

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
SANDRA STOTT

15 SEPTEMBER 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.097

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

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH
SANDRA STOTT**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.097

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q. M. Smith Collection designated as QMS.1995.97. This is Regina Forsythe. I am interviewing Mrs. Sandra Stott. Today is Thursday, September 14, 1995. The interview 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 part of the Quintin Miller Smith Collection and will be available to the public. Future researchers may include portions of this interview in their publication. Is that all right with you Mrs. Stott?

STOTT: That is fine.

FORSYTHE: What is your full name?

STOTT: Sandra Cowart Stott

FORSYTHE: Your birth date and place of birth?

STOTT: July 15, 1938 in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

FORSYTHE: Your father's name and occupation?

STOTT: Walter B. Cowart, he was a supervisor at Combustion Engineering Company.

FORSYTHE: Your mother's name and occupation?

STOTT: Eva Stella Hawkins Cowart, just a mother, housewife, eleven children.

FORSYTHE: The next question is their names.

STOTT: All their names?

FORSYTHE: Yes.

STOTT: Alva, Mary, Anna, Judy, Dorothy, Virginia, Medina, Jean, my brother Walter Jr., and myself.

FORSYTHE: How many of your brother sand sisters came to school here?

STOTT: Only three of us. Virginia, Medina, and myself.

FORSYTHE: What is your husband's name and occupation?

STOTT: Fred C. Stott Jr. He is from California. He is now working at Stones River Manor, mechanical.

FORSYTHE: Your children's names.

STOTT: I have no children. I have three step children,

FORSYTHE: Did anyone else in your family work here?

STOTT: No.

FORSYTHE: Why did you decide to come to school here?

STOTT: My typing teacher in high school had come here, and of course my sisters too.

FORSYTHE: What was your typing teacher's name?

STOTT: Dorothy Leavitt. She and her husband both graduated from here. She said "You have got to go to Middle Tennessee State College." So I said "OK"

FORSYTHE: What years were you here?

STOTT: I was here 1956 to 1960.

FORSYTHE: What was your major and minor.

STOTT: Business education, economics.

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

STOTT: They are all real good memories because I remember going, like you said, to church on Wednesday nights. When I was here it was like a big high school. All the girls knew everyone in the dorm, and were like one big family.

FORSYTHE: Did you have to go to assembly every week?

STOTT: We had assemblies on Thursdays at 1:00, and then on Wednesday nights we had to go to prayer meeting. Everything shut down, the grill, everything shut down, and you would go to the church of your choice.

FORSYTHE: The one on Thursday, was that mandatory.

STOTT: No.

FORSYTHE: Did you live on campus?

STOTT: Yes, I lived in Rutledge Hall for one year and Monohan for three.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about living in Rutledge Hall?

STOTT: How terrible everything was. We had one electrical cord hanging from the middle of the ceiling, and everything was plugged up to the one cord. We put our table in the center of the room, and everything was plugged in around that one deal.

FORSYTHE: Describe the room when you walked into it?

STOTT: When I walked in it was like two hospital beds, one on one side, one on the other, and a table in the middle. My mother was very sick with cancer, and my dad brought me up here and took me to that room. I thought, "I can't stay, I just can't do it." But after I met all the girls and got used to everyone, it was just like one big happy family. Then my mother passed away like three weeks later. So it was a hard decision for me to come to school. Monohan was, well I knew all the girls and we moved from Rutledge to Monohan, so it was just a continuation.

FORSYTHE: Describe that room.

STOTT: It was a little nicer. The beds were closer to the floor and not up high like hospital beds. I don't know what they have in Rutledge now. I need to go and check it out.

FORSYTHE: Did they have enough electrical outlets?

STOTT: Yes it was much better, I think someone did a lot more planning.

FORSYTHE: Did you have a job when you were a student?

STOTT: Yes I worked in the cafeteria and in the grill. The grill, when I started school, was located where the women's center is, very small. Then they opened the terrace room, which is now the faculty dining room, and that was the grill.

FORSYTHE: Were you paid a salary?

STOTT: No, they fed me. That was it, you work, you eat.

FORSYTHE: What memories do you have of being a worker there?

STOTT: It was real good, we had a lot of fun. Everyone met together that worked in the cafeteria, like thirty minutes before it opened, and we all ate together. Then we went to our assigned jobs.

FORSYTHE: How did students pay for their meals?

STOTT: I think they paid cash. I don't think there was such a thing as meal tickets when I was in school.

FORSYTHE: What did you do for fun?

STOTT: All the girls would get together and walk to town, because no one was allowed to have cars. Every Tuesday night they had Fun Night. They would spin records and everyone would go and dance. That was where you would meet a boyfriend, so I guess that was the fun part.

FORSYTHE: Where was Fun Night located?

STOTT: In the Tennessee Room every Tuesday night. That would be very hard to do now, since I do all the scheduling. I don't think that would ever work. Of course we had no sororities, no fraternities, and no one had cars unless they were handicapped; so everybody stayed on campus.

FORSYTHE: What did you do on the weekends?

STOTT: Most people would go home. It was very lonely, but I did not go home every weekend. I would just stay up and study and do my laundry.

FORSYTHE: Where would you do your laundry?

STOTT: We had washers and dryers in the basement of the dorms. To go to Chattanooga, when I was in school was a big ordeal, there was no interstates.

FORSYTHE: I have some faculty names I want to ask you about. Robert Abernathy.

STOTT: I did not have him for class, but I knew him well. He was the type of person to joke around with you, some tale to tell you. He was a fun person.

FORSYTHE: June Anderson.

STOTT: I knew June Anderson, but I did not have a class under her.

FORSYTHE: Dean Beasley

STOTT: Of course he was the Dean of Admissions when I was here, and then he was the one that hired me to work here in 1960, after I graduated. When I went in for my

interview, of course he knew me real well. He knew I had just gotten married, and he just sort of shook his head and said, "I know you won't be here very long, but I am going to hire you." This was on a Wednesday, and I thought he would say, come to work on Monday. He said, "Can you go to work right now?" So I started to work right then and I have been here ever since.

FORSYTHE: What were your duties?

STOTT: I was his secretary. I worked for him one year, and he retired and I started working for John Weemes. I worked for him for ten years, and he later became the first Vice President here. I was made his assistant. Then he left and went to Meredith College as president, and Morris Bass came and I worked for him for a year and a half as his assistant. Then I was promoted to facilities coordinator, and I still hold that job. I started in '73 doing that.

FORSYTHE: Why did you want to work here?

STOTT: Why did I want to work here? I was just looking for a job. I did have my teaching certificate and I was hired at Eagleville High School to teach typing and shorthand, but I didn't have a car to get to Eagleville. It's pretty hard to walk, so I came over here and interviewed, and Dean Beasley hired me. Then I never cared about teaching because everybody here was so good to work with. Now I'm glad I stayed.

FORSYTHE: Bill Beasley?

STOTT: I had two years of English under Bill Beasley, and he was a wonderful person. I guess he was the most inspirational teacher that I had, if I had to name one.

FORSYTHE: Henrietta Wade.

STOTT: I had several business classes under her. She was very professional and I feel like she really helped me in acquiring my degree. Hollie Sharpe was my major advisor. He was very helpful and very encouraging. He would always say, "If you get discouraged, keep plugging." My first quarter here I did get discouraged, because I was here when my mother passed away. I got very far behind and he helped me catch up.

FORSYTHE: Fowler Todd.

STOTT: He was a very dear sweetheart. I had a lot of classes under Fowler Todd. In fact I saw him about two weeks ago and he said I hadn't changed a bit.

FORSYTHE: John Parchment.

STOTT: I had biological science under him for one year, he was a very nice person. Of course it wasn't my major. It was one of those classes you had to take to get a teaching certificate, so that was the reason I was in there. I enjoyed him as a teacher.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Corlew.

STOTT: He was a real good teacher, very informative. We had to read a lot of books under him. I didn't really like staying up half the night reading books, but you had to memorize history. He was good. I had B. B. Gracy for first aid. He was an elderly man but very informative. He made us do a lot of class discussion and practice on each other with first aid like CPR. He made sure each one of us knew how to do that. I had Harry Green for economics, and his daughter is now working in the athletic department. I found that out about a month ago when we had the dedication of the Mass Comm. I had Clarence Greever. He was very good. He wanted everyone in his class to know each other. On the first day of class he made everyone introduce yourself and tell all about you, like you are asking me to do now. He was good, he wanted everybody to know everybody and have a good time. He said we should not just come to school for an education, he wanted you to have a good time.

FORSYTHE: You didn't tell me about Harry Green.

STOTT: I had him one summer and that was the first time I had come to summer school. You really had to cram a lot of things in six weeks. I only came the first half because we switched over to the semester system my senior year. I wanted to get one or two classes out of the way, but he was a good teacher. I had David LeDoux in art. He was a little different but I guess most art teachers are. He just wanted the students to think that art was the only thing taught here. He taught Introduction to Art. We studied all the different painters and artists and all. I had Richard McCord. It was a real fun class when I had him, because one of the girls in our class sort of had a crush on him, and he had a crush on her. He would send her flowers to the dorm and everything. They are now married. Bob Womack is just a dear person. He is probably one of my favorites too. He is such an inspiration, a mentor or something.

FORSYTHE: Let's talk about the presidents, what do you remember about Q. M. Smith?

STOTT: He was sort of like a principal of a high school. Of course when I was here, as I told you, it was like a big high school. When everyone saw him walk down the sidewalk, it was like he was the person you looked up to, and admired. I think now a lot of our students, they don't know who the president is. Everyone knew who the president was when I was here.

FORSYTHE: How has your job changed, since you started work in 1972.

STOTT: The lady's place I took, she had a secretary. I thought I would rather do my own work when they interviewed me, so I started doing all of it; and I am still doing all of it. It has really grown. Of course there were not that many buildings in '73, and now I try to keep up with everything that goes on this campus, the entire master calendar. Of course I don't schedule all the buildings, but if there is any activity other than classes they are sent to me to make a distribution on them, like security, parking, custodial, anything that is taking place so that everybody on campus will know what to do.

FORSYTHE: How has it changed?

STOTT: The procedure has not changed, it is just so much greater in volume. But we are getting ready to computerize it, so it is going to change in the next six to eight months.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Dr. Weems

STOTT: He was not only a boss, he was a real good friend. He and his wife, and my husband and I went on a lot of trips together. We just had a real good time. I am divorced from my first husband and am now remarried. He has met my new husband and is the same. His wife has passed away.

FORSYTHE: What were your duties?

STOTT: I did his administrative work, worked with the budgets, everything that a vice president for finance and administration does.

FORSYTHE: Morris Bass.

STOTT: I worked for him for a year and a half. I continued doing the same thing that I did for John Weems. Then this job was available and I took it.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Scarlett.

STOTT: He was a real friendly person. He would see me walking and he would stop and pick me up. He was just a real kind person, and I admire him very much. He was a real good president, I think he did a lot for MTSU. This building, that we are in now, would not be here if it had not been for him. I think he had a lot to do with Murphy Center coming here too.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Ingram.

STOTT: I loved Dr. Ingram. I have enjoyed all the presidents that I have gotten to know. I have been a real good friend of Dr. Ingram's too. I don't know what he did for the school, but I understand that he saved a lot of money. That is how everybody is getting everything new now. He was a very professional person, he held the reins

real tight. I think all the students respected him for that too. He might have been a little too tight, where the others have been the other way.

FORSYTHE: Is there anything else we should cover?

STOTT: What I remember about student days, anytime you went to a PE. class, you could not wear shorts on campus. You had to have a raincoat over you shorts to walk across campus. You had to be in the dorms at 9:00 unless you had signed out to go to the library. Every time you left the dorm, you had to sign out where you were going, what time it was, and what time you would be back. All the girls would like to go down and check out the list and see if you were going with their boyfriend. Even when I did my student teaching at Smyrna, I had to sign out who I was riding with, when I got back, what time, this was everyday.

FORSYTHE: Is there anything else?

STOTT: I guess not.

FORSYTHE: Thank you.