



Name: Washington Irving

Years: 1783- 1859

Residence: Tarrytown, NY

Biography: Washington Irving was born to an affluent family in 1783 and was the favorite of eleven children. He was raised in New York City where his family kept him sheltered from issues concerning the outside world. He never attended college, but he read law and wrote satirical essays for *The Morning Chronicle*. In 1806, Irving passed the bar exam and entered the legal profession. He served as a lobbyist in Washington D.C. and he frequently wrote whimsical histories for magazines and newspapers. Later on, he traveled to Europe on numerous business occasions, even serving as a minister to Spain.

This life experience served as inspiration for some of his classic stories derived from older European sources. Settling as his estate, Sunnyside in Tarrytown, NY, Irving revisited earlier work and wrote material such as “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle” appear in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819–20) and with enormous success. He focused the rest of his life's pursuits on the advancement American literature and interacted with many of the great writers of his day such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allen Poe, and Herman Melville among others.

Major Accomplishments: He is known for creating the first American short stories, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle.”

More

Information: http://www.historichudsonvalley.org/education/Background/abt_irving/abt_irving.html

Resources: <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Washington-Irving>

By Elizabeth Wasserman