

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
FLOYD RICHARD HAWK

21 AUGUST 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW #QMS.065

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
FLOYD RICHARD HAWK**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.065

FORSYTHE: This is Regina Forsythe, I am interviewing Mr. Floyd Richard Hawk. Today is Monday August 21, 1995. The interviewing is being conducted in the Gore research center room 111 of the Ned McWherter Learning Resource Center. The 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. Is that all right with you Mr. Hawk?

HAWK: That is fine.

FORSYTHE: Is Floyd Richard Hawk your full name?

HAWK: Yes, but I prefer to called Dick Hawk.

FORSYTHE: What is your birth date and place of birth?

HAWK: June 19, '32 in South Pittsburgh, Tennessee.

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

HAWK: Russell Hawk, he was shovel operator for the Dixie Cement Corporation.

FORSYTHE: Your mother's name and occupation?

HAWK: Rosella Tate, she was a mill worker.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

HAWK: None, living.

FORSYTHE: Your wife's name?

HAWK: Caroline Hoover

FORSYTHE: Do you have any children?

HAWK: Two, David and John

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

HAWK: My entire family, my wife and my kids.

FORSYTHE: Does anyone else in your family work for MTSU?

HAWK: My son John. He is the custodial coordinator with housing.

FORSYTHE: What degrees do you have?

HAWK: I have a BS from here, an MA from here, and a JD from the Nashville School of Law.

FORSYTHE: What years did you go to school here?

HAWK: 1950 - 1954 and 1960 - 1962

FORSYTHE: Why did you decide to come to MTSU?

HAWK: To play football.

FORSYTHE: What was your major?

HAWK: Biology, my minor was education.

FORSYTHE: Did you student teach here?

HAWK: At Critchlow and Mitchell Nielson, about the 6th and 7th grades. I taught Health and Science. I was student teaching with three other people and the teachers would give us various assignments back then, it was a little different from what it is now.

FORSYTHE: Why did you choose Biology?

HAWK: I just enjoyed Biology, I did pretty well in it.

FORSYTHE: What was registration like?

HAWK: It was very simple, Dean Beasley would pull the class cards for you in the basement of Kirksey Old Main.

FORSYTHE: Did you live on campus?

HAWK: Yes in Jones Hall, at that time Jones Hall was the only boys dormitory, in 1950. I read in the paper that this was the first year that school had closed because of the weather, that is not true, it closed back then, because of an ice storm and for several days we had no heat or electricity.

FORSYTHE: What year was that?

HAWK: I guess it was 1950 or the first part of '51.

FORSYTHE: How did you keep warm?

HAWK: I don't know we did it some how.

FORSYTHE: How many roommates did you have?

HAWK: I had three. I lived in the back corner room of Jones Hall, it is now part of the education department, they enclosed that area. My roommates were Carl Whelms who sells insurance now in Gallitan, and Jim Ballard who is a retired school teacher from Tullahoma, he married Joan Jurnigan, who graduated about the same time I did, the all did. Freeman Jordan and Billy Simmons for a while.

FORSYTHE: What was it like living in Jones Hall.

HAWK: Very enjoyable. I can't remember who was in charge of Jones Hall at that time.

FORSYTHE: What did the students do for fun?

HAWK: When I wasn't playing football, I did a lot of hunting and fishing. We would go to the movies every Sunday night, we would walk to town to the Princess Theater. Most of the time we stayed on campus, I went home very rarely. Maybe once a quarter.

FORSYTHE: What was the condition of the buildings.

HAWK: I thought it was very nice, it seemed to be very comfortable. To me we had a very nice lobby with a fireplace, they didn't have a fire there. They had a student run store in there. I believe Eual Gellham from Lewisburgh ran the store. He was a former County Court clerk for that county.

FORSYTHE: Where was the store located?

HAWK: As you went in the front of Jones Hall and turned right, it was about half way down the other end.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Dean Beasley

HAWK: Dean Beasley had a very good memory, I was always amazed at Dean Beasley because he always knew everyone's name, he was very friendly fellow.

FORSYTHE: Dean James

HAWK: HE was an excellent teacher, I had him for sociology and he was one of my favorite teachers, he was very hard and strict but I enjoyed him very much.

FORSYTHE: Layne Boutwell

HAWK: He was an excellent speech teacher, it was very pleasant to be in his class. He was very enjoyable.

FORSYTHE: John Scott

HAWK: I enjoyed him, he was a fellow that wore bright colorful clothes. There were several of the football players in my class, Howard Alsup, Ellis Hamblit, several of us football players happened to be in his class at that time, I enjoyed Dr. Scott.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Sims

HAWK: Dr. Sims was a very lively fellow, he was a fellow that liked to chew gum. He was very interesting. He could speak on just about any subject you could speak about. He chewed gum in class and would sometimes ask students if they had a piece of gum.

FORSYTHE: Cliff Burns

HAWK: He was very polite and very well mannered person, all business in class, he insisted that we read all of our reading assignments so I enjoyed him. He was a very reserved person.

FORSYTHE: Crawford Crow

HAWK: I had him for history. He told a lot of interesting stories about children drowning in slop buckets, the buckets that they fed the hogs in the early part of their life, he was a very interesting person.

FORSYTHE: Buleah Davis,

HAWK: I had a PE class or two under her, she was a very nice lady, very strict about us coming to class and participating in every thing. Miss Davis was a very helpful type person, if you needed anything she was always the type of person that would talk to you and help you. She is also a friend of mine now.

FORSYTHE: Newby Freeman

HAWK: He was an old coach, not one of mine. He was an industrial arts teacher and had a reputation of being a pretty strict teacher. Seems like he later did some work for the VA inspecting homes and things like that when some of the building got started after World War II.

FORSYTHE: B. B. Gracy

HAWK: He was an agriculture teacher. We used to have fun night once a week in the old gym, and he would come over and call some of the square dances. He was very friendly and very nice to the students.

FORSYTHE: Mary Hall

HAWK: I had her in child psychology. I think she was the first person that I ever saw to bring a movie into the classroom. I had child psychology with Jimmy Weatherford, he is Jack Weatherford's brother, Jimmy is now a judge in Columbia. She was a very interesting person, one of the better teachers that I had.

FORSYTHE: Coach Greer

HAWK: He was the basketball coach at that time, he coached the ends on the football team the year I was a freshman. He was very outgoing and always had a pleasant smile for the students.

FORSYTHE: Job Black Hayes

HAWK: He was the line coach, one of my coaches. It seems that everybody who was going to be a teacher had to take safety and first aid, and I believe he was the safety and first aid teacher. He was the one that put us through a lot of work to get us in shape to play football.

FORSYTHE: Howard Kirksey

HAWK: I didn't have a class under him until I was in graduate school. He was an excellent teacher, all business, I enjoyed him very much.

FORSYTHE: Joe Nunley

HAWK: He taught one of my sons, the first education class here. He and I became friends after I had worked here, I believe he started to work in about 1956. Joe remembered a lot of people and names and dates. That was a big part of his life writing down some of the things he had seen.

FORSYTHE: Charles Murphy

HAWK: I remember him very well, he was the head football coach. I had a lot of confidence in him, I believed every play he called, and everything he said would work. He had an office as you go in on the end of the alumni gym, he had the first office as you go in. He was a very good coach, and a very good athlete. I enjoyed playing under coach Murphy.

FORSYTHE: Gerald Parchment

HAWK: I had one quarter of general biology under him, I had a course that I believe was called comparative at that time, he was a very pleasant teacher, all the students like Mr. Parchment as he was called at that time, I believe he lived out on a farm out on the Woodbury Road. He started every class off by telling a joke. He was one of the most pleasant people I have ever been around.

FORSYTHE: Elbert Patty

HAWK: He was also a football coach, I knew who he was because he was a high school football coach over at Bridgeport Alabama before he came here. Yes I did I had a golf course under him.

FORSYTHE: Furman Cunningham

HAWK: I enjoyed him very much. He was in charge of Smith Hall the first year it was built. He used to stop by our room almost every night and talk. I had a lot of respect for him, he was a very intelligent fellow, he was going to Vanderbilt at the time he was staying in Smith Hall, and it seems that he hadn't been out of the Army to long. He was very strict in the dorm but every body who stayed in the dorm liked him. I used to stop by when I was working at State Farm, he later became the Dean of the School of Business, I talked to him 30 or 40 minutes at a time. He was a very pleasant fellow. He also was very knowledgeable in the insurance field, very few people had knowledge of the insurance field such as that. I later had a class under him when I was working at State Farm and he was teaching some classes there.

FORSYTHE: John Patton

HAWK: He was one of my favorite teachers. I had Dr. Patton in the old course called bacteriology, he was considered to be one of the most difficult teachers on campus but I took every class I could under Dr. Patton. He could write with both hands on the board, he was an amazing man, he never brought a note to class, all of his lectures were strictly without notes. I learned a lot under him. He was one of the people that helped me to understand that you had to read and study to pass some of these classes. He would always talk to the students, he was never condescending, and everybody liked Dr. Patton.

FORSYTHE: Why was he considered difficult?

HAWK: He gave comprehensive tests, he would give test throughout the semester and his finals were always comprehensive., and I don't think a lot of students were accustomed to taking comprehensive tests. As Dr. Patton and his wife would say his final was fairly comprehensive.

FORSYTHE: Richard Peck.

HAWK: He was the chairman of the English department. I didn't have a class under Dr. Peck, the first time I talked to Dr. Peck was after I had graduated, I was a claims superintendent with state farm was at meeting at Jackson Tennessee and he and Bill Beasley were at a meeting in Jackson and we ran into each other at breakfast one morning.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Reel

HAWK: I guess he was chairman of the physical education during that time. What I remember about Dr. Reel was at that time he was the football coach and he was the coach that sent me in the game the first year that I played. He was a very good badminton player, I used to play some badminton with him. No one could beat him playing badminton.

FORSYTHE: Ellis Rucker

HAWK: He was a good teacher. I had him in a genetics class and also in embryology. I remember Dr. Rucker's final test. I also had him in a field botany class and he had a lot of plants that we had to identify that was our final test. I got an interest in plants from his class.

FORSYTHE: Eugene Sloan

HAWK: He was the business law teacher when I was in school. He was also the editor of the sidelines, he was known as being all business. He had a good reputation.

FORSYTHE: Will Dunn Smith

HAWK: I didn't have a class under him, it seems like he taught a government class, I can't remember what class he taught. I remember he was smoking in class one time and pitched a cigarette in the trash can and the trash can caught on fire over in Old Main.

FORSYTHE: Clifford Stark

HAWK: He may have been chairman of the agriculture department and a year or so ago he may have taught some of the bacteriology classes. I didn't have him.

FORSYTHE: Roscoe Strickland

HAWK: I remember he used to drink coffee in the old lunch room in the James Union Building with several of the students in the morning. The James Union Building was built in 1951, that was my sophomore year here. That was the year that

Witcher Phillips opened the bookstore in the basement of the James Union Building.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Witcher Phillips

HAWK: I didn't know Witcher very much when I was in school except he played football, he was one of those people that came to play football had to go into the service, and then came back and played football, he was the manager of the bookstore all the years that I was in school. He seemed to be a very good business man, and he was I became good friends in later years after I started back to work for the university. Witcher was considered to be a very tough football player, he was a very fierce competitor.

FORSYTHE: Ed Voorhies

HAWK: He began teaching industrial arts around the time that I came here and I believe he left while I was in school, or sometime after I finished.

FORSYTHE: Jay Eldridge Wisner

HAWK: Dr. Wisner was the chairman of the chemistry department and at the time there was a store over by the vet. village in one of the Quonset huts, it was behind the science building, and I remember during his breaks Dr. Wisner would come over and play ping pong with the students, he would come over and get a coke. I had my chemistry classes under Mr. Setmuth who was a graduate of Vanderbilt and I don't believe he stayed here very long, maybe a year or so.

FORSYTHE: Can you tell me more about him

HAWK: I don't remember much about him except he had just finished Vanderbilt, I believe and I had the general chemistry classes under him.

FORSYTHE: Bill Beasley

HAWK: I didn't know him as a teacher, I knew him later in life when I was working in the counseling and testing office and he was chairman of the English department. Bill also worked at state farm of the time, part-time, teaching letter writing for the employees at State Farm when it was located on North West Broad St.

FORSYTHE: Beeler Smotherman

HAWK: I had a class under Dr. Smotherman, it was a graduate class, it was a photography class. I enjoyed that very much because I got a chance to do some film developing, black and white film developing under Dr. Smotherman. Most of the people didn't have a lot of money and Dr. Smotherman would sell film at a very reasonable cost to the students and cameras.

FORSYTHE: T B Woodmore

HAWK: I remember he used to smoke, he rolled his own cigarettes and I didn't have enough money to pay all of my fees when I started back to get my master's and Mr. Woodmore, I would go in and pay a little money till I paid me fees.

FORSYTHE: Joe Little

HAWK: He was the manager of the farm and he helped coach the lineman on the football team and he was a freshman or a sophomore, he was a very tough coach, he worked us very hard. He did a good job getting the lineman in condition to play football.

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

HAWK: I didn't know Mr. Smith very well at the time I was a student, I never had any reason to say anything to him, I was sort of in awe of him. I remember we had an assembly once a week and I decided that I didn't need to go, and I don't know how they knew who was there and who wasn't there but I remember that Dean James called me into his office and told me that I had to assembly every week and I still don't know how he knew that I was absent. We had the assembly in the auditorium of Old Main, it was in the basement of Old Main, and I guess that is part of the business education department now. At that time the post office was in the basement of Old Main and a lot of students met there to get mail, if we had any mail, and I believe the post master at that time was a lady name Mrs. McElroy. I remember Mr. Smith that he was injured in the war, I thought maybe World War I by gas, and I understood that had some effect on his vocal cords, but at that time, I as a student did not have much to say to any of the deans or the president of the school, I felt very awkward in their presence.

FORSYTHE: Why did you decide to come to work at MTSU?

HAWK: I had always wanted to work at, it was MTSC at the time I came, I had met with Dr. James Martin while I was in school, he was teaching in the psychology department and he later was an education consultant with State Farm Insurance company, he worked there on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for about fifteen years. I was a claim superintendent and Dr. Martin asked me if I would like to come at the University and I said "I have always wanted to work at the University" and he said he would talk to the regional vice president and ask him about me coming to work at the University and the regional vice president gave him permission to talk to me, and I started to work at the university in August of 1972, for about the first two weeks or the month I had to give notice that I was working at the university and at State Farm.

FORSYTHE: What were you hired to do?

HAWK: As a councilor, when I came to work here we were in the administration building on the second floor, I guess that is where public relations later had an office, Dr. Pittard's office, and Joe Nunley's office.

FORSYTHE: Who did you council?

HAWK: We were councilors for the students, we did the same thing then as we do now, if students have any type of problem we talk to them, we were also academic advisors to the undeclared students and helped them with their schedules.

FORSYTHE: How has the department changed?

HAWK: It hasn't changed all that much. We had Dr. Martin and three councilors and a testing technician at the time I came to work here, we still have a director and three councilors and a testing technician now, but we see a lot more students now then we did then. I have enjoyed the counciling part and I have also taught several courses in business law, that is now under the accounting department.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Dr. Scarlett

HAWK: He was a very friendly fellow. Dr. Scartlett was interested in journalism, that was one of his interest. He was always accessible to anyone that wanted to talk to him. All of my dealing with him were very pleasant. I remember when all of the administrators would get together each year at the beginning of each year, he was there playing softball.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Ingram

HAWK: In my dealings with Dr. Ingram he was always interested in the students, if somebody was suspended from school, he would readmit some of those students, he called me many times about working on a schedule, trying to get some classes that they were interested in, and talk to them about repeating courses that they had failed. While he was here if he wanted anything ,he would pick up the phone and call me, and I have called Dr. Ingram many times, he was always very helpful.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Prescott'

HAWK: He was a very impressive president over the period that he was here, he was the interim president for about year. He seemed to be a well organized individual.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Walker

HAWK: I don't know as much about Dr. Walker as I did the other president, I think he got here at a time when the school was expanding and he has been very and he had gotten the schools name out to a lot of people.

FORSYTHE: What stands out in your memory from your time here as a student?

HAWK: When I came here I knew almost everyone on campus, I came there in 1950 with the idea that I would play football for one year. I played for one year and I decided to come back for another year to play football, I was always planning on leaving at Christmas for the first two years, but I got interested in school and I knew a lot of people, and this was a very friendly school and it was about the later part of my sophomore year that I really got interest in academics and decided to graduate, I was planning joining the service, that was during the Korean Conflict, all the students were very helpful, Most of the ones I knew stayed on campus and we were together sitting out under the trees, and this school just became a part of me and I have enjoyed it very much.