STEP INTO READING

reading on your own

STEP

Abe Lincoln's Hat

By Martha Brenner

Illustrated by Donald Cook

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the fascinating world of non-fiction! Here you will find natural science, biography, history, sports . . . and more.

STEP INTO READING® NON-FICTION READERS include

a huge selection of high-interest topics to engage young readers. No child can resist finding out about such topics as:

- Animals, both fuzzy and fierce
- Brave, bold, and brainy people
- Wild weather, such as twisters
- Life in the time of ice mummies or the Age of Dinosaurs
- Supersized trucks that leap into the air

Why should children read non-fiction? The benefits are enormous. First, children build their vocabularies, encountering words that may not come up in ordinary conversation but are needed to increase reading comprehension.

Second, non-fiction introduces children to a writing style that supports learning. When explaining new concepts, non-fiction writers often compare one thing with another. Comparisons make learning easy and fun.

Third, children build their store of background information. Context helps readers make important content connections, whether they are reading about history, biography, or natural science.

Last but not least, non-fiction books raise questions and motivate children to find answers.

The Common Core State Standards call on us to prepare children for college and careers by teaching them to read, write, and discuss non-fiction. **STEP INTO READING® NON-FICTION READERS** can help children meet this goal while enjoying informative, age-appropriate books.

Happy reading!

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Myra Zarnowski Professor, Elementary and Early Childhood Education Queens College, City University of New York

Look for an F&P Text Level on the back of every book.



Learning to Read, Step by Step!



Ready to Read Preschool-Kindergarten

• **big type and easy words** • **rhyme and rhythm** • **picture clues** For children who know the alphabet and are eager to begin reading.



Reading with Help Preschool-Grade 1

• **basic vocabulary** • **short sentences** • **simple stories** For children who recognize familiar words and sound out new words with help.



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• engaging characters • easy-to-follow plots • popular topics For children who are ready to read on their own.



Reading Paragraphs Grades 2–3

• challenging vocabulary • short paragraphs • exciting stories For newly independent readers who read simple sentences with confidence.



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• chapters • longer paragraphs • full-color art For children who want to take the plunge into chapter books but still like colorful pictures.

STEP INTO READING[®] is designed to give every child a successful reading experience. The grade levels are only guides; children will progress through the steps at their own speed, developing confidence in their reading. The F&P Text Level on the back cover serves as another tool to help you choose the right book for your child.

Remember, a lifetime love of reading starts with a single step!







by Martha Brenner illustrated by Donald Cook Photograph credits: Duff Armstrong: Lincoln's New State Historic Site and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Stephen Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, Judge Davis: Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

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SUMMARY: Frontier lawyer Abraham Lincoln cures his absent-mindedness by placing letters, court notes, contracts, and his checkbook in his tall black hat.

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For Daniel and David —M.B.



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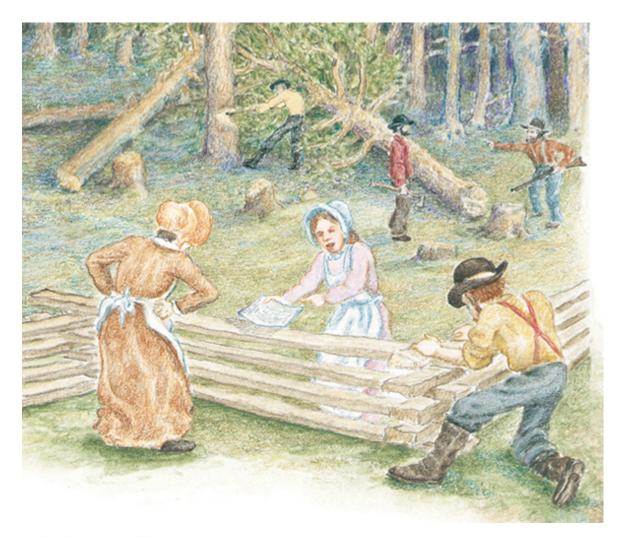
Abe Lincoln didn't have much money. But when he became a lawyer, he wanted to look his best. He bought a long black coat and a tall black hat.



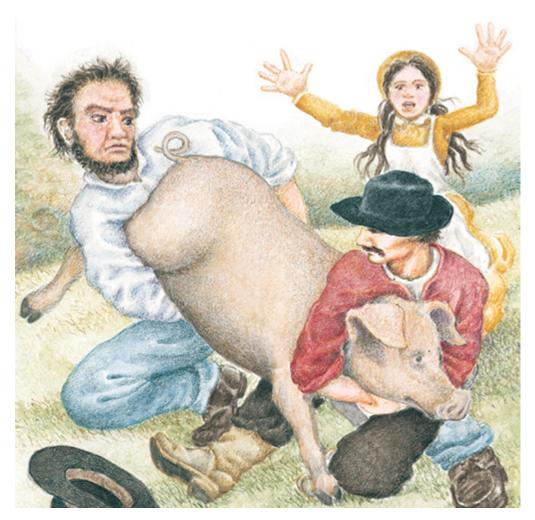
Every day Abe wore his hat to his new job. People noticed the tall man in the tall hat.



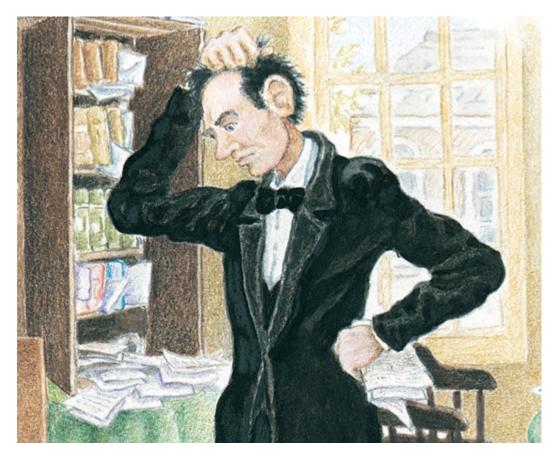
He was friendly to everyone. When they needed a lawyer, they remembered him.



Abe lived in Illinois. His state was mostly wilderness. Then more and more settlers came. They built houses and farms and new towns. Sometimes they didn't get along.



They argued over land and animals and money. Lawyers like Abe could help people settle their arguments. They could help people get a fair trial in court.



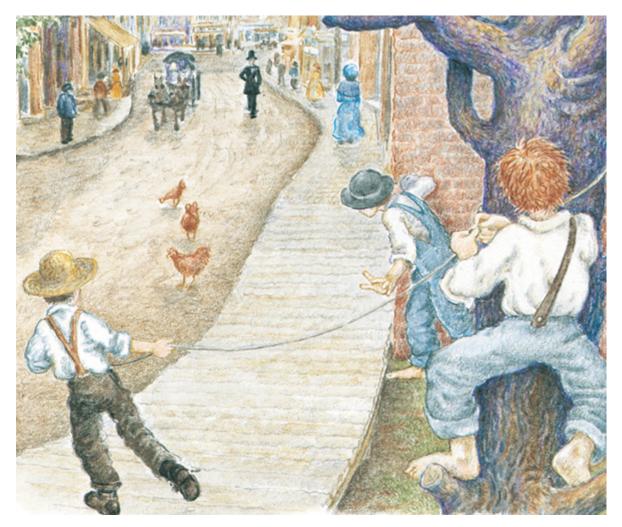
Abe Lincoln was a smart lawyer. People came to him with all kinds of problems. He helped them all. But he had one problem himself.



He forgot to answer letters. He forgot where he put important papers. A good lawyer cannot forget. Abe wanted to be a good lawyer, but he was not a good paper-keeper. What could he do?



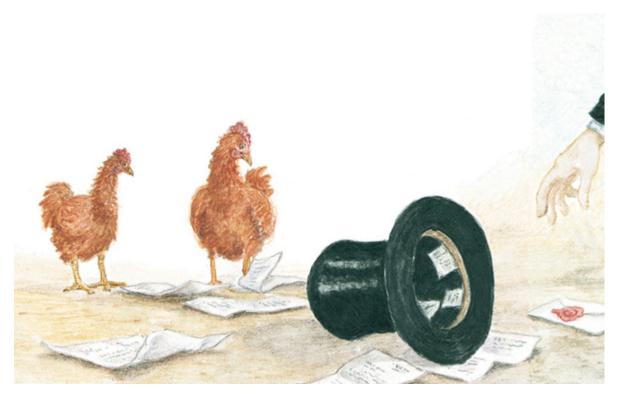
Abe had an idea. His tall hat! He could push letters deep inside it. He could stuff notes into the leather band. When he took off his hat, the papers would remind him what he had to do. The idea worked, most of the time.



One day some boys played a trick on Abe. They tied a string across the street. They strung it way up high. Everyone in town could walk under it. Everyone except Abe.



When Abe walked down the street, the string knocked off his hat. Papers flew everywhere! He bent over to pick them up. The boys ran out of hiding. They jumped all over him. Abe laughed. He was not mad at the boys.



He liked a good joke. But the trick did not stop him from carrying papers in his hat!



Once a lawyer sent Abe a letter. Abe stuck it in his hat. The next day, Abe bought a new hat. He put away his old one.



Weeks later the lawyer wrote again: "Why didn't you answer my letter?"



Then Abe remembered. The letter was still in his old hat!



Many towns in Illinois had no lawyers and no judges. So every spring and fall, a judge and some lawyers traveled from town to town. Abe went too. He packed his hat with papers, his checkbook, and a handkerchief.



At the head of the parade of lawyers rode the judge. No one could miss him. He weighed over 300 pounds. Two horses pulled his buggy.



Abe's horse was skinny and slow. His name was Old Buck.



Abe and Old Buck traveled lonely country roads. In the snow.



In the rain. In the mud.



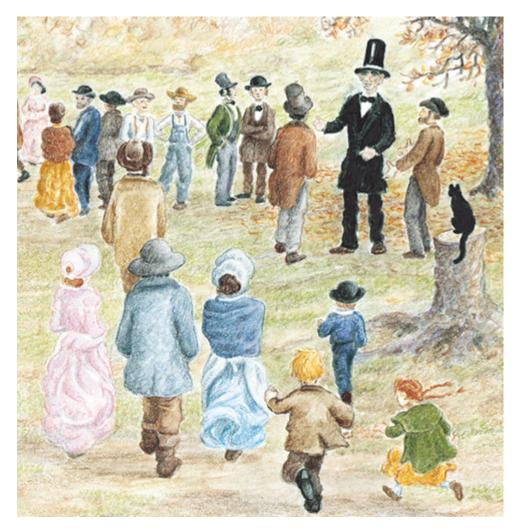
Traveling made Abe very tired. He dreamed of a soft bed and a good meal. But the lawyers had to stay at poor country inns. The food was bad. The rooms were cold. The beds were crawling with bugs. The lawyers had to share beds.



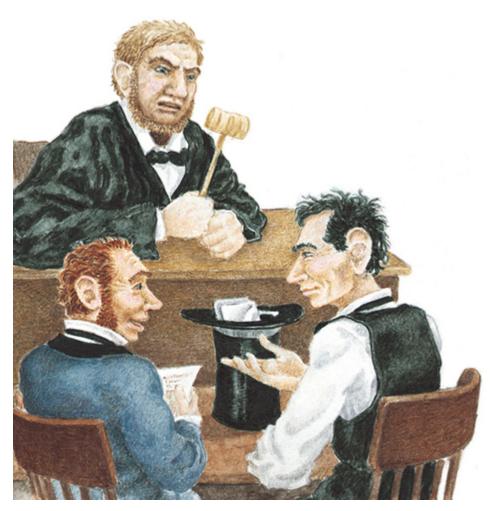
Except the judge. He had his own bed.



Early in the morning the courthouse bell would ring. Abe hurried to court. Pigs lived under one courthouse. Abe had to talk loudly over the grunts and squeals.



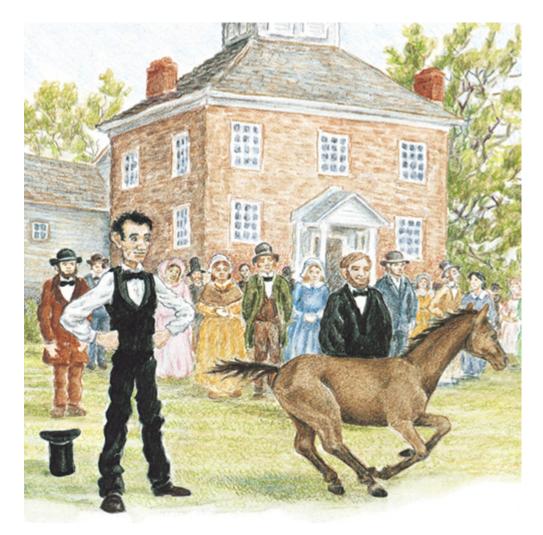
People came from near and far to hear Abe. He made trials easy to understand. He told jokes and stories. People said he could make a cat laugh.



Once Abe whispered a joke to another lawyer. The lawyer laughed out loud. "Quiet!" the judge yelled. "You are fined five dollars."



When the trial was over, the judge asked to hear the joke. He laughed as hard as the lawyer. "That was worth five dollars," he said. "Forget the fine."



At another trial two men argued over who owned a young horse. Each said he owned the mother of the colt.



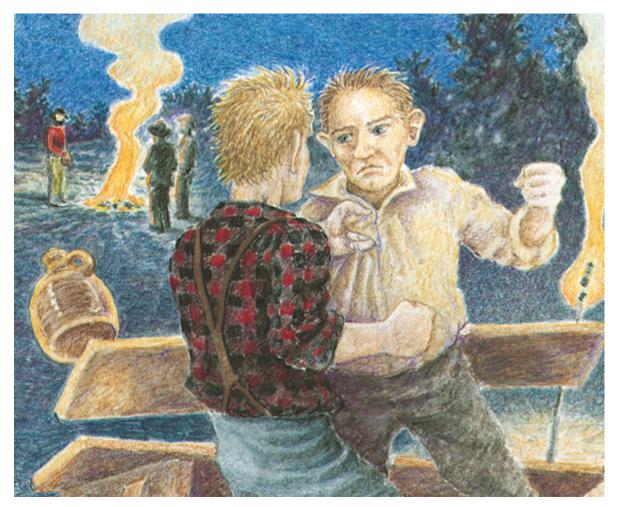
Abe led everyone outside. He put the two grown horses on one side of the lawn. He held the colt on the other side. Then he set the colt free. It headed straight to its real mother!



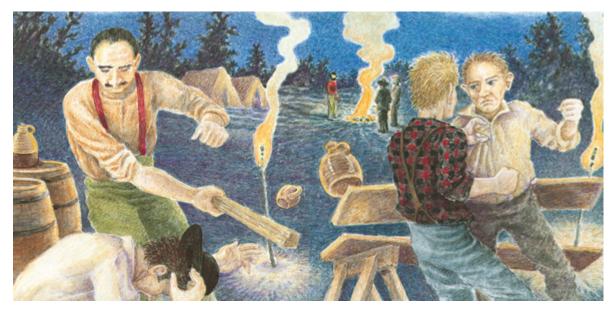
One day Abe got a letter. It was from Hannah Armstrong. Years before, Abe had lived with her family. Mrs. Armstrong cooked for Abe. She sewed up the holes in his pants. Now she begged Abe for help.



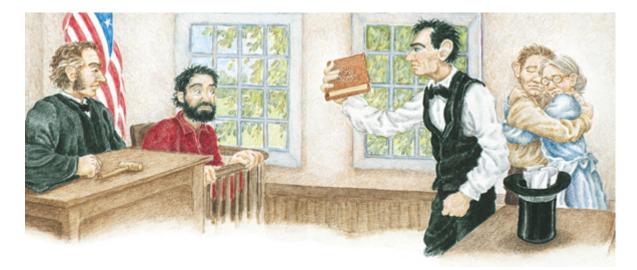
Her son Duff was in jail—for murder! Abe did not stick this letter in his hat. He wrote back right away: "Of course I'll help you."



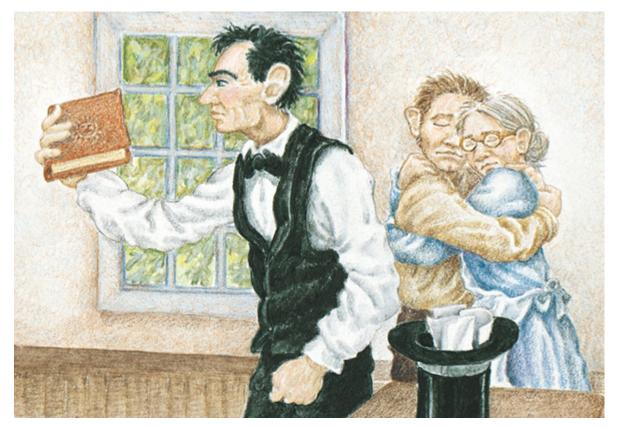
Duff had been in a big fight. It was very dark. But a man said he saw Duff kill someone.



Duff said he did not do it. Abe believed Duff. But how could he prove that the man was wrong or lying?



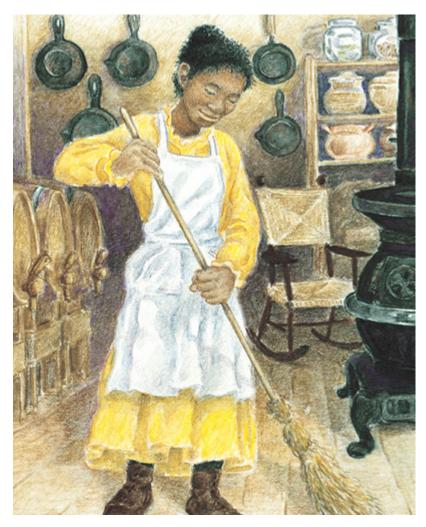
"How could you see in the dark?" Abe asked the man. "The moon was full," the man said. "It was bright as day." "Are you sure the moon was full?" Abe asked again and again. "Yes," the man repeated.



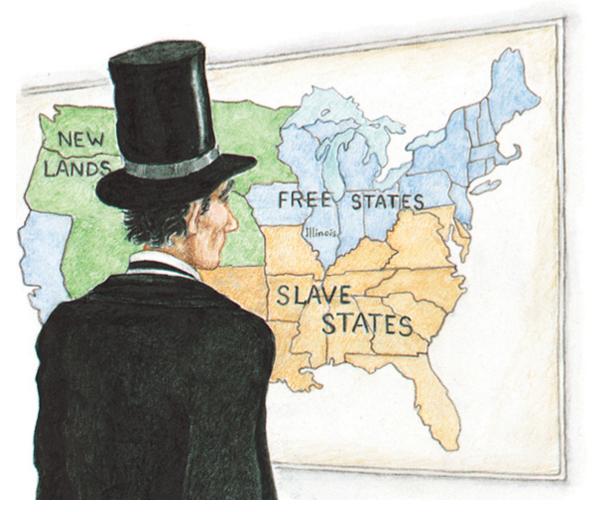
Then Abe held up a famous book of facts. It said there was NO moon in the sky at the time of the fight! Now no one believed the man anymore. The judge set Duff free!



Abe believed slavery was wrong. His state had laws against it. But the laws were not clear. Many blacks were treated like slaves.



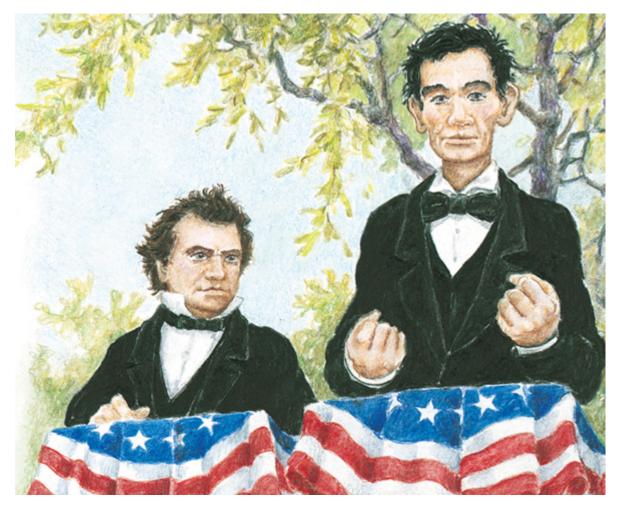
Nance was one of them. She worked for a storekeeper who sold her to another man. This man treated Nance badly. So she would not work for him.



Abe argued for Nance in court. Illinois was a free state, he said. All its people were free, whatever their color. The judge decided Abe was right. From then on, no one could be bought or sold in Illinois.



Abe had saved Nance. But half the states in America still had slaves. In a few years there would be new states out west. Abe did not want slavery to spread to these states.



Abe tried to get elected to the U.S. Senate. If he won, he could make laws to stop slavery. He ran against Stephen Douglas. Douglas argued that each state should decide for itself if it wanted slaves. They gave speeches all over Illinois. Thousands of people heard them. Abe lost the election but became famous.

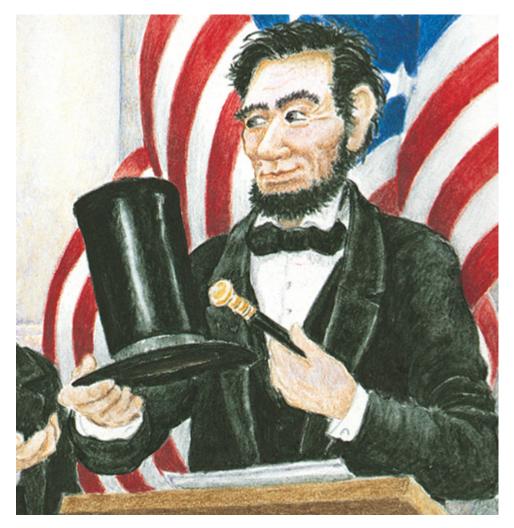




In 1860, Abe ran for president. Stephen Douglas ran too. This time Abe won.



Abe grew a beard for his new job. He took his family to Washington. At every train station, crowds cheered the new president.



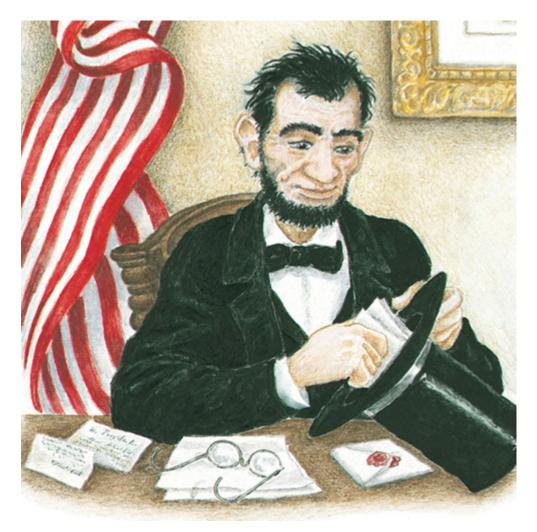
Abe was ready to make his first speech as president. He carried a cane, a tall silk hat, and his speech. He looked for a place to put his hat.



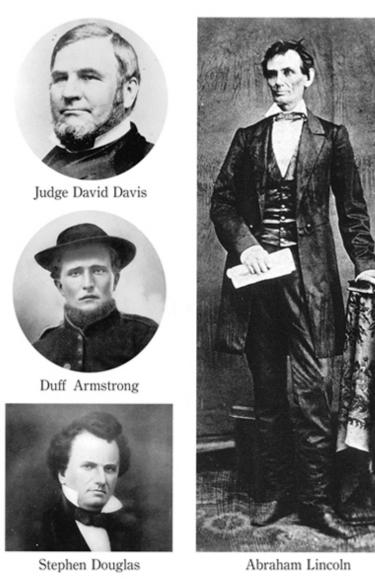
Stephen Douglas stepped up. "If I can't be president," he said, "I can at least hold his hat."



Abe Lincoln was a great president. He freed the slaves. He worked for fair laws. He helped unite the nation after a long war.

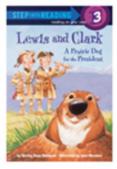


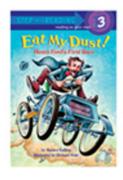
But he never changed his ways. He always kept important papers in his tall hat!



All the stories in this book are true and all the people really lived. Here are photos of some of them. When the photos were taken, around 1860, the camera was a new invention.

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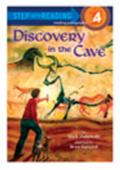
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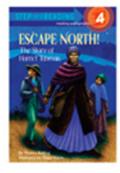
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THE TITANIC: LOST . . . AND FOUND

THE TRUE STORY OF POCAHONTAS

TUT'S MUMMY: LOST . . . AND FOUND









Abe Lincoln always wore a tall black hat. Do you know what he kept inside it? Read about what a smart man our 16th president was.



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