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Lower Chesapeake Maritime Enterprise: 1781-1812

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LOWER CHESAPEAKE MARITIME ENTERPRISE: 1781-1812

by

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ABSTRACT

LOWER CHESAPEAKE MARITIME ENTERPRISE: 1781-1812.

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Old Dominion University, 1996
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The American Revolutionary War, officially concluded by the Treaty of Paris of 1783, forever changed American maritime enterprise. An examination of the response of Lower Chesapeake merchants to elimination of the British monopoly on American seagoing commerce reveals that Virginia shipping activity recovered quickly after the conflict, then expanded and prospered until the War of 1812. In addition to propelling the Commonwealth's post-war economic resurgence, Virginia's prosperous foreign trading interests influenced political decisions on Constitutional ratification, establishment of Confederation period and early national commercial policies, and diplomatic initiatives to strengthen American overseas exchange.

Principal sources include customs records of the Commonwealth found in the Library of Virginia Archives, and documents of the Colonial Office which are in the Colonial Williamsburg Research Library.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1784 Benjamin Franklin thought the general state of economic affairs appeared "less gloomy than has been imagined." Tench Coxe, another Philadelphian writing in 1794, recalled that "affairs had fallen into a very disagreeable condition by the year 1786."¹ In a 1785 petition to the Virginia General Assembly, Norfolk businessmen, among others, lamented that merchants were compelled to "lay their vessels by the walls."² These differing views on the economic history of the United States in the first years after the Revolution continue to persist among today's scholars. For too long, historians avoided

¹Benjamin Franklin, *The Internal State of America; Being a true Description of the Interest and Policy of that Vast Continent*, in John Bigelow, ed., *The Works of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), X, 394-400; Tench Coxe, *A View of the United States in a series of papers...* (Philadelphia, 1794), 3, quoted in Gordon C. Bjork, "The Weaning of the American Economy: Independence, Market Changes, and Economic Development," *The Journal of Economic History* 24 (December 1964): 541.

²Virginia Legislative Petitions, Borough of Norfolk, 1776-1789, MSS, Library of Virginia Archives, Richmond, Virginia quoted in Peter C. Stewart, "Elizabeth River Commerce During The Revolutionary Era," in *Virginia in the American Revolution: A Collection Of Essays*, eds. Richard A. Rutyna and Peter C. Stewart (Norfolk, VA: Old Dominion University, 1977), 64.

analyzing quantitative evidence and concentrated on contemporary writings of political leaders, travelers' accounts, records of public bodies, and assumptions when interpreting the period. This is especially true of early commentators on the economic environment of the new nation, particularly its external commercial enterprises. This essay paints a more complete picture of post-Revolutionary overseas commerce by adding to the palate an examination of available empirical data obtained primarily from customs records.

Several questions are asked in evaluating this data to bring a clearer image to the historical sketch. What impact did American exclusion from the British mercantile system have on the Lower Chesapeake's overseas trade in the post-war decades? Were Virginia merchants and ports prosperous or in a depressed state? Did the type and volume of Confederation and early national commodity exports from the Commonwealth exceed the levels of colonial times or were shipments reduced? Finally, how were trading patterns of Lower Bay merchants altered by Britain's 1783 prohibition of American shipping from her West Indian harbors? This paper will answer these questions by comparing and evaluating data obtained from colonial and Confederation-era import and export records. Additionally, this essay will incorporate and synthesize the work of scholars writing on national and regional commercial maritime enterprise during the years between the battle of Yorktown and the War of 1812. While

this examination focuses on Virginia trade, it adds to the national portrait emerging from inclusion of other regional studies on post-Revolution foreign commerce.

Crown officials maintained colonial customs records, but with the outbreak of hostilities in 1775, both the American and British governments embargoed all direct trade between the revolting colonies and Great Britain and her West Indian islands. It was not until October 1776 that the Virginia legislature made provisions for appointing naval officers to register and collect customs duties on inbound and outbound vessels and their cargo. Only Virginia among the former colonies collected duties during the war years. Unfortunately, most Virginia naval officer records for the 1776-1779 period do not survive, consequently there are no extant state or national customs documents for the early years of the conflict. Virginia records for 1780-1789 are incomplete, but quite useful. Customs agents appointed by the new national government replaced state officials in 1789 and 1790, and from then on documentation is more consistently available, although still lacking in much detail. For these reasons, there is little statistical evidence with which to construct a complete and accurate model of foreign exchange during the 1775-1790 period. All historians agree, however, that the years between 1793 and the War of 1812 were, with minor exceptions, boom years for American commercial enterprise.

There is limited scholarship discussing general

economic conditions, commodity exports, trading patterns, vessel ownership, and staple prices nationally or in the Lower Chesapeake during the three decades following the Revolution. But in the last half century especially, some historians have examined customs and economic data in efforts to discover more accurately the true nature of the country's post-war prosperity. This has not been an easy task since much of the period's documentation, if it ever existed, has been lost. The remaining evidence is fragmentary at best. This dearth of statistical information forces current scholars to make many assumptions when interpreting the data that is available and, not surprisingly, they have not reached consensus.

Scholarship on the health of the economy during the Confederation years falls into three broad categories. Historians of the first school see a severely-depressed economy after the war that did not recover until the early 1790s during the wars of the French Revolution between France and Great Britain. Another group argues that the Confederation years were booming times and that the economy quickly achieved colonial levels by expanding rapidly as the decade progressed. A third view expressed by many scholars is that there was an immediate post-war depression, but that its severity and length varied by region. These historians argue that by the late 1780s a general recovery had returned American maritime commerce to at least pre-war levels. Most scholars writing on the Chesapeake see a recovering economy

that adjusted well to post-war conditions. Evidence presented in this study corroborates the findings of Chesapeake historians and suggests they may be too conservative in their evaluation of the strength of the region's post-Revolutionary maritime commerce.

Late-nineteenth-century historian John Fiske is credited with identifying the immediate post-Revolution years as America's "critical period." In his 1888 book, *The Critical Period Of American History, 1783-1789*, Fiske described the era as one of financial distress, economic chaos, inept state governments, and popular unrest. He noted that the carrying trade revived soon after the war, but that it took years to return to prosperity.³ Writing fifty years later, William B. Hesseltine concurred with Fiske's assessment of the Confederation years as one of economic depression. In his 1943 work *The South in American History*, Hesseltine saw the era's business as stagnant, with old markets closed, and new markets yet to be found. He attributed much of this misery to actions of the separate states in enacting tariffs and regulating commerce.⁴ Oliver M. Dickerson, in *The Navigation Acts and the American Revolution* first published in 1951, concluded that the British trade laws made the colonies prosperous and that

³John Fiske, *The Critical Period Of American History, 1783-1789* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1888), 55, 104-5, 134-47, 162-65.

⁴William B. Hesseltine, *The South in American History* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1943), 127.

depression naturally followed when independence excluded the states from the benefits of Empire. According to Dickerson, some staples such as rice and indigo never recovered their markets, and he contended that it took decades for tobacco interests to reestablish world-wide trade.⁵

Curtis P. Nettels and Douglas C. North reach similar conclusions in their more narrowly focused examinations of the country's exports. A nation with a growing export economy increases its wealth over time and raises the living standards of its citizens. A shrinking overseas exchange leads to stagnation or depression. Published in 1962, *The Emergence Of A National Economy, 1775-1815* by Curtis P. Nettels is considered one of the standard works on the period, and his evidence suggests that American exports declined sharply during the Confederation period. Citing Virginia's post-war decreased tobacco production, he notes that Britain imported an average of forty percent fewer pounds of the leaf than during the six years preceding the war. For Nettels, the large drop in exports to Britain was the most significant event in immediate post-war American commerce. Although seeing American trade to the British West Indies suffering severe losses after the Revolution due to restrictions, he acknowledges that the exact effects are

⁵Oliver M. Dickerson, *The Navigation Acts and the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1951; 2d. reprint ed., New York: Octagon Books, 1978), 52, 291-92 (page references are to second reprint edition).

unknown as American merchants probably found means to avoid British restraints.⁶ North in his 1961 monograph, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860*, also observes a stagnant foreign demand for American tobacco, rice, indigo, and breadstuffs during the Confederation years. In particular, his evaluation of breadstuff exports reveals a lack of sustained expansion from 1770 to 1790.⁷

Another indicator of good or poor commercial health is the percentage of nationally-owned vessels calling on a country's ports, since greater wealth will flow to nations that transport commodities as well as produce them. Donald R. Adams, Jr., notes that the shift from foreign to domestic carriers in American overseas trade did not begin until 1789. In his 1980 article, "American Neutrality and Prosperity, 1793-1808: A Reconsideration," Adams sees the proportion of American-built vessels engaged in North American trade actually declining during the Confederation period.⁸

Other studies paint a strikingly different picture of the post-war economy than those of Fiske and his supporters.

⁶Curtis P. Nettels, *The Emergence Of A National Economy, 1775-1815* (White Plains, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1962), 49, 50, 55.

⁷Douglas C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1961), 19.

⁸Donald R. Adams, Jr., "American Neutrality and Prosperity, 1793-1808: A Reconsideration," *The Journal of Economic History* 40 (December 1980): 723, 726.

For many historians the 1780s were boom years for American maritime commerce. Robert A. East in his 1938 monograph, *Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era*, suggests that although there was a general post-war commercial depression, many merchants prospered during these years of economic consolidation. For Virginia, he cites the rebuilding of Norfolk and expansion of Alexandria businesses as evidence of prosperity. Claiming that the West Indian trade was not as depressed as once thought, he finds exports strong and staple prices high until late 1785. East does concede, however, that imports suffered after the immediate post-war boom. He sees depression conditions encouraging a general revival of foreign commerce beginning in 1786.⁹

John Alden also sees the era as one of Southern prosperity in his 1957 book, *The South in the Revolution, 1763-1789*. Noting that the years between the departure of the British and Washington's inauguration were not trouble-free, Alden nonetheless sees the era as one of economic progress in the Southern states. He contends the region's recovery was so rapid that by 1789 it seemed likely the South would surpass the rest of the country in wealth, and maintains that southern staple exports nearly reached the

⁹Robert Abraham East, *Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1969), 239-51 (page references are to reprint edition).

levels of the prosperous pre-war years.¹⁰

Among the scholars that observe a rapid expansion of both the national and southern economy after the war is noted Confederation era historian Merrill Jensen. In his 1958 book, *The New Nation: A History of the United States During the Confederation, 1781-1789*, he argues that increased tobacco and grain production, along with development of new exports, propelled the Chesapeake to a vibrant recovery. Jensen credits freedom from British shackles, implementation of state and federal navigation acts, and the enterprise of American merchants as the driving forces of a burgeoning trade. While acknowledging that there were regions affected by commercial depression in the mid-1780s, he dismisses as myth the contention that commerce was stagnant during the period. For Jensen, the evidence indicates that merchants quickly regained their old commerce and soon extended it dramatically beyond what any could have imagined in 1775.¹¹

In a 1964 essay, "The Weaning of the American Economy: Independence, Market Changes, and Economic Development," Gordon C. Bjork supports the arguments of East, Alden, and

¹⁰John Richard Alden, *The South in the Revolution, 1763-1789* (Pineville, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), 367-69.

¹¹Merrill Jensen, *The New Nation: A History of the United States During the Confederation, 1781-1789* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), 217-18.

Jensen. He portrays the immediate post-war years as a time of real prosperity for Virginia and the nation due to high tobacco prices and consistently high exports. Bjork holds that the rapid expansion of trade with the French Caribbean colonies and indirect trade through the Dutch colony of St. Eustatia more than offset any deterioration of American trade with the British West Indies. In disagreeing with Fiske and other "critical period" historians who see economic chaos and depression, he detects a modest increase in overall American exports, although not in proportion to the rapid increase of the new nation's population.¹²

Concentrating solely on tobacco exports as a measure of prosperity is Jacob M. Price's 1973 monograph, *France and the Chesapeake: A History of the French Tobacco Monopoly, 1674-1791, and of Its Relationship to the British and American Tobacco Trades*, Volume 2. Price challenges Nettels' contention of a national post-war depression in tobacco exports since he estimates that by 1786 overseas shipments of the American leaf had recovered to pre-Revolutionary levels and remained high until 1793. In looking at commerce on the state level, he asserts that Virginia experienced almost total recovery in tobacco exports when compared with pre-war levels.¹³

¹²Bjork, "Weaning of the Economy," 544, 553, 555, 558, 560.

¹³Jacob M. Price, *France and the Chesapeake: A History of the French Tobacco Monopoly, 1674-1791, and of Its Relationship to the British and American Tobacco Trades*,

A number of historians suggest economic conditions of the time were neither severely depressed nor overwhelmingly prosperous, but rather demonstrated modest growth. Taking issue with Jensen, Bjork, and others, James F. Shepherd and Gary M. Walton initially dispute their findings and conclusions. In a 1976 essay, "Economic Change after the American Revolution: Pre- and Post-War Comparisons of Maritime Shipping and Trade," the authors see little improvement in American trade during 1784-1792, and postulate that in the 1790-1792 period trade conditions were actually worsening. In addition, they claim that on a per capita basis the Upper South, Virginia in particular, realized a sharp drop in the value of exports in the early 1790s. With respect to American-owned tonnage, Shepherd and Walton see significant increases in the northern regions, but only modest advances in the Upper South (Maryland and Virginia).¹⁴

In a subsequent 1979 book, *The economic rise of early America*, Shepherd and Walton temper their previous findings somewhat in concluding that tobacco production may have equalled or exceeded pre-war levels by the mid-1780s. And, they continue, Virginia actually experienced a modest

Volume 2 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973), 729, 731.

¹⁴James F. Shepherd and Gary M. Walton, "Economic Change after the American Revolution: Pre- and Post-War Comparisons of Maritime Shipping and Trade," *Explorations in Economic History* 13, no. 4, (October 1976): 404, 413, 415-19.

recovery during the Confederation years as a result of higher prices coupled with increased output.¹⁵

Writing more recently, John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard also take a balanced position in the depression-prosperity controversy in their 1985 book, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789*, maintaining that an economic contraction lasted from 1782 to 1789. However, they acknowledge the questionable nature of their findings and note that other evidence suggests a less grim picture. By the end of the decade, though, the authors determine that the levels of commodity exports were at least as high, and probably higher, than before the Revolution.¹⁶

While the findings of historians examining national and regional conditions fall into three schools, scholars that have probed conditions in the Chesapeake in detail for the most part find a recovering and expanding commerce during the Confederation years. Geoffrey Gilbert in a 1977 article, "The Role of Breadstuffs in American Trade, 1770-1790," claims that far too little is known about commerce during the period to conclude that grain and meat exports were depressed. He cites the late colonial movement from tobacco to grain production in the Chesapeake, contending

¹⁵Gary M. Walton and James F. Shepherd, *The economic rise of early America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 192.

¹⁶John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 369, 371.

that Virginia nearly quadrupled annual flour exports between 1768-1772 and 1792. Despite British and French post-war navigation restrictions, American flour shipments expanded steadily to the Caribbean colonies of these European powers. According to Gilbert, breadstuff exports by the early 1790s were so successful that they were the cornerstone of United States foreign commerce.¹⁷

Data presented in W. A. Low's 1951 essay, "The Farmer In Post-Revolutionary Virginia, 1783-1789," strongly support Gilbert's thesis. In analyzing market prices, which in a free economy usually follow demand, Low examines wheat and corn sales at warehouses on the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers. He discovers wheat prices somewhat higher and corn prices significantly higher in 1783-1789 when compared with pre-war averages. However, Low does note a general downward trend in farm commodity prices between 1785-1787.¹⁸

In a 1964 article, "Virginia's 'Critical Period,'" Alan Schaffer argues that in the Old Dominion there is evidence both to support and dismiss the "critical period" view of Fiske and others. He determines that the economy of the state rose rapidly to prosperity immediately after the victory at Yorktown as British vessels descended on Virginia rivers to load tobacco warehoused during the war years. He

¹⁷Geoffrey Gilbert, "The Role of Breadstuffs in American Trade, 1770-1790," *Explorations in Economic History* 14, no. 4, (October 1977): 380-87.

¹⁸W. A. Low, "The Farmer In Post-Revolutionary Virginia, 1783-1789," *Agricultural History* 25 (1951): 127.

cites a more than six-fold increase in annual exports of the staple from 1783 until the fall of 1785 compared with wartime levels. Schaffer concludes that the depression set in only when tobacco prices fell in late 1785 as a result of market manipulation by Philadelphia merchant and Revolutionary War financier Robert Morris. To Schaffer, the very existence of the depression in Virginia contradicts the contentions of anti-"critical period" scholars.¹⁹

Only one scholar has surveyed in detail the maritime activity of an individual Lower Chesapeake port during the Confederation era. Examining Norfolk in his 1977 essay, "Elizabeth River Commerce During the Revolutionary Era," Peter C. Stewart maintains that although non-quantitative evidence paints a bleak picture of maritime activity, commerce data reveal otherwise. He holds that Norfolk's mainstay, the West Indian trade, was about seventy-five percent of pre-war levels. Over fifty percent of that cargo was carried in Virginia-registered vessels, also an increase over earlier years. His evidence also indicates a healthy trade with Great Britain and the Continent. Stewart's findings for the port of Norfolk support Schaffer's view that an economic downturn occurred in 1787 and lasted for several years. However, he attributes the cause to stricter British enforcement of restrictions on American-British West

¹⁹Alan Schaffer, "Virginia's 'Critical Period,'" in *The Old Dominion: Essays For Thomas Perkins Abernethy*, ed. Darrett B. Rutman (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1964), 154, 160, 163-65, 168.

Indian trade rather than a decline in tobacco prices and shipments. In general, Stewart sees Norfolk's post-war maritime commerce little changed from colonial years.²⁰

As the works discussed in this review clearly indicate, there is much disagreement among scholars as to the general state of the economy, and specifically maritime commerce, during the Confederation years. Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century historians John Fiske and William Hesselstine see this "critical period" as one of economic depression and commercial stagnation. Some more recent scholars concur with their predecessors, particularly Oliver Dickerson, Douglas North, Donald Adams and Curtis Nettels. In sharp contrast with those finding only depression, Merrill Jensen, John Alden, Robert East, Jacob Price and Gordon Bjork see the years between 1781 and 1789 as ones of great economic opportunity and prosperity. Shepherd and Walton, and McCusker and Menard take a more balanced view of the period, contending there was a national economic depression, but note regional variations in length and severity. For the most part, regional scholars detect expanding commerce in the Chesapeake. Geoffrey Gilbert, W. A. Low, and Peter Stewart conclude that increasing commodity production and higher staple prices fostered accelerated shipping activity in Virginia ports. Alan Schaffer, however, discovers a mixed economy in the Old Dominion

²⁰Stewart, "Elizabeth River Commerce," 64-66, 71-72.

during the years under the Articles of Confederation.

A number of these scholars acknowledge the pitfalls of considering commercial activity for the period only on a national basis, since economic conditions varied greatly from region to region. McCusker and Menard maintain that the definitive economic history for the period is yet to be written, and they challenge historians to probe thoroughly regional and state commercial activity in an effort to develop a more accurate picture of the period's commerce. They hold that a national synthesis is not possible until the narrower studies have been written.²¹ This paper argues that in one of these regions, the Lower Chesapeake, elimination of the legal British monopoly on American foreign trade did not cause depression or stagnation, but rather termination of the cartel enabled Virginia merchants to extend commercial activity to non-British ports.

Although officially restricted, American trade with the British West Indies continued throughout the Confederation and Early National periods. Taken collectively, it appears that Virginia exports of domestic produce to Europe and the Caribbean quickly recovered from low Revolutionary levels, increased throughout the 1780s and early 1790s, and then rose dramatically after the conflict between the European powers began in 1793. With the exception of a few brief intervals, Lower Chesapeake

²¹McCusker and Menard, 367.

maritime enterprise remained strong and profitable during the 1793-1812 period.

Chapter three examines several aspects of Virginia's mercantile growth after independence and is a continuation of works begun by others on the Lower Chesapeake's post-Revolutionary maritime enterprise. To put this growth in context, the next chapter briefly reviews Virginia and early national navigation policies, as well as efforts by the United States to establish formal commercial ties with the era's most dominant maritime powers, particularly Great Britain. The nascent Commonwealth and national governments faced entrenched European navigation systems that forcefully resisted change. While American legislative and diplomatic efforts to bring about a more open Atlantic mercantile structure were modest, Virginia merchants pursued the goal with single-minded zeal.

CHAPTER II

NAVIGATION POLICIES AND DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES

Virginia statesmen faced the task of establishing commerce policies even before the Revolutionary War was officially concluded. The General Assembly established tariffs on commercial trade to pay war debts and to refill the Commonwealth's treasury. The legislature also imposed customs duties in an attempt to protect domestic shipping interests from foreign domination. The new national government addressed these same issues after adoption of the Constitution, while also endeavoring to advance American commercial interests with other countries. Most early American political leaders championed free trade, but disagreed on how to achieve it. James Madison proposed discriminating imposts on foreign goods, whereas Alexander Hamilton favored a single schedule tariff applied to imports from all countries. Seeking to quiet this partisan debate, President Washington sought a diplomatic solution. In the end, both fledgling governments were tentative and largely ineffectual in promoting a strong maritime enterprise, but for the most part they did little to interfere with its natural development and growth.

Virginia Trade Regulation: 1781-1789

Virginia's Revolutionary War leaders, realizing that the immediate recovery of the Commonwealth's economy depended on the profitable sale of accumulated tobacco crops, supported the inclusion of an article in the Yorktown surrender terms which stipulated that British merchants were allowed to exchange their wares for tobacco before leaving for England. Although wartime legislation was still in effect, soon after the surrender Tory factors, or merchants, began filtering back into Virginia in hopes of acquiring a portion of the large quantity of leaf that had escaped His Majesty's torch.

Governor Benjamin Harrison and many other patriots, however, initially opposed selling the staple to the enemy, and the Governor issued a proclamation in December 1782 designed to prevent the developing trade by calling for the arrest of all British subjects remaining in the state. These governmental restrictions on commerce with Loyalists were successful, but planters and American merchants, unable to find other buyers willing to purchase the hogsheads piled up in warehouses throughout the state, protested these policies. Exacerbating the condition, planters continued growing large quantities of tobacco despite the loss of thousands of their slaves who departed with the British.¹

Economic necessity and ever-increasing stocks finally

¹Schaffer, 155-56.

compelled the Commonwealth's House of Delegates to address the issue of tobacco sales to Tories during the 1783 spring legislative session. Led by Patrick Henry, proponents of easing the restrictions argued that long-suffering Virginians needed the relief which British tobacco purchases and imports would bring to the Commonwealth. Henry noted that Tories "are an enterprising, moneyed people, they will be serviceable in taking off the surplus produce of our lands.... Afraid of them!... Shall we, who have laid the proud British lion at our feet now be afraid of his whelps?"² George Mason thought that pent-up European demand would increase prices to such a level that Virginians might soon return to pre-war wealth. With the formal signing of the Peace Treaty early in 1783, opposition to renewing commercial ties with Britain diminished, and the legislature passed an act that repealed prior restraints and declared that British goods would be admitted to the Commonwealth, subject only to normal duties and restrictions.

Governor Harrison reversed his position and called on authorities to uphold the new law and to protect all returning English and Scottish factors. Virginia leaders had hoped that the conclusion of the Paris Treaty would finally bring peace to the Bay and encourage ships from many

²William Wirt Henry, *Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence and Speeches* (New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 1891), 2:192, quoted in Schaffer, 157.

countries to call at Virginia's rivers and ports to exchange European manufactured products and West Indian commodities for Chesapeake tobacco, yet this was not to be. Tory merchants quickly reestablished almost exclusive control of the Commonwealth's trade.³

Virginia's post-war commercial policies were initially an extension of colonial and wartime import and export tariffs. In the month following Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown, the Virginia legislature enacted a comprehensive tariff schedule designed to raise revenues to meet overwhelming war-related financial obligations and to serve as a permanent income source for the Commonwealth. The act imposed an ad valorem duty on all imported goods, provided for specific tariffs on the enumerated items of alcohol, sugar, and coffee, and levied a tonnage duty on all ships entering Virginia waters. In May 1783 the General Assembly expanded the enumerated list to include additional commodities, but reduced duties on all tobacco exports. Virginia increased duties and expanded its enumerated list in 1784, 1786, and 1788 in an effort to raise additional revenue. In 1786 the legislature exempted from duties some domestic products, and by 1788 most goods produced in the various states entered Virginia duty free.⁴

³Ibid., 156-58.

⁴William Frank Zornow, "The Tariff Policies Of Virginia, 1775-1789," *The Virginia Magazine Of History And Biography* 62, no. 3 (July 1954): 308-13.

Of particular importance to Virginia merchants was the extensive and lucrative overseas trade to Europe and the West Indies. Commonwealth leaders and merchants eagerly anticipated renewed trade with Britain and her West Indian colonies after the lifting of the wartime embargo on British imports and shipping enterprises. But when American Commissioners failed to secure a commercial treaty with Great Britain, the Crown on 2 July 1783 issued an Order-in-Council that severely restricted Virginia's foreign commerce by rigidly excluding American ships from trading with the British West Indian islands. In the colonial years, Britain's Sugar Islands were a favorite destination for Virginia merchants where they exchanged foodstuffs and other commodities for molasses and rum, while earning the specie and credit necessary to enable them to purchase British manufactures.

Caribbean trade was further restricted shortly after the war's end when both France and Spain closed their colonial markets to American flour in order to protect their own agricultural industries. In attempts to lure specie to the Chesapeake, Virginia legislators offered discounts in customs duties to vessels of countries that concluded commercial treaties with Congress. Since Great Britain was unwilling to enter into such a pact, British imports suffered particular discrimination in Virginia ports. In a further attempt to compel George III's government to negotiate an agreement, Virginia enacted legislation that

empowered Congress to prohibit British West Indian imports in British ships, and to take any other action it deemed necessary to force a change in Royal policy. When no other state granted Congress similar power, Virginia retaliated independently by imposing double tonnage duties on vessels from nations without a commercial treaty, specifically Great Britain.

Congress frequently requested authority from the states to enact commercial legislation, but never received the required unanimous consent. Each state was thus left to its own initiative to regulate foreign trade. This failure to establish a national commercial policy ultimately led many Virginia political leaders and merchants to favor adoption of the Constitution since they saw in its provisions for regulating foreign commerce a means of countering Britain's exclusion of Virginia ships from her West Indian colonies.

As an additional inducement for British cooperation, Virginia in 1786 eliminated all duties on French brandies carried in French or American vessels. Two years later the General Assembly extended the privilege to any other country having a commercial treaty with the American Congress. In addition, Virginia imposed a five percent ad valorem duty on imports from non-treaty nations compared with a three percent tariff on goods from countries that had negotiated

commercial pacts.⁵

Virginia tariff legislation during the Confederation era was mildly protective, discriminating against foreign countries, particularly Great Britain, and served as a significant revenue source for Commonwealth coffers. Retaliatory tariffs enacted by Virginia and other states were not sufficient, however, to coerce the British Parliament to modify its long-established navigation policies. Virginia was a leader among the states in granting Congress authority to enact a uniform American commercial policy, but the necessary unanimity was never attained. However, the lack of strong national commercial policies does not appear to have appreciably affected the reestablishment and growth of a viable maritime enterprise in the Lower Chesapeake. Virginia merchants, contrary to their protestations, quickly recovered from wartime losses and prospered during the Confederation years.

Early National Maritime Policy

In addition to providing revenue, a primary reason for a comprehensive national navigation policy is to protect and promote domestic shipping enterprise by eliminating or severely restricting the carrying trade of foreign countries in its home waters. The intended result is an expansion in a country's shipping industry until the available tonnage is

⁵Ibid., 313-15.

at least sufficient to meet domestic demand, and at best, capable of dominating the maritime commerce of other nations. With the adoption of the Constitution, Lower Chesapeake maritime interests expected the new national government to establish policies that would compel Britain and other countries to open their domestic and colonial markets to American vessels. Congress addressed the commerce issue early in its first session, but the resulting legislation was disappointing to Virginia merchants.

The new federal Constitution adopted in 1789 divided authority to regulate commerce between the executive and legislative branches, with the Congress responsible for setting customs duties. The Executive could make treaties but they did not become effective until approved by the Senate. In addition, only Congress as a whole could set tariff rates to effect the terms of any agreement with foreign nations. Representative James Madison of Virginia led efforts in the first Congress to impose retaliatory and discriminatory restrictions against Great Britain, but the Tariff Act of 1789, signed by President Washington on July 4th, had only two objectives, raising revenue and protecting domestic manufacturers. In setting a single-schedule tariff, Congress mandated that the same duties apply to imports from all countries, regardless of commercial

restrictions placed on American commerce by those nations.⁶

The first tariff act set specific duties on the non-competitive enumerated items of tea, wine, coffee, molasses, brown sugar, and cocoa. Also taxed were imports of many raw materials that were produced on American farms, including manufactured tobacco products, malt, cheese, leather goods, hemp, indigo, and cotton. Scarce raw materials of saltpeter, tin, lead, copper, wood, dyes, hides, furs, and deerskins were to enter duty free. Specific manufactured products were taxed at rates between 5 and 15 percent, with an average of approximately 8.5 percent. This act also provided some protection to American shipbuilders and shipowners by imposing high duties on Oriental products imported in foreign bottoms and by discounting duties of all imports in American-built and American-owned vessels.⁷

In further attempts both to raise revenue and protect American maritime interests, Congress passed the Tonnage Act of July 29, 1789 that levied a 50 cents a ton duty on all foreign-owned and -built ships entering United States waters. American-built, foreign-owned bottoms paid duties of 30 cents a ton, while American shippers operating domestically-built and domestically-owned vessels paid only 6 cents per ton entry duty. Moreover, American ships

⁶Alfred E. Eckes, *Opening America's Market: U.S. Foreign Trade Policy Since 1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 12-14.

⁷Nettels, 110-11; Eckes, 14.

employed in the coasting trade or fisheries only paid the duty annually. This last provision in effect granted Americans a monopoly in the fishing and coastal trade of the new country.⁸ To encourage the American carrying trade, the act provided that merchants would be entitled to a drawback of all except one percent of imposed duties on goods re-exported within twelve months.⁹ A third commerce bill, the Registry Act of 1789, became very important to American shipping interests as it limited United States documentation to American-built vessels and ships already owned by Americans.¹⁰

These first three commerce acts (the Tariff Act, Tonnage Act, and Registry Act) of the United States established a national policy of promoting equality and providing for reciprocal access to American exports that prevailed until the War of 1812. However, these bills proved ineffective in compelling Britain and other European countries to open their peacetime markets to American mercantile interests, in part because the United States had

⁸Nettels, 111.

⁹Anna C. Clauder, *American Commerce As Affected By The Wars Of The French Revolution And Napoleon, 1793-1812* (Philadelphia: By the author, 1932; reprint, Clifton NJ: Augustus M. Kelly, 1972), 18 (page references are to reprint edition).

¹⁰John G. B. Hutchins, *The American Maritime Industries And Public Policy, 1789-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941; reprint, New York: Russell & Russell, 1969), 250 (page references are to reprint edition).

failed to implement a navigation strategy that was discriminatory against specific countries. For the first time, however, Americans in 1789 did counter restrictive European monopolies, particularly those of the British. Had these monopolistic systems been allowed to go unchallenged, American maritime commerce in the Atlantic and Caribbean would have been eliminated.¹¹

Although frustrated by the failure of the new national government to establish a strong maritime policy which promoted domestic shipping and restricted that of foreign countries, Lower Chesapeake shippers continued to challenge British dominance by aggressively expanding their exports of Commonwealth produce. Like earlier Confederation policies, national legislation did not preclude continued growth of Virginia's mercantile enterprise.

On 1 February 1793 France declared war on Britain and the Netherlands, an act that had enormous impact on American maritime industries and severely challenged American political leaders. As neutrals supplying large quantities of raw materials and foodstuffs to the warring countries, American merchants and shippers saw great opportunities for expanded commerce. France immediately opened its colonial ports to American vessels and goods on an equal basis with French ships. In May, however, the National Convention, revolutionary France's governing body at the time,

¹¹Ibid.

sanctioned French ships to seize neutral vessels with neutral goods bound for enemy ports. The following year the Convention authorized seizures of enemy goods in neutral ships. Both these acts violated the 1778 Franco-American Treaty of Amity and Commerce.

In response to French actions, Britain declared its intention to divert to English ports all ships destined for France from neutral ports, and all neutral vessels carrying French property sailing from the French West Indies to Europe. In addition, the Crown directed the Royal Navy and British privateers to seize all American ships attempting to enter French West Indian ports. Enforcement of these decrees, all designed to restrict American commerce, began in the summer of 1793 with the first seizures of American merchant vessels. Between the start of hostilities in 1793 and the end of 1807, American merchants, while continuing to protest against seizures, nonetheless continued to expand their highly profitable commercial exchange with the belligerents. The United States took only limited action to discourage this ever-increasing carrying trade as it was an important source of government revenue. In 1806, however, Congress passed a partial non-importation law excluding many British goods as a protest against English court decisions affecting seized American vessels and their cargo.¹²

Concerned for the protection of American seamen,

¹²Clauder, 90.

ships, and produce, President Jefferson in late 1807 recommended to the legislature that United States vessels be prohibited from trade with foreign nations. On 22 December the status of American maritime enterprise changed drastically. Congress passed the Embargo law that imposed a sudden, complete, and indefinite cessation in the foreign commerce of the United States by prohibiting American vessels from leaving port for overseas destinations. To prevent evasion, ships cleared for coasting voyages were required to post bonds in an amount double the value of vessel and cargo.

Although some shippers managed to elude the embargo, American imports, exports, and re-exports plummeted. The sight of hundreds of anchored ships and thousands of idled seamen and merchants encouraged widespread opposition to the embargo. When in January 1809 Congress stiffened the law to ensure greater compliance, the public outcry was so great that two months later Congress repealed the act along with the non-importation law. In their place, the government imposed a non-intercourse law providing for a total exclusion of French and British products from American ports.¹³ Since the provisions of this legislation were easily overcome through indirect trade or outright evasion, commerce soon returned to pre-embargo levels. The Macon Bill of 1810 reinstated non-importation, which by the next

¹³Ibid., 149.

year began causing severe economic hardships in Britain. In response, the British government in June 1812 repealed two of the most egregious Orders-in-Council that had called for seizure of neutral ships, but to no avail. Five days before the United States had declared war on Great Britain.

Customs duties; protective, discriminating, and retaliatory tariffs; drawback legislation; vessel registration acts; and non-importation and non-intercourse laws all influenced and helped shape early national maritime enterprise. While none of these policies achieved the open exchange desired by American merchants, neither did they prevent Virginia shippers from extending their lucrative foreign trade. Only the 1807-1809 Long Embargo among early national policies had a significant impact on Lower Chesapeake commerce, and its repercussions were devastating.

Diplomacy

American legislation alone was insufficient in bringing about an open exchange of goods between the United States and the European powers. Successful diplomacy was also needed. Until the start of the European wars in 1793 it was in Britain's best interest to exclude United States shipping from her Caribbean islands, and all American diplomatic initiatives failed to produce a commercial accord to permit open trade. With the beginning of hostilities, however, Britain and the other belligerents needed neutral American vessels to supply both home and island markets.

Great Britain made this task easier for Virginia traders when in 1794 she negotiated a commercial treaty with American diplomat John Jay. For the first time since colonial days, some American ships were to be free to enter British West Indian harbors. Lower Chesapeake merchants were quick to expand their commercial ties with the British and other islands.

During the Revolutionary War years the American government had concluded commercial agreements with several European countries, the most important being the 1778 Treaty of Amity and Commerce with France. The Confederation period brought renewed American attempts to secure favorable commercial pacts with foreign nations, but these efforts were generally unsuccessful. Implementation of the Constitution in 1789 enabled the American government to legislate a comprehensive navigation policy and to redouble efforts to reach commercial accords with foreign countries. The outbreak of war in 1793 between France and Britain made American endeavors to establish maritime agreements with these two European powers even more necessary, as French and British seizures of American vessels began almost immediately.

Continued American protests of French policies and actions against United States shipping interests during the conflict finally led to the 1800 Convention of Mortefontaine which replaced the earlier 1778 Treaty and led to an immediate easing of tensions between the two countries.

However, Napoleon issued the Berlin Decree in 1806 which resulted in increased French seizures and condemnations of American shipping. His 1807 Milan and 1808 Bayone Decrees, as well as several 1809 edicts, imposed even more restrictions on United States commerce. American protests fell on deaf ears until 1812 when France ostensibly repealed the Berlin and Milan Decrees. American diplomatic efforts during the 1793-1812 period to achieve French respect for neutral commercial rights clearly failed. Diplomacy succeeded, however, in preventing war between the two nations. This, by contrast, was not the final outcome of Anglo-American diplomacy during these same years.

With the American War for Independence ended, leaders of the new republic realized that one of their most urgent problems was to resolve the commercial relationship with the former mother country and her remaining colonies, particularly those in the West Indies. American Commissioners negotiating the treaty of peace in Paris reached general agreement with their British counterparts, only to have the proposal rejected by Parliament. Although the United States made several further attempts to formalize an understanding with Great Britain, none were successful until 1794 when the two countries concluded a Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation.

The Treaty of Paris of 1783 which ended the war between Great Britain and her American colonies provided very generous terms to the newly formed Confederation. In

hope of retaining the mercantile bond that had existed for over a century and a half, British Prime Minister Lord Shelburne also intended to conclude a liberal commercial treaty with the American states based on the free trade principles of Adam Smith. While British diplomats were in Paris negotiating with American Commissioners Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay, Parliament debated the American Intercourse Bill that would have effectively repealed the Navigation Acts and permitted the former colonies to continue their lucrative trade with the British West Indies. Lord Shelburne's government fell from power before the debate ended and, lacking a strong advocate, the bill was set aside in favor of an act that vested in the King-in-Council temporary authority to regulate Anglo-American commerce.¹⁴ On 2 July 1783 an Order-in-Council shattered the dreams of liberal traders on both sides of the Atlantic; American ships were strictly excluded from the carrying trade to Britain's Sugar Islands. This order became the cornerstone of British commercial policy with American governments until 1795.

Several reasons can be advanced for this initial rebuff to the newly independent nation. Skillfully articulated in Lord Sheffield's *Observations on the Commerce of the American States*, the main argument asserted that

¹⁴Jerald A. Combs, *The Jay Treaty: Political Battleground of the Founding Fathers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 8.

opening trade to American ships would clearly benefit West Indian and American merchants, but ruin Great Britain. Britain would lose a large portion of the carrying trade, resulting in economic hardship for British shippers, unemployment for British seamen, and general maritime decay. Sheffield and others argued that Britain need not fear American retaliation as it was unlikely the Confederation government could orchestrate unified action among the individual states, and furthermore, any embargo would do far more damage to America than to Great Britain or her colonies. Finally, there was the desire on the part of many Britons to punish the upstart ex-colonials for the British defeat and the humiliating treaty of peace.¹⁵

While excluding Americans from the West Indian trade, the British government in 1783 opened its domestic market to tobacco and other unmanufactured goods of American origin at lower duties than similar commodities from other countries. In May 1784 The British Committee for Trade reported a flourishing commerce between Britain, her colonies, and the United States that substantially exceeded that of 1774, the last full year of peaceful exchange before the war.¹⁶ An

¹⁵Ibid., 7-9. The British press and Parliament particularly assailed treaty provisions that they felt abandoned British Loyalists and their Indian allies, granted Americans rights in the Newfoundland fisheries, and ceded to the United States all the territory between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers south of the Great Lakes.

¹⁶Charles R. Ritcheson, *Aftermath of Revolution: British Policy Toward the United States, 1783-1795* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1969), 12.

open British Isles did much to relieve Virginia planters of their wartime tobacco surplus while promoting British manufactures in the Commonwealth, but did little to benefit Lower Chesapeake merchants. English and Scottish factors continued to purchase and export tobacco to Europe in British vessels. Only trade to the West Indies had been profitable for Virginia shippers in colonial times, and that exchange was legally denied them after 2 July 1783.

The American Commissioners in Paris made further attempts in 1784 to initiate discussions on an Anglo-American commerce accord without success. In 1785 the United States reorganized its European delegation and dispatched John Adams as minister to London to negotiate a trade pact. In the next three years, King George, Prime Minister Pitt and Secretary of State the Marquis of Carmarthen continually rebuffed Adams' attempts to open a dialogue on a commercial agreement. The conclusion of the very liberal Eden Treaty between Great Britain and France in 1786 effectively doomed the Adams mission. Furthermore, the temporary Orders-in-Council regulating Anglo-American commerce were summed up in an Act of Parliament and thus were no longer subject to periodic review and renewal. Adams returned to America in 1788 without a trade agreement.

Shortly after assuming the Presidency in 1789, George Washington initiated the first diplomatic effort of the new government to secure a commercial accord with Great Britain. Feeling an unofficial approach more appropriate, Washington

asked Gouverneur Morris, then in Paris on private business, to undertake the assignment. Arriving in London in late March 1790, Morris immediately conferred with Foreign Secretary Carmarthen, but found him unresponsive. By May, however, when Britain seemed to be approaching war with Spain, Carmarthen and Prime Minister Pitt apparently offered Morris a basis on which to start negotiations. Misreading their intentions, Morris rebuffed the ministers and sealed the fate of his mission.¹⁷ The British government had been agreeable to beginning discussions on a commercial pact only if the remaining issues from the 1783 Treaty could be settled first. At that point, both sides were unwilling to make the first concession.

Some extraordinary event was needed to move the two sides toward mutual interest in negotiating a treaty. This event came in the declaration of war on Great Britain by France early in 1793. While this conflict did not in any way change the issues between the United States and Great Britain, Britain now desperately needed something from America--its neutrality. President Washington responded quickly, declaring American neutrality on 22 April. While discussion of the complex issue of neutral rights of non-belligerent nations is beyond the scope of this thesis, it should be noted that issues such as the definition of contraband, vessel seizures, condemnation of ships and

¹⁷Ibid., 94-106.

cargo, fitting out of privateers, admiralty courts, retention of seamen, impressment, and international law all complicated the clearly defined positions of the United States and Britain which had previously existed. British policy, as well as French, was to seize all captured ships and cargo of any nation, neutral or not, carrying goods that might benefit the enemy.

Realizing ship seizures and other events were hurtling America toward another war with Britain, in April President Washington nominated Chief Justice John Jay as a special envoy to Great Britain and directed him to reach an accord resolving the outstanding issues from the 1783 Treaty as well as spoilation claims resulting from the 1793 West Indian seizures.¹⁸ Should he be successful on these two points which would guarantee peace between the two countries, he was authorized to negotiate a treaty of commerce. While his instructions outlined the general objectives of such an accord, he was expressly forbidden to sign a pact that did not allow American ships to trade with the West Indies on the same terms enjoyed by British ships plying between the United States and those islands.¹⁹

Jay formally submitted to British negotiator Lord

¹⁸Samuel Flagg Bemis, *Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 291-95. These other events were provocations by British officials along the United States - Canadian border and increased impressment of American seamen to man Royal Navy men-of-war.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 291-95.

Grenville an outline for a convention and treaty of commerce which included, in addition to the standard propositions, his proposal for partially opening the West Indian carrying trade to American ships. Specifically, he suggested that Americans could carry any goods in their own ships of less than 100 tons between the Sugar Islands and the United States. While the final version of Article XII of the Treaty reduced the size of ships to less than seventy tons, prohibited the re-exportation of a list of island products, and limited the term to only two years beyond the conclusion of the Anglo-French war, it did meet the criteria set forth in Jay's instructions from his government.²⁰ On 19 November 1794 Jay signed the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation which has since borne his name. Thus, a commercial treaty with Great Britain, so desperately sought by Americans for more than a decade, was concluded by one of the same diplomats who failed to secure an agreement on commerce with the 1783 peace accord.

The United States Senate refused to ratify the agreement as negotiated, rejecting Article XII which had authorized American vessels of less than seventy tons access to the British West Indies. Angered by restrictions on re-exportation of island commodities, the Senate demanded the Article be suspended and Britain concurred. Although this

²⁰Most Virginia vessels trading with the British West Indies were in the thirty to seventy ton range and thus below the threshold set by the Treaty.

important provision to Virginia shippers was ultimately rejected, British concessions in fact led to increased commercial exchange between the Lower Chesapeake and British West Indies.

Anglo-American diplomatic activity between implementation of the Jay Treaty and the War of 1812 was much like the United States' exchange with France and consisted primarily of protesting continued British seizures of American merchant vessels. With resumption of the European wars in 1803 after the brief Peace of Amiens, Britain imposed extensive blockades on Continental and Caribbean ports of France and its allies, resulting in the capture of hundreds of American ships. Jefferson's 1807 embargo of all American overseas commerce proved ineffective as a diplomatic weapon, but passage of the 1810 Macon Bill ultimately forced Britain in June 1812 to repeal acts that called for seizure of neutral vessels. Congress, however, had already declared war. In contrast with American success in avoiding armed conflict with France, extensive efforts by American and British diplomats failed to prevent hostilities between the countries. The magnitude and duration of British ship seizures were simply more than Americans could tolerate.

Attempts by the United States to force equality and full reciprocity in international commerce failed. The new nation simply was not yet strong enough to counter effectively the entrenched European navigation systems.

Evidence presented in the next chapter demonstrates that despite these diplomatic failures, Lower Chesapeake post-Revolutionary maritime enterprise generally flourished until the War of 1812. Merchants exported traditional Virginia produce in large quantities to an expanding number of overseas harbors while concentrating their domestic activities in a few major Commonwealth ports. Only misguided national commercial policies limited Lower Bay maritime prosperity, and then just for brief periods.



²¹Map by H. Moll, ca. 1730, in Joseph A. Goldenberg, "Virginia Ports," in *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution*, ed. Ernest McNeill Eller (Centerville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1981), Illustration 1.

CHAPTER III

LOWER CHESAPEAKE POST-REVOLUTIONARY COMMERCE

The Revolutionary War forever changed the Lower Chesapeake's maritime enterprise. With elimination of the British monopoly on American seagoing trade, a thriving industry in the colonial era continued to expand and prosper from independence to the War of 1812. Change occurred gradually, however, and commerce in the immediate post-war years resembled greatly that of colonial times. An examination of the transition in types and quantities of commodities exported, shifting maritime commercial centers in Virginia, and altered overseas origins and destinations of vessels calling at Commonwealth harbors during the Confederation and Early National eras reveals a clear picture of the Lower Bay's overall economic health. This commercial sketch illustrates that, despite governments' ineffectual maritime policies and mostly futile diplomatic initiatives, post-war Lower Chesapeake shipping activity was not depressed or even stagnant, but recovered rapidly to colonial levels and then expanded in the following three decades.

Several political, diplomatic, and economic events directly influenced Virginia's overseas commerce in the

post-Revolutionary years. After initially attempting to exclude British merchants, Commonwealth leaders soon welcomed their return and the renewed prosperity which accompanied their mercantile expertise. Despite impotent governmental maritime policies during the Confederation and early years under the Constitution, Virginia merchants aggressively pursued new markets in response to Britain's exclusion of their ships from her West Indian islands. With the beginning of the European wars in 1793, Lower Chesapeake shipping interests, overcoming myriad restrictions and hundreds of vessel seizures, prospered as neutral carriers of goods to the warring nations and their colonies. Even though the most important commercial maritime clause of Jay's Treaty was suspended, the article's de facto implementation can be observed by tracing the routes of Virginia vessels to the Caribbean islands. Only peace among the belligerents and mistaken national policies curtailed the Commonwealth's thriving overseas commerce until it was decimated by another war with Great Britain.

Using the years 1768 and 1784, this essay identifies and evaluates the trends and changes in overseas commercial maritime enterprise in the Lower Chesapeake's rivers, ports, and harbors between the colonial years and the Confederation era. Data for 1768 compiled by Beverly Miller from British Colonial Office records and *Virginia Gazette* shipping announcements are summarized by Table 3 in Appendix A and

form a basis from which to measure post-war foreign trade.¹ Naval Officer returns in the Library of Virginia Archives, though incomplete, provide sufficient information to make a valid comparison with Lower Bay foreign exchange activity of pre-Revolutionary Virginia. Appendix B gives selected entries on overseas trade from these customs returns, while Table 4 in Appendix A summarizes this data. Virginia's foreign commercial enterprise in the first years under the Constitution is culled from published sources.²

The customs data and statistical information available may not permit a truly accurate appraisal of commercial activity for several reasons. Determining a vessel's cargo carrying capacity was an imprecise science during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The British changed their method of calculating tonnage between 1773 and 1786,

¹Beverly Wellings Miller, "The Export Trade Of Four Colonial Virginia Ports," (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1967), 32-98, 107-110. Clearances and entrances for the Lower James River District are missing for eight months in 1768.

²The Library of Virginia Archives, Entry 300, General Records, Naval Officers, 1778, 1780-1789, Record Group 48, boxes 1135-36, 1138, 1141, 1143-45, 1148A. Hereafter cited as NOR with box numbers. Numbers of vessels, ports of call, and types of cargo are not available for Virginia harbors for the early national years, although estimates of exports between 1790 and 1792 can be found in the *American State Papers, Class IV, Commerce and Navigation* published in 1832. Data on imports, by commodities for each state, are recorded for 1789-1791 in the same publication. The most reliable source for estimates on foreign trade after 1792 were compiled by Timothy Pitkin in his 1835 book, *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States Of America*. No other Lower Chesapeake customs returns or trade statistics exist for this period.

but it is unclear if Virginia and United States customs officials followed suit. Therefore, it is possible that post-war tonnage listed on Naval Officer returns and given in statistical tables may be over-estimated by as much as one-third. It is also important to note that registered tonnage for many vessels was about two thirds actual carrying capacity.³ Thus, direct comparisons of quantities and volumes of various types of cargo are of marginal worth.

Customs evasion is another consideration that makes accurate evaluation of maritime activity in the Lower Chesapeake difficult. Bay sailors were notorious smugglers, and in a 1770 report John Williams, His Majesty's inspector general of customs in America, calculated that large quantities of goods entered and cleared duty free.⁴ There is no reason to believe the situation changed after the Revolution.

Since the available data are of debatable accuracy, this study uses statistical material only to evaluate relative magnitude and change over time, and thus the conclusions are not based on absolute quantities.

Commodity Exchange

In colonial years American exports of tobacco went

³Stewart, 59-60; Ernest M. Eller, "Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution," in *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution*, ed. Ernest McNeill Eller (Centerville MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1981), 16.

⁴Eller, 16.

primarily to the British Isles, while foodstuffs, timber products, and naval stores were shipped to Britain's West Indian islands. Colonial merchants also sent some wheat and corn to southern Europe. During the Revolutionary years American and British officials banned legal trade, although the warring nations carried on considerable illicit exchange. After the war, Virginia shippers for the most part resumed exporting the same commodities as they had in the colonial era. Tobacco continued to be the Commonwealth's premier cash crop export to Europe, whereas foodstuffs, forest products, and naval stores were sent to the West Indies. Although prices were generally favorable to Virginia producers during this period, factors other than supply and demand often influenced staple costs, especially for tobacco.

While independence ostensibly brought freedom from Britain's navigation system, the British monopoly on the American tobacco trade continued throughout the Confederation period and well into the early nineteenth century. Virginia planters did earn higher rates for their crop after the war, but also paid increased marketing, export, and shipping expenses when compared with colonial levels. Virginians were unable to alter pre-Revolution tobacco trade patterns due to lack of financial resources, mercantile experience, and political clout.

Throughout the hostilities planters continued to grow, cure, and press into hogsheads Virginia's economic mainstay,

tobacco. Exports of the staple continued during the war, but at considerably reduced levels as His Majesty's ships patrolled the Bay and Atlantic, while his armies burned large quantities of the crop on their periodic forays into the rebel colony. Despite wartime exports and destruction, Virginians stored large quantities of the leaf in warehouses around the Commonwealth before Cornwallis surrendered.

Shipments of the crop in 1782 were probably less than ten million pounds due to post-war governmental restrictions against the British.⁵ But with repeal of anti-British legislation in early 1783, tobacco exports surged to over 68,000,000 pounds in both 1783 and 1784.⁶ Virginia planters harvested and shipped the staple in large quantities throughout the Confederation era as demonstrated in Table 1. In 1787 tobacco still accounted for 84 percent of the Commonwealth's foreign sales, and by the early 1790s Virginia-grown leaf represented slightly more than one half the total tobacco exports of all the states.⁷ Since Virginia's late colonial tobacco shipments are estimated to have been 67,000 hogsheads annually, it appears that after the Revolution, Virginia leaf exports rapidly recovered to near pre-war levels and remained there until the start of

⁵Schaffer, 155-56. Schaffer notes that although estimates of the quantity vary for 1782, tobacco exports were still very much below pre-war levels.

⁶Ibid., 161.

⁷Price, 729-30.

the European wars.

TABLE 1
Virginia Tobacco Exports, 1783-92^a
(Years Ending 30 September)

<u>Years</u>	<u>Hogsheads</u>
1783-1784	49,497
1784-1785	55,624
1785-1786	60,380
1786-1787	60,041
1787-1788	58,544
1788-1789	58,673
1790-1791	56,288
1791-1792	61,203

After 1792, American tobacco production gradually declined until 1807 when cultivation of the staple averaged three-quarters of that grown fifteen years earlier. Following the Long Embargo, leaf exports shrank dramatically until 1812 when they were less than one-fourth the quantity traded in 1790.⁹ However, overseas sales of cotton soon filled the void left by the deterioration of tobacco shipments. After the cotton gin was introduced, southeastern Virginia and the central part of North Carolina became the cotton producing regions of the Upper South, which in 1811 grew to nineteen percent of total American

^aPrice, 729. A tobacco hogshead contained between 1,000 and 1,400 pounds of the leaf. The figures for 1790-1792 are not exactly comparable with earlier years since after adoption of the Constitution shipments to other states were not considered exports.

⁹Nettels, 395.

production.¹⁰ Like tobacco, the vast majority of cotton exports went to Great Britain, and by 1807 American shipments of the new cash crop accounted for two thirds of British cotton imports.¹¹

Commodity value, in addition to quantity, determines real growth in a cash-crop economy like that of the early Chesapeake. In supplying pent-up demand caused by the war, Virginia planters sold their premier commodity at very favorable prices during the post-Revolutionary years, thus achieving a greater return for fewer hogsheads. But considerations other than demand also fostered high prices. The end of Britain's legal monopoly released the tobacco trade from various charges connected with its importation to the British Isles and its reexportation to France and other countries. Also, supplies decreased as crop production in the older tobacco areas of the Chesapeake continued to diminish due to the loss of field hands, soil depletion, increased preference for cultivating grain, and bad weather between 1786 and 1789.¹²

A thriving economy continued in the Lower Chesapeake until the fall of 1785 when the price for the leaf fell

¹⁰Ibid., 185.

¹¹North, 41.

¹²Bjork, 555; Nettles, 184; James F. Shepherd, "British America and the Atlantic Economy," in *The Economy of Early America: The Revolutionary Period, 1763-1790*, eds. Ronald Hoffman, John J. McCusker, Russell R. Menard, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), 32.

rapidly to less than half that of a few months earlier. Philadelphia merchant Robert Morris orchestrated this severe price decline by negotiating exclusive rights to the French market. Since Morris' contract excluded English and Scottish merchants from the French trade, British demand declined and reinforced the lower prices.¹³ Even these depressed prices, though, were comparable to or above pre-Revolution levels and, by remaining high until 1790, brought real renewed wealth to the Chesapeake.¹⁴

The Commonwealth's governmental fortunes also improved as the Virginia treasury realized a surge in revenue from taxes and duties on vessels and cargo as the staple was shipped overseas.¹⁵ Tobacco based prosperity was fleeting, however, and by 1791 high staple prices encouraged increased leaf cultivation in the Lower South, which in turn drove prices in Virginia back down to pre-war levels.¹⁶ Sustained tobacco prices never again reached 1790 heights and suffered a severe depression in early 1808, having fallen by one-half in a four-month period after the embargo was implemented by President Jefferson.¹⁷

Payments received for crops are a major determinant

¹³Schaffer, 161, 165-66.

¹⁴Bjork, 555.

¹⁵Schaffer, 161.

¹⁶Bjork, 558.

¹⁷Nettels, 328.

affecting the type and quantity of produce grown. Prices, however, are influenced by several factors, including marketing and shipping costs controlled by middlemen in the mercantile process. During the colonial years, most Lower Chesapeake growers exercised no control over their leaf once they delivered the staple to the wharfs and warehouses along the rivers. British factors and merchants controlled the entire commercial process of purchase, transport, sale, and distribution of the leaf. In removing constraints of the British navigation system, the Revolution gave Virginia planters the theoretical freedom to market their crop to their best advantage. Circumstances beyond the planters' control, however, prevented them from exercising their hard-won rights.

During the war years, Virginians gained some expertise in the international commercial system, but when peace returned to the Chesapeake, so too did British merchants. Quickly regaining their pre-war dominance, these foreign middlemen initially managed the majority of the post-Revolution tobacco trade and were only gradually replaced by Americans. There are many reasons for continued British control. Southerners, particularly Virginia planters, lacked the capital necessary to finance a large and complex tobacco trading enterprise. They did not own the ships needed to carry their product to market. Many were naive about freight rates, insurance, commissions, terms of credit, and market prices. Smaller Virginia planters and

traders lacked the contacts required at foreign ports. Finally, all Americans suffered from a weak national government that proved incapable of promoting and protecting their commercial interests.

Thus even after the war, George III's merchants shipped the Commonwealth's leaf to Britain in British vessels, where they reexported it to other European countries. In return, the Crown's ships brought highly desirable British manufactured goods to Virginia. Both planter and merchant benefitted from reestablishment of the colonial pattern as the British extended generous credit, opened retail stores throughout the Commonwealth, and brought ships to Virginia's ports and rivers.

Nevertheless, many Virginians opposed Britain's continued monopoly of the Chesapeake's premier crop and the large profits that accrued to her merchants. The General Assembly attempted to counter British influence by increasing tobacco export duties, levying tariffs on English imports, and imposing regulations on credit and rates of exchange. British wholesalers and governmental officials retaliated by increasing commissions and shipping charges, discriminating against Virginia exports, and manipulating tobacco prices.¹⁸ Following the Revolution, freight expenses were often as high as fourteen percent of the total

¹⁸W. A. Low, "Merchant And Planter Relations In Post-Revolutionary Virginia, 1783-1789," *The Virginia Magazine Of History And Biography* 61, no. 3 (July 1953): 311.

sales price compared with a pre-war average of six percent. Post-war duties amounted to eighty percent of the wholesale price of the leaf, considerably higher than in colonial times.¹⁹ Tensions between planters and merchants were also exacerbated by the debt issue, particularly legal pre-war debts which planters attempted to avoid with the support of Virginia's legislature and courts.

While growing and exporting tobacco was the Chesapeake's chief economic enterprise before the Revolution, Virginians also cultivated grain, harvested timber, and produced naval stores. Merchants generally sent these secondary products to Britain's West Indian colonies in exchange for island staples, although they shipped limited quantities to Europe. By the Revolution, Virginia merchants had established a prosperous exchange with the Caribbean that was key to the new nation's survival during the conflict. Increased crop diversification prompted Lower Chesapeake merchants to expand aggressively this commerce in the decades after the war as tobacco exports gradually declined and the European wars boosted demand for Commonwealth foodstuffs. Despite belligerent trade restrictions and seizures of hundreds of vessels, large amounts of Virginia commodities reached the islands between America's two wars with Great Britain. Only a brief peace and actions by the federal government curtailed this

¹⁹Ibid., 313.

thriving Lower Bay enterprise.

The reorientation of Virginia's export commerce from tobacco to other commodities, begun as early as the mid-1700s, continued after the war. Many planters in the old leaf-growing regions along the major rivers and their tributaries continued switching to grain production as fields wore out and departed slaves were not replaced. When West Indian demand for American foodstuffs grew increasingly strong, the shift away from tobacco cultivation and to the production of wheat, corn, and other farm products accelerated. European need for American wheat remained erratic however, increasing dramatically during periods of poor harvests in Britain or on the Continent, and falling precipitously during Europe's bountiful years. In addition to being exported in its unprocessed form, wheat was shipped as bread or flour, and it is estimated that Virginia flour exports quadrupled in the two decades between 1768-1772 and 1792.²⁰

The value of breadstuff exports also grew significantly in the post-Revolution years as higher wheat and flour prices brought increased capital to the Commonwealth.²¹ Grain exports, primarily to the Caribbean islands, had become so successful by the early 1790s that they were replacing tobacco shipments to Europe as the

²⁰Gilbert, 380.

²¹Ibid., 381-82.

foundation of American trade.²² The inability of European countries to support adequately their Caribbean colonies created an opportunity seized upon by Virginia merchants in marketing the Commonwealth's increasing produce.

In July 1785 James Madison observed that "The Revolution robbed us of our trade with the West Indies, the only one which yielded us a favorable balance, without reopening any other channels to compensate for it."²³ Madison was referring to the exclusion of American ships from Britain's Caribbean islands by the 2 July 1783 Order-in-Council. The islands of most other European colonial powers, however, generally remained open to American vessels during the Confederation years, and Americans carried on a prosperous trade with the West Indies during this period.

With the exception of wheat and flour, Americans could export their produce to the French islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Saint Dominique, the western part of Hispaniola. Furthermore, American vessels could carry island commodities, except sugar, to North American and other overseas ports. In the mid-1780s France abandoned its restrictions on flour imports and American trade with the French colonies grew rapidly. By 1790, American exports to Saint Dominique exceeded those to all other Caribbean

²²Ibid., 386-87.

²³*Letters and Other Writings of James Madison*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1867), 1:158, quoted in Nettels, 56.

destinations combined, although in 1784 only fifteen percent of Lower Bay departures were for the French island.²⁴

These trade regulations permitted American merchants to supply the French islands with most of their required goods, and in return, provide Americans with island staples.

During the course of the 1780s Britain's restrictions on American commerce with her West Indian islands fluctuated with her colonies' needs, since lumber products, naval stores, and staple foods were frequently in short supply. The British islands of Jamaica, Barbados, and Antigua imported more American corn and corn meal than the French colonies, and only slightly less flour. Additionally, much illicit trade was funneled to the British possessions through the Dutch island of Saint Eustatia, and often was even carried openly into Britain's island harbors. The amount of this illegal trade was probably significant and was commented on by Horatio Nelson, then patrolling the Caribbean for His Majesty's Navy. Nelson disapprovingly noted that American vessels were landing and unloading in British ports with the permission of local customs officials.²⁵

Spain had closed its Caribbean ports to American

²⁴John H. Coatsworth, "American Trade with European Colonies in the Caribbean and South America, 1790-1812," *The William And Mary Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (April 1967): 245-46; NOR.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 247; Bjork, 551.

shipping shortly after Yorktown, but reopened Trinidad and Havana in 1785. Customs regulations were so restrictive, however, that few legal American exports entered Spanish America. American contraband, though, reached the west coast of South America and the Gulf area, as well as the Spanish islands. Similarly, the value of American shipments to the West Indian colonies of Denmark and Sweden was small, even though commodities were admitted duty free.²⁶

Taken collectively, shipments to Europe's Caribbean islands constituted a significant portion of America's total exports during the Confederation era. With the exception of tobacco, by 1790 more than half of the United States' major export commodities were shipped to the West Indies (See Table 2).

Table 2

Percentage of Total United States Exports of Selected
Commodities Shipped to the West Indies in 1790²⁷

Flour	52.0
Corn	32.8
Fish	73.5
Beef	81.1
Pork	97.9
Lumber and wood products	64.4
Livestock	95.3

Virginia-produced staples constituted significant portions of these exports to the islands, accounting for twelve

²⁶Coatsworth, 247; Peggy K. Liss, *Atlantic Empires: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713-1826* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 112.

²⁷Coatsworth, 248.

percent of the flour and twenty-two percent of corn shipments in 1791.²⁸

With the 1793 outbreak of hostilities between the European colonial powers, American trade with the West Indies expanded rapidly. Domestic exports to the various islands fluctuated with the vagaries of military and diplomatic activity, but were generally well above the levels of the 1780s. Wartime values of annual Virginia exports almost doubled those of the Confederation years, except during the 1801-1803 Peace of Amiens and the Long Embargo of 1807-1809.²⁹

Overseas shipments from the Elizabeth and James rivers constituted the vast majority of exports from the Lower Chesapeake in the mid-1780s. The James extended far into the backcountry while the Elizabeth River drew produce from its watershed as well as northeastern North Carolina. Tobacco exports remained strong and went primarily to the British Isles, although a few tobacco ships departed for France and the Netherlands. Foodstuffs, forest products, and some leaf left the Elizabeth River District for the Caribbean and, to a much lesser extent, the Continent. Imports consisted of manufactures and wine from European ports, and sugar, molasses, coffee, rum, and specie from the West Indies. These post-war commodity exchange patterns

²⁸Ibid., 249.

²⁹Pitkin, 50-56.

were identical to those of colonial times.³⁰

York River planters and merchants carried on a robust commodity exchange with Great Britain and her West Indian islands during the colonial era. Tobacco was sent to the British Isles while foodstuffs and wood products were exported to the Caribbean, and to a much lesser extent Madeira and Britain. Imports included European manufactured goods from Britain and the usual island commodities from the Caribbean. Post-Revolution exchange mirrored the earlier years in all respects except volume, since the number of vessels calling at York River ports decreased after the conflict. Tobacco shipments, however, remained strong throughout the Confederation era.³¹

Tobacco was the primary export from the Accomack District on Virginia's Eastern Shore in the early 1780s. As the decade progressed, flour, corn, oats, bread, pork, lumber, staves, and shingles were shipped with ever increasing frequency, replacing leaf as the region's preferred export commodities. Exports from the Shore's Northampton District followed a similar pattern. Confederation period commodity shipments from these two Eastern Shore districts deviate somewhat from those recorded in 1768 when there were no overseas shipments of tobacco. Post-war exports of foodstuffs and lumber products, though,

³⁰NOR, boxes 1141, 1148A.

³¹Miller, 32-98; NOR, boxes 1136, 1147.

compared favorably with those before independence. Some tobacco shipped in the years immediately following the Revolution had probably accumulated during the war, but for the most part, planters on the Eastern Shore had shifted away from tobacco production by the mid-1780s. Pre- and post-Revolution imports from foreign ports were similar and consisted primarily of wine, rum, molasses, and sugar as well as specie.³²

There are no extant documents that record Lower Chesapeake exports by commodity after early 1789. However, Virginia's aggregate domestic exports expanded after 1793 and, with the exception of cotton gradually replacing tobacco, consisted of the usual foodstuffs, timber products, and naval stores that had been shipped abroad since colonial times.

Virginia Ports

While merchants of the Lower Chesapeake generally exported the same commodities in the decades after the Revolution as before, in the post-bellum years they gradually shifted the geographic locations of their commercial centers for overseas shipments. The deep penetration into the interior by Virginia's four major waterways led to the early establishment of a highly decentralized maritime commercial system at the expense of

³²NOR, boxes 1135, 1138; Miller, 32-98.

the development of one or a few major trading centers. During the colonial period, large ocean-going vessels regularly bypassed the colony's natural harbors and proceeded directly to plantation wharfs, tobacco warehouses, and inland river settlements to exchange goods. Small trading centers soon sprang up near tobacco warehouses established by the colonial government. These centers extended from river mouths to fall lines on each of Virginia's four major waterways, as well as along their numerous tributaries.³³ The House of Burgesses, and later the General Assembly, encouraged the development of such entrepôts, and by the Revolution, Norfolk, Richmond, Yorktown, and Alexandria were emerging as the Commonwealth's dominant shipping centers.

Merchants from Norfolk, and particularly Alexandria, shifted much of their trade to the West Indies as many of the Chesapeake's older leaf-growing regions moved to grain cultivation. Alexandria escaped wartime damage, while the other major ports suffered at British hands. Except for Yorktown, all quickly recovered and resumed their thriving overseas trading activities. Alexandria experienced economic and population setbacks early in the nineteenth century from which it did not fully recover. Richmond traders gradually moved the export of their extensive

³³Robert Walker Coakley, "Virginia Commerce During The American Revolution" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1949), 23.

backcountry produce to Norfolk, and concentrated on domestic shipments from the upper James River ports. By the early 1800s Norfolk emerged as Virginia's leading entrepôt for foreign commerce.³⁴

Norfolk conducted much of its overseas trade with the West Indies since many Virginia farmers and merchants preferred to ship foodstuffs through this commercial center rather than directly to the Caribbean islands. First established as the naval office for the James and Elizabeth rivers in 1776, Norfolk was completely destroyed during the war. By 1789 the city had recovered enough that the new federal government designated it and Portsmouth a combined district customs office.³⁵ Unlike Baltimore, the Chesapeake's other major harbor, Norfolk did not dominate the state's commerce as many towns and plantations along the rivers shipped Virginia produce straight to Europe and the islands. Moreover, two other Hampton Roads ports competed with Norfolk for the region's trade. Portsmouth, never as large as Norfolk but with a deeper harbor, suffered numerous raids and enemy occupation during the Revolution and recovered more slowly than its neighbor across the Elizabeth. Hampton, near the mouth of the James River on

³⁴Winifred J. Losse, "The Foreign Trade Of Virginia, 1789-1809," *The William And Mary Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (April 1944): 167, 170-71.

³⁵Coakley, 302; Peter Jennings Wrike, "Mathews County Shipbuilding Patterns 1780-1860," (M.A. thesis, Old Dominion University, 1990), 3.

its northern bank, served as a naval office and customs house from colonial times until 1822 despite having a port that only accommodated small ships due to a bar at its entrance.³⁶

The James extends further west than Virginia's other rivers that empty into the Bay, and thus served as the principal waterway for a vast interior region. Near the mouth of the James on its southern bank, the Nansemond River and its towns of Sleepy Hole, Suffolk, and Milner's could accept ships of 250, 50, and 25 tons respectively. During the war South Quay, twenty miles southwest of Suffolk on the Blackwater River, became an important inland port with access to the North Carolina sounds and the Atlantic. This village handled vessels up to 200 tons burden, and a customs office controlled the port from the Revolution onward. Smithfield, several miles north of Suffolk and at the head of Pagan's Creek, could berth only small craft in its relatively shallow harbor. Cabin Point and Hoods, mid-river ports on the James between its Nansemond and Appomattox River tributaries, easily accepted ocean-going ships. Petersburg, Pocahontas, and Blandford at the falls of the Appomattox, Broadways, midway on the river, and City Point at the river's mouth, served a vast tobacco growing region. Petersburg became the leading tobacco port in America despite being able to berth vessels of just 50 to 60 tons.

³⁶Coakley, 26-27; Goldenberg, *"Virginia Ports,"* 321.

Further up the river, Warwick, Osborne's, and Bermuda Hundred handled ships up to 250 tons burden. At the fall line of the James several settlements competed for the backcountry's produce. Richmond, the Commonwealth's capital from 1779, Shokoes, and Chesterfield all could accept small craft, while Rockets, a mile below the capital, accommodated 125 ton vessels.

A naval office monitored these Upper James ports in colonial times, but in 1776 the Virginia General Assembly designated the Elizabeth River District in Norfolk as the river's official port of entry. A customs house near City Point and Bermuda Hundred controlled commerce on the upper reaches of the river from 1789-1800 when the federal government established separate customs offices at Richmond and Petersburg. Although attacked by the British late in the war, Richmond ultimately benefitted from the conflict when merchants moved from other Commonwealth ports to be close to the seat of state government.³⁷

Elizabeth River District ports on the James and Elizabeth rivers resumed their position as the Lower Chesapeake's premier maritime commercial centers as foreign trade quickly rebounded after the Revolution. Even though it is likely that fewer ships stopped at these ports in 1784 than eighteen years earlier, enterprising merchants from

³⁷Coakley, 32-36; Goldenberg, 310-11; Arthur G. Peterson, "Commerce Of Virginia, 1789-1791," *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* 10, no. 4 (October 1930): 308.

Virginia's southernmost naval district expanded post-war commerce with the French, Dutch, Spanish, and Danish islands to offset a decline in their trade with Britain and her colonies. Table 3 lists the number of vessels in overseas trade calling at Lower Chesapeake harbors in 1768 and identifies their origins and destinations. Table 4 gives similar data for 1784. Since several months' records are missing for 1768, figures for the Lower James given in Table 3 are being increased by one hundred vessels for this analysis to reflect more accurately probable traffic through the Hampton Roads ports.³⁸

Using these adjusted figures, departures to West Indian and Atlantic ports from the Elizabeth and James rivers totaled 144 in 1784 compared with an estimated 154 in 1768. There were 124 entries to the Elizabeth River District from the same harbors in 1784, and an estimated eighty-nine in the earlier year. Trade with the British Isles and the Continent decreased appreciably in 1784 compared with 1768. In the latter year, thirty-seven vessels departed for Britain while eleven left for the Continent. In 1768 Naval Officers of the Upper and Lower James districts cleared an adjusted sixty-eight ships to the British Isles and ten to the Continent. Similarly, there were forty-one entries from the British Isles and ten from

³⁸Several of the missing months are for the hurricane season when maritime traffic between the Lower James and Caribbean was limited.

the Continent in 1784 compared with an adjusted sixty-seven and five respectively in 1768. The numbers of ships bound to and clearing from European ports were relatively balanced in both colonial times and after the conflict. Departures to the West Indies though, exceeded entries from the islands during both periods, resulting in a positive trade balance for Virginia merchants, planters and farmers.³⁹

There are some indications, however, that the 1784 level of port calls was not maintained at Elizabeth River District harbors during mid-decade. Analysis of 1786 customs records leads historian Peter Stewart to conclude that Elizabeth River and James River commerce in that year was only seventy-five percent of pre-war levels. Stewart's argument is supported by evidence of a decrease in York River and Eastern Shore shipping activity for the latter part of the decade, although this decline also can be attributed to other factors.⁴⁰ Examination of Virginia customs records for 1788, however, shows a dramatic increase in overseas ship movements compared with 1784. There were 512 total entrances and clearances in the Elizabeth River District in the latter year compared with 367 four years earlier.⁴¹ It thus appears that commerce on the Elizabeth and James rivers quickly returned to near pre-war levels,

³⁹Miller, 55-98; NOR, box 1148A.

⁴⁰NOR, box 1148A.

⁴¹NOR, boxes 1141, 1143-45, 1148A.

possibly declined in the mid-1780s, and then increased rapidly in the last year of the Confederation.

The York River and its tributaries, the Mattaponi and Pamunkey, did not service extensive western settlements like the James, nevertheless, their ports carried on a flourishing overseas commerce. Yorktown, at the river's mouth, could accept the largest ships and served as an entrepôt for collecting tobacco from its tributaries as well as from the James and Rappahannock rivers. Suffering great damage during the 1781 siege, Yorktown recovered sufficiently to warrant replacement of the naval office with a district customs house in 1789. West Point, at the confluence of the Mattaponi and Pamunkey, also handled large vessels and serviced the numerous smaller upriver settlements. While the York River region carried on some West Indian trade, it was primarily a leaf growing area that sent several tobacco ships to Britain annually.⁴²

The only extant customs documents for the York River District during the Confederation period, covering the months from July 1782 through September 1785, show significantly reduced maritime traffic compared with 1768. Nine tobacco ships cleared for Europe in 1784 compared with eighteen in 1768. Only six ships are recorded as departing with the leaf in the first nine months of 1785, while four carried grain and wood products to Lisbon. Post-war exports

⁴²Coakley, 36-37.

of foodstuffs and lumber products to the West Indies also appear to have been less than in colonial years as about half the number of vessels departed the York for the islands in both 1784 and 1785 compared with 1768 exits (Tables 3 and 4). Similarly, exchange with Madeira was much less frequent after the war than before. In 1768 thirty-nine vessels departed and thirty-eight entered York River ports trading in overseas commerce. In 1784 eighteen ships sailed for foreign ports and only ten cleared from overseas. In the first nine months of 1785 overseas departures totaled seventeen, while just nine entered from abroad.⁴³

York River commerce clearly did not recover from the deprivations of the war. Yorktown's wartime damage may have prompted many middle peninsula farmers to send their produce to ports on the James or directly to Norfolk for shipment abroad. Reduced tobacco shipments, however, probably reflect decreased leaf cultivation rather than utilization of neighboring harbors. Post-war imports likely declined also, as only about one-quarter of the number of ships entered the York in 1784 compared with 1768.⁴⁴ Incoming vessels were probably discharging their cargo at Norfolk rather than sailing up the Bay.

A comparable decline in post-war commerce at Eastern Bay harbors is revealed by Tables 3 and 4. Virginia's

⁴³NOR, box 1136.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Eastern Shore does not have extensive river systems like those west of the Bay, but it does possess many navigable creeks and inlets on both sides of the peninsula from which active commercial enterprise developed. Accomack County housed the naval office in colonial times, but the Virginia legislature appointed customs officers for both Accomack and Northampton counties after independence. In 1789 Virginia designated Cherrystone in Northampton County as the Shore's single naval office under the new federal government.⁴⁵

Sustained post-war maritime activity does not appear to have reached colonial era levels in the Eastern Shore's creeks and harbors. In 1768 thirteen vessels cleared to foreign ports while fourteen entered the Accomack Naval District from overseas origins. During 1781, the Shore's busiest foreign exchange year of the Confederation period, twenty-four vessels departed while fourteen entered. These wartime exits were mostly vessels carrying tobacco to the French and Dutch West Indies in exchange for specie and war-related goods. After 1781 overseas clearances and entrances never exceeded twenty-one. Throughout the 1780s Eastern Shore foreign trade gradually declined, and by 1788 Naval Officers documented only nine vessels with foreign destinations or origins.⁴⁶ This decline probably was due to a shift from tobacco to grain cultivation by Shore

⁴⁵Goldenberg, 315; Wrike, 3.

⁴⁶NOR, boxes 1135, 1138.

planters, and the increasing tendency of farmers to send foodstuffs to Norfolk for shipment overseas.

Although not a part of this study's statistical analysis, ports on Virginia's Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck rivers deserve mention since post-war foreign commerce through their harbors was significant. On the Rappahannock River, Urbanna, twenty miles from the mouth, Hobbs Hole or Tappahannock, thirty-five miles upriver, and Leeds Town and West Point, thirty and fifty miles from the Bay respectively, all accommodated 200 ton vessels. Thirty miles beyond West Point the very active commercial towns of Fredericksburg and Falmouth stood at the falls and handled a large backcountry trade from the Valley of Virginia via roadways. These fall line towns, however, could not berth the largest ships and relied on brigs and sloops to carry their produce downriver. Urbana was the official port of entry until 1789 when Tappahannock assumed ship registration responsibilities for the Rappahannock.⁴⁷ Tappahannock in 1791 was the state's fourth busiest customs office when measured by value of goods exported⁴⁸

The lower reaches of the Potomac River, Virginia's fourth major waterway, contained few trading centers but many plantation wharfs to which the largest craft brought European manufactured goods in exchange for Northern Neck

⁴⁷Coakley, 30-32; Goldenberg, 314.

⁴⁸Peterson, 309.

produce. The Yeocomico colonial naval office, and a later customs house, registered vessels in the lower river. The upriver towns of Aquia, Boyd's Hole, Colchester, and Dumfries concentrated primarily on tobacco export, but never grew very large.

The river's major port, Alexandria, lay eight miles below the falls and in 1775 had 3,000 inhabitants. Serving as a naval office and customs house from colonial days, the broad and deep harbor could accommodate the largest ships of the time. Concentrating initially on tobacco shipments, the town's merchants switched to wheat export when the northern part of the Commonwealth moved to grain cultivation. Alexandria competed with Fredericksburg for the Valley's produce, and like its southern neighbor, depended on roads for access to the interior since a series of falls blocked navigation to the town from the Potomac's upper reaches. When Alexandria merchants shifted to wheat exports, much of its trade moved to the West Indies. Most of the vessels that returned, however, did so in ballast as the Alexandria market was not large enough to accept substantial quantities of Caribbean produce.

Alexandria escaped the ravages of the Revolution due to its protected location and emerged from the conflict with a thriving commerce promoted by its access to the grain producing regions of the Valley.⁴⁹ In 1791 exports from

⁴⁹Coakley, 28-30.

Alexandria trailed only Bermuda Hundred and Norfolk in value of shipments destined for ports abroad.⁵⁰

The vast volume of overseas commerce carried on by Virginia planters and merchants would normally have led to the growth of one or a few major trading centers similar to those that developed in other states. However, the extensive penetration to Virginia's interior by the James, York, Rappahannock, and Potomac rivers encouraged a decentralized commercial system where vessels frequently bypassed the natural ports of Hampton Roads and Yorktown, and proceeded directly to upriver destinations. By the Revolution, though, Norfolk was gradually emerging as the Lower Bay's entrepôt. Quickly rising from ashes after the war, Norfolk reestablished its position as one of the Commonwealth's dominate ports, particularly for commercial exchange with the West Indies. It is likely that the post-war decline of Eastern Shore and York River overseas produce shipments was in part due to Norfolk's continued development as the Lower Chesapeake's premier harbor. At the same time, traders from the numerous ports along the James began sending through Norfolk many of their commodities for foreign destinations, although they continued to dispatch for Europe dozens of tobacco ships annually.

Due to a lack of records after 1788, it is not possible to measure exactly individual port activity in the

⁵⁰Peterson, 309.

Early National period. Estimates of entries at Norfolk from foreign ports are 356 in 1800, 369 in 1801, 453 in 1802, and 484 in 1804. Clearances from Norfolk to overseas destinations are thought to have been 307 in 1798, 405 in 1799, 422 in 1800, and 448 in 1801.⁵¹ Other evidence also suggests that Norfolk continued to increase its dominance of Lower Chesapeake foreign commerce. Merchants from fall line towns increasingly sent goods in small boats to Norfolk for export abroad. They either kept large ships on the Elizabeth or shipped overseas through Norfolk merchants. Norfolk shipyards were also booming in the early 1800s, building vessels for Chesapeake and Philadelphia merchants. Congress too advanced Norfolk's cause. In an attempt to curtail smuggling, the federal legislature enacted a law forbidding inbound ships from entering the James and York rivers without first picking up a Naval Officer at Norfolk. Norfolk's fortunes also increased at Alexandria's expense, when after suffering severe losses due to ship seizures by belligerents, the Potomac port's population was decimated in 1803 by a yellow fever epidemic.⁵²

Norfolk's ascendancy was not without difficulty as the town's merchants suffered at the hands of the belligerents

⁵¹W. S. Forest, *Sketches of Norfolk and Vicinity* (Philadelphia: 1853), 101-02, 107-08, 115, quoted in Cecil Llewellyn Blackwell, "The Rise Of The Port Of Norfolk And Its Decline As A Result Of The Embargo Of 1807 And The War Of 1812, 1680-1815," (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1959), 25.

⁵²Losse, 168-73.

as well, loosing thirteen vessels to French and Spanish privateers between 1803 and 1805 alone. An 1804 fire destroyed most of the town's commercial district and several ships in the harbor. Despite these setbacks, Norfolk remained the Commonwealth's premier port and chief harbor for foreign commerce even after the 1807 embargo temporarily crippled Virginia commerce and the War of 1812 brought overseas trade to a halt.⁵³

Trade Routes

Even though Lower Bay merchants concentrated their foreign trade enterprises in major Virginia harbors in the post-Revolution years, they dispatched their vessels to an expanding number of foreign ports. Virginia colonial trade was limited for the most part to Great Britain and her island possessions. In the war years legal commerce with these destinations was forbidden, forcing Virginia shippers to broaden their operations to the French, Dutch, Spanish, and Danish colonies. Extending their trade routes even further after the war, Virginia merchants also reentered into limited commercial exchange with the Crown's Caribbean islands in spite of official British restrictions against port calls by American vessels.

All belligerents opened their home and overseas ports to American ships during the European war years, and Lower

⁵³Ibid., 173-76.

Chesapeake merchants, while mostly avoiding the reexport trade, still increased dramatically their shipments of domestic produce to Europe and Caribbean destinations. Even with subsequent suspension of a key maritime provision, the diplomatic efforts of John Jay further enhanced Virginia traders access to Britain's West Indian islands. While Congressional failure to impose discriminating duties on British imports and tariffs on exports in British bottoms was resented by Lower Chesapeake merchants, they maintained their profitable trade at high levels during most years of the 1793-1812 period.

Maritime commerce was the lifeblood of the British-American colonies in the century before the Revolution, and the Atlantic trading routes between the mother country and her possessions were the most-heavily plied ocean highways in the world. More than one-third of all English imports were from the American colonies, while almost half of Britain's exports were destined for her Atlantic possessions. In limiting trade within Britain's colonial empire to British and colonial vessels, the Navigation Acts prohibited the shipping of most colonial commodities directly to other countries. But within the empire, few restrictions encumbered free competition for marine transport services.

Trade between the British Isles and the North American colonies was generally carried out by ships sailing a regular direct route, particularly those on the Britain-

Virginia shuttle. Convoys of up to two hundred ships were often formed to protect vessels transiting between the mother country and her Virginia and West Indian colonies. Chesapeake tobacco vessels gathered at the river mouths and proceeded in small groups down the Bay to Hampton Roads where they departed for Britain under the protection of Crown warships. Virginia merchants also conducted a modest exchange of foodstuffs for wine with the Canary Islands and Madeira during the colonial period.⁵⁴

The Royal Navy did not, however, provide similar protection for ships trading between the North American and West Indian colonies, resulting in the loss to privateers and pirates of a great number of vessels plying that route.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, by the Revolution, Virginians had established large and profitable markets throughout the British islands which produced the capital Americans needed to purchase European manufactures.

The Lower Chesapeake had a flourishing colonial trading enterprise in the immediate pre-Revolutionary years. An analysis of ships entering and clearing four lower Virginia naval office districts for overseas ports in 1768 (Table 3) reveals a thriving commerce with Britain from the Lower James River, Upper James River, and York River

⁵⁴Arthur Pierce Middleton, "The Chesapeake Convoy System, 1662-1763," *The William And Mary Quarterly* 3 (April 1946): 182-205.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

districts. Not surprisingly, merchants trading from the Eastern Shore's Accomack district, limited by population and quantity of produce, had no direct exchange with the British Isles, although the naval office did clear three vessels to the European continent. Lower and Upper James River Naval Officers also entered and cleared several ships to the Continent. Upper James merchants and planters traded primarily with the British Isles while those served by the Lower James district conducted the majority of their commerce with the West Indies. On the York River, slightly more ships sailed for and entered from the Caribbean than Britain, although tonnage carried to and from the British Isles was much greater than that exchanged with the islands.

All four southern Virginia districts, though, registered substantial commerce with the British West Indies, particularly Antigua and Barbados. Trade with the non-British Caribbean islands was very limited and was exceeded by that with Madeira. Examination of data on which Table 3 is based also confirms the prevalence of shuttle routes for vessels calling on these Lower Chesapeake harbors as many ships entered from and cleared to the same ports on a regular basis.⁵⁶

While direct legal trade with the British islands was curtailed during the Revolutionary War, smuggling and indirect exchange with these Crown possessions continued.

⁵⁶Miller, 105-110.

Chesapeake wartime commerce, severely restricted by the British, was about one-fourth to one-half that of colonial years.⁵⁷ Official records of Virginia port entrances and clearances during the early years of the Revolutionary War were either not kept or have been lost; however, customs documents for the last six months of 1780 and all of 1781 are available for the Eastern Shore districts. These records and other evidence suggest that each year during the hostilities large numbers of Chesapeake vessels avoided the periodic Royal Navy blockade and British privateers in making their way down the Bay and through the Virginia Capes to the West Indies.⁵⁸

France and Spain opened their colonial islands to American commerce early in the war and Chesapeake merchants and planters continued sending Virginia commodities to the Caribbean throughout the conflict. The Commonwealth also sent many of its Navy ships to the islands for military stores, salt and other essentials, paying for them with tobacco and foodstuffs. Martinique and St. Eustatia were favorite destinations as Virginia and Maryland jointly established commercial agents at those ports to represent their interests. Between June 1780 and December 1781 ten vessels departed Accomack and two Northampton for these islands, all carrying tobacco. St. Croix was also a popular

⁵⁷Eller, 30-32.

⁵⁸NOR, box 1135.

destination for Eastern Shore tobacco ships during the late war years as eleven ships sailed for that Danish island during the same eighteen month period. Additionally, Curacao in the Netherlands Antilles was listed as the destination of seven departing vessels from Shore creeks in the months leading up to Yorktown.⁵⁹

With the cessation of hostilities, Lower Chesapeake merchants immediately resumed the tobacco trade with the British Isles, and in addition, exported the leaf directly to Spain, France, and the Netherlands. At the same time, smaller quantities of the staple were shipped to the Caribbean islands that had imported it during the war. Most tobacco shipments continued to originate at Upper and Lower James River ports, although a few vessels departed from the York River and the Eastern Shore.

James Madison's 1785 assertion that Americans had been "robbed" of commerce with the West Indies did not accurately depict conditions on the Lower Bay. The war had opened most of the non-British Caribbean to Virginia merchants and, despite restrictions, traders increased exchange with these islands during the Confederation period. In addition to the islands of Martinique, St. Eustatia, Curacao, and St. Croix which were favored during the war, Virginia merchants shipped foodstuffs, wood products, and limited quantities of tobacco to Guadeloupe, Hispaniola, St. Lucia, St. Martins,

⁵⁹Ibid.

St. Thomas, and Tobago. Table 4 shows that the 1783 Order-in-Council restricting American trade with the British islands had only a limited effect in keeping Virginia ships out of His Majesty's Caribbean harbors.⁶⁰ In 1784 there were seventy-eight clearances to the British West Indies from Lower Chesapeake ports, at least thirty of which, or forty percent, were Virginia or other American-owned vessels. Similarly, twenty of sixty-two ships entering Lower Bay naval office districts from the British islands the same year were American.⁶¹

During the Confederation era as in the colonial period, the majority of vessels clearing and entering Virginia naval office districts were those on direct shuttle routes between the Lower Bay and the West Indies. Sloops of thirty to seventy tons burden frequently made several trips annually, bound to and returning from different island harbors on each voyage. Generally, ships on the Atlantic run were much larger and made one round trip between Europe and the Lower Chesapeake in a year, although occasionally a vessel did make two cruises. Rarely did ships enter from the Caribbean and then depart for the British Isles or the Continent.

⁶⁰The Crown permitted colonial governors to open their island ports to foreign shipping for periods of up to six months if conditions warranted.

⁶¹The actual number of American owned ships is probably slightly higher since in 1784 only the Elizabeth River District documented the nationality of vessel ownership.

In 1793 all European belligerents opened their harbors to American vessels and Virginia shippers carried on an active commerce with Britain, the Continent, and the Caribbean islands during the long European wars. With official customs records lost for the 1793-1812 years, quantification of destinations and origins of ships calling at Lower Chesapeake ports can not be made. However, newspaper accounts of Norfolk ships and others clearing the port reveal such destinations and origins as London, Liverpool, Scotland, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Madeira, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Africa, Nova Scotia, Bermuda, Havana, and the British, French, and Dutch West Indies. This evidence suggests that during the European conflict, Virginia merchants continued their maritime trade with ports that had become familiar to them during and after the Revolution.⁶²

It appears that Lower Chesapeake shippers did not extensively pursue the reexport trade so profitable to other American maritime interests during the European war years. Reexport merchants imported to the United States West Indian produce, paid a small net duty after receiving a drawback, and then exported the cargo to the Continent and British Isles. Goods thus reexported were considered neutral, and ostensibly could enter ports of warring nations duty free. Commonwealth reexports were insignificant compared with

⁶²Losse, 169-175; *Norfolk Gazette and Public Ledger*, 25 and 30 October 1804 quoted in Blackwell, 26.

overseas shipments of domestic goods, accounting for less than ten percent of total exports during most years.⁶³

Independence and the American victory at Yorktown brought freedom from the British Navigation Acts and Lower Chesapeake merchants responded enthusiastically by broadening their shipping routes beyond the British empire while still maintaining commercial ties with the former mother country and her Caribbean islands. Virginians continued a prosperous domestic trade with foreign ports throughout the 1790s and early 1800s despite constantly changing navigation restrictions and frequent vessel seizures by warring European powers. Madison's claims to the contrary, Virginia shippers clearly found other profitable channels to export the Commonwealth's produce.

Lower Chesapeake maritime enterprise changed dramatically in the three decades after Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown. Although merchants exported the Commonwealth's tobacco, foodstuffs, forest products, naval stores, and later cotton in large quantities, the relative importance of leaf shipments declined while that of other commodities increased. The gradual emergence of Norfolk as the Lower Bay's entrepôt for foreign exchange fulfilled the wishes of Virginia statesmen at the expense of shippers in many river towns and settlements. Ineffective governmental maritime policies and mostly failed diplomatic efforts did

⁶³Pitkin, 50-56; Losse, 174-75.

not appreciably hinder the quick recovery of mercantile interests from wartime deprivation, or the reestablishment, and expansion of overseas commerce into a flourishing enterprise between the wars with Great Britain.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

After the Revolution, Lower Chesapeake commerce resembled a changing canvas as Virginia merchants gradually transformed the Commonwealth's maritime enterprise. Commodity producers and shippers quickly returned to relative affluence as early as 1784, gradually gained wealth through the remainder of the decade and first years under the Constitution, and with few exceptions, flourished from 1793 until the War of 1812.

A picture of general post-war prosperity in a vital commercial region of the fledgling United States emerges from an analysis of pre- and post-war customs records maintained by Virginia's colonial and Confederation governments. Growth was steady in the first decade after Yorktown as Lower Bay merchants sought new markets to replace declining trade with Britain and her island colonies. These shippers exchanged Virginia produce in French, Dutch, Spanish, and Danish harbors, while retaining substantial commerce with the British. Available statistical data for the early national years shows increasing expansion of Virginia's overseas trade after the beginning of the European Wars despite dozens of seizures by

the belligerents. Except for brief intervals, high levels of exchange continued until 1812.

Virginia merchants were not greatly assisted by government in their efforts to wrest from British control the commercial lifeblood of the Commonwealth. Mildly protective tariffs did not discourage large numbers of British vessels from calling at Lower Chesapeake ports, although an early act by Congress effectively excluded them from American domestic trade. At the same time, Commonwealth and federal legislatures were unwilling to promote aggressively Virginia and other American foreign shipping interests, primarily because their chances of forcefully countering British dominance were slim. Even with generally impotent governmental commercial policies, Lower Bay shippers continued to expand their enterprise until 1807. The misguided Long Embargo enacted late that year crippled for fourteen months most foreign exchange in Virginia waters and other American maritime centers. Commonwealth shipping activity recovered by 1810 and remained strong until Congress declared war on Great Britain in 1812.

American statesmen were mostly unsuccessful in establishing an open foreign commercial exchange by breaching the European navigation systems that excluded Lower Chesapeake and other American vessels from colonial West Indian ports. But with war between the European powers almost constant from 1793 until 1812, Virginians reaped the

rewards and suffered the losses of neutral shippers caught in the midst of a long Atlantic war. Jay's Anglo-American pact in 1794 and the Franco-American Convention of Mortefontaine in 1800 were helpful in temporarily reducing tensions caused by extensive seizures of American vessels by the belligerents. Jay's Treaty also induced the first crack in the British mercantile system and greatly benefitted Lower Bay commerce as the Crown's island possessions were opened de facto to American ships. Despite Virginia shippers' general avoidance of the carrying trade, entrances and clearances at Norfolk around 1800 are estimated to be notably higher than those recorded in colonial and Confederation periods and suggest a thriving regional domestic commerce with Europe and the Caribbean.

In the first three decades after the 1783 Treaty of Paris officially ended the Revolution, Virginians continued to export tobacco, foodstuffs, timber, and naval stores as they had in colonial years. Increased cotton exports partially compensated for declining tobacco shipments caused by soil exhaustion and a shift to grain cultivation. Exports to the Caribbean of foodstuffs and forest products rose spectacularly and remained high during the European conflict. For most years during these wars, values of Lower Chesapeake domestic exports were double pre-1793 levels and enabled Virginia merchants to increase their favorable balance of trade with the West Indies.

The post-war years also found Commonwealth maritime

interests shifting from a decentralized colonial distribution pattern to a system where foreign exchange was concentrated at a few major ports. Alexandria, Richmond, and Norfolk aggressively pursued overseas commerce after the Revolution, but over time, Norfolk garnered the majority of Lower Chesapeake foreign exchange. By the early nineteenth century the Elizabeth River town emerged as the state's entrepôt for exports as merchants of Richmond and other river shipping centers increasingly floated their produce to the Hampton Roads harbor for shipment to overseas destinations, particularly the West Indies.

Lower Chesapeake foreign commerce was a flourishing enterprise for maritime interests during the period between the American wars with Great Britain. Benjamin Franklin's 1784 observations on the general state of economic affairs reflected accurately conditions in Virginia's major ports immediately after the Revolution. In the years following, Virginia merchants built on that foundation a thriving shipping industry that continued for almost three decades.

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APPENDIX A

NUMBER OF VESSELS INVOLVED IN TRADE, 1768 AND 1784

Data for Table 3 is selected from: Beverly Wellings Miller, "The Export Trade Of Four Colonial Virginia Ports," (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1967), 32-98, 107-110.

Data for Table 4 is compiled from: The Library of Virginia Archives, Entry 300, General Records, Naval Officers, 1778, 1780-1789, Record Group 48, boxes 1135-36, 1138, 1141, 1143-45, 1148A.

TABLE 3

Number of Vessels from Four Virginia Naval Office Districts
Involved in Trade with Individual Overseas Ports in 1768
(B = bound to, C = cleared from)

	Accomack		Lower James*		Upper James		York	
	B	C	B	C	B	C	B	C
British Isles	0	0	10	15	54	48	18	14
adjustment			[4]	[4]				
Continent	3	0	3	3	6	1	0	0
adjustment			[1]	[1]				
West Indies & Atlantic								
Britain								
Antigua	0	4	17	7	4	5	2	2
Bahamas	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0
Barbados	8	4	22	5	13	6	14	13
Bermuda	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	1
Dominica	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Grenada	0	0	10	2	0	1	0	0
Jamaica	0	0	5	8	1	2	0	0
Nevis	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0
St. Kitts	0	0	7	5	0	0	1	2
St. Vincents	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
France								
Martinique	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
St. Martins	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Netherlands								
Curacoa	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
St. Eustatia	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spain & Portugal								
Honduras	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Madeira	0	1	4	1	4	4	4	5
Canary Isles	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total W.I. & Atlantic	10	14	72	39	22	20	21	24
adjustment			[60]	[30]				

* Records for the following periods are missing:

April

May

June 1-14

July 16-31

August-November

December 1-26

Numbers in brackets are an estimate of the number of additional vessels that probably called at the port during the missing periods.

TABLE 4

Number of Vessels from Four Virginia Naval Office Districts
Involved in Trade with Individual Overseas Ports in 1784
(B = bound to, C = cleared from, [#] = American Vessels)

	Accomack & Northampton		Elizabeth River		York River	
	B	C	B	C	B	C
British Isles	0	0	37[12]	41[7]	7	1
Continent	0	1	11[4]	10[5]	2	0
West Indies & Atlantic						
Britain						
Antigua	0	0	17[4]	11[3]	4	1
Bahamas	1	0	2[2]	3[1]	0	0
Barbados	0	0	13[5]	4[1]	0	0
Bermuda	2	0	7[1]	9[1]	0	0
Dominica	0	0	3[2]	0	0	0
Grenada	0	1	6[3]	9[3]	0	0
Jamaica	0	0	9[4]	7[2]	0	0
Nevis	0	0	0	1[1]	0	0
Nova Scotia	0	1	4	8[1]	0	0
St. Kitts	0	0	6[4]	6[2]	0	0
St. Vincents	0	0	1[1]	2[1]	0	0
Other	0	0	5[4]	7[5]	2	0
Denmark						
St. Croix	0	0	3[3]	1[1]	0	0
St. Thomas	0	0	3[3]	2[2]	1	0
France						
Guadeloupe	2	3	9[8]	5[4]	0	0
Hispaniola						
Cap Francois	0	0	1[1]	3[3]	0	1
Hispaniola	0	0	13[13]	5[4]	0	0
Port Au Prince	0	0	8[8]	16[13]	0	0
Martinique	2	1	5[3]	5[5]	1	2
St. Lucia	0	0	2[2]	1[1]	0	0
St. Martins	0	0	6[3]	4[1]	0	2
Netherlands						
Curacao	1	0	1[1]	2[2]	0	0
St. Eustatia	4	2	14[13]	10[10]	0	1
Spain & Portugal						
Florida	0	0	2	0	0	0
Honduras	0	0	1	0	0	0
Madeira	0	0	0	1[1]	1	2
Tobago	0	0	3[3]	0	0	0
Canary Isles	0	0	0	0[1]	0	0
Total W.I. & Atlantic	12	8	144[91]	124[69]	9	9

APPENDIX B

NAVAL OFFICER RECORDS

Documentation presented is compiled from: The Library of Virginia Archives, Entry 300, General Records, Naval Officers, 1778, 1780-1789, Record Group 48, boxes 1135-36, 1138, 1141, 1143-45, 1148A.

NAVAL OFFICE DISTRICT: ELIZABETH RIVER						
YEAR: 1784						
* KNOWN TO BE VIRGINIA OR OTHER AMERICAN VESSEL						
DATE	VESSEL	MASTER	BOUND TO	CLEARED FROM	TONS	CARGO
1/1/84	PILGRIM	JOHN GRIMES	ST. MARTINS		24	PLANK, SCANTLING, SHINGLES
1/3/84	NELLY	MARK MCPHERSON	ST. MARTINS		20	CORN, PEAS, STAVES
1/10/84	INDUSTRY *	JOHN COOK		PORT AU PRINCE	60	SUGAR, COFFEE, MOLASSES
1/10/84	CHRISTIANSTEAD *	JOHN WHITNEY		PORT AU PRINCE	75	SUGAR, COFFEE, MOLASSES
1/13/84	HAPPY RETURN *	GEORGE CHAMBERLAIN		MARTINIQUE	50	RUM, COFFEE
1/13/84	FRIENDLY ADVENTURE *	SOLOMON YALTUS	JAMAICA		200	LUMBER
1/25/84	HECTOR *	CHARLES BURHNELL		NEVIS	60	RUM
1/25/84	ANTONIETTA	GOTFRIED PRIESZ		LISBON	160	SALT, WINE
1/25/84	VENUS *	JAMES BRATELL		CAP FRANCOIS	110	RUM, SUGAR, MOLASSES
1/27/84	SAMUEL *	MAURICE STARK		ST. THOMAS	120	RUM
2/3/84	THOMAS *	THOMAS KELLEY		ST. KITTS	75	RUM, SUGAR, SALT
2/4/84	BETSEY	SAM WESTEOTT		ST. MARTINS	35	SALT, RUM, SUGAR
2/5/84	PEGGY	CHARLES MCDONALD		SHELBURNE	75	BALLAST
2/6/84	THEBIS	JAMES SCOTT		GLASGOW	140	
2/7/84	TALBOT *	CHRISTOPHER GARDNER	ST. EUSTATIA		50	TOBACCO, LUMBER
2/9/84	FANNY	JAMES YOUNG		MONTSERRAT	75	RUM
2/9/84	MARYANNA	RICHARD CARROL		NANTES	100	
2/9/84	MARY *	JOSEPH BUIFRON		PORT AU PRINCE	60	SUGAR, COFFEE, MOLASSES
2/18/84	NYMPH	JOHN SMITH		HALLIFAX	60	BALLAST

2/20/84	SUFFOLK	* JAMES MORRIS	ST. KITTS		100	
2/21/84	TRUE BLUE	GEORGE CUMMING	ANTIGUA		15	PEAS, CORN, LUMBER
2/24/84	MONTGOMERY	SAM TYNES		ST. KITTS	80	SUGAR, SALT
2/26/84	FREDERICK	* JOHN WILLIAMS		ST. THOMAS	96	SUGAR, COFFEE, RUM
2/27/84	THOMASIN	EDWARD KNIGHT		LONDON	210	SUGAR, WINE
3/1/84	NEPTUNE	* RICHARD DAVIS		ST. MARTINS	120	SUGAR, SALT, RUM
3/3/84	DOLPHIN	* WALTER WILLIS		CAP FRANCOIS	45	SUGAR, COFFEE, MOLASSES
3/3/84	ABBY	* ROBERT PATTON	ST. EUSTATIA		35	TAR, TURPENTINE, LUMBER
3/3/84	FANNY	JAMES YOUNG	ANTIGUA		75	PORK, LUMBER
3/4/84	CAESAR	PETER WADE		BRISTOL	200	SUGAR, RUM, WINE
3/7/84	ST. GEORGE	GEORGE ROBINSON		BERMUDA	75	COFFEE, SUGAR, SALT
3/8/84	YORK	* JOHN BULL		BREMEN	270	
3/8/84	DOLPHIN	* JOSEPH FOSTER	BARBADOS		82	FLOUR, BREAD, LUMBER
3/10/84	EIGHTY THREE	* PETER SCOTT	ANTIGUA		90	BREAD, FLOUR, PORK
3/10/84	MARY	PETER HAMILTON	MONTEGO BAY		100	LUMBER
3/13/84	ADVENTURE	WILLIAM LYONS	ANTIGUA		75	FLOUR, CORN, TAR
3/13/84	HARLOTT	* JOHN CUNNINGHAM	ST. EUSTATIA		40	TOBACCO
3/15/84	PENELOPE	JOHN CANTERBURY		ANTIGUA	75	SUGAR, SOAP, RUM
3/16/84	PRISCILLA	* JAMES COFFIN		CADIZ	130	WINE, SALT
3/19/84	PERSEVERANCE	HENRY KING		JAMAICA	20	SUGAR, COFFEE, RUM
3/20/84	VIRGINIA	* THOMAS DICKENSON		PORT AU RPINCE	60	SUGAR, RUM
3/20/84	SALLY	PETER MAIN	ST. AUGUSTINE		20	FLOUR, BREAD

3/22/84	SALLY	*	ISAIAH KELE		PORT AU PRINCE	65	SUGAR, MOLASSES, SALT
3/27/84	INDUSTRY	*	JOHN KING	BARBADOS		60	LUMBER
3/27/84	HARRISON		ROBERT BARRON	BARBADOS		70	LUMBER
3/27/84	PATSEY		JOHN HUNTER	BARBADOS		60	LUMBER
3/27/84	HECTOR	*	CHARLES BUSHNELL	DOMINICA		60	LUMBER
3/30/84	FILICITY		JAMES RIDLEY	JAMAICA		70	LUMBER
3/31/84	PITSON		JOHN CURWIN		LIVERPOOL	360	
4/3/84	MARY	*	JOHN COX	HISPANIOLA		80	LUMBER
4/4/84	GLASGOW		JAMES PATRICK		JAMAICA	101	RUM
4/5/84	VENUS	*	JAMES HICKAND	HISPANIOLA		80	SHINGLES
4/6/84	PATSEY	*	DAVID BILGOE	ST. CROIX		90	STAVES, SHINGLES
4/6/84	SALLY	*	ISAIAH KELE	HISPANIOLA		64	SHINGLES, BACON
4/7/84	TALBOT	*	CHRISTOPHER GARDNER		ST. EUSTATIA	50	COFFEE, SUGAR, RUM
4/7/84	FAIR AMERICAN	*	JAMES BRADSHAW		HISPANIOLA	80	SUGAR, SALT, RUM
4/7/84	TERRY		THOMAS TOLSON		GLASGOW	120	EUROPEAN GOODS
4/7/84	NANCY	*	JOHN BROWN	HISPANIOLA			LUMBER
4/9/84	HANSFORD		JAMES CLUNIE		BERMUDA	80	
4/9/84	ELIZA		JOHN GIBSON		ANTIGUA	60	SUGAR, RUM
4/9/84	FAVOURITE		JOHN RYAN		BARBADOS	70	SUGAR, RUM
4/9/84	CATHERINE	*	DAVID DEAS	LONDON		100	TOBACCO
4/9/84	GOOD INTENT	*	JAMES RAPHEL	KINCUTHBRIGHT		103	
4/10/84	CAESAR		PETER WADE	HONDURAS		200	TOBACCO, LUMBER

4/10/84	FREDERICK	*	JOHN WILLIAMS	ST. EUSTATIA		96	STAVES, SHINGLES
4/13/84	HENRY	*	ARCHIBALD GUNNELL		TENERIFE	40	WINE
4/13/84	FRIENDS GLORY	*	THOMAS BROWN	HISPANIOLA		250	LUMBER, SHINGLES, STAVES
4/15/84	ST. THOMAS	*	WILLIAM KIRKLEY	CORK		150	TOBACCO, STAVES
4/19/84	NELLY	*	JOSEPH WHITE	KINCUTHBRIGHT		30	TOBACCO
4/22/84	HAPPY RETURN	*	GEORGE CHAMBERLAIN	MARTINIQUE		50	STAVES, SHINGLES
4/23/84	PEGGY	*	DAN ROBINSON	JAMAICA		70	STAVES, SHINGLES
4/24/84	PHOENIX	*	SAM TUCKER	ST. EUSTATIA		40	STAVES, SHINGLES
4/24/84	PENELOPE		JOHN CANTERBURY	ANTIGUA		75	LUMBER
4/24/84	JACK AND LUCKY	*	JOHN BRAMBLE	ST. EUSTATIA		120	LUMBER, STAVES, SHINGLES
4/26/84	RECOVERY	*	WILLIAM GRIMES	ST. CROIX		86	SCANTLING, SHINGLES
4/27/84	CHRISTIANSTEAD	*	JOHN WHITNEY	PORT AU PRINCE		79	LUMBER
4/28/84	JOHN & BELLA		THOMAS GIBSON		LIVERPOOL	147	SUGAR, SALT, RUM
4/28/84	SAMUEL	*	WILLIAM STARK	ST. EUSTATIA		120	LUMBER, STAVES, SHINGLES
4/29/84	FANNY		THEODORE HINSON		GRENADA	40	RUM, SUGAR
4/29/84	PORCUPINE		GEORGE LIGHTFOOT		JAMAICA	100	RUM
4/30/84	CORMORANT		ISAAC HUTCHINGS		JAMAICA	120	RUM, SUGAR
4/30/84	UNITED STATES	*	WILLIAM PEARSON	AMSTERDAM		110	TOBACCO, STAVES
5/1/84	HANSFORD		JAMES CLUNIE	ANTIGUA		80	TURPENTINE
5/2/84	CHARLESTON PACKETT	*	THOMAS MELVILL	LONDON		40	TOBACCO
5/2/84	ROBIN HOOD	*	JAMES BISHOP	LONDON		140	TOBACCO
5/3/84	IRIS		THOMAS DOUGLAS		LONDON	100	EUROPEAN GOODS

5/4/84	ABBY	*	ROBERT PATTON		ST. EUSTATIA	35	RUM
5/4/84	FAIR AMERICAN	*	JAMES BRADSHAW	ST. MARTINS		80	LUMBER
5/5/84	GOVERNOR HARRISON		THOMAS WILLIAMSON		LONDON	100	EUROPEAN GOODS
5/5/84	THEBIS		JAMES SCOTT	GLASGOW		140	TOBACCO
5/6/84	WILLIAM	*	THOMAS CALONTS		PORT AU PRINCE	60	MOLASSES, COFFEE
5/7/84	WILSON		ALLEN THOMPSON	LIVERPOOL		170	TOBACCO, TURPENTINE, STAVES
5/8/84	JANE		THOMAS STOWE		BERMUDA	50	BALLAST
5/8/84	CORNWALLIS		EPHRAM FERNHAM		JAMAICA	80	RUM
5/8/84	ANN		ALEX AULE		GLASGOW	180	WINE, CORDAGE
5/8/84	HOPE		WILLIAM BRUCE		ANTIGUA	130	RUM, SUGAR
5/8/84	YORK	*	ISAAC WINTWORTH	LIVERPOOL		132	TIMBER, TAR
5/10/84	PROVIDENCE		JOHN BARRELL		LONDON	60	EUROPEAN GOODS
5/10/84	FANNY	*	THOMAS LINGOR	CURACAO		45	TOBACCO, FLOUR, PEAS
5/11/84	FRIENDSHIP		WILLIAM JONES		BERMUDA	20	CORDAGE
5/11/84	PROSPERITY		WILLIAM JACKSON		WHITEHAVEN	110	SALT
5/13/84	COUNT DE GRASS	*	ISAAC ALLEN		ST. EUSTATIA	50	RUM, SUGAR
5/13/84	VIRGINIA	*	JOHN ASKEW		LONDON	200	EUROPEAN GOODS
5/13/84	HARLOTT	*	JOHN CUNNINGHAM		ST. EUSTATIA	40	SUGAR, RUM
5/14/84	ROBERT		THOMAS JOHNSTON		LONDON	180	EUROPEAN GOODS
5/14/84	FRIENDSHIP		DAN MORGAN	BERMUDA		45	PROVISIONS, BOARDS
5/17/84	TALBOT	*	A. APPLEWHITE	ST. EUSTATIA		50	SCANTILING, SHINGLES
5/17/84	ANN		JOSEPH DAUGHTRY	DUBLIN		80	TOBACCO, DEERSKINS

5/18/84	HARD TIMES	SETH HARVEY		GEORGE TOWN	60	SALT
5/19/84	PALLAS *	THOMAS TINGRY		GEORGE TOWN	200	BALLAST
5/19/84	ELIZA	JOHN GIBSON	ANTIGUA		60	CORN, FLOUR
5/19/84	JANE	THOMAS STOWE	BERMUDA		50	TAR, TIMBER
5/19/84	HOPE *	SAM LIVINGSTON	DUBLIN		120	TOBACCO, SNAKE ROOT
5/21/84	LOUISA *	WILLIAM GOODWIN	ST. THOMAS		50	FLOUR
5/21/84	TWO FRIENDS *	SAM TYNES	ST. KITTS		80	STAVES, SHINGLES, FLOUR
5/21/84	FAVOURITE	JOHN RYAN	BARBADOS		70	SUNDRY PROVISIONS
5/24/84	DOLPHIN	WALTER WILLIS	MARTINIQUE		45	LUMBER
5/25/84	CININNATUS *	WILLIAM LARGEANT	LONDON		140	TOBACCO
5/25/84	PALLAS *	THOMAS TINGRY	AMSTERDAM		200	TOBACCO
5/27/84	RAWLINS	THOMAS FRYER		ST. KITTS	100	RUM
5/27/84	GRANGE	WILLIAM KINNIER		LISBON	150	EUROPEAN GOODS
5/27/84	JUFFRAU MARIA	D. VANDER WOLF	ROTTERDAM		138	TOBACCO
5/27/84	MOLLY	JOHN LIVINGSTON	MARTINIQUE		60	SHINGLES
5/28/84	FANNY	T. HINSON	GRENADA		40	SHINGLES
5/28/84	FRIENDSHIP	WILLIAM JONES	BERMUDA		20	TIMBER
5/28/84	DOLPHIN	THOMAS AMISON	GRENADA		50	SHINGLES, STAVES
5/28/84	HOPE	JOHN GIBSON	ANTIGUA		180	CORN, WHEAT, FLOUR
5/28/84	POCAHANTIS *	BENJAMIN FORSYTHE	ANTIGUA		50	STAVES
5/29/84	ABBY *	JOHN GRIFFIN	GUADELOUPE		35	FLOUR, CORN
5/29/84	POLLY *	WILLIAM MOSLEY	MARTINIQUE		80	LUMBER

5/29/84	ST. GEORGE	GEORGE ROBINSON	BERMUDA		70	BREAD, SHINGLES
5/31/84	ASHLEY	EDWARD SMITH		LIVERPOOL	110	EUROPEAN GOODS
5/31/84	VENUS	* JOHN RICHARD		NICOLA MOLE	80	SALT, MOLASSES
6/3/84	VIRGINIA	* E. SMITH	CADIZ		60	TAR, TURPENTINE
6/4/84	TERRY	THOMAS TOLSON	GLASGOW		120	TOBACCO
6/8/84	PITSON	JOHN CURWIN	LIVERPOOL		360	TOBACCO, TAR
6/11/84	FLYING FISH	* RICHARD WOODS	ST. EUSTATIA		50	TIMBER, STAVES
6/11/84	GLASGOW	JAMES PATRICK	BRISTOL		101	TOBACCO
6/12/84	NEPTUNE	* THOMAS MAXWELL	HISPANIOLA		160	TIMBER, PLANK, STAVES
6/15/84	CORNWALLIS	E. FERNHAM	GRENADA		80	SHINGLES
6/17/84	BETSEY	* DUGAL MCLEON	PORT ROSEMARY		40	TURPENTINE, TAR
6/18/84	NEPTUNE	* RICHARD DAVIS	ST. MARTINS		120	FLOUR, TOBACCO
6/23/84	HAPPY RETURN	* GEORGE CHAMBERLAIN		MARTINIQUE	50	RUM
6/23/84	HARLOTT	* JOHN CUNNINGHAM	GRENADA		40	SHINGLES, FLOUR
6/23/84	PEGGY	* CHARLES MCDONALD	BARBADOS		75	SHINGLES, FLOUR
6/24/84	ANN	* PAUL OWINS	ST. EUSTATIA		70	SHINGLES, FLOUR, STAVES
6/28/84	FRIENDSHIP	SAMUEL MILFORD		NEW BRUNSWICK	200	EUROPEAN GOODS
6/29/84	JACK AND LUCKY	* JOHN BRAMBLE		ST. EUSTATIA	30	RUM, SUGAR, MOLASSES
6/30/84	ATTEMPT	NATHANIEL BARDEN		ST. KITTS	15	RUM, MOLASSES
6/30/84	BETSEY	SAM WESCOTT	ST. MARTINS		35	SHINGLES
7/1/84	MIDAY	JOHN RICHMOND		PORT AU PRINCE	80	RUM, COFFEE, SUGAR
7/3/84	MARY	* THOMAS TIMSON	ST. EUSTATIA		25	SHINGLES, STAVES

7/3/84	MARYANNA		RICHARD CARROL	HARVE DE GRACE		180	TOBACCO
7/3/84	RAWLINS		THOMAS FRYER	ST. KITTS		100	STAVES
7/3/84	RECOVERY	*	WILLIAM GRIMES		ST. CROIX	80	RUM
7/5/84	WILLIAM	*	WILLIAM HONEY	ST. LUCIA		60	LUMBER
7/5/84	FRIENDSHIP		DAN MORGAN		BERMUDA	45	
7/5/84	REVOLUTION	*	JOHN COX		GUADELOUPE	80	SUGAR, MOLASSES, RUM
7/6/84	PROVIDENCE		JOHN BARRELL	LONDON		60	TOBACCO
7/6/84	PORCUPINE		GEORGE LIGHTFOOT	LIVERPOOL		100	TOBACCO
7/7/84	TWO SISTERS	*	LOUIS HATTON	BARBADOS		45	SHINGLES
7/9/84	BUMPER	*	JAMES ELLIOTT	JAMAICA		50	WHEAT
7/9/84	BETSY RAMBLER	*	NATHANIEL COLLY		ST. EUSTATIA	40	RUM
7/11/84	LOUISA	*	WILLIAM GOODWIN		CURACOA	50	SUGAR, RUM
7/12/84	HAPPY RETURN	*	GEORGE CHAMBERLAIN	HISPANIOLA		50	SUNDRIES
7/12/84	ASHLEY		EDWARD SMITH	LIVERPOOL		110	SUNDRIES
7/14/84	VIRGINIA	*	JAMES ASKEW	LONDON		200	SUNDRIES
7/15/84	YORK		JAMES RUMON	JERSEY		80	SUNDRIES
7/15/84	SALLY	*	M. DERICKSON		GUADELOUPE	65	WINE, RUM
7/16/84	FRIENDSHIP	*	WILLIAM LEWIS	ST. THOMAS		45	SCANTLING, SHINGLES
7/17/84	PROSPERITY		WILLIAM JACKSON	WHITEHAVEN		100	SUNDRIES
7/17/84	HARD TIMES		SETH HARVEY	WEST INDIES		60	SUNDRIES
7/18/84	TALBOTT	*	PETER CUNNINGHAM		ST. KITTS	50	RUM, SALT
7/20/84	FANNY	*	W. KING	PORT AU PRINCE		20	SUNDRIES

7/23/84	RECOVERY	*	WILLIAM GRIMES	ANTIGUA		80	SUNDRIES
7/23/84	JAMES		THOMAS ROBINSON	ST. EUSTATIA		30	SUNDRIES
7/23/84	POLLY	*	WILLIAM GIBBS		MARTINIQUE		RUM
7/24/84	COUNT DE GRASS	*	ISAAC ALLEN	GUADELOUPE		50	SUNDRIES
7/24/84	ALARM	*	JOSEPH HOPKINS	GUADELOUPE		70	SUNDRIES
7/24/84	POLLY	*	JEFREY HODGES	GUADELOUPE		60	SUNDRIES
7/24/84	JACK AND LUCKEY	*	R. MONTGOMERY	BERMUDA		30	SUNDRIES
7/26/84	ISABELLA		WILLIAM YOUNG		NOVA SCOTIA	20	BALLAST
7/27/84	PROVIDENCE		M. WEATHERHEAD	LONDON		250	TOBACCO
7/27/84	MARY	*	JOHN COX	GUADELOUPE		80	SHINGLES, STAVES
7/27/84	NANCY	*	JOHN BROWN	GUADELOUPE		100	LUMBER, SHINGLES
7/30/84	SWIFT		WILLIAM BROWN	SOUTH FLORIDA		30	BREAD, MOLASSES
7/30/84	ABBY	*	JOHN GRIFFIN		ST. EUSTATIA	35	RUM, SUGAR, COFFEE
7/31/84	FANNY	*	THOMAS LINGOR		CURACOA	45	SALT
7/31/84	HARMONY	*	JOSEPH ROULE		BRISTOL	100	SUNDRY PACKAGES
7/31/84	FAIR AMERICAN	*	JAMES BRADSHAW		NICOLA MOLE	80	MOLASSES, SALT
7/31/84	MARY & ANN		WILLIAM PRAITMAN		LIVERPOOL	150	SUNDRY PACKAGES
8/4/84	HENRY		B. STEEL	DUBLIN		120	TOBACCO
8/4/84	JOLLY TARR	*	JOHN ANDERSON	PORT AU PRINCE		65	SHINGLES
8/4/84	VENUS	*	THOMAS CRYMER	PORT AU PRINCE		80	LUMBER, SHINGLES
8/6/84	FRIENDSHIP	*	BEN HAMMOND	ST. EUSTATIA			FLOUR, SHINGLES
8/6/84	GRANGE		WILLIAM KINNER	GLASGOW		150	TOBACCO, TURPENTINE, SKINS

8/6/84	NEPTUNE		PETER ELLIOTT	JAMAICA		40	SUNDRIES
8/6/84	JOLLY TARR	*	B. SHIRTLIFF	NEW PROVIDENCE		15	WHEAT, FLOUR
8/6/84	SWAN	*	P. CASARGIN	CAP FRANCOIS		53	LUMBER, SHINGLES
8/7/84	DART		WILLIAM WALLIS	ST. KITTS		50	STAVES, SHINGLES, PLANK
8/7/84	POLLY	*	WILLIAM MOSLEY		ANTIGUA	80	RUM
8/10/84	JOHN & BELLA		THOMAS GIBSON	WHITEHAVEN		147	TOBACCO
8/13/84	FRIENDSHIP		DAN MORGAN	BERMUDA		45	CORN, PEAS, BOARDS
8/13/84	PEGGY	*	M. BOURHAM	PORT AU PRINCE		75	SCANTLING, SHINGLES, TAR
8/13/84	ATTEMPT		NATHANIEL BARDEN	ST. KITTS		45	BREAD, BOARDS, STAVES
8/13/84	BEE		THOMAS DUNCAN		ANTIGUA	72	RUM, DRY GOODS
8/14/84	MINERVA	*	FRANCIS BRIGHT	ST. KITTS		70	FLOUR, SHINGLES
8/16/84	STRATFORD		WILLIAM FOLGER	LONDON		150	TOBACCO, STAVES
8/16/84	FRIENDS GLORY	*	THOMAS BROWN		PORT AU PRINCE	250	MOLASSES, SALT
8/18/84	FAME		AARON FORES		BARBADOS	70	WINE, DRY GOODS, SUGAR
8/19/84	PATSEY		CHARLES JONES	BARBADOS		60	FLOUR, BREAD, TAR
8/23/84	DOLPHIN	*	WALTER WILLIS		HISPANIOLA	45	SUGAR, RUM
8/26/84	FAIR AMERICAN	*	JAMES BRADSHAW	GUADELOUPE		70	LUMBER
8/27/84	KING FISH		H. HUTCHINGS		BERMUDA	20	RUM, SUGAR
8/31/84	AIR BALLOON	*	ROBERT ATKINSON	HISPANIOLA		50	SHINGLES
8/31/84	LIVELY		GEORGE BIRD	ISLE OF JERSEY		140	SUNDRIES
8/31/84	VENUS	*	H. TAYLOR	ANTIGUA		80	SCANTLING, SHINGLES, BOARDS
8/31/84	ADVENTURE	*	ANDREW WATSON	GRENADA		60	SCANTLING, SHINGLES, BOARDS

9/1/84	ISABELLA		WILLIAM YOUNG	SHELBURNE		20	CORN
9/2/84	ROBIN	*	JOHN BROWN	HISPANIOLA		60	TURPENTINE
9/2/84	ANNA MARIA		GEORGE AIKEN		ANTIGUA	30	RUM
9/3/84	PATSEY	*	WILLIAM WORMINGTON	BARBADOS		90	PLANK, SHINGLES, BEES WAX
9/3/84	MARY	*	THOMAS TIMSON		NICOLA MOLE	25	MOLASSES, LIMES
9/3/84	FLYING FISH	*	RICHARD WOODS		ANTIGUA	50	RUM, SUGAR
9/4/84	BETSEY	*	GEORGE ALLEY	PORT AU PRINCE		90	SCANTLING, PLANK, SHINGLES
9/4/84	MOLLY	*	ROBERT ELLIOTT		MARTINIQUE	80	RUM, SUGAR, MOLASSES
9/6/84	DAN PROCURER		THOMAS WATSON	OSTEND		200	SUNDRIES
9/6/84	EMFUROR	*	JOHN WALSH	OSTEND		110	TOBACCO
9/6/84	JENNY AND NANCEY		THOMAS GRIFFITHS		BARBADOS	49	RUM
9/6/84	MARY		JOHN ROBINSON		ANTIGUA	50	SUNDRIES
9/7/84	ANTONIETTA		G. PRIESZ	LISBON		160	SUNDRIES
9/9/84	HANSFORD		J. CLUNIE	ANTIGUA		80	CORN, SHINGLES, STAVES
9/9/84	IRIS		THOMAS DOUGLAS	LONDON		180	TOBACCO
9/9/84	LADY JANE		ISAAC NEWTON		ST. KITTS		RUM, SUGAR
9/10/84	FANNY	*	THOMAS LINGOR	ST. CROIX		45	SHINGLES, STAVES
9/11/84	LA LEWIS		LEON CHERON		NICOLA MOLE	146	SUGAR, MOLASSES
9/13/84	STARLOTT	*	P. CUNNINGHAM		TURKS ISLAND	45	SALT
9/15/84	HERCULES	*	CHARLES BUSHNELL	DOMINICA		80	CORN, SHINGLES
9/15/84	HECTOR	*	WALTER CONNER	ST. VINCINTS		60	FLOUR, PLANK, SCANTLING
9/16/84	RICHMOND		ROBERT LEE		LONDON	140	SUNDRY PACKAGES

9/17/84	CONVENTION OF DUBLIN	ROBERT WORKMAN	PORTSMOUTH		150	TOBACCO
9/17/84	MIDAY	JOHN RICHMOND	GUADELOUPE		80	TIMBER, SHINGLES
9/18/84	ANNA MARIA	GEORGE ATKINS	ANTIGUA		30	CORN, SHINGLES
9/18/84	LIBERTY *	BALEY WARREN	PORT AU PRINCE		80	SUNDRY PACKAGES
9/18/84	HANISSON	JAMES MURROW		MARTINIQUE	70	RUM, SUGAR, MOLASSES
9/18/84	JANE	THOMAS STOWE		BERMUDA	50	SALT, RUM
9/20/84	HARMONY *	JOSEPH ROULE	BRISTOL		100	TOBACCO
9/20/84	TWO SISTERS *	LOUIS HATTON		BARBADOS	45	RUM, SUGAR, COFFEE
9/21/84	NANCEY AND TAMMY	GEORGE BURIS	JAMAICA		40	SCANTLING, PLANK, SHINGLES
9/26/84	BLANDFORD	ANDREW TROOF		GALSGOW	140	SUNDRY PACKAGES
9/30/84	RECOVERY *	WILLIAM GRIMES		ANTIGUA	80	RUM
10/1/84	THOMAS *	THOMAS KELLEY	GUADELOUPE		100	STAVES, SCANTLING, SHINGLES
10/1/84	POLLY *	WILLIAM MOSLEY	ST. LUCIA		80	LUMBER
10/1/84	REFORMATION	JAMES CHAMBERS		LANGFORD	100	SUNDRY PACKAGES
10/5/84	ROBERT	ANDREW RAMSEY		GLASGOW	250	SUNDRY PACKAGES
10/5/84	JEANET	WILLIAM CHISHOLM		GLASGOW	101	SUNDRY PACKAGES
10/5/84	MARIA	JOSEPH SIMONS		SHELBURNE	25	FISH
10/6/84	LYDIA	THOMAS WATSON		GLASGOW	160	SUNDRY PAKCAGES
10/6/84	POLLY	PETER RYMER		LIVERPOOL	100	SUNDRY PACKAGES
10/6/84	THOMAS	WILLIAM WISHAY		WHITEHAVEN	140	DRY GOODS, SUGAR, WINE
10/7/84	THEBIS	JAMES RAMSEY		GLASGOW	140	WINE, DRY GOODS
10/7/84	NANCY *	CHRISTOPHER TOMPKINS		MEDEIRA	100	WINE

10/7/84	NEPTUNE	*	THOMAS MAXWELL		PORT AU PRINCE	160	MOLASSES
10/8/84	BETSEY AND POLLY	*	WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM	MARTINIQUE		40	SHINGLES
10/8/84	LA ANNABLE LOUISA		JAMES SATREYTE	MARLAIX		120	TOBACCO
10/8/84	ABBY	*	THOMAS BROWN	JAMAICA		35	SHINGLES, STAVES, SCANTLING
10/9/84	HANISSON		JAMES MURROW	BARBADOS		70	STAVES, SHINGLES
10/9/84	THOMAS	*	THOMAS COOK	PORT AU PRINCE		40	SCANTLING, SHINGLES
10/9/84	SALLY	*	P. KELLE	TOBAGO		64	SCANTLING, SHINGLES
10/11/84	ELIZABETH	*	SAM DAVIDSON		GUADELOUPE	20	SUGAR, COFFEE
10/11/84	PEGGY	*	CHARLES LANALO		GRENADA	75	RUM, SUGAR, DRY GOODS
10/11/84	NANCEY		ROBERT CRAIGHORN		NOVA SCOTIA	20	FISH
10/11/84	MERMAID		ROBERT HUNTER		GLASGOW	140	DRY GOODS
10/12/84	MOLLY	*	ROBERT ELLIOTT	TOBAGO		80	LUMBER
10/12/84	VILIGENT		FRANCIS HAY		GRENADA	90	RUM, SUGAR
10/12/84	EAGLE		HENRY FUARR		WHITEHAVEN	180	SUNDRY PACKAGES
10/12/84	SISTERS		JOHN HARTIN		BRISTOL	50	SUNDRY PACKAGES
10/13/84	DOLPHIN	*	WALTER WILLIS	HISPANIOLA		45	SCANTLING, LOGS, PLANK
10/13/84	HAPPY RETURN	*	ISAAC RICHISON	HISPANIOLA		50	FLOUR, SHINGLES
10/14/84	CHRISTIAN		JOHN BLACKBURN	PORT D' ANINT		190	TOBACCO
10/14/84	MARIA		JOSEPH LIMONS	SHELBURNE		25	OATS, CORN, FLOUR
10/16/84	ISABELLA		M. MALCOLM		SHELBURNE	20	FISH
10/18/84	HARLOTT	*	JOHN CUNNINGHAM	WEST INDIES		40	SHINGLES, SCANTLING
10/20/84	COMMERCE	*	PETER WANTON	TURKS ISLAND		68	BREAD, APPLES, CORN

10/20/84	DOVE		DAVID CHRISTAIN		LIVERPOOL	80	SUNDRY PACKAGES
10/21/84	RECOVERY	*	HUGH PRI	GRENADA		80	SCANTLING, PLANK, SHINGLES
10/22/84	TWO SISTERS	*	ROBERT HATTON	ST. MARTINS		50	SCANTLING, FLOUR, SHINGLES
10/23/84	CININNATUS	*	WILLIAM LARGEANT		LONDON	140	SUNDRY PACKAGES
10/26/84	PLANTER		WILLIAM ARTTICUS		LONDON	300	SUNDRY PACKAGES
10/27/84	LADY JANE		ISAAC NEWTON	ANTIGUA		25	CORN
10/27/84	MARY		JOHN ROBINSON	ANTIGUA		50	TAR, FLOUR, CORN
10/28/84	PHOENIX	*	SAM TUCKER	ST. EUSTATIA		40	LUMBER
10/29/84	CLOVER		JOHN HARAM		ANTIGUA	20	CORDAGE, PACKAGES
10/29/84	THOMASIN		E. KNIGHT		LONDON	210	SALT, WINE, DRY GOODS
10/30/84	NANCEY	*	JOHN BROWN		HISPANIOLA	100	SALT, MOLASSES
10/30/84	VIRGINIA	*	E. SMITH		CADIZ	80	SALT, LEMONS
11/2/84	MOLLY		JOHN WILSON	DOMINICA		50	FLOUR, CORN, SCANTLING
11/4/84	MINERVA	*	FRANCIS BRIGHT		PORT AU PRINCE	80	RUM, MOLASSES
11/5/84	ENGAGEATH	*	LOUIS BOUSHAN		PORT AU PRINCE	75	SUGAR, COFFEE, RUM
11/6/84	UNITED STATES	*	WILLIAM PEARSON		AMSTERDAM	120	SUNDRY PACKAGES
11/6/84	MARY	*	JOHN COX		NICOLA MOLE	80	MOLASSES
11/8/84	DAPHINE	*	RALPH GOFFIGAN	HISPANIOLA		90	SCANTLING, SHINGLES
11/8/84	PITSON		JAMES CURWIN		LIVERPOOL	300	SUNDRY PACKAGES
11/10/84	JOLLY TARR	*	JOHN ANDERSON		JAMAICA	65	SUGAR
11/10/84	VENUS	*	THOMAS GAYNES		JAMAICA	60	BALLAST
11/11/84	ISABELLA		M. MALCOLM	NOVA SCOTIA		20	FISH

11/13/84	NANCY		ROBERT CRAIGHORN	SHELBURNE		25	OATS, FLOUR, BREAD
11/13/84	ANN	*	JOHN CAMPBELL	ST. KITTS		70	SHINGLES, STAVES, PEAS
11/13/84	MARY	*	THOMAS TIMSON	ST. THOMAS		25	SHINGLES, STAVES
11/17/84	ROVIN		JOHN MORGAN	ANTIGUA		20	SHINGLES, STAVES, PLANK
11/17/84	WEST INDIAN	*	THOMAS COLONTS	ST. KITTS		35	SHINGLES, STAVES, CORN
11/18/84	FLYING FISH	*	JOHN BRAMBLE	HISPANIOLA		35	SHINGLES, STAVES, CORN
11/19/84	MINDETH	*	H. LIMONS		CORK	120	SUNDRY GOODS
11/22/84	THOMPSON		JOSEPH BELL		BRISTOL	70	SUNDRY PACKAGES
11/22/84	BETSEY		MARTAIN BAINS		ST. MARTINS	35	SUGAR, SALT
11/22/84	HARD TIMES		SETH HARVEY		GRENADA	60	RUM, GIN
11/23/84	BRE		THOMAS DUNCAN	ANTIGUA		72	CORN, SHINGLES
11/24/84	BETSEY		JOHN SMITH		ANTIGUA	50	RUM, SUGAR
11/26/84	VIRGINIA	*	JOHN ASKEW		LONDON	200	SUNDRY PACKAGES
11/26/84	PEGGY		JOHN THINS		OSTIND	65	SUNDRY PACKAGES
11/27/84	SALLY	*	M. HAMMETT		ILE THIRA	16	SALT
11/29/84	MERMAID		ROBERT HUNTER	BARBADOS		140	SCANTLING, SHINGLES, FLOUR
11/30/84	HOPE		CHARLES GUILLE		GUERNSEY	120	CORDAGE, LIQUOR, DRY GOODS
11/30/84	GIRARD	*	JOHN CASSIN		ST. LUCIA	35	SUGAR, COFFEE, COCOA
11/30/84	ROBIN	*	JOHN BROWN		PORT AU PRINCE	60	MOLASSES, SUGAR
12/3/84	MYMPHIS		PATRICK CAMPBELL		ST. VINCINTS	130	RUM
12/3/84	ADVENTURE	*	ANDREW WATSON		ST. VINCINTS	60	RUM, SUGAR
12/4/84	GLOUCESTER	*	SAM POOLE		ST. EUSTATIA	55	RUM, SUGAR

12/4/84	POLLY *	J. HODGES		CAP FRANCOIS	68	BALLAST
12/7/84	BETSEY	SAN KINIDAY	BARBADOS		40	TOBACCO, FLOUR, STAVES
12/7/84	BETSEY AND POLLY *	WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM		ST. EUSTATIA	40	SALT, LIMES
12/9/84	NANCEY *	ANTHONY WALLACE	TOBAGO		100	SHINGLES, STAVES, SCANTLING
12/9/84	BETSEY *	GEORGE ALLEY		PORT AU PRINCE	90	MOLASSES
12/9/84	LE FORT DAUPHINE	JOSEPH PEGUITT		HISPANIOLA	50	MOLASSES, SUGAR, RUM
12/10/84	MARY	WILLIAM YOUNG		LIVERPOOL	80	SUNDRY PACKAGES
12/11/84	MERCHANT	ROGER GALICEE	LONDON		250	TOBACCO, BEES WAX
12/11/84	VENUS *	H. TAYLOR		PORT AU PRINCE	80	RUM, MOLASSES
12/13/84	JERMOND	WILLIAM SMITH		LONDON	260	SUNDRY PACKAGES
12/13/84	PARRISH *	E. TURNER		LONDON	250	SUNDRY PACKAGES
12/14/84	LUCY	JOHN TROURDALE	DUBLIN		140	TOBACCO, BEES WAX
12/15/84	SALEY	J. BURTLE		TURKS ISLAND	30	SALT
12/17/84	IRISH VOLUNTIER *	WILLIAM WALLACE	BELFAST		250	TOBACCO, BEES WAX
12/17/84	POLLY	R. MITEHUE		TURKS ISLAND	60	SALT
12/18/84	JENNY AND NANCEY	THOMAS GRIFFITHS	BELFAST		49	TOBACCO, BEES WAX
12/18/84	MARIANA *	ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL		HARVE DE GRACE	180	SUNDRY PACKAGES
12/20/84	JANE	THOMAS STOWE	BERMUDA		50	LUMBER
12/20/84	SISTERS	JOHN HARTIN	BARBADOS		60	CORN, LUMBER
12/20/84	HERCULES *	CHARLES BUSHNELL		GUADELOUPE	80	RUM, SUGAR
12/20/84	FREEMASON *	JAMES GIMBY		MARTINIQUE	64	SUNDRIES
12/20/84	RECOVERY *	HUGH PRI		GRENADA	60	RUM

12/21/84	POLLY	PETER RYMER	LIVERPOOL		180	TOBACCO, STAVES
12/21/84	FAVOURIBLE JOHN	JAMES HUGHES	JAMAICA		200	NAVAL STORES, SHINGLES
12/22/84	ANABLE MARY *	JAMES LUITT	CAYMAN		50	PLANK, STAVES, TOBACCO
12/22/84	PANDORA *	EDMOND LEWIS	LONDON		90	TOBACCO
12/22/84	LEEFRUND	PETER LAMMENS	OSTEND		200	TOBACCO, STAVES
12/22/84	JANE AND DIANA	JOHN BOYD		DUBLIN	130	WINE, SALT, DRY GOODS
12/23/84	PATSEY *	WILLIAM WORINGTON		GRENADA	90	SUNDRIES
12/23/84	EIGHTY THREE *	PETER LEOTT		ST. EUSTATIA	90	MOLASSES, SUGAR, SUNDRIES
12/23/84	GRENADA PACKETT	WILLIAM BRUCE		GRENADA	150	RUM, SALT, DRY GOODS
12/23/84	PROVIDENCE *	GEORGE WALKER		GUADELOUPE	60	RUM, SUGAR
12/23/84	N. CAROLINA PACKETT	CONSET WILSON		LISBON	140	SUNDRIES
12/24/84	NEPTUNE *	THOMAS DAVIS		ST. MARTINS	120	SUGAR, DRY GOODS, RUM
12/27/84	MARIE JANIE	NICHOLAS ULTER		HISPANIOLA	80	SALT
12/29/84	POLLY	WILLIAM COX		ST. KITTS	30	RUM, SUGAR
12/29/84	FAIR AMERICAN *	JOHN BRADSHAW		PORT AU PRINCE	60	MOLASSES
12/29/84	KITE	THOMAS RAMOR		HALIFAX	120	BALLAST
12/29/84	BETSEY	SAM HOPE		GRENADA	110	SUNDRIES
12/29/84	BETSEY	JOSEPH RINNDLE		HALIFAX	20	FISH
12/30/84	ALEXANDER	THOMAS QUILMAN		GRENADA	30	RUM
12/31/84	CORMORANT	ISAAC HUTCHINGS	LIVERPOOL		200	TOBACCO, NAVAL STORES
12/31/84	DRAKE *	A. ALMOND		PORT AU PRINCE	60	SALT, MOLASSES

NAVAL OFFICE DISTRICT: YORK RIVER						
YEARS: 1782 - 1785, 1789						
* KNOWN TO BE VIRGINIA OR OTHER AMERICAN VESSEL						
DATE	VESSEL	MASTER	BOUND TO	CLEARED FROM	TONS	CARGO
7/20/82	GLOUCESTER	SAMUEL POOLE	CAP FRANCOIS		50	
8/26/82	CHANCE	MICHAEL HEAN		BERGEN	50	
8/26/82	CATHERINE	THOMAS MCNALLY		BERGEN	80	
9/7/82	PEGGY	MICHAEL JAMES		CAP FRANCOIS	75	RUM, SUGAR, COFFEE
10/22/82	GLOUCESTER	SAMUEL POOLE		CAP FRANCOIS	50	RUM, SUGAR
11/3/82	MOLLY	SOLOMON TATUM		ST. THOMAS	30	
3/3/83	DON GARUEZ	SILAS JONES		ST. OSSENTE	100	WINE
5/8/83	STADT H.V. BNYES	WILLIAM STRAUGHN		DOMINIQUE	100	RUM, SUGAR, COFFEE
6/19/83	POLLY	EPHRAFM MERRICK		ST. CROIX	60	RUM, SUGAR
7/15/83	STADT H.V. BNYES	WILLIAM STRAUGHN	IRELAND		100	TOBACCO, FLOUR, STAVES
8/22/83	VROW ANNA	WILLIAM RITCHIE		GRENADA	80	RUM, SUGAR, COFFEE
8/27/83	PROVIDENCE	ALEXANDER KENNEDY		ST. MARTINS	50	SALT, SUGAR
9/6/83	HERON BNYES	AUGUSTE DALE		CAP FRANCOIS	400	WINE, RUM, SALT
10/11/83	TWO FRIENDS	JOHN SISTER	GUADELOUPE		30	STAVES
10/29/83	ST. JOHN BAPTIST	EDWARD DONOGHUE		IRELAND	40	SALT, WINE, WOLLENS
11/7/83	ENDIMION	ALEXANDER LE GRIFFON		FRANCE	60	SALT, BRANDY, WINE
11/14/83	PROVIDENCE	JOHN GARRET	ST. MARTINS		50	LUMBER
11/24/83	GLOUCESTER	SAMUEL POOLE		PORT AU PRINCE	50	SUGAR, COFFEE, MOLASSES
1/17/84	HERO	JOHN YOUNG		LONDON	60	

2/1/84	PROVIDENCE	JOHN GARRET		ST. MARTIN	50	SALT
4/11/84	ST. JOHN BAPTIST	EDWARD DONOGHUE	ANTIGUA		60	TOBACCO, FLOUR, CORN
4/11/84	GLOUCESTER	SAMUEL POOLE	MADEIRA		50	WHEAT, STAVES
5/11/84	SISTERS	JOHN HARTIER	LONDON		60	TOBACCO, STAVES
5/13/84	NANCY	MARK BURNHAM	CAPE ANNE		45	FLOUR, CORN, WHEAT
5/18/84	ANNE	WILLIAM RITCHIE	LONDON		80	TOBACCO, STAVES, PLANK
5/19/84	PROVIDENCE	JOHN SISTER	ANTIGUA		50	TOBACCO, FLOUR, CORN
5/28/84	ST. CHRIST OF BUYOS	ANTOINE BIDOART	ST. THOMAS		60	CORN, STAVES, WHEAT
6/1/84	JOHANNES	HANS ROCK	LIVERPOOL		140	TOBACCO
6/1/84	HERO	JOHN YOUNG	LONDON		180	TOBACCO, STAVES
6/3/84	ANIABLE MARIE	C. TALLARD		SURINAME		MOLASSES, SUGAR, COFFEE
6/23/84	LIBERTY	WILLIAM OUTRAM	LONDON		192	TOBACCO
6/27/84	BESTSY	ANDREW DODGE	ST. SEBASTIEN		40	TOBACCO
7/10/84	ST. JOHN BAPTIST	EDWARD DONOGHUE		ANTIGUA	60	RUM, SUGAR
7/13/84	GLOUCESTER	SAMUEL POOLE		MADEIRA	50	WINE
7/31/84	PROVIDENCE	JOHN SISTER		ST. MARTINS	50	RUM, SUGAR
8/10/84	ST. DEMONIELLE PET.	YVES BIDAMANT		MARTINIQUE	100	
8/14/84	APROAGUE PACKET	MONS TALLARD	CAYENNE		35	FLOUR
8/17/84	ENDIMION	ALEXANDER LE GRIFFON	ROCHFORT		60	TOBACCO, NAVAL STORES
8/24/84	FRIENDSHIP	SAMUEL MILFORD	LONDON		200	TOBACCO, STAVES
8/26/84	VIRGINIA	MOSES ROBERTSON	LONDON		200	TOBACCO, STAVES
9/9/84	GLOUCESTER	SAMUEL POOLE	ANTIGUA		50	CORN, SHINGLES

9/22/84	DUMFRIES PACKETT	GEORGE STRIVENS		MADEIRA	60	WINE
9/29/84	ST. DEMONIELLE PET.	YVES BIDAMANT	DUNKIRK		100	TOBACCO, STAVES
10/23/84	LA JOSEPHINE	BONNE CHOSE		CAP FRANCOIS	50	SUGAR, COFFEE, SOAP
10/24/84	NANCY	JAMES GRAVES		CAPE ANNE		
11/6/84	PRETTY HENRIETTA	THOMAS GIBBONS		ST. EUSTATIA	60	SUGAR, GIN
12/20/84	ST. JOHN BAPTIST	EDWARD DONOGHUE	ANTIGUA		60	STAVES, SHINGLES, CORN
1/6/85	POLLY	THOMAS GENTLEE		CAPE ANNE	45	SALT, SUGAR, RUM
1/18/85	LIBERTY	WILLIAM OUTRAM		LONDON	192	
1/25/85	ROBERT	THOMAS JOHNSON	ANTIGUA		180	
2/11/85	LA VICTORIE	DAVID HEON		MARTINIQUE	40	
3/24/85	RUTH	JOHN HUMPHREYS	BARBADOS		60	
3/28/85	MOLLY	JOHN BAKER	LISBON		80	
3/28/85	WATSON	THOMAS RAYS		ANTIGUA	40	
4/15/85	GLOUCESTER	RICHARD MARCH	ST. KITTS		50	CORN, STAVES
4/15/85	ST. JOHN BAPTIST	EDWARD DONOGHUE		ANTIGUA	60	RUM, SUGAR, DRY GOODS
5/4/85	VIRGINIA	JOHN ASKEW	LISBON		200	CORN
5/7/85	WATSON	THOMAS RAYS	ANTIGUA		40	CORN, PEAS, TOBACCO
5/7/85	YORK	WILLIAM AUBRAM	LONDON		192	TOBACCO, STAVES
5/13/85	ST. JOHN BAPTIST	WILLIAM RITCHIE	LISBON		60	CORN
5/18/85	DUMFRIES PACKETT	GEORGE STEVENS		ANTIGUA	60	SUGAR, RUM
5/28/85	DAVID	GEORGE FORD		HISPANIOLA	40	MOLASSES
5/28/85	WASHINGTON	MOSES ROBERTSON		LONDON	180	EUROPEAN GOODS

6/4/85	PROVIDENCE	JAMES STEVENSON	LISBON		50	CORN, STAVES, SHINGLES
7/15/85	SINCERITY	EDWARD GRIFFIN	LIVERPOOL		90	TOBACCO, STAVES
7/21/85	FRIENDSHIP	SAMUEL MILFORD	LONDON		200	TOBACCO, STAVES
7/30/85	ST. ALDYONDE	JOCQUES SEMOYNE	DUNKIRK		150	TOBACCO
8/6/85	SOPHIA	JOHN OSBURN	CURACOA		43	FLOUR, PEAS, CORN
8/20/85	NORTH CAROLINA PACK	CONSETTE WILSON	LONDON		140	TOBACCO, STAVES
8/20/85	DAVID	GEORGE DICKENSON	ST. EUSTATIA		40	CORN
8/26/85	ASSISTANCE	JOSEPH FARISH	LONDON		130	TOBACCO, STAVES
9/14/85	DILIGENT	EDMOND ARCHER		CAP FRANCOIS	110	SALT, WINE, COFFEE
9/15/85	POLLY	PETER MILHAUT	CAP FRANCOIS		8	APPLES
4/8/89	HUNTER	THOMAS ORR		GLASGOW	136	
4/10/89	FRIENDSHIP	SAMUEL MILFORD		ANTIGUA	205	
4/20/89	LUKEY *	JOSIAH ORNE		ST. EUSTATIA	61	WINE, SUGAR
4/22/89	BETSY *	RICHARD BINGHAM		ST. BARTHOLOMUS	30	RUM, SUGAR
4/28/89	PLANTER	WILLIAM ARTHUR		LONDON	402	WINE, LIQUOR, SUGAR
4/29/89	SAVANAH	JOHN WALTE		LIVERPOOL	110	SALT
5/13/89	HELEN *	GEORGE GOOLEY		ST. THOMAS	120	RUM, SUGAR
5/16/89	THORNTON	JAMES SMITH		LONDON	257	
7/2/89	JANE MARIA *	ANTOINE BIDARD		HISPANIOLA	75	SUGAR
7/3/89	TWO BROTHERS *	JASON VAUGHAN		ST. EUSTATIA	25	RUM, WINE, SUGAR
7/12/89	CONTENT *	WILLIAM WILLIAMSON		HISPANIOLA	70	SUGAR

NAVAL OFFICE DISTRICT: ACCOMACK						
YEARS: 1780 - 1789						
* KNOWN TO BE VIRGINIA OR OTHER AMERICAN VESSEL						
DATE	VESSEL	MASTER	BOUND TO	CLEARED FROM	TONS	CARGO
6/13/80	BROTHERS DELIGHT	EZAR KELLAM	ST. EUSTATIA			TOBACCO
8/25/80	FRIENDSHIP	DUNCAN GLEN	MARTINIQUE			TOBACCO
8/26/80	FREEDOM	ROBERT MILLENER	CURACAO			TOBACCO
10/13/80	REVOLUTION	JOHN MCMACHTANE	ST. EUSTATIA			TOBACCO, STAVES
10/26/80	SALLEY	SMITH MILLENER	ST. EUSTATIA			TOBACCO, STAVES
11/27/80	EXPERIMENT	WILLIAM PENNOCK	ST. EUSTATIA			TOBACCO, STAVES
11/29/80	GOOD INTENT	THOROWGOOD WEST	ST. EUSTATIA			TOBACCO
11/30/80	FRIENDSHIP	DUNCAN GLEN		ST. EUSTATIA		SALT, RUM, DRY GOODS
11/30/80	BROTHERS DELIGHT	EZAR KELLAM		ST. CROIX		SALT, RUM, DRY GOODS
1/6/81	RICHMOND	PELEG GREEN	ST. EUSTATIA			TOBACCO
2/22/81	FRIENDSHIP	REUBEN JOYNER	ST. EUSTATIA			TOBACCO, SHINGLES
3/27/81	BROTHERS DELIGHT	EZAR KELLAM	ST. EUSTATIA			TOBACCO
5/25/81	FAIR AMERICAN	WILLIAM COFFIN		PORT AU PRINCE		RUM
5/30/81	BROTHERS DELIGHT	EZAR KELLAM		ST. CROIX		RUM
6/10/81	FANNER	MICHAEL JAMES		PORT AU PRINCE		RUM
7/3/81	BROTHERS DELIGHT	SMITH MILLENER	CURACAO			TOBACCO
7/5/81	FAIR AMERICAN	WILLIAM COFFIN	CURACAO			TOBACCO
8/2/81	RAPPAHANNOCK	THOMAS SEE		ST. CROIX		SALT, RUM
8/20/81	GAME COCK	FRANCIS SAVAGE		CAP FRANCOIS	37	SUGAR, DRY GOODS

9/8/81	BRAVADO	WILLIAM EWELL	ST. CROIX			TOBACCO, STAVES
9/12/81	FAIR AMERICAN	EDWARD DELLINGHAM	ST. CROIX			TOBACCO
10/2/81	GAME COCK	FRANCIS SAVAGE	ST. CROIX		37	TOBACCO
10/6/81	EXPERIMENT	JONATHAN ELLIGOOD	ST. CROIX			TOBACCO
10/12/81	BROTHERS DELIGHT	SMITH MILLENER	ST. CROIX		30	TOBACCO
10/16/81	GAME COCK	JOHN CASE	ST. CROIX		37	TOBACCO, FLOUR
10/18/81	ROSE	MICHAEL JAMES		ST. CROIX		RUM, SALT
11/2/81	ROSE	GEORGE CHRISTIAN	ST. CROIX			TOBACCO
11/8/81	RAPPAHANNOCK	JOHN REYNOLDS	ST. CROIX			TOBACCO, STAVES
12/11/81	SALLEY	THOMAS PERIAM	MARTINIQUE		50	TOBACCO
12/20/81	FAIR AMERICAN	SAMUEL BUNKER		ST. CROIX	40	SALT, CORDAGE
12/25/81	BROTHERS DELIGHT	SMITH MILLENER		MARTINIQUE	30	SALT, RUM, CANVAS
3/23/82	BROTHERS DELIGHT	REUBEN JAMES	ST. CROIX		30	TOBACCO
5/31/82	HUMMING BIRD	WILLIAM COFFIN		ST. EUSTATIA	20	RUM, SUGAR
7/19/82	CHARMING JENNY	MICHAEL WELCH		HAVANA	50	SUGAR, SALT
8/12/82	LUCKY TO CONTINUE	REUBEN CLERK		ST. CROIX	35	RUM
8/13/82	HONEST ENDEAVOUR	ZACKARIAH BUNKER		CAP FRANCOIS		SUGAR, COFFEE
8/19/82	WILLIAM ROBINSON	JOHANNIS WATSON		ST. EUSTATIA	40	RUM, SALT, DRY GOODS
9/23/82	BRAVE AMERICAN	SETH EWELL		ST. EUSTATIA	12	RUM, SUGAR
10/2/82	WILLIAM ROBINSON	JOHANNIS WATSON	ST. CROIX		40	TOBACCO, FLOUR
10/6/82	ROSEY	GEORGE CHRISTIAN		CAP FRANCOIS	35	DRY GOODS
11/12/82	LUCKY TO CONTINUE	JOHN SAVAGE	ST. CROIX		35	TOBACCO

11/22/82	WILLIAM ROBINSON	JOHANNIS WATSON		ST. THOMAS	40	COFFEE, DRY GOODS
2/21/83	WILLIAM ROBINSON	JOHN STRAN	MARTINIQUE		40	TOBACCO
5/10/83	WILLIAM ROBINSON	JOHN STRAN		MARTINIQUE	40	SALT, COFFEE, SUGAR
5/11/83	FIREBRAND	ABRAM OUTTEN	MARTINIQUE			CORN
5/13/83	LADY DELIGHT	ISAAC TYLER	NEW PROVIDENCE			PEAS, CORN, PORK
5/14/83	SWALLOW	REUBEN JOYNER	NEW PROVIDENCE			FLOUR, CORN, BREAD
5/20/83	FRIENDSHIP	RICHARD DRUMMOND	MARTINIQUE			LUMBER
5/20/83	WILLIAM ROBINSON	JOHN STRAN	MARTINIQUE			CORN
5/29/83	KATEY	GEORGE HARMON	ST. EUSTATIA			FLOUR, CORN
6/9/83	SALLEY	JOHN CHASE		NEW PROVIDENCE		SUGAR, RUM
6/23/83	ELIZABETH	DAVID ARNOLD		NEW PROVIDENCE		COFFEE
7/28/83	OMARA	RICHARD MICKLEHWAIT	MARTINIQUE			CORN, TOBACCO
7/28/83	ELIZABETH	DAVID ARNOLD		NEW PROVIDENCE		CORN, WHEAT
8/12/83	WILLIAM ROBINSON	JOHN STRAN				
9/8/83	PEALE	JAMES STARR	LONDON			TOBACCO, STAVES
9/29/83	FRIENDSHIP	RICHARD DRUMMOND		ST. EUSTATIA		SUGAR, COFFEE, RUM
12/15/83	GOOD INTENT	NATHANIEL HAYWOOD		BERMUDA		SALT, RUM, COFFEE
3/26/84	GOOD INTENT	NATHANIEL HAYWARD	BERMUDA		40	CORN, PORK, LIVESTOCK
4/6/84	TWO BROTHERS	JOHN STRAN	ST. EUSTATIA		30	CORN, OATS, TOBACCO
4/8/84	BETSEY & SALLEY	RICHARD DRUMMOND	ST. EUSTATIA		25	CORN, OATS, TOBACCO
5/2/84	BETSEY KENDALL	JAMES STAR	MARTINIQUE		30	CORN, FLOUR, OATS
5/25/84	BETSEY & SALLEY	RICHARD DRUMMOND		GUADELOUPE	25	RUM, MOLASSES, SUGAR

5/28/84	TWO BROTHERS	JOHN STRAN		ST. EUSTATIA	30	RUM, SUGAR
6/1/84	FRIENDSHIP	SMITH MILLENER	MARTINIQUE		20	CORN, OATS, STAVES
7/3/84	BETSEY & SALLEY	RICHARD DRUMMOND	ST. EUSTATIA		20	TOBACCO, SHINGLES
7/10/84	JOHN & JANE	EDMUND JOHNSON		SHELBURNE	70	BALLAST
7/12/84	TWO BROTHERS	JOHN STRAN	GUADELOUPE		30	TOBACCO, SHINGLES
8/4/84	FRIENDSHIP	SMITH MILLENER		MARTINIQUE	20	SUGAR, RUM, MOLASSES
9/3/84	BETSEY & SALLEY	RICHARD DRUMMOND		GUADELOUPE	25	MOLASSES, SUGAR
9/15/84	TWO BROTHERS	JOHN STRAN		GUADELOUPE	30	SALT, MOLASSES
11/11/84	LIS BURN	CUSTIS KELLAM		GRENADA	30	MOLASSES, COFFEE, RUM
1/3/85	BETSEY & SALLEY	RICHARD DRUMMOND		GUADELOUPE	25	SALT, MOLASSES, RUM, SUGAR
1/8/85	HENRIETTA	HENRY DAVIS		ANTIGUA	21	RUM, SUGAR, COFFEE
2/6/85	TWO BROTHERS	JOHN STRAN		GUADELOUPE	30	MOLASSES, RUM
4/7/85	TRIAL *	RICHARD DRUMMOND	CURACAO		35	CORN, LUMBER
5/7/85	LISBON	CUSTIS KELLAM		ST. EUSTATIA	40	RUM, SUGAR, COFFEE
5/11/85	BETSEY & SALLEY	CHARLES JOYNES		ST. CROIX	30	RUM
6/2/85	LISBON	CUSTIS KELLAM	GRENADA		40	CORN, PEAS, LUMBER
7/4/85	TRIAL *	RICHARD DRUMMOND		ST. THOMAS	35	SALT, RUM, SUGAR
8/8/85	TRIAL *	RICHARD DRUMMOND	GUADELOUPE		65	OATS, LUMBER
8/13/85	VOLANTE	JOHN STRAN	GUADELOUPE		70	OATS, LUMBER
8/20/85	LISBON	CUSTIS KELLAM		CURACAO	40	RUM, COFFEE
10/15/85	NANCY	SAMUEL OUTTEN	MARTINIQUE		65	TOBACCO, OATS, LUMBER
10/16/85	MARIA	ABRAHAM OUTTEN	ST. EUSTATIA		120	TOBACCO, OATS, LUMBER

11/13/85	TRIAL *	RICHARD DRUMMOND		GUADELOUPE	65	MOLASSES, RUM
11/19/85	FRIENDSHIP	SMITH MILLENER	ST. EUSTATIA		20	CORN, OATS, LUMBER
1/26/86	LISBON	CUSTIS KELLAM		ST. EUSTATIA	40	BALLAST
1/26/86	LOVELY FANNY	THOMAS PRATT		GRENADA	60	BALLAST
2/1/86	MARIA	ABRAHAM OUTTEN		ST. EUSTATIA	120	BALLAST
2/8/86	LISBON	CUSTIS KELLAM	ST. EUSTATIA		40	CORN, LUMBER
3/10/86	TRIAL *	JESSE KELLAM	ST. EUSTATIA		65	CORN, FLOUR, TOBACCO
3/11/86	LOVELY FANNY	THOMAS PRATT	GUADELOUPE		60	LUMBER, LIVESTOCK
4/19/86	MARIA	ABRAHAM OUTTEN	MARTINIQUE		120	LUMBER
6/8/86	TRIAL *	JESSE KELLAM		ST. EUSTATIA	65	RUM, WINE, SUGAR
7/20/86	MARIA	ABRAHAM OUTTEN		GUADELOUPE	120	RUM, MOLASSES
7/28/86	LISBON	WILLIAM GROTEN	TRINIDAD		40	TOBACCO, LUMBER
11/2/86	LISBON	WILLIAM GROTEN		TURKS ISLAND	40	SALT
1/7/87	RICHMOND PAQUET	CUSTIS KELLAM	ST. EUSTATIA		40	FLOUR, BREAD, OATS
2/12/87	NORTHAMPTON	JOHN TURPIN		ST. EUSTATIA	75	GIN, BALLAST
3/26/87	TRIAL *	SAMUEL RANKIN	ST. EUSTATIA		20	
8/7/87	TRIAL *	SAMUEL RANKIN		ST. EUSTATIA	20	LIQUOR
8/8/87	PORPOISE *	WILLIAM ELLIOT	BASSETERRE		18	OATS
8/22/87	TRIAL *	SAMUEL RANKIN	ST. EUSTATIA		20	CORN
10/8/87	DOLPHIN *	GEORGE FINNEY	ST. EUSTATIA		20	OATS, TOBACCO
12/12/87	TRIAL *	SAMUEL RANKIN		TURKS ISLAND	20	SALT, LIQUOR
1/27/88	LITTLE BETSEY *	WILLIAM ELLIOT	GUADELOUPE		20	CORN, STAVES

NAVAL OFFICE DISTRICT: NORTHAMPTON						
YEARS: 1781 - 1789						
* KNOWN TO BE VIRGINIA OR OTHER AMERICAN VESSEL						
DATE	VESSEL	MASTER	BOUND TO	CLEARED FROM	TONS	CARGO
1/10/81	AMERICA	TAMES STARR		ST. CROIX	50	RUM, SUGAR, DRY GOODS
1/17/81	GAME COCK	NATHANIEL BROWN		HISPANIOLA	37	SUGAR, COFFEE, DRY GOODS
2/13/81	GAME COCK	FRANCIS SAVAGE	CURACAO		37	
2/26/81	DOLPHIN	WILLIAM FLOYD	ST. EUSTATIA			
2/28/81	AMERICA	WILLIAM COFFIN	CURACAO		50	
3/9/81	FANNY	MICHAEL JAMES	ST. EUSTATIA			
4/20/81	GAME COCK	FRANCIS SAVAGE		ST. CROIX	37	RUM
5/1/81	BETSEY	LEM PALMER		ST. THOMAS		RUM
5/28/81	GAME COCK	FRANCIS SAVAGE	HISPANIOLA		37	
6/19/81	RAMBLER	THOMAS FLOYD	ST. CROIX			
8/24/81	DOVE	WILLIAM JOHNSON	ST. CROIX			
8/31/81	ROSE	MICHAEL JAMES	CURACAO			
9/17/81	AMERICA	WILLIAM COFFIN		PEAY	50	SUGAR, RUM
10/26/81	AMERICA	SAM BUNKER	ST. CROIX		50	
11/1/81	PEGGY	WILLIAM MOORE		ST. THOMAS	62	RUM
12/4/81	FOX	DUNCAN GLEN	CURACAO			
2/25/82	AMERICA	SAMUEL BUNKER	CURACAO		50	TOBACCO, FLOUR
2/25/82	PORT ROYAL	THOMAS FLOYD	ST. CROIX			TOBACCO, STAVES
6/3/82	ROSE	GEORGE CHRISTIAN		CAP FRANCOIS		SUGAR, RUM

7/5/82	ROSE	GEORGE CHRISTIAN	CAP FRANCOIS			FLOUR, PORK
7/12/82	VICTORY	GEORGE HANNOCK	ST. EUSTATIA			TOBACCO, FLOUR, CORN
7/29/82	PILGRIM	TAMES STARR	CADIZ			TOBACCO
8/5/82	FLY	JONATHAN WELGOOD	ST. EUSTATIA			TOBACCO, CORN
5/13/83	B. KENDALL	NATHANIEL BROWN	ST. EUSTATIA		25	FLOUR, CORN
7/23/83	DOVE	JAMES FLOYD	BORDEAUX			TOBACCO
9/13/83	WOLF	EDWARD BRANGMAN		BERMUDA	35	SALT, MOLASSES
2/20/84	DOVE	JAMES FLOYD		BORDEAUX		WINE, SUNDRIES
6/22/84	JAMES	THOMAS ROBERTSON	ST. EUSTATIA			MERCHANDISE
7/1/84	DOVE	JAMES FLOYD		ST. EUSTATIA		SUGAR, RUM, SALT
9/11/84	TWO SISTERS	WILLIAM MOORE	CURACAO		32	CORN
11/4/84	WOLF	EDWARD BRANGMAN	BERMUDA			CORN, PEAS
11/15/84	TWO BROTHERS	JOHN SHAN	GUADELOUPE			OATS
12/7/84	TWO SISTERS	WILLIAM MOORE	NEW PROVIDENCE		32	MERCHANDISE
3/1/85	B. OF SALLY	JAMES FLOYD	ST. EUSTATIA			CORN
5/19/85	PEGGY	JAMES FLOYD		ST. EUSTATIA		SUGAR, SLAT
3/30/87	LUE *	ZACHARIAH BUNKER		HALIFAX	40	SNUFF
6/26/87	LITTLE LADY *	WILLIAM MOORE	ST. BARTHOLOMUS		29	CORN, SHINGLES
8/11/87	LITTLE LADY *	WILLIAM MOORE		ST. CROIX	29	RUM, SUGAR
10/9/87	BETSEY *	JAMES FLOYD	ST. EUSTATIA		93	STAVES, SHINGLES
10/9/87	TWO SISTERS	BERRY FLOYD	ST. EUSTATIA		32	SHINGLES
1/5/88	BETSEY *	JAMES FLOYD		ST. CROIX	93	RUM, SALT

VITA

D. Dennis Duff was born in St. Paul Minnesota on 19 January 1944. Raised in Kansas City, Missouri and Topeka, Kansas, he graduated in May 1962 from Topeka's Hayden High School. In June 1966 Mr. Duff received a B.S. degree in Education from the University of Kansas at Lawrence and was commissioned an Ensign in the United States Navy. Leaving active military service in August 1970, he enrolled at the University of Oregon and was awarded a Bachelor of Architecture degree in June 1973.

A practicing architect, he is a partner with Dills . Ainscough Duff in Virginia Beach and has held leadership positions in numerous civic and professional organizations. Mr. Duff entered the Old Dominion University graduate program in History in 1995 and received a M.A. degree in May 1996. He serves as a Captain in the Naval Reserves and has taught in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools. Mr. Duff and his wife Janet have two adult daughters, Meaghan and Erin, and reside at 1624 Bay Breeze Drive, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 23454.

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MAR 26 2001