



# INSIDE THE VAULT

Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*  
with Professor Eric Slauter

THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2022



THE  
GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE  
of  
AMERICAN HISTORY



# How to Participate



- If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature.
- We will be answering audience questions throughout the session.

## For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.

# Eric Slauter



Deputy Dean of Humanities and of the College,  
Director of the Karla Scherer Center for the Study of  
American Culture, and Associate Professor of English  
at the University of Chicago.

The author of *The State as a Work of Art: The Cultural  
Origins of the Constitution*, he is currently completing a  
book about the origins, meanings, and afterlives of the  
Declaration of Independence.

He will be leading a GLI course on the Declaration in Autumn 2022!



# Thomas Paine

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1736/37 - 1809

- Arrived in Philadelphia from England in 1774
- Recommended by Benjamin Franklin, calling him "ingenious" and "worthy"
- Edited *Pennsylvania Magazine* (ca. 1775) and is best known for his work *Common Sense* (1776)
- Other works include *Rights of Man* (1791) and *The Age of Reason* (1794)



# Common Sense

By Thomas Paine

## COMMON SENSE;

ADDRESSED TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

AMERICA,

On the following interesting

SUBJECTS:

- I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.
- II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.
- III. Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs.
- IV. Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous Reflections.

A NEW EDITION, with several Additions in the Body of the Work. To which is added, an APPENDIX; together with an Address to the People called QUAKERS.  
N. B. The New Edition here given intreasas the Work upwards of One-Third.

By THOMAS PAINE,

Secretary to the Committee for Foreign Affairs to Congress, during the American War, and Author of The Rights of Man, and a Letter to the Abbe Raynal.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR H. D. SYMONDS, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1793.

(PRICE SIX-PENCE.)

- Originally published January 10, 1776
- The Gilder Lehrman Institute's copy was published in 1793

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense advertised to the Inhabitants of America on the following interesting Subjects...* London, 1793  
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC08643)



The BLOODY MASSACRE perpetrated in King-Street BOSTON on March 5<sup>th</sup> 1770 by a party of the 29<sup>th</sup> REG



# The Boston Massacre

## March 5, 1770

*The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King-Street Boston on March 5<sup>th</sup> 1770 by a party of the 29<sup>th</sup> Reg., by Paul Revere, 1770.*

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLCoI868)



Benjamin Edes, Junr  
Printer

THE  
*Boston-*  
AND  
COUNTRY



(No. 1090)

Gazette,  
JOURNAL.

Containing the freshest Advices,

Foreign and Domestic.

Printed by BENJAMIN EDES, in WATERTOWN.

MONDAY, April 8, 1776.

IN CONGRESS,

MARCH 23, 1776.

WHEREAS the Petitions of these United Colonies to the King, for the Redress of great and manifold Grievances, have not only been rejected, but treated with Scorn and Contempt; and the Opposition to Designs evidently formed to reduce them to a State of servile Subjection, and their necessary Defence against hostile Forces actually employed to subdue them, declared Rebel

Men on board, and two thirds to the Use of the United Colonies.

Resolved, That all Ships or Vessels with their Tackles, Apparel and Furniture, Goods, Wares and Merchandizes belonging to any Inhabitants of Great Britain, which shall be taken by any Vessel of War fitted out by and at the expence of any of the United Colonies shall be deemed forfeited, and divided, after deducting and paying the Wages of Seamen and Mariners as

farmers with their families.

Remember the bribing negro Slaves to assassinate their masters.

Remember the burning of Norfolk †.

Remember their obliging you to pay treble duties, when you came to trade with the countries you had helped them to conquer ‡.

Remember their depriving you of all share in the Fisheries, you had equally with them spent your blood and treasure to acquire.

# The Boston Gazette

April 8, 1776

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLCo8748.02)



## COMMON SENSE.

TO-MORROW will be published and sold by  
J. Gill, and T. and J. Fleet, in Boston, and  
B. Edes in WASHINGTON,

A NEW Edition of COMMON SENSE,  
address'd to the inhabitants of America.  
With several additions in the body of the work:  
To which is added an Appendix, and an Address  
to the representatives of the people called Quakers.

N. B. This edition contains upwards of one  
third more than any former one





*The Author, by Del. of Philadelphia, in the Possession of T. B. Hollis Esq.*

THOMAS PAINE.

*Published as the Act directs July 25. 1791 for J. Rodgers, York Street, St. James's Square*

COMMON SENSE;  
ADDRESSED TO THE  
INHABITANTS  
OF  
AMERICA,

On the following interesting

SUBJECTS:

- I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.
- II. Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.
- III. Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs.
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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR H. D. SYMONDS, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1792.

[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense Addressed to the Inhabitants of America on the following interesting Subjects...*, London, 1792. (Private Collection).



O ye that love mankind; yet that dare oppose, not only the tyranny  
stand forth; every spot of the  
old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round  
the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her, Europe regards her  
like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O receive  
the fugitive! and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense advertised to the  
Inhabitants of America on the following interesting  
Subjects...*, Page 21, London, 1793.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC08643)



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Thomas Paine, *Common Sense advertised to the  
Inhabitants of America on the following interesting  
Subjects...*, Page 21, London, 1793.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC08643)

*But the Tyrant* —————  
O ye that love mankind; ye that dare oppose, not only the tyranny  
stand forth; every spot of the  
old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round  
the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her, Europe regards her  
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ceive the fugitive! and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense advertised to the  
Inhabitants of America on the following interesting  
Subjects...*, Page 21, London, 1792.  
(Private Collection)



# Common Sense

By Thomas Paine

O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is over-run with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the Globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her.— Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense advertised to the Inhabitants of America on the following interesting Subjects...*, Page 30, Philadelphia, 1776. (Evans Digital)

O ye that love mankind; Ye that dare oppose, not only the tyranny, *but the Tyrant* stand forth; Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa, have long expelled her---Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense advertised to the Inhabitants of America on the following interesting Subjects...*, Page 30, London, 1776. (Eighteenth Century Collections Online)



But where, say some, is the King of America? I will tell you, friend, he reigns above, and does not make havock of mankind

Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honours, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth, placed on the divine law, the word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know that so far we approve of monarchy, that in America, **THE LAW IS KING**. For as in absolute governments the King is law, so in free countries the Law ought to be the King; and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown, at the conclusion of the ceremony, be demolished, and scattered among the people whose right it is.

# Common Sense

By Thomas Paine

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense advertised to the Inhabitants of America on the following interesting Subjects...*, Page 20, London, 1793. (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC08643)

But where, say some, is the King of America? I will tell you, friend, he reigns above, and does not make havock of mankind *Like the Royal Brute of Britian* — Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth, placed on the divine law, the word of God: let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know that so far we approve of monarchy, that in America, **THE LAW IS KING**. For as in absolute governments the King is law, so in free countries the Law ought to be King; and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown, at the conclusion of the ceremony, be demolished, and scattered among the people whose right it is.

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense advertised to the Inhabitants of America on the following interesting Subjects...*, Page 20, London, 1792. (Private Collection)



ance of the continent, or any ways equal to the expence of blood and treasure we have already been put to.

The object contended for ought always to bear some just proportion to the expence. The removal of N—, or the whole detestable junto, is a matter unworthy the millions we have expended. A temporary stoppage of trade was an inconvenience which would have sufficiently balanced the repeal of all the acts complained of, had such repeals been obtained: but if the whole continent must take up arms, if every man must be a foldier, it is scarcely worth our while to fight against a contemptible ministry only. Dearly, dearly do we pay for the repeal of the acts, if that is all we fight for; for in a just estimation, it is as great a folly to pay a Bunker's-Hill price for law as for land. As I have always considered the independency of this continent, as an event which must sooner or later arise, so from the late rapid progress of the continent to maturity, the event could not be far off. Wherefore, on the breaking out of hostilities, it was not worth while to have disputed a matter which time would have finally redressed, unless we meant to be in earnest; otherwise it is like wanting an estate on a suit at law, to regulate the trespasses of a tenant, whose lease is just expiring. No man was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than myself before the fatal nineteenth\* of April, 1775, but the moment the event of that day was made known,

But admitting that matters were now made up, what would be the event? I answer, the ruin of the continent.—And that for several reasons.

First.—The powers of governing still remaining in the hands of the king, he will have a negative over the whole legislation of this continent.—And,

is he, or is he not, a proper man to say to these colonies, "you shall make no laws but what I please!" And is there any inhabitant in America so ignorant as not to know, that according to what is called the present constitution, that this continent can make no laws, but what the king gives leave to: and is there any man so unwise as not to see, (that considering what has happened) he will suffer no law to be made here, but such as suits his purpose? We may be as effectually enslaved by the want of laws in America, as by submitting to laws made for us in England. After matters are made up (as it is called) can there be any doubt, but the whole power of the crown will be exerted to keep this continent as low and as humble as possible? Instead of going forward, we shall go backward, or be perpetually quarrelling or ridiculously petitioning.—

To bring the matter to one point. Is the power who is jealous of our prosperity, a proper power to govern us? Whoever says no to this question, is an independent; for independency means no more, than whether we shall make our own laws, or

But the King, you will say, has a negative in England; the people, there can make no laws without his consent. In point of right and good order, there is something very ridiculous that a youth of twenty-one (which hath often happened) shall say to several millions of people, older and wiser than himself, I forbid this or that act of yours to be law.

\* Lexington

ance of the continent, or any ways equal to the expence of blood and treasure we have been already put to.

The object contended for ought always to bear some just proportion to the expence. The removal of North, or the whole detestable junto, is a matter unworthy the millions we have expended. A temporary stoppage of trade was an inconvenience which would have sufficiently balanced the repeal of all the acts complained of, had such repeals been obtained: but if the whole continent must take up arms, if every man must be a foldier, it is scarcely worth our while to fight against a contemptible ministry only. Dearly, dearly do we pay for the repeals of the acts, if that is all we fight for; for in a just estimation, it is as great a folly to pay a Bunker's-Hill price for law as for land. As I have always considered the independence of the continent, as an event which sooner or later must arise, so from the late rapid progress of the continent to maturity, the event could not be far off. Wherefore, on the breaking out of hostilities, it was not worth while to have disputed a matter which time would have finally redressed, unless we meant to be in earnest; otherwise it is like wanting an estate on a suit at law, to regulate the trespasses of a tenant, whose lease is just expiring. No man was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than myself before the fatal nineteenth\* of April, 1775; but the moment the event of that day was made known,

*I rejected the proposed Sullivan temporary cessation of England's power in America the more I felt that with the pretended title of Father of his people can unobscuredly bear of*

But admitting that matters were now made up, what would be the event? I answer, the ruin of the continent.—And that for several reasons.

First.—The powers of governing still remaining in the hands of the king, he will have a negative over the whole legislation of this continent.—And,

*as he hath shewn himself such an inveterate enemy to Liberty and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary power*

is he, or is he not, a proper man to say to these colonies, "You shall make no laws but what I please!" And is there any inhabitant in America so ignorant as not to know, that according to what is called the present constitution, that this continent can make no laws, but what the king gives leave to: and is there any man so unwise as not to see, (considering what has happened) he will suffer no law to be made here, but such as suits his purpose? We may be as effectually enslaved by the want of laws in America, as by submitting to laws made for us in England. After matters are made up (as it is called) can there be any doubt, but the whole power of the Crown will be exerted to keep this continent as low and as humble as possible? Instead of going forward, we shall go backward, or be perpetually quarrelling or ridiculously petitioning. *We are already greater than the king wishes us to be and will be not hear of our endeavor to make us less*

To bring the matter to one point. Is the power who is jealous of our prosperity, a proper power to govern us? Whoever says no to this question, is an independent; for independency means no more, than whether we shall make our own laws, or

*if we must have or can have that to us, there shall be no laws but such as I like*

But the King, you will say, has a negative in England; the people, there can make no laws without his consent. In point of right and good order, there is something very ridiculous, that a youth of twenty-one (which hath often happened) shall say to several millions of people, older and wiser than himself, I forbid this or that act of yours to be law.

*their slaughter and composed by deep with their blood upon his side*

\* Lexington

# Common Sense

By Thomas Paine

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* advertised to the Inhabitants of America on the following interesting Subjects... Page 17, London, 1792. (Private Collection)



Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* advertised to the Inhabitants of America on the following interesting Subjects... Page 17, London, 1793. (Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC08643)

# Passages for Insertion in the Hiatuses.

No.	In the INTRODUCTION.	Pag
1.	"by the <i>King and Parliament</i> they have"	2
2.	"reject the <i>oppressions</i> of either"	—
3.	"nor a <i>Gen. as in England</i> a man"	11
4.	"In <i>England</i> the king hath little"	—
5.	"by the <i>king</i> and his"	13
6.	"made known, <i>I rejected the hardened, sullen-temper'd Pharaoh of England</i> for ever; and disdained the wretch that with the pretended title of <i>FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE,</i> " can unfeelingly bear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul! — <i>But</i> "	17
7.	— "And as he hath shown himself such an inveterate enemy to Liberty, and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary power—Is he? or is he not a proper man"	—
8.	"petitioning.— <i>We are already greater than the king wishes us to be: and will he not endeavour hereafter to make us less? — To bring the</i> "	—
9.	" <i>Laws, or whether the King, the greatest enemy we have, or can have, shall tell us, "There shall be no laws but such as I like? — But</i> "	—
10.	" <i>dangerous and fatal than it</i> "	18
11.	" <i>policy in the king</i> at this"	—
12.	" <i>reinstating himself in the government of the Provinces in order that he may accomplish by fraud and subtlety in the long run, what he cannot do by force and violence in the short one: Reconciliation and Ruin are nearly related. Secondly,</i> "	—
13.	" <i>haddock of mankind, like the royal brute of Great-Britain,—Yet that</i> "	20
14.	" <i>eternal tyranny, by keeping vacant the seat of Government, — There are,</i> "	—
15.	" <i>the tyranny but the TYRANT—Stand forth!</i> "	21
16.	" <i>it is not the King's business</i> "	—

*Passages for Insertion in the Hiatuses* ([London: H.D. Symonds, 1792?])  
(Eighteenth Century Collections Online)



their taste, and the will engage to ingraft them with the natural hair, without rendering the operation the least painful. In like manner, gentlemen, whose skulls are, from age, become rather a little too bare, and yet cannot submit to the Gothic taste of covering them with wigs, may have natural hair inserted, in as sure and easy a manner as they are supplied with teeth, and which will hold many months without renewal. Any gentleman or lady, under this predicament, may be served by the year, on very moderate terms.

*Peter Alexis Knoutschosschler-witz.*

*Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, July 4.*

WHEN, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident:—That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; and whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate, that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards

GENT. MAG. August, 1776.

for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present ——— of Great Britain, is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations; all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute t—— over these states. To prove this let facts be submitted to a candid world

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend them.

He has refused to pass other laws for accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the rights of representation in the legislature; a right inestimable to them, and formidable to t—— only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representatives houses repeatedly, for opposing, with manly firmness, his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be erected, whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining, in the mean time, exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their subsistence.

He

# Gentlemen's Magazine

August 1776

In reprinting the Declaration in London, the publishers have removed the word "King" (the history of the present ---- of Great Britain") and left only the letter "t" in place of "tyranny" and "tryants."

Declaration of Independence as reprinted in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, London, August 1776.  
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC08863)





# James Bowdoin to Catharine Macaulay

March 1777

“

...Our Cause is too just & our Countrymen too numerous & brave to be overcome. But however it is my wish & the Wish of us all, that the Justice & not the power of Brittain might disarm us. We say if you'll acknowledge our Independance we'll give you <sup>our</sup> trade, the advantages of it to you must be much greater than a Conquest. but why do I speak of conquest. It is chimerical. none I believe but the deluded ---- & ministry can even think of it. it is strange they refuse being taught by Experience every year seems really to add to their disgrace and puts conquest at a greater distance...

James Bowdoin to Catharine Macaulay. March 15, 1777.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC01791.02)



it would make but little way towards a conquest  
Our Cause is too just & our Countrymen too numerous  
& brave to be overcome. But however it is my wish &  
the Wish of us all, that the Justice & not the power  
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by Experience every year seems ~~to add~~ really to add to  
their disgrace and puts conquest at a greater distance

SUBSCRIBER'S NAMES.

Members of Congress.

ELBRIDGE Gerry, *State of Massachusetts.*  
James Gordon, }  
Thomas Tredwell, } *State of New-York.*  
Cor<sup>c</sup> C. Schoonmaker, }  
Tho<sup>s</sup> Fitzsimons, }  
Wm. Findley, }  
Andrew Gregg, } *State of Pennsylvania.*  
D. Heister, }  
Tho<sup>s</sup> Hartley, }  
Israel Jacobs, }  
Philip Key, }  
John F. Mercer, 2. }  
W. V. Murray, } *State of Maryland.*  
S. Sterett, }  
Upton Sheredine, }  
John Brown, }  
Wm. B. Giles, 12. }  
John Page, 2. }  
J. Parker, } *State of Virginia.*  
James Madison, jun. 2. }  
Aw. Moore, }  
Abm. B. Venable, 2. }  
Alex. White, }  
Benjamin Hawkins, }  
T. B. Ashe, } *State of North-Carolina.*  
W. Barry Grove, 2. }  
Nath. Macon, }  
Tho<sup>s</sup> Sumpter, 2. *State of South-Carolina.*  
Fran<sup>s</sup> Willis, *State of Georgia.*  
John Beckley, *Clerk, House of Representatives, U. S.*  
Joseph Wheaton, *Sergeant at Arms, do.*

Following the success of Paine's *Rights of Man* in 1791 printers in Albany, New York issued proposals for printing a collection of *The Writings of Thomas Paine* by subscription.

Subscribers included 29 representatives to the Second Congress—including James Madison, who took two copies.

The representatives subscribed amostly along party lines: of the 46 copies subscribed for by members of Congress, only 9 were for identifiable Federalists.



# Common Sense

By Thomas Paine

*Fanny Coolidge*  
COMMON SENSE;

ADDRESSED TO THE

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On the following interesting

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- I. Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.
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- IV. Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous Reflections.

To which is added,

AN APPENDIX.

Man knows no Master save creating Heaven,  
Or those whom Choice and common Good ordain.

THOMSON.

ALBANY:

RE-PRINTED,

By CHARLES R. and GEORGE WEBSTER.

M.DCC.XCI.

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (Albany, 1791).  
Copy owned by Fanny Coolidge  
(Private Collection)



# Upcoming Programs

**INSIDE THE VAULT:** August 4 at 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)

- We will be joined by Barbara Perry to discuss materials from FDR's third presidential campaign.

**MA IN AMERICAN HISTORY:** Professor Eric Slauter will lead a graduate history course on the Declaration of Independence for the Gettysburg College–Gilder Lehrman MA in American History during the fall 2022 semester. Applications are open now. Registration for the fall semester begins on July 9 for all admitted students.

