

Gloria Hurst Shakespeare
Interviewed by Loren Webb
For the Washington County Historical Society

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Participants: Loren Webb (Washington County Historical Society interviewer)
Gloria Hurst Shakespeare (former St. George City Council member and
current St. George Housing Authority board member)

Webb: Good afternoon. My name is Loren Webb. I'm with the Washington
County Historical Society, and with me here today is Gloria Shakespeare.
What is your full name, Gloria?

Shakespeare: Gloria Hurst Shakespeare.

Webb: Okay. And what was the impetus behind your parents, Beth and John
Hurst, in opening the Hurst Variety Store in Panguitch, Utah?

Shakespeare: My parents first went to Panguitch with the intent to take over my
grandparents' Bryce Canyon Cafe, but instead, they decided to put in a
Variety Store, and that's how they landed up with the Variety Store in
Panguitch.

Webb: Interesting. So why did the family move to St. George and open up a Hurst
Variety Store here?

Shakespeare: My mother's brother, Arthur Bruhn, lived in St. George, and Center Department
[Store] had just moved out of their current building and moved two doors
up where they they had built a brand new store. So my uncle called my
mother and said, "Why don't you move your variety store to St. George?
They really could use another variety store here." So my my dad came
down, and watched the foot traffic. After, he went to see Merv Reber
who was the owner of the building, and said, "I want to rent your building."
Merve asked, "What are you going to put there?" he replied "I want to put in
a variety store." Mr Reber replied "You're just the man I'm looking for
because I want a variety store to go with that clothing store."

Webb: "Oh, my gosh. And what was the original location of the store?"

Shakespeare: First North Main. It was just right there on Tabernacle and Main Street, just
right across the street from the Tabernacle.

Webb: So a great location, right?

Shakespeare: A great location.

Webb: Okay. And your mother took over operation of the store in 1962, correct?

Shakespeare: That's correct.

Webb: Okay. And what involvement with the store did you and your siblings have?

Shakespeare: It was mostly my older sister Kathy and I who worked the store with our mother. Her and I were the ones that worked when we were young. In fact, Kathy worked when my dad was there, so she had already been working in the store when I started. I was 14 when my parents divorced, and then I started to work with our Mom, Beth Hurst; along with my sister. Kathy got married and moved away and I worked for a few years after I was married. Now it's just our brothers and their families that own and run the stores

Webb: Oh my gosh. Well what did you carry? Yeah.

Shakespeare: Oh, it was a variety store, and it had everything. We had yarn, dishes, cards, hardware, toys. It was the old fashioned way of displaying things, Merchandise was displayed on counters that were flat with your inventory under the counters. Also pegboard and metal shelving was coming into play.

Webb: That's great. So what did you find interesting about the store and the impact that it had on St. George and the surrounding area?

Shakespeare: Well, St. George was only 5,000 people at that time, and so it was a small town. What I loved about the store was the people. I loved to get to know the people, and that was the favorite part about it. St. George didn't have the great big box stores here, as the town was small, in fact, big box stores were just starting to come into play in the big cities. So, there was just two variety stores here, Sprouse-Reitz and Hurst Variety. Back then the store played a big part in helping the people so they didn't have to travel. People didn't travel back then like they do now.

Webb: Right.

Shakespeare: And so they played an important part in the community.

Webb: Okay, great. So once in St. George, did the Hurst family expand and/or relocate your original store, and where were other stores added in the area?

Shakespeare: Yes, they moved from downtown which was First North Main, out to Bluff Street, I think that was in the 70s, and that was their first new location. At that time my Brother Ross Hurst had moved back to St. George, and was now in the

store. Later they put one over in Hurricane. . By then my other brother Buck Hurst had moved home and was also in the stores. Later when they divided the stores, my brother Buck and my mother Beth took over the Hurricane store, and Ross took over the Bluff street store. Then little by little it grew in different locations.

Webb: Okay, and now, isn't there one out there on Mall Drive, and out in Santa Clara, as well?

Shakespeare:, Yes, now they've got a few in St. George.

Webb: Wow.

Shakespeare: But there's two different families involved now, because my brother Ross, his family has the one on the Bluff Street. The one out on Mall Drive and in Santa Clara area, that's my brother Buck and his family.

Webb: Okay.

Shakespeare: And Bucks the one that owns the one in Hurricane and Ross's family owns the ones in Cedar and Heber Utah.

Webb: Okay. So when did you get interested in city government?

Shakespeare: I was concerned about what was taking place in the City of St. George for quite a few years, as far as the building and what was taking place. They were filling the inner blocks [interior portions of city blocks] with just small condos with no parking, with no aesthetics. Also, homes were being made into apartments. I also was concerned with people just parking on lawns, and yards not being taken care of. I became very concerned about it. Back then you didn't have computers, as they were just coming into play, so I got a copy of the city ordinances and started to study them, and I found the City of St. George had some great ordinances, they just weren't being enforced. As I was talking to Ted Snow one day and telling him all my concerns, he said, "Well, Gloria, if you go to the city, don't just go in with problems, go with solutions." So I decided to put a committee together, and I asked Ross Taylor, Jim McArthur , Dorothy Norton, Dick Mathis, Doug Alder and Kenton and Georgia Barker, all became part of that committee. And we did a research from Bluff Street to the college, and then from the Boulevard down to 700 South. And then we got maps of the city, and each researched different areas in that vicinity, We found out how many of those homes had turned into rentals, and how many were owner occupied. Then we had them blown up into great big maps and put them on 4 x 8 styrofoam sheets, and then color-coded it. If it was a rental it was one color and it if was owner

occupied it was another color, and we took it to the city. We presented it to the City Council and showed them what was happening downtown so they could visualize it. Before I put the committee together, I had also, in my research, contacted many other cities throughout the nation, to find out what kind of ordinances other cities had and how they ran them. I found out St. George had every bit as good of ordinances. They just didn't enforce them. So we presented that information to the city as well. After that the city put together rental ordinances and put together an enforcement program, and that's how we got going.

Webb: Okay. And just for clarification, you mentioned Dixie College. That would have been out to 700 East, correct?

Shakespeare: 700 East, right.

Webb: Okay, okay.

Shakespeare: Yes.

Webb: So when did you decide to run for St. George City Council?

Shakespeare: Well, we were looking for someone to run for council, and kept getting turned down. People just couldn't or didn't want to do it. And then I had this strong impression "You need to run." So I did. Before that, I had never even considered running for City Council.

Webb: Okay, so and what years did you serve on the city council?

Shakespeare: From 2008 until the very end of 2011.

Webb: Okay. And during your tenure on the city council, did you serve with Mayor Dan McArthur and Mayor John Pike?

Shakespeare: I served with Dan McArthur as mayor, and I served with John Pike as a councilman. He wasn't the mayor when I served with him.

Webb: Oh, okay.

Shakespeare: He was just a councilman like me.

Webb: Okay. And how would you describe their leadership style?

Shakespeare: Dan McArthur was a fantastic mayor. And I thought that Mayor McArthur and Gary Esplin made a great team because as they both grew up here, and both their heart and soul was here. They really cared what happened to the

city, And so I really liked the leadership style. Jon Pike was a councilman, and so when he became mayor, I didn't really get to know him as a mayor.

Webb: Okay. And Gary Esplin was serving as city manager.

Shakespeare: He was the city manager.

Webb: Right, okay. So what other city council members did you serve with during your council tenure?

Shakespeare: Gail Bunker and Suzanne Allen, and then Gil Almquist and John Pike for two years, and then Suzanne was replaced by Ben Nickle, and I served with them the last two years.

Webb: Okay. So it must have been great to have that female perspective along with the male perspective, right, on the city council?

Shakespeare: And they were awesome ladies.

Webb: Okay.

Shakespeare: And they were very bright and very, did a lot of good.

Webb: Okay. So while serving on the city council, what do you feel were your major accomplishments to the city?

Shakespeare: When I got into the City Council, when we started to study budget, the first thing that came to my attention was that the city supplemented golf. I have golfers in my family, and I know how expensive golf is, and it didn't make sense to me, and so I started to ask questions. I found out they supplemented it because they felt it was part of economic development. So then I wanted to know how it was run. . If you go back in time, the way golf was really set up with cities, was like the private courses. Golf pros were really an elite personnel on private courses, and so when cities made public courses they were set up like private courses were. I discovered that most of the money taken in by golf went to the Golf Pro of the city's golf courses. The Golf Pro got all the money that was spent in the golf pro shop along with all the money from the tournaments. In the beginning, they also got all the money from the carts—the City of St. George had taken that back [in house]. So then I thought, hmm, I wonder how other cities do it now, because I think that's the way all cities were set up at first. So I contacted a lot of the cities throughout the state of Utah and found out and gathered all that research and found out that most of them had taken it back in-house. So I presented that to the council just about the time the elections happened, and then I lost the election. But right after the first of the year, the city took that information and voted on it and changed it and took it all back in the

house. Years later, a few years later when I ran into someone I had visited with before about golf, he told me that it was the first time that golf ran in the black and paid its own way in the city.

Webb: Isn't that amazing.

Shakespeare: So I was really glad about it.

Webb: Gosh. Okay. So what other major accomplishments do you feel the council as a whole made during your tenure?

Shakespeare: Well, when we first arrived, we kind of built on the foundation the other council had laid, which was the new airport. I'd been following it in the paper for quite a few years, and you probably did, also, when they were looking for a place to put it. They were looking at Mesquite. They were looking here and there, and they finally had the place. They had done the soil test. They also had the architect who was going to draw the building, and all that was in place when we came on board. So right off the bat, they flew us around the country, and our job was to do the decor of the inside of the airport.

Webb: Okay, so—

Shakespeare: And that's the part we did.

Webb: Okay. So the original, well, it's kind of interesting when I say original, because the earlier airport, of course, was up on the Black Hill.

Shakespeare: That's right.

Webb: And then they moved the airport out to the old CAA airport.

Shakespeare: That's right.

Webb: Civilian Aeronautics Administration Airport, and actually, I guess, that was there first, then they moved to the Red Hill, or Black Hill, excuse me, and then they moved back over, and that became the new St. George City Airport in 2011, 2012?

Shakespeare: Right, in your day and my day, that's where they did the drag races.

Webb: Yes, that's right. The drag races and those mini-airplanes, what did they call those?

Shakespeare: Oh, yeah.

Webb: I can't remember what they call those, but yeah, that's where they did that in the, at the old CAA airport. So it is a little bit confusing. But anyway, so you did the decor, you designed the décor—

Shakespeare: Yeah.

Webb: And the building, the new—

Shakespeare: The inside. The building, it was already designed, but we did have some say.

Webb: Okay.

Shakespeare: But they already had an architect planned.

Webb: Okay.

Shakespeare: We were doing the decor of it, and so that's how we came into play.

Webb: So what do you think, what are your thoughts about the new airport?

Shakespeare: I think it's a great asset to this area. I think there's many businesses that wouldn't have come here without a regional airport. So that part of it I think has played a really [important] part. I hope they have enough space because I think it's really growing, and I think it's going to become even bigger than it is now.

Webb: Right, okay. So were you appointed to the St. George Housing Authority Board by Mayor John Pike?

Shakespeare: No.

Webb: And if so, oh, okay.

Shakespeare: I was first appointed by Mayor McArthur. I took Suzanne Allen's place.

Webb: Okay.

Shakespeare: There's always a city council member on that board. When Suzanne was not a council member, Mayor McArthur asked me to go on it, and I served there until just about 2013, the end of '13, when my husband and I went on a [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] mission to Kenya.

Webb: Okay.

Shakespeare: So then I was released, but when I got back, then Mayor Pike contacted me and asked me, he said, "The council has asked you to come back. Will you come back?" And so I did.

Webb: Okay. And then how long did you serve there?

Shakespeare: I'm still there.

Webb: Oh, you're still there?

Shakespeare: I'm still there.

Webb: That's awesome. Okay. So from 2013 through 2024, you're still there.

Shakespeare: Right.

Webb: That's great. And what are some things that, experiences that stand out in that position?

Shakespeare: Well, really, you find out how much need there is for assisted housing. When I was in the council, I started to realize how much housing was assisted, and that was before I was on the board. I really wanted to research and find out how many different organizations funded public housing for people. Because of privacy laws, I don't know if I could ever find out all that information. Also, we had a lot going on in the city at that time. But St. George Housing Authority at this time has 267 Section 8 housing vouchers. We have about 50 vouchers that are for people that are handicapped, but not elderly. We have about 20 for veterans. And then there's about 20 vouchers that we have that people bring with them when they move here from another area, and if they've been approved by another housing organization, they can bring their voucher with them and then we do the administration on those vouchers also.

Webb: Okay.

Shakespeare: The Housing Authority also have 30 units they own called Dixie Sun Manor and that is where our offices are at. Also they own four duplexes. Mike Barben, who's the Executive Director of the Housing Authority, is always looking for more vouchers because the need is much greater than the supply.

Webb: Okay. My understanding is that the Sunset Apartments just came under the auspices of the St. George Housing Authority. Is that correct, on Bluff Street, or excuse me, on Sunset Boulevard?

Shakespeare: Oh, I knew they were looking at that. I don't know. If that's happened, I haven't, heard about it.

Webb: Because I saw it in the *St. George News*.

Shakespeare: Oh.

Webb: And so I just was wondering.

Shakespeare: Okay. we were talking about it, but I haven't been notified of that yet.

Webb: Okay. Okay.

Shakespeare: So that's good to know.

Webb: Maybe that's still, maybe that's still in the—

Shakespeare: That's probably in the—

Webb: Yeah.

Shakespeare: They'll probably, at the next meeting, they'll probably bring it up. They told us that it was in the works.

Webb: In the works, okay. So what other civic or religious organizations have you participated in, if any?

Shakespeare: Well, I've always been an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and in that capacity, I've served as a teacher, music leader and also different leadership positions. One of my favorites, as you go back in time, was when they did road shows, and I loved to write and direct road shows, and they were a lot of fun.

Webb: Yeah, they are a lot of fun.

Shakespeare: And they were just musical drama. But as far as civic, my first one was when Washington County asked me to be on the Career Service Council. I served with Larry Lennon. He was the chairman of it, and his whole career was pretty much over law enforcement. Also, Alan Boyack and Lowry Snow, they were both attorneys. Our job was to do the interviewing for those that were wanting to be on the sheriff's department, and that was part of their testing. Now they've taken it in-house, but it was very interesting.

Webb: Yeah, I bet it was. Okay. Where and when were you born?

Shakespeare: I was born in Panguitch, Utah, in August of 1948.

Webb: Okay, and who else was in your family?

Shakespeare: I had a brother, Ross Hurst, and he was six years older than myself. Then I had a sister, two years older than myself, Kathy, that's married to David Isom. I have a twin brother. His name was Garland Fred, but now he's known as Buck Hurst. And then 10 years later, behind me, is brother Bruce Hurst.

Webb: Very famous, Bruce Hurst, right?

Shakespeare: Yes,

Webb: But, got into baseball, okay. And what did your community look like outside of your family?

Shakespeare: It's hard to separate community and family because, first of all, we were a business family, and we were right on Main Street, and also my mother played the piano and accordion (she was very musical) all by ear, and my brother Ross played the piano by ear. And so music being part of the community, on top of a business being part of the community, they all went together. And I don't know how to separate them because music and business with your community was just all part of life.

Webb: Where did you first settle?

Shakespeare: My ancestry or myself?

Webb: Yeah. Yeah. Let me just go back a little bit. So where did your ancestors come from?

Shakespeare: My ancestry on my mother's side pretty much came from Germany and England. And my dad's side pretty much generated from England.

Webb: Okay. And then, so where did they first settle, then?

Shakespeare: They settled, most of them came to Utah and went to northern Utah. They pretty much came to Utah because of the church [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints]. They were converts to the church, and then eventually some of them landed up in Parowan and Panguitch in some of those missions that were called there.

Webb: Okay. Describe your grammar school and high school years.

Shakespeare: Well, I went to grammar school up to the third grade in Panguitch, Utah, and my kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers were awesome. And my kindergarten teacher had to teach me grammar because I had a speech impediment and had to work on my speech impediment. And then I moved here [St. George, Utah] in fourth grade. I had a hard time making the transition

to here. I had great teachers here, but it was just me. I really struggled for the next few years. But when I hit high school I loved high school--loved the teachers, loved the kids I ran with. I loved high school.

Webb: That's great So tell me, what were your interests in your school days?

Shakespeare: Well, I didn't really get any interests until I hit high school. Then I started to play the ukulele, and we started to get interested in doing a lot of the activities, the dances. I was on the AWS [Associated Women Students] committee, which was a women's or ladies, girls' organization, and doing all those things. And so all of those things were really fun in the school. Those were things I was involved in.

Webb: Okay. And what influential teachers did you have?

Shakespeare: In high school?

Webb: Yeah.

Shakespeare: I loved school. I loved all my teachers. I can't really separate them.

Webb: Any that stand out? Okay.

Shakespeare: I can't really, you know, they were all so beneficial and I learned something from all of them.

Webb: Yeah. Any hobbies or interests as a child? You mentioned music, right?

Shakespeare: Yes, music was always part of our family. It was a big part of our family. My grandpa could play the harmonica, and all my uncles could sing. And then my mother played, and it was just music that just grew up in part of our lives. As far as hobbies, I still didn't get any hobbies until I really got into high school and got in and stood in music and drama and writing.

Webb: Okay. So education-wise, did you attend college or university, and what was your major or minor, if any? I went to Dixie College for two years. And back then you didn't really major until you, after. You were getting associate's degrees, and everybody's pretty much doing the same thing.

Webb: Yeah, general ed.

Shakespeare: That's right, pretty much general ed.

Webb: Okay, and that was pretty much it, right?

Shakespeare: And that's it. That's all I did. And then I got married.

Webb: Okay, so anything that stood out about your college years, your two years at Dixie College?

Shakespeare: Well, I know my regrets. I really wished I had got in with Roene DeFiore and her music department. And I wished I had taken an accounting class because if I'd known my husband was going to go into business, I wished I had got into accounting, so down the road I've always regretted that I didn't do those things. But other than that, I was surprised when I got into college. I took a microbiology class from Pete Nyberg. And I was amazed how much I liked microbiology.

Webb: Oh, that's great.

Shakespeare: So it was really interesting.

Webb: Yeah, he's a great teacher.

Shakespeare: Also, I was in the stewardess program, one of the first they had at the college.

Webb: Who was the teacher for them?

Shakespeare: Her name was Miss Bell.

Webb: Okay.

Shakespeare:, I don't know if she was at Dixie for any more years after I left, but the two years I was there she was the teacher of the stewardess program. It was brand new, and I had always wanted to be a stewardess so I could see the world. And then I had 10 more years of my life planned besides that.

Webb: Okay.

Shakespeare: And so that was very interesting.

Webb: And what were your successes, accomplishments, or challenges, and frustrations? Any others that come to mind?

Shakespeare: In school?

Webb: In school.

Shakespeare: I think the adjustment from High School to College for in High School you go through a book a year, to a book a semester in college. It was a big

challenge when all of a sudden you learn you have to really speed up your learning curve, when you go to college.

Webb: Yes, you do. Describe how you met and married your spouse.

Shakespeare: Well, Tom didn't live very far from me and he was really in my ward in the church, but I didn't really know him because he worked out in Lund, Nevada, during the summer, from the time he was young, and then he went to school out there, his tenth and eleventh grade. But he came back his senior year. Just the year before they had separated the college and the high school, so he was the first senior class of Dixie High after that separation. And we were the first tenth grade class that didn't go to Woodward, but now were part of the high school.

Webb: Okay.

Shakespeare: And so when I would see him with other girls, I'd just think what are you doing with her? You belong with me. And it was just a matter of fact. It wasn't even jealousy or anything, and getting married was far from my mind. So—

Webb: And what's his name?

Shakespeare: His name's Tom Shakespeare.

Webb: Okay, Tom Shakespeare, okay, great. And describe any important aspects of family life and raising your children.

Shakespeare: Well, I think you raise children on your knees all the days of your life. I think you raise yourself on your knees all the days of your life, because each one of your children come to you, I find, already made. They are who they are, and your job is to learn to understand them so you can help them and guide them. And then they have things happen in their life that set them back or set them ahead, and it's a full-time job just to learn to understand and be what they need. And sometimes you make it and sometimes you don't.

Webb: Yeah. Good point. As you look back over your life, what would you like to be remembered for?

Shakespeare: Well, my whole career has been motherhood, and so I would want, hopefully, that my children would be known to be noble men and women that do themselves honor, do their Father in Heaven honor, and are a great service to their fellowman. And that, that's what I want to be known for, that my children are a success and make a difference for good in the world.

Webb: Thank you. If there is anything else you feel is important that we have not asked you, this would be a time, is there anything that you would like to tell us that I haven't asked you?

Shakespeare: No, I think when you talk about the book of life, I think the longest chapter is the would'a, could'a, should'a chapter, don't you?

Webb: Yes. Oh, yes.

Shakespeare: I think it's the longest chapter, and you go back in life, but you also look at the things that you've learned and been guided. And I'm a people person. And if there's anything I have learned to love and appreciate, it's the people and the people in the community. This town has always been blessed. And when I first moved to St. George there was a pioneer spirit in this area, and it was real. You could feel it. And I realized that the original, the children of the original pioneers, many of them were still alive at that time. And if you remember back then a lot of your historians were writing at that time. You had A. K. Hafen, Karl—

Webb: Andrew Karl Larson.

Shakespeare: Andrew Karl Larson and all of his works. You also had Juanita Brooks. They were all doing these histories. And if they hadn't have done them, we would have lost all that history. And so I look at the work you're doing here, and it looks like it's not important because all these things pass and go, but in time, in years ahead, people won't know a lot of these things unless they are written in history and people remember them.

Webb: It's so true. I really subscribe to that. And thank you so much for being here, Gloria. I just really appreciate the kind of, you know, the kind of person that you are and the, the family that you've raised and the service that you have provided to our community. So—

Shakespeare: I appreciate that.

Webb: And I just, at this point I'd like to also thank the community education channel for producing this, this oral history interview, and we wish to thank you for being here for this segment. And until the next time, thank you so much.

Shakespeare: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Addendum:

In the 90's I was asked to write and produce a production called "I Was Called to Dixie" for St. George Heritage Week. I think Mayor McArthur asked me because of a conversation we had at a banks drive up window a few years earlier when I suggested that they take the book "I Was Called to Dixie and turn it into a Musical".

I have to say I felt the inspiration of heaven doing that program, in the writing of the script and music and the people who came into play to help with it. Pal Echman took my music and did all the arrangements for them, along with a couple of her own numbers. Stan Seale took all our music and put the orchestration to it. Robin Keith directed all the music and her husband Stephen Keith made all the costumes. And all the Cast came from the surrounding area. We did it in 1997, 1998 and 2000 in the St. George Tabernacle.