

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
THELMA SLOAN

5 JULY 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW #QMS.019

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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ABSTRACT



**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH
THELMA SLOAN**
Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW #QMS.019

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q. M. Smith Collection designated as QMS.1995.19. This is Regina Forsythe. I am interviewing Mrs. Thelma Sloan. Today is Wednesday, July 5, 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 Q. M. 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?

SLOAN: Yes.

FORSYTHE: What is your full name?

SLOAN: My name is Thelma Gray Sloan.

FORSYTHE: What is your middle name?

SLOAN: Gray. Didn't have a middle name.

FORSYTHE: Where were you born?

SLOAN: Murfreesboro.

FORSYTHE: When were you born?

SLOAN: June 21, 1930.

FORSYTHE: You just had a birthday. Happy belated birthday. What was your father's name?

SLOAN: John Henry Gray, Jr.

FORSYTHE: And his occupation?

SLOAN: He was a fireman.

FORSYTHE: And your mother's name?

SLOAN: Nelia White Hayes Gray

FORSYTHE: And her occupation?

SLOAN: Well she was a housewife up until my father died. And then she ran the post office out at the VA hospital.

FORSYTHE: Any siblings?

SLOAN: Yes two sisters. Ruth Gray Lane. And Ruth is dead. She died in November of last year. Blanch Gray Coffman deceased.

FORSYTHE: How do you spell Coffman?

SLOAN: C-o-f-f-m-a-n.

FORSYTHE: What is your husband's name?

SLOAN: June Holloway Sloan Jr. You spell that H-o-l-l-o-w-a-y. Well he's retired now. He was an engineer at AEDC.

FORSYTHE: What are your children's names

SLOAN: Carl. Do you want the full name?

FORSYTHE: Yes.

SLOAN: Carl Davis Sloan. John Steven Sloan. Thomas White Sloan and June Holloway Sloan Jr.

FORSYTHE: Okay

[This part of the tape is inaudible.]

FORSYTHE: Was there a dress code?

SLOAN: Well, you didn't wear slacks. It was sometime when I was working in the library that they decided that I could wear a pantsuit, but not until the seventies.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Vet's village.

SLOAN: We probably lived there two years in the 50s. We paid \$22.15 a month and that included heat, light, and water. These were old converted barracks, so they were not in the best of shape. We had a large room, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a closet. And you walked through the big closet to get to the bathroom. The walls were so thin that you could hear people whispering next door. So you learned to whisper when you had an argument. But we made the best friends that we ever

had. We would sit out on the steps and talk and the children would play. We had a little grocery store. It was just a small room. You could pick up bread and things that you needed. This is how the person ran it. His last name was Smith. It was open every day but Sunday. They had a grocery store, and then there was a room next to it like a game room.

FORSYTHE: Where did you do your laundry?

SLOAN: I bought an old washing machine and put it in the kitchen. They didn't have a laundry on campus. We each had our own clothesline. We had a truck, and we parked there in vet village. Parking wasn't a problem then. On the weekends, we would go to the drive-in movie. They would charge \$1.00 a car, and we would try to put as many people in there as we could.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any memories of Old Main?

SLOAN: Underneath the front steps there was another way to get into the building. You could come down into the basement that way and we [T.B. Woodmore's office] were just right there at the entrance. That is where I worked. There were two big rooms and a small office in between. Mr. Woodmore was in the small office, and the two secretaries were on one side and Jimmy Jackson was on the other. I worked for him.

FORSYTHE: James Union Building.

SLOAN: That is where the post office and the bookstore were.

FORSYTHE: The gym.

SLOAN: When I went to high school out here, the gym was there where the business building is now. There weren't many seats. It was very small. Then they built the Alumni Memorial Gym. And then of course, we now have Murphy Center.

FORSYTHE: The library.

SLOAN: When I went to high school, the library was where Peck Hall is now. It was a small building, and we used to go over there to have fun in the afternoons. Katherine Clark was the librarian when I went to high school here and was here when I started working here. They had built a new library and had added on to it. This was the place where Vet Village used to be. Now of course, they are thinking about building another one.

FORSYTHE: The Science Building?

SLOAN: We didn't use the lab, but Miss Perry Williamson, my teacher, brought things in to show us.

FORSYTHE: The football field?

SLOAN: I think it was used for high school games when I was in school. It used to just have bleacher seats. It was a grass field then, and I was in the band. We marched on the field. They had lights.

FORSYTHE: Q.M. Smith?

SLOAN: He was such a dignified man. We were scared to death of him. A lot of things were accomplished while he was president.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about your father-in-law, Gene Sloan.

SLOAN: He came here in '47 and started teaching history. Then he started teaching some business courses and got involved with "Sidelines." He retired in the sixties. Then he came back for about a year. He is in his eighties now, he will be eighty-eight in September. His mind is very good. He loves MTSU. He was also in athletics.