

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
WITH  
EDWIN VOORHIES

23 AUGUST 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE  
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
INTERVIEW #QMS.068

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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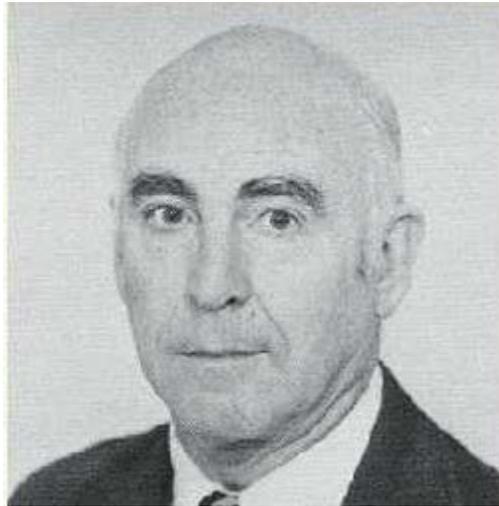
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# ABSTRACT



**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH  
EDWIN VOORHIES**

**Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**INTERVIEW #QMS.068**

**FORSYTHE:** We were talking about Murfreesboro Sewer and Water.

**VOORHIES:** I was just going to say that I feel good progress has been made but it is not nearly in as good a shape as it needs to be in.

**FORSYTHE:** Tell me about the Rail Birds

**VOORHIES:** That is a group of us that were interested in MTSU athletics over the years. Dr. Joe Nunley was the ring leader of that over the years. We do what ever we can, informally, to help the athletic department, baseball is the number one sport with the Rail Birds, football and basketball had a lot of support and we felt like the baseball program needed more support. One of the things that we do, every spring, near the end of baseball season, we have a barbecue for the players, and have a little program for them and give them a little pat on the back. But we lend support to, primarily, the baseball program. Dr. Nunley would write a poem every year...

[this part of interview did not record]

**FORSYTHE:** What was Q. M. Smith's greatest accomplishment?

**VOORHIES:** His farsightedness, his planning for the future. He acquired about two hundred and twenty acres on this campus and about five hundred acres that the federal government donated that is still being used for farm purposes.

**FORSYTHE:** Dr. Cope.

**VOORHIES:** He knew where every dollar was spent on this campus. He had a budget in his drawer and anytime you went in to ask for money he would open it up. He would tell you whether he could do it or not. One thing about both of them, they were difficult to work for in that they let me do half of the building program and they did half but they didn't let me know which half I was doing until after the fact. Dr. Cope had a strong understanding of how state government worked, and in both of

the cases they knew what their limits were, and they would go into Nashville and tell them.

FORSYTHE: What was Cope's greatest accomplishment?

VOORHIES: The growth in building, we built most of the buildings on this campus during the 1960s during his administration. He conceived of the idea to save funds from bookstore sales and what ever, and he conceived the idea of Murphy Center. His other major accomplishment was that he expanded the curriculum.

FORSYTHE: What about Dr. Scarlett?

VOORHIES: He was most helpful to me. But he was not as good an administrator as some of the others because of his nature, he was so vitally interested in doing things that were important, he concentrated so much on getting those things done, that he couldn't get his mind off of that that he couldn't get his mind on anything else. He conceived the notion of building this building. He was vitally interested in mass communications, because that was his background. He has developed programs that have attracted students from all over the nation.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Ingram

VOORHIES: He was a very conservative president. He was determined not to spend any money and that was good at that time because that was the state government's attitude. The fact that he was conservative with funds, our school benefited a great deal. What happened is, he would save all the money he could, and with some encouragement from the board of regents, he would be encouraged to spend some of it. Our school needed it, and we got more equipment money under Dr. Ingram than we did under any president, or any previous president.