

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
WITH  
MARY FRANCES SNELL MCNEILL

11 AUGUST 1995  
MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE  
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
INTERVIEW #QMS.056

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Albert Gore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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# ABSTRACT



**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH**  
**MARY FRANCES SNELL MCNEILL**  
**Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**  
**INTERVIEW #QMS.056**

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q. M. Smith collection designated a QMS.1995.56. This is Regina Forsythe I am interviewing Mary Frances Snell McNeill. Today is Sunday, August 11, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the home of Mrs. McNeill, located at 1023 Northfield Boulevard in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. This tape of this interview along with a transcription of the interview will become a part of the Quintin Miller Smith Collection and will be available to the public. Future researchers may include portions of this interview in their publications.

FORSYTHE: Is that all right with you Mrs. McNeill?

MCNEILL: Yes

FORSYTHE: Is Mary Frances Snell McNeill your full name?

MCNEILL: Yes.

FORSYTHE: When is your birthday?

MCNEILL: November 23, 1908, in Nashville.

FORSYTHE: What is your father's name and occupation?

MCNEILL: William Alton Snell, he was a farmer and he dealt in the buying and selling of mules.

FORSYTHE: What was your mother's name and occupation?

MCNEILL: Lillie Piell, she was a housewife.

FORSYTHE: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

MCNEILL: I had one sister that died with blood poisoning.

FORSYTHE: Your husband's name?

MCNEILL: William Masterson McNeill

FORSYTHE: Did you have any children?

MCNEILL: No.

FORSYTHE: Did anyone else in your family go to MTSU?

MCNEILL: Yes, my uncles and my aunts, that is all.

FORSYTHE: Why did go to MTSU?

MCNEILL: Because I had to if I went to college.

FORSYTHE: You weren't given a choice?

MCNEILL: No I didn't have the money.

FORSYTHE: What did you study?

MCNEILL: I studied English, Latin, French and Spanish.

FORSYTHE: What years did you go to school?

MCNEILL: 1926-30.

FORSYTHE: And you got a B.S. degree?

MCNEILL: Yes

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

MCNEILL: We were pretty well bound to the campus, we didn't have a fence around it, but we were pretty well bound to the campus, we had campus meetings, we had a good time but we were not allowed to go off of the campus, if you had friends on the campus you would associate with them.

FORSYTHE: You said you had campus meetings, what were they?

MCNEILL: Well we had chapel once a week.

FORSYTHE: Was that in the old auditorium?

MCNEILL: Yes.

FORSYTHE: I have heard about that. Did you ever miss a meeting?

MCNEILL: Yes. I just had to hide in my room where the beds were, until it was over.

FORSYTHE: Did you live on campus?

MCNEILL: Yes, in Rutledge Hall.

FORSYTHE: Can you describe your room?

MCNEILL: It had four walls and a ceiling and a window and a door, we had three beds.

FORSYTHE: What did you do on the weekends?

MCNEILL: Since I just lived four miles out in the country, I went home.

FORSYTHE: I made a list of faculty members when you were a student there, let's see what you can remember about them. Mrs. Sarah Beasley?

MCNEILL: She was a lovely lady, I never did have her for a teacher

FORSYTHE: Dorothy Bachtel?

MCNEILL: She was always very nice to me, because I wasn't good in biology and she just sort of patted me on the back, she got me through that course, then she married, and I don't know what has happened to her.

FORSYTHE: Mr. Beasley

MCNEILL: He was a in the Dean's office, I remember he told me, I was getting ready to go to Columbia in New York and he said "finish school here and then go there." But I went on anyway.

FORSYTHE: Elizabeth Brigham

MCNEILL: She was, I think she is still living isn't she? She was always cheerful and always happy, good to everybody, she was a really nice person.

FORSYTHE: Dr. J. D. Bruner

MCNEILL: He was my major professor

FORSYTHE: How about Rebecca Buchanan.

MCNEILL: She had me in English class one time and I wasn't paying attention, but I had known her, we went to the same church. I remember a poem I had to write for her, I don't see why she didn't throw me out then.