

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.001

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

ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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## ABSTRACT



**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH  
JOE BLACK HAYES**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.059

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q. M. Smith Collection designated as QMS.1995.59. This is Regina Forsythe. I am interviewing Mr. Joe Black Hayes. Today is Monday August 14, 1995. OK , where were we?

HAYES: I was going to reminisce about after I graduated from college. I got married two hours after I got my degree, because we had always said that I wouldn't marry her until after I had graduated from college. I got a job at UT Martin. It was a junior college at that time, in 1939, as assistant football coach and teaching in the agriculture department. I stayed there until '44 and I went into the navy. I was in the navy two years. Not knowing what I was going to do, I went to the Giles County assistant county agent. My wife didn't like it down there, way out in the country. Everyone of my boys was born there. Then Cumberland University offered me a job coaching and as the athletic director at Cumberland. So we went to Cumberland University in Lebanon in 1946, and I was there until 1950. Then that is when Mr. Sloan came over and talked to me about coming to Middle Tennessee. I came over here about 1950. I coached 'til 1968, and then I taught til '81 when I retired. I retired in '81 and have been a public servant most of the time since then. I wanted to kind of reminisce over where I have been. I don't know if I covered the different things that I did when I was at UT, did I?

FORSYTHE: No you didn't. Tell me about that.

HAYES: I went there in 1934, and I played freshman football. I made three letters in football and I was captain of the team in 1937. Then in the winter I came out for wrestling, and I made three letters in wrestling. In the spring I came out for track, and I made three letters in track. So in all I made ten letters in athletics. I guess I spent too much time in athletics because it took me five years to graduate, so that maybe explains that. Another reason [it took five years], I got into agriculture and a lot of the labs were in the afternoon. I was in these sports in the afternoon, and I couldn't take them. So that fifth year I had to make up some things I missed during the time I was there. I had the privilege of being elected vice president of the student body one year. I was also president of the Baptist Student Union, and I was elected the student representative on the athletic council. Now that was an interesting responsibility. They had two students elected in that position, and one of them was appointed on the executive committee and one on the general committee. I was the one on the executive committee. I got to know Dr. Hoskins who was president at that time, Dean Daughtery who was chairman of the athletic committee. It meant a lot to me to be in that position. I know a lot about the

program and what the university was doing in athletics. General Neylan was on the board at that time, and I remember he got his contract renewed. It was about to run out, and he said, "What are you all going to do about it;" and they said, "We don't want you to go. " We renewed his contract for five years. Of course he stayed on there as long as he did. He left in 1935 and went to Panama to serve a year in foreign service so he could retire, he came back in '36. During World War II he went to India and spent three years in the service in India as an army engineer. He hadn't really planned to do that, but that is what happened. He was a great leader, and I feel honored that I had him as a coach. Of course, they got the stadium named for him. He was an army man and that is the way he handled the team, every thing had to be right. He was a calculator all the way, precision, everything had to be done just right. That is the way he handled the football team. What success I had in coaching, I felt I learned from his way of doing things.

FORSYTHE: What did you do in the Navy?

HAYES: I went to boot camp at Great Lake, and I left there and went to Bainbridge, Maryland in PI school where they taught us physical fitness. in the navy and they had a series of exercises called the (not clear on the tape) exercises. Then I went to Memphis to the athletic center and was in the athletic program there. I taught conditioning at the two schools they had there. I was there eighteen months. We had a big rain there, and the barracks looked like boats. We called it "USS Millington," the naval base there. But I never did go to sea, I was discharged there at the naval base, just north of Memphis. . . .

FORSYTHE: Tell me about the Rutherford County Commission

HAYES: I was elected in 1968 on the county court. At that time there was a county court and a county judge. Later the constitutional convention changed the county judge to county executive and the county court to county commission. I was on there for 21 years and during that time it changed. As I said, I served on just about all the committees. The steering committee, which would appoint committees, and the state legislature went through our committee. It was a key committee. I enjoyed that. It was quite an experience. I got out in I guess '90, I served 21 years.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about the Central Alliance Budget Act.

HAYES: I was really strong for this. I wanted an accounting budget office, and having a centralized budget committee for the county, we didn't have that. We prepared that bill and the county commission voted to send it to the legislature. They passed it and we came back, you know they had to vote three times to pass that thing. We had to have a two thirds vote to ratify, then there would be somebody absent and I would want to do it again; so we voted three times and it finally passed. So we have a county budget director. They have something in the paper sometimes about the County Budget Director recommending how they can get

more money, like the impact fee. Another thing I was really strong for was a personnel policy, well they finally got one passed.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Rutherford County primary care.

HAYES: That was started about three years ago to take care of people that are not financially able to go to the hospital. If they have any money they can pay according to a scale based on how much they earn. A lot of them don't pay anything. The Primary Care Center is governed by a board working with Mid-Cumberland in Nashville, they help us some; and then we got into financial trouble and we let them kind of take over, handle the finances . . . It is badly needed.

FORSYTHE: Is there anything else in your notes that we need to talk about?

HAYES: I was a Rotarian a long time. I joined the Rotary in Martin in about 1939. I left there and went to Pulaski and went in the Rotary. When I was in Lebanon I was in the Rotary. When I came here I was in it, but after I had been here ,I got involved in several different things and got out of the Rotary. But I think it is a fine organization and does a lot of good things. It is kind of expensive. You have projects and you have finance. I got out of it. I was in a lot of different things. I didn't think I needed to do it any more. Let's see what else. We haven't talked about the Senior Center. Of course I am old enough to take part in the Senior Center. I have been Chairman of the Board over there for several years. It is a very good place for seniors to go and have friends and play cards, spades, rook. They have got pool tables and a craft place where you can make crafts. They have a nurse on duty you can go to and check your temperature and give you advice on any health problem you might have. They don't charge anything for that, it is a nice service.. I guess that is about it.

FORSYTHE: Thank you.