

The Colonial Press and Revolutionary Press Influencers 1735-1765

- Journalism 1002
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Timeline

- 1730s and 1740s: The Great Awakening, a religious revival. The press closely covered it.
- 1750: Christopher Sower Jr., son of German immigrants, built printing presses near Philadelphia
- 1754: Seven Years' War began. The North American conflict is often called the French and Indian War.
- 1757-8: The second American Magazine and Monthly Chronicle
- 1758: The postal service established mailing rates for newspapers

This lecture will cover...

- How the Colonial press covered a huge religious revival
- The first monthly magazines in the American colonies
- How the press covered the Seven Years' War aka the French and Indian War
- Thomas Paine's influential pamphlet "Common Sense"
- And other pamphleteers leading to the American Revolution



1730s and 1740s: The Great Awakening

- Protestant Christian ministers believed people had gotten away from faith
- Perhaps a backlash to the Protestant Reformation. Perhaps in response to the Enlightenment (intellectual/scientific movement)
- Most famous example: The Rev. George Whitefield
- Whitefield visited America, preaching conversion on his traveling sermons around the colonies, 1739-40
- Audiences in tens of thousands. A true media celebrity
- Emotional public services called revivals changed the religious landscape in America and Europe



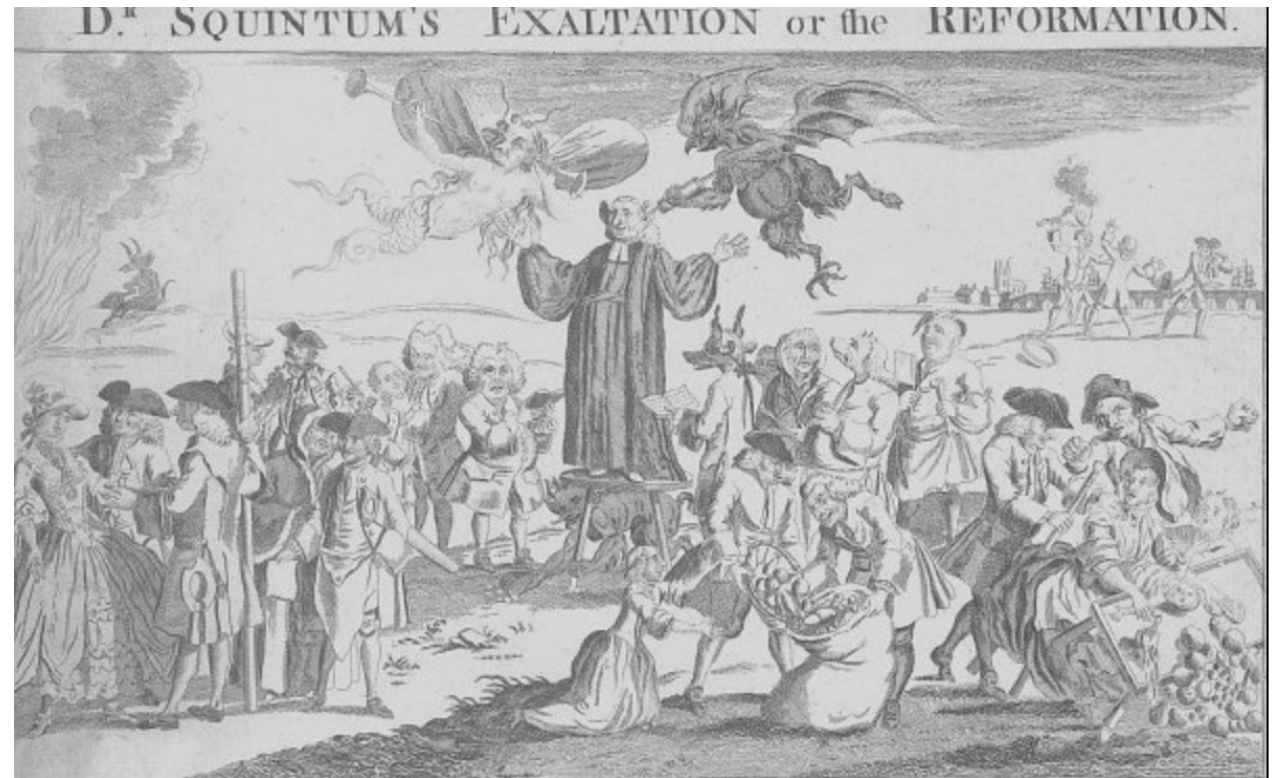
Portable field pulpit. Oak, c. 1742-1770.
American Tract Society, Garland, Texas (63)

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/f0206s.jpg>



Cartoon poking fun at religious revivals

- Evangelist George Whitefield is preaching. He had an eye problem, hence “Dr. Squintum”
- The Devil is raking in money just below the podium, suggesting Whitefield is just in it for the money.
- At left, Whitefield’s followers are busy propositioning a prostitute.



The Great Awakening: Jonathan Edwards



- Yale Divinity School graduate
- Widely known in his own time
- Gave a sermon called “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” 1741 in Enfield, Connecticut
- It portrayed people as loathesome insects hanging above their doom
- <https://news.yale.edu/2014/05/01/centuries-later-jonathan-edwards-still-igniting-hot-spots-around-world>

"A vast congregation in the Rev. Dr. Colman's meetinghouse," reported the newspapers; "at the South Church a crowded audience...about 5,000 people on the Common." Sunday afternoon, "having preached to a great number of people at the Old Brick Church, the house not being large enough to hold those that crowded to hear him, when the exercise there was over, he went and preached in the field, to at least 8,000 persons." (This account is from the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University)

1741: Franklin and Andrew Bradford raced to get out the first monthly magazine in the colonies

- 1. Benjamin Franklin's *General Magazine* (SEE PICTURE): It was *planned* first and included news, opinion pieces, analysis, poetry, and extracts from new books.



1741: Franklin and Andrew Bradford raced to get out the first monthly magazine in the colonies

- 2. Andrew Bradford's *American Magazine*.
- It was *published* first (three days ahead of Franklin's.) It reprinted other sources like pamphlets and books.



16 years later... 1757...
Bradford's nephew William
published a new
American Magazine

T H E
AMERICAN MAGAZINE,



Prævalebit æquior.

. O R

MONTHLY CHRONICLE for the BRITISH Colonies.

N^o. I. Vol. I. FOR OCTOBER 1757.

C O N T A I N I N G.

I. The GENERAL PREFACE.

II. EUROPEAN AFFAIRS.

III. ACCOUNT of the NORTH-
AMERICAN INDIANS.

IV. The PHILOSOPHICAL MISCEL-
LANY.

V. MONTHLY ESSAYS: viz.

The Planter. N^o. I. *The Hermit*. N^o. I

POETICAL ESSAYS.

VI. MONTHLY CHRONICLE of
AMERICAN AFFAIRS.

To be continued (Price One Shilling *Pennsylvania* Currency each Month)

By a SOCIETY of Gentlemen.

Veritatis cultores, Fraudis inimici.

Printed and Sold by WILLIAM BRADFORD, at the Corner-House of
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William Bradford's
American Magazine
1757

Poems, stories, essays

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Account of the North American Indians. 9

—Their size, shape, &c. ib.

—Their character, customs, excessive use of spirituous liquors, behaviour in councils, hospitality 10

—Revenge, notions of the supreme Being, superstition of their sick, method of performing extraordinary cures by their physicians, education of their youth, love of liberty, forms of government 11.

12
—Their talent for oratory, public feasts, strong friendships, lamentations for their dead, feast of souls 13. 14. 15

—Their passion for war, the war-dance, the courage of their woman, dexterity in following the footsteps of their enemy, the horrible cruelties sometimes exercised on their captives, with some reflections on the state and government of the *English* colonies 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22.

PHILOSOPHICAL MISCELLANY.

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quakes* 23. 24

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N^o. III. A new solution of the *Aurora Borealis*, or northern light ib. 26. 27. 28

N^o. IV. Of uncommon sea-animals—of the *Mer-man*, and *Mer-maid* 29. 30

—Of the *Sea-serpent* or *Sea-snake*, a

—Of the *Kraken*, a most enormous monster in the northern-seas, whose back is thought to be at least an *English* mile and a half in circumference, and mistaken by some superstitious voyagers for an island appearing and disappearing thro' the delusion of the devil 32. 33

MONTHLY ESSAYS,

THE PLANTER, on the good and ill effects of civil *Dissent* 33

—His story of a crazy capuchin ib.

—Of the dissensions in the *Roman* state, and their effects 34. 55

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—Their treatment of their great men humorously compared to the treatment given their gallants by the *Amazons* ib.

—A concluding reflexion illustrated by a quotation from *Otway's* *Caius Marius* 37

THE HERMIT OF THEODORE. His address to the proprietors of the magazine ib. 38

—His birth and education, his father's death and last advice to him, his travels and return 39.

40
—His love of *Amelia*, and the affecting story of her death, and the death of his mother 40. 41

—His inconsolable grief on that occasion, and resolution to seclude himself from the world for life

—His design of publishing a monthly paper on religious subjects &c. 41. 42

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Progress of love 44

Ode on music by a young gentle-

Contents of the 1757
American Magazine.

From editor's preface

From a society thus constituted, there is sufficient reason to expect all that variety and entertainment, together with all that impartiality and candor, which ought to distinguish works of this nature. We shall not hesitate, therefore, to promise, that the greatest care will be taken to do equal justice to the affairs of every colony, their literary productions and public-spirited undertakings, their improvements in arts and the several branches of commerce, their natural curiosities and other advantages of soil and climate; nor shall any society or party, religious or political, have real cause to accuse us of giving an unjust preference to any of them, as we hope for encouragement among them all. From the nature of our plan, we shall readily admit what is offered with decency by any denomination of men, and shall seldom venture our own judgment on subjects of a controversial nature.

In treating of public matters we shall be very careful to lay nothing before the world which might either weaken us as a nation, or be of advantage for the enemies of our country to know. But, on the other hand, we shall think it our duty to give our readers such an authentic account of every thing relating to their own happiness and safety, as a *free people* have a right to expect; and, as we are independent in our situation, no power whatsoever shall either awe or influence us, in the discharge of so essential a part of our engagement with the public.

This work will be carried on in six half sheets each month.

Sighting of a "mer-man"

The first we shall mention is the *Mer-man* and *Mer-maid*, whose very existence is even doubted by many sensible people, on account of the fabulous relations concerning them. On this subject, indeed, the pride of man has urged, with some degree of plausibility, that tho' there may be a pretty general resemblance and analogy between terrestrial and sea-animals, yet man, who is more expressly and immediately the image of his *Maker*, is exempted from this resemblance both of his figure and faculties.

In answer to this, the good bishop takes the liberty to remind us of the *Ouran-outan* of Asia, and the *Chimpenzie* of Africa, *those wild men in the woods*, and surprizing mimicks of our form, that bear so grave and striking a resemblance of the human figure, and even of the human faculties and actions.

By such arguments as these, the venerable prelate endeavours to remove prejudices, and open up the imagination of his readers to receive with candor the accounts he is to give. He is sensible how difficult it is to eradicate long prepossessions; but he very reasonably hopes, that when it is considered how small a part of nature has hitherto fallen under our enquiries, no one will pretend to deny but that the vast unsearchable ocean may contain

city, in his own diocese of Bergen, all agreeing with the description of this animal published long since by *Jablonsky* and *Kircher*.

Among other unsuspected evidences he has the following. In the year 1719, the rev. Mr. *Peter Angel* (minister at Sundmoer, then 20 years old, and alive when the bishop's history was published) saw and handled a *Mer-man*, dead on a point of land among other sea-animals, to which many of his neighbouring inhabitants were witnesses. Its length was 3 fathoms, its colour grey, its lower part like a fish with a porpoise's tail. The face resembled a man's, with a mouth, forehead, eyes &c. the nose was flat and pressed down to the face, in which the nostrils were very visible. The breast was near the head; the arms, which seemed to hang by the side, were joined by a thin membrane, and the hands, to appearance, were like the paws of a sea-calf.

Mr. *Strom*, another clergyman informs the bishop, that at *Neroe*, in *Numedalen*, a *Mer-man* and a sea-calf were both found dead on a rock, all bloody; from whence it was concluded that they had killed each other. *Indeed, it is analogous enough, to think that a Sea-man should covet a repast of Sea-veal.**

But the strongest and best

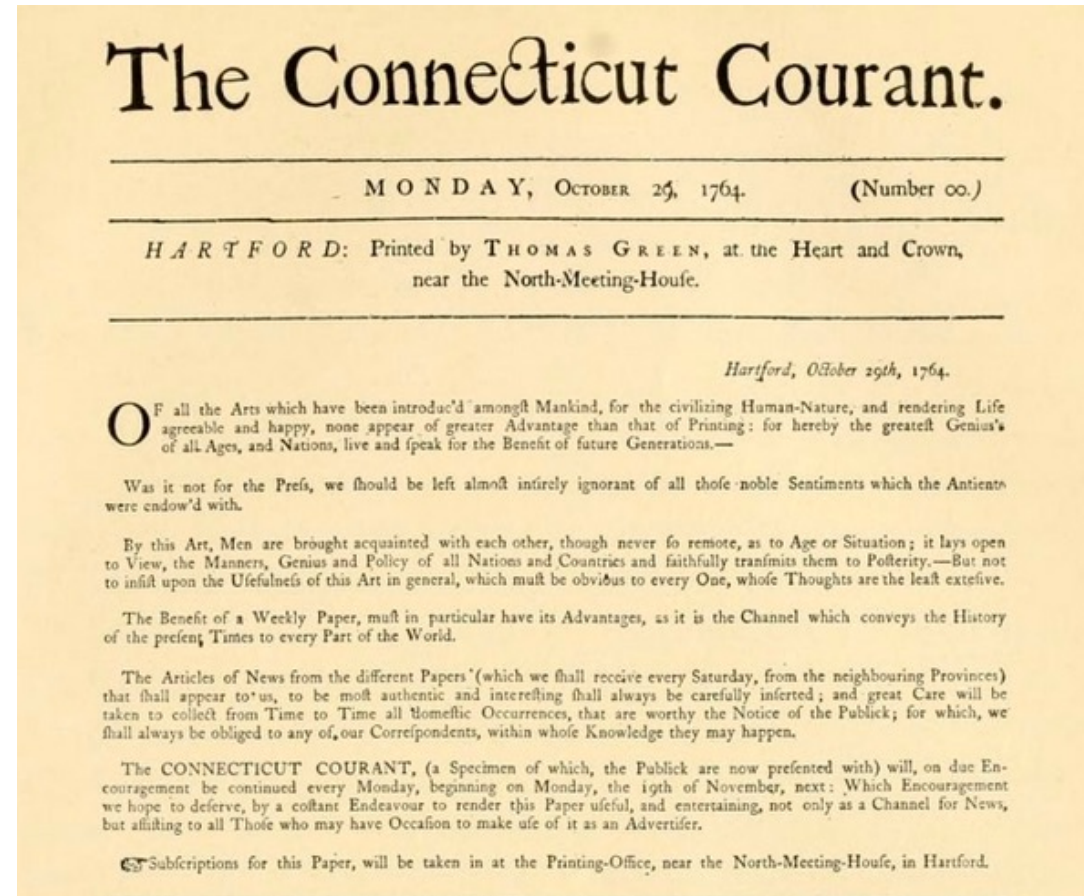
1754-1763: The Seven Years' War

- The North American portion of a global conflict, also known as French and Indian War
- Britain fought with France over large areas of land in North America.
- France joined forces with many American Indian tribes
- Britain won. In 1763, France ceded the territory including Canada to Britain
- Proclamation of 1763 reserved Indian lands west of the Appalachian Mountains, but Colonial leaders soon ignored this.
- Britain started taxing the colonies to recoup war debts.



1764: The Hartford Courant began publishing

- October 29, 1764
- By a printer named Thomas Green
- Oldest continually publishing paper in the country
- “When Thomas Green opened his print shop in a second-floor office on what was known as Queen Street in Hartford, news arrived by post on Saturdays. The city had 3,027 residents and shared the duty of being the state's capital 2009 with New Haven.” (From 2009 editorial in the Courant.)
- <https://connecticuthistory.org/the-oldest-newspaper-in-continuous-publication/>



How women were depicted in Colonial papers

- Either... subservient, home-oriented, in keeping with the times: “virtuous.”
- Or... standing up for a strong idea, disagreeing with men: “vicious.”
- —David A. Copeland
- From Copeland’s article, “Virtuous and Vicious: The Dual Portrayal of Women in Colonial Newspapers.” *American Periodicals*, Vol. 5 (1995), pp. 59-85. Published by Ohio State University Press

Legacy of Colonial press until the years just before the Revolution

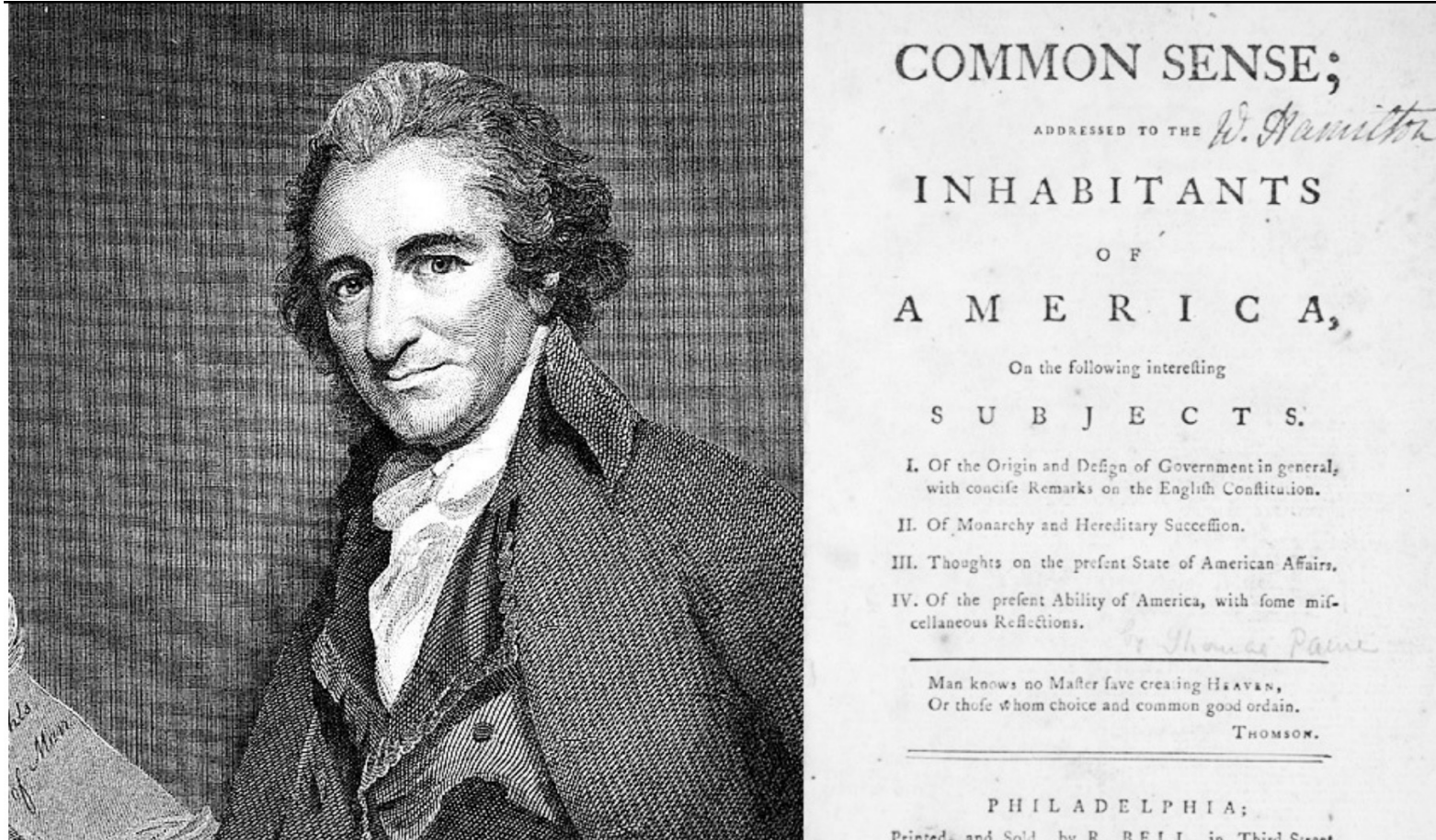
More publications: By 1763, number of papers expanded from a dozen to 23

More readers: Newspapers were *spreading the news* and opinions farther and wider, especially during the Seven Years' War.

The Great Awakening was a media sensation. The press might have amplified this religious movement

A vibrant time for the press: magazines experimented with analysis, strange features, and literature.

Thomas Paine and the coming Revolution



Timeline

- 1763 onward: England started taxing the Colonies to recoup money spent on the Seven Years' War (French and Indian War)
- 1765: The Stamp Act forced American printers to pay a tax, marked by a stamp
- 1760-1776: Journalism exploded with pamphlets, broadsides (big sheets) all *advocating* for causes.
- 1776: Thomas Paine's pamphlet advocating revolution—*Common Sense*— was published and widely circulated
- 1776-1781 American Revolution
- 1789: Constitutional convention

Editors abandoned the principle of an “open press” and began to take sides

- Turned away from Ben Franklin’s old approach of printing a bunch of different views and letting readers decide.
- Instead:
- Editors decided what their stance was on such things as breaking away from England. And printed articles that matched their views.

Anonymous pamphlet writers took risks

- “The pamphleteers amounted to the nation’s first version of an underground press, a guerrilla counterpart to the established newspapers.” (Christopher Daly book, 37)
- Printers tried to remain neutral. But they found that readers would perceive which view dominated a newspaper, and those who felt outnumbered would stop subscribing.
- “The printer followed his readers into overt partisanship rather than leading them there.” (Daly, 38)

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.

Man knows no Master save creating HEAVEN,
Or those whom choice and common good ordain.

THOMSON.

PHILADELPHIA;

Printed, and Sold, by R. BELL, in Third-Street.

MDCC LXXVI.

Paine's difficult life

- Born in 1737 in England
- Lost his job and separated from his wife in 1774 (age 37)
- Immigrated to Philadelphia and met Ben Franklin, who took Paine under his wing
- Wrote article against slavery that inspired a meeting of abolitionists

—Peter Feuerherd in Jstor Daily

“Comparative analysis of *Common Sense* and other pre-Revolutionary pamphlets suggests that *Common Sense* was indeed stylistically unique; no other pamphleteer came close to matching Paine's combination of simplicity and forcefulness.”

—Lee Sigelman, Colin Martindale and Dean McKenzie, “The Common Style of *Common Sense*.”

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/30204657>

Table 1. Accessibility and forcefulness data for the 15 pre-Revolutionary pamphlets.

Pamphlet	Accessibility		Forcefulness	
	Sentence length	Long words	Sanguinic-melancholic	Choleric-phlegmatic
S. Hopkins (1764)	32.8	0.292	-0.83	1.68
J. Otis (1764)	23.2	0.287	0.68	-0.65
S. Hopkins (1764)	24.6	0.290	0.55	-0.49
M. Howard (1765)	25.6	0.311	0.48	2.14
W. Goddard? (1765)	24.2	0.293	-0.91	0.65
D. Dulany (1765)	33.9	0.341	0.39	-0.67
R. Bland (1766)	29.4	0.313	0.79	-0.32
J. Dickinson (1768)	24.8	0.307	0.28	-1.09
W. Hicks (1768)	34.4	0.345	-0.57	0.21
S. Adams (1772)	31.6	0.324	-1.11	-1.41
T. Jefferson (1774)	31.3	0.316	-1.01	-0.45
D. Leonard (1774-75)	23.7	0.329	0.77	-1.30
J. Adams (1774-75)	25.2	0.304	-0.76	-0.34
J. Galloway (1775)	25.7	0.317	-1.03	-1.09
<i>Mean for the 14 above</i>	<i>27.8</i>	<i>0.312</i>	<i>-0.16</i>	<i>-0.23</i>
<i>Standard error for the 14 above</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>0.005</i>	<i>0.21</i>	<i>0.29</i>
T. Paine (1776)	22.7	0.285	2.28	3.15

Common Sense

- 25 editions
- Read by or to almost every literate person in the colonies
- Paine wrote for the ordinary person
- His writing came alive with memorable phrases and examples

Paine's main points in *Common Sense*

- The English governing system is corrupt
- Americans can't reconcile with such a system
- America should become its own nation

“Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil. ... Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise.”

“That the crown is this overbearing part in the English constitution needs not be mentioned, and that it derives its whole consequence merely from being the giver of places and pensions is self-evident, wherefore, though we have been wise enough to shut and lock a door against absolute monarchy, we at the same time have been foolish enough to put the crown in possession of the key.”

Legacy of Thomas Paine and others like Paine

- Political writers with the goal of stirring the public's thinking
- Wrote for all classes of people
- Short sentences, vivid phrases
- Advocated for his cause
- Took big risks (criticized the English monarchy itself)

