



Man of Firsts

On January 17, 1706, Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Over the next eight decades, he would exert an enormous influence over the course of



Statue of Benjamin Franklin at Philadelphia's Franklin Institute

history. A printer, author, publisher, philosopher, scientist, diplomat and philanthropist, he conducted experiments in electricity and invented the lightning rod, bifocal eyeglasses, and the Franklin stove. At an age when most men retire, he became one of America's founding fathers, signing both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. He was the first U.S. Postmaster General, and founded a college that later became the University of Pennsylvania. Walter Isaacson, a history professor and author of a recent biography of Franklin, called him "the most accomplished American of his age and the most influential in inventing the type of society America would become." Learn more about Franklin with "Ben Franklin: Man of Firsts," part of the *Early Americans in History* series from CCC! Streaming Media.



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TIROS-1: A Weather Odyssey

In the 1940s, Dr. Harry Wexler,



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director of the National Weather Bureau's meteorological research, was looking for a way to predict extreme weather events so



Dr. Harry Wexler, whose work led to the first weather satellite

that a warning system could be devised. In 1944, he became the first scientist to be deliberately flown into the eye of a hurricane. He gained valuable information, but there was a limit to how much could be learned from the ground. However, his work was being followed by Arthur C. Clarke, a science fiction author whose works would later inspire the 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Clarke wrote to Wexler asking if he had considered using a satellite to monitor weather. With that in mind, Wexler began work that would eventually result in the launch of TIROS-1 (Television Infrared Observation Satellite) on April 1, 1960. The satellite relayed TV images from space to a ground station in New Jersey, paving the way for our modern system of weather satellites. Find out more with "Weather Satellite," part of the *Inventions That Shook the World* series from **CCC! Streaming Media**.

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