

SI LOCKHART

PART TWO

**"I HAVE A FONDNESS FOR THE OLD DAYS,
BUT I WOULDN'T EVER WANT TO GO BACK!"**

BY MARI JO HOAGLUND



"WHO'LL GIVE ME ANOTHER DOLLAR?"

Si Lockhart is a veritable western man whose life story reads like a western novel. Part one of his lifestory was in issue ten by Jill Lockhart Montieth. Through part two, I hope to capture his memoirs and let you meet this amiable man. Si started by relating the situation of the United States before World War I.

"In 1912 Woodrow Wilson was elected President and served until 1919. When he ran his second campaign, his slogan was 'He kept us out of war.' But even then he was shipping supplies to England, and they warned him to stop. Germany blew up one of the American ships. Then came the big story and headlines in the paper 'Woodrow Wilson, has declared war on Germany.' Wilson said, 'Now this is the war that will end all wars. The boys will get in there and whip them and there will not be any more wars.' But Wilson didn't live long enough to see about that. They drafted the boys from the farms and the cities and sent them overseas to fight. A lot of those good boys never came back. The survivors that did come back were great heroes. The banks

loaned the veterans money, and they bought farms. Things went along very well then.

"Until 1920, when Harding was elected President, there was a great panic. These boys back home were feeding sheep and raising beets, and the bottom fell out of Dow Jones. Some people jumped out of the upper story windows and committed suicide. It was a terrible thing. The banks said to sell the sheep, which were only half fat. So they shipped sheep, each day their value devaluating. The country was in a downward state and the public thought a new President might help.

"Then Calvin Coolidge was elected in 1924 and served until 1928. He was a very tired man and believed in saving. And I'll tell you what, the bottom fell clear out of things even more in 1929. It was something terrible, until Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President in 1932. He served until 1945. In my opinion, he was the greatest, or one of the greatest Presidents that ever lived.

"Things worked out pretty good until the



THE LONESOME COWBOY

depression of the Thirties. Things were pretty tough all through the Thirties, which I covered. People had left their farms and were walking the streets. Livestock was very cheap; cows were selling for five and eight dollars a head. Pigs were selling for as low as ten cents a piece. There was no market for anything, and it was really tough. I got started in the auction business in 1932 to try and make a market for the livestock. Franklin D. Roosevelt said, 'I'm going to make work for every able bodied man.' He fixed roads and bought picks and shovels by the carload. He put everybody to work. If you remember, the W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration) was work if you wanted to work. Well, things got better then. He said, 'I have a brand new deal, I'll put two chickens in every pot, and two cars in every garage,' and everything went fine then.

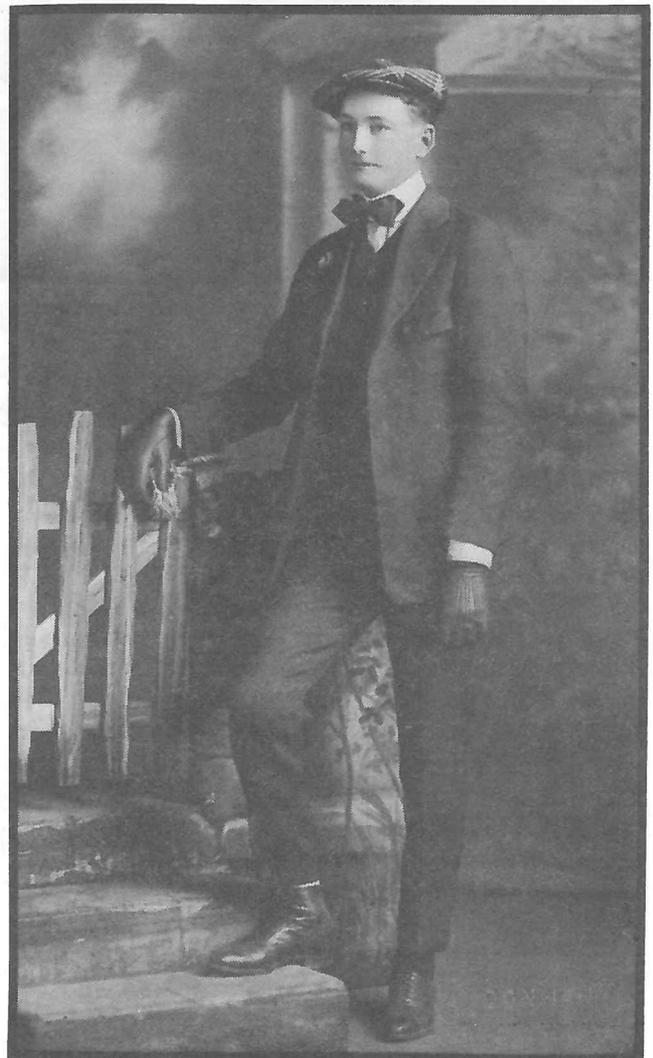
"Everybody went to work. Money began to fly and if a boy or man wanted a ranch, why, Roosevelt financed them. If they rented a ranch for three years, he'd furnish them money to outfit it. That's when he put the nosebag on me. The banker called me in one day and told me about these fellows that were going to get this loan. It was already approved, but the money hadn't come. It was in the spring and the money never got there until the month of June, which was too late to put in a crop.

'But anyways,' the banker said, 'You outfit these guys and we'll carry you until the money comes in.' Boy, and I'll tell you what, I worked

day and night to supply these fellows with horses, machinery, cows, and the other things they needed. I would just drive into a yard and say, 'Well, I see you rented a ranch,' or 'I see you rented a farm.' 'Yeah,' the farmer would say, 'I got a loan, but it still hasn't gotten here, and I can't buy anything.' I would say, 'Well, what do you need? I think I can fix you up.'

"I had some good men working for me, and I could buy horses and equipment anywhere in the world. So I fixed a lot of these boys up and got them farming and going good. In those days we didn't work eight hours; sixteen hours was a short day, and sometimes we worked around the clock.

"The boys that rented the farms were not all farmers, but nevertheless it got them going. Some of them stayed three years, some rented the farm again and stayed for six years, and some of them got jobs and left the farms. Now that's when the auction business got really good, 'cause these boys were leaving the farms and the only thing to do was sell their equipment and livestock at auctions. Sometimes I would have two or three auction sales a day. I was working day and night on auction sales."



SI, A DASHING MAN AT AGE 18

Si continued by giving a graphic description of the dust bowls.

"Dust bowls, dust was so awful bad, we couldn't see the sun for the dust. In those days we didn't have blacktop roads, but all dirt roads. They plowed up the plains, and the dust was something terrible. Now some of the livestock got so much dust that they died. A lot of farmers were out of feed, but, you know, nature left something; the cactus. Some of the farmers took a blow torch and burnt the stickers off the cactus for the cows to eat. Sometimes the cows would grab these cactus while they were still hot and get their mouths and tongues burnt. I'll tell you, they didn't get fat, but it kept them from starving to death.

"Oh, that was bad then! We had dust storms; we had blizzards; we had hard times then. In the late '30's things got better. Prices came up, and we got into war in 1939, and things have been going better ever since.

"A lot of people say, 'How did you get started in the auction business?' Well, I had clerked a few sales, and, as I say, in 1932 another man and I started an auction sale. We were trying to make a market for livestock. This man was a butcher and packer and had a nice place north of Fort Collins. We had community sales every week. I would go down the road in an old Ford with a rack on the back and pick up stuff from farmers. You know, anybody would do anything for money back then. I would pick up enough stuff to have an auction sale every week. Then we got to going good, and people brought stuff into the auction sale and we didn't have to go out and rustle it up.

"In the beginning cows were getting eight to ten dollars a head. We sold the meat in the morning on a platform. There was very little refrigeration in those days, so my partner cut it up in five pound packages. He told me as long as it brought five cents a pound to keep selling it, and if it got cheaper to holler. I was selling meat along five to seven cents a pound, and I had it all sold but one front quarter of a cow. He shoved that out, and a man bid three cents on it, and he said to sell it. I didn't ask for more, so that's the cheapest beef I've ever sold, that three cents a pound. Today it would cost a fortune.

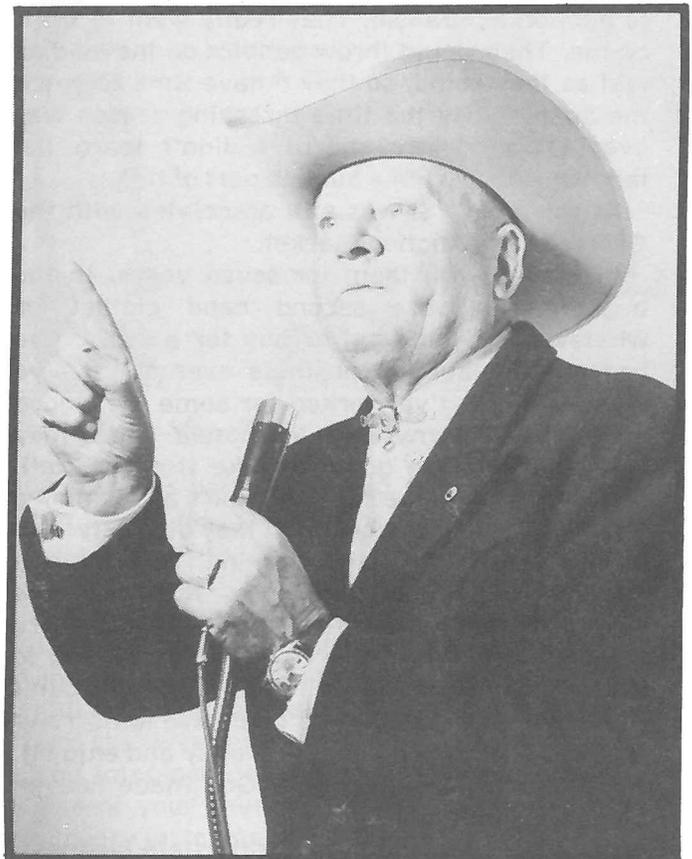
"Well, we went along pretty good that way selling meat. People would buy five pounds for a quarter and then they they'd run it back into the refrigerator and write their name on it. Then when they went home they could pay for it. At that time, potatoes were selling for ten cents a gunny sack full, and cabbage was ten cents. We sold rabbits, chickens, and everything under the sun that we could get."

Si is an industrious man and can be a very persuasive auctioneer. It is no wonder he has been such a success. He told about furthering his career in Greeley.

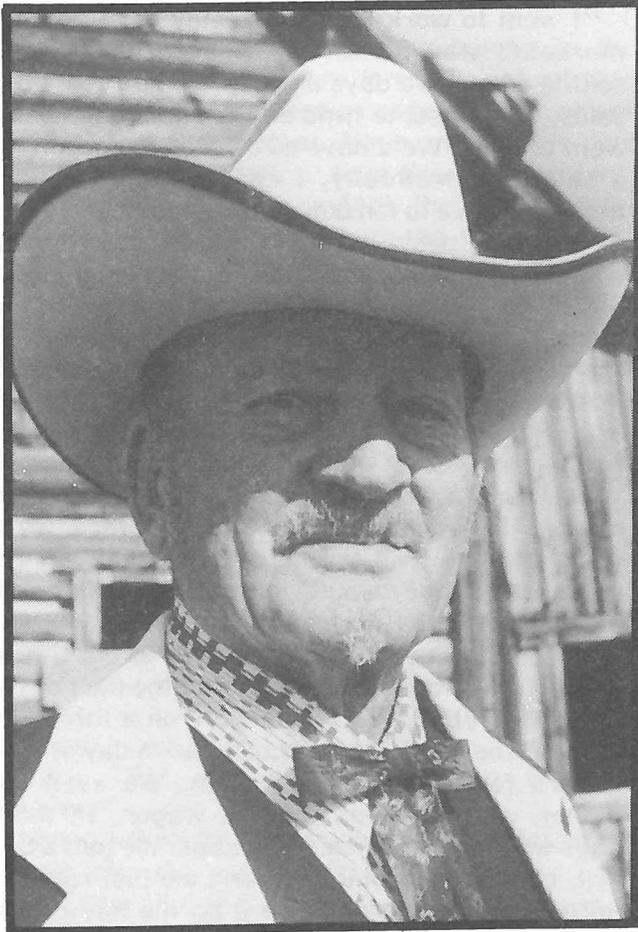
"I went to work for the Greeley cash auction market. I stayed with them seven long years, selling one to two days a week. We had some big sales. We got some time on the radio and really went to town. We'd have as high as 500 people at a sale, and truthfully, I can bet there wasn't more than five to ten dollars amongst them.

"The only people at that time who had money was the Mexicans. They worked the sugar beets and had big families. At that time you tended the beets. One guy 'blocked' with the hoe ahead, and the other two crawled along on their hands and knees and thinned them one beet at a time, about a foot apart. And when that was done and the beets were covered back, the sugar factory would send a field man out to look these beets over. If the job was good, and the job was always good, then he paid the help. When the workers got a payday they would come to an auction sale and spend it all.

"I worked at odds and ends at different times, and I worked on a threshing machine part of the time. Everybody wanted to work on a threshing machine because it paid two dollars a day or four dollars for a man and a team. We even got dinner, and we slept under a wagon. In those days we didn't have sleeping bags. We had a bed roll, canvas with blankets, and we just rolled it up in the morning and tied it on the hay racks. The threshing outfit had a cook shack, and we boarded there. The food was always good. On this job, there were four Mexican pitchers who



"GOING ONCE, TWICE, SOLD!"



"GO WEST YOUNG MAN"

pitched bundles onto the wagon. I asked these Mexicans how long it would take for me to learn to auction in Spanish. They really went to work on me. They would throw bundles on the load as fast as they could, so they'd have time to teach me Spanish. By the time threshing season was over I was pretty sharp. I didn't learn the language, but just the auction part of it."

At this point, Si was still associated with the Greeley Cash Auction Market.

"I stayed with them for seven years. In the beginning I wore second hand clothes or whatever we could get or buy for a dime. I've been in the auction business ever since. I've never retired. I've worked for some very good auctioneers in my life. Most said when they retired they were going to take it easy. Well, these boys sat in the rocking chairs and watched television and drank beer and they didn't live but a few years. I'm still working, and have a daughter in the auction business. A lot of people say, 'Why don't you retire?' Well, when I retire from life, life will retire from me. I'm going to keep right on working until the day I drop. I can't live yesterday; it's gone. I can't live tomorrow; it's not here, so I can just live today and enjoy it. I'm thankful; I believe that God made heaven before he made earth.

"In 1932, I started in the real estate business. Realtors were very scarce, and the first state

license I got cost ten dollars. The ski hill, I love it. I came to Fort Collins in 1913, and I have been in Steamboat over 40 years, in the very same house.

"I got married in 1921. I got married to a girl by the name of Lois Henderson who was raised in the Buckhorn in Fort Collins, Colorado. And to our union we were married 56 years. We had six children, three boys and three girls. Four of those children have passed on, all three boys and one girl. Only two children left. I'm kind of alone in the world, but what you can't cure you have to endure.

"I think I'll spend the rest of my life in Routt County in Steamboat Springs. I don't think I'll look for any greener pastures. We've got the mountains here, and the Bible says the mountains bring you peace. I expect to have as much peace and good times here as any place else. We just take it for granted, the scenery and all. But anyways, my advice to young people today is, there is great opportunity. There's work, and good money to be made. Start a savings account. I have a friend who saved 25% of every dollar he made, and he is about 65 now, and an alcoholic at that, but a very wealthy man. So you've got to save money; get a good banker. Young people in America have the greatest opportunity of anyone in the world. You can work. It is surely the land of opportunity.

Now to the Senior Citizens: It is a Golden Age. You can do the things that you wanted to when you were young, but couldn't because you had a family to take care of, and they came first. So take care and have a good time, the best is yet to come. You can't live yesterday, it is gone. You can't live tomorrow, it isn't here. So live today. To be older is to be wiser. Value your years on earth. We are here to serve. Age is the best experience. The heart that loves is always young.

