Call for Papers:
Hanseatic-American Relations since 1790

The U.S. Consulate General Hamburg, the Hanseatic History Association and the Chair for North American, Caribbean and Atlantic History at Hamburg University are going to hold a conference on the occasion of the 222nd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg and the United States of America.

Venue: Hamburg, N.N.
Date: 11/23/2012

On June 17, 1790, President George Washington appointed John Parish, a naturalized Hamburg citizen of Scottish birth, to the position of Vice-Consul to Hamburg. His mission was to promote trade and to protect the interests of U.S. citizens. Not only does his appointment mark the beginning of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Hanseatic city, but rather between America and the whole German-speaking region. The U.S. Consulate in Hamburg was founded as the eleventh U.S. diplomatic representation worldwide, and the first one on German soil. This circumstance emphasizes the historic importance of the commercial metropolis Hamburg for the German-American relations and the transatlantic partnership.

At the beginning, economic aspects played a major role in the Hamburg-American relations. In the 1790s, the trade with the United States grew enormously. Soon after the Napoleonic Wars and the Continental System it continued to grow again, boosted by the Convention of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between the United States and the Hanseatic cities of Hamburg, Bremen and Luebeck in 1827.

Since the 1840s, emigration to the “new world” increased erratically. In this context, Bremen—where a U.S. Consulate had been opened in 1794—and Bremerhaven played a more important role. The large emigration resulted in more intense political and cultural contacts between the United States and the three Hanseatic cities of Hamburg, Bremen and Luebeck.

After the foundation of the North German Confederation in 1867 resp. the German Reich in 1871, this development continued unabated although the Hanseatic cities lost their sovereignty. Aside from the numerous trade contacts and the links forged by emigrants between the old and new world, the U.S. Consulates on site were also major players in this development.

Later, the Hanseatic-American relations were incisively affected by the two world wars, yet it should be emphasized, that the Americans appeared as liberators more than occupiers. Until now, the relations especially between the United States and Bremen preserve that notion, while America's links into Hamburg also always remained strong, not least because of the U.S. Consulate's work on site. Being both an important European trade and media hub, Hamburg continues to play an essential role in the German-American relations.

On the occasion of the 222nd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg and the United States of America, the U.S. Consulate General Hamburg, the Hanseatic History Association and the Chair for North American, Caribbean and Atlantic History at Hamburg University plan on setting up a historical conference in order to appreciate the multi-faceted relations between the Hanseatic cities and the United States. The conference aims to both explore and connect the fields of research on the Hanseatic-American relations, focusing on the following topics:

- Politics and Diplomacy
- Economy, Trade and Shipping
- Military
- Emigration
- Culture

Please send proposals for contributions related to these topics and a brief curriculum vitae until April 20, 2012, to:

Professor Dr. Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, rolf.hammel-kiesow (at) luebeck.de
Dr. des. Heiko Herold, HeroldH (at) state.gov
Professor Dr. Claudia Schnurmann, claudia.schnurmann (at) uni-hamburg.de

Please respect a time limit of 20 minutes for all presentations. Selected contributions are planned to be published in conference proceedings.