

Interview with
PATRICK CURTIS

March 4, 2016

**MOTION PICTURE PRODUCTION IN
WASHINGTON COUNTY, UTAH**

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PATRICK CURTIS

Patrick Curtis was interviewed March 4, 2016 in St. George, Washington County, Utah by Dr. Stephen B. Armstrong. He related his experiences with motion picture production in Washington County, Utah.

SA: Please spell your name.

PC: Patrick Curtis, P-A-T-R-I-C-K C-U-R-T-I-S.

SA: [What is] your age?

PC: [I am] seventy-seven [years old]. And your age, Stephen? [Laughter]

SA: [I am] forty-five [years old].

PC: I have underwear older than you! [Laughter]

SA: Discuss the autobiographical aspects of your life leading up to your experiences working with motion pictures in southern Utah. I know that you were with Republic [Pictures] a lot.

PC: Yes. I started in 1939. I was baby Beau Wilkes in *Gone With the Wind*, Olivia de Havilland and Leslie Howard's baby. There are only three of us [from that film] living. Olivia de Havilland is ninety-nine years old. She will be 100 years old in July [2016]. Mickey Kuhn played the same character, Beau [that] I did, later on when he was six years old [and] is still alive. He is eighty-three years old and I am seventy-seven years old. The movie is seventy-six years old.

SA: Were you born in the Los Angeles [California] area?

PC: Yes, in Los Angeles. I worked intermittently as a [child] actor, nothing of any real importance, but I worked. I always say that I was the fourth child on the right, but I worked a lot all through my life. My last job was in 1960. Again, nothing of any real importance, only [when] they needed a [lot of children]. My dad, Daniel, was comptroller at Republic Pictures so [when] they needed a group of [children] at Republic, I was always one of the [children]. It was a great time. Our friend, Cheryl (Rogers) Barnett, and I grew up together on the lot at Republic. She was a bit too prissy for us. She was always in the makeup department or wardrobe [because] she did not want to play with us rough [fellows]. [Laughter]

SA: Right!

PC: Yakima Canutt, the greatest stuntman in the world, taught us all how to ride. I do not know about today, but I could ride like the wind [then] — all of us could. He was a great [teacher]. Those were fun times for a [child] growing up.

I [received] a [United States] Navy ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps] scholarship and went to Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa for a semester. I hated every moment of it, being a southern California [fellow]. My parents gave me a MG [Morris Garages] when I graduated from high school. I drove it to Des Moines, Iowa, lost it in a snow drift and did not see it for months. [Laughter] It seemed like the tires were about two inches wide. If I could find it and drive, I drove down the street backwards half the time. I did not know how to drive in the snow. I came home at Christmas and begged my parents to let me [stay] home.

I went to SC [University of Southern California] as a cinema major.

SA: Cinema major?

PC: Yes. I did my military [service] and then started in production. I worked while I was in school. I worked on *Leave It to Beaver*. Joe Connelly and Bob Mosher were family friends. They liked me and hired me to work in production. Also, since I had my Screen Actors Guild card, if they needed somebody to say, “Can Wally come out to play, Mr. Cleaver?” I was there most of the time. I was over eighteen [years old] and that was a big deal. If you were small and looked younger than your years, it was a big benefit. If you were twelve [years old], but could look nine [years old], you are still mentally twelve and hopefully sharper than a nine year old. If you were over eighteen, you did not have to go to a studio school, you did not have to have your mother on the set. You were a grown-up and [could] work [for] however many hours they wanted [you]. If you were a child, you [could] only work four hours a day. You had to go to school four hours and [could] work four hours. They were not four hours all at one time; you [went] to school a minimum of twenty minutes at a time. That is why there are teachers always on the set. Your mother or father, or somebody had to be there, but I did not have to do that so it was a benefit, and I was learning the business. Looking back on it, the funny part to me, was that I was not particularly liked by my teachers because I would literally leave the set to go to class. More than once, stupidly, I would say, “If you are teaching us this so we can go get a job in the entertainment business that is not how it is done anymore. This is how it is done.”

We were using equipment, a lot of times, that had been donated by the studios and a lot of it was from the silent days. If you think of USC as the Steven Spielberg building — not in the 1950s. We were in Quonset huts, using equipment that was donated. Mentally you knew it, but your hands, if you went to get a job, your hands did not work. It was like being a surgeon, having to work with nineteenth century equipment, but you are in the twentieth century. I probably should have taken business [courses]. It would have been more helpful to me as a producer.

SA: What year did you graduate from college?

PC: [I graduated in] 1960.

SA: Is that when your acting ended, also?

PC: Yes. My last job was a western called *Cimarron* with Glenn Ford and Maria Schell. I was an elevator boy. The Screen Actors Guild was going on strike at midnight on [a] Sunday and they had to get the picture done by then. They were going on strike for residuals; anybody who ever worked before 1960, if you made \$100.00 that is all you ever [received]. The stars of my youth — not Clark Gable and people of that level — but Roy Rogers was making \$350.00 a week which was a decent amount of money then, but that is all he ever [received]. Nobody [received] residuals. People say, “You must have made a fortune [being in] *Gone With the Wind*, but I got \$125.00. There were no residuals, except for the affection of lot of people around the world for the movie and my tiny little part in it.

[So] they had to finish this movie, *Cimarron*. The actors were going here, there, everywhere, little bits of sets were being built. They were throwing [sets] up in a corner, taking shots. I was the least important person there, but they could not get rid of me. They would shoot something in the elevator, and there I would be. They would take Maria Schell off to do something over here, and they forgot about me. It was a \$250.00 a day job, and I made \$3,500.00 on overtime, meal penalties and quadruple golden overtimes. That was my last [acting] job, *Cimarron*. I did the smart thing; I took my check when I [received] it, went to Felix Chevrolet and bought a 1959 Corvette. [Laughter]

SA: [Laughter] If you can, you can!

PC: Yes, that is it. I did not live at home; I had an apartment, but I went home to show my parents. My dad said, “How are you going to insure it?” I said, “I will put it on your insurance like I used to.” He said, “No.” [Laughter] Four-speed, fuel-injected Corvette? No. It sat until I could find some insurance I could afford. I owned it and I could not insure my own car. I only had to insure it for public liability and property damage, so if I hit somebody else, they would be covered. I could not afford it otherwise. I think my driving record was not great. I do not remember, but probably not.

SA: Did you hold on to that car?

PC: No, I did not. Annabel and I got another one like it a few years ago. I fool around with cars all the time. We have a 1949 Ford Coupe and a very nice 1966 Mustang convertible.

SA: [Did] you move into production at this point?

PC: Yes.

SA: Were you about twenty-two years old?

PC: I [was discharged from military] service in 1965.

SA: Were you a jet pilot?

PC: Yes, I was a [United States] Marine pilot. In 1965, I [was discharged] and went into the [Marine] Reserves. My parents had saved every dime that I ever made in the entertainment business. I always had to have another job. I worked in gas stations, made doughnuts — everything I ever made, they put in an account for me. I had a substantial amount of money, so a group of us got together. I was one of the producers for a movie called *A Swingin' Summer*, a Beach Blanket Bingo movie that we shot in Lake Arrowhead [California]. [Earlier], I had met a really, really beautiful girl. [This was the] time when, in a service town like San Diego [California] where they have the Navy and the Marine Corps, parents did not want their daughters going out with a Marine or a sailor. I met this beautiful girl through some friends. I said, "What do you want to be?" She said, "I want to be a model." I said, "You are never going to be a model because you look like an Italian movie star. But, I am going to make movies and I want you to be in them." She believed me; she would not kiss me, but she believed me. So we started off really together. I had good friends in the business; the producers of *Hollywood Palace*, which was a variety show on Friday nights, were looking for a beautiful girl to be the billboard girl. I got her that job and we started off together. We made *A Swingin' Summer* and through that she got a contract at [Twentieth Century] Fox [Studios] and then *One Million Years B.C.* and all of those [films were] started. She and I made three or four movies together. I was the producer and she was the star. It went on until we did not do it anymore. [Laughter]

SA: You told all that, but you did not mention her name.

PC: [Her name was] Raquel Welch, R-A-Q-U-E-L W-E-L-C-H.

SA: I remember seeing the video when we became friends eight or nine years ago. It was an introductory video, but I have not seen it in awhile. I am not sharp on what happened after you and Ms. Welch moved on and did different things.

PC: I stayed in the business, produced films and a lot of television [shows]. I produced the Golden Boot awards, which for twenty-five years we raised money for the Motion Picture and Television Fund. This honored the cowboy heroes, directors, writers [for] film and television. It was great fun. I wrote and produced it. It was at the Beverly Hilton [Hotel in California] every year. It was a big deal. We did it for twenty-five years, but the problem was they were not making a lot of westerns six or seven years ago. We had honored everybody who was still alive and many who had passed on. We decided to go out with a bang; we would do twenty-five

years and that would be the end of it. And so [it was]. I am very proud of it. It was a great part of my life. In the meantime, I was [still] producing. What brought us here to Utah was the film I did called *The Avenging Angel* [inaudible].

SA: Yes, I watched it.

PC: We shot it here in Utah. I was able to get very good facilities in Park City [Summit County, Utah] in the summer. Park City is not known as a summer location; because of the skiing, there is not much going on in the summer. I was able to get condos for my actors and great facilities for my crew. We would go to Heber [City, Wasatch County, Utah], Salt Lake City [Salt Lake County, Utah and] different locations every day. The closest we got to here was Escalante [Garfield County, Utah]. We shot the scene with Tom Berenger and James Coburn in the Escalante Canyon. Most of the time, we were somewhere around Salt Lake [City]. The last part of the picture, as you know as you saw it, was supposed to take place in St. George at Brigham Young's home. We could not shoot there for every reason you can think of. We found a really nice farm, very similar in architecture, outside of Salt Lake [City] and we shot there. The people were very nice. We built fake walls to blow people through the windows, and it was very nice. The people were great.

SA: Was the director of that Craig Baxley? How did you find him? Was he the son of a stuntman?

PC: Yes, and he was a stuntman also. The young man who played Tom Berenger at the beginning when they said, "Take the shot," a good-looking [fellow]. He is [Craig Baxley's son and] a stuntman now. He followed in everyone's footsteps. Baxley is an excellent director, easy to work with. He knew the business backwards and forwards. It was one of the best experiences I have had, making films. That is what brought us here; people were so nice. My wife, [Annabel,] and I lived in Palm Springs [California] and it was too hot there for my wife. We had such a nice experience here [earlier] that it brought us here thirteen years ago, this summer. We love it.

SA: You were shooting that movie in 1994? TNT [Turner Network Television] broadcast the show in 1995.

PC: Yes. We shot in the summer of 1995 [and] it came out in November. We were editing as we were working. We had a great time! To work with Charlton Heston, James Coburn, Tom Berenger, and good people like that was super fun. Because it had to do with the Mormons and The Church [of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints], we had a very good relationship with the LDS people in Salt Lake [City]. The only time the elders ever came on the set was when we were doing, "This is where we will build our church," when he [Brigham Young] comes up on the butte and there is Salt Lake [City]. We CGI'd [computer-generated imagery] that in; it was not on that butte. They came in, it was hotter than blazes, way over 100°

and they were in their dark suits. We had a couple of open-sided tents. There must have been about a dozen very nice men and they were very happy to be there. Heston started with the wagon train going, the oxen and the pull carts. He was surrounded by his brethren and saying, “This is the spot where we will build our church and we will go — aw fudge,” but he did not say fudge. [Laughter] He blew his line. I looked over at the elders; they were gut-shot. They did not know what the heck to do. [Laughter] I went over and I thought: I could go help round up the cattle or I could explain what went on. I said, “I have known Mr. Heston for thirty years and he is not a profane man. Do you see that good-looking young [fellow] there?” They said, “Yes,” and I said, “That is Mr. Heston’s son, Fraser. He arrived this morning to tell his father that his mother, “Chuck” Heston’s mother, had passed away the night before.” He told Baxley and me, and we were the only ones who knew that. We told him he could go deal with it, but he said. “No, I want to finish the picture.” He had worked twenty-eight hours. The entire beginning of the picture, the beginning of the trek when Brigham is younger, Miles Utley is a boy and his father dies, he takes him to Bill Hickman and says raise him as your own — all that was shot the night before, all night. We shot all the next day, until the golden hour, which is when we shot the “This Is the Place” scene. The golden hour is about 4:30 or 5:00, when the sun is — everybody is golden and they look good.

SA: The sweet light.

PC: Yes, exactly. He had been working all that time. I said, “Look what he did for us. He stayed and finished.” He had to be in Dallas [Texas] the next morning to start rehearsal of *Love Letters*, the two-handed man and woman — a lot of actors and actresses have done it. They sit and read each others’ mail, love letters to each other. He was doing it in Dallas with Lydia [(Clarke) Heston], his wife. For a lot of reasons, he needed to finish the picture, and he did. The amazing thing was — we had a lot of cattle and oxen. They had rounded them up and were getting ready to go again. They were milling around and the elders marched over to Mr. Heston, applauding him. That spooked the cattle —. [Laughter]

SA: Oh, no!

PC: [Laughter] They were not running, but they were wandering around as cattle will do. We missed the good part of the golden hour, but we got it done and it worked out fine.

SA: It is a nice scene.

PC: Yes, it was. I had some concerns that possibly we could not do the blood of atonement scene, but they were fine with that. I had learned years [earlier] — I do not know who told me this, probably Milton Berle — that if you want one “damn” in your script, put five “hells” and then give them away. Fight for every one of them, but give them away until you get to the “damn” that you want. We put a

few things in and we had no problems with it. The interesting thing to me was brought up by one of the elders. I gave a talk in Salt Lake [City a few] years ago, and I had not thought about it, but he said, “The most viewed LDS film ever in the history of the world was produced by an Irish Catholic Marine fighter pilot.” If he thought of it, it must be true. A lot of people watched in our turn. It is still playing lots of places; I do get residuals now, or profit participation. Turner was a great company to work for.

SA: How did you get the property? It was adapted from a novel.

PC: Yes, my partner, Heather Lowe, and I found the novel. It was in manuscript form and so we optioned it. I know Ted Turner quite well. He owned *Gone With the Wind* during the fiftieth anniversary. He owned it for quite some time. He bought the library from MGM [Metro Goldwyn Mayer] so he owned it and cared a lot about it. I think he named two of his children Rhett and Scarlett. I was somewhat helpful, I think, in organizing the fiftieth anniversary of the film in 1989. We knew each other [and] he invited me to the set of different pictures. We brought it to him and he said, “Yes, let us do it.” That is how it happened. I had Heston at that time, because I had gone —. At the LDS temple in Los Angeles, they have a man to deal with people like me. His name escapes me at the moment, but he had been in the business forever and knew what was going on. He was a conduit to whoever was making the big decisions. The two people [who] were acceptable to them to play Brigham [Young], which I understand, were Heston and Gregory Peck. Gregory Peck was ill and could not do the film. Heston was a great friend of mine, forever, and he was happy to do it. He worked for two weeks and it was a good time. That is how it started. I brought the story and Heston and then we packed it with other good people.

SA: How did you get James Coburn?

PC: He is a friend who lived up the street for the Raquel part of my life. I had a Ferrari, he had a Ferrari. We would race each other down San Ysidro [Drive in Beverly Hills, California]. I do not know if this is interesting, but Twentieth Century Fox signed Raquel to a forty-eight hour deal. [Albert Romolo] “Cubby” Broccoli had arrived in Los Angeles [and] wanted her to be in *Thunderball*, but she was under a forty-eight hour contract to Twentieth Century Fox. They wanted her to be in *Our Man Flint* with James Coburn, whom we knew, so she tested with him. Part of the forty-eight hour contract was that she had to go to work, let us say on Tuesday. The movie was not ready to go and so — this is what I remember, but I do not know if it is [correct] — in *Fantastic Voyage* they had signed Janet Leigh to play the part of the woman. They paid her off and Raquel started on the Tuesday. They were not filming it, but she was on the lot every day working, getting fitted for the swimming [scenes and other costumes]. She was working and she did not do *Thunderball*, which was probably a good thing. Outside of Ursula Andress, Bond girls are only Bond girls. From that, she did *One Million Years B.C.* and that is the thing — not the movie so much, which was

very successful, but the poster was enormously successful. [Laughter] These were people who were friends of mine. I did not know Tom Berenger, but his agent put us together. We all liked him and he was very good in the part. I cannot tell you why he had greasy hair the [entire] time. I tried; I did my best to get him to wash his hair and not put the goop in it.

SA: He has a nice quality to him. He is handsome, but he is not the all-American type. There is a sinister element to him.

PC: He has done very well. He always thought of himself as a character actor, not a leading man. I kept telling him, and so did Heather, “You are the star of this piece. Because of the relationship with the women, you have got to be something; you cannot be a grumpy old fart.” We did our best. He was very good in it. I was happy with him.

SA: It holds together.

PC: It was the third-highest rated movie that TNT made. Number one was with [Tom] Selleck. I can’t remember the name of it.

SA: One of those westerns [that Tom made with Sam Elliott]?

PC: Yes. That is how that all started. We found the story, got the actors [and] Ted Turner said yes. Turner is very clever. Every picture that you work on, you have two things. You have a completion bond and a contingency. [Suppose] a movie costs ten million dollars; you have a ten percent contingency, which is a million dollars, just in case you screw up. You have a million dollars you can spend before the completion bond starts. If you go into your completion bond, the bonding company, which is the insurance company, can take over the picture. Usually, it is about a three-and-a-half percent fee that you pay the completion bond company. They can literally come in, fire the director, or do whatever they want.

Turner had another way of doing it which was that he will be the completion bond and he will be the contingency. If you do not screw up, meaning the producers, you will get a very nice fee at the end of the film, which was great. In our situation, it was \$300,000.00 we would get if we came in under budget and on time, which we did. The problem with that is that the agents know all of this crap. All they would pay Berenger — looking back on it, whether it was collusion or not, I do not know — all we could pay Berenger was \$700,000.00. In our back pocket, we had \$300,000.00, which was my money. [Laughter] “Do you want to make the movie?” We gave that \$300,000.00 to Berenger. We are in profit now, so we are making back the \$300,000.00 all these years later that we gave away. If you think about it from Turner’s standpoint — let us say it is a \$10,000,000.00 movie, so there is \$1,000,000.00 that he has not spent.

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

PC: Let us say he makes ten movies that year. There is \$10,000,000.00 that he can make [another] movie. Very clever. Plus, there is the completion bond, three-and-a-half percent of ten movies — there is another substantial amount of money. He is very clever that way. Some people have screwed up massively, but most of us have not. They were doing *The Cisco Kid* with Jimmy Smits and the producers went in the toilet. They never worked for Turner again, so there are two sides to that story. It makes everybody work a little harder, a little faster and a little better, I think, knowing that the \$300,000.00 in your back pocket that you did not get. At some point, Heather and I thought: that is our money. They paid us very well, but that was a bonus. We gave our bonus to Berenger in order to get him in the movie, so he got \$1,000,000.00. Heston and Coburn each got \$250.00, for two weeks work. [Laughter]

SA: You were telling me that in that late 1960s period you were getting to know Heston and Coburn. Were you in Utah with *Bandolero*? Raquel Welch was —.

PC: We were in Page, Arizona and then Del Rio, Texas. I do not think we were in Utah.

SA: Did you stay in Kanab at all?

PC: Not that I remember.

SA: You were in Glen Canyon, so it was on the Arizona side.

PC: Yes. Those showed a lot of riding and a few dialog scenes, getting to somewhere.

SA: *Bandolero* is jumping and banditos were covered in the dirt.

PC: Yes, that is right.

SA: Is that where *Planet of the Apes* was filmed?

PC: Yes. In those days, Page was not — it is not much now — but it was really not much at all. [Laughter] I remember two times in my life — *One Million Years B.C.* — nobody had made a movie in the Canary Islands [Morocco] before and all the equipment had to be shipped by airplane. The plane was a propliner, a DC6. Everybody got off the plane and there was no airstrip in Tenerife [largest Canary Island]. It took off and we thought: come back, come back for us. [Laughter] The interesting thing about that is, at that time, at the end of the runway at one side were about twenty German Heinkel bombers from World War II that had flown to Spain. Spain took them over and flew them all the time. They were Spain's bomber contingent.

SA: The Luftwaffe?

PC: Yes, World War II equipment. Not there, but they had Messerschmitt fighters from World War II and they contracted to build them after the war. They were flying Messerschmitts in the 1950s and 1960s. When they made *Battle of Britain* that is where they got all those planes. All of those Heinkel bombers came from Spain and a lot of it was shot there. The air scenes where you could not see the ground did not look like England. The difference was that the real Messerschmitts had Daimler engines which were upside down; the heads were pointed down so the cowling was different. The ones that were built in the late 1940s and 1950s used Merlin Rolls-Royce engines, the same engines that were in the Spitfire. They bought them from Rolls-Royce. The front of the Spitfire was different looking to some extent than the real Messerschmitt. There was no CGI in those days and they could not have made the movie if they had not had those airplanes. It is interesting, especially because I am an airplane [person].

The film, [*Bandolero*], was [made] in Page, Arizona [and] when the plane took off, we said, “Do not forget to come back for us.” [Laughter] There was nothing there. I do not know if we looked at a map to see where we were; we got in an airplane in Burbank [California] and got off in Page, Arizona. I know I am in Arizona, [but] where in the hell am I?

SA: This is important to know because local lore in Kanab has it that *Bandolero* was shot on the Utah side and —.

PC: I cannot say that it was not. We were in Page, which is on the border. Did they go over the border? They may very well have done so. If the wranglers from Kanab say that, they would know better than I. There is no line in the sand that said, “Now we are in Arizona, now we are in Utah.” If people that you think know better, than I am sure that is probably true.

SA: Did you know that I wrote a book about Andrew McLaglen?

PC: Yes.

SA: I published it and he had no recollection of it being in Utah. He had shot some *Have Gun, Will Travel* [episodes] in Johnson Canyon. He said that *Bandolero* was [shot] in Texas and in Arizona. He was fanatic about it.

PC: Yes, we did those riding scenes and then we took off for Del Rio, Texas. Maybe they pulled some wranglers or stock from Kanab, but I do not honestly know. We never stayed anywhere in Arizona. We stayed in Page for a few days, did the riding scenes hither and yon and were out of there.

SA: I love that movie; I think it is a winner. Dean Martin was a good actor.

PC: It was good fun to make. Del Rio is on the border with Mexico and it is not a very nice place to be, especially then. We stayed in a Holiday Inn, I think, and Jimmy Stewart would go take a shower. We would all eat together and he would take his toupee off — he was an older [man]. Women would come in because they knew we were there and say, “Jimmy! God damn, you are old! I have got to take you out to the farm and fatten you up. I need to show Billy Joe Bob and we have got to get you —.” We could see them coming. We learned to eat defensively, watching the doorway. We would do our best to stop them; it was terrible. [Laughter] A few times, because we got bored, we went across the border to a place called Ciudad Acuña.

SA: I have been there.

PC: In the middle of Ciudad Acuña is a place called Boys Town, which is a rather rough, rank place, but there was a good restaurant, bar, dive whatever there. I cannot tell you the name of it. Everybody was married, except for Andrew Prine, who then married my partner, Heather Lowe, and made *Avenging Angel*. He is in *Avenging Angel*; he is the newspaper man. Andrew is a wonderful actor. He played Bookbinder, the deputy. He was the only single [man], so there is Jimmy Stewart and his wife, Dean Martin and his wife, Raquel and me, and Joyce Kennedy. Little girls would come up and we would pay them to go over to “Andy.” [Laughter] They could steal your socks without taking your shoes off; they wore little jackets and he paid them not to unzip their jackets, so they got paid twice. [Laughter] It was something to do; I do not know if the wives knew what we were doing. He turned nine different shades of red every time we went down there. [Laughter]

SA: That is funny, because he was marketed as a sex symbol for awhile. Do you remember?

PC: “Andy” Prine?

SA: Yes.

PC: He was a *Playgirl* centerfold of the month. Good [fellow]. He got caught up in the Los Angeles murder of Karyn Kupcinec, Chicago columnist Irving Kupcinec’s daughter. “Andy” had gone out with her for a time. He was a suspect — not really, but he was. I think it hurt his career; it certainly hurt him. They never found out who did it; a lot of people know who did it, but they could not prove it.

SA: I did not know that story at all.

PC: Yes, it was terrible. She was found in her apartment, dead for four or five days.

SA: Was he an “Andy” McLaglen regular too?

- PC: Yes, “Andy” loved him. He is still a great friend. He is eighty or eighty-one years old.
- SA: I think of him as a young [man].
- PC: Yes, a young, lanky [man], wonderful actor. [Inaudible] Heather brought up a story for a play and did it about the downwinders. This was the first time I had ever heard of that. After we had done *Avenging Angel*, he was doing [Gettysburg] — one of those Southern movies where he was a general — for Turner. *Cincinnati* was it; that is where Heather was from. She did a play called *The Downwinders* in Cincinnati, so we all went to see it. That is the first time I knew anything about downwinders. He played different characters and it was quite good.
- SA: You came out to Utah to make this movie. You are more-or-less in northern and central Utah filming, with one sojourn to Escalante. Yet, you are here in the southwest corner of the state. How did you pick this? Was it the geography or the mildness compared to Palm Springs?
- PC: Yes, I think so. We came together with Cheryl and Larry Barnett. I do not remember how I heard about St. George. I knew about it. We were looking for someplace to move and so we were here, and so were Cheryl and Larry. We discovered we were in the same place; they built their house, we built our house and that is how it happened. It is the climate is as mild as you can find, generally. The location is good as far as [the] Las Vegas [Nevada] airport, because I am flying hither and yon a lot.
- SA: Why are you flying? Is it for western things?
- PC: Yes, and for *Gone With the Wind* and for business. We do not fly as much as we did just a few years ago. My wife’s health is not great, so I am housebound a bit more than either of would prefer me to be, but that is it.
- SA: I am trying to focus on the Western Legends Round-up because that is a southern Utah event. Are you still involved with that? It seems that the numbers are diminishing because the stars are older.
- PC: Yes, the same thing happened with *The Boot*. You run out of people to keep it going [and] people are getting old. They are very old and decrepit. I am not a personality, but if I were, I would never do that. I think Heston did it the best way. A lot of other people would have. It is called, “closing the door.” They say goodbye as healthy as they can be and they close the door. You never see them again. When they pass away, everybody remembers Heston as Heston. You do not want to remember Heston the last time I saw him.
- SA: With Alzheimer’s or dementia.

PC: Exactly, and a lot of people are that way. I can think of dozens of people [who are] that way.

SA: Do you think that is the story of Ogee Seeger.

PC: Probably. I do not know how old she is, but I think that might be. She is an interesting woman. In leafing through, she [had] a lot of programs from the Oscars and Raquel. I found two where she was a presenter, but that was in the late 1960s so she is not [young] for sure.

SA: Right.

PC: To put a period on your point, people show up at these things maybe because they need the money. I totally understand that, but on the other hand, you do not know why they are there. They cannot speak, they do not know where they are; their wives or girlfriends have [brought] them there. Jim Stacy, a great friend of mine who lost an arm and a leg to a drunk driver, had a lot of problems. He was at Kanab a couple of years ago. He did not know why he was there; he did not know me. We played football together in high school [and] he was in two movies with Raquel. He was in *A Swinging Summer*. I hired him; he and [William] “Bill” Wellman, Jr. were the two men in *A Swinging Summer*, which we shot in Lake Arrowhead — the Beach Blanket Bingo movie. Let us put on a show and put ourselves through dental school. We had the Righteous Brothers, Gary Lewis and the Playboys, the Rip Chords. The bad [fellows] stole a cash box and had a race across — girls in bikinis. The sad part was that I wanted to direct it because a big portion of it was my own money. In those days, I looked like I was twelve years old and I could not get a completion bond. We hired Robert Sparr, who looked like God, and did 300 television shows at Warner Brothers. He was an excellent, get-it-done director. He had grey hair, was handsome, walked in and took over; it was fine. My life might have been a little bit different, had I been able to do what I really wanted to do, but it did not happen and that is okay. Jim Stacy had no idea where he was or who anybody was. A lot of people are that way now, more and more so. They do not know what is going on.

SA: That is what I noticed on a couple of occasions [where] you have these old [men] with young wives, and the wives are sort of like handlers.

PC: Yes, exactly.

SA: They are collecting the money on the autographs.

PC: They may need to pay the rent. I totally understand, but from a fan standpoint, I do not know what they think. Maybe they are very happy to finally meet the person, no matter what condition he is in, or maybe they think, “Ohhhhhhh.”

[Laughter] They had a big paper show at a hotel in Los Angeles and we used to go to see friends. They would have two or three tables, this length, with former Playboy bunnies, maybe twenty of them signing photos. You would think, “Ohhhhhhh, no.” [Laughter] “I want to remember you like I remember you.”

SA: They seem to age the hardest.

PC: Oh, tough, tough.

SA: This is great! Have you had any work over the past thirteen years since you moved here?

PC: No, I retired. Between you and me, I have a full-time job which is taking care of my wife, who is not well. She broke her neck and back in a car wreck twenty-two years ago. She is a chronic pain patient and that is the way life is. We have been married twenty-eight years. I do not need to work. The other problem is that I do not know anybody anymore. My generation does not know the generation that is doing things today. Turner was great, but then a lot of people got involved with Turner movies who did not like westerns. They wanted to make female-oriented films and it went in the toilet. There has not been a TNT movie for a decade, probably.

SA: I remember they were really big events.

PC: Yes, they were. It is unfortunate. Warner Brothers bought Turner’s library for so many dollars and a lot of stock. Then the Warner Brothers stock went in the toilet. He either left the board or got kicked off the board; I cannot remember. He [became] disenchanted, which is sad because he was a mover and shaker. It was so nice not to have committees. “Ted, I really want to do this. Here is what I [have]. What do you think?” He would respond, “I am going to give you so many dollars to move it to the next step. Let us get a script.”

SA: He was a mogul.

PC: Totally, that is exactly who he was. He was the Louis B. Mayer of television, as far as movies go. You did not have to talk to anybody else; it was great. He made the decisions. I honestly do not know, “Steve,” you look at a movie, you look at television, especially a half-hour television show with twelve producers. What the hell do they do?

SA: It gets ridiculous when you see producer, producer, producer, producer.

PC: I understand that at a certain point a [man] who was one of the primary writers, has written 200 scripts, you cannot give him any more money, so you give him a credit. Give me the money; I do not give a crap about credit. What do they do? I have no idea what the hell these people do. [For] a half-hour television show, you

have twelve producers? In the movies you see fifteen executive producers. Some of them are the stars' agents who wants a credit.

SA: Yes.

PC: It drives you nuts, but that is what you have to deal with. Like my \$300,000.00 that I had to give Berenger. Why was he not happy with \$700,000.00 for twenty-five days? Give me a break! They knew it was there, that it was in our back pocket and we could give it away in order to get the picture made. It is "airy-fairy" money, but it would not have been; he [received] it over a period time. He [was] paid and now we are [being] paid.

SA: Does he work anymore? I have not seen him.

PC: He [received] an Emmy for *The Hatfields and McCoys*. He was wonderful in it, but you would not have known it was him. He has gained a lot of weight [and] had a big beard. He was excellent in it. He has become what he thought he was; a character actor. Every once in awhile, he will show up in something. I saw him as a prison warden in one scene in some movie; I cannot tell you what it was. Maybe he did it, as we all have, as a favor to the director or the producer. He had a wonderful wife at the time who was a Scientologist. She was giving his money away. The two young girls in the movie are his daughters. He divorced her and was going somewhere [when] he met a girl who was a waitress at a dive in the south. He started going out [and] married her. We had already finished our movie and [we] gave him a [Golden] Boot. When he was there at the Boot, so was his wife. I heard from other people that in order to deal with Berenger, you have to deal with the wife who, two years before was a waitress in a dive in South Carolina. People do not want to do that. There are other people out there you can deal with, better than having to deal with — not that she was not nice, but she did not know what show people were talking about. You are an impediment to getting something done that we all want to do. I do not know if he is still married to her.

SA: It is only acting. Hollywood people are weird.

PC: His [first wife] was giving all his money away to [The Church of] Scientology, which he was not a member of, but she was. It drove him crazy and he could not stop it. I do not know why you cannot, but felt that he could not, and so he divorced her. She was a very pretty blonde lady. She was not model [pretty], but a very handsome, good-looking woman, tall with a nice figure. Is there anything else?

SA: No, that is all. I think we covered everything.

PC: Let me know.

SA: Yes.

PC: What is this going in? Annabel asked what this is for and I told her I had no idea. He is my friend; he asked me to do it and I am doing it. Heather did it. "Oh, okay." Aren't women funny? "If Heather did it, it is fine." [Laughter]

SA: This is an oral history project.

PC: Great!

SA: It is oral history of motion picture production in Washington County and southern Utah. I am the director of undergraduate research at [Dixie State University] and I wanted to have a project for my undergraduate researchers. Over the course of about six months, we wrote a grant and then [presented it] to the Utah Humanities [Council in] Salt Lake City, which also works with the museums and the arts. They gave us \$2,000.00. It is not a lot, but it is something.

PC: I'll [gladly] donate the \$50.00 to your project [laughter] but, I want credit. [Laughter]

SA: [Laughter] That is very nice of you. I can put that in my back pocket, like your \$300,000.00! We are collecting this information. It will be transcribed. The transcription will be presented to you to make any changes, if you want anything left off the record. It goes back and forth like that. They want us, at some point, to have our interviewees talk about their experiences in a public setting, which you and I did at the [St. George] Book Fair Festival years ago. We would have you come to the Dunford Auditorium [at Dixie State University]

PC: I spoke there [once] before.

SA: I think I was there for that [event].

PC: Yes. That was one of those where I spoke to one of the art classes, a movie class, and afterwards I realized, I am in big trouble.

SA: Because of the changes?

PC: I am looking at the audience of fresh-faced young people who had no idea what I was talking about. I have a story about Clark Gable and his Jaguar where he scared me so badly I peed my pants. They did not know who Clark Gable was nor what a Jaguar was. I said, "Brad Pitt and a Ferrari. This is a story about Brad Pitt and his Ferrari," and then I told the story. They laughed when they should have and got a kick out of it when they should have, but I realized I am in deep do-do. I have to modify the things I am talking about. This is the cinema department here. When I did that talk, it has been a few years now, I was a little bit concerned about that. What I discovered was that ninety-nine percent of the audience was people from the community who [are] retired and that was my gray-haired

audience. Thank you. They [responded to] all the jokes, they knew who the people were. If I do not have to explain who Betty Grable is, I am in good shape.

SA: You said that the director of the digital film program — he is a colleague and we work together. We brought out a fellow in January who is a documentary maker who had done a movie about these studio musicians who worked with the Beach Boys, the Righteous Brothers and Phil Spectre.

[END OF RECORDING TWO. END OF INTERVIEW.]