



## 60 Years U.S. Consulate General Hamburg at the “Little White House on the Alster”



*Alsterufer 27/28*



## Imprint

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## Message from Ambassador Philip D. Murphy



It is a special honor for me as Ambassador of the United States of America to Germany to offer my congratulations on the 60th anniversary of the “Little White House on the Alster”.

In 1790, the Consulate in Hamburg was established by the first President of the United States, George Washington, as one of the first eleven American diplomatic missions worldwide. Our forefathers understood that Hamburg, a center of international trade, would play an important role for the transatlantic relationship. Millions of Germans also emigrated from Hamburg and helped to shape the United States in crucial ways.

For 60 years, the U.S. Consulate has been located in the “Little White House on the Alster.” Originally, the building consisted of two separate villas. They were designed by Martin Haller, who was also the architect of Hamburg’s famous Town Hall. The U.S. Government purchased the two houses in 1950, remodeled them and added a portico. When the work was completed, many thought that the new building resembled the White House in Washington and residents of Hamburg began to call it affectionately “Little White House on the Alster.”

The Hamburg consular district covers the five Northern German states of Niedersachsen, Bremen, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Hamburg. We are proud of our history in Hamburg and look forward to an exciting and challenging future, as we continue to build connections between the citizens of Northern Germany and the United States.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip D. Murphy'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'P' and 'M'.

Ambassador Philip D. Murphy  
August 24, 2011

## Message from Consul General Inmi K. Patterson



This summer, we celebrate 60 years of the American Consulate General Hamburg at its current location on the Alster. The building and the institution have a long history, intertwined with that of Hamburg. The “Little White House on the Alster” has become an important landmark in Hamburg and the Consulate is part of the fabric of Hamburg’s life. To name only one event, for many, the lighting of the Christmas tree on the portico with its colored lights marks the beginning of the holiday season each year.

The United States has had a Consulate in Hamburg since 1790, one year after the U.S. Constitution came into force. Its mandate was to promote trade and to protect the interests of U.S. citizens. Since then, Consuls and Consuls General have proudly represented the United States and have promoted political, economic and cultural relations with Hamburg and Northern Germany.

Modern technology has altered how diplomacy is carried out, and we have shifted our focus to new areas: green technology, renewable energy, new media, biotechnology, Muslim engagement and the building of higher education links. However, the mandate that applied in 1790 remains the same. We continue to further promote U.S.-German relations in five Northern German states. We are grateful for the support that the Consulate has received from our German partners and are looking forward to many more years of joint activities in the “Little White House on the Alster”.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Inmi K. Patterson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Consul General Inmi K. Patterson  
August 24, 2011

## Hamburg-American Relations Before the Establishment of a Consulate

The first trading route between Hamburg and the New World already existed in 1625. Coincidentally, the first German immigration to North America was documented in the same year. At that time, Hamburg already had one of the largest seaports in Europe and therefore played a key role in the development of European-American trade. Commerce and emigration of Germans to Northern America would remain the characteristic feature of German-American relations until the late 19th century.

## First U.S. Diplomatic Representations

Hamburg was one of the first states in the world, where the United States established a diplomatic mission after the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The Consulate in Hamburg was established on June 17, 1790. On the same day, the United States also opened their diplomatic representations in Bilbao, Cowes, Marseilles, Le Havre, London, Fayal and Surinam.

Paris	10. Juli 1781
Kanton	27. Januar 1786
Madeira	7. Juni 1790
Liverpool	7. Juni 1790
Dublin	7. Juni 1790
Bordeaux	7. Juni 1790
Nantes	7. Juni 1790
Rouen	7. Juni 1790
Hispaniola	7. Juni 1790

Martinique	7. Juni 1790
Hamburg	17. Juni 1790
Bilbao	17. Juni 1790
Cowes	17. Juni 1790
Marseilles	17. Juni 1790
Le Havre	17. Juni 1790
London	17. Juni 1790
Fayal	17. Juni 1790
Surinam	17. Juni 1790

## The First Consul

On July 1, 1790, the U.S. Senate passed an act “providing the means for intercourse between the United States and foreign nations.” The United States’ endeavors to intensify commercial relations with Hamburg by establishing diplomatic relations with the Free and Hanseatic city fell into the same time period. In 1790, President George Washington appointed John Parish, a naturalized Hamburg citizen of Scottish birth, to the position of “vice-consul for the port of Hamburg.” The U.S. Consulate in Hamburg was opened on June 17, 1790, as the eleventh American Consulate worldwide.



John Parish, the first diplomatic representative of the U.S.A. in Hamburg (1790-1796)



the time of the first great increase in commercial relations between Hamburg and the United States. In 1806, he left Hamburg and moved to Bath, England, where he lived until his death in 1826.

## History of the Consulate, 1790–1950

The American Consulate in Hamburg was established as the United States of America's eleventh oldest Consulate on June 17, 1790, with the naming of John Parish as Vice Consul by George Washington.



The American Consulate in Hamburg,  
Michaelisbruecke 1, June 27, 1901

From left to right:

Vice Consul Otto Helmrich,  
Eduard Hopf,  
Vice Consul Ernest H. Mummenhof,  
Consul Dr. Hugh Pitcairn  
and Ida Hafermann

The founding of the Consulate was based on Thomas Jefferson's desire to establish commercial relations with various countries in Europe. In 1793, after Parish was promoted to the rank of Consul, Hamburg Mayor Sieveking granted him his exequatur.

John Parish was followed by over twenty Consuls in the nineteenth century, who all, unlike Parish, were American citizens. By far the most prominent of these was John Cuthbert, Vice Consul from 1817 to 1826 and, subsequently, Consul until his death in 1848. One of Cuthbert's more notable actions was urging that the American Consulate in Altona, which operated briefly in the 1830s and closed in May 1840 upon the resignation of the Consul, not be reopened. Presumably he wished to collect the consular fees for himself, as Consuls received no salaries during that period. Records indicate that he was not as prolific as diplomats today, writing only 92 dispatches from 1833 to 1848. They were, however, characterized by strict attention of the interests of the U.S. Government and precise observation of German political, economic and commercial developments.

During Cuthberth's term as Consul, the first Convention of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between the United States and Luebeck, Bremen and Hamburg, was signed in Washington on December 20, 1827. A second treaty, the Convention for the Mutual Extension of the Jurisdiction of Consuls, was signed on April 30, 1852, between the same parties. These treaties mark important milestones in the long-lasting friendship between Hamburg and the USA.

The event that stood out most during Cuthberth's career in Hamburg was the great fire of 1842, which destroyed a large part of the city. He wrote in a dispatch to the Department of State on May 9, 1842:

*"This city has suffered an immense loss by fire which broke out on the night of the 4th [...]. The number of warehouse and houses burnt is said to be about 1,300, the value of which with their contents is estimated to be about 20 million dollars. The Consulate was destroyed on the 6th. I have saved the books and papers of the last three years and the Seal. The screw press, the arms, as also those of the Altona Consulate, have been destroyed."*

After a succession of more than fifteen other Consuls, the Consulate was raised to the status of Consulate General in 1904 through the appointment of Dr. Hugh Pitcairn as Consul General. That year, it was also moved to its twenty-seventh location at Adolphplatz 6 (Börsenhof), and again in 1909 it moved yet again to Alsterglaciis 10.

On February 3, 1917, the Consulate General closed due to the United States' entry into the First World War against the Central Powers. During the war, one of the German clerks of the U.S. Consulate General worked at the Spanish Consulate and took over the representation of American interests in Hamburg. After the war's end in 1919, the United States deployed a commission to Hamburg headed by Francis J. Steward. The Consulate was reopened on April 28, 1923, in the Hamburg America Line building at Ferdinandstraße 58, with the appointment of Theodore Jaeckel as Consul to Hamburg. Jaeckel was not designated Consul General until June 5, 1924.



Reprint of the first Convention of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation between the United States and the Hanseatic cities of Luebeck, Bremen and Hamburg from December 20, 1827

The work of the office increased considerably and an expansion became necessary. During the summer of 1934, the offices were moved to larger quarters in the Warburg Bank Building at Ferdinandstraße 75, where they occupied seventeen rooms until the outbreak of the Second World War. By September 1939, the staff had grown to eight American officers, three American clerks and fourteen local employees.

On July 8, 1941, all American Consular offices in Germany were closed for the duration of the war, and American interests were handled by three German clerks in the Swiss Legation. The Consulate General reopened on March 1, 1946, in the German South American Bank building on Neuer Jungfernstieg 16.



Painting of Wilhelm Battermann that was presented to the Consulate by the city of Hamburg in 1937 and is still displayed at the Consulate today

The old offices, including the archives and most of the equipment, had been destroyed during the war. Among the few assets that survived the war was a painting of Wilhelm Battermann that was presented to the Consulate by the city of Hamburg in 1937. The painting is still displayed at the Consulate today and shows the harbor of New York with the Statue of Liberty. When the Consulate General reopened in March 1946, it consisted of seven officers, thirteen American clerks and seven local employees. Only a few months later, in November of 1947, it moved again to the Esso-Haus at Jungfernstieg 21, finally purchasing its present quarters in the spring of 1950.

## The Building at Alsterufer 27/28



Villa Michaelsen and villa Réé around 1890



Inside view of villa Réé around 1900

The two houses that make up the “Little White House on the Alster” are fine examples of the 19th century upper class hanseatic architecture. Both were designed by the prominent architect Martin Haller, who also designed the Hamburg Town Hall. The larger villa was built in 1882 for the merchant Gustav Michaelsen, who sold it in 1891 to Wilhelm Anton Riedmann, a pioneer in the oil shipping business. Riedmann was one of the founders of the German-American Petroleum Company (later ESSO). The neighboring house at Alsterufer 28 was built in 1893 for businessman Julius Réé, who shortly after its completion sold it to Eduard Sanders. Both buildings were linked to each other by archways.

In 1934, the NSDAP rented, extensively modified and assembled both buildings. The local party headquarters was located there until the end of the war. The NSDAP installed, among other things, a massive loudspeaker on the roof of the building. This loudspeaker could be heard throughout the entire inner-city area of Hamburg. The basement included three prison cells that were approximately one square meter in size, as well as one larger prison cell, where the party leadership imprisoned political prisoners.

After the war, the British Occupying Forces confiscated the houses. In May of 1950, the U.S. Government purchased the two houses from the heirs of the owners. The houses were remodeled and a large classical portico in front was added that resembled the one on the White House in Washington. Since then, the people of Hamburg affectionately call it the “Little White House on the Alster”. Today, the annual Christmas Tree Lighting takes place on the portico.

## History of the Consulate General, 1951-2011

The role of the Consul General after World War II was completely different in comparison to that of John Parish. After the war, Hamburg and much of Germany lay in ruins. Not only was it necessary to rebuild the city itself, but also to give food and shelter to those who had survived. This was a primary function of Consul General Groth, who reopened offices in March 1946. He was responsible for the German people, the German army, mercenaries and refugees who had crossed over following the Russian takeover of Eastern Europe. Mr. Groth was also very interested in the cultural rejuvenation of Hamburg. He was especially eager to reestablish the Hamburg opera.



Consul Edward M. Groth (1946-1949)

On August 15-16, 1951 the Consulate moved into the new building at Alsterufer 27/28. The formal opening ceremony took place on August 24, 1951. The Consul General at that time, Robert Cowan, hosted a reception for 750 guests including German officials, British officials from the Land Commissioners office, the Consular Corps, and prominent German businessmen, as well as American citizens from the consular district.



U.S. Consulate General Hamburg at Alsterufer in 1952

In early 1955, the Consulate began constructing a one-storied annex. On April 1 an unexploded bomb was found at the building site that was rendered harmless by the Hamburg police. The annex was completed in November 1955.

In February 1962, Hamburg suffered a major storm tide, which resulted in the highest water level in 150 years. The disaster caused over 300 deaths and tremendous damage throughout the city. The Consulate itself suffered

major damage, including a flooded basement and the cut of power and phone lines. The United States played a major role in helping to control the situation. U.S. army helicopters were used in flood relief and the U.S. Navy collected money from individual sailors in order to help those affected by the catastrophe.

On November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Three days later a crowd of approximately 50,000 people gathered in front of the Town Hall, where Hamburg's major, Paul Nevermann, addressed the crowd. His speech was followed by a torch light parade around the Binnenalster to the American Consulate. On its way, the crowd crossed Lombardsbruecke, which was later renamed Kennedybruecke. By the time the crowd reached the Consulate, it had grown to about 80,000. It was a powerful demonstration of Hamburg's sympathies for the United States.

In 1976, the United States celebrated its 200th birthday. Hamburg took part in the festivities. John Brogan, Consul General from 1972 to 1976, recalled America's birthday on July 4, 1976:

*“Ambassador Martin Hillenbrand came up from Berlin to help us celebrate. Upon his arrival, we set off to the Rathaus where the mayor was set to receive the Ambassador. I remember making the drive and seeing every flag pole around the Binnenalster proudly flying an American flag. I was touched to see this lovely gesture of friendship from the German people. Following our meeting with the mayor, we set off for the Staatsoper to watch John Neumeier's interpretation of the Nutcracker. His version was quite unique, as the story takes place at a young girl's birthday party. I will never forget the moment the ballerina walked in, pushing a giant birthday cake shaped like an American flag, decorated with 200 candles. The crowd grew silent as the conductor waved his hands to start up the orchestra. But, instead of the beautiful sounds of Tchaikowsky, out came the sounds of Stars and Stripes forever. At that moment I felt so much pride. I jumped up and put my hand over my heart. Of my entire career as Consul General in Hamburg, I will never forget that moment.”*

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the end of the Cold War, American foreign policy took on a new direction. In the past, many U.S. posts in Europe had primarily security, military and surveillance goals. Hamburg had been a particularly important American mission since it was located about 80 miles from the inner German border. With the shift in foreign policy in the early 1990s, the Consulate was also forced to reconsider its aims. When Elizabeth Bollmann was appointed the first female Consul General in 1991, she was faced with this dilemma:

*“The situation I was in was unusual because it was the ending of an era as well as a new beginning. With the end of the Cold War, military presence in Hamburg was forced to fold down. This was an extremely sad time because they had become such a large part of life in the local community. Another difficult part of my job was that we had to let go of the majority of the employees who worked at the Consulate as many of the agencies had pulled out.”*



A 60-year tradition: the annual lighting of the Christmas tree with its colored lights on the Consulate's portico

Ms. Bollmann served until 1994 when she retired to the United States. She fondly recalls her days spent in Hamburg and the honor of being the Consulate's first female principle officer:

*“Being Consul General in Hamburg both honor and personal gratification for me. It also had a great deal of personal meaning as my father was an immigrant from Bremen. I received a warm reception in Hamburg from both the citizens and my colleagues. It was the highlight of my career.”*

In 1994, the Consulate was almost closed due to the change in direction of American foreign policy. Downsizing had significantly reduced the staff and two thirds of the building had been abandoned. Since then, the Consulate has moved from a Cold War strategy to a modern policy focusing on international trade and regional cooperation. One primary aim has been facilitation of Baltic Sea cooperation, especially with the addition of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern to the consular district in 1999. This has been accomplished through projects in the context of the Northern Europe Initiative (NIE). In addition, the Consulate has also focused on new media, with Hamburg as the new media capital of Germany. Further important thematic priorities were set in the areas of biotechnology, environmental technology, and cooperation between German and American universities.

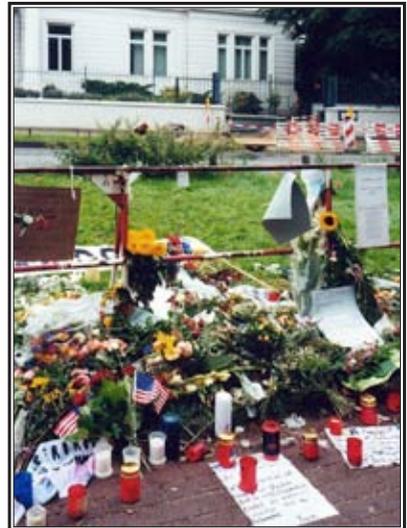
The Consulate also increased its efforts in the area of cultural exchange between Northern Germany and the United States. Visits by prominent artists, writers and actors such as Clint Eastwood and Toni Morrison have furthered cultural ties between the nations. In addition, the Consulate has also sponsored many cultural



The ballroom is the core of the Consulate's representational area

events, including a performance by the Hamburg ballet in its rooms or an upcoming workshop with the famous Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater at the Stage School Hamburg. It has also helped Hamburg greet many other famous American visitors, such as Edward Kennedy, John Glenn and Henry Kissinger.

September 11, 2001, marks a recent historic turning point, when the United States suffered from a series of terrorist attacks that took the lives of nearly 3,000 and injured more than 6,000. In cities around the globe, people took to the streets to show their sympathy and support for the United States. Hamburg was one of those cities. On September 13th, just two days after the attacks, over 20,000 people gathered on Rathausmarkt as an expression of solidarity. Flowers, candles and wreaths were placed along the fence surrounding the U.S. Consulate General in Hamburg. Through these actions, the people of the city of Hamburg expressed their high sympathies for the United States, just as they did in 1963 after the assassination of President Kennedy.



After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, thousands of people placed flowers, candles and wreaths along the fence surrounding the U.S. Consulate General

Since the 9/11 attacks the Consulate has been extensively secured. The dialogue and cooperation with representatives not only of Muslim, but of all religious communities in Northern Germany has become another focus. This was underlined, not least, by the visit of Rashad Hussain in February 2011. Hussain is U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference and, among other things, contributed to President Obama's landmark speech in Cairo two years ago. During his visit to Northern Germany he met with representatives of the Islamic community in Hamburg and members of the Center for Intercultural Islamic Studies of Osnabrueck University.



In February 2011, Special Envoy Rashad Hussain visited Northern Germany and participated in a prayer at Altona Ulu Mosque in Hamburg

Two visits of U.S. President George W. Bush in the consular district mark a highlight in the younger history of the Consulate General. In 2006, he accepted a private invitation of Chancellor Angela Merkel to visit her electoral district in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. One year later, he participated in the G8 summit in Heiligendamm.

## The Consulate General today

The consular region of U.S. Consulate General Hamburg encompasses the *Bundesländer* (states) Hamburg, Bremen, Niedersachsen, Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. There are approximately 20,000 American citizens who live in these states, including 2,800 in Hamburg (status: 2010).

The staff members of the political-economic section are primarily responsible for following, analyzing and reporting on topics in the area of politics, internal security, economy and military in Northern Germany. They are in close contact with German politicians, representatives of law enforcement authorities and business representatives. Events are organized on various topics that are relevant to the United States as well as Germany.

The public affairs section promotes understanding of U.S. policies and U.S. culture. It is responsible for the Consulate's media relations and presents U.S. policies and current developments in U.S. history, society and culture to the German public. The section closely cooperates with the media, civic society institutions and the educational sector and further promotes cultural exchanges between the U.S. and Germany.

Since her arrival in September 2010, Consul General Inmi K. Patterson has given special emphasis to enhancing cooperation with politicians and leaders of civil society, as well as to supporting institutions dedicated to creating cultural understanding between Germany and the United States, such as youth exchanges and sister city initiatives. Consul General Patterson regularly visits all five states in Hamburg's consular district. During her travels, she has cultivated contacts with women, youth groups, local media, cultural institutions, and political parties. In her efforts to strengthen German-U.S. relations, she has also increased activities in the "Little White House on the Alster". Hamburg's current designation as Europe's Green Capital has given the Consulate an opportunity to highlight U.S.-German environmental collaboration.



U.S. Consul General Patterson and Tashi Takang, General Manager of Hotel Park Hyatt Hamburg, cutting the birthday cake during the Consulate's 60th anniversary event on August 24, 2011



Consul General Patterson receives her guests at the main gate of the Consulate for the Fourth of July reception in 2011

## Consuls and Consuls General in Hamburg since 1790

John Parish ..... 1790	Samuel T. Williams ..... 1867
Samuel Williams ..... 1796	Edward Robinson ..... 1869
Joseph Pitcairn ..... 1797	John M. Wilson ..... 1876
John M. Forbes ..... 1803	George Scroggs ..... 1879
Edward Wyer ..... 1817	James M. Wilson ..... 1880
John Cuthbert ..... 1826	John M. Bailey ..... 1881
Frederick List ..... 1830	William M. Lang ..... 1885
John Cuthbert ..... 1831	Charles F. Johnson ..... 1889
Gustavus Koerner ..... 1848	William R. Estes ..... 1892
Philo White ..... 1849	William H. Robertson ..... 1893
Samuel Bromberg ..... 1850	Hugh Pitcairn ..... 1897
S. M. Johnson ..... 1853	Robert B. Skinner ..... 1908
Orson W. Bennett ..... 1854	Henry M. Morgan ..... 1913
Eli B. Ames ..... 1856	
John B. Miller ..... 1858	<i>From February 3, 1917, to April 28, 1923, the U.S. Consulate General in Hamburg was closed.</i>
Henry S. Miller ..... 1861	
James R. McDonald ..... 1861	Theodore Jaeckel ..... 1923
James H. Anderson ..... 1861	Thoma H. Bevan ..... 1924
Davidson M. Leatherman .... 1866	Gabriel B. Ravndal ..... 1928

John E. Kehl .....	1929	James C. Whitlock, Jr. ....	1987
John G. Erhardt .....	1933	Elizabeth Bollmann .....	1991
Wilbur Keblinger .....	1937	Daniel A. Weygandt .....	1994
James J. Murphy, Jr. ....	1940	Christopher F. Lynch .....	1997
Alfred R. Thomson .....	1941	Susan M. Elbow .....	2001
<i>From July 9, 1941, to March 1, 1946, the U.S. Consulate General in Hamburg was closed.</i>		Duane C. Butcher .....	2004
		Karen E. Johnson .....	2007
		Inmi K. Patterson .....	2010
Edward M. Groth .....	1946		
Robert T. Cowan .....	1949		
Clare H. Timberlake .....	1952		
Edward S. Maney .....	1955		
E. Tomlin Bailey .....	1959		
Coburn B. Kidd .....	1965		
Alexander C. Johnpoll .....	1969		
John A. Brogan, III .....	1972		
Charles A. Kiselyak .....	1976		
Grant E. Mouser, III .....	1980		
Pierre Shostal .....	1985		



Impression of U.S. Consulate General Hamburg in the early 1970s