

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
JEAN MOSER

21 SEPTEMBER 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

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

INTERVIEW #QMS.101

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
JEAN MOSER**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.101

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q.M. Smith Collection designated as QMS.1995.101. This is Regina Forsythe. I am interviewing Mrs. Jean Moser. Today is Thursday, September 21, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the Keathley University Center, Room 322, located at MTSU. The tape of this interview along with the 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. Moser?

MOSER: Yes, it is.

FORSYTHE: What is your full name?

MOSER: Jean Hudgens Moser.

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

MOSER: September 27, 1934. Walling, Tennessee.

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

MOSER: Everitt Lee Hudgens. He worked in the maintenance department at MTSU. I do not know what years. He retired about 1976.

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

MOSER: Norene Matheny Hudgens. She was a secretary at MTSU in the maintenance department. She started in the maintenance department when it was just Dr. Voories, who was in charge of the maintenance departmen, and herself. It was a very small staff. She retired in 1975. Both my parents are deceased.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any siblings?

MOSER: No.

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

MOSER: Don Moser. He was a banker at Third National, but is retired now.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any children?

MOSER: Two. Don Scott Moser and Michele Moser.

FORSYTHE: Did anyone else in your family besides yourself and your parents work at MTSU?

MOSER: No. My son graduated from here, but my daughter did not go here.

FORSYTHE: Why did you decide to go to school at MTSU?

MOSER: I graduated from high school when I was 16. Like all of my friends, I wanted to go to the University of Tennessee. My parents said no, I was too young. I lived two blocks from MTSU on East Bell Street. I thought, since I was an only child, that by the time school started, they would change their minds. I did not even apply to MTSU, because I was going to go to UT. The morning of MTSU registration, my father suggested that I get up and go to school. I said that I was just going to go to UT, which was registering later. He said, "NO! You are going to get a job." I said that I was too young and that no one would hire me. I had worked at the ten cents store, Woolworth's, up on the square for two weeks at Christmas. That was the only job that I had ever had. He said they told him that I did a wonderful job, and that they'd be happy to hire me. I decided that I had better attend MTSU. I enrolled with the idea that at 18 I could transfer to UT. That did not happen. I went straight through school, and by the time I was 18 I was in my junior year and planning to get married. I did not meet my husband at MTSU, we were high school sweethearts.

FORSYTHE: What years did you attend MTSU?

MOSER: 1951 to 1954 I got my masters in 1962. I think I started my masters in 1958, I piddled with that one. I covered 16 years of school in 19 years, and it took me about five years to get one year of my masters. I was tired of school.

FORSYTHE: Did you live at home while attending MTSU?

MOSER: Yes, and I walked to school.

FORSYTHE: Did you belong to any organizations?

MOSER: Yes, I belonged to several. I was a cheerleader; in Tau Omicron, a honorary society; I was in a business club. I was involved in a lot, but I cannot remember now.

FORSYTHE: How did you become a cheerleader?

MOSER: At that time, you just tried out. You did not have to be athletic. Now I could not have been a cheerleader. Then, you did not have to be a gymnast, like you do

now. It just seemed like the thing to do. There was a committee that picked out the people. Then you went before your class, there were not that many there, and then they voted on you.

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

MOSER: Of course, I loved it. I married in the beginning of a fall semester, and married people could not be cheerleaders. We were playing Vanderbilt University that year, and I was determined to cheer at the Vanderbilt game. I cheered at the Vanderbilt game. I started the basketball season, but I was pretty tired of being a cheerleader. Even though they said that I would have to drop out when I got married, I just stayed on and then dropped out when I was tired of doing that. It was fun, but quite different from now.

FORSYTHE: Did you have a job?

MOSER: Yes. While I was a freshman, Dean Beasley was the Dean of MTSU, and I started working part-time for him. My parents said that I could have all the money I made to buy clothes with. Since I did not have very many clothes, I was really excited about that. I made \$75.00 a month, and that was really big money. Everyone else was making \$.50 an hour, and I got to make \$75.00 a month. As long as I kept my grades up, I could work. I worked in the afternoon, and my friend worked in the morning. Dean Beasley also had a full-time secretary, but then she left. He decided that since he had both of us, he did not need a full-time secretary. She came in mornings and worked from 8:00-12:00, and I came in at 12:00 and worked until 4:00. I also had to work on Saturday mornings. She took the dictation in the morning and I translated it and typed it in the afternoon. It was interesting that we had the same shorthand skills. That was before Dictaphones and all the things we have now. That was the way we operated. I did all the GI bill money. I worked until I started student teaching and I was also going to get married that semester. I just did not have time to do everything, so I resigned then. I worked there from early 1952 till January 1954. Margaret Bain was the full-time secretary that left. Her husband was a coach. I do not know if she is still living, but she would be an interesting person to interview. Her husband's name was Moody Bain. Francis Carter was the friend I worked with. She probably remembers lots of things because she has a better memory. Her last name is Gill now. She was a superintendent of Palm Beach Schools and she is now retired. She and I worked together, and she was in my wedding. We are going down to visit them this winter for the first time. She has always invited us. I said, "Don't invite us if you don't want us, we are retired now."

FORSYTHE: Do you remember going to chapel or assembly every week?

MOSER: We had one, but I do not remember going. I probably did not have time with my working. That must have stopped before I came. I remember having it in that old

auditorium where that business building starts now. I remember going there the first day that we came to school.

FORSYTHE: What did you do for fun?

MOSER: I just did the same thing that everyone else did. Most of the girls on campus, at that time had to be in the dorm at 10:00 at night. The library was the only place you could sign out to during the week. If you signed out later, you had to have permission from your parents. Most all of my friends, except one, lived in the dorm. They all had permission to spend the night at my house. My mother always said that she had no idea when she got up in the morning, how many people would be in her house. If they had a date, they had to sign out to spend the night with me, because nobody got home at 9:00 from a date. They all called my mother "Aunt Rene" because they all had permission to go to Aunt Rene's house. I had lots of company all through college. I was dating my husband the entire time though college. I did not miss anything. I stayed up many nights playing bridge. At that time, people used to meet in the grill and play bridge. We went out. I went to all the sporting events. Unlike the students today, we went to all the sporting events in town, out of town, everywhere. We were very small. Another recollection is that you could not wear shorts or slacks. I was on the water ballet team. They built the pool while I was here. I swam with the water ballet. We had to wear our rain coats, in the middle of summer, to go to the pool, because you could not walk across campus in shorts and slacks.

FORSYTHE: I have not heard about the water ballet team, please tell me about it.

MOSER: Sometime during my schooling there, they opened the pool. We just had a group of swimmers who did ballet shows in the pool. Now, you would compete. I don't even have any pictures of it. I do remember that there was a lady up on the corner of Main Street and Maney that had light bulbs that would stand up. We would go there to get tans. We all had black one-piece bathing suits and wore swim caps. I would always go up there and try to keep a tan, year round, because of that. Now they have tanning beds. I kind of burned out on swimming by that time, so I do not swim much any more. We did not have hand-held hair dryers at that time. The only hair dryers we had were those things on the wall, similar to what you dry your hands with now, except they were hair dryers. It was quite different. That was at the pool area, it was added on to. Of course, we only had the Alumni Memorial Gym, and then they added the pool to that.

FORSYTHE: I would like to ask you about some of the people that were here. What do you remember about MTSU President Q.M. Smith?

MOSER: I had known the Smith family because of being in Murfreesboro. Our office was directly across the hall from his office. On Saturdays, when his secretary Miss Bonnie was off, he expected me to come and work for him. I could not understand him. I tried and Miss Bonnie would just say, "Ask him to repeat it." I

would say, "I do, but I still can't understand him." I would be so nervous. One Friday, Miss Bonnie came over and said, "Now I'm going to be gone tomorrow, and Mr. Smith wants you to come and work in the office." I was a nervous wreck. I dressed up and wore my heels because they were having a meeting. They wanted me to come in and take minutes. Back then, everything was done by hand. I was sitting over in Dean Beasley's office, waiting for them to call me in. They called me in. I had my little steno pad, and just as I went in the door I kind of slipped. I did not fall all the way, but I was so embarrassed. Dean Beasley said, "That's what she gets for wearing those high heels." I thought I looked so nice. I sat down and took minutes, and I got everything everybody said, but Mr. Smith. On Monday, I said to Miss Bonnie, "Now I can translate it all, but I have to make up what he said." I knew kind of what he said. That was the worst experience. From then on, when Miss Bonnie was off on Saturday, I was off on Saturday. I did get very nervous, but he was very nice to me. That is basically what I remembered. When I went to teach at the Campus School, in 1961, Mrs. Smith was the secretary there. She was the secretary there for many years. I knew her very well. She was also a friend of my mother's. She was very straight laced and pretty bossy. She was always very good to me and pleasant to work with. One year I was serving as principal of the Campus School in the summer months, and she was the secretary for the regular school session. She would say to me, "I do not have time to answer the phone for your session." April and May was the sign-up time for summer school. Mrs. Smith and I would have confrontations sometimes, over me trying to teach fifth grade and trying to run a summer school that had not started yet. She was there for quite some time. She kinda ran the Campus School. We had a principal, but Mrs. Smith was pretty much in charge. I always knew Bill and Nancy Jean.

FORSYTHE: What years did you work at the Campus School?

MOSER: 1961 till 1981. I had taken off a year or two in between. I can't remember the exact years I was principal of the summer school. It was the two years before Martha Hampton came in. I left in 1981 and come over on the main campus in 1985. I did developmental studies until 1994.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Dean Beasley.

MOSER: He was a very interesting individual. He was very involved. While I worked for him, he was the secretary/treasurer of the Tennessee Education Association. Every time he had to go to a conference or something like that, I did get to go along. For me that was fun, because I never did get to travel places very much. I helped him with that a lot. He was very stern with me, yet I knew he liked me because I worked really hard for him. He was very fair with the students. He was the only Dean we had. There were two thousand students. He had children that were my age or older. I learned a lot working in his office. That was my first real job.

FORSYTHE: Evelyn Turney?

MOSER: Mr. Judd was the registrar and she and Carolyn Holloway worked in his office. Their office was right next door to me. There were very few of us at that time.

FORSYTHE: Carolyn Holloway?

MOSER: I do not remember a great deal about her. She is retired and lives in Murfreesboro.

FORSYTHE: Mr. Judd?

MOSER: He was a very quiet individual. I wanted to take an overload so that I could graduate in three years. I only lacked one hour. I asked, "Please Mr. Judd, let me take nineteen quarter hours." He said, "Oh you don't need to." I replied, "If I don't, I'll have to go school one whole term in the summer just to take one hour, and I want to graduate." I had already gotten married. He said it was okay for me to take it. I took it and my mother kept insisting that I check and make sure that I was going to graduate. I said, "Oh I'm going to graduate." I knew a lot more then, than I do now, obviously. She insisted, so I went in and looked at my records. Sure enough, I lacked one hour, and I was supposed to graduate that semester. I looked at my permanent record; and that class I had taken overload, I had been given zero credits, because it was an overload. There was not a statement on there. Everyone said that it was too late, because I had to have it in writing. I did not have it in writing. Mr. Judd just told me that I could do it. I went into his office and asked him if he remembered it, and he said that he did not. I just went over it and over it. He really remembered it but just had to make me really nervous. He wrote on my permanent record that I had permission to take the overload. He died not long after that. I thought that was close. I would have been back in school taking another hour credit, if my mother had not made me go in there and check my records. He was fair, but was letting me sweat a little bit.

FORSYTHE: Mr. Woodmore?

MOSER: I never worked around him, but he went to my church. Buff, his daughter-in-law is still a friend. He was probably my mother's best friend on campus. I always continued to visit him, up until the time he died. Buff would even bring him to church when he was very elderly.

FORSYTHE: Miss Mary Hall?

MOSER: I had a class under her. The one in particular that I remember was when I was in graduate school. She was saying that teachers were so ill prepared, and that we needed to do more. I thought it was crazy. She gave achievement tests in our class. They were all teachers. She had Marty McCullough, who was working on

his degree. He is in the Education department now. She had us grade the achievement tests, and put the grade levels on them. I was flabbergasted. Hardly anyone in that class made high school scores, but they were all teaching school. I learned then, that she knew what she was talking about. She was an authority on education, and quite a character. She was gone from the Campus School when I started teaching there. She was ahead of her time in education.

FORSYTHE: Dr. Howard Kirksey?

MOSER: He was the graduate dean when I was in school. I recall a very firm demanding individual. When I decided that I would just get an extension and not finish my master he said, "no." I lacked six hours and he made me take those six hours. That is probably the only reason I finished it, he made me do that.

FORSYTHE: Will Bowdoin?

MOSER: I had him in graduate school. He was my thesis director. I had worked and worked on it and I thought I was doing really well with it. I went in and we were talking about it. He suggested that it was a good research paper. I said yes, but this is going to be my thesis. He told me just to turn it in as a research paper and to take two more classes and I would be through. I turned the paper in and received a "B" on it. I had never made a "B." I went in and asked him why I made a "B." He said that it was a good average paper. I said, "But you said it would be a good research paper and I thought sure I'd make an "A." He did not change it and I had a "B" for that class.

FORSYTHE: Bealer Smotherman?

MOSER: never had him for a class but knew him personally. When he died, his wife sent me a lot of pictures that he had made of us through the years. I thought that was really nice.

FORSYTHE: James Martin?

MOSER: He was my neighbor across the street. He did my testing in the master's program.

FORSYTHE: Ed Baldwin?

MOSER: I knew him but never had his class. His son is my age. He goes to my church.

FORSYTHE: Robert Corlew?

MOSER: I had Dr. Corlew for history. I liked history and he was a very outstanding teacher. I still see them a lot. I taught all of his children at the Campus School. He made American history very interesting for me. I had it in the middle of summer, on the second floor, at one o'clock with no air conditioning.

FORSYTHE: Gene Sloan?

MOSER: I worked on the "Sidelines" some. He was also my business law teacher. I remember I had him in the summer and there were just three or four boys who never did anything in that class. I kept up really well, and I made "A's." I really liked him. Then I had to finish the third quarter in the spring and it was a huge class. I did not do too well. I had to study really hard because all of a sudden there were people in there who paid attention and decided to work really hard. I think he thought that I lost a little intelligence between summer and then, because I was not doing as well. That was just because I was doing so much better than those guys.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about the "Sidelines."

MOSER: I just signed up. Then the school was so small. I did a few stories, feature writing, but that was about all. I was never involved in the editorial part or anything like that.

FORSYTHE: Miss Tommie Reynolds?

MOSER: I had her in a class. Everybody said that she liked boys and did not like girls and that you could not make an "A" in her class. I worked myself to death to make an "A." I finally made one, but I had to work twice as hard. I was determined to prove that she did give "A's."

FORSYTHE: This is a continuation of the interview with Jean Moser by Regina Forsythe on Thursday, September 21, 1995. Lane Boutwell?

MOSER: I had speech with Lane Boutwell. Then I taught with Mrs. Boutwell at the Campus School. In my speech class he kept reminding me to project my voice. I kept saying that I could not because if I talked loud to students they were loud, but if I talked quite they were quieter. He said that in this class I had to project my voice. I tried to do that for him, but I still do not have a lot of projection with my voice.

FORSYTHE: Wink Midgett?

MOSER: I had classes with him forever. I was a business major at the time. He was the only accounting teacher at the time, so I had all of my accounting under him. He was also my Sunday School teacher all the time I was in his department. At the end of your senior year, you got to go to dinner with your major professor if you had the highest grade point average. I remember him saying, "I take these people over there, they are all well educated, and then we sit down to eat, and they have the worst table manners you have ever seen." When it was my time to go with him, they had barbecue chicken. I thought oh, gosh, I'm not going to embarrass

him. I hardly ate because I could not figure out how to eat my barbecue chicken without making a mess. I did not eat very much that night because I wanted him to be proud that he took me to dinner. I was in his classes every year that I was here.

FORSYTHE: What was your major?

MOSER: I was a business major and then I went back and did my education certification. I also had a social science major, I double majored.

FORSYTHE: Henrietta Myers Wade?

MOSER: She taught me accounting, typing, and business machines. She was a strong teacher. I learned a lot in her classes.

FORSYTHE: Dr. John Patten?

MOSER: He was my biology teacher. He liked having girls in his class. If we talked to him a lot during our ten minute class break, he might go out for coffee with us, and we would not have to go back to class. Everybody always put us up to that, but I was the only one who had a car. I was the one that would always have to drive out to Lamb's grill so we could have coffee. Finally I wised up. We were taking him and going for coffee, and everyone else was getting to go and do what they wanted. We were not. I finally wised up and told them that it was their turn to take him. We did not do that everyday, but that was one of our ways to get out of staying in biology so long. Lamb's Grill was out on East Main Street. I think that there is a Sir Pizza there now.

FORSYTHE: Ellis Rucker?

MOSER: I did not have him as a teacher. I taught with his wife, and I still see her. Margaret is a very interesting lady. She was my mentor when I first started teaching at Hobgood. I remember her saying that she took dancing lessons. I thought that was interesting. She said that her husband would not dance, so she took dancing lessons to get to dance. She still dances. I do not know how old she is, but she is the most beautiful dancer that you have ever seen.

FORSYTHE: John Gerald Parchment?

MOSER: He was my first biology teacher. He married Elaine Stepp. He said that I was so much busier trying to see what boys were in the class than I was learning. I said that was just because I could not see through the microphone and had to find something to entertain me. He was a very interesting and good teacher.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about working at the Training School.

MOSER: It was a great experience. I went there in 1961. At that time we had student teachers. Each teacher had two student teachers at all times. In 1964 I left for a year. When I came back we started having teaching lab experiments and they used my room as experimental to see how that would work. They took all the student teachers out, and that began the practices that they do now at the Campus School. I stayed there until 1982. The student teaching experience was quite different from now. Then they would only stay half a day, they did not stay the full day. They did that for the whole semester. One would be responsible for one part, and one the other. We had so many student teachers, and so few classrooms that we just started using the lab and participation/observation experiences at the Campus School now. Now they come out of a methods class, with a prepared lesson and teach it. Also while I was there, we decided we would have TV cameras in the classroom which were connected to the main campus. They would call and say they wanted to observe me teaching at a certain time, and I would go turn the TV cameras on. They were mounted in the back of the room, and the university professors could control the cameras. I was an experimental program that did not work well. We spent quite a bit of money on it. It did not work that well, because they got so interested in the cameras. They did not care about people being in the classroom and observing them. They were used to that and paid no attention. When you put the camera on them they got nervous. We tried the experiment for a couple of years, but it never worked well. I did not like switching from student teachers to observation. I loved having the student teachers because that was like having two more teachers in the classroom to work with the students. Once we switched over, it became much more time consuming for the classroom teacher to plan what they were going to do and set up your classroom for them to come in and do teaching. It put quite a bit of responsibility on us. It took a lot of organization. They would tell you what they wanted to see, and you would have to prepare lessons that would fit in with what they were teaching at the college. It was good for the teacher in that it made you stay up-to-date. I was always learning because I was never allowed to get set in my ways. I had to be innovative and do what they were doing. It is a good experience, but it is very difficult to teach at the Campus School. It is a lot of hard work.

FORSYTHE: Did you student teach when you were a student?

MOSER: Yes, I did mine at Central High School, seniors. I taught typing and shorthand. There I was 18 years old teaching seniors who were my age. I had double-dated with most of them. I knew them all. I had just gotten married and had my 19th birthday. I would go in and they would say, "Hi Jean, I mean Miss Hudgens, I mean Mrs. Moser." This went on and my supervising teacher said it would be very difficult and there was no way I could handle it. It worked out really well. The students were very good. I learned my discipline of controlling a classroom, even with seniors. I knew then I wanted to be a teacher. I was not sure up to that point. When I did that, I really liked it. I had thought that I would be an accountant, but when I did my student teaching I changed my mind.

FORSYTHE: When you were working at the Training School, you were also teaching here at MTSU?

MOSER: Yes. I taught elementary methods. I came here in 1985 full-time. I taught partially in elementary special education and part in developmental studies. The next year I went full time with developmental studies. That is the program that the state initiated in 1985 for students entering the university that are under prepared. We had study skills, math, English and reading. They were tested depending upon their composite ACT score. They were put in these classes for non-credit. They were not admitted to take regular classes until they could obtain all the skills at a 12th grade level.

FORSYTHE: Why did you switch to teaching at the university full-time?

MOSER: It is easier teaching at MTSU than at the Campus School. That was a challenge and something different. It became very difficult to teach full time and teach classes at MTSU at the same time.

FORSYTHE: What have you done since you retired in 1994?

MOSER: I do all kinds of charity work. I work part-time at the travel agency as an outside sales person -All Points Travel.

FORSYTHE: I saw a plaque near the Alumni Center that had "Jean Moser" on it?

MOSER: Oh, in a tree. When I retired they planted a tree in my honor. I had forgotten to go check on my tree. Dr. Waldrop checks on it and tells me that it's living and doing well. I have not seen the plaque, it was not in when they planted the tree. I thought that was a nice tribute. I do a lot of work with the university. I am on the Blue Raider Athletic Association board. We are just supporters of athletics at MTSU. I am a trustee for the university. MTSU has a foundation that helps raise money to support the university and they select trustees to manage that money. The trustees are selected by voting by the executive board. My husband was a trustee prior to my being one. You serve three year terms and can serve a maximum of six years at once time. I am also on the Miller Trust for planning the new arena. They selected people from the community and people interested in academics. I am on the academic side. I have helped secure two chairs of excellence for the program. Dr. Walker selected us. I guess we will work on that as trustees until the project is finished. We are just now getting the land. The people have submitted their plots, but I'm not on the facilities group. We meet about once every six months with the total group. I am with the academics group. I know more about academics than I do horses. I have worked on lots of projects for MTSU.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any other memories?

MOSER: It has just been a part of my life since 1951. I just lived two blocks down the street from MTSU. When we were little we came over here and played.

FORSYTHE: Thank you.