



0. A New Beginning for Abe Lincoln - Story Preface

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In New Salem, Abraham Lincoln decided to earn a living with his mind instead of his axe. He accepted work as a store clerk and asked the local schoolmaster—Mentor Graham—to tutor him.

Lincoln studied history, literature, science and math. His world began to expand, and so did his ambition. He decided to run for political office.

In 1832, he ran for state legislature in Illinois as a candidate of the Whig party (the party favoring a strong federal government). As soon as he entered the race, however, the Blackhawk War broke out. Lincoln enlisted and was elected Captain by his men (an honor he considered one of the greatest in his life).

When he returned from the war, it was too late to campaign. Lincoln lost that election.

Now 23 years old, Lincoln purchased half-interest in a store. He also bought a barrel of books, sight unseen, for fifty cents. The books turned out to be a set of law books.

Abraham studied those law books from cover to cover. Along the way, he decided to pursue a career as a lawyer and sold his share of the store back to his partner. Before his partner paid him, however, fate presented Abe with a different plan. His partner died, leaving Lincoln with over \$1000 in unpaid bills.

At the time, this debt represented an enormous amount of money. Abraham visited each creditor, to whom money was owed, and promised that he would repay every penny. It took him more than 15 years, but he kept those promises.

For the next two years Lincoln was both the postmaster of New Salem and a surveyor for land owners. He also hired-out to work in the fields and drew-up simple legal agreements for clients.

People in New Salem called Lincoln “Honest Abe.” His reputation began to spread throughout neighboring communities, and—the next time he ran for the state legislature—he won!

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-New-Beginning-for-Abe-Lincoln-Abraham-Lincoln>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/A-New-Beginning-for-Abe-Lincoln-Abraham-Lincoln>

Media Stream



Abraham Lincoln

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