

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
WITH  
LOWELL BOGLE

19 SEPTEMBER 1995  
WATERTOWN, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE  
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
INTERVIEW #QMS.100

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Albert Gore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

---

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

## **EDITORIAL NOTICE**

This is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted by the Albert Gore Research Center at Middle Tennessee State University. The original recording and associated materials are archived at the center, whose collections may be accessed in person or via the web site [gorecenter.mtsu.edu](http://gorecenter.mtsu.edu). After a draft of this transcript was made, the interviewer, or in some cases another qualified staff member, reviewed the draft and compared it to the tape recordings. In a few cases, the interviewee also contributed editorial corrections. This final transcript incorporates the corrections and other changes suggested by the interviewee and interviewer. The transcript follows as closely as possible the recorded interview, including the usual starts, stops, and other rough spots in typical conversation. The reader should remember that this is essentially a transcript of the spoken, rather than the written, word. Stylistic matters, such as punctuation and capitalization, follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15<sup>th</sup> edition. The transcript includes bracketed notices at the end of one tape and the beginning of the next so that, if desired, the reader can find a section of tape more easily by using this transcript.

## **RESTRICTION**

The interviewee has donated her or his copyright in this interview to the state of Tennessee through Middle Tennessee State University and has agreed that use of the recorded interview and transcript shall be governed by the director of the Albert Gore Research Center.

Researchers may read, quote from, cite, photocopy, and download this transcript without permission for purposes of research only. Publication is prohibited, however, without permission from the director of the Albert Gore Research Center.

# ABSTRACT



**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH  
LOWELL BOGLE**

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

**INTERVIEW #QMS.100**

**FORSYTHE:** This tape is part of the Q. M. Smith collection designated as QMS.1995.100. This is Regina Forsythe, I am interviewing Mr. Lowell Bogle. Today is Tuesday September 19th, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the home of Mr. Bogle located at 622 West Main Street, Watertown, Tennessee. The tape of this interview along with a transcription of the interview will become a part of the Quintin Millers 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. Bogle?

**BOGLE:** Yes.

**FORSYTHE:** What is your full name?

**BOGLE:** Lowell Afton Bogle

**FORSYTHE:** Your birth date?

**BOGLE:** June 9 1897

**FORSYTHE:** Your birth place?

**BOGLE:** I was born in Bridgeport Alabama, but almost immediately my parents and I moved to Tennessee, so I know nothing about Alabama.

**FORSYTHE:** Where in Tennessee did you move?

**BOGLE:** Here, but not in the corporation. We lived out in the woods.

**FORSYTHE:** What was your father's name?

**BOGLE:** Jesse

**FORSYTHE:** What was his occupation?

**BOGLE:** He was a farmer and a school teacher. He taught school in Wilson County at a place called Mt. Vernon.

**FORSYTHE:** Your mother's name?

BOGLE: Martha Francis Brown

FORSYTHE: Her occupation?

BOGLE: She was a school teacher, she taught in Warren County, and in Wilson County at Greenvale. That is where Thelma lives.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

BOGLE: Yes there were five of us.

FORSYTHE: What were their names?

BOGLE: [first part inaudible] Sam , Ruby, Thelma.

FORSYTHE: What was your wife's name?

BOGLE: I married Beulah Talley

FORSYTHE: What was her occupation?

BOGLE: She was a musician, pianist, and a piano teacher, she was the best musician in the world.! I will explain that to you. Patarusky was prime minister of Poland, do you know about him?

FORSYTHE: No I don't.

BOGLE: He was reported to be the greatest pianist in the world. He came to America and made a tour and charged admission. I went to hear him at Toledo Ohio, with 3, 000 other people in the audience. I heard Ignaus Petarusky [imitates] a lot of noise! It meant nothing to me. Well, that was Beulah, my wife, who knew music, knew how to read it and knew how to time it. Music is not only tone, but a note or a half note ,or a quarter note, or an eighth note, or a sixteenth note, all of which has to be right. Sshe did better than Pataursky, therefore she was the greatest pianist in the world.

FORSYTHE: What years were you a student at MTSU?

BOGLE: 1916 to 1918, that was seventy seven years ago.

FORSYTHE: Why did you go to MTSU?

BOGLE: It was available to me, closer to me than any other college, and it was cheaper.

FORSYTHE: What do you remember about being a student at MTSU?

BOGLE: I remember most vividly Robert L. Jones, he was the president of MTN. They called it Middle Tennessee Normal at that time. Professor Tavennar was Dean, and he welcomed us by playing the viola and cello. I had to buy some books that cost three or four dollars a piece, which I thought was pretty high. I didn't have any money except what I got for teaching school. I got one hundred and forty dollars a year. A year was four months. That \$140 I put in the bank and wrote checks to pay for my books and board. They had a dining room there, and that is where we ate. We paid \$20 a month for food, then we didn't have much money for other things. They had a girls dormitory which is still there, but they had no dormitory for men. I got a room on Main Street and the corner of Tennessee Boulevard. I walked wherever I had to go. There were three automobiles on campus. One belonged to the Charlton brothers, it was a Dodge. One belonged to Mr. Moffitt, it was an Oldsmobile. And one belonged to a student there named Mr. Martin, it was a Ford. Now I expect there are several hundred automobiles on campus.

FORSYTHE: Thousands. Tell me about Mr. Moffitt, who was he?

BOGLE: Mr. Moffitt was in real estate and he built the Moffitt house that has about ten rooms in it. He rented out those rooms to the men. I finally got a room in the Moffitt house, in his house, he lived there and he rented rooms.

FORSYTHE: What was it like inside the Moffitt house?

BOGLE: Well there was a stairway going from the basement to the second floor. I and a number of men lived on the second floor and the Moffitts lived on the first floor. The stairway wound itself around. We went up through the first floor to the second floor where we lived.

FORSYTHE: How many men lived there?

BOGLE: About fifteen.

FORSYTHE: How many men to a room?

BOGLE: There were several men to a room. I said while ago there were several rooms, but now I am not sure that there were one or two big rooms. I know there were several men in a room with me. It might have just been one or two big rooms. We each had a bed that sat on the floor, and in the daytime we pulled it up straight, where you could see only the bottom of it.

FORSYTHE: Was there a name for the other house you lived in?

BOGLE: No, it was just a dwelling. But it was hard to heat, I moved out as soon as I could. I believe I went from there to the Moffitt house.

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

BOGLE: I had no job around the campus. I went into to matriculate and I did not have a high school diploma, so they turned up their nose at that. I had taken my high school work in a country school where we were not graded and I had no diploma. So they said, you go on and take the course here, and we will decide about the credit later. They never did tell me they would give me credit for my high school work. So there I was just meeting classes, and doing a little studying and taking examinations, and I made pretty good grades. I had a enough for graduation lacking a few credits, I don't remember now what a credit was, but I lacked a few, and nobody paid any attention to me at all. They could have said you lack three or four credits to graduate. I could have taken those three or four, and I could have graduated if they had paid any attention to me. I never liked that very much.

FORSYTHE: Did you get a two year teaching certificate?

BOGLE: I got nothing. When I went to teach school I had to take an examination. The teacher gave me a one year certificate for teaching.

FORSYTHE: Did you have to go to chapel?

BOGLE: Yes we had chapel every day. It was eleven o'clock. We gathered in the auditorium and we sang a song or two. I think someone prayed, then we walked out from there over to the dining room.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about president Jones.

BOGLE: He was a very big man, an imposing figure. I guess he was about six feet six, well fleshed out, not fat. P A Lyon was a professor of mathematics, and I had trigonometry under him, but I never made much progress in trigonometry. Dr. P. A. Lyon became president after Jones.

FORSYTHE: What about Katherine Monohan

BOGLE: She was one of my favorites. She and her sister lived there. I don't remember whether or not her sister was working there or if she just happened to be there, but she was a close friend of mine. She talked to me many times, and told about saving the cream off the top of her milk bottle. I think she must have been like me and not had much money. I don't know how much money the professors received, now they get pretty big pay.

FORSYTHE: What teachers do you remember.

BOGLE: Professor Woodward was a manual arts teacher. He was a good man and a good teacher. He gave us projects to work on and disappeared and never was around there much to tell us to do this or that. The last year I was there, I think he was

the man who got me a job at the League Island Navy Yard, in Philadelphia, twenty five cents an hour. I spent the summer of that year building an airplane that used water for a landing field. It had pontoons on the end of each wing, it rode on its belly and those boxes kept the wing from dipping into the water. I don't think it ever amounted to anything.

FORSYTHE: What was your impression of MTN when you came?

BOGLE: I had a special regard for MTN, I loved it as my school, my alma mater. I thought it was a good place for young people to learn how to become teachers, that is what I remember.

FORSYTHE: What did you think when you first saw the building?

BOGLE: It was very impressive to me, tall columns, and a number of steps leading up to it. We called in the administration building. I had been in the country and I had never seen any real good buildings, until I saw the MTN administration building. It was all very impressive to me. Classes were held in that one building and they were fifty-five minutes long. We had a bell, and everyone went out in the hall and found the next class.

FORSYTHE: How many students were there?

BOGLE: Six hundred.

FORSYTHE: What did the classroom look like?

BOGLE: It looked like small school room, seats and tables for the professor. One of my professors named Murphy, he was sort of a comic. He would ask us a question and when no one had an answer he would say, "Speak up, don't turn this into a prayer meeting."

FORSYTHE: Tell me about the library.

BOGLE: The library was a very good library. The librarian was Mrs. Murfree, and she was a writer of note. She signed her writings by some other name, I believe it was James Craddock. She presided over the library, and had a very big dictionary, five or six inches thick. It had its own table, it was a very impressive dictionary.

FORSYTHE: What did you do for fun as a student?

BOGLE: We went to the ballgames sometimes and sometimes we walked down to the square and bought something to eat, bananas for instance. I was walking along with my buddy and he said, "Let's get two dozen bananas and whoever eats the most will get his free." So I ate all I could and while he wasn't looking I dropped one to the side and that put me ahead and he had to pay for the bananas. I started

to write poetry while I was there in school. I didn't do very good with it but afterwards I did very well. I wrote a book of poems. I sold a few of them among my friends and about that time I started to write a history of Watertown. I am still working on that. Would you like me to tell you about my occupations?

FORSYTHE: Yes.

BOGLE: My wife and I went to Toledo, Ohio when we had jobs with the Oberland automobile factory for ten years. The plant went bankrupt so we were out of a job. We came here to Watertown and lived with her family for a while, then the farm program came along. We had quotas on them, and I got a job measuring tobacco. I had a chain sixty-six feet long and would take that into the field. The farmer would help me and I would put down the size and length. I turned in very good reports and they gave me a job in the office. In the office I was putting the figures in, what came in on the field. Then they made me chief clerk of the work that we were doing on quotas and conservation. As chief clerk I had six or eight girls and boys writing up the answer. They finally made me administrator. I had a little more responsibility and we did a little more work. I made good at that but I skated on thin ice, and I made some mistakes. I finally got through as the Wilson County administrator. My wages were at first two dollars and a half, a day, and they raised me to six dollars. Before I quit, they raised me to seven thousand two hundred a year. They retired me on an annuity, so much money per year. I am still here, and still getting it. If I didn't get it, I guess I would be out there plowing somewhere. I retired when I became '65, that was in 1962.

FORSYTHE: What have you done since you retired?

BOGLE: My wife and I took a trip to the West, we visited every state in the union, except Wisconsin. We saw a lot.