

persisted but also intensified. Every major European state engaged in technology piracy and industrial espionage in the eighteenth century, and the United States could not afford to behave differently. Yet, there was etiquette to this piracy. It was undertaken in secret and officials would deny any connection to such practices.

The young republic embraced a Janus-faced approach. The government of the United States, after briefly considering sponsoring such activities, formally disengaged from technology piracy. Officially it disavowed the practice and Congress passed a patent law founded on a principled commitment to worldwide originality as the foundation of intellectual property in the United States. covertly, federal officials winked as they disavowed any connection to the theft of knowledge. The constant influx of immigrants lessened the necessity for recruiting skilled artisans in Europe. Moreover, the wars of the French Revolution created a large demand for American agricultural products, unleashing an unprecedented economic boom. In this context the impetus to create a self-sufficient industrial economy in order to secure American independence was no longer urgent. In a sense, federal policy toward technology piracy signaled the coming of age of the republic.

### A Vigorous Spirit of Acquisition

The formation of an effective government and the ascent of George Washington to the presidency inspired widespread optimism among nationalists and champions of industry. The president was a known advocate of economic development who had invested his own money in technological and industrial projects. Washington was delighted that a "spirit of industry and economy" had already begun to transform the nation, pointing out to an English correspondent that the establishment of the federal government had already delivered the desired effect. "More Manufactures of cotton,

wool, and iron have been introduced within eighteen months past than perhaps, ever before existed in America." He promised the Delaware Society for Promoting Domestic Manufactures that the "promotion of domestic manufactures," would be "among the first consequences which may naturally be expected to flow from an energetic government."<sup>9</sup>

Many Americans shared their new president's sentiments and agenda. Private and public discourse abounded with boasts of the coming new age of American industry. A group of tradesmen and mechanics from Baltimore asked "that the encouragement and protection of American manufactures will claim the earliest attention of the supreme Legislature of the nation." The United States, they declared, has all the natural resources necessary to make it "a great manufacturing country, and only want the patronage and support of a wise, energetic government." A writer from Hartford declared: "Our people are industrious and intelligent; they are possessed of uncommon genius for mechanical inventions, and of such versatility, that they can, with great ease and quickness, turn their hands to those arts which are introduced among us from abroad." Another essayist explained that during the colonial era American technology had "laboured under the unjust imputation of inferiority," but that the new government would set local industry on a course that would prove it could be equal to and even better than foreign rivals. And Coxé expected many manufacturers to "migrate into this country" following the establishment of the federal government. "Many have already come," he observed, "and as fast as encouragement may be offered or prospect of success appear, so fast will the manufactories of the United States be supported by foreign workmen."<sup>10</sup>

Calls to develop American manufacturing showed complete disregard for the intellectual property laws of European nations, particularly those of Great Britain. An essayist in *American Museum* celebrated the widespread abuse of European intellectual property