



Summer 2015

The Pine Grove Schoolhouse, built in 1865, was quiet now as the children have gone back to their farms and homes for summer vacation. Abigail, the small field mouse who lives under the floorboards, began to miss the sound and laughter of the children above. So she decided to take a vacation too! But where? She wanted to go somewhere new and exciting...Hartford! She had never been to the state capitol before and loved an adventure! She decided to go by train and there was a flag station stop at 'Allen's Crossing' just down Scoville Road. She had a plan, of course, as you know what a clever little mouse Abigail is. There was a post office near this train station and all Abigail had to do was sneak into the mailbag. This bag was then hung on a pole near the train tracks, and the conductor just snatched the bag as the train went slowly by.

Abigail packed her small wicker hand basket with lunch, her lace handkerchief, and whisker comb. Then she put on her shawl over her gingham check dress and her straw sunbonnet. She went outside and whistled for Duke, the farm dog across the dirt road. It took only a few minutes, but here came Duke all slobbery and panting from the hot weather. Abigail asked him for a ride on his back to the train stop and mentioned that he could cool off in Chidsey Brook on his way home. He agreed and off they headed north down Middle Street (before it was named West Avon Road) to Scoville Road. Abigail hopped off Duke's back, thanked him and off she scurried into the post office. She saw the mail bag on the floor and when the Postmaster wasn't looking, she snuck inside. It wasn't long until she heard the whoooo-whoooo of the train whistle approaching the platform. The bag was hung on the pole and shortly she went kerplop on the floor of the boxcar. She was on her way to the city!

In a short while the train began to slow down and it pulled into the Hartford station. She peeked her nose out of the mailbag to be sure it was safe and then she scooted to the outside. She jumped on top of some boxes there on the loading dock to get a view of her surroundings. She saw carriages going by with people dressed in fancy clothes, she saw buildings like she had only seen in books, and then, across the large park she saw an unusual structure. It was the Soldiers and Sailors Arch that was dedicated in 1886 to honor Hartford men who fought and died in the Civil War. Abigail carefully crossed the street, looking both ways first, to the green grass of the Bushnell Park. Then she made her way to the brownstone arch. She admired the statues and the raised art border scenes as she climbed up the outside of the arch all the way to the top where the angels of Gabriel and Raphael are on top. From here she had a panoramic view of all of downtown Hartford and it was breathtaking. She sat down and ate her lunch as she watched the world go by beneath the arch. What a magnificent day!

The sun got lower in the sky and Abigail knew she would have to catch a train back home to Avon soon. So she climbed back down the arch, went across the park again, and waited on the train platform behind a barrel until a train headed west arrived. She jumped onto the caboose and would soon be home to the school house. When the train arrived at 'Allen's Crossing' she hopped off onto the passenger platform and there was good old Duke sitting there waiting to take her home. Good dog!

Photo credit: www.bushnellpark.org