

Journey to a Brand New State

A Tale of Two Whippersnappers

CHAPTER THREE: Circle the Wagons

by Carolyn Estes



Ty, Trevor and Boomer ran ahead of Mama as she walked to the general store. They tied the dog to the hitching post, then rushed inside. The boys admired the big, full jars of penny candy.

"How can I help you?" the clerk asked Mama.

"I made a list of what I need," Mama replied.

The clerk took the list and rushed around gathering the supplies.

Mama told the boys to pick out one kind of penny candy they wanted. Ty and Trevor eagerly checked out each jar.

Soon, the clerk told Mama he had everything ready.

"Let's see . . . I have yeast, crackers, cornmeal, bacon, eggs, dried beef, potatoes, rice, and beans," said the clerk. "Would there be anything else?" he asked.

"Oh yes," Mama said. "I forgot to write down chocolate, thread and leather."

"Don't forget the candy, Mama," exclaimed Ty.

"That's right. I'll take two nickel bags of candy. They'll show you which ones," she said.

As they finished, Pa pulled the wagon up in front of the store. Boomer barked a greeting.

"Ready to load the supplies?" he asked.

"We sure are," answered Mama.

"Whippersnappers, throw those things up to me," he said as he gave Mama a hand up.

Once everything was in the wagon, Pa called the horses into action. The wagon bumped along the street back to camp.

Pa turned the wagon into its place in the circle. The boys helped him settle the animals for the night as Mama cooked some supper.

That night, all the folks gathered in the center of the circled wagons to listen to the Captain, also known as the wagon master.

"Welcome, folks! We're glad you're coming along," the Captain said. "We'll be up before daylight so you can gather up your livestock and cook breakfast. Be hitched up by about seven so we can pull out."

Ty and Trevor were excited to meet the

Captain who makes decisions for the wagon train. He says when to take stops and where the group will camp for the night. When the wagon train has to cross a river, he will decide how to cross. He's even in charge of waking everyone so they can start their day.

"We'll travel in single file unless the trail is wide enough to spread out," the Captain continued. "That will help keep the dust down.

"We'll take an hour or two for a lunch break and rest the animals," he said. "At about four or five we'll stop for the night.

"Pull your wagons into a circle so we can keep the livestock corralled. It's also the safest place to build your campfires

and have the young'ns play. You can sleep in or under your wagon or in tents if you have 'em.

"Our scouts are the best in these parts," he boasted. "They'll keep us on the trail and find fresh water and river crossings.

"Mornin' will come early so I'll bid you goodnight."



Newspaper activities

1. Add this chapter to your scrapbook.
2. Discuss how much candy you think the boys got for a nickel. How much do you think that amount would cost today? Write down a list of chores you think the boys will have to do on the trail. Are any of them the same as you do at home?

Next week: Chapter Four
Load 'Em Up,
Head 'Em Out

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