

Celebrate the
300th
anniversary of
Ben Franklin's
Birthday!



BEN and ME

An Astonishing **LIFE** of
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
By His Good Mouse **AMOS**
Discovered, Edited & Illustrated by
ROBERT LAWSON



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I, AMOS

SINCE THE RECENT death of my lamented friend and patron Ben Franklin, many so-called historians have attempted to write accounts of his life and his achievements. Most of these are wrong in so many respects that I feel the time has now come for me to take pen in paw and set things right.

All of these ill-informed scribblers seem astonished at Ben's great fund of information, at his brilliant decisions, at his seeming knowledge of all that went on about him.

Had they asked me, I could have told them. It was ME.

For many years I was his closest friend and adviser and, if I do say it, was in great part responsible for his success and fame.

Not that I wish to claim too much: I simply hope to see justice done, credit given where credit is due, and that's to me — mostly.

Ben was undoubtedly a splendid fellow, a great man, a patriot and all that; but he *was* undeniably stupid at times, and had it not been for me — well, here's the true story, and you can judge for yourself.

I was the oldest of twenty-six children. My parents, in naming us, went right through the alphabet. I, being first, was **A**mos, the others went along through **B**athsheba, **C**laude, **D**aniel — and so forth down to the babies: **X**enophon, **Y**sobel, and **Z**enas.

We lived in the vestry of Old Christ Church on Second Street, in Philadelphia — behind the paneling. With that

number of mouths to feed we were, naturally, not a very prosperous family. In fact we were really quite poor — as poor as church-mice.

But it was not until the Hard Winter of 1745 that things really became desperate. That was a winter long to be remembered for its severity, and night after night my poor father would come in tired and wet with his little sack practically empty.

We were driven to eating prayer-books, and when those gave out we took to the Minister's sermons. That was, for me, the final straw. The prayer-books were tough, but those sermons!

Being the oldest, it seemed fitting that I should go out into the world and make my own way. Perhaps I could in some way help the others. At least, it left one less to be provided for.

So, saying farewell to all of them — my mother and father and all the children from Bathsheba to Zenas — I set forth on the coldest, windiest night of a cold and windy winter.

Little did I dream, at that moment, of all the strange people and experiences I should encounter before ever I returned to that little vestry home! All I thought of were my cold paws, my empty stomach — and those sermons.



Meet the mouse who changed history!



DO YOU EVER WONDER WHERE INVENTORS GET THEIR IDEAS? BENJAMIN FRANKLIN WAS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS INVENTORS IN AMERICAN HISTORY, AND ACCORDING TO THIS BOOK HE GOT MOST OF HIS IDEAS—THE GOOD ONES AT ANY RATE—FROM A MOUSE!

Ben and Me is a classic American story that celebrated its sixtieth anniversary in 1999, and it has been a favorite for readers small and old for generations. Once you've read it and met Amos, the mouse who tells the story, you will never think of Benjamin Franklin, or American history, quite the same way again.

"The remarkable life of old Ben Franklin is related with wit, warmth and wisdom by Amos, a mouse who has a way with words."

—*Publishers Weekly*

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