

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
JOE BLACK HAYES

14 AUGUST 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

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

INTERVIEW #QMS.058

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
JOE BLACK HAYES**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.058

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q M. Smith collection designated as QMS.1995.58. This is Regina Forsythe. I am interviewing Joe Black Hayes. Today is Monday, August 14, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the Gore Research Center room 111 of the Ned McWherter Learning Resources Center. What else have you done for the county commission?

HAYES: They have several committees and I was chairman of the steering committee which was a committee that legislation went through to the commission. Any bills or anything like that we passed on them. We recommended that various people serve on various committees, we were the ones that set up various committees. I was the chairman of the Health/Education committee for several years. For that length of time, I had a lot of different roles. I was also on the state Tennessee county commission association which all the commissioners in the state were members of, and was chairman of that commission one year. Tennessee County Commission Association, now that is all the county commissioners in the state of Tennessee. We met in Nashville. We really were a lobbying group, for the county commission. The county executives had an organization, and they had somebody working with them like we have a fellow working with us. If we recommended something, he would take it to the legislature. Each branch of government, I think the others like the Trustee and the County Clerk, Registrar of Deeds, they all had a combined organization. Each of these groups would lobby for what they thought would be good for them. You see, that's they way state government works. I was in the role of chairman for the Tennessee county commission association for one year, and I traveled quite a bit. We would have a meeting in Cookeville, I would go up there. We would have a meeting in Clarksville. It was quite an experience to go to those different places, so that is I guess the major things that I did. It was county court then it was changed to the county commission. Tennessee Constitution Convention met and changed county government, from county court, county judge, to county commission and county executive. Really after they changed it the county executive didn't have much power, about all they did was preside over the county commission. If the county

commission didn't want them to do that, they didn't do that. So for the county executive, it just didn't help them too much.

Now I've had an important role in the Red Cross. Of course I was in charge of it our here, teaching it, but I have spent over fifty years in the American Red Cross as a volunteer. I was chapter chairman here. I've been on the board for all these years. I was appointed on the red ribbon committee, national committee, that met in Indianapolis. We got together and presented resolutions to the National Board, which some of them they excepted and some they didn't; but it was quite an experience. I also was appointed on the nomination committee for the national Red Cross. We met in Washington D.C., where we recommend national committees. Those are two fairly important positions that I have had. Been the only one in the state, at that time, from Tennessee that was up there. All the states are represented, or at least they could be; of course they didn't have that many up there. The Red Cross has been a big part of my life.

FORSYTHE: Are you still part of the Red Cross?

HAYES: Yes, I'm still on the Red Cross board, and I was chairman of the chapter here and have been on a lot of different committees. I am not doing as much now. You know some time you have to pull in your wings, and I have,. . . let somebody else.

FORSYTHE: What is the Red Cross doing in Murfreesboro?

HAYES: Well, we have a strong chapter. Bedford County doesn't have a chapter so they have been combined with Rutherford County. The national is trying to get some of these weak counties and drawn into a strong county and let 'em work together. We're working with Bedford County now to provide services over there such as disaster, and safety, and first aid, and water safety, to make these services possible. Christy Houston helped us buy the building we are in right now. That's been a wonderful thing for this community, Christy Houston. I happened to be chairman of the committee that got that grant through. I knew most of those guys on there, and I am glad that it worked out like that. The Red Cross has been a wide awake program in this county. I guess you,. . . how long have you been here?

FORSYTHE: Three years.

HAYES: Have you noticed quite a bit about it?

FORSYTHE: I noticed this past week there was a lady from the Red Cross on the radio speaking about it.

HAYES: Yes that is Nancy. Nancy McGill, she is director of the chapter here now and very aggressive go-getter type person. I remember, I guess you think I am bragging about this ,but I was on a committee that tried to find somebody to take that job. Of course I knew her and she was doing field work over the state in Red Cross, helping them out. I called her in one day and I said, "Now Nancy, you have got boys here in school, and your husband, you don't need to be running around all over the state. You need to be at home some, and we need you to help us here at the local chapter." So she agreed to take the director job. I knew she would do a good job, that is the only thing she knows. She got her mother, up there as a receptionist. Her father had died, and the mother is a real out going person and she is doing a good job.

FORSYTHE: What stood out in my mind, she said there are six hundred volunteers.

HAYES: Yeah. The blood program, that is a big thing. When they come in and help with that they don't do anything else. That's the way they do it. They have got people to teach first aid and safety. They got people that teach water safety. They have got people in the disaster program. They got people that come in with their sewing machines and sew baby gowns and things for mothers that don't have the money to buy that kind of stuff. It is amazing the different things they do. The volunteers are just a tremendous thing. Of course there are not a lot of chapters doing as much as they are doing here. We meet once a month. We have somebody in charge of the blood program, somebody in charge of first aid, somebody in charge of disasters, somebody in charge of volunteers. All these people make reports whenever we have board meetings. Nancy puts together a budget report, how much money is coming in, how much is coming out, and how much balance we got. We got some pretty good folks over there. Dr. . . . a chiropractor, he is over there. I forget what his name is. He has ads in the paper a lot. George Corlew is over there. George Corlew is Bob Corlew's son who taught out here, and he retired. In the history department I believe.

FORSYTHE: Yeah, I, going to interview him too.

HAYES: Are you? Well, he'd be a good one. His son is a chancellor. He was a general session judge, but ran for chancellor and was elected. Now he's on the Red Cross board.

FORSYTHE: Let me ask you about this Rutherford County Primary Care that you are chairman for.

HAYES: Well we started that about three or four years ago. We worked with Mid-Cumberland in Nashville. The Commission on Aging is part of Mid-Cumberland. The primary care is worked through Mid-Cumberland. Right now they are supervising it. We have had trouble financing it. People have come thinking it is free and really it shouldn't be, but if they don't have the money we have to provide the services and get what we can. Ordinarily it is set up where people pay based on salary schedule. The less they make, the less they pay. A lot of them come in and just don't have anything, so you have to provide them. We have a little financial trouble there so Mid-Cumberland took over. But since Tenn. Care was set up, they have certain insurance services that take on certain people and doctors, and they pay you for services that you render to certain people. This helps financially for our program. Just recently, the Middle Tennessee Medical Center I don't know whether you noticed this or not, is going to put a primary care under physicians, where ours is a nurse practitioner. They will have a physician that is supervising, but it is my understanding they are not there all the time. The primary care the hospital is setting up, they are going in over on Memorial where TSC used to be, now they are going in there under this primary care. I just talked to the chairman of our board at Rutherford County Primary Care, she lives right behind me in a condo, in Forrest Oaks. Just today she backed out and I was there so we talked a little while. I just asked her, "What do you think this place the hospital the starting is going to have on our program?" She said, "Well I don't know. We need to get together and talk about that and see whether we need to be or what is the situation." But I understand there they are going to require payments through Medicare and supplement insurance. I don't really know what effect that is going to have on us. That is just something that has just come up. That was in the paper last week, I don't know whether you saw it or not. But we have to watch and see. That's a big building. They put some signs out there, "No Parking" and nobody's going in there, I guess they could tow them off is they did.

FORSYTHE: Where is your primary care located?

HAYES: On the corner of Academy and College. You know where the Woman's Club is? You know where Third National Bank is. Well the west side of Third National Bank is Academy, right on the corner from that bank across from Academy is a white building. It's got a sign sticking up from the ground, called Rutherford County Primary Care. That used to be Kenneth Ezell's dental building. We have nurse practitioners, general nurse, business manager, and an office girl that makes appointments and has them fill out an application when they come in. The building is well arranged for what we do. He had rooms arranged

for dental services, and we make those rooms for places to provide treatment. It is a little small, and we are trying to get another building. We applied through Christy Houston but they turned it down last time. We've got to down size the building I guess, really I don't know what is going to happen with this other program. Evidently that is going to be a pretty big building.

FORSYTHE: Let me ask about the Conservation Board.

HAYES: The Conservation Board is run by part-time director Ben Cates. It has been at least twenty years we've had the conservation board which is in charge of recreation in the county. It centers more around the schools in the county, not all of them; but Blackman, for instance has a community club. We hire somebody in the summer to go in there and provide recreation, mostly for the kids in that community. They come there in the morning and they can leave in the afternoon. The kids can come and they have balls and equipment that they play with. When the weather is bad they can be inside playing games. We have a softball program, have a softball field. Most of these are at school sites. Really the program is community oriented, which is entirely different from what the city does. The city of course goes out here and builds a ball park and they hire people. Everything is done by the city. But the ball parks and all that is kept up by the people in the community. We feel like that is a sound way. You have community interest, and they are enjoying what they are doing. It doesn't involve a whole lot of people you know Lascassas, Kittrell, Walter Hill, Buchannan, Eagleville, Christiana, all these communities have a recreation program. Blackman, Almadale, they don't have schools but they have a community center. I know we have had 2020, as an organization here trying to get us to apply for money to build community centers, and I personally don't think that fits in to what we are doing at all. It does for the city. Maybe we aren't aggressive enough, but I think what we are doing is helping the community provide recreation for themselves. It works real good. I got some statistics on that, how many people participated and so on, I would be glad to share that with you if you want me to. But we feel like that is very good. It was a public act passed by the state legislature and we adopted it and called it the Conservation Board. You can do other things beside recreation. You can acquire land, you can build parks and that kind of thing; but we chose to go the recreation route. I've been with it ever since it started. It has been twenty years at least, maybe it has been longer than that.

FORSYTHE: Is there anything else you want to talk about?

HAYES: You can tell by what I have had to say that football has been my life, I played football in elementary school with corduroy pants on with sewed pads on the knee, at McFadden. I went out for football at Central High School when I was in the 8th grade. Paddy was coach, I was green and young. I remember we were running plays and I was supposed to go to the right and I would go left, and he got disgusted and hit me in the side with a football and liked to have scared me to death. But that's the way I started. I remember I got out there and I had my winter underwear on and I put my pants over the top of it. As I got out there running around this underwear came down below my knees and they thought this boy don't know what he's doing." I never will forget that. But anyway, that freshman year the high school had a new coach and I was so glad of that. The guy that hit me with the football wasn't there anymore. We had a new coach, he left after I graduated. We were undefeated my senior year, and lost one game my junior year, and had a real good break in high school.

FORSYTHE: Who was the new coach?

HAYES: R. N. Jobe, by the way he taught chemistry and physics, pretty smart guy as well as a football coach. I left there and went to UT in 1934 and played football at UT '34 to, four years there. My last year I was captain of the football team at Tennessee. I was vice president of the student body while I was there, and president of BSU while I was there

FORSYTHE: What's BSU?

HAYES: Baptist Student Union. I'm a Southern Baptist. What are you?

FORSYTHE: I'm Catholic.

HAYES: Catholic, that's alright. We're all headed the same place. That's a very serious matter with me. And the gal I married, my second wife, she is a very devoted Christian. She is a Methodist, and we go to the Methodist church one Sunday and the Baptist church the next. That is what we do, and it's working out all right. I am deacon at my place and she sees all the new people come in, that is what we agreed to do. So the preacher and everybody agrees with that, so that is the way we do it.

FORSYTHE: Well I want to thank you for coming here.

HAYES: I have had a good time.