

TOM PAINE, INDEPENDENT!

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

Tom Paine was born in England, but he was an adopted Pennsylvanian and much of his life was spent in the Philadelphia area. This man who incited men to think; this philosopher who bade citizens of a new place to claim liberty and freedom; Tom Paine was the son of a Quaker corsetmaker and he was a failure to begin with. He went bankrupt when he was 37 years old and not until then, in 1774 did he emigrate to America. Seventeen-seventy-four was only one year before Paul Revere's ride--but by the time that had happened, Paine was supporting himself with contributions to contemporary periodicals, and on January 10, 1776, published "Common Sense", a forty-seven page pamphlet urging an immediate Declaration of Independence. It has been said that independence per se, was far from the minds of the American colonists until Paine's publication, but it so stirred the minds of men longing to be free that it was the ignition that set off independence. Paine's writings gained wide circulation, so much so that men concentrated thinking toward independence. Paine was a fighter indeed as well as in print; he enlisted in the Continental Army, publishing still during the war, twelve issues of the "Crisis", constantly upholding the colonial cause. He was secretary to the Continental Congress' committee on Foreign Affairs and Clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly. Not satisfied with the American cause, he went to Europe at the time of our Constitution Convention, became interested in the French Revolution, defending the measures taken there, and at that time was inspired to write

"The Rights of Man!" He even appealed to the English to overthrow their monarchy and organize a Republic. Hunted, he took refuge in France, was tried, convicted of treason, outlawed from England, and then became a member of the French Convention. In those days one knew not from one moment to another on which side he might find himself and Paine was arrested by the French and imprisoned as an Englishman. Minister James Monroe, later to become president claimed Paine was an American citizen, a Pennsylvanian and had him released. He studied in Paris, wrote the Age of Reason---the philosophy of his deist belief. Back in America in 1802, he became involved in that struggle politically between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, and in his last years lived in ostracism and relative poverty. Tom Paine, Philosopher, Patriot, Fighter for Men's Rights; pamphleteer who ignited the thoughts of liberty in the minds of Frenchmen and Americans was a Pennsylvanian by adoption; not a young man, but a man with new, vibrant ideas which changed the course of men's history. For these contributions to the future, Pennsylvania's Tom Paine was installed in the American Hall of Fame in 1945, another Pennsylvanian who gained immortality.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.