

## Book Club Kit



# Searching for SILVERHEELS

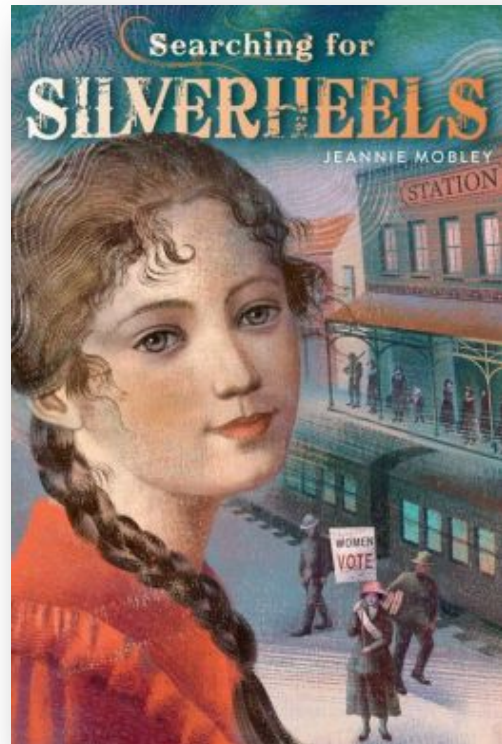
## ABOUT THE BOOK CLUB KIT

The political climate of 1917 Como, Colorado, churns with the declaration of war against Germany, exhibitions of patriotism and accusations of un-American behavior, and a lone cry for the women's right to vote.

**Searching for Silverheels** by Jeannie Mobley opens with 13-year-old Pearl saying that it is *“strange how sometimes, even though the whole world is changing around you, everything can feel so much the same.”*

But, like every girl coming of age, the world starts to affect Pearl's day-to-day life in Como. The war will bring soldiers into the cafe, friends' patriotism will be questioned, and Pearl's sense of the rights of women and her own power will grow.

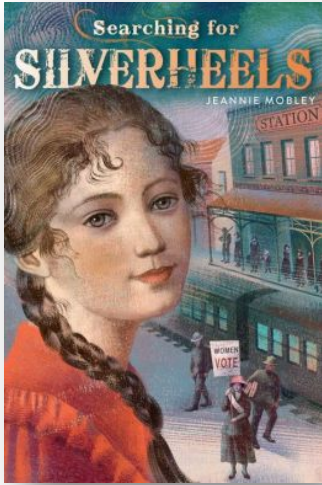
This book is full of opportunities for book club readers to explore both our larger history and their personal coming-of-age. **Best for ages 10-14.**



To make this book club experience richer, this kit offers ideas to:

- **Introduce** the book with suggested readings, themes and read-alikes. (Page 3)
- **Promote** the book club with a poster and suggested calendar copy. (Pages 4 & 16)
- **Discuss** the book with chapter-by-chapter questions. (Pages 8-10)
- **Prepare** for your book club with ideas and tools for:
  - Holding a Skype Q&A with the author. (Page 5)
  - Brushing up on your history. (Pages 12-15)
  - Including multimedia. (Page 6)
  - Craft projects to make suffragette sashes and silver heels. (Pages 5-6)
  - Cooking projects for book club setting and eating. (Pages 7 & 11)

## ABOUT THE BOOK



### **Searching for Silverheels**

By Jeannie Mobley

Margaret K. McElderry Books

ISBN 9781481400299

304 pages

Ages: 10-14

Grades: 5-9

A girl's search for the truth about a legendary woman teaches her a lot about what bravery and loyalty really mean in this gorgeous novel from the author of **Katerina's Wish**.

In her small Colorado town, Pearl spends the summers helping her mother run the family café and entertaining tourists with the legend of Silverheels, a beautiful dancer who nursed miners through a smallpox epidemic in 1861

and then mysteriously disappeared. According to lore, the miners loved her so much they named their mountain after her.

Pearl believes the tale is true, but she is mocked by her neighbor, Josie, a suffragette campaigning for women's right to vote. Josie says that Silverheels was a crook, not a savior, and she challenges Pearl to a bet: prove that Silverheels was the kindhearted angel of legend, or help Josie pass out the suffragist pamphlets that Pearl thinks drive away the tourists. Not to mention driving away handsome George Crawford.

As Pearl looks for the truth, darker forces are at work in her small town. The United States's entry into World War I casts suspicion on German immigrants, and also on anyone who criticizes the president during wartime—including Josie. How do you choose what's right when it could cost you everything you have?

## PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"Pearl's lively narration reveals her transformation from an old-fashioned, romantic girl into a spirited, courageous champion. Mobley uses the legend of Silverheels to effectively 'raise questions about the traditional roles of women and their sources of strength,' as she writes in her author's note, against the backdrop of wartime Colorado. An engrossing, plausible story of several unlikely feminist heroines with a touch of romance and intrigue."  
—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Mobley uses the microcosm of Como to echo the broader issues of the day—women's suffrage, the Great War, prejudice, and class divisions—yet she doesn't overwhelm readers or the town with these themes." —*School Library Journal*



## READ-ALIKES

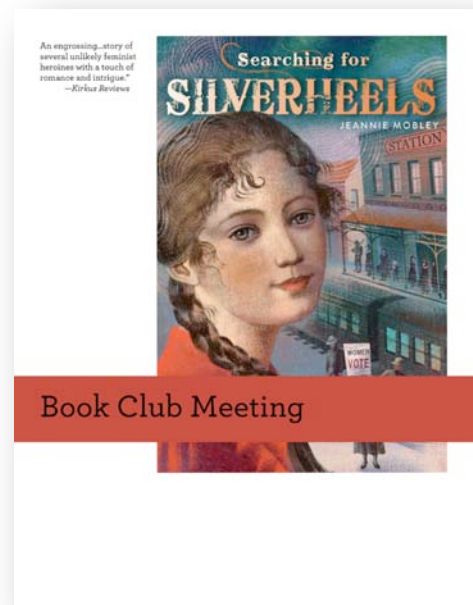
Whether you are trying to recommend **Searching for Silverheels** to a reader of book club or suggesting a next read after **Searching for Silverheels**, here is a list of read-alikes:

- **Hattie Big Sky** by Kirby Larson (Themes: home front, WWI, coercive liberty bond drives, and German discrimination)
- **Moon Over Manifest** by Clare Vanderpool (Themes: home front, WWI, and exploring a past mystery)
- **Rilla of Ingleside (Anne of Green Gables: Book 8)** by L. M. Montgomery (Themes: small town girl, first-love confusion, and World War I)
- **Palace Beautiful** by Sara DeFord Williams (Themes: kids learning about a past mystery and WWI)
- **The Hope Chest** by Karen Schwabach (Themes: suffrage movement with a younger protagonist)
- **The Year We Were Famous** by Carole Estby Dagg (Themes: suffrage movement)
- **The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate** by Jacqueline Kelly (Themes: gender roles and mysteries)
- **May B** by Caroline Starr Rose (Themes: gender roles and supporting family)
- **War Horse** by Michael Morpurgo (Themes: WWI)
- **Katerina's Wish** by Jeannie Mobley (Themes: gender roles, Colorado, and supporting family)
- **Winnie's War** by Jenny Moss (Themes: WWI, home front and small town America)

## PROMOTING YOUR BOOK CLUB

There is a customizable poster included in this kit (Page 16) if you are promoting the book club to the broader community. If you plan to list the book club online or in calendars, here is some suggested copy:

The rising tide of women's suffrage, World War I, and accusations of un-American behavior come together in the Silverheels Café, where 13-year old Pearl waits tables and awaits her destiny. Join us as we explore small-town America in 1917 and one girl's struggle to find her way through this challenging new world. Our book club will be reading **Searching for Silverheels** by Jeannie Mobley, and discussing it on \_\_\_\_\_ . Best for ages 10-14.



## PREPARING FOR YOUR BOOK CLUB

Here are some ideas for historical context, multimedia viewing, craft and cooking activities, and other ideas to engage your book group.

### Schedule a Skype with the Author

Author Jeannie Mobley is happy to provide a free 30-minute Skype Q&A with your book group, as her schedule permits. To arrange a visit, contact Jeannie Mobley at [jmobleyauthor@frii.com](mailto:jmobleyauthor@frii.com), subject line SKYPE BOOKCLUB VISIT. Please include the name of your group, ages and number of members, your contact information, and indicate several possible times that might work for you.

### Prepare a Craft: Votes for Women!

One of the most iconic images in United States Women's History is the suffragist. Explore images of suffragists online and in your library with your book club. Can your book club stand in solidarity by creating "Votes for Women" signs and sashes? Take a photo of your group and share with author Jeannie Mobley! You could gather:

- Poster board and markers to make signs.
- String to hang signs around necks or to suspend them from poles.
- Stakes to staple or duct tape signs to.
- Strips of craft paper and markers\* to make sashes.
- Large safety pins to attach sashes.

\* When looking at the B&W photos, you will not be able to see that the colors of the suffrage movement were purple and green. Feel free to flaunt your colors on the sashes!



*Photo: Suffragists Katharine McCormick and Mrs. Charles Parker, 1913*

### Prepare a Craft: Silverheels Shoes

If you wanted a hands-on activity or a tabletop decoration for each of your book club members, you could create Silverheels Paper Shoes. You could gather:

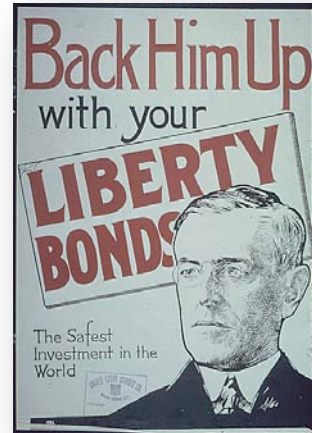
- 32-lb or heavier paper. Look for scrapbooking or other art papers with a silver hue.
- Decorative buttons, ribbons and stickers to decorate the shoes.
- Scissors and glue.
- Template and step-by-step instructions available at: <https://thedailydigi.com/because-one-can-never-have-too-many-shoes>

You could also have book club members sculpt their own shoes or transform the shoes they are wearing using aluminum foil. You could gather:

- Roll of aluminum foil.
- Decorative bits and bobs like bows, buttons, pom poms, bits of lace or yarn, and stickers.
- Scissors and glue.

### Provide Context: Brush Up on Your History

Jeannie Mobley has provided historical context for the novel by writing novel-centric summaries of World War I and Liberty Bonds; Park County and Como, Colorado; the Era of Silverheels in Colorado; the Suffrage Movement; and the Early Vote in Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado. Look for these historical reviews on pages 12-15.



### Provide Context: Review Multimedia

To give your book club an entry into 1917 America and Colorado, you could share any and all of these multimedia links. These links are also available on the “Teacher’s Resources” page at [www.JeannieMobley.com](http://www.JeannieMobley.com) if you cannot link from this document.

- Historical Photographs related to **Searching for Silverheels**:  
<http://www.pinterest.com/jeanniemobley/searching-for-silverheels-scrapbook/>
- Library of Congress Suffrage page with primary documents (photos, broadsides, leaflets, newspaper articles, maps, sound files, etc.) on suffrage:  
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/womens-suffrage/>
- Music Video /Public Service announcement (Emmy recipient for Best Informational / Instructional Program) from Bad Romance which covers the suffrage events in the book:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYQhRCs9IHM>
- *School House Rock* on women's suffrage, addressing Susan B. Anthony and her branch of the movement, from which the National Women's Party split:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGHGDO\\_b\\_qo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGHGDO_b_qo)
- The United States World War I Centennial Commission offers information, educational activities, pictures, history, etc. about the Great War:  
<http://worldwar-1centennial.org/>
- A virtual tour of Como, Colorado, through historical photographs:  
<http://www.narrowgauge.org/ngc/html/excursion4/gkazel/excursion4-como.html>
- The HBO movie *Iron Jawed Angels*. Viewer discretion is advised for younger audiences as there are some disturbing scenes of beatings and prison abuse.

### Food Connection: Create the Silverheels Cafe

Much of the book takes place within the Silverheels Café at breakfast. Could you set up your book discussion area like a café? Lay out checkered tablecloths, place a carnation in a vase, and place an upside down coffee cup and a menu at each setting. We have included a café menu template on page 18.

If your book club meets at a home, consider making author Jeannie Mobley's great-grandmother's Century Griddle Cakes. Find the recipe on page 11.

If your book group meets in a public space consider individual pastries or a pie.

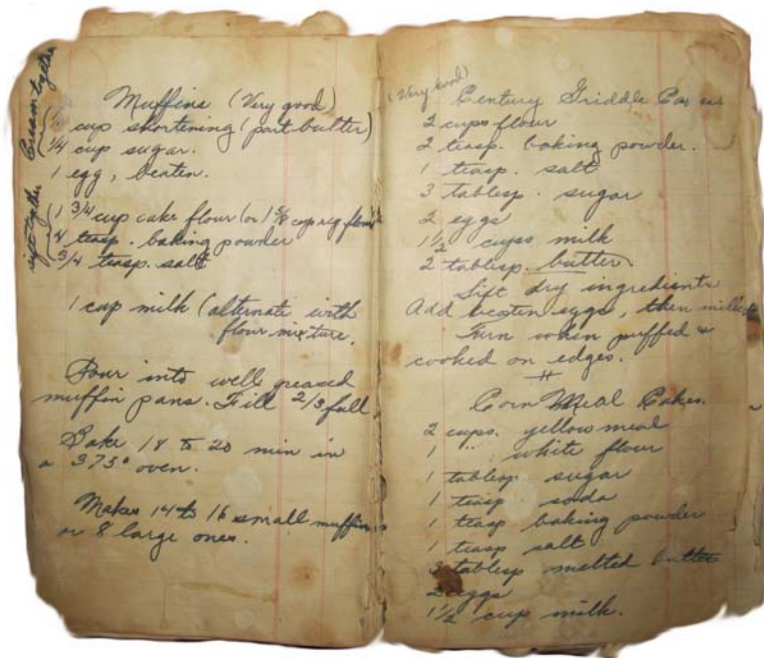


Photo: Recipe book handwritten (with a fountain pen) by Jeannie Mobley's great-grandmother!

### Food Connection: Hold a Patriotic Picnic

Another big food scene in the book is the Fourth of July Picnic (which Mrs. Crawford wants to be the most patriotic picnic ever!). Why not hold a patriotic picnic (indoor or outdoors) for your book club meeting? You might:

- Decorate with flags or red-white-and-blue streamers.
- Print out the "Roast at Liberty Dog to Roast the Kaiser" banner on page 19.
- Print out Liberty Bond flyers on page 17.
- Serve picnic foods with patriotic names. Many foods during WWI were given patriotic names (especially if they were of German origin). Consider serving Liberty Dogs (hot dogs), Doughboy Buns, Victory Potato Salad, and/or Freedom slaw (coleslaw).
- Bake a Coconut Picnic Cake from author Jeannie Mobley's great-grandma's recipe book. Find the recipe on page 11.



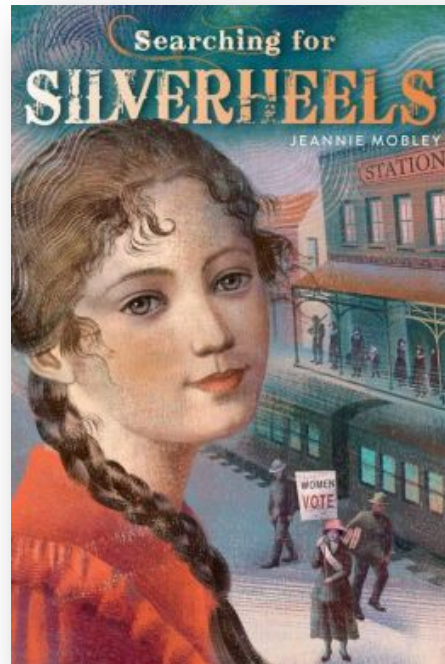
# Searching for SILVERHEELS

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

You must have many questions after reading **Searching for Silverheels** by Jeannie Mobley. Here are some of ours...

### Chapters 1-2

1. What do their different views of the Silverheels legend tell us about Josie and Pearl?
2. Do you think the legend of Silverheels that Pearl tells could be true?
3. Chapter 2 ends with Josie posing the question, "If they were her friends and loved her, why didn't a single one of them know her name?" What are some possible reasons?



### Chapters 3-5

1. In these chapters we start to get know Pearl, Pearl's mother, and Josie better. What do you think of these three women? How do you think they are going to influence one another?
2. Pearl sees unexpected and unusual things in Josie's house. What do you think these things suggest about Josie?
3. Should Pearl have taken Josie's bet? Who do you think is going to win? Would you have taken it if you were Pearl? Why or why not?

### Chapter 6-8

1. Pearl has George's interest, but she is building a connection to Frank as well. How do you think these relationships will play out? Who do you think Pearl should favor and why?
2. Who do you think tended Buck Wilson's grave?
3. What do you think of Mrs. Nelson's story? What or who do you think she saw?

### Chapter 9-11

1. George expresses concern about Pearl's connection with Josie, and asks, "You will be a true patriot?" What does it mean to be a patriot? Do you think what Josie is doing is wrong? Does it make a difference that it is wartime?

2. On page 93, Josie says that for women, "History doesn't have much use for you unless you look and act just how men want you to. If you're beautiful and work yourself to death for them, that's worth remembering. If you weren't much to look at to start with, well, feed them supper and be forgotten." Do you think this is a true statement of how women have been viewed? Do you think it is true today?

3. What is your reaction to Mrs. Crawford's treatment of Mrs. Schmidt when she offers to bring frankfurters to the Fourth of July Picnic? How would you have reacted? What do you think will happen to Pearl's mother for standing up for Mrs. Schmidt when no one else would?

### **Chapter 12-15**

1. For various reasons, Josie's campaigning becomes more controversial in Chapter 12-13. Is she in the wrong? Does she have a right to say and do the things she does?

2. In Chapters 12-15, Pearl's mother finds herself in a variety of difficult situations. What motivates her responses through these chapters? How do her responses differ from what Pearl would have done in those situations?

3. Pearl's fondness for Frank grows in Chapter 15. How do you think this will impact her upcoming picnic date with George?

### **Chapters 16-18**

1. In Chapter 16, Pearl spends a bit of time in private conversation with Josie. Do you think Pearl's feelings about Josie are changing, and if so, how? What do you think is creating the change? Do you think Josie is changing as well?

2. Pearl finds herself caught between George and Josie and doesn't know what to do. Does she do the right thing? What do you think she should have done? Have you even felt caught between an adult and a friend?

### **Chapters 19-20**

1. The picnic doesn't go exactly according to plan. How do you think this is going to change things for Pearl? For the community?

2. How do picnics in 1917 compare to picnics today (or other summer community events)?

### **Chapters 21-23**

1. Pearl gets two other versions of the Silverheels story--Josie's printed story and Frank's retelling of Mr. Lee's story. Whose story do you think is most likely to be the truth and why? Why do you think multiple versions of a story like this exist?

### **Chapter 24**

1. How and why has Pearl changed?

### **Chapter 25-27**

1. How does Pearl's relationship with Frank compare to her relationship with George?

2. How does the revelation about Josie change Pearl's view of her? How does it change your view of the story?

### **Chapter 28-29**

1. Some threads of the story are left somewhat unresolved in the end. What do you think will happen after this point? What would you like to happen?
2. Discuss the final scene. What does Pearl see? Is it real, a metaphor, or her imagination?

### **After Reading**

1. Critique the book. What did you think were its strengths? What would you have done differently if you had been the author?
2. How do you think women were different (or the same) in 1861, 1917, and today?
3. Many of the major characters in this book (Pearl, Josie, Mrs. Crawford, Pearl's mother) are female. How are they different or alike? Which of them would you see as strong or weak? What makes each of them strong or weak?
4. Josie stands up for what she believes is right, even when she knows it's going to get her into trouble. Are there things you believe in that you would risk your freedom for? How would it feel to do what Josie does?
5. The book opens with Pearl saying that it is “strange how sometimes, even though the whole world is changing around you, everything can feel so much the same.” Does Pearl feel the same at the end of the book? Has the “changing world” of the roles of women and the Great War itself affected her?

## RECIPES

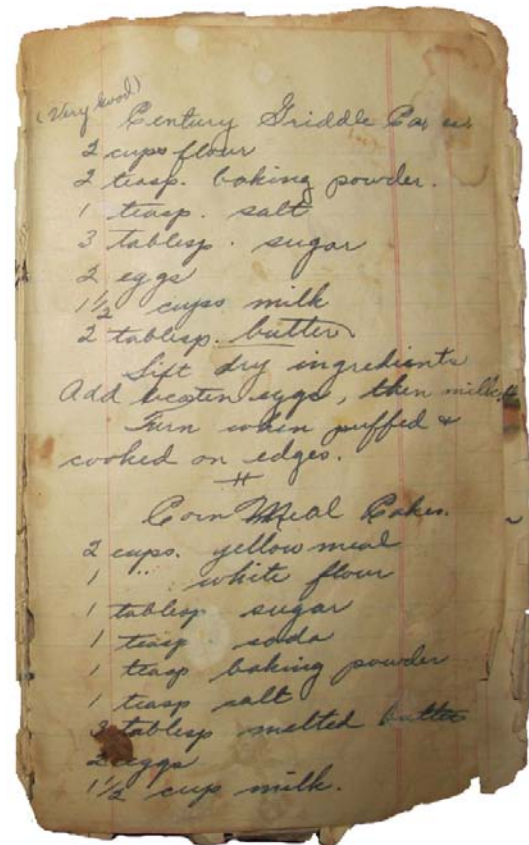
The Silverheels Café and the Patriotic Picnic in Como, Colorado, only exist in the novel **Searching for Silverheels**, but the food author Jeannie Mobley depicts is quite real. Here are Jeannie's great-grandmother's recipes handwritten in a Colorado kitchen long ago.

### Century Griddle Cakes

2 cups flour  
2 teaspoons of baking powder  
1 teaspoon of salt  
3 tablespoons of sugar  
2 eggs  
1 ½ cups milk  
2 tablespoons of butter

Sift dry ingredients. Add beaten eggs. Blend till smooth.

Flip the pancake on the griddle when the pancake is puffed and cooked on the edges.



### Coconut Picnic Cake

3 tablespoons of butter  
1 level cup sugar  
2 eggs, separated  
1 cup milk  
1 teaspoon of orange extract  
2 teaspoons of baking powder  
2 cups flour  
¼ teaspoon of salt  
1 cup shredded coconut

Beat butter and sugar until creamy. Add yolks of eggs (well beaten), milk, extract. Add flour sifted with baking powder and salt. Beat egg whites until stiff. Add to batter, along with coconut. Turn into a flat, buttered and floured cake tin. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

For the frosting:

Cream:

2 cups powdered sugar  
¼ cup soft butter

Add and beat until smooth:

¼ teaspoon of salt  
1 teaspoon of vanilla  
3-4 tablespoons of milk

If thin, add more sugar. If too thick, add more milk.

Frost cake when completely cooled. Sprinkle coconut over the top of the icing. (Coconut may be lightly toasted if desired.)

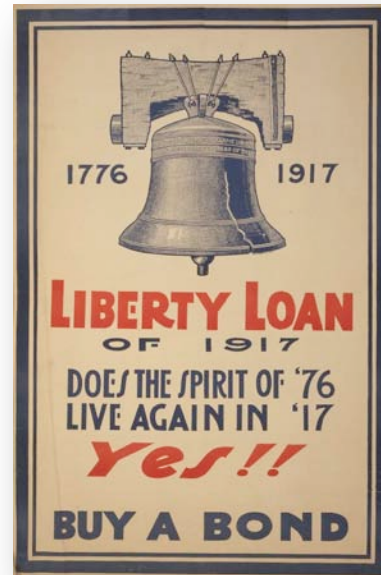
## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Here is some of the historical background for the novel **Searching for Silverheels** by Jeannie Mobley (Margaret K. McElderry Books).

### World War I & Liberty Bonds

World War I began in Europe in the summer of 1914, but the U.S. did not enter the war until 1917. In fact, President Wilson was re-elected in 1916 partially on the platform that he had kept the U.S. out of the war. However, Germany's decision to resume unrestricted submarine warfare on all enemy ships, including passenger vessels, in early 1917 led Wilson to declare war in early April of that year.

The U.S., while officially neutral, had been supporting the allied forces with shipments of food through much of the war, and, by 1916, was also supplying some munitions. However, the country was not prepared for the cost of war. To help fund the war, the government began issuing Liberty Bonds in the spring of 1917.



Bond subscriptions were made starting with a pledge of one dollar, but requiring payments totaling fifty dollars over six months. In rural communities like Como this was a large sum of money. These bonds were not popular among the American public, many of whom were unfamiliar with the idea of loans and debt. A variety of strong-arm tactics were taken up across the country to sell the bonds, among them suggestions of un-American behavior for those who didn't subscribe.

### Park County and Como, Colorado

The state of Colorado is half in the Great Plains and half in the Rocky Mountains. Within the mountains, however, are broad, open, high-elevation grassland areas known as "parks." Como, Colorado, is situated within South Park, one of the largest and highest of these mountain grasslands, the feature for which the county is named.



*Photo: Como, Colorado*

The basin of the park is at an elevation of 9,500-10,000 feet above sea level, making Como one of the highest towns in the United States.

Gold, first discovered by Whites in Tarryall Creek near Como in 1859 (the era of the Silverheels legend), brought miners into South Park. Como was not founded until twenty years later, when coal was found nearby. Como was founded by Italian coal miners who named it after their hometown in northern Italy. In the 1880s, the railroad came through South Park, and Como was chosen as a hub, a place where different rail lines connect. A roundhouse was built, and railroad workers and maintenance crews were stationed there. A hotel was built by the railroad company and new opportunities for tourism income came to the town.

The last passenger train ran through Como in 1937, and the tracks were removed in 1939. However, you can still drive over the Boreas Pass road, which was once the railroad line from Como to Breckenridge. Today, Como has only about two hundred residents, many just for the summer. The old depot and hotel are being restored, and walking tour brochures guide visitors through the streets. The grade school and high school buildings where Pearl would have gone to school still stand. Also standing are several old saloon buildings and a building across the street from the depot that served as a lunch counter in the 1920s, feeding lunch to train travelers. This lunch counter is the inspiration of the Silverheels Café.

### **The Era of Silverheels in Colorado**

Silverheels really is the name of a mountain in Colorado, and the legend of the dancehall girl is still told. While the truth of the Silverheels story is unknown, we do know that in 1861, mining communities in the Colorado mountains were remote, and medical supplies or help would have been hard to come by. The first Anglo-American populations of any size came to Colorado with the announcement of gold at the junction of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River (where



Denver stands today). This first gold strike may have been a hoax, but it brought thousands of gold seekers pouring into the state. Legitimate gold strikes in Gregory Gulch, Tarryall Creek, and other locations in the Colorado mountains kept the movement alive.

The gold strike in the Tarryall in 1859 was among the earliest, and strikes in other creeks in South Park, including Buckskin Creek, soon followed. So by the winter of 1860-1861, when

*Photo: Mount Silverheels*

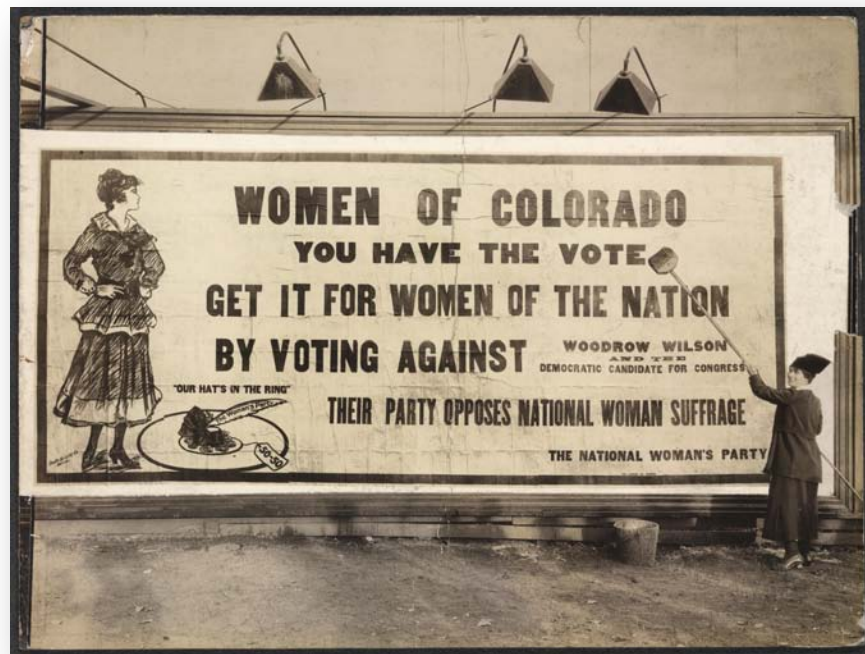
the smallpox epidemic supposedly took place, the influx of Whites into the region had only been underway for a year or two, and there was little established infrastructure to deal with such an event.

While Mexican American and Native American women inhabited the area, white women were few and far between in this era. Those in the region were dancehall girls, prostitutes, and the occasional wife who followed the gold seekers. There are many records and stories from this era in which these women served as nurses and caretakers for sick or injured men when illness or tragedy came to the gold camps. It is unknown whether or not Silverheels was a real person, but it is not an unlikely story in that respect.

### **The Suffrage Movement**

Women had been working for the vote in the United States since the mid 1800s. The National Women's Party, the organization to which Josie belongs in the book, was a radical suffragist organization that split from more traditional suffragists in 1916. Rather than fighting for the vote in individual states, they believed the fight had to be for a national constitutional amendment and so they picketed the White House. When the United States entered the war in 1917, they publicized the hypocrisy of Wilson's claim as a champion of civil rights in Europe while opposing women's right to vote at home. Their message, which had been tolerated in a time of peace, became considered seditious in wartime. Their arrests in the summer and fall of 1917 led to harsh treatment.

These are the real national events alluded to in my story that drive Josie's actions. The rally and arrests in Denver are fictional; however, Colorado did have an active suffragist movement, including members of the National Women's Party, who held a conference in the town of Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1916.



*Photo: Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

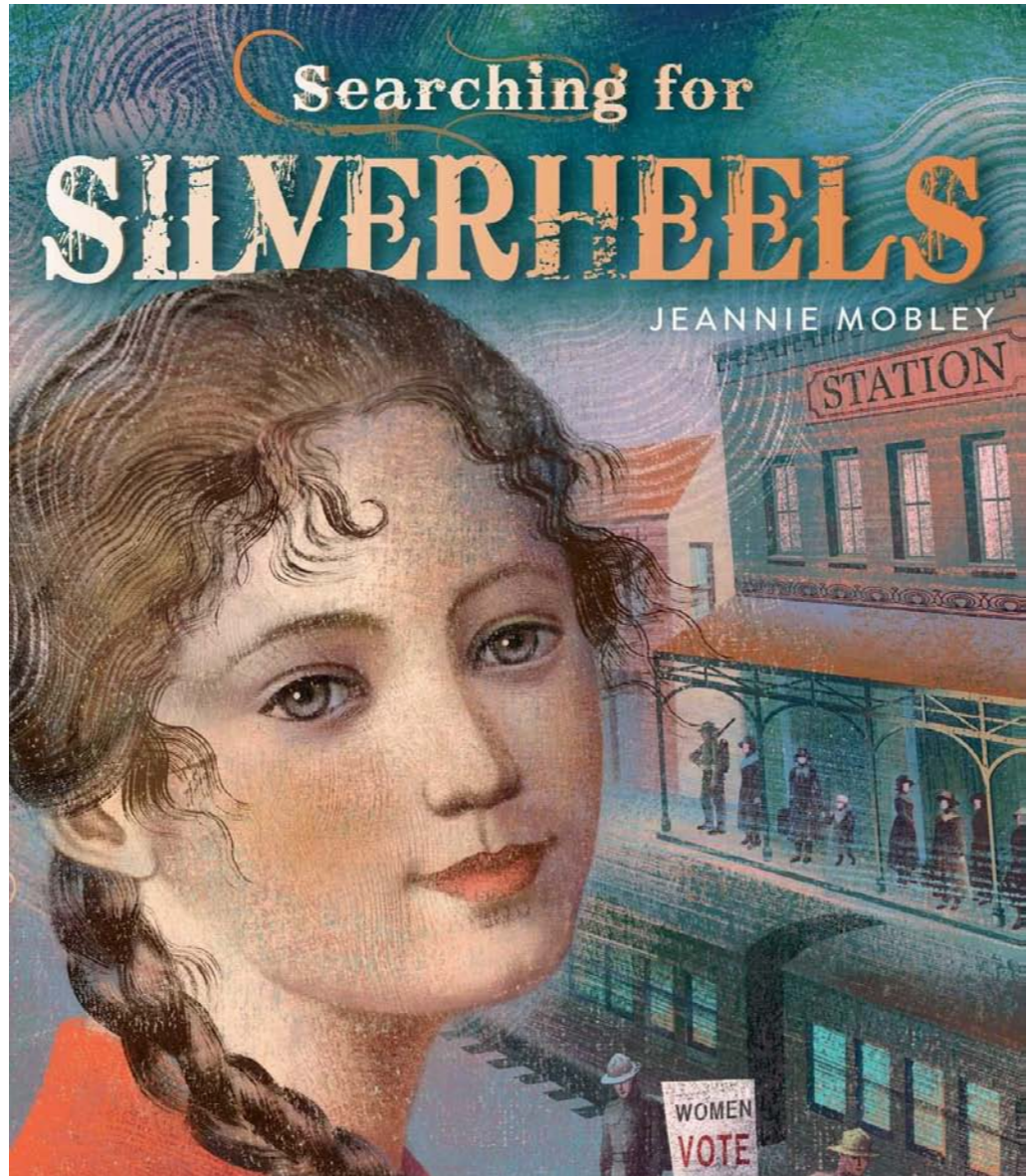
## **The Early Vote in Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado**

While the U.S. Constitution didn't give women the vote until 1920, a number of individual states approved women's suffrage earlier. The first to give women the vote was Wyoming Territory, in 1869. Wyoming, as a newly settled territory, had few women, and the state legislature agreed to women's suffrage in an attempt to draw more women to the predominantly male state.

The second state to give women the vote was Utah in 1870. However, they repealed the measure in 1887! When Colorado women got the vote in 1893, it was the third state to grant women the right, but only the second to give women the right at that time, since Utah had repealed the move. Colorado was the first state to grant women's suffrage by voter approval. This didn't stop Colorado suffragists from campaigning. The active suffragist chapters already established in Colorado continued to work for national legislation on suffrage, hand in hand with their sister suffragists in other states.

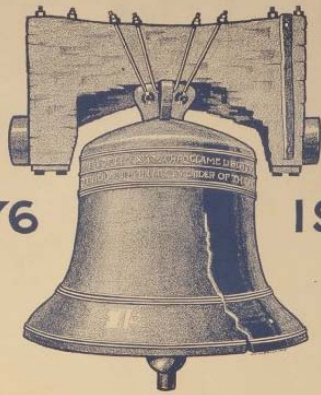


An engrossing...story of several unlikely feminist heroines with a touch of romance and intrigue.”  
—*Kirkus Reviews*



## Book Club Meeting





1776

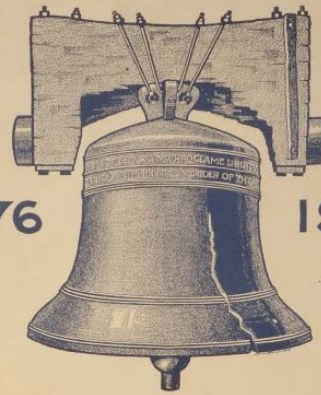
1917

# LIBERTY LOAN OF 1917

DOES THE SPIRIT OF '76  
LIVE AGAIN IN '17

*Yes!!*

**BUY A BOND**



1776

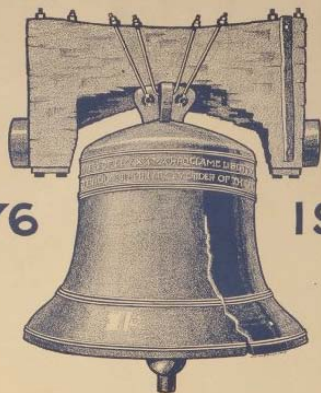
1917

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1776

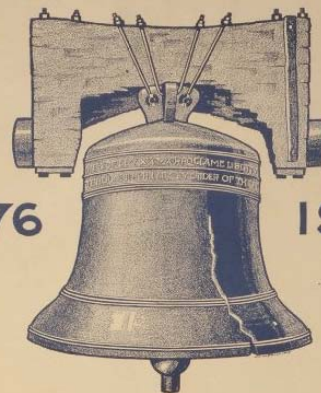
1917

# LIBERTY LOAN OF 1917

DOES THE SPIRIT OF '76  
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*Yes!!*

**BUY A BOND**



1776

1917

# LIBERTY LOAN OF 1917

DOES THE SPIRIT OF '76  
LIVE AGAIN IN '17

*Yes!!*

**BUY A BOND**

# SILVERHEELS

## CAFÉ



# MENU

# ROAST A LIBERTY DOG TO ROAST THE KAISER!

Come to the  
Patriotic  
PICNIC!

Buy Liberty Bonds!

