

Journey to a Brand New State

A Tale of Two Whippersnappers

CHAPTER SEVEN: Land of Adventure

by Carolyn Estes



The first few days on the farm were very busy. The family cleaned out the dugout. They put their few possessions in place.

Pa set up his blacksmith work area right away. He said folks would come around for him to do some work as soon they figured out he was here.

The dugout house was just one room. Pa and Mama put their bed on one side of the room. Ty and Trevor's bed was on the other. In the middle was a table, with cooking items stacked nearby.

The boys loved to play in the creek or try their hand at fishing. Once they caught enough fish for Mama to cook up a mess for supper.

One day, Ty and Trevor decided to explore the area. They took Boomer with them. Mama said she felt better when they did.

It didn't take long for Boomer to sniff out a lot of white bones all over the ground. They rushed back to show some bones to Pa.

"Pa, look what we found!" yelled Trevor. "What are they? Why are they so big?"

"These are buffalo bones," said Pa. "I'll give you a couple of tow sacks to put them in. When you get enough we'll take them to town to sell."

The boys ran back to find more.

As fall came, the days grew cooler. Pa decided to build a sod addition to the dugout. They needed more shelter before winter set in.

He planned a trip to town to buy new windows and a sodbuster.

"Boys, get your tow sacks of bones," said Pa.

Ty and Trevor loaded several sacks. They were excited about earning some money.

"Fetch Mama and we'll head out," Pa directed.

Pa dropped Mama and the boys off at the store with their bags of bones. He went looking for building supplies.

"Good day, young men! What you got in your sacks?" asked the clerk.

"We'd like to sell these buffalo bones," said Ty.

"Let's weigh them," replied the clerk.

"Looks like it's going to be about five cents each," he said.

The boys looked around the store, planning how to spend their fortune. Five cents would buy a lot of penny candy.

"I guess you'll be coming back to town for the big celebration next week," the clerk said to Mama.

"What celebration?" she asked.

"Oklahoma is going to be a new state. President Theodore Roosevelt will sign the papers on November 16," he said. "The whole town is planning a big shindig."

"Yes, I guess we'll need to come," Mama said.

Pa returned with his supplies to pick up Mama and the boys. On the way back to the farm she told Pa about the big celebration.

"Sounds like something these whippersnappers need to see," said Pa.

The next few days the family worked from dawn to dusk cutting sod for the addition to their home. They hurried to beat the winter cold.



Newspaper activities

1. Add this chapter to your scrapbook.
2. A sod house required about an acre of land. The sod would be turned over with a sodbuster. Furrows were cut 4 inches deep. Then a spade was used to cut the sod into rectangular slabs about 12 inches by 24 inches. The slabs would be laid with the grass side down. Rows would be added with the slab straddling the joint between the two beneath it. Openings were left for the door and windows. Dirt was compressed into the low spots and between all joints. Finally, a roof was added. Search your newspaper to see what houses are made from today.

Next week: Chapter Eight Celebration of Statehood

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