

They Cried on the Trail

Chapter 5

By Carolyn Estes

When Sally and John woke up the sun was already bright in the sky. They scouted the area for wood and made a small fire.

"I'm hungry," said Sally. "I'm going to make a snare trap and see if I can catch a rabbit. My Uncle taught me how to do this."

She walked off into the woods.

John took their only pot and put clean snow in it. He placed it on a flat rock in the fire. He thought at least they could warm themselves by drinking some melted snow.

Several hours passed before Sally returned with her catch. John was very proud his friend had hunting skills. He cleaned the rabbit while Sally found a cooking stick. She placed the rabbit meat over the fire to roast. They both enjoyed their feast of fresh meat and warm water.

"I will make covers for your feet with the rabbit hide," John told Sally. "It will help keep them warm."

"I took a bone from the rabbit and will make an awl—a tool to punch holes—so I can use the sinew to make a lace," he explained as he worked.

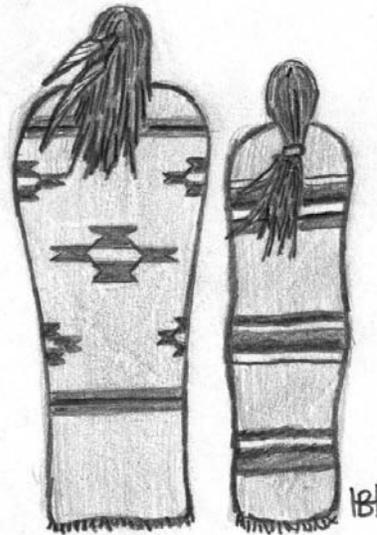
"What is sinew?" asked Sally.

"Sinew is the tendon in the rabbit's legs," he told her. "I'm glad you have small feet, I think I can get enough hide to make a pair."

The friends spent the day warming by the fire as John made the rabbit skin foot covers. They both agreed that a day of rest was good.

Morning came too soon for the young Cherokees. They prepared to continue on the trail to the new land.

Sally was pleased with the foot warmers. She laced them over the top of her moccasins. John smiled as he watched her. He was happy he could keep her a little warmer.



They made sure the fire was out, then wrapped their blankets around their shoulders. Sally picked up their pot and they began another day's long walk.

"It's easy to follow the trail," said John. "The wagon ruts scar the earth."

"Do you think the land will ever look the same?" Sally asked.

"No, the land is just like us. It will never be the same and we won't either," said John. "We will have to grow into our new homes, like the land has to grow new grass."

Sally took a deep breath and looked to the sky.

"Thank you, Uncle, for teaching me to take care of myself," she said softly. "We will be safe now."

About the story

This is an eight-chapter fiction story about two Indian children. It is based on the history of the Trail of Tears. The names of the children are made up. The story is not based on any real family. Watch for another chapter in next week's newspaper.