

Interview with
JAMES D'ARC

April 22, 2016

**MOTION PICTURE PRODUCTION IN
WASHINGTON COUNTY, UTAH
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

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JAMES D'ARC

James D'Arc was interviewed April 22, 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: [Inaudible] University of Victoria in Canada.

JD: Oh.

SA: [Inaudible] He is very supportive of research, writes grants and was just trying to get something going with the *Maltese Falcon*.

JD: He approached me about that a few months ago.

SA: I got into that discussion, too, because of my teaching of crime novels. This is what we have and you have been along as a consultant for much of this. After the experience of making the movie about Kanab [Kane County, Utah] I was looking for a new project. I was also looking for a project that our new undergraduate research office could sponsor, oversee and supervise. Working with some students over the course of about a year or so, we [received] this \$2,000.00 grant presented to Utah Humanities [Council] Oral History Project. To have an operation like that endorsing what we are doing is very helpful in terms of connecting with people and securing interviews. I don't know if this project is going to yield anything other than just archives of these transcribed talks; although maybe I will turn it into a small book or an article.

The focus this time is on Washington County which we think has been under recognized, not with *When Hollywood Came to Town*, just in general. People don't seem to know about movie history in St. George the way they do in Kanab. We have prepared about six questions. The protocol has us ask the same six questions. But I have to modify them for each person. If I can begin, what is your name and how do you spell it?

JD: James D'Arc. J-A-M-E-S D'-A-R-C.

SA: What is your age?

JD: I am sixty-five [years old].

SA: This is your day for autobiography. If you would, provide an autobiographical background detailing your experiences, personal and professional, leading up to your experiences, working or interacting, with production crews or people attached to motion picture productions in Washington County, Utah.

- JD: Leading up to the writing and researching of the book?
- SA: Yes. How you got from where you were before, narrowing and focusing onto this geography.
- JD: I was born and raised in Glendale, California, a Los Angeles suburb. There, in what is often called regionally the movie capital of the world, I fell in love with motion pictures — classic, not contemporary. [I] became greatly interested in studio films and movie making history. When I moved to Utah in the late 1960s to go through an undergraduate degree at Brigham Young University [Provo, Utah County, Utah], the interest in films persisted. I majored in American History since there was no American Studies program to do an interdisciplinary film approach. I was hired at the Harold B. Lee Library [on the BYU campus] in special collections, archives and manuscripts in 1977. I have been there ever since. [I am] curator of the Arts and Communications Archives, the BYU Motion Picture Archive and the BYU Film Music Archive since 1979 to the present. My scholarly interests have continued in studying the history of Hollywood filmmaking and throughout the State of Utah which led me to this thirty-four year project that culminated in the book *When Hollywood Came to Town*, a history of movie making in Utah published by Gibb Smith in 2010.
- SA: Can you tell about Gibb Smith?
- JD: Gibb Smith is a regional publisher based in Layton [Davis County] Utah. He publishes fine art books on Utah artists, some titles on regional history, but this was the first book that they had published on regional film history. I believe Gibb Smith, who is still alive, has had the company going since the late 1960s. Its previous in print title was Paragon Press.
- SA: What was the response to the book when it came out?
- JD: Well, it sold out the first printing in about eighteen months. Then I did a revised and updated second edition that was published in 2012. That sold out in the fall of 2015 and it has not been reprinted. So the response was very good.
- SA: I remember seeing it for sale in Costco [Wholesale Corporation].
- JD: Yes, Costco took it for awhile.
- SA: Tell about the adventure of crisscrossing Utah, interviewing these personalities, these living bits of history.
- JD: This was a singularly exciting part of my life because no one had ever really done a book length study on this topic at all. Anecdotes, isolated articles in local newspapers whether it be in Moab [Grand County Utah], St. George, Kanab, Salt Lake City [Salt Lake County, Utah], the narrative had never been pieced together,

number one, the history of movie making in Utah. And second, there had never been a union list of all feature motion pictures, television movies and television series episodes ever compiled before. So what I encountered was an exciting adventure, but a long one. It was a long one because I, first of all, had to verify every title that was shot in whole or in part in Utah. More often than not, I had to cut through regional myths that had grown up over decades of what was shot, what was shot where, and who they talked to. I found out that many of these experiences were either trumped up, misremembered, conflated or just wished it happened. So it took years and years of research to corroborate information that I had heard, [to] either confirm or deny. We are talking here of nearly one thousand titles that now appear as the appendix in the book.

So the book started at the end in trying to compile a comprehensive accurate list of films. It was met in some quarters with utter disbelief and in some cases with anger. Such as, "I know that this was filmed here," when in fact it clearly demonstrably was not filmed. On the other hand I [had] the experience of over thirty years [of] getting to know so many wonderful people in St. George, Kanab, Moab, Salt Lake City, Cedar City [Iron County, Utah], and little towns in between. People who had been hired as children as extras on the movies and who had vivid memories of what it was like to make a little extra money when a particular star performer had been friendly to them. These are lasting memories because now in the year 2016 many of these informants who I had interviewed over the years are gone, have passed away. In many cases, mine were the last interviews these people ever had. Many of them who I visited on subsequent visits for additional interviews or who I had just become friends with had passed away and I would consider very, very dear friends. So it has been a saga of my personal life as well as my professional endeavors, a wonderful adventure.

Since this is focused on Washington County one of the things that became apparent to me, and you started this interview out with, is that Washington County had just been left off the historical map as far as motion pictures are concerned. I will weigh in on why I think that is so. The difficulty in Washington County being recognized for what it really should be recognized for is the fact that it did not have a highly profiled booster. By that I mean, in the early years Chauncey Parry and his two brothers [Gronway and Whitney Parry] were the renowned go getters and jump starters of the movie industry in both Iron and Kane Counties. The fact that they purchased the Jet Johnson farm in Kanab and turned it into what is now the Parry Lodge with its storied history of movie stars who stayed there while making more than a hundred feature films and maybe over a hundred television episodes in the Kane County area, drew so much attention to Kane County at the expense of all the others.

Nor did Washington County have a George White who was the road supervisor in Moab who went down to Monument Valley when John Ford was making *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* in the late 1940s and essentially told Ford, "Mr. Ford, you have beautiful sandstone formations down here against which you have made

many, many films. Should you ever become tired of it or if you would like to see a similarly red rock but water fed landscape, come on up to Moab and I will show you the Colorado River Valley that is just outside our township.” He was persuaded by George White and the editor of the newspaper, *The Moab Times Independent* at the time, to come up and take a look. As they have recounted, John Ford was so awed by the backdrop of the La Salle Mountains and the Colorado River right along what is called now Scenic Highway 128 that he promised them he would make his next film there. Ford followed through and made *Wagon Master* and then right after that *Rio Grande* both released in 1950.

Who did Washington County have? No one, really. The first film that I document in my book that was made in the region was a twelve chapter serial for Republic Pictures called *The Painted Stallion* that was released in 1937. [It was] filmed mostly around Ivins [Washington County, Utah] and beautifully showed off the canyon countryside that is only available here. Now it was photographed in black and white so you couldn’t see the crimson red of the cliffs, but they certainly took advantage of high canyon walls to photograph down in the valleys, shooting up at the high canyon walls and what was regarded of all of Republic’s twelve chapter and ten chapter serials [as] largely filler B products.

But here is what is significant about the films made in Washington County and *The Painted Stallion* is a great example of that. You can make a twelve chapter serial that is regarded as kiddy-fare costing next to nothing to make, filmed in a matter of a few weeks. You can make something that cost a few hundred thousand dollars in your budget look like a million bucks on the screen and that is what the production people at Republic did when they came here to make *The Painted Stallion*.

This area really took off in the early 1950s when Republic came back out here again with Ray Milland to make a film called *A Man Alone*. The beginning portions, the early parts of the film, were shot in and around St. George. Then a few others showed up to make films. But it was really when Howard Hughes and his location managers came in search of an area that would stand in for Mongolia in the Twelfth Century when Genghis Khan reigned. When they saw the [Snow Canyon] State Park up here they knew exactly this was the place to make what became *The Conqueror*. They came in under stealth as they talked with the locals because all that they told the locals when they were hunting for locations — it wasn’t that Howard Hughes was making a movie, it was that a Hollywood motion picture company was coming to make a religious picture in the area. Probably for understandable reasons not tipping off other movie makers what their subject was going to be or that Howard Hughes was the backer, a man [who] by the early 1950s was known to be eccentric, to have very deep pockets and I suspect they didn’t want news to get out. So they swore the locals to secrecy on all of this.

As I recall, the first name that becomes prominent is a chamber of commerce official by the name of L. Browning [“Brown”] Hale, if I have the name right. It

is in the book. He was the one who dealt with these location managers and as the evidence showed me cinched the deal with RKO [Radio-Keith-Orpheum] Radio Pictures that Howard Hughes owned at the time to make *The Conqueror*. As documented in the book, RKO and the Howard Hughes production people took over this county for the period of about six weeks as I remember. Just about everyone who lived here had a job in some capacity or another from night watchman to greens man to horse wranglers, cattle wranglers, providers of rolling stock [and] caterers. Dick's Café catered all the meals and the town was turned over. [Dixie] High School was used to house all of the costumes and [props] they needed to keep under cover. All of the area school buses were hired to transport people from area hotels and rented houses in St. George out onto the various locations which went as far north on Interstate-15, then Highway 91, as Harrisburg [Washington County, Utah] and down into Warner Valley [Arizona] where some of the big battles occurred.

So this was a very big deal that, I think, whetted the county's appetite for more of the same. I suspect that people here in St. George and in the surrounding area felt about the movie companies the way that a farmer in Moab told me who had worked with John Wayne on *The Comancheros* in 1961 when I just point blank asked him, "What do you think about the movie companies coming into your area? Is this a good thing or is this a bad thing?" He looked at me and said, "You know I think it was a good thing because when they came here all they left was money and all they took were pictures."

Now I imagine there are some locals here who didn't want those infernal outsiders coming in here and busying up what I can imagine being a peaceful and rather placid existence. But Utah in the 1950s was on the rise with tourism and a big movie by RKO Radio Pictures and by Howard Hughes and showing off the landscape does nothing but encourage tourists. Once the movie company came here and got going those were still the days when people could come to an area, stand on the sidelines and watch a movie being made in contrast to what you find today: armed guards, closed off sets and keeping people away from movie shooting sites. Back then it was a major tourist attraction. *Look Magazine*, *Life Magazine* [and] major news outlets covered the extensive production of this movie here. That drew in visitors. Visitors draw in money and I think the chamber of commerce was all set for additional films to be made in the area.

SA: A couple of weeks ago we had a person here named Glen Blakely who in the 1970s worked in the film office. Just like Kane County, the film office and the travel office were combined. He said, "Look this is an attractive place. It is a confluence of climates and geographical strata." But the point was, it would be an ideal place to offer a film that needs multiple locations and a studio that needs multiple locations in close proximity. He said basically the town wasn't behind bringing people out here. So Sidney Pollack did the *Jeremiah Johnson* and Walter Hale did the Grafton film, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. Then Robert Redford came back out here for *The Electric Horseman*. There was *The Car*.

JD: Keith Merrill was down here for his anti-tax feature film. *Harry's War*, I think, was the name of it, shooting all in downtown St. George.

SA: Yes.

JD: I found as I studied movie making in the state there was that element in every major movie making city — Kanab, Moab, Salt Lake City, and certainly here in St. George. There is that faction, a very vocal faction that was against the kind of corruption as they would call it that would be brought in by the movie colony. Charismatic movie stars who gained the affections of a lot of young female wannabes that creates problems that they came here to escape. They, meaning their families wanting peace, quiet, a sort of pastoral solitude, a getaway from the metropolis of Las Vegas or Los Angeles or Chicago [Illinois] or anywhere else. If you don't have the town's people behind you it makes it nearly impossible for a movie company to feel welcome. Local merchants will gouge to get their pound of flesh — overcharge. Motels will overcharge. Grocery stores will overcharge which thus upsets the movie companies who from their perspective are being taken advantage of and will likely not come back again. It poisons the well for future productions because news of that sort will get around particularly amongst location managers [and] location scouts.

That happened at various times in Utah as I record in the book. There are periods when Hollywood just laid off Utah, stayed away, until some of those matters were resolved and they received assurances that those kinds of price gouging wouldn't happen again.

SA: Over the years I have been looking into this, [and] I have heard people speculate. The question is how come there isn't more movie production going on here now especially when we have this digital boom. It's cheaper to shoot and the landscape is still fairly pristine. The answer is: places like New Mexico offer better tax incentives. So it is austerity, penny pinching that is actually depressing motion picture investment in the state. What do you think about that?

JD: I would agree to everything you are saying because the landscape, if you want to metaphorically put it that way, of movie making has vastly changed from the time period that I predominantly describe in my book. Local entrepreneurs could entice Hollywood here and remarkably keep them here. The Parry brothers kept them coming to Kanab and Kane County from 1934 to 1978. It is astounding that kind of draw. These are just local businessmen. Now-a-days, as you have pointed out, every state virtually has realized the boom that movie making brings to their municipalities and the game has completely changed. Georgia, South Carolina, Manhattan [New York and] New Mexico that you have mentioned and we haven't even brought up Canada that has had a significant effect on what are called run away productions from Hollywood. Even now, if you watch Los Angeles television and listen to Los Angeles radio there are commercials sponsored by the

local chambers of commerce to keep movie making in Hollywood. You would never have seen that before because it was always headquartered there. Now they are begging for production to remain in the Los Angeles area.

So potent have been the energies of Canada, and the states that I have just mentioned, in offering incentives for up to forty percent for awhile for money that could be demonstrated was deposited into the local economy. They would get that money back. Now the state that had that forty-two percent, Michigan, quickly rescinded it because they were paying out more than they figured they were getting in. But many states have seemed to settle on from fifteen to twenty-five percent as a rebate for money that can be documented by receipts was put into the state's economy. The world of movie making and the world of financing have changed. But also the landscape, physically, has changed because with the digital universe that has now inhabited movie making since the late 1990s with CGI, computer generated images. Oftentimes scouts will go to an area and will digitally photograph the landscapes that they want to incorporate into their film and then simply go back to their digital laboratories and recreate it. That was happening as early as the late 1990s, early 2000s, here in Utah to where you actually don't have to bring your production company to the physical locale to make it work.

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

SA: Before we continue talking about the business of film making in Southern Utah, I wanted to possibly address one of these myths, one of these stories, urban legends, and that of course is *The Conqueror*. The well known story is here you had testing, the nuclear bombs going off and it settled reputedly over Washington County in Snow Canyon. You had Agnes Moorehead, Dick Powell, Susan Hayward and John Wayne tromping around in this radioactive dirt. That is the story and they all died of these excruciating cancers later on. I think Agnes Moorehead's was the worst. It was stomach cancer or it was ovarian cancer.

JD: Pedro Armandáriz committed suicide suffering from cancer.

SA: Here is what I want to get the scoop on. Hughes bought red dirt and brought it to the sound stage in Los Angeles and it was that prolonged exposure to that dirt and marching around in it which may have contaminated them, which may have given them this radioactive sickness. I am just trying to visualize when you were talking about this secretive nature of the production whether these long trucks dragging out our precious red dirt? Have you heard that story?

JD: Yes, indeed. They had to do that because all the interiors were shot on the sound stages at RKO which is right next door to Paramount Studios. In fact, both of those are now combined. RKO sold out so the entire lot is Paramount now.

Yes, they did. They trucked loads of this radioactive, infected earth back and had it there. However, I think all of the above is true. Their exposure was prolonged

here to the soil because they did all the exteriors up here. Calvary men who were asked to do stunts on horses would fall into that soil. It would get under their nails, get on their skin. They would have to wash it off at night. Camera crews were working outside in this [dirt]. So I think the effect was prolonged here and prolonged in Los Angeles when they were doing this. The \$64,000.00 question though is: was it the radioactivity or was it the heavy smoking habit that all of those except for a few? A sizable majority of those were heavy smokers at the time. John Wayne, notorious above them all, was already experiencing problems at that time in his life. So which was it? I never tried to prove that case because I think it is unprovable. I think the combination of — the radioactivity, the sun exposure and the tobacco habit, the nicotine — all contributed to their early demise.

Patrick Wayne [Patrick John Morrison] who probably didn't smoke because he was younger was on location all of the time, [but] nevertheless developed stomach cancer. So you can't rule out the radioactivity. The question is: what was its preponderance as a contributor to the cancers of all of them? I think it would be safe to say if you start eliminating factors, I think if you eliminated the radioactivity here I don't think you would have had as severe a cancer and maybe not as early a death as those prominent actors and actresses had. I think the fallout here was a definite factor and, in fact, there is a new feature length documentary on just that fallout and its impact here. It was debuted at the LDS [Latter-day Saint] film festival in March.

SA: What is it called?

JD: I can get the title to you. It is done and it is out on DVD [Digital Versatile Disc]. It is quite powerful focusing around *The Conqueror* and the [United States] Government's position on the fallout here.

SA: Let's right now start to name productions, films and television that were made in the county, maybe, starting at the earliest decade.

JD: Let me pull this out and start to go through it. You may want to stop [the tape recorder] for a second. [I want to] get some of those that were done that would be certainly Washington County, would be Zion National Park. You have two or three Zane Grey films that I document in my book that were made by Paramount Pictures including *The Vanishing Pioneer* and *Forlorn River*. The problem with those film titles done in the late 1920s is they are lost films. No prints are known to exist and very few still photographs survive of those films.

Probably the one that is the earliest that does survive and that really shows off the Zion National Park and Springdale areas [in Washington County, Utah] so beautifully is a film that was just discovered and restored three years ago called *Ramona*. Ironically, a California story about a white man's love for an Indian and their forbidden love and marriage that was done as an annual pageant play in

Southern California because it is a California story. Inspiration Pictures came to Zion National Park in 1926 to film it in the park. Why? Because of its grandeur. That was considered a lost film until a print was discovered in the Czech film archive acquired by the Library of Congress and then restored. We at Brigham Young University premiered it last year at the BYU Motion Picture Archive Film Series. It is a beautiful film starring Warner Baxter and the beautiful Mexican actress, Delores del Rio. So that is one of the early ones. In fact, a complete Mexican hacienda was built right at the turnaround point in the bus tour at the Temple of Sinawava, I think is the term. A mountain hideaway was built on the west rim trail, something that would never be permitted now-a-days, but was done then. Then I reference *The Vanishing Pioneer* that was done by Paramount Pictures.

You know *In Old Arizona*, the first all-talking Western in 1929 was photographed at Grafton [Washington County, Utah] and throughout the park. Warner Baxter got his first and only academy award done there. Raoul Walsh directed the film. Raoul Walsh is one of those directors who is parodied so often, the director with the eye patch. He [received] the eye patch as a result of making that film in Washington County. They were driving back to his hotel from filming one day in Grafton. I believe [he was staying] in Cedar City at the time. It was twilight and a rabbit jumped off the road into the windshield smashing the glass and sending splinters into his eye. He was rushed to the hospital, then sent up to Salt Lake City where they had to remove the eye thereby Walsh having to wear an eye patch for the rest of his life thanks to his movie making in Washington County, Utah.

A sequel of sorts was made to that film called *The Arizona Kid* in 1930. [It was] filmed on the same locations and co-starring a very young, almost unknown, actress by the name of Carol Lombard who later married Clark Gable and became quite an accomplished actress herself.

Another Zane Grey story, *The Dude Ranger*, was filmed in Zion National Park and Kanab in 1934. The first A-list film was an MGM [Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer] Production again filmed in Zion National Park called *The Bad Man of Brimstone* [with] Dennis O'Keefe and the great gruff Wallace Beery. That is probably the first really mainstream A-budgeted talking picture made in the area. Then came a movie that became in Utah circles anyway quite notorious, a film directed by André de Toth which many call a film noir western called *Ramrod* shot in 1946 in Zion National Park and starring Joel McCrea, a very popular actor by that time, a sizzling femme fatale by the name of Veronica Lake, Donald Crisp and Don DeFore. [It was] a very brutal, gritty western film.

SA: It was de Toth [inaudible]. He did *House of Wax*. He had this very, very dark outlook.

JD: He did. He is lionized nowadays as one of the best directors of films noir. No one had ever seen a western like this one before. Betrayal, violence, grittiness [were]

all set against this visual splendor of Zion National Park. It was such a big production that some in the Utah State Legislature said, "Well, we are celebrating our centennial year, 1947. Let's make *Ramrod* the centennial movie for the State of Utah." The boosters felt really good about it until some of the legislators got wind of what kind of a film this was and they said, "Well, wait a minute." The Luke Short story that this is based on, a *Saturday Evening Post* serial, was based in Colorado. "This is too violent and too dark for Utah to be associated with. Let's give it to them." The Utah Governor weighed in on this and said, "No, we're not. This is going to be Utah's centennial film." David [O.] McKay who was a LDS Church general authority and who was head of the centennial commission agreed that *Ramrod* should be Utah's centennial picture.

So in February of 1947 there was a gala premiere in Salt Lake City of *Ramrod*. It brought in news correspondents from all over the United States. The studio sent all of the stars on a special whistle stop train that ended its journey in Salt Lake [City] for this premiere. Hedda Hopper, Art Linkletter and a number of other radio broadcasters had national hookups in Salt Lake [City] and it was deemed an unqualified success for the State of Utah to have *Ramrod* as its centennial picture. But it wasn't without controversy. The movie holds up very, very well today, photographically and critically as one of the few great western films noir. It had much to do with Utah's image, Utah's economy and Utah's culture.

SA: I am going to correct this for the transcriptionist. The de Toth movie was the 3-D *House of Wax*.

JD: You mentioned that.

SA: I thought I said Wax Works.

JD: You said *House of Wax*. In fact, another one-eyed director, the only one-eyed director to make a 3-D movie. It is considered the best 3-D movie.

SA: Charles Bronson is in that.

JD: He is as Charles Buchinsky. Then you have bits and pieces of other films made in the area through the year certainly eclipsed by *The Conqueror*. Again, which like *Ramrod*, but in another way had everything to do with Utah history, culture and even to this day current events with the downwinders and the downwinders legislation that was passed in the 1980s. Motion pictures, popular motion pictures and Utah, Southwestern Utah in particular, are intertwined. You cannot divorce the movie making industry from the State of Utah culturally, economically or tragically where *The Conqueror* is concerned physically.

SA: We have been talking about Springdale. We have been talking about Ivins. We haven't really been talking about St. George.

JD: St. George itself?

SA: Yes.

JD: With the Robert Redford films you [had] shooting in downtown St. George. Then with the Keith Merrill film, *Harry's War*, you [had] an awful lot of downtown footage as well. But again, this is something that locals didn't particularly welcome or encourage. Whereas for the most part in Kanab and in Moab they loved the movie companies coming there and the critics were in the minority at that time. So for a film in Moab, for example, like *Blue* that was done in 1967 they actually made a film within a film called *Fade In* where they got a young up and coming actor, Burt Reynolds, to play a local Moab rancher who is in love with the film editor of *Blue*. That was a separate feature that was made about the making of the film there and was shown in Europe theatrically and shown in the United States on television. That only happened because the locals were behind those kinds of things.

SA: It has been a while since I have thought about this, but the Monte Hellman movies with Jack Nicholson, were they —.

JD: *Ride in the Whirlwind* and *The Shooting* were Kanab based.

SA: Okay.

JD: So it does make a difference when the locals are behind it sometimes in the form of the chamber of commerce or in some other way.

SD: With Dick's Café, weren't there merchants in town who maybe asked the chamber of commerce?

JD: Yes and they loved that because Dick catered to the stars. He was the one who catered the location lunches for the cast and crew of *The Conqueror*. Of course, many of the local merchants dealing in lumber, tools and supplies loved this. A lot of the local residents didn't because [of] how it upset daily life and operations in the community, unlike Moab and Kanab. It is my understanding that the chamber of commerce in St. George did not regularly send contact people down to Hollywood to drum up business. If they did it was probably much later.

SD: Glen, who was with the film office, told me this story that there were two employees. One had been really strong keeping the telephone numbers and sending the photos just like the Parrys would do — look at this and look at this. Then she was reassigned to another office. The person who followed her was, I think, half-time, didn't keep the numbers, didn't give the numbers out and that caused the interest to plummet.

JD: What time period was this?

SD: [In] the mid-1970s.

JD: It was much later whereas both Moab and Kanab got an early start doing this. They were very active knocking on doors studio to studio. Once they [were] doing that and established those contacts all you had to do was [to] keep it going. To this day what is now called the Moab to Monument Valley Film Commission is the oldest continuously running film commission in the United States, 1949 to now, because they kept it up.

SD: Let's go to the question of myths. One myth that I have already had undone or weakened by this talk is the loss of Raoul Walsh's eye. I had heard that it was a convertible with one of those windshields that you can flip up and flip down like a wartime jeep. It was down and a bird flew into his eye.

JD: In my research I strive to get the closest to a contemporary account as possible as to what happens. So I looked at accounts in the Iron County record and then I looked at Raoul Walsh's account in his autobiography and the accounts seem to agree that it was shards of glass from a rabbit hitting the windshield that did it. Now whether it was a convertible or not I don't know. I have never seen a description nor read a description of the vehicle, but glass definitely played a part and the fact that after getting a sort of a triage type treatment locally he was sent up to Salt Lake City and that is where his eye was removed. I think it was [at] St. Mark's Hospital. That comes from an account where he was in conversation with Douglas Fairbanks and they were joking about how many bottles of whiskey it took to deaden the pain. There were some rather interesting accounts that I didn't have space in the book to talk about, but which are just wonderful accounts of how he went through all this.

SD: What other stories, anecdotes or tall tales does St. George and Washington County area have? What myths have arisen out of this parcel that you have been able to shoot down?

JD: I never encountered any myths where Washington County films are concerned. Most of the myths that I encountered were having to do with Kane County and the films that they claimed were filmed there. I never had that problem because there were too few films. The experiences in making them here by the time film making got going here mid-1950s and onward there were not many myths to dash because it was a very public enterprise and they were pretty well covered at the time. So none for this region.

SD: This will be the last question. We have actually gone through just about everything that I wanted to ask. Could I have you list actors and directors who have worked in Washington County?

JD: The best list is in my book. This is just off the top of my head. You have Nicholas Ray, Raoul Walsh [and] Dick Powell. You have Irving Cummings. He was the

one who took over for Raoul Walsh on *The Arizona Kid* because Walsh was initially the star of the film. He was starring in his own film. When his eye [was] taken out they had to put somebody else in that role and also to finish directing the film. I am trying to think of that wonderful film *Run of the Arrow*. I am trying to think of the director of that film.

SA: That was the Jimmy Stewart one. [Inaudible]

JD: No. That's *Taza, Son of Cochise*. This one has Rod Steiger as a Civil War veteran.

SA: Is that Samuel Fuller?

JD: "Sam" Fuller, yes. That is who directed it. In fact, "Sam" Fuller and Raoul Walsh overlapped their production times in St. George just a little bit. Raoul Walsh wished that he could be directing "Sam" Fuller's *Run of the Arrow* which is still considered to be a very, very good film about the clash of cultures. *Run of the Arrow* being a clash of culture between the white [man] and Native American. It was a very good film that was shot in Snow Canyon as well as other areas in the region. You also have Robert Rossen who did the film *They Came to Cordura* starring Gary Cooper and Tab Hunter which was one of Cooper's last films. It was the film in which Cooper just fell in love with the area and went fishing with a local here. When Cooper found out that he had inoperable lung cancer [he] chose to come back and spend some of his best final days with this fellow hunting and fishing. So Cooper just fell in love with Utah, Washington County people and the landscape.

Then you have *The Car* about this anthropomorphic possessed Lincoln Mark 7 that just willy nilly hunts down people and kills them on the highway. That wasn't reviewed too well when it came out, but has since become quite a cult film.

One of the things that has always fascinated me about films in Washington County, particularly focusing on the iconic nature of Snow Canyon and Zion National Park is that it forces those of us who are either natives or who have lived a long time in this region of the state to radically rethink how we view and how we perceive the landscape. For example, most of us here would go to Zion National Park and would think awesomeness, peace, pastoral repose. And yet filmmakers who come here looking for locations see violent gun battles, the clash of good and evil and as the malevolent setting of a devil possessed automobile that seeks out victims and kills them. Have we ever thought of our landscape in that way? No.

[END OF RECORDING TWO. END OF INTERVIEW.]