

Good Morning, Mr. President

Chapter Two - by Kay Hively

Peggy slept late that first morning in the Black Hills. She woke up not sure where she was. Nothing looked familiar. Then she remembered. This was South Dakota.

Slowly Peggy turned over in the warm bed where she had spent the night. As she turned, she could see out a small window by her bed. And what Peggy saw through the window made her bolt up in bed. In disbelief, she pressed her nose flat against the window.

Not far away, on the side of a mountain, was a giant carving of George Washington – THE George Washington! President George Washington!

Peggy could only stare at the scene before her. But there was no question about it. It was the same George Washington whose picture hung in her schoolroom back in Nebraska.

But how could George Washington's face be up on top of a mountain?

Peggy threw back the covers and jumped off the top bunk. She couldn't wait to tell her family about the face on the mountain.



But the cabin was empty.

No one was in sight.

Through the kitchen window, Peggy saw her parents outside, leaning against the car. Her brother was standing on the running board. All of them were looking up at the mountain. Peggy rushed outside where she found still another surprise. From the front yard, she could see the face of George Washington. But, to her amazement, right beside Mr. Washington was the face of Thomas Jefferson. Two presidents had been carved into the mountain!

Peggy had never seen anything so magnificent. Even her parents could hardly take their eyes off the mountain.

Mrs. Jansen put her arm around Peggy and told her that those faces were why they had come to South Dakota. Because he was very good with dynamite, Peggy's father had been asked to help add another face to the mountain. The new face would be Abraham Lincoln's.

As the Jansen family stood admiring the huge faces, a voice called out to them. Peggy saw a man coming out of a nearby cabin. Her father walked over to greet him.

The two men shook hands and talked for a few minutes. When Mr. Jansen returned, he said the man had invited them to a church not far away. It was close enough to walk, Mr. Jansen said.

Quickly, Peggy's mother hustled everyone inside for breakfast. Peggy hurried through her food and then went to put on her Sunday clothes.

In the little room where she had slept, she could hardly button her dress.

All she wanted to do was look out the window at George Washington. Because trees covered part of her window, he was the only President she could see.

Later, as she walked with her family down the path toward the church, she could smell pine needles. Living in the piney woods was going to be wonderful. In fact, the whole summer was going to be wonderful. Peggy could just feel it in her bones.

Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Produced in partnership with this newspaper and the Missouri Press Foundation with support from Verizon Foundation. Copyright 2002.

Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do -

- How many United States Presidents have there been? In what years did Mr. Washington and Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Lincoln become President?
- Mike stood on the car's "running board." What is a running board? What do you think Peggy meant when she said she could "feel it in her bones?"

STANDARDS - SS6; CA5; G1:2; G1:9; G2:3

Next Week: Chapter Three – More Faces to Come