



{ THE BEACON }



But while I beheld with pleasure the dawn of liberty rising in Europe, I saw with regret the lustre of it fading in America. In less than two years from the time of my departure some distant symptoms painfully suggested the idea that the principles of the Revolution were expiring on the soil that produced them.

Thomas Paine (1802)

T. Paine

THOMAS PAINE NATIONAL HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

thomaspaine.org

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Paine on the U.S. Constitution

The quote on the masthead is from the first article written by Paine on his return to America in 1802: *To the Citizens of the U.S. #1*. The time frame he speaks of, “In less than 2 years from the time of (my) departure”, was the enactment of the U.S. Constitution culminating in 1789. His departure was in 1787.

Among other things, Paine objected to the creation of a Senate. Like Franklin, he supported a unicameral legislature, divided in two at random, which would then separately debate laws, then convene together to come to agreement. The Pennsylvania Constitution had a single legislature with no equivalent of an elite House of Lords. The Senate created in the Constitutional Convention was a block on the popular Representatives. This was Paine’s “painful” “symptoms”. The Federalists were pushing for a Senate for life, and they were largely appointed by Governors. There was no direct election of Senators, and that wasn’t changed until 1913.

In *Rights of Man*, Paine compared the U.S. Constitution to Britain’s lack of one positively, because of the way America created it, not because of all its content. Paine had argued that the people write a Constitution and then the government will have a set of rules, a structure, that has to be abided by.

Compared to the monarchical system where one person dictates whatever he or she wants, and all functions of government are run by his or her whims, Paine’s principle of the mass of people set the rules by first creating a Constitution.

Paine unveiled that Britain does not have a constitution because the people never set one up. The only progress in Britain was that the barons and landowners forced on the monarch some reforms, like the Magna Carta. None of these helped the people. Laws were proposed and passed on the basis of protecting the rule of the elite, and the natural rights of the people were repeatedly suppressed. And civil rights were scarce and obscure. The theme of *Rights of Man* lays out the comparison, which resulted in a revolution in the concept of government.

So Paine, in contrasting the new American Constitution with Britain’s lack of one, was a call to the English people to copy America. This is why he was charged with sedition, among many other issues, including his attack on monarchy itself.

The Pennsylvania Constitution forged by the democratic faction of the Revolution led by the Whig Society, had a single legislature; a seven year convention to make adjustments by popularly elected delegates; a plural executive so as not to mimic a king; and further democratic

Principles, all of which were copied in France in the 1793 Constitution (but it was never enacted.)

A crucial article was written by a friend of our Association, Richard Rosenfeld, who we introduced to Lewis Lapham of *Harper's Magazine*. Rosenfeld then wrote an article which has more importance today than in 2004 when he first wrote it: "What Democracy?", which questions the scam perpetrated on the American people: the Senate. It is in the May Issue of 2004, and we would reprint it here, but it is still owned by *Harper's*. Another relevant article is his "Adams' Tyranny" from 2001, also in *Harper's*.

We also recommend Rosenfeld's book which documents the proof of the accuracy of Paine's *Letter to Washington* in 1795 and the corrupt Adams administration: *American Aurora*. Paine has been heavily criticized for this work on Washington in his day, and since by historians; but its accuracy of analysis has now been proven from original sources in Rosenfeld's book.

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There is also a recent book by Michael Klarman of Harvard University, *The Framers' Coup*, which documents in detail the 1787 Constitutional Convention, and the politics and class content of that spectacle.

THOMAS PAINE DAY 2023

June 8, 2023 will be Thomas Paine Day in New Rochelle, NY at the Thomas Paine New Rochelle Center. A Resolution will be read by the City of New Rochelle, and it will be done repeatedly every June 8th in the future, open to all.

June 8th was the death day of Paine, and in remembrance a wreath will be laid on his gravesite, which is the Paine Monument: since the Monument is his gravesite in actuality since the only surviving part of his body, the brainstem, is interred beneath the Monument; his original location of the grave site is 30 feet away under Paine Avenue.

Most of our members are not located in the vicinity of New Rochelle, so we reproduce it:

Resolution of the City of New Rochelle, New York

Establishing Thomas Paine Day, June 8th
WHEREAS, Thomas Paine received from the State of New York, on June 16, 1784, a 277-acre farm on North Avenue in New Rochelle, for his services in the Revolution; and
WHEREAS, he lived on what is now Paine Avenue for two years on his farm between 1804 and 1806; and
WHEREAS, he was the spark that lit the fuse of the American Revolution with his work *Common Sense* in January, 1776, and closed 1776 with the essay that turned the tide in favor of the American forces with his *Crisis I*; and

WHEREAS, he wrote *Rights of Man*, which inspired the Age of Democratic Revolutions in North America, Europe, Latin America, and around the world; and

WHEREAS, he demonstrated how equality is the basis of democracy and just government, fought for the abolition of slavery, and was the first to call for reparations; and

WHEREAS, New Rochelle has become the world center for scholarship, remembrance, and appreciation of Thomas Paine's life, works and legacy with the creation of the Thomas Paine New Rochelle Center in 2022 comprising:

- the Paine Monument, erected in 1839, the first monument for a Founder;
- the Thomas Paine Cottage, the only house standing that Paine lived in, owned by the Huguenot & New Rochelle Historical Association; and
- the Thomas Paine Memorial Building and Museum, for which on May 30, 1925, Thomas A. Edison turned the first shovel of earth, initiating its construction as a headquarters for the Thomas Paine National Historical Association, the oldest body dedicated to a Founder in the country, est. 1884;

THEREFORE, we recognize Thomas Paine's contributions to democracy and human rights by declaring that June 8th be known as **Thomas Paine Day** in New Rochelle, New York as of June 8, 2023, 214 years after his death, and henceforth.

TPNHA and the Comstock Act

Our Association was founded in 1884, and the founders were from various organizations, all of which were opposed to the Comstock Act. The Comstock Act was created to combat "obscenity", dodging the idea that the Comstock Act was in itself obscene to democracy. It is now a weapon again against women, common sense, and decency, and in support of feudalistic ideology. This law is still on the books. It was a religious-based law denying the

ability to talk about and mail material related to contraception, or anything related to it.

The Board of TPNHA was formed to unite these groups into one place to coordinate their activity, with Thomas Paine as the symbol for these progressive causes, including women's rights, especially women's health rights and access to health information.

The Comstock Act of 1773 is in the news today! being used to suppress all support for women's abortion rights. See how far we have progressed?! The editor of the *Truth Seeker*, D.M. Bennett, was jailed based on this Act. Members of the Board of TPNHA were threatened for opposing the Act, and so they founded the groups that eventually led to forming the American Civil Liberties Union, groups like the National Defense Association. Thaddeus Wakeman, the main organizer of our Association and the first President, ran for governor of New York on a platform opposing the Comstock Act. Far ahead of his time, he lost.

For complete coverage of the history of TPNHA go to:

<https://www.thomaspaine.org/pages/history.html>

Recommended Paine related Podcast and Film Links:

Silo Solving multi-disciplinary approaches to world problems:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLlcvfo5wQ>

The Peaceful Political Revolution in America

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBXySZqOdSsXZleMqsBvQt5Tk0uyYa84n>

American Freethought: all 4 parts

<http://www.americanfreethought.tv>

More Paine Quotes

Following up on the article above on the Senate, and the Revolution “expiring” on American soil, Paine had foreseen “the strife of Factions” in 1786. He had been fighting for a Bank which would benefit merchants as well as workers (“mechanics”) and small farmers, but the class interests created strife. Paine worked with all factions in the mid-1780s before his departure, and tried to secure a national interest above the conflict of greed and hubris. He wrote a letter to George Clymer in the fall of 1786 which included this passage:

“Instead of that tranquility which the country required and might have enjoyed, and instead of that internal prosperity which her independent situation put her in the power to possess, she has suffered herself to be rent into Factions, and sacrificed her interest to gratify her passions.

“The proceedings of the Legislature for these two years past are marked with such vehemence of party spirit and rancorous prejudice, that it is impossible any country can thrive or flourish under such manifest misconduct.

“I have often been at a loss to account for the conduct of people where no visible interest appeared to direct them, and where it has been evident to me that the consequences of their own conduct would operate against themselves.”

On his return to America in 1802, Paine was greeted with even more intense conflict, a barrage of a dis-information campaign against him, and intense partisan warfare in the wake of the anti-democratic Adams Administration.

The Progress of the Collected Works

The Editorial Board of the Thomas Paine Collected Works and Correspondence has made enormous progress. The Board has stopped searching for new works and letters at this point, and began the process of annotation and proofreading. That should be completed by early next year, for a publication date of Spring 2026 – in time for the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.

The completed edition will be six volumes, broken down chronologically:

Volume 1: Works from 1758 to 1774

Volume 2: Works from 1775 to 1782

Volume 3: Works from 1782 to 1793

Volume 4: Works from 1793 to 1801

plus all Poetry

Volume 5: Works from 1802 to 1820

Some works were posthumous

Volume 6: Correspondence

The Paine corpus has been increased nearly three-fold.

Editorial Board

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The Collected Works Project is being managed by the Thomas Paine National Historical Association. Although we have some initial funding from the Nimick Forbesway Foundation, we still need support from donors in other foundations and historical research bodies. Contact TPNHA through this website at tpnhamail@gmail.com.