

Journey to a Brand New State

A Tale of Two Whippersnappers

CHAPTER FIVE: Life on the Trail

by Carolyn Estes



The dusty days on the trail were never dull for the boys. The wagon train lumbered west, then turned south to enter the vast expanse of land known as Oklahoma Territory.

Ty and Trevor rode in the wagon or walked beside it.

Some days the bright blue skies turned dark and rain soaked the travelers. The rain shower was a welcome way to wash off some of the trail dust.

The boys loved to walk barefoot on the days it rained. They could squash mud up through their toes. Boomer also liked to run in the rain to cool off.

Now and then, Boomer would go exploring. The boys could usually keep track of him by watching his black tail wagging above the grass.

Most of the time, the dog stayed out of trouble. Today, he did not.

A very nasty smell rose up from the tall grass beside the wagon trail.

Boomer ran back to the wagon with his head down. He was shaking his head so hard back and forth that his ears were hitting each other.

“Oh, NO!” yelled Pa. “Boomer, you had to go find a skunk! What are we going to do with you?”

Boomer just looked sad and rubbed his head into the soft dirt on the trail.

Soon the Captain rode up to talk with Pa.

“You’ll have to fall back behind the other wagons with that stinkin’ dog,” he said. Pa pulled the wagon to the side to let the other wagons go past.

“Looks like we’ll have to camp by ourselves tonight, thanks to Boomer,” Pa said. “I hope that dog has learned his lesson!”

By morning the stench was mostly gone. Everyone was busy loading the wagons.

“Mornin’ folks,” said the Captain. “Today will be a big day. We’re crossin’ the Cimarron River just ahead.

“You’ll need to waterproof your wagons,” the Captain explained. “You whippersnappers help your Pa put wax paste in the open spaces on the bottom of the wagon. It will help keep it dry.

“I want you to cross the river first,” the Captain told Pa. “You can get your blacksmith tools ready for wagon repairs on the other side.”

The scouts had found a wide place in the river where the banks were not too steep. The water was a little too deep to ford so they would have to swim the animals and float the wagons across.

Ty and Trevor were excited to go first.

Pa and the Captain helped Mama and Ty up on the tallest horse. Trevor stayed behind with one of the nice ladies of the wagon train. He watched Pa and the Captain lead the horse with Mama and Ty into the water. Before long they reached the other side. A big cheer went up from those preparing to cross.

Pa and the Captain came back for Trevor, the other horse and Boomer. Soon the river was full of livestock and families.

Pa got busy fixing the wagon wheels. After two days the wagon train was ready to roll again.



Newspaper activities

1. Add this chapter to your scrapbook.
2. What other wildlife do you think Boomer might have encountered on the trail? Discuss your thoughts with your class.
3. There was a lot of action on the trail. Search your newspaper for words that show action. Make a list in your scrapbook of those words.

**Next week: Chapter Six
A New Home in Red Dirt Land**

Provided by
Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation