

Thomas Paine: *An American Patriot*

Based on a manuscript by **Mae Kramer Silver**

Last week ~ Chapter 2

A Fresh Start in America Thomas Paine arrives in America, bearing a letter of introduction from Benjamin Franklin.

Chapter 3 ~

Who Was “Anonymous?”

John Aitken’s question to his son at dinner that night didn’t go away.

The next night at dinner Frederick’s father asked him what he had heard about the anonymous author of *Common Sense*.

Frederich was still uncertain. However, he had ideas from his research and his listening.

The next morning at his father’s bookshop, Frederick waited and finally saw Thomas Paine coming to work on Aitken’s *Pennsylvania Magazine*.

“Mr. Paine, sir. May I ask you a question?”

“Of course. What is it, Frederick?” Paine replied.

“Sir, you know the best writers in Philadelphia. Just who is this Mr. Anonymous who wrote *Common Sense*?”

Thomas Paine was quiet for a minute, but then he said, “Let me ask Mr. Aitken if we can speak together in a little while. I do not want to take you away from your chores. Then we can talk.”

Frederich thought Paine would forget, or that he wouldn’t have time to talk with a young boy like him. But he was surprised.

Thomas Paine came looking for him when the chores were done. Alone, in the back of the bookshop, the two sat down late that afternoon.

Paine began to tell Frederick a story about a boy who grew up in England and saw how English royalty treated other people.

“The little boy watched how people, even children, were punished by public hanging each spring when

they were found guilty of taking food that did not belong to them, or for

owing money, or for not working well enough to please their masters,” Paine explained.

“The boy’s father was a Quaker and did not believe in executing people,” Paine continued. “The little boy learned many of his father’s peaceful Quaker ways.”

What Thomas Paine was talking about was the Quaker religion.

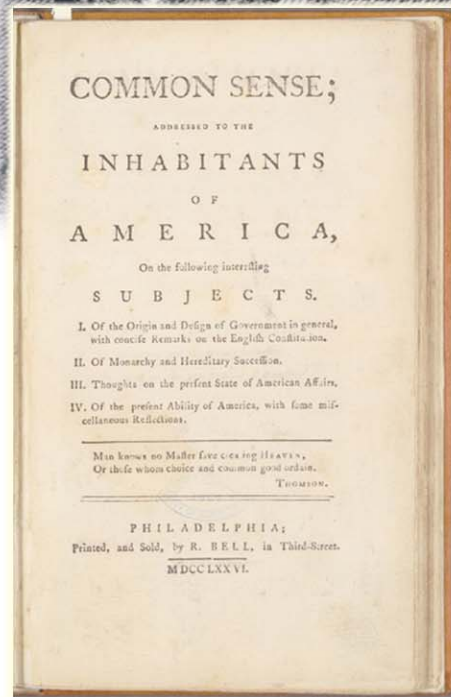
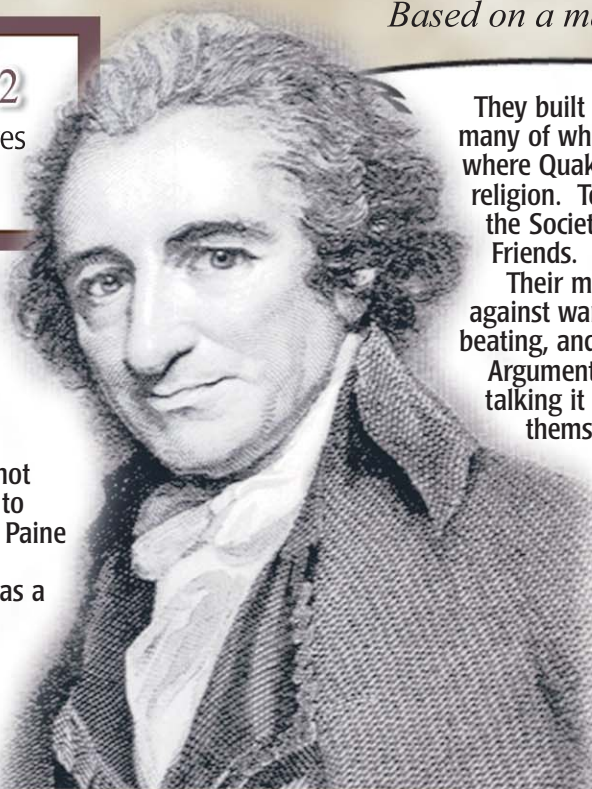
To be a Quaker in England was to be an outsider because the main religion in England was Anglican, a Protestant faith.

Because Quakers were different in the conduct of their lives, they were jailed, fined and finally “helped” to leave England.

Quaker ways meant that none of them would bow to anyone. Not one of them would take a hat off in the presence of royalty.

Those behaviors often meant a jail sentence in England.

In America, many Quakers settled in the western part of southern New Jersey and founded Pennsylvania, named for the Quaker family led by William Penn.



They built their meetinghouses, many of which still stand today where Quakers still practice their religion. Today, they also are called the Society of Friends, or simply Friends.

Their most well-known belief is against war ... against violence, beating, and execution.

Arguments become settled by talking it through and out among themselves, not through laws.

Drinking alcohol, dressing fancy, speaking ill of one’s neighbors and family, having slaves, being tardy, stealing, lying, etc., were not accepted.

The Circle of Friends made their own rules of conduct and expected all in the Circle to abide by the rules. If someone broke a rule it was reported to the Circle. A committee would be appointed to help the person correct that misbehavior.

In the 1700s and 1800s when towns had no police, no hospitals, no schools and other services we have today, the Quaker way held their communities together in safety.

“These early lessons made the boy very sensitive to ordinary people’s problems and he wanted to help them,” Paine added.

Frederich sat on the edge of his stool, leaned forward and almost tipped it over when Paine described how the boy of the story ran away to sea to get away from the everyday horrors he was witnessing. Frederick could only imagine what that would be like.

The light of day was fading that late afternoon in January and Frederick was beginning to feel hungry. So was Thomas Paine, who was still deep into his story about the English boy who ran away to sea.

Paine told Frederick how the boy boarded a ship and sailed away for two years, even after his father snatched him off the ship the first time he tried to run away from home.

The boy made such a good wage that when he returned home, now as a young man, he started his own business. “But the young man was not good at doing that. He needed to do something else,” Paine explained.

“I have to leave now,” Paine said. “I’ll continue my story tomorrow.”

Each day, after his own chores were done, Frederick walked to the docks on the Delaware River that flowed by the city of Philadelphia.

He saw the sailors and listened to their songs as they worked. He sometimes watched the ships leave after they had unloaded their goods, and he wondered what it must be like to tend those sails and work those boats the whole way across the sea to other ports far away.

Sometimes those sailors almost looked to be his age, yet Frederick knew he could never run away from the print shop to do that.

That would take courage ... courage that motivated the young English boy Thomas Paine described.

Q&A ~

Comprehension Question:

What motivated the young Englishman Thomas Paine described and what did Frederick believe it would take to run away and become a sailor? Why?

NIE Activity: Thomas Paine’s story had Frederick on the edge of his seat while he told him the tales of “the English boy who ran away to sea.” Look through the newspaper to find a story that keeps you on the edge of your seat. Perhaps you will find a story about a runaway or missing person.

Essay Question: What was more courageous, writing *Common Sense*, a pamphlet calling for revolution, or running away from home? Why?

Serialized Story Guide for Teachers, Students and Parents: www.njreadforlife.org/paineguide.html

Designed by Terry Bellucci

Next week ~ Chapter 4

The Secret Is Revealed

Thomas Paine’s young friend, Anna, guesses who is the writer of *Common Sense*.

Read more about Thomas Paine: www.njreadforlife.org/paine.html