

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
NEWELL MOORE

6 JULY 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW #QMS.020

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Albert Gore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "A" and "G".

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
NEWELL MOORE**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.020

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q.M. Smith collection designated as QMS. 1995.20. This is Regina Forsythe. I am interviewing Dr. Newell Moore. Today is Thursday, July 6, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the Gore Research Center Room 111 of the Ned McWherter Learning Center. The tape of this interview, along with the 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 that okay with you?

MOORE: That's fine.

FORSYTHE: What is your full name?

MOORE: Newell Seals Moore. Seals was my father's middle name. I missed being a junior by three letters.

FORSYTHE: And your birth date?

MOORE: March 17, 1926.

FORSYTHE: And your birthplace?

MOORE: Whiteville, Tennessee. It's in Hardeman County.

FORSYTHE: And your father's name?

MOORE: Newton S. Moore.

FORSYTHE: And his occupation?

MOORE: He was a royal letter carrier.

FORSYTHE: And your mother's name?

MOORE: Ruby Anderson Moore

FORSYTHE: And her occupation?

MOORE: She was a housewife.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any siblings?

MOORE: I have two brothers. One older, Warren, who is still in Hardeman County and the younger, Maurice Moore, who is an optometrist in Sparta, Tennessee.

FORSYTHE: What is your wife's name?

MOORE: Minnie Sue Hudson.

FORSYTHE: And her occupation?

MOORE: She was a dental hygienist.

FORSYTHE: What are your children's names?

MOORE: My oldest son, Terry Lynn, is currently a fiscal director with the State Department of Transportation. Margaret Ann, who is now Todd is a nurse at Middle Tennessee Medical Center. She is the youngest. The other is Susan Elaine Moore.

FORSYTHE: Did anyone else from your family come to MTSU?

MOORE: All three of my children came here.

FORSYTHE: Do you remember when they were here.

MOORE: My son came here in 1973.

FORSYTHE: Did anyone else in your family work here at MTSU?

MOORE: No, I'm the only one.

FORSYTHE: What is your educational background? What degrees do you have?

MOORE: I have a bachelor's, a master's, and a Ph.D. all from Peabody College which is now part of Vanderbilt.

FORSYTHE: Why did you choose to go to Peabody?

MOORE: I had planned on going to Vanderbilt, but I didn't have the foreign language requirement. They quit teaching Latin when I went into high school. I had planned to transfer over there after the first year, but I would have lost so many hours that I had taken at Peabody when I transferred that I decided to remain there. I also taught some courses at Peabody. I took a lot of courses through Vanderbilt. They had a joint arrangement where you could take courses at Vanderbilt. I completed as an

undergraduate a double major in history and political science. I took almost all of the political science through Vanderbilt.

FORSYTHE: During your master's, what was your major?

MOORE: I had a double major in history and political science. To get your doctorate from Peabody, you had to take a minor in some aspect of education. I took history and philosophy of education.

FORSYTHE: Did you write a thesis?

MOORE: I did the equivalent of that in a research paper at Vanderbilt. Peabody at that time discouraged thesis because they didn't want to direct them. The paper I worked on during my master's ended up being my doctoral dissertation which was, "The Role of Senator Arthur H. Vandenburg in American foreign policy after World War II."

FORSYTHE: Why did you choose the particular coursework you chose?

MOORE: I originally was planning on either becoming a journalist or a career in the foreign service, but that was the time of the McCarthy era. And Dr. Fleming at Vanderbilt urged me not to do it because he thought I could have my whole career ruined. He encouraged me to go into either teaching or research, so I did and haven't regretted.

FORSYTHE: Why did you choose to work at MTSU?

MOORE: I came here one time in graduate school to help organize a chapter. I don't remember the name, but it was an educational fraternity. I was impressed with it. I had been to Murfreesboro several times. I was teaching in Arkansas A&M in Monticello, Arkansas. I won't say much about Arkansas. It's just not my choice. I came home Thanksgiving and stopped by to see my major professor at Peabody. He told me that they had been trying to get in touch with me from Middle Tennessee State because they had an opening. I actually had some acquaintances here. A member of my doctoral committee was the chairman of the social science division or department at that time, Dr. Norman Parks. I had several courses under him, and he was on my doctoral committee. He actually helped me on the dissertation as far as looking at it and making suggestions. So, I knew him from years back, and the dean of the faculty at that time, Dr. Howard Kirksey, later the academic vice-president was my wife's school principal. So, I came on over and saw Dr. Parks, and he suggested that I might want to have an interview with Mr. Q.M. Smith. He called him, and Mr. Smith said I could come on over. They told me that they would let me know by the following Thursday. Monday, they called me and asked me if I would take it. I accepted the job, and I have been here ever since.

FORSYTHE: What year was that?

MOORE: 1954 was when the interview was conducted the day after Thanksgiving.

FORSYTHE: What else do you remember about that interview?

MOORE: It was a very informal interview. I was really impressed by him. He had a slight speech impediment, but you soon learned to understand what he was saying.

FORSYTHE: What was your job title?

MOORE: I was an assistant professor.

FORSYTHE: Let's talk about buildings. Did you say that you had some stories about Old Main?

MOORE: When I first came here, we had offices on the second floor, but then a year or so later, Dr. Corlew and I had offices on what we called the Penthouse...the third floor. I often felt this might be our crematory because it had wood floors. They polished them, but the polish they used was oil-based, old cedar type of stuff. Those floors had plenty of oil, so if anyone ever dropped a cigarette, we would have been gone. One day, when I opened the door to my office, a huge rat ran out. About a week or so later, I came in and it looked like a sycamore leaf was lying on my desk. I went to pick it up, and it flew out! It was a bat! It is quite a different building today. In fact, where the business building is currently was the old auditorium. At that time, you could get all of the students in that one auditorium. When I came here, I believe there were about 3,000 students and about 300 faculty members. Kirksey Old Main was the main administration building then. The old gym was here at that time and where Peck Hall is today was formerly the library. They had trouble with the books because the building was damp. That area was once a swamp. The James Union Building had been completed then. Only three or four dormitories existed at that time. The industrial arts building was there at that time. The Post office at that time was in the basement of Old Main.

FORSYTHE: Let's talk a little about Peck Hall.

MOORE: Before we moved into Peck Hall, we were in the dramatic arts building. We moved there when history became a separate department. When I first came, the Social Science department included economics, political science, sociology, geography and history. History became a separate department first during Dr. Cope's presidency. Then, when they built Peck Hall, we were told that we would move into that building. And we've been there ever since.

FORSYTHE: What was the initial reaction about Peck Hall?

MOORE: Well, you got lost. You had to learn when you came in which direction you traveled. I can't say that it was that much of an improvement because the dramatic arts was a new building. We enjoyed it over there. The dramatic arts and the speech people were being crowded. We had more room at that time. Of course, that's not true today.

FORSYTHE: What about the Dramatic Arts Building?

MOORE: I thought the facilities were adequate at that time. Since then, all of the audiovisual equipment has been added. It was before the era of computers, so it was adequate. And I enjoyed it. I was in that building at the time Kennedy was assassinated. I can remember... I had a one o'clock 201 in the fall. And I was going down the hall. Some student stopped me and asked me if I heard about President Kennedy. I said, "What?" He told me he had been assassinated. I remember where I was. I was two-thirds of the way to my class.

FORSYTHE: Where was your office?

MOORE: It was on the second floor. One of the things I remembered was that I never left a test in my office. I always took them home. I came in one morning, and the shade was down. I normally did not leave it down. My desk was straight, and it usually isn't. I could tell that the opening in the door had been taken out and had been replaced. I couldn't resist going into class and saying, "Well, someone sure wasted their efforts. I do appreciate your leaving things in such good shape." It was obvious someone had been in there. You know, I gave you the review questions from which the test was taken. And if you had taken the time to have studied those, you would have been prepared for the test. All that effort and all that time must've taken two or three hours. You could have been studying and passed.

FORSYTHE: Murphy Center?

MOORE: I can remember when that was built. It was a fine building. I'm sure that it's getting to the point that it needs some improvement. That was one of the outstanding buildings as far as structure. I've attended many basketball games there. I have season tickets, and I usually buy tickets for my sons and sons-in-law. Anything I buy for my son, I buy for my sons-in-law.

FORSYTHE: The Keathley Student Center?

MOORE: I remember that. That's when they put the postal facilities and the bookstore there. All of that was originally in the basement of the Old Main.

FORSYTHE: The science building?

MOORE: The old science building was built before I came here. I'm not too familiar with the science building.

FORSYTHE: Campus School?

MOORE: I had three children that went through there. At least two or three days a week, I would pick them up. I always enjoyed that. I always got out of the car, so that I

could hug them. My wife worked only part-time, two to three days a week. Those days I babysat and picked them up. One time, I made the rounds from Oakland High school to Central Middle school to the Campus School then over here.

FORSYTHE: Where was your office in Peck Hall?

MOORE: 277.

FORSYTHE: What did you teach when you first came here?

MOORE: I was hired to teach both history and political science. I taught some American government, but I taught most of the advanced courses in political science such as Comparative Government and Public Administration. Then, I started teaching the basic American history. Then, I was given the Recent American which was my area. We had two three-hour courses at that time. We were on the quarter system at first. Then, I taught Far East; Dr. Roscoe Strickland was teaching it, but that was more like secondary. And he didn't want to. So, I taught the Far East for years and did teach a section of it this past fall. I taught some economic history of the United States. I put the course that Dr. Messier now teaches in the Near East. I first put that in as well as an English history because we had to teach areas that were not exactly our specialty because we were limited. When I first came here there was Dr. Strickland, Dr. Corlew and Dr. Windham. Then, we had a coach who taught one of the two courses. Gina Sloan taught one of the courses in Survey of Civilization, but that was the faculty.

FORSYTHE: What did you require your students to do?

MOORE: I originally required term papers as well as a certain amount of outside reading. I soon found that there was very little research done on term papers. We taught five courses a quarter, and one quarter, we had to teach six. You don't have time to grade research papers. So, I basically had them do outside reading and a minimum number of pages. Part of the reviews were oral with me in the office, and the rest were written.

FORSYTHE: Are there any students that stand out in your mind?

MOORE: I've had a number of students to stand out in my mind over the years. I've had a lot of good students. In fact, this past session we've just completed, I had one of the best classes in United States since World War II that I've had since I've been here. There were a number of outstanding students. I've had a number of students who have gone on and gotten their doctorate. Some have actually been back and taught for a while. One taught with us for several years, but I think she is in North Carolina now, Mary Wilgers. Mary got her doctorate at Vanderbilt. Her major professor, because it was in Asian studies, had me look at her work. We made some corrections. Dr. Jennings was a student of mine in graduate.

FORSYTHE: What do you remember about Q.M. Smith?

MOORE: He was a very friendly person. A number of times I would start over to get my mail, and he was say, "Come on, I'll buy you a cup of coffee." I always enjoyed that. With a smaller faculty, you could associate more readily than today. I thought highly of him. In fact, I thought a lot of all the presidents we've had. My attitude is that I will cooperate and do my best to get along with anyone. Mr. Q.M. stands out because he was the first president when I came here.

FORSYTHE: How did the rest of the faculty get along with him?

MOORE: Fine as far as I know. Someone said that there was one thing that you could understand if you asked him for a raise. He knew how to say, "No!" I think the faculty got along fine with him.

FORSYTHE: What about the students? How did they relate to him?

MOORE: I don't think I've ever heard a student voice any criticism. Students back at that time didn't have the voice in school affairs they would have today. I know a lot of people who graduated and came back. They always spoke fondly of Mr. Smith.

FORSYTHE: What kind of president was he?

MOORE: A very efficient one.

FORSYTHE: What about Mrs. Smith? Did you know her?

MOORE: Yes. She was a very likable, very personable person.

FORSYTHE: What memories do you have of Dr. Cope?

MOORE: Dr. Cope was very efficient. And he meant business, but if you did your job, he would back you. I remember on one occasion I had a father to call me one morning to say, "I'm coming up there and talking to you. I want you to change my son's grade." I said, "Why?" "Well, he'll have to come to school this summer to pull his average up, and I want him to take a lifeguard job." He asked me if I graded on something besides what he does. I told him that if he was talking about effort, his son didn't exert any effort. I said, "You're talking to the wrong one. Under no condition will I change that grade." He got abusive on the telephone, so I slammed the phone down. I had made up my mind that if he came out to my house, I would have him arrested. I thought in the mean time I would go and see Dr. Cope. Dr. Cope said, "Let me tell you one thing. Just because you teach at a state school, you don't have to take insults and abuse from parents. I'm not surprised. I had my run-in with that father, and I had to escort him out of the office for fear that I might hit him. I'll back you. Don't you worry." He would back the faculty if they were right.

FORSYTHE: Did you know Mrs. Cope?

MOORE: She was a little more reserved, but she was a fine person.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Scarlett?

MOORE: Dr. Scarlett was not as efficient as a president. He had difficulties with the faculty. He had difficulties with some members of the state board. Part of that was his fault; part of it was not. Of all the presidents, he was the least effective.

FORSYTHE: What about his wife?

MOORE: She would have been a better president than Dr. Scarlett. She was much more outgoing and on-the-ball.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Ingram?

MOORE: I always liked him, and I called him Sam. Before he was president, he was head of the school of education. And he and I got on very friendly terms. He always referred to me by the first name and told me to do the same. Although, when he became president, I had to say Dr. Ingram.

FORSYTHE: What about his wife?

MOORE: She was a little more reserved, but she was a very nice person.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Prescott?

MOORE: I never had any personal contact with him.

FORSYTHE: This is a continuation of the interview with Dr. Newell Moore by Regina Forsythe on Thursday, July 6, 1995.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Walker?

MOORE: I'm really impressed with him. He makes a very good impression. He makes a good speech. In all aspects, I am very impressed with Dr. Walker. I have not had that much personal contact with him. He was at the reception the history department gave for me back in April, and I really appreciated the remarks that he made. I think we're fortunate to have him.

FORSYTHE: Do you know Mrs. Walker?

MOORE: Yes, and she is a very likable person. She's very friendly, and I'm impressed with both of them.

FORSYTHE: How had the department changed from the time you began until you retired last week?

MOORE: At first, we were part of the social sciences. We fared much better as a separate department. When we first began, we had five or six people. Then, we added one or two a year. We've not only grown as far as a variety of degrees and qualifications, but also the offering that we could give has grown. I have seen the addition of the graduate program. First, the master's, then the doctorate of arts in recent years. I've been involved in all of those. It's steady growth, and a broadening of his role.

FORSYTHE: What projects were you involved in?

MOORE: Well, I guess most of the programs at one time or another. Specific programs, I'm not sure about.

FORSYTHE: What awards or honors have you received?

MOORE: I was listed as an Outstanding Educator of America. Off hand, I can't think of any others.

FORSYTHE: Do you remember Dr. Norman Parks?

MOORE: I remember him from awhile back. I had courses when I was a freshmen at Peabody, and he taught there. I had my basic American history under Parks. Then, I joined the political science faculty at Vanderbilt, and I had a number of courses there under him. He was a revisionist on the Cold War. I didn't necessarily agree with him, but he was an outstanding professor. When they brought Parks to MTSU, I took courses under him. I kept up with him over the years. I had contact with him even after he became head of the department down here. I remember him from long back. He's still living now. I assume he's pretty close to 90.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Clayton James?

MOORE: I remember Clayton in sociology. He was a very likable... slow, methodical talk. He had been the Dean of Students before I came here. Then, he was in sociology.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Roscoe Strickland?

MOORE: Strickland was one of my good friends. Quite outspoken. But he and I got along fine from the very beginning. He wanted me to teach a far eastern course. When he was the original sponsor... Phi Gamma Mu is a social science honor society. ... and when he left to take our college presidency, he asked me if I would take it over. We had offices in both Peck and in the dramatic arts next to one another. He and I have had many cups of coffee together.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Robert Martin?

MOORE: Bob Martin was in economics. He was sort of a folksy type person. I'm not sure how good a job teaching he did, but I remember Bob. I think sometimes students took advantage of him. He's been dead now for several years.

FORSYTHE: How would students take advantage of him?

MOORE: Well, just to be frank, they would cheat in his classes, but I don't guess it made any difference. He gave the same test for years. I liked him. But as far as having great respect for him, I didn't.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Edwin Baldwin?

MOORE: I remember Ed when he first came here. At that time, we often taught extension courses, and they provide the allowance of a meal for mileage as well as a basic salary. I might mention something Mr. Smith said. He said, "Dale, does Edwin Baldwin ever eat except when he eats on the state of Tennessee?" Well, Ed had his classes on the third, and Ed was a little connoisseur of food. He had containers for everything. He loved his food. A student one day told Dr. Corlew, "I'm going in here to see a movie with sound effects." Someone asked what he meant by sound effects. He said, "You know how Dr. Baldwin eats. He turns that film on and every once in awhile we hear him burp. Ed was a very likable person, but he died rather young from a heart attack. I always remember how he would over pronounce the word "geography."

FORSYTHE: Was he a big man?

MOORE: I guess he was a little heavy set.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Gene Sloan?

MOORE: I remember Dr. Gene Sloan was large in public relations. I guess you could say he was one of the first in that. He lives out in our neighborhood, and he is in very bad shape physically. He taught the Western Civilization course. He was very likable, very congenial. He had been a former newspaperman.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Robert Corlew?

MOORE: Dr. Corlew is one of my good friends. He and I eat together once a year on my birthday. Of course, I worked as a colleague with him, then under him as head of the department, and as the dean of the school of liberal arts. Then, finally as Academic Vice-President. I think Bob Corlew is one of the oldest and best friends I have in Murfreesboro. He attends church where I do. He teaches one of the adult classes, and I teach the other one.

FORSYTHE: Miss Ollie Green?

MOORE: I remember Miss Ollie very fondly. Someone said that if you want to get along with Miss Ollie talk about flowers. One day she told me that she had some flowers for me. Someone said, "You've got it made now with her. If she gives you flowers, that indicates that she likes you." We always called her Miss Green. One day Dr. Baldwin made a mistake and called her Ollie. She told him, "No one but my close friends call me Ollie, and you're not one of those." When Dr. Fulton, who was head of the geography department when I first came here, asked Dr. Corlew what he should do. He had a note to go see Miss Green. I believe she may have retired by then. Well, Dr. Corlew told him to go and told him that she would give him good advice.

FORSYTHE: Dr. C.C. Simms?

MOORE: He was the one who gave much of the money that built the Presbyterian Church where I attend. He was teaching a course or two, but he found out that I like to fish. So, he invited me to go fishing. So, we fished many a time. He would give me advice. He told me one day, "I know I haven't got long to live, and you're going to be one of the leaders of our church in the future. For goodness sakes, don't let that church go head-over-heels in debt." I knew Dr. Simms would leave it to the church. I didn't want to see him do that because his wife could become ill. One night, some or just one wanted to build a whole new sanctuary with no money down, just borrow the whole amount. That was one of the few times I quoted Dr. Simms. That slowed it down because Dr. Simms was greatly respected. He taught the adult class that I am now teaching when he became ill. Someone asked me to teach it. I never taught Sunday school a day in my life. My wife later told me that she was sitting there with her fingers crossed until I got started good. I've been teaching it ever since then. I remember him very fondly.

FORSYTHE: What church was that?

MOORE: Northminister Presbyterian. It's right across from Mitchell-Neilson School.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Billy Mac Jones?

MOORE: Billy Mac was the coach I was talking about who also taught some courses in history and then went on and got his doctorate at one of the Texas colleges. For years, he was president of Memphis State. He came by one time and wanted me to write a chapter and adjust a more popular outlook on the battles of the Civil War in Tennessee. He wanted me to do one on Stones River. Well, I've never been a particular Civil War buff, but I've read a lot, and the Battle of Shiloh always interested me because I was taken as a child. I agreed to do it. Until that time, I had never visited Stones River Battlefield. But, I got acquainted with it. I went out there for days and went through the official records and all.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Thurman Cunningham?

MOORE: Thurman was a good friend of mine. I see his wife every once in awhile. He was in economics and later the dean of business. I thought highly of Thurman. He was a very likable person. We see his wife every once in a while now.

FORSYTHE: Dr. William Windham?

MOORE: Bill came the following fall after I came, and I've always been very close to Bill. When Bill retired, he told me that he would keep on if he had all the people like me. I was very cooperative and didn't worry him about things. I remember Bill very fondly. He was a very popular and very good teacher and a very conscientious person. He was easy to work with. You couldn't find a finer person than Bill.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Charlotte Allen?

MOORE: That's the person who was expecting a child at that time. It may have been born dead, but the idea was that she didn't know what it was going to be. She didn't know if she was going to take a temporary or permanent leave. I said, "We could probably make a place for you." And they did. I see Charlotte every once in a while.

FORSYTHE: Lillian Gray?

MOORE: I remember her to be very liberal and very outspoken. I'm not sure how outstanding she was as a teacher, but I remember her with mixed feelings.

FORSYTHE: Harry Green?

MOORE: I remember Harry. I never had Harry as a student. Dr. Corlew did. Harry used a lot of big words. (But one day an advisee of mine, Randy Tyree, who was later the mayor of Knoxville and did run for governor but didn't get it.) Randy came in and said, "I want to ask you something. Does he know what those words mean, or is he using them just to impress?" I said, "Well, Randy, I just won't say, but I'll tell you a little story. One day he was in a class with Dr. Corlew. Dr. Corlew said, "Harry, I assume you will be going on to graduate school." He said, "Yes sir, Dr. Corlew, that's a good suppository."

FORSYTHE: H.C. Brerely?

MOORE: Dr. Brerely had a heart attack and died. The summer he came, they had to retire him from Peabody. I knew him at Peabody, but I never had any courses under him.

FORSYTHE: Thelma Jennings?

MOORE: Thelma made a comment once that I was the brother she never had. She comes by to see us when she can. I will always think highly of Thelma.

FORSYTHE: Dr. James Hunta?

MOORE: I also think very highly of Jim. I got a note from him when I retired that I will always treasure.