

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
CLARENCE RUSSELL

27 JULY 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.045

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
CLARENCE RUSSELL**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.045

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q.M. Smith Collection designated as QMS.1995.45. This is Regina Forsythe. I am interviewing Mr. Clarence Russell. The interview is being conducted in the conference room of the Murfreesboro Housing Authority located at 318 East Lokey in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The tape of this interview, along with the transcript 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 all right with you Mr. Russell?

RUSSELL: Yes.

FORSYTHE: Let's start with your full name.

RUSSELL: Clarence W. Jack Russell.

FORSYTHE: Your birthplace?

RUSSELL: December 4, 1907. Do you want me to tell you about that?

FORSYTHE: Sure.

RUSSELL: I was born out in the country, to a country doctor. It snowed about six inches that night. The old cow had a calf and my dad went out the next morning to milk. He found the old cow and saw that she'd had a little one. Anyway, the snow was so deep he couldn't find that calf quickly. He got rough with the old cow. The old cow let out a moo and the little calf jumped up. That day my great grandmother Edwards rode about three miles straddled of a mule to see me.

FORSYTHE: Where were you born?

RUSSELL: I was born over in Wilson County. Born right over the line from Rutherford, approximately fifteen miles from Murfreesboro, probably fifteen miles from Lebanon and about eight from Smyrna, Tennessee.

FORSYTHE: What was that area called?

RUSSELL: It went by three or four names, more or less, Will Mattux's Store and Guy Lantern's store. Anyway it was in the midst of my people, the Towns. My

mother was a Towns. My grandfather was Issac Levi. There was twelve children in the Towns family. Issac Levi Towns, my grandfather, married Rebecca Ann Edwards. What else did you want to know about it?

FORSYTHE: What have you written down? Tell about what you have written down there.

RUSSELL: Oh, this is my first experience into Murfreesboro with my dad with horse and buggy. Old Henry, a trotter and a pacer, was also a plow horse. He was high-strung and aggressive. Dad pulled Old Henry up to a hitching post, an iron post, on the square in front of the Jewish clothing store, Mr. Sam Lichtner. I was approximately five or six years old [Mr. Russell was born 1907] and we bought shoes. It could have been the first ones that I ever had. That trip, approximately 15 miles, took most of the day from Murfreesboro and back home. I recall my first basketball game at Normal College, which is MTSU today. MTSU, or the Normal, was playing the old New York Celtics, professionals out of New York. Carried seven players. Center Dave Lopchick, approximately six foot two, look at them today, and David Banks, five foot seven a Jewish forward, were two that I can recall the names. In other words, if the other five names were written up on the wall among fifteen more; I could pick out the five that was on the Celtics basketball team. Dated a girl at old Tennessee College. I came from Nashville by train. Walked to college for a date. I left the college campus, the girls dormitory, about ten thirty. I walked to the old depot knowing that the train wouldn't be there before five or five thirty the next morning. The only people there was the clerk. He told me to go on in and make myself at home. I went and laid down across the bench. The lights were real dim and I could hear the rats running across the floor. Me being an old trapper in the creeks back home, pole cats, muskrats, any varmint that I could get, skin and sell; anyway I went in to the clerk and said, "Have you got anything in here that I can make a trap out of?" A dead fall trap. He said, "Yes, I got a big book for this trigger. I tied a string taut, and I baited it for the rats. I think I caught about five rats that night, before the train came the next morning, at five o'clock.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about the schools that you went to.

RUSSELL: I'll never forget. My granddaddy had given me a little red wagon for Christmas. This was my first day to go to school, Greenwood. My mother took me over to my neighbors, the Johns'. I pulled the little red wagon. I never will forget Mrs. Helen Johns, my mother's dear friend. She told my mother, "Bertha, I'm a going to let Hubert take care of Clarence." Hubert was one of her sons. He was about four or five years older than me. We went over to the school, about two miles, and I pulled that little red wagon. That was my first day in school. My teacher was Miss Lula Rather. Miss Lula died in the flu epidemics about 1917 or 1918. I went to school there up until the eighth grade. We walked backwards and forwards. I'll never forget spelling. I was pretty good and was head. Otis Arland and I were tied for marks, good marks. Miss Lula was going to give us seven buffalo nickels. The one that had the most black marks by Christmas. This one

morning it was real cold, misting snow, and I was head of the spelling class. Anyway, that was the chance before Christmas. It was about two miles that I had to walk. It was cold, wind was blowing, misting snow, you know. So I had a creek to cross or I could have went around by the bridge. I wanted to cut the short way and get there quicker. And so this was called a slope fence. A slope fence was made to keep the neighbors cattle from going up and down the creek when they was grazing. It was made out of poles. They first took rock and they made a point from bank to bank on these rocks. Then they took these poles, I'd say about ten or twelve feet long and they put one end on the bottom of the creek and the other end across this runway. Then they'd put heavy rock down in the creek so that wouldn't wash away and of course they would nail them to the bigger poles, probably four inches in diameter. Anyway, this morning now the creek was up a little bit, I had about two feet that the water wasn't running over, probably three feet, we'll say. So I got down on my knees and crawled across these poles to the other side of the creek. Well the mist from the creek from the water, you see, got on me and wet me real good. Well anyway, I had about five hundred yards to go up the creek to my step-grandmother's, Aunt Sis Towns. Well by the time I got up to Aunt Sis', which was about seven thirty, I guess, I'd gotten pretty cold, so I decided that I'd better stop and warm. Anyway, I knocked on the door and grandmother came to the door, and she said "Clarence what are you doing out this morning as cold as it is? You come on in here, I'm going to thaw you out." Well, they had what we call a grate. This grate was heated with coal and there weren't too may grates in the country, to tell you the truth about it. I never will forget, her grandson Irvin Swain was about eighteen or nineteen years old, and she told Irvin, "Irvin you go and get the tub, quick." So anyway, Irvin went and got the wash tub and put it down in front of the grate. Then he went to the well and started drawing water, which was warm and putting in this tub. By that time Sis said, "Pull them clothes off." You know because I was just about six or seven years old, I said, "What?" She said, "Pull them clothes off." So anyway, I turned my back and pulled my clothes off, you know, and got in that tub and set down. By that time Irvin had plenty of water in the tub. So grandma took a towel and she started bathing me. Of course I was embarrassed, in a way, but she saved my life. If I had kept going, you know when you freeze you don't realize it. But I would have frozen if I hadn't stopped at aunt Sis Towns'. Once she got me thawed out and dried me off, or gave me the towel and I dried myself off; I put my clothes on. She said, "Irvin you get to the barn and get old so and so and the buggy and you're going to take Clarence back home." Which he did. The next day, or probably the next day, the weather was fair and I went to school. It came to spelling class. Maybe there wasn't over eight or ten of us, I guess, Miss Lula said, "Clarence you were supposed to have been head of the class yesterday," which was bad. She didn't know that I'd almost frozen to death. She said, "Tell you what I'm going to do, I'm going to give each one of you four buffalo nickels apiece." She was going to divide it. She was going to give seven buffalo nickels, that would be thirty-five cents. So instead she give me four, which was twenty cents and Otis Arnold, which was next to me, give him four, too. So that cost her forty cents. That would be eight buffalo nickels. Now what else?

FORSYTHE: Tell me how to spell Irvin's last name.

RUSSELL: Irvin Swain.

FORSYTHE: That flu epidemic, can you tell me more about that?

RUSSELL: Yes, I guess my family must have been immune. At that time there was my mother and my dad and my granddaddy and my step-grandmother. I believe there was about four of us boys, and none of us had the flu or pneumonia either. But now a lot of people died. In fact, Miss Lula Rather I believe there was three sisters that died from the flu. I tell you something else. One of her brothers, now of course he was just a little fellow at that time, I ran into him here in Murfreesboro, one of her brothers. And so then after I graduated, at the eighth grade, of course after Miss Lula, after she died; then I had Cleo Mann. She came in and taught, and Mattie Becton she came in and taught. She was from Murfreesboro. Lassie Henderson, she came. I went to four or five different teachers after eighth grade. Then I went from there to old Jefferson, ninth grade there. Miss Jessie Nesbit, Miss Jenny Halliburton, I believe was the two teachers there at that time.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about your family's farm.

RUSSELL: Well, I'll have to go back to this. As I remember, we lived in a cabin, a one bedroom cabin up on the hill approximately eight hundred yards from the big log house --called it a story and one half. A story and one half meant that everything was big, normal size, you know, down stairs. Then the upstairs it was kind of a half of a house. Okay, I can remember the first time there in the cabin, I had the belly ache, the stomach ache. So anyway, I was laying down in the floor and so looked like mama couldn't do nothing with me. So she went down and got my granddaddy, granddaddy Russell, and came up and said "Son, what's wrong with you?" I got the stomach ache, got the belly ache. He said "Get up." So I got up and for some reason the pain ceased. That's the first time that I remember being in that cabin.

FORSYTHE: Your son said your family had been there five generations?

RUSSELL: Let's see now, my great-granddaddy, Bill Cook -- now Bill Cook is on record right here in the court house. You can go to the marriage license, and you'll find my great-granddaddy Bill Cook or William Cook marriage license to Margaret Hunter. That's along about 1935 or '40-somewhere's along there.

FORSYTHE: You mean 1835?

RUSSELL: Yeah. So anyway, I don't remember grandpa Cook. But grandpa Cook was a blacksmith. I know this much, that he shod old General Hood's stallion because I

found one of his date books upstairs between the rafters. The rafters was on a plate about twelve or fourteen inches wide. Grandpa Cook's date book, I found it between these rafters, and at the time, that book had been there I reckon twenty five or thirty years. Now in this book was a pass for Bill Cook to go by Couchville Pike through the Yankee lines to Nashville, with wagon and team, to get his iron works. I mean his iron, to make whatever, horse shoes, plow points, you know, door hinges, pokers, fire pokers, just anything needed in the country. Now in this pass it said for him to come back to Nashville and Murfreesboro Pike through the Confederate lines. I wouldn't have taken ---oh money wouldn't have bought this pass. It was signed by General Hood and to my way of thinking it was just a few days before the battle of Murfreesboro. So anyway, in 1951 or 1952, the house burned up and among some old history, you know what I mean, that money wouldn't have bought -- this pass burned.

FORSYTHE: That's too bad.

RUSSELL: Yes. Grandpa Cook died and the farm went direct to my granddaddy Wilson Russell. Then when he died why there was two heirs, my aunt Carrey Russell McMahan and my daddy. I remember very well that my daddy paid my aunt Carrey \$1,000.00 for her part of the old home place, old log house and all like that, you know.

RUSSELL: Now do you want me to tell you how I got it?

FORSYTHE: Sure.

RUSSELL: I was working Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, Akron, Ohio, building automobile tires. I had been there about six or seven years. Due to layoffs, just about every year, I got sick and tired of that. If I saved up any money, I spent it before I'd be called back. So I decided I'd just start farming. My mother and daddy had got disabled, you know. The boys, well there was four boys, and they'd gone to Nashville and was working jobs. My two sisters was still at home. So anyway, I got in touch with the boys, the grown ones, in fact, I was fixing to get married. When I left old Akron, I never will forget, down at the pool room I told the boys, I said, "Well this is the last time Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company is going to lay me off. I'm going back home." They laughed and said, "No, you'll be back," said "Once in the coal mines, always in the coal mines, " and said, "Once in the gum mines, always be in the gum mines." I said, "I'll see you." Back home I had it understood with the boys that I would take the farm over and support my mother and dad. So my wife, we got married, and we moved in with my mother and dad. I started farming. Now do you want me to tell you some more about that?

FORSYTHE: Yes, I do.

RUSSELL: I started farming. Of course I didn't have any money. My money I'd made at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company; I'd spent that you know. I had baseball talent. I'd hurt my arm in 1933, I believe it was. I stuck to baseball playing, you know what I mean. So I went thirty six miles from Akron to Cleveland, Cleveland Indians baseball. So I went over there quite a bit to see some of the greatest baseball talent in the world, Tyrus Raymond Cobb and umpteen more. So anyway, back home now, I started farming with two old horses. One of them was Old Frank. He was blind. My daddy broke him years before that. I had him and an old horse named Old Charlie. The equipment that I had to farm with was handed down from, you might say, from my granddaddy Cook and granddaddy Russell. Anyway, I managed to borrow some money on those two horses and that old equipment from Murfreesboro Bank and Trust Company. Mr. Bob Bell was the president and Mr. Homer Powell was the trustee. I borrowed enough money to buy four milk cows and I started milking. We was living off of them four cows. Of course I was farming with the equipment and the two horses. Well anyway, I made money; supported a family. I'd been married approximately two years I reckon when my first baby came along, Tom Russell. He was born in St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee. Then fifteen months later, Ken Russell, Kenneth Bub Russell was born. We couldn't make it to St. Thomas with Bub, so Bub was born in Murfreesboro, Rutherford County Hospital.

RUSSELL: Do you want to know the rest of the family?

FORSYTHE: Sure do.

RUSSELL: Let me tell you about Tom Russell. Dr. Caldwell delivered him. So of course the wife was in labor, and I told Dr. Caldwell, I said, "Doc, let me tell you something, If you don't deliver me a son that's left handed and make a ball player," I said, "I ain't going to pay you nothing." Tom was born and later on he was left handed and he's still left handed. Yeah. He was a great prospect for baseball, but he was in Lipscomb and I never will forget it. He wrote me a little note and he said "Well Daddy, I know you wanted us to go to pro-baseball, but I think more of the Lord than I do of baseball." So he quit; you know what I mean. So then approximately in four or five years, Rebecca Ann was born in St Thomas Hospital. Let me muscle in with Mr. Favor Jennings. It was Jennings and Ayers, undertakers, right here in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Mr. Favor Jennings went to the hospital. I'd meet him in Smyrna and we'd go down to the hospital and bring my wife and the kids, the babies, home. Mr. Favor Jennings went to St Thomas Hospital and hauled my wife and three kids to our home. Mr. Jennings has been dead for years and Edwin Ayres is still in the business. I think all totaled he has buried about fourteen of my people. He buried my mother was the first. That was 1944. Since then of course he buried my daddy, and I think all totaled up to date he's buried about fourteen of my family and my neighbors. Then Jenny was born in St. Thomas Hospital.

RUSSELL: Do you want to know where the names come from?

FORSYTHE: Sure.

RUSSELL: Let me see now, Tom Russell, I named him Thomas LaFayette. Thomas was after St. Thomas Hospital and LaFayette was after a great uncle of mine. I never will forget this. He said, "Clarence, if that baby is a boy, I want you to name him after me." At that time Uncle Fate was up in years, you know, and he and Aunt Lila didn't have no children. I said, " Uncle Fate, I'll think about it." And to that Uncle Fate said, "If you'll name him after me, I'll send him school, through high school." But I didn't go for that. I just named him after the hospital and after him. I never will forget coming from the hospital. I stopped at Uncle Fate's to tell him about Tom Russell, that we'd named him Thomas Lafayette. So it happened that he and Aunt Lila was both home. I never will forget.. I said, "Well Uncle Fate it's a boy." But God what did you name him? I said, "Named him Thomas Lafayette." Aunt Lila looked around and said, "Well if I couldn't have give him a first name, I wouldn't have give him the second name." Anyway, Uncle Fate got killed. A truck ran over him when Tom Russell was about eight or nine years old.

FORSYTHE: When was Tom Russell born?

RUSSELL: Let's see, Tommy will be fifty-five years I believe August first.

FORSYTHE: So it's 1940?

RUSSELL: That's about right I guess. There's fifteen months difference between he and Kenneth. I believe already there's six generations that has Wilson. My granddaddy Russell was named Wilson. My daddy was named Wilson and I was named Wilson. Kenneth Russell was named Wilson, and Byran Wilson -- I guess there is six generations.

FORSYTHE: Who's Bryan Wilson?

RUSSELL: He's Kenneth's son down in Paris, Tennessee. Bryan's getting married August fifth, I believe this coming Saturday week. Let's see now, Rebecca Ann was named after my grandmother, Rebecca Ann Edwards, my grandmother who was married to Issac Levi Towns; and Jenny was named after my grandmother Jenny Cook. Jenny Cook was Bill Cook and Margaret Hunter's only child.

FORSYTHE: Jenny doesn't have a middle name?

RUSSELL: Jenny Lynn. Kenneth Wilson. Thomas Lafayette. Jenny Lynn, let me see; I got the Lynn from a great singer.

FORSYTHE: Loretta Lynn?

RUSSELL: No, not Loretta Lynn. She was a Porter, nightingale. My goodness, that's been too many years ago, but anyway, there was a famous fort by the name of Lynn. But there's more to it. So we added that to Jenny and as I said the Jenny came from Jenny Cook Russell.

FORSYTHE: Let me get your father and mother's names.

RUSSELL: My father's name was William Pinckney.

FORSYTHE: Pinckney? I had a great uncle named that.

RUSSELL: Is that right?

FORSYTHE: And your mother's name?

RUSSELL: My mother had only Bertha. She didn't have any middle name.

FORSYTHE: And they were farmers?

RUSSELL: Yes, we were farmers. I was the first in the family to leave home and go to the city.

FORSYTHE: And that was Akron, Ohio?

RUSSELL: No, I was seventeen years old, third year of high school in Smyrna and I got disgusted. Had to feed and cloth the rest of them and I got tired of that so I went to Nashville and went to work. I went to work for a packing house. I was out pitching baseball, you know what I mean. A cousin of mine was working at the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in Akron, Ohio, building automobile tires. He sent me word that they was hiring in the rubber shops so I went to Akron and got a job with Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, building automobile tires.

FORSYTHE: You said you were pitching baseball. Were you on a team?

RUSSELL: Yeah, I sure was. This team was named St. Martha's and it was sponsored by this Catholic Church, St. Martha's. Father MacKeever was the priest there. 1932 we beat Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company two games out of three for the city championship. It was the first time that a team other than Firestone or Goodyear had won the city championship in years. I pitched the first game and I beat them three to nothing. The first game I pitched was under the lights. They had professionals, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company and Firestone, too. Back then professionals didn't make too much money. So Firestone and Goodyear would hire these professional baseball players, amateur or whatever, pay them more money than they could make playing in leagues, you see what I mean? So the next game I beat them seven to six. Two games out of three for the city championship. The first game I pitched against Johnny Burdick, a right-hander,

and I beat him three to nothing. He'd been in professional baseball. The next game I pitched against a left-hander, Lefty Hollran. This I want to tell you. I remember Sam Case catching for Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. Of course I was, you might say, from Smyrna, Murfreesboro and Sam was from Knoxville. Of course when I left there, I forgot all about all the old ball players, this, that, and the other. Thirty something years later I happened to be over in Chattanooga and I always got the sports page, ball games and one thing and another. It was telling about the Baseball Hall of Fame, not the professionals, but amateurs, you might say, there in Chattanooga. It mentioned Sam Case, and I said to this friend of mine, "I'll bet you that I know this Sam Case. I'm going to satisfy my curiosity and I'm going to call him." So I never will forget, I called the number, this lady answered the phone. I said, "I'd like to speak to Mr. Sam Case." I heard her call, "Sam, somebody on the phone." He came to the phone, and I said, "Well old boy, what's your batting average today?" We was up in our sixty's. He said "Oh, I'm hitting about a thousand." He said, "Oh yeah, you don't think I know who you are, do you? I said "I don't think you do Sam." He said " You are that hitting pitcher that beat the hell out of us for the city championship in 1932." And honey he is still living. I have been intending, and that was 1932, now how many years would that have been ago?

FORSYTHE: Sixty-three.

RUSSELL: All right, sixty-three years ago. Okay, I called him about a year and one half ago and he lives in Chattanooga now. He's in a wheel chair. I told him, I said, "Sam, how would you like for me to come up to see you, and we'll get a camera man from your main paper and a sports writer, and we'll have our pictures made." He said, "You hitting pitcher that would tickle me to death." I have been intending to do it, but I just keep putting it off. I got to get in touch with Sam and I hope he's still living. I think that'll be something great, you know, sixty some odd years. Of course we're not major leaguers, but he caught some professional baseball.

FORSYTHE: St. Martha's was based out of Nashville?

RUSSELL: No, no honey, in Akron --in Akron, you see -- Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, that was the big plant. Yeah.

FORSYTHE: Well, let me bring you back to Tennessee. What can you tell me about the Sam Davis Home? Do you have any stories about that?

RUSSELL: Sam Davis home? The only thing I know about Sam Davis home -- now I've been in the Sam Davis home many times. Let me get this straight. Sarah Davis, my memory is not as good as it used to be I'm eighty-seven years old. So anyway, this is Sam Davis' niece that run Sam Davis home for years. The name may come to me. I knew her personally. I'll tell you something else. Sam Davis' nephew, Bob Bell, president of Murfreesboro Bank and Trust Company for years --Mr. Bell on his dying bed, I think I put that down here somewhere, --well

anyway, on Mr. Bob's dying bed, I know he was crazy about sucker fish and sucker fish is known for more bones than any fish, you know what I mean? But you got to know how to cook them and how to prepare them. They are the most delicious fish that we think, I think, or a lot of people think, that you can catch. I know Mr. Bell loved sucker fish. So I caught a big mess of suckers and I took him a big mess when he was on his dying bed. He was a nephew now of Sam Davis. Of course everybody knows what happened to Sam Davis. We used to have our family reunion, the Hunters, at the dining room down there at the Sam Davis home.

FORSYTHE: Let's talk about World War I. How did it affect you here in Tennessee?

RUSSELL: World War I? Okay, I had an uncle, Lynam Towns, was in World War I. He was in medics. I was eleven years old and me and my Dad was cutting winter wood. We heard the factory horns, whistles, blowing at Smyrna. We stopped and listened and my daddy said, "Clarence," he said, "I'll be --World War is over. Your mother will be having a fit." Well we had about five yard I reckon to go down the hill. We was going down the hill and we could hear my mother hollering and screaming. The war's over, the war's over! Which it was.

FORSYTHE: So the factory rang their bells?

RUSSELL: I tell you. You want me to tell something else about the Hunters?

FORSYTHE: Sure.

RUSSELL: All right, Sam Adkisson told me a lot about World War I. Of course, Sam is dead and gone. He was a veteran of World War I; died out here at the Veterans Hospital. I was about twelve years old and I worked quite a bit ,when I was caught up at my home, for Sam Adkisson. He told me a lot about life. He and Frank Hunter, a cousin of mine from Smyrna, and another guy by the name of Harley Davidson left Smyrna, Tennessee going to World War I. I know that they was headed for Breas France, This should be interesting. I don't know whether it was the US Levithon, that ship I think, belonged to Germany; but when it was declared American; the United States got that great ship. It was one of the greatest. We'll put it like this, on this ship, headed for Breas France, now you're talking about the flu epidemic. The flu epidemic hit the military world. Sam Adkisson told me this out of his own mouth. He said Frank Hunter for one had the flu and said he sat on the side of the bed with his head in his hands. Sam said we'd try to enlighten him by telling him everything is going to be all right and we are going back to Smyrna. But Frank Hunter died and was buried at sea. Sam Adkisson told me one big soldier, eighteen or nineteen years old, got up out of bed and fell right out in the floor and died. He said they just died like flies. Sam said that he didn't know when he got to Breas, France, but anyway, he got over it and lived through the war and came back to Murfreesboro to his farm up here on Stones River. Of course I know there was more than Frank Hunter that died.

This I do remember so well, you know, Sam Adkisson telling me. Frank was about one third cousin of mine I guess. In other words, he was probably a great nephew or a nephew of this Margaret Hunter that married William Cook.

FORSYTHE: What is the name of your brothers and sisters?

RUSSELL: The name of my brothers and sisters?

FORSYTHE: Yes.

RUSSELL: Now I had three brothers in World War II. All of them was in combat at the same time. Reed was the oldest. Hollis was next and then my brother Wyman, the baby boy in the family. The three of them was in combat. Let me see now, Wyman died first. I don't remember exactly the date. Then my brother Reed died. He was at the new Tennessee Nursing Home out here at Walter Hill at the Veterans Hospital. He had a massive heart attack and they rushed into the hospital in Murfreesboro. He died out here at the medical center. That was about two years ago.

FORSYTHE: What about your brother Hollis?

RUSSELL: Hollis died about a year ago. I forgot about him. So that was my three brothers. Then I had a brother named Shirley. Of course he's been dead ten or twelve years. In other words, I was the oldest. Then I had a little brother named Gardner. He died with colitis when he was thirteen months old. We were still living in this cabin. I just barely remember him being in a baby bed. He had beautiful curly hair. My mother had a way of fixing curls on babies. We was all country kids, born with curly hair; but little baby Gardner was kind of a blond. Anyway, I remember going with my dad down to the barn. At that time I wasn't three years old. We went down to the barn and got Old Henry and hitched him to the buggy. We didn't have a well up there on the hill at the cabin. We had to get our water from down at my granddaddy's, all of our drinking water. All the rest of it came from the creek in the barrels. So anyway, we got Old Henry and hitched him to the buggy and my daddy had a bucket. I didn't know what it was all about, exactly. We went up to my granddaddy's and my daddy went around to the well and drew up a bucket of water. I remember my daddy was crying and I didn't know what he was crying about. Anyway, we got in the buggy with this bucket of water and we went out to the road and up the hill to the cabin. The next thing I can remember me and my mother and my dad was in the buggy and behind a little white box of a thing. There was four people walking and carrying this casket down the hill. My mother and my dad was both crying, see.

[END TAPE]

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q. M. Smith Collection. It is designated as QMS.1995.46. This is Regina Forsythe. I am interviewing Mr. Clarence Russell. Today is Thursday, July 26 or 27, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the conference room of the Murfreesboro Housing Authority, located at 318 East Lokey in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. You want to tell me about bones, you say?

RUSSELL: Approximately 1965 the Corps of Engineers bought property to do the J. Percy Preist Lake. They got about one hundred acres of my property. I was dairy farming. We had to move our cemeteries. The local undertakers didn't have a chance. There was some big military guy out of Oklahoma come in here and outbid all the local undertakers. They got the job to move our graves. I never will forget this one day that they came to move the Russell graveyard. I had all the authority because I owned the property. My son Kenneth, now I guess he had already moved to Paris. He was in the furniture business. He came. They came in there with trucks and just boxes to put the bones and so on and so forth in. Well, we didn't like that much. They had their cowboy boots on, the two sons of this guy, the dad, I don't remember his name. But this one big military man we're talking about had the authority to move the graves. They come in there with just rough boxes, put the bones and one thing and another in and we didn't like that. But not to cause any friction and so on and so forth we just went along with them. Of course they hired local people, you might say, to dig into the graves and get the bones and whatever. Well of course I recognized my granddaddy. My granddaddy didn't have any markers. Some of my people had markers and some of them didn't. For instance, my granddaddy Russell, as I'm telling you, he accidentally shot himself. He was bird hunting. Fired a shot at a single bird and then he went to load his gun. He was tamping it down and the tamp rod hung and jerked the stock of the gun up and hung the trigger into a strap on his boot. The gun went off and shot about half of his head off. So anyway, he had a broken arm. He was mowing hay and the mower turned over and broke his arm. He lost about twelve teeth and two or three inches of his jaw bone and one eye. Of course I could recognize him, identify him by the broken arm and that jaw, which I did. Of course they got the bones out you know and they put them in this box and marked them. All these bodies was going to a cemetery down at Mt. Juliet, Tennessee. That's where the bodies of my people was going. Then we come around to little baby Gardner, his grave, I knew exactly where it was. As I said, they didn't want us in there. There wasn't a dad-blamed thing they could do. I just told them, "Let me tell you something right now," I said, "These are my people, they don't belong to you people and I'm going identify them so we can put markers on the graves after we move them down to Mt. Juliet, Tennessee." So anyway we settled that. We come to little Gardner's grave and I never will forget how yellow the soil was, the dirt. Got down to his, well there wasn't nothing there, but his curls. The way I understand it, hair will not rot. He had been dead, well I was born in seven and he was born in about 1909 and this was sixty five, now you help me figure it out. That was about sixty five or sixty six.

FORSYTHE: Fifty five years.

RUSSELL: All right. Anyway, the only thing was those five curls. They was approximately four inches long. The way my mother would do it, I never will forget. She'd take a pan of water and put lye soap in this water. Then she'd wet the hair and she'd put the hair around her finger, take a comb and so on and so forth; and that lye would stiffen the hair and leave the curls, see.

FORSYTHE: Was that uncomfortable to have that in your hair?

RUSSELL: No, no, it wasn't all that stiff. It might make you mad. But anyway, they come to those curls and there they were laying right there. No bones, he was only about thirteen months old. His bones were so soft that they deteriorated. I was tempted to tell him I want them curls. Suddenly, I said uh-uh, I don't need them. I would just cause hard feelings and so on, and what am I going to do with them? It's best to let them go along with the rest of the bodies. Which it did. You see the dirt was what we call clay, yellow or red, and those little curls were blond. Moved him along with the rest of them to Mt. Juliet, Tennessee. I believe there was about seventeen or eighteen of my people. There was grandpa Cook; grandma Cook; Jenny, their daughter, was my grandmother; Wilson Russell and his second wife, Lucy Harrison Russell; my aunt Jessie. Let's see there was a Mr. and Mrs. McCannon, was buried there in the Russell graveyard. Mr. McCannon was a mill-right at a little place called Lamar about five hundred yards across the spring creek over to a little place they call Lamar. There was a grocery store there and there was a hoop mill, hoops for barrels and one thing and another and this flour mill. Mr. McCannon got tangled up in one of the shafts and just broke him all to pieces. My dad heard him a hollering. He ran as fast as he could across the bridge. Mr. Ed Sanders was already on that side of the creek and he and my daddy got there just about the same time. So Mr. Mac was broke all to pieces. Of course, there was no such thing as going to the hospital, you might say, for country people. Mr. Mac died the next day. I never will forget. I was at school and at that time I think I was about six or seven years old. The teacher would send us with a bucket and we'd go to a farmer's house and get water. That's where we got our drinking water. Me and somebody had gone to the well to get some water and we come back, two of us, and the school teacher would line us up and pass that bucket of water. Everybody drank out of the same dipper. Somebody whispered and told me that Mr. MacCannon died. Of course, he and Mrs. Mac, there's a lot of history behind them too -- they are buried at Mt. Juliet with the rest of my people.

FORSYTHE: Which cemetery is that?

RUSSELL: The only thing I know honey is Mt Juliet cemetery.

FORSYTHE: And what size boxes did they put them in?

RUSSELL: Those boxes was probably, we'll say, eight or ten feet long and about four or five feet wide.

FORSYTHE: So they put one person per box?

RUSSELL: Yes, put the bones in the boxes. My mother, Bertha Towns Russell, she always said, "When I die I don't want to be buried out here in this graveyard," the Russell graveyard. My daddy said "Well I don't want to be buried down in that Town's graveyard." My brothers were in World War II. My mother died first and Edwin Ayers and Favor Jennings, undertakers, buried her. Down at old Fellowship Church was the Towns cemetery and I knew that the Corps of Engineers sooner or later was going to buy our property. We'd have to move our cemetery to get along with everybody. Of course, as I said, my brothers were in World War II. My brother Hollis was in there five years. My mother and daddy both died and he wasn't here for the burials. Now back to my mother. To satisfy and to get along with everybody, I buried her down at old Fellowship Church, the Town's graveyard. I buried her in a metal casket and a metal vault because I knew sooner or later my daddy would die and I was going to move Mama. We were going to have to move the cemeteries. A year later, that was 1943 I believe it was, when my mother died and '44 then my daddy died. I buried my daddy at the Russell graveyard. When the Corps of Engineers came in to move them I got Edwin Ayers, and I believe Mr. Favor Jennings was dead, to take my mother up and move her to Mt. Juliet. The casket was intact and the vault was intact, because it was metal, the best. When we went into my dad's grave, I couldn't get a metal vault and had to bury him in a plastic job. When we went to move that plastic was gone. I called Edwin Ayers and said, "Edwin, I want you to come down here and look at this thing." Which he did. Edwin was already down there to move my mother, so I didn't have but about two miles to go and get Edwin and brought him up there and showed him. He said "Well, Clarence there isn't nothing I can do about it. I'll refund your money." I said "No I don't want you to refund my money, I just want you to know what's what." You see I couldn't get a metal vault for him on account of World War II going on -- the iron works or metal, whatever, the army was getting it. So after all's said and done, my mother and dad is buried side by side.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Brown's Mill.

RUSSELL: I wasn't over four or five years old. I wasn't too big that I didn't sleep between my granddaddy Russell and my nanny at night. At that time the mill at Lamar had burned up and the farmers were taking their wheat on Stones River. Brown's Mill was about four or five miles from Walter Hill. I never will forget. I wanted to go with my granddaddy to take the wheat to Brown's Mill to get ground into flour. I stayed down at my granddaddy's and slept between he and my nanny. I must have been four or five years old at least. The next morning, up early, Nanny cooked breakfast. My granddaddy went to the barn and fed the horses. He had harnessed up the horses, old Minnie and old Judy. That was the old mares' name.

Most farmers kept mares and they bred them to jacks and got mule colts. Of course mules went into work stock. People liked to work mules. So at weaning time somebody would come around and buy up the young colts. Granddaddy had harnessed them up. He hitched them up to the wagon then he loaded the wheat. We ate breakfast and we went to Brown's Mill. I never seen it before. What you did you had to wait till your turn. Finally we got my granddaddy's, our wheat, unloaded and ground it. They took out what they call a toll, so much. Finally we left in the wagon, old Minnie and old Judy, and we got almost home, within about two miles, and the moon was shining. I had gotten sleepy and so my granddaddy said, "Son just lay down there on one of them sacks of flour." I never will forget, he took his coat off and put the coat over me. When I woke up out front by the wheat garner, where they put the wheat when it was thrashed, we was right in front of the house. It must have been about nine or ten o'clock, I reckon. It didn't take me long to go to bed. I've been by Brown's Mill since then, around it, but that is my experience and my so-so at Brown's Mill. I've got a picture of it there someplace. I've had it for years and years. Of course it's been out working, not too many years. Somebody told me that part of the dam had washed out. There is two forks of Stones River, east and west, and they both run together down here at Old Jefferson and make one stream. That one stream is the big stream to J. Percy Priest Lake.

FORSYTHE: They took a hundred acres of your land?

RUSSELL: Yes, approximately one hundred acres.

FORSYTHE: It's under water?

RUSSELL: Oh yes, it's under water.

FORSYTHE: Did you have a choice in selling this?

RUSSELL: No, no we had to sell it.

FORSYTHE: How did the local people feel?

RUSSELL: Oh, they didn't like it, but there wasn't nothing they could do about it. Wasn't a thing you could do about it. Anymore, if you got land and the city or the state or whatever wants to build, which is kindly a necessity; why you just have to sell, that's it. If they want to build a highway through your farm, well there isn't nothing you can do but just sell them. J. Percy Priest was named after one of our great Democratic senators, J. Percy Priest. He was a Nashville man. I guess the largest seller was Christine Sanders. I think she sold them about seventeen hundred acres. I had some land left, it's a long story. I don't want to go into it. Divorce, and so and so forth you might say, destroy my family.

FORSYTHE: Did you have enough land left for your farm? To work your farm?

RUSSELL: Yes, but I didn't. I just more or less retired, I was up in my sixties.

RUSSELL: Do you want me to tell you about where my children are?

FORSYTHE: Sure.

RUSSELL: Tom Russell is the oldest. He graduated from David Lipscomb College and married Joy Blackman. They have two children, John and Larissa. He is a minister. Joy, his wife, is a graduate, too. She was living in Chattanooga. They have the two children. This was in Huntsville, Alabama. They put the kids in private schools and they graduated with good honors, good grades. John Russell, the oldest, graduated from Auburn. Four point nothing, all the goody goody, sororities, one thing and another. I believe that John's graduates, that he was among four in the United States. He worked about two years, I believe it was, and then he went over the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, Virginia. He graduated over there with high honors. Later on, maybe a couple of years, then Larissa went to Auburn and she graduated from Auburn. This is my great grandbaby. They live in Muscle Shoals.

FORSYTHE: What's your great grandbaby's name?

RUSSELL: Don't ask me. I can't tell you. She's about eleven or twelve months old, I guess. But anyway, that's kind of embarrassing. Them old Sarah's and Nancy's and one thing and another is about a thing of the past. That's Tom Russell's family. Kenneth Russell, he graduated from MTSU and he married Lydia. I can't think of the last name right now. They live in Paris, Tennessee. Their business, she's secretary to the only high school in that county, to the principal or whatever. They have two children, just like Tom Russell, you know. All of them happened along about the same time. I think Bryan and John, I think about eight months difference in them. Both of them around thirty years old. Let me put this in-- baseball. I had a country ball club up here about ten years, little leaguers, Babe Ruth, one thing and another. Then my son. that graduated from MTSU, put fourteen years in Paris, Tennessee with little league, Babe Ruth. I've got some write ups that Bub got, Kenneth got, signed by the governor of the state of Tennessee, house of representatives and the senate, big write-ups. He took this ball club outa' a little place like Paris, Tennessee -- oh he eat Murfreesboro up, little league, Babe Ruth, one thing and another. He played teams, and of course, little league, Babe Ruth, Jacksonville, Florida, Phoenix, Arizona, Knoxville, Memphis and so on. Fourteen years that he give to the little fellows and still kept his business going. Today now, there's Bryan. Bryan went to Knoxville to go to school at the University of Tennessee. He had a sweetie back in Paris so he couldn't stay away. So he went back to Paris, Tennessee and went to University of Tennessee at Martin. He graduated from Martin. This coming fifth of August he's getting married to a fine young lady. I couldn't tell you her name. She graduated from University of Tennessee. There's Beck, the oldest daughter, well I

can't tell you too dog-gone much about her family. But anyway, eight of my grandkids, seven of them are college graduates. The eighth one is little Bethany, down here at Mt. Juliet, Tennessee and her mama is Jenny, Jenny Lynn Green. She's a great athlete. I'll have to wedge this in, muscle it in or whatever--she's already five foot eleven and one half and the doctor says she'll be probably six feet two. I hope they are so wrong on that.

FORSYTHE: How old is she?

RUSSELL: She's fourteen -- five foot eleven and one half. She's great--softball and basketball--she's great. I've been told that she's the greatest athlete girl that's ever been in Mt. Juliet high school. You can't tell about these kids. I've asked her if she wouldn't like to take tennis. You know she'd make a great tennis player because she's tall. She could be a millionaire by the time she's fifteen years old, but she don't like it. She likes that softball and basketball. Golly-bill, you see she has two half brothers. Jenny and her first husband, well they didn't get along some way. He wanted to drive fast cars. He didn't drink, he didn't smoke, good boy, but he just wasn't worth a nickel. So Jenny fired him. You know, divorced him, and then married Bill Green. He was divorced and had two boys. Jenny just took them. To be frank with you, she wanted a kid of her own. She'd been with her first husband, birth controls pills, so she went to the doctor and the doctor examined her. He said, "Jenny, I don't think you are going to be able to have any babies," you know conceive; and she said, "I'll show you!" And sure enough, by-golly, she conceived and this is Bethany that I'm talking about.

RUSSELL: Policeman around the square.

FORSYTHE: I don't know that one, tell me that one.

RUSSELL: I recall a policeman around the square when I was about fifteen years old. His name was Mr. McNabb. When I went to Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company this policeman, Mr. McNabb's son, was named Sam and they called him Rabbit. Rabbit graduated from MTSU as a lawyer. So he came to Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company and went to work in the law firm there. By accident we got in touch. Of course Sam was a little older than me. Probably they only had one policeman at that time. I was about fifteen years old so that's been a long time ago. But I can remember Mr. McNabb going around that square. The first electrocution, I'll tell you about it. This guy killed a good friend of mine -- caught him on a commode in the City Cafe, George Snow. I don't know if it was over drugs or what. This guy was my friend. I'd wrestle with him and so on and so forth. This guy, he caught George on the commode with this knife and he knew that George couldn't get his pants up. In other words it shackled him. His pants shackled him, and he killed him -- cut his head off. Well I think he went to the penitentiary. He got out and he killed a young taxi driver. Lanum DuBois is the guy that killed Snow. Then he cut this young cab drivers' throat and killed him. But it so happened that I was in Murfreesboro running an errand of some kind. I

knew I had heard they were going to sentence Lanum DuBois for killing this cab driver. So I rushed up in the court room in time that I heard. I forget the judge's name right now, but anyway the jury found him guilty of murder in the first degree. The judge went along with it and they electrocuted him in Nashville, Tennessee, this Lanum DuBois. Somebody told me, said right over there is DuBois wife She had a little two year old girl in her lap. They was there to soften up the jury. And would you believe they came from Huntsville, Alabama, and stayed over here in this West Brooks Tower. Do you know anything about West Brook Tower?

FORSYTHE: No, I know where it is.

RUSSELL: Anyway, DuBois' widow lives over there and I met her. This daughter, the little kid, two or three year old, she's a grown woman and got kids of her own. As far as I know, this is the only people that's ever been electrocuted out of Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

FORSYTHE: Oh yes, let me wedge this is, I was dating a girl out here that was going to MTSU. I was only about fifteen or sixteen years old. She was a little older than me, Virginia Hale. So this Sam Adkisson, this friend of mine, he had a new car and it had a rumble seat. Virginia and I, we rode the rumble seat.

FORSYTHE: The 2nd Tennessee, the maneuvers in Tennessee..

RUSSELL: I told you about being married and living with my mother and dad. The wife she wasn't too satisfied. I said, "Do you want to move up on the hill in the cabin?" You know the cabin I was telling you about. She said, "I'd be tickled to death." So we moved up in the cabin. Well Tom Russell, he was about four or five years old, no, in other words about fifteen months difference in them, and Bub was....maneuvers came in there. What year would that have been?

FORSYTHE: 1941 to about 1945?

RUSSELL: Yeah, Bub and Tommy remembers them maneuvers. I never will forget one evening, in fact, we were practically ready for bed. Of course farmers back there then went to bed as soon as we ate supper. We was just about ready for bed and the kids was already, Tom and Bub --I don't think the girls was born at that time -- anyway they was all ready for bed. Three soldiers came in with an old hen. They wanted Mary Lee, my wife, to cook that old hen. I said, "Let me see that old hen," and she was as poor as she could be. I said, "Where did you get this old hen, anyway?" Said we found her in the nest down here at some farmers. I said, "That old hen was setting on some eggs." Said yeah, what's that got to do with us. They said, "We can eat her." I said, "Nah, you don't eat that old hen." So anyway, we had some fryers and had them up in a pen. Back then, very seldom people would pick chicken up off the yard and cook it. You would always put them in pens. That's the way my grandparents and my daddy did. So anyway, we

had some up. I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do with you boys. If you'll take this old hen back where you got her from and come back, we'll have some fried chicken for you." And so we bargained that way. I went out and got a couple of chickens, fryers, and picked them and Mary Lee cooked them. They ate like pigs. They was all around us, all around us across the road over in the lot. They had a tent spread and was feeding them. If they'd leave, when they'd move, whatever they'd left there, if you wanted it. See they couldn't move nothing, food or nothing else. They couldn't move it. They had to do something with it -- anything, it didn't make no difference what it was. If it was steaks and potatoes, bread, whatever it was, they'd say, "do you want it? If you do, you can have it." Even gas was the same darned way. They just kept us in gas. I had my first tractor. They'd leave gas and it was limited, just so many gallons of gas, so it come in fine. And me being with my brothers, the three brothers in there, I had a lot of sympathy for these boys. Boy they would march them boys from the city hot and they'd gall and their skin would come off their belly. They was pitiful. I can remember this. Me and the wife and the boys had been down to her brothers, half-brother, Frazier Burness, down in the lower end of the county. We spent the night down there. The next morning we came back. Golly bill, it was crack of day and we come to the bridge at Spring Creek. That's where we lived. The darned bridge was down in the creek! Of course I got out and went around there. Come to find out that sometime in the night, you see, the tractor trailer and they had this huge piece of machinery on this trailer --well the tractor would go across but the trailer with this big piece of machinery on it, it was wide, and when it hit the railings, why it just knocked that bridge down into the creek. This guy that was driving, he said the water come up and like to have scared him to death. That water was cold because Spring Creek was run by springs. In the summertime, in the hottest weather, you could go down there and drink out of the creek anywhere. It was just that cold. And boy he said, "I was just down, down, down and said I didn't know how deep that water was." He said, "It just come up and I couldn't get out." Couldn't get the door open, you know for the water. He said the water come about half way to his chin, or whatever and of course he got out. They set up a tent down there in my field. Probably I'd say fifty or seventy five yards from the bridge. They was three or four of these boys. Well there was about four of them, I reckon, stayed on duty to see that nobody run off in the creek. The army, they set the bridge up passable. But them boys was something else. I forget where all they was from. At that time we was living up in this cabin up on this hill, still living up there. My granddaddy was still living and my younger sister she was living. She was about sixteen or seventeen years old. Anyway, she was quite attractive, if she was my sister. So one of these boys would come up there and get their water, drinking water. One of them got smart with my sister and she told me. I waited for a sergeant or captain, an officer, to come around. And so I told him, I said, "I got three brothers. We have me and my sister, my dad, and we got three brothers that's somewhere in the United States, in the army you know, in World War II, and I got a lot of respect." I said, "Just tell these boys not to get smart with my sister, because I ain't going to stand for it." Which he did, and from then on, by golly. I guess there was a couple of weeks before they got the bridge in and they

left. We were just as good to them as we could be. They had what they call pup tents. They'd be two or three I think to a pup tent. They bivouaced, whatever they call it, back over there, seven or eight miles.-- not that far maybe two or three miles from where we lived. So this one morning, I guess this was duty, that a couple of soldiers got up and was going to take one of the trucks, and they backed over one of them tents. They killed one of them I know. Mashed one of them to death. But they was scary times. I never will forget. I went back up in among the maneuvers. It was hot. Two or three of these boys was laying in the shade in front of a residence. One of them jumped up and said to me, "Hey there Mr. Farmer do you know where so and so is?" I said yeah and I told him how to get there. Well I didn't know they were in mock combat. Anyway I told him and I didn't much more it out of my mouth telling him till another one of them come around on the other side of my truck and he said, "Don't you tell them son of a bitches nothing. By golly we are on maneuvers," and says, "by golly let them find so and so. Things like him will get us killed in combat." From then on, by golly, I didn't tell them nothing. I guess he was probably a sergeant or captain and this guy wasn't nothing but a buck private.

FORSYTHE: So they had to get around on their own. They weren't supposed to ask directions?

RUSSELL: Yeah.

FORSYTHE: Cause they wouldn't be able to do it in Europe.

RUSSELL: Yeah, that's right. They was practicing maneuvers. Combat is what it's all about. Oh, they run through fences and they got my great uncle killed. I said got him killed. They tore down fences, you know, and tore up the roads and so on. After the maneuvers was over, why then my uncle Fate Towns, the one that I was telling you about, the one that wanted Tom Russell named LaFayette...I didn't tell you this. Tom Russell got up fourteen or fifteen years old, didn't tell nobody nothing, but he went through Washington and got his name changed from LaFayette. He didn't like LaFayette. Got it changed to Lee --Thomas Lee. Of course his mother's name is Mary Lee. Uncle Fate had charge of repairing the roads. They brought gravel in and they fenced. One day I saw Uncle Fate upon the running board of one of these big gravel trucks. He was pulling the lever to dump these gravels. Of course he had done got up into his sixty's, maybe seventy's, so I warned him. I said "Uncle Fate, let me tell you something. By golly, you'd better stay off them dog-gone running boards. Let them drivers do their own handling, dumping." Your feet fly out from under you and by golly what you going to do?" Would you believe, by golly, the next day just about the same dad-burned time on down the road two or three miles, I know exactly where it is, they call it Spain Hill, they was dumping some gravel. He was up on that running board and the driver was looking back through the back glass to see what was going on. Would you believe he went to pull that lever and his feet was slick -- slick old running board and his feet flew out from under him and he went right under them dual wheels. Mashed him into mud molly. Killed him after I had

warned him. But he was just that way, kind of like me, I reckon. What's that great saying? That Italian guy, we'll do it my way, or no way. Do it my way or no way? That song?

RUSSELL: Yeah, something like that. Who is that? He is one of the most popular Italian singers. He's in his eighty's now, I reckon. Italian. Oh they had him linked with the mafia.

FORSYTHE: Frank Sinatra?

RUSSELL: Frank Sinatra, yeah, that's one of his famous songs.--"We'll Do It My Way." I got a big kick out of that. That left his wife, Aunt Lily, in other words she said, "If I couldn't give him a first name..." I never will forget that.

FORSYTHE: Did you have any contact with the prisoners of war that were brought over here? The German prisoners?

RUSSELL: Let me see now. You know they had a prison of war camp back up in here around Sewanee, I believe it was. Between here and -- do you know anything about the state of Tennessee? Where was you raised?

FORSYTHE: I was raised all over the south. I know there is a place in Tullahoma, Camp Forrest.

RUSSELL: Yeah well, I helped build Camp Forrest. Yeah, I did. We was living in this cabin like I'm telling you. The boys they was three or four years old. I had three or four riders. We got jobs up there as carpenters. I worked about seven or eight months up there. Of course I couldn't resist it because I was making twelve or fifteen dollars a day. Of course I'd milk. I was milking about eighteen old cows. I'd get up every morning and milk them old cows and then pick up my riders. We worked eight hours and then get home in time to milk again. It was just that way about seven or eight months. That was Camp Forest. I'll tell you something else. You've heard of Arnold Engineer. Would you believe that we found out that Harry Truman would be there to dedicate the thing. Two or three of my friends, we went up and I could have spit on him. I never will forget he come in there in a convertible. I guess it was a Cadillac, some kind of a limousine, you know. I think there was four of them. Old Harry was on the back seat. I never will forget he had that big Stetson on. I tell you I always loved that rascal. Jean Faircloth, let me tell you, she was raised right in Murfreesboro. Her mother was a Wright and so was Tom Russell's mother, my ex-wife. I almost got it tied up. Of course Tom Russell, he's educated, I'm not, and a good genealogy. I had just about tied Jean Faircloth in with my ex-wife's Wright's. Have you seen this book on the history of Murfreesboro? All the pictures?

FORSYTHE: Dr. Sims book, C. C. Sims' book? Or are you talking about the one put out by the Chamber of Commerce?

RUSSELL: I couldn't tell you. I got this book about two months ago. A friend of mine down around Walter Hill let me have it because I'd lent him a bunch of -- well he had surgery. Confined to bed so I took him a lot of baseball material and he let me have this book. It's here some place because I let Bob Batey have it. Exactly where it is I don't know.

FORSYTHE: Is it a picture book?

RUSSELL: Yeah.

FORSYTHE: Okay, there's a couple it could be. There's one called "The Hearthstones" and has pictures of houses only in it.

RUSSELL: Jean, of course she married MacArthur. You know what Harry Truman did to MacArthur? You know?

FORSYTHE: No, I don't..

RUSSELL: Oh, you don't know? Oh golly-bill, he fired the heck outa him. MacArthur was something else. You know he was a great general, but he got a lot of criticism. I believe this would have been World War II, wouldn't it? Well he's the man that jerked the britches off of MacArthur and set him down in diaper, you might say. In this book there's a picture of Jean Faircloth's home here in Murfreesboro. It burned down or they tore it down. It's real interesting. I'm thinking about seeing these people that writes it up or whatever and seeing what they'll give me per copy to sell them. I know I could sell them, quite a few of them. If you live in Murfreesboro and interested in the prehistory of Murfreesboro, you'd buy one of them right quick. Did you ever hear of Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd?

FORSYTHE: Yeah.

RUSSELL: Great bank robber.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about him, what you know.

RUSSELL: Bob's got that book too. It cost thirty-some-odd dollars. Someway or another I got in contact through the Edwards. In other words, there was Columbus Edwards that got a marriage license to marry Augusta Leath over in Wilson County. They married, I think, in Georgia. I don't know why. They went to California and wound up in Indian territory in Oklahoma, Chickasaw, Pawnee and all those Indian names. Some way or another I got in touch with a cousin. She says we're fourth cousins. Neat. She is a great granddaughter of Columbus Edwards. A great uncle of mine, I believe. We have been corresponding and so she writes me and asks me if I have ever Pretty Boy Floyd. I wrote her back in respond, and said, "I can tell you a bunch about Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd." He

used to come through Akron, Ohio. He had a hide-out in Akron and gambled with people that I knew personally. It's a long story, but back to her. She sent me a book. If you want to read it sometime it'll be available. Of course you probably wouldn't be interested in it. But Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd married a cousin of ours. He had one son and he lives in Texas, I believe. He's in his sixty's, see. Well, in this book, well as I said, it wouldn't interest you like it did me. Now back to Akron. You see being a pretty good ball player, you know the gamblers bet on me, and so I knew just about the whole about the police force. There was two policemen there that was brothers. One of them was Big Mike and Little Mike. They were good friends of mine. Big Mike and another policeman was on patrol one night and this car ran a red light. They run them down and stopped them. Well Big Mike was driving. Now he tells me this himself, of course this is in the papers, but Big Mike told me this. This come out of his mouth. He said they pulled up behind this car about eight or nine o'clock. Why his buddy, I knew him too, can't think of his name.