

**Oral History Interview of  
Arthur Vaughan**

**Interviewed by: Monte Monroe  
June 3, 2019  
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:  
*General Southwest Collection Interviews***

© Southwest Collection/  
Special Collections Library



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

**Southwest Collection/  
Special Collections Library**

15th and Detroit | 806.742.3749 | <http://swco.ttu.edu>

## Copyright and Usage Information:

An oral history release form was signed by Arthur Vaughan on June 3, 2019. This transfers all rights of this interview to the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

This oral history transcript is protected by U.S. copyright law. By viewing this document, the researcher agrees to abide by the fair use standards of U.S. Copyright Law (1976) and its amendments. This interview may be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes only. Any reproduction or transmission of this protected item beyond fair use requires the written and explicit permission of the Southwest Collection. Please contact Southwest Collection Reference staff for further information.

### Preferred Citation for this Document:

Vaughan, Arthur Oral History Interview, June 3, 2019. Interview by Monte Monroe, Online Transcription, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. URL of PDF, date accessed.

*The Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library houses over 6,300 oral history interviews dating back to the late 1940s. The historians who conduct these interviews seek to uncover the personal narratives of individuals living on the South Plains and beyond. These interviews should be considered a primary source document that does not implicate the final verified narrative of any event. These are recollections dependent upon an individual's memory and experiences. The views expressed in these interviews are those only of the people speaking and do not reflect the views of the Southwest Collection or Texas Tech University.*

*The transcribers and editors of this document strove to create an accurate and faithful transcription of this oral history interview. However, this document may still contain mistakes. Spellings of proper nouns and places were researched thoroughly, but readers may still find inaccuracies, inaudible passages, homophones, and possible malapropisms. Any words followed by "[?]" notates our staff's best faith efforts. We encourage researchers to compare the transcript to the original recording if there are any questions. Please contact the SWC/SCL Reference department for access information. Any corrections or further clarifications may be sent to the A/V Unit Manager.*

## Technical Processing Information:

The Audio/Visual Department of the Southwest Collection is the curator of this ever-growing oral history collection and is in the process of digitizing all interviews. While all of our interviews will have an abbreviated abstract available online, we are continually transcribing and adding information for each interview. Audio recordings of these interviews can be listened to in the Reading Room of the Southwest Collection. Please contact our Reference Staff for policies and procedures. Family members may request digitized copies directly from Reference Staff.

Consult the Southwest Collection website for more information.

<http://swco.ttu.edu/Reference/policies.php>

### Recording Notes:

*Original Format:* Born Digital Audio

*Digitization Details:* N/A

*Audio Metadata:* 96kHz/ 24bit WAV file

*Further Access Restrictions:* N/A

*Related Interviews:*

### Transcription Notes:

*Interviewer:* Monte

*Monroe Audio Editor:* N/A

*Transcription:* Ian Fehl

*Editor(s):* Kayci Rush

## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Arthur Vaughan as he discusses how he got involved with the Spallholz family and the book about the Spallholz cross country road trip. In this interview, Arthur describes where he grew up, and how he came across the slides of the Spallholz family. He then adds commentary about his goals for the book.

**Length of Interview:** 01:48:22

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
Introduction and background information	05	00:00:00
His time in the coast guard; acquiring the glass slides of the Spallholz cross country trip	08	00:11:16
Developing a relationship with the Spallholz family	11	00:26:59
Working on getting a book published	13	00:35:40
Arthurs job with Western Electric; his interest in photography	17	00:51:17
Coming down to New Castle	23	01:06:40
Gravitating to spiders in photography	26	01:14:20
Putting on a macro presentation at Graham; his dreams for the book	33	01:29:19
The Taylor Ranch; locations in the photos	39	01:39:50

### Keywords

travel; writing; photography

**Monte Monroe (MM):**

This is Monte Monroe. It is June the third. I am at the Southwest—2019. I am at the Southwest Collection. I'm the Southwest Collection Archivist. I'm here with Art Vaughan. We have been working on a perspective book for TTU [Texas Tech University] Press this morning, dealing with the Spallholz photographic collection of a trip out west in the 19-teens. Actually, twenty—I mean, 19-teens, almost a hundred years ago this week. So, Art's going to tell us a little bit about himself, how he got roped into this, and most importantly, how he acquired the photos of this trip and how the family got in touch with him, which is a wonderful bit of serendipity, in terms of matching archives with stories. Okay, Art. Tell us your full name. Spell Vaughan for me so we make sure that the transcribers [sic] get that correct.

**Arthur Vaughan (AV):**

My name is Arthur Stephen Vaughan. That's S-t-e-p-h-e-n. Vaughan is V-a-u-g-h-a-n. Don't leave off the last *a*, okay? I live at 124 Boston Street, North Andover, Massachusetts. And I'm seventy-one years old, I think, if I can remember correctly. Okay. Monte wants me to start at the very beginning. I have to lead off by saying I've always been interesting in reading, traveling, even through my school years—high schools years. I never really did plan what I was going to be doing in life. My guidance counselor was my enemy because he wanted to know what I wanted to do, and I always said I wanted to travel and do this. He said there's no future in that. Anyway, I went my own way. I did graduate from high school. During high school, I developed a great interest in the Pacific Northwest, anything have to do with the wild regions of North America. I was an avid reader, and bought travel books whenever I could at used-book stores; old hardcover ones, paperback ones, if I could afford them—find them. My favorite style of reading was an author Lewis R. Freeman. He wrote a book called *Down the Columbia*, and he wrote several other books, too. I read his books. Just the style of his writing is captivating. Very descriptive. He could produce, by word, vivid pictures in your mind, as I read his accounts of traveling down the Columbia and elsewhere where he had went around. I've always been interested in photography. Most of these old books had photographs that accompanied them. My earliest recollection of having anything to do with photography was when I was about seven or eight years old, living on Dufton Road in Andover, Massachusetts. One of my toys I used to play with was an old print—or a negative developing kit that my father had. No chemicals anymore, but there was an old printing frame and some—a maroon acetate material. And I used to pretend to make prints using snippets of magazine pictures and stuff. I didn't know what I was doing, but it seemed fun at the time. When you're young, all you want to do is have fun. It was cheap entertainment. When I got into high school, I used to like to explore antique shops. I would mow lawns to get a little bit of spending money. I would go to flea markets and buy things that caught my fancy. Some of them would be old photographs. And in this respect, I got lucky. I picked up some nice material over the years. When I graduated from high school, the Vietnam War was going on. I didn't particularly want to go to Southeast Asia, so I enlisted in the Coast Guard, and was sent to Cape May, New Jersey for my basic training. There I spent a number of months,



before being assigned to a buoy tender up in Portland, Maine. The Coast Guard called her Cowslip, WLB-277. I spent all my four years on that ship. It was an interesting four years. Again, I kept on buying stuff that caught my fancy. I began taking pictures with a little Brownie Fiesta plastic camera that took 127 film. And I enjoyed it. Then in 1966, as a graduation present for high school, my mom bought me an Agfa Selecta 35 millimeter camera. And that was my first real camera, one that took color slides. I enjoyed using that for many years. At that point, also as a graduation gift, sort of—I talked my brother into calling it a graduation gift. I wanted to go out to the West Coast. I heard my brother Bob was going to be taking a drive out there, and I said, “Well, how come you get to go and I can’t go? You’ve got a car that seats four people, minimum, comfortably, and you’re going to drive out there all by yourself?” Well, anyway, he took me and two of my cousins, and we drove out there in his brand, shiny new 1966 Pontiac GTO Convertible. And we had a great time. We went out along Lake Erie and across Indiana and Illinois, and out through South Dakota and Wyoming and Washington state, down through California, back across Arizona, Colorado, and wound up coming east—a little bit more of a southern route than we had traveled going west. And it was an interesting trip. We enjoyed it. I was big into—this was a thrill of a lifetime for me. We broke down in—actually, in Jackson, Wyoming, we rounded off the timing gear teeth on our timing gear—the teeth on the timing gear in the Pontiac broke down. And they couldn’t put us up in Jackson—no vacancy—so we wound up staying at the Lawson Ranch in Bondurant for three days while the timing gear came out. Once we got that put in, we were on our way again. And we spent twenty-three days on the road. It was a fun trip. Never regretted a bit of it. Used my Agfa Selecta camera to death. It was wonderful. Wouldn’t have traded it for anything. Now what?

MM:

Let’s back up just a bit.

AV:

Sure. Okay.

MM:

Tell me your parents’ names, and then your maternal and your paternal grandparents and where they were from, and a little bit about your family history.

AV:

My parents—my mother was Alice Luella Vaughan. She was born in, I believe, Fairhaven, Massachusetts. I don’t know whether it was 1913 or 1917. It was one or the other. Okay? She married my father, Lincoln Pearce Vaughan—I don’t know what year. Could’ve been back in the late thirties. I would say mid-thirties, early thirties. And I’m one of six children. Our grandparents was—my grandfather was Shiva House [?] [0:08:09]. That’s on my mother’s side, because my mother’s maiden name was Alice House [?] [0:08:17]. And he worked, for many

years, for, William Wood of the Wood Mill fame up in Andover. He was a woolen mill magnet. But he worked him on Cuttyhunk Island as a steam engineer. My paternal grandfather would've been Arthur Stephen Vaughan. Okay? I don't know much about him. I know the only picture I have of him, that I remember at all, is him dressed in a tuxedo, wearing a top hat, standing in front of our old house on Enmore Street in Andover, with a cigar hanging out of his mouth. That's all I remember from him. We lived in Andover for many years, then my mom and my father—my mom and—yeah, father—divorced, and we had to split up and we moved to North Andover. My brother was working at Western Electric for the time—at the time, and bought the house that I live in now, back in 1962, from the company. The company had a habit of selling houses for people who were being relocated. So that's how we wound up in North Andover, and I've been there ever since. [Clears throat]

MM:

You were talking about your brother earlier. Tell me the names of your siblings. And if I understood right, your brother worked for Western Electric for forty-six years?

AV:

That's correct.

MM:

And your sister worked for a number of years. And you worked and retired after thirty-something years.

AV:

Yes. I worked at Western Electric when I got out of the Coast Guard. I worked cleaning out stores at night—night work—just janitor work. But before I went into the Coast Guard, I had put my application in at Western Electric. Before we get into that, I have a younger sister named Susan Hall. She was born in 1953. My next older brother is Weston Vaughan, born in 1945. My next older brother was Allen Vaughan, born in 1938. And my oldest brother, Robert, the one who worked at Western Electric and bought the house, was born in 1935. And my two other—two older brothers have passed away several years ago, and everybody else is still very much alive.

MM:

What were your older brothers' names?

AV:

My older brother's name was Robert Vaughan. Then it went Allen Vaughan, then Weston Vaughan, then me, and then Susan Hall.

MM:

Susan Hall?

AV:

Yeah.

MM:

Okay, very good. All right, now, tell us a little bit about what you did when you were in the Coast Guard. I mean, what your daily routine was like. And then tell us how you ultimately came in contact, as you kept looking for photographic materials in various antique shops and Salvation Army stores, or wherever you could find 'em, how you encountered the Spallholz collection.

AV:

Okay. Well, I was a Seamen First Class on the Coast Guard, called Cowslip. I took the Service wide Exam for a Third Class Gunner's Mate, but wound up never taking—I took it and passed it, but never was made the rate—it turns out that our three-inch gun on the ship—they were going to phase out. They decided they didn't need a gunner's mate, so they wanted me to strike for boatswain mate, and I wound up just sitting back and surviving, very nicely, as a Seamen First Class until my enlistment expired. [Clears throat] Our daily routine—being on a buoy tender, you are in charge of all the ocean aids to navigation maintenance. This is ocean buoys that are beyond the ability of a smaller aids [?] [0:12:38] navigation craft to maintain. So we'd have big sea buoys that are off all your harbors; channel marker buoys and everything. Anything offshore. Also, we were in charge of pumping diesel fuel and fresh water to the Portland light vessel and all offshore light stations from Portsmouth, New Hampshire to West Quoddy Head, Maine. It was a very interesting tour of duty. I took a few pictures up there, again, with my Agfa Selecta camera, because it was still running at the time. And we would typically go out for two days, maybe three days, maybe four, maximum. But we were generally in on evenings and most weekends, okay? There was always an exception. If a buoy broke loose or something, we had to go snag it. There was an occasion where we had a disgruntled ex-Coast Guard employee shooting at buoys with armor-piercing ammunition, and they would sink and we would have to go fetch them. And some other stories, which I'm not going to go into. It was a gratifying experience, but it was—four years was enough. Anyway, when I was in the Coast Guard [coughs], you had, generally, duty every third day. You had liberty on two days and, I think, duty one day. I might have that reversed. But regardless, okay? When they granted liberty, it was usually at four o'clock in the afternoon on a weekday. You went ashore. Well, the people that didn't go ashore, because they had no place to go or nothing to do, could, theoretically, be put to work if something came up that had to be done, even though you were technically on liberty once you're off the ship. If you were on the ship at the time liberty had been granted, and people were on liberty during that space of time, up until the time you were supposed to report back, you could be put to work. So the most beneficial thing to do would be to find a place to stay in



town. So I rented a room for a month; shared it with some people from the ship. We would crash there. Even if we did nothing, we were at least not on the ship and could be put to work. So maybe we were lazy, but it was—it seemed like the right thing to do at the time. So I would go around in some of the old junk shops in Portland, always looking for little trinkets and things to buy that caught my fancy. I started collecting steamship menus at the time. I've got a pretty nice collection put aside. Never anything that's very expensive, because on a seaman's pay, you could not buy a lot, which is why I happened to go to the Salvation Army store in Portland on this one particular time. I think it was spring of 1967. I had about fifty dollars in my pocket, and I wanted to go buy some civilian clothes, because one thing you didn't want to do was march around Portland in your military uniform. It was just—you wore it all the time. You're better off in civilian clothes. You felt more cool in civilians clothes. So I went to the Salvation Army one day. I walked in. I was browsing around. And there were some—more people in there than I usually see. There was a crowd of about three or four people that didn't look like official hippies, like from the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco in California, but they were clearly unusual people. They were not beatniks. They looked a little hippie-ish. And they were clustered around this box of things that they were holding up to a window, in front of the store. They appeared to be glass slides. And they would hold one up and they would laugh and chitter at some of the images they were seeing, and then they would put them back in the box. And they went through this for about ten, fifteen minutes. And as I browsed the store, I found nothing of any value, nothing that interested me, in the store. But I kept on looking over to what they were doing, and I saw them lift a slide up to the window, and I sort of squinted and I could see it was an old antique car of some sort, and that caught my interest. So after I saw a few more slides pop up—a few colored ones—I really couldn't make out what they were, but I was shooting them brainwaves to make them go out the door. I wanted them to disappear. I wasn't being greedy or anything, but I wanted to get a over at them slides, and I didn't want to go over there and say, "Hey, let me take a look at that," because if they knew I had an interest in them, they might just, for spite, buy them themselves. Eventually, they did leave the store, and I started going through the slides. I did find the ones that they saw, the couple of—a few of the antique auto ones, which were really classy. And they were—each slide was labeled. And I picked up a couple of slides. There were a couple of colored ones, and there was one slide, in particular, of two youngsters standing on a stream, looking like they were freeing, but they looked like they were having fun. I went through them some more. And I looked through a couple of other boxes, and there were a couple of antique slides, that looked really old, of—they were bound a little differently, and they showed some really ancient people. One of the people on the slides looked like Ben Turpin, the old silent screen star, although I'm sure it wasn't. All told, it looked like there were four full boxes of slides, and each box weighed probably about twelve pounds. Anyway, I was interested, and I went over to the proprietor, behind the counter, and asked how much for the slides. And he said, "Well, fifteen dollars." I said, "Well, yeah, but how much for the whole pile?" He said, "Well, fifteen dollars." I said, "Well, that's for all four boxes, right?" He says, "Yeah, fifteen dollars." I said, "You wouldn't break them up, right?", "No. Fifteen dollars for the lot. If you

want to buy one box, it's fifteen dollars." I said, "Well, I think I'll take all four boxes, under those circumstances." So I was—paid him the money, and I'm trying to figure out how to carry fifty pounds of slides out of the store. He said, "No, no, no, no. You've got to take that, too." And I said, "What's that? What?" He said, "That thing, under the—over there, under the table." It was a big black box. I said, "What's that?" He said, "I think it's some kind of a projector." So I went over and I looked, popped the lid on the box, and, sure enough, it was an old projector that reminded me of a stove, an old black stove. I took it out. I didn't plug it in. But it looked kind of neat. And what struck me about it was it was in pristine condition. It had the old, kind of fabric-colored—a fabric-covered woven wire that mice like to chew. None of it was chewed. It had some kind of a unusual connector on the end that allowed—it had a two-pin connector on the end that was plugged into an adaptor to allow it to be plugged into a wall outlet. And I didn't see any data on it at the time. I opened the little side door and there was a big, huge bulb inside with a point on the end. And I got to thinking, Well, that's probably not going to work. So I said, "Are you sure I've got to take it?" He says, "You've got to take the projector or you don't take the slides." I said, "I'll take everything." In three trips, I had—back at the room that I had rented in town. I plugged the projector in and it lit up. So, I ran the slides through the projector. Very first time projecting these slides was in my room in Portland, alone, looking at them. And I was impressed by the fact that they were so clear. And because the projector was so close to wall, they were so bright. Each slide was labeled. Some of the slides were labeled "Mr. and Mrs. Spallholz." That was a name I wasn't familiar with. Never heard it before. But in looking through the numbers and looking through the slides and sorting through them, I could see that they formed a kind of a sequence of a genuine, cross-country trip, dated—that began on June 11, 1919. All of the slides were labeled. I was familiar with some of the locations, because I had been to some of the locations myself. The order that they fell in to led me to believe that they were all from one grand trip: Yellowstone, Glacier National Park, the West Coast, through Arizona, and then back. There was nothing, that I could see, that was closer, on the return trip, going by the numbers, than about Kansas City, Missouri. That's where things seemed to cut off. A few of the slides were damaged and had to be discarded. Some of them were absolutely falling apart. But all told, it formed a—kind of a nice selection. So I had these slides in Portland for—I kept them up there for about a year, along with the projector. And I showed a few people what I had. I'd throw a few slides on the wall to show people. They'd say, Can you come over to my house? My family would like to see those." And probably half a dozen different times, maybe eight times, in the Greater Portland area. I used the original projector to project the original slides. And there was enough material in the captions to form some kind of a sort regarding what was going on. And it was especially interesting to these people if they had been to any of these areas that were in the slides. Some people—a lot of people could relate to what they were seeing. This went on for a long time. Like I said, I put on about eight presentations. And then I left the Coast Guard, and the slides and projector went home with me. I showed them to family members down here, friend's families. And then I got a little bit involved in photography, myself. I still kept the slides together. I showed them at the Photographic Historical Society of New England

back in 2001. I was a member of that there. Had been a member for several years. One day, somebody happened to be talking about lantern slides, and I said, "Hey, I've got some of them." And he perked up and wanted to know more about them. One thing led to another and then I put on this presentation. And it went over very well. Then I—before then, even, I was showing them to coworker's families, at work. All in all, they were very well-received. The people really enjoyed them; marveled at how clear they were for such a clunky-looking projector. The images were superb. Not to mention the fact that the guy who had, evidently, taken some of the pictures knew what he was doing. So that takes us up to about 2000. I left work and then got involved in camera—about 1987, '86, I got involved in camera clubs. And a number of camera clubs became interested in these, so I projected them, again, with the original projector at camera clubs. And, again, they were very well-received. They were impressed with the clarity. Wanted to know more information about the trip, but that information I could not give them, because I had no knowledge of the specifics of the trip. Okay? But I did discover, way back then, that the automobile used—and I got asked this question quite often on what kind of car are they driving—was probably a 1917, or '16, or '18, Haynes automobile. And that was something I claimed was a possibility, because I had read the name "Haynes" on a hubcap. That's how sharp some of these slides were. And then [clears throat] I started posting some of these images on Flickr. I have a little website—web hosting service I call Flickr. I do a lot of photography myself, close-up photography, mainly. But I do like to post an occasional old image on Flickr. And I posted twenty-three images of—scanned these. I scanned all these slides, figuring that someday, the slides might be gone, for some reason, but if I still had scans and they were written to CDs, I would still be able to make some nice prints out of them, at least. When I really got a decent computer and started scanning the slides and putting them on Flickr, it was at that point that about two years ago, probably around the mid-nineteen—mid-2017, I received an email from somebody named Lance Spallholz. And he was very intrigued because he had seen pictures that I had posted on Flickr that he had at home, in paper form, in photo albums. And his comment was that the slides looked so much better. Where did I get the slides? It was at that point that I described to him the events that I just described in my dissertation here. Let me see. I'm trying to think of where I've got to go from here, now. Hang on a minute.

MM:

How did you develop a relationship with the Spallholz family after this, after this first contact? Where did it go from there and how did it spiral into the Smithsonian article, possibly, and then later an association with Texas Tech University Press?

AV:

Okay. I returned Lance's inquiry, via email, and explained to him how I got the slides. And then we exchanged phone numbers and wound up speaking on the phone. We exchanged a number—we continued to exchange e-mails. I needed more information from him. Not so much that he needed information from me, but I needed information from him. I needed to know—and he



described to me how he had extra pictures, extra albums. It came to—he did tell me that he had—that the slides were not just from one trip; they were from three trips: two Yellowstone trips and a Glacier National Park trip. And it was at that point that I realized that I'm not dealing with a lot of slides here that constitutes one huge trip; it's actually three separate trips. And that would account for some unusual numbering, stuff seeming to be out of sequence. Where I had been projecting my slides according to location, sorting them by location, I was actually mixing three different lots, and not knowing that. Lance and his brother, Julian—but especially Lance, because he had all the material in Round Lake, New York—he was kind enough to send me copies of albums. And we exchanged lists, slides that I had. It was at that point that they realized that a—there was a little notation in all their albums. It was a little S in a circle written in red. And they didn't know what that meant. They assumed it meant that Henry Spallholz had taken the picture. But looking back, they realized that can't be true, because Henry is in some of the pictures, and how can he take a picture that he's in, unless he's using a self-timer? And that wasn't likely. So in putting together our lists and double-checking against one another, we came to realize that every image in the album that contained an S in a red circle meant that a slide had been generated from the original negative, and I had the slides. Now, at this point, we got talking, and we got discussing different things. I mentioned that in 2001—I had done a little bit of research before 2001—had discovered that through the revealing of the Haynes name on the hubcap, I was able to determine that the car was about a 1916 through 1918, maybe, Haynes “Light Six” Automobile. I had been looking up stuff and considering where to get more information. I knew that two children on the trip had to be eight, ten, maybe twelve years old. So I started looking through the Social Security Death Index. I started doing some research through Salem, New York, which is the name of the town on some of the slides. And through looking at obituaries and everything, and following through the death index, I determined that somebody named Walter Spallholz used to live in Saco, Maine, and passed away on a particular date, according to the Social Security Death Index. And I didn't think anything of it. And a few years later, I happened to be going, on New Year's Day, up the main turnpike, and I happened to be passing through Saco, and I turned around to drive off the turnpike into the town of Saco and go to the police station. And I happened to casually ask if anybody had ever heard of anybody with a last name of Spallholz. He lived in Saco for a number of years, and he passed away. Somebody said that they never heard of the name. But then somebody—a clerk or somebody—a girl came out from the back and said, “Yes. My best friend's grandfather's name was Spallholz.” And that's how I came to—I talked to her and she gave me a phone number of a contact person. And the person I contacted, I think, was named Carol. I could be wrong. But she mentioned that the guy who I was inquiring about—his name was Henry Andrew Spallholz. And I had not provided her the middle initial, which I knew was A. So she had provided the original name associated with the initial that she did not know. I knew had, probably, reached somebody who knew something about the Spallholz family. And I chatted with her for a while, but nothing really came of it. I had briefly thought of handing out—I'm a big bug about returning images to families, if I know who they are. I don't like holding families photos hostage for money, if I

know who they belong to. And I was pretty much ready to handoff the project and slides to her, but we never even—we lost contact—never made contact again. And it was at that point that I started putting stuff on Flickr, and Lance Spallholz happened to find them, or whatever member of the family happened to be out there, looking at the tablet. It was at that point that we then got together. Me and my sister, Susie, took a trip out to Round Lake. We had a chance to photograph the original cameras; study the original cameras; photograph the original albums; study them; take a look at some other material. Lance forwarded me some newspaper articles regarding Henry and his original slide presentations and everything. And one thing has led to another, and then somebody suggested, “Well, how about doing a book?” I had learned, through e-mail, that Lance had submitted a proposal—one of those, limited to 250 words things, that you send to some publishers—to the *Smithsonian* magazine, but was rebuffed in some way. So, at that point, the Spallholz brothers started mumbling about a book. And Julian contacted me and said, “Hey, we want to do a book, and we want you to do the pictures.” And it was at that point I almost fainted, because I realized what kind of work was going to be involved in doing that. I knew that images that I did not have existed in print form, but the print form were scans done by Lance, and they were not done with the idea of the end result—the end product being a published book of any kind. Because whatever you generate for web use is nowhere near in quality of what has to be present for publication. Okay? They’re two different universes. [Coughs] So I knew from the start that the book project was going to be a lot of work, but I could not say no. So I agreed to be the picture guy. Fortunately, Lance’s scans were sufficient to get a reasonable good quality image out of the prints. And by coincidence, the same thing happened with my slides. Where I was just scanning for my own use for making maybe an eight-by-ten print after restoration, it turns out that for production purposes, my choice of scanning resolution and other properties was okay, we think, for publication. So that’s where we are right now. And Julian suggested Texas Tech University Press.

MM:

And then you have been down, you’ve talked to Joanna Conrad. Tell us how all that kind of went together there.

AV:

Well—[coughs]

MM:

And where the hang-up seems to have been.

AV:

Okay. We—at this point, I was—we were thinking—we were going to have a meeting with Texas Tech University Press.



MM:

This is 2017? Twenty-eighteen?

AV:

This would've been, probably, 2018. I have a timeline I can probably put together. Julian felt that time was of the essence, and the sooner we get this done, the better, because the centennial year of the trip was coming up. Image restoration is a labor-intensive endeavor. And you have to put in the time, or you don't get good results out the back end of the process. I knew this was going to be a labor-intensive process. So what I did is—before we had made any formal arrangements, we—Julian had mentioned Texas Tech University Press, and I immediately contact—had him check and see what they needed for resolutions. I've never done any work for the print industry, for print production of any kind; just home dark room stuff. And we found out that they wanted—that the ideal thing would be six hundred PPI [**pixels per inch**] at a dot gain [of] 20 percent. That's what most of the magazine industry used—went for, anyway. So, Julian decided to put together a meeting with Joanna Conrad of Texas Tech University Press, and present materials that we had—samples of materials—to see if there might be any interest in cranking out a book on this particular subject. The story being Julian's and Lance's parents and grandparents and their involvement in this trip, and then my discovery of the slides, and then through my discovery of the slides and posting images on Flickr, their discovery of where I was in this thing. It seemed weird, at the time, that we were both running seemingly parallel archives, with similar purposes, in two different venues. And it's just by luck that we happened to find each other. Now, at Texas Tech University Press—I forget the exact date—but late in 2017, we met with Joanna Conrad and Julian and his wife, and we hashed out what we might do, moving forward, with this project. And there were a number of—there was a lot of writing that had to be done. I wasn't really involved in that. But I knew that this whole thing depended on pictures, so I was really sweating deadlines. I don't do well with deadlines. I hate deadlines. I like it when people just say, “Well, whenever you're finished with it, just”—but deadlines stink. I know they're an essential part of business, but it's always been a bugaboo of mine. So anyway, I would come out—I came out here—I think it was almost two years ago—and I brought all my editing stuff with me. I had already done all the original scans, then I worked late night, two, three, four o'clock in the morning here—out here, sitting in Newcastle, Texas, working on these images to get them all done and everything. And we had our meeting. I had, I believe, high-resolution images, and then smaller images, at a lower resolution, just for viewing, to get the opinion, regarding, “Is the content here any good? Or should I waste my time restoring this image when the contact doesn't merit it being in any book?” Or whatever. So I scanned everything and provided a pick list—what I call a pick list. I had all the captions noted and anything—and everything. I left it to the folks at Texas Tech University Press to make their selections. And Joanna did produce what she felt was the core of the lot that should be considered for publication. She thought the images were great. The content was definitely there. There should be a lot of interest in a book dealing with this matter. There were a couple of glitches. A couple

of pictures had to be really reworked to the max because they needed restoration. But as far as continuity and everything goes, it made for a nice story. This was exclusively the 1919 trip. The 1920 Yellowstone trip and the 1922 Glacier—or vice versa—I forget which was which—were not in consideration here at all, because Texas Tech University Press had not seen them. And the impotence seemed to be since we're approaching the centennial year of the first trip that that is the direction they should move in. Now it was just a question of nailing down the writing material that has to go with this. The written material. There was—this is where things seemed to diverge a little bit. One of the brothers, Lance, felt that a more personable type of written work would be of some benefit, and he cranked out a sample of that—which I thought was very nice—based on letters and other resources they have that came from the West Coast during the trip. Julian is more of a serious history person, and he felt that there should be a great deal of historical, factual documentation to augment what was actually in the story of the trip, to lend some interest, in that respect, provide some background information on previous cross-country trips that had been taken, under what circumstances. One thing should be noted is a lot of these earlier trips—several of them that he's mentioned—there was very, very meager photographic documentation, if any at all, where the 1919 trip is just full of photography. It was very well-received at Texas Tech University Press, and they decided to go ahead with the project. I had it dragged out a little bit because, number one, the image restoration took so long, in particular the ones on the—from the print scans that Lance scanned originally. And also getting the written material. Even though Lance, Julian and myself are retired, that doesn't necessarily mean we have all the time in the world to work on stuff when we'd like to. And it was a constant hassle to try to meet deadlines. We kept on having to push back. And every time we pushed back, we were worried that we were scotching the deal. This is where we stood, until a meeting—and I'm trying to think of when my last time out here was, in Texas.

MM:

Wasn't it last summer?

AV:

It might've been—it was the very last time I was out here. I can't think of it. Probably the fall of 2017. October 2017. We had a meeting at Texas Tech University Press. And I think Joanna Conrad was there. Brian Ott, the new director, or whatever his role is, was there. Julian and myself and my sister Susie. We were discussing the book. And it was at that point—first of all, I inquired to Joanna—I says [sic], "I never worked—before we go any further with this, I have to know. You've got the images I sent you. I've sent you TIFF [**Tagged Image File Format**] images. I have to know whether those images meet your specification, and are they good enough for publication in the size you require"—talking about a fairly smallish book. "Do they meet your requirements? Are they good enough? I have to know, because this is my first experience doing this, and I don't know whether I'm just spinning my wheels or what." At that point she said they rarely ever get a lot of images in of this quality. And I couldn't believe her, because I

thought that some of my efforts were really not up to snuff. But she assured me that they were very happy with the pictures as they came. So that made me feel, immediately, that all my effort was worthwhile, not a waste. And it was at that point that they suggested going—now, at that particular meeting, I was really—my stomach was really rolling over because I—Julian [clears throat] had, in the past—he'd been at odds with Lance, regarding what kind of writing to do. And I've been playing the middle man between the two. I've always considered myself to be the picture guy. [Coughs] Authoring anything beyond captions, I didn't want to deal with. I would probably knock off a short piece or something, but it was always their show; their family, their pictures. I just happened to stumble across the pictures accidentally. But I don't mind being the picture guy. And after walking a tightrope between these two, Julian declared, one day, that he wanted me to be primary author. [Clears throat] Write the book. Do the book. I do good captions. I'm involved in the pictures. To him, that sounded like a—probably a great idea. To me, it sounded horrible, because I knew what would happen. If I'm the prime author and the thing fails, then I'm the prime goat, and I don't want that. And also, I could see him, maybe, using me more than just a mediator between himself and Lance. I thought that a lot of the stuff that Lance cranked out—it's not a huge volume—but I thought the material that he produced and gave to me was absolutely top-notch stuff, but Julian disagrees. So how do you reconcile something like that? Anyway, I was really sweating going into this meeting at Texas Tech University Press, because I had planned to tell Julian, at that point, that I did not want to be author. And I just didn't know how to do it. Before I could even say anything, Joanna or Brian spoke up and said that before they even got started, there was something they had to announce, and that they wanted to go with a professional author. Well, I said to myself, Boy, that's just ducky. I'm off the hook. So, at that point, I made a face at Julian. I don't know if he could sense my elation or not, but I don't know whether he exhibited an expression of dismay. Anyway, I thought it was a great idea. And I think I was pretty quick in saying so. At that point, the meeting went very well. They had not decided who they were getting. Based on the fact that the images were great—that I'm not going to be the author. I walked away, and I had a very nice vacation for the rest of my stay here in Texas. Anyway, after that, I think Julian went fishing, trying to figure out who our new author might be. But I didn't have any information. Joanna or Brian were playing it kind of cool, saying that only—they think they have an author. Julian, of course, would ask me if I knew anything, and I didn't know anything. I said, "Let's just go with who they get. There was an issue regarding money and all this. At the meeting, when they said they were going to—first said they were going to go to a professional author, the number "five thousand dollars" popped up—or fifteen thousand, originally. Julian looked at me and I looked at Julian, and I spoke up and I had a folder on the table, a little Manila folder, and I said, "Well, I want to tell everybody up front that all the money I have in the world to put into this book is hiding under that folder right now." Meaning zero. So anyway, Julian said he could handle up to five thousand dollars. And as it turned out, down the road a ways, we found out that an author had been considered accepting to this task, and that was Monte Monroe. I looked up Monte Monroe and found a bunch of video clips. I heard that he was the head of the Southwest Collection, and I was told that, anyway, by

Joanna. And I said to myself, Well, what better way to go than to have this? Most of the images were taken west of the Mississippi—west, not east—so why not have the Southwest Collection be involved in this? And that's where we stand right now.

MM:

Well, and that means all the onus is on me to coordinate all of this stuff, now. Of course, you have revealed to me that—for the first time—about this fifteen thousand dollars thing. I had not heard of it.

AV:

I don't know whether I was supposed to let that slip or not, but that was at the meeting.

MM:

Well, I suspect I'll be paid like y'all will, with royalties.

AV:

Right.

MM:

Which are usually, for academic presses, are next to nothing. But the main thing is—

AV:

Well, I understand that.

MM:

—the pleasure of getting things out.

AV:

I understand that.

MM:

But no one's mentioned anything like that to me. I wouldn't take it, I don't think. I think this would be a labor of love, more than anything.

AV:

Well, I think so.

MM:

Let's back up here just a little bit, Art. First, I want you to tell me a little bit about how you swerved into working at Western Electric, and what you did there throughout your career. And



then how you got increasingly more involved in photography and giving presentations and things like that. Tell us a little bit about that.

AV:

Well, I was hired into Bell Labs—I always—one of my hobbies when I was a kid was I had a toy microscope. And it was from a Gilbert Microscope set. The set is long gone, but I still have the microscope. That's one part I saved. It's on my shelf in my computer room. Okay? I went to—when I put in my application at Western Electric, I immediately entered the Coast Guard. Four years later, I came out. Worked in supermarkets, washing floors at night, until my brother announced, “Hey, your application finally made it to the top of the stack. They want to interview you.” So I went in and interviewed. I didn't know what to expect. I don't even remember the name of the guy who interviewed me. All I know is he was tall, gray-haired, had a moustache, wore a blue suit and tie, and I was scared stiff. He asked me what I liked to do. I said, “Well, I don't know. I'm not doing anything yet.” He said, “Well, what are your hobbies?” I said, “Well, I like stamp collecting, this, that and the other thing.” I said, “I have a microscope I goof around with.” “Oh, you like microscopes, do you?” I said, “Yeah.” “Well, what do you do with it?” I said, “I look at pond water and stuff like that. Little bugs and things that are swimming around.” It was a hobby of mine. I loved doing that stuff: looking at the center of flowers and stuff; bringing stuff in the house and looking at all the—it's only a toy microscope, but I had a lot of fun with it. He said, “We'd kind to like to—you like working with your hands?” I said, “Sure, yeah. But I like microscopes and stuff.” “Well, what have you done before?” I said, “Nothing. I was in the Coast Guard.” “Well, we want to hire you. We'll try you out. Report for work Monday morning. We'll have you assigned to this department over here. So they had a clean room they were setup. It was called a process capability laboratory. And what it was—it was involved—they were working with what were then new things on the block: hybrid integrated circuits—thin-film circuits. And I was going to start there Monday morning. I found out Monday that Monday was an optional holiday. You can take it off and not get paid, so I took it off and didn't get paid my very first day at work. So the second at work, I reported for work. And about eleven-thirty in the morning—I didn't see anybody watching me or anything and doing anything. I was just some—cleaning circuits or something. Doing some mundane task. And somebody came down from Bell Labs and said, “Hey, you Art Vaughan?” I said, “Yeah.” He said, “Come with me.” I went up to the bottom floor of the office building in Western Electric, where Bell Laboratories ran a little lab. He says, “Report here tomorrow morning.” So I started working in this lab. I said, “Well, what about my old boss?” He says, “He's not your boss anymore.” So I started working in this other little lab. And that was as a 203-grade entry-level employee. And what happened is I, evidently working with these circuits and stuff and working with the engineers—the engineers enjoyed working with me, because when they asked me questions, I gave them sensible answers. And when I had questions, they must have been sensible questions. So they enjoyed working with me. And gradually, over the years, I just kept going up in grade, until, eventually, I wound up being basically in charge—I guess it would be called a “lab



coordinator.” I wasn’t a supervisor. I didn’t want supervision. But lab coordinator—I would regulate the work going through this particular lab. And I was a bug about stuff being done by the book. And if I saw an engineer doing something stupid, I would tell him so. And because I was the integrated person, there wasn’t much they could do about it. Okay? They were off in their own universe. I said—I worked for many, many years in the thin-film lab. I love doing microscope work. I love doing microscope photography work. I used to use a Zeiss Ultra Fault 2 Microscope System. It was a huge beast of a microscope that had sodium vapor, light sources, fluorescent light sources, all kinds of light sources, all kinds of attachments. It had its own desk. It was a—weighed—it was a beast. It weighed about three hundred pounds. I would use it. I got very proficient. It had an internal four-by-five camera. I learned how to run it very well. It took large-format Polaroid film. And I got good enough at it where if any engineer had a particular problem that they had to have four-by-five images, and they were getting unsatisfactory images out of the photo lab at work, they would come down to me and have me run their stuff through this Zeiss Ultra Fault system. And I would get their images for them.

MM:

What were the images of?

AV:

Excuse me?

MM:

What were the images of?

AV:

Microcircuits. We were involved in what you call failure mode analysis. So if they had a microchip that failed, our task was to try to determine why it failed. And I have one picture I took at home—as a matter of fact, I might even have it on Flickr—of an epithelial cell that had been spit out of somebody’s mouth and landed on a microchip. You could see the nucleus of the cell right on the chip.

MM:

Describe that a little bit. Most people probably aren’t familiar with those.

AV:

Well, when you have a microchip—okay? An epithelial cell is if you do a swab—DNA swab—you get epithelial cells on your—they’re in your mucus membranes. They’re one of the largest cells in the body. They’re easy to find, easy to see. Okay? If you’re an amateur microscope guy, you can get an epithelial cell anywhere. If you’re talking, even the tiniest, little shred of spittle probably has an epithelial cell in it. And if it lands on a microchip and dries, there you are. And

we found a failure that had failed because of an epi—I took a picture of it. I think I still have the picture. Not only that, but when I—and this went on for a long time. I was a specialist using this piece of gear. And we used all kinds of exotic lighting. We used Nomarski differential interference contrast lighting and all this. I had all the attachments for it. When an engineer would retire—if he had any attachments or accessories for that particular scope on his desk that he had got over the years, he'd dump them on me. Lab came to close. We were going to leave—the lab was closing. They wanted to surplus everything, so they had me crate up everything. So I crated up everything. And all the accessories—I made sure all the books and everything went with it—all the accessories. Crated it up properly and it went to the surplus shed. And that was going to be the end of that. And then I left the company, retired and all of that. And then a guy who used to work for the company, an engineer, was on his own outside. He was making huge laser engraving equipment. And he had a prototype machine in his garage at home. He must've had his house specially wired, because it took a lot of juice to run this laser thing. He had a—he eventually, he built an extension on this home; he built a shop, and he was doing laser work in there, induction welding and all sorts of stuff. And he got me involved in taking pictures for him. And one day I was in his shop and I was taking pictures with my film camera, and I see this shrouded, cloth-covered mound in the back of his shop. I said, "What's that?" He said, "It's a microscope I got from work, the surplus." I said, "Oh, let me take a look at it." And, geez, it's a Zeiss Ultra Fault 2 Microscope. And I said, "Where'd you get that?" He said, "Well, it was in a surplus shed. I picked it up." I said, "Well, how come you're not using it?" He said, "Well, I'm going in a different direction now. It's probably never going to be used." So I went to it and I went to the nosepiece of the microscope, slid off the dovetail and looked on the other side. There's my penciled initials: A.S.V. [laughter] It's a fluky story. But I wound up buying this—what was essentially, when new, a sixty-thousand-dollar instrument for 792 dollars. It's sitting in my spare room right now. [MM laughs] It's a beautiful scope. So anyway, I got all the attachments because I was so careful when I crated everything up. I've got everything. So anyway, that was just an odd coincidence. My life has been full of coincidences. So anyway. I enjoyed working for Western Electric. My sister worked for Western Electric. My brother worked for Western Electric. When we went out the door, I think we went out with—let me see—thirty-one, twenty-six and forty-six. You do the math. That's how many years' service we took out the door with us.

MM:

Wow. Over a hundred years.

AV:

And because of that, I have an okay pension today, which is why I'm able to travel down here to be talking to you.

MM:

Now—so that—did that [pause] cause you to really gain a passion for photography?

AV:

No. What happened is—I had already been taking pictures, okay? And I was taking pictures with my film cameras and all that.

MM:

Right. When you were on your trip.

AV:

And I got involved—and I got involved in other film cameras, using 120 film.

MM:

Such as?

AV:

That's roll film. Paper roll film.

MM:

What type of cameras?

AV:

Well, I would use—I bought an old Graphic View camera. They had roll film backs. And then I got rid of that, and I got a Century Graphic that had roll film backs, okay? And I used sheet film because I could not develop film—sheet film. I didn't have the facilities. I live in a house. I would always send roll film out to be processed. Then I got interested in Nova Scotia, and I did a lot of my photography up there. Still do.

MM:

And why did you get interested in Nova Scotia?

AV:

Because, at one time, I got—I went from two weeks vacation to three weeks vacation. So then I figured, well, where can I go? I've got enough time now to go away for at least a week or two. So I got out my—the *National Geographic* magazines and was poking through them, and I found a 1957 edition of the *National Geographic* magazine that had an article about the giant tides of Fundy. And then there were interesting pictures in there, and writing about the huge tides they have up there, and the rock house—going up there and finding amethyst crystals and everything. So just for the heck of it, I put a compass point on Boston and ran out a five-hundred-mile wide

arc and slung the thing, and it clipped most of the part of Nova Scotia that I was interested in, so I decided to go up there. That was in 1976. And I've been going up there ever since. That's where I really got interested in photography. And I was—did all this roll film photography, slide photography, then I got involved in stereo photography, because I got some stereo cameras. And they were beautiful. You could run thirty-five millimeter film through them, and they were—you had a hand viewer. I didn't do project because I didn't want to mess with Polaroid filters. And at that point, I think I joined a camera club about 1987.

MM:

What was your primary focus in taking photos, especially up there?

AV:

Personal pleasure. There was no selling.

MM:

No, but, I mean, what was the subject matter.

AV:

Oh. A lot of it was landscape, seascape. But then I started really getting involved in close-up photography, especially close-up stuff of insects, spiders, and especially stuff that would wash up along the shore. I would—some of the stuff was almost artistic. Okay? When nature throws stuff up on a shore, it's at random, and it's up to you to select the artful arrangement—the preserves. And by selecting just this portion, it looks almost like your shot has been contrived in some way. And it hasn't; it's a natural thing. And then, at one point, I started finding little white disks on the shore, and I knew what that was immediately. It was a sewage treatment plant disk from Hooksett, New Hampshire. They had a flood down there, and two million, three, four million floated down the Merrimack River into Massachusetts Bay. Some of these made their way up to the beaches in Nova Scotia. And the *Halifax Chronicle* picked up one of my pictures that was posted on Flickr, and wrote me a letter and wanted to do a story about it. So I—that's how I got my picture in a *Halifax Chronicle*. In the meantime, I've been more and more involved in close-up photography. I got involved in close-up photography on the cheap, because I'm on a pension and getting retirement. I'm fairly poverty stricken, and I have developed a macro photography bracket that uses just the pop-up flash on your camera, and it lets you get wicked good lighting for close-ups. And also, I take apart damaged lenses, salvage them—salvage the objective lenses, and reverse-mount them on conventional lenses, and I get wicked super close-ups without having to spend money for a specialized macro lens. And I have put on many, many, many seminars throughout New England, even at the PSA, Photographic Society of America, convention in San Antonio. I put on my macro program. They were absolutely blown away. They do not understand how I can be getting these pictures without a macro lens. So that's where my interest in photography lies. My sister Susie travels with me. At present, I am Print Competition Director

for the New England Camera Club Council. That's a council of about seventy-one camera clubs. They have a convention every year. I'm in charge of the print exhibition room and competition. Been doing that for about twelve years now. So I've got plenty to keep me busy. So all of this photography related stuff is all very relevant.

MM:

So your hobby became, really—I mean, you're a professional at doing this stuff, now.

AV:

I guess. I don't make any money at it.

MM:

You are—

AV:

It's probably professional level.

MM:

—an expert—

AV:

Oh yeah.

MM:

—amateur.

AV:

Yes. I would have to say, yeah.

MM:

Now, tell me this. How did you get involved in coming down to New Castle?

AV:

Oh okay. Okay. This is another story altogether. Okay? My friend over in New Castle—okay? We used to—because—well, because of my photography, I would do internet searches and stuff like this in chat rooms or whatever you call them. Message boards and things. He used to run a graphics place in Florida. Okay? In one of these places, they had a big flat-bed camera, you know? They do copy work or whatever. I don't know what it is. I'm not involved in that. And we got talking about different photographic issues and things like that. And he happened to mention that—he rents a room from a friend in New Castle. And they have fallow deer. I happened to be



interested in fallow deer. I don't even know where the interest came from, okay? But it's just one of these things. Maybe from when I was a kid or something. So anyway, we were—he was going to be doing volunteer work at an animal sanctuary up in Wallkill, New York, back in 2005. I said, "Well, that's not all that far from me—four hours. Okay?" I said, "Why don't I come down? We can see each other for the first time and we'll go to the—we'll do some animal sanctuary work. I guess there was an animal plant that, I think, had just come out at the time. There was a country western singer named Linda Eder. Linda Eder. She was going to put on a benefit for raising money for this animal sanctuary. It was no-kill animal sanctuary. So we went down there and we did some volunteer work. I showed up in flat shoes and Chino's. He looked at me and he said, "That doesn't look like farm clothes." I said, "Well, you don't know what I'm carrying in my bag. I've got junk clothes in the bag. I don't want to walk in and do [?] [1:08:40]." And we palled around for a week, and we met Linda Eder. There was a horse down there that was absolutely unruly that nobody could handle. I think we dealt with him in a week. It was just a retired race horse who was having a fit because it wasn't allowed to run out in the paddock because a proprietor of this place thought it would get hurt. And we fixed that in a hurry. But anyway, it went very well. I wound up being the photography for this place, unofficial. Okay? But I got pictures of a couple of the—one of the performers there, and Linda Eder and some other people. What I found interesting is taking pictures of the production crew—what went on behind the camera. I was more—as interested in that—seeing that as to what went on in front of the camera. You know? And that—so in September of that year, we were talking on the phone or something. He said, "Hey, you ought to come down to New Castle sometime. At that point, I said, "I supposed I could." And I drove down there—flew down, rented a car.

MM:

Now, he was from Florida. How did he get to New Castle?

AV:

This is—excuse me?

MM:

He was from Florida, right?

AV:

Yeah.

MM:

How did he get to New Castle?

AV:

Yeah. He wound up—through emails or internet connections or something, he found out about

these fallow deer in New Castle. And he's an animal person, anyway. He's a horse trainer from way back. He came out to look at the deer or something. Anyway, one thing led to another. And since he was leaving Florida anyway, he decided to rent a room here, work locally, and help tend the deer. And that's where it all started. I went down there. I saw the deer. I said, "Man, this is great." So I think in 2006, the person he's renting the room from had a little house in his back property, and he wanted to buy a new truck. So I said, "Why don't I buy this house back there, okay? Since you need this new truck. I got some spare cash. It's a good deal." So now I own this little house down there. It needs a lot of work, but at least got a new Thermopane windows in it and stuff. But that's my life boat if anything—eventually, I'd like to leave New England and move down here. I love it down here. People can't understand it. If they ain't been here and done what I do, then they—

MM:

Explain why you do enjoy being down there, and why people up north wouldn't—don't like it.

AV:

Okay. Number one: Texas is hot. Well, I can show them my snowy March pictures taken over in New Castle and tell them—have them tell me how it's hot. "Yes, it's hot in the summer. It's hot out, okay? What you do in a case like that is you go indoors." [MM laughs] What's the big deal? Okay? "That's expensive to air condition?" I said, "Well, oil heat ain't free up in New England, either." I've got an answer for all of this crap, okay? Also, I've lived in the same house for fifty-six years. That's fifty-six years of washing dishes and looking out the same kitchen window. It's getting stale. Okay? I love fossil hunting, okay? And I found out that in Rattlesnake Hill, one mile from my house—I went hiking one day and I found a beautiful scallop shell. And inside, a scallop shell fossil. I have it at home now. I'd walk on the Brazos River, when the water was low, you know, and I'd find beautifully bleached animal skulls. Small ones. Tiny ones. On the back of my property, I found a dove skull, which is fragile as hell. Been on the ground and it got cleaned up by ants. It was fragile. I've got that at home. I use that as a lens test target. I've—as part of my macro seminars, I have—I might even—have you got a second?

MM:

Yeah, sure.

AV:

I'll show you one of our displays. Hang on. I just happen to have it in my phone. Let me turn it on. Okay. I turned it off to be polite. Hang on a minute. I got my skulls, on one of the tables here, for the camera club people to take pictures of. Hang on a minute. It'll be on in a minute. I've got to put on my other glasses to do this, though. But what I do is a bring these skulls, I wrap them in towels—and camera club people who want to take pictures of stuff—they don't usually see

skulls. They never do. Okay? Come on. Skull. Come on. There we go. Let's see if I got that. It's not that long ago. [Hums]

MM:

That's great. Flower photos there.

AV:

Oh, we ran into a tornado developing on the way to Wichita Falls the other day.

MM:

The deer.

AV:

We're getting away from the—okay. Hang on a minute. There was one. Okay, here's some, yeah.

MM:

Oh, it is interesting.

AV:

You see?

MM:

Yeah. No kidding.

AV:

The camera club people—they arrange different material in with them skulls, okay? I mean, I've got nice hog skulls and everything. When the river's high, I'm disappointed, you know? But my specialty—photographic specialty is spiders, believe it or not.

MM:

And how did you gravitate to spiders?

AV:

Well, I found—I used to participate in print competitions in camera clubs. The high-impact pictures are what win. And spiders, by their ugliness, have impact. Okay? So you get a leg up if you have something that's horrible-looking, okay? So anyway, what would happen is—I actually—years ago, I found a Black widow spider over my house. You can tell a Black widow spider immediately when it walks—when you handle its web—tensile strength is very high. One of the highest tensile strength web there is. So I found this Black widow spider, and it was

towards the tail-end of my trip. So I sort of watched it the last day of my trip, before I had to fly home. I put the few drops—just a couple of drops of water in a pill bottle. The spider went in the bottle. Capped. Put it in my computer bag. Carried it home with me. I was going to check on it on the plane to see if it was all right, but I had visions of it getting loose, so I didn't want to do that. So I brought it home and I got in the case. I said, "Susie, have I got something to show you." So I held a light up—the thing up the light and she goes, "That's a spider." I said, "Yes." I put it up to the light and I said, "Take a look.", "That's a Black widow. Get it away. What are you bringing Black widows from?" Well, it turns out that there are Black widow spiders in Chicopee, Massachusetts, so I'm not expanding the range of the hostile creature, okay? So anyway—and then doing challenging things with them. Okay? I've got a beautiful picture of a nursery web spider, single claw, hanging onto its web, showing how the end of the claw is like the comb. Okay? I mean, I've got close-ups of spinnerets exuding webs. I mean, it's basically almost like a microscope photo. And I never photographed dead stuff. You can tell it's dead. That's cheating. I don't chill stuff in refrigerators to slow it down. No. It's all live stuff. And I give seminars on this stuff. The people are fascinated. So photography has always been kind of a bug of mine.

MM:

Now, do you continue to go to junk stores and Salvation Army stores, or other antique stores, or whatever, and find old photos, or anything like that? Does that still hold—

AV:

I do still, but I don't go out specifically for that. I don't say, "Let's go for a photo hunting trip. Let's go see if I can find some old photos." No. In my travels down here and my travels up to Nova Scotia—if we were near a junk shop, I'll go in and I'll just see what they've got. Okay? And my latest thing now is I always look for photos that can be identified, okay? If I have—like, I have a series of logging photographs, taken back around the turn of the century.

MM:

Logging—

AV:

With horses, okay? Up in the Maine Woods. In Canada. Up in the Maritimes. If I could find a picture of somebody with work horses and a huge load of logs or something—if it could be identified, [phone dings] I'll buy it, but it has to be bad and need restoration. Can I look at this just a second?

MM:

Um-hm.

AV:

Just to see what this is. I'll have to get back to it later. It's about my cat babysitter, babysitting my cat at home. So, anyway. I forget where I was. What'd I just say?

MM:

You were talking about the logging pictures.

AV:

Oh yes. I will buy photographs if they can be identified. Okay? Some of them need restoration, some of them don't. Okay? I'm especially interested in what they call photo postcards. These were—like the Spallholz's were taken. You could buy photographic paper back then called postcard paper. And on the back of the postcard paper, there's a space for a stamp, a space for the address, and a dividing line. In other words, you printed this from a negative and mailed it. Okay? And some of these are very sharp. And I've got pictures of a log—one by a log hauler and some other stuff. But what I'm looking for, especially, is anything that can be identified that is cheap because it is horribly faded. I've done some experiments now, and I know what kind of a horribly yellow-faded picture I get. Almost invisible. And you can put that on a flatbed paper, and if you tweak your controls just right, boom, it brings out an image like you wouldn't believe. People are fascinated with that. And I've got a number of photos. I've got a photo of somebody, evidently, shooting a silent movie or something up in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. I knew what it was immediately, and I knew, roughly, what I was taking, because of the building in the back that burned in 1912. When you study the area that you visit, it gives you a lot more pleasure to what you're doing in there.

MM:

It provides context.

AV:

Yeah. Absolutely.

MM:

No doubt. So, Art, do you figure that ultimately you're going to move down here to Texas?

AV:

I would like to, but the sticking point here is I have a brother who's in a—who's two years older than me. He's in a group home in Georgetown, Massachusetts. I cannot walk away from him.

MM:

Yeah, you can't leave him.



AV:

Can't leave that. And then my sister, Susie—she would love to come down here, but she's got family up north and all that. I would love to fix up my place in New Castle. I'm not abandoning it, okay? My friends say because it's right in the back of their paddock. And the deer sleep on the porch, okay? It's in the deer enclosure. And that's one thing I like about it. So I'm always coming down here. When I bring my sister, we don't stay there. There's a nice elderly couple in town that rent us their cottage—extra cottage. We stay there.

MM:

Do—how much time do you spend in Texas when you come down here?

AV:

Not enough.

MM:

Do you usually come at a usual time?

AV:

Susie and I like to come down in the spring because we like the wild weather, believe it or not. Okay? Also, the wildflowers—I know I can go over to Peacock, over to the other side of Aspermont, and I know that that thing going down near the Peacock Bridge, that's going to be a river of wildflowers. Okay? And I don't mean just blue bonnets. I mean all this other stuff.

MM:

Oh I know.

AV:

And yeah, you've got to sort of walk around the fire ant mounds and all that, but it's just wonderful. Oh, it's beautiful. Anybody who hasn't seen it can't imagine it.

MM:

Why do you think your friends from New England make fun of you coming down here to do this stuff?

AV:

Well, they probably figure—well, they probably think I'm wasting my time, okay? But they don't when they see the pictures I come home with. Okay? A lot of them would kill to get some of these pictures. But they really shy away. They don't like the idea of the hot weather. They don't like the fact that it's so far away. Well, it's not far away if you're going to fly and rent a car or something. I have a—my friends over in New Castle—I have a Jeep over there. It's just had the

rear end replaced, so this is why I had to borrow the truck to get over here. But we want to break it in, you know? So it's—a lot of people just aren't interested in leaving New England. I don't know. They'll go down to Florida. I don't want Florida. It's too humid, too flat. I ain't interested in it. Okay? There's other things about Florida I don't like, either, but I don't want to sound like a bigot. Okay? I love North Texas. I love specifically the Brazos River Watershed: the upper area, the central area. I don't know much about it. I don't want to go anywhere near the Gulf. The closest I got to the Gulf was San Antonio. That was okay, because I had to go put on a presentation at a convention. Nah, I like North Texas. That's the west. Not Galveston.

MM:

Well, sometime, you ought to go—you ought to try and walk the Double Mountain Fork.

AV:

Where?

MM:

The Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos.

AV:

Oh, I've been over there. Me and Susie went over there about a year or two ago. And we found the gate to get to the top of Double Mountain. Any time we see a mountain that's got towers on top—they've got to get up there somehow. So we found the gate and asked some gent who was weed whacking in his yard. I said, "What's the story on this gate?" "Oh, they don't lock that." I said, "Well, who's 'they'?" "Well, the power company." I said, "Well, what do they do if somebody goes up there?" He said, "Well, people do occasionally." I said, "Do they close the gate behind them?" "Yeah." Well, we had my sister's Chevy Equinox, and that was not mountain-worthy. But I know right where to go now. We've taken—I took some nice pictures of some horses in a horse shed over there made out of a freight car. I mean—everything about down here is really nice. Although, everything that grows sticks you, burns you, poisons you, or whatever. I just—we just enjoy it. [Coughs]

MM:

Have you been to the Big Bend National Park?

AV:

Not down that way, no.

MM:

That's a whole different country.

AV:

Really?

MM:

And if you get a chance to go to Guadalupe Mountains—there's a book over it—that's a whole different country. That is the largest fossilized barrier reef in the world. Okay? So even when you're up on top of the mountain, you're looking at prehistoric creatures, even before mammals. It goes back that far. It was caused by uplift. It's part of the same geographic structure that created Carlsbad Caverns, which is right over there. And it's all worth seeing. There's a lot—if you really love macro work, there's a lot of macro work you could do in both of those places. When the cactus bloom in the big thicket, and the other plants—the desert plants bloom, it's wonderful. So you ought to come down and try that some time.

AV:

Oh, I probably will. I'll probably bring my sister with me if I did that.

MM:

Yeah. It's a long way down there. But it's a whole different world; a whole different part of West Texas. They call it the Trans-Pecos—west of the Pecos.

AV:

Now, I know that you can find—I have found them. You go to the Route 209 Bridge, just south of Graham, over the Brazos River, and you go north of there and you go around the first bend, and I can find all the crinoid fossils I want. Now, an interesting thing happened down there a few years ago, because I was walking on the river. I parked the Jeep and I'd walk along the bars when it's low. I'm walking along and I'm one mile above the Route 209 bridge, south of Graham, and I come across this Chinese lion. It's a huge fiberglass lion, like in front of a Chinese restaurant. Okay? And I didn't have my phone with me. I should've took a picture. I got thinking: What in the hell is that doing here? And there was a bullet hole in it, of course. Where did that come from? And I got thinking, Hm, I know where this is from. So I went back to the house and I called my friend. I said, "Hey, I think I found the Chinese lion that was stolen from in front of that Chinese restaurant two years ago." He said, "No you didn't." I said, "Yes I did." "Describe it." I said, "It's a Chinese lion.", "Well, where is it?" "It's in the riverbed." So anyway, I went to the Chinese restaurant that only had the one lion left—and it's one we eat at all the time. The women's last name is Chen. I said, "Geez, that lion out there is beautiful. Where's the other one?" I'm leading her on, okay? She all, "It got stolen." I said, "Well, I found it for you." She said, "What? What? What?" Like that. So she called the sheriff right away, and the sheriff came over. I had to describe to him where it was. He said, "Well, we'll just take our Humvee down there and we'll go get it. I said, "Where is it exactly?" I said, "You go to the Route 209 bridge and you go north.", "Was that upstream or downstream?" I said, "You lived

here your whole life and you don't know whether north is upstream or downstream?" I said, "You go against the current, okay? One mile." So he said they're going to take the Humvee down there. I said, "You know there's quicksand down there? You're going to get stuck." Well, they took the Humvee down there and they got the lion. Brought it back. And I told the lady, "You put it in the auto body shop and have these two paint it up. I got a free meal out of it. Probably should've gotten more than that. But I got an article in the paper, and my picture.

MM:

That's neat. That's neat. When I was talking about the Double Mountain Fork—I'm talking about the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos.

AV:

Oh yeah, I know.

MM:

And when you pass—you've been through Post, right?

AV:

Oh sure, yeah.

MM:

Okay. I mean, you can stop right there. When we passed over it last week, there was just a little bit of water in there. I've seen it to where it laps under the bridge, you know, when you really get a whole lot. There are—right north of us here is called the Yellow House Draw. The Yellow House Draw and the Blackwater Draw by Plainview are tributaries of the Double Mountain Fork. And the Blackwater Draw goes all the way over to the Clovis area. And there's a place over there called the Blackwater Draw site, where they found, while they were doing excavation—you know, just regular—you know, digging dirt, stuff like that—that it was one of the earliest Clovis man sites. And they have, you know, mastodon bones and all kinds of stuff like that over there. The earliest dated human well on the North American continent, mainly because it's dry. They discovered that. That's worth going to see sometime, too, when you're up this way. And some people follow that—there's somebody right here in this building that is helping some other colleagues—other friends track what they called the Trail of Living Waters, which archaic Indians and primitive humans—Clovis people—actually followed, which was part of the proto-Brazos system.

AV:

I like the whole—the upper and central part of Brazos Watershed. I've walked all over down near the collapsed bridge, you know, down there in Peacock. There's a steel bridge that's collapsed in on itself. The disappointing thing is the river access is terrible. You can only really



hit the river form a highway someway. You don't walk on private land. I've had a great time walking on the river, anywhere you could get access to it. And found all sorts of stuff. One thing I did notice, though, is, especially around New Castle and any other highway bridge that goes over—I can go downstream of any highway bridge, dig down into the riverbed, and sooner or later I will find corroding printed wiring boards.

MM:  
Really?

AV:  
Yep. The amount of stuff that's thrown off bridges in Texas is astonishing for trash.

MM:  
Yeah, it doesn't surprise me. It really doesn't surprise me. It is a shame.

AV:  
But it's all very interesting. No, I like Texas a lot.

MM:  
Well—

AV:  
Oh, I did put on a macro presentation at the Old Post Office Museum & Art Gallery in Graham.

MM:  
Did you really?

AV:  
Yeah.

MM:  
Okay, so, tell a little bit about that presentation. Are these PowerPoint presentations?

AV:  
No, this is a slide presentation. Digital, you know?

MM:  
Digital? Okay.

AV:

So what happened is somebody, evidently—I bought my book of deer photos down once, and spider photos. I usually have these with me. I didn't bring any this time. But what happens is somebody, somewhere, saw my album or heard about my photography. And I went to the Old Post Office Museum one day, and it was one of the days when they were having one of their exhibitions—photo exhibitions. And I got talking about this and that, and I was talking about photography, and this image and that image. They gradually figured that I was a photographer of some kind. So I was describing my program, okay? And they wanted to me to do it one day. So I happened to be down in Texas one time and I had to call them up. I said, “Are you guys having a meeting or something that you’ve got no agenda for? I’ve got my program with me on a flash drive.” They jumped right on it. So I presented over there one day. So that’s the furthest away from home that I’ve ever presented.

MM:

That you’ve ever given one?

AV:

Except for San Antonio.

MM:

San Antonio?

AV:

Yeah.

MM:

Well, that’s very interesting, Art. Now, where—what is your expectation—going back to our original discussion here on the Spallholz book. If you had your druthers or your dream of how to make this whole project go forward and to bring it to its best conclusion, what would you visualize that to be?

AV:

Well, first of all, I would like to be—I would not like it to be exclusively what Julian would like it to be. I would like it to incorporate—I would like it to be a blend—a happy blend of both. Okay? I am almost insistent that—Lance has got good stuff there, and he’s got a good method. I think that that needs to be in there. I think there can be a happy medium struck between—Lance feels that it’s bloated, terrible, will all previous road trip stuff that has nothing, whatsoever, to do with our trip, except they covered the same ground. Okay? I think, somehow, we have to strike a happy medium with that. I will accept whatever comes out of this, because I’m just the picture guy.

MM:

What do you think its value will be to people who are interested in early travel in the American West, or people who are interested in early photos of travel in the American West? What's your perspective of that?

AV:

Well, I think that anybody who's interested in lantern slides would certainly be interested. Travel in general. Definitely anybody who's interested in old vehicles. Okay? Especially anybody who's interested in old travel over tough road conditions. Travel, back in the day, when you almost had to make your own way. A couple of the images—they were going through detours over a prairie and down in the gullies and stuff like that. That was pretty adventurous stuff back then. It would be even adventurous today in a Jeep. I think there'd be a fair amount of interest in that. The national parks—well, they haven't changed much in appearance over the years, except for what's going to them. Okay? But I just think the whole thing has a high degree of interest. Old car people. Okay? I have—by the way, I didn't mention this. But over the years, I have had zillions of offers to sell this slide or that slide. I've always said no. Okay?

MM:

The—now, Lance—what do you think his vision of this final product would be? Since you seem to have a good relationship with him.

AV:

Well, I don't know how big a seller he would expect it to be. Okay? I don't know whether he's—he feels that it is a worthwhile endeavor, as far as marketing goes, or whether it's a worthwhile endeavor in saying that it's been done, and it's out there, and it's a record now; it's there for people to see if they want to. I don't know what his real push is on that. I do know that he wants to—wants this thing memorialized in some way. Okay? The last thing that should happen is that the slides be scattered and things disappear, and then all you've got is the trip in existence, only until the memory of the last surviving person who knows about it.

MM:

Is gone, yeah. Okay. And having talked—spoken with Julian here over these past couple of years, what do you see is his vision of how this should be?

AV:

He would like—of course, he would like to have it be marketed successfully, okay? I think he's very proud. Both of them are very proud of their grandfather's accomplishment. They have a very high sense of pride of the fact that this whole event took place. Okay? They relish in the idea that they have the physical mementos from the trip. How many people have something like that? Okay?

MM:

Very few.

AV:

It isn't just having a camera *like* was used on the trip. They got the camera that was used on the trip, both of them. And that means a lot. I think that he would love to see it published, as a matter of pride. I believe, with both of these guys, marketing is secondary. But on the other hand, these things don't sell themselves, and they don't come free.

MM:

Well, and most university press books are marketed to various scholarly conferences and stuff like that. There's never a large distribution field.

AV:

It's not going to be a New York Best Seller.

MM:

It is more a memorial or a legacy type of book. Or it—more importantly, for an academic press, it advances scholarship. You know?

AV:

Yes.

MM:

And it educates the academic public, or the general public.

AV:

Lance didn't—you remember the bit about *Tienda*—*La Tienda* [store]?

MM:

Yeah, yeah.

AV:

Okay. There's an interesting story behind that. Okay? I had been looking—I had been—that had been bothering me for a long time: *Tienda*. And I have been hammering on Julian about that. I said, "Where is this *Tienda*?" I said, "I'm following the route on the map. I'm using new maps and old maps. I'm seeing they stayed here, they stay here; they went here, they went there. They went to Comado [?] [1:36:39]. They went to this. And I said, "I come across here and there's no *Tienda*." He said, "Well, we're going to find out about that." So that's when I looked on the internet and I found out that the word *tienda* means "store." So then I contacted him and I said,



“Hey, there’s something funny here.” Okay? And that’s when he did some more digging and found out it was San Jose, I think he said it was.

MM:

Yeah, something like that.

AV:

Right away, he came up with an antique postcard picture. And I said, “I’ll get back to you.” So what I did was I got on Google Earth and I found the church at San Jose. And I had our slide. I used Google Earth’s street view to turn until their picture matched our slide.

MM:

Really?

AV:

Okay. I got goosebumps when I saw that.

MM:

I can see that.

AV:

It was a perfect match.

MM:

That’s interesting.

AV:

That’s why I love the computer. Computer are a pain in the butt, but they are wonderful, in some respects.

MM:

I know I wrote that down somewhere, but I’m not seeing it in my scribbles right now. Well, I appreciate you bring here today, and I appreciate you sharing this component of this wonderful story. It is certainly one of the important and serendipitous coincidences—

AV:

It’s the craziest—

MM:

—in those whole event. I hope that somehow or another, miraculously, we might be able to run into the journals that supposedly were kept, but who knows?

AV:

Oh man. That would really be something.

MM:

I think, if anything, It may fall to that person that you talked to there—

AV:

Corey [?] [1:38:28] Flaherty and her friend up there who—last—was Carol—whoever—whatever it is.

MM:

Because, clearly, she knew somebody that was a member of that other brother's family.

AV:

Yeah.

MM:

It could be—like she said, maybe there's something in an old barn somewhere. There might be another piece to this puzzle yet to add. Either there will or there won't be. There's enough to do a wonderful story on that.

AV:

Now, what happens—have you ever ran into a situation where—where you're looking for something really—you really have got to get your hands on something, and all of a sudden, bingo, here it is? And you approach the people and tell them what you want, tell them what you're looking for, and all of a sudden they see dollar signs?

MM:

Yeah. Well, [AV laughs] the problem is there are no dollar signs to be had.

AV:

Well, I know that.

MM:

If—depending on cost, many things can be had.

AV:

I would love to find the journals.

MM:

I would hope that they're there. It's clear that that family did—or the other component of Julian's family and Lance's family did keep some journals. They were clearly literate people. They were well-to-do people. And so they had opportunities that other people at those times did not have.

AV:

I don't think I mentioned it to you, but I spent a very nice winter's night talking to the people who knew about the Taylor Ranch out in Wyoming. I was talking to them out in Taylor, out in Wyoming.

MM:

Really? Okay, so when—tell me this story.

AV:

What I did is—it was bugging me about this Taylor Ranch, okay? And ranches in Wyoming and out in the west, many times, stay in the family for generations, okay? Nobody lets them go. So anyway, I found out that in—first of all, he had gone to Ten Sleep, Wyoming. They went up through Ten Sleep. And there were some clues as to how far below Ten Sleep they had to camp at that ranch. Because I wanted to find the Taylor Ranch. Well, it turns out there's a place out there called Taylor Ranch, but it's not the same one. But I did track down—I called some—made a couple phone calls out there, and I found a lady who—an old lady who seemed to know somebody who came after the people that owned the Taylor Ranch when they were there. Okay? That's as close as I could get. And I found out, roughly, where the Taylor Ranch was, because what I did is, looking at the slide of where they camped—and there's buildings in the back and there's a little butte here and all that. I was able, on Google Earth, to find out where they camped. Okay? And it's kind of iffy, but I think I'm pretty sure. From there, I was able to dope out, well, where is this Taylor Ranch? Anyway, I spent a couple of nights during the winter talking to old people out there. It was very interesting.

MM:

Now, let me ask you this question. Because I haven't asked—I know the two boys, Lance and Julian, they went with their father and parents on this trip. You know? Did you ever track any of the trip itself? Aside from just going to the Taylor Ranch? Have you driven that?

AV:

Oh, of course.

MM:

The entire route of the trip? Of the Spallholz trip.

AV:

You mean have I ever driven, physically, myself, in an auto?

MM:

Yeah.

AV:

I have driven parts of the trip, but not knowing that it was their trip route. It was on my own route—my brother, when we—

MM:

I knew that.

AV:

—when we went out there.

MM:

I knew that. But, I mean, since you have the slide of the map—

AV:

No, I never have. I never have. I never have, okay?

MM:

I was just curious. But this whole thing about *Tienda* and *La Tienda* and all of that—and the Taylor Ranch—those were components of this story that always fascinated you?

AV:

Yeah, right.

MM:

Why?

AV:

Well, because—

MM:

I mean, you've explained him.



AV:

—I guess I'm naturally inquisitive. Because we stayed at the Lawson Ranch, okay?

MM:

When you went with your brother?

AV:

Yeah. In 1966. It was a beautiful time. We stayed in a bunkhouse. It was marvelous, knotty Pine bunkhouse. It wasn't a public place, you know? But it was beautiful. So anyway, the similarity, I guess, fascinated me. We drove through Ten Sleep. But I know the area. I know the road between Cody, where they get stuck in the water and all that. We went through there. We went through Yellowstone. We went through what now is no longer an avenue of trees. It's natural for me to try to compare things, okay? I just—it's fascinating. Now, to be able to nail down where the Taylor Ranch was and all that—I guess it's always been the idea, Geez, maybe someday I'll be able to go there. Julian and Lance would love to be able to drive the whole route and document—go everywhere they did, okay? [Coughs] I don't know—time-wise, it's just not going to work out. Also, you might not be happy with what you find in some of the locations. I don't know. But it's always been fascinating. The kid on the—the kid's on the donkey cart in Fort Collins, Colorado—I'd love to know what that brick is in the back. Where is that? Where? Place? Show me exactly where they were standing when they got that picture taken. You know? Just curiosity. The big cut he talks about. Okay? I spent three or four days on Google Earth, and I found it. There ain't a road going through it anymore. It's on private farmland behind a casino. But the big cut is still there. I was able to find it on Google Earth.

MM:

That's interesting. That's interesting. You know, one of our former photography professors here at Tech, he's now living out in Wyoming or some place. He loves to find old photos and then go back and retake pictures. You know, and try to get the light right and all that kind of stuff. It seems to me like—

AV:

That's very popular. A lot of people like doing that.

MM:

Yeah, like doing that kind of stuff. I don't foresee this kind of a project like that. Now, getting back to the Taylor Ranch. When you went out there that night, you—or at that time—and you met with some of these people. What kind of conversations—

AV:

Well, I never did. I never did meet them. This was all on phone.

MM:

Oh, on the phone.

AV:

Yeah. It was while it was stinking cold out there, okay? There is a—not a travel agency. What do you call it? There's a place out there that supposedly—when Lance and Julian went out there, they went through Ten Sleep, okay? Well, I think their father left something at one of the shops out there, either a diary or something, or pictures of something, because somebody out there—when I was talking to somebody, concerning this Taylor Ranch out there, they said that up in the travel bureau, she seems to think that there's pictures, and she remembers the name Spallholz. Okay? And that might be from Julian and Lance going up there, you know, when they were kids. Arriving there. Because they did stop there.

MM:

Now, that's interesting. So you say travel bureau, maybe?

AV:

It's a—it's in Ten Sleep, Wyoming. It's a visitor's center or something, okay? And it was closed at the time I called—for the reason. Okay? It hadn't opened for the season yet.

MM:

Would it have been, like, a county museum or something?

AV:

Probably. It was in Ten Sleep.

MM:

Okay.

AV:

Yeah. It's Ten Sleep. Sounds just sounds like it sounds. [Clears throat]

MM:

You just gave me another, little possible lead.

AV:

And somebody seems to remember pictures—seeing pictures of the trip. So maybe they had the albums with them when they went out there. Okay?

MM:

Yeah.

AV:

That would be my guess.

MM:

It could very well be. Of course—

AV:

Because I waste time, during the winter, doing a lot of things. I probably should be more productive. That's why I tried call out there and see. What happened is they called and they probably thought I was a loon. But I got a call back. [Clears throat]

MM:

Well, I mean, all they'd have to do is just listen to you for a bit and they'd realize, you know, what you were doing, and that it was an interesting topic. Well, anything else that you'd like to add, relating to either the Spallholz project or your own life?

AV:

I can't think of another thing, really. Not at this point. Other than I expect to spend more time down here in Texas.

MM:

Well, we hope to see you. I want to encourage you to maintain your archive over time, and get it into a safe place when the time comes.

AV:

I do want to contact you in the future about those Chinese letters and photos I have.

MM:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AV:

Because there was a doctor from the West who was over there. And it was during the time they were having beheadings and things, and bandits and all of that.

MM:

All that kind of stuff is endlessly fascinating.

AV:

I think it was called Shanghai Doctor or something like that. I forget the name of the guy. I'll scan a couple of pictures and send them. Maybe you'll recognize them.

MM:

Okay. Okay. But anyway, if there's nothing else—

AV:

Can't think of anything.

MM:

Then we will end our—

AV:

Okay.

MM:

Little interview here today.

***End of Recording***

© Southwest Collection/  
Special Collections Library