



Chapter Five by Russ and Kay Hively

As the wagon rolled into Bellows Falls, Violet studied everything she passed. During the ride into town, Violet had been nervous. She knew this was not a normal trip to town and was worried about what they were going to find.

Her heart raced when the town first came into view. She was pleased by what she saw. The town was just like she remembered it.

The Connecticut River narrows as it flows into a rocky gorge at the base of Fall Mountain. The water passing through this gorge creates a series of rapids called the Great Falls. The town of Bellows Falls sits beside these falls, on the west bank of the river.

To Violet, Bellows Falls was the most fun place she could imagine. She was always torn between watching the water flow

over the rocks at the Great Falls or watching a boat pass through the locks of the Bellows Falls Canal. She liked to watch the water level go up and down in the locks as the riverboats by-passed the rough water of the falls.

Thomas poked his sister and pointed to the bridge crossing the river. Built in 1785, it was the first bridge built across the Connecticut River. The short distance spanning the river gorge provided a wonderful location for building a bridge. Thomas was completely fascinated by the bridge, and would spend his free time in town looking at it. He asked anyone he could find for information about the bridge.

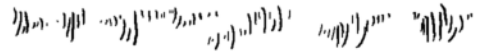
When the wagon stopped, the Howard family climbed down to the street. It felt good to stand up and move around after sitting in a wagon for so long. Thomas unhooked the horses and led them to the river to get a drink. Violet's father pulled the tarp off the wagon, and they went to work unloading, hauling and re-loading the wagon with supplies.

Once most of the trading was done, Violet's mother told the children they were free to roam but weren't to get too far away, so their father

could find them. Violet spent her time at the Great Falls or watching the boats moving in and out of the canal. In what seemed like only a few minutes she heard her father calling.

When Violet got back to the wagon, she could see that the back end was full of supplies and the tarp was laid over it. Looking at the tarp, Violet could see a shape that did not look like a bag or barrel of supplies. Instantly her curiosity got the better of her, and she asked her mother what it was. Mrs. Howard looked over at her husband and grinned.

Mr. Howard flipped back the tarp to let his daughter see the surprise in the wagon. Violet gasped.

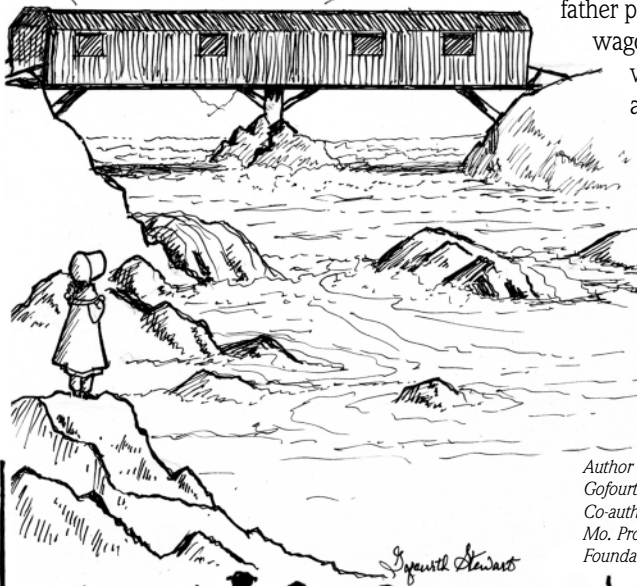


Learn More

- Bellows Falls, Vt., sits on the west side of the river. What is on the east side of the river? On which side of the river does Fall Mountain sit? What kind of map labels mountains and valleys?
- Thomas studied and asked people about the bridge over the Connecticut River. What is the title of the person who designs a bridge? Where are some places you could find out about designing and building a bridge?
- Find a headline for a story in the newspaper that sounds interesting. Write a list of questions to find out more information. Read the story and see if you can find answers to your questions. If you don't find them all, be a reporter and do further research.

STANDARDS: G1:4; SS:7; G4:8; S:2

NEXT WEEK: Chapter 6 – What's under the tarp?



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