



# Beautiful Music

## Chapter Seven by Russ and Kay Hively

Mr. Howard explained that during the trip to get the new sheep, he heard rumors about troops and fighting close to their farm. He had also heard that many Vermonters went to fight in New York. He said he wanted to go to town to get supplies, but really he went to hear the latest news about the war. Violet realized she had been right. There had been something worrying her parents ever since Father and Thomas got home.

Today, Violet's parents had learned that two battles had been fought in the past few days. The battle closest to them was fought on Lake Champlain, off the shore of Plattsburg, New York, on September 11th. That would put the battle just across Lake Champlain from the state of Vermont.

During the battle, the British naval fleet on the lake was defeated, and its Commanding Officer, Captain Downie, was killed. The British army at Plattsburg chose not to attack the American forces when news of the fleet's loss reached the troops. The British commander pulled out and returned to Canada with his forces.

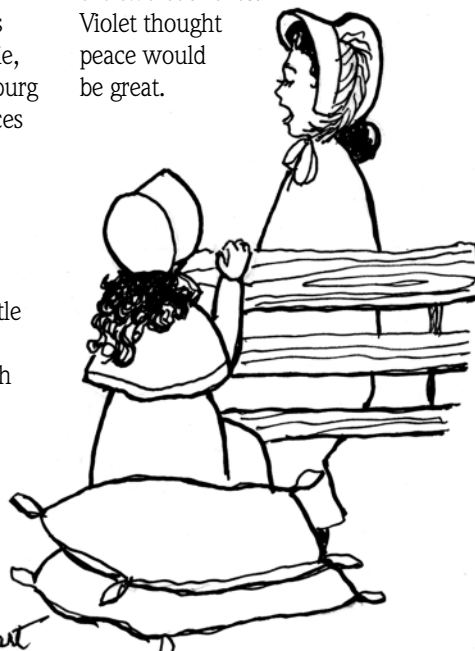
Violet's father told them a second battle was fought in and around Baltimore, Maryland, a few days later. The British bombarded Fort McHenry, a military

fort which protects Baltimore from water attack. At the same time as the naval bombardment was occurring, the British army attacked Baltimore from the land.

The British ships shelled the fort all day and all night, but Fort McHenry stood firm against the bombardment and would not surrender. By the following morning the British had failed to make any progress into the city from either land or sea.

During the stories, Violet had sat on her soft spot in the wagon and listened to every word her father said. When he was finished, both children asked their parents a few questions about what happened. Violet's mother added that all things considered, this was very good news, and most people were hopeful this would speed up the peace talks between the two countries.

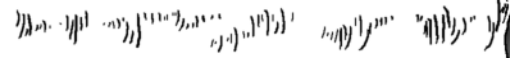
Violet thought peace would be great.



Violet's mother then said she had learned something else in town. During the Battle of Fort McHenry, a lawyer named Francis Scott Key had been on a British ship during the bombardment. He watched the shelling of the fort and wrote a poem about what he saw. He called the poem the "Defence of Fort McHenry." A few days later the poem was put to the tune of "To Anacreon in Heaven," and became a song.

Her mother went on to say the song was now only a few days old, but it had swept across the entire country, from New Hampshire to Georgia. Shaking her head, Violet's mother said she had never seen anything like this before.

Looking down at Violet with a big smile, Mrs. Howard asked her if she wanted to hear the song. Violet nodded her head, and holding her breath, she waited to hear this new and already famous song.



### Learn More

- Vermont citizens went to fight in New York. They volunteered to help protect their county. What other things do volunteers do? List some. Have you ever volunteered?
- Look in your newspaper for opportunities in your community to volunteer. Make a list of those in which children could contribute.
- Francis Scott Key was on a British ship during the bombardment of Fort McHenry. Find out what he was doing there.

STANDARDS: G4:2; SS:6; G1:1; SS:1

NEXT WEEK: Chapter 8 – The song.

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