



# Washington Irving: The Definitive Biography of America's First Bestselling Author

*Brian Jay Jones*

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# Washington Irving: The Definitive Biography of America's First Bestselling Author

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**Washington Irving: The Definitive Biography of America's First Bestselling Author** Brian Jay Jones  
Brian Jay Jones crafts a deft biography of the author of “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip van Winkle”: quintessential New Yorker, presidential confidant, diplomat, lawyer, and fascinating charmer. The first American writer to make his pen his primary means of support, Washington Irving rocketed to fame at the age of twenty-six. In 1809 he published *A History of New York* under the pseudonym Diedrich Knickerbocker, to great acclaim. The public’s appetite for all things Irving was insatiable; his name alone guaranteed sales.

At the time, he was one of the most famous men in the world, a friend of Dickens, Hawthorne, and Longfellow, as well as Astor, van Buren, and Madison. But his sparkling public persona was only one side of this gentleman author. In brilliant, meticulous strokes, Brian Jay Jones renders Washington Irving in all his flawed splendor—someone who fretted about money and employment, suffered from writer’s block, and doggedly cultivated his reputation. Jones offers a very human portrait of the often contrasting public and private lives of this true American original.

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