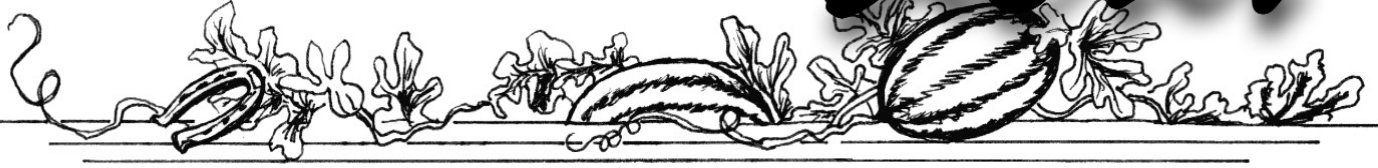




An Old Secret



Chapter Five - by Russ and Kay Hively

Joe almost panicked. Without the truck how would they get the watermelons into town? Then Daddy said when he discovered the truck was missing he went looking for it and found it in the melon patch. It was just fine. Both boys let out loud sighs of relief.

Mr. Porter looked down at his feet. He always did that when he had something important to say. Then he said the truck had been empty when he parked it last night. When he found it this morning, it was fully loaded with melons ready to be taken to town.

Joe and Grant looked at each other in shock. No one had any idea who moved or loaded the truck. During breakfast, the three of them talked about the truck being moved last night and the crate of food on the porch yesterday.

Joe had never seen so many strange things happen to his family. While eating his biscuits he could only wonder what was going to happen next. After breakfast, they headed to the melon patch for another day of hard work.

Later, as he was picking melons, Joe saw something in the dirt. He lifted it out of the sandy soil. It was an old horseshoe. Joe wondered how a horseshoe got in the melon patch. Stepping over a couple of melons, Joe showed it to his father.

Mr. Porter said he had found shoes like this in the fields when he was a boy. Then he reminded Joe that horses had been used for travel and farming for many years before people had trucks and tractors. Daddy said the shoe may have been on someone's workhorse, or it could have been a shoe on a cowboy's horse.

Joe was surprised when he heard that. He asked Daddy why he thought it could have been on a cowboy's horse. Mr. Porter explained that a man named Jesse Chisholm had blazed a trail through the Indian Territory all the way to Kansas. Mr. Chisholm used the trail to trade with the Army and with Indians during the Civil War. After the Civil War, the trail was used by ranchers to move cattle north from Texas to the railroad in Kansas.

Daddy told Joe that the Porter farm was located right on the Chisholm Trail. He said 80 to 85 years ago, millions of cattle had passed right across their farm. Carefully Joe turned the horseshoe over in his hands and imagined it on a horse carrying a cowboy on the Chisholm Trail. Until now, he had no idea their farm was on such a famous spot.

When Joe went to put the shoe in the truck, he saw a loaf of bread on the truck seat. It was one that had been left on the porch yesterday. In an instant, he forgot about the horseshoe and started thinking about the strange things that had been happening on their farm.



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Things to Think About and Do

- Mr. Chisholm blazed a trail through the Indian Territory. What did the Indian Territory later become? When did the change happen? Find out who the "Sooners" were.
- There were other trails used by pioneers to settle the United States. Find four other trails and determine where the trail started and ended and when it was used.

Next Week: Chapter Six – Joe's idea.