

Copyright Lore

■ *Frank Evina*

Prior to the enactment of the first federal copyright law in 1790, 12 of the original 13 states passed copyright laws of their own to protect authors and publishers. Delaware was the only state not to pass a copyright law for its citizens.

The first book to be registered under a state copyright law was *A Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage to the Pacific Ocean* by John Ledyard. Often referred to as the father of American copyright law, Ledyard appealed directly to the Connecticut General Assembly for protection of his literary work, which documented Cook's third and last voyage around the world. Thanks to the petitions of Ledyard and several other prominent authors of the time, Connecticut passed the first copyright law in the new United States of America in January 1783.

The complete texts of the 12 state copyright laws are reprinted in Copyright Office Bulletin No. 3, *Copyright Enactments, Laws Passed in the United States since 1783 Relating to Copyright*. ©



John Ledyard