

# Silver and Gold



## Chapter Seven – by Kay Hively

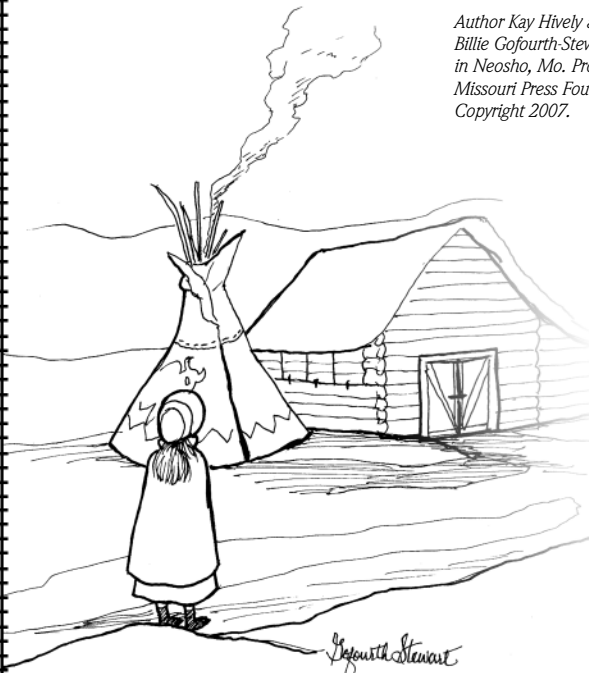
After lunch, as Molly walked across the parade ground to school, she looked toward the stables. The Indian man and two soldiers were putting up a teepee on the south side of the building. But Molly could not see the mother, the little girl or the baby. She wondered where they were, and if they were safe and warm.

When all the school children were back at their desks, classes began once more. Every day after lunch, Mrs. Nelson read to the students. Today she started a new book. It was called “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens. While the teacher read, students were allowed to lay their heads on their desks. Sometimes they went to sleep, but Molly never slept. She liked hearing the stories.

After story time, the students went back to their books. Mrs. Nelson separated the children by ages. The only one who was Molly’s age was Robert, so they studied together. Because she was the only teacher, Mrs. Nelson arranged for each group to do different things at the same time.

Molly and Robert worked on arithmetic problems after story time. The smallest children sat around Mrs. Nelson’s desk practicing their alphabet. The older students drew maps of the United States as part of their geography lesson. The oldest student in school was 16-year-old Johnny Barton. He worked on vocabulary words in his Latin book.

*Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart both live in Neosho, Mo. Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2007.*



Going to the small school was fun. Molly liked being in the same room with kids of all ages. Before she came to Fort Russell, she was only with children her own age. Now, when she finished her assignment, she could hear the lessons of other children. Sometimes she helped the little children learn their alphabet or numbers. Because she had trouble with spelling, one of the older girls helped her with the weekly spelling list.

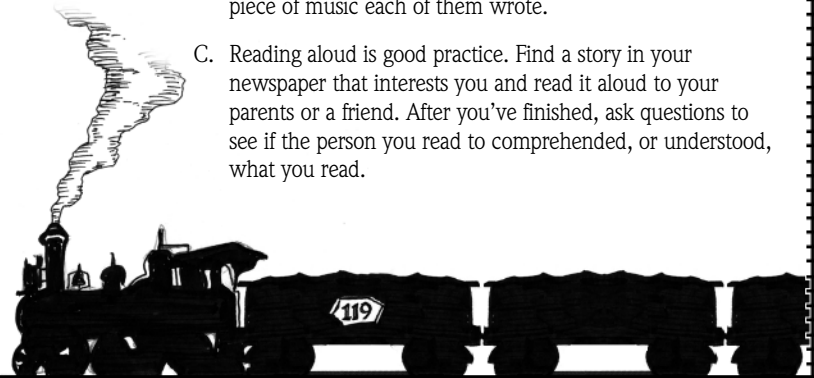
Throughout the afternoon the children worked. Then, near the end of the school day, Mrs. Nelson had music class. All the children loved music. Some were even learning to play the piano. Mrs. Nelson talked about the great composers and played classical music on the piano. Most of the classical music had been written in Europe, but Mrs. Nelson also taught American music. Molly liked singing European and American folk songs.

But today, Mrs. Nelson said they would start practicing for their Christmas musical. Then she opened a big trunk filled with simple musical instruments. She said that each child would learn to play one of the instruments for the Christmas program.

Molly was excited as Mrs. Nelson took out the instruments one at a time and told what each was and how it was played. In the trunk were cymbals, a musical triangle, tiny silver bells, a small drum and even a harmonica. Then Mrs. Nelson asked the children which instrument they would like to try. Molly chose a tiny silver bell.

## Things to Think About and Do

- Mrs. Nelson was reading “A Christmas Carol.” List six other stories or books written by Charles Dickens. What large city is the setting for many Charles Dickens stories.
- Molly was learning about famous composers. What three composers are called “The Three Bs?” Find out at least one piece of music each of them wrote.
- Reading aloud is good practice. Find a story in your newspaper that interests you and read it aloud to your parents or a friend. After you’ve finished, ask questions to see if the person you read to comprehended, or understood, what you read.



Next Week: Chapter Eight – A happy baby