

**Volume 11**

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## **Ben Franklin – II**

**Lead: In a life distinguished by business success, intellectual curiosity, and community innovation, Ben Franklin, by the 1740s financially secure, embarked on a course of extraordinary public service.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: The foundation of Franklin's success was the printing business which he leveraged into a succession of lucrative ventures. He published *Pennsylvania Gazette*, one of the best colonial newspapers, *Poor***

*Richard's*, a wildly popular almanac which appeared yearly for 25 years after 1732. He invested in real estate and other successful printing ventures throughout the colonies. This gave him the financial security and leisure to pursue his intellectual and social interests.

He helped form a reading and debating society which eventually led to the establishment of one of the first lending libraries in the colonies. Franklin was instrumental in the founding of a city police force, a volunteer fire department, a fire insurance company, the American Philosophical Society, and the Academy of Philadelphia from which emerged the University of

**Pennsylvania. He invented the lighting rod, bi-focal glasses and improved the free-standing woodstove. His writings and experiments on electricity were celebrated internationally. Many of the basic terms in this field, positive, negative, battery, conductor, either originated with Franklin or were first described by him.**

**His reputation as a reformer, community innovator, and his increasingly pan-colonial vision, in which he advocated action by the colonies as a group, carried him into politics first in Pennsylvania and after 1764 as agent in London for several of the colonies. There he vigorously articulated the colonial position in the**

**press and before Parliament and the government. He argued against parliamentary taxation of the colonies and with some degree of sadness, predicted the coming conflict that would eviscerate the Empire. Next time: the diplomatic sage of the Revolution.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

## Resources

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