with the Political part of Trade, as the Interest of all Countries, with respect to all Commodities, i.e. which are most proper for, or are to be prohibited Exportation, or Importation in this or that Country, and many other things; which, should I particularize it would swell this Epistle beyond due proportion to the subsequent Treatise; all which a compleat Merchant must necessarily be acquainted with, in order to the qualifying him for the judicious Performance of his own Business, and that of his Country in a Court of Merchants. So that we may well conclude with the fore-cited ingenious Author, *That of this Study, as well as others, it may be said, There is Infinity in it, none, though of the largest Intellects and Experience, being able to fathom its utmost Depth.*

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