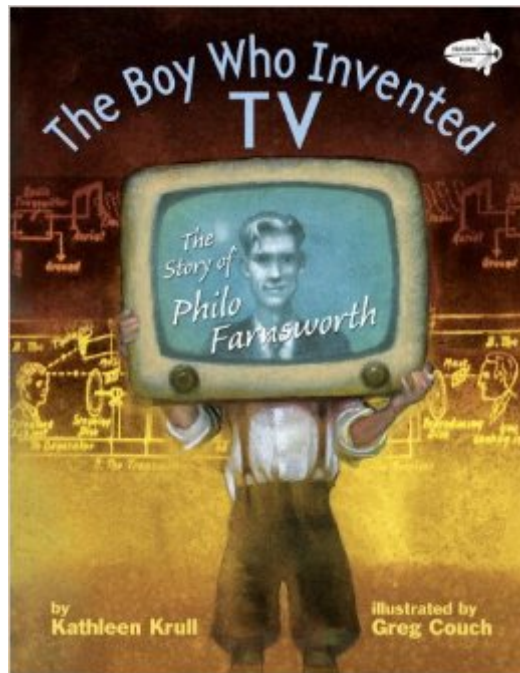


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# The Boy Who Invented TV: The Story Of Philo Farnsworth



## Synopsis

An inspiring true story of a boy genius. Plowing a potato field in 1920, a 14-year-old farm boy from Idaho saw in the parallel rows of overturned earth a way to make pictures fly through the air. This boy was not a magician; he was a scientific genius and just eight years later he made his brainstorm in the potato field a reality by transmitting the world's first television image. This fascinating picture-book biography of Philo Farnsworth covers his early interest in machines and electricity, leading up to how he put it all together in one of the greatest inventions of the 20th century. The author's afterword discusses the lawsuit Farnsworth waged and won against RCA when his high school science teacher testified that Philo's invention of television was years before RCA's.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## Customer Reviews

I had to read several biographies written for a young audience as part of an assignment for graduate school and came across this title. It was an interesting and riveting read, especially so considering I had never even heard of Philo Farnsworth! This inspiring picture book biography recounts the true life story of Philo Taylor Farnsworth, who was just a 14-year-old farmboy in 1920 when he had a brainstorm. Seeing the plow create rows of overturned earth, Philo found a way to create television by "breaking down images into parallel lines of light, capturing them and transmitting them as

electrons, then reassembling them for a viewer." His school teacher, Mr. Tolman encouraged him to go to college where he thought Philo's genius would be given the recognition it deserved.

Unfortunately, events would conspire against Philo. He was forced to leave college after his father's death and became his family's main breadwinner. It was only eight years after his brilliant idea first came to Philo's mind that he was able to realize his dream of transmitting the world's first television image. The book ends at this point though the author's note at the back of the book mentions how Philo triumphed in his bid to invent TV but would not get credit for it during his lifetime. Philo was embroiled in a dispute with the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) and never did get actual credit for inventing the television, especially since his patents expired and his ideas became public domain. It is an inspiring tale that will serve to fire young people's imaginations and motivate them to invent. Philo Farnsworth has finally received the acknowledgment and recognition denied to him all those years ago.

Philo Farnsworth was an inquisitive boy who had been interested in anything mechanical since he was a very small boy. Trains, telephones and phonographs were wondrous and magical inventions that excited and stirred his imagination. It was a passion that his father shared with him. He told his son about Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell and their inventions. When his father was temporarily away on a work assignment, Philo, at the tender age of eight, was left in charge of the family. Perhaps as a result, he grew more mature than others his age. Bullies had a tendency to tease him because of his unusual name, but he turned away from them. He enjoyed reading his grandmother's Sears, Roebuck catalog and marveling over cameras, alarm clocks, and machines that used a new, invisible source of power called electricity. The most he got out of the catalog was a violin at the insistence of his grandmother, which tended to give more fodder for the bullies. There was something about this electricity business and the elusive television scientists were working on. Philo's mind never seemed to stop thinking about it. Wait . . . there was something about the plowed rows of dirt that turned a switch on in his fourteen-year-old mind. Was this the solution the scientists had been looking for to make pictures fly through the air? This was a fascinating story of a young man who was nudged out and almost forgotten even though he invented one of the greatest inventions of the twentieth century. I loved the way the story was told because it gave great insight into Philo's character and why he was not credited with his invention. The artwork was very period-looking and quite appealing. The end papers are filled with a large variety of television sets that span the ages.

This book is a Junior Library Guild Selection that both old and young alike will enjoy!

I mistakenly bought the book thinking it was for an adult. It definitely is not. The story of Philo Farnsworth is one of the most tragic in the history of the United States. Farnsworth should have long ago been recognized as the man who created electronic television, but, instead, he was forced to defend himself from repeated lawsuits filed by David Sarnoff, RCA and NBC. Farnsworth died too young, and clearly in the middle class. He should have been one of the wealthiest men this nation has ever known. He would not have ended as well as he did if it were not for the Church of Later Day Saints, which helped him in his battle against Sarnoff. Edwin Armstrong, the man who developed FM radio, was not so fortunate. I understand why this part of the story is not contained in this book, but it's a story that should have been told long ago. It is in the book "Empire of the Air," but it's truly a tragedy.

Kids often wonder where and when certain constants in our lives were invented. I think this story does a great job telling about Farnsworth. I will be using it (with other books) to teach a unit on inventions and innovations.

The Boy Who Invented TV: The Story of Philo Farnsworth by Kathleen Krull and illustrated by Greg Couch is yet another wonderful picture book about a young man having the courage to continue and solving science before anyone else! Farnsworth went through his daily life always wondering how the world worked. Philo Farnsworth, the young inventor, develops and then discovers how to transmit images electronically, while plowing the fields, which leads to the invention of the first TV. With the help of his wife, Philo gets his wife to be the first person on TV. The book is a wonderful book that shows courage of a young boy from a young age of three all the way up to a young married man, imagining, creating, and having the will to continue no matter how many people were negative and those who didn't have faith for him. This book is an encouraging book for young readers to continue on their determinations no matter how negative people can be.

Have you ever wondered who invented television? Would you be surprised that a 14-year-old boy got the idea as he was plowing the fields on the family farm in Idaho? Philo T. Farnsworth later took his idea of how to send pictures through the air and turned it into television. This book inspires kids to take their ideas to fruition and not to give up even in the face of discouragement.

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