



FIGURE 6. Thomas Digges of "Warburton Manor" (1742–1821). Portrait possibly by Sir Joshua Reynolds, ca. 1775–81. Whether or not Reynolds painted this portrait is in dispute. I thank Ken Bowling for alerting me to this fact. The family lost custody of the portrait following the resolution of an estate dispute in 1957 and the painting's current location is not known. This reproduction is of a duplicate in the custody of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

the machinery, and put it to work. "It gives me great pleasure," he concluded, "to have been the means of getting so valuable an Artist to our Country." Alas, Pearce's journey did not go smoothly. Digges reported that an English cutter "pursued & searched His Vessel twice for His double Loom & they would have brought him back had He not entered & given in a different name."²

While reading a New York newspaper Digges came across Alexander Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures*. Submitted to Congress on December 25, 1791, the secretary of the Treasury's thorough analysis of the state of American industries was followed by a call for an aggressive policy of technology piracy. Digges was delighted to read that Washington's closest lieutenant had endorsed his goals and methods, and believed that this was an excellent time to plunder European technology. By offering inducements and developing opportunities for employment, Hamilton wrote in the report, the United States could immeasurably "increase the extent of valuable acquisitions to the population, arts and industry."³

Digges could not have agreed more. He wrote Hamilton that in the industrial regions of Belfast, Liverpool, and Manchester, newspapers would not publish any favorable account of American manufactures, fearing that it might "lead the people to Emigration." He had one thousand copies of Hamilton's *Report on Manufactures* printed in Dublin in 1792 and spread among local societies for the promotion of manufactures in Britain and Ireland. He believed the report would "induce artists to move toward a Country so likely to very soon give them ample employ & domestic ease." The Dublin edition was "distributed and sold cheap," reported the Edinburgh bookseller Samuel Peterson to Hamilton. Yet the encouragement given in the *Report on Manufactures* to "the poor distressed Subjects of these States to flock to America" antagonized "the great people & Landed Interest" who sought to discourage emigration.⁴

Digges's proclivity to steal, not pay his debts, and engage in industrial espionage landed him in a British jail for some time in the mid 1780s, in 1792, and probably in 1795.⁵ His many American detractors were not impressed by his activities in England and continued to distrust him. In the eyes of at least one American, however, Digges's clandestine efforts in behalf of American manufacturing proved his patriotism. Responding to Digges's critics, President George