



Independence

The Scholarly Journal of Heritage Academy

Our Mission

Thomas Jefferson stated, “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.” It is the goal of *Independence* and Heritage Academy as a whole to keep our nation from a state of ignorance. To accomplish this, *Independence* will promote learning through the essays of Heritage Academy scholars.

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Roosevelt's Progressive Mark on America

Frederic Bastiat wrote, "Which countries contain the most peaceful, the most moral, and the happiest people? Those people are found in countries where the law least interferes with private affairs." This means that countries are the best off having governments "which [govern] the least" and allow people to control their own property (Thoreau). This was something many of the Founding Fathers stood for, having much experience in having a government have too much control in private affairs, but America's views began to progressively differ overtime. An example of this is income tax. Because of the Revenue Act of 1942, which was created under Franklin D. Roosevelt to fund World War II, the federal government restricted citizens' freedom to fully control their income, a tax that continued after the war.

A precedent for the Revenue Act of 1942 was the institution of an income tax during the Civil War. On July 1, 1862, President Lincoln signed a revenue act in order to help in fund the war. At this point in America's history, this was the first time this type of tax was decreed. This tax was abolished shortly after the war ended and was not re-introduced until 1913 ("History"). Fortunately for those with lower paying jobs,

this tax only affected the top money makers at the time. However, the idea of an income tax did not come about in 1862. Income tax was first addressed in Congress when trying to fund the War of 1812, but was quickly shut down, as many considered the war to be "Madison's war." Thomas Jefferson once said, "The same prudence which in private life would forbid our paying our own money for unexplained projects, forbids it in the dispensation of the public monies" ("The Founding"). All these events set the groundwork for the eventual permanent enactment of an income tax.

While an income tax seemed necessary to fund World War II, the continuation of the tax after the war restricted the people's freedom to use money they earned as they chose. As the U.S. was mobilizing its economy to fund itself through World War II, Congress passed the Revenue Act of 1942 under President Franklin D. Roosevelt increasing the number of people who paid income tax from thirteen to fifty million ("How"). Benjamin Franklin once said, "It would be a hard government that should tax its people one-tenth part of their income" ("The Founding"). Taxes reached peaked at 94 percent for those with an income

of over \$2.5 million in today's money while still having high rates for those in lower tax brackets. This restricted the people from investing their income as they desired. Instead, the government used this money to invest in industries that would benefit the U.S. in the war. Unfortunately, it was not a priority to entirely repeal this tax after the war, although the tax was no longer a necessity. Time called it "the biggest piece of machinery ever designed to separate dollars from citizens" (Rothman). Having gained a degree of control over the money in people's pockets, the government avoided fully giving up this power. This act restricted citizens from having full control of the assets they had worked for.

Based off the views the Founding Fathers had on taxes, they would have been horrified by the extreme taxes rates Roosevelt imposed on the American people at the time. Jefferson once said, "This is the tendency of all human governments... the fore horse of this frightful team is public debt. Taxation follows that, and in its train wretchedness and oppression" ("The Founding"). He is speaking of America's rocky past with its mother country, Great Britain, in the matter of taxes. Although the Founders understood how difficult it is to fund a war when the people are not taxed,

they also had experience in being overtaxed. Considering that the taxes imposed on the colonies was a listed grievance written by Jefferson in the eventual call for independence, the Founders would have been astounded by the massive tax placed on Americans during World War II, seeing it as oppressive and tyrannical. They would have found other solutions to funding the war because they understood that the government should not be the answer to everything in a federal democratic republic. They were able to get through the Revolutionary War with hardly any money coming from the people having done all that they could without restricting the people's rights. Their belief of having as much power left to the people as possible contradict Roosevelt's actions considering what the Founders penned about taxation, it is clear that they would have wholeheartedly disagreed with FDR's income tax, seeing it as extreme and oppressive.

Altogether, it is clear that the income tax placed on Americans during World War II led to the expansion of federal power and the restriction of individual freedom. How can America truly have a capitalist economy where people are motivated to work hard because they know it is the only way to achieve success and fulfill the American

Dream, if such an excessive portion of their hard work is taken away? It is as John Adams said, “if tyranny and oppression come to this land, it will be in the guise of fighting a foreign enemy.” It is understandable for a government to take more control during a

time of war, but it would be wise for America to keep its government in check with this added power and to be sure that their leaders return it. Otherwise, the power remains, as seen today, while citizens continue to pay income tax that was meant to fund a war.

Francis Scott Key and the Call of Freedom

During American history in the 1800s, patriotism in the colonies flourished. Many were prepared to give their life in order to maintain the spirit of freedom. This dedication came to the hearts of Americans through music, including the national anthem, written by Francis Scott Key. He once stated, “Then, in that hour of deliverance, my heart spoke. Does not such a country, and such defenders of their country, deserve a song?” (Leepson 162). Key knew how music impacts man, which shows in his creation of the well-known “The Star-Spangled Banner”. Because of his patriotism and love of freedom, Francis Scott Key created a musical masterpiece that has touched the lives and hearts of the American people throughout history.

Although Key’s poetic masterpiece is historically famous, the inspiration for this national anthem is not as well-known. After the burning of Washington, D.C., during the War of 1812, Key was sent on a rescue mission to save William Beanes, a friend who had been captured by the British. Since Key was a well-known lawyer, William’s family hoped he would be able to persuade the enemy to free his friend. When Key and Colonel Skinner reached the Tonnant, the British ship in Baltimore’s Harbor where

negotiations were to take place, they began discussing the release of Beanes with the British General and Admiral aboard the ship. The enemy finally agreed to let William go, but on one condition: Key, Skinner, and Beanes were required to wait on a guarded American ship for 25 hours until the Battle at Fort McHenry ended. They agreed, reluctantly, in order to save their good friend. Through mortar shells and open gun fire, they watched the battle from the safety of the ship. Key said, in honor of the soldiers who lost their lives that day: “The patriot who feels himself in the service of God...has the promise of Almighty direction...” (Quotes HD). At the end of the bloodshed, the three Americans raised their eyes towards the sky and saw the waving American flag, signifying a U.S. victory. This image inspired Key to pen the famous poem originally titled, “Defense of Fort M’Henry,” which was later set to the tune of “To Anacreon in Heaven,” creating the famous national anthem entitled “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Though only an amateur poet, his uplifting and inspirational words has truly motivated patriots throughout history to press onward and fight for freedom.

An excerpt from the national anthem says: “Blest with victory and peace, may the

heav'n rescued land praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation" (U.S. Flag Site 4). Francis Scott Key, who seemed to be an ordinary man, created an extraordinary poetic masterpiece. How could someone so inexperienced pen something so spectacular? The answer is simple: it came from his heart. He believed in the cause of freedom so deeply it simply flowed from his fingertips. Such dedication stirs up others to stand for their freedom, to fight for their freedom, and to die for their freedom. Such

patriotism calls to men who refuse to remain slaves to the tyranny around them. In times of trial, the call of freedom shouts to those who are willing to act on what they know to be true and right. This call of freedom, so beautiful and strong, is announced to our ears through music. Music unites and inspires men to carry on. Because of Francis Scott Key, our national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," will continue to inspire the minds and hearts of the American people for centuries to come.

A Compelling Man of His Time

“The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph” (Thomas). This is the life motto Thomas Paine adapted, as he spent his years on this earth substantially affecting the outcome of America. He was an ordinary young child, who became a man of great consequence in the world. His experiences as a young child, his accomplishments of considerable success during his lifetime, and his salient impact on the world paved the way to Thomas Paine being a man of great respect among people worldwide.

Not only did Paine overcome extreme hardship in his life, but he chose to allow the trials in his youth, shape him into the man he was destined to become. As a child, Paine’s parents habitually quarreled on the topic of religion. Because of his father’s Quaker beliefs and his mother’s Anglican beliefs, debating on matters of religion became a focal point in his life. In his later years, Paine said, “If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace” (Thomas). There was great contention in his home, that he claimed a child should never have to endure. He deeply believed in the idea that love and peace should constantly be demonstrated among families in the home. However, in the long run, his father’s religious views influenced Paine’s writing of

the Age of Reason and his political views that he would later develop. A few years later, Paine found himself in a rut of great debt, and he concluded that it was necessary to make adjustments in his life. Shortly after encountering Benjamin Franklin, who wheedled him into relocating to America, Paine sold his house in 1774, used the money to pay off his debts, and sailed to America. He landed his first job in America as an editor for Pennsylvania Magazine, where his interest in writing was sparked. Paine took advantage of the trying experiences in his youth and early adult life, using them to mold who he was as an adult and the way he thought and wrote.

During his lifetime, Paine acquired a great amount of success. Periodically, his writings became famous. Some of his more notable writings include The American Crisis, which consisted of a series of pamphlets separated into Common Sense, The Rights of Man, and the Age of Reason. He wrote countless books, papers, and pamphlets proving his knowledge of ideas ahead of his time. These pamphlets forced on Americans the ideas of the natural rights given to man and ideas concerning religion. While participating in the French Revolution, Paine wrote The Rights of Man, focusing on

the rights every individual has guaranteed to them, and the government's duty in protecting those rights. Age of Reason primarily centered on attacking orthodox Christianity. Paine stepped out of the norm in this pamphlet and as a result, was mocked and criticized for it. Nevertheless, he did not deny or repress what his beliefs were. He was a brilliant man, who in *The American Crisis*, inspired the American Revolution, helped the colonists to prosper in the American Revolution, and with his most famous line, "These are the times that try men's souls", pushed the demoralized Americans to not abandon their cause for revolution (Thomas). Because his writings were applicable and understandable to any citizen reading his material, they were heavily influential and powerful, resulting in his works becoming bestsellers. Because of Paine's impressive diction and persuasive writings, he achieved notable success, uncommon for many writers of that time. Paine's writings of *Common Sense*, published in 1776 and considered his greatest achievement, left a lasting impact on the world (Schoenberg). This forty-eight-page pamphlet emphasized the push on Americans to declare their independence from Britain. The pamphlet fueled the American fire, and awakened society to the fact that the British,

including King George III, were "...not to be trusted without being looked after" (Thomas). Paine saw things through a different perspective than the colonists, and understood how important it was that they put up their defenses, urging them to fight back against the British. This pamphlet was a prime factor in the Americans boost of morale and their proclamation for independence. Selling over 100,000 copies, Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* played a key part in influencing the United States. Referring to *Common Sense*, Paine said, "Anyone sitting on the fence who encountered 'Common Sense' was probably no longer sitting on the fence" (Thomas). This pamphlet had such an intense impact on those who read it. As a result of his ability to intensely influence and persuade those who read his writings, Paine played a fundamental role in early American life.

Thomas Paine heavily affected the people of America during his life. Through his famous writings, he led America in a direction that was, at the time, perceived to be unconquerable. His writings led to wondrous events, such as America gaining her independence, giving people the opportunity to see ideas of human rights and religion through a different lens, and inspiring Americans in ways others could

not. Although in his later years he was condemned by many for his criticism towards Christianity, and few attended his funeral, he died with a legacy that the American people remember today. He was a compelling man

of his time that profoundly impacted America and influenced the people of his era in ways that have never be forgotten.

Franklin's Legacy

“All mankind is divided into three classes: those that are immovable, those that are movable, and those that move” (“Benjamin Franklin Quotes”). Without a doubt, Benjamin Franklin was one to move. Born in 1706, he would go on to become a renowned journalist, diplomat, inventor, and politician (“Benjamin”). While these feats are staggering, Franklin did not end his endeavors here. Throughout his life, he sought the development of his nation, diplomacy, and himself. As a result, he contributed to the unification of the United States, the establishment of peace, and the example of character Americans should follow.

The great nation of America partially owes its formation to Benjamin Franklin because of his powerful pleas for the unification of the States. During the French-Indian War (1756-1763), British officials in England commanded the colonists in a war against the Indians, yet they were separated by the Atlantic Ocean. Believing that the colonists could better defend themselves against their enemies without Britain's restraining control, Franklin proposed the Albany Plan in 1754. In this plan, he proposed that the

Colonies be united by a central government that would allow them to act for themselves in this war (Denton). He believed the colonists could stand together and benefit by doing so. Even though his plan failed, the idea that the colonies could stand together proved invaluable. An idea cannot be acted upon unless it is first proposed. Essentially, Benjamin Franklin fulfilled the vital role of proposer and furthered the cause of the United States. Years later, on September 17, 1787, he would lead his country again. At this time, the Constitutional Convention was coming to a close, and soon the delegates would choose whether or not to sign the Constitution. Beseeking his fellow delegates to sign it, Franklin implored, “I hope... that for our own sakes as part of the people, and for the sake of posterity, we shall act heartily and unanimously in recommending this constitution” (“On”). He wanted the United States of America to be united under a single, supreme law. By making his voice heard, he influenced the adoption of this law. Because of Franklin's continued endeavors, America fought for its independence and adopted the Constitution.

As a result of his diplomatic nature, Benjamin Franklin was key in establishing peace in the nation and in American minds. During the Revolutionary War, he was sent to France to further their alliance and to progress against Britain. After the conclusive American victory at Yorktown, Franklin engaged in the peace negotiations that ensued. In 1783, Franklin assisted in passing of Treaty of Paris, which ended the war while securing Britain's recognition of the United States as independent ("Treaty"). By his diplomacy, Benjamin Franklin ended a bloody fight while securing America's liberty. In effect, he saved this youthful country from continued conflict with Britain. Now the newly formed nation could focus on internal problems rather than worries across seas. While this peace was temporary, Benjamin Franklin used simple yet profound speech to further the cause of peace for all humankind when he proclaimed, "There was never a good war, or a bad peace" ("Benjamin Franklin Quotes"). Firmly, he stood for peace and condemned war, thinking which would become more prominent as society advanced. Overall, Benjamin Franklin lived as a servant to peace and sought it nationally and universally.

Throughout his life, Benjamin Franklin developed traits and characteristics that benefited him and others, giving Americans an example to follow. Concerned with morality, he composed thirteen virtues that he chose to aim for. Among these, "industry" and "frugality" greatly improved his life. By implementing these principle, he was able to release himself from the shackles of debt and then proceed to procure wealth ("How"; Marelisa). As he practiced these principles, he proved their effectiveness. Because he proved their effectiveness, others now have incentive to follow suit, seeking after his exemplary model and its benefits. Humility, last of the virtues on his list, is a profound example of self-correction. When he believed himself finished with the first twelve, a man criticized him, condemning him of pride and insolence in conversation. Instead of becoming offended and lashing out against this man, he reacted by adding humility to his list ("How"). By reacting so, he portrayed the most productive form of humility: using criticism as a springboard to improvement. If others followed his example, the population would be filled with amiable and constantly improving individuals. Thanks to Franklin, he

provided an example possible to imitate. Undoubtedly, Benjamin Franklin blessed humankind with a way of living that can produce prosperity and advancement in life if followed.

Benjamin Franklin's legacy affects the United States today. Of paramount importance to this nation, he influenced its unification, which is synonymous with saying he influenced its formation. America exists today in part because of him. Similarly, he persuaded his fellow delegates to sign the Constitution, an action that would forever merge Americans together under its supreme law. Even now, this law holds the nation

together and ensures a democratic republic to provide for the people. In addition to his domestic works, he went overseas to establish peace between Britain and America, allowing America to move forward. Today, the United States has a perpetual and peaceful relationship with Britain while also being completely independent from it. Likewise, he used his intelligence to develop the ideology for peace, which still stimulates thoughts for progress. Most long lasting, he lived a life that forever stands as a beacon to Americans today of a productive character. Overall, because of his generous contributions, America is greatly indebted to him.

Assassin Wilkes Booth

“John Wilkes Booth was the man who pulled the trigger, capping off a coordinated plot to murder President Abraham Lincoln” (Montagne). Booth grew up in a way that would seem pretty normal, but he turned out to be a completely different person in his adult life than most. Even though he had some success as an actor, he will always be remembered as the murderer of the President of the United States of America. As he grew up following in his father’s footsteps, his father being a professional actor and an eccentric man, his choices led him through an acting career of his own and to murder Abraham Lincoln.

From a very young age, John Wilkes Booth, the ninth of ten children, was becoming like his father in many ways, one of which was his love of acting. His father, Junius Brutus Booth, was famous for his skill as an actor. John Wilkes Booth attended the Milton Boarding School for Boys, but then switched to St. Timothies Hall (Montagne). He was commonly described as being disarmingly handsome, and it was assumed that he would follow in his father’s footsteps and become an actor (biography.com). he became a very well-known actor, and became more popular than even his father. His father was also an extremely eccentric

man. He had strange political views and behavior. He eloped with his second wife before divorcing the first. He was an alcoholic and even though he was a great actor, he was abusive to his family and to his peers. As John Wilkes Booth grew older, he thought and behaved in the same way as his father. “While the people shrank away from what he did, they didn’t really shrink away from him” (Montagne). His father’s example shaped who John Wilkes Booth was as he grew older.

Led by his acting, Booth to discovered a world of politics which he quickly became obsessed with. At the age of 17, Booth left home to start his acting career. He became so popular it is said that, “When he was coming out of a theater in Boston, the manager had to come back and tell people ‘Back up, let him out, just let him walk to his hotel’” (Montagne). His performances were such hits that he was invited to tour the country with a Shakespearean acting company. Along his way he started learning a lot more about politics; especially the Civil War. Booth joined the Know-Nothing Party and showed his support for slavery by joining the militia that captured and executed John Brown after his raid on Harper’s Ferry (Montagne). His acting career was still strong

but politics started becoming a much larger part of his life.

Because of his actions in the Know-Nothing Party and his service as a secret agent for the confederacy, Booth was involved in activities that escalated the war (biography.com). While he was taking a short break from acting, he became involved in a conspiracy to kidnap President Lincoln. The plan was to kidnap Lincoln and demand either the release of Confederate soldiers or demand peace. His plot was foiled ,and Booth decided to go even more extreme and planned the assassination of Abraham Lincoln (History.com). A few weeks before the assassination, Booth attended a speech where Lincoln talked about giving rights to African Americans. Booth was furious and was quoted saying, “That is the last speech he will ever give!” On April 14, 1865, while Lincoln was watching the play *Our American Cousin* at Washington, D.C.’s Ford Theater, Booth sneaked into the President’s box and shot Abraham Lincoln with his 44 caliber

Derringer. After the shooting, Booth leapt onto the stage where he broke a bone in his left leg and shouted, “The South is avenged!” (biography.com) (History.com). If Lincoln were to live, he would have worked to make sure the slaves were free, but Booth assassinated him because he was a threat to the dominance of the Whites in both the Old South and the North as well (britannica.com).

Some were of the opinion that John Wilkes Booth was insane, affected by his acting or hard times working for the Confederacy, but others simply believe he was just acting for his political views. One man claimed Booth not to be a mad man, but “in fact he was politically motivated to assassinate Lincoln” (Montagne). A common belief however, is that the events of his life and the people surrounding him affected him. Whether John Wilkes Booth was insane or not is unknown, but his father was very influential to who he became as an adult, and his acting, fame, and political ideas led him to a position to assassinate Abraham Lincoln.

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