



{ THE BEACON }

“From the errors of other nations, let us learn wisdom.”

Thomas Paine



T. Paine

THOMAS PAINE NATIONAL HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

thomaspaine.org

September 1, 2022

NEW ROCHELLE, NEW YORK

Issue #7

THOMAS PAINE MEMORIAL IN D.C. MOVES FORWARD

By Margaret Downey, President of the Thomas Paine Memorial Association

The Thomas Paine Memorial Association (TPMA) is pleased to announce that an important Congressional procedure has resulted in the advancement of House Bill 6720.

Every proposed Washington, D.C. monument and museum must be presented to the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC) for consideration. The members of the Commission vote on whether or not the proposal has merit and is deserving of their endorsement. TPMA spokespersons conducted a presentation to NCMAC on July 27, 2022. The below link will take you to a recording of the actual hearing, discussion and vote.

<https://youtu.be/ZJJNu4mfUbA>

Spoiler alert! The NCMAC Commissioners unanimously voted to endorse and support a memorial project dedicated to the life and work of Thomas Paine! Don't let this momentous news keep you from enjoying the film, however.

In the film you'll see presentations from (in order of appearance) Congressman Jamie Raskin, Mark Dann, myself, Gene Jones, Karen Heineman, Mandisa Thomas, and Charis Hoard. We're sure you'll enjoy the variety of viewpoints and gain an appreciation of why we're working so hard to finally have Thomas Paine recognized for his important work. It was a joy to also hear the compliments and additions made by each of the Commissioners.

If this news and/or film inspire you to extend your support of House Bill 6720, please know that TPMA is in need of help reaching State Representatives to request that they become a sponsor. Please visit the below link to see if your Representative is already a sponsor:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/6720/cosponsors?r=8&s=1>

TPMA would be happy to work with you on how to approach your Representative. Please feel free to contact us for more information. Also, please let us know if you have any interest in becoming a member of the House Bill 6720 presentation team. All volunteers are welcomed.

Toasts of the Mechanics, 1792 *(From the Daily Advertiser, New York, July 6, 1792)*

A large and respectable meeting of Mechanics assembled at Mechanic Hall, (which was elegantly illuminated) on Wednesday last, to commemorate the return of that auspicious day the Anniversary of our independence, when the following toasts were drank.

1. The President of the United States
2. The State of New York
3. The Governor of Right of the State of N.Y.
4. The right of suffrage – may the violators of them receive the contempt of freemen and the punishment due to traitors of man.
5. May the contempt of every free patriot light upon the men who by a pretended respect to the letter have

omitted all regard to the spirit of the law; violated the Constitution and intentions of the Legislature.

6. The Patriotic Minority of the Canvassers.
7. May his Excellency Geo. Clinton, by resignation, convince the world that neither the lust of power or gain have effaced from his mind the duty he owes to the peace and happiness of his country.
8. Our particularly injured brethren in the counties of Clinton, Tioga and Ostego – May the orderly and firm spirit of freemen govern their proceedings upon this interesting occasion.
9. May the Mechanics of the City of New York ever act independent, and guard with jealousy against every attempt to invade their rights.
10. **The Rights of Man throughout the world**
11. May success attend the Sons of Liberty in pursuing a lawful redress of grievances.
12. The plow, the loom, and the ship.
13. The French Revolution – may the spirit of their patriotism spread to the downfall of all tyranny.
14. **Thomas Paine, the author of the rights of man.**
15. The day – prosperity to all who esteem it a blessing to America.

Gold and Corporate sponsors:

Nimick Forbesway Foundation

J.H. Johnson Educational

Charitable Trust

Thomas M. Paine

Joy Masoff

Barbara Crane

Julia Holofcener

Paul and Karen Isaac

Epitaph, On Thomas Paine

by Clio Rickman*

To future times this monumental stone
Need not be spared to make thy value known.
For future times will in each bosom raise
An Altar sacred to that worth and praise;
And sound with general voice, when envy
dies,
Thee and thy works with plaudits, to the
skies.
This Tomb is simply raised by friends sincere
To point the spot and tell that Paine lies here:
Their high respect and gratitude to prove
Who dared insulted excellence to love:
Who leave to future times and better days
Thy worth I appreciate and proclaim thy
praise;
For future ages must with loud acclaim –
When man will live to Reason, Truth and
Fame,
When Freedom, Virtue, Love shall reign
below,
Hail him! to whom their happy stake they
owe.

*Rickman was a close friend of Paine from England. Paine wrote Part 2 of *Rights of Man* on the second floor of Rickman's print shop – that desk is now in the People's History Museum in Manchester, UK.

The Ignorance of Some Historians, Part I

This is the first in a series of excerpts from articles and books, and discussion, dealing with the marginalization of Paine by certain historians. Orwell knew the power of history and why ideology determines how history is written:

Orwell: *"Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past."*

From the excellent article by Michael Durey, *Thomas Paine's Apostles*, from the *William and Mary Quarterly*, October, 1987:

“THE key to understanding eighteenth-century American political discourse since the publication of Caroline Robbins's *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman* in 1959 and Bernard Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* in 1967 has been the recognition that political ideas from England and Scotland underpinned republican ideology. In developing Robbins's and Bailyn's insights, both for the period of the American Revolution and for the Federalist years, historians have tended to gravitate toward one or the other of two general interpretations. "Classical" historians, represented most forcefully by J.G.A. Pocock and Lance Banning, seek the roots of American republicanism in the political writings of James Harrington, Algernon Sidney, John Trenchard, Thomas Gordon, Viscount Bolingbroke, and Joseph Addison. In contrast, "liberal" historians such as Joyce Appleby and Isaac Kramnick include John Locke, Thomas Mun, Adam Smith, Richard Price, and Joseph Priestley. The controversy over American republican ideology concerns which of these two lines of thought was the more influential in late eighteenth-century American political discourse. Whatever the relative merits of these two approaches for an understanding of American republicanism, one notable absentee from historians' deliberations on the 1790s is Thomas Paine. This omission is surprising, for recent historiography on the Revolutionary period has emphasized both Paine's role in securing popular acceptance of Independence and his wartime political propaganda. But his long-term influence in the United States has been strangely neglected. Paine's absence becomes even stranger when it is appreciated that much of the debate on republicanism in the 1790s revolved around political and economic issues such as egalitarianism, natural rights, and national economic development, on all of which Paine wrote copiously. The essence of Paine's radicalism - its singular politico-economic combination of democratic egalitarianism and support for national economic development in a market-oriented society - appears anomalous when one considers the classical-liberal debate.”

[You can find the full article on JSTOR.]

Durey is right in that the marginalization of Paine is rooted in the accepted views that either conservative thinking (represented by Pocock), and liberal thinking (represented by Kramnick and others) miss the basic facts, and the point. If you leave out Paine's impact on political philosophy and his impact on the subconscious of humanity, you wind up bickering in a vacuum. Recent research has uncovered the wealth of Paine's impact on history, and old history books will not represent this reality.

A recent example of this stumbling, blind acceptance of flawed, antiquated analysis can be found in Richard Bell's C-SPAN talks. It's almost plagiarism, as these stale concepts are passed along like oral superstitious myths. There is not much, if any, basis to either, the myths or the concepts. Another historian, for example, in a recent podcast, declares that Paine had no real impact on the American Revolution because John Adams and Thomas Jefferson already had pronounced the same ideas. Really? Well, let's take a look at this...

In 1790, when Vice-President, Adams wrote a letter to a friend, Francis Vanderkamp - he declares the following: *“we were compelled against our inclinations to cut off the hands which united us to England and that we should have been very happy to have had our grievances resolved, and our dependence continued... I will candidly confess that an hereditary Senate without an hereditary Executive would diminish the Prerogatives of the president and the liberties of the people. But I contend that hereditary descent in both when controlled by an independent representation of the people is better than corrupted, turbulent and bloody elections.”* So according to this historian, Paine must have believed in hereditary government and maintaining ties to Britain? Paine had the vigorous opposite opinion on both, and in fact brought these ideas of independence and an end to monarchy to the American people which fueled the Revolution. And who were the ones “compelling” independence and a new form of government: it was a group led by Paine and Franklin, including Timothy Matlack, James Cannon, Charles Willson Peale, Thomas Young, and David Rittenhouse, who formed the revolutionary wing of the conflict with Britain. They led a majority of people to stifle the “inclinations” of Adams.

Let's look at Jefferson: in May, 1776, on his way to Philadelphia to take part in Congress deciding on a Declaration of Independence, Jefferson wrote to a friend: *"I wish much to see you here, yet hope you will contrive to bring on as early as you can in convention the great questions of the session. I suppose they will tell us what to say on the subject of independance, but hope respect will be expressed to the right of opinion in other colonies who may happen to differ from them."* Quite a revolutionary leader there...

And this is after *Common Sense*, when 96 Declarations of Independence throughout the American states in the spring of 1776 all copied the terminology of *Common Sense*, and the Declaration (supposedly penned by Jefferson) copied the same language into the national Declaration. Not that Jefferson did not write it, but as Franklin said: “He is a good draughtsman.” So someone told him “what to say”, I guess.

The great and disciplined historian E. H. Carr said: “Study the historian before you begin to study the facts.” Facts used by historians are not always facts, but past opinions, and many are based on ideology not reality. Many facts are skipped over (*like the quotes above*) because they don't fit into the ideology, or the prejudices, of the historian.

Part 2 will be a review of Bernard Bailyn's marginalization of Paine in the American Revolution.

Photos from the June 17 Thomas Paine Symposium



Presentation by Ian Ruskin of his one-man play, *To Begin the World Over Again: the Life of Thomas Paine*.



Ribbon-cutting ceremony and wreath-laying ceremony for the Thomas Paine New Rochelle Center



Panel discussion by the Editorial Board of the *Collected Works of Thomas Paine*