of the firm in experience and capital investment. He had some business experience and had undoubtedly helped at the distillery, for he had great interest in the distilling and " doctoring " of liquors, but he was described by Henry as a " timid young man." [2] All three were bachelors.

In 1953 the Maryland Historical Society acquired a letterbook of the Baltimore branch of Johnson, Johonnot, and Co. It contains the outgoing correspondence of Henry Johnson from November, 1783 to May, 1784 and of George Johonnot, his successor, from May, 1784 to February, 1785. Although it is possible from these records to reconstruct the case history of a New England commission house venturing into the Baltimore market in this period, the present discussion has used the letterbook as raw material for general economic and social rather than specific business history. Through the correspondence of these transplanted New Englanders run scattered comments that indicate much about certain facets of Baltimore life and development after the Revolution.

The precise reasons for the establishment of a Baltimore branch of Johnson, Johonnot, and Co. are not known from the firm's correspondence, but it may be assumed that, like many New Englanders, Johnson and the Johonnots hoped to profit from the exodus of British traders after the war and take over a larger share of the carriage of Southern goods. Fastgrowing Baltimore looked inviting for many reasons. In February, 1784, Henry Johnson told a Portsmouth correspondent that the people of Baltimore ". . . have very few vessels of their own. Chief of their Trade is carried on by strangers." [3] He had earlier claimed, in writing to Boston, that " The people of this country had rather freight in the vessels of New England than any others as they know the[y] will despatch there buseness imediatly." [4] Whether this was true or not,[5] Baltimore offered more than freight.

> Only one advantage attends the importation of that Article [wheat] from here beyond Virginia, which is, that there are exports from your Country which will answer here by fetching an advanced price, . . . Virginia is not sufficiently populous to render exportation to any one port from you an object worth attention—there is one thing worth notice of every owner of a Vessel Trading to the Southward that the worm in the summer season is very destructive to ships in Virginia While we are wholly free from them here.[6]

To Johnson, Johonnot, and Co. Baltimore not only presented opportunities; it also held business friends who were able to give the new firm advice and financial backing when needed. Chief among these friends in Baltimore were Mark Pringle of the established firm of Ridley and Pringle and David Stewart of Stewart and Plunket. In Philadelphia, closely linked to Baltimore by bonds of trade, superior credit facilities and

[2] Henry Johnson to Hewes and Anthony, April 24, 1784, JJLB.
[3] Henry Johnson to Noah Parker, February 21, 1784, JJLB.
[4] Henry Johnson to Henry Newman, January 14, 1784, JJLB.
[5] The correspondence of Christopher Champlin of Newport throws some doubt on this statement. *The Commerce of Rhode Island,* Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 7th series, X (Boston, 1915), 179, 210.
[6] George Johonnot to Hodijah Bayles, August 16, 1784, JJLB.