



# { THE BEACON }

Though the flame of liberty may sometimes cease to shine, the coal can never expire.

Thomas Paine



*T. Paine*

THOMAS PAINE NATIONAL HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

thomaspaine.org

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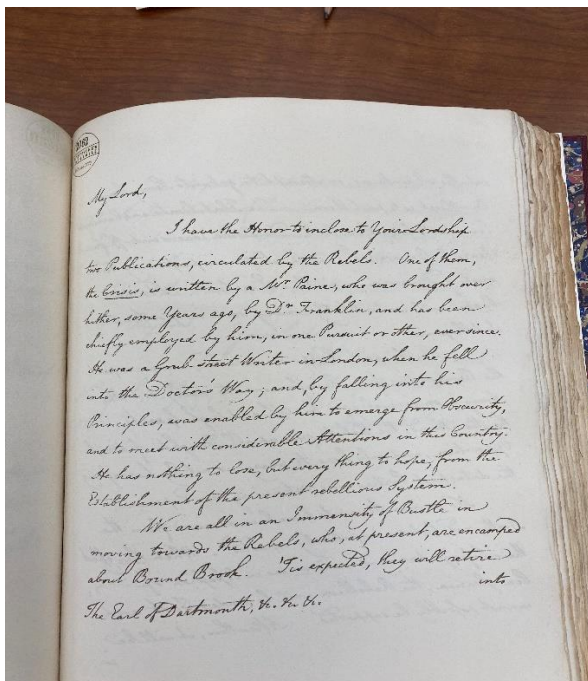
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## From the Thomas Paine Symposium, June 17, 2022

The Editorial Board of the Collected Works of Thomas Paine presented an overview of the project. They presented a picture from the work done to date that Paine had been an active writer for 17 years before coming to America. And he had ties to Benjamin Franklin, then an ambassador to England, from an early date when Paine was just entering adulthood.

A piece of collaborative research to this claim has been found, which we copy here:



The letter reads:

*Ambrose Serle to the Earl of Dartmouth,  
11 June 1777*

*My Lord,*

*I have the Honor to inclose to Your Lordship two Publications, circulated by the Rebels. One of them, the Crisis, is written by a Mr. Paine, who was brought over hither, some Years ago, by Dr. Franklin, and has been chiefly employed by him, in one Pursuit or other, ever since. He was a Grub street Writer in London, when he fell into the Doctor's Way; and, by falling into his Principles, was enabled by him to emerge from Obscurity, and to meet with considerable Attentions in this Country. He has nothing to lose, but every thing to hope, from the Establishment of the present rebellious Situation.*

"A Grub Street Writer" was a derogatory term used by the aristocracy against the political writers, and others, of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, synonymous to "hack writers" living in the poor area around that street. This shows that Paine was actively writing before coming to America. It also shows his close ties to Franklin from that early period. Although he probably didn't live there, Paine fits the underground Patriotic Whig political writing group in philosophy. The new works being discovered by the Project has confirmed

his role as a leading writer close to the Pitt/Shelburne faction long before coming to America. Volume I of the new Collection of his writings will be almost entirely filled with these recently discovered works, and will explain how a writer could produce a brilliant work like *Common Sense*, after two decades of honing his skills.



Paulie Wenger was one of the presenters at the Symposium, and he uncovered an unknown freethinker from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Tamar Davis. She was hounded by the state authorities until she died young in prison. As part of his talk was a poem she wrote on Paine:

### ***The Reformer and Patriot* by Tamar Davis**

Written for the 116 Anniversary of the Birth-Day of Thomas Paine. From the *Boston Investigator*, January 26, 1853.

Bright laurels bring the conquering chief to crown,  
And wreath with bays the poet's young renown;  
But garlands gather from the mighty Oak  
Whose gnarled limbs defy the thunder stroke  
For the Reformer who, in fearless might,  
Dares nobly battle for the Truth and Right!

Long, long ago, dark Error wrapped mankind  
And hateful priests enslaved the human mind;  
Now bidding War unsheathe his bloody steel,  
And then presiding o'er the rack and wheel;  
Hear saintly Luther without mercy doom  
Unnumbered victims to a watery tomb;  
See grim old Calvin, like a demon smile,  
Where of Servetus gleams the lighted pile;  
And Cranmer, too, compelled the fate to bide  
He'd dealt to others in his hour of pride;  
Then later still to sage New England turn  
Where priests decide and tortured witches burn!

Now, even now, they still presume to blind  
And breathe anathemas o'er all mankind;  
The same in mind and thought, in wish and will,  
They're avaricious, grasping, selfish still.  
Not now, indeed, they light the horrid fire

Where aged women poor and lone expire;  
Not now, indeed, the torturing rack they build;  
Not now are dungeons by their orders filled.

Thanks to the noble, great, and godlike train  
Who dared their idiot phrenzy to restrain!  
Thanks to the Man, their leader, proudly names.  
Who civil rights and mental freedom claimed!  
Of pious fraud and mummeries exposed,  
And superstition's silly rites disclosed;  
And holding up for bigotry to read  
The thousand errors of her worthless creed,  
Became the mark for hate's malicious shaft,  
Aimed in their fury by the priestly craft.

And long shall live the glorious name of Paine!  
While Justice, Truth, and Gratitude remain;  
So long as men with generous thought endued  
Admire the great and reverence the good,  
So long as nations glory in the fate  
That brought disunion of the Church and State,  
So long as freedom to the memory clings  
Of those who humbled priests and conquered kings,  
Age after age shall murmur their applause  
And bless the Champion of a righteous cause!

A native ardor all his soul refined;  
Not for himself he labored, but mankind;  
And knows the earth a nobler, greater part  
Than acts the Patriot of exalted heart,  
Who stirs to mighty deeds his fellow men,  
Whether he wields the falchion or the pen?

### **Symposium Talk by Gary Berton, with Notes by Dr. Cazenave**

#### *A Tale of Two Toms: Thomas Jefferson's and Thomas Paine's Radically Different Visions of America*

Dr. Noel Cazenave, Professor of Sociology at University of Connecticut, has been researching for a book on *Kindness Wars: The History and Political Economy of Human Caring*. During his research of Enlightenment thinkers he came to Thomas Paine, and was impressed by his orientation towards the well-being of humanity. He also came across Thomas Jefferson, and immediately formed an opposite opinion, that although he shared a lot of political goals with Paine, he also had no Kindness in his world view.

I was honored that he contacted me about Paine, and wanted to hear more. We decided we could collaborate on an article about the comparison between the two historical figures who influenced

the world on this question of kindness. This is a very brief summary of where we are on this narrow topic.

In examining 21 Enlightenment thinkers, Dr. Cazenave separated them into 3 categories, British Conservatives, Christian Benevolents and Secular Progressives. Both Toms fit into the last. Class plays a major role: Paine from the lower classes, Jefferson from the inherited planter class.

Paine's argument for independence was linked to the cause of humanity for justice and equality. "My country is the world; my religion is to do good." He criticized Rousseau that although Rousseau possessed benevolent sentiments, but "having raised this animation, they do not direct its operation, and leave the mind in love with an object, without describing the means of possessing it." For Paine, sentiments won't abolish aristocracy and privilege, or defend the poor, the homeless, the children, and proposed concrete ways of kindness toward humanity which slowly have minimally been addressed if not universally enacted. Even his guaranteed minimal income concept is still a far-off goal, and the economist Thomas Piketty recently outlined the hope of humanity as resting on this concept. Paine called for aggressive political change, and with it a change in thinking.

But Jefferson is another question. The self-possessed contradiction of Jefferson is almost frightening. Although Franklin probably had more to do with the preamble of the Declaration than Jefferson, the "all men are created equal" gets contradicted by Jefferson in his slavery clause written by a slave-owner, and his clause about savages which shows he didn't think they were "men". Relatively few people are aware, however, that Jefferson would become one of that new nation's earliest and most influential theoreticians of white supremacy, and even fewer people know of the major kindness-theory-related contradictions within the Declaration of Independence, itself.

In 1807 Jefferson as President told his Secretary of War that if the assimilation of indigenous people don't conform to the white society, "If we are constrained to lift the hatchet against any tribe, we will never lay it down until that tribe is exterminated." With America's indigenous people, like its African slaves, depicted as an existential threat to "white" American colonists, in-group empathy bias was mobilized for a remarkable lack

of empathy and kindness for those deemed to be racial outsiders.

Jefferson was one of this nation's most influential crafters of racist theory and ideologies. We can see this in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*; ironically Jefferson introduces his racism theory in a section of the book in which he touts the progressive changes he proposed to the Virginia legislature; including his unsuccessful effort to get it to gradually abolish slavery. Here Jefferson used what he argued was the inferiority of Africans as a race to explain why the Virginia slaves did not seem to benefit from the state's progressive laws by making significant accomplishments in the arts and sciences. Jefferson's reliance on genocide as the ultimate solution to his racial fears was evident again when he concluded that "the real distinctions which nature has made," along with other factors like "white" prejudice and "black" resentment "of the injuries they have sustained," prevent the two races from living together amicably without "the extermination of the one or the other race." In making his case, Jefferson's argument was anything but color-blind, for as he put it "The first difference which strikes us is that of colour." After wrapping his racist theory in a thin and pretentious veneer of scientific speculation as to the possible origins of "the black of the negro," Jefferson lays out his aesthetic argument for the importance of "colour, figure, and hair" and other physical differences. After surmising that this inferiority causes African slaves to be less able to achieve in the arts and sciences like painting, sculpture, poetry, even when granted the opportunity to do so, Jefferson concluded "as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind." And finally, Jefferson made it clear that this conclusion had implications beyond their ability to make significant contributions in the arts and science, when he surmised that due to that "unfortunate difference of colour, and perhaps of faculty" both their emancipation and their assimilation were unwise because if they were freed and allowed to remain in America that would risk "staining the blood of his master."

In the book by Tyler Stovall, *White Freedom*, Jefferson, like Voltaire, Kant, Hume and other Enlightenment figures, freedom was not meant to



be universal, but reserved for rational white men who owned property which he describes as “white freedom”. He concludes not only that “slavery and reason were not so much paradoxical as complementary and mutually reinforcing” but that, indeed, “race and racial difference played a seminal role in the modern concepts of liberty.”

Enter sociologist Pierre van den Berge: racism didn’t develop despite the commitments to liberty and freedom, it developed because of it. He answered the question of how slavery is justified in a society built on the assumptions that all human beings are created equal while developing racist ideology: people of African descent were not sufficiently human. And Jefferson was the most influential person to promote this duality. The ideal of equality was not only NOT inconsistent with racism, but it enabled, as it does today, the ability to separate the Africans from full humanity. So the ideal of America has an exception, and once created it bleeds into other “not fully white” peoples, and excluding them in varying degrees. You might say that is better than nothing, but in fact, it created a racist system by using fake science to justify inequality.

Voltaire, Kant, Mill, and Hume, all considered liberals in thought, are also guilty of this dichotomy among classification of human status. Voltaire even invested in the slave trade, even as his thinking evolved more progressively. And Hume identified “Negroes” as a species inferior to whites.

But this duality, or caste system of ranking humans, is ended by Paine among widely read Enlightenment figures. After writing the first work that was a collaboration with Benjamin Franklin in 1762, Franklin returned to America for a year or two; it was at this time that he changed his views of slavery, and I will surmise it was his close contact with Paine. Paine had declared he would be too emotional to write on abolition of slavery. He did write in private letters against it, and he wrote with Joseph Priestley in favor of the Slave Trade Act in London in 1792. But on his death bed, he couldn’t contain himself and let Jefferson know about the abomination of the existence and tolerance toward slavery anywhere, but particularly in America, who claimed that all men are created equal. The “Slave Letter” as we call it is the strongest, clearest expression against the abomination, with its

contradiction to American creed, and it was the first to call for reparations to begin reversing it. Like much of Paine’s work and ideology he was too far ahead of his time, and he still is. Racism from the white supremacists in the intellectual class infected the country, as did the inherited mentality of British colonialism. A sort of free pass to commit atrocities based on the supposition that whites are superior, the others are subhuman. This ideology remains with us today, and is vying once again for complete power in the growing fascist movement in America, and other countries.

Paine makes his case for the inalienability of human rights through his argument that while civil rights are based on an individual’s membership in society, natural rights are rooted in mere human existence, and that consequently “every civil right grows out of a natural right.” Consistent with this conceptualization of civil rights as natural rights, in stark contrast to Burke’s insistence that it was God who determined one’s social status and people have no right to change it, Paine argued that, indeed, people are entitled to improve their lives and circumstances, however not at the expense of the public.

And Paine’s “Slave Letter”, called as such because Paine took the identity of a slave in it to channel his emotions, and even make them focused and more powerful. Paine’s kindness toward humanity, especially towards the disenfranchised on many levels, sets him apart in the Enlightenment spectrum of thought in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and presents a different philosophy long suppressed in our philosophical political heritage.

Paine remains the beacon for another path, still not travelled. Despite the friendship established over many years and discussion and correspondence, the two Toms held opposite positions on equality and kindness, on ALL men are created equal, and a path forward towards true equality – the only basis of democracy. Jefferson turned a blind eye, rooted in fake subjective science, while Paine saw humanity as one whole: “The world is my country, my religion is to do good.” In this sense, Kindness in Paine’s writings is the end product of the Enlightenment, waiting for realization.

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# From Joy Masoff's presentation on Madame Marguerite Bonneville:

The Unrevealed Journey of Marguerite Brazier de Bonneville:

Paris, Paine, and the Patriarchy, 1789-1846

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What do Paine scholars say about Marguerite Brazier de Bonneville?

Was she a hapless victim?

A scheming gold-digger?

A tiresome burden?


What is the truth?

Her 12-year-long relationship with Thomas Paine forms the scaffolding of my research into her life.



"A typical Parisienne"


Audrey Williamson, Thomas Paine: His Life, Works, and Times.



• A "typical Parisienne" on November 8, 1793

"...too accustomed to the movement and glitter of Parisian boulevards"

Alfred Owens Aldridge, Man of Reason: The Life of Thomas Paine.



• A glittering boulevard on October 5, 1795

She was "...a new and oppressive responsibility to one who had grown used to living unto himself"


Frank Smith, Thomas Paine, Liberator.



• An example of Madame Bonneville's "oppressive behavior" as she guarded Paine from unwelcome visitors in June 1809.


Who was Madame Bonneville?

- An ardent feminist
- Survivor of the French Revolution
- Political refugee
- Friend and eventual legatee of Thomas Paine
- Part of a circle of luminaries of the Atlantic world, including Lafayette, the Rolands, the writer Mercier, and more.
- Mother of the explorer Benjamin Bonneville




## The challenges of my research:

### Archival fires



- A fire at West Point destroyed Benjamin Bonneville's records.
- Many of Paine's papers—inherited by Madame Bonneville—along with her own, burned in a St. Louis fire.

• All Civil Records in Paris burned in a fire in 1871. Only one-third of the burned files have been reconstructed.



## Marguerite Brazier's roots




- Born in Lyon, France in 1767, into a comfortable Bourgeois life
- The third of 12 children
- Daughter of a master pastry chef who was an activist in guild politics.
- Orphaned at the age of 16. Her two youngest siblings were placed in an orphanage.

### Why did she leave Lyon and move to Paris?

One possibility is a connection with Jean-Marie and Manon Roland

## Marguerite in Paris:

### When and how did she meet Nicolas Bonneville?



Another difficult quest on to answer but...

- A son, Louis C.H. Bonneville was born sometime between 1790 and 1791
- A second son, Nicolas Bonneville was born December 5, 1793, and died in 1807
- Thomas Paine Bonneville—Thomas Paine's godson—was born sometime around 1795
- Benjamin Louis Eulalie Bonneville was born April 14, 1796
- Paine moved into the Bonneville home in 1797. He remained until 1802.

## Paine and the Bonneville:

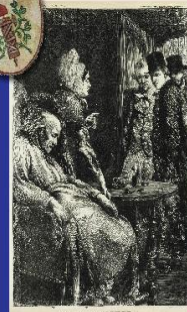
### Meeting of the minds

The Bonneville family were influential activists. Nicolas Bonneville was a linguist, political journalist, writer, editor, printer, and utopianist. Paine worked closely with him.

- In 1790 Nicolas and the abbé Fauchet founded the Cercle Social (also called Société des Amis de la Vérité)
- The Cercle quickly grew into one of the largest and most influential political clubs in Paris.
- Bonneville published about two hundred books, brochures and pamphlets concerned with revolutionary and Enlightenment ideas.

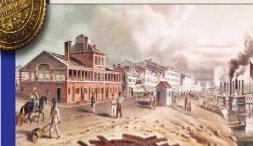


### The Paine-Bonneville bond



- Paine grew close to the Bonneville family, and their four young boys.
- Paine spent five years under the Bonneville roof after the Reign of Terror.
- As Paine prepared to return to America, Nicolas was arrested by Napoleon and his presses were seized.
- Marguerite and three sons came to the U.S. expecting to stay for a short time.
- She remained for 12 years before returning to France.

## Meet me in St. Louis



- After Paine's death, Marguerite took on the task of sorting through Paine's papers.
- Nicolas Bonneville died in 1828—described as a man ruined and half-mad.
- In 1831, Marguerite returned to America and moved to St. Louis, where her son Benjamin lived.
- Freed from five decades of onerous responsibilities, she was finally able to embrace her authentic self.



## Connecting the dots of three distinct eras

### The Enlightenment and Revolution

- An era of nascent feminism
- Women's education became a priority
- Women were active participants on the front lines of Revolution
- They also found equality beneath the guillotine's blade

### Republican Motherhood in America

- Separate "spheres of influence."
- A woman's place was in the home, molding her children into exemplary citizens.
- A husbandless woman was the subject of derision, suspicion, or an object of pity in many circles of society.

### The Growing American West

- A unique atmosphere fostered by multi-cultural roots
- Women had a small degree of independence that differed from Atlantic coastal life.

## Why should we care



## about Madame Bonneville?

- Marguerite Bonneville's life and her relationship with Thomas Paine offer a unique way to explore women's experiences with gender, religion, politics, and motherhood during a time of sweeping societal change.
- She traveled in a rarified circle of brilliant and visionary thinkers.
- Her relationship with Paine reveals a different side of him.
- Hers was a journey through the times that tried women's souls as well as men's.



## In Memory of General John Cadwalader.

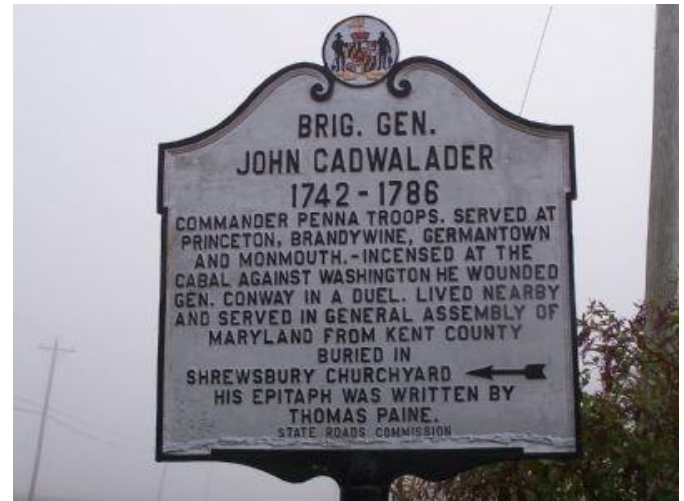
*On the tombstone on the right bottom:*

Who departed this life the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1786 aged 44 years, 1 month 1 day.

The following character was given him by Thomas Paine who during his lifetime had been his violent political enemy.

"His early and inflexible patriotism will endear his memory to all true friends of the American Revolution. It may with strictest justice be said of him, that he possessed a heart incapable of deceiving. His manners were formed on the nicest sense of honor and the whole tenor of his life was governed by this principle. The companions of his youth were the companions of his manhood. He never lost a friend by insincerity nor made one by deception. His domestic virtues were truly exemplary and while they served to endear the remembrances they embitter the loss of him to all his numerous friends and connections."

**Link to a few video clips of Symposium: Go to YouTube – search with "Paine Symposium June 2022" The first 5 videos will be the clips.**



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