

Silver and Gold

Chapter Twelve – by Kay Hively

On May 10, 1869, Molly and her family went into Cheyenne and boarded a special rail car on the Union Pacific. The train was filled with dignitaries going to the ceremony at Promontory Summit where the two tracks would meet. Everyone wanted to see the last spike put in place. Then America would have a transcontinental railroad, connecting the country from east to west.

It was cold when Molly and her family boarded the train early that morning. Molly wore her new Christmas dress and a little cape to keep her shoulders warm. Around her neck she wore the necklace that Black Feather had given her.

Soon after Molly and her family were seated, the train began its journey westward. In a very short time, they left the flat plains and began climbing into the mountains. Molly sat by a window and watched as the little train chugged along. She had never been so high into the mountains.

The ride to Promontory Summit did not take long. When they were close to the meeting of tracks, the train eased to a stop. Another train in front of them was already parked at the meeting site. Molly could see men walking about, waiting for the ceremony. Looking far down the track, Molly could see that a Union Pacific train was poised nose to nose with a train from the Central Pacific. The spike would be driven where the two trains met.

Molly and her family left the train and walked to the place where everyone had gathered for the ceremony. The crowd was filled

with men of every size and shape. Many of the men who had built the railroad were there to see their work complete. There were also men in fancy suits and, of course, there were soldiers in the crowd – even an army band from Fort Douglas.

Everyone was crowding around the spot where the spike would be driven. Captain Hankins hoisted Molly up on his shoulders so she could see the ceremony. As she sat on her father's shoulders Molly looked around at all the people. To her great surprise, she saw Black Feather. Sweet Flower was sitting on his shoulders just as Molly was sitting on her father's shoulders.

Molly begged her father to go stand by Black Feather so they could watch everything together. Soon the two families stood side by side. Molly held her breathe as she watched the dignitaries. One man in a fancy suit was carrying the spike which would be driven into the wooden tie. Molly's eyes popped wide open when she saw that the spike was made of gold.

After a few speeches and a prayer, the historic moment had come. Molly watched as the sledgehammer fell. A great cheer rose up from the crowd as the golden spike was driven. Molly cheered and clapped her hands.

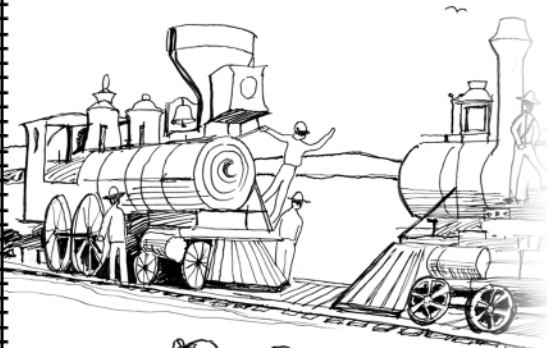
But, over the noise of the crowd, Molly heard a familiar sound. Sweet Flower was ringing her bell. The two girls began to laugh.

The two girls took turns ringing the little silver bell to celebrate the big golden spike.

Things to Think About and Do

- Using a perpetual calendar, find out which day of the week the golden spike was driven. Find out who actually drove the spike.
- On a map, find Promontory Summit. In what state is it located? Draw and color pictures of a silver bell and a golden spike. How long was the Transcontinental Railroad?
- The transcontinental railroad meant progress for the United States in 1869. Look in your newspaper for stories that describe progress for your community, your state or the United States today.

STANDARDS: G1:1; G1:2; G1:4; G1:8; G2:7; SS7; M2; S6



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