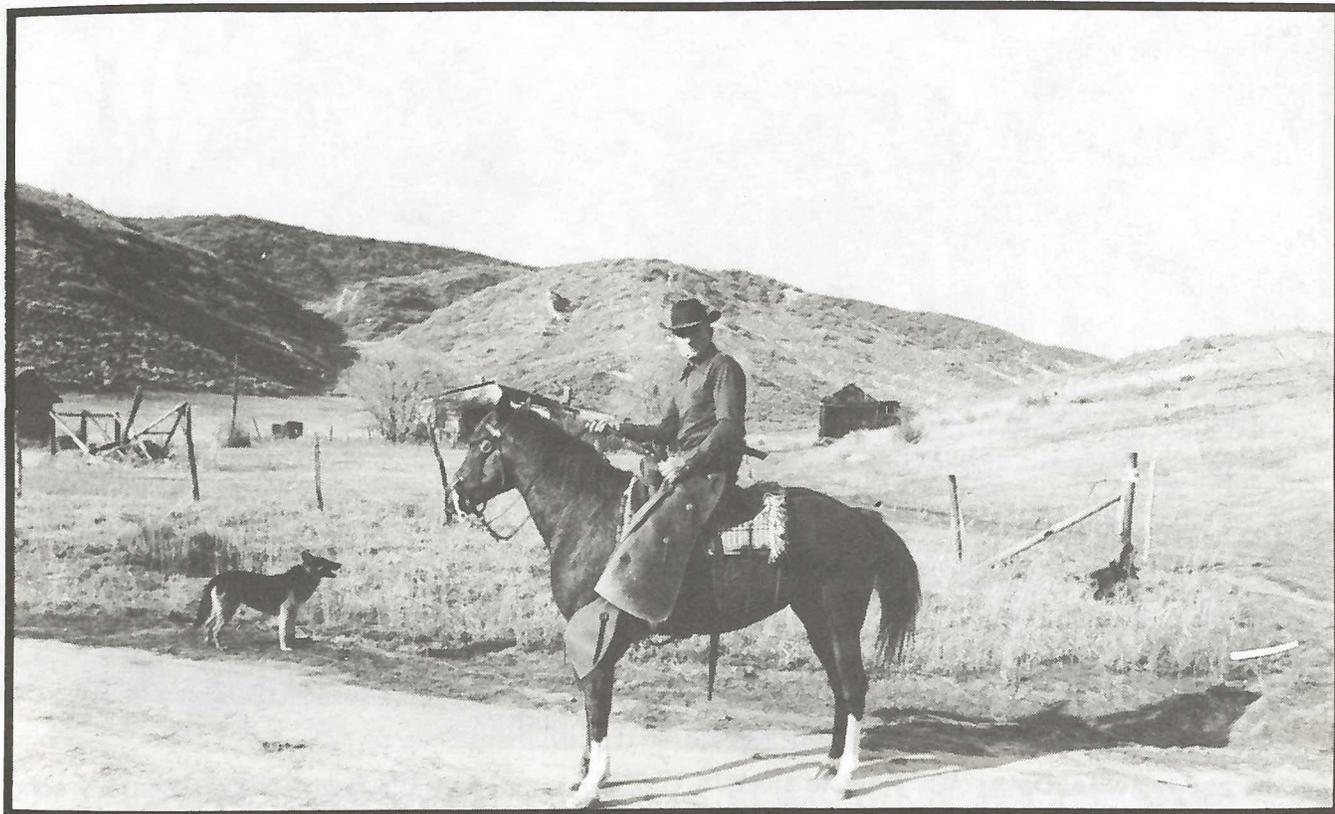


Doc Utterback:

Part Two

By Mari Jo Hoaglund



“I came to Steamboat, a babe in arms, on a four-horse stage.”

This is the conclusion of a two part story on Doc Utterback. Part one was in issue 12, (Vol. III, no. 4.) In that part Doc told me about his family's trip west in 1908. He related their life in Routt County and his life up until 1940. This second part covers his life to the present.

His mother and father were among the first settlers who came to Routt County. Mrs. Utterback celebrated her 100th birthday September 18, 1980. She is still spry and good humored. Doc told about their ranching operations on Tow and Chimney Creek. He was and still is a good cowboy. He received his education in country schools and went on to be a successful veterinarian.

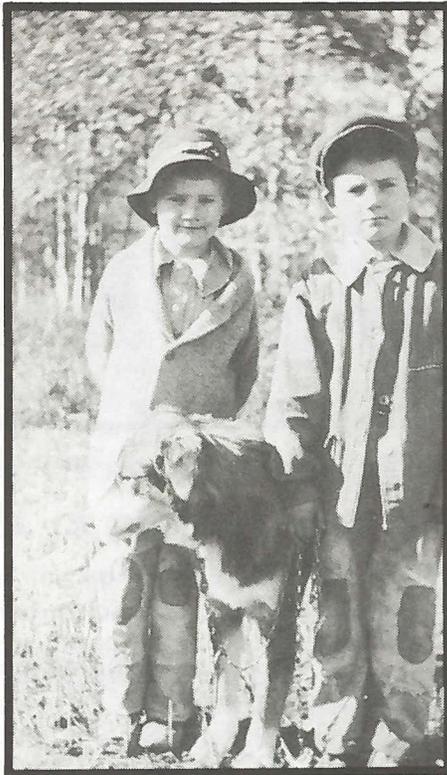
Doc, his brother Claude, and sister Adeline used to walk to school where they received a good education. Adeline was quite a cowgirl and

was a jockey for many years. The Routt County Fair has many good memories of the Utterback children for their entries. Adeline currently resides in Craig with her husband, Jack Mann. Claude always liked to hunt and was quite a sportsman. He now lives in Kansas.

Doc started part two by telling about his military experiences.

“My R.O.T.C. training in college made me subject to call at any time. I went into the Army in May of 1941. I was a second lieutenant in the cavalry at Fort Bliss, Texas. I was the head of the veterinary clinic for a year down there where they had 15 thousand head of horses.

“Then in 1942, I was transferred from there to Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland. That was a chemical warfare training center. They dealt with poison gases, how to deploy them, and



Claude, Doc, and Rover going to school in 1919

protection against them for both animal and man. I was there for approximately nine months. My wife and new born baby girl were there with me.

"I got my orders for overseas. In October of 1942, I embarked from Camp Shanks, New York for overseas — destination unknown. During wartime they didn't impart where they were sending me for security. On the way across the ocean, about seven or eight hundred miles off the coast of France, in midday about out third or fourth day our a German 'Volkwolf' plane came up over the horizon and headed for our ship. This was very near the center of the place where the Lusitania, the sister ship to the one we were on, was sunk. Our ship was fast. It had 9,800 soldiers aboard and several thousand rounds of ammunition and explosives. If they would have hit us we'd all went up. Orders were for the battle personnel to their battle stations, and all the rest to go below deck. I stood right in the center of the ship at the staircase and watched that bird come in. When he got close they opened up on him. They had too much firepower. He turned right away and left. As soon as he was out of sight, the captain turned the ship ninety degrees angle. We got in a raging storm. A half hour after that we heard a lot of German planes overhead. The visibility was zero, so they couldn't find us. We went all that afternoon, night, and the next day at four o'clock we landed in Glasgow, Scotland.

"They unloaded and put us on a train that

afternoon. At one o'clock the following morning we arrived at Staffordshire, England. We stayed there for two days, rested and cleaned up. My unit went to Exeter, England. That was back in the low hills and agricultural backwaters of Sommerset Parrish. It's a way from the coast, kind of central England.

"Exeter was a small town with a lot of agriculture, dairies, and small farms. I stayed there for four months taking actual training. At that time, the veterarnians were mostly on food inspection and sanitation. The camp had ten thousand troops stationed there. It wasn't bombed very much because there were no big military installations or supplies there.

"From there I was transferred to South Hampton, England. That's 60 miles south of Exeter and right across the coast from France. I was there for several months. We took care of the food suplies coming in on the ships, inspected the hospitals and the army installation for sanitation.

"Prior to that time, I made friends with a medical major who was in the tank corp. He'd had the top of a tank door come down on his head and impact his neck. He couldn't sleep at night and had a 'hell of a time' getting around. I was down at the officer's mess hall one afternoon when this major asked me if I knew anything about chiropractry. I told him I'd given quite a few adjustments. He asked me to help him out.

"So he came up to the barracks after lunch, and I worked on him a while. That night he was still sore. I told him it would take more than one treatment to get his problem worked out. I gave him two treatments a day, and in three weeks he could sleep without pain at night. I treated him for three months after that. He got so he could function back on duty.

"I demonstrated for a week about manipulation and getting the soreness out of backs and legs at the South Hampton hospital. I got in trouble with the colonel who was the head of the veterinary corp in that region. I'll never



Doc's sister, Adeline, after winning a race at the Routt County Fair in 1935

forget him. I wanted to become associated with military medicine and I got into a racket with him about it one day.

"I said I could take any quarter master sergeant and in three weeks teach him all he needed to know about the food inspection and sanitation. He said, 'That's what your job is and what you're here for.' Well, I told him the only difference between him and I was that I had forgotten more about medicine than he ever knew. That was the wrong thing to say. He was going to court-marshal me.

"I went to this major I had worked on and told him the story. He told me they were going to Normandy. This was a couple of days before the Normandy invasion. They were heading out right away and asked me to go along. He had an executive officer call up the colonel and tell him to give Captain Utterback an assignment with the 186th General Hospital for an indefinite period of time. The Colonel said he was issuing orders for insubordination. The officer said I'm sorry but you can attend to that when he gets back. We're going to take him to the continent with us. He saved me, and I got orders to go on.

"I went through France with that outfit. I would adjust necks and backs and go to field dispensaries and first-aid stations. I learned a lot about human medicine and really liked it. They found out I could do it, so I just kind of fell in with the bunch. From then on, I was in the medical corps. I never did get back to see what the old colonel was going to do to me.

"Now I'm going to tell you the story of how I met Patton. His armored diversion was at Worms. This was about 100 kilometers from this place in Luxembourg where we were. They told him they needed his armor in 48 hours. This was in December, 1944. It was cold, snowy, and drizzling. They needed him to release the embattled 101st airborne, which was trapped in Bastogne, Patton made it in time.

"The medical unit I was with went out 40 kilometers the next day to meet Patton. He was at the head of his column in his jeep. It was colder than sin that day. We took his outfit some hot coffee and food. After an hour his command moved on, and by nightfall he was in battle position. They rescued the 101st airborne. That really ended the German threat.

"Soon after that our medical unit was called in and asked if they wanted to stay on as a rehabilitation team which we did. I was on the team based in the Rhine Province of Germany. That extended to the French border, Berlin, and the Rhine River. I was there for nine months.

Our team was a nurse, sanitary engineer, medic, veterinarian, and a Bergmeister, which is the same as a town mayor. Koblintz, on the Rhine River, in the northern part of the province, was our headquarters. We had 60 towns to get



Doc's brother, Claude, after a good day hunting in 1930

rehabilitated. My job was to go out and find veterinarians who were practicing before the war and put them back to practice.

"There was this big German veterinarian who could speak seven languages. In Germany at that time 80% of the veterinarians had a M.D. Degree. This man did. He was practicing animal medicine though. He and I rode up and down that province day after day. He opened up one day and said 'I'm a dyed in the wool Nazi, but the war is over, and I want to get my country back on its feet.' I said, 'That's fine, doctor. We won't have any trouble. The war is over, that's that!'

"I stayed at many of the German homes in the Rhine River Valley. I was surprised to find how friendly the people were there. They said we fought the wrong people. Everyone of them told me 'You better take care of the Russians now, because they're going to take care of you later on.' Patton wanted to go on. But, of course, the boys in Washington wouldn't let him.

"One day I was driving around sightseeing. The Black Forest is high, hilly country. We drove into a friendly little village. Over there the habitation is all grouped together. The name of the valley was Otterback which means Valley of the Beavers. That's where the name Utterback comes from. Our family was originally from Whittenburg, Germany. Two brothers came to New York in 1648. One of them married an Indian and one married a French gal. I am of the Indian off shoot. Our lineage traces back to the Tufonic Knights who originated from the Black Forest of Germany. They fought the Saxons from England. Now that's where I get my fighting blood. Briefly that's my family tree.

"While I was in the Rhine Province the people used to set up entertainment for the American soldiers. The small town of Heidleburg sat on a high timbered ridge above the Rhine. That's where the famous University of Heidelberg is. Some of the best students in the world came out of there. There was nary a bomb dropped on it.



Ben Hur drives again

"They had an orchestra in Heidleberg that used to play for the German soldiers during the war. After the war they played for the American forces. There was a gal in there who could warble like a bird. I've never heard anyone sing like that in my life. They had an hour evening performance each weekend. We never missed it. I'll never forget her because she could sing so well.

"I signed up to come home in August, 1946. I came home on a bride ship. There was a little Irish girl who would sing every night. She could sing those ballads to a farethee well. We got off in New York. They railroaded us down to this army depot in Illinois. I was released from the army.

"I stayed in the reserves for eight years. I came back to Steamboat Springs and started practicing. I had a garage fixed up as a clinic. I practiced until I got into politics. I used to take care of the pure bred cattle at National Western Stock Show in Denver. I took care of a few sheep too. I've had some wonderful experiences in practice.

"I wish I would have taken some pictures down on William's Fork one night. I did three Cesareans. I did two at one place and one at another. It was snowing like sin and these ranches were about three miles apart. I got down there at 11:00 p.m. and got through about 4:00 a.m. the next morning. Another time I had a ewe that couldn't lamb. She'd been trying and was all swollen up, toxic, and very sick. I did a Cesarean on her and got the dead lamb, cleaned her out, and by golly, that ewe got well.

"I've had various job offers. Ohio State University wanted me to teach anatomy and physiology in their veterinary department. I said I'd rather be out in the fields. Practice was good. I was always busy."

Doc told me about some of his hobbies. "There are some oil wells on my Tow Creek property. Texaco drilled them back in the 1930's. They produced oil for about 20 years, then the price of oil didn't warrant them to continue operating. They're going to redrill them again this summer.

"We started chariot racing in the Yampa Valley in 1962. We have our own association. Our races are all over. Each year we have a representative at the World Championships in Elko, Nevada. We race thoroughbreds, Quarter Horses, and crosses. We used to use our fast saddle horses. It has become a spectator sport. We run the chariots all year around.

"I am also involved with Toastmasters, an international speech club. I enjoy it. We meet every Monday morning at 6:30. We have club, area, district, region, national, and international speech contests. I've always been interested in politics. I started about 1965. I ran twice and didn't win. I won county commissioner in 1970 and stayed until 1978. I'm thinking about running for county commissioner again or a state office.

"County government is the people's government, and the grass roots of state government. The people have direct contact daily if they so choose. I enjoyed the responsibility of my office. I gave the public the service that they needed. We had a lot of relations with the state. County government gives the county a voice in the state affairs, if they have good commissioners that perform like they should. I like politics because it's vicious. One has to have a strong mind and will to stand the pressure. I won't sell out.

"I haven't done everything I wanted to do in life yet. I've done what is necessary, I've taken care of my needs and wants. When I was a kid I always wanted a bicycle and a violin. The folks always told me I had work to do. If I had my life to live over I'd be smarter in the beginning. The path wouldn't change much though. My advice to young kids these days is to put your trust in God. That is what our founding fathers did. In order to have honor, you must accept responsibility which goes with every privilege. You must maintain loyalty and honesty. Let your word be as good as your bond. To finalize, I would say that youngsters growing up in modern society have a lot to learn.



The author, Mari Jo, and Doc