

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.003

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

ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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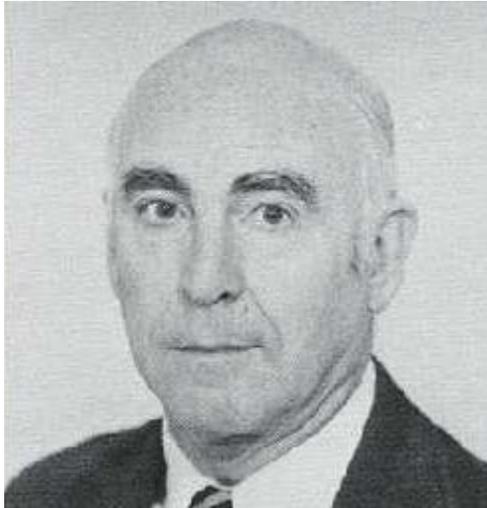
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ABSTRACT



**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH
EDWIN VOORHIES**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.003

FORSYTHE: This tape is part 2 of the Q. M. Smith Collection designated as QMS.1995.3 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. Let's talk about the Community Building. Was that part of what was called "Vet's Village"?

VOORHIES: Yes. The Community Building was in Vet's Village. It was a small building where they could have meetings or get together.

FORSYTHE: What was in there?

VOORHIES: Just a few rooms, and some chairs and tables. They would have meetings there, and they elected a president of the group. The president represented them to President Smith for any cause they might have. And it worked.

FORSYTHE: The Fire School?

VOORHIES: We did have it for a while on the site where the Graphic Arts Building is. It was a small building where all the temporary offices are now. It was a block building that was built by the state and put on our campus as the place to train firemen for the state of Tennessee. There was a tower there, where they could go and build a fire and practice putting it out. It was right there beside that building. Now that is done at the Vocational Center on Old Fort Parkway. There is a brick tower out there that you can see when you drive by. When that left here, it was moved out there.

FORSYTHE: When did it leave here?

VOORHIES: Probably the late 1970s or early 1980s.

FORSYTHE: How long was [the tower] here?

VOORHIES: It was here for about twenty years.

FORSYTHE: The Stadium?

VOORHIES: I have an annual that has an aerial of the campus in 1944 and in 1954. In 1944, the stadium is essentially where it is now. It only had seats on one side.

FORSYTHE: How did that work for the opposing team?

VOORHIES: They walked up and down the sidelines, like a lot of high schools. A lot of high schools' football fields didn't have seats. So the spectators walked up and down the sidelines and hollered.

FORSYTHE: So we got the seats and they got to stand?

VOORHIES: They probably divided the seats. It is hard to know what they did in those days. The right side had the only seats. They probably had some temporary bleachers, but when I came here the east side was under construction. It was built just as it is today [1995]. There is a little press box over there. It is about half the size of the west side. At that time, the east and west sides were about the same height. We doubled the size of the west side, and put in a big press box when President Cope was here. President Cope was a lot like President Smith. He saved money out of bookstore profits where ever he could, [until he had] enough money to build that west side. He doubled the size of it and built a nice press box. So that left the east side the way it is now. The east side was being built in 1949, and was probably ready for the 1950 football season. So, for the first time, we had a nice press box. The one that is there now is so small. It is now being used by the President to entertain guests at football games. Here is another interesting tale: President Smith was interested in the athletic program, and he knew the value of a good one. He is the one that hired Coach Murphy. Coach Murphy came in 1947. Coach Murphy then hired Charlie Greer as basketball coach, who started in 1949, the year I came. I knew Coach Murphy and Charlie Greer because we all grew up in Nashville. I played ball in high school with Charlie Greer, and I played Sunday afternoon amateur with Coach Murphy before we ever came here. I was interested in the athletic program, and he [Q. M. Smith] knew that. President Smith wanted to do anything to help them, just like anything else on campus. He was very much interested in surplus property, as I said. He bought a surplus property movie camera with an old magazine on it that would carry two 400 foot rolls of film. He conceived the idea that I was the man to take pictures of the football games, so he wouldn't have to pay anybody else. I was interested in the program, and I agreed to do it. So I hired some students at fifty cents an hour to help me. I had two of them helping me. We built a place on top of the press box, and put railing around it so we wouldn't fall off. We went up there and took the movies of the football games for free. Then we took them down to the bus station, put them on a bus, and sent them to Nashville to be developed. We would get them back by bus the next day, and Coach Murphy would review the football games. The big schools had enough money to do it [themselves] in those days, but that was the only way we could do it.

FORSYTHE: Where are those films now?

VOORHIES: They are probably in the athletic department. I took one of those young men with me, and we rode to Chattanooga. We were playing the University of Chattanooga football team. The camera we had, had three positions for the lens. We had to change the lens. The only way you could get different views was to change the lens. I told Coach Murphy that I was willing to help to him as long as he needed help, but as soon he could afford to pay somebody to take those pictures, I would certainly appreciate it, because we had been frozen and drowned on top of that press box. Anytime it rained, we had to stay up there and take film anyway. I remember, we played East Tennessee State here and it rained a flood. We drowned that day. Another day, it was cold. [I said to Coach Murphy,] "Just as soon as you can afford to pay somebody, please hire them and dismiss me!" We went to Chattanooga and [filmed] the first half with the lens in the wrong position, and didn't get a dog-gone thing - just our own negligence, you know. I noticed then that next season Coach Murphy replaced me. He found the money to get somebody else to take those pictures. That is another illustration of the way President Smith helped the athletic program - by going to the trouble himself. He went to the Surplus Department and found that old camera, and he bought it. He just waited until somebody came along that was willing to get up there and take those pictures. That is the way he helped support the athletic program.

FORSYTHE: Were the lights at the stadium?

VOORHIES: The lights that were there then were not by any means as good as the ones that are there now. President Smith made a deal with the Murfreesboro Electric Department - he had to pay them of course. They put up wooden poles and put lights in the stadium. That was in the 1950s. Later on, when Dr. Cope was here in the 1960s, we put those much higher concrete poles up. They are much safer and much better. They lit up the field twice as much as before. When we built the stadium, and here again President Smith always had it planned years ahead of time, he wanted a stronger track program. We took some of those GI students and went over there and did the surveying for him. He told us what he wanted done. He wanted eight lanes, but I think we only managed six - my memory fails me on that point in detail. We had to replace the football field, because we already had one side of the stadium built, and he [President Smith] talked the architect that designed the other side into what he wanted to do. We laid out the track where it is now and surveyed the football field. We had to move it a few feet and re-grade it so it would drain well. We laid the track, making certain the 100 yard dash was on one side, and making sure how many lanes we had all the way around and where we could put it [the 220 and the 440] to have exactly a quarter of a mile. He had that all done, he did it himself to where it would work. I took the students with me, and we went over and surveyed it [the track], and laid it out where it is now. We had to put in a cinder track at first. That wasn't a very good track. Later on, Dr. Cope accumulated enough money to [improve] on that. That is how that whole place was developed. We laid in that tarpon track. The composition is so much better than that old cinder track. Later on, they put the cover over the football field. At that time, we spent a lot of time and money and trouble working

year round on that football field. We sowed the grass and worked on the drainage. He made a deal with the high schools to use our football field. Nearly every season, we'd have two or three high school games before we ever got to play on the field, because they started sooner. One or two of those football games were played in the rain. We worked all year on that football field, and they would tear it up before we even got a chance to play on it. We were able to work a deal with the county, later on, to put the surface on the football field. We have a surface on the football field now, that when high schools play on it, rain or not, it is still in good shape when we play on it. Now, two high schools are using it with the turf that is on it. That is why it is still there. We could maintain the field, if only we played on it, but there are three teams playing on it in the same season. No way to do it without the artificial turf.

FORSYTHE: Baseball Field?

VOORHIES: The baseball field, when I came here, was close to where it is now. The old home plate was located between the auditorium and the baseball stadium, where the parking lot is now. President Smith had in mind to create that parking lot. So we moved [the field] over to where it is now. I took my surveying crew out, and we moved the field so we could start work on the parking lot when President Smith was here. When Dr. Cope was here, we laid out some permanent seating and did some other work. Another thing I recall that we did is [plant maple trees on campus]. On the street where the Wright Music Building, the side of the auditorium, and the baseball field are, [we planted] large maple trees. Between Jones Hall and the Fine Arts Building, and around the Alumni Center, there are also large maple trees. Where those maple trees came from is another illustration of how we operated in those days. We had a ton and half truck, and a grounds crew. I think a fellow named Floyd Travis had been around here during the previous administration, was here when President Smith came, and lived over there near where the baseball field is now in an old wooden building that had been there for years. He [Travis] fired the furnace for President Smith when Smith lived in the President's home. He was in charge of grounds. He was a very good, hard-working fellow that stayed and worked long hours around campus, trying to keep it in good shape. He had few workers helping him. Well, we took our crew out and a few extra people, like those who normally work in the boiler room. Anyway, we went up between here and Winchester off of Hwy 41 and back in the hills. There was a farmer up there, and one of the fellows found out that he was going to burn up one of the hill sides. We went up there and pulled maple trees out of the ground and loaded a whole truck load of them. I guess there were sixty of them. We paid him 10 cents a piece for every one of those maple trees we pulled out of the ground. We brought them back, and put them in the ground. That is where those large maple trees came from, and they cost us a dime a piece. It was so easy, because that hillside was nothing but leaves and those maple trees had a shallow root system. They were very small trees, so we just pulled them out of the ground. One of the faculty members of that time - and I will not mention his name - was building a house, and he found out about it and wanted some of

those maple trees. I said "No. We didn't go get them to sell. We bought them to put on this campus." I turned him down. When I went back the next morning, I went to work at 7: 00a.m. and found 60 cents on my desk. He left a note saying "I got those trees and here is the money." He paid what we paid for them, and he knew where they were. Things like that you can't forget, can you? But that is what happened in those days.

FORSYTHE: Cope Administration Building?

VOORHIES: That was built in the middle 1960s. President Cope was here, and of course it wasn't named for him then, but he was the president when it was built.

FORSYTHE: What was it called then?

VOORHIES: Just the Administration Building. It was named after him after he left. Dr. Joe Nunley and I were there, before we got our doctorate degrees, in the early 1960s, like 1963-1965. In 1965 we hired Charles Pigg to be Director of Campus Planning. In that period of 1963-1965, Dr. Nunley and I were driving to Knoxville and back every day, working on our doctorate degrees. I would come back on Saturdays, because I was Chairman of the Industrial Studies Department, and I would do all the paperwork for that department. Dr. Cope gave me a grant-in-aid, and I had help getting by so I didn't have to borrow a lot of money. That was the time that the Cope Administration Building was built. So I wasn't in close touch with that [project] as I was with others. But I do know that a decision was made later to put a usable basement under there. That's where the Computer Center is now. They had a lot of trouble getting that worked out. They had trouble with the rock underneath, and I have forgotten the details of it. That is the only trouble I remember about the building. It probably opened in 1965. Charles Pigg was hired when it was under construction. Almost immediately after that, Peck Hall was designed and opened in 1968.

FORSYTHE: Judd Hall?

VOORHIES: That was just another one of those buildings, along with Beasley and Sims. It was built about the same time Sims was. No, it was built about the same time as Beasley. It had indoor corridors. I think Judd and Beasley were built about the same time. Mr. Judd was in charge of registration when I came here in 1949. That is why the building was named after him. Dean Beasley was Dean of the Faculty. There was only one Dean. Later on, we had a Dean of Students, a Dean of Academic Schools and a whole bunch of Deans. At that time, the Dean was Dean Beasley. Mr. Judd was the registrar. He was in charge of the office that registered students and kept records. Dean Beasley was very instrumental in helping President Smith with the academic program for nearly the whole time that President Smith was president. Mr. Judd was registrar all the way through the 1950s. So President Smith, Beasley and Judd had the first three men's dormitories named after them. Another thing I recall was the way President Smith operated.

Dean Beasley had been around a long time, and was near retirement. President Smith knew what he wanted to do years ahead of time. He brought Howard Kirksey in here, who had been the State Supervisor for Education for the Middle Tennessee area. He lived in the old Moffitt House that I was telling you about on Tennessee Blvd., where the Home Economics Department is now. While he was Supervisor of Education, he started teaching part time in the summers. President Smith hired him, and he became Chairman of the Education Department. Before Dean Beasley retired, he made him Registrar, and made Dr. Kirksey Dean of the Faculty. Later, Dr. Kirksey became the first Vice President of Academic Affairs. Kirksey Hall is named after him. That is another illustration of how [President Smith] had a plan, and he just waited until Dean Beasley got near retirement, made that switch and implemented his plan when the opportunity presented itself. That is the way he operated. He acquired the Womack Farm. There was an old house out there where married student housing is called the Old Womack House. Several of the faculty members I remember, including Dr. Riel in the Physical Education Department, lived over there, and a number of other faculty members lived in that building over the years. He bought that farm, and originally there might have been 150 acres in the plot, and he added 200 more acres with the Womack Farm. When my first child was born in 1955 or 1956, I was working two jobs [that totaled sixty] hours a week or more. I wasn't spending any money for anything. I lived close enough to walk to work, and we didn't have money to spend for anything except just to feed our family in those days. I had to do something. So I went to President Smith and told him I wasn't making a living. He wasn't able to do anything for me. I got a job at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama that paid twice as much, so I went down there. President Smith said "I think I want you to come back if you are willing." I said "Yeah, I would be willing if you would pay me a living wage." He said "Don't take out your pension money from state. Just leave it there." After a year down there he called me back. I became Chairmen of the Industrial Arts Department. He paid me halfway between what I was making before and what I was making down there. I was delighted to come back. I have enjoyed being here ever since. That was another one of his plans that he couldn't implement at the time, but he found a way later. When I came back in 1957, two of the first things I did had to do with the faculty. The federal government declared some property out at the V.A. Hospital to be surplus. They gave it to him for MTSC to use for agricultural purposes. They still have it out there - about 150 acres that they use for a pig farm. It is out by the V.A. Hospital, on the other side of the little golf course. Also, he bought the property east of what he had at that time. Now, it extends even across Rutherford Blvd. Again, I got some student help and we surveyed the property. We went around and talked to all the neighbors, and told them where the line was and that we were going to build a fence. We told them we were going to use it for farming purposes, and we were going to build a fence one foot inside our property, and we asked them, "do you object?" That was in 1957, when he acquired about 250 more acres. All in all, I think there are about 550 acres now, where there were only 150 to begin with. It is because of his foresight that we have that extra property. We are using a lot of it now. A lot of that area

back there is that [Womack Farm] land that he acquired in 1957 - the student recreation center, that entrance off of Rutherford Blvd., and that pasture the Agriculture Department uses for horses.

FORSYTHE: Talk about parking on campus.

VOORHIES: In 1949, with 1200 students, it was mostly faculty who had cars at that time. Students had begun to commute some. GIs started [to commute], and we had to start a large parking area. At one time, just after I came here, there was very little parking space. [The area] in front of Old Main was about the only parking space there was. It was just an widened area between Old Main and the library. Coming in off Bell Street was the main entrance, where the two big stone columns are still. Parking along that street, in front of Old Main and around the heating plant was all there was. The area that is a parking lot now was for tennis courts. One of the first things I did after I came here was to change those tennis courts, and move some new tennis courts over to where Murphy Center is now, north of Memorial Gymnasium. The first parking lots we added were taken over by those four tennis courts over there. They were paved, and we just started parking there at first. Then later, we designed it more like it is now. In that way we just added parking along the street between the heating plant and the stadium. That street is Faulkinberry Drive now. It was the only parking we had. [Most of the parking spaces were for] faculty, and the faculty was small. In 1949, there were only sixty faculty members on the whole campus, but I don't know if that counted the campus school. There weren't too many faculty members, but they were the only ones that had cars. Right after the war, when I came in 1949, was when the GIs started in and they had cars. That's when we had to expand the parking areas. When I came here, I started a class in survey. And north of where the Murphy Center is now, was used by the farm. At one time they had eucalyptus planted on that corner of Tennessee Boulevard and Greenland Drive. I remember one year, they bought the eucalyptus seed, and it had turnip seeds mixed in with it. I remember I could drive by and see people over there picking turnip greens in that field! In the area where Murphy Center is now, is where I laid out a surveying course. We kept it mowed and put some points down over there, and we had the students surveying from one point to the other. They were keeping notes, like surveyors are supposed to keep. A number of students learned about surveying that way. Later on, that became parking, and gradually started that parking area. Parking the way it is now started with Dr. Cope. Murphy Center opened in the early 1970s. We laid out the parking and the picnic area, and we had a parking lot off Greenland Drive at about that time. That was a little bit after President Smith was here. That first parking lot was a large parking lot for that time. Of course, there are about 10,000 parking spaces on campus now. But, it was the first large lot. That's why we conceived the idea of building Murphy Center where we did. We had to have it in that area, because it was the athletic area. That's where we played basketball, and we wanted parking facilities near. The parking along Greenland Drive was largely expanded over the years to what it is now. Parking wasn't nearly the problem under President Smith as it

became later, because enrollment was small. His first master plan that I saw, was when we had an enrollment approaching 2,000, was for 3,500 students. That was on ditto paper.

FORSYTHE: Tell me more about the Murphy Center.

VOORHIES: The Murphy Center was conceived by Dr. Cope, because the Memorial Gymnasium got too small. There are pretty good pictures in the annual [showing] graduation in the Memorial Gymnasium. For basketball games, it got too small. It was standing room only when we got to compete in the OVC for the first time. So Dr. Cope, like he did on the football field, looked for a way to take care of basketball. We formed a committee of Coach Murphy and Jim Earle, who was the basketball coach then, Dr. Riel, who was Chairman of the Physical Education Department then, and Charlie Pigg, who was helping coordinate Campus Planning. We flew around the country - Dr. Cope was with us - and looked at facilities. We went to Auburn to see what they had. We went to Murray, and we were thinking about [using their facilities as a model]. You came in on the entrance level, and walked down the [rows of] seats, and the playing floor was on a lower level. That is the way Murray was built. That appealed to us, because of the lay our land over here. We went to Notre Dame, and saw that they had one like that also. And it had a track around it on the entrance level, and portable bleachers above that. You could pull them out or push them in, so you could have track [events]. That's were we got the idea [for Murphy Center]. We went to the Air Force Academy, where they had a structure like we built at Murphy Center. Murphy Center is supported by only four columns. It was designed by computers with steel roof trusses. It would have an overhang here to keep it [roof deflection] from collecting in the center between those two columns. By that time, an architect from Nashville who was creative, designed that building by computer. You didn't have to worry about columns being in your way when you were seated and watching a ball game. It [Murphy Center] turned out the be probably the most useful building on campus. It is used for so many different things. When President Smith was here, we had two graduations a year. We had graduation in June, because the quarter ended in June, and then we had a graduation for summer school in August. The graduation in June was held on the football field facing the stadium, which was on the west side. If it rained, we had to go somewhere else, like the Memorial Gym, which at that time was not air conditioned, it was air cooled. It just had fans. I remember that when had Senator Kefauver one June, it rained. I was about as hot as I have ever been, sitting in there in cap and gown, in that non air-conditioned room. The place was full. Senator Kefauver was sweating when he was making his speech. When built Murphy Center, we could have graduation in a nice air-conditioned place. That was great. August graduation was held out in front of the Dining Hall, out near Rutledge Hall. We had a smaller group, and we used portable chairs. For years, that is the way we had our graduation. Murphy Center is very useful for that, and it had all the recreation space. It has two gymnasiums on one side, a dance studio on the other side, and a bunch of classrooms on the opposite side. It became a very useful

building. We went around the country looking for ideas, and the architect put it all together and did a fine job. It certainly has been used [often] over the years, even for concerts. It makes a good place.

FORSYTHE: When was the air-conditioning put into the Alumni Gym?

VOORHIES: It was later. I don't recall when. Probably during the renovation. What we did was put in a tunnel between the Alumni Gym and the Murphy Center. Once we built the Murphy Center, we renovated the Alumni Gym completely. We changed some things, like the way we used it. We designed it so it would work like one design, the old building and the new. That might be when we got the air conditioning.

FORSYTHE: Gracy Hall.

VOORHIES: That is just another one of those dormitories that was part of the original plan. I don't recall much about it. The only thing that President Smith did was plan where it was going to be put.

FORSYTHE: Woodmore Cafeteria.

VOORHIES: That was after we built the original James Union Building. Well, it wasn't named James then, Dean James was Dean of Students for a number of years, and taught Sociology. He taught the whole time he was here as Dean of Students, and he was popular and well-liked by the students and faculty. So later on, they named the Union Building after him. After we built all those dormitories over there, we put too big of a burden on one cafeteria. So we decided to build the Woodmore Cafeteria to serve that area. [We wanted to] have one on this side of campus near the girl's dormitories, and that one on that side near the boy's dormitories. We built that. Then we hired the cafeteria service, ARA, who ran cafeterias all over the country.

FORSYTHE: What does ARA stand for?

VOORHIES: I think it was the American Restaurant Association to begin with, but it was just ARA then. They sent a young man, with one of our graduates to operate it. Later on, he went to Atlanta and was supervisor over all the Southeastern states. Doug McCallie is still here. They have been giving us service for years, and doing a good job. One year, the state forced us to take bids, and we did and got another outfit out here. They stayed a year, and didn't work out too well. Then we got ARA back. [They had helped] set it up, helped us design it and operate it.

FORSYTHE: The Davis Science Building.

VOORHIES: It was approximately 1970 when that was built. We did a lot of work on that. Charles Pigg was here then, and he did a lot of the work. But I remember

traveling around with him, looking at what some other institutions had, and helping him. We just had to have more science facilities. We believe in doing lab science, and we had just run out of space. We believe in requiring all students to have a basic background in science. Most freshmen courses in Chemistry, Physics and Biology had the old building completely overloaded. We did some work on trying to remodel it [old Science Building] gradually over the years. But, we had to build a new building and we did. We involved the departments in all the work with both Charles Pigg and I, and the president worked with the architects.

FORSYTHE: Whose idea was it to do the color tiles on the outside of the Davis Science Building?

VOORHIES: The architects. By that time, we had hired our third architect. Sometimes we had more than one. In the late 1960s, we had three architects on campus all at the same time. We had two architects do a lot of the work. One did the University Center, and another one did the Agriculture Building. The third one came in and did the Murphy Center. Another thing I remember about the Murphy Center, is that we had the basic structure of the steel trusses built, and they had three or four little rooms with air-conditioning equipment erected up in the steel trusses. One day they were working, they had built the roof on the steel trusses and those little rooms, maybe they were installing the air-conditioning. They had one of those wood scaffold boards up, and were working on the wall of one of those little rooms with the air-conditioning. They had a place where you could climb up the walkway to go up all around in those trusses up there. Then, they hung all the speakers and everything down through that. One day a worker laid a drill down at the end of the workday. It was faulty, and he left the power on and it started a fire. It burned that wood truss, and the wall to that little room. The fire got so hot that it warped those steel trusses up there. We had to come in and take down a quarter of those steel trusses, while the building was still under construction. We had to go back and redo the whole thing. It delayed the opening of the [Murphy Center] by half a year, because of that negligent workman. Of course it didn't cost us anymore, because it was negligence on the part of the contractor.

FORSYTHE: What about the part that connects the two science buildings, the Strobel Extension?

VOORHIES: It was done later, after we built the Davis Science Building. There are about ten offices in there I guess. We decided that we needed office space for the Science Department very badly. We just built a connection that would have some office space in it. It was an afterthought.

FORSYTHE: Keathley University Center.

VOORHIES: That was built in 1962, if I recall. I need a fact sheet in front of me, which I don't have. Finally, when enrollment got large enough - probably seven or eight thousand by that time - we decided we had to have that. The James Union

Building just had gotten entirely too small. We needed Keathley. We needed the Tennessee Room badly. We had outgrown the Bookstore and Post Office completely. We had added on to what we couldn't add anymore. There wasn't any good way to expand the James Union Building. We needed more cafeteria space, more space for a grill. We had a little grill room, a little room for a bookstore, and a little room for a post office. It got more traffic than it could bear. Seeing that, we started working on the University Center. There again, we traveled around, looking at what other people were doing. We came up with what we have with an architect's help. Our bookstore and the post office were more than adequate for that time, but I am sure it is crowded now. We added offices for the Vice President for Student Affairs, meeting rooms on the top floor, and the Grill. Then we needed another cafeteria, so we put in another one in the basement of the high rise dormitory.

FORSYTHE: What is the name of that dormitory?

VOORHIES: That is Cummings Hall. It was named after a man who for years was a member of the House of Representatives that did a whole lot for us. He was from Cannon County. Jim Cummings was a long time representative from Cannon County. John Bragg still tells tales about working with him in the State Legislature. The cafeteria was built in the basement, in the extension toward the rear. I noticed in the paper just the other day, that they got money to renovate it just recently.

FORSYTHE: What did you need the Tennessee Room for?

VOORHIES: For a large meeting room, especially for the Alumni Banquet and such meetings like that. Now it is the only one in the city. [The Tennessee Room] is used by a lot of community people, whenever they can schedule it. Usually MTSU has it scheduled most of the year. It is scheduled for the Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting and annual banquet, which brings in a large group of people. They used to have a lot of student dances in the place. Large group meetings is the main purpose, however. It is the only one of its size in the county, really. It is used for all kinds of purposes.

FORSYTHE: Learning Resources Center.

VOORHIES: The Learning Resources Center is entirely the brainchild of President Scarlett. It was built in the 1970s, when he was president. It is interesting, that Q. M. Smith was president for twenty years from 1938 to 1958; and each ten year period since has had a different president, just about. President Cope was president for ten years, 1958 to 1968. There was a change in there, because President Scarlett couldn't come in the fall, so he came in December. When he retired, President Ingram replaced him. He came in at a little different time, but essentially each one has been here ten years since then, [except the] interim president between President Ingram and Dr. Walker. President Walker has been here four or five years. Each one since President Smith has only lasted ten years. I understand

why, because it gets to be a lot more hectic. Every year I was here, it got a little bit more difficult, because of state government paperwork. Whatever problem you wanted to call it, it got more difficult, because administration became more difficult each year. I'm sure it is more difficult than it was since I retired.

FORSYTHE: Let's get back to the Learning Resources Center.

VOORHIES: We had a committee there again that traveled all over the country with Dr. Scarlett and other members of the committee. Charles Pigg played a hand in that again. And representatives from all the schools were on campus at that time. We went to Oral Roberts, who had a Learning Resources Center. We were looking at what they were doing, and we went to the University of Florida, which had a similar one. What we were after, was to do everything you needed to do on the college campus in the way of helping students, other than reading matter. [The Learning Resources Center] had to with videotaped television and anything that supported the education program that wasn't already provided in the library. We had a television studio, and videotape, and we had computers at that time. It was only beginning of students need for a computer center. We had all kinds of visual aids. We had a large meeting room upstairs, with stations where you could give students an examination by asking questions and students would push a button at the desk and provide answers. The control center, where the instructor could visually see the outcome of his test, was very quick. That sort of thing is what was visualized at the time. It provided the round facility where the Gore Center is now for a 360 degree projection.

FORSYTHE: What was it's original purpose?

VOORHIES: It was to provide a 360 degree projection, where you could simulate [climate conditions]. Or turn the temperature up or down and show a 360 degree projection to make it as realistic as possible for demonstrations. The History Department used it, and they had 360 projections in there for a number years. For instance, they showed the Civil War and made it realistic. Sound, sight, and temperature control were all in that room. That was the originally designed purpose of it, and it was used for that purpose some.

FORSYTHE: Why did it stop?

VOORHIES: I think the faculty didn't seem to want to use it after the young man in the History Department who developed a lot of it became concerned with other matters.

FORSYTHE: What was his name?

VOORHIES: I can't recall at the moment, but I should. It just does not come to mind right now. He was the one that came from the Middle East, and had done some research back over there. He had done a lot of things in that room with projections. As I recall, the history of the Civil War was one of the things that lended itself to that. Why it

wasn't used is the fact that the interested in it died. That is just my opinion. When I retired, it was being used by the History Department.

FORSYTHE: When did you retire?

VOORHIES: 1985. Ten years ago, almost. The first of July.

FORSYTHE: Boutwell Dramatic Arts Building.

VOORHIES: That was built in the early 1960s, or late 1950s. Mr. Boutwell was the Chairman of the Speech and Drama Department. He developed the drama program and the speech program to lay the foundation. He is another one that President Smith selected. It turned out to be a very good selection. He built the department up to where it had a very good reputation. Later on, he hired Dorethe Tucker, who put on some outstanding plays, and made a reputation. That is who that auditorium [Tucker Theater] is named after. We wanted an auditorium, and we wanted to be able to use it for speech and drama. So the backside of the auditorium is the Speech and Drama Department. When I came here in 1949, the Old Main Building was shaped like a T. The bottom of the T was a gymnasium in the back. The top of the T was the classroom and office space. Three floors in the front, with a little space on top of that, with a large room. We decided later on, to renovate it and make it into a large instructional floor space. Which is the fourth floor, I think. The middle connecting the top and bottom was the auditorium. There was a small auditorium, and it had a stage. One thing I remember, is that on every Tuesday morning at 11: 00a.m. we had an assembly. All the students were required to come. Each one had an assigned seat. Dean Beasley's job was to call the roll, but he knew the seat numbers and that's how he called it. If a student was absent he would call them in and asked them why. President Smith would talk to that group [the Assembly] once a week. Not every week, but when he had anything he wanted to tell the student body, they were there. That auditorium was too small. The idea was to build an auditorium to replace that auditorium, and that became the Boutwell Building. Then they made three floors of classrooms and offices out of what used to be the auditorium - just like we did with the old gymnasium. Professor Boutwell had a lot to do with building that building. It was probably the late 1950s, when a lot of that planning may have started with President Smith. I know he had that his in mind. It might have been envisioned after Dr. Cope came, probably. It has served well ever **since**.