
EPISODE FOUR

EARLY SETTLERS IN MEADVILLE, 1794

[The MEAD and DICKSON CHILDREN, three girls and two boys rush in wildly from the right]

MEAD BOY. *[As he touches a tree]* I got here first.

DICKSON BOY. No you didn't, it was me.

OLDER MEAD GIRL. *[As she runs in]* Children, children.

Mother may be putting baby sister Sarah to sleep.

OTHER TWO GIRLS. Hush, hush.

MEAD BOY. Well, didn't I get here first?

OLDER GIRL. No. You beat Henry across the stockade from the Dickson's log house, but you tripped him just as he started.

MEAD BOY. No, I did not.

CHORUS OF GIRLS AND SMALLER BOY. Yes you did; yes, you did.

MEAD BOY. I didn't. He walked on my foot.

[As Mrs. MEAD enters, the MEAD BOY is shouting "I didn't," the DICKSON BOY "You did" amid protests from the girls]

Mrs. MEAD. Children, children, sister Sarah will wake if you're not more quiet. *[Turning to the DICKSON CHILDREN]* Glad to see you Henry and Millie. Where are your father and mother?

THE BOY. Coming, Mrs. Mead.

THE GIRL. Father was late tonight, so mother waited for him. *[As she goes to Mrs. MEAD]* Oh, I'm glad you asked us all for supper tonight.

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Mrs. MEAD. Well, dears, we must do all we can to make these newcomers, the Dicks, feel at home when the General brings them in tonight.

DICKSON GIRL. Who are they, Mrs. Mead?

Mrs. MEAD. A man, his wife, and two children, coming here from Pittsburgh to settle, just as all of you came from New York state a few months ago. General Mead has asked them to stay with us in the stockade till they choose a home for themselves.

MEAD BOY. It's for them your father and mine have been making over the log store house, isn't it mother?

Mrs. MEAD. It won't be very good, but its the best we can provide with only your log house, that frame house of ours, and the store house safely inside the stockade. Sam, go climb up by the gate and see if your father be coming.

[Boy goes to the middle of the bridge, where he climbs up and waits]

Are the rest of you starved, waiting for our new friends to come?

CHILDREN. *[Chorus]* Yes, Oh, yes.

Mrs. MEAD. Well, Mary, run tell Roger and Tony to bring out the table and the supper. It is so warm that we will eat out here where there is more space than in our small rooms.

[Even as the children run off, Mr. and Mrs. DICKSON appear, walking quickly. She carries a huge pumpkin pie, and he a pumpkin in each hand]

DICKSON. *[As he enters]* Very sorry not to be on time, Mrs. Mead, but I worked late on the General's lumber mill here on the Creek. The wheel never has run as well as that in his grist mill, but I think I have found the trouble.

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MRS. MEAD. It's all right. The Dicks haven't come yet.

DICKSON. I thought you wouldn't mind anyway, for the General said last night I wasn't to stop until I had finished the job. We've run short on lumber for the store house and he wants to mill some.

MRS. DICKSON. William is mighty willing to work on that mill, Mrs. Mead, for he knows the lumber's coming out of it to build the house he's planning for us four miles up the creek.

DICKSON. [*Enthusiastically*] Mrs. Mead, that's a wonderful piece of land I've found, just naturally as smooth as my hand. I do admire these big forest trees on another man's land, but give me something I don't have to fell and burn and dig, and pull, and plow and replot for roots, and then plow some more.

MRS. MEAD. I haven't been so far away from the stockade as your place in a year, but the General tells me it's an unusually fine piece of land [*Looking at the pie*] Why, Maria, I believe that's the biggest pie I ever saw.

MRS. DICKSON. I tried to make it big enough for all four children and leave a little over for their parents, but I never shall get a pie those youngsters of yours and mine can't get outside of.

[*During this dialogue, the men servants have brought in the table and chairs, assisted by the children. After two trips, the table is ready and set, with plates, cups, knives and forks, a pan of apples, a big pan of roasted potatoes, and two large pitchers of milk.*

[*In the interim between the two entrances of the servants, SAM MEAD returns from the stockade gate*]

SAM. Ma, Pa isn't anywhere in sight, and I'm awful hungry.

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MRS. MEAD. Very well, go help the others and you'll get the supper the quicker.

[*As the children return the second time, the DICKSON BOY lingers over the dish of apples*]

DICKSON BOY. May I have one, Mrs. Mead?

MRS. MEAD. Of course, at supper. Those are the first apples in this settlement, the first small crop from the trees neighbor Van Horn planted six years ago.

YOUNGER MEAD GIRL. Just one apiece, mother says.

[*The children are moving about the table, so hungry that they sniff the food with pleasure. The two younger are slipping into their seats*]

MRS. MEAD. Children, children. We want the table to look fresh for the new comers, don't we? We'll wait just a little. They must come any minute.

SAM. [*As he moves 'round the table*] Roast potatoes and lots of milk.

DICKSON BOY. And apples.

TWO IN CHORUS. Um-m.

MRS. DICKSON. [*Holding up the pie*] Look, children.

CHILDREN IN CHORUS. Ah-h. Pumpkin pie.

DICKSON. [*Holding up his two pumpkins*] And more to come.

[*As DICKSON passes the two pumpkins to ROGER the children suddenly encircle ROGER, crying "The pumpkin song, sing the pumpkin song, Roger. Yes, while we wait."*

[*Drawn to the front by them, he sings, pumpkins in hand, the following. Tony joins in:*

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

Oh, when the spring opens, we then take the hoe
And make the ground ready to plant and to sow:
Our corn being planted and seeds being sown,
The worms destroy much before it is grown:
And when it is growing some spoil there is made
By birds and by squirrels that pluck up the blade:
And when it is come to full corn in the ear,
It is often destroyed by raccoon and deer.

And now, too, our garments begin to grow thin,
And wool is much wanted to card and to spin:
If we can get garments to cover without
Our other in-garments are clout upon clout:
Our clothes we brought with us are apt to be torn,
They need to be clouted soon after they're worn.
But clouting our garments they hinder us nothing,
Clouts double are warmer than single whole clothing.

For pottage and puddings and custards and pies
Our pumpkins and parsnips are common supplies.
We've pumpkins at morning and pumpkins at noon,
If 'twere not for pumpkins we would be undone.
If barley be wanting to make into malt
We must be contented and think it no fault:
For we can make liquor to sweeten our lips
With pumpkins and parsnips and walnut tree chips.

As the singing is about to end, there is a loud knocking, supposedly at the stockade gate. The two servants hasten to open it. All turn toward the little cavalcade that enters. The children run to meet it. The DICKSONS are just behind MRS. MEAD as she goes forward. WILLIAM DICK enters ahead, axe on shoulder, gun across his back, leading a horse with a pillion on which is seated MRS. DICK, with a

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five month's old child in her arms. Just behind comes a small boy driving a cow. Behind all and on guard is the stalwart figure of GENERAL MEAD. As they enter, one servant takes GENERAL MEAD's horse, the second the cow. DICKSON steps forward to take DICK's horse]

MEAD. Mary, these are our new friends, the Dicks. They are so hungry and weary that the sooner you can give them supper and let them rest, the better.

MRS. MEAD. [*Shaking hands with DICK*] You certainly are heartily welcome. [*She moves with him to help MRS. DICK dismount*]

MRS. MEAD. [*As she takes the baby*] What is its name?

MRS. DICK. John.

MRS. MEAD. John Dick. He looks just as my little Sarah did five years ago—the first baby born in this settlement, Mrs. Dick. [*She passes the child to MRS. DICKSON*]

MRS. DICKSON. Children, children, come and look at little John Dick.

[*They cluster about her. As if stiff, MRS. DICK slips down from the pillion*]

MRS. MEAD. If you're very tired, sit down just as you are for supper. It is all ready.

MRS. DICK. I don't know but I'm too tired to eat. [*To the boy*] Are you, dear?

BOY. [*Loudly*] No.

MRS. DICK. [*As she sits*] Ah, I'm glad to be here. This wilderness frightens me.

DICK. She doesn't like the reptiles and wild beasts.

MRS. MEAD. You saw many?

DICK. Snakes in plenty and some catamount.

MRS. DICK. Oh, it's the wolves, William, that terrify me. Night after night in the three weeks coming by boat from

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Pittsburgh to Waterford, I heard them howling on the bank.

MRS. DICKSON. Three weeks!

DICK. It's only some thirty or forty miles in a straight line, but its nearer a hundred by the windings of the river, and we came against the current.

MRS. DICK. Oh, it was easy enough to Waterford, but between there and here the overhanging bushes and branches nearly swept me off.

DICK. [*With an approving glance*] You hung on well, Mary. [*To MRS. MEAD*] I had to cut out the way three or four times.

MRS. DICK. Well, that gave David a chance to rest. Tired, dear?

DAVID. [*With a big yawn*] No.

MRS. MEAD. [*As the GENERAL and DICKSON draw in at the back*] Now, then, everybody, supper.

[*As she is placing her guests, with all the children well in the front, the small DICK BOY at the left corner, there is the following dialogue*]

MEAD. [*Rubbing his hands*] Dickson, here's luck! You know how badly we've been needing salt for the cattle and ourselves. Dick here brings me in a bag as a gift.

DICKSON. [*Leaning across the table to shake DICK's hand*] That's the very best present possible.

THE MEAD BOY. Father, did you see any Indians?

MEAD. No, but none the less, I want you children to keep well inside the stockade these next days. Mr. Dick saw some, and there are reports abroad of restlessness among them.

MRS. DICK. Yes, the Indians frightened me. You tell them about it, William.

DICK. 'Bout half way between here and Waterford, just

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before your father met us, we were coming through an open glade. Up there on a hill top, were two Indians looking off the other way. I kept right on with my rifle ready. Just as we were going into the woods again, they turned. I am sure they saw us, for they hesitated. They made into the woods, I thought to head us off, but almost at once your father met us, and they made no other sign.

DICKSON. Were they in war paint?

DICK. I couldn't quite tell—they were too far off, but I think so.

[*A look between DICKSON and MEAD*]

MRS. DICK. Well, it's good to be where one is safe among friends, inside a strong stockade.

[*Another troubled look between MEAD and DICKSON*]

DICK. Have the Indians been restless here at Cussewago?

MRS. MEAD. [*Looking up*] We don't call the place that these last years.

DICK. Why that's what Lieutenant Polhemus and Ensign Rosencranz at Venango called it.

MEAD. That was its name when last they went through here.

MRS. DICK. The Indians don't really trouble you here, do they?

[*DICKSON and MEAD hesitate*]

MRS. MEAD. [*Impulsively*] Last year the General's father went out to fell and plow. Hostile Indians were about. When grandfather did not come in at night we sent for him. We found him side by side, where he fell in the death grapple with Delaware Bull, the Indian chief. The General's mother hasn't been the same since that.

MEAD. I hadn't meant to tell you newcomers tonight,

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but shortly you must know anyway that the Indians are threatening. [To DICK] Don't prospect for land alone. [To MRS. DICK] Don't go outside the stockade alone. Don't let your boy, alone, or with our children, go out unguarded.

[There is loud knocking at the gate. All the children start, frightened, except little DAVID DICK, who has fallen asleep on the table, head in his arms. The servant, TONY, hurries to open the gate. VAN HORN enters in trapper's costume]

MEAD AND HIS WIFE. Good evening, Christopher.

VAN HORN. Good evening.

MEAD. Van Horn, these are William Dick and his wife and children. I have told you about them.

VAN HORN. A hearty welcome to you. I hope we can make you happy here. I don't like to interrupt your supper, Mrs. Mead, but I am going the rounds from house to house to make sure how many men I may count on in the guard I'm organizing for the future defence of the town. I want fifteen or sixteen good Indian fighters. The Governor has sent me power to act.

MEAD. Count on me, of course.

DICKSON. And me.

DICK. And me, though I haven't had the experience of these two.

MRS. MEAD. Do you really fear trouble, Christopher?

VAN HORN. Not for long if we are prepared, but we haven't been. Next year, Mead, we must have a newer and stronger stockade.

MEAD. I don't think this stockade—

VAN HORN. No, I know you don't, but this stockade is getting shaky. Later I am going to organize all the settlers within a radius of fifty miles for effective fighting of Indians, and I am going to see that here we have the best stockade anywhere, but for the moment I can only

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make the best of the men I can gather here. The main thing is not to be caught napping. The Indians won't attack if they know we're prepared.

[As he turns to go, the MEAD BOY yawns deeply. This sets off all the others]

MRS. MEAD. *[Seeing this]* Dear me, dear me, in our Indian scare we forget bedtime. Come, everybody—Christopher, wait if you can, we will sing the evening song.

[The men uncover and all sing]

The night is come wherein at last we rest,
God order this and all things for the best!
Beneath His blessing fearless may we lie,
Since He is nigh.

Drive evil thoughts and spirits far away;
Oh, Father, watch o'er us till dawning day;
Body and soul alike from harm defend,
Thine angels send.

Father, Thy Name be praised, Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be wrought as in our heav'nly home;
Keep us in life, forgive our sins, deliver us,
Now and ever. Amen.

MRS. MEAD. *[As they finish]* And now it's bed for the children and these tired people.

VAN HORN. Well, good night, all. *[To DICK]* Glad to count on you, sir, as one of us.

[He swings off across the bridge with military bearing. DICK picks up his boy, sound asleep. DICKSON gathers up the little girl, also fast asleep. The boy walks sleepily between his father and mother as they go. MRS. MEAD precedes the DICKS to their quarters. MEAD shepherds his sleepy flock to the right. The servants clear away food, table and chairs]