

VALLEY OF INDUSTRY: DEVELOPING A REGIONAL ECONOMY IN
THE POST JEFFERSON'S EMBARGO OHIO VALLEY

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by

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VALLEY OF INDUSTRY: DEVELOPING A REGIONAL ECONOMY IN THE POST
JEFFERSON'S EMBARGO OHIO VALLEY

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To my parents, George and Mandy Lewis. You never gave up on me and none of my achievements would have been possible without your support.

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INTRODUCTION

During the early morning hours of May 28, 1754, a company of men from the Virginia Militia under the command of a young lieutenant colonel named George Washington marched through the darkness, rain, and thick brush towards a French encampment near present day Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Sometime near daybreak, accompanied by a small number of Mingo warriors led by the Half-King Tanaghrisson, the company approached their target. Washington expected to find a large French force capable of forcing the British from the Ohio Valley. Instead, Washington found a detachment of French soldiers much smaller than he had anticipated and in a general state of unpreparedness not commensurate with a force ready to strike. As the French soldiers emerged groggy and half asleep from their bark lean-tos, they discovered the British and Indian presence and went for their weapons. Washington ordered his troops to fire and finding themselves outnumbered and outgunned, the Frenchmen soon surrendered. As the commander of the French troops, Joseph Coulon de Villiers de Jumonville, lay bleeding and pleading for Washington to believe that he had not planned to attack but merely warn the Englishmen to leave the Ohio Valley, the Mingo Half-King Tanaghrisson approached the fallen Frenchmen. He looked down upon Jumonville and proclaimed “Thou art not dead, my father,” then proceeded to shatter his cranium with a hatchet and wash his hands with the Frenchmen’s brains. This affair is often called the Battle of Jumonville and it marked the start of the French and Indian War.¹

¹ George Washington, *The Diaries of George Washington, Vol. I, 1748-1765*, ed. Donald Jackson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1976), 194-196; John Shaw, “Affidavit of Fred Shaw,” in *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765*, ed. William L.

The French and Indian War, which evolved into a worldwide conflict known as the Seven Year's War, was at its core a battle for the resources of the Ohio Valley. Both the British and the French wanted what nature had placed within the valley and were prepared to kill in order to get it. The preceding story was dramatic and brutal and provides an entry point to discuss the value European powers placed on gaining and maintaining control of the Ohio Valley and its resources. But, it did not mark the beginning or the end of the story. In reality the battle for the resources of the Ohio Valley was actually more subtle than a volley of musket fire against a detachment of unsuspecting French soldiers or a cranium smashing swing of a hatchet by a renegade Mingo Warrior. It is instead a story of economic control maintained through the extraction and manufacture of natural resources such as agricultural produce, timber, mineral deposits and animal skins and furs that went beyond guns and hatchets and even colonial control. The whole story can be found in examination of a colonial economy that existed even after colonial rule ended.

The powers of Europe coveted control of the Ohio Valley at first because of the fur trade and later because of its agricultural produce and mineral deposits. Therefore, the battle for the resources of the Ohio Valley started as a quest for fur. According to historian Eric Jay Dolin, 'the fur trade determined the course of empire' as North America became a battleground where European powers waged war for the right to kill millions of animals for their fur. By the mid-eighteenth century, the Ohio Valley had become the main field of battle for North American fur and the French and British constituted the primary combatants. Both nations viewed sovereignty over the Ohio

McDowell Jr. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), 4-5; Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 5-7.

Valley and its natural resources as vital to maintaining control of their North American empires.²

The struggle for the natural resources of the Ohio Valley fits into the mercantilist and imperialist world views of Britain and France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They wanted to establish colonies and extract their natural resources for the home economy. Resources would be taken from the edge or fringes of its empire to enhance the wealth and power of its center. Historian Eric Hindraker calls this relationship “empires of commerce.” In a similar vein, historians John J. McCusker and Russell Menard have posited that the relationship between mother country and colony blurred economic boundaries and created a situation where the colonies’ economic identity was nearly inseparable from that of the colonizer. The work of McCusker and Menard builds upon that of nineteenth century English philosopher and political economist John Stuart Mill who defined colonies as being “outlying agricultural or manufacturing establishments belonging to a larger community” and argued that trade between colony and mother country “is hardly to be considered as external trade, but more resembles the traffic between town and country.” Colonial America and more importantly to this study the Ohio Valley, was as a possession of larger and more powerful nations and devoid of its own economic identity. The economic fate of the Ohio Valley would be determined by whatever nation won the battle over its resources.³

² Eric Jay Dolan, *Fur, Fortune and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), XV-XVII and 109-112.

³ Eric Hindraker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-2; John J. McCusker & Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British North America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 5-9; John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909), 685-686.

The struggle that took place in the Ohio Valley over its natural resources can be viewed almost entirely in commercial and economic terms. Britain and France vied for natural resources which could be manufactured into finished goods in factories at home and exported to markets they controlled abroad. In this context, the battle for the Ohio Valley did not begin with the Mingo Half-King's hatchet nor did it end with the signing of the Treaty of Paris which ended the French and Indian War and expelled the French from most of North America or the end of British colonial control of America at the conclusion of the American Revolution. From the moment the first white man stepped foot in the Ohio Valley, Europeans looked for ways to use its natural resources to their advantage and the end of European occupation and political control did not spell the end of economic control as the post-colonial economy of the United States mirrored its colonial economy.

Even though the Ohio Valley constituted a battleground over natural resources, its participation in the Atlantic World can hardly be considered passive. The Ohio Valley was a part of the Atlantic World as both a provider of natural resources to act as raw materials for industrialization in Europe and a consumer of European manufactured goods such as glass, home furnishings, clothes, guns, hardware and farming equipment. Despite being geographically isolated from the Eastern United States by the Allegheny Mountains and from Europe by the Atlantic Ocean, it was connected to the larger world through commerce. The Ohio Valley shipped its natural resources down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans where they would then be sent to markets in the East or Europe to be turned into finished goods and eventually sent back to the Ohio Valley at a considerable mark-up. While this type of commerce connected the Ohio Valley to the

Eastern United States and Europe, it also created economic dependence upon outside forces by insuring that its system of manufactures remained underdeveloped. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the battle over Ohio Valley resources shifted from physical confrontation involving guns and hatchets to market control and balance of trade. European merchants held a decided advantage in this struggle due to the lack of emphasis in the Ohio Valley on manufacturing. Entrepreneurs in the Ohio Valley felt no impetus to shift their economic focus from mercantile activities to manufacturing endeavors because they benefited economically from importing manufactured goods from Europe. Outside forces would continue to maintain the advantage until the Ohio Valley developed its own system of manufactures and trade networks within the valley and averted its economic vision away from markets in the Eastern United States and Europe and towards itself. The Embargo of 1807 provided the impetus for such a change.

The Embargo of 1807, which arose from the refusal of Britain and France to acknowledge the United States' right to free trade during the Napoleonic Wars and will be discussed in greater detail in chapter one, constituted a major transforming event in the development of a system of manufactures in the Ohio Valley. The embargo shut down American ports for both imports and exports and cut off trade between the United States and Europe. This meant, at least temporally, no more exportation of natural resources or importation of manufactured products. Merchants and other businessmen in the Ohio Valley whose economic fortunes depended on transatlantic trade found themselves in serious financial straits. They could no longer look outside the valley for their financial wellbeing and needed to find a new way to use the region's natural resources which did not involve exportation to European manufactures. As a result, local entrepreneurs began

to invest in manufacturing in order to develop their own natural resources and seek out trade partners within the Ohio Valley. This did not mean that the Ohio Valley stopped doing business with outside markets and retreated from the Atlantic World only that it began to value domestic manufacturing and trade over foreign commerce. In simplest terms, the Ohio Valley business community created a new economic environment where mercantile activities could coexist with manufacturing. Ultimately, The Embargo of 1807 forced resourceful Ohio Valley entrepreneurs to embrace manufacturing and trade within the valley while lessening their dependence on markets in the Eastern United States and Europe.⁴

The Embargo of 1807 was a seminal event in the industrial history of the both the United States and the Ohio Valley. Despite loopholes in the act which allowed some transatlantic trade through special permits as well as smuggling, the United States was essentially closed for business. Jefferson's Embargo had an immediate and catastrophic effect on the nation's economy. American exports dropped from \$108,343,150 in 1807 to \$22,430,960 in 1808. Imports fell from \$136,000,000 in 1807 to \$56,990,000 in 1808. One major short term consequence of the decreased foreign trade was that it deprived the federal government of funds. Customs revenue, which constituted a vital source of income for the young republic, plunged from \$16,000,000 in 1807 to \$6,500,000 in 1809. Exports and imports experienced a modest rise after the repeal of the embargo in 1809 but their value fluctuated throughout the second decade of the nineteenth century due to the passage of the Non-Intercourse Act of 1809, trade disruptions during the War of 1812

⁴ Louis Martin Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo* (New York: Octagon Books, 1978), 3

and the Tariff of 1816. The major beneficiary both long term and short term of the turmoil inflicted upon commerce by the Embargo of 1807 was domestic manufactures.⁵

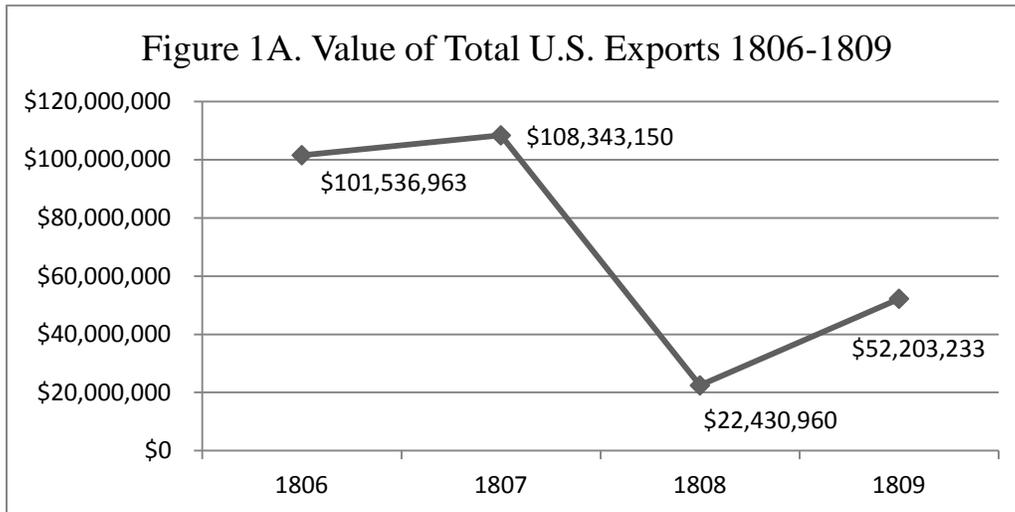


Figure 1B. Value of Selected U.S. Exports 1806-1809 (in millions) (rounded)

	Vegetable	Forest	Animal	Fish	Tobacco	Cotton	Manufactured Goods
1806	\$11.9m	\$4.9m	\$3.3m	\$3.1m	\$6.6m	\$8.3m	\$2.7m
1807	\$14.4m	\$5.5m	\$3.1m	\$2.8m	\$5.5m	\$14.2m	\$2.1m
1808	\$2.6m	\$1.4m	\$1m	\$0.8m	\$0.8m	\$2.2m	\$0.3m
1809	\$8.8m	\$4.6m	\$1.8m	\$1.7m	\$3.8m	\$8.5m	\$1.5m

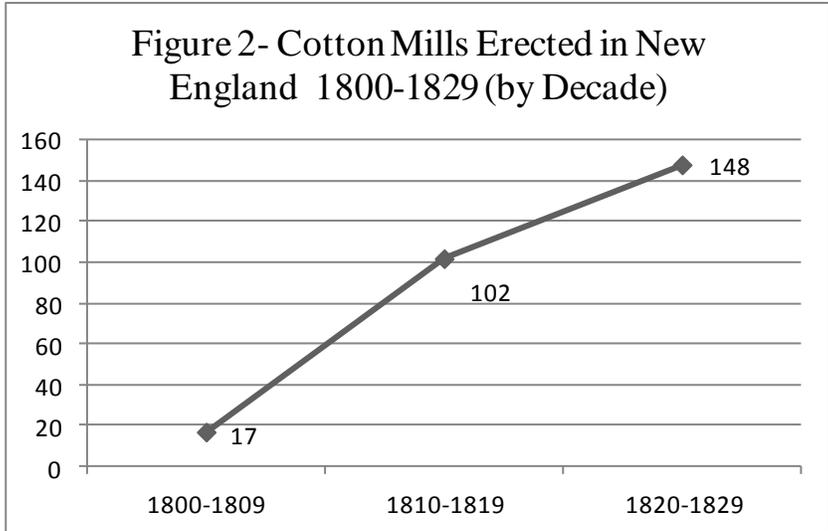
The initial disruption to transatlantic commerce caused by the Embargo of 1807 led to a reevaluation of manufacturing by American businessmen. The United States did not grow into an industrial giant overnight as a result of Jefferson's Embargo but it did lead

⁵ Curtis P. Nettles, *The Emergence of a National Economy, 1775-1815* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 328-329; Walter Wilson Jennings, *The American Embargo* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1921), 178-179 and 214-215; Reginald Horsman, *The New Republic: The United States of America 1789-1815* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000), 191; William Nester, *The Jeffersonian Vision, 1801-1815: The Art of American Power During the Early Republic* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2013), 95

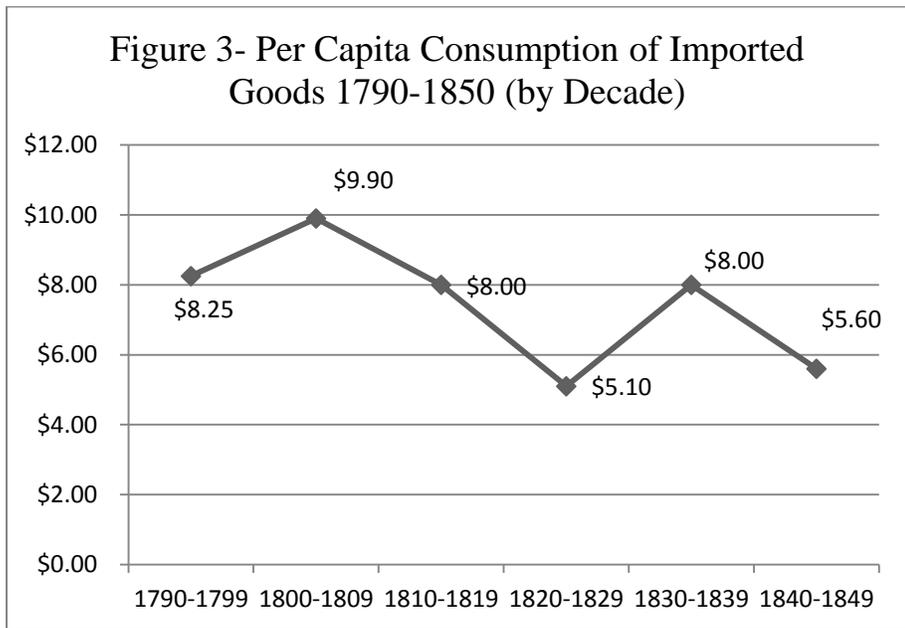
⁶ Data for Figures 1A and 1B taken from Timothy Pitkin, *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States* (Hartford: Charles Hosmer, 1816), 40-47, 49-53 and 109-146; Jennings, 209-215.

to an increase in domestic manufactures throughout the nineteenth century. According to historian Walter Licht the growth of domestic manufacturing is complex and involved many factors but the Embargo of 1807 planted “the seeds of American industrialization.” The Embargo as well as other trade restrictions protected American manufacturers from foreign competitors allowing them space to grow and develop domestic markets for their products. The first industry to experience a boost as a result of the embargo was the textile industry. The embargo shut off the flow of foreign textiles into the country necessitating domestic production. In 1803 there were only four cotton mills in the United States. By 1810, that number increased to 226 which constituted a 5,550 % increase. While these mills were geographically dispersed in the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee and Vermont, the Northeast became synonymous with production of cotton textiles. The textile industry and cotton production in the South grew together through the first half of the nineteenth century. In the immediate years after the Embargo of 1807, the total amount of cotton consumed domestically rose from 8,000,000 pounds in 1800 to 31,500,000 in 1815. Other industries which experienced significant growth as a result of Jefferson’s Embargo included iron, glass and hemp. Indicators of the embargo’s long-term effect on domestic manufacturing can be seen in a precipitous decrease in the consumption of foreign goods and a slow but steady rise in the percentage of Americans employed in manufacturing through the first half of the nineteenth century.⁷

⁷ Nettles, 203-204; Matthew Brown Hammond, *The Cotton Industry: An Essay in American Economic History*, (New York: MacMillan Company, 1897), 238 Walter Licht, *Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore; The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 40; Victor Selden Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States, 1607-1860* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of



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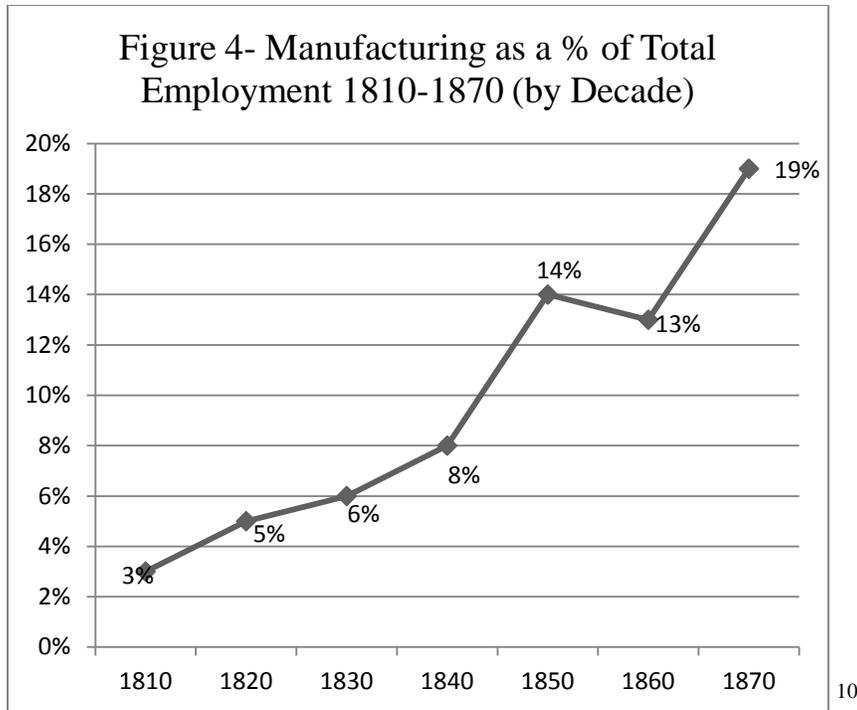
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Washington, 1916), 245-246; Jeremy Atack and Fred Bateman, "Manufacturing," *Historical Statistics of the United States*.

<http://hsus.cambridge.org.proxy.mul.missouri.edu/HSUSWeb/essay/showessaypath.do#Dd.ESS.01.B>;
 Quentin R. Skrabec, *The 100 Most Significant Events in American Business: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC., 2012), 16-18

⁸ Data for Figure 2 taken from Clive Day, "The Early Development of the American Cotton Manufacture," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 39, no. 3 (May 1925), 452; Caroline F. Ware, *The Early New England Cotton Manufacture: A Study in Industrial Beginnings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931), 37-38.

⁹ Data for Figure 3 taken from Victor Selden Clark, 245-246.



The historiography of the Embargo of 1807 does not reflect its importance as a major transforming event in the history of American industry. In general, historians who have looked at the embargo view it as an unmitigated disaster and a colossal blunder by Jefferson and describe some increase in domestic manufacturing but mostly grief. Henry Adams called the embargo an experiment in peaceable economic coercion “well worth making” but one that failed miserably as it did not succeed in preventing war with Britain as well as destroying American commerce in the process. The result of Jefferson’s experiment was that “every artisan dropped his tools, every merchant closed his doors, every ship was dismantled. American produce- wheat, timber, cotton, tobacco, rice- dropped in value or became unsalable; every imported item rose in price; wages stopped; swarms of debtors became bankrupt; thousands of sailors hung idle around the wharves.” In Adam’s depiction, Jefferson played the part of a well-meaning fool who unknowingly

¹⁰ Data for Figure 4 taken from Atack and Bateman.

released the apocalypse upon the young nation. According to Walter Wilson Jennings, a one sentence epitaph could be placed on the coffin of Jefferson's Embargo to describe its effects upon the economy of the United States. This epitaph would read "The embargo stimulated manufacturers, injured agriculture and prostrated the economy." More recently Drew R. McCoy posited that the Jefferson's Embargo and other trade restrictions related to the War of 1812 failed to achieve its political goal, which was to coerce Britain and France into respecting the neutrality of the seas, but stimulated domestic manufacturing as it left the United States economically isolated from the rest of the world for a too lengthy duration.¹¹

As a whole the historiography of the Embargo of 1807 treats it as a political blunder which led to an increase in American manufacturing as a byproduct of its failure. Entrepreneurs reacted to Jefferson's ill-conceived assault on commerce by shifting their resources from merchant and shipping interests to manufacturing. This included pulling capital away from shipbuilding which previously maintained the link between merchants in the United States and manufacturers in Europe. The benefits to American industry are portrayed as unintentional and accidental. This approach fails to recognize the embargo as an economic policy decision instead of just a miscalculated reaction to foreign belligerence or the role government played during the Early Republic in stimulating domestic manufacturing. Furthermore, it depicts manufacturing as a concept outside of mainstream political thought during this period.¹²

¹¹ Henry Adams, *The History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Jefferson* (New York: Library of America, 1986), 1115 and 1118; Jennings, 231; Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 222-223 and 232-233.

¹² Albert Sidney Bolles, *Industrial History of the United States, From the Earliest Settlements to the Present Time* (Norwich, Conn.: Henry Bill Publishing Company, 1878), 864-865; Victor Selden Clark,

Recent scholarship by historian Lawrence A. Peskin illustrates the prominence of manufacturing in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century political discourse as well as the significance of the Embargo of 1807 as economic policy. Peskin posits that the years between the enactment of the embargo and the end of the War of 1812 shaped “American attitudes towards manufacturing” and during this period the promotion of a “new economy based on industry” took root. Furthermore, the advocacy of domestic manufacturing cannot be viewed simply in terms of political ideology as it blurred party lines. Traditionally, The Federalists are viewed as the pro-manufacturing party because of Alexander Hamilton’s 1791 *Report on Manufactures* with the Democratic-Republicans in opposition due to Thomas Jefferson’s perceived disdain of industry and preference for agriculture and animal husbandry. In this scenario, all Federalists shared Hamilton’s position that the “patronage of government” should be used to “accelerate the growth of manufactures” and all Democratic-Republicans prescribe to Jefferson’s belief that “for the general operations of manufacture, let our work-shops remain in Europe.” According to Peskin, this interpretation fails to properly explain Federalist and Democratic-Republican attitudes towards manufacturing during the Era of the Early Republic as the positions of neither Hamilton nor Jefferson can be considered widely representative of their respective party’s thinking on the subject of manufactures. Additionally, a large number of the Federalists who supported Hamilton’s stance on manufacturing, mainly northern urban artisans, switched their allegiance to the Democratic-Republicans at the end of the 18th century. While Thomas Jefferson himself may have preferred an agricultural instead of industrial course for America’s economic future this did not reflect

536-537; Sears, 318-320; Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 131-133; Adams, 1115 and 1118; Jennings, 231, McCoy, 222-223 and 232-233.

his party's position towards manufacturing as a whole. By the time of the Embargo, the issue of domestic manufacturing possessed a large number of vocal supporters within the Democratic-Republican Party. These supporters pushed for the development of a new national economy centered on manufacturing with less dependence on foreign trade. The growth of the manufactures would remain a major element of the party's ideology throughout the first quarter of the nineteenth century and later a major tenet of the Whig party.¹³

The political career of Congressman Adam Seybert of Pennsylvania is indicative of the Democratic-Republican Party's embrace of manufacturing as well as its increased importance in the aftermath of the Embargo of 1807. In 1808, the citizens of Philadelphia elected Seybert to serve them in the United States House of Representatives. He was an affluent physician with many friends and neighbors within the Federalist and merchant community but ran as a Democratic-Republican and supported the Embargo of 1807. Besides practicing medicine, he invested heavily in the manufacture of chemicals and textiles and believed that the Democratic-Republican Party better served his interests because of their burgeoning support of manufacturing. On May 19, 1809, Seybert gave the after dinner speech at the Philadelphia Manufacturers' and Mechanics Dinner held at the Shakespeare Hotel. During the oration, he argued for government funded programs to research improved manufacturing techniques, educate citizens on the benefits of domestic manufactures and develop new strategies to better exploit natural resources. Overall, his

¹³ Lawrence A. Peskin, "How Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing: The First Parties and the "New Economy"," *Journal of the Early Republic* 22, no. 2 (Summer 2002), 237-244; Alexander Hamilton, "Report on the Subject of Manufactures" in Hamilton: Writings, ed. Joanne B. Freeman (New York: The Library of America, 1994); 648; Thomas Jefferson "Notes on the State of Virginia" in *Jefferson: Writings (Autobiography, Notes on the State of Virginia, Public and Private Papers, Addresses, Letters)*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: The Library of America, 1994), 290-291.

goal was to convince Pennsylvania manufactures that with a new manufacturing philosophy as well as technological advancements; the United States could rival and eventually surpass European industry. Likewise, he argued against merely copying British manufacturing techniques and spending “large sums of money” on European manufactured goods. It is important to note that although Seybert was not from the West and actually represented Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and the Ohio Valley still occupied an important role in his strategy. Much of the resources that he discussed were in the Ohio Valley and Philadelphia conducted a great deal of business with Pittsburgh’s expanding manufacturing base. In particular Seybert was interested in increasing the domestic manufacture of glass and iron tools, both of which were blossoming industries in Pittsburg. In other words, in regard to the development of domestic manufactures what was good for Philadelphia was good for the Ohio Valley.¹⁴

As a member of Congress, Seybert tirelessly championed American manufacturing. He also presented a very public example of the Democratic-Republican Party’s evolving position on manufactures. In December of 1809, on the floor of the United States House of Representatives, he requested that copies of Alexander Hamilton’s *Report on Manufactures* be reprinted and passed out amongst his colleagues. Furthermore, Seybert described Hamilton’s report as “a document which contained much important matter” and argued it should be used to serve as the “basis on which an important superstructure might be raised.” In many ways, the Democratic-Republic Party was founded in

¹⁴ Lawrence A. Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution: The Intellectual Origins of Early American Industry* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 152-156; Peskin, “How Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing,” 235 and 243; Adam Seybert, “An Oration delivered on the 19th of May, 1809, at the Meeting of the Manufacturers and Mechanics of the City of Philadelphia,” Philadelphia: Printed by order of the Committee, 1809. Shaw & Shoemaker, Early American Imprints, Series 2, no.18591. Micro-Form, 5-16.

opposition to the political policies of Hamilton, of which manufacturing constituted a major element. Therefore, Seybert's public support of Hamilton's report marked the culmination of the party's evolutionary shift on the issue of manufacturing.¹⁵

Focusing on Democratic-Republican Party attitudes as a whole and not just the ideology of Jefferson adds a new dimension to the conversation of the Embargo of 1807 which allows for it to be viewed as an economic policy decision reflective of the party's philosophy towards manufacturing. After divorcing Jefferson from the discussion it becomes clear that developing a system of manufactures was part of the Democratic-Republican Party agenda both before and after the enactment of the Embargo of 1807. The equation used to judge the success and failure of the embargo changes as a result. Instead of judging Jefferson's Embargo as a foreign policy decision in which it was most definitely a failure, it becomes a success when viewed as economic policy part of a larger agenda meant to foster industrial growth over the long-term.

Overall, the historiography of the Embargo of 1807 is sparse in relation to other aspects of Jefferson's political career, overemphasizes the destructive aspects of the trade restrictions, underemphasizes the benefits to industry and ignores its role in the evolving ideology of the Democratic-Republican Party's relationship to manufacturing. Additionally, the historiography possesses an eastern bias and neglects the West and more specifically, the Ohio Valley. The West and the Ohio Valley is an important part of the embargo's story because they were vital to the Democratic-Republican thought process in regard to the development of manufactures and provided natural resources for manufacturing. Furthermore, politicians from the Ohio Valley as well as those outside

¹⁵ Peskin, "How Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing," 235 and 243.

like Adam Seybert who were connected to it championed manufacturing and the Embargo of 1807 both before and after its enactment.

In the years after 1807, Henry Clay of Kentucky played a critical role in advancing the Democratic-Republican Party's pro-manufacturing policies. Clay was one of the earliest and loudest supporters of the Embargo of 1807 and its potential for industrial development. In 1809, as a Speaker of the State House of Representatives in Kentucky, Clay introduced a series of resolutions which pledged support for the embargo and required state legislators to only wear suits of clothing manufactured in the United States. Clay's passion for this legislation led him into a verbal and physical conflict with Humphrey Marshall, a Federalist rival. Marshall was vehemently opposed to Jefferson's Embargo as well as Clay's proposal. The two men engaged in a heated debate on the floor of the Kentucky House of Representatives. Eventually, Clay grew tired of Marshall's attack on the embargo and both his honor and resolutions and challenged him to a duel. On January 19, 1809, Clay and Marshall crossed the Ohio River near Shippingport into Indiana and proceeded to fire dueling pistols at one another. Both men missed on their first two shots but on his third attempt, Marshall hit his target and left Clay with a flesh wound in his right thigh. After Marshall wounded Clay, the seconds ended the duel and declared that both men acted honorably. The Embargo of 1807 had many supporters within the Democratic-Republican Party but none risked their life in its defense like Clay. On the national stage as Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and later as Secretary of State under John Quincy Adams, he pushed an ambitious economic program known as the American System to grow the national economy and increase domestic production. The main elements of the program were a

high tariff to protect American industry and generate revenue for the federal government, the establishment of a national bank to stabilize the country's currency and internal improvements to create and maintain a transportation infrastructure that would link the various sections of the nation together and facilitate the movement of goods and people.¹⁶

The American System had its roots in what historian Stephen Aron called the Bluegrass System. As a member of the Kentucky legislature Clay promoted a legislative program designed to use the power and funds of the state government to encourage the commercial and industrial growth of Lexington. His plan involved the solicitation of both private and public financing as well as convincing manufacturers, merchants and planters that their interests intersected. Essentially, Clay used the government to protect the interests of bluegrass elites. Aron argues that in developing the American System, Clay simply transferred the Bluegrass System from state to national politics. Instead of using the state government to promote the commercial and industrial interests of the Bluegrass Region, he began using the federal government to advance the economic interests of the West which included Kentucky and the Ohio Valley. It is clear that the Ohio Valley played a significant role in the Democratic-Republican Party's thought process in regard to the development of a system of manufactures. Therefore, The Ohio Valley is an ideal location to discuss the development of manufacturing in the aftermath of Jefferson's Embargo even though previous studies have ignored it.¹⁷

In regard to the Embargo of 1807 and the development of domestic manufacturing in its aftermath the United States government acted as "agents of change" and

¹⁶ Maurice G. Baxter, *Henry Clay and the American System* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1995), 5-6 and 199-210; Robert V. Remini, *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 54-56.

¹⁷ Stephen Aron, *How the West was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 124-125 and 133-135.

entrepreneurs in the Ohio Valley served as instruments of change. For pro-industry Democratic-Republicans, the increase in manufacturing caused by Jefferson's Embargo furthered their agenda of promoting domestic manufactures. The embargo presented a different challenge for businessmen in the Ohio Valley. These men were in large part responsible for stunting the growth of manufacturing in the valley because of their reliance on foreign manufactures. Therefore, their embrace of manufacturing was not part of a larger plan but instead a reaction to the disruption of foreign trade. When the Embargo of 1807 destroyed foreign trade, businessmen within the Ohio Valley looked inward and towards manufacturing and domestic trade and did not continue to beat their heads against the wall between American and foreign markets created by Jefferson's Embargo. They simply adapted and prospered and in turn, so did the region as a whole.¹⁸

These early nineteenth century Ohio Valley entrepreneurs adopted a strategy which has come to be known as import substitution industrialization. This a term commonly used to describe the economic strategies of less developed countries in the twentieth century to develop their domestic economies. These countries, primarily in Latin America and in some areas of Asia and Africa, who exported their agricultural produce and other raw materials while importing manufactured goods from Europe and the United States, developed a system of manufactures to produce finished goods which they formerly imported. While the term import substitution industrialization is predominantly used to describe government action and is rarely used to describe strategies within the United States or individual action, it applies perfectly to what occurred in the Ohio

¹⁸ Richard R. John, "Governmental Institutions as Agents of Change: Rethinking American Political Development in the Early Republic, 1787-1835," *Studies in American Political Development* 11 (1997): 347-348.

Valley at this time. Ohio Valley entrepreneurs pursued individual policies of import substitution industrialization in reaction to government policy that restricted the importation of foreign manufactured goods and the exportation of raw material.¹⁹

The individual actions of early nineteenth century Ohio Valley entrepreneurs came together in the development of a regional economy in the Ohio Valley centered upon manufacturing and domestic trade within the valley. Although the economy of the Ohio Valley would still have ties to the Eastern United States and Europe, it developed an economic identity of its own and no longer constituted a possession of either. In his influential 1955 work "Location Theory and Regional Economic Growth," economist Douglass C. North argued that a shift from an agricultural and export base to an industrial base was "neither necessary nor desirable" in the development of a regional economy or process of sustaining economic growth. Furthermore, a region whose export base was agricultural could experience economic and population growth just as effectively as a region with an industrial base. An examination of the Ohio Valley during the Era of the Early Republic presents a different conclusion. While relying upon the exportation of its raw materials and importation of manufactured goods the Ohio Valley failed to grow its economy or develop its own economic identity separate from the Eastern United States or Europe. It did not have a regional economy but instead was an appendage of the

¹⁹ Gerald M. Meier, *Biography of a Subject: An Evolution of Development Economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 72-74 and 85-87; Werner Baer, "Import Substitution and Industrialization in Latin America: Experiences and Interpretations," *Latin American Research Review* 7, no. 1 (1972): 95; Henry J. Bruton, "A Reconsideration of Import Substitution," *Journal of Economic Literature* 36, no.2 (1998): 903-904. For a discussion of import substitution industrialization in a United States context, albeit later period, see Harold G. Vatter, "An Estimate of Import Substitution for Manufactured Products in the U.S. Economy, 1859 and 1899," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 18, no. 1 (Oct., 1969): 40-43. The major criticism against government enacted policies of import substitution industrialization is that it is socially inefficient as it overemphasized industrialization at the expense of agriculture and caused greater income inequality between a small privileged industrial labor elite and an unemployed and underemployed populous.

economies of the East and Europe. Eastern and European agents dictated what materials to extract and what goods would be manufactured and sent back. The Ohio Valley had little control of its own economic destiny as control rested outside of the Valley.²⁰

The reactions of Ohio Valley entrepreneurs to the Embargo of 1807 transformed the valley from being merely a repository of natural resources used to supply manufacturers in Europe to a workshop where its own residents manufactured products from their own agricultural surplus. They wrested control of the Ohio Valley economy away from outside interests and fostered the development of a regional economy built upon manufacturing and domestic trade. Within this new regional economy, manufacturing and agriculture worked together to achieve economic growth and advance the industrial development of the Ohio Valley. In addition, it joined with other regional economies to advance the economic interests of the United States as a whole. Although Ohio Valley entrepreneurs were not working in concert with the federal government, they were not working in opposition either. Federal policy, the embargo, forced them to further the cause of domestic manufacturing in a regional context. In other words, they did not act alone as government played a key role in fostering industrial development in the Ohio Valley.

The main goal of this study is to tell the story of the development of a system of manufactures in the Ohio Valley and illustrate when and how it developed and the Embargo of 1807 plays a major role in this story. My work is neither exclusively an economic or political study. It possesses elements of both and resides at the intersection of economic and political history. While this may cause comparisons to Drew R.

²⁰ Douglass C. North, "Location Theory and Regional Economic Growth," *Journal of Political Economy* 63, no. 3 (Jun., 1955): 256-258.

McCoy's concept of political economy, it is in fact entirely different. Whereas McCoy dealt primarily with the convergence of politics and economics on a theoretical level, my study takes a ground-level approach. I am primarily concerned with the ways in which businessmen and entrepreneurs in the Ohio Valley took economic policy created by politicians in Washington D.C. and used it to advance both their own individual economic interests and that of the region. In essence, I am concerned with how the disruption in trade caused by the Embargo of 1807 triggered their entrepreneurial survival instinct and how it manifested itself in terms of individual economic strategies. Furthermore, I will explore how those economic strategies influenced others to adopt similar approaches and ultimately form a region wide change in how the Ohio Valley viewed and conducted both manufacturing and trade. As a result, the key role played by the Embargo of 1807 in the economic transformation and development of a system of manufactures in the Ohio Valley will become abundantly clear.

This study does not argue that the Embargo of 1807 was the only factor in the development of a regional economy in the Ohio Valley only that it was the driving factor. It is not my intention to lessen the role played by social factors such as population growth and technological advancements but to stress the importance of economic policy. Furthermore, I do not contend that the government had no role in the transformation of the Ohio Valley's economy as the embargo necessitated the actions of the entrepreneurs and the development of manufactures was a major policy goal of the Democratic-Republican Party both before and after 1807. This study also will not argue that the Ohio Valley's retreat from the Atlantic World in the aftermath of Jefferson's Embargo equaled complete or permanent separation. The East and the West still had economic ties and they

still conducted business with one another but the embargo and subsequent other trade restrictions forced the Ohio Valley to develop a degree of economic independence and rely more heavily upon itself. Ultimately, this study will show that policy does matter and answer the question of why the Ohio Valley developed a regional economy built upon manufacturing and domestic trade separate from the East and Europe when it did.

The development of a regional economy in the Ohio Valley built upon manufacturing and domestic trade will be tracked through the economic development of three river cities: Pittsburgh, Marietta and Louisville. The Ohio River and the major cities along its banks play a crucial role in this study because it constituted the highway of the interior during the Colonial and Early Republic Eras and facilitated trade both in and out of the Ohio Valley. Each of these river cities possessed characteristics that are vital to the arguments of this study. These characteristics include a location of geographic importance, clear links to Eastern and European markets, dependence upon river trade, involvement in the construction of ocean-going vessels either physically or through investments, separation from markets outside of the Ohio Valley in the aftermath of Jefferson's Embargo and the development of a manufacturing infrastructure and/or a network of western trade after 1807. Essentially, each city has a story of economic development that is tied directly to the Embargo of 1807 and entrepreneurial reaction. Furthermore, the stories of these cities are representative of the economic changes that took place throughout the Ohio Valley. In each of these cities, the activities of primarily one businessman will be detailed. The businessmen chosen had experienced considerable success prior to the embargo and adapted their business practices in its aftermath to

achieve greater success. Their stories are case studies which exemplify the change in economic thought that took place in the aftermath of Jefferson's Embargo.

In chapter one, I will discuss the Ohio Valley's role in the Atlantic World and transatlantic trade. Prior to Jefferson's Embargo, the Ohio Valley marked an extraction point for raw materials and a dumping ground for finished goods manufactured in European workshops. By 1800, both eastern merchants and shipbuilders had relocated to the Ohio Valley in order to gain easier access to its resources. The merchant and shipbuilding activities of these individuals will be examined and used to illustrate the connection and dependence that the Ohio Valley had on eastern and European markets. Another key element of this chapter will be a discussion of the circumstances that led to the Ohio Valley's retreat, at least temporarily, from the Atlantic World. This includes an extensive examination of the Embargo of 1807 and its effect on America's economy.²¹

Chapter two will examine Pittsburgh and James O'Hara. Pittsburgh began as military fort and trading post. From the very beginning commerce was an essential part of its daily existence. Merchants and fur traders conducted trade with the local Indian tribes exchanging trinkets and other manufactured goods for animal furs and skins. Eventually as the Indian trade died down, agriculture became a more prominent element of the settlement's economy. More specifically the exportation of agricultural produce such as wheat, grain and hemp to Europe in exchange for manufactured goods such as guns, tools and clothing became the economic focus. Over time, numerous manufactures such as

²¹ The use of the term extraction in this manner is a departure from the way it is typically used as it normally refers to mining techniques where outside forces come into an area in search of a particular resource. These forces will extract the said material and leave the terrain barren. However this term is also applicable to describe the effect of the colonial system upon the Ohio Valley as outside interests removed natural resources from the valley for manufacturing elsewhere which left it without a system of manufactures..

glassworks, steelworks and breweries developed but the business community viewed manufacturing as an afterthought or supplement to merchant endeavors and its distribution apparatus was pointed outwards instead of inwards. Which meant their main focus in regard to markets was Eastern and European. As a result of the trade restrictions that constituted the Embargo of 1807, businessmen in Pittsburgh increased their focus on manufacturing and in turn gave more attention to markets in the West instead of the East. But more importantly, they changed their attitudes toward manufacturing in general. The driving force behind this change of economic focus in Pittsburgh was James O'Hara who was "Pittsburgh's first captain of industry" and an example of what historian Lawrence A. Peskin referred to as "industrial revolutionaries." After the embargo, O'Hara turned his interests to internal trade, much of which he conducted in the Ohio Valley, instead of external trade and increased his stake in manufacturing. Furthermore, he led the charge to encourage other Pittsburgh merchants to follow his lead and become a merchant-manufacturing catering to internal demand.²²

Chapter three will examine Marietta, Ohio and Dudley Woodbridge Jr. The founders of Marietta designed the settlement as a transplanted Northeastern port town and a "hub of western commercial and cultural exchange with the East." The goal was to make Marietta "New England on the Ohio River" in terms of society, government, religion, education and economy. In economic terms the settlement prided itself on its

²² Quentin R. Skrabec Jr., *The World's Richest Neighborhood: How Pittsburgh's East Enders Forged American Industry* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2010), 31; Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution: The Intellectual Origins of Early American Industry*, 1; Leland D. Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1937), 146-149; Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 45; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 29, 1809; Lawrence A. Peskin, "How the Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing: The First Parties and the New Economy," 235 and 262.

economic connection to the Atlantic World. Foreign trade was much more than an economic strategy and instead became a part of their self identity. The economic well-being of Marietta and the practice of exporting natural resources and importing manufactured goods were inseparably linked together. The Embargo of 1807 had a devastating effect on Marietta. The loss of foreign markets caused stores to close their doors, merchants went bankrupt and the once lively docks became devoid of activity. The embargo not only cracked Marietta's economic foundation but also damaged the self-worth of its citizenry. As Marietta teetered on the brink of extinction, local merchant Dudley Woodbridge Jr., who was a major player in transatlantic trade before Jefferson's Embargo, charted a new course for the town which focused on trade with merchants and manufacturers within the Ohio Valley. The economy that developed in Marietta after the Embargo did not turn the town into a regional hub that dominated the Ohio Valley's economy as originally planned but instead became what historian Kim Gruenwald describes as a subregional hub which connected other hubs in the Ohio Valley to one another. Marietta became a connection point between Ohio Valley manufacturers and markets both within and outside of the region.²³

Chapter four will focus on Louisville and the Tarascon brothers. In the earliest days of the New Republic, Louisville resided on the periphery of the United States. It possessed great economic potential but that potential remained largely unrealized through the first decade of the nineteenth century. The town contained virtually no manufacturing interests and its primary economic asset was the Falls of the Ohio, a natural obstruction

²³ Kim M. Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise: The Commercial Origins of Regional Identity in the Ohio Valley, 1790-1850*, 2002), 3, 13, 42, 78-79 and 94.

for which ships could not pass at certain times of the year, which caused most vessels heading west on the Ohio River to unload their cargos in the town. The unorganized nature of its economy and an inefficient local government which was incapable of regulating trade, hindered Louisville businessmen in their efforts to capitalize of the advantages presented by the falls. The town's economy mainly relied on the exportation of tobacco and other agricultural surplus as well as the importation of manufactured goods for retail in local stores. The implementation of Jefferson's Embargo meant that fewer ships would be passing through and fewer markets for the agricultural surplus and raw materials. Though slower to adapt than their Ohio Valley neighbors further east, Louisville merchants and businessmen would eventually develop an economic infrastructure which incorporated both the development of manufactures and internal trade. Louis and John Tarascon occupied a role at the forefront of Louisville's reaction to the embargo. They acted as ambassadors of industry and economic change by providing a blueprint for industrial development that other merchant-manufactures would soon adopt.²⁴

By shifting the focus of the Embargo of 1807 from the eastern seaboard to the interior, I will provide a new understanding of the embargo as well as the nature of manufacturing that it fostered. By widening the focus to the Ohio Valley, it is also possible to capture the embargo's full impact on the United States as well as pulling the discussion away from Thomas Jefferson and towards other individuals. But just as importantly, this is a story of economic adaptation and survival which illustrates the ways

²⁴ George H. Yater, "Louis and John Tarascon" in *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*, John E. Kleber (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2001), 866-867; "Traditions of Shippingport: Romance in the History of the once Thriving Settlement," *Louisville Herald*, 13 May 1906

in which entrepreneurs reacted in a regional setting to a change in federal economic policy. In the Ohio Valley, Jefferson's Embargo did not bring about an economic apocalypse. Instead, it produced temporary discomfort but at the same time presented new opportunities which encouraged a transformation of the valley's economic thinking and thus its economy. Merchants and manufacturers in the Ohio Valley adapted to Jefferson's trade restrictions by altering the way they envisioned and conducted business. Centering my story on the Ohio Valley also allows me to make a larger statement about economic relationships during the Era of the Early American Republic as well as the development of economies in the interior and West. Ultimately, using the Ohio Valley's reaction to Jefferson's Embargo and other ensuing trade restrictions, I will show the region's transformation from a colonial extraction point tied to international trade to the hearth of the American West and facilitator of western expansion. As a result of the Embargo of 1807, a new regional economy emerged in the Ohio Valley and it became a valley of industry.

CHAPTER 1: THE OHIO VALLEY AND THE ATLANTIC WORLD

This study is concerned with the development of a system of manufactures in the Ohio Valley and how, why and when that development took place. Also of major concern is the role of individual businessmen in the industrial development of the Ohio Valley and how their reactions to federal policy defined that role as well as the effect that the Embargo of 1807 had on these events. Before getting to those discussions it is important to first examine the Ohio Valley's economic connection to the Atlantic World. Atlantic history or the study of the Atlantic World is a discipline which explores the interactions between the nations and peoples of continents bordering the Atlantic Ocean. It places North and South America, Europe and Africa into a common sphere of influence defined by economic and cultural exchanges starting with Christopher Columbus' voyage to the New World in 1492. The Ohio Valley was a part of the Atlantic World because its exportation of natural resources and importation of manufactured goods constituted a major element of transatlantic trade during the Colonial and Early Republic Eras. The end point of this study is the development of system of manufactures in the Ohio Valley and a temporary retreat from transatlantic trade, therefore the starting point must be a discussion of its relationship to the Atlantic World. And a major element of that discussion is economic connection and separation. The connection came in the form of its participation in transatlantic trade and the Embargo of 1807 forced a separation of sorts from the Atlantic World which resulted in the growth of a system of manufactures.

Therefore the major focus of this chapter will be the Ohio Valley's economic history prior to 1807 and Jefferson's Embargo.¹

A.) Connecting the West and the Atlantic World: The Ohio Valley as a Distant yet Vital Part of Post-Colonial Trans-Atlantic Trade

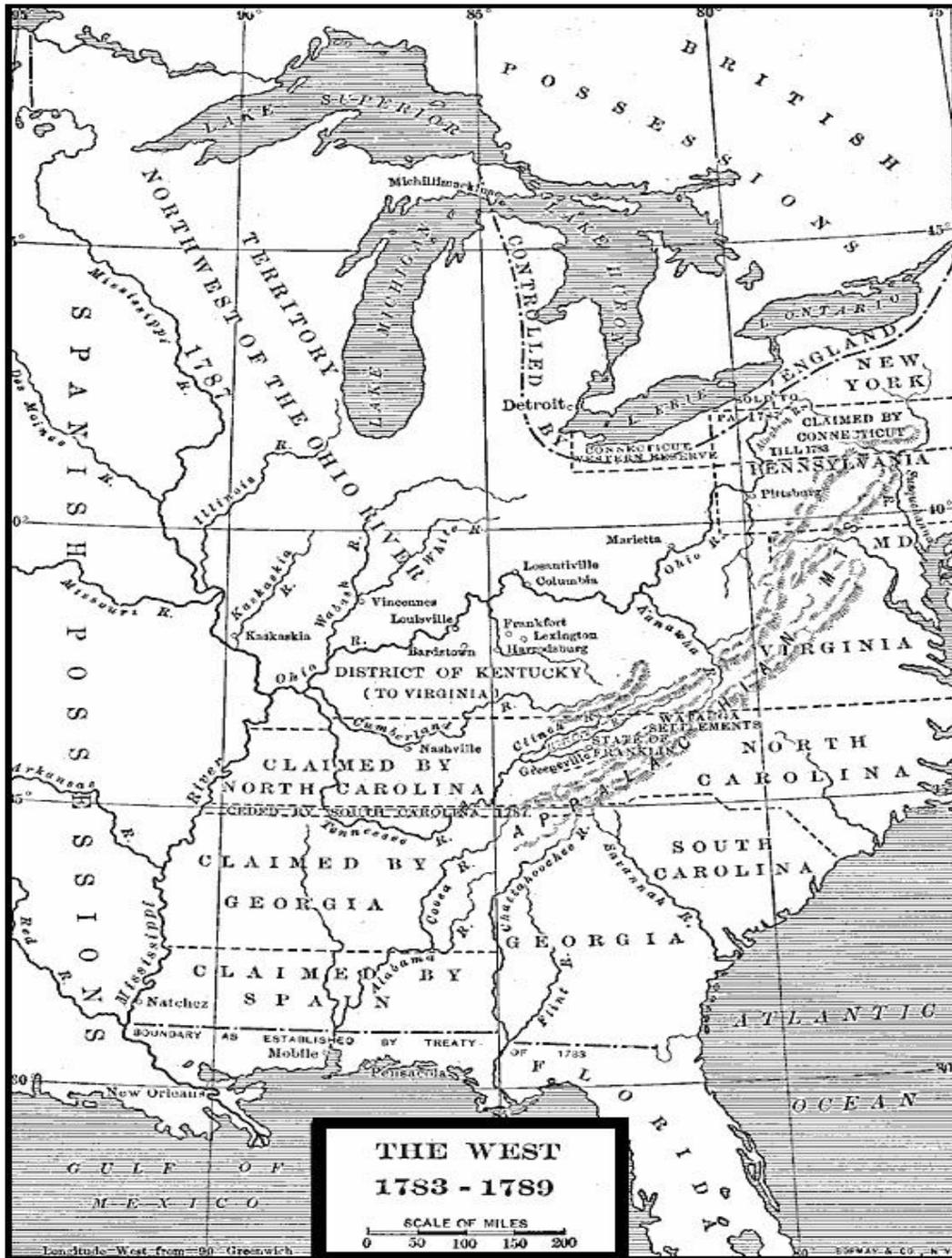
Although the West was economically linked to the Eastern United States and Europe and thus the Atlantic World, there is no denying its geographic isolation. The Ohio Valley is geographically situated to the west of the Allegheny Mountains which is part of the Allegheny Plateau and constitutes the mountainous eastern portion of the Appalachian Mountains. The Alleghenies have a range of nearly five hundred miles and runs northeast to southwest through the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, and Virginia and presents a natural barrier between the Atlantic Coast and the interior. The Ohio Valley is part of what is known as the Ohio River Basin which is a 189,422 square mile area that is comprised of land in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia but is commonly, and for the purposes of this study, considered to be land in states bordering the Ohio River.²

The defining feature of the Ohio Valley is the Ohio River which is formed by the juncture of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers at the Forks of the Ohio in Pittsburgh. It runs for 981 miles from Pittsburgh to the Mississippi River near Cairo, Illinois and forms the northern borders of West Virginia and Kentucky and the southern borders of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. The Ohio River, or as the French called it La Belle Rivière

¹ Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Atlantic in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1-2; Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 3-7.

² Allegheny Mountains," *Britannica Online Encyclopedia*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/16046/Allegheny-Mountains> (Accessed August 26, 2012)

Figure 6- The West, 1783-1789



⁵ Map courtesy of the Florida Center for Instructional Technology (FCIT.)

Three words can be used to describe the natural resources of the Ohio Valley, abundant, varied and valuable. The Ohio Valley offered something for everyone. For the trapper and hunter it provided ample game. Bear, beaver, deer, elk, wolf and wood bison could all be found in large numbers in the Ohio Valley and were prized by Europeans and later British colonists for their skins, furs, meat and fat. Trappers and hunters came to the valley in large part because of the game that flocked to the region because of the numerous salt licks and abundance of grasses, roots and edible seeds in the forests. In addition to the animals that inhabited the land, a plentiful and varied collection of fish species such as bass, catfish, crappie, sunfish and sturgeon made the waterways of the Ohio Valley their home. For the farmer, the valley provided rich and fertile soil that yielded a bounty of crops including barley, corn, hemp, rye, tobacco and wheat. An early visitor to the region exclaimed that “the soil is deep-black alluvium, which yields year after year abundant crops.” For those looking to construct boats, ships, buildings or anything else for that matter, the Ohio Valley offered a plethora of timber resources. Among the inventory of timber resources found in the valley were different varieties of trees such as ash, beech, buckeye, cedar, chestnut, elm, hickory, maple, oak and sycamore. The white oak constituted the most plentiful and valuable of the tree species and at the time of European entry into the Ohio Valley it formed more than one half of the regions forest growth. Reaching heights between 100 and 140 feet with a diameter of four to six foot at its trunk, the white oak proved vital in the construction of boats, ships, agricultural implements, furniture, carriages and wagons. The Ohio Valley also possessed valuable mineral resources in abundance including coal, iron, lead, salt, clay and sand. The natural resources of the Ohio Valley could be found in markets throughout the world.

These resources fueled the industrial progress of Europe but did little to advance the cause of manufacturing at their point of origin as they were extracted by interests outside of the Ohio Valley and manufactured into finished goods elsewhere.⁶

As with every other piece of land in America, the first inhabitants of the Ohio Valley were Native Americans but their time in the valley would soon come to an end because of the resources contained within its boundaries. From the very beginning white incursions into the Ohio Valley and land at the Forks of the Ohio were driven by commercial motives. The extraction of natural resources constituted the main reason for these incursions throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The French had long been in the area trapping furs and trading with the natives and believed they possessed exclusive trading rights in the entire Ohio Valley. But the British felt that they had the same rights. The French staked their claim on the belief that the first white man to enter the Ohio Valley was French explorer and trader Robert de La Salle who supposedly discovered the Ohio River and stopped at the Forks of the Ohio and Falls of the Ohio in 1669. The British claim also dates back to 1669 and King Charles II's issuing of land grants in what is now West Virginia. The British and French both viewed the fur trade, and in general the extraction of the Ohio Valley's resources, as a zero-sum competition. If one side gained, then the other lost. Therefore each denied the claim of the other and considered themselves sovereign over the Ohio Valley with sole claim of its resources, which ignored the rights of the original inhabitants, the Indians.⁷

⁶ Isaac Lippincott, *A History of Manufactures in the Ohio Valley to the Year 1860* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1914), 6-19; Gruenwald, 3-4.

⁷ George Thornton Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs, Vol. I* (New York: American Historical Society, 1922), 131 and 287-288; University of Pittsburgh's Digital Research Library "Historic Pittsburgh Chronology," Historic Pittsburgh, <http://digital.library.pitt.edu/chronology/>. (Accessed June 9, 2013); Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 32. The legitimacy of the French claim that La Salle discovered

In 1730, the British made a serious incursion into the Ohio Valley, and what the French claimed was their territory, when the English court in Lancaster, Pennsylvania granted Pierre Chartiers a license to trade with the Indians in South Western Pennsylvania across the Alleghenies. Pierre Chartiers was the son of Martin Chartiers, a French trader living in Philadelphia who had sworn allegiance to the British crown, and a Pequea Shawnee woman. The younger Chartiers made frequent trips across the Alleghenies into the area at the Forks of the Ohio and despite being issued a license by the British, he actually did more to strengthen French ties in the Ohio Valley as his true loyalty rested with the his father's native country. In 1743, Pierre Chartiers established a trading post about three miles west of the point where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers converge to form the Ohio River in Pittsburgh at the mouth of what would become Chartiers Creek. Two short years later, Chartiers would abandon his trading post at the request of the Marquis of Beauharnais in order to go and represent French interests at the River Vermillion in Canada.⁸

Shortly before the abandonment of the French trading post at Chartiers Creek, the British moved to strengthen their own claim to the territory. In June and July of 1744, the governor of Pennsylvania and representatives from the colonies of Maryland and Virginia

the Ohio Valley is a controversial subject and doubted by many historians. But whether accurate it or not it is the basis for France's claim of sovereignty over the Ohio Valley. For more on La Salle and the surrounding controversy see Robert Burnett, "Louisville's French Past," *Filson Club Historical Quarterly* 50 (April 1976): 5-27; Francis Parkman, *La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West* (New York, Rinehart, 1956); L.A. Williams, ed., *The History of the Ohio Falls Cities and their Counties, Vol. 1* (Cleveland: L.A. Williams & Co., 1882); F.E. Wood, *The Louisville Story, A Century of Fiscal Integrity* (Louisville, 1951); Lawrence Burpee, *The Discovery of Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1944); J.M. Bumsted, *The Peoples of Canada: A Post Confederation History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.)

⁸ Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs, Vol. I*, 171-174; Leland D. Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City, 1750-1865*, 8.

met with members of the Iroquois Confederacy in Lancaster, Pennsylvania to settle land disputes in the trans-Appalachian West. The meeting resulted in the Treaty of Lancaster which the colonies of Pennsylvania and Virginia interpreted as a deed to the Ohio Valley. The Iroquois did not interpret the treaty in the same manner believing that they had simply given up their tenuous claim to all land within the boundaries of Virginia and Maryland in return for \$800 in Pennsylvania currency, 300 pounds of gold and the rights to enter Virginia to attack the Cherokees and Catawbas. The problem for the Iroquois Confederacy was that in Virginia's original colonial charter the boundary for the colony stretched northward from the Potomac to Hudson Bay and westward to the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, in the eyes of the colonial representatives the Iroquois had just ceded the Ohio Valley. The Iroquois negotiators left the conference believing they made a good deal and struck a blow against white intrusion into their territory but once the English started to trickle across the Alleghenies to the land at the Forks of the Ohio and further west, they realized part of the consequences of the treaty but the full effect would not be felt for another decade.⁹

In 1748, the governor of Pennsylvania sent his ambassador to the Six Nations, Conrad Weiser, to the Ohio Valley to present the Iroquois Confederacy with presents to ease tensions. Weiser's mission was the first official journey taken at the request of an English colony west of the Alleghenies. He met the Iroquois leaders at Logstown, or as the French called it Chiningue. Logstown was a mixed village and the most important of the Iroquois' trading villages in the upper Ohio Valley. The Iroquois had inhabited this site since about 1725 but in 1747, French traders altered the appearance of the village by

⁹ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 23-24; Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs, Vol. I*, 135.

building about thirty log cabins, most of which were of substantial size with stone chimneys. The French did not intend to reside in the cabins but instead built them to gain favor with the Iroquois Confederacy and provide what they deemed to be proper structures to conduct trade. The Iroquois met Weiser by firing their guns in salute and acted quite cordial towards the colonial representative. The cordial greeting cannot be attributed to any affection that the natives held for the British but instead the Iroquois were on the verge of declaring war on the French who took some of their tribesmen prisoner and needed allies. The meeting between Weiser and the confederacy leaders went extremely well with the Iroquois entering into a league of friendship with Britain and allowing a British flag to be flown in their camp. The Iroquois still did not recognize the British purchase of the Ohio Valley or their right to settle the area but they did grant them trapping and trading rights in the valley. After the meeting, colonial traders and trappers started entering the upper Ohio Valley with more frequency.¹⁰

The successful attempt by the British to buy the favor of the Iroquois Confederacy and gain access to the resource rich Ohio Valley with a string of wampum infuriated the French, who had previously attempted to buy the favor of the Iroquois with the much more expensive gift of thirty log cabins with stone chimneys. The French decided to reassert control over the Ohio Valley and the region at the forks of the Ohio. Governor Galissonier of New France sent a force of 300 men led by Captain Céloron de Blainville, a chevalier of the military order of St. Louis, down the Allegheny River

¹⁰ Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs, Vol. I*, 135; Conrad Weiser, "Journal of a Tour to the Ohio, August 11-October 2, 1748," in *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, Volume I*, ed. Rueben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904), 12 and 24-44; Daniel Agnew, "Logstown" on the Ohio: *A Historical Sketch* (Pittsburgh: Myers, Shinkle & Co., 1894), 3-6; Erasmus Wilson, ed. *Standard History of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania* (Chicago: H.R. Cornell & Company, 1898), 19. The present given to the Iroquois leaders by Weiser was a string of wampum which was traditional sacred shell beads used as currency by Native American tribes.

towards the Ohio Valley in 1749 to rid the region of British influence. As Céloron made his way down the Allegheny, he nailed copper plates bearing royal arms to trees and buried leaden plates in the ground at the mouth of principle tributaries to claim the Ohio Valley as a dominion of France. When the expedition reached Pierre Chartiers abandoned trading post, they encountered six English traders at Logstown with 150 peltries which they were preparing to take to Philadelphia. Céloron informed the traders that the Ohio Valley belonged to the King of France, Louis XV, and not the King of England, George II, and warned them that if they ever returned they would be “pillaged.” By way of the Englishmen, he sent a message to the governor of the Pennsylvania colony to stay out of French territory. According to Céloron, the warning worked as the traders assured him “either from fear or something else, that they would not return; they are convinced that they have no right to trade.” The warning to the governor and the threat of pillaging would not be as successful as Englishmen continued to venture across the Alleghenies and these would not be the last English interlopers that he encountered on his expedition.¹¹

Outside of Logstown, or Chiningue in the French, Céloron found six more English traders. He gave them the same warnings as the others and sent another message to the governor. According to Céloron, the Englishmen told him that “they were going to retire; that they knew well they had no right to trade, but not having found any obstacle until now, they had tried to make a living, so much the more as the savages had attracted them.” The last part of Céloron’s statement about the “savages” defined the problem as it stood. The French knew that Ohio Valley was economically significant, so did the

¹¹ Céloron de Blainville, “Journal of Captain Celeron,” in *Fort Pitt and Letters from the Frontier*, ed. Mary Carson Darlington (Pittsburgh: J.R. Weldin Company, 1892), 24-27; Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs*, Vol. I, 217-224; Weiser, 23; Anderson, 26; Wilson, 19.

British, and both knew that the key to extracting the natural resources of the Ohio Valley was maintaining control of the Forks of the Ohio or Pittsburgh as it would eventually be known. The problem was that natives had the same assessment of the situation and were determined to play the two nations against each other to better their own trade opportunities.¹²

After his encounter with the Englishmen, Céloron continued to Logstown where he found three flags flying over the village, two French and one British, and demanded that the British flag be removed or he would tear it down himself. He castigated the Iroquois for doing business with English and allowing them to travel unmolested through the valley. He told them that they had been seduced by the British and warned them to “drive away the evil spirit which seduced you and which will destroy you, without remedy, if you do not take care.” Implicit within this warning was a reminder that the Ohio Valley was the dominion of France and that French would use their superior military force against both the British and the Iroquois Confederacy to maintain control. The French saw the area as an important center for trade and did not want the British staking any sort of claim to the area or its resources. The Ohio Valley already possessed a lucrative fur trade and held the possibility for even greater trade opportunities because of untapped natural resources, both agricultural and geological. Therefore, fear would not hold off British colonists on the other side of the Alleghenies for long nor would they be convinced that they had no right to trade in the Ohio Valley. The British were coming and the land at the forks would be their first stop because European incursions into the Ohio Valley occurred at the motivation of extracting natural resources, at first furs and

¹² Céloron de Blainville, 27-33; Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs, Vol. I*, 226-228.

later agricultural and geological yields, from the interior for the benefit of their economies at home and taking control of the Ohio Valley and the interior required control of the Forks of the Ohio.¹³

The tensions between the French, the British and the Iroquois Confederacy over the Ohio Valley boiled over on May 28, 1754. In a glen about fifty miles southeast of the Forks of the Ohio, George Washington proved unable to control his Indian companions on a mission to aid William Trent in constructing Fort Prince George and Tanaghrisson's stroke of hatchet diplomacy started the French and Indian War. On that day the powder keg exploded but the spark had actually been set ten years prior with the signing of the Treaty of Lancaster. The treaty gave the British a legal foundation to trade and settle in the Ohio Valley, intensified French efforts to maintain sole dominion of the Ohio Valley and caused a split within the Iroquois Confederacy over which nation to side with in the coming conflict.¹⁴

In the years between the signing of the treaty and the Battle of Jumonville Glen, both the British and the French wrangled for control of the valley as the Iroquois Confederacy found themselves stuck in the middle trying to hold on to their territory. Most of this wrangling took place in the vicinity of the Forks of the Ohio but a pivotal event that would move all involved parties closer to war occurred outside of the Ohio Valley in Virginia in 1747 when a group of influential gentlemen, including Virginia Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie, from the colony formed the Ohio Land Company of Virginia and petitioned King George II of Great Britain for half a million acres or more of land at the Forks of the Ohio for a settlement. This constituted the first step of

¹³ Céloron de Blainville, 27-33; Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs, Vol. I*, 226-228.

¹⁴ Anderson, 5-7.

their plan to colonize the Ohio Valley because control of the forks meant control of the valley. The following year, the British Crown granted the Ohio Company of Virginia 200,000 acres at the Forks of the Ohio on the condition that they build a fort and settle 100 families within seven years. Once the company met those obligations, they would be granted another 300,000 acres. It is no coincidence that Céloron's expedition to dislodge all Englishmen from the Ohio Valley commenced immediately after French officials in both Paris and the New World learned of King George II's grant of land to the Ohio Company of Virginia and their plans to place a settlement at the gateway to the Ohio Valley in what would become Pittsburg.¹⁵

The French and Indian War marked the beginning of the end of a physical foreign presence in the Ohio Valley. As a result of the war, the British expelled the French but their attempts to insure that the colonists would not agitate the Indians led to the American Revolution and the eventual expulsion of the British. But this only marked the end of European occupation of the Ohio Valley and America as a whole not economic dominance. The conclusion of the American Revolution broke the former colonies free from the chains of a colonial economy in theory only. Europe still largely controlled the post colonial economy as they no longer had an active and physical role in the extraction the Ohio Valley's natural resources but these resources still ended up in their workshops and factories. The only significant difference being that markets in the Eastern United States assumed a larger role in deciding the economic fate of the Ohio Valley.

Crossing the Allegheny Mountains offered treasure on the other side in the form of land and opportunity but also great danger and hardship. During the Early Republic,

¹⁵ Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City, 1750-1865*, 16-18; Henry Steele Commager, "Forts in the Wilderness," in *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City*, ed. Stefan Lorant (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company), 17.

the Allegheny Mountains marked the boundary between the East and the West and presented an obstruction to travel and substantial hindrance to reaching the natural resources of the Ohio Valley. The travel account of French botanist and explorer Francois André Michaux, who traveled over the Alleghenies and into the West in 1802, provides a vivid description of what trappers, hunters, traders, settlers and travelers encountered when passing through the mountain chain. According to Michaux, “when on the top of the highest of these ridges, the inequality of this crowd of mountains, conveyed by continual forests, which extend over the country, and beyond which no habitation can be perceived, presents a picture resembling the sea after a storm.” He appreciated the beauty and grandeur of the Alleghenies but by the time he reached Pittsburgh the arduous journey had wore him down as he wrote “I began to be tired of traveling in so mountainous a country; for in an extent of a hundred and eighty miles which I had traversed almost wholly on foot, and during the greatest heats, I do not believe that I went a hundred yards on level ground.” English traveler Thomas Ashe best summed up travel over the Alleghenies, when he stated that all he encountered on his mountain pass were “immense hills, bad roads and frightful precipices.” Americans had previously battled Britain, France and various native tribes for access to the resources of the Ohio Valley but geography and the Allegheny Mountains posed an equal if not greater challenge.¹⁶

During this period, wagon trails into the West through the Alleghenies were limited. Two wagon roads crossed the mountains into Pennsylvania, one led from

¹⁶ “Allegheny Mountains,” *Britannica Online Encyclopedia*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/16046/Allegheny-Mountains> (Accessed August 26, 2012); F.A. Michaux, *Travels to the Westward of the Allegany Mountains, in the States of the Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, in the Year 1802* (London: Barnard & Sultzter, 1806), 21 and 29; Thomas Ashe, *Travels in America, Performed in 1806, for the Purpose of Exploring the Rivers Alleghany, Monongahela, Ohio, and Mississippi* (London: Newburyport, 1808), 18.

Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and the other from the Potomac River to the Monongahela River near Pittsburgh. The mountains could also be crossed further south on a wagon trail that ran southwest through Virginia toward the Holston River and Knoxville in Tennessee from there a pioneer could pass through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky. Once across the mountains, the main artery of travel was the Ohio River which ran from Pittsburgh to the Mississippi River. Travelling by river also presented a problem as the Ohio River had many spots that were not navigable at certain times of the year with the most troublesome spot being the Falls of the Ohio at Louisville. It was also primarily a one way avenue of travel, downstream east to west.¹⁷

The distance and difficulty involved in crossing the Allegheny Mountains has lead many historians and other observers to categorize the West and the Ohio Valley as a different world isolated both economically and culturally from the East. In his legendary work, *History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson*, Henry Adams, member of the Adams political family, identified the Ohio Valley as both the first West and the frontier during the era of the New Republic. He commented on both the geographic isolation of the Ohio Valley and the distinctiveness of its people, “nowhere did eastern settlements touch the western. At least one hundred miles of mountainous country held the two regions apart.” According to Adams, the isolation and differences between the East and the Ohio Valley, and hence the West, were so great that they presented a problem for governing and uniting the young nation. The people of the Ohio Valley were “partly disposed to think themselves, and the old thirteen States were not altogether unwilling to consider them, the germ of an independent

¹⁷ Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson*, 5.

empire, which was to find its outlet, not through the Alleghenies to the seaboard, but by the Mississippi River to the Gulf.” In Adams’ analysis, the East and the West were worlds apart and westerners viewed themselves separate from easterners. Their affiliation was to their own region and not the larger United States.¹⁸

Historian Frederick Jackson Turner also played a critical role in perpetuating the idea of separation between the East and West. Turner’s “Frontier Thesis” shaped the image of both the West and the frontier for generations of Americans. Turner posited that the East and the West were two different worlds. The East was a part of the transatlantic world and largely European in nature. In many ways, Turner viewed the East as the European frontier. The West was a barbaric and uncivilized land inhabited by barbaric and uncivilized Indians. Settlers would move west, conquer the Indians and create a new culture and society that was distinctly American. According to Turner, the wilderness or the West took European settlers “strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone to planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick; he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion.” In this scenario, a western pioneer loses all trace of their former identities. They become savages like those they are living amongst. Over time the settler reclaims civilization but not the same that he brought with him from the East. Turner’s pioneers were a breed apart with the westerner cut off from the East both geographically, philosophically and economically.¹⁹

¹⁸ Adams, *The History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Jefferson*, 6.

¹⁹ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1996), 4.

Other historians have taken a similar approach to Adams and Turner but shed most of the cultural and social analysis and focused instead on economic separation. In *A History of Manufactures in the Ohio Valley to the Year 1860*, Isaac Lippincott argued that the Ohio Valley possessed very little dependence on the East for manufactured goods because severe isolation made it nearly impossible to import finished goods. Thomas D. Clark posited in *Agrarian Kentucky* that broad areas of the region retained complete economical isolation from the rest of the country until the early decades of the nineteenth century. Arguments such as these have created a perception that pioneers in the Ohio Valley were self-sufficient yeomen who gave up all the “comforts of civilization” to create an independent life for themselves far removed from the influence of the East. Nature provided everything that they needed such as food, clothing and home furnishings. Trade was conducted between neighbors within the region not outside and almost exclusively involved nature’s surplus.²⁰

An examination of the economic situation on the ground during the pioneer period illustrates that the characterization of the Ohio Valley as economically isolated does not hold true. In his work on the colonial and post colonial economies of the Ohio Valley, Eric Hinderaker argued strongly against the idea of economic insularity. Furthermore, he concluded that the empires of commerce strategies employed by both France and Britain and their intense competition for markets and resources made any sort of economic isolation impossible. To this point, by the end of British control, the Ohio Valley had developed a strict cash economy and a material culture dominated by European influence. Farmers and settlers who lived outside of larger trading centers increasingly ventured into

²⁰ Lippincott, 2; Thomas D. Clark, *Agrarian Kentucky* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1977), VII; Elizabeth A. Perkins, “The Consumer Frontier: Household Consumption in Early Kentucky,” *Journal of American History* 78, no. 2 (1991): 486.

these towns as well as outlying trading posts for the purpose of trade. These individuals found that they could no longer trade for goods with their surplus but instead needed cash which led to the deterioration of the subsistence/household economy. It did not totally obliterate the existence of subsistence farming but it did draw those on the fringes into the larger Atlantic World. The Ohio Valley's developing cash economy does largely debunk the arguments of earlier historians such as Adams and Jackson who viewed the Ohio Valley as a savage frontier with economically, socially and culturally backwards inhabitants. Instead, the Ohio Valley more closely resembled Richard C. Wade's concept of an urban frontier where towns constituted the "spearheads of the frontier" and outlying areas developed around these centers. And pivotal to this development was a reliance on a cash economy and European goods.²¹

Similarly, according to historian Elizabeth A. Perkins, the Ohio Valley frontier was a "consumer frontier." Peripheral regions such as the Ohio Valley were quickly absorbed into the larger "European economic sphere." Or more specifically, they became part of the larger Atlantic World. Most settlers arrived in the Ohio Valley with a capitalistic ideology and an affinity for European goods. The fact that Eastern goods littered The Ohio Valley even during its earliest days of settlement attests to her argument and renders the idea of economic insularity void. Queens ware, nankeen cloth, Bohea and English tea along with English teacups and saucers and European home décor could all be found in pioneer homes. In 1786, the immediate years following the American Revolution and at a time when the West was still considered wild, untamed and uncultured, residents of Pittsburgh could purchase fine eastern goods imported from

²¹ Hinderaker, 2; Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830*, 1-3.

Philadelphia such as coffee, waggoner tools, pewter dishes and formal handkerchiefs from India at the store of Wilson & Wallace on Water Street. If a customer did not want to do business with Wilson & Wallace they could walk down the street and purchase a similar assortment of imported goods from Daniel Britt & Co. The following year, citizens of Pittsburgh could purchase a variety of West India goods at James O'Hara's newly opened store or make a short trip to Mercer's Town and purchase European and both East and West India goods such as silk hats, gauze handkerchiefs and aprons, silk laces and queens ware at Abraham Usher's store. In 1789, a citizen of Pittsburgh could drink the finest imported coffee at the newly opened Beaumont's Hotel and Ohio Coffee House. Far from being isolated, the residents of Pittsburg and its surrounding areas had access to the same finished goods as those on the East Coast.²²

Further west into the interior, as early as 1793, European goods imported from Philadelphia such as books, linens, silks, clothing, hats and queens ware could be purchased in abundance in Lexington, Kentucky. Numerous merchants such as Irwin & Bryson, John Crozier & Co., Hugh Millvain, George Tegarden and Montgomery Bell regularly advertised a wide assortment of the finest imported goods. Residents of Lexington could also purchase goods seized by man but provided by nature in the Ohio Valley such as whiskey, furs and leather goods but ads in the local newspaper spent more time announcing the arrival of goods from outside the valley. At Marietta, Ohio in 1800, residents had access to just about any type of finished goods that their hearts desired even if local merchants did not carry that particular item on their shelves. If a consumer had

²² Perkins, 486-487 and 508-510; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 36, 1786, January 27 and July 14, 1787, August 1, 1789. For more on capitalist commodity markets in early Ohio Valley settlement see Allan Kulikoff, "The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 46 (Jan. 1989), 120-44.

the economic means, distance was not a problem. Fine exquisite furniture such as cane chairs and bedroom cornices could be imported from Findlay's Chair Manufactory on Gage Street and black morocco shoes with a designer pattern from Mitchell and Kirkshaw on Baltimore Street in Baltimore. If a resident of Marietta wanted to satisfy their intellectual curiosity, they could import books on a wide variety of subjects from Osborn's Bookstore in New York City. While Lexington and Marietta were geographically distant and isolated, its residents had the same access to fine goods as residents in the East although it would take more time for the goods to arrive in their hands at certainly more cost.²³

Imported textiles, ceramics, tea and coffee did not magically appear in the Ohio Valley nor did nature provide it for the pioneers. Of course some of these goods arrived in the wagons of settlers but the rest had to be imported. The key element of this is the word imported which means that someone had to send it from the East which on its own debunks the myth of economic isolation. Merchants could be found in abundance in the Ohio Valley during the earliest days of the New Republic. And these merchants were not acting as a conduit for trade between neighbors of goods provided by nature. They dealt in imported eastern and European goods. Most of these goods came into the Ohio Valley at Pittsburgh from Philadelphia and traveled across the Alleghenies on roads and paths not suitable for wagons, at least in the early years. Therefore, resources from the Ohio Valley such as furs and skins, ginseng, bear's grease and agriculture products would be exported out of the valley and finished goods such as salt, iron, nails and other

²³ *Kentucky Gazette*, December 21, 1793; Harman Blennerhassett, Commissions to be Executed for H. Blennerhassett at Baltimore and New York, December 1800, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, Archives and Manuscript Collections, West Virginia University.

manufactured goods brought into the valley on caravans of sometimes as many as fifteen packs horses carrying as much as 200 pounds each tied together in a single file line usually guided by two men. Pittsburgh was both a part of the Ohio Valley because of its position at the head waters of the Ohio River and a gateway to the rest of the valley for the same reason. The Ohio River was the highway of the interior and, in many regards, Pittsburgh was the toll keeper. Pittsburgh facilitated trade between the East and the West. Agents working for Pittsburgh merchants purchased manufactured goods in Philadelphia and sent them overland on covered wagons back to Pittsburgh. The journey took about twenty days and once in Pittsburgh, the goods would be sent down the Ohio River further into the Ohio Valley. The important role played by Pittsburgh in the importation of goods into the Ohio Valley was not lost on visitors to the valley. Francois André Michaux described Pittsburgh as a “dépôt of merchandise from Philadelphia and Baltimore, sent thither at the commencement of spring and autumn, to supply the states of the Ohio and Kentucky, and of the settlement of the Natches.” It is not unusual or extraordinary that a Frenchman or any other European for that matter would recognize Pittsburgh’s role as importer since most of the goods being imported from Philadelphia originated in Europe.²⁴

Foreign goods constituted the vast majority of goods imported into the Ohio Valley and during both the Colonial and New Republic eras, northeastern merchants were synonymous with foreign trade. Pittsburgh was the gateway for goods coming into the Ohio Valley but northeastern merchants played a role in receiving those goods once they made their way into the valley. By the turn of the nineteenth century, northeastern

²⁴ Catherine Elizabeth Reiser, *Pittsburgh’s Commercial Development, 1800-1850* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951), 29-31; Erasmus Wilson, 74; Michaux, 30-31.

merchants made significant inroads into the Ohio Valley which provides more proof that the West was far from economically isolated. A major example of this can be found in Marietta, Ohio. In 1786, a group of New England businessmen and speculators purchased over a million acres of land from the United States government under the name of the Ohio Company of Associates. This land at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers would give birth to the town of Marietta in 1788. From the very beginning, commercial interests and more specifically international commerce played a significant role in the plans of the Ohio Company. By 1799, Marietta contained upwards of thirty stores and the majority of these stores were owned by northeastern merchants. Marietta provided a perfect location for eastern merchants to receive imported goods because it was strategically located about 170 miles southwest of Pittsburgh. Northeastern merchants in Marietta received goods from Pittsburgh and not only sold them to nearby residents but also facilitated the infiltration of foreign goods further into the Ohio Valley. The presence of stores owned by eastern merchants selling eastern and foreign goods in the Ohio Valley puts another dent in the idea of the economic isolation of the early American West.²⁵

One index of the Ohio Valley's integration into the wider Atlantic World was the presence of a large and vibrant boatbuilding industry in the region. Boats played a major role in getting goods from the East to the West. Therefore, boatbuilding was a major industry within the Ohio Valley. As early as the American Revolution and its immediate aftermath keelboats, barges and flatboats produced in the Ohio Valley could be found in abundance on the Ohio River. Pittsburgh was a leader in the early construction of keelboats and barges. Keelboats were shallow draft and typically between forty to eighty

²⁵ Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise*, 7-24.

feet long and between seven and ten feet wide. Their cargo burden ranged between fifteen and fifty tons. Barges were a form of keelboat that was significantly wider and usually shorter with a slightly larger draft. The cargo burden of a barge could range anywhere between forty to 170 tons. Flatboats, or Kentucky boats as they were commonly referred to, appeared on the Ohio River in the most frequency. Flatboats were the easiest and least costly to construct and ranged between twenty and 100 feet in length and between twelve and twenty feet in width with a typical cargo burden between forty to fifty tons.²⁶

Pittsburgh and its surrounding area constituted the center of the vast majority of the building and purchasing of boats. The *Pittsburgh Gazette* regularly advertised companies who specialized in building boats for travel down the Ohio River. John Perry's boat yard at the mouth of Turtle Creek on the Monongahela River boasted a saw mill on the premise which could be used to cut wood and construct boats to a customer's specifications. Turnbull, Marmie & Co. routinely advertised a sizeable stock of Kentucky boats. Outside of Pittsburgh in Elizabethtown on the Monongahela, a person could choose from a wide assortment of sizes of Kentucky boats at Duncan Berriman & Co. The United States government even took part in boatbuilding on western waters. In 1805, it contracted the construction of one gunboat in Marietta and another five gunboats in Cincinnati, Ohio. Further west, Between April 1805 and January 1806, the U.S.

²⁶ Leland D. Baldwin, *The Keelboat Age on Western Waters* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press), 44-47.

government contracted the construction of another seven gunboats in Louisville and Eddyville, Kentucky.²⁷

Keelboats, barges and flatboats were the means of transportation Henry Adams referred to when he stated that the Ohio Valley would “find its outlet, not through the Alleghenies to the seaboard, but by the Mississippi River to the Gulf.” But even the travel of the boats down the Ohio River to the Mississippi River and then New Orleans did not constitute a break from the East because a good portion of the goods transported on these boats made their way to both eastern and European markets. According to historian Peter J. Kastor, during both French and Spanish control, the Port of New Orleans was vital to America’s international commerce as a significant amount of goods and raw materials were sold and deposited in New Orleans for “transshipment to the Atlantic.” Specifically in regard to the Ohio Valley, the Port of New Orleans was especially important to Kentucky as a means to get their goods and raw materials to both the East and Europe. Starting in the late seventeen-eighties, Lexington became an “important dispatching center” for the area’s agricultural surplus to reach markets both inside and outside the United States. Ads attesting to the connection between Kentucky goods and New Orleans markets could be found in abundance in the *Kentucky Gazette*. One such example can be found in an ad placed by Georgetown merchant James Lemon in November of 1793. Lemon solicited the services of boatmen for the purpose of sailing his boats from the city of Frankfort to New Orleans. The cargo of the boats would consist of country linen, hog’s lard, sugar, wheat, rye, oats and live cattle and pigs. Although not on Lemon’s list of goods being sent to New Orleans, hemp made up a large amount of the agricultural

²⁷ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, February 16, 1788; February 23 and August 1, 1789; List of Agents, Contractors and Builders of Gunboats in the Western Country, Captain David Potter Letter Book, MSS. CP, Filson Historical Society, Special Collections, Louisville, KY.

surplus making its way down the Mississippi River. Kentucky merchants routinely shipped a large quantity of hemp on flatboats or barges to merchants and commission agents in New Orleans who would then in turn ship and sell the hemp to merchants and commission agents on the Eastern Seaboard or in Europe.²⁸

Boats brought finished goods into the Ohio Valley from the East and transported raw materials out of the valley but most of these goods originated in Europe because American merchants sold a significant amount of foreign goods and the raw materials were headed for foreign workshops. Therefore, merchants needed a way to bring foreign goods to American markets and send raw materials to foreign manufacturers. They needed ships to bridge the Atlantic waters that separated markets at home from markets abroad. Shipbuilding was a hallmark of commerce during both the Colonial and New Republic eras. Along the Atlantic Coast, it became one of the first mechanical industries to which colonists earned a degree of profit. By the mid-eighteenth century, America possessed more than 125 shipyards and constructed more than one-third of all ships built in the British Empire. 2,343 colonial built vessels sailed the earth's oceans in 1775 and this represented only a fraction of the ships built in North America in the eighteenth century. New England was the center of the construction of ocean-going vessels in America and was responsible for over two-thirds of all American shipbuilding. It had occupied this role since the early colonial days, mainly because of their leading role in foreign commerce along with the cheap price of wood and abundant workforce. New

²⁸ Adams, *The History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Jefferson*, 6; James F. Hopkins, *A History of Hemp in Kentucky* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1998), 73; Peter J. Kastor, *The Nation's Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 37; Wade, 20; *Kentucky Gazette*, November 16, 1793. Wade is most concerned with foreign trade but does also discuss eastern interests.

England was the center of shipbuilding not only for America but also played a major role in supplying ships for foreign demand. During the Era of the New Republic, New England was at the forefront of what maritime historians describe as the “golden age” of American shipbuilding. Shipbuilding constituted a major link in the economic ties between America and foreign markets.²⁹

The most significant index of the Ohio Valley’s integration into the Atlantic World was its involvement in the shipbuilding industry. It was an important industry to the region even if few outside the valley knew of its existence. On January 2, 1812, tireless promoter of American industrial progress and champion of the Western Country Henry Clay attested to the once vibrant industry of shipbuilding on western waters in an address before the United States House of Representatives. Clay told a story to his fellow representatives that he had heard several years prior about a ship captain trying to convince a custom officer in Marseilles, France that Pittsburgh was a port city. In the story, Captain John Brevoort of the ship *Western Trader* presented the papers for his vessel and its cargo of flour and pork to a French customs officer. The official looked at the papers and threw them to the ground. He angrily asked Brevoort, “what do you mean, sir, by giving me forged papers? Do you take me for a child not to know that there is no such port in America as Pittsburgh?” The captain replied that he did not forge the papers nor lie as the ship “was built there and is loaded with the products of the surrounding country.” This did not convince the Frenchman as he threatened to seize the ship and have the captain and crew “thrown into irons.” Nervously, Brevoort asked for a map of

²⁹ Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Viking, 2001), 176-177; Kenneth J. Blume, *Historical Dictionary of the U.S. Maritime Industry* (Lanham, MD.: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 442; Archer B. Hulbert, “Western Ship-Building,” *American Historical Review* 2, no.4 (1916): 720; Charles F. Carroll, “Wooden Ships and American Forests,” *Journal of Forest History* 25, no. 4 (Oct., 1981): 213.

the United States and then proceeded to map a course from France to the Gulf of Mexico and then up the Mississippi River to the Ohio River with his finger. When the captain's finger reached the headwaters of the Ohio River he stopped and exclaimed this is "Pittsburgh, the port from which I sailed!" Now convinced that Breevort had not lied or forged papers and that Pittsburgh was indeed a port city, the French customs officer allowed captain, ship and crew to continue on their way. While amusing and possibly exaggerated, the story attests to the existence of shipbuilding on western waters, the lack of knowledge in regard to the existence of this industry and the strong connection between the economies of the Ohio Valley and Europe. Shipbuilding and foreign trade linked the Ohio Valley to the Atlantic World even if a rude and presumptive French customs agent and the general public did not know it.³⁰

As early as the seventeen-sixties, Philadelphia merchants began to look to the land west of the Alleghenies as a possible spot for the construction of ocean-going vessels. In 1770, an advisor to Lord Hillsborough, who at the time served as Secretary of State for the American department, posited that "whenever the farmers or merchants of the Ohio shall properly understand the business of transportation, they will build schooners, sloops & ec. on the Ohio, suitable for West India or European markets." It is believed that the first ship capable of traversing ocean waters built on western rivers was done so by Dr. Waters in 1792. He built an unnamed schooner near Pittsburgh and sailed it down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans and then by sea to Philadelphia. The story of Dr. Waters' schooner caused Englishman Francis Baily, who traveled to the

³⁰ Michaux, 32; Henry Clay, "On the Increase of the Navy," in *The Works of Henry Clay, Vol. V*, ed. Calvin Colton (New York: Barnes and Burr, 1863), 294-295; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 129-130; Leland D. Baldwin "Shipbuilding on the Western Waters, 1791-1817" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 20 (1933), 29.

Ohio Valley in 1796, to comment that the area would soon witness “a fleet of merchantmen doubling the Cape at the mouth of the Ohio, and bringing up that delightful river the produce of every climate under the sun.” It would take a few years, but Baily’s prophecy would come true.³¹

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, shipbuilders took their trade to western waters and were constructing sea-worthy vessels at points all along the Ohio River from Pittsburgh to Louisville. A major reason for this being that the Ohio Valley contained a wide variety of wood for ship planks and masts, such as black oak, white oak, black walnut, cherry, and yellow pine. Not having to ship these materials long distances made the construction of the vessels cheaper. Also of importance was the availability of agriculture products in the area. A ship could leave the shipyards with a full load and not have to stop until it reached its destination. Usually the word ship is used as a catch-all term to describe any craft capable of ocean travel but there are technical differences that set the different types of vessels apart. These differences mainly involve size and number of masts. The Ohio Valley primarily constructed three types of ocean-going vessels. The first was a ship which contained three or four masts and was the largest of the three. The next type was a schooner which had two or more masts rigged fore-and-aft. The final type of vessel built in the Ohio Valley was a brig with two masts, fore and main. It is

³¹ Leland D. Baldwin “Shipbuilding on the Western Waters, 1791-1817,” 29-31; Thaddeus Mason Harris, *The Journal of a Tour into the Territory Northwest of Alleghany Mountains* (Boston: Manning & Loring, 1805), 210; Francis Baily, *Journal of a Tour of the Unsettled Parts of North America in 1796 & 1797* (London: Baily Brothers, 1856), 330-331; *Kentucky Gazette* (Lexington), May 5, 1792. Hall’s vessel may have been called the *Western Experiment* as the May 5, 1792 edition of the *Kentucky Gazette* describes a vessel with that name descending the Ohio River on its way to Philadelphia via New Orleans on that date. Leland Baldwin believes that Dr. Waters schooner and the *Western Experiment* were one in the same.

estimated that between 1800 and 1808 the total value of ocean-going vessels built in the Ohio Valley surpassed one and a half million dollars.³²

Historians, those who have actually looked at the subject, have long disputed the actual economic effect of shipbuilding on western waters. Even Leland Baldwin, the foremost chronicler of western shipbuilding activity, has characterized it as a romantic yet minor phase of the western movement that paled in comparison to the shipbuilding in the East. But the continued construction of shipyards in the Ohio Valley stretching further inward as time progressed is proof that both Eastern investors and businessmen within the valley felt that it was an economically worthwhile endeavor. It is also proof that the Ohio Valley viewed itself as part of a larger economic world, because these vessels capable of crossing the mighty Atlantic Ocean were not being constructed to travel back and forth from Pittsburgh to Louisville as both the difficulties of upriver travel and common sense eliminate this possibility. The Ohio Valley built ocean-going vessels in order to assume a role in transatlantic trade and viewed its economy within the context of the Atlantic World not locally or regionally.³³

The existence of a consumer culture built upon European goods imported from the East, the existence of retail stores owned by northeastern merchants and manned by Ohio Valley residents and a shipbuilding industry in the Ohio Valley which not only built ocean-going vessels but also facilitated the removal of raw materials from the area represented its link to the Atlantic World. It also signified a larger problem for the Ohio Valley which was economic dependence on the East and foreign markets. The Ohio

³² Baldwin "Shipbuilding on the Western Waters, 1791-1817," 29-31; Hulbert, 729; F.B. Webster, ed., *Shipbuilding Cyclopaedia: A Reference Book* (New York: Simmons-Boardman Publishing Company, 1920), 15, 18 and 121-122.

³³ Baldwin, "Shipbuilding on Western Waters, 1791-1817," 44.

Valley constituted a major extraction point in the colonial system of trade that marked the pre-embargo economy of the United States. Raw materials were taken out of the valley, sent to eastern ports, whether overland through Pittsburgh or via water through New Orleans, and shipped to foreign markets. These materials would then be turned into finished goods and shipped back to ports in the Eastern United States. Once the materials were extracted from the area, the Ohio Valley economy was left barren of any system of manufacturing of its own. Therefore, the Ohio Valley's participation in a transatlantic economy did possess negative effects on the long term economic stability of the region.

The Ohio Valley would not gain any sort of economic independence or its own economic identity until the second decade of the nineteenth century when entrepreneurs within the valley encouraged with their actions the development of a system of manufactures and increased emphasis on internal trade. Essentially, this constituted a change in economic focus which led to the emergence of a regional economy in the Ohio Valley which although not dependent on the economy of other regions within the United States could still function with those other economies in the creation of the larger United States economy. The question that now must be asked is what caused this change in vision? The answer can be found in the Embargo of 1807, or Jefferson's Embargo as it is more commonly known, and ensuing trade restrictions resulting from British and French aggression leading to the War of 1812.

B.) Retreat from the Atlantic World: Jefferson's Embargo

In December of 1807, at the urging of Thomas Jefferson, a Democratic-Republican controlled Congress passed into law a total embargo on foreign trade. Jefferson urged Congress to take action as the "increasing dangers with which our vessels, our seamen,

and merchandise, are threatened, on the high seas and elsewhere, from the belligerent powers of Europe, and it being of the greatest importance to keep in safety these essential resources.” Jefferson’s Embargo, as it has come to be known, was an experiment in peaceable coercion which prohibited American vessels from carrying goods to any foreign ports as well as prohibiting any foreign vessels from carrying goods into American ports unless operating under orders from the President of the United States. Jefferson intended to prevent the United States from becoming entangled in the conflict between Great Britain and France and vindicate the “revolutionary vision of free trade” for all nations regardless of size or strength. The theory behind the embargo was neither a new nor foreign concept to Americans. The Embargo of 1807 was essentially an extension of the Pre-Revolution non-importation movements meant to alter British taxation policies only on a much grander scale.³⁴

Louis Martin Sears, an early historian on the Embargo of 1807, posited that Jefferson’s implementation of the embargo was an extension of his long maturing philosophy of pacifism and it was “the projection into foreign affairs of the peace ideals of a democracy, the contribution to international polity of one of the world’s greatest democrats.” Other historians such as Henry Adams had previously taken a similar approach and linked pacifism and economic coercion. The rationale behind the embargo is actually more complex and does not involve pacifist considerations. By definition, a pacifist will not fight and is opposed to war or any sort of violence. There is no doubt that Jefferson preferred a diplomatic solution such as economic coercion over war but that did

³⁴ Thomas Jefferson, “The Embargo Laws and a Message from the President to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, 1807” (Shaw & Shoemaker, *Early American Imprints*, Series 2, no. 13897), 1; Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic*, 210 and 216. The Embargo passed by a vote of 22 to 6 in the Senate and 82 to 44 in the House of Representatives.

not mean he completely ruled out armed conflict. He defended the embargo by stating that the continued belligerence of Britain and France left him with only three options, “1. Embargo. 2. War. 3. Submission and tribute.” Jefferson unequivocally ruled out the third option which left a choice between the other two. He felt that a total embargo against Britain and France presented a better option but only in the short term. A permanent embargo was not acceptable. If economic coercion did not succeed, then America would fight to defend the “common birth-right of mankind” which was the right to conduct free-trade across the seas. According to Jefferson, “our situation is truly difficult. We have been pressed by the belligerents to the very wall, and all further retreat is impracticable.” A short term embargo was the line in the sand. Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin echoed this sentiment when he declared that “in every point of view, privations, sufferings, revenue, effect on the enemy, politics at home, etc., I prefer war to a permanent embargo.” The Embargo of 1807 as conceptualized by Jefferson and his advisors was neither a pacifist solution, act of cowardice nor a knee-jerk reaction to a foreign relation crisis. It was a calculated foreign policy decision devised to use economic coercion to avoid war if at all possible. If not, then war was the next step.³⁵

Thomas Jefferson believed the Embargo of 1807 would accomplish two major goals. First, it would prevent war by depriving the British and French, especially the

³⁵ Sears, 4; Henry Adams, *The History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Jefferson* (New York: Library of America, 1986), 1115 and 1118; Marion Severynse, ed., *Webster's II: New College Dictionary* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 787; Thomas Jefferson to Lieutenant Governor Lincoln, 13 November 1808, *Memoirs, Correspondence and Private Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Volume III*, ed. Thomas Jefferson Randolph (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1829), 119; Thomas Jefferson to the Society of Tammany, 29 February 1808, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. VIII*, ed. Henry Augustine Washington (Washington D.C.: Taylor & Maury, 1854), 127-128; Henry Adams, *The Life of Albert Gallatin* (New York: Peter Smith, 1943), 366-367.

former, of America's agricultural surplus and force them to respect the United States' right to free trade. According to Drew R. McCoy, a historian of Jeffersonian political economy, this arose from Jefferson's belief that "the young republic could always feed itself, but the corrupt, mercantilist societies of the Old World and their colonies could not." He was confident in the ability of the embargo to sway British and French policy. In hindsight, it is clear that Jefferson miscalculated America's dependence on foreign markets and its connection to the Atlantic World. The other major accomplishment involves the economic development of the United States. By forcing the government of Britain in particular to acknowledge the neutrality of the seas and the United States' right to free trade with whomever it may choose, the British monopoly on world trade would be lessened and open a larger number of markets on more favorable terms to American commerce. Furthermore, the embargo would encourage a certain level of American manufacturing.³⁶

As discussed in the introduction, the Democratic-Republicans were not an anti-manufacturing party. Many within the party felt that the promotion of manufacturers was necessary in order to grow the United States economy. Even Jefferson himself was not an enemy of manufacturing. Despite his championing of agriculture and previous statements that America's work-shops should remain in Europe, Jefferson actually believed that development of some manufacturing was good for the nation. He preferred household manufactures over large scale industry but did believe that manufacturing, agriculture and animal husbandry could co-exist. In defense of his embargo in February of 1808, Jefferson stated that it is time to "turn seriously to that policy which plants the manufacturer and the husbandman side by side, and establishes at the door of everyone

³⁶ McCoy, 216 and 217.

that exchange of mutual labors and comforts, which we have hitherto sought in distant regions, and under perpetual risk of broils with them.” In this statement, Jefferson was mainly referring to household manufactures but it still constitutes support for manufacturing and acknowledgment of the effect that the embargo would have on American industry. Jefferson no doubt realized that if the United States was to replace foreign goods with those made domestically, it would require more than just household manufactures. Taking into account that Jefferson and the Democratic-Republicans considered manufacturing while planning the Embargo of 1807; it becomes both a foreign and economic policy decision.³⁷

Jefferson’s Embargo was a direct reaction to Great Britain and France’s refusal to respect the United States’ right to conduct neutral trade and the long standing British seizure of American vessels and the impressments of American citizens. Specifically, the *Leopard-Chesapeake* incident necessitated Jefferson’s actions. On June 22, 1807, the British warship *Leopard* stopped the American vessel *Chesapeake* three miles off the coast of Virginia and thus outside of United States waters. The captain of the British vessel demanded the surrender of seamen whom he suspected to be deserters from the British naval service. When the captain of the *Chesapeake* denied the request, the *Leopard* opened fire severely damaging the American vessel and leaving 21 Americans dead or wounded. In the aftermath, the British lowered the American flag and retrieved the four suspected deserters. The *Leopard-Chesapeake* incident precipitated “anxiety, rage and alarm” throughout the United States and left Americans “ripe and prepared for

³⁷ McCoy, 14-15, 210-211 and 227-231; Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution*, 205; Peskin, “How the Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing: The First Parties and the New Economy,” 248-249; Thomas Jefferson to the Society of Tammany, 29 February 1808, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. VIII*, 127-128.

anything that may promise revenge.” The attack on the *Chesapeake* constituted an assault on American sovereignty and honor and the American people demanded action. What kind of action they demanded was complicated by political ideology. Democratic-Republicans tended to favor swift and harsh action against their hated rivals the British whereas Federalists, whom in large part were merchants or had a stake in foreign trade, favored a more cautious and diplomatic response as they feared swift action against the British would further harm their economic interests. Jefferson tended to come down somewhere in the middle as he felt that the United States was not prepared militarily, financially or psychologically for war with an adversary as powerful or prepared for conflict as the British.³⁸

Jefferson’s Embargo was a complete and utter failure in regard to affecting British or French policy or keeping the United States from becoming involved in foreign entanglements. It failed to achieve its political goal by failing to ensure, as Jefferson had proposed, that the “great highway of all nations,” the Atlantic Ocean, remain free for all who chose to use it. The embargo disrupted foreign trade but failed to alter the policies of either Britain or France towards American vessels. Both the British and the French continued to harass and seize any American vessels it found on the Atlantic Ocean, the vast majority of these vessels were there illegally because of the embargo sanctions, but their seizure still constituted aggression against the United States. The British found other markets such as South America to make up for the lost trade with the United States and in many ways, the Embargo of 1807 reinforced Napoleon Bonaparte’s Continental System which involved isolating Britain from mainland Europe and other ports in an

³⁸ Walter Wilson Jennings, *The American Embargo, 1807-1809*, 38-39; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser* (Baltimore), June 29, 1807, 2.

effort to cripple their ability to conduct trade and isolate them economically. Bonaparte considered Jefferson's Embargo a joke and often publicly ridiculed it. In March of 1808, he declared himself a de facto U.S. custom agent by claiming that his seizure of American vessels was in fact aiding the United States government in their enforcement of the Embargo of 1807. By this logic, every shipped seized by Bonaparte constituted one less that Jefferson would have to punish for violating the embargo. It also constituted another reminder that the embargo had failed.³⁹

The Embargo of 1807 was a domestic economic catastrophe, at least in the short-term. It inflicted much more damage upon the United States economy than it did those of the intended targets, Britain and France. The embargo went into effect in December of 1807 and lasted fifteen months. The effects on the American economy were immediate and severe. American exports declined from \$108,343,000 in 1807 to 22,430,000 in 1808 and imports decreased from \$138,000,000 to \$56,990,000. The Embargo affected both North and South, merchants and farmers. The Northeast was heavily tied to foreign commerce. Merchants, ship-owners, shipbuilders, seamen and others who were involved in various other subsidiary activities suffered greatly from the loss of foreign commerce. The middle states such as New York and Philadelphia also were heavily dependent upon foreign trade and thus also suffered greatly. Even the economy of the South, which is often considered distant from the merchant and import activities of the North, experienced devastating effects as tobacco and cotton plantations were dependent upon foreign markets. No foreign markets meant that tobacco and cotton would rot on docks waiting for ships that would never arrive to take them to foreign shores. Prior to the

³⁹ George Logan to Thomas Jefferson, Feb. 27, 1801. Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress; Burton Spivak, *Jefferson's English Crisis: Commerce, Embargo, and the Republican Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1979), 123; Sears, 314.

Embargo, Americans heavily engaged in foreign commerce and often looked to Europe, for both a source of finished goods and a market for their agricultural surplus and raw materials, before looking inward to themselves. The effects of Jefferson slamming the door on foreign commerce were devastating to a nation that had not developed a significant infrastructure for manufacturing or domestic trade.⁴⁰

Thomas Jefferson knew the embargo would bring economic hardship to the young nation. He thought most of the economic distress would be felt in the Northeast among those involved in the shipping industry. His hope was that these hardships would only be temporary and the embargo would quickly convince Britain and France to change their maritime policies. Jefferson believed American patriotism and pride would compel the majority of Americans to gracefully endure these hardships. This assumption arose from his conviction that in the United States “every man feels a vital interest in maintaining the authority of the laws, and instantly engages in it as his own personal cause.” As a result, Americans would be willing to sacrifice “private interests for this greater public object.” He was wrong. By August of 1808, Jefferson realized that he had severely miscalculated American patriotism and stated to Albert Gallatin that “this Embargo is certainly the most embarrassing one that we have ever had to execute. I did not expect a crop of so sudden & rank growth of fraud & open opposition by force could have grown up in the U.S.” A large amount of this “fraud & open opposition” came in the form of smuggling or what historian Peter Andreas called “embargo busting.” Smugglers used three primary methods for evading the trade restrictions of Jefferson’s Embargo. The first method

⁴⁰ Reginald Horsman, *The New Republic: The United States of America 1789-1815* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000), 191; Adams, *The History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Jefferson*, 1115 and 1118; Jennings, 231.

involved farmers from Vermont and New York smuggling their agricultural produce into Canada. Smuggling under the guise of coastal trade between states constituted the second method. The third method was secretly sailing from a United States harbor without a waiver or clearance to a foreign port for the purpose of trade. The amount of smuggling necessitated that Congress pass a series of enforcement acts to combat the illicit trade. Smugglers not only offered tangible proof of the economic hardship caused by the Embargo of 1807 as well as hatred towards it but also lessened its effect as goods made their way to European markets despite the trade restrictions.⁴¹

Smuggling did not constitute the only domestic reaction towards the Embargo of 1807. Jefferson's attempt at peaceful economic coercion brought immediate reaction from American newspapers, politicians and citizens throughout the nation. However, the responses were often colored by regional and political allegiances. In the Northeast, where the economy revolved around all aspects of foreign commerce, reactions were, to say the least, negative. These reactions ranged from the embargo being a terrible mistake to a plot by Jefferson to annihilate foreign commerce and destroy New England merchants and shippers. A Federalist from the Northeast sent an anonymous letter to Jefferson condemning the embargo alleging that he engaged in a conspiracy with the French. The anonymous individual stated that "We had too great reason to believe that you are bartering away this Country's rights honor and Liberty to that infamous tyrant of the world (Napolien). From you originated all the calamities and evils this Country now suffers. You was the mother of the deathlike measure, the Embargo: and by you it is

⁴¹ Peter Andreas, *Smuggler Nation: How Illicit Trade made America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 74-79; Thomas Jefferson to General Benjamin Smith, 20 May 1808, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. V, ed. Henry Augustine Washington (Washington D.C.: Taylor & Maury 1853), 293-294.

continued.” The writer of the letter also accused the Jeffersonians of “fattening your selves on the spoils of our Country.” Northeastern poets also turned their rage towards Jefferson. At the age of thirteen in 1808, legendary poet William Cullen Bryant wrote his first poem with the subject of that work being Jefferson’s Embargo. The young Bryant expressed both a devotion to his section of the country and the Federalist Party as well as a developing dislike for Jefferson when he wrote “Curse of our nation, source of countless woes, From whose dark womb unreckon’d misery flows; Th’ Embargo rages, like a sweeping wind, Fear lowers before, and famine stalks behind.” Bryant’s affinity for British culture as well as his father’s pronounced loyalty to Federalist ideology no doubt influenced his opinion of the Embargo of 1807 but the poem does serve as a gauge to measure public discontent in the Northeast against Jefferson and his policies as the poem was a huge seller.⁴²

Federalist newspapers in New England acted quickly to denounce Jefferson’s Embargo. The *Salem Gazette* predicted economic catastrophe, “the embargo, the worst of evils in its worst form is about to annihilate the fruits of 20 years of industry- to impoverish the rich- to beggar the middle classes, and to starve and freeze the poor.” The *Connecticut Courant* called the embargo “Complete Despotism!” and published the lyrics to a song written by Henry Mellen and performed at a fourth of July celebration in Dover which blamed the current economic distress and future ruin squarely on Jefferson:

Our Ships all in motion,
Once whiten’d the ocean,

⁴² McCoy, 218; A Citizen Suffering under the Evils Accasioned by You to Thomas Jefferson, 29 August 1808, *To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson: Letters to a President*, ed. Jack McLaughlin (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 20-22; William Cullen Bryant, *The Embargo, with an Introduction and Notes by Thomas O. Mabbott* (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1955), 9-13 and 36. Bryant revised his poem in 1809 for the second edition and increased his criticism towards Jefferson and his embargo.

They sail'd and return'd with a cargo;
Now doom'd to decay,
They have fallen a prey,
To Jefferson, worms and Embargo.⁴³

Northeastern merchants screamed the loudest about Jefferson's Embargo but were not the only ones to suffer economic hardship and express their dissatisfaction. Thomas Freeman, a seaman from Philadelphia, typified the situation of those affiliated with occupations dependent upon ocean trade. Freeman found himself broke and without employment one year after the introduction of the embargo. He wrote to President Jefferson begging for relief, "Sir we humble bag your honour to grant us destrs seamen sum relaf for God nos what we will do. Your petitioners is at present utterly destitute of all employamat...We all have misses & famlys." This letter illustrates a growing sense of fear and desperation and shows that although New England marked the center of foreign trade, the hardships caused by the embargo worked their way down the coast to eventually touch all whose livelihood was dependent in some way on the ocean such as this seaman from Philadelphia.⁴⁴

While some seaman begged for help, other letters took a more threatening tone. In an unsigned letter, a citizen of Boston wrote that "I have agreed to pay four of my friends

⁴³ "A Refutation of Mr. Jefferson's Apology for the Embargo," *Salem Gazette*, January 12, 1808, Page 2. This article originally appeared in the *Boston Centinel*. "Complete Despotism!," *Connecticut Courant*, May 25 1808, P. 3 and "The Embargo," *Connecticut Courant*, July 20 1808, P. 3. This is only a portion of the song which was published in its entirety by the *Connecticut Courant*. There is some disagreement as to where and when the lyrics to "The Embargo" originated. In "Shipbuilding on Western Waters" Leland Baldwin called it a poem and attributed it to an anonymous river bard in Marietta, Ohio. He cited his source as Archer B. Hulbert's "Western Ship-Building." Hulbert also called it a poem with an anonymous author from Marietta and cited his source as manuscript in the possession of Captain J.G. Barker of Marietta. Since the *Newburyport Herald* and the *Pittsburg Gazette* both published the piece as a poem in 1808 with the same citation as the *Connecticut Courant*, it is a safe assumption that the manuscript in Barker's possession was probably pulled from a Federalist newspaper and attributed it either mistakenly or with purpose as being from Marietta.

⁴⁴ Thomas Freeman to Thomas Jefferson, 14 November 1808, *To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson: Letters to a President*, 31.

\$400 to shoat you if you don't take off the embargo by the 10th of Oct 1808 which I shall pay them, if I have to work on my hands and knees for it." The feelings of this particular gentleman are contradictory to a viewpoint expressed by Jefferson in a letter to Thomas Mann Randolph that continued hostilities by the British had "entirely hushed all opposition to the embargo." Along with the fact that Jefferson considered the death threat as "embargo ribaldry," it is obvious that he considered opposition to his attempt at peaceable economic coercion as mainly minor obstruction originating from a few troublemakers in one region of the nation.⁴⁵

Jefferson's Embargo did possess some support in the Northeast. Democratic-Republican newspapers attempted to make a case for the embargo to their readers. The *Republican Spy* (Northampton, MA) listed eight reasons to support the embargo which included "no commerce could be carried on with safety prior to the embargo," "we had serious disputes with England which might lead to war," "the embargo would bring the British to terms," "it would tend to preserve peace," "it would injure enemies more effectively than war" and an argument that was quite common among supporters of the embargo in New England and the Middle States, "it would encourage domestic manufactures." The last argument was one which could have garnered more supporters but domestic manufactures were slow to develop and their growth would not be recognizable until the embargo was already deemed a failure.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Unsigned to Thomas Jefferson, 19 September 1808, *To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson*, 27; Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Mann Randolph, 26 January 1808, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress; McLaughlin, 26-27. Jefferson was writing in reference to the British Orders of November 11, 1807 which rendered trade with France an impossibility. It is indicative of his belief, both prior to and after passage, that the Embargo was not unpopular. Thomas Mann Randolph was Thomas Jefferson's son-in-law.

⁴⁶ *Republican Spy* (Northampton, MA,) March 9, 1808.

Despite some support in northern states, the overwhelming amount of support for the Embargo of 1807 came from the South, which not coincidentally was Jefferson's home region and an area that assumed it would not be hard hit by foreign trade restrictions in part because of their belief that Jefferson would do nothing to harm southern interests. They possessed absolute faith in the Sage of Monticello which manifested itself in the form of unwavering blind loyalty. Newspapers in the South quickly came to Jefferson's aid. *The Enquirer* in Richmond, Virginia considered the embargo to be a necessity caused by British depravations against United States sovereignty and that "it was not a choice out of good and evils; but of evils alone- War- Submission- or the Embargo, were the alternatives presented. What patriot could have hesitated about the Choice?" This approach painted the debate over the embargo as a question of patriotism and morality but they also clearly emphasized it as a party issue and a battle between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans. A few weeks prior, the same paper framed it as a regional and occupational issue when it printed a fictional conversation between a farmer and a merchant. In this conversation, in which it should come as no surprise the farmer emerged as the winner over the merchant, the merchant stated that "I must confess, that your arguments do not convince me, that I should make as much money by the continuance as by the revocation of the embargo." In his answer, the fictional farmer identified himself as a defender of the values and traditions of the Founding Fathers, "I must invoke the honor of your country; the genius of our independence...Are you guilty, or not guilty, of abandoning the honor and independence of your country? - For what did our forefathers contend during the wars of the revolution? Against what usurpation, principally, did they rise up in arms?" Those who supported Jefferson and his embargo

had to take a moral highroad and placed patriotism over the accumulation of wealth because in the face of mounting economic hardships and proof that the embargo would hurt their region as much as any other, it was all they had.⁴⁷

The South expressed very little anger in regard to the Embargo of 1807. A rare example of discontent towards Jefferson and his embargo emanating from the South can be found in an article published by the *Alexandria Advertiser*. The paper viewed the embargo as a miscalculated plot to damage the British, whom Jefferson despised, and aid the French, whom Jefferson favored. In their estimation the only party to be damaged would be Americans as “the first immediate sufferers by an Embargo, are the poor day laborers- the next, the mechanics- the third, the merchants- but the last, and deepest sufferers, will be the FARMERS.” Furthermore, the ultimate ends of the embargo would not be the coercion of America’s enemies but the victory of British commerce as the “English must finally get all of the trade of the world to themselves- their enemies will admit them to an illicit commerce, while we are starving, and our produce rotting at home.” This article possessed many of the same themes as those in the Northeast but it placed special emphasis on the plight of the South and their relationship with agriculture. The purpose of this article was to alert Southerners who continued to support Jefferson and tolerate his policy of peaceable economic coercion that the embargo would destroy the economy of their region while profiting the British.⁴⁸

The muted negative response to Jefferson’s embargo in the South does give some credence to Jefferson’s analysis that opposition to his embargo was mainly the work of Northerners but the lack of public discontent does not mask the obvious effects of the

⁴⁷ Sears, 126 and 230; *The Enquirer* (Richmond, VA,) September 16, 1808, 3; “Dialogue between a Farmer and a Merchant,” *The Enquirer* (Richmond, VA,) September 2, 1808, 3.

⁴⁸ *Alexandria Advertiser* (Alexandria, VA) January 13, 1808, 3.

trade restrictions on the southern economy. Southern merchants suffered the ill-effects of the embargo just like northern merchants. John Melish, a Scottish merchant, writer and mapmaker suffered great financial loss on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean because of Jefferson's Embargo. In 1806, Melish traveled to the United States in order to learn about American markets. To be more specific, he was concerned with the relationship between American trade and British manufacturing. Between 1806 and 1807, Melish made numerous business connections in the United States which extended into the South and the interior as well as opening a store in Savannah, Georgia. He left the United States in 1808, to check on his business interests in Britain but quickly returned to Georgia in 1809 when he learned of the havoc the embargo brought to his investments. Upon his arrival in Savannah he found that he had amassed American debts which were "large and urgent" and a significant amount of which involved custom houses. A major reason why he could not pay his debts involved the large amount of money owed to him that he was unable to collect because of the damage done to the economy by the Embargo of 1807. He estimated that he had 185 debtors extending over an area of 200 square miles. Melish complained loudly to anyone that would listen that Jefferson's Embargo had reduced him to a state in which he had "nothing to contemplate but the wrecks of a ruined estate, and the fragments of it scattered to and fro throughout the land." He also stated that he had a store located over 200 miles into the interior which "held out no better prospect." Although not a southerner, Melish was a merchant whose main American business investment was a store in the South and he suffered ruin just like merchants in the North.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ John Melish, *Travels Through the United States of America in the Years 1806 & 1807 and 1809, 1810 & 1811* (Philadelphia: T & G Palmer, 1812), v and 261. Melish does not give the location or any

Some historians support a position that the embargo had a greater effect on the South than the North. Louis Martin Sears believes that the South suffered less than the Northeast in the short term but received greater permanent economic damage, mainly because of the region's failure to develop a legitimate manufacturing infrastructure. He even suggests that the embargo furthered the isolation of the South from the rest of the nation and made the Civil War more likely. Historian Norman J. Risjord also believes the Embargo of 1807 had a greater negative impact in the South because the impact in the North was primarily felt by those involved in the import industries. In the South it affected the entire economy. The Southern planter could not feed his family and slaves because his agricultural products sat on the docks and rotted rather than being sold in foreign markets. Without a viable system of manufacturing, the economy relied heavily on the planter class. Therefore, when the economic fortunes of the planter class decreased because they could not find adequate markets, the economic fortunes of the entire region suffered as well.⁵⁰

Evidence to back up these theories does exist. In Charlottesville, Virginia, the price of tobacco fell from five and a half dollars to three dollars in just twelve hours after news of the embargo arrived. Similarly, the price of flour fell from \$5.50 to \$2.50. Although these price drops can be attributed to hysteria more than actual pressure placed upon the market, it is indicative of the importance that the Southern economy placed on foreign markets. Historically, North Carolina depended more on exports than its neighbors to the north or south in its region. This state's market prices dropped drastically after the embargo. A bushel of corn sold for one dollar prior to the trade restrictions and only

other details of the store which he owned in the interior.

⁵⁰ Sears, 228 & 252; Norman J. Risjord, *Jefferson's America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 367.

nineteen cents afterwards. The price of tar plummeted from two dollars a barrel to forty-five cents. The fact that the South complained less than the Northeast cannot be taken as an indication that they suffered less only that they exhibited greater loyalty to the President because they shared his theory of the supremacy of the land.⁵¹

The reaction that Jefferson received to his attempt at peaceful economic coercion no doubt affected his decision not to seek a third term as President. His efforts had no effect on British and French aggression towards America's right to maintain neutral trade, the economy laid in ruin and his popularity had taken a serious hit. Congress finally repealed the Embargo of 1807 as Jefferson exited the presidency. It was replaced by the Non-Intercourse Act of 1809, which restricted trade only with Great Britain and France. Despite the change in policy, foreign trade failed to return to pre-Embargo levels in the ensuing years as more trade restrictions preceded the War of 1812. The embargo drove the United States into a deep economic depression that surpassed in severity the one experienced during the American Revolution. This coupled with the fact that the United States went to war in 1812 after all, has led historians to consider the Embargo of 1807 as the biggest political blunder of Thomas Jefferson's long public career. This assessment is correct only when the embargo is viewed strictly as a foreign policy measure as there is no denying its failure to coerce Britain or France into respecting the neutrality of the seas or keep the United States out war. If the Embargo of 1807 is viewed as a long term economic policy, its characterization as Jefferson's blunder becomes problematic.⁵²

Jefferson's Embargo affected the nation's economy and all regions suffered. But, at the same time it increased the demand for American goods which in turn hastened the

⁵¹ Sears, 229; *Connecticut Courant*, May 11 1808. This article was originally published in the *North Carolina Minerva*.

⁵² William Sterne Randall, *Thomas Jefferson: A Life* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994), 580.

development of manufactures in the Northeastern and Middle States, which is widely recognized, as well as the West, which is hardly recognized and the main focus of this study. Given that the promotion of manufactures was a major goal of the Democratic-Republicans by the time of the embargo's enactment, the long term boost that it provided to American industry makes it a success as economic policy. While lamenting the negative response to the embargo and its ineffectiveness in altering the maritime policies of belligerent foreign nations, Thomas Jefferson hailed its effect on the nation's manufactures. He proclaimed that his embargo had "impelled us to apply a portion of our industry and capital to internal manufacture and improvements. The extent of this conversion is daily increasing, and little doubt remains that the establishments formed and forming will- under the auspices of cheaper materials and subsistence, the freedom of labor from taxation with us, and of protecting duties and prohibitions- become permanent."⁵³

After the repeal of the Embargo of 1807, Democratic-Republicans were quick to acknowledge its influence in encouraging American Manufactures. James Madison stated that as a result of the embargo manufactures had "progressed in a wonderful degree, and went far to supply the internal demand, which was one great and permanent good that had risen out of a system fraught with many evils." According to Albert Gallatin, the embargo broke "inveterate habits, and given a general impulse to which must be ascribed the general increase of manufactures during the last two years" by "forcing industry and capital into other channels." Governor Simon Snyder of Pennsylvania linked the industrial growth of his state to Jefferson's Embargo when he commented that "many

⁵³ Jennings, 168-171 and 231; Peskin, "How the Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing: The First Parties and the New Economy," 237; McCoy, 222-223, 227-228 and 232-233; Thomas Jefferson "Eighth Annual Message-November 8, 1808" in *Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. VIII*, 127-128.

new and highly valuable manufactories have been established, and we now make in Pennsylvania various articles of domestic use, for which two years since, we were wholly depended upon foreign nations.” The Democratic-Republicans did not attempt to argue the effectiveness of the Embargo of 1807 as a foreign policy measure but were quick to defend it as a positive economic policy both in the present and future. Historians need to take a similar approach and evaluate the Embargo of 1807 as less of a foreign policy blunder and more of a long term stimulant to industrial growth.⁵⁴

The traditional story of the Embargo of 1807, as told by historians, has been one of not only devastation but also Eastern seaboard myopia that for the most part fails to comprehend the event's larger historical significance as a turning point in America's economic development. It is a story of eastern shipbuilders who lost their livelihoods because there was no need to build ocean going vessels at a time when ocean going trade had been halted, eastern merchants going broke because they had no foreign finished goods to sell and agricultural products rotting on eastern docks because there were no foreign markets to send them. Also missing from the traditional story is any mention of the West, the interior or the Ohio Valley. A major reason for this is that the embargo closed ports to both imports and exports which leads to the conclusion that it mainly affected those affiliated with ocean commerce. Given that the Ohio Valley is geographically distant from any coastal ports, even though it was in reality heavily involved in transatlantic trade, it is considered to be unimportant to the story of Jefferson's Embargo. This is a false assumption as the Ohio River was the highway of the

⁵⁴ Jennings, 168-171; Melish, 289; James Leander Bishop, *A History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860, Vol. II* (Philadelphia: Edward Young & Co., 1864), 140-141. The Madison quote is attributed to him by John Melish from a discussion the two engaged in.

interior and thus facilitated trade between the East and the West and, as illustrated earlier, the Ohio Valley was economically connected to the Atlantic World. Because of this any economic disruptions to the East adversely affected the West. Their economic fates were linked.

An example of the embargo's ill effects stretching into the interior can be found in a letter from Philadelphia merchant Sterling Grimes of Philadelphia to fellow merchant Thomas Bodley in Lexington in November of 1808. Grimes claimed that the embargo had affected his ability to supply cotton bagging to customers in the interior which included Bodley. According to Grimes, in all matters related to commerce, the embargo had severely damaged the economic interests of merchants and "placed an implacable seal on their commercial coffins." The fact that Grimes wrote this letter to Thomas Bodley of Lexington not only shows that northern merchants experienced economic hardships as a result of the embargo and thus reacted negatively towards Jefferson's policy, it is also further proof of the economic connection between the East and the Ohio Valley. The Embargo of 1807 negatively affected the ability of Grimes, an eastern merchant, to supply Bodley, a western merchant, with cotton bagging which would as a result affect his ability to supply his customers further in the interior. Grimes' letter also highlights the necessity of developing a system of manufactures in the interior as Bodley would not have had to look east for cotton bagging if Lexington manufacturers would increase their production, which they did in the following years. Jefferson's embargo damaged foreign trade and affected the lives of eastern merchants but more importantly

to this study it also affected merchants in the Ohio Valley because the East and the West were connected economically.⁵⁵

The Ohio Valley was a part of the Atlantic World. It occupied a significant role in the post-colonial commercial relationship between the United States and Europe which was still largely colonial in nature. The fact that foreign trade was important to the Ohio Valley economy is not necessarily a groundbreaking revelation. The importance and uniqueness of this study resides in the degree to which the valley was connected to the Atlantic World in ways that went beyond what is typically considered frontier commerce. The Ohio Valley provided a market for European manufactured goods as well as an extraction point for natural resources which fueled the industrial machines abroad. Ships built in the Ohio Valley carried manufactured goods and natural resources across the Atlantic Ocean in considerable bulk. Merchants and other entrepreneurs within the valley arranged the exportation of these resources and the importation of manufactured goods and as a result became major players in transatlantic trade. Ohio Valley markets, merchants and natural resources occupied a vital role in the economy of the Atlantic World. Given the Ohio Valley's role in the system of trade that occurred between the United States and foreign powers in the early nineteenth century, any interruption in foreign commerce would adversely affect the Ohio Valley. Despite its omission from the historiography of Jefferson's Embargo, Ohio Valley businessmen suffered just like their counterparts in other parts of the country. Likewise, they also contributed to the nation's development of a system of manufactures that occurred as a result of the embargo. The

⁵⁵ Sterling Grimes to Thomas Bodley, 24 November 1808, Bodley Family Papers 1773-1039, Filson Historical Society, Special Collections, Louisville, Ky.

following chapters will illustrate how the commercial interruptions that occurred as a result of the Embargo of 1807 forced Ohio Valley entrepreneurs to amend their business practices or perish. Furthermore, their actions fostered industrial growth in the Ohio Valley.

CHAPTER 2: PITTSBURGH

In the early months of 1808, James O'Hara encountered a serious cash flow problem and faced the possibility of losing the fortune that he spent the previous quarter of a century amassing. O'Hara built a mercantile empire constructed upon foreign trade. Although he possessed significant manufacturing interests, he viewed himself primarily as a merchant importer/exporter. He facilitated the extraction and shipment of Ohio Valley resources to Europe and imported goods manufactured from those very same resources. He constituted a major cog in America's post-colonial economy that eerily resembled its colonial economy. As a result most of his fortune was tied up in the elaborate system of credit that symbolized foreign commerce and his economic focus turned towards markets outside of the Ohio Valley and the United States. The Embargo of 1807 closed off markets in Europe and left him in dire financial straits scurrying to receive payment from his debtors and make payment to his creditors. He quickly realized that his economic survival depended upon adapting to the new economic environment. In the following years, O'Hara altered the way he viewed industry by increasing his manufacturing interests and looking to markets within the Ohio Valley and further west. More importantly, he encouraged other Pittsburgh businessmen to do the same and in the process would create the blueprint for Pittsburgh's industrial future.

James O'Hara's path to becoming Pittsburgh's "first captain of industry" and Pittsburgh's path to becoming an "industrial metropolis" travelled through the same terrain. In the years prior to the Embargo of 1807, Pittsburgh possessed significant manufacturing interests but viewed them as an afterthought to mercantile activities. Much

like O'Hara, its economic focus was turned towards the Eastern United States and Europe. Pittsburgh valued its relationship to the Atlantic World more than its connection to the Ohio Valley. Jefferson's Embargo forced it to look unto itself economically and change its view of industry. This included embracing manufacturing and developing trade networks within the Ohio Valley. Pittsburgh's reaction to the trade restrictions of the Embargo of 1807 and change in economic focus would be driven by businessmen, who like O'Hara, were forced to adapt or face financial disaster. As result of the reaction of these entrepreneurs to Jefferson's Embargo, Pittsburg would quickly transform from a "dépôt of merchandise from Philadelphia and Baltimore" to a manufacturing center and earn the nickname the "Birmingham of America."¹

A.) Pittsburgh's Early History and Pre-Embargo Economy

Pittsburgh's location and the abundant natural resources of the area dictated that it would one day be a great city. The city is situated at the spot where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers meet to form the Ohio River. The Iroquois Confederacy or Five Nations called this spot "Da-un-daga," which means fork hence the name Forks of the Ohio. The Allegheny River runs for 325 miles starting in north central Pennsylvania in Potter County flows into New York and eventually zigzags its way back into Pennsylvania flowing southwest towards Pittsburgh. The Monongahela River is a 130

¹ Leland D. Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 146; Quentin R. Skrabec Jr., *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 3 and 31; F.A. Michaux, *Travels to the Westward of the Allegany Mountains, in the States of the Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, in the Year 1802*, 30-31; Zadock Cramer, *Cramer's Pittsburgh Almanack for the Year 1804* (Pittsburgh: Zadock Cramer, 1803), 21, Shaw & Shoemaker, Early American Imprints, Series 2, Micro-Form. 21; John Armstrong, *The Pittsburgh Town and Country Almanac, for Rogues and Honest Folk, 1816* (Pittsburgh: R. Patterson, 1815), 27, Shaw & Shoemaker, Early American Imprints, Series 2, Micro-Form.

mile waterway which flows north into Brownsville, Pennsylvania and then turns northwest into Pittsburgh. The Allegheny allowed merchants access to trading partners in New York and further into the Northeast and the Monongahela, although more dangerous to navigate, allowed those same merchants access to trading partners in West Virginia and further South. Together, these two rivers made Pittsburgh the connection point between northern and southern Pennsylvania. The Ohio River connects Pittsburgh to the Mississippi River which allowed merchants at the Forks of Ohio access to New Orleans and, ultimately, Europe via ocean travel.²

In addition to the waterways, the Allegheny Mountains constituted another advantage possessed by the city at the Forks of the Ohio. Pittsburgh is located about forty miles from the foot of the Alleghenies and was the first town of any consequence that travelers from the East encountered after disembarking from the mountains and the last town of any consequence that travelers heading towards the mountains would encounter. In this sense, Pittsburgh largely controlled access to the Alleghenies on its western slope as well as the Ohio River and as a result, was connected to markets in the North, East, West and Europe. The commercial potential of Pittsburgh's geographic location was incalculable because it had access to almost all markets in all directions. Historian Henry Steele Commager emphasized the value of Pittsburgh's location when he wrote, "whoever commanded the Forks of the Ohio commanded the great interior of the

² Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier*, 10; Catherine Elizabeth Reiser, *Pittsburgh's Commercial Development, 1800-1850*, 1; Erasmus Wilson, ed., *Standard History of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*, 17-19; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City, 1750-1865*, 8 and 14.

continent” and during the Era of the Early Republic, Pittsburgh controlled the forks, the Ohio Valley and subsequently, the West.³

George Washington figures prominently in the history of Pittsburgh and the Ohio Valley. In November of 1753, while scouting possible sites for a British fort and settlement in the land west of the Alleghenies, he identified the spot that would eventually become Pittsburgh. Washington’s Indian guide, the Mingo Half-King Tannaghriison, suggested that the fort be constructed on a spot of land about two miles downstream from the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers but Washington found the land at the fork more suitable. According to Washington, the site further down the river was “greatly inferior, either for Defence or Advantages” because the site at the forks possessed “absolute command of both rivers” with “well timber’d land all around it, very convenient for building.” Furthermore, “it is extremely well design’d for water carriage, as it is of deep still nature” and “might be built at a much less expence, than the other place.” Most of Washington’s reasoning for putting the fort at the fork involved military strategy. But the same reasons applied to its future economic importance as a center for trade. Command of the rivers, accessible port and sufficient timber for building all attested to its commercial potential. The British would not be able

³ Zadock Cramer, *The Ohio and Mississippi Navigator*, Third Corrected ed. (Pittsburgh: Zadock Cramer, 1802), 20, Shaw & Shoemaker, Early American Imprints, Series 2. Micro-Form; Michaux, 27-28 and 30; Henry Steele Commager, “Forts in the Wilderness,” in *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City*, ed. Stefan Lorant, 9. The first town that travelers encountered after leaving the Alleghenies on the road to Pittsburgh was Greensburg but according to Francois André Michaux it contained only about one hundred houses in 1802 and one inn, the Seven Stars. Michaux also remarked that they were economically dependent upon Pittsburgh markets because that is where they sent their crops of wheat, rye and oats.

to act upon Washington's recommendation for several years as the French and Indian War disrupted their plans.⁴

The French saw the same potential, at least militarily, in the Forks of the Ohio, as it took control of the area away from the British before they could plant a fort or settlement. In 1754, the French began construction on Fort Duquesne and upon completion; it became the first permanent structure built in the area that is now Pittsburgh. The French held Fort Duquesne until September of 1758 when they burned the post to the ground and retreated from the Forks of the Ohio as a superior British force under the command of General John Forbes advanced on their location. Forbes, whose health was in dire condition and would be dead within months, immediately ordered the construction of a temporary structure to shelter and protect the troops on a spot adjacent to the burned ruins of Fort Duquesne. Fort Pitt, as named by Forbes, and the settlement that grew up around it marked the beginning of Pittsburg. From the moment that General Forbes took control of Fort Duquesne it was obvious that the site possessed much more than just strategic military importance. Forbes attested to the commercial value of the region in a letter he wrote to the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on December 14, 1758 announcing his victory. In the letter he declared, "Blessed be God, the long look'd for day is arrived, that has now fixed us on the Banks of the Ohio!...This valuable acquisition lays open to all His Majesty's Subjects a Vein of Treasure, which if rightly managed, may prove richer than the Mines of Mexico, the trade with the numerous nations of Western Indians." The French and Indian War would effectively be over the following

⁴ George Washington, *George Washington's Diaries, An Abridgment*, ed. Dorothy Twohig (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 19-20; Wade, 9; Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 43; Wilson, 32; George H. Thurston, *Pittsburgh as it is* (Pittsburgh: W.S. Haven, 1857), 3; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City, 1750-1865*, 23.

year, and so would Forbes' life for that matter, but the economic value of the Ohio Valley, however, outlived British rule of the colonies.⁵

British soldiers finished Fort Pitt, as ordered by Forbes, in January of 1759. It was a square structure made of earthworks and logs with four bastions. The British did not intend it to be a permanent structure but it did serve as the primary point of defense for the Ohio Valley until they completed the new Fort Pitt on April 14, 1761 at staggering cost of 60,000 pounds sterling. In the words of Colonel Mercer, who temporarily commanded Fort Pitt after the departure of General Forbes from both the fort and the mortal coil, the new fort once completed would be a "a most formidable fortification" capable of securing the British empire on the Ohio. Outside of the stockade of the original Fort Pitt on the bank of the Monongahela River, a line of log cabins and bark huts could be found that housed the soldiers until the fort had adequate quarters. As construction on the new fort progressed, soldiers moved from the cabins and huts into their permanent quarters. The log cabins and huts along the Monongahela did not stay vacant for long as traders and their families filled the vacancies. These traders constituted Pittsburgh's first civilian population. The native tribes in the area played a key role in dictating the daily routine of the first residents. The daily routines can be broken down into two categories: the soldiers protecting the people of Pittsburgh, who were almost

⁵ Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City, 1750-1865*, 23-25, 38 and 52; Commager, "Forts in the Wilderness," 28-34; John Forbes, *Letters of John Forbes: Relating to the Expedition against Fort Duquesne in 1758*, ed. Irene Stewart (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2006), 6; John Forbes, *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), December 14, 1758, 1. General Forbes named Fort Pitt after William Pitt, the British statesman and Secretary of State for the Southern Department who was in charge of the British war effort.

exclusively traders, from the Indians and traders purchasing skins and furs from the Indians.⁶

Just as Forbes had predicted, Indian trade became very lucrative for colonial traders. Indians constituted the life blood of Pittsburgh commerce. Pittsburgh was an emporium built upon Indian skins and furs. The provincial store operated by George Allen, who had been appointed Indian agent for Pittsburgh by the Pennsylvania Colonial government in March, took in 15,000 furs in 1759 alone at a total value of 4,000 pounds sterling. The success of Allen's provincial store led to numerous private stores opening up in 1760 among these were shops run by William Trent and Levi Levy in partnership with the Lancaster firm of Simon and Franks, Hugh Crawford, John Hart and Major Thomas Smallman. The shopkeepers traded blankets, clothing, strouding cloth, axes, knives, guns, ammo and trinkets such as wampum imported from the East and Europe for skins and furs. The presence of so many stores and traders competing for their skins and furs pleased the natives but they were not so enamored with the military presence or the prospect of thousand of whites swarming onto their lands to settle.⁷

The fort did not exist merely for show as Pittsburgh existed under complete military control during the early years and both the traders and natives had to operate under regulations established by the post commanders. The military dictated who lived in the area around the fort as houses could only be built with its permission and the buying

⁶ Baldwin, Pittsburgh: The Story of a City, 1750-1865, 55; Neville B. Craig, *The History of Pittsburgh, with a Brief Notice of Its Facilities of Communications, and other Advantages for Commercial and Manufacturing Purposes* (Pittsburgh: John H. Mellor, 1851), 66-67 and 72; George Thornton Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs, Vol. I*, 449; Charles W. Dahlinger, *Fort Pitt* (Pittsburgh: Privately Printed, 1922, 16; Howard C. Douds, "Merchants and Merchandising in Pittsburgh, 1759-1800," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 20 (1937): 123.

⁷ Commager, "Forts in the Wilderness," 34; Douds, 123-124; Anderson, 327;

and selling of domiciles was strictly prohibited. Rules of trade also fell under the jurisdiction of the military. Some of these rules included the limiting of powder and lead sold to natives at five pounds, forbidding the sale of liquor to natives, forbidding traders to purchase horses from natives and requiring that all trade cease at sunset. On occasion, the post commanders fixed prices and required the traders to carry arms in defense of the fort. According to Chester County Quaker James Kenny who brought a load of goods to Fort Pitt in 1758 and came back in 1761 under the employ of new Indian agent Josiah Davenport, traders violated the rules “on pain of having their houses pull’d down & ye transgressors being banished the place.” The military intended the rules to maintain harmony between the Indian traders and the natives and this was very important because the natives already harbored ill will towards the English because of lingering harsh feelings resulting from the French and Indian War and the taking of their land. This coupled with the unscrupulous manner in which some of the traders attempted to cheat the natives often led to retaliation on their part which by accounts from Kenny could range from murder and scalping to less severe but still annoying actions such as theft and “throwing stones on ye house & door after we went to bed.” As a result, trade in early Pittsburgh was simultaneously perilous and lucrative largely because English traders made already tense relations between whites and natives worse by treating them as naive children whose land and furs could be taken however they saw fit.⁸

Pittsburgh’s early economy and the daily lives of its citizens revolved around the fur trade and military presence and both had a significant impact on the way the town

⁸ Kenny, James “Journal of James Kenny, 1759” and “Journal of James Kenny, 1761-63,” in *Pen Pictures of Early Western Pennsylvania*, ed. John W. Harpster (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1938), 79-97; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City, 1750-1865*, 60.

developed. Pittsburgh during its earliest days possessed a mostly transient population. Traders came into the area, sometimes with their families, to grow rich on the resources that they could extract from the natives and the land and then return to the East and soldiers moved in and out of the area with the object of protecting the traders. Pittsburgh was a means to an end, for the traders this meant accumulation of wealth and trade connections and for the soldiers it meant an opportunity to prove themselves in battle against the Indians and receive a promotion, and not a destination to spend the rest of their days. There was no sense of permanence and as a result Pittsburgh witnessed little growth. Its early economy was severely unbalanced with an abundance of trade but virtually no manufacturing. Pittsburgh's lack of manufacturing and the nature of the trade that it engaged in stunted its development as it possessed plenty of stores but few people and even less organizational structure that a town needs to grow. The completion of the original Fort Pitt in January of 1759 and Forbes' announcement that the Ohio Valley was open for business brought traders and their families to the area. Traders built houses and huts in a haphazard and unorganized manner with no sense of direction. They focused on trade with no consideration given to the development of the town. It was not until 1764 when John Campbell, at the insistence of military authorities at Fort Pitt, surveyed the area around the fort and laid out four blocks and streets along the Monongahela River that any consideration was given to the manner in which the town of Pittsburgh should develop. Even though Campbell's plan served as the basic design of Pittsburgh, the impetus behind the survey, in the words of early Pittsburgh chronicler Erasmus Wilson,

was more “the accommodation of traders and their customers than as the nucleus of a permanent population.”⁹

Following Campbell’s survey in 1764, Pittsburgh had a blueprint for becoming a town but it would be quite a while before it resembled a town or instilled any confidence in travelers passing through that it could ever become one. In September of 1766, Presbyterian Minister Reverend Charles Beatty stopped in Pittsburgh on a tour of the Ohio Country to preach to the Indians and assess both the physical and spiritual condition of pioneers on the frontier. In Pittsburgh, the officers at Fort Pitt impressed the Reverend Beatty with their politeness and hospitality as he stayed the night inside the garrison but he did not walk away as impressed with the town itself. Beatty remarked that, after walking outside of the fort to find the town in a poor state of affairs, he “preached to the people who live in some kind of town without the fort.” In October of 1770, George Washington returned to the location that he had scouted in 1753 and used language similar to that of Beatty. Washington found that the town had not made much progress. In his diary, he stated that “we lodged in what is called the town, distant about 300 yards from the fort...the houses which are built of log, and ranged in the streets, are on the Monongahela, and I suppose may be about twenty in number, and inhabited by Indian traders.” Not only had Pittsburgh not made great strides since his first visit to the area seventeen years prior, but it appears not to have made much if any progress since Campbell’s survey in 1764.¹⁰

⁹ Wade, 10; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City, 1750-1865*, 70; Wilson, 60; Neville B. Craig, 79 and 87-92; George H. Thurston, *Pittsburgh as it is*, 4-5.

¹⁰ Charles Beatty, *The Journal of a Two Months Tour* (London: William Davenhill, 1768), 28-29; Neville B. Craig, 83; George H. Thurston, *Pittsburgh as it is*, 4-5; Washington, *George Washington’s*

Washington made no prediction on the future of Pittsburgh but fourteen years later while on a trip to the western country to negotiate a treaty with the Indians, Congressman Arthur Lee made just such a pronouncement. According to Lee, Pittsburgh in 1784 was “inhabited almost entirely by Scots and Irish, who live in paltry log-houses, and are as dirty as in the north of Ireland, or even Scotland...there is a great deal of small trade carried on; the goods being brought at the vast expense of forty-shillings per cwt., from Philadelphia and Baltimore.” Furthermore, and perhaps his harshest indictment of Pittsburgh, he stated, “the place, I believe, will never be considerable.” Although, the Congressman did not connect the dots, his statement does include all of the elements that plagued Pittsburgh’s economy and kept it from reaching its potential. The kind of trade that the town engaged in, “small trade,” did not allow for growth or permanency because its inhabitants were committed to trading goods that they imported from Philadelphia and Baltimore at “vast expense” to trade to the Indians for furs, skins and other natural resources which they then exported to the East and Europe. A letter published in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* in March of 1787 identifies the lack of permanency and the problems associated with an economy built on trapping and trading. The author declared that the traders and transients of Pittsburgh “take this for a resting place or halfway house and think it in vain to waste their labor making improvements...because, next year they shall go down the river.” It had been almost thirty-five years since George Washington identified the Forks of the Ohio as an ideal location for a settlement in the Ohio Valley

Diaries, An Abridgment, 150; Wade, 10. Reverend Beatty was the grandfather of noted 19th century Presbyterian minister Charles Clinton Beatty.

and the town still had a population mainly consisting of vagrants and economy lacking significant manufactures and reliant on a colonial system of trade.¹¹

Pittsburgh, for most of the eighteenth century, experienced minor growth and little economic development. It possessed a transient population and failed to present a sense of permanency. Pittsburgh appeared to be a makeshift town with the sole purpose of conducting Indian trade and exporting the natural resources of the Ohio Valley back east and to Europe. The problem of the town's undiversified economy can be summed up best by examining observations made by Dr. Johann David Schoepf of Germany during his trip into the Western Country and subsequent stop at Pittsburgh in 1783. According to Schoepf, "the people here do not grow rich by industry and fair prices but prefer rather to deal extortionately with strangers and travellers... They gained their living hitherto by farming and trafficking in skins." It is rather clear that Schoepf held a grudge against the traders in Pittsburgh because of the prices they charged him for supplies, as he felt they bordered on extortion, but he does identify one of the reasons contributing to the town's lack of permanency, the absence of significant manufactures. This is not to say that manufacturing was the only possible base for a developing economy as trade and agriculture are important as well, but the lack of balance did contribute to its lack of growth both for the present and future.¹²

The fact that Pittsburgh had yet to develop a strong manufacturing base did not mean that all of its citizens were oblivious to the need for industrial growth. Noted

¹¹ Arthur Lee, "Journal of Arthur Lee," in *Pen Pictures of Early Western Pennsylvania*, 157; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 17, 1787; Wade, 10-12.

¹² Johann David Schoepf, "Travels of Johann David Schoepf," in *Pen Pictures of Early Western Pennsylvania*, 136. Dr. Johaan David Schoepf came to America during the American Revolution as chief surgeon for the Ansbach mercenaries.

lawyer, judge, politician, writer and tireless promoter of the town of Pittsburgh Hugh Henry Brackenridge started pushing for Pittsburgh to embrace manufacturing starting in 1786. When Brackenridge moved to Pittsburgh in 1781, with his son Henry Marie Brackenridge, the town had a miniscule population of just 400 inhabitants and he immediately identified the lack of manufacturing as one obstacle to growth. Brackenridge wrote a series of articles for the Federalist *Pittsburgh Gazette*, which had just been established by Philadelphians John Scull and Joseph Hall in 1786, to enlighten the town's residents on the benefits of manufacturing. In one of the articles published on August 26, 1786, the elder Brackenridge sternly declared that "this town must in future time be a place a great manufactory. Indeed the greatest on the continent, or perhaps in the world." His reasoning was that the exorbitant price of carriage from Philadelphia and the distance of Pittsburgh from either the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans made the importation of larger and heavier manufactured goods, both in the present and the future, economically unfeasible. Pittsburgh because of its location at the headwaters of the Ohio River and an abundance of natural resources could economically control the Ohio Valley with the development of a system of manufactures.¹³

Most of Pittsburgh's early manufacturing rose from necessity. The traders and their families engaged in household manufacturing and manufactured what they could not

¹³Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 26, 1786; Hugh Henry Brackenridge, "Observations on the Country at the Head of the Ohio River," in *A Hugh Henry Brackenridge Reader, 1770-1815*, ed. Daniel Marder (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970), 111-115; Lawrence C. Wroth, *The Colonial Printer* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1994), 56; Wilson, 193; Stefan Lorant, "Gateway to the West," in *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City*, 49-51. The *Pittsburgh Gazette* was the first newspaper west of the Alleghenies. Henry Hugh Brackenridge is often referred to as the founder of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* but this is not entirely true. More accurately, Brackenridge encouraged the establishment of the first newspaper west of the Alleghenies. In 1786, he convinced Scull and Hall to move west and establish a newspaper. Brackenridge's goal was twofold: provide a forum for the democratic process in Pittsburgh and win election to the State Assembly. He succeeded in both.

easily obtain from the East. This did not include goods for retail or trade and primarily involved the necessities of life such as food and shelter. Most of the town's early manufacturing was related to the building of Fort Pitt and Pittsburgh. Therefore, its first manufactories included brick kilns, saw-mills and rock quarries. During the construction of the second Fort Pitt, 1,244,160 bricks, 2,026 pickets, 4,250 feet of walnut scantling, 499 feet of plank and a significant amount of cut stone were used and manufactured in Pittsburgh. Household manufacturing is somewhat difficult to document as few sources mention or elaborate upon what was made in the home but manufacturing related to the construction of Fort Pitt and the surrounding town is more heavily documented. In the journals of his experiences in Pittsburgh, merchant James Kenney makes numerous references to the manufacturing of construction materials and gives particular mention of sawmills. Another early manufacturing endeavor and one that can be consider a necessity to some, can be found the distilling of alcohol. Most of the distilling in early Pittsburgh was akin to household manufacturing and not an example of large scale manufacturing. The most notable of early distilling efforts involved Jonathan Plummer. In 1770, Plummer built what is believed to be the first distillery west of the Alleghenies, or at least the first documented instance. His distillery was running and in good order in October of 1770 when George Washington visited Pittsburgh. Washington is said to have sampled a batch of Plummer's whiskey and pronounced it as "good." A more substantial effort to establish a commercial brewery in Pittsburgh occurred in 1784. One of Pittsburgh's leading mercantile firms, Craig, Bayard & Co., in partnership with Turnbull, Marmie & Co. of Philadelphia, built a distillery with a purpose of selling whiskey in their resale establishment. In the same year the firm opened a sawmill and salt works. Craig and

Bayard abandoned the distillery in 1786 when they dissolved their partnership. Craig opened a new distillery in 1787. Rudimentary grist mills were also found in early Pittsburgh.¹⁴

Boatbuilding constituted Pittsburgh's most important and sizable early manufacturing interest. The manufacturing of boats served a dual purpose: the moving of troops and goods. Boatbuilding at the Forks of the Ohio actually preceded the construction of Fort Pitt and the founding of Pittsburgh. Indians had long constructed canoes in the area and the French built bateaux at Fort Duquesne. The English foray into boatbuilding commenced at Pittsburgh in May of 1760 when the colonial government sent seventeen boat builders led by Philadelphia shipwright Jehu Eyre to the Forks of the Ohio to construct bateaux for the movement of troops along the Ohio River and its tributaries. In February of 1777, the now independent Continental Congress sent fourteen boat builders to a sawmill fourteen miles up the Monongahela River from Pittsburgh to construct thirty bateaux to be used against the British during the American Revolution. Bateaux served a military purpose for the Colonial and then American governments by moving troops, munitions, supplies and on occasion serving as gunboats but they were also important to Pittsburgh traders. Not long after the British established Fort Pitt at the Forks of the Ohio, bateaux replaced pack horses as the primary means of transporting furs and skins out of and finished goods into the Ohio Valley. River travel proved to be

¹⁴ Reiser, 12; Wilson, 147 and 193; George Thornton Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs, Vol. III* (New York: American Historical Society, 1922), 468; Sarah H. Killikelly, *The History of Pittsburgh: It's Rise and Progress* (Pittsburgh: B.C. Gordon Montgomery Co., 1906), 87-88 and 90; James Kenney, 80-86; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 26, 1786.

less costly and more time efficient than pack-horses for moving goods within and out of the valley.¹⁵

Travel along the river became so valuable to the economy of Pennsylvania, and that of the United States as well, that the state legislature designated the Monongahela River a public highway. Shortly after, The Allegheny and Ohio Rivers would be declared public highways as well. The residents of Pittsburgh constructed a wide variety of boats in addition to bateaux which included keel boats, flatboats, arks and “Kentucke” boats. In the seventeen-eighties, boat building became more elaborate and numerous boat yards sprung up in the area in and around Pittsburgh. In 1783, John Ormsby, one of the soldiers under General Forbes’ command when he took Fort Duquesne, commenced operation of a boatyard on the south side of Pittsburgh on the bank of the Monongahela. Along with the boatyard, which he successfully operated for five years, Ormsby also owned the first ferry across the Monongahela River and a tavern on Water Street, where he no doubt regaled customers with tales of his military exploits and Forbes’ defeat of the French. Turnbull, Marmie & Co. built boats in the area from 1784 to 1787. Other notable boatyards included ones operated by Alexander Craig on Pittsburgh’s south side and Stephen Bayard at the mouth of the Youghiogheny River. The construction of boats was vital to the economy of Pittsburgh and constituted a significant manufacturing interest. By 1803, boatbuilding was the third most valuable manufacture in Pittsburgh and its value in that year is estimated at \$40,000. Although lucrative in the short term, boatbuilding was also an indicator of the town’s reliance on markets outside of the valley

¹⁵ Baldwin, *The Keelboat Age on Western Waters*, 7 and 50-51; Killikelly, 88-90; Wilson, 73; George H. Thurston, *Pittsburgh as it is*, 5. A bateau, or bateaux in the plural, is a shallow draft flat skiff, which is extremely stable and capable of carrying heavy loads. Some Bateaux can reach forty-five to fifty-eight feet in length and can carry a burden of anywhere between two to ten tons.

and actually stunted its development of a strong manufacturing base because it lessened the need for the townsfolk to manufacture if they could simply import what they needed.¹⁶

As the seventeen-eighties progressed, manufacturing in Pittsburgh gradually increased. Besides the boatbuilding and distilling industries, Pittsburgh witnessed the emergence of several valuable manufactures during this decade. Freeman & Severen commenced cabinet making and upholstery in 1785. In 1786, Hugh Ross opened a ropewalk. Ross also attempted to encourage the cooperation of the Pittsburgh community in the future prosperity of his industry by advertising the sale of hemp seed to ensure that he would have a supply of hemp to keep his workers busy and by teaching youths the rope making business. The manufacturing of hats was another burgeoning industry in Pittsburgh. Also in 1786, John and Daniel Craig started manufacturing hats and caps from beaver, fox, raccoon, muskrat, or any other animal for which people were willing to put its skin or fur on their heads. Two other prominent hatters in business at this time were Marmaduke Curtis and John Blackburn. In 1788, Andrew McIntire opened a business manufacturing Windsor chairs on the upper end of Front Street. In the advertisement for his business, McIntire advertised that he could make any type of Windsor chair that the customer desired and he emphasized that since the item did not have to be imported that the retail cost would be less. At the end of the seventeen-eighties, Gregg and Barker started making jewelry of various types, Hugh Rippey

¹⁶ Killikelly, 88-90; Wilson, 194-197; Oliver Ormsby Page, *A Short Account of the Family Ormsby of Pittsburgh* (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1892), 17; *Cramer's Pittsburgh Almanack for the Year 1804*, 21. According to early Pittsburgh historian Erasmus Wilson there is a strong chance that the bricks used to make the second Fort Pitt were made by John Ormsby. The Youghiogheny is often referred to simply as the Yough.

manufactured guns and William Dunning commenced the manufacture of metal and other implements. The manufacture of rope, cabinets, chairs, hats, guns and steel tools meant that Ohio Valley resources stayed in the Ohio Valley. More importantly, it meant that Pittsburg and the Ohio Valley would be less dependent on the East and Europe to meet consumer demand. It signified a step towards economic independence.¹⁷

The number of manufacturing interests continued to increase in the seventeen-nineties. In 1794, Revolutionary War veteran John Irwin opened a ropewalk in Allegheny City which would eventually supply the rope that comprised the rigging for Commodore Perry's fleet on Lake Erie during the War of 1812. The manufacturing of hats continued to be an important industry as Thomas and Samuel Magee began making beaver as well as castor and roram hats in 1798 on the corner of Front Street and Chancery Lane. In the same year Joseph McClurg and William Cogan established separate tobacco factories for the manufacture of cigarettes and other forms of tobacco and Joseph White opened his wagon, chair and coach factory. The end of the decade also brought the first glass factory to Pittsburgh. Glassmaking represented one of the most important early industries in Pittsburgh. In 1797, James O'Hara and Isaac Craig opened Pittsburgh's first glass factory, aptly named Pittsburgh Glass Works, on the town's south side close to the confluence of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers. O'Hara and Craig advertised

¹⁷ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, September 2, 1786 and March 15, 1788; Wilson, 197; Thomas Jefferson Chapman, *Old Pittsburgh Days* (Pittsburgh: J.R. Weldin & Co., 1900), 140; Killikelly, 111-112. A Ropewalk is a long path or lane where long strands of material, during this time it was primarily hemp, was laid out and then twisted into rope. The hemp industry and the manufacturing of rope will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters four and five as Kentucky was the center of the hemp industry in the United States. A Windsor chair is a common style of chair in which the back and legs are pushed into holes on a solid wooded seat. The Windsor chair is both easier and cheaper to make than chair that is made from one continuous piece of wood,

window glass “of a superior quality” 25% cheaper than any imported from Europe. The Pittsburgh Glass Factory proved to be such a success that it soon attracted competition as the town contained another glass factory by 1803 when the total value of the glass industry was \$13,000. The Pittsburgh glass industry would continue to grow, mostly in the years after 1807, when its total value equaled \$63,000 and constituted the town’s third largest industry. Glass making thrived in Pittsburgh because all of the materials needed to make utilitarian glass which were silica, lime and potash could all be easily found in the area and glass bottles were the container of choice for the town’s growing alcohol industry. Location also played a key role in the expansion of the industry as glass was difficult to transport over land at this time because of bumpy roads and trails. Pittsburgh’s location at the headwaters of the Ohio meant that it could ship glass down the river to New Orleans and eventually out to sea and markets in the East and Europe.¹⁸

¹⁸ Dan Rooney and Carol Peterson, *A History of Pittsburgh’s North Side* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), 7-8. James L. Flannery, *The Glass House Boys of Pittsburgh: Law, Technology and Child Labor* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 75-77; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 23, 1800; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 148; Wade, 48; Lorant, “Gateway to the West”, 69-70. Allegheny City was a municipality located on the north side of Pittsburgh at the junction of the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers. Pittsburgh annexed Allegheny City in 1907. John Irwin’s ropewalk is often credited as the first ropewalk west of Alleghenies but this is a false claim as advertisements for Hugh Ross’ ropewalk predate the opening of the ropewalk in Allegheny City. However, Irwin’s ropewalk was the first manufactory in Allegheny City. In similar fashion, early Pittsburgh historian Sarah Hutchens Killikelly credits Hugh Ross as manufacturing the rope for Perry’s fleet but this too was a false as contemporary accounts such as the one made by Zadock Cramer in *The Navigator* identify Irwin. Castor and Roram were imitation beaver hats. Although the Pittsburgh Glass Works commenced operations in late 1797, it did not produce its first bottle until February 1798 due to numerous setbacks. The identity of the second glass factory in Pittsburgh is not clear from historical records and accounts. There is no doubt that a second factory opened in 1800 but almost all accounts do not refer to it by name or give any additional information. Only Stefan Lorant and Joseph D. Weeks give detailed information on this factory. In separate accounts, both men claim that it was a window pane factory financed by General James Wilkinson, Dr. Hugh Scott and John Wilkins and operated by Ebenezer Denny and Anthony Beelen under the name of Denny and Beelen on the north side of Pittsburgh.

Several factors contributed to the growth in manufacturing that Pittsburgh experienced during the last two decades of the eighteenth century and the first few years of the nineteenth century but most of these factors revolved around one underlying cause, increased settlement in and increased traffic through the Ohio Valley. While population growth of Pittsburgh proper was slow and weak until the nineteenth century as its population in 1790 totaled a miniscule 376 people, this did not mean that people were not passing through. In 1794, which coincidentally is the same year that the state of Pennsylvania incorporated the town as a borough and expanded its municipal responsibilities, it is estimated that 13,000 emigrants passed through Pittsburgh on their way further west. The following year the number was even greater and the *Pittsburgh Gazette* reported that the “emigration to this country this fall surpasses that of any other season and we are informed that the banks of the Monongahela, from M’Kees Port to Redstone, are lined with people intending for the settlements on the Ohio and County.” The end of the Indian Wars and the culmination of the American Revolution and the expulsion of the British added more stability to the Ohio Valley along with the constant desire for better economic opportunities opened the flood gates to western settlement. Even though a great deal of these people would not settle in Pittsburgh, they would temporarily add to their economy. Settlers heading west needed goods and supplies, whether it be flour, whiskey, glassware, furniture, guns or tools. The arduous trip across the Alleghenies had required that they only bring the bare essentials therefore once they reached the other side, they would need to shop.¹⁹

¹⁹ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, February 7, 1795 and November 21, 1795; Wilson, 71; Reiser, 6; Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs*, Vol. III, 466. Although the meaning of the term varies widely, a

In Pittsburgh's earliest days, traders mostly dealt with the Indians and the goods they imported primarily consisted of smaller trinkets such as beads and wampum. These items did not cost a great deal to import. Some families did live in Pittsburgh in the early days and they created a demand for finer goods, which meant larger and more expensive goods, but their numbers were not significant and the Indian trade still dominated. The decade following the conclusion of the American Revolution witnessed a decrease in the number of Indians in the Pittsburgh area which meant a decrease in the Indian trade. Trade with the increasing number of whites settling in and passing through Pittsburgh required a different variety of merchandise. Carriage across the mountains was expensive, especially with the larger and heavier goods that settlers demanded and it cut into costs. It would be cheaper to manufacture goods locally. Pittsburgh developed manufactures out of necessity not ideological transformation. New demand compelled Pittsburgh to start manufacturing some of the goods that they sold but they did not fully embrace manufacturing and to a great extent still relied upon the importation of goods from outside markets and as a result remained dependent upon the East and Europe.²⁰

Shipbuilding constituted one of Pittsburgh's more interesting manufacturing endeavors and it was a natural evolution of boat building. With the exception of the construction and voyage of Dr. Waters' schooner in 1792, Pittsburgh did not actively engage in shipbuilding until the end of the eighteenth century. The first step towards establishing a shipbuilding industry was made on behalf of the United States

Government. In 1797, in response to Spain's refusal to allow the U.S. free navigation of

borough, as used here, is an incorporated municipality smaller than a city. Incorporation as a borough designates a self-governing township and is one administrative step below cityhood.

²⁰ Reiser, 11; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 115; Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs*, Vol. III, 465-466.

the Mississippi River and increased tensions with the French, the government commissioned the construction of two armed sea-worthy galleys at Pittsburgh, the *President Adams* and the *Senator Ross*, under the supervision of Major Isaac Craig. The mission of these galleys was to patrol the Mississippi River and engage the Spanish and French on either the river or sea if war broke out. The *President Adams* launched on May 19, 1798 but due to a combination of construction delays and bad weather, the *Senator Ross* would not leave Pittsburgh's shipyards until the spring of 1799. However, Craig assured his superiors that the vessel was well worth the wait as it was "a fine piece of naval architecture, and one which will far exceed anything which the Spaniards can show on the Mississippi." Craig's letter can be viewed as either an attempt to alleviate his superior's displeasure with the *Senator's Ross*' delayed launch, a testament to craftsmanship of Pittsburgh shipwrights or a combination of the two. Concessions on the part of the Spanish ensured that neither the *President Adams* nor the *Senator Ross* would be needed in combat and little is known of their subsequent use.²¹

The construction of ocean-going vessels began in earnest in the Pittsburgh area in 1800. In the early part of that year, a group of farmers and merchants in Elizabeth, Pennsylvania founded the Monongahela Company and later in the year began constructing ocean-going vessels near the headwaters of the Ohio River. Designed and built under the supervision of John Scott, the *Monongahela Farmer* was a 120 ton burden schooner constructed of white oak, black walnut and yellow pine. The vessel launched on

²¹ Neville B. Craig, 273-274; Charles Henry Ambler, *A History of Transportation in the Ohio Valley* (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1932), 84-85. It is not know if either the President Adams or the Senator Ross ever sailed ocean waters, or as Leland Baldwin stated "blue water," but there is no doubt that they were constructed with ocean travel in mind and were sea-worthy.

April 23, 1801 under the command of John Walker loaded with 750 barrels of flour. Upon reaching Pittsburgh, Walker added whiskey, hides, hemp, and flax to the vessel's cargo and set sail for New Orleans via the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The *Monongahela Farmer's* maiden voyage was besieged with difficulties as it suffered an Indian attack, lost a crew member to drowning, stalled at the Falls of the Ohio for three months waiting for the water to rise and ran aground on a shoal below Cave-in-Rock with the ensuing water damage causing the flour to sour. When the vessel reached New Orleans, Walker sold both the ship and the cargo at the request of his employers. *The Monongahela Farmer's* new owners used it to facilitate trade between the Eastern United States, New Orleans and the West Indies. Not long after the Monongahela Company commissioned Scott to construct the *Monongahela Farmer* in Elizabeth, the merchant firm of Samuel Jackson and Company of Brownsville commenced construction of the *Redstone* under the supervision of Joseph Chester. Although, the construction began on the Elizabeth vessel before the Brownsville vessel, the *Redstone* was the first to launch and it reached Pittsburgh weeks before the *Monongahela Farmer*, which it also beat to New Orleans.²²

The construction of the *Monongahela Farmer* and the *Redstone* would be followed by many more vessels. Unlike the Elizabeth and Brownsville vessels, most of the ones that followed would be built within Pittsburgh and not its surrounding area. In 1802, Francois André Michaux made note the vibrancy of shipbuilding in Pittsburgh as

²² Baldwin, *Keelboat Age on Western Waters*, 162-163; Ambler, 87; 31; Michaux, 32. Elizabeth, PA is thirteen miles upstream from Pittsburgh on the Monongahela River. Cave-in-Rock is a riverside cave in Hardin County, Illinois on the banks of the Ohio River which is most notorious for serving as a stronghold and hideout for nineteenth century river bandits and highway men. The souring of the crackers on the *Monongahela Farmer's* maiden voyage was not a total loss as he sold the lot to a cracker manufacturer. Not much is known of the *Redstone* after its arrival in New Orleans.

he observed numerous shipyards and ships in the process of being constructed. In particular, he viewed “on the stocks, a ship of three masts of 250 tons, and a galliot of 90, which were on the point of being finished.” From 1803 through 1806, a large number of the vessels constructed were done so at the shipyard of John A. Tarascon Brothers, James Berthoud & Co by Eliphalet Beebe.²³

Shipbuilding was a strong indicator of Pittsburgh’s link to the Atlantic World and desire to strengthen that connection. Conducting business with outside markets is not bad in itself but it did breed a certain level of dependence as Pittsburgh relied on imports instead of developing its own system of manufactures. Also, an overreliance on imports can cause significant financial turmoil when trade restrictions such as those found in the Embargo of 1807 disrupts access to foreign markets. For the most part, Pittsburgh did not ship goods that it manufactured but instead exported natural resources which would eventually be used as raw materials to feed the industrial machines of Europe. Pittsburgh merchants would then import the finished goods via wagon over the Alleghenies from Philadelphia and Baltimore. English traveler Thomas Ashe detailed this scenario in 1806 when he observed that “Pittsburgh possesses upward of forty retail stores, which all seem continually busy. To this place most of the goods conveyed in wagons over the mountains in spring and autumn, and destined for the Kentucky and Louisiana trade, are brought to be ready for embarkation.” Instead of manufacturing enough goods themselves to export for the Kentucky and Louisiana trade, they mostly imported from Europe via

²³ Michaux, 32-33; Baldwin, *The Keelboat Age on Western Waters*, 164-166. The Tarascon brothers left Pittsburgh for Louisville in 1807 in an attempt to construct ocean-going vessels on the west side of the Falls of the Ohio. Their shipbuilding activities in both Pittsburgh and Louisville will be discussed in great detail in chapter four.

Philadelphia and Baltimore. Even the stores which sold these products are proof of Pittsburgh's lack of economic development. In 1799 on a scouting trip through the Ohio Valley, James Berthoud and Charles Brugiere noticed the dominance of eastern interests in the Pittsburgh's marketplace. According to Berthoud and Brugiere, "there are about 30 stores most of which do not belong to those who run them, but rather to business men either from Philadelphia or Baltimore. None of these stores appears rich, and all are stocked from the two cities mentioned above." Francois André Michaux echoed the statement of Berthoud and Brugiere when he noted in 1802 that "most of the merchants who are established at Pittsburgh and its environs, are either partners or factors of commercial houses in Philadelphia. Their agents at New Orleans dispose of as much goods as they can for ready money; or they will take cotton, indigo and clayed sugar in exchange. These they forward by sea to the houses in Philadelphia and Baltimore." From the eastern cities, these resources would be sent to Europe. Pittsburgh was merely a link in the chain and a means to an end which did not benefit the town's economy in the long term because without a strong system of manufactures, it could not control supply.²⁴

Western expansion spurred substantial growth in Pittsburgh's local market in the years after the American Revolution. An increasing number of settlers stopped in Pittsburgh on their way further west needing goods. Local manufactures provided some of these goods but a great deal still came from the East and Europe with Philadelphia serving as a primary middleman between European manufacturers and Pittsburgh merchants. This relationship is clearly illustrated in ads purchased by local merchants in

²⁴Ashe, *Travels in America, Performed in 1806*, 25-26; James Berthoud and Charles Brugiere, Extract from a Journal of a Trip from Philadelphia to New Orleans by Way of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers: 1799, Louis Tarascon Journal, 1799, MSS A T177, Filson Historical Society, Special Collections, Louisville, KY.; Michaux, 32.

the *Pittsburgh Gazette*. Despite increasing manufactures in the seventeen-eighties, merchants still relied on imported goods instead of goods manufactured locally. Most of the first two pages of the August 26, 1786 edition of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* are filled with ads by local merchants who just received a load of European goods brought in from Philadelphia. The separate mercantile firms of John & Samuel Calhoun and Wilson & Wallace purchased the largest ads and listed goods such as linen, pewter dishes, men and women's shoes and clothing, fur and wool hats, handkerchiefs beaver gloves and a "variety of other articles too numerous to enumerate." Pittsburgh already possessed the capability to manufacture most of these goods. At the dawn of the nineteenth century, at a time when most early Pittsburgh historians applauded the town's growing manufacturing interests, Oliver Ormsby advertised the arrival of over fifty items at his store from Europe and both the East and West Indies. Pittsburgh already manufactured most of these items yet Ormsby and two other store owners felt compelled to import what could be produced locally.²⁵

Having numerous manufacturers is one thing, having a robust manufacturing infrastructure that could eclipse imports is entirely another matter. The inability to meet consumer demand with locally produced goods was due to the lack of an adequate system of manufactures and it rendered Pittsburgh a mere middle man in the increasingly lucrative trade between the East and new settlements in the Ohio Valley. In 1803, Pittsburgh had an unequal balance of trade; the town imported \$250,000 dollars worth of goods and exported only \$180,000. The town at this time did possess some manufacturing interests but the products that they manufactured mainly filled demand

²⁵ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 26, 1786 and August 23, 1800; Wade, 12.

which could not be fully met from the East. Zadock Cramer, publisher, editor and author of both *The Navigator* and the *Pittsburgh Almanack*, continually advised the town's business interests to exercise prudence by manufacturing more and importing less. He also appealed to the farmers of Pittsburgh to stop growing crops primarily for export and start growing crops that could be processed locally into manufactured goods. In terms of growing for export, one of the main crops that Cramer referred to was wheat as farmers continued to grow it even when the "season may be dull for wheat." Cramer informed the farmers that, "We want hemp to make ropes and sail cloth... We want barley to brew into beer... We want flax to make shirts and trousers; wool to make coats, hats, stockings and the skins of your sheep are much wanted for the bookbinders and saddlers; tobacco, to make cigars for the gentlemen to smoke." If the people of Pittsburgh accomplished these tasks, Cramer wrote, they would "forward the interests of our country of which you are the principle inhabitants."²⁶

In 1803, the total value of Pittsburgh area manufactures was \$350,000. By 1810, the total value of manufactures had increased to \$1,000,000 and by 1815, it rose to \$2,617,833. The last years of the first decade of the nineteenth century witnessed a change in Pittsburgh's attitude towards manufacturing. Even though they had been developing a system of manufactures since the seventeen-eighties, as a whole, Pittsburgh did not wholeheartedly embrace manufacturing until after 1807 at which time there appeared to be a change in how entrepreneurs approached industry. These men began to identify as merchant/manufacturers instead of just merchants who just dabbled in manufacturing. There are many factors that played a role in this change such as

²⁶ Wilson, 150; Zadock Cramer, *Pittsburgh Almanack for the Year 1803* (Pittsburgh, 1802), 25.

population increase and new technologies but the Embargo of 1807 provides a moment in time when trade restrictions aided by those other factors convinced entrepreneurs in Pittsburgh that increased domestic production and less reliance on imported manufactured goods was advantageous to their economic interests. As a result, Pittsburgh took a huge step forward on the road to being an industrial giant and achieved separation from the economies of both the East and Europe.²⁷

B.) Pittsburgh and the Embargo of 1807

On the national level, the Embargo of 1807 was a divisive political issue which gave new life to the Federalist Party. Economics and politics occupied a position at the forefront of the debate over Jefferson's Embargo. Politicians on the national stage either championed or decried the embargo. Federalists attacked Jefferson and the embargo and Democratic-Republicans mounted a defense of both. A major element of the debate involved the economic effects of the embargo and the dichotomy between merchant interests and manufacturing interests. Most observers believed from the beginning that a rise in manufacturing would accompany Jefferson's Embargo. As discussed in the introduction, manufacturing was a tricky issue within late eighteenth and early nineteenth century political parties. Federalists were decidedly pro-merchant and had moved away from any support they had for manufacturing at the time of Alexander Hamilton's Report on Manufactures. In the Democratic-Republican Party the issue was not as clear-cut especially as the Jeffersonian wing tended to favor agricultural over industry and newer members as well as those from northeastern states advocated industrial growth. But, by

²⁷ Reiser, 12 and 203.

and large, by the time of the embargo many within the Democratic-Republican Party championed the cause of manufacturing. Newspapers became a battleground between pro-embargo and anti-embargo forces. On the pages of the nation's newspapers, Federalist editors condemned the prospects of increased industry as an evil plot to destroy mercantile interests and Democratic-Republicans defended the embargo and detailed the British offenses against America's right to free trade that necessitated it in the first place. Nationally, the politics over the issue of Jefferson's Embargo was an all or nothing proposition with no middle ground.²⁸

In Pittsburgh there was less vitriol and more consensus on the prospective advantages afforded to domestic manufactures by the Embargo of 1807. At the time of the embargo, Pennsylvania's Democratic-Republicans were decidedly pro-manufacturing and many of Philadelphia's merchants were members of the party with significant industrial investments. These merchant-manufacturers conducted a great deal of business with entrepreneurs in Pittsburgh. Furthermore, while divided on the embargo itself, Pittsburgh's two major newspapers, the Federalist *Pittsburgh Gazette* and the Democratic-Republican *Commonwealth*, both supported the cause of domestic manufacturing and welcomed industrial growth. In regard to Jefferson's Embargo, these papers ignored their political differences in order to boost local economic interests which they felt was better served by supporting manufacturing.²⁹

²⁸ Lawrence A. Peskin, "How the Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing: The First Parties and the New Economy," 235-236; Jeffrey L. Pasley, "*The Tyranny of Printers*": *Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 1-4 and 235-236.

²⁹ Roland M. Baumann, "Philadelphia's Manufacturers and the Excise Tax of 1794: The Forging of the Jeffersonian Coalition," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 106, no. 1 (January 1982), 4-5.

John Scull and Joseph Hall founded the *Pittsburgh Gazette* in early 1786 in a log house on Water Street and the first issue rolled off a hand press on a July 29, 1786. From its beginnings, the *Pittsburgh Gazette* reflected the Federalist political ideology of John Scull despite his claim of political impartiality. Scull refused to print any articles that criticized the Federalist Party because he considered it traitorous propaganda but at the same time gladly published Federalist propaganda directed against the enemies of Federalism. Despite Scull's claims to the contrary, the *Pittsburgh Gazette* was decidedly pro-Federalist, pro-British and anti-Jefferson and anti-French. As the animosities between Federalists and Jeffersonians intensified on the national level, Scull gradually backed away from his claims of nonpartisanship and in the aftermath of the XYZ Affair, he openly aligned himself with the Federalist Party. Scull carried this bias into his coverage of Jefferson's Embargo.³⁰

From the enactment of the Embargo of 1807, John Scull aggressively attacked Jefferson and his trade restrictions. He attempted to sway favor with Western Pennsylvania farmers, who since the Whiskey Rebellion had overwhelmingly supported the Democratic-Republican Party, by convincing them that they would bear the most economically damaging effects of Jefferson's Embargo. Scull embarked on a campaign to identify Jefferson, and all Democratic-Republicans for that matter, as the true enemies of the farmer and agricultural interests because of what he identified as the anti-agrarian nature of the embargo. In August of 1808, Scull editorialized that "upwards of ten thousand barrels of flour have been spoiled in the stores of Philadelphia, and a

³⁰ Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 113 and 177; Wroth, 56; Russell J. Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1938), 116 and 144.

considerable quantity of wheat and flour very much damaged at Columbia” and “at this very time we might carry on trade of forty millions without hazard of capture, not subject to the French decrees or to the British orders of council.” This called Jefferson’s motives for restricting trade with any foreign nation into question and contradicting his claim that agriculture could be redoubt against the British and French. Furthermore, Scull asked the agricultural community, “will the farmers of this country submit much longer to this state of things? Will they submit to be ruined for no better purpose than to gratify a ridiculous notion of Mr. Jefferson?” Scull closed with an attempt to persuade Western Pennsylvania farmers that their interests were linked with other classes and professions by the damaging economic effects of the embargo by pointing out that “if the farmer suffers, so must the merchant, the mechanic and the labourer.” If Scull could convince the farming community that Jefferson had turned against them, then hopefully, they would turn against the Embargo of 1807 and more importantly Jefferson and the Democratic-Republicans.³¹

The *Pittsburgh Gazette*’s most focused and harshest attacks against Jefferson and the Embargo of 1807 came in the form of a series of letters written by two presumably different anonymous writers and published under the pseudonyms of Julius and Fabius. In the Julius letters, the author addressed the economic aspects of the embargo and its effect by stating that “merchants, the cause of wealth, they are sinking into ruin.” He also claimed that Jefferson was in league with Napoleon and together the two were executing a despotic plot to ruin the country. The author also believed that George Washington and John Adams had put the nation on the right road to prosperity but Jefferson was in the

³¹ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 24, 1808.

process of destroying everything that they had accomplished. Two examples of this were that Jefferson had reduced the military and denounced federalist taxes and in the process and as a direct result, he had rendered the United States helpless to defend itself on the eve of war. Julius lumped the Embargo of 1807 in with Jefferson's other blunders and foolish policies and called them the "Jeffersonian System." Much like Julius, Fabius viewed the Embargo of 1807 as a measure solely intended to benefit the French to the detriment of United States commerce and was the "last link in the chain of French acts that have disgraced our legislature and administration." But he differed from Julius in focusing on the plight of the farmer. Jefferson had always claimed to be an advocate of the farmer but his embargo would bring them to the edge of ruin. He warned the farmers of western Pennsylvania that they had been "deceived and abused at first, and you are now sacrificed to the men you have trusted to the insolent and ravaging demands of France." Taken together the Julius and Fabius letters provide a comprehensive attack against Jefferson and his policies meant to enflame the passions of both the agrarian and merchant classes against the Jeffersonians and their economic policies.³²

The other major newspaper in Pittsburgh was the *Commonwealth* which Ephraim Pentland founded in June of 1805 in direct competition with the *Pittsburgh Gazette*. Pentland did not stick exclusively to the party line and the other Jeffersonian papers in Pittsburgh considered him a radical, primarily because of his simultaneous advocacy of both agrarian and manufacturing interests. While not being as openly biased as Scull's *Pittsburgh Gazette*, the *Commonwealth* did act as a defender of the embargo. Pentland's

³² *Pittsburgh Gazette*, January 26, 1808, April 26, 1808, May 24, 1808, June 21, 1808, July 20, 1808 and August 3, 1808; Russell J. Ferguson, 202.

general take on the embargo was that it served the best interests of the United States and that the country could provide for its self during the duration of the policy which in turn would create greater independence and foster the expansion of not only Pittsburgh's system of manufactures but the nation as a whole. Furthermore, Jefferson's Embargo had not created widespread suffering in Pittsburgh and that the Federalists had greatly exaggerated its effects. He identified the *Pittsburgh Gazette*, and the letters of Julius in particular, as the main culprits responsible for exaggerating the effects of the embargo. He opined that the Julius letters were completely lacking in "decency and truth" born of the "ignorance and folly of Federalism" with the sole purpose to "deceive the unwary, and to rouse the spirit of the factious." The editor of the *Commonwealth* believed that the nation was no better under Washington and Adams and that the Federalists had distorted the founding father's legacy to serve their own purposes.³³

The *Pittsburgh Gazette* was an outlet for Federalist propaganda and the *Commonwealth* represented the interests of the Democratic-Republicans. In the aftermath of the enactment of the Embargo of 1807, The *Pittsburgh Gazette* attacked Jefferson and his policies, ideology and administration. John Scull presented a doom and gloom scenario to his readers in which Jefferson's Embargo would destroy the ability of both a farmer and a merchant to provide economically for their families. From this perspective, the embargo produced no upside or potential for good. Furthermore, it was a consequence of Jeffersonian ideology and as a result would become the new economic reality of the nation and not a short-term remedy for the aggressive belligerence of both Britain and

³³ Russell J. Ferguson, 188; *Commonwealth* (Pittsburgh), January 6, 1808, February 10, 17, 24, 1808 and March 2, 1808.

France. The *Commonwealth* defended Jefferson and his policies, ideology and administration. Ephraim Pentland stressed to his readers the embargo's important role in keeping the United States from becoming entangled in the ongoing conflict between the warring nations of Europe. He sold the Embargo of 1807 to the public as sound policy to force Britain and France to respect the neutrality of the United States. In the short term, the citizens of Pittsburgh, and the entire nation for that matter, would suffer some economic discomfort but they should put patriotism and the best interests of the nation above their own personal interests. In regard to the Embargo of 1807 as a policy and the man who created it, the two newspapers were diametrically opposed in their views.

No common ground existed between the *Pittsburgh Gazette* and the *Commonwealth* as to the short term consequences of Jefferson's Embargo. However, they held a very similar position on the long term ramifications of Jefferson's trade restrictions. Both Scull and Pentland viewed the development of a system of manufactures as a positive and welcomed consequence of Jefferson's Embargo. Scull's attitude towards manufacturing contradicted the emerging Federalist position. He had long advocated manufacturing and in the earliest years of his paper printed a series of articles by Hugh Henry Brackenridge which summed up his philosophy on manufacturing, "this town must in future time be a place a great manufactory. Indeed the greatest on the continent, or perhaps in the world." Through the publication of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* and the frequent inclusion of pro-manufacturing articles, Scull spent his career working towards that goal.³⁴

³⁴ Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 26, 1786. Hugh Henry Brackenridge, "Observations on the Country at the Head of the Ohio River," in *Henry Hugh Brackenridge Reader, 1770-*

As the embargo wore on, Scull reduced his criticism of the legislation itself which included no more Julius or Fabius letters after August of 1808 and focused his vitriol on Jefferson alone. In March of 1809, he printed a clear manifesto for the development of manufactures while still managing to jab Jefferson for his ill-conceived and ruinous policy without ever mentioning the embargo by name. Scully advised his readers that “the importance and necessity, in the present crisis of our national affairs, of attending to our own resources, is becoming daily more and more obvious...the situation of Pittsburgh is peculiarly adapted to the establishment of manufactures of various kinds.” He endorsed the idea of forming societies and organizations for the “encouragement of domestic manufactures” but not to help Jefferson’s foreign policy. Essentially, Scull adopted a policy of shooting the messengers, Jefferson and the Democratic Republicans, but embraced elements of the message as he interpreted it such as decreasing reliance on foreign manufactured goods by extending Pittsburgh’s system of manufactures. For Scull this message was not a particularly hard sell as many of Pittsburgh’s elites were already interested in manufacturing to varying degrees.³⁵

Like Scull, Pentland had long championed manufacturing. Although his view of manufacturing contradicted Jefferson’s long held personal ideology, it did fit with the administration’s temporary embrace of manufacturing to offset the loss of foreign markets. The difference between his advocacy of manufacturing and that of the administration was that Pentland believed in the development of a large scale permanent system of manufactures and Jefferson believed in small-scale household manufactures.

1885, 111-115; Lawrence A. Peskin, “How the Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing: The First Parties and the New Economy,” 235-236.

³⁵ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 29, 1809.

His manufacturing philosophy would, however, align with the party's embrace of manufacturing and decreasing support of Jefferson's agrarian vision in the coming years. From the outset of the embargo, the *Commonwealth* stressed the necessity and benefits of manufacturing. Immediately after the enactment of the legislation, the paper printed a letter from an individual referring to himself as "A Friend to Manufactures." In the letter, the writer urged the citizens of Pittsburgh to look at the manufacturing success of Europe and follow their example. He stated that "I conceive, that no nation can arrive at a perfect stature, or be independent, until it is capable of maintaining itself." In November of 1808, Pentland stated that the true purpose and ultimate success of Jefferson's Embargo could be found in the British condemnation of the trade restrictions. In regard to Britain, He editorialized that "we must injure her manufactories, and make her feel the necessity of doing us justice, for her own sake...America will not be beholding to her. We shall manufacture for ourselves and hold no manner of intercourse with her faithless and tyrannical government." In other words, what was bad for Britain must be good for the United States.³⁶

Despite differing political ideology, both Scull and Pentland agreed on the necessity and logic of the development of a system of manufactures. Prior to the embargo, Pittsburgh already possessed numerous manufactures but it lacked an ideological commitment to manufacturing as the community still placed merchant activity over manufacturing and as a result was still largely dependent upon Eastern and foreign markets. Pittsburgh needed a push to convince it that an economy built upon

³⁶ *Commonwealth* (Pittsburgh), January 6 and November 23, 1808; Peskin, "How the Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing: The First Parties and the New Economy," 262.

manufacturing was in their best economic long term interests. *The Pittsburgh Gazette* and *The Commonwealth* provided that push for Pittsburgh's residents, whether they were a Federalist or a Democratic-Republican, on a daily basis.

The Embargo of 1807 caused a disruption in foreign trade and necessitated the enlargement of Pittsburgh's system of manufactures but a new emphasis on innovation made the town a leader of industry in the United States throughout the nineteenth century. Since the last decade of the eighteenth century, the glassmaking industry existed in Pittsburgh and was important to the local economy but most purchasers still viewed European glass as superior. The Embargo of 1807 closed America's shores to foreign glass and Pittsburgh filled the void left in the domestic market but the innovation of Benjamin Bakewell would make Pittsburgh glass known worldwide and proved to be the town's first step towards becoming an industrial power. Born in Derby, England on August 1, 1767, Bakewell's profession of choice was commerce as he long dreamed of becoming a merchant. At the age of fourteen, Bakewell became an apprentice to a haberdasher in Derby and when he turned twenty-one, he moved to London and took a job as a clerk in the employ of a mercer. In 1790, he opened his own shop in Cornhill across the street from the Bank of England. Bakewell specialized in the importation of French goods and his work often took him to Paris. The French Revolution and the commencement of hostilities between Britain and France cut off his supply of French goods and soon put him out of business. Bakewell immigrated to the United States in 1794 and initially took up residence in New York City where he imported European goods for sale on the American market but soon moved to New Haven, Connecticut with

his brother William where they opened a brewery. The brewery burned down in 1804 and Bakewell moved back to New York and resumed importing foreign goods.³⁷

Bakewell's mercantile firm in New York City relied heavily on foreign trade. He carried on extensive trade with Britain, France and the West Indies and invested heavily in the building of ocean going vessels which he used to carry foreign goods to the American market. The Embargo of 1807 put an end to Bakewell's importation of foreign goods and soon ruined his business. He had nothing to sale and no way to earn money and as a result debt began to accumulate. After settling his debts, he was left with nothing to his name except his wardrobe and a few articles of furniture. Much like the circumstances that caused his business failures in London, which had first brought him to the United States in 1794, the perils of international trade and its vulnerability to policy decisions once again delivered him to the brink of ruin. In an attempt to reverse his economic misfortune, Bakewell looked towards manufacturing and the West.³⁸

In 1808, Bakewell secured funding from Thomas Kinder and Benjamin Page to purchase a small glass plant in Pittsburgh on Grant Street. The glasshouse had limited space as it measured a mere thirty square foot but it would serve as a beginning for Bakewell's glassmaking aspirations. The plant was previously owned and operated by George Robinson and Edward Ensell but achieved very little success and suffered from a perpetual lack of capital and ingenuity. Bakewell bought out Robinson and along with Ensell formed the firm of Bakewell and Ensell. Despite some reservations about Ensell,

³⁷ B.G. Bakewell, ed., *The Family Book of Bakewell*Page*Campbell*. Pittsburgh (WM. G. Johnston & Co., Printers and Stationers, 1896), 45-46; Jay W. Hawkins, *Glasshouses & Glass Manufacturers of the Pittsburgh Region, 1795-1910* (New York: iUniverse, 2009), 48. Mercer is a British term for a dealer in dry goods and fabrics. Cornhill is a historic and significant ward and street in London and is considered the financial center of modern London.

³⁸ Bakewell, 46-48; Hawkins, 48-49.

Bakewell agreed to go into business with him because of his claim that he possessed vast glassmaking knowledge and experience. Bakewell and Ensell reopened their glasshouse, Pittsburgh Flint Glass, in late 1808. They advertised a wide variety of flint glass products such as decanters, tumblers, pitchers, bottles and flasks. In February of 1809, Bakewell and Ensell had a falling out and dissolved their partnership mainly due to Ensall's general incompetence and his misrepresentation of the condition of the plant's equipment. Apparently, Ensell possessed little expertise or experience in regard to glassmaking and failed to inform Bakewell prior to sale that the furnace and pots were improperly manufactured from subpar materials. At about the same time, Kinder withdrew his financial support and Page became the sole backer buying out Ensell and, although Bakewell remained the company's driving force, assumed a more active role in the business.³⁹

From the very beginning of his partnership with Ensell and continuing through and after the opening of Pittsburgh Flint Glass, Bakewell had to solve numerous problems before turning his glasshouse into a success. The first problem was inadequate equipment; the lone furnace was poorly constructed and could only hold six twenty inch pots at a time and the workmen possessed little or no glassmaking skills. Bakewell replaced the old furnace with a state of the art ten pot furnace and by 1814 had purchased another. In regard to an inferior workforce, he replaced all of the workers that he

³⁹ Bakewell, 46-48; Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 50; Killikelly, 133-134; Hawkins, 49; *Commonwealth* (Pittsburgh), November 23, November 30 and December 7, 1808; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, April 5, 1809. Bakewell bought ads in the Pittsburgh Gazette throughout April of 1809 announcing that he had dissolved his partnership with Ensell on February 1, 1809. The name of Bakewell and Page's company would remain Benjamin Bakewell and Co. until 1813 when Bakewell's son Thomas joined the firm and the name was changed to Bakewell, Page & Bakewell. Despite assuming a larger role in the day to business of Pittsburgh Flint Glass, Benjamin Page did not permanently move to Pittsburgh until 1814 but he did stay connected to the business through frequent correspondence and visits.

inherited with experienced glass blowers from England and Belgium. Another problem was that European glass was superior to glass currently being made in Pittsburgh and even though local glass cost less, consumers still preferred the imported glass because of its better quality. In order to compete, Bakewell would have to produce superior, or at least equal, glass for which domestic consumers would be willing to purchase instead of imported glass.⁴⁰

European glassmakers produced and exported high-end glassware which American consumers craved known as flint lead crystal glass. The process for making flint glass involved a technique in which molten glass was poured into a mold and then pressed to create cut glass in the shape of a wide variety of objects from tableware to door knobs. Bakewell came to the conclusion that in order to compete, he would have to produce flint glass. Obtaining the knowledge of how to make flint glass presented a major obstacle. The process for making flint glass, and the entire glassmaking industry for that matter, was shrouded in mystery. Those who had the knowledge did not want to share it as they feared it would create competition. Often governments and not just individuals attempted to keep the process of glassmaking secret in order to maintain a commercial advantage over other nations. This proved especially true in regard to flint glass as it constituted a lucrative industry and in the early years, England kept the process secret and thus maintained complete control. James O'Hara and Isaac Craig, and not Bakewell, took the first steps towards bringing the secrets of flint glass to Pittsburgh but would not be able to capitalize on their achievement. In 1800, O'Hara and Craig

⁴⁰ Bakewell, 48; Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 50; Flannery, 76-77; Killikelly, 134-135.

experimented with the production of flint glass at Pittsburgh Glass Works. Flint glass artisan William Price of London gave a successful demonstration on the making of flint glass in September of the same year but large scale production would have required a significant upgrade of the facilities and equipment. This proved to be cost prohibitive and O'Hara and Craig never moved forward with their plan. Several years later, Bakewell hired William Eichbaum, who had previously been employed at the Pittsburgh Glass Works and witnessed Price's demonstration, to oversee the production of flint glass. As a result, Bakewell and his glass factory and not that of O'Hara and Craig would eventually become the first flint glass manufacturer in both Pittsburgh and the West.⁴¹

Bakewell now possessed the equipment, labor and technique to make flint glass but he faced a raw material problem. Red lead was vital to the production of flint glass but Britain controlled the supply of this particular ore because they had managed to keep its production technique secret as well. New England glassmaker Deming Jarves eventually discovered the secret to producing red lead and traded that knowledge to Bakewell in exchange for instructions on how to manufacture flint glass. Bakewell now had everything needed to produce flint glass and became wealthy and successful as a result. In the following years, Pittsburgh Flint Glass won numerous awards for its glass and its products were world renowned. Important and powerful men such Andrew Jackson, James Monroe, Henry Clay, the Marquis de Lafayette owned various items manufactured by Pittsburgh Flint Glass such as decanters and other glassware. Lesser

⁴¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on the Manufacture of Glass*. Report prepared by Joseph D. Weeks (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), 85-88; Bakewell, 48; Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 50; Flannery, 76-77 and 111; Killikelly, 134-135. The secrecy surrounding the glassmaking dates back to ancient times when it was considered part of the "black arts." During the Middle Ages, the Venetian government took extreme steps to keep the production process of glass a secret as it isolated and imprisoned glassmakers on the island of Murano, in large part, to keep them from passing technical knowledge on to competitors.

known individuals in the interior used Bakewell's glass products as well as he shipped merchandise throughout the Ohio Valley.⁴²

Prior to the embargo, Pittsburgh manufacturers primarily focused on markets in the East and Europe. The embargo forced manufactures to change their focus and look for markets further west. Bakewell solicited the business of merchants in Ohio, Kentucky & Tennessee. He was not alone in looking to reach markets further in the interior as many Pittsburgh merchants and manufacturers engaged in the same endeavor. Hatter Jason Thompson routinely advertised that he would ship his hats great distances and Scully & Graham were willing to accommodate on the "shortest notice" merchants and individuals wanting to take their goods down the Ohio River. In the past, merchants had used their advertising space in newspapers to promote foreign goods but Jefferson's trade restrictions enticed them to highlight American goods. Merchants such as Charles Biddle Jr. announced to the public that he had "constantly for sale upon the Most Liberal Terms, a large and very handsome assortment of British, India and American Manufactures." Many of the goods being advertised and sold in Pittsburgh were not just manufactured or grown locally but also all points throughout the Ohio Valley. As a result of Jefferson's Embargo, Pittsburgh not only turned their attention towards domestic trade but, of equal importance, trade within the Ohio Valley.⁴³

Benjamin Bakewell's new vision of industry soon attracted other entrepreneurs to the production of flint glass, turning Pittsburgh into a glassmaking capitol. By not settling for the normal method of production but instead reaching for a higher standard, Bakewell

⁴² Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 50-51; Flannery, 76-77.

⁴³ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, October 19 and December 14, 1808, April 12 and July 26, 1809.

placed Pittsburgh at the forefront of glass production throughout not just the country but the world. Jefferson's Embargo helped spark Bakewell's turn to innovation. The Embargo cut off the supply of foreign glass to the United States effectively creating a void. Bakewell filled that void and capitalized on the situation for not only his own good but that of Pittsburgh.

What Benjamin Bakewell did for Pittsburgh glassmaking, Oliver Evans did for not just one industry but many industries throughout not just Pittsburgh but the entire nation. Evans was born in the colonial town of Newport, Delaware on September 13, 1755. His father worked as a shoemaker which explains his lifelong interest in the production processes. From an early age, he embraced technical innovation and wanted to become an engineer. Evans' invention of the automated flour mill and new design for a high pressured steam engine laid the foundation for the industrial and market revolutions in the United States and his move to Pittsburgh proved to be a critical moment in the town's rise to industrial greatness.⁴⁴

Evans first technological breakthrough came when he turned his attention to the antiquated production methods employed by grist mills of the time. He wanted to revolutionize flour mills by designing machinery which could carry grain from the wagon and move it through the necessary operations to manufacture it into flour without employing manual labor. Evans designed five separate machines an elevator, conveyor, hopper-boy, drill and descender. Together they would not completely eliminate the need for manual labor but it would lessen the need for manpower. In his own words the five

⁴⁴ Eugene S. Ferguson, *Oliver Evans: Inventive Genius of the American Industrial Revolution* (Greenville, Delaware: Hagley Museum, 1980), 10-12; Greville and Dorothy Bathe, ed., *Oliver Evans: A Chronicle of Early American Engineering* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1935), 7-8.

machines would “perform every necessary movement of the grain, and meal, from one part of the mill to another, or from one machine...until it be completely manufactured into flour...ready for packing into barrels, for sale or exportation. All of which is performed by the force of water, without the aid of manual labour, excepting to set the different machines in motion.” The grain elevator marked the most significant and innovative of Evans’ machines as it used metal or wooden buckets spaced twelve inches apart on a belt and pulleys to continuously elevate three hundred bushels of grain or meal every hour and the hopper-boy consisting of a twelve foot rake on a vertical drive shaft which evenly spread meal and slowly guided it towards the bolting hopper. By 1792, over a hundred mills had obtained licenses to use his design⁴⁵

Evans’ design for the automated flour mill constituted his first contribution to the eventual development of a system of manufactures in the United States. His design for a high pressure steam engine marked the second and it would have a much greater effect on manufacturing and western expansion. In the early seventeen-seventies while apprenticing to a wheelwright, Evans first envisioned a way to make carriages move without horses using steam power. His idea for a steam-carriage took a back seat to his automated flour mill in the seventeen-eighties but in 1793 he moved to Philadelphia and opened a store. In 1801, Evans designed a steam wheel for his horseless carriage but soon decided that the steam engine would be better suited for the purpose of manufacturing and industry instead of travel. Low pressure steam engines were already being used as a source of power but he had a different idea which involved high pressure steam. At the

⁴⁵ Bathe, 10-11 and 14-18; Oliver Evans, *The Young Mill-Wright and Miller’s Guide* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1848), 203; Eugene S. Ferguson, 12-13, 28-29, 41-42. The hopper-boy derived its name from the fact that it did the work previously performed by boys.

same time in England, Richard Trevithick independently developed his own high pressured steam engine for transportation which would eventually be used to power the world's first steam powered locomotive. In February of 1803, Evans completed work on his high powered steam engine which produced the same amount of power but was smaller, easier to transport and cheaper to build and received a patent from the United States government in 1804. Evans opened the Mars Works in Philadelphia on the corner of Ninth and Vine Street in 1806 to construct high pressured steam engines and boilers. Additionally, the Mars Works produced iron castings of a wide variety of sizes, pans for soap manufacturers, rollers for rolling mills, cylinders for sugar mills, spindles for paper mills, forge hammers, anvils and screws. The items produced by Oliver Evans at this factory aided industrial growth by providing the materials needed to build and run factories, but the business was limited by the lack of demand for domestic manufactures.⁴⁶

All that changed with Jefferson's Embargo. Domestic manufacturing exploded and Evans finally started to earn significant profits from both his automated mill and high pressure steam engine designs in the form of licensing fees as well as from the actual construction of high pressured engines at the Mars Works. These profits in turn allowed him to expand his business in the West, starting with Pittsburgh. Evans knew the land west of the Alleghenies possessed untapped potential, and in particular, that Pittsburgh was the perfect spot to realize this potential. He devised a plan which would combine both his patents as he constructed an automated mill in the town at the forks of the Ohio and sent a high pressured steam engine and boiler across the mountains to provide the

⁴⁶ Eugene S. Ferguson, 30, 35-37 and 45; Bathe, 165; *Aurora* (Philadelphia), September 25, 1809.

power to run the machines. Evans sent his twenty three year old son George along to run the mill. The Pittsburgh Steam Mill commenced operations in the fall of 1809. It was a four story steam powered grist mill on the banks of the Monongahela River. The mill contained two 26 foot wrought iron boilers and ran two pair of grinding stones with the capacity to produce eight bushels of flour per hour at the time of its opening but the engines possessed the power to run an additional set of stones. The *Pittsburgh Gazette* ran an editorial in December of 1809 in which the writer claimed that he had witnessed during a demonstration of the mill's capabilities that one set of stones produced ten bushels of flour in one hour and the other set nine which led him to speculate once the third set of stones were installed that the mill could produce thirty or more bushels of flour per hour.⁴⁷

The Pittsburgh Steam Mill cost Evans and his investors upwards of \$15,000 to construct and due to financing difficulties and a decreasing amount of capitol on the part of the investors; they needed more funds to complete the mill. Evans alone sunk \$7,600 into the project and finding additional investors locally in Pittsburgh proved to be a very difficult proposition because many citizens viewed the project as "wild and visionary." Evans' mill was state of the art but went far beyond their conception of manufacturing or what they believed prudent. In the end, the Western Branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania stepped in and issued enough credit to ensure the completion of the mill. Despite the cost and the trepidation displayed by Pittsburgh's citizenry, the mill became a huge success and provided a financial boon for the farmers who originally doubted its feasibility. The *Pittsburgh Gazette* opined that the opening of the Pittsburgh Steam Mill would provide

⁴⁷ Eugene S. Ferguson, 46; Bathe, 159-163; Wilson, 202.

local farmers a better price for their grain because they would not have to ship it as far and the size of the mill and its production capacity would require a constant supply of grain to produce large enough quantities to justify its production costs which would ultimately benefit the agricultural community. Farmers from as far away as forty miles brought their grain to the Pittsburgh Steam Mill. The *Pittsburgh Gazette*'s statement that the mill would provide farmers with a better price for and more control of their product proved correct as witnessed by Oliver Evans who commented "at one time forty sleds were waiting to be unloaded and the wheat farmers raised their prices 50%." Evans' steam powered mill provided Pittsburgh's growing system of manufactures a valuable new addition and more importantly he linked the fate of farmers and manufactures together as the Pittsburgh Steam Mill proved that manufacturing and agriculture were not mutually exclusive and both communities needed the other to prosper.⁴⁸

The opening of the Pittsburgh Steam Mill was part of Evans' full frontal assault on the western market. In addition to opening the mill in Pittsburgh, he sent steam engines to new flour mills in both Lexington and Marietta, Ohio as well investing in both. All three of Evans' western flour mills proved to be huge financial successes which in turned inspired others to open steam powered flour mills and required him to send more steam engines across the mountains. The huge demand for his steam engines produced a transportation dilemma. The cost of transporting engines and boilers across the Allegheny Mountains was both time and cost prohibitive. Evans solved this problem by building a

⁴⁸ Wilson, 202; Bathe, 162; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, December 6, 1809. Many early historians of Pittsburgh often erroneously list the Pittsburgh Manufacturing Company or Bank of Pittsburgh as the financial institution which stepped in and provided the funding to complete the construction of the Pittsburgh Steam Mill but in 1809 the only bank in operation was the Western Branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania.

factory similar to the Mars Works in Pittsburgh. In 1812, the Pittsburgh Steam Engine Company commenced operations on the south side of Front Street near the Pittsburgh Steam Mill. Like the steam mill, the new factory would be overseen by George Evans. It is important to remember that Oliver Evans made his move to Pittsburgh at the commencement of the War of 1812. The demand for his steam engines was no doubt directly influenced by the disruptions in trade caused by the lead up to the war but these were a continuation of the disruptions caused by the Embargo of 1807.⁴⁹

In the summer of 1812, Evans started running ads in the local papers for the Pittsburgh Steam Engine Company in which they informed the public of the quality of their engines. The ads boasted that their engines were “far superior to those on the principles of Boulton and Watt; they are less expensive, more simple and durable, occupy infinitely less room, require much less fuel, are thirty times more powerful, and can be conducted by any man of ordinary capacity, with less than two months practice.” Furthermore, the ads warned that “no other person or persons are authorized to make said engines in this place, and that no licence can be obtained for using those not made by the subscriber.” The warning clearly constituted an attempt by Evans to protect his patent and licensing fees as well as a warning shot across the bow of upstart engine manufacturers who may try to profit off of his design. This was not an unwarranted concern because below Evans’s ad in the July 14 edition of the Commonwealth, Robert Smith claimed that he had invented a steam engine of “a different construction, than any that has been made in the U.S” and was ready to install his engine in Pittsburgh grist mills. Other possible usurpers to Evans’ emerging western steam engine dynasty included

⁴⁹ Eugene S. Ferguson, 47; Bathe, 180.

Thomas Copeland of Pittsburgh and Daniel French of Brownsville. Copeland and French cut into Evans' market by producing cheaper engines using inferior parts and shoddy workmanship. George Evans attested to this in late 1814 when he complained to a judge that Copeland and French had infringed upon their patent and were currently "underselling us" and that they "do their work badly." Success breeds imitation and the amount of entrepreneurs looking to copy Evan's techniques is clear proof that he started a manufacturing revolution in Pittsburgh which was greatly influenced by the Embargo of 1807.⁵⁰

In many cases steam increased the production of already existing industries but in the case of cotton, it resurrected a dead one. George Eltonhead opened Pittsburgh's first cotton factory in 1804 which manufactured cotton and woolen products using water as a power source. Water power presented a problem for factories in that it catered mainly to seasonal work whereas steam power could propel a factory year round. Eltonhead's factory never enjoyed much success and coupled with a lack of capital, it soon closed. Hugh and James Jelly opened a cotton factory in the years following the closure of the Eltonhead factory but encountered many of the same production and capital problems and eventually met the same fate. The failures of the Eltonhead and Jelly factories scared off any other potential cotton manufacturers in the Pittsburgh market and it would be several years before anyone else entered this particular industry. In 1819, James Arthurs opened a steam powered cotton factory on Strawberry Street. The James Arthurs & Son Cotton

⁵⁰ *Commonwealth*, June 23 and July 14, 182; Bathe, 187 and 216-217; George Evans to the Honorable Judge R. Peters, 8 September 1814, *Oliver Evans: A Chronicle of Early American Engineering* Greville and Dorothy Bathe, ed., 217. The Boulton and Watt steam engine was low pressure rotative steam engine built in 1785 and was in heavy use in the United States prior to Evans' design for a high powered steam engine.

Factory had a workforce of thirteen employees and primarily engaged in the production of fine yarns. Unlike the previous cotton attempts in Pittsburgh, Arthurs' factory became quite successful and encouraged him to open a steam powered woolen mill on the adjacent lot which employed another thirteen employees and manufactured various types of woolen cloths. The James Arthurs & Son Cotton Factory would be followed by The Phoenix Steam Cotton Factory. This factory, owned by James Adams and James S. Craft, achieved even greater success than that of Arthurs. In 1822, Adams and Craft expanded their factory and increased its workforce to 170 persons and its daily production capacity to about 700 weight of yarn and 450 pounds of cotton cloth. Its annual production soon exceeded \$100,000. Most often, success breeds more success and that was the case in regard to cotton manufacturing in Pittsburgh as the town soon possessed numerous successful cotton factories. The Embargo of 1807 increased the need for domestic manufacturing because it cut off the supply of foreign goods but the innovation of both Oliver Evan's design for the automated mill and high pressured steam engine gave Pittsburgh the push it need to realize its potential to become a manufacturing giant.⁵¹

In the earliest years of the nineteenth century, Oliver Evans abandoned his plans to use steam for transportation. Instead he turned his attentions towards designing a high powered steam engine for the purpose of manufacturing and industry. Steam powered transportation played a vital role in the commercial development of both the West and Pittsburgh but this particular innovation would not be born of Evans' innovative mind. Robert Fulton did not invent either the steam engine or steamboat but he was responsible for demonstrating the commercial value of both to the American public. Of more

⁵¹ George Thornton Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs, Vol. III*, 648-649.

importance to this study, he demonstrated the commercial value of steam boating on western waters. The steamboat played a very important role in the commercial and industrial development of Pittsburgh, which in turn fostered development throughout the Ohio Valley and the West. By the eighteen twenties, steamboats carried goods manufactured from Pittsburgh to all points along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and steamboat building filled the manufacturing void left by the collapse of the shipbuilding industry in the wake of Jefferson's Embargo.⁵²

During the seventeen-nineties and the early years of the nineteenth century, Robert Fulton experimented extensively with steamboats on the rivers of Europe but in 1806 he returned to his native United States with the goal of perfecting steamboat travel in America. In 1807, Fulton, along with Robert R. Livingston, built the country's first commercial steamboat, *The Clermont*, which carried passengers upstream and downstream from New York to Albany. By the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, Fulton had turned his attention to the West and Pittsburgh. He recognized the commercial potential of the West and the role that steamboats could play in realizing that potential. The Embargo of 1807 gave Fulton an opportunity to put his theory into action as the increase in demand for goods manufactured domestically necessitated more efficient modes of transportation. Steamboats could move goods both upstream and downstream quicker, cheaper and more efficiently than vessels moved by wind and oar.

⁵² In 1805, Oliver Evans revisited the idea of using steam for the purposes of powering a vehicle. He received a commission from the Philadelphia Board of Health to build a steam dredge for the purpose of cleaning the docks and removing sandbars. The resulting vehicle was the Urukter Amphibolos which in theory was a thirty foot long and twelve foot wide high pressure steam carriage capable of travel on both land and water. The engine was too small for the vehicle and the Urukter Amphibolos barely made the distance from Evans' shop to the Schuylkill River. It never proved successful as a dredger and rotted on the dock until being sold for parts. Evans abandoned all plans for the Urukter Amphibolos.

From Pittsburgh, Fulton could monopolize the use of steam power along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Pittsburgh would serve as a focal point on a trade route that ran from Pittsburgh to Louisville, Louisville to Natchez, Natchez to New Orleans and vice versa. In 1811, Fulton along with his associates, Livingston and Nicholas J. Roosevelt, began construction on the first steamboat built on western waters. The steamboat *New Orleans* was 138 feet long and carried a burden of approximately 200 tons. The final cost of the steamboat, including its engines, neared \$40,000. On October 20, 1811, the *New Orleans*, captained by Roosevelt, embarked on the first steamboat voyage down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. The Falls of the Ohio interrupted Roosevelt's journey and as a result, he did not reach New Orleans until January of 1812.⁵³

The successful voyage of the *New Orleans* demonstrated the steamboat's capacity for effective river navigation, both upstream and downstream, and marked the beginning of the steamboat era on the Ohio and Mississippi. It also commenced the steamboat building era in Pittsburgh, and eventually other spots along the Ohio River. In the years following the voyage of the *New Orleans*, the Pittsburgh area witnessed in rapid succession the construction of numerous steamboats including the *Aetna*, the *Buffalo*, the *Comet*, the *Dispatch*, the *Enterprise*, the *Harriet*, the *James Monroe*, the *James Ross*, the *Vesuvius* and the *Washington*. The steamboat building revolution even convinced Oliver Evans, who years prior had abandoned his plans to use steam for transportation, to get in on the action. In December 1816, the Pittsburgh Steam Engine Company completed

⁵³ Robert Henry Thurston, *Robert Fulton: His Life and its Results* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1891), 101-128, 147; Wilson, 107; Martha Kreipke "The Falls of the Ohio and the Development of the Ohio River Trade, 1810-1860," *Filson Club Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (1980), 199; Ben Casseday, *The History of Louisville from its Earliest Settlement Till the Year 1852* (Louisville: Hull and Brother, 1852), 119-121; ; H.M. McMurtrie, *Sketches of Louisville and its Environs* (Louisville: S. Penn, 1819), 134, 200.

construction of the *Oliver Evans* and launched it down the Ohio River. The following year near Point Coupee, Louisiana, one of her boilers blew and eleven men lost their lives. In December of 1818, the Pittsburgh Steam Engine Company launched the *Tamerlane* and the *Franklin*. In 1819, steamboat builders along the Ohio, Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers had approximately 10,000 tons of steamboat in the process of construction. By 1820, the Ohio Valley had constructed seventy-one steamboats with a total tonnage exceeding 14,208 tons for use on its waters. Ten years later, the numbers rose to 296 steamboats and 51,507 tons. By 1835, more than 300 boats steamed their way up and down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Pittsburgh and Louisville built the vast majority of these boats.⁵⁴

The abundance of steamboat building in Pittsburgh convinced Zadock Cramer that the town had finally filled the void created by the blue-water shipbuilding industry and led him to declare “shipbuilding is superseded by steamboat navigation on our western waters.” The building of vessels capable of ocean travel symbolized Pittsburgh’s reliance on foreign markets. The emergence of steamboat building signaled and made possible a greater reliance on domestic trade and more importantly trade within the Ohio Valley. Steamboats carried goods and people from town to town along the Ohio River not across the Atlantic Ocean. Jefferson’s Embargo marked a transition point in the Ohio Valley’s transformation from an outpost of the British Empire to the center of an economic empire of its own.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Wilson, 107-110; Kreipke, 199-201; McMurtrie, 200-204, Robert Henry Thurston 147-148.

⁵⁵ Zadock Cramer, *The Navigator: Containing Directions for Navigating the Monongahela, Alleghany, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers, 11th Edition* (Pittsburgh: Cramer, Spear & Eichbaum, 1821), 28.

If steam fueled the rise of manufacturing in Pittsburgh, then iron provided the building materials. The words “Pittsburgh” and “iron” are synonymous with one another. Iron is also synonymous with the industrialization of Pittsburgh. The growth of the iron industry and manufacturing occurred simultaneously and one could not have occurred without the other. Pittsburgh would not assume the title of “Iron City” until the middle of the nineteenth century when iron products dominated its industrial production but the groundwork was laid in the years immediately following the Embargo of 1807. In its early years the town contained a significant amount of iron products, but the citizens of Pittsburgh imported most of these products from the East or Europe; local blacksmiths made the rest from bar-iron transported across the mountains.⁵⁶

Rich iron ore deposits could be found throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania and iron furnaces sprang up in abundance, but Pittsburgh itself was an exception. Its immediate area did not contain enough iron ore to successfully maintain the production of raw pig iron. Early Pittsburgh industrialists experimented with iron production but failed. In 1792, George Anshultz opened Pittsburgh’s first iron furnace but found so little ore that he soon closed it down. Pittsburgh would become the “Iron City” by focusing on iron-working and -mongering rather than primary iron production. Blast furnaces did not become an important part of its industrial landscape until the eighteen-fifties. Another problem facing the iron industry in Pittsburgh was foreign competition. It proved cheaper to import iron than produce it which stunted the growth of the iron industry. In order to prosper domestically, the iron industry desperately needed the United States government to pursue protectionist policies. Jefferson’s Embargo served that purpose. With the

⁵⁶ Seelve A. Wilson, “The Growth of Pittsburgh Iron and Steel,” *Magazine of Western History Illustrated* 2, No. 6 (October 1885), pp. 540; Reiser, 191; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 149.

foreign supply of iron cut-off, Pittsburgh industrialists began to take another look at the iron industry.⁵⁷

In 1805, Joseph McClurg opened a foundry to produce metal castings. Like Anshultz, McClurg had a supply problem. He had to rely on outside sources for pig iron and often the pig iron that he received was not of good quality and proved difficult to work with. As with other industries, Jefferson's Embargo not only increased demand but supplied the inspiration for innovation. Pittsburgh lacked enough iron ore for smelting but it possessed coal in abundance. McClurg built two air furnaces for the purpose of using coal to reheat and melt pig iron which could then be used in his factory to produce iron castings. Re-melting proved to be a more efficient method than smelting his own because the re-melted pig iron supplied a greater amount of molten metal which better served the production of large castings. In order to maintain a steady supply of pig iron for his foundry, McClurg bought out several bankrupt furnaces in Westmoreland County located in the middle of rich iron ore deposits. The success of his foundry encouraged McClurg to build a mill for the grinding of iron. Just as important to breaking the West's dependence on eastern and foreign markets, McClurg began sending his iron products to markets throughout the west. In regard to breaking dependence on foreign nations, McClurg played a key role in the defeat of the British in the West during the War of 1812 as his foundry supplied the cannons and cannon balls for Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's Lake Erie Fleet. McClurg also played a vital role in promoting the development of other industries besides that of iron as his metal castings were used to build the steam

⁵⁷ Wilson, 253-254; George Henry Thurston, *Allegheny County's Hundred Years* (Pittsburgh: A.A. Anderson & Son, 1888), 136-138; Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 57.

engines which fueled industrial development in Pittsburgh. McClurg's success led to further innovation in Pittsburgh's iron industry. In 1819, Union Rolling Mill constructed a puddling furnace which used re-melted pig iron to produce wrought iron. This sparked an explosion of rolling mills, slitting mills and nail mills in the Pittsburgh area in the eighteen-twenties.⁵⁸

While the city did not sprout its mighty blast furnaces overnight, the Embargo of 1807 and the subsequent War of 1812 placed Pittsburgh on the road to becoming the "Iron City" and later the "Steel City." Trade restrictions increased the demand for domestically manufactured iron products. The re-melting of pig iron allowed for the production of large metal castings. Re-melted pig iron provided raw material for puddling furnaces which produced wrought iron. The puddling process and the resulting wrought iron laid the foundation for the steel industry that would emerge in Pittsburgh in the eighteen-fifties and sixties.⁵⁹

The transformation of Pittsburgh industry during the Embargo era shows most clearly in the statistics. In 1803, Zadock Cramer pleaded with his fellow citizens of Pittsburgh to manufacture more and import less as the town possessed an unequal balance of trade. He wanted the town to embrace a "principle of economy and industry" and declared that manufacturing would "forward the interests of our country of which you are the principal and ostensible inhabitants." At this time, Pittsburgh had failed to live up to

⁵⁸ Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 34-37; Wilson, 257; Thurston, *Allegheny County's Hundred Years*, 166.

⁵⁹ Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 35; Thurston, *Allegheny County's Hundred Years*, 139-142. Wrought Iron is a highly refined form of iron that is almost entirely free of carbon and can easily be shaped yet is strong and fairly resistant to rust. Rolling is a process of metal formation in which metal stock is passed through a pair of rollers. Slitting is a process in which metal bars are slit into rods. In the nineteenth century, the most common use for slitting was to produce nails.

its considerable promise. The years after 1807, would witness Pittsburgh's march towards becoming an "industrial metropolis." In 1803, when Cramer made his desperate plea for greater manufacturing, Pittsburgh's total manufacturing output amounted to around \$350,000. Seven years later in 1810, the figure had jumped to over \$1,000,000. This included significant increases in industries such as Iron, from \$56,548 to \$94,890 and glass, from \$13,000 to \$63,000. In 1815, its manufacturing output reached \$2,617,000 and iron and glass production increased to \$764,200 and \$235,000 respectively. In 1792, 37 mechanics were employed in sixteen factories. That number had increased to 259 factories employing 1,657 by 1817. Of those employees, 100 worked in the copper and tin industry, 92 in glass factories, 87 in iron foundries and 70 engaged in the production of steam engines. Iron production topped \$1,000,000 for the first time in 1826 and glass would follow in 1836. By 1850, total manufacturing output exceeded \$50,000,000 with iron alone accounting for \$6,300,000. Pittsburgh made great economic progress during the first half of the eighteenth century and Jefferson's trade restrictions along with other economic disruptions caused by the War of 1812 provided a springboard for economic change.⁶⁰

Population increase can account for some of this economic growth as Pittsburgh's citizenry increased from 1,565 in 1800 to 4,768 in 1810. By 1820 it had risen to 7,248 and twenty years later Pittsburgh's population exceeded 20,000 people. In 1850, its

⁶⁰ Zadock Cramer, *Pittsburgh Almanack for the Year 1803*, 25; Edward K. Muller, "Industrial Suburbs and the Growth of Metropolitan Pittsburgh, 1870-1920," in *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home on the Metropolitan Fringe*, ed. Robert Lewis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 124; Reiser, 203; Stefan Lorant, "Gateway to the West," 77. The term "industrial metropolis" was first used in reference to Pittsburgh by Robert A. Woods in 1909 in an initial report of the findings of Paul Kellogg's Pittsburgh Survey which was conducted in 1907-1908 and published by *Collier's Weekly* in 1909.

population numbered 46,601 making it the thirteenth largest city in the United States and the third largest city in the West behind only New Orleans and St. Louis. The passage of time and advancements in technology also played a role but the Embargo of 1807 and subsequent adjustments made by Pittsburgh's business community played the primary role in and provides a window to the economic expansion and growth it enjoyed throughout the nineteenth century. The rapid economic progress made by Pittsburgh in the decade after Jefferson's Embargo was quite extraordinary given the minimal growth it experienced in the decades prior. Zadock Cramer best summed up this progress in 1817, when he declared manufacturing "has almost rendered us independent of the eastern states, as those states have been rendered by the war independent of the old world." Prior Jefferson's Embargo, Pittsburgh already had a manufacturing infrastructure to fall back on. It just needed a reason to move its economic focus from chiefly mercantile interests towards retail and manufacturing as well as away from foreign markets and towards domestic and Ohio Valley markets. The Embargo of 1807 provided the motivation to make a change.⁶¹

Pittsburgh's ascension from a small fort and Indian trading post to "industrial metropolis" is epitomized in the business activities of James O'Hara. O'Hara was a major force within the Pittsburgh business community and early on realized that merchant and manufacturing activities were not exclusive of one another. He helped lead both the town's manufacturing and merchant interests into a new era.

⁶¹ *Pittsburg Press almanac and cyclopedia of useful information, 1898* (Pittsburgh: Press Pub. Co, 1898), 9; United States Census Bureau, "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990." <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/twps0027.html> (Accessed June 5, 2013); Stefan Lorant, "Gateway to the West," 77.

C.) James O'Hara and the New Economic Vision

General James O'Hara was Pittsburgh's "first captain of industry" and America's first industrial millionaire. He founded and owned most of Pittsburgh's wealthy and exclusive East End neighborhood. At one point or another in his life, O'Hara was an Indian trader, soldier of the American Revolution, merchant, manufacturer, real estate mogul, politician, shipbuilder, and financier. O'Hara ranks among America's first true capitalists, a proto-robber baron, who provided a role model for future East End and Iron City gods of capitalism such as Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, Henry John Heinz, and Andrew Mellon. O'Hara did not see himself as just a merchant or manufacturer. His capital provided the life blood of Pittsburgh's manufacturing boom in the years after Jefferson's Embargo and created the blueprint for the town's reaction to the Embargo of 1807 as he personified the concept of adaptability.⁶²

James O'Hara was born the son of General Sir James O'Hara, the Baron of Tyrawley, in County Mayo, Ireland in 1752. At the age of thirteen he left home to attend the Jesuit college of St. Sulpice in Paris, France. Five years later, O'Hara accepted a commission in the Regiment of the Coldstream Guards in Her Majesty's service. He left the service a year and a half later to become a clerk in the counting house of a Liverpool ship broker. O'Hara displayed a talent for business and soon immigrated to the United States. Arriving in the New World in 1772, he found employment with various Scotch-Irish fur trading companies out of Philadelphia. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Western Virginia and gained employment with an Indian trader. In 1773, he moved to Pittsburgh

⁶² Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 146; Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 3 and 31.

and used a small inheritance as capital to join the Pittsburgh Indian trading firm of Devereux Smith and Ephraim Douglass. Most of his dealings as an Indian trader took place at the village of Kuskusky near the junction of the Mahoning and Shenango Rivers in present day Lawrence County. On the frontier, his knowledge of the French language and his ties to the vast Scottish-Irish trade network served him quite well in terms of dealing with the natives and acquiring abundant European goods to conduct trade. These contacts would continue to serve him for the duration of his business career and life. During his brief tenure as an Indian trader, O'Hara amassed considerable profit and made a name for himself as resourceful young man who could adapt his business strategies to meet a wide variety of situations.⁶³

The colonial government of Pennsylvania appointed O'Hara to the position of government agent among the Indians in March of 1774 and he retained this position until 1775. At the onset of the American Revolution, O'Hara enlisted in the Third Virginia Regiment under the command of Colonel Hugh Mercer. Due to his three years in the British military, his superiors commissioned him as a captain. He was tasked with raising, equipping and commanding a company of forty volunteers. Upon assembling the company, the State of Virginia sent O'Hara and his men to Fort Kanawha near present day Charleston, West Virginia. O'Hara protected and provisioned the fort until early 1778 when he received orders to join George Rogers Clark's military expedition to attack

⁶³ William M. Darlington, "Sketch of the Life of General O'Hara," in *Fort Pitt and Letters from the Frontier*, ed. Mary Case Darlington (Pittsburgh: J.R. Weldin Company, 1892), 200-201; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 146; Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 32; George Thornton Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs, Vol. III*, 536. County Mayo is a county in the West Region of Ireland and a part of the province of Connacht. Queen Anne conferred the title of baron on James O'Hara's father for his military service. Lawrence County is a part of the Pittsburgh metropolitan area and was named after the USS Lawrence which was Admiral Oliver Hazard Perry's flagship during the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812.

the British post of Kaskaskia in the Illinois country. After the defeat of the British at Kaskaskia and during the ensuing occupation, O'Hara proved invaluable to Clark as he not only procured provisions but also served as translator to the Indians because of his knowledge of the French language. By 1779, O'Hara's company had been reduced to 29 men and considered too small to guard a garrison. Therefore, he received orders to join the Ninth Virginia Regiment. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed as Commissary of the General Hospital at Carlisle, Pennsylvania on the other side of the Allegheny Mountains. In 1781, O'Hara was assigned to the Quartermaster's department where he served as Assistant Quartermaster for the remainder of the war.⁶⁴

Following the American Revolution, James O'Hara married Mary Carson and returned to Pittsburgh. Soon after, he received a lucrative contract from the government to supply the western army under the command of General Harmar as well as supply the various Indian agents in the western country. In 1792, O'Hara received a commission as Quartermaster General of the United States Army, hence the title of general which he carried with him for the rest of life even though he resigned his commission in 1796. As Quartermaster General, his responsibilities included paying the troops, coordinating transportation and securing supplies. While serving in this position, O'Hara spent most of his time in the field and therefore relied on his chief deputy, Major Isaac Craig, with whom he would enter into business in the private sector, to procure provisions in Pittsburgh imported from the East such as clothing and arms and send them down the

⁶⁴ William M. Darlington, "Sketch of the Life of General O'Hara", 201-206; Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs*, Vol. III, 536; George Rogers Clark to George Mason, 19 November 1779, in *George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-1781*, ed. James Alton James (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois State Historical Library, 1912), 117; George Rogers Clark to John Brown, 1791, in *George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-1781*, 221.

Ohio River via flatboats to his location. He also engaged in battle on several occasions, the most notable of which was the Battle of Fallen Timbers under the command of General “Mad” Anthony Wayne and subsequently became a signer of the Treaty of Greenville. After resigning his commission, he continued to supply the government as a private contractor until 1802.⁶⁵

O’Hara became a wealthy man through his association with the government, both Colonial and United States, as an agent, contractor and officer. He continually adapted to the ever changing situation on the frontier and never missed an opportunity to make a new contact or profit from an official position. He also never seemed to be concerned about the appearance of conflicting interests. While acting as a representative of the government, he opened numerous stores and manufactories in Pittsburgh and purchased large tracks of land throughout Western Pennsylvania as well as Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. By the time he ended his official relationship with the government in 1802; O’Hara was the richest man in Pittsburgh and owned most of the East End. He resigned his commission as Quartermaster General in order to focus on his private affairs but while serving in that position he constantly blurred the lines between government and personal business to the point where no differentiation could be made between the two.⁶⁶

O’Hara’s most obvious conflict of interest came in 1795, while still serving as Quartermaster General, when he entered the salt market in his own name using

⁶⁵ Baldwin, *Pittsburg: The Story of a City*, 146-147; Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs*, Vol. III, 536; Skrabec, *The World’s Richest Neighborhood*, 32; William M. Darlington, “Sketch of the Life of General O’Hara”, 209-211 and 215. The Treaty of Greenville established the "Greenville Treaty Line," which served as a boundary between American Indian territory and lands open to white settlement. American settlers largely ignored the line and continued to encroach on Indian land supposedly protected by the treaty.

⁶⁶ Skrabec, *The World’s Richest Neighborhood*, 32.

government resources. In the process of supplying Fort Oswego in New York with flour and other provisions, he orchestrated an elaborated network of ships and wagons to bring salt from the Onondaga Salt Works in Salina, New York to Pittsburgh. O'Hara made sure that the barrels he used for flour would be suitable for transporting salt. He sent barrels filled with flour to Fort Oswego and the barrels returned to Pittsburgh filled with salt. Using ships and barrels provided by the government, he cornered the Pittsburgh salt market as well as supplying other towns along the route. Pittsburgh previously received their salt from Baltimore but it was both expensive and scarce. O'Hara undercut their price and provided a steady supply of salt using the vast resources of the Federal government. He sold his salt for four dollars a bushel which was half the cost of that imported across the mountains. O'Hara eventually starting using his own ships and barrels but by that time, he controlled the market. In 1800, he received 723 barrels of salt from New York and by 1809, the number had reached 14,346.⁶⁷

James O'Hara soon took the initial profits from his salt scheme and moved on to his next business endeavor, glass making. Much like salt, glass was a product desperately needed in Pittsburgh but scarcely found. The cost of transporting glass across the Allegheny Mountains from the East proved to be considerably expensive and time consuming. A significant amount of the glass sent west never reached its destination because breakage presented a major barrier to its importation. Noted New England Unitarian Minister and Harvard librarian Thaddeus Mason Harris on a trip west attested to the problems of transporting glass to the western country and the need for glassworks

⁶⁷ Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 32; Killikelly, 120-121; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 147; Neville B. Craig, 272-273. O'Hara's control of the Pittsburgh salt market began to wane in 1810 when the Kanawha Salt Works provided him with competition.

in Pittsburgh when he wrote “for the transportation of these brittle articles from Philadelphia over the mountains has been attended with much hazard, as well as expense.” O’Hara recognized that the growing need for glass and the prohibitive cost of importing it necessitated a glass works in Pittsburgh. He began exploring the possibilities of building a glass works in 1795 but would not concentrate his full attention towards the endeavor until after resigning his commission as Quartermaster General in 1796 when he formed a partnership with former subordinate Isaac Craig. The following year, O’Hara and Craig opened the Pittsburgh Glass Works which was the first glass factory west of the Allegheny Mountains.⁶⁸

O’Hara and Craig hired William Eichbaum, who would later introduce the technique for manufacturing flint glass at Benjamin Bakewell’s glass works, to oversee the construction of their glass works and the production of green glass. Prior to his employment with O’Hara and Craig, Eichbaum served as the superintendent at the Schuylkill Glass Works near Philadelphia. At the time of its completion the Pittsburgh Glass Works consisted of two buildings and an eight pot furnace, each capable of holding around 500 pounds of material. With each blowing of glass, the furnace could produce three 100-square-foot boxes of window glass. Along with window glass, the glass works possessed the capability to manufacture additional green glass products such as bottles, decanters, flasks, jars, pitchers and other hollow ware items. The factory was located on the Monongahela River on Pittsburgh’s Southside. O’Hara and Craig purchased the property on Coal Hill to gain access to the coal but were also able to use limestone found

⁶⁸ Hawkins, 390-391; Thaddeus Mason Harris, *The Journal of a Tour into the Territory Northwest of Alleghany Mountains*, 41; Wilson, 198. There is much dispute as to how far O’Hara proceeded in 1795 with his plan to build a glass works in the western country. Some sources claim that he built a glass works and installed a furnace only to tear it down immediately after because of the lack of a good fuel source.

at the site in the glass making process and sandstone in the construction of the factory. Up until this point, wood had fueled America's glass works. Eichbaum preferred coal instead of wood because it produced a steadier and more efficient burn and locating the glass works near rich coal deposits cut down on transportation costs. Pittsburgh Glass Works became the first glass manufactory in the United States to use coal as a fuel and soon sparked a trend in the glass industry.⁶⁹

Despite Eichbaum's glass blowing expertise, the factory's capacity to produce large amounts of glass and pent-up demand from the public, Pittsburgh Glass Works was not an immediate success. It did not even produce its first piece of glass, a bottle, until 1798. O'Hara would later comment that the bottle, counting all the expenses of building and equipping the factory and manpower as well the delays in production, cost \$30,000. That is an exorbitant price for a bottle O'Hara described as "a very ordinary one." Many factors and problems caused the budget over-runs and production delays. One factor included the equipping of the glass works. O'Hara and Craig purchased the equipment for the glass works in Philadelphia which required transportation across the Allegheny Mountains in wagons. Transportation across the Alleghenies was both expensive and time consuming. Even after installing the initial machines, O'Hara and Craig found themselves held captive to the arduous time-consuming task of transporting equipment

⁶⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on the Manufacture of Glass*, 84; Hawkins, 391-393; Wilson, 198; Eulalia Catherine Schramm, "General James O'Hara: Pittsburgh's First Captain of Industry." (Master's Thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1931), 67-69; Killikelly, 121-122. Green Glass, more commonly referred to as soda-lime glass or soda-lime-silica glass, is the most common type of glass used for window panes (flat glass) and glass containers (container glass.)

across the mountains. In May of 1805, O'Hara waited not so patiently for a new ten pot furnace to arrive from Baltimore as a deadline for a new blowing approached.⁷⁰

Other problems involved the procurement of production materials. Glass makers used clay pots to hold the glass inside the furnace. The furnace at the Pittsburgh Glass Works held eight pots. This meant that O'Hara and Craig needed a steady supply of clay to make their pots. The clay that could be found in the surrounding area was of poor quality and unsuitable for use in blast furnaces. Therefore, clay had to be imported from Baltimore, New Jersey and Delaware at a great cost and loss of time. Suitable sand also proved elusive. O'Hara spent a great deal of his time soliciting clay and sand from both fellow glass manufacturers in the East and the local townsfolk. He offered rewards in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* for the "first Discoverer of a bed or bank of clay fit to answer the purpose of making melting pots." The ads also often included the solicitation of pot ash, pearl ash and alkaline salts. Pot ash, and pearl ash are common names for various mined and manufactured salts which contain potassium in water-soluble form and are used in the manufacture of glass. Manufacturers of glass often solicited them from the public because farmers always needed to clear land for crops which meant burning trees. The ashes from the trees produced lye which could be boiled to make pot Ash and pearl ash.⁷¹

⁷⁰ James O'Hara to James Morrison, June 24, 1805, James O'Hara Letterbook, Denny-O'Hara Family Papers, 1769-1949, MSS 51, Box 12, Heinz History Center, Detre Library and Archives Division, Pittsburgh, Pa.; U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on the Manufacture of Glass*, 84; Hawkins, 392; Killikelly, 122; William M. Darlington, "Sketch of the Life of General O'Hara", 216; James O'Hara to Frederick M. Amelung, May 26, 1805, James O'Hara Letterbook.

⁷¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on the Manufacture of Glass*, 84; Hawkins, 392; Schramm, 69-70 and 73; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, February 6, 1801 and May 21, 1802.

O'Hara and Craig also experienced great difficulty in finding a competent workforce. Once an acceptable quality and amount of clay had been acquired, it needed to be molded into pots by the workers. If not dried correctly, the pots would not withstand the heat of the furnace and crumble during production. The production of quality glass required experienced and talented glass blowers and O' Hara constantly inquired with fellow glass makers such as Frederick M. Amelung of Baltimore for help in finding "a few good sober glass blowers." O'Hara frequently complained about the quality of both his skilled glass blowers and pot makers and often found himself "tired and disgusted with some of those I have been pestered with for years past." The disgust could lead to termination but in a thin workforce, the same problems usually resurfaced with the new employees. One consistent problem encountered by O'Hara, especially in regard to common workers who molded pots in the composition room, was drunkenness. In January of 1806, he dismissed two employees for overindulging in the consumption of alcoholic beverages. The first was Charles Haines, who "forfeited all claim to indulgence by his constant practice of getting drunk and neglecting his business to the great loss and disgrace of the work." The other employee, a man by the name of Boehl, earned his termination "after many repeated abuses of his duty in being drunk in the composition room" and generally being "unworthy of any confidence." O' Hara also experienced considerable problems with glass blowers and supervisors. One in particular was Frederick Wendt, who possessed a "mutinous natural disposition" who continually allowed the fire to go out which necessitated the stoppage of production. O'Hara reached his breaking point when he discovered that the "ignorant" and "obstinate" Wendt "had gone off down this river. I do not know where and has taken three others with him still

more ignorant than himself.” By all accounts, James O’Hara was an extremely difficult man to work for but the workforce problems he experienced cannot be considered exclusive to him.⁷²

During the earliest years of the market revolution which America would witness in the following decades, factory owners had difficulty keeping employees sober. They met resistance in getting their workers to accept authority and adhere to a more structured and capitalist productivity-oriented work environment. Factory work was new to Americans and it would take time to adjust. But understanding the situation did not render O’Hara and Craig any less dependent on their workforce. O’Hara’s solicitation of workers from Baltimore and other markets in the East only intensified the problem and presents another example of both O’Hara’s and other Pittsburg businessmen’s reliance on outside markets. In relation to more established cities in the East, Pittsburgh was a frontier setting and bringing in new people was a proven strategy for development in the sense of adding population but at this time the town possessed a sufficient populace to recruit and train workers. Instead of working to create a reliable workforce locally through training and patience, they imported what they needed.⁷³

The cost and time required to import equipment across the Allegheny Mountains affected the Pittsburgh Glass Work’s production costs. If proper clay could not be found, then no pots could be made to hold the glass inside the furnace and production would be

⁷² Hawkins, 392; James O’Hara to Frederick M. Amelung, April 19 and May 26, 1805 and January 18, 1806, James O’Hara Letterbook. John Frederick Amelung was the owner and proprietor of the Baltimore Glass Works at Federal Hill in Baltimore. His son, Frederick Magnus Amelung, would later become the superintendent of the Pittsburgh Glass Works.

⁷³ W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 131; Scott C. Martin, “Introduction: Toward a Cultural History of the Market Revolution,” in *Cultural Change and the Market Revolution, 1789-1860*, ed. Scott C. Martin (Lanham, Md.: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 3.

shut down. Likewise, if drunken and inferior employees were used to make the clay pots, the pots would crumble during heating and again production would shut down. And if “ignorant” and “obstinate” glass blowers allowed the fire to go out, then no glass could be blown and, once again, production would shut down. All of these problems plagued the Pittsburgh Glass Works throughout its years of operation and constituted a major reason why the first glass bottle manufactured cost \$30,000.

This situation persisted throughout the early years of the Pittsburgh Glass Works history and assured that it achieved little or no early success. Yet James O’Hara stuck with it; he was a risk taker who found no dilemma, either economically or philosophically, in throwing more money at a problem. The same cannot be said for Isaac Craig. He began to develop serious doubts about the future of the glass works in 1803. In a letter to Samuel Hodgson of Philadelphia, Craig wrote that the glass works “has been attended with greater expense than we had estimated. This has been occasioned partly by very extensive buildings... and partly by the ignorance of some people in whose skill of that business we reposed too much confidence.” The following year, Craig’s family convinced him that the unstable nature of the glass business along with the difficulties and financial losses already incurred by the Pittsburgh Glass Works placed his economic security in doubt. Craig sold his three-eighths interest in the factory to O’Hara for \$11, 539.24. According to O’Hara, Craig just “gave up” and he found himself as the sole owner of the Pittsburgh Glass Works free to throw more money at the factory’s problems. Luckily for O’Hara, this actually did prove to be the solution.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Isaac Craig to Samuel Hodgson, August 5, 1803, U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on the Manufacture of Glass*, 84; James O’Hara to James Morrison, June 24, 1805, James O’Hara Letterbook; Hawkins, 394; Schramm, 74-75.

O'Hara improved the fortunes of his glass works by investing in a brewery. He had previously entered the brewing business in 1798 when he opened a brewery in McKeesport, PA with John Reed but this venture proved unsuccessful and did not last long. In 1803, O'Hara decided to reenter the suds trade. In partnership with Joseph Coppinger, O'Hara opened the Pittsburgh Point Brewery. This venture proved to be more successful than the McKeesport enterprise, and proximity to the Pittsburgh Glass Works contributed to its success. O'Hara used the glass works to make bottles for his beer. Through his control of both the brewing and packaging process, he maximized his profits, eventually taking complete control of the brewery in 1803. The Pittsburgh Point Brewery prospered, becoming known for an English porter beer that was particularly popular within the Scotch-Irish community. O'Hara's marketing of his beer to the Scotch-Irish community was a shrewd business decision because they were a growing part of Pittsburgh's populace. At this time, they made up about half of the town's population, with people of English ancestry making up the other half, and were quickly increasing in numbers. The success of the brewery proved to be a boon not only for the glass works, but also local farmers because it required a steady supply of barley and the brewery routinely paid 53 cents per bushel. O'Hara sold his beer throughout the Pittsburgh area but focused much of his distribution efforts not locally but instead outside of the Ohio Valley and the United States. Much of the beer brewed at the Pittsburgh Point Brewery ended up in Natchez and New Orleans where it was sold for as much as \$7.90 and then exported for resale on the East Coast and Europe. At times, O'Hara skipped the middle man and directly shipped his product to Europe. Instead of concentrating on the

local markets, he maintained his focus on markets outside the Pittsburgh area and the Ohio Valley.⁷⁵

Despite his growing manufacturing interests, O'Hara still viewed himself primarily as merchant and exporter and not a merchant/manufacturer. His self-identification as first and foremost a merchant and importer/exporter can be seen in his relationship to the Ohio Valley Shipbuilding industry. O'Hara envisioned Pittsburgh and the Ohio Valley as a shipbuilding center not a manufacturing center. His manufacturing interests existed mainly to support his import/export ambitions. In 1804, O'Hara helped organize the Ohio Company which was an organization of Pittsburgh area exporters. Its membership consisted of businessmen from eight Pennsylvania and Virginia counties bordering the Ohio and Allegheny Rivers. The Ohio Company's capital stock was \$100,000, divided into \$100 shares. O'Hara was a shareholder and served on the board of directors. The goal of the Ohio Company was to encourage the exportation of Ohio Valley goods and resources to eastern and European markets and the importation of foreign manufactured goods for the benefit of its members. The strategies to accomplish this goal included hiring mutual agents in New Orleans to prepare goods and resources sent down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans for shipment to the East and Europe and establishing a western branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania which provided funds not only for merchants and businessmen desiring to procure goods and resources for export but also shipbuilding activities. In 1805, O'Hara became the first director of

⁷⁵ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, February 11, 1803; James O'Hara and Joseph Coppinger, Notice of Dissolution of Partnership, March 6, 1803, Denny-O'Hara Family Papers, 1769-1949, MSS 51, Box 12; James O'Hara to James Morrison, June 24, 1805, James O'Hara Letterbook; Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 37; Schramm, 77-79; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh, The Story of a City*, 72. English porter is a dark style of beer which originated from London in the 18th century.

the bank. From this position he encouraged the exportation of Ohio Valley resources and did little at this time to encourage the development of manufactures.⁷⁶

O'Hara's continued investments in overseas exports and shipbuilding were at times counterproductive to his overall business interests. Some of these ventures did not prove to be very successful and, at worst, can be considered financial disasters. He owned several manufacturing companies and the Ohio Valley and the West contained numerous markets that could be developed. Yet, O'Hara still looked east, often incurring financial losses. Shipbuilding and transatlantic trade involved many risks and on several occasions, he learned this lesson the hard way. The two most prominent examples of this involved the *General Butler* and the *Betsey*. In 1804, O'Hara and his partner Major General John Wilkins Jr. commissioned the building of the *General Butler*. The 400 ton *General Butler* was completed in early 1805 at a cost of around \$10,000. It possessed the capability of ocean travel with the capacity to carry large cargos of Ohio Valley goods and resources to both eastern and foreign ports. O'Hara's plan for the ship provides insight into how committed Ohio Valley merchants were before Jefferson's Embargo to the old colonial pattern of serving the overseas commercial markets.⁷⁷

In March of 1805, the *General Butler* rested in harbor at Pittsburgh, loaded with a cargo of window glass and porter beer along with other goods consigned by local merchants, waiting to weigh anchor and travel down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The ship was captained by Samuel Lake with an ultimate destination of Liverpool,

⁷⁶ Hulbert, "Western Ship Building", 730-731; Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 37; Schramm, 83-83; William M. Darlington, 15.

⁷⁷ Schramm, 81. Major General John Wilkins Jr. was O'Hara's successor as Quartermaster General of the Army and served in that position from 1796 until 1802. He owned a one-fourth interest in the *General Butler*.

England after stops in Louisville, Kaskaskia, Natchez and New Orleans to conduct trade. O'Hara sent his son, William O'Hara along to manage the transactions. He instructed his son to sell a small portion of the window glass and beer for cash in Louisville and use the proceeds to purchase lead and peltries from Pierre Menard near New Madrid, Missouri. The younger O'Hara would then proceed along the Mississippi River on the *General Butler* to Natchez, Mississippi and empty the ship's hold by either selling cargo or shipping it by boat to sell at New Orleans. The hold of the ship needed to be empty, in order for him to take in a full cargo of cotton at Natchez for sale in Liverpool. The degree to which O'Hara favored the cotton over his own manufactured goods is obvious in his command to Captain Lake that "nothing must interfere with the stowage of a complete cargo of cotton." Once in Liverpool, William O'Hara would sell the cotton and then purchase British manufactured goods to import and sell on either the Philadelphia or New Orleans markets. Many of these goods would eventually make their way into the Ohio Valley at a considerable mark-up. Among the goods requested by O'Hara were cotton textiles manufactured in Manchester and Birmingham. This is a prime example of how Pittsburgh's system of manufactures constituted merely a means to engage in transatlantic trade and paled in comparison to the value placed on European manufacturing.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ James O'Hara to Peter Menard, March 4, 1805, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to William O'Hara, March 8, 1805 and June 9, 1805, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to Captain Samuel Lake, March 8, 1805, James O'Hara Letterbook. Pierre Menard, known by Peter to his friends and close associates, was a successful French Canadian businessman and fur trader living in Illinois. He would later become an officer of the Illinois Territorial Legislature and from 1818 to 1822 served as the state's first lieutenant governor. In his letters to Menard, O'Hara sometimes refers to him as Peter and in others Pierre.

Transatlantic trade and ocean travel in general presented many risks and potential hazards. In addition to possible mishaps on the open ocean that could result in a vessel sinking, on occasion, foreign nations confiscated ships and cargos they believed to be acting in concert with their rivals. In the early nineteenth century, the hostilities between Britain and France as well as the often frayed relations between the United States and Spain made confiscation an ever present possibility. Even though James O'Hara remained in Pittsburgh, he maintained control of the *General Butler* and its cargo through letters to Captain Lake and William O'Hara waiting for the two men at various ports. O'Hara also took precautions against the loss of his ship and cargo to either the ocean or foreign governments. Through his father-in-law Joseph Carson in Philadelphia, he insured the *General Butler* for \$10,000 covering the voyage from New Orleans to Liverpool and then back to any port in the United States. In addition, he insured the cargo with a firm in England. Furthermore, in order to avoid running afoul of any belligerent nations and give them cause to confiscate the ship or cargo, O'Hara gave Captain Lake strict orders in Pittsburgh as to rules of engagement. O'Hara instructed Lake to observe the particular laws of any port he entered and "not suffer on board any stores, wares or articles of any kind that can possibly be conceived to be contraband of war, nor attempt to touch any prohibited port, that we may escape the disagreeable consequences." The consequences alluded to by O'Hara, of course, included possible confiscation of ship and cargo as well as detainment of crew but also negotiation and litigation with foreign nations and insurance companies that could keep him tied up in court for years.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ James O'Hara to Joseph Carson, April 19, 1805 and May 21, 1805, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to Captain Samuel Lake, March 8, 1805, James O'Hara Letterbook.

Before the *General Butler* reached Liverpool, O'Hara changed his mind about using the vessel for a return voyage and decided to sell her on the European market. On his arrival in Liverpool, William O'Hara found a letter authorizing him to sell the ship "on the best terms in your power consistent with your knowledge of her cost & value." O'Hara was not abandoning the shipbuilding industry or transatlantic trade. He had begun construction of another vessel in Pittsburgh, the schooner *Betsey* and contracted another vessel to bring his English manufactured goods back to the states. The possibility of confiscation also weighed heavily upon his mind and selling the vessel instead of risking another voyage across international waters seemed prudent. O'Hara believed that he could sell the vessel in Liverpool for at least \$12,000, as it had been valued at \$14,000 before leaving Pittsburgh, and make a substantial profit but if necessary was prepared to settle for less. In further orders to his son, he stated "we do not wish to sell at any considerable loss but being engaged in building another ship and desirous to encourage shipbuilding at this place, we are willing to sell without profit." The younger O'Hara was to use some of the proceeds from the sale to purchase more goods. The promotion of the shipbuilding industry and the desire to acquire more goods for importation rendered the *General Butler* expendable after only one transatlantic voyage. Or at least that was the plan.⁸⁰

To James O'Hara's dismay and "contrary to our arrangement," William O'Hara did not sell the *General Butler* in Liverpool; apparently, the price was not right. In May of 1806, the ship sailed for Philadelphia from Liverpool. O'Hara received no information regarding the cargo from either his son or Captain Lake. He instructed Joseph Carson to

⁸⁰ James O'Hara to William O'Hara, June 9, 1805, James O'Hara Letterbook.

take inventory of the cargo once the vessel docked and inform him of its contents. In regard to the *General Butler* itself, “we do not expect this ship will sell in Philadelphia. You may give it a fair trial and if you cannot sell, we wish her sent on freight or charter either directly to New Orleans or by any of the West Indies for New Orleans.” The vessel did not sell in either Philadelphia or New Orleans and in May of 1807, The *General Butler* set sail from New Orleans for Greenock in the West Central Lowlands of Scotland with Captain Lake at her helm and a cargo of cotton in the hold. O’Hara insured the vessel only and not the cargo for \$8,000 on its voyage from New Orleans to Greenock. He instructed Captain Lake to purchase insurance for the return voyage in Scotland. O’Hara would come to regret not selling the ship and instead sending it on one more voyage.⁸¹

On September 17, 1807, James O’Hara received news that Captain Lake had failed to avoid the “disagreeable consequences” that he previously warned him about in May of 1805. Lake informed O’Hara that the *General Butler* had the “misfortune to be captured” by a Spanish schooner about sixty miles off the coast of Havana, Cuba while bringing a load of British manufactured goods back to New Orleans. According to Lake, he was “captured under Bonaparte decree as they gave no other reason than that of coming from an English port.” Since all of his paperwork was in correct order and the cargo was clearly American property, Lake believed the *General Butler* would be returned, but had neither “seen nor heard” of her since the capture. Unbeknownst to Lake, the Spanish had taken the vessel and cargo to Vera Cruz, Mexico. Lake arrived at that place on December 27, 1807 and found that the Spanish had claimed the cargo and sold

⁸¹ James O’Hara to Joseph Carson, May 30, 1806 and May, 15, 1807, James O’Hara Letterbook.

the *General Butler* on behalf of O'Hara for the "trifling sum of \$4,500" despite being appraised for \$14,000. O'Hara had no insurance on the cargo and the underwriters of the policy on the ship refused to pay out the full \$8,000 because he received the \$4,500 from its sale. O'Hara claimed that the vessel cost double the amount insured and wanted the underwriters to pay in full or they would find him in a "litigious disposition." He vowed to not compromise and fight on until the matter was adjudicated in his favor but ultimately never received the full amount on the insurance policy and the matter lingered for years. In his own words, "the underwriters must be convinced that the owner did not wish for this mode of settling the ships account." And unfortunately for O'Hara, he possessed no such proof and the Spanish offered no assistance in backing up his claim.⁸²

James O'Hara's next shipbuilding fiasco came in the form of the 100 ton schooner *Betsey*, the vessel whose construction rendered the *General Butler* expendable. Construction on the ship began in the summer of 1805 and by February of 1806, O'Hara was ready to send his "beautiful new schooner" to New Orleans with a full cargo including flour, whiskey and beer. His partner in this venture was Eliphalet Beebe, who also happened to be the captain of the vessel. Unlike the *General Butler*, O'Hara had no intention of sending the *Betsey* to sea. He instructed Beebe to "dispose of the schooner, both your own half share and my half share of the vessel & appurtenances for such a price as you may think proper." And if Beebe failed to find a suitable deal, he was to either employ the vessel on the Mississippi River hauling goods to and from New Orleans

⁸² Samuel Lake to James O'Hara and John Wilkins, September 17, 1807 and January 12, 1808, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to Joseph Carson, May 10, April, 15, 1808 and January 3 and June 17, 1809, James O'Hara Letterbook; William M. Darlington, 217.

or use her to carry cargo to and from Havana. The plan was quite simple but just like the *General Butler* endeavor, the plan went horribly wrong.⁸³

In the Fall of 1806, Captain Beebe sold his half share of the *Betsey* to Baltimore merchant John Holmes. O'Hara decided to temporarily retain his share of the vessel and enter into a limited short-term partnership with Holmes who would have complete control of the vessel and her voyages but retain space for O'Hara's cargoes without commission and insure O'Hara's half of the *Betsey*. Eventually Holmes would buy O'Hara's share of the vessel and become sole owner at a price of no less than \$2,300. Furthermore, as part of the arrangement, Holmes would purchase a load of clay imported from Europe in Baltimore and arrange transportation over the Alleghenies to the Pittsburgh Glass Works. This was of upmost importance to O'Hara because without clay for the pots, he could not run the furnace. The clay had to be received by April because he needed it for the next blowing. O'Hara was very clear on this point, "I must have a supply in April." Holmes informed O'Hara in December that he had purchased 24 barrels of German Clay and that he would send them to Pittsburgh. Holmes promised O'Hara that the barrels would be in his possession by April 1, 1807 and that on the return of the *Betsey* from the West Indies, he would honor the final term of their agreement. O'Hara received one more letter in February and that would be the last time that he ever heard from Holmes.⁸⁴

At the end of April the clay still had not arrived and O'Hara grew concerned. In a letter to Holmes dated April 28, O' Hara wrote "I beg to have the clay sent immediately

⁸³ James O'Hara to Kenner and Henderson, February 1, 1806, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to Captain Eliphalet Beebe, February 30, 1806, James O'Hara Letterbook.

⁸⁴ James O'Hara to John Holmes, September 19 and December 11, 1806 and April, 28, 1807, James O'Hara Letterbook. In 1806, James O'Hara claimed that the total cost of the schooner *Betsey* was \$4,600 bring his share to \$2,300 but in 1809, he told Henry Baldwin that the value of his half was \$2,000.

& to hear from you soon as convenient.” He received no clay or reply. By June, O’Hara resolved himself to the realization that Holmes had not sent the clay and was already forced to stop production at the glass works which resulted in a financial loss of nearly \$3,000. Furthermore, he feared that consequences of the stoppage could lead the “total ruin” of the business. This proved to be an exaggeration as the Pittsburgh Glass Works survived and thrived but it did cause problems in the short-term. O’Hara wrote numerous letters to Holmes over the course of the next two years and received no reply. In April of 1809, O’Hara turned the matter over to his attorney, Henry Baldwin. O’Hara went to his grave without ever receiving any of the money owed to him by John Holmes nor did he ever learn what became of the schooner *Betsey*.⁸⁵

The unpredictable results that marked James O’Hara’s shipbuilding career were symptomatic of international trade in general. This was especially true in such an unstable period. On one trip a merchant could profit greatly and on the next he could lose everything that he owned. While profits could be lucrative there were still many problems that made transatlantic commerce difficult. Communications from the interior to both the East Coast and Europe was slow and sometimes unreliable. Ocean travel was arduous, time consuming and risky as both weather and other nations could delay or destroy a vessel. Market prices could change before a vessel reached its destination. Politics also affect commerce in the Atlantic World as hostilities between nations often resulted in sanctions and trade restrictions that blocked access to markets which was the case in regard to the Embargo of 1807. Transatlantic trade required a gambler’s mindset, a habit

⁸⁵ James O’Hara to John Holmes, April 28, 1807 and April 8, 1809, James O’Hara Letterbook; James O’Hara to Henry Miller, June 12, 1807, James O’Hara Letterbook; Henry Baldwin’s Notes on James O’Hara’s Letter to John Holmes on April, 8, 1809, James O’Hara Letterbook.

of sorts, and until conquered or at least moderated, a premium would not be placed on domestic manufactures and in regard to the Ohio Valley, it would continue to look east.

1807 proved to be a very costly year for James O'Hara. He lost the *General Butler* to foreign scoundrels and the *Betsey* to one of domestic origin. The consequences of the Embargo of 1807 ensured that 1808 and 1809 would turn out to be even worse. In the aftermath of Jefferson's Embargo he found himself in dire financial straits and it seemed as though half the world owed him money and he owed money to the other half. The problem primarily involved the nature of international trade which drove the economy of the Atlantic World. Notes of credit played a key role in international trade. From farmers to American merchants to shipbuilders to European merchants and manufacturers, everyone lived on a certain amount of credit and were inextricably linked together. This was a machine fueled by credit and when the Embargo of 1807 stopped the machine, the credit dried up and the system broke down. The reason for this was that the embargo stopped the string of transactions that allowed the system to keep moving in the first place.⁸⁶

James O'Hara, like many involved in the various levels of international trade, occupied a role as both a creditor and a debtor. The hardships of the embargo prevented those indebted to him from paying which, in turn, meant that he experienced difficulty paying his own creditors. A prime example of this is O'Hara's business dealings with Pierre Menard of the Illinois Country. Prior to the Embargo, O'Hara sent products from his factories such as glass and beer to Menard who sold it both locally and in St. Louis.

⁸⁶ The entries in James O'Hara's Letterbook for 1808 and 1809 are filled with letters where O'Hara either solicited payment of debts owed to him or attempted to explain why he could not pay the money that he owed.

O'Hara offered these items to Menard on credit, who in turn, extended the same courtesy to his customers. Often in lieu of cash, Menard paid for his goods with natural resources such as lead and furs which O'Hara would then send to New Orleans and then out to sea. O'Hara manufactured the glass and beer and although he had to burden the cost of their manufacture, he did not owe anyone for the goods. The dealings became more complicated when O'Hara sent Menard imported goods which he either had to purchase himself, usually on credit, or take on consignment. This meant that somewhere down the line he would have to compensate someone for those goods. If Menard did not have cash, O'Hara then took commodities such as peltries in return. When O'Hara lost access to foreign markets, he no longer needed raw materials for export and instead needed cash to pay his creditors. In June of 1808, he conveyed this point to Menard, "it is with regret that I have to remind you of your great neglect in not writing to me or remitting...I wish to see your good excuse for not sending me payment at least for the goods left with you. Now take the advice of your very best friend you ever had & write me a statement of all my affairs in your hands & send me remittance." O'Hara acknowledged that when Jefferson's Embargo was removed things could return to normal but in the meantime, he wanted what was owed to him in cash "immediately."⁸⁷

Ultimately, James O'Hara's main problem in the wake of the Embargo of 1807 was that he possessed plenty of assets but little cash and in a marketplace where credit crashed, cash became king. His correspondence with various individuals, both creditors and debtors, is indicative of his lack of cash flow. Letters to merchants who had failed to

⁸⁷ James O'Hara to Pierre/Peter Menard, March 4, 1805 and June 7, 1808, James O'Hara Letterbook.

settle their debt often expressed this point. In July of 1808, he told a fellow merchant that “I am more pressed for funds than I ever expected to be.” O’Hara often remained cordial and professional while seeking remittance but had no reservations about resorting to legal remedies if necessary. In the same month, James Weir of Lexington refused to answer O’Hara’s letters or pay his debt. O’Hara forcefully requested that his associate Lewis Sanders inform Weir that “if he does not pay, he shall be sued.” He also had no qualms about using legal avenues to collect debt from former friends and colleagues. The following February, O’Hara instructed his attorney to move forward to claim the business and property of General Arthur St. Clair who owed him a debt of \$10,632.17 incurred while he served under the general’s command during the Indian Wars. In 1791, St. Clair assured O’Hara that if he used his own money to cloth and feed the soldiers after the funds provided by Congress proved insufficient, the Army would later reimburse him. When the Army denied the expenditure, St. Clair became liable for the debt. O’Hara pressed his attorney to act before St. Clair could obtain an extension to prolong the affair because it had “become absolutely necessary for me to raise money as soon as possible.” He also resorted to selling real estate in order to raise cash to pay his debts. At the same time O’Hara pressed his attorney to seek legal assistance in seizing the business and property of his former commander and friend; he sold a considerable amount of his own land near Lake Erie because he was “certainly under the necessity of selling property to raise money.” O’Hara was not broke but instead had a liquidity problem as he had much of his wealth tied up in real estate and a wide range of business enterprises and this

presented many difficulties while trying to navigate the economic hardships wrought by the Embargo of 1807.⁸⁸

The Embargo put James O'Hara in financial straits, but did not bankrupt him. Unlike many eastern merchants, he kept his house and stayed out of debtor's prison, suffering severe economic discomfort but not absolute ruin. The main reason was that he possessed a more diversified financial portfolio than most of them, including manufacturing interests and real estate in addition to his commercial ventures. The problem for O'Hara was that he could no longer use foreign trade to prop up his other businesses. In the wake of Jefferson's Embargo he could not build a ship and load it up with Ohio Valley resources. Nor could he import a ship load of British manufactured good or send some of his products to foreign shores. In order to survive, O'Hara would have to adapt. He realized that he needed to change his business techniques and change economic focus. For James O'Hara, financial recover would start at home in the Ohio Valley.

James O'Hara's first reaction to the Embargo of 1807 involved calling in outstanding debt, such as the one to his good friend General St. Clair. He also moved to stop letting customers accrue large amounts of debt in the first place. He put out the "no credit" sign and started announcing to customers that "my glass sells for cash at present." Despite his proclamation to the contrary, O'Hara would always have to deal with credit as it was the nature of long distance trade and he had to remain flexible to meet his

⁸⁸ James O'Hara to Mr. A. Foster, July 17, 1808, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to Lewis Sanders, July 17, 1807, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to Mr. W. Forward, February 14, 1809, James O'Hara Letterbook; Schramm, 83; James O'Hara to Thomas Forster, February 14, 1809; James O'Hara Letterbook.

customers' needs. Another solution to his cash flow problem was to focus on new markets. O'Hara had always sold his glass to the Pittsburgh market and done business in the Ohio Valley and the West but in most cases he did so in order to facilitate transatlantic trade. Previous to Jefferson's Embargo, he sold glass and beer at various stops along the Ohio River in order to raise cash to purchase items such as cotton for shipment to Europe keeping his focus on the New Orleans, Philadelphia, Baltimore and British markets. The embargo cut off the British markets and lessened the importance of the others. Shipping his products to New Orleans and Philadelphia no longer seemed as attractive a proposition if they did not serve as a launching point for Europe. Once it became a matter of just shipping glass and not a component of transatlantic trade, shipment to markets in the Ohio Valley became more attractive because it was cheaper, safer, and quicker. O'Hara started soliciting customers in markets such as Louisville, Lexington, Nashville and various parts of Ohio as well as asking existing customers in the interior to inform their friends and associates of his products.⁸⁹

Another important change in James O'Hara's commercial strategies came when he started to tie his interests to those of those of the greater Pittsburgh community as a whole. The easiest and cheapest thing that he did was to promote other local manufactures involved in producing products such as rope and cordage, lead or black and white glass in his letters with merchants in other markets. Of greater importance, O'Hara's next tactic involved a greater expenditure of both capital and time. In March of

⁸⁹ James O'Hara to W. Moore, October 28, 1809, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to Chandler Price, April 14, 1810, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to John & Thomas Childress, July 5, 1811, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to Thomas Kirkman, July 17, 1808, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to Lewis Sanders, July 17, 1808, James O'Hara Letterbook; James O'Hara to A. Foster, July 17, 1808, James O'Hara Letterbook.

1809, he organized a public meeting, along with a group of local businessmen and community leaders which included Benjamin Bakewell, Zadock Cramer and James Wilkins Jr., for the purpose of “promoting the interests of domestic manufactures.” The organizers of the meeting resolved to start a “society” and capital stock company to promote and fund manufacturing in Pittsburgh and the surrounding area. They planned to aid “domestic manufactures- whether by purchasing, or making advances on goods deposited for sale- the purchasing and letting out of implements or machinery- by offering premiums for those articles or machines of superior utility, or by any other mode which they may deem most conducive to the end proposed.” Furthermore, they would encourage the citizens of Pittsburgh at large to use products manufactured locally. The “society” scheduled their next meeting for April and requested that all artisans, farmers, manufacturers and merchants attend because their fortunes were intertwined. The joint stock company that these men proposed opened in February 1810 as the Pittsburgh Manufacturing Company which in 1814 became the Bank of Pittsburgh through a charter of the state legislature. The Pittsburgh Manufacturing Company directed the development of the town’s system of manufactures through the allocation of funds.⁹⁰

James O’Hara did not serve on the Pittsburgh Manufacturing Company’s board of directors but he did invest heavily in their stocks. Therefore his money played a key role in the company’s promotion of manufacturing but he did not make decisions on how to

⁹⁰ James O’Hara to Henry Wertz Jr., January 4, 1809, James O’Hara Letterbook; James O’Hara to W. Moore, April 28, 1810, James O’Hara Letterbook; James O’Hara to Henry Brunner, May 12, 1810, James O’Hara Letterbook; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, March 29, 1809; Wade, 45; Pittsburgh Manufacturing Company Stock Slips, March-June 1812, Denny-O’Hara Family Papers, 1769-1949, MSS 51, Box 11, Folder 2; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 152. The Pittsburgh Manufacturing Company primarily issued insurance policies. It did very little banking at first because of the states restrictive banking laws. The Pittsburgh Manufacturing Company continued on as the Bank of Pittsburgh until 1931.

distribute the funds. He played a similar role in the Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank of Pittsburgh, which also promoted industry, by investing in their stock as well. In a more direct role, O'Hara made major contributions to Pittsburgh's industrial development through his position as director of the Western Branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania. In this role, he loaned money to aspiring manufacturers and industrial innovators. His most famous investment came in the form of the steamboat. In 1811, O'Hara backed the construction of Robert Fulton's steamboat *New Orleans* in Pittsburgh. The *New Orleans* cost nearly \$40,000 and much funding came from the Western Branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania. Fulton's steamboat grabbed national headlines and started a revolution on western waters. In the years following the launch of the *New Orleans*, Pittsburgh became a major manufacturer of steamboats. O'Hara was also a major contributor to the use of steam engines in manufacturing in the West. When construction on Oliver Evans' Pittsburgh Steam Mill stopped in 1809 due to a lack funds, the Western Branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania stepped in and provided the funds for completion. The Pittsburgh Steam Mill proved the effectiveness of the use of steam engines in manufacturing. To further cement his role in the steam engine revolution, in 1812 O'Hara and the Western Branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania invested in Evan's Pittsburgh Steam Engine Company.⁹¹

⁹¹ Pittsburgh Manufacturing Company Stock Slips, March-June 1812, Denny-O'Hara Family Papers, 1769-1949, MSS 51, Box 11, Folder 2; Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank of Pittsburgh Stock Slips, October 1815, Denny-O'Hara Family Papers, 1769-1949, MSS 51, Box 11, Folder 2; Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, 152; Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 38. The Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank of Pittsburgh was chartered through the same legislative act that created the Bank of Pittsburgh in 1814. This particular bank remained in operation until it closed in 1825 because of the public's lack of confidence in the institution as a result of a bank robbery.

Through his role as director of the Western Branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania, O'Hara also financed the early stages of Pittsburgh's road to becoming the "Iron City." He provided the funds for both Joseph McClurg's foundry and his purchase of the bankrupt Westmoreland pig iron furnaces and backed nail and slitting mills that provided a buyer for McClurg's iron. In partnership with John Henry Hopkins, O'Hara also entered into the iron industry in 1815 as an operator of an iron furnace not just an investor. The lawsuit that he filed against Arthur St. Clair in 1809 resulted in him gaining title to the Hermitage Furnace on Mill Creek two miles from Ligonier. McClurg's success and the burgeoning iron industry in Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania convinced O'Hara that it would be a safe investment to reopen the Hermitage facility. He provided all of the capital for the operation but left the day to day management to Hopkins who had previous experience as a superintendent at a similar furnace in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, the Hermitage Furnace proved to be a financial disaster for O'Hara. The furnace never made any profits and by February of 1817, it had accumulated \$20,000 worth of debt. O'Hara closed the facility and accepted all of the debt himself since Hopkins did not have any capital. This represented O'Hara sole industrial failure as all of his other manufacturing endeavors made a profit to some degree. Despite the Hermitage Furnace fiasco, O'Hara is still considered the founder of Pittsburgh's Pig Iron Aristocracy because of his role in financing and promoting the iron industry and political influence.⁹²

⁹² Skrabec, *The World's Richest Neighborhood*, 27, 36-38 and 59; James O'Hara to Mr. W. Forward, February 14, 1809, James O'Hara Letterbook; James Ross to General Arthur St. Clair, January 27, 1810, James O'Hara Letterbook; General Arthur St. Clair to James O'Hara, January 15, 1810, James O'Hara Letterbook; William M. Darlington, 217-218; Schramm, 83-85. O'Hara received most of the Hermitage Furnace as payment for the \$10,632.17 debt, including interest, owed to him by St. Clair. He

James O'Hara realized that in order for Pittsburgh to develop a strong system of manufactures it would not only need to focus on building factories and establishing domestic trade networks but would also need to improve its transportation infrastructure. While engaged primarily in trade with eastern and European markets, O'Hara focused on transportation on water not land. He did have to transport goods across the Allegheny Mountains from Philadelphia and Baltimore but that represented an entirely different problem that would not be solved during his lifetime. As a merchant involved in international trade, he built ships to carry goods to market but as a merchant/manufacturer depending on markets within the Ohio Valley and further west, he built bridges and roads. In the Spring of 1810, along with Jacob Beltzhoover, Thomas Cromwell, Thomas Enochs, David Evans, William McCandless, Ephraim Pentland, George Stevenson and Adamson Tannehill, O'Hara petitioned the state legislature for a charter of incorporation to explore the possibility of building a bridge across the Monongahela River on Pittsburgh's south side. At that time, the only passage across the river was a ferry boat owned by Enoch Wright and Andrew Herd, barely adequate for passengers but not close to what was needed to carry the rising number of manufactured goods needing passage. In March of 1810, the state legislature authorized the governor of Pennsylvania to incorporate a bridge over the Monongahela River but the project failed to raise sufficient funds. In 1816, O'Hara and other Pittsburgh businessmen renewed their efforts and the state authorized the incorporation of the Monongahela Bridge Company.

purchased the rest from the sheriff's office after seizure. Ligonier, Pennsylvania is a small borough in Westmoreland County Pennsylvania. The Pig Iron Aristocracy is a term used by business historian Quentin Skrabec Jr. to describe wealthy and influential men who controlled the iron industry and political system in Western Pennsylvania for most of the 19th century. They used their connections in the banking and political communities to expand their own operations and maintain control of the industry.

The legislature appointed O'Hara as a commissioner to oversee the project. He also invested in the company initially purchasing twenty shares of stock and later acquiring another 100. On October 10, 1818, in large part due to O'Hara's efforts, the Monongahela Bridge opened for foot traffic and the following month to loaded wagons.⁹³

At the same time he pushed for a bridge across the Monongahela River, O'Hara also pressed for bridge across the Allegheny River. The act of 1816 that authorized the Monongahela Bridge Company also allowed for the incorporation of the Allegheny Bridge Company. O'Hara served as a commissioner on that project as well and bought stock. He also addressed the issue of roads investing in the Greensburg and Pittsburgh Turnpike Road Company. Upon its opening, the new turnpike connected Pittsburgh to the iron furnaces and rich ore deposits in Westmoreland County. This road would also eventually be expanded to better connect the town to Philadelphia. The opening of the Monongahela and Allegheny Bridges' along with the Pittsburgh-Greensburg Turnpike Road dramatically improved Pittsburgh's overland transportation capabilities and James O'Hara played a crucial role in all of these events.⁹⁴

On December 21, 1819, James O'Hara died at the age of sixty-six years old at home in Pittsburgh's East End. He did not live to see Pittsburgh become the "Iron City" in the eighteen-sixties or an "industrial metropolis" by the turn of the twentieth century.

⁹³ Herbert Du Poy, "A Brief History of the Monongahela Bridge, Pittsburgh, Pa.," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 30,no. 2 (1906): 187-196; *Pittsburgh Gazette*, April 9, 1810 and November 24, 1818; Monongahela Bridge Company Stock Slips, May and July 1818, Denny-O'Hara Family Papers, 1769-1949, MSS 51, Box 11, Folder 2; Schramm, 95. The alliance between O'Hara and Pentland is especially interesting because of the two men's political allegiances. The former was a stalwart Federalist who unsuccessfully ran for congressional office in 1802 and 1806 and the latter was a partisan newspaper editor who printed Republican propaganda.

⁹⁴ Du Poy, 190 and 193; Schramm 95; Greensburg and Pittsburgh Turnpike Road Company Stock Slips, 1815, Denny-O'Hara Family Papers, 1769-1949, MSS 51, Box 11, Folder 2.

Neither of these accomplishments would have been possible without his contributions. Once Jefferson's Embargo brought him to see the light, O'Hara was tireless champion of industry who even in his last year of life planned to build a steam grist mill and commissioned a report to calculate its probable earnings. Prior to the Embargo of 1807, he fancied himself a merchant operating on the world stage. He was a man who in 1804, played a significant role in the organization of the Ohio Company which promoted the construction of shipbuilding, exportation of the Ohio Valley's natural resources and importation of foreign manufactured goods. The formation of this company led to the establishment of the Western Branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania and his appointment as director. From this position, he planned to use the bank's power and finances to turn Pittsburgh into a capitol for shipbuilding and international trade. Jefferson's Embargo caused O'Hara to change his focus by eliminating foreign trade and in the following years, he used both his own personal resources and those of the Western Branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania to transform Pittsburg into a capitol of industry. Without the Embargo of 1807, O'Hara may have never stopped looking east. And without O'Hara's influence, Pittsburgh may never have started looking west, or at least not until later.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Calculations and Estimates for Steam Grist Mill, 1819, Denny-O'Hara Family Papers, 1769-1949, MSS 51, Box 11, Folder 2.

CHAPTER 3: MARIETTA

In December of 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. packed his belongings and left Marietta for brighter pastures back east. In his wake, he left an infant daughter and enormous debt. Just two years prior, he occupied a position as Marietta's leading merchant and most respected businessman. He had a house, business, family and good name. Fast forward two years and he had lost it all. His misery had a name and it was the Embargo of 1807. Woodbridge Jr. made his living as a merchant. More specifically, he dealt in foreign goods. He imported finished goods into the Ohio Valley from the East and facilitated the exportation of the region's natural resources. Credit was a vital component of his business and he wielded it like a soldier would a sword. Woodbridge Jr. used credit to purchase manufactured goods from eastern and European merchants and extended it to his own customers. Although he lived and conducted business in the interior, his economic focus was locked on the Atlantic Coast and Europe. In this regard, his business model was very similar to that of James O'Hara except that Woodbridge Jr. possessed undiversified business interests. He was a merchant and nothing else, entirely dependent on foreign markets. With the coming of Jefferson's Embargo, Woodbridge Jr. found he no longer had a business and soon left Marietta broke and disgraced.

Dudley Woodbridge Jr. blamed his misfortune on the Embargo of 1807 but the situation was more complex. Jefferson's Embargo was simply the death blow for a system that was already seriously ill. A native of Massachusetts, Rufus Putnam founded Marietta in 1788. From the beginning he wanted his settlement to be New England on the Ohio River. In both economic and societal terms, he believed Marietta should mirror a

New England port town. Foreign trade was the foundation of Marietta's economy. The town exported its natural resources and imported manufactured goods. Putnam sought to create a strong commercial relationship between Marietta and the rest of the Atlantic World that was mutually beneficial for all parties but in reality, the relationship was one of dependence. Marietta was dependent upon foreign goods and markets because it failed to develop a system of manufactures to turn its own resources into finished products. The Embargo of 1807 simply highlighted in devastating fashion the cracks that already existed in Marietta's economic foundation. Marietta prior to 1807 was Rufus Putnam's Marietta and it existed in a situation ripe for economic Armageddon.¹

The Embargo of 1807 brought devastation to Marietta's economy because the town was economically dependent on markets it could no longer reach. It had a similar effect on Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and placed him in serious economic straits. However, the embargo was not the sole cause of his downfall. Woodbridge Jr.'s business philosophy inhibited his ability to react to the embargo's trade restrictions. Instead of a regrouping and refocusing, he attempted to combat his financial problems by continuing to look outside of the Ohio Valley for economic salvation. This did not prove to be a successful approach as he would not experience economic recovery until he left Marietta as a change in location brought a change in perspective. Woodbridge Jr. ended up in Pittsburgh where he encountered a town with a growing manufacturing base. He embraced the concept of domestic manufacturing and internal trade and returned to

¹ Rufus Putnam to Fisher Ames, 1790 in *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam and Certain Official Papers and Correspondence*, ed. Rowena Buell (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903), 234-236 and 246-247; Andrew R.L. Cayton, *The Frontier Republic: Ideology and Politics in the Ohio Country, 1780-1825* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1986), 21-22 and 30-31; Kim Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise*, 12-13.

Marietta with a new business philosophy which consisted of promoting Ohio Valley manufacturing and fostering the formation of trade networks within the valley. While Woodbridge Jr. never became a manufacturer himself, he did play a significant role in the development of a system of manufactures in the Ohio Valley. Other merchants in Marietta followed his example and, as a result, Dudley Woodbridge's Marietta became a connection point between Ohio Valley manufacturers and merchants.²

A.) Rufus Putnam's Marietta

Marietta, Ohio is located approximately 170 miles southwest of Pittsburgh along the Ohio River. It resides at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers. Founded in 1788 by Rufus Putnam and a group of Revolutionary War veterans from Massachusetts and Connecticut, Marietta was the first permanent settlement in Ohio and also constituted the first settlement sanctioned by the infant United States government north of the Ohio River in the Northwest Territory. In terms of social customs, governance and economy, Marietta was New England on the Ohio River. Local government made sure of this as it heavily regulated the economy, religion and education as its authority strengthened these institutions. The residents of Marietta lived in community that was aesthetically similar to New England and the law made sure that they worked and behaved in a similar manner. In other words, it was a very structured environment. In regard to the economy, this meant developing a strong link to Atlantic markets. Whereas Pittsburgh and Louisville developed organically as a result of circumstance, the founders of Marietta brought a plan for development with them and

² Gruenwald, 42.

stuck to it meticulously. From the very beginning, these men intended for the town to serve as a center for the highest levels of commercial and cultural exchange deep within the wilderness that would possess a strong connection to foreign markets and provide a blueprint for the future settlement of federal lands. The founders of Marietta created an economic philosophy centered on transatlantic trade from its inception.³

Although historian Richard Wade did not include a study of Marietta in his work on western towns, it epitomized his concept of towns being the “spearheads of the frontier” from which civilization would spread better than those he actually chose. Marietta differed from other settlements in the Ohio Valley in that its founders determined matters of governance and tenure of land before settlers arrived at the Mouth of the Muskingum. There would be no experimentation with different forms of government, trial by error or fumbling for order in the wilderness of Ohio. Essentially, The Ohio Company of Associates transplanted a New England Community deep into the interior and determined its destiny before ever leaving the confines and comfort of Massachusetts for the vast wilderness known as the Ohio Country. Rufus Putnam acted as the driving force behind the Ohio Company and the settlement of Marietta. Therefore, the stories of both must begin with a discussion of Rufus Putnam’s life and motivations.⁴

Born in Sutton, Massachusetts on April 9, 1738, Rufus Putnam experienced an unsettled and chaotic childhood. At seven years of age his father died and he spent the

³ Gruenwald, xiii and 6; Thomas Ashe, *Travels in America, Performed in 1806*, 122-123; Thaddeus Mason Harris, *The Journal of a tour into the Territory Northwest of Alleghany Mountains*, 122; Cayton, 26-28 and 43.

⁴ Martin R. Andrews, *History of Marietta and Washington County Ohio and Representative Citizens, Vol. I* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1902), 47; Thomas Jefferson Summers, *History of Marietta* (Marietta, OH: Leader Publishing Co., 1903), 37; Fred J. Milligan, *Ohio's Founding Fathers* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2003), 2-5.

rest of his childhood on the move as his mother looked for an appropriate father figure to interject into his life. In 1757 at the age of nineteen, Putnam enlisted in the British Army and served during the French and Indian War. He reenlisted four times and rose from the rank of private to ensign and not only became a skilled Indian fighter but also acquired considerable knowledge in regard to constructing fortifications and other structures. The Military brought order into his life which up until that point had been missing. During his service in the military, Putnam also gained an appreciation of the Western County which would become a lifelong fascination and obsession to conquer and tame the land west of the Allegheny Mountains.⁵

In the aftermath of the Battles of Lexington and Concord in April of 1775, Putnam enlisted in the Continental Army. He received a commission as a lieutenant colonel and first served in Colonel David Brewster's regiment at Roxbury, Massachusetts under the command of General Thomas. At Roxbury, Putnam received considerable praise from his superiors for his successful efforts to design and supervise the fortification of the town. His work caught the eye of General George Washington. Putnam quickly became one of Washington's most trusted officers and received an appointment as Chief Engineer of the Continental Army with a rank of colonel on August 11, 1776. By the end of the war, he rose to the rank of brigadier general. Putnam's service and accomplishments during the American Revolution won him the respect of both his subordinates and superiors but more importantly he gained a significant amount of political influence through the friendship he forged with George Washington. This

⁵ Rowena Buell, ed., *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam and Certain Official Papers and Correspondence*, 9-11 and 35-54; Milligan, 9-11; Eben Putnam, *A History of the Putnam Family in England and America* (Salem, MA: Salem Press, 1891), 162-167; E.O. Randall, "Rutland: The Cradle of Ohio," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* XVII, no. 1 (1908), 57-66; Gruenwald, 12.

relationship served him well in his next endeavor as the spokesman and leader for a group of his fellow officers who wanted fair compensation for their service during the war. This marked the beginning of Putnam's push to settle the Ohio Country and eventually led to the formation of the Ohio Company of Associates and founding of Marietta.⁶

In the aftermath of the American Revolution, veterans of the war started agitating for their back pay. The problem was that the Continental Congress had no funds to pay these obligations. Their solution was to give the men who fought for America's independence interest bearing certificates that could be redeemed at an undetermined time in the future. The soldiers had little faith in the government's ability to fund itself and make good on the certificates. As a result many of these soldiers panicked and sold the notes of promise to speculators for as little as one sixth of its value in coin. A group of Revolutionary officers from New England, which included Rufus Putnam, petitioned Congress in May of 1783 to set aside a tract of land in the Northwest Territory and sell it to them in exchange for their certificates.⁷

The land-seeking officers chose Putnam as their leader because of his friendship with and access to George Washington. The former Chief Engineer of the Continental Army immediately sent a letter asking his former commander to endorse the plan before congress. Putnam argued that the settlement of the Ohio Country was "of grate consequence to the American Empire" and it was a matter of the utmost importance to "secure the allegiance of the natives; as well as provide for the defence of that country in

⁶ Buell, 54-60; Milligan, 2 and 10-11; Eben Putnam, 164-167; Randall, 62-66.

⁷ Petition for the Ohio Country, 7 May 1783 in *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam and Certain Official Papers and Correspondence*, 215-216; Milligan, 2; Andrews, 48; Randall, 66.

the case of a war with Great Britain; or Spain.” In theory, an armed community of military veterans would protect the United States from possible foreign aggression on its western flank and provide a buffer between Indian land and the East. Putnam also felt that the possibilities for trade were immense because of the natural resources contained in the area. He was mainly referring to Indian trade involving animal furs and skins but agriculture also piqued his interest. Americans could harvest the natural resources of the Ohio Valley themselves or trade with the natives using manufactured goods from the East or Europe. The community would be a bulwark in the wilderness which connected the interior to the rest of the United States and the markets of the Atlantic World through trade, communication and mutual protection against outside threats.⁸

In June of the following year, Congress had still not addressed the petition of the revolutionary veterans for bounty lands and Putnam wrote another letter to Washington stressing the urgency of the situation. He stated that congressional delay jeopardized the entire plan because squatters and land speculators already had their sights set on the Ohio Country and he did not want anybody to beat him or his group to Ohio and stake a claim. Washington expressed support for the plan and told his former subordinate that every member of congress that he spoke to “acquiesced in the reasonableness of the petition” and “all yielded, or seemed to yield to the policy of it.” But unfortunately for Putnam and the other petitioners, Congress did not know if they had the power to grant their request and were currently negotiating with various states to relinquish competing claims to land

⁸ Rufus Putnam to George Washington, 16 June 1783 in *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam and Certain Official Papers and Correspondence*, 216-223; Milligan, 2-3; Gruenwald, 10; Andrews, 48; Randall, 66.

in the Northwest Territory. Therefore, Congress would take no immediate action on the petition.⁹

George Washington and most of the Congress of the Confederation believed in the immediate settlement of the area and endorsed Putnam's plan. They knew the settlement of the Ohio Country was inevitable and crucial to the survival of the nation. Western lands represented financial stability and a way to fund the government. The sale of these lands could pay off Revolutionary War debts and put the nation on solid financial ground as well as growing the economy through tighter control of Ohio Valley resources. Additionally, many in Congress, especially those from the North, wanted to bypass the frontier stage of development and prevent the unruliness and lack of organization that they felt characterized the West. They wanted the settlements of the Northwest Territory to possess the government and civilization of the East from day one. New Englanders would impose order on the territory and provide a blueprint for future settlement. But, conditions on the ground jeopardized their vision of the Ohio County and necessitated action on their part. Indian traders and trappers operating in the Ohio Valley estimated that there were over 1,000 squatters in the land west of Allegheny Mountains. These individuals, and some families, professed no particular allegiance to the United States and held no desire for either government or law. Congress feared that the squatters would be susceptible to promises from outside forces such as the British, French and Spanish and form separatist movements. All could be lost if they did not start sanctioned

⁹ Rufus Putnam to George Washington, 5 April 1784 in *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam and Certain Official Papers and Correspondence*, 223-225; George Washington to Rufus Putnam, 2 June 1784 in *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam and Certain Official Papers and Correspondence*, 226-28; Rufus Putnam to George Washington, 16 June 1783 in *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam and Certain Official Papers and Correspondence*, 216-223; Milligan, 3.

settlement soon as more people traveled across the Alleghenies every day. The only thing that stood in the way was the clear authority and means to begin the process.¹⁰

The failure of Congress to act on the initial petition of the northeast revolutionary officers did not dissuade Rufus Putnam but instead caused him to refocus, reorganize and adopt a different strategy. He was certain that legal settlement of the Northwest Territory was inevitable and that eventually Congress would be forced to act. Therefore it was essential to keep his plan prominent and viable in the meantime. In Massachusetts in January of 1786, Putnam met with close friend Colonel Benjamin Tupper who had just returned from a surveying trip to the Seven Ranges in Eastern Ohio. The two men decided to organize a company for the purpose of establishing a settlement in Ohio. They named their venture the Ohio Company of Associates, or Ohio Company for short, and their plan for settlement closely followed the 1783 proposal but added a blueprint for the town of Marietta, the first official settlement in the Ohio Country, which they chose to build at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers because the highway of the interior would provide access to markets in the East and Europe.¹¹

Rufus Putnam and Benjamin Tupper took out ads in several Massachusetts newspapers in late January announcing their plans. They invited Revolutionary War veterans entitled to bounty lands and other New Englanders interested in migrating west, to send delegates to a meeting in Boston in March. On March 1, 1786 the first meeting of the Ohio Company came to order at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern in Boston and was followed by several other meetings in the days to follow. The delegates of Ohio

¹⁰ Milligan, 3; Cayton, 13 and 24; Gruenwald, 11.

¹¹ Milligan, 3-4 and 11-12; Gruenwald, 10; Andrews, 50; Randall 67-69.

Company soon named Putnam, Rev. Manasseh Cutler and Samuel H. Parsons as directors of the company and determined that 1,000 shares of the company would be sold. Each share cost \$1,000 in continental certificates and \$10 in gold or silver. The certificates would be used to purchase land in Ohio and the specie would cover company expenses. The rules of purchase stated that no shareholder could own more than five shares in order to promote an illusion of egalitarianism and limit the participation of professional land speculators. The reality was that most of the shareholders could not afford to purchase more than one share and an unequal amount of the land ended up in the hands of the wealthy who had their own speculation schemes in the works. Of the 1,500,000 acres of land that the company proposed to purchase in the Ohio Country, the directors reserved 5,760 acres at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum Rivers to build the town of Marietta.¹²

The initial sale of stock did not go well as the Ohio Company had hoped as investors purchased only 250 shares. Putnam viewed the underperforming stock as more of a condemnation of congress' inaction than his plan. The formation of the Ohio Company provided him with a formal structure to promote the project but as long as Congress refused to move forward and authorize the sale of land, there would be no settlement. Putnam had previously used petitions and the support of George Washing to persuade Congress to take action. The situation now required a more direct and aggressive approach. In June of 1787, the Ohio Company appointed Reverend Manasseh

¹² Rufus Putnam and Benjamin Tupper, "Information," in *The Records of the Original Proceedings of the Ohio Company, vol. I*, ed. Archer B. Hulbert (Marietta, OH: Marietta Historical Commission, 1917), 1-4; Ohio Company, "Proceedings of the First General Convention," in *The Records of the Original Proceedings of the Ohio Company, vol. I*, 4-12; Ohio Company, "Second General Meeting of the Ohio Company," in *The Records of the Original Proceedings of the Ohio Company, vol. I*, 12-13; Milligan, 3; Andrews, 50; Randall, 69-71; Gruenwald, 10; Cayton, 28.

Cutler as its representative to the Congress of the Confederation and sent him to negotiate a land deal and advocate for legislation to govern the Northwest Territory. Cutler was a Connecticut born Yale educated minister who served as a chaplain during the American Revolution. Putnam chose Cutler to represent the Ohio Company's interests because he possessed a passion for western settlement and was charming, culturally polished and skilled in the art of political negotiation. Although a man of the cloth, Cutler was not adverse to cutting corners and using manipulation in order to achieve his goals and this combined with his other traits proved invaluable during his dealings with the Continental Congress.¹³

Cutler arrived in New York on July 5, 1787 and immediately lobbied for Putnam's plan. Not coincidentally, his arrival coincided with Congress' debate over the settlement and government of the Northwest Territory. On July 13, 1787 the Congress of the Confederation passed the Northwest Ordinance. The ordinance officially created the Northwest Territory from lands south of the Great Lakes, north and west of the Ohio River, and east of the Mississippi River and provided for its governance. Furthermore, the Northwest Ordinance established the precedent by which the United States would expand westward across North America with the admission of new states rather than with the expansion of existing states. With the passage of the Northwest Ordinance, Congress gave itself the authority to start the settlement of the Ohio Country. Two weeks later, Congress passed an ordinance agreeing to a sale of land in the Northwest Territory with the Ohio Company negotiated by Cutler. The land deal included 1,500,000 acres of land

¹³ Hulbert, *The Records of the Original Proceedings of the Ohio Company, vol. I*, xlix and lv; Ohio Company, "Second General Meeting of the Ohio Company," 12; Milligan, 4; Randall, 71.

north of the Ohio River, west of the Seven Ranges and east of the Scioto River at \$1 per acre with a one third reduction for bad land which reduced the total price to 66 cents per acre. Of the total \$1,000,000 price tag, half was paid down using mostly government securities given to Revolutionary War veterans.¹⁴

On November 23, 1787, the directors of the Ohio Company appointed Putnam to the position of superintendent of all their lands in the Northwest Territory. He was in charge of the settlement and day to day management of not only Marietta but also other communities expected to take root in the surrounding areas. In early December, Putnam set out from Massachusetts for the Mouth of the Muskingum with an advance party of 48 men including one blacksmith, four surveyors, four carpenters, six boat builders and nine common workers. The expedition arrived at Fort Harmar across the Muskingum from the spot that would become Marietta on April 7, 1788. Putnam immediately started surveying the area and mapping out the town while the others built a garrison and cabins. The first permanent structure that the men built was a block house known as Campus Martius which served as the cultural, governmental and spiritual center of the settlement. The settlers at first called their new home Adelphi which meant “brethren” but it eventually settled on the name Marietta in honor of Queen of France Marie Antoinette for

¹⁴ Milligan, 4-5; Randall, 71-73; Hulbert, *The Records of the Original Proceedings of the Ohio Company, vol. I*, lv-lviii; Andrews, 53; Gruenwald, 11; Ohio Company, “Third General Meeting of the Ohio Company,” in *The Records of the Original Proceedings of the Ohio Company, vol. I*, 13-15. Cutler negotiated a second land deal known as the Scioto Speculation; it was much more controversial and negotiated outside the purview of Rufus Putnam and the Ohio Company. This deal was for 3,500,000 acres of land west of the Scioto River at a price of \$3,500,000 and conducted as a private speculation. In reality, it was a bribe used to get the support of reluctant members of Congress to support the Ohio Company purchase. The Scioto Speculation was complete and utter failure both financially and administratively as sales was slow and the organizers of the scheme never had a plan for settlement. As a result, those who settled in that area experienced a dismal existence. When the backers of the Scioto Speculation failed to meet their financial commitments, the land reverted to the Ohio Company who sold it to French settlers for \$1.25 an acre.

French assistance during the American Revolution. Marietta's population grew steadily during its early years. By the end of 1788, it had a population of 132 men along with a few women and children. During the second year, another 152 men arrived and one-third of these newcomers brought their families. 1790 witnessed the arrival of an additional two hundred men of which 33 brought their families. Soon other settlements such as Belpre on the Ohio River and Waterford, Plainfield, and Big Bottom on the Muskingum River appeared in the vicinity of Marietta.¹⁵

The founding of Marietta was a grand endeavor involving many people but Rufus Putnam was the driving force behind its design and settlement. He would insure from day one that its development both economically and socially would adhere to his vision which was deeply rooted in the New England communities which himself and the other settlers had just left. Putnam was able to shepherd that sort of development because for all intents and purposes, he was in complete charge. Although he held a tremendous amount of power in the Ohio settlements, in theory there was a higher power, the

¹⁵ Buell, *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam and Certain Official Papers and Correspondence*, 103-106; Andrews, 55; Randall, 73-76; Hulbert, *The Records of the Original Proceedings of the Ohio Company, vol. I*, xxvii; Milligan, 12; Gruenwald, 13-14 and 22; Summers, 54-57; Cayton, 43; John D. Barnhart, *Valley of Democracy: The Frontier versus the Plantation in the Ohio Valley, 1775-1818* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1953), 138-139. Putnam called his expedition party the adventurers and named the lead flatboat the Mayflower to symbolize the connections between their journey to Ohio from Massachusetts and that of the Pilgrims who came to Massachusetts from Europe. Campus Martius took three years to complete but the settlers used it while construction was under way. Other possible names for the community included Castrapolis, Protepolis, Urania, Tempe, Genesis, Montgomery and Muskingum. Another early Ohio settlement of note was Gallipolis which was part of the Scioto Speculation. The growth of Marietta and the surrounding communities slowed in 1791 with the start of the Indian Wars as potential settlers feared for their lives in a territory distant from military protection. In 1793 much of the concerns about safety were quelled when General Anthony Wayne established Fort Greenville in the area. All concern was alleviated the following year when Wayne defeated the Ohio Valley Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers and they ceded all of their lands in the southern and eastern parts of the Northwest Territory as a consequence of the Treaty of Greenville which ended the war. The end of hostilities ushered in reinvigorated settlement in the Ohio Country.

territorial governor. After the passage of the Northwest Ordinance, the Congress of the Confederation appointed Arthur St. Clair as the territorial governor of the Northwest Territory. The presence of a federal official in the Ohio Territory did not lessen Putnam's power but instead strengthened it. St. Clair and Putnam served together during the American Revolution and were friends. Upon his appointment as territorial governor, St. Clair appointed Putnam as Justice of the Peace, Judge of the Court of General Quarter Sessions, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas and eventually Probate Judge of Washington County. Putnam held these positions simultaneously with his job as superintendent. In 1796, Putnam gained even greater influence on the federal level when George Washington appointed him as Surveyor General of the United States. Putnam's appointments on both the local and federal levels along with his growing stature within the Federalist Party insured that he would have the power, influence and means to put his vision for Marietta into effect.¹⁶

The Congress of the Confederation wanted a New England community in the Ohio Territory to impose order on the wilderness and that is exactly what Rufus Putnam gave them. In addition to a strong reliance on transatlantic commerce, Marietta possessed similar philosophies towards governance, religion and education, all of which merged together and reinforced each other. All residents were required by law to pay for the upkeep of the church and its minister and strictly follow moral and religious ordinances such as observing the Sabbath. In regard to education, according to the law every member of the community, whether they had children or not, paid an annual sum for the

¹⁶ Barnhart, 143; Milligan, 12-13; Hulbert, *The Records of the Original Proceedings of the Ohio Company*, vol. I, cv. Prior to being appointed as the Territorial Governor of the Northwest Territory, St. Clair served as President of the Continental Congress. He was the presiding president when congress passed the Northwest Ordinance.

establishment and maintenance of a public school which children were required to attend. Almost from the very beginning of its existence Marietta contained a church, school, court-house, jail-house, post-office and public marketplace. Even the architecture and layout of the town were more akin to New England than the West. Brick and stone structures were just as common as those constructed entirely of wood. Early Marietta possessed an air of sophistication and refinement that made it seem more like a fully realized and developed “Colony of Massachusetts” than an outpost on the western frontier.¹⁷

Early visitors to Marietta often remarked on the similarities between it and towns in New England. In 1806, Englishman Thomas Ashe visited Marietta and was pleasantly surprised by the state of civilization that he found. He affectionately referred to the town as a New England community and stated that it possessed none of the negative qualities that he expected to find in a frontier town such as unruliness and barbarism. He commented that “never was a town more orderly or quiet. No mobs, no fighting, no racing, no rough and tumbling, or anything to be observed but industry, and a persevering application to individual views.” Ashe contrasted the order that he found he found in Marietta to the disorder that he encountered in Virginia where mobs, fighting, racing and rough and tumbling were common occurrences. He even went as far as to say that the general state of civilization and order found in Marietta was foreign to visitors from Virginia who wondered how a town could be so orderly and restrained or why anybody would want to live in such a place. In similar fashion, in July 1807 Fortescue Cuming

¹⁷ Ashe, 122-123; John Melish, *Travels Through the United States of America in the Years 1806 & 1807 and 1809, 1810 & 1811*, 346.

attributed the beauty and order found in Marietta to the origins of its founders and citizens. In regard to the aesthetics of the town, “Marietta is principally inhabited by New Englanders which accounts for the neat and handsome style of building displayed in it.” Two months later, on his visit to Marietta, Christian Schultz described the town as “New England in miniature” and its residents as “sober, honest, religious and industrious” with no “dissipation and irrational amusements” to be found within “her friendly circles.” In societal and governmental terms, Putnam successfully transplanted a New England community to the banks of the Ohio River and bypassed the dreaded frontier stages of settlement.¹⁸

From the beginning of their deliberations on how the settlement of the Northwest Territory should proceed, the Congress of the Confederation mainly considered social and cultural factors. As stated earlier, they wanted to bypass the frontier stages of development and did not want the spearhead of Ohio settlement being led by uncultured and uncivilized ruffians. Therefore, social and cultural factors took precedence over economic considerations. Rufus Putnam shared these concerns, which was a factor in their endorsement of his plan, as he believed that the “western country should in their manners, morals, religion and policy, take the eastern states for their model.” But he also focused on economic matters as the nature of Marietta’s economic development resided at the forefront of his strategy.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ashe, 122-123; Fortescue Cuming, “Cuming’s Tour of the Western Country,” in *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, Vol. IV*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904), 123-125; Christian Schultz, *Travels on an Inland Voyage, Vol. I* (Ridgewood, NJ: The Gregg Group, 1968), 143.

¹⁹ Rufus Putnam to Fisher Ames, 1790 in *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam and Certain Official Papers and Correspondence*, 246; Cayton, 21.

Putnam wanted Marietta's economy, and all of the Ohio Country for that matter, to be fully integrated into the economies of the Atlantic World. He did not believe it was necessary for Marietta to grow or craft everything that it needed. Instead he envisioned an interdependent relationship between Marietta and both the eastern states and Europe. According to Putnam, it was in the best interest of both Ohio and the United States as a whole that "tobacco, flour, pot-ash, iron & lumber of all kinds with ships ready built, should be sent to Europe and the West Indies by way of remittance for goods obtained from those countries." The natural resources of the Ohio Valley would be of "utility" to outside markets that would in turn provide manufactured goods. Furthermore, not only would an interdependent relationship exist between Marietta and the Atlantic World but also within the town between merchants, farmers and manufacturers. In theory, Marietta's economy would treat those three occupations as equal in regard to economic importance but, in reality, that sort of equality never developed. In early Marietta, agriculture quickly became subservient to mercantile activities and manufacturing barely developed at all. Much like New England proper, merchant activities dominated the economy and the lack of manufacturing necessitated the exchange of agricultural produce and other raw materials for European manufactured goods. Putnam engineered Marietta's economy to mimic that of a New England community and the lifeblood of which was merchant activities not manufacturing.²⁰

In Rufus Putnam's vision of Marietta, the town would develop into a commercial hub with the surrounding communities existing as "farming towns." Developing and

²⁰ Putnam to Fisher Ames, 1790 in *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam and Certain Official Papers and Correspondence*, 234-238 and 246-247; Cayton, 21-22 and 30-31; Gruenwald, 12-13.

maintaining commercial connections to the larger Atlantic World and protecting merchant interests took precedence while surveying and laying out lots and streets. Putnam reserved the best lots on the banks on the Muskingum for merchant activity. Stores and not artisan shops occupied the prime locations. This was of the utmost importance because proximity to the Muskingum provided merchants access to the Ohio River which in turn provided them access to the Mississippi River and New Orleans. From there, Marietta merchants could ship Ohio Valley resources to the Eastern United States, Europe and anywhere else in the World. In addition they could arrange for manufactured goods to be imported across the Alleghenies to Pittsburgh and shipped down the Ohio River to Marietta.²¹

There was little doubt that Marietta would attract merchants because of Putnam's commerce friendly philosophy to town development as well the opportunities provided by the Ohio River and the West. Farmers were drawn to the area because of the opportunity to start anew, richness of the soil and the access to outside markets provided by the Ohio River. Putnam was confident that Marietta would become a hub of commercial activity but he also knew that there would be a transition period before his plan could be fully realized. He envisioned the settlement of Marietta and the surrounding area occurring in waves. First the settlers would arrive and then the army. After that, merchants and other businessmen would make their way to Ohio. While this was similar to most western development, he wanted the transition to occur much quicker and bypass any appearance of Marietta being a frontier town. This necessitated a strong government

²¹ Rufus Putnam to Manasseh Cutler, 16 May 1788 in *Life Journals and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler, LL.D.*, ed. William Parker Cutler and Julia Perkins (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & CO., 1888), 376-380; Gruenwald, 17 and 24; Cayton, 42-43.

structure and link to the Atlantic World from the earliest stages of development. But in the interim, the early settlers would need goods. Therefore he needed to create a temporary connection to markets in the East and Europe in order to meet the needs of the town's residents until merchants could arrive in force and form a more permanent link.²²

Before leaving Massachusetts in December of 1787, Putnam contracted Colonel John May to act as his agent and supply goods for the settlement of Marietta. May journeyed to Marietta with a load of goods in the summer of 1788. He remained there throughout the summer helping to build the town before returning to Massachusetts in September. After spending the winter in Boston, May returned to the western country in early 1789 with more goods. He chose not to open a store in Marietta and instead set up shop in Wheeling. Despite not maintaining a physical presence in Marietta, May still serviced its commercial needs. According to May, he was close enough to identify their needs and "send them supplies of provisions when wanted." From Wheeling, he occupied an important position in the link between Marietta and the Atlantic World. He used an agent to purchase goods in Pittsburgh imported from the East and Europe and another, William Breck, to transport and sell those goods in Marietta. Most of his business dealings in Marietta involved trading manufactured goods for pelts and ginseng which he exported out of the Ohio Valley. May was never completely comfortable in the Ohio Valley mainly because it lacked the culture and development of bigger cities in the East and returned to Boston in late 1789. May's departure from the area did not leave Marietta without a commercial link to the Atlantic World as Dudley Woodbridge opened the

²² Rufus Putnam to Manasseh Cutler, 16 May 1788 in *Life Journals and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler, LL.D.*, 376-380; Gruenwald, 17.

town's first store in September marking the beginning of the realization of Putnam's economic vision.²³

Rufus Putnam brought an economy to Marietta similar to that of a New England community centered upon commerce conducted with European merchants and manufacturers. In order to transplant this kind of economy to the settlement at the Mouth of the Muskingum, he needed to attract merchants with similar economic philosophies. Marietta's first resident merchant, Dudley Woodbridge, personified all the ideals that Putnam wanted for his settlement. Woodbridge was born in Stonington, Connecticut on October 9, 1747 to physician and Harvard graduate Dr. Dudley Woodbridge and his wife Sarah. The younger Woodbridge graduated from Yale and opened a law practice in the port town of Norwich in 1770. At the age of 27, he married Lucy Backus and soon abandoned his law practice to pursue a career as a merchant. The career change proved quite successful for him as he built a lucrative business acting as a middleman between New England farmers and merchants in New York, Boston, Europe and the West Indies. Woodbridge's fortunes rose during the American Revolution as he frequently sold provisions to the Continental Army. During this time, he purchased products such as beef, pork, corn, oats and flax from local farmers which he then sold to the army. Woodbridge used the profits that he made from those transactions to import European manufactured goods such as rum, cloth, wine and tea from Boston and New York. He then sold a portion of these goods to surrounding merchants and kept the rest for sale in his Norwich store. Additionally, he used contacts in Virginia to import tobacco from

²³ Dwight L. Smith, ed., *The Western Journals of John May, Ohio Company Agent and Business Adventurer* (Cincinnati: Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1961), 3-5, 7, 141; Gruenwald, 30-31 and 18-19; Summers, 243-245.

Virginia. In 1786, Woodbridge gained a more prominent role in transatlantic trade by acquiring a quarter interest in the schooner *Elizabeth*.²⁴

In 1788, Dudley Woodbridge turned his attentions towards the West. He complained that commerce in New England had become “exceeding dull, & money grows scarcer.” In the aftermath of their defeat during the American Revolution, the British government attempted to reaffirm economic control over its foreign colonies. As a direct result American merchants found trade with the West Indies more restricted by British regulations which caused economic hardship. Some merchants began to look to the interior for an alternate route to Atlantic trade. Some merchants came to the realization that the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers could provide a path to the West Indies which would bypass a portion of the competition on the East Coast as well as some of the British regulation. Woodbridge was one of these merchants. With the opening of the Ohio Country and prospective new markets and natural resources along the Ohio River, Woodbridge contemplated a move. He first became aware of the Ohio Company’s settlements in Ohio through his brother-in-law James Backus who was one of the first settlers in Marietta. Backus came to the Ohio Valley as a surveyor for the Ohio Company and bought shares in the company which entitled him to land. In December of 1788, Woodbridge wrote to Backus and inquired about the present state of commerce in Marietta. In particular, he wanted to know about the navigation along the Ohio River,

²⁴ Biographical Notes in Backus-Woodbridge Collection Finding Aide, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio. Gruenwald, 8-9; Donald Grant Mitchell and Alfred Mitchell, ed., *The Woodbridge Record, Being an Account of the Descendants of Rev. John Woodbridge of Newbury, Mass.* (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, Printers, 1883), 62; Francis Manwaring Caulkins, *History of Norwich, Connecticut: From Its Possession by the Indians to the Year 1866* (Hartford, CT.: Privately Printed, 1866), 160; Richard Anson Wheeler, *History of the Town of Stonington, County of New London, Connecticut* (New London CT: Press of the Day Publishing, 1900), 693.

demand for manufactured goods and carriage costs for goods from Philadelphia. Even during this early stage of inquiry, Woodbridge had more in mind than just dealing with the people of Marietta, he wanted to maintain his economic connections to the greater Atlantic World. Backus told his brother-in-law that settlers were arriving in large numbers in the settlement at the Mouth of Muskingum and the opportunity existed to make great profit from trade. He recommended that Woodbridge purchase shares of the Ohio Company and move his business operations to the interior. Woodbridge visited Marietta in the Spring of 1789 to check out the situation for himself. After confirming Backus' description of the settlement and its mercantile prospects, he returned to Norwich and started make arrangements for a move to the Ohio Country.²⁵

Upon arriving in Norwich, Woodbridge began liquidating stock and closing accounts. He sold most of his leftover stock but shipped a portion of it such as hardware and dry goods to Marietta. Woodbridge arrived in Marietta in September and immediately opened a store in partnership with James Backus on Ohio Street. In the Ohio Valley, he conducted business in the same fashion as he had done in New England importing manufactured goods from Europe via Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and exporting Ohio Valley agricultural produce. He catered to the needs of Marietta's residences in regard to both necessities and luxuries selling a large variety of goods including imported items such as tea, fancy home furnishings, cloths and textiles, hardware, farming and milling equipment and local goods such as whiskey, flour and

²⁵ Biographical Notes in Backus-Woodbridge Collection Finding Aid, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128; Dudley Woodbridge to James Backus, 9 December 1788, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, Box 1, Folder 1; Gruenwald, 7-9 and 18; Caulkins, 160. James Backus negotiated the immigration of French immigrants to Gallipolis. Backus also served as Deputy Sheriff of Washington County during his residence in Marietta.

butter. In 1791, Backus left Marietta and returned to Norwich where he opened his own store. Although no longer a partner in the Marietta store, Backus still maintained a business relationship with his brother-in-law as he supplied him with goods from New England. Despite being located in the interior, Woodbridge remained just as connected to Atlantic World as he was in New England through previous contacts as well as the Ohio River. Woodbridge's success helped create and maintain Marietta's economic link to markets outside of the Ohio Valley.²⁶

Like Rufus Putnam, Dudley Woodbridge believed in an interdependent relationship between America and Europe in regard to commerce. In reality, this type of philosophy would lead to a dependent relationship because it inhibited the development of manufactures but much like Putnam, Woodbridge did not particularly care. In their defense before the Embargo of 1807 it could be argued that it made more economic sense not to build factories when it was easier to bring in British goods that would also be more fashionable and of better quality than anything they could have produced in Ohio. But the embargo changed the economic calculus necessitating a change in strategies which most Marietta entrepreneurs were either unwilling or unable to make. Woodbridge played a key role in insuring that Marietta continued to develop according to Putnam's original plan. Besides just connecting Marietta to the Atlantic network of trade, Woodbridge assumed a leadership role in the governing of the settlement. In the late seventeenth-nineties, he gradually removed himself from the day to day operations of his mercantile firm before handing over the entire business to his son, Dudley Jr. In the absence of

²⁶ Biographical Notes in Backus-Woodbridge Collection Finding Aid, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128; Dudley Woodbridge to James Backus, 1791, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, Box1, Folder 2; Gruenwald, 32-33; Summers, 245; Caulkins, 160.

mercantile responsibilities, he had more time to concern himself with the management of Marietta serving at various times as county recorder, judge for the Court of Common Pleas and Court of Quarter Sessions, chairman for both the town meeting and town council and a director for the Bank of Marietta. Woodbridge gained most of these positions at Putnam's recommendation. Woodbridge shared Putnam's vision for Marietta and the development of a system of manufacturing held no importance. As a result, and as a town leader, Woodbridge's commercial strategies would not serve the town's best interests in the aftermath of Jefferson's Embargo and the forced separation from outside markets and, in fact, contributed to its inability to cope with the economic crisis.²⁷

Rufus Putnam created the blueprint for Marietta's economy and Dudley Woodbridge offered a tangible example of it in execution. Other New England merchants would immediately follow Woodbridge's example and immigrate to Marietta. Charles Greene opened the town's next store on Ohio Street in close proximity. He became Woodbridge's main competition and through the years the two men engaged in a bitter rivalry which on several occasions manifested itself as price war. Benjamin Ives Gilman opened a very a successful store on the other side of the Muskingum directly across from Marietta at Fort Harmar. Born in Exeter, New Hampshire on July 29, 1766, Gilman moved to Marietta with his parents in 1789. He opened his first store in 1792 but much like Woodbridge, it served as merely a starting point for him becoming one of the town's most influential citizens. Gilman was one of the town's most prominent land speculators. By 1810, he owned 127 tracts of land totaling 22,128 acres. Besides his merchant

²⁷ Biographical Notes in Backus-Woodbridge Collection Finding Aid, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128; Gruenwald, 34-38; Wheeler, 693; Cayton, 49.

activities and land speculations, Gilman served as justice of the peace, judge of the of the court of common pleas and court of quarter sessions, probate judge, territorial judge and clerk of the courts of Washington. Rufus Putnam was largely responsible for his appointment to these positions. The main reason for Putnam's support, much like Woodbridge, was that he shared the same commercial ideology. Gilman worked to strengthen Marietta's connections to the Atlantic World and as a direct result, kept the town from developing a commercial identity of its own. Other early merchants who immigrated to Marietta and opened stores included Edward Tupper, Robert Lincoln, Colonel Abner Lord, Captain Levi Barber, William Skinner, James Whitney and Abijah Brooks. Not all of these stores operated at the same time as some went out of business and were quickly replaced by new ones opened by recently arriving merchants.²⁸

In the years prior to the Embargo of 1807, Marietta possessed a thriving merchant community. Residents of the town could readily purchase anything they desired at one of many local stores. In the early years most these establishments were general stores which carried a wide variety of goods but as time progressed, more specialized shops such as jewelry stores and drug stores opened. One common link between these stores was the availability of manufactured goods shipped in from the East and Europe. Although most carried some local crafted goods and agricultural produce, imported goods dominated the shelves giving the consumer many of the same choices as those in cities on the Atlantic Coast. Early travelers to Marietta commented on the abundant and vibrant commerce. In 1803, Thaddeus Mason Harris described Marietta as a "place of much business" which

²⁸ Summers, 245-246 ; S.P. Hildreth, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of the Early Pioneer Settlers of Ohio* (Cincinnati: H.W. Derby & CO., 1859), 307-309; Gruenwald, 13 and 34; Cayton, 30 and 49; Milligan, 21-23.

was “rapidly increasing in population, wealth, and elegance.” He found the town to have a population of 551 residents in 91 different houses. As a testament to the importance of merchant activity in the town, these 551 residents were serviced by eight different stores. In the same year, Francois André Michaux took notice of the amount of activity taking place at the docks. Some of this activity involved shipbuilding but the vast majority came in the form of ships and boats loading and unloading goods. Three years later, Thomas Ashe was also impressed with Marietta’s lively docks. The amount of goods being imported and produce being exported led him to refer to it as a “port town.” By 1807, Marietta clearly developed into the merchant community with strong ties to the Atlantic World originally envisioned by Putnam. Although landlocked and distant from the Atlantic Ocean, Marietta resembled a New England “port town” where manufactured goods flowed in and agricultural produce flowed out. While this was good for the merchants in the short term, it was bad for the town’s long term economic health as it lacked a manufacturing infrastructure. When the embargo stopped the flow of manufactured goods into the area and agricultural produce out, the economy collapsed because Marietta did not have the proper infrastructure to manufacture their own raw materials into finished items or trade networks within the valley to compensate for the loss of foreign markets.²⁹

Pre-embargo Marietta did not exist completely devoid of manufacturing. Much of the town’s early industry came in the form of small household manufacturing but there were efforts attempted on a larger scale. Seth Washburn became Marietta’s first hatter when he opened a shop on Ohio Street. Washburn’s shop proved quite popular and

²⁹ Summers, 246-247; Thaddeus Mason Harris, 122-124; Michaux, 43; Ashe, 122-123.

successful and thus spurred several imitators. In 1791, Captain Jonathan Devol constructed a floating mill which served Marietta and other communities along the river. When anchored it had the capability of grinding one to two bushels of corn per hour. While of great help to the residents of Washington County, the mill was primarily designed for individual not large scale commercial use. In the same year, Ichabod Nye opened a tannery at the corner of Sixth and Putnam Streets and remained in business until 1820. There were also many stills throughout Washington County for the distilling of whiskey and several establishments manufactured woolen fabrics by hand but these endeavors constituted little more than home manufacturing and did not contribute significantly to the growth of industry in Marietta. Predominantly, despite the existence of some manufacturing, the town imported what it needed and sent its natural resources out for others to manufacture.³⁰

Visitors often spoke of the industrious nature of Marietta and its citizens but none mentioned any industries other than those associated with shipbuilding and export endeavors. During his 1803 trip to Marietta, Thaddeus Mason Harris declared that “a spirit of industry and enterprize prevails” but attributed it to shipbuilding which he said was “carried on to a considerable extent.” He listed several industries but all involved shipbuilding. He reported that the town contained three rope walks which were a combined 850 feet long. Harris also mentioned a proposed factory that would manufacture sail cloth. The success of shipbuilding and other related industries led him to predict that Marietta would “maintain a character as the most respectable and thriving town in the state.” In 1806, Thomas Ashe called the residents of Marietta a “people of

³⁰ Summers, 252; Andrews, 213-214.

uncommon industry and speculative enterprise” but only mentioned shipbuilding. In 1807, both Christian Schultz and Fortescue Cuming applauded Marietta’s industrious nature but, once again, only mentioned shipyards and ropewalks. Schultz went as far as to proclaim that in Marietta “ship building is carried on with more spirit than any other town on the Ohio.” Shipbuilding was representative of both Marietta’s link to and dependence on foreign markets. Shultz identified this relationship and the problem it represented when he wrote that the ships were “loaded with the produce of the country, and ready to convey it to the most distant part of the globe.” The problem was not that Marietta’s farmers had overseas markets for their produce or that its merchants acted as the middlemen in this trade but, instead, their reliance on foreign trade over all else.³¹

Shipbuilding commenced in Marietta in 1800 at the G.M. Knox & Son Boat Yard. Charles Greene and Stephen Devol commissioned Knox to build the 110 ton brig *St. Clair*. The vessel left Marietta in May of 1801 with a cargo of pork and flour for Havana, Cuba under the command of Commodore Abraham Whipple. The *St. Clair* reached New Orleans in July and Havana in August. After selling the pork and flour, the commodore purchased a load of sugar with the proceeds and set sail for Philadelphia where Whipple sold both the sugar and vessel for a handsome profit. The new owners used the *St. Clair* in transatlantic trade for many years after. The success of the voyage convinced many Marietta merchants of the feasibility of constructing ocean-going vessels on western waters. The town soon began shipbuilding in earnest recruiting seamen and shipwrights from Connecticut and Rhode Island and used the abundant timber of the Ohio Valley to

³¹ Thaddeus Mason Harris, 122-124 and 142; Ashe, 122-123; Schultz, 142-143; Cuming, “Cuming’s Tour of the Western Country,” in *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, Vol. IV*, 123-124.

cheaply construct the vessels and fill them with low priced farm produce to sell at markets around the world.³²

The construction of ocean-going vessels fit the needs of both farmers and merchants. The people of Marietta could consume only a finite amount of agricultural produce. Without sufficient manufacturing demand for additional produce, the area's farmers had to look to other markets. Local merchants and agents of eastern mercantile firms purchased the produce from the farmers and exported it in exchange for manufactured goods. Flatboats and keelboats carried large amounts of products such as pork and whiskey down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans but these forms of water travel could not hold as much cargo as ships, brigs and schooners which also afforded the option of ocean travel and access to more remote markets. Rufus Putnam never mentioned shipbuilding in his plan for Marietta but given his economic philosophy, and thus that of town, it was a logical evolution.³³

Shipbuilding flourished in Marietta in the years between 1800 and 1808. During these years, the shipyards at the Mouth of the Muskingum gave birth to at least 33 ships, brigs and schooners with a tonnage nearing 4,000 tons. The cost of these vessels completely equipped and rigged for ocean travel averaged \$50 per ton. Merchants commissioned the vast majority of the vessels as both owners and investors. The most active merchants in the shipbuilding industry were Benjamin Ives Gilman, Charles Green, Abner Lord, Edward Tupper, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Harman Blennerhassett. Investing in ocean-going vessels allowed Marietta's merchants greater market control.

³² Leland D. Baldwin, "Shipbuilding on Western Waters," 36-38; S.P. Hildreth, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of the Early Pioneer Settlers of Ohio*, 159-160; Summers, 253; Gruenwald, 64; Andrews, 280 and 307; Ashe, 122. The flour sold for forty dollars a barrel with a duty of twenty dollars.

³³ Gruenwald, 62-64.

They could purchase agricultural products and other natural resources at home and ship them anywhere in the world while making arrangements for those same vessels to return manufactured goods. The years between 1800 and 1808 marked a golden era for not only shipbuilding in Marietta but also for trade. However, this was a fragile era of prosperity because it was over reliant upon trade with outside markets. This study does not attempt to demonize foreign trade only over reliance. Marietta was more reliant on foreign trade than any other town in this study. Foreign commerce was engrained in their economic philosophy to such a degree that there was no balance in their economy and this had serious ramifications in the aftermath of the Embargo of 1807. The embargo cutoff access to foreign markets and the Golden Age came to a crashing halt.³⁴

Whereas travelers to Marietta in the years prior to the enactment of the Embargo of 1807 had once hailed its economic progress and predicted success in its future, in economic terms, it was now a ghost town. In Pittsburgh and Louisville, Jefferson's Embargo caused major problems to both individuals and the economy as a whole but the devastation was not catastrophic. The former already possessed manufacturing interests and prominent businessmen intend on expanding industry in their town and the latter had such a primitive economy that the embargo could only do so much damage. However, in Marietta, the embargo dealt the town a near mortal blow and commerce came to a complete stop. The effect was both instantaneous and long standing. The fate of Marietta was forever altered.

³⁴ James Whitney, List of Ships Built at Marietta from Old Manuscript Book, p. 116 and 117, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 19, Volume 132, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, Archives and Manuscript Collections, West Virginia University; Baldwin, "Shipbuilding on the Western Waters, 1791-1817", 38; S.P. Hildreth, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of the Early Pioneer Settlers of Ohio*, 160-161, Andrews, 307-308; Gruenwald, 63-64.

Jefferson's Embargo cut Marietta off from outside markets thus depriving it of an outlet for its agricultural produce as well as suppliers of manufactured goods. As a result, its primary industry of shipbuilding became unviable because there was nothing to import or export. In 1809, Manasseh Cutler's son Jervis succinctly summed up the damage, previously Marietta had been "one of the best places for ship-building on the Ohio River. A number of large ships and brigs were built in a short time, and the employment was rapidly progressing until a stop was put to it by the embargo." Furthermore, he declared that three ropewalks and numerous mechanic jobs died with it. Work at the shipyards stopped as no new orders came in and previous ones were cancelled. Marietta's ropewalks quickly went out of business as their primary customers had been the shipyards. During the Golden Age of Shipbuilding, farmers increased their hemp production to meet the demand for rope used in the making of ship rigging but with the closure of the ropewalks, they were left with a large quantity of the crop without a market. Additionally, plans to develop other industries related to shipbuilding were scrapped.³⁵

The Embargo of 1807 destroyed Marietta's economy. While the residents of the town did not know how to relieve the situation, they certainly identified the cause of their grief. An unnamed citizen of Marietta described the immediate effect of the Embargo on the town's economy. According to the source, shipbuilding and business in general was "prostrated" and in 1809 "the town looked like a deserted village." Marietta's first resident merchant, Dudley Woodbridge had already transitioned out of commerce as he

³⁵ S.P. Hildreth, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of the Early Pioneer Settlers of Ohio*, 309; Summers, 253; Gruenwald, 36; Jervis Cutler, *A Topographical Description of the State of Ohio, Indiana Territory, and Louisiana* (Boston: Charles Williams, 1812), 19-20.

longer ran the family store and into city governance but the effects of the Embargo of 1807 on his former profession and the economy of the town was obvious to both him and his family. His wife Lucy remarked that “our streets are as empty and our countenances as sober as if we were a remote Yankee village and our days a continuous Sunday.” Woodbridge’s son William complained that “Very little business of any kind is done here. No money in circulation, everything wears a gloomy aspect.” Marietta was a town whose economy depended on commerce with Europe. Jefferson’s Embargo closed the ports to foreign trade and when a town which is economically dependent on commerce loses its markets, it no longer has a viable economy. And this is where Marietta found itself after December of 1807.³⁶

Marietta possessed numerous small scale and household manufacturing interests such as looms and stills but nothing substantial. Shipyards and ropewalks constituted the only factories and these were severely damaged or closed by the embargo. The only new large scale manufacturing interest opened within five years of the embargo was the Marietta Steam Mill Company in 1812. This was a three story steam mill built by millwright William Green of Zanesville and capable of grinding a bushel of grain every three minutes. A twenty horsepower engine conceived, built and installed by Oliver Evans powered the mill’s operations. Among the stockholders of this venture were Rufus Putnam’s son David, Benjamin Ives Gilman, William Skinner, Levi Barber, Paul Fearing, Oliver Dodge and Oliver Evans. The Marietta Steam Mill Company was a significant manufacturing interest within itself but it did little to advance manufacturing in Marietta.

³⁶ Andrews, 312; Gruenwald, 36; Emily George, *William Woodbridge: Michigan’s Connecticut Yankee* (Lansing: Michigan History Division, Michigan Department of State, 1979), 9.

It represented the most elaborate mill in Ohio, use of new technology and a manufacturing effort led by some of the town's most prominent citizens but its significance ended with the opening of its doors for business as it inspired no other immediate endeavors.³⁷

The Marietta Steam Mill Company did not spur more industrialization or the further introduction of new technologies. Nor did the men involved with this endeavor attempt to expand upon their accomplishment. It would be another eight years before Marietta took its next significant industrial step forward with the opening of the Marietta Chair Company. This enterprise included lumber yards and various buildings on eleven acres of land employing 500 individuals and manufactured several different kinds of furniture. The A.T. Nye & Son Company Foundry opened in 1830. In 1856, the Marietta Manufacturing Company commenced operations and manufactured stoves, iron and brass castings, plows and condensed engines and pumps for steamboats. These were all major industrial interests but they did not succeed in advancing a strong system of manufactures as they failed to spur other industries as they all opened several years apart.³⁸

The damage inflicted upon foreign trade and thus Marietta's economy did not spark a manufacturing revolution at the Mouth of the Muskingum. Instead, the town continued to look towards shipbuilding and foreign trade with lackluster results. Whereas the rest of the Ohio Valley abandoned shipbuilding, Marietta soldiered on. Stephen Devol, who opened up his own shipyard after the successful voyage of the *St. Clair*,

³⁷ Gruenwald, 60-61; Greville and Dorothy Bathe, ed. *Oliver Evans: A Chronicle of Early American Engineering*, 173-174; Andrews, 218; Kim Gruenwald argues that Marietta possessed a significant amount of manufacturing but she includes interests throughout Washington County and mainly discuss small household manufacturing whereas my study is concerned with large scale endeavors and actual manufactories.

³⁸ Summers, 252-255.

continued to promote the shipbuilding industry in Marietta and solicit new customers. He championed the craftsmanship of the town's vessels and claimed that their product was inferior to none being constructed in the Ohio Valley. What he did not mention was that no others were being constructed in the Ohio Valley. Unfortunately for Devol and the other shipyards, there was no demand for the construction of ocean-going vessels because of Jefferson's trade restrictions. Marietta shipyards produced only two vessels between 1809 and 1812, the schooners *Adventure* and *Maria*. In 1832, William Knox attempted to revive his father's shipbuilding business but only constructed boats and no ocean-going vessels before closing. In 1844, several local business men formed a shipbuilding company for the purpose of constructing sea-worthy vessels but only constructed three ships and two schooners in a five year period before closing its doors. In the eighteenthies, Marietta commenced steamboat construction with more success. During this decade, the town produced fourteen steamboats followed by another 21 in the eighteenthies after which the production began to wane. Steamboat construction was temporarily an important industry for Marietta but the town's involvement in this enterprise never matched that conducted by other river towns such as Cincinnati, Louisville, Pittsburgh, Jeffersonville or New Albany.³⁹

Resourceful businessmen in Pittsburgh and Louisville engaged in the practice of import substitution industrialization in the aftermath of the Embargo of 1807. These men embraced manufacturing and others within the community followed their lead. Through manufacturing, they advanced not only their economic fortunes but also that of the

³⁹ Jervis Cutler, 21; James Whitney, List of Ships Built at Marietta from Old Manuscript Book, p. 116 and 117, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 19, Volume 132; Summers, 253; Isaac Lippincott, *A History of Manufactures in the Ohio Valley to the Year 1860*, 182-184.

greater community. In essence, their entrepreneurial survival instinct kicked in. Importing goods from outside their areas was no longer economically advantageous and they started to manufacture goods from their own natural resources. This did not occur in Marietta. In 1811, Scottish merchant and writer John Melish commented on the lack of industry and gave his interpretation of the problem. According to Melish, “The spirit of foreign commerce seems to have long prevailed among them. They were successful in it for some time, and notwithstanding the total change of circumstances, they yet view it with a fond partiality, and have not thoroughly seen that a change of circumstances has called for a change in policy.” Marietta had been almost completely dependent upon foreign commerce and shipbuilding and when Jefferson’s Embargo cut off access to outside markets; it became a “dull place.” Melish believed that the town was perfectly situated to become a manufacturing center because of its position on the river, fertile farmland, and abundant natural resources such as coal, iron and limestone but its mercantile mindset was an impediment to success. Furthermore, “should the people of Marietta, therefore, commence the manufacturing system, I think probable, that it will become a flourishing place...but so long as they allow the ideas of a foreign commerce, which is gone, to fetter their minds, it will hang like a millstone round their necks, and prevent all improvements.” Ultimately, the reason for Marietta’s refusal and failure to develop a system of manufactures during the economic crisis created by the Embargo of 1807 can be found in the town’s economic philosophy and leadership.⁴⁰

In Marietta, transatlantic trade was deeply engrained part of the culture which was a result of Rufus Putnam’s influence on its development. He was a stout Federalist and

⁴⁰ Melish, 345-346.

proud New Englander. Putnam was a part of a wing of the Federalist Party that never warmed to Alexander Hamilton's championing of manufacturing. This was the branch that remained Federalist when pro-manufacturing members of the party switched their loyalty to the Democratic-Republicans. His business philosophy was strictly mercantile and largely colonial, exporting raw materials and importing manufactured goods. Putnam was a proud American so he viewed this relationship as interdependence instead of what it really constituted, a form of dependence. He may have preached manufacturing while pitching his plan for Marietta, but he never put it into practice. As a result the town had strong ties to Britain and an overreliance and dependence on foreign commerce. Jefferson's Embargo cut the town's connection to outside markets but Putnam and the town of Marietta continued to view itself and conducted its business in the same manner.⁴¹

The victory of Thomas Jefferson during the Election of 1800 and the subsequent rise of the Democratic-Republicans signaled the beginning of the end of the Federalist Party on the national level. The Federalists retained popularity in the Northeast and a few interior outposts such as Marietta where diehard Federalists like Rufus Putnam retained power. Even though Putnam lost most of his national influence with the rise of the Jeffersonians, his position within Marietta's power structure did not change substantially, at least in the short-term. Just as Thomas Jefferson was President of the United States and head of the Democratic-Republican Party, Putnam was King of Marietta and leader of the Muskingum Federalists for the time being. He controlled the town and maintained his power through a system of patronage. He appointed men with similar views to positions

⁴¹ Cayton, 30 and 49; Gruenwald, 35-36.

of power in order to insure that the town continued to develop according to his plan. As a result, political power in Marietta rested with the merchant class. Even when Putnam and these men started to lose influence as more Jeffersonians assumed governing positions within the town and territory, the old ideas such as heavy-handed governance, strict enforcement of religious practices and unwavering commitment to foreign commerce still remained prevalent. When Jefferson's Embargo created economic havoc in Marietta, the town's leadership knew no other direction to take other than the one they came in on and that path was paved by foreign trade.⁴²

Rufus Putnam successfully transplanted a colonial New England village to the Ohio Valley. Therein lies the problem, Putnam's Marietta was stuck in time. New England had already begun to change. The Embargo of 1807 forced New England businessmen to invest in manufacturing. Textile mills sprang up throughout the Northeast. In the decades following Jefferson's Embargo, Massachusetts towns such as Lowell and Waltham would make the transition from foreign trade to industrialization. Putnam's Marietta refused to change. Consequently, Marietta nearly died as it had no commerce or viable plan to move forward. In order to survive the town needed to change. Putnam's Marietta soon gave way to a new Marietta, Dudley Woodbridge Jr.'s Marietta. This new direction, much like the old, would not embrace manufacturing but it did change the town's economic focus. Woodbridge Jr., after losing everything he had because of his unwavering dependence on foreign trade, experienced an economic rebirth in the years after the embargo. He developed trade networks within the Ohio Valley and

⁴² Lawrence A. Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution: The Intellectual Origins of Early American Industry*, 192; Lawrence A. Peskin, "How the Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing: The First Parties and the New Economy," 237-240; Cayton, 30 and 49; Gruenwald, 35-36.

connected its various markets. Woodbridge turned Marietta into a connection point between markets inside and outside the Ohio Valley and fostered the development of system of manufactures.⁴³

B.) Dudley Woodbridge Jr.'s Marietta

The Embargo of 1807 delivered a devastating blow to Marietta's economy and placed its future in serious doubt. Rufus Putnam built the town on an economic foundation of foreign commerce. The loss of foreign markets as a result of Jefferson's Embargo constituted a near knockout blow as the town teetered on the brink of extinction. Marietta managed to pull itself back from the brink but would never stand as tall as it did prior to the embargo. It survived by becoming a facilitator of Ohio Valley trade. Marietta acted not only as a connecting point for markets within the valley but also to those outside by promoting Ohio Valley manufactured goods throughout the United States. The transition of Marietta's economic focus from outside to within the Ohio Valley was primarily the work of one man, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. An examination of Woodbridge Jr.'s career both before and after 1807 will illustrate how a new Marietta arose from the ashes of the old and the fires of Jefferson's Embargo.

Dudley Woodbridge Jr. was born in November of 1778 in Norwich, Connecticut. He was the third of six children born to Dudley and Lucy Woodbridge and the only one to share his father's passion for mercantilist endeavors. Woodbridge Jr.'s birth occurred at the time his father was making the transition from the law to commerce. As a child, he

⁴³ Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 27-28; Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution: The Intellectual Origins of Early American Industry* 133-135; Gruenwald, xii-xvi.

would witness Woodbridge Sr. forge connections with European merchants and become extremely successful in transatlantic commerce. Woodbridge Jr. displayed an early fascination and aptitude for his father's work. As a result, Woodbridge Sr. began to groom his son for a future role in his business. When Dudley Woodbridge Sr. left Connecticut for Marietta, he left his eleven year old son behind. He made arrangements for the younger Woodbridge to live with relatives and attain an education both scholarly and commercial.⁴⁴

After his father's departure from Connecticut, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. attended prep school and then enrolled in Yale University. Dudley Woodbridge Sr. monitored and guided his son's progress through correspondence with his brother-in-law James Backus who moved back to Norwich from Marietta in 1791. The elder Woodbridge chose areas of study for the younger Woodbridge such as foreign languages, public speaking and classical studies such as Greek and Latin. In particular, the father was keen on his son gaining "knowledge of the French tongue" preparing the boy for a future role in a family business that was primarily concerned with foreign trade. Knowledge of the French language would prove invaluable since Woodbridge Jr. would be conducting a significant amount of trade on the transatlantic market with French and British agents.⁴⁵

In the Fall of 1794, Dudley Woodbridge Sr. started making arrangements for his son to leave Yale for an apprenticeship with an unspecified trading firm in Philadelphia. The decision was quite sudden and took both Woodbridge Jr. and James Backus off

⁴⁴ Donald Grant Mitchell and Alfred Mitchell, 100; Biographical Notes in Backus-Woodbridge Collection Finding Aide, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128; Gruenwald, 44.

⁴⁵ Dudley Woodbridge to James Backus, 7 January 1791, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 1, folder 2; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Dudley Woodbridge, 1794, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 1, folder 2.

guard. Woodbridge Sr. left the logistics of the move to Backus which included withdrawal from the University, the selling of books and other possessions that were no longer needed and arrangement of transportation to and a place to both live and work in Philadelphia. The younger Woodbridge did not embrace the proposed move to Philadelphia and wished to continue studying in New Haven with his friends. In January, Backus went to Philadelphia to meet the younger Woodbridge but he was nowhere to be found. Furthermore, the man charged with procuring him a room and apprenticeship, Mr. White, died without finalizing arrangements for either a job or accommodations. Woodbridge Sr. took direct control and negotiated an apprenticeship for Woodbridge Jr. at Webster, Adgate and White. He then wrote to his son and told him to pack a small trunk of clothes and get to Philadelphia “as soon as you possibly can.” The younger Woodbridge had no say in the matter as his father made the decision and he was expected to obey. Much in the same manner that town patriarchs such as Rufus Putnam and Dudley Woodbridge Sr. had placed Marietta on a certain course of social and economic development with little room for deviation from the original plan, the same had been done for Dudley Woodbridge Jr. The younger Woodbridge would learn the business of transatlantic trade at Webster, Adgate and White and practice that trade at his father’s side.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James Backus, unspecified date in 1794, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 1, folder 2; James Backus to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 26 October 1794, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 1, folder 2; James Backus to Dudley Woodbridge, 5 January 1795, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 1, folder 2; Dudley Woodbridge to James Backus, 9 January 1795, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 1, folder 2; Dudley Woodbridge to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 9 January 1795, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 1, folder 2; Gruenwald, 44.

Dudley Woodbridge Jr. moved to Marietta in January of 1796 and immediately began work at the family store. He arrived at a prosperous time for both his family and Marietta. Armed hostilities with the local native tribes had ceased, settlers were moving to Ohio as well as further west in large numbers and the Woodbridge store had more business than it could handle. By all accounts, Woodbridge Jr. exceeded expectations and proved quite adept as a merchant. His father soon entrusted him with more duties and responsibilities. Despite expressing some anxieties about his son's bookkeeping prowess and advising that he get the help of "mama" in his absence, the elder Woodbridge began to trust him with the day to day operations of the store and thus the financial well-being of the family as he transitioned into retirement.⁴⁷

At this point in his life, Woodbridge Sr. was happy with his role in transatlantic commerce and the facilitation of trade between the Ohio Valley, the East and Europe. He exhibited no desire to expand or change his business model and instead began exerting more energy on endeavors involving the law and real estate. The younger Woodbridge wanted more and was constantly looking to expand upon his father's business model. In his own words, Woodbridge Jr. possessed a variety of "plans to grow rich." He did not plan to stray far from the economic path blazed by his father. Instead, Woodbridge Jr. would maintain the economic link of both his family and Marietta to the Atlantic World but seek a more direct connection to foreign markets and larger piece of the profits. His

⁴⁷ Gruenwald, 44-50; Dudley Woodbridge to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 5 January 1796, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 1, folder 3.

means to accomplish these goals would come in the form of a partnership arranged by Woodbridge Sr. shortly before his retirement.⁴⁸

In late July of 1797, Dudley Woodbridge Sr. received a letter from Pittsburgh businessman Edward Turner that would alter the career trajectory of his son. This was a letter of introduction for “gentleman of Europe” Harman Blennerhassett on his upcoming trip to Marietta. Blennerhassett wanted to “become a resident of the Western Country” and was scouting not only land but also business opportunities. The following week, Turner wrote again urging Woodbridge Sr. to meet with the European visitor and detailing the benefits of such a meeting for both his own business interests and those of Marietta as a whole. According to Turner, Blennerhassett was “a man whom I know to be worth at least 250,000L. [pounds]” and “could you persuade him to set down among you I think it would be great acquisition as monied men will give a celebrity to the settlement and consequently enhance its value.” In addition to the obvious capital that Blennerhassett could introduce into Woodbridge Sr.’s business, he would also bring a plethora of foreign contacts.⁴⁹

Born in 1767 to a wealthy Irish land owner, Blennerhassett enjoyed a privileged upbringing much like Dudley Woodbridge Jr. During his childhood, his parents sent him to Westminster School in London and later Middle Temple. He received a Bachelor of Laws from Trinity College in Dublin in 1790. Although being a student of the law,

⁴⁸ Gruenwald, 44-50; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James Backus, 15 February 1799, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 2, folder 1 ; William Woodbridge to Dudley Woodbridge, 6 May 1796, 22 August 1796 and 11 September, 1796; Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 1, folder 3; Dudley Woodbridge to William Woodbridge, 4 February 1797, 19 March 1797, 19 April 1797, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 1, folder 3

⁴⁹ Edward Turner to Dudley Woodbridge, 31 July 1797 and 2 August 1797, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, Archives and Manuscript Collections, West Virginia University; Gruenwald, 46.

Blennerhassett did not practice after graduation and instead spent his time traveling Europe lavishly exhibiting his family's wealth. In 1792, he returned to Ireland and started practicing law at the Irish Bar until he inherited his family's estate upon his father's death. Shortly thereafter, he joined the Society of United Irishmen, a secret organization dedicated to political reform. Abruptly, in 1796 Blennerhassett sold the family estate to his cousin, Lord Ventry, for \$160,000 and sailed to the United States. His relocation across the Atlantic was more of an exile than a planned move primarily for two reasons, both of his own doing. The first reason was that the Society of United Irishmen turned radical and militaristic and he feared becoming entangled in a planned rebellion against the British government. The other reason involved his incestuous marriage to his nineteen year old niece Margaret Agnew and the shame and scorn from both his family and society that followed the union. As a result of his indiscretions, Blennerhassett left Europe as both a political and social pariah. Neither Dudley Woodbridge Sr. nor his son was aware of the circumstances surrounding Blennerhassett's sudden departure from Europe.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ S.P. Hildreth, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of the Early Pioneer Settlers of Ohio*, 491-492; William Harrison Safford, *The Life of Harman Blennerhassett*. (Chillicothe, OH: Ely, Allen & Looker, 1850), 19-22; Gruenwald, 46. There is some disagreement as to Harman Blennerhassett's date of birth. Some sources list his birth date as October 8, 1764 but others such as Blennerhassett's primary biographer William Harrison Safford list 1867 as the correct year. Blennerhassett was born County Hampshire, England despite his family home, Castle Conway which was named after his father Conway Blennerhassett, being in Ireland because his parents were visiting England when his mother gave birth. His parents' were visiting County Hampshire to avoid raids perpetrated by Irish peasants known as "whiteboys" on prominent Irish landlords. For more on Blennerhassett's early life other than the sources listed above see Ray Swick, *An Island Called Eden: An Historical Sketch of Blennerhassett Island Near Parkersburg, West Virginia, 1798-1807* (Parkersburg: Parkersburg Printing Company, 1996) and Michael Burke, "A Chronicle of the Life of Harman Blennerhassett," *West Virginia Historical Society Quarterly* XIII, no. 1(January 1999).

Gaining a meeting with Woodbridge Sr. was an urgent matter for Harman Blennerhassett because the factors that necessitated his move to America from Ireland would make a return very difficult. Furthermore, his lavish lifestyle would require another source of income other than the sum received from the sale of his family's estate. After short stays in New York and Philadelphia, Blennerhassett was lured across the Allegheny Mountains by the beauty and romanticism. He also felt that he could thrive economically in Marietta as it constituted a center of transatlantic trade that connected the American interior with the Atlantic Coast and Europe. All he needed to make his plan work was new contacts in the interior to go along with those he recently made on the East Coast and pre-existing ones from Europe. During his initial visit to Marietta, Harman Blennerhassett secured a partnership with Dudley Woodbridge Sr. which satisfied his need to make a business connection in the interior.⁵¹

Blennerhassett next began searching for a home for himself and his young bride and child. In 1798, he purchased half of an island from Matthew Backus, brother of James Backus, for \$4,500. The 170 acre island was located fourteen miles southwest of Marietta on the Ohio River near Belpre. He named his new property Blennerhassett Island. At first he lived with his family on the island in an old-block house built during the Indian Wars but soon began construction on a mansion. Completed in 1800, Blennerhassett's new abode was a 7,000 square foot Palladian style mansion furnished with the finest furniture purchased in London and paintings and porcelain from Paris. He chose to build his family's home on this island, primarily because it was part of Virginia

⁵¹ S.P. Hildreth, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of the Early Pioneer Settlers of Ohio*, 492-493; Gruenwald, 46.

and not the Northwest Territory or Ohio. The Blennerhassett mansion was a plantation complete with slaves and unlike Virginia, Ohio did not allow slavery as a condition of the Northwest Ordinance. While Blennerhassett mainly utilized the slaves to serve the household, he also used them to carry goods along the Ohio River. Including the cost of the island, construction of the home and improvements, Blennerhassett invested somewhere between \$40,000 to \$50,000 in his new estate.⁵²

The partnership between Blennerhassett and Woodbridge Sr. proved to be very profitable for both men. Business increased primarily for two reasons, the first was that Blennerhassett opened a store in Belpre which purchased goods from the Woodbridge store in Marietta. This increased the amount of goods that Woodbridge Sr. needed to import from the East Coast. Blennerhassett's store was also important because it provided another location for farmers to trade their produce for imported goods which increased the Woodbridge's participation in transatlantic trade. The second reason that business increased involved Blennerhassett's eastern and European contacts. In 1798, the elder Woodbridge, on Blennerhassett's urging, began an association with two of Philadelphia's most prominent merchants, Joseph Clark and Joseph S. Lewis. This new association quickly increased Woodbridge Sr.'s access to imported goods. Blennerhassett's contacts in Europe also allowed Woodbridge Sr. to bypass the Philadelphia market houses and occasionally deal directly with European merchants. In May of 1798, the Woodbridge Mercantile Firm arranged a deal with Brook Watson and Company of London to

⁵² S.P. Hildreth, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of the Early Pioneer Settlers of Ohio*, 494-497; Woodbridge, 46; Harman Blennerhassett to Dudley Woodbridge, 20 June 1799, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Harman Blennerhassett to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 15 July 1799, 6 August 1799 and 7 September 1799, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459.

transport a cargo of goods to Philadelphia on the *Lexington* on Blennerhassett's account. The ship arrived in Philadelphia in September and its cargo included furniture, linen, fabric, clothes, jewelry, tools, art, drapes and kitchen utensils.⁵³

The partnership between Dudley Woodbridge Sr. and Harman Blennerhassett proved to be short lived. The increased business became a detriment to the health of the elder Woodbridge as well as a drain on his time. As a result, in the Summer of 1799, he retired from the mercantile trade. Woodbridge Sr. had been grooming his son to take over the company for years but the burdens placed upon him by the recent increase in the company's fortunes hastened his departure. Upon assuming control of the family business, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. changed its name from Woodbridge Mercantile Firm to Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Company. Prior to taking control of the company, the younger Woodbridge had already entered into his own business arrangements with Blennerhassett absent his father. Upon the establishment of Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Company, Blennerhassett purchased a half share in the firm at a cost of three thousand dollars. The partnership proved, at least in the short term, to be a perfect match as the two men shared similar ambition and vision. Woodbridge Jr. was the senior partner managing the business on a day to day basis and making all significant decisions but

⁵³ Dudley Woodbridge to Joseph Lewis, 5 May 1799 and 1 February 1799, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Dudley Woodbridge to Harman Blennerhassett, 23 May 1799, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 145; Dudley Woodbridge to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 22 May 1799, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Dudley Woodbridge to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 21 May 1798, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Invoice of Goods Shipped from London, September 1798 by Brooke Watson Company, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Gruenwald, 46.

Blennerhassett's capital and connections would allow him to expand the business he just received from his father and pursue new opportunities.⁵⁴

Dudley Woodbridge Jr.'s first major expansion to his father's business model came in the form of branch stores. The elder Woodbridge opened a store in Belpre in partnership with Blennerhassett in 1798 but Woodbridge Jr. took the concept further. Using funding provided by Blennerhassett, he opened branch stores throughout Southeastern Ohio. Since the younger Woodbridge could not be in two places at once, he entered into partnerships with other merchants to manage the stores. The more prominent of the stores and partnerships were with James Converse first in Waterford and later Lancaster, Joseph F. Munro in Lancaster and Licking, Nathaniel S. Cushing in Gallipolis and Augustus Stone in Harmar. Woodbridge Jr. supplied the stores with finished goods imported from Joseph Clark and Joseph S. Lewis in Philadelphia such as glass, home furnishings, clothes, guns, hardware and farming equipment and transported by contracted agents to Pittsburgh and then Ohio. Another aspect of his business involved exporting Ohio agricultural produce including hemp, flax, oats, wheat, hay, beef and pork as well as skins and furs taken in at the branch stores to New Orleans, the Atlantic Coast

⁵⁴ Dudley Woodbridge to Harman Blennerhassett, 28 June 1799, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Dudley Woodbridge to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 21 May 1798, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Business Agreement between Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Harman Blennerhassett, 15 June 1799, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Harman Blennerhassett to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 22 December 1800, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *The Burr Conspiracy* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1968), 108; Gruenwald, 46.

or Europe. With the opening of the branch stores, Woodbridge Jr. assumed a major position in local retailing but was still reliant on transatlantic trade.⁵⁵

Entry into the shipbuilding industry constituted Dudley Woodbridge Jr.'s next major expansion of his father's business model. In the seventeen-eighties, Dudley Woodbridge Sr. invested in ocean-going vessels in Connecticut. He merely supplied capital and obtained interest in ships and their cargoes. Much like he did with the concept of branch stores, Woodbridge Jr.'s involvement went far beyond that of his father. Not only did the younger Woodbridge decide to invest in the building of ships on western waters, he wanted his company to be the sole owner of the vessels. The cost of constructing the vessel and risk of financial loss would fall entirely upon Woodbridge Jr. and Blennerhassett but so too would all the profit once they sold the cargo and vessel on the East Coast or Europe. In the Fall of 1801, Woodbridge Jr. and Blennerhassett formalized plans for the construction of a 125 ton brig. The two partners hired Joseph Barker to build the vessel at a cost of \$20 per ton not including sails, rigging and equipment. Barker's main responsibility involved the hull of the ship as he had little experience with building the rigging for a vessel that size, therefore, the two partners

⁵⁵ Biographical Notes in Backus-Woodbridge Collection Finding Aide, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James Converse, 30 November 1801, 4 February 1802, 8 February 1802, 10 February 1802, 2 March 1802, 5 May, 1802, 21 June 1802, 14 June 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph F. Munro, 19 February 1802, 9 March 1802, 10 May 1802, 21 June 1802, 8 September 1802, 1 June 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph S. Lewis, 15 November 1802, 24 June 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge to Joseph Clark, 9 June 1803, 14 June 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Harman Blennerhassett to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 18 July 1801 and 19 August 1801, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Henry Mills, 13 January 1802, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459 Gruenwald, 56-58.

agreed to hire a master shipwright from the Atlantic Coast to finish the job. They secured a shipyard, shipwright and workers for the hull, building materials and even determined a launch date, March of 1802. On paper, their plan seemed perfect but execution would be an entirely different matter as getting the vessel built and ready to cast off proved more difficult than they imagined. Although Woodbridge Jr. and Blennerhassett were partners, the task of dealing with the problems involved with building the brig fell to the former. Blennerhassett seems to have had very little involvement with the brig project after the planning stages except for the hiring of Barker which turned out to be a problem in and of itself. Barker's inexperience in working on a project as big as this one was at the root of many of the difficulties encountered by Woodbridge Jr.⁵⁶

The problems with Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Harman Blennerhassett's brig started almost immediately after work commenced. The first problem was finding a competent and skilled shipwright to construct the rigging. In November of 1801, Woodbridge Jr. wrote his friend Thomas Soya in Connecticut, who was familiar with the shipbuilding industry, soliciting information on the type and size of rigging needed for a large brig so that the proper materials could be procured. He referred to himself as a "somewhat of novice in that kind of business" and asked for help in finding someone to conduct the work. At the beginning of February, Thomas Soya had yet to reply to his friend's plea for help and the vessel was no closer to completion than in November. In a

⁵⁶ Harman Blennerhassett to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 18 July 1801 and 19 August 1801, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph Clark, 11 February 1802, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Harman Blennerhassett, 26 December 1800, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818; Gruenwald, 63; S.P. Hildreth, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of the Early Pioneer Settlers of Ohio*, 457; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Thomas Soya, 2 November 1801, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1.

state of desperation with his planned launch less than a month away, Woodbridge Jr. wrote to a business associate in Philadelphia, Joseph Clark, asking him to “engage on the best terms you can a ship carpenter capable of making a mast and building a vessel. He was willing to pay between a \$1.50 and \$2.25 per day for several months work. In April, Clark informed Woodbridge Jr. that he could not find a master workman willing to take the job. Finally in May, Woodbridge Jr. procured a Philadelphia master shipwright named Sam Crispin, who he later described as a “celebrated Philadelphia shipwright,” agreeable to traveling to Marietta and completing the work on the brig. This represented one problem solved but there would soon be more such as procuring a captain and crew, anchor, sail, iron and additional workers. Finding a potential buyer for the vessel in Philadelphia and insurance for both the brig and cargo proved difficult and time consuming as well.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Thomas Soya, 2 November 1801, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge to Joseph Clark, 11 February 1802, 13 April 1802, 17 May 1802, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James Backus, 8 February 1802, 6 April 1802, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Fox, 17 May 1802, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Oliphant, 25 April 1802, 18 May 1802, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joel Winchester, 7 February 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Captain Latimore, 18 October 1802, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Gruenwald, 63; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph S. Lewis, 18 October 1802 and 28 April 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Captain Latimer, 18 October 1802, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; James Whitney, List of Ships Built at Marietta from Old Manuscript Book, p. 116 and 117, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 19, Volume 132, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 19, Volume 132; Gruenwald, 63.

In March of 1803, Woodbridge Jr. and Blennerhassett's brig, the *Dominic*, set sail for New Orleans with an eight man crew including Captain Latimer and first mate Thomas Wrigley. The cargo consisted of wheat, pork, lard, tobacco, salt, hemp and other Ohio Valley agricultural produce as well as some finished goods including whiskey, flour and leather. Joseph Munro, an agent for Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Company purchased most of the cargo from local farmers and the rest was on consignment from merchants in the area. Latimer had orders to sail to Natchez, Mississippi where he would find a river pilot to navigate the lower portion of the Mississippi River and then New Orleans. Once in the Port of New Orleans, the captain of the *Dominic* was to sell some of the cargo and buy a large quantity of cotton. The flour, wheat, pork and cotton were reserved for sale in the West Indies and the revenue would be used to purchase manufactured goods. From the West Indies, Latimer was directed to sail to Philadelphia. Woodbridge Jr. reserved half of the cargo of manufactured goods for Joseph S. Lewis and the rest would be picked up by a Mr. McCoy for transport to the Ohio Valley. After the cargo was unloaded in Philadelphia, the vessel would be sold with the entirety of the proceeds (except for commissions), going to the Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Company mercantile firm. He estimated that the *Dominic* would arrive at the Falls of the Ohio around the beginning of April and be in Natchez by early May. Shortly thereafter, it would arrive in New Orleans and end its voyage in Philadelphia sometime around the end of summer.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Harman Blennerhassett to Dudley Woodbridge, 2 March 1802 and 13 March 1802, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Dudley Woodbridge to Harman Blennerhassett, 3 March 1802, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph S. Lewis, 15 November 1802, 28 April 1803, May 14, 1803, 24 June 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph Munro, 12 December 1802, 22 February 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870,

At the end of April, Woodbridge Jr. took precautions against any unforeseen problems by instructing Joseph S. Lewis to purchase insurance for the vessel and its cargo. He wanted the brig insured for \$4,000 with another \$4,000 on the freight and requested that the insurance cover ‘all risks’ from the departure of the *Dominic* from Marietta until her arrival in Philadelphia. Transatlantic trade of this nature promised great reward but at the same time threatened great risk. Woodbridge Jr. went to great lengths to anticipate potential problems but the nature of transatlantic trade rendered this a near impossible task. No matter how much someone prepared, all risks could not be anticipated. As seen earlier in this study, foreign nations could detain vessels, cargoes could rot, voyages could take longer than anticipated and market prices could fluctuate as well as other problems caused by incompetence on the part of captain and crew. Insurance covered some but not all of these occurrences but in most cases the owners never recovered all they had lost as the insurers often found ways to minimize their payout, if they paid at all. Sometimes, it took years of litigation just to recover some of

A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James McCoy, 19 December 1802, 31 January 1803, February 1803 and 6 March 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Memorandum for H. Mills, 24 February 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Captain Latimer, 6 March 1803, 12 March 1803 and 11 April 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Brig Memorandum 1803, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459, Gruenwald, 63. Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Harman Blennerhassett named their brig the *Dominic* after the latter’s son who had nearly died the previous year during a prolonged sickness. Harbor records from Marietta list the Captain Latimore as commanding the *Dominic* and Martin Andrews’ *History of Marietta and Washington County Ohio and Representative Citizens* lists his name as Lattimore but all correspondence from Woodbridge Jr. refers to him as Latimer. The harbor records also list the *Dominic* as being a 150 ton brig but Woodbridge always listed the weight as 125 tons. The instructions for Captain Latimer from Woodbridge Jr. sent in various letters in the Spring of 1803 do not detail the plans for cotton or which goods are to be sent to the West Indies. The plan for purchasing cotton in Natchez and the list of which goods would be sent to the West Indies is included in Dudley Woodbridge Jr.’s letter to Joseph S. Lewis from November 15, 1802.

the investment from the insurance companies. Woodbridge Jr. and Blennerhassett would soon learn the harsh realities of transatlantic trade and liabilities involving sole ownership of a vessel.⁵⁹

In the months since the launch of the *Dominic*, Woodbridge Jr. began to doubt whether the voyage would eventually prove successful and questioned the competency of Captain Latimer. The *Dominic* arrived in Natchez on May 21, 1802. This was a few weeks later than expected but did not constitute a major setback. Sometime later in the month or early June, the brig docked in New Orleans. On June 21, Latimer wrote Woodbridge Jr. and assured him that after a brief delay, the *Dominic* would leave New Orleans in two or three days. Almost three weeks later, Captain Latimer and the brig had only advanced as far as La Balize, Louisiana which was merely 86 miles from New Orleans. In a letter written after his arrival in La Belize, Latimer claimed that the delay was caused by work on the anchor, trouble with the sails and the repacking of some of the cargo. In particular, he explained that the salt that Joseph Munro packed the pork in was not sufficient to keep it from spoiling in a warm climate thus necessitating repackaging which delayed his departure from New Orleans. Latimer's explanation would not be enough to placate Woodbridge Jr. or reassure him that his firm's investment in shipbuilding would prove wise.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph S. Lewis, 15 November 1802, 28 April 1803 and May 14, 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1.

⁶⁰ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Harman Blennerhassett, 10 August 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Captain Latimer, 3 September 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge to Joseph S. Lewis, 11 September 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1. La Balize was an eighteenth and nineteenth century French Village near the mouth of the Mississippi River. River pilots living in La Balize helped ships navigate to

Expecting that vessel and brig would soon arrive in Philadelphia at the beginning of September, Woodbridge Jr. wrote a letter for Latimer to be given to him by Joseph S. Lewis upon arrival. In the letter, he demanded that the captain of the *Dominic* further explain the “monstrous delay at New Orleans” and questioned his judgment. In regard to Latimer’s original explanation for the delay, Woodbridge Jr. did not believe any aspect of the story. He argued that sending the anchor out for repairs in order to make it sea worthy did not make sense because there were “tools & a suitable carpenter on board” to do the job. Woodbridge Jr. declared that the repacking of the pork was unnecessary and a complete waste of time. Furthermore, unsealing and then resealing the pork would do more damage than leaving it alone and proceeding to the West Indies. He reminded his captain that the *St. Clair* had made the same voyage a couple of years prior with the same amount of pork in the same packing with the same kind of salt and reached its destination on time without a spoiled cargo. Woodbridge Jr. took numerous precautions to insure that the *Dominic* would arrive in Philadelphia on time and that the voyage would be successful. Obviously he did not anticipate Latimer’s incompetence.⁶¹

In late October, Captain Latimer had not yet reached Philadelphia to receive the angry letter from his employer. Dudley Woodbridge Jr. informed Blennerhassett that he had “reason to suppose that some accident has befallen the brig.” Blennerhassett agreed that there is “indeed an ugly prospect to our apprehensions for our pretty little brig.” Neither man expressed much concern for the safety or well-being of the crew. The *Dominic* finally arrived in Philadelphia in late November but her arrival left the

and from New Orleans and help them navigate the dangers of the river. La Balize was abandoned after being destroyed by a hurricane in 1860.

⁶¹ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Captain Latimer, 3 September 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1.

mercantile firm of Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Company in about the same financial situation as if she never arrived. The sale of Ohio Valley agriculture produce did not bring the financial windfall that they hoped for and as a result, the amount of manufactured goods purchased in the West Indies was far less than expected. Furthermore, the brig remained unsold and on the market in Philadelphia. The voyage of the *Dominic* proved to be a fiscal disaster which caused a serious capital problem for the firm. Woodbridge Jr. spent the rest of the year frantically calling in debt in order to secure the funds needed to stay in business.⁶²

The firm of Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Company invested over \$10,000 in the *Dominic* and in the end, recouped less than seven thousand dollars of that investment. The experience caused Woodbridge Jr. and Blennerhassett to retreat almost entirely from shipbuilding. In the future, they invested in and purchased shares of other businessmen's shipbuilding endeavors but never attempted to build a vessel on their own again. The experience did nothing to persuade either man to look towards the Ohio Valley for manufactured goods or encourage the development of a system of manufactures regionally. The two men continued to operate heavily in transatlantic trade but used other

⁶² Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Harman Blennerhassett, 18 October 1803, 4 December 1803 and 21 December 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Harman Blennerhassett to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 17 October 1803, Woodbridge-Blennerhassett Papers, 1797-1818, Microfilm, one reel, A&M 1459; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James Converse, 9 December 1803, 19 December 1803 and 22 December 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Nathan Hinne, 12 December 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Silas Bingham, 12 December 1803, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 1.

people's ships to carry their goods. No one in the Marietta business community was deterred at all from their colonial habits until the Embargo of 1807.⁶³

Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Harman Blennerhassett's business relationship and friendship lasted for a few more years after the launch of the *Dominic* but ended in 1806 as a direct consequence of the Aaron Burr Conspiracy. Burr, former Vice President of the United States under Thomas Jefferson, allegedly plotted to create a new independent American empire from the Western territories of the United States and Mexico with New Orleans as its capitol and appoint himself emperor. According to the United States government, Burr's scheme involved separating the western territory of the U.S. from the union by inciting insurrection amongst its inhabitants and leading a private invasion of Spanish Mexico. Burr claimed that his sole intention was to take possession of and farm 40,000 acres of land in Texas leased to him by the government of Spain and at no time did he conspire against the United States Government or plot to capture Spanish territory. The government charged him with treason for assembling a large force for the purpose of seizing New Orleans and with high misdemeanor for plotting to levy war against Spain. In the end, the prosecution could not convict on either charge as it could not show an overt act in regard to treason or that his forces intended to invade Spanish territory. A major problem for the prosecution was that Burr told so many varying stories about his scheme to so many different people that no one could be certain what exactly his scheme was only that he planned to do something in the West and Spanish Territory. Burr

⁶³ Gruenwald, 63.

supposedly had many co-conspirators and chief among these were General James Wilkinson, governor of the Louisiana Territory, and Harman Blennerhassett.⁶⁴

The United States government indicted Harman Blennerhassett on treason charges but unlike the former vice president, he was never tried. Whether it was to finance an invasion of Spanish Texas or a trip to claim leased land, Blennerhassett was clearly involved. He invested a significant portion of his fortune, \$21,000, to fund Burr's scheme and as a result of the entire affair, it is estimated that he lost nearly \$50,000. The government argued that Blennerhassett was Burr's primary financial backer and writer of a series of inflammatory articles meant to incite westerners titled the "Querist." Additionally, his island served as headquarters for the plot. Burr allegedly offered him a diplomatic position after the takeover of Mexico was completed. Many historians who have studied the conspiracy characterize Blennerhassett as a man seduced or bewitched by Burr during their very first meeting on Blennerhassett Island in the spring of 1805. Early Ohio historian Samuel Prescott Hildreth went as far as to describe the meeting in terms of evil and innocence and equated it to biblical account of the Garden of Eden and Original Sin. The government's assessment did not differ much from that of modern historians or Hildreth. During Burr's trial, lead prosecutor William Wirt characterized Blennerhassett as "Burr's dupe." Dudley Woodbridge Jr. gave testimony that added further weight to the notion of Blennerhassett being a dupe by questioning his common sense. Woodbridge Jr. described him as a cultured and well-read man of literature, science and music who was known by his associates and neighbors as having "every kind

⁶⁴ Abernethy, 240, 246 -249 and 258; Gruenwald, 75-76; Joseph Wheelan, *Jefferson's Vendetta: The Pursuit of Aaron Burr and the Judiciary* (New York: Carroll & Graff Publishers, 2005), 2, 18, 233-240, 283; Buckner F. Melton, *Aaron Burr: Conspiracy to Treason* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 213-216.

of sense but common sense.” Blennerhassett freely admitted after spending time in jail and reassessing the situation that “Burr had duped me” but took pointed exception with Woodbridge’s assertion that he was “less skilled in the ordinary affairs of life than common men.” Blennerhassett considered this a betrayal. Woodbridge’s Jr.’s characterization constituted a serious blow to his former partner’s ego and their friendship.⁶⁵

Depicting Harman Blennerhassett as book smart but common sense deficient does not tell the entire story. His involvement in Burr’s scheme had a good deal to do with ambition as well. Blennerhassett’s association with Burr offered a possible escape from the doldrums of Ohio Valley life. He had grown bored with life along the Ohio River and exhausted most of his fortune on a lavish lifestyle. By the time of Burr’s trial, Woodbridge Jr. began to doubt his ex-partner’s fortune. In regard to Blennerhassett’s economic resources, he testified that “they are not as great as was generally imagined” and “his fortune is much less than generally understood.” As far as personal assets, Woodbridge Jr. did not know of his ex-partner having more than \$6,000 thousand dollars in the hands of purchasing agents in Philadelphia and despite spending between \$40,000 and \$50,000 thousand dollars on his estate at Blennerhassett Island it was probably worth no more than \$17,000. Partnership with Woodbridge Jr. did not hold as much attraction as partnership with the Emperor of the American Southwest. As a result, Blennerhassett

⁶⁵ Abernethy, 57, 68, 240, 243, 205 and 210; Gruenwald, 75-76; Melton, 188-189 and 210-211; Wheelan, 170, 187, 190-191 and 241; S.P. Hildreth, *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of the Early Pioneer Settlers of Ohio*, 506-507; David O. Stewart, *American Emperor: Aaron Burr’s Challenge to Jefferson’s America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), xiv; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Testimony in *The Trial of Aaron Burr for High Treason, in the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Virginia, Summer Term, 1807*, ed. Joseph Jackson Coombs (Washington D.C.: W.H. & O.H. Morrison Publishers, 1864), 202; Harman Blennerhassett in *Breaking with Burr: Harman Blennerhassett’s Journal, 1807*, ed. Raymond E. Fitch (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1988), 62-63.

was both vulnerable to and fascinated by Burr's scheme. There is no doubt that Blennerhassett occupied a primary role at the center of Burr's scheme, whatever it may have been.⁶⁶

The nature of Dudley Woodbridge Jr.'s involvement is not as clear, either to historians or to the prosecutors of the case. Woodbridge claimed he did not participate in or have prior knowledge of Aaron Burr's alleged plot against the United States government or invasion of Spanish territory, but he did build the Burr expedition's boats and procure their supplies. His only involvement came through a series of business transactions between his firm and Burr arranged by Harman Blennerhassett. During the trial, Woodbridge stated that he first met Burr on August 27, 1806. The former Vice President of the United States came to his store in Marietta with Blennerhassett seeking provisions and a large number of boats. He made a contract for 110 barrels of pork and fifteen boats to be delivered to him on December 9 at Blennerhassett Island. After Burr's departure, Woodbridge hired Joseph Barker, who built Blennerhassett's home and constructed the hull of the *Dominic*, to build ten 40ft. x10ft. boats and another five which would be 50ft. x10ft. Each boat had the capacity to hold between forty and fifty men and their gear.⁶⁷

In regard to the purpose of the boats and Burr's expedition, Woodbridge Jr. claimed vague knowledge. He stated that Blennerhassett previously mentioned to him that "he had embarked in an enterprise with Colonel Burr in which the "prospects were

⁶⁶ Gruenwald, 75-76. Coombs, 202.

⁶⁷ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Testimony in *The Trial of Aaron Burr for High Treason, in the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Virginia, Summer Term, 1807*, 198-200; Abernethy, 66 and 107-108; Gruenwald, 76-77.

flattering.” As a result of other conversations with his partner, he surmised that the destination of the enterprise was Mexico but had no idea as to its purpose or why so many men would be needed. Blennerhassett invited his partner to join the expedition but Woodbridge “evaded his question, but could not forbear telling him that I preferred my situation to an uncertainty, which is the same as declining it.” Finally realizing that his partner was not going to sign on with Burr, Blennerhassett asked him to keep their conversation quiet, and sold Woodbridge his half of the company before his departure on December 9.⁶⁸

Harman Blennerhassett’s journals, written while he awaited trial in Virginia, cast serious doubt upon Dudley Woodbridge Jr.’s account of his own involvement in the Burr Conspiracy. Blennerhassett accused Woodbridge of giving misleading testimony during trial as well as coming very close to naming him as a co-conspirator. According to Blennerhassett, his former partner had “not yet told the whole truth- having suppressed my communication to him, of our designs being unequivocally against Mexico- which I suppose he kept back because he embraced and embarked on the plan upon the first mention of it to him. Tho’ he afterwards receded fr. it, upon his own reflection or the counsels of others.” Furthermore he questioned Woodbridge’s character, “such is the address with which ingratitude and dishonesty are made to pose in the garb of integrity, like tar-cloth, under fine muslin.” Blennerhassett clearly had an axe to grind and was upset with his former partner’s unflattering testimony but that does not necessarily make

⁶⁸ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Testimony in *The Trial of Aaron Burr for High Treason, in the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Virginia, Summer Term, 1807*, 198-200; Abernethy, 66 and 107-108; Gruenwald, 76-77.

his claim untrue as it is obvious that Woodbridge knew more about the scheme than he was willing to admit.⁶⁹

Following the Burr trial, Harman Blennerhassett left Richmond, Virginia a free man but his life would never be the same. The trial ruined his reputation. The government decided not to pursue a conviction for Blennerhassett after failing to convict Burr but the testimony of Dudley Woodbridge Jr., his gardener Peter Taylor and others as well as a rather extensive money trail left little doubt as to his involvement. In the aftermath of his arrest, creditors forced the sale of his home, island and all possessions and the government placed a writ of attachment on any remaining funds, goods or real estate that he had in the firm of Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Company. Burr reneged on a promise to reimburse Blennerhassett a portion of the funds that he contributed to the scheme and Woodbridge refused to do any further business with him and withheld the \$6,000 payment for his half share of the company for several years. With no other options, he moved his family to Natchez, Mississippi and took up residence in a dilapidated cabin. Eventually, Blennerhassett secured the capital to purchase a small cotton plantation named La Cache but it never produced significant profits and he sold it in 1818. After a failed attempt to practice law in Montreal, Blennerhassett gave up the quest for riches and power in the New World and returned to Britain and moved in with his spinster sister in Bath in 1822. The man who once owned his own island spent the rest of his life in

⁶⁹ Harman Blennerhassett in *Breaking with Burr: Harman Blennerhassett's Journal, 1807*, 106-107; Gruenwald, 76. Most historical accounts of the Burr Conspiracy barely mention Dudley Woodbridge, if at all. Those that do mention Woodbridge Jr. simply refer to him as a merchant who supplied boats to Burr. Historian Kim Gruenwald believes that Dudley Woodbridge Jr. was knowingly involved to some degree in the Burr Conspiracy. She posits that he likely got involved in the plot to protect his business interests and that with Burr in charge of New Orleans it was unlikely that any foreign powers would interrupt trade from that port in the future.

poverty scheming to reclaim his riches with no success. He died broke in Guernsey in the Channel Islands off the coast of Normandy in 1831 at the age of 66 and left his widow Margaret penniless. Ultimately, Harman Blennerhassett was a victim of his own endless ambition.⁷⁰

The United States government never charged Dudley Woodbridge Jr. as a co-conspirator in the Burr Conspiracy. Nor did the prosecutors make any accusations against him. Nonetheless, doubt lingered as to his actual involvement in Burr's schemes. He engaged in a nearly ten year long partnership with Harman Blennerhassett. Woodbridge also sold Burr provisions and boats for his journey down the Mississippi. When federal agents came to Marietta to apprehend Burr and his cohorts and stop the scheme, he warned Blennerhassett and gave him time to get away. No matter how loudly he proclaimed his innocence or the lack of charges filed against him, Woodbridge carried the taint of Blennerhassett's supposed treasonous actions everywhere he went. The blows to his reputation did not represent the only damage inflicted upon the firm of Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Company by the Burr Trial. Testifying at the trial was a drain on Woodbridge's time and energy which led to the neglect of his business which fell behind on both the payment and collection of debts. Upon returning to Marietta, he found the firm in a dilapidated state with low cash flow and a depleted stock of goods.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Peter Taylor Testimony in *The Trial of Aaron Burr for High Treason, in the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Virginia, Summer Term, 1807*, 172-173; Abernethy, 243 and 261-262; Melton, 228; Wheelan, 241-242, 263-264 and 274-275; Gruenwald, 77. Harman Blennerhassett's gardener, Peter Taylor, testified during the trial that Blennerhassett told him "Peter, we are going to take Mexico, one of the finest and richest places in the whole world" and that "Burr would be the king of Mexico." Intermittently during the years following trial, he unsuccessfully attempted to blackmail Joseph Alston, Burr's son-in-law and investor in his scheme, with the threat of exposing his real role in the conspiracy.

⁷¹ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Testimony in *The Trial of Aaron Burr for High Treason, in the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Virginia, Summer Term, 1807*, 198-199; Dudley Woodbridge

The Burr Conspiracy and the ensuing trial pulled Dudley Woodbridge Jr.'s attentions away from his business and now he would struggle to undo the damage. 1807 was a very difficult year for him but the next two years proved to be even worse. The passage of the Embargo of 1807 at the end of December posed an even greater challenge to his business than the damage inflicted by Blennerhassett. Woodbridge was a merchant who largely engaged in transatlantic trade and Congress just closed the ports to foreign goods. To make matters worse, he would have to deal with the trade restrictions while licking his wounds from the Burr controversy. In other words, Woodbridge faced Jefferson's Embargo financially wounded and at a disadvantage.

Dudley Woodbridge Jr.'s primary problem in regard to the Embargo of 1807 was debt and lack of credit. Specifically, the embargo made it nearly impossible for him to pay his creditors. He had a large amount of debt at the end of 1807 and it would increase significantly throughout 1808. Woodbridge's main source of income came from selling manufactured goods, in the Ohio Valley that he imported from Europe on credit, hoping to eventually pay for it in agricultural produce or skins and furs. When manufactured

Jr. to John Woodbridge, 6 July, 1807, 23 November 1807 and 1 December 1807, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Simon Converse, 6 July 1807, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James Converse, 6 July 1807, 18 July 1807 and 16 October 1807, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; William Woodbridge to Corp, Ellis & Shaw, 9 October 1807 Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Corp, Ellis & Shaw, 15 October 1807, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph Clark, 15 October 1807 and 7 December 1807, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to William Taylor Jr., 15 October 1807, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Thomas Cromwell, 3 December 1807, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph S. Lewis, 30 December 1807, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Abernethy, 107; Gruenwald, 76-77.

goods stopped flowing into the United States and there was no external market for agricultural produce and additional debt piled up quickly on top of what he already owed and he had no way to pay it.⁷²

It did not take long for Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to realize that the Embargo of 1807 represented serious trouble for his financial interests because of the particular business model that he employed. He understood the contours of transatlantic trade and knew a cash flow problem and credit crunch of epic proportions was heading his way. Immediately, he called in debt owed by fellow merchants and local customers. Debt owed by merchants was particularly troublesome as they operated on credit just like Woodbridge and had just as much trouble collecting from their debtors. This included his younger brother John Woodbridge who operated a branch store in Chillicothe. It appears that John Woodbridge fell behind in regard to keeping his accounts current, which was particularly disheartening since he had only been in business a little more than a year. In January of 1808, Woodbridge wrote to Samuel Taggart, who was temporarily in charge of his brother's store while he made a trip to the East, requesting help in collecting outstanding debt. The request was simple; collect the debt owed in the form of bank notes not barter because "I am really much in want of cash." In the current situation, the return

⁷² Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Corp, Ellis & Shaw, 2 January 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to William Taylor, January 1808 and 15 February 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Joseph Clark, 9 February, 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Harvey & Worth, 16 February 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 18 February 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Gruenwald, 77; James Whitney, List of Ships Built at Marietta from Old Manuscript Book, p. 116 and 117, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 19, Volume 132; Andrews, 308.

of goods or payment with agricultural produce or skins and furs was not sufficient.

Woodbridge needed cash to satisfy his own creditors and purchase more goods in order to remain in business.⁷³

One of Dudley Woodbridge Jr.'s largest and most persistent debtors was James Converse and his brothers Wright, Simon and Daniel with whom he had a long standing business relationship. James Converse operated a branch store in Lancaster and the other brothers often acted as agents for Dudley Woodbridge and Company. Even in good times, Woodbridge Jr. experienced difficulty receiving payment for goods from the Lancaster store because James Converse was inept at keeping his customers accounts current. Sooner or later, he always made good but in the current situation, Woodbridge needed cash immediately. In late January of 1808, he wrote his business partner in Lancaster with a simple request, "I beg you to remit me what money you can."

Woodbridge wrote similar letters to Simon and Wright Converse in early February in regard to their brother's affairs. Despite the communications and pleas to the Converse family, he had little faith that they would resolve the situation and instead decided that it was "expedient to close my business" in Lancaster. The reason for ending his business relationship with Converse Family actually went beyond debt. In the middle of January, Simon Converse became "delirious" and "slit his throat." He did not die as his brother

⁷³ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Mathews, 26 January 1808 and 5 February 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James Converse, 26 January 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder ; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Augustus Stone, 5 March 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Samuel Taggart, 28 January 1808, 4 February 1808 and 6 February 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; "New Store," *Fredonian* (Chillicothe, Ohio), January 8, 1807. Dudley Woodbridge's store with his brother John in Chillicothe opened in October of 1806.

Wright “prevented him from ending his existence” but remained “in a state of insanity.” The situation with Simon would no doubt occupy most of their energies and cause even greater financial difficulties. Woodbridge proposed that Nathaniel S. Cushing, who operated a branch store in Gallipolis, purchase James Converse’s share of the Lancaster store which also included portions of the debt. Ultimately, Converse chose to sell his share of the store to Cushing who then set about collecting on the store’s outstanding accounts with limited results.⁷⁴

Debt not only caused a problem for Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and his associate merchants in Ohio in the wake of the Embargo of 1807 but also the firms in which they were indebted to because in the world of transatlantic trade, everyone had creditors. This in turn made it difficult for men like Woodbridge to procure goods to sell as Eastern merchants now wanted only cash. Credit could be secured in certain instances but it meant a much higher price than those with cash would pay. In order to supply his store in Marietta as well as the branch stores, Woodbridge needed to scrape together whatever cash he could in order to purchase goods. In early January of 1808, he sent his brother John across the Allegheny Mountains to procure merchandise. His brother was to travel to Pittsburgh and then Philadelphia and “purchase any articles you think may be saleable” with bank notes and any attainable credit. Another purpose of the trip, and perhaps more

⁷⁴ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James Converse, 26 January 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Simon Converse, 26 January 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Wright Converse, 4 February 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Nathaniel Cushing, 4 February 1808, February 26 1808 and 19 March 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 8 February 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Gruenwald, 56-59.

important in the long run, was to acquire as much information as possible about the political situation involving the Embargo of 1807 and assess the damage that it had inflicted upon trade. Woodbridge was ‘anxious’ to learn anything he could about the embargo because it had been in effect less than a month and merchants already existed in a state of panic.⁷⁵

Despite the scarcity brought on by the Embargo of 1807, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. successfully obtained credit using his longstanding connections to firms such as Corp, Ellis & Shaw in New York and those of Joseph S. Lewis and Joseph Clark in Philadelphia. However, the goods came at a substantially higher price and remittance was required much sooner than usual. All totaled, he owed large sums of money to merchants in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and New Orleans some of which was due at the beginning of June. Woodbridge sent the recently acquired goods to his branch stores and informed his partners of the impending payments and the seriousness of the situation. He required that they sell the goods quickly and make payment. Woodbridge’s message to the branch store operators did little good as he failed to collect enough money to pay his creditors and was forced to beg for more time, which he received as they had little chose in the current crisis.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Augustus Stone, 24 January 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 26 January 1808, 2 February 1808, 8 February 1808, 13 February 1808 and 15 February 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph Clark, 9 February 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 36, folder 1.

⁷⁶ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Thomas Cromwell, 11 April 1808, 17 April 1808, 19 April 1808 and 2 May 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 12 April 1808, 19 April 1808 and 26 April 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph Clark, 22 April 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book

By the end of Spring in 1808, the embargo was still in effect with little hope for its end. Woodbridge's creditors were putting significant pressure on him for payment of his debts. The expenses of the business had grown too large especially with decreasing profit. He had spread himself too thin and decided that it was time to cut costs and downscale his business which included selling his interest in some of the branch stores. The first store that he wanted to shed was in Chillicothe. This meant breaking business ties with his brother John who managed and owned a half share in the store. Since its opening, the Chillicothe store had been a drain on Woodbridge's finances and time. John Woodbridge did not prove to be a good businessman as he owed money all over town and allowed delinquent accounts to pile up and experienced little success in trying to collect on debtors. In the explanation of the decision to his brother, Woodbridge stated "business is especially dull and our bank is curtailing her accounts." He admonished his younger brother that "there is certainly something wrong" when the amount of money in hand after the sale of a stock of goods is far less than the original cost of said goods. Credit was at the root of the store's problems. Specifically, "a great deal too much property was thrown afloat in credit." No doubt, Woodbridge's creditors probably had similar thoughts about his business practices and the amount of money he owed. Woodbridge expressed

1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Harvey & Worth, 22 April 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James Converse, 3 May 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Nathaniel Cushing, 3 May 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Samuel Carswell & Co., 3 June 1808 and 8 June 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Corp, Ellis & Shaw, 15 July 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1.

this point to his brother on many occasions but now he would “preach no more.” Instead, he asked his brother to buy him out.⁷⁷

Throughout the rest of 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr.’s problems did not abate. The Embargo of 1807 continued to wreak havoc on the fortunes of both Marietta’s merchants and the town itself. Woodbridge continued to experience difficulty finding the cash to pay his creditors and debt continued to pile up which was due in large part to his difficulties in collecting from his own debtors. As the year progressed, so did his desperation and temper which manifested themselves during a confrontation with a fur dealer named Gardiner. As words became heated and insults thrown about, Woodbridge took offence and in his own words, “took up a cow skin to give him a flogging.” The blows were severe enough to cause Gardiner to lose his balance and fall to the ground. As Gardiner attempted to pull a knife from his coat, Woodbridge dove on top of him and began to choke the fallen fur dealer. If the local printer had not heard Gardiner’s cries for help and separated the two men, Woodbridge may have choked him to death. The month did not get any better for the increasingly unhinged Woodbridge as personal tragedy struck in the following weeks. On September 18, 1808 his wife Jane, the eighteen year old daughter of Marietta merchant Benjamin Ives Gilman, died giving birth to their first child. Over the course of the preceding two years, he lost his wife and his business partner. Dudley Woodbridge Jr. now found himself debt-ridden and alone facing financial Armageddon.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 19 April 1808, 26 April 1808; 2 May 1808 and 16 May 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1.

⁷⁸ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Sam Carswell & Co., 3 June 1808, 8 June 1808 and 11 June 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder

At the end of September, Dudley Woodbridge Jr.'s financial situation continued to decline as the Embargo of 1807 took its toll upon anyone engaged in transatlantic trade. Woodbridge realized that economic survival required some changes in his business model. He believed it was an "absolute necessity" to divorce himself from all current business interests in the Ohio Valley and start anew. This included closing his store in Marietta, selling his interest in the Lancaster store and settling all accounts with customers and associates in Ohio. Woodbridge formulated a plan to pull himself out of debt that involved a new partnership with his father-in-law, Benjamin Ives Gilman. The Embargo of 1807 proved to be just as devastating on Gilman's business interests as it had his own. Gilman was a merchant, shipbuilder and land speculator. His mercantile business depended heavily upon foreign markets just like that of Woodbridge but he was involved in the shipbuilding industry to a much greater degree than his son-in-law. Gillman commissioned the construction of six ocean-going vessels between 1801 and 1807. At the time of the embargo he owned two completed vessels, the 350 ton *Francis* and the 300 ton *Robert Hall*, and a third, the 100 ton schooner *Belle*, was unfinished. Jefferson's Embargo rendered these vessels virtually useless since their primary purpose involved the exportation of Ohio Valley natural resources to ports that were now off

1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to William Taylor, 3 June 1808 and 11 June 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph Clarke, 18 June 1808 and 8 August 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1806-1808, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to O'Neil & Boyd, 18, June 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Corp, Ellis & Shaw, 15 July 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Thomas Cromwell, August 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 11 September 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Emily Hoffman Gilman, ed., *A Family History in Letters and Documents, 1667-1837, Concerning the Forefathers of Winthrop Sargent Gilman and His Wife Abia Swift Lippincott* (Cedar Rapids: Torch Press, 1920), 279; Gruenwald, 54-55 and 77.

limits for American trade. Gilman attempted to sell the *Francis*, *Robert Hall* and *Belle* to the Navy with no success. In a desperate attempt for financial salvation, Woodbridge and Gilman partnered together to speculate in tobacco.⁷⁹

Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Benjamin Ives Gilman's tobacco scheme was quite elaborate and contingent upon many factors. It also included a third partner, Joseph S. Lewis of Philadelphia. First, Woodbridge would raise funds through the liquidation of his remaining goods and collection of debt to purchase a half share in one of Gilman's schooners, the *Belle*. Then, the two men would raise enough cash to buy between two and five hundred hogshead of tobacco, depending on how much was available at the lowest price possible in Lexington. Lewis authorized bank drafts to cover his share. Woodbridge figured that tobacco farmers would be eager to sell their product as harvest time approached and the trade restrictions of Jefferson's Embargo had limited their market opportunities. Next, Woodbridge would sail with the tobacco, and possibly hemp, down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans where a ship sent by Joseph S. Lewis waited to carry it to Philadelphia. In New Orleans, Woodbridge planned to sell the vessel for a handsome profit and return to Marietta. Once the tobacco arrived in Philadelphia, Lewis would hold on to it until the embargo was lifted, which he believed was imminent. After which, he planned to sell it on the open market and to foreign speculators. Then Woodbridge would travel to Philadelphia, collect the profits, pay his creditors and return

⁷⁹ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 11 September 1808, 24 September 1808 and 22 November 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph S. Lewis, 19 November 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Nathaniel Cushing, 23 November 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; James Whitney, List of Ships Built at Marietta from Old Manuscript Book, p. 116 and 117, Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 19, Volume 132; Gruenwald, 13, 36-37 and 77.

to Marietta debt free to re-open his business. The scheme depended on the tobacco being in Philadelphia upon the termination of the embargo and beating other speculators to market. If any element of the plan went awry, the profit margin for the endeavor could decrease significantly. This was a grand scheme but not significantly different than anything Woodbridge Jr. had done before. It was still a transatlantic trade venture that exported Ohio Valley agricultural produce instead of manufacturing locally. The only difference being that this time Woodbridge Jr. was broke, desperate and conducting his business on a boat headed for Philadelphia instead of his office in Marietta.⁸⁰

The system of transatlantic trade that constituted a significant part of the United States' postcolonial economy was flawed as men like Dudley Woodbridge Jr. were still trying to operate using a colonial approach when the U.S. was no longer part of the British Empire. Marked by too much dependence on foreign goods and markets along with an over reliance on credit and under reliance on domestic manufacturing, it was a powder keg set to explode. The Embargo of 1807 proved to be the match that set the situation aflame and demonstrated to many merchants that their prior business model was no longer tenable. Ohio Valley entrepreneurs such as James O'Hara of Pittsburgh and the Tarascon brothers of Louisville realized that their business interests needed to be diversified. They still engaged in some merchant activities but when facing the financial crisis created by Jefferson's Embargo, these men and others like them, pulled themselves back from the flames and turned to manufacturing. Woodbridge did not take the same

⁸⁰ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph S. Lewis, 19 November 1808 and 14 December 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 22 November 1808 and 1 December 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Joseph Lewis to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 28 November 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1.

course of action. He possessed undiversified business interests and had nothing else to fall back on. Woodbridge was a merchant with no inclination to do anything else. He was a product of Marietta's export/import economic mindset. Instead of pulling back from the flames like other Ohio Valley entrepreneurs, he immediately jumped with abandon back into the fire with similar results.

On December 18, 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. left his infant daughter with his parents and traveled to Lexington. His transportation to New Orleans, the schooner *Belle* would not leave Marietta for a few more weeks. This was the only part of the scheme that went as scheduled as problems started before he ever left Marietta. He had trouble securing his portion of the funds. John Woodbridge agreed to buy his interest in the Chillicothe store and Nathaniel Cushing did the same in Lancaster but neither man provided full payment before he left for Kentucky, or after his return for that matter. Woodbridge was also unable to sell his stock of goods in Marietta or close out accounts with debtors. He ran ads in the *Ohio Gazette and Virginia Herald* requesting that customers with delinquent accounts make payment immediately as the store would soon be closed but the effort produced little success. In order to preserve what cash he had on hand, Woodbridge skipped payment of his own debt and promised to pay his creditors after the sale of the tobacco. This included a large scheduled payment to Corp, Ellis & Shaw of New York as well as any remittance of the money owed to Harman Blennerhassett for his share of the company which was overdue. He received a \$3,000 loan from the Bank Marietta but failed to secure another from the Chillicothe Bank as its directors had little confidence in the tobacco scheme. As a result, Woodbridge was forced to request an advance on his share of the profits from the sale of the tobacco from Joseph

S. Lewis who agreed but attached interest. The bank loan and advance from Lewis represented a defeat for Woodbridge because they put him further in debt and reduced his potential profits before he even left the Ohio Valley.⁸¹

Funding problems did not represent the only challenge to the success of Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Benjamin Ives Gilman's tobacco venture. The *Belle*, commanded by Captain Boyle, suffered an extended delay in Louisville and did not leave the Ohio Valley until the beginning of April. A major reason for the delay was the Falls of the Ohio which could only be passed when the water was high enough to cover the rocks. Attempting to pass during low water put the ship and its cargo in danger. Another problem involved the procurement of tobacco. Woodbridge expected to find a healthy market in Lexington and Louisville. The more he bought, the more he could sell in Philadelphia which meant greater profits. Ultimately, he did not find himself swarmed by tobacco farmers in dire need of selling their crop in either Lexington or Louisville as hoped. Securing a large load of tobacco took much longer than expected and at a greater cost. The best time for the *Belle* to pass the Falls of the Ohio was during periods of heavy

⁸¹ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 29 November 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; "Notice," *Ohio Gazette and Virginia Herald* (Marietta, Ohio), March 20, April 3 and April 10, 1809; "New Goods," *The Supporter* (Chillicothe, Ohio), February 2, February 16 and March 9, 1809; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Harman Blennerhassett, 23 November 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Benjamin Ives Gilman, 17 December 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 19 December 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Benjamin Ives Gilman to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 22 December 1808, 27 December 1808, 10 March 1809 and 17 March 1809 in, *A Family History in Letters and Documents, 1667-1837, Concerning the Forefathers of Winthrop Sargent Gilman and His Wife Abia Swift Lippincott*, 291-293; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph S. Lewis, 14 December 1808, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Joseph S. Lewis to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 27 December 1808, in *A Family History in Letters and Documents, 1667-1837, Concerning the Forefathers of Winthrop Sargent Gilman and His Wife Abia Swift Lippincott*, 281-283; Gruenwald, 77.

rain which would cause the water level in the Ohio River to rise. The heavy rain also caused the roads to become muddy and impassable which hindered tobacco farmers from reaching either market or the *Belle* which further delayed departure. A major element of the tobacco scheme was time. The tobacco needed to be in Philadelphia before the embargo was lifted and the market was flooded by other speculators which would cause the prices to fall. The delays in Louisville caused the *Belle* to arrive late on the Atlantic Coast. As the price of the tobacco fell so did Woodbridge's hopes of making enough profit to pay off his debtors.⁸²

Dudley Woodbridge Jr. arrived back in the Ohio Valley from his trip to New Orleans in June of 1809. He did not return to Marietta with the same high spirits as he left with the preceding winter. Shortly before exiting Washington D.C. and his presidency in March of 1809, Thomas Jefferson signed the repeal of the Embargo of 1807. America's docks and markets were once again open for business. Unfortunately for Woodbridge, Gilman and Lewis, at the same time foreign commerce commenced, their tobacco was still sitting at the Falls of the Ohio. By the time, Lewis' vessel brought the tobacco to Philadelphia the market was flooded from both domestic and foreign sources and prices fell drastically. This coupled with the fact that the sale of the *Belle* failed to bring significant profits, Woodbridge's hopes of getting out of debt with one big score suffered a blow from the harsh hand of reality. In a letter to John Woodbridge in July, he announced the failure of the venture to live up to expectations or extinguish his debt.

Woodbridge complained to his brother that his foray into tobacco speculation would

⁸² Joseph Gilman to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 20 March 1809 and 6 April 1809 in Gilman, 295-296; Benjamin Ives Gilman to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 17 March 1809 in Gilman, 291; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 3 July 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1.

“terminate as most of my business has with little profit to myself.” Furthermore, he would not receive much debt relief because “after the proceeds of the voyage have gone to my creditors, I shall be left with debts on my shoulders to amounts of about \$2,000 more than the sum in which you are indebted to me.” In the past Woodbridge profited on some transatlantic trade ventures and lost money on others. Risk was the nature of the business and he always accepted it but this time failure came at greater price because the Embargo of 1807 reduced him to a state where his economic fortunes required a level of success which he did not achieve. Woodbridge was financially ruined and neither Marietta nor his previous business strategies offered him any hope of economic recovery.⁸³

The failure of the tobacco scheme to lift him out of debt left Dudley Woodbridge Jr. in a condition that was, in his own words, “not a very pleasant one.” Besides a few remaining assets such as a small amount of real estate, some goods in the Marietta store and uncollected debt, he was essentially broke with few prospects for the future. Furthermore, the reputation that he spent years building was now ruined as creditors looked to claim any remaining assets like buzzards circling a dying animal. Even the disgraced Harman Blennerhassett took advantage of the situation. He drafted \$2,142 from Woodbridge’s account at Joseph S. Lewis store in Philadelphia without permission as

⁸³ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Marshall Jones, 19 June 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 3 July 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Memo of Bank Notes Forwarded to Joseph Clark, July 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1. Upon repeal of the Embargo of 1807, Congress replaced it with the Non-Intercourse Act which opened American ports to foreign commerce as well as allowing American ships to enter foreign ports. Although the act freed trade from the restrictive chains of Jefferson’s Embargo it also gave President James Madison the ability to halt trade with belligerent European nations.

payment for his share of the firm which was long overdue. Lewis alerted Woodbridge but still held him accountable for the draft. With no other options, Woodbridge formulated an exit strategy from Marietta. This meant closing the Marietta store and selling its stock of goods. Collecting on debt from outstanding accounts was a priority as well. Woodbridge failed at all of those tasks during the preceding winter but there was more urgency now as his time in Marietta neared its end. A new start required cash as few people in their right mind would give him credit at this juncture. In most cases, Woodbridge did not receive all that was owed to him but collected on portions of numerous accounts. In November, he sold the remaining goods from the Marietta store to Augustus Stone and left town. His short term destination was Philadelphia but as he told John Woodbridge, his future was “perfectly uncertain.”⁸⁴

Dudley Woodbridge Jr. did not stay in Philadelphia for long as he soon ended up once again in the Ohio Valley. In February, he decided to settle down in Pittsburgh, at least temporarily. This is where he found redemption and started on the road back to respectability. With funds provided by Benjamin Ives Gilman, he opened a new business

⁸⁴ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 3 July 1809, 7 July 1809, 27 July 1809, 12 September 1809 and 20 November 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Harman Blennerhassett, 31 October 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph S. Lewis, 20 January 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph S. Lewis, 20 June 1809, 12 July 1809 and 9 September 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Nathaniel Cushing, 28 June 1808 and 27 November 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James Converse, 30 June 1809 and 6 November 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to James Wilson, 23 September 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Corp, Ellis & Shaw, 28 November 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1808-1809, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1.

at the headwaters of the Ohio River. Woodbridge decided to engage in wholesale trade instead of retail and facilitate trade between the East and the West as a commission agent. In late February, he announced his intentions to old associates in the Ohio Valley as well as the Atlantic Coast. In a letter to John Woodbridge in February he summarized his plan, “I have concluded to establish myself at this place and I should like to obtain what commission business I can. If your friends should have any business to be transacted in this place, I would pay every attention.” Woodbridge felt that retail merchandising was “very much overdone.” This type of business led to his ruin in Marietta and he would not make the same mistake in Pittsburgh. He planned to broker deals between merchants in the Ohio Valley and the East involving an exchange of agricultural produce for finished goods. Although Woodbridge announced this as new endeavor it was in reality the same type of business that he always conducted. He would still be exploiting Ohio Valley resources in exchange for foreign goods at the expense of local manufacturing. The only difference being, he did not put up his own money and only received a commission for the transaction thus minimizing the risk.⁸⁵

In Pittsburgh, Woodbridge did something that he had never done before by valuing goods manufactured in the Ohio Valley over those imported from the East and Europe. Prior to the Embargo of 1807 Pittsburgh possessed numerous manufacturing

⁸⁵ Dudley Woodbridge to John Woodbridge, 28 February 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Munro & Converse, 23 February 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Nathaniel Cushing, 23 February 1809, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Benjamin Ives Gilman, 2 March 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Lucy Petit to Dudley Woodbridge Jr., 27 February 1810, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 2, folder 2; Gruenwald, 77-80.

interests. However, the town's primary focus was on imported manufactured goods not those produced locally. After the embargo, the town placed greater significance on developing a system of manufactures and decreasing the amount of goods they imported. Woodbridge Jr.'s arrival in Pittsburgh coincided with that change of economic focus. In April, he told his brother John that he was "pleas'd with the bustle of this place & with such acquaintances as I have formed." Much of this "bustle" was industry and his new "acquaintances" were merchants and manufacturers. Furthermore, Woodbridge was excited about the kind of business he conducted. He still facilitated the export of agricultural produce to the East such as tobacco, hemp and cotton and the importation of some finished goods but mostly promoted products manufactured in the Pittsburgh. Woodbridge found it cheaper and logistically simpler, to supply merchants deeper in the valley with goods manufactured locally such as iron, tools, woolen hats, glass and glassware and paper just to name a few. In addition, he sent the same type goods east. He still conducted business with many of the same mercantile firms as before like those of Joseph S. Lewis, Joseph Clark, Benjamin B. Howell and Harvey and Worth in Philadelphia as well as merchants in Ohio such as Joseph Munro, Nathaniel Cushing, John Woodbridge and Augustus Stone but his transactions now benefited Ohio Valley industry. Woodbridge's new business strategy also proved extremely successful. By the middle of September, he had earned enough profit to pay off his debt and moved past the "embarrassments" of the last few years. In less than a year in Pittsburgh, Woodbridge had erased debt which took him years to accumulate in Marietta.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 28 April 1810 and 11 September 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Tilford, 10 March 1810, 14 March 1810, 1 April 1810, 7 April 1810, 23

In Pittsburgh, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. broke his dependence on foreign goods and markets. He started looking within instead of outside the Ohio Valley for his financial well-being. In the process, Woodbridge went against everything he learned and practiced before his arrival in Pittsburgh. In Marietta his entire focus had been on foreign trade and markets outside of the Ohio Valley. As a result, he helped maintain the link between Marietta and the Atlantic World that Rufus Putnam envisioned upon the founding of the town. In theory, there was nothing wrong with Putnam's desire for Marietta to be a part of the Atlantic marketplace. The problem occurred when they looked east at the expense of developing their own system of manufactures which proved to be an unwise strategy when Jefferson's Embargo severed the town's connections to foreign markets. In the immediate months after the implementation of the embargo, Woodbridge tried to remedy his economic ills by engaging in variations of the same kind of trade that caused them in the first place. In order for him to change his economic focus and strategies, he first needed to change his address. 170 miles of river and mountains separated Marietta and Pittsburgh geographically but in terms of economic philosophy, the distance was much greater. By leaving Marietta, Woodbridge entered a new economic environment in which

April 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Joseph S. Lewis, 20 January 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Benjamin B. Howell, 24 February 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Harvey & Worth, 8 August 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Munro & Converse, 23 February 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Nathaniel Cushing, 23 February 1810, 12 April 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Augustus Stone, 9 March 1810, 28 March 1810, 4 April 1810, 11 April 1810, 24 April 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John k Creed, 5 April 1810, 5 July 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Gruenwald, 77-80.

domestic manufacturing was viewed as a viable commercial strategy and learned to be successful in a post-Jefferson's Embargo marketplace.

At the end of 1806, Harman Blennerhassett left Marietta disgraced and broke with the federal government on his heels. Likewise, at the end of 1809, Dudley Woodbridge left Marietta humiliated and broke with creditors in pursuit. It appeared the two men would meet a similar end. There was however one major difference in their stories, Woodbridge returned to Marietta in 1811 and quickly regained his business and reputation while Blennerhassett never returned and died disgraced and broke in Europe. Pittsburgh served as springboard back to Marietta for Woodbridge. Despite claiming in several letters throughout 1810 that Pittsburgh was his "permanent residence," as soon Woodbridge pulled himself out of debt, he left the Headwaters of the Ohio for Marietta. His stay at Pittsburgh lasted less than one year but it provided a path for him to return home. He returned to Marietta debt-free with a new vision for both his own economic future and that of Marietta.⁸⁷

Upon his return to Marietta, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. quickly set about to regain all that he lost during the aftermath of the Embargo of 1807. In 1811, he reestablished the mercantile firm of Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Company and reopened his store in Marietta. Woodbridge also opened a branch store in Zanesville with his former clerk

⁸⁷ Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 23 February 1810, 28 April 1810 and 11 September 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Munro & Converse, 23 February 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 28 April 1810 and 11 September 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Nathaniel Cushing, 23 February 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 28 April 1810 and 11 September 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Benjamin Ives Gilman 2 March 1810; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to John Woodbridge, 28 April 1810 and 11 September 1810, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letter Book 1810-1811, Backus-Woodbridge Collection, MSS 128, box 43, folder 1; Gruenwald, 79-80.

Thomas L. Pierce. Along with his store, he opened a warehouse to hold and process goods shipped into Marietta and prepare natural resources such as cotton, ginseng and hemp for shipment. These actions seem to indicate that he returned to business as usual incorporating similar strategies to those he employed prior to the embargo and his exit from Marietta. However, a deeper look at his operation proves that this was not the case. Woodbridge bought large amounts of cotton, ginseng and hemp and other agricultural produce from farmers in the Ohio, Mississippi and Tennessee Valleys. Instead of shipping these items downstream to New Orleans he shipped them upstream by steamboat and barges, to Pittsburgh in order to feed their industrial machines. He then purchased goods manufactured in Pittsburgh such as iron, glass, cloth, rope, nails and metal tools for shipment to his warehouse in Marietta. Once in Marietta, Woodbridge sent the goods not only to stores in Ohio but throughout the Ohio Valley and also the Tennessee and Mississippi Valleys. As the decade progressed, he started to deal in goods manufactured in other Ohio River towns such as Louisville, Wheeling and Cincinnati. Although Woodbridge took very little interest in becoming a manufacturer himself, he did invest in the Marietta Cotton Factory and served on its board of directors.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ “Woodbridge & Peirce,” *Ohio Gazette and Virginia Herald* (Marietta, Oh), October 14, 1811; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Scott & Trotter, 8 November 1811, 30 April 1812, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook (1811-1814), Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 2; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Thomas Pierce, 13 November 1811, 16 November 1811, 25 November 1811, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook (1811-1814), Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 2; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Thomas Cromwell, 25 November 1811, 8 April 1812, 25 May 1812, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook (1811-1814), Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 2; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to W.L. Cantrell, 12 December 1811, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook (1811-1814), Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 2; Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Andrew Miller, 23 December 1811, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to Cantrell and Read, 1 April 1812, 4 May 1812, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook (1811-1814), Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870, A&M 1455, Box 1, Volume 2; Gruenwald, 81-100; Andrews, 249. For more on Dudley Woodbridge Jr.’s business dealings after his return to Marietta

Dudley Woodbridge Jr. started Marietta down the road to a new economic future but the transformation would be completed by his protégé, John Mills. In 1815, Woodbridge entered into a partnership with Mills and opened a second store in Marietta. At the age of eighteen, Mills began working as a clerk for the mercantile firm of Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and Company at the Marietta store. Woodbridge took a liking to the young man and taught him the inner workings of the merchant trade and eventually took him on as a partner. The store was run by Mills but half the profits went to Woodbridge as he invested \$5,000 in the venture. By 1817, Woodbridge increased his capital investment in the store to \$20,000 and took two-thirds of the profits. The partnership dissolved in 1821 but Woodbridge's business relationship with Mills played a crucial role in the birth of a new Marietta in the years following the Embargo of 1807.⁸⁹

John Mills was a native born son of Marietta and came of age after the Embargo of 1807. The business model that Woodbridge handed down to Mills was the one he developed in Pittsburgh not the one he inherited from his father. From the very start of his business career, Mills' focus was on the Ohio Valley not the East and Europe and did not have to break his dependence on foreign markets because he never had it in the first place. Upon the dissolution of the partnership he formed the mercantile firm of John Mills & Co. and engaged in the same type of business as he had with Woodbridge. Mills sold goods manufactured in the Ohio Valley to merchants both inside and outside the valley. He not only promoted Ohio Valley manufacturing through his mercantile activities but also became actively involved in manufacturing himself by serving as

from Pittsburgh see his business correspondence in Dudley Woodbridge Jr. Letterbook (1811-1814) in Woodbridge Mercantile Firms Records 1789-1870 and Kim Gruenwald's chapter "The Dimensions of the Riverine Economy" in *River of Enterprise*.

⁸⁹ Gruenwald, 135-136; Summers, 245-246.

president of the Marietta Chair Company. Mills also furthered the interests of local manufacturing as director of the Marietta Bank and through his agitation for transportation improvements. As time passed, Mills surpassed Woodbridge as Marietta's most prominent businessman. Although Woodbridge broke away from the economic mindset he learned from his father, he would still always be a product of Rufus Putnam's Marietta. John Mills, however, was exclusively a product of Dudley Woodbridge Jr.'s Marietta.⁹⁰

Dudley Woodbridge Jr. returned to Marietta from Pittsburgh with a new business model. He no longer focused on markets outside of the Ohio Valley. After returning to Marietta, Woodbridge promoted Ohio Valley manufactured goods and developed trade networks within the valley. While Marietta never became one of the Ohio Valley's major manufacturers, it did play a vital role in the region's transformation into a valley of industry by serving as connection point that linked manufactures to markets. The Embargo of 1807 broke Woodbridge and Marietta's connection to eastern and European markets. After a period of failure, Woodbridge adjusted and turned his economic focus unto the Ohio Valley. Rufus Putnam envisioned Marietta as New England on the Ohio River. He created an economic mindset that fostered dependence on markets outside of the Ohio Valley. Foreign trade served as the economic foundation of Rufus Putnam's Marietta. The Embargo of 1807 destroyed that foundation. The Marietta that emerged from the devastation of Jefferson's Embargo was no longer the one built by Rufus Putnam but, instead, it became Dudley Woodbridge Jr.'s Marietta.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Gruenwald, 135-136; Andrews, 250, 258, 267, 280 and 288-289; Summers, 153, 245-246 and 277.

⁹¹ Gruenwald, 42.

The Embargo of 1807 forever altered the course of history for Marietta. Despite finding a new identity in the years after the embargo as a connection point for Ohio Valley markets, the town never regained its past prominence. While Marietta did facilitate the growth of Ohio Valley industry, its failure to develop its own system of manufactures stunted the town's growth. At the dawn of the nineteenth century, Marietta contained over 500 people and its population was on the rise. Halfway through the century, the West had witnessed a population explosion but Marietta's population had rose to only 3,175 people. In 1910 the number increased to 12,923 but the following 100 years only witnessed a population growth of 1,162 people as the 2010 United States Census listed its population as 14,085 people. Marietta was Ohio's first town. In 1800 it was the commercial center of the state. In 2010, it ranked as Ohio's 123rd largest city. Even town's such as Chillicothe and Zanesville which relied on Marietta merchants such as Dudley Woodbridge Jr. to supply it with manufactured goods to stock their stores, now boast a larger population.⁹²

Today Marietta is most known as a tourist site where visitors come to see what the town once was not what it is now. Marietta's fall from prominence cannot be attributed completely to the Embargo of 1807 as new forms of transportation such as roads and railroads diverted people from its borders but it presented a crossroads and the town chose the wrong path in terms of future development. Marietta's decline coincided not only with Jefferson's Embargo but also with the growth of other Ohio Valley River

⁹² Thaddeus Mason Harris, 122-124; Together We Teach, "U.S. Cities: Ohio, Populations of Ohio Cities," <http://www.togetherweteach.com/TWTIC/uscityinfo/35oh/ohpopr/35ohpr.htm> (accessed April 22, 2014); Ohio History Central, "Marietta, Ohio," http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Marietta,_Ohio?rec=749 (accessed April 22, 2014).

towns such as Louisville, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. All of these cities embraced manufacturing and became industrial centers and attracted waves of new residents in large part because of jobs. Dudley Woodbridge Jr. played a key role in Marietta's survival by leading its transformation into a connection point but the failure to manufacture its own goods and instead rely on goods manufactured by its neighbors insured that it would never thrive again.⁹³

⁹³ Gruenwald, 125-126; Ohio History Central, "Marietta, Ohio," http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Marietta,_Ohio?rec=749 (accessed April 22, 2014).

CHAPTER 4: LOUISVILLE

In 1808, Louis Anastasius Tarascon stood on the brink of financial disaster. He and his younger brother Jean Antoine, better known as John, had moved to Louisville from Pittsburgh the previous year. They gave up a lucrative import/export business and shipyard to construct a commercial empire built upon foreign trade in Shippingport at the Falls of Ohio deep within the Ohio Valley. The Embargo of 1807 closed American ports to foreign vessels and prohibited American ships from entering foreign ports for the purpose of trade, thus effectively killing their plan. As Louis Tarascon stared into the depths of potential economic ruin, a new vision came to him, one centered upon industry. Jefferson's Embargo rendered his previous dream impractical, now he would manufacture a new one. Upon arriving in Shippingport in 1807, the elder Tarascon brother walked along the Ohio River and struck upon the idea of building water mills on its banks but gave it up because he preferred to focus on shipbuilding and merchant activities. In 1808, the idea seemed much more attractive and he and his brother turned all of their efforts towards manufacturing and would become ambassadors of industry and bring change to a Louisville business community lacking an industrial infrastructure.¹

Of the four cities in this study, Louisville was the second oldest but least developed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It lagged behind Pittsburgh and Marietta in regard to both manufacturing and organized trade. It was also slow to increase its population. In 1790 the population was 200 people and ten years later only 359. Not only

¹ Louis Anastasius Tarascon, "L.A. Tarascon, to His Friends," Louisville, 1836, Kentucky Culture Series, no. 213, Micro-Form, 11.

did the other cities in this study surpass Louisville in terms of size and population but it also trailed nearby Kentucky communities such as Lexington, Frankfort, Washington and Paris.²

Louisville possessed enormous potential because of its location at the Falls of the Ohio which required everyone traveling west to stop in the city but had yet to fully realize its potential because of a lack of manufacturing and a formal system of trade. Louisville may have resided on the periphery of the United States in both geographical and economical terms but this did not mean complete isolation. In fact a large amount of traffic and goods passed through the city. Louisville sent out its raw materials and received finished goods but its system of trade was not as organized or structured as that of its Ohio Valley neighbors further east. Like the rest of the Ohio Valley, Louisville looked to the East economically and would not develop a regional economy until it gained some degree of separation. This separation would begin with the passage of Jefferson's Embargo in 1807. Unlike Pittsburgh who possessed significant manufacturing interests prior to 1807, Louisville had miniscule manufactures. Whereas, the City at the Forks of the Ohio only had to embrace a new way of thinking in regard to manufacturing, the City at the Falls of the Ohio virtually had to start from scratch in order to develop a system of manufactures. The Embargo of 1807 presented the necessity for this change in Louisville and the Tarascon brothers provided the plan.

² United States Census Bureau, "Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 to 1990." <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/twps0027.html> and George H. Yater, "Louisville," in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, ed. John E. Kleber (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1992), 575.

A.) Louisville's Early History and Pre-Embargo Economy

Louisville is located nearly 650 miles below Pittsburgh along the Ohio River and nearly 1,400 from New Orleans by way of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. It is situated at the mouth of Beargrass Creek, which provides an excellent harbor, opposite of the Falls of the Ohio at an elevation of about 70 feet above the river. The area at the Falls of the Ohio had long been known by Indians, trappers and traders but no permanent settlement was placed there until the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Various Indian tribes battled over the area and the right to use it as a hunting ground and George Rogers Clark has stated that there was an ancient Indian burial ground located somewhere on the Northern side of the river but they never attempted permanent or long-term habitation at the spot. The exact reason as to why no permanent settlement arose at the Falls of the Ohio is unknown but from traditional stories told by the Delaware Indians, it appears they exterminated a tribe of Kentucky Indians who frequented the area and it was their bodies who resided in the burial mound. After conquering the Kentucky Indians, various Ohio and Indiana tribes held the area in common as a hunting ground and as such, any attempts to settle permanently at the falls would have caused conflict.³

It is unclear who the first white man or individual of European origin to first journey to the Falls of the Ohio was but the British, the French and the Spanish all claim the honor. There is a legend that Englishman Colonel Wood penetrated the Kentucky

³ Martha Kreipke "The Falls of the Ohio and the Development of the Ohio River Trade, 1810-1860," *Filson Club Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (1980): 196; Zadock Cramer, *The Navigator: Containing Directions for Navigating the Monongahela, Alleghany, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers* (Pittsburgh: Cramer, Spear & Eichbaum, 1821), 11th ed., 102; John Melish, *Travels Through the United States of America in the Years 1806 & 1807 and 1809, 1810 & 1811*, 377; Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier*, 14; L.A. Williams, ed., *History of the Ohio Falls Cities and their Counties, Vol. I.* (Cleveland: L.A. Williams & Co., 1882), 18-20.

wilderness from Virginia in 1654, discovered the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers and passed through the area at the falls while attempting to establish trade with native tribes but this account is much disputed by historians. Another story has a group of Spaniards reaching the Falls of the Ohio in 1669 on their way to New York from New Orleans in search of a fabled lake whose bottom was covered in silver. No substantial evidence of their journey or what they found remains because they were killed during an Indian attack in Western New York later in the year and the details of their journey died with them. France also staked its claim to the area. France claimed that the French explorer René-Robert Cavelier, or as he is more commonly known Robert de La Salle or Cavelier de La Salle, was the first white man to reach the Falls of the Ohio or the area that is now known as Louisville. There is some evidence to suggest that in the winter of 1669 or spring of 1770, La Salle discovered the Ohio River and traveled as far west as the falls. According to the story, La Salle reached the area that is now Louisville before returning to the Atlantic Coast after his men refused to go any further and threatened to abandon him if he did not stop his advance.⁴

In the mid-eighteenth century American colonists started to turn their attentions towards the Ohio Valley and their speculation of land and incursions into what was then territory inhabited by the French and Indian tribes played a crucial role in the start of the French and Indian War in 1754. After the defeat of the French and the Indians in 1763, British monarch King George III dampened the hopes of the colonists with the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which forbade settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains but it did not avert their sights away from the Ohio Valley for long. Later in this decade, John

⁴ L.A. Williams, 32-34.

Connolly, a notorious Tory during the American Revolution, accompanied his uncle on a trading trip into the Ohio Valley that brought him to the area at the Falls of the Ohio. Connolly became convinced that the area would be an ideal location for a settlement and spent the next few years trying to procure a title to the land. In 1773, through his friendship with the royal governor of Virginia, Connolly acquired the title to 2,000 acres of land at the Falls of the Ohio from King George III which he then sold half interest of to John Campbell in order to finance his planned settlement and purchased another 2,000 from Charles De Warrensdorf of Pittsburgh who also had been awarded title to land at the falls. In April of 1774, Connolly and Campbell took out an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* advertising the sale of half-acre lots at the falls. The start of the American Revolution in 1775 put an end to Connolly and Campbell's plans.⁵

A permanent settlement would not appear at the Falls of the Ohio until 1778 during the American Revolution as a result of military maneuverings. In January of 1778, Virginia governor Patrick Henry gave Lieutenant Colonel George Rogers Clark orders to attack the British post of Kaskaskia in the Illinois country. Clark made his way down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh with a military force and numerous families to establish outposts along the way in order to assert Virginia's claim to the territory. One of these outposts would become Louisville. In the spring of 1778, Clark left thirteen families consisting of around sixty individuals on a small island opposite of what is now Louisville as he continued on what would be a successful mission to Kaskaskia. As Clark

⁵ George H. Yater "Louisville: A Historical Overview" in *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*, ed. John E. Kleber (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2001), xv; L.A. Williams, 163-166. Connolly's land was confiscated after he left the United States in 1775 as a British subject. Campbell retained the title to his land but would not return to the Louisville until 1788. This is the same John Campbell who in 1764 surveyed the area around Fort Pitt.

and his men marched on to fight the British, these settlers remained behind to carve out an uncertain existence in this hostile environment. With a rifle in one hand to ward off the Indians and a hoe in the other to till the land, Clark's settlers managed to produce a sizeable crop of corn which would help sustain them through their first winter which turned out to be very harsh. From this crop of corn the island would attain its name, Corn Island. In the autumn of 1778, the settlers took their corn and moved onto the mainland. They went about establishing fortifications and laying out plans for a city. The following year more families arrived from Virginia as well as discharged soldiers from Clark's Kaskaskia expedition. In 1780, the settlement took the name Louisville in honor of King Louis XVI of France for his pledge of aid to American colonies during the Revolution and received a town charter from the state of Virginia.⁶

From the very beginning the economic fortunes of Louisville and its surrounding areas depended on the Ohio River. It is said that providence causes the largest cities to be located near the largest rivers. This is definitely true in regard to Louisville because without the Ohio River the town would not have developed in the same manner, if at all. The river not only brought important goods into the area to supplement what nature could not provide but also settlers to populate its boundaries. The Ohio River facilitated the beginnings of long distance trade. Louisville's first recorded instance of long distance trade coincided with what historian John J. Rowe called the area's first known banking activities. In 1780, John Sanders, a trader on the upper Ohio River floated down to the Falls of the Ohio and issued paper receipts in return for the furs and skins on his boat. He

⁶ Ben Casseday, *The History of Louisville from its Earliest Settlement Till the Year 1852* (Louisville: Hull and Brother, 1852), 22-29; Yater "Louisville: A Historical Overview," xv; L.A. Williams, 168-172.

then made his way to New Orleans and on his return, compensated those who held the notes. Therefore it can be argued that Louisville's very first bank was a boat which given the importance of the river in the development of the city is apropos.⁷

Two other notable early long distance trade endeavors took place in 1782. Both of these endeavors involved goods being taken to New Orleans and originated in the Pittsburgh area. The first of these examples involved two French traders named Tardiveau and Honore. They traveled thirty-five miles up the Monongahela River from Redstone Old Fort near Brownsville to Pittsburgh where they then descended the Ohio River towards Louisville. At the Falls of the Ohio, the Frenchmen purchased goods and materials and then traveled on to New Orleans. Because of the success of this first voyage, Tardiveau and Honore subsequently moved their operation to Louisville and carried on lucrative trade for many years with French and Spanish ports along the Mississippi River. Honore enjoyed such success that he remained in Louisville until his death in the mid-nineteenth century. A major element of their business operations involved importing finished goods or dry goods into Louisville from Pittsburgh and then trading those goods for cattle, horses, whiskey and slaves which they would then send to markets in New Orleans.⁸

The second notable long distance trade endeavor of 1782 took place in the spring. Captain Yoder, on a voyage also originating from Redstone Old Fort, procured produce at the falls and made his way on a flatboat to New Orleans. His first trip constituted a huge success but subsequent trips resulted in financial losses. These two accounts of early

⁷ L.A. Williams, 41; John J. Rowe, *Pioneering and Money in the Ohio River Valley- from Fort Pitt to the Falls of the Ohio* (New York: Newcomen Society of England. American Branch, 1948), 9. The original author of the statement about providence, rivers and large cities is unknown.

⁸ L.A. Williams, 188; Casseday, 62

business activities illustrate the nature of Louisville trade at this time. The unorganized nature of commerce and the location of the town on the periphery of the United States made long distance trade hit or miss. It promised great reward but also held great risk. A trader's economic fortunes rested on the mercy of the river as the length of a journey could never be accurately predicted because of seasonal changes. These early business endeavors also illustrate the important link that Louisville occupied in not only trade between the Ohio Valley and the Eastern United States but also trade between the United States and foreign nations as it facilitated trade between Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and New Orleans. Despite its location deep in the interior, Louisville was connected to the Atlantic World by the Ohio River and commerce.⁹

After these early trade endeavors of Tardiveau and Honore and Yoder, large amounts of merchandise started to pour into the city from Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. This early trade was often conducted alongside the river in a somewhat informal manner. The larger quantity of goods which started to flow into the area necessitated more permanent structures in which to do business which meant that actual stores would soon follow. Daniel Brodhead opened Louisville's first store in 1783. Brodhead purchased his first stock of goods in Philadelphia and transported it by wagon to Pittsburgh and then by flatboats to Louisville. After this first load which he transported himself, Brodhead continued to have a steady flow of finished goods supplied to him by river from cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and New Orleans. Many of these goods originated in Europe and were manufactured from Ohio Valley natural resources. The

⁹ L.A. Williams, 188; *Kentucky Gazette*, 15 December 1787. It is said that Captain Yoder made the first flat-boat voyage down the Mississippi. This has been much disputed and is impossible to verify.

citizens of Louisville now had regular access to luxury items such as flowered calico and real horn combs. It is also believed that Brodhead introduced glass window lights and panes to the city. People living in the East had grown accustomed to these sorts of items but not the early citizens of Louisville especially the city's younger residents, one of whom was reported to have run home in excitement after discovering a home with a glass window and told his mother "O, Ma! There's a house down here with specs on!" This young boy had often seen people wearing spectacles on their face but had never seen a house wearing the same. Even though retail stores existed, the purchase of trade goods still remained somewhat informal, largely because of the falls and the type of trade that occurred. Much of the city's trade, for instance, remained outside the confines of a four wall structure and as a result, off the pages of formal record books.¹⁰

The economic fortunes of Louisville would rise and fall on the amount of trade that the Ohio River brought into the town and during the Era of the Early Republic, its early citizens were very cognizant of the relationship between the city's economy and the river. Louisville possessed an advantage that none of the other cities along the Ohio River. It had a good port but so did Pittsburgh and Marietta, what these other cities did not have and Louisville did was the Falls of the Ohio. These were a series of rapids lasting about two miles and descending about twenty-five feet and three inches. The falls were formed by a ledge of limestone rock which extended across the bed of the river and during times when the river was low the rocks could be seen protruding the surface. Three chutes existed between the rock through which ships could pass but the path through each

¹⁰ L.A. Williams, 189; Casseday, 83 and 84. Although Daniel Brodhead's store was the first store in Louisville and is believed to be the first in Kentucky to offer luxury goods, it was not the first store in Kentucky as it is believed that Henderson & Co. opened the state's first store in 1775 in Boonesborough.

depended upon the height of the river and the time of the season and during the late months of summer, none were passable. During times of low water, the sound of water churning over the rocks acted as an introduction to Louisville as travelers to the city often reported hearing the sound a half mile upstream. One early traveler to the city, Thomas Ashe, claimed to have heard the roaring of the falls fifteen miles upstream.¹¹

The Falls of the Ohio created the only natural obstruction in the Ohio River between Pittsburgh and Louisville. Few who visited the area in its earliest years doubted that a great city would one day rise at the Falls of the Ohio. A major reason for this was the natural obstruction to travel created by the falls. An early historian of Louisville, Ben Casseday posited that the Falls of the Ohio presented “so serious an obstacle to the navigation of the stream as to create the necessity, which always exists, except at the highest stage of the water, for the debarkation and re-shipment of goods above and below this point, thus affording great commercial advantages to the city situated beside these rapids.” For most of the year, all travelers and goods coming up or down the Ohio River would have to stop at the Falls of the Ohio. This provided enormous opportunity for commercial trade. In 1766, Captain Thomas Hutchinson of Her Majesty’s Sixtieth Regiment of Foot traveled through the Ohio Valley and stopped at the falls. He created both a blueprint for travel at the falls and warning for future travelers. Hutchinson stated that “the Rapids in a dry season, are difficult to descend with loaded barges or boats, without a good pilot, it would be advisable therefore for the Bargemen, in such season,

¹¹ L.A. Williams, 42; Gilbert Imlay, *A Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America* (London: J. Debrett, 1792), 47-48; Barbara Conkin, “Falls of the Ohio,” in *The Louisville Encyclopedia*, ed. John E. Kleber 279; Wade, 14 and Thomas Ashe, *Travels in America, Performed in 1806, for the Purpose of Exploring the Rivers Alleghany, Monongahela, Ohio, and Mississippi*, 235.

rather than run any risk in passing them, to unload part of their cargoes, and reship it when the barges have got through the Rapids.” Others would heed this warning.¹²

In the winter of 1776-1777, George Gibson and William Linn used Hutchinson’s blueprint to complete what is believed to be the first commercial journey along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers from Pittsburgh to New Orleans and back again. Gibson and Linn traveled down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers from Pittsburgh to New Orleans where they purchased supplies such as 136 kegs of gunpowder to sell to troops stationed at Fort Pitt. On the voyage back up the Ohio River, they stopped at the Falls of the Ohio and with the help of John Smith, carried the kegs on their backs around the falls where they then reloaded their boats. This was an arduous task but it proved to be very profitable. It also marked a pattern in how trade would be carried out at the Falls of the Ohio and Louisville.¹³

Some impatient ship captains eager to get their goods to market in New Orleans would not waste time and unload their cargoes and wait for the water to rise so that they could reload on the other side. These captains would trust their piloting skills to get them safely across the rapids regardless of the height of the river or the time of the season and more time than not these captains would meet the same fate as those witnessed by Christian Schultz on a trip through Louisville in 1807. According to Schultz, on his passage down the Ohio River outside of Louisville, he came upon two large ships both nearing three hundred ton burdens which “were lying upon the falls as we descended the river, having attempted to pass without a sufficient rise of the water; they had their keels

¹² Casseday, 16; L.A. Williams, 42.

¹³ L.A. Williams, 167-168.

knocked out, and were otherwise considerably damaged.” And as a result of these ill-advised actions, “their situations were considered so precarious that the one which should have been worth ten thousand dollars, was sold at public auction for fifteen hundred only.” Most captains took the safest course of action and broke down their cargoes on the east side of the falls. This led to the creation of makeshift marketplaces where items such as flour, grains, produce, pork and beef products, whiskey, salt, tobacco, sugar, molasses, coffee and imported manufactured goods could be sold in lieu of hauling them around the natural obstruction in the river. The abrupt stop of passengers and goods at the falls also created for Louisville a situation, as described by one of these burdened passengers, where “at the head of ascending and the foot of descending navigation, all the wealth of the western country must pass through her hands.” The kind of trade that developed at the Falls of the Ohio was a double-edged sword as it proved to be a boon for commerce in the short-term but a detriment to Louisville’s long-term economic growth or the development of a system of manufactures. Most of the wealth passed from its hands to Europe where European manufactures turned nature’s bounty into finished goods.¹⁴

Early visitors to Louisville most often noticed the gap between Louisville’s potential and its fulfillment. In 1784, Gilbert Imlay, a captain in the Continental Army during the American Revolution, land commissioner for the United States government and speculator, found Louisville to be undeveloped but possessing great potential. With the falls, the river and good banks nature had provided the area a great bounty but man had yet to take full advantage of the gifts but Imlay had little doubt that it would one

¹⁴ Christian Schultz, *Travels on an Inland Voyage, Vol. I*, 191-192; Kreipke, 196-197; Wade, 64; Casseday, 121.

day become a “flourishing town.” In 1797, as part of his trip to the western country, the noted English scientist and astronomer Francis Baily passed through Louisville. He was quite taken by the area and commented on many of the same advantages as Imlay. Baily was especially impressed by the harbor at Bear-Grass Creek. He felt that Louisville had the potential to be a great city and the prospect of it achieving its potential was “truly delightful” but it had yet to do so. Baily attributed the lack of progress, in large part, to the unorganized nature of its municipal government.¹⁵

Both Imlay and Baily believed that Louisville would overcome its lack of early development given time. The advantages provided by the Ohio River and the falls would eventually propel Louisville to greatness. Other travelers to Louisville were not as sure that it would achieve its potential given its current trajectory. In 1796, Andrew Ellicott, a Commissioner from Massachusetts on a mission to determine the boundary between the United States and France, was temporarily delayed in Louisville. He was not impressed with the development of the town and commented that “the town has improved but little for some years past.” The comments made about Louisville’s development and prospects by James Berthoud and Charles Brugiere while on a commercial scouting trip down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh in 1799 were more blunt and critical than those of Ellicott. They wrote that “the growth of this town does not correspond to the beauty of its location and the advantage that it should have as the stopping place of most of the boats which have to stop there in order to pass around the falls; its population, instead of increasing,

¹⁵ Gilbert Imlay, *A Topographical Description of the Western Territory*, 49; Francis Baily, *A Journal of a Tour in the Unsettled Parts of North America in 1796 & 1797*, 239-243.

seems on the contrary to be decreasing each day.” Ultimately, they found Louisville to be underdeveloped with few signs that it would ever become a great city.¹⁶

Perhaps the harshest indictment of Louisville’s development and failure to fulfill its potential can be found in Englishman Thomas Ashe’s account of his trip to the area in 1806. Ashe traveled to the area under the alias of D’Arville and acquired a notorious reputation during his stay in the Ohio. While in Cincinnati, he allegedly swindled Dr. Goforth out of a valuable collection of fossils from Big Boone Lick. In Louisville his notoriety would come from comments he published about the town and would lead to townsfolk calling him a “liar.” Ashe’s first impression of Louisville was one of beauty and potential but that quickly changed to a more grim prediction for the town. According to Ashe, “here the magnificence of the scene, the grandeur of the falls, the unceasing brawl of the cataract, and the beauty of the surrounding prospect, all contribute to render the place truly delightful, and to impress every man of observation who beholds it with ideas of its future importance, till he enquires more minutely.” The Englishman found that the unhealthiness of the town, the lack of manufacturing and industry and character of its inhabitants “forbids the encouragement of any hope of its permanency or improvement.” In regard to the character of Louisville’s citizens he wrote that “the inhabitants are universally addicted to gambling and drinking. The billiard rooms are crowded from morning to night, and often all night through.” In Ashe’s assessment, nature had done its part in placing Louisville on the path to becoming a great city but the

¹⁶ L.A. Williams, 208; James Berthoud and Charles Brugiere, Extract from a Journal of a Trip from Philadelphia to New Orleans by Way of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers: 1799, Louis Tarascon Journal, 1799, MSS A T177.

townsfolk had stunted its growth due to their perpetual state of drunkenness and laziness.¹⁷

Louisville's failure to realize its potential and show signs of becoming the great city that many had predicted on the eve of the Embargo of 1807 nearly thirty years after its founding presents a major question, why? One reason is a general lack of economic development which included a scarcity of manufacturing interests as well as a failure to become a major agricultural center. Up through the first decade of the eighteenth century, Louisville had very little industry and visitors to the town during this period rarely mentioned manufacturing in their journals because there was little for them to comment on. Even in regard to the appearance of grist or corn mills which were a frequent occurrence in agricultural communities, there is little mention of either. Christian Schultz noted the presence of mills during his trip to the area in 1807 but what he witnessed was not the standard four wall structures which normally constituted a mill. The majority of the mills which Schultz observed were floating mills which consisted of a grinding wheel supported by two large canoes and were "of a very simple construction, and consequently the more valuable in a country so destitute of mill-seats as this." This may have been advantageous to some degree as "instead of the farmer's going to the mill, the mill comes to him" but this was a sign of the town's lack of permanency. These mills were not built to stand the test of time and often operated in the short term and essentially constituted the same kind of trade as a traveling salesman who went door to door peddling his wares only in this case the salesman traveled by canoe down a river. Permanency was a major

¹⁷ Ashe, 236-237; L.A. Williams, 218-219.

issue in Louisville at this time and contributed to the appearance that, in economic terms, the town did not have much going on.¹⁸

Wood processing for the construction of boats, and to a lesser degree ships, salt-making for the preservation of food and small scale whiskey distilling comprised the bulk of Louisville's industry. Whiskey distilling was difficult to regulate as stills could be set up almost anywhere away from the prying eyes of regulators. Most of the stills in Louisville during the early days were small and mainly used for personal use and some surplus for sale. The towns' trustees established rules and regulations for the distilling and sale of whiskey but most distillers operated without a license. The first men to obtain a license from the board of trustees to distill whiskey within town limits were Evan Williams, Marsham Brashears and Jacob Myers. Boat making marked another of Louisville's early industries and was problematic because it provided monetary gain for the farmers but provided little to the development of the town's economy. The building of boats provided a way to export resources and conduct long-distance trade which is beneficial to an economy but can also lead to a certain level of dependence when all economic focus is turned to outside markets. It also made Louisville extremely vulnerable to external events which were completely out of its control. The major problem was that Louisville possessed no balance between the exportation of natural resources and manufacturing.¹⁹

Boatbuilding had long been a part of Louisville's economy but shipbuilding was relatively recent. The arrival of the industry can be dated to sometime between 1799 and

¹⁸ Schultz, *Travels on an Inland Voyage, Vol. I*, 189.

¹⁹ George H. Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio: A History of Louisville and Jefferson County* (Louisville: Heritage Corporation, 1979), 15.

1805 as Berthoud and Brugiere stated in their journal in 1799 in regard to shipyards in Louisville, “there aren’t any.” The earliest mention of shipyards at the Falls of the Ohio comes from the memorandums of Josiah Espy, the son of a Kentucky immigrant who had moved to Pennsylvania when he reached adulthood. Espy toured Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana and came to Louisville in October of 1805. He made note of two shipyards, one above the falls and one below. Ashe also noted shipyards in the area but only detailed the one below the rapids. Schultz took notice of shipyards in Louisville but did not include a number and only stated that the town “carries on ship and boat-building with considerable spirit; several large vessels have already been built.” He also predicted that the area at the falls would become a center for the construction of ocean-going vessels on the Ohio River. Ultimately, this prediction would not come to fruition but the reasons for that involve Jefferson’s Embargo and will be discussed in greater detail later.²⁰

Tobacco comprised the majority of Louisville’s agriculture production and tobacco growers depended heavily upon foreign markets with Europe being a popular destination, Tobacco was a staple crop which benefited the area’s farmers but did not foster any kind of manufacturing as it was sent abroad for manufacturing. It was also an extremely labor and soil intensive endeavor. Tobacco quickly used up the nutrients in the soil which meant that land often had to be left vacant in order to replenish the soil in between crops. This led to fewer fields for the cultivation of other crops. Tobacco played a role in the

²⁰ Paul A. Coomes, “Economy,” in *The Louisville Encyclopedia*, ed. John E. Kleber, 262; James Berthoud and Charles Brugiere, Extract from a Journal of a Trip from Philadelphia to New Orleans; L.A. Williams, 216-217; Ashe, 236; Schultz, 190. It is possible although unlikely that shipbuilding existed in Louisville as early as 1794 as George Yater in *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio* wrote about the *Caroline*, a vessel constructed by Richard Clough Anderson below the Falls of the Ohio in 1794 which made one trip to Europe before being wrecked in the Bahamas, but Leland Baldwin never mentioned this vessel in any of his works and there is no other documentation of the vessel ever existing. Therefore, the existence of shipbuilding in Louisville in 1794 is highly doubtful.

early history of Louisville as Colonel Campbell opened the first tobacco warehouse in 1787 and farmers often used tobacco as a way to pay public debts and taxes. This sometimes caused problems because constantly fluctuating prices added to the instability of both the economy and the city's ability to fund its own government.²¹

A major element of the town's potential for economic growth, as previously mentioned, involved trade opportunities provided by the Falls of the Ohio and its obstruction to river travel. But this situation also led to lack of growth in the area's economy and a lack of permanency. The rapids at the falls forced ship captains to unload their cargoes and carry them around the falls. Often, they would sell part of their cargo in lieu of carrying it any further which meant the purchase of these goods often took place wherever crewmen broke them down to carry around the falls. Furthermore, local farmers would sell their agricultural products to those traveling on, wherever the opportunity presented itself. Essentially what developed was a kind of casual grey market economy stemming from the circumstances of the falls portage whose profitability discouraged any sort of permanency or the development of manufacturing.²²

Both the lack of manufacturing and the type of trade that existed at the Falls of the Ohio can be seen as indicative of a larger problem which was inadequate municipal leadership. On May 1, 1780, The Virginia Legislature passed "An Act for Establishing the Town of Louisville at the Falls of the Ohio." Although the act was not signed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates until July 1, the act was considered to be law at the time of passage and the date of May 1, 1780 marks the birth of Louisville. Kentucky

²¹ Steven R. Price Sr., "Tobacco," in *The Louisville Encyclopedia*, ed. John E. Kleber, 883; H.M. McMurtrie, *Sketches of Louisville and its Environs*, 134; Casseday, 84-85 and 235.

²² Kreipke, 197.

would not become a state until 1792; therefore Louisville remained under the jurisdiction of Virginia until statehood. The Virginia Legislature left the governing of the town and the stewardship of its development to a board of trustees which consisted of John Todd Jr., Stephen Trigg, George Slaughter, John Floyd, William Pope, George Meriwether, Andrew Hines, James Sullivan and Marsham Brashears. Their first duty was to lay out the town on 1,000 acres of land and divide the area into half-acre lots for sale. The conditions of the sale of lots dictated that each purchaser build on the lot within two years of the sale “a dwelling house, sixteen feet by twenty, at least, with a brick or stone chimney.” The failure of the trustees to enforce the requirement of building within two years constituted just one of many mistakes that hindered the growth and the development of the town throughout the first decade of the nineteenth century.²³

The problems with the trustees started early as the Board of Trustees did not even hold their first meeting until February of the next year and the second meeting did not follow until January of 1783. And by the time the board met for the second time there had been an almost complete turnover of the members as only two of the original members remained and four new members were appointed. During these first meetings, the trustees did little to dispose of the lots in an orderly and productive fashion or govern the town in a manner that would foster its growth or economic development. The acts passed at these first meetings had little to do with the sale of town lots or the economy but did dictate that members could not address each other by name during debate, could not read

²³ Lewis Collins, *Historical Sketches of Kentucky* (Cincinnati: J.A. & U.P. James, 1850), 360; L.A. Williams, 176; John E. Kleber, “Act of Incorporation (Louisville,) in *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*, ed. John E. Kleber, 3. The land that would become the town of Louisville had originally been granted to John Connolly and subsequently confiscated by the United States government when he remained loyal to the crown during the American Revolution.

any papers or documents while someone else was speaking or drink liquor during the meeting as they had to wait till afterwards when everyone would drink together. The nature of the acts passed by the trustees led the editors of *History of the Ohio Falls Cities* to describe them as “some queer rules” and they were particularly amused by the strangest of all the acts which stated “upon the commission of the same act a second time by the same person, he shall, besides the censure aforesaid, be liable to pay the sum of Six Shillings, to be Collected and applied as aforesaid, and shall moreover forfeit the liquor so brought in for the use of the Board after adjournment.” The trustees failed to pass any acts which would dictate a uniform method to selling lots or regulate trade but they did set down some pretty stringent regulations about the after-party.²⁴

The original act passed by the Virginia Legislature in 1780 that had appointed the trustees, gave the same trustees the power to appoint new members to the board in the case of death or removal. By the late seventeen-eighties the number of board members had grown to a point where citizens of the town complained that they had “too many trustees” which in turn had led to a “burdensome municipal government.” In 1789, the Virginia Legislature responded to numerous petitions presented by the citizens of Louisville and passed an act which deposed all existing members of the board and appointed J.F. Moore, Abraham Hite, Abner M. Donne, Basil Prather and David Standiford as the sole members of the Board of Trustees and granted them the power to sell and convey lots, levy taxes, govern and improve the town through the taxes levied and fill vacancies on the board but not expand their numbers through election by existing members. The municipal disorder in Louisville caused the Virginia Legislature to step in

²⁴ L.A. Williams, 184-185.

and assert some semblance of order. This constituted an adjustment from Virginia's usual practices of self-perpetuating county courts. The municipal government under the new board of trustees did exhibit greater competency than the old board but it still struggled to provide the leadership needed in order for the town to grow and fulfill its potential.²⁵

Much of the town's problems in regard to lack of economic development or growth can be attributed to the ineffective leadership of the trustees. At the root of a great deal of Louisville's problems was the failure of the trustees to exhibit a vision for the town from the very beginning. A major element of the original trustees' job was to lay out the town in manner that would foster future growth and development, at this task they failed miserably and it would continue to haunt the town for years to come. In 1800, the trustees of Louisville recognized the inherent problems with the unorganized nature of the town's trade and decided that building a market house on public ground would be prudent. In this year, they passed an act which allocated taxpayer funds for the building of a market house on public grounds. Both the building and the operation of the market house would be overseen by the trustees who had also just taken control of the harbor at Bear Grass Creek. By controlling the harbor and the market house they could have taken a monumental step towards placing the town on a steady path towards economic development but instead found themselves handcuffed by the actions of the early trustees. They abandoned their plan to build a market house in 1801 because no public grounds could be found. All land within town limits had already been sold and the trustees had kept none for official business. In 1800, half-acre lots sold from anywhere between \$700 to \$14,000 but in the seventeen-eighties, the trustees sold off all the towns lots at a price

²⁵ L.A. Williams, 202-203.

of anywhere from \$7 to \$20 and in one instance, they sold a lot on main street for a horse. As a result, several years passed before Louisville acquired a public market house.²⁶

The disposal of all the town's lots was both unwise and in some cases illegal. In 1783, the trustees had passed an act which resolved that a strip of land on the bank of the Ohio would be set aside as common land for future use but the trustees would eventually sell that land as well. If they would have retained the land according to the law, then Louisville would have had a market house in 1800. The original trustees had within their power a clause which would have allowed them to reclaim lots that had remained undeveloped but they chose not to use it as speculators purchased many of the lots and left them vacant and some of the members of the board of trustees were speculators who owned undeveloped lots. In 1800, in the same act which allocated funds for a market house, the trustees compounded the error of the earlier trustees by revoking the clause that allowed for the forfeiture of lots in the case of non-development because of the perceived futility of enforcing it. They could have used this clause the next year when they found that no public land existed for the market house.²⁷

Another reason that Louisville had thus far failed to fulfill its potential was that the town had little or no way of making a profit and financing its government infrastructure. The trustees realized some of the problems plaguing the city such as the lack of a police force and the need of a canal but more often than not, they lacked the funds to address these needs. Louisville was spread out and methods for tax collection were unorganized and ineffective. The 1797 tax list is indicative of this problem. Despite the fact that the

²⁶ Casseday, 107-109; L.A. Williams, 178 and 212.

²⁷ L.A. Williams, 183; Casseday, 108.

population now numbered around 800, the tax assessment amounted to approximately \$150. The tax lists cannot be considered complete during this time because the tax assessor, Dr. Hall, often did not get around to everyone during each tax season. Even when he did manage to catch up with everyone, they did not always pay. Delinquencies in paying taxes were quite common in the pre-embargo years.²⁸

The trustees also failed in creating a healthy environment within the town limits. Disease presented another obstacle to the development of Louisville because a disease ridden town did not provide an attractive location for potential citizens or business investments and it also placed current residents in danger. This is another problem that can be blamed directly upon the trustees. Poor planning and failure in reacting to an unhealthy situation allowed maladies such as malaria, yellow fever, and dysentery to plague the city. Louisville became known as the “graveyard of the Ohio.” The problem stemmed from stagnated waters. The landscape of Louisville was covered with ponds and stagnant water arising from the fact that its soil was not particularly porous; floodwater from the Ohio River and rain water had a difficult time permeating the surface and left behind standing water. John Filson, an American author and early resident of both Lexington and Cincinnati, recognized the relationship between Louisville’s unhealthy environment and lack of growth when he commented during a visit to the town in the early seventeen-eighties that “its unhealthiness, owing to stagnated waters at the back of town, has severely retarded its growth.” In 1806, during his visit to the area, Thomas Ashe noticed the same problem which still created a general “character of unhealthiness.” Nearly twenty years had passed between the comments of Filson and Ashe’s visit and yet

²⁸ Casseday, 104.

stagnated water and the diseases that it bred still wrecked havoc on the well-being of the town and its citizens. In these years, the trustees had failed to properly drain the water from the town or device a method to keep it from becoming a recurring problem. Everyone seemed to recognize the dangers except for the trustees of the city.²⁹

Stagnant water was not the only problem that Louisville had with water as unhealthy drinking water also contributed the unhealthiness of the town. A resident of Louisville during this time commented that “the water of the wells, after standing a little time, becomes nauseous to the taste...this bad quality of the water in general use, is one great cause of a variety of complaints, that are so common in the summer months, and calls loudly for a remedy.” Bad drinking water and disease cannot be considered exclusive to Louisville during this period as Americans drank a large amount of beer and other alcoholic beverages because water was neither healthy nor palatable. However, poor planning and a general lack of organization made the problem worse than usual in Louisville. In order for the town to become a strong center of business, the city needed to be safe.³⁰

The extreme type of laissez-faire government that existed in early Louisville did not work very well in regard to economic development. The leaders of the town, and to a large extent its citizens, only planned day to day and gave little thought to the future. Long term planning was an alien concept. Economic growth depended on the development and efficient use of town space as well as economic planning. Louisville needed an organized center to regulate and manage trade and the actions of trustees from

²⁹ Casseday, 49; L.A. Williams, 207; John Filson, *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucky* (London: John Stockdale, 1793), 22; Ashe, 236.

³⁰ McMurtrie, 139; W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition*, 95.

the early history of the town through the first decade of the nineteenth century proved that they were incapable of providing that organized center. In general, Louisville lacked economic vision and did not view its economy in the same way as other communities in this study and that is why they lagged behind in population growth and economic development. They envisioned their economy in small and individualistic terms. The impetus to change the way they viewed their economy would not arise from the local level but instead from the national level in the form of the Embargo of 1807.

B.) Louisville and the Embargo

Thomas Jefferson's Embargo of 1807 immediately affected Louisville because of its ties to transatlantic trade but it did not suffer to the same extent as other cities in this study simply because its economy was less developed than the others. Instead of widespread suffering, Jefferson's Embargo brought opportunity to the City at the Falls. The embargo forced Louisville to look west and unto itself instead of east. The town started to think about its economy in new ways which included manufacturing and trade with the west. Although change in Louisville would come much slower than that of Pittsburgh, it would come and the town played a major role in the Ohio Valley's development of a regional economy.

Louisville manufactured very little prior to the embargo except boats, ships, whiskey and salt, therefore the majority of the items sold at local stores had to be imported and since the opening of Daniel Brodhead's store in 1783, the town's residents had developed a taste for imported goods. The Embargo of 1807 presented a major obstacle for the importation of goods. Even after Jefferson's Embargo was lifted in 1809,

the continuing hostilities between Great Britain and France necessitated that the Federal government enact more trade restrictions leading up to and during the War of 1812. Local merchants could attempt to obtain smuggled European manufactured goods from merchants in the east or attempt to deal directly with European colonial possessions such as Rio De Janeiro but Louisville's location meant that the goods had to pass through many hands and stood a great chance of being intercepted by the government before they arrived at the falls which made the proposition very risky. The instability of Louisville's economy and the lack of imported goods due to trade restrictions led one of the area's merchants to warn a colleague not to do retail business in Louisville because the situation was "extremely unfavorable" to success and that "obstruction to our trade has already done much evil but that which is to come I consider will be much worse than anything which we have seen." Without a system of manufactures, Louisville had few options for obtaining manufactured goods in the aftermath of Jefferson's Embargo.³¹

The Embargo crippled the shipbuilding industry throughout the United States and shipbuilding interests in Louisville met the same fate. Prior to the embargo, Louisville had two, possibly three, shipyards in operation and another was being constructed. Travelers to the area prior to December of 1807 such as Josiah Espy, Christian Schultz and Thomas Ashe all mentioned not only the presence but also the vibrancy of the town's shipbuilding industry. Schultz even went as far as to describe these activities as being carried on with "considerable spirit" and commented on how the Falls of the Ohio possessed more advantages for shipbuilding than all the other towns along the Ohio

³¹ John Corliss to Thomas L. Halsey, May 6, 1809, Corliss-Respass Family Papers 1698-1994, MSS A C799, Folder 15, Filson Historical Society, Special Collections, Louisville, Ky; Joseph Ficklin to Isaac Clark, October 5, 1810, Bodley Family Papers 1773-1939, MSS A B668e, Folder 236, Historical Society, Special Collections, Louisville, Ky.

River. The effect of the embargo upon Louisville's shipbuilding industry was both immediate and severe.³²

The correlation between the end of shipbuilding at the Falls of the Ohio and the Embargo of 1807 is quite clear and substantiated by an aborted attempt on the part of the federal government to have several vessels constructed at that spot in 1808. In May of 1808, Captain David Porter of the U.S. Navy sought a shipyard on the west side of the falls for the construction of gunboats, other small vessels and a galley capable of ocean travel to serve as a vessel of war. Porter found no shipyards operating at that time in Louisville as they had ceased operation. In his 1812 travel account, Jervis Cutler also observed that the Louisville possessed no shipyards and he placed the blame squarely on Jefferson's Embargo. According to Cutler "shipbuilding was began and carried on with considerable spirit here, until it received a check by the late embargo law." In just a matter of months, the town had gone from having at least two shipyards to none and the only intervening event was Jefferson's Embargo.³³

The Embargo of 1807 cut off foreign markets for domestic tobacco and other trade restrictions leading up the War of 1812 caused continued uncertainty about access to foreign markets and fluctuating prices. New Orleans received the majority of Louisville's tobacco and would then send it abroad or to the Eastern United States. Louisville's farmers could get \$2 per hundredweight on the domestic market but tobacco sold at the Spanish port of New Orleans could bring as much as \$10 per hundredweight. The towns

³² Paul A. Coomes, "Economy," in *The Louisville Encyclopedia*, 262; Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 30; L.A. Williams, 216-217; Ashe, 236; Schultz, 190;

³³ Captain David Potter to J.A. Tarascon, May 11, 1808, Captain David Potter Letter Book, MSS. CP, Filson Historical Society, Special Collections, Louisville, KY; Jervis Cutler, *A Topographical Description of Ohio, Indiana Territory and Louisiana*, 58. The shipyard being constructed belonged to the Tarascon Brothers and will be discussed in detail later.

dealings with the Spanish highlights not only the uncertainty of the tobacco market but also transatlantic trade as Spain would occasionally close its port to American goods and produce or limit the amount of goods that could be sold. One particular instance came in 1790, when the Spanish government limited the purchase of American tobacco to 40,000 pounds annually which caused prices to drop because tobacco farmers had more product than markets. The Embargo of 1807 had a much greater effect on tobacco as New Orleans now belonged to the United States and Louisville farmers could still sell their product to the former Spanish port but since it could no longer ship it to foreign markets, the city had no need for the amount of tobacco being grown because its market could not support it. Louisville's tobacco farmers could look to eastern markets to sell their product but eastern farmers had the same problem, which was tobacco rotting on docks or in warehouses waiting to be purchased or shipped. In the early months of 1808, the price of tobacco in Virginia and North Carolina fell to between \$2 and \$3. Prior to the embargo, during Jefferson's second term, America exported around 60,000,000 pounds of tobacco. Between 1811 and 1815, that number had decreased to 40,000,000 pounds with the low point being 1814 when America only exported 4,000,000 pounds. An increasing amount of that tobacco came from the Ohio Valley and the West. Because of the embargo, Louisville's only significant cash crop lost its market value and the town's economy took another hit.³⁴

Whereas Jefferson's Embargo injured tobacco cultivation it fostered the cultivation of hemp and wheat. *Cannabis sativa* or hemp was not native to Kentucky or the United

³⁴ W.F. Axton, *Tobacco and Kentucky* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1975), 43-45; Sears 228-229; *Connecticut Courant*, February 17, 1808.

States and is believed to be of Asiatic origin. The British introduced hemp to America in Jamestown in 1611 along with flax with the intent of establishing hemp cultivation in an area under colonial control so that the empire could not be denied access by their enemies or competitors. Hemp is the strongest natural fiber and was highly sought after because its fibers could be used to manufacture rope and sailcloth. Today it is most known for the psychoactive properties of its hipper cousin *Cannabis indica* or marijuana but from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries it was an important agricultural product for the purposes of manufacturing. Not only was hemp sought after because of its strength as a fiber but it also thrives in poor soil, possesses a natural ability to protect itself from weeds and grows extremely quickly which allows for multiple crops in a season. The crown felt that it was more important than tobacco and that the colonists should put their efforts into its cultivation instead. But John Rolfe and other Jamestown colonists found tobacco to be more profitable and suitable to their needs and it became the primary cash crop of the colonies. Hemp cultivation was prevalent in early America but it would not occupy a significant role in America's economy until the foreign supply of cordage was abruptly disrupted by the Embargo of 1807 and the subsequent War of 1812. Louisville would play an important role in hemp's rise to economic prominence.³⁵

At the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century and for most of the second decade, Kentucky was the center of hemp cultivation and manufacture in the United States. Hemp was first grown in Kentucky in the seventeen-seventies and from its earliest beginnings its potential was recognized by both residents and visitors. In 1792, Gilbert

³⁵ Mark Bourrie, *Hemp: A Short History of the Most Misunderstood Plant and its Uses and Abuses* (Buffalo: Firefly Books, 2003), 10-20; James O. Luken, "Hemp Industry," in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, ed. John E. Kleber, 422; James F. Hopkins, *A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), 5-7.

Imlay observed that “the soil is uncommonly favorable to hemp and Indian corn. I have known 12 cwt. of the former produced from an acre of ground.” And while Imlay acknowledged that tobacco grew better than hemp in Ohio Valley region or any other area in the world, he felt that hemp was more advantageous because tobacco “continually impoverishes the land.” Louisville would not become as big a hemp cultivator or manufacturer as Lexington, mainly because the latter had embraced, to some degree, hemp cultivation and manufacturing prior to 1807, but its economy did grow as result of its switch from tobacco to hemp.³⁶

By 1810, Louisville extensively carried on the cultivation and manufacturing of hemp. Louisville manufactured hemp in two main ways, rope making and the production of bagging for cotton. Rope making was the process in which individual fibers of hemp were twined together in order to make them stronger. Louisville possessed numerous rope walks at this time. Manufacturers produced hemp bagging by weaving hemp into cloth on hand looms and then sewing the individual pieces together to make a bag. Louisville contained several bagging manufactories which were very valuable to the town’s economy. The importance of such was evident in the fact that the bagging manufactory of Anderson and Gwathmey had burned to the ground twice in an eighteen month period yet the owners continued to rebuild without reservation in the same spot because of the value of their product and they did not want to waste time redesigning or moving their factory. In 1811, John Melish, a Scottish writer and mapmaker, commented on Louisville’s reliance on hemp manufacturing and its lack of other forms of manufacturing during his visit to the city at the falls. He commented that “except the

³⁶ Imlay, 91-92.

manufacture of ropes, rope-yarn and cotton-bagging, which are carried on with spirit, there are no other manufactures of importance at Louisville.” Over a two month period between November 1810 and January 1811, approximately 197 flat-boats and fourteen keel boats descended the Ohio River from the Falls of the Ohio carrying 400 pounds of hemp, 1,484 pounds of thread, 154,000lbs of rope-yarn, 20,784lbs of bale-rope, 27,700 yards of bagging, 4,619 yards of tow-cloth and 479 coils of tarred rope. It is certain that not all of those items originated in Louisville as Lexington was more heavily involved in hemp and used the Ohio River to ship their products but because of the Falls of the Ohio not only did the fruits of Louisville’s hemp cultivation and manufacture get purchased and shipped along with the products from further upstream but it also meant additional commerce for the area.³⁷

The Embargo of 1807 promoted the growth of the hemp industry in Kentucky, and more importantly to this study Louisville, by eliminating foreign cordage from the domestic market. It also caused the Ohio Valley to look to other places rather than just the East and Europe in regard to their economic well-being. Louisville sent its hemp and hemp products north, east, south and all points in-between and Lexington did the same. While the embargo helped create domestic markets for manufactured hemp and create a manufacturing infrastructure, other events also fostered the growth of the industry. One of the factors which led to the continued growth of the hemp industry in Kentucky was the growth of the cotton industry in the South. By the time of the embargo, King Cotton

³⁷ Andrew Ure, *Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures, and Mines* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman’s, 1840), 1069-1070; Hopkins, 132-134; Cramer, *The Navigator*, 11th ed., 102 and 283; Melish, 377-380. The cargo manifests detailing the amount of hemp and hemp products descending the Ohio River were printed by Cramer but originally taken from the account books of Messrs. Nelson, Wade and Greatsinger who had acquired their information from pilots’ books.

had assumed it's thrown in the South and Southern planters needed bagging and rope which was made from hemp. In regard to the reciprocal relationship between hemp and cotton, William Darby in *The Emigrant's Guide to the Western and Southwestern States and Territories* stated that "as long as cotton is extensively cultivated in the southern part of the valley of Mississippi, hemp will be profitably produced in the northern. Every twenty lbs. of the former will demand at least one of the latter...A bale weighing three hundred, will have 285 lbs. of cotton, and 15 lbs. of baling and rope." Darby's prediction did not prove correct over the long-term but in the short-term, the cotton surge in the South helped cause a hemp surge in Kentucky.³⁸

Another factor that contributed to the continued success of hemp was the military build-up leading to the War of 1812. Part of Thomas Jefferson's rationale for the embargo was his belief that the nation was not prepared for war against the European aggressors. If peaceful economic coercion failed to alter the policies of Great Britain and France then the embargo would give the nation the time to marshal its resources and "make every preparation for whatever events may grow out of the present crisis." In other words, if peace fails then war would be the only other alternative. If war proved necessary then the military would need weapons and ammunition but also other items such as rope and sails. In 1808, the military came to Kentucky in search of cordage. Captain David Porter instructed his subordinates to find and "deliver cordage of every description to New Orleans." This included rope, yarn and twine. In May, Porter was informed that "cordage of every description assorted as they ought to be from cables to

³⁸ William Darby, *The Emigrant's Guide to the Western and Southwestern States and Territories* (New York: Kirk & Mercein, 1812), 184-185 and 207; Hopkins, 85-86.

ratlings and spun yards for rigging” could be found in abundance in Louisville. When it became apparent that trade restrictions over the four years had done little to change British policy, the United States went to war and during the War of 1812, the government relied heavily upon Kentucky hemp. It is estimated that in 1813 and 1814 alone, Kentucky supplied 182 tons of manufactured yarns and cordage to the government. Cotton production in the South and the military’s need for manufactured hemp both can be attributed to Jefferson’s Embargo because the lack of foreign textiles stimulated manufacturing in the Northeast which required a constant stream of cotton to feed the machines which in turn required bagging and rope to house the cotton for transport.³⁹

Before further discussing manufacturing, the change in thinking that provided the proper environment for the rise of manufacturing must be discussed. Between the years of 1807 and 1811, the merchant class completed a takeover of local government as they gained control of the Board of Trustees. The merchants would maintain control until the eighteen-twenties when professionals such as doctors and lawyers gained greater influence among the ranks of city government. The early trustees were the original pioneers and settlers of Louisville and they also constituted the town’s largest landholders. They envisioned the town as a community of freeholders who deserved a significant amount of control over their own lives and that of Louisville because they were the first to arrive in the area and established the town. These men emphasized individual gain and growth. They did not focus on the growth of the town’s economy

³⁹ Louis Martin Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo*, 28-29; Thomas Jefferson, “*The Embargo Laws and a Message from the President to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, 1807*,” (Shaw & Shoemaker, Early American Imprints, Series 2, no. 13897), 1; Captain David Potter to J.A. Tarascon, May 11, 1808, Captain David Potter Letter Book, MSS. CP; Hopkins, 154.

only their own economic well being. The merchants were also concerned with personal wealth but they believed their best interests depended on a strong economy.⁴⁰

The original trustees who were also the first settlers and came from the class of large landholders, for the most part, remained content to live the lifestyle of southern gentleman and watch their investments, which mainly consisted of the land and its agricultural produce, grow. The merchant class, however, intended to protect and expand their economic interests. Louisville's growing population and a widening gap between the wealthy and the poor and the appearance of a number of strangers resulted in an increase in crime. In order to protect their property and possessions, the merchants pushed for security against crime. This resulted in the beginnings of a police force. In 1810, the trustees hired two watchmen, John Ferguson and Edward Dowler, whom they paid \$250 each per year to police the city with special attention paid to commercial interests. Louisville's police force would not be expanded in any significant way until 1820 in response the townsfolk's concerns in regard to the growing number of slaves in the area. Continuing on the theme of law and order, later in the year, the trustees commissioned the construction of a courthouse and jail on Sixth Street which was completed in 1811. The town constructed the building from a plan by John Gwathmey and it was made of brick with large wooden columns at its entrance. The new courthouse was considered one of the finest in the western country. Prior to the construction of the courthouse, the trustees conducted their business in taverns, meeting halls and other informal locations which did not present an image of a strong or permanent government. The lack of any form of law enforcement and a centralized location to conduct town

⁴⁰ Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 9-10 and 40-41

business and dispense justice had been a point of contention for investors because without it, they could not be ensured protection for their interests.⁴¹

By 1809, the trustees completed a task which had eluded earlier trustees which was to find a suitable location on public grounds to construct a public market house. In 1819 the market house remained open and Dr. Henry McMurtrie, A native Philadelphian who served as a ship's surgeon during the War of 1812 and briefly lived in Louisville after, described it in a report presented to James Monroe as "a neat structure, kept it good order, and well supplied, two days in the week, with everything that can be desired in a similar place." Providing physical and legal protection for the town's business interest in the form of watchmen, a courthouse and a public market house constituted a significant step towards assuring local businessmen and outside investors that Louisville was a good place to conduct business. In 1812, people outside of Louisville started to take notice of the progress made by the trustees as the Bank of Kentucky decided to establish a branch at the Falls of the Ohio. In this year, Louisville acquired its first incorporated bank when the Bank of Kentucky opened its doors for business on Main Street with a capital of \$100,000. The directors of the Bank of Kentucky appointed prominent local merchant Thomas Prather of the trading house Prather & Jacob as president of the institution. Prather had an excellent reputation among the merchant community because he came from their class. His appointment as president provided an image of confidence and security. The town previously had an unincorporated bank, the Louisville Bank, but it had not inspired much confidence. Now Louisville's entrepreneurs had a secure location to

⁴¹ L.A. Williams, 223-224; Casseday, 118-119; Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 42.

deposit their money. Six years later, Prather helped establish the Louisville Insurance Company, incorporated by an Act of the Kentucky Legislature on January 31, 1818, and funded at \$100,000. Louisville entrepreneurs had long recognized the need for an insurance company and now they had a safe place to deposit their money and an insurance company to protect their interests against crime and disaster. It also sent a message to investors outside of the Ohio Valley.⁴²

In the years following the Embargo of 1807, the trustees focused their actions on fostering trade and developing an economic infrastructure. They also focused on creating a healthy environment in Louisville. Clearing harbors, building market houses and protecting commercial interests became a priority but they also focused on creating a healthy environment in Louisville. In 1809, Fortescue Cuming commented that Louisville had recently made great progress towards becoming a healthy environment and that “it is now considered by the inhabitants as healthy as any town on the river.” John Melish made the connection between economic improvement and a healthy environment in 1811, when he stated that “there are a great many ponds in the neighbourhoods of the town; at one of them, I observed a rope-walk erecting, and the people were draining the pond...I am persuaded that nothing but draining is wanted to render Louisville quite healthy.” In 1811, Zadock Cramer stated that disease had previously kept Louisville from becoming a commercial and manufacturing center and that problem had now been remedied. Neither

⁴² Fortescue Cuming, “Cuming’s Tour of the Western Country,” in *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, Vol. IV*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites, 260; McMurtrie, 135-136 and 153; Casseday, 135; L.A. Williams, 231; John E. Kleber, “Thomas Prather,” in *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*, ed. John E. Kleber, 719. According to Fortescue Cuming, the two days of the week in which the market operated was every Wednesday and Saturday.

manufacturers nor merchants wanted to invest in an unhealthy environment so it was in the best interests of the trustees to provide a healthy environment.⁴³

Nature presented a great gift to Louisville in the form of the Falls of the Ohio. It provided tremendous commercial advantages to the area but the town failed to reap the rewards because the Board of Trustees had not succeeded in creating an economic infrastructure that was capable of capitalizing on those advantages. In 1799, the United States government presented a gift to Louisville by declaring it a port of entry, building a custom house and assigning a federal collection agent. Before this point, there had been no check on the importation of goods into the United States from Louisiana via its western boundary. Mainly, this meant that the United States had no way of collecting duties on foreign goods entering the country from the West. Even though the collection of duties was intended to mainly provide revenue for the Federal government, it should have provided a boost for Louisville's economy as well because of the increased commerce that came with being a port of entry. In February of 1807, the United States government placed a custom house in New Orleans and shut down the custom house at the Falls of the Ohio. Being a port of entry for eight years did little to grow Louisville's economy because, once again, the trustees had failed to develop an economic infrastructure and the lack of manufacturing caused the town to miss another opportunity. In 1811, Robert Fulton and his steamboat *New Orleans*, which would be followed by countless other steamboats making their way up and down the Ohio River throughout the

⁴³ Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 9-10 and 40-41, McMurtrie, 142-144; Cuming, 259-260; Melish, 380; Zadock Cramer, *The Navigator: Containing Directions for Navigating the Monongahela, Alleghany, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers*, 7th ed. (Pittsburgh: Cramer, Spear & Eichbaum, 1811), 128. Shaw & Shoemaker, Early American Imprints, Series 2. Micro-Form.

decade, presented Louisville another gift and another opportunity to fulfill its economic potential.⁴⁴

Louisville's economy would not receive a major boost from the steamboat until a few years after the voyage of the steamboat *New Orleans* when Captain Henry Miller Shreve and the steamboat *Enterprise* demonstrated true mastery of upriver travel. Built by Daniel French in Brownsville, Pennsylvania on the banks of the Monongahela River, the *Enterprise* made two voyages to Louisville in the summer of 1814 under the command of Captain I. Gregg but did not gain real notoriety until later in the year with its involvement in the War of 1812. In December of 1814, Captain Shreve took command of the vessel and left Pittsburgh with a cargo of ordinance stores for New Orleans. Once it arrived in New Orleans, Andrew Jackson used it on several missions leading up to the Battle of New Orleans. After the war concluded, Shreve took the *Enterprise* on several commercial runs up and down the Mississippi and eventually embarked on the 2,200 mile journey upstream and against rough currents from New Orleans to Pittsburgh with a brief stay at Louisville. Shreve's arrival in Pittsburgh after a 45 day journey demonstrated that steamboat travel on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers was economically and logistically practical. Soon steamboats littered the Ohio River much like keelboats had before and because of its position at the Falls of the Ohio, Louisville reaped the benefits. Prior to the steamboat age on the Ohio River, in a typical year before 1817, twenty barges carrying 100 tons and making one trip apiece and fewer than 150 keelboats carrying thirty tons apiece and making several trips constituted the entirety of river commerce from New Orleans to the upper country. The total tonnage of all boats ascending the Mississippi and

⁴⁴ L.A. Williams, 210; Casseday, 119-121.

Ohio Rivers was somewhere around 6,500 tons. By 1819, the river trade from Louisville to Cincinnati alone accounted for 25 steamboats with a total tonnage nearing 6,500 tons.⁴⁵

Steamboats brought a tremendous amount of commerce to Louisville in the form of river traffic but they also provided the town the opportunity to get back into boatbuilding. In 1818 four steamboats the 200 ton *Exchange*, the 250 ton *Volcano*, the 300 ton *Napoleon* and the 400 ton *Ohio* were constructed at the Falls of the Ohio. In the following years steamboat construction would replace and far surpass the economic importance of the shipbuilding industry which had occupied an important role in Louisville's economy prior to 1807. Steamboats may have increased traffic through Louisville and provided an economic boon but the actions of the trustees and the business community in the previous years made sure the town could handle the enormous boost in commerce by developing an economic infrastructure which had eluded the town in the years prior to the Embargo of 1807.⁴⁶

One of the first noticeable attempts at developing a system of manufacturing came in the form of the Tarascon flour mill in Shippingport which opened immediately after the embargo but numerous other manufacturing endeavors soon followed. In 1812, John Skidmore opened Louisville's first iron foundry. Skidmore's foundry primarily casted small items such as pots and pans, fireplace andirons, grates, stove and oven lids, gudgeons for water and horse mills and smoothing irons. The foundry's operations were fairly modest but still significant to Louisville developing their own economy

⁴⁵ Kreipke, 199-201, McMurtrie, 201; L.A. Williams, 234-235.

⁴⁶ L.A. Williams, 241.

independent from the East because these items had previously been purchased in Philadelphia, Baltimore or Pittsburgh and shipped down the Ohio River. Skidmore sold the business in 1815 to Joshua Headington who expanded the facilities to include all sorts of blacksmith works. The most extensive expansion would come in 1817 when David Prentiss and Thomas Bakewell purchased the foundry. Bakewell and Prentiss immediately acquired new machinery from Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and commenced the building of steam engines. In 1819 alone, they constructed eight steam engines for steamboats and two for land manufactories. The total of value of these ten engines was around \$100,000. Bakewell and Prentiss also forged castings in excess of \$25,000 which they used in the foundry and exported both inside and outside the valley. In addition, they possessed \$70,000 worth of contracts to build additional steam engines. The Prentiss and Bakewell foundry constituted a significant manufacturing interest for Louisville. It provided iron castings and engines for the town that they did not have to import and by exporting their products throughout the Ohio Valley and beyond, they helped reduce the valley's reliance upon other markets. The steam engines that they constructed for steamboats also contributed to the settlement of the West as these boats carried people and goods along western waters. Their engines also helped expand manufacturing in the Ohio Valley as a number of the engines they produced were used in other manufactories.⁴⁷

Jacob and Hikes opened Louisville's first paper mill in 1814. The *Western Courier*, Louisville's third newspaper and one of two that was still publishing at that time, stopped

⁴⁷ McMurtrie, 131; *L.A. Williams*, 231; Casseday, 135-136; George H. Yater, "Iron Foundries," in *The Louisville Encyclopedia*, ed. John E. Kleber, 422. A gudgeon is a socket-like, cylindrical fitting attached to one component to enable a pivoting or hinging connection to a second component.

importing paper from mills outside of the town and exclusively used Jacob and Hikes paper. Businessmen outside of Louisville started to take notice of the improvements made to the town and its developing system of manufactures. In 1816, a group of New England investors headed by James D' Wolf Jr. purchased 100 acres at the corners of Main Street and Portland Avenue and started construction on a whiskey distillery. Whiskey had long been distilled in Louisville but almost exclusively in small stills for private consumption with a surplus for sale. In 1817, Hope Distillery opened its doors and it constituted a \$100,000 investment in Louisville's economy. It was the largest distillery in the United States. The goal was to mass produce Kentucky bourbon, the first attempt to do so, for the eastern market. The distillery contained a 45-horsepower steam engine that powered two stills which had a 1,500 gallon capacity along with a 750 gallon doubler which was in production year round. By 1819, the distillery produced 1,200 gallons of liquor per day.⁴⁸

The Hope Distillery marked a significant departure from how the East had traditionally viewed the Ohio Valley or the West for that matter. In the past the East viewed the Ohio Valley as an extraction point where they would take raw materials from the valley, ship them to eastern cities or Europe to be turned into finished goods and then sent back to the valley for purchase. The Hope Distillery marked a reversal in that thinking. Ohio Valley produce, specifically grains, would be manufactured in Louisville and then sent to the East as a finished product. It epitomized the new kind of economic thinking that had begun to take root in Louisville which looked towards future profit and

⁴⁸ McMurtrie, 127-131; L.A. Williams, 236; Casseday, 143; Lindsey Apple and Albert Young, "Hope Distillery," in *The Louisville Encyclopedia*, John E. Kleber, 398.

planning not just day to day or quick profit. The idea that long term success required long term investment can be found in a letter from James D'Wolf Jr. to his brother in Boston in 1817; he stated that "I found my distilling at Louisville going on better than my fears but it will swallow up immensity of money." D'Wolf realized that it took money to make money and that it would take time to pay dividends, which was an avenue of thought that was not often found in Louisville prior to the Embargo of 1807.⁴⁹

The year 1818 brought two major additions to Louisville's manufacturing base. The first was the Maltz and Jacobsen Sugar Refinery, which commenced operation in May. It produced 300 loaves of sugar which equaled 1,500 pounds of refined sugar per day. Prior to the opening of the refinery all refined sugar had to be imported from the East. The Maltz and Jacobsen Sugar Refinery not only provided sugar for the Ohio Valley but they controlled the western sugar trade. Also of significance is the Peterson and Company Soap and Candle Manufactory. It became the largest soap producer in the western country and turned out 12,000 pounds of soap per week along with 1,000 pounds of candles per day. Like the Maltz and Jacobsen Sugar Refinery, a large amount of its product was sent west. This is important because it gave Louisville a role in facilitating western expansion. The Embargo of 1807 is an important moment in Louisville's economic expansion because it not only fostered the development of a system of manufactures but it also forced the town to not only look upon itself and the rest of the Ohio Valley for its economic needs but it also forced it to recognize the market potential of the west. The Maltz and Jacobsen Sugar Refinery and the Peterson and Company Soap

⁴⁹ James D'Wolf Jr. to John D'Wolf, 7 July 1817, Jas. D'Wolf Letter, MSS CD, Filson Historical Society, Special Collections, Louisville, Ky.

and Candle Manufactory are both examples of this change of vision in regard to the west.⁵⁰

By 1820, Louisville was well on its way to fulfilling its potential as a commercial and industrial center. Its population had grown substantially over the course of the last decade. Its harbors were busy, its merchants were thriving and its manufacturing base was expanding. The rise to economic importance that took place in Louisville and the inner-workings of this change can be seen in greater detail by examining the reactions of the Tarascon brothers to the trade restrictions of Jefferson's Embargo. They adapted their business philosophy and attitudes towards industry and in the process created a blueprint that would be followed by other businessmen in the area and foster the development of a system of manufactures in Louisville.

C.) The Tarascon Brothers and their Grand Plans

The Tarascon brothers, Louis Anastastius and Jean Antoine, were merchants, manufacturers, importer/exporters, shipbuilders and promoters of western expansion. More importantly they possessed a keen sense for business and an uncanny ability to adjust and adapt to rapidly changing economic circumstances. The story of the Tarascon brothers starts in France and ends in Louisville with stops in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. They originally came to Louisville with plans of developing a vast commercial empire built upon the construction of ocean going vessels but the Embargo of 1807 drastically changed those plans.

⁵⁰ McMurtrie, 133-134.

Louis Anastasius Tarascon was born in France on February 10, 1759 in the town of Tarascon or as it is often called Tarascon-sur-Rhone because of its location in the Department of Rhone. Upon reaching adulthood, Tarascon moved to the port city of Marseilles on the Mediterranean Coast where he established himself as a merchant involved in international commerce. He conducted a large amount of business with merchants in Philadelphia. In 1794, Tarascon fled France because of the turmoil created by the French Revolution and more specifically Robespierre's Reign of Terror. He chose the United States as his "new and last patria" and established a mercantile business in Philadelphia with Victor Journal, whom he had met on the sloop *Birmingham Packet* on the journey from Europe. Tarascon selected Philadelphia as his new home in large part because of his previous business contacts in that city. He specialized in the importation of silks and other goods from France and Germany. Jean Antoine Tarascon, better known as John, joined his brother Louis in Philadelphia in 1797 and the two immediately began working together in identifying new and better business opportunities.⁵¹

The Tarascon brothers knew that international trade constituted their greatest opportunity for fortune and success. Louis Tarascon had already established himself in this field but recognized that he not only needed to expand the size of his business but he

⁵¹ Doyce B. Nunis Jr., "Tarascon's Dream of an American Commercial Empire in the West," *Mid-America: An Historical Review* 42, no. 3 (July 1960), 170; George H. Yater, "Louis and John Tarascon" in *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*, ed. John E. Kleber, 866-867; "Traditions of Shippingport: Romance in the History of the once Thriving Settlement," *Louisville Herald*, 13 May 1906; Louis Anastasius Tarascon, "L.A. Tarascon, to His Friends," 6. The town of Tarascon was not named or founded by Louis Tarascon or his family. It is more likely that his family took their name from the town which took its name from the Tarasque, a monster believed by the locals to have lived in the area in the first century A.D. Both the town of Tarascon and the City of Marseilles were targets of Robespierre because of their pronounced allegiance to the King of France. Doyce B. Nunis Jr. identified a third Tarascon brother known only by the initials H.J. who had either come to the United States at the same time as Louis Tarascon or shortly before John Tarascon. No other works on the Tarascons mention this mysterious brother. The basis for Nunis' assumption of his existence comes solely from Hardie's *Philadelphia Directory of 1802*.

needed to obtain a more secure link to the resources of the West. In 1799, he sent two of his clerks, Charles Brugiere and James Berthoud, whom he had met on the trip from France, on a scouting trip into the interior. Their mission was to travel from Pittsburgh to New Orleans along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and assess the feasibility of establishing a trade route between the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys and Europe. He planned to build fully rigged ships in Pittsburgh at the headwaters of the Ohio River and send them downstream to the Gulf of Mexico and eventually Europe. These vessels would be built using materials from the Ohio Valley and stocked with its agricultural produce. Tarascon intended to construct a commercial empire that connected the interior of the United States with foreign markets abroad built upon the extraction of Ohio Valley resources.⁵²

Brugiere and Berthoud returned to Philadelphia with a favorable report which provided Louis Tarascon with the motivation he needed to move forward with his plan. Tarascon's scouts confirmed every aspect of his plan. They found Pittsburgh to be a perfect spot to headquarter his empire. According to Brugiere and Berthoud, Pittsburgh would become a very important city "because of its location, which is as advantageous as it is pleasant, at the confluence of two beautiful rivers, both of which can bring there from about 200 miles away products from the inland, and also because it is located at the head of the Ohio which offers an outlet more sufficient for everything that agriculture and manufacturing will one day be able to furnish." Pittsburgh contained few manufacturers but there was an abundance of stores, around thirty. Brugiere and Berthoud believed that

⁵²Newman F. McGirr, "Tarascon of Shippingport at the Falls of the Ohio," *West Virginia History* (January 1946), 90; Nunis, 171.

Tarascon could do good business in Pittsburgh because most of the stores were owned by absentee owners from Philadelphia and Baltimore and did not appear overly successful. If Tarascon kept an eye on his store himself to make sure it was properly managed and run, he could take business away from the other stores. They also believed that he could be successful because, in general, the stores mainly stocked merchandise from Baltimore and Philadelphia with a small amount of local product such as whiskey, flour and glass. If Tarascon kept his ties to merchants in those cities as well as import nature's surplus from the interior such as wood and other construction material, hemp, wood wax and ginseng along with manufactured products such as flour and whiskey, his store could be better stocked than the competitors. Also, by establishing strong trade networks with Wheeling, Cincinnati and Louisville, he would have ample markets for imported finished goods. Brugiere and Berthoud found no shipyards along the Ohio River but felt that there would soon be because of advantageous circumstances provided by nature, therefore, if Tarascon moved quickly he could get a jump on the competition. The scouts also advised that he could gain a commanding size of the existing boat building market because most the boats built in the area were "in general so poor." Ultimately, the Ohio Valley provided a perfect location and extraction point for Louis Tarascon's commercial empire.⁵³

In 1799, Louis Tarascon along with his brother John and James Berthoud formed a business firm under the name of John A. Tarascon, Brothers, James Berthoud & Co. By 1801, the firm had established a wholesale and retail store, warehouse, shipyard rigging

⁵³ James Berthoud and Charles Brugiere, Extract from a Journal of a Trip from Philadelphia to New Orleans.

and sail loft, anchor smith shop and block manufactory in Pittsburgh. The firm's retail establishment on Water Street near Henderson's Ferry provided the citizens of Pittsburgh the opportunity to purchase goods such as imported cloths, clothes, blankets, queens ware and umbrellas as well as products from the Ohio Valley such as groceries and whiskey. In that same year, the firm constructed two-sea worthy vessels. Louis Tarascon's stated purpose for constructing vessels on the Ohio River was for "ameliorating the commerce of this country, of course all its other means of prosperity, and of seeing all the states of the confederacy united by the ties of mutual interest" and prove "the practability of the navigation of the Ohio by large vessels." The first vessel constructed by the firm was the 120 ton schooner *Amity*. The Tarascons launched it down the Ohio River on December 23, picking up agricultural products along the way, eventually making its way to St. Thomas. The second vessel was the 250 ton *Pittsburgh*, which they loaded with Ohio Valley produce including 3,000 barrels of flour and sent it upstream to Philadelphia and then out to sea with its destination being Bordeaux, France. It eventually returned to Philadelphia with French goods such as wine and brandy, which the firm then sent via wagon at a price of six to eight cents per pound to its store in Pittsburg. In the following years the firm continued to construct ocean-going vessels which it sent both upstream and downstream from Pittsburgh with agricultural products extracted from the Ohio Valley. Among the ships constructed by the firm were the 250 ton brig *Nanino* which was named after John Tarascon's daughter Nannine in 1802, the 300 ton ship *Louisiana* in 1803 and the 400 ton ship *Western Trader* in 1804.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ *Pittsburg Gazette*, 8 January 1802 and 31 December 1802; Louis A. Tarascon, "The Petition Presented by Lewis A. Tarascon of Shippingport, Jefferson County, Ky. To the General Assembly of

Louis Tarascon was quite proud of his shipbuilding achievements and considered himself both an innovator and a pioneer of shipbuilding on western waters. He was one of the first men to attempt the construction of ocean-going vessels on interior rivers at a time when many doubted the wisdom or practicality of building and navigating vessels fit for the sea so deep in the American interior. His success left him feeling like a triumphant warrior who had won the right to taunt his vanquished foe. Tarascon wrote in 1836, "I was right, the results proved it; the doubters and deniers acknowledged it, and so much did they so, that without delay, some of them purchased western land and, at my imitation, built ships." In Tarascon's mind, his achievements put him in the company of great men whose actions had been doubted as well such as Christopher Columbus, Thomas Jefferson and Robert Fulton. Tarascon's success with shipbuilding no doubt gave him the confidence for his own western voyage that he would soon make.⁵⁵

The foreign trade and shipbuilding conducted by the Tarascon brothers resembled the colonial system of trade that existed before the American Revolution and continued into the era of the New Republic. They extracted and exported a significant amount of the Ohio Valley's natural resources to be manufactured in Europe and not locally and then import manufactured goods. Up until this point, the Tarascons' dealings with the Ohio Valley largely benefited the Tarascons at the detriment of the Ohio Valley's future economic viability because their actions hindered the development of a system of manufactures. The constant flow of foreign goods into the valley eliminated the necessity

Kentucky," 1824, Rare Pamphlet 380.13 T177, Filson Historical Society, Filson Library, Louisville, KY; L.A. Williams, 488-489; Nunis, 171-172; McGirr, 90-93.

⁵⁵ Louis Anastasius Tarascon, "L.A. Tarascon, to His Friends," 8-9.

of manufacturing. Only when market disruptions such as Jefferson's Embargo occurred, did the necessity for domestic manufactures arise.⁵⁶

In 1803, Louisville assumed a much larger role in the Tarascon brother's, and thus the firms', vision of a commercial empire originating from western waters. In the fall of that year, the rocks at the Falls of the Ohio, which presented a tricky natural obstruction for passing vessels, destroyed one of their ships. As stated earlier, some captains would unload their cargo on the eastern side of the falls so that the ship would ride higher in the water and then reload it on the western side at Shippingport. More brazen captains, such as the one piloting the firm's vessel in 1803, would charge straight into the rapids at the falls and rely on their sailing skills to carry them through. More often than not, their skills presented no match for the rough water and rocks at the falls. The loss of this vessel proved to be a valuable lesson for Louis Tarascon and his firm. The experience convinced him that he had been building ships in the wrong location or more specifically, the wrong side of the Falls of the Ohio. According to Tarascon, "the choice of the town of Pittsburgh for the construction of those vessels was an error of which we have been convinced by a dear bought experience... it is below the Rapids, that vessels fit for the sea must be constructed and laden." In December of 1803, James Berthoud traveled to Louisville and on the behalf of the firm and purchased 45 acres of land from Colonel Campbell in Shippingport which had previously been used for the cultivation of tobacco for \$2,306.25. The Tarascon brothers intended to establish a

⁵⁶ Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*, 1-2; John J. McCusker & Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British North America, 1607-1789*, 5-9; John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 685-686.

shipbuilding and export/import operation in Shippingport because of the difficulties presented by the falls. Following the firm's purchase of land from Campbell, the Tarascon brothers bought in their own name two lots in downtown Louisville on Main Street from merchants Nelson Clarke and Charles Anderson. They operated a produce market and store on those lots. Starting in 1804, after their initial purchase of property, the firm started sending French emigrants to Louisville so they would have a readymade population and workforce in Shippingport when they completed the move.⁵⁷

The Tarascon brother's plan for Shippingport and subsequently Louisville was both elaborate and expensive therefore they would need investors. The firm paid the note for the land they purchased in Shippingport but lacked the funds to move their operation from Pittsburgh to Louisville and finance their extensive plans for the new location. In 1806, they released a pamphlet aimed at Philadelphia investors titled "An Address to the Citizens of Philadelphia." Their pitch was simple and described their plans as such, to establish shipyards "below the rapids for the purpose of building vessel, to sail down the lower Ohio, and Mississippi, taking on their way, the agricultural produce of the inhabitants of the banks of the river; to carry the same to foreign countries, either for the account of the citizens of Pennsylvania, or the citizens of the Western Country, but always to bring back the returns to Philadelphia." Through money contributed by various

⁵⁷ George H. Yater, "Louis and John Tarascon" in *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*, ed. John E. Kleber, 866-867; Tarascon, Berthoud and Co., "An Address to the Citizens of Philadelphia," 1806 (Shaw & Shoemaker, Early American Imprints, Series 2, no. 11431), 12; John J. Crnkovich, "Tarascon Junr., James Berthoud & Co. and the Development of Shippingport, Kentucky" (Master's Thesis, University of Louisville, 1959), 15-18; McGirr, 94. Crnkovich obtained his material on the firm's purchase of land in Shippingport, their commercial plans and the Tarascons' individual purchase of town lots in Louisville from court documents pertaining to lawsuit filed by James Berthoud against the heirs of Capt. Campbell which he included in their entirety in the appendix of his work.

investors and a series of loans, the firm obtained over \$70,000 for their move to Shippingport.⁵⁸

Tarascon's explanation of the wisdom of building a commercial center at the Falls of Ohio which included a shipyard for the construction of ocean going vessels to Philadelphia businessmen can be considered not only as a plea for investors to contribute much needed funds but also an extraction manifesto. He labeled the relationship between Philadelphia and the West as reciprocal because Philadelphia "supplies the western country with a vast quantity of foreign merchandise, and the state at large furnishes it with a variety of articles of its own manufacture" and "the western country on the other hand, supplies Pennsylvania with hemp, cotton, flax, bees-wax, ginseng, peltries, saltpetre, and pays her a considerable balance in cash." A closer examination of Tarascon's statement shows that the relationship was far from reciprocal. Philadelphia needed the Ohio Valley's raw materials to send to Europe to feed its industrial machines. Pittsburgh also needed the Ohio Valley to feed its own increasing industrial machines. The Ohio Valley received finished goods made from their own raw materials. In reality the Tarascon brothers would be doing the same thing that they did before, taking agricultural produce and natural resources out of the Ohio Valley to ship and sell on foreign shores and then import finished goods back into the valley to sell to its citizens at a considerable mark-up. The only difference being that they would now be based deep in the valley and not on its edges which would give them greater access to and control of its resources and

⁵⁸ George H. Yater, "Louis and John Tarascon," in *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*, ed. John E. Kleber, 866-867; Crnkovich, 15-18; Tarascon, Berthoud and Co., "An Address to the Citizens of Philadelphia," 6.

markets. This plan still signified the exploitation of the Ohio Valley at the hands of eastern business interests.⁵⁹

The firm's move to Shippingport did not go as planned as their scheme started to unravel shortly after they announced the move. Before even arriving at the Falls of the Ohio, the firm had accumulated debts well in excess of \$70,000 despite selling off all their assets in Pittsburgh. In March of 1807, James Berthoud became increasingly alarmed at the size of the firm's mounting debt and with payment coming due and no immediate income, he moved to dissolve his partnership with the Tarascon brothers. In the dissolution of the firm, Berthoud received fourteen lots in Shippingport on which he built a warehouse and home. The Tarascon brothers received everything else including all previous debts incurred and the rights to all of the firm's past and future work. The brothers now found themselves on their own which was not a terrible fate since the vision that had brought them to Louisville belonged almost entirely to Louis Tarascon. However, a more significant blow to their plans would soon be dealt by Thomas Jefferson.⁶⁰

Unfortunately, for the Tarascon brothers, by the time they arrived in Louisville, the Embargo of 1807 had put a halt to foreign trade and diminished the need for the further construction of ocean going vessels. When the United States government came to Louisville in search of a shipyard to build vessels capable of traversing ocean waters in May of 1808, it was Louis Tarascon they called upon and him who told them they would have to look elsewhere. Tarascon had come to Louisville in large part to construct a

⁵⁹ Tarascon, Berthoud and Co., "An Address to the Citizens of Philadelphia," 3.

⁶⁰ Crnkovich, 20-21.

shipyard and build ocean-going vessels and for him to tell a major purchaser such as the federal government that he could not build vessels for them because he did not have a shipyard capable of doing so; something drastic must have happened since his arrival in early 1807. In 1824, Louis Tarascon recollected that in 1807 he was “caused” to focus on manufacturing instead of shipbuilding, the endeavor that brought him to Louisville. Although, Tarascon did not mention the Embargo of 1807 by name in his recollection, there was no other occurrence during that year that would have forced him to abandon a significant element of his plans other than Jefferson’s trade restrictions. This coupled with the assertions by historians Leland Baldwin and Archer B. Hulbert which attributed significant blame on the demise of Ohio Valley shipbuilding on Jefferson’s Embargo makes it a very safe assumption that the event that “caused” Tarascon to stop construction on the shipyard was the embargo.⁶¹

Despite not being able to realize their plans to construct ships at the Falls of the Ohio, the Tarascon brothers did not leave Louisville, mainly for two reasons. The first reason was that they had invested a large amount of their financial resources during the move and sold their Pittsburgh holdings. In essence, there was no going back as they had nowhere to go. The Tarascon brothers, and Louis in particular, had staked their reputations and their financial fortunes on building a commercial empire in the heart of the Ohio Valley at the Falls of the Ohio. It was a bold move that conventional wisdom said was imprudent. Another reason that the Tarascon brothers did not give up on Louisville was that the area always had and still did hold vast economic potential.

⁶¹ Nunis, 174; Captain David Potter to J.A. Tarascon, May 11, 1808, Captain David Potter Letter Book, MSS. CP; Ashe, 236; Tarascon, “The Petition Presented by Lewis A. Tarascon of Shippingport, Jefferson County, Ky. To the General Assembly of Kentucky,” 5; Crnkovich, 20; Leland D. Baldwin, “Shipbuilding on Western Waters”, 42-43; Archer B. Hulbert, “Western Ship-Building” 732-733.

Shipbuilding was just one aspect, albeit a significant aspect, of Louis Tarascon's plan. He envisioned Louisville, and more specifically Shippingport as a commercial center from which the natural bounty of the area could be exported to the East and Europe. With Jefferson's Embargo cutting off foreign markets, Tarascon could still make his plan work but he would have to turn his sights away from the East and unto the Ohio Valley. He would turn his sights to not only the Ohio Valley but the West as a whole, not as a means but as an end.

The Tarascon brothers replaced the role that shipbuilding had originally occupied in their plan with manufacturing and replaced trade with Europe with domestic trade, and more specifically internal trade within the Ohio Valley. Actually, domestic trade did not constitute an alien idea to the brothers as Louis Tarascon had actually addressed the idea of facilitating domestic trade in 1806 by stating that by moving west, they would "produce a greater intercourse between the inhabitants of the eastern and western countries and identifying more and more their manners and customs, as well as their interests, will strengthen the bonds of friendship between them and greatly contribute to consolidate and, we hope, to perpetuate the American Union." In regard to manufacturing, Louis Tarascon wrote in 1836 that he fully recognized the benefits of manufacturing at the Falls of the Ohio upon his arrival in the area in 1807. Walking along the banks of the Ohio River from the ferry landing to the mouth of Beargrass Creek the idea of building water mills on the Ohio River became evident. Jefferson's trade restrictions, the loss of foreign markets and the sudden economic infeasibility of ship

building did not ruin the Tarascons' dream of building a commercial empire at the Falls of the Ohio; it only forced them to redefine their vision.⁶²

The Tarascons immediately built a flour mill which manufactured flour for both the local market and New Orleans, retail store, warehouses, saw mill and a twelve hundred foot ropewalk which Fortescue Cumings described as "one of the finest ropewalks in the United States" in Shippingport. The most vital of the Tarascon brother's Shippingport business endeavors to this study is the flour mill which also held a significant amount of importance to Louis Tarascon as well. He stated later in his life that his flour mill at Shippingport and its successor were "the first great mills which ever existed in the western country" and that by building these mills he had "contributed his share towards drawing the name of Kentucky flour from a mire of merited discredit, and at raising it up to a high standing."⁶³

In 1815, the Tarascon brothers began construction on what they hoped would be their crowning achievement, a new six story water powered brick graining mill. The mill was the first to utilize the rapids at the Falls of the Ohio for power. The Tarascon brothers brought in machinery from Pittsburgh and France. They based the design of the mill on Philadelphia mechanic and engineer Oliver Evans' design for an automated grain-milling which utilized elevators, belt conveyors, screws and gravity chutes. The brothers opened the mill in 1819 with a price tag exceeding \$150,000 and the capacity to produce 500 barrels of flour per day. The mill also contained equipment for cotton spinning, fulling

⁶² Tarascon, Berthoud & Co., "An Address to the Citizens of Philadelphia," 13; Louis Anastasius Tarascon, "L.A. Tarascon, to His Friends," 11.

⁶³ Cramer, *The Navigator*, 11th ed, 106-107; Captain David Potter to J.A. Tarascon, May 11, 1808, Captain David Potter Letter Book, MSS. CP.; Cumings, 260; Louis A. Tarascon, "The Petition Presented by Lewis A. Tarascon of Shippingport, Jefferson County, Ky. To the General Assembly of Kentucky."

and weaving all powered by water. In 1819, Dr. Henry McMurtrie described the mill to President James Monroe as “the most perfect specimen of the millwright’s abilities to be found in this or any other country.” The significance of the Tarascon mills is that they were now not just extracting resources from the Ohio Valley economy to send to foreign markets, but engaging in agricultural manufacturing that would benefit the inhabitants of the Louisville area. Because of the enormous size of the mill, it required greater agricultural production which meant that the area’s farmers would now see greater demand for their products. Furthermore, the mill would provide jobs.⁶⁴

By 1819, the Tarascon brothers had turned Shippingport into a commercial center and realized, at least temporarily, their dream of a commercial empire at the Falls of the Ohio. The town possessed nearly 600 residents and had expanded beyond its original 45 acres. A large amount of these residents found employment at the Tarascons’ various manufactories, warehouses and wharf. The issue of job creation in an environment like Louisville and Shippingport is complicated and actually entailed the expansion of slavery. At this time, Louisville’s population contained 1,126 blacks, both enslaved and free although slaves far outnumbered those who were free. The large number of slaves is important to consider because it is indicative of the kind of economy that was developing in the area. It was neither Southern nor Northern but possessed elements of both.

Louisville and its surrounding area did possess a plantation system and a large number of its slaves worked in agriculture but others worked in its growing system of manufactures.

The Tarascon brothers made liberal use of slave labor in their business operations from

⁶⁴ George H. Yater, “The Brothers Tarascon: A Dream of Power,” in *The Tarascon Mill: Shippingport’s Great Mill Reconstructed in Words, Pictures and a Model*, ed. George H. Yater (Portland, Ky: Portland Museum/Roosevelt Community School, inc., 1981), 1; *Louisville Public Advertiser*, 30 October 1819; McMurtrie, 162-164.

their arrival at the Falls of the Ohio. Their mills and ropewalks ran, in part, on slave labor. Other manufacturers also used slaves and one particular ropewalk in the area employed “forty or fifty negro boys.” There is no record that the Tarascon brothers owned slaves but starting in September of 1807, they rented bound laborers. One source of the Tarascon’s slave labor was Alexander Scott Bullitt of Oxmoor who leased the brothers slaves on two year contracts.⁶⁵

Besides the mill, the Tarascon brothers also operated warehouses, retail stores and a wharf. By 1819, their ropewalk was no longer in operation because of the decline of hemp but they would soon compensate for the loss. During the excavation of the lots for the flour mill the Tarascons stumbled upon a new industry. Louis Tarascon discovered that the red clay along the river bank was ideal for making brick. This led him to open a brick manufactory that spurred the building of brick houses in both Shippingport and Louisville.⁶⁶

The Tarascons were not the only residents of Shippingport who added to Louisville’s industrial and commercial base as the brother’s ex-partner; James Berthoud operated a store, warehouse and commission office. Berthoud conducted extensive business with Lexington and other towns within the Ohio Valley and further west such as New Orleans and Natchez. He conducted a significant amount of this business with John Wesley Hunt of Lexington. His business with Hunt primarily entailed sending goods by

⁶⁵ L.A. Williams, 247; George H. Yater, “Louisville: A Historical Overview,” in *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*, ed. John E. Kleber, xvi-xvii; Yater, *Two Hundred Years at the Falls of the Ohio*, 42-43; McMurtrie, 160-161; J.A. Tarascon – Alexander Scott Bullitt Slave Rental Agreements, September 1, 1807- September 22, 1813, Bullitt Family Papers-Oxmoor Collection, 1683-2003, MSS A. B937c, Folders 38-40, Filson Historical Society, Special Collections, Louisville, KY;

⁶⁶ “Traditions of Shippingport: Romance in the History of the once Thriving Settlement,” *Louisville Herald*, 13 May 1906.

wagon that arrived from New Orleans to Hunt in Lexington and sending Hunt's hemp products such as rope and bagging down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to Natchez and New Orleans. Berthoud's dealings with Hunt lasted until his death in 1819. In most cases, Berthoud was merely a middle man but he still played a very important role in the development of a regional economy in the Ohio Valley because he facilitated trade within the valley as well as trade with the West. Shippingport also contained its own distillery. Operated by a gentleman from the Tarascons' native France, the Napoleon Distillery produced distilled waters, cordials and various liqueurs. Henry McMurtrie commented that the progress made by the community in regard to commerce, manufacturing, culture and aesthetic beauty had transformed it into the "Bois de Boulogne" of Louisville. Louis Tarascon had envisioned a commercial empire at the west side of the Falls of the Ohio based upon shipbuilding and the exportation of the area's natural resources but due to the Embargo of 1807 and demise of shipbuilding on western waters, he had to re-imagine his dream to include manufacturing and internal trade. And in the short-term, he succeeded.⁶⁷

By the eighteen-thirties, however, the commercial empire of the Tarascon brothers had collapsed and the once thriving community of Shippingport reduced to a shadow of its former self. Shippingport was the brainchild of Louis Tarascon and their fates were inseparably linked. Tarascon blamed his own financial ruin and the decline of Shippingport on the Panic of 1819 which caused a vicious cycle of inflation and deflation in which banks refused to redeem their own paper money and the opening of the Louisville and Portland canal in 1830 which took away the necessity of ships having to

⁶⁷ James Berthoud to John W. Hunt, 26 June 1810, John Wesley Hunt Papers 1792-1849, MSS A H941 Folder 7, Filson Historical Society, Special Collections, Louisville, Ky; James Berthoud to John Wesley Hunt, 8 April 1816, John Wesley Hunt Papers 1792-1849, MSS A H941M Folder 12; Crnkovich, 30; McMurtrie, 160-161. Bois de Boulogne was and still is a resort community outside of Paris, France.

stop at the Falls of the Ohio to unload cargo. The Panic of 1819 made it very difficult to acquire credit; in Tarascon's own words, "the error of banking establishments" led to his "ruin." The opening of the canal in Louisville was a long process that dates to the town's earliest years. In 1804, a company was incorporated to excavate a canal around the falls but nothing came of the endeavor but a few surveys. In 1809, the United States Congress authorized a subscription from the national treasury of \$150,000 to the Ohio Canal Company with the stipulation that the company secure half the funds needed for construction of the canal. The Ohio Canal Company failed to meet the requirement and the project died. In 1815, the Kentucky Legislature passed a resolution to request the cooperation of surrounding states in the construction of a canal around the falls with the Ohio Canal Company once again commissioned to oversee the project but, like the others, nothing came of this attempt. In 1825 the General Assembly of Kentucky authorized the construction of a canal at the Falls of the Ohio and chartered a company composed of Philadelphia businessmen to construct it with a sizable contribution from the Federal government and this attempt proved to be a success. The two mile long Louisville and Portland Canal opened in 1830 with a total cost of nearly \$1,000,000. The canal proved to be a tremendous boon for Louisville's economy.⁶⁸

Although a boon for Louisville's economy, the Louisville and Portland Canal Company signaled doom for the Tarascon brothers. Louis Tarascon had advocated for a canal the entirety of his residence at the City by the Falls and he had done the same before he ever made his move to Louisville. As far back as his plea to Philadelphia

⁶⁸ Louis A. Tarascon, "The Petition Presented by Lewis A. Tarascon of Shippingport, Jefferson County, Ky. To the General Assembly of Kentucky"; Louis Anastasius Tarascon, "L.A. Tarascon, to His Friends," 11-13; Wade, 174-175; L.A. Williams, 46-49.

investors in 1806, Tarascon voiced his desire to “cut a canal of navigation along the portage, between Louisville, and Shippingport.” Shippingport was the key word for Tarascon, but the final location of the Louisville and Portland Canal bypassed him and his community. All of the traffic that Tarascon envisioned would come to Shippingport as a result of a canal went to the nearby upriver community of Portland, which also had better anchorage, instead. In 1836, he condemned the canal and the men who designed and constructed it. According to Tarascon, the men behind the canal project destroyed Shippingport through the “unjudicious, illiberal, unforeseeing location of the Louisville and Portland Canal.” Ultimately, Louis Tarascon was not upset with the concept of a canal as he felt it would be economically beneficially to his many investments, only its location which almost entirely excluded him from the benefits.⁶⁹

Although Louis Tarascon placed the blame for the downfall of himself, his brother and Shippingport on banks and canal builders, outside forces did not play the only role in his demise. Tarascon’s grand vision and more specifically the enormous scale of his flour mill played a large role in his economic ruin and thusly, that of his brother and Shippingport. The mill cost over \$150,000 and took several years to construct and turned out to be far too ambitious. The Tarascon brothers had too much capital tied up in the construction of the mill and never had enough funds to properly operate the facility. The mill was so large that its production capacity often exceeded demand making operating costs exceed sales. Another problem can be found in the use of water power from the rapids. In concept, it was a excellent idea because the churning of the rapids would

⁶⁹ Tarascon, Berthoud and Co., “An Address to the Citizens of Philadelphia”, 6; Louis Anastasius Tarascon, “L.A. Tarascon, to His Friends,” 11-13.

provide the power to fuel the machines but, in reality, the Falls of the Ohio only provided sufficient power during certain times of the year because often the water was too high to produce the force needed. Because of the unpredictability of the falls, the mill had to shut down for up to six months a year because of a lack of power. Furthermore, mills constructed after the Tarascon mill operated on steam power which allowed them to operate year round. Steam played another role in the decline of the Tarascon brothers and Shippingport because as steamboats began to replace other boats along the Ohio River, traffic stopping at Portland increased because it possessed better anchorage for steamboats which caused a decline in commerce at the wharf in Shippingport. The Tarascon brothers never attempted to build steamboats or switch to steam powered machinery because they had invested too much capital in their water-driven mill and had nothing left to invest in steam. The opening of the Tarascon mill constituted the crowning achievement of the brothers, but they had to watch on the sidelines as others expanded upon their vision and commercial plans for the City at the Falls because they painted themselves into a financial corner.⁷⁰

As debt continued to pile up for the Tarascons in the early 1820s, the brothers secured two loans, one in October of 1822 for \$820 and a second in January of 1823 for \$880 dollars, but neither proved to be enough to stop the financial bleeding or keep their creditors at bay. Their empire was clearly in decline. In February of 1823, a St. Louis firm filed a plea of debt against the Tarascon brothers for \$8,000. A jury found against the Tarascons and being unable to pay, a claim was placed against their mill. The court put an executor in charge of the mill until it could be sold. On August 11, 1825, as a

⁷⁰ McMurtrie, 164; Yater, "The Tarascon Mill", 4; Crnkovich, 20 and 31.

result of the loss of their mill, mounting debt and the crumbling of their empire, John Tarascon committed suicide by shooting himself in the head at the age of sixty. John Tarascon knew his economic outlook was bleak and at sixty years of age he was too old to start over. A friend of John Tarascon's said as much in his obituary, "with stoick patience he bore his share of the tribulations on this world as long as he considered his exertions as being of any service to his fellow men; but deprived of his means of utility, he considered a continuance of his travels on earth as useless, and he returned to his Creator." Bad business decisions and the bypassing of Shippingport by the canal left John Tarascon in financial ruin and he chose not to labor on.⁷¹

Unlike his brother, Louis Tarascon chose to labor on but he was now alone in trying to save what they had built together and the results would not be favorable. 1828 witnessed a desperate attempt by Tarascon to reclaim control of his mill. In June of that year, Tarascon and his nephew Henry entered the mill during lunch hour while the workers were outside eating. Brandishing flintlocks, the two Tarascons barricaded themselves inside the walls of the mill effectively creating an armed siege. Tarascon alleged that creditors had fraudulently laid claim to the mill and that he was only taking back by force what rightfully belonged to him. For several hours he fired at anyone who approached the entrance. Eventually, the two men surrendered to the sheriff and his deputies and the "Battle of the Mill" ended. A couple of months later, Tarascon attempted once again to take the mill by force but this time left without firing a shot. This ended Louis Tarascon's involvement with the mill as a federal court awarded it to a group of

⁷¹ Crnkovich, 42 and 45-49; A Friend of the Deceased, "Obituary," *Morning Post and Commercial Advertiser* (Louisville), 16 August 1825.

Philadelphia businessmen in 1833 as repayment of a loan they made to him in 1806.

Tarascon moved to New York shortly after where he died in 1840.⁷²

Louis Tarascon never gave up on the West. He continued to champion its economic importance and the role it could play in the growth of the United States. He spent his last remaining years soliciting investors for a joint capital company with the purpose of building a community in the far west called Startspoint. The town would be built along the same blueprint as Shippingport with a strong emphasis on manufacturing and domestic trade. The new community would also emphasize republican virtue and stress the importance of instilling upon the next generation a republican education which focused on the ideals of the French Enlightenment. The purpose of this community was to provide its inhabitants with a virtuous and happy life but also to facilitate the “gradual western march” of the United States. The explanation of his plan also showed his contempt and anger over the way that his commercial empire in Shippingport had crumbled as he continually stressed that all people should “perform his or her share of the labors wanted for the support and pleasures of life, and to make them all equally enjoy those pleasures in proportion of their merits or rights.” He would go to his grave feeling that he had not been properly rewarded for the work that he put into Shippingport and Louisville and that the fame and fortune for his actions had gone to other men who did not deserve the merit. Startspoint would be his chance to right the wrongs that had been dealt to him in the Ohio Valley, in essence it would be his new start. Tarascon died before he could bring his new plan to fruition.⁷³

⁷² Yater, “The Tarascon Mill,” 5.

⁷³ Louis Anastasius Tarascon, “L.A. Tarascon, to His Friends,” 4-5 and 13-14.

The ultimate demise of the Tarascons' commercial empire at Shippingport in no way diminishes their contribution to Louisville's growth or the fulfilling of its economic potential. The Tarascon brothers, and to a greater extent Louis Tarascon, provided a blueprint for economic growth and development that would be followed by other Louisville businessmen. They were "pioneers of a new era of civilization" at the Falls of the Ohio, built upon manufacturing and domestic trade. On a personal level they may have ultimately failed by not being able to maintain the empire they built over the long-term but in regard to lifting Louisville from an economic quagmire in which it had long been trapped, they succeeded. Shortly before his death, Louis Tarascon summed up this change in the nation's economic vision in regard to the West as well as giving himself a significant amount of credit for that change when he wrote, "I made the opening of the present immense navigation of the western rivers and induced eastern eyes, much more than before, to look westwardly." Those who encountered Louis Tarascon would have probably been more likely to use the word "braggart" instead of "humble" to describe him as he never missed an opportunity for self congratulations but in this instance his description of his role in western expansion and the growth of the Ohio Valley can be called nothing but accurate.⁷⁴

In 1800, Louisville proper contained 359 people and Jefferson County had a population of 8,754. Jefferson County was largely rural and the town of Louisville held very little importance. By 1810, the town and county's population rose to 1,357 and 13,399 people respectively. In 1830, Louisville's population increased to 10,341 and

⁷⁴ Louis Anastasius Tarascon, "L.A. Tarascon, to His Friends," 11.

23,979 people lived in the surrounding county. At this time, Louisville surpassed Lexington as Kentucky's largest city and was the fourteenth largest city in the United States. Jefferson County was still largely rural but the city itself had grown substantially in terms of size, population and importance. Additionally, Louisville was becoming an industrial and commercial center. In 1830 alone, it is estimated that total wholesale business in the city amounted to \$29,000,000. Steamboat building was a large part of its manufacturing base but also contained many other manufactures including candy, soap, liquor and metal. It can be argued that population growth, the arrival of the steamboat age and other technological advancements along with a general march towards modernity aided Louisville's rise to prominence. To some degree all of these arguments would be correct as this study does not attempt to discount population growth, the advent of the steamboat or inevitable progress as reasons for why Louisville developed a system of manufactures and network of internal trade. But the fact of the matter is that prior to the Embargo of 1807, Louisville had made very little progress towards becoming a commercial or industrial center. Few people wanted to live in Louisville and even fewer wanted to invest in its economic future. Louisville's economic growth is proof positive that policy matters.⁷⁵

Jefferson's Embargo sparked growth, both in terms of economy and population, in Louisville. The embargo closed foreign ports and forced the town to manufacture its own goods. It forced the trustees and business community to embrace a new way of economic thinking that looked to the future not just the present. The trustees built an economic

⁷⁵ John P. Marcum Jr. "Population" in *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*, 714-715; Yater "Louisville: A Historical Overview," xvi-xviii.

infrastructure that possessed the ability to accommodate the population growth and the arrival of the steamboat and as a result continued to expand. The changes that occurred in Louisville took place throughout the Ohio Valley and while it is true that the economic improvements were slower to develop than in other areas of the valley that is mainly because the City at the Falls was in such bad shape in terms of economic advancement before the embargo. Louisville's rise to economic importance was a slow but steady march sparked by Jefferson's Embargo and the Tarascon brothers contributed significantly to the journey.

CONCLUSION

On the floor of the United States Senate on April 6, 1810, Henry Clay told his colleagues an odd story of a man and woman quarrelling over the preparation of their meals. It seems the gentleman had been in the habit of “supplying his table from a neighboring cook and confectioner’s shop.” Eventually, he began to doubt the prudence of sending out for their meals. The gentleman proposed that they obtain a servant and start eating food prepared in their own kitchen. His wife “revolted at the idea” and could not tolerate the thought as her “delicate nerves could not bear the clattering of kitchen furniture.” Undeterred, the man persisted in his attempts to change their dining habits. Eventually, his wife gave in and they started having their meals prepared at home. According to Clay, the end result was that “his table was thenceforth cheaper and better supplied, and his neighbor, the confectioner, lost one of his best customers.” The reason for Clay telling this story was not to illustrate the charms of his native Kentucky or its people but rather to promote domestic manufactures. Clay compared the woman in his story to Americans who were determined to continue importing all or most of the nation’s manufactured goods. The Senator from Kentucky stated that “Dame Commerce will oppose domestic manufactures. She is a flirting, flippant noisy jade, and if we are governed by her fantasies, we shall never put off the muslins of India and the cloths of Europe.” The gist of the story was that the couple stopped importing and started

producing. He challenged his colleagues as to why America as a whole could not do the same.¹

There are many different elements to Clay's story. The first is that it reinforced longstanding stereotypes involving men, woman and gender roles. Clay equated women with consumption, waste and irrational thought and men with work, thrift and rationality. He appealed to the misogynistic attitudes of his all male crowd by imputing females with a negative stereotype in order to advance his goals. Clay made the cause of domestic manufacturing the domain of men and linked women to its opposition. The second element is that he danced around the issue of slavery. The couple in his story were well-to-do and when he said that they would get a servant to prepare their meals, he was implicitly endorsing the institution of slavery. Kentucky was a slave holding society and home production in this type of society among the wealthy more often than not meant that slaves would do the work. In Clay's native Kentucky, slavery was already becoming an element of factory work and he was appealing to certain members of his audience. Although Clay was not a supporter of slavery, he was an opportunist. Finally, Clay's story also illustrates the advancements that the issue of domestic manufactures had made in just a few short years. More importantly, it was not necessarily what he said but instead the fact that he chose to say it on the floor of the United States Senate. This is similar to Adam Seybert, a Democratic-Republican Congressman from the state of Pennsylvania, who just a few months earlier requested that copies of Alexander

¹ Henry Clay, "On Domestic Manufactures" in *The Life and Speeches of the Honorable Henry Clay, Volume I*, ed. Daniel Mallory (New York: Robert P. Bixby & Co., 1843), 195-196.

Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* be reprinted and passed out amongst his colleagues. The difference being that Clay was a bluegrass planter from Kentucky.²

How a man like Henry Clay from an agricultural region such as Kentucky in the interior of the United States was influenced to talk like a Philadelphia manufacturer on a national stage is a question that is at the heart of this study. This is a story of economic transformation and how and why it occurred and the Embargo of 1807 is an essential element. Clay used a homespun truism to claim ownership of an issue that had long been a topic of political debate. Since the inception of the American Republic, the cause of domestic manufacturing had been advocated by both Federalists and Democratic-Republicans at different times. Clay himself had championed the cause while serving in the Kentucky legislature. Jefferson's Embargo placed domestic manufacturing at the forefront of a national discussion on how America should produce, whether industrially or agriculturally, and what role the federal government should play. Clay used the issue as a springboard to national prominence and continued to advocate manufactures throughout the rest of his career with the American System. More importantly than advancing the career of Henry Clay, the Embargo of 1807 reoriented the Ohio Valley's economy from the colonial patterns tied to transatlantic trade toward manufacturing for the domestic market.³

The United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a rural agrarian nation. It did not possess a manufacturing mindset. Its role in transatlantic trade had long

² Henry Clay, "On Domestic Manufactures," 195-196; Marion B. Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky from Slavery to Segregation, 1760-1891* (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 2003), vi and xxii; Robert V. Remini, *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union*, 26-27; Lawrence A. Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution: The Intellectual Origins of Early American Industry*, 152-156; Peskin, "How Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing," 235 and 243.

³ Maurice G. Baxter, *Henry Clay and the American System*, 5-6 and 199-210.

been the colonial one of supplier and consumer. During the Colonial Era, European agents extracted America's natural resources and turned them into manufactured goods abroad. They then sent those goods back across the Atlantic Ocean for sale. In the post-colonial Era and the early years of the New Republic, businessmen from the United States assumed the role previously held by European agents. In essence, the post-colonial economy of the United States did not change much from its colonial economy. America possessed the potential to produce for itself but had no compelling reason to do so.⁴

As a whole, through the first decade of the nineteenth century, Americans generally did not embrace domestic manufacturing or recognize its merits. If the current system was not broke, they saw no reason to fix it. The importation of foreign goods and exportation of natural resources had long dominated the economics of the Americas and was the basis of the national economy. The problem was it left the economy as a whole and individuals vulnerable to economic decisions made by foreign nations. Furthermore, it created an imbalance in trade. The United States imported far more than it exported. But, Americans generally did not look far into their economic futures and instead focused on what was working in the present. Therefore, most Americans found little impetus to change and those making profits from foreign trade such as merchants fought against manufacturing. This reluctance to pursue domestic manufactures also involved the same reasoning that led Thomas Jefferson to argue that America's workshops should stay abroad and that was fear that the United States would become Britain. Clay identified this mindset when he declared that those opposed to domestic manufacturing "transport

⁴ Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*, 1-2; John J. McCusker & Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British North America, 1607-1789*, 5-9.

themselves to the establishments of Manchester and Birmingham, and, dwelling on the indigence, vice, and wretchedness prevailing there, by pushing it to an extreme, argue that its introduction into this country will necessarily be attended by the same mischievous and dreadful consequences.” Much of the problem was the refusal of many Americans to fully understand the concept of economic diversification and the possibility that merchant activities, agriculture and manufacturing could peacefully and successfully co-exist.⁵

There was a general fear that America would become a manufacturing society and destroy the livelihoods of farmers and merchants. Ultimately, this was not the case as manufacturers needed the support of both to succeed. Much of the manufacturing that developed in the United States, especially in the early years, was agriculturally based and necessitated increased agricultural production. A prime example of this was the relationship between textile mills in the Northeast and cotton farmers in the South. The proliferation of textile mills in the first quarter of the nineteenth century required that the South increase their cotton production. Hemp farmers also received a boost from the rise of textile production as their product was needed to manufacture bags and rope to package the cotton. Other industries such as breweries and distilleries required a constant supply of grain and barley. However, it was not unreasonable for Americans at the turn of the nineteenth century to believe that manufacturing would destroy traditional ways of live as they were entering virgin territory and did not know what to expect. Americans

⁵ Thomas Jefferson “Notes on the State of Virginia” in *Jefferson: Writings (Autobiography, Notes on the State of Virginia, Public and Private Papers, Addresses, Letters)*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: The Library of America, 1994), 290-291; Lawrence A. Peskin, “How the Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing: The First Parties and the New Economy,” 238; Lawrence A. Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution*, 4-5; Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic*, 230-233; Henry Clay, “On Domestic Manufactures,” 196.

needed a reason to alter their commercial behaviors and start manufacturing their own finished goods.⁶

The Embargo of 1807 provided an impetus for change. It also altered attitudes towards domestic manufacturing and more importantly, behavior. By stopping the flow of manufactured goods into and agricultural surplus out of the country, Americans had to reassess their commercial habits. America was forced to find a new way to use its natural resources and supply internal demand for manufactured goods as old business models no longer worked and domestic manufacturing became more palatable. As a result of the embargo, the demand for American manufactured goods increased greatly almost overnight.⁷

The major consequence of the Embargo of 1807 was that it spurred America to embrace manufacturing and lessen its dependence on imports and transatlantic trade. The nation started on a journey to becoming an industrial power. Jefferson's Embargo brought temporary discomfort but changed American attitudes towards domestic manufactures. Historians have conducted some work on the economies of certain regions of the country during this period such as the Northeast and the Middle States in order to illustrate how they fit into the larger story of the Embargo of 1807. Absent from these studies is the West and more specifically the Ohio Valley. This is a significant exclusion because the Ohio Valley is a major part of the story and played a key role in the development of a system of manufactures in the United States.

⁶ Walter Licht, *Industrializing America*, xiii-xv; Henry Clay, "On Domestic Manufactures," 195-196; Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution*, 4-5.

⁷ Walter Wilson Jennings, *The American Embargo, 1807-1809*, 180-181 and 230-231; Louis Martin Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo*, 228-238, McCoy, 210-211.

Prior to the Embargo of 1807, the Ohio Valley possessed very little manufacturing other than that of a small household nature such as making materials for the construction of homes and buildings or whiskey for personal consumption. The region is vital to the story of Jefferson's Embargo and its effect on manufacturing because their connection to Atlantic World was deeper than most historians realize. The Ohio Valley not only supplied a large amount of the natural resources such as agricultural produce and furs and skins that feed the industrial machines in Europe but constructed a significant number of the vessels that carried those resources across the Atlantic Ocean. Citizens of the Ohio Valley purchased the goods manufactured from those resources once its merchants and other entrepreneurs arranged for their importation across the Allegheny Mountains. Jefferson's Embargo obstructed the valley's link to the Atlantic World. Its natural resources could no longer feed Europe's industrial machines and there was no longer a need to construct vessels to carry those resources abroad. Furthermore, there was no longer an endless stream of European manufactured goods flowing across the Allegheny Mountains for its citizens to purchase and no deals for the merchants to broker. Instead of sending its grains, tobacco, hemp, minerals and ores, and furs to the Eastern United States and Europe, the Ohio Valley started milling its own flour, distilling and brewing its own beer and whiskey, processing its tobacco, turning hemp into ropes and bags, manufacturing chemicals, glass and iron, and making its own fur hats and other clothing items on a large scale. The Embargo of 1807 fostered a change in Ohio Valley behavior and necessitated the growth of industry in the region by forcing it to look unto itself.⁸

⁸ Isaac Lippincott, *A History of Manufactures in the Ohio Valley to the Year 1860* (New York:

The reactions to the Embargo of 1807 in Pittsburgh, Marietta and Louisville illustrate how the Ohio Valley developed manufactures and stopped looking east. Prior to the embargo, each city was heavily tied to transatlantic trade. Shipbuilding was a component of each town's economy. Manufacturing was not vital to any of their economies even though it was present to varying degrees. Pittsburgh contained the most manufacturing but viewed it as insignificant compared to foreign commerce. Each town possessed the resources and manpower to support industrialization but relied instead on the exportation of natural resources and importation of manufactured goods. As a result, each town and the Ohio Valley as a whole was dependent upon outside forces for finished goods such as tools, guns, clothing and home accessories.

Jefferson's Embargo cut the Ohio Valley off from the Atlantic World and caused an embrace of domestic manufactures not from choice but instead out of necessity. Ohio Valley entrepreneurs played a vital role in the transformation. In Pittsburgh, General James O'Hara had always included some manufacturing among his business interests but focused his delivery apparatus towards the East and Europe not locally within the Ohio Valley. The embargo forced him to place greater value on manufacturing and western markets. Dudley Woodbridge Jr. of Marietta was a merchant born and bred on transatlantic trade. The town itself was founded to conduct trade with the Atlantic World, exporting natural resources and importing manufactured goods. While the Embargo of 1807 failed to force either Woodbridge or Marietta to develop manufactures it did cause both to embrace goods manufactured within the Ohio Valley. In the years after the embargo, Woodbridge turned his focus away from transatlantic markets and Marietta

Knickerbocker Press, 1914), 1-5 and 193-197.

became a connection point between Ohio Valley manufactures and western consumers. The Tarascon brothers came to Louisville in 1807 to build an import/export empire but the embargo forced them to change their plans. Instead, they turned their attention towards manufacturing.⁹

The Embargo of 1807 had a profound effect on the individual business strategies of James O'Hara, Dudley Woodbridge Jr. and the Tarascon brothers but of greater importance, they changed the economic orientation of their respective communities. Pittsburgh, Marietta and Louisville reoriented their economies towards manufacturing and/or domestic trade under the leadership and examples provided by these men. Pittsburgh placed greater importance on domestic manufacturing. It went from simply producing what was too difficult or costly to import to producing the majority of what it needed. Glass, iron and steel production became a hallmark of Pittsburgh's economy. Marietta did not develop their own system of manufactures but did place significant value on goods manufactured by other Ohio Valley cities. It started marketing Ohio Valley manufactured goods both inside and out of the region and as a result became a connection point. In simplest terms, Louisville just started manufacturing. It used the disruption in foreign trade caused by the embargo as a starting point for the development of a system of manufactures and transformed from consumer to producer. In the years after 1807, Louisville developed a wide variety of manufactures that supplied both the local population and settlers moving further west. The most successful of these industries was building steamboats.

⁹ Kim M. Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise*, 42.

The United States did not become an industrial giant overnight as manufacturing steadily increased throughout the nineteenth century. The Democratic-Republicans' adoption of Henry Clay's American System in the first quarter of the century, protective tariffs, population growth, urbanization, improvements in travel and technological advances all played a role in the rise of American industry. The Embargo of 1807 played a different role by providing an impetus for change. It necessitated a transformation in thought towards manufacturing and planted a seed for industrialization. Jefferson's Embargo lasted only a little over a year but along with the Non-Intercourse Act; it caused a transfer of capital from commerce involving transatlantic trade to manufacturing. Consequently, America's dependence on foreign manufactured goods and trade began to lessen. In April of 1810, when Henry Clay took to the floor of the United States to argue for the development of domestic manufactures, the Embargo of 1807 had already started to influence industrial change. Just as the couple in the story began preparing their own food, American was manufacturing for itself.¹⁰

Of greater importance to this study, the Ohio Valley was also making industrial strides and starting on a journey to becoming an industrial heartland. This was vital to the development of a system of manufactures in the United States because the Ohio Valley had long been a source of raw materials for European industry. It was a monumental moment when the Ohio Valley began to manufacture its own natural resources and transformed itself from importer to industrial producer. Ohio Valley entrepreneurs spearheaded this change by illustrating that manufacturing, mercantile activities and farming could come together for the benefit of all and form a regional economy built on

¹⁰ Henry Clay, "On Domestic Manufactures," 195-196

domestic manufactures and trade. The Embargo of 1807 closed the door to the old colonial ways, which was transatlantic trade, but opened a new one and the Ohio Valley became a valley of industry.

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