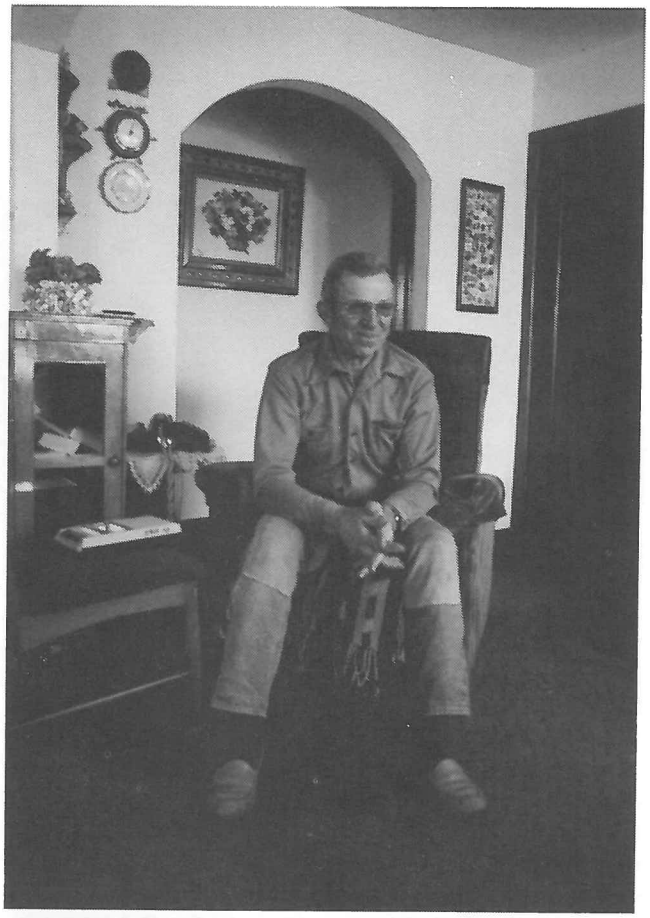

"I've Done My Share of the Work Ever Since I Can Remember."

Lloyd Monger

By

Scott Sis

and

Chad Whitmore

The idea for this story, growing up on the lower Elk River, first came about three years ago. Since then other students have worked on it but were unable to complete it. That is where Scott and I picked it up. Because the story had been chopped up by other students, it was a hard story to put together. We ended up going back for another interview, getting Lloyd to start his story from scratch.

"I was born at the ranch south of Elk Mountain on the old home place on April 29, 1916. My folks had homesteaded this place. My mother died when I was two years old. The only time I can remember seeing her is when my dad took us into the bedroom at home and showed us to her. She died of the flu epidemic after World War I. In my mother's family she and her brother both died of the flu. There were several of the neighbors right around her that also died. We had a housekeeper for a couple summers when we were little, but after we got older, my father did it alone. I had two sisters, and one of them would do all of the cooking, and the other helped out a lot, too. We didn't have the luxuries we have today, and we didn't go to town much when we were younger. Something I remember about my dad was how important money was and how hard it was to come by. If we went to town, we might get fifty cents, and that was about all. There was no such thing as a weekly allowance, and I am sure none of the other farm kids got an allowance either.

"I remember my dad getting his first automobile in 1925. Farming was done in this area like now, but the farms were 160 acres or less, and the work was done by horses and plows; all the machinery was horse drawn."

Then we asked him about his school years. "I was the fifth of six children in our family. My youngest brother, John, lived with our grandparents while he was growing up. They lived on the lower Elk River where the Saddle Mountain School is located. It was at the base of Elk Mountain on Elk Mountain Road (now Routt County 46). I even attended summer school one summer at the Salt Creek School. I don't remember why, but I was the only child of my family that did. For a few years, my older brothers and sisters went to school in a building which is now near the Sherrod's place. At that time the school was in session only during the summers. Elk Mountain School was small, with six to eight kids in the whole school; most of them were from right around there. For a couple of years, we all went to the Fairplay School. We had a team and sled and drove about seven miles. My older brother always managed the team when we were driving back and forth. Then in the Spring, we had a little one-horse buggy that we used. It was kind of a cart-like outfit. Instead of having four wheels, it had two, but there was room for all of us. We always had fun in school. We made our own games because we didn't have any big school ground equipment like

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there is nowadays. Almost everyone got along with each other because there were only a few kids that went to the school. The last teacher I had was a Miss Lisztten who was probably fifty years old. One lady I remember was Miss Cantrell, my first grade teacher, who gave a friend and me a licking just about every day. Of course, we were full of the devil and always into something."

Lloyd then told us about his dad's job and all the problems with it. "My dad started in the sheep business when I was about five or six years old. I can barely remember when he sold his cattle and went into the sheep business. At that time he had just a small barnyard flock of a couple hundred head. We kids had to pitch in and help feed. He had a few milk cows and approximately eight to ten head of work horses, as did everyone else. We would work at least two to four horse teams in the field, planting the grain and getting the ground ready. A horse was fairly cheap; you could buy a good horse for $75. Still, that was a lot of money in those days. I remember for one team of colts my dad paid $150. They would last a long time, unless something went wrong. A horse would die of a heart attack quite frequently because of extra work. I can remember three different ones of my dad's that had heart attacks. The horses then outlasted most pickups today. A horse was good for about 14-15 years of ordinary work. You used the younger horses for the harder work. Horses were broken when they were about three to five years old. If an older horse was broken, he was a lot better horse than a young one, because they had had a better growing period and were able to work more."

Lloyd talked about raising grain, and all the problems with that. "We put up our own hay and had our grain. We bound the grain with horse binders (the machines that cut the grain) and then shocked (tied together) and stacked it. Thrashing machines would move into the country wherever they were needed. My uncle had a thrashing machine that usually thrashed for the neighbors. He had a steam engine that ran the thrashing machine. If the farmer started early in the fall, his grain could be thrashed in the field after shocking it. But if you were a smaller operation, you stacked your grain so that the thrashers could come in whenever they got around to it, possibly in December or January. The machine owner would charge a fee of about three or four cents a bushel. That doesn't sound expensive, but I'm quite sure that was the cost. They usually charged rather than

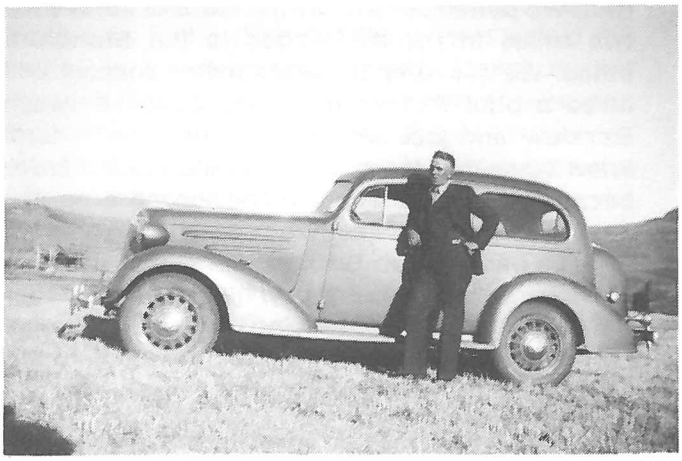
"THRASHING MACHINES WOULD MOVE INTO THE COUNTRY WHEREVER THEY WERE NEEDED."

"THE WHEAT WAS ABOUT THIS TALL WHEN WE CUT IT."

trading work. But the farmers did help each other thrash. My dad would help five neighbors, and they in turn would help him. In those days hardly anyone hired help; labor was traded because it was cheaper that way. When I was small, I don't think my dad had over 30 to 40 acres of grain. Later on, when my brother and I started farming, we were putting more land into grain crops. My dad harvested about 500-600 bushels of grain a year. Few farmers raised much wheat. It was mostly for their own use to be made into flour. All the grain was stored on the farm in granaries and then hauled to market in the winter when we weren't so busy. Our sleds hauled a lot more grain than the wagons could in the summer time. Wagons in the summer could only hold about 40 bushels, which is not much more than a pickup load now. Wheat was taken to the mill in Steamboat and made into flour. This mill later burned down. They might have had a market around Hayden, but we went to Steamboat with our extra saleable grain. Back in the twenties, the elevator was located close to the B & K or a little west of it."

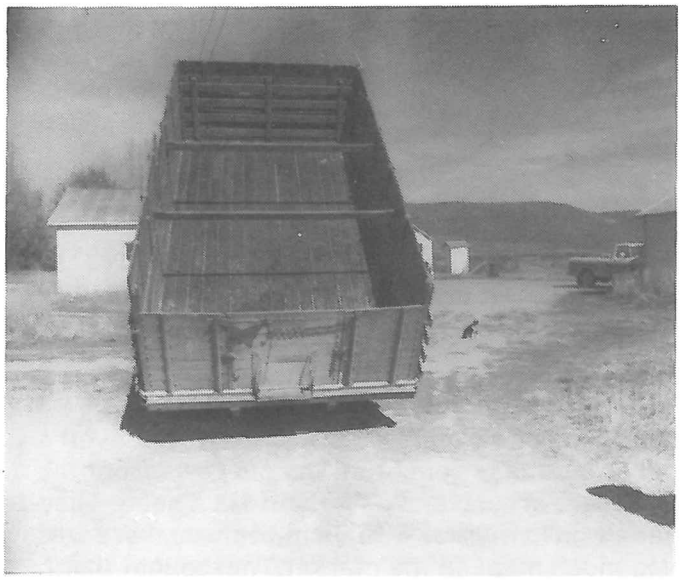
We asked Lloyd if there were any problems with raising sheep. "When my dad first started raising sheep, the sheepmen and cattlemen didn't get along. It was in the late '20's or early '30's that they were really feuding with each other. He had a homestead of 160 acres on **Slippery Sides** (west of Elk Mountain). Then he took up an additional 320 acres in the same area. That was all of his own private land for summer sheep pasture there. Some of the local cattlemen had cattle up behind his place, and it was all free grazing for them. After he took the additional 320 acres, they hired a lawyer, Ferry Carpenter, as they were trying to run him off of his land so they could have the free pasture. I don't remember that they ever went to court over it. They must have given it up after they figured out they couldn't win. He had to fence all of his land to keep the cattle off, which was costly and time-consuming. Eventually the cattlemen and sheepmen decided to get along. There was one neighbor who told my dad he was going to collect damages or take him to court every time a sheep would get on his side of the fence. Now, if a cow gets over on a neighbor's property, nobody collects damages."

Lloyd then discussed the years of The Great Depression. "During The Depression, my dad sold pigs, and they were going for $3 a hundred weight. Cattle were bringing five or six dollars a hundred weight. It wasn't much money. The government had a big buyout program to help out the poor farmers. It was during Roosevelt's term, and they bought all the old cows from the ranchers around and paid them $18 a head. They didn't go to market with them because there was too much meat on the market. They bought them, slaughtered them, and then buried them. This was to bring up the prices so people would have an income. There were a lot of ranches through this country that went broke, and I think my dad would have gone broke too if he hadn't been in the sheep business. He had been in there long enough, and he was making a little money. He could sell the lambs in the fall and the wool in the spring. That is how he ended up buying a few small places in our neighborhood, several of them he bought for taxes, and then no one repossessed them or paid the back taxes on them."



ONE OF LLOYD'S FIRST CARS.

Lloyd has an interesting story about his first trip out-of-town and out-of-state. Here is what he told us: "I was about 14 the first time I went to Denver; I went with a friend, Leo Coyner, who had a filling station in Steamboat. It was in the winter, and when we came over the top of Floyd Hill, I could see the lights of Denver. I thought it was the most spectacular place that I'd ever seen. The road up the pass was really curved and a hard climb for a truck. He was hauling gas from Denver in fifty-gallon barrels, which he dumped into his underground tanks. His truck



was small, not as big as my farm truck, and he could carry about ten barrels of fuel.

"Before our country road was kept open in the winter time by the county, we took a horse-drawn snow plow and leveled the snow on the road, which was about five feet deep. Then we went across it early in the morning with a car while it was still frozen. Usually, in the winter, we took a team and sled (or skied) to the main road.

"In March, 1939, my dad and I drove to California because my dad thought there was a lost gold cache on the desert there that he could find. We pulled our car with a team of horses the two miles to the main road to the Blandford place. We drove to San Bernardino Airport and hired a pilot to take us to the desert between Barstow and Las Vegas. To this day, I don't know where we were, as the plane landed twice because of engine trouble. The second time, the pilot said it couldn't be fixed so we hired a car to take us back to San Bernardino. It was quite an experience for a young guy then, but we never did find what we were looking for."

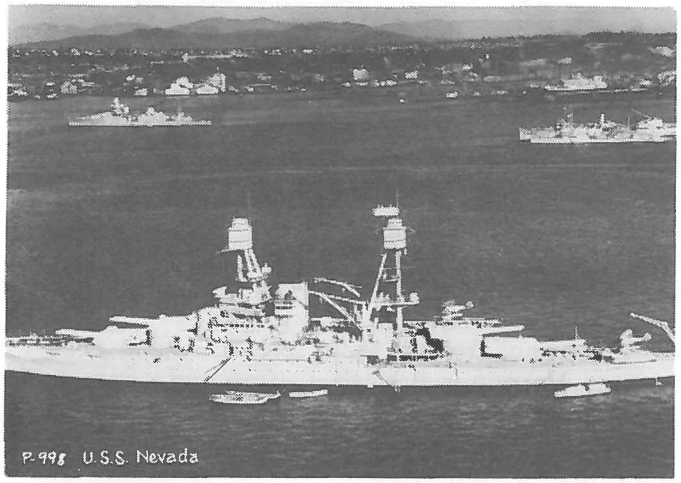
"After we got our tractors we stopped using horses for the field work."

Lloyd told us about the first few years after he quit school. "I quit school after my freshman year. My brother and I started farming together up by Elk Mountain. We did a lot of odd jobs, anything to make money. One job was cutting logs for a sawmill that my dad and uncle owned. We sold bridge plank to the county. We bought our first new tractor in 1936, but my dad had purchased a small used crawler tractor before that. It was identical to the one my neighbor, Ray Selbe, has now to hold up his mailbox. After that we used the tractors along with the horses to do our work, and it was done faster. We did all our own mechanical work on the machinery. My brother Ben was really handy with tools. We even did our own engine overhauls. Later on, Ben, our brother-in-law George Wheeler and I rented all my dad's land. In a few years, we were mostly using tractors, except during haying and the feeding of cattle in the winter."

"I enlisted in the Navy with the Navy recruiter here in Steamboat."

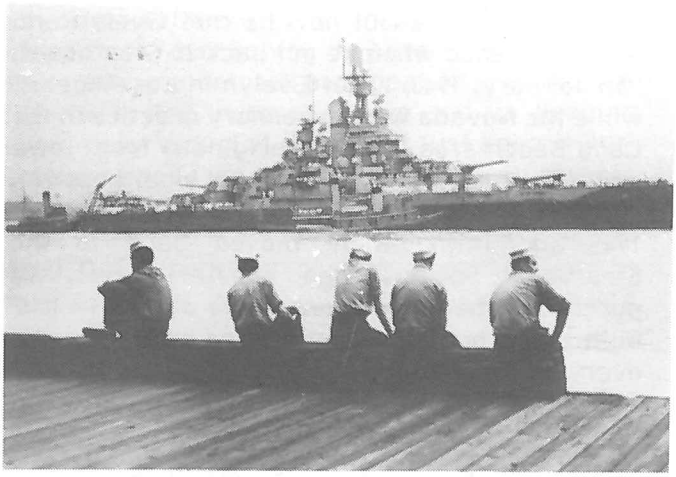
We asked Lloyd to tell us about his Navy years. "The day of the Pearl Harbor attack, I had taken my brothers back to get a load of coal. When I got home, the radio reports were all about the Pearl Harbor attack. Everyone knew that war was brewing, and my draft number had been drawn. So two weeks before getting drafted, I enlisted in the Navy in Steamboat. I preferred the Navy, because I had heard so much about the Army and how you had to do so much walking, and I didn't want to walk. On January 2, 1942, I left for basic training in San Diego, California. This was supposed to be for six weeks but only lasted two weeks. While in boot camp, aptitude tests were given, and I qualified for machinist mate school,

where I spent 16 weeks learning about the engineering force of a ship. My assignment to the battleship **Nevada** at Bremerton, Washington began on July 2, 1942. At that time the battleship was under reconstruction because of the attack at the Pearl Harbor invasion. The naval personnel and shipyard workers had the **Nevada** finished so it could be recommissioned on December 7, 1942.



"The whole ship had pretty much been rebuilt as a result of December 7, 1941."

"Immediately, the crew spent six weeks in the Los Angeles area on maneuvers. Then the **Nevada** went to the Aleutian Islands on patrol duty, where the Japanese were invading. After five months, the ship went down through the Panama Canal and into the Atlantic. Then the **Nevada** started to convoy troops to Belfast, Ireland prior to the Normandy Invasion. This escort was necessary so the troop ships would not be attacked. After four trips, we stayed for the Normandy Invasion. It was pretty shakey there. In fact, I was down in the bottom in the engineering quarters for 72 hours. The division didn't know what was going on topside, but they did keep us well-informed on the public address system. You could hear the German shells hitting close by, but we never got hit. The **Nevada** was firing 30 miles inland. All this time we were positioned in the English Channel next to Omaha Beach, about one mile from land. They were shooting at the shore batteries with the five inch guns and at the same time at the gun installations on shore. After this battle, we went to the Mediterranean, anchoring off the Italian coast, and waited two weeks for the invasion of the southern part of France. Here we were to destroy the shore installations. From here, we spent a few days in Algeria and Africa before arriving home in Norfolk, Virginia for a month leave. After our leave, the ship returned to the Pacific theater through the Panama Canal,



"I joined the Navy because I didn't want to walk."

anchoring in the Long Beach area for about a week. The **Nevada** took part in the Iwo Jima and Okinawa invasions. In Okinawa, the ship was hit by a suicide plane, and 36 marines were killed. The ship's gunners couldn't get it shot down before it hit us, and the plane did a lot of damage, but the fire control unit was able to get the fire out just after the plane hit. We were also hit by a shore battery after the plane attack. Before we returned to Pearl Harbor to have the damages repaired, we were on patrol for a month. The battleship **Nevada** spent the rest of the war in the Pacific, and we were in Manila Bay when the Japanese surrendered. The treaty was signed aboard the battleship **Missouri,** but we didn't get back to the states right away, as we did patrol duty in the South China Sea. The **Nevada** arrived back at Long Beach, California on October 9, 1945, and I was discharged October 19th."

"I met my wife, Evelyn when the ship was on maneuvers just after it was recommissioned."

Lloyd told us about how he met Evelyn and what happened when he got back to Steamboat. "In January, 1943, I met Evelyn in Los Angeles, while the **Nevada** was on gunnery practice in the Long Beach area. She was originally from Iowa and was a registered nurse at a local hospital. We were married in Los Angeles on October 25, 1945 and immediately moved back to the Steamboat Springs area. In April, 1946, we purchased the place we now live on and in 1947 built a new house. Since then, we have replaced every building on the place. In 1958, I purchased a piece of land from my uncle, which is about five miles from the home place, and a few years later, we purchased the place my folks homesteaded and where I was born. It is about five miles from our house.

"I GOT LEAVE FROM THE NAVY AND WENT DEER HUNTING WITH FRIENDS AROUND RANGELY."

"When I got back from the war, people were replacing horses with machinery with the exception of putting up hay. Since I had been in partnership with my brother prior to going into the service and I still had interest in some farm equipment, we were in partnership for ten more years. In 1948, we started our cattle business by buying 18 head of Hereford heifers. The excess hay we had was sold, and I quite often fed it on the ranch to the buyers' cattle."

In our interview, Lloyd discussed the problems with ranching today. "Since I have been in farming, the price of machinery has skyrocketed. In 1958, I paid $5,800 for a tractor, and the same size one today would cost approximately $20,000 to replace. The machinery of today is more efficient and comfortable to run than it was in the '50's. Now a man can put in longer hours and farm a lot more acres in the same length of time. On our ranch we now use tractors for all the farm work except in the winter when a team is needed to feed the cattle because of the snow depths.

The price of tractor fuel has risen since the '50's. Then it was 30 cents per gallon for gas and 15 cents for diesel. Today, we get more for our cattle, but the expenses are higher. Today it is necessary to vaccinate to keep healthy animals. Also, the haying costs have risen, mostly because keeping machinery repaired is expensive even though we do most of our own repair work. But at the cost of new machinery, one can't always afford new machines. We were getting as much for grain in the '50s, as we are today, but our expenses have risen with inflation."

When Chad and I got the rough draft done and went to the Mongers to have them proofread their story, they were gone. We finally found them down in sunny Arizona and got the story mailed to them. When we got the story back, this is how Lloyd concluded his story:

"Evelyn and I have five children: Larry, Douglas and Donna Mae live in Steamboat Springs, Vernon in Bountiful, Utah and Kenneth in Portland, Oregon. All attended the Steamboat schools and participated in numerous school activities, so that made us avid followers of school doings. Two of our children are graduates of the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado, and three have graduated from Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado. We have nine grandchildren.

"I have served on the board of directors at the Yampa Valley Co-op for eighteen years, on the Soil Conservation board for ten years, and on the ASCAS board for three years. I have been a fifty-six year member of the Elk Mountain Grange and of the American Legion for thirty-nine years. I have been a constant supporter of 4-H because Evelyn was a 17-year 4-H leader of the Fairplay 4-H Club, and all the children carried many projects and received many awards in 4-H.

"Today, I am semi-retired. Larry rents my hayland, but I still farm the grainland and have a few cattle. In the past few years, Evelyn and I have done some traveling."