

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
WITH  
DAN SCOTT

26 JUNE 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE  
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
INTERVIEW #QMS.011

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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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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## ABSTRACT



**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH  
DAN SCOTT**

**Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**INTERVIEW #QMS.011**

**FORSYTHE:** This is Regina Forsythe. I am interviewing Dr. Dan Scott. Today is Monday June 26, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the Conference Room in the Learning Lab, Room 111 of the Ned McWherter Learning Resource Center. The tape of this interview, along with a transcription of the interview, will become a 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 that all right with you Mr. Scott?

**SCOTT:** Fine with me.

**FORSYTHE:** What is your full name?

**SCOTT:** Dan Dryden Scott.

**FORSYTHE:** Your birthday and place of birth?

**SCOTT:** Petersburg [Tennessee], half way between Fayetteville and Lewisburg. The county line runs through the town, and I grew upon a farm about two and a half miles out of town in Lincoln County. My mother still lives and operates the farm. She is eighty-seven years old.

**FORSYTHE:** What kind of farm was it?

**SCOTT:** When I was a boy, it was just a general family farm. We had milk cows, beef cattle, pigs, sheep, two mares that raised a pair of mules every year, corn, wheat and barley. Now we only have beef cattle, hay, and tobacco that somebody harvests for my mother.

**FORSYTHE:** What is your birth date?

**SCOTT:** April 1, 1928.

**FORSYTHE:** Your mother's name?

**SCOTT:** My mother's name is Lucille Evans, and she married Charles Clayton Scott who was my father.

**FORSYTHE:** He was a farmer?

SCOTT: He worked in a bank in Petersburg, and he operated the family farm. The farm had been in the family for a number of years. It had belonged to his grandfather.

FORSYTHE: What is your wife's name?

SCOTT: My wife now is Margaret Witherspoon Scott. She is a retired librarian from MTSU.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any children?

SCOTT: I have two daughters by my first marriage. Margaret Scott Smith and her son, Lieutenant Colonel Ricky Smith are both MTSU graduates.

FORSYTHE: What degrees do they have?

SCOTT: Both have bachelor's degrees. Don't ask me the years. I think Ricky's [was] maybe in 1978 and Margaret's [was] in 1983. My other daughter, Patricia, is married to David Myrick. Patricia Scott Myrick graduated here, and her husband David did too. Patricia graduated about 1984. Their mother died in 1983. Then I remarried in 1986.

FORSYTHE: What degrees do you have?

SCOTT: I have a B.S. from MTSU, an M.S. from Peabody, and a Ph.D. from Peabody/Vanderbilt. Chemistry was my major, and mathematics was my minor. My masters was in science education, and my Ph.D. was also in science education with an emphasis in chemistry. My dissertation was entitled, "The Use of Analogies in Teaching Introductory Chemistry."

FORSYTHE: What memories do you have as a student here at MTSU?

SCOTT: I was only here one year. I had gone to undergraduate school for three years up at Sewanee. One year, the day I got home for summer vacation, a man who was going to teach plain geometry in the local schools that summer had a heart attack. And so they asked me if I would teach that summer in his place. I did, and I liked it so well I decided I wanted to be a teacher. At that time, Sewanee did not have any means by which you could become certified [as a teacher], but I went back up there for another year; and even taught in the local high school a second summer. After that, I came to MTSU and in one year I took all the education courses, did practice teaching, and worked in the chemistry department. I got my B.S. in 1950 here at MTSU.

FORSYTHE: You had a job in the chemistry department.

SCOTT: Yes, I worked as a student assistant in the chemistry department for my senior year, and I did take a physical chemistry course also.

FORSYTHE: What did you do?

SCOTT: I ran the stock room, monitored the laboratories, and kept the supplies.

FORSYTHE: What buildings were your classes held in?

SCOTT: Either in Old Main or in the Science Building. It was simply called the Science Building at that time. It was much later, after J. E. Wiser retired, before it was renamed the Wiser-Patton Science Building. All my classes were either in the Science Building or what is today called Kirksey Old Main. Back then, it was called the Main Building. It didn't really have a name.

FORSYTHE: What was registration like here?

SCOTT: At that time, I really don't remember if all the faculty were in one place, or if you went to see them in their individual offices to see if you could get into their classes. At that time, the James Union Building wasn't even built. But later on when I joined the faculty here, the faculty would all meet in the Tennessee Room and each department would have a table where all the faculty would be. The students would go to each faculty member to see if they could get into their classes, and the faculty member would take the student's name and either admit them or not. That way, when registration was over, the faculty had a [roster] of everybody that was in their class.

FORSYTHE: I am going to ask you about some of the faculty members. Dr. Emily Calcott?

SCOTT: She lived just off campus. And at one time where I lived, going and coming from the campus, I would pass her. On occasion, I would offer to give her a ride. Unless it was pouring rain or something like that, she would refuse. She would walk. But in real bad weather she would let me carry her home.

FORSYTHE: Horace Jones?

SCOTT: He was a good man to talk to about all different topics. He was interested in athletics of course, and the football field is named Horace Jones Field. He was a good teacher. At times his feet and legs would bother him, and he would sit in his chair and teach and would maybe write on the blackboard what he could reach by sitting in his chair. He would not feel like standing up where he could cover all the board. I remember that sometimes he would sit in his chair, that he could roll on rollers, so he could roll to the black board and show us how to work the calculus problems.

FORSYTHE: Mary Hall?

SCOTT: I knew Miss Mary Hall very well. Then in later years, after she retired, her basketball seats were right next to mine in Murphy Center. She was a great basketball fan. I remember during the NIT tournament here once, when Middle Tennessee played the University of Tennessee and beat them in the NIT tournament, I had never seen Miss Mary Hall so excited in my life. I never did have a class with her, but I knew her well, and she was a delightful person to know.

FORSYTHE: Clayton James?

SCOTT: Mr. James was Dean of Students when I was a student here. He had that same title along with teaching sociology after I came back to join the faculty in 1955. Mr. and Mrs. James were wonderful people. He was very student-oriented but also very firm. At that time, faculty and college administration acted a little bit more like parents were supposed to act. He would certainly not hesitate to call either a male or female student in if they were misbehaving a little bit and talk to them like their mother or father would have talked to them. If they continued on that same track, he was not at all hesitant to tell them they were no longer welcome to be students at this school. They would be invited to leave.

FORSYTHE: B. B. Gracy?

SCOTT: I knew him quite well. He was a very energetic person. He was interested in a lot of activities both on campus and in the community.

FORSYTHE: Catherine Clark?

SCOTT: She was a very competent librarian and very helpful to students. The library was in a little building where Peck Hall is now located. I remember both as a student and as a faculty member when the library was somewhat limited, she was as helpful as she could be with students that were trying to get information, particularly if it was not in our library and you had to go somewhere else.

FORSYTHE: Howard Kirksey?

SCOTT: He was a good teacher. At the time, his title was "Dean of the Faculty," but that office has evolved into what is now Vice-president of Academic Affairs. He was very helpful to young faculty coming in when I joined in 1955. We had several common interests of which athletics was one. I was on the athletic committee for a long time and was a faculty representative to the OVC and the NCAA for a good many years. Then Dr. Kirksey's son majored in my department, and he was later the chairman of the chemistry department at Memphis State, now the University of Memphis. And he and I kept professional contact over the years. Dr. Kirksey and I would talk about his son's career, and we just had common interests over the years.

FORSYTHE: What is his son's name?

SCOTT: Graden. That is the "G" in Howard G. Kirksey. His son was a junior and was called "Graden."

FORSYTHE: Dr. Gerald Parchment?

SCOTT: The first year I was here as a student was the first year Dr. Parchment joined the faculty. I remember he was a sponsor of the Science Club at that time, and I was a member of it. We had some activities, and that is where I first knew Gerald. Then I came back in 1955, and he was a biology professor. I have known him these many years. He is a good friend, and he has been very supportive of me since I have been president of the retired teachers group. I have called on him to do several things for the group. He is very cooperative, and he is just a fine gentleman.

FORSYTHE: What did the science club do?

SCOTT: We had programs that were of interest to the students. I think we took some field trips. We went to the state labs in Nashville one time. We did the sort of things that the students would be interested in that might be above and beyond what you would get in normal classes.

FORSYTHE: Dr. C. C. Sims?

SCOTT: I got to know him later when the space program started. He would go on trips with the faculty to Huntsville to visit the Marshall Space Center. He was an interesting man to know. He was very well read and educated. And he could talk to you intelligently about many different subjects.

FORSYTHE: Wink Midgett?

SCOTT: I knew him very well. He got the Business Department started here. He was interested in both community activities as well as on campus. If you went to plays or other activities on campus, you would always see the Midgetts. They were always very supportive of community activities.

FORSYTHE: Margaret Wright?

SCOTT: Yes, I knew the Wrights. The Music and Speech Departments used to cooperate very closely and put on wonderful performances. They sometimes put on operettas. One year they put on "Finnigan's Rainbow." It was a fantastic production and in my judgment much better than anything the university now puts on. Unfortunately, I don't think the Music and Speech Departments cooperate like they used to. Each one sort of does its own thing. And separately they are not as good as they were together.

FORSYTHE: Roy Simpson?

SCOTT: Mr. Simpson lived on Fairview Avenue, same as I did. His wife ran a florist shop in the back of their house, so I knew the Simpsons very well. Fairview is just a couple blocks off campus. A lot of times we would walk back and forth from work together in the mornings or afternoons. He was a very nice friendly person to know. He was a very good math teacher, and I remember that the students felt like he would take the extra time they needed to help them out.

FORSYTHE: T. B. Woodmore?

SCOTT: He was the Bursar. You had to go by his office to pick up your check every month. They didn't put it in the mail. At the end of the semester, he wouldn't give you your last check until you had turned your grades in. When you turned the grades in, they would sign a little receipt at the registrar's office, and then you went to the Bursar's office to pick up your check. Every quarter before Christmas you would always need your check for the Christmas expenses, but you couldn't get it until you had turned your grades in for that fall quarter.

FORSYTHE: Dean Beasley?

SCOTT: He was so interested in the students that if he got the idea that one was having a little difficulty or particularly if he thought one was causing a problem, he would make a point to discuss that student with all of that student's teachers. Everybody knew Dean Beasley because if you were on the faculty, at some time or the other, he would contact you about some student that was in your class.

FORSYTHE: Bonnie McHenry?

SCOTT: She was the secretary to President Smith. Any time you needed any kind of business with the president's office, you always had to go through Ms. McHenry. She would certainly expedite matters for you.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Eldred Wiser?

SCOTT: He was the man who hired me. When I decided that I wanted to teach and couldn't get certified at Sewanee, I think an arrangement was made with Franklin County where now student's can get certified. But they couldn't then. I came down here while I was still a student up there. I met Dr. Wiser and talked to him and told him about my background. I was able to get hired as a student assistant in the department for the next year. So I worked with him that year, and he was a teacher for the physical chemistry course that I took as a senior student. Later, he is the one that contacted me. And he knew I had finished a master's and had experience teaching chemistry and physics at Central High School in Fayetteville. He contacted me about joining the faculty. Since we already knew each other, I

was interested. So I worked with him. He was the department chair until 1981 when he retired, and I replaced him. Dr. Wisner was a good teacher and an excellent man to work with.

FORSYTHE: Ellis Rucker?

SCOTT: Dr. Rucker was a professor of biology and a colleague for many years, until he retired. I was not a big hunter, but he was quite a bird hunter. And he liked to train bird dogs. I remember we had lots of discussions about his techniques of training bird dogs to be good hunting dogs.

FORSYTHE: What did students do for fun?

SCOTT: We went to plays and ball games. The students then supported things on the campus much more than they do now. If the Drama Department put on a play, you went. And if the Music Department had a program, you would go to it. All the students went to all the ball games, and you were more involved in campus activities. The departmental clubs had programs where people would be invited in to talk about various activities, and that is what they did.

FORSYTHE: What did you do on the weekends?

SCOTT: Like it is now, I went home a lot of weekends, but not on all of them. Sometimes I would stay up here. If there were Saturday night ball games I would stay. You would study. And if you wanted to go downtown to eat or something. There weren't a lot of places to eat in Murfreesboro then. It would take awhile because you might walk down there and eat and walk back. That would take longer than if you got in a car and went down there.

FORSYTHE: Was the cafeteria open on the weekends?

SCOTT: Most of the time it was open on the weekends. But I don't think it was open much on Sunday nights.

FORSYTHE: What was the cafeteria like then?

SCOTT: It is where the alumni center is now. It was just like most other school cafeterias are.

FORSYTHE: Did you live on campus?

SCOTT: No, I lived on Crestview with Mrs. Faulkinberry, the widow of the man for whom Faulkinberry drive is named. He was a football coach for years back in the 1930's. I rented a room from her with Richard McCord. He teaches math here now. Ernie Pelligran was there, and he is a lawyer in Gallatin, Tennessee. Another boy there was named Joe Raby. Joe is from Fayetteville and works for

the post office there. The four of us lived with Mrs. Faulkinberry. We didn't have meals there. We would have to eat in the cafeteria or some other eating place around town. It was just a room. She had two rooms upstairs and two of us stayed in each room.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about the gym.

SCOTT: When I was here as a student, the gym was where the Midgett Business Building is. They had started building the Alumni Memorial Gym that year, and when I came back in 1955, it was completed. The year I was here as a student they started construction on the Alumni Gym and what is now the James Union Building. The library was where Peck Hall is, and it was not very big at all. Later, they built the Todd Library which is much bigger, but not near what a university of this size needs.

FORSYTHE: Campus School.

SCOTT: Campus School had been there a long time. I remember coming here in high school on the debate team for a state debate meet, and that is where we would have the debates. Then when I came back here on the faculty in 1955, Mr. Hillary Parker was the principal. And he lived just around the corner from where I lived, close to the campus. Both of my children went to Campus School. It has always been a very good school, and that is where a lot of students would do their practice teaching and their observation which they still do. My main recollection about campus school was when my two children were students there. After Mr. Parker retired, then Martha Hampton was the principal. There were two or three other principals there for short times. And I don't remember who they were, but I think the lady who is principal now has been there a good while. She is doing a good job.

FORSYTHE: Old Main?

SCOTT: When I was here as a student, we had the Science Building, and we had Old Main. And then you had the little library building, and that was about it. There were some buildings back there where industrial arts is. But all your classes were in Old Main or the Science building.

FORSYTHE: Vet's Village?

SCOTT: It was where the Davis Science Building is now. They were Army barracks type buildings that had been moved in here and converted into apartments. I had friends who lived there, but at the time I was not married. I was just a single student, so other than just knowing that was where the married students lived, that is about all I remember about it. There was a building there that was sort of a little... Well you wouldn't call it a grocery store. But it was sort of a little market. It also had some ping pong tables in it. One end of it was a Rec.[recreational]

hall, and the other end was where you could buy milk and bread; but that is all I remember about it. I wasn't as involved as somebody who lived there.

FORSYTHE: The airport hangar.

SCOTT: That is where the rifle range is for the ROTC now, but I remember that building was there. Some of the students taking flight training had to get in so much flight time. I would go up with one of them and fly around a little bit. I remember the hanger being there and the runway down the field in front of it, which is where the student union building is now. The quadrangle is out there, and I can remember airplanes taking off and landing there.

FORSYTHE: The farm?

SCOTT: Well, the Stark farm wasn't so much a part of the university then. When the Starks came back to Murfreesboro, they then acquired the Stark Farm. So the university farm at that time was where this building is, and where the high rise dorms are. And a little of [the land] is still left where there is now pastures and horses. Of course, they built the new rec. center out there; but this whole area was the farm at that time. I never was involved with the Agricultural Department, so I don't exactly know what all they did. But I knew that was the farm, and as the school grew, we spread into that space.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about John Patten.

SCOTT: He was a biology professor. Then about 1960 or '61, the science department was split into a Biology Department and a Department of Chemistry and Physics. And Dr. Patten was the first chairman of the Biology Department. He continued to be chairman of it until he retired. Then George Murphy became chairman of it. So the biology department has only had two chairs, John Patton and George Murphy.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Van Zandt?

SCOTT: She was a professor of chemistry at Sewanee. When Dr. Guerry died, the man who replaced him as president of Sewanee didn't last very long. His name was Dr. Green. And he was replaced by a man named Dr. McCrady. Then when Mr. Davis at Sewanee died, who was head of chemistry, Dr. McCrady did not want to keep Dr. Van Zandt on as head of the chemistry department. He wanted to bring somebody else in, so she was a little unhappy with the situation there. And at that time we were looking for a person to teach organic chemistry here. I suggested to Dr. Wisner that she would be a good organic chemistry teacher and told her about the vacancy. She came down, applied, and was hired as an organic chemistry professor here. She stayed for about three years, and then she went to Ft. Worth, Texas. She went back then to Texas as chairman of the Department of Chemistry at a school there.

FORSYTHE: Mr. James W. Gilbert?

SCOTT: He and I shared an office when he was on the faculty here. He taught physics in the Chemistry Department. I was a colleague of Wade for many years. He was an excellent teacher and a good colleague, and I enjoyed my relationship with him.

FORSYTHE: Joe Evans?

SCOTT: Joe taught math, and then he came over and taught in the chemistry and physics department in the science area for one year. Then he went back to the math department and is still there. I was talking to Joe just Tuesday night of this week. We still see each other quite a bit.