



The Battery: How Portable Power Sparked a Technological Revolution

Henry Schlesinger

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In the tradition of Mark Kurlansky's *Cod* and David Bodanis's *E=MC²*, *The Battery* is the first popular history of the technology that harnessed electricity and powered the greatest scientific and technological advances of our time.

What began as a long-running dispute in biology, involving a dead frog's twitching leg, a scalpel, and a metal plate, would become an invention that transformed the history of the world: the battery. From Alessandro Volta's first copper-and-zinc model in 1800 to twenty-first-century technological breakthroughs, science journalist Henry Schlesinger traces the history of this essential power source and demonstrates its impact on our lives.

Volta's first battery not only settled the frog's leg question, it also unleashed a field of scientific research that led to the discovery of new elements and new inventions, from Samuel Morse's telegraph to Alexander Graham Bell's telephone to Thomas Edison's incandescent lightbulb. And recent advances like nanotechnology are poised to create a new generation of paradigm-shifting energy sources.

Schlesinger introduces the charlatans and geniuses, paupers and magnates, attracted to the power of the battery, including Michael Faraday, Guglielmo Marconi, Gaylord Wilshire, and Hugo Gernsback, the publisher and would-be inventor who coined the term "science fiction." A kaleidoscopic tour of an ingenious invention that helped usher in the modern world, *The Battery* is as entertaining as it is enlightening.

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