

Interview with
ARTHUR J. HALE

March 28, 2016

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

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ARTHUR J. HALE

Arthur J. Hale was interviewed March 28, 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: — as the director of the undergraduate research office, I do oversee interns and these two were picked out by me because they are wonderful students. Betty is involved with DOCUtah, the film festival of documentaries. Karen is a writer and a smart [person]. We have sort of been fumbling through this [project] for the last two months. If you have any suggestions for contacting other people who may remember, we would really appreciate it. Tell and spell your name and your age.
- AH: [My name is] Arthur [J.] Hale, A-R-T-H-U-R H-A-L-E. I am sixty-six [years old].
- SA: Would you give us an autobiographical background, your life story, detailing your experiences, personal and professional, leading up to your experiences interacting with actors and production crews. Did you grow up in St. George?
- AH: I was born and raised in Las Vegas [Nevada]. We moved up here in 1963. I was thirteen [years old]. We lived here for two years and then we moved up to a motel in Springdale [Washington County, Utah]. I went on a mission for [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] right at the time they were [filming] *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*.
- SA: [Were they filming] in Grafton [Washington County, Utah]?
- AH: They were in Grafton. They stayed at the Driftwood Lodge. My mother-in-law actually was a waitress there. She is gone now. She waited on Paul Newman and Robert Redford.
- SA: Really?
- AH: Yes.
- SA: Did you interact with anybody for that production or [were] you gone at that point?
- AH: Not any of the actors that I know of because they were [filming] at the time that I left. It was in the fall of 1968 that they were there.
- SA: Do you remember any other productions or experiences when you were living in Springdale?

AH: Yes. When I was a senior in high school, they were doing *The Appaloosa* with Marlon Brando.

SA: Did you see him?

AH: I saw him once. It was brief. The set they had where his friend rode up was out by Virgin [Washington County, Utah], across the [Virgin] River sitting up on a hill at the start of the movie when he rode the appaloosa up there. That was the set that they [used] there. I think that that is about all that they did here in Southern Utah; just that scene there.

SA: That is the value of this project because — was *The Appaloosa* on our list of films produced in the area?

UV: I don't think so.

SA: No. I don't think so.

AH: What about *Harry's War*?

SA: No. Have we seen that on our list?

UV: No.

SA: Tell us about *Harry's War*.

AH: Let me think of the actor. I actually ran into him up at the Safeway [Store]. Maybe we can come up with his name. He played in [*The*] *Lost Boys*. Did you ever see [*The*] *Lost Boys* about the vampires? He played the head vampire.

SA: I am calling up the movie credits list.

AH: He also played in *Overboard* with Goldie Hahn. [Inaudible]

UV: I know who you are talking about.

UV: He was the head vampire?

AH: He was the head vampire that was trying to get —.

UV: I can visualize him, but I can't —.

AH: He was head of the lost boys and was trying to get their mother to marry him because he said the two boys needed a mother. Corey Feldman was the young brother.

UV: Yes.

UV: Edward Herrmann?

AH: That's it, Edward Herrmann.

SA: He played a mailman who fights back when the IRS [Internal Revenue Service] hounds an eccentric old woman, Geraldine Page.

AH: Yes. They built a set down here on River Road as you go past the spa, Summit [Athletic Club]. You go past there and around the curb right there is the old Shurtliff farm. Across the street on the hill, they built that great big barn which they burned. Actually, it was after midnight that they did it. Everybody was out there watching it because they blew it up [when] they were after him. The Feds blew it up. [Laughter]

SA: Was that about 1980 or so?

AH: I was married then, so that was in the 1970s. It seemed like it was the late 1970s.

SA: Okay. Going back to you, when you came back from your mission had you already [obtained] a trade?

AH: I actually went up to barber college [the] next fall after high school because I didn't know what I wanted to do. Dad said, "I will pay for you to go up there." I always liked getting a haircut. I was always good with my hands, so I went up there just mainly to get out of the house. You can't get away from the parents [here]. So I was up there for about eight months.

SA: [Was this] up in Salt Lake [City, Salt Lake County, Utah]?

AH: [At] the Salt Lake Barber College.

SA: You came back down [here] and then you went on your mission?

AH: I came back down. We had what is called the Zion Park Roundup up [in] Springdale that we opened up in the spring of my senior year. I worked that summer and then I went up to barber college. Then I came back and worked that summer and then I went on my mission [on] December 1, 1968.

SA: Did you come back in 1970?

AH: Yes. [I came back] the end of November 1970. I started immediately working with Ron Knell [at] Knell's Barber Shop. [It was located] in Dick's Café building on the northeast corner.

SA: Tell about that establishment which is Ancestor Square now. They tore it all down.

AH: No. Ancestor Square was the Big Hand Café [across St. George Boulevard]. Actually, Dick Hammer, who [owned] Dick's Café was cooking at the Big Hand [Café] at the same time he was cooking [at] his own place. He started Dick's Café in 1935. It had kind of like a horseshoe bar around it and a kitchen and that is about all it was. Then they added on. It has been added on four times. They had some booths in it and they added on a bigger dining room. In 1946, the barber shop was added on the front of it and the curio shop behind that. They put the false front on so it didn't look like it was pieced together.

SA: What is there now?

AH: Sunfirst Bank was there, [but] it is not there now. It is an office building.

SA: Did they tear down all of Dick's [Café] structure?

AH: They tore that down and I moved over to where I am now. I have been there seventeen years. A month after I moved, they tore the building down. The Wittwers [who] have [the] Boulevard [Home Furnishings] store actually bought the property and the café from Dick Hammer. They had it for about three years. They bought it with the intention of tearing it down and using it for parking because the Boulevard [Home Furnishings] was on that corner where the juvenile court is [now]. That used to be the Boulevard [Home Furnishings] store. It used to have the old St. George Ford Garage there, and because part of that foundation was still there, they wanted to go up another story for the furniture store. The engineers told them they couldn't do it; it wouldn't hold it. So that is when they decided to go out and build a new store. They didn't sell it, but they went in on the Sunfirst Bank [building] because they owned the property. The bank eventually bought them out of that. Of course, Cache Valley Bank bought that and they still own that property.

SA: Are there any remnants, at all, of the original structure? Or was it all just bulldozed and paved over?

AH: It was just torn down. I have the salad wagon in the dining room.

SA: You do?

AH: They built it out of metal. It was like a buckboard. They kept the salad dressings on the seat. They put it in there so they could put ice and the different [items] down in there. I bought it and made a barbecue out of it. [Laughter]

SA: [Laughter] How did this structure look? It had a series of add-ons and had a false front. Was it pretty or was it kind of kooky looking?

AH: I have a business card of it. Actually, I have a picture of the old café because my daughter is a photographer. She took some pictures inside the café as well as inside the barber shop. Actually, I have a book. She made me a book for Father's Day and put together the story with pictures inside the café and inside the barber shop.

SA: We saw some of that online. It was very nice.

AH: Sharee [(Hale)] Jones is one of my daughters.

SA: So you are a young man and you are just getting started. [Were] you about twenty-one years old?

AH: I turned twenty-one [years old in] August 1970. I came home and four months later I was married in May [1970]. We have lived here in St. George ever since. Ron and I worked together at the shop for twenty-five years and then he [became ill with] leukemia. He was eighty-six years old and passed away. He had the symptoms in October. He was gone two days after Christmas [in 1996].

SA: Did you apprentice under him first and then become [a] coworker?

AH: I rented the chair from him. It was probably [for] two years or so. Dick didn't own the property. He was leasing it from the Schultz family. The Schultz daughter, Vera, was the executor of the estate. When their lease was up, Ron was only leasing that space for \$35.00 a month. [Laughter] Vera's father was Frank [Schultz]. Dick owned the parking lot on the east side of the building, but he didn't own the building or the parking lot on the west side. He renewed his lease with the mother, Mrs. Schultz, and then she stepped off a curb down in [Las] Vegas, was hit by a car and killed. Ron hadn't renewed his lease. So Vera, the daughter, being the executor, wanted to get more money because Dick had renewed his lease until 2001 at that time for only \$500.00 a month for all that. Vera thought that she could get more money out of Dick. She came and was going to kick us out of the shop. Dick didn't want to expand his dining room. He didn't feel he needed to. It wasn't that big of a space anyway. So Ron saw her and offered her \$100.00 a month rent and she took it. That is when he took me in as a full partner. We were full partners up until that time that he passed away. I worked there before I moved over to where I am now for almost twenty-nine years.

SA: You were [at] that site for twenty-nine years?

AH: This is my forty-sixth year [that] I have been cutting hair. [I am] the oldest one in St. George. Well, maybe not the oldest barber, but the oldest one here.

SA: My father is looking for a barber. He just moved into a little community. He has been here about six months or so. I will send him your way, but he is like me. He is afflicted like I am.

AH: There are a few customers [who] don't have much [hair], but they still get it cut once in awhile.

SA: Did Dick's Café, at that point, become a regular destination for actors and crews?

AH: Yes. Of course, before my time, when John Wayne made *The Conqueror*, they used to patronize [the café] all the time. Jack Holt has been a contractor here for years. He and his family had a motel here called the Twin Oaks [Motel]. It was up on the Boulevard. It had the first swimming pool in St. George. He knew Gary Cooper personally because he used to stay there. He called him "Coop." In fact, just before he passed away, he came up and visited Jack. Jack is full of baloney. He has a lot of stories. [Laughter]

SA: Is he still alive?

AH: He is. He lives two doors down from me.

SA: Jack Holt.

AH: He has a lot of stories if he can remember. He has some stories he can tell you about Gary Cooper when they were doing *They Came to Cordura*. There was another [fellow], Darryl Hafen, [who] lives over in Santa Clara [Washington County, Utah]. He was a school teacher here. He was the second for one of the actors and I can't remember who he told me. It was on television when he came in to get a haircut. He said, "What's his name there, I was his second." They would supply horses and [gear]. I don't know how many of them are gone, but there are a few around here [who] did work on the sets, whether they were wranglers or whatever.

SA: Since you were [working] in the 1970s, do you remember the clientele at the barber shop? Who came in that you recall had been in movies or television? Who was in town working?

AH: Nobody came in the barber shop that I knew of. When they were doing *The Electric Horseman*, the three days they were filming it at the café, I waved at Jane Fonda out the window there. They had a little tray with coffee and a bunch of [items] like that. Every time she would come out there, my chair was right there and I would smile at her. She would smile back at me. She was really into aerobics. I think when Neil Roberts was [Dixie] College basketball coach, I think they did a film. They filmed her doing aerobics.

SA: [A] Jane Fonda workout?

AH: Yes, because she used to work out. What was interesting, you could go in the curio shop when they were filming inside the dining room when they were waiting to get on the bus, if you are familiar with that. When she was getting on the bus and the stand-in was there, if she was speaking, [Robert] Redford's stand-in would be sitting there [and] all you would see of him was the back of his head. When [he had a] speaking part, her double would sit in there and speak. They weren't together. When they were filming and setting the camera up outside to go up through the window, the seconds were there while they were setting up everything. Must have been really boring, but they were paid [well]. We could go in the curio shop, peek in there and watch them film them. Then you would hear Dick Hammer's voice on the bus, announcing for so and so to get on the bus.

There was a lady here, Jennings. [She] and her daughter were in that scene. I think they were getting on the bus or something like that. It was [Mansfield] "Mans" Jennings' wife. I can't remember her name. It was quite interesting to watch them set things up. When they were doing the car [scene], across the street by the Coral [Hills] Motel which was [owned by] the Wittwer's, there was a vacant lot there. It is probably still there. All the cars were wrecked. All the police cars were parked across there. Larry Hansen's Auto Body [Shop] did the fixups on the cars so they could wreck them again. It was quite interesting to see. Do you remember *The Eiger Sanction* with Clint Eastwood?

SA: Yes.

AH: My in-laws [the Wendell Seegmillers] lived in Rockville [Washington County, Utah]. That is where my wife [Gayle (Seegmiller) Hale] is from. We went up there and my father-in-law's 1969 [Dodge] Charger is actually in the film. Up at the lodge they used to have a swimming pool. It is not there anymore, they took it out. But they had a pool scene in the movie and his car is parked there. We kind of ruined their scene because down by the bridge you either turn to go up to the lodge or up through the tunnel [and] they were shooting. We were coming back down and we pulled over to the side and they were shooting. He is in that [Ford] Bronco coming down there and we got in the way. It wasn't intentional. Anyway, they had to shoot that over again. They weren't real mad at us, but I think they made some faces at us. That was kind of interesting.

It is fun to go to a movie. When I was on my mission, we went on our day off. I went to see *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. I got a little bit homesick seeing Zion [National Park, Washington County, Utah] up there and up on Kolob [Mountain]. It was quite interesting.

SA: Where was your mission?

AH: [I went to] Australia.

SA: You were in Australia looking at pictures of Washington County?

AH: Yes, in Australia looking at home. [Laughter]

SA: That shows the reach of the movies. There were these shoots in town and you were next to a restaurant that served food, pie and coffee. Did the actors and crews come in to cool their heels?

AH: Yes, they would go in the café. At that time, [there was], probably, only Dick's Café, Sugarloaf Café [and] the Big Hand [Café]. Over on Bluff Street was [one] called Kelly's Café. They were about the only restaurants in town at that time.

SA: What was it like watching them tear these places down? It is hard to believe that the city would allow that so easily.

AH: Dick's Café had been added on so many times that it actually had four cedar posts in it. It needed to be torn down.

SA: It was just awful?

AH: Yes, it was to that point. [If] you looked on it outside and even going inside, you could tell. My youngest son [Rhett Hale] washed dishes one summer in there. He [wore] Levis. He came home and his mom said, "Do you want me to wash those?" He said, "No, they will just get greasy again." So he just wore those. I don't know how they passed the sanitation [regulations], but Dick's always served good food. The kitchen was just old.

SA: We have been mentioning big famous films here. *The Car*, *The Electric Horseman*, *They Came to Cordura*, *The Conqueror*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* [and] *The Eiger Sanction*. What other stars or lesser known movies [or] television shows do you remember?

AH: There was one that they made with some [youngsters who] snuck [on] an airplane. What was that called? That is probably one of the most recent ones. It has been a few years ago, but I can't remember the name of that.

SA: *The Wanderers*, *The Waterboy* or *The Water Kids*?

AH: They were smuggling drugs or something in there. They shot the house [that] is over in Middleton [Washington County, Utah]. It is the one that sits up on the top of the red hill there. That is where the drug lord was. They snuck in the airplane. I can't remember much [more] of that. They have done a few television shows around here. Some of them I am not familiar with because it is so big. I don't pay that much attention because it is just bigger than that. I know they have done quite a few television shows around here for lower budgets. They will advertise for extras.

SA: How would they do that?

AH: [They would advertise] over the radio. They would announce if you were interested in acting or being a part of this, where [to] show up. [They] probably [would advertise] in the paper. I remember seeing [announcements] in the paper.

SA: Did your [children] do any of that?

AH: No. All my [children] were practically grown up by then.

SA: Why do you think the industry stopped coming here like it did?

AH: Like the big productions?

SA: Yes.

AH: Well, because other than *Electric Horseman* which wasn't a Western and like *Harry's War*, wasn't a Western. I don't know why. The landscaping and everything is still spectacular. I think with the age of computers and [items] like that they do so much more now. They don't make Westerns like they did years ago. There was a movie, I can't remember the name of it. Glenn Ford was in it. That was my senior year [of high school]. My friend, Jack Fotheringham who lives up there, was a night watchman. It was a Western [movie]. He was a cavalry officer. I remember we went up there and watched them film by the Weeping Rock [in Zion National Park] around the turn. Angels Landing is [also] right there. You could park along the side there because it was down by the [Virgin] River. They were running a wagon over there and they tipped it over. They were shooting a scene there. But I can't remember the name of that [movie].

SA: We were talking to Bruce [Pickett] and he had mentioned *Cimarron* and Glenn Ford.

AH: That might have been it.

SA: *Oklahoma Land Rush*?

AH: I just don't remember what it was. All I know is he was a cavalry officer. It could have been. I don't think he was a cavalry officer in *Cimarron*.

SA: He is in so many movies.

AH: I remember when they were doing *Sergeants 3* with Sammy Davis Jr., Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin. They were over at the fort over in Kanab [Kane County, Utah]. They went through the secret passage that is supposed to go down by the river. They went down that way, but they ended up in Zion [National Park] on the Virgin River. That is a pretty good secret passage! I thought that was kind of comical to see how they would do those kind of things.

SA: I went out to Paria Canyon [Arizona] when I was making that movie and there was a scene in the movie. It is when we were trying to get a horse across a bridge and you could see the brass rings they had put into the rocks.

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

AH: — time and the cost of it. They do so much with special effects with the computers now. I mean you can show a whole army out there, horses and everything, which is a lot cheaper than actually what they used to do here. They would come here and they would get several —. “Connie” Bowler is still alive. He used to break horses and mainly trained cutting horses, but he used to be in the movies too.

SA: How do you spell Bowler?

AH: B-O-W-L-E-R.

SA: Conrad?

AH: He goes by “Connie,” but it is Conrad.

SA: Conrad Bowler. With this grant from [the] Utah Humanities [Council] we are collecting the interviews and we have a transcription service. It takes awhile, to get the material back. Then what happens, if you are willing, we will give you the transcribed copy to review. If there is anything that doesn’t seem right or [needs] a correction —.

AH: I didn’t remember the names of those [fellows] sitting in there.

UV: Nolan Ashman and John Cardon?

AH: She said, “I took a picture of that [fellow] because he had his moustache and cowboy hat on.” That is Nolan Ashman there. There should be some other pictures there.

UV: [Inaudible]

AH: She is the one [who] ran it at the last. She has the Wagon Wheel Restaurant now which used to be in the old Sugarloaf Café which is the building there. She has moved over down from Texas Roadhouse and Subway Sandwich place down there, but she ran that. This [fellow] right here is a weird [fellow], [laughter] but Dick hired him. His name is Darrell Knight. His father was a character. His father used to drive for Milne Truck Lines for years. There I am. You know, these photographers, they go whacky. That is the window where Jane Fonda was —.

UV: [Inaudible]

AH: No, that is not Ron. [Inaudible]

[END OF RECORDING TWO. END OF INTERVIEW.]

UV: Unidentified voice