

METRO/STATE

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Two boys back home; missing for 2 years

By FIONA SOLTES

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Howard Cattrell used to receive pictures of his two sons in various places around the country.

But he didn't really know where they were, until Wednesday.

Kevin, 7, and Jody, 6, were found in Athens, Texas, more than two years after they disappeared following a weekend with their mother.

"Sometimes I didn't think I'd ever see them again," said Cattrell, 33, of Dowelltown, Tenn. "And sometimes, I thought, well, maybe."

Cattrell's ex-wife, Brenda Gail Cattrell, 29, was charged with kidnapping. She was released from the Henderson County, Texas jail after posting \$2,500 bail.

The children had been living in a trailer in the east Texas town with their mother and several other peo-

ple, Cattrell said.

The family was reunited late Thursday after Cattrell and his wife, Sherry, drove to Texas. Now the Cattrells and the boys are back in Dowelltown, a town of 308 people in DeKalb County.

The boys were found after a three-month search through the American Association for Lost Children, a national, non-profit organization based in Houston.

"Those kids were in a real sad, bad condition," said Mark Miller, founder of the association. "They were all cramped up in a two-bedroom trailer, sleeping on the floor with their mother. It was just awful."

Miller, who worked with the Henderson County Sheriff's Department in the arrest, said the boys had told police they had witnessed acts of violence, including a knife fight, between their mother and another man to whom she had been married.

"I sure am happy to see them home," Cattrell said. "I want my kids to grow up in the right home, and I want to see them taken care of. ... If they're not healthy, they're not going to learn anything. And if they're always on the run, they'll end up in jail. They'll grow up to be

How to help

The American Association for Lost Children helps parents find children who have been kidnapped across the country at no charge.

The person searching for the child must have custody, the child must have been registered as missing with law enforcement officials, and a felony warrant must have been taken out against the person believed to have the child.

Call the hot line at 1-800-375-5683 for more information. The organization runs entirely on donations, which can be sent to P.O. Box 41154 in Houston, Texas 77241.

nothing, and I don't want to see that happen."

Cattrell said he and Brenda had been divorced since 1988, when Brenda gained custody of the two boys. But after several instances when they came to visit in "really bad" condition, where "their clothes were so dirty they were stiff," Cattrell said, he took his ex-wife to court and gained custody of the boys.

A month later, the boys did not return from a weekend visit with their mother in July 1989. ■

