

A CARING COWBOY

A family, all nine of them, loaded their earthly possessions into a covered wagon pulled by a four-horse hitch and set out to join 14 other families leaving Arkansas headed for Texas and the promise of a new land. Rolling through rainstorms, hail, blistering hot days, fighting off insects at night, the wagons rolled across the plains of what is today Oklahoma.

One afternoon, a cloud of dust appeared on the horizon behind the group, and the wagon master halted the column and drew them close together into a circle. The men reached for rifles while the women gathered children together into the center of the wagons. In a few moments it became apparent that the dust was coming from a lone rider carrying a parcel across his saddle.

Slowing his horse to a walking gait, the man called out that he meant no harm. The horse stopped, the man got down, reached for the bundle and unwrapped a small child no more than two years old. A cry of recognition tore from the throat of the baby's mother when she saw her seventh child standing beside the strange man. The child had not been missed, but had fallen from the wagon and the cowboy had found him sitting in the dirt and sifting it through his fingers... waiting for someone to come back for him.

How many of us are on life's "wagon train" headed for the promised land, and so intent on our journey that we fail to miss those of God's children who fall off along the way?

-Jacksonville, Al bulletin