

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
EDWIN VOORHIES

14 JUNE 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW #QMS.002

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Albert Gore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

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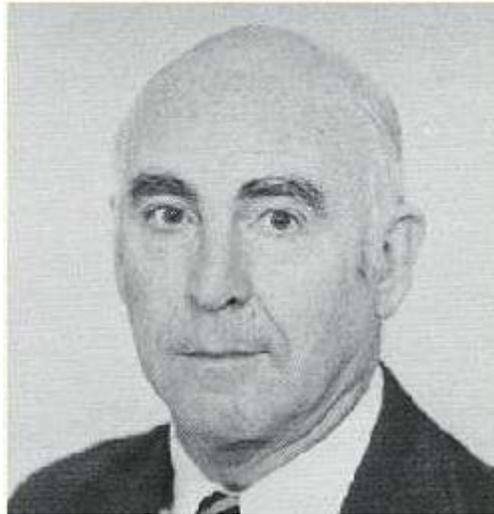
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ABSTRACT



**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH
EDWIN VOORHIES**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.002

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q.M. Smith Collection designated as QMS.1995.2. This is Regina Forsythe, I am interviewing Dr. Edwin Voorhies. Today is Wednesday, June 14, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the Gore Research Center, Room 111 of the Ned McWherter Learning Resource Center. The tape of this interview along with a transcription of the interview will become part of the Quintin Miller Smith Collection and will be available to the public. Future researchers may include portions of this interview in their publications. Is this all right with you, Dr. Voorhies?

VOORHIES: That's fine.

FORSYTHE: Great. We are going to talk about the buildings today. First of all, I'm going to name buildings that I know were done during Q. M. Smith's time. If you want to change the order that is fine with me.

VOORHIES: Great.

FORSYTHE: First, the heating plant.

VOORHIES: The basic heating plant was a boiler room, as we called it in those days. A coal fire boiler room was the only thing in it. I started work here on August 1st, 1949. The boiler room was in the same place as it is now. Over the years they ran steam lines across the campus to supply steam to all the buildings for heating and hot water. The heating plant was here when I came and I'm sure that it was very basic. Over the years it has been improved to what it is today.

FORSYTHE: James Union Building

VOORHIES: The James Union Building was built about 1950. When I came here, there was nothing between Monohan Hall and Lyon Hall. It was a natural spot for the Union building. It was planned by President Smith, with the help of the architects. A lot of the planning was done when I came. Only the foundation was built for Memorial Gymnasium about that same time. It was built a little bit ahead of the James Union Building. The Memorial Gymnasium as it is now, of course, sitting across the street from the Industrial Arts Building. Previous to the time that the Memorial Gymnasium was built, there was a corn field. They went and crossed over on the corn field and the footings were dug when I came here in 1949. Before that, the place to play basketball was where the business building is now (the backside of Old Main). Once they built the Memorial Gymnasium, the business building was remodeled and made into three floors, whereas previously, there were just dressing rooms underneath. They put in three floors of classrooms

and offices and called it the Business Building.

FORSYTHE: Voorhies Industrial Studies Complex

VOORHIES: President Smith had that as a dream when he came here in 1938. I heard him talk about that. He was interested in more technical programs on this campus. Because he came here from Tennessee Tech, he knew what a technical core was. So what he did was use NYA money to build the two wings that he called the Industrial Arts Building at that time. It's called the Industrial Studies Complex today. He built those two wings with NYA help and federal money. He built the walls and the concrete floors. Immediately after World War II, he began to acquire equipment from Surplus Property of the federal government. When I came here, we had a machine shop. I was an instructor in the machine shop. In addition to that, I was superintendent of buildings and grounds. I was supposed to be in the classroom 30 hours a week, plus run the building program on campus. Of course, we were a lot smaller then than we are now. We had an wholly inadequate staff. The place was run down because the president didn't have any money. It was with the 1947 Sales Tax Act that he first had access to some funds. I always thought that was the reason that he hired me- to help him spend it. And I did. But the spending went toward improving the quality of maintenance and building new buildings that were sorely needed. In fact, that first September, we were on the quarter system. The enrollment was about 1,200 students. Just a year or two before that, it passed 1,000 for the first time.

FORSYTHE: Forrest Hall

VOORHIES: Another one of President Smith's ambitions was to get an ROTC. He had been an officer during World War I. In fact, I heard him say that is what caused his speech impediment. He did have a speech impediment, and some people had trouble understanding him.

FORSYTHE: What exactly caused it?

VOORHIES: He thinks it was gas, during World War I. He had the best mind I ever saw on anybody, I think. But it caused him to speak hesitantly. He would speak and then stop, then speak again in that manner. He was quite frank about talking about it, [he was] not self conscious in any way. He told me a tale one time about a little girl coming up and pulling on his pants and saying "Mister, why don't you do this?" [clears his throat]. She thought all he had to do is clear his throat and he would be all right. That's the way he would talk about himself. But he spoke hesitantly and was a little difficult to follow. I could understand him very well, because I had to. He would call me up on the phone and tell me what to do and then hang up. I had to figure out what he said. So I learned to understand him quickly.

FORSYTHE: Smith Hall

VOORHIES: Forrest Hall, I need to go back to that.

FORSYTHE: Sure.

VOORHIES: During World War II, President Smith acquired a training program. He worked with the Air Corps. With federal funds, he built the old hangar. That's still there right behind Forrest Hall. It has been improved considerably. It was just an old hangar. He added wings on it later, then it was bricked. ROTC put a rifle range in it, which is still there, probably. Before that, it was used as a maintenance building. He [built] the wings on it and we used it as a maintenance department. Finally in 1950, he got his ROTC program. He had been working on it for years. Lt. Col. Bob McClain, who later became Dean of Students, was the first professor of military science, meaning that he was the commanding officer of the ROTC. We had an ROTC unit in addition to our other duties. I got a third job as what they called Military Property Custodian. At that time, the federal government assigned the equipment. We had guns, and we even had a tank. I was qualified to sign for them. I was responsible for the equipment that was signed here by [the government]. Immediately, President Smith wanted to provide space for the ROTC program. First they started over in the basement of the Memorial Gym. Then he finally put together funds from where ever he could. I was amazed at how little it cost to build that building. We got it through state government. We had student help then. We paid GI students or outstanding students right out of high school 50 cents an hour to work for us on campus. We drew our own plans and got the state's approval. Clifford Brothers drew the plans for it. Clifford Brothers later on became Rutherford County School Superintendent, now the principal of Holloway High School. He worked for us at the time for 50 cents per hour. We bypassed hiring architects and saved money wherever we could. He got around [the costs] legally, but it was just the way you had to do it to get state government approval - you couldn't get it that way today. But we built it without an architect. Had good quarters for ROTC by contracting in pieces. That's Forrest Hall and it was done in the 1950s.

FORSYTHE: There was a second airport hangar wasn't there?

VOORHIES: Yes, there was another airport hangar at that time. When I came here there was an old barn, where the art department is now, and an old stucco house that had been there for years. Right where the Stark Agricultural Building is today. Beyond that, to the east of that I guess, was a small runway where single engine planes could land and there was a hangar up there. This was another thing that illustrates the foresightedness of President Smith. He had an aviation program. He contracted with the Air Corps to train Air Core personnel during World War II. He built the hangar down by Forrest Hall, and there was some flight instruction connected with that. He was foresighted enough to see the need to continue flight instruction after he lost the federal program. He had flight instruction for students, who could get licenses for piloting single engine planes. He had a little airport there on TSC property. There was an old hangar up by the agriculture center and then there was a small one right behind the Wesley Foundation with a drainage ditch running beside it. Just behind it there was a small building to house small planes that private people owned. They built a ramp across the drainage ditch and would come up the airfield from that too.

FORSYTHE: What happened to the airport?

VOORHIES: When we started to expand the campus we made a deal with the city. That's one reason why we have a Murfreesboro Airport. We would call the flight off campus out there and then use the space for expansion. It took us awhile to need anything east of the Agriculture Building for buildings, but we have since built in that area. Corlew Hall is near where that runway was.

FORSYTHE: Smith Hall

VOORHIES: I will probably have to bring in some things that will seem unrelated, but it will help me to recall. Jones Hall was the only dormitory for boys at that time. Lyon and Rutledge Hall were for women. My family was in Kingsport, Tennessee when I came here. I started work on August 1st but didn't move in until school started after Labor Day. So I came down for a place to live and I lived in Jones Hall that summer. It was something. There wasn't anything in the room but two double Decker beds. Four students per room, and they're small rooms. A lot of the students at that time were GIs. I think the man that ran the place was scared to go upstairs, because them boys were kind of rough. I recall one time when I was in there. One of the ex-GIs was a football player and had a little too much to drink one night. I think it was summer. And he didn't have anything to keep him busy. He went out and forgot his keys, so he rammed his fist through the door and unlocked it from the inside. That was the kind of place Jones Hall was. Another men's dormitory was badly needed. And President Smith then conceived of the idea for a master plan. He was going to build a large dormitory which was Smith Hall and he was going to build a string of others, like Beasley Hall. Smith Hall was then built and occupied [first], and later on he added the others, according to his plan.

FORSYTHE: Who ran Jones Hall? Who was that man?

VOORHIES: I don't recall. It was a faculty member who had a small apartment on the first floor. A man and his wife, I think, and they had no children. I was kidding when I said he was afraid to go upstairs. I think I would have been. He wasn't afraid to when the need arose. He would stop them before they got too bad. There wasn't any way that you could take care of that building with the large number of people in such a small building. The way they had to live, there wasn't anyway to take care of it. Later on we went back in there, under President Smith, where there were old wooden partitions with plastered walls. You know how they used to have clays and plaster over wood partitions? We found that the studs were turned sideways, which didn't give it any strength at all and didn't give it any protection from sound or anything. It was amazing what we found when we went in there and took it all out and put in concrete block walls. From then on we had a building that stood up under the hard use that it got. Smith Hall was certainly badly needed and I guess we opened it up in early 1956.

FORSYTHE: Todd Library

VOORHIES: The library came in a little bit later. As I recall it was the middle fifties--1954

maybe. Anyway the library was just across [from Old Main], if you stand up on the exit of the second floor of Old Main and go down those steps and look right out front as you come out the front door, the small building over there was built as a library. It was built in the 1920s when the governor of the state was Austin Peay. They had a committee of the State Board of Education then, which had the responsibility for elementary and high schools, public schools and colleges other than UT. So we were under the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education now has only to do with public schools, K-12. At that time MTSU, Memphis State, East Tennessee State, Tennessee Tech and Austin Peay were all under the State Board of Education. And the governor, with the committee of the State Board of Education, had come and was going to fund a new library for then MTSC. At that time, it wasn't even Middle Tennessee State College, it was called Middle Tennessee Normal School. The object was to just educate teachers and that's all. Anyway, the committee came out of Old Main and Governor Peay looked over there and said "that's a good place for a building." So everybody said "okay, that's a fine place to build." They built the older buildings inside the circle (because Governor Peay pointed out that spot and it was a small building). After we built the new library (the Todd Library), we put the English department in that building. In a few years it got too small for the English Department. Besides that we always had problems on this campus with drainage. Every time we would have a hard rain, the basement would have a foot or so of water. In a library, that was a serious handicap, of course. The library was one of the greater needs of [the university]. [Todd Library] was opened in 1954. It has been expanded one time since then to about double its size. Now it's wholly inadequate again, but it certainly wasn't in those days. That was a rather unique building. We had a hard time deciding to tear [the old library] down when we put Peck Hall where it is now. Peck Hall is now where that library was. It had a lot of stone, and it was rather intricate in design from the outside. But the inside was almost not usable from where it had flooded. And the large rooms with high ceilings, there was a lot of space that wasn't useful. They had a hard time because of the style, and it was unique deciding to tear it down. But we decided to tear it down and put Peck Hall in there. And it was about the middle 1960s. Todd Library was certainly badly needed when it was built, and President Smith saw that. I might take another aside now. When he built the library it was the first building on this campus without columns. Smith Hall began to approach that. President Smith took a lot of criticism from the old timers for building a building without columns. The older dormitories - Jones Hall, Rutledge Hall, Lyon Hall, the cafeteria which is now the Alumni Center, Old Main, and the Science Building all had columns out front. When he built Smith Hall he got away from that a little bit. But when he built the library he got away from it entirely. The next building built was the music building, Saunders Music Building - you see it has columns on it. That's because he got criticism for building the library without columns. He used to laugh about that a lot.

FORSYTHE: Beasley Hall

VOORHIES: The plan when he built Smith Hall was to build a string of dormitories like Beasley Hall. [President Smith] parted at that time from the inner corridors in order to save money and get more rooms for the price. At the time, we could get money from the federal government - we could borrow money from the federal government to build housing at 3 percent interest. So he wanted that money to go as far as it could and furnish rooms for the boys, as cheaply as possible. As a result, we had exterior corridors for first time in some of those buildings back there. I don't remember exactly which building is which, but that was done with a unique way of construction also. They poured all three floors on the ground and jacked up the top two floors instead of having to pour concrete at higher levels. With outdoor corridors it saved a lot of money in construction. All those dormitories behind Smith Hall were part of his original plan to build a center for housing men on that side of the campus, opposite from Monohan Hall which was the first women's dormitory he added.

FORSYTHE: I want to go back to the library. Where the entrance is now, has that always been the entrance?

VOORHIES: No. When it was originally built, the entrance was facing the inside of the circle. There is large glass entrance there now, but it's closed. We doubled the size of the library later on; this was probably in the 1970s or in the late 1960s. I remember traveling around some, with the committee, looking at other libraries and working with the architects on it. In order to enlarge the library satisfactorily, we had moved the entrance down, facing the Science Building. It faced the South instead of the West.

FORSYTHE: The Home Living Center, is that Ellington Annex now?

VOORHIES: Yes.

FORSYTHE: What about it?

VOORHIES: That has an interesting history. That was an old home that President Smith purchased. Anyway, it belonged to TSC when I came here in 1949, just a big old brick house. He divided it up into apartments and let some GI students with families and some faculty members live there. As I recall, Dr. Baldwin, who was chairman of Geography Department for many years, lived over there a while. Coach Murphy lived there when he first came [to MTSU]. I remember one of the young men we hired who was a carpenter, he was a GI, and he had about four children. We let him live over there. And it got to be in terrible condition because it was old and because of the hard use it had. The Home Economics Department had the second [floor] of the science building. Chemistry and physics had the ground floor. Biology had the third floor. Science needed to be expanded badly. So the idea was conceived to move Home [Economics Department] over there in that old building. That old building really almost had to be torn down and rebuilt again. We took all the brick off and just left the frame and improved the structure and then re-bricked it. We planned it for the use in Home Economics and later on built the addition, which extends out toward the west. That made it a complex

instead of just that one old building. It created space for the sciences to occupy the second floor where Home [Economic Department] had been. We had spent some money on it by that time, so it's too valuable for Home Economics now to ever change. It is the only academic department on the west side of North Tennessee Boulevard. It's the only thing over there that MTSU owns other than the Training School.

FORSYTHE: What about the Training School?

VOORHIES: The Training School was here when I came. All three of our children have attended first grade through the eighth grade there. It is a whole lot like it was when I came, except it has been maintained. It hasn't changed. It is a school operated by the Rutherford County School System in cooperation with MTSU. So that teachers are paid by the state and supplemented for the help they give us in helping to train and educate training teachers, in a cooperative sort of way.

FORSYTHE: We have come to the end of the tape.

FORSYTHE: This is an continuation of the interview with Dr. Edwin Voorhies by Regina Forsythe. Today is Wednesday, June 14, 1995. Go ahead.

VOORHIES: I might, as an aside, talk a little bit about architects. Architects had a lot of influence over the buildings, because they were the ones that did design them. President Smith could hire an architect and bill Nashville, and tell them who he had hired - and that was all there was to it. Today, the state pretty much tells you who is going to be your architect. At that time we had one architect, and that was Hartfree and Roberts from Nashville. They designed all the buildings we had up to a point. Then we changed architects, and we had Charles Wheeler, who was a graduate of MTSU. Charles Wheeler was largely responsible for talking him into designing a building without the columns.

FORSYTHE: What did he say to Wheeler after all that controversy about the columns?

VOORHIES: He was in control, there wasn't any doubt about who the boss was when President Smith was there. He just told them that if he [Wheeler] wanted to continue to work on this campus, then he'd design a building with some columns on it, unless he had his permission to do otherwise, and that was all there was to it. But I think President Smith had a lot of respect for Charles Wheeler. I think Charley Wheeler helped him in the days when the NYA built the Industrial Arts wings. He went on to architecture school from there. He established a business in Nashville and came to be a well known and well respected architect. President Smith hired him as our campus architect, probably sometime in the 1950s.

FORSYTHE: Talk about Monohan Hall.

VOORHIES: Monohan Hall was the first addition that President Smith made to girls' dormitories. He put it in line with Lyon Hall, it's obvious. But when we got down that far south we did have some drainage problems. It was built in the early 1950s. But one thing I do recall about it, when we dug the footings for that building, we cut through limestone rock, like anytime when we get into the

ground around this campus, or anywhere in Rutherford County for that matter. We found underground rivers down there. So every time it rained, there would be a large heavy flow of water. Those underground streams would be full when it rained and we had to do something about that. We poured tons of concrete - more than what we needed to support the footings, just to stop that stream flow. The footings held and the building has served well over the years. The city has grown so much in this part of Murfreesboro that drainage comes down through that drainage ditch down North Tennessee Boulevard and collects in the field in front of the Campus School. We called it Training School at one time and Campus School today. That drainage down through there got so much water in it that it flooded the basement of Monohan Hall after a few years. This is another thing I remember that President Smith had made a major contribution toward. I had a picture that I couldn't find that showed the area from Bell Street to Lytle Street. You couldn't even see North Tennessee Boulevard because it was flooded. It was covered with water to where you couldn't see the street. It was all the way up to Bell Street and all the way up to Lytle Street. Between that, you couldn't see the street where North Tennessee Boulevard was. That's because all the water collected down in that lower area there. It did flood Monohan Hall. It was the early 1950s I'm talking about now. So what President Smith did was make a deal with the State Highway Department -another thing you couldn't do today. The area supervisor for the Tennessee State Highway Department lived on Bell Street here in Murfreesboro, so he understood all that. President Smith made a deal with him. The city of Murfreesboro claimed that it was the college's water [problem] and they weren't going to spend taxpayers' money to do the work. So President Smith got city permission and made a deal with them that he would get the State Highway Department to do the work and make a drain. Then the city would maintain the ditches. We put new drainage under North Tennessee Boulevard. And cut through every street from the cemetery, back through East and West Street and all the way across back to Campus School. Bell Street was the first one we cut across and put in drainage. I did the surveying, and a young student, John Shearon, was my helper. He became a builder around town- a rather prominent citizen- but he recently died. He and I surveyed all the way to the cemetery and set stakes for the State Highway Department to cut through. And we drained it and never had any water on Tennessee Boulevard since. But that's just an illustration of the some of the problems that President Smith had and the way he solved them. I'm sure that Harry Deal, who was the supervisor for the State Highway Department, billed us about, what I would guess to be, ten to 25 percent of the actual cost and charged the rest of it off to the state, which helped us out a whole lot. He also did the same thing, I think this was right after President Smith left, when we built the loop. The main entrance was an extension of Bell Street which came around in front of Old Main and that was it. The loop wasn't here. The State Highway Department came in here and built that loop, poured the curbs and everything, and made the main entrance off of Main Street at that point. So the master plan during the time President Smith was here will show that the main

entrance came off of Bell Street. Like it does now, but the James Union Building stops it. It used to come on through with the driveway and round in front of Old Main and to the side where that street is now and loop around and go by a street down there where Faulkinberry Street is now; between the swimming pool and the Industrial Arts Building and on down to the baseball field. The main entrance connected to that. That's about all the streets there were at that time.

FORSYTHE: Talk about the Saunders Music Building you mentioned earlier.

VOORHIES: That was built in the late 1950s.

FORSYTHE: Is that what they call the Fine Arts Building?

VOORHIES: Yes.

FORSYTHE: Go ahead.

VOORHIES: It was built after the library and had columns on it, because of the controversy about building a library without columns. Music was on the first two floors and art on the third floor as I recall. And it has practice rooms for the band and rehearsal rooms. When we built the James Union Building, we didn't have the need at that point for a cafeteria. The only cafeteria we had was the old Dining Hall, which is now used for an Alumni Center. When we moved the cafeteria and heating facilities out of the old Dining Hall, we converted it to a Music Building. We had the big rooms for classes, and made two classrooms out of what was the main dining area. We built a series of practice rooms for music out of concrete blocks as an addition.

FORSYTHE: Is that still there?

VOORHIES: That's still there. Later on, when we built the Fine Arts Building, they had practice rooms and everything in it. We took the Music Department out of [the old Dining Hall] and turned it over to the Industrial Arts Department. And it was called the Drawing Building for a number of years. They [made] two big drafting rooms out of those big rooms and offices where the practice rooms were. It was really decided, by a committee over in the State Board of Regents, that the building would be torn down. That's when the alumni came in. One of our graduates, Cecil Cantrell, one of our Industrial Arts majors, came here as a GI and worked on the campus for us. He went over to North Carolina and became an oil distributor and made some money. He put up \$100,000 on a matching basis to convert it to an Alumni Center rather than tear it down. That's the way it got to be like it is.

FORSYTHE: About what time was that?

VOORHIES: It was during the 1980s, that it was made an Alumni Center. Before that it was a drawing building. Cecil took drafting in that building. It is a very useful and nice building today.

FORSYTHE: The Natatorium?

VOORHIES: There lies another interesting story. At the time that President Smith was president, the State of Tennessee legislature met every two years. They set up a

two year budget and appropriated funds for a two year period. President Smith was allocated a certain sum of money, with approval of the State Board of Education, where he would decide how to spend that money. The budget would be designed to spend a certain amount for academic, a certain amount for maintenance, and a certain amount for new buildings. He had a certain amount of money for the two year period, 1949-1951. It was that odd two year period. He built the Alumni Memorial Gymnasium. He built it without the stage that is there now. Rooms were underneath that stage where there is a classroom and where the Wellness Center is. He had to build [the Gym] without it, because he didn't have enough money. He also wanted a swimming pool as part of that complex. But he only had enough money to build an outdoor pool. He had a little money left over. He didn't have enough to put the stage on the Memorial Gym, but did have enough to build a pool. Just an essential pool, concrete only. Then the next appropriation period, he put a building over the pool and put the equipment in it to keep it sanitary and put the tile in that's around it. That's the way you had to operate in those days. He made every dollar go as far as it would go. And that's the way the present swimming pool was built.

FORSYTHE: Sims Hall

VOORHIES: That was another extension. As I recall, Beasley Hall was built with indoor corridors. Sims Hall was the first one that was built with outdoor corridors. What they did when they built Sims Hall, they did to save money, so students could pay less when they rented the rooms. They had outdoor corridors and they poured and set the columns. They poured three separate concrete slabs and then they raised the top two up to the floor levels to make three floors. By pouring everything on the ground, the construction cost was a lot less that way. And it was a lot less because it had outdoor corridors, so it was a unique building. It was just a extension of his [Q. M. Smith's] plan to house more male students.

FORSYTHE: What about the infirmary?

VOORHIES: At the time when President Smith was here the infirmary was (doesn't finish the thought). I guess I will have to start a little bit before that. There was a large complex for temporarily housing students. The wooden buildings that were in Camp Forrest, the old German POW camp, which is now where AEDC [Arnold Engineering Development Center] is near Tullahoma, [were transported from there to MTSU's campus]. This was before I came here. When I came here [the buildings] were where the new Science Building and the Student Center is now. There was room enough for fifty or sixty families of GI students. They were all married, and all had children and lived in married student housing, which were made up of those temporary buildings, wooden buildings.

FORSYTHE: Was that Veteran's Village?

VOORHIES: That was Vet Village. And there was a trailer part of it. And a little grocery store down there to serve them. Right where the new Science Building is now. One of those buildings was the infirmary, up until the present infirmary was built. That

was a long time after President Smith left. The present infirmary was started by a fellow named Jack McFarland, who was the editor of the [Murfreesboro] Daily News Journal. He was very much interested in the place. [The money to build it] was almost all raised by private funds. It was put over there in front of the high rise dormitory, where it is today. But for a number of years the infirmary was in one of those temporary wooden buildings. It was where the parking lot is behind Old Main, between Old Main and the Fine Arts Building, that parking lot near the Heating Plant. There were tennis courts when I came here and the football field. Back somewhere near there was the infirmary in one of those wooden buildings.

FORSYTHE: Tell me more about Veteran's Village. How did that get started?

VOORHIES: President Smith, after World War II, was very much interested in veterans because he was one. He decided he was going to make the place as attractive as he could for the veterans. He believed that it was good for the country that as many of them get an education as possible. He believed in the GI bill. He made it possible for a lot of them to get through [college] by hiring them. GI's were better carpenters and better metal workers and so forth than our regular crew. As I said earlier, I was in charge of Buildings and Grounds at that time and I know that we had two carpenters. Whenever they had a real hard job to do, they would wait for a GI to come to work. He worked about half time, but they let him tell them how to do the hard work, because he was a better carpenter than they were. He was making fifty cents an hour with the GI bill and that was what he was getting by with for his family. That carpenter was Charlie Dunn, who came back to work for us later. He became an Industrial Arts major in Vocational Education. He became the State Director of Vocational Education. We hired him back here from that in order to get Vocational Education approval for all our areas of agriculture. We weren't able to be approved until we hired him, and he showed us how. That was a carpenter who was good enough to do that. In any case, President Smith wanted to make housing for them. And he was very much into government surplus, because he saw that as another way of getting what he needed with a very small budget. By doing that, he set up housing. Along that line, there is one thing I never shall forget. We had it seems like, sixty-four families living over there. I'm not sure I remember how many of them were in trailers and how many of them were in regular housing. But we had about four apartments to one of those buildings. The water heaters in the kitchen were wood burners. We didn't have electric water heaters in there at that time.

FORSYTHE: That was dangerous wasn't it?

VOORHIES: We had safety valves on the water tanks. We never had an explosion. They had to burn wood to heat the water in those apartments. One Thanksgiving I went to Cookeville, and at that time MTSC and Tennessee Tech always played a football game on Thanksgiving. And I went up there to the football game and just about all the GIs went home or somewhere else, the football game or somewhere. I sat and watched that football game in my shirt sleeves. And they left with the windows [in their apartments] up. And that night there came a storm and the

temperature fell to the point where everything froze. Every one of those water heaters froze. A complete surprise to all of us. So we had to go back in there then. We wiped out all of those water heaters and sold scraps from all over campus. We had a good start selling that scrap metal, and accumulated enough money to replace those water heaters with electric heaters that were safer. Finally, a few at a time, we got it all done. And that's the way we financed it: by selling scrap metal. We had two plumbers that had been around here for years. Just as good a people you ever saw, but they were jack-legged plumbers because they didn't have any formal experience. They just did it the only way they knew how to do it. One of them even couldn't read. But he would measure something off on a ruler and bring it in to the other one and say, "It takes one this long."

FORSYTHE: What were their names?

VOORHIES: Mr. Macroon and Mr. Jones. That was funny. When I didn't have anything else to do, I would go around where they were working and listen to them talk to each other. But they did all that. Those two. We finally got a second pick-up truck. When I first came here, we had only one old pick-up truck. I guess there are sixty or more campus vehicles now. In any case, we had one old pick-up, and the man who was in charge of heating plant and electrical work was the head man. He had the truck. Finally, we got a third one and gave one to the carpenters. And one to the plumbers and one to the heating and electricity people. We finally got those by selling scrap [metal]. By the time [of the frozen heaters], we finally got them a pick-up truck to take out one of those old units. It was heavy in scrap metal value. We took one building at a time. That was four apartments. We took care of that, and then got enough money accumulated to help them a little bit with the little budget we had. One building at a time, and we finally got all those electrical water heaters in.

FORSYTHE: Those trailers they were in, where they owned by the school?

VOORHIES: Yes, they were owned by us. They were surplus property too, owned by the school and rented to students. I guess they were rented to them for ten or twenty dollars a month. We tied them in and they had electricity. They had a central bath for the trailer areas. All of them had to come to that one area for their baths. And that little grocery store down there beside it served the whole area.

FORSYTHE: That grocery store, how big was it?

VOORHIES: One of these little buildings.

FORSYTHE: The Agriculture Center. I noticed on the map that it was three different buildings.

VOORHIES: Yes, those were the same buildings we got from Camp Forrest- three wooden buildings. At that time, when I came here, there was no maintenance building, except one of those buildings had a carpentry shop in it. And a place for them to get into [and] get out of the cold. That was one of those buildings in what they called the Ag Center. The other two were used by the Department of Agriculture for offices and classrooms. The last one was used by the maintenance department, primarily the carpenters. The rest of the maintenance operation was out of the

boiler room. They had a few work areas but not a whole lot of space. So the first maintenance facilities we had were in the old hangar. And we built concrete block wings on it, and one of those wings turned out to be a carpentry shop. They had worked in storage facilities in that hangar and that was the maintenance building. When we got the ROTC built and Forrest Hall, and turned that hangar over to the ROTC, we built a maintenance building pretty much where Corlew Hall and those Tennis courts behind it are now. A concrete block building with parking spaces for vehicles, by that time we had four or five. And offices and plumbers had an area, and carpenters had an area and electricians had an area and so forth. [We] put a maintenance building right there, and it was later, after President Smith, left before we built the present maintenance facilities.

FORSYTHE: Was that the Department of Buildings and Grounds?

VOORHIES: Yes.

FORSYTHE: When did the Vets Village disappear?

VOORHIES: About the time we built the library, in the middle 1950s. And later on in the 1960s, we built the Science Building. The Vet Village was there and we went back across a gravel road and built the maintenance facilities. We wouldn't move that far back because the Village was there. Then, when we built the new science building and the present student center, we had to wipe it all out. But it all started when we built the library in the middle fifties.

FORSYTHE: This is a good time to stop this tape.