



With 2026 now underway, the celebration of America's 250th anniversary of independence is officially in full swing! Over the coming months, the Town will be sharing a series of articles exploring key events that took place throughout each month of 1776. We hope these stories inspire readers to learn more about our history.

In January 1776, the American colonies reached a turning point in the Revolutionary era as events and ideas pushed them closer to independence. The publication of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* galvanized public opinion by boldly arguing for separation from Britain and rejecting monarchy altogether.

That same month, escalating conflict underscored the seriousness of the struggle. Much of Norfolk, Virginia, was destroyed by fire following British naval bombardment, colonial leaders took stronger action against Loyalists, and American forces continued key military efforts, including strengthening their position outside Boston.

Meanwhile, political debate intensified in the Second Continental Congress as independence became an increasingly accepted goal.

By the end of January 1776, the colonies were no longer simply protesting British rule, they were moving decisively toward the creation of a new nation.

To learn more on Thomas Paine: [Thomas Paine - Common Sense](#)

