# Thomas Willing (1731-1821): Philadelphia Financier and Forgotten Founding Father

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**Courtesy of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania**

*Thomas Willing, by J. Augustus Beck*

Merchant, judge, entrepreneur, real estate developer, and national banker Thomas Willing (1731-1821)[1] is relatively unknown today. Yet, he was one of the richest, longest lived, and most influential of those Philadelphians responsible for the mid-Atlantic region's economic growth. Considered by some to resemble George Washington (see portrait),[2] Willing's career paralleled that of the Virginian. While Washington fought Native Americans with guns, Willing subdued them with trade. Washington gained glory on the field of battle, but only with the help of equipment and powder supplied by Willing and his more famous, though not necessarily more important partner, Robert Morris. The nation summoned Washington to the new government's highest executive office and so too was Willing called upon to take the nation's most important financial office. During his long tenures as President of the Bank of North America (1781-1791) and Bank of the United States (1791-1807) Willing, like Washington, set important precedents.[3] Finally, Washington's land speculations helped to open up the West; while Willing engaged in similar western speculations his most important real estate dealings helped spur Philadelphia's internal economic development.

Inheriting his roles in both the transatlantic and inland trade, Willing did his utmost to draw large numbers of fellow Pennsylvanians into the world market. Though his motives were almost entirely self-interested, and he was without apparent theoretical understanding of how his actions would change his native land, Willing's business techniques helped spread and maintain market relations throughout backcountry Pennsylvania while simultaneously developing capital and insurance markets in Philadelphia. Contrary to the hypothesis of historian John R. Nelson,[4] Willing's mercantile concerns in no way affected his support for strengthening indigenous manufactures. In fact, an analysis of Willing's land sales in Philadelphia shows he played an important though overlooked role in the development of Philadelphia's artisanal and mechanical communities.

Willing helped the economic growth of Pennsylvania by playing a major role in the creation of a faceless "cash" marketplace and by promoting a political economy protective of new market entrants. These innovations, if nothing else, kept the acapitalistic ideologies and cultures historians have detected in early America from becoming powerful and pervasive enough to stymie the region's natural endowments and proclivity for trade.[5] The proliferation of bank money created a stable and ample medium of exchange and store of value. Combined with the growth of the economy, the profusion of "cash" destroyed colonial "patriarchal dependence"[6] by allowing men and women to transcend their traditional stations and enter a marketplace dictated by money, not by custom. This increased net consumer demand. Besides drawing more people into the market economy, the liquidity of bank money made it easier to pay one's debts and hence served to protect new market entrants from the dreaded writ of *fi fa*.[7] Willing's banks did not keep people from going bankrupt (liabilities greater than assets) but the liquidity they engendered directly and indirectly helped debtors avoid insolvency (insufficient cash and credit to meet current obligations payable). In other words, Willing's banking policy prevented what became, as the banking system destabilized during the War of 1812, a major contributor to the popularization of acapitalist ideologies, the apparent injustice of forced sales during economic downturns.[8] Aside from his mercantile and land development programs, Willing helped maintain Pennsylvania's rapidly expanding economic pie through his executive, legislative, and judicial decisions, most of which protected new market entrants.

Willing's business and political career also influenced the formation of the American nation-state. First, he personified the early American political process—national and community advancement through the vigorous pursuit of self-interest. As judge, mayor, assemblyman, congressman, and wealthy patriarch, Willing put his personal interests, broadly conceived, first. These interests, however, namely monetary stability and rule of law, were also those of the emerging nation. First with Superintendent of Finance Robert Morris (1781-1784), and later with Secretaries of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton (1789-1795), Oliver Wolcott (1795-1800),[9] and Albert Gallatin (1801-1807),[10] Willing influenced the first practical compromises between federal and state jurisdictional issues and helped to define the bounds of executive interaction with national agencies.

## Willing and the development of Pennsylvania's commodity and capital markets

Willing's parentage ensured he would have one foot in the domestic economy and one in the transatlantic world. His mother, Mary Shippen, endowed Willing with close ties to the powerful pro-proprietary Shippen clan and its interest in the inland and Indian trade.[11] Willing's English-born father Charles was a prominent Philadelphia merchant, politician, lawyer, and Justice of the Peace. In twenty-six years of active commercial activity in Philadelphia his accumulated capital rose from £1,000 to £20,000.[12] The successful politician-merchant sent young "Tommy" to live with his paternal grandmother in England where he studied in the Watts Academy and Inner Temple from 1740 to 1749. Though his legal training encompassed only the last few months of his stay, young Willing became learned enough in the law to serve on the province's Supreme Court for a decade, from 1767 until 1777. Willing's fortune came from trade, but his legal training greatly aided his political and mercantile pursuits in an era when contractual arrangements played an increasingly important role in economic development.[13]

Willing joined his father in partnership in October, 1751. The firm, Charles Willing and Son, imported fabrics, hardware, wines, and servants from the Old World, and slaves, sugar, and rum from the New. The Company's advertisements show that the principals maintained a diverse inventory instead of specializing. Though the firm made some money from the resale of dry goods, wharfage, and insurance, its major means of foreign remittance came from carrying others' freight on its ships, and from the export of foodstuffs, tobacco, pig iron, and lumber to West Indian and Southern European ports. Advertisements show the father and son team atypically preferred to keep commodities on hand rather than extend long credits to potential buyers. After the death of his father in 1754, Willing shied away from the import trade, especially dry goods, blaming "the great Number of Importers [and] . . . the Long Credits given" for its troubles. Even when desperate to unload old inventory, Willing much preferred slashing prices to extending any but the shortest of book credits. This was especially true during the French and Indian War when unstable conditions on the frontier made it difficult to know "whom in the Country to trust" or to "find Chaps that are safe to Deal with." At first glance, this reluctance to extend credit to backcountry traders restricted the growth of market relations because it limited the volume of goods distant traders could purchase for resale to non-Philadelphians.[14]

However, Willing's conservative credit policy was macroeconomically more important than his colleagues' credit extensions because it helped lead to the creation of Pennsylvania's capital market. Willing's competitors merely extended person-to-person book credit, a relatively inert, illiquid form of conducting transactions. Such credits were often liquidated years after the original purchase with country produce. Though this process marginally tied farmers and country shopkeepers to the Atlantic market, such procedures were economically inefficient and more closely resembled local barter exchange than a monetarized market. From an economic standpoint, the many who defaulted were more like thieves than market participants.[15] Merchants who sued delinquents often forced their debtors out of the market. Many delinquents absconded, feared entering into new contracts, or lost their property in sheriff's sales. Though he did not foresee the effects of his policies, and acted solely out of his own perceived self-interest, Willing did not entice men into market relations only to sting them when the money supply tightened. The greater liquidity of his receivables, combined with the greater solemnity of his credit contracts, ensured Willing encountered relatively fewer bad debts and petty lawsuits than fellow traders. His policies increased both the supply and demand of negotiable commercial paper because he relied on notes and bonds rather than book credit when dealing with non-merchants and non-Philadelphians. Numerous newspaper advertisements and other qualitative evidence suggest paper debt instruments circulated much more freely than money of account.[16] Also, these forms of negotiable commercial paper served as the basis for bank note issues in the post-Revolutionary period.

Willing first extended collateralized credit in the human chattel trade. He imported or purchased the indentures of large numbers of German, Welsh, Irish, and English persons and sold their indentures on bond. In July, 1755, for instance, Willing advertised "a parcel of likely servant men and boys" for sale. As usual with such advertisements, Willing was not specific about the number for sale, but stressed their artisanal skills and good behavior. In one 1765 advertisement he even promised to "shew the character each servant bore in his own country." Far from an exchange of contracts between elite merchants, Willing extended liquid credits to various groups in society, including Germans. When the French and Indian War began to siphon off white servants to the King's forces, and cut off the importation of more from Europe, Willing's firm, Willing & Morris,[17] began to add black slaves to cargoes returning from the West Indies and soon was making large importations. Most of the sales were also made on bond. As in the antebellum South, human chattel in colonial Pennsylvania proved a liquid asset and good collateral security for debt obligations.[18]

Desirous of infiltrating backcountry markets in a controlled manner, in 1758 Willing took advantage of Governor Denny's deadlock with the Assembly over the choice of Indian trade commissioners, part of a decades-long struggle between proprietary and popular rule in Pennsylvania.[19] Willing and eight other Philadelphia merchants offered to serve as private commissioners "to furnish the whole stock themselves, draw six per cent interest for their money, and five per cent commission for managing the business." The governor thought the terms unreasonable, but, to assert his executive prerogative, put forth Willing and the others as Indian trade commissioners in lieu of the Assembly's nominees. The House eventually consented and charged the commissioners with preventing abuses in the Indian trade, appointing and directing field agents, setting fair prices for both English manufactured goods and Indian peltry, and selling the pelts to public advantage at auction. The commissioners received 1.25% commission on all goods that passed through their charge. Although the commissioners agreed not to sell to Indians on their private accounts on penalty of £100 per offense, and the concern was robbed, the business was lucrative for the commissioners, and created business connections for Willing, who served from 1758 until 1763.[20]

Importantly for the development of Pennsylvania's capital market, the Indian Trade bill empowered Willing and the other commissioners to enter the private capital market to borrow up to £4,000 at six percent interest for five years to augment the commissioners' initial capital of £1,000. The Assembly raised the commissioners' debt ceiling to £10,000 the next year. Investors took up the bonds, most of which Willing helped to negotiate. Merchants like Isaac Norris and Thomas Clifford bought some, but by far the most numerous investors were women like Mary Coates, Hannah Allen, and Susannah Head. Wealthy women, sometimes widowed but often owners of substantial estates held on their own account separate from that of their husbands',[21] often invested in government bonds because they were safe, easy, and remunerative. Though this was the first of a number of laws allowing various Pennsylvania government agents to deficit finance public operations by issuing negotiable bonds, the availability of such solid investments outstripped demand, forcing Willing to help mold other types of safe annuities as he prepared to endow his own daughters on their sole and separate accounts.[22]

The French and Indian War damaged the export trade and dry goods importations, thereby engendering business innovations. The war tended to increase domestic food prices, decreasing both gross and net profits for an export firm like Willing & Morris. Though the firm had the ships and capital to export foodstuffs to any profitable market, prices were sometimes so high no profitable ventures were possible. In the summer of 1755, for example, unusually dry weather and increasing troop demand increased the price and decreased the quality of domestic wheat and flour. "Our produce keeps up too high for any hopes of Yielding Proffitt at your Market," Willing wrote to correspondents in August.

The war offered other dangers as well. Willing was late on some remittances to England because he could not procure good bills on Europe or make collections in Philadelphia. He responded not by initiating lawsuits but by increasing the complexity and flexibility of his contracts. When he realized exchange rates were higher on large bills, he began to purchase many smaller bills at a lower exchange rate to make remittances. This spread the risk of protest, but virtually ensured some bills would be protested for nonpayment. (Imagine depositing one hundred $100 checks instead of one check for $10,000. Though a $100 check is less likely to bounce than a single large one, the number of $100 checks required would make it likely at least one would "bounce.")[23] To counter this risk, Willing established a credit line with London merchant-banker David Barclay. If Willing's remittance met dishonor (bounced), they were not to be protested (returned for insufficient funds), but presented to Barclay who promised to pay the bills on Willing's account (serve as his credit line). Instead of working strictly on commission, or buying and selling outright solely on his own account, Willing began to take goods on commission but with prespecified prices at which he could buy the consigned goods himself. Such contracts decreased Willing's risks, while also giving him the opportunity to speculate in rapidly rising markets. Uncertain wartime conditions spurred Willing to build his own ship "with as little Expence as possible" and also prompted him to engage in some very old trade techniques, like "forestalling," withholding goods from market in anticipation of higher prices, and "networking," establishing new business relationships and encouraging existing ones through correspondence and the exchange of information and even gifts. Willing also secreted funds for safekeeping because of the war. Instead of burying coins in the yard, however, he bought English public securities.[24] By sparking hard work, and, more importantly, innovative mercantile practices, the war's adversity helped Philadelphia's business community at large and Willing in particular.[25]

The colonial wars, especially the French and Indian War, initiated many of the business trends continued and extended during the Revolution. The earlier conflict made Pennsylvanians, especially merchants, more attentive to the value of punctuality. A single day could ensure arriving first in a market in need of goods or launching a ship before an export embargo, as Willing somewhat painfully discovered firsthand in 1755 when he had a ship with a "mixt cargoe" bound for the West Indies trapped by an embargo. Luckily for Willing, he was able to convince Governor Robert Hunter Morris, with whom Willing confessed "a particular Intimacy," to allow the snow to leave port, but only after several crucial day's delay and the posting of a £1,000 performance bond.[26] Though a political enemy of Benjamin Franklin, by the end of the conflagration Willing embodied the spirit of Poor Richard: "Be punctual in your correspondence, attentive to your employment, . . . and as quick as Possible in your remittances," Willing instructed traders Tod and Swan of Guadeloupe in 1762.

This greater emphasis on exactness led to better cost accounting and triggered experimentation in insurance. Willing owned several ships outright and had shares in others, and hence exerted some control over his transport costs. He had less control over insurance costs, however. Though he underwrote some of the ventures of others, Willing usually insured his own ships with his paternal uncle and business correspondent, Thomas Willing of London. However, the war brought higher risks, higher premiums, and slower intelligence. Willing lost out on several profitable opportunities because of the slow, costly, and inflexible system of writing to England for insurance. The unpredictability of trade forced merchants to vest much discretion in shipmasters and supercargoes to deviate from plan if circumstances warranted. Such deviations often voided insurance contracts, however, forcing merchants and agents to sacrifice potentially lucrative speculations for safety's sake. In 1754, for example, Willing complained his ship *American* could have taken more iron on board "but we did not now Chuse to put any onboard, as it might perhaps prejudice the Insurance." Accustomed to pay about five pounds for every one hundred pounds of insurance, as premiums rose over fifty percent during the war, Willing realized he could afford "to stand [his] . . . own Insurer Rather than pay such Exorbitant Premiums." In October, 1757, he joined five other Philadelphia merchants in a limited partnership under the name "Thomas Willing and Company." Under the articles of agreement, the association, capitalized at £80,000, could write up to £6,000 more per venture than the members "could formerly have done here on any one Risque." Though not a permanent institution, some members made similar arrangements during the 1760s, and Willing and Morris continued to act as agents and underwriters through their mercantile firm.[27]

In the colonial era Willing increased colonists' and Native Americans' desire for his importations by carefully extending a negotiable and hence liquid form of credit, by facilitating the movement of goods to the West as Indian commissioner, and by improving insurance and remittance-making to ensure the continued importation of goods and manpower during the French and Indian War. He continued to make contributions after the Revolution. Due to his outstanding credit and financial prowess, Willing not only brought large amounts of Oriental goods to American markets, he did it for less money than others, thereby allowing more consumers to partake of the wares. Contrary to belief, some American merchants, first Willing and later John Jacob Astor, were able to purchase goods in Asia with bills of exchange and promissory notes, a much more efficient, regular, and profitable way of carrying on trade than by specie or barter. Willing used his extensive credit to make purchases in China with bills on London and India, and even promissory notes, instead of the specie lesser merchants had to tender. In the 1790s Willing's very innovative new firm, Willing & Francis, also trafficked in opium and attempted to break into the lucrative but restricted Japanese market. The concern also sent ships to Manila via Jamaica and Barcelona, and tried to enter the South American market.[28] Willing's systematic exploitation of the Oriental trade shows that his longtime partner, Robert Morris, has received too much scholarly attention at his expense.[29] Though the closeness of the two and the paucity of evidence render it impossible to clearly delineate the contributions each made, it is clear Willing was the better businessman. Morris, who started out as a clerk in Charles Willing's counting house, took large risks. Though he grew fabulously wealthy, like many speculators he took on too much and eventually went bankrupt. Willing's approach was much steadier. Morris, for example, made huge profits on the famous *Empress to China* venture, but did not mine the market as Willing later did. This scene repeated itself in western land speculation where Morris made big scores only to end up losing his all. Meanwhile his former partner quietly built an empire he had the pleasure to bequeath to his large family.

The argument is not that Morris was unimportant or should not be studied as much but rather that Willing made important and lasting contributions in his own right. Morris clearly had a brilliant mind, but the fact that Willing was staid and relatively mute does not mean he was without insight. In fact, Willing left us at least one important theoretical piece, a pamphlet about life insurance published in March, 1813, as "An Address to the Citizens of Pennsylvania Upon the Subject of a Life Insurance Company." Despite its five banks, nine insurance companies, and three fire insurance companies, Willing lamented that Philadelphia remained "in want of *a Company for the Insurance of Lives, and granting Annuities.*" Willing wrote the tract to stir interest in the languishing Pennsylvania Company for Insurance on Lives. Chartered in March, 1812, and capitalized at $500,000, the concern encountered difficulties selling its $100 shares. Because of the Company's obscure origins it is not known if Willing had a financial interest in it, but he obviously had a personal interest in the subject because he struggled to procure safe, long-term, interest-bearing investments for friends and family, especially his five daughters.[30] He noted that annuities allowed donors to provide for "imprudent and helpless members of families, who have not discretion or ability to manage their own affairs." The Pennsylvania Company was a good institution, Willing argued, because it benefited both its owners and its customers. The institution allowed "capitalists, and others, [to] invest funds to their own private emolument, whilst they will be performing a great public good."[31] Besides reviving the Company's fortunes, Willing's message reverberated through the political economy of the Whigs, to the philanthropy of the late nineteenth century to the rhetoric of twentieth century supply-side theorists. Willing clearly saw himself as one of these "capitalists" performing "great public good" while rightly enriching themselves. His other major contribution to the development of American capitalism, his support of manufacturing, also evinced this theme of economic development through "private emolument."

**Willing and Manufacturing**

If late eighteenth-century Philadelphia was ruled by merchant "princes," then Willing was a king. Probably worth over a million dollars, Willing was one of, if not the, richest man in Philadelphia between the fall of Morris in the mid-1790s and the rise of Girard after the War of 1812. Whatever his exact worth, it is clear Willing was immensely wealthy by the standards of his day. Shortly after his father's sudden death in late 1754, Willing was assessed at £100. Aside from his father's estate, which was rated at £130, only 16 of the Dock Ward's other 383 taxables were rated higher than the young merchant. Willing's 1769 Philadelphia County assessment was £453, far higher than the average assessment that year of £69. Willing's was also far higher than the average assessment for those involved in the Revolutionary movement (£79), be they merchants (£77), Anglicans (£84), Quakers (£84), Whigs (£48.5), or Tories (£146.6). In 1774 Willing was assessed at £534. Only 9 of Philadelphia's 83 coach owners were assessed higher. The Revolution seems to have increased Willing's wealth both in absolute and relative terms. Directors of the Bank of the United States (BUS) were among the richest of the rich, but in the early 1790s the net worth of BUS directors averaged "only" about £25,000. During his lifetime Willing gave a fortune, between £20,000 and £40,000, to *each* of his ten surviving children. In all, he gave away a little over £300,000 to friends and family during his life. Though some gifts were huge, others were relatively small, as when he gave his daughter Mary $160 "for Pin & Pocket Money" in 1796. Over the decades these smaller gifts added up to considerable sums.[32]

Though a staunch Federalist,[33] and seemingly dependent on foreign commerce, Willing long evinced a desire to develop America's indigenous economy. The events of his career clearly dispel John R. Nelson's belief that Federalists opposed the development of indigenous manufactures and internal improvements because their interests were too closely tied to international commerce. Willing, who had the most to lose according to Nelson's scenario, clearly supported manufacturing and internal improvements because he realized they would help the entire economy while enriching capitalists like himself. The merchant's efforts to supply artisans with affordable and convenient lots in Moyamensing and Southwark clearly demonstrate this. Unlike John Jacob Astor's speculations in Manhattan, most of which were traditional sales for the full purchase price, Willing preferred to sell his south Philadelphia lots on ground rent, a type of perpetual mortgage.[34] This allowed mechanics, artisans, yeomen, and even laborers to purchase lots, in *fee simple*, in return for low but perpetual annual payments.

Willing did not make these sales out of the goodness of his heart. In an era of few corporate securities and government bonds, he used ground rents to generate stable income streams. In fact, he sometimes, wrongly, referred to the contracts as "annuities." A personal lien on the real estate and a right to seize the personal property of the owner in case of default made ground rent sales relatively safe investments. To ensure there was something to seize for payment, and to increase the value of surrounding lots, ground rent sellers often included a deed clause forcing the purchaser to build improvements on the lot within a few years. To protect against currency depreciation, though not inflation, virtually all of the deeds stipulated that if the purchaser could not procure the specified type of coin, he could tender other types of money, as long as the type tendered was sufficient to buy the stipulated amount and type of specie. Between 1759 and 1764 Willing sold 9 lots in Philadelphia by ground rent deed, 7 to artisans or mechanics. All save one had the option to buy out the ground rent within 10 years for an average price of 165.55 pistoles. The average yearly rent was 8.56 pistoles and the average lot size was 1,764 square feet. By the terms of the deed, 6 of the purchasers had to erect improvements worth £100 or more pounds within three years. Between 1767 and 1788 Willing sold 8 lots of an average size of 3,469 square feet by ground rent deed. Artisans or mechanics purchased 5 of these lots. The average rent for 7 of the lots was 35.75 milled silver dollars, commonly called "pieces of eight." Almost all deeds specified the erection of £100 of improvements and contained a buyout option. Between 1792 and 1809, Willing made 43 recorded sales by ground rent deed, 34 to mechanics, artisans, farmers, or laborers. The average purchaser annually paid 23 pieces of eight for a 2,244 square foot lot.[35]

Some of the deeds in the 1790s included assurances that Willing and Morris would construct a "small street" bordering the property within five or ten years. The duo apparently had plans to develop the area's infrastructure in order to increase prices. The development of Philadelphia's southern districts did not come easily. The ground rents were difficult to collect at times, and Willing found himself embroiled in disputes with his collectors. When all went well, however, the ground rents generated a significant and stable income stream. In 1796, for example, Willing collected £518 from 38 ground rent deeds in Philadelphia's Southern districts. In 1798 he collected $2,743.28 in ground rents.

The purchasers benefited as did Willing. Unlike tenants, they held the property in *fee simple*, and thus could divide, devise, or sell the property. Also, they could not be "evicted," even for nonpayment, and did not have to worry about new lease terms. The ground rent landlord, as the recipient of the ground rent was termed, could distrain the personal property of the ground rent tenant but could reclaim title only if the delinquent had no personal property for the sheriff to seize, a relatively rare occurrence. Though the deed terms ensured purchasers could not meet their obligations with depreciated currency, the ground rent rate was not linked to any price or interest rate index. Thus, over time, as price levels and interest rates rose, the fixed annual payment decreased in real terms. If purchasers wished to remove the perpetual liens and payments, moreover, most deeds stipulated they could do so by paying 16 to 20 times the ground rent, representing an interest charge of 6% and 5% respectively, to the ground rent landlord within 7 to 10 years from date of purchase. Regardless of the original contract, purchasers or interested later parties could, and did, make separate contracts to "extinguish" the ground rent, often after it had sunk to a nuisance level in real terms.[36]

An analysis of how ground rent deeds helped artisans and other small businessmen is beyond the scope of the present study. Suffice it to say, there is little difference between purchasing real estate by ground rent or by bank mortgage. They are simply different ways of financing *fee simple* ownership. In both cases, the purchaser receives the benefit of full ownership without eliminating his/her capital base. This capital can then be used to make improvements on the lot and to purchase tools or stock. Both forms of finance force the purchaser to greater exertions and stricter economy in order to meet the periodic payments and thereby increase the efficiency of the macroeconomy.

Few of Willing's non-mercantile letters survive, so there is little evidence he realized his extensive Moyamensing land development scheme helped lay the basis for Philadelphia's emerging industrial strength. Historians have been quick to criticize the nation's early banks for not extending long-term credit to artisans and nascent manufacturers. In fact, in Philadelphia at least, manufacturers did receive long-term credit, the sale of well-situated lots by ground rent deed.

Ample indirect evidence demonstrates Willing's support for indigenous manufactures throughout the region. Though not involved in the founding of the Society for the Establishment of Useful Manufacturers, Willing did serve as one of four superintendents who oversaw its unsuccessful lottery scheme in 1794. Mathew Carey, later one of the leading advocates of the development of the nation's domestic economy, had nothing but praise for Willing. In the mid-1790s he gave Willing a copy of his edition of Guthrie's *Modern Geography* in "approbation" of Willing's "Public conduct." One of Willing's sons, Thomas Mayne, also a merchant, corresponded with famous manufacturing advocate Tench Coxe in the early nineteenth century. When it appeared the Napoleonic Wars had wound down in 1801, Willing's son-in-law, William Bingham, lamented that "our Sphere of Business will be considerably contracted." Bingham, however, saw "many essential objects for the Employment of American Capital," and he was not just talking about Western land speculation. Few merchants were so dull-witted not to understand at least one-half of their collective business depended on the nation's internal economy.[37]

Finally, Willing, in both his personal capacity, and as president of the Bank of the United States (1791-1807), was crucial to Alexander Hamilton's control over securities' prices. Through the discount (lending) policies of the nation's banks, and the sale of guilder bills of exchange drawn on Amsterdam (the process by which the United States "imported" the Dutch loans that helped refinance the Revolutionary War debt), both of which processes Willing played an important role as a decision-maker and purchaser, the Secretary of the Treasury was able to control securities' prices. Contrary to the hypothesis of John R. Nelson, there was no need to squelch indigenous industry to maintain British imports, and hence United States revenues, in order to stabilize securities' prices.[38] Overall, then, Willing's actions show the internationally renowned merchant to be a strong supporter of American manufacturing.

## Willing and the Cash Economy

Willing furthered the development of America's cash economy as Bank of North America (BNA) and BUS president. By increasing the nation's stock of "cash," be it coin, bank notes, or bank money of account, the nation's early banks facilitated market decisions. The bearer of current cash, no matter his or her station in life, could buy as much of any type of commodity as s/he could afford. This was very different than barter or credit transactions where the seller's opinion of the buyer played a crucial role in the determination of the price, quantity, quality, and even type of commodity the seller would exchange. In the absence of stable "cash," both the price and means of payment were open for haggling. No exchange was routine; each one required an elaborate cultural exchange that served to perpetuate the *status quo*. Besides preventing people from entering the market, the lack of stable cash also created anti-market sentiments. Thanks to the General Loan Office (GLO), provincial Pennsylvanians did not contend with the rampant depreciation of currency colonists in places like Rhode Island and South Carolina faced. Pennsylvanians did endure the forced sales and market disruptions severe monetary stringencies caused, however, especially in the mid-1760s. The Stamp Act crisis and general stagnation of trade combined with the "sinking" (scheduled retirement) of GLO and war finance bills of credit issues to lead to a severe shortage of money and liquidity. The situation was so dire, in fact, it appears receipts (notes of hand) Bucks County magistrates wrote to "pay" the squirrel scalp bounty passed hand to hand in 1765 and 1766![39]

Unfortunately, the current state of the sources, and, to some extent, historiography, precludes a full assessment of Pennsylvania's late colonial debt structure here. In his *Best Poor Man's Country*, an otherwise excellent work, James Lemon all but ignored debt. Even Alice Hanson Jones, in her massive and detailed *Wealth of a Nation to Be*, admitted "that the potentialities for improving our understanding of the pace and character of colonial economic development would be enhanced if ways could be devised to determine more clearly than I have been able to do . . . the nature of particular financial liabilities." Suffice it to say here that the main systemic cause of debt suits in Pennsylvania was illiquidity—the inability to turn property or obligations receivable into cash. In the mid-1760's insolvents, men of some property fallen victim to circumstances, swelled the debtor prisons. In the autumn of 1766 Willing & Morris and seven other large and reputable Philadelphia mercantile firms tried to increase the money stock by issuing "a Number of their joint and several Promissory Notes, for Five Pounds each, amounting to Twenty Thousand Pounds, Pennsylvania Currency, payable to the Bearers within Nine Months, with Interest at the Rate of Five per Cent. per Annum." Though Franklin had publicly espoused a similar scheme involving interest-accruing bearer bills of credit, merchants jealous of the private advantage these firms might have gained from the project effectively blocked the issue by raising legal technicalities based on two English statutes. British authorities thought the merchants' actions legal in that the issue was essentially private, and hence merely an extension of typical mercantile practices. The British balked at the bearer nature of the bills, however, so the scheme died.[40] The Revolution removed these legal barriers and allowed largely the same group of men to create the Bank of North America.

To fully appreciate the liquidity Willing and his banks engendered, it is necessary to consider the extreme illiquidity of the colonial American economy. One of the major economic activities of colonial governments was to issue paper money "bills of credit" and to manage "loan offices" that gave out low interest long-term loans on the security of land. Governments were extremely lax about the repayment of principal. Although most loans were eventually paid back, arrears were often huge and long overdue. Governments rarely filed suit, however, as such a course would have been highly unpopular. Colonial governments gave such easy repayment terms that students of the colonial economy, from eighteenth century merchants to Thomas Paine to twentieth-century historians of agriculture and economics, have argued that the loan office was largely a way to redistribute wealth by giving debtor classes an easy way to pay off creditors. Their arguments were much the same: the interest rate on the bills of credit was much lower than the price inflation they helped to generate. The difference in purchasing power between the time the bills were issued and the loan was eventually repaid was seen as a disguised tax on creditors. It is just as likely, however, that the government did not demand punctual repayment because very few individuals, including merchants, were so strict. Creditors allowed accounts of colonists of all stations to remain unpaid for months, years, and even decades. During monetary stringencies like that of the mid-1760s, however, when overseas creditors demanded payment, the normal laxity turned to lawsuits as businesspersons scrambled to make remittances.[41]

Since gold, silver, and even loan office bills of credit were scarce, and English bank notes rare, person-to-person transactions were the single most important economic transaction in colonial America. There were four types of colonial person-to-person "money." The first was commercial paper: bills of exchange, bills of lading, and letters of credit. The second was personal securities: promissory notes and bonds. The third was direct transaction of silver, gold, bills of credit, or marketable produce. The fourth was "book credit" or "account money": debts and credits maintained in merchants' and traders' ledgers.[42]

All four types were transferable and hence circulated to a greater or lesser degree. Even account money was transferable. These types of account transactions led to close personal relations and a degree of dependence on the storekeeper. As such they were illiquid and somewhat arbitrary. Payment in kind was fraught with difficulties because the goods had to be "merchantable." It was not always clear if the "country produce" was not selling because of its quality or because of unfavorable market conditions. Quantities of goods often changed in transit from the point of production to the point where the produce was payable. Contracts were often ambiguous about who had to suffer the difference—the farmer, the shipper, or the creditor. Payment in services was not so easy either, as the length, area, and type of work had to be settled. Situations like these occasioned haggling, not only over price and quantity, but also over quality, an even more elusive concept. Haggling led to concessions by one or both parties, and eventually a personal understanding between those involved, but also to arbitrary or non-market driven decisions.[43]

Gold and silver also circulated, but not without problems. Coins were often foreign or underweight and hence were not as easily transferable as one might expect. The exchange of British coins of the proper weight raised problems because the pound of account of each colony constantly varied from that of the Mother Country's. During stringencies coins "disappeared," entering hoards or ships bound for England. Bills of credit often circulated at face value because there were so few of them, but sometimes were subject to depreciation. When this happened, men had to haggle over their value and liquidity ebbed.[44]

Promissory notes and bonds also circulated, and they too demanded much interpersonal contact. Unlike book credits, each indorser of a circulating note obligated himself to pay it if the maker defaulted. This obligation was both a legal and a moral one and involved eighteenth-century merchants, traders, mechanics, and farmers in a tight circle of mutual debts, obligations, and personal relationships. This interdependence ensured virtually all felt the effects of stringencies as the failure of one put a chain of others in jeopardy.[45]

Essentially bills of exchange were postdated checks drawn on non-banks. Merchants transferred bills of exchange to cancel debts. The laws and moral obligations pertaining to bills of exchange were similar in form to those pertaining to promissory notes, but were much more intense.[46] Bills of exchange were not transferred or passed from one person to another at face value like money. Because only merchants used them, they usually involved large sums, and they were often transatlantic or transregional. Also, bills were "discounted." That is to say the receiver or purchaser deducted interest for the risk involved in accepting the bill as payment. A bill of exchange for £1,000 payable in three months would pass at something like £985. That is £1,000 minus £15 for three months' interest of six percent per annum. But even this was not so simple, as the interest rate merchants charged for discounting a bill varied with the season, the rate of exchange, the size of the bill, and the reputations of the maker, payer, and endorsees. Like coins, bills of exchange also became scarce during monetary stringencies and trade depressions.

The common element of all of these forms of transferring money is that they were negotiable but not always liquid. Specie disappeared when it was most needed. The value of promissory notes and bonds fluctuated greatly and not always according to market considerations. When bills of credit and bills of exchange were also scarce, as during the mid-1760s, lawsuits mounted and commerce slowed. Owing money in colonial America was a sobering experience. One's honor, reputation, property, and personal freedom were tied to the repayment of debts and hence rested in the hands of one's creditors. This volatility made the market seem arbitrary or unpredictable and hence dissuaded market entrance.[47]

By stabilizing the value of money, increasing the amount of circulating "cash," regularizing remittances through the extensive use of checks, and serving as financial intermediators, banks decreased the opportunity for arbitrary, personal relations to influence economic transactions, especially in retail trade.[48] This allowed markets to become more "rational," and opened them to more persons, goods, and services, on both the supply and demand sides.[49] Banks turned businessmen's bills of exchange and promissory notes, their entire property in effect, into money—easily recognizable and divisible bearer notes redeemable in specie. This regularization of the money market, this increased liquidity, allowed business to be conducted either more safely, or more profitably, depending on the businessman's goals. This made banking seem unfair to many and led to the revocation of the charter of the bank of North America for a time in the mid-1780's. Pennsylvania's Republicans [i.e. Federalists] mounted a massive propaganda and political campaign to gain control of the Assembly and re-charter the bank. What is less appreciated is that Willing's day-to-day business decisions, especially on discount (loan) applications, put the BNA on unassailable ground as a provider of community credit and a solid money supply. By 1790, only 32 percent of the Bank's customers were merchants (interregional, interstate, or international traders). A full 23 percent were artisans (makers of things), 18 percent were retailers (direct-to-consumer traders), 9 percent were gentlepersons (wealthy, retired, or widowed persons living off investments or inheritances), 9 percent were professionals (doctors, lawyers), 5 percent were government officials (mostly city and county officers), and 4 percent were mariners (captains, pilots, supercargoes). Of the bank's 1,600 or so customers, 2.5 percent were women! Through wages and retail trade the Bank's notes aided an even wider spectrum of the community.[50]

**Willing's pursuit of self-interest in politics**

The tumults of the 1750s and the war's ambiguous effects on his business forced Willing to become involved in politics. He severely censured the handling of foreign affairs and wartime trade issues by Britain and Pennsylvania. "We are by our disjointed Interest + Constitutions on this Continent," Willing argued in 1755, "in a most sad Situation, + this our Restless Neighbours know well." Rather than submit to "the influence of our Quaker Meeting, who put in what Members of Assembly they Please, & Govern Em when there," Willing decided to enter politics himself, consenting to join Philadelphia's self-electing Common Council in October.[51] After the initial Indian depredations stopped, however, Willing rarely attended Council meetings, serving on few committees during his career. The assignments he did assume, however, dealt with economic issues like Middle Schuylkill Ferry regulation, public wharf inspection, and market stall repairs. As a landowner near the Ferry, a shipper, and a wholesaler, all three issues directly impacted Willing's economic interests.[52]

Though not an official commissioner, in January, 1756, Willing joined Governor Robert Hunter Morris and other Pennsylvania leaders for three weeks of Indian meetings and defense preparations at various frontier strongpoints. Willing used his financial acumen and business liquidity to make advances and negotiate bills of exchange for the use of the army. Though concern for the safety of his family was a motivating factor, Willing most desired to invigorate the city's stagnant trade by putting it "in some posture of Defence" and limiting the influence of "Quaker principals" and their "Vile Meetinghouse." The Anglican vestryman feared the Quakers' handling of the war would destroy Philadelphia's prosperity by turning "the Channell of Trade to Maryland and Virginia."[53]

In the fall of 1759 the Philadelphia Common Council elected Willing an alderman. He chose not to serve until 1761, when he also became a Philadelphia County Justice of the Peace. In October, 1763, the Common Council elected Willing mayor of Philadelphia. Besides his civil duties, his judicial duties, and his trip to Germantown to help stop the Paxton Boys' advance in 1764, Mayor Willing oversaw the creation and execution of economic ordinances establishing the rate carters could charge for carrying different types of goods, and mandating the use of certified weights and scales in the sale of meat, fish, and other provisions within the city, both issues directly linked to his mercantile interests.[54]

Willing began his two-term assembly career in the fall of 1764. After a futile effort to block the movement for royal government and quash the nomination of the staunchly anti-proprietary Benjamin Franklin as provincial agent to England, Willing played an important role in the House, serving on 23 committees his freshman year, 16 more than the average representative. Not surprisingly, most of his assignments dealt with issues of money and trade. Most importantly, he helped to instruct the province's agent "respecting the trade of the province." He condemned "the 'pernicious Effects' of the present restrictive laws regarding trade to Ireland and Europe, and any future internal taxations from Parliament that endanger the rights of the colonists as Englishmen," and helped to prepare resolves of the House concerning the Stamp Act. He also helped to settle the accounts of the General Loan Office (GLO), reform the poor laws, construct a workhouse, enquire into the condition of insolvent debtors, supplement the Dock Street construction law, alter and amend the bill for better securing the estates of deceased persons, prepare and bring in a bill for the more easy recovery of legacies, amend a £55,000 supply bill, and regulate the assize of bread.[55]

Willing had a personal stake in most of these issues. As a merchant, the trade restrictions and Stamp Act struck at the core of his business. Willing trafficked in all of the goods now laden with duties. The duties and the Stamp Act had to be paid in specie and hence served to drain the colonies of hard coin. The latter act taxed the very items, bonds and promissory notes, that usually filled the void. Improvement of Dock Street was important to Willing as both a shipper and land owner. The derangement of the economy increased pressure to lower poor taxes and deal effectively with bankrupts. As a major flour exporter, the assize of bread affected Willing's profits by influencing the supply and hence price of flour available for export. Willing had already successfully altered the province's probate law to his advantage with a petition to the 1763-64 Assembly. The new law helped Willing, whose father died suddenly in 1754 before updating his will, by reinstating a useful old act "for the more easy recovery of legacies" due from the estates of intestates. This is not to say, however, that Willing dominated the Assembly or forced it to do his bidding. In fact, the 1764-65 Assembly passed an immigration regulation act so stringent that Willing and other importers of servants joined an unsuccessful movement to thwart its full implementation.[56]

In the fall of 1765 Willing led the merchant community's remonstrances against the Stamp, Sugar, and Currency Acts. Willing and his colleagues blamed these acts for the "melancholy State of the North American Commerce." The regulations, merchants complained, "limited the Exportation of some Part of our Country Produce, increased the Cost and Expense of many Articles of our Importation, and cut off from us all Means of supplying ourselves with Specie enough even to pay the Duties imposed on us, much less to serve as a Medium of our Trade." To show their disdain, many Philadelphia merchants pledged not to import British goods until the acts were repealed. Willing was one of 11 merchants, including Samuel Mifflin and Benjamin Fuller, who convinced some 400 Philadelphia merchants to sign this nonimportation agreement.[57]

Though the "Old Ticket" (Quaker party) swept most of the October, 1765 elections, Willing returned to his House seat. His biggest success this term came when the Assembly appointed him to meet with Governor Penn to hash out appointments to be made under the port wardens bill. Willing, who had a hand in the formation of the bill, convinced his longtime friend to appoint Robert Morris and John Nixon to two of the seven posts. Morris was Willing's partner and Nixon was a close business associate who later served as Willing's cashier in the Bank of North America. The measure empowered Morris and the other wardens to examine "all persons offering themselves to serve as pilots to and from the port of Philadelphia as to their knowledge and skill in pilotage," to take pilots' performance bonds, and enforce the laws that fixed pilots' fees. The wardens were also responsible for selling unclaimed salvage and had other powers sure to enhance Willing's trade.[58]

Willing also served on the important committee of grievances in his second and last House term. He again helped to audit the GLO accounts, worked on poor relief, sought to amend the £55,000 supply bill, and helped draw up a memorial against British trade policies like the Currency Act, which severely curtailed the rights of American colonies to issue bills of credit. When the British repealed the Stamp Act he sat on two committees charged with communicating the Assembly's approbation. He also aided in the revision and correction of the minutes of the House, evaluated the condition of the Pennsylvania Hospital, extended the time for drawing the St. Peter's Church lottery, and amended the night watch regulations. The future bank president also helped draft a bill allowing the managers of Henlopen lighthouse to borrow money to complete the work. In all Willing sat on 33 committees, 26 more than the average assemblyman.[59]

The Philadelphia merchant bowed out of the Assembly campaign in early September 1766, arguing that his tenure in the House had been "very injurious" to his "private Affairs." Although his political career was far from over, Willing would never again sit in Pennsylvania's legislature, preferring the bench to the House. He joined the Supreme Court as Fourth Justice in time for the September, 1767, term. Despite a paucity of reported decisions, it is clear that as Supreme Court justice Willing performed a wide range of judicial duties, many of which were related to his business activities. For example, Willing had to sign the bonds of indenture of imported servants. Although biographer Burton Konkle argued that Willing significantly increased the efficiency of the Court, the Court's increased efficiency probably had more to do with the creation of *nisi prius* circuit courts than his personal efforts.[60] However, Willing indeed did ride circuit, and probably used the opportunity to visit informally backcountry customers and suppliers at taxpayer expense. Willing's high court career ended in 1777 when the Assembly abolished the colonial bench.[61]

Willing rejoined legislative councils in May, 1775, when the Assembly elected him to the Continental Congress. The Philadelphia merchant served as a conduit between Congress and Lord North. In June Willing procured a three-month emergency loan of £6,000 for Congress from Pennsylvania treasurer Owen Jones on the collateral of the Pennsylvania delegation's joint promissory note. He actively participated in trade debates in September, especially after some delegates expressed "an Uneasiness, . . . concerning a Contract with Willing & Morris, for Powder, by which the House, without any Risque at all will make a clear Profit of 12,000£ at least." While some Congressmen complained, the Secret Committee continued to award contracts to the firm, including one for gunpowder, cannon, and 2,000 stand of arms on 27 September. The firm needed such business because "all Exportation of . . . Country Produce has ceased, indeed there has not been any brought to Market for Sale."[62]

On 4 November 1775 the Assembly reappointed Willing to Congress. He played an active role within the delegation, apprising absent members of upcoming matters of importance, and attended regularly from 13 December until sometime in July, 1776. He sat on several strategic committees, including one for procuring gunpowder, and one "to consider of the best Means of supplying our Army." "Our gold is locked up at present," Willing noted from the committee on trade, so "we ought to be decisive." The shipowner also denounced the notion of allowing foreign vessels to carry colonial goods, pointing out that "carriage [was] an amazing revenue."[63]

Though he lost a bid for the state Assembly in May, 1776, Willing was still a member of Congress and continued to attend regularly, apparently not even taking time off to campaign for the Assembly. He was absent in early June, however, so John Dickinson summoned him back when "a Matter of the last Importance," the question of independence, reached the floor. Incredibly, whether or not Willing voted for independence, voted against independence, or abstained is unclear. Whatever his votes on independence, Willing did not sign the formal Declaration. Like so many other propertied men, Willing entered into the Revolution with trepidation. For all his desire for peace and stability, once independence was proclaimed, Willing soon joined his partner in the belief that "there never has been so fair an opportunity of making a large fortune." The firm Willing & Morris, by this time one of the largest mercantile firms in the country, used its political clout and extensive connections abroad to advance the patriot cause and make profits.[64]

Although the depreciation of Continental and state bills of credit severely stressed the poor, historians sometimes forget that wealthy men like Willing actually suffered the most pecuniary loss. Contrary to the naive view of some historians, there were no creditor or debtor "classes" in early America. Willing & Morris, for example, always had large sums both owing and owed. Instability of the monetary supply could lead to losses on both ends. As early as January, 1777, Willing complained to Morris that he had received bills of credit in exchange for his property, but found himself unable to tender the bills to meet his debts. "This is hard treatment," he lamented. Early in 1778 a land deal with Joseph Pemberton stalled because Pemberton wanted to pay the first installment with "the Money then Current" at the time of agreement, or else he expected "a consideration abatement." Realizing the instability of the situation and potential for loss, Willing chastised Morris for allowing business transactions to drag out, complaining that if Morris continued to procrastinate "demands will be made on me to be paid in hard money continually." This was of course a problem because the firm's debtors remitted only bills of credit or nothing at all. Only good wine brought "hard Cash."

Though he never explicitly stated it, Willing hinted he may have stayed in Philadelphia during the occupation because he suspected pre-Revolutionary bills of credit, of which he had "a considerable Sum," might again pass current. Ensuring the British would not repudiate bills of credit issued by the rebel governments was one of his major concerns in his talks with General Howe in occupied Philadelphia. The unstable monetary situation of the war made Willing extremely nervous, so, as during the French and Indian War, he sought to invest funds "in Safe hands in some part of Europe." Importantly, Willing's firm created contractual arrangements with some other merchants about depreciation rates. For example, in its dealings with Carter Braxton, a Virginia tobacco merchant, the parties agreed that when a drawer drew a bill as reimbursement for funds actually in the hands of the drawee [the payer], the rate of depreciation would be calculated on the day the bill was paid. If the drawer drew not on lodged funds but on his credit with the drawee, depreciation would be calculated on the date of drawing. The key was not so much the details of the arrangement as the fact that it reduced risks by creating specific, detailed obligations. Like Willing's establishment of a line of credit with David Barclay during the French and Indian War, the contract was an effort to reduce the risks of war. Though this particular arrangement was somewhat soured by Braxton's insolvency, similarly complex contracts became increasingly common over the next few decades. Though Willing by no means made all of the innovations, he did set several precedents. He also fostered the development of more complex contracts as president of the BNA and BUS.[65]

Braxton's failure does show, however, that private contracts were not always enough. Major institutional changes were necessary to bring stability and efficiency to the nation's war-torn economy. Again in the movements for the Bank of North America and the Federal Constitution, Willing's economic interests merged with those of the community's to a large extent. Besides exemplifying this synergy, Willing influenced the development of America's nation state through his administration of the nation's first two national banks.

### Willing and the Federal Nation State

A staunch Federalist, Willing undoubtedly used his mercantile and banking connections to influence national politics and federal-state relations in the late 1780s, the 1790s, and beyond. Willing worked closely with mercantile partner Robert Morris to stabilize the nation's finances in the late stages of the Revolution. As bank of North America president Willing cooperated with Hamilton to hash out many of the details of the Treasury's transactions with the BUS in the 1790s. These details allowed Hamilton effectively to control securities' prices and stabilize the economy while permitting rapid economic growth. Philadelphia's population jumped almost one-half during the 1790s, while exports increased from around $3,000,000 per year in the early years of the decade to over $10,000,000 per annum in its final years. Other ports posted similar gains.[66]

Willing also influenced national politics. The BUS's timely $400,000 loan was instrumental in the squelching of the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, for example. The next year, Willing and other bankers effectively countered an anti-Jay's Treaty petition with a pro-Treaty circular. Republican Pierce Butler privately told James Madison he believed "that many Persons signed the last Paper, not from inclination or Approbation, but a dread of being refused Discounts at the Banks if they did not Sign."[67]

As BUS president, Willing coordinated the Bank's activities with the Federal government. Throughout the 1790s, for example, he worked with

Hamilton, Benjamin Lincoln, and Secretary of State Timothy Pickering to thwart the spread of counterfeit bank notes. Deeply involved with counterfeiting problems as BNA president, Willing's reputation in the field was so strong by 1797 that Pickering wrote to ask "what measures to pursue" to capture an escaped counterfeiter. The most impressive part of this high-level correspondence was Willing's late 1789 advice to Alexander Hamilton. In the first letter, Willing deftly explained the necessity and technical means of creating secret anti-counterfeiting marks on bank notes. He also described how to avoid the "risque of imposition on the Officers of the Impost" by requiring them to cut postnotes and other securities in half and remit them by separate conveyances. In subsequent letters he further refined his directions, virtually all of which Hamilton implemented. When some of the Treasury's drafts on the collectors at Norfolk were protested (bounced), Willing engineered an amicable settlement and upheld the new government's honor by indicating the mistake was an honest one caused by inexperience, not a fundamental flaw in the public credit. Though Willing's contributions went untold in the public discourse, such actions endeared high Federalist officials to Willing and his leadership of the BUS. Those doubting Willing's close connections to these important politicians should consider that the guest list at his daughter Elizabeth's 1795 wedding to the relatively obscure William Jackson included George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Lincoln, and former Secretary of War Henry Knox.[68] Similarly, prominent politicians and even foreign dignitaries supped at Willing's townhouse or country mansion. The only Federalists cool to Willing were followers of John Adams. The second President feared the "banking aristocracy" and allegedly accused Willing and his son-in-law William Bingham of "making through the means of the bank of the United States monstrous fortunes." Adams, apparently unaware Willing had been extremely wealthy before becoming a banker, thought it looked as though the two families would soon "get possession of all Pennsylvania."[69]

Under the Republican administrations, Willing worked with Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin to make payments the United States owed to holders of its funded debt and to other nations. The task was enormous and required Willing to coordinate the efforts of the BUS branches, state banks, and the Treasury.[70] Early 1805 was a particularly trying period. Willing had to provide for the purchase and remittance of several hundred thousand pounds of sterling bills payable in London due the British government.[71] He also had to pay United States bills the French government unexpectedly dumped on the market *en masse*.[72] Early 1805 also witnessed some economic dislocations, especially in New York. A large fire there caused over $2,000,000 in damages in late 1804. Conditions were so bad that in late January, 1805, the City of New York petitioned the legislature for authority to chop up some old wooden bastions belonging to the state for firewood for the poor. Bank stock prices slipped. Manhattan Company stock was off almost twenty points. Bank of New York and BUS stock fell 10% each. These crises occurred about the same time the large association known as the Merchants' Bank of New York called in its debts in order to comply with the Empire State's 1804 law against unincorporated banking. Also that spring, merchants in the major ports made "considerable purchases" of "American dollars" for intended sale "to India." Finally, businessmen hoarded specie because they were concerned about the £200,000 sterling the BUS was scheduled to pay to the British government on behalf of the United States later in the year.[73]

Willing and Gallatin solved these potentially catastrophic difficulties with tact and discretion. In a January, 1805, circular to the BUS branches, Willing admitted that the mother bank had been lessening its discounts [loans] for some time, and would continue to do so "until we find such a reflux of specie, as will justify us in extending them again." Willing urged the branches "to lessen . . . Discounts as far as possible, without distressing the Community too much." Willing attributed the stringency to the British payments and the eastern trade. "Even in a typical spring, merchants required all the aid that the Banks could give," he noted. Gallatin and Willing further eased the situation by granting funds to "support also the Manhattan & New York Banks." The Secretary also lodged $200,000 with the Manhattan Company. To increase confidence, he made arrangements to repay the British loan in bills of exchange, acquired through the agency of the BUS, instead of specie, as originally planned. The bipartisan team did all of this behind the scenes, without public recognition, because publication of the extent of the confluent crises could have caused collapse of credit. The episode was one of many examples of Willing's influence on the halting development of the relationship between the federal government and national agencies.[74]

Willing suffered a minor stroke in 1807. Nearing the age of eighty, he soon resigned from the BUS and his partnership in Willing & Francis. He lived until 1821 but played little documented role in the War of 1812 or the formation of the Second Bank of the United States [SBUS]. Sons George, Richard, and Thomas Mayne emerged as substantial merchants during these years, and Thomas Mayne served as a SBUS stock commissioner. Willing willed his large fortune and extensive western lands to his children.[75]

## Conclusion

Philadelphia politician, jurist, and entrepreneur Thomas Willing deserves to be considered one of this nation's Founding Fathers. His longtime friend and partner, Robert Morris, is sometimes accorded this respect because of his role as the Superintendent of Finance. While Morris undoubtedly played a crucial role during the Revolution, it is doubtful he could have risen to such an eminent post without Willing's aid and it seems highly unlikely he would have had much effect at all had not Willing firmly grasped the reigns of the BNA. Also, in the 1790s Morris lost sight of the fundamental principles of good business, and dissipated his political power with his insolvency and subsequent imprisonment. He died virtually forgotten in 1804. In contrast, though not technically a member of the national government, Willing headed the first federal agency, and a very important one at that, for over twenty years (if one considers the BNA the institutional precursor to the BUS). More importantly, as others built the constitutional, administrative, judicial, and legislative pillars of the new nation, Willing helped create its economic strength.

The causation of economic growth and development is an elusive process that defies easy delineation.[76] Though the issues cannot be solved to everyone's satisfaction here, most would agree, somewhat paradoxically, that a degree of stability is essential to positive change. Given its vast natural resource base and its increasing population the main barrier to economic growth in America was socio-political.[77] The main possible impediment to growth was the reluctance of a sizable percentage of the population to enter the market. Cultural and intellectual traditions to impede growth were present and could have been given vigor and more political power if large groups entered the emerging markets only to meet with disappointment, visits from the sheriff, or imprisonment.[78]

During his entire career, Willing furthered economic growth by protecting new market entrants. First, instead of ceasing to trade or curtailing his efforts during wars and other disruptions, a perfectly legitimate response that nevertheless would have injured small traders, farmers, and debtors by decreasing the volume and velocity of credit and money, Willing responded to risk with innovative contractual arrangements like his insurance company. Second, instead of extending book credits to inland traders, again a legitimate business tactic that had the unfortunate effect of slowing capital movements and endangering the liquidity of new market entrants, Willing extended credit cautiously and in a more liquid form. Third, instead of requiring artisans to give the full purchase price for city lots, again a legitimate business tactic that left artisans victim to the vagaries of short leases or bereft of cheap startup capital and hence easy prey for market fluctuations, Willing sold lots by ground rent. Such sales gave artisans the protection and political privileges of *fee simple* ownership and kept them out of the grasp of usurers by leaving their capital intact while giving Willing a safe and liquid stream of annual income. As bank president, Willing fought against counterfeit bank notes, a danger not only to the bank's reputation but also to noteholders. His political career evinced similar concerns for both his self-interest and the interests of market participants. Finally, Willing helped establish and maintain the public credit of the new nation. Even if they quarreled with Hamilton over specific issues, most prominent men realized the excellent state of public credit ensured the overall stability of the economy and made possible the phenomenal growth of the 1790s.

Though no surviving letter indicates Willing understood the theoretical implications of his actions, his policies and practices nevertheless served to protect new market entrants and hence furthered economic growth by diminishing the impact of cultural traditions antithetical to it. From insurance and banking to international trade and domestic manufactures, others quickly mimicked Willing because he was often in the vanguard of innovations essential to the new nation's economy and hence its very existence.

## Notes

1. My thanks to Sally Griffith, Russell Menard, Lucy Simler, and especially the Biographical Dictionary of Early Pennsylvania Legislators Project for comments on an earlier version of this essay. A chronological, narrative sketch of Thomas Willing, hereafter abbreviated TW, in roman type, will appear in the third volume of the Project's *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania* and will contain much biographical and political information not contained in this article.

2. Willing estate attorney Horace Binney made the comparison. Burton Alva Konkle, *Thomas Willing* (Philadelphia: 1924), 1, 143, *passim*, hereafter cited *TW* in italics. For an engraving of TW by Samuel Sartain that looks very much like Washington's portrait on the current one dollar federal reserve note, see J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884* (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), facing page 1:276, or *Pennsylvania History*, 47:237.

3. For a discussion of the precedents set during Washington's Presidency, see Leonard White, *The Federalists: A Study in Administrative History, 1789-1801* (New York: MacMillan & Co., 1948).

4. John R. Nelson, *Liberty and Property: Political Economy and Policymaking in the New Nation, 1789-1812* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

5. For a description of these acapitalist traditions in Pennsylvania see George Rappaport *Stability and Change in Revolutionary Pennsylvania: Banking, Politics, and Social Structure* (University Park: Penn State Press, 1996), and the works cited in footnote 78, below.

6. The term is from the title of Chapter 3 of Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

7. *Fi Fa* is short for *fierci facias*, a writ requiring the sheriff to seize the goods and chattels of a debtor for resale to satisfy a judgment. Similar writs include *venditioni exponas* and *levari facias*. The most galling aspect of these writs was that during monetary stringencies and depressions the seized goods sold for much less than their "real," normal, or previous market value. Henry C. Black, *Black's Law Dictionary*, (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1968); *Conductor Generalis, or the Office, Duty and Authority of Justices of the Peace, High-Sheriffs, Under-Sheriffs, Goalers, Coroners, Constables, Jury Men, Overs-seers of the Poor* (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1722), *passim*.

8. This definitely occurred in New York during the Panic of 1819 and the depression of the late 1830s. Murray Rothbard, *Panic of 1819: Reactions and Policies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962); Robert E. Wright, "Banking and Politics in New York, 1784-1829" (Ph.D. diss., SUNY Buffalo, 1996).

9. Samuel Dexter served as Secretary of the Treasury for a short time (1800-1801) but was of little importance.

10. Willing retired from the Bank of the United States in 1807 after suffering a mild stroke. Gallatin continued as Secretary of the Treasury until 1813.

11. For an overview of the Shippen clan and Willing's place in it, see the chart facing page 467 in David Hackett Fisher, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

12. Unless otherwise noted, all figures in pounds refer to Pennsylvania currency, as opposed to pounds sterling.

13. Konkle, *TW*; 6-7, 12-14. Charles Willing to Lawrence Growden, ? Sept. 1754, Willing Letterbooks, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, hereafter HSP; *Minutes of the Provincial Council* (Philadelphia: Published by the State, 1852), 5:388, 572-573, 600-601, hereafter *MPC;* James O. Wettereau, "Thomas Willing," *Dictionary of American Biography*, hereafter Wettereau, "TW," *DAB*; TW of Bristol, England, to Charles Willing, Bristol, 25 Aug. 1743, cited in Thomas Willing Balch, *Willing Letters and Papers: Edited with a Biographical Essay of TW of Philadelphia (1731-1821)* (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane, and Scott, 1922), 3-4, hereafter Balch, *Willing Letters;* TW to ?, Philadelphia, 21 July 1802, Willing Family Papers, HSP; TW to Richard Henry Lee?, Dec. 1799 cited in Konkle, *TW*, 170 and *Pennsylvania Magazine of Biography and History*, 23:267, hereafter *PMHB;* Euguene R. Slaski, "Thomas Willing: Moderation During the American Revolution" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1971), 8, hereafter Slaski, "TW"; Morton Horwitz, *The Transformation of American Law, 1780-1860* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

14. Wettereau, "TW," *DAB;* Konkle, *TW*, 15; Slaski, "TW," 39-40; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 22 Aug., 17 Oct., 5 Dec. 1751; 2 Apr., 5 Oct.

1752; 5 Apr., 9 Aug., 4 Oct. 1753; 23 May, 27 June, 12 Sept., 1754; 10 Apr., 13 Nov. 1755; 1 Jan., 1 Apr., 12 Aug., 14 Oct. 1756; Thomas M. Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 82; Charles Willing & Son to Messrs. Whatley, Meyler & Hall, 24 Aug. 1754, Charles Willing & Son to Connel & Morony, 25 Sept. 1754, Charles Willing & Son to William Whitaker, Philadelphia, 24 Sept. 1754, Charles Willing & Son to Robert Hibbert of Manchester, 30 July 1754; Charles Willing & Son to Mr. James Campbell, 15 June 1754; Charles Willing & Son to Messrs. Goold & Morony, 13 July 1754; TW to Robert Hibbert & Compy, 18 July 1757, Willing & Morris to Tudor & De Visme, 2 Sept. 1757, Willing Letterbooks, HSP. For the quotation see: Charles Willing & Son to Day, Bristow & Stratton, 25 Oct. 1754, Willing Letterbooks, HSP. For similar sentiments see Charles Willing & Son to Stephen Perry, 25 Oct. 1754, TW to Thomas Potter, ? Feb. 1756, Willing Letterbooks, HSP; Willing's 1750s Account Book, Hare-Willing Collection, American Philosophical Society.

15. *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 13 Nov. 1760.

16. *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 24 Apr. 1755; 26 Feb. 1756; 13 May 1756; 6 Apr. 1758; 12 Oct. 1758; 10 May 1759; 25 Feb. 1762; 27 June 1765; 4 Dec. 1766; 19 Feb., 12 Nov., 3 Dec. 1767; 3, 24 March, 19 May, 23 June, 29 Sept. 1768; 23 Feb., 2 March 1769; 1 Feb. 1770; 29 July 1772; 24 Feb., 28 July 1773; 27 Apr., 6, 20 July, 3 Aug. 1774; 31 May, 20 Sept., 22 Nov. 1775; 1 May 1776; 18 Sept. 1776; 9 June 1779. Most of these are advertisements subscribed by makers of notes who requested readers "not to take any assignment" of the note(s) because s/he was not going to pay it because of a default in the contract with the payee, or because the notes "were obtained . . . in a fraudulent and deceitful Manner." Some advertisements for lost notes are also revealing.

17. Willing headed several companies with slightly different names. For simplicity sake, they are all referred to as Willing & Morris herein. The ampersand signifies the company. The construction "Willing and Morris" herein refers to Thomas Willing and Robert Morris as individuals.

18. Charles Willing and Son also dealt in a few black slaves. *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 20 Sept., 22 Nov. 1753; 12 Sept. 1754; Slaski, "TW," 53-55; Konkle, *TW,* 26, 29; TW to Anthony Bacon, 12 Apr. 1757, TW to Codrington Carrington, ? Feb. 1756, TW to John Perks, 22 Apr. 1756, TW to Codrington Carrington, 3 Sept. 1756, Willing Letterbooks, HSP; *PMHB,* 1:190-191, 33:501, 97:28, 36; *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 4, 11 Sept. 1760; 7 May 1761; 6 May, 3 June 1762; 1 Sept. 1763; James T. Mitchell and Henry Flanders, comps., *The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801* (Harrisburg: State printers, 1896-1915), hereafter *Statutes;* The firm also advertised in the Pennsylvania *Journal* on 6 May 1762 and 26 Sept. 1763 according to Balch, *Willing Letters,* 20-22; Richard Kilbourne, Jr., *Debt, Investment, Slaves: Credit Relations in East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, 1825-1885* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995). For an early example of the mortgaging of a slave in Philadelphia, see Philadelphia County Deedbook, E1:150-153, made 7 Dec. 1685, hereafter PHDBk. The deed books are on microfilm and are available at HSP. For more on the indentured servant trade, and some analysis of Willing's role in it, see Sharon V. Salinger, "Labor and Indentured Servants in Colonial Pennsylvania" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1980), 89. For more on the slave trade, see, and Willing's role in it, see Darold Duane Wax, "The Negro Slave Trade in Colonial Pennsylvania" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1962), 32, 45, 94, 95, 124, 150, 261.

19. For more on this struggle and the deadlock over this bill, see Craig Horle, et al., eds., *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania,* vols. 2 and 3, forthcoming, University of Pennsylvania Press. For more on the Indian trade, see Yoko Shirai, "The Indian Trade in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1730-1768: Traders and Land Speculation" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1985).

20. Slaski, "TW," 98; William Peters to Thomas Penn, Philadelphia, 17 Feb. 1758, Penn Papers Official Correspondence, 9:11; Konkle, *TW,* 33; *Statutes,* 5:320; Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, Clerk of the Criminal Court, 23 Oct. 1760; Israel Pemberton to the Commissioners for Indian Affairs, 7 June 1760, George Allen to TW, Pittsburgh, 13 Dec. 1759, "Amount of the Goods sold + Bartered to the Indians P month from the 21st Aug. 1761 to the 31st of Decemr 1762 at the Province Store at Pittsburgh," and the "acct of

goods sold at the Province store at Fort Pitt from 3 Apr. 1763 to 27 June 1765" in Gratz Collection: Commissioners for Indian Affairs, 1757-1765, Case 14, Box 10, HSP.

21. For a discussion of women's estates held outside the bounds of coverture, and the little-appreciated role of women in colonial and early national capital markets, see Peggy Rabkin, *Fathers to Daughters: The Legal Foundations of Female Emancipation* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980) and chapter 13 in Robert E. Wright, "Banking and Politics in New York, 1784-1829" (Ph.D. diss., SUNY Buffalo, 1996).

22. The paucity of high-grade investments was a recurring problem in America from the colonial era through the early twentieth century. Richard E. Sylla, *The American Capital Market, 1846-1914: A Study of the Effects of Public Policy on Economic Development* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), *passim.* A copy of these early bonds or certificates can be found in Gratz, Indian Affairs Commissioners Certificates, 1759-1760, HSP; *Statutes,* 5:396, 6:234, 372-379, 7:9-17.

23. For a detailed discussion of colonial and early national finance, see chapter 1 in Robert E. Wright, "Banking and Politics in New York, 1784-1829" (Ph.D. diss., SUNY Buffalo, 1996). For briefer but still enlightening synopses, see Doerflinger's *Vigorous Spirit,* John H. McCusker, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775: A Handbook* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), or the glossary in Joseph Ernst, *Money and Politics in America, 1755-1775, A Study in the Currency Act of 1764 and the Political Economy of Revolution* (Charlotte: University of North Carolina Press, 1973).

24. Unfortunately, because of the vagueness of eighteenth century financial terminology, it is not clear if Willing owned Bank of England stock or government bonds like the famous Consols. Willing and his correspondents simply referred to the investments as "annuities" or "public stocks," which imply some type of public bond, but also mention dividends, which imply bank stock. It is possible Willing made both types of investments.

25. Doerflinger, *Vigorous Spirit,* 38; TW to Henry Bright, 23 June 1755, TW to Coddrington Carrington, 17 June 1755, TW to Mayne, Burn, Mayne, ? Aug. 1755, TW to Robert Scott, 2 Aug. 1755, TW to Scott Pringle + Scott, 5 Sept. 1755, TW to S. Snee, Steer & Berkin, 25 Feb. 1756, TW to TW, 1 July 1756, TW to Robert Morris, ? Nov. 1756, TW to John Hobbhouse & Company, 6 Dec. 1756; TW to Robert Morris, ? Nov. 1756, TW to S. Snee, Steer & Berkin, 25 Feb. 1756, TW to William Whitaker, 19 Feb. 1756, TW to John Taylor, 1 Sept. 1755, TW to TW of London, 26 Aug. 1755, TW to John Vernon + Company, 25 Feb. 1756, TW to Mayne, B + Mayne, 16 Sept. 1755, TW to David Barclay, 2 Apr. 1755, TW to TW of London, 22 Nov. 1755, TW to David Barclay & Sons, 12 Aug. 1756, TW to TW of London, 13 Aug. 1756, TW to TW of London, 30 March 1757, TW to TW of London, 1 Sept. 1757, Willing Letterbooks, HSP; Willing's 1750s Account Book, Hare-Willing Collection, American Philosophical Society.

26. TW to Governor Robert Hunter Morris, 4 July 1755, TW to Coddrington Carrington, 7 July 1755, TW to Coddring Carrington, 3 Oct. 1755, Willing Letterbooks, HSP.

27. Willing, Morris & Co. to Messrs. Tod & Swan, Philadelphia, 16 Feb. 1762, Wallace Family Papers, vol. IV, 156, HSP; Slaski, "TW," 44, 64, 88, 180; *PMHB,* 39:193-195; PHDBk. I, 4:177; Willing & Morris, Business Papers & Accots. Prior to 1770, Levis Collection, HSP; Paul H. Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1976- ), 4:686 n., hereafter *LDC;* Charles Willing & Son to Messrs. Bright, Whatley Company, Philadelphia, 19 June 1757, TW to TW of London, 2 March 1756, TW to TW, London, 15 June 1756, TW to TW of London, 7 Apr. 1755, Charles Willing & Son to John Perks, 25 Oct. 1754, TW to TW, London, 15 June 1756, Willing & Morris to Lawrence Reade, 13 Oct. 1757, Willing Letterbooks, HSP; Leighton Stradley, "TW & Company: A Study of Early Marine Underwriters in Philadelphia," in N.S.B. Gras and Henrietta M. Larson, eds., *Casebook in American Business History* (New York, 1939), 139-149; Konkle, *TW,* 32-33; Joseph Stancliffe Davis, *Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations* (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1917), 1:95-96; Thomas H. Montgomery, *History of the Insurance Company of North America* (Philadelphia: Press of Review Publishing and Printing Co., 1885), 23-24; Slaski, "TW," 81-89; Edwin J. Perkins, *American Public Finance and Financial Services, 1700-1815* (Columbus: Ohio State Press, 1994), 289.

28. Margaret Myers dates the Chinese acceptance of sterling bills at 1819, Peter Temin as the mid-1820s, Thomas Govan at 1825, and Robert Albion at 1845. Margaret G. Myers, *The New York Money Market: Volume I — Origins and Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 61; Peter Temin, *The Jacksonian Economy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1969); Thomas Govan, *Nicholas Biddle: Nationalist and Public Banker, 1784-1844* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 118; Robert Albion, *The Rise of New York Port, 1815-1860* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), 197; Timothy Pitkin, *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States of America: Its Connection with Agriculture and Manufacturers, and an Account of the Public Debt, Revenues, and Expenditures of the United States* (New York: James Eastburn & Co. 1817); See F119 Willing and Francis Papers, HSP for the correspondence between supercargo William Read and Willing & Francis in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Read used promissory notes to fill out several return cargoes in Canton as early as 1805. Read also mentioned the possible use of "bills on India." John Jacob Astor to Baring Brothers & Co., New York, June 19, 1813, Volume 16, Copy of Letter, J. J. Astor, 1813-1815, John Jacob Astor Papers, Baker Library, Harvard University; William Read to Willing and Francis, Canton, 9 Jan. 1805, Willing & Francis to William Read "Super Cargo of the Ship Bingham," 3 May 1805, William Read to Willing & Francis, Batavia, 3, 7 Sept. 1805, William read to Willing & Francis, Canton, 10 March, 26 Nov. 1806, Willing & Francis to William Read, 17 May 1806, Willing and Francis to Charles Kuhn, 15 May 1807, Willing and Francis to George Biddle and TW Jr., 13 May 1809, Willing Family Papers, HSP; Willing & Francis to Clement Humphreys Jr., Philadelphia, 1 Sept. 1800, Clement Humphreys Collection, HSP; Willing & Francis to Clement Humphreys Jr., Philadelphia, 8 June 1801, Hampton Carson Collection, HSP; Willing's 1790s Account Book, Hare-Willing Collection, American Philosophical Society. For general background on Philadelphia merchants in the Asian trade, see Jonathan Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1682-1846: Commercial, Cultural, and Attitudinal Effects* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978).

29. For Morris see: William G. Sumner, *The Finances and Financier of the American Revolution* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970); Ellis Paxton Oberholtzer, *Robert Morris: Patriot and Financier* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968); Eleanor Young, *Forgotten Patriot: Robert Morris* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1950); Clarence L. Ver Steeg, *Robert Morris, Revolutionary Financier* (New York: Octagon, 1972); Barbara Chernow, "Robert Morris, Land Speculator, 1790-1801" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1974); Barbara Chernow, "Robert Morris: Genesee Land Speculator" *New York History* 58 (July 1977), 195-245; E. James Ferguson and John Catanzariti, eds., *Papers of Robert Morris* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973-1988), 7 vols.

30. For details about Willing's family life and children, see *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania*, vol. 3, forthcoming.

31. There is a copy of this pamphlet in the Willing Family Papers at HSP.

32. James O. Wettereau calculated Willing's net worth at over $1,000,000 but did not give details. His closest biographer, Eugene Slaski, thought Willing "probably the wealthiest man in Philadelphia in 1781," but as with Wettereau, did not give specific proofs. Though much information about Willing's property, both real and personal, survives, this author has not found a single financial statement on which to base an estimate. Reconstructing his assets without such a statement would probably underestimate his worth. It may be possible to build a model by comparing various versions of his will. But the vague wording of his last will and codicil suggests Willing himself did not know everything he owned by his death in 1821. Wetterau, "TW", *DAB;* TW to Mary Clymer, 6 Jan. 1796, cited in Balch, *Willing Letters,* 219-220; Eugene R. Slaski, "Thomas Willing: Loyalty Meant Commitment," *Pennsylvania History* 47 (1980): 244; Hannah Brenner Roach, *Taxables in the City of Philadelphia, 1756* (GSP Special Pub. No. 4, 1990), 16, 30; The averages are from Robert Francis Oaks, "Philadelphia Merchants and the American revolution, 1765-1776" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1970), 9, 11, 454, 206, 235; *PMHB,* 95:353, 357, 362; Davis, *Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations,* 2:52; *Columbian Centinel,* 2 Nov. 1791; For a list of the aggregates of these gifts, see Konkle, *TW,* 120-124 or "Accounts for my Children, showing the amount of my Gifts to them to this

time and an Estimate of the Value of my Gifts and Legacies, by my Will," 30 July 1819, in the Willing Family Papers at HSP. Willing's will can be found Balch, *Willing Letters,* and the Balch Collection at HSP.

33. Hamilton sought Willing's aid when Federalist editor George Fenno needed funds in 1793. In May, 1795, Willing was first to report a separate peace had been signed in the European war. Later this year, Willing countered an anti-Jay's Treaty petition with a pro-Jay petition. The firm Willing & Francis was a government contractor during the Whiskey Rebellion and Quasi-War. Willing fought Republican removals of Federalist officeholders after the "Revolution of 1800," signing a petition asking for the reinstatement of George Latimer as Philadelphia Customs Collector in 1802. He spent $40 to subscribe to the United States *Gazette* from 1804 until 1809 and loaned money to the Washington Benevolent Society, a Federalist electoral machine. He also took Chief Justice John Marshall's son into apprenticeship. Alexander Hamilton to John Kean, Philadelphia, 29 Nov. 1793, Tench Coxe to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 9 Dec. 1794, Harold Syrett, et al., eds., *Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961-1987), 27 vols., hereafter *PAH,* 15:418, 17:431; John Beckley to James Madison, Philadelphia, 25 May 1795, Pierce Butler to James Madison, Philadelphia, 21 Aug. 1795, J.C.A. Stagg, ed., *Papers of James Madison* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), 16:11, 54-55; Oliver Wolcott Jr. to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 17 June 1796, *PAH,* 20:230-231; *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 22 Aug. 1795; TW et al to George Latimer, Philadelphia, 10 Aug. 1802, Society Miscellaneous, HSP; Willing Family Papers, HSP; Bushrod Washington to James Marshall, Mount Vernon, 2 May 1810, John Marshall to Bushrod Washington, Richmond, 16 March 1815, Herbert A. Johnson and Charles T. Cullen eds., *The Papers of John Marshall* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 7:244-245, 8:81-82.

34. Only 20% of the lands Astor sold, and 10% he purchased, contained any long-term or perpetual obligations. "John Jacob Astor, 1763-1848," in N.S.B. Gras and Henrietta M. Larson, eds., *Casebook in American Business History* (New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1939). For more on ground rents, see Richard M. Cadwalader, *A Practical Treatise on the Law of Ground Rents in Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Kay & Brother, 1879); Vincent D. Nicholson, *A Treatise on the Law Relating to Real Estate in Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: George T. Bisel Company, 1929), 60-77; Edward Allinson and Boies Penrose, "Ground Rents in Philadelphia" (Philadelphia: Publication of the University of Pennsylvania, Political Economy and Public Law Series, No. 3, 1888).

35. Cadwalader specifically mentions Willing's erroneous use of the term "annuity" in his *Practical Treatise,* 94 n.; PHDBk. D, 18:612, 22:495, 46:434, 56:103, 65:84; EF, 7:242, 538, 8:41, 28:613; MR, 2:54, 3:382; H, 20:207, 543; I, 1:32, 35, 38, 14:21. Many of these ground rent sales included Robert Morris, but the dollar figures given represent only Willing's share. Most of the lots were in Moyamensing and a few were in Southwark. PHDBk. D, 39:492, 40:310, 41:42, 218, 43:160, 220, 444, 446, 45:386, 460, 46:430, 49:326, 50:167, 51:349, 402, 53:445, 54:67, 55:120, 56:163, 57:24, 100, 58:175, 378, 59:121, 63:120, 65:1, 68:402, 405, 71:41, 236; EF, 7:253, 9:10, 507, 18:368, 19:693; IC, 6:614, 11:144, 25:163; IW, 7:400, 8:603; MR, 1:343, 15:476, 23:529.

36. For examples of difficulties collecting ground rents, see Account Book B, Hare-Willing Collection, American Philosophical Society; for examples of trouble with collectors, see TW to Matthew Adam, 31 May 1797, 14 Feb. 1798, Willing Family Papers, HSP; Ground Rent Books, Willing Family Papers, HSP; see also the deeds cited above.

37. Davis, *Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations,* 1:478-479; see esp. Tench Coxe to Thomas Mayne Willing, 17 July 1802, Gratz, Old Congress, HSP; William Bingham to Willing & Francis, London, 7 Oct. 1801, Gratz—Bingham, William, HSP.

38. For examples, see *PAH,* 13:459, 462, 497; Oliver Wolcott Jr. to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 14, 17 Oct. 1794, *PAH,* 17:325, 329; Folder 4: United States in Acct. with the BUS, 1792-1794, Etting Collection, HSP.

39. Mary M. Schweitzer, *Custom and Contract: Household, Government, and the Economy in Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 116-166; Ernst, *Money and Politics in America, passim;* "A Lover of Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 14 January 1768; Bucks County Treasurer's Book, Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

40. James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeast Pennsylvania* (New York: Norton, 1972); Alice Hanson Jones, *Wealth of a Nation to Be: The American Colonies on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 421. For the miserable condition of insolvent debtors in the mid-1760s, see the Archives of Old Christ Church, Philadelphia, microfilm, 2:159, 161. Willing was a vestryman in Christ Church and certainly knew of the situation. For Franklin's interest-bearing bills of credit scheme, presented in a speech he gave before the Assembly in January 1764, see Leonard W. Labaree, et al., eds., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 11:7-18, hereafter *PBF*. For Britain's reaction to the bank project, see the *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 7 May 1767.

41. James Kent, *Commentaries on American Law,* 4th ed. (New York: R. B. Clayton, 1840), 4:266; John Hickcox, *History of the Bills of Credit or Paper Money Issued by New York from 1709 to 1789* (Albany: J. H. Hickcox, 1866), 26; E. James Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 5-6; Theodore Thayer, "The Land-Bank System in the American Colonies," *Journal of Economic History* 13 (Spring 1953): 145-159; Cornelius Agrippa, "Appendix to Massachusetts in Agony," (1751) in Andrew McFarland Davis, *Colonial Currency: Reprints, 1682-1751,* vol. 4 (1911) (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1964), 476-487; Thomas Paine, *Dissertations on Government; the Affairs of the Bank; and Paper Money* (1786) in Nancy Spannaus and Christopher White, eds., *The Political Economy of the American Revolution* (New York: Campaigner Publications Inc., 1977), 316-318; Earl S. Sparks, *History and Theory of Agricultural Credit in the United States* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1932), 6, 26-27. Robin Brooks, "Melancton Smith: New York Anti-Federalist, 1744-1798" (Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 1964); Horace White *Money and Banking,* 6th ed. (New York: Ginn and Company, 1935), 50-51; Julian Gwyn, "Private Credit in Colonial New York: The Warren Portfolio, 1731-1795" *New York History* 54 (July 1973), 268-293; Philip White, *The Beekmans of New York: In Politics and Commerce, 1647-1877* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1956), 350, 391-396.

42. Adolph O. Eliason, "The Rise of Commercial Banking Institutions in the United States" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1901), 9; Thomas Wermuth, "'To Market, To Market': Yeoman Farmers, Merchant Capitalists and the Transition to Capitalism in the Hudson River Valley, Ulster County, 1760-1840" (Ph.D. diss., SUNY Albany, 1991), 113; Virginia Harrington, *The New York Merchant on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935). *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 12 Oct. 1769, 23 June 1768.

43. New York *Journal,* 10 March 1792. Further complicating the issue is the fact that account transactions were kept both in terms of "use-value" and "exchange" value—accounts could be considered "settled" even though the sums did not balance! Wermuth, "To Market, To Market," 253.

44. This was due to normal wear on old coins and also from deliberate clipping and sweating of coins to steal a few grains of its precious metal. Coin value also varied from colony to colony, see Hickcox, *History of the Bills of Credit or Paper Money Issued by New York from 1709 to 1789,* 10. In late colonial Ulster County, New York, around 7.5% of all transactions were carried out in some form of "cash." Wermuth, "'To Market, To Market,'" 73; According to Cathy Matson, between 1709 and 1770 New York paper depreciated "only" 16%. "Fair Trade, Free Trade: Economic Ideas and Opportunities in Eighteenth-Century New York City Commerce" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1985), 303; David Valentine, *History of the City of New York* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Company, 1853, 305).

45. John Bayley, *Summary of the law of bills of exchange, cash bills, and promissory notes 4th ed. w/American notes and references by Willard Phillips and Samuel E. Sewall* (Boston: H. Gray, 1826), 18.

46. Joseph Chitty and John Walter Hume, *A Practical Treaties on Bills of Exchange, Checks on Bankers, Promissory Notes, Bankers' Cash Notes, and Bank Notes, With Reference to the Law of Scotland, France, and America, 12th American edition by JC Perkins* (Springfield: G&C Merriam, 1854), 591; J. S. Gibbons, *The Banks of New-York, Their Dealers, the Clearing House, and the Panic of 1857, with a Financial Chart* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1858), 214.

47. The most obvious example of this is that merchants had "credit" and "cash" prices. Cathy Matson, "Fair Trade, Free Trade," 255; Gerard G. Beekman to John Channing and

Chalinor, Rhode Island, Jan. 12, 1749, Philip White, ed., *Beekman Mercantile Papers, 1746-1799,* 3 vols. (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1956), 1:72-73; Janet Riesman, "Origins of American Political Economy, 1690-1781" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1983), 19. For a complex example of a protested bill causing interpersonal conflict, see Henry Lloyd to James Beekman, Boston, May 10, 1762 in White, ed., *Beekman Mercantile Papers,* 2:678; During the height of the commercial stagnation caused by the Revenue Acts, James Beekman commented: "For my part I could ruin many [an] honest and able family should I take such steps at present." James Beekman to Pomeroys and Hodgkin [of London], New York, Apr. 21, 1770 in White, ed., *Beekman Mercantile Papers,* 2:924; Imprisonment for debt was still quite common. James Ciment, "In Light of Failure: Bankruptcy, Insolvency and Financial Failure in New York City, 1790-1860" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1992), 105.

48. Personal factors have always, and probably always will, influence economic decisions at all levels. In the colonial period, however, almost every transaction, even small retail ones, were very intimate and often complex. Cash eliminated this, allowing individuals to make anonymous purchases and retailers to make quick sales. The seller did not have to worry if the customer would ever pay and the customer did not have to wonder if the seller would have him before a judge as soon as the money supply tightened. Today even credit transactions are impersonal; the customer's credit card issuer pays the merchant immediately without questioning the propriety of the purchase. Few card issuers know more about their debtors than what they have learned of the customer's credit history from other impersonal institutions.

49. Peter Coleman, *Debtors and Creditors in America: Insolvency, Imprisonment for Debt, and Bankruptcy, 1607-1900* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1974), vii; Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution;* New York *Packet,* 12 Jan. 1784.

50. For more details about the theoretical importance of banking, see Pelatiah Webster, *An Essay On Credit: In Which the Doctrine of Banking is Considered, And Some Remarks Are Made on the Present State of the Bank of North America* (Philadelphia: Elezer Oswald, 1786); Alexander Bryan Johnson, *An Inquiry into the Nature of Value and of Capital and into the Operation of Government Loans, Banking Institutions, and Private Credit* (New York: Published for the author, 1813); Mathew Carey, *Essays on Banking* (Philadelphia: Published for the author, 1816); Lloyd Mints, *History of Banking Theory in Great Britain and the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1945); Rondo Cameron, *Banking in the Early Stages of Industrialization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); Naomi Lamoreaux, *Insider Lending: Banks, Personal Connection, and Economic Development in Industrial New England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Robert E. Wright, "Banking and Politics in New York, 1784-1829." For more about the reaction to the Bank of North America, see George Rappaport, "Sources and Early Development of the Hostility to Banks in Early American Thought" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1970), and his forthcoming book. For Willing's leadership in the BNA see the Bank's Directors' Minutes at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. For his leadership of the BUS, see Robert Blackwell to George Willing, Philadelphia, 10 Aug. 1807, Wallace Family Papers vol. IV, 177, HSP; David Lenox to Samuel Breck, 12 Aug. 1807, folder #124, Samuel Breck Papers, HSP. My thanks to David Cowen for bringing this letter to my attention. TW to Henry Kuhl, Bank U.S., 20 Sept. 1798, Gratz, Justice Colonial Supreme Ct. of Pennsylvania, HSP; TW to George Simpson, 3 Oct. 1798, Etting Collection, Vol. I-IV, Bank of the United States, HSP; TW to George Simpson, n.p., n.d., Conarroe Collection, 10:93, HSP; Thomas Fitzsimons to Willing & Francis, 12 Sept. 1798, Jared Ingersoll to TW, 23 Apr. 1804, Gratz—Old Congress, HSP; For general examples, see TW to Jonathan Burrall, Cashier, 3 Feb. 1800, Balch Collection, HSP; TW to John Swan at Baltimore, 9 June 1807, TW to Jonathan Nicholson, BUS, 6 Feb. 1795, cited in Balch, *Willing Letters,* 163; Benjamin Winthrop to TW, New York, 18 March 1800, Etting Collection, Vol. I-IV, Bank of the United States, HSP. See also William Pennock to Messrs. Plumsted and McCall, Norfolk, 20 Nov. 1794, Etting Collection, Vol. I-IV, Bank of the United States, HSP; TW to Jonathan Burrall, Cashier, 3 Feb. 1800, Balch Collection, HSP; Joseph Clay and Jos. Habersham to TW, Savannah, 18 March 1802, cited in Balch, *Willing Letters,* 156-157; Petition to the President

and Directors of the Bank of the United States, Richmond, 1 July 1792, Johnson and Cullen eds., *The Papers of John Marshall,* 2:118-120; Thomas Tingey to Willing & Francis, Washington, 11 Sept. 1801, Thomas Tingey to Willing & Francis, Washington, 10 Nov. 1801, Thomas Tingey to Willing & Francis, Washington, 9 Jan. 1807, Gratz, U.S. Naval Officers, HSP; William Paca to TW, Baltimore, 12 Dec. 1798, Joseph Habersham to TW, 31 July 1802, Joseph Habersham to TW, 26 July 1802, Conarroe Collection, HSP; John Laurance to TW, New York, 30 Dec. 1802, Gratz—American Judges, HSP; Joseph Hambersham to TW, Savannah, 23 Apr. 1802, Jacob Read to TW, 25 Jan. 1805, Gratz—Old Congress, HSP; Bank of the United States Directors Minutes, HSP; Bank of the United States Directors Minutes and Stockholder Minutes, Hare-Willing Collection, American Philosophical Society. The customer statistics are from the Individual Ledgers, Bank of North America Records, HSP and the General Directory of 1790, available on microfilm. The numbers accord with those presented in Doerflinger, *Vigorous Spirit,* 305. Readers should note Doerflinger looked at discount (loan) customers while the present researcher tabulated customers of all types. For the diffusion of bank notes from bank customers to workers, see the "journeyman's pay journal" of tinmaker Thomas Passmore in the HSP.

51. For details about Philadelphia's colonial government, see Judith Marion Diamondstone, "The Philadelphia Corporation, 1701-1776" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1969).

52. TW to Messrs. Connell & Morony, 14 Apr. 1755, TW to TW of London, 26 Aug. 1755, TW to William Whitaker, 14 Oct. 1755, TW to Walter Stirling, 12 Nov. 1755, TW to John Perks, 19 Nov. 1755, TW to John Perks, 19 Nov. 1755, Willing Letterbooks, HSP; Slaski, "TW," 129-131; *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 9 Oct. 1755, 2 Aug. 1770.

53. *MPC,* 6:770-78; Robert Morris to Whatley, Mayler & Hall, 26 Jan. 1756, TW to Wm Ogilive, 29 Dec. 1756, TW to David Barclay & Sons, 22 Nov. 1755, TW to TW of London, 2 March 1756, TW to TW of London, 22 Nov. 1755, TW to John Perks, 13 Aug. 1756, Willing Letterbooks, HSP.

54. *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 4 Oct. 1759; 6 Oct., 17 Nov. 1763; 2 Feb. 1764; Slaski, "TW," 129; Konkle, *TW,* 37-38; *MPC,* 9:204-6, 237; Stauffer Collection, Mayors Volume, HSP, 38; "Fragments of a Journal Kept by Samuel Foulke of Bucks County, while a Member of the Colonial Assembly of Pennsylvania, 1762-1764," *PMHB,* 5:70.

55. See *Lawmaking and Legislators,* vol. 3, forthcoming, for more information.

56. *Statutes,* 6:339-343, 409-410, 432-440, 453-456; *Votes,* 5:309-310, 376-406; Slaski, "TW," 136-139; Konkle, *TW,* 41-45; Thomas Penn to James Hamilton, London, 9 Jan. 1762, Thomas Penn Papers, 7:96; *PBF,* 9:253, 313, 335, 358, 370, 372. For discussions of the nature and extent of this derangement, see Lloyd Mints, *A History of Banking Theory in Great Britain and the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945); Harrington, *The New York Merchant,* 318-323; Doerflinger, *Vigorous Spirit,* 173; Anne Bezanson, Robert Gray, Miriam Hussey, eds., *Prices in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935), 331.

57. *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 7 Nov. 1765.

58. This was the election where George Bryan and Israel Pemberton tied, causing a run-off election that Pemberton won. *Votes,* 5:436-437; Slaski, "TW," 138-139; *Votes,* 5:433-434, 444, 447, 459, 460; *MPC,* 9:293; *Statutes,* 7:19-27.

59. *Votes,* 5:433-486 passim.

60. "The *nisi prius* courts are such as are held for the trial of issues of fact before a jury and one presiding judge. In America the phrase is familiarly used to denote the forum (whatever may be its statutory name) in which the cause was tried to a jury, as distinguished from the appellate court."—*Black's Law Dictionary.* For specifics concerning Pennsylvania's *nisi prius* courts, see Gail Stuart Rowe, *Embattled Bench: The Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the Forging of a Democratic Society, 1684-1809* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994).

61. *Pennsylvania Gazette,* 11 Sept. 1766, 24 Sept. 1767; Konkle, *TW,* 52, 57; Thomas Wharton to Benjamin Franklin, Philadelphia, 21 Sept. 1767, *PBF,* 14:257; *PMHB,* 33:485, 489; Konkle, *TW,* 57; *Votes,* 5:505-506, 518-519; TW to Abigail Willing, 10 Aug. 1768, Gratz, Justice Colonial Supreme Ct. of Pennsylvania, HSP.

62. *LDC,* 1:xi, 2:xxi; Slaski, "TW," 233-235. For his pay from the Pennsylvania Assembly, *Votes,* 6:620, 740, 751, 760, 765; Samuel Ward's Diary, 30 May 1775, *LDC,* 1:466; Worthington C. Ford ed., *Journals of the Con-*

*tinental Congress, 1741-1829* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904-1937), 18 vols., 2:71-72; *LDC,* 2:46-48, 2:55-57, 2:73, 75.

63. *Votes,* 6:644; See, for example, TW to John Dickinson, Thursday morning, n.d., HSP. Paul Smith dates this letter 1 June 1775. Dickinson reciprocated, beseeching Willing to attend in another undated letter Smith dates as 8 June 1776. *LDC,* 1:431; 4:169; Slaski traced his attendance only until 22 March 1776. Slaski, "TW," *LDC,* 3:xxi; For his assignments, see Worthington C. Ford ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1829,* 2:253-255, 3:257-258, 3:259, 3:260, 3:262, 4:157, 4:171; *Secret Journals of the Acts and Proceedings of Congress, From the First Meeting Thereof to the Dissolution of the Confederation, by the Adoption of the Constitution of the United States* (Boston: Thomas B. Watt, 1821), 1:27; *LDC,* 2:31, 2:42, 45; This quotation is from Slaski. According to Smith's edition of Adam's notes of debates, Willing said: "Our Gold is lok'd up, at present. We ought to be decisive. Interest is near and dear to Men. The Committee of Secrecy find Difficulties. Merchants dare not trade." *LDC,* 2:106; 3:375.

64. *LDC,* 3:616, 4xx; *PMHB,* 10:363, 98:169. Dickinson to TW, 8 June 1776? *LDC,* 4:169; Slaski, "TW," 166-168, 192, 251 and Euguene Slaski, "TW: A Study in Moderation," *PMHB,* 100:491-506 are the best discussions of Willing's trepidation and his uncertain voting record on the Independence question, but see also Richard Alan Ryerson, *The Revolution Is Now Begun: The Radical Committees of Philadelphia, 1765-1776* (Philadelphia: University Pennsylvania Press, 1978); Doerflinger, *Vigorous Spirit,* 38, 236; Curtis P. Nettels, "The Founding Fathers and the West Indies: The Economics of Revolution," in Charles W. Toth ed., *The American Revolution and the West Indies* (London: Kenikat Press, 1975), 71; Robert Morris to Silas Deane, 11 Aug. 1776, *LDC,* 4:655-658; See TW to William Bingham, 3 June 1776, Willing & Morris to William Bingham, 20 Oct. 1776, Willing & Morris to William Bingham, 7 Nov. 1776, Willing & Morris to William Bingham, 8 Nov. 1776, Willing & Morris to William Bingham, 3 Dec. 1776, and two other folders of like correspondence in the Balch Collection, HSP; Estienne Cathalan to Willing & Morris, Marseilles, 15 Feb. 1777, Levis Collection, Willing & Morris Business, HSP; Willing, Morris business account, 1776, in Levis Collection, Willing & Morris Business, HSP; Estienne de Cathalan to Willing & Morris, Marseilles, 24 Jan. 1776, Levis Collection, Willing and Morris Business, HSP; Willing & Morris to William Bingham, Philadelphia, 14 Sept. 1776, *LDC,* 5:169; TW to Messrs. Connel + Morony, 30 Oct. 1755, Willing Letterbooks, HSP; Duff & Welsh to Willing & Morris, Cadiz, 23 July 1776, Levis Collection, Willing & Morris Business, HSP; Secret Committee Minutes of Proceedings, 15 Aug. 1776, Willing & Morris to William Bingham, Philadelphia, 14 Sept. 1776, *LDC,* 4:6:685-686, *passim,* 5:169; Sumner, *Financier,* 1:193.

65. Perkins, *American Public Finance and Financial Services, 1700-1815,* 1-10; Willing, Morris & Co. promissory note, 2 June 1775, Folder: Willing & Morris Business papers and Accounts, 1775, Levis Collection, HSP; TW to Robert Morris, 8 Jan. 1777, TW to Robert Morris, 6 Feb. 1778, TW to Robert Morris, 3 Apr. 1778, TW to Robert Morris, 3 Apr. 1778, cited in Balch, *Willing Letters,* 45-47, 63, 76-76; Not enough of Willing's account books survive to determine the quantity or location of his safety investments; See "General Lee's Proposals + Queries" in the Willing Family Papers at HSP; Sumner, *Financier,* 2:167-168.

66. Samuel Blodget, *Economica: A Statistical Manual for the United States* (Washington: Printed for the author, 1806); Timothy Pitkin, *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States* (Hartford: Charles Hosmer, 1816).

67. Ferguson and Catanzariti, eds., *Papers of Robert Morris,* 4:15, 23, 56, 145, 162, 165-66, 346-347, 367, 448, 466; 5:413, 555-556; 6:152, 331, 365, 392, 407; TW to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 18 Nov. 1789, TW to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 9 Dec. 1789, TW to Alexander Hamilton, 24 Dec. 1789, TW to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 12 March 1790, TW to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 12 March 1790, TW to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 22 March 1790, TW to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 8 Apr. 1790, Alexander Hamilton to the President and Directors of the bank of the United States, 19 March 1792, Alexander Hamilton to TW, New York, 13 Sept. 1789, TW to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 1 Oct. 1789, TW to Alexander Hamilton to TW, Philadelphia, 6 Aug. 1794, *PAH,* 5:370-371, 416-419, 442-443, 523-524; 6:9-10, 34-35, 301, 308, 359; 17:59,

17:264; 17:476; 26:651-52, 685; *Papers of James Madison*, 16:54-55. For his extensive nationwide business contacts during the 1790s see his account book in the Hare-Willing Collection, American Philosophical Society.

68. "Regulations of the Bank," 12 Nov. 1782, Willing to the Directors of the Bank of Massachusetts, 6 Jan. 1784, Bank of North America Minutes, HSP. Alexander Hamilton to TW, Philadelphia, 27 July 1792, *PAH*, 12:122; Benjamin Lincoln to TW, Philadelphia, 10 Jan. 1797, Etting, Revolution, HSP; Timothy Pickering to TW, 9 Dec. 1797, Conarroe Collection, HSP. The issue continued to the end of Willing's tenure. See Joseph Daveiss to TW, Frankfort, Kentucky, 13 July 1804, Dreer, War of 1812, HSP; a counterfeit BUS-NY note in the Willing, Thomas, Mayors of Philadelphia folder at HSP; Albert Gallatin to TW, 29 March 1802, Etting Collection, vols. I-IV, Bank of the United States, HSP; Edward Thornton to TW, 8 Nov. 1802, Gratz—Foreign Ministers, HSP; The Willing-Hamilton correspondence is most accessible in *PAH*, 5:416-6:35, *passim*. For the wedding, see *PMHB*, 2:366.

69. For Adams' changing view of Willing, see L. H. Butterfield ed., *The Adams Papers: Diary and Autobiography of John Adams* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961), 2:132, 157, 178-180, 183-186, 188-190, 200; 3:339, 376. For the quotations, see John Adams to Richard Rush, Quincy, 8 Oct. 1813, *PMHB*, 60:452-454 and James McHenry to Alexander Hamilton, 31 May 1800, *PAH*, 24:564.

70. Fritz Redlich, *Molding of American Banking: Men and Ideas* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1968), 377-38; Robert Blackwell to George Willing, Philadelphia, 10 Aug. 1807, Wallace Family Papers, vol. IV, 177; David Lenox to Samuel Breck, 12 Aug. 1807, folder #124, Samuel Breck Papers, HSP; Thomas Willing to Henry Kuhl, Bank U.S., 20 Sept. 1798, Gratz, Justice Colonial Supreme Ct. of Pennsylvania, HSP; TW to George Simpson, 3 Oct. 1798, Etting Collection, vols. I-IV, Bank of the United States, HSP; TW to George Simpson, n.p., n.d., Conarroe Collection, 10:93, HSP; Thomas Fitzsimons to Willing & Francis, 12 Sept. 1798, Jared Ingersoll to TW, 23 Apr. 1804, Gratz—Old Congress, HSP; for general examples, see TW to Jonathan Burrall, Cashier, 3 Feb. 1800, Balch Collection, HSP; TW to John Swan at Baltimore, 9 June 1807, TW to Jonathan Nicholson, BUS, 6 Feb. 1795, cited in Balch, *Willing Letters*, 163; Benjamin Winthrop to TW, New York, 18 March 1800, Etting Collection, vols. I-IV, Bank of the United States, HSP; see also William Pennock to Messrs. Plumsted and McCall, Norfolk, 20 Nov. 1794, Etting Collection, vols. I-IV, Bank of the United States, HSP; TW to Jonathan Burrall, Cashier, 3 Feb. 1800, Balch Collection, HSP; Joseph Clay and Jos. Habersham to TW, Savannah, 18 March 1802, cited in Balch, *Willing Letters*, 156-157; Petition to the President and Directors of the Bank of the United States, Richmond, 1 July 1792, in Johnson and Cullen eds., *The Papers of John Marshall*, 2:118-120; Thomas Tingey to Willing & Francis, Washington, 11 Sept. 1801, Thomas Tingey to Willing & Francis, Washington, 10 Nov. 1801, Thomas Tingey to Willing & Francis, Washington, 9 Jan. 1807, Gratz, U.S. Naval Officers, HSP; William Paca to TW, Baltimore, 12 Dec. 1798, Joseph Habersham to TW, 31 July 1802, Joseph Habersham to TW, 26 July 1802, Conarroe Collection, HSP; John Laurance to TW, New York, 30 Dec. 1802, Gratz—American Judges, HSP; Joseph Hambersham to TW, Savannah, 23 Apr. 1802, Jacob Read to TW, 25 Jan. 1805, Gratz—Old Congress, HSP; Bank of the United States Directors Minutes, HSP; Bank of the United States Directors Minutes and Stockholder Minutes, Hare-Willing Collection, American Philosophical Society.

71. Pursuant to Article 6 of Jay's Treaty, a joint Anglo-American commission met in Philadelphia to settle British Revolutionary War claims against the various American governments for obstructing the recovery of debts by sundry "lawful impediments since the peace." Negotiations broke down but the dispute was finally resolved by the compromise of the Convention of 8 January 1802. Under this agreement, the United States agreed to pay the British government £600,000 ($2,664,000), in three annual installments. A leading authority on the subject, Samuel F. Bemis, knew the money was paid but did not specify how. Samuel F. Bemis, *Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1924), 318-319, 326-328.

72. These bills were part of the payment for the Louisiana Purchase. The United States issued $11,250,000 in domestic bonds to raise funds to pay the French [See Everett S. Brown,

*The Constitutional History of the Louisiana Purchase, 1803-1812* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1920), 60; *Annals of Congress*, 8 Cong., 1 Sess. (1803-1804), 73.] Instead of using the proceeds to purchase bills of exchange for remittance as with the British debt, the United States agreed to allow the French to draw bills of exchange payable in America. The French government then sold the bills to European merchants desirous of making remittances to the West. It was essential the United States pay the bills, even though the French had not issued them in increments as planned.

73. William Leete Stone, *History of New York City from the Discovery to the Present Day* (New York: Virtue & Yorston, 1872), 344; Assembly Papers—Corporations & Comptroller's Reports, New York State Library, Albany, New York, Jan. 23, 1805, Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonality of the City of New York; Albert Gallatin to TW, 4 Feb. 1805, Albert Gallatin to TW, 5 March 1805, Etting Collection, vols. I-IV, Bank of the United States, HSP; Robert E. Wright, "Banking and Politics in New York, 1784-1829" (Ph.D. diss., SUNY Buffalo, 1996), esp. the graph "Prices of Bank Stock in New York, 1805"; For details of the Bank's preparation for this large payment, and the steps taken to alleviate the stringency in New York, see the TW papers in the Balch Collection at HSP and Albert Gallatin to TW, 5 March 1805, Bank of the United States, Etting Collection, HSP, vol. 1.

74. Willing, Thomas, Mayors of Philadelphia, TW to ?, 25 Jan. 1805, HSP. The formal salutation and closing, along with internal reference to "your boards," and a lack of any personal information, indicate this was a circular; Matthew Clarkson to Joshua Sands, New York, Feb. 4, 1805, Anon., *A Statement of the Correspondence between the Banks in the City of New-York* (New York, 1805); Albert Gallatin to TW, 4 Feb. 1805, Bank of the United States, Etting Collection, HSP, Volume I: Folder 73. That the BUS was a federal agency see Perkins, *American Public Finance*, 252.

75. For more on Willing's last years, his will, and his extensive western land speculation, see Volume 3 of *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania*, forthcoming.

76. For starters, see Joseph Dorfman, *The Economic Mind in American Civilization, 1606-1865 Vol. II* (New York: Viking Press, 1946); Stuart Bruchey, *The Roots of American Economic Growth, 1607-1861* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); Douglass North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1961); Cameron, *Banking in the Early Stages of Industrialization: A Study in Comparative Economic History*; Diane Lindstrom, *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810-1850* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978); Allan Kulikoff, *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992).

77. Many historians have stated this in one form or another. A corollary view is that the United States developed social, political, and legal forms supportive of capitalism. For this view see Bruchey, *Roots*, especially chapter 5: Federal Government and Community Will and chapter 8: The Social and Cultural Dimension. Another important contributor to this view is Horwitz, *The Transformation of American Law, 1780-1860.*

78. For descriptions of these acapitalist traditions, see James A. Henretta, *The Origins of American Capitalism: Collected Essays* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), esp. the discussion of mentalité; Michael Merrill, "Cash is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States" *Radical History Review* 4 (1977) 42-58; David Hackett Fisher, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America.*