

American Dreams Then and Now

MOVE OVER MILEY! American heroes of the past are getting the pop-culture treatment this year from San Diego-based AmeriTales Entertainment, a new company that aims to put the story back in *history*. By mixing fact and a little fiction into daring adventure tales, the company hopes to inspire and engage kids ages 4 to 9, author Theresa Carter tells PLAYTHINGS.

A lover of history, Carter founded the company in 2005 with the hope of sharing that love. "We present history as action-adventure tales presenting real-life heroes," she explains, noting that AmeriTales stories are designed to bear "a great message for children."

The first AmeriTales picture book, the well-received *Abraham Lincoln and the Forest of Little Pigeon Creek*, is an origin story that begins at childhood. Lincoln was chosen to mark the company's debut "because he epitomizes the AmeriTales brand and he is the ultimate personification of the American Dream," Carter says. Lincoln is also a person whom she has researched and admired over the years, she says. The book is distributed through Baker and Taylor and is currently available at AmeriTales.com, Borders.com and Amazon.com; the company hopes to add more retailers soon.

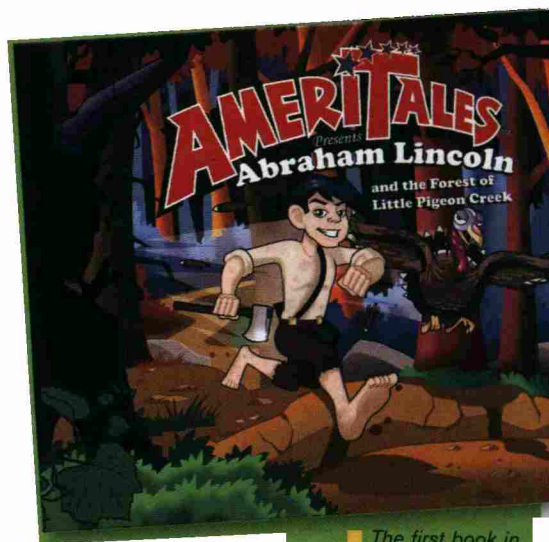
Also on the horizon is the series' second

book, *Amelia Earhart and the Haunted Winds of Kansas*, available "in a few months," along with *Thomas Edison and the Fog of Port Huron* this summer and a Jackie Robinson title in the fall. Further down the line, expect additional adventures for the heroes as well as new origin books introducing new characters.

AmeriTales is also hoping to branch out into additional areas, and is actively seeking strategic partners.

"We are working to establish the brand as a series (of at least three books)," Carter says. Once that happens in the marketplace, "We will offer licensing opportunities for DVDs, toys, games, etc." She adds, "The company was founded on the premise that if historical characters were presented to children in a fun and engaging way, a life-long interest in history could be nurtured." —KMP





■ The first book in AmeriTales' growing historical series; future titles focus on Amelia Earhart, Thomas Edison and Jackie Robinson.