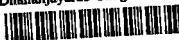


THE NEW YORK MERCHANT ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

Dhananjayrao Gadgil Library



GIPE-PUNE-014104

VIRGINIA D. HARRINGTON, M. A.

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

No. 404 In the "Studies in History, Economics and
Public Law" of Columbia University.

NEW YORK

1935

X5.7311.L7

G5
14104

COPYRIGHT, 1935

BY

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

70

G. S. H. and A. B. H.

PREFACE

It has been my purpose in this study of the New York merchant during the quarter-century preceding the Revolution to present the merchant primarily as a business man. I have, of course, endeavored to relate him to the society of which he was a part—to show his position in the community and his relations to the governments which might affect his life. With political events as such, however, I have been concerned only as they touched and influenced business. The reaction of the merchants as a group to the political questions of the period has already been exhaustively presented by Arthur M. Schlesinger in *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution*, and in a study dealing specifically with New York, Carl L. Becker's *Political Parties in the Province of New York*. There is little that can be added to the conclusions of these scholars. My intention has been rather to describe the economic activities of the merchants, to compare the stage to which business had advanced in New York with that which it had reached in Great Britain and on the Continent, and to point out contrasts to the infinitely more complex organization of business at the present time.

The statistical appendices, with but two exceptions, comprise hitherto unpublished material taken from the Customs House records in the British Public Record Office. For the sake of comparison figures for Boston, Philadelphia and Charleston, as well as for New York, have been included in the tables of shipping wherever possible.

My sincere thanks are due to Professor Evarts B. Greene, of Columbia University, under whose direction the study has been conducted, and to whose suggestions, criticisms and encouragement it owes much. I am also indebted to President Dixon Ryan Fox of Union College for reading and criticizing the book in manuscript. For any errors of fact or interpretation that may remain I alone am responsible. I am glad also to acknowledge the helpfulness and friendly interest of the staffs of the New York Historical Society and the Manuscript Division of the New York Public Library.

VIRGINIA D. HARRINGTON

NEW YORK,
DECEMBER, 1934.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
The Place of the Merchant in Provincial Life	II

CHAPTER II

The Organization of Business	47

CHAPTER III

The Conduct of Business	76

CHAPTER IV

The Merchant Invests His Surplus Earnings	126

CHAPTER V

Overseas Trade and Business Relations	164

CHAPTER VI

Business Relations with the Continental Colonies	206

CHAPTER VII

The Government and Business	244

CHAPTER VIII

War-time Prosperity	289

CHAPTER IX

Business on the Eve of the Revolution	316

APPENDICES

PAGE

A. List of bills of credit issued by the province of New York, the date of their expiration and the amount of each issue cancelled	352
B. Table of exports to and imports from Great Britain, 1750-1775.	353
C. Table of exports to and imports from London and the outports of Great Britain, differentiating English and foreign manufactures, 1750-1775	354
D. Shipping into and out of New York, 1754, 1763 and 1764	356
E. Shipping to and from the West Indies, 1754, 1763 and 1764, distinguishing islands and ports	357
F. Shipping into and out of New York, Boston and Philadelphia, 1765 and 1766	358
G. Shipping into and out of New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Charleston, 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772	359
BIBLIOGRAPHY	369
INDEX	383

CHAPTER I

THE PLACE OF THE MERCHANT IN PROVINCIAL LIFE

WHEN Cadwallader Colden described for the benefit of the Board of Trade the state of the province of New York after the Stamp Act riots of 1765, he divided the inhabitants into four classes—the large landed proprietors, the lawyers, the merchants, and a fourth estate comprising the small farmers and artisans.¹ His distinctions were made on the ground of the special reactions of these groups to the political problems of the day, each differing from the other in motives and to some extent in attitude, while offering a uniform opposition to the Stamp Act itself. On no other basis could he have made such a division; indeed, the lieutenant governor himself would probably have agreed that, for the most part, socially, economically and politically, the landholders, lawyers and merchants formed a single, privileged, ruling class as against the rank and file of small freeholders, tenant-farmers, shopkeepers, artisans and laborers. Generations of inter-marriage had welded these first three groups into a large, interrelated clan whose interests could not be far separated. The Schuylers, though not primarily a mercantile family, numbered among their cousins the Van Cortlandts, Van Rensselaers, Livingstons, Verplancks, Bayards, DePeysters, DeLanceys and Beekmans—all actively engaged in commerce.² John Van Cortlandt, a grandson of the first lord of

¹ New York (State), *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, VII, 795. Hereafter cited as *N. Y. Colonial Docs.*

² George W. Schuyler, *Colonial New York: Philip Schuyler and His Family* (New York, 1885), I, 187, 190, 201-203.

the Manor of Cortlandt, was himself a prominent sugar refiner, had married Hester, the daughter of the merchant Nicholas Bayard, and was related to the mercantile families of Cuyler, Rutgers and Beekman as well as to the Van Rensselaers and DeLanceys.³ Similarly Gerard G. Beekman, of a predominantly commercial family, while not an outstanding business man, had an assured social position by virtue of his family connections. His grandmother was an Abeel, his mother a Van Horne; his cousins and uncles had married daughters of the DeLancey, Van Dyck, Keteltas, De Peyster and Duyckinck families; an aunt and a cousin had married the wealthy and prominent Walton brothers, Jacob and William, while his son married Cornelia Van Cortlandt, the daughter of Pierre Van Cortlandt, later to be governor of New York State.⁴ So well recognized was this situation by contemporaries that Colden once wrote to England suggesting that Justice Livingston be removed from office "as no Cause of any Consequence can come before him in which or in similar cases he or the Livingston family are not interested."⁵

Nor is it possible to designate particular families as belonging to land-holding, legal or mercantile interests. Among the land-holding families, for example, have been listed the Crugers, Waltons, Baches, Cuylers and Bayards.⁶ Yet the Crugers, while they did possess vast tracts in western New

³ Robert Bolton, *History of the Several Towns, Manors and Patents of the County of Westchester, From Its First Settlement to the Present Time* (2 vols., New York, 1905), I, 98.

⁴ William B. Aitken, *Distinguished Families in America Descended from Wilhelmus Beekman and Jan Thomasse Van Dyke* (New York and London, 1912), pp. 55, 111, 124, 133-4.

⁵ *New York Historical Society Collections*, Publication Fund Series, IX-X (hereafter cited as *Colden Letter Books*, i-ii), vol. i, p. 462.

⁶ A. C. Flick, *Loyalism in New York During the American Revolution* (New York, 1901), pp. 31-36.

York and Vermont, were in the Revolutionary period better known as the house of John & Henry Cruger, with subsidiary branches abroad managed by the sons of Henry—John Harris Cruger of Jamaica, Telemon of Curaçoa, Nicholas of St. Croix and Henry of Bristol.⁷ The Walton fortunes had been founded in trade and shipbuilding a generation earlier by the first William ("Boss") Walton, and were at this time being advanced in the same way by his sons and grandsons. His grandson, William Walton the third, was a founder of the New York Chamber of Commerce.⁸ The representative of the Baches was Theophylacte Bache, brother of Benjamin Franklin's son-in-law, merchant and fifth president of the Chamber of Commerce.⁹ Of the Cuyler family, Cornelius Cuyler was a merchant of Albany; his brother John and his nephews were merchants in Schenectady; his son Philip was in business in New York; and his cousin Henry was an important sugar refiner in the same city.¹⁰ The Bayards, William and Nicholas, descendants of the son-in-law of Governor Stuyvesant and part proprietors of the Minisink and Great Nine Partners patents, were both merchants.¹¹ Perhaps one might think of the great manorial families such as the Livingstons as peculiarly a land-holding group; yet there were at least six Livingston merchants in the city of New York, three of them sons of the Lord of

⁷ See also chapters v and vi below. *New York Geneal. & Biog. Record*, vol. vi, pp. 74-80.

⁸ J. A. Stevens, "Commercial History of N. Y.," in Wilson, *Memorial History of the City of New York* (4 vols., New York, 1892), IV, 523.

⁹ J. A. Stevens, "Colonial New York," in *New York Chamber of Commerce, Colonial Records* (New York, 1869), pp. 41-54.

¹⁰ M. C. Nicoll, *The Earliest Cuylers in Holland and America* (New York, 1912).

¹¹ Catherine G. Atterbury, *The Bayard Family* (Publications of the Order of Colonial Lords of Manors in America, No. 18, Baltimore, 1928), pp. 15-18.

the manor himself.¹² In like manner, while "The Patroon" administered the family acres at Rensselaerswyck, his nephew Stephen Van Rensselaer sold the family wheat and flour in the metropolis.

While the lawyers seem to have formed to some extent a special class, about half of them being sons of lawyers or ministers,¹³ yet many of them were sons and brothers of merchants, as were William Livingston, John Jay, John McEvers, Jr. and Richard Harison.¹⁴ The DeLancey family comprised members of all three classes: James, lieutenant governor and chief justice; Peter, the squire of Westchester; and Oliver, the merchant, soldier and councillor. There were also individuals like Philip Livingston, who, after the fashion of the eighteenth century, which loved a comprehensive genius, united in themselves the landlord, the merchant and the lawyer.¹⁵

It would be difficult to find an important family in colonial New York which in at least one of its branches was not engaged in commerce, or in industry to which trade was a corollary. The Bayards were sugar refiners, as were the Van Cortlandts, the Roosevelts, one or two Livingstons and the Cuylers; the brewers and distillers included the Barclays, Rutgers and Lispenards; on the long and honorable list of merchants and general traders are found the Schuylers, Verplancks, Crommelins, Baches, Murrays, Franklins, Clarksons, Beekmans, Setons, Van Zandts, Van Horns, Ludlows,

¹² E. B. Livingston, *The Livingstons of Livingston Manor* (New York, 1910).

¹³ Instances in point are William Smith, Jr., the son of Chief Justice Smith and Rudolph Ritzema, son of the Dutch Reformed minister.

¹⁴ Charles Warren, *History of the American Bar* (Boston, 1911), *passim*.

¹⁵ Franklin B. Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of Yale College* (6 vols., New York, 1885-1912), I, 582-84.

Waltons, Kortrights, Alsops and many others. The Brevoorts, Goelets and Laights were iron-mongers; the Gouverneurs traded with the West Indies. The Keteltas family had large warehouses, while Peter Keteltas was clerk of the Old Insurance Office with Richard Sharpe. The Schermerhorns were in the coasting trade. Other names connected with commerce were the Abeels, DePeysters, Banckers, Lows, Remsens, Bogarts, Duyckincks and Brinckerhoffs.¹⁰

No social stigma, therefore, could be attached to the mercantile profession so long as it was practiced with a dignity, breadth of interest and family connection sufficient to lend it importance. Mrs. Mary Alexander, for example, did not lose caste in the slightest degree when she continued her first husband's business after his death. Some notion of the English distinction between tradesmen and gentry may have persisted, but the opportunities offered by the professions were naturally limited in a city which had barely 20,000 inhabitants by 1775, so that for most young men commerce as an occupation was inevitable. The army and navy were ordinarily unavailable for provincials; medicine was not held in great repute as a profession,¹¹ while the Church offered few livings and demanded an expensive sojourn in England for education and ordination. Non-conformists, indeed, might be trained in America, but few native New Yorkers seem to have been attracted by clerical life. "Law or Commerce seem to be the only alternatives with us," wrote Watts to his friend Gedney Clarke of Barbados, "and such numbers infest the first that the latter I think upon the whole is become full as Creditable!"¹²

¹⁰ J. G. Wilson, *Memorial History of the City of New York*, IV, 524.

¹¹ *New York Historical Society Collections*, Publication Fund Series, LXI (hereafter cited as *Letter Book of John Watts*), pp. 198, 254.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 361.

It must be admitted that a certain part of the merchant class were not of the established families, but were recent arrivals, many of whom made their fortunes, as Lieutenant Governor Colden pointed out, in the French and Indian War. Yet to be an immigrant or the son of an immigrant was no barrier to alliance with good families, since most of this new blood came from the British Isles and was therefore assimilated into the social body without difficulty. Recent contacts with the home country lent a certain aura to these new comers, and were a great advantage in entering some social circles. Those who were especially conscious of the traditional distinction between gentle and simple, like Oliver Templeton of the auction-house of Templeton & Stewart, preferred to take up their freedom¹⁹ as "gentlemen" rather than as "merchants". It was possible, for a young newcomer of ability, ambition and energy to go far. Such a young man was Henry White, who arrived from Wales in 1756, apparently with introductions and connections, set up in the dry-goods business, and in 1761 married a daughter of the Van Cortlandt-Philipse family. By 1776 he had amassed a fortune of £7,000 sterling in investments outside his business, had been a member of His Majesty's Council since 1769, and fourth president of the Chamber of Commerce in 1772.²⁰ A similar history is that of Hugh Wallace, of Irish origin, who appears in New York about 1753 as a general merchant. Through his marriage to Miss Sally Low in 1760 he allied himself with the Lows, the Gouverneurs and the Cuylers, and subsequently became one of the wealthiest merchants of the city as well as one of the most important,

¹⁹ Merchants who were retailers had to become freemen of the city. See below chapter vii.

²⁰ J. A. Stevens, *Colonial New York*, pp. 35-36; Loyalist Transcripts, Transcripts of Losses of American Loyalists preserved amongst the Audit Office Records, XLV, 143-148. In the New York Public Library.

being made a member of the Council in 1769 and second president of the Chamber of Commerce in 1770.²¹

In the city, at least, nationality created no divisions of society. The original Dutch, French and English elements had by 1750 been so completely fused by intermarriage that few of their descendants could claim to be more one than the other. Oliver DeLancey, for example, the son of a French *émigré* and a Van Cortlandt lady, had married the daughter of a prominent Jewish merchant, belonged to the Anglican Church, though originally a French Huguenot, and was a member of the court party.²² English was the language of officialdom and of business in the port, though Dutch was still spoken in Albany and the Hudson River counties, while people went to New Rochelle to learn French.²³ It was not that the home country was forgotten or ignored; among the British the contrary was attested by the St. Andrew's, St. Patrick's, St. David's, and St. George's societies. But what division existed seems to have been based, as in seventeenth-century England, on religious differences, which to a certain extent reflected national origins but even more political opinion.

Only one group remained distinct, separated from the mass by both race and religion. This was the small body of Jewish merchants, descendants of Spanish refugees or young men from Germany who were seeking new fortunes in new lands. They included at least a dozen names famous in the history of Jewish congregations in New York—Franks, Levy, Seixas, Isaacs, Gomez, de Lucenah, Hendricks, Hays, Myers, Simson, Judah and Pinto. In many in-

²¹ J. A. Stevens, *Colonial New York*, pp. 19-21; *Loyalist Transcripts*, XLII, 360.

²² M. A. Hamm, *Famous Families of New York* (New York, 1902), pp. 94-95.

²³ *Cuyler Letter Book*, to his father, Sept. 23, 1758.

stances they became wealthy and prominent men of affairs who traded widely, chiefly but not exclusively with those of their own faith and race in other North American colonies, in the West Indies and in Europe. Some even established formal connections with European merchants, as did Hayman Levy, the head of the large fur-trading firm of Levy, Lyons & Co., which had a branch abroad styled Levy, Solomon & Co. Religion not only engendered a separatism in culture among the Jews but also intensified their natural tendency to intermarriage. Jacob Franks, Isaac Mendes Seixas and Joshua Isaacs, for example, all found their wives among the daughters of Moses Levy, while marriage again related the Gomez, de Lucenah, Hendricks and Lopez families.²⁴ But although the Jews remained a distinct group (John Watts familiarly called them "Israel"), there was no apparent intolerance in either business dealings or social intercourse. David Franks, the son of Jacob, married Margaret Evans of Philadelphia, and his sister, Phila, married Oliver DeLancey.²⁵ Peter Kalm noted with surprise that the Jews "possess great privileges. They have a synagogue and great country seats of their own property, and are allowed to keep shops in town. They likewise have several ships which they freight and send out with their own goods. In fine they enjoy all the privileges common to other inhabitants of the town and province."²⁶

If the social position of the merchant in relation to the province as a whole was excellent, his position in the city

²⁴ M. J. Kohler, "Phases of Jewish Life in New York before 1800," *American Jewish Historical Society Publications*, II, 82-84; III, 73-86; N. T. Phillips, "The Levy and Seixas Families of Newport and New York," *ibid.*, IV, 189-214; Charles P. Daly, *The Settlement of the Jews in North America* (New York, 1893), p. 52.

²⁵ N. T. Phillips, "The Levy and Seixas Families of Newport and New York," *American Jewish Hist. Soc. Pubs.*, IV, 197.

²⁶ Peter Kalm, *Travels into North America* (London, 1770-71), I, 245.

itself was unassailable, for there he represented society, wealth and power. The aristocracy of New York was even then an aristocracy of wealth rather than of lineage, for the latter was somewhat difficult to establish in barely a century; and in the city wealth centered in the hands of the merchant prince, making him the inevitable leader in fashion, in intellectual and philanthropic projects and in politics. There were, to be sure, no East Indian nabobs, but the rewards of trade were by no means paltry. Most merchants—and here we may accept Defoe's definition of the merchant as one "who carried on foreign correspondences, importing the goods and growth of other countries and exporting the growth and manufacture of [the colony] to other countries,"²⁷ for it was impossible to carry on trade in New York without doing both—most merchants had at least £2,000 invested in their business and many had as much as £10,000.²⁸ Beyond that they had personal fortunes in houses, lands and bonds which varied from the £100,000 of Oliver DeLancey or the £75,000 of Col. William Bayard to the more modest but still comfortable sum of £20,000 amassed by John Watts.²⁹ Even a newcomer like Hugh Wallace, second president of the Chamber of Commerce and member of his Majesty's Council, was able to build up a fortune of £30,388 sterling.³⁰ On the incomes from such competences New York merchants were able to live in an ease and comfort very similar to that of their compeers in London. Indeed, Lieutenant Governor Colden complained in 1760 that the salary and perquisites of the governor were not sufficient to enable him to live "in any degree suitable to his Rank, or as some

²⁷ Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (Oxford, 1841), I, 2.

²⁸ See below chapter ii.

²⁹ Loyalist Transcripts, XLI, 207 *et seq.*; XLVI, 432 *et seq.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, XLII, 360.

Merchants in this Town do." ⁸¹ Lecky describes the life of the prosperous English merchant of the mid-eighteenth century thus:

The increased luxury and refinement which was so conspicuous among the country gentlemen was still more manifest in the industrial classes; but while in the upper classes the tendency was toward a greater assimilation of manners, in the middle classes it was rather to define and distinguish a variety of grades. There was already a rich merchant aristocracy who vied in splendor with the first nobility. . . . The migration of the rich shop-keeper from his shop, which we have seen in the first half of the century, had become more general. In the earlier years of George II a thriving London tradesman not only lived in his shop but rarely ventured more than once or twice in the summer beyond the sound of Bow Bells, and then only to Edmonton or Hornsey. There was but one dish of meat upon his table; French or Spanish wines were never seen there except at Christmas . . . and when he at last retired from business it was usually to a small villa at Turnham Green, or Hackney or Clapham Common. . . . But George III had not been many years on the throne before these habits were totally changed. A successful tradesman had two houses. . . . He spent two months of every year at Margate or Brighton. His wife and daughters imitated the dress, pleasures and tastes of the gentry. A footman stood behind his table. He entertained his friends with Madeira and claret. Bloomsbury, Queen and Bedford Squares, in the close neighborhood of the still aristocratic quarter of Soho, were now filled with rich tradesmen, and shortly after the middle of the century it was noticed as a new and characteristic fact that private carriages belonging to tradesmen were becoming common.⁸²

New York, of course, was far removed from London, but it is no exaggeration to say that among the well-to-do men

⁸¹ *Colden Letter Books*, I, 10.

⁸² W. E. H. Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1878-1890), VI, 184-5.

of business the way of life that Lecky described was reproduced as closely as was possible in a new colonial community. Travellers found the town more "urban" in appearance than Philadelphia and as genteel as Boston, while Edward Thompson, an officer of the British Navy, remarked that few provincial cities in England could rival it in "show, gentility and hospitality."⁸⁸ Brick houses, often with tiled roofs, compactly lined its streets which, though not laid out with the precision of the city of William Penn, were nevertheless wider and more regular than those of Boston; but visiting citizens from the Massachusetts capital rarely failed to remark that in spite of this superiority New York was "not Boston yet."⁸⁹ In other respects also the town did its best to copy its English model. It had its Ranelagh Gardens, a Vauxhall, a Merchants' Exchange, its Mall, statues of famous men—Pitt and George III—and well known streets and squares. St. Paul's Chapel, built in 1766, remains today an example of classical architecture which does not suffer by comparison with the smaller eighteenth-century churches of London.

The city in 1760 was, of course, much smaller than it is today. To the north it was bounded by Chambers Street and DeLancey Street. But physically the island of Manhattan was smaller, for the shores have been progressively filled in and built out since the eighteenth century. In 1760 neither Front Street nor South Street existed. Water Street ran for only a short distance and Queen Street, now Pearl, bordered the East River; Battery Park had not been built. At the south end of the island was the governor's mansion fronting Whitehall slip, and immediately to the north were

⁸⁸ Wilson, *Memorial History of the City of New York*, II, 314.

⁸⁹ James Birket, *Cursory Remarks* (New Haven, 1916), pp. 43-44; Alexander Hamilton, *Itinerarium*, ed. A. B. Hart (St. Louis, Mo., 1907), p. 51; John Adams, "Diary," *Works* (ed. C. F. Adams, Boston, 1850-56), II, 347, 351, 353; *Copley-Pelham Letters*, p. 117.

the fort and the Bowling Green. From the Bowling Green to the Common at Frankfort Street ran Broadway. This wide, tree-shaded street was commonly dubbed "The Mall," and at the lower end of the gardens behind the houses reached to the Hudson, for no avenue west of Broadway ran northward until one reached Church and Partition Streets. At Warren and Chambers Streets began the road to Greenwich, which followed the shore of the Hudson to Greenwich Village, then a country suburb. Only two streets ran from south to north between Broadway and the East River—Smith Street, now William, and Broad Street, whose name changed at Wall Street to Nassau.²⁵

The mansions of the wealthy merchants distinguished the fashionable parts of town. In the "Court End" near the Governor's mansion, which was inside the fort enclosure, were the Van Hornes, the DeLanceys, the De Peysters, Bayards, Morrisises, Crugers and Livingstons; up Broadway lived John Watts and his son-in-law Archibald Kennedy, Robert Livingston, Augustus Van Cortlandt and Henry White; in Wall Street, a rival fashionable neighborhood, resided the Verplancks, the Marstons, one of the Ludlow brothers, a branch of the Beekmans, and David Van Horne; Queen Street was famous for the De Peyster mansion and the new Walton house; while on Dover Street, at Pearl and Cherry, stood the mansion of Walter Franklin, later the first residence of Washington in New York.²⁶ Equally prominent merchants, however, lived in other streets, for the juxtaposition of shops and houses was characteristic of the provincial city and there was no loss of social consideration in living over one's store. In Smith Street, a center of retail

²⁵ See Rätzer Map of 1767 superimposed on a modern map, in Wilson, *Memorial History of New York*, II, 91.

²⁶ J. A. Stevens, "Physical Evolution of New York City in Amer. Historical Mag., II, 122-128; Esther Singleton, *Social New York under the Georges 1714-1776* (New York, 1902), pp. 18-19.

trade, lived the Philipses, the Duyckincks, another Ludlow brother and the Clarksons, while Gerard William Beekman and John Alsop were in little Queen Street (now Cedar) and William Alexander in Broad Street.⁸⁷

A town house, however, was by no means sufficient for the merchant of even moderate wealth. He must have a country house where he could send his wife and children for the "somer season"; to which on occasion he could himself retire for rest and enjoyment, and which was yet near enough to the city to permit him to come in for a day's business. The roads which led north from the city were lined with the estates of merchants whose orchards and formal English gardens often reached to the water on the east or west. A visitor from another province who wished to see the island might drive off in the morning along the Hudson on the road to Greenwich, past the distilleries of George Harison and Leonard Lispenard from which he could glimpse further inland the mansion of Nicholas Bayard, past old "Richmond Hill," belonging to Abraham Mortier, the paymaster of the royal forces, to Lady Warren's "Greenwich."⁸⁸ A little further on at Greenwich Village was "Bloomingdale", the country-seat of Lady Warren's brother, Oliver DeLancey,⁸⁹ while nearby were the villas of Colonel William Bayard and James Jauncey. At Greenwich the river road stopped and the visitor would drive east by a short lane to a nameless road which, turning north, took him past Colonel Clarke's "Chelsea" and John Morin Scott's "Hermitage" and presently ran into the old Bloomingdale Road. After follow-

⁸⁷ J. A. Stevens, "Physical Evolution of New York City," *loc. cit.*, p. 122; William Kelby, Mss. Notes on Trinity Church, in New York Historical Society. Envelope labelled "Alexander."

⁸⁸ Occupied for a time by General Monckton while governor of the province. J. A. Stevens, "Physical Evolution of New York City," *Am. Historical Mag.*, II, 35.

⁸⁹ Near 12th Street west from 9th Avenue.

ing this winding tree-shaded road for a few miles he would reach Bloomingdale Village, where Charles Ward Apthorp had recently built "Elmwood" ⁴⁰ on a piece of land running west to the river ("something like Rome with seven hills", John Watts observed), and near the elegant mansion of his brother-in-law, James McEvers, who was appointed the stamp distributor in 1765. If he were fortunate he might be invited to break his journey here and dine at one of these houses; Mrs. McEver's table was famous for its delicious fresh fruit. On his return trip that afternoon, he might take one of the farm roads across the island to Kingsbridge road, and, turning south, observe the villas along the East River. At Hell Gate was Jacob Walton's "Belview," ⁴¹ and at Turtle Bay ⁴² were the mansions of the Le Roys, Van Zandt, Lawrences, Marstons, Schermerhorns and Rhinelanders. The present Murray Hill district at Forty-second Street took its name from the estate of the Quaker merchant, Robert Murray. Just above the spot where the Kingsbridge Road joined the Bloomingdale Road and became the Bowery Lane, an avenue led up to John Watts' "Rose Hill" ⁴³ and to the Keteltas estate, while below the visitor passed the country seats of the three Stuyvesant families, Peter, Nicholas and Gerard, the villa of James Duane, and on the outskirts of the city, the estate of James DeLancey. ⁴⁴ Philip Livingston and his nephew, Robert Cambridge Livingston, preferred Brooklyn Heights, while the Cuylers crossed the Hudson to northern New Jersey in what is now Bergen County. Captain Owen of the Royal Navy noted that many of the "principal gentlemen and merchants" of New York

⁴⁰ At 90th Street.

⁴¹ Near 86th Street.

⁴² About 50th Street.

⁴³ At 29th Street and 4th Avenue.

⁴⁴ Between east 17th and 8th Street from First to Third Avenues.

had villas on Long Island, where racing on Hempstead Plain was the chief outdoor sport.⁴⁵

While many of the older houses in town were built after the Dutch fashion, the gable end facing the street, the newer mansions followed the English version of the classical style and presented the familiar features of the so-called colonial type. The square brick house, five windows wide, with stone trimmings, the use of triangular, semicircular or broken pediments above windows and doors, the pillars or pilasters framing the doorway, the semicircular fanlights, the balustraded roof and cupola or simple gable with dormer windows—all these were adapted as the owner saw fit. The special feature lending elegance to the DePeyster mansion was the Palladian window. In other instances, although the general spirit and principle were preserved, the imagination was allowed freer play and certain liberties were taken with the conventional design. Perhaps the most famous of these mansions was the Walton house (destroyed in 1881), whose elegance made a lasting impression not only in its own age but in the generations that followed.⁴⁶

Country houses, though following the same style, were generally built of wood and usually, John Singleton Copley noted, had piazzas or small porches on the side, which he considered "very beautiful and convenient" but which apparently were not well-known in New England, since he had to explain to his brother that "a Peaza . . . is exactly

⁴⁵ "Narrative of Capt. Wm. Owen, R. N.," *New York Public Library Bulletin*, March, 1931, p. 141.

⁴⁶ J. A. Stevens, *Colonial New York*, pp. 61-62. The famous description is by John Pintard. It was a square building, fifty feet wide and three stories high, of yellow Holland bricks with brownstone water-tables, lintels and jambs, lions' heads being carved in the freestone above the windows. Its tiled roof had a double balustrade, and the doorway framed by fluted pillars was crowned with a broken pediment supporting the armorial bearings of the family.

such a thing as the cover over the Pump in your yard." ⁴⁷ It was not only "peazas" that marked the New Yorker as up-to-date; he was keenly interested in having the details of his house both correct and modish. The full portico was not very often used in America until after the Revolution, but Roger Morris had one on his mansion at Harlem Heights. ⁴⁸ Similarly, in most American houses the architrave and frieze were omitted and the decorative pillars or pilasters which framed the ends of the house were continued from the ground or pedestal to the cornice in order to allow the second-story windows to be full size, but Apthorp's "Elmwood" had the proper full entablature at the top all around the building. Indeed, when our supposed visitor passed "Elmwood" on his tour he saw a house which, according to a modern critic, was "a model of architectural style and classic to the last degree." ⁴⁹

⁴⁷ "Copley-Pelham Letters," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, vol. 71, pp. 136, 131. Hereafter cited as *Copley-Pelham Letters*.

⁴⁸ S. F. Kimball, *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies* (New York, 1922), pp. 100-101. It is now popularly known as Jumel Mansion.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97. The house, reached by an avenue which led from the road, stood on a knoll overlooking the river. It was built of heavy wood planking three stories high north and south and two stories with dormers east and west. The broken pediments above the windows, the Ionic columns at the four corners, and the carved frieze gave the house elegance and distinction, but the feature which impressed the observer at once was the recessed portico. The middle third of the façade, composed of the front entrance and the Palladian window in the second story, was set back, framed in Ionic columns and surmounted by a triangular pediment and gable the full height of the roof. The glass panes at the top and sides of the front door lighted a large central hall, the floor of which was painted to imitate black and white marble, and which led by the back door to the formal English gardens that ran down to the river. Three of the rooms on the first floor had panelled wainscoting, carved cornices and mantelpieces, while the dining-room was panelled in mahogany to the ceiling and had a mantel of the same wood.

If the style of the houses New York merchants were building indicated a desire to be in the van of fashion, by 1760 the furnishings were no less indicative of taste and luxury. Panelling, of course, was to be expected. Where walls were not panelled, hangings were coming to be used and printed papers were imported from England.⁶⁰ The drawing-room in Colonel William Bayard's town house was wainscoted in mahogany and hung with blue and gold leather,⁶¹ while Mr. Aspinwall's hall and stair-case hung with India print excited the envy of Thomas Riche of Philadelphia.⁶² The abundance of mahogany and walnut furniture, draperies, mirrors, pictures, candelabra, brasses, and even eight-day clocks⁶³ bears witness to a standard of comfort and luxury equal to that in England "at home." Lowestoft, Staffordshire and Wedgwood, as well as china originally from Canton or Nanking graced the tea-tables of merchants' ladies, and many a wealthy tradesman had a well-chosen collection of silver tankards, salvers, bowls, cutlery and teapots worth hundreds of pounds.⁶⁴

Family portraits began to make their appearance, some by local "limners," other by lesser English artists like Lawrence Kilburn, who did two half-lengths of the Beekmans in 1761. It is to be hoped he lived up to his promise of a "true and pleasing likeness."⁶⁵ More famous artists also visited New

⁶⁰ Singleton, *Social New York under the Georges*, p. 92.

⁶¹ New Jersey Land Papers, "Partition of Secaucus," fol. 82. In the New York Historical Society.

⁶² Letter Book of Thomas Riche (Historical Society of Pa.), to Jacobus Van Zandt.

⁶³ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 248. "I am desired by an Acquaintance to beg you would send me an Eight-day Clock made by Chater & Sons. Harry White sent two last fall are liked much, they cost between nine and ten Guineas a Piece."

⁶⁴ Singleton, *Social New York under the Georges*, pp. 69, 92-95, 147, 157.

⁶⁵ William Kelby, *Notes on American Artists*, pp. 1-3. New York Historical Society, Jones fund ser., V; reprint *Bulletin*, V, 2-4.

York. Benjamin West did some portraits, and in 1769 miniatures could be had executed by Pierre du Simitière. In all there were about a dozen painters practising their art not too successfully in the city in this quarter-century.⁵⁶ On the other hand, John Singleton Copley spent a profitable five months in New York where, his brother remarked, he was "highly caressed," finishing in all thirty-seven portraits which netted him £300 sterling.⁵⁷ To be sure, his ability had been well advertised in New York by his portrait of President Cooper of King's College, and he must, indeed, have been known earlier, for Philip Cuyler went to Boston to have a likeness made in 1757.⁵⁸ Copley found the New Yorkers not only punctual for their appointments, and disposed "to render them happy," but also keen critics. "It takes much time," he wrote when finally setting a date for his return to Boston, "to finish all parts of a Picture when it is well finished, and the Gentry of this place distinguish very well, so I must slight nothing."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Dunlap, *History of the Arts of Design* (ed. P. W. Bayley and C. E. Goodspeed of Boston, 1918), I, 44-47; Kelby, *Notes on American Artists*, pp. 1-11.

Between 1731 and 1765 six limners were admitted as freemen: Gerrardus Duyckinck, sr. and jr., Raphael Goelet, Richard Clark Cook, Andrew Maverick, and John More, jr. Besides Lawrence Kilburn and Du Simitière, there came Thomas McIlwraith, William Williams, Abraham DeLanoy and William Burchell Tetly.

⁵⁷ *Copley-Pelham Letters*, pp. 179, 136.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70. Cuyler Letter Book, to John Singleton Copley, Oct. 19, 1757.

⁵⁹ *Copley-Pelham Letters*, pp. 174, 114; F. W. Bayley, *Life and Works of John Singleton Copley* (Boston, 1915), pp. 94, 96-7, 110-111, 167, 187, 191, 207, 246, 247, 271; Augustus T. Perkins, *Life and Paintings of J. S. Copley* (Boston, 1873), p. 31.

Not all these portraits have survived, so that we do not know how many merchants patronized Copley. Captain Kemble reported among the subscriptions a half-length portrait of Miles Sherbrooke, a bust of Mrs. McEvers, and a picture of Mrs. Mortier, the wife of Abraham Mortier,

In his style of living the merchant prince had achieved a solid comfort which approached luxury. The footman or butler who stood behind the master of the house at table was a Negro slave, as were the maids and the coachman, which may have ensured a somewhat less expensive household than a similarly staffed establishment in London; but the supply of the table left nothing to be desired. Madeira was in more demand than claret or burgundy, though occasionally an order was sent to Holland for good French champagne.⁶⁰ "I dined with Col. Wm. Bayard," wrote Josiah Quincy, Jr., in his diary: "His seat on the North River, table, and all around him are in the highest elegance and taste."⁶¹ The merchant's wife and daughters went driving on pleasant afternoons in light chaises or phaetons; or if it were an expedition to the country, the family might go in the coach, for a few men like Charles Ward Apthorp and William Bayard, owned all three kinds of vehicle, while John Van Cortlandt and several fellow merchants owned two.⁶² The ladies dressed in the latest style, with gowns of allamode, lutestring or padasoy, powdered hair drawn up on a frame to extraordinary heights and tastefully decorated with curls, puffs, flowers, feathers and ribbon. The men, equally anxious to be in the mode,

paymaster of the royal troops. Among those still known are those of John Cruger, Mrs. John Livingston, Mrs. Axtell, Daniel Crommelin Verplanck (aged six) and Mrs. Gulian Verplanck, Samuel Verplanck, probably portraits of the Ludlows, and one of Charles Ward Apthorp dated 1764 which was probably painted in Boston.

⁶⁰ Beckman Letter Book, to Townsend White, Oct. 8, 1753; Cuyler Letter Book, to Capt. Wilkinson, Sept. 20, 1755.

⁶¹ "Diary of Josiah Quincy, Jr.," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.*, XLIX, 478-479.

⁶² G. W. Houghton, *Coaches of Colonial New York*, pp. 24-25. Pierre du Simitière found 62 persons owning carriages in 1770 of whom 34 were merchants. There were in all 26 coaches, 33 chariots or chaises and 26 phaetons, of which merchants owned 15 coaches 17 chaises and 14 phaetons.

had their suits made to measure by an English tailor and their wigs sent out from London even at the risk of not getting an exact fit.⁶³ Indeed, as Franklin commented to the evangelist Whitfield, men "fear less the being in hell than out of fashion."⁶⁴

The great effort to be modish was naturally stimulated during this quarter century not only by the increase of traveling due to the establishment of regular packets and the improvement of roads, but especially by the influx of British officers during the French and Indian War. The Waltons and other wealthy citizens are said to have offered such lavish entertainment to the British officers stationed at one time or another in the city that when, after 1763, the colonies urged their impoverished condition as a bar to paying the higher taxes proposed in the Grenville program, their plea was rebutted in Parliament by members who had been thus entertained, and who asserted that the show of plate "equal if not superior to any nobleman's" and the luxurious life there exhibited were proof of the wealth and prosperity of the colonies.⁶⁵

Social activities were patterned after the London model, and led by the mercantile aristocracy. The élite danced at fortnightly assembly balls managed by William Walton and James McEvers;⁶⁶ they attended the theater at which in 1750 a company of comedians presented the tragedy of *King Richard III* "wrote originally by Shakespeare and altered by Colley Cibber, Esq."⁶⁷ followed a week later by *The Beau*

⁶³ Cuyler Letter Book, to Philip Doughty, June 29, 1756.

⁶⁴ Benjamin Franklin, *Works*, II, 151.

⁶⁵ J. A. Stevens, "Colonial New York," p. 62. Valentine, *Manual of the Common Council*, 1857, p. 494.

⁶⁶ *New York Journal*, Oct. 30, 1766.

⁶⁷ Colley Cibber was an eighteenth century dramatist who wrote several successful and famous plays of his own, but his contemporaries did not care for pure, unadulterated Shakespeare.

in the *Suds* and a "Tragi-Comidy, *The Spanish Fryar*; or *The Double Discovery* wrote by Mr. Dryden". Evidently these New York provincials preferred serious drama to ribald farces, for after the performance of Addison's *Cato* the editor of the *Post Boy* remarked: "As it was the fullest Assembly that has appeared in that House, it may serve to prove that the Taste of this Place is not so Vitiated or lost to a Sense of Liberty but that they prefer a Representation of Virtue to that of a loose character."⁶⁸ Dr. Hamilton reported "a tolerable *concerto* of musick performed by one violin and two German flutes."⁶⁹

At the Vauxhall, the chief attraction was "a number of wax Figures as large as life drest in the newest and most elegant manner, representing their present Majesties, King George and Queen Charlotte, sitting on the throne with their usual attendants, several of the nobility . . . properly disposed in a large apartment genteely fitted for the purpose," to which was added later "the Banquet from *Macbeth* with the appearance of Banquo's Ghost."⁷⁰

Convivial life in this commercial society centered in the coffee houses and the clubs. There seem to have been a number of small groups of congenial souls who met regularly, for purposes of relaxation, and there were many merchant members. "We have missed you at the club," wrote Gerard Beekman to his friend Richard Sharpe, on the first page of his letter book.⁷¹ Some of these companies met at private houses, but more at the inns, the Social Club, for instance, at Fraunces' Tavern and the Hungarian Club at Todd's "Sign of the Black Horse" in Smith Street. The

⁶⁸ *New York Post Boy*, Sept. 24, 1750; I. N. P. Stokes, *Iconography of Manhattan Island*, 6 vols. (New York, 1915-1928), IV, 618-622.

⁶⁹ Alexander Hamilton, *Itinerarium*, p. 57.

⁷⁰ *New York Mercury*, July 6, 1772, July 27, 1772.

⁷¹ Beekman Letter Book, to Richard Sharpe.

Hungarian Club, all "bumper men" as Dr. Hamilton complained when he was unable to keep pace with them, met nightly; others apparently once a week or as they pleased.⁷² A few of the sporting members of New York society belonged to the Philadelphia Jockey Club, for horse-racing had been the sport of merchant princes, as well as of kings, ever since the days of Governor Nicholls and Lovelace, while General Monckton during his term had built a race course at Greenwich.⁷³

It was by no means a bluestocking society, however, and the test of a good fellow was not his ability to carry on a learned conversation. "The people of New York," commented Dr. Hamilton, "at first appearance of a stranger are seemingly civil and courteous, but the civility and complaisance soon relaxes if he be not either highly recommended or a good toaper. To drink stoutly with the Hungarian Club is the readiest way for a stranger to recommend himself and a set among them are fond of making a stranger drunk. To talk bawdy and have a knack at punning passes among them for good sterling wit. Governor Clinton himself is a jolly toaper and gives a good example and for that one quality is esteemed among these dons." A few weeks later, however, after he had seen more of the citizens, Hamilton decided that "in this place you may have the best of company and conversation as well as at Philadelphia."⁷⁴ A young traveller from Philadelphia wrote enthusiastically: "This is a better place for company and amusements than Philadelphia; more gay and lively. I have already seen some pretty women. You may tell my sister that I get acquainted with families and drink tea, and play at cards, and go about to assemblies

⁷² Hamilton, *Itinerarium*, pp. 49, 52, 100, 102.

⁷³ J. A. Stevens, "Physical Evolution of New York City," *Am. Historical Mag.*, II, 35.

⁷⁴ Hamilton, *Itinerarium*, pp. 106, 108.

dancing minuets." Yet he shortly announced his return, remarking that "the novelty of this place made me think it more enchanting at first than I now find it. . . . With regard to the people, manners, living and conversation one day shows you as much as fifty. . . . I have gone dining about from house to house, but meet with the same dull round of topics everywhere—land, Madeira wine, fishing parties or politics make up the sum total. They have a vile practice here, which is peculiar to the city; I mean that of playing backgammon (a noise I detest), which is going forward in the public coffee-houses from morning till night, frequently ten or a dozen tables at a time."¹⁸ Perhaps it was because John Adams did not stay in town long enough, or because he came from Boston, or possibly because New Yorkers did not like him, that he found society in New York displeasing. "With all the opulence and splendor of this city," he remarked, "there is very little good breeding to be found. I have not met one gentleman. . . . There is no conversation. The people talk very loud and fast and all together and break in upon you in speaking."¹⁹

This lack of interest in things intellectual, which had been deplored as early as 1713 by John Sharpe, a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel,²⁰ was passing, for the same quarter-century saw the beginnings of a renaissance of culture whose growth was checked by the Revolution. Perhaps the most notable event in this development, indeed the opening gun in the battle and certainly the one that made the most noise, was the founding of King's College, on whose Board of Governors sixteen merchants served in the score of years before the Revolution. Among them were

¹⁸ Alexander Mackraby to Sir Philip Francis, "Philadelphia Society Before the Revolution," *Pa. Mag. Hist.*, XI, 282-283.

¹⁹ John Adams, "Diary," *Works*, II, 353.

²⁰ A. B. Keep, *History of the New York Society Library*, p. 54.

the wealthiest and most important men of the time,—Henry Cruger, John Cruger, Henry White, the Waltons, Charles Ward Apthorp.⁷⁸ Among the trustees for the new Queens' College, later Rutgers, were Philip Livingston, Theodorus Van Wyck and Abraham Lott.⁷⁹

Very few merchants in New York had had a college education, for many of them had come as young lads from England, while for the most part an apprenticeship in a business house was considered the proper preparation for a mercantile career. Ten merchants, sons of such old families as the Livingstons, the Roosevelts, the Cuylers and the Lansings, had gone to Yale.⁸⁰ Oliver DeLancey, a rare instance, had been educated in England.⁸¹ But, with the growth of prosperity and the multiplication of institutions of learning, merchants developed a respect for the A. B. and a desire to send their sons to college. Princeton lured ten, chiefly from the Livingstons who had transferred their allegiance from Yale to the Presbyterian College.⁸² Pennsylvania attracted a few;⁸³ but the greatest number—to be exact eighty-nine—matriculated, between 1754 and 1775 at King's.⁸⁴ Not all of them got their degrees. Nine, among whom was Henry Cruger of the class of 1758, "went to merchandize" after two or three years, which meant, one may suppose, that they transferred to the school of business.⁸⁵ Occasionally sons whose parents could afford it were sent to England; all

⁷⁸ Columbia University, *General Catalogue* (New York, 1912), p. 16.

⁷⁹ Rutgers College, *Catalogue of Officers and Alumni* (1776-1916), p. 7.

⁸⁰ F. B. Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of Yale College*, I, *passim*.

⁸¹ *Loyalist Transcripts*, XLI, 167.

⁸² Samuel D. Alexander, *Princeton College during the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1872), pp. 19, 24, 43-44, 52-53, 60, 72, 85, 108, 196.

⁸³ University of Pennsylvania, *Biographical Catalogue*, pp. 5, 8, 12.

⁸⁴ King's College Matricula—mss. in Columbiana Collection, Columbia University.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

the promising young DeLanceys went, and Robert Cambridge Livingston who went to Cambridge added a middle name to distinguish himself from all the other Roberts in the family. An English education, however, was not general, nor was it always highly regarded. "I wish," commented John Watts apropos of young Peter DeLancey who had gone to Oxford to study law under Blackstone, "that our young Folks who go Home for their Studys may not attend the dirty Coffee Houses and idle expensive Vauxhalls, etc. too much to accomplish what they are sent for. Most of them that I see have furnished their Eyes pretty well, but the poor Brain is as naked as ever."⁸⁶ Nineteen scions of mercantile families were members of the Inns of Court, and New Yorkers evidently preferred the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn, eight individuals being members of each.⁸⁷ "I could wish as you do," wrote Watts to his son John in 1772, "that you was again in Lincoln's Inn, but if that can't happen you must choose the next best place whatever it may be, the Temple I have heard is a loose dissipated place, but Dr. Johnson is of the opinion that much good might arise from the Law Conversation there."⁸⁸

The year 1754 also marked the establishment of the New York Society Library under the leadership of Philip Livingston and William Alexander, merchants, and four lawyers, Robert R. Livingston, William Livingston, later governor of New Jersey, John Morin Scott and William Smith, Jr. Eight of the trustees of the Library, of whom

⁸⁶ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 13, 282. Cf. p. 390.

⁸⁷ E. A. Jones, *American Members of the Inns of Court* (London, 1924), *passim*.

⁸⁸ *Watts Correspondence*, vol. i, March 5, 1772. N. Y. Hist. Soc. Mss. Dr. Johnson is probably Dr. William Samuel Johnson, son of the first president of King's College, a Connecticut lawyer of distinction, and later to follow his father's footsteps as first president of Columbia when King's College was reorganized under that name after the Revolution.

four were merchants, were among the first governors of King's College, showing the close bond of interest and culture.⁸⁹ Of the first eighty-three subscribers to the Library, fifty-seven were merchants.⁹⁰ The library was to provide a wider opportunity for reading of all kinds, and the college to offer a liberal education to their sons. A dozen New Yorkers were sufficiently interested in experimental science to belong to the American Philosophical Society, but of these only one had been a merchant, namely William Alexander, Lord Stirling, who in 1769 sent in an observation of the transit of Venus.⁹¹

The merchants as a class showed more interest in philanthropy. The Society of the New York Hospital was founded in 1771 by a group of seventy-one members and twenty-one additional contributors, of whom all but twelve were merchants. The Board of Governors, all merchants, was made up of such distinguished men as John Watts, Oliver DeLancey, Charles Ward Apthorp, Hugh Wallace, Henry White and William Axtell, who became members of the Council; Philip Livingston and Peter Van Brugh Livingston; Leonard Lispenard, a great land holder, and Abraham Lott, formerly in trade but at that date treasurer of the Province.⁹²

Several societies were in existence having a charitable as well as a convivial purpose. Such were the St. Andrew's Society, made up of Scotsmen and descendants of Scots, which had been founded in 1756; the St. George's Society for the English, St. Davids' for the Welsh, and St. Patrick's

⁸⁹ Keep, *History of the N. Y. Society Library*, pp. 130, 146.

⁹⁰ William Smith Papers, II, 359. Broadside list of Subscribers to the New York Library, in the New York Public Library.

⁹¹ American Philosophical Society, *Transactions*, vol. i; W. A. Duer, *Life of William Alexander, Earl of Stirling* (New York, 1847), p. 6.

⁹² *Charter of the Society of the New York Hospital* (New York, 1833), pp. 4-5, 66-71.

for the Irish. All of these were designed to succour their compatriots in distress and to exercise special oversight over newcomers.⁹² As early as 1739 there had been a lodge of Freemasons in New York, and by 1776 there were eight in the city: Temple, St. Johns 2, Trinity, Union (of which Robert R. Livingston was master), King Solomon's, Hiram, Independent Royal Arch 8, and King David's, which latter appears to have been composed of Jewish brethren, Moses M. Hays being the first Master. The first Grand Masters of the provincial lodges were Francis Goelet and George Harison, both merchants.⁹⁴

In politics, as in society, the merchants with the lawyers and landholders formed an aristocracy which was able to control elections both in the city and in the country by methods closely resembling those in vogue in England before 1832. In the city the franchise was restricted to freemen—that is, to those who had purchased the right to engage in certain occupations, ordinarily by payment of a fee of £5—and to freeholders whose estate was worth £4. Election methods gave enormous opportunity for manipulation and intimidation through the practices of viva-voce voting, treating, vote buying and pre-arranged disorder at elections.⁹⁵ In the rural counties, the large landholders con-

⁹² See George A. Morrison, *History of the St. Andrew's Society* (New York, 1906), pp. 7-8; *History of the St. George's Society of New York* (New York, 1913), pp. 9-11.

⁹⁴ Ossian Lang, *History of Freemasonry in the State of New York* (New York, 1923), pp. 1-45.

⁹⁵ C. L. Becker, *History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760-1776* (Madison, Wis., 1909), pp. 14-15. The elections could also be managed because the control of the polls and the returns was given to the incumbent alderman of the ward which inevitably made for permanence of tenure for members of the Common Council. However, in 1771 the power of the lower class had so increased that a law was passed for the reform of municipal elections which abolished aldermanic control, defined the qualifications for voting and prevented plural voting inside the city. Edwards, G. W., *New York as an Eighteenth Century Municipality* (New York, 1917), pp. 46-51.

trolled the elections through personal and economic influence which was made possible again by the public voting, by the difficulties, due in part to distance, of getting to the polls, by the indifference of the rank and file to political matters, and by the lack of independent thinking among the masses.

In the city, control by this aristocracy meant control by the merchants. One might expect, then, that the governing bodies would be in their hands. This was not always true in the municipal government; for while the merchants were usually well represented in the Common Council, having a majority until 1763, and while they were still the leaders of that body, the representatives of the artisan-shopkeeper class could often check them by combination.⁹⁶ In the provincial legislature on the other hand, a different situation existed. The four representatives of the city in the Assembly were always merchants even though individuals and parties might change, but until the eve of the Revolution they were unable to control the lower house. They had to combat the antagonism to the commercial metropolis of the country members, who, united, could overwhelm them on any issue. Animosity toward the city centered in the nearby counties of Westchester, Richmond, Kings and Queens and was due to the clash of agricultural and commercial interests, the farmers opposing now the city market ordinances, now the prices fixed by the Common Council for produce, or attempting to repeal the municipal charter.⁹⁷ On two issues the city had already been worsted: the right to maintain a monopoly of bolting and packing flour for export, and the use of a land tax instead of imposts on trade for the support

⁹⁶ Edwards, *New York as an Eighteenth Century Municipality*, p. 59; Valentine, *Manual of the Common Council*, vol. v, pp. 121-133.

⁹⁷ Edwards, *New York as an Eighteenth Century Municipality*, pp. 80-94; Spencer, "Sectional Aspects of New York Provincial Politics," *Political Science Quarterly*, XXX, 398-423.

of the government. On a third question, the apportionment of taxes, New York, by a coalition with the trading city of Albany and the representatives from the pocket boroughs of Schenectady, Renssalaerswyck, Livingston Manor and Cortlandt Manor, plus Dutchess and Westchester counties which were controlled by families who had an interest in commerce as well as land, was able to force a compromise whereby it paid only one-third of the total property tax instead of the 65% proposed by the rural counties, and this notwithstanding that it had but one-fifth of the population of the province. In this struggle the city members had a powerful safeguard in the provincial Council which had the power of rejecting bills from the Assembly, and which consistently refused to ratify manifestly unfair bills. At first this sympathy was probably due to the fact that they were residents of the city, for until 1758 there was but one merchant, Joseph Murray, on the Council. From 1758 on, however, there was a gradual change, practically all the new members being merchants of the court party, until by 1769 they numbered nine—John Watts, William Walton, Sr., Oliver DeLancey, Charles Ward Apthorp, Joseph Reade, Roger Morris, Henry Cruger, Hugh Wallace and Henry White—as against two lawyers, Daniel Horsmanden the chief justice of the province, and William Smith, Jr. This predominance was maintained until the Revolution for later appointees were all merchants. In 1772 William Axtell took the place of Reade; John Harris Cruger succeeded his father in 1774; and James Jauncey, Jr., was added also in 1774.⁸⁸

Although the merchant class predominated in politics, it was divided between the two existing parties which were based partly on religion, partly on family and partly on official connection. The court party was composed largely of Anglicans who were the most important religious group

⁸⁸ *Journal of the Provincial Council*, pp. 1049, 1685, 1800, 1898, 1951.

in the city, because while they embraced but one-tenth of the population, they included most of the wealthy citizens and the royal officials. Their numbers were increasing by the adherence of many of the younger members of the Dutch Reformed Church who opposed the use of Dutch in the service. Politically the Anglican Church stood for the principle of obedience to the Crown which later came to be associated with loyalism, and thus its members in general took the part of the governor and the king's representatives against the Assembly. The foremost leaders of the court party were the DeLancey family, and, indeed, James DeLancey, the former chief justice and lieutenant governor, had been largely responsible for its formation in the years following the Zenger case. Between 1750 and 1775 although the DeLanceys lost some of their power, the family connection, which now included Lieutenant Governor Cadwallader Colden, Sir William Johnson, John Watts and William Walton, remained the backbone of the party.

Presbyterians had constituted an opposition ever since the days when James I remarked that "Presbytery agreeth as well with monarchy as God with the devil." In the province of New York the Presbyterians were frequently dubbed the "popular party" since they tended to exalt the power of the elected assembly as against the appointed governor and council, but from the modern point of view they could scarcely be considered a "people's party." They espoused not popular control but a liberalism like that of Edmund Burke, a sort of "dilettante democracy equally anxious to clip the pinions of ambitious royalty and to curb the insolence of the unlettered mob."⁹⁹ During the years immediately preceding the Revolution the leaders of this group were those whom the Tory judge Peters called "the rebel

⁹⁹ C. H. Levermore, "The Whigs in Colonial New York," *Am. Hist. Review*, I, 238.

triumvirate"—William Livingston, William Smith and John Morin Scott. Their chief coadjutants were the Livingstons, the traditional leaders of the party, and their family connections, especially William Alexander, James Duane and the Van Cortlandts.

In the merchant class, the Anglican-Court-DeLancey group was the more influential. Some prominent Anglican merchant was usually mayor. Most of the merchant-members of the Council were Anglicans—Walton, Watts, DeLancey, Apthorp, Wallace and White. The members of the assembly being elected, were divided among the three religious groups; William Walton and John Watts (both had served in the lower house), Oliver and James DeLancey and William Bayard, were Anglicans; Philip Livingston was a Presbyterian, and the Crugers were Dutch Reformed.

Neither of these politico-religious parties, however, represented mercantile interests as against those of the land-owners or lawyers, but rather a point of view toward government in general and certain questions in particular. When, however, during the years of stress which followed the Stamp Act, many lawyers allied themselves with the radical elements, the opposing interests of the merchant led to the development of class consciousness as evidenced by a broadside issued in the election of 1768 calling upon the "Sincere Friends to the Trade and Prosperity of the City" to "join Heart and Hand to hinder a Lawyer being chosen to represent this Commercial City . . . and its requested that no Man will vote for a lawyer unless he prefers the Craft of the Law to the business of the Merchants and the Welfare of their Friends."¹⁰⁰ Until the question of the security of property was injected into the dispute, merchants belonged to either party according to their birth, marriage connec-

¹⁰⁰ *N. Y. P. L. Bulletin*, III, 23.

tions, temperament, religion and to some extent economic interest.¹⁰¹

An interesting merchant representative of the DeLancey party was John Watts, the son of one Robert Watts who came to New York in the early eighteenth century from the suburbs of Edinburgh. His portrait shows a strong, well-molded face, straight lips, prominent aquiline nose, keen eyes, surmounted by heavy eyebrows, the right brow being higher than the left, which gave a quizzical look to the whole countenance. He was evidently a man who enjoyed living well, and he is reputed to have joined with the "bloods" of the day in encouraging horse-racing. His lively sense of humor made even business letters engaging,¹⁰² and gave a tinge of light to the gloomiest picture of conditions. "We have no butter to our bread," he remarked during the hard times of 1765, "and so as Napier would say cannot tell on which side our bread is buttered."¹⁰³ Yet he was also one of those who led the movement for the New York Hospital, one of the first presidents of the charitable as well as convivial St. Andrew's Society, a trustee of the New York Society Library, and was interested in scientific exploration.¹⁰⁴ "Happy New York," wrote William Gordon to a mutual friend, Chief Justice William Allen of Philadelphia, "if Messrs. Peters, Allen and Franklin be removed here to be joined with Messrs. DeLancey and Watts, for, without intending you any compliment, they four are such public

¹⁰¹ See chapter ix.

¹⁰² "How am I to furnish my Mammon?" he asked Gedney Clarke of Barbadoes regarding the financing of a joint venture. "Will it do when you advise me or must it be sent previously haphazard?" *Letter Book*, p. 363.

¹⁰³ Chalmers Collection, New York, II. Mss. in New York Public Library.

¹⁰⁴ Peters Mss., 3:81. Wm. Gordon to Wm. Allen, Jan. 8, 1754. Hist. Soc. of Pa. Mss.

spirited Gentlemen the Province would then flourish and the boasted advantages [Philadelphia] has would [I] believe turn the scale of New York."¹⁰⁵ Watts' letters reveal him by turns the careful father, sending his boys to college, warning the one against dissipation in London, or finding a place in business for the other, buying his girls a spinet, and indignant at being asked to make much of Lady Susan O'Brien, who had eloped with an actor, thereby setting a deplorable example to a family of daughters; the prudent man of affairs, scrupulous yet enterprising, careful to obey the law and willing to accept a post in the Customs House,¹⁰⁶ but able to understand why others engaged in illicit trade; a shrewd observer of affairs, especially in his correspondence with his English political friends, General Monckton, James Napier and Isaac Barré; an active public servant, being an assemblyman for several years, a member of His Majesty's Council from 1754 to 1775, and attorney general under Governor Monckton. A member of the court party by his conservative temper, his connections (for he had married Ann DeLancey the daughter of Stephen and sister of the lieutenant governor) and Anglican training, Watts was protestant enough to believe in independent judgment, opposing the dissolution of the assembly for having answered the Massachusetts circular letter in 1769,¹⁰⁷ criticising Colden for arming the fort against the Stamp Act rioters "as if he had been at Bergen-op-Zoom when the French besieged it,"¹⁰⁸ and querying both the wisdom and the practicability of the Grenville-Townshend program; indeed, going so far as to

¹⁰⁵ Peters Mss., 3:81, Jan. 8, 1754. Hist. Soc. of Pa. Mss.

¹⁰⁶ Temple Papers, Watts to Temple, March 18, 1765. In Mass. Hist. Society.

¹⁰⁷ New York (State), *Calendar of Historical Mss. in the Office of the Sec'y of State*, 2 vols. (Albany, 1865-66), vol. ii, p. 775.

¹⁰⁸ "Aspinwall Papers," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, 4th ser., vol. x, p. 585.

suggest that independence was not unthinkable.¹⁰⁹ Yet he was so innately conservative, so convinced of the benefits of the imperial connection, so opposed to violent methods, that in the end he became a Tory.

Opposed to him in nearly all essentials, yet curiously like in the variety of his interests was Philip Livingston, whom John Adams found "a great, rough, rapid mortal."¹¹⁰ The fourth son of the second lord of the manor, he was educated at Yale and trained to be a lawyer, but "went to merchandize" and made a large fortune in the West India trade and in privateering during the French and Indian Wars, when he owned parts of six privateers.¹¹¹ There is some evidence that he took part in the illicit trade—his cousin, Peter R. Livingston, undoubtedly did—and further, as a distiller his sympathies were doubtless with the smugglers of molasses. As diligent as Watts in good works, being one of the founders of the Library, an early member of the St. Andrew's Society and a subscriber to the New York Hospital, by his family connections and training he belonged to the popular party. His public service covered fifteen years as representative of the city in the Assembly and as Speaker of that house from 1762 to 1768. Yet although he and Watts agreed on the unwisdom of the British policy, they disagreed on the nature of the protest, and in the end Livingston signed the Declaration of Independence a year and two months after Watts had sailed for England on the *Hariott* packet.

Rather different from both of these was William Alexander, "Earl of Stirling." His father, James Alexander, was a Scotch lawyer who had received his training in the Middle Temple in London and shortly afterward migrated to New York where he earned a reputation as an able lawyer and

¹⁰⁹ See chapter ix. *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 399.

¹¹⁰ John Adams, "Diary," *Works*, II, 351.

¹¹¹ See chapter viii.

became a member of the Council. His mother was Mary Provoost, the widow of an eminent merchant, David Provoost, whose business she had carried on after his death and continued to carry on even after her second marriage.¹¹² When he came of age, William Alexander went into business with his mother, and eventually formed a partnership with Peter Van Brugh Livingston, whose sister he married. His interests at this time were very closely associated with the Livingstons, but he apparently took no outstanding part in politics, although he eventually became a member of the Council.¹¹³ At the outbreak of the French and Indian War, Livingston and Alexander were awarded the contract for supplying the provincial troops in the attack on Niagara, and Alexander, going north to administer the supplies, was appointed secretary to General Shirley. About this time he discovered that he was the heir of the line of the Earls of Stirling; accordingly when Shirley went to England to defend his action in the campaign, Alexander accompanied him partly as witness, partly to collect what was due the firm on the contract, and partly to establish his claim to the title which he conceived now fell to him. He employed an attorney to present his claim, and meanwhile seems to have lived in London in the style which he felt befitted a peer, for he had already assumed the title. The House of Lords, however, refused to recognize his pretensions, although Alexander continued to advance proofs of his right and to call himself Lord Stirling; whereupon the Peers declared that unless he dropped the title, he would be arrested and forced to march up and down before the Houses of Parliament bearing a placard with the word "Imposter" blazoned upon it.¹¹⁴ Having received word of the death of his

¹¹² *New York Geneal. & Biog. Record*, vol. vi, p. 17.

¹¹³ *Journal of Prov. Council*, p. 1483.

¹¹⁴ G. A. Morrison, *History of the St. Andrew's Society of the State of New York, 1756-1926*. (New York, 1906), pp. 52-53.

mother, Alexander had already returned to the province, bringing with him a grand scarlet and gold coach which bore his coat of arms on the doors and infuriated Lieutenant Governor Colden because it was so much more splendid than his own. His fellow citizens recognized his title, even if the House of Lords refused, and thenceforth he was known on this side of the water as the Earl of Stirling.

His business affairs, however, had not prospered during his absence, nor did they improve upon his return. The partnership with Livingston had been dissolved in 1764, which gave him as his share approximately £17,000.¹¹⁵ He owned the Hibernia Iron Works near Pompton, New Jersey, and in 1768 or 1769 gave up his town house and retired to his country mansion at Basking Ridge to devote himself to this project which he estimated should bring him £2,000 a year.¹¹⁶ In spite of his efforts matters went from bad to worse; by 1772 he was practically insolvent. Since all his real estate was mortgaged up to the hilt, and the interest had not been paid for some time upon the loans his friends had made him, he was forced to find some stratagem by which he might avoid bankruptcy. In 1771 he tried to organize a personal lottery, but no one would buy the tickets.¹¹⁷ In 1774 he offered the whole yearly output of the Hibernia Works to any merchant in New York who would supply him and his store with the dry goods needed, but there were apparently no takers.¹¹⁸ Whether or no his opinions would have led him to take the opposing side in any event, he was certainly one of those "whose subsistence consists in confusion," and he became a general in the Continental Army.

¹¹⁵ William Alexander Papers, II, A. B. & R., "State of the Accounts of Livingston and Alexander, Sept. 2, 1763." In the New York Historical Society.

¹¹⁶ *Stirling Papers*, IV, fol. 34.

¹¹⁷ "Schedule of the Estate of John Watts," *Watts Papers*, X, New York Historical Society.

¹¹⁸ *Stirling Papers*, IV, 34. New York Historical Society.

CHAPTER II

THE ORGANIZATION OF BUSINESS.

ANY attempt to reconstruct the scene of business in colonial New York, or for that matter in any community before the period of statistics, is inevitably hampered by the fragmentary evidence of business transactions on which such a reconstruction may be based. The folio volumes into which the clerks of those early merchants copied, more or less legibly, the letters which went out of the counting-house each day provide the most vivid and connected accounts of the way in which business was carried on. But these are unfortunately very few, for they have survived the casual custody of descendants over more than a century only by accident. The same thing is true of ledgers and journals, and the disregard for them is occasionally attested by childish scrawls or exercises to be found on the blank pages. In no series of letter-books nor in any complete set of financial books is the historian able to trace the career of even one merchant, but, like the paleontologist, he must try to reconstruct a whole skeleton from a few vertebra, and then, like the prophet, attempt to breathe life into the dry bones. As the paleontologist supplies the gaps in his skeleton by reference to kindred forms of life, so it is possible to clarify the outline of business organization by comparison with the better-known economic life of contemporary Europe and especially contemporary England, for the business which was done in Smith Street or Hanover Square resembled very closely the similar enterprises carried on in Bristol or Liverpool. True, there were differences, but they were largely in

scope and scale which were limited by imperial law and by the size and economic capital of the community. On the other hand, colonial New York differed fundamentally from a modern commercial city, not only in the scope and scale of its business, but also in the non-existence of two institutions especially characteristic of the present day—the corporation and the commercial bank. The lack of banking facilities naturally made itself felt more in the conduct of trade than in the organization of business, and its discussion may therefore be postponed until the financial problems of the merchant come to be considered.

Although by 1750 the corporate form had been known for a century and a half, it was not often used for business purposes in America. This was not extraordinary. In England itself there were few commercial corporations, the most prominent examples being the privileged and monopolistic companies for foreign trade, such as the East India Company and the Royal African Company, against which no small prejudice existed in the colonies. Colonial business failed to develop corporations chiefly because there was no demand for that type of organization. Commerce, even in fairly extensive operations, could be and continued to be satisfactorily handled through partnerships. Manufactures, which in time necessitated large-scale enterprise, were still in embryo, partly because of the repressive policy of the mother country, but chiefly because of the abundant opportunity presented to both capital and labor by the untilled land lying everywhere at hand. If in the old world in 1750 the use of machinery, power and mass labor was still in the future, such things could hardly be factors of importance in the new.

Capital, moreover, was scarce. It is true that in the commercial cities there was a certain amount of free capital to be invested, but most of it was the surplus from trade,

and other types of investment were available which were preferred by the merchants as a means of diversification, since they required less oversight and offered greater profits. The six or eight corporations which were established for business purposes in America during the whole colonial period, of which the most famous was the Long Wharf in Boston, Massachusetts, furnish only the exceptions to the rule, since "their significance, even for their time, was but slight and local."

None of these corporations existed in New York. It is true that in 1675 a corporation "for Settling a Fishery in these parts" was chartered under liberal terms by the governor and council of New York, acting for the Duke of York. This was a typical joint stock company, the capital stock being divided into shares of £10; but neither the fact of incorporation nor the actual operation of the company is clear, and no mention of it has been found since that time.² There was also, in 1774, the "United Whaling Company," which, at its annual meeting on June 5, 1775, elected a presi-

² See chapter iv. J. S. Davis, "Eighteenth Century Business Corporations," *Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations* (Cambridge, 1917), vol. ii, pp. 4-6. S. E. Baldwin, "American Business Corporations before 1789," *American Historical Review*, vol. viii, p. 257. Davis includes two other causes for the non-existence of business corporations: "political conditions which operated to check rather than to promote intercourse between different colonies, and the colonial independence of temper which was an adverse factor." In New York, at least, no natural exchange of goods appears to have been hampered by the mildly protective duties levied by the province (see chap. vi), although it is true that the Acts of Trade restrained the tobacco trade of New York with Virginia. One factor, politico-economic, which did have an adverse effect was the difference in money, both the rate at which specie was accepted and the multiple issues of paper money, between the various provinces. The influence of the colonial independence of temper on this whole situation seems to me imponderable.

³ Davis, *Essays in the Earlier History of Am. Corps.*, I, 92, and note. Baldwin, "American Business Corporations before 1789," *Am. Hist. Rev.*, vol. viii, p. 257.

dent, treasurer and committee to buy vessels and sell the oil. This organization, however, seems but recently to have come into existence on the encouragement of the Chamber of Commerce, and to have been a typical whaling company in which the owners, captains and crews were partners for each individual voyage and shared in the profits.³ That the provincial governors were permitted to grant charters of incorporation in the name of the king is shown by the incorporation of the Chamber of Commerce in 1770, and of several charitable societies such as that of the New York Hospital. There was evidently no demand for commercial stock companies.

Such being the case, the merchant who entered his store shortly after his apprentices had taken down the shutters in the morning was either in sole command of his business or in partnership with some fellow-citizen. He was, perhaps, rather more likely to be a partner, because to join with another in carrying on trade brought the advantages of additional capital and division of financial responsibility. Of the members of the Chamber of Commerce in 1775, for example, sixty-one carried on their business in association with one or more persons, and forty-three were independent.⁴ In contemporary England the business of mercers, linendrapers, banking goldsmiths and "such considerable trades" was generally carried on in partnership, while trades of less prominence were carried on single-handed.⁵ Similarly, on the continent, the small shopkeeper, the retailer, or the dealer in a specialty was likely to pursue his business alone, while among the wholesale trades the joint concern was more usual.⁶ In the province of New York much the

³ New York Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 74 and note 42.

⁴ *Ibid.*, "Biographical Sketches," by John A. Stevens, *passim*.

⁵ Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, I, 164.

⁶ Werner Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, 2 vols. (Leipsic, 1902), I, 567.

same situation existed. Although there was no noticeable tendency for particular trades to be pursued in partnership, the larger business concerns were usually combinations of two, three or four persons while the smaller were individually owned. Important exceptions, however, must be made to this generalization. Although the Crugers, the Franklins, the Wallaces, the Waltons, Greg, Cunningham & Co. and many others rise to the mind at once as examples of partnerships, two of the wealthiest and most important merchants of the day, Philip Livingston and Robert Murray, had no partners.

The basis of these partnerships varied. Some originated simply through business association, but family relationship was particularly important. Brothers or brothers-in-law were often partners. Such were the firms of Walter and Robert Livingston, Walter and Samuel Franklin, William and Jacob Walton, DeLancey and Watts—John Watts as we have seen, had married Oliver DeLancey's sister—and Livingston and Alexander.[†] In the last case the two men, Peter Van Brugh Livingston and William Alexander, each married the other's sister. The family relationship appears in a slightly different guise in the Scotch firm of Walter and Thomas Buchanan. The son of an important and wealthy Glasgow merchant, Thomas Buchanan came to New York at the age of eighteen, after he had finished his course at the University of Glasgow, and entered into partnership with a cousin of his father, Walter Buchanan—a man twenty years older than himself and already established in a business dealing exclusively with Great Britain. At the time of the Revolution Walter Buchanan withdrew and the firm became "Thomas Buchanan and Son."^{*} The importance

[†] See chapter i.

^{*} W. McBean, *Biographical Register of the St. Andrew's Society*, 2 vols. (New York, 1922-1925), I, 96-98.

of the family connection in the business of New York cannot be overestimated, nor, indeed, has it entirely disappeared. The merchant who was about to take on a new apprentice chose first his sons and then looked among his promising nephews. If there were no available relatives, then, and then only, he applied to a friend to recommend some one who would inevitably be a youth in the family who was to be prepared for a mercantile career. The young man establishing himself in business in Halifax or Jamaica counted upon his brother, cousins, and uncles for trade.⁹

While it seems clear that merchants in New York traded on a smaller scale than those who occupied a similar social and economic position in England, the actual worth of their businesses in ships and goods is difficult to determine. We know from shipping lists that one firm owned in whole or in part as many as thirteen ships at one time. This was Greg, Cunningham & Company, who owned the *Prince of Wales*, the *Dispatch*, the *Falls*, the *Thomas and Waddell*, the *Johnston*, the *Betty* and the *Prosperity* outright, and the *Race Horse*, the *New York*, the *Prince George*, the *Vigilant*, the *Monckton* and the *Little David* in company with other English, Irish and provincial merchants. This was, however, an Irish company with a flourishing branch in New York. Of the native New York merchants, Walter and Samuel Franklin were interested in six ships; the Walton brothers, in four; the Crugers, in four; the Wallaces, in four. Robert Murray owned three ships outright and one-third of another. Atcheson and Thompson, Theophylacte Bache and Lawrence Kortright owned all or parts of three each.¹⁰

⁹ The family basis for the organization of trade is, of course, the oldest in the world. The famous Fugger family is an instance in early modern times. As late as the sixteenth century they were very reluctant to take in outside or "foreign" capital.

¹⁰ Colonial Office Papers 5:1228, Entries and Clearances through the Customs for 1764.

Besides this the merchant had a capital investment of some hundreds, possibly thousands of pounds. It was estimated that the English wholesale merchant of the eighteenth century could begin on £500, but if he were to pursue his business "with spirit" he needed £2,000.¹¹ In New York no business of any importance seems to have rested on a capital investment of less than £2,000, and in many cases it amounted to much more. George Folliott testified in his petition for compensation as a Loyalist that he had "£10,000 stock at interest in the house of George Folliott and Company,"¹² while Samuel Hake's business, if he is to be believed, was worth £11,388 in debts due alone.¹³ The firm of Walter and Robert Livingston had when it started a total capital of £2,000, as shown by this entry on the first page of their Waste Book:

Oct. 1, 1765:—Inventory of our whole Estate consisting of Money and Indigo taken this day by us Walter & Robert Livingston and is as follows, vizt:

We have ready money	£1,602.9
Indigo and charges	397.11
	£2,000.00 ¹⁴

Upon the dissolution of the partnership in December 1769, the total value of the business was £6,100.15.7¼ of which, however, only about £1,200 was cash, but payments of

¹¹ Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, I, 572.

¹² Loyalist Transcripts, XLV, 521. In the New York Public Library.

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. xli, pp. 389-393. The testimony given in regard to his claims indicates that he was virtually bankrupt at the outbreak of the Revolution. D. P. Coke, *Notes on Loyalist Claims* (Oxford, 1915), p. 160.

¹⁴ Waste Book of Walter and Robert Livingston. In the New York Historical Society.

accounts kept dribbling in until 1774.¹⁵ Evert Bancker had a total of nearly £3,000 invested in his business, counting cash, goods and debts due, and deducting liabilities.¹⁶ John Ludlow, not a large or important merchant himself, bought goods to the value of £2,000 annually.¹⁷ The firm of Livingston and Alexander at its dissolution had a joint net investment of £17,204.14.10½.¹⁸ These sums may seem small to the modern eye, but it must be remembered that the purchasing power of money was very much greater in 1750, and thus these figures represent considerably more than their face-value in terms of present-day pounds sterling or dollars.

Partnerships were administered in much the same way as they are today. Profits were divided between the partners according to an agreed ratio fixed in proportion to what each brought to the firm. A few instances will illustrate the prevailing practice. When William Lloyd in Jamaica was considering a partnership with Thomas Temple of Boston, he presented the matter thus to his father:—

Whether I have a prospect of getting more money by Joining in this manner then to Continue by myself I Can't determine; but the Acquaintance it will lead me into in the Mercantile World, and several other advantages makes me prefer it. besides should we settle separate, the Interest I supposed myself to have in Boston will most likely turn in his favor. . . . Mr. Trecothick . . . writes me that he thinks 2/5 of the profits of our house an advantageous settlement for me, a proposal of

¹⁵ Ledger, fol. 123 ff.

¹⁶ Evert Bancker Journal, p. 1, March 30, 1771. In the New York Historical Society.

¹⁷ Compare his Letter Book and Invoice Book, in the Montgomery Library, Columbia University.

¹⁸ William Alexander Papers II, A. B. & R., "State of the Accounts of Livingston & Alexander, Sept. 2, 1763." In the New York Historical Society.

this kind I did not expect and at first objected to, but on reflection have agreed to accept 5/12 for five years.¹⁹

In the case of Livingston and Alexander the profits were equally divided. This was probably because, although during the French and Indian War Livingston was the only active partner, Alexander as secretary to General Shirley was responsible for many of the army contracts they received.²⁰ Still a third variation is illustrated by the partnership agreement of Peter R. Livingston with one Jenkins of Rhode Island for the manufacture of spermaceti candles. Livingston furnished the entire capital and received two-thirds of the net returns, while Jenkins carried on the candle-making for one-third.²¹

The predominance of partnerships naturally produced an effect of discontinuity in business organization, for partnerships were formed and dissolved with equal facility. Some associations lasted a few months, others many years.²² Occasionally the span of life was determined by previous arrangement, but often, as in the case of the partnerships of John and William Ludlow, Henry and John Lloyd, or Walter and Robert Livingston, it was terminated by joint agreement.²³ At the dissolution of the partnership a full statement was made of the assets and liabilities of the business,

¹⁹ "The Lloyd Papers," II, *Collections of the New York Historical Society*, LX, 495. Hereafter cited as *Lloyd Papers*.

²⁰ "State of the Accounts of Livingston & Alexander," William Alexander Papers II, A. B. & R.

²¹ "The Commerce of Rhode Island," *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, Series 7, IX, 137.

²² John Ludlow Letter Book, to Moses Franks and to Samuel Touchet, Nov. 6, 1752. *Lloyd Papers*, II, 568, Walter & Robert Livingston Ledger, 42.

²³ A notice in the *New York Mercury*, Feb. 4, 1754 announced the dissolution of the firm of Hamilton & Hainsworth on Jan. 26, 1754 which had been formed only on June 16, 1753.

and both profits in hand and outstanding debts were divided between the partners.²⁴

While membership in a firm probably meant that a man's chief efforts were put forth on behalf of his house, it did not hinder him from engaging in other business operations, which to some extent took the place of modern investment. Thus both Peter Van Brugh Livingston and William Alexander had "private accounts" as well as the partnership account.²⁵ Similarly, in sending orders abroad, a distinction is often found between goods bought for the firm and those "on my own Account."²⁶ Nor did association with a partner prevent any individual from undertaking special ventures in company with other persons. Cooperative action of this type without formal partnership was very common, for it was the essential nature of the joint venture in which the capital and goods of several persons were united in a single project and the expenses and profits divided in proportion to the amount contributed. These were, in fact, temporary partnerships terminating upon the completion of the end in view. Such an arrangement is recorded in the Waste Book of Walter and Robert Livingston under date of February 11, 1766:

Peter R. Livingston, Margaret Livingston, and ourselves have agreed to ship per Capt. Willet Taylor 100 half Johannes at 64/

²⁴ "State of the Accounts of Livingston & Alexander," William Alexander Papers, II, A. B. & R. Walter & Robert Livingston, Ledger A, fol. 127, "Walter Livingston's New Account to terminate the partnership," and entry dated December, 1769 in Robert Livingston's account.

²⁵ "State of the Accounts of Livingston & Alexander," William Alexander Papers II, A. B. & R. Cf. also Livingston Ledger A, p. 42, "Robert Cambridge Livingston his private a/c."

²⁶ E. g. John Van Cortlandt Letter Book A, to Riddelhurst, August 30, 1762. In the New York Public Library. Gerard G. Beekman Letter Book, to S. Fowler, Jan. 30 and May 25, 1750. In the New York Historical Society. John Ludlow Letter Book, *passim* to John de Neufville.

per 320 which he is to lay out for Sugars on our joint account at Barbadoes or elsewhere, and have paid our $\frac{1}{3}$ share to Peter R. Livingston, being £106.13.4.²⁷

Nor was the "single handed" business in practice always an entirely unassisted enterprise, for the individual merchant, while sole owner of his store and exercising sole authority over his business, usually had two or three projects in hand in which he was jointly concerned with one or more persons. It may have been a share in a vessel, for very few ships were singly owned and many were divided into sixteenth parts; or it may have been a cargo of wheat from Virginia to Madeira, or provisions to Barbadoes.²⁸ Privateers, "flags of truce,"²⁹ and smuggling voyages were usually financed by groups rather than by individuals;³⁰ so also were voyages to new and untried ports such as Montreal and Pensacola. Multiple ownership or interest was especially the vogue where the element of speculation entered—the term "venture" recognizes that feature—since cooperative action in such cases ensured the desired division of risk.

If New York business had not gone far in the development of the corporation, neither had it progressed very rapidly in that other characteristic of the modern era, namely,

²⁷ In the New York Historical Society.

²⁸ John Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Robert Tucker, May 13, 1765. William Alexander Papers I, A. B. & R.: "Account of sundries shipt aboard the Brig Molly for Barbados: $\frac{1}{4}$ on account Campbell & John Stevens." Gerard G. Beekman Letter Book, to Camble Stevens, Sept. 26, 1752.

²⁹ These were vessels which carried prisoners for exchange during the French and Indian War. They were allowed to take aboard a certain amount of provisions for the prisoners and the crew during the voyage, and under cover of this permission a considerable illicit trade in provisions was carried on with the French West Indies. See chapters vii and viii.

³⁰ Philip Cuyler Letter Book, to his father Oct. 19, 1756. In the New York Public Library. John Ludlow Letter Book, to Crommelin & Zoon and John de Neufville.

specialization. In this respect business in the province lagged behind its European model. The most fundamental differentiation among merchants is that between wholesaler and retailer. In the old world the separation of these two groups, which had begun in England in the sixteenth century and in France in the seventeenth, was firmly established by 1750.⁸¹ In New York, on the other hand, although the distinction was made, the separation was not complete. In practice the term "merchant" seems to have been applied to all who, according to Defoe's definition, "carried on foreign correspondence, importing the goods and growth of other countries and exporting the growth and manufacture of England [here the province] to other countries."⁸² Retailers existed as a separate class, as evidenced by an advertisement addressed to "merchants, shopkeepers, retailers and country chapmen,"⁸³ and by the fact that a special resolution of the retail merchants followed the general non-importation agreement of the "merchants" as a whole in 1768. What distinguished the merchant from the shopkeeper seems to have been chiefly that he had a "store" or warehouse, not a shop, and that he imported his own wares in bulk rather than purchased them from some other importer, although he might do so if it were necessary to replenish his stock.⁸⁴ That the "merchant" was not necessarily a wholesaler is testified by the number who became freemen, a requirement which was imposed only on those who sold "by retail." On the other hand, some merchants advertised their establishments ex-

⁸¹ W. Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, I, 535-536; Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, I, 2.

⁸² Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, I, 2.

⁸³ *New York Mercury*, Feb. 27, 1764. Joseph Griswold, Distiller.

⁸⁴ *New York Mercury*, June 1, 1768. The ledger of Samuel Deall, a retailer, shows the difference clearly when compared to the ledgers of the Livingstons. It is in the New York Historical Society.

clusively as wholesale houses.²⁵ The obligation of the wholesaler to sell in bulk only was also recognized. "As I cannot Cutt Goods myself," wrote Philip Cuyler in a letter covering a shipment of goods to a customer, "was Obliged to Gett the Silks and Cruels²⁶ of the retailers which accounts for their dearness."²⁷ But the two forms of business were by no means mutually exclusive, for many men advertised that they sold goods "by wholesale and retail."²⁸ Furthermore, it is quite clear from an examination of the ledgers that merchants like the Livingstons, John Van Cortlandt and Evert Bancker had accounts with private individuals as well as with other traders. It is difficult to distinguish always between the ordinary citizen and the retailer because the practice of large quantity buying—linen by the piece instead of by the yard, for instance—tended to make the accounts of the large householder approximate those of the small shop-keeper.

Even less clearly defined is any tendency to specialize in a particular line of goods. In Europe, specialization was fairly complete. Differentiation had begun as early as the fifteenth century in England and the seventeenth century in France, and was completed by the early part of the eighteenth; so that, abroad, merchants concentrated their attention on a single line and became drapers, mercers, grocers, thread-men, yarn men, hardware men, hoop and stave men, iron-mongers, coal merchants, wool-men, silk men, leather

²⁵ *New York Mercury*, Sept. 30, 1754. Perry and Hayes.

²⁶ Crewel was a loosely twisted yarn used in fancy work. Cuyler may also have been referring to crewel embroidered linen so much used in the eighteenth century for hangings.

²⁷ Philip Cuyler Letter Book, to Martin Dewey, July 13, 1759.

²⁸ *New York Mercury*, William Wright, Jan. 7, 1754; Rowland de Paiba, Aug. 19, 1754; Jacobus Van Zandt, March 4, 1754; Robert Crommelin, Sept. 30, 1754; Remsen & Van Alstyne, Jan. 16, 1764; Ten Eyck & Seaman, Oct. 17, 1768.

men or tobacconists or they might trade with only one country overseas, and become, for example, East India men.³⁹

Although the grades were by no means so minute and various, to some extent this process was under way in America. People spoke of "flax-seed merchants" and "sugar merchants." Richard Bancker advertised his "Linen Drapery Store," James Strachan his "Cabinet Warehouse," and James Dalzell his "Grocery Warehouse."⁴⁰ But William Gilliland, who kept an "Earthen and Glassware Shop" in Broad Street, also had for sale "linen and cotton checks, striped cotton hollands, Indian gartering, buckles, gunlocks, coffee and wines."⁴¹ Moreover, being a sugar merchant like John Van Cortlandt did not prevent one from dealing also in wheat with the West Indies, nor did being a flaxseed man preclude Gerard Beekman from carrying on a general merchandise and commission business. Certain classifications of goods were in general use: dry goods (a very inclusive term covering most merchandise not to be weighed or poured, and corresponding roughly to the German *Ellenwaaren*), haberdashery, hardware or ironmongery, drugs, groceries and produce, although very few merchants confined themselves to a single division.

As the most inclusive group, dry-goods was the largest of the specialized classes. Merchants spoke of "being in the dry-goods way" and advertised themselves as having a fine assortment of dry-goods,⁴² but from the modern point of view this did not represent fully developed specialization,

³⁹ Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, I, 456-457, 539-540.

⁴⁰ *New York Mercury*, Supplement to October 17, 1768, and Jan. 16, 1764.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Nov. 17, 1760.

⁴² Gratz-Croghan Collection I, fol. 26. Manuel Josephson of New York, July 19, 1771. In the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Jacobus Van Zandt in the *New York Mercury*, March 4, 1754.

for their lists ordinarily included a large amount of haberdashery, articles *de luxe*, liquor, sugar and even hardware. Groceries, by which was meant not provisions but those luxuries of diet imported from the West Indies and South Europe, such as lemons, raisins, citron and spices, also engrossed the exclusive attention of some merchants. A frequent combination was wine, sugar, rum, groceries and spices, all sold by the "wine merchant" who was often a distiller as well. Produce included foodstuffs that would keep and might be shipped, such as wheat, flour, salt meats and dried peas, but not perishables, which were sold in the markets. There was seldom any specialization in such produce, although John Abeel kept a "flour store."⁴³

Specialization was more complete and more usual in lines which were closely connected with manufactures—the hardware men or ironmongers, the tobacconist and the apothecary. This was especially true of the artisan shopkeeper, such as the silversmith, the cutler, and the cabinet-maker, but these were not properly merchants.

The most common indication of this budding specialization is the propensity of the merchant to emphasize a particular line of goods which apparently were always on hand and probably formed the backbone of his stock. Thus Hugh Wallace, later to be president of the Chamber of Commerce, advertised constantly "Choice Madeira, Sherry, Lisbon and some excellent Old Mountain Wine; and has just imported a Cargo of Jamaica Rum, Sugar and Molasses which he will sell cheap."⁴⁴ To this, however, he added in another notice "Oranges and Lemmons, Sallad Oil, Capers and Anchovies, Gold and Silver Lace, Men's shoes and pumps, Boots and Spatterdashes, Silk Handkerchiefs, Scots

⁴³ *New York Mercury*, Oct. 17, 1768.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Jan. 4, 1762.

Carpets, Men's and Women's Gloves, Irish Linens and sundry European goods." ⁴⁵

The undifferentiated general store, of which there were at least forty-four in New York in 1764, was still the prevailing type. The typical merchant called himself a "general importer" and his warehouse resembled a miniature department store or the inclusive emporium of the country village. No other analogue exists for such an agglomeration of goods as that advertised by John Forster & Co. as "Just Imported and to be Sold . . . at his store on Cruger's Wharf":

A parcel of choice Irish Beef and Pork, Cork rose butter, dipt Candles, fine green and Bohea tea, Silk, Cotton and Kenting Handkerchiefs, Muslin Cravats and Scotch Gauze, choice old Claret in Bottles and Hogsheads, with the following Scotch Goods imported in the *Barrington* from Glasgow, Tartans, Bonnets, Women's Stays, shoes, printed and Broad Cloths, silk and Hair Button, Oznabrigs, Camblets and Frizes of all sorts. Damasks of sundry color for vests etc. Poplin, Stock tape, Cardinals, Cloaks, Cotton Allapeens, Flowered Dimity Plaid Forrest Cloths, Kersey, duffils, Baize, Horn and Ivory Combs, Metal and Steel Buckles, Knives and Forks, Hinges and a parcel of choice Barley.⁴⁶

This assortment was quite typical, in its wide range of unrelated lines of goods from beef and butter to shoes and satin, of the notices of most of the general importers. Only one person, Gerardus Duyckinck, had the courage to call a spade a spade in naming his house "The Universal Store" or "The Medley of Goods."⁴⁷

Some evidence is to be found of a tendency to deal exclusively in goods of one origin. As practically all manu-

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, April 5, 1762.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, Feb. 16, 1761.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, April 21, 1767.

factures, cloth and clothing were imported from the mother country, it is natural that the majority of collections should be advertised by merchants as "European and East India goods" from London, Bristol, and Liverpool. This included dry-goods, haberdashery and luxuries, and accounts to a large degree for their combination. "Scotch goods" and Irish goods" were very similar but were more limited in range. The former were chiefly woolens, while a large part of the imports from Ireland were linen and butter. Although merchandise from Holland was seldom advertised as such because ordinarily it was illegally imported, the merchant often ordered dry-goods, tea and hardware from Amsterdam and entered such shipments in his ledger as "Holland goods." Specialization in such trade, however, was too dangerous to be common. Though it has been customary among historians of New York City to speak of a class of "West India merchants," the appellation apparently was unknown to the eighteenth century, but since most of the rum, sugar and molasses for sale came from the West Indies, the term may with some justification be applied to those who specialized in that branch of trade. If, on the other hand, all who traded with the West Indies are to be regarded as "West India men," then that group included practically all the merchants of New York.

The ordinary merchant did not confine his trading to any one locality. He sent his ships where they could get a cargo that would sell, and sold his cargoes wherever there was a market. Strictly speaking, it is impossible to distinguish a "European" from a "West India" merchant, as there later came to be a type of "China merchant." A single firm in one year adventured to the West Indies, to England, even to Africa, and also engaged in the coastwise trade, supplying other colonies with the fruits of its overseas

voyages.⁴⁸ The custom house lists for 1754 show only one person, Stephen Van Cortlandt, who, in addition to sending his ship to the West Indies several times a year, did not have it make one voyage, at least to some other part, particularly England, or, as with the Schermerhorn's and the Waltons, to the southern colonies, or like Henry Cuyler, to Africa and the Mediterranean.⁴⁹ The exceptional business house, such as Greg, Cunningham & Co., whose ships sailed only between the British Isles and New York, had unusually strong British connections, and probably filled their holds with freight as well as carried merchandise on their own account.

Any considerable specialization of mercantile business was practically impossible because of two conditions: first, the lack of specie or any satisfactory medium of exchange, and, secondly, the difficulty of finding cargoes for the essential trade with England. The lack of specie compelled the merchant to carry on business to a certain extent by barter, and this necessitated and created a widely varied stock. The situation is clearly shown by an advertisement in the *Mercury* for October 17, 1768:

Ten Eyck and Seaman Have entered into the noted Flour Store lately kept by Mr. John Abeel near Coenties Market where they follow the same business. They have by them for Sale the best of fine, middling and common flour; they have also to dispose of either Wholesale or Retail, Rum, Molasses, Tea, Pepper, Coffee, Chocolate, Allspice, ground and unground ginger, Snuff, Copperas, Indigo, Brimstone, Lump and Loaf Sugar, Muscovado do. by the Hogshead, Barrel or less quantity; also a few Pipes of choice Teneriffe Wines by the Pipe, Quarter Cask or 5 gallons. Most kinds of country Produce will be

⁴⁸ See the ledgers of Philip Cuyler (in the New York Public Library), Walter & Robert Livingston and John Van Cortlandt.

⁴⁹ C. O. 5: 1227.

taken in Payment for the same. *It will often suit them to exchange flour for many of the above Articles, which will make considerable easement to the Purchasers thereof, and will answer their Ends as well as Cash, as they must pay Cash for such articles.*

The second condition was due to the comparative scarcity of native products which were marketable in England, the merchant, in consequence, being forced into trade with other parts of the world which could supply cargoes to be re-exported to Great Britain.

To add to the difficulties of classification, merchants tended to combine trade with other related forms of enterprise. Thus we find hardware men running an iron bloomery. By far the most common combination was that of shipping and trading. Most merchants owned shares in ships, usually eighths. Those at the top of the ladder ordinarily had several ships plying between New York, England and the West Indies. The frequency with which less important names appear on the customs lists shows that many of the smaller merchants also turned to shipping as a natural extension of their business interests. Ship-building was frequently combined with importing, the outstanding instance being the Walton family, whose founder had established shipyards in the city as early as 1728. The Waltons sailed their own ships and later built their own wharf at the foot of their property on Pearl Street. The Van Dams also had a shipyard as well as a store. The Schermerhorns had a line of vessels trading between New York and Charleston, together with warehouses and a ship chandlery, thus effecting a sort of vertical integration of trade.⁶⁰

Naturally a fleet of ships could not be employed solely in the trade of a single individual or even a single firm, at

⁶⁰ M. A. Hamm, *Famous Families of New York* (New York, 1902), p. 119.

least at a time when the scale of business was so small. The ship owner, therefore, became also a freighter, the terms for each shipment being individually arranged between the shipper and the owners or the master.⁵¹ The business was probably stimulated by the practice of dividing a shipment among several bottoms to distribute the risk. Regular advertisements for freight were inserted in the papers by some firms,⁵² but apparently the greater part of the carrying trade was arranged without the aid of a formal advertisement,⁵³ as was possible in a relatively small and compact business community where the arrival and departure of vessels could be easily observed by any interested person. Furthermore, the papers regularly printed the list of incoming and outgoing ships, as they do now, and it must have been comparatively simple for the merchant to discover where there was space for his cargo.

If mercantile business were still largely undifferentiated, it followed that the merchant himself was a composite figure, and one man in his time played many of the parts which we should now think proper to several. Yet he had begun to discard a few rôles necessarily assumed by his medieval prototype. Between the merchant of the fifteenth century and the merchant of the twentieth, that of the eighteenth occupies a middle position, somewhat nearer the former than the latter. The medieval merchant, for example, had to perform the functions of transporting, protecting, insuring, storing, advertising, selling, gathering information and financing. These functions are performed today by specialized agencies—railroads, ship lines, state police, army and navy, insurance companies, warehousemen, newspapers, special salesmen, trade papers, government agencies and financial

⁵¹ *New York Mercury*, Apr. 12, 1762, e. g., Greg, Cunningham & Co.

⁵² *New York Mercury*, Apr. 12, 1762.

⁵³ Gerard Beekman Letter Book, *passim*.

X5.7311.L7

G5

14104

institutions.⁶⁶ In the eighteenth century all of these functions or their equivalents were still performed by merchants, and frequently by a single merchant. In this the merchant resembled his medieval prototype.

Certain changes, nevertheless, may be noted. In the first place, new agencies had come to his aid; newspapers, for example, had just inaugurated the modern era in advertising. In the second place, all the functions just mentioned were recognized as separate activities and not necessarily a part of the merchandizing process. Although they were carried on by merchants, and for the most part, in New York, by them only, no individual had to undertake them all in selling his own goods. He might insure his cargo through a group of merchant underwriters; he might ship it in a vessel belonging to another merchant ship-owner; he might store it in the warehouse of still a third importer. On the other hand, he might borrow money from a colleague, but not in the modern manner from a bank. In the third place, although a man might do all these things for himself, he also did them for others and others did them for him. In other words, an important feature, the principle of representation, had been introduced in the person of the middleman, and the development, diversification and specialization of his activities bridge the gap between medieval and modern conditions.

The representation of joint business interests by members of families or by members of mercantile companies or guilds was of long standing. The factor, or personal agent, who took the place of the merchant in accompanying goods to market, developed in Italy toward the end of the Middle Age, and especially during the sixteenth century, and spread thence over Europe. The relationship was at this time confidential, and the epochal development occurred when a

⁶⁶ Leon C. Marshall, *Business Administration* (Chicago, 1921), p. 247.

stranger who was not in the service of a particular merchant, and who might also perform such services for more than one man, took over the business of representation. Properly speaking, the factor now developed into the commission merchant and the broker, and the outward and visible sign of their importance was the growth of consignment trading. This development was the outstanding feature of eighteenth-century business.⁵⁵ The commission merchant developed first in the selling field and is properly called there the "consignee." Buying commission merchants appear to have been in the beginning much less important, and were usually employed only in the purchase of raw materials.⁵⁶ The broker was a very gradual development, and probably did not branch off until the seventeenth century.⁵⁷

All these types could be found in New York in our period. Gerard G. Beekman wrote to his Irish clients in 1755 that "as the commission business is now in a few hands it is difficult to get a freight for such a ship unless orders come with her."⁵⁸ In the *New York Mercury* of December 11, 1769, Anthony L. Bleecker advertises himself as a "Broker and Auctioneer" who "buys and sells all manner of goods on commission for persons at home or abroad; charters and freights vessels, procures money at interest and transacts all other the general business of a broker and auctioneer with the greatest integrity, secrecy and dispatch."⁵⁹ Insurance

⁵⁵ W. Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, I, 549-553; Weber, *General Economic History* (tr. F. H. Knight, London, 1927), p. 292.

⁵⁶ W. Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, I, 553-554.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 483; Weber, *General Economic History*, p. 292.

⁵⁸ Letter Book, to Cunningham & Schoals, Jan. 17, 1755.

⁵⁹ Cf. also the notice of the opening of a merchant-broker's office by William Tongue in the *Mercury*, Sept. 5, 1774, and the inscription in the Waste Book of Walter & Robert Livingston: "Paid Christopher Smith, broker, the Insurance of $\frac{1}{4}$ Ship Commerce from hence to Amsterdam."

was almost always placed through a broker, or, what was practically the same thing, with an agent.

But the new growth had not yet detached itself from the parent stem. Every merchant, while a principal himself, acted as agent for his clients and customers—a dual relationship which was perhaps the most important of all phases of his business personality. In every undertaking, with scarcely an exception, he had to rely upon the judgment and integrity of his factors or to act as an agent for his clients.⁶⁰

The first duty of the agent was to keep his customer informed as far as possible of the state of the market in order that the latter might suit his shipment to it. This was also to the agent's own advantage, since it prevented him from being saddled with stock he could not sell advantageously.⁶¹ Thus we find Gerard G. Beekman, who did a considerable part of his business in this way, advising one client that there was plenty of beer and cheese in the market and not to send any then. To his Rhode Island correspondent, Metcalf Bowler, he wrote that "Muscovado sugars are cheaper than white usually 46/ per cask, but selling now for 40/. White sugars should bring a good price. Unless more orders and more vessels come muscovado sugar will be down to 35/ per cask."⁶²

The agent received the cargo, saw to the formalities of the customs, and sold for the best price he could get. He was usually instructed to sell the goods at a particular figure, or at least not below one which would insure a profit. "I cannot sell your candles," reported Beekman to Robert

⁶⁰ The same thing was true in England. See Malachi Postlethwayt: *Dictionary of Commerce* (1757), I, 761, article "Factor."

⁶¹ Beekman Letter Book, *passim*, especially to S. Fowler, Feb. 23, 1753.

⁶² *Ibid.*, to Adam Schoales, Feb. 14, 1760, Sept. 9, 1760; to Metcalf Bowler, Sept. 7 and 15, 1760; to Townsend White (Phila.), July 29 and Aug. 5, 1754.

Crooke, "for more than 18 d. if you can get 20/ O. T. [Old Tenor] a pound you had better order them back." ⁶⁵ He might be ordered to sell part of the cargo at once for what it would bring, or to keep it against a probable rise in prices, ⁶⁶ which would then have to cover storage charges. ⁶⁶ Although there might be an average price for staple commodities, each lot was sold by making a separate bargain, and it was often possible for a clever dealer to get more than the average for his client's goods. On the other hand, he often had to be content with less, due, according to frequent complaint, to the condition and quality of the commodities sent them. "Your oats," wrote John Watts to John Riddell of Virginia, "are confoundly gritty; we are forced to pass it all through a sieve; when your folks are richer and can construct barns, I suppose that evil will be removed." ⁶⁸ In the same vein Gerard Beekman reported, "The cheese you sent loses weight. Also the potts though saleable are very dull. Your cart boxes I am returning as unsaleable." ⁶⁷ Another complaint was that the goods had been damaged in transit. "The shoes and linen have arrived, but by the negligence of the vile Master they have come in very bad condition being stowed among the coal and suffered by downright carelessness to get wet." ⁶⁸

Having sold the cargo to the best advantage, the agent credited the profits to his principal's account, to be either remitted or used in making up a return cargo according to instructions. He further attended to placing insurance on

⁶⁵ Beekman Letter Book, to Robert Crooke, July 19, 1753.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, to Henry Lloyd, Dec. 15, 1755. Philip Cuyler Letter Book, to Mr. John Cuyler, Mar. 19, 1757.

⁶⁷ Beekman Letter Book, to Adam Schoales, Feb. 15, 1752.

⁶⁸ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 97.

⁶⁷ Beekman Letter Book, to Jacob Richardson, July 14, 1760.

⁶⁸ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 110.

the vessel, saw that the vessel was properly outfitted, or arranged for freight rates if his employer had no ship of his own. At these points he had only such discretion as his orders allowed. Should he overstep the bounds, he was accountable for the consequences and must stand any resulting loss or expense. He sent in advance a bill of lading and a tentative report on sales. As the selling process frequently took several months, a full accounting was often impossible for some time, and the way was open for many misunderstandings regarding balances, discounts, commissions deducted, interest on money advanced for purchases ordered, and so on *ad infinitum*. As financial agent, the merchant was often called upon to buy or to honor bills of exchange for his clients, again at the most favorable rates, and he also acted as a bill collector. In brief, it was his business, then as now, to further the interests of his principal as if they were his own, proceeding with ordinary caution and diligence.

For all this the agent received a commission in the form of a percentage on the gross value, agreed upon beforehand.⁶⁹ A report made to the Chamber of Commerce sets forth the following rates as usual:

<i>Inland:</i>	2½% on Sales exclusive of Storage	} Say from Boston to Philadelphia.
	2½% on Returns " " "	
<i>Foreign:</i>	5% on Sales exclusive of Storage	
	5% on Returns " " "	
<i>Bills of Exchange:</i>	Indorsing, Selling or Negotiating	2½%
<i>Making Insurance:</i>	¾%; Recovering of losses	2½%
<i>Outfit of Vessels:</i>	5%; Solliciting and Procuring Freight	5%
<i>Collecting of Freight:</i>	2½%; Receiving or Paying of money ...	2½% ⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Beekman Letter Book, to Eleazar Fitch, May 4, 1761. John Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Abraham Maer, Dec. 8, 1764. *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 81.

⁷⁰ New York Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 50.

These rates were not enforceable, naturally, and agreements differed according to the circumstances. Van Cortlandt tried to get his factors in Virginia to do his business for $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ of sales and returns, though he was willing to allow 10% .⁷¹ Beekman got 5% for sales and 5% for returns. As agent for the Rhode Island Government he received $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ for selling their effects and remitting the money to the Commissary.⁷² To Adam Schoales in Ireland he wrote:

You would make another Tryal of our Market if I could submit to Take $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ for remitting & Charge no Storage & that $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ is Sufficient for sales and return. I agree it is Provided we could sell the Goods for Cash & may remit the same in Cash or Bills but not Otherwise for to Remit it in flaxseed & Charge no more, it would not be in our power to do you Justice & ourselves too, for the Very Storage & our time in running from wharf to wharf to buy it in will amount to at least $2\frac{1}{4}\%$; if you Should Send any goods to my Address I shall Always do the Best I Can for your Interest & Charge Commissions as Follows:—On sales and storage of Dry Goods, $7\frac{1}{2}\%$; if the proceeds be remitted in Cash or Bills $2\frac{1}{4}\%$; if in Flaxseed then for buying storeing & Shipping $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ under which I cannot do you Justice.⁷³

The usual rate between New York and the West Indies was 10% , 5% for sales and 5% for remitting.⁷⁴

Two associations of merchants remain to be considered in this survey of business organization. The first of these is the Merchants' Exchange, and the second the Chamber of Commerce. The Merchants' Exchange dates from the

⁷¹ Letter Book, to Abraham Maer, Dec. 8, 1764, and to Robert Tucker, Feb. 6, 1765.

⁷² Letter Book, to Eleazer Fitch, May 4, 1761.

⁷³ Letter Book, Feb. 14, 1752.

⁷⁴ *Letter Book of John Waits*, p. 81; John Van Cortlandt Letter Book to Evan Jones, Apr. 7, 1766; Dec. 19, 1766.

order of the governor in 1670 that merchants and "other artificers" should meet every Friday between eleven and twelve near the bridge over the Heere Graft at Broad Street and Exchange Place. In 1753 new quarters were erected for the Exchange at the lower end of Broad Street, and the cost was defrayed by public subscriptions to which the Common Council contributed £100.⁷⁶ The building was apparently managed, if not owned, by the municipal corporation who rented it to various persons. In 1753 a coffee house was established on the lower floor while the upper floor was hired for balls, concerts or meetings of societies. Some difficulty seems to have been experienced in renting this upper story. From 1756 to 1768 it was leased as a store to a series of shopkeepers, and finally in the latter year to the Chamber of Commerce for their meetings on condition that they put it in repair and allow the Corporation to use it "as often as they shall judge necessary."⁷⁷ What the merchants did who met here is entirely conjectural. No mention of the Exchange appears in any of the letter books, and no bulletin of its activities was published in the papers, save that a market or periodic fair for home manufactures was held there during the Stamp Act excitement.⁷⁸ The Exchange Coffee House was evidently a resort of merchants similar to the coffee houses of London of which a famous example is Lloyd's Coffee House which grew into Lloyd's Insurance Company. It is probable that this, like many eighteenth-century exchanges, was a sort of merchants' club where insurance and bills of exchange might be negotiated. Possibly there was some trading in provisions. Indeed, it would be extraordinary if there were anything more. The

⁷⁶ Stokes, *Iconography*, I, 164, 197-198; Valentine, *Manual of the Common Council*, vol. xv, p. 515.

⁷⁷ New York Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 312.

⁷⁸ *New York Post Boy*, Oct. 17, 1765.

London, Paris and Amsterdam Exchanges, while dealing in public loan securities at this period, did not begin to trade in commodities, industrial securities and futures in general in the modern sense until the nineteenth century.⁷⁸ Certainly in the New York Exchange merchants did not trade in stocks for there were none to sell and English issues were commonly bought in London.⁷⁹ There may have been some speculation in colonial paper money issues⁸⁰ but there is no evidence that it was done on the Exchange.

The founding of the Chamber of Commerce in 1768 marks New York as a progressive business community. It was the first in America—for the Charleston Chamber was not established until 1774—and by its incorporation in 1770 it became the first incorporated chamber of commerce in the world.⁸¹ Unincorporated chambers of commerce had appeared in Dunkirk and Marseilles by 1700. The purpose of the New York Chamber of Commerce according to its own prospectus was to promote and encourage commerce, support industry, adjust disputes relative to trade and navigation, and procure such laws and regulations as might be found necessary for the benefit of trade in general.⁸² Most of the important merchants of the city were members and they proceeded without delay to attack the major problems of the commercial community—the currency situation, the regulation of the manufacture of the staple commodities of the province, the arbitration of disputes.⁸³ How well

⁷⁸ Weber, *General Economic History*, pp. 293-295; Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, I, 561-564; Knight, Flügel & Barnes, *Economic History of Europe*, pp. 323-325.

⁷⁹ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 142, 342, 352. See chapter iv.

⁸⁰ Beekman Letter Book, to Henry Paget, Jan. 7, 1754.

⁸¹ Davis, *Essays in the Earlier History of Corporations*, I, 102 and note.

⁸² New York Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 1.

⁸³ See chapters iii and vii.

they succeeded in solving these problems is discussed in other chapters. With politics they had little concern. Although founded in the spring of 1768 at the height of the post-war depression and as the opposition to the Townshend Acts was becoming vocal, the Chamber of Commerce never passed a resolution favoring or opposing non-importation and the succeeding boycott on tea, nor is there any evidence in the minutes that the subject was ever discussed. Probably the various shades of opinion which were represented in the membership of the Chamber would have made such resolutions dangerous to the unity of the group. Certainly the monthly meetings (to which the members were bound to come or pay a fine) were fully occupied with important matters outside of questions of political controversy.

To sum up: business organization in New York in 1760 was in no way peculiar, but was characteristic in general of commerce in the eighteenth century. It could not have differed essentially from that of other American cities such as Boston, Philadelphia or Charleston. Thirty years later a visitor named the city "the Liverpool of America." The epithet, in so far as it indicated a copy in miniature of the provincial ports of England, may not have been unwarranted in 1760.

CHAPTER III

THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

IF, in the simplicity of organization and the resultant complexity of the merchant's activity, business in New York resembled that of England, in the conduct of trade also no essential differences appear. The methods used by the New York merchant of 1750 in buying and selling goods were those which were typical of the eighteenth century and the age of commercial capitalism of which it was the flowering. The commercial revolution, with the concomitant improvement of navigation and shipbuilding, had expanded markets, increased the volume of trade, and centered commerce in the Atlantic rather than the Mediterranean; the prices of familiar commodities had fallen by reason of increased shipment and decreased transportation charges; old luxuries were made accessible to the poor and new ones introduced to the rich, bringing in their train a host of new wants which stimulated new industries for their satisfaction.¹ From the point of view of marketing, however, the age of exploration had introduced no new problems, but had only increased and emphasized the separation of buyer and seller, and hence the frequency of negotiations at a distance, a situation already familiar to the later Middle Ages.

To deal with the problems thus presented, the merchants of the fifteenth century had used personal agents. Succeeding generations had developed the agent into the factor. The eighteenth century saw the specialization of the factor

¹ Weber, *General Economic History*, p. 296; Knight, Flügel and Barnes, *Economic History of Europe* (New York, 1928), pp. 297-299.

in the commission merchant and of his errands into consignment trading—the signs manual of that age. The growth in volume and variety of overseas commerce and wholesale trade necessitated the deposit of goods in a convenient place where continuous exchange could be carried on. The old fairs and periodic markets, accordingly, declined in importance, and their place as meeting ground for buyer and seller was taken by the individually owned wholesale warehouses. With the separation of buyer and seller business dealings began to be more impersonal, a characteristic which has become more marked in our day of increased specialization of function and division of labor. On the other hand, because specialization was even less complete in the provinces than in Europe, the personal element was still important among New York merchants, who chose their friends for their clients and made their customers friends.³

Probably the larger part of the New York merchant's purchases, unless he were a shopkeeper only, was made without sight of the goods. His English and European, West Indian and provincial goods came as he ordered them; he gave his captain, supercargo or factor instructions to buy certain merchandize for him; but excepting articles bought at auction or from other importers, he never saw his stock until it was unpacked in his store. In some instances he traded in goods which he never saw at all. Beekman, unable to buy wheat advantageously in New York, ordered a cargo sent from Philadelphia to Madeira,⁴ and John Van Cortlandt sent 214 barrels of tar to Henry Cruger at Bristol (England) direct from North Carolina.⁴

³ See chapters v and vi on business relations.

⁴ Wharton Letter-book, to Gerard G. Beekman, June 27, and June 30, 1757. Cf. *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 383, to Fenwick Bull, Sept. 20, 1765 and Van Cortlandt Letter-book to Abraham Maer, Aug. 2, 1764.

⁴ Van Cortlandt, Ledger C, p. 215 New York Public Library.

Purchase at a distance, however, included not only straight orders to be filled by correspondents overseas or in other provinces but also "country buying," one of the oldest forms of such transactions. Though not characteristic of any one trade as it was of the English wool trade, country buying is frequently found where local produce was being collected for export, especially those articles for which there was a steady demand abroad, such as furs, flaxseed and wheat. Ordinarily it was done through agents, the merchant having no direct contact with the producer, whether farmer or hunter. For example, Beekman wrote to Robert Rutherford, March 16, 1752: "Secure all the fox and muskquash skins you can as cheap as possible"; to Samuel Fowler on the third of January 1753: "If you have not yet agreed with Pears and Tillinghast for their flaxseed, pray buy it for me on as reasonable terms as possible."⁵ In many instances the order was sent in anticipation of demands so as to assure a sufficient quantity on hand. John Watts ordered a quantity of white oak hogshead staves from James Neilson of New Brunswick: "Let me know the number I may depend on in a fortnight or three weeks time," he wrote, "as I am afraid I shall be pressed for this kind of Lumber. I must beg if you cannot supply me yourself so as to be here in all this Month with about 20,000 you would engage them wherever they are to be had and can be delivered within the time upon my giving Orders."⁶ This practice was especially common in buying wheat, where there was even a tendency to corner the crop so as to command good prices.⁷

Usually the prices at which large quantities were to be bought were specified, but where orders were given in ad-

⁵ Cf. also to Daniel Dyson & Co., Nov. 22, 1752, and to Francis Brown, April 14, 1753.

⁶ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 19.

⁷ Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to Ruscoe Sweny, Oct. 9, 1762.

vance of production buyer and seller sometimes agreed to accept the market price of some future date. Thus John Van Cortlandt ordered from Colonel Van Rensselaer in October ten to twenty thousand bushels of wheat to be delivered in the spring. Concerning the terms he wrote later: "I have no great objection to but [*sic*] that they [the farmers] would fix a certain limitation as for instance any time between the first of April and the first day of October, or the highest price good wheat sells for at any day within that space of time."⁸

To a generation accustomed to mail-order houses, trade at a distance presents no particular difficulty; but the matter was complicated in the eighteenth century by the incomplete standardization of goods. The ease with which such enterprises are now carried on has been made possible by the development of accurate and uniform standards of quality, fineness and manufacture, a process which had barely begun by 1750. Complaints are frequent in the letter books of differences in measure and indefinite meanings of terms. "The Guage of rum at Barbadoes," wrote John Watts, "seldom holds out with ours which is managed by a sworn officer, tho' the method seems the same."⁹ When relaying to South Carolina an order for "fifty barrels" of rice to be sent to Lord Holderness in London, he remarked: "By barrels I suppose is meant your half Tierces¹⁰ of about 4 bushels each. We have a variety of Wooden Vessels called in general barrel so that with us the Term has no determinate meaning without prefixing the name of the Commodity they are to contain and generally used for, as Flour, Pork, Bread etc. which are all different."¹¹ Some degree of standardiza-

⁸ Van Cortlandt Letter book, to Robert Van Rensselaer, Dec. 24, 1762.

⁹ *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 360; *Cf. Diary of John Rowe*, p. 65.

¹⁰ A tierce was a cask between a barrel and a hoghead in size, containing 42 wine gallons.

¹¹ *Letter-book*, to Fenwick Bull, Sept. 30, 1765, p. 383.

tion may have been reached in dry goods, for they were generally ordered by description and price. "If you send any linens lett them be white, those you sent me yard wide was very yellow. $\frac{7}{8}$ sells best and not higher priced than 2/ Irish per yard."¹² But this, too, was uncertain, and gave rise to protests that the articles were not as specified and therefore unsalable.¹³ Sugar was graded according to the processes to which it had been subjected: molasses, muscovado, paneles, brown sugar, clarified, double, middling and single-refined, loaves and powdered.¹⁴

Some progress had of necessity been made in reducing confusion to order. A certain amount of standardization may have been obtained through the concept of "merchantable goods," a term in use also in England and comparable to the *Kaufmansgut* of the German cities. It must not be inferred, however, that this concept had developed in response to the greater need for such a yardstick consequent upon the spread of purchase and sale at a distance, for it is found in the German cities of the sixteenth century as fully matured as it was in London or Amsterdam in the eighteenth.¹⁵ Nor did it apparently imply in either Europe or America an absolute standard, but seems rather to have originated as the agreement of a small group upon certain details. The qualities demanded in goods if they were to be "merchantable" were simply those which experience had shown to be desirable for sale under given conditions, not necessarily either the most or the least exacting. The term served to establish certain norms for particular markets rather than to standardize products, and to furnish one method of grading goods. Thus Beekman ordered his cap-

¹² Beekman Letter-book, to John & David Ross, Jan. 8, 1756.

¹³ Ludlow Letter-book, to Sheldon & Wright, Jan. 8, 1757.

¹⁴ Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to Colonel Robert Tucker, Oct. 8, 1762.

¹⁵ Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, I, 496-497.

tain to take only "good Dryed Merchantable not Jamaica" mackerel.¹⁶ The attitude of the merchant toward the term was one of conformity, not to an objective measure but to the demands of his customers. In giving an account of the sales of his rum to Samuel Carter, John Watts wrote: "The Quality too was very good, the Proof was high which is a recommendation absolutely necessary at this Market."¹⁷ Concerning another shipment he regretted that "It has not been in my power to finish the Sales of Mr. Astin's Rum. The Proof is so low, had it been merchantable, it would have been ended e'er this."¹⁸ Goods accounted "merchantable" in one locality were not always satisfactory to another, as evidenced by the requirement that staves "for the English market should be quartered not cut lengthwise,"¹⁹ while Beekman warned his supercargo against taking "Boston merchantable boards."

I have always understood that those boards was of a very long unequal Length and Breadth & In general full of rents, such I would not have you bring on any account. But if you get Boards of an Inch thick of an Equal Length and Breadth & Square Edge Such I would have you bring for they will sell well.²⁰

Even where the term was not actually employed it is clear that a general informal agreement on the characteristics of acceptable goods prevailed. Good indigo should be "light as a Cork, of good copper and Purple color, scrape it and it resembles polished copper."²¹ For wine "*stout and pure* are

¹⁶ Letter-book, to Capt. John Bennet, Jan. 28, 1756.

¹⁷ *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 30.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55; cf. also to John Collins, July 30, 1765, p. 362.

¹⁹ C. O., 388: 57, p. 52.

²⁰ Beekman Letter-book, to Mr. Peter Berjeau, Aug. 24, 1752.

²¹ *Ibid.*, to Henry Lloyd, Dec. 24, 1755.

the two grand requisitions." "The older it is the better, admitting the Quality equally good. . . . The Straw Colour we most esteem, of a good body without a sweetish Taste."²²

One further guarantee of quality was found in certain staple exports, such as tobacco from Virginia, wheat, flour, bread, beef, pork and lumber from New York, which had to be inspected before export to ascertain that they complied with the law. Regulations concerning the measurements of lumber, the fineness of wheat and flour, the weight of barrels of bread, beef or pork were on the statute books of the province all through the English colonial period, and in so far as they were well enforced ensured a dependable product. If the produce passed inspection in New York the barrel was branded "New York."²³ Although a simple minimum requirement was thus established, uniform quality was not always assured, as it is in modern "brands."

The most usual method of making sure that the merchandise should be exactly as ordered was to send samples—another characteristic practice of the eighteenth century.²⁴ This procedure was used especially for cloths, both woolen and linen, the samples being pasted or pinned to the order.²⁵ The practice was not confined to textiles. Samples of tobacco, candles, flour, indigo and even clay pipes were sent from New York to Boston, Rhode Island and Philadelphia to demonstrate in tangible fashion the quality desired.²⁶

²² *Letter-book of John Watts*, pp. 192, 214.

²³ See chapter vii.

²⁴ Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, I, 504, 508. Samples of linen and textiles were used as early as the last quarter of seventeenth century.

²⁵ See Alexander Papers, I: "Invoice of Goods requested by J. Alexander of Rodrigo Pacheco," 1733.

²⁶ Beekman Letter-book to Messrs. John & David Ross, Jan. 16, 1760; to Gamaliel Wallace, Sept. 21, 1753; to Samuel Fowler, Oct. 16, 1752; to Metcalfe Bowler, Feb. 14, 1760; to John Sayre, Feb. 5, 1753; Wharton Letter-book to G. G. Beekman, May 15 and 27, 1756.

The sample system, of course, had its drawbacks. It was bulky. Some products did not lend themselves easily to such a method, and it was often impossible to match the sample because of unevenness of manufacture. Protests and demands for rebates accordingly were frequent.

Methods of marketing goods differed most obviously from modern practice. No cohorts of salesmen roamed the country in quest of customers. No blatant advertisements assaulted the eye on every side. Large scale production had not yet made it necessary to convince people they had needs of which they were unaware. It is true that the germs of modern usage were present; clerks and factors were the eighteenth century counterparts of present-day salesmen, but the actual business of selling fell with greater weight than it does today on the shoulders of the merchant himself. Defoe's "*Complete Tradesman*" advocated the daily presence of the merchant in his store, and letter books of New York merchants evince a close familiarity with detail which would indicate such diligence.

Advertising, while it had been constantly improving in variety and technique, occupied but a small place in the provincial business man's budget. By 1750 English advertising had developed three out-standing media, the sign-board, the handbill, and the newspaper notice. Signboards lined the streets of London, taking the place of house numbers and thus becoming important landmarks as well as attracting business. In the competition for something new and distinctive, glaring incongruities were perpetrated, and eminent artists, like Hogarth, were drafted into the service. Indeed, the period has been dubbed "the great Pictorial Signboard Era."²⁷ Signboards had not the same vogue in New York, however, because the smaller community found them less

²⁷ Frank S. Presbrey, *History of Advertising* (New York, 1929), chap. iii.

necessary. Inn signs and tobacco-shop Indians were fairly common. An occasional merchant established himself at "The Sign of the Golden Key" or "Crosshand Saw," but most of them directed their customers by reference to other land-marks—Hunter's Quay, Cruger's Wharf, or "opposite Mr. Walton's house."²⁸ The beautifully illustrated handbills or tradesmen's cards which were so widely used in England²⁹ do not seem to have been adopted by the colonies.

On the other hand, newspaper advertising equalled if it did not surpass that found in English journals.³⁰ A few of the old "reader" type of business notices, which were simply paragraphs about two inches long resembling our modern "want ads," in appearance,³¹ persisted; but most printers had adopted newer methods at least to the extent of separating the merchant's name from his goods and using decorative font marks. One of the less well-known contributions of Benjamin Franklin, in a distinctively American line, was the improvement of the technique of advertising. Not only did he use illustrations before they were introduced in England, but by varying the type and breaking up the paragraph by the use of leads and space he introduced emphasis into the old reader advertisement so that it caught and held the attention.³² New York newspapers were equally up-to-

²⁸ Other examples of signboards are: "The Sign of the Indian King and Cross Gun" in the Fly; "The Sign of the Golden Lock" in Dock Street; "The Sign of the Gilt Dish" (a pewterer's shop) in Dock Street; "The Sign of the Hand and Shears" (a tailor)—Stokes, *Iconography*, IV, 676.

²⁹ Presbrey, *History of Advertising*, chap. iv.

³⁰ Presbrey, *History of Advertising*, chaps. xv, xvi. See also chap. viii, 68-70. The chief addition to technique in England was the headline, and clusters of reference marks for decoration.

³¹ See the advertisement of Abraham Duryea, *New York Mercury*, Jan. 14, 1764.

³² Presbrey, *History of Advertising*, chap. xvi.

date and enterprising.²³ By 1765, about half the space or more of an issue was given over to advertisements, most of which used headlines varying from ten to eighteen point capitals. Many had broken away from the old two-inch length and ran to a quarter or half a column. Milligan's "Woman's Shoe Store" inserted a cut of a shoe with the name running around in the frame much like a signboard. Pictures, however, were chiefly used to advertise the sailing of vessels, runaway slaves, horses, and an occasional house for sale.²⁴

The most progressive advertiser in New York and, indeed, in North America was Gerardus Duyckinck, who conducted a general store containing everything but dry goods and perishable foods, which he called "The Medley of Goods." Beginning with a quarter column which used head-lines and was decorated with font-marks (*#! etc.) he gradually worked into a "display type." By 1769 he was employing what was probably the earliest all-inclosing border used in American newspaper advertising. Patterned on the lines of some English shopbills, it was a highly ornate design resembling a carved mirror frame, but topped with a mortar and pestle instead of a scroll. Inside it were listed his wares in centered display lines using a delicate roman and italic face, which according to a later day opinion, was inconsistent with his merchandise. Duyckinck, in fact, was so much ahead of his age that his advertisements have been called "an isolated instance of twentieth century display methods in the eighteenth century."²⁵

Few merchants, however, used advertising in a modern way. No one advertised regularly every week. Most of them inserted notices only sporadically—some often, some

²³ *Ibid.*, chap. xvii, 145-146.

²⁴ *New York Post Boy*, Feb. 7, 1765.

²⁵ Presbrey, *History of Advertising*, pp. 142-149.

seldom. A few, mainly wholesale houses, scarcely ever advertised. Vendue houses were the most regular.⁸⁶ Although most merchants thought one paper a sufficient expense, about a third of those in New York, not all of them the largest houses, advertised in both the *Mercury* and the *Post Boy*. The third quarter of the century, furthermore, saw an increase in the amount of advertising, for in the '70s a special single-page supplement was often required.⁸⁷

The Lilliputian scale of provincial business made modern selling methods unnecessary, but the absence of certain aids to marketing which have been developed in our time was a real, though unrealized, handicap to the merchant of 1750. Trade journals, house organs and stock market reports inform the twentieth century business man of the fluctuations in prices and demand for goods, analyze the condition of the market and predict the future. Such information was not available to the provincial merchant. New York weekly journals printed entries and clearances, prices current in town, and a column of miscellaneous data from abroad, chiefly concerning vessels, brought in by ships' masters. Any one of these features might be omitted, for they were regarded, especially the prices current, as filler, not as news of first importance. Occasionally a list of prices from some other port, such as Charleston, might appear. For any real information concerning the state of the market, however, the merchant had to depend upon his correspondents who sent him "advices" about profitable cargoes and the course of affairs. A wide and regular correspondence was thus invaluable. Letters, on the other hand, arrived a week or a month after they were written, depending on whether they came

⁸⁶ Moore and Lynsen's and Cuyler's Vendue Houses appear in the *Mercury* nearly every week. Vendue is an old term for an auction sale.

⁸⁷ These remarks are based on a comparison of the *Mercury* and the *Post Boy* for 1754 and 1764-5.

from other continental colonies or from across the Atlantic, and during that time the complexion of affairs might have altered considerably. Progress in this respect had to wait upon the improvement of communication. The merchant himself was partly responsible for this situation, for trade information was still considered confidential and the development of organs for its dissemination was retarded by the persistence of the old idea.²⁸ Nor was this unnatural when profits depended on having first knowledge of a market and arriving before the crowd.

The normal demand of the community probably took off a good part of the merchant's stock, for his first effort naturally was to satisfy this market. Unfortunately there is little or no record of this type of buying. Beyond the notices of stocks in the papers, no special effort seems to have been made to attract local purchasers. The enterprising wholesale merchant, desiring to increase his profits by extending his sphere of activity, had to make a real effort to sell his goods. In the disposal of large quantities, definite orders accounted for a good share of the business, especially in the case of goods sold to retailers in the country or materials for which there was a steady demand in England or the West Indies. William Hawxhurst, indeed, contracted to supply country stores with imported goods.²⁹ Beyond this the

²⁸ Weber, *General Economic History*, pp. 294-295. Beekman Letter-book, to Messrs. Conyngham & Gardner, Oct. 23, 1752: "Flaxseed is at 6/ with you. Mr. Bradfords the printer his paper also acquaints the Publick that the price is 6/ which all the buyers in this Town knows and am afraid it may be a means of Starting it. Some chaps lately from your Place who wants but Little are driving our wharffs this morning and have raised it to 4/3 a bushel at this rate will soon be at 5/ but am still of opinion will not Exceed it for many Orders here are limited at that and under, but there is no dependence to be made how it will go for you well know by Experience that the price often Exceeds our Expectation in that Commodity more than any other."

²⁹ *New York Mercury*, Dec. 23, 1758.

merchant had three courses open to him: to send his goods out to be sold on commission; to ship them in ventures or trading voyages; or to put them up at auction or public vendue. The method chosen was the one that seemed most likely to be successful under the circumstances.

Large amounts of goods were sent out on consignment. This is especially noticeable in the letters of the sugar manufacturer, John Van Cortlandt; but a great deal of flour, bread and lumber was sent to the West Indies on these terms, and Beekman forwarded cargoes to Rhode Island to be sold by his friends in Providence or Newport whenever he thought he could make money by it. Nevertheless, the specialization of business had not proceeded far enough to make it unusual for an ordinary merchant to perform services on commission, or to make it inevitable for him to consign his goods to a commissionaire when they were to be sold away from home. Every merchant, just as in England, acted as an agent for his clients as a matter of course. Similarly, most consignments were sent to men who were already pursuing trade on their own account. Even the professed factor was usually building up a business of his own, and the increased trade and commissions which came to him through his factorage provided him with patronage, capital and experience. Both purchasing and selling through agents were more often done without a formal agreement, the merchant ordering goods through, or consigning them to, his customers in other ports. The extent to which a merchant acted in this capacity was increased in the colonies by the frequency of actual barter, which still existed on account of the lack of currency. A shipment of sugar to Virginia was paid for by a cargo of wheat or corn, the cargo being sold by the original shipper on commission; the cost of shipment, together with the commissions was deducted from the proceeds, and the remainder, if any, placed to the credit of the payee.

The merchant found consignment trading a convenient method of taking advantage of a good market elsewhere, or of disposing of swollen or slow-moving stocks. When the demand for his goods was steady, and especially when a new market was to be opened, the merchant might have a regular factor who was to handle as much as he might desire to send on an agreed percentage. Such a factor was used by the Waltons at St. Augustine (Florida) because their contract to supply the garrison necessitated someone on the spot.⁴⁰ The factor might be a man already in business, or a young man sent especially for the purpose, but the arrangement was not exclusive on either side. Even when the young beginner had been established in a port to receive his principal's goods, he was not necessarily the agent of that firm alone, but might act for anyone who chose to entrust him with business.⁴¹ John Van Cortlandt considered Abraham Maer his factor in Virginia, but he consigned sugar to at least three other persons in the Norfolk district.⁴²

The exclusive selling agent does not seem to have been very common, being employed chiefly by small manufacturers, such as Edward Broadfield, who advertised that his special brand of pickled sturgeon was "sold by Henry Derham opposite the Meal Market in New York and by Alexander Liman on Hamilton's Wharf, Philadelphia, and by no other person."⁴³ Curtenius and Forbes were sole agents of the Vesuvius Furnace, but they were also part owners of it. William Alexander proposed to consign the yearly output of the Hibernia Iron Works—seven hundred tons of

⁴⁰ John Austin Stevens, "Commercial History of the City of New York," in Wilson, *Memorial History of the City of New York*, IV, 523.

⁴¹ *Lloyd Papers*, II, Henry II to Henry, 564-565, 592-593, 599.

⁴² Robert Tucker, John Crooke and John Riddell. Ledger C. under their accounts.

⁴³ *New York Mercury*, Aug. 9, 1756.

pig iron—to one merchant who in return should guarantee to supply him annually with about £4,500 of dry goods and West India goods for the use of his men and his stores.⁴⁴ Most people, on the other hand, appeared to feel that a better price could be obtained by distributing their eggs among several baskets.

The use of the factor, however, was not confined to the commission business. Consignment trading, broadly speaking, covers all marketing where the goods are put in the care of—consigned to—an agent for sale. Thus it includes those speculative enterprises properly and contemporaneously dubbed “adventures,” which were in essence attempts to take advantage of favorable prices or to try one’s luck in a new or difficult market. “Flour is scarce and high in Philadelphia,” wrote Beekman. “Am willing to be one half concerned in any quantity you think proper.”⁴⁵ Voyages to Montreal, to Mobile, to New Orleans or Africa were considered adventures.⁴⁶ Certain ventures were the outgrowth of the merchant’s usual course of trade, but were still speculative or in some special way hazardous. For instance, John Van Cortlandt, a sugar manufacturer, sent a cargo of dry goods and sundries to Africa, and with this procured a cargo of slaves who in turn were sold in Barbados for raw sugar and rum. Slaves were a “chancy” cargo and the voyage dangerous, but the profits from their sale over the original lading and expenses of the voyage probably bought Van Cortlandt more sugar than would the same money if laid out in an ordinary shipment of foodstuffs direct to the West Indies.⁴⁷ As a matter of fact, such voyages, though they

⁴⁴ Stirling Papers IV, 34 (Oct. 4, 1775).

⁴⁵ Letter-book, to S. Fowler, Jan. 10, 1757.

⁴⁶ Van Cortlandt Ledger, *passim*. Livingston Ledger, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to Capt. Richard Mackey, Nov. 26, 1764.

stir the imagination, were actually fewer than those of the more prosaic kind.

Adventures often took the form of trading voyages, the goods being peddled around from port to port in search of the best terms. Now and then such enterprises were carried on by barter, the returns being made in produce rather than in specie or bills. Especially was this true of ventures to the West Indies, where the market, though steady, varied from island to island, and sugar and rum were as good a remittance as cash. Van Cortlandt's brig *Matty* made an annual trip to the West Indies carrying flour and grain from Virginia, a cargo which incidentally was the proceeds of the sale of his sugar there. The master was instructed to go first to Barbados (in one instance to Montserrat), but if the market there proved unfavorable to go about among the Leeward or Windward Islands and get rid of the goods in small lots, taking in return sugar and rum.⁴⁸ The peddling trip was a favorite way of "putting off" slow-moving stocks or over-large supplies. Beekman frequently sent shipments of bread-stuffs, indigo and tallow to be carried round to Rhode Island, Boston, Ipswich and "easterwards."

In these enterprises the goods were consigned to the master or to a supercargo, with exact instructions as to procedure; but since the state of the market was usually unknown, more discretion had to be given concerning prices than when the consignment went to a regular merchant who had means of storing wares until conditions should be more favorable. On the other hand immediate sales, though for less money, had the advantage of quick, sure returns. The

⁴⁸ See Letter-book, to Richard Mackay, Oct. 7, 1765; Feb. 10, 1766; Feb. 16, 1767 and Jan. 28, 1768.

⁴⁹ Letter-book, to Capt. Berjeau, July 31, 1752; Capt. Geo. Briggs, Jan. 16, 1753; Capt. John Conklin, June 23, 1752; Moses Chadwell, Sept. 26, 1757; Bradshaw & Alexander, July 8, 1760.

master here had an opportunity to show his business acumen by striking shrewd bargains—an opportunity which often led to a commercial career. If the venture were of some value—the amount risked in such projects varied from £50 to £1,000—or if the return cargo was desired whether or not the proceeds of the voyage were sufficient to cover it, a letter of credit was given either on some person in the port or on a London banker, on whom the master or supercargo might draw to a certain amount. Van Cortlandt, for example, instructed the captain of the *Matty* to “value himself upon” (the phrase used in modern letters of credit) John Wilson at Sierra Leone in a voyage to Africa. Pierre William De Peyster, a supercargo, was to draw upon Alexander Stevenson at Barbados, or Messrs. Cruger & Gouverneur at Curaçao or J. Richardson Herbert at Nevis. Watts, on the other hand, gave Captain Colgan who was taking a cargo to Havana, a credit of £500 sterling on Sir William Baker of London.⁵⁰

One further method of keeping stock moving was by vendue sale or public auction. “We thought it most eligible,” wrote John Watts, “to close the Sales at Public Auction, the way Goods of all kinds go off best in Quantities.”⁵¹ This method was especially useful when a quick sale was desirable, either to put the merchant in cash that he might comply with his engagements and thus preserve his credit, or to settle accounts in the event of death, insolvency or

⁵⁰ Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to Capt. Mackay, Nov. 26, 1764; to Pierre William De Peyster, Feb. 7, 1767. *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 5.

⁵¹ *Letter-book of John Watts*, to John Kennion, Jan. 10, 1763, p. 115. Cf. also Beckman Letter-book to S. Fowler, Oct. 23, 1753: “If you can’t sell the beef by private sale then by vandue,” and also: to Messrs. John and David Ross, Jan. 16, 1760; Cuyler Letter-book to Richard Alsop of Middleton, Conn., Feb. 12, 1759; Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to J. R. Herbert, Feb. 7, 1767.

removal.⁵² Damaged goods were most easily disposed of by auction and at the best price, for which reason that method was always used by insurers to determine loss.⁵³ Greg, Cunningham & Co., seem to have sent considerable quantities of goods to Templeton & Stewart to be auctioned off, for their receipts total £1,095..6..4 from Sept. 2 to Dec. 16, 1769. Most of the other accounts in Templeton & Stewart's book are small, but a great many individuals appear, showing that this method was widely used. There must have been a good deal of business, for there were in 1770 six auctioneers, Nicholas Stuyvesant & Co., Moore & Lynsen, Abeel & Neils, A. & J. Bleecker, Telemon Cuyler, and Templeton & Stewart.

The general attitude in selling was summed up in the ancient phrase *caveat emptor*. Constant attempts were made to pass goods off for better than they were, and complaints multiplied that wares were not as represented. Even the most reputable merchants raised the proof of rum by adding spirits and "mended" poor wine by coloring it.⁵⁴ This

⁵² Cf. this letter written by Mrs. Reed of Philadelphia quoted in J. Thomas Scharf: *History of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1884), p. 891.

⁵³ "20 Oct. 1772. You will no doubt here of the failure of a very considerable house in New York; it seems to have been very unexpected as they were in great credit. Many failures are expected here; the city is so overstocked with goods that in many shops you may buy cheaper than in London, and the needy trader is constantly obliged for the sake of ready cash to send his goods (often with the bales unopened) to vendue, where they sometimes sell under prime cost, which is productive of universal bad consequences."

⁵⁴ Wm. Alexander Papers, Letters I: "Remarks on Vendue Sales." Livingston Ledger A, 103, "Invoice # 7 Damaged, Sold at Vendue by Moore & Lynsen." Beckman Letter-book, to Messrs. Sayre & Wharton, May 23, 1757. Wharton Letter-book, to G. G. Beckman, Feb. 21, 1757. Templeton & Stewart Receipt Book, Columbia University, 53, 86, Greg, Cunningham & Co., Oct. 22, and Dec. 16, 1769.

⁵⁵ *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 237; Beckman Letter-book, to James Searle, March 25, 1760.

was probably not considered reprehensible. Actual fraud, however, was contemplated when stone blue was made to sell for indigo,⁵⁴ and a modern ring can be heard in Van Cortlandt's protest that, in the last Virginia tobacco he had bought, both ends of the casks were covered with a fine grade while the middle was not merchantable.⁵⁵ On the other hand, a reputation for fair dealing demanded a certain amount of honesty, and there are many instances of allowances being made for goods not up to specification, rebates for Carolina indigo represented as French, for short weight and poor quality.⁵⁶ Damage introduced a new element—the carrier. The dangers of shipping were as omnipresent as the dangers of the seas. It was to the seller's interest to claim that the goods had been in proper condition when they left his hands, and to the master's to insist that he was not responsible for stowage. Unless he could recover from the carrier, the loss was borne by the purchaser.⁵⁷ Where a dispute could not be settled, the practice was to submit the question to the arbitration of "indifferent persons," usually three.⁵⁸ Arbitration was widely used to compose all kinds of differences, not only concerning goods, but also to determine the liability of insurers, rates of salvage, freight, disputed accounts, whether or not a contract existed, who should bear the cost of towing a ship off the bar, and even the own-

⁵⁴ Beekman Letter-book, to Mr. Thomas Reynolds, Dec. 24, 1753, and to Mr. Wm. Edmonds, Oct. 2, 1754.

⁵⁵ Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to John Riddellhurst, Nov. 10, 1763.

⁵⁶ Beekman Letter-book, to Israel Boardman, Aug. 26, 1754, to John Sayre, Dec. 15 and 29, 1755; Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to Edward Travis, Apr. 17, 1764; Cuyler Letter-book, to Wm. G. Beekman, Dec. 1, 1758; Ludlow Letter-book, to Nicholas Hallam, July 25, 1755; Wharton Letter-book, to G. G. Beekman, Dec. 23, 1755.

⁵⁷ Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to John Batyer, Oct. 15, 1767; to John Hilton, Dec. 2, 1762; *Letter-book of John Watts*, pp. 110, 234.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Diary of John Rowe*, p. 69.

ership of land.⁶⁰ Men found it "the most speedy and just determination" and far preferable to "two or three lingering Law Suits that may be Spun out for Years in the way the Law is Here."⁶¹ When the Chamber of Commerce was founded, in 1768, one of its expressed aims was "the adjusting of disputes relative to trade and navigation," and in pursuance of this end a committee was appointed each month to hear and decide any question that might be submitted to them.⁶² It appears that these arbiters received a fee for their services, and doubtless that procedure was usual.⁶³ Compulsory arbitration, however, had little support, for a motion to enjoin it upon the members of the Chamber was tabled.⁶⁴

In the conduct of business New York merchants generally followed English practices regarding both forms and policies. Bills of lading, freighting conditions, marine insurance policies were all copied from English models, as was natural since English law was in force. In so far as it was possible the maxims of business administration were also imported from "home."

The financial policy of a firm is revealed in its books. Unfortunately no complete set of books has survived from this period, nor are existing scattered volumes satisfactory. Both single and double-entry bookkeeping were used accord-

⁶⁰ For examples of these see respectively: *Letter-book of John Watts*, pp. 107, 113; Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 108, *Conyngnam & Nesbitt vs. Capt. Warden*; p. 114, *Dunlap vs. Pintard*; p. 119, *Townsend vs. Budd*; p. 144, *Johnston vs. Bayard*; p. 53, *Rhodes vs. La Piere*; p. 119, *McReady vs. Loughan*; p. 65, *Watson & Murray vs. Capt. Sears*; Bayard-Campbell-Pearsall Collection, Walter Franklin to Wm. Bayard, Nov. 5, 1766. In New York Public Library.

⁶¹ *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 108.

⁶² Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, pp. 3, 8 and *passim*. In 1769 the reports of these committees began to be published, and from then to 1771 fifteen cases were decided, both of members and non-members.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 120 and note 75, p. 331.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74, 79.

ing to inclination. Although in England single entry was reserved for retailers and traders who had little business, the same distinction was not made in New York.⁶⁵ Double entry was used, for example, by the Livingstons, Evert Bancker and John Ludlow; but Van Cortlandt, although his business was as large as any of theirs was content with the less advanced method. All the books of the Livingstons have not survived, but the ledger and waste book are models of the double-entry books. The waste-book, or journal, contains the day-by-day entries of goods bought and sold and cross references to ledger are entered in columns to the left. The ledger contains impersonal accounts as well as those of individual customers: adventures, bills of exchange, bonds and notes, merchandize general, vendue account, invoice accounts, bills receivable, bills payable, interest account, suspense account, profit and loss, and also accounts for special articles such as pig iron, sugar and the "Ship Commerce." Ludlow's Invoice Book is probably one of a double entry series, although such books were kept in the single entry series as well.⁶⁶ Van Cortlandt kept only a journal and a ledger of customers' accounts, which makes it impossible to discover anything about his profits and losses each year. Possibly he also had a cash book, but there is no indication in the journal of any other books, the page references being only to the ledger.

Most wholesale houses apparently used double-entry book-keeping, and a fairly high level of proficiency must have been maintained. The accounts of New York merchants with English houses were kept in both provincial currency and sterling, and all other currencies were translated into New York money. No instance has been found, for example, of accounts kept in Spanish dollars. A customer's regular

⁶⁵ Postlethwayt, *Dictionary of Commerce*, I, 312 article "books."

⁶⁶ Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, II, chap. xxxii.

account was kept separate from his consignment account and personal and partnership accounts differentiated. Careful bookkeepers noted the invoice number of all goods sold,⁶⁷ but to find out how much of a particular invoice had been sold required a troublesome search through several books. In 1786 Benjamin Booth, "late of New York and now of London," brought out "*A Complete System of Book-keeping by an improved mode of double entry* which offered as the fruit of his experience in New York a solution of this difficulty. This was a special arrangement for recording sales on the same page as the invoice—in reality a new method of keeping the sales book—which enabled the merchant to tell at a glance how much of a single shipment had been sold."⁶⁸

The English custom was to balance accounts of stock and of profit and loss at least once a year; individual accounts it was recommended to balance once a month.⁶⁹ It is not at all clear that either of these things was done in New York. At intervals of no special length creditors were supposed to furnish a customer with a trial balance called an "account current."⁷⁰ Eighteenth century freedom of spelling rendered this in one instance "Account Currant," which since the balance was "in the red" was especially apt. As the proceeds of bills of exchange and cargoes seldom amounted to the exact sum owed, accounts over several years continually showed a small balance due or credited. Ordinarily, to close out an account entirely meant the cessation of the connection.

⁶⁷ Van Cortlandt, Livingston and Bancker Ledgers, *passim*.

⁶⁸ Benjamin Booth, *A Complete System of Bookkeeping by an improved mode of double entry* (London, 1786), pp. 181 et seq.

⁶⁹ Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, I, 310. Postlethwayt, *Dictionary of Commerce*, article "Account."

⁷⁰ Ludlow Letter-book, to Messrs. Chancery, Brown & Chancery, Dec. 22, 1755; Wharton Letter-book, to G. G. Beckman, Sept. 10, 1757.

Early in the eighteenth century Defoe had counselled young merchants that "few goods and a quick sale is the beauty of a tradesman's warehouse or shop." This he considered the basis of success, for overstocking was one of the chief causes of failure.⁷¹ New York merchants were compelled to carry a fairly large stock because of the "long credit for dry goods and Slow payment."⁷² From the incomplete records at our disposal it is impossible to compute accurately the rate of turnover of the merchant's stock. Cautious men like Watts, Ludlow and Van Cortlandt apparently kept the pot simmering continuously rather than boiling spasmodically. It seems clear from the letter books and from the semi-annual orders to England that goods were supposed to be off the shelves in about six months, but in many cases turnover was slower. Ludlow, for example, had some English cloth unsold three years after the original order.⁷³ Walter & Robert Livingston received a shipment of goods from Neate, Pigou & Booth on October 30, 1765, which was not completely sold until November 7, 1768.⁷⁴ In the first instance, however, the cloth was priced too high for the market, and in the second the order was probably over-large, being worth £2,854, or some £800 more than their original capital.

Profits are supposed to have been high, at least on English manufactures. In provisions, prices were adjusted by the operation of the law of supply and demand. The published price current possibly had a tendency to keep charges reasonable, although there was no survival of the medieval idea of the just price except in the municipal assize of victuals.

⁷¹ Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, I, 39.

⁷² Cuyler Letter-book, to Dirk Van der Heyden, June 29, 1756.

⁷³ Ludlow Letter-book, to Sheldon & Wright, Jan. 8, 1754 and Jan. 8, 1757.

⁷⁴ W. & R. Livingston, Ledger A, p. 9.

Profits were probably low on foodstuffs. Beekman thought sixpence a pound a good return on pepper, but Van Cortlandt bought raw sugar at nine and a quarter pence a pound and sold the refined product at only fifteen pence.⁷⁵ The average profit on imported goods, according to Governor Bellomont, was 90 per cent in 1699, while in 1706 English woolens sold at 200 per cent advance, and in 1715, 100 per cent was considered low.⁷⁶ This general average was still true in 1750. Philip Cuyler wrote to his father in 1755 that "dry goods sells very well here at 150 per cent advance."⁷⁷ It should be borne in mind, however, that this advance was over the prices charged by English houses, not over the total cost to the importer. To the initial cost must be added many charges such as packing, freight, insurance, advancing cash in some instances for purchasing part of the invoice from other houses, and so on. All this combined to raise the price of the goods when delivered in New York anywhere from ten to twenty-five per cent.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the practice of selling on credit made it necessary to charge higher prices in order to make the part of the returns which would be in early cover the amount due to the English wholesaler.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Beekman Letter Book, to Gamaliel Wallace, Aug. 6, 1753, and to Townsend White on the same date; Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to J. W. Hoffman, Sept. 6, 1762.

⁷⁶ Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States, 1607-1860* (Washington, D. C., 1916), I, 148.

⁷⁷ Cuyler Letter Book, Dec. 2, 1755.

⁷⁸ See Ludlow Invoice Book, *passim*. For example, in an invoice of cotton goods ordered from William Beekman August 23, 1756, the cost of the goods in round numbers was £52, and the charges amounted to £6, or 11%; the charges on a shipment of woolens and blankets amounting to £532 which were sent by Moses Franks on April 8, 1757, were £114, or 21%; similarly, a cargo of crapes, silks, gloves and ribbons, bought of Kilby, Barnard & Parker, in February, 1757, cost £323 for the goods and £77 for charges, commissions, packing and insurance, or 24%.

⁷⁹ Livingston made only about 20% on an invoice plus charges. See Ledger A, 9, Neate, Pigou & Booth.

Competition, especially when the community was overstocked with goods, undoubtedly kept profits low, and price-slashing was evidently practiced. In the issue of the *New York Mercury* of November 4, 1771 Leigh & Price announced "that they ask no more than a cent [one per cent] retail on the Manufacturer's Price."

They cannot think, they continued, that the Candid Part of Gentlemen in Trade will Censure them for this Determination, when the many Precedents, the many living Instances are considered of People who have done all in their Power to hurt the fair Tradesman, and prove destructive to Trade in general—Every Man who pretends to sell under a Cent. must either make (to use a mercantile phrase) a Salt-Water Invoice, put rotten Goods at Vendue, or use some sinister Means to delude the Town, deceive their Customers and impose on the credulous Part of Mankind.

A week later one Timothy Fagwell announced in the same paper as the *reductio ad absurdum* of this price war:

None of your Cents, nor under Cents, but Goods given away Gratis. The subscriber having (of late) seen a number of advertisements in the news-paper, in which the public are offered goods at prime cost and under—now take notice—that he being moved by such laudable examples, has determined within himself not to be backward in serving his community, as well as some of his fellow citizens; he therefore takes this method to inform the respectable public that he has imported in the last vessels from Europe a large and general assortment of all kinds of goods to the amount of One Hundred Thousand Pounds Sterling, which he proposes—observe well—to give away gratis, to any person or persons (in small quantities) who chuses to apply; and as his plan is one of the most beneficial, perhaps, that ever was offer'd to the public, he don't doubt but this advertisement will attract the attention of many, and that he shall have the pleasure of bestowing his charity to numbers of his fellow Creatures, which will be a great satisfaction.

All New York merchants extended credit under varying conditions. Selling goods on time had been widely practiced in Europe for a long while, but nowhere was it so extensive as in England where, it was claimed, four-fifths of all sales were made on credit.⁸⁰ New York customers were generally allowed twelve months by English merchants.⁸¹ The Dutch theoretically allowed three months, but in practice payment had to be made upon demand or further credit was not extended.⁸²

Opinion differed as to the proper policy in the matter of credit. Some criticised only the folly of giving too long credit and thus of not ensuring that returns should be in before payment must be made.⁸³ For example, a merchant who was allowed twelve months by his creditors should grant only nine months to his purchasers. Others, while admitting that credit was useful and prudent when extended only to retailers and beginners, felt that for wholesale merchants to purchase on time and expect to pay for their purchases with the returns on the same goods, especially when the goods were exported, was unjustifiable and had an injurious effect upon trade. "It tends to force trade and glut foreign markets with greater quantities of merchandise than is ordinarily required, whereby the price of commodities comes to be abated to the prejudice not only of the fair trade but also of the nation in general."⁸⁴ Trading for cash, on the other hand, made it possible for a man to buy cheaper and by avoiding the necessity for immediate payment to wait for the best prices.

⁸⁰ Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, I, 514. Postlethwayt, *Dictionary of Commerce*, I, 574, article "private credit."

⁸¹ Ludlow Letter Book, to Sheldon & Wright, Jan. 9, 1753; Cuyler Letter Book, to Wm. G. Beckman, Oct. 27, 1758.

⁸² Postlethwayt, *Dictionary of Commerce*, I, 574.

⁸³ Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, I, 40.

⁸⁴ Postlethwayt, *Dictionary of Commerce*, I, 574.

Among the New York traders dry goods, which included even deerskins, were always sold on credit. Six to twelve months' credit was usual while as low as four was considered a very good bargain.⁸⁵ On the other hand West India goods—sugar, molasses, rum—flour and tea were considered "cash articles";⁸⁶ but three months were sometimes allowed for payment on these commodities, or occasionally, by special dispensation, six months.⁸⁷ In some instances, where actual cash was not demanded, interest was charged from the day of delivery. Van Cortlandt allowed six months credit on his sugar, after which he charged seven per cent interest.⁸⁸

Nevertheless every effort was made to encourage people to pay cash rather than to take credit. Prices varied in direct ratio to the length of time allowed. Philip Cuyler set his prices at 150 per cent for twelve months credit and 140 for three months. To Robert Nevens of Hartford he offered deerskins at 7/9 per pound at six months credit, 7/6 at three months and 7/3 for "present pay."⁸⁹ Cash discounts were also allowed. Van Cortlandt "abated" a halfpenny a pound

⁸⁵ Beekman Letter Book, to Messrs. Gideon & John Wanton, Jan. 2, 1757; Ludlow Letter Book, to Sheldon & Wright, Dec. 22, 1755; to William Hogg, Jan. 16, 1760, to J. & D. Ross, same date.

⁸⁶ Stirling Papers, IV, fol. 34. Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Robert Henry, Dec. 15, 1767; to I. Younghusband, Dec. 15, 1763; to Edward Travis, June 21, 1764; Cuyler Letter Book, to Richard Cartwright, March 26, 1759; Ludlow Letter Book, to Col. Jonathan Trumble [sic], Sept. 22, 1755.

⁸⁷ Ludlow Letter Book, to Col. J. Trumble, Sept. 22, 1755; Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, June 3, 1756 and June 19; Beekman Letter Book to S. Townsend, July 14, 1760; Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Duncan & Phyn, March 17, 1766; to I. Younghusband, Dec. 15, 1763; Van Cortlandt Ledger C, p. 81, Isaac & Benj. Gomez.

⁸⁸ Stirling Papers, IV, fol. 34; Wm. Alexander Papers, A. B. & R., I, "William Neilson's Account, 1773"; Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to John Riddellhurst, 20 June, 1764, and to John Cocke, Jan. 18, 1765.

⁸⁹ Cuyler Letter Book, to Dirk Van Veghten, Dec. 1, 1755; Beekman Letter-book, to David Lewis, Feb. 5, 1753.

from the price of sugar, and reductions were customary where goods sold on credit were paid for before payment was due.⁹⁰ Similar reductions were made in Europe. The Dutch allowed one per cent for prompt payment, and the English varying amounts, the East India Company's rate being six per cent.⁹¹ In the bill for Lieutenant Governor Colden's carriage, made in London in 1766, five per cent is deducted for prompt payment.

While it is clear that a great deal of business was done on credit, and Watts asserted that the greater part of the merchants in New York lived on credit,⁹² it is impossible to indicate definite ratios. The proportion may be estimated at perhaps one-half to three-quarters of a man's business, depending on the amount of local trade he had.⁹³ Even purchasers in the city frequently paid at the end of the month rather than when buying. Ledgers and letter-books show that practically all of the distant trading was done either on credit or on commission. Very seldom did a man send the money to pay for his merchandise with the order, although New York merchants did this occasionally for European firms. The nearest approach to cash payment was when the purchases were to be made from the proceeds of a cargo.

In fact, one noticeable feature of New York business before the Revolution was the persistence of direct barter,

⁹⁰ Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to Henry Walker & Co., Dec. 14, 1763; to John Cocke, Dec. 14, 1763; Ledger 1770-1772, *passim*, and especially "by cash and abatement"; Wm. Alexander Papers, A. B. & R. I, "William Neilson's Account, 1773."

⁹¹ Postlethwayt, *Dictionary of Commerce*, I, 575, article "Credit" and "Abatement."

⁹² *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 355.

⁹³ In 1758 Van Cortlandt sold £295 worth of sugar on credit and £577 for cash, but the following year the proportions were reversed, £392 cash being taken in and £808 out in credit. Bancker had £2,641 in debts owing him "good, Bad and Doubtful" against £2,638 in cash and goods. Van Cortlandt Journal, 1758-1759. Bancker Journal, 1771, pp. 1-2.

not of the primitive type since value was measured in money, but nevertheless an actual payment for goods by goods. It is a platitude to say that all trade is at bottom barter, but the actual exchange of one commodity for another has been many removes separated in modern times. This was not true in 1750. Storekeepers advertised that produce or "country pay" would be accepted in return for merchandise.⁹⁴ Even in sales at a distance returns were made in wheat, sugars, rum, peach brandy, flax-seed, or any commodity acceptable to the creditor.⁹⁵ This condition was apparently far less true of Europe, and was due in America to the inadequacy of financial organization and to the lack of a sufficient currency, and of institutions which might facilitate exchange and extend credit.

The currency situation of New York was quite as basic in determining its business enterprise as were its resources, and commanded more attention because, being amenable to human manipulation, more attempts were made to control it. No dependable estimate of the amount of specie in circulation in the province exists, and for America as a whole the figure is placed anywhere from one and a half to three million guineas.⁹⁶ From earliest times, however, the movement of gold and silver from the colony to England was noticeably embarrassing. Cadwallader Colden, reporting

⁹⁴ *New York Mercury*, Oct. 17, 1768, Ten Eyck and Seaman; Beekman Letter-book, to S. Fowler, Oct. 23, 1753, and to Archibald White, Jan. 9, 1761; Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to Alex. Stevenson, Feb. 10, 1766; Stirling Papers, III, P. T. Curtenius to Stirling, July 24, 1767, fol. 63.

⁹⁵ Beekman Letter-book, to Capt. Israel Boardman, July 25, 1753; to Samuel Fowler, Nov. 2, 1754: "I hope you have sold or trucked all my Ginger away before now." Cuyler Letter-book to Gershom Mott, Dec. 13, 1759; Van Cortlandt Letter-book to John Riddelhurst, Dec. 9, 1765, and *passim* in all letter books.

⁹⁶ David MacPherson, *Annals of Commerce* (4 vols., London, 1805), III, 574.

on the state of trade in 1723, wrote: "Whatever advantage we have with the West Indies, it is hard to make it even with England, so that the money imported from the West Indies seldom remains six months in the Province before it is exported to England, current cash here being wholly in current bills of the province and a few Lyons Dollars."⁸⁷

The bulk of the specie in circulation was Spanish or Portuguese. The most plentiful kinds were the Spanish milled dollar, or piece of eight, and the Portuguese johannes, so-named from the fact that it was issued in the reign of John V. The Lyons or lion dollar, which received its name from the figure of a lion on its face, came from Holland and was the only foreign coin ever made legal tender. It became very scarce after 1720 and during the Revolutionary period is hardly mentioned. Small coins were so scarce that an attempt was made to import copper money until a law was passed forbidding it, but later one William Wood of Wolverhampton, England, received permission from George I to coin twopenny, penny and half-penny pieces which were stamped "Rosa Americana." His money was not well received, since the intrinsic value was much below the face value. The last issue came in 1733.⁸⁸

At best not uniform in weight or fineness, many coins had been so sweated or clipped that they had lost as much as one-quarter of their original weight. The heaviest, accordingly, were collected for remittance abroad, where they were taken as bullion by weight. In an effort to prevent "the scandalous practice of clipping half Johannes" the Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution on August 17, 1770, "that 3d be allowed for every grain that a half Joe weighs more than 9 dwt. and 4d. be deducted for every grain it weighs

⁸⁷ *New York Colonial Docs.*, V, 685-690.

⁸⁸ Berthold Fernow, "Coins and Currency of New York," in J. G. Wilson, *Memorial History of the City of New York*, IV, 309, 310.

less."⁹⁹ Except during the French and Indian war, when the presence of the British army increased the amount of the specie in the country, constant complaints are heard of the difficulty of getting together large amounts of money. "Gold is very scarce here," wrote John Watts in 1762, "and I believe at Philadelphia too. I shall write to my friend Mr. Allen to send you £500 str. if a Vessel of Force offers. Half Johannes' are the only Gold that can be picked up in any Quantity. They pass at 63/. Moidores are very rare at 46/; so are Guineas at 36/ and Pistoles at 29/." ¹⁰⁰

The natural result of this situation was to enhance the market value of such specie as was in circulation. By a proclamation of Queen Anne of June 18, 1704, the various foreign coins in common use had been given an official valuation, but both the proclamation and the enforcing act of 1707 were disregarded in the colonies. Any attempt on the part of the provinces to prevent drainage of specie to England, and to recognize in law the true situation, was disallowed because the mother country, in conformity with the prevalent mercantile theory, wanted uniform rates in its dependencies and the importation of specie to England itself.¹⁰¹ In accordance with this policy the governor of New York, Sir Henry Moore, vetoed in 1769 an act of the Assembly making gold and silver coins legal tender because, although it put no different valuation on them than that at which they passed current in the common course of business, it nevertheless differed widely in its provisions from the Act of Parliament.¹⁰² The report to the Chamber of Commerce

⁹⁹ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, pp. 104-5.

¹⁰⁰ *Letter-book of John Watts*, to Gedney Clarke, July 5, 1762.

¹⁰¹ Elmer B. Russell, *The Review of American Colonial Legislation by the King in Council* (New York, 1915), p. 136.

¹⁰² *New York Colonial Docs.*, VIII, 169. Moore to Hillsborough, May 29, 1769.

of a committee appointed to ascertain the current value of gold shows that guineas whose official value was twenty-one shillings passed for thirty-seven shillings; the shilling itself as 1s. 9d; the Spanish dollar, by proclamation four shillings sixpence, as eight shillings, and so on. The same report set a standard weight for each coin which the members agreed to try to enforce, deducting 4d. for every grain less than standard. An attempt was later made to adopt uniform scales for weighing coin, but it failed.¹⁰³

The only other currency in use was paper money, commonly called bills of credit, issued by the provincial government in anticipation of taxes. Such issues were common in the eighteenth century to all the colonies, which emitted them in greater or less quantities according to their need and policy with a concomitant and consequent depreciation. New York was not a serious offender in this matter. The first of such bills had been issued in 1709 to meet the extraordinary expenses of Queen Anne's war, and had been followed at irregular intervals by other emissions which were largely for the salaries of provincial officials.¹⁰⁴ In 1750 there were outstanding some £126,350 in bills of credit, to be redeemed by taxes levied for that purpose.¹⁰⁵ Each act of emission provided a fund for the "sinking and cancelling of" the bills, the fund to be raised by a tax on estates both real and personal "of all and every the freeholders, inhabitants and residents within this colony." It was also directed that the bills should be cancelled every six months at the Treasurer's office by commissioners appointed for that purpose.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, pp. 52, 56.

¹⁰⁴ Colden Letter Books, *New York Historical Society Collections*, IX, 350-352.

¹⁰⁵ J. H. Hickcox, *History of the Bills of Credit of New York* (Albany, 1866), 81.

¹⁰⁶ Colden Letter Books, *New York Historical Society Collections*, IX, 350-352; Additional Mss. 22679 (British Museum), fol. 31, "Report of

Of the bills which had been issued before 1750 the province had redeemed approximately 93 per cent, and of the £385,000 issued between 1755 and 1760, chiefly for war expenditures, 73 per cent were redeemed at the expiration of their currency.¹⁰⁷ The depreciation of this paper money, accordingly, had been relatively negligible. No issues of "old," "new" and "middle tenor" to replace hopelessly depreciated bills had taken place as in New England, where the sterling exchange for Massachusetts and Connecticut in 1750 was 1100 per cent and for Rhode Island twenty-three to one.¹⁰⁸ For many years before the Revolution the normal sterling exchange rate for New York money was 177 per cent, but it fluctuated between 160 and 195, depending on the supply of bills of exchange on London in comparison with the demand for them. The normal exchange rate seems to have been reached not so much through the emissions of paper money as by the rate at which Spanish dollars were accepted. These coins, which had been valued at four shillings sixpence in the Proclamation of 1704, passed in New York at eight shillings, or at the rate of 177 per cent.¹⁰⁹

The emissions of paper money had little or no effect upon exchange. For example, exchange in 1750, when but £126,350 was in circulation, averaged about 180,¹¹⁰ and had been 190 in 1748 with no more paper in use. By 1760,

Abraham Lott to Gov. Moore, Nov. 14, 1766" in "Aspinwall Papers," *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 4th series, X, 520-521.

¹⁰⁷ J. H. Hickcox, *History of the Bills of Credit of New York*, p. 81. See Appendix.

¹⁰⁸ C. J. Bullock, *Essays on the Monetary History of the United States* (New York, 1900), p. 39.

¹⁰⁹ Bullock, *Essays on the Monetary History of the United States*, pp. 21-22; S. L. Adler, *Money and Money Units in the American Colonies*, read before the Rochester Historical Society, Jan. 8, 1900, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Figures for exchange rates are not to be found in newspapers. Those used throughout this study have been taken from letters and ledgers.

when the amount of paper money had nearly trebled, standing at £443,350, exchange, instead of rising had fallen to 160. In 1764, when paper money had been reduced by only £73,000, exchange rose to 185.¹¹¹ The comparative abundance of bills of exchange on London during the French and Indian war, and their relative scarcity after it, provide the simplest explanation. It is true that in November, 1768, when only £113,266 remained still unredeemed after the expiration of the last issues, exchange fell to 175; but, on the other hand, in November, 1768, the non-importation agreement was in force and the demand for exchange was diminishing with the cessation of orders.

The colonial theory concerning exchange and paper money is well expressed by Benjamin Franklin in a memorandum of 1767 entitled "Facts concerning Paper Money."

The difference between sterling and paper money is due to Silver having a Property always in demand in the colonies, that is the property of being fit for remittance. This Property having soon found its value by merchants bidding on one another for it, and a Dollar thereby coming to be rated at eight shillings in Paper Money of New York and 7 shillings sixpence in that of Pennsylvania, it has continued uniformly at those Rates in both provinces now near forty years without any variations upon new Emissions, though in Pennsylvania Paper Currency at times increased from £15,000 to £600,000 and in New York from £40,000 to £600,000 or near it. Nor has any alteration been occasioned by Paper Money in prices of other Necessaries of life. Compared with silver they have varied only with plenty and scarcity, or by greater and less foreign Demand.

Adversaries call every rise of exchange with London a depreciation of Paper: But that Notion appears to be by no means just: For if Paper purchases everything but Bills of Exchange

¹¹¹ See Appendix, and chapters viii and ix.

at former Rates, and those Bills are not above one-tenth of what is employed to purchase, then it may be more properly and truly said that Exchange has risen than that Paper has depreciated. And as Proof of this it is a certain Fact that whenever in those Colonies Bills of Exchange have been dearer, the Purchaser has constantly been obliged to give more in Silver as well as in Paper for them.¹¹²

"Confusion worse confounded" resulted from the circulation of paper money of other colonies in New York. As the relation of these currencies to sterling differed not only from the rate of New York money but from each other, they had to be translated into New York currency. Tables showing the rates of exchange were included in the almanacs, and in William Wright's "American Negotiator," a work which was published in London in 1765, passed through several editions and sold over 5,000 copies. One of the first problems which confronted the Chamber of Commerce in its effort to stabilize the currency was the "advances" at which New Jersey and Pennsylvania money should be received, for the sterling exchange rate for this paper was ten per cent less than for New York. The necessity for this addition to the circulating medium is also shown in the result of the Chamber's deliberations. After some discussion concerning the rate for New Jersey money, it was resolved "to take no further notice until it becomes a matter of more concern to the city and province."¹¹³ With regard to Pennsylvania currency, the first decision was to discourage its use in the colony by refusing to accept it, but three months later the resolution was repealed "as many inconveniences have arisen to the trade of the city by refusing it."¹¹⁴

¹¹² *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin* (Smith ed., New York, 1905), V, 10-11.

¹¹³ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 15.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 11, 15, 16, 18.

In 1770 a new attempt was made to prevent the circulation of New Jersey paper at more than its face value on the ground that it injured New York issues. The question was debated and postponed through 1771. Finally, in 1772, a resolution was adopted not to receive "Jersey money at more than its acknowledged value by their own Legislature."¹¹⁵ Within the next six months eighteen members of the Chamber resigned in protest. Although in November, 1773, the resolution was repealed on motion of Robert C. Livingston and the members were invited to return, in March, 1774, the Assembly passed a law practically embodying the old resolution as "An Act to prevent the depreciating of Paper Currency in the Colony."¹¹⁶ Bills of credit of other colonies were not, however, legal tender in New York, and a merchant could refuse to accept them if he chose.¹¹⁷

The currency was fortunately rendered more elastic by the use of bills of exchange, which both supplemented and obviated remissions of specie both abroad and at home. Such drafts were usually made out in sets of three or more, either on printed forms or hand written, a saving clause being included which voided all other copies if any one had been accepted. The original bill and duplicates were sent by separate conveyances to minimize the risk of loss. They were ordinarily drawn for large sums, generally over £100 and seldom less than £50, at thirty or forty days sight.¹¹⁸ Occasionally sixty days were allowed, in which case the exchange was lower because the term was less desirable. "Enclosed is my Bill on Mr. David Harvey for £52.10, at

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 143, 160.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 185-187, 334, note 88.

¹¹⁷ Beekman Letter-book, to S. Fowler, Sept. 25, 1752; Wharton Letter-book, to John Waddell, April 10, 1756; *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 95, to Maj. Robert Rogers, Nov. 15, 1762.

¹¹⁸ Ludlow Letter-book, to Moses Franks, Nov. 25, 1761.

85 per cent at 60 days sight," wrote Gerard Beekman. "Those drawn at 30 days sell for 87½." . . . "I must inform you that it differs Every Person that sells bills at least 2½ per cent whether payable in one month or two, although it is much more than the interest, yet it is the prevalent custom." ¹¹⁹

In intercolonial commerce the bill of exchange took the place of the modern check, and domestic bills in contrast to foreign were usually drawn payable three, five or ten days after sight.¹²⁰ There was one point at which exchange between the colonies resembled that between two foreign nations, namely, the different rates which the currencies of the provinces bore to sterling. On this account it was customary to specify in bills, in the payment of debts and in bonds and notes, the kind of payment desired, whether sterling, the currency of a particular colony, or specie.¹²¹

It was, of course, annoying for an individual to draw on a firm with which he had no funds. Such bills were returned protested, and as satisfaction for the resulting difficulties and delays the drawer of the bill was heavily fined. In the autumn of 1768 the Chamber of Commerce appointed a committee to report on the normal rates of damages for protested bills. Its report was adopted as the standard for the future, the rates being:

¹¹⁹ Beekman Letter-book, to Adam Schoales, Feb. 5, 1762; to John McConnell, Jan. 25, 1762. Cf. Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to James Gibson, Oct. 30, 1766.

¹²⁰ Cuyler Letter-book, to John Coddington, Jan. 30, 1758; to Wm. Tweedy, July 11, 1760; Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to J. W. Hoffman, Oct. 14, 1766.

¹²¹ Beekman Letter-book, to Joseph Jackson, Aug. 17, 1761; to S. Fowler, Sept. 12, 1753; Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to J. W. Hoffman, Oct. 14, 1766; Cuyler Letter-book, to Wm. Tweedy, July 11, 1760; Gratz-Croghan Correspondence (Historical Society of Pennsylvania), Archibald Mercer to M. Gratz, June 12, 1771. The Van Rensselaer-Fort Collection in the New York Public Library has several examples of promissory notes all specifying the kind of money.

5%	on all bills on the colonies in North America,
10%	" " " " " West Indies,
20%	" " " " " Europe.

It was further recommended that the full amount of the bill with damages should be paid in money at the current exchange without regard to the exchange current at the time the bill was bought or sold.¹²²

A bill might be protested both for non-acceptance and for non-payment.¹²³ Protest for non-acceptance was made upon the drawee's refusal to accept the bill, and was ordinarily followed by one for non-payment at the expiration of the time. Although the first presaged the second, both were necessary to effect collection. "Mr. Gerard G. Beekman," wrote Ludlow to Moses Franks in London, "who Indors'd Mr. Thompson's Bills has satisfied me for the same and just informed me that Mr. Thompson Refuses to make him satisfaction as the Bills were only protested for none Acceptance and says that he expects they will be paid when the time is run out which is a matter of dispute . . . as you have not attended to the custom of merchants in sending me a protest for non-payment when the Bills were Expired Mr. Gerard G. Beekman says he will Sue me for the money back as he has paid it me in his own Wrong and unless you send me a proper protest its the opinion of the Merchants here that I shall be obliged to pay it . . . and in that case what Ever Damage I sustain Expect youll make it good as you have Neglected to Negotiate those Bills in a Regular Manner."¹²⁴

Not only in this, but in other details regarding the acceptance of bills, the English practice was followed. If the

¹²² Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, pp. 19-20, 24.

¹²³ Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to Samuel Purviance, Dec. 19, 1763; to Charles Cox, June 25, 1764; Ludlow Letter-book, to S. Touchet & Co., Dec. 14, 1754.

¹²⁴ Ludlow Letter-book, to Moses Franks, Jan. 9, 1758 and June 28, 1758.

drawee had some effects of the drawer in his hands, he might accept the bill in part, the remainder being protested. If a bill payable by a non-resident was not honored, protest was made before a notary public, and this document under the notary's hand was sufficient to offer in a court action; otherwise the original bill had to be introduced. In case an endorsed bill were protested the endorser paid the amount plus damages and himself sued the drawer for the money.¹²⁵

In modern business, bills of exchange are usually negotiated through a bank, but in New York before the Revolution there were no banks. The first commercial bank to be opened in the city, the Bank of New York, was not established until 1784. For that matter, the issuance of bank-notes was considered the chief function of a bank, and the term was used during the colonial period to denote a quantity of paper money.¹²⁶ This was shown not only by the "Land Bank" schemes but also by a plan for establishing a bank which was sent to Lord Dartmouth in 1773, in which the preamble announced that this bank was to take the place of the retired bills of credit "now forbidden by law."¹²⁷

The development of commercial banks was slow chiefly because the functions of banks were performed by the merchants for themselves. To some extent every important merchant was a private banker. Each of his customers had a bank deposit in the shape of the balance to his credit after the goods he ordered had been paid for. On this balance the customer might draw bills, the counterpart of modern checks, which the merchant would in turn honor. Through

¹²⁵ Cuyler Letter-book, to Elihu Lyman, Oct. 29, 1757; to Gamaliel Wallace, Oct. 22, 1753; Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to David Purviance, Dec. 19, 1763 and Jan. 13, 1764; Postlethwayt, *Dictionary of Commerce*, I, 5-8, article 'Acceptance.'

¹²⁶ Bullock, *Essays in the Monetary History of the United States*, p. 29.

¹²⁷ *Reports of the British Historical Mss. Commission*, "Dartmouth Mss.," XIV, part 10, 185.

the long credits extended and the advances made pending the sale of goods, the merchant virtually lent money. Some merchants advertised that they had sums available for loans on good security, but these were personal loans. There is no instance of any one receiving money to be loaned except as a personal agent.¹²⁸ Thus the functions of deposit and lending were to some extent performed. As for discount, there is no evidence to show that New York merchants discounted bills of exchange or promissory notes, and it is doubtful whether there was any demand for the service. If a merchant had a credit that he did not need, he probably sold the bill which he had the right to draw. Merchants also bought and sold bills of exchange which were not the outcome of their own trading,¹²⁹ but the greater part appear to have been drawn by New Yorkers on correspondents in England. Men like Charles Ward Apthorp, John Watts, Robert Crommelin and William Bayard had large credits in England and Amsterdam through trade and through their army contracts, on which they drew bills to sell to fellow-citizens who wished to make remittances abroad.¹³⁰

The New York merchant usually had his "bankers" abroad through the wholesale houses in England or Holland with whom he did business. The firm of Peach & Pierce in Bristol, for example, were private bankers as well as a wholesale dry-goods house. Such too, were David Barclay & Sons

¹²⁸ Adolph O. Eliason, *Rise of Commercial Banking Institutions in the United States* (Minneapolis, 1901), pp. 33, 41, 45, 47-48. John Coghill Knapp, a lawyer, advertised that he acted as such an agent and so did Anthony Bleeker, the auctioneer.

¹²⁹ Beekman Letter-book, to Messrs. Conyngham & Gardner, Oct. 23, 1752: "I could readily sell 6 or 8 hundred pounds in Bills at 30 or 40 days sight but must have them soon for they will be plenty here in three weeks time." Cf. Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 144. "Case of Lewis Johnston vs. Wm. Bayard."

¹³⁰ Cf. Ludlow Letter-book, and Cuyler Letter-book, *passim*.

of London and Clay, Midgely & Co. of Liverpool. Many of the London houses had begun to deal in securities, and John Watts not only ordered goods from Moses Franks and Lascelles & Maxwell but entrusted his investments to them also.¹⁸¹

The net result of the system of credit, advances, inadequate currency and lack of banks was to diminish the amount of ready cash at a merchant's call almost to the vanishing point. Spring shipments were barely paid for, or were still outstanding when fall goods came in and another remittance was due.¹⁸² Added to this, many merchants tied up their money still tighter by embarking on various investment projects. Considerable judgment was needed to juggle remittances, returns and investments successfully. Philip Cuyler failed because he put too much of the returns from his sales into privateers which did not bring in prizes.

One of the greatest problems, accordingly, of the colonial merchant was the collection of the money due him. Not only did he sell his goods on time, but he also advanced funds to his clients pending the sale of their cargoes; he ordered merchandise sent to him trusting that his own ventures would net sufficient to pay for them. The persistent debtor, therefore, found this necessary laxity of payment greatly to his advantage; certainly it enabled him to run up huge bills before a demand was made. In 1764 Van Cortlandt, for example, carried over into his new Journal 226 unpaid accounts of which twenty-two were for more than £100. Robert Tucker of Virginia, to whom he had entrusted the collection of his debts in that region, had died and

¹⁸¹ Beekman Letter-book, to David Barclay & Sons, *passim*; William Alexander Letters, I, 1760-1769, "Accot. with David Barclay & Sons." *Letter-book of John Watts*, pp. 8, 60, 342, 352, 142.

¹⁸² Bancker Journal, pp. 2, 8, 16; Cuyler Letter-book, to Wm. G. Beekman, Oct. 27, 1758.

the estate owed £1,021; of his two factors, Ruscoe Sweeny owed £483, and Abraham Maer £486, while a client, Phenix & Brown, had run up a bill of £901. In 1770 he carried over 296 such accounts of which thirty-two were for more than £100, including that of Sampson Simson for £1,549.¹³³

The scarcity of money added another valid reason, usually recognized by the creditor, for slow returns. "Unless a large sum of money," wrote Gerard Beekman to his brother David, "is struck in this and the neighboring governments we shall never get in our debts."¹³⁴ Similarly, William Bayard's agent at New Haven complained of "the Delays attending any Great Matter of remittance."¹³⁵ In view of the difficulty of getting either specie or bills of exchange, merchants were often willing to accept a cargo of some salable commodity, the goods being sold on commission and the proceeds applied to the debt.¹³⁶

The possible complications latent in this method of doing business are well illustrated by the relations between John Watts and Thomas Astin, a merchant of Essequibo, Guiana, the crisis of which lasted from January, 1762, to March, 1763. Astin apparently owed a considerable sum to Watts and to a friend and client of the latter in Barbados, Gedney Clarke. In December, 1761, Astin proposed to send a sloop to New London or New York, to sell the cargo, and from the proceeds to pay his debt to Clarke; then to reload the ship with a cargo suitable for a voyage to Guinea and send

¹³³ Van Cortlandt Journal C, pp. 1-5.

¹³⁴ Beekman Letter-Book, July 17, 1766.

¹³⁵ Bayard-Campbell-Pearsall Collection, B. Douglas to Wm. Bayard, April 3, 1765, New York Public Library.

¹³⁶ Beekman Letter-book, to S. Fowler, Dec. 29, 1763; Cuyler Letter-book, to Jonathan Jennings, March 26, 1760; Bayard-Campbell-Pearsall Collections, Ben Douglass to Bayard May 6, 1765; Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to Wm. Coventry, April 4, 1764 and to Abraham Maer, Jan. 19, 1764.

it back to Essequibo. From the returns of this second voyage Watts was to be paid, and a third venture fitted out for New York which was to bring some profits to the owner. How long Astin estimated the process would take is not indicated. What actually happened was that the ship, the sloop *Deborah*, proceeded according to orders first to New London, where it was stranded offshore and suffered considerable expense in getting clear. Finding no market there the vessel then proceeded to New York. The supercargo while in New London drew on Watts for the expenses of getting the ship towed off the bar, for the wages of the crew and the master, and for the "portage bill" or port charges. The master of the sloop, Captain Lowell, while at Newberry (Newbury?), drew on Messrs. Udney of London, for £480 by a credit of his owner with Messrs. Maxwell and Udney of Antigua, in order to make up the cargo for Guinea. Of this amount £250 was shortly returned protested, and Lowell was thrown into jail in an action of £600. Watts advanced him his expenses in prison on Astin's account since Lowell had acted on the latter's orders. While the captain of the *Deborah* was still in prison, a second sloop belonging to Mr. Astin, which had been driven into Curaçao by a storm, arrived in New York with a cargo of rum which Watts sold to pay off the protested £280. In the meantime Watts learned from Messrs. Maxwell & Udney that Astin did not have the credit he claimed with them, so the remaining £230 of Lowell's bill would also be protested. Further, he received a complaint from John Willcocks of Philadelphia that the £455 sterling bills with which Astin had paid for a ship, the *Charming Polly*, had come back protested. The project thus far had been more than a failure. Watts was already "in advance" for Astin £1,000 at the time the *Deborah* arrived, and had since then paid for the outfitting of the vessel, the supercargo's expenses while in New York,

the master's and crew's allowances in port, and the jail charges of Captain Lowell. Then disbursements, made in accordance with instructions, amounted to a further £500; in addition Astin now owed £900 and damages in his protested bills for which both Willcocks of Philadelphia and Colborn & Barrell of New Hampshire (who had endorsed the bill on Messrs. Udney) were about to demand satisfaction. Fearing that the *Deborah*, which was on the point of sailing, would be attached, Watts changed the destination of the sloop from Essequibo to Barbados, with the cargo consigned to Clarke. To secure his own debt, he took out a bottomry bill on the *Deborah* and took over the proceeds of the cargo of rum; but even by allowing credit so that the price might be a little greater, the net returns were not sufficient to reimburse him completely.¹²⁷

The usual procedure in collecting debts was first to dun the individual in arrears. If he evinced any willingness or ability to meet his obligations, the utmost indulgence was shown him. If, on the other hand, his standing was suspected or if he paid no attention to repeated demands or simply continued to make excuses, the creditor threatened to sue. Inquiries concerning a debtor's financial condition were made very quietly so as not to arouse general suspicion, for every creditor hoped to be able to collect his debts before the insolvency of the debtor became generally known.¹²⁸ Such a report was made by William Samuel Johnson from Stratford, Connecticut, to James McEvers.

I have known Mr. Kuler two or three years. He is a person of a very shrewd turn, of capacity enough but I apprehend not very much acquainted with Trade, and his character for

¹²⁷ *Letter-book of John Watts*, pp. 1, 11, 15, 32, 34-39, 42, 63, 108-9.

¹²⁸ Cuyler *Letter-book*, to Henry, July 26, 1759; Ludlow *Letter-book*, to Richard Law, Feb. 11, 1760.

Integrity I have very little opinion of. he is possessed of what you call New England Artifice, and sly cunning in great perfection. I have made all the Inquiry concerning his Circumstances that I could since I received your Letter but cannot yet learn anything particular.¹³⁹

Suits at law were tedious and expensive, and a man had to pay for his food while in prison. Under threat of suit, accordingly, the offender usually proposed some form of gradual payment, or offered some security for his debt such as a bond or mortgage.¹⁴⁰ A case in point may illustrate the practice. William Bayard of New York was owed a considerable sum by one Isaacs of New Haven. Pressed to make some payment, Isaacs first offered to assign the cargo of his ship, when it should come in, to Bayard, the latter to take in the profits, which might be much or little. Under threat of a lawsuit, he later agreed to give better security in the shape of a mortgage on his "House, Lot and Out-houses" redeemable in twelve months.¹⁴¹ Had he not done so, the next step would have been to sue, and, if possible, to attach whatever property could be found in the meantime.

If the debtor had no effects within the province, the merchant might attach the man's property either in the place of his residence or in any port to which his ships or cargoes might come. This is the well-known foreign attachment procedure which had evolved to meet just such contingencies from the medieval mercantile customs of the borough, notably the customs of the borough of London. The essence of the action is the ability of the creditor to attach the prop-

¹³⁹ *William Samuel Johnson Papers*, Connecticut Historical Society Mss.

¹⁴⁰ Ludlow Letter-book, to Samuel Johnson, Jan. 27, 1755; Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to Abraham Maer, Jan. 15, 1765; Beekman Letter-book, to Townsend White, Jan. 21, 1754; *Lloyd Papers*, II, 555-6, 561, 597.

¹⁴¹ Bayard-Campbell-Pearsall Collection, Douglas to Bayard, May 6 and April 3, 1765.

erty of the alleged debtor, wherever it could be found, without formal judgment in court. It was widely used in all the mercantile centers of England and, with certain modifications, throughout the American colonies.¹⁴² In this event, however, the merchant had to entrust the prosecution to someone on the spot. If he had an agent, the matter was simple; if not, he had to ask some other person to act for him.¹⁴³ Lawyers were occasionally employed. In Connecticut, for example, both Richard Law, the son of Governor Law, and William Samuel Johnson, the son of the first president of King's College, had charge of the collection of the debts of a number of prominent New York merchants, among them Beekman, Ludlow, Livingston & Alexander, Theophylact Bache, Robert Crommelin, and Greg, Cunningham & Co.¹⁴⁴ Ordinarily a power of attorney was sent to a private person, who was then authorized to pay and receive monies, sue, or transact any kind of business in the name of his principal. The merchant furnished his attorney with sworn accounts and copies of whatever relevant letters he might have received from the debtor in order that the latter might have no grounds for denying the debt.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Mary Bateson, *Borough Customs* (London, 1904-06). See also the treatment in W. Brandon, *Treatise on the Customary Law of Foreign Attachment and the Practice in the Mayor's Court in the City of London therein* (London, 1861) and the forthcoming second volume of *American Legal Records* by R. B. Morris, "Select Cases in the Mayor's Court of New York."

¹⁴³ Beekman Letter-book, to John Torrance, Feb. 9, 1761; to David Lewis, Feb. 5, 1753; to Wm. Beekman, April 13, 1763; Van Cortlandt Letter-book, to Abraham Maer, Jan. 15, 1765; to Robert Wallace, April 22, 1763; to John Taylor, Aug. 27, 1767; to Robert Tucker, March 20, 1766.

¹⁴⁴ Beekman Letter-book, to David Lewis, Feb. 5, 1753; Ludlow Letter-book, to Samuel Johnson, Jan. 27, 1755, and to Richard Law, Feb. 11, 1760. William Samuel Johnson Papers, Connecticut Historical Society.

¹⁴⁵ Ludlow Letter-book, to Richard Law, Feb. 11, and June 9, 1760.

Lack of specie, long credits and slow communication made the recalcitrant debtor a veritable thorn in the flesh, and the language used about such persons was by no means mild. "Chandler," exclaimed Gerard Beekman, "is the devil incarnate, for he every time starts some new evasion to put it off. I wish he had been in hell ten years ago, and I verily believe I would have saved some £10,000."¹⁴⁶

Distance, especially, increased difficulties. Merchants condemned particular localities roundly, but it was usually the district with which they traded most frequently and where they naturally had most to lose. Thus the choleric Beekman, who did most of his business in New England wrote: "I think 7/8 of the people I have credited in New England has proved to be d—d ungrateful cheating that I am now almost afraid to Trust any Connecticut man tho' he's well recommended from others."¹⁴⁷ In the same vein Van Cortlandt, who sent most of his sugar to Virginia, complained that the "long credit and many losses I meet with in Virginia is discouraging," and Watts found Curaçao "an infernal place for bad Debts" and Antigua "a place that protracts remittances unconscionably long."¹⁴⁸

If his creditors agreed to compound their claims a man unable to meet his obligations might go through bankruptcy, turning over his books and assigning all his property to receivers. The assignees were either a committee of his creditors, or some outside person or persons appointed by them or by the court, who held the property in trust for the creditors.¹⁴⁹ Until 1755 a person who owed less than £50

¹⁴⁶ Beekman Letter-book, to David, Mar. 8, 1766.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, to Samuel Johnson, Dec. 2, 1754.

¹⁴⁸ Van Cortlandt Letter-Book, to John Riddlehurst, Apr. 25, 1763; *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 215, 357.

¹⁴⁹ Livingston Waste Book, Sept. 10, 1767. *New York Mercury*, Aug. 19, 1754: Notice of the composition of the creditors of Henry Lane and

and had been imprisoned three months could obtain his release on presentation of a petition stating his willingness to assign his goods (except bedding, wearing apparel, and the tools of his trade to the value of £5) to his creditors, who were required to pay his gaol fees if they refused.¹⁸⁰ In 1755 an act of the Legislature provided that any prisoner willing so to assign his goods, and presenting a petition signed by those creditors who held three-quarters of his debts, might be released from gaol and go into bankruptcy even though the remaining creditors did not agree.¹⁸¹ Various supplementary acts to enable assignees to dispose more easily of debtors' effects were passed. It was provided that assignment should break entail except where the land reverted to the crown, thus empowering assignees to give valid title in fee simple to land. The insertion of saving clauses exempting mortgages from assignment was prohibited and persons who had received part of their debts were forbidden to become petitioners.¹⁸²

In 1761 the laws concerning bankruptcy were revised and embodied in a single act. Under this statute, an insolvent debtor, though he had not been imprisoned, might also go into bankruptcy on presentation of a petition signed by the

Isaac Latouche with a list of "trustees." The Account Books of John E. Pryor in the New York Historical Society are evidently those of his assignees as they contain a list of creditors, debts owed him, assets, results of the vendue of his effects, and the amount paid each creditor. Cf. Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Robert Tucker, Jan. 23, 1767, and Beekman Letter Book, to Henry Lloyd, Aug. 31, 1755.

¹⁸⁰ *Colonial Laws of New York* (5 vols., Albany, 1894), III, Sec. 903. Reenacted in 1751; reenacted and amplified in 1753 and 1756. *Ibid.*, III, chaps. 937 and 965; IV, ch. 1026. Repealed in 1761, *ibid.*, IV, ch. 1148, and included in the general act of that year. Similar laws were reenacted in 1770 and 1772. *Ibid.*, V, chs. 1463, 1480.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, III, 980.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, IV, ch. 998.

creditors holding three-quarters of his debts, and the whole estate was to be converted into money and divided within one and one-half years. Debts to the king were to be paid first, and then, in order, those to the colony, gaol charges, and creditors' claims *pro rata*.¹⁵⁸ The law expired in 1770 and was not reenacted, but seven special acts were passed in 1772, 1773, 1774 and 1775 extending its benefits to designated persons.¹⁵⁹

The provincial government did all it could to enable persons to recover their debts, although it did not provide for outlawry. Where it could be proven by witnesses and affidavits that persons with sufficient property to discharge their debts had secretly left the colony and, designing to defraud their creditors, had ordered their estates sold and outstanding debts collected and remitted to them, the judges of the Supreme Court were empowered to order the sheriff :“ to seize, attach, take and safely keep ” all property of such a person in the colony. Unless the debt were paid within three months after notice of the seizure had been inserted in the papers, the judge was to appoint three persons to sell the estate at public auction for the satisfaction of the creditors.¹⁶⁰ This procedure for absconding debtors was later allowed to be used to recover debts of persons living outside the colony but owning property within it.¹⁶¹ A supplementary law of 1761 empowered assignees to compel the wife of any debtor suspected of concealing assets to testify before a justice, and made any one of joint partners liable for the debts of the partnership.¹⁶² Creditors were also protected

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, IV, ch. 1148.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, V, chs. 1565, 1566, 1567, 1636, 1686, 1687, 1732.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, III, ch. 908. Supplemented in 1771, *ibid.*, V, ch. 1486.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, V, ch. 1731.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, IV, chs. 1160, 997.

against fraudulent devises in wills—that is, devises which were designed to prevent the disposal of lands to pay bonds and other “specialities” after death.

British creditors were protected by an Act of Parliament of 1732, which provided that plantation debts might be proven in England on oath before a chief magistrate by affidavit or affirmation. All real estate and inheritable property situated in the colonies belonging to any person indebted to a British subject were liable “in like manner as real estates are by law in England and shall be subject to like proceedings, remedies and process in any court of law or equity in any of such plantations.”¹⁸⁸

From this analysis it is clear that the methods of conducting business in provincial New York were patterned after those followed in England. The departures from English practice were slight and no doubt were due chiefly to local conditions and to the less advanced development of colonial trade, particularly in respect of specialization. Much the same situation existed in other colonial cities. The letter books of Philadelphia merchants, the business records of Henry Laurens of Charleston, or of Thomas Hancock and John Rowe of Boston, reveal the same practices and the same problems as are to be found in the commercial community of New York.

¹⁸⁸ 5 George II, ch. vii. *English Statutes at Large* (Pickering ed., Cambridge, 1765), xvi.

CHAPTER IV

THE MERCHANT INVESTS HIS SURPLUS EARNINGS

ALTHOUGH the capital investment of a New York merchant in the eighteenth century seems small when judged by modern standards, fortunes outran the capacity of business to employ them. The point seems to have been reached quite early when it was no longer advantageous for a man to reinvest his savings in his business. What did the merchant do with his surplus earnings? In the Loyalist petitions for compensation the largest sum any single person claimed to have invested in his mercantile house was £10,000, and most claimants kept the figure lower. The merchant preferred to have other irons in the fire, but unlike his modern counterpart his rods had to be watched somewhat more carefully. The opportunities for investment which were open to him were for the most part similar to those he would find today—that is to say bonds, mortgages, real estate, British government loans, industrial and mining enterprises. Yet here, too, are found the same differences which distinguished the organization of trade itself—the non-existence in the province of joint stock companies, and the predominance of individual personal relations. The first of these facts immediately rules out the corporate securities, both stocks and bonds, which form the bulk of modern investments, but other opportunities were to be found without difficulty. Government securities, real estate and mortgages were essentially the same in the eighteenth century as they are today. In lieu of holding industrial securities a man might become partner in a sugar refinery, a distillery, an iron bloomery; or he might

lend his money on bond to finance another person in a similar enterprise. Had he a speculative temper he might join with others in underwriting marine insurance. The speculative spirit, moreover, was one of the signs of the times, to be seen in the scramble for lands, in the prevalence of lotteries, and to some extent in the purchase of government stock issues. Perhaps the investments most preferred were those comprising personal financial engagements—bonds, notes, or mortgages, and real estate. Frequently a single individual, not necessarily possessing an important fortune, would be interested in several projects. Nearly all varieties of investment demanded at least a modicum of personal attention from the investor—not merely a daily scanning of the market quotations, but a considerable interest in the actual conduct of the enterprise.

Although there were no local stock issues in which New York merchants might invest their money, a few of the wealthier men with good English connections, such as John Watts and William Alexander, purchased English "stocks." Such investments, however, were very few and as a class are relatively unimportant.¹ These "stocks" were not issues of incorporated companies, but government securities corresponding to modern national bond issues, running, it should be noted, for an indefinite period without a set date for redemption. For instance in 1747, the British government, wishing to borrow £4,000,000 offered "stocks" which bore 4% interest. Such issues opened the way to speculation, since if the interest rate were considered too low in view of the state of the public credit, less than par (£100) was paid for each share and the government had to issue more stock. Thus, in 1747, £4,400,000 in stock was nominally issued, which made the actual interest rate on the

¹ Alexander Letters I, 1760-9. "Accot with David Barclay & Sons"; *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 8 and *passim*.

£4,000,000 collected $4\frac{1}{2}\%$.² Besides the greater interest there was always the prospect that the stock would rise to par. "I shall get something at last for my gaming in Stocks, I see," wrote John Watts to Moses Franks in 1762.³

Watts also had money invested in "the funds" and in the "India annuities," two other types of government securities. The first refers to the funded national debt owed to the Bank of England, consisting of three loans made in 1694, 1708 and 1742 amounting to £3,200,000. The Bank also administered other national debts—accumulated stock issues and loans—amounting to £27,839,144 which in 1751 were united and grouped in three classes—consolidated annuities, reduced annuities, and bank annuities, all bearing interest at 3%.⁴ It was in one of these three groups that Watts had the £1,350 which he bequeathed to his son Robert as "3% consolidated Bank annuities."⁵ William Alexander's "Bank stock" might have been either "funds" or annuities, probably "funds." These issues were never managed by the Exchequer but were floated through three agencies, the Bank of England, the South Sea Company, and the East India Company, of which the first two had been founded on similar loans to the government. With the exception of a small sum in the life or term annuities administered by the Exchequer, the whole national debt was in the hands of these companies, but in the latter half of the eighteenth century the policy was to pay back the South Sea Company and arrange new loans through the Bank. The East India Company held only about £4,200,000 which was converted into 3% annuities and paid over to the bank in 1793.⁶

² Eugen Phillipovich von Phillipsburg, *History of the Bank of England* (tr. C. Meredith, Washington, D. C., 1911), pp. 119-120.

³ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 101.

⁴ Phillipovich, *History of the Bank of England*, pp. 133-135.

⁵ *New York Genealogical & Biographical Record*, XXXVI, 116.

⁶ Phillipovich, *History of the Bank of England*, pp. 123, 125, 130, 136.

There were, however, certain obvious drawbacks to the possession of such investments, as Watts frequently observed. Distance made it impossible either to follow the market or to take advantage of its changes, and this necessitated dependence on others. "Forgive my awkwardness," he wrote to Lascelles, Clarke and Daling when commenting on a "minute" of his stocks "collected in one View," "I have allways trusted to the Ability of my friends. It concerned me little to enquire minutely into Transactions they could carry on better without my assistance." "I am persuaded you acted for me as you would have done for yourself," he assured Moses Franks. "Stocks are not an Object of our knowledge at this Distance, but at large and by the Gross." He thanked Sir William Baker, who had charge of a third block of stock, for some information and observed that "to secure the Principal on this Side the Water from depretiating [*sic*] will be the point, and a difficult point too." The vagaries of the market he found perplexing across the Atlantic. "Stocks this Peace have proved so heterogeneous that a body does not know what to say or think about them. What sympathetick feeling is there between them and a dead King of Poland? A Living King I could conceive might move and upset them in the Bargain." He detected, naturally enough with a state security, "a strange Sympathy between your Ministry and your stocks . . . a Devilish suspicious sort of Credit unstrings both." Considered, moreover, as an investment, the three per cent interest which was made uniform for all state securities after 1757 was thought "too slender for an Annual Crop"^a compared to the yield from local opportunities; for while money lent on bond to individuals at home, for instance, did not afford an opportunity to become wealthy through speculation, nor was it so solidly backed by the national credit, the interest rate was five, six and seven per cent.

^a *Letter-book of John Watts*, pp. 342, 352, 142.

^b *Ibid.*, p. 229.

A bond was at that time always a personal obligation, a transaction between individuals, and its nature had not changed appreciably since Antonio gave his bond to Shylock. The document stated the obligation with the penalty attached, expressly mentioning what money was to be paid and the limited time for the performance thereof, and was customarily phrased thus:

Know all men by 'these presents that we John Lloyd and Nathanael Hubbard, both of Stamford in Fairfield in the Colony of Connecticut are holden and Stand firmly Bound and obliged unto Mary Ver Planck of the City and Province of New York, Executrix to the last will and testament of Gulian Ver Planck deceased, in the full and just some of £200 lawfull money of the Province of New York, to be paid unto the said Mary Ver Planck, Her Heirs, Executors, administrators, or Assigns. To the which Payment well and Truly to be made we bind ourselves, our Heirs Each and every of them jointly and severally firmly by these Presents, sealed with our seals Dated the 18th day of August Anno Domini 1753.

The Condition of this present Obligation is such that if the above Bounden John Lloyd and Nathanael Hubbard, their or either of their Heirs, Executors, administrators or any one of them, shall and do well and truly pay or cause to be Paid unto the said Mary Ver Planck, Her Heirs, Executors, administrators or assigns, the full and just sum of £100 Lawful Money of the Province of New York with Lawfull Interest for same till paid on or before the 21 day of August Next, which will be in the Year of our Lord 1754, without Fraud, Coven or further delay, then the above written Obligation to be Void and of None Effect or else to be and abide and remain in full Force and Virtue.⁹

JOHN LLOYD
NATHANAEL HUBBARD

⁹ *Lloyd Papers*, II, 511-512. Cf. a bond dated Aug. 12, 1766 from Henry VanRenssalaer to Stephen Richard in the Van Renssalaer-Fort Collection I, and Postlethwayt, *Dictionary of Commerce*, I, article "Bond," 304-305.

The time limit was usually short; in this instance a year, but in the Van Rensselaer bond to Stephen Richard it was only six months. Other bonds might run for three or five years, or they might be renewed; but none, not even municipal bonds, were drawn to run ten, twenty or thirty years as are modern industrial or national bonds.¹⁰ In this the bonds resembled long-term notes. The interest was usually five or six per cent, though sometimes as high as seven. The security of such obligations was the credit of the debtor, and the cogency of the penalty, or larger sum for which he was bound if he failed to repay the loan with interest in the stated time. Other security was sometimes asked, frequently land in the province, in which case the document became properly speaking a mortgage bond,¹¹ but all forms of money lending were considered related and in the schedules of estates were usually lumped under the heading "Bonds, Notes and Mortgages."

This was a very popular form of investment, since it was almost the only one which combined mobility and security. Land speculation and manufactures tied up a man's money for a longer period, while marine insurance or lotteries, which afforded a quick turnover and unusual returns, were highly speculative. Individuals therefore advertised sums to be "let out at interest,"¹² and wealthy men seem to have had a large proportion of their fortunes invested in this fashion. Hugh Wallace held £20,000, amounting to nearly half his entire fortune, in bonds and notes. Others like Oliver

¹⁰ Cf. Van Cortlandt Ledger, 1770-1772, 44, Account of Jos. Stringam, and List of Bonds due John McEvers in 1752, in New Jersey Land Papers, "Partition of Secaucus Common," fol. 29 in New York Historical Society. G. W. Edwards, *New York as an Eighteenth Century Municipality*, pp. 201-203.

¹¹ Of course bonds were used then as now to ensure the performance of services or other desired conduct. Postlethwayt, *Dictionary of Commerce*, I, 304.

¹² *New York Mercury*, Jan. 10 and Mar. 21, 1763; April 4, 1768.

DeLancey, George Folliot and John Watts held from £17,000 to £21,000. Even a comparative newcomer like Samuel Hake, who arrived in 1766, claimed to have £21,776 of his rapidly accumulated fortune of more than £57,656 on loan to citizens of New York.¹³ From these heights the holdings declined to the £5,582 of Isaac Low, and the £3,000 of Henry White.¹⁴ In most instances the individual bonds were for small amounts, rarely over £500. James McEvers, for example, held sixty bonds of which only four were for over £200, while the aggregate totalled only £5,218.¹⁵ Scarcely any merchant could avoid having a small sum lent out on bond because of the practice of taking bonds in payment of accounts, either the debtor's own or one owed to him.¹⁶

Two forms of local government securities should be mentioned. The first is the municipal bonds authorized by the Common Council of New York City from 1750 to 1775 for extraordinary expenditures, such as building Coenties Slip, and later even to care for the normal salary list. Most of these bonds were bought by prominent merchants such as John Watts, Christopher Bancker, Oliver DeLancey and Henry Cruger. Drawn for short terms, they were usually renewed from time to time and bore five or six per cent interest.¹⁷ The second type of government bond is illustrated by the Treasury Notes of Massachusetts. The trea-

¹³ Loyalist Transcripts, XLII, 360; XLI, 165; XLV, 504-534; Watts Papers, "Schedule of Estate in 1781," N. Y. Hist. Soc. Loyalist Transcripts, XLI, 381-388. Sums are in New York currency unless sterling is specified.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, XLIII, 154; XLV, 148.

¹⁵ *New Jersey Land Papers*, "Partition of Secaucus Common," fol. 29.

¹⁶ Van Cortlandt Ledger, 1770-1772: p. 44 Account of Joseph Stringam; p. 132, Account of John Riddelhurst at Hampton, Virginia.

¹⁷ Edwards, *New York as an Eighteenth Century Municipality*, pp. 201-203; *Minutes of the Common Council*, V, 342, 371; VI, 90, 429.

surer of that province had frequently been empowered to issue these notes, after the currency of Massachusetts had been restricted to specie, in order to raise money to meet the exigencies of the French and Indian War. Governor Bernard explained to the Board of Trade that "the Security [for these loans] was an Obligatory note of the Treasurer wherein he promises to pay the Sum specified to the lender or his order at a certain day (within five years during the war and within two years since the peace) with interest at six per cent. When the note is once endorsed it becomes negotiable without further writing. . . . The Notes are not generally circulated. At present they are almost wholly in large Sums and kept as Securities."¹⁸ New York men seem to have considered these securities an excellent investment and an easily liquidated asset. Bills not payable for some time could be bought at a discount so as to yield seven per cent on the purchase price instead of the six per cent named on the face.¹⁹

Real estate, however, was always the favorite investment, as was quite natural in a new country. There were two kinds of holdings: those producing revenue, which may be considered investments, and speculative holdings, chiefly the unsettled country or the newly-laid-out townships, which were bought or procured with a view to selling at a profit rather than receiving an income. Merchants in general held both kinds, the proportion depending partly on the temper of the individual. From the point of view of income, the first group, although the nominal value of speculative holdings might be equally great, was by far the most important, and actually represented the greater wealth, since in many instances only a small fraction of the possible selling price

¹⁸ *Plantations General*: Vol. 21. Bills of Credit; Bundle S 88. Francis Bernard to the Board of Trade, Aug. 1, 1764.

¹⁹ *Lloyd Papers*, II, 562, 563, 569.

was paid in fees for grants. A prosperous business man seems to have bought first his house in the city, and then if possible his "store" or warehouse. Increasing in wealth, he branched out in various directions; he might buy three or four more houses in the city, or with his partners build a wharf; he might go farther north into the country, or across the river to New Jersey, or to Long Island, and buy a farm which served as country estate as well. Members of established families who might inherit land, such as John Van Cortlandt and Philip Livingston, had holdings in the city as large as £14,000 and £20,000.²⁰ Yet newcomers like Henry White could buy lots and build houses and stores worth £9,530,²¹ while those who married into old landed families usually received a handsome dowry in land with their wives. Beverly Robinson, who derived the whole of his landed property from his wife, Susannah Philipse, owned real estate which, although it included but one house and lot in New York City worth £2,500, aggregated 30,359 acres of settled lands valued at £91,077 and 29,595 acres of unsettled land valued at £22,196.²² On the other hand those who, like William Bayard and Oliver DeLancey, combined the advantages of inheritance with a keen interest in real estate, amassed enormous holdings of land in and around the city as well as elsewhere in the province.²³ William Bayard owned three three-story houses renting for £360 a year, five small houses, two store-houses and a pier for shipping, all valued at £17,000, in the city; a large farm at Kakiate,

²⁰ Facsimiles of Mss. in European Archives regarding America (ed. B. F. Stevens), in the New York Public Library, Vol. XII, "Estimates of Real Estates...belonging to Persons in actual Rebellion, 1778." Copied from Auckland Mss., Kings College, Cambridge.

²¹ *Loyalist Transcripts*, XLV, 147.

²² *Ibid.*, XLIII, 209-226.

²³ *Ibid.*, XLI, 107-164; XLII, 209-215.

Orange County; one at Hoboken and another at Weehawken; a fourth called "Casteel"; an estate at Greenwich and nine lots just outside the city, all of which he estimated were worth £56,166. His yearly income from all this property he calculated at £1,775 at least, besides which he had the proceeds from the timber cut from some of these properties and from a tract of 2,000 acres in New Jersey called Secaucus.²⁴

Rents were apparently steadily rising through this period. The rent roll of Beverly Robinson shows an increase from £319 in 1755 to £791 in 1768 and £1,257 in 1777, an aggrandizement made possible no doubt by the growth of population and the increased value of the land from continued improvement, but also managed by raising the rent with each change of tenant. Changing tenants also brought in another revenue since the newcomers had to pay fees on taking up their tenancies, a source which yielded to Robinson £1,599 between the years 1768 and 1777.²⁵ Less ambitious men, like Watts, were content to own two houses and some unimproved land in the city, a country estate on the Boston Post Road reaching to the East River, a few farms in Westchester and a few more in Albany county.²⁶

It is difficult to distinguish clearly between land which might be considered an investment and tracts held purely as speculative ventures. It is probable that in New York, at least, where the great semi-feudal estates had accustomed men to look forward to becoming landed proprietors, the intention was generally to develop a tenant-farmer system similar to that in England, and to that end holdings in the new grants were advertised for rent rather than for sale.

²⁴ Bayard-Campbell-Pearsall Collection, "William Bayard's statement of losses, 12 November, 1778."

²⁵ Loyalist Transcripts, XLIII, 241.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, XLVI, 434-437.

But it is also true that as settlers increased in the frontier districts, the value of the land increased and its sale became very profitable for the grantee. The land-grant system, furthermore, gave an initial speculative value to the land since only a small part of its selling value had to be paid in fees. The fees due from General Monckton for his 25,000 acres amounted to only £700.²⁷ For those, therefore, who could command or enlist the favor of the governor, real estate offered an attractive opportunity for profit. Reinforcing these obvious attractions was the speculative spirit which seemed to permeate every undertaking among all classes in England and the colonies—a condition to which New York was no exception. Speculation, however, was the game of the wealthy and influential. Merchants were heavily interested—not the small retailers, but people of importance such as the Livingstons, Provoosts, Van Cortlandts, Cuylers, Abeels, Schermerhorns, Lotts, or prominent English wholesalers such as Waddell Cunningham and members of the council such as Henry White and William Walton.

But by 1750 the opportunities for speculation in land near the city of New York were limited. The large manorial grants of the British government in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and the extravagant patents issued by the governors from Hunter to Cornbury in return for political support had tended to concentrate the most valuable territories in the hands of a few families.

In Westchester County the six manors of Morrisania, Fordham, Pelham, Scarsdale, Cortlandt and Philipseborough covered more than half the county, while a round million acres of Albany County were included in the Livingston and Van Rensselaer manors. In Dutchess County large tracts were owned by the Beekmans, Schuylers and Philipses, and in Long Island by the Remsens, Rapaljes, Nicolls and Smiths.

²⁷ *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 340.

On both sides of the Hudson in Orange, Ulster and Dutchess counties lay the enormous grants comprising the Waywayanda, Minisink, Great Hardenburg, Great and Little Nine Partners Patents, and north of Albany the Kayaderoseras claim.⁸⁸ Although as a rule even merchants who were related to manorial families held no part of the original grants, they had often inherited holdings in the great patents. Among the holders of the Waywayanda tract were John Van Cortlandt, Evert and Christopher Bancker, Leonard Lispenard and Richard Sharpe.⁸⁹ Oliver DeLancey, Richard Sharpe and the Banckers were part owners of the Minisink patent, and William Alexander, Peter Van Brugh Livingston, John Provoost and John Stevens of the Great Hardenburgh patent.⁹⁰ Upon the preemption of both banks of the Hudson by these great holdings, the speculators would naturally have turned to the west, but there the danger from both French and Indians was a great deterrent to expansion.

With the gradual removal of these threats a new era of speculation began in which the merchant was ready to take his full part. From the first prospects of peace, after the fall of Quebec and Montreal, petitions for grants from all sorts and conditions of people flooded the land office and prominent and wealthy merchants displayed the greatest avidity. Since the law forbade the governor to grant more than one thousand acres to each person, the speculators associated themselves with a number of other persons, many of whom were children or dependents rather than *bona fide* holders. Under this condition Oliver DeLancey, Garret

⁸⁸ For a full discussion of the land situation in the province see C. W. Spencer, "Land System of Colonial New York," in *Proceedings of New York State Hist. Ass'n*, 1917, 150-64.

⁸⁹ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Mr. Charles Clinton, Sept. 2, 1763; Evert Bancker, *Journal*, p. 1; *New York Mercury*, Jan. 25, 1762.

⁹⁰ *Loyalist Transcripts*, XLI, 131; Evert Bancker, *Journal*, p. 1; J. A. Stevens, "Colonial New York," p. 163.

Abeel and others requested a cool hundred thousand acres in what is now Washington County and another hundred thousand on both sides of the Mohawk River.⁸¹ The Mohawk, Susquehanna and Delaware Valleys attracted most interest at this period, and petitions for land in those quarters were filed by both Philip and Peter Van Brugh Livingston, John and Augustus Van Cortlandt, Telemon Cruger, Abraham Lott, and the four Waltons, William, Jacob, Thomas and Gerard.⁸²

Two measures of the home government, however, threatened to nip the new development in the bud. The first of these was the Proclamation of 1763, which prohibited expansion into the Finger Lake district and western New York, or into the Champlain region in the upper province; the second was the land bounty ranging from one thousand to five thousand acres, according to rank, offered to ex-soldiers in the late war. These measures were accompanied by lavish grants to settle obligations to individuals. There was much dissatisfaction with this policy of granting so lavishly to people "entirely ignorant of Husbandry and both unable and indisposed to improve their Property."⁸³ Even a friend of government like Watts felt that the provincial authorities might better have granted even more freely to their own friends and countrymen, who at least might have attempted to settle.⁸⁴ From the speculator's point of view this made no difference; for the army men immediately offered their holdings for sale for a little over a shilling an acre. But when ten sellers appeared to every buyer the

⁸¹ *Calendar of New York Colonial Mss. Indorsed Land Papers; in the office of the secretary of the state of New York, 1643-1803* (Albany, 1864), pp. 293, 294.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 256, 492, *passim*.

⁸³ *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 294.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

market became glutted.⁸⁸ Hence, although there continued to be considerable activity in buying soldiers' claims on the part of men able to risk their money on the "long pull" and to wait for more favorable selling conditions, interest in land lay chiefly in grants and patents—an interest which was rather encouraged than curbed by the governors since it lined their pockets more warmly.

Nevertheless, between the Indian reserve on the one hand and the extensive claims under the old large patents on the other, it was difficult to find good land in the province even for the reduced officers.⁸⁹ Unencumbered property had to be sought elsewhere, and Lieutenant Governor Colden now opened a new region by pressing New York's claim to Vermont and winning a favorable legal decision in England. Yet here again expansion was hampered by uncertainty as to the Crown's policy regarding the grants made by the governor of New Hampshire west of the Connecticut River. The practical difficulties encountered in establishing a claim are well illustrated in a letter of John Watts to his friend James Napier, who was petitioning for a grant.

I wish I could give you some good Account of your land. Sir William Johnson I have told you could give us no Assistance. We have employed an Albany surveyor to look toward New Hampshire but there we may be foiled again, for Donald Campbell tells us it is expected the Government at home will confirm all Mr. Wentworth's iniquitous Grants, if it does we shall probably be precluded from that Quarter [Vermont]. Another opening seemd to offer toward Crown Point and Otter Creek, but a French Man has put in his Claim there and the Board of Trade has forbid old Grey Head [Colden] to grant within his limits, which are very extensive and include Crown Point itself, one of the Objects of the War and yet the Claim is called

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 343.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 298, 307.

reasonable at Home. . . . Were we to pitch your Tent near Fort Edward as was once proposed you come both within the Indian and the Kayaderosseras Claim, a Patent so-called, the One would take your Scalp, the other your Estate in Law-Suits; both as bad as need be.³⁷

Under such circumstances, success in securing a patent depended on the favor of the administration, which during the greater part of this period meant Lieutenant Governor Colden. Colden, although a faithful servant of the Crown, appreciated both the addition to his salary from the fees and the power to reward his friends, and was therefore willing to ignore or evade his instructions in the matter of granting land.³⁸ As a result, most of the merchants who received grants were of the court party. "The trade in Lands here," wrote Watts to James Napier in April, 1765, "is a Nostrum in the Adm-n confined to his H-r and his friends who are making hay abundantly while the Sun shines, they have the whole Game in their hands."³⁹ In May, 1765, for example, Colden wrote to the Board of Trade that there were no more ungranted lands on the Mohawk River; yet five years later he made extensive grants in that region to influential merchants and members of the Council, among whom were William Walton, Henry White and Walter Franklin.⁴⁰

After the decision of the Privy Council in 1764, Colden made extensive grants west of the upper Connecticut to super-

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 317-18.

³⁸ Watts wrote to Monckton in 1764: "'Tis well we have been combating the old man about his thirst for granting or not an inch would have been left. . . . When an instruction starts that feeds his ambition & vanity, he is as tenacious as a girl of her virtue—But those against land, that is against his interest weigh about as much as an old Almanac." "Aspinwall Papers," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, 4th series, X, 538.

³⁹ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 342.

⁴⁰ *New York Col. Docs.*, VII, 742. *Documentary History of New York*, I, De Witt Map.

sede the patents given by Wentworth, granting in the six months from April, 1765 to the following November 36,000 acres to private persons and over 130,000 to military men, most of which immediately came into the hands of city speculators. Governor Moore, who came into office in 1766, was forbidden by an additional instruction of 1767 to issue patents for lands west of the Connecticut, and made therefore largely confirmatory grants. Although this restriction made little difference from his standpoint, since the fees were paid exactly as though these were new grants, the speculators were held in check. But in the thirteen months during which Colden again held office, between the death of Moore in September, 1769, and the arrival of Dunmore in October, 1770, the patenting of unoccupied lands went forward at a furious pace. The lieutenant governor evaded the prohibition with regard to Vermont by saying that the land he disposed of had not previously been granted by New Hampshire, and during this period he issued patents for 559,000 acres, among the patentees being Augustus Van Cortlandt, Lawrence Kortright, Nathaniel Marston and John Reade, both members of the Council, Jacobus Van Zandt, James Abeel, Alexander Wallace, brother of a Councillor, and Abraham Lott, formerly a merchant and now treasurer of the province.⁴¹ At the same time he granted a group of tracts in the Mohawk Valley as large as or larger than the Vermont townships to Augustus Provoost, Leonard Lispenard, William Walton, Walter Franklin, Lawrence Kortright and Henry White, all members of the court party.⁴² Both Dunmore and Tryon, who succeeded him, violated their instructions to the benefit both of the merchant speculators and of themselves. Be-

⁴¹ Hiland Hall, "New York Land Grants in Vermont," *Vermont Historical Society Collections*, I, 149-157.

⁴² *Documentary History of New York*, I, De Witt Map. Sauthier Map of Land Grants in New York, 1772. In the New York Public Library.

tween 1765 and June 26, 1771, 388,940 acres in Vermont had been granted to merchants outright, and there is no doubt that the military grants also tended to come into their hands.⁴³ Samuel Hake, for example, owned four townships.⁴⁴ Of the twenty-six proprietors of the seven towns of Socialboro, Halesboro, Newry, Richmond, Nelso, Monckton and Durham, fifteen or sixteen were merchants of prominence and usually of the court party.⁴⁵

Since permanent settlers were preferred to speculators the government at home protested against these large grants to associated proprietors, but the governors saw no harm in them. Tryon, indeed, went further and wrote to Hillsborough in 1772 that "I conceive it good policy to lodge large claims with gentlemen of weight and consideration. They will naturally farm out their land to Tenants, a method which will create subordination and counterpoise in some measure the general levelling spirit."⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the Board of Trade, perhaps realizing the danger of this practice and no doubt weary of these palpable evasions of their instructions, sent an additional instruction in February, 1774, directing that a survey of the province be made and a map

⁴³ Hall, "New York Land Grants in Vermont," *Vermont Historical Society Collections*, I, 149-157. Hall gives a list of patentees and the number of acres granted to each. This total is computed.

⁴⁴ Transcripts of Loyalist Claims, XLI, 375-393.

⁴⁵ They were: Charles McEvers, brother of the stamp collector, Hamilton Young, partner in Greg, Cunningham & Co., Theophylacte Bache, fifth president of the Chamber of Commerce, Henry Van Vleck, Theodorus Van Wyck, Isaac Roosevelt, Jacobus Van Zandt, William McAdam, James Phyn, of the Schenectady fur trading company of Phyn and Ellice, Adam Gilchrist, Samuel Deall, John Harris Cruger, who took his father's place on the Council, William Walton, a councillor, and his brothers Jacob and Gerard, Frederic DePeyster, and Garret Rapalje. "Controversy regarding the New Hampshire Grants," *Documentary History of New York*, IV, 773.

⁴⁶ *New York Col. Docs.*, VIII, 293.

prepared showing the unpatented lands, the latter districts to be divided into lots which should be sold at auction for at least sixpence sterling per acre.⁴⁷ The Revolution came hard on the heels of this new regulation before it had had time to work any improvement in the situation.

By 1772 patented land was selling at half a crown to 18d an acre, or even less.⁴⁸ Pelham wrote to his brother-in-law, John Singleton Copley, that no one would give sixpence an acre for lands that must be settled and cultivated.⁴⁹ "This is no time for the sale of land," Watts advised his son. "Advertisements for that purpose crowd one another out of the papers to no manner of Purpose, whole Regions are to be sold."⁵⁰ Where they were not offering tracts for sale, landholders were advertising for "forty or fifty families inclining to settle on good lands."⁵¹

Nor were the interests of New York merchants confined to their own province, for land was in some respects easier to procure elsewhere. The speculative fever had taken hold of the New England provinces as well, and land agents from that region came into New York and New Jersey selling township rights, in many cases spurious or appertaining to the superseded New Hampshire grants.⁵² Ezra Stiles reported that fifty dollars Spanish was the price of rights in the New Hampshire towns.⁵³ Land speculation swept over the older towns as well as the new. Charles Ward Apthorp

⁴⁷ *New York Col. Docs.*, VIII, 410-412.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, VIII, 293.

⁴⁹ *Copley-Pelham Letters*, p. 182.

⁵⁰ *Watts Papers*. To his son John, March 5, 1772. Cf. the advertisement of Hugh Wallace for 4,400 acres in Albany County of the Otsego patent in the *N. Y. Mercury*, July 8, 1771.

⁵¹ *N. J. Archives*, XXVII, 183.

⁵² Roy H. Akagi, *The Town Proprietors of the New England Colonies* (Philadelphia, 1924), p. 213.

⁵³ Ezra Stiles, *Itineraries*, p. 90.

of New York bought up thirty-six out of seventy rights in Lancaster, Massachusetts, between 1765 and 1770, and dominated the proprietors' meetings through his agents.⁵⁴ In other towns where speculation in real estate had been at a standstill for a generation, new interest was aroused by the movement to divide the town commons.⁵⁵ Oliver DeLancey bought a half proprietorship in New Jersey which entitled him to a forty-eighth interest in all the unsurveyed and unpatented lands in the province; and it is illustrative of the attitude of the wealthy speculator that he put through the Council of Proprietors a motion to survey all such lands "that they might have a view of the quantity belonging to the twenty four Proprietors . . . which was intended to put a stop to all future dividends and hinder advantage being taken in the future by Jobbing Holders of the shares of the Proprietors."⁵⁶

Little attention was paid to raw lands in the west and south. Peter Van Brugh Livingston petitioned through his son Philip, who had been secretary to Governor Moore, for a township in Florida.⁵⁷ But interest in the Ohio developments was not very great. George Croghan got part of his capital for the Vandalia project in New York through the Coldens and Goldsborough Banyar, but according to Lord Dunmore "men of wealth and land interest," who it may be supposed included merchants, generally opposed the Ohio colonization not only as impracticable, but more particularly as draining off the population which would otherwise settle

⁵⁴ Akagi, *Town Proprietors of the New England Colonies*, p. 215.

⁵⁵ E. g. the partition of Secaucus common. See N. J. Land Papers in the New York Historical Society, "Partition of Secaucus," fol. 74.

⁵⁶ Loyalist Transcripts, XLI, 164.

⁵⁷ Livingston Photostats, I, 136, July 11, 1773, in the New York Public Library.

in the east and pay the quit-rents, thus reducing the value of the lands eastward.⁸⁸

Finally, the land speculation fever also led to the revival of old claims, such as the Stirling claims to the Sagadahock territory in Maine granted by the Council of New England to the Earl of Stirling in 1635. In 1768, after William Alexander had assumed the title of Earl of Stirling, he revived this claim by proclamation, and printed advertisements in the newspapers offering to sell tracts of one thousand acres at £100 each on condition of actual settlement. The land was to be forfeited if the condition was not fulfilled, but the consideration money was to be returned with five per cent interest. As a matter of fact nothing came of this move, which was connected with Stirling's attempt to avoid bankruptcy.⁸⁹

Many merchants found opportunity for investment in manufacturing enterprises, an interest which was confined more closely to the merchant class than either real estate or securities, but which, even so, was a third choice at best. Manufactures were not highly developed in the provinces, and in New York less than in the other commercial colonies because the ease of transportation up and down the Hudson encouraged the exportation of agricultural products and the importation of British manufactured goods. There was a marked contrast in this respect with the more difficult overland transportation in Pennsylvania, for example, which fostered local self-sufficiency. Moreover, other conditions which hampered the development of large-scale manufactures in the provinces in general, that is to say, the scarcity of labor and the lack of banking facilities, operated in New York as well. Merchants, also, tended to confine their interests and their capital to enterprises which combined a

⁸⁸ *New York Col. Docs.*, VIII, 253.

⁸⁹ Akagi, *Town Proprietors of the New England Colonies*, pp. 230-231.

mercantile and a manufacturing interest, or to those which grew naturally out of their course of trade. Some men, for example the Waltons and Schermerhorns, maintained shipyards and ship chandlery.⁶⁰ Another, John Van Cortlandt, whose brig *Matty* plied a triangular course between Virginia, the West Indies and New York laden with wheat, muscovado and refined sugar on the respective laps, seeing the opportunity for a side-line in Virginia tobacco, erected a snuff mill just outside the city.⁶¹ The handicrafts reported by the governors—the manufacture of hemp, bricks, salt, glass, hats, shoes, silver and cutlery—being for home consumption only were left to the artisans. Such textiles, both woolen and linen, as were produced in the province were chiefly of household manufacture, except for the factories established during the reaction to the Stamp Act and the coincident depression of 1765 by the philanthropic Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Agriculture and Economy. The same society, for the same patriotic reasons, encouraged the manufacture of paper in the province, but this also failed to attract mercantile capital.⁶² Leather, which was a fairly considerable manufacture, was carried on wholly by tanners, although the “Swamp” where the tanneries were located was the property of Jacobus Roosevelt, a sugar manufacturer.⁶³ The chief pursuits in which industry and commerce were combined and which therefore attracted the attention of merchants were lumbering, as it was the only return from the unsettled lands and important in the West Indian

⁶⁰ M. A. Hamm, *Famous Families of New York*, p. 119; W. Barrett, *Old Merchants of New York*, I, 103-106.

⁶¹ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Philip Livingston, Dec. 15, 1768.

⁶² J. L. Bishop, *History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860* (Phila., 1864), I, 200-209.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 439-440. The “Swamp” was located at what is today Spruce and Vandewater Streets.

trade, the milling of flour, sugar refining, distilling and the smelting of iron.

Both lumber and flour mills were usually located close to the source of supply, and for this reason centered more around Albany and the Hudson Valley than in the city. But though these mills were characteristically a part of the manor or great estate (at least after the withdrawal of the metropolitan monopoly toward the end of the seventeenth century), merchants who saw the profits to be gained by combining these industries with their West Indian trade occasionally erected or bought mills both in the province and in New Jersey. The importation of wheat from Virginia and Maryland after 1750 also increased the demand for mills near the city. Thus while the mills at Rensselaerswyck and Claveraack supplied the Van Rensselaer and Livingston merchants in New York, William and Jacob Walton owned flour mills at Pembroke, some thirty miles up the Hudson, and Captain Samuel Bayard owned a sawmill near Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey.⁶⁴ In 1765 an enterprising merchant of New York, William Gilliland built a saw-mill and grist-mill at the falls of the Bouquet River, some distance above Ticonderoga, looking evidently toward Quebec rather than the Caribbean islands for his market.⁶⁵

The "mystery" of sugar refining was apparently introduced into New York City as early as 1689, when a refinery was built on Liberty Street, but the industry did not become important until after the first quarter of the eighteenth century. In 1725 one Hopper was granted a monopoly of refining sugar in the city, but the privilege must have been only temporary, for in 1729 the Bayards erected their sugar-

⁶⁴ Bishop, *History of Manufactures*, I, 105-108, 135. Stevens, *Colonial New York*, p. 66. *New Jersey Archives*, XX, 298.

⁶⁵ Bishop, *History of Manufactures*, I, 107. John Pell, "The Saga of Will Gilliland," *New York History*, XIII, 390-403.

house on Wall Street close to the City Hall.⁶⁶ By 1768 there were five other refineries in the city: John Van Cortlandt's sugar house on the northwest corner of Trinity Churchyard; Peter Livingston & Co. at Crown and Nassau Streets near the Presbyterian meeting-house; Henry Cuyler's sugar house at Rose and Duane Streets, built for his son, Barent Rynders Cuyler, and famous later as the Rhineland Sugar House; and the Roosevelt Sugar House near Cliff Street.⁶⁷ From the muscovado brought from the West Indies these establishments manufactured various grades of sugar known as single, middling and double-refined, powdered, lump—not cubes but shapeless bits—and loaf. To produce the last named variety refined liquid was poured into conical molds and allowed to crystallize.⁶⁸ Evidently the process of sugar refining was not very well understood by local "mechanics," for Van Cortlandt imported both his "boiler" and "upstairs-man" as well as his "moles" from England.⁶⁹

Brewing and distilling, as a side line to local or West Indian trade, were also carried on extensively and by the most substantial families. The Lisenards and Harisons were brewers and the Livingstons distillers.⁷⁰ Judging by the number of distilleries the manufacture of rum was almost as important an industry in New York as in Massachusetts. John Williams, the customs collector at the port, reported

⁶⁶ Paul L. Vogt, *Sugar Refining Industry in the U. S.* (Philadelphia, 1908), p. 6; O. G. Villard, "Early History of Wall Street," in *Historic New York* (New York, 1899).

⁶⁷ Stokes, *Iconography*, I, plate 34; IV, 662, 760, 790, 798; Barrett, *Old Merchants of New York*, I, 269-270.

⁶⁸ Van Cortlandt Ledgers I and II, *passim*.

⁶⁹ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Christopher Jacobson, Nov. 21, 1763; to John Badger, Feb. 22, 1766; to Davis, Strachan & Co., May 15, 1772.

⁷⁰ *New York Gazette* (Rivington), Dec. 1, 1774; J. A. Stevens, "Physical Evolution of New York City," *Am. Historical Mag.*, II, 33-34.

in 1767 that there were seventeen distilleries between Oyster Bay and Tarrytown, twelve of them in the city and three on the North River.¹¹

The manufacture of pig and bar iron was a fairly important industry in New York and New Jersey, and in fact, during the decade of 1760 to 1770 experienced a small "boom" due in part to the market for iron furnished by its addition to the list of enumerated commodities but probably in greater part to the speculative spirit characteristic of the times. A number of mines were opened, particularly in New Jersey, which attracted the interest of a number of New York merchants. William Alexander, Lord Stirling, for example, retired from trade, and between 1767 and 1771 apparently invested a large proportion of his fortune in the Hibernia mines.¹²

The existence of a number of iron deposits in New York had been known since the days of the Dutch, but curiously enough the first permanent iron works to be established did not use ore from the provincial mines but imported it from Salisbury, Connecticut. This establishment, the Ancram Iron Works, owned by the Livingstons and situated near the manor of Claverack, comprised a blast furnace and forge. Until after 1750 it was the only furnace working in the province, although several shortlived bloomeries had been started, and two furnaces had been set up on Van Cortlandt Manor only to shut down after a brief existence. Governor DeLancey reported in 1757 that during the previous six years the Ancram works had produced 2,016 tons of pig and 1,302 tons of bar iron, and merchants advised

¹¹ Treasury Papers I: 505, Report of Mr. Williams on the Illicit Trade of New York.

¹² Charles S. Boyer, *Early Forges and Furnaces in New Jersey* (Philadelphia, 1931), p. 92. On this topic cf. A. C. Bining, *British Regulation of the Colonial Iron Industry* (Philadelphia, 1933).

their clients that the product was of such excellent quality that it was all promised before it reached the market.¹³ In 1751 the exploitation of the deposits in Orange County began with the building of the Sterling Works by Ward and Colton, and a certain Abel Nobel erected an anchor forge in the same vicinity. The Sterling Works later fell into the exceptionally competent hands of Peter Townsend, who erected a second furnace and continued to work the "Long Mine" systematically until the Revolution.¹⁴ None of these men, however, was primarily or even secondarily a merchant. The only establishment in New York which was owned or operated by merchants was the New York Air Furnace Company, established in 1767 by Peter T. Curtenius and Gilbert Forbes, merchants of hardware and ironmongery. Two others, Richard Sharpe, an insurance broker and commission merchant, and Thomas Randall, later joined the firm, undoubtedly as silent partners. Something of the patriotism of the Stamp Act agitation seems to linger in their advertisement that they hope the public will give the "preference to what is *American-made* especially when the price is full as low as any can be afforded for that imported from Europe."¹⁵

Several New York merchants were interested in the mines of northern New Jersey, sometimes as part owners, at others as agents for the sale of the products of the forges or bloomeries. As New York was the only outlet for their pig or bar iron, most of the mine owners found it advantageous to have an agent who would market the output. Usually this

¹³ *Doc. Hist. of New York*, I, 731; John B. Pearse, *Concise History of Iron Manufacture in the Am. Colonies up to the Revolution, and of Pennsylvania until the present time* (Philadelphia, 1876), pp. 44-46; Beckman Letter Book, to Samuel Fowler, July 6, 1761.

¹⁴ Pearse, *Concise Hist. of Iron Manufacture*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁵ *New York Mercury*, Aug. 24, 1767.

was arranged by an agreement in which the agent secured a monopoly of the output of a particular mine. Such an agreement evidently existed between Nicholas Gouverneur, merchant of New York, and the Ogdens who were undoubtedly the foremost mine owners of northern Jersey before the advent of Peter Hasenclever. A similar arrangement was offered by Lord Stirling.¹⁶ In other cases no evidence of definite agreements exists. John Abeel, Garret Abeel, and Evert Byvanck advertised domestic iron for sale; And-over pig and bar iron was sold in New York by John Blanchard and by James & Alexander Stewart in 1773; but whether they acted as agents or whether they bought the iron in the open market does not appear.¹⁷ The Mount Hope pig iron advertised in 1774 by Peter Keteltas and his partner, Jacobus Van Zandt, may have been the product of a mine which Keteltas had owned in company with Dirck Brinckerhoff in 1764 and had sold in 1771 to Jeston Homfray.¹⁸

In many instances, however, the selling agents were part owners of the mine. The Vesuvius furnace is an example of this type of interest. Located near Newark it was operated by the Ogdens, father and son, and owned by them in company with James Abeel and Edward Laight. Both Abeel and Laight were hardware merchants in the city, and became by virtue of their partnership with the Ogdens sole distributors of the products. The initiative was also taken by the merchant occasionally. Two enterprising young English merchants, Perry and Hayes, who had established a wholesale house in New York City, purchased soon after

¹⁶ Boyer, *Early Forges and Furnaces in New Jersey*, pp. 17, 18, 92.

¹⁷ *New York Mercury*, Oct. 17, 1768; L. H. Weeks, *Prominent Families of New York* (New York, 1898), p. 9; Boyer, *Early Forges and Furnaces in New Jersey*, p. 28.

¹⁸ Boyer, *Early Forges and Furnaces in New Jersey*, p. 212.

their arrival a mine called "Spotswood" near Pankridge, New Jersey, and in company with one Peter Corne established forges and the "proper works for carrying on Iron Manufacture" which they valued at £7,219.6.9½ sterling.⁷⁹ When a merchant who invested in iron mines did not have partners who attended to the manufacture of the iron, he usually hired a manager. Such was the arrangement of Garret Rapalje who bought the Brooklyn Forge on Musconetcong Creek near Lake Hopatcong in 1764 and in 1768 leased it to Joseph and John Tuttle for five years at £300 a year, all the iron to be delivered at market prices to the lessor.⁸⁰

The outstanding ironmaster of the period, Peter Hasenclever, arrived from England about 1760. He established four furnaces in New Jersey—at Ringwood, Charlottenburg, Longpond and Pompton—a fifth in New York near the Sterling Iron Works, and inaugurated the most thoroughly systematic exploitation of the mines in practice in the district. His capital, however, was furnished by English speculators, and he never attempted to combine trading with his mining. This was left for William Hawkshurst, who had been a partner of Abel Nobel, and who in May, 1761, erected a "finery" and tilt hammer for refining Sterling pig iron and for making anchors up to 1,000 pounds. At the same time he continued his store in New York, where he made a specialty of supplying country tradesmen.⁸¹

Should manufactures or land fail to interest the merchant with surplus capital, or should he have but a small sum to invest on which he wanted a quick profit, there remained

⁷⁹ Pearse, *Concise History of Iron Manufacture*, p. 71; *Loyalist Transcripts*, XLIV, 495.

⁸⁰ Boyer, *Early Forges and Furnaces in New Jersey*, p. 46.

⁸¹ Bishop, *History of Manufactures*, I, 531; *New York Mercury*, Nov. 17, 1760.

marine insurance. Like all investments with a high return, the speculative element was outstanding, for although to the extent that a man placed his money according to his judgment and experience insurance was an investment, to the extent that he risked it on wind and weather, ships and men it was a pure gamble. Yet to the eighteenth century marine insurance held no more risks than any other investment. "It is deserving," wrote a contemporary commentator, "of the highest attention as a source most fruitful of *private Speculation* and *public Benefit*; And is so far from being justly reproachable as a Plan of Gaming that it removes the Business of the Merchant from that of the State and greatly reduces the Risk upon the whole, dissipating it in such a manner as to leave even the Insurer himself liable to little Hazard."²² Many merchants, therefore, such as James Jauncey, Walter Franklin, the Crugers and the Waltons, considered marine insurance a related branch of mercantile business, and apparently kept a certain amount of money always engaged in it.

The speculative element of marine insurance lay not only in its nature but in its organization, for like all other business enterprise the burden of the undertaking was borne by the individual. It is true that the risk was "dissipated," since the prevailing practice was for five, ten or more merchants to be associated in each venture. Few put more than £200 on a single bottom or cargo and frequently the contribution was as little as £50. The establishment of incorporated companies, with wider distribution of risk and concentration of responsibility, was impossible because the London Assurance and the Royal Exchange Assurance had been granted monopolies in their charters. Nevertheless, both in the colonies and in England informal groups of merchants continued to insure vessels, each being responsible for his own proportion of the

²² Corbyn Morris, *Essay on Insurance*, p. 2.

risk. In New York, it is true, two so-called companies were operating in 1759—the Old Insurance Office at the Coffee House, and the New York (popularly the “new”) Insurance Office “at the home of the Widow Smith adjoining the Merchant’s Coffee House.”⁸³ These offices, however, were, as the name indicates, simply convenient meeting-places where the rich and adventurous might meet with shippers and owners to underwrite risks in full or in part at rates agreed upon between them. “Attendance was given” at the Old Insurance Office from twelve to one o’clock and from six to eight by Garret Keteltas and Richard Sharpe, clerks, both young merchants, while the New Office established by Anthony Van Dam, also a merchant and later secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, overbid its rival by one hour, advertising that the office was open from eleven to one and from six to eight.⁸⁴ All three of the persons named apparently carried on their regular mercantile business while conducting the offices as side lines. The clerks probably engrossed the policies or filled in the printed forms, and under some circumstances may have received a broker’s fee; but in spite of their claim that “all risks are underwrote at very modest premiums,” it is improbable they had much to do with making rates or deciding what risks should be accepted. They probably acted chiefly as brokers arranging “a meeting of the minds” between the underwriters and the insured; but since merchants of the time spoke of the Old and New Offices as offering certain rates, it may be that they advised their clients what terms to propose, in which advice competition played its part.⁸⁵ “Through the jealousy of the

⁸³ *New York Mercury*, Nov. 5, 1759 and Aug. 27, 1759.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; J. A. Stevens, “Colonial New York,” p. 105.

⁸⁵ Beckman Letter Book, to Richards & Coddington, June 30, 1760; to Solomon Townsend, Apr. 20, 1762.

Different Offices," wrote Beekman to the Malbones, "I have obtained the Insurance you ordered, say £800." ⁸⁶

Insurance was written in New York for merchants in other colonies, particularly Rhode Island.⁸⁷ On the other hand the New York merchant himself, if dissatisfied with the rates at home, insured his ship or cargo in Philadelphia,⁸⁸ while both ships and cargoes were also insured in England and Holland, particularly if proceeding thither or coming thence.⁸⁹

Rates depended, naturally, upon the nature and hazard of the voyage, but in the decade of peace before 1775 they did not vary much for the stereotyped voyages. Between New York and London the regular premium was two to three per cent (though Robert Murray offered one and one-half per cent in 1764 as a special bargain), or five per cent for the round trip.⁹⁰ To the West Indies the usual rates were four or four and one-half per cent, and to coast ports one and one-quarter to two per cent one way, depending on the distance, or three and one-half per cent for the round trip. To Africa and back via the West Indies, the rate was eight or nine per cent. A long trading voyage called for a larger premium; the Waltons asked 7% for a ship proceeding from New York to Quebec, the "Streights," the Canaries and New York, and 9% for the Brig *Joseph* going from New York

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, to Evan and Fra. Malbone, August 16, 1762.

⁸⁷ Beekman Letter Book, to Thomas Freebody, Jan. 25, 1758, and *passim*; William B. Weeden, "Early African Slave Trade in New England," *Amer. Antiq. Soc. Proc.*, n. s., V, 118.

⁸⁸ Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, Feb. 26, 1759, and *passim*; *Letter-book of John Watts*, to Carter, Jan. 2, 1762.

⁸⁹ Beekman Letter Book, to Adair Jackson, Dec. 21, 1752; Ludlow Letter Book, to Daniel Crommelin, July 16, 1757; Livingston Waste Book, Jan. 14, 1768.

⁹⁰ Walton Insurance Book, 1773 *passim*; Philip Cuyler Account Book, p. 16; *New York Mercury*, Apr. 2, 1764. "For London the Ship Beulah."

to Jamaica, to Georgia, to Jamaica and New York.⁸¹ The same conditions held true where the description of the voyage was vague, but not where the vessel or master was not named. Thus the premium was 6% on a vessel going from Newport to any port or ports and back, and 10% for insurance for twelve months on the schooner *Constant* to sail from New York with no specified destination.⁸² Cargoes arriving from Madeira or Dublin on "any Vessel and Master" called, strangely, for only 2% premium.⁸³

During the French and Indian War, with the risk of capture very great, insurance rates rose as high as fifteen guineas per cent to London and 20% to the West Indies, or 50% for a round trip. If the ship were well armed and manned the premium might be lowered, and English policies very frequently provided for a return of 3% if the ship had a convoy through the Channel and 5% if to North America, or 2 to 3% if it sailed with a convoy and went "north about" via the Orkneys.⁸⁴

Many policies named two ports as the destination of the ship, an abatement being made if the vessel did not proceed to the second.⁸⁵ It was possible also to withdraw the policy entirely if the voyage were changed or the ship failed to sail, the premium then being refunded save for one-half per cent "for the trouble."⁸⁶ Where insurance was placed after the ship had sailed, usually because it was overdue, a

⁸¹ Walton Insurance Book, 1773 *passim*.

⁸² Beekman Letter Book, to S. Fowler, Oct. 24, 1765; Walton Insurance Book, 1773, June 23.

⁸³ Walton Insurance Book, May 4, and Aug. 3, 1773.

⁸⁴ Ludlow Invoice Book, Kilby, Barnard & Parker, Feb. 1757; Peach & Pierce, May 10, 1757 and Aug. 25, 1757; Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, Feb. 9, 1758.

⁸⁵ *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 140.

⁸⁶ Cayler Letter Book to John Tweedy, June 19, 1758; *Letter-book of John Watts*, pp. 1, 37.

clause might be inserted in the policy providing for a rebate in case the vessel should arrive soon enough to make the risk negligible. On the other hand, if such a clause were not inserted, even should it arrive within twenty-four hours no return of premium was allowed.⁹⁷ The practice of insuring a vessel after it had been out some time was fairly common, but was, of course, a greater risk to the underwriter, who accordingly, demanded heavy premiums. "I try'd what our Underwriters would have on the *Ranger*, most of whom will not fix any premium as they say she is a missing Vessel and those that do will not take her under 25-30%." ⁹⁸ Beekman could insure Townsend's ship, unreported and under an unlucky master, only for £200 at 60% "out and out" with no return of premium in case of early arrival,⁹⁹ while Thomas Riche of Philadelphia could get no insurance whatever for Francis Lewis' snow *Hester*, forty-six days out and not heard from.¹⁰⁰

Both the wording of the policy, and for the most part the practice regarding interpretation and payment of losses, followed English precedents.¹⁰¹ A Boston policy which may be considered typical read as follows:

"In the Name of God, Amen. Arthur Fenner of Providence in New England as well in his own Name, as for and in the Name and Names of all and every other Person or Persons to whom the same doth, may or shall appertain, in Part or in all doth make Assurance and causeth himself and them, and every of them to be insured, lost or not lost, the Sum of One Thousand Pounds Old Tenor, at and from Surinam to Providence aforesd.

⁹⁷ Cuyler Letter Book, to John Tweedy, July 12, 1758.

⁹⁸ Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, June 9, 1757; cf. same to same Jan. 4, 1759.

⁹⁹ Beekman Letter Book, to S. Townsend, April 20, 1762.

¹⁰⁰ *N. Y. Pub. Lib. Bull.*, II, 314.

¹⁰¹ Beekman Letter Book, to Joseph Jackson, Oct. 19, 1761.

upon any kind of goods and merchandize and also upon the body tackle apparrell Ordnance munitions artillery, boat and other furniture of and in the good Brigantine Providence, whereof is Master under God for this present Voyage, Jonothan Sheldon or whosoever else shall go for Master in the said Vessell or by whatsoever other Name or Names the said Vessell or Master thereof is or shall be named or called: beginning the Adventure upon said goods and merchandize¹⁰² from loading thereof on board said Briga. and So shall Continue and endure during sd. Voyage upon sd. Vessell etc. and further 'until She Shall be arrived and moored at anchor there twenty-four hours in good Safety, and it shall be lawful for the Vessell, etc. in this Voyage to proceed and sail to, and touch and stay at any Ports or Places whatsoever, without Prejudice to this Insurance, touching the Adventurers and Perils which we the Assurers are contented to Bear, and do take upon us in this Voyage; they are of the Seas Men of War, Fire, Enemies, Pirates, Rovers, Thieves, Jettizons, Letters of Mart and Counter-Mart, Surprizals, Takings at sea, Arrests, Restraints and Detainments of all Kings, Princes and People, of what nation, Condition or Quality soever; Barratry of Master and Marriners, and of all other Perils, Losses and Misfortunes of the Said "goods and Vessell etc" or any Part thereof. And in that Case of an Average Loss not exceeding Five Pounds per Cent¹⁰³ the Assurers by Agreement with the Assured, are not to pay or allow anything toward such Loss, and in case of any Loss the Money to be paid in *thirty* Days after Proof of the same. And it is agreed by us the Insurers, that this Writing or Policy of Assurance shall be of as much Force and Effect as the surest Writing or Policy of Assurance heretofore made in *Lombard Street* or in the *Royal Exchange* or elsewhere in *LONDON*. And so we the Assurers are contented, and do hereby promise and bind ourselves, each one for his own Part, our Heirs,

¹⁰² In the policy given in Postlethwayt's *Dictionary of Commerce*, I, p. 136, the enumeration of the goods laden follows at this point.

¹⁰³ In Postlethwayt £3 per cent.

Executors and Goods, to the Assureds, their Executors, Administrators, and Assigns, for the true Performance of the Premises, confessing ourselves paid the Consideration due unto us for this Assurance by the Assureds at the rate of fourteen Pounds per Cent. And in Case any Dispute arising hereupon, the Matter in Controversy shall be submitted to and decided by, Referrees chosen by each Party.

In Witness whereof, we the Assurers have subscribed our Names and Sums Assured in BOSTON in NEW ENGLAND June 4, 1745.

£200 Thos. Gunter for Two Hundred Pounds.

£200 Thomas Hancock for Two Hundred Pounds.

£200 John Gooch for Two Hundred Pounds.

£200 Isaac Winslow for Two Hundred Pounds.

£200 Thomas Hutchinson for Two Hundred Pounds.¹⁰⁴

The phrase "at and from," in the policy made the insurers liable for damages to the ship and cargo during the period the vessel stayed in harbor after the cargo was on board, the risk continuing according to the terms of the policy until the vessel had arrived and been moored at its destination twenty-four hours.¹⁰⁵ Nearly all policies included a phrase giving the ship "leave to touch," as it is noted in the Walton Insurance book, at any port or ports whatsoever, but according to English practice this did not include cases where the master deliberately and with the full consent of the owners stopped at a place which would have increased the premium. Any damages resulting from such a procedure must be borne by the owners.¹⁰⁶ Some attempt seems to have been made occasionally to lower the premium by agreeing to lessen the risks taken on by the insurers. John Waddell, for example,

¹⁰⁴ New York Public Library, Mercantile Miscellaneous Mss., Marine Insurance folder. Photostat printed from George L. Shepley Collection.

¹⁰⁵ Nicholas Magens, *Essay on Insurances* (London, 1755), p. 45.

¹⁰⁶ Magens, *Insurances*, I, 49.

suggested that an abatement might be made for underwriting the "dangers of captains" only, but the Philadelphia insurers quite naturally refused that as "subject to too many disputes." In 1762 the New York underwriters added a clause to policies of ships going to the West Indies, agreeing to accept "all risks except English customs house officers," a reflection of the extent of the illicit trade with the French islands and the attempts of the military commanders to stop it.¹⁰⁷

Losses were defined as "total," that is where the ship or cargo were destroyed either completely or so far as to be useless, and "average" or partial losses. "Average" losses were further divided into "general averages,"—losses incurred for the common good and security of the vessel, such as goods thrown overboard to lighten ship, the expenses of entering a forced harbor, ransom, or rigging cut away in a storm—and "particular averages" or those caused by a peril insured against. The loss in a "general average" was divided among the shippers and the ship owners in proportion to their several interests, whereas the loss in a "particular average" was "particular" to the owner of the article involved.¹⁰⁸ In both cases the insurer paid according to the terms of the policy. "General averages" were paid in full, but particular averages were not paid unless they amounted to 5% of the value of the cargo, according to American policies, or 3% according to English usage.¹⁰⁹ In particular averages on the ship, the insurers paid two-thirds of the reasonable cost of repairs, allowing one-third for replace-

¹⁰⁷ Beekman Letter Book, to Christopher Champlin, Jan. 25, 1762.

¹⁰⁸ Postlethwayt, *Dictionary of Commerce*, I, 154; Magens, *Insurances*, I, 35, 36.

¹⁰⁹ Wharton Letter Book, to G. G. Beekman, March 10, 1757. In modern American policies averages on the cargo must amount to 5% but those on hulls to 3% only. Solomon S. Huebner, *Marine Insurance* (New York and London, 1920), pp. 220, 232.

ment of old for new—a practice no longer adhered to since the advent of steel ships.¹¹⁰ Certain perishable goods, however, such as grain and fish, were “warranted free from all average” and therefore no claim could be put in for damages to them.¹¹¹ Although goods might sustain a particular average due to a peril not insured against, in that event the damage had to be borne by the owner alone and the underwriters were not liable. Nor were they liable for damages to the cargo caused by bad stowage, deficiency in the calking of the deck or the seaworthiness of the vessel, or defective packing by the shipper. “The insurers . . . makes several objections to paying your demands,” reported Beekman to Evan and Francis Malbone of Newport. “They say the mast was defective before the gale and probably so before the vessel left Surinam and therefore the damage might have happened in any case, and that the 44 gallons of molasses wanting from the ship’s cargo is due to leakage. They offer to pay one-half the premium.”¹¹² Nor were they liable where the vessel was unseaworthy before leaving port. “By the custom of Insurers at home as well as in this place they are in no wise liable to pay any part of those Charges that the Owner of the Vessel must be at that Expense to enable her to carry the goods to her Delivering port and entitle him to Freight. However . . . had a mast or bowsprit been cut away and any of the topsails or rigging lost for the preservation of the Vessel or Cargo—in that Case and only they say, that the whole must be

¹¹⁰ Beekman Letter Book, to S. Townsend, May 1, 1762. Huebner, *Marine Insurance*, pp. 92, 124.

¹¹¹ In modern practice such articles, including furniture, are still free from all average, while in other classes the percentage below which no loss will be paid is raised, for instance to 20% for hemp and tobacco, 10% for coffee and pepper and 7% for sugar, flax and flax-seed. Huebner, *op. cit.* 233.

¹¹² Beekman Letter Book, May 7, 1761.

furnished with new, and they to pay two-thirds of the amount."¹¹³

In order to recover damages from the underwriters it was necessary to submit "proof of loss," which consisted of the protest—that is, a declaration of the master on oath before a justice, notary or consul setting forth the causes of the accident, such as bad weather, and the precautions taken—and evidence of interest as shown either by bills of lading in the case of goods, or a bill of sale or customs house register in the case of ships.¹¹⁴ Where a man had valued his cargo or share of a vessel in the policy, that value was used as the basis of computation of damages, and in the event of an average loss Philadelphia required no further proof of interest, although it demanded the usual documents in a total loss.¹¹⁵ Where a policy was unvalued, the basis for calculation was the worth of the vessel or cargo at the time of sailing plus the insurance charges.¹¹⁶ During the war with France the ransom on a captured ship plus the expense of a hostage was divided among the insurers of the freight, cargo and ship in proportion to their several interests.

In particular averages the loss was often determined by subtracting the actual selling price from the amount insured, or the underwriters might choose to settle on the basis of a total loss, having the damaged goods sold for themselves, either privately or more often at auction, with a view to reimbursing themselves from the proceeds.¹¹⁷ The modern

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, May 1, 1762; cf. Magens, *Insurances*, I, 50-52.

¹¹⁴ Magens, *Insurances*, I, 87; Beekman Letter Book, to J. Jackson, Oct. 19, 1761; Feb. 1, 1762; Cuyler Letter Book, to David Franks, Aug. 14, 1758; *Letter-book of John Watts*, to Joseph Maynard, p. 81; Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, Feb. 26, 1759.

¹¹⁵ Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, Sept. 13, 1758.

¹¹⁶ Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, Feb. 26, 1759; Magens, *Insurances*, I, 37; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, XIV, 901.

¹¹⁷ Wharton Letter Book, to G. G. Beekman, June 6, 1757; Beekman Letter Book, to John Marsden, Jan. 15, 1760; W. & R. Livingston Waste Book, Oct. 13, 1767; Templeton & Stewart Receipt Book, *passim*.

practice is precisely the same. It was the custom both here and in England for the insurers to pay £98 for every £100 in case of loss, less in addition one-half per cent for clerks and brokers; and no losses were paid until three months after proof of loss was submitted except for an additional discount of $2\frac{1}{2}\%$.¹¹⁸ In the event of a dispute it was usual to submit the matter to arbitration by "indifferent" judges, from whose decision it was not considered ethical to appeal. "It is invariably looked upon as a point of Justice and Propriety," John Watts informed his rapacious client, Maynard, "to submit to the Referees, or why leave it to them at all. The Looser is seldom content or satisfyd."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Beekman Letter Book, to Jos. Jackson, Oct. 19, 1761, Feb. 1, 1762; to Malbone, Oct. 10, 1761; *Letter-book of John Watts*, to Jos. Maynard, pp. 108, 123; Postlethwayt, *Dictionary of Commerce*, I, 141; Corbyn Morris, *Essay on Insurances*, xii; Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, Aug. 28, 1758.

¹¹⁹ *Letter-book of John Watts*, p. 285.

CHAPTER V

OVERSEAS TRADE AND BUSINESS RELATIONS

To paint a true picture of business in colonial New York, it is necessary to examine more specifically the nature of the trade of the port and the relations of New York merchants with their correspondents in other colonies and abroad. In describing the organization and conduct of business, constant mention has been made of shipments to England, the West Indies, and American colonies outside New York. The composition of these cargoes, however, has been merely indicated. How extensive was the trade to Great Britain, to Southern Europe, to Africa, to the West Indies, to sister colonies? What goods were sent thither and taken thence? What relations, friendly or otherwise, had New York merchants established with these districts? Finally, since competition is the life of trade, where did New York stand in comparison with other commercial centers in the thirteen continental colonies?

The character of the overseas trade of New York, like that of any other community, was determined by the nature of the products and the needs of the province. As one of the so-called bread colonies, its chief articles of export were bread, flour and grain of various kinds—wheat, Indian corn, oats, rye, barley, peas and buckwheat. Through the development of cereal manufactures in the Hudson and Mohawk valleys the port of New York ranked second only to Philadelphia as a shipping point for such commodities. Equally important in the list of exports were furs—beaver, bear, otter and muskrat—for which New York was prëminent. In

addition, the province exported flax-seed and hemp. Its forests were the source of a profitable lumber trade which included boards, scantlings, staves, shingles, and even wooden houses framed and ready to set up. Most of the manufactures, such as hats and shoes, were solely for home consumption, but considerable amounts of iron in pigs and bars were exported. After 1730 too, sugar from the refineries of the Bayards, Van Cortlandts, Cuylers and Roosevelts found markets outside the colony, as did a great part of the rum distilled there. The manufacture of potashes and pearlshes on the newly-cleared farms was already foreshadowing, by 1760, the importance it was to have later in the century. Finally, although in quantity surpassed by its northern neighbors, New York built ships superior in quality and workmanship to those of New England, some of which were sold to foreign merchants.

Well able, therefore, to supply itself with food and shelter, the greatest need felt by the province was for the manufactured articles of comfort and luxury drawn from the mother country. Of all its native products, however, only a few—fur, flax-seed, iron and ashes—were acceptable to Great Britain, and those were by no means sufficient to pay for the more expensive imports. As a result, New York was forced to find other markets for its wares which might yield in return commodities that could be exported to England, and as an *entrepôt* for the reexport of goods New York came to surpass all other North American ports. In so doing there was developed a trade as triangular as that of Boston. The most vital part of the triangle was in the Caribbean, and included the West Indies, Honduras and Guiana. From this district came the bulk of products bought for reexport to England. Ships laden with food-stuffs, horses and lumber were sent to the West Indies and the Bay of Honduras to bring back cotton from St. Thomas

and Surinam, lime-juice and "Nicaragua" wood from Curaçao, sugar, spices and drugs from the West Indies, for all which there was a demand in London. On the way home the ships might call at Charleston for rice and indigo, both of which could be remitted to British creditors. Rice, together with salt fish (the latter procured from New England in return for flour and wheat), made it possible to carry on a profitable trade with Spain, Portugal and Italy, and to undertake adventures to Africa, where the ships also "put off" quantities of British manufactures, taking the proceeds of the voyages in gold, ivory and slaves to be disposed of in the West Indies. As New York always exported more to all of these places than it imported from them, the balance was paid either in gold or in bills of exchange, both of which eventually found their way to England to satisfy creditors. In addition, a large part of the flaxseed sent to Ireland, and of the beef, pork and horses exported to the West Indies, was not of local production, but came from New Jersey and Connecticut, for New York was the chief outlet for agricultural products from both these provinces. Nevertheless, in spite of all efforts, the higher prices commanded by manufactures compared with raw materials, together with the commercial theory which produced the Acts of Trade, combined to keep the balance of trade heavily against the province.

A certain amount of trade went on with Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Hamburg and ports on the Baltic Sea which was a mingling of legal and illegal exchange. The carriage of foreign goods to those nations or their free ports was allowed under the Acts of Trade, but the lower prices of linen and teas offered a constant temptation to smuggling.

Since there was no staple provincial product like the tobacco of Virginia or the rice of South Carolina, the cargoes which the New York merchants sent to England were mixed.

Six or a dozen commodities formed a backbone for the trade to England, and amounted to one-half or three quarters of all goods exported thither.¹ The remainder consisted of small quantities of a score of articles, chiefly enumerated commodities such as whale fins, lumber, hemp, spices and drugs. The only important item of domestic production was fur, especially beaver, which in 1751 was worth £2,169. In several years furs of all kinds amounted to one-fifth of the value of all exports. In fact, at that time New York sent more fur to Great Britain than any other region except Hudson's Bay. During the French and Indian War the quantity of furs exported decreased, and after the Peace of Paris the trade turned to the St. Lawrence and the south so that by 1773 New York was surpassed by both Canada and the Carolinas.² Dressed buck and deer skins, which were placed on the list of enumerated products in 1764, took the place of bear and beaver in value and quantity. In some years the herb ginseng from the country about Albany was important. But in general goods brought from many places expressly for reshipment formed the bulk of the exports to Great Britain.

The most valuable cargo which the merchant stowed in the hold of his ship consisted of mahogany from Honduras or possibly Barbados, and the woods used for dyeing—logwood, "Nicaragua," fustick and redwood—which were also enumerated commodities. Except when the Caribbean was infested with hostile men of war between 1756 and 1763, these precious woods were usually worth about forty per cent

¹ Customs Papers, 3: 51-75. The observations which follow are made on the basis of British Customs House records in the Public Record Office except where otherwise noted. Changes in market price did not affect these lists because the average prices by which the values of commodities were calculated had been set in 1697 and were never changed, so that an increase in value simply reflected an increase in volume and *vice versa*.

² C. O. 390: 9, B6-B7. Treasury Papers 64: 274. See also chapter viii.

of the annual value of all exports from New York to Britain. Shipments in 1769 amounted to as much as £28,907.³ Raw sugar was another of the backbone commodities from 1750 until after 1763. The yearly exports ran from £2,500 to £4,500 before the war, and in 1761, 1762 and 1763 the addition of shipments of French prize sugars multiplied the value ten times; but after the war, although in 1770 New York exported the largest quantity of any continental province, sugar became a relatively insignificant item.⁴ The yearly exports of such semi-tropical products as cochineal, pimento and sarsaparilla were occasionally worth as much as £1,000 each, but in most years the total quantity was small. The amount of "cotton wool" which crossed the ocean in the holds of New York vessels was never considerable, yet the province exported more than any other continental colony.⁵ The third West Indian product of importance in remittances to England was annotto,⁶ which was not shipped in large quantities until about 1770. In that year, however, 81,249 pounds worth £10,156 were shipped, and in the five years following the average amount exported was 27,267 pounds with a value of £3,408.

Two remaining commodities which were re-exported in large quantities the merchant procured from the Carolinas. These were naval stores and rice. Taken together, the pitch, tar and turpentine from the pine forests of the south which were shipped from New York amounted in value to between £1,000 and £3,000 a year. Shipments of rice, due to either poor crops or poor transportation, seem to have varied con-

³ Customs 16:1. Exports and Imports of all the American colonies from 1768 to 1772.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Treasury Papers 64:276. "An account of cotton wool imported into Gt. Britain, etc.... 1767-1777."

⁶ Annotto, a yellow dye used chiefly to color cheese.

siderably, but in many years between 1750 and 1775, over 3,000 hundredweight of rice were sent at an average price of £2,000 to £3,000.⁷ These quantities could not, of course, compete with those from South Carolina itself, which averaged annually 160,000 hundredweight, worth about £120,000. New York merchants however re-exported the largest amount of rice of any colonial port, but were closely trailed by those of Philadelphia.⁸

A third article of re-export which came from South Carolina was indigo. This was at all times an experimental crop in America, but it was never considered as good as the foreign product. Most of the indigo used in England was imported from France and Flanders, while of the colonies, South Carolina shipped the largest quantities, with Jamaica and Montserrat second in importance. New York came next, but with 20,000 pounds the most it ever sent in one year, it seems clear that its position was not important except as the largest re-exporter of indigo on the American continent.⁹

The other products of its sister provinces were of slight importance in New York's annual remittances to Great Britain. It exported little or no tobacco;¹⁰ occasionally it sent some rum from New England, sperm candles from Rhode Island, or whale fins from Boston.¹¹ Part of the flaxseed shipped to Ireland came from Connecticut and New Jersey.¹²

⁷ In 1771 the exports of rice amounted to 7,664 hundredweight and £5,748 sterling.

⁸ C. O. 390: 9, B. L.

⁹ Treasury Papers 70: 1205, A 40.

¹⁰ Treasury Papers 64: 276.

¹¹ Customs 16: 1.

¹² The flaxseed trade is treated subsequently.

While it is clear that the most valuable and probably also the largest proportion of New York cargoes to England was brought from semi-tropical markets, the importance of such products in the general total began to decrease toward the middle of this period as a result of a change in the character and amount of domestic exports. Whereas in 1752 the home-grown products of New York were scarcely ten per cent of all its exports, by 1767 they had grown to over forty per cent. In particular, merchants began to ship large amounts of three important commodities, iron, pot and pearl ashes, and wheat.

Pig and bar iron from the furnaces of New York and northern New Jersey had been a negligible item during the fifties, for although by a law of 1750 colonial iron was allowed to enter England free of duty, the largest amount the province exported in any one year was 168 tons of pig and 11 tons of bar iron in 1755 with a value of only £284. When, in 1764, pig and bar iron were placed on the list of enumerated commodities, the amount exported rose suddenly, and its value reached the peak at £15,708 in 1771. This increase was undoubtedly due to the establishment of some six or eight new forges after 1755, as well as to encouragement by the government. The rise in value was largely attributable to the greater amount of ore that was worked into bars rather than run into pigs, the former bringing £10 a ton against £1 for the latter; but the tonnage also increased from an average of seventy-five tons yearly between 1750 and 1760 to 776 tons of pig and 1,492 tons of bar iron in 1771. Although in 1750 New York furnished only a very small proportion of the pig and bar iron imported into England from the colonies, by 1769 it was surpassed only by Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, the exports of the latter two colonies not being separated in the records.¹⁸ As

¹⁸ C. O. 390:9, B. 24. Plantations General, O, 123. Historical Society of Pennsylvania Transcripts. Cf. Bining, *British Regulation of the Colonial Iron Industry*, pp. 82-85.

has been indicated in a previous chapter, much, or perhaps most of this iron came from the mines of northern New Jersey. Most of England's imported iron still came from the European continent, especially Sweden and Russia, but American bar iron was beginning to earn a reputation, for it was reported by the consul at Rotterdam "to have been found equal if not superior to Swedish Iron."¹⁴

Potashes and pearlashes had a similar history. Notwithstanding a bounty offered in 1750, the colony in 1752 exported to England only forty pounds of potashes.¹⁵ By the Act of 1764 this commodity was added to the enumerated list, and in 1765 London alone received 89,927 pounds valued at £1,124. In 1771, the peak year previous to 1775, 1,302,994 pounds of potashes and 761,048 pounds of pearlashes, worth £29,611 or about one-third of all exports in that year, were exported to London and the outports.¹⁶ During the decade from 1765 to 1775 shipments averaged about 660,860 pounds with a value of £16,621 annually. Much of this phenomenal increase must be ascribed to expanded production, possibly in response to a larger market, to importations from other colonies, or perhaps to an attempt to realize the only income obtainable from speculative lands. It is possible, also, that the requirement that potashes and pearlashes be sent to Great Britain diverted the trade from some other channel.

During the sixties and early seventies New York merchants had an unusual and abundant opportunity to ship wheat and flour to England, where ordinarily there was no market. The failure of English crops in 1767, and again in 1772, led to the passage by Parliament of two acts "for

¹⁴ C. O. 390: 9, B. 24. C. O. 388: 95, 1, (13).

¹⁵ Treasury Papers 70: 1205, A 57.

¹⁶ The largest quantity of ashes was sent in 1773 and was worth £32,247, or about forty per cent of the total exports.

allowing the importation of wheat and wheat flour from his Majesty's colonies in America into this kingdom for a limited time free of duty." ¹⁷ Fortunately these were fat years for America, and in 1767 New York shipped to London and the outports 3,932 quarters of wheat and 2,627 quarters of flour with a total value of £12,171. In the next year its exports of wheat and flour were worth £12,433, and were second only to those of Virginia.¹⁸ England's needs diminished during the next few years, but in 1773 considerable quantities of wheat, flour and even Indian corn, amounting in all to £5,025, were sent to London and the outports; in 1774 the export reached £19,538. The greatest wheat year was that of Lexington and Concord, the province exporting to England in 1775 a total of 67,208 quarters of wheat, 4,278 quarters of meal and 11,076 quarters of flour, worth all told £119,970. The large amount of breadstuffs alone accounts for the unusual size of New York's exports to Great Britain in that year. If the value of the grain and wheat be deducted from the value of all exports, £67,048 remains, which is about the normal value of New York's exports to Great Britain.

The imports of New York from Great Britain consisted of manufactures of all kinds—articles of clothing, cotton, woolen and linen cloth, furniture, brasswork, wrought iron, East India and European goods, arms, gunpowder, brimstone, lead, tin, sheet copper, sail cloth, cordage, paints, grindstones, coal, chalk, drugs, malt liquors, cheese and groceries. Their value was always from four to ten times as great as that of all exports, save for the years in which non-importation agreements were in force. Compared with the quantities of individual commodities sent to England, each article

¹⁷ MacPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, III, 495. 7 Geo. III, 4; 12 Geo. III, 32.

¹⁸ Customs Papers 16: 1.

of import seems large. The most important group were the cloths, which formed about one-third of all imports and about one-half of the imports of British manufactures. Non-British manufactures imported varied from ten to thirty-five per cent of the whole, consisting chiefly of drugs, East India spices, special oriental silks, china, Russian duck and paper, Dutch linen and tiles.

The needs of the armies during the French and Indian war and the greater demands of a prosperous community caused a large increase in the flow of goods from the mother country, but even after the withdrawal of the troops the general level of imports from Britain remained higher. To some extent this increase was distributed throughout the list, for a general rise in all items is noticeable. An increased importation of luxuries, especially foreign silks, was particularly important, the purchases of silk reaching 8,243 pounds with a value of £14,425, in 1765, and 17,952 pounds, valued at £31,417 in 1774. The sudden rise in foreign manufactures imported in 1764, 1765 and 1768 was due wholly to the great amount of tea brought in, the imports in 1765 reaching 226,232 pounds, priced at £75,410, or about three-quarters of the value of all foreign goods. This increase perhaps reflected the redoubled efforts of the customs officers to check the smuggling of tea from Holland.¹⁹

Thus New York's trade with Great Britain was constantly increasing between 1750 and 1775 and was due as much to the growth of population as to the greater wealth of the community. By 1775 both exports and imports were double those of 1750. One of the most interesting features was the growth of commerce with the English outports, noticeable particularly from 1763 onward. A contemporary writer asserted that most of this trade was with Bristol,²⁰

¹⁹ See chapter vii.

²⁰ J. H. Wynne, *General History of the British Empire in America* (London, 1770), pp. 197-198.

but the rising importance of other western ports, particularly Liverpool, and of the manufacturing towns of Manchester and Birmingham undoubtedly accounted for some of it. While trade with London was always greater than that with other British ports, the exports of New York to the outports had increased five-fold by 1775 and imports were twenty times as great as in 1750. London, on the other hand, had gained only fifty per cent in both exports and imports during the same period.²¹

The outports included the Scottish commercial cities, but not Ireland, which was still considered a dominion on a par with the American colonies. No such close connection with Scotland as existed in Virginia was to be found in New York. The number of Scotsmen settled in the latter province apparently accounts for the existence of the trade, but it differed very little from that to England. New York merchants shipped to Glasgow potashes, iron, flour, staves, whale fins, Madeira wine, hard woods and mahogany. Their ships returned laden with carpets, tartans and other woollens, and haberdashery of Scotch manufacture which were apparently in demand in New York. The insignificant size of this trade is evident when the exports and imports of New York, which amounted in value to £8,197 and £8,893 respectively in 1764-5, are compared with those of Virginia. In the same year Virginia imported from Scotland goods worth £126,499 and exported tobacco and other articles worth £244,722.²² On the other hand, New York was the only province except Pennsylvania to trade regularly with Ireland. The most important export was flaxseed, a large part of which came from Connecticut and New Jersey. It is recorded that 129,150 bushels were exported in 1774, 71,850 of which had been previously imported into the colony

²¹ See Appendix C.

²² Customs 14: I B.

from those colonies.²³ Since the average export of flaxseed amounted to £23,901 a year, it was as important a remittance from New York as was the logwood sent to England. The flaxseed was collected in the fall, occasionally through previous arrangement with the farmer, and shipped in December or January.²⁴ The return cargo was usually linen and "Rose Cork butter." Irish beef and pork were imported from time to time if the local supply were low.

Shipping also reflected the increased commerce, as the subjoined table shows.²⁵ The vessels which plied between New York and the British Isles, while larger than many in the West Indian trade, were small, and averaged less than 100 tons burden. Most of them were square-rigged vessels, distinguished by the number of masts and sails they carried as ships, brigs and snows.²⁶ The sloop and the schooner were rare in trans-Atlantic trade. The ships were preponderantly plantation built, but not so owned. Passes were issued from 1750 to 1774 to 362 vessels trading from New

²³ Lord Sheffield, *Observations on the Commerce of the American States* (London, 1784), Appendix XII.

²⁴ Beekman Letter Book, to Adam Schoales, John & David Ross, Charles McManus, Archibald Conningham, Messrs. Arnold, Albert and Alexander Nesbitt, Alexander Ogilvy, and Wm. Snell & Co., *passim*.

	<i>Gt. Britain</i>		<i>Ireland</i>	
	<i>Tonnage</i>		<i>Tonnage</i>	
	Into N. Y.	Out of N. Y.	Into N. Y.	Out of N. Y.
1754	2,635	2,205	820	1,515
1764	4,140	2,952	1,647	1,882
1768	7,158	5,139	1,378	2,522
1771	6,850	4,830	1,411	2,476
1772	6,117	4,280	915	1,610

²⁵ Customs 16:1. See Appendix G. The original gives the number of "Topsails" and "Sloops and Schooners" as well as the tonnage. In 1768, 78 ships and one sloop or schooner entered New York from Great Britain; no sloops or schooners entered from Ireland or Africa, and from the southern parts of Europe 20 top-sails entered and 11 sloops.

York to the British Isles, of which 266 had been built in the colonies, while 72 were built in Britain and 24 were classed as "foreign made free" because they were prizes taken during the war. Of these 362 ships, 221 were owned, possibly only in part, by British merchants and 141 by New Yorkers.²⁷

Shipments in the British trade were determined by seasonal considerations, cargoes being timed to arrive in the province in the autumn and spring. Orders for spring goods were sent to England sometime between October and January, and for fall goods in June. Vessels left New York on the journey to London laden with whatever was at hand, for except in the case of flaxseed American products did not have to arrive in England at a special season.²⁸ If the voyages were made in good time, it was possible for a ship to make two round trips a year, with three months allowed for each passage and for unloading and loading. On the other hand, if the vessel were dispatched late, or if it were becalmed or driven off the course by storms, and the passage consequently lengthened to four months, the ship had to lay over until the next season. Philip Cuyler wrote to his correspondent in London regarding a vessel which had arrived in June, that "the Long Passage of the Albany has prevented me sending you her Immediately back as She arrived quite too late for a fall Ship and there will be no Less than five sale at your place when the Maria and bearer gett with you who all design back this Fall, that we concluded to send the Albany from hence in September to be the earliest Spring ship back."²⁹ The arrival of orders early in the season before supplies were plentiful was of great importance to the provincial merchant,

²⁷ Admiralty Papers 7: 87-92, 94, 96, 98.

²⁸ Cf. Cuyler Letter Book, June 26, 29 and Oct. 26, 1756. Ludlow Letter Book, Dec. 16, 1758, Oct. 26, 1759 and Jan. 9, 1761.

²⁹ Cuyler Letter Book, to Dirck Vander Heyden, June 29, 1756.

for the lower the stock in the community the better the prices.

Business dealings between British and New York merchants were dominated by two fundamental relationships, that of principal and agent and that of debtor and creditor. Perhaps the most important activity of the English agent was to act as banker for provincial merchants, but that was not his only service. It was impossible for the New York merchant to send either bills of exchange or gold sufficient to pay for the goods he imported from firms in England. He accordingly consigned cargoes—tons of logwood, barrels of sugar—to his correspondent, who in turn acted as agent in selling the commodities at the best price they would command, deducting charges and commissions and crediting his colonial client with the net proceeds. The English merchant apparently did not purchase many goods outright from a provincial seller, although Irish traders ordered definite quantities of flaxseed to be sent to them, the proceeds being usually remitted to the vendor's agents in London or Bristol.⁸⁰

As factor the London, Bristol or Liverpool merchant arranged insurance on his customer's ships and cargoes, forwarded letters and made payments, advancing money when necessary if the customer's credit were good. He also filled the orders sent him, and on these, if they called for goods not in his own stock and hence to be purchased from others, he received a commission. Since commodities from a distance incurred overland carrying charges as well as commissions, a New York merchant usually had correspondents in each important town—in London always, and usually in Bristol, Liverpool or Manchester.

Walter and Robert Livingston dealt with Neate, Pigou & Booth of London, Henry Cruger, Jr. of Bristol, and John

⁸⁰ E. g., Beekman Letter Book.

Markland of Manchester.⁸¹ Philip Cuyler's chief correspondent was Dirck Vander Heyden of London, but he also ordered goods from Devonshire, Reeve and Lloyd of Bristol, William Beekman and Hyde & Hamilton of Liverpool.⁸² Van Cortlandt, as a sugar refiner had little need for English agents, but he hired his "upstairs man" through one Jacobson of London and corresponded with Henry Cruger.⁸³ Similarly Gerard Beekman, although most of his overseas trade was with Ireland, had as his London agents David Barclay & Sons, and bought linens occasionally through his brother William in Liverpool.⁸⁴ The greater part of John Watts's English correspondence was purely friendly, semi-official or connected with his victualling contract, but he also did business with Kilby, Barnard & Co., Lascelles & Maxwell, and David Barclay & Sons of London, and Thomas Pennington & Sons and Henry Cruger of Bristol.⁸⁵ Evert Bancker's journal shows accounts current with Richard Neave & Son and John Blackburn of London, Thomas Pennington of Bristol and Robert & Nathan Hyde of Manchester.⁸⁶ As business was much more specialized in England than in the provinces, a merchant might have several factors in the same place. John Ludlow, who had a general dry-goods business in New York, bought hosiery from William Davy & Co., woolen goods from Moses Franks, taffetas and gloves from Kilby, Barnard & Parker, cottons and linens from Pomeroy & Streatfield (later Pomeroy & Hodgkin), handkerchiefs and garlix from Richard Durnford, all of London. He ordered further dry goods from Peach

⁸¹ Ledger and Waste Book of Walter & Robert Livingston.

⁸² Cuyler Letter Book.

⁸³ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, Nov. 21, 1763, Oct. 8, 1766.

⁸⁴ Beekman Letter Book.

⁸⁵ Letter Book of John Watts.

⁸⁶ Evert Bancker Journal, pp. 2, 8, 15.

& Pierce of Bristol, cottons and checks from William Beekman and Clay, Midgely & Co. of Liverpool, and Manchester goods from Touchet & Co. of Manchester.⁸⁷ On occasion one correspondent might be played off against another to secure the best possible terms.

Although Thomas Hutchinson was of the opinion in 1749 that few goods were sent from England on commission, British merchants occasionally agreed to allow some New York trader to act as factor, or consented to send goods on consignment.⁸⁸ The practice was probably not very extensive, for most of the letter books and ledgers indicate outright purchases. On the other hand, British correspondents very generally extended long credit. A contemporary writer estimated that at least four-fifths of the goods imported into the colonies were bought on credit, and further alleged that "this credit was so extensive and so stretched beyond all proper bounds as to threaten the ruin of every British merchant trading to America in 1772" because of the difficulty of collecting debts, especially in Virginia and Maryland.⁸⁹ According to Adam Smith, the annual returns from colonial merchants amounted to hardly one-third, and sometimes less, of what they owed. "The whole capital which their correspondents advance to them is seldom returned to Britain in less than three and sometimes not in less than four or five years."⁹⁰ New Yorkers bore the reputation of being punctual and fair dealers,⁹¹ and the apparently insurmountable adverse balance of trade between the mother country and the province was doubtless greatly dimin-

⁸⁷ Invoice Book of John Ludlow. Letter Book, to these firms, *passim*.

⁸⁸ Cuyler Letter Book, to William Beekman, Oct. 4, 1757.

⁸⁹ Sheffield, *Observations on the Commerce of the American States*, pp. 200-201.

⁹⁰ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, Book IV, chap. vii.

⁹¹ *The American Gazetteer* (London, 1762), III, under "York, New."

ished by remittances of gold and bills of exchange which are not credited in the Custom House accounts. At the outbreak of the Revolution the total indebtedness of New Yorkers to British merchants amounted to only £175,095, which was less than that of any other important trading province except Rhode Island.⁴²

Nevertheless, an examination of letter books and ledgers indicates that merchants were seldom completely out of debt to their British creditors, and certainly not for long periods. No sooner had one shipment been received and a certain amount of it paid for, than another arrived. Evert Bancker, for example, owed Pennington & Sons of Bristol £368 on June 12, 1771; on June 20 he sent pieces of eight worth £200 sterling, and on November 1 another shipment amounting to £209; but in the same month (November) he imported goods amounting to £373, being thus still in arrears £332.⁴³ As a consequence of such practice, merchants in New York were continually pressed to make remittances home, and in view of the generous extension of credit throughout the provinces, hard times, tight money or bad debts in intercolonial trade caused a sympathetic reaction in overseas relations, indicated by a succession of dunning letters on the one hand and defensive apologies on the other.

An excellent illustration of the difficulties of the British creditor is presented by the career of Philip Cuyler, who advertised on August 18, 1755, "a choice assortment of *European and India goods* on reasonable terms."⁴⁴ Cuyler had recently opened a correspondence with Dirck Vander

⁴² Chatham Papers: Bundle 343, No. 313. "List of Debts due by Citizens of the United States of America to Merchants and Traders of Great Britain contracted previous to the year 1776 with interest on the same to January 1, 1790."

⁴³ Journal, p. 2 *et seq.* Compare also the accounts of W. & R. Livingston with Markland of Manchester or Cruger of Bristol.

⁴⁴ *New York Gazette & Post Boy*, Aug. 18, 1755.

Heyden of London, and in June had sent £300 in bills of exchange with a statement that he had sold £600 of the goods Vander Heyden had shipped to him.⁴⁵ There was also a cargo of logwood to his credit in London.⁴⁶ Five months later, in November, no further payments having been made and a spring order being on the way, Cuyler wrote that he would make remittances as soon as possible from money due him in the following January, and repeated this promise in a letter of December 16, adding, "I am sensible the Great Advance you are for me." A year later, in January, 1757, he wrote precisely the same thing, the situation being apparently unchanged.⁴⁷ In the meantime Cuyler had tried to establish a connection with Joseph Mico of London, but in spite of his father's recommendation, Mico declined the honor on the ground of the difficulties of remittance and credit.⁴⁸

Cuyler made no further attempts to establish connections in London, where his reputation as "slow pay" was evidently well-known; but in February, 1758, he opened an account with William Beekman of Liverpool, and in August another with a third house, Devonshire, Reeve & Lloyd of Bristol, in company with which he owned part of the snow *Britannia*.⁴⁹ In ordering large shipments from all these firms at once, he soon found himself in difficulties, and Devonshire, Reeve & Lloyd brought about his downfall. Beekman and Vander Heyden he tried to content with small remittances on account from time to time, but his sops were most unsatisfying and he complained that his correspondents were "prodigiously hungry."⁵⁰ Vander Heyden,

⁴⁵ Cuyler Letter Book, June 3, 1755.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, to Dirk Vander Heyden, March 1, 1759.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Nov. 5, 1755, Dec. 16, 1755, Jan. 12, 1757.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Dec. 4, 1756, Jan. 25, 1758.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Feb. 15, 1758, Aug. 15, 1758.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, to Wm. S. Beekman, Jan. 15, 1759.

indeed, finally losing patience, had drawn on him without notice for £486 in March, 1759.⁵¹ His first order to Devonshire, Reeve & Lloyd for fall goods in 1758 amounted to £1,190 18s. 10d.⁵² In May, 1759, he consigned a cargo of sugar to them which eventually netted £264 16s 11d, which amount was applied to his account.⁵³ In the following months he sent two more orders and no more remittances.

Accordingly in January, 1760, Devonshire, Reeve & Lloyd refused to send him any more goods, demanded that he sell them his part in the *Britannia*, and handed over the account to their attorneys in New York, who forced Cuyler to give security for the payment of his debt.⁵⁴ Cuyler, extremely indignant, accused other Bristol firms of attacking his reputation,⁵⁵ although his conduct was plainly sufficient in itself to destroy his standing. As a matter of fact Cuyler was undoubtedly very short of cash. He had sold goods on extensive credit, and he had been speculating heavily in privateering without much success.⁵⁶ His business acumen could not have been very great, for after retiring to Albany, he failed again in 1770.⁵⁷ It may be suspected that his difficulties were due, not to hard times, but to poor judgment.

On the whole, however, the relations between New York merchants and their British creditors were amicable. Most merchants seem to have kept their accounts sufficiently paid

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, to Dirk Vander Heyden, March 1, 1759.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Aug. 15, 1758.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, May 12, 1759.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Jan. 3, 1760, July 26, 1760.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, to Devonshire, Reeve & Lloyd, July 26, 1760; to Dirk Vander Heyden, May 10, 1756.

⁵⁶ Beekman Letter Book, to William Beekman of Liverpool, April 13, 1763.

⁵⁷ *Colonial Laws of New York*, V, Ch. 1687, p. 706.

up to maintain their credit. Ludlow refused to order more goods when his stock was still high and money outstanding,⁸⁸ and his letters to his English purveyors are, accordingly, free from answers to recriminations. On the other hand, he smuggled goods extensively from Holland in company with three others, which made it less necessary for him to stock his shelves through English firms.⁸⁹

In spite of the difficulty of collections, merchants in England were interested in furthering their trade with the colonies. Although they prudently demanded references from prospective clients, they also tried to enlarge their circle by tendering their services to reputable men, by asking their customers to get friends to send in orders, and even by sending representatives to the commercial cities in America to drum up trade.⁹⁰ Wharton of Philadelphia wrote to John Waddell in New York introducing "Godfrey Leacocke of Hallifax in England," sent by a firm in Liverpool to recommend American merchants.⁹¹ Philip Cuyler wrote with an order to Hyde and Hamilton, also of Liverpool: "When your Mr. Hamilton, to whom was Personally known was in this City, I promised him after his absence from this place to forward his house a Memorandum for Goods."⁹²

It is fairly well recognized that the British merchants trading to America in the early years of the reign of George III formed a powerful lobby which worked with the colonial

⁸⁸ Ludlow Letter Book, to Chauncey, Brown & Chauncey, Nov. 30, 1753; to Moses Franks, Elias Bland, Sheldon & Wright all under date of Jan. 8, 1754.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, to Daniel Crommelin, *passim*.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, to Elias Bland, Jan. 8, 1754. Cuyler Letter Book to Messrs. Thomas Wilson & Co., May 21, 1760.

⁹¹ Wharton Letter Book, July 7, 1756.

⁹² Cuyler Letter Book, Oct. 27, 1758.

agents in the interest of the American merchants. This was entirely natural, since they not only wished to preserve the productive capacity and buying power of their customers but were also anxious for their good will. Although issues arose concerning which the interests of the mercantile groups on either side of the Atlantic were diametrically opposed, such questions were often settled by compromise, while on other occasions the merchants interested in American trade were able to influence Parliamentary action regarding the colonies. The repeal of the Stamp Act, of course, is a pre-eminent example, but the merchants were also influential in securing trade bounties. A petition of merchants trading to America in 1763, asking for the restoration of the bounty on hemp was acceded to by Parliament, and another of the same year requesting a bounty on American pig and bar iron led shortly to an act for encouraging the production of bar iron in the colonies.⁶⁸

By far the most interesting feature of New York's trade relations with Great Britain is the evidence to be found of actual business association. Such association is to be seen in the ownership of vessels by firms or persons on both sides of the Atlantic, in joint ventures undertaken by English and provincial correspondents, in the web of business and friendly interests which developed when members of New York families were in business in England or British firms established branches in New York. Customs lists give several instances of ships owned jointly by persons in New York and England. Thomas Pennington & Sons of Bristol owned part of the *Prince George* in company with Greg, Cunningham & Co. of Belfast and New York, part of the *Grace* with Theophylact Bache, Perry, Hayes & Sherbrooke,

⁶⁸ L. B. Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution* (London, 1930), p. 291. 5 George III, ch. 45, 23.

Cornelia Rutgers, Elias Desbrosses and James Jauncey. Messrs. Trafford & Bird of Bristol were part owners with Theophylacte Bache of the *Manchester*; Holyday & Dunbar of Liverpool with Greg, Cunningham & Co. shared ownership of the *New York*. The *Betty* was owned jointly by Walter & Samuel Franklin of New York and David Kennion of Liverpool. The ship *Hope* had for owners Christian Jacobsen—the master—Henry Van Vleck of New York and Joseph Borum and William Mackie of London, while the ship *Elisabeth and Catherine* belonged to Moses Franks of London and his father Jacob Franks of New York.⁶⁴ Other instances can be found in the letter books. A quarter interest in the snow *Britannia*, for example, was owned by Devonshire, Reeve & Lloyd of Bristol and three-quarters by provincial merchants of whom Philip Cuyler was one.⁶⁵ Cuyler also owned part of another ship in company with his correspondent Dirck Vander Heyden, of London and the latter's brother, David, of New York. Joint ventures were also undertaken. Philip Cuyler engineered two with the Vander Heydens, one in coffee and sugar and a second in indigo; Walter & Robert Livingston shared in an adventure to Cork with Henry Cruger of Bristol.⁶⁶

In relations with England, as in business in New York, the family connection again assumes an appreciable importance. Apparently there was a tendency for the various members of a colonial community to use much the same group of correspondents, so that in the letter books and ledgers of New York merchants the names of certain firms

⁶⁴ C. O. 5: 1227 and 1228. The Naval Office Lists give the names of the owners of ships which entered and cleared.

⁶⁵ Cuyler Letter Book, to Devonshire, Reeve & Lloyd, Aug. 15, 1758, and to Dirck Vander Heyden, June 3, 1755.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, to Dirck Vander Heyden, March 16, 1758. Livingston Ledger A, p. 95.

in London, Liverpool and Bristol are continually recurring. This was especially true when family relationship or acquaintance provided a natural channel of communication. There were at least four instances of this in New York. Three out of four of these colonial merchants had dealings with Moses Franks of London, whose father, Jacob Franks, was well known and respected in the province.⁶⁷ A member of the Beekman family, William, the younger brother of Gerard G. Beekman, was established in Liverpool.⁶⁸ Dirck Vander Heyden, with a father in business in Albany and a brother in New York, settled in London in 1752 and started a business on the basis of his provincial connections.⁶⁹ Henry Cruger, Jr., nephew of John and son of Henry Cruger of New York, went to Bristol, founded the firm of Cruger and Mallard, and married a daughter of Samuel Peach of the banking house of Peach & Pierce.⁷⁰ There were, of course, a number of other English firms doing a considerable business with New York,⁷¹ and it may be that chance has preserved a special group of business documents. The family relation, however, apparently offered a real advantage, for it assured to the young business man a circle of steady and interested customers in his family and among their friends, and with that as a nucleus he might extend his trade

⁶⁷ Israel Solomons, "The Genealogy of the Franks Family," *Am. Jewish Hist. Soc. Pub.*, XVIII, 213-214.

⁶⁸ W. B. Aitken, *Distinguished Families in America descended from Wilhelmus Beekman*, p. 134.

⁶⁹ *New York Gazette & Post Boy*, Dec. 16, 1751; *N. Y. Geneal. & Biog. Record*, XXIV, 313.

⁷⁰ "Cruger Records," *N. Y. Geneal. & Biog. Record*, VI, 74-77.

⁷¹ Chatham Papers: Bundle 343, No. 313. The ten or twelve firms to whom New Yorkers owed sums greater than £5,000 include only two or three who appear in the correspondence available to the researcher—none were of American origin, and only one—Elam of Leeds—had an American agent in New York.

to an even larger group. The personal touch, even though it came second-hand, meant much to the provincial merchant. Not only had he some knowledge of the character of his correspondent and on that account could expect a more sympathetic understanding of colonial conditions, but the matter of exchange was considerably simplified by the presence of responsible persons authorized to receive payment in the city. Further, although the actual number of these transplanted provincials was small, the frequency with which their names recur in mercantile correspondence leads one to infer that their influence was large.

The other side of the shield is not so well ornamented. There were a few agents of English firms in New York, but they were by no means so important as the factors of Scottish firms in Virginia. The only person who exemplifies that type of representative is John J. Glover, who was sent out in 1768 by Emanuel Elam of Leeds to take charge of the American end of his woolen goods business.¹² There were, however, firms which had partners on both sides of the water. In 1754 two young men from Bristol, Perry and Hayes, set themselves up in New York in a wholesale dry goods business which flourished until 1761, when they advertised that the partnership was due to expire in March and that they desired all accounts settled. In April, 1761, they announced that they were taking in another partner and desired the continuance of their custom; the following year the style of the firm was changed to Perry, Hayes & Sherbrook. Hayes later returned to Bristol and the American business was left entirely in the hands of the new partner, Miles Sherbrook, who became one of the outstanding merchants of the city.¹³ The London firm of Neate &

¹² New York Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, "Colonial New York," p. 133.

¹³ *New York Mercury*, Apr. 13, 1761, March 15, 1762, Apr. 9, 1764; "Diary of Josiah Quincy," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.*, I, 454.

Pigou established a younger partner, Benjamin Booth, in New York about 1766, after which the firm was known as Neate, Pigou & Booth, later Pigou & Booth.⁷⁴

The largest of these houses was Greg, Cunningham & Co. The parent firm was in Belfast evidently under Thomas Greg, while the New York branch was managed for a time by Waddell Cunningham.⁷⁵ After an altercation with another merchant, Thomas Forsey, in which he is said to have stabbed him "naked" on Broadway, Cunningham returned to Ireland, leaving the colonial house in the hands of two younger partners, Hamilton Young and Robert Ross Waddell.⁷⁶ While the greater part of the business of this firm was apparently between Belfast and New York their ships went also to Curaçao and Lisbon.⁷⁷ Goods were also consigned to Orr, Dunlope & Glenholme of Philadelphia, who evidently wished to be sole agents in Philadelphia, for the arrival of a ship "to the care of Mr. Hazelhurst" caused them to write to the New York partners asking if Mr. Greg had a son "concerned" with Hazelhurst. "We are told so and that he is coming out to this place to settle a House if

⁷⁴ New York Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, "Colonial New York," p. 124.

⁷⁵ In 1756 Waddell Cunningham of New York appears on the Philadelphia Ship Register as part owner of the ship *Union*, *Pa. Mag. of Hist. & Biog.*, XXV, 573.

⁷⁶ "Aspinwall Papers," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, 4th series, X, 536. *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 307. The case of Forsey vs. Cunningham involved the important question as to whether appeals in fact as well as in law from the verdicts of juries lay to the Governor and Council and thence to the King in Council. Robert Ross Waddell acted as representative of Cunningham in the appeal. Cunningham appears as of Belfast with Hamilton Young and Robert Ross Waddell of New York as joint owners of the ship *Peace and Plenty* in 1773. *Pa. Mag. of Hist. & Biog.*, XXVIII, 479.

⁷⁷ C. O. 5: 1228.

so we really think it is a bad time, as little we find can be done at present."⁷⁸

Merchants from the British Isles resident in New York paid occasional visits home, and accounts of their success drew younger sons and relatives back to the new world with them. Robert Neilson of Maddbenny, Ireland, wrote to his brother-in-law: "William Neilson is now here and sold a large cargo of flaxseed this year in Dublin, he sets out from home tomorrow on his way to London and from that to Newyorke [*sic*] . . . I have five Children alive & Intend to send my oldest son to Newyork this Summer."⁷⁹ The William Neilson mentioned was one of the large dry-goods importers in the city and one of the original members of the Chamber of Commerce.⁸⁰

Quite as fundamental as the British trade was the commerce with the Caribbean. In the semi-tropical community from the Bahamas to Dutch Guiana the New York merchant found not only the largest market for his native produce, since the flour, lumber, beef and pork which England spurned were welcome in the West Indies; but he also obtained products without which trade with the mother country would have been impossible. Besides the goods bought for re-export abroad, large quantities of molasses and muscovado sugar were imported to supply the refineries and distilleries in the province. Contemporary observers agree that the imports from the West Indies were considerably smaller than the exports to them; indeed, William Smith asserts that "the balance against them would be much more in our favour if the indulgence to our sugar colonies did not enable them

⁷⁸ Orr, Dunlope & Glenholme, Letter Book, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁷⁹ *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.*, LI, 338.

⁸⁰ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, "Colonial New York," pp. 152-153.

to sell their produce at a higher rate than either the Dutch or the French islands."⁸¹

In view of the unfortunate dearth of figures concerning this branch of New York commerce, we can only estimate that it accounted for fully half of the yearly exports of the province and for about thirty or forty per cent of the imports, exclusive of gold and bills of exchange. In volume it formed about forty-five per cent of all overseas shipping, being sometimes double those to Great Britain.⁸² To be sure, the average size of vessels trading to England was about three times that of those trading with the West Indies, vessels in the latter trade averaging only about forty tons. On the other hand, four round voyages a year could be made to the West Indies against a possible two to the British Isles. Some idea of what this trade meant in the daily life of the port can be gathered from the lists in the weekly newspapers of the vessels entered or cleared. In the week ending February 4, 1760, for example, of twenty-five ships outward bound, ten were going to the West Indies. A week later, five out of seventeen had sailed for the same destination. On August 25 the arrival of eleven vessels was announced; of these, four came from Jamaica. On the same date, of fourteen ships sailing, four were bound for Jamaica, one for Barbados, one for Antigua and one for St. Kitts.⁸³

Shipping lists indicate that the bulk of New York's commerce was with the British possessions, especially with Jamaica.⁸⁴ Of the 315 ships which entered from or cleared

⁸¹ William Smith, *History of the Late Province of New York*, 2 vols., New York Historical Society Collections (1829 and 1830), I, 280; *New York Col. Docs.*, VII, 759; MacPherson, *Annals of Commerce* (4 vols., London, 1805), III, 397.

⁸² See Appendix G.

⁸³ *New York Gazette*, 1760.

⁸⁴ See Appendix E; C. O. 5: 1227, 1228.

to the Caribbean region on an average each year, 85 declared Jamaica their origin or their destination. The trade to Jamaica amounted to a little over one-quarter of that with the entire Caribbean region and to about a third or a half of that to the British possessions alone. The total shipping to Jamaica averaged about 3,400 tons a year. The remaining trade with British possessions was chiefly with the Leeward Islands, St. Christopher and Antigua being the most important for New York. Direct sailings between New York and Barbados were comparatively rare, no more than fifteen voyages being made thither in any year. John Watts wrote to a friend in Boston in 1763 to acknowledge the receipt of a letter and enclosure "which I must send to Philadelphia for a conveyance to Barbados as we have little or no intercourse to that island from hence." "Philadelphia," he added, "has a great deal."⁸⁸

The proportion of New York trade which was carried on with foreign islands cannot be ascertained, nor are evidences of direct international trade to be found in official records. In view of the policy of France, however, it is probable that there was very little such trade with French ports except during war time. Exchange was effected through the Dutch and Danish neutral ports, particularly St. Eustatius, St. Thomas, St. Croix (or Santa Cruz) and Curaçao.⁸⁹ One-third of New York's Caribbean trade was to these ports, and since a much larger number of ships cleared for them than entered from them, it is probable that a large part of the exports were paid for in bills and gold, and that many ships touched at other islands on the way home, both to get a cargo and to obtain a clearance which would cover contraband

⁸⁸ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 113; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 17, 81, 130.

⁸⁹ Frank W. Pitman, *Development of the British West Indies* (New Haven, 1917), pp. 279-280; also C. O. 5: 1227, 1228.

goods to be landed before entering port.⁸⁷ The most important of the neutral ports was Curaçao, whose trade attracted most of the prominent New York merchants, the Gouverneurs, Livingstons, Crugers, Van Cortlandts, Waltons, Franklins, Wallaces and Cuylers, and the shipping to which in 1764 ranked second only to that with Jamaica.⁸⁸ This was by no means a new situation. As far back as 1737 it was remarked that New York's imports from the foreign sugar islands were small, but that the province had a considerable export trade in provisions, lumber and horses to St. Thomas, Curaçao and Surinam.⁸⁹

Some trade was also carried on with free ports in the Spanish Islands, particularly Havana and various ports in Hispaniola—Port au Prince, Auxcayes and Monte Christi, the latter made free during the Seven Years' War. "The Spaniards," wrote William Smith, "commonly contract for provisions with merchants in this . . . colony . . . very much to the advantage of both the contractors and the public because the returns are made wholly in cash."⁹⁰

Although some of the mahogany and logwood which the province sent to England was undoubtedly procured from the West India islands, a very considerable trade, perhaps third in importance after that of Jamaica and Curaçao, was carried on with Honduras and the Mosquito Coast. Twenty ships, totalling 695 tons in 1754 and 970 tons in 1764, entered New York from that region. The smallness of the settlements there is reflected in the disproportionate number of clearances, for in 1754 no ships declared the Mosquito Coast of Honduras their destination, and in 1763 but one

⁸⁷ Pitman, *Development of the British West Indies*, pp. 279-280; also C. O. 5: 1227, 1228.

⁸⁸ C. O. 5: 1227, 1228.

⁸⁹ Pitman, *Development of the British West Indies*, pp. 281-2.

⁹⁰ William Smith, *History of the Late Province*, I, 280.

vessel of fifteen tons went there directly, though five entered with a total burden of 170 tons. The provincial cargoes were usually sold elsewhere and the proceeds used to purchase wood from the "factories."⁸¹

The chief characteristic of New York's Caribbean commerce is this concentration of trade at three points, Jamaica, Curaçao, and Honduras. The two Leeward Islands, St. Christopher and Antigua, were the only other really important trading centers. It was to these centers that most merchants consigned their cargoes, and there they had their regular correspondents from whom they ordered their shipments. Too much emphasis should not be placed upon this concentration, for although individual islands saw few ships from New York each year, their combined trade indicates a tendency toward diversification which was probably stronger than naval office lists indicate because of the practice of trading round both for markets and for return cargoes. The marked discrepancy between entries and clearances at the various ports also corroborates the evidence of the letterbooks that the West Indian trade was in many instances a kind of circuitous peddling. Many more ships cleared for Jamaica, Curaçao, St. Eustatius and St. Croix, Antigua and St. Kitts than returned from them. On the other hand, more ships entered from the Leeward Islands and Honduras than were destined thither.

New York merchants commonly had agents resident in the West Indies, but letter books and ledgers also show that no merchant confined himself to any one correspondent or any one port. All had connections with at least two islands and many had more than one customer in a single place.⁸²

⁸¹ C. O. 5: 1227, 1228.

⁸² C. O. 5: 1228. The ships of Philip Livingston, for example, went to Jamaica, Honduras, St. Christophers, Antigua, the Virgin Islands, St. Croix and Surinam; those of the Crugers to Jamaica, the Mosquito

In many cases the agent was a merchant trading on his own account for whom the American firm acted on the continent. Both sides did business both by order and consignment. John Watts wrote to Gedney Clarke, Jr., of Barbados in 1765, offering to act as agent, "should any of your friends be inclinable to ship rum to the northward in the fall . . .," and added, "I should not dislike being concerned in a cargo of about a hundred or a hundred and twenty hogsheads myself."⁸⁸ Americans in general did not think highly of the business ability of most native West Indians, and New Yorkers were of the same opinion. In common with merchants of Philadelphia, Charleston and Boston, they found the planters and traders in the islands careless in keeping their accounts, unconcerned about piling up debts, and excessively slow pay.⁸⁴ Van Cortlandt, after his agent in St. Croix had delayed two years in making a promised remittance, was finally forced to send the master of his ship to collect the debt.⁸⁵ Experiences such as this were undoubtedly the reason why the trade of the province was concentrated in the hands of New Yorkers resident in the West Indies.

Many a younger son, attracted by the opportunity to make or mend his fortune, had established himself in business in Jamaica or Curaçao, where he acted as factor or customer for New York merchants. Such an one was William Lloyd,

Coast, St. Eustatius, Curacao, Antigua, St. Christophers and Montserrat. Evert Byvanck sent his vessel to Jamaica, Honduras, the Mosquitoes, Curaçao and the Virgin Islands. Letter books and ledgers confirm this evidence.

⁸⁸ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 360-361.

⁸⁴ Agnes M. Whitson, "The Outlook of the Continental American Colonies on the British West Indies, 1760-1775," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLV, 70-71.

⁸⁵ Van Cortlandt Letter Book to Sovereign Bagge, Dec. 17, 1773, Feb. 1, 1774, Feb. 15, 1775.

the fourth son of Henry Lloyd of Lloyd's Neck, who settled in Kingston, Jamaica, about 1752 and in 1754 entered into partnership with C. Seymour. Through his father he became a factor for many merchants in New York, and through his brother Henry he had "an Interest" in Boston.⁹⁶ His sudden death in 1755 did not deprive New York merchants of personal acquaintance in Jamaica. There was still the firm of Perry & Ludlow.⁹⁷ There was also John Harris Cruger, son of Henry Cruger of New York and grandson of a Jamaica planter.⁹⁸ The Livingstons had a representative in Henry Livingston, who had begun business in Antigua in the 1740's in partnership with his brother William, but had since moved to Jamaica. Some time later he was joined by two nephews, Philip and Peter Van Brugh Livingston, the sons of the Philip Livingston who was to sign the Declaration of Independence.⁹⁹

Even more numerous were the transplanted New Yorkers in Curaçao—perhaps an index of the importance of the trade with that place. Merchants of Dutch origin in New York may have begun the commerce with this Dutch island, though by 1750 interest seems to have been equally strong among all nationals. There were in this period at least six firms in Curaçao having direct personal connections with New York. Another Philip Livingston, a cousin of the famous member of the Continental Congress, had been in business there for some time, but he died at some date between 1750 and

⁹⁶ *Lloyd Papers*, II.

⁹⁷ Cuyler Letter Book, to John Ludlow, June 13, 1758; *Banker Waste Book*, Feb. 20, 1750.

⁹⁸ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, Nov. 17, 1763; "Cruger Records," *New York General & Biog. Record*, VI, 74-77.

⁹⁹ Alexander Letters, I, fol. 1744-50; E. B. Livingston, *The Livingstons of Livingston Manor* (New York, 1910), pp. 531, 560; *New Jersey Archives*, XXV, 222.

1753.¹⁰⁰ The ubiquitous Cruger family was represented by Telemon Cruger, who was in partnership with Daniel Moore; Moore apparently resided in Curaçao continuously while Cruger made many visits to New York.¹⁰¹ Sons of two Dutch families from Albany formed the firm of John Cuyler & Myndert Lansingh, which had special arrangements for the care of its business in New York.¹⁰² Nicholas and Isaac Gouverneur carried on a profitable trade with New York, as did Depeyster & Duyckinck, Bowen & Van Ranst. The last firm later became Lefferts & Van Ranst.¹⁰³ The Crugers, Van Ranst, the Cuylers and the Gouverneurs had ships which plied between the two ports. Although trade with St. Eustatius was brisk, apparently only one New Yorker, John Remsen, was established there.¹⁰⁴

Other young merchants went to the Danish islands. Cornelius Kortright and Nicholas Cruger set up counting houses in St. Croix, while David Beekman, the younger brother of the Gerard already mentioned, became a sugar planter as well as a trader there.¹⁰⁵

Constant commercial intercourse led naturally to other ties between New York and the Caribbean. A few New

¹⁰⁰ Livingston Letters I (Volume of Photostats in N. Y. Public Library), p. 176; Wm. Alexander Letters I, fol. 1752-1754; Alexander Papers II, A, B & R.

¹⁰¹ Moore may also have been in charge of a branch in Jamaica. Cf. C. O. 5:1228, entries and clearances for 1764-5 and Letter Book of Thomas Riche, to Capt. Ed. Nichols, Mar. 15, 1763, and to Capt. Joseph Marston, June 2, 1763.

¹⁰² Cuyler Letter Book, to his father, Nov. 4, 1756, and to brother Henry, July 15, 1756. Lansingh died about 1755, but Cuyler continued the business. Cf. C. O. 5:1228.

¹⁰³ Wm. Alexander Letters, I, fol. 1752-1754. From Bowen & Van Ranst, July 14, 1753. Cf. C. O. 5:1228.

¹⁰⁴ Letter Book of Thomas Riche, to Henry Remsen, Nov. 18, 1766.

¹⁰⁵ Beekman Letter Book, April 14, 1756, to Capt. Montgomery, April 8, 1756. Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Richard Mackay, May 24, 1766.

Yorkers owned land in the islands, particularly in Jamaica,¹⁰⁶ and an estate for sale in Antigua was advertised in New York papers.¹⁰⁷ Sons for whom no suitable business arrangements could be made in the colonies were sent to the West Indies to serve their apprenticeship.¹⁰⁸ The acquaintance which would be made during such a stay, or even during a visit as supercargo, might lead to a permanent settlement and even closer ties. Young men like Philip Livingston, whose business kept them in the islands, married there;¹⁰⁹ Henry Cruger, Sr., had brought his bride back to New York from Jamaica;¹¹⁰ Telemon Cruger found a wife in Curaçao, and his brother Nicholas twice capitulated to young ladies of St. Croix.¹¹¹ West Indian heiresses were highly regarded in the colonies, and young men setting out for the islands were advised not to miss the chance of marrying a rich Creole.¹¹²

New York's commerce with the Dutch possessions in the Caribbean had a direct connection with its commercial intercourse with Holland. Not only did the provincial merchants procure Dutch manufactures which were much cheaper than the same quality of British goods, but through the dependencies they were enabled to make payments to creditors in Amsterdam. Bills of exchange were more easily remitted through Surinam than through New York, and logwood might be sent directly from Honduras to Amsterdam.¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ Add. Mss. 12,246: List of Landholders in Jamaica in 1750, lists 12, 39, 67.

¹⁰⁷ *New York Mercury*, Nov. 16, 1767.

¹⁰⁸ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 359.

¹⁰⁹ E. B. Livingston, *The Livingstons of Livingston Manor*, p. 560.

¹¹⁰ "Cruger Records," *New York Gen. & Biog. Record*, VI, 74-77.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

¹¹² Agnes M. Whitson, "The Outlook of the Continental American Colonies on the British West Indies, 1760-1775," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLV, 63.

¹¹³ Stirling Papers, I, to John de Neufville, January 14, 1755 (p. 92) and Wm. Alexander Papers, II, A. B. & R., to same Mar. 19, 1758.

Ludlow and his associates used logwood as advance payment for a return cargo of linen and tea which was to be smuggled in at Stamford.¹¹⁴ A certain amount of direct trade with Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Hamburg was carried on, presumably in accordance with the Acts of Trade. It engaged three or four ships a year.¹¹⁵ All of it, however, was under suspicion, for the vessels usually entered New York in ballast or with a very small legal cargo. Consul Walters reported to the Board of Trade in 1765 that although the trade to Rotterdam was chiefly through England, drugs and dye woods were sent from the Bay of Honduras chiefly by New York, Boston and Rhode Island; in times of peace this trade amounted to about 1,000 to 1,500 tons of logwood and 500 to 2,000 tons of other "dying wood from the coast of Guinea." The exports to the colonies, he adds, are chiefly Palatines.¹¹⁶ In 1768 he reported that the trade to North America, exclusive of the ships carrying settlers, had grown since the last peace.¹¹⁷ Letter books and invoices indicate, however, that the unofficial exports to the provinces included much more than Palatines, and American trade with Hamburg, except for the war years, seems to have been almost entirely illicit, at least as far as return cargoes were concerned.¹¹⁸ One ship ventured as far east as St. Petersburg, returning to New York in 1764 laden with iron, flax, hides, cordage, linen, raven duck and sail-cloth.¹¹⁹ The consensus of official opinion, however, was that the greater

¹¹⁴ Ludlow Letter Book, to John de Neufville, Jan. 5, 1756.

¹¹⁵ See Appendix, "Entries and Clearances for 1754 and 1764," and "Entries and Clearances, 1768-1772."

¹¹⁶ C. O. 388: #95, I (13).

¹¹⁷ Treasury Papers I: 468.

¹¹⁸ See chap. vii.

¹¹⁹ C. O. 388: # 95, I (22) C.

part of the commerce with the Baltic was clandestine and in violation of the trade laws.

Most of the Dutch trade seems to have been with Amsterdam. As in the case of England and the West Indies, merchants in New York tended to trade with the same group of correspondents—John de Neufville & Son, the banking firm of Amsterdam who later supplied the Continental forces; John Hodshon, apparently an English merchant, possibly a member of the British factory, and Daniel Crommelin and Son.¹²⁰ The most interesting of these houses was that of Crommelin, founded twenty-five years earlier by Charles Crommelin. The descendant of an old Dutch family which had taken refuge in France during the Spanish domination, Crommelin had migrated to the new world after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and finally arrived in New York via the West Indies. He founded in 1720 the Holland Trading Company, which for years conducted an extensive and lucrative business between Amsterdam and New York. In this enterprise he was associated with other well-known Amsterdam bankers, Messrs. Willincks, Ten Broeck & Schemmelpennick. Some time later he founded the great Amsterdam banking house of Crommelin & Zoon, the transatlantic branch being managed by his eldest son, Daniel. After his death, the New York business was continued by his younger son, Robert. Daniel Crommelin eventually returned to New York and died there in 1768, but the firm name was continued. His daughter Elizabeth married Gabriel Ludlow of New York, and their eldest son, Daniel, was sent at fifteen to Amsterdam to learn the business of a merchant at the counting house of Crommelin

¹²⁰ Cf. Cayler Letter Book, to John Hodshon, Aug. 9, 1755; Ludlow Letter Book, to John de Neufville and Daniel Crommelin, *passim*; Stirling Papers I, to John de Neufville, Jan. 24, 1755; Banker Waste Book, to Daniel Crommelin, Aug. 20, 1754.

& Zoon. The Crommelins had wide connections in New York, another son-in-law being Gulian Verplanck, and inter-marriage between the New York and Amsterdam branches continued to strengthen overseas ties well into the nineteenth century.¹²¹

A considerable and growing trade was carried on between New York and southern Europe and the Wine Islands. In 1754 five ships entered New York from south European ports and three cleared, but between 1754 and 1772 the trade increased eight-fold. Ships sailing to that part of the world had to carry "Mediterranean passes" as the evidence of their right to the freedom from molestation which the British government bought for its citizens from the Barbary pirates. Of those issued for vessels owned in New York, only a few named ports inside the straits of Gibraltar—three were bound to Venice, four to Leghorn, two to Barcelona. A somewhat larger number of ships were destined to Gibraltar and to Cadiz, but the favorite port was Lisbon, where rice, fish and lumber were exchanged for lemons, limes, raisins, salt, almonds and olive oil.¹²² Such was the importance of the New York and Philadelphia trade to the British factory at Lisbon that Consul Ibbetson protested against the act of 1764 as harmful to their interests, since the colonial lumber was now going to the Azores and thence by Portuguese ships to Spain, while the requirement that produce from southern Europe must touch at English ports amounted to a prohibition of the fruit trade because fruit was perishable. The wine trade was turned over entirely to Madeira because the additional voyage raised the price of Spanish wines to an unprofitable figure.¹²³

¹²¹ William Seton Gordon, "Gabriel Ludlow and his Descendants," *New York Geneal. & Biog. Record*, L, 34.

¹²² *Admiralty Papers* 7: 136, 138, 139.

¹²³ C. O. 388: 95 I. Report on trade in Lisbon, Aug. 3, 1765.

The largest part of the trade to "southern Europe" was with the Wine Islands. Twice as many passes were issued allowing ships to go to Madeira, Fyall and Teneriffe as to Lisbon and Oporto. It was an important branch of trade for New York not only because of the demand for wine in the province, but also because most remittances were made in gold and silver. The trade was not entirely in native products of New York, fish, for example, being procured from New England and Newfoundland. Philip Cuyler proposed to employ a ship constantly in trade from New York to Newfoundland and Madeira until he heard that the market was overstocked with fish.¹²⁴ The legislation of 1764 seems to have had little or no effect on this branch of trade, for it continued to increase, but Watts reported early in 1764 that the market was glutted with large shipments brought in to avoid the duty which would shortly be operative.¹²⁵ New York was so partial to Madeira wine that a special variety was named for the province, and Philadelphia visitors raised their eyebrows at the capacity of its people. William Gordon wrote to Chief Justice Allen in 1754:

America in general complains of the high prices of Madeira, indeed I was at a loss what to attribute it to, that instead of [diminishing] they annually increased in value upon us, but my eyes were opened, and if the sons follow in the footsteps of their fathers which they d[rink] enough to do I make not the least doubt in a few years to read the Province of New York consumes the whole vintage of [Madeira]. Never did I see the like, Never do I believe there [existed a] city more thoroughly devoted to Bacchus. He orders [where] ever they meet. But what amazes me the more [they devote] themselves to him the healthier they appear. . . . Madeira is the remedy

¹²⁴ Cuyler Letter Book, to Scott, Pringle & Cheap, Jan. 16, 1759.

¹²⁵ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 286.

for all disorders and they tell me [if I would but] turn off my doctors and drink more of it, it would be better for me.¹²⁶

Finally, there was a small trade with Africa, no more than five ships entering from or clearing to the Guinea coast in any year. The slaves procured there were usually sold in the West Indies, Charleston or in Florida after the British occupation, in exchange for sugar or gold, partly because of the small demand at home and partly because of the heavy head tax. Ships returning directly from Africa were usually laden with gold, ivory and spices.¹²⁷

It is difficult to form an accurate idea of the total value of the trade of New York, for the figures are incomplete, scattered, and more often estimates than records. What we have, when taken in connection with the shipping returns, show at least that the trade of the province had been constantly growing during the eighteenth century and reached its high water mark during the colonial period just before the Revolution. The report of the Board of Trade to the king in 1721 shows a small community whose annual clearances averaged 215 ships totalling about 7,464 tons, and whose imports from Great Britain were valued at about £50,000 per annum while the goods sent in exchange ran from £16,000 to £22,000.¹²⁸ By 1750 exports to Great Britain had doubled and imports were almost five times as great. The shipping in 1754 showed an increase of 66 per cent over the earlier figure and more than tripled between 1754 and 1774. Part of this great increase is due to the fact that more vessels trading along the coast had to clear

¹²⁶ William Gordon to William Allen, March 9, 1754. Ms. in Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹²⁷ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Capt. Richard Mackay, May 5, 1765; to Roger Richards, Sept. 20, 1771; Ledger C, 272, "Voyage to Sier Leon"; C. O. 5: 1227, 1228; Customs Papers 16: 1.

¹²⁸ *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, V, 601, 618.

through the customs after 1764, but the entries and clearances for the extra-continental trade alone show an increase of more than fifty per cent in these two decades, mounting from 20,765 tons in 1754 to 34,357 tons in 1774.¹²⁹ Similar evidence of the growth of shipping is afforded by comparing the report of Governor Clinton in 1749 showing 157 ships totalling 6,406 tons registered with the Customs House, with that of Governor Tryon, who reported 477 vessels, with a total of 19,514 tons, registered in 1762 and 709 vessels of 29,132 tons in 1772.¹³⁰

In the matter of value we are not so fortunate, since the only complete series of figures for this period is for the exports and imports to Great Britain; there are no estimates of the intercolonial trade, and only two which differentiate between the different kinds of overseas commerce. Neither is it possible to learn the rate of increase from 1750 to 1775. By 1768 exports and imports, exclusive of intercolonial exchanges, amounted to £762,840, and to £420,882 in 1769, the year of the first non-importation agreement.¹³¹ Even

¹²⁹ C. O. 5: 1227, 1228. Customs 16: 1. See Appendix D and G. The growth of shipping is specifically as follows:

	<i>Cleared</i>	<i>Entered</i>
1715-18	7,464 tons	
1754	12,686	12,506
1764	17,022	16,660
1774	40,216	40,812

¹³⁰ *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, VI, 511; VIII, 446.

¹³¹

	1768		1769	
	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>
Gt. Britain ...	£ 91,437. 5.7	£482,930.	£113,382. 8.8	£ 75,930.19. 7
Ireland	23,702. 5.7			
S. Europe	19,154.11.6	20,618.16. 3	50,885.13.0	14,927. 7. 8
West Indies ..	54,983.14.0	70,015. 3. 7	66,324.17.5	97,420. 4. 0
	£189,277.16.8	£573,562.19.10	£231,906. 1.7	£188,976. 1. 3

these years do not seem to have been typical for they differ not only from each other but also from other estimates which were apparently made on the basis of documents which have since disappeared. Although the total exports amounted to £189,277 in 1768, they total £231,906 in 1769, while for 1765-66 Lord Sheffield estimates them at £251,934 exclusive of several important items such as naval stores, logwood, indigo, rice and fish, which would amount to about £60,000 more.¹²² Exports probably averaged about £250,000 or £275,000. Had the imports from England been normal, say £400,000, the total for 1769 would be £513,045, which agrees in general with the figure for 1768. It would also be desirable to know how the figures for imports from and exports to the West Indies were computed, for these statistics do not bear out the general opinion of contemporaries that the balance of trade with the West Indies was in favor of New York. Both value and volume continued to increase down to the Revolution. In 1774 Governor Tryon estimated that the exports and imports to Great Britain averaged in normal years £130,000 and £500,000 respectively, both generous estimates, while the trade to foreign Europe was worth £150,000 in exports and £100,000 in imports annually.¹²³

In comparison with other North American provinces, New York rated as the third or fourth port on the continent, Philadelphia being easily first and Boston and Charleston second and third. The generalization needs qualifying, however. In the volume of shipping to Great Britain New York was surpassed by both Charleston and Boston, but exceeded Philadelphia. Philadelphia and New York were the only important traders with Ireland, Boston being a

¹²² Sheffield, *Observations on the Commerce of the American States*, Appendix XI.

¹²³ *N. Y. Col. Mss.*, VIII, 447. Cf. Appendix B.

poor third. In shipping to Southern Europe Philadelphia again led the way, with New York and Charleston competing for second place and Boston ranking fourth. With the West Indies Philadelphia had the largest volume of trade, Boston came next, and New York and Charleston competed for third place.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ Customs 16: 1. See Appendix G.

CHAPTER VI

BUSINESS RELATIONS WITH THE CONTINENTAL COLONIES

It is often assumed that the political divisions which set off each province as a separate entity also raised barriers against any important intercourse, either social or economic, between them, and caused them to develop individually in a semi-isolation in which they faced eastward towards England and southward towards the West Indies, but seldom glanced to either side until the need for joint action was forced upon them by the Revolution. Recent studies have shown, however, that before the Revolution there was a considerable amount of intercolonial communication with a resulting interchange of political, religious, social and cultural ideas.¹ Increasing travel during the eighteenth century had multiplied individual contacts, both social and professional. Not the least important of these were the business connections established between the provinces. Trade was often the first bond between colony and colony, but friendships, marriages and the exchange of political opinions quickly developed during the visits to other cities which business entailed upon the merchant.

Individuals journeyed from province to province by horse, carriage or stage-coach over the newly improved roads that by 1760 linked the large towns from Boston to Charleston; but merchandise was more often sent by water than by land, for shipping was cheaper, frequently quicker, and more convenient, especially for New York, since goods coming by

¹ Especially Michael Kraus, *Intercolonial Aspects of American Culture on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York, 1928).

land had to be ferried over to Manhattan. Land traffic was especially handicapped in the vast reaches south of Philadelphia, where the roads impeded even the post. "Your favour of the 12th of November," grumbled John Watts to Colonel Byrd of Virginia, "has reached me by the Post & a meer Post & Pillar too he must be to take two months to travel from your neighborhood."² As a result the trade of New York with the southern colonies was confined to coast and river ports. A large part of the trade with the farmers and retailers in New Jersey was carried by wagons and ferries to its destination, while a small amount of the same kind of goods came and went to Connecticut by the Harlem Bridge and the road to New Haven. The stage-wagons between New York and Philadelphia also carried freight as well as passengers, especially during the winter when the Delaware and Schuylkill were frozen. But transportation by sloop and schooner was by far the most favored; even letters to clients were delivered more often by the ship's master than by the postman.

The coastwise trade of New York had developed because of the comparative lack of native commodities which might be exported to England, while the growth of manufactures and agriculture provided a number of products for which markets could be found along the Atlantic seaboard as well as in the West Indies. As in its overseas trade, however, the intercolonial commerce of the province was dominated by its position as an entrepôt, for New York collected from neighboring provinces commodities for re-export not only to Britain and to southern Europe but also to the West Indies, and supplied them with manufactures and tropical products. On the other hand, New York was also a market for certain colonial manufactures, especially those of New England,

² *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 323.

particularly oil, rum, lampblack, salt fish, certain kinds of wrought iron, tin work and brassware. At the same time the provincial merchant found in neighboring colonies a vent for overlarge supplies and a convenient magazine to supplement low stocks, a fact which undoubtedly accounted for a considerable part of the total volume of intercolonial trade.

Commerce with the southern colonies was less important than with the northern and middle sections, not only on account of the poor overland communication, but chiefly because few articles of southern production were in demand, and there was little call in the south for those of New York. After 1750 commercial intercourse increased somewhat as the population of the south grew and the consumption of staples rose. This growth was accompanied by certain changes in the nature of the trade. The trade in rice with South Carolina, which had been established early in the eighteenth century and up to 1750 had been the most important branch of southern trade, was surpassed in 1768 by the trade with North Carolina in naval stores and skins and with Virginia in wheat.³ The Virginia grain trade must also have tapped the sources in Maryland, since the shipping to and from that province does not justify the assertion of contemporaries that a great deal of wheat was imported from that province. Wheat growing in Virginia had developed largely since 1750 and was still in the experimental stage. Watts, who received fairly regular shipments from his cousin John Riddell, complained that the wheat was not sufficiently prepared and dried "and the shipping too little attended to, to preserve it during the course of a long voyage,"⁴ while Van Cortlandt objected that the shipments which his correspondent had been sending were very dirty and did not weigh more than fifty-six pounds to a

³ See Appendix G.

⁴ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 322.

bushel.⁵ A small amount of Virginia tobacco was imported into New York where it was manufactured into snuff and rappee.⁶

The importation by New York of grain and a certain quantity of pork and beef from Virginia points to an interesting situation. By 1768 the commerce of New York with the West Indies and Madeira had evidently grown so large that, in order to meet the demands of a trade which had originated in its own need for markets, the colony had to supplement its native crops with those of neighbors even more distant than New Jersey and Connecticut. During this same period, it is true, New York was exporting large quantities of wheat and flour to Great Britain to relieve the scarcity there;⁷ but the West India trade was as necessary as it had ever been, for an increasing population meant an increasing demand for British goods to be paid for from the proceeds of the island trade.

Commerce with North Carolina in furs and naval stores centered in Newbern and attracted some eminent merchants, among them Peter Van Brugh Livingston and William Alexander.⁸ Although the trade with Charleston was no longer preeminent, its continued importance is evidenced by the reprints of prices current there which appeared from time to time in the weekly newspapers. Van Cortlandt found Charleston an excellent market for the slaves which his ship brought from Africa, as well as for his sugar. A few ships laden with British and New England manufactures, food-stuffs, tea and Madeira wine went to Georgia and brought back rice to New York.⁹

⁵ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to John Riddlehurst, Nov. 17, 1762.

⁶ Rappee was a dark, strong-flavored snuff made from the ranker tobacco leaves.

⁷ See chapter v.

⁸ William Alexander Papers, Letters I, fol. 1744-1750, to Capt. Dunbiven, Dec. 20, 1749.

⁹ Beekman Letter Book, to James E. Powel, May 30 and Nov. 2, 1755.

Business relations with the south were, therefore, neither close nor regular. The Schermerhorns, indeed, after establishing their packet service to Charleston in 1728, usually had one member of the family established there,¹⁰ and important Charleston merchants such as Henry Laurens, considered it wise to have a correspondent in New York.¹¹ When a merchant, of whom John Van Cortlandt is an example, had a considerable amount of business with Virginia or some other southern colony, he usually made a local merchant his factor, but much of the trade with those provinces seems to have been done through ships' masters who came with a cargo, disposed of it, and took on another according to orders.¹²

The trade with New England, the earliest to develop in point of time, continued to be the largest in point of volume throughout the colonial period.¹³ Breadstuffs formed the basis of this commerce, for soon after the opening of the eighteenth century the colonies to the north of New York had found themselves unable to raise enough for their own consumption. In consequence there was a brisk regular trade in flour and cereals between New York and Boston, and to a slight extent with the retail merchants of the small ports in New Hampshire and Maine—Portsmouth, Piscataqua and Falmouth—in return for which fish for the trade to southern Europe, oil and rum were the usual payment. The island colony of Newfoundland should be included in

¹⁰ R. Schermerhorn, *The Schermerhorn Family* (New York, 1914), pp. 154-156.

¹¹ David D. Wallace, *Life of Henry Laurens* (New York and London, 1915), p. 55.

¹² Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Ruscoe Sweeny, Abraham Maer, and Robert Tucker, *passim*. Cuyler Letter Book, to William Proctor, July 5, 1755.

¹³ Emory R. Johnson, *Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the U. S.*, I, 163-169. See Appendix G.

this branch of commerce, since it was a natural extension of the New England trade and furnished the same kind of market. By 1775 it was, indeed, the most frequent destination for New York ships after Rhode Island and Connecticut, although few Newfoundland vessels entered at the Hudson's mouth.¹⁴

On the other hand, in 1750, commerce with Massachusetts was more important than that with either Rhode Island or Connecticut.¹⁵ The trade centered in Boston, with whose important merchants, among them John Rowe,¹⁶ John Erving,¹⁷ Charles Apthorp,¹⁸ and Henry Lloyd,¹⁹ New York merchants corresponded regularly. Peter Faneuil, for example, did a good deal of business about 1742 with Gulian Verplanck in New York.²⁰ John Rowe, twenty years later, had several correspondents in New York, two of whom, David Van Horne and Philip Cuyler, were the most regular. To the first he sent a mahogany table and desk, and to the second deer-skins to be sold on account. He collected bills for Cuyler and wrote to Van Horne that the latter's suit against Joseph Greenleaf had been entrusted to an able attorney, James Otis. One winter his business took him to

¹⁴ See Appendix G.

¹⁵ The weekly newspapers show a greater number of clearances to and entries from Boston than Rhode Island. On March 5, 1750, for example, 1 ship entered from Boston and 3 cleared thither, while no ships were going to or coming from Rhode Island; on June 4, 3 entered from Boston, one from Rhode Island, while 4 cleared for Boston but none for Rhode Island. *New York Post Boy*.

¹⁶ A warden of King's Chapel in 1776. H. W. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel, Boston* (2 vols., Boston, 1882-96), II, 307.

¹⁷ He married Maria Catherina, daughter of Gov. Shirley—E. A. Jones, *Loyalists of Mass.*, p. 133.

¹⁸ See *infra*, pp. 216-219.

¹⁹ See *infra*, pp. 220-221.

²⁰ William B. Weedon, *Economic and Social History of New England, 1620-1789* (2 vols., Boston and New York, 1890), II, 615.

New York where he visited the Van Hornes and made a number of friends whose visits to him after his return to Boston he recorded with care and evident pleasure.²¹

By 1765, however, although the trade with Boston had decreased but little, the greatly increased shipping to Rhode Island had ousted Boston from its preeminence.²² Begun during the war, the change was probably stimulated by the illicit trade under flags of truce, but the gain was maintained after the declaration of peace. Business with Rhode Island in general was not on a large scale, consisting chiefly of small cargoes traded back and forth to take advantage of a market. The province afforded an illustration of a particular characteristic of the New England trade, namely the practice of sending surplus stock, or goods which for any reason were unsatisfactory for the home market, to be sold for what they would bring.²³ New York sent the usual food-stuffs—flour, pork, molasses, rice, rum, indigo, ginger and naval stores—and in return bought spermaceti candles, oil, iron pots and deer-skins. Most of the British manufactures sold in Providence and Newport also came from New York. John Lees, a traveller who passed through these towns on his way to Canada, asserted that Providence had only one vessel a year from London, and that Newport sent much of the returns from its West India trade to New York to pay for English manufactures.²⁴ Even the "most considerable merchants" received cargoes through New York.

²¹ *Letters and Diary of John Rowe*, ed. Anne Rowe Cunningham, (Boston, 1903), *passim*.

²² See Appendix G.

²³ Beekman Letter Book, to John Sayre, Dec. 29, 1755. "Rather than to trouble in returning it (some poor indigo) have sent it to New England where I do not expect to sell it for more than 8 or 9d. a pound." See also chap. iii.

²⁴ Lees, John, *Journal of J. L. of Quebec, Merchant* (Detroit, 1911), pp. 10-12.

Sir Alexander Grant of London shipped sundry goods and china to Christopher Champlin in the care of Gerard G. Beekman at New York, and Henry Cruger frequently sent the goods ordered from him by Aaron Lopez to New York "knowing that . . . it would make only a day or two odds."²⁵

Trade relations with Newport and Providence were both more frequent and more intimate than those with Boston. New York merchants had more correspondents among important merchants there—the Champlins, Malbones and Ayraults—and a larger volume of goods was sent to and from the two colonies to be sold on commission. Practically all of Beekman's dealings with his correspondents, who were of excellent standing,²⁶ was of this kind. Letters to Rhode Island acknowledging the receipt of goods, giving statements of accounts current, advising of the shipment of cargoes from New York and the state of the market there form a large part of his correspondence. Newport and Providence merchants insured their ships through New York underwriters, joined New York correspondents in ventures to the West Indies, and shared in the purchase and outfitting of privateers.

Although there was an overland route to the Connecticut towns, land transportation was expensive, and trade went by water to the ports on Long Island Sound, Stamford, Norwalk, Bridgeport, Stratford, New Haven and New London.

²⁵ *Commerce of Rhode Island, Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, vol. 69, 189 and 117-119, 172, 194. Hereafter cited as *Commerce of Rhode Island*.

²⁶ Metcalf Bowler was one of the foremost merchants of Newport, for a time a partner of Christopher Champlin, and a vestryman of Christ Church. Beekman also traded directly with Champlin, with Evan and Francis Malbone, with Samuel Fowler and Solomon Townsend. Champlin was American agent for Sir Alexander Grant, the victualling agent of the British Navy. G. C. Mason, *Annals of Trinity Church, Newport* (Newport, 1890), 85, 89, 100, 107, 124, 134, 221.

There seems to have been a regular weekly packet to New London by 1772.²⁷ Sloops from New York pushed up the Connecticut as far as Middletown, Hartford and Windsor.²⁸ The falls and the shallow channel of the upper Housatonic probably prevented any water communication with the Berkshires, but goods ordered by traders of Stockbridge and Great Barrington²⁹ in western Massachusetts were sent up the Hudson to Albany and from there on the Boston and Albany post road to their destination.

Connecticut differed from the rest of New England in being a land of farmers and small storekeepers supplied by New York wholesalers, and the situation of New Jersey was much the same. Both were, so to speak, tributary provinces, dependent on their wealthier neighbor for the sale of their products and for imported European manufactures. Considering that the population of New York was smaller than that of Pennsylvania, Virginia or Massachusetts, the fact that, in 1770, the province imported more haberdashery and British linen than any other colony except Virginia, more Irish linen than any except Pennsylvania, and surpassed them all in the quantity of checked linens, printed and striped cottons and pewter, proves clearly that it supplied not only itself but also Connecticut and half of New Jersey with British manufactures.³⁰ A steady stream of farm products, particularly pork, beef and flaxseed, poured into New York from the east and the south which found its way in New York ships to the West Indies and Ireland. New Jersey pork had a specially good reputation among the merchants, and letters, as well as conjectures of

²⁷ *Norwich Packet*, 1772, *passim*.

²⁸ Cayler Letter Book, to Robert Nevens, Feb. 12, 1759; to Richard Alsop, same date; to Stephen Mears, July 21, 1760.

²⁹ Livingston Ledger A, pp. 23, 83, 84.

³⁰ Customs 16: 1.

travellers, indicate that the flaxseed trade with Ireland was largely supported by the Connecticut farmers.²¹

Since both Connecticut and New Jersey were at once markets and sources of raw materials, New York had to meet competition for their trade from Boston on the one hand and from Philadelphia on the other. Although shipping lists indicate that between 1768 and 1772 Connecticut's trade with Boston was somewhat larger than that with New York,²² there is some evidence that New York was beginning to oust its rival. John Adams observed at Middletown in 1774 that all the trade went to New York; there was but little connection with Boston which, he was told, had lost the trade of the colony by the severe laws which the Massachusetts General Court had passed against Connecticut's old tenor money.²³

New Jersey, then as now, was divided in interest, the southern towns of West Jersey looking toward Philadelphia while the north depended upon New York. In this province, as in Connecticut, the country shopkeepers of Newark, Elizabeth, Rahway, Woodbridge and New Brunswick received their regular supplies from New York. A correspondent of the *New York Mercury*, who signed himself "B. C. Caesaria," indicated the relative importance of business in New Jersey. "Like most Jerseymen," he wrote, "I am not much of a merchant."²⁴ Even those merchants who corresponded directly with the English wholesalers had their goods shipped to New York.²⁵ Since boats going from

²¹ John Adams, *Diary*, p. 341. See also chap. v.

²² See Appendix G.

²³ John Adams, *Diary*, 276.

²⁴ *New American Magazine*, July, 1768. Quoted in *New Jersey Archives*, XX, 260.

²⁵ E. g., Andrew Johnston & Co. of Perth Amboy who advertised an assortment of European & India goods from London via New York, *New York Mercury*, June 14, 1762.

New York City to ports on New York Bay or the Raritan were probably not required to clear through the Customs House, the shipping lists show only the unimportant amount of tonnage which was bound to southern points such as Salem, Egg Harbor and Cape May. Furthermore, as the distances were shorter and the roads more frequented, a large proportion of the trade from northern New Jersey was carried in wagons to the Hudson and ferried across to Manhattan, the imported goods returning in the same fashion. One of the inducements most emphasized in advertising land for sale in New Jersey was its strategic position on or near the road to New York.⁸⁶

Both New Jersey and Connecticut rebelled against this dependence on New York and the domination it entailed, a reaction that undoubtedly arose as much from the creditor-debtor psychology as from local pride. In Connecticut, where the merchants of New Haven alone were reputed to owe New York creditors £20,000 in 1772,⁸⁷ the jealousy took the form of an attempt to encourage buying from local firms by advertising "prices as low as in New York or Boston."⁸⁸ New York merchants were said to perpetrate all manner of frauds on their Connecticut consumers in order to undersell their Boston rivals. It was claimed, for example, that they instructed manufacturers in England to make the textiles destined for Connecticut narrower and of a meaner fabric so that the price might be lowered with no loss of profit.⁸⁹ The abandonment of non-importation by

⁸⁶ *New Jersey Archives*, XXIV, 10, 20, 106, 112, 124, 135, 172, and *passim* through this and other volumes.

⁸⁷ Franklin B. Dexter, *Extracts from the Itineraries of Ezra Stiles*, p. 83.

⁸⁸ See *Norwich Packet*, *New London Summary*, *Conn. Journal* and *New Haven Post Boy*, *passim*.

⁸⁹ John Adams, *Diary*, p. 276.

New York in 1771 presented a long-sought-for opportunity. John Adams was told that Boston might easily regain the Connecticut trade, for in patriotic repudiation of New York's defection from the ranks Connecticut hoped to be freed of her yoke.⁴⁰

In New Jersey this resentment may be seen in the constant agitation for the development of local ports; the natural attractions of Perth Amboy, for example, suffered by constant comparison with the superb natural harbor of New York. The Perth Amboy boom began in the seventeenth century⁴¹ and was revived intermittently whenever conditions made it opportune. "Philo-patria" wrote to the *New American Magasine* in 1758 suggesting an export duty on goods shipped to New York and Philadelphia and a bounty on goods shipped from Jersey ports, to encourage the use of Perth Amboy and Burlington.⁴² In 1770 a great revival of the Perth Amboy project came as a reaction to New York's desertion of non-importation. The "Punic perfidy" of New York gave Jerseymen an opportunity of displaying their patriotic virtues, rebuking the offender in an effective manner, and at the same time freeing their province from its commercial bondage and themselves from the heavy annual "tax" they paid in profits and transportation charges. "Neo Caesarensis" presented a plan in October, 1770, for the development of Perth Amboy by the incorporation of a trading company, to be styled "The United Company of New Jersey" and organized like the East India Company. Subscriptions as adventurers in this company would be bought for £50 and £100, and New York merchants

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Herbert L. Osgood, *The American Colonies in the 17th Century* (3 vols., New York, 1904-1907), II, 187-190.

⁴² *New Jersey Archives*, XXVII, 192.

who disagreed with the majority of their own city were to be invited to move thither.⁴³

Business connections more intimate than mere correspondences and factorships testify to the close relations between New York, the New England colonies and New Jersey. The most important of these was the family tie, which frequently led to actual partnership between merchants of two provinces or resulted from them. This development began early in the eighteenth century, when Abraham Wendell of Albany moved to New York and started a commercial house that grew to large proportions and corresponded with prominent firms in Holland, England and New England. As Wendell's relations with Boston increased, he established a branch there, in charge of his son, which proved so successful that he himself went to live in Boston permanently, and his children made alliances with New England families which bore fruit in Oliver Wendell Holmes, Wendell Phillips, and Professor Barrett Wendell.⁴⁴ By the middle of the century this branch of the family was firmly identified with Boston, but although there were no Wendells in business in New York, the connections with that city and Albany, both family and commercial, were still cherished.⁴⁵

The residence of Charles Ward Apthorp in New York brought the merchants of the city into closer relations with an important New England connection. The elder Charles Apthorp was a prominent merchant in Boston, of whom it was said that "he studied to mind his own business."⁴⁶ In the Seven Years' war he was American agent for Thom-

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 295-299.

⁴⁴ Marguerite A. Hamm, *Famous Families of New York*, pp. 242-245.

⁴⁵ W. B. Aitken, *Distinguished Families in America descended from Wilhelmus Beekman and Jan Thomasse Van Dyck*, p. 383 et seq.

⁴⁶ C. W. Foote, *Annals of Kings Chapel, Boston*, II, 145.

linson & Hanbury, the English contractors who supplied money to the army, and when, upon the death of Hanbury, the company was reorganized as Thomlinson & Trecothick, he was continued in his post. There was nothing strange in this since Barlow Trecothick was his son-in-law, and his youngest son John was later taken into the firm.⁴⁷ Just how much actual association there was between the firm of Apthorp & Gardiner in Boston and Charles Ward Apthorp, the son, in New York is not quite clear, but the latter succeeded to his father's interest in the army contract.⁴⁸ He seems to have been cognizant of the state of the business in Boston, and he made frequent visits to that town.⁴⁹

Marriage connections are found behind or growing out of business relations, and were apparently looked upon as a natural and convenient road to business contacts. Charles Ward Apthorp married Mary McEvers of New York, whose brother, James, an important merchant there, was the husband of Apthorp's sister Elizabeth.⁵⁰ Philip Cuyler married the daughter of John Tweedy, his correspondent in Newport—a lady, so he wrote to his friend, Vander Heyden, of a "gentle fortune."⁵¹ The intermarried Jewish families of Newport, Connecticut and New York, the Lopez-Rivera-Seixas and Pinto families, maintained close relations with each other.⁵²

It was not unusual to find a brother or son in business in a place with which his family had a considerable trade.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 142-144.

⁴⁸ *Lloyd Papers*, II, 564-5.

⁴⁹ Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel, Boston*, II, 168-170. *Diary of John Rowe*, p. 72.

⁵⁰ Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel, Boston*, II, 142-144.

⁵¹ Cuyler Letter Book, Dec. 20, 1757.

⁵² Max J. Kohler, "The Jews in Newport," *American Jewish Historical Society Publications*, VI, 72-80.

Richard Alsop, brother of the John Alsop who represented New York in the first Continental Congress, was trained in the dry-goods business and went to Middletown, Connecticut, to establish a general store.⁵³ The Lloyd family spread themselves all over New England, and although, strictly speaking, they were never merchants of New York, they parallel the tendency to scatter along the lines of trade so well illustrated in the Cruger family. Originally of Boston, the first Henry Lloyd eventually settled on a manor at Queens Village, Lloyd's Neck, Long Island, a center from which he was able to establish connections with New York and Boston. His eldest son, Henry, became a merchant in Boston, and his second son, John, set up in business at Stamford, for a time in partnership with his elder brother. By the marriages of his relatives he became connected with many of the foremost mercantile families in New England and New York. Through his cousin, Grizzel Lloyd, he was related to the Apthorps, Charles Ward Apthorp of New York being his godson; his eldest son married a sister of the prominent Boston merchant Shrimpton Hutchinson; his half-sister Rebecca, married James Oliver and her daughter married John Wendell. His daughter Elizabeth married Samuel Fitch of Connecticut, while his granddaughter Rebecca married John Broome, a merchant of New York.⁵⁴ His sons and grandsons, Henry, John, William and William Smith, found the New York connection extremely useful, for in intercolonial as in overseas trade men tended to give their business to individuals of whom they had some personal knowledge. Henry Lloyd in Boston had a regular correspondence with Gerard G. Beekman and Philip Livingston; William Lloyd acted as factor in Jamaica for many

⁵³ Wilson, *Memorial History of the City of New York*, IV, 524. Cuyler Letter Book, to Richard Alsop, Middletown, Conn.

⁵⁴ *Lloyd Papers*, II, 886.

New York merchants, while William Smith, a grandson, owed his success in Halifax as much to commissions from New Yorkers as to orders which his brother Henry procured for him in Boston.⁵⁵

There were also actual partnerships and branch businesses established by New Yorkers in other provinces. One example has already been mentioned, the partnership between Peter R. Livingston and Robert Jenkins of Rhode Island for the manufacture of spermaceti candles.⁵⁶ Commercial association was fairly common between New Yorkers and tradesmen in the district of New Jersey around New York Bay. Uzal Ward, who sold Newark quarry stone, had a special agent in New York "at Mr. Doughty's near Whitehall Slip" to dispose of it.⁵⁷ Other Jerseymen maintained stores in New York especially to sell their manufactured products. This was particularly true of iron manufacturers. The Vesuvius Furnace is an example which has already been mentioned in another connection, the bloomery being managed by two partners while two others sold the hardware in the city.⁵⁸ William Alexander may have sold his own iron for a time, although he later consigned it all to some merchant in the city.⁵⁹ Branch businesses proper were more common in general merchandising. The firm of Gibbon, Hedge & Gould operated both in Greenwich, New Jersey, under the first two partners, and also in New York under Gould.⁶⁰ Cornelius Low at Raritan and his son Isaac in New York carried on a dry-goods business in partner-

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Commerce of Rhode Island*, I, 137.

⁵⁷ *New Jersey Archives*, XXVII, 439.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, XXVI, 122, 353.

⁵⁹ Correspondence of William Alexander, *New Jersey Hist. Soc. Collections*, 1st series, VIII, 112.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, XX, 154 and note 2.

ship.⁶¹ Henry & James Shotwell, later Shotwell, Bowne & Co., had stores in Woodbridge, Rahway and New York.⁶²

Other forms of business ventures were carried on in company with merchants in other provinces. Beekman interested his Rhode Island friends in opportunities in Philadelphia and Cayenne.⁶³ Walter & Robert Livingston directed an "adventure" to Liverpool for Whiting & Adgate of Norwalk, Connecticut.⁶⁴ New York merchants invested in privateers and "flags of truce" with Rhode Island men.⁶⁵ Indeed, part of the larger volume of commerce with Rhode Island and Connecticut must undoubtedly be laid to the illicit trade which was carried on chiefly through their ports.

Goods from Holland were landed at Newport, Providence, Stamford or Norwalk, whence the ship proceeded to New York in ballast or with a smaller legal cargo. The laxity of the customs officials in these colonies, where by virtue of their charters the Crown had little authority, was such that not only could contraband be taken ashore easily, but false clearances were actually advertised in Norwalk.⁶⁶ During the French and Indian War, amenable collectors such as Nicholas Lechmere, who cleared ships carrying provisions for the West Indies and provided "flags of truce" for a price, made it possible for New York merchants to carry on a lucrative trade with the enemy. Merchants in New York organized smuggling ventures in company with colleagues in these ports. Philip Cuyler had such an arrangement with John Lloyd of Stamford until the latter's activities were discovered, whereupon he turned to his wife's

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, XXV, 358.

⁶² *Ibid.*, XXIX, 79, 106, 294.

⁶³ Beekman Letter Book, Jan. 10, 1757.

⁶⁴ Walter & Robert Livingston Journal, p. 143.

⁶⁵ See chap. viii.

⁶⁶ See chap. vii.

family in Newport;⁸⁷ the Ludlow-Desbrosses-Waddell-Ray partnership had a similar connection with John Lloyd and with Richards & Coddington at Newport.⁸⁸ Some of the smuggled goods were left in the port of arrival for sale on account there; some were brought overland or in small sloops to the stores of the principals in New York;⁸⁹ John Waddell sent most of his contraband tea to Wharton in Philadelphia, the goods being taken overland by stage to Bordentown and brought up to Philadelphia in small boats at night.⁹⁰ "The tea merchants," wrote Thomas Riche to Jacobus Van Zandt, "are supplied from New York."⁹¹

Philadelphia, because of the similarity of its native products, was the natural competitor of New York, and thus it would seem that there could be no exchange of commodities, since both ports traded with the same markets in the same goods. Each sent foodstuffs to the West Indies, New England and southern Europe and furs and semi-tropical products to England, importing European manufactures and East Indian luxuries. In spite of this rivalry, however, business relations were closer with Philadelphia than with any part of the continent except Rhode Island; there is no merchant's letter-book which does not include correspondence with at least one person in the Quaker city, while unless a merchant were specially interested in trade with New England, he did not consider Boston, Newport or Providence connections necessary. John Van Cortlandt,

⁸⁷ Cuyler Letter Book, to John Lloyd, July 12, 1756, to Wm. Tweedy, Feb. 18, 1760.

⁸⁸ Ludlow Letter Book, e. g., John Lloyd, Sept. 24, 1755.

⁸⁹ Cuyler Letter Book to S. Townsend, Jan. 23, 1760, and to Richards & Coddington, Nov. 7, 1759.

⁹⁰ Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, and to Joseph Borden, Jr., Feb. 7, 1756.

⁹¹ Thomas Riche Letter Book, Feb. 2, 1756.

as a sugar merchant, found perhaps little demand for his products in Massachusetts or Rhode Island, but corresponded regularly with John William Hoffman, a refiner in Philadelphia.⁷³

These Philadelphia correspondents were merchants of standing and members of the foremost Quaker and English social groups. Beekman dealt with John Sayre, a vestryman of Christ Church, and Thomas Wharton, his Quaker partner; with Thomas Clifford & Company, owners of the only important ship-chandlery in Philadelphia; and with Townsend White, another vestryman of Christ Church.⁷⁴ John Ludlow had few interprovincial connections, but his associate, John Waddell, also bought of Thomas Wharton.⁷⁵ Robert C. Livingston, John Harris Cruger, Isaac Adolphus and James Kennedy corresponded with Bernard & Michael Gratz;⁷⁶ Watts and his brother-in-law, David Franks, with Willing & Morris and with Chief Justice William Allen.⁷⁷ Breese & Hoffman and David Van Horne were customers of Daniel Roberdeau, later a general in the Continental Army.⁷⁸ Philip Cuyler corresponded infrequently with David Franks, with Scott & McMichael, and with Benjamin & Samuel Shoemaker.⁷⁹ Greg, Cunningham & Co., as already has been pointed out, did business with Orr, Dunlope & Glenholme,⁸⁰ and Hugh & Alexander Wallace appear to have been

⁷³ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to John William Hoffman, *passim*.

⁷⁴ "List of Vestrymen of Christ Church," in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biog.*, XIX, 524, 526; J. L. Scharf, *History of Philadelphia*, p. 886.

⁷⁵ Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, *passim*.

⁷⁶ Gratz-Croghan Collection, I, pp. 15, 24.

⁷⁷ Letter Book of John Watts, *passim*.

⁷⁸ Roberdeau Letter Book. "History of St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia" in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History*, XLVII, 343.

⁷⁹ Cuyler Letter Book, March 21, 1757; Dec. 19, 1757; Oct. 4, 1756.

⁸⁰ See chap. v, p. 188.

closely associated with another firm of Irish origin in Philadelphia, Conyngham & Nesbitt.⁸⁰ In the same way, Thomas Riche of Philadelphia did a considerable business with New York firms. Jacobus Van Zandt was his chief correspondent, but the others included Greg, Cunningham & Co., Lawrence Kortright, Gerard Duyckinck, Garret Rapalje, Henry Cuyler, Henry White, Gerard G. Beekman and Telemon Cuyler, Abraham Lott and Benjamin Booth. With John Alsop, and Rem and John Remsen he entered a contract for supplying Cayenne in 1767, while with Francis Lewis and others he speculated in "flag-trucing." Andrew Barclay, the brother of the rector of Trinity Church, paid in pence a bill of exchange for £50 drawn upon him. "I had rather," Riche expostulated, "you had protested it."⁸¹

Through these correspondents New York merchants kept in touch with affairs in Philadelphia, especially with respect to prices, for conditions in one city quickly affected those in the other. Wharton reported to Beekman that it was impossible to sell his cask of indigo at eight shillings a pound as "those who want to buy by the Cask wait till they hear from your City how the sales is there."⁸² From Philadelphia New Yorkers bought goods to supplement home markets, chiefly imports from southern Europe—brandy, ginger, spices, pepper, and limes—with which Philadelphia had much more trade than New York. In years of poor harvests they ordered cargoes of flour sent to customers in New England or Madeira, or flaxseed to Ireland.⁸³ To Philadelphians New York sent Dutch goods—gunpowder

⁸⁰ They owned three ships jointly.

⁸¹ Riche Letter Book, May 8, 1768; see also to Francis Lewis, Jan. 29, 1759, and to John Alsop, Aug. 4, 1767.

⁸² Wharton Letter Book, March 13, 1758.

⁸³ Beekman Letter Book, to John Sayre, Dec. 15, 1755. Wharton Letter Book, to G. G. Beekman, April 15, 1756. *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 214-215.

and tea—chocolate, sugar and various other articles which might supplement the supply there or relieve a glutted market at home.⁸⁴ "What can you get for 1,000 lbs. Black pepper?" queried Wharton of John Waddell.⁸⁵ "If the price will answer I will send it thee." In 1766 Isaac Adolphus suggested to Michael Gratz that if Maryland wheat could be got to New York it might result in a "great haul."⁸⁶

The customs records do not indicate the full volume of this trade, for a good deal of it went overland by stage through New Jersey to Bordentown, Burlington and Trenton and by ferry thence across the Delaware to Philadelphia. New York merchants insured their ships⁸⁷ and bought bills of exchange at Philadelphia, especially when they could get better terms;⁸⁸ indeed, it seems to have been the practice to provide a correspondent with a sum of money for the purchase of bills whenever a favorable exchange offered. Breese & Hoffman, hearing that exchange at Philadelphia had fallen to 50, instructed their agent, Daniel Roberdeau, to buy bills for them at that rate. In reply the latter explained that

as it must be the most extream necessity that will oblige merchants to sell so low nothing less than the Cash deposited

⁸⁴ Beekman Letter Book, to S. Fowler, Jan. 10, 1757. W. V. Byars, *B. and M. Gratz, merchants in Philadelphia* (Jefferson City, Mo., 1916), p. 131. Daybook of Uriah Woolman, 1764-1773—accounts with Franklin & Underhill—in the New York Public Library.

⁸⁵ Wharton Letter Book, Nov. 4, 1757.

⁸⁶ Byars, *B. and M. Gratz*, p. 68.

⁸⁷ Beekman Letter Book, to Townsend White, Oct. 6, 1754. "I find Premiums for Insurance Run lower with you than with us and think for the future to have it done with you."

⁸⁸ Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, April 17, April 26 and June 23, 1758. Cuyler Letter Book, to David Franks, Aug. 14, 1758, and *passim*.

will do. Therefore if you have an Inclination to Lodge a Sum in my hands shall endeavour to be faithful and punchial in serving you when an opportunity offers, and on your own Terms as you say it is the Custom of Merchants here, but you'll please to explain whether you mean . . . 50% York or Pennsylvania Currency.⁸⁹

Merchants in both cities also performed a variety of friendly services for each other, forwarding letters, and especially tracing and apprehending debtors.⁹⁰ Manuel Josephson of New York wrote Michael Gratz asking him to apprehend the fugitive Levy Marks who according to "positive information" had gone to Philadelphia. Marks had arrived in New York from the West Indies and had asked Josephson to put him in the way of getting a living until he might return in the winter. "I out of meer Compassion told him that if he could find sale for some articles in the Dry goods way, I would let him have such as I had and charge them at Prime Cost the Profits should be for Himself." The rascal took over goods worth £30.14-7, together with a watch which Josephson's brother-in-law, Samuel Judah, had given him to sell on consignment and disappeared.⁹¹

Personal relations between correspondents were undoubtedly strengthened by the frequent travel between the two cities. Van Cortlandt exchanged several visits with Hoffman of Philadelphia, and Watts enjoyed going to see William Allen on a combination of business and pleasure.⁹² Business trips to New York were apparently considered necessary and proper to the course of affairs. Bernard

⁸⁹ Roberdeau Letter Book, Dec. 16, 1766.

⁹⁰ Cuyler Letter Book, to David Franks, Oct. 12 and Dec. 19, 1757. Beekman Letter Book, to Townsend White, Oct. 15, 1753 and July 29, 1754. Riche Letter Book, to Lawrence Kortright, Feb. 7, 1760.

⁹¹ Gratz-Croghan Collection, I, fol. 26.

⁹² *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 44.

Gratz did the buying for his firm there.⁹³ When bills of exchange on Philadelphia were scarce in New York it was usually possible to find a Philadelphian who would be willing to take back with him the actual specie.⁹⁴

Actual partnerships were few. Francis Lewis, a merchant of New York and later signer of the Declaration of Independence, established a branch in Philadelphia in charge of his partner Edward Annely.⁹⁵ By far the most ambitious intercolonial partnership in which New Yorkers were associated was that between Bernard & Michael Gratz of Philadelphia and Isaac Adolphus of New York. Michael Gratz had probably become acquainted with Adolphus while he was in New York as clerk in the counting house of Jacob Franks, and upon establishing a business in Philadelphia, he and his brother Bernard entered into partnership with Adolphus. After Pontiac's War, Adolphus found a new and profitable outlet for his West Indian imports, particularly rum, coffee and spices, in trade with the Indians and the garrisoned frontier posts. Thereupon he and the Gratz brothers planned a three-sided association with Miranda Brothers of Curaçao to carry on this trade, each firm to provide one-third of the cargo and receive one-third of the commissions for marketing.⁹⁶

Seven ships were owned jointly by New York and Philadelphia merchants: the brig *Laurel*, by David Van Horn of New York and John Philips of Philadelphia; the sloop *Sally* by James Jauncey and Robert Field; the sloop *Elizabeth* by two brothers, Luke and Matthias Thomas, of New York and Philadelphia respectively; the ship *Union* by Waddell

⁹³ Byars, *B. and M. Gratz*, p. 131.

⁹⁴ Wharton Letter Book, to John Waddell, March 2, 1756, and to G. G. Beekman, April 19, 1757.

⁹⁵ M. A. Hamm, *Famous Families of New York*, p. 250.

⁹⁶ Byars, *B. and M. Gratz*, pp. 68, 77.

Cunningham and Jonathan Craythorne; the ship *Rainbow*, the ship *Kitty* and the *Sally* by Hugh and Alexander Wallace jointly with Nesbit & Conyngham.⁹⁷

Nevertheless, competition with Philadelphia undoubtedly existed. In the Irish trade, the supply of flaxseed and the price per bushel determined the division of orders between the two cities. Beekman summed up the feeling of New Yorkers when worsted in the race. "The Quakers and the Jews," he wrote, "are the men nowadays."⁹⁸ But the greatest rivalry was for the domination of those sources of supply and markets situated in the American continent and in the West Indies. As New York had to reckon with Boston in Connecticut, so Philadelphia was its rival in New Jersey, as well as in Massachusetts and South Carolina; but the most vital point was the West Indies, where New York beef, pork, flour and lumber competed with products from Pennsylvania. New York tried to meet this competition by raising the quality of its staples so that they should equal if not excel those of her rival. Legislation was passed by both the municipal Common Council and the provincial legislature, warmly supported and seconded by the Chamber of Commerce after its inception, providing for the inspection of beef, pork, flour and wood, specifying the size and weight of barrels, the proportions of meat and brine, the fineness of flour and the dimensions or grades of lumber.⁹⁹

Flour especially engaged the attention of New York merchants, who felt that the reason for its declining reputation must lie in the manufacture, since the wheat of Maryland, New Jersey and the Hudson Valley was fully as good

⁹⁷ Ship Registers of Philadelphia, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biography*, XXIII, 257-8; XXIV, 108; XXV, 119, 120, 274, 415, 564, 573; XXVII, 105, 348.

⁹⁸ Beekman Letter Book, to Samuel Fowler, Dec. 7, 1761.

⁹⁹ See chapter vii.

as that shipped from Philadelphia. Not content with a law of 1750, which had finally been enacted after much agitation, requiring the inspection and branding of all flour casks, a committee of the Chamber of Commerce was appointed on November 1, 1768, barely six months after the Chamber was founded, to apply to the city members of the legislature and request them to consider such laws as might be necessary for the regulation of the trade of the colony, and particularly for the more effective inspection of flour, potash and other products.¹⁰⁰ In December the committee reported on the inspection of flour, recommending "so as if possible to retrieve its general disrepute in all parts of the world": first, that there should be one inspector who should set the standard, with several deputies to perform the inspection, rather than two or three inspectors each having power to set a standard; second, that a practical test be given to determine whether the flour would make "fine white light bread"; and, third, that all barrels should be branded with the surname and initial of the manufacturer and the county in which he lived, the inspector to add the name of the province if and when he passed the flour.¹⁰¹

This report, however, did not suggest any definite improvements in the process of manufacture. Two years later Isaac Low, who must have been investigating the matter, proposed that the members of the Chamber adopt and encourage four practices which he felt accounted for the finer quality of Philadelphia flour, namely: the use of French buhr stones in grinding; transportation in covered wagons and under the decks of boats to avoid dust and dirt; the use of German mill screens to clean the flour; and, finally, regulation of the weight and size of barrels to prevent the flour from being packed too hard. The members received

¹⁰⁰ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 21.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

his suggestions favorably, and it was announced at the next meeting that as several pairs of buhr stones had already been sent for by millers, it was unnecessary for the Chamber to send for any, but it was resolved that the members would give preference in future to those millers who used buhr stones.¹⁰²

The same desire to outdo their competitors through the regulation of the lumber trade is evidenced by a notice, naively displaying provincial jealousy and pride, which appeared in a New York paper in December, 1765:

The merchants trading to the West Indies are about to get the corporation to pass a bye-law regulating the size of white oak Hogshead Staves . . . to restore the credit of our Lumber and to enable us to share that Branch of Trade with Pennsylvania and other provinces that have for some years past rivalled us in it at the West Indian markets. . . . Indeed the thing most likely to hurt its Credit is the permitting the Stave-Getters from New Jersey and other Parts (who have been used to get very ordinary Lumber) to work our good Timbers.¹⁰³

Competition was not confined to Philadelphia. Surpassed also by Boston and possibly Charleston, New York was ambitious to lead them all. It procured goods from other importers as well as from producers, and it was thus naturally anxious to increase its direct trade and shipping. This anxiety is reflected in the provincial tariffs, for although levied for revenue chiefly, the protective principle is manifest in the lower duties on goods imported directly from the place of production. For example, a five per cent *ad valorem* duty was imposed on woolen goods imported from other colonies, a three-fold duty on wine and a four-fold duty on rum not imported directly from the place of manufacture.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 110-113.

¹⁰³ *New Jersey Archives*, XXVI, 4.

¹⁰⁴ A. A. Giesecke, *American Commercial Legislation to 1789*, p. 22.

Tonnage duties, from which ships built and owned in the colony were exempted, were also designed to encourage local shipping and ship-building.¹⁰⁸

The intraprovincial trade of New York centered in the Hudson and Mohawk valleys, from which came the staple products of the colony, wheat and flour, lumber and furs. Native ginseng was also sent to New York City, while iron from the Livingston foundry at Ancram was in great demand at the metropolis. Most of these products were sent to New York City merchants in return for London goods, semi-tropical products, or local manufactures such as refined sugar, pickled oysters and particularly rum, great quantities of the latter being used in the Indian trade.

In 1750 New York and Pennsylvania controlled the fur trade of the seaboard colonies because of their easy access to the Great Lakes and the Ohio district, and of the two New York had by far the greater share, exporting more furs of all kinds to England than were sent from any other part of America except the Hudson's Bay region. James Alexander declared that the fur trade of the province had increased by 1740 to five times its size in 1728. Albany controlled the trade of New York, not only through the geographical advantage of easy communication with the Indian country on the one hand and with New York City on the other, but also through the friendly relations established with the Iroquois, who acted as middlemen between the traders at the posts and the tribes of the Great Lakes-Ohio region.¹⁰⁹ The post at Oswego, established as early as 1724 and re-established by Henry Van Schaack of Albany after the

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89, 93.

¹⁰⁹ Wayne Stevens, *The Northwest Fur Trade*, pp. 14-16; C. H. McIlwain, in introduction to Peter Wraxall, *Abridgement of Indian Affairs* (Cambridge, 1915), pp. xxxv-xxxvi, xl-liii, lxxxii.

capture of Niagara in 1759, commanded the Mohawk communication with the upper country.¹⁰⁷

The regulation of the Indian trade was in the hands of the magistrates and commissaries of Albany, but it was always inefficient; not only was there constant complaint that the traders cheated the Indians, but an illicit trade was regularly carried on by Albany merchants with French trappers from Montreal which no laws could check and in which the officials themselves were the chief offenders.¹⁰⁸ This illicit trade united the English advantage of cheaper manufactured goods with the French success in Indian relations that had given their *coueurs de bois* their supremacy, but it was obviously inimical to the interest of English traders. Albany merchants, however, were looking for big profits and engaged in this commerce as a matter of course. "I am very sensible," replied Philip Cuyler to his father, "that the Last french Canos [*sic*] with Beaver yielded but little profits to the purchaser and think you are well off you was not on the spot."¹⁰⁹ The letter book of Robert Saunders, mayor of Albany from 1750 to 1754, contains a series of letters written in French to Canadian traders whose names are usually not given.¹¹⁰

The report of Peter Wraxall, secretary of Indian affairs, started in 1756 an agitation for centralized regulation of the Indian trade under imperial authority. Wraxall alleged as causes of the decline of the Indian trade of the province

¹⁰⁷ Stevens, *The Northwest Fur Trade*, p. 18; F. W. Barnes, "Fur Traders of Early Oswego," *New York State Historical Association Proceedings*, XIII, 184.

¹⁰⁸ C. H. McIlwain, introduction to Peter Wraxall, *Abridgement of Indian Affairs*, pp. lxxiii, lxxi-lxx; Stevens, *The Northwest Fur Trade*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁹ Cuyler Letter Book, July 7, 1755.

¹¹⁰ Letter Book of Robert Saunders of Albany, 1742-1757. In the collections of the New York Historical Society.

after 1750 the lack of centralized control and the inefficiency of the Albany officials which had made possible the establishment of French authority in the Indian territory; the illicit trade between Albany and Canada, which nourished the French by supplying them with goods for trade with the Indians cheaper than they could obtain them for themselves; the exorbitant charges and impositions of Albany traders; the frauds and trickery of petitioners for land patents which encroached on Indian territory, and the ill-conduct and bad success of the expeditions of 1755 against the French.¹¹¹ The first of his proposals to be adopted was the appointment of Sir William Johnson in March, 1756, as superintendent of the Northern Department, but the one which was most objectionable to the traders was the prohibition of the sale of rum to the Indians.¹¹² In March, 1764, the merchants of Albany sent a petition to the Lords of Trade complaining that the prohibitory clause had resulted in a decrease of trade, since Indians needed only a few furs to pay for necessities, "but a Vent of Liquors . . . spurs them on to an unwearied application in hunting in order to supply the Trading Places with Furs and Skins in Exchange for Liquors." They added that the decrease was due also to the arbitrary directions of the commandants of the conquered stations, to which trade had now been extended, and to attacks on the traders in their journeys by the Indians; and prayed that the trading be centered in accessible posts such as Pittsburg, Niagara, Fort William Augustus and Cannusadago.¹¹³

Not until 1766 was the plan first outlined by Halifax to Amherst in 1763 put into full operation. This plan confined trading to certain established posts under the inspection of the commanding officers of the garrisons. Traders were

¹¹¹ *New York Col. Docs.*, VII, 15 *et seq.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 613-614.

also required to take out licenses from the governor and to give security that they would observe the regulations regarding prices and practices to prevent fraud. But in one respect the regulation was relaxed, namely, by allowing the sale of rum, a traffic which proved so profitable that many merchants dealt in nothing else.¹¹⁴ The plan was never completely satisfactory, and caused a great deal of friction between Canadian traders and those of the colonies to the south, especially in regard to the restriction of trade to specified posts. The Lords of Trade suggested to the king in 1768 that the management of the trade be left to the colonies themselves, and in 1771 the New York assembly drew up a series of regulations which were submitted to the Council of Quebec. These, however, the Council rejected because the interests of the two colonies were diametrically opposed. The British government then realized that regulation must come from above, a decision which was responsible for the addition of the Ohio Valley to the province of Quebec in the Quebec Act of 1774.¹¹⁵ By 1774, however, New York was on the threshold of a new era.

After 1763 the fur trade which was fed by the Great Lakes district was diverted to Canada, partly because of the easy water route afforded by the St. Lawrence, and partly because of the activity of English fur companies which settled factors or partners in Montreal and Quebec immediately after the peace. Of the 124,247 pelts and skins taken in the Michigan district in 1767, only 28,643, or about one-fifth, were sent to Albany, the rest going to Montreal.¹¹⁶ Moreover, although the total amount of furs and skins sent to England by New York in 1773 was valued at £5,624 and in 1774 at

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 571, 657. Stevens, *Northwest Fur Trade*, p. 31.

¹¹⁵ *New York Col. Docs.*, VIII, 24; Stevens, *Northwest Fur Trade*, pp. 26-34.

¹¹⁶ *Canadian Historical Review*, XX, 358, "Return of Peltry sent from Michillimackinac, June to October, 1767," reprinted from C. O. 42: 14.

£9,970, the beaver alone in 1753 was worth £5,637 and bear-skins £1,066. On the other hand, the Canadians exported furs to the value of £32,085 in 1773 and £38,228 in 1774.¹¹⁷ The removal of the French competition in the southwest also increased the fur-trade of the southern colonies.¹¹⁸ One English firm turned not to Montreal but to Albany, building on the foundation offered by two New York merchants already in business. James Phyn and John Duncan, both natives of Scotland had apparently formed a partnership in 1755, operating from Schenectady through traders whom they supplied with Indian goods in return for pelts. Duncan took charge of the business in Schenectady while Phyn established a branch in Montreal and made the necessary contacts with London. From 1760 to 1763 the firm of Livingston, Duncan, Rutherford and Phyn were carrying on trade with the Indians and trappers as far west as Detroit. The two new members were Peter B. Livingston of Albany and Walter Rutherford, an officer in the British army who later settled in New York City. In Detroit the firm was represented by James Sterling and John Porteous who were made partners in 1764 and 1765. In the summer of 1766, Alexander Ellice of London was also added to the firm, while Livingston and Rutherford had by now evidently dropped out of the business. In 1768 the firm of Phyn and Duncan was dissolved, and a new partnership organized including Phyn and the four Ellice brothers. The New York branch was known as Phyn & Ellice and the English firm as Phyn, Ellice & Inglis. Under this style the firm continued until the Revolution.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Treasury Papers, 4: 274, "Account of Quantities and average value of Furs and Skins imported into England, 1773-1776." Cf. C. O. 390: 9, B 6 and B 7.

¹¹⁸ See chap. viii.

¹¹⁹ Phyn & Ellice Receipt Book, New York Historical Society; *Journal of John Lees*, p. 84, note 17; MacBean, *Biographical Register of the St. Andrew's Society*, pp. 9, 116; Stevens, *Northwest Fur Trade*, p. 122.

Most of the Albany furs seem to have been exported through New York merchants, who took the pelts at the market price in return for European and West Indian goods.¹²⁰ Occasionally a New York tradesman, like Hayman Levy, would enter the fur trade himself or deal directly with the trappers at Oswego,¹²¹ but this was not usual. Merchants at Albany had regular correspondents in New York who performed all the services of factor or agent in selling and shipping goods, filling orders, insuring ships or cargoes, and even acting in some instances as middlemen between them and the English wholesalers. Many Albany business men corresponded independently with British houses, but goods were usually sent via New York in care of correspondents there, who transshipped the cargo to Albany. Thus Robert Saunders of Albany sent his furs to and ordered his dry goods through Richard and Robert Ray of New York; Cornelius Cuyler sent beaver, ginseng and flour to his son Philip, who sold them, remitted bills of exchange to England for his father and received his cargoes from Bristol, London or Liverpool. The Lansings and Myndert Schuyler, who in company with Henry Holland of New York and Captain George Codwise owned the ship *Fame*, dealt with the Bankers. On their behalf the Bankers sent Spanish pistareens to creditors in Madeira, pieces of eight to Crommelin in Amsterdam, and paid the freight and entry charges on goods from London, for all which, of course, they received a commission.¹²² Similarly, farmers

¹²⁰ E. g., the advertisement of Jonas Phillips in *New York Mercury*, Jan. 4, 1762.

¹²¹ Byars, B. and M. Gratz, p. 68; *Sir William Johnson Papers* (7 vols., Albany, 1921-1931), I, 336.

¹²² Letter Book of Robert Saunders, to Richard and Robert Ray, *passim*. Cuyler Letter Book, to his father, Nov. 11, 1755, Dec. 14, 1756; to Champion & Hayley, June 2, 1758; Banker Waste Book, May 11 and 23, and August 24, 1752.

and shopkeepers sent wheat and lumber by sloop or by sleigh to the metropolis for sale, the proceeds to be expended for specified articles.¹²³ Henry Van Rensselaer sent Claverack wheat to his son and his nephew; Gerard G. Beekman sold all the wheat and flour his brother could send him; while Wendell consigned his wheat, peas and pine boards to the master of the sloop, who brought back the proceeds according to instructions.¹²⁴

The family relationship was especially significant in the Albany trade within the province, for many younger sons came down to New York to take advantage of the opportunities their connections gave them. Philip Cuyler's important trade with Albany rested upon his father's prominence as a merchant there and the many branches of his family tree. David Vander Heyden had also established himself as a merchant in New York City, and his brother Dirck in London hoped to secure for himself a large part of the orders which Albany merchants sent to England.

The peace of Paris of 1763 opened several new markets to colonial business men, and New Yorkers were not slow to take advantage of them. They were already trading to great advantage with Nova Scotia, though Boston ships outnumbered theirs.¹²⁵ With the founding, in 1751, of Halifax, through which came the wheat of the fertile Chignecto valley, New York merchants as well as those of Philadelphia and Boston opened connections with this new market. A dispatch from Nova Scotia in the *Post Boy* of September 9, 1751 reported that "there is such a number of New Yorkers

¹²³ Cuyler Letter Book, to his father, Aug. 9, Dec. 23, 1755 and Dec. 31, 1759. Beekman Letter Book, to John Treeby, Jan. 23, 1761. Abraham Evertse Wendell, Account Book, in the New York Historical Society.

¹²⁴ Van Rensselaer—Fort Collection, Stephen Richard to Henry Van Rensselaer, Jan. 10, 1763; Jeremiah Van Rensselaer to Henry, April 22, 1765; Beekman Letter Book, to Samuel Fowler, July 8, 1754.

¹²⁵ See Appendix G.

got to this Place since the first settlement of it, as will Nearly fill one of the largest Streets in Town." Factors were established and the government agents for victualling the garrison, Daniel Dyson & Co., began to receive goods on commission.¹²⁶ Upon the cession of Canada to Great Britain, Montreal and Quebec attracted attention, New York business men apparently concentrating their efforts on the latter. Albany may have legalized its previous connections with Montreal, but it is more probable that the British merchants who began to settle there at once took over the business of supplying Indian traders with British manufactures and thus destroyed the basis of Albany's commerce. Boston sent annually fifteen or twenty ships to Quebec against ten or twelve from New York,¹²⁷ but the route to Quebec in the winter months, "above half the year," was overland through the Champlain country, and relations between New York and Quebec were apparently close. Money was remitted from Quebec to Scotland through New York; New York prices and exchange rates were important in Quebec; and furs sent by Quebec merchants to England were insured by New York underwriters.¹²⁸

To the south the provinces of East and West Florida, which had so long attracted New York merchants, as witness the contracts of the Waltons to supply the Spanish garrison at St. Augustine and the illicit trade along the Gulf of Mexico, were in 1763 at last open to legal trade. New York surpassed all the provinces except South Carolina in ventures to this new territory, sending about fifteen ships

¹²⁶ *Lloyd Papers*, II, 592-3, 599; Beekman Letter Book, to Daniel Dyson & Co., Nov. 22, 1752.

¹²⁷ See Appendix G.

¹²⁸ Jamieson Papers, I, James Glassford to Wm. Hislop, June 12, 1761; II, Neil Jamieson to James McEvers, Aug. 16, 1762, and James Glassford to James McEvers, Dec. 11, 1762. In the Library of Congress.

a year laden with a variety of supplies, foodstuffs, manufactures and slaves.¹²⁹ The majority of these shipments went to St. Augustine, but a few pressed on to Pensacola and Mobile. Mechanics from New York were sent to build fortifications in St. Augustine,¹³⁰ and the dependence of that small community on New York for communication with England is seen in the complaint of the governor of Florida in 1776 that the negotiation of bills of exchange through New York and Boston had been entirely stopped by the Revolution.¹³¹

Taking into account all varieties of business relations with citizens of other provinces, whether partnerships, association, correspondence, or simply coastwise peddling, what was the extent of individual as against provincial contacts? Did an individual merchant trade with all colonies or only a few? What proportion did his extra-provincial customers bear to his whole trade? No general answer can be made. The breadth of individual contacts varied according to the interest of the merchant. Each man seems to have had correspondents in Boston and Philadelphia in order to keep in touch with conditions and for convenience in details of business outside actual merchandising, such as insurance, bills of exchange, apprehending debtors, and the like. Beyond that it was entirely a matter of the nature of the business and the merchant's own inclination. Beekman, who had a general store but dealt chiefly in provisions, and who preferred to get supplies from the source, had customers and clients in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Philadelphia, North and South Carolina, Hali-

¹²⁹ See Appendix, "Entries and Clearances, 1768-1772."

¹³⁰ C. O. 5: 551, 166; Gov. Grant to Secretary of State, Oct. 1, 1770; Library of Congress Transcripts.

¹³¹ C. O. 5: 556, p. 594; Gov. Tonym to Secy of State, May 19, 1776; Library of Congress Transcripts.

fax, and Quebec. Philip Cuyler, a general wholesale merchant, because of his family connections had most of his customers in Albany and Schenectady, but he dealt also with Rhode Island and New Jersey, and shared occasionally in a venture to Montreal. Van Cortlandt, being engaged in sugar manufacturing, had no interest in New England with the exception of Connecticut, from which colony he got tobacco for his factory; but he found good markets in Virginia, the Carolinas and New Jersey, used Philadelphia chiefly to compare prices, and sent the wheat he received from Virginia to Quebec and the slaves he bought in Africa to Mobile. Walter & Robert Livingston, dealing in dry goods, iron and indigo, sold to retailers in New England and New Jersey and speculated in voyages to Mobile and Pensacola. On the other hand John Ludlow, whose business was also dry goods, had no provincial correspondents except John Lloyd of Stamford, who received the contraband goods he smuggled "in company" from Holland; but his goods went to Philadelphia through his partner, John Waddell. John Watts presents a special case, since his business during the span of his letter book arose largely out of the victualling contract; yet in order to meet the demands of a military diet he had to collect grain, beef and pork from Virginia, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Some tendency may be detected to concentrate trade in one direction, due either to connections, such as those Philip Cuyler had with Albany, or to the nature of a man's business. Van Cortlandt had fourteen customers in Virginia alone; the Livingstons had ten in Connecticut; four in Massachusetts, five in New York, six in New Jersey, one in Rhode Island, but none in Philadelphia or the south. Beekman wrote more letters to his Rhode Island correspondents than to any others. It is, of course, impossible to tell how much business a man had beyond what is recorded in his letter

book, but the Livingston and Van Cortlandt ledgers indicate that the proportion of local business, even in a wholesale house, was greater than the intercolonial. No attempt was apparently made to specialize in the interprovincial trade. Such trade appears to have been regarded simply as a source for raw materials and a market for the general importer.

Compared with other coast ports, New York stood a poor third in the volume of coastwise shipping. Philadelphia exceeded it by fifty or sixty percent, and Boston had twice or three times as much tonnage engaged in it. Charleston, whose continental exchange of goods was proportionately smaller because its natural markets were in England and the West Indies, fell a little below New York. Nevertheless, the trade of the province with sister colonies on the continent grew during this quarter century, the entries rising from 4,140 tons in 1754 to 10,996 in 1772, and the clearances from 6,700 tons in 1754 to 11,726 in 1772. This increase was found largely in the trade with the southern colonies and with Rhode Island and Connecticut.¹⁸³

Although New York had less coastwise trade than either Boston or Philadelphia, and but little more than Charleston, such trade was not, as has generally been supposed, third in the importance of the various branches of its commerce. In volume, at least, trade to Great Britain, the West Indies and the North American continent seems to have been about equal, and as a matter of fact the tonnage engaged in the coastwise trade, both entries and clearances, for the years 1768-1772 inclusive surpassed that to either the British

¹⁸³ The figures for 1754 are estimated from newspaper lists, since registry with the Customs House was not required for all coastwise vessels. The average for the five years, 1768-1772, was 8,370 tons entered and 9,304 tons cleared.

Isles or the Carribean.¹⁸⁸ This was not true of either Boston, whose coastwise trade was twice the size of that to any other place, or of Philadelphia, whose shipping to North American ports was a little below that to the West Indies but at least twice that to Great Britain.¹⁸⁴ New York thus occupied a middle position between its northern rivals on the one hand and the plantation colonies, whose trade was chiefly with England because they had staples readily marketable there, on the other. In the matter of value no definite figures can be given nor any comparisons made, for no statistics were kept, but the North American trade of New York was probably worth about as much as its West Indian trade although undoubtedly much less than that with Great Britain. The ordinary cargo shipped by a New York merchant to other provinces was under £100 in value and was carried in a sloop or schooner of about thirty tons burden or less.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Average tonnage, 1768-1772:	<i>Entries</i>		<i>Clearances</i>	
Great Britain	6,954		6,937	
West Indies	7,664		7,047	
So. Europe and Africa	5,007		2,750	
Coastwise	8,370		9,364	
¹⁸⁴	<i>Boston</i>		<i>Philadelphia</i>	
	<i>Entered</i>	<i>Cleared</i>	<i>Entered</i>	<i>Cleared</i>
Great Britain	7,587	6,176	6,609	3,547
West Indies	11,404	9,422	12,939	13,220
Coastwise	17,892	20,677	11,526	12,933

¹⁸⁸ Of the 67 cargoes insured by the Walton brothers in 1774, 40 were valued at under £100, 18 between £100 and £200, and only nine over £200, although these sums may have represented only what the Waltons contributed as members of a larger group of insurers. Walton Insurance Book, in the library of the New York Chamber of Commerce. As to the size, 22 ships with topsails cleared to North American ports in 1768 and 155 sloops and schooners. They represented 5,371 tons as a whole. The average is thirty and one-third tons. Customs 16-1.

CHAPTER VII

THE GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS

BEFORE the age of laissez-faire, governments displayed a lively interest in business, which found expression in various legislative acts designed chiefly to render economic activity beneficial to the nation as a whole. In the province of New York during the quarter-century immediately preceding the Revolution this policy was in the ascendant, operating through three different agencies each of which manifested a different kind of concern, although their activities to some extent overlapped.

The imperial government was responsible for the system of regulations, prohibition and duties known as the Acts of Trade imposed in accordance with the mercantile theory. The provincial government of New York also levied tariffs, principally for revenue, but its particular field was the regulation of the methods of manufacture and of the quality of staple products of the colony in order to maintain its commercial reputation and to meet competition from the other bread colonies, especially Pennsylvania. Ordinances to the same effect were enacted by the Common Council of the City, but the municipality went further, regulating not only the quality but the price of certain necessary articles of food for the benefit of its citizens and also prescribing the conditions under which any trade or commerce could be carried on within its limits. Part of this comprehensive program was inspired by the merchants themselves; in part of it they acquiesced; and to part of it they were in passive and at times active resistance.

The Acts of Trade, while theoretically securing the desideratum of a self-sufficient empire, meant to the New York merchant on the one hand an inconvenient amount of red tape, and on the other the restriction of the natural scope of his commercial activity. Neither of these burdens was particularly onerous before 1763. The formalities regarding shipping had been laid down in the Act of 1696 and in a few subsequent enforcing acts. According to official instructions issued to the customs officers in 1755, a master upon entering a port presented to the collector a certificate of the ship's registration showing that she was British built and owned and that her master and three-quarters of the crew were British subjects, and at the same time declared on oath that the vessel was the same for which the register and pass were made out.¹ He also presented a bill of lading indicating the places where the goods had been taken in.²

¹ C. O. 388: 46: Ee 44. 15 & 16 George II, Ch. 31, sec. 1. The form of such a register was prescribed:

*In pursuance of an Act made 7 and 8
William III Regis, Entitled, An
Act for preventing Frauds and re-
gulating abuses in the Plantation Trade.*

Hand &
seal *Jurat,* A. B. of _____ that the Ship _____ of
of gov- _____ whereof _____ is at present Master, being a _____
ernor Ship of _____ Tons, was built at _____ in the Year
or _____ and that _____ of _____ are at present
naval Owners thereof, and that no Foreigner directly or indirectly
offi- hath any Share or Part, or Interest therein. Dated at _____
cer. the _____ Day of _____,

Hand &
seal of
the
Collect- In a register of prize ships "Captured & Condemned" is
or. given instead of time and place of building.

² 7 & 8 William III, Ch. 22, s. 15 Charles II, Ch. 7-8.

The merchants to whom the goods were consigned next appeared before the collector, who was to attend to them "in order and without partiality." Since all foreign manufactured articles had to be imported through Great Britain, no Parliamentary import duties were collected at the port except those on sugar, molasses and rum from the foreign West Indies. The importer of such articles had to make declaration and to pay the duty before landing them. He was required to present to the collector two bills of entry; the first of them the collector retained as his voucher. On the second, which must bear the marks and numbers of each cask, the collector computed the duty, and it was then turned over to the waiter who examined the goods, passed them and entered the bill as his voucher in "a blue book, signed, sealed and pages numbered progressively."³

There were also duties laid by the provincial assembly which were collected in a different manner. The master, mate or purser was required to make a sworn declaration to the provincial treasurer within forty-eight hours of arrival specifying the quantities of all goods, and the consignee, the latter making particular entry and paying the duties levied by the province if under £10, or if over that amount giving security for payment within three months. Invoices, if they were produced, must be sworn to, but if no invoices were presented, two merchants were to appraise the goods. The certificate of the treasurer was then sent to the "land and tide waiter" who allowed the removal of the merchandise.⁴

Clearing for the outward voyage involved somewhat more documentation. Before a certificate of clearance was issued the master must file with the customs house an invoice of

³ C. O. 388: 46: Ee 44.

⁴ J. D. Goss, *History of Tariff Administration in the United States from Colonial Times to the McKinley Administration Bill* (New York, 1891), p. 19.

goods taken aboard, to which he must take oath after all the goods were taken in but not before.⁸ If enumerated articles were included, bond must be given with one surety besides the master to land them in England, Wales or Berwick on Tweed, or some British plantation, the bond to be cancelled by a certificate from the port of delivery within eighteen months. If the ship were destined for Southern Europe or Italy a Mediterranean pass must be had from the governor. No woolen cloth or beaver hats were in any case to be exported.

A moderate expenditure in fees was required before the vessels could leave the harbor with the proper papers. If the ship were going to England carrying a cargo of naval stores from North Carolina, pig and bar iron from local forges, furs from Albany, the charges for the necessary certificates and bonds would amount to 175½ Spanish dollars or about £4 sterling.

⁸ C. O. 388: 46: Ee 44.

"Invoice of Goods laden on board Ship *Swan* of *Bristol*, *Thomas Grant* Master, bound to the port of *Bristol*.

Portus

<i>Marks</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Contents</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Quality</i>	<i>Freighters Names</i>	<i>To whom Consigned</i>
A. B.	from 1 to 30	700	30	—	John Payne	Richard Smart
R. P.	from 7 to 20	450	13	—	Thomas Grant	on his own acct.
E & S	from 1 to 70	one with another } 400 70	—	—	John Short	on the Ship's account dated the day of
		dated		the	day of	<i>Thomas Grant</i>

For clearing the vessel	10 ½ dollars
A cocket in foreign trade	1
Naval stores certificate	2 ¾
Pig and bar iron certificate	2 ¾
Plantation bond for fur as enumerated article ...	1 ¾

17 ¾ dollars *

With the inauguration of the Grenville program, in 1764, a change came over the face of commerce. Not only were all the former laws practically reenacted by the revitalizing of the customs service, but in a series of acts, between 1764 and 1767, new requirements were laid down which rendered the course of the smuggler much more difficult. In addition to the bonds concerning enumerated commodities, the master had now to give a penalty bond in double the value of the cargo, with one surety, to land no non-enumerated goods north of Cape Finisterre.⁷

Upon arrival at his destination the master must also produce, if required, certificates from the collectors of customs at the port where the goods were laden stating that these bonds had been given. Certificates were also necessary for all West India products taken aboard, with details concerning the origin of the cargo, and all unspecified goods were to be considered foreign. The invoice submitted by the master upon entering had now to specify each package and its identifying marks, and the master had to take oath that no goods had been discharged during the voyage.⁸ Clearances or "cockets" were required of all ships whether in coastwise or foreign trade, and even of small boats if they went further than one league from shore.⁹ Bonds must be

* "List of fees conformable to those in New York and taken in Quebec in 1771," Custom Papers, Mass. Hist. Soc. Mss.

⁷ 6 George III, 52: 30, 31.

⁸ 7 George III, 46: 9.

⁹ 4 George III, 15: 22; 5 George III, 45: 26. This acted in general to allow goods to be shipped in open vessels of less than twenty tons from

cancelled by certificates from the port of delivery, presented within eighteen months if in Great Britain or Ireland, six months if a British plantation in America, and twelve months for any other part of America, Asia or Africa.¹⁰ If rum were laden, bond must be given not to land it on the Isle of Man, where certain monopolies were in force, and a certificate obtained for that also.¹¹ As before, duties on the principal enumerated articles must be paid at the port of lading if the articles were exported to another colony.

Until 1767, non-enumerated products might be sold in any market. Although the provincial merchant might sell his wares to foreign countries, he was not permitted to take their goods in return except for a few articles, chiefly salt and wine of Madeira and the Azores, but had to buy all manufactures, European and East India goods through England. The one exception to this rule was European ports south of Cape Finisterre. The most important restriction was the practical prohibition of the trade with the foreign West Indies by the Molasses Act of 1733, which if it had been enforced would have ruined the merchants of the middle and New England colonies. These two types of restriction, however, struck directly at the economic interest of the New York merchant, which was to sell the native products of the province in the dearest market, and to buy his manufactured goods in the cheapest market, this latter being in many respects Holland and Hamburg. The goods which were extensively smuggled were chiefly those on which no drawback was allowed and therefore were

port to port inside the same province, but vessels for South Carolina had to have cockets because the shoals made it necessary for them to go out more than one league from the shore. Opinion of the Attorney General DeGrey. Treasury I: 465.

¹⁰ 4 George III, 15: 28.

¹¹ 5 George II, 39.

dearer than if procured by direct trade—linen, sailcloth, paper and tea (of which the East India Company had a monopoly).¹³ Since merchants refused to relinquish valuable markets, evasion of the law became a constant factor in business, for the practical effect of the Acts of Trade was to establish an illicit trade with foreign ports, both in Europe and America, which flourished with little or no restraint until the French and Indian War. Indeed, commercial correspondence shows an extraordinary absence of fear of the customs officers who were supposed to be enforcing the acts, and it has been doubted whether before 1760 the merchants and the tide-waiters were actually conscious of their duties and obligations.¹⁴

Although access to the French and Spanish West Indies was never legally free to British traders, since both France and Spain enforced in their own interest systems similar to that of Great Britain, the sea-captains of the northern and middle colonies, who considered the law no barrier, had gradually gained admittance everywhere, and after 1730 the whole tropical community from the Bahamas to Dutch Guiana was considered a unit, a legitimate and necessary sphere for exploitation.¹⁵ The principal center of the illicit trade in the West Indies was, curiously enough, Jamaica. The masters of vessels from northern colonies were allowed to enter and clear at the same time, and frequently cleared their ships as having on board the produce of Jamaica when as a matter of fact they not only had not loaded and did not intend to load any, but instead carried empty casks for holding and the money for purchasing molasses, sugar and other products of the French Islands. Under the cockets obtained

¹³ G. L. Beer, *British Colonial Policy, 1754-1765* (New York, 1st ed. 1907, 2nd ed. 1922), p. 195.

¹⁴ E. Channing, *Hist. of the U. S.*, II, 521.

¹⁵ Pitman, *Development of the British West Indies to 1763*, pp. 271-272.

again in Jamaica these goods entered the northern ports as legally imported. In spite of laws passed by the Jamaica assembly requiring the master to present certificates of sale showing all goods on board to be the produce of Jamaica, and an act of 1756 prohibiting ships of northern colonies from entering and clearing in one day, the practice did not cease, for in 1774 Edward Long testified that

Many traders employ their time whilst they lie at Jamaica in fitting up casks and as they are provided with *affidavit* men, they take false clearances out of the custom house there for large quantities of Jamaica produce, sugar, molasses, rum, coffee, indigo, etcetera without having in fact a grain on board and repair to Cape Nicola Mole in Hispaniola which is now become their capital rendezvous. Here they buy of the French the very articles they refused at Jamaica and are afterwards protected by their clearances. . . . The trade is now got to such an alarming height that more N. American vessels are seen in the course of a year at the Mole than at Kingston.¹⁸

Direct trade with the French islands was not common until after 1756, but northern commodities were exchanged in increasing amounts through the Dutch and Danish neutral islands—St. Eustatius, Curaçoa, St. Thomas and St. Croix—not only for foreign sugars but for all kinds of European goods, which were then carried home in violation of the Navigation Acts.

The Dutch had early been converted to the principle of colonial free trade, and accordingly St. Eustatius and Curaçao, as free ports belonging to a highly commercial nation located in the midst of English, French and Spanish colonies which were rich and prosperous but were managed on a restrictive system, became important centers of trade.

¹⁸ Edward Long, *History of Jamaica*, I, 539-40; Add. Ms. 12,404. Pitman, *Development of British West Indies*, pp. 278-279.

The Danes had been slower than the Dutch to recognize the value of free trade to their West Indian colonies. It was not until 1735 that the monopoly which had been given the Danish West India and Guinea Company of the trade of St. Thomas was abolished by royal edicts. Even then a five per cent duty had to be paid on incoming cargoes and a six per cent duty on outgoing goods. An attempt to restore the Company's monopoly in 1749 was defeated by the planters who feared that New York and New England ships might cease to come to the Danish islands which would deprive them of provisions and of the lumber which was absolutely necessary to the manufacture of sugar and molasses. It was not until April, 1764, that the trade of St. Thomas with other European colonies in America was formally thrown open to the ships of all nations, and direct trade with Europe was forbidden until 1767.¹⁶

After 1763, when the loss of Canada and the Mississippi valley made it certain that the French West Indies would be more dependent than ever on British North America for temperate zone supplies France modified its colonial policy to legalize the importation of certain commodities into the French islands in exchange for molasses and rum. The treaty of 1686 was disregarded by France on the ground that it had been annulled by later wars, and all previous regulations except those concerning the island of Santo Domingo, were revised in the interest of free trade, a policy which was also adopted by Holland and Spain. Great Britain, on the other hand, determined through new acts and by the aid of an improved administration to confine colonial trade within the British Empire, but in spite of naval patrols and a reinvigorated customs service, North Americans were not slow to take advantage of new markets, and new centers

¹⁶ Waldemar Westergaard, *The Danish West Indies, 1671-1917* (New York, 1917), pp. 213-220, 230-235, 240, 250.

of illegal trade developed, especially Cayenne in French Guiana.¹⁷

The illicit trade was defended everywhere by the same arguments. The Molasses Act, it was held, gave the British West India sugar planters an unfair advantage, for while they could not supply the demand of the American continent, the high tax would, if enforced, have prohibited supplementary purchases from the foreign islands. To the imputation that they emulated the dog in the manger, the sugar interests replied that they probably could supply the demand, but that the Americans did not attempt to buy sugar of them, demanding instead cash which they laid out in foreign sugars, thus not only leaving the crops of the Jamaicans and Barbadians on their hands but also draining the islands of specie.¹⁸ The reasons for the preference of the North American merchants for French sugar are not difficult to discover. In the first place, the foreign product was thirty to forty per cent cheaper than the British, due in part to the British export duties and in part to the fact that more land was under cultivation in the French islands.¹⁹ In the

¹⁷ Pitman, *Development of the British West Indies*, pp. 272, 331-333.

¹⁸ Pitman, *Development of the British West Indies*, p. 304; Long, *History of Jamaica*, I, 539; Add. Mss. 12,404; Journal of Board of Trade, Vol. 58, Dec. 5, 1750; Historical Society of Pennsylvania Transcripts.

¹⁹ The duties were chiefly the "enumeration duties" on partially refined sugars exported to the northern colonies and the duties of 4½% at Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands. Pitman, *Development of the British West Indies*, pp. 301-302; Channing, *U. S.* II, 511. Long estimates that the profit on foreign sugar was 18%, which was 6% more than could be made in trade with Jamaica. His defense of Jamaicans on this question of price are the arguments of the modern protectionist exactly. "This cheapness (of the French product) is due to the inferiority of their public taxes, as well as their being enabled to live cheaply by paying a less price for their European supplies and other Plantation necessities, the greater number of white Inhabitants and the work of their Artificers being much less changeable than in our Islands." *Hist. Jamaica*, III, 33. Add. Ms. 12,413.

second place the quality of the French product was better, since French refining was more complete than British owing to the legislation intended to encourage refining in England.²⁰ There is, moreover, no evidence that the British planters could have supplied the American demand, and much opinion to the contrary. The fact that they not only did not do so but also could not consume the products of North America furnished the greatest argument in favor of allowing trade with the foreign islands. The lieutenant governor of New York, Cadwallader Colden, pointed out in 1760 that the northern colonies could not possibly pay for their consumption of British manufactures by the proceeds of their produce exported only to the British colonies; the English sugar islands, he said, consumed only a small part of the provisions raised in North America, and the profits of the whole trade of the continental colonies in every direction were barely sufficient to pay the balance due Great Britain. To diminish their purchasing power through curtailment of their markets would result in decreasing their importation of British manufactured goods.²¹

Concerning the share of New York in this illicit trade no definite statement can be made, although it is certain that the provincial merchants participated largely, as was discovered during the French War.²² New York's imports directly from the foreign West Indies were said to be small, but after 1737 it had had a considerable export trade in provisions, lumber and horses to St. Thomas, Curaçoa, Surinam and St. Eustatius, which doubtless were resold to other islands.²³ The number of New York men who settled in business in these neutral islands indicates also that full advan-

²⁰ Channing, *U. S.*, II, 511.

²¹ Colden to Pitt. Dec. 27, 1760; *Colden Letter Books*, II, 52.

²² William Smith, *History of the Late Province of New York*, II, 287.

²³ Archibald Kennedy to Board of Trade, Jan. 10, 1737-8; C. O. 5: 1059; Gg 19; Pitman, *Development of the British West Indies*, p. 281.

tage was taken of this *modus operandi*.²⁴ Moreover, the largest trade of the province among the British islands was with Jamaica, and this, it may be suspected, covered at least a part of the trade with the French colonies.²⁵ The Molasses Act of 1733 was undoubtedly evaded; yet more of the color of compliance was lent to it by New York traders than by those of other colonies, for the actual amount of duties collected under the act at New York from 1733 to 1750 was £2,003 on merchandise and none on prizes, being the largest sum collected in any port on merchandise and nearly twice the corresponding amount collected in Massachusetts.²⁶

Much more serious was the direct clandestine trade with Holland in tea, canvas, gunpowder, arms for the Indians and linens. Governor Hardy upon his arrival found this trade in such a "flourishing state" as "almost to totally discourage the Importation of these commodities from Great Britain." The common procedure was for vessels from Holland to stop at Sandy Hook, and smuggle their cargoes to New York in small boats while the vessels went up empty. Upon Hardy's attempt to put a stop to this practice, "the trade took another course by sending their vessels to the ports of Connecticut from whence it is not very difficult to introduce their goods through the Sound to New York and even to Philadelphia,"²⁷ a route which the convenient bays and inlets of Long Island Sound made practicable in spite of all precautions throughout the colonial period. The methods in use are well exemplified in these instructions from the owners of the Brig *Brilliant* to her captain, Richard Jeffery:²⁸

²⁴ See chapter v.

²⁵ For evidence of smuggling sugar from the West Indies see below, the report of Charles Williams in 1768.

²⁶ Pitman, *Development of the British West Indies*, p. 275, giving a list of returns from C. O. 5:38, App. 5.

²⁷ Sir Charles Hardy to Board of Trade, July 10, 1757; *N. Y. Col. Mss.*, VII, 271.

²⁸ Ludlow Letter Book, to Capt. Richard Jeffery, Apr. 6, 1755.

Sir:—

As our Brigantine Brilliant is now ready for the Sea, we Desire you'l imbrace the first opertunity of Sailing and Proceed to Amsterdam north about where deliver your Cargo agreeable to Bill of Lading and apply your selfe to our Friende Mr. John de Neufville Merchant there who will supply you with as many Holland Clinckers as is Needful to Ballance the Vessel also with what money you may want for the Use of the Vessel—it is our Positive order that you take in no goods but such as Mr. de Neufville ships for your owners excepting Eighteen pieces of sailecloth which we agree to by the Request of Mr. Le Roy—we hope you will be Dispatch from Amsterdam in 14 or 16 days after your Arrival and then Proceed with the utmost Expedition North aboute into the sound and lay with the Vessel off the Entrance of New London Harbour and send your Mate with a letter to Advise our friend Capt. Nathaniel Shaw Merchant at that place who will have our directions what to do with the Cargo, which you may deliver as he Orders after which Proceed home to this Port with the Vessel as he Directs. We desire you will Avoid as much as Possible to Speake with any Vessel in your Passage out and Home and Desire you Will not faile to Write us per all opertunitys and Advise us how affairs seems to Stand in Europe relating to War.

E. D.

J. W.

J. L.²⁹

The cargoes of these illicit voyages were not always sent to the same place, for on her next voyage, the *Brilliant* was to land her goods at Stamford rather than at New London.³⁰

²⁹ E. D. was Elias Desbrosses, to be third president of the Chamber of Commerce. J. W. was John Waddell, a famous merchant and captain at one time of his own vessel, one of the founders of the New York Society Library. J. L. was John Ludlow. The Naval Office Lists record the entry of the *Brig Brilliant* from Amsterdam and the Isle of May in ballast, Sept. 3, 1755; C. O. 5: 1228.

³⁰ Ludlow Letter Book, To Capt. Richard Jeffery Junr. Jan. 8, 1756.

We hope this will meet you safe arrived at Amsterdam and Desire that you will after the Delivery of your Cargo of Logwood to Mr. de Neufville take in what Bricks you think is Sufficient for Ballast and receive all Such Goods as he Ships or Others for our accounts and not Other as it is our Orders that you do not accept of any Freight. . . . You will proceed home North about and come in by way of the Sound and if spoak with by any Vessells you may Answer from the Isle of May and . . . proceed down off Stamford but don't anchor nearer the Conn. Shore than about the middle of the Sound if moderate weather and if otherways then anchor in Oyster Bay or under Lloyd's Neck on Long Island side and go across yourself or send the mate in your own boat or otherways directly to Mr. John Lloyd at Stamford whose direction you are desired to follow in the delivery of your cargo, but in case you meet with a Sloop, before you get that Length, or when there, that you can trust and will sute the purpose, you may send us directly about Twenty cases of Tea and your Owners as much Ozenbrigs as you can Stow under the deck of the Sloop. @ Letters but no other Letters and order the Master to Anchor out of sight of the Harbour and give us notice. You should take care that Mr. de Neufville provides you with ²¹ a Charter party and other needful papers for a foreign part and conceal all other Letters and papers in case of being brought to by a man of War or a Privateer in case of war. . . . Mr. Lloyd will provide you with a Clearance from fairfield in Ballast and if no sloop offers as before mentioned, apply to Mr. Lloyd to supply you with one.

Sir, Your friends and owners,

ELIAS DESBROSSES
JOHN WADDELL
WILLIAM LUDLOW
RICHARD JEFFERY
JOHN LUDLOW.

²¹ Colden in 1763 reported ships cleared from Holland to one of the Dutch islands with leave to touch at a port of her owners. To Board of Trade, Dec. 7, 1763. *Colden Letter Books*, IX, 259.

It seems to have been the usual practice to use two or three different consignees in these transactions; Philip Cuyler, for example, who brought in his Dutch tea through Newport, consigned it at various times to Solomon Townsend, to Richards and Coddington or to Joseph Wanton.³² Cuyler's tea was to be emptied into bags and sent to "Hunts," probably Hunt's Point, where he would arrange personally for getting it into the city. "The lead of the Chests sell for the most you can . . . and advise me the neat amounts of proceeds. The chests being of no value to the Owners you will distribute them among your friends."³³

When it seemed hazardous to bring the contraband into New York, orders were given to sell it at Newport.³⁴ Philadelphia was³⁵ used by John Waddell as a market for his share of the tea landed at Stamford by the *Brilliant*, and having brought it to New York by sloop he regularly sent several cases to Thomas Wharton by the stage to Bordentown, whence it was taken in boats to Philadelphia. Wharton instructed the stage-owner to "give positive orders to the Boatmen not to come in sight of the City till after Night and then they may come into the dock before my Store and take them [the chests] out unsuspected, and without occasion of Drays through the Streets."³⁶ Another device was to send goods by boat around the Jersey shore and up Delaware Bay to Marcus Hook, and thence to Philadelphia by night.³⁷ This seems to have been the usual way

³² Cuyler Letter Book, To John Hodshon, June 26, 1759; to Solomon Townsend, Jan. 23, 1760; to John Hodshon, Oct. 4, 1757; *ibid.*, Jan. 17, 1758; to Richards & Coddington, Sept. 25, 1758; to Hodshon, Oct. 26, 1758; to Richards & Coddington, April 18, 1759; *ibid.*, July 23, 1760.

³³ Cuyler Letter Book, to Richards & Coddington, Sept. 25, 1758, May 8, 1759, Sept. 27, 1759 and Nov. 7, 1759.

³⁴ Cuyler Letter Book, to Wm. Tweedy, Feb. 18, 1760.

³⁵ Wharton Letter Book, to Jos. Borden, Feb. 7, 1756.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, June 28 and July 3, 1756; July 19 and Aug. 5, 1756.

of disposing of contraband, and, with a little trouble, was attended by no risk. "I have paid the freight etcetera to Joseph Borden," reported Wharton to Waddell after the second shipment in the spring of 1756, "who desired me to write to thee to request thou would get the owners of the Stage Boat with you to contract with the Collectors at Amboy by the year for he says that is the only place they fear."²⁷

In the same letter he gives evidence of another and perhaps simpler method: "Yesterday the trial relating to Benjamin Levy's Tea ended, the Jurors brought in their Verdict in favor of Levy, deeming the New York Cocket Good. Wherefore shall endeavour to comply with thy Hint respecting the old Cocket." Even after arrival there seems to have been some danger of a general search, such as that reported in August 1756 for tea, arms and powder, which fortunately did not discover their store.

We acted as much for your interest as lay in our power, and are in hopes that we have secured them if they should start another search, having started one Chest into Barrells, which lay the most exposed, and dared not remove it in the chest, but after it was started took the barrels and removed them to a considerable distance, and at present dare not offer any for sale. . . . The Collector's Clark was very serviceable in the affair about the arms etc. and had it not been for him apprehend should have suffered, and as the other Factors here have permission to present something to him should be glad to know thy mind thereon.²⁸

Still another method which the governor reported that the merchants used in voyages from Europe was to stop at some of the outports of Great Britain and there enter only half

²⁷ Wharton Letter Book, June 12, 1756.

²⁸ Wharton Letter Book, to Waddell, Aug. 20, Sept. 16, 1756.

their cargo, thereby obtaining a legal cocket.³⁹ This was amplified later by declaring the remainder as bound for foreign ports.⁴⁰

Governor Hardy determined to stop the illicit trade in his own province, and he also notified Governor Fitch of the proceedings in Connecticut. The year 1756 was a bad one for smugglers. Philip Cuyler wrote to his correspondents in Amsterdam in June: "The officers here have lately made great Seizures of Illegal goods Imported from Holland and are determined to put a stop to the counterband trade, that I believe few goods will be ordered from your place this season."⁴¹ On the 9th of June he informed his father that there had been a seizure at Stamford of forty boxes of tea, guns and powder amounting to about £7,000. "The trade is now entirely stopped. The Governor is determined to have all Contraband goods seized he can hear of." On the thirtieth, he reported goods worth £2,500 currency seized at Norwalk, and advised against getting any more merchandize from Holland without a clearance in Great Britain.⁴² Cuyler had considerable shipments for himself and his father at Stamford, but how to get them to New York was a problem. Early in July he sent a man to Stamford who broke up two cases of tea and linen, put the contents into bags and brought them in. Case No. 30, however, could not be reached easily and on the 12th Cuyler instructed John Lloyd, in whose store it lay hidden, to break the cask and ship the goods by the bearer. Before the letter reached Lloyd, the customs officers searched the store and seized all

³⁹ Hardy to Board of Trade, July 10, 1757, *N. Y. Col. Mss.*, VII, 271.

⁴⁰ Colden to Board of Trade, Dec. 7, 1763. *Colden Letter Books*, I, 259.

⁴¹ Cuyler Letter Book, to Isaak Clockener & Zoon, June 4, 1756, to John Hodshon, June 15, 1756.

⁴² Cuyler Letter Book, June 9, 1756 and June 30, 1756.

contraband goods. The goods were put up at auction, according to law and Cuyler bid them in. "The average on your check [linen]", he reported to his father, "was to bribe the Custom House officers that they should not bid, for which Reason they went so low."⁴³

Through the activity of the governor the trade may have been checked for a time, but the profits apparently were so great that it could not be permanently kept under. Philip Cuyler transferred his operations to Newport; and in July 1757, Hardy, admitting that the trade was still flourishing, predicted that "if some effectual means are not used, the greatest part of the commerce of the American colonies will be withdrawn from the Mother Country and carried to Holland."⁴⁴ For the next few years the attention of the home government was engrossed with the prosecution of the war, and Holland goods came in without difficulty until the attempt to stop the illicit intercourse with the French West Indies caused a general "narrow scouting into the mysteries of Trade."

By virtue of the war the trade with the French, and later the Spanish, islands which was so essential in "taking off" native provincial products, had become trade with the enemy and therefore treason, but the merchants had no intention of relinquishing so valuable a market. They continued to supply it chiefly through Monte Christi, a settlement in the Spanish portion of Santo Domingo (and thus neutral until 1761), which was made a free port in 1752.⁴⁵ The trade was essentially a direct one with the French, though its technical legality was often asserted. John Watts described it thus to Isaac Barré:

⁴³ Cuyler Letter Book, to his father, July 7, 1756; to John Lloyd, July 12, 1756; to Daniel Crommelin, July 16, 1756; to his father, Sept. 13, 1756.

⁴⁴ Hardy to the Board of Trade, July 10, 1757. *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, VII, 271.

⁴⁵ *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, VII, 499.

We have an odd kind of mungrell Commerce here called the Mount Trade, a Spanish Port near Cape François, the Lawyers say it is legal and contrary to no Statute. The Men of Warr say it is illegal and both take and condemn them at their own shops while they are acquitted at others. No two Courts pursue the same Measure. A Stranger to form a judgment from them would imagine that the Nation in its Jurisdictions had neither Rule, Law or probity and yet the Evil is suffered to go on without determination. The Subject is torn to pieces by Robbers, Lawyers and all sorts of Vermin. I never was concerned with this kind of commerce myself but I have both blamed and pitied some that were.⁴⁶

The actual extent of the trade can only be guessed, but it engaged such important and substantial merchants as Peter R. Livingston, Theophylact Bache, Abram de Peyster, and Lawrence Kortright.⁴⁷ "I am persuaded," wrote Colden in 1760, "that the merchants of this place have been too generally concerned in this illegal trade and that the merchants of Philadelphia have been more so."⁴⁸

The methods used to cover this enemy trade and to deceive the collector of the port were many and varied, most of them involving an intermediate stop at a New England port. In his letter of October 27, 1760, Colden continued:

The method taken to conceal this trade so far as I can learn has been to ship off large quantities of provisions to New England governments for which the merchants give Bond as the Act directs, and return proper certificates of their being landed. They likewise bring back French Sugars to New Jersey and the New England Colonies which are from thence imported into this place with proper cocketts of their haveing been legally imported. . . . Besides this I make no doubt provisions are

⁴⁶ *Letter Book of John Watts*, Feb. 28, 1762.

⁴⁷ *Colden Papers*, VI, 137-140, from Amherst, Apr. 16, May 24, 1762.

⁴⁸ *Colden Letter Book*, I, 27, to Pitt, Oct. 27, 1760.

privately sent off from some of the many ports on this coast where there are no officers.⁴⁹

On the 23rd of April, 1762, Colden wrote as follows to Amherst, who had been urging a stricter investigation in an attempt to suppress the trade:

Inclosed is a list of Vessels Cleared out of this Port with Provisions which are suspected to be on illicit trade. Among them it is observable that the sending of Onions, Boards, Hoop-poles Apples and Oyl to New London, the sending of Tar to South Carolina, Beef and Butter and the sending of Provisions Bricks and hoops to Pennsylvania are all of them like sending Coals to New Castle.⁵⁰

It was strongly suspected that the Connecticut customs officers were conniving in this illicit trade at least by furnishing false clearances for a consideration, but evidence shows that they were not alone. Nicholas Lechmere, the collector of Newport, Rhode Island, was most obliging. Orr, Dunlope and Glenholme wrote to William Bayard; "This day settled your account with S. Moore allowing Mr. Letchmore [sic] two hundred dollars for his Clearance which I think anuff as he has not charged anyone here more than 150. I have had six myself."⁵¹ Philip Cuyler outfitted a number of expeditions to the French islands covered with clearances from Lechmere.

Inclosed you have Certificate for the Landing of 320 Barrels Flour on board the Schooner Dolphin, John Hicky master to your Place [he wrote on one occasion] which I Request you'll be good enough to Indorse and send it to me per Return of Bearer. Charge thereon Please to draw for and your Bill shall

⁴⁹ *Colden Letter Books*, I, 27.

⁵⁰ *Colden Letter Books*, I, 195, 102.

⁵¹ Orr, Dunlope & Glenholme Letter Book, to Wm. Bayard, May 1, 1760, Hist. Soc. of Pa. Ms.

be paid on Recet. I have also the Brigantine Charming Sally Captain Joseph Hunt Cleared from Amboy in the Jerseys for Kingston Jamaica with 318 Barrels Flour should be glad Likewise you could send me a Certificate for the Landing of it with a Clearance for Jamaica as well as for the former.⁵³

Sometimes the collector eased his conscience by requiring the cargo to be actually unloaded, but closing his eyes while the same goods were taken aboard again.⁵⁴ Indeed, a regular business sprang up in supplying false clearances and arranging for trade. A firm in Norwalk sent out a letter advertising that it had procured "numbers of fictitious clearances for Different Persons as also their method and Price for doing it."⁵⁵ Letters seized in ships captured in the French ports showed a regular correspondence with persons in the West Indies who gave advice as to how the illegal trade might be carried on, especially from New London.⁵⁶ In the spring of 1762 Colden heard rumors that merchants in New York or Philadelphia, or both, had entered into a contract to send supplies to Havana via Providence.⁵⁷

A variation of the false clearance was the legal clearance to Jamaica, Barbadoes or New England, with verbal orders to the captain to change his course when out of sight of land. The sloop *Industry* cleared for North Carolina and Jamaica, but with verbal orders from her owners to go to Cape François, where she was later captured by British men of war.⁵⁸ The same thing happened to the sloop *Dove*, owned by Peter R. Livingston, which sailed from New York bound for Jamaica with a cargo of provisions and lumber. At

⁵³ Cuyler Letter Book, to Nicholas Lechmere, Esq., Aug. 19, 1760.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, to Richards & Coddington, Dec. 3, 1760.

⁵⁵ Beer, *British Colonial Policy, 1756-1765*, p. 101, n. 2.

⁵⁶ *Colden Papers*, VI, 138. From Amherst, April 16, 1762.

⁵⁷ *Colden Letter Book*, I, 209. To Amherst, May 22, 1762.

⁵⁸ *Colden Papers*, VI, 161-162. Cf., pp. 210-212.

Hispaniola the master changed his course to St. Marks, but when he saw what appeared to be English privateers, he changed again to Port au Paix. On the sixth of January he arrived at Cape François, delivered her goods, and loaded a cargo of sugar, coffee and rum. On the way home the sloop was captured. On the outward voyage the master had told his men that he would be safe enough in any French port under a "Flag of Truce," which they supposed was due to some papers they knew he had "concealed by being sowed in the Hinder Part of his Breeches . . . a patch being sowed over them."⁸⁸ It is certain that many ship-captains carried unwarranted flags of truce and French permissions for just such occasions.⁸⁹

Another method, used for example by the snow *Johnson*, Waddell Cunningham owner, was to open the customary bond and sign it without filling in the description of the cargo—a practice which the Customs had begun in order to facilitate getting the ships out. Having gotten the proper papers, the vessels simply sailed without completing the bond.⁹⁰ Still another bolder device was to weigh anchor in the night without any clearance papers. This was done by the sloop *Sally*, Lawrence Kortright owner, and by the brig *Phoenix*, which later took on French prize sugars at Kingston, giving no security to land the cargo as the law directed, and attempted to clear out through false reports of what was on board. The collector served notice on the vessel, but when he returned next morning to take possession, the bird had flown.⁹¹

⁸⁸ *Colden Papers*, VI, 149-151.

⁸⁹ *Colden Papers*, VI, 138-139.

⁹⁰ "Aspinwall Papers," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, 4th series, IX, 470-471; Kempe to Monckton, Nov. 3, 1762.

⁹¹ *Colden Papers*, VI, 178. Cf. p. 3.

Flags of truce were equally useful in carrying provisions to the enemy. Under cover of permission to transfer prisoners and to carry ship's stores, cargoes of flour, beef, pork, and bread were taken to French ports and sold there. Apparently the authorities in New York were extremely careful in granting commissions, but in Rhode Island they were easily bought from the governor or the collector, and in Philadelphia the sale of flags was an open scandal. Governor Denny was reported to have made £1,200 in 1759 by the use of this prerogative.⁶³ The process of obtaining these permissions is well illustrated by two letters. Philip Cuyler wrote to his father-in-law, William Tweedy, in Newport on the eleventh of March 1760:

Observe you had promis of a Flag but wanted the name of the Vessell master Burthen prisoners and where Bound which is not in power to give for the reason the vessell I design for that flag I momentarily expect and the master to go in her am not fixed on yett and the Prisoners being too great a Risque to engage with before the Vessell is on Sailing as they are only obtained by way of Stealth. I should think they might give the Flag and Leave those vacancyes to be Filled here for which I will give them my Honour it shall be done in a very Proper manner before the Vessell Leaves this their is now flags in Town which given by your governor which are Lett vacant and is no more than what has been done at Philadelphia etcetera. and I dare say you will be able to get the flag in that manner . . . in case you can't obtain the flag without having it filled in in that Case Pay them for the flag and take a proper receipt to have the flag delivered you filled up when demanded and on failure thereof to pay you a forfeit of £1,200 this Currency. I can't conceive what necessity there is for this great form when they have granted flags without filling up.

⁶³ Pitman, *Development of the British West Indies*, 317, 328. Cf. Letter Book of Thomas Riche, to J. Van Zandt, March 24, 1759. Hist. Soc. of Pa. Mss.

Thomas Riche of Philadelphia wrote to Jacobus Van Zandt in New York under date of April 2, 1759: "Have secured a flagg You get the Frenchmen and send them to the ferry opposite Philadelphia. Three men are concerned here so divide her in quarters. Let me know the best place in Hispaniola to send and how many men to cover 150 or 160 tons." ⁶³

Although the investigation of the illicit trade with the enemy, was undertaken chiefly as a military necessity, it worked also toward the enforcement of the Acts of Trade as a whole. In pursuance of this object naval men were placed aboard suspected ships before they could break bulk and attended them to a proper port where customs agents saw to the unloading.⁶⁴ Colden was of the opinion that if this method were continued it would put a stop to the illicit trade, more of which he felt had been detected and punished in New York than in other colonies. Even the navy was not incorruptible, however, for the Admiralty office reported that in December, 1763, a warship "on the York station" had accepted a bribe of £300 to allow an English ship from Amsterdam to pass through.⁶⁵

In 1764 the presence of so many ships of war was thought to have killed at last the clandestine commerce. The efficacy of the measures which had been taken is partially attested by the sudden increase in the amount of foreign goods imported from England, the value in 1764 being double that for the four preceding years. It is significant that tea thus imported accounted for two-thirds of the rise in value.⁶⁶ The excellent sweeping of the new broom wielded by Grenville led John Watts to remark to Napier that the Customs

⁶³ Letter Book of Thomas Riche, Hist. Soc. of Pa. Mss.

⁶⁴ *Colden Letter Books*, I, 230.

⁶⁵ *Colden Papers*, VI, 334.

⁶⁶ Customs 3: 60-64 inclusive.

House was administering oaths instead of oysters, "a dissimilar Food indeed."⁸⁷ The quarry, however, had only taken cover till the hunt should subside. Colden had suspected that some tea was still being run in small quantities by small boats which could dart up creeks and into harbors where there was not sufficient draught of water for larger ships to pursue.⁸⁸ In 1766 the value of foreign goods, and of tea in particular, imported from London fell fifty per cent below that of 1764 and 1765, and it is noteworthy that whereas such goods represented a little more than a third of all imports from England in 1751 and in 1764, in 1766 they were about one-fifth.⁸⁹

In the spring of 1765 John Temple, the surveyor at Boston, having had information that vast quantities of goods from Holland and Hamburg were being smuggled up the Hudson River after trans-shipment at Sandy Hook, proposed to make Albany a port, or at least to establish a "preventive officer" there. The New York Council and Lt. Governor Colden questioned the right of the surveyor to create a new port, as well as the expediency of demanding that every vessel going up the river should load and unload at Albany, since many of them either did not proceed so far or continued farther. Temple, accordingly, contented himself with putting in a preventive officer who had power to demand of all vessels a clearance from New York. This device did not prove completely satisfactory.⁹⁰

In February 1766 the British consul at Hamburg reported to the Duke of Grafton an illicit trade in rice and tea between Hamburg and New York, Rhode Island and Boston, but

⁸⁷ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 267.

⁸⁸ *Colden Letter Books*, I, 375.

⁸⁹ Customs 3: 51, 64, 65, 66. See Appendix.

⁹⁰ *Colden Letter Books*, II, 22. Temple Papers, John Temple to the Commissioners of the Customs, April 10, 1766.

chiefly New York, which was carried on with the connivance of the British factory at Hamburg.⁷¹ In November, 1767, Colden wrote to Shelburne that he was aware "that a greater quantity of Goods had been Run without paying duty since the Repeal of the Stamp Act than had been done in ten years before. Whole cargoes from Holland and shiploads of Wine has been Run besides what is usual in the way of smuggling. This could not be effected without numbers of People knowing it. They have been so daring it is no secret in the country."⁷² On December 22, 1768, Charles Williams, the naval officer, sent to the Board of Trade a report on the Port of New York in which he presented the evidences of smuggling.⁷³ There were, he said, two forms of smuggling; one of wine, sugar and molasses from the West Indies, and the other of every species of East India and other goods from Holland and Europe.

Between 27 November 1767 and 27 November 1768 a large ship, a Snow and a Brigg entered from Amsterdam in ballast. This carries the strongest conviction of Fraud for those Ships had they been empty would have gone over to England for Freight or would loaded with Newcastle coal, or they would . . . have put in at Lisbon for Salt or at many other ports that might have been for the Merchant's interest so that it admits of no doubt but they came with full Cargoes of Contraband Goods.

Between 8 September 1767 and 8 September 1768 seven snows, four Briggs and three schooners and two sloops their whole Burthen was not less than 1,200 tons and yet it does not appear that they brought more than 190 tons of wine for the Consumption of this whole Country as well as the supply of their Exportation to other markets which on a medium is not

⁷¹ C. O. 388: 53 L: 50.

⁷² *Colden Letter Books*, II, 133-134.

⁷³ *Treasury Papers* I: 505.

less than 100 tons a year; This leaves only 90 tons for their own Consumption which is not one sixth of what is consumed in this province, besides in the last year six Vessels entered from the Madeiras and Teneriffe in all only 23 pipes, 12 hogsheads, and 2 quarter casks of Wine. . .

From 18 November 1767 to 18 November 1768 thirty vessels out of seventy two which on a medium of three years use the foreign Island Trade entered mostly in Balast, some had 18 hogsheads, others 42 hogsheads of Molasses and others 24 hogsheads of sugar etcetera, but the whole thirty sail did not enter a sufficient quantity of Goods to Load one of those Vessels; on a Medium of three years 69 Vessels appear to have been employed from hence to the British West India Islands which stand much on the same footing with those engaged in the Foreign Island Trade.

From 8 September 1767 to 8 September 1768 only 286,131 gallons of Molasses were imported into this port for the Consumption of the whole Country which is by no means a sufficient quantity for that purpose, for it is used by the country people in place of Sugar, and also in making of beer, besides the great quantities distilled in Rum; there are seventeen Distilleries in this district, twelve of which work constantly and I am told on a medium each Distills 150 gallons of Mollasses in a day . . . which reckoning only 300 days will amount to 540,000 gallons and the Consumption in beer and other respects together with their Exports to other Markets is at least 720,000 gallons more which make 1,260,000 gallons so that making an allowance for what pays duty and what is brought in coastwise, not less than 900,000 gallons of Molasses are annually smuggled by which the Revenue loses £3,750 on this article.

The reasons for the persistence of this illicit trade are obvious, and they were faithfully pointed out by the officials reporting to the Board of Trade, to wit, the configuration of the coast, which provided innumerable bays and inlets peculiarly well adapted for running contraband; the weakness of the machinery for enforcement, and the attitude of

the colonial citizenry. The first point needs no confirmation other than a glance at the map, and no comment beyond a reminder of the similar use to which such bays and inlets were put in England itself. With regard to the second point, it was continually urged that the customs establishment lacked both numbers and strength. In 1767 it consisted of a controller, collector, a surveyor, a surveyor and searcher, and a land-waiter. During the next five years three tide-waiters and a tide-surveyor were added. In Governor Tryon's survey of 1774, the Naval Officer of the port was also considered part of the customs establishment. The only other customs official in the province was stationed at the east end of Long Island. In 1750 Colden wrote to the Board of Trade suggesting that a naval patrol be established to supplement the custom-house officials who, he rightly claimed, were not sufficient to prevent illicit trade. Hardy also suggested "a nimble cruiser." From 1757 to 1761 the presence of men of war virtually established the patrol as suggested, but upon their withdrawal nothing took their place. Again in 1763, when the lieutenant governor was once more concerned with the question of more adequate forces and methods, since he was continually harassed by demands of the Board of Trade that smuggling be stopped, he wrote to Lord Egremont: "I cannot imagine any method for suppressing the pernicious Trade with Holland which can be more effectual than this now taken by His Majesty's Ships of War. If a few Men be put on board every suspected Vessel on the Coast or that comes from a Foreign Port to prevent her breaking Bulk till she comes to the proper Port for unlading and so attend the unlading, this alone, in my humble opinion would in great measure if not wholly suppress the illegal trade."¹⁴

¹⁴ *Colden Letter Books*, I, 230.

Although an act of 1763 authorized the use of the navy in preventing illicit trade in the provinces as well as in Great Britain, there is no evidence of men of war placed at the disposal of the Customs House in New York.⁷⁵ In his report of 1768 Collector Williams suggested having two good vessels to cruise constantly, one off Sandy Hook under direction of the customs at New York, and one off the east end of Long Island Sound under the customs at New London, with power to visit every vessel and put an officer aboard.⁷⁶ Yet in 1774 Collectors Elliott and Moore were recommending the same thing to the Commissioners at Salem, and Colden wrote to Dartmouth that "there is not a Boat of any kind belonging to our Customs House."⁷⁷

After the report of the consul at Hamburg concerning the illicit trade from that port, the consuls there and at Amsterdam and Rotterdam were asked to notify the Treasury and the Customs at New York of any vessels destined for America which were loading contraband.⁷⁸ In view of the length of time such communications would take to reach their destinations, it is questionable what value they had in facilitating the apprehension of smugglers.

Colden further complained that there was too good an understanding between the customs officers and the merchants. The stated salaries of the officials were extremely small, the largest amount paid being £60 per annum to the surveyor and the searcher, Richard and Alexander Colden, while the controller and collector each received £55 per annum.⁷⁹ To these stipends, however, were added the fees

⁷⁵ Beer, *British Colonial Policy, 1756-1765*, p. 229.

⁷⁶ Treasury Papers, I: 505.

⁷⁷ Treasury Papers, I: 505. Extract from letter of Elliott and Moore to the Customs at Salem, July 20, 1774; *Colden Letter Book*, II, 370.

⁷⁸ Treasury Papers I: 499.

⁷⁹ Declared Accounts, Audit Office, Bundle 844: Roll 1137. Cash Account of Charles Stewart, Esq., 1767-1777.

payable to each officer, which in the case of the collector amounted to over £575 (stg.) for entering and clearing ships alone. At least an equal sum must have resulted from fees for granting a bill of health, permits to trade within the provinces, or cockets for foreign trade, for certifying the endorsement of the captain and the owner on a register of foreign trade, giving a vessel a new register, making out a bond, or granting a post-entry. The naval officer of the Port, besides fees for these services, also received fees for issuing certificates covering naval stores or pig and bar iron, "Plantation Bonds" for enumerated goods, and certificates to cancel Plantation Bonds.⁸⁰ Even so, the officials were not beyond the temptation of bribing, nor were the merchants slow to offer. Alexander Colden virtuously refused 200 pistoles to overlook some Holland duck, and Richard Colden, his son, was given to understand, on taking office, that if he were not too officious in the performance of his duty his income would be increased by £1,500 a year.⁸¹

Even if a seizure were made, a conviction was by no means sure to follow. In 1738 Collector Kennedy reported to the Board of Trade that a case in which the evidence was clear had been removed from the High Court of Admiralty by the chief justice of the province, on the ground that since the seizure had been made within one of the counties of the province, namely in New York Bay, the case must go to common law courts and there be tried by a jury. It would be impossible to hold a man for smuggling, Kennedy predicted, if this were allowed to become a precedent, for the juries would always acquit him no matter what the evi-

⁸⁰ Customs Papers: Massachusetts Hist. Soc. "List of fees conformable to those in New York and taken at Quebec in 1771."

⁸¹ *Colden Papers*, V, 73. Alexander Colden to Cadwallader Colden, May 8, 1756; *Colden Letter Books*, II, 371; Colden to Lord Dartmouth, Nov. 2, 1774.

dence.⁸² Twenty-five years later the Admiralty Court was no less partial than the juries, perhaps because the judges were themselves engaged in illicit trade. The prosecution in 1762 of Tom Richardson, Francis Welsh and Samuel Tingley, owners of the brig *Earl of Loudon* which was known to have carried provisions to the French islands during the war, was dismissed by Judge Lewis Morris for lack of cognizance—"I thought it unprudent," remarked George Spencer, who had provided the evidence, "while there was such a judge to Enter any more actions in that Court, tho it is certainly the Proper Court and appointed by the said act for the Trial of such cases."⁸³ In 1760 Colden observed to Pitt that "it is difficult to prosecute with success against the bent of the people . . . and when a prosecution fails of success it is of prejudice to the service it was designed to promote."⁸⁴ The grand jury in the city of New York," he remarked in another letter, "consists of Merchants. Few merchants in this country are not perpetual smugglers and known to be such."⁸⁵ The attitude of the merchants toward illicit trade is well exemplified by the affair of George Spencer, who was mobbed in the street for informing of the trade with the French West Indies. He was imprisoned by a trick as a debtor and languished in jail for at least two years without a hearing.⁸⁶ Colden complained to General Amherst during the war that "so many people I suspect have been interested in the Illicit Trade from this Place that it is difficult to find Persons to execute any orders who have not connections with them and who are not afraid of their resentment, so that however solicitous I may be to bring

⁸² *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, VI, 154-155.

⁸³ *Treasury Papers* 1: 425, fol. 281.

⁸⁴ *Colden Letter Books*, I, 53.

⁸⁵ *Colden Letter Books*, II, 148. To Lord Mansfield, Jan. 22, 1768.

⁸⁶ *Colden Papers*, VI, 89-99.

the guilty to condign punishment . . . my endeavours may not have the desired effect." ⁸⁷

Some distinction was made by conservatives, such as John Watts and William Smith, between smuggling sugar from the West Indies, which was condoned, and running tea, linen and gunpowder from Holland, which was condemned. "England is doubtless entitled to all our superfluities, because our general interests are closely connected, and her navy is our principal defence. On this account the trade with Holland and Hamburg . . . is certainly, upon the whole, impolitic and unreasonable, how much soever it may conduce to advance the interest of a few merchants, or this particular colony." ⁸⁸ But in general, it appears, trade with the Dutch was looked upon by New York merchants as prosaically as trade with the English, for they sent orders, protested high charges, changed houses when dissatisfied, and received letters soliciting business in exactly the same fashion as in lawful British connections. ⁸⁹ When his Newport partners in crime protested to Philip Cuyler that he ought not to let his clerk copy his letters to them, he replied indignantly that he was "well assured of the lad's *honest principall*" and "convinced that no bribery would be any Temptation of Inducing him to Divulge any of my Business." ⁹⁰ Prudence, however, dictated that every precaution should be taken not to get caught, and Colden reported to Tryon that when a small sloop laden with Dutch tea and duck was seized by the Customs House Officers at high noon,

⁸⁷ Colden Letter Books, I, 196.

⁸⁸ William Smith, *History of the Late Province of New York*, I, 281. Cf. *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 212. Stirling Papers, III, 43. Stirling to Lord Shelburne, Aug. 6, 1763.

⁸⁹ Ludlow Letter Book, to Daniel Crommelin, Apr. 3, 1755; to John Hodshon, Sept. 24, 1755.

⁹⁰ Cuyler Letter Book, to Richards & Coddington, Nov. 27, 1759.

she was "secured without any Tumult," for "the smugglers had so daringly exposed their cargo that everybody thought they justly deserved to lose it."⁹¹

Nor were the duties laid by the province any more willingly paid. Collector Williams reported to the Board of Trade that since the Province had laid a duty on the tonnage of vessels, the ships as proven by their cargoes were four times the burden at which they were registered. "This instance of Justice to the Province will, I suppose, settle what here is intended towards the Crown."⁹² Indeed, he might also have pointed out that provincial tariffs were as often and consistently evaded as imperial. Merchants were requested to "save part of the duty" on wine, rum and chocolate, while even John Watts suggested that negroes shipped from Barbadoes might be landed in New Jersey to save the duty of £4 a head. Paying the duty on goods was avoided either by unloading secretly or by declaring only a part of the cargo.⁹³

All of the colonies had tariffs, the most continuous being those of Massachusetts, New York and South Carolina. In New York there had been tariff regulations continuously for a century prior to the Revolution.⁹⁴ The most important duties were those laid on wine, rum, distilled liquors and cocoa, first levied in 1691 and reimposed by an act of 1715 which continued without change until 1775. The duties, payable in silver to avoid the fluctuations of paper currency, were 7½ oz. per pipe of wine, 15 gr. per gallon of rum, 1 oz.

⁹¹ *Colden Letter Books*, II, 336, to Gov. Tryon, May 4, 1774.

⁹² *Treasury Papers* I: 505. The duty was 3d. per ton for the erection of a light-house at Sandy Hook. Giesecke, *American Commercial Legislation before 1789*, p. 93.

⁹³ *Beekman Letter Book*, to Sam. Fowler, April 2, 1754. T. White, Dec. 1, 1753. *Letter Book of John Watts*, Mar. 30, 1762—Cuyler Letter Book, to Jos. Wanton, Jr., Oct. 16, 1755.

⁹⁴ Giesecke, *American Commercial Legislation*, p. 37.

per hundredweight of cocoa. A 5% ad valorem duty was laid on European goods not imported from England, and a tax on slaves of 40 shillings a head if imported directly from Africa or £4 if from the West Indies.⁹⁵ These duties provided an average income of about £2,226 annually from 1750 to 1755, rose to the peak of £10,000 during the war, "the military being exceedingly public spirited in the consumption of strong liquors,"⁹⁶ and averaged about £4,500 a year from 1764 to 1775.⁹⁷ The purpose of the duties was chiefly to bring in revenue, for most of the expenses of the province were met by the income from these sources, but a slight element of protection may be seen in the higher tax on slaves from the West Indies. Home shipping was also encouraged by a double duty laid on goods imported from other colonies not the produce of such colonies—that is to say, reshipped goods—and the tonnage or "powder duties" of three shillings per ton levied on vessels, from which latter duty ships built or owned wholly within the province or, at the insistence of the Crown, owned by residents of Great Britain, were exempted.⁹⁸ Coastwise vessels wholly owned by persons living between Cape Henlopen and New Hampshire were also exempted from payment of this duty. By

⁹⁵ Giesecke, *American Commercial Legislation*, pp. 21-23; William Hill, "First Stages of the Tariff Policy of the U. S.," *Publications of the Am. Econ. Ass'n.*, VIII, 34; *Colonial Laws of New York*, I, 165, 403, 812, 847.

⁹⁶ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 26. Cf. Hill, "First Stages of the Tariff Policy," *loc. cit.*

⁹⁷ *Journal of the Assembly*, II, 287, 333, 360, 403, 466, 507, 545, 573, 613, 643, 679, 712, 728, 754, 790; III, 1766-67: 43; 1768: 21; 1769-1770: 28; 1770-1771: 23; 1772: 30; 1773: 32; 1774: 35; 1775: 32.

⁹⁸ Giesecke, *American Commercial Legislation*, p. 92. They were called "powder duties" because originally they were levied to provide powder for the forts and payment was something required in gunpowder. *Colonial Laws of New York*, I, 675, 779, 801, 847, 898, 1010; II, 16, 18, 843, 867; III, 754; IV, 370, 741, 766; V, 280.

Albany merchants were interested in the trade with Canada to permit this policy to succeed.¹⁰¹

Tariffs, however, were only one phase of provincial legislation concerning business. The tariff acts were far outnumbered by other acts regulating the quality and packing of staple articles of export and consumption and providing for inspection before and after sale. These measures, while resembling our modern pure food and drug acts, cannot be considered social legislation since they were not intended to safeguard the consumer. They were rather a reflection of the English regulatory policy in the Stuart period, their purpose being avowedly to preserve the reputation of commodities in markets abroad.¹⁰² Inspectors were appointed and fees prescribed, though the amount of the fee and the extent of the inspector's duty varied from time to time.¹⁰³

The manufacture of flour, the greatest staple of the province, had been a monopoly of the millers of New York City during the seventeenth century. The "Bolting Act", which destroyed this monopoly in 1694, was put through by the agricultural counties, and their representatives also refused to allow the Municipal Common Council to regulate the quality of flour brought in for export. The manufacture of flour was, therefore, virtually unsupervised. As a result the reputation of New York flour in the West Indies suffered severely, and the second quarter of the eighteenth century saw repeated petitions by the leading merchants to the provincial assembly for adequate regulation. In 1750 increased pressure was brought to bear on the assembly.

¹⁰¹ *Colonial Laws of N. Y.*, I, 250, 290; *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, V, 775, 778, 781-2; Giesecke, *American Commercial Legislation*, pp. 54-55.

¹⁰² William Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1910-1912), II, 156.

¹⁰³ *Colonial Laws of N. Y.*, V, 767; Giesecke, *American Commercial Legislation*, p. 75.

What makes the most noise here at present (wrote William Alexander to John Provoost in London in November) is the inspection of flower, our Staple Commodity; the Grand Jury of the last Supreme Court found Several Indictments against persons who had sold bad flower, or Cornel for flower, and Remonstranced to the Assembly the Great frauds Committed in the manufacturing thereof and the great necessity there is of some remedy being applied. Somedays after that about seventy of the merchants of this City petitioned the Assembly to the same purpose¹⁰⁴ and the next day attended the house with above thirty Evidences of the discredit our flower is in through all the Islands in the West Indies and produced a great number of letters by which it clearly appeared that neither the English, French, Dutch, Spaniards or even the Negroes would buy a barrel of New York flour while philadelphia flour is to be had.¹⁰⁵

A comprehensive act was presently passed, supplemented by an act of 1751, "to prevent the Exportation of unmerchantable flour." It required the branding of all flour casks and the registration of names and brand marks of bakers with the clerk of the municipal court; provided a penalty for false branding or the use of old barrels already branded; required inspection by government officials, and arbitration of disputes by "three indifferent judicious persons"; directed the forfeiture of unbranded flour; and imposed penalties for the purchase of condemned flour by the inspectors. The statute was reenacted in 1752, and again in 1757 and 1765.¹⁰⁶ A similar act provided for the inspection of meat. The packer was required to see that his beef and pork were properly packed in the right proportion of brine, and that the casks were of "London size" and of well seasoned timber. No

¹⁰⁴ *Journal of the Assembly*, II, 294-5.

¹⁰⁵ Stirling Papers, I, fol. 20; N. Y. Hist. Soc. Mss.

¹⁰⁶ Edwards, *New York as an Eighteenth Century Municipality*, p. 67; Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 310.

meat could be exported till inspection had taken place and the gauger had marked the barrel. Even when the meat was imported into New York for reexportation, it frequently had to be repacked before being sold.¹⁰⁷ A like inspection was early required for fish. The third commodity thus standardized was lumber, and here the process was even more complete. The earlier laws usually regulated in detail the size and quality of staves, to which later acts added shingles, boards, planks, etc.¹⁰⁸ Other acts provided for the inspection of naval stores and sole leather, prescribed the size of casks in which white bread should be packed for exportation, or attempted "to prevent Frauds in Bar Iron exposed to Sale in this Colony."¹⁰⁹ The province also levied an excise tax on the sale of all strong liquors, and required a license fee of £5 from all hawkers and peddlers.

Many of these regulations had been previously embodied in ordinances of the Common Council of New York City, the third agency to attempt any control of commerce. This was especially true of meat packing, concerning which the Common Council had passed an ordinance as early as 1731 requiring the inspection, casking and marking of all dressed meat for the export trade.¹¹⁰ The shipment of unwholesome beef or pork was punishable by a fine of £5. After the meat was examined and passed, it was packed in wooden casks having a capacity of thirty gallons. As the competition with Philadelphia for the West India markets grew keener, the Common Council insisted on a cask of thirty-one and one-

¹⁰⁷ *Colonial Laws of N. Y.*, III, 77; Giesecke, *American Commercial Legislation*, pp. 75-76.

¹⁰⁸ Giesecke, *American Commercial Legislation*, pp. 76-77.

¹⁰⁹ Giesecke, *American Commercial Legislation*, p. 79; *Colonial Laws of New York*, V, 71-73; IV, 1021-1022; V, 65-66.

¹¹⁰ *Minutes of the Common Council*, IV, 95.

half gallons.¹¹¹ This requirement was later included in a provincial statute which specified further that each barrel was to be trodden down at least twice and to contain not less than one and one-half bushels of salt.¹¹² The system proved very ineffective, for casks often fell short of the legal size, much to the "Discredit of said Staple Commodities of this Colony in Foreign Markets." The Council accordingly standardized the casks according to weight, and ordered a full barrel to contain 220 pounds of beef or 210 pounds of pork. The casks were to be branded "New York" by the municipal inspector, who collected a fee from the exporter.¹¹³ These regulations were maintained largely by the constant pressure of the merchants, especially through the Chamber of Commerce, which recommended amendments to the Mayor. The suggested amendments were not always embodied in ordinances, but it appears that such suggestions were thereafter followed by the public inspectors.¹¹⁴

The Common Council also revived the medieval practice of a municipal assize of victuals, which had fallen into abeyance in England because competition answered better for the distribution of food to the public at fair prices, either because of increased internal communication, or because of the rise of a large class of wealthy farmers who could afford to hold their crops for favorable prices.¹¹⁵ In New York the assize of bread had been established very early and was continued with unabated strictness. The price and size of loaves varied with the cost of flour. When wheat sold at 17s. per hundredweight in 1755, bakers were allowed to charge 2d.

¹¹¹ *Minutes of the Common Council*, IV, 95, 306; Edwards, *New York as an Eighteenth Century Municipality*, pp. 63-65.

¹¹² *Colonial Laws of New York*, III, 77-79, 346.

¹¹³ *Minutes of the Common Council*, VI, 239-241, 161.

¹¹⁴ Edwards, *N. Y. as an Eighteenth Century Municipality*, p. 92.

¹¹⁵ Cunningham, *History of English Industry and Commerce*, II, 356.

for a loaf weighing 15 ounces, whereas when it rose to 18s. 6d. in 1759 the loaf had to weigh only 13 ounces.¹¹⁶ These prices were not always satisfactory to the bakers, who in 1773 petitioned for an increase on the ground that materials and journeymen's wages were both higher. "Bakers are now obliged to give one Loaf of Bread to the Retailer on every dozen Loaves they sell them for their Incouragement." In response a scale was adopted for the assize of bread calculated on the varying prices of inspected flour which allowed a gross profit of seven shillings per cent.¹¹⁷ An assize was supposed to be made every three months, but the practice was not consistent, for frequently rates were changed twice within a month, and again a half year would intervene between two assizes. Every loaf offered for sale was to be marked with the baker's initials; inspectors were appointed to see that the assizes were faithfully observed; and violations incurred a fine of 20 shillings, the goods being forfeited to the poor of the city.¹¹⁸

The price of food had risen steadily since 1750, chiefly because of the increased exportation of provisions. Complaints about monopolies, especially of beef, as the cause of rising prices were frequent, and the agitation led to a petition from leading citizens in 1763 urging the Common Council to fix by an assize the market price of food in general. Although the Common Council had the right to regulate the price of bread since the bakers were all residents within the city, there was some question as to meat and provisions because inhabitants of neighboring counties would thus be affected by a municipal ordinance. Nevertheless the Council asserted its right to fix these prices also, and at once passed

¹¹⁶ *Minutes of the Common Council*, VI, 17, 163.

¹¹⁷ Stokes, *Iconography*, IV, 835, 839; *Minutes of the Common Council*, VII, 434.

¹¹⁸ *Minutes of the Common Council*, IV, 83-84; VII, 411.

a regulating ordinance. The regulation was bitterly opposed by both the butchers and the nearby farmers, who soon brought pressure to bear upon the Assembly to pass a bill nullifying the assize established by the municipality. After passage in the lower house by virtue of the votes of the country members, the bill was sent to the Council, where it was rejected on the representation of a committee of the Common Council that it impaired the charter rights of the city. The country people, furious at this decision and proclaiming their right as free Englishmen to sell their produce at their own prices, announced the establishment of a storehouse at Tarrytown where inhabitants of New York might purchase provisions, proposing at the same time to lay a twenty shilling tax on the owner of every vessel leaving there with supplies for the city. In the face of this forceful resistance the Common Council conceded the point on the price of beef per pound, but maintained its right to lay the assize.¹¹⁹ The city fathers continued to set prices for beef, pork, veal, butter and milk for several years.¹²⁰

This type of legislation, of course, affected not the merchants but the shop-keeper, and it was, therefore, inevitable that the greater part of the regulations made by the municipal Council had to do with what might be termed petty business. Ordinances of the most detailed and specific kind were passed to regulate the public markets; to prevent the sale of misrepresented, short-weight or actually bad food; to prevent regrating, forestalling and engrossing; to prescribe the size of apple barrels and the weight of onions; to fix the methods of importation and sale of firewood, and the making and selling of bricks and charcoal within the city. Retailers of liquor in quantities of less than five gallons were required

¹¹⁹ *Minutes of the Common Council*, VI, 362; Edwards, *N. Y. as an Eighteenth Century Municipality*, pp. 79-82.

¹²⁰ E. g., *N. Y. Mercury*, Jan. 9, 1764.

to be licensed or else forfeit a fine of £5.¹²¹ At the same time, the merchant felt the hand of the municipality in the requirement that he must apply for the freedom of the city before he was allowed "to keep shop, or sell, or expose to sale any Goods or Wares by Retail." One became a free-man by applying to the Common Council and, after being admitted, paying a fee of £3 and taking an oath to be "Obeysant and Obedient" to the regulations of the city.¹²²

Informal regulation of trade was carried on by the Chamber of Commerce. This body, the first in America, was founded April 5, 1768, during the spring depression following the non-importation agreement and the money stringency, with the purpose of "promoting and encouraging commerce, supporting industry, adjusting disputes relative to trade and navigation, and procuring such laws as may be found necessary for the benefit of trade in general."¹²³ Incorporated by the governor in 1770, by 1775 it had more than one hundred members and included all the prominent merchants of the city. It proceeded at once to take up the monetary problem in an effort to establish a uniform policy among the merchants regarding the acceptance of paper money of the neighboring colonies and of foreign coin.¹²⁴

The regulation, standardization and improvement of flour occupied more attention than any other single item, thus giving testimony again to the importance of flour in the trade of these merchants. At the third meeting of the Chamber the subject was brought up by a proposal to consider whether the price of flour and bread casks should not be lowered.¹²⁵ Apparently the Chamber felt that the bakers

¹²¹ *Minutes of the Common Council*, IV, 81.

¹²² Edwards, *N. Y. as an Eighteenth Century Municipality*, 85.

¹²³ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 3.

¹²⁴ See chapter iii.

¹²⁵ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 12.

and bolters were taking advantage of the scarcity of money to profiteer. In August 1768, the members unanimously voted that from and after the fifteenth of the month no member should pay more than 25s. 6d. per ton for flour and bread casks, including nailing. On November 1 the following minute was entered: "This Chamber being informed that there is a combination among Bolters, Millers, and Bakers and sellers of flour, with respect to the prices of flour and bread casks, and finding that they are opposed to the resolution of this Chamber at their meeting on the second of August last, when the Chamber determined on giving 25s. 6d. per ton for the same they have Resolved, Ordered and do agree that Mr. William Neilson do go to Philadelphia and purchase therefrom 1,500 to 2,000 barrels of flour at the lowest price he can obtain them at, and that he cause them to be shipped to this place. . . . That on their arrival here such members as may be in want shall be first supplied . . . any that remains on hand to be disposed of on the account of the Chamber."¹²⁶ On the fourteenth there was a special meeting to vote funds, and a deputation of bakers appeared to give their reasons for maintaining their prices, but both sides refused to yield. The flour was duly bought and sold by the secretary of the Chamber, Anthony Van Dam, whereupon the bolters, millers, and bakers apparently gave in.¹²⁷

The Chamber was also considering possible ways of effectively regulating, inspecting and marking flour barrels "so as if possible to retrieve its general disrepute in all parts of the world". On October 4, 1768, two resolutions were adopted: 1. to open one barrel of each brand mark bought to see if it be properly tared and if fraudulent, to bring the offenders to justice; 2. "that every member of this Chamber

¹²⁶ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 21.

¹²⁷ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, pp. 21-23, 35.

do in further purchases of flour, cause the same to be weighed and inspected after purchase, and that the Secretary do cause these resolutions to be advertised in the newspapers." ¹²⁸ In November 1768, a committee was appointed to apply to the city members of the assembly for consideration of such laws as might be necessary "for the more efficient inspection of Flour and Pott-Ash." ¹²⁹ In December the committee brought in a long report embodying several suggestions which were included in a later act of the legislature of May, 1769. ¹³⁰ In June, 1769, it was agreed to raise the price of casks to twenty-eight shillings per ton, since the law now required them to have ten hoops. The next year the question of flour was still agitating the Chamber, probably because competition with Philadelphia was growing keener. At the October meeting Isaac Low, as we have seen, proposed several improvements "to bring into repute the lost character of the Flour Exported from this market." ¹³¹

Similar resolutions were made regarding the packing and repacking of beef and pork, standardizing the amount of pickle, the weight and size of barrels, and the time of inspection. ¹³² On another occasion minute specifications were drawn up for the dimensions and dressing of lumber, staves, heading, hoops, boards, timber, shingles and the various other grades of wood products exported. ¹³³

Restraint was not the sole object of governmental interest in business. Judicious encouragement of trade and of the production of articles desired in England, or of such products

¹²⁸ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 17. The advertisement appeared in the *Journal*, Oct. 6, 1768.

¹²⁹ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 21.

¹³⁰ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, pp. 30, 314.

¹³¹ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, p. 110.

¹³² Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, pp. 63, 70.

¹³³ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, pp. 57-59.

and industries as were considered advantageous to the colony, was also part of the program. Mention has already been made of the protective feature of the provincial tariffs and taxes; inspection was not intended to repress trade; and bounties for the production of certain articles were offered by both the imperial and the provincial governments. In the effort to encourage the cultivation of hemp, high bounties were offered by England and by the provincial legislature, but they were on the whole a failure, partly because the New York farmer was more interested in other crops, and partly because all that was raised was used in this country rather than exported.¹⁸⁴ Wheat, flour and salt also received bounties at various times.¹⁸⁵ The most successful of the bounties, however, was that offered for potash; for after its enactment in 1750, following a suggestion by Colden, the annual shipment of potash and pearl ashes to Great Britain increased from forty pounds in 1752 to over two million in 1771.¹⁸⁶ Finally, the attempt of the Chamber of Commerce to encourage "a Fishery on this Coast for the better supplying the markets of the City with Fish" by means of premiums led to the formation of the United Whale Fishery Company in 1774, which continued until the Revolution shortly put an end to it.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ *Journal of the Council*, II, 1540; *N. Y. Coll. Docs.*, V, 501, 617; Giesecke, *American Commercial Legislation*, p. 62.

¹⁸⁵ *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, VI, 19.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, V, 610. See chapter v.

¹⁸⁷ Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*, pp. 176, 178, 190, 194-195.

CHAPTER VIII

WAR-TIME PROSPERITY

LONG recognized as of great political importance, the quarter century between 1750 and 1775 witnessed the culmination of the economic development of New York as a British province. But business during this period presents on the surface the alternations of revival, prosperity and depression which have become known as the signposts of the business cycle. It is questionable, however, whether this was a truly cyclical movement; whether, that is, these changes were inherent in the way business was conducted at the time. While one may easily trace the path of expansion in the face of opportunity, over-expansion, speculation, and recession leading to depression, the crisis—the sharp turning point—is noticeably lacking. It has been doubted by so careful a student as Professor Wesley Mitchell whether there were any cycles of the modern type in the eighteenth century, even in England where the money economy was much more fully developed than in the colonies. Furthermore, it is possible to account for the development in New York more simply and more satisfactorily by outside influences, namely, war and politics. Viewed from this angle, expansion is seen to have been artificially stimulated by the French and Indian war, although the profits made in that time did increase the buying power of the permanent community. The following depression was equally the result of the withdrawal of the stimulus coupled with the inauguration of an imperial policy which was well-conceived in theory, but which in practice intensified the depression by restricting

trade. The interaction of politics and economics, therefore, peculiarly marks this period and most satisfactorily explains its salient features.

The years immediately preceding the outbreak of the French and Indian War (1750 to 1755) were years of great depression. Business was still in the process of finding its proper level after the accelerated activity of the war just ended by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748. As a result, money was scarce and "every branch of trade was stagnated." Nor was the situation improved by an epidemic of smallpox in the summer of 1752 which deterred the country people from bringing their produce to market.¹ "Trade has been so bad in the West Indies", wrote William Alexander to Henry and William Livingston at Antigua in 1750, "that I have discouraged sending anything."² In the winter of 1753-4 John Ludlow regretted that he could order no more goods from his English correspondents until "times were mended," nor even make them remittances because of the scarcity of bills and silver.³ "It is not in my power," reported Beekman to Samuel Fowler of Newport in April 1754, "to describe to you the leadness of times and the scarcity of money."⁴ These conditions were not confined to New York, for in October, 1755, Townsend White of Philadelphia advised his London correspondents, that "trade in this place is very dull and not like to be better," a situation which apparently persisted until the fall of 1756;⁵ while

¹ Beekman Letter Book, to William, June 6, 1752.

² Alexander Letters I, fol. 1744-50.

³ Ludlow Letter Book, to Chauncey, Brown & Chauncey, Nov. 30, 1753; to Moses Franks, Elias Bland and Sheldon & Wright, all under date of Jan. 8, 1754.

⁴ Beekman Letter Book, to Samuel Fowler, April 2, 1754.

⁵ Proprieties, V, p. 155. Cf. Joseph Wharton to John Waddell, June 3, and Nov. 3, 1756.

Beekman wrote to Henry Lloyd in Boston in June of 1756 that "Money seems to be so scarce with you and the Credit so long it is almost discouraging to send anything your way."⁶

By 1755 border friction had produced annual expeditions and engagements, and formal war with France was almost sure to follow. The prospect was by no means unpleasant to merchants, since it meant a rise in prices.⁷ Indeed, the mere report in July, 1755, that war had been proclaimed in England sent the price of glass up ten shillings a half-box and all dry goods in proportion.⁸ The formal declaration was made by Parliament on May 18, 1756, and on June 22 hostilities were proclaimed at Albany,⁹ the news being received thankfully by New York merchants in the hope "that it may prove as fortunate to this place as the Last War did."¹⁰

Since war meant the presence of armies which had to be paid, fed and clothed, the immediate result of hostilities was the development of a new and extremely active branch of business in supplying the provincial and imperial forces. Six months earlier, in December, 1755, the Board of Trade had written to Governor De Lancey that it considered New York the best place for a general magazine of arms and military stores,¹¹ and although distributions were made through three subsidiary ports, Boston, Philadelphia and Norfolk, all supplies from England passed through New

⁶ Beekman Letter Book, to Henry Lloyd, June 21, 1756.

⁷ Beekman Letter Book, to Wm. Edmonds, June 29, 1755; Ludlow Letter Book, to Sheldon & Wright, July 1, 1755; to Moses Franks, Nov. 7, 1755; to John de Neufville, Jan. 5, 1756.

⁸ Beekman Letter Book, to S. Fowler, July 10, 1755.

⁹ Stokes, *Iconography*, IV, 680.

¹⁰ Cuyler Letter Book, to Dirk Vander Heyden, July 17, 1756.

¹¹ *New York Col. Docs.*, VI, 1016.

York, shipments being facilitated by the establishment of monthly packets in 1756.¹² Contracts for this business were given to English merchants, usually those with American connections, who were often members of the House of Commons group known as "Treasury Whigs" because their political allegiance was based on contracts rather than convictions.¹³ These merchants then appointed agents in the colonies to act for them. The victualling contract was held by Baker, Kilby & Baker, who had also had a similar position during the War of the Austrian Succession and had employed DeLancey & Watts of New York as their agents.¹⁴ Sir William Baker, the senior partner, was a member of Parliament and one of Newcastle's chief advisers on American affairs, with as a rule liberal and pro-American opinions. The second Baker was his son, Richard. The third member, Christopher Kilby, partner of the mercantile firm of Kilby & Barnard, was a native of Boston and agent for the province of Massachusetts from 1741 to 1748. He returned to New England to manage the American end of the contract, receiving much attention and being widely entertained.¹⁵ A second victualling contract was held by Sir James Colebrooke, his brother George, and Arnold Nesbitt, who worked in partnership with Moses Franks of London whose father was a prominent merchant in New York. The American agencies were given to Franks's brother David in Philadelphia and to Oliver DeLancey and his brother-in-law, John Watts, in New York. To the experience which DeLancey

¹² Newton D. Mereness, *Travels in the American Colonies* (New York, 1916), "Lord Adam Gordon's Journal," p. 414.

¹³ Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, pp. 209, 261, 280 *et seq.*

¹⁴ "Nova Scotia Papers," *Canadian Archives*, 1894, p. 169.

¹⁵ Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, pp. 280-281; Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel, Boston*, II, 92-93; Audit Office Papers, I, 191: 598.

& Watts had gained as agents for Sir William Baker was added the further inducement of relationship, for Oliver DeLancey, as we have seen, had married Phila, the daughter of David Franks.¹⁶ In 1763 the contracts were taken away from Colebrooke and Nesbitt because they stubbornly adhered to Newcastle, and given to Sir Samuel Fluyder and Adam Drummond, who retained Moses Franks, the latter in turn keeping on DeLancey & Watts of New York.¹⁷

Colebrooke, Nesbitt, Thomlinson and Hanbury, who had the remission of government money to America, often of large sums at exorbitant rates, used as American agents the correspondents of Thomlinson, Charles Apthorp & Co. of Boston, and Col. William Bayard of New York. The American connections of these contractors were particularly strong. Arnold Nesbitt was a member of an Irish house which dealt extensively, particularly in flaxseed, with American merchants.¹⁸ It is possible that the Philadelphia firm of Conyngham & Nesbitt was connected with Arnold, Albert & Alexander Nesbitt of Londonderry. John Thomlinson had been agent for New Hampshire since 1738, and in 1763 associated his son (of the same name) with him in that business. In ordinary affairs, outside the contracts, Thomlinson was senior partner of the firm of Thomlinson & Trecothick. Barlow Trecothick, although born in London, had lived in Boston for a time and had married Grizzel Apthorp, a daughter of Charles Apthorp. At some date between 1754 and 1763, John Apthorp, the fourth child of Charles Apthorp, entered the firm, Upon the death of

¹⁶ See chapter i.

¹⁷ Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, p. 281; *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 262. Drummond had been an officer in a regiment sent to America and had known both Watts and De Lancy in New York.

¹⁸ Beckman *Letter Book*, to Arnold, Albert & Alexander Nesbitt, *passim*.

Hanbury, Thomlinson, Trecothick & Apthorp were awarded the contract for the remission of money to America, and when the senior Apthorp died in 1759, the American agency passed naturally into the hands of Charles Ward Apthorp in New York.¹⁹

The concentration in New York of the business of caring for His Majesty's forces in America was completed by the appointment of Abraham Mortier of New York as deputy paymaster general of the army, and the award of the navy contract to Henry White, a prosperous merchant related by marriage to the Van Cortlandt family and later a member of the provincial council.²⁰

The contracts were evidently computed on the basis of the cost per day of supplying a certain number of men, estimated by the contractors on the prices of food in America furnished them by their agents in the colonies. Sir William Baker's contract for 1756 specified 12,000 men at sixpence per day, which represented a yearly turnover of about £110,000,²¹ the profit being made on the difference between the amount allowed and the current price. Baker was attacked in the House of Commons by the younger Townshend on the fairness of his contract, but was able to vindicate himself,²² nor were his profits deemed excessive by contemporaries. All the contractors anticipated fat profits as the reward of their trouble. "I always thought Mr. Baker's contract extremely well managed," commented John Watts to a friend concerning the terms of a new con-

¹⁹ Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel, Boston*, I, 143, 549; II, 69; Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, p. 281, 286, 289; *Calendar of Historical Mss. England*, p. 702; *Treasury Papers*, I, 396.

²⁰ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 236; "Narrative of Capt. Wm. Owen," *New York Public Library Bulletin*, March, 1931, p. 142.

²¹ Namier, *Eng. in the Age of the Am. Rev.*, p. 280.

²² Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of the last ten years of the reign of George II* (2 vols., London, 1822), II, 133.

tract which had been offered to the latter, "and as you justly observe if that did not yield a handsome Profit what must this do so much under it in price and Provisions started in America fifteen to twenty per cent since it commenced." ²³

There were provincial as well as royal forces to be supplied, and here again contracts were given to merchants already known to, and more often already connected with, the government. The care of the New York regiments was given to Oliver DeLancey, brother of the lieutenant governor, to Beverly Robinson, his partner and a son-in-law of the wealthy Frederick Philipse, and to John Cruger, mayor of the city of New York, who were commissioned "commissaries and paymasters of the provincial forces." ²⁴ Toward the end of the war DeLancey seems to have dropped out and Peter Van Brugh Livingston took his place. ²⁵ The firm of Livingston and Alexander had already contracted in January, 1755 to supply Shirley's projected expedition against Niagara and Johnson's against Crown Point but when Alexander became secretary to General Shirley a special partnership was formed with John Erving of Boston, a relative of Shirley, and Lewis Morris of New York, all profits to be divided equally among them. ²⁶ The firm was responsible for clearing the roads to Niagara, constructing the batteaux and stationing the men in charge of store-

²³ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 51.

²⁴ Stokes, *Iconography*, IV, 680; *Cal. Hist. Mss. Eng.* p. 651.

²⁵ Stirling Papers, III, 28. List of Officers who have received pay from Messrs. Cruger, Robinson & Livingston, Apr. 1762. Cf. an advertisement of the *New York Mercury*, Jan. 2, 1764. "All Persons that have any Demands on the Colony of New York for Subsistence or Pay due in the service of said Colony for the Campaign of 1762 are Desired without Delay to apply to Mr. Peter Van Brugh Livingston; for the Campaign of 1761 to Mr. Beverly Robinson and for the Campaign of 1760 or any Time before to John Cruger Esq."

²⁶ Stokes, *Iconography*, IV, 670; Stirling Papers, I, fol. 35, 39; *Treasury Papers*, I: 1, 58.

houses at the carrying places. In May agents were appointed at Schenectady; in June it became necessary to designate an agent, James Stevenson, at Albany, and in August two other Albany merchants, Hans Hansen and John Cuyler, were also made factors. "Mr. Lewis Morris is at Philadelphia for the second time," complained Livingston. "I think it would be better if he was at Schenectady to forward matters there and take some share of the trouble since he has an equal share with us of the profits if there should be any."²⁷ By this time the business had developed to include outfitting and transporting the regiments from Pennsylvania and supplying the garrison left by Shirley at Oswego after his abortive attempt on Niagara. The next spring this firm was awarded contracts as purveyors to General Loudoun's forces in the campaign about Oswego.²⁸

Other provinces which sent troops to join in these expeditions preferred to make their own arrangements; Rhode Island, for example, appointed Gerard G. Beekman agent for its forces sent against Crown Point. Beekman was to provide food and clothing for the men, negotiate money bills for the province, and sell for the colony's account all produce sent him in payment. For this he was to receive regular commissions of 5% on purchases, 2½% for money and 7½% for storage and sale. He would take in payment good bills or milled dollars, but if they were not to be had, then "Jamaica Molasses which commands cash sooner than Rum."²⁹

It was the duty of the agents under the British contracts to collect the necessary supplies at the lowest possible prices, and to arrange for their distribution through subordinate

²⁷ Stirling Papers, I, fol. 49, 50, 52, fol. 69, pp. 2-7.

²⁸ Stirling Papers I, fol. 52; II, fol. 45.

²⁹ Beekman Letter Book, May 20, 1755, to Committee of War for Colony of Rhode Island.

agents on warrants of the regimental commissaries, who were required to give a receipt for all provisions issued.²⁰ The terms on which subsidiary agents were employed varied with each contract. In some instances the lower clerks had salaries supplemented by bonuses at the close of the contract; in others no specific arrangement was made, but a "reasonable allowance" was promised.²¹ There were, moreover, perquisites such as supplying officers, which were not included in the contract and on which more profits could be made, and the negotiation of bills of exchange, for which the regular commission was charged.²²

But although profits may have been large, there were many difficulties in the path of the victualers' agent. Poor roads, slow communication, and inadequate transportation facilities are the themes of most of Livingston's letters to Alexander. A provincial statute had been passed in May, 1755, allowing the impressment of carpenters, joiners, sawyers and their servants for the building of batteaux, but not all goods could be sent by water. In September, Stevenson reported from Albany that "wagons are now difficult to be had. All the wagons about Town on both sides of the river and I am told quite down to Esopus are Pressed to go to the carrying place [Rome] and Lake George, and many of the Schenectady and Mohawks River Wagons are Employed in carrying stores to Herkimer's for want of Battoes."²³ In the summer a warrant had been issued to Mayor Cruger, William Coventry, Henry Cuyler, Jr. and Anthony Ten Eyck to impress horses, men, sloops, provisions, wagons, etc., for the use of the troops.²⁴ Supplies in town being insuffi-

²⁰ Treasury Papers I: 396. Sir James Colebrooke and partners to DeLancey & Watts, May 1, 1760.

²¹ Letter Book of John Watts, pp. 280, 371-372.

²² Stirling Papers I, 46.

²³ Colonial Laws of New York, III, 1093-96; Stirling Papers I, 54.

²⁴ Stokes, Iconography, IV, 692.

cient for the great demand which came not only from the northern part of the province but from Halifax and New England, Livingston proposed to send five or six men to Oswego to bake bread on the spot, using Mohawk Valley flour and thus saving the expense and difficulty of shipment from New York.⁸⁵

The most friction, perhaps, came in extracting the money for supplies from the home government. In response to repeated reproaches from Alexander, Livingston wrote on August 2, 1755: "I send Mr. Stevenson money as fast as I can get it from Mr. Bayard. I fear he will be puzzled to raise what is wanted unless he gets a speedy supply from London; I now send Mr. Stevenson £792. 17.11, three hundred pound of which is in pence. Mr. Bayard promises me some more next week. I have not known how to send you money otherways than to Mr. S."⁸⁶ Moreover, the warrants had to go through several hands before the money could be paid. They were required to be made out by General Shirley and the originals sent to Abraham Mortier, deputy paymaster-general for the northern district, who must authorize payment before Bayard, the agent for the paymasters, could give the money to Livingston.⁸⁷ Any sums spent for Col. Dunbar's regiments, which had been transferred from Pennsylvania to Oswego, had to be paid through the southern department notwithstanding that all the money came first to the hands of the agent in New York.⁸⁸ Even the agents for the London contractors, though apparently not bothered by financial stringency, found the red tape connected with the delivery of supplies to

⁸⁵ Stirling Papers, I, fol. 44, 47; *cf.* Beekman to Nichols, Cranston and Bourne, Apr. 19, 1756.

⁸⁶ Stirling Papers, I, 43.

⁸⁷ Stirling Papers, I, fol. 67, 71.

⁸⁸ Stirling Papers, I, fol. 59, 72.

the army and getting receipts for them trying to the temper. "Dealing with Generals and Armys and Commisarys and Quarter-Masters and Secretarys and God knows what," exclaimed John Watts to Moses Franks, "is such a trying Situation as would discompose the philosophy of a Socrates." ³⁹

The trials of the victuallers and their agents were increased by the loose wording of the contracts, which made clear neither the exact extent of their authority—whether, for instance, DeLancey and Watts were to issue beyond Albany,—nor the nature of the receipts and certificates they could demand from regimental quarter-masters to certify their accounts.⁴⁰ On the whole, John Watts's experience inclined him to ignore the secretaries and commissaries "unless to keep on good terms which common Prudence requires", and to go directly to headquarters for orders. "There the Waters are drank pure." The question of price, also, was a very real one, for from 1756 on prices of food rose greatly over those guaranteed in the contract, the reason being the increased demand; due not so much to greater consumption at home as to the increased exportation of provisions to the foreign West Indies through "flags of truce" and illicit traders.⁴¹ Watts's advice to Moses Franks when the contract had expired gives an idea of the difficulties involved: "If you should enter into a Contract it's probable Provisions will bear a moderate Price to carry it on to Advantage if the Terms be good, but remember the Vast Expence of Issuing at Small Posts to small Numbers, widely dispersed, deliver them only into their own hands, let them see to the Expediture, and above all be cautious that your Engagement is

³⁹ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 262.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 194, 279, 305-306. To Moses Franks.

⁴¹ *Treasury Papers*, I, 396; cf. *N. Y. Mercury* for Apr. 28, 1760; see chapter vii and *infra*, pp. 308, 312.

well understood to avoid the Shoals and Quicksands we have so often been aground upon." "Under such a one [contract] as the last a General may tear you all to pieces."⁴³ Added to these vexations was the incompetence and even the downright corruption of subordinates, for profiteering was apparently as characteristic of eighteenth, as of twentieth, century warfare.⁴⁴ "So many fortunes are made," commented Watts, "none are thought little Rogues."⁴⁵

The war had, indeed, fulfilled the expectations of the merchants, for the mere presence of the soldiery increased business, and if business men could not all deal in government contracts they made money supplying the contractors' agents. Cruger, Robinson & Livingston's account lists receipts for goods from sixty firms or individuals, including most of the more important merchants, among them James and Charles McEvers, Elias Desbrosses, the Ludlows, Lott & Low, Walter and Samuel Franklin, the Bankers, James Jauncey, Greg, Cunningham & Co., Robert and Richard Ray, the Cuylers, Van Hornes, Anthony Ten Eyck, John Waddell, and especially their own firms and families—Henry & John Cruger, Robert G. Livingston, and DeLancey & Robinson, the latter with the largest account.⁴⁶

Another opportunity was presented by private ventures like that undertaken by Philip Cuyler and John Livingston to supplement the regular supplies for the troops at Oswego with such luxuries as tea, coffee, chocolate, wine, rum, sugar and molasses, tobacco "and some dry goods," which he calculated would net them 150 or 200 per cent. The project, which was to be kept "very secret" for fear, apparently,

⁴³ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 240, 224.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, to Moses Franks, pp. 296, 371-372.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 335.

⁴⁶ *Commissaries & Paymasters of the Province of New York, 1759-1767; Accounts for 1756 to 1761.* In the New York Historical Society.

of competition, was intrusted to the care of a factor, Cuyler's father in Albany, who was to buy, hire or build the batteaux and procure men to navigate them.⁴⁶ Incidentally, the family connections which Cuyler had in the Albany region were of great importance in the scheme. Cuyler made £125 on the venture and was well satisfied, but what percentage of profit it actually represented he does not state. He probably did not realize his hopes, however, because he decided not to try again, partly because of increased competition; but in the following March he wrote to his father that "Mr. Livingston and self have such a Prospect that it Can't fail but we shall make a great hand of it." This new project was to be secured against interference by the authorities through the assignment of a one-third interest to Francis Lewis, one of the contractors to furnish the provincial forces, who would arrange for passes with his partner Alexander, General Shirley's secretary.⁴⁷ This was again a family affair, the goods being sent to the care of Cuyler's uncle, John Cuyler, in Albany and thence to his cousins John and Cornelius Cuyler in Schenectady, all of whom received commissions.⁴⁸ As the risks of this expedition were much greater than those of the former, the partners looked for a profit of 300 per cent. Unfortunately for their hopes, Oswego was captured by the French, with the result that they lost entirely the part of their goods which had reached the fort and had to take what was offered for the remainder at Schenectady.⁴⁹

As the war progressed and the armies moved farther afield, individuals were encouraged to follow the troops

⁴⁶ Cuyler Letter Book, to his father, Oct. 8, 1755.

⁴⁷ Cuyler Letter Book, to his father, March 10, 1756.

⁴⁸ To Mr. John Cuyler, Sr., and Messrs. John & Cornelius Cuyler, May 8, 1756.

⁴⁹ Cuyler Letter Book, to his father, July 20, 1756, Oct. 19, 1756; to John Cuyler, Schenectady, Oct. 28, 1756.

with supplies. The *Mercury* of March 10, 1760, advised that "with regard to the Situation of Affairs at Quebec . . . the following Articles would fetch a great Price to those who arrive first in the Spring, viz: *Candels, Salt, Tea, Chocolate, Coffee* and *Sugar*, etc. etc." Supplies were also sent to Louisburg and to Martinique.⁵⁰ Yet all these ventures were distinctly speculative and subject as much to loss as to gain. Watts, Cruger and Walton sent two cargoes of flour to Havana, acting on the representations of the commanders that the expedition thither might need relief. Upon the fall of Havana, however, they had to deliver the goods to the contractor's agent there, who paid them less than the average prime cost of the flour and half what it would have brought in the open market, the loss being estimated at £3,000.⁵¹

Merchants naturally made a point of catering to their new clientele. "Goods for officers and soldiers," "army shirts, blankets and regimental shoe-buckles" were featured in the advertisements.⁵² The services of the advertisers were also proffered, the most generous offer being that of Hayman Levy:

N. B. If any gentlemen in the army has occasion for any of the above articles by directing a line to the above mentioned *Hayman Levy* they shall be sent free of all charge as far as *Albany*; or if they think proper to employ him to get anything not in his way he will serve them with pleasure, without any commissions whatsoever.⁵³

⁵⁰ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 35; Chalmers Collection, New York, II, Watts to Monckton, March 2, 30, 1762; Feb. 2, 1764.

⁵¹ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 92. "Aspinwall Papers," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, 4th series, X, 596-98.

⁵² E. g. *Mercury*, Sept. 19, 1757 (Hayman Levy); Sept. 26, 1758 (William Cobham); Jan. 1, 1759 (Manuel Josephson); Jan. 14, 1760 (Delancey & Robinson).

⁵³ *New York Mercury*, Sept. 19, 1759.

In order to take advantage of the military market, branches or agencies in Albany were established by certain New York city houses, such as Thomas and Benjamin Forsey,⁵⁴ while local firms sent orders and suggestions to their factors in the metropolis.⁵⁵ English merchants also arrived to share in the profits: Philip Doughty, London tailor; George Richey, tentmaker for land and sea service; Bishop & Watson, haberdashers from Bristol; James Murray, druggist, and others.⁵⁶

The majority of merchants found their chief opportunity for making money out of the war in another direction. With the memories of King George's War, which had ended only eight years before, still fresh and vivid, they turned to privateering in the hope of rich prizes and fat profits. The first petitions for letters of "marque and reprisal" were presented to the governor late in June, 1756, as soon as the formal declaration of war was known, and the following September Philip Cuyler informed his friend Vanderheyden in London that the war had "put such spirits in persons here that no less than twelve privateers are out and fitting with the greatest dispatch."⁵⁷ By the end of November there were nineteen privateers on cruise, five in harbor, three on the stocks and one expected from London.⁵⁸ Two months later, in January, 1757, thirty of these temporary men of war were cruising between New York and South America, and ten were building in the ship-yards, while fourteen prizes valued at £100,000 had already been brought

⁵⁴ *New York Mercury*, Nov. 7, 1757; cf. Rowland de Paiba, Dec. 23, 1758; Greg, Cunningham & Co. also sent a factor—Cuyler Letter Book, to his father, Oct. 28, 1755.

⁵⁵ Cuyler Letter Book, to John Cuyler, Oct. 28, 1756.

⁵⁶ *New York Mercury*, June 18, Aug. 6, Oct. 8, Nov. 12, 1759; Nov. 4, 1760.

⁵⁷ Cuyler Letter Book, Sept. 23, 1756.

⁵⁸ *New York Post Boy*, Nov. 22, 1756.

into port.⁸⁹ In November, 1757, Beekman wrote to his brother William in Liverpool that privateering was "very good."⁹⁰ Between the outbreak of war and January, 1758, fifty-nine prizes had been brought into New York, and twenty-six others, which had been captured by New York privateers, had been taken into other ports.⁹¹ Altogether from June, 1756, to January, 1763, 128 privateers were fitted out in New York harbor.⁹²

Opportunities for speculation were plentiful, for ships destined for privateers were divided into eight, sixteen, and even thirty-two shares. Every man who could lay his hands on the money—from the merchants to the shipmasters—bought shares, and many were not satisfied with gambling on one bottom but purchased an interest in four or five. A few merchants, some wealthy already and others hoping to be so speedily, invested more heavily. Lawrence Kortright owned shares in ten privateers; Waddell Cunningham, an Irishman, managing partner of the New York branch of Greg, Cunningham & Co., petitioned for commissions for nine ships. Philip Livingston, James Jauncey, George Folliot and James DePeyster each owned shares in six such vessels.⁹³ The petitions for letters of marque named only a few of the owners of the ships and give the impression that a little more than a score of men were most active in pressing for commissions, but the anonymity of "and company" covered a hundred small investors. Thomas Witter, for example, an unimportant merchant whose name does not appear in the list of petitioners, owned shares in five priva-

⁸⁹ Valentine, *Manual of the Common Council*, 1870, p. 872—Quoting a letter from New York to a London merchant.

⁹⁰ Beekman Letter Book, to Wm. G. Beekman, Nov. 25, 1757.

⁹¹ *New York Mercury*, Jan. 9, 1758.

⁹² *New York (State) Calendar of Historical Mss.*, II [Eng.], 658-739.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

teers—the *Tyger*, the *General Monckton*, the *Royal Hester*, the *New York* and the *Columbine*.⁶⁴ Christened with names symbolic of their mission—the *Dreadnought*, the *Tyger*, the *Defiance*, the *Terrible*—, or reminiscent of past glory—the *Oliver Cromwell*—or complimentary to the leaders of the present war—the *Blakeney*, the *Boscawen*, the *Keppel*, the *Monckton*, the *Wolfe*, the *Amherst*—and bristling with from fourteen to twenty-four guns, the ships left the harbor to prey upon enemy shipping.

The size of the investment involved in a share of a privateer varied with the size and equipment of the ship, but the value of the vessel ready to sail with the addition of its "warlike stores" was considerable, and the shares were fairly expensive. One-sixteenth of the brig *General Monckton*, whose total cost was £3,908, was £244;⁶⁵ one-sixteenth of the snow *Royal Hester* brought £294;⁶⁶ one-sixteenth of another ship cost £300.⁶⁷ All these, of course, were large ships. Shares in smaller vessels undoubtedly cost less, and sloops were no less successful than brigs in capturing foreign merchantmen. The most famous of all the privateers was the sloop *Harlequin*, owned in part by Lawrence Kortright, which lay off Sandy Hook masquerading as a pilot boat and on one occasion arrived in harbor with seven prizes.⁶⁸

Prizes were brought into the court of Vice Admiralty in New York, or to that of the port to which they had been carried. According to the instructions issued by the king early in June, 1756, three or four of the principal officers of the prize ship, of whom the master and pilot must be two, must be brought before the Court to be examined, and the

⁶⁴ Account Book of Thomas Witter, in New York Historical Society.

⁶⁵ Thomas Witter Account Book, June 15, 1762.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, August 10, 1761.

⁶⁷ Cuyler Letter Book, to his father, Oct. 19, 1756.

⁶⁸ *New York Gazette* (Weyman), June 16, 1760 and Sept. 1, 1760.

ship's papers were to be presented under oath that they had not been disturbed. The crew and gear of the ship were not to be molested nor the cargo or ship sold until the court had decided the case. After condemnation the vessel and cargo might be sold, but wrought silks and stuffs mixed with silk, if manufactured in Persia, China, or the East Indies, and calicoes, if painted, dyed or printed, were to be deposited for re-export according to an act of 1691.⁶⁹

The question of Dutch ships trading with the French West Indies was raised in New York in 1758 by the capture of the *De Dageroed* by the *Duke of Cumberland*, a New York privateer. The Vice-Admiralty court in New York held that the ship was lawful prize under a recent ruling of the British High Court of Admiralty, which had declared that neutral ships might not trade in time of war with ports which were closed to them in time of peace—a decision which came to be known as the Rule of 1756. The case was appealed to the English court and judgment affirmed.⁷⁰ It is interesting to observe how firmly Americans were convinced of the justice of this rule when they were the captors, and not the captured as they were forty years later. The American owners of the *Duke of Cumberland* employed as their representative Joseph Mico, a merchant of London with a large American trade and a member of the West New Jersey Company, who, according to Gerard Beekman, had been "employed by every person and for every ship and cargo that has been appealed for from this our court of Admiralty but charges very high." If Beekman's remark be true,

⁶⁹ Instructions given with Letters of Marque against France, June 4, 1756. In the Broadside Collection of the New York Historical Society.

⁷⁰ Cuyler Letter Book, to his father, Oct. 3, 1758; Beekman Letter Book, to Mr. Jos. Mico, Aug. 29 and Sept. 22, 1760. See C. M. Hough, *Reports of Cases in the Vice Admiralty of the Province of New York . . . 1715-1788* (New Haven, 1925).

Mico must have increased his income considerably, for he charged a fee of £200 and a commission of two and a half per cent on the gross cargo.⁷¹

The value of the prizes, of course, differed, and if divided into thirty-two shares, a single share must have been small. Philip Cuyler, who wrote to his brother-in-law in 1758 that "my success in the Privateering way has not been very great,"⁷² bought shares in four vessels, the *Cicero* and the *Pliny*—two of the earliest ships to receive commissions—the *Hope* and the *Duke of Cumberland*.⁷³ The *Cicero* took a prize in 1757 which brought £66,000 when it was sold, and Cuyler's sixteenth interest after the rewards to the captain and crew were deducted, would amount, he predicted, to between £1,000 and £1,500.⁷⁴ The *Pliny's* prize, which was taken into Charleston, brought only £8,000 sterling, of which Philip Cuyler would receive somewhat less than £400.⁷⁵ The *Duke of Cumberland* brought in the famous *De Dageroed* and Cuyler figured his dividend at £1,000.⁷⁶ Thus his total returns would amount to between £2,400 and £3,000, of which no more than half was profit over and above the original investment. A New York merchant, writing to his London correspondent thought £100,000 value for fourteen prizes "good Success."⁷⁷ If each prize were divided into eight parts, the average dividend to the owners would probably have been about £800. This was a fair return, but unsuccessful voyages might eat up the profits of

⁷¹ Beekman Letter Book, May 18, 1761 and June 6, 1761.

⁷² Cuyler Letter Book, to Wm. Tweedy, Dec. 15, 1758.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, to his father, Sept. 13 and Oct. 19, 1756. New York (State), Cal. Hist. Mss., II (Eng.), 680, 702.

⁷⁴ Cuyler Letter Book, to John Stevenson, Apr. 27, 1757.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, to his father, May 16, 1757.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, to his father, Oct. 3, 1758.

⁷⁷ Valentine, *Manual of the Common Council*, 1870, p. 872.

good ones. The enthusiasm for privateering indicates that the average speculator probably doubled his original investment, and the owners of the *Harlequin* doubtless made much more than 100 per cent. Many ships, however, must have brought in so few prizes as to show a net loss for their owners or a bare repayment of the original investment, for privateers were so numerous by 1760 that Cadwallader Colden complained that they chased each other instead of the French.⁷⁸ It is probable that many men not only did not realize their hopes but actually lost money.

The keen competition in preying upon French vessels led owners to use their privateers in the illicit trade with the foreign West Indies. This offered the next best opportunity for profit, the ship's commission as privateer being relied upon to disarm suspicion. Some of the most prominent merchants in New York had recourse to this method of cutting their losses, and it may be suspected that smuggling was no new business to them. Both the sloop *Henry* and the ship *Tarter*, of which Philip Livingston was part owner, were said to have carried provisions to Spanish and French ports; the sloop *Fox*, owned by Robert Crommelin and William Cheslyn, and the brig *Earl of Loudon*, owned by Richard Ray and Garrit Van Horne, also carried on trade with the enemy while commissioned as privateers.⁷⁹

As has already been pointed out, ships carrying flags of truce for the exchange of prisoners were extensively used in the trade in provisions and sugar with the French and Spanish islands.⁸⁰ Such voyages, if successful, brought in

⁷⁸ *Colden Papers*, VI, 63.

⁷⁹ *Treasury Papers*, I, 425. Report by George Spencer. "List of Vessels which were laden with Provisions, etc. at the port of New York for Mounti Christo... (etc.)." *New York (State), Cal. Hist. Mss.*, II (Eng.), 679, 692, 735.

⁸⁰ See chapter vii.

good profits and for that reason "flag-trucing" was very popular. As the concerted efforts of the British navy and the Customs officers made such enterprises more hazardous, however, the profits turned into losses. Gerard Beekman claimed to have lost £2,000 in parts of seven flags which went to Hispaniola, three of them being captured on the way home.⁸¹ The aspect of the trade which occasioned most offense among New Yorkers was not its illegality, but the alleged duplicity of privateers from other British ports and colonies, especially Jamaica, in arresting New York ships trading at Monti Christo and other places, while engaged on the same errand themselves. The court of Vice-Admiralty at Jamaica was particularly active in condemning ships caught trading with foreign islands, although citizens of that island were as guilty as those of New York.⁸² "The ship," wrote Beekman on such an occasion to his associate in Rhode Island, "is taken and carried to Jamaica to be condemned. I say dam them all."⁸³

The effect of the war upon ordinary business was to curtail seriously the normal trade by which New York paid for British goods imported. The year 1754 was marked by the first hostilities and by a general fall in the value of exports, the total declining to £26,663 against £50,553 in 1753. Exports reached their lowest point in 1758 at £14,260, remained low in 1759 and 1760, but rose suddenly to £48,648 in 1761.⁸⁴ The most obvious reason for the decline was the interference of the war with the fur trade, which had previously furnished twenty per cent of the exports of New York to Great Britain. In 1753 beaver pelts had been worth £5,637 and bearskins £1066; the next year their

⁸¹ Beekman Letter Book, to William G. Beekman, June 14, 1760.

⁸² *New York Gazette*, Oct. 6, 1760.

⁸³ Beekman Letter Book, to Solomon Townsend, July 14, 1760.

⁸⁴ This was due to the exportation of French prize sugar. See chap. v.

respective values were £1,715 and £644, in 1757 £3 and £37, while for the next three years no furs of any description were exported, unless dressed deer-skins valued at £435 are to be classed as such.⁶⁵

Before 1756, as has been observed, New York had been the most important British fur center except Hudson's Bay, and its merchants were naturally much concerned about the disposition to be made of Canada by the peace conference. That they had no idea of the effect its retention by Great Britain would have upon the trade of the province is illustrated by the observations of John Watts, as shrewd and intelligent a counsellor as the province possessed, to Isaac Barré:⁶⁶

If Canada be kept or not kept, I imagine our population will be much the same barring the Disturbances and Evils we may suffer in the latter case, which no doubt will be sensible enough, and seems to me the ruling reason for keeping it, tho others no doubt there are too, such as the safe exercise of an important and increasing Furr Trade that takes off large Quantities of British manufactury, the great Expence that would attend the keeping up such a Line as is necessary for a Barrier against so Restless a Neighbour and the probability at last that it would bring on a New Warr as we should never be easy together.

The Furr Trade as I take it should have its Natural course either thro the St. Lawrence or Hudson's River, as Experience proves it most beneficial and safe, each no doubt will possess some Share from the Efforts and Struggles of its own Inhabitants, and where the largest Capital in Commerce circulates and the best Supplis of proper Goods are found most probably the largest Share will centre. I don't see there are any limitations necessary to the Trade of Canada if we keep it, let it take its fair chance. The endless Winters and tedious Navigation are Limitations enough.

⁶⁵ Customs 3: 51 to 63.

⁶⁶ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 25-26—to Isaac Barré, Feb. 28, 1762.

Watts apparently thought that New York would have the largest capital in commerce and the best supplies of suitable goods, but as a result of the unforeseen influx of British capital to Montreal the northern fur trade took the St. Lawrence route, while the trade of Carolina seaports, freed of the French competition, developed enormously. New York, in consequence, lost its preeminence.⁸⁷

The West India trade was also somewhat affected by the war, particularly after the center of hostilities shifted to the Carribbean. It is true that the trade in produce to the French and British islands was at least kept at normal. On the other hand, the valuable logwood exports fell in 1755 from the unusual £30,000 of 1753, and the average value of £17,000 to £1,675, reaching a low of £115 in 1761. The trade did not recover its former importance till after 1765. Another branch of the West India trade, however, saved the day for the New York merchants and kept the visible balance of exports and imports nearly normal. Sugar captured from French traders or taken from conquered islands could be legally imported, and while in 1755 the quantity sent was worth only £9,000, in 1761-63 large shipments of "French prize" and Havana and Guadeloupe sugar were exported to England, furnishing in 1763 £40,000 of the £58,882 total exports, and completely accounting for the rise in exports from 1761 to 1763.⁸⁸

Merchants, moreover, felt a shortage of shipping, for the military officials had the authority to commandeer vessels for transport service. During the war traders rebelled and protested, but when business grew slack in 1762 many were glad to get the thirteen shillings per ton a month which the Crown allowed them.⁸⁹ All sea-going commerce suffered

⁸⁷ See chapter v.

⁸⁸ Customs 3: 51-63.

⁸⁹ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 23, 53, 59; *Cuyler Letter Book*, to Solomon Davis, Oct. 3, 1757.

from the depredations of French privateers until English maritime supremacy was well established. Vessels from England sometimes sailed in convoy, although many merchants preferred not to wait but took the chances of a safe voyage and the advantage of an early arrival.⁹⁰ The increased danger to shipping was reflected in the rising insurance rates, the premium to England increasing from a normal five per cent to fifteen per cent in 1757. For Amsterdam the insurers asked fifteen to eighteen per cent, and for the West Indies ten to eighteen per cent instead of four or four and a half, while to Cape François, probably because of the added danger of capture, as much as fifty or sixty per cent was asked. Even coastwise vessels had to pay treble the usual fee.⁹¹

Nevertheless, the period was one of great prosperity. The presence of the army led to greater demand for goods which in turn meant higher prices as well as larger orders, while the funds transmitted to pay and provision the soldiers brought a great influx of gold and bills of exchange into the province. Imports from England, which had averaged £200,000 annually, trebled in 1759, and were double the average in 1760 in spite of the departure of many regiments for the West Indies.⁹² The actual rise in prices is difficult to determine, especially with regard to dry goods, for which latter there are no figures. Foodstuffs rose suddenly in the spring of 1756, wheat, flour and bread going up two shillings a barrel and pork rising from sixty-five to seventy-five shillings. By 1759 beef had risen from forty shillings a barrel to fifty-five. Salt and rum doubled in price.⁹³ Only sugar remained about the same. The increased amount of

⁹⁰ Cuyler Letter Book, to Devonshire, Reeve & Lloyd, May 12, 1759.

⁹¹ See chapter iv.

⁹² See Appendix.

⁹³ *New York Mercury*, May 3, 1756.

gold and other specie in circulation and the unusually large balances in England to be drawn upon forced a fall in exchange, which normally fluctuated between 70 and 80 and had been 82 and 85 in 1755, to 68 in December, 1758, and 60 in December, 1759, much to the disgust of British merchants.⁸⁴ The year 1759, indeed, was the peak year of New York's prosperity, as evidenced not only by the high exports and imports, by prices and by favorable exchange rates, but also by the greatly increased number of advertisements in the newspapers and the general bustle of business in the community. "Never," wrote William Smith, "was the trade of this province in so flourishing a condition as at the latter end of the late French War."⁸⁵ Cadwallader Colden asserted that many merchants made their fortunes in the war, and John Watts protested to Moses Franks that the people "have run too much into habits of luxury." "The changes and inconstancies of the war had allmost turned their Heads. Not long since such an importation of Coaches, Charriots etcetera appeared in the City as surprized every Body but those it ought to surprize, the Proprietors."⁸⁶

With the shifting of the war to the Carribbean after the conquest of Quebec and Montreal in 1760, New York entered on a period of readjustment which developed, through influences both inside and outside the province, into a depression of serious proportions. The departure of the army for the West Indies, in 1761, meant for the merchant the loss of a large body of customers. The contracts, to be sure, had still to be wound up, but that was not stimulating to business. In the spring of 1762 Watts wrote to Monckton that the contractors had received all their money for provisions and

⁸⁴ Cuyler Letter Book, to his father, Dec. 11, 1758 and Dec. 17, 1759.

⁸⁵ Smith, *History of the Late Province of New York*, I, 284.

⁸⁶ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 233.

no more gold was to be expected from England.⁹⁷ Some military business, of course, continued, for the provincial regiments were kept under arms until 1763 and royal troops were stationed on the frontier and at some large ports, but the fat years were past. "Our consumption [of rum] at this season is very slender," reported Watts to his Barbadoes correspondent, "and the Tipling Soldiery that used to help us out at a dead lift are gone to drink it in a warmer Region, the place of its production."⁹⁸ "The Reservoir of all Streams of Business and the Spring too which feeds many of them is dried up," he wrote to Franks.⁹⁹ The scarcity of specie, due not only to cessation of the circulation of soldiers' pay but equally to demands of English creditors for reduction of outstanding balances (stocks had fallen in England in 1762, the government loan selling at seven per cent below par, and many failures followed¹⁰⁰) began to be felt in New York¹⁰¹ in 1762; this scarcity continued through out the decade. As a result, exchange rose to 87½ in January, 1762, reached 90 early in May and 95 by the end of the month, and fluctuated between 92½ and 95 during the rest of the year.¹⁰² Prices, however, instead of falling remained high, especially those of food which were even higher than during the war, pork selling at £5 a barrel, beef at £4 and

⁹⁷ Chalmers Collection, New York, II, Watts to Monckton, March 30, 1762.

⁹⁸ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 6.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

¹⁰⁰ Stirling Papers, III, fol. 26; Henry Drummond to William Alexander, Apr. 10, 1762; *New York Mercury*, Feb. 27, 1764, quoting the *Gentleman's Magazine* for Nov., 1763.

¹⁰¹ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 40, 46; Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Ruscoe Sweeney, Oct. 9, 1762.

¹⁰² *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 5, 33, 35, 48, 65, 68, 80, 87, 94, 104, 109.

flour from eighteen to twenty shillings a bushel.¹⁰² "Provisions of all kinds continue amazingly scarce and dear with us. Was it not for the assistance of Ireland we should really be distressed for several articles and even with that assistance 'tis incredible to what a heighth things run, not only the Subsistence of Man but of Beast too which a succession of two years Drouth has rendered it difficult to support in the usual Number."¹⁰⁴ In addition "the Narrow Scrutiny into the mysterys of Trade", carried on by the Customs House officers in the campaign to check the illicit trade with the French, "rendered people very cautious" and "brought a melancholy stagnation on all business that many individuals must feel very sensibly."¹⁰⁵ Perhaps the best comment on the success of official endeavor was the rise in the price of Bohea tea from five shillings ninepence a pound in April, 1761, to eleven shillings a pound in October, 1762.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² *New York Mercury*, May 1, 1762; *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 8-9, 45.

¹⁰⁴ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 62.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 62-63.

¹⁰⁶ *New York Mercury*, Oct. 21, 1762.

CHAPTER IX

BUSINESS ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

THE French and Indian War was formally terminated by the declaration of peace in the spring of 1763, but war-time prosperity had been gradually disappearing in New York since 1760, and the seeds of depression had already been sown. Upon the news of peace, exchange fell to 85, but as no revival of business followed, it rose again to 90 in July and remained there for the rest of the year. Prices, even of food, and freight rates fell by midsummer but business continued very dull. "The peace has cheapened things and lessened the people's keenness, as well as made money scarce."¹ From 1763 to 1770 there was a profound business depression which reached its nadir in 1769. In the beginning it was due to the inevitable readjustment to peace time conditions, but for its later stages governmental policies and political events were in the main responsible.

Superficially it might seem that, with the close of the war, there began the period of greatest commercial activity in the colony,² for the figures of trade with England show a steady increase in exchange of goods. The exports from New York to Britain stood at £53,697 in 1764, which was greater than the highest pre-war year; increased to £87,115 in 1768, to £95,875 in 1771, and reached the peak of £187,018 in the year the Revolutionary War began.³ Imports, which

¹ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 90, 158, 214-215. Cf. Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to John Riddelhurst, May 31, 1763.

² John A. Stevens, *Progress of New York in a Century*, p. 36.

³ See chapter v for an analysis of these figures.

had fallen to £238,560 in 1763, rose again in 1764 to £515,416, and after a relapse from 1765 to 1767, in 1768 stood at £482,930. It should be remembered, however, that the increased exports were due largely to the unusual demand for wheat and flour because of bad crops in England, and to the development of new products, such as potash and bar iron, for which there was a market in the mother-country. Moreover, trade figures cannot be considered in a vacuum, and if the growth in population be measured against it,⁴ the increase in trade will be seen to be relatively less important. The number of inhabitants in 1771 was a little more than double the figure of 1749, and trade had only increased in proportion. On the other hand, the period of deflation which inevitably attended the cessation of war-time business was protracted by two factors—the stringency of money and apprehension concerning the effect upon business of the new trade regulations of the British Parliament. Any one of these conditions would have affected business unfavorably; the combination of all three rendered traders (as Watts put it) “poor, cross and desperate.” Trade statistics cannot, then, be said to belie the testimony of the merchants, that hard times did exist during the years immediately following the war.

The conditions which had marked the receding tide of business activity from 1761 to 1763 became measurably worse in 1764. Other prices might fall, but the price of food rose again, pork especially being so dear that Watts wrote to Ireland for one hundred or one hundred and fifty barrels. Beef and muscovado sugar were also high. The wheat crop was exceptionally large in 1764 and the following years, so that, in spite of large exports to Madeira and the

⁴ The population of the province increased from 73,448 inhabitants according to the census of 1749, to 168,007 by the census of 1771. *Documentary History of New York*, I, 695, 697.

Straits in 1764 and to England for the next five years, the prices of breadstuffs remained moderate. The diligence of the customs officers continued to hamper trade and probably acted to keep up prices; but the difficulty most complained of was the scarcity of money. "I never knew the want of money so much as at present," wrote Van Cortlandt to his factor in Virginia; and again, "I am so much in want of Cash I shall not have it in my power to accept your Bills if you should draw."⁵ Nor did he offer any encouragement in sending goods. "There is a great loss on all produce from Virginia and even on bills of exchange . . . I have £3,000 due to me in Virginia and cannot get it home but at a Considerable Loss."⁶ With credit in as great demand as cash,⁷ it is not strange that Watts characterized the summer of 1764 as "times of profound Peace and stagnate Commerce." "Little or nothing sells," he wrote to a correspondent in Quebec, "and Payments for what does sell keeps the same dull Pace."⁸ These conditions were not peculiar to New York, for merchants in Philadelphia sent word that cash, credit and bills of exchange were very scarce with them. "Believe we must learn to barter," wrote one trader.⁹ In Boston the failure of three prominent merchants, Nathaniel Wheelwright, John Scollay and Joseph Scott, was a great shock to trade.¹⁰

The year 1764 also saw the expansion of the new policy of stricter imperial control in the Grenville legislation, which had begun the year before with an attempt to secure the enforcement of the Acts of Trade. Although the merchants

⁵ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Abraham Maer, March 19, 23, 1764.

⁶ *Ibid.*, to same, March 19, 1764. Cf. to Wm. Smith, Feb. 16, 1764.

⁷ *Ibid.*, to Riddelhurst, Feb. 15, 1764.

⁸ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 286, 254.

⁹ *Pa. Mag. of History & Biog.*, XX, 208.

¹⁰ Abram E. Brown, *John Hancock, his Book* (Boston, 1898), p. 61.

of New York made little public complaint of the measures of 1763 directed against smuggling, the enforcement of the Molasses Act of 1733, which was the natural result of those measures, soon occasioned private protest in their letters. "The severity of the custom house officers and men of war" who "required 5% sterling on all foreign sugars imported" was claimed to have stopped trade almost entirely.¹¹ "No vessel goes unsearched," wrote Van Cortlandt.¹² Protest was redoubled and began to appear in the public prints when rumors of the new Sugar Act, which was to supersede the Molasses Act, reached America, for even the duty of three-pence a pound would amount, it was held, to a "Total Prohibition of all foraigne Sugars which will be almost a Total Destruction of Sugar Refiners."¹³ Since every merchant, as well as many provincial officials, agreed that the trade in sugar and molasses with the foreign islands was not only vital to New York but advantageous to England, the opposition was general.

"The good folks at home," Watts wrote "are quite overshooting the mark about trade here, little do they think the Mother Country will pay for it all at last, and when that happens commerce will be dispassionately considered. The intercourse between the Dutch etcetera and the colonies (I mean Dry Goods everywhere) ought to be entirely suppressed but the rigorous execution of the Sugar is very injurious. Like ninepins, says Hudibras one merchant knocks down another, the King Pins that fall heaviest will fall at home and the manufacturers feel the weight of 'em."¹⁴ The

¹¹ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Abraham Maer and to Isaac Younghusband, Nov. 10, 1763; to John Riddelhurst and to Abraham Maer, Feb. 16, 1764.

¹² *Ibid.*, to Isaac Younghusband, Nov. 10, 1763.

¹³ *Ibid.*, to John Riddelhurst, May 5, 1764.

¹⁴ "Aspinwall Papers," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.*, 4th series, X, 506.

action of the northern colonies in proposing to give premiums for locally manufactured cloth, levy duties on sugar, rum and molasses from the British West Indies, and dry goods from Great Britain, and make lumber and produce legal tender as tobacco was in Virginia, was reported enthusiastically by the *Mercury*. "By this Means," the article declared "we may in time be able to pay a debt of £4,000,000 at least of sterling money which the Northern Provinces now owe to Great Britain, without which (as the great Means of making Remittances are cut off) it will be impossible for us to pay; but it may be that our fifty-six good Friends, the West India Planters in the Parliament of England will be pleased to propose a Scheme to pay it for us."¹⁵

The merchants of New York met in Burns's Long Room on January 27, 1764 to consider "the declining state of trade", and appointed a committee to prepare a memorial to the Legislature which was transmitted by order of the Council to the Board of Trade and by the Assembly to Parliament. The memorial ascribed the gloomy state of trade to the rigorous execution of the act of 6 George II "commonly called the Sugar Act" (the Molasses Act of 1733), and argued that the suppression of trade with the foreign islands either by the enforcement of the present act or by the enactment of another "must necessarily end not only in the Utter Impoverishment of H. M. Northern Colonies and the Destruction of their Navigation but in the grievous Detriment of British Manufacturers and Artificers and the great Diminution of Trade, Power, Wealth, and Naval Strength of Great Britain". It would cause a noticeable decrease in the amount of British manufactures purchased by the colony, because their profits in trading with the British sugar islands were minute, a consequent reduction in colonial shipping, the loss of profits to British manufacturers

¹⁵ *New York Mercury*, Jan. 2, 1764.

from the cessation of the sale of British goods to the foreign islands, and the eventual loss of profits from sugar refining, since the British dominions raised scarcely enough to supply the continental colonies.¹⁸ In spite of protests the new act was passed early in April, and in May Van Cortlandt, reporting to a fellow refiner in Philadelphia the existence of a price war in New York, added that "this together with the bad news from home has put a gloomy Aspect on our Business in particular."¹⁹

The act of 1764, which, in preventing trade with the foreign islands, operated to decrease the amount of specie brought into the province through commerce, also provided that the duties should be paid in silver—a further drain on the currency. "And as if the government had intended to prevent the colonists having even the shadow of money, another act was passed in a few days after that for the new duties declaring that no paper bills to be thenceforth issued should be made legal tender in payment, and enjoining those in circulation to be sunk at a limited time."²⁰ A storm of protest arose in the province of New York, especially among the merchants, who foresaw the disappearance of their chief medium of exchange. John Watts wrote a long letter to General Monckton in England urging him to oppose the act.

The forbidding Paper Money to be legal tender would in my opinion take away what little energy it has and subject every Debtor with a real estate to the mercy of his creditors. . . . To suppose we can keep either silver or gold in the Colonies while our Mother Country will trust us for both necessities and for luxuries is entirely ideal and destroying intercourse between Mother and her offspring may be very injurious to both. . . .

¹⁸ *Assembly Journals*, II, 741-744; *Col. Council Minutes*, p. 464; *New York Col. Docs.*, VII, 612.

¹⁹ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Mr. Hoffman, May 16, 1764.

²⁰ MacPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, III, 398.

We have been faithful to our trust, in '67 all our emissions will be sunk except £40,000 emitted on loan for the support of the Government continued from year to year more at the instance of the government itself than at the request of the people. We sink £40,000 a year which makes the tax very heavy for a new country, it falls near four shillings in the pound on houses in the city.¹⁹

In like vein, Lieutenant Governor Colden assured the agent for the province, Robert Charles, that "the arguments that Paper Money may not be a legal tender are unanswerable. Notwithstanding of this, a total and sudden suppression must be attended with great difficulties and hardships which may throw the Colonies into perplexities and confusion."²⁰

The year 1765, accordingly, was one of deepening gloom. The prospect of the disappearance of paper currency, added to the scarcity of specie which continued without relief,²¹ had a depressing effect, psychological as well as material. The enforcement of the Sugar Act rendered sugar high and scarce. "Two of the Principle Sugar houses here have stopped working," reported Van Cortlandt, "and am afraid that will be the case with all of them soon."²² A New York merchant of twenty years standing withdrew from trade due to his apprehension of the effects of the new regulations. He testified later before a committee of Parliament that whereas the price of molasses at New York had formerly varied from one shilling sixpence to one shilling ninepence per gallon, the threepence duty had raised it a penny to two-

¹⁹ "Aspinwall Papers," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, 4th series, X, 520. Cf. chapter iii.

²⁰ *Colden Letter Books*, I, 330-331.

²¹ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 359.

²² Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Robert Tucker, July 11, 1765. Cf. to J. W. Hoffman, Sept. 2, 1765.

pence while the price of rum had advanced sufficiently to enable Danish rum to undersell American on the Guinea coast; the ten or twelve New York vessels formerly engaged in the trade now lying idle.²³ Poor harvests made the price of grain so high that it "in effect forbids Exportation anywhere."²⁴ "Trade in this part of the world", wrote a New York correspondent, "is come to so wretched a pass that you would imagine the plague had been here, the grass growing in most trading streets; and the best traders so far from wanting the assistance of a clerk, rather want employment for themselves."²⁵

The collection of debts became difficult.²⁶ The effect of such conditions upon business men was inevitably to force out the inefficient or over-extended. In February, 1764, Watts reported that the process had already begun: "Everything is tumbling down, even the traders themselves." By August, 1765, he noted in a letter to Sir William Baker that "business here is very languid. The weak must go to the Wall. Frequent Bankruptcies and growing more frequent."²⁷ "The times are Very Uncertain", Douglass warned his principal, "and Men who are least suspected you are sensible are not altogether Free from danger."²⁸ The clouds which were gathering gave no hint of silver linings but seemed to herald the approach of night for merchants. Oliver De Lancey, thanking General Monckton for the care of his sons, wrote that he intended to let them stay but one

²³ Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution* (New York, 1918), p. 58.

²⁴ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 378, 381.

²⁵ *Upcott Collection*, II, 289. In New York Hist. Society.

²⁶ Bayard-Campbell-Pearsall Collection, B. Douglass to Wm. Bayard, Apr. 3, 1765.

²⁷ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 228, 368.

²⁸ Bayard-Campbell-Pearsall Collection, to Wm. Bayard, Apr. 3, 1765.

year longer in England. "I had originally thought to let them finish their education there, but the new regulations of the Colonies has so much taken me down that I am Obliged to give them an Education suitable to what they may expect, which is much altered."²⁹

"The new regulations" by this time included the Stamp Act. Word of the passage of the act had reached America on the 11th of April, 1765, while the act itself was to go into effect the following November. The duties of the act were also to be paid in silver. The economic burden of the Stamp Act, as of the Sugar Act, fell upon the shoulders of the merchants, for the taxes on commercial documents—policies, clerk fees, charter parties, protests and other notarial acts, letters and even advertisements—threatened to paralyze such business as had survived the restrictive legislation of the previous year. "Publicola" calculated in the *New York Gazette and Post Boy* for May 30, 1765 that all the gold and silver would be drained off in two years at the most, while John Watts protested to his friends in England: "I cannot conceive that there will be silver and gold enough to carry this act and the high duties that are laid through, and what shall people then do in a new country where property so frequently changes hands? Must they stagnate and will not a universal discontent prevail? Man is man and will feel and will resent too. . . . Even rescinding our great demand for English clothing will be felt and occasion uneasiness at home."³⁰

The first formal opposition came, it is true, from the Assembly, which agreed to send delegates to the Stamp Act Congress in New York in October; but the five delegates (who also composed the Committee of Correspondence

²⁹ Chalmers Collection, New York, II, April 20, 1765.

³⁰ *Letter Book of John Watts*, to Gen. Monckton and James Napier, Sept. 23, 24, 1765, pp. 385, 386.

which had been appointed by the Legislature in 1764 and were the members for New York County) were merchants, with the single exception of Robert R. Livingston. Of the others, John Cruger was a merchant of high standing and mayor of the city; Philip Livingston was a wealthy West Indian merchant; William Bayard, an importer, had been agent for the paymasters of the royal forces, and Leonard Lispenard was a merchant and large landholder. Action through the Congress was soon discovered to be too slow to prevent the Act from going into effect. This led to the establishment of such extra-legal organizations as the Sons of Liberty, who aimed to direct popular agitation and allowed the entrance of the unenfranchised mechanic and artisan into the arena. Their agitation, as well as the example of the New England colonies, forced the resignation of the stamp distributor, James McEvers, in August, two months before the meeting of the Congress and three months before the arrival of the stamps or the date for the enforcement of the Act.

The merchants saw little harm in popular demonstration if kept within control and directed toward the proper end. They were even prepared to encourage it,⁸¹ realizing that no immediate result could issue from the Congress. The Congress met on the twelfth of October; Watts remarked that the delegates were good men "and probably their Deliberations will be sensible and moderate enough". Upon its adjournment two weeks later he reported to Monckton: "Congress broke up; their Transactions are not publicly known as decency forbids they should. . . . People here are kept quiet but are thoroughly dissatisfied, the Stamps are safe in the Fort that came by Davis. If they are issu'd, con-

⁸¹ Cf. *Correspondence of General Thomas Gage*, C. E. Carter, ed. (New Haven, 1931), I, 81.

fusion will ensue, I am sure. If they are not 'twill be as bad if not worse. So you see our unhappy situation."⁸²

On the 31st of October the merchants formed the first non-importation association, the agreement being signed by about two hundred individuals, to take effect January first and to last until the repeal of the Stamp Act. Their stand was presently strengthened by a separate agreement of the retailers and by another of some forty-eight merchants of Albany.⁸³ The first of November, the day on which the Act was to go into effect, was the signal for three days' rioting, during which Lieutenant Governor Colden's carriage was burned and Major James' house sacked. This revealed a latent opposition of motives and interest between the merchants and the mob. The violent and irresponsible methods of the populace were utterly distasteful to the wealthy merchants and a conservative reaction set in under the leadership of Robert R. Livingston, Mayor Cruger and James Duane which finally succeeded in subduing the mob while also preventing the unwise use of force by the irate Colden. The conservatives also contrived to control the meeting on November 25th at Burns's Tavern for the purpose of drawing up instructions to the Assembly, and appointed a committee of their own choosing. This was composed of seven merchants—including Henry Cruger, a member of the Council, John Alsop, Walter Rutherford, formerly an officer in the British army, James Jauncey and David Van Horn—and five lawyers—William Livingston, William Smith, Jr., James DeLancey, William Hicks and John Morin Scott—of whom only the first and last remained on the radical side. The resolutions of the committee differed

⁸² *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 393, 396.

⁸³ *New York Gazette and Post Boy*, Oct. 31, 1765 and Nov. 7, 1765.

markedly from those of the radicals which had been published.⁸⁴

The broad distinction between the conservative and radical elements which was thus created, was perfectly clear to contemporary observers. "The whole people," reported General Gage to Secretary of State Conway, "have been united to oppose the Execution of the Stamp Act and to find Means to carry on business independent of it. They have differed only in the Means to be pursued. One part would set the Act aside by open Force and Violence, the better Sort by Quibble that no Stamps are to be had, and every other Pretence that could give some Appearance at least of the legality of their Proceedings."⁸⁵ But associated with the radicals were still a considerable number of merchants who were more alarmed by the danger to trade from British taxation than by the danger to private property from violent methods. Many of them belonged to the Sons of Liberty. With the conservatives stood all those "who were opposed to the Stamp Act as a specific measure but who were even more opposed to violent methods of all kinds and jealous also of the presumption of the unenfranchised classes."⁸⁶ Among the former was Philip Livingston, a man of property and family; among the latter was John Watts, who, while deploring the violence of the mob, felt that the provocation had been great.

Watts's letters to England during the next few months probably present very fairly the attitude of the liberal, intelligent and thoughtful men of substance. Four days after the riots he wrote to Moses Franks:

⁸⁴ Becker, *Political Parties in the Province of New York*, pp. 32-38; *New York Gazette and Post Boy*, Nov. 28, 1765.

⁸⁵ *Correspondence of General Thomas Gage*, I, 81.

⁸⁶ Becker, *Political Parties*, p. 51.

The Tempers of the People are so altered by the frightful Stamp Act, 'tis beyond Conception, so Violent and so universal, and what adds to the Evil there are so many distressed desperate Inhabitants in the Colonies whose safety and subsistence consists in Confusion. . . . The Government will never recover any strength here till it is in other hands, and in general will be loosing ground as the colonies increase till other people are sent out to fill the most interesting offices than such as are fit for nothing at Home; a little more tenderness and attention must be shown them; their Treatment is entirely too Bald.³⁷

The Stamp Act, he maintained, was in its larger aspects but the last act of a fatal policy.

If America is to be governed . . . by people sent out merely because they had no character at home or were a burden on some great man; if property is to be thrown into dependent courts of admiralty and causes carried at pleasure to an obscure corner of H. M. Dominions called Halifax . . . if verdicts from juries are to be overruled by the Governor and Council appointed at will. . . .³⁸ If internal taxes are to be laid by fellow subjects who know nothing of their Circumstances and whose Interest it will be to make them meer beasts of burden . . . it can't surely be worth their Contention who shall be their Masters.³⁹

To Monckton to whom he wrote forwarding a copy of Daniel Dulany's pamphlet, Watts observed that the colonists would never be easy "till they are either persuaded or compelled to forget they are entitled to the rights of Englishmen," and at the same time pointed out an aspect of the situation which Paine was later to use to such advantage.

The injudicious question about the power of Parliament, no prudent man would meddle with but among friends as a meer

³⁷ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 399.

³⁸ This refers to the case of *Forsey vs. Cunningham*.

³⁹ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 406-407. Cf. to Monckton, p. 400.

matter of speculation. . . . For my own part I really believe some new constitution will be formed in time between the mother country and the colonies, nothing similar to the present state offers in history. That there should be a supreme power lodged somewhere seems reasonable, but as the colonies before a great number of years are elapsed will exceed the mother country in numbers would it be equally reasonable the Property of the Majority should be disposed of by the Minority at meer Will and pleasure, especially when it is their Interest to throw the Burthen off their own Shoulders upon those of their absent unrepresented and of course unheard fellow Subjects. Must not . . . such a government end in Oppression? Then what follows? ⁴⁰

Nor was independence unthinkable to Watts. "Don't think," he warned Franks, "that same knot is indissoluble, it would be too terrifying. Providence in mercy has reserved the power of dissolving it as Alexander did the Gordian knot, by cutting the thread." ⁴¹ Yet when the prospect of independence was imminent, Watts departed for England, more distrustful of the people than of Parliament.

The immediate and inevitable result of the Stamp Act was the curtailment of all business activity. Apart from the non-importation agreement, the requirement of stamped paper for all clearances, bills of lading and governor's passes operated to stop much of the foreign trade. "Nothing is done in a Commercial Way," reported Watts to Monckton; "the Stamps cannot possibly be distributed and if Vessels should be permitted by this and the Neighboring Governments to go without them 'tis Uncertain what Treatment they may receive abroad." ⁴² "The Cheaf Business here," wrote Van Cortlandt to Virginia, "is opposing the Stamp

⁴⁰ *Letter Book of John Watts*, pp. 400-401.

⁴¹ *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 399. Under date of Nov. 9, 1765.

⁴² *Letter Book of John Watts*, p. 404.

Act with violence."⁴³ By mid-December a resident thus described the situation to an English friend: "Our port is shut; no vessels clear out; no law and no money circulating; in short all traffic and trade seems to be at an end. The country people that are willing to pay bring their produce to market to raise money but can scarce sell anything. Flaxseed that other years sold at 12/ to 14/ per bushel not to mention last year when it sold at 18/ to 20/ per bushel, is now no more than 5/ to 6/, and but little sells at that. A great many Merchants that can pay will not, in order to prevent remittances being paid to your part of the world. The people of the Province seem to have such an aversion to taking the Stamp papers, that they will sooner die than take them."⁴⁴ Retail trade was soon affected by the stoppage of foreign trade, for while the wealthy importer could afford to wait, or even could profit from the artificial monopoly which the situation created, the retailer's stock was quickly gone, and he, with the artisan, mechanic and day laborer, found himself without employment.⁴⁵

The radicals wished business to resume without stamps, and many merchants were doubtless willing enough to venture cargoes if they could get clearances,⁴⁶ but Watts reported that although the Customs House cleared vessels, certifying that there was no distribution of stamped paper, "in this port alone the men of war stop the shipping unless a few that steal out by night, this sours the inhabitants greatly."⁴⁷ The *New York Mercury* on January 13, 1766, recorded one

⁴³ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to John Hilton, Dec. 9, 1765.

⁴⁴ *Upcott Collection*, II, 343.

⁴⁵ Becker, *Political Parties*, p. 36.

⁴⁶ E. g., Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Willet Taylor, Feb. 12, 1766.

⁴⁷ "Aspinwall Collection," *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, 4th series, X, 587. One correspondent claimed that the officers had not the hardihood to refuse such clearances. Becker, *Political Parties*, p. 36 n.

hundred and eleven sea vessels in harbor. General Gage had predicted that the evil effects of non-importation would soon bring the merchants to accept the Stamp Act. "When they shall feel the loss of all Business," he wrote to Conway, "and their Imaginations to cool, their Fury . . . may evaporate and lose itself, and I am certain many will soon wish to take the Stamps though all afraid to be the First."⁴² But the stamps remained shut up, and the watchful Sons of Liberty forced the first merchant who attempted to use stamped paper to do public penance. Most of the merchants protested not against the enforcement of the resolution to refuse the stamps, but against the "frightful" act itself.

In April news arrived of the repeal of the Stamp Act and of the revision of the Sugar Act, both due as much to the protests of the British merchants as to the resistance of the colonies. There was great rejoicing. William Walton illuminated his splendid mansion from top to bottom; a great celebration was held; luxury and high living presently returned; and the Society for the Promotion of Arts, Agriculture and Oeconomy lapsed into a "comatose condition" until new oppressions should revive it. In May, Watts wrote to Monckton: "All seems to be well and quiet here for the present, but I should imagine it will take some time and require some Art and prudence to bring the populace back to due order that have so frequently and so sensibly felt their power."⁴³

Nevertheless, trade had not been restored to its former footing, nor did a revival follow upon the removal of certain obnoxious features in the new system. In November 1766, the New York merchants sent a petition containing 240 sig-

⁴² *Correspondence of General Thomas Gage*, p. 73.

⁴³ Chalmers Collection, New York, III. New York Public Library. Cf. Gage to Conway, Feb. 22, 1766, *Correspondence of General Thomas Gage*, p. 84.

natures to the House of Commons protesting that the duty on foreign sugar was so high, even at the reduced rate of a penny a pound, that it prohibited a trade which was valuable because it yielded specie, and at the same time was an incentive to smuggling. The petition also declared that the provision that all sugars shipped to England from America should be classed as French was unreasonable since the higher duty on foreign sugars rendered unprofitable a hitherto valuable remittance to Britain. The merchants further claimed that the Acts of 1764, in laying a duty on Madeira wine and requiring goods from Spain and Portugal as well as all unenumerated commodities destined to ports north of Cape Finisterre to stop at England, had rendered those branches of trade unprofitable. Finally, the new customs regulations for the enforcement of the Acts of Trade were declared to be expensive, tedious and burdensome, and to render the officers autocratic and irresponsible. The petition was duly forwarded by Governor Moore, although he considered it "an improper representation"; William Pitt characterized it as "highly improper; in point of time most absurd; in extent of their pretensions most excessive; and in reasoning most grossly fallacious and offensive."⁸⁰ It was, in fact, a protest against the enforcement of the whole recent policy at a time when substantial concessions had just been made, and acquiescence by Great Britain would have meant a return to the conditions existing before 1763.

The chief problem of the next two years, however, was the currency situation, concerning which nothing was said in the petition. The omission was due not to improved conditions, for nothing had happened in 1765 or 1768 to increase the amount of money in circulation, but to the hope of relief which had been extended to the province. When

⁸⁰ Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution*, p. 88; *New York Col. Docs.*, VII, 920.

Governor Moore arrived in the colony, in 1766, he immediately reported the situation to the Board of Trade,⁵¹ but that body would only recommend that New York be given permission to issue bills to the amount of £260,000 without making them legal tender.⁵² This the Assembly felt to be no privilege at all, since it was in exact accordance with the terms of the Act of 1764. However, as all of the issues outstanding did not expire until 1768, and as the Lords of Trade had told Moore that by that time the sense of Parliament regarding the propriety of allowing an exception might be obtained, relief appeared to be in sight.⁵³ In December the governor sent the draft of an act to be introduced into Parliament by the provincial agent, but no action was taken during 1767 because the ministry was irritated by the refusal of New York to provide for quartering the royal troops under the terms of the Mutiny Act.⁵⁴

Throughout 1767 money grew steadily more scarce, while debts and dunning letters became more plentiful. Van Cortlandt wrote to Albany and to Virginia that "there is not money enough Circulating to do business," and that "Money is so scarce . . . the Best People disappoint in their engagements."⁵⁵ Peter R. Livingston complained that he was in great want of money.⁵⁶ Gerard G. Beekman, who had written to his brother in 1766 concerning his difficulties that "unless a large sum of money is struck in this and the neighboring governments we shall never get in our

⁵¹ *New York Col. Docs.*, VII, 820.

⁵² *Ibid.*, VII, 827, 843.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, VII, 844.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, VII, 844-5; Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution*, p. 89.

⁵⁵ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to Thos. Shipboy, June 18, 1767; to Adams & Griffin, July 27, 1767. Cf. to Evan Jones, Jan. 30, May 17, 1767; to J. W. Hoffman, June 6, 1767.

⁵⁶ Victor Byars, *B. and M. Grats*, p. 82.

debts," now in May, 1767, advised him that he had not received "one farthing for my own account out of Connecticut since my last nor do I see a prospect of getting anything from the best of them in that dam country."⁵⁷ In January, 1768, Isaac Adolphus, a wealthy Jewish merchant of New York, wrote to Bernard Gratz that he had not twenty pounds in his till.⁵⁸

The stringency of money was felt also by the poorer classes, among whom unemployment and consequent distress were rife, and the need for open-handed charity became such that *Philander* deplored the opening of the play-house that winter because it would tempt people to squander money on amusement that was needed for the poor.⁵⁹ On the 17th of December the *Journal* published a letter of December 14, 1767, from a correspondent who reminded the readers that "about three years ago a Society sprang up among us which promised much, and indeed was encouraged by all the most eminent and best Friends to their Country; . . . but alas! its youthful Vigor is over and many have relaxed or broke through some of the rules of its Institution." On that very evening a committee was appointed to consider the expediency of measures "to promote frugality, industry and employing our own tradesmen and necessitous poor." Its report, made in January, recommended the encouragement of home manufactures, the restriction of imports, the disuse of a long list of expensive fabrics and the discouragement of extravagant funerals and the importation of negro slaves.⁶⁰ This marked the resurrection of the Society of Arts, Agriculture and Oeconomy.

⁵⁷ Beekman Letter Book, to David, June 17, 1766; May 9, 1767.

⁵⁸ Byars, *B. and M. Gratz*, p. 84, note 1.

⁵⁹ *New York Journal*, Jan. 7, 1768; cf. Jan. 21, 28, and Feb. 4, 11, 1768.

⁶⁰ *New York Journal*, Feb. 2, 1768; Stokes, *Iconography*, IV, 782.

It was also the first sign of opposition to the Townshend Acts, now in operation for several months, which had already called out non-consumption agreements in the New England towns. No further steps were taken for some time, and as late as January 23, 1768 Watts wrote to Monckton that the colony was "the quintessence of moderation,"⁸¹ while in the election of February, 1768; the conservative DeLancey-mercantile-Church combination was victorious, Philip Livingston alone of the popular party surviving.⁸² Toward the end of March meetings of the merchants began to be held, following the example of Boston, and from one of these developed the New York Chamber of Commerce. About the middle of April the merchants drew up a non-importation agreement to take effect on October 1 provided both Boston and Philadelphia did the same. Boston had already adopted a similar resolution, but the failure of Philadelphia to agree by the date set, June 14th, prolonged debate until the end of the summer. On the 27th of August the New York merchants adopted a resolution to countermand all orders sent after August 15th and to cease to import any English goods after November 1 until the repeal of the duties. Philadelphia came tardily into line in December.⁸³

Apparently no effort was made to enforce non-importation in New York until March, 1769, by which time the full effect of Grenville's economic and financial legislation was beginning to be felt. The Currency Act had deprived the colony of paper money, the last issues having been redeemed in 1768,⁸⁴ while the requirement that the duties of the

⁸¹ Aspinwall Papers, *Mass. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, 4th series, X, 600.

⁸² Becker, *Political Parties*, p. 60.

⁸³ Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution*, p. 124.

⁸⁴ The issues which expired between 1766 and 1768 amounted to £380,350, of which £274,259 was actually retired.

amended Sugar Act and of the Townshend Act be paid in silver, although not a heavy burden in itself, operated under existing conditions to take out of the country any specie which might arrive. Governor Moore's efforts to relieve the financial stringency met with failure. In January, 1768, he had suggested to Shelburne that permission to pass an act providing for legal tender would lead to colonial support of the Mutiny Act. "Commerce here as well as the ordinary services of the government must very shortly be exposed to great inconvenience." A compliance with the wishes of the Assembly "would be attended with such return of duty and submission" as was desired.⁶⁵ In return Hillsborough merely suggested that the colony pursue the routine course of preparing a bill and submitting it to the king.⁶⁶ On the 14th of May the governor sent a copy of the act of December 1766 to the Secretary of State for the Colonies suggesting its introduction into Parliament and pointing out that "to have no legal tender would expose debtors to the petulance and malice of their creditors even though they have Spanish gold and silver enough to satisfy them."⁶⁷ No further action was taken that year. Meantime the supply of gold and silver had become so scarce that Moore himself testified that the poorer inhabitants were in great distress and "all Ranks were impoverished."⁶⁸ Van Cortlandt found himself unable to collect so small a sum as fifty dollars from a prominent merchant, and the most prudent business men were forced to let their bills run at interest for lack of cash to pay them.⁶⁹ Hayman Levy, one of the principal fur mer-

⁶⁵ *New York Col. Docs.*, VIII, 1.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, VIII, 13.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, VIII, 72.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Van Cortlandt Letter Book, to J. W. Hoffman, Sept. 30, 1768; Feb. 16, 1769.

chants of the city, failed solely because of frozen assets, for his assignees were able eventually to discharge the whole of his indebtedness with interest.⁷⁰ Property values fell and estates were sold upon execution at a fraction of their worth.⁷¹

In the summer of 1768 new orders were received by Andrew Elliott, the collector of the port, from the Commissioners of the Customs. On account of the scarcity of specie Elliott had been granting very liberal terms to the merchants, taking their notes to pay duties in a week or ten days rather than delay the vessel so long without unloading. Not only had he never lost a penny by this practice, but he had probably prevented any practical opposition to the duties from coming to a head. Now he was informed that he did this at his own risk and was responsible for every shilling to the king. As there was no silver the order was seen to be the source of future trouble.⁷²

The situation was further aggravated by the quarrel between Governor Moore and General Gage over a question of precedence, a quarrel which led to popular fear that the end of this new program was to be the establishment of martial law. The general feeling of dissatisfaction and unrest led first, on December 17th, to a petition of the Assembly to the House of Lords against the new laws of trade, the policy of allowing appeals on facts from the decision of a jury to the king in council,⁷³ and the suspension of the legislature.⁷⁴ Two weeks later came the resolutions of December 31st, claiming the same right of levying taxes

⁷⁰ Daly, *Settlement of the Jews in North America*, p. 52.

⁷¹ *New York Col. Docs.*, VIII, 72.

⁷² *New York Col. Docs.*, VIII, 96. Hillsborough agreed the order was ill-advised, but as it was outside his sphere he referred the governor to the Treasury. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁷³ This refers to the case of *Forsey vs. Cunningham*.

⁷⁴ For refusing to comply with the terms of the Mutiny Act.

for the provincial legislature as for Parliament, asserting the illegality of the Restraining Act,⁷⁵ and maintaining the right of the Assembly to correspond with other colonial legislatures. Taxation, however, was the real point at issue, for the Restraining Act had never operated, and the right of correspondence was a secondary consideration. Because he considered these resolutions seditious, the governor dissolved the Assembly but the elections of January, 1769, registered popular approval of its actions, the old members being returned almost to a man.⁷⁶

Although the non-importation agreement had gone into effect in November 1768, its enforcement really began in March, 1769, with the appointment of a committee of inspection. The composition of the committee showed the determination of the conservative merchants to keep the control of the opposition movement in their own hands in order to hold it within the bounds of peaceful resistance—i. e. the maintenance of the boycott—and to prevent the outbreak of violence such as had occurred at the time of the Stamp Act.⁷⁷ Many of the members of the committee, notably Low, Alsop, Franklin, Murray, Bache, Verplanck, Remsen, Cruger, Laight, McEvers and the Waltons, were men of weight in the community; all but three were members

⁷⁵ The act suspending the legislature.

⁷⁶ Becker, *Political Parties*, pp. 74-75. Philip Livingston failed of reelection because of the unpopularity of his running mate, John Morin Scott.

⁷⁷ Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and The American Revolution*, pp. 95-105. The members of the committee were Isaac Low, James Desbrosses, John Alsop, John Broome, William Neilson, Theodorus Van Wyck, Walter Franklin, John Murray, Jacob Walton, Theophylact Bache, Thomas Franklin, Jr., Samuel Verplanck, Isaac Sears, Peter Van der Voort, Thomas William Moore, Henry Remsen, Jr., John Harris Cruger, John Thurman, Jr., Thomas Walton, Peter T. Curtenius, Herbert Van Wagenen, Joseph Bull, Edward Laight, and Charles McEvers.

of the Chamber of Commerce; two, Low and Bache, were to be presidents of the Chamber, while John Harris Cruger was a nephew of the first president, son of a member of His Majesty's Council and himself to be a councillor upon the resignation of his father.

The chairman, Isaac Low, is perhaps typical of the majority of the group in that "no taxation without representation meant to him merely a cover for carrying on business with a modicum of parliamentary restraint." A leader of the opposition to the measures of the British government up to 1775, when the question of independence was finally raised he adhered to the Crown. The same observations could be made regarding John Alsop, characterised by John Adams as "a soft, sweet man," who had been delegate to the Stamp Act Congress and was to be on the Committee of Fifty-One and the Committee of One Hundred, and a delegate to the first and second Continental Congresses, but who resigned his seat upon ratification of the Declaration of Independence by the province. With Alsop and Low may be classed Joseph Bull, Edward Laight, John Thurman, Jr., and Samuel Verplanck. Indeed, of the whole two dozen only three—Isaac Sears, Henry Remsen, Jr., and Peter T. Curtenius—became strong Whigs, the rest being neutral like the Quakers, Murray and Franklin, or Loyalists such as John Harris Cruger and Charles McEvers. In 1769, however, the opposition was general among all classes, and Governor Bernard of Massachusetts thought the difficulties of administration in New York greater than in his own province. Remarking that the governors in both places were "liable to be harassed by the Spirit of Jealousy and of Opposition to Government," he continued: "But there is this Material Difference between the two Provinces: in New York that Spirit actuates men of Rank and Ability; in Massachusetts it works only with Men of Middling or low Rank; in the Latter the Governor has

the generality of respectable Men on his Side; in the former they are generally against Government." ⁷⁸

Apparently very little attempt was made in New York to evade the non-importation agreement; the lack of specie undoubtedly helped to make it effective. Only once was there need for enforcing the requirement that illegally imported goods be stored; on May 11, 1769 two ships entered with cargoes from England which were taken over without resistance by the Committee of Inspection. More difficulty was found in preventing the smuggling of goods from Philadelphia on the plea that since they had been imported previous to Philadelphia's non-importation agreement, although after November first, they were within the regulations. The committee ruled that such goods must be returned. One New York offender, Peter Clopper, obeyed in good faith, but Alexander Robertson, while shipping the casks, retained their contents in his cellar, upon discovery of which a virtual boycott was enforced against him. On the whole, however, non-importation was well observed in New York. The claim of the merchants that all cargoes imported contrary to the agreement had been stored cannot, of course, be proven, but the value of the imports of the province from England fell from £482,930 in 1768 to £74,918 in 1769,⁷⁹ a record which is not equalled in any other colony.⁸⁰

On the other hand the merchants found themselves unable to manage the situation as they would have liked, for the effect of agitation and organized activity upon the non-mercantile population was to raise forces too powerful for them

⁷⁸ Channing, "Bernard-Barrington Correspondence," *Harvard Hist. Studies*, XVII, 42.

⁷⁹ See Appendix. The figure for 1768 is higher than that of the three preceding years which may indicate that the merchants had laid in larger stocks in anticipation of the stoppage of trade.

⁸⁰ Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and The American Revolution*, p. 190.

to control.⁸¹ The Sons of Liberty, organized to resist the Stamp Act, reminded the populace of their "duty" and mob enforcement of the non-importation agreement by the shopkeepers in July indicated a development little relished by the merchants. The course of events added further fuel to the fire. The Assembly which met in November heard to its exasperation that the proposed bill for the emission of bills of credit to the amount of £120,000 had only just been received; no action, therefore, had been taken by His Majesty. The economic situation had now reached a crisis. There had been no legal tender in the colony for more than a year except Lyons dollars, which were rarely seen, while the Spanish silver was insufficient as a medium of exchange. Business stagnation had reached a climax. Property was selling for one-half to one-third its value.⁸² The prisons were filling with debtors. Violence soon ensued. The Sons of Liberty resorted to mass-meetings, riots and effigy-burning. The introduction of the provision bill (for quartering the troops) in the Assembly on December 17, 1769, called out a pamphlet entitled "To the Betrayed Inhabitants of the City and Colony of New York," by "A Son of Freedom." The author, Alexander MacDougall, one of the radical leaders, was arrested and imprisoned for libel, only to be hailed as the "Wilkes of America" and visited in gaol by patriotic ladies bearing delicacies.⁸³ Friction between the soldiery and the citizens ended in an armed clash on Golden Hill.

⁸¹ Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and The American Revolution*, pp. 104-105.

⁸² Gov. Moore to Lord Hillsborough, July 11, 1769. *New York Col. Mss.*, VIII, 176. Cf. Bayard-Campbell-Pearsall Papers, George Clinton to Wm. Bayard, New Windsor, Oct. 8, 1770.

⁸³ Becker, *Political Parties*, p. 80. The likeness of this future general of the continental forces to the author of *North Briton*, No. 45 was emphasized in the popular mind by the fact that the record of his sentence was printed on the forty-fifth page of the Journal of the Assembly.

The renewal of violence brought a conservative reaction on the part of the merchants, and by the spring of 1770 the majority were ready to consider a move to end non-importation. Other causes contributed to this change of mind. In the first place, non-importation was now seen to be a self-denying ordinance. The coöperation of Boston and Philadelphia had been very unsatisfactory, Boston in particular being more active in "resolving what it ought to do than in doing what it had resolved," while in the South imports had actually increased.⁸⁴ Among the local merchants the effect of the agreement was to enrich the smuggler at the expense of the fair trader whose stocks were now gone.⁸⁵ Moreover, the merchants resented the charges of extortion on account of high prices, and particularly the twisting of their purely economic protest into a crusade for constitutional rights. There were, however, those who were still interested in the constitutional issue, men who had in many instances been of the popular rather than of the court party before 1763, or who, as was suggested, were heavily interested in the illicit trade with the French West Indies or with Holland. As a result the merchants divided into two parties, and the cleavage was signalized by two separate dinners for the annual celebration of the repeal of the Stamp Act.

With the news in May of the repeal of all the Townshend duties except the tax on tea, and the arrival late in June of a law permitting the emission of £120,000 in bills of credit receivable at the Loan Offices and the Treasury, the movement to reopen trade became stronger. The conservative merchants appointed a committee to take a poll of the city, and on July 9, the non-importation agreement was lifted

⁸⁴ Becker, *Political Parties*, p. 85; Schlesinger, *The Merchants and The American Revolution*, p. 210.

⁸⁵ Becker, *Political Parties*, p. 85.

except on tea. Concerning this exception, Governor Hutchinson commented: "The New Yorkers have agreed to an Importation of all Goods except Teas which they have no occasion for from England, their Dutch trade being under no restraint."⁸⁶ New York was roundly condemned by other parties to the compact for its desertion of the cause. Connecticut and New Jersey denounced its action as perfidious. In Philadelphia, where the merchants had provided themselves with large quantities of goods before entering into the agreement, one hot patriot declared that the New Yorkers deserved to be tarred and feathered,⁸⁷ and a broadside circulated there announced that "the names of a *Bute*, a *Grenville*, a *Bernard* and a *Yorker*" would henceforth be synonymous.⁸⁸

The years from 1770 to 1773 were years of material prosperity and, for the most part, of political calm in New York. The merchants were dominated by satisfaction with the British concessions and a determination to destroy the political power of the non-mercantile elements. The reasons for the return of prosperity are not far to seek. The chief sources of discontent had been removed by the repeal of the duties and the alleviation of the currency situation; non-importation had reduced the balance of trade against the province and had allowed merchants to make substantial payments to their British creditors. Even when trade was resumed, exports to England continued to rise in value, a movement due not only to increased activity on the part of provincials but also to the continued unusual demand for wheat and flour abroad. The exports to England in 1775 amounted to £187,018, while imports from Britain, after a

⁸⁶ C. O. 5: 894, p. 121; Hutchinson to Lord Hillsborough, July 26, 1770.

⁸⁷ *Pa. Mag. of Hist. & Biog.*, XXIII, 57.

⁸⁸ Phila. Broadside, July 14, 1770. In Broadside Collection of N. Y. Historical Society.

spurt in 1771 to the unprecedented figure of £653,621, kept to the very moderate level of £300,000 or £400,000. This may be explained by the growth of illicit trade, the increase of indirect importation from other colonies, and the probability that merchants had overstocked after 1771 and were selling off their surplus.⁸⁹ Under these favorable conditions, exchange returned to its normal rate, fluctuating between 70 and 80 according to the demand for bills.

In the summer of 1773 relations as cordial as had ever existed between the colony and the mother country seemed in a fair way to be established, when the half-forgotten three-penny duty on tea led to events that resulted directly in the Revolution. The boycott on tea had been faithfully observed in New York, no doubt because of the ease with which tea could be smuggled in from Holland. Between 1770 and 1773 only 870 pounds had been imported from England.⁹⁰ Moreover, the smuggled tea was cheaper and the profit correspondingly greater, so that it may be suspected that self-interest had quite as much to do with observance of the agreement as devotion to principle. The Tea Act of 1773, however, made it possible for the East India Company to undersell the smuggler, and at the same time revived the question of constitutional rights.

Opposition to the tea shipments was not foreseen in New York, for when the Company announced its intention of entrusting the sale of its goods to well-recommended American firms, merchants showed themselves very willing to serve as consignees. The directors finally appointed Pigou & Booth (the American branch of an English firm), Abram Lott & Co., and Henry White, contractor for the navy and member of the Council, as their agents.⁹¹ As late as No-

⁸⁹ Becker, *Political Parties*, p. 95; cf. the letter from Mrs. Reed of Philadelphia quoted in chapter iii from Scharf, *Hist. of Phila.*, p. 891.

⁹⁰ *Treasury Papers* 1: 505.

⁹¹ Becker, *Political Parties*, p. 102.

vember a series of able articles signed "*Popliocola*" appeared in the New York press pointing out the benefits of the trade and advocating the reception and purchase of the tea.⁸² Until the news of the Boston Tea Party many people, among them Governor Tryon, hoped that there would be little opposition to the landing of the tea.⁸³ The hope proved to be too optimistic, for hostility to the act became general.

The sources of opposition to the Tea Act were two-fold. The fair trader opposed it because it gave the East India Company a virtual monopoly through the low prices it made possible; these, they predicted, would be abandoned as soon as the local competition was smothered. Moreover, the fear was expressed that this was merely an entering wedge and that the sale of other articles would be introduced in the same manner, thus effecting the ruin of the local merchants.⁸⁴ No doubt most of these dangers were imaginary, and possibly they were magnified by propagandists, but they did much to influence the conservative group. For the rest, particular emphasis was openly placed upon the ruin of the illicit trade. Abram Lott wrote to William Kelly: "The introduction of the East India's Company's tea is violently opposed here by a set of men who shamefully live by monopolizing tea in the smuggling way."⁸⁵ A month earlier William Smith had noted in his diary: "The fact is that ever since the duty of threepence per pound had been laid . . . all Tea had been smuggled from Holland to the Great

⁸² Becker, *Political Parties*, pp. 103-104; Rivington's *Gazetteer*, Nov. 18, 1773.

⁸³ *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, VIII, 407-408.

⁸⁴ *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, VIII, 400, 408; Schlesinger, *The Merchants and The American Revolution*, p. 268.

⁸⁵ Francis S. Drake, *Tea Leaves* (Boston, 1884), p. 269; Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and The American Revolution*, p. 265.

Detriment of the India House, and now the Sons of Liberty and the Dutch Smugglers set up the Cry of Liberty."⁸⁶

The mode of opposition to be adopted presented some difficulty, for the conservative merchants wished to retain their policy of modified non-intercourse, and this could be achieved only by one of two methods, non-consumption agreements or forcible resistance to landing. Partial non-consumption was impracticable because once in the stores, it would be impossible to distinguish English from Dutch tea, while total non-consumption would be opposed to the interests of the smuggler and would put too great a strain on human nature as well. Forcible resistance, on the other hand, opened the way for violence which was no less abhorrent to men of property. While the merchants were thus impaled on the horns of the dilemma, the Sons of Liberty and the radicals, less scrupulous, fanned with cries of "No taxation" the flames of popular opposition to landing the tea, and on December first the consignees under pressure publicly declined to receive or sell it. Thomas Wharton in Philadelphia had news of popular demonstrations against receiving the tea during which an effigy of William Kelly, the member of the East India Company in charge of the American shipments, was carried around the streets and hung. His informant declared that one of the agents of the company, Benjamin Booth, stood "a most miserable chance of sharing the same fate, but was saved by the Mayor and some more magistrates who went to his assistance."⁸⁷ The attempt of the merchants, led by Isaac Low and Jacob Walton, to solicit subscriptions to a statement disclaiming any intention of using force failed, whereupon the agents on

⁸⁶ Diary of William Smith, IV, Oct. 13, 1773. In the New York Public Library.

⁸⁷ Letter Book of Thomas Wharton, to Samuel Wharton, Nov. 30, 1774.

December 27th wrote a letter to Captain Lockyear, to be delivered to him on his arrival at Sandy Hook, advising him not to attempt to land his cargo but to return as soon as he had taken on the necessary ship supplies. Captain Lockyear, who did not arrive until Monday the 18th of April, followed this advice and violence was thus avoided; but news that Captain Chambers of the *London*, who arrived the following Friday, had tea aboard—on his own account as it later appeared—caused great excitement, and although the "Mohawks" had "prepared to do their duty at a suitable time," the impatient mob boarded the vessel that evening and dumped the tea overboard with no disturbance and no damage to the rest of the cargo.⁹⁸

The tea episode had little or no effect upon business, because although the agitation covered several months the action was over in a week. Prices of provisions in the spring of 1774 were a little higher than they had been the previous year—tea, for instance, was sixpence dearer a pound—and exchange rose from 77½ in November, 1773, to 80 in May, 1774, and to 90 in November. The rise in exchange may with equal probability have been due to poor crops, to the general unrest, and to a demand for bills of exchange to pay for greater imports from Britain, the latter reaching £437,937 in 1774 against £289,214 in 1773. After the end of April tranquility quickly returned, and was maintained in spite of the news of the punitive measures against Boston. "Shutting up the port of Boston," wrote Watts to Monckton, "is a matter of great speculation on this side the water. . . . The lower class of people were taking it up exceeding high here and would have carried things to extremities but by the interference of most people of Weight a soberer counsel takes place."⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Becker, *Political Parties*, pp. 104-109.

⁹⁹ Chalmers Collection, New York III, Watts to Monckton, May 30, 1774.

The "Gentlemen of Property and Principal Merchants" had finally realized during the tea agitation that if action and opposition were to be pressed by extra-legal committees, they must control the committees. By attending the public meetings they succeeded in getting a majority in the Committee of Fifty-One and in nominating the delegates to the first Continental Congress of 1774. But as the proposals of the radicals more and more prevailed in Congress over the counsels of the moderates, the New York merchant found himself forced into neutrality or into the right wing which became the Loyalist party.

In general, the merchants' reaction to the political questions of the day shows them to have been eventual conservatives. United with the more radical elements, which were just emerging into politics, in opposition to measures which harmed and curbed business enterprise, the desire for law and order was too ingrained in them to allow support of the violent measures to which the radicals resorted as the only means of forcing immediate relief. Thus the economic opposition to the Sugar Act, the Stamp Act and the Townshend Acts led to petitions, non-importation associations, committees of correspondence and congresses in which prominent merchants took their full share. But the Stamp Act Riots, the burning of Colden's carriage, the Golden Hill affair, and the "Wilkes of America" episode caused a revolution of feeling on the part of men of standing and property which crystallized into loyalism when independence was seen to be the end toward which the opposition was tending. Of the five delegates to the Stamp Act Congress, four of them merchants, John Cruger and William Bayard became loyalists, while Lisenard, Philip Livingston and his brother Robert R. Livingston, remained in the opposition. Of the twenty-four members of the Committee of Inspection appointed in March 1769 nine were later loyalists, Low, Alsop,

the two Waltons, Bache, Thurman, Moore, Cruger, and McEvers; three were neutral, Desbrosses, Neilson and Verplanck; Walter Franklin and John Murray were Quakers; while only four, John Broome, Isaac Sears, Henry Remsen, Jr., and P. T. Curtenius, were Whigs. Similarly of the Committee of Fifty-One, twenty-six adhered to the Crown;¹⁰⁰ seven were neutral;¹⁰¹ and eighteen were Whigs, of whom twelve were merchants.¹⁰² The five delegates to the first Continental Congress included three merchants, Isaac Low, Philip Livingston and John Alsop, and only Philip Livingston was able to agree to independence. When John Adams paid his respects to the New York delegation he suspected both of the others, Alsop as a man "of good heart but unequal to the trust in point of abilities" and Low as professing attachment to the cause but of doubtful sincerity.¹⁰³ Indeed, of the 104 members of the Chamber of Commerce who were living in 1775, fifty-seven became loyalists, twenty-one were neutral, and twenty-six were Whigs—a very small minority of patriots.¹⁰⁴

The relation of a merchant's business to his loyalism or Whiggism is not entirely clear, chiefly because there was so little specialization in trade. The few facts which are salient may indicate some tendencies, although generalizations based upon them must be made cautiously. At the head of the

¹⁰⁰ Alsop, Bache, Pearsall, Yates, the two Waltons, Browne, Bayard, McEvers, Nicoll, Moore, Low, Laight, Desbrosses, Delancey, Sherbrooke, Thurman, Booth, Wallace, Jauncey, Ludlow, Van Schaack, Young, Goellet, Van Horn, McAdam. All except Peter Van Schaack were merchants.

¹⁰¹ Johnston, Duryea, Brall, Sharp, Marston, Shaw, Hoffman.

¹⁰² Peter Van Brugh Livingston, Isaac Sears, MacDougall, Randall, Lispenard, Van Zandt, Broome, Curtenius, Lott, Beekman, Lewis, Remsen, Philip Livingston, Duane, Jay, Hallett, Duyckinck, and Brasher. Becker, *Political Parties*, pp. 113-114.

¹⁰³ "Diary of John Adams," *Works*, II, 350.

¹⁰⁴ See biographical sketches in New York Chamber of Commerce, *Colonial Records*.

list of merchants who worked for independence in New York stand those who were interested specifically in distilling and sugar refining—the Livingstons, Leonard Lisenard, the Roosevelts and John Van Cortlandt. Very near them in importance are those who had close connections with the West Indies—the Gouverneurs, Lawrence Kortright, the Beekmans, the Van Zandts, Rem Rapalje and Luke Van Ranst. All of these men had at one time or another been engaged in illicit trade, and many others, whose patriotism cannot be attributed to their interest in sugar or the welfare of members of their families established in business in the West Indies, had also been smugglers. Francis Lewis, for example, had been extremely active in procuring flags of truce to cover an illicit and treasonable trade in provisions with the French islands during the Seven Years War. Others had been prominent in privateering, among them Evert Byvanck, Peter Keteltas, Isaac Sears, Rem Remsen, David Van Horn and the Bogerts.

On the other hand, there are exceptions to be noted. The Bayards, who were engaged in distilling, were loyalists; so was John Harris Cruger, who had two brothers in business in the West Indies; so also was George Folliot, who had petitioned for commissions for six privateers during the French and Indian War. Loyalists, too, were the Waltons, who had persisted in sending supplies to the Spanish garrison at St. Augustine after England had declared war on Spain in 1761.

The explanation of this apparent contradiction is not difficult. The influence of official connections or English birth was stronger than the pull of business interests. William Bayard had been agent for the British contractors during the war and was politically of the government faction. John Harris Cruger and William Walton were members of the Council. George Folliot had come to New York from England as a young man and had maintained his connections

with the mother country. Practically all the outstanding loyalist merchants fall into one or another of these groups. Those with official connections include John Watts, Oliver DeLancey, Henry White, Hugh Wallace, Charles Ward Apthorp and James Jauncey, Jr. All of them were members of the Council and all but Jauncey had been connected with government contracts during the Seven Years' War. An even larger number were recent immigrants to New York from the British Isles. Besides George Folliot, this group included Miles Sherbrooke, Robert Ross Waddell, Hamilton Young, Samuel Hake, William McAdam, Benjamin Booth, Henry White and Hugh and Alexander Wallace. Most of these men traded chiefly with England, Scotland or Ireland, and Sherbrooke, Waddell, Young and Booth were partners in charge of branches of British firms. It is interesting to note that the loyalist Wallaces married daughters of Isaac Low, also a loyalist; but the neutral Thomas Buchanan, who had come over from Scotland in 1760, married into a Whig family, which evidently equalized the pull of birth sufficiently to keep him "on the fence."

The affiliation of these groups with the court and popular parties is obvious. The DeLancey party controlled most of the offices on the eve of the Revolution and most loyalist merchants had supported it. Most of them, too, were Anglicans. The leader of the Whigs was Philip Livingston, whose family had for fifty years led the popular party.

The year 1775 properly marks the end of this study, for with the beginning of the Revolution business in New York entered on a new phase in which extra-legal committees, provisional governments and martial law took the place of the old assembly and common council, while armies marching back and forth and the hazards of war upon the sea disrupted the course of commerce. The return of peace in 1783 ushered in a new era, new faces in the commercial community and new methods of carrying on business.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF BILLS OF CREDIT ISSUED BY THE PROVINCE OF NEW YORK^a

<i>Date Issued</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Expiration of Currency</i>	<i>Amount Cancelled</i>
1709	£5,000	1711	Unknown
.....	4,000	—	"
.....	4,000	—	"
1711	10,000	1724	"
1714	27,680	1739	£27,406. 8
1715	6,000	1724	1,190. 5
1717	16,607	1740	16,351
1720	2,000	1733	1,896. 8. 6
1723	2,140	1726	2,122.10
1724	3,000		
.....	6,630	1729	9,469.16. 6
1726	3,000	replacement	2,858.18. 6
1730	3,000	"	2,999.10
1734	12,000	1746	11,576.15
1737	48,350	1768	43,153.15
1739	10,000	1767	9,115. 6
1746	13,000	1748	12,618.12
.....	40,000	1756	38,772.10
1747	28,000	1756	27,098
1755	45,000	1761	36,325
.....	10,000	1762	7,550. 6
.....	8,000	1761	6,489. 2
1756	10,000	1761	7,640
1756	52,000	1766	41,990
1758	100,000	1768	66,155
1759	100,000	1768	71,876
1760	60,000	1768	41,970
1771	120,000	—	Unknown

^a Hickcox, *History of Bills of Credit in New York*, p. 81.

APPENDIX B

TABLE OF EXPORTS AND IMPORTS TO AND FROM GREAT BRITAIN ^a

I. TOTAL EXPORTS, IMPORTS AND BALANCE

<i>Year</i>	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>	<i>Balance</i>
1751	£42,363	£248,941	£206,578
1752	40,648	194,030	151,382
1753	50,553	277,864	227,311
1754	26,663	136,413	109,750
1755	28,054	151,071	123,017
1756	24,073	250,425	226,352
1757	19,168	353,311	334,143
1758	14,260	356,555	342,294
1759	21,684	630,785	609,100
1760	21,125	480,106	458,981
1761	48,648	289,570	240,922
1762	58,882	288,046	229,164
1763	53,988	238,560	184,571
1764	53,697	515,416	416,719
1765	54,959	382,349	327,389
1766	67,020	330,829	263,809
1767	61,422	417,957	356,534
1768	87,115	482,930	395,815
1769	73,466	74,918	1,452
1770	69,882	475,991	406,109
1771	95,875	653,621	557,745
1772	82,707	343,970	261,263
1773	76,246	289,214	212,968
1774	80,008	437,937	357,929
1775	187,018	1,228	185,790 in favor

^a Customs 3: 51 to 75. In the British Public Record Office.

APPENDIX C

TABLE OF EXPORTS AND IMPORTS ^a

I. NEW YORK AND LONDON

Year	<i>Imports from</i>			<i>Exports to New York</i>					
	<i>New York</i>			<i>English Manufactures</i>			<i>Foreign Manufactures</i>		
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
1751	36,997.	5.	8	124,190.—	6		25,530.	1.	4
1752	38,484.	14.	11	124,329.	5.	1	21,845.	10.	5
1753	45,865.	17.	8	199,577.	13.	10	25,768.	13.	10
1754	21,289.	8.	9	87,499.—	5		13,500.	19.—	
1755	17,987.	5.	11	114,451.	4.	8	17,097.—	2	
1756	13,136.	8.	6	169,233.	19.	3	31,753.	7.	1
1757	9,828.	3.	11	228,377.	18.	1	43,148.	18.	1
1758	3,442.—	4		263,290.	7.	7	30,136.	7.	1
1759	10,011.	17.	9	483,952.	8.—		59,803.	12.	6
1760	6,328.	8.	10	387,839.	6.	7	42,123.	12.	9
1761	16,721.	2.	7	89,630.	17.—		25,851.	3.	6
1762	17,729.	19.	7	216,164.	13.	7	23,356.	14.	11
1763	29,977.	19.	9	133,443.	13.	8	30,093.	18.	6
1764	28,921.	18.	4	336,351.	17.	6	37,486.	6.—	
1765	38,232.	10.	6	217,487.	13.	9	20,287.	19.	9
1766	45,682.	13.	2	184,865.	14.	1	18,940.	7.—	
1767	35,502.—	7		258,012.	3.	8	57,585.	15.	7
1768	50,509.	9.	9	299,480.	13.	5	96,380.	18.	3
1769	38,585.	5.	2	48,990.	18.	1	3,900.	5.	6
1770	55,191.	12.	7	284,972.	8.	10	45,494.	4.	3
1771	72,894.	10.	8	393,344.	10.	10	66,841.	16.	6
1772	58,743.	7.	9	183,662.	14.—		30,809.	6.	9
1773	54,475.	18.	3	127,432.	19.	10	69,942.	1.	10
1774	49,381.	5.	4	250,728.	7.	11	61,908.	1.	8
1775	95,105.	16.	6	1,140.	5.	11	54.	16.	7

^a Customs 3:51 to 75. In the British Public Record Office. "In time" indicates that the foreign manufactures were re-exported within the period during which drawbacks were allowed, and "out of time" the reverse.

APPENDIX C—(Continued)

TABLE OF EXPORTS AND IMPORTS

II. NEW YORK AND THE OUTPORTS

Year	<i>Imports from</i>			<i>Exports to New York</i>					
	<i>New York</i>			<i>English Manufactures</i>			<i>Foreign Manufactures</i>		
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
1751	5,366.	10.	3	33,190.	18.	4	17,072.	8.	2
1752	2,164.	1.	11	13,112.	17.	7	5,212.	19.—	
1753	4,687.	4.	8	16,825.—	5		10,417.	16.	7
1754	5,374.	1.	11	13,600.	7.	7	5,052.—	4	
1755	10,067.	6.	4	14,755.	15.	11	525.	3.	2
1756	10,936.	12.	10	31,311.	3.	2	8,252.	17.	5
1757	9,340.—	6		34,779.	12.	10	8,864.	7.	3
1758	10,818.	15.	3	16,154.	4.	5	2,772.	1.	8
1759	11,672.	12.	6	23,902.	13.	1	4,300.	6.	11
1760	14,796.	11.	2	28,627.	17.	2	2,995.	6.	9
1761	31,926.	19.	7	18,449.	3.	9	3,926.	11.	3
1762	41,152.	6.	10	19,961.	16.	11	472.	9.	3
1763	24,010.	14.	7	38,024.	6.	5	2,828.	5.	2
1764	24,775.	12.—		34,250.	5.	9	7,837.—	11	
1765	16,727.	7.	8	42,284.	11.	8	19,909.	6.	4
1766	21,337.	18.	6	58,024.—	10		18,284.	15.	5
1767	25,920.	18.—		75,249.	2.	9	9,066.	8.	1
1768	36,605.	16.	1	72,484.	8.	11	6,179.	17.	11
1769	34,880.	18.	7	16,326.	13.	4	3,229.	14.	11
1770	14,690.	17.	10	119,450.	14.	2	10,554.	16.	7
1771	22,980.	18.	3	158,763.	11.	3	11,588.	8.	8
1772	23,964.—	9		111,175.	5.	1	7,687.	15.	9
1773	21,770.	13.	9	71,469.	10.	7	16,165.	15.	4
1774	30,627.—	5		108,270.	11.	9	5,672.	10.	11
1775	91,912.	7.	11	—			33.—		

APPENDIX D

SHIPPING INTO AND OUT OF NEW YORK, 1754, 1763 AND 1764 *

	1754		1763		1764	
	Tonnage		Tonnage		Tonnage	
	Entered	Cleared	Entered	Cleared	Entered	Cleared
Gt. Britain	2,635	2,205	3,980	2,079	4,040	2,952
Ireland	820	1,515	550	1,460	1,647	1,882
S. Europe	750	410	1,390	690	2,385	1,087
Africa	155	130	65	70	—	140
Br. & For. W. I. .	5,960	5,980	4,124 ^c	7,433	7,340	7,938
Newfoundland ..	105	440	—	405	—	465
Quebec	—	—	—	355	—	345
Nova Scotia	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Hampshire .	—	—	—	20	—	—
Massachusetts ...	170	545	—	705	80	445
Connecticut	—	—	—	265	—	290
Rhode Island	—	30	—	—	—	—
New Jersey	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pennsylvania	130	—	—	120	—	100
Maryland	—	—	—	90	—	—
Virginia	—	25	—	—	—	80
North Carolina ..	—	—	—	85	—	30
South Carolina ..	496	1,291	615	935	540	525
Georgia	30	40	—	230	25	25
East Florida	100	—	—	60	30	105
West Florida	—	—	—	165	100	290
Bahamas	50	—	205	35	103	93
Bermuda	80	75	200	115	370	230
Total Extra						
Continental ...	10,450	10,315	10,514	11,882	15,885	14,322
Total Within						
Continent	1,056	2,371	615	3,585	775	2,700
Grand Total	12,506	12,686 ^b	11,129	15,467 ^d	16,660 ^e	17,022 ^f

* C. O. 5: 1227, 1228.

^b Shipping to Amsterdam amounted to 135 tons, to Hamburg 90, to Rotterdam 130, which brings the total to 13,041 tons.

^c Shipping to Havana accounted for 1,067 tons.

^d Shipping to Amsterdam amounted to 160 tons, to Bordeaux, 150, to Louisbourg, 40, which brings the total to 15,817 tons.

^e Plus 50 tons to Louisbourg, bringing the total to 17,020.

^f Shipping to Amsterdam amounted to 155 tons, to Hamburg, 20, to Porto Rico, 95, to Montreal, 40, and to New Orleans, bringing the total to 17,352 tons.

APPENDIX E

SHIPPING TO AND FROM THE WEST INDIES, 1754, 1763 AND 1764, DISTINGUISHING ISLANDS AND PORTS ^a

	1754 Tonnage		1763 Tonnage		1764 Tonnage	
	Entered	Cleared	Entered	Cleared	Entered	Cleared
Jamaica	1,025	1,956	695	3,388	1,270	1,880
Antigua	190	790	310	492	635	310
St. Christophers ...	655	780	232	385	534	577
Barbados	385	620	380	325	165	175
Nevis	45	—	b	b	b	b
Anguila	315	—	50	—	260	55
Montserrat	105	105	—	—	—	—
St. Martins	60	—	b	b	b	b
Turk's Island	255	—	b	b	b	b
Cyana	25	—	b	b	b	b
Havana	50	—	1,067	600	90	280
Cape François	30	—	—	—	—	—
Virgin Islands	645	800	25	25	200	185
St. Croix	260	—	50	445	400	630
St. Eustatius	470	45	—	165	145	525
Curaçao	520	665	—	620	820	1,360
Surinam	235	145	15	105	30	55
Honduras	695	—	170	15	970	346
Musquitos	—	—	130	135	66	88
Monte Christi	—	—	—	260	150	170

^a C. O. 5: 1227 and 1228.

^b In 1763 and 1764 the shipping to Nevis, St. Martins, Turks Island, Cyana and other small islands has been lumped together. Entries in 1763 amounted to 1,000 tons and clearances to 547 tons; in 1764 they totalled 1,695 and 1,862 tons respectively.

APPENDIX F

SHIPPING INTO AND OUT OF NEW YORK, BOSTON AND PHILADELPHIA, 1765-1766

	<i>Inward</i>			<i>Outward</i>		
	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Phila- delphia</i>	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Phila- delphia</i>
Great Britain	4,842	7,163	4,455	2,872	5,286	1,830
Ireland	880	80	4,100	2,035	436	4,830
South. Europe	710	2,018	4,230	3,190	1,075	4,455
Br. West Indies ...	3,480	2,475	9,132	4,200	1,835	12,049
For. West Indies ..	4,785	3,820	2,592	4,185	5,971	1,445
Africa	295	—	40	290	275	300
Canada	30	465	6—	125	425	100
Newfoundland	462	912	585	962	1,002	1,975
Nova Scotia	40	2,215	1,045	254	2,115	780
New Hampshire ...	80	1,000	450	—	1,180	370
Massachusetts	80	32,760	4,408	240	38,360	3,925
Connecticut	544	3,280	83	—	3,120	110
Rhode Island	897	540	445	74	300	556
New York	—	210	622	—	165	512
New Jersey	30	—	70	—	—	58
Pennsylvania	95	2,810	—	145	2,493	—
Maryland	—	1,716	366	25	855	1,752
Virginia	40	1,285	837	90	463	880
North Carolina	237	3,034	1,066	130	2,393	1,268
South Carolina	407	400	1,266	325	872	1,173
Georgia	40	100	75	100	85	230
East Florida	25	—	—	10	—	—
West Florida	95	20	175	370	48	105
Bahamas	75	163	405	50	50	317
Bermudas	45	80	425	190	—	242
Total	18,214	66,546	36,872	19,812	69,574	39,487

1766-1767

Gt. Britain	5,267	7,094	11,263	6,824	5,994	8,670
Foreign Ports	5,745	7,190	6,950	7,610	1,684	6,245
Br. West Indies ...	3,625	1,971	11,144	4,548	7,688	13,075
Cont. of N. A.	2,823	8,835	13,099	2,789	10,338	14,122
Total	17,460	25,090	42,456	21,771	25,704	42,112

* Manuscript papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society, notes of Professor Channing and collection entitled "Customs Papers, Imports and Exports 1765-1777."

APPENDIX G

SHIPPING INTO AND OUT OF NEW YORK, BOSTON, PHILADELPHIA AND CHARLESTON, 1768-1772 *

INWARD, 5 JANUARY 1768 TO 5 JANUARY 1769

	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Charleston</i>
Great Britain	7,158	6,946	6,924	18,125
Ireland	1,378	220	1,470	1,010
Southern Europe	1,500	1,871	5,001	2,023
Africa	130	—	—	—
British & For. West Indies ..	6,301	10,811	11,677	8,238
Newfoundland	265	1,140	425	—
Quebec	175	365	45	—
Nova Scotia	285	2,364	1,340	—
New Hampshire	40	281	313	—
Massachusetts Bay	515	—	2,992	753
Connecticut	318	509	120	—
Rhode Island	1,100	114	650	245
New York	—	345	423	385
New Jersey	10	24	—	—
Pennsylvania	315	2,345	—	1,115
Maryland	70	856	145	20
Virginia	440	625	1,208	60
North Carolina	694	2,642	1,242	43
South Carolina	360	395	615	—
Georgia	—	130	270	789
East Florida	190	—	—	850
West Florida	185	—	—	165
Bahamas	204	—	—	355
Bermuda	115	—	110	273
Total Extra Continental	16,476	19,848	25,071	29,396
Total Within Continent	5,371	12,135	9,898	5,053
Total	21,847	31,983	34,970	34,449

* Customs 16: 1.

APPENDIX G—(Continued)

OUTWARDS, 5 JANUARY 1768 TO 5 JANUARY 1769

	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Charleston</i>
Great Britain	5,139	6,428	4,134	15,873
Ireland	2,522	170	3,482	—
Southern Europe	2,360	1,333	7,255	5,515
Africa	35	—	—	—
British & For. West Indies ..	6,981	10,095	12,019	5,808
Newfoundland	1,900	2,068	773	—
Quebec	55	145	155	80
Nova Scotia	195	1,975	880	—
New Hampshire	—	331	253	—
Massachusetts Bay	345	—	2,276	567
Connecticut	70	618	240	—
Rhode Island	1,075	396	—	155
New York	—	380	728	345
New Jersey	—	21	—	—
Pennsylvania	267	1,936	—	525
Maryland	6	1,716	1,365	20
Virginia	932	1,116	1,102	70
North Carolina	705	4,076	1,257	150
South Carolina	305	556	745	—
Georgia	30	305	150	1,020
East Florida	345	—	—	720
West Florida	50	30	30	65
Bahamas	67	—	—	345
Bermudas	172	—	100	293
Totals Extra Continental ...	17,037	18,026	26,890	27,196
Totals Within Continent	6,536	15,672	10,534	4,355
Totals	23,573	33,698	37,424	31,551

APPENDIX G—(Continued)

INWARD, 5 JANUARY 1769 TO 5 JANUARY 1770

	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Charleston</i>
Great Britain	3,785	7,333	5,504	14,551
Ireland	1,435	100	2,995	—
Southern Europe	2,700	2,120	9,685	1,310
Africa	30	2—	—	2,215
British & For. West Indies ..	6,964	10,495	11,726	6,123
Newfoundland	545	998	1,393	200
Quebec	615	950	445	—
Nova Scotia	175	3,961	1,270	127
New Hampshire	—	896	345	—
Massachusetts	1,385	—	3,045	575
Connecticut	4,230	3,240	90	40
Rhode Island	1,646	878	604	457
New York	—	814	254	270
New Jersey	292	40	280	—
Pennsylvania	—	2,479	—	895
Maryland	120	1,370	1,325	60
Virginia	1,068	1,993	1,227	25
North Carolina	828	1,925	770	376
South Carolina	315	335	945	—
Georgia	—	230	275	373
East Florida	260	137	55	649
West Florida	125	—	100	240
Bahamas	42	160	—	245
Bermudas	90	20	—	395
Total Extra Continental	14,918	20,057	29,910	24,199
Total Within Continent	11,959	20,426	12,423	4,927
Total	26,877	40,483	42,333	29,126

APPENDIX G—(Continued)

OUTWARDS, 5 JANUARY 1769 TO 5 JANUARY 1770

	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Charleston</i>
Great Britain	3,955	6,707	4,049	14,681
Ireland	2,515	60	3,170	—
Southern Europe	3,278	1,081	12,040	5,773
Africa	205	495	109	—
British & For. West Indies ..	5,466	8,995	11,114	5,807
Newfoundland	825	1,682	608	120
Quebec	690	520	115	—
Nova Scotia	275	993	480	—
New Hampshire	10	727	320	—
Massachusetts Bay	101	—	3,990	395
Connecticut	4,471	3,181	90	50
Rhode Island	1,714	1,171	748	522
New York	—	1,221	253	285
New Jersey	100	60	—	—
Pennsylvania	388	2,575	—	660
Maryland	190	1,193	690	30
Virginia	861	2,370	932	175
North Carolina	908	2,479	1,127	1,079
South Carolina	310	910	715	—
Georgia	15	245	220	622
East Florida	115	165	80	515
West Florida	305	20	100	15
Bahamas	35	175	—	333
Bermudas	127	20	—	205
Totals Extra Continental ...	15,419	17,338	30,403	26,261
Totals Within Continent ...	11,640	19,707	10,468	5,006
Totals	27,059	37,045	40,871	31,267

APPENDIX G—(Continued)

INWARDS, 5 JANUARY 1770 TO 5 JANUARY 1771

	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Charleston</i>
Great Britain	4,055	6,830	4,705	9,153
Ireland	1,667	—	2,267	440
Southern Europe	3,124	1,640	13,620	2,256
Africa	230	—	—	—
West Indies	8,695	11,088	14,946	9,563
Newfoundland	189	1,275	75	140
Quebec	340	495	180	80
Nova Scotia	100	2,759	830	100
New Hampshire	—	1,335	465	—
Massachusetts	660	—	4,195	870
Connecticut	1,739	3,714	183	20
Rhode Island	1,350	1,195	1,057	445
New York	—	911	552	460
New Jersey	37	—	60	—
Pennsylvania	677	2,405	—	1,360
Maryland	160	938	1,070	35
Virginia	417	1,070	916	70
North Carolina	446	2,175	1,108	468
South Carolina	390	345	637	—
Georgia	65	30	427	495
East Florida	609	—	—	684
West Florida	275	—	30	54
Bahamas	284	110	156	466
Bermudas	148	45	342	395
Total Extra Continental	17,771	19,558	35,538	21,412
Total Within Continent	7,768	18,802	11,951	6,142
Total	25,539	38,360	47,489	27,554

APPENDIX G—(Continued)

OUTWARDS, 5 JANUARY 1770 TO 5 JANUARY 1771

	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Charleston</i>
Great Britain	4,665	5,819	3,208	11,727
Ireland	2,692	—	4,791	—
Southern Europe	2,920	813	10,940	6,291
Africa	98	415	147	—
West Indies	7,005	8,248	13,842	7,374
Newfoundland	1,049	1,708	776	—
Quebec	380	530	230	—
Nova Scotia	210	2,634	855	20
New Hampshire	—	930	485	—
Massachusetts	770	—	3,490	350
Connecticut	1,168	3,709	183	—
Rhode Island	1,315	1,423	835	509
New York	—	919	730	420
New Jersey	—	—	180	—
Pennsylvania	637	3,305	—	670
Maryland	105	1,280	1,176	125
Virginia	608	1,340	1,900	—
North Carolina	282	3,092	1,302	480
South Carolina	770	530	1,342	—
Georgia	—	110	747	458
East Florida	1,160	60	25	384
West Florida	580	—	54	135
Bahamas	144	100	126	690
Bermudas	95	—	75	343
Total Extra Continental	17,380	15,295	32,781	25,392
Total Within Continent	9,273	21,670	14,111	4,584
Total	26,653	36,965	46,892	29,976

APPENDIX G—(Continued)

INWARDS, 5 JANUARY 1771 TO 5 JANUARY 1772

	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Charleston</i>
Great Britain	6,850	7,502	8,157	11,878
Ireland	1,411	—	1,545	310
Southern Europe	1,344	1,055	6,345	2,361
Africa	—	—	—	903
West Indies	8,191	12,155	13,397	8,208
Newfoundland	605	1,665	130	—
Quebec	450	290	70	—
Nova Scotia	90	3,251	535	50
New Hampshire	—	1,085	360	—
Massachusetts	305	—	3,175	975
Connecticut	1,334	2,790	215	—
Rhode Island	1,418	890	705	333
New York	—	385	1,081	1,166
New Jersey	25	30	65	—
Pennsylvania	886	2,345	—	2,077
Maryland	20	1,118	473	95
Virginia	415	1,333	1,366	15
North Carolina	374	2,244	1,598	353
South Carolina	610	437	1,605	—
Georgia	30	170	415	774
East Florida	270	—	100	766
West Florida	100	—	40	115
Bahamas	210	215	208	517
Bermudas	105	148	155	606
Total Extra Continental	17,796	20,712	29,444	23,750
Total Within Continent	7,247	18,708	12,206	7,842
Total	25,043	39,420	41,740	31,592

APPENDIX G—(Continued)

OUTWARDS, 5 JANUARY 1771 TO 5 JANUARY 1772

	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Charleston</i>
Great Britain	4,830	5,750	3,222	15,792
Ireland	2,476	—	3,470	—
Southern Europe	2,029	1,113	7,110	2,882
Africa	115	267	90	30
West Indies	7,708	9,171	13,449	6,131
Newfoundland	1,605	2,275	610	—
Quebec	375	495	320	—
St. John's	50	173	—	—
Nova Scotia	80	2,627	720	—
New Hampshire	—	1,328	295	—
Massachusetts	460	—	3,355	482
Connecticut	547	3,016	310	—
Rhode Island	1,205	776	800	237
New York	—	619	1,011	598
New Jersey	23	30	222	—
Pennsylvania	719	2,485	1,802	1,505
Maryland	10	1,419	2,099	—
Virginia	303	2,058	1,456	15
North Carolina	620	3,698	1,755	929
South Carolina	1,066	1,235	—	—
Georgia	15	100	550	1,109
East Florida	649	—	—	326
West Florida	260	—	75	100
Bahamas	135	320	253	497
Bermudas	153	40	274	398
Total Extra Continental	17,258	16,301	27,341	24,835
Total Within Continent	8,275	22,694	15,688	6,196
Total	25,533	38,995	43,029	31,031

APPENDIX G—(Continued)

INWARDS, 5 JANUARY 1772 TO 5 JANUARY 1773

	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Charleston</i>
Great Britain	6,117	9,325	7,757	10,932
Ireland	915	—	1,125	1,110
Southern Europe	2,480	1,343	8,120	2,565
Africa	—	—	—	2,171
West Indies	8,170	12,469	12,947	6,121
Newfoundland	980	2,227	350	—
Quebec	230	973	—	—
St. Johns	—	285	—	—
Nova Scotia	—	1,888	576	—
New Hampshire	85	803	445	—
Massachusetts	610	—	3,121	500
Connecticut	2,727	2,922	79	25
Rhode Island	2,386	961	887	312
New York	—	1,173	378	601
New Jersey	123	—	—	—
Pennsylvania	857	2,491	—	2,055
Maryland	15	1,654	610	75
Virginia	513	875	1,755	130
North Carolina	1,483	3,369	1,743	566
South Carolina	428	469	1,480	—
Georgia	20	—	526	1,274
East Florida	149	—	70	505
West Florida	90	—	14	20
Bahamas	268	340	247	585
Bermudas	215	70	70	386
Total Extra Continental	17,682	23,137	29,949	22,899
Total Within Continent	11,179	20,496	12,351	7,034
Total	28,861	43,633	42,300	29,933

APPENDIX G—(Continued)

OUTWARDS, 5 JANUARY 1772 TO 5 JANUARY 1773.

	<i>New York</i>	<i>Boston</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Charleston</i>
Great Britain	4,280	6,178	3,123	15,610
Ireland	1,610	170	2,491	—
Southern Europe	2,449	555	8,415	1,774
Africa	260	420	20	290
West Indies	8,076	10,703	15,674	5,749
Newfoundland	2,032	3,730	770	—
Quebec	390	610	—	100
St. Johns	—	140	55	—
Nova Scotia	70	2,187	871	—
New Hampshire	27	1,167	205	—
Massachusetts	1,061	—	3,326	465
Connecticut	2,222	2,833	259	20
Rhode Island	2,197	1,087	622	340
New York	—	1,036	737	468
New Jersey	—	—	55	—
Pennsylvania	389	2,221	—	1,630
Maryland	237	1,975	660	165
Virginia	389	2,110	2,432	70
North Carolina	1,454	4,004	2,036	1,661
South Carolina	863	970	2,099	—
Georgia	20	125	441	1,905
East Florida	135	—	30	526
West Florida	240	—	94	—
Bahamas	88	215	282	452
Bermudas	85	70	125	323
Total Extra Continental	16,675	18,026	29,723	23,423
Total Within Continent	11,899	24,480	15,099	8,125
Total	28,574	42,506	45,822	31,548

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

I. MERCANTILE CORRESPONDENCE AND ACCOUNTS

This material, of which very little has been printed, is of fundamental importance in a study of the organization and conduct of business, because it is the chief source of information concerning business methods, policy and ethics, financial practices and trade relations. Letter-books, since they contain copies of all the letters which were sent out by the merchant, are perhaps the most valuable, but ledgers, journals, waste-books (the books in which the first entry of a purchase or sale was made), invoice-books and even receipt-books may be made to yield supplementary evidence of equal importance particularly in the study of financial methods. Collections of papers, such as the Alexander Papers, provide a less connected account of mercantile transactions, but frequently include business documents such as bills of lading and statements of current accounts which are naturally not to be found in the more formal books. In the search for this material I have found most helpful Greene and Morris' *Guide to the Principal Sources of Early American History (1600-1800) in the City of New York* (New York, 1929).

1. Manuscript Material:

In the New York Historical Society:

William Alexander, Letters.

Accounts, Bills and Receipts, 2 vols. Cited as

A. B. & R.

Stirling Papers.

Evert Bancker, Account Book.

Journal.

Gerard G. Beekman, Letter Book.

Walter & Robert Livingston, Journal.

Ledger.

Waste Book.

Phyn & Ellice, Receipt Book.

Robert Saunders, Letter Book.

Thomas Witter, Account Book.

Receipt Book.

In the New York Public Library:

Bayard-Campbell-Pearsall Collection.

Philip Cuyler, Letter Book, 1755-1760.

Ledger, 1765-1770.

Livingston Letter (a volume of photostats).

John and Stephen Van Cortlandt, Letter Books.

Ledgers.

Journals.

Van Rensselaer-Fort Collection.

In Columbia University:

John Ludlow, Letter Book.

Invoice Book.

Templeton & Stewart Receipt Book.

In the Historical Society of Pennsylvania:

Gratz-Croghan Collection.

Orr, Dunlope & Glenholme, Letter Book.

Thomas Riche, Letter Book.

Daniel Roberdeau, Letter Book.

Thomas Wharton, Letter Book.

In the Library of Congress:

Jamieson Papers.

In the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, The Insurance Book of William and Jacob Walton.

2. Printed Material:

Aspinwall Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 4th series, X.

The Commerce of Rhode Island, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 7th series, IX and X.

The Letter Book of John Watts, New York Historical Society Collections, LXI.

The Lloyd Papers, New York Historical Society Collections, XXXIX, XL. Letters and Diary of John Rowe, ed. Anne Rowe Cunningham (Boston, 1903).

New York Chamber of Commerce, Colonial Records of the New York Chamber of Commerce, 1768-1784; with historical and biographical sketches by John Austin Stevens, Jr. (New York, 1867). The original is in the library of the New York Chamber of Commerce.

II. OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

While general estimates of the value and volume of the trade of the province may be found in the reports of the governors printed in Documents Relating to the Colonial History of New York, the detailed figures necessary to any analysis of commerce must be sought in the Customs House accounts, the Naval Office lists and the reports of British consuls to be found in the Public Record Office in London. The Naval Office Lists, which are complete only for the years 1754 and 1764, indicate not only the tonnage, cargo and origin or destination of the vessel but also the owners. Colonial Office Papers, Treasury and Admiralty Papers, the correspondence of governors and other officials, laws and municipal ordinances also form the most important source of information concerning imperial, provincial and municipal regulation of trade.

I. Manuscript Material:

In the British Public Record Office:

Admiralty Papers: Vols. 3833 to 3837, 3866, Consular Correspondence; Vols. 1321 to 1323, List of Mediterranean Passes; Vols. 87-98, Register of Passes; Vols. 136-139, Register of foreign passes.

Colonial Office Papers: C. O. 5: 1227-1228, Naval Office Lists for the Port of New York; C. O. 388: 95, Consular Reports to the Secretary of State; C. O. 390: 5-9, Customs House Statistics.

Customs House Papers: Customs 3: 51-75, English Customs House Accounts; Imports and Exports: America, 1768-1772; State of Navigation, 1772-1775.

Treasury Papers: Vols. 361, 371, 392, 396, 423, 425-6, 431, 433, 465, 468, 469, 473, 482, 505. Papers relating to the administration of customs, smuggling, reform of custom administration, etc.

Chatham Papers, Bundle 343.

In the New York Public Library:

Chalmers Collection, New York. 4 volumes of notes copied from British state papers and including also holograph letters from outstanding people such as John Watts and Oliver DeLancey.

Loyalist Transcripts: Transcripts of the Manuscript Books and Papers of the Commission of Enquiry into the Losses and Services of the American Loyalists . . . preserved amongst the Audit Office Records in the Public Record Office of England, 1783-1790. New York claimants, Vols. XLI-XLVI.

Stevens, B. F., ed., Facsimiles of Mss. in European Archives regarding America, Vol. XII.

In the Historical Society of Pennsylvania:

Transcripts of documents in the British Public Record Office:

Colonial Office Papers 5: 1257-1271, 1273-1279: Proprieties.

Colonial Office Papers 391: Vols. 1-89: Journal of the Board of Trade.

In the Library of Congress:

Transcripts of Colonial Office Papers 5: 551, 556.

In the Massachusetts Historical Society:

Temple Papers.

2. Printed Material:

Colden, Cadwallader: Letter Books. New York Historical Society Collections, IX, X.

Letters and Papers. *Ibid.*, L-LVI.

English Statutes at Large. Pickering ed. (Cambridge, 1765).

New York (City) Common Council, Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1675-1776, 8 vols. (New York, 1905).

New York (Colony) Colonial Laws of New York from the year 1664 to the Revolution, 5 vols. (Albany, 1894).

New York (Colony, Council) Journal of the Legislative Council of the Colony of New York, 2 vols. (Albany, 1861).

—, Minutes of the Executive Council. Ed. V. H. Palsits, 2 vols. (Albany, 1910).

New York (Colony) General Assembly, Journal of the votes and proceedings of the General Assembly of the colony of New York, 1691-1765, 2 vols. (New York, 1764-66); third volume, 1766-1776 (Albany, 1820).

New York (State), Calendar of Historical Mss. in the office of the secretary of state, Vol. II, English Mss., 1664-1776 (Albany, 1865-66).

—, Calendar of New York Colonial Mss. indorsed land papers; in the office of the secretary of the state of New York; 1643-1803 (Albany, 1864).

—, Documentary History of New York State, E. B. O'Callaghan, Ed., 4 vols. (Albany, 1849).

—, Documents Relating to the Colonial History of New York, E. B. O'Callaghan, Ed., 15 vols. (Albany, 1853-1887).

Wraxall, Peter, Abridgement of Indian Affairs, contained in four folio volumes transacted in the colony of New York from the year 1678 to the year 1751. Ed. C. H. McIlwain (Cambridge, 1915).

III. NEWSPAPERS

- The New York Gazette or Weekly Post Boy* (Parker), 1750-1770.
The New York Gazette (Weyman), 1759-1767.
The New York Mercury (Hugh Gaine), 1752-1775.
The New York Journal (John Holt), 1766-1776.
The New York Gazetteer (Rivington), 1773-1775.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS SOURCE MATERIAL

1. Manuscript Material:

- William Samuel Johnson Papers. In the Connecticut Historical Society.
Kelby, William, Mss. Notes on Trinity Church. In the New York Historical Society.
King's College Matricula. In the Columbiana Collection, Columbia University.
Peters' Mss. In the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
Smith, William, Diary. 4 vols. In the New York Public Library. The diary of an able lawyer and a leader of the popular party, author of the "History of the Late Province of New York." Full of interesting description and comment on the contemporary scene.
Correspondence of John Watts. In the New York Historical Society. Chiefly of the period after 1776, although there are a few letters dated before that year. Non-mercantile, but containing shrewd and interesting comment.

2. Printed Material:

- Adams, John, *The Works of John Adams*, second president of the United States. Ed. C. F. Adams, 10 vols. (Boston, 1850-1856). The Diary is the second volume and is interesting here for the accounts of journeys, particularly that to Philadelphia in 1774, and comments on places and persons.
Birket, James, *Some Cursory Remarks made by James Birket in his voyages to North America, 1750-1751* (New Haven, 1916).
Booth, Benjamin, *A Complete System of Bookkeeping by an improved mode of double entry* (London, 1786). Written by the American partner of the English firm, Pigou & Booth, which was one of the agents of the East India Co. in the tea episode.
British Historical Mss. Commission, *Dartmouth Manuscripts*. Report XIV, part 10.
Copley, John S., *Letters and Papers of John Singleton Copley and Henry Pelham, 1739-1776*. Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, LXXI.

- Defoe, Daniel, *The Complete English Tradesman, in familiar letters: directing him in all the several parts and progressions of trade.* Reprinted from the edition of London 1745 in vols. XVII and XVIII of "*The Novels and Miscellaneous Works of Daniel Defoe*" (Oxford, 1841).
- Franklin, Benjamin, *The Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin.* Ed. John Bigelow, 10 vols. (New York, 1887).
- , *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin.* Ed. Smyth, 10 vols. (New York, 1905).
- Gage, Thomas, *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage.* Ed. C. E. Carter, 2 vols. (New Haven, 1931).
- Hamilton, Alexander, *Hamilton's Itinerarium; being a narrative of a journey from Annapolis, Maryland, through Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Hampshire from May to September, 1744.* Ed. A. B. Hart (St. Louis, Mo., 1907). Amusing descriptions of people and places.
- Johnson, Sir William, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson.* 7 vols. (Albany, 1921-1931).
- Kalm, Peter, *Travels into North America* (London, 1770-71).
- Lees, John, *Journal of J. L. of Quebec, merchant* (Detroit, 1911).
- Long, Edward, *History of Jamaica*, 2 vols. (London, 1774). Useful as comment of an intelligent contemporary on the trade between Jamaica and the North American colonies on the eve of the Revolution. The copy in the British Museum, Additional Ms. 12,404, has manuscript notes of Long inserted between the pages.
- Quincy, Josiah, Jr., "The Diary of Josiah Quincy, Jr.," in the *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, XLIX, pp. 424-481.
- Postlethwayt, Malachi, *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce.* 2 vols. A translation of Savary's *Dictionnaire de Commerce*, adapted and corrected for English usage. Very valuable for comparison of English and colonial practice.
- Smith, William, *History of the Late Province of New York.* 2 vols. New York Historical Society Collections (1829 and 1830).
- Stiles, Ezra, *Extracts from the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, 1755-1794.* Ed. F. B. Dexter (New Haven, 1916).
- Upcott Collection, 2 vols. In the New York Historical Society. A collection of newspaper clippings.

SECONDARY WORKS

- Aitken, William B., *Distinguished Families in America descended from Wilhelmus Beekman and Jan Thomasse Van Dyke* (New York and London, 1912). Genealogies provide useful bits of information concerning particular families, for example, where a younger son established himself in business in the West Indies.

- Atterbury, Catherine G., *The Bayard Family*. Publications of the Order of Colonial Lords of Manors in America, No. 18 (Baltimore, 1928).
- Adler, Simon L., *Money and Money Units in the American Colonies*. Read before the Rochester Historical Society, Jan., 1900.
- Alexander, Samuel D., *Princeton College during the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1872).
- Akagi, Roy H., *The Town Proprietors of the New England Colonies* (Philadelphia, 1924). Useful chapters on land speculation.
- American Philosophical Society, *Transactions*, Vol. I. (Philadelphia, 1771).
- Anon., *The American Gazeteer* (London, 1762). One of the many guides to America done in encyclopedic style, from official records for the most part and frequently containing information which was very much out of date, but giving the English opinion of the colonies.
- Baldwin, S., *Survey of the British Customs, Containing Rates of Merchandize* (London, 1770). A handbook for English merchants giving a digest of the various customs regulations and the laws which provided for both regulations and duties.
- Baldwin, S. E., *American Business Corporations before 1789*. *American Historical Review*, VIII, pp. 449-465.
- Barnes, F. W., *Fur Traders of Early Oswego*. *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association*, XIII, pp. 128-137.
- Barrett, Walter, *Old Merchants of New York*. 6 vols. (New York, 1870). Chatty stories of old New York mostly of a date later than this study.
- Bateson, Mary, *Borough Customs*. Edited for the Selden Society by Mary Bateson (London, 1904-06).
- Bayley, Frank William, *Life and Works of John Singleton Copley* (Boston, 1915). A standard work.
- Becker, Carl Lotus, *The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760-1776* (Madison, Wis., 1909). An indispensable book in the study of provincial New York.
- Beer, George Louis, *British Colonial Policy, 1754-1765* (New York, 1907). Extremely valuable for discussion of imperial regulation of trade.
- Bining, Arthur C., *British Regulation of the Colonial Iron Industry* (Philadelphia, 1933).
- Bishop, James Leander, *History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860* (Philadelphia, 1864). Old but still useful.
- Bolton, Robert, *History of Westchester County*. Third ed., 2 vols. (New York, 1905). Written by an outstanding local historian and containing information not to be found elsewhere concerning Westchester families.

- Boyer, Charles S., *Early Forges and Furnaces in New Jersey* (Philadelphia, 1931).
- Brandon, Woodthorpe, *Treatise on the Customary Law of Foreign Attachment, and the Practice of the Mayor's Court in the City of London Therein* (London, 1861).
- Brown, Abram E., *John Hancock his Book* (Boston, 1898).
- Brymner, Douglas, *Report on Canadian Archives, 1894* (Ottawa, 1894).
- Bullock, C. J., *Essays on the Monetary History of the United States* (New York, 1900).
- Channing, Edward, *The American Board of Customs Commissioners. Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, XLIII.
- , *The Bernard-Barrington Correspondence. Harvard Historical Studies*, XVII.
- , *A History of the United States*. 6 vols. (New York, 1910-1925).
- Clark, Victor S., *History of Manufactures in the United States, 1607-1860* (Washington, D. C., 1916).
- Coke, Daniel Parker, *The Royal Commission on Losses and Services of American Loyalists, 1783 to 1785, being the notes of Daniel Parker Coke, M. P., one of the commissioners during that period*. Ed. H. E. Egerton (Oxford, 1915).
- Columbia University, *General Catalogue for 1912* (New York, 1912).
- Cunningham, William, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*. 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1910-1912).
- Duer, William Alexander, *The Life of William Alexander, Earl of Stirling. Collections of the New Jersey Historical Society*, II (New York, 1847). Not a very satisfactory biography.
- Daly, Charles P., *The Settlement of the Jews in North America* (New York, 1893).
- Davis, J. S., *Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations*. 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1917). The outstanding study on the organization of business in the colonies in the eighteenth century.
- Dexter, Franklin B., *Biographical Sketches of the graduates of Yale College, with annals of the college history*. 6 vols. (New York, 1885-1912).
- Drake, Francis S., *Tea Leaves* (Boston, 1884). An old and famous collections of correspondence concerning the tea shipments of 1773.
- Dunlap, William, *History of the rise and progress of the arts of design in the United States*. Ed. F. W. Bayley and C. E. Goodspeed (Boston, 1918).
- Edwards, George W., *New York as an Eighteenth Century Municipality, 1731-1776* (New York, 1917). Good chapters on municipal regulation of trade.

- Eliason, Adolph O., *Rise of Commercial Banking Institutions in the United States* (Minneapolis, 1901). A little book containing one of the few discussions of banking in the colonial period.
- Flick, Alexander C., *Loyalism in New York during the American Revolution* (New York, 1901). An able and indispensable monograph.
- Foot, Henry Wilder, *Annals of King's chapel* (Boston) from the Puritan age of New England to the present day. 2 vols. (Boston, 1882-96). Includes sketches of prominent members of King's Chapel in the period of the Revolution.
- Giesecke, Albert Anthony, *American Commercial Legislation before 1789* (Philadelphia, 1910).
- Goss, John Dean, *The History of Tariff Administration in the United States from Colonial Times to the McKinley Administrative Bills* (New York, 1911).
- Hamm, Margherita A., *Famous Families of New York* (New York, 1902).
- Hall, Hiland, "New York Land Grants in Vermont." *Vermont Historical Society Collections*, I (1870), pp. 147-159.
- Hill, William, *First Stages of the Tariff Policy of the United States. Publications of the American Economic Association*, VIII.
- Houghton, George W., *Coaches of Colonial New York* (New York, 1890).
- Hickcox, J. H., *A History of the Bills of Credit or Paper Money Issued by New York from 1709-1789* (Albany, 1866). A old work on New York currency.
- Hough, Charles M., *Reports of Cases in the Vice Admiralty of the Province of New York and in the Court of Admiralty in the State of New York, 1715-1788* (New Haven, 1925).
- Huebner, Solomon S., *Marine Insurance* (New York & London, 1920).
- Johnson, Emory R., *et al.*, *History of the Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States*. 2 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1915).
- Jones, Edward Alfred, *American Members of the Inns of Court* (London, 1924).
- Jones, Thomas, *History of New York during the Revolutionary War*. Ed. E. F. DeLancey, 2 vols. (New York, 1879).
- Keep, Austin B., *History of the New York Society Library, with an introductory chapter on libraries in colonial New York, 1698-1776* (New York, 1908).
- Kelby, William, *Notes on American Artists*. New York Historical Society, Jones fund series V; reprint Bulletin, V.
- Kimball, Sidney Fiske, *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic* (New York, 1922).
- Knight, Flügel & Barnes, *Economic History of Europe* (New York, 1928).

- Kraus, Michael, *Intercolonial Aspects of American Culture on the Eve of the Revolution with special reference to the Northern Towns* (New York, 1928).
- Kohler, Max J., "The Jews in Newport," *American Jewish Historical Society Publications*, VI.
- , "Phases of Jewish Life in New York before 1800." *Ibid.*, II and III.
- Lang, Ossian, *History of Freemasonry in State of New York* (New York, 1922).
- Lecky, W. E. H., *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*. 8 vols. (New York, 1878-1890). A famous and standard work offering excellent chapters on life in England during the reigns of George II and George III.
- Levermore, C. H., "The Whigs in Colonial New York." *American Historical Review*, I, pp. 238-250.
- Livingston, E. P., *The Livingstons of Livingston Manor* (New York, 1910). An interesting study of an important family.
- MacBean, William, *Biographical Register of the St. Andrew's Society of the State of New York*. 2 vols. (New York, 1922-25).
- MacPherson, David, *The Annals of Commerce*. 4 vols. (London, 1805). A chronological, year by year, description of the commerce of Europe and America, emphasizing the trade of the British Empire, based in part on official records.
- Magens, Nicholas, *Essay on Insurances* (London, 1755). A mid-eighteenth century English study of marine insurance.
- Marshall, Leon C., *Business Administration* (Chicago, 1921). A modern authority on the conduct of business who discusses the historical development of the specialization of business activity and provides a good basis for comparison of modern and colonial business methods.
- Mason, George Champlin, *Annals of Trinity Church, Newport, R. I., 1698-1821*, 2 vols. (Newport, 1890). Sketches of prominent Newport merchants on the eve of the Revolution.
- Mereness, Newton D., *Travels in the American Colonies* (New York, 1916). Includes Lord Adam Gordon's Journal which has an amusing section on the province contrasting the inhabitants of Albany and New York City.
- Morris, Corbyn, *Essay towards illustrating the science of insurance* (London, 1747).
- Namier, L. B., *England in the Age of the American Revolution* (London, 1930). Interesting and useful; particularly fine chapter showing the role of the merchants trading to North America in Parliament and in the contracts for the care of royal forces during the Seven Years' War.

- New York Genealogical and Biographical Record (New York, 1870—).
Scattered among the volumes are accounts of most of the early New York families some of which give valuable hints concerning the family ramifications.
- Osgood, Herbert Levi, *The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century*. 3 vols. (New York, 1904-07).
- Owen, William, "Narrative of Capt. William Owen, R. N." *New York Public Library Bulletin*, March, 1931.
- Pearse, John B., *Concise History of Iron Manufacture in the American Colonies up to the Revolution and of Pennsylvania until the Present Time* (Philadelphia, 1876).
- Pell, John, "The Saga of Will Gilliland." *New York History*, XIII, pp. 390-403.
- Pennsylvania University, *Biographical Catalogue of the matriculates of the college, together with lists of the members of the college faculty and trustees, officers and recipients of honorary degrees, 1749-1893* (Philadelphia, 1894).
- Perkins, Augustus T., *A Sketch of the Life and a List of some of the Works of John Singleton Copley* (Boston, 1873).
- Phillipovich von Phillipsburg, Eugen, *History of the Bank of England*. Tr. by C. Meredith (Washington, D. C., 1911).
- Phillips, N. T., "The Levy and Seixas Families of Newport and New York." *American Jewish Historical Society Publications*, IV.
- Pitman, Frank W., *Development of the British West Indies* (New Haven, 1917).
- Presbrey, Frank S., *History of Advertising* (New York, 1929).
- Russell, Elmer B., *Review of American Colonial Legislation by the King in Council* (New York, 1915).
- Rutgers University, *Catalogues of Officers and Alumni of Rutgers College (originally Queen's College) in New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1766 to 1916*. Compiled by the Rev. J. H. Raven, D. D. (Trenton, 1916).
- Scharf, John Thomas, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884* (Philadelphia, 1884).
- Schermerhorn, Richard, *The Schermerhorn Genealogy and Family Chronicles* (New York, 1914).
- Schlesinger, Arthur Meier, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution* (New York, 1918). An indispensable study.
- Schuyler, George W., *Colonial New York: Philip Schuyler and his Family*. 2 vols. (New York, 1885).
- Sheffield, Lord (John Baker Holroyd), *Observations on the Commerce of the American states* (London, 1784). Has statistics on the trade of the colonies taken from official documents since apparently mislaid.

- Singleton, Esther, *Social New York under the Georges, 1714-1776* (New York, 1902).
- Smith, Adam, *The Wealth of Nations*. Ed. Edwin Carman, 2 vols. (London, 1925).
- Society of the New York Hospital, *Charter of the Society and Laws relating thereto with the By-laws and Regulations of the Institution and those of the Bloomingdale Asylum for the Insane* (New York, 1833).
- Sombart, Werner, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*, 2 vols. (Leipsic, 1902). The only study dealing directly with the organization and specialization of trade and industry in Europe in the eighteenth century, and unfortunately untranslated.
- Spencer, C. W., "The Land System of Colonial New York." *New York State Historical Society Proceedings*, XVI, pp. 150-164.
- Stevens, John A., *Progress of New York in a Century* (New York, 1876).
- , "Physical Evolution of New York City." *American Historical Magazine*, II, pp. 24-43, 92-128, 173-186, 242-260.
- Stevens, Wayne E., *The Northwest Fur Trade, 1763-1800* (Urbana, Ill., 1928).
- Stokes, Isaac Newton Phelps, *Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909*. 6 vols. (New York, 1915-28).
- Valentine, David Thomas, *Manual of the Corporation of the City of New York* (New York, 1842-1870).
- Villard, Oswald Garrison, "Early History of Wall Street," in *Historic New York* (New York, 1899).
- Vogt, Paul L., *The Sugar Refining Industry in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1906). The first dozen pages treat the beginning of sugar refining in New York.
- Wallace, David D., *The Life of Henry Laurens, with a sketch of the life of Lt. Col. John Laurens* (New York and London, 1915). Includes generous quotations from the mercantile papers of Henry Laurens which may be supplemented by those reprinted during 1928 in the *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Record*.
- Walpole, Horace, *Memoires of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George II*. 2 vols. (London, 1822). Gossipy bits concerning a few important people, but not very useful for this study.
- Warren, Charles, *A History of the American Bar* (Boston, 1911).
- Weber, Max, *General Economic History*. Tr. by F. H. Knight (London, 1927). Draws heavily on Sombart and is the nearest thing to a translation in English.
- Weeden, William B., *Economic and Social History of New England, 1620-1789*. 2 vols. (Boston & New York, 1890).
- , "The Early African Slave Trade in New England," *American Antiquarian Society Proceedings*, new series, V, pp. 107-128.

- Westergaard, Waldemar, *The Danish West Indies, 1711-1917* (New York, 1917). Chiefly concerned with the Danish West Indies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
- Whitson, Agnes M., "The Outlook of the Continental Colonies on the British West Indies, 1760-1775." *Political Science Quarterly*, XLV, pp. 56-86. An interesting and stimulating article.
- Wilson, James G., *Memorial History of New York City*. 4 vols. (New York, 1892). A coöperative work, each chapter written by an authority in the field. Especially good are the chapters by John Austin Stevens on New York on the eve of the Revolution and on the Commerce of New York, and that by Bernard Fernow on Coins and Currency.
- Wynne, J. H., *a General History of the British Empire in America* (London, 1770).

INDEX

A

- Abeels, 136, 138, 141, 151
 Abeel, John, 61
 Abeel & Neils, 93
 Account current, 97
 Acts of trade, 245, 318, 317, 332
 Act of 1764, 321, 332
 Adams, John, 33, 44, 217, 339, 349
 Admiralty Court, 274, 328, 273
 Adolphus, Isaac, 224, 226, 228, 334
 Adventures, 91
 Advertising, 83 *et seq.*
 Advices, 86
 Africa, 92. *See* Trade, with Africa
 Agent, 60, 70, 76, 187
 Alexander, James, 232
 Alexander, Mrs. Mary, 15
 Alexander, William, "Lord Stirling", sketch of, 44-46; English stocks, 127, 128; founder of N.Y. Soc. Library, 35; mbr. of Am. Philos. Soc., 36; iron mines, 89, 149; land speculation, 137, 145; partnership with Livingston, 51, 56; provincial war contracts, 295 *et seq.*; mentioned, 23, 41, 121, 209, 280, 290
 Allen, Chief Justice William, 42, 106, 201, 227
 Alsop, John, 23, 225, 326, 338, 348, 349
 Alsop, Richard, 220
 Ancram Iron Works, 149
 American Philosophical Society, 36
 Amherst, Gen. Sir Jeffery, 263, 274
 Antigua, 122
 Apprentice, 52
 Apthorp, Charles, Sr., 211, 218, 293 *et seq.*
 Apthorp, Charles Ward, 24, 293, 34, 36, 39, 41, 115, 143, 218-229, 294, 351

- Arbitration, 94
 Assize of victuals, 282
 Astin, Thomas, 117
 Atcheson & Thompson, 52
 Auction, 92, 93. *See* Vendue

B

- Bache, Theophylacte, 13, 52, 121, 262, 338, 339, 349
 Baker, Richard, 292
 Baker, Sir William, 92, 129, 292, 323
 Bancker, Christopher Bancker, 132, 137
 Bancker, Evert, 54, 50, 96, 137, 180
 Bancker, Richard, 60
 Banking, 67, 114, 115
 Bankruptcy, 122 *et seq.*, 323
 Barbados, 90, 91, 191
 Barter, 64, 91, 103, 104
 Barré, Isaac, 43, 261, 310
 Bayard, Nicholas, 12, 23
 Bayard, William, credit in England, 115; lawsuit, 120; land holding, 134; illicit trade, 263; agent for paymaster, 298; mbr. Council, 41; mbr. Stamp Act Congress, 325; Loyalist, 348, 350; mentioned 19, 23, 27, 29, 117
 Beekman, David, 196
 Beekman, Gerard G., general commissioner, 60, 69, 72; agent for R. I., 296; bills of exchange, 112, 113; business methods, 77, 78, debts, 122; flags of truce, 309; hard times, 290; insurance, 161; business relations, 229, 238, 240; merchantable goods, 80, 81; on Joseph Mico, 306; scarcity of money, 333; social position, 12; mentioned, 31, 68, 70, 90, 91, 117, 121, 220, 225

- Beekman, William, 181, 186
 Bernard, Governor, of Mass., 339
 Bills of exchange, 111, 112, 113.
See Exchange
 Bolting Act, 279
 Bond, 130-132
 Bookkeeping, 95-97
 Booth, Benjamin, 97, 188, 225, 346, 351
 Boston, 91, 169
 Boston Port Bill, 347
 Bounties, 288
 Branch businesses, 221
 Brewing, 148
 Broker, 68
 Buchanan, Thomas, 51, 351
 Buchanan, Walter, 51
 Business connections, intercolonial, 218, 219 *et seq.*, 228, 240; with Gt. Britain, 177, 184 *et seq.*; with West Indies, 194 *et seq.*
 Business cycle, 289

C

- Canada, 310
 Capital investment, 53
 Chamber of Commerce, 73-75, 95, 105, 106, 154, 230, 285, 335
 Charleston, 166
 Clarke, Gedney, 15, 23, 117, 129
 Clarke, Gedney, Jr., 194
 Clay, Midgely & Co., 116
 Clubs, 31
 Colborn & Barrell, 119
 Colden, Alexander, 272, 273
 Colden, Cadwallader, on admiralty courts, 274; on illicit trade, 254, 262, 264, 267, 268, 269, 271, 275; on currency situation, 104; on Stamp Act riots, 326, 348; land grants, 140; N. Y. claim to Vermont, 139; mentioned, 12, 16, 19, 40, 43, 46, 144, 272, 288, 308, 322
 Colden, Richard, 272-3
 Colebrook, Nesbitt, Thomlinson & Hanbury, 293
 Colebrook, George, 292
 Colebrook, Sir James, 292-293
 College education, 34
 Commission merchant, 68, 77
 Committee of Correspondence, 324
 Committee of 51, 348
 Committee of inspection, 348
 Competition with other colonies, 229 *et seq.*

- Connecticut, 122, 166, 169, 255
 Consignment trading, 88-90, 179
 Continental Congress of 1774, 348
 Copley, John Singleton, 25, 28, 143
 Corporation, 48 *et seq.*
 Country-buying, 78
 Court party, 39, 40
 Credit, 99, 101-103, 179, 318
 Croghan, George, 144
 Crommelin, Charles, 199
 Crommelin, Daniel & Son, 199
 Crommelin, Richard, 115
 Crommelin, Robert, 121, 308
 Cruger family, 22, 51, 52, 153, 338, 349
 Cruger & Gouverneur, 92
 Cruger, Henry, 13, 34, 39, 77, 132, 185
 Cruger, Henry, Jr., 123, 186, 326
 Cruger, John, 13, 34, 297, 325, 326, 348
 Cruger, John Harris, 13, 39, 195, 224, 339, 350
 Cruger, Nicholas, 13, 196
 Cruger, Robinson & Livingston, 300
 Cruger, Telemon, 13, 196, 138
 Cunningham, Waddell, 265, 303
 Curaçao, 122, 166, 191, 192, 195, 251, 254
 Currency Act of 1764, 321, 335
 Currency. *See* Money
 Curtenius, Peter T., 150, 339, 349
 Customs, establishment, 271; regulations, 245 *et seq.*
 Cuyler, Cornelius, 237, 301
 Cuyler family, 12, 13, 14, 16, 24, 34, 136
 Cuyler, Henry, 64, 225, 297
 Cuyler, John, 196, 296
 Cuyler, Philip, business practices, 59, 116, 102, 180-183, 185, 224, 300; intercolonial trade, 201, 211, 233, 238, 241; illicit trade, 222, 258-263, 275; flag-trading, 266; privateering, 307; mentioned, 28, 99, 219, 303
 Cuyler, Telemon, 93, 225

D

- Damage, 94
 Debts, 119 *et seq.*, 323 *et seq.*, 116 *et seq.*
 DeDageroed, 306-307
 Deflation, 317

DeLancey family, 11, 12, 14, 40
 DeLancey, James, 24, 41, 40, 291, 326
 DeLancey, Oliver, partnership, 51;
 land speculation, 134, 137, 144;
 buyer of municipal bonds, 132;
 war contracts, 292, 295, 299;
 political activities, 41, 36, 39,
 351; mentioned 17, 18, 19, 34, 42,
 323
 Depression, 290, 313
 Desbrosses, Elias, 185, 257, 349
 Devonshire, Reeve & Lloyd, 181
 et seq.
 Distilling, 148-149, 270
 Dry goods, 60 *et seq.*
 Duane, James, 24, 41, 326
 Dunmore, Lord, 141, 144
 Duyckinck, Gerardus, 62, 85, 225

E

Elliot, Andrew, 272, 337
 Erving, John, 211, 295
 Exchange, 108, 109, 313, 314, 316,
 344, 347
 Expedition against Niagara, 295
 Exports, 167-172, 316, 343, and
 Appendix B

F

Factor, 68, 69, 76, 89, 67, 177, 179,
 194
 Financial policy, 95
 Flags of truce, 266, 308-309
 Flax-seed trade, 166, 169, 174. *See*
 Trade, with Ireland; with Con-
 necticut
 Flour, 171-172, 147, 280
 Fluyder, Sir Samuel, 293
 Folliot, George, 53, 132, 304, 350,
 351
 Foreign attachment procedure, 120-
 121
 Forsey, Thomas & Benjamin, 303
 Forsey, Thomas, 188
 Forsey *vs.* Cunningham, 337
 Fowler, Samuel, 78, 290
 Franklin, Benjamin, 13, 84, 109
 Franklin, Walter, 22, 51, 52, 140,
 141, 153, 338, 339, 349
 Franks, David, 18, 224
 Franks, Jacob, 18, 185, 186
 Franks, Moses, 113, 116, 128, 129,
 185, 186, 292, 299, 327, 329
 Fraud, 94
 Freight, 66

Freemasons, 37
 French and Indian War, 291; war
 contracts, 291-300
 Fur trade, 164, 167, 232-237, 310

G

Gage, General, 327, 331, 337
 Gilliland, William, 60, 147
 Glover, John J., 187
 Golden Hill Affair, 341, 348
 Gouverneur family, 156, 350
 Gouverneur, Isaac, 196
 Gouverneur, Nicholas, 151, 196
 Gratz, Bernard & Michael, 224,
 226-228, 334
 Great Britain, trade with, 172 *et*
 seq., Appendix B, C, D, F, G
 Greg, Cunningham & Co., 51, 52,
 64, 93, 121, 184, 188, 224, 225
 Grenville legislation, 318
 Groceries, 61
 Guiana, 165
 Guinea Company, 252

H

Hake, Samuel, 53, 132, 142, 351
 Hamburg, trade with, 166, 198
 Hamilton, Dr. Alexander, 31, 32
 Hancock, Thomas, 125, 159
 Handicrafts, 146
 Hardy, Governor, 255, 260, 271
 Harison, George, 23, 37, 148
 Hasenclever, Peter, 151, 152
 Hawxhurst, William, 87, 152
 Hodshon, John, 199
 Holland, 166, 197, 255 *et seq.*
 Honduras, 165, 192
 Hutchinson, Thomas, 159, 343

I

Illicit Trade, 166, 222, 250-276, 308,
 315, 344, 345
 Imports, 172 *et seq.*, 312, 316, 340,
 343 and Appendix B
 Independence, threat of, 329
 Indebtedness of New Yorkers to
 British merchants, 180, 182
 Indigo, 169
 Inspection of exports, 82; of
 lumber, 281; of meat, 280; of
 flour
 Intraprovincial Trade, 232 *et seq.*
 Ireland, 166, 174
 Iron, exports of, 170-171; manu-
 facturing, 149-152
 Italy, 166

J

- Jamaica, 190
 Jauncey, James, 23, 304, 326, 351
 Jay, John, 14
 Jenkins, Robert, 55, 221
 Jewish merchants, 17 *et seq.*
 Johnson, Sir William, 40, 139, 234
 Johnson, William Samuel, 35, 119, 121

K

- Kalm, Peter, 18
 Kelly, William, 345, 346
 Kennedy, Archibald, 22, 273
 Keteltas, Peter, 151, 350
 Kilby, Christopher, 292
 Kings' College, 33
 Kortright, Cornelius, 196
 Kortright, Lawrence, 52, 141, 225, 262, 265, 304, 305, 350

L

- Laight, Edward, 151, 338, 339
 Land Speculation, 135 *et seq.*
 Lansingh, Myndert, 196, 237
 Lascelles & Maxwell, 116, 118, 129
 Laurens, Henry, 125
 Law, Richard, 121
 Leacocke, Godfrey, 183
 Lechmere, Nicholas, 222, 263
 Leeward Islands, 91, 191
 Legal tender, 105, 106, 333
 Letter of credit, 92
 Levy, Hayman, 18, 237, 302, 336
 Levy, Lyons & Co., 18
 Levy, Salomon & Co., 18
 141, 148, 325, 348, 350
 Lisenard, Leonard, 23, 36, 137,
 141, 148, 325, 348, 350
 Livingston family, 11, 136, 34
 Livingston & Alexander, 54, 55,
 121, 295 *et seq.*
 Livingston, Duncan, Rutherford &
 Phyn, 236
 Livingston, Peter R., 44, 55, 221,
 262, 264, 333
 Livingston, Peter Van Brugh, busi-
 ness practices, 45, 51, 56, 195,
 209, 298; land holding, 137, 138,
 144; sugar refining, 148; war
 contracts, 295 *et seq.*; mentioned,
 36
 Livingston, Philip, sketch of, 44
et seq., 34-36; business, 51; land
 holdings, 134; illicit trade, 304,

- 308; political activities, 41, 325,
 327, 335, 348, 349, 351; men-
 tioned, 14, 24, 220
 Livingston, Robert R., 12, 22, 35,
 37, 325, 326, 348
 Livingston, Robert Cambridge, 24,
 35, 111, 224
 Livingston, Walter & Robert, 51,
 55, 56, 59, 96, 98, 185, 241
 Livingston, William, 14, 35, 41, 326
 Lloyd family, 220
 Lloyd, Henry, 195, 211, 291
 Lloyd, John, 130, 222, 223, 257, 260
 Lloyd, William, 54, 194
 Logwood, 311
 Lopez, Aaron, 213, 219
 Lott, Abraham, 34, 36, 136, 138,
 225, 344, 345
 Low, Cornelius, 221
 Low, Isaac, 132, 287, 338, 346, 339,
 348, 349, 351
 Loyalist Party, 348 *et seq.*
 Ludlow, Gabriel, 199
 Ludlow, John, 54, 55, 96, 98, 113,
 121, 241, 257, 290
 Ludlow William, 55, 257
 Lumber mills, 147, 165

M

- MacDougall, Alexander, 341
 Maer, Abraham, 89, 117
 Mahogany, 167
 Malbone, Evan and Francis, 161
 Manufacturing, 145 *et seq.*; regu-
 lation of, 230 *et seq.*
 Marine insurance, 153 *et seq.*, 312
 Marketing, 76 *et seq.*, 83
 Maryland, 208
 McEvers, Charles, 338, 339, 349
 McEvers, James, 24, 30, 119, 132,
 325
 Mediterranean passes, 200
 Merchandizing, 67
 Merchant, definition of, 19, 58;
 functions of, 66; education of,
 34-35; financial standing of, 16,
 19; intellectual interests of, 33,
 35, 36; philanthropic interests of,
 36, 37; political position of, 37-
 42; social activities, 30-33; social
 position of, 11 *et seq.*, 18-30
 Merchantable goods, 80, 81, 94
 Merchant's Exchange, 72, 73
 Middleman, 67

Mico, Joseph, 181, 306
 Molasses Act of 1733, 255, 319
 Mobile, 90
 Monckton, General Sir Robert, 32,
 43, 136, 321, 323, 325, 329, 331,
 347
 Money 104 *et seq.*; paper money,
 107 *et seq.*, 321-322, 332, 342,
 343; specie, 104-106; scarcity of,
 314, 317, 318, 322, 323, 333-336;
 "New Jersey" and "Pennsyl-
 vania" money, 110 *et seq.*
 Monte Christi, 192, 261
 Montreal, 90
 Montserrat, 91
 Moore, Sir Henry, 106, 141, 332,
 336, 337, 349
 Moore & Lynsen, 93
 Morris, Roger, 26, 39
 Morris, Lewis, 274, 295
 Mortier, Abraham, 23, 298
 Mosquito Coast, 192
 Municipal bonds, 132
 Murray, Robert, 24, 51, 52, 155,
 338, 339
 Mutiny Act, 333, 336

N

Napier, James, 42, 43, 139, 140, 267
 Naval stores, 168
 Navigation Acts, 251. *See* Acts of
 Trade
 Neate, Pigou & Booth, 98
 Neilson, William, 189, 286, 349,
 338
 Nesbitt, Arnold, 292, 293
 deNeufville, John, & Son, 199, 256,
 257
 New England, 122, 169, 207, 210
 Newfoundland, 210
 New Jersey, 166, 169, 215-217
 New Orleans, 90
 Newport, 213, 258
 New York Air Furnace Company,
 150
 New York Insurance Office, 154
 New York Society Library, 35
 Nobel, Abel, 150
 Non-importation association, 326,
 335, 338, 349, 342
 O
 Old Insurance Office, 154
 Orr, Dunlope & Glenholme, 188,
 224, 263
 Otis, James, 211

P

Paper Money Act, 321, 333
 Partnerships, 50-56, 221
 Peach & Pierce, 115
 Peach, Samuel, 186
 Perry, Hays & Sherbrooke, 187
 Pearlash, 165, 171
 Petition of Nov. 1766, 331, 332
 Petition of 1768, 337
 Philadelphia, 223-228, 255
 Phyn & Ellice, 236; Phyn, Elice &
 Inglis, 236
 Pigou & Booth, 344
 Pitt, William, 21, 274, 332
 Popular party, 40
 Portugal, 166
 Potash, 165, 171, 317
 Prices, 100, 283, 312, 316, 317, 322,
 330, 341, 347
 Privateering, 303-307
 Profits, 98, 100, 300
 Prosperity, 312
 Providence, 213
 Provosts, 136, 137, 141
 Provost, John, 280
 Purchase at a distance, 78

Q

Quincy, Josiah, Jr., 29

R

Rebates, 94
 Regulation of trade, by Chamber
 of Commerce, 285 *et seq.*; by
 Common Council, 281; of flour
 manufacture, 230; by imperial
 government, 245-250; of Indian
 trade, 233; of manufactures,
 279; of petty business, 284; by
 the provincial government, 276
et seq.
 Remsen, John, 196
 Remsen, Henry, Jr., 338, 339, 349
 Remsen, Rem, 350
 Report on the Port of New York,
 269
 Resolutions of 1768, 337
 Restraining Act, 338
 Retailer, 58 *et seq.*
 Rhode Island, 91, 212, 169
 Rice, 168
 Richards & Coddington, 258
 Riche, Thomas, 27, 223, 225, 267
 Riddell, 70, 208
 Roberdeau, Daniel, 226

Robinson, Beverly, 134, 135, 295
 Roosevelt family, 14, 34, 350
 Roosevelt, Jacobus, 146
 Rotterdam, 166, 198
 Rowe, John, 125, 211
 Rule of 1756, 306

S

St. Andrew's Society, 36
 St. Augustine, 239
 St. Croix, 191
 St. David's Society, 36
 St. Eustatius, 251, 254
 St. George's Society, 36
 St. Patrick's Society, 36
 St. Thomas, 191, 251, 254
 Sample system, 82
 Schermerhorn family, 24, 64, 65, 210
 Schuyler, Myndert, 237
 Scotland, 174
 Scott, John Morin, 23, 35, 41, 326
 Sears, Isaac, 349, 339, 350
 Sharpe, Richard, 15, 31, 137, 150, 154
 Sheffield, Lord, 204
 Sherbrooke, Miles, 187, 351
 Ship-building, 65, 146, 165
 Shipping, 65, 175, 311
 Shirley, General William, 45, 55, 295
 Simson, Sampson, 117
 Single-handed business, 57
 Slave trade, 166, 202, 276
 Smith, William, Jr., 35, 39, 41, 189, 275, 313, 326, 345
 Smuggling: *see* Illicit trade
 Society of the New York Hospital, 36
 Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Agriculture & Oeconomy, 146, 331, 334
 Sons of Liberty, 325, 327, 331, 341, 346
 South Carolina, 208
 Spain, 166
 Specialization, 58 *et seq.*, 61, 63, 64, 174
 Specie: *see* Money
 Stamp Act, 324-331, 348
 Standardization, 79, 80
 Sterling, Earl of: *see* William Alexander

Stocks, English, 127-129; "funds", "annuities", 128
 Stuyvesant, Nicholas & Co., 93
 Sugar refining, 147-148, 165, 168
 Sugar Act, 319, 320, 322, 336, 348
 Surinam, 254

T

Tariffs, provincial, 231, 246, 276
 Tea Act of 1773, 344, 345, 347
 Tea Party, Boston, 345
 Templeton, Oliver, 16
 Templeton & Stewart, 16, 93
 Thomlinson & Hanbury, 293
 Townshend Acts, 335, 336, 342, 348
 Trade: with Africa, 166, 202; with Albany, 237 *et seq.*; with Amsterdam, 166, 198, 199; with the Baltic, 166, 198; with Boston, 212; with the Carolinas, 166, 168, 169, 209, 210; with the Caribbean, 189, 190, 193; with Charleston, 209-210; coastwise trade, 243; with Connecticut, 213-216; with Dutch and Danish neutral ports, 191, 196; with East & West Florida, 239; with Gt. Britain, 165, 167 *et seq.*; with Holland, 166, 197; with the Indians, 233 *et seq.*; with Ireland, 166, 174; with Massachusetts, 211; with New Jersey, 128, 217; with Nova Scotia, 238; with Philadelphia, 223-229; with Rhode Island, 212-213; with Scotland, 174; with southern colonies, 208; with southern Europe and the Wine Islands, 166, 200, 201; compared with other colonial ports, 204; total value of trade, 202; with the West Indies, 165-168
 Treasury Notes of Mass., 132
 Trecothick, Barlow, 219, 293
 Trend of affairs, 289 *et seq.*
 Tryon, Governor, 141, 142, 203, 271
 Turnover, 98

U

Unemployment, 334
 United Company of New Jersey, 217
 United Whaling Company, 49
 United Whale Fishery Company, 288

V

- Van Cortlandt, Augustus, 22, 138
 Van Cortlandt, John, business practices, 59, 60, 72, 77, 79, 88, 89, 90, 96, 98, 99, 102, 116, 122; extent of trade, 91, 92, 194, 208-210, 223, 241; land holdings, 134, 137, 138; scarcity of money, 318, 336; severity of customs regulations, 319; Stamp Act, 329; Sugar Act, 321, 322; sugar refining, 148, 350; mentioned, 29, 11
 Van Dam, Anthony, 154, 286
 Vander Heyden, David, 238
 Vander Heyden, Dirck, 181, 186
 Van Horne, David, 22, 211, 326, 350
 Van Ranst, Bowen &, 196
 Van Ranst, Luke, 350
 Van Rannelsaer, Stephen, 14
 Van Zandt, Jacobus, 141, 223, 225, 267
 Vendue houses, 86, 92. *See* Auction
 Verplanck, Gulian, 200, 211, 338, 349
 Verplanck, Samuel, 339
 Vesuvius Furnace, 151
 Virginia, 122, 208

W

- Waddell, John, 183, 223, 241, 257, 258, 259
 Waddell, Robert Ross, 188, 351
 Wallace, Alexander, 351, 224
 Wallace, Hugh, 16, 19, 36, 39, 41, 51, 52, 61, 131, 224, 351
 Walton, Gerard, 138
 Walton, Jacob, 24, 51, 138, 346
 Walton, Thomas, 138
 Walton, William, 30, 30, 40, 41, 51, 52, 64, 65, 89, 138, 141, 338, 349, 350
 Wanton, Joseph, 258
 War business, 300 *et seq.*

War contracts, 291-299

- Watts, John, sketch of, 43 *et seq.*; business practices, 51, 70, 78, 79, 81, 92, 98, 117, 118, 119, 207; extent of trade, 115, 116, 122, 194, 208, 224, 241; personal fortune, 19; investments, 127, 128, 129, 132; war contracts, 292, 294, 299; political activities, 39, 41, 42, 44; on education, 35; on fur trade, 310-311; on illicit trade, 261, 267, 275, 276; on enforcement of Acts of trade, 319; on land speculation, 139; on prosperity in 1759, 313; opposition to Paper Money Act, 321; opposition to Stamp Act, 327, 329, 330, 331; opposition to Townshend Acts, 335; reaction to Boston Port Bill, 347; scarcity of money, 106, 324, 318; mentioned, 22, 24, 36, 40, 227, 351
 Wendell, Abraham, 218
 West Indies, 165, 166 *et seq.*, 311, 192
 West India merchants, 63
 Wharton, Joseph, 183, 223, 224, 225, 226, 259
 Wharton, Thomas, 258, 346
 Wheelwright, Nathaniel, 318
 Whigs, 349. *See* Popular party
 White, Henry, 16, 22, 34, 36, 39, 41, 134, 351; investment 132, 136, 140, 225; navy contract, 294; agent for East India Co., 344
 Wholesaler, 58
 "Wilkes of America", 341
 Willcocks, John, 118
 Williams, Collector Charles, 269, 272, 276
 Windward Islands, 91
 Wraxall, Peter, 233
 Wright, William, 110
 .
 Y
 Young, Hamilton, 188, 351

V I T A

VIRGINIA DRAPER HARRINGTON was born in New York City on December 15, 1903. After a preparatory education in the city schools, she entered Barnard College from which she was graduated with the degree of A. B. in 1924. Upon graduation she began graduate work in history at Columbia University, and received her A. M. in 1925. In 1925-26 she taught in the Mt. Holly High School at Mt. Holly, N. J., and in 1926-27 was substitute instructor of history at Hunter College, New York City. She returned to Columbia in the fall of 1927 to continue study toward the Ph. D. In 1928-29 she was Honorary Fellow of Columbia University, and in 1929 went abroad to do research in the British archives in London. From 1930 to 1932 she taught at the Fieldston-Ethical Culture School, New York. Since 1932 she has been tutor and instructor of history at Brooklyn College at the College of the City of New York. She has published "New York and the Embargo of 1807," *Journal of the New York State Historical Association*, 1927; "The Place of the Merchant in Provincial Life," *New York History*, 1932; "The Colonial Merchant's Ledger," *History of the State of New York*, ed. Alexander C. Flick, vol. II, chap. 8 (New York, 1933); and jointly with Professor Evarts B. Greene, *American Population before the Federal Census of 1790* (New York, 1932).