

## WILLIAM PAINE.

BY GEORGE E. FRANCIS.

I HAVE ventured to bring before you some notes of the life of Dr. William Paine, because his share in the formation of this Society and his usefulness and prominence as a member and as a man seem to render it proper that we should show, even at this late date, our appreciation of his services and character.

William Paine was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, June 5, 1750. His father, Timothy Paine, and his mother, Sarah Chandler, were both descended from families which had held prominent positions in the colonies for a hundred years. The family name is believed to be derived from the Latin Paganus, a villager; many varieties of it are known, perhaps the most curious being the form Pagan, which is a surname now in use.

William was the oldest of ten children, and his early life was quietly passed in the then small town of Worcester, scarcely anything having been chronicled of it except that he was taught Latin by John Adams, afterwards President, but then reading law in the office of the Hon. James Putnam.

"He was graduated at Harvard College in the class of 1768, his name standing second in a class of more than forty, when they were arranged in the catalogue according to the dignity of families."<sup>1</sup>

He then began the study of medicine with a very distinguished physician, Dr. Edward A. Holyoke of Salem. There was then but one medical school in America, that in

<sup>1</sup> Paine Genealogy, p. 57.

Philadelphia, and there the course of instruction had been but partial; the first full course of lectures was begun there in this same year, 1768. It is not surprising that the opportunity of study and practice after the usual custom, with the famous Dr. Holyoke not further away from Worcester than Salem, was preferred to the almost untried experiment at the then very distant city of Philadelphia. One very fortunate result, at least, may be noted, that in Salem he made the acquaintance of the lady whom he married a few years later.

In 1771, after about three years of study, he returned to Worcester, with every prospect of becoming a leader in the medical profession.

January 18, 1773, he entered into a business partnership which seems to me quite unique, and well worthy of your notice. The Indenture, which is now in the possession of one of his descendants, is "between Levi Shephard apothecary & Eben<sup>r</sup> Hunt, Jn<sup>r</sup> Physician, both of Northampton, on the one part, and William Paine, Physician, of Worcester, to continue as Traders in the Art, Mystery & Business [of] an apothecary, and of the Practice of Physick." Each party put in two hundred pounds value. Shephard and Hunt were to practise as apothecaries, and Paine to "practise Physick afores<sup>d</sup> whenever he shall have oppor<sup>t</sup> without any expence to said Shephard & Hunt, except one half of the expense of a Horse and Horse-keeping, and one half of y<sup>e</sup> Med<sup>s</sup> the said William may use in his said Practice, which is hereby agreed shall be taken out of the Shop by said D<sup>r</sup> William at any time." Profits and losses were to be divided equally, and the partnership was to terminate about ten years later, on July 7, 1783. In the *Massachusetts Spy* of the latter part of July, 1783, appeared an advertisement announcing that this partnership had ended.

It seems highly probable that this business venture brought very little profit to Dr. Paine, on account of the

revolutionary struggle which began in the following year; and on the 8th of February, 1779, the agent of the estate of Dr. William Paine, late of Worcester, was directed by resolve of the Provincial Congress to put Levi Shephard in possession of one-half of a shop in Worcester, the property of said Paine. This act may have been a confiscation, or possibly the result of a lawsuit or of a friendly arrangement. Whatever this may have meant the partnership was considered to be in force till four years later.

September 23d, 1773, Dr. Paine was married to "Miss Lois Orne, daughter of Mr. Timothy Orne, deceased, a young Lady with a fortune of 3000 pounds sterling." So announced the *Massachusetts Spy* of September 30, declaring further that the wedding was at Salem. The announcement in the *Essex Gazette* of September 28 states no locality, and it is highly probable, if not quite certain, judging from the marriage certificate, now in the possession of the family, that the ceremony took place at Hampton Falls. Six children were born from this union, the youngest being Frederick William Paine, for many years an active and honored member of this Society; and his son, Rev. George Sturgis Paine, continues the family custom of useful membership.

William Lincoln, in his History of Worcester, stated that "for the purpose of facilitating the negotiations of this business (the pharmacy,) abroad, and of perfecting his medical education, Dr. Paine visited Europe, long previous to the breaking out of hostilities." It is difficult to verify statements or fix dates relating to this period of Dr. Paine's life, but it is quite likely that the family tradition correctly attributes to Hon. James Putnam and Dr. Paine the joint authorship of the famous "Protest" signed by fifty-two loyalists of Worcester; and we know that at a Town Meeting held in Worcester August 24, 1774, it was "Voted: that as it is highly needful that those of the signers who have not made satisfaction as aforesaid, should be

known in future, it is therefore necessary that their names should be inserted as follows, viz. :

James Putnam.  
William Paine.

Isaac Moore.  
John Walker."

Joshua Johnson.

A week later, August 31, 1774, the Convention of the Committees of Correspondence for the County of Worcester, "in County Congress assembled," "at the house of Mrs. Mary Sterns in Worcester," "Voted to postpone the consideration of the petition of Dr. William Paine, respecting the establishment of a hospital for the small pox, to the adjournment of this meeting." No further action appears to have been taken concerning the petition. Smallpox was then quite prevalent in the State, and this was not Dr. Paine's first attempt to diminish its ravages; the record of a Town Meeting in Worcester, March 7, 1774, informs us that "on the Eleventh Article the Question was put whither the Town would allow Doct. William Paine to Erect a Hospital for Inoculation in Said Town, and it Passed in the Negative."

Not long after September 1, 1774, Dr. Paine sailed for England, and it is probable that the following winter was passed in the study of medicine. The first number of the *Massachusetts Spy* which was issued in Worcester bears the date of May 3, 1775 and the copy in our Library has upon it the certificate of Isaiah Thomas that it is the first thing printed in Worcester. It contains this brief item: "Messrs. Chandler and Paine of this town are arrived at Salem from London." It will be remembered that the fight at Lexington had occurred but a few weeks before; and while there was apparently no legal impediment to his return to Worcester, it was doubtless a very prudent decision of Dr. Paine not to make the attempt. His feeling of personal loyalty to the English government was too strong to allow him even to appear to yield to the revolutionary spirit then entirely dominating his native town, and he wisely and soon returned to England.

His study of medicine there must have been pursued with unusual zeal and success, for in November, 1775, he received from Marischal College, Aberdeen, the degree of M.D. This was certainly an extraordinary recompense for not more than nine months of attendance, considering the high attainments usually demanded for this degree, which is much above the diplomas obtained by the great majority of English and Scotch practitioners. But the handsomely engrossed parchment is now in our Library, bearing the signatures of the officers, and plainly showing where the seal was once attached.

Soon after obtaining this distinction, he received an appointment as "Apothecary to the English forces in America, and served in Rhode Island and New York till [January] 1781, when he returned to England in company with his patient, Lord Winchelsea."<sup>1</sup> Lincoln's History states that he sailed with Lord Winchelsea and family for England, but the vessel being driven out of its course, they landed at Lisbon. It seems certain that Dr. Paine passed several months on the continent as physician attending this noble family. While in England, in 1782, he is said to have been made Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of London.<sup>2</sup>

October 23, 1782, he was commissioned "Physician to His Majesty's Hospitals within the district of North America commanded by Sir Guy Carleton," and he reported for duty at Halifax, N. S. A letter addressed to him there, dated New York, 26th October, 1782, is found among the Paine papers deposited in our Library by our associate, Rev. George S. Paine. This is from Dr. J. Mervin Nooth, Supt. General, and begins: "Sir, I have herewith sent you the Instructions which are usually given to Hospital officers on detach<sup>d</sup> Service, Etc." This plainly marks the beginning of Dr. Paine's employment in this capacity. It is evident that at first he was not pleasantly received by

<sup>1</sup> Paine General., p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

the General Commanding in Halifax. He carefully preserved copies of his letters to Dr. Nooth at this period, and certain of them reveal a capacity for honest indignation under unjust treatment: "General Paterson was not pleased at my being sent here, and affected to be much surprised at the Instructions I had the honor to receive from you. He added they precluded him from Employing me if it was necessary. There is no reasoning with a *great man*, who is determined to misconstrue everything. I made my bow and retired. \* \* \* My situation here has been very unpleasant, and it has required my utmost exertions to prevent offending. \* \* \* I shall patiently wait for your final orders; whatever you direct shall be attentively executed." Again: "I this day came to a very serious explanation concerning my Situation with M. G. Paterson, in consequence of which he directed me to be put in orders. It is impossible for me to recapitulate what passed between us on this occasion, for I very candidly confess to you I was in such a Passion as made me forget the Respect which was due to him as my commanding officer. But the most Extra' part of this business was that he told me that if I had shown him my Commission when I first came here instead of Mr. Nooth's Papers, I should have been immediately put in Orders. How ridiculous!"

Presently matters ran more smoothly, and for about a year Dr. Paine was active in the management of hospitals, in the purchasing of stores and, to a lesser degree, in the care of sick and wounded soldiers. About the end of October, 1783, these duties ceased, owing to the withdrawal of troops, and he was placed on half-pay, retaining his rank. Letters which have been preserved show clearly that during this year at Halifax he had won the respect, friendship and confidence not only of his immediate medical superior, Dr. Nooth, but also of Lord Wentworth, Governor of the Province, who wrote from Halifax, May

18, 1786, "Mrs W. is somewhat better than when I wrote you last, but expects from your advice only to establish any health."

"In the summer of 1784 Dr. Paine took possession of La Tête, an island in Passamaquoddy Bay, granted him by the English government for his services in the war."<sup>1</sup> He remained there less than a year and then made his residence in St. John, N. B., where he took up the practice of his profession. He appears to have been hopeful of managing his island profitably, and to have found the climate, *etc.*, agreeable; but the chief cause of the removal was the protest of his wife that the children could not receive a proper education in that isolated spot. At the time of leaving the island there were three children living, aged eleven, six, and two respectively.

There is abundant evidence of the high estimate placed on his character and ability in the numerous offices which he held during his residence in New Brunswick. "He was elected member of the Assembly of New Brunswick from the county of Charlotte, and was appointed Clerk of the House." "He was commissioned as a justice for the county of Sunbury."<sup>2</sup> In October, 1785, he was commissioned by Sir John Wentworth as Principal Deputy Surveyor of Woods in the Province of New Brunswick, with the special duty of registering "such white pine trees as may be now or hereafter fit for the use of the Royal Navy."

July 29, 1786, he wrote to a friend, Mr. John Brown: "I do a great deal of Business in my Profession but I get very little for it. The truth is we are all very poor, and the most industrious and economical gets only a bare subsistence. However it will soon be better as the Province is daily filling with stock of all kinds."

Early in 1787 Dr. Paine made application for leave to visit and reside in New England while remaining on half-pay, and a permit to that effect was issued by the War

<sup>1</sup> Paine General., p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Office, May 5, 1787, and August 2 following, a similar order was signed in Fredericton, N. B., by Tho<sup>s</sup>. Carleton. In the Paine Genealogy (p. 77), the statement is made that he returned to New England because the act of banishment had been repealed, but, so far as I can gather, that act was in force for many years later; probably it was understood that it would not be enforced.

In Salem he devoted himself to the practice of medicine, and no doubt he was received with special favor in the town where he had been well known as student and, consequently, companion and assistant to the justly famous Dr. Holyoke, and where his wife had spent her early life. He did not neglect other means of adding to his income. Lincoln, in his History of Worcester, speaks of him as "having good professional business and occasionally writing marine policies" in Salem; while his letters to his brother Nathaniel show that he was interested rather deeply in business connected with sugar, perhaps a refinery.

July 17, 1793, his father, Timothy Paine, died, and he soon removed to Worcester, and for the remaining forty years of his life he resided in the paternal mansion on Lincoln street, which is now owned, though not occupied, by his grandson, Rev. George S. Paine. His father's property was large, and by will was equitably divided among the heirs, each of the children inheriting a share of the farm, which with the homestead covered 1230 acres.

In September, 1793, he bought the shares of his brothers and sisters for the sum of 2000 pounds sterling, but the deeds were given to Nathaniel Paine in trust for William.

The year 1812 was a critical one, bringing a most important question for Dr. Paine's decision, for war arose between Great Britain and the United States, and he was still a half-pay officer in His Majesty's service. Tradition tells us that he was notified to report for active service, and that he determined to take his stand with the country in which he was born and was now living, and that therefore



he resigned from the British service. This is no doubt correct, though no documents have been found here to establish it directly; but in June, 1812, he certainly petitioned the Legislature "for its consent to his being naturalized as a Citizen of the United States," and it was resolved \* \* \* "that whenever the said William Paine shall bring himself within the provisions of the several statutes of the United States, which establish a uniform rule of naturalization, and shall make due application to any Court of Record to be admitted a citizen of the same, the Legislature of this Commonwealth doth hereby consent thereto." This may have ended Dr. Paine's action in this laudable direction. I have not been able to find any court record or any other evidence of his becoming a citizen, except that on May 11, 1809, Nathaniel Paine transferred to William the real estate which he had been holding in trust since 1793; and at a later date deeds were given by William in his own name. Nathaniel Paine was an eminent lawyer, judge of probate for many years, and it is impossible to believe that he would have assisted or allowed his brother to take any doubtful action regarding the tenure of land; but all the records appear to show that at this time, and even later, William Paine was a proscribed alien, by the unrepealed law of 1784 as well as other statutes.

It was in 1812 that the American Antiquarian Society was founded, and William Paine was one of the petitioners for its incorporation. The sequel is best told in the words of the manuscript record of the first meeting, and I transcribe the record in full because, for some unknown reason, it has never appeared in print, and is scarcely alluded to in the "Account" by Isaiah Thomas, which is the first publication of the Society. Because of the omission of the report of the first meeting an error has naturally crept into the various accounts of Dr. Paine's original relation to this Society.

At a meeting of the American Antiquarian Society at the Exchange Coffee House in Boston, on Thursday, Nov. 19th [1812], convened agreeably to the Act of Incorporation.

## Present:

Isaiah Thomas, Esq <sup>r</sup>	Rev. T. M. Harris,
Rev. J. T. Kirkland, D.D.	Benj <sup>n</sup> Russell, Esq.
Edward Bangs, Esq <sup>r</sup>	Mr. E. T. Andrews,
Rev. Aaron Bancroft, D.D.	Doct. Redford Webster,
Prof. W <sup>m</sup> D. Peck,	Isaiah Thomas, Jr.

Isaiah Thomas was appointed Chairman of the meeting and Rev. Mr. Harris Secretary.

Votes were brought in for a President of the Society and Isaiah Thomas, Esq. was chosen. Prof. W<sup>m</sup> D. Peck was chosen Vice President, the Rev. T. M. Harris corresponding Secretary, and Sam<sup>l</sup> M. Burnside, Esq., recording Secy.

Voted, that the President, Judge Bangs, Dr. Bancroft, Timothy Bigelow, Esq. and Professor Peck be a Committee to draw up regulations and bye laws for the Society and be requested to report them the next meeting.

Voted, that the President, Vice President, Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary be Counsellors till the report of the Committee.

Voted, that whereas the name of Doct. W<sup>m</sup> Paine of Worcester, who was one of the petitioners for the incorporation of this Society, has been, by some accident, omitted in forming the bill, that he be now regularly admitted a member.

The Society then Voted that a nomination should be made of persons to be admitted as members under the regulations to be reported by the Committee, and the following were named, viz—

Col. George Gibbs of Boston,	nominated by	Maj. Russell
Hon. Oliver Fiske of Worcester,	“	“ Rev. Mr. Harris
Rev. Joseph McKean of Cambridge	}	“
Dr. John Green of Worcester		
Rev. W <sup>m</sup> Bentley of Salem	“	“ Judge Bangs
Hon. Judge Davis of Boston	“	“ Dr. Kirkland
Rev. W <sup>m</sup> Jenks of Bath	“	“ Major Russell
Rev. Dr. Holmes of Cambridge	“	“ Professor Peck
Rev. Dr. Morse of Charlestown	“	“ Mr. Andrews.

Then Voted to adjourn this meeting to the first Wednesday in February next, to meet at the Exchange Coffee House in Boston at 3 o'clock, P. M.

Attest, THADDEUS M. HARRIS, Secretary.

A true copy of the proceedings of the first meeting as made by the Secy, the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Harris.

Attest, S. M. BURNSIDE,  
Rec. Secy.

It is quite possible that Dr. Paine's name was omitted from the act of incorporation because of the recent calling

of the attention of the Legislature to the fact that he was not an American citizen.

In October, 1813, the regulations and by-laws came into effect, and two Vice-Presidents were elected—Prof. Peck and Dr. Paine.

At the anniversary meeting in 1815 Dr. Paine made a formal address, which was published by the Society. One brief extract has a particular interest in this connection :

“Less necessary is it to place before you the many signal favors, from the hand of Providence, during the revolutionary war with Great Britain. Baffled and discouraged in her scheme of subjugation, she proffered and we accepted, the rich blessings of peace on the basis of national independence. You will remember, or your fathers have told you of the names, the trials, and the sufferings of those days, and the joys, the congratulations, and the devout gratitude, with which peace was received.”

Dr. Paine's name stands at the head of the first committee on ways and means for erecting an edifice for deposits ; it appears also in the committee on publishing in 1819, and in the first printed list of donors of books to the Society. Many of the books forming his professional library were given to this Society after his death, and are now in the same alcove with books which had belonged to Isaiah Thomas, and others. They are of considerable value, being good copies of the best medical works of that period.

He was made member of many societies besides those already named. As early as 1790 he was elected an honorary member of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and, considering the circumstances, this may be accepted as proof of his high position as a medical practitioner. He was also member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, of the Linnean Society of Boston, and of the Essex Historical Society ; and, according to the account in the Paine Genealogy, he was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries of Copenhagen.

Except the address to this Society in 1815, I have found no printed evidence of his literary power; but the mass of his correspondence which has been piously preserved, reveals a ready and skilful command of language. His own copy of a letter to a medical friend in New Brunswick, contains a most graphic account of an epidemic of influenza in Salem in 1789. It is well worth publication as a part of medical history, and it incidentally reveals his powers of accurate observation and clear description. [See appendix.]

His church affiliation was, by force of circumstances, rather varied. He was originally trained in the Calvinistic creed of the original parish in his native town; when in the English army he attended the services of the Episcopal or English Church, and later he was warden of Trinity Church, St. John, N. B.; in Salem, also, he attended the Episcopal Church; but when he finally took up his residence in Worcester, he joined the Second Parish (then Arminian, now Unitarian), of which Dr. Aaron Bancroft was the first minister.

Of his later life in Worcester there is but little to be chronicled. He occupied the old paternal mansion on Lincoln street in a quiet, very dignified and almost luxurious manner, as befitted an honored country gentleman. There are still a few persons living who can recall his later years, when he used to start out every morning between nine and ten o'clock in his well-known chaise to make a round of calls. It is believed that most of these were purely friendly visits among the relatives and connections who then made up the greater part of the well-to-do inhabitants of the town, and that only rarely was any account presented. One who well remembers him states that he was of medium height and of slight figure; his white hair was brushed back from his head, made into a cue and bound with black ribbon, with a bow at the end.

Even at the age of eighty his complexion remained clear and delicate. At this time he was a widower, living with his married son, Frederick William, and having no household responsibilities.

His death occurred on March 19, 1833, at the ripe age of 83. It is probably owing simply to the different customs prevailing seventy years ago that no eulogy or funeral sermon has been found, nothing beyond the bare death notice in the newspaper. It does not seem to be recorded that this Society, which was indebted to him in so many ways, took any action to express its sense of the loss of his companionship and aid.

Four likenesses of him are preserved in the family: one representing him as a young man in the court dress of a medical officer, as he was presented to King George III. and Queen Charlotte, no doubt in 1782; a miniature, painted at a later date; a full-size portrait, painted by Harding, in his later life; and a silhouette likeness cut in paper.

We cannot study the records of this long, active and eventful life without being convinced that William Paine was a man of high character and deep and strong convictions; of keen intellect, well stored with the fruits of habitual observation, reflection and study; that he was unusually well qualified as a physician, inspiring the confidence, respect and affection of his patients; but, I think, we must also be struck by his aptitude for business affairs. From the beginning of his practice, when he started the first pharmacy in Worcester County, through his period of active service in the English army, during his life in the Provinces, and later, in Salem and in Worcester, we find him always active and prominent in business affairs; and though he was, perhaps, of rather sanguine temperament, he was usually successful in these enterprises.

Strongly conservative and aristocratic by nature, it was

natural that he should take the side of established authority during the strife of the Revolution, and that he should not have allowed hardship or exile to change his views. When peace was definitely established it was equally natural and quite proper that he should prefer to live among his kindred. And when, in 1812, he was forced to make choice between the English government, whose pay he had been receiving for twenty-five years, and the Republic which had sheltered him among his kindred and friends for the same quarter of a century, the fact that he took his stand with his home simply shows that his original convictions had not hardened into obstinacy, and that reason and good sense were still, as ever, the guides that he preferred to trust.

#### APPENDIX.

Copy of letter from Dr. William Paine to a "medical friend in N. B."—

Salem, January the 8<sup>th</sup>, 1790.

Dear Sir,

\* \* \* I shall attempt to give you a concise History of the Influenza as it appeared at Salem in the M<sup>o</sup> of Nov<sup>r</sup> and December, and prevailed more generally than I ever knew any epidemic. The Autumn was very wet, and the Weather very changeable, and I do not recollect a Season in America so rainy as the last. The Weather in general was unusually warm. \* \* \*

This Disease made its first appearance at Salem on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, and by the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nov<sup>r</sup> became very General. At this Time Cough became very frequent attended with Catarrhal Symptoms, and so many were seized with it that it obtained with us the Name of the Washington Cold, as the President at that time made his tour through the several Northern States, and the People were supposed to have caught cold by being much exposed either in walking in Procession, or by being Spectators of them as the weather was cold and rainy. Like contagion it seemed to spread amongst all ranks and conditions and spared neither age nor sex, yet it was observed that children were less liable to be affected with this Epidemic than adults. It was computed that two thirds of the Inhabitants of Salem were affected nearly together. The Universality of this Epidemic was beyond Example, yet the Bills of Mortality were not increased. Its violence lasted about five weeks.

\* \* \*

The attack with us was in general very sudden, and attended with the Symptoms that usually precede Fever, such as Shivering, heat, Pain in the Back and Limbs, stitches in the Muscles serving to respiration: and attended with a discharge from the Eyes and Nose of acrid Lymph, and in some Instances it appeared to corrode the Part it flowed over; sneezing, hoarseness and a severe Cough which threw up great quantities of Mucus. The Taste and Smell were much impaired. Few were free from Fever, yet I seldom heard a Patient complain of Thirst, but I saw many attended with some Symptoms similar to what we meet with in the Nervous of [or?] Slow Fever, such as great anxiety, amazing dejection of Spirits, Pain and Giddiness in the Head, a loathing of Food and a white Tongue, lassitude and restlessness, much more than could be conceived of from the Degree of the other Symptoms. Headache and a sense of stricture in the Forehead were frequent, but I saw but two Patients that complained of a soreness about the Cheek Bones under the Muscles, which was particularly noticed by Sir George Baker when this Epidemic prevailed in England 1783. Many complained of a sore throat, but altho' I inspected several Patients with this Complaint I only saw two that had any ulceration.

It was rare to see two Patients with Symptoms exactly similar. The Skin was in general dry in those Persons that were immediately under my care. Several were seized with vomitings and almost all were costive from the beginning of the Complaint. In some Instances the Patient was seized with a spontaneous purging. This was my own case. I was waked in the Night with severe Pains in my Bowels, and in the space of six Hours had as many as eight stools. The discharge was extremely hot and as yellow as an Orange, attended with a violent Tenesmus. I drank a wineglass of the spirituous Tincture of Rhubarb, and at Night took an anodyne draught that perfectly relieved me; and next day I had nothing to combat with but extreme Weakness. I now supposed that I should not again be visited by this Epidemic; but I was disappointed for six days afterwards I had severe Rigors, violent Pain in my Head, Breast and back, my eyes were sore and my pulse beat 120 in a Minute, but were by no means full or tense. My skin was very dry attended with a tickling cough and I expectorated with difficulty. My debility was so great that I felt as if I had been ill for a Month with some severe indisposition. The violence of these Symptoms abated in a few Days by keeping within Doors very warm, using Squill Pills and Ipecac with mild Opiates at Night, diluting freely and abstaining entirely from animal Food, but it was nearly six Weeks before I recovered my usual Strength.

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