



Chapter One by Russ and Kay Hively

Eight-year-old Violet Howard walked up the hillside behind her home. From the crest of the hill, she would be able to see and hear anything coming down the path to her house long before it got there. Besides, Violet loved standing on the big boulder overlooking her house. From that vantage point she could look out across the rolling hills that surrounded her farm.

On clear days if she looked south, Violet thought she could see all the way to the ocean. Her mama told her it was only a trick of her eyes, but she was not convinced. Violet did know that if she looked east she was looking at the hills in New Hampshire.

It was late September 1814, and summer was quickly coming to an end on the Howard Farm of Windham County, Vermont. The leaves on the trees were beginning to change into their fall colors and the days were getting cooler and shorter.

Violet's long dark hair hung below her wool bonnet and

swirled in the wind as she looked down into the valley at the path. She looked up from the path and turned her small round face toward Bellows Falls, the closest town. The hills blocked her view of the small town that sat on the west side of the Connecticut River. Violet always looked for the town, hoping she could actually see it. She loved Bellows Falls and wished she could see it from up here.

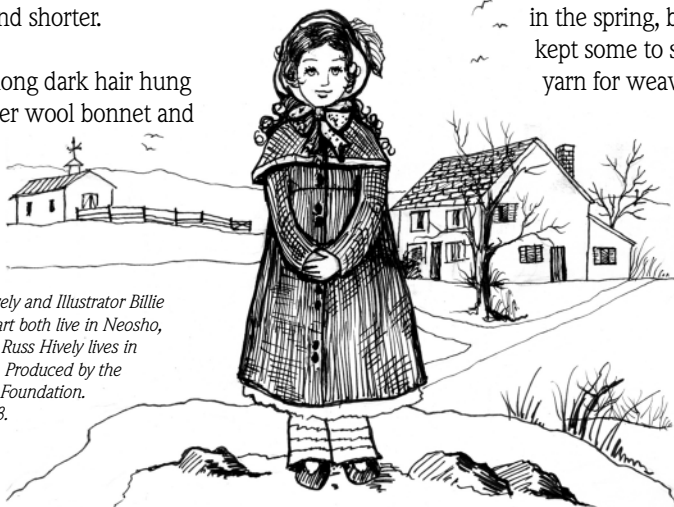
Violet's father and her 12-year-old brother, Thomas, would be coming home along the path with a small herd of sheep. The Howard's raised sheep for wool, milk and meat. They also planted a big garden for vegetables, mostly to feed the family, but they would sell or trade some of their produce for things they needed. They had a few other animals on the farm, including pigs, chickens, ducks, geese and horses, but most of the farm was used for raising sheep. The family sold most of the sheep's wool in the spring, but also kept some to spin into yarn for weaving cloth.

Violet was very excited about the new sheep. Papa had purchased a breed of sheep she had never heard of, in fact the breed was new to Vermont.

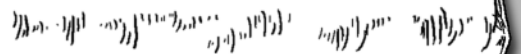
As Violet stood on the boulder looking down at the path, she thought she could hear something. She listened really hard and heard the same sound again.

Suddenly, a huge smile spread across Violet's face showing the gap between her two front teeth. The sound was Molly barking. Molly was the Howard family's sheep dog.

Violet jumped off the boulder and began running down the hill. She wanted to be home when the new sheep got there. She had to hurry to get there on time.



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Learn More

- A. Bellows Falls, Vermont, is beside the Connecticut River. Find this river on a map. How many U.S. States does the river run through or beside? What ocean does it flow into?
- B. Violet wore a bonnet on her head. Make a list of five kinds of hats people wear and beside each hat explain why each one is worn. Find pictures in the newspaper of people wearing these hats.
- C. What do you think this story will be about? Write down your prediction. Add more details to your prediction as you read each chapter in your newspaper.

NEXT WEEK: Chapter 2 – Here they come!

