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### **“Merchant Culture” in Germany and America in the Late-Eighteenth Century**

Happy is the man who has reached the harbor  
and left the sea and storm behind  
and now sits warm and peaceful in the good Ratskeller of Bremen.

(Heinrich Heine, “Im Hafen”)

When Thomas Mann completed *Buddenbrooks* in 1900, the minutely imagined chronicle of life among the nineteenth-century Hanseatic merchant class was so uncomfortably realistic that its publication caused a social earthquake in Mann’s hometown of Lübeck. The twenty-five-year-old author depicted a mercantile elite that was often shallow, relatively unappreciative of high culture, obsessed with reputation and status, grasping and frequently deceitful yet constantly mouthing Christian platitudes. Mann painted the rest of Germany in broad strokes. Prussians were stoic and slightly dim, honest but easily duped. Rhinelanders were awkward provincials with bad tempers and no social graces. The Bavarians were a lovable collection of absurdities: perpetually inebriated, slothful, unambitious, inarticulate, yet playful and warm-hearted. Throughout the novel, Mann leaves little doubt that the Hanseatic merchant families considered themselves a breed apart from all other Germans. By virtue of their money, accumulated through two generations of buying and selling, the Buddenbrooks and their rival families moved through society like minor royalty, trailed by a fleet of servants and sycophants, convinced that their worldly calling was divinely sanctioned and superior to all others.

By the time Mann wrote his startling debut novel, independent merchants (like the fictional firm of Johann Buddenbrook & Sons) were all but gone, replaced by broadly-based international trading lines like the North German Lloyd and the Hamburg-Amerika. But little more than a century earlier, at the time of the American Revolution, they had been at the zenith of their powers. Between

the liberation of the Americas and the onset of European industrialization, the independent merchants dominated the trade of the western world.

As the Enlightenment gave way to what was indisputably the West's "bourgeois century," the role of the independent merchant took on new significance.<sup>1</sup> Elisabeth Fehrenbach has written that this era witnessed the last period of "bureaucratic absolutism," which was replaced by a rapidly-spreading capitalist revolution, a liberation of what would become the "investing class."<sup>2</sup> Independent merchants, usually operating in the major seaports, stood in the front ranks of these "liberated" capitalists in both Germany and North America.

The remarkable number of social, economic, and political similarities between German and American businessmen formed the bases for the earliest German-American commercial and diplomatic relationships. In the last two decades of the eighteenth century, commerce rapidly developed between the merchant houses of the Hanseatic cities of Bremen and Hamburg and their American counterparts in cities like Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. This blossoming business was not simply the result of capitalist impulses, but was nurtured by a striking cultural similarity that acted as a catalyst for trade, and transcended linguistic and national differences.

In the late eighteenth century, goods and passengers traveled on two kinds of merchant vessels. Packets, also called "traders," ran regularly between two or more ports, sometimes serving a triangular or four-pointed circuit like the vessels which sailed from England to Africa, thence to the West Indies, to the American colonies, and finally back to England. In the age of sail, these regular routes were less common than the transient or "tramp" voyages, which were made by ships picking up cargoes wherever they could. Vessels plying this kind of trade made two or three trips per year, depending upon opportunities for cargo, as well as upon distance, weather, and experience sailing to a particular port.

"Tramp" voyages were riskier enterprises than running packets, but they could prove stupendously profitable. The Perkins Brothers of Boston recorded the results of several shipments to France and to Hamburg, often citing 200 percent profits after all expenses had been paid.<sup>3</sup> The Baltimore merchant Robert Oliver wrote to a German colleague that he had realized nearly 300 percent profit on purchases of German metalwares (primarily silver and pewter) from a pair of shipments to Hamburg in 1799, even after paying the American agent in Hamburg who had brokered the deals.<sup>4</sup> The amounts paid to brokers, freight-handlers, and other middlemen who demanded a small percentage of the total sales (usually 1-3 percent), indicate that it was possible for a shipper in America to realize as much as 1,000 percent profit for a shipment of tobacco to Bremen, if weather, government inspectors, and the local economy all cooperated.

Certainly merchants kept an eye on all these factors as best possible, given the limitations of communication in the era. They were often keenly aware of prevailing prices in the world's major markets, well-informed on political events that might have an impact on business, and very quick to fire off a letter of

complaint or even withhold the transfer of funds if they felt anyone was charging them unfairly.<sup>5</sup> Information on the state of the market was apparently considered public domain knowledge, and shared among merchants with a readiness that makes it easy to forget that these men were all competitors. Merchant firms shared information on prices, access to credit and transport, the reliability of certain brokers, the supply and demand at various locations, etc. The acerbic Baltimore merchant Thomas Rutland, who did a large trade in tobacco with both Germany and Britain, paid close attention to details of this nature. In 1786, when he was first investigating the possibility of expanding his operations to Germany, Rutland commissioned a clerk to research all the major tobacco buyers in Bremen and Hamburg and to investigate "the differences between the merchants [in Germany and America] and continental scales of depreciation and exchange."<sup>6</sup> Robert Oliver, interested in expanding his business to include German textiles, wrote to the Bremen firm of Hermann Heymann Sons with an analysis of the markets and the financial considerations: "German and Silesia Linens are generally in demand and sell to advantage, but our credits on these articles are long, say 8 Months."<sup>7</sup>

Local merchant houses and tramp merchantmen had a mutually-dependent relationship. The merchant brokers served as liaisons between the ship-handlers looking for cargoes and the producers and sellers looking to have their goods taken abroad. In order for the merchants to keep up a lively business, they had to be willing to be diverse in their dealings, and they needed to be exceptionally well-informed on a number of economic and political factors, both local and foreign. As long as merchants were successful, the tramps would keep coming back to that port, looking for new cargoes. As long as the tramps called regularly, merchants could do a brisk business with a wide array of customers and goods.

The arrival of steam travel in the mid-nineteenth century made packets more common, and encouraged the development of regular shipping lines.<sup>8</sup> This spelled the beginning of the end for independent merchants, as most of the world's ports were by that time open to each other's commerce, and regular, predictable lanes could be established.<sup>9</sup> In their heyday, however, the independent merchants came to dominate the American harbors, as they had done in the Hanse for centuries. In both America and the Hanse, prominent merchants were invariably well-connected socially and politically. Thirteen of the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were merchants, second in number only to lawyers.<sup>10</sup>

The economic, social, and political linkage of the merchant class was a relatively recent development in America, but a long-standing tradition in the Hanse. For centuries, the most successful merchant houses had provided the largest part of the social and political leadership of Bremen and Hamburg. Johannes Lange, who founded the first tobacco importing firm in Bremen in 1642, was an alderman, later a senator, and his family produced a number of other civil servants over the next two centuries.<sup>11</sup> The Oelrichs family, origi-

nally from East Prussia, entered the independent shipping business shortly after American independence, specializing in *Kolonialwaren* (colonial goods). They rose to become one of Bremen's most prominent and influential families, who in the course of three generations produced a senator, a general-consul, and an alderman.<sup>12</sup> The merchant dynasty founded by the Kulenkampff brothers in 1806, which operated the biggest tobacco import house in Bremen, contributed two senators, several consuls, and a number of prominent attorneys and judges.<sup>13</sup>

The example of another Bremen family, the Wichelshausens, is instructive. Even though they had moved from the Rhineland relatively recently—in 1702—the Wichelshausens were a perfect example of the kind of family which dominated the Hanseatic cities for centuries.<sup>14</sup> In the two generations prior to the French Revolution, they had produced a *Bürgermeister*, two senators, and two noted magistrates. In addition, the family boasted some of Bremen's best-known private persons, including three physicians, a writer, and several prominent merchants.<sup>15</sup> Friedrich Jacob Wichelshausen served as the U.S. consul to Bremen for thirty-three years. His brother Hieronymus Daniel moved to Baltimore, where he became a successful merchant, an influential person in the German-American community (serving on the boards of most of the German-American associations), and ultimately Bremen's consul in that city.<sup>16</sup>

Bremen and Hamburg were governed by senates, which comprised representatives from the most wealthy and powerful merchant families. After 1712, in fact, a minimum of one of Hamburg's four mayor's positions and half of the twenty-four senators' seats were reserved exclusively for merchants.<sup>17</sup> The franchise was limited to a moneyed elite, which ensured that the senate was re-elected, generation after generation, as the representatives of the merchant class. It was customary for men to ascend into the positions held by their fathers, moving up from the position of consul to senator, for example, assuming that the family and its business had not suffered any untoward developments such as scandals or financial reverses.

The political and economic arrangement of the Hanse was essentially the opposite of that in most German states, where the merchant class was decidedly subservient to the nobility, church, and even the scholarly and professional elites. Indeed, it more closely resembled the situation developing in young America, where budding capitalism had created a patrician class of well-educated merchants who were interested in worldwide trade and local politics. Business and politics meshed in more than one family in both the Hanse and the American seaboard, the cousins John and Samuel Adams being the most notable example in the New World, although the business-political connections could also be found in a single man. Stephen Girard, at the height of his mercantile powers, also served in various positions in the Philadelphia city government.<sup>18</sup>

In both societies, the merchants themselves represented only small percentages of the total populations. Bremen in 1796 had only 156 registered independent merchants and sixty major commercial houses. These men and their fami-

lies accounted for slightly less than 2,000 people, or under 5 percent of the city's roughly 40,000 inhabitants. They owned the most expensive homes, virtually all in the *Altstadt*, the oldest, most central district of Bremen, closest to the major religious and government structures. In Lübeck, with a total population of approximately 25,000, roughly the same percentage were members of this economic elite. Hamburg, which had over 100,000 inhabitants in 1800, had a slightly larger merchant class of over 8,000 people, who lived primarily in the St. Nicolas and Ste. Catherine neighborhoods. In no case did this group exceed 10 percent of the total populace of any Hanseatic city.<sup>19</sup> It must be noted, however, that the number of citizens either directly employed by the merchant elites or connected in some material way to their enterprises was very high, and is far more difficult to ascertain. Since industry in these cities was small and limited to a few fields, it is logical to conclude that the majority of working men were involved in one or another facet of commercial activity, and that a good number of the working women were employed by these wealthy families as domestic help.

The Hanse usually "spoke for" German commerce in the wider world, since Germans imported and exported largely through Hanseatic harbors. In the 1790s, Bremen and Hamburg alone accounted for more than half of all imports to German-speaking lands from non-German states.<sup>20</sup> Apart from the Hanse, the rest of Germany's merchants were inward-looking. Saxony, for example, had a healthy trade in the 1780s and 1790s, and the Leipzig Fair attracted merchants from across northern and eastern Europe. Such German markets, however, dealt predominately with other German-speaking states, and most of what Saxony did receive from the trans-oceanic world came via Hamburg.<sup>21</sup> The Hanse were thus uniquely suited among all the German states to serve as interlocutors between Germany and the United States. In many ways the Hanseatic business class had more in common with its counterpart on the American seaboard than with most regions of Germany.

Whether or not we accept the portrait drawn by Thomas Mann, it is clear that we can speak of some sort of "merchant culture" extant in the seaports of both Germany and the United States. Certainly the common ground shared by German and American merchants served as a catalyst for German-American relations as a whole. Although they would have been attracted to the new and expanding markets of North America in any event, the Hanseatic merchants were additionally drawn to the very idea of the American "commercial republic" (as a French representative to Congress had described the United States in 1779.) A trans-national collegiality existed among these men of business. German and American merchants spoke a mutual second language: liberal capitalism.

In addition to the political and economic similarities between the merchant classes of North Germany and the American seaboard, a great many socio-cultural similarities existed as well. The two peoples were religiously compatible. In both the Hanse and the United States the population was overwhelmingly

Protestant. Much of English North America, of course, began as a Protestant religious sanctuary. Many of the cities of the Hanse were Protestant, but Bremen and Hamburg were particularly influenced by the large number of Huguenots fleeing France in the 1600s. These people flooded into the North German ports; virtually the entire Huguenot community of La Rochelle resettled in Bremen.<sup>22</sup> But despite being staunchly Protestant, by the late eighteenth century both America and the Hanse were exceptionally tolerant of religious minorities in their midst. A general mistrust of Catholics admittedly existed in both societies, although both they and the Jews were allowed to participate actively in the economy, albeit not in the clubs and the social lives of the elite.<sup>23</sup> The English writer Thomas Cooper, describing the new United States to prospective immigrants, listed matters of conscience as the most important of the many reasons to relocate there:

You would seek in America in the first place, an asylum from civil persecution and religious intolerance . . . and where you might be permitted to enjoy a perfect freedom of speech as well as of sentiment.<sup>24</sup>

Hamburg's Jews comprised around 5 percent of the city's total population in the period 1770-1820. Since 1612 they had enjoyed a protection agreement (*Schutzvertrag*) with the senate, renewed *pro forma* every year. Although they had a Jewish quarter, it was not a ghetto, and they were not legally required to live there and nowhere else. The Jews were overwhelmingly employed in banking, trade, and money-changing—the most important businesses to their community, although their firms were usually small-to-medium sized, and did not really compete with the big trading houses. The successful merchant banking firm of M. M. Warburg, for instance, made only 13,000-15,000 marks banco per year, or less than one-tenth what John Parish earned in the same period.<sup>25</sup>

The principle of tolerance was most dramatically evident in the way the Hanse eschewed the conservative German paranoia about Freemasons and similar semi-secret organizations. Indeed, in both the Hanse and the United States, many of the most prominent public figures were quite open about their Masonic ties, and their homes and gravestones are adorned with the symbols of their orders. In young America, where accommodation for oppressed adherents of minority groups and faiths was something of a tradition, this is perhaps not surprising.<sup>26</sup> But when contrasted with the occasional persecution of Masons in other regions of Germany, the Hanseatic attitude is quite striking.

In 1798-99, conservative passions and paranoias threatened a witch-hunt of Masons in both Germany and New England. The prominent American scholar William Bentley, friend of Jefferson and an open defender of Masons, collaborated with his friend Christopher Daniel Ebeling, the equally prominent Hamburg scholar and Americanist, on a literary counterattack in both countries. Ebeling, city librarian of Hamburg and former head of the Academy of Trade

(*Handelsakademie*), wrote frankly of his membership in both the Illuminati and the Masonic Lodge. He pointed out that his friends in both institutions included the city's best-known and most respected men of letters and affairs.<sup>27</sup> American defenders of Freemasonry were just as eloquent and just as prominent in society.

Concurrent with Protestant ethics, both the Hanse and young America were relatively conservative in dress and drink. In neither society did the wealthy indulge in splendors on the scale of French or Italian balls and fêtes.<sup>28</sup> This was particularly true of the New Englanders, and of the equally sober and parsimonious German-Americans in the mid-Atlantic.<sup>29</sup> A German observer in Philadelphia who had also lived in France commented on the rather spartan entertainments to be found even among the wealthiest of merchant society.<sup>30</sup> Thomas Cooper remarked in 1794 that a wealthy European man would actually have trouble spending his money in America, because "there are not such variety of amusements, nor as expensive amusements, nor does an expensive style of living procure so much respect."<sup>31</sup>

Though Bremers cherished their several fine old breweries, coffee was the primary social beverage of the Hamburgers, consumed in numerous coffeehouses where wealthy men read their foreign-language newspapers and discussed politics and business.<sup>32</sup> Although plenty of imported (mostly French) wine passed through the harbors in Bremen and Hamburg, it appears that almost all of it was sold to other regions of Germany. Hamburg especially was a remarkably "dry" city where many tea-totalling American puritans would have felt quite comfortable with Caspar Voght's cautionary platitudes about "drunken idleness" and "the miseries of drinking."<sup>33</sup>

In both the Hanse and the American port cities, the merchant elites who dominated public affairs were the *hautes citoyens* in republics which officially disdained nobility. Recent research has shown that in Germany at this time, in areas of great mercantile activity, there was usually no nobility. Instead, the "high bourgeoisie" filled the role of "nobility."<sup>34</sup> Hanseatic society was dominated first by merchants—a great many of whom, like Arnold Delius, had studied law as young men—plus a few early industrialists and a few Protestant clergy.<sup>35</sup>

As in America, Hanseatic society was led by businessmen and lawyers who claimed to love and defend democracy and republicanism. In reality, of course, both societies' franchises and electoral systems were carefully restricted to allow only members of the existing elite to ascend to power.<sup>36</sup> The American merchant elite supported the city incorporation movement of the 1780s and 1790s because it helped to place political power more firmly in their own hands. By 1800, Boston was the only major American city not incorporated, primarily because its relatively small size and slow growth allowed for the survival of the more democratic "town meetings." The Federalists—particularly Hamilton—openly distrusted "democracy" as one short step from the abyss of mob-rule, and thus sought to narrow the definition of "liberty" in order to preserve the sanity and self-discipline of the republican system. Ironically, German-Ameri-

cans (many of whom were first- or second-generation transplants from authoritarian states) were in the vanguard of those who resented and rebelled against the exclusive and "monarchist" impulses of the Federalists in the 1790s.<sup>37</sup>

Thus the Hanseatic and American republics were *de jure* republics, but *de facto* oligarchies administered by a jurisprudent merchant "nobility." While working-class Germans (and many Americans) were initially enthusiastic and supportive of the democratic ideals of the French Revolution, the wealthy bourgeois leaders of the Hanse (and the Federalists in America) were immediately skeptical. Revolution, after all, is usually bad for business.<sup>38</sup>

American democracy, even in its earliest and most restrictive forms, did not exhibit the kind of class-structures that characterized the Hanse. There were no places in the U.S. Senate reserved for "Notables," who could only be elected by a certain class of people, determined by ownership of significant amounts of property. Nonetheless, it is clear that both societies had constructed republics in which the money-making and money-managing elites controlled virtually all policy initiatives, unless their hands were forced by the occasional popular rebellion.

However tentative and qualified their commitments to democracy, both societies were nonetheless wholly devoted to capitalism. A mid-eighteenth-century German visitor to Hamburg commented that:

The importance of business in Hamburg and the variety of things connected with it are so great that one could profitably spend an entire year here and learn something new each day. There are few European seaports which Hamburg's ships do not enter, and there is no seafaring people in this part of the world which does not traffic with Hamburg. Its superb location has made the city the emporium of all Germany. . . . The Elbe and the canals . . . are almost blanketed over with ships. The assembly on the Stock Exchange is one of the largest [in Europe] and the place teems with negotiants. In a word, one finds here a perpetual motion of all nations and peoples caught up in the business of money-making.<sup>39</sup>

As in the Hanse, the American port cities were centered upon the commercial action at the waterfront. Boston's main trading-place in Faneuil Hall stands only one block downhill from the old State House. In Philadelphia the merchants and their ships plied their trade three blocks east of the building that housed the Continental Congress. Similarly, prior to the construction of the modern industrial-age dockyard downstream, Bremen's *Rathskeller*, centrally located on the little island of the *Altstadt*, was no more than four blocks in any direction from the merchant ships at anchor in the Weser. These cities were admittedly small; at roughly 40,000 inhabitants each, Philadelphia and Bremen were "medium-sized" ports for the era, Hamburg and New York were larger,



Boston and Lübeck smaller. But in every sense, these were societies where business and politics—capitalism and republicanism—were inextricably bound together.

Several late-Enlightenment exponents of republicanism such as Thomas Paine and Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès predicted a liberation of creative business impulses if the bourgeoisie were allowed the dominant say in national affairs.<sup>40</sup> In the Hanseatic cities and in young America, we find not only a belief that republicanism brings out the best in capitalism, but also the obverse: the belief that the egalitarian impulses of republicanism were indeed a function of capitalism, a demonstration of business at its best. The greatest virtue of capitalism, according to an anonymous author of a 1790 editorial in Hamburg's *Kaufmännisch-politische Zeitung*, was that more people have more opportunities and basic civil rights than had ever been possible under an aristocracy.<sup>41</sup> The editor of the popular journal *Hamburg und Altona* concurred in 1802, writing that, as a result of Hamburg's special societal arrangements, not the least of which was commitment to free trade, "We have no nobility, no patricians, no slaves, indeed not once even subjects. All real Hamburgers know and have only a single rank, the rank of citizen."<sup>42</sup>

The wealthy merchant was expected to be philanthropic and liberal, although privately: in spheres outside his work. "Humanity and liberal, enlightened spirit follow the true merchant only to the door of his warehouse," wrote Johann Arnold Minder of his colleagues in Hamburg: "Not seldom one can also find those respectable men who possess two souls at the same time: one for the profession and one for society—and in the Hanseatic cities more frequently than in others."<sup>43</sup> Hamburg "employed" unpaid civil servants (*ehrenamtlich*) inevitably drawn from the rich, who performed much of the city's administrative tasks part-time, for the honor of the title. The inspector of shipping, for instance, might have been a wealthy man serving as a volunteer.<sup>44</sup>

Hanseatic government was heavily paternalistic and familial.<sup>45</sup> The aldermen and government leaders were active in efforts to improve the public welfare, such as the building of poor houses and the dispensing of food and clothing to the destitute. Many of the leading citizens of Hamburg were members of the "Patriotic Society," formed in 1765 by Johann Ulrich Pauli. "Patriotism," in this North German bourgeois sense, was less a political concept than it was a social impulse inspired by the French Enlightenment: a sense of doing good for the community.<sup>46</sup> Caspar Voght was a leader in the movement among Hamburg's business elites to set up a centralized administration to care for the poor. His arguments were remarkably enlightened for his era, refuting the conventional wisdom that poor morals caused poverty, and that the poor were poor because they lacked the Christian virtues of honesty, sobriety, and diligence:

We generally blame them [the poor] for it, as if these qualities were so very common in the higher classes, and as if corruption did not always spread from the higher to the lower or-

Voght paid for a "Poor Census" in 1788, as well as donating thousands of suits of new clothing to the needy.<sup>48</sup> As in Hamburg, the wealthy merchant families of Bremen funded many philanthropic public works such as parks and gardens, and the scenic, tree-lined canal just beyond *Am Wall*, built in 1787.<sup>49</sup>

The American counterparts of these men were often equally generous with their wealth; Stephen Girard's name still graces the buildings of more than a dozen public institutions he founded through charitable donations and endowments. Ultimately Girard willed less than 4 percent of his net worth to his family. The rest of his massive estate went to charity.<sup>50</sup> The wealthy Boston merchant T. H. Perkins regularly used his Masonic connections to raise funds for local charities. Perkins donated his own mansion, and several thousand dollars, to founding an asylum for the blind.<sup>51</sup> Unlike later "liberals" in Britain and elsewhere, these men generally were not *laissez-faire* about the social problems around them.

American society was, and in some respects still is, the ultimate example of social mobility. Robert Oliver, head of a multi-million-dollar Baltimore merchant house, began virtually penniless as a twenty-six-year-old Irish immigrant.<sup>52</sup> Stephen Girard, born "Étienne Girard," arrived in Philadelphia from France as a young sailor. Peter Grotjan, another Philadelphia trade magnate, was the son of a Hamburg bureaucrat. Starting with a small warehouse he inherited from his uncle, he turned twenty on the ship to America, and by age twenty-two had founded his own firm in the New World.<sup>53</sup> Richard Derby was a second-generation American, his middle-class grandfather having brought the family from England at the turn of the century. Millionaires John Jacob Astor and David Parish both came from Germany, although the latter arrived already quite wealthy. Once the Revolution began, many of the states used enticing legislation to encourage a change of citizenship for men such as these. Maryland, for instance, passed a "Naturalization Act" in 1779, encouraging all foreigners to become citizens by giving them two years' exemption from taxation.<sup>54</sup> While Germany generally inclined toward the traditional European sense of class and nationality as a fairly iron-cast distinction for an individual or family, the Hanse—particularly Hamburg—demonstrated a social flexibility much more like the New World than the Old. Mary Lindemann has written:

To a large extent, it would appear that the path taken by Hamburg into the modern world diverged from that followed by the rest of Germany. . . . Hamburg was freer, richer, and happier than the other German cities or territories. In the eighteenth century, Hamburg's *Bürger* considered themselves a breed apart. They lived in a city owing no allegiance to a higher authority (except a tenuous one to the Holy Roman Empire). The city ruled itself and, according to one observer, "citizens

govern citizens." There was no legally defined patriciate. Hamburg's elite proved quite receptive to newcomers.<sup>55</sup>

We have already encountered families like the Wichelshausens and Kulenkampffs, who ascended to the highest circles of Bremen's society within two or three generations of their arrival in the city. Cases from Hamburg are even more remarkable. Young Caspar Voght, who, according to family legend arrived in the city in 1722 with less than three marks in his pockets, spent a decade as an apprentice at a merchant firm. He then was sent by the firm to manage its new branch in Lisbon, where his success was such that, upon his return, he married the daughter of his employer and established his own business. In 1765 he was elected to the senate.<sup>56</sup> A large number of Hamburg's senators in the eighteenth century had very humble origins; fathers or grandfathers who had arrived as common laborers and sent their sons to law school or apprenticed them in merchant firms.

In both societies, mobility worked in both directions. A family or firm might fall even more quickly than it had risen, going from riches to rags in the space of a single failed business transaction or unfavorable court decision. The suicide of David Parish, son of John Parish and manager of the largest portion of the latter's massive Hamburg-based merchant empire, serves as a grim reminder of the lack of a safety net in this early capitalist society. The Parish name was one of the strongest among businessmen in both the New World and the Old; the family was wealthy enough to underwrite a third of the United States' \$16 million loan in 1813.<sup>57</sup> With all of his fortune and a large part of his father's, David Parish invested in a new banking house in Vienna in the 1820s. The bank's office was magnificently appointed; home to one of the greatest collections of art in a city known for great collections of art. Parish and his partners had the blessing of Prince Metternich, under whose auspices they underwrote a loan for the Austrian government. Nonetheless, in the financial crisis of 1825, bad debts proved unrecoverable, Metternich withdrew his support, and the firm declared bankruptcy at the end of the year. Parish, rather than facing his father and Hamburg society in the wake of the catastrophe, leapt into the Danube and to his death.<sup>58</sup>

Both the Hanse and the American ports were the urbanized, ocean-going fringes of nations whose interiors were deep, relatively provincial and out-of-the-way, and generally far less interested in commercial activity than their seafaring cousins. Nonetheless, the port cities depended upon the interior country, where most of the buyers of their imports lived. Relations between the two zones were sometimes fractious, owing to a cultural gulf which caused mistrust and resentment. In 1784, George Washington (who was a coastal planter, and thus not a member of either camp) advised his merchant-legislator colleagues to make attempts to cultivate better relations between the ports and the hinterland. "The western settlers," he said, "stand as it were upon a pivot. . . smooth the road, and make easy the way for them, and see what an influx of articles will

be poured upon us; how amazingly our exports will be increased by them, and how amply we will be compensated for any trouble and expense we may encounter to effect it.”<sup>59</sup> A decade later, an Irish visitor in Baltimore wrote that, “The size of all towns in America . . . has hitherto been proportionate to their trade, and particularly to that carried on with the back settlements.”<sup>60</sup>

Germany’s interior differed as profoundly from her ports as did America’s. The area surrounding the Hanseatic cities, however—as far south as Kassel—had a number of things in common with the port cities, including an enlarged bourgeoisie much more numerous and developed than in other parts of Germany, even by 1800. This had been the case for over two centuries, almost entirely because of the mercantile economy of the Hanseatic ports, which attracted businessmen from other parts of Germany. Farming existed in the German lowlands around the Hanse, and small industry was present, as in all areas of Germany, but the North was notable, he argues, for its dominant merchant class and the resulting concentration around the few major seaports. The area was fairly urbanized by contemporary German standards; some 25 percent of the population lived in towns or cities in 1800—a much higher percentage than in the rest of Germany. Just as in the early United States, the most prominent men of affairs could be found in the port cities.<sup>61</sup>

A list of German merchants published in 1798 attests to the dominance of the bourgeoisie in what one historian calls the “Greater Hanse” area: “it constitutes, if you will, the “Who’s Who” of the German bourgeoisie.”<sup>62</sup> The multifaceted and multi-national nature of their businesses meant that the merchant firms were linked to virtually all the other bourgeois occupations, if not involved in them in some way directly. Many firms performed all the services of market-scouting, contact, transportation, storage, wholesaling, and retailing. Inevitably for merchants who enjoyed success in one kind of commerce, temptations arose to branch out into new markets and new commodities.<sup>63</sup>

Proximity to the sea—the highway of world commerce—created a worldly and cosmopolitan bourgeoisie in the Hanse and the American ports. Incoming ships meant constant contact with other nations and their citizens and wares. Ferdinand Beneke, moving from Bremen to Hamburg in 1796, remarked on the latter’s “Venetian splendour,” and its massive and chaotic multinational waterfront.<sup>64</sup> John Quincy Adams, who as scion of a prominent Boston family was certainly no stranger to either wealth or busy harbors, wrote of the impressive size and sophistication of Hamburg when he visited for the first time in 1797. John Parish (the Scottish merchant turned Hamburg entrepreneur turned American consul turned British double-agent) entertained Adams for a week at the luxurious homes and salons of his many business friends from Britain and a half-dozen European countries.<sup>65</sup>

In these salons, which were essentially coffeehouses, Adams would have found other men of his class and educational level from a variety of nations, reading newspapers and magazines from all over Europe. As the eighteenth century ended, Stephen Daniel Uhalde argues, a new generation of “cultural patri-

cians" was emerging in Hamburg: more worldly, extravagant, educated, and enlightened than their fathers.<sup>66</sup> In clubs like "Harmonie," which by 1800 had over five hundred members, these gentlemen drank coffee and tea, played cards, exchanged foreign books and journals, and entertained visiting foreign persons of note like the young John Quincy Adams. The Harmonie soon spread to other German cities, first in the Hanse, then elsewhere.<sup>67</sup> The fictitious Senator Thomas Buddenbrook in Mann's novel was a member of the Lübeck chapter of the Harmonie, which Mann described as "a gentleman's reading club" in which all the prominent merchants gathered to smoke their pipes, exchanging journals, gossip, and *bons mots*.<sup>68</sup>

America had its share of coffeehouses too, also frequented by the business-political classes. Charles Buck, a transplanted Hamburg merchant who would later serve as Hamburg's consul to the United States, remarked happily that Philadelphia's coffeehouses made him feel at home. On a visit to New York, Buck "found the city much engaged in business," but still found the time to make the rounds of the various coffeehouses, stopping in to give his regards to fellow merchants, and to gather useful information or gossip. There were so many Hanseatic merchants in New York by 1800 that Buck found gentlemen's clubs in which English was rarely heard; one tavern frequented by them was called "The City of Hamburg." When Buck returned to Hamburg after years in America, he went straight to a coffeehouse to catch up on the news.<sup>69</sup>

Other clubs for gentlemen were dedicated to more scholarly or philosophical interests. In Bremen, the well-known historian (later *Bürgermeister*) Dr. Liborius Diderich von Post was a scholar from a mercantile family which had interest and family members in the United States. He was a founding member of a society for the study of new ideas in science and the humanities. He and the other men of this group corresponded frequently with Benjamin Franklin regarding the latter's experiments with electricity and lightning.<sup>70</sup> In the well-read circles of the coffeehouses, people often perused journals like *Bruchstücke von Gedanken und Geschichte*, which for its motto tackled the rather ambitious questions: "*Woher bin ich? Wer bin ich? Warum und wozu bin ich? und wobin soll ich?*" Its enlightened assault on "old thinking" attempted to offer a perspective, "for every man, for every business, and for the whole world."<sup>71</sup>

As John Quincy Adams discovered, Hamburg was a hub for traveling men of affairs, where nationality was less important than class. Thomas Aston Coffin, an exiled American Tory, arrived there in the summer of 1784, on his way from London to Brunswick. He spoke no German, and had apparently arrived at the height of the business cycle when all the major inns and hotels were full. Coffin proceeded to a gentleman's club, where he met a German merchant who was fluent in English and happy to assist him in finding both lodging for the night and travel arrangements on to Brunswick. The next morning Coffin met a second merchant "who was so kind to take me with him on his journey."<sup>72</sup>

Cosmopolitanism and fascination with foreign ideas—particularly new and controversial ones—was a hallmark of most of America's "founding fathers"

and many of their mercantile colleagues. (Consider the way Franklin cultivated scholarly European friends and devoured the latest European scientific journals, or the excitement and care with which Jefferson planned his sight-seeing tour of the Rhineland.)<sup>73</sup> Stephen Girard was fascinated by European systems of education, and collected pamphlets in German and French on the subject.<sup>74</sup> He also prided himself on his expertise in European-styles of horticulture, planting with his own hand several impressive vineyards and orchards, and writing articles on tree surgery. He did his best to import European plants and husbandry techniques to the New World; one of his biographers credits Girard with introducing the artichoke to America.<sup>75</sup> Like John Quincy Adams, Girard learned German on a business/pleasure trip. While Adams spent his off-duty time away from Berlin touring Silesia and Saxony, Girard preferred the mercantile aura of Hamburg, where he made several business contacts and collected some German literature. Clearly, this Philadelphia businessman felt quite at home in the largest Hanseatic port. He returned in 1798 and visited his friend Johann Berenberg Gosseler, a sugar merchant.<sup>76</sup>

Despite the remarkable similarities between the Hanseatic bourgeois elite and their American counterparts, there were important differences between these two societies. First, like most Europeans, the Hanseatic Germans abhorred slavery. Although John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and other prominent Americans north of the Potomac belonged to emancipation societies, Germans frequently felt that the majority of the American leadership tried to finesse the issue of the "peculiar institution."<sup>77</sup> Second, the Hanseatic cities were part of the Holy Roman Empire—such as it was by this point—and were thus beholden to imperial politics. The emperor's decision to blockade all French commerce during the wars of the French Revolution hurt Bremen a great deal, since the city had maintained a large and profitable wine trade with Brest, Bordeaux, and La Rochelle for hundreds of years.<sup>78</sup> While the American port cities would be similarly constrained by the Embargo Acts, the Hanseatic cities were extremely vulnerable: nestled into a crowded European political map where economic policies could result in the arrival of vengeful armies within a matter of weeks. This was indeed to be the fate of the Hanse in the twenty years following the onset of the French Revolution, a fate which most of America's ports were spared (although Baltimore came perilously close in 1814.)

Finally, a profound difference existed between the economies of the Hanse and those of cities like Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, with regard to manufacturing. From the outset, the American harbors were industrial as well as commercial centers. American manufacturing was modest, by any measure, in its first half-century, primarily because of the difficulty of competing against British manufactures. Thomas Cooper, visiting from England in the 1790s, predicted that, "while America and England are at peace, there will be little or no temptation to set up manufactures in the former country. The prices of labour are too high; the master has not the same kind of command over his men."<sup>79</sup>

Nonetheless, America's harbors were workplaces for more than just commercial activities. Baltimore's largest workshops and first factories were all clus-

tered near the waterfront, as were Boston's. Richmond's port on the James River was only four blocks downstream of her tobacco-rolling plants; equidistant from the state capital Jefferson had designed on the hill which overlooked both. Shipbuilding was still a principle industry in all the American ports, particularly so in the North, because American timber was still plentiful, unlike the heavily deforested regions around Bremen and Hamburg.<sup>80</sup> Only in New York did the commercial significantly outweigh the industrial, but there again they were present in close proximity.

The Hanse, by contrast, were devoted overwhelmingly to commerce by the late eighteenth century. Hamburg's economy was not self-sustaining, and its growth was totally dependent upon the frequently capricious winds of commerce. The Hanse were trading societies with very little domestic production, and thus dependent on other lands for resources, markets, and thus, prosperity.<sup>81</sup> Calico printing and sugar refining had been the major industries in Hamburg since the early 1600s, but the former had declined as the city's economy became almost wholly based upon trade and its various support services. Sugar refining remained Hamburg's only real domestic industry, since even shipbuilding was no longer done in the city, which had been completely deforested since the seventeenth century.<sup>82</sup> In the mid-to-late eighteenth century, Hamburg somewhat belatedly entered the tobacco importing business with great enthusiasm, although it would never catch up to Bremen in that field. In both cities, however, the majority of cigarette-rolling and cigar-making shops were located in the surrounding countryside, rather than in the city proper. In the case of Hamburg, this usually meant Danish territory, so Hamburg's citizens bought their smokes only after the tobacco had traveled from America to Hamburg, to a Danish town, and back again to Hamburg as a finished product.<sup>83</sup>

By the time of the American Revolution, the economies of Bremen and especially Hamburg were only slightly involved in manufacturing, and had become almost entirely dependent upon trade. An increasing number of men (and, apparently, a substantial number of working women) were drawn to the cities to perform day-work for the bourgeoisie as domestic servants, porters, etc. Caspar Voght estimated in 1788 that there were about 15,000 "female servants" working in Hamburg, almost entirely in the homes and businesses of the wealthy.<sup>84</sup> The economy and livelihood of the Hanse—from top to bottom—were thus entirely balanced upon the continued success of trade. The Hanse were profoundly vulnerable to the whims of powerful neighboring states, who could with little effort or inconvenience upset this carefully-balanced prosperity. Small wonder that the merchants of Bremen and Hamburg reacted with glee at the prospect of an independent America. For once, they could establish a commercial relationship with a people who had absolutely no territorial ambitions in Europe.

Although most of the early American politicians could be counted upon to wax poetic on ideological points (and some, like Patrick Henry and Thomas Paine, could approach hysteria), America's merchants had supported the revo-

lution largely for more fundamental and practical reasons of economics. The Salem shipping magnate Richard Derby provides a typical example. Frustrated at his inability to expand his rum and molasses exports, feeling cheated by unscrupulous British agents in the Bahamas and the West Indies, Derby was by 1776 an open supporter of rebellion. He turned his fortune to the aid of the revolutionary cause, smuggling guns, powder, and other supplies for the rebels, and hoarding them in his warehouses. Derby was a "patriot" because the British restricted his business ambitions.<sup>85</sup>

Had ideology been the foremost concern of the American merchants, more of them would probably have heeded the urgings of Jefferson and Madison to abandon their dealings with Britain and to shift American commerce in the direction of France, Holland, Spain, and other "friends" in Europe. That no such shift occurred after 1783 indicates the relative lack of enthusiasm among American businessmen for any kind of ideology that would impinge upon their pocketbooks.<sup>86</sup> The American bourgeoisie was above all practical.

The primacy of profit was the hallmark of the merchant culture which the Americans shared with their counterparts in the Hanse. Rolf Engelsing has made a strong case for the Hanseatic cities being culturally and ideologically detached from the rest of Germany, which varied wildly from ultra-conservative feudalism to woolly-headed philosophical flights of fancy. The Hanse, he argues, were focused entirely upon the "ideology" of money-making. Once French society began to disintegrate into chaos in the 1790s, the perceived dangers of ideological loyalties became even more pronounced, and the Hanse clung more staunchly than ever to the sensible capitalist examples of Britain and the United States: "They aren't idealists, but rather materialists. They are realistic and industrious."<sup>87</sup>

Bremen was somewhat less attached to the Anglo-American model than was Hamburg, where more than one pamphleteer had described the city as merely "one of the suburbs [*Vorstädte*] of London."<sup>88</sup> Napoleon would later weigh in with his own damning agreement on the matter: "Hambourg? Ne me parlez pas de cette ville anglaise!"<sup>89</sup> Nonetheless, the Bremer merchants shared with their American counterparts a general skepticism for any ideology that had no practical economic applications. Hans Wiedemann writes:

Here lies the key to Bremen's politics. Only within the context of trade can one understand it. The striving for neutrality, the search for backing from the great powers which was to have guaranteed its position . . . shows Bremen's guiding principle. Neither nationalism, nor cosmopolitanism, nor even religion, but rather a purely practical point of view motivated the thinking of Bremen's civic leaders.<sup>90</sup>

In his last years, the eloquent and prolific Adam Duckwitz, one of Bremen's most famous statesmen and a vehement defender of free trade, looked back at



his sprawling business and political career all over Germany and Europe, and concluded that while he had lived among Americans and Englishmen, "Ich war in meinem Elemente."<sup>91</sup>

Thus we find that, by time of American independence, the Hanseatic merchant families were ideally poised to serve as the intermediaries between the German and American people and economies. They shared a host of social, political, and cultural traits, and above all a mutual thirst for free trade. Via their common merchant culture, German and American businessmen began to establish the first ties between their nations. They were often well aware of this cultural heritage that gave them a commercial *lingua franca*. A 1783 letter from a group of Hamburg senators to Benjamin Franklin emphasizes the many things which Hanseatic and American society have in common, concluding with a "hope and wish that a solid foundation can be laid for the strong basis of friendship and community between the citizens of our republics."<sup>92</sup>

To this day, remnants of the mercantile heritage linger on both sides of the Atlantic. We find it in the statue of Sam Adams gesturing out over the entranceway to the preserved eighteenth-century Quincy Market in Boston. It is inescapable in the upper-middle class suburbs of northern Bremen, where virtually every major street carries the name of an eighteenth-nineteenth century merchant firm: Kulenkampffallee, H. H. Meier Allee, Gröningstraße. In a dozen other places in America and the Hanse, the old merchant culture remains at the intersection of the very different roads on which German and American history has traveled.

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## Notes

Abbreviations in notes:

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|------|---|
| AHR  | <i>American Historical Review</i>                                     |
| APS  | Archives of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, PA      |
| MAHS | Archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA          |
| MDHS | Archives of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD            |
| NYHS | New York Historical Society, New York City                            |
| PHS  | Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia                         |
| SAB  | Staatsarchiv Bremen   |
| SAH  | Staatsarchiv Hamburg  |
| SuUB | Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen, "Bremensia" collection     |
| SuUH | Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg, "Hamburgensia" collection |

<sup>1</sup>The term is Percy Ernst Schramm's, from *Hamburg, Deutschland und die Welt: Leistung und Grenzen hanseatischen Bürgertums in der Zeit zwischen Napoleon I. und Bismarck, ein Kapitel deutscher Geschichte* (Hamburg: Hoffman & Campe, 1952), 10.

<sup>2</sup>Elisabeth Fehrenbach, "Der Einfluss des napoleonischen Frankreich auf das Rechts- und Verwaltungssystem Deutschlands," in Armgard von Reden-Dohna, ed., *Deutschland und Italien im Zeitalter Napoleons* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1979), 23-40.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Seaburg and Stanley Patterson, *Merchant Prince of Boston: Colonel T. H. Perkins, 1764-1854* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 106-7.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Oliver to Mallhüsen & Sillem of Hamburg, 29 January 1799 (MDHS, Oliver Record Books, Ms 626.1).

<sup>5</sup> Examples abound. The ongoing correspondence of Frederick König in Baltimore with D. F. Kalkmann in Bremen, for instance, over the price of tobacco in Germany (MDHS, Ms 522). Or, Ambrose Clarke to Friedrich Amelung, 24 April 1807, on the plausibility of re-opening a coffee and sugar trade from New York to Bremen, given the political situation (MDHS, Ms 1754).

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Rutland to John Hale, 6 December 1786 (MDHS, Thomas Rutland Letterbook, Ms 1726). "Acerbic" is perhaps charitable. Judging from the harsh tone of most of his letters, Rutland must have been something of a terror to his contemporaries. To all business associates, he wrote in the imperative, never thanking, always giving orders. To his son, his tone varied from accusing to contemptful. Even to the mayor of Annapolis, who sent a ham as a birthday gift, Rutland replied with a single line of thanks, and then a paragraph of complaints about recent difficulties in obtaining the paperwork for shipping Virginia tobacco.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Oliver to Hermann Heymann Sons, 17 December 1799 (MDHS, Ms 626.1).

<sup>8</sup> "Ein Dampfschiff verband Bremen mit Nordamerika," *Weser Kurier* (14 June 1997), 49.

<sup>9</sup> Robert G. Albion, *The Rise of New York Port* (New York: Scribner, 1939), 416.

<sup>10</sup> Anna Rochester, *American Capitalism 1607-1800* (New York: Free Press, 1949), 77.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Bargman, ed., *Bremen: Die Tabakstadt Deutschlands* (Bremen: Franz Leuwer, 1939), 41.

<sup>12</sup> SAB, "Die graue Mappen," Oelrichs.

<sup>13</sup> The brothers were Peter Andreas and Caspar Gottlieb. See Hermann Kellenbenz, "Der Bremer Kaufmann: Versuch einer sozialgeschichtlichen Deutung," *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 51 (1969): 39-40; see also Bargman, *Bremen: Die Tabakstadt Deutschlands*, 44; and SAB, "Die graue Mappen," Kulenkampff.

<sup>14</sup> Franz-Josef Pitsch, *Die wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen Bremens zu den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Bremen: Selbstverlag des Staatsarchivs, 1974), 20. The Kulenkampffs also were relatively recent arrivals, having lived in Bremen only since the late 1600s.

<sup>15</sup> The death notices of the Wichelshausen family read like a "Who's Who" of Bremen in the *Neuer Nekrolog der Deutschen* (Altona, 1856), 124-28.

<sup>16</sup> In addition to his consular file in the SAB, see the MDHS, Ms 1846, in which H. D. Wichelshausen is one of a dozen Baltimore notables who raises money to outfit the "Baltimore Horse Artillery."

<sup>17</sup> Steven D. Uhalde, "Citizen and World Citizen: Civic Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism in 18th Century Hamburg," (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1984), 50.

<sup>18</sup> He ran for a number of other offices, but was defeated. See Harry E. Wildes, *Lonely Midas: The Study of Stephen Girard* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1943), 153-57.

<sup>19</sup> Hans-Erich Bödecker, "Marchands et Habitat: Le Nord-Ouest de l'Allemagne vers 1800," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 41,4 (1994): 577-79.

<sup>20</sup> Percy Ernst Schramm, "Die deutschen Überseeskaufleute im Rahmen der Sozialgeschichte," *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 49 (1964): 35. It is admittedly somewhat futile to speak of "German commerce" in this era; there was no such thing, rather a number of competing states.

<sup>21</sup> William E. Lingelbach, "Saxon-American Relations, 1778-1828," *AHR* 17 (April 1912): 517.

<sup>22</sup> Reinhard Pateman, "Die Beziehungen Bremens zu Frankreich bis zum Ende der französischen Herrschaft 1813," *Francia* 1 (1973): 482-507.

<sup>23</sup> Uhalde, "Citizen and World Citizen," 27-28. It should be noted that Uhalde disputes the view of Rörig, Chapman, and others, who have held that North Germany was the center of anti-Semitism in the country, particularly after the Congress of Vienna. Uhalde writes: "Occupation, residence, and religious practice were severely restricted. Nevertheless, they too [the Jews] were now part of the scene" (47).

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Cooper, *Some Information Respecting America* (London: J. Johnson, 1794), 3.

<sup>25</sup> Rosenbaum and Sherman, *M. M. Warburg and Company*, 17-21.

<sup>26</sup> Two of many examples are Copp's Hill cemetery in Boston and Hollywood cemetery in Richmond, Virginia, where Protestants rest in close proximity to Jews, Catholics, and a variety of Masons (and in Boston, a few African-Americans).

<sup>27</sup> Pochmann, *German Culture in America*, 54.

<sup>28</sup> Uhalde, "Citizen and World Citizen," 27-28, and Rolf Engelsing, *Bremen, England, und die USA im 19. Jahrhundert* (Bundes-Firmenregister) (n.p., n.d.), 5.

<sup>29</sup> For the origins of this trend during Colonial times, see Nash, *The Urban Crucible*, 84-85.

<sup>30</sup> "Il n'y a ici ni promenade, ni spectacle, l'on ne peut se voir qu'à table, et ce sont des séances de 4 à 5 heures" (Lingelbach, "Saxon-American Relations," 530).

<sup>31</sup> Cooper, *Some Information Respecting America*, 1794.

<sup>32</sup> Uhalde, "Citizen and World Citizen," 29.

<sup>33</sup> See Voght, "A Letter to Some Friends of the Poor in Great Britain," NYHS.

<sup>34</sup> Jefferey Diefendorf, *Businessmen & Politics in the Rhineland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 43. Rhenish elites seem to have been more divided along scholarly, juridical/political, and mercantile lines than in the Hanse, where all three blurred together.

<sup>35</sup> Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers*, 10.

<sup>36</sup> The structure of the American electoral college, and the fact that only representatives were to be popularly elected, serve as reminders that early American democracy was every bit as exclusive as the elections to the senates of the Hanse.

<sup>37</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of the role of German-Americans in anti-Federalism, see Paul Douglas Newman, "The Fries Rebellion of 1799: Pennsylvania Germans, the Federalist Party, and American Political Culture" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kentucky, 1996), 4-20.

<sup>38</sup> Walther Vogel has written: "The men at the highest ranks of the small Hanseatic republics were far too sober politicians to allow themselves to become carried away [by] . . . careless writings." See Walther Vogel, "Die Hansestädte und die Kontinentalsperre" (Blatt 9, 1913), in *Pfingstblätter des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins*, an annual published in Leipzig by the Verlag von Duncker & Humblot.

<sup>39</sup> Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers*, 3.

<sup>40</sup> The Abbé Sieyès in *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?* went so far to suggest that a government based on the propertied and producing classes was the only way for a nation to save its "soul."

<sup>41</sup> SuUB, *Zeitschriften und Journale* (file no. 516).

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Uhalde, "Citizen and World Citizen," 49.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-51.

<sup>45</sup> Mary Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers*, calls it a government of "fathers and uncles."

<sup>46</sup> Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers*, 5.

<sup>47</sup> Voght, "A Letter to Some Friends of the Poor in Britain" (p. 5), NYHS.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

<sup>49</sup> Schwarzwälder, *Geschichte der freien Hansestadt Bremen*, 1:504.

<sup>50</sup> APS, Stephen Girard Papers, microfilm.

<sup>51</sup> Carl Seaburg and Stanley Patterson, *Merchant Prince of Boston: Colonel T. H. Perkins, 1764-1854* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 378-81.

<sup>52</sup> Bruchey, *Robert Oliver*, 52.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Grotjan Memoirs (unpublished, no page numbers), PHS.

<sup>54</sup> Stuart Weems Bruchey, *Robert Oliver, Merchant of Baltimore, 1783-1819* (Baltimore, 1956), 33.

<sup>55</sup> Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers*, 9.

<sup>56</sup> SAH, 621-1 Familie Voght. This story is confirmed by Uhalde and Schramm.

<sup>57</sup> The other two investors were Stephen Girard and John Jacob Astor. It is interesting to note that they, and Parish, were all immigrants; none had been born in the New World.

<sup>58</sup> Philip G. Walters and Raymond Walters, Jr., "The American Career of David Parish" *Journal of Economic History* 4 (1944): 165.

<sup>59</sup> James Weston Livingood, *The Philadelphia-Baltimore Trade Rivalry 1780-1860* (Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1947), 8.

<sup>60</sup> Isaac Weld, 1797, quoted in Bruchey, *Robert Oliver*, 30.

<sup>61</sup> The first Federal census counted slightly less than 10 percent of the American population living in towns or cities.

<sup>62</sup> Bödecker, "Marchands et Habitat," 573-75. "Il dresse une liste précise des grands négociants et manufacturiers pour chaque ville, et constitue, si l'on veut, le Who's Who de la bourgeoisie de

l'Allemagne."

<sup>63</sup> John G. Hutchins, *The American Maritime Industries and Public Policy, 1789-1914: An Economic History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), 241.

<sup>64</sup> Uhalde, "Citizen and World Citizen," 22-23.

<sup>65</sup> C. F. Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, 1:201. Parish's astonishing career is thoroughly investigated in Richard Ehrenberg, *Das Haus Parish in Hamburg* (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1905). Parish's secret role as a British agent, however, was not discovered until the 1950s, by crossindexing references from Karl Sieveking's diary, encoded British consular reports, and mysterious omissions in the British *Bullion Report* of 1810.

<sup>66</sup> Uhalde, "Citizen and World Citizen," 60-64.

<sup>67</sup> By the twentieth century, most chapters of "Harmonie" in German cities were little more than music-appreciation societies. See Martin Kirschstein, *Die Harmonie* (Hamburg: Hermann Kampen, 1913).

<sup>68</sup> Thomas Mann, *Buddenbrooks*, trans. John E. Woods (New York: Vintage, 1994), 312.

<sup>69</sup> Charles N. Buck Diary (no page numbers), PHS.

<sup>70</sup> Schwarzwälder, *Geschichte der freien Hansestadt Bremen*, 1:509.

<sup>71</sup> SuUB, Zeitschriften und Journale (file no. 510).

<sup>72</sup> Thomas Aston Coffin to Francis Coffin, 7 June 1784, MAHS, Coffin, Hamburg, Germany, six letters, 1784.

<sup>73</sup> For a fascinating perspective on Jefferson as the archetypal American ingenue in Europe, see George G. Shackelford, *Thomas Jefferson's Travels in Europe, 1784-1789* (Johns Hopkins, 1995).

<sup>74</sup> APS, Stephen Girard papers, microfilm, reels 435-36 and 474 contain several of these pamphlets as well as Girard's notes on European education models he was considering for what would become Girard College.

<sup>75</sup> Wildes, *Lonely Midas*, 205.

<sup>76</sup> It is unclear to what degree Girard actually had any "friends." He was, according to all witnesses, a profoundly lonely and solitary man, unusual among the members of his class in that he loathed and avoided society. The notes on the trip to see Gosseler, however, indicate that the visit was social as well as professional. APS, Stephen Girard papers, microfilm, reel 63. The ship on which Girard sailed on this trip, the *Sally*, was involved two years later in a legal dispute with a Bremer merchant named Friedrich Delius—older brother of Arnold.

<sup>77</sup> Uhalde, "Citizen and World Citizen," 109.

<sup>78</sup> Hans Wiedeman, *Die Außenpolitik Bremens im Zeitalter der Französischen Revolution 1794-1803* (Bremen: C. Schünemann, 1960), 24.

<sup>79</sup> Cooper, *Some Information Respecting America*, 1.

<sup>80</sup> Hutchins, *The American Maritime Industries and Public Policy*, 74.

<sup>81</sup> Uhalde, "Citizen and World Citizen," 5.

<sup>82</sup> Lindemann, *Patriots and Paupers*, 44.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

<sup>84</sup> Voght, "A Letter to Some Friends of the Poor in Great Britain" (p. 11), NYHS.

<sup>85</sup> Phillips, "The Life and Times of Richard Derby," 280-89.

<sup>86</sup> Abundant statistics are available which chart the almost unbroken dominance of British commerce in the United States after 1783. John H. Frederick's *The Development of American Commerce* remains useful, as is the statistical information to be found in Robert G. Albion's *The Rise of New York Port* (New York: Scribner, 1939).

<sup>87</sup> Rolf Engelsing, *Bremen, England, und die USA im 19. Jahrhundert* (Bundes-Firmenregister) (n.p., n.d.), 5.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>89</sup> Cited in Clapp, *The Port of Hamburg*, 20.

<sup>90</sup> Hans Wiedemann, *Die Außenpolitik Bremens im Zeitalter der Französischen Revolution 1794-1803* (Bremen: C. Schünemann, 1960), 27-28.

<sup>91</sup> Engelsing, *Bremen, England, und die USA im 19. Jahrhundert*, 8.

<sup>92</sup> Baasch, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Handelsbeziehungen zwischen Hamburg und Amerika*, 56-57. "Mit tiefgefühlter Freude mache ich diese Mittheilung und hoffe und wünsche, daß ein solider Grund möge gelegt werden für die feste Gründung der Freundschaft und Gemeinschaft zwischen den Bürgern unserer Republiken."