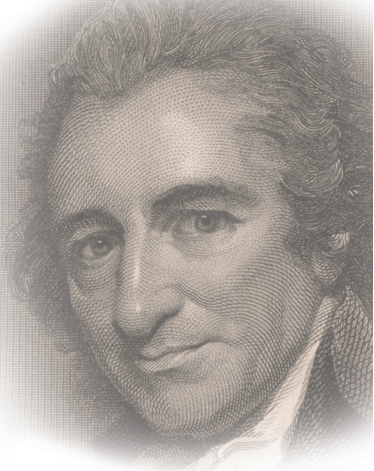


The Beacon



July 2026 • Vol 21, No. 4

THOMAS PAINE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1884 • New Rochelle, New York • Thomaspaine.org

A Breakthrough in Paine Scholarship

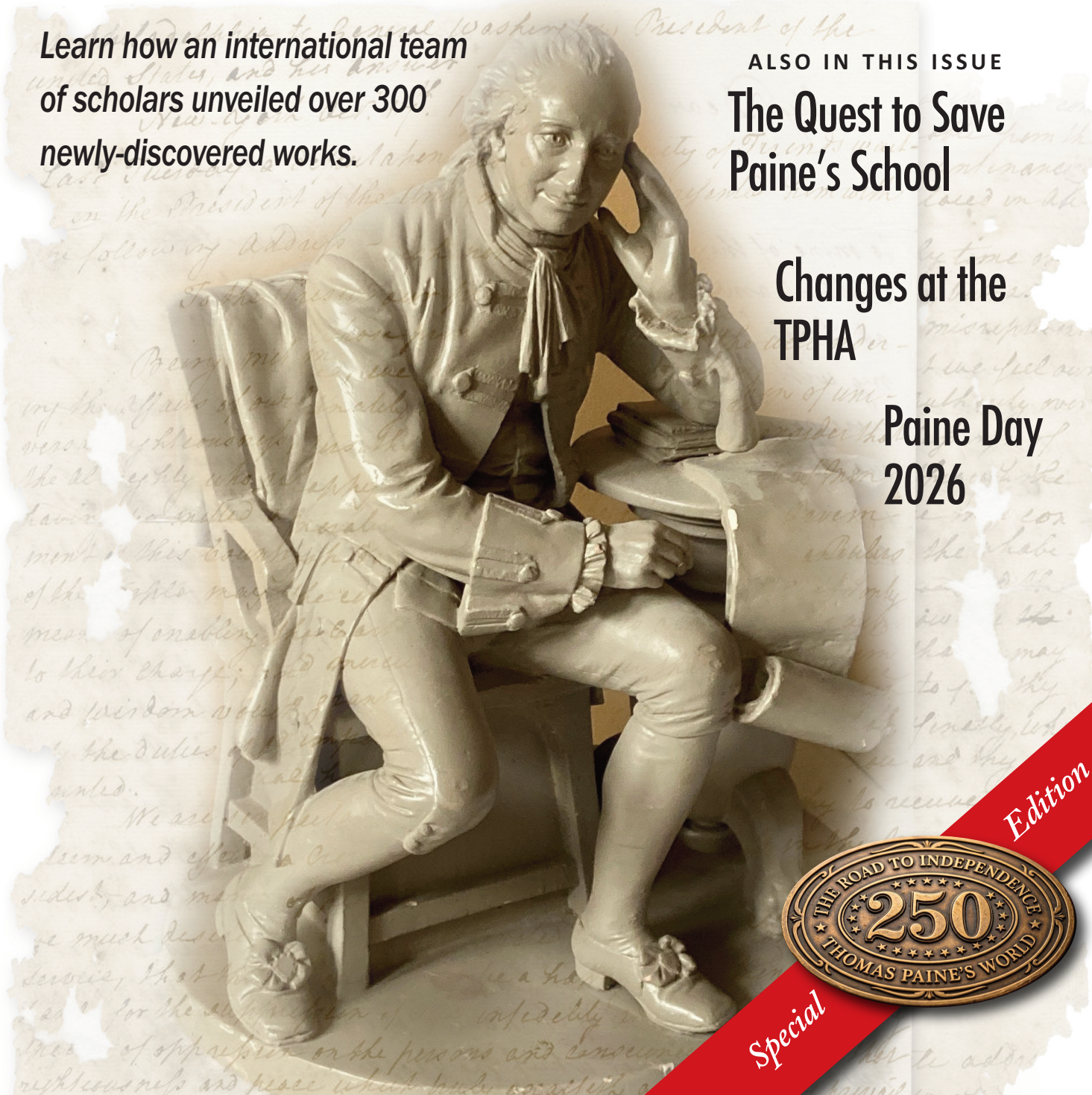
Learn how an international team of scholars unveiled over 300 newly-discovered works.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

The Quest to Save Paine's School

Changes at the TPHA

Paine Day 2026



Edition



Special

Changing the World of Paine Studies

Announcing *Thomas Paine: Collected Writings*

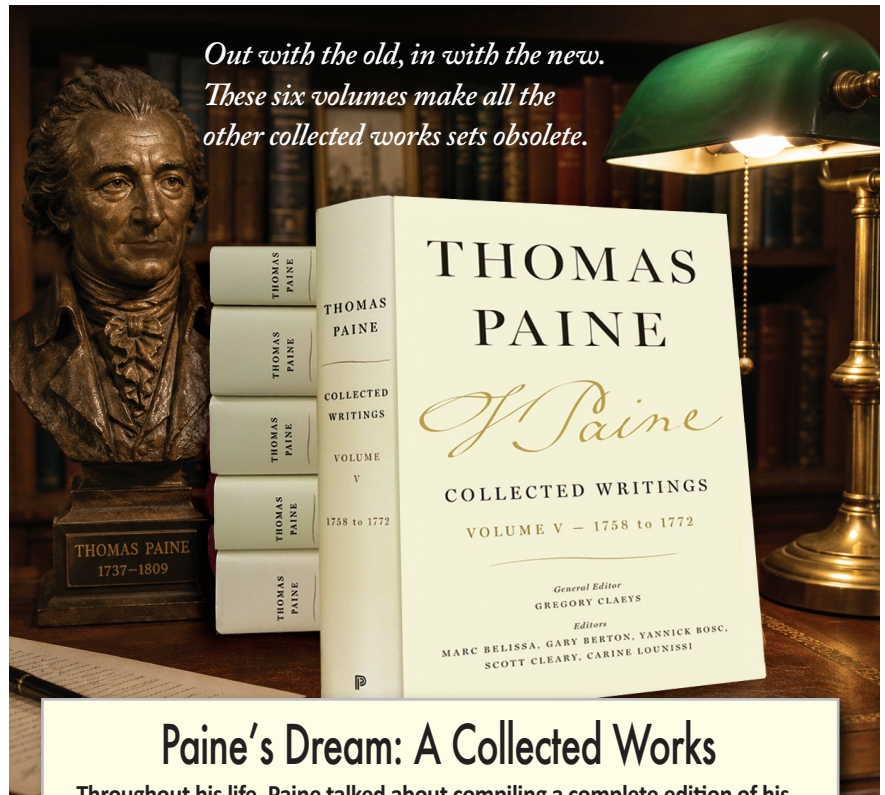
By Gary Berton and Scott Cleary

On June 30, 2026, just days before the nation celebrates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Princeton University Press will publish *Thomas Paine: Collected Writings*, a six-volume scholarly edition of Paine's works and correspondence. This new edition—the most up-to-date—comes in a long line of editions of Paine's works. At least three collections of Paine's works were published by the end of the 1700s, and at least ten different editions of Paine's works appeared in the 1800s, by editors with various political ideologies and agendas. The first genuine “collected” writings was published by the radical English publisher Richard Carlisle in England in 1819. For that, Carlisle was arrested and imprisoned for three years. Moncure Conway's four-volume edition in the 1890s was the culminating event of the nineteenth-century editions.

FOLLOWING IN PAINE'S FOOTSTEPS

Paine had articulated a schema for a modern scholarly edition, thinking about how to organize volumes, and providing historical context to help readers understand his texts. That is what we have done in the *Collected Writings*. But Paine's wish never came to pass before he died in 1809.

No such legal jeopardy threatened the current editorial board, which began this project in 2012, during the First International Conference of Thomas Paine Studies. At that conference, a group



*Out with the old, in with the new.
These six volumes make all the
other collected works sets obsolete.*

Paine's Dream: A Collected Works

Throughout his life, Paine talked about compiling a complete edition of his own works, and it is clear from his correspondence that he always saw this as a signature achievement. He first mentioned it in a 1779 letter to Henry Laurens, a South Carolina politician and then president of the Continental Congress. *"I intend this winter to collect all my Publications, beginning with Common Sense and ending with the Fisheries, and publishing them in two Volumes, Octavo, with notes. I have no doubt of a large Subscription."*

Paine needed money and hoped readers were willing to pay for it, but he also understood that his own works, while meritorious on their own, are better understood in the larger context of a history of the Revolution itself. The ultimate purpose was to celebrate revolutionary history as much as his own writing.

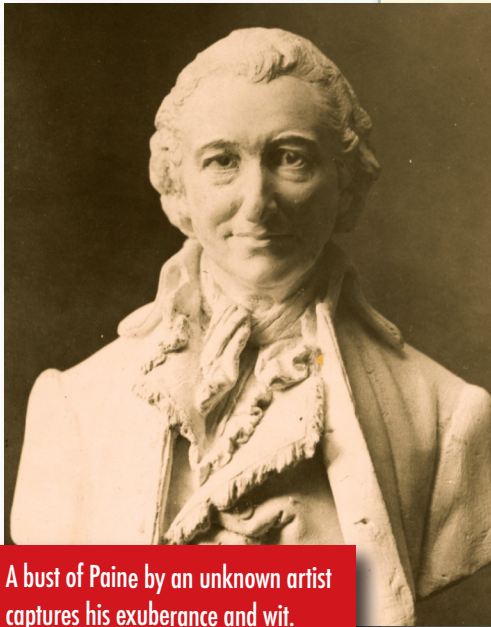
After the American Revolution, Paine's years were filled with building both physical and metaphorical bridges, supporting revolution in France, and planning revolution in England and Ireland. When Paine returned to America in 1802 at Thomas Jefferson's invitation, he again thought of a collected works. In an 1803 letter to Jefferson, Paine wrote *"...with what I have in manuscript will make four, or five octavo Volumes, and publish them by subscription."* He did not succeed, but did not abandon the idea.

In 1805, again to Jefferson, Paine, having clearly thought about his collected works project, laid out a clearer scheme: *"I judge the Collection I speak of will make five volumes Octavo of four hundred pages each at two dollars a Volume to be paid for on delivery; The three first volumes will be political and each piece will be accompanied with an account of the state of affairs at the time it was written whether in America, France or England which will also shew the occasion of writing it. The two last Volumes will be theological and those who do not chuse to take them may let them alone. They will have the right to do so. by the conditions of the subscription. I shall also make a miscellaneous Volume of Correspondence, Essays, and some pieces of Poetry which I believe will have some claim to originality."*

Thomas Paine: Collected Writings *Continued*

of Paine scholars came together and agreed that what was needed was a new and reimagined edition of Paine's works and correspondence.

The standard edition of Paine's works, Philip Foner's two-volume *Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, published in 1945, were definitely not complete, and really didn't tell the story of Paine or his writings. Edited and published during World War II, Foner's edition served its purpose and was an admirable accomplishment on Foner's part. But it has acted as the definitive edition upon which dissertations, articles, and books have been written for nearly a century. For Paine studies to grow, a new, modern collection was necessary.



A bust of Paine by an unknown artist captures his exuberance and wit.

Source: New York Public Library

THE MAIN EDITORIAL TEAM

Paine scholars from England, France, and America, the three nations most impacted by Paine and his political ideas, gathered. These include:

- **GENERAL EDITOR:** Gregory Claeys (Professor Emeritus, Royal Holloway, University of London)
- **SENIOR EDITORS:** Marc Belissa (Université Paris Nanterre), Gary Berton (Thomas Paine Historical Association), and Scott Cleary (Iona University)
- **EDITORS:** Carine Lounissi (Université de Rouen-Normandie) and Yannick Bosc (Université de Rouen-Normandie).

In 2013 the newly formed editorial board began the painstaking process of organizing the edition. What works should be included? What works had Paine written that newly developed author-attribution software could help identify? What are the gaps in our knowledge of Paine, and how should those gaps be filled? What are the errors in the current editions of Paine's works? How many letters had Paine actually written? Where might more Paine letters be found? Once we have gathered all the materials for the edition, what format should it take? How many volumes? How should the volumes be organized? Should the volumes be published all at once, or over the course a few years? Who should publish it? And who will pay for it?

WHERE TO BEGIN?

All of these questions and many more were addressed over the next 13 years. Zoom and in-person meetings and literally thousands of e-mails answered some questions and generated others. Research trips to French archives by our French editors, to British libraries by Marc Belissa, and to nearly every major archive east of the Mississippi River by Scott Cleary produced over 300 new works, poems, and pieces of correspondence.

Understanding Author Attribution

The system of authorship attribution used in this edition focuses on the syntax of the document rather than on its contents, or on the similarity of philosophical or political content, which play a secondary role. Three criteria, equally important, are used to make a judgment about the authorship of a particular text:

CONTENT, CONTEXT, AND CALCULATION

Any one of these not fitting the author selected would deny that author a claim to the text; The results generated by the authorship-attribution software may indicate a strong possibility that a particular piece may or may not be attributed to a particular author, but on their own they cannot be absolutely conclusive. Thus, once a trend is

uncovered by the authorship-attribution software, efforts are made to consider the conformity of the work to the ideological content of the author's other writings, and to match the text with the historical circumstances and personal idiosyncrasies of the author (content and context).

Authorship attribution is a classification task: to classify a document means to assign it to the class of documents written by the same author. Special algorithms use documents of known authorship (training examples) to teach the system to recognize each author's writing style. Once training has been completed, the created model can be used to attempt to identify the creator of a document. The software can reach 90 percent accuracy by itself, which is pushed higher by content and context analysis.

Six volumes—approximately 6000 pages—will significantly change the landscape of Paine studies, early American history, French revolutionary history, and the history of democracy.

Thomas Paine: Collected Writings *Continued*

A talk by Carine Lounissi in France sparked the interest of the Nimick Forbesway Foundation, which generously funded the edition for five critical years of research and editorial work. The prior relationship of Gregory Claeys with Princeton University Press, combined with Paine’s New Jersey connections, made the choice of publisher easy.

The nearly 200-page introduction by Gregory Claeys will reframe and re-imagine Paine, his intellectual development, and his global impact in radical new ways. Gary Berton’s expert knowledge of the author attribution software led our discussions of which works Paine may have written or co-written. Yannick Bosc’s expertise in *Agrarian Justice* and post-revolutionary France produced a slate of new French-language material.

Unlike other United States Founders, this is not called a “papers” project but a “collected writings,” largely because Paine held few official government positions, and therefore does not have a large quantity of documents which can be categorized as “papers.” We are certain that there are many more Paine works, poems, and letters yet to be discovered, which will be added to the digital edition of the *Collected Writings*, now in development with Princeton University Press.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NEW EDITION

Collected Writings will unveil new facts about Paine, whose biography has been skewed with false narratives and attempts to destroy his character. Here are examples of what is new and notable about Collected Writings:

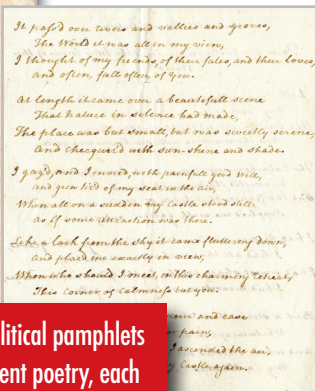
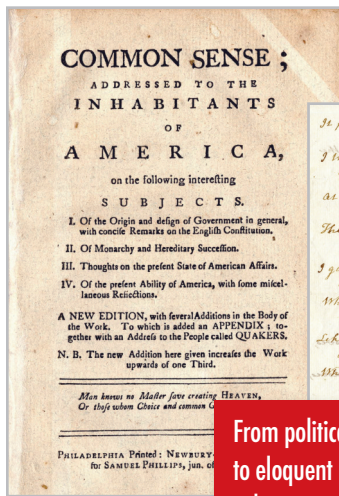
WORKS AND POETRY

- Approximately 200 new works and poems
- Paine’s English writings from before 1774
- Correct dating and publication locations
- Wealth of new French language material from the French Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary period
- Post-1802 writings that shatter previous narratives about Paine’s precipitous decline and irrelevancy
- Complete Deane Affair, Taxation, and Bank essays

CORRESPONDENCE

- Approximately 180 new letters
- Letters published in correct chronological order
- Complete archival & library locations for all letters provided for the first time
- Earliest letters written while Paine still in England before he came to America
- Letters that widen Paine’s Enlightenment social network
- Several letters reveal Paine’s “personal” side, not often appreciated or known

Each volume reveals new aspects of Paine’s life and writings:



From political pamphlets to eloquent poetry, each volume reveals new discoveries about Paine.

VOLUME 1: 1771-1782

Major American Revolutionary texts, complete annotations for Common Sense, all newspaper articles associated with the Deane Affair, and historically accurate numbering of Paine’s Crisis essays and Forester Letters.

VOLUME 2: 1782-1793 & POETRY

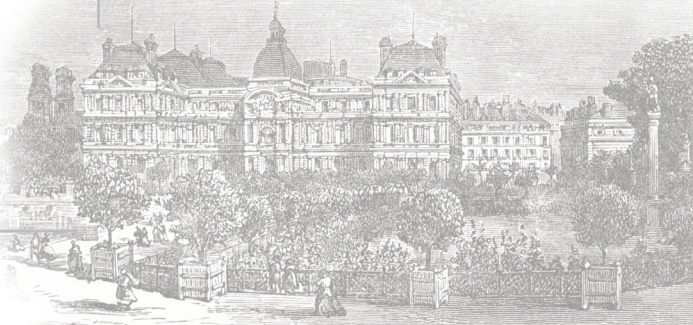
Paine’s contributions to American nation-building in the post-Revolutionary period, including essays and articles on taxation and the nation’s first

bank. The volume also includes Paine’s first works on the French Revolution in both English and French, and a complete set of Paine’s poetry with new poems, and corrected titles.

The Luxembourg in Paris, where Paine was imprisoned for almost 11 months. Source: Alamy

VOLUME 3: 1793-1809

Paine’s navigation of his imprisonment and post-revolutionary France, and the writings surrounding his return to the United States in 1802. These involve the legacy of the American Revolution in Jeffersonian America, anti-federalist writings, and early nineteenth-century New York City politics. Also, notable works on deism, the emerging free-thought movement, and the complete textual history of the “third” part of *Age of Reason*, and writings that display Paine’s varied interests and explorations.



Thomas Paine: Collected Writings *Continued*

VOLUME 4: CORRESPONDENCE 1765-1808

A near doubling of Paine’s correspondence, including never-before printed letters from Paine to his parents, Henry Laurens, Dewitt Clinton, Thomas Walker, and major figures of the French Revolution. The earliest letters come from Paine’s time in Lewes, England while he was an exciseman. Letters from Paine to James Monroe are thoroughly annotated, providing new insight into the events leading up to Paine’s imprisonment and eventual release. Paine’s enlightenment social network is greatly expanded, and his final letters to friends and acquaintances in New Rochelle, New Jersey, and New York City show Paine in the most intimate moments of his final days.

A trove of early Paine writings were found in the *North Briton* and other British imprints of the 1760s.

Gary Berton is the President Emeritus of the TPHA, a senior editor of the *Collected Writings*, and an esteemed Paine scholar.

Scott Cleary is a Professor of English at Iona University where he specializes in 18th-Century British literature. He is a TPHA Board member, senior editor of the *Collected Writings*, and the author of *The Field of Imagination: Thomas Paine and Eighteenth-Century Poetry*.

TECHNOLOGY-ASSISTED ATTRIBUTIONS

Two volumes that expand our knowledge of Paine’s output in tumultuous times

VOLUME 5: SUPPLEMENTARY WRITINGS, 1758-1772

One of two volumes compiled with the aid of computer-assisted technology to determine anonymous, pseudonymous, and co-written Paine

texts. Includes Paine’s earliest writings, reflecting his deep immersion into British Whig politics of the 1760s and participation in some of the most famous political writings of the eighteenth century: the Junius Letters. It also includes Paine’s

writings from the *North Briton* and other British political journals.



Letter from "A Slave" to Thomas Jefferson, 1808. Source: Library of Congress

VOLUME 6: SUPPLEMENTARY WRITINGS, 1772-1808

More computer-assisted technology to determine anonymous, pseudonymous, and co-written Paine texts. This volume includes many of Paine’s writings on revolution from before 1774, as well as Paine’s attempts at addressing the legacy of the American Revolution and confronting Thomas Jefferson about the issue of slavery.

A NEW PAINE FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

While volumes 5 & 6 offer some of the most interesting of Paine’s new writings, every volume contains new material, texts closest to Paine’s original intentions, and an extensive editorial commentary on both new and familiar Paine writings. For the first time, Paine’s complete literary, political,

and religious references are noted, and the full context of Paine’s knowledge, intelligence, and cultural understanding are brought forward in every volume.

In their 2013 review of that First International Conference of Thomas Paine Studies, Ed Larkin and Betsy Erkkila noted that “One of the persistent themes of the conference was the atomization of scholarship on Paine... Paine scholarship is further divided between the French, the British, and the Americans.” This edition acknowledges both “atomization” and “division” as the historical realities of Paine scholarship and the very problems we hope to have addressed and transcended in order to present the most complete collection of Paine’s works and correspondence ever compiled in both print and digital editions. Paine famously wrote that we have it in our power to begin the world over again, and that, we hope, is what we have done. ▲

Saving Paine's Grammar School

Will It Survive?

By Adrian Tawfik

In April 2026, the Thetford Grammar School, where Thomas Paine was a pupil from 1744 to 1749, announced its closure effective August 31, 2026. This poses more questions than answers about the future of the historic structure and potential archives that must be resolved.

Thetford Grammar School is among the oldest schools in England and, according to the school's website, "traces its origins to AD 631 when it is likely that Sigbert, King of the East Angles, provided a school for his court in Thetford." Less conjecturally, the school's Roll of Headmasters traces back to 1114, although the school has been dormant for long periods since that time.

The "Old School," a former chapel, comprised the entire school at the time Paine attended. According to Paine in *Rights of Man: Part the Second*, "my parents were not able to give me a shilling, beyond what they gave me in education; and to do this they distressed themselves." The curriculum included reading, writing, and arithmetic. He was also exposed to poetry for the first time, surely having great influence on his later work as a poet. At age 13, he left school to begin a corset-making apprenticeship with his father. That his formal education ended then was later weaponized by his political enemies.

"My parents were not able to give me a shilling, beyond what they gave me in education."

The current Headteacher, Amanda Faye, told the BBC that the closure of the school was due to "the 20% VAT tariff on school fees, the removal of business rates relief, increased employer pension contributions, and the rising of the minimum wage and operating costs."

In an unusual twist, in 2017, the school was sold for an undisclosed sum to China Financial Services Holdings, a company registered in Hong Kong and accused in the press of "direct links to both the CCP and the Chinese state." This comes as part of a trend where dozens of private schools in the UK have been purchased by Chinese government-linked investors.

Former students, current staff, and local officials are currently trying to save the school. Readers of the TPHA Beacon may wish to subscribe to that group's mailing list and ask

how to help their cause: www.thetfordgrammerschool.co.uk Most vital is that the landmark, or at least its records, be preserved and celebrated for its historical value, including its important connection to the immortal Thomas Paine. ▲

Adrian Tawfik is a TPHA Board Member and founder and Editor-in-Chief of the pro-democracy newspaper *Democracy Chronicles*.



A mid-eighteenth century map shows Thetford's landmarks when Paine was young. The X marks his school.

The Thetford Grammar School today
Source: Alamy



Expanding Awareness of Thomas Paine

Across Town and Around the Globe

This past year, the TPHA has expanded programs and activities to build on the expertise at our command about Paine and to reach widely with our publications, website, and events, both virtual and in-person.

We changed the Association's name, dropping "national" as we moved to establish an international Board, Advisory Council, and global network of Paine scholars. We have also increasingly involved the community surrounding our 1925 Thomas Paine Memorial Building in New Rochelle, which is open regularly to the public on Saturdays and increasingly hosts community groups for meetings and events. A high priority is to empower a new generation, both of Paine scholars and individual citizens, informed by Paine's thought. In addition to the activities described below and on the next page, for other important events and resources of TPHA, visit our website at thomaspaine.org. ▲



Our new logo expresses our global reach with scholars around the world.

Thomas Paine Day Our Annual Celebration

A recent highlight was a well-attended Thomas Paine Day, officially designated in 2024 by the New Rochelle City Council, celebrated this year on Sunday, June 7th. The program, moderated by TPHA President-elect Lisa Burton, honored Congressman George Latimer, State Senator Shelley Mayer, and Assembly Member Amy Paulin with Thomas Paine Legacy Awards for their support over the years. High school students Kabir Bhalja, Noor Abdalla, and Brooke Lanser read excerpts from the Declaration of Independence.



TPHA President-elect Lisa Burton and Congressman George Latimer



Left to right: Noor Abdalla, Brooke Lanser, Assembly Member Amy Paulin, local historian Peter Feinman, State Senator Shelley Mayer, Kabir Bhalja

Gary Berton and Scott Cleary spoke about Thomas Paine's role during the formative year of 1776 and the six volumes of new *Collected Writings* being published this year by Princeton University Press. A highlight of the day was a program featuring City Councilman David Peters

performing as Jesse Jackson in an imaginary dialogue with Thomas Paine, played by Rick Hartung (available on our YouTube channel).

Outgoing President Gary Berton was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the TPHA Board recognizing his "visionary leadership and scholarship advancing the legacy of Thomas Paine." The Board also announced plans for an annual Gary Berton Award for Thomas Paine Scholarship for a college or graduate student who produces publishable original work on Thomas Paine. ▲



TPHA President Gary Berton



WHAT IF THOMAS PAINE MET JESSE JACKSON?

An excerpt from our timely program shows how Paine's thinking is relevant to our modern-day challenges.

PAINE: Unfortunately, having voting for everyone is not enough as we have learned. We saw the emergence of partisan politics early in the new republic. The dominance of institutional political parties, often beholden to economic interests, impedes the free flow of debate and the direct influence of voters on government.

JACKSON: I have proposed that we should rise above partisan politics. As I have said, "What is right surpasses narrow political categories... The moral center is not left or right. Abolitionists were not conservatives or liberals; they were the moral center and eventually they won out."

View the entire presentation at www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yLoqMeOJQg



TPHA's new president
Lisa Burton.

TPHA's Leadership Transition

Our Place in the Community and the World

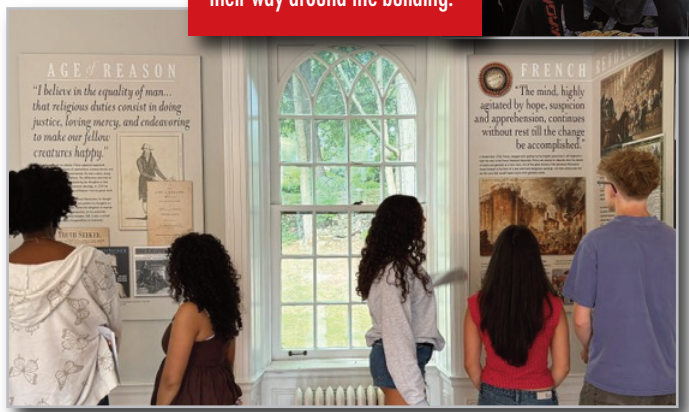
Lisa Burton, the new President of TPHA as of July 1st, is a respected community leader in Westchester. In 2025, she was an honoree of the New Rochelle Council of Community Services and later, was also honored by the local chapter of the NAACP. After she retired from a career in law firm administration, she worked as Legislative Aide to former Westchester County Legislator Damon Maher. Most recently, she was Director of Government and Community Engagement for HOPE Community Services. She previously served for five years on the Board of the Boys and Girls Club of New Rochelle. She is also active in New Rochelle Against Racism and for a period chaired a Committee of the Obama-initiated My Brothers Keeper program in New Rochelle. She has been a leader and District Governor in the global women's service organization, Zonta International, including representing Zonta at the United Nations Commission on Status of Women. ▲

Fostering a New Generation of Paine Scholars

New initiatives are underway to introduce young people to Thomas Paine's extraordinary legacy. TPHA hosted 35 history teachers from New Rochelle High School last fall, followed by 17 NRHS juniors visiting the Building and other nearby Paine historical sites in May. At TPHA events this year, students presented oral selections from Paine's *Common Sense* and the Declaration of Independence. TPHA is also assisting student researchers, augmented by the annual award to a college or graduate student for original publishable work on Paine. A small grant from the City of New Rochelle will enable creation of attractive new digital displays in the Building, and students will continue to assist in hosting Building visitors. We plan to increase outreach to schools in the tri-state area, and anticipate that the new *Collected Writings* will inspire new scholarly interest at all levels along with the revival of attention to Thomas Paine during this 250th anniversary year of the American Revolution. ▲



Students followed the trajectory of Paine's life as they made their way around the building.

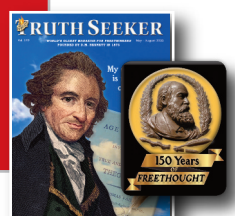


The Beacon
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Editor: Joy Masoff
 Editorial Committee: Gary Berton
 Barbara Crane • Frances Chiu
 Judah Freed • Richard Briles Moriarty
 Adrian Tawfik

Our mission is educating the world about the life, works and legacy of Thomas Paine. We were founded in 1884 to correct the record on Thomas Paine by refuting negative propaganda and slanders perpetrated against him by most historians in the 19th century. We've since become the most reliable and accurate source of information about Paine worldwide. The TPHA relies on funding from people like you! We welcome any and all contributions and look forward to sharing new discoveries in this all important 250th anniversary year! Visit: www.thomaspaine.org

THE TRUTH SEEKER is the world's foundational source of freethought information since 1873: longer than TPHA has existed. The publication was the main force behind our formation in 1884. Learn more at TheTruthSeeker.net.



Help Us Shape Future Beacons!
 Take our new survey at Thomaspaine.org.
 Link on the home page!

Florida Veterans for Common Sense
 An all-volunteer nonprofit advocate for veterans inspired by Thomas Paine to defend democracy, liberty, equality, and human rights.
FloridaVeteransforCommonSense.org/Contact@flvcs.us