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John Swanwick: Spokesman for "Merchant-Republicanism" In Philadelphia, 1790-1798

THE literature on the era of Jeffersonian democracy is largely dominated by the great triumvirate of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Albert Gallatin.* During the last decade, however, historians have been paying more attention to state and local political leaders who played significant roles in the Democratic-Republican movement.[1] Among the more notable second-rank

* In a somewhat abbreviated form this article was presented as a paper at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association held at Williamsport, Pa., on Oct. 22–23, 1971. The author wishes to express his gratitude to his colleague, Bernard Sternsher, for his helpful editorial suggestions.

[1] Historians have given most of their attention to secondary Federalists, but since 1960 the number of modern scholarly biographies of less prominent Republicans has increased. We now have first-rate biographies on Robert R. Livingston, David Rittenhouse, Aaron Burr, Daniel D. Tompkins, John Breckinridge, Luther Martin, Benjamin Rush (2), Samuel Smith, and James Monroe. There are also a number of good unpublished doctoral dissertations. Among the more notable studies are those on Elkanah Watson, Simon Snyder, Mathew Carey, Samuel Latham Mitchell, Melancton Smith, Levi Woodbury, William Lowndes, William Duane, William Jones (2), Eleazer Oswald, Thomas McKean, Levi Lincoln, Ephraim Kirby, and John Nicholson. Major biographies of Tench Coxe by Jacob E. Cooke, of John Beckley by Edmund Berkeley, and of Thomas McKean by John M. Coleman and Gail Stuart Rowe are now in progress.

Jeffersonian Republicans whom scholars have overlooked is Congressman John Swanwick of Philadelphia. Swanwick is virtually unknown save to a handful of specialists. No large body of manuscript material bearing his name has survived, and he has proved to be an elusive and mysterious figure. Scholars, as a result, have either mentioned his name only in passing or have buried it in a footnote.[2] Yet Swanwick was an intimate of the leading figures of the Federal era. Next to William Bingham, moreover, he was perhaps the most successful member of the Robert Morris clique. More important, Swanwick's career deserves scholarly attention because he was not a typical Jeffersonian Republican and because much of what he accomplished as an urban political leader and party spokesman anticipated the Jacksonian era.

I

The account of John Swanwick's early years that follows is based on scattered and fragmentary evidence. He was, it seems, born in Liverpool on June 9, 1759, the only son of Richard and Mary (Bickerton) Swanwick.[3] Before John reached the age of four, his father suffered some financial reverses and took out a commission of bankruptcy.[4] Unable to provide for his family and unable to pay off his creditors, the elder Swanwick apparently decided that opportunities

2 Swanwick's name does not appear in the standard biographical reference works. Early references to Swanwick, however, can be found in the following accounts: Abraham Ritter, *Philadelphia and Her Merchants, as Constituted Fifty and Seventy Years Ago* (Philadelphia, 1860), 38, 48; S. Austin Allibone, *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature, British and American* (Philadelphia, 1903), II, 2309. Ansel Wold's compilation, *Biographical Dictionary of Congress 1774–1927* (Washington, D. C., 1928), 1679, contains two sentences on the Congressman.

3 Swanwick's name was apparently unusual and therefore subject to different spellings. It is spelled Swanweck, Swanick, Swannick, and variations thereof. Also, the date 1740 is frequently given as John Swanwick's year of birth. My own evidence has convinced me that some error occurred when the inscription on Swanwick's stone was copied by the Rev. William White Bronson. It reads: "in memory of John Swanwick, Esq., who departed this life on the 1st of August, 1798, Aged 58 years." See Charles R. Hildeburn (ed.), *The Inscriptions in St. Peter's Church Yard* (Camden, 1879), 110. It should have read 39 years, as was reported in the obituary notices in the papers. See note 236.

4 Genealogical data on the Richard Swanwick family is extremely scarce. Most of my information is based on the latter's will and on petitions from members of the Swanwick family to the Executive Council of Pennsylvania cited herein, and on a pamphlet entitled *British Honour and Humanity; or the Wonders of American Patience* (Philadelphia, 1796). This piece was probably written by James Thompson Callender in Swanwick's pay.

for him and his family would be greater in England's colonies. Around 1770 the Swanwicks embarked upon a voyage to America, settling first in Caln Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, where relatives had preceded them,[5] before moving on to the capital city. Serving under the King of England in Philadelphia's Customs House, Richard Swanwick was appointed commander of a British revenue cutter employed on the Delaware River.[6] His excise office afforded him the means to purchase a two-hundred-acre farm, a sawmill, valuable furniture and cutlery, two slaves, and several hundred acres of backlands.[7]

When the Revolution broke out, Swanwick sided with the Crown and gained fame as a zealous Tory wagon master.[8] Along with his uncle John Swanwick, who also served in the Customs House,[9] Richard was attainted of high treason in Pennsylvania.[10] Placed on the "Black List" and forced into exile, he went to New York City in 1778, where he was eventually appointed a notary public.

5 Colonial and English immigration records contain no record of the Swanwick family's passage to the colonies. See genealogical notes by Matilda W. Evans in my possession through the courtesy of the Chester County Historical Society. Clarence Ver Steeg, *Robert Morris, Revolutionary Financier* (Philadelphia, 1954), 81. The earliest reference found on Richard Swanwick is an incomplete legal document of the Court of Vice Admiralty, Philadelphia, concerning the sloop *Swallow*. Duane-Featherstonhaugh, Dec. 1, 1773, Misc. Mss. (under Swanwick), New-York Historical Society (NYHS).

6 Callender, *British Honour and Humanity*, 45.

7 Last Will and Testament of Richard Swanwick, Sept. 25, 1776, Will No. 133, Year 1799, City Archives of Philadelphia; Chester County Tax Lists, 1779, Chester County Historical Society; *Pennsylvania Archives* (Sixth Series), XII, 134, 134b, 135, 149, 151, 159, 176, 210–211, 236, 735, 852; XIII, 191, 391–392, 443–444, 471, 481, 502, 504, 513, 522, 528, 530–531, 558; *ibid.* (Third Series), XIV, 417; J. S. Futhey and G. Cope, *History of Chester County* (Philadelphia, 1881), 103.

8 William Cobbett, "A Letter—To Citizen John Swanwick, an Englishman the Son of a British Waggon Master, and Member of Congress for the City of Philadelphia," signed "P. Porcupine" at the back of Henry Mackenzie's, *An Answer to Paine's Rights of Man* (Philadelphia, 1796); James Thompson Callender, *The American Annual Register . . ., For the Year 1796* (Philadelphia, 1797), 251, 274.

9 Many writers have unfortunately confused the younger John Swanwick with his great uncle of the same name, which explains in part the considerable amount of misinformation to be found on the former, especially as it relates to his age, where and when he was born, and his activities during the revolutionary upheaval.

10 Alexander J. Dallas (ed.), *"BLACK LIST:" A List of Those Torries Who Took Part with Great Britain in the Revolutionary War and Were Attainted of High Treason . . .* (Philadelphia, 1802), 15; Lorenzo Sabine, *Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution . . .* (Boston, 1864), II, 344.

There he tried unsuccessfully to get Robert Morris to use his influence with General Charles Lee to arrange a pass for his wife Mary and his daughter Mary, and for the removal of his property across the English lines.[11] During this time, according to a petition of neighbors, his family remained in the Philadelphia area loyal to the Revolutionary cause.[12]

The circumstances surrounding Richard Swanwick's role during the Revolution, as one might expect, caused his family considerable distress. First of all, the Revolutionary upheaval ruined the senior Swanwick, leading to his unhappy return in 1783 to Shropshire. There he lived on a small estate purchased by his son and in part maintained until his death in 1795 by an annual pension from the Crown of £100.[13] Secondly, in 1777 the government of Pennsylvania confiscated his property, which, although later recovered, was reclaimed only after John Swanwick petitioned the Supreme Executive Council of the State of Pennsylvania and when political friends spoke up on the family's behalf.[14] Third, the war had damaging personal consequences for young John, since Richard Swanwick's toryism made his son's patriotism suspect in the eyes of government officials. He was accused, while in the employ of Robert Morris, of carrying on a correspondence with his exiled father in which he supposedly transmitted secret information to the British.[15] How-

11 Richard Swanwick to [Robert Morris], Apr. 1, 1778, Morris Papers, Library of Congress (DLC).

12 See affidavit of Robert Morris relative to John Swanwick's citizenship and residence sworn before Clement Biddle, Apr. 13, 1796, Misc. Mss. (under Swanwick), NYHS; [Robert Morris?], petition in behalf of Mrs. Mary Swanwick, n.d., Morris Papers, DLC. Eleanor Young's claim that Mrs. Mary Swanwick and her daughter Mary were Tories can not be supported. *Forgotten Patriot, Robert Morris* (New York, 1950), 82.

13 Callender, *British Honour and Humanity*, 45. John Swanwick had also paid his father's old debts. *Ibid.*, 52–53.

14 For the amount of Swanwick's property, see references in note 6 and the petitions of John Swanwick to the President and Executive Council of Pennsylvania, Oct. 21, 1777, June 9, 1780, in the Forfeited Estates File, under the Records of the Supreme Executive Council, RG 26, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Division of Archives and Manuscripts (PHMC). Minutes of the Council of Safety of the State of Pennsylvania, *Colonial Records* of Pennsylvania (First series), XI, 336, 359; Petition to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, undated folder, Morris Papers (Box), DLC.

15 Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates, Apr. 6, 1778, President's Letter Book, I, 252, National Archives (NA); Henry Laurens to Robert Morris, Papers of the Continental Congress, Apr. 6, and Morris to Laurens, Apr. 7, 13, 1778, Papers of the Continental Congress, no. 137, Appendix 225–226, 229, NA (on microfilm); Stan V. Henkels (ed.), *The Confidential Corre-*

ever, in an investigation ordered by the Board of War, and conducted by Robert Morris and Colonel Morgan Conner in 1778, the charges against John Swanwick were proved groundless.[16] Being politically insecure, John, although not yet of age, took the oath of allegiance as prescribed by an act of the Pennsylvania legislature in 1777. Several years later he joined the second militia company of the Sixth Battalion in Philadelphia.[17] Nevertheless, the Morris-Conner investigation, the petitions of neighbors, and Swanwick's patriotic acts were not enough to put all rumors to rest. One of Swanwick's partisan critics, writing some twenty years later, declared that had the royalists triumphed, John Swanwick would have pleaded his "unshaken fidelity to the king."[18] The validity of such a statement, of course, can never be known. Yet it should be pointed out that Swanwick's war reputation, unlike that of so many other post-Revolutionary politicians, served neither to enhance nor to detract from his running for office during the 1790's.

Meanwhile, in 1774 it had been his good fortune to obtain an apprenticeship in Robert Morris' countinghouse. No one knows when he first thought of becoming a merchant, but his father's position in the Customs House might have influenced him in that direction.[19] Talented with figures and trained in German and French,[20] Swanwick quickly proved to be particularly valuable in Morris' mushrooming mercantile operations which extended to

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spondence of Robert Morris . . ., Catalogue No. 1183 (Philadelphia, n.d.), 90–91, 203, 204; Edmund Burnett (ed.), *Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress* (Washington, D.C., 1921–1936), III, 152.

16 For the statement exonerating John Swanwick from corresponding with the enemy, see Morris circular, dated Apr. 24, 1778, which is a Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS) document in the Guild Library, inserted in Washington Irving's *Life of George Washington* (New York, 1856), III, Part I, 19. I am indebted to E. James Ferguson for this lead.

17 Swanwick to the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania, undated folder, Morris Papers (Box), DLC; *Pa. Arch.* (Sixth Series), III, 1163, 1173, 1202, 1216.

18 Cobbett, "A Letter to Swanwick," 94.

19 See affidavit of Robert Morris cited in note 12. Robert Morris (in Swanwick's hand) to John Langdon, Sept. 17, 1777, quoted in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (*PMHB*), XXIII (1900), 401. Precisely under what circumstances John Swanwick received the clerkship with Morris is unknown, yet it is clear that Richard Swanwick had committed himself and his entire family to Morris' patronage. Richard Swanwick to Morris, Apr. 1, 1778, Morris Papers, DLC.

20 Morris to Laurens, Apr. 7, 1778, Papers of Cont. Cong., no. 137, Appendix f. 225, NA; Ver Steeg, *Morris*, 81.

many of the states, the West Indies, and France.[21] In 1783, upon the death of Morris' partner Samuel Inglis, the twenty-three-year-old trusted clerk was admitted as a junior partner into the firm of Willing, Morris, and Swanwick.[22] Mrs. Robert Morris noted how this great occasion gratified his ambition and how he was the envy of everyone.[23] But the ambitious Swanwick, as will be shown later, aspired to even greater heights, eventually buying out his senior partner and establishing himself as one of Philadelphia's leading import-export merchants.[24]

In 1781 Swanwick's business ties had led to his being designated by Morris as the unofficial "cashier" in the Office of Finance[25] and to his being appointed Receiver of Continental Taxes for Pennsylvania.[26] The post in the Office of Finance eventually developed into the permanent office known as the "Treasurer of the Superintendent of Finance." There was a time when all notes sold by and paid on behalf of the United States government were drawn on Swanwick's name.[27] At first, some merchants did not accept the Morris notes

21 Ver Steeg, *Morris*, 10–21 and ch. 2; Robert A. East, *Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era* (New York, 1938), ch. 6.

22 A printed note was sent to business correspondents concerning Inglis' death and of the change of the firm's name to Willing, Morris & Swanwick. Enclosure, Willing, Morris & Swanwick to ————, Sept. 15, 1783, Robert Morris Papers, New York Public Library (NYPL).

23 Mrs. Robert Morris to Catherine Livingston, Oct. 2, 1783, Ridley Papers, MHS, cited in Ethel E. Rasmusson, "Capital on the Delaware: The Philadelphia Upper Class in Transition, 1789–1801" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1962), 99. On Swanwick's mercantile respectability, see William Shippen to Thomas Lee Shippen, Feb. 20, 1784, Shippen Papers, IV, DLC.

24 Ellis Oberholtzer, *Robert Morris, Patriot and Financier* (London, 1903), 315; Young, *Morris*, 200.

25 Swanwick was not on the Civil List of employees paid by Congress. See Memorandum on Offices of the Civil List, Department of Finance, 1782, NA. Also, see statement in Harold C. Syrett *et. al.* (eds.), *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, 1961–1972), III, 75n. According to Prof. Ver Steeg, Morris initially urged David Rittenhouse to accept the position, but he turned it down. *Morris*, 81, 102.

26 Swanwick's take was one-eighth. Civil List, Feb. 13, 1783, Papers of Cont. Cong., no. 12, appendix 52; enclosure with Robert Morris to President of Congress, Mar. 10, 1783, NA; *Pennsylvania Packet*, Sept. 2, 1783.

27 In the Treasury records Swanwick is consistently referred to as "Treasurer to the Superintendent of Finance." See Journal, Blotters, etc. for this period in Fiscal Section, NA. Swanwick's active role is also depicted in the correspondence of contemporaries. See, for example, Morris to Benj. Harwood, Apr. 15, 1782, Apr. 15, 1784, Morris-Harwood Papers, Maryland Historical Society; Morris to Hamilton, Apr. 15, July 19, 1782, Syrett, *Hamilton Papers*, III, 73, 75, 110.

drawn on Swanwick, instead of the Treasury, but by 1784 more than 500,000 of these so-called "Long Bobs" and "Short Bobs" circulated in the country.[28] According to Arthur Lee, Morris' "quondam clerk" received substantial commissions for his services and aided Morris in the private use of half of the public's funds.[29] The access the firm of Willing, Morris, and Swanwick had to the vast amounts of monies and bills of credit daily channeled through Swanwick's various offices assured its place in the front rank of the nation's mercantile houses.[30] For example, the port records of 1783 reveal that young Swanwick was the leading consignee of goods shipped to Great Britain and among the leading consignees for other trade areas.[31] He was obviously using his name to conduct Morris' business affairs. Indeed, while Robert Morris served as Superintendent of Finance and Thomas Willing served as President of the Bank of North America, Swanwick almost single-handedly directed the firm's business operations.[32]

Naturally, Swanwick was also connected with the Bank of North America. Even though he was not among the original founders and investors, he soon emerged as one of the bank's leading stockholders with a total of 110 shares,[33] and he eventually became one of its directors.[34] Swanwick invested $28,400 in the first subscription and $15,600 in the second. As a partner in the firm of Willing, Morris & Swanwick, he held an additional 99 shares, valued at $35,600.

28 East, *Business Enterprise*, 290; William G. Sumner, *The Financier and the Finances of the American Revolution* (New York, 1892), II, 154–158. Swanwick also supported the establishment of a United States Mint. *Ibid.*, II, 44.

29 Lee to James Warren, Sept. 17, 1783, Burnett, *Letters*, VII, 299–300. Lee wrote:"in laying out the public Money Commissions accrue to his friend, in selling things so purchased, new Commissions arise to the Sellers. In this," he added, "it is his Clerk, Mr. Swanwick, who is to have this emolument."

30 "Public Justice," *Freeman's Journal*, Mar. 19, 1788; E. James Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse: A History of American Public Finance*, 1776–1790 (Chapel Hill, 1961), 75–78.

31 Rezin F. Duvall, "Philadelphia's Maritime Commerce with the British Empire, 1783–1789" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1960), 378–379, also, 308, 323, 345, 414.

32 Swanwick's rather extensive role in the firm's affairs can be seen in the correspondence with Tench Tilghman of Baltimore. Willing, Morris & Swanwick Papers, F. Folder, PHMC. Also, see Morris to Swanwick, June 20, 1783, Morris Letter Book E, 377, DLC; Ver Steeg, *Morris*, 190.

33 East, *Business Enterprise*, 290; Directors Minutes, Nov. 2, 1781, as quoted by Lawrence Lewis, Jr., *A History of the Bank of North America* . . . (Philadelphia, 1882), 33–34, 134, 137, 143.

34 Swanwick served from Jan. 9, 1792, to Jan. 14, 1793. *Ibid.*, 120.

Swanwick also acted as the principal broker and advisor for such prominent Dutch investors as P. J. Van Berckel, A. D. Van Lennep, and G. K. Van Hogdenderp, and Americans such as Tench Tilghman.[35] Thomas Jefferson, after having completed a pamphlet "On Finance" in 1784, took it to Swanwick for his examination and approval.[36] Thus, Swanwick held the respect of his contemporaries on matters relating to commerce and finance.

Although politics and business are always closely related, during the immediate post-Revolutionary war years Swanwick remained largely aloof from state and local politics. He neither held an elective office nor sought the advantages of party affiliation, for he no doubt labored under the disadvantages of youth as well as his father's toryism. One may assume, however, that Swanwick's close association with Robert Morris during the 1780's certainly placed him within the orbit of the anti-Constitutionalist party (Republican), which supported the Bank of North America, the College of Philadelphia, and the repeal of the Constitution of 1776 and the test laws.[37] To be sure, as a wealthy merchant and as a substantial public securities holder,[38] Swanwick supported the federal constitutional movement and, like so many economic nationalists, thought it offered viable national solutions to the economic problems confronting Philadelphia's mercantile community.[39] In 1788, as a Fed-

35 *Ibid.*, 144, 146–147; Swanwick to Tilghman, Feb. 23, Mar. 24, 29, May 3, 10, July 27, 1784, Jan. 18, 1785, Willing, Morris & Swanwick Papers, PHMC. Although some of these letters are signed with the firm's name, they are all in Swanwick's hand. Also, see G. K. Van Hogdenderp to Thomas Jefferson, May 22, 1784, Julian P. Boyd *et. al.* (eds.), *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton, 1952–1972), VII, 284.

36 *Ibid.*, VII, 212–214. Regarding Swanwick, Jefferson wrote that he was "a learned and respectable merchant in Philadelphia."

37 For the battle between the Constitutionalists and anti-Constitutionalists (Republicans), see Robert L. Brunhouse, *The Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1776–1790* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1942), especially chs. 5–7.

38 Swanwick held the following amounts of public securities: $3,363 (State of Pennsylvania), $5,643 (transferred Virginia), and $53,234 (federal). Of the latter total, $35,219 represented Swanwick's one-third share of a joint subscription with the firm Willing, Morris & Swanwick that totaled $105,656. I am indebted to Professor Whitney Bates who kindly provided me with these figures.

39 Swanwick's interest in the outcome of the Federal Convention can be seen in the following sources: John Swanwick, "On a Walk in the State House Yard," *Columbian Magazine*, II (August, 1787), 609–610; John C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Diaries of George Washington, 1774–1799* (Boston, 1925), III, 107, 232.

eralist, Swanwick was pleased with George Washington's elevation to the presidency and he warmly endorsed as well the Federalist slate of candidates for the First Congress, which included mercantile associates Morris, Thomas Fitzsimons, and George Clymer,[40] but for a variety of reasons his political future was to be with the opposition party.

II

In Philadelphia the Democratic-Republican Party leaders were not primarily national statesmen directing affairs from the halls of Congress, but tended to be political newcomers, outsiders, ambitious economic types, and influential men tied to the state government who formed an interest and mobilized relatives, friends, acquaintances, and dependents to oppose those in power at all levels of government. "We rely," wrote party chieftain A. J. Dallas, "on the activity of all men of property and influence in the Republican interest."[41] One of the persons Dallas came to depend upon was John Swanwick, whose political sentiments began to deviate from those of the Federalist Party soon after the establishment of the new federal government. The reasons for his shift of allegiance from the Federalists to the Democratic-Republicans after 1790 are complex, involving psychological, political, economic, and intellectual motives.

Contemporaries knew Swanwick, who full-grown stood only five feet four, as a talented virtuoso, with a wide range of interests and accomplishments. Because the pompous, vain little man wore big cravats and exhibited finicky traits and particular kinds of interests, he was probably something of an eighteenth-century dandy. He was a literary dilettante, and he was active in philanthropy, education, and religion. His views and activities in these areas often led to controversy. For example, Swanwick took exception to Virginia's "Statute of Religious Freedom" (1786) that had been drawn up in

[40] There are several panegyrics to Washington in John Swanwick's *Poems on Several Occasions* (Philadelphia, 1797), 104, 107–109; John Swanwick, "A Poem: On the Prospect of Seeing the Fine Arts Flourish in America," dated Mar. 1, 1788, *The Gentlemen's Magazine . . .*, LXV (June, 1795), 508–509.

[41] See the author's, "The Democratic-Republicans of Philadelphia: The Origins, 1776–1797" (Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1970), II, ch. 12. The quote is Dallas to William Irvine, June 14, 1799, Irvine Papers, XIV, 88, HSP.

1779 by Thomas Jefferson. The Act, which made taxes to support established churches illegal and allowed for freedom of religious opinion, was not regarded by Swanwick as a victory for the separation of church and state. Rather, he contended, the measure reflected more a "general declamation against all religion."[42] Regarding education, Swanwick opposed Benjamin Rush's practical, popular views of female education. Swanwick continued, instead, to support in the private academies a genteel education that included such subjects as instrumental music, French, and drawing. At the same time, Swanwick strongly supported a plan whereby the state would pay the cost of educating talented poor boys.[43]

Besides giving suave discourses in the ladies' academies and preening himself before the ladies of the theater, Swanwick in his spare time dabbled in light-hearted poetry. Dubbed a "merchant-poet," Swanwick had, it seems, the ambition of attaining the "Poet Laureateship of Columbia." His poems, consisting primarily of odes and elegies, were addressed to females, clergymen, and several distinguished Americans, such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and David Rittenhouse.[44] "His *vers de société*," writes William J. Free, "has little literary merit, but was apparently popular gossip for Philadelphia readers." In the preface to his book of verse, Swanwick claimed that the poems were "memorials of persons and of scenes, that recall the most grateful sensations of the mind; they demand no praise. . . ."[45]

During the post-Revolutionary war years, Swanwick became a member of many of the numerous associations and organizations

[42] "By a Citizen of Philadelphia" (attributed to John Swanwick), *Considerations on An Act of the Legislature of Virginia, entitled, An Act For the Establishment of Religious Freedom* (Philadelphia, 1786), especially iii-iv.

[43] John Swanwick, *Thoughts on Education* (Philadelphia, 1787), especially 13, 21–22. Rush's "Thoughts on Female Education," are in his *Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical* (Philadelphia, 1806), 75–92.

[44] Geoffrey Touchstone (attributed to James Carey), *He Wou'd Be A Poet; "Nature will be Nature Still" An Heroic Poem; to which is annexed a Thanksgiving Epistle on Electioneering Success* (Philadelphia, 1796), see section entitled "Argument" and 6–7, 12, 14. This is a burlesque on Swanwick.

[45] William J. Free, *The Columbian Magazine and American Literary Nationalism* (The Hague, 1968), 44. For a more sympathetic analysis, see Eugene L. Huddleston, "Poetical Descriptions of Pennsylvania in the Early National Period," *PMHB*, XCIII (1969), 494–495; Bernard Fay, *The Two Franklins: Fathers of American Democracy* (Boston, 1933), 151–152.

which sprang up in Philadelphia. He was a patron of the Protestant Episcopal Academy and of the Young Ladies' Academy of Philadelphia, as well as a shareholder in the Library Company and a manager of the City Dancing Assembly.[46] He was also a member of the "Society of Gentlemen" which generously patronized the *Columbian Magazine* and espoused the idea of a National University. Charles Willson Peale rightly claimed that Swanwick was "a friend to the arts."[47] He helped, for example, in 1783 to sponsor the raising of a balloon in Philadelphia and in 1787 brought the first collection of Italian paintings to the United States.[48] In addition, Swanwick was active in the Society of Political Inquiries, the Philadelphia Society for Agriculture, and gave money to and held office in humanitarian enterprises such as the "Society for the Information and Assistance of Persons Emigrating from Foreign Countries" and the "Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons." Finally, he was a commissioner of the Company "for Promoting the Cultivation of Vines."[49]

According to William Cobbett, Swanwick's use of his great wealth to buy his way into the city's various social and humanitarian associations in order to achieve "admiration" and "consequence" irritated upper-class Philadelphians. "Our Lilliputian, with his dollars," wrote Cobbett, "gets access where without them, he would not be suffered to appear."[50] Swanwick was also known to overextend him-

46 In October, 1792, the same month Swanwick was elected to the Assembly, he became a subscriber and manager of the New Dancing Assembly. See items dated Feb. 13, Oct. 24, 1792, in City Dancing Assembly of Philadelphia, HSP. Rasmusson, "Capital on the Delaware," 99–100.

47 Free, *Columbian Magazine*, 23–27; Peale to Swanwick, Dec. 13, 1786, C. W. Peale Letter Book, APS, quoted in Charles Coleman Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale* (New York, 1969), 217. Also see sources cited above, note 40.

48 *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 30, 1784; *Pennsylvania Packet*, May 1, June 25, 30, July 2, Aug. 3, 1787; C. Edwards Lester, *The Artists of America* (New York, 1848), 201–202.

49 See Minutes, Society for Political Inquiries, HSP; *Minutes of the Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of Agriculture. . .* (Philadelphia, 1854), I, 8. Membership in the other organizations was advertised in the Philadelphia newspapers. *Pennsylvania Packet*, Oct. 6, 1787; *Aurora*, Oct. 16, 1795; *Porcupine's Gazette*, Sept. 26, 1797. Although Swanwick was committed to the objectives of the American Philosophical Society and the Society for the Encouragement of Manufacturers and the Useful Arts, no record of his membership in these organizations has been located.

50 William Cobbett, *The Political Censor, or Monthly Review of the Most Interesting Political Occurrences . . .* (Philadelphia, May, 1796), 192.

self in his lavish entertainments.[51] Although he followed an aristocrat's "style of life" and had a sense of *noblesse oblige*, Swanwick's pretensions to social status and honor never resulted in full recognition because he was an *arriviste* who lacked breeding and family. In fact, the extent to which Swanwick was driven by a "passion for superiority" opened him up to special obloquy.[52] To illustrate, William Cobbett railed at Swanwick, describing him as the "little gentleman-merchant," the "little duck-legged squire," the "puffing orator," "Patriot Plato," and the "short-man" from Philadelphia. In the correspondence of other contemporaries, Swanwick is derisively and mockingly ridiculed as "the Hero of the night," the "Great Man," or the "Little Man."[53]

The malice toward Swanwick was seemingly greater than toward parvenues generally because he posed a greater threat to the privileged status group in Philadelphia, and because his rise occurred as the economic standing of the Quaker gentry was becoming precarious.[54] By 1790, in less than a decade, Swanwick had surpassed a great many of his Quaker rivals in wealth. The self-made merchant owned thirteen ships, large amounts of bank stock, government securities (state and federal), urban real estate, back lands, a two-hundred-acre estate on the Delaware and a fine new house on South Front Street between Pine and Cedar. The latter, which was insured for £3,000 by the Mutual Assurance Company in February, 1795, was one of the city's most costly residences.[55] Among his properties was the exclusive O'eller's Hotel, or Swans' Tavern, valued at around $40,000.[56] In accumulating such a great fortune, estimated

51 Catherine Livingston to Matthew Ridley, Nov. 3, 1794, Ridley Papers, MHS, cited in Rasmusson, "Capital on the Delaware," 117.

52 James Carey, *A Pill for Porcupine* (Philadelphia, 1796), especially 42, 46–49.

53 The above phrases are scattered throughout Cobbett's writings and are summarized in Mary E. Clark, *Peter Porcupine in America: The Career of William Cobbett 1792–1800* (Philadelphia, 1939), 57–58, 75–85; and in Rasmusson, "Capital on the Delaware," 117, 117n.

54 I have benefitted from the ideas set forth in Max Weber's "Class, Status and Party," *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York, 1946), 180–195.

55 Swanwick's wealth is outlined in his published *Circular* (Philadelphia, 1797). Also, see "Tax and Assessment Books" for Philadelphia, especially for Dock Ward, between 1790–1798, City Archives of Philadelphia; *Pa. Arch.* (Third Series), XXV, 302–303, 761; Mutual Assurance Company minutes.

56 Swanwick, *Circular*, 13; Horace Edwin Hayden (ed.), "The Reminiscences of David Hayfield Conyngham 1750–1834 . . .," *Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming Historical and Genealogical Society for the Years 1902 and 1903* (Wilkes-Barre, Pa., 1904), 243.

in 1796 at nearly six-hundred and fifty-thousand dollars, Swanwick showed greater daring or initiative than a great many of Philadelphia's merchants in investing his money in newer and richer fields of enterprise. For example, while the city's dry goods merchants still clung desperately to the old British umbilical trade cord and the export merchants clung to the West Indies trade following the depression of 1785,[57] Swanwick's firm established new markets in China, India, Germany, France and parts of southern Europe, dealing in such cargoes as sugar, teas, coffee, flour, and dry goods.[58]

As a result of his swift rise to fame and fortune in the commercial world, Swanwick quite naturally exhibited some self-conceit. Possession of wealth, however, did not automatically make one a member of Philadelphia's upper class. The "National Society" and the "Provincial Society" of Philadelphia placed a high value upon exclusiveness. This fact, as well as Swanwick's being a platonic lover, led to the frustration of his matrimonial ambitions more than once.[59] Swanwick was persecuted, summed up one contemporary, because he had acquired a fortune "by which he was likely to obtain a preeminence over them [*the aristocrats*] as far as riches will do so, in a free country."[60] During the immediate post-Revolutionary years social persecution was not at all uncommon in Philadelphia because the primary basis of gentility was still inherited wealth.[61]

Swanwick's defection from the Federalists, while perhaps influenced by social reasons, was based upon a number of political considerations. He was not the simple opportunist depicted by his political enemies, although he was well aware that political power

57 For an analysis of the post-war trade in Philadelphia, see Duvall, "Philadelphia's Maritime Commerce," chs. 5–7; East, *Business Enterprise*, ch. 11.

58 Ritter, *Philadelphia's Merchants*, 38, 48. The firm Willing, Morris & Swanwick was among the leading investors in the East Indies Trade and in the development of home shipbuilding. See Samuel W. Woodhouse, "The Voyage of the Empress of China," *PMHB*, LXIII (1939), 24–25n, 29; Marion V. Brewington, "Maritime Philadelphia, 1609–1837," *ibid*, LXIII (1939), 109–110, 113–115.

59 See Swanwick's *Poems*, most of which are addressed to females. In one poem, addressed to Mrs. Brodeau, entitled "On Female Excellence," Swanwick seems to have preferred females who were plain, modest, and not necessarily distinguished by their "long descent of noble blood." Elizabeth Meredith to David Meredith, Nov. 8, Dec. 16, 1795, Meredith Papers, HSP.

60 Carey, *A Pill for Porcupine*, 49.

61 Two notable victims of social exclusion were John Nicholson and Charles Willson Peale. *Ibid.*; Sellers, *Peale*, 217.

could lead to the acquisition of social power.[62] There is some evidence suggesting that he was a disgruntled office seeker. While most of Swanwick's friends had received offices in the newly organized federal government, he was not rewarded when the "loaves and fishes" were dispensed to Philadelphians in 1789. Later on, in December, 1790, believing himself to be the country's foremost expert on international trade, Swanwick volunteered his services to Thomas Jefferson. He wrote that he was willing to assist the Department of State "in whatever Matters of a Commercial Nature you might have Occasion for information from one who probably is inferior to none in this Country for the extensiveness of his Occupations." Earlier he had sought the appointment of his brother-in-law, James B. Nickolls, as Collector of Customs at Norfolk, and now he asked Jefferson to appoint a friend, John Telles, as American Consul at Lisbon. In all of the above instances Swanwick was disappointed.[63]

Swanwick soon came to disagree with the Federalists over policy matters. Being nationalist-minded, he had no specific quarrel with Hamilton's methods in establishing the nation's credit or in consolidating the union. Yet he objected to the Washington administration's pro-British commercial and revenue policies, making his objections public in July, 1790, in an article entitled, "Thoughts on the Commerce of the United States."[64] In this article Swanwick advocated what might be called "free trade mercantilism."[65] Defining America in terms of its own mercantilism and believing in government as a stimulator of enterprise, Swanwick suggested that Federalist policies had failed to stimulate all parts of the nation's economy. He was desirous of a self-reliant national state, in which

62 According to Max Weber, "There are two ways of making politics one's Vocation: Either one lives 'for' politics or one lives 'off' politics." Quoted in his "politics As a Vocation," in *Essays in Sociology*, 84.

63 Swanwick to Jefferson, Dec. [14], 1790, Boyd, *Jefferson Papers*, XVIII, 156; Swanwick to George Washington, Apr. 22, 1789, Letters of Application, Washington Papers, DLC.

64 The pamphlet appeared in the *Universal Asylum and Columbian Magazine*, V (July, 1790), 24–26. It was also reprinted in Mathew Carey's *American Museum*, XII (August, 1792), 89–97. It included a reply by Dr. Thomas Ruston and a defense by Swanwick. Swanwick to Carey, [undated], Lea & Febiger Collection, 1785–1796, HSP.

65 Paul W. Conner uses this term to describe Benjamin Franklin's political economy. *Poor Richard's Politicks: Benjamin Franklin and His New American Order* (New York, 1965), 74, 239n. I also believe that Swanwick's economic views were not of one piece and represented a composite of mercantilism and free trade.

commerce, navigation, agriculture and manufacturing would be mutually, indeed, serenely dependent. While he called for greater economic protection of the country's carrying trade, Swanwick expected at the same time that higher tariff barriers would eventually lead to reciprocity. Swanwick, unlike Madison and Hamilton, seemed less inclined to tie American interests to any one country.[66] He desired instead that *all* foreign ships be restricted to carrying into the country's ports only those products that had been produced and manufactured in their respective countries. Being interested in the East Indies trade and in the development of the domestic shipbuilding industry,[67] Swanwick found England's monopoly of this trade and our dependence on British ships particularly obnoxious because it adversely affected the country's economic growth. He earnestly hoped that the First Congress would, during its third session, increase tonnage duties on foreign vessels, and he probably joined Philadelphia's China traders who petitioned Congress on February 24, 1792, to enact such additional duties on articles imported from India and China as would enhance the trade of American carriers.[68] To his dismay, Madison's navigation bill of 1791,

66 The enactment of tariff and tonnage laws represented the first order of business of the new federal government. Joseph Gales (comp.), *Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States, 1789–1824* (Washington, 1834–1856), I, 131, 133–135, 150–153, 157–158, hereinafter cited as *Annals of Congress*. The sentiments expressed by William Maclay in the Senate went beyond Swanwick. Edgar S. Maclay (ed.), *The Journal of William Maclay . . .* (New York, 1890), 60–62, 67–68, 71, 76–78, 97. For Madison's and Hamilton's respective views, see Irving Brant, *James Madison* (Indianapolis, 1941–1961), III, 246–247, 251–254; and Broadus Mitchell, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York, 1951–1962), II, 148–151. Paul A. Varg, *Foreign Policies of the Founding Fathers* (Lansing, 1963), ch. 5.

67 For the Willing, Morris & Swanwick firm's interest in these areas of economic development, see secondary sources cited in note 47. The appeal to develop the China trade among Philadelphia's merchants was not only strong but was also organized. Burnett, *Letters*, VIII, 280–281n; Sellen, "The American Museum," *PMHB*, XCIII, 185–186. Yet not every merchant supported the East Indies trade because it served, so it was argued, to drain specie out of the country. Dr. Thomas Ruston's rebuttal to Swanwick, *American Museum*, XII (August, 1792), 91–92, 94–94; Issac Harvey to Arrendell & Richardson, Sept. 18, 23, Nov. 27, 1788, Isaac Harvey Letter Book, HSP; Robert Andrews to David Meredith, Dec. 6, 1794, Meredith Papers, HSP.

68 The petition has not been located, but there is a reference to it in the *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1828), I, 40, 60, 549. *Annals of Congress*, II, 428; Walter Lowrie and Matthew St. Claire, Clarke (eds.), *American State Papers, Documents, Legislative and Executive, of The Congress of the United States* (Washington, 1832–1861), *Finance*, I, 107, hereinafter cited as *ASP, Finance*. Hamilton's report on the petition, dated Feb. 10, 1791, is reprinted in Syrett, *Hamilton Papers*, VIII, 20–21.

which discriminated against British shipping, was successfully sidetracked by Hamilton's forces in Congress.[69] Hamilton himself had written in *The Federalist, No. XI,* that the aim of the new central government would be to foster an "ACTIVE COMMERCE in our own bottoms," yet it would seem that Swanwick was more of a thoroughgoing mercantilist and actually closer to Federalism, vintage 1788, than Hamilton.[70]

The establishment of the Bank of the United States and the financial panics of 1791 and 1792, which historians often neglect, also contributed to Swanwick's defection from the Federalists. As a leading stockholder and director of the Bank of North America, Swanwick no doubt viewed Hamilton's national bank as a threat to his vested interests.[71] Philadelphia's local banking establishment was reportedly divided over the creation of a rival institution because it would allegedly violate the Bank of North America's charter rights and would hold a "monopoly of the public moneys."[72] He was, in addition, probably among the group of prominent Philadelphians "left in the lurch" without any Bank of the United States scrip when the New England interest and the local Quaker banking circle monopolized the subscription of stock.[73] Later, when Philadelphia came under a speculative rage for bank scrip,[74] Swanwick

69 *Annals of Congress*, especially Feb. 22, 23, 1791, 2020–2022. For more background, see the excellent editorial note entitled, "Commercial and Diplomatic Relations with Great Britain," by Julian P. Boyd and others, in *Jefferson Papers*, XVIII, 220–283.

70 William Appleman Williams, "The Age of Mercantilism: An Interpretation of the American Political Economy," *The William and Mary Quarterly* (*WMQ*), Third Series, XV (1958), 428–432. For quote from No. XI, see Jacob E. Cooke (ed.), *The Federalist* (Middleton, Conn., 1961), 66.

71 The full details of this story are told in the author's, "Democratic-Republicans of Philadelphia," ch. 7.

72 Pelatiah Webster, *To the Stockholders of the Bank of North America on the Subject of the Old and New Banks* (Philadelphia, 1791), 3, 14–15.

73 William Constable to Thomas Fitzsimons, July 16, 1791, Constable Letter Book, NYPL; Jefferson to Madison, July 6, and same to Monroe, July 10, 1791, Paul L. Ford (ed.), *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1892–1899), V, 349–353. Oliver Wolcott claimed that those who were disappointed were "chiefly Pennsylvanians." Quoted in East, *Business Enterprise*, 297.

74 The bank scrip spiral of July 1791 is charted in the Clement Biddle Letter Book, HSP. George W. Corner (ed.), *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush: His "Travels Through Life" together with his Commonplace Book for 1789–1813* (Princeton, 1948), 203–206; Joseph S. Davis, *Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations* (Vol. XII of *Harvard Economic Studies*, Cambridge, Mass., 1917), I, 202–212.

was caught holding large amounts of inflated scrip as the market collapsed. In two known cases Swanwick's paper losses alone totaled more than $60,000.[75] Swanwick was a merchant who held "sound money" views, and one can easily understand why he would be irked by his personal losses and the way in which stock jobbing had upset Philadelphia's commerce.[76] In no small way, then, Hamilton's financial policies accounted for Swanwick's political decisions or conduct.

Finally, Swanwick's political views were caught up in a vision he held of America's future. He saw a new, liberal economic order being created in America, one that would be run by a "natural aristocracy." He showed a preference for men who were ambitious, self-interested, middle class, and producers of productive wealth; and legislators who were self-taught, reform-minded, advocates of armed defenses, proponents of republican principles, and sponsors of a competitive commercial society.[77] Perhaps Swanwick, believing he had been called by his generation to lead the new commercial order, decided to accept the somewhat dubious role of party leader as the only way to re-establish the nation's happiness.

Although Swanwick's ideas and principles were derivative, one has to be impressed with the self-educated merchant's broad knowledge of the classics, the political culture of eighteenth-century England, and general history and political economy. Swanwick, who owned one of the largest libraries in Philadelphia, doubtless received from booksellers in London and Paris all the worthwhile new publications. The first American edition of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was advertised in Philadelphia in 1790 as proving that

75 "Livingston *et al.* versus Swanwick" in A. J. Dallas (comp.), *Reports of Cases Ruled and Adjudged in the Courts of Pennsylvania* . . . (Philadelphia, 1798–1807), I, 300–302; Corner, *Rush Autobiography*, 205–206. Swanwick also became conspicuously involved in the passing of fraudulent certificates. Willing to Bingham, Feb. 14, 1791, Gratz Coll., HSP; also, see a series of William Bingham letters during February, 1791, in Bingham Letter Book, 1791–1793, HSP; Maclay, *Journal*, 407–408.

76 In a series of letters written from Philadelphia, Jefferson described the effects of the panic of 1792 on the Quaker city. Jefferson to Francis Eppes, Apr. 14, to Thomas Mann Randolph, Apr. 19, and to William Short, Apr. 24, 1792, in Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, V, 506–511.

77 See Adam Smith's *Moral and Political Philosophy* edited by Herbert W. Schneider (New York, 1948). I have also benefitted from a reading of Joseph Cropsey's *Polity and Economy; an Interpretation of the Principles of Adam Smith* (The Hague, 1957), ch. 2.

commerce "is best supported, not by mutual limitations and embarrassments, but by a perfect freedom of intercourse."[78] Swanwick's familiarity with the writings of Adam Smith and *The Federalist Papers* is clearly suggested in his own writings and speeches. His poem, "An Ode on Liberty," reveals, according to one contemporary, that Swanwick also took Thomas Paine, chief spokesman for an "Age of Reason," as his patron saint.[79] Thus, the works of eighteenth-century writers as well as his own experience gave coherence and direction to Swanwick's thoughts and actions on state and national affairs.

III

Swanwick made his debut in politics in the seldom-noticed elections to the state legislature in October, 1792. Perhaps his election to the Assembly, which has been heretofore overshadowed by the outcome of the contests for the federal House held at the same time, represented a better indication of Republican Party strength in Philadelphia.[80] These fall elections not only brought into sharp focus the political division over the economic policies of George Washington's first administration and the long-standing personal factionalism in Philadelphia, but they also took on the appearance of a contest of aristocracy versus aristocracy.[81] John Adams was perceptive when he remarked in 1792 that Philadelphia's "first places" remained "the objects of pursuit of Clashing Grandees" who specialized in the "popular Arts" of political intrigue.[82]

Party leaders on both sides had apparently agreed to support the same four candidates for the Assembly and to have a contest only for the fifth spot.[83] In this key race Swanwick was pitted against

78 "Lines Written in my Library," Swanwick, *Poems*, 48. The quote is from the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Jan. 13, 1790, cited in Mitchell, *Hamilton*, II, 598n.

79 Carey, *He Wou'd Be A Poet*, 17. Several similarities between Paine and John Swanwick's father Richard are noted in William Cobbett's *The Political Censor; or Review of the Most Interesting Political Occurrences*. . . (Philadelphia, 1796), 17–18.

80 Both Raymond Walters, Jr., "The Origins of the Jeffersonian Party in Pennsylvania," *PMHB*, LXI (1942), 440–458, and Tinkcom, *Republicans and Federalists*, 15–68, fail to appreciate the significance of the Assembly contest.

81 Baumann, "Democratic-Republicans of Philadelphia," II, chs. 6–8, *passim*.

82 Adams to John Q. Adams, Feb. 15, 1792, Adams Microfilm, MHS, Reel 375.

83 *General Advertiser*, Oct. 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11; *Federal Gazette*, Oct. 13, 1792. Although both parties supported Henry Kammerer, he soon became a leading figure in the German Republican Society.

ultra-Federalist William Lewis, a prominent Quaker lawyer. One cannot be certain whether Swanwick was drawn into the race by the Dallas-Hutchinson faction of the emerging "republican interest" or had personally canvassed for the seat on his own as is claimed by a partisan critic.[84] At any rate, Republicans were asked to support the "Rights of Man" ticket that bore Swanwick's name, and their attention was called to the "consummate display of the presumption and boldness of the Aristocratic junto" in advancing Lewis, an archenemy of Whig measures.[85] In a heated contest Swanwick defeated Lewis by the narrow margin of sixty-five votes —the first setback the Federalist junto suffered after the establishment of the new government.[86]

Republican Party leaders at once recognized the significance of Swanwick's triumph. Writing to Albert Gallatin, Dr. James Hutchinson declared, "Our opponents strained every nerve to carry him [*Lewis*] but were defeated. . . . It is impossible to conceive the chagrin of the aristocrats on this occasion."[87] Philadelphia's Republicans, according to Beckley, had won an "important victory" because the Federalists' object was to procure a proper Senator to fill William Maclay's vacated seat, and Swanwick's triumph endangered that goal. Beckley revealed that Alexander Hamilton, so active in Quaker city politics, was now so "cruelly mortified at the disappointment of his dupes, as to have explicitly declared 'that the interest of the general Government, received a greater shock than it would do by the total failure of the conference [*Federalists*] ticket.' "[88] Hamilton, as it turned out, had good reason to be alarmed. Not only had the conferees failed to dominate the federal elections, but Gallatin was also later appointed to represent Pennsylvania in the United States Senate. Swanwick's election in the city had in no small way helped to break the political deadlock which was depriving Pennsylvania of one of its seats in the United States Senate. The merchant-politician played an important role in the Assembly, drawing up the successful federal Senator's bill that called for a

84 Dick Retort [William Cobbett], *Tit for Tat; or A Purge for A Pill*... (Philadelphia, 1796), 28; "To Citizen John Swanwick," signed "CANDOUR," *Porcupine's Gazette*, July 1, 1797.

85 Broadside issued Oct. 9, 1792, HSP.

86 *General Advertiser*, Oct. 11; *Independent Gazetteer*, Oct. 13, 1792.

87 Hutchinson to Gallatin, Oct. 24, 1792, Gallatin Papers, NYHS.

88 Beckley to James Madison, Oct. 17, 1792, Madison Papers, NYPL.

joint vote of the two houses, and eventually throwing his support behind Gallatin's nomination.[89]

When the Third Assembly was organized, Swanwick aligned himself at once with the Republican majority. He was appointed to numerous committees, and the legislative record suggests he took his job seriously. As Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Swanwick soon acquired an extraordinary influence in the state government of Pennsylvania. He used his office to promote both "popular democracy" and "capitalist democracy." For the public at large he supported the establishment of a state hospital, public support of schools, penal and bankruptcy law reform, and the elimination of imprisonment for debt. For Philadelphia's commercial-minded middle classes—merchants, manufacturers, and skilled artisans—he sponsored bills for expanded and freer facilities in banking and insurance, and supported public-improvement measures relating to roads, turnpikes, and canals. The great monuments to Swanwick's success, the Bank of Pennsylvania and the insurance companies of North America and the State of Pennsylvania, earned him a reputation as the spokesman for productive capital.[90]

The popular demand for freer banking facilities and economic opportunity, usually associated with the Jacksonian period, was evident in Philadelphia during the 1790's. The attempt to charter a state bank was, it seems, the brainchild of John Swanwick. In early 1793 Swanwick, who came to identify himself with the speculative-entreprenurial wing of the Republican Party, suggested to four leading Republicans—A. J. Dallas, John Nicholson, Dr. James Hutchinson, and Thomas Mifflin—that a state bank plan be used as an engine to re-elect Thomas Mifflin governor.[91] Speculators, consisting of "wealthy officers" in the state legislature and a few "dis-

89 Raymond Walters, Jr., *Albert Gallatin: Jeffersonian Financier and Diplomat* (New York, 1957), 50–51. Swanwick's name was also put into nomination by John Shoemaker. At first Swanwick supported Daniel Heister to replace William Maclay. See the *Journal of the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania, 1790–1800* (Philadelphia, Lancaster, Harrisburg, 1790–1932), 3rd Assembly, 24, 36, 38, 48, 120–212, 213, 220–221.

90 *Ibid., passim.* The Third and Fourth Assemblies, of which Swanwick was a member, sat between Dec. 4, 1792, and Apr. 11, 1793, and Dec. 8, 1793, to Apr. 22, 1794. A special session was held from Sept. 1 to 23, 1794.

91 "Z" and "'Critiques' on the Ode of the Honorable J. S.," both in the *Gazette of the United States*, Feb. 16, Mar. 6, 1793; Callender, *British Honour and Humanity*, 47.

appointed projectors" reportedly rallied behind the plan.[92] Yet Swanwick's own involvement in the promotion of a third bank in Philadelphia, which Republicans boasted would strike at banking monopoly and at usury, seems to have originated from personal motives. According to pamphleteer William Cobbett, Swanwick's participation stemmed from a quarrel he had with the stockholders of the Bank of North America. The disagreement—the full details of which are unknown—apparently led to Swanwick's being dropped from the board of directors after only one year of service. Accordingly, then, Swanwick hoped to vent his spleen against the older bank and to further his own business interests in the process by championing the state bank.[93]

The responsibility of speaking for the interests in the Assembly supporting a state bank rested with John Swanwick. Following Adam Smith's theoretical lead and Alexander Hamilton's political lead, he sought to convince his opponents that banks benefited both private and public interests.[94] In extolling the advantages the state bank would afford to persons of small capital and to victims of banking favoritism, he argued that a state bank would expand capital, lower the rates of interest, prevent all banks from trading beyond their means, and keep bank dividends high, even in competition. Furthermore, he suggested that the services provided by a state bank would be comparable to those provided by the Bank of the United States. Lastly, in an obvious effort to pacify the residual agrarian hostility to commercial banks, Swanwick claimed that the state bank's loan office feature would bring together the interests of commerce and agriculture, city and country.[95] At one point during the debates, when the Bank of North America bullishly contended

92 "An Observer," *General Advertiser*, Feb. 1, 1793.

93 Cobbett, *Tit for Tat*, 28–29; "Another Bank," *Gazette of the United States*, Mar. 9, 1793. Swanwick had been replaced by Richard Rundle. Minutes, Bank of North America, Jan. 15, 1793, HSP.

94 The best recounting of the state bank debate is to be found in the newspapers. *General Advertiser*, Feb. 14, 15, 16, 18, 1793. Also, see *Pa. House Journal*, 3rd Assembly, 156–157, 253–257, 333–334, 345; and 4th Assembly, 49, 67, 88, 90, 177.

95 It was earlier claimed that only two or three persons outside the environs of Philadelphia owned stock in the Bank of North America. "A Citizen of Philadelphia," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Feb. 3, 1790. The Quakers of Philadelphia controlled the private bank and headed the opposition forces. "Argus," *General Advertiser*, Mar. 5, 1793.

that a state bank was unnecessary, useless, and even harmful, Swanwick lost his patience with his former friends. In a clear bid to rally the speculators behind him, he revealed that the private bank had for the last twelve years been averaging thirty per cent above par, and not the reported twelve per cent.[96]

The Bank of North America's immediate response to the well-planned attack by the new bank sponsors was, as it had been in 1784, to try to buy its way out of the bank expansion entanglement. The Bank of North America's proposal, which would have allowed the State of Pennsylvania to purchase its stock, came too late. The majority in the Assembly, without reservation, rejected the offer.[97] Thereupon, carrying out Swanwick's entire plan, the Assembly, by a two-to-one margin, passed two acts chartering a semipublic state bank for twenty years with an authorized capital of $3,000,000, of which the governor subscribed one-third for the State of Pennsylvania. The state's $1,000,000 subscription was to be paid for in part with the proceeds of a $250,000 loan from the Bank of Pennsylvania. The charter also required the institution to lend $500,000 to the state for the establishment of loan offices in each county, included various democratic provisions, and stipulated that 2,000 shares at $400 each be set aside for the Bank of North America, if the latter institution would agree to relinquish its charter. The private bank, however, would not accept the latter provision.[98]

The ingredients that went into the establishment of the Bank of

96 Table in Lewis, *Bank of North America*, 152; Brunhouse, *Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania*, 150–151.

97 The resolves were signed by Richard Wells, the cashier of the Bank of North America. Memorandum Book, Bank of North America, 1792–1794, HSP. Swanwick, editor B. F. Bache reported on Feb. 18, 1793, in the *General Advertiser*, accepted the Bank of North America's offer. The only explanation that can be advanced for Swanwick's vote is that he hoped to grasp the middle ground on an issue already decided. Perhaps he also felt that he had won his point with his former friends, as the subject of the state's purchasing the private bank's stock had been a controversial question over which stockholders wrangled in 1792. This view is based on my reading of the Minutes, Bank of North America, dated Jan. 14, 29, 31, Feb. 12, 1793, HSP.

98 *General Advertiser*, Mar. 27, Apr. 3, 4, 1793; James T. Mitchell and Henry Flanders (eds.), *The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801* (Harrisburg, 1896–1915), XVI, 365–381; XV, 37–38; John T. Holdsworth and J. S. Fisher, *Financing an Empire: History of Banking in Pennsylvania* (Chicago, 1928), I, 133–137; Davis, *American Corporations*, II, 95–96, 318, 325–326n.

Pennsylvania were, indeed, many. In sum, they included the wounded pride of a single merchant, the avarice of speculators, the legitimate needs of middling businessmen for more capital, the policy differences of certain persons in private banking circles, and the political ends of a party. Although the "merchant-Republican" bank got off to a shaky start, within five years it surpassed the Bank of North America in assets. By then, it had also become another "privileged" institution, denying other groups the same opportunity it had enjoyed to widen the scope of business enterprise. To protect the stockholders from the evils of corruption and favoritism safeguards had been built into the bank's operations.[99] Yet during the financial crisis of 1796 defalcations and overdrafts amounting to more than $200,000 were discovered. This incident, involving the bank's leading officials and sponsors, led an anti-Republican to jibe in verse:

> See him [*Mifflin*] with Barclay [*John Swanwick*], and Dallas
> (Poor Pennsylvania Keeps no gallows)
> Play many a democratic prank
> In fleecing Pennsylvania Bank.[100]

Although banks during this time were generally appurtenances of political parties, the Republican-chartered bank served several positive purposes. In upsetting the Federalist Party's dominance of local banking, by its mere presence it expanded business opportunity. In championing the cause of the rising entrepreneurs, it broadened the base of the Republican Party. Finally, the state bank aided trade and business generally and promoted the successful operation of the finances of the State of Pennsylvania. Years later, Albert Gallatin observed how the state's participation in these productive mixed enterprises had "enabled Pennsylvania to defray all the expenses of government without any direct tax during the forty ensu-

[99] *Ibid.*, II, 96–97, 103; Walters, *Gallatin*, 43. Thomas Willing immediately informed Swanwick that their mercantile firm would not purchase any stock in the Bank of Pennsylvania. Willing to Swanwick, May 9, 1793, Gratz Coll., HSP. Subscriptions in the branches went extremely slow. Edward Hand *et al.* to Samuel Howell *et al.*, June 14, 1793, Conarroe Papers, II, 69, HSP. For a different view, see Anna J. Schwartz, "The Beginning of Competitive Banking in Philadelphia, 1782–1809," *Journal of Political Economy*, LV (1947), 420, 424–425.

[100] Quote in James T. Callender, *History of the United States for 1796* (Philadelphia, 1797), 33. Also, see *ibid.*, 165–166; Callender, *Amer. Annual Register*, 269–271.

ing years."[101] Largely as the result of this comment, Gallatin has generally received the bulk of credit for the banking legislation, and Swanwick's own considerable service to the state bank as a legislator, commissioner, director, and benefactor has gone unnoticed by historians. One contemporary, however, fully understood and acknowledged Swanwick's role when he claimed that the Bank of Pennsylvania would always remain "a valuable monument" of his zeal in managing Pennsylvania's finances and promoting Philadelphia's commerce.[102]

In the Assembly Swanwick played a similar leading role in the incorporation of the insurance companies of North America and the State of Pennsylvania.[103] In Philadelphia the middling merchants not only faced a shortage of credit and discounts but also suffered from inadequate marine insurance to cover their cargoes. Some Republican merchants had come to regard the prevailing system of privately underwritten insurance as a form of "tribute," especially since their fees lined the pockets of London brokers.[104] The need to explore new ways to cut costs and to break the insurance monopoly coincided with the increase in national commerce and with hostilities in Europe.

A group of Philadelphia merchants, headed by many of the same people who were interested in chartering the Bank of Pennsylvania, responded to the above problems in November, 1792, by organizing the Insurance Company of North America (INA). The company, it was claimed, would benefit the community at large as well as the mercantile part of it. The directors applied at once to the State of Pennsylvania for a charter of incorporation, which they believed would help to establish investors' confidence. Remonstrances op-

101 Autobiographical sketch, Gallatin Papers, NYHS, as quoted in Walters, *Gallatin*, 44.

102 Callender, *Amer. Annual Register*, 275. Both Raymond Walters, *Gallatin*, 44, 384n, and Bray Hammond, *Banks and Politics in America, from the Revolution to the Civil War* (Princeton, 1957), 164–165, give Gallatin too much credit for the establishment of the Bank of Pennsylvania.

103 *Pa. House Journal*, 3rd Assembly, 40–41, 46, 97–98, 152–153, 331; 4th Assembly, 142, 234, 237, 251, 257, 259. The best secondary accounts detailing this story are: Marquis James, *Biography of a Business 1792–1942; Insurance Company of North America* (New York, 1942), especially 16–18, 36–39, 45–50; Thomas H. Montgomery, *History of the Insurance Company of North America* (Philadelphia, 1885), ch. 4.

104 "Mercator," *General Advertiser*, Jan. 2, 1793.

posing incorporation were presented by private brokers and merchants who were attached to financial houses in London. This powerful group, led by Thomas Willing, President of the Bank of the United States and Swanwick's business partner, opposed the Insurance Company of North America on the grounds that it would create a "monopoly."[105] Although most persons interested in this struggle realized that the new corporate venture had been formed to circumvent the existing monopolistic situation, with its high insurance premiums, the Willing group succeeded in obstructing this legislation in the Assembly for nearly eighteen months.[106]

Meanwhile, the self-interested John Swanwick—a prominent investor and director of the INA company—used his chairmanship of the House Ways and Means Committee to keep the charter proposal alive.[107] The charter group was also materially aided by other circumstances and events, which, in effect, turned the political battle around. First of all, the Willing group took seriously the INA directors' threat to seek a charter from Delaware if one were not granted by the State of Pennsylvania. Second, the marine company's success, even without the advantages of a corporate organization, tended to lower insurance rates generally and to diminish the profits of the opponents. Given this situation, the opponents were transformed into would-be competitors. Arguing that a second marine company was needed to promote competition and to permit all interested investors to buy stock, the Willing group decided to seek incorporation themselves.[108]

Swanwick, seeing that an opportunity now existed to strike a compromise, had two charters drawn up in April, 1794—one for the Insurance Company of North America with a capital of $600,000 and a second for the Insurance Company of the State of Pennsylvania with a capital of $500,000.[109] Swanwick not only accepted

105 Montgomery, *Ins. Co. of North America*, 36–39.

106 *Ibid.*; James, *Biography of a Business*, 37–39; "An Enemy to Unnecessary Corporations," *Gazette of the United States*, Jan. 1, 1794.

107 *Ibid.*, Jan. 12, 1793; *Pa. House Journal*, 3rd and 4th Assemblies, *passim;* Minutes of Dec. 10, 1792, reprinted in James, *Biography of a Business*, 32a, 382; stock subscriptions listed in INA Directors Minute Book, reprinted in Montgomery, *Ins. Co. of North America*, 40a; John A. Diemand, *Insurance Company of North America* . . . (New York, 1953), 34.

108 James, *Biography of a Business*, 36–39; Montgomery, *Ins. Co. of North America*, 35–44.

109 *Pa. Statutes at Large*, XV, 41–68, 70–76.

directorships in both companies,[110] one of which he had to vacate, but also saw to it that the charter bill contained a provision requiring these two insurance companies to purchase stock in the floundering Bank of Pennsylvania.[111] In summarizing the establishment of these corporations, one is inclined to agree with William Bingham, who poignantly analyzed the essence of Philadelphia's politics when he wrote: "The interests of commerce, as connected with politics, are so striking, that it is difficult to separate one from the other."[112] Finally, it is clear that the Assembly battle over chartering the state bank and the insurance companies in 1793 shaped up not so much as "a contest between fluid capital and agrarianism" as a struggle between competing economic elites.

IV

While Swanwick spoke out for liberating commerce from colonialism and banking from favoritism, events precipitated by the French Revolution made foreign policy a major partisan issue for Philadelphia as for the nation. The impact of the foreign affairs controversy on the Anglophobia of Philadelphia's "merchant-Republicans" was two-fold. First of all, it posed to them the very real question of monarchy versus Republicanism and, second, it confirmed their worst fears that decisions at the highest level of government would continue to be heavily weighted in favor of British trading interests. Yet these new political developments during the second Washington administration merely opened to view the party alignments that had already formed during the first. Jefferson reflected upon this matter, noting in early 1793 that the Federalist Party was backed by the "old tories," who were joined by merchants trading on British capital and speculators in currency and bonds. The Republicans, he explained, received the support of merchants trading on their own capital, Irish merchants, and "tradesmen, mechanics, farmers, and every possible description of our citizens."[113]

110 James, *Biography of a Business*, 39.

111 *Ibid.*, 29, 54.

112 Bingham to W. and J. Willink, Apr. 1, 1793, Bingham Letter Book, 1791–1793, 416–418, HSP.

113 Jefferson to Madison, May 12, 1793, Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, VI, 251. A similar statement is made in Jefferson to Monroe, June 4, 1793, *ibid.*, 281–282. For a more detailed analysis on party development in Philadelphia, see Baumann, "Democratic-Republicans of Philadelphia," II, ch. 8, section V, and ch. 9.

Thus, the Washington administration's conduct of foreign policy between 1793 and 1795, which exposed even further Hamilton's preference for revenue over the interests of commerce, served to reinforce Swanwick's Republican Party leanings. Like a great many Americans he had welcomed the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, seeing it as the overthrowing of a corrupt and tyrannical regime. The violence associated with the "Second" Revolution of 1792, however, quickly tempered his earlier enthusiasm. He was, for instance, the first Philadelphian to hear of the execution of Louis XVI, and he circulated the news.[114] It seems that Swanwick's mercantile connections in Europe were constantly providing him with information on international affairs, and later, no doubt, while serving in Congress he profited from the free access he had to these sources of foreign intelligence.

In the struggle at home between "Anglomen" and "Gallicans," Swanwick was not predisposed to side with either group. Rather he stood, to use a contemporary term, for the interests of the "American Party."[115] As early as the fall of 1792, Swanwick seems to have already made some realistic judgments on how American interests would be affected by the European power struggle. The main conclusion he reached was that the only strategy of diplomacy Great Britain intended to adopt toward the United States was one of friendship, though by means of deception, and not force.[116] Yet the Republican merchant, who opposed a policy of close collaboration with Great Britain, showed why he cannot be considered a Francophile or a John Bull baiter when he publicly abandoned the idea of honoring the French Alliance of 1778. On May 17, 1793, in a petition circulated by "Fitzsimons & Co.," Swanwick pledged his "strictest regard" for President Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality.[117]

114 This news was received on Mar. 15, 1793. Jacob Cox Parsons (ed.), *Extracts from the Diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer, 1765–1798* (Philadelphia, 1893), 190.

115 This third or middle position on foreign policy is generally overlooked. William Stephens Smith to George Washington, June 6, 1791, quoted by Boyd, *Jefferson Papers*, XVIII, 253n, 257.

116 This impression is based on Swanwick's actions and in part on a poem addressed to "Mrs. Hodgkinson . . ." in his *Poems*, 81–82.

117 The address, dated May 16, 1793, was signed by 300 merchants in Philadelphia. Swanwick, however, was not the only "merchant-Republican" to sign the address. *General Advertiser*, May 18, 1793. For the President's response, see John C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington* (Washington, D.C., 1931–1944), XXXII, 460–461. Jefferson to Madison, May 19, 1793, Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, VI, 260.

Like Jefferson and other "merchant-Republicans," Swanwick saw the document as a necessary step to preserve the neutrality and security of the United States as well as its prosperity.[118] As an export merchant, moreover, Swanwick fully appreciated the fact that the Anglo-French war would shift the bulk of the shipping trade business to the neutral nations.[119] In a real sense, then, Swanwick's distrust of Great Britain was equally motivated by his own self-interest and by his conception of the country's national interest.

Swanwick was among the cheering throng of yeomanry (as Jefferson labeled them) that greeted Edmund Genêt.[120] In addition, he served on a thirty-man committee, dominated by Republican Party leaders, who organized the welcoming reception for the French Minister at the City Tavern.[121] On May 18, Swanwick also attended the huge banquet honoring Genêt at his own O'eller's Hotel.[122] During the following weeks Swanwick surely participated in one or more of the Republican-planned, pro-French celebrations, and a year later he helped manage a festival to commemorate French victories.[123] It is not known whether Swanwick had misjudged the impulsive Genêt's motives as had most leading Republicans. One can safely assume, however, that as a merchant he would have opposed Genêt's plan to arm and equip privateers in the United States, and that he was certainly embarrassed by the Frenchman's independent acts.[124]

In any event, as the summer months of 1793 passed into fall, new

118 Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time* (Boston, 1948–1970), III, 134; "Introductory note" to letter by Hamilton to Washington, May 15, 1793, Syrett, *Hamilton Papers*, XIV, 450–454.

119 For the impact of the Anglo-French war on American commerce, see Anna C. Clauder, *American Commerce as Affected by the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon, 1793–1812* (Philadelphia, 1932), chs. 1–2; Carleton E. Curran, "The Trade of Philadelphia with Europe During the Era of the French Revolution, 1792–1815" (Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1950), chs. 1–3.

120 *General Advertiser*, May 17, 18, 1793; Hamilton to ————, May 18, 1793, Syrett, *Hamilton Papers*, XVI, 473–476; Jefferson to Madison, May 19, Ford, *Writings of Jefferson*, VI, 260; Jefferson to Monroe, May 5, 1793, *ibid.*, VI, 238.

121 The list of names appears in the *American Daily Advertiser*, May 20, 1793.

122 *General Advertiser*, May 21, 1793.

123 *Ibid.*, Apr. 24, May 3, 1793; *Gazette of the United States*, May 9, 1794.

124 For an analysis of British actions, see Samuel F. Bemis, *Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy* (New Haven, 1923), chs. 9–13; Alexander De Conde, *Entangling Alliance: Politics and Diplomacy under George Washington* (Durham, N. C., 1958), ch. 3.

British restrictions on neutral trade and not French intrigue proved to be the catalyst for widening political divisions at home. In a series of policy statements, the British government defined foodstuffs as contraband and directed British vessels to bring in for adjudication all neutral ships bound to or from the French West Indies.[125] It was this order, a secret one, that led to British attacks, particularly against American shipping, and which resulted in the capture of more than 250 American ships. By March, 1794, reports from abroad clearly underscored the status of Philadelphia as one of the country's hardest hit ports, and by then merchants' allegiance to Federalism had become considerably strained in the Quaker metropolis.[126]

Meanwhile, James Madison's "commercial propositions" had again been placed before Congress. But, upon the receipt of the news of the British outrages on the high seas, Madison's long-term proposals of economic retaliation lost much of their cogency and the extremely excited public now demanded immediate measures of relief and action from Congress.[127] This series of developments—Madison's resolves, the spoliation reports, and the calls for the enactment of a defense program—stirred up political passions in all the seaboard towns. It was also this political chain reaction, fostered by Republican leaders, that ultimately produced Jay's mission to London in May, 1794.[128] Yet before the politically troubled Federalist Party had been rescued and before the state of popular feelings toward England had died down, Swanwick had successfully exploited the "crisis of 1794" to his political advantage. On the one hand, he affirmed that the nation's prosperity demanded a fair

125 This impression is based on my reading of numerous articles in the *General Advertiser* and in the *Gazette of the United States* for January–March, 1794. Fisher Ames to Christopher Gore, Feb. 25, 1794, Seth Ames (ed.), *The Works of Fisher Ames* (Boston, 1854), I, 135–136; Herman LeRoy to Rufus King, Feb. 23, 1794, Charles R. King (ed.), *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King* (New York, 1894–1900), I, 546.

126 *Annals of Congress*, IV, 155–156. Madison's resolves were based on reports prepared by Tench Coxe and Thomas Jefferson. Brant, *Madison*, III, ch. 30; Merrill D. Peterson, "Thomas Jefferson and Commercial Policy, 1783–1793," *WMQ*, Third Series, XXII (1965), 584–610.

127 Madison to Jefferson, Mar. 26, 29, 1794, Madison Papers, DLC; Edward Burd to Jasper Yeates, Mar. 12, 1794, Yeates Papers, HSP.

128 Mitchell, *Hamilton*, II, 331–337; William Miller, "First Fruits of Republican Organizations: Political Aspects of the Congressional Election of 1794," *PMHB*, LXIII (1939), 118, 132–133.

share of the carrying trade and, on the other, he challenged the junto's control of the politics of Philadelphia.

The confrontation between the "merchant-Republicans" and the pro-British Federalists took place at a large mercantile meeting held on March 8, 1794. Philadelphia's merchants had been called together to hear a long-delayed, special report on ship-seizures prepared by a local committee. The Federalists, led by Thomas Fitzsimons and William Bingham, however, tried to use the occasion to denounce Madison's proposed resolutions against England.[129] Swanwick, a member of the committee, not only questioned the propriety of the Federalist junto's pro-British move but opposed the Federalist remonstrance as well. Knowing that mercantile resentment against Great Britain was at a high pitch, he warmly defended Madison's congressional proposals. In enumerating Great Britain's ruthless actions on the high seas, Swanwick also revealed that he had personally lost three ships, one of them valued at £9,000 sterling.[130] He explained, furthermore, that he was finished with Britain and demanded that the national government adopt more vigorous measures to protect the nation's commerce. Swanwick's patriotic presentation and show of independence was applauded and ultimately led to the overwhelming defeat of Fitzsimons' remonstrance.[131]

Following the so-called Federalist plot, Republican leaders decided to hold two meetings of their own on March 15th and 18th. At these sessions, in which Stephen Girard and Swanwick played leading roles, the "merchant-Republicans" offered numerous alternatives to the policies pursued by the Federalists. It was suggested, for example, that the Washington administration could at least fortify the nation's harbors and establish a procedure to indemnify

129 The details for this meeting have been drawn from the following sources: "A Nose of Wax," *General Advertiser*, Mar. 13; "A Moderate Man," *Gazette of the United States*, Mar. 25; *Independent Gazetteer*, Mar. 12, 1794; Madison to Jefferson, Mar. 9, 1794, Madison Papers, DLC.

130 Swanwick's ship *Two Friends* was officially reported as lost on Aug. 1, 1795. Jay Treaty Records, RG 76, NA (on microfilm): (1) Records of the Claims Commission under Article VII: List of Claims . . . Received from Mr. Samuel Bayard on May 18, 1797, by Rufus King; (2) List of 341 Cases in which the Parties Have Not Appeared to Prosecute their claim, item 19.

131 Madison to Jefferson, Mar. 9, Madison Papers, DLC; "A Card," *Gazette of the United States*, Mar. 24, 31; "Honestus," *ibid.*, Apr. 10, 1794.

shippers for their losses.[132] Although some of the proposals were more bellicose than Madison's resolves, the local Republicans were not strident "war hawks." Rather, the export traders, especially the flour merchants, [133] and even certain import merchants,[134] hoped to profit, though in different ways, from the foreign crisis. The Democratic-Republican politicians expected, of course, to capitalize on the popular resentment against Britain at the fall elections.[135]

Thus, by 1794, the year of his election to Congress, Swanwick had gained a broadly based following. He had carefully championed the views of Philadelphia's rising, large middle class both in and out of the Assembly. In addition to commanding the support of nearly 100 "merchant-Republicans," he also received the backing of the city's unhappy seamen and manufacturers. Since 1788 the members of these three interest groups had been solidly behind the Federalists. Now, they were starting to shift over to the Republican Party which not only exploited popular enthusiasm for France and the residual hostility toward Britain but also willingly endorsed their economic aspirations.

Swanwick, above all other Republican leaders in Philadelphia, voiced the democratic aspirations of the city's rising middle class and revived the "Spirit of 1776." His Anglophobia chimed perfectly with the sailors' unwillingness to expose themselves and the American flag, unarmed, to further British aggression.[136] He not only advocated the establishment of a naval force, but also took an active part in the drive to solicit funds to aid the Algerine victims.[137] When the manufacturers in May, 1794, openly opposed Hamilton's sup-

132 "JUNIO," *General Advertiser*, Mar. 18; [unsigned article] *ibid.*, Mar. 21, 1794; Thomas J. Scharf and Thompson Wescott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609–1884* (Philadelphia, 1884), I, 476–477.

133 Eugene P. Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790–1800* (New York, 1942), 53, 74–76.

134 John Adams to Abigail Adams, Apr. 1, 1794, Adams Microfilm, MHS Reel 377; Douglas S. Freeman, *George Washington, A Biography*, the last volume completed by John A. Carroll and Mary W. Ashworth (New York, 1948–1957), VII, 161 and 161n.

135 The Democratic Society of Pennsylvania and the German Republican Society were at this time very active. Minutes, Democratic Society of Pennsylvania, 29–38, 50–51, 53–55, 67–75, HSP; *General Advertiser*, Apr. 24, May 3, 16; *Gazette of the United States*, May 9, 1794.

136 *General Advertiser*, Apr. 15, May 26, June 6; "The Committee," *ibid.*, May 23, 1794.

137 *Ibid.*, Mar. 18, 21, 1794; Harry E. Wildes, *Lonely Midas, The Story of Stephen Girard* (New York, 1943), 154–155.

plementary revenue plans, which called for excise taxes on snuff, sugar, and other articles, and a reduction of drawbacks and bounties, Swanwick took up their cause for more protection by coming out in favor of direct taxes.[138] The Democratic Society of Pennsylvania, which he officially joined in April, 1794, became an active supporter of protection for infant industries. It recommended "to the friends of Democracy throughout the United States to take immediate measures introducing the use of American and excluding the use of British manufactures."[139] Later, as a participant at a gigantic Independence Day dinner, Swanwick joined Republican Party regulars who offered this toast: "EXCISE, may this baneful exotic wither in the soil of freedom."[140]

The Democratic-Republicans had clearly taken the 1794 congressional battle to the Federalists. Then, in late July, news of the events in Washington County, Pennsylvania, arrived in Philadelphia.[141] The western excise insurrection, which alarmed citizens throughout the new Republic, more than slightly hurt the Republican Party cause. First of all, it placed the Republicans on the defensive and, in turn, it gave the Federalists an issue by which to regain the political offensive. Secondly, the Republicans were forced to abandon their well-organized anti-excise campaign that seemed at first almost tantamount to dropping out of the 1794 federal congressional races. Thirdly, and perhaps most important of all, the westerners' actions split the leadership of the Democratic-Republican Party of Philadelphia. In this struggle between the radicals and the moderate Republicans, Swanwick sided with the latter. Displaying his strictest adherence to peaceful and constitutional protest, Swanwick supported the third resolve that condemned the westerners for their intemperate and undemocratic behavior.[142] (It was at this Demo-

138 *General Advertiser*, May 8, 1794; James T. Callender, *A Short History of the Nature and Consequences of Excise Laws* (Philadelphia, 1795), especially 64–66; John C. Miller, *Alexander Hamilton; Portrait in Paradox* (New York, 1959), 398–401.

139 Minutes, Democratic Society of Pennsylvania, 75–76, HSP; *General Advertiser*, May 12, 1794.

140 *Ibid.*, July 8, 9, 10, 1794; *American Daily Advertiser*, July 7, 1794.

141 William Miller, "The Democratic Societies and the Whiskey Insurrection," PMHB, XLII (1938), 324–349; Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies*, 145–148.

142 Minutes, Democratic Society of Pennsylvania, 143–145, HSP; Frederick B. Tolles, *George Logan of Philadelphia* (New York, 1953), 141–142.

cratic Society meeting on September 11, 1794, that the radicals walked out.) While attending the special session of the Assembly called by Governor Mifflin in September, 1794, Swanwick, although reasserting his general opposition to federal excise taxes, aligned himself on the side of law and order. Claiming that "he never rose with more pain on any question in his life," Swanwick strongly supported Federalist Party measures to raise a militia force to put down the rebellion.[143] Later, during the October election campaign, a pro-Federalist correspondent discerningly explained that Swanwick's ambivalent actions in the Assembly had been a "fair and masterly electioneering stroke to keep in with all parties."[144]

It was no small coincidence that the leadership of the Democratic Society of Pennsylvania was dominated by the same capitalist-democratic interests that Swanwick had loyally represented in the Assembly.[145] Being completely cut off from his former Federalist associates, Swanwick evidently joined the Democratic Party organization to seek new sources of support, and he surely planned to use it as a political base for his race for Congress against Thomas Fitzsimons, the incumbent.[146] Swanwick, who let it be known publicly that he desired the nomination, gave respectability to those with whom he associated because he was a notch or two above his followers. He was, moreover, a valuable ally since his cashbox over the years was used to subsidize the infant Republican Party organization.[147] Besides, few other men in the party could afford a costly congressional campaign and service in an underpaid political office. The "scattered" and "unconnected" interests in the opposition phalanx were obviously not in complete political harmony on all

143 I have used the Pennsylvania House debates reprinted in the *General Advertiser*, Sept. 10, 13; *Gazette of the United States*, Sept. 10, 1794. Also, see Swanwick to Benjamin White, *ibid.*, Sept. 16, 19, 1794.

144 "A Citizen," *ibid.*, Oct. 11, 1794; Ethel R. Rasmusson, "Democratic Environment, Aristocratic Aspiration," *PMHB*, XC (1966), 177.

145 Baumann, "Democratic-Republicans of Philadelphia," II, ch. 9, section III, and Appendix I, Table 3, 598–601.

146 Minutes, Democratic Society of Pennsylvania, 97, HSP; Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies*, 75–76. Harry M. Tinkcom claims that Swanwick joined the society for business reasons in order to protest British interference with American commerce. Tinkcom, *Republicans and Federalists*, 85.

147 Fay, *Two Franklins*, 152, 163, 334, and his "Early Party Machinery in the United States; Pennsylvania in the Election of 1796," *PMHB*, LX (1936), 381.

of the issues, but mutual enemies and complementary resources had operated to produce a coalition capable of reaping a political harvest.[148]

By 1794 public opinion in Philadelphia had shifted dramatically, and local Federalists realized Fitzsimons would have to run hard to win a fourth term. They designed an election strategy that aimed to discredit the Republican Party's candidate, characterizing Swanwick as a Jacobin "sans culotte," the candidate of the Democratic Society, and an unsteady, greedy upstart who had become the tool of the masses. His adoption of the anti-excise and spoliation claims causes and his "merchant-Republican" views were called demagoguery. One critic even wanted to appoint the local assemblyman "AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY to the Insurgents."[149] Finally, Swanwick was characterized in a federal cartoon as a self-seeking broker who was prepared to crush both the city's dry goods merchants and the government itself if this would raise him to "Eminence and Fortunes."[150]

In October, 1794, Swanwick defeated Fitzsimons for Congress by a margin of fifty-eight votes.[151] Swanwick's triumph met with a mixed response. According to James Madison, his election represented "a stunning change for the aristocracy." Subsequently, he wrote Jefferson that the election of a Republican at the commercial and political metropolis of the United States was "of itself, of material consequence," and it was so considered by the Federalists.[152] Federalist William Bradford thought the "contemptible" Swanwick owed his success "more to resentment against Fitzsimons than to his own merits. Many refused," he revealed, "to vote for either candidate and many voted for S[wanwick] in order to vote against F[itzsimons]."[153] Concurring, Fisher Ames wrote: "Here the supine good men let Swanwick get a nominal majority."[154] Elizabeth Mere-

148 Joseph Clarke to William Jones, Oct. 14, 1794, Uselma Clark Smith Coll. HSP.

149 The quoted phrase is in "A. B," *Gazette of the United States*, Sept. 27, 1794. Also, see "T. T.," *ibid.*, Oct. 11; unsigned article, *ibid.*, Sept. 12; and *General Advertiser*, Oct. 9, 1794.

150 "A Peep into the Anti-Federal Club," reprinted in Fay, *Two Franklins*, 190.

151 *General Advertiser*, Oct. 15, 1794; Tinkcom, *Republicans and Federalists*, 141–142.

152 Madison to Jefferson, Nov. 14 and to Monroe, Dec. 4, 1794, in United States Congress, *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison* (Philadelphia, 1865), II, 19, 29, hereinafter cited as *Madison* (Cong. ed.).

153 Bradford to Elias Boudinot, Oct. 17, 1794, Wallace Coll., II, 101, HSP.

154 Ames to Gore, Nov. 18, 1794, Ames, *Works*, I, 152.

dith, whose daughter Mary's romance with Swanwick was a matter of grave concern to her, was surprised that he was elected because she thought everybody hated and despised him. She explained that his membership in the Democratic Society had particularly embittered the propertied men in the army.[155] Perhaps John Adams best summed up the election results when he wrote: "Swanwick may be for anything that I know as federal as his Rival."[156]

Essentially, then, Swanwick owed his congressional victory to the events of 1794. The various factors—local issues, national issues and personalities—all played their part. If any two issues hurt Fitzsimons above all others, they were the congressman's conduct during the spring embargo and the cry used by the Republicans, "Swanwick and no Excise." Edmund Randolph reported that Fitzsimons' conduct cost him support in the mercantile community and that the tax slogan gained support for Swanwick among the "less-informed classes of men." In addition, Randolph noted that Chief Justice Thomas McKean, who had openly campaigned for the independent merchant, remarked that at the last moment "the gentlemen" decided to vote for Swanwick.[157] Another contemporary suggested that Swanwick's election was owing to the support he received from "five personal Enemies" of Fitzsimons. Although they were not named, possible antagonists were A. J. Dallas, Thomas McKean, John Nicholson, Charles Pettit, Blair McClenachan and Charles Biddle.[158]

Lastly, a large measure of Swanwick's success obviously belonged to the candidate. He adopted the "new politics" consisting of the political arts of ambivalence, compromise, self-nomination, and direct voter appeal, which enabled him to circumvent the Federalist junto's control of local politics. Nor was Swanwick afraid to employ his own fortune to insure his political success. For example, the merchant-politician was widely known for his charitable donations, especially to the local churches. No doubt the fact that Swanwick was a pewholder of St. Mary's Catholic Church for his mother and sister, and promised before the election to decorate the altar of the

155 Elizabeth Meredith to David Meredith, Dec. 6, 1794, Meredith Papers, HSP.

156 Adams to Abigail Adams, Nov. 11, 1794, Adams Microfilm, MHS, Reel 377.

157 The quote is to Washington, Oct. 16, 1794. Also, see same to same, Oct. 15, and William Bradford to Washington, Oct. 17, 1794, Washington Papers, DLC.

158 Clarke to Jones, Oct. 14, 1794, Uselma Clark Smith Coll., HSP.

church, helped to neutralize Fitzsimons' strong appeal among that voting bloc. Swanwick even used a tavern he owned to refresh his supporters with muddy porter and grog.[159] Such open breaks with the nonparty tradition, however, got him into serious trouble, and led the Fitzsimons supporters to contest the election on the grounds of irregularities.[160]

Thus, Swanwick apparently won not because of any great upsurge of the voters of little or no property, but because Fitzsimons was unable to hold onto traditional Federalist votes.[161] An analysis of wards reveals that Swanwick's greatest support came from the newer and poorer wards of Philadelphia. The 255-vote majority piled up in North and South Mulberry wards—the home of the mechanics and manufacturers—proved decisive in overcoming the late militia returns.[162] Swanwick was defeated decisively in only one ward, Dock, and he ran a strong race even in the exclusive, high property value wards. Considered at the level of practical politics, Swanwick's candidacy served as a means of protest for those growing numbers of dissident Federalists who either opposed a one-way trade relationship with Britain or eyed a better market for domestic manufactures.

V

During the fourteen months before Swanwick officially took his seat in Congress on December 7, 1795, a great deal happened. In the "lame duck" session of Congress, Fitzsimons, though unable to overturn Swanwick's election, succeeded in his effort to have the democratic societies condemned by President Washington.[163] More

159 Carey, *He Wou'd Be A Poet*, 25–28; William Cobbett, *A New Year's Gift to the Democrats . . .* (Philadelphia, 1796), 66; Callender, *British Honour and Humanity*, 47–48; *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, V, 20; X, 60; XXII, 55, 117; XXVIII, 243.

160 *Annals of Congress*, V, 151, 190, 789; United States Congress, *Causes of Disputed Elections, 1789–1801* (Washington, D. C., 1902), House Document 510, 56th Cong., 2nd Sess., 46; *Aurora*, Oct. 7, 1796; Callender, *Amer. Annual Register*, 269–273.

161 "A Mechanic," *Gazette of the United States*, Sept. 27, 1794. The Republicans had nearly overturned Fitzsimons' candidacy. *General Advertiser*, Oct. 14; "A Correspondent" claimed that Swanwick's nomination originated with the "antifederal Junto." *Gazette of the United States*, Oct. 14, 1794, and unsigned article in *ibid.*

162 For the late militia returns from western Pennsylvania, see *General Advertiser*, Oct. 21, 31, Nov. 5, 6, 8, 10, 1794.

163 *Annals of Congress*, IV, 894ff, 906, 943–945; Mary Meredith to David Meredith, Dec. 6, 1794, Meredith Papers, HSP; Ames to Thomas Dwight, Nov. 29, 1794, Ames, *Works*, I, 153.

seriously for Swanwick, by late summer of 1795 he had suffered some political defection on the part of the Republican radicals, headed by Beckley, Michael Leib, and B. F. Bache, who no longer trusted him and considered him a turncoat because of his low-pitched position on Jay's Treaty.[164]

After the Senate's ratification in mid-June of Jay's Treaty, by the vote of 20 to 10, Philadelphia's Democratic-Republicans agreed to hold a series of protest meetings to apply public pressure on Washington not to sign it.[165] The prime movers behind this strategy were Dallas, Beckley, and Swanwick. Serving on the select committee of fifteen, which Federalists openly acknowledged contained some of the city's more "principled inhabitants,"[166] Swanwick helped to organize two antitreaty demonstrations held on July 23 and 25.[167] He apparently put up the money to pay for the printing of petitions and handbills that were circulated by the thousands throughout the city's twelve wards. There is no record of his making any formal speeches or of his marching through the city with the mob which bore the treaty on a pole, yet Swanwick was on the same platform with firebrand Blair McClenachan when he moved "that every good citizen in this assembly kick this damned treaty to hell."[168]

When the Republicans' national protest campaign failed to intimidate Washington, who signed the document into law on August

164 Beckley to Madison, Sept. 10, 1795, Madison Papers, NYPL. For more details, see Raymond Walters, Jr., *Alexander James Dallas: Lawyer-Politician-Financier* (Philadelphia, 1943), 72–73; Stephen G. Kurtz, *The Presidency of John Adams: The Collapse of Federalism* (Philadelphia, 1957), 36–37.

165 *Aurora*, July 27; *Gazette of the United States*, July 27; Swanwick to Madison, July 26, 1795, Madison Papers, DLC; Timothy Pickering to Stephen Higginson, July 27, 1795, Pickering Papers, MHS (on microfilm); Oliver Wolcott to Washington, same to Mrs. Wolcott, both dated July 26, 1795, George Gibbs (ed.), *Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams* (New York, 1846), I, 217–218.

166 Ralph Izard to Jacob Read, July 30, 1795, Misc. Mss. Coll., Box "I," DLC; Elias Boudinot to Samuel Bayard, Oct. 17, 1795, Bradford Papers, Princeton University. The committee included: William Shippen Jr. (chairman), Thomas McKean, Charles Pettit, Thomas Lee Shippen, Stephen Girard, Jared Ingersoll, Blair McClenachan, Abraham Coats, F. A. Muhlenberg, John Hunn, John Barker, Moses Levy, William Coats, and A. J. Dallas.

167 Thomas Lee Shippen to Swanwick, July 24, 1795, Shippen Papers (misc. Letters Box), DLC; George Mifflin Dallas, *Life and Writings of Alexander James Dallas* (Philadelphia, 1871), 51.

168 See sources cited in note 164. Also, see poem on "Blair the Great" by William Cobbett in John Bach McMaster, *A History of the Peoples of the United States . . .* (New York, 1883–1913), II, 225n.

14, 1795,[169] moderate Republican leaders, including Swanwick, believed that the treaty issue was dead. To continue the fight, they concluded, would only lead to political suicide. The radicals, however, refused to follow this strategy.[170] They insisted instead on making the fall elections of 1795 a referendum on Jay's Treaty, and thereby the radicals drove moderates like Swanwick from the field of political battle in 1795. The former were obviously carrying their fight with the latter for control of the party, an effort which had begun a year before in a Democratic Society meeting over the excise resolves.[171]

Swanwick's moderate views had not jeopardized his standing with the "Madisonians" in Congress.[172] His vast commercial experience and the importance of the urban district that he represented were at once recognized, and, with the Republicans in the majority, he was named Chairman of the Committee on Commerce and Manufactures.[173] In this position, which suited him ideally, Swanwick introduced many private bills on behalf of merchants and manufacturers. He also supported the protection of American seamen from foreign impressment and the reform of the penal code.[174]

The dominating issue of the first session of the Fourth Congress, and Swanwick's major concern, was whether the House should appropriate money to carry Jay's Treaty into effect. The extended debate on the House's participation in treaty-making had been touched off by Edward Livingston's call for the executive papers

169 Carroll and Ashworth, *Washington*, VII, ch. 10; Gerald A. Combs, *The Jay Treaty; Political Battleground of the Founding Fathers* (Berkeley, 1970), 165–170.

170 John Beckley to De Witt Clinton, Sept. 13, 1795, cited by Alfred F. Young, *The Democratic-Republicans of New York: The Origins, 1763–1797* (Chapel Hill, 1967), 458n; Thomas J. Farnham, "The Virginia Amendments of 1795: An Episode in the Opposition to Jay's Treaty, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXV (1967), 81–88.

171 William M. Meigs, "Pennsylvania Politics Early in this Century," *PMHB*, XVII (1893), 462–490; James H. Peeling, "Governor McKean and the Pennsylvania Jacobins, 1799–1808," *ibid.*, LIV (1930), 320–354.

172 Madison to Swanwick, June 14, July 26, 1795, Madison Papers, DLC; Brant, *Madison*, III, 429. Swanwick secured for the Madisons a three-story brick house in Philadelphia for a yearly rent of £200.

173 The appointment was made on Dec. 14, 1795. *Annals of Congress*, V, 137.

174 *Ibid.*, V, 382, 383–384, 395, 398–400; VI, 2074, 2076, 2079; VII, 62; *ASP, Finance*, I, 479, 480, 494, 495–496; Callender, *British Honour and Humanity*, 41; James F. Zimmerman, *Impressment of American Seamen* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1966), 56–57.

relating to the treaty.[175] Swanwick supported the New Yorker's move and the House's right to reject the treaty.[176] Reading the *Annals of Congress* indicates that Swanwick, who had become increasingly pro-French, played a much larger part in the debate over Jay's Treaty and in foreign affairs generally than scholars have heretofore recognized. John Adams no doubt had "merchant-Republicans" Swanwick and Livingston in mind when he wrote: "A few outlandish men in the House have taken the lead, and Madison, Giles, and Baldwin are humble followers."[177]

In his maiden speech, delivered on March 8, Swanwick persuasively asserted that he could not see any harm in the people's representatives carrying out their constitutional rights to inspect the executive papers. Following what had become a practice with the skillful debater, he read some supporting documents. Quoting a recent speech of George III to Parliament regarding the ratification of Jay's Treaty, Swanwick noted that it had been read before both houses. Did we not have, he asked, the same powers of deliberation as the House of Commons? Then he read, over the objection of Representative John Williams, two extracts from *The Federalist* which seemed to suggest that in foreign affairs the House deserved some role or voice in the treaty's approval because of its connections with the other branches of government.[178]

Thirteen days before the vote, at a time when an air of crisis hung over Congress, Swanwick arose to make his second major speech on the treaty.[179] In this, his longest and perhaps most memorable speech in the House, Swanwick argued that the treaty was a terrible blow to American national pride and dignity; that the commerce of the country had more to lose than to gain by it; and that the treaty's opponents were no less patriotic than its supporters.

175 *Annals of Congress*, V, 426.

176 *Ibid.*, V, 768–769, 974–975.

177 Adams to Abigail Adams, Apr. 16, 1796, Charles Francis Adams (ed.), *Letters of John Adams Addressed to his Wife* (Boston, 1841), II, 220. Later, William Smith wrote: "Giles, Gallatin, Nickolas, Livingston, Swanwick, and Sam Smith have disgraced the country by their speeches. . . ." Smith to Ralph Izard, May 23, 1797, "South Carolina Federalist Correspondence, 1789–1797," *American Historical Review*, XIV (1909), 787; Combs, *Jay's Treaty*, 175–176.

178 *Annals of Congress*, V, 448–452. The extracts were from *Federalist Papers*, No. 53 and 47; Cooke, *The Federalist*, 364, 332.

179 *Annals of Congress*, V, 990–1003.

Swanwick, who was a student of international law and constitutional theory, again maintained that under Republican governments the power to raise appropriations for treaties was not a perfunctory obligation but ultimately required the House to sanction treaties. After a thorough examination of the treaty, in which he found objections to almost every article, Swanwick informed the House that he could not throw away $90,000 of the people's money to carry out the ruinous contract.[180] He deemed it highly inconsistent for the United States to negotiate a document that permitted Great Britain to dictate rules of conduct, varying with each part of her empire, while we agreed at the same time to provisions on a much more uniform basis. More specifically, he was critical of the cession to Britain of the free navigation of the Mississippi on terms that were entirely different from those stipulated in Pinckney's Treaty with Spain; the unplanned surrender of the western posts; the indefinite assumption by the United States of debts owed by its citizens to British subjects; the uncertain method by which the spoliation claims of American merchants were to be decided by commissioners in London; and, lastly, the prohibition of sequestration of debts that deprived the United States, as he saw it, of its only vital weapon of commercial retaliation. Regarding the latter, Swanwick denied that to be opposed to Article X meant one was opposed to paying his debts. Even John Dickinson, one of the wealthiest men in the country, opposed the treaty, claimed the Republican representative.[181]

It had come as no surprise to him, Swanwick averred, that the merchants generally supported the treaty. They were always, he said, "influenced by the present rather than future interests." The merchants looked to the treaty, he explained, to repay $5,000,000 in spoliations, to keep their present property afloat, and to prevent war. These arguments, Swanwick believed, lacked real weight for four reasons: first, the commissioners on spoliations were at best arbitrators of the Laws of Nations; second, although the danger of war was a chief Federalist argument for approval of the treaty, Great Britain, he concluded, would not embark on a new war with her best trade customer; third, Great Britain would carry out her

180 *Ibid.*, V, see especially, 990–991.
181 *Ibid.*, V, 991ff.

part of the treaty and the Federalists knew it. Swanwick illustrated this point by calling attention to the fact that American merchants still appealed to Congress to advance them money for their spoliations and that the British still impressed United States seamen into the British naval service and seized American ships. Fourth, raising the old issue of patriotism, Swanwick said that it was his duty not to surrender the "Law of Nations" and to support Great Britain, but to promote the "best and most lasting interests of our country."[182]

In mid-April, 1796, local Federalists exerted tremendous pressure on Philadelphia's two representatives. Republicans Swanwick and F. A. Muhlenberg, it was claimed, were failing to support the interests of their constituents. Administration party leaders tried to reinforce this claim through a pro-treaty petition campaign. The Federalists called on every house in the city, charged the *Aurora*, armed with "all the terrors of Bank and Discounts, and all the influence that wealth can give." It seems that Swanwick's "merchant-Republican" friends and undecided merchants, especially, felt the brunt of these tactics.[183] Since it was a time when money was extremely scarce, bank directors were able to carry on, as Madison reported, "like a Highwayman with a pistol demanding the purse."[184] The Federalists were also trying to influence the people, he added, by "beating down the prices of produce, and sounding the tocsin of foreign war and domestic convulsions." Swanwick faced all of these pressures, and even more. He was offered the governorship of Pennsylvania as the price for his vote.[185] On his refusal, the previously antitreaty Muhlenberg took the bait.[186]

When Swanwick made his April 15 speech, the Republicans still commanded the votes to refuse funds for the treaty's execution.[187] The *Aurora* spoke of the "groans of the fallen faction."[188] But

182 *Ibid.*, V, 1003.

183 John Fenno to Joseph Ward, Apr. 24, 1796, Ward Papers, Chicago Historical Society [typescript]; Elizabeth Meredith to David Meredith, Apr. 14, May 18, 1796, Meredith Papers, HSP.

184 Madison to Jefferson, Apr. 23, May 1, 1796, *Madison* (Cong. ed.), II, 98, 99–100.

185 "Civis," *Aurora*, May 9, 1796; "From a Correspondent," *ibid.*, Apr. 23, and "An Election Anecdote," *ibid.*, Oct. 6, 1796.

186 Paul A. W. Wallace, *The Muhlenbergs of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1950), 285–287.

187 Kurtz, *Adams Presidency*, 55–58; Brant, *Madison*, III, 434–436.

188 *Aurora*, unsigned article, Apr. 11, 1796.

within the span of ten days, in the face of a nationwide Federalist counterattack directed by Hamilton, the Republican majority melted away. On April 30 the appropriations resolutions passed the Committee of the Whole, 50–49, the deciding vote being cast by F. A. Muhlenberg of Philadelphia County.[189] A last-ditch effort by Republicans to salvage a partial victory also failed when Henry Dearborn's amendment stating that the House considered the treaty objectionable even though it consented to it, was defeated by the same vote. Swanwick voted for Dearborn's Amendment to the treaty, but his political posture, if for the moment flexible, in the end remained firm. After the amendment's defeat, he announced that he could not support the treaty without the preamble because, although it was consistent with his economic interests, it was inconsistent with his political principles.[190]

To Swanwick's opponents, both in and out of Congress, he seemed a political Proteus. As an urban representative, he was neither a Federalist nor an agrarian Republican; as a leading merchant and financier, he also seemed to be on the wrong side of the political fence on Jay's Treaty. In fact, Swanwick's actions, which remained consistent with his earlier economic nationalism, strongly suggested that some Philadelphia merchants had as much to lose as others had to gain by the treaty. Swanwick's antitreaty arguments in the House, one Federalist observed, "were so blinded with his own private interests, that it drew laughter and sarcasm of all present, and I think the current hatred and malevolence never bore so hard against him as at this time."[191] Swanwick came in for the most scorching criticism of all from William Cobbett, the scurrilous scribbler who wrote under the pen name of "Peter Porcupine."[192] He railed at Swanwick for everything from his politics to his fondness for the ladies and his love of the arts.[193] There were undoubtedly

189 *Annals of Congress*, V, 1140–1292 (votes are recorded on 1289–1291); Madison to Jefferson, May 1, 1796, *Madison* (Cong. ed.), II, 99–100.

190 *Annals of Congress*, V, 1289–1290.

191 Elizabeth Meredith to David Meredith, May 18, 1796, Meredith Papers, HSP.

192 William Cobbett, *Porcupine's Works* (London, 1801), II, 229; VI, 15, 78, 104. Also, see references cited in note 52.

193 Swanwick wrote his own defense. Sim Sansculotte [John Swanwick], *A Roaster; or, A Check to the Progress of Political Blasphemy: Intended as a Brief Reply to Peter Porcupine . . .* (Philadelphia, 1796). Also, see sources cited in note 53.

many legitimate reasons for antagonism toward Swanwick, yet Elizabeth Meredith explained that she found it difficult to account for public prejudice against him, "Except it proceeds from Envy, which . . . is its Original Source."[194]

In Congress Swanwick became the frequent target for barbs, especially by John Williams of upstate New York. Williams had sided with the Federalists on Jay's Treaty and had come to despise Philadelphia's smiling "merchant-Republican." In reply to one of Swanwick's speeches on the treaty Williams claimed he "could not boast of having vessels" (Swanwick owned thirteen), only to having a few acres of land on the frontier which he planned to have settled. At another point, he singled out Republicans Swanwick and Edward Livingston for being "gentlemen who lived surrounded by the luxuries in the city" and could not, therefore, appreciate the needs of the frontier farmers.[195] The New Yorker's remarks were not in accord with the conventional alignment of friction between rural Republicans and mercantile Federalists.

Swanwick, in opposing the appropriations bill to carry Jay's Treaty into effect, was apparently motivated both by principle and by political expediency. The Anglo-American pact, as he interpreted it, hardly served the national interest based on free commerce and expansionism. And in actual fact, moreover, there were aspects of political acuity behind Swanwick's actions. For, in less than a year the Republican moderate had come around to the radical's position on the treaty issue, which enabled him to patch up his differences with the radicals within the Democratic-Republican Party.[196] In the 1796 congressional elections, characterized as a contest between pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty forces, Swanwick again received the open endorsement of the Democratic Society.[197] To oppose Swanwick, the Federalists selected Edward Tilghman, a

194 To David Meredith, Apr. 14, 1796, Meredith Papers, HSP.

195 *Annals of Congress*, V, 950, 1075–1076. One fellow congressman observed: "[Edward] Livingston & *his aide*, *little* Swanwick—the two great champions of these two *great* Cities—N York & Phila." Jonathan Trumbull to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Mar. 30, 1796, Trumbull Papers, Connecticut Historical Society. I am indebted to Alfred Young for the lead on the Swanwick-Williams antagonism. Young, *Democratic-Republicans of New York*, 462–463.

196 Callender, *British Honour and Humanity*, 13, 40–41, 48–49.

197 Although the society was driven underground after November, 1794, it is my conviction that the group still carried out political functions.

prominent lawyer who had been a Tory during the American Revolution, over George Latimer, a popular merchant.[198] By the slim margin of seventy votes, only twelve more than he had received in 1794, Swanwick was re-elected.[199] Tilghman's good showing can be attributed to the great numbers of Quakers who, hating Swanwick for his support of public education and the theater and his refusal to support Jay's Treaty, had come out to support a fellow conservative.[200] According to Beckley, the dual election of "merchant-Republicans" Swanwick and Blair McClenachan "over the united and combined force of the British and Aristocrats" was achieved in Philadelphia "against the most violent exertion ever made in this city."[201] Benjamin Rush later observed that it was the old Tories' "preference for one of themselves that threw Swanwick into Congress."[202] Indeed, Rush seems to suggest that because the High-Federalists were able to nominate Tilghman over Latimer, Swanwick became as much the candidate of the "honest Federalists" as he was of the Democratic-Republicans.

VI

During the second session of the Fourth Congress (December 5, 1796, to March 3, 1797) and the first session of the Fifth Congress (May 15, 1797, to July 10, 1797) Swanwick frequently found himself at odds with his Republican colleagues representing rural districts.[203] Although he had fought under the Republican Party standard during the Jay Treaty controversy, Swanwick's foreign policy views

198 Carey, *A Pill to Porcupine*, 72.

199 *Aurora*, Oct. 13; *Philadelphia Gazette*, Oct. 12, 1796.

200 It was written that Swanwick's re-election was brought about "in spite of the Quakers." Carey, *He Wou'd Be A Poet*, 25. One Quakerite recorded "Swanwick instead of Tilghman, McClanigan [*sic*] instead of Waln." Henry D. Biddle (ed.), *Extracts from the Journal of Elizabeth Drinker* . . . (Philadelphia, 1889), 292.

201 Beckley to Madison, Oct. 15, 1796, Madison Papers, NYPL.

202 Rush to John Adams, Aug. 14, 1805, Butterfield, *Rush Letters*, II, 900–901. John Adams believed that Thomas McKean was the master political operative behind the scenes. Adams to Rush, Mar. 14, 1809, John A. Schutz and Douglass Adair (eds.), *The Spur of Fame; Dialogues of John Adams and Benjamin Rush, 1805–1813* (San Marino, 1966), 135. Cobbett, like Rush, believed Swanwick owed his nomination "to the indiscretion of the Federal party" in choosing Tilghman who labored "under the imputation of having been a tory." Cobbett, "A Letter to Swanwick," 93.

203 The first session met from December, 1796, to March, 1797. On Swanwick's voting record, see Manning Dauer, *The Adams Federalists* (Baltimore, 1953), Appendix III, 298, 295.

differed greatly from those of Madison and Gallatin.[204] Swanwick was a realist in foreign affairs and his first policy was one of preparedness, though not blind nationalism. He was not under any illusion that the country could rely solely on its geographic separation from Europe to preserve the peace. While Federalists after the election of 1796 talked of prospects for economic prosperity, boasted of the country's advantages over troubled Europe, and made warlike cries against France, Swanwick pondered the needs of a nation on the threshold of becoming a commercialized society.[205]

Swanwick, painfully aware of the new nation's weakness in a world at war, avidly supported the requests made by Presidents George Washington and John Adams to construct a navy. He wanted to make the United States "a great maritime power," as he phrased it, and with a certain degree of accuracy he predicted that she would be a naval power equal to any nation by at least 1945.[206] He accepted, as did many Federalists, two doctrines: first, that nations who are masters of the sea are also masters of the land and, second, that the commerce and harbors of the United States could be made secure only through the establishment of a naval force. He opposed, therefore, embargoes because they were a remedy worse than the disease.[207] As one of the principal supporters in the House to build six frigates as allowed in the Naval Act of 1794, instead of the amended Senate bill recommending three frigates, Swanwick broke with the generally antinavy Republicans.[208] He argued that six ships were not only essential to maintain the nation's security, but also that it was preferable to spend the money to support the domestic shipbuilding industry than to pay tribute to Algiers. Not

204 On Madison's views, see Combs, *Jay's Treaty*, ch. 5; on Gallatin, see James A. Boxall, "Albert Gallatin and American Foreign Policy: A Study in Thought and Action" (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1967), ch. 2; on Jefferson, see Lawrence S. Kaplan, *Jefferson and France, An Essay on Politics and Political Ideas* (New Haven, 1967), chs. 3–4.

205 *Annals of Congress*, VI, especially 1620–1622, 1629–1630.

206 For Washington's Eighth Annual Address and Adams' Special Session message, see James D. Richardson (ed.), *A Compilation of Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (Washington, D. C., 1897–1927), I, 193, 226–228. The quoted words are Swanwick's. *Annals of Congress*, VII, 381.

207 *Ibid.*, V, 869–872, 880–882, 886–887, 890–891, 893, 1069; VI, 1630, 1929; VII, 113, 381.

208 *Ibid.*, VI, 1982. For a contrast, see Alexander S. Balinky, "Albert Gallatin, Naval Foe," *PMHB*, LXXXII (1958), 293–304. Dice R. Anderson, *William Branch Giles* (Menasha, 1914), 54–66; *Aurora*, Aug. 29, 1798.

a cent should be spent, he declared, to purchase ships abroad.[209] Swanwick eventually came to support the establishment of a separate army and navy, each with an academy, as the only way to avoid waste and extravagance in naval affairs.[210] He did not, however, agree to the Adams Administration's request to arm merchant ships or to its plan to permit naval ships to be used for convoying.[211] Marshall Smelser, an authority on early naval history, has correctly credited Swanwick with being one of the principal spokesmen for the establishment of a United States Navy.[212]

Swanwick's views on political economy also differed markedly from those of his agrarian counterparts. The "merchant-Republican" naturally desired to see the government encourage commercial and industrial development and to liberate the enterprising economic classes from the heavy burden of taxation. For these reasons Swanwick advocated a direct tax on land and opposed increases of indirect taxes, such as imposts and excises. Indirect taxes on commerce and manufacturers, he reasoned, were not dependable forms of revenue because they were too often influenced by war and dependent upon foreign goodwill. He regarded excise taxes as productive only of discontent, and usually the source of insufficient revenues. At the same time, too high a tax on commerce usually led to smuggling.[213] In the Fifth Congress Swanwick consistently opposed internal taxes such as sugar taxes, salt duties, poll taxes and the proposed limitation of drawbacks on re-exports. Finally, he voted against measures designed to support the removal of the capital from Philadelphia to the Potomac.[214]

Swanwick considered the establishment of a permanent system of revenue the most important question to have come before the

209 *Annals of Congress*, V, 869–870; Marshall Smelser, *The Congress Founds The Navy, 1787–1798* (South Bend, 1959), 112–113.

210 *Annals of Congress*, VII, 371–372, 381.

211 *Ibid.*, VII, 253, 255–256, 258, 273–274, 286, 287–289, 353, 372, 374.

212 Smelser, *Congress Founds The Navy*, 203, also, 79–80, 88, 97, 108–113, 116, 150.

213 *Annals of Congress*, VII, 385; VI, 1852–1854, 1858. For a contrast, see Alexander S. Balinky, *Albert Gallatin, Fiscal Theories and Policies* (New Brunswick, 1958), especially ch. 9. William D. Grampp, "A Reexamination of Jeffersonian Economics," *Southern Economic Journal*, XII (1946), 263–282; Joseph Dorfman, "The Economic Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson," *Political Science Quarterly*, LV (1940), 98–121.

214 *Annals of Congress*, VI, 1888, 2260–2262; VII, 422–425, 430; *Porcupine's Gazette*, July 5, 1797.

House. The question involved, as he saw it, not only the fixing of the principle of a direct tax, but also the commitment of the agricultural interest to bear its share in the expenses of government.[215] All treaties the nation will negotiate, the urban Republican declared, would be worthless, "until the yeomanry of the country should join in the support of our common interest."[216] In arguing that the yeomanry did not pay their proportion of the taxes, Swanwick stated that commerce brought $7,000,000 annually into the treasury, while the more prosperous agricultural interest evaded all land taxes and even denied commerce the support of a navy.[217] On this matter Swanwick repeatedly stressed two key points: first, that the commercial and the agricultural interests were equal and had to join hands, somehow, in the interests of the Union; and second, that the House ought to be more mindful of economy and be more willing to shoulder the responsibility of raising revenues.[218]

Swanwick's views on raising money clearly had a democratic bent. He argued that direct taxes fell more equitably on the people than did taxes on consumable articles. Indirect taxes, he explained, always hit the large, poor families the hardest because they consumed more goods than did the rich, adding that there was a similar effect on those persons living on fixed incomes.[219] These democratic views probably explain why Swanwick supported the levying of a stamp duty, since it fell largely on lawyers, bankers, and insurance brokers.[220]

Swanwick's views on public debts, public borrowing, and the productive uses of national capital were similar to those of the agrarian Republicans.[221] He disapproved of permanent public debts because he felt that foreign creditors would have greater faith in a

215 *Annals of Congress*, VI, 1853–1855, 1889. This political tax battle is discussed by Henry C. Adams, "Taxation in the United States, 1789–1816," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in History and Political Science*, II, nos. 5, 6 (Baltimore, 1884), 50ff.

216 *Annals of Congress*, VI, 1854. Also, see the response of Williams in *ibid.*, VI, 1857. Taxing the farmers, Swanwick concluded, might have the beneficial effect of making them better citizens. *Ibid.*, VI, 1855.

217 *Ibid.*, VI, 1853–1854, 1889.

218 *Ibid.*, VII, 344–345.

219 *Ibid.*, VI, 1886–1888, 1927–1928; VII, 401.

220 *Ibid.*, VII, 388, 390–393, 397, 400, 404–407, 409–410, 413–414.

221 See sources cited in note 213.

country that not only funded its debt but paid its principal as well. Debt reduction, for Swanwick, was also desirable because the interest on debt, mostly paid to foreigners, swallowed up the country's revenues.[222] Failure to reduce debt not only had a desultory effect on trade but also prevented the government from putting revenues into more productive uses, such as naval armaments, harbor improvements, and bounties and drawbacks. "A Debt of eighty millions called loudly for extinction," cried Swanwick.[223] In sum, Congressman John Swanwick's program of an American mercantilism was probably too comprehensive as well as too premature politically for it to receive a fair hearing.

VII

Swanwick's fall from fame and fortune was as swift as his rise. He was reported to have said during the debates over Jay's Treaty that "he would rather sacrifice his whole fortune than abandon his principles."[224] In a sense, this sacrifice was made, for, during the economic recession of 1796 and 1797 that rocked Philadelphia, Swanwick's mercantile firm was among the 150 houses that experienced either economic ruin or were financially crippled.[225] His financial troubles, which began around August, 1795, were further aggravated when large amounts of his bills of credit were either locked up or discredited in European entrepôts. Hence, Swanwick's capital did not make its usual transfer to London to maintain his credit there. He turned to his wealthy associates for help, but received very little. Thomas Willing and John Nixon, Presidents of the Bank of the United States and the Bank of North America respectively, evidently not only refused to grant him sufficient discounts to cover his debts but offered him the most usurious loans. Robert Morris and John Nicholson, who owed Swanwick nearly $100,000 on a

222 For an explanation of how foreign loans undermine the national capital, see Balinky, *Gallatin*, 52–67.

223 *Annals of Congress*, V, 851–854; VI, 1885–1886; VII, 311.

224 "An Election Anecdote," *Aurora*, Oct. 6, 1796.

225 See Elizabeth Meredith to David Meredith, Apr. 23, 1797; Hawthorn & Kerr to John & Jeremiah Naylor & Co., Nov. 7, 1796, Hawthorn & Kerr Letter Book, both in Meredith Papers, HSP; Theodore Sedgwick to Ephraim Williams, Dec. 12, 1796, Sedgwick Papers, III MHS; Callender, *Amer. Annual Register*, 275ff; Rasmusson, "Capital on the Delaware," 185–186. No detailed study of this important panic and recession exists.

mortgage debt for lands in Westmoreland County, had taken refuge by this time.[226] Unlike the "splendid bankrupts," however, Swanwick did not seek asylum from the importunities of his creditors but proceeded to discharge his obligations.

On September 22, 1797, Swanwick issued a public circular announcing his intent to assign his entire property to three trustees, who would settle his accounts with the Customs House and his creditors. In this statement he also explained in detail why his bills of credit had not been regularly honored in London. Although he blamed his economic difficulties in general on the war's distressing impact on the mercantile situation in Europe, Swanwick also clearly suggested that the secret rejection of his bills of exchange on the Baring Brothers, together with the rejection of his orders of insurance in excess of £2,400 sterling, amounted to no less than a contractual betrayal. Several of his ships bound to Europe from the West Indies, after being seized by belligerent powers, became complete losses because their cargoes were uninsured.[227]

As a consequence of French and British depredations on the high seas and other "fortuitous circumstances," Swanwick's economic troubles had become insurmountable. And when it became clear that he could no longer save himself with expedient measures he issued the circular. To his credit, Swanwick showed no bias or animosity toward any one person or party when he well might have. According to one contemporary, "all the engines of faction were set at work [*following the election of 1796*] to complete his [*Swanwick's*] ruin."[228] Another observer explained that Swanwick's bills of credit were not accepted because he had earned the reputation in London of being a "violent Democratte." Sixty years later, Abraham Ritter suggested that Swanwick's politics "being adverse to Merchandising, drew heavily upon his prosperity, which perhaps with other evils, suppressed a successful issue to his labors."[229]

226 Swanwick, *Circular, passim; Porcupine's Gazette*, Nov. 23, 1797; Swanwick to the Bank of the United States, Nov. 11, 1796, Etting Coll., HSP. On Morris and Nicholson, see Young, *Morris*, ch. 14; Sumner, *Morris*, 280–292.

227 Swanwick, *Circular*, 1–5; Callender, *Amer. Annual Register*, 271–273.

228 *Ibid.*, 273. Callender also wrote: "Incendiary letters against Mr. Swanwick's credit were written from this city [*Philadelphia*] to London." *Ibid.*, 274.

229 Paul Bentalou to Stephen Girard, Dec. 14, 1795, Stephen Girard Papers, Series III, Reel 123, American Philosophical Society; Ritter, *Philadelphia's Merchants*, 48.

During the fall of 1797 the bankrupt and deeply depressed Swanwick took refuge at his villa in Frankford while trying to escape the scourge of yellow fever in Philadelphia.[230] There he compiled, under the constant ridicule of Cobbett, a little volume of poems, entitled *Poems on Several Occasions*. He commuted by chaise from his estate to the city to attend the second session of the Fifth Congress. During the first few weeks he voted only three times and made three short speeches. In one speech he defended the Quakers' right to petition Congress regarding the slave trade, and in the other two he opposed giving President John Adams discretionary power either to postpone meetings of Congress or to regulate the uses of foreign corn.[231] It was not long before Swanwick became seriously ill and was forced to absent himself from the legislative session, although he did not resign his seat in Congress.[232]

Meanwhile, Swanwick still faced the bitterness of having to liquidate his estate for his creditors. In early January, 1798, his library of 1,300 volumes, various fine pieces of imported furniture, and other personal effects were sold at auction. An observor of this scene, remarked that Swanwick would probably die of a "broken heart."[233] Perhaps Swanwick's weakened physical and mental condition was an indirect cause of his death. After a "lingering illness" he died on the night of July 31, 1798, one of the first victims of the yellow fever.[234] His fate, indeed, was a bit ironic because during the "Great Plague" of 1793 he had personally remained in the city supplying expensive wine from his cellars to help the sick, and had even provided a house to be used as a children's mortuary.[235] Now, he was dead at the age of thirty-nine.

Philadelphia had always observed the passing of her favorite sons with obsequies commensurate with their status and achievements.

230 *Porcupine's Gazette*, Dec. 14, 1797. Also, see *ibid.*, Sept. 23, 26, Oct. 21, 26, 30, Nov. 10, 11, 17, 1797.

231 The second session met from Nov. 13, 1797, to July 16, 1798. *Annals of Congress*, VII, 659, 737–738, 749–750.

232 There is no record of Swanwick having attended Congress after Dec. 24, 1797.

233 H. G. Otis to Mrs. Otis, Jan. 7, 1798, Harrison Gray Otis Papers, MHS; *Porcupine's Gazette*, Jan. 6, 8, 1798.

234 *Aurora*, Aug. 2, 1798; Parsons, *Hiltzheimer Diary*, 258; Biddle, *Drinker's Journal*, 325.

235 Callender, *British Honour and Humanity*, 47; J. H. Powell, *Bring Out Your Dead: The Great Plague of Yellow Fever in Philadelphia in 1793* (Philadelphia, 1949), 195–196.

Congressman Swanwick's funeral was such an occasion. The pall was borne suitably enough by members of the hierarchy of the Democratic-Republican Party, including Thomas McKean, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Judge James Smith, A. J. Dallas, Secretary of the Commonwealth, John Bayard Smith, Comptroller General, John Beckley, the ubiquitous national party manager, and David Jackson. The *Aurora* reported that Swanwick's interment at St. Peter's Episcopal Church was attended by large numbers of the clergy and by "an immense concourse of mourning fellow citizens. Few men have lived," Bache added, "more esteemed and died more sincerely regretted." James Carey, editor of the *United States Recorder*, wrote a 350-word political tribute to honor Swanwick in which he stated that the "merchant-Republican" died "a victim of political persecution, a model of unshaken patriotism, and a martyr in the cause of civil liberty."[236]

Editor Bache obviously saw Swanwick's role in history in a sharper light than have the eyes of posterity. In fact, the historians of the Federal Period have virtually forgotten Philadelphia's first Republican congressman. What estimate, one might properly ask, will history place upon the enigmatic John Swanwick? Nineteenth-century Whig historian Richard Hildreth claimed that Swanwick was "a self-conceited fop, puffed up with sudden wealth."[237] In more recent studies by Harry M. Tinkcom and Ethel E. Rasmusson the "merchant-poet" is pictured as a self-interested politician and a man whose "ambition for social eminence did not mesh with his political ideals."[238] No one will deny that Swanwick was a man who hungered after status, a man who was acutely aware of his own humble origins and who thus sought compensation in personal achievements and popular recognition, first in the commercial world and then in the political arena. Yet, one cannot help but think that in his search for imperial horizons to bury the past, Swanwick,

236 *Aurora*, Aug. 3, Aug. 10; *Gazette of the United States*, Aug. 1, 3, 8, 1798. Editor John Fenno claimed that Swanwick had died a "Federalist." *Ibid.*, Aug. 3, 1798; *United States Recorder*, Aug. 2, 1798.

237 Richard Hildreth, *The History of the United States* (1st ser., New York, 1853–1882), IV, 592.

238 Tinkcom, *Republicans and Federalists*, 85, 141–142; Rasmusson, "Capital on the Delaware," 117. These two writers no doubt benefitted from Fay's, *Two Franklins*.

although he was neither a crusader for the "embattled farmers" nor a tribune of the city's lower orders, contributed in no small way to the triumph of Jeffersonian Democracy. Future historians, it may safely be said, will doubtless be less interested in Swanwick than in what he personified, because his political career exposes the neglected concepts of "merchant-Republicanism" (urban Jeffersonianism, if you will) and late eighteenth-century liberalism as they relate to the "first party system."

This study of Swanwick has, I believe, added to our understanding of the Democratic-Republican movement in Philadelphia in three important respects. First, the urban Republicans recruited support not only among persons of little or no property but also attracted newer entrepreneurial groups that contributed both ideas and leadership. Second, the "merchant-Republicans" deserted Federalism over policy matters, demanding greater protection of trade from foreign shippers, freer banking facilities, cheaper marine insurance, and a foreign policy that was immune from foreign domination and was directed at establishing national pride. On a related matter, it also cannot be said that the urban Republicans attacked "capitalism" or commerce, only its special forms which prevented the expansion and diversification of the economy. Third, the urban Republicans frequently found themselves at the national level at odds with their agrarian counterparts. Jefferson's ideas, which are usually taken as the sole principles of the Republican Party, represented in fact only one variety of Republicanism. Swanwick was not a soothsayer, yet the commercial society he envisioned emerged as a fact of American development and forced even Jefferson to reshape his thinking.

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