



# { THE BEACON }

Whenever politics are applied to debauch mankind from their integrity, and dissolve the virtue of human nature, they become detestable; and to be a statesman on this plan, is to be a commissioned villain.

Thomas Paine



*T. Paine*

THOMAS PAINE NATIONAL HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

thomaspaine.org

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Issue #9

## 2023 Marks the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of

### *The Truth Seeker*

... the oldest, and most influential, continuous, freethought publication in the world.

Our Association was formed as a result of the Truth Seeker magazine: nine of the sixteen founders of TPNHA were involved in the magazine. As well, for 150 years they helped resurrect Paine to his rightful place in American and world history in the movement for free thought and democracy.

Here is the opening editorial of its founder and first editor: D. M. Bennett

"We are not unaware we are taking a bold stand -- one that but a few centuries ago would have cost us our lives, and one that even now may produce alienation of friends, and the censure of the bigoted and illiberal portions of the community. It is no small undertaking to oppose in a positive manner the religious superstitions of centuries, and to hold up in a clear sunlight of today the false theories and errors handed down to us from the dark ages of the past. *The Truth Seeker*, at all events is in for a year's campaign, and we hope the intercourse with our readers may continue many years; and we ask the friends of truth, light and mental liberty to give us their aid, both by contributing to our columns and in helping us to get up a generous list of subscribers. Again we say to our friends, let *The Truth Seeker* be sustained -- let it

be successful in disseminating light and truth and in dispelling the fogs of superstition, bigotry and error."

--D.M. Bennett, September 1873

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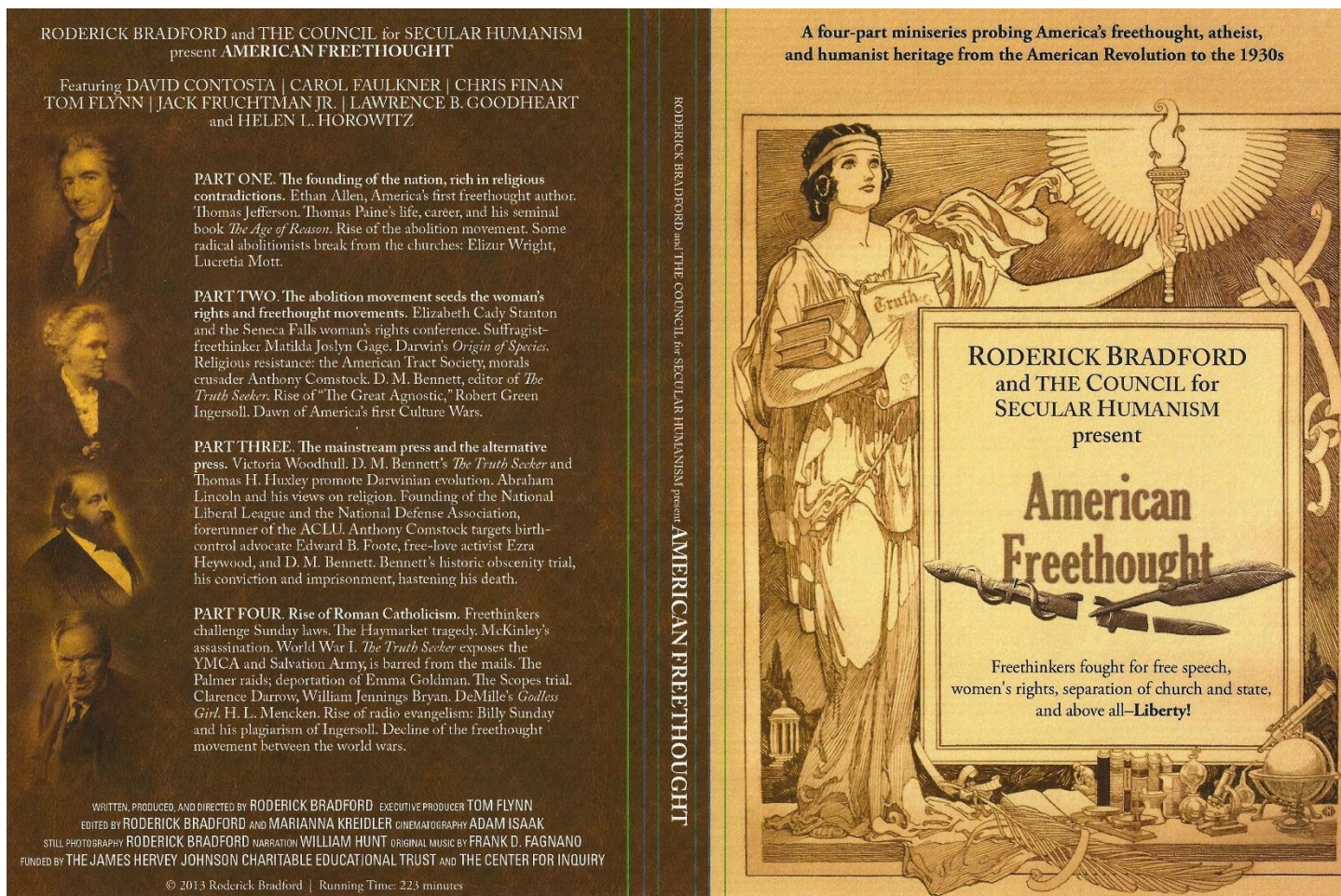
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## 286<sup>th</sup> Thomas Paine Birthday Celebration

The Thomas Paine Birthday Celebration will take place on the exact day of the time of his birth, which is February 8<sup>th</sup> (Julian calendar). Calendars were changed to the current Gregorian calendar in 1582 (but put into effect in 1752 in England). Most of Europe changed in 1582, when Pope Gregory listened to science and had to adjust to the 10 lost days over centuries. England was a little slow to change, which is obviously a national trait - like kings and queens.

This year's celebration will feature a broadcast of the first part of *American Freethought*, a documentary by Rod Bradford, editor of *The Truth Seeker*. There are three more parts which we will show in the months to follow. The first part features Paine, the father of the Freethought Movement. It will be followed by a discussion, and questions and answers from Rod. Our building will be open for an in-person audience as well as a Zoom broadcast to members and guests, directed by professional technicians this time!





February 8, 2023, 7 pm, at the Thomas Paine Memorial Building, 983 North Avenue, New Rochelle, NY. You can email us at [tpnhamail@gmail.com](mailto:tpnhamail@gmail.com) with questions. Zoom link will be sent to members.

## On Bernard Bailyn, part 2

In the last *Beacon*, the problem with historians marginalizing and ignoring Thomas Paine was discussed, and Bailyn was used as a typical example. He is an excellent historian by modern standards, and he is also emblematic of the norm which assumes a world view and then looks for data to justify it. The 19<sup>th</sup> century history books were steeped in prejudice against Paine, driven by political and theistical bias, largely rooted in fake news, incomplete facts, and the myth of the founding. That myth of the founding puts the Federalist Party as the Founding Party, with people like Paine and Franklin on the sidelines watching. Independence Mall in Philadelphia was created around that myth.

An historian steeped in that education deepens it in order to be accepted, not question it. Franklin, up to the 1930s, was treated like Paine, a caricature, sitting on the sidelines. When an accurate book on Franklin finally emerged then, it caused a great stir, and eventually a re-examination. History has always been the tool of those who control a country, as Orwell said, "those who control the past, control the future." Some 20<sup>th</sup> century historians continued the trope on Paine from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, right up to today with J.C.D. Clark, Chernow, Ellis and others. There is even an organization of conservative historians, which is an improvement since at least they admit it.



There was a book which came out a year after Bailyn's *The IDEOLOGICAL Origins of the American Revolution*, in response: *The INTELLECTUAL Origins of the American Revolution* by Staughton Lynd. It was full of quotations so we could see the material left out of the "accepted" narrative. In 1968 it was eye-opening. We recommend it. Lynd put Paine out front with other radical leaders, and in his 2009 updated version he apologized for not adequately crediting Paine. As information spread in history departments, and that generation became the heads of those departments, like Eric Foner and many more, the blind eye to Paine was slowly opened. The Collected Works of Thomas Paine Project, managed by our Association with the leading Paine scholars in the world, will further reveal the incredible impact of Paine not only on the American Revolution, but world history: much of the atmosphere of radical English politics fueling the American cause was generated by Thomas Paine before he came to America. Stay tuned...but here's some breaking news:

## Paine Statue in DC is now law!

Under the leadership of Congressman **Jamie Raskin** (D-Maryland) and Congresswoman **Victoria Spartz** (R-Indiana), House Bill 6720 was included in the 2022 Omnibus Package.

In late December, the package was passed by both the House and Senate. President Biden signed the bill into law on December 27, 2022. The Thomas Paine Memorial Association (TPMA) will now begin working with the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC) on advancing the project with a goal of unveiling the monument in 2026, which would coincide with the 250-year anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, and the new Collected Works of Thomas Paine release.

Recognition of this important milestone will make the Sunday, January 29, 2023 Thomas Paine Birthdate Proclamation Celebration Zoom event even more joyous. Below is a description of the event and the link to register.

January 29, 2023

It's time to celebrate the birth of **Thomas Paine**! The Zoom celebration will take place on **Sunday, January 29, 2023 at Noon (PST)/3:00 PM (EST)**. Register at the below link:

[bit.ly/PaineProclamation](https://bit.ly/PaineProclamation)

The 2023 Thomas Paine birthdate celebration is sponsored by the Thomas Paine Memorial Association (TPMA), Freedom From Religion Foundation, Secular Student Alliance, Center For Inquiry, and The Freethought Society.

The theme of the 2023 event is "Thomas Paine Birthdate Proclamation Celebration." TPMA board members will each read a Thomas Paine Day proclamation as an example of how a proclamation can be written to honor the life of our freethought hero.

Thomas Paine Day is celebrated on June 8<sup>th</sup> every year. In Europe his date of death is used as an official time to reflect upon and honor his life accomplishments. Paine died on June 8, 1809.

Actor **Ian Ruskin** will be reading a New Rochelle, New York proclamation. Author, comedian, and monologist **Julia Sweeney** will be reading a City of Philadelphia proclamation signed by former Mayor **Edward G. Rendell**. Another City of Philadelphia proclamation, signed by former mayor **Michael A. Nutter**, will be read by author and educator **Christopher Cameron**. Actor **John de Lancie** and his wife **Marnie Mosiman de Lancie** will be reading proclamations from the cities of Lancaster and York, Pennsylvania. The executive director of the Center For Inquiry, **Robyn Blumner**, will be reading the Bordentown, New Jersey proclamation.

### Benefactors:

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## On the Tribute to Paine

John Wesley Jarvis was an American painter, and considered the leading portrait painter in New York city in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

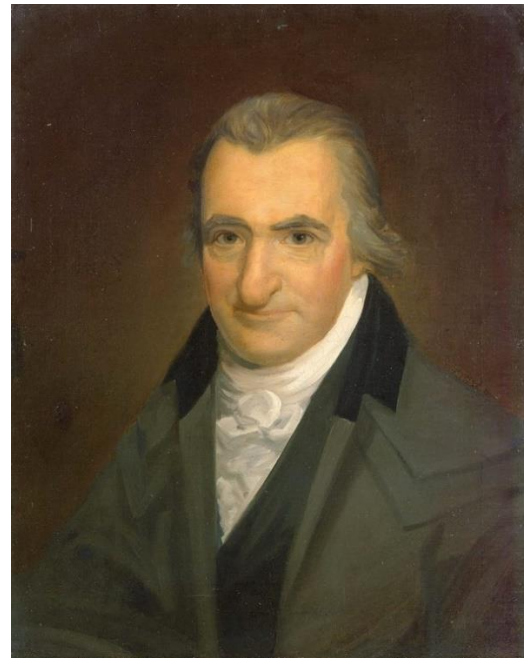


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Jarvis lived with Paine for a while when Paine moved back and forth between NYC and New Rochelle in 1805 through 1807. He painted Paine in 1805 at 68 years. He also lived close enough when Paine died to create the death mask.

Upon Paine's death he produced a Tribute to Paine, which lists associates as well as works of note. They are difficult to read so we will list them:

Associates: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Joel Barlow, Benjamin Rush, Mary Wollstonecraft, Madame Bonneville, Benjamin Franklin, Elihu Palmer, Clio Rickman, John Stewart, John Horne Tooke, Marquis de Lafayette, Jacques Brissot.



National Portrait Gallery

