

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
GERALDINE EATON GARNER

20 July 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW #QMS.032

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
GERALDINE EATON GARNER
Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW #QMS.032**

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q.M. Smith Collection designated as QMS.1995.32. This is Regina Forsythe. I am interviewing Mrs. Geraldine Eaton Garner. Today is Thursday July 20, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the home of Mrs. Garner, located at 1514 Murfrees Boulevard in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The tape of this interview, along with the transcripts of this interview will become part of the Quentin Miller Smith Collection and will be available to the public. Future researchers may include portions of this interview in their publications. Is that O.K. with you, Mrs. Garner?

GARNER: Yes, that is fine.

FORSYTHE: What is your full name?

GARNER: Geraldine Eaton Garner.

FORSYTHE: What was your birthplace?

GARNER: Shelbyville, Tennessee.

FORSYTHE: What is your birth date?

GARNER: September 18, 1919.

FORSYTHE: What is your father's name?

GARNER: Harvey Eaton. He was a shoe salesman.

FORSYTHE: What was your mother's name?

GARNER: Elizabeth Wood. She was a housewife.

FORSYTHE: Did you have any siblings?

GARNER: No.

FORSYTHE: What was your spouses name?

GARNER: James William Garner. He is a retired pharmacist.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any children?

GARNER: We have three children. Dr. James Garner Jr., Janet Leigh, and Lynne Whitmore.

FORSYTHE: Is there anyone else in your family that went to MTSU?

GARNER: My son graduated from MTSU.

FORSYTHE: Why did you go to MTSU?

GARNER: I lived in Murfreesboro, and that was the only way I could have gone to college, because of money.

FORSYTHE: What was your major?

GARNER: I majored in Biology, English, and Social Studies.

FORSYTHE: Why did you chose those majors?

GARNER: I just liked them. I majored in Biology because I became a biology lab assistant under Dr. [Marion] Edney and Dr. [George] Davis.

FORSYTHE: What memories do you have as an MTSU student?

GARNER: It was a nice friendly college, and I enjoyed my time there. I got my degree in three years because I went during the summer, also. I was 16 when I started and 19 years old when I graduated.

FORSYTHE: Was that normal to start college at 16 years of age?

GARNER: Well, I finished high school at 16. Usually people graduated at 17, but I had skipped a year of grade school, therefore, I finished a year early.

FORSYTHE: What was registration like?

GARNER: It was not difficult at all, then.

FORSYTHE: What did they have you do?

GARNER: That has been a long time ago! I do not remember.

FORSYTHE: Did you live on campus?

GARNER: No, I lived at home.

FORSYTHE: What did students do for fun?

GARNER: We had our clubs, I belonged to the Tau Omicron Society. We just did what students so for fun.

FORSYTHE: What is the Tau Omicron Society? What were the organization's activities?

GARNER: That was the honor society. We just had meetings.

FORSYTHE: What did students do on the week-ends.

GARNER: Since I lived at home, I do not really know much about the dormitory life.

FORSYTHE: Did you drive to school?

GARNER: No, I walked.

FORSYTHE: What condition were the buildings in?

GARNER: The newest building was the science building. All of my classes were held in the administration building, except for the science and biology classes. I spent a lot of my time in the science building. The library was over in the middle of campus, where Peck Hall is now. That is where I met my husband.

FORSYTHE: You were both students at the time?

GARNER: Yes.

FORSYTHE: Did you do any student teaching?

GARNER: Yes, I did student teaching over at the campus training school. I taught the eight grade. Mary Frances Snell was the supervisor. I had her for English class in high school, and she was one of the best English teachers that I ever had in school. She was a great teacher. I do not remember what she required of her student teachers. I suppose she asked us to do lesson plans and teaching.

FORSYTHE: What do you remember about William Judd?

GARNER: I had Mr. Judd for classes. Mr. C.C. Sims also taught me. He was a very smart man. I liked Mr. Judd, he was nice.

FORSYTHE: Katherine Monohan?

GARNER: Yes, I had Miss Monohan for a teacher, and I liked her. She was an older teacher when I was there.

FORSYTHE: Hester Rogers?

GARNER: I never did have Miss Rogers for a teacher.

FORSYTHE: E. May Saunders?

GARNER: No, Miss Saunders never taught me either.

FORSYTHE: Edna Scofield?

GARNER: She never taught me.

FORSYTHE: Isa Lee Sherrod?

GARNER: She was in library science, and I had a class under her. She came there to teach, while I was a student. She married Lawrence Freeman, here in town, and she goes to church where we do.

FORSYTHE: Bettie Murfree?

GARNER: I do not remember her.

FORSYTHE: John Arrants?

GARNER: No I do not remember him.

FORSYTHE: Dean Beasley?

GARNER: Dean Beasley was very nice. He was a good dean.

FORSYTHE: Mary Frizzell?

GARNER: Yes, I remember Miss Frizzell. She used to say we were related, some where down the line. She was nice.

FORSYTHE: T.J. Golightly?

GARNER: I had class under Dr. Golightly, psychology, I think. I liked him.

FORSYTHE: Charles Lewis?

GARNER: I think I had a class under Mr. Lewis. I do not remember much about him.

FORSYTHE: Eva Burkett?

GARNER: I never had Miss Burkett for a teacher.

FORSYTHE: Neal Frazier?

GARNER: I think I had an English class under Mr. Frazier. He was a good teacher.

FORSYTHE: Philip Mankin?

GARNER: Yes, I had Philip Mankin for a teacher. He was different, but I enjoyed his classes.

FORSYTHE: Anne Ordway?

GARNER: Yes, Miss Ordway taught me one semester. She was not my favorite teacher, but she was all right.

FORSYTHE: Anne Ashley?

GARNER: No, she never taught me.

FORSYTHE: Roy Simpson?

GARNER: He was nice. I cannot remember if I had any classes under him or not. I knew him really well, in later years, from church and other activities.

FORSYTHE: Mary Hall?

GARNER: I had an education class under Miss Mary. She was a very good educator. She was called "Miss Mary" all of the time.

FORSYTHE: T. B. Woodmore?

GARNER: He was in the business department, I never had him for a professor.

FORSYTHE: Bonnie McHenry?

GARNER: She was a secretary and was very efficient.

FORSYTHE: W. C. Hastings?

GARNER: I think he was in maintenance, but I did not know him.

FORSYTHE: J. S. Holmes?

GARNER: I never knew him very well.

FORSYTHE: C. W. Daniels?

GARNER: I did not know him.

FORSYTHE: Tommie Reynolds?

GARNER: I had physical education under Miss Tommie, but I did not have a lot of contact with her.

FORSYTHE: Harold Thompson Straw?

GARNER: No, I never had him as a teacher.

FORSYTHE: William Mebane?

GARNER: No, I never knew him very well.

FORSYTHE: Nooby Freeman?

GARNER: I did not have any classes under Mr. Freeman. He was involved with woodworking and things like that.

FORSYTHE: Horace Jones?

GARNER: No, I did not have classes under Mr. Jones.

FORSYTHE: Philip Cheek?

GARNER: No, I did not have classes under him.

FORSYTHE: Wink Midget?

GARNER: No, I did not have classes with her either.

FORSYTHE: Robert Abernathy?

GARNER: No.

FORSYTHE: B.B. Gracy?

GARNER: I had first aide under Mr. Gracy. He was nice. I noticed one of the year books was dedicated to him.

FORSYTHE: Ollie Green?

GARNER: I never had Miss Green for a teacher.

FORSYTHE: Carrie Hodges?

GARNER: No.

FORSYTHE: George Davis?

GARNER: He was the biology teacher that I worked in lab under. He was a very nice person and a great teacher. He was interested in his students.

FORSYTHE: What do you remember about MTSU President Lyon?

GARNER: He was great. He gave me my job at school. He was a good friend of my grandfather's. The students hated to see him leave. Q.M. Smith was the next president of MTSU. I was there when the transition was made. Dr. Lyon was a really nice person. He was a good president. No, I do not remember Mrs. Lyon.

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

GARNER: He was nice. He did a lot for the college. When he came to MTSU, he was received with mixed emotions. People hated to see the old president leave and have a new one come in. He did a nice job.

GARNER: You left out Mr. Marion Edney, a biology teacher. He was a very smart man. I worked under him too in the biology department.

FORSYTHE: Do you remember Knox Hutchinson?

GARNER: No. I did not have him as a professor.

FORSYTHE: What were your duties for your campus job?

GARNER: I helped in the lab. I assisted students and did some research, too.

FORSYTHE: What years did you attend MTSU?

GARNER: I started in the Fall of 1936 and I finished in the summer of 1939.

FORSYTHE: What did you do after you graduated?

GARNER: I took a business course and I worked as a secretary for a contractor. I also worked at the bank. I taught school for a year, before I married. I taught second graders at Walter Hill. When my husband and I came back to Murfreesboro, after he finished pharmacy school, I taught two years over at McFaddin. When he needed help in the drug store, I quite teaching to help him.

FORSYTHE: Which drugstore is that?

GARNER: The Prescription Shop. We later sold it to the Beckmans. Now it is Beckmans Prescription Shop.

FORSYTHE: Tell me how you met your husband?

GARNER: I met him at the library on campus. He likes to tell our love story, so you let him tell it when you interview him.

FORSYTHE: Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about?

GARNER: We are proud of the school here. It was a very good school and it has developed into an excellent university. We are really proud of it and are glad that we are MTSU graduates, as well as, our son. Murfreesboro should be very proud of MTSU.

FORSYTHE: Have you kept close ties with your alma mater?

GARNER: No, not real close.