

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
GERALD PARCHMENT

22 JUNE 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW #QMS.010

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

EDITORIAL NOTICE

This is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted by the Albert Gore Research Center at Middle Tennessee State University. The original recording and associated materials are archived at the center, whose collections may be accessed in person or via the web site gorecenter.mtsu.edu. After a draft of this transcript was made, the interviewer, or in some cases another qualified staff member, reviewed the draft and compared it to the tape recordings. In a few cases, the interviewee also contributed editorial corrections. This final transcript incorporates the corrections and other changes suggested by the interviewee and interviewer. The transcript follows as closely as possible the recorded interview, including the usual starts, stops, and other rough spots in typical conversation. The reader should remember that this is essentially a transcript of the spoken, rather than the written, word. Stylistic matters, such as punctuation and capitalization, follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition. The transcript includes bracketed notices at the end of one tape and the beginning of the next so that, if desired, the reader can find a section of tape more easily by using this transcript.

RESTRICTION

The interviewee has donated her or his copyright in this interview to the state of Tennessee through Middle Tennessee State University and has agreed that use of the recorded interview and transcript shall be governed by the director of the Albert Gore Research Center.

Researchers may read, quote from, cite, photocopy, and download this transcript without permission for purposes of research only. Publication is prohibited, however, without permission from the director of the Albert Gore Research Center.

ABSTRACT



**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH
GERALD PARCHMENT**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.010

FORSYTHE: This is a continuation of the interview with Dr. Gerald Parchment by Regina Forsythe Thursday June 22,1995. Dr. Clay Chandler?

PARCHMENT: I am responsible for his being here in a way because he was looking for another job at a meeting that I attended in Sewanee. And I said "We might could use you. Why don't you put in an application at MTSU?" So we hired him.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Patrick Doyle?

PARCHMENT: He was one of my former students. He came here for summer institute, and stayed. He is from South Dakota. He is very active in this recycling program. You see these cans and newspapers around.

FORSYTHE: What was the summer institute?

PARCHMENT: It was funded by the federal government to improve science teachers in the high schools. They apply, and we selected so many. I have forgotten how many each summer, but that is how we got Pat Doyle, Phil Mathis. Those are the ones I remember real well.

FORSYTHE: Does that still happen?

PARCHMENT: No, like so many government programs it quit. It was a good program.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Wymer Wisser.

PARCHMENT: Yes I have known him for years. I met him when he was a freshman here. We played touch football together. Then later I was in graduate school with him in Nashville. Then we were associate faculty here in Biology for many years.

FORSYTHE: Mr. Merle Wing

PARCHMENT: I don't know what to say there. He was something else. We got him in August, and at a last ditch stand. And that is not a good recommendation you know to get somebody that has been passed over all those months. We didn't XXX [at 078 on the tape] with him to well. I don't think he had tenure. I don't

know what became of him. He was older and hard to get along with, with students and faculty. So we just decided we would rather have someone else.

FORSYTHE: Miss Mary Dunn?

PARCHMENT: She was hard. I have seen some of the freshman girls come out of her class crying. She was very active in the national organizations.

FORSYTHE: Dean Beasley

PARCHMENT: Let me tell you a tale about him since these people are not living any more. I had a little trouble with Miss Green. I hadn't had high school chemistry, and I went to see her. And she said, "That is not my fault. You just have to sit down and learn it." So I went to talk to him about dropping the course and he said "No, we don't want to do that. With Miss Green on the top floor and Miss Edney on the bottom floor, I feel like I am sitting on a powder keg. The thing to do is just be real nice and sweet. And she will be all right. You will learn to deal with her."

FORSYTHE: Dr. Homer Pittard?

PARCHMENT: The first time I met him he was slinging ten-gallon milk cans at Consumers Ice Cream Plant here in the summer. And I was impressed with what a strong physique he had. He would pick up big, old, ten-gallon cans of milk and set them on the porch. I will tell you a tell about him. He was principal of Central Middle School one time, and I went over there to see him about something. And this boy was smoking in the hall. He put out his cigarette and stepped on it and said, "There comes Mr. Pittard. Have you seen him? He is huge."

FORSYTHE: Dr. Cope?

PARCHMENT: I turned in a budget one time, and he didn't sign it. And I waited and waited in finally got in his office. I told him that I was a grown boy. And I could take no for an answer, but I would like an answer. And he said "I will give you one this afternoon." So he approved it. He had boys about the age of mine that played baseball, and I would see him and his wife when they would come to the ball games. And we would sit there and chat. Going back to Q.M. Smith if I might, he had already retired when my first son was born. And he and his wife came to my house to see the new baby. And he wanted to hold him. And Laura said "Put your hand under his head." And he said "Laura, I was holding babies before I ever met you." I thought that that was unusual to take time to come pay a visit, and he was already out of office then.

FORSYTHE: How did the faculty relate to Dr. Cope?

PARCHMENT: I think okay. He was a little more Big Boss than Q.M. You never got the feeling that he was bossing you around. Dr. Cope was an old navy man, and he really believed in running a tight ship. He would go to the maintenance building every morning to be sure of what they were going to do every day. He would drive around the campus and be sure there were no broken windows or things. He ran a tight ship. I heard a few things about Dr. Scarlett.

FORSYTHE: Well, let's talk about him.

PARCHMENT: I don't know what his problem was but there were some of the Deans that resigned I think when he was president. Dr. Clay Tucker retired early. I thought it was kind of funny when they were named Tucker Theater. The guy who was presiding over it said, "I think he got a little case of Scarlett fever." I didn't think he should have said that. I got along with him fine. I was on the faculty senate when Dr. Scarlett was here and had a lot of meetings with him. And I found him very easy to work with. In fact, I didn't have any trouble with the presidents. I think they were all good at their time.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Ingram?

PARCHMENT: Yes he was president when I retired. He said "People tell me that they are sorry to see you go. That is a compliment, and they mean it. But if they say that to me, they don't really mean it." But they did.

FORSYTHE: Where was your office located?

PARCHMENT: My last office was the first floor of Davis Science. But for years, I was in Mr. Davis' old office in the Wiser Patton building, the third floor. It was a good office. I had my own private laboratory kind of hot. It didn't have air conditioning then. I was thinking this morning coming over here, that fifty years ago almost to the week, I walked up the steps up the old Science Hall to take my first course here. It was hot, but they did have an exhaust fan that pulled air out of all the rooms on the third floor.

FORSYTHE: What are you doing now that you have retired?

PARCHMENT: Well, I have got four grandchildren, I am planning to go to Maryland in August. That is where they all live. And my mother was real sick. [She] died. Let's see, I retired in '89. A train killed one of my brothers about a year ago, one of the twins. So I have been doing a lot of family things.

FORSYTHE: Well, I appreciate you coming and talking to me.

PARCHMENT: I think I went to MTSU at a good time. I enjoyed it very much. You knew everybody, and the faculty knew you. I might be like the presidents. Good for their time. Maybe it was the right time for me.

FORSYTHE: Thank you.