



The Life of Benjamin Franklin, Volume 1: Journalist, 1706-1730

J. A. Leo Lemay

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Named "one of the best books of 2006" by *The New York Sun*

Described by Carl Van Doren as "a harmonious human multitude," Benjamin Franklin was the most famous American of his time, of perhaps any time. His life and careers were so varied and successful that he remains, even today, the epitome of the self-made man. Born into a humble tradesman's family, this adaptable genius rose to become an architect of the world's first democracy, a leading light in Enlightenment science, and a major creator of what has come to be known as the American character. Journalist, musician, politician, scientist, humorist, inventor, civic leader, printer, writer, publisher, businessman, founding father, and philosopher, Franklin is a touchstone for America's egalitarianism.

The first volume traces young Franklin's life to his marriage in 1730. It traces the New England religious, political, and cultural contexts, exploring previously unknown influences on his philosophy and writing, and attributing new writings to him. After his move to Philadelphia, made famous in his *Autobiography*, Franklin became the Water American in London in 1725, where he was welcomed into that city's circle of freethinkers. Upon his return to the colonies, the sociable Franklin created a group of young friends, the Junto, devoted to self-improvement and philanthropy. He also started his own press and began to edit and publish the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, which became the most popular American paper of its day and the first to consistently feature American news.

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