A CROWD of curiosity seekers gathered early at the Dock Street wharf to see the man whose reputation had preceded him across the Atlantic. Fortunately for Charles Maurice Talleyrand de Périgord, within the crowd stood a friend, Théophile Cazenove, who came to greet this new arrival and aid him in his adjustment to the New World.1 The two had known each other in the business world of Paris and now renewed their acquaintance. Cazenove, chief agent for the Holland Land Company, had lived in America for a number of years and had established excellent business connections. Talleyrand’s travels and experiences in America would have been quite different had it not been for this early meeting with Cazenove. Time and time again Talleyrand used Cazenove to advance his own interests. As Talleyrand rather critically remarks in his Memoirs, “M. Cazenove was a man of a rather enlightened, though slow, mind and of a timid and almost careless nature. But his qualities and his defects made him very useful to me.”2

Thanks to Cazenove, Talleyrand bypassed the custom formalities that usually encumbered the arrival of the European emigrant. Furthermore, Talleyrand encountered no difficulty in securing lodging, since he was invited to stay at Cazenove’s small brick house in South Philadelphia for as long as he desired.3

Here Talleyrand spent his first few weeks acclimating himself to his new environment and contemplating his next move. Here he could objectively appraise the financial conditions of the United States without the necessity of becoming immediately involved in

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1 The author is an Associate Professor of History at Muhlenberg College.
4 Barton, Little Journeys, 99.
them. His own finances were exhausted when he arrived in Phila-
delphia, as he had been forced to sell his personal library in Lon-
don to pay for his passage to America. Talleyrand intended to
recoup his fortune by amassing wealth in the New World. He
certainly would not be satisfied to sit idly by, enjoying the hos-
pitality of Cazenove, while awaiting developments in Europe.

Although desirous of returning to Europe as soon as possible,
he carefully studied ways to enrich himself in the United States.
It was imperative, he saw, to enter a business that either offered
quick monetary returns or could be operated profitably from the
continent. Keeping these restrictions in mind, he proceeded to
explore the business climate in the United States.

To begin with, he sought introductions to the prominent busi-
nessmen of Philadelphia. Here was another opportunity of using
the friendship of Cazenove. Through him Talleyrand met Robert
Morris, William Bingham, and Henry Knox, all successful leaders
of America's infant enterprises. They, in turn, informed him of
their activities and consequently, with his knowledge, he could
attempt to visualize the best way of predicting future possibilities.

After close scrutiny he narrowed the field of opportunities
available to aliens to three: one was to play the stock market,
either individually or as a representative of a European firm;
another was to act as an agent for European businessmen; and
the third possibility was to engage in land speculation.

But as Talleyrand weighed the economic possibilities in Amer-
ica, he appeared to favor more and more the future prospects of
the land market. Land speculation held certain advantages that
appealed to him: it could be carried on successfully from Europe;
and the price of land, steadily rising, was certain to continue
upward since expansion inland was inevitable. He believed that
America would "one day be a great nation," and wished to
take advantage of the increase in land values that would accom-
pany the growth of population and material wealth.

At first, Talleyrand had no preference as to where to buy land;
he was prepared to let price and conditions govern his choice.

4 Most authors agree that he was destitute when he arrived in the United
States, but according to one his trip was paid by John Church who had
known Talleyrand in Paris and later befriended him in England. John S.
Minard, "Intimate Friend of Old Celebrities in America and Europe,"
Journal of American History, II (1908), 52.

5 Bernard Lacombe, Talleyrand the Man (London, 1911), 82.
But eventually he eliminated the South from any consideration and his interest focused entirely on either western or northern lands. Presumably, in this decision he was guided by Cazenove who pointed out the disadvantage of southern lands. Cazenove warned that in the South land titles were uncertain, large tracts were not available, foreigners were prohibited from owning land, and furthermore, the climate and slavery would be objectionable to Europeans.  

Two of Talleyrand's Philadelphia friends, William Bingham and Henry Knox, urged him to consider investing in Maine lands, and Talleyrand agreed to visit the proposed site. Anxious to get away from the summer heat which he found oppressive, Talleyrand left Philadelphia in July, 1794 for Maine; but he returned landless in early fall.

Discouraged by the outcome in Maine and still in a buying mood, Talleyrand searched for other areas to acquire. Cazenove had purchased for the Holland Land Company large tracts in New York State; consequently, Talleyrand decided to investigate. Also, he previously had learned in Philadelphia about the proposed construction of a new federal city along the Potomac. This site was certain to prosper as the country expanded; therefore, here would be an excellent opportunity of buying early, and cheaply, then selling within a short period at a handsome profit.

Both places, Talleyrand decided, warranted a personal inspection. But after visiting New York (traveling from New York City to Albany, and on to Niagara Falls), he studied the prospects and then rejected the area. He approved of the soil and the overall productivity of the land, but in other categories, he judged it inferior to Maine. The rivers were few, valleys narrow, the price too high, the climate unhealthy, transportation inadequate, and above all, the people lazy and indifferent. He journeyed then to

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6 It is indeed fortunate that Talleyrand could rely on the judgment and experience of Cazenove. Cazenove's conservatism in the acquisition of lands and great optimism in the future of America permitted the Holland Land Company to become the most prosperous land enterprise in America and to long outlive its competitors. Paul D. Evans, The Holland Land Company (Buffalo, 1924), 21.

7 *Morteau de St. Mery's American Journey, 1793-1798* (Garden City, N.Y., 1947), 324.

8 Charles Maurice Talleyrand, "Letter on the Northern Part of New York," Albany, October 30, 1794, Talleyrand Papers, Library of Congress. This is a general prospectus written for potential buyers.
Washington and considered purchasing land there, but again he thought the market price was already too high, and he refused to buy.

Whenever Talleyrand stayed in Philadelphia, he called on two close friends, Antoine Omer Talon and Louis Marie Vicomte de Noailles. He had known these men in France, having served with them in the Constituent Assembly. In America, Talleyrand renewed the acquaintance and became quite interested in their business activities.

In 1793 Talon and Noailles had established a French colony at Asylum, Pennsylvania. As the name applies, the purpose was to erect a place of refuge for French exiles. Specifically, it was hoped that Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette could live there while awaiting future development in France. In Asylum they would be safe from revolutionary Europe, still live among a large number of their former subjects, and be sufficiently removed from Americans so that daily contacts could be avoided.

Talleyrand soon exhibited a strong personal interest in Asylum and a desire to visit it. His particular enthusiasm, however, was reserved for an area adjacent to the colony and similar to it in mineral deposits, topography, vegetation, and climate. Unlike the founders of Asylum, Talleyrand was not interested in Pennsylvania lands for the purpose of establishing a colony. He wanted land which could give him a quick monetary return by reselling to settlers or other speculators at a profit, or by development of any rich natural resources. He hoped that one of these alternatives could be applied to central Pennsylvania.

The precise date when Talleyrand visited Asylum is difficult to determine. He does not mention the journey in his Memoirs and writers on the subject disagree.9

9 Some say he merely passed through Asylum on his return to Philadelphia from his excursion in New York. Thomas W. Clarke, Emigres in the Wilderness (New York, 1941), 76. That would make it in the fall of 1794. Others give the fall of 1795 as the correct time. David Craft, “The French Settlement at Asylum,” Proceedings of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, V (1900), 81. The “official” historian of the settlement, Elsie Murray, writes that Talleyrand arrived there after the visit of the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, who reached Asylum on May 21, 1795, and left on June 2 of that year. Elsie Murray, A Frontier Trianon (Athens, Pa., 1955), 16. But, by piecing together numerous accounts of Talleyrand’s travels in America, the present writer concludes that the visit must have occurred when Talleyrand returned from Albany. He could not have been there in the fall of 1795 since he was in New York City from August 23,
During his visit Talleyrand, as planned, traveled widely in the area and thoroughly explored the land he proposed to buy. He journeyed as far west as the small town of Bellefonte where he inspected the soil and stayed overnight at the home of Captain John Patton. From this visit a local legend emerged that credits Talleyrand with having named the town “Bellefonte.” On being shown the marvelous fountain located there, Talleyrand supposedly remarked, “Quelle belle fontaine!” The State of Pennsylvania apparently accepts this as authentic and, consequently, retells the incident on historical markers at numerous entrances to the town.

A few of the older inhabitants of the community refuse to believe the story, pointing out that it is impossible to prove that the incident actually occurred. Two local residents, the late Thomas Mitchell and Mrs. Carl Iverson, former librarian for the Centre County Historical Association, believe the story to be a complete fabrication. Mr. Mitchell points out that the French word fonte means cast iron while fontaine is French for fountain. He believes that Talleyrand’s main interest in the town pertained to the feasibility of establishing an iron foundry there. He felt that Talleyrand searched for economic values in the area and was little concerned about nature’s wonders. This possibility is strengthened since Talleyrand’s host at Bellefonte, Captain John Patton, had recently established the first ironworks in the area.

1795, to November 14, 1795. Moreau’s Journal, 202; Talleyrand (New York, N. Y.) to Jean Henry Cazenove Nephew & Co., August 23, 1795, Talleyrand Papers, LC. There are minor discrepancies between Talleyrand’s correspondence from America and Moreau’s Journal which are contradictory and misleading. For example, there is a letter Talleyrand wrote from New York on December 14, 1795; yet Moreau has noted the return of Talleyrand to Philadelphia from New York on December 5, 1795. Talleyrand (New York, N. Y.) to Jean Henry Cazenove Nephew and Co., December 14, 1795, Talleyrand Papers, LC; Moreau’s Journal, 209. During most of that period, all communication between New York and Philadelphia was prohibited by proclamation of Governor Thomas Mifflin of Pennsylvania, necessitated by a severe outbreak of yellow fever in Philadelphia, which definitely affected Talleyrand’s travel plans and compelled him to remain in New York longer than he anticipated. The Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), September 2, 1795. Consequently, it was in the fall of 1794, not 1795, that Talleyrand visited Asylum.


12 Ibid., 32.

J. Thomas Mitchell is the author of Centre County From Its Earliest Settlement to the Year 1915 (Bellefonte, Pa., 1916).
and probably boasted to Talleyrand of the rich natural resources found in the vicinity. It is also true that Captain Patton showed his guest his recently constructed charcoal furnaces and the rudimentary beginning of the area's iron industry.

Talleyrand immediately envisioned the additional value this would add to the land. He could ascertain that his proposed investment now might prove lucrative in two ways: (1) as providing prospective lots for future settlers and (2) as having valuable natural resources. This dual potentiality eliminated much of the risk involved in the initial purchase.

In addition to these two possibilities, Talleyrand soon discovered there was still a third advantage; the land had a particularly heavy growth of sugar maple trees. These could provide syrup for eastern markets. The entire concept was relatively new; but already some businessmen believed that if an efficient method of extracting sap could be developed, the industry could compete successfully against the sugar imported from the plantations of the West Indies. Furthermore, humanitarians in the United States envisioned this competition as bringing financial ruin to the sugar plantations whose failure, in turn, would cause the overthrow of the hated system of slavery which operated so viciously in the cane fields.\textsuperscript{15}

Talleyrand recognized the value of maple sugar and mentioned it as an additional source of wealth to any area.\textsuperscript{14} He had learned from Cazenove, however, that before the industry could become profitable, a more efficient method of extracting the sugar must be developed. Cazenove told Talleyrand about the unfortunate results experienced by Gerrit Boon, a former employee of his. Boon had attempted to develop a large stand of sugar maples in New York State by tapping the trees through a rather awkward trough system, whereby each tree's sap would flow through cumbersome troughs into a common vat. Unfortunately, the wooden troughs warped and buckled, and he experimented to no avail in trying to find more suitable lumber. Why he did not use the common, and much simpler, bucket arrangement remains a mystery; presumably, he was afraid of labor expenses. The failure of

\textsuperscript{13} Evans, \textit{Holland Land Company}, 14.

\textsuperscript{14} Charles Maurice Talleyrand, "Observations on Speculation in Lands in the United States of America," Talleyrand Papers, LC. This is a general prospectus, undated, written by Talleyrand for potential buyers.
the project cost Cazenove about $15,000, and discouraged others from developing the industry at this time.\textsuperscript{15}

Pennsylvania was the only state that permitted aliens to buy and hold property. Consequently, Talleyrand, Talon, Noailles, and others could purchase land there without the necessity of camouflaging their ownership.

The Pennsylvania Legislature passed the law February 11, 1789, and renewed it every three years until February 1797, when it was allowed to lapse. Therefore, it was in effect during the entire period of Talleyrand's residence in the United States, and it became one of the main reasons why French refugees, such as Talleyrand, preferred to speculate in Pennsylvania lands rather than elsewhere; titles could be recorded openly and ownership duly recognized, without resorting to any subterfuge.

Robert Morris owned most of the land in Pennsylvania that Talleyrand contemplated buying. Morris had recently sold to Talon and Noailles the site for the Asylum Company and was desirous of selling more.\textsuperscript{16} These were troublesome times for Morris. He had overextended himself and, as a result, was bombarded by creditors who gave him no peace. Suddenly the land market had collapsed, credit was no longer available, and he faced bankruptcy. Talleyrand was the best remaining prospect who might keep Morris solvent.

After careful consideration, Talleyrand in 1796, decided to buy Morris' land. Terms of the proposed sale were thoroughly discussed and, as finally agreed, Talleyrand was to purchase 106,875½ acres of land lying in Mifflin, Northumberland, and Northampton Counties, for the total sum of $143,500.40. It was stipulated that Talleyrand had until August 9, 1797, to make payment, after which time the sale would be declared null and void.\textsuperscript{17} Furthermore, according to the agreement, John Davis, Comptroller of the Treasury of the United States, representing


\textsuperscript{16} The exact size of this purchase is difficult to determine. Allen C. Clark, \textit{Greeneleaf and Law in the Federal City} (Washington, 1901), 58, reports it encompassed one million acres. \textit{Wilkes-Barre Times Leader}, February 11, 1932, estimates 500,000 acres.

the government, was designated to hold the deeds in escrow awaiting payment. A Morris debt to the government of $93,000 was still outstanding and the government held a mortgage for this amount on the land Morris tentatively sold to Talleyrand. Therefore, even if Talleyrand should pay for the land, the profit Morris would make on the sale would only be a little under $50,000.

It is interesting to see how Talleyrand analyzed the terms of the sale. In a letter written shortly before the final agreement was reached, he observed:

The Articles express a promissory agreement of buying and selling, and not an actual sale. ... The promissory part of the agreement will be very obnoxious if Mon. Talleyrand wishes to sell again the property before the expiration of fifteen months; for as an evidence of his right he must produce the Agreement from which it will appear—

1) that his right is not complete. . . .
2) that Robert Morris might dispose the lands elsewhere should he desire,
3) that the purchaser had better apply directly to Morris and buy from him at the rate of 1 1/3 dollars, instead of paying an additional price to M. de Talleyrand.

Here it appears Talleyrand was complaining about the terms of the agreement despite the fact that the price per acre was below current market price and no down payment was necessary!

It is apparent that Morris agreed to grant these very generous terms because of his own desperate financial condition. In order to postpone bankruptcy, he needed all the available credit he could get. Even the prospect of securing money in the future appealed to him. Furthermore, he hoped that he could use this arrangement to gain time to meet his creditors’ demands.

It is interesting to note that Morris’ plan worked. Prior to the agreement with Talleyrand, he was bombarded repeatedly by creditors. Following the sale, four or five months passed without any

financial demands made upon him. It was a period of calmness, marking the last time Morris appeared solvent. His creditors were content to follow an attitude of watchful waiting, seeing if Talleyrand could complete his part of the bargain. But, by November 1796, their patience expired and attack was renewed. This time it continued until Morris was placed in the Prune Street jail.²⁰

Talleyrand’s position was comparable to that of an ordinary land agent. As the recorded agreement mentioned, he was about to embark for Europe. He would attempt to resell the land in Europe, either to prospective settlers or to European speculators.

To help Talleyrand find European markets, Morris immediately wrote his son-in-law, James Marshall, currently in London on a combined business and honeymoon trip.²¹ In the letter of May 24, 1796, Morris wrote:

I have made a sale of 100,000 acres of land in this state payable in fifteen months. You will see the Purchaser before long but I do not give his name as I shall probably write by him, but if not by him, soon after him as he does not yet choose to have his name mentioned. These lands are none of those mentioned to you but I shall engage his assistance to you in the sales you have to make which may probably be useful, . . . I am determined that your time shall not be thrown away and your voyage prove fruitless.²²

Unfortunately for Talleyrand, Marshall was more concerned about his honeymoon than about his father-in-law’s business and when Talleyrand reached Europe, no prospective buyers had been located.

Talleyrand disembarked in Hamburg, Germany, instead of a French port.²³ He deliberately took his time in returning to France. His name had been erased from the émigré list in the fall of 1795; yet he had remained in the United States until June of the following year. He was afraid that, should he return too soon, he

²¹Ellis P. Oberholtzer, Robert Morris, Patriot and Financier (New York, 1932), 321-323.
²³Talleyrand’s Memoirs, I, 187.
might be caught in another violent upheaval of the French government.

As he traveled from Hamburg to Paris, he familiarized himself with the European situation. He stopped at Brussels and Amsterdam and did not arrive in Paris until late in September, having conferred with his friends along the way about the current political situation. Gradually he became more involved in European politics, and consequently less concerned about Robert Morris; certainly he did not give the impression of a man traveling around Europe selling lands.

Morris grew impatient, desiring that some payment be made; even evidence that the prospects looked good might suffice to hold off his creditors. But Morris heard nothing from Talleyrand until late in January of 1797, when he received news Talleyrand had successfully landed in Europe. Morris quickly and impatiently wrote to him:

I had the pleasure to receive your favor of the ninth of August from Hamburg and rejoiced very, very sincerely at your safe arrival as indeed did all my family and your other friends here. It is with great satisfaction also I see honorable mention made of your name in the public papers since your return to Paris where it seems you are likely to be engaged in Public Service for which very few are so well qualified as yourself. I send herein a letter which has been a long time in my custody as I do not choose to send but by a safe hand. I am in hopes of hearing from you soon relative to the object depending between us (italics mine) and with sincerest good wishes for your health and happiness I remain . . . Your friend, Robert Morris.

Talleyrand’s payment represented Morris’ last hope of avoiding bankruptcy; all earlier possibilities had disappeared. All was in ruins, and now Talleyrand appeared to be cancelling his agreement. However, Morris attempted to create the impression of calmness and respectability; certainly he showed no sign of being a hysterical man, desperately trying to avoid the collapse of his financial empire. He mentioned the deal only as an afterthought, but its mere insertion was a reminder of how desperate he was.

Ibid.

On February 8, 1797, Morris made an entry in his “Waste Book” changing Talleyrand’s account from outstanding to sundry, reading: “Charles Maurice Talleyrand dr (debtor) to sundry accounts for the following tracts of land sold him conditionally at ten shillings per acre by articles of agreement dated 1796.”26 In the next entry, Morris specified lands of the respective counties, according to various townships, quoting the price that Talleyrand was to pay for each. Following this, he credited some as being sold to other buyers at half the price he expected Talleyrand to pay. For example, he mentioned that Talleyrand was to pay ten shillings per acre for fourteen tracts in Bald Eagle Township, Mifflin County, containing 6,001 acres, but then in a later entry credited William Harrison as having purchased the same area in Mifflin County for just five shillings an acre. There are more examples, one in Northumberland County and another in Cumberland County, referred to in the “Waste Book.”27

Morris’ bookkeeping left much to be desired. He used the single entry system, which became misleading and complicated, and he never stopped to balance his account. Some might interpret this to signify that Morris was selling the same land twice because he had to resort to any measures to avoid bankruptcy. Actually, he was taking part of the land back from Talleyrand, crediting him, and then reselling it to ready buyers in America. He needed the cash and saw the chances of acquiring money from Talleyrand disappearing. According to the initial agreement, Talleyrand had only fifteen months in which to make settlement, and nine months had elapsed without even a token payment. It was apparent to Morris that there was only the remotest possibility that Talleyrand could fulfill his obligation. He had, therefore, better sell when he had the chance, regardless of the losses he would incur.

The likelihood of finding a buyer in Europe further dwindled when the Pennsylvania Legislature allowed the Alien Act to expire in February of 1797.28 Morris knew that Talleyrand needed European investors in order to uphold his half of the bargain, but now only American citizens were permitted to own property in Pennsylvania. Of course, the failure of the State to renew this

26 February 8, 1797, entry in Robert Morris “Waste Book, 1794-1801,” HSP.
27 Ibid.
law did not affect Talleyrand’s option to buy the land but now potential European buyers could not purchase from Talleyrand.

For a complete understanding of the entries in Morris’ “Waste Book,” it is necessary to compare them with corresponding entries made in his “Ledger” in which the double entry system is used. These further prove that Morris’ sale of portions of this land was perfectly legal. A “Ledger” entry, February 8, 1797, cited as outstanding the $142,500.42 which Talleyrand owed.29 This figure was placed on the debit side of the “Ledger”; nothing appears on the credit side under Talleyrand’s name. This would coincide with the fact that no payment had yet been made. Furthermore, the lands in Mifflin County under option to Talleyrand had been tentatively resold to William Harrison.30 This agrees with the “Waste Book,” but it is important to notice that these deeds contain conditional clauses mentioning that someone holds an option on them and had first choice, should payment be received by the ninth of August, 1797.31

In March, 1797, Morris decided to make one final attempt to relieve pressures and preserve his few remaining assets. He established the Pennsylvania Land Property Company, to which he conveyed all the land he then had in his possession. He thought that he might be able to satisfy creditors by giving them shares of stock in this company as security.32 Furthermore, he guaranteed to shareholders a six dollar annual dividend per share and predicted “that in all probability they will ultimately receive a large profit or addition to their capital.”33

To the company’s trustees, the Honorable James Biddle and William Bell, Morris transmitted the titles of the property, conveying twenty-two different areas or enterprises in Pennsylvania, and quoted the value of each. Item number seven is of particular interest:

One hundred and six thousand eight hundred and seventy-five acres and fifty perches of land in diverse

29 February 8, 1797, entry in Robert Morris “Waste Book, 1794-1801,” HSP.
30 Ibid.
31 “Articles of Agreement between Robert Morris and James Biddle and William Bell,” March 18, 1797, Robert Morris Business Papers, LC.
32 Oberholtzer, Robert Morris, 336-337.
33 “Articles of Agreement between Robert Morris and James Biddle and William Bell,” March 18, 1797, Robert Morris Business Papers, LC.
tracts all patented to Robert Morris lying in counties in Northampton, Northumberland, and Mifflin subject to a contract for conditional sale of the same at ten shillings per acre. . . . These being generally good lands and well situated will, like the others, increase annually in value but for the present they are estimated at the price agreed that is ten shillings per acre.

This is the same land that Morris had previously agreed to sell to Talleyrand. Again Morris acknowledged Talleyrand’s option on the land, but the mere fact he was assigning it to the Pennsylvania Land Property Company implied that Morris had not received the money. Time was running out on the option and, according to the agreement, the title to the land reverted to Morris if payment was not made.

This is precisely what happened. The period elapsed without Talleyrand’s meeting the contract terms, and so Morris maintained possession. Talleyrand, therefore, never completely acquired any land from Morris or, for that matter, from anybody in America. He investigated the land, planned to buy, but defaulted.

The dates on which the land deeds between Morris and Talleyrand were recorded give further support to this view. In Lewis-town, Pennsylvania, the date is October 21, 1797; in Sunbury, Pennsylvania, October 28, 1797; and in Easton, Pennsylvania, November 7, 1797. Obviously, the deeds do not have to be recorded immediately after a sale, but it is important to observe that in each instance not only are the deeds recorded but also the articles of agreement are registered with them. It would be superfluous to record the conditions of sale if they had been satisfied, but it would be necessary to record them if they were not. This indicates that the deeds were invalid since the conditions were not executed; consequently, the land titles would be cleared for resale by Morris.

Footnotes:
[5] If Talleyrand had actually met the conditions of sale, it would have been necessary to record his name as grantor in subsequent sales to other buyers. In a detailed search of the deed books located in the courthouses of Lewis-town, Sunbury, and Easton, nowhere is Talleyrand listed as a grantor. All
The court testimony given by Robert Morris at his bankruptcy trial also indicates that Talleyrand balked in completing the transaction. Under oath Morris accounted for every business agreement he participated in during the 1790's. It is a sad story, filled with disappointments which eventually culminated in his financial ruin. He cited various amounts of business deals, some larger, some smaller, than the one negotiated with Talleyrand, but he never mentioned selling any land to Talleyrand.37

Further evidence proving that Talleyrand withdrew from his attempt to speculate in Pennsylvania lands is found in the government's appraisal of Robert Morris' property after his bankruptcy. Very systematically, each entry in Morris' "Ledger" is fully examined, the value of the transaction cited, and a notation made indicating what portion of the deal had been completed and the balance that remained. The appraisal shows precisely what properties still belonged to Morris and therefore could be considered an asset in evaluating Morris' estate. The explanation of Account 325 reads:

Charles M. Talleyrand—stands charged $142,500.42 amount of Lands sold him. But the sale being conditional, he revoked it; and must be credited to balance.38

These three simple words, "he revoked it," clarify the entire question and prove that the sale was only a tentative one which eventually collapsed.

Various authors have stated that Talleyrand participated in numerous land deals in America. Most of their remarks are nebulous, never citing exactly where the lands were situated, the size of the purchase, or the dates of the transactions.39 Furthermore, they never explain what he did with the lands he supposedly bought. In fact, Talleyrand's stay in the United States is treated superficially. An early biographer admitted that "The period of three places merely refer to him as a grantee and Morris the grantor; consequently, if he had purchased the land, what did he do with it? Obviously, he never resold it.

37 "The Testimony of Robert Morris Given Before the Commissioners," Robert Morris Business Papers, HSP.
Talleyrand's life upon which we possess the fewest documents is that of his stay in America. Nothing would be easier for us, were we writing a romance, than to fill up this void by supposing events of which history leaves us ignorant."

In most instances biographers have followed her advice. Even Talleyrand's Memoirs deemphasized the visit. He allotted it ten pages in his five-volume work! Only two accounts of Talleyrand's travels in America specifically mention the tentative purchases made with Morris and both reach the wrong conclusion. One says, "In February, 1797, after Talleyrand had returned to France, Morris received $142,500.42 from him for 106,875½ acres sold." The statement is supported by citing three sources: Talleyrand's observations on the proposed sale; Morris' instructions to his son-in-law, James Marshall; and the entry appearing in Robert Morris' "Waste Book" on February 8, 1797. The first reference is irrelevant since Talleyrand's observations were made prior to the date of the final agreement and therefore cannot be used to prove a point that would have occurred later. These observations merely imply that a sale is being considered; they do not confirm one. The other two documents listed have already been explained. Both have been misinterpreted by the authors. Further investigation by them, particularly in Morris' "Ledger," would have shown that the contemplated sale was dissolved.

A more recent study states simply, "Morris received from Talleyrand $142,500.42 for 106,875½ acres." But the author has leaned too heavily upon the earlier account and cites the same documents as proof. Her statement therefore is likewise disqualified. During his brief stay in Pennsylvania, Talleyrand did not become a last minute rescuer for Robert Morris nor did he amass a fortune by speculating in Pennsylvania lands. After

42 Elsie Murray, "Early Land Companies and Titles of Northumberland County," 31.
43 Correspondence with Miss Murray shows that she appears to be vacillating on this point. She raised the question as to whether or not the entire deal was ever seriously intended to take place and suggested it was merely a paper transaction to bolster Morris' sagging finances. If this were the plan, then a lot of paper was wasted on it. Murray to Baldrige, September 30, 1960.
obtaining an option to buy over 100,000 acres of Pennsylvania land from Morris, he returned to Europe and became involved in other, perhaps more important, matters. The payment was not forthcoming and Morris, desperately in need of money, sold some of this land to other parties as he had every right to do within the terms of his agreement with the Frenchman.