

Journey to a Brand New State

A Tale of Two Whippersnappers

CHAPTER FOUR:

Load 'Em Up, Head 'Em Out

by Carolyn Estes



Wake up, Trevor! Get out of bed, Ty! Go help your pa get the oxen, horses, and cow ready for the trail," said Mama. "I'll have breakfast ready when you get done."

"Mama, it's still dark," Ty said.

"Remember what the Captain said last night about being up before dawn? Now scoot," Mama said.

The sun was just coming up as the family finished eating, cleaned up the dishes and doused the campfire. They loaded everything in the wagon and got set for the first day on the trail.

"Load 'em up, head 'em out!" shouted the Captain.

One by one the wagons moved into a single file line that stretched for almost a mile.

"Pa, it's bouncy back here," said Ty. "The pots and pans are clanking against each other. Can Trevor and I sit up front with you?"

"Sure," said Pa.

The boys and Boomer joined Pa on the wooden seat.

"Look at that!" exclaimed Trevor, pointing at a rabbit hopping at the side of the trail.

Boomer perked up his ears.

"No, no Boomer," Ty held him back. "You could get lost out there and the wagons won't stop for you!"

"You're right, Ty. The wagons would just keep rolling," Pa said, smiling.

The wagon train stopped at noon for lunch. The boys were happy to get down to play.

"Stay close," warned Mama.

"We will," they shouted back.

Boomer started following a scent into the tall grass beside the trail.

About an hour later everyone boarded their wagons. Pa whistled for Boomer. He came running with his head hanging down.

"What's wrong with you, dog?" exclaimed Pa.

"Oh, my! You stuck your nose into something you shouldn't have. Looks like you got stung by something," Pa said. "We'll have to keep a close eye on you."

The wagons started rolling again.

"Pa, how far do you think we've traveled?" asked Ty.

"I reckon about eight miles," Pa answered.

"How far away is our new home?" asked Trevor.

"It's about 270 miles," Pa said.

"That will take forever," said Trevor.

"It might seem like it, but it will be worth the bumpy ride when we get there," Pa teased.

The day on the trail ended before sunset. After supper the boys and Boomer sat down by the fire with Pa.

"Today was just the first of many. We're goin' to need your help," Pa said. "There are lots of chores to be done, milking the cow, fetching water, cooking, washing dishes, and finding wood or buffalo chips for the fire. I'll expect you both to help your Ma as much as you can."

"Alright Pa, but will there be any time to play?" asked Ty.

"Sure, after all the work is done," Pa said. "Just like right now, I hear the sound of a fiddle."

"Fetch Ma and we'll see what's goin' on."

Sure enough, folks were gathering while one of the scouts played his fiddle. Soon most of the kids and adults were dancing.



Newspaper activities

1. Add this chapter to your scrapbook.
2. If Ty and Trevor's family travels 270 miles in a covered wagon going 10 miles per day, how many days would it take for the family to reach its new home? If you travel 270 miles in a car going 60 miles per hour, how many hours would it take to reach your destination?
3. Make a list of things that could slow down the family's trip.

Next week: Chapter Five Life on the Trail

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