

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
BOB WOMACK

25 AUGUST 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW #QMS.072

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
BOB WOMACK**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.072

FORSYTHE: This is Regina Forsythe and I'm interviewing Dr. Bob Womack. Today is Friday, August 25, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the office of Dr. Womack located at room 300 Jones Hall, MTSU. The tape of this interview along with a transcription of the interview will become a part of the Quinton Miller Smith collection and will be available to the public. Future researchers may include portions of this interview in their publications. Is that okay with you, Dr. Womack?

FORSYTHE: What is your full name?

WOMACK: Robert Womack.

FORSYTHE: And your birth date?

WOMACK: July 24, 1923

FORSYTHE: And your birthplace?

WOMACK: Shelbyville, Tennessee

FORSYTHE: And your father's name?

WOMACK: Andrew.

FORSYTHE: And his occupation?

WOMACK: farmer

FORSYTHE: And your mother's name?

WOMACK: Georgia.

FORSYTHE: And her maiden name?

WOMACK: Price.

FORSYTHE: And her occupation?

WOMACK: Housewife.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

WOMACK: Five brothers and sisters.

FORSYTHE: What were their names?

WOMACK: My oldest brother was named Price. He was a physician. My next brother's name was Paul. He was a farmer. My oldest sister's name was Helen. She was superintendent of the schools in Shelbyville and Bedford County. My next brother was Ben and he was a farmer. My next sister was named Sarah. She is a physician in Shelbyville, TN.

FORSYTHE: What is your wife's name?

WOMACK: Elizabeth.

FORSYTHE: Her maiden name?

WOMACK: Clements.

FORSYTHE: Any children?

WOMACK: I have four children and their names are Andy, Ricky, Laura, and Lynn.

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

WOMACK: All of them went to MTSU except for Ben.

FORSYTHE: And your wife too? Did you meet her here?

WOMACK: yes, but no, I met her in high school?

FORSYTHE: Did anyone else work at MTSU?

WOMACK: My daughter teaches here, Laura.

FORSYTHE: What does she teach?

WOMACK: She teaches business law.

FORSYTHE: What degrees do you have?

WOMACK: I have a BS from MTSU and MA and EDD from Peabody.

FORSYTHE: What was your major?

WOMACK: I had five majors at the undergraduate level...music, English, education at the MA level and EDD level.

FORSYTHE: What was the other three at the bachelor level?

WOMACK: One of them was science, one was math, one was social science. It was altogether different then than it is now. What we called majors then, you wouldn't recognize as majors now. The reason I did that was because I went into the navy during WWII and they sent me to school and I picked up a lot of math and science courses and that's why I ended up with so many.

FORSYTHE: Why did you choose to come to MTSU?

WOMACK: Because of the location of the University. The college at that time was affordable and my older brothers and sisters went here.

FORSYTHE: Why did you choose to work here at MTSU?

WOMACK: A lot for the same reason. My family has always been very close and we never ran too far geographically. So, I wanted to stay in the area. I liked the school, so I came back here and I've been here 39 years.

FORSYTHE: What year's did you go to school as a student here?

WOMACK: I started in 1941 and I believe I graduated in 1948 because of WWII.

FORSYTHE: What year did you start working here?

WOMACK: In the summer of 1957.

FORSYTHE: What memories do you have as a student here?

WOMACK: I have two sets of memories....one before the war and the one after the war. The one I have before the war, of course I lived in this building we're in now, Jones Hall, I remember the people who were here. As I remember it, it was very laid back, very low key. Everything was very relaxed. You didn't have to maintain a certain grade point average to stay in school and there were very few students here. I guess not over 300 students here at the time. I made friends then that I kept throughout my life. Then, after the war, most of us or a lot of us were married and we lived in a little trailer town. A lot of us had children. My oldest son Andy was born during the war. We brought him here as did many others. It was a wonderful, wonderful time. It was a reunion. We'd all been gone and scattered all over the world for three years. We came back and we were serious students then. I was not a very good student before WWII. Even if I do say it, I was an excellent student after WWII. Play period was over. It was time to get

down to work. I think that's generally true of everybody. I think most of the veterans who came back from WWII were excellent students. We shared experiences in class, and it was just a great time. I have very pleasant memories of it. All of my memories regarding MTSU are very pleasant. I wouldn't have stayed here this long if they hadn't been.

FORSYTHE: Where were you in Jones Hall?

WOMACK: In this floor on the other end of the hall.

FORSYTHE: How many roommates did you have? I have a boy named Jim Shoffner who was a pilot during WWII and has since died. I had another roommate named Roscoe Shoffner who after WWII went to the University of Tennessee and he lives in Bedford County. Those were the only two roommates I had and they were both excellent roommates.

FORSYTHE: What condition was Jones Hall in when you were here?

WOMACK: Much like it is now. It was in good condition.

FORSYTHE: What was it like living here?

WOMACK: It was good, but like I say, nobody wasted a lot of time studying. We did a lot of playing. People were pretty rambunctious. In fact, the administration of the college at that time would come over and we would have a meeting in the lobby and they would tell us to tone it down a little bit. All in all, it was a very pleasant experience and I guess not too unusual for eighteen and nineteen year old boys.

FORSYTHE: What were some of the pranks you all pulled?

WOMACK: I remember that probably the rankest thing I was ever a part of was when we went over to the farm, we had a boy here in this hall that none of us liked. He was sort of a pompous kind of fellow. He had a very good opinion of himself. He went home for the weekend, and we went home to the farm and got a calf and brought it over here and put it in his room. You can imagine what that calf did to his room. I guess that was about the worst thing I ever had part in, but I really enjoyed it and I never regretted it because I think he needed that. And, also the old thing of stacking rooms. You go into someone's room and put the chairs on the bed. That was a part of it.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Vet Village.

WOMACK: Vet Village was an accumulation of trailers that were surplus trailers that were given to the college and they were put over here where the new science building is now, I think. We would elect a major, and the rent was very low...maybe 20 dollars a month. It had a place to cook, and everybody I liked. There was nobody

that had a finer trailer than anyone else. We were all pretty much alike. Everybody helped everybody else if they needed it. All of us were very glad to be out of the regimented life of a service man. So, there was a new gained freedom that we were enjoying. It was all in all a very wonderful time. I look back on it with a great deal of pleasure. I'm sure all the rest of them do, too.

FORSYTHE: Can you tell me the layout of the trailer?

WOMACK: Of the individual trailer? Well, you would go in and on the right would be a couch that could turn into a bed. At the opposite extreme was your bedroom, and you had sliding doors that you could put the bedroom off from the rest of it. I had a gas stove and a table and a lamp....pretty much like a trailer is now, but those were not fancy. They were very fundamental things, but they were livable and they were the only home we'd ever had. They looked good to us and we liked it.

FORSYTHE: Do you remember Robert Abernathy?

WOMACK: He came later. I don't believe he was here before the war. He was probably here after the war. Bob Abernathy was a very jolly kind of fellow. He had a wonderful personality. He was a great public speaker. He had whole reservoir of humorous stories. He could weave those humorous stories into a message that he was trying to deliver and did a wonderful job of that. In fact, after he retired from here, he did this professionally. He was a recruiter and he would go around to the high schools and talk to the students to encourage them to come to this school. He was quite an outstanding man, very brilliant man and unfortunately died far too soon. He had a brain tumor.

FORSYTHE: What about Dean Beasley?

WOMACK: Dean Beasley was one of the greatest men I ever knew. He was MTSU as far as my family was concerned. All my brothers and sisters had known him. When I came over here, he took me under his wing. I was interested in horses and so was he. I eventually rented his barn and kept a whole barn full of horses. That's when I came here to teach. But, as a student, he let me bring horses to the campus, and I kept the horses on the campus. I rode them. Dean Beasley was quite a good public relations man. He was friendly to everybody. Everyone liked him. I never heard people criticize him in any way. So, he was quite an asset to the school, and he personified this school to a lot of us. We could relate to him much easier than we could relate to Mr. Smith because Mr. Smith was the President and his office was inside another office and Dean Beasley was always out walking around. He was easy to talk to. My memories of Dean Beasley are first class.

FORSYTHE: Where did you keep your horses?

WOMACK: We kept them at an old barn that no longer stands where married housing apartments are now. In fact, I think the silo may still stand over there. I'm not

sure. But, there was a barn close to that silo, and I kept two horses over there. When I was student, I kept horses in what is now the art barn. I kept a couple of horses in there.

FORSYTHE: Mr. Judd?

WOMACK: I had a class with Mr. Judd. I didn't know a lot about him. He was a quiet, scholarly type of man with a lot of dignity. He was a very good teacher as I remember him, but I was never very close to Mr. Judd.

FORSYTHE: Mr. Woodmore?

WOMACK: Mr. Woodmore was a little skinny man and he had a funny way of walking and a funny way of talking. Very friendly sort of man. He was here to help students and he did that. If you needed some help in registering or anything like that, you could go in and talk to him and he was very obliging. Very wonderful man.

FORSYTHE: Mr. Holmes?

WOMACK: I never knew Mr. Holmes very well. He was a very quiet man. He was a fellow who sat at his desk and did his work. That was about it. Certainly, he was a very competent, very pleasant man, but I never knew him very well.

FORSYTHE: Clayton James?

WOMACK: Clayton James lived across the street from me when I moved back here. I've always thought that he was the best scholar that was ever connected to this school. He was very well read on many, many subjects. He was the Dean of Students when I was student here, and he had a sense of humor that went along with the dignity that he had. He could laugh, but he could get tough, too. Whatever the situation called for, he could deliver. I have very pleasant memories of him as I do of all of them.

FORSYTHE: Mr. McClearin?

WOMACK: I didn't know him.

FORSYTHE: Joe Little?

WOMACK: I knew Joe Little was the football coach, but I never had any contact with him.

FORSYTHE: Bonnie McHenry?

WOMACK: Bonnie McHenry was Mr. Smith's secretary. Very dignified lady and strikingly beautiful lady as well as a very competent secretary. If you wanted to know

something but didn't want to go see the President, you went to see her. She was usually very obliging and very competent secretary.

FORSYTHE: W.C. Hastings?

WOMACK: I don't know who that is.

FORSYTHE: Edward Baldwin?

WOMACK: I had geography under Ed when I first came here in 1941. Ed was a very good teacher and a very outstanding musician. He directed the choir at the Methodist church and a very fine scholar.

FORSYTHE: Eva Mae Burkett?

WOMACK: Ms. Burkett was an English teacher and had a sort of sly sense of humor. She went from here to Drake University to teach. She had quite a bit of originality about her and welcomed originality on the part of students. Of course, we all tried to reinterpret poetry, and sometimes she would laugh...a more disgusted laugh than a laugh of admiration. She did tolerate us and inspired me and many others to like literature.

FORSYTHE: Katherine Clark?

WOMACK: I remember Ms. Clark, but I didn't know her all that well. She was a small woman, very distinguished lady, and very much a lady. I remember her in that way, but I never had a lot of first hand dealings with her.

FORSYTHE: Emily Calcott?

WOMACK: Dr. Calcott was one of my favorite teachers. She was the one the convinced me that I wanted to major in English. She was probably the only person I've ever known to have a photographic memory. She could just flip through a book and tell you what was in it. She came from a very distinguished family. Her brother was an atomic scientist. Her mother was selected as the outstanding woman in Virginia. Dr. Calcott was a little bit peculiar. You just have to say that about her. I know she liked me and did a lot for me, but after I came back here to teach, I would pass her in my car. If it was raining, I would offer to take her where she wanted to go and she wouldn't get into the car with me. I remember once she called me and wanted me to take her somewhere, and I did. But, she was very peculiar. If she had a dislike for certain students, she would make it rough on those students. Fortunately, she and I got along fine. She was probably as brilliant a person as I've ever known, but peculiar with it. She died in a little house here on Airport Ave. She'd been dead for ten days or so before anyone found her. She sort of lived as a hermit, and it's my understanding that although her family was quite wealthy, she never accepted any money from them in any

way. Bill Beasley, who used to be on our English staff here was a good friend of hers. She was in the English department. They talked a lot, and he was probably closer to her than anyone I knew. She was a very outstanding teacher.

FORSYTHE: Philip Dalton?

WX; He was a great furniture. Many people around Murfreesboro have furniture he has made, but I was never close to him.

FORSYTHE: Delbert Dike?

WOMACK: I didn't know him.

FORSYTHE: Philip Cheek?

WOMACK: Yes, I knew Dr. Cheek. I had English under him. I believe he was a Phi Beta Kappa from the University of North Carolina. He was a big tall man and very quiet, almost shy. I know that when he went into the army during WWII, they put him on a train with students from this school. They told me about it and said that he looked totally out of place with them. He could speak five languages, and eventually they put him in a division of the army where he could speak foreign languages. I believe he died during the war, but I'm not sure about that.

FORSYTHE: Beuleah Davis?

WOMACK: She was in the physical education department. She is a very good friend of my wife. They play cards together. I've never had a class under Beuleah, but I consider her a good friend and a very competent teacher.

FORSYTHE: Newby Freeman?

WOMACK: I never had much association with him. He was in mechanical drawing and that was about as far away from my interest as you could get. So, I didn't know him.

FORSYTHE: Carol Evans?

WOMACK: I had an English course under Mr. Evans. I remember the course that I took under him. We analyzed the root of words and how words had changed down through history. He made the course very interesting.

FORSYTHE: Roy Simpson?

WOMACK: Roy Simpson was the principal of the campus school. I didn't have a lot of association with him. He was a very quiet man and very competent man as far as I know.

FORSYTHE: C.C. Simms?

WOMACK: Dr. Simms was a history teacher, and he wrote a book about the history of Rutherford County. He was a fine scholar, very fine scholar. I always thought he was jealous of people in history like George Washington. He was a teacher. I remember once I disagreed with him on a point in lecture. He didn't like that. He was bald-headed and I remember he put his hand on top of his head. He said, "Well, Mr. Womack, the constitution gives every jack-ass the right to pray. Now that you've prayed, we'll go on with the lecture." That was his attitude, but I did make A's under him. You could anticipate what he was going to ask you on the test because of what he emphasized in his lectures. But, he was a wonderful teacher and he was probably one of the most distinguished professors that has ever taught at this school.

FORSYTHE: Eugene Sloan?

WOMACK: Mr. Sloan is still living. He was in charge of public relations. He wrote a book on the manuevers that were held here during WWII, and he was a great writer. He wrote for the national banner, and he wrote about horses a lot. He and I worked together on historical subjects that we were both interested in. He was a very brilliant man, and he was an asset to the school. I think as much of him as anyone.

FORSYTHE: Joe Wilkes?

WOMACK: I remember him, but I don't remember a lot about him.

FORSYTHE: Will Don Smith?

WOMACK: I remember Will Don. I never had a class under him. He was a history teacher and his father was the state commissioner of education, and I believe he'd been the president of Memphis State University. He was sort of a flamboyant type of guy that people liked who had close associations with him. But, I never had close associations with him.

FORSYTHE: Neil and Margaret Wright?

WOMACK: Oh yes. I majored in music. Neil directed the glee club and gave private lessons. I took piano under Margaret. I took a lot of other subjects, and we used to tour a lot. She organized that, and I was in the first group. I see her quite often now, and she's still a wonderful woman. She was very talented. She was Phi Beta Kappa at Vanderbilt. She was quite an asset. They were wonderful people for this school. They came here right after WWII, and I think they were both from Nashville, but they had been in Bristol, Tennessee. There she had a connection with Tennessee Ernie For, arranging some of his music. Neil was quite an accomplished musician. They made quite a contribution to the school.

FORSYTHE: Did you travel with them?

WOMACK: We traveled by car. It wasn't over six or eight of us.

FORSYTHE: For your senior recital, what did you do?

WOMACK: I took voice and I used to sing in operas and things like that.

FORSYTHE: Coach Murphy?

WOMACK: Coach Murphy came here after WWII. He had been coaching in Nashville. He had been an outstanding athlete here at MTSU. Of course, he has always been very popular with the players and the people. He's a man of sterling character and he is obviously a wonderful coach. He and his wife both have been assets to the community.

FORSYTHE: Howard Kirksey?

WOMACK: Howard Kirksey was vice-President for faculty when I was here. Dr. Kirksey was quite a scholar. He was a good leader. He coordinated this school when it went from a college to a university. He blueprinted the schools that we now have. He presided over sort of a mushrooming growth following WWII. In that capacity, it made quite a contribution to the University.

FORSYTHE: XXX Patty?

WOMACK: I knew Patty because he managed the tickets at the athletic events. When I came here, I volunteered to help him and for several years went over before football games. He would tell me what he wanted me to do and he would go do some other things. I remember the advice he gave me when I came here. He told me that the best position on this campus is to be a full professor with no outside duties. That's what I wound up doing. I think he was right, but he had a lot of outside duties. He was an outstanding golf coach and was a good business manager for athletics. He had also been an outstanding athlete here years before.

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

WOMACK: Well, the thing that everybody remembers about Q.M. Smith was the impediment he had in speaking. It was difficult to talk to him. There's no telling what that man could have done had he not had that speech impediment. I went into his office several times, and he would tell me something and I would have no idea what he said. But, I could tell whether he was scolding me or whether he was not. A lot of times he called me in to scold me when I came back here as a teacher because he didn't like the stands that I took on several issues...political and religious. But, he was always understanding. He never threatened or anything

like that. He was just talk, and I was a young turk and he was trying to calm me down a bit which was appropriate, I'm sure. He was obviously a very fine administrator. The institution grew dramatically under his presidency. After he retired, I got pretty close to him. He went to the bank, and every time I'd go in the bank, I'd go in and talk to him. It's amazing that when your relationship is boss to employee, there seems to be barriers in the communication. When that is removed, then things become so much easier and more fluid. I think I got to be quite good friends, and I think he looked upon me as a friend, too. He was an outstanding administrator.

FORSYTHE: There was something about a footrace with Q.M. Smith. What was that about?

WOMACK: Well, the last night of school in 1942, we, in Jones Hall had gotten a little rowdy celebrating the end of school. It got so bad that he came over to quiet things down. We all ran. We ran and hid under the football stadium. He came over there after us. When he came after us, we ran again. He caught some and didn't catch others. He caught my roommate, and that was the reason my roommate when to UT.

FORSYTHE: What did he do with the ones he caught?

WOMACK: I don't remember. I'm sure he gave them firm talking to. Roscoe Shoffner was my roommate, and I don't really think that had anything to do with him transferring to UT. I'm sure he talked with us sternly. There was an atmosphere here on campus especially among boys at that time. We knew we were going into the war. We sort of let go a little bit. I'm sure he understood that, but at the same time, he couldn't tolerate it. After the war was over, we came back and he was the first to greet us. He had been a veteran himself during WWI. He knew what it was like.

FORSYTHE: Were there any controversies while you were a student?

WOMACK: No, I really don't remember any. At that time, students didn't get involved in the administration. You would never have thought of challenging a teacher or administrator.

FORSYTHE: What about as a faculty member?

WOMACK: Very few as a faculty member. There was really no controversy, disagreements sometimes.

FORSYTHE: You were a founding member of the faculty senate?

WOMACK: Yes, I was one of the early president's of the faculty senate. As you said, I helped found it. As I look through the years, I can remember maybe one thing the faculty

senate has ever done. It was nothing more than an organization for teacher's to vent out their frustrations, and nobody really pays any attention to them. I'm not saying it shouldn't exist because it should. The faculty does need a voice, and maybe if something really important came up, it would serve a good purpose. I'll bet I served on one-hundred committees through the years, and I can't name a thing that a one of them did. It's a way to spend time, and a way to make faculty members think they're having a voice on what's going on. When, in reality nobody pays any attention to it.

FORSYTHE: What was the original purpose of the faculty senate?

WOMACK: To give the faculty a voice in running the university.

FORSYTHE: I wanted to ask you about the Upper Bound Grant.

WOMACK: I wrote the original Upper Bound Grant. The purpose of that grant was to bring students who, for some or another had quit high school. They had dropped out, yet they had potential. So, we brought those students into the campus during the summer. We gave them math, English, and drama. Drama was probably more important than any of the other subjects because it taught the students to project themselves into another character. When we then used this as a vehicle through which they could project themselves ten years from now. To have dreams, you must get an education and develop the potential that you have. It was an excellent program. I'll give you two or three examples. We had a boy named Ricky Floyd. He wanted to be a flyer. One day, I went to the Nashville airport way before they had the tunnels that you walk through. In those days, you walked out into the weather, walked up to the plane and walked up. I was walking up to a plane one day and got tapped on a window, and the pilot was Ricky Floyd. We had another young lady who wanted to be a stewardess on an airline. I remember I got a letter from Transworld Airlines and she was serving as a stewardess on the run from America to Australia. We had a teacher named Christine Vaughn from Manchester. Later, she went to St. Thomas hospital, and when she got to the hospital, the person who greeted her was a former XXXBound. We have three of them here on staff at the university. It was a fabulous program. We didn't save them all. Some of them we tried as hard as we could, but it was still not a total success. But, in terms of college, it was just a wonderful experience for them. We had a lot of teachers on campus who helped us XXXX Dwight Bullard, Joe Sawyer, just a whole group of teachers on campus that helped us. Bill Boner, who later became mayor of Nashville and U.S. representative helped us a lot. He was a student here at the time. It was a good program.

FORSYTHE: How long did it last?

WOMACK: About ten years. President Kennedy brought him in and President Johnson carried it on after that. But, later on Nixon cut back a little bit and it sort of dwindled out.

FORSYTHE: What about the Elder Hostile Classes?

WOMACK: Yes, we still do that. I've had five this summer, and I'll have one more in September. Cynthia XXX heads that program. She tells people that it will be available and the subjects that will be taught. They have a national newspaper. So, this goes all over the nation. Those people sign up for our program. The ones I'm involved in have three subjects...the civil war, Tennessee walking horses and country music. I do the civil war and the walking horses, and other people such as Ben Austin and Wolf do the country music. Generally, our programs are filled up and we have a good reputation throughout the country. When people come and they enjoy it, they tell other people about it. All of these people are retired. They come because they are interested in the subject not because they have to. That makes it a joyous situation for a teacher because you're teaching them something that they don't know much about, yet they have an interest in it. It's been a very rewarding experience for me.

FORSYTHE: How long are the classes?

WOMACK: They are about an hour and a half. They only stay here a week. We used to keep them on campus in a dormitory, but we found that that was a little bit confusing to these retired people who had to mix it up with baseball camps and band camps and all that type of stuff. So, now we put them in motels. They come back to MTSU to eat because they think the food is better than any in town. So, we bus them back here for their meal. They take three classes a day, one in walking horse, one in civil war, one in music. Then, we take them on field trips. We take them to the Grand Ole Opry, Stones River Battlefield. We take them out to the barns to watch the horses.

FORSYTHE: Do you have to be retired to do this?

WOMACK: One spouse has to be retired. They just have to be over a certain age.

FORSYTHE: Do you remember your job interview here?

WOMACK: I don't remember a lot about it. Will Bowden was the head of the education department when I came here, and I had worked with him. I was principal of a school in Lebanon, Tennessee. He had come over there and got acquainted with him. I knew Dean Beasley real well, and I knew Mr. Smith pretty well. So, really it wasn't too big of an ordeal. I applied for the job, and two or three weeks, I had it.

FORSYTHE: What were your duties?

WOMACK: I was a teacher. I taught subjects in educational psychology, education sociology and educational philosophy.

FORSYTHE: Where was your office?

WOMACK: My office was on the bottom floor of the Old Main Building and it was not air conditioned. I shared an office with Dr. Pete XXX, and he was an outstanding teacher. I was very fortunate to share an office with him. The only thing that separated us from the classroom was chicken wire. It seemed like every time either of us taught a class, the other had to sit through it. We didn't have a telephone or anything like that. Comparing it to what we have now, you'd think it was pretty crude, but we didn't think it was crude then. We thought it was fine. It was as good as what we had been used to.

FORSYTHE: How has the department changed since you've been here?

WOMACK: Not a lot. The personnel has changed, of course. I think that I am the oldest of the staff of all 500 teachers. I am seventy-two. I think I'm the only veteran of WWII on staff. So, I've seen a complete turnover. It was so gradual. It sort of XXX XXX. I haven't seen a lot of difference in what we do or how we do it on any aspect. We do more of it and we have technology now that we didn't have before. But, technology doesn't change what I do, and I don't think it changes what an English teacher does or what a history teacher does. It certainly gives access to information. But, we had access to all the information we needed before computer although I do use a computer. The fundamentals of any course offered on this campus are pretty well the same as they were when I came here as a student. Of course, historical data accumulates, but it isn't all that foreign to what accumulated before it happened. We live in a society where we're always reminding ourselves of how things change so fast. Really, I think that's an illusion.

FORSYTHE: What are you teaching now?

WOMACK: I'm teaching at two extreme levels. I'm teaching incoming freshmen and I also teach a class on the overview of education.

FORSYTHE: What did you decide to become a teacher?

WOMACK: I like to deal with ideas and have an audience to help me deal with my ideas. In an academic situation, these ideas can be penetrated because that's the nature of going to school. I had a sister who was a teacher, and I admired her very much. She probably had an influence on that.

FORSYTHE: What are your interests in the civil war?

WOMACK: My interests in the civil war stem from that fact that I live way back in the hills. I remember when we didn't even have a radio, but we had a lot of old people back there, and their mothers and fathers had fought in the war. I would sit and listen to them talk about it. They never talked about strategy or anything like that. They talked about the human interest part of it. That was the part that interested me then and it still interests me. I think the individual soldier was outstanding although I didn't think the south was right. My own experience in WWII leads me to believe that no other experience in the world puts you in touch with reality like war does. No experience in the world props you to examine your own existence to the degree war does.

FORSYTHE: How did you get interested in the walking horses?

WOMACK: I was raised on a farm and my family always had walking horses. It was just natural that I would get interested in them. Now, my children are interested in them, so my interests keep going.

FORSYTHE: What about your membership in the walking horse committee of the American horse association? Can you tell me about that?

WOMACK: That 's not the proper name for it. It's the Walking Horse Owner's Association. I was president of it for two or three terms. We tried to help promote the walking horse and do all that we could to further it and its image as far as the public is concerned. A man by the name of John Miller was very close to us and recently willed 20 million dollars to MTSU to build a collisium. One of the great advantages of being interested in the walking horses are the people that you meet are a different cut of people. Some are very, very wealthy people, and I think its interesting to sit around under a tree and get their perspective. The animal itself is so beautiful and so talented. That, as a product of nature brings a clear understanding of what life is all about. So, I have thoroughly enjoyed my association of the walking horse.

FORSYTHE: I want to ask you about the President's you worked under? What do you remember about Dr. Cope?

WOMACK: Dr. Cope was a very brilliant man. He combined the theoretical with the practical. He was a man who walked around the campus looking to see how things were going in the buildings, yet he would go in his office and print out programs. His background was in education, and he was a very personable fellow. He just made a fine contribution to this school.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Scarlett?

WOMACK: Dr. Scarlett was quite a scholar and quite a gentlemen. He initiated more programs on this campus than any president. He initiated the DA program, and he was the person who got the Learning Resource Center built. He had visions of

that building that have been lost sight of because other people didn't understand the potential he had in mine. He was an imaginative thinker and very much a gentleman. Although very quiet, he was a very determined individual. He was a very positive influence on this school.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Ingram?

WOMACK: I was closer to Dr. Ingram at a personal level than any other presidents. He was my department head, Dean, and my President. All of my relationships with Dr. Ingram were very pleasant. He was a very competent man. He probably was as keen in intelligence as any person I've ever known in my life. He was fiscally conservative but that worked to the benefit of the school in a lot of ways. He did initiate some new programs, and I can't remember precisely right now but I know he did. He was a very personable man and was very interested in horses. So, that gave us something in common. He was a very down to earth man.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Prescott?

WOMACK: Prescott was here only a very short time. He was a wonderful president. I don't know of another man that made the impact that Dr. Prescott made while he was here. When they told us that someone from Tennessee Tech was going to be our President, I think there was a little bit of a negative reaction. The moment he walked on campus and you shook hands with him, you forgot all of that. He did a lot of good things for this school, and I think he was a person you could look to and be proud of as representing your school.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Walker?

WOMACK: Dr. Walker is a very personable and very intelligent, very imaginative administrator. I think that he has seen things and has initiated things on campus that needed doing. It took quite a degree of intestinal fortitude to do things. He had that and received full support from the community, and I'm sure full support of the faculty as well. I think he'll go down as an outstanding president of this school.