



{ THE BEACON }

"The revolutionary history of the United States and France stirred me deeply and its heroes and martyrs became my idols. Thomas Paine towered above them all." **Eugene V. Debs**



T. Paine

THOMAS PAINE NATIONAL HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

thomaspaine.org

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NEW ROCHELLE, NEW YORK

Issue #5

Thomas Paine Monument and Grave Issue

The Thomas Paine Historical Association will be designating the Paine Monument as the **Thomas Paine Monument and Grave**. We cannot officially change the name, as the City of New Rochelle has jurisdiction over it ever since TPNHA handed the maintenance of the site in 1905 to it. The rationale for our change in reference is the following.

As most of you know, the body of Paine was dug up and relocated to England in 1819, ten years after his death, by William Cobbett – a one-time opponent of Paine until he read Paine, and sniffed the winds of the politics brewing around him in favor of Paine's politics, and became a supporter. He dug up the bones and left an empty grave, taking them back to England.

Twenty years later, in 1839, after years of raising money and securing the talents John Frazee, the sculptor, Gilbert Vale placed the monument near the original spot of Paine's grave. It was placed 30 feet due north of the grave site. It is the oldest such monument to a Founder that we know of. More on Gilbert Vale below, but his biography of Paine (on our website) is one of the best, and as accurate as could be at the time.

In 1905, North Avenue (then North street) was being widened, and the Monument needed to be moved back, which it was, 15 feet straight back from North Avenue. (See article of the time below). In the

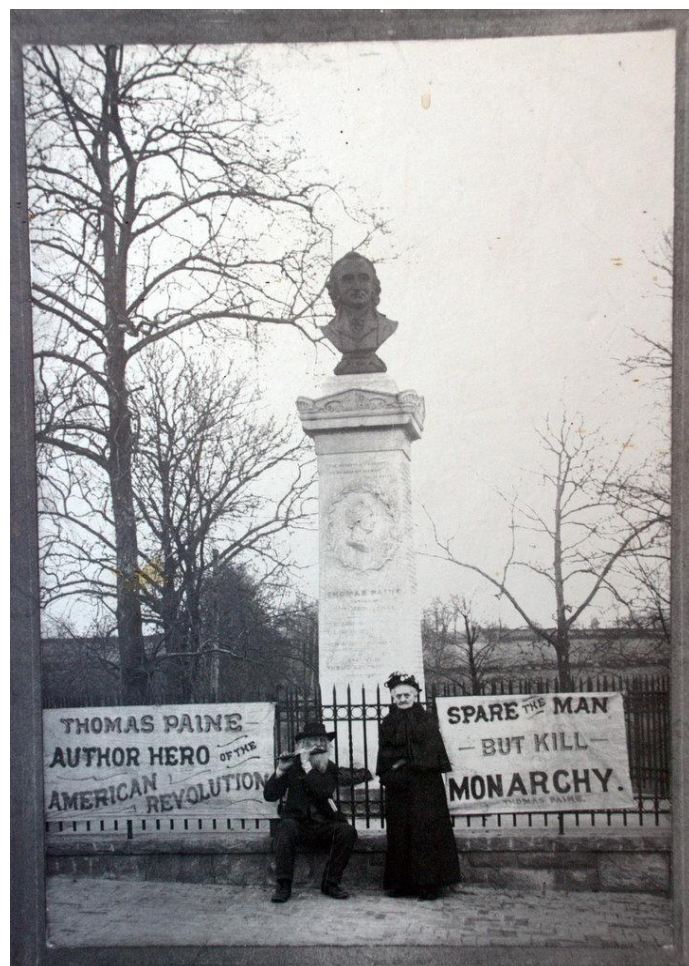


process of relocating the Monument in 1905, the relic of Paine's body, obtained by Moncure Conway in England, the brain of Paine, was placed beneath the Monument. This is the only surviving piece of Paine's body to be interred. That makes it his grave. And a more fitting marker cannot be found, despite Paine's request for a gravesite, that at this time, cannot be successfully established. He called for a 12' X 12' plot with trees planted around it. That was established before Cobbett made his heist, but for now it will have to wait to be recreated. **1**

From the Truth Seeker, January 21, 1905

"Again the rumor is going around that the Paine monument in New Rochelle, N.Y., is to be removed! The facts are that the city of New Rochelle has taken charge of the monument, and will move it only about fifteen feet. It now stands at the junction of North street and the lane which leads from North street to the old house where Paine lived. North street has been widened to seventy-five feet, and takes in the ground where the monument stands. The lane, which runs at right angle to North street, has been widened to sixty-six feet, and named Paine avenue. The monument is to stand in the center of Paine avenue, guarded by stone posts and chains, and a driveway is to be made on either side of it. The city of New Rochelle is doing the work, and of course paying for it. All of the councilmen of the city desire to preserve the historic landmark, as may be inferred from the naming of the lane through which Paine walked, Paine avenue. The old Paine house, some quarter of a mile from North street, is still standing, occupied by its owner, Mr. See, one of the old settlers. A trolley car runs through North street, and one can now ride to the monument from New Rochelle depot, or from New York by trolley, if that form of amusement is bearable. The monument is now permanently located, or will be when moved to the center of Paine avenue, and the city of New Rochelle will care for it. Our informant is Capt. George W. Loyd, who has lived in New Rochelle since 1853, is over eighty-six years old, was a Copperhead in the civil war, is a Populist now, and has more fire and vitality in his body at the present time than many young men. His wife is ninety-three, and they have both been Paineites so long that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. When the work is completed we will print a picture of the monument and its surroundings."

[Note: the bust on top of the Monument was placed there in 1899. It was created by a noted sculptor George MacDonald who was a Board member of TPNHA.]



George Loyd and wife posing in front of the new location of the Monument in 1905.

Inscriptions on the Monument:

Under the profile are the words:

THOMAS PAINE. Author of "Common Sense." Born in England, January 29, 1737; died in New York City, June 8, 1809.

The palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise.

Erected by public contribution, November 12, 1839. Repaired and rededicated May 30, 1881.

On the north side is inscribed:

I believe in one God and no more, and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe in the equality of man, and that our religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy. - *Age of Reason*. It is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing or in disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe. - *Age of Reason*.

On the East side is inscribed:

It is only in the creation that all our ideas and conceptions of a word of God can unite. The creation speaketh an universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they be. It is an ever-existing original which every man can read. It cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not: it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this world of God reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of God.

Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the scripture, which any human hand might make, but the scripture called the creation. - *Age of Reason*.

On the South side is inscribed:

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis shrink from the service of their country, but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have the glorious consolation with us that the harder the conflict the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap we esteem too lightly. Heaven knows how to put a price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated. - *Crisis No. I*

The times that tried men souls are over —and the greatest and completest revolution the world ever knew, gloriously and happily accomplished.

In the present case — the mighty magnitude of the object — the various uncertainties of fate it has undergone — the numerous and complicated dangers we have suffered or escaped — the eminence we now stand on, and the vast prospect before us, must all conspire to impress us with contemplation. To see it in our power to make a world happy — to teach mankind the art of being so — to exhibit, on the theatre of the universe a character hitherto unknown — and to have, as it were, a new creation intrusted to our hands, are honors that command reflection, and can neither be too highly estimated, nor too gratefully received.

Never, I say, had a country so many openings to happiness as this. Her setting out in life, like the rising of a fair morning, was unclouded and promising. Her cause was good. Her principles just and liberal. Her temper serene and firm. Her conduct regulated by the nicest steps, and everything about her wore the mark of honor. It is not every country (perhaps there is not another in the world) that can boast so fair an origin. Even the first settlement of America corresponds with the character of the revolution. Rome, once the proud mistress of the universe, was originally a band of ruffians. Plunder and rapine made her rich, and her oppression of millions made her great. But America need never be ashamed to tell her birth, nor relate the stages by which she rose to empire. *Crisis XV*

Gilbert Vale

Gilbert Vale was an early supporter of Thomas Paine, first in England, then in America in the early 19th century. He was a freethought publisher and writer, and through his work he reached the freethought and progressive segments of the American people, and was able to rally them to raise the money to construct the Paine Monument. He chose to place it near the gravesite of Paine to mark his presence there, and accommodate Paine's wish.

Vale was born in London, England, in 1788, died in Brooklyn, New York, August 17, 1866. He was educated to join the clergy, but he abandoned preparation for that profession, got involved in rebellions in England, and came to the United States in 1829, and engaged in teaching, making a specialty of navigation, and in lecturing, publishing, and literary pursuits in New York city and Brooklyn. For several years he edited the *Citizen of the World* and subsequently *The Beacon*, a literary and scientific journal, for which this Newsletter honors him. He also was an inventor, and patented a combined terrestrial globe and celestial sphere to facilitate the teaching of astronomy. Vale was a free-thinker, and wrote accordingly. He published *Fanaticism, its Source and Influence* (New York, 1835), and the *Life of Thomas Paine*, including his letters to General Washington, which were suppressed in other biographies of Paine back then (1841).



The Truth Seeker

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 1881.

Rededication of Paine's Monument.

[Excerpts from the article]

"On Monday last, Decoration day, a goodly number of the admirers of Thomas Paine, amounting to several hundreds, assembled at the monument erected to his memory near New Rochelle in 1839. The day was lovely and the meeting was in every way most pleasant. The major portion of those who went out from the city took the 10 A.M. train at the New Haven depot, and a pleasant ride of forty minutes brought us to village of New Rochelle, Westchester county. Quite a party were in waiting at the depot with numerous omnibuses and other carriages. These were soon filled, and a procession was formed which turned its face toward the monument, nearly two miles north of the station. Capt. Geo. W. Loyd, mounted on a white horse named Button [the same as one once owned by Thomas Paine], acted as marshal and escorted us to the monument.

The lot in the center of which the monument stands is some twenty feet square, surrounded by a wall laid in cement and some three or four feet high, with a tree in each corner affording an agreeable shade. The monument is of Westchester marble, of a light color, and is a straight shaft some twelve in height, including the base and capstone and cornice of Ionic order. It is about

three feet square at the base, and tapers to thirty inches or thereabouts next the cap. The whole is profusely lettered on the four sides.

[Several speakers and notables were present, including future leaders of TPNHA like Thaddeus Wakeman, Samuel Putnam, D.M. Bennett, and many others. Mrs. H. Allen gave a brilliant paean:]

"It will be seen by the life and writings of Thomas Paine that he was a correct thinker, a ready writer, with a heart free from guile but overflowing with benevolence; firm in purpose and untiring in pursuits, he warmly espoused the cause of liberty and human rights, and he defended his cause with such force of argument and eloquence that he bore down all opposition. With a mind as capacious as the universe, and a perception as quick as thought, he could grasp the most extensive subjects, and discover their most abstruse bearings; he could discover truth, and always espoused her cause, which was one reason why, in debate, he always put his adversary to flight. He erected a monument that will be more durable than brass, and more precious than rubies. When conquering heroes shall be forgotten; when the rich and noble of the earth shall be laid low in the dust; when the proud obelisk and triumphal arch shall molder and decay, there shall live with grateful remembrance in the hearts of his countrymen the name of Thomas Paine."

Who was George Loyd?

George Loyd, seen in the photo on page 2 with his wife, lived in New Rochelle since 1853 to his death in 1906. For 30 years he cared for the abandoned grave of Paine, and when the Monument was moved in 1905, and the road widened, he cut off a piece of the tree over the grave for remembrance (this piece is in the TPNHA Collection at Iona College).

Loyd had an interesting life, growing up in Rhode Island and his family participated in two rebellions against the still-English model of government there (the Dorr Rebellion and again when a new constitution was written.) When the Civil War broke out he sided with the South and still opposed slavery, citing States' Rights. He was a founding member of TPNHA in 1884 for caring for Paine's presence in New Rochelle and his unwavering efforts to promote Paine's ideas.

The original locations of the Monument and Gravesite

When Vale placed the monument in New Rochelle, he put it 30 feet to the north of the grave site. We know this from the description of it from the 1892 Eckler edition of Linton's *Life of Paine* (see page 2 of the Newsletter *The Beacon* #4). The article in this issue from page 2, we know the Monument was moved straight back 15 feet to make way for the North street expansion. With these calculations we can determine that the gravesite is under the right lane of Paine Avenue (the street splits into two halves surrounding the Monument, entering it, and exiting it). It is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way over in that lane. It is also approximately in the center of the sidewalk along North Avenue if it continued into Paine Avenue. The original Vale location of the Monument is also in the center of that sidewalk along North Avenue, directly in front of the present Monument location. See the pictures below.



Left: looking north, the marker in the road is the original gravesite; the marker in front of Monument is the original site of the monument.

Below: Same markers looking south along North Avenue; the Cottage is behind the Monument. (original location of the Cottage was 300 yards up what is now Paine Avenue)



Thanks to *The Truth Seeker's* Editor, Rod Bradford, who has provided many Paine articles from past issues of the Truth Seeker. This month a special issue The Truth Seeker will highlight Paine and New Rochelle.
(<http://thetruthseeker.net>)

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The Thomas Paine Festival: June 16 -18, 2022 in New Rochelle, NY

We will be Zooming to all members on June 17, 2022 from 10 am EDT until 3pm. We will send a link just prior to the date. Symposium schedule follows:

Thomas Paine Festival Symposium

Friday, June 17, 2022

10 am Session I

Lyne Hervey-Passée, PhD candidate, Université de Limoges & Université Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis: *The Writing Actions of Thomas Paine*: using the theory of geocriticism to highlight the significance of spaces and places in preparation of a documentary.
Paulie Wenger, writer: *A Pretender to Literature: The Rise and Fall of a New Jersey Infidel*. The story of Tamar Davis, an unknown female freethinker who was left out of the list of notable literary freethinkers of the 19th century.

11:15 am Session II

Joy Masoff, PhD candidate, Arizona State University: *The Unrevealed Journey of Marguerite Brazier de Bonneville: Paris, Paine, and the Patriarchy, 1789-1846*.

Greg McMurray, writer and historian: *Why Isn't Thomas Paine Cool?* This talk explores the ways in which Paine has struggled to achieve the kind of folk-hero status enjoyed by some of his lesser contemporaries, and how our culture would be affected if he were able to break through.

Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-founder and co-president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation: "To Do Good Is My Religion - Thomas Paine's importance to freethought."

1 :15 pm Session III

Noel Cazenave, sociology professor, University of Connecticut, presented by co-author Gary Berton: *A Tale of Two Toms: Thomas Jefferson's and Thomas Paine's Radically Different Visions of America*.

Collected Works Discussion: The Editorial Board will present an overview of initial findings and their impact not only on the historiography of Thomas Paine, but world history as well. Many of the basic assumptions of Paine's life and works have been erroneous, and these discussions will bring out some aspects of the findings.

Marc Belissa, University of Paris Nanterre

Yannick Bosc, University of Rouen

Gary Berton, Research Director, and President TPNHA

Gregory Claey's, retired, University of London, Royal Holloway – Editor-in-Chief

Scott Cleary, Iona College – Secretary

Carine Lounissi, University of Rouen, University of Paris – Assistant editor

Note: Entrance fee to in-person attendance will include lunch, and a \$15 fee to cover costs.

Other scheduled events include:

- A reception at the Paine Cottage and first viewing of the new exhibits at the Thomas Paine Memorial Building, evening of June 16th
- A tour of the TPNHA Collection at Iona College, 3 – 5 pm, 6/17/22
- Banquet at the Greentree Country Club in New Rochelle, followed by a performance by Ian Ruskin of his play *To Begin the World Over Again*, 6 – 9 pm, 6/17/22
- Ribbon cutting ceremony with dignitaries and politicians 11am – noon, 6/18/22 and
- Re-enactors, family games, wreath laying ceremony at the Monument 11am – 12:30 pm
- An afternoon of more activities available on Zoom, including virtual presentations by Congressman Jamie Raskin, and Sarah Marsh, reading from her children's book on Paine, and an in-person talk by Zenos Frudakis – sculptor of the proposed statue in Washington, DC.

Go to www.thomaspainecenter.org for details and to purchase tickets.