

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
MARGUERITE BOUTWELL

30 AUGUST 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW #QMS.081

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
MARGUERITE BOUTWELL**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.081

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q. M. Smith Collection designated as QMS.1995.81. This is Regina Forsythe, I am interviewing Mrs. Marguerite Boutwell. Today is Wednesday, August 30, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the home of Mrs. Boutwell located at 618 Fairview, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The tape of this interview along with a transcription of the interview will become 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?

BOUTWELL: Oh yes that is fine.

FORSYTHE: What is your full name?

BOUTWELL: Marguerite Jacobsen Boutwell.

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

BOUTWELL: 7/11/14, Crete, Nebraska.

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

BOUTWELL: Richard he was a lumber man.

FORSYTHE: What was your mother's name and occupation?

BOUTWELL: Ella Gillette, her name was Ella Adelia, and her sister's name was Della Bedilia, my grandfather had a wonderful time. She was a housewife.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

BOUTWELL: I had two brothers, Dick and Bob. They were older.

FORSYTHE: What is your husband's name?

BOUTWELL: Layne, he was a professor at MTSU.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any children?

BOUTWELL: We have Richard, our son, and Gillette, our daughter. She is the last of that branch of the Gillettes, my uncles did not have any sons, they had no children as a matter of fact, and so she is the last of that name.

FORSYTHE: Why did choose to go to school at MTSU?

BOUTWELL: I didn't go to school here, I got my master's here, I went to school, got my B.E. degree at the National College of Education, in Evanston Illinois, outside of Chicago.

FORSYTHE: But you got your master's here?

BOUTWELL: Yes

FORSYTHE: What year did you go to school for your master's?

BOUTWELL: It is the first year they gave it, I don't remember.

FORSYTHE: What was your major?

BOUTWELL: The only one they gave at that time, English.

FORSYTHE: Why did you come to MTSU for your master's?

BOUTWELL: Because I lived here. We came in '47 and I think I got in the fifties, maybe. Whatever year they first gave it.

FORSYTHE: When did you start to work at MTSU?

BOUTWELL: At campus school in '62.

FORSYTHE: Why did you start working there?

BOUTWELL: I was teaching first grade in the city schools from '52 to '62 and there was an opening in the first grade at campus school, so I wanted to teach there.

FORSYTHE: At which city school were you teaching?

BOUTWELL: Critchlow, which is no more, there were only three schools in Murfreesboro when we came. Critchlow, a city school. McFadden, a county school, and Bradley, which was the black children's school.

FORSYTHE: I was told to ask you about the Kindergarten program.

BOUTWELL: The kindergarten, when Miss Mary Hall got the legislature to pass a law to have public school kindergartens we had the state, let MTSU have one of the nine pilot programs, at campus school, and I began that because Kindergarten was my the

only thing I really like doing best of all, teaching kindergarten. So we began that in '65, I believe, and so we educated all those teachers who wanted to become kindergarten teachers in middle Tennessee, they came here to get their training. So we had the kindergarten program and kindergarten practicum at campus school.

FORSYTHE: How did that work sending college students over there, did you do the teaching and they watch, or did they do the teaching and they watch?

BOUTWELL: It all depended, they were here as student teachers, we did have groups of people, and I had fifty at one time, for observation.

FORSYTHE: Didn't that bother your kids?

BOUTWELL: No they got used to it. Then the aerospace program began at that time so that we had the aerospace, no it began before because I had them in first grade, during summer school we would have the aerospace people come over and that was lots of fun. One summer we went out to the airport and all the children got to take a ride in the airplane. All the summer school children.

FORSYTHE: Do you remember your job interview?

BOUTWELL: No. I think Will Bowden was head of the education department at that time, or no, well I don't know.

FORSYTHE: Hillary Parker, maybe?

BOUTWELL: No Hillary Parker was the principal at campus school at the time that I went, Dr. White was, and I think he was in charge of education.

FORSYTHE: Did you teach any education classes at MTSU?

BOUTWELL: Occasionally I did, but I was responsible for Kindergarten practicum, and then in the summer I did a course or two but I don't remember which it was. This was the time that we had the kindergarten and we also had the day care center over in the family housing unit, and we had Andrea Lowry, had the nursery school which was down at the home ec department, and Mary Tom Berry was in the education department so the four of us worked together and that was the time we established the early elementary major with those four areas. That was the first major in early elementary school.

FORSYTHE: How has the training school changed from '62 to '72?

BOUTWELL: Well we have a different principal, I don't think it changed very much, we had two of every grade, we did add a second kindergarten but that was the year, '72, when I left, Wilma Salzman came on as kindergarten teacher then, in '72 and then

they opened another one and I think that was when Lorraine Singer, probably was the one that was the teacher at that time.

FORSYTHE: I want to go back to your student days and ask you about some of the faculty members that were here.

BOUTWELL: I had Howard Kirksey, was an excellent teacher, Will Bowden, an excellent teacher, no one could equal Dick Peck in English, he was the one that helped me get through me master's degree program. We found out that there were some freshman, particularly boys, that had a hard time passing English one, they would take it and flunk it and take it and flunk it, my feeling was that it was because they couldn't read, so thanks to Dean Beasley, who supported it, and Dick Peck they set up a program and gave me these boys and I taught them a particular program that Dean Beasley ordered and I used a movie camera and so I worked with them to see if we could bring up their reading level t see if we could pass English One and it was marvelous, I have the paper on it and the percentage gain they made was just incredible. One was a football boy, a couple of them were football players, but I think I had six or eight boys, that was lots of fun, they all made good progress.

FORSYTHE: Was it like a remedial program?

BOUTWELL: Yes

FORSYTHE: Was that the start of the remedial program?

BOUTWELL: It could have been but I doubt it, I don't think they have ever used that material since, I don't know where it is. It is a shame because I would like to see it again, because they were interesting. One of the stories was about pygmies, and there were test on comprehension and so on afterwards, but it was fun. I brought in all of the reading material I could find, classics that were on sixth or seventh grade level to magazines, anything to create interest.

FORSYTHE: Wilma Salzman

BOUTWELL: Well Wilma was married to Michael Salzman who was in the music department over at the university, and he also had the music at campus school, and he was across the hall from me in the kindergarten, Michael could play anything by ear. I would get so fascinated with him over there, I would go and listen at the door, but Wilma had a background in orph music, the kind of thing where you do a lot of clapping and playing instruments like a xylophone, sticks, anything that the child could play and still have a lot of fun with it, and she has done, they were just here recently, Michael was at a conference in Nashville, and Wilma had a new series of books, they are little individual books that the children have themselves and they are all singing songs, so they do the song together, I saw her demonstrate this with children, she had twenty five children that she did not know from Adam, and

they were just fascinated with her, when they were through, they were reading this little book on "Ten Little Indians" and then she gave each one of them the little book to take home with them, she hopes to bring it to the next educational conference next year, I hope they will have her come and demonstrate it, because every teacher that sees her do it is just fascinated by it. Because the children then learn to read so easily, they end up by knowing what it is so that they can find the words, but she is remarkable, and she came over and took my place at campus school.

FORSYTHE: Will Bowdoin

BOUTWELL: Ruth Bowdoin is the one that has the classroom on wheels that is nationally known and just went to Washington for special honors and she and Will were just salt of the earth, and Will has died but Ruth is still leaving and getting the honors that she well deserves, and Will was a honey to work with I enjoyed him thoroughly. Dell Pockat was head of the education department.

FORSYTHE: Can you tell me about him?

BOUTWELL: Dell was a good listener, very fine educational background, and I enjoyed knowing and working with him, his wife Mary is still here, Dell died just suddenly of a heart attack, but Mary is here.

FORSYTHE: Miss Mary Hall

BOUTWELL: Miss Mary, of course Rita King has written a wonderful book about Miss Mary, and as I said, Miss Mary is the one that finally got the legislature to put through the program for public school kindergartens which Tennessee hadn't had before then and Miss Mary had a scholarship in her name, I have one in my name and we always enjoyed taking our scholarship student out to lunch and Miss Mary was just great.

FORSYTHE: Can you tell me about yours and her scholarship?

BOUTWELL: I don't know who established Miss Mary's scholarship, but mine was established by friends and I didn't know anything about it until they had a nice party for me down in St. Paul's garden, have you ever seen St. Paul's church on Main Street? In the back is a garden that I designed and started, so they thought that would be nice place to have the party, which it was, so they were the ones that set it up, I don't know all of them that did, but Andrea Lowry and Mary Tom Berry, and I think Flo Swanson and Maritta Bishop and some of the parents that I had when I had my school, after I left campus school, for two or three years I had my little Hide-a-Way house school in the back yard here, those parent were particularly dear. I will show you, when you come down the drive way, and go in the gate, there is a little house back there and you can't see it, so when I started the school we didn't know what to name it, and we said we would name it Hide-a-Way house

because you can't see it, till you get in. One of my Hide-a-Way house boys was here the other day, he is around twenty five I think, and we went back to look, but it was lots of fun.

FORSYTHE: What did you do in the school?

BOUTWELL: I patterned it after the primary school in England. If somebody decided that they wanted to go outside, we would go outside to play, in other words as we felt the inclination to do something we did it, and the first year I had thirteen boys, the baker's dozen.

FORSYTHE: How did you get the students and how did this start?

BOUTWELL: I had people who knew me from campus school, and faculty members, you know the Bills in the music department, Taylor Bills, Tom Hutchison in music, Kirk LaLance, Adam Swanson, I had the other two Swanson children at campus school. Marietta Bishops, Jimmy Bishops, who is now a dentist out here, Mary Edith McFarland. Every one of them was a chief, there wasn't an Indian among them, they were so cute, such fun, Tom Welchance is going on to get his Ph.D. in English, they went to, several of them, I had one honors at Webb School, Adam is going to be a minister, he is starting a church. Cute as they could be. I had all boys because there were only about two or three girls had enrolled, and one of the little girls had older brothers and I didn't think it was fair for her to come to school with a bunch of boys, so I didn't. Matt's little girl, he was in the psychology department but he is at Nissan, and she it just getting married, they were lots of fun. Layne built all the equipment we had back there and had everything from work bench to sand all kinds of creative things to do.

FORSYTHE: How did think get started and when?

BOUTWELL: It was in '72 when I left campus school.

FORSYTHE: Was it just a summer thing?

BOUTWELL: No it was a regular school. A preschool. We can walk out there and you will see. Layne's mother came to live with us, and we built a little house back there for her, and so after she died we had the house back there, I had a work scholarship student with me, from the time she came as a freshman all four years, we adopted her, she was Linda Duzkhinsky, she is Linda Beaty now. She was with me all four years and when she got married we let her have and her husband have this house for the year that they were finishing up, and that was after I had the school, I didn't have it but three years. Then I found that the children's noise was beginning to bother me and if perfectly normal natural noise bother's you, then it is time to quit. They weren't doing anything that wasn't just good old fun.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Howard Kirksey.

BOUTWELL: He was splendid, just a wonderful teacher. Very studious, when we lived at Moffitt house, did Layne tell you about Moffitt house, which is now the living center on the other side of human services, that was the old Moffitt house, and one of the football teams had lived in it at one time and on the third floor they knocked out all the openings between the closets so they could go all they way around. Did Layne tell you how we happened to be here? Dean Beasley? Dean Beasley took us out on the first floor, was Ed and Irene Baldwin, Ed was the head of the geography department, Irene is still leaving here. Well the Kirkseys eventually came, on the second floor. Then on the first floor there was a young couple over here, then the Martin's were over here, he has since died, then we had one or two rooms back here, and the fuse box for the whole house was in our apartment, and it was always blowing a fuse, the electric cord that was behind the piano caught fire and scorched the Baldwin's piano and there was just a shower no bathroom, and my washing machine, in those days the washing machine didn't automatically cut off when it filled and I would get busy and forgot it, and it went down through the floor right on the Elizabeth Kirksey's dining room table with a lace table cloth, so I dashed down there with my New York time to sop up the water. Howard was working on his Ph.D. and he would get up, I think it was four o'clock he would get up to read and study, such an intellect, and then after he got it he was reading Russian literature, all the time, just a wonderful mind, a great sense of humor, their son lives in Memphis and was head of the history department I believe but I not sure. When we walked into that apartment I cried and I said "Layne, I have seen tenements in Chicago and I have seen tenements in New York City, and I have never seen anything like this." Because when I was in Chicago we did student teaching or sophomore, junior and senior years, and I was assigned to Hull house in Chicago and you are too young to know about Hull house but Jane Adams started a program in Hull house for the little immigrant children, they would come sewed into their underwear and garments for the winter because that is what the European children did, they sewed them in to keep them warm. Well I went down there to student teach, we ate lunch with them, and you had to eat it, and they had liver loaf. But I didn't get to finish there because riding down on the elevator train, I remember sitting by a man and he had a very strange smell, and I got mumps from him, so I was in the infirmary with mumps for quite a while, but how did we get off on that? Oh Hull house. Well we moved on up into this third floor, and that was a lot of fun because you had the sunrise here, and the sun set here, and each child had his own bed room, and we had a dining room, and that was a lot of fun being up there, then we moved in here in '49, in February, so we were just in the Moffit house for that length of time.

FORSYTHE: So when you were on the third floor did the closets still have wholes in them?

BOUTWELL: I think somebody closed them back up.

FORSYTHE: You were there for two years?

BOUTWELL: No, let see, from September of '47 to February of '49, so it would be about a year and a half. So I think the next year we moved up to the third floor.

FORSYTHE: Can you tell me about the bad condition they were in? Tell me what was there?

BOUTWELL: Well it was just an old stove and just, I think that as you went in it was no bigger than our dining area, and then there was a room out here, and I asked Layne "where did we sleep?" I don't remember where we slept, he said he thought we had a bed some where, the children had bunks and of course the kitchen was just mediocre kind of thing. But then after all, I trapped around when Layne was in the war, so I was used to a lot of different things.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Ed Baldwin.

BOUTWELL: Ed Baldwin was a wonderful character. Ed could sit down and play the piano and sing, it was such fun, we always has such a good time with the Baldwins, and still love them dearly. They had just one son, Edward and then the Martins,

FORSYTHE: What was their first name?

BOUTWELL: Umm, Donald was there son. He taught over here in the economics department, and Julie, his wife, was an organist.

FORSYTHE: Was his name James?

BOUTWELL: No James Martin was different, he was in psychology.

FORSYTHE: Robert?

BOUTWELL: Robert. Jim Martin is with his daughter now, he and Layne talk on the phone, every now and then. His wife was in the nursing home for years and he went over every day to help feed her and look after her, and he always looked so nice. He always dressed nicely.

FORSYTHE: Does he live here in Murfreesboro?

BOUTWELL: No he is with his daughter in Illinois.

FORSYTHE: Did you know Horace Jones?

BOUTWELL: No

FORSYTHE: I am going to ask you about people who were involved in the Training school. Tell me about Hillary Parker.

BOUTWELL: Oh Hillary is out living with his, he had two sons in LaVergne, and he is in with Robert, and we called yesterday, and he is visiting his sister her.

FORSYTHE: Yes I interviewed him, he told me his birthday is tomorrow, he is going to be 89.

BOUTWELL: He is such a honey. When I started at the campus school he said "Well, we will have a honey moon for one year, and let's see what you can do." He was always such a joy, and our children went to campus school, and when our son and a couple of others, they went through eighth grade then and they thought it was a good idea to sell candy. Hillary Parker was so cute, he told the boys, he admired their enterprise, but it really couldn't be done. They could understand that. He was very supportive.

FORSYTHE: What about Roy Simpson?

BOUTWELL: Roy lived right across the street. Then he went to teach math at the university. Hillary followed Mr. Simpson, I didn't have him as a principal.

FORSYTHE: What about Mary Francis Snell?

BOUTWELL: She was teaching 8th grade, and she is out here at, have you interviewed her?

FORSYTHE: Yes she was very nice. Helen Greer?

BOUTWELL: Greever. Pete Greever was in the University, he Helen had fourth grade, Pete was in the Art department, then he went to education. I don't know if he was in the horticulture department, at and time or not, but he was in art then he ended up in education. Pete is a fun person to know. They are on road, he had the beautiful carved canes, all kinds of beautiful things that he makes, and is a wonderful gardener.

FORSYTHE: Mary Bell Jordan

BOUTWELL: Mary Bell Jordan? Is she still living? It was Mary Bell's place that I took at campus school, she went to Michigan or someplace to teach, I can't remember where. She left campus school. At the time our kids were in there, they kept the teacher the first three years, so when I went, I said, I don't want to inflict my personality on a child for three years. SO they said OK. Marguerite Harrison had taught first grade then she went on the second grade, and she said that that was fine with her, she would just as soon keep second grade, then they got somebody else for third grade.

FORSYTHE: Marguerite Harrison.

BOUTWELL: Marguerite was a very, kind of a quit person, the big house, across from the president's home was where she lived, I have forgotten how many rooms they

had, they rented rooms. She and her sister, her sister lived with her. She was a nice person.

FORSYTHE: Jean Moser

BOUTWELL: She is over teaching at the University now, was, in education I think.

FORSYTHE: Polly Dugger

BOUTWELL: I was trying to think of her name the other day, let me have that, because she had third grade right across from me, because somebody came, I met them the other day, from where Polly lived, and I couldn't think of her name to ask them about her, she had the third grade. She did a good job.

FORSYTHE: Dorothy Ridley

BOUTWELL: She was Dorothy something-else till she married Ridley, she lives on Main street, an awfully nice person, she is a very kind thoughtful person, and she does the children's choir at the First Baptist church.

FORSYTHE: Martha Hampton

BOUTWELL: Martha Hampton was the principal, she came to be principal after Laura Smith, no Laura was still secretary, she came in as principal after Parker left, not Hillary, but Francis Parker.

FORSYTHE: What can you tell me about her?

BOUTWELL: Francis was a fine principal, she did an excellent job. Her daughters were over her in school, one of them just got married and Francis would be a nice person to talk to. You would enjoy her very much.

FORSYTHE: Nannie Rucker

BOUTWELL: Nannie Rucker is still going strong. She is a, loved those children and was fond of every one of them, and she is on one of the boards, county boards, she was very active politically, she is a very interesting person. You would enjoy her.

FORSYTHE: Darlene Ross

BOUTWELL: Darlene, I can't think who she married. She was in one of the upper grades, so I just knew her as a compatriot.

FORSYTHE: Patricia Rushing?

BOUTWELL: Wasn't she the secretary? Yes she was the secretary. She was the secretary after Laura I think. She was a nice person.

FORSYTHE: What about Laura Smith?

BOUTWELL: Oh Laura was one huge, she did a yeoman's job being president's wife and raising those two children, she just did a great job.

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

BOUTWELL: Q. M. was as Nancy said, dedicated to his children, he had goals, and he attained them, and he knew what he wanted and he went about getting them. He did a great service to the university. The college then.

FORSYTHE: What do you remember about Dr. Cope.

BOUTWELL: Dr. Cope, and of course, Mrs. Cope was still here, and her son. Dr. Cope and Layne's birthday were together. They were very close, and did Layne tell you that he was the one for Layne to have a building? He was a nice person. He did a good job on his two boys.

FORSYTHE: What about Dr. Scarlett?

BOUTWELL: I didn't know Dr. Scarlett.

FORSYTHE: What memories do you have as a teacher over at campus school?

BOUTWELL: Lots of people coming and going. Harold Jewel of the maintenance department, when we set up the kindergarten, fixed everything that we designed. He was the nicest person to work with that I can ever imagine. I had XXX their only child in the kindergarten. But Harold, did the play ground, they did everything Layne and I designed on the inside. We made up, we had so many people wanting to know about our materials, our equipment that we designed, that we put out a sheet of the designs and how to make them, specifications and so on. Ralph White teased me, he said that every time he went to visit a school around Middle Tennessee he saw Margie Boutwell in all the equipment. Because we designed things, swinging bridges and things that were not common at the time.

FORSYTHE: Where did you come up with these ideas?

BOUTWELL: Oh, looking, investigating, research. Layne is very creative, so between the two of us we figured out various and sundry things to make. Like getting old telephone poles and putting a seat on top so kids could get up there and look out, be monarchs of all they survey. But Harold Jewel is a honey and Mary, too. Delora just got married, so as I say, anything we designed, Harold built it for us. It was just great. And we designed a lot. Up over the storage cabinet we had a

place up there where you could go up and read books, now the first grade room had a big place where they can climb up and get away. Because after all you are in a crowd all the time, it is just fun to get up and be by yourself. Wilma designed nice things in her, she moved on to the big kindergarten area over here, in that part of campus school, and she designed some nice things too.

FORSYTHE: What memories do you have of being a student?

BOUTWELL: I was a very bad student in one class. Because I didn't like the teacher. He was a young upstart.

FORSYTHE: Who was that?

BOUTWELL: I don't even remember his name. He didn't last long. But I was not a good listener. I got A's except in English, and I got B's. As I said, it was the only MA they gave, the first one was in English. When my transcript came, Dick Peck looked at it and found I had one year of Freshman English and one year of Elizabethan literature at National College, and I think that was all. So the poor man had to work to get me in. I did all kinds of reading but I just loved it.

FORSYTHE: So you basically did what you were required to do?

BOUTWELL: My education with Will Bowden and with Howard Kirksey and I had English Shakespeare with Dick [Peck] then he set up two courses my own reading, then I had the remedial reading program which was on that schedule, so I worked hard, but I enjoyed it thoroughly.

FORSYTHE: When you were teaching over here at the training school, how many student's were in your class?

BOUTWELL: Twenty -five. Which was quite nice. In the public schools you had to take what ever children were available. The poor little kids, I had fifty children one fall, and they did work it out for a while, but at one time, I hired my own assistant, because I knew I had too much of a variance.

FORSYTHE: Do any of your students stand out in your mind?

BOUTWELL: Oh Layne laughs at me because I keep track of them, their graduation and their marriages and their children and they had a reunion over here the other day of, let's see, I think they were the '65, I am not sure. One little girl said, well she had children of her own in campus school now, and she said "Mrs. Boutwell, you look just the same when we had you." I think they were first grade and I said "I understand that, because I figured that out some years ago when Amy Steagall said that to me. It is because, when you are little, this person is old, well you are still old but they have grown up. But you were always old to them, so I can understand that we might look the same. So cute, all kinds of fun things. I just

got a wedding in the middle of September for one of my kids, one of my Hide-A-Way house ones, the last of September. It is just fun to keep up with them. Lot's of fun. I know I don't remember all of them, but I can still see a six year old face on them some time.

FORSYTHE: Is there anything else we should talk about, or anyone?

BOUTWELL: I don't think so.

FORSYTHE: Thank you very much.