

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
CHARLES PIGG

23 OCTOBER 1995

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

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

INTERVIEW #QMS.133

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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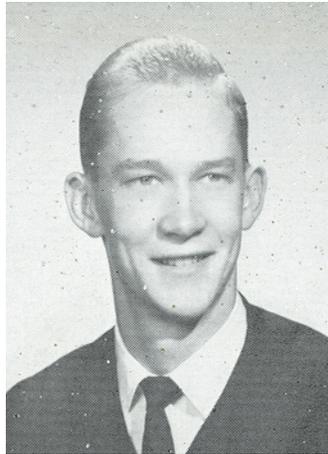
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ABSTRACT



**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH
CHARLES PIGG**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.133

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q.M. Smith Collection designated as QMS 1995.133. This is Regina Forsythe, I am interviewing Charles Pigg. Today is October 23, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the Gore Research Center, Room 111 of the Ned McWherter Learning Resources 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 publications. Is that all right with you?

FORSYTHE: What is your full name?

PIGG: Charles L. Pigg.

FORSYTHE: What is your birth date?

PIGG: 9/13/33.

FORSYTHE: Birthplace?

PIGG: Petersburg, TN.

FORSYTHE: What is your father's name?

PIGG: He is now deceased. J.D. Pigg.

FORSYTHE: What was his occupation?

PIGG: He was a farmer and a carpenter.

FORSYTHE: And your mother's name?

PIGG: She was Wilma S. Pigg. Who is, also, now deceased.

FORSYTHE: What was her maiden name?

PIGG: Sowell.

FORSYTHE: What was her occupation?

PIGG: She was a schoolteacher and homemaker.

FORSYTHE: Where did she teach school?

PIGG: She taught in a country school in Lincoln County. She got her license at Middle Tennessee State Teacher's College.

FORSYTHE: Do you know what year?

PIGG: It would have been 1926,I guess.

FORSYTHE: Did she ever talk about being a student here?

PIGG: Yes. There were some old pictures somewhere in a family albums with student body pictures. They had a student body picture out in front of Old Main that was in 1926. She lived in Rutledge Hall. Rutledge Hall was the first Women's Dorm constructed on this campus. In fact, it came about in 1911 when the institution was established. There was the Old Main building and Rutledge Hall as a women's dorm. She lived in Rutledge Hall, and I had daughters and a sister who lived in Rutledge Hall. So, at least three generations lived in Rutledge Hall.

FORSYTHE: So, three generations went to school here.

PIGG: Yes.

FORSYTHE: What is your wife's name?

PIGG: Nancy Roberts Pigg.

FORSYTHE: What is her occupation?

PIGG: She's a medical technologist and homemaker.

FORSYTHE: How many children?

PIGG: Three daughters.

FORSYTHE: What are their names?

PIGG: Robbie, Vickie, and Teri. All three are graduates of MTSU.

FORSYTHE: Why did you come to MTSU?

PIGG: That's a good question and one I've asked myself occasionally. That was in the summer of 1951. I graduated from high school in 1951 in Petersburg, TN. I had a couple of friends who were going to school and I, also, had a cousin who was in

school here at MTSC. There was a certain insistence that I needed to come over at look at things. We looked things over in the summer of 1951 and fell in love with the place to be quite frank. We decided this is where we needed to enroll. So, we enrolled in the fall of 1951. I've maintained some sort of a close relationship since then.

FORSYTHE: What years were you here?

PIGG: I was here from Sept 1951, until I graduated with an undergraduate degree in June 1955.

FORSYTHE: Did you get your master's here?

PIGG: I got my master's here, too. That would have been in 1976. I was working here at that time.

FORSYTHE: How long did you work on your master's?

PIGG: I got it within 18 months or so. Within two years for sure.

FORSYTHE: '74-'76

PIGG: Right. '74-'76

FORSYTHE: What memories do you have of being an undergraduate here?

PIGG: I was an Industrial Arts major. That was a popular major for young boys after the war. It was a field or degree that demanded some hands on experience with academics. It appealed to young boys and even to boys who were coming here to school after the military service. So, I have a fond memory of that. In fact, I suspect that the people I was closest to were members of the Industrial Arts Club. They had students in academic clubs at that time. So, I have fond memories of that. Another activity that I was involved in while I was on campus, I worked in the cafeteria. We developed some close relationships with the people that worked in the cafeteria. We worked for our meals. The food service at that time was owned, operated, and run by the institution. So, they did their own hiring and firing and hired their own people who ran the place and who supervised the food service operation. In the Spring semester of 1952, we moved into what is known as the Student Union building. You know it today as the James Union Building. That became the second food service outlet to ever be on the campus. The first one was over in what is now called the Alumni Center, but prior to that in its original mission was the cafeteria. That operation moved from what is now the Alumni Center to James Union Building in February 1952. That is when I began working in the cafeteria. So, we developed some really close relationships with the people who worked there. You didn't get a wage. You worked for your

meals. You got three meals a day. You worked so many hours a week in order to justify the meal, that you got.

FORSYTHE: If you're off sick a day did you get to eat?

PIGG: We had people who could fill in. All they would do is ask you what your situation was.

FORSYTHE: I'm more worried about your food.

PIGG: We did have an infirmary at that time that you could go to. That would be part of the deal there. If you were confined to the infirmary, then the institution was obligated to bring meals to you.

FORSYTHE: Did you have any other jobs?

PIGG: No. Although I do remember maybe a couple of years during the Christmas break I would work with the grounds and the maintenance folks. They had some specific jobs they would do during the break seasons like Christmas and Spring Break like at the heating plant and cleaning out the manholes and that sort of thing. But that was just temporary, maybe for a week or 10 days or two weeks at a time.

FORSYTHE: Did you work with Dr. Voorhies?

PIGG: Dr. Voorhies was in charge of the maintenance operation at that time. Also, he taught in the Industrial Arts department. So, we developed a close relationship with Dr. Voorhies from early on. Dr. Voorhies is the one person who was most instrumental in my coming back to MTSU on a full-time employment basis. That occurred in 1965.

FORSYTHE: How long were you here?

PIGG: I was here until May 1992.

FORSYTHE: How was he instrumental in bringing you here?

PIGG: We developed a close relationship with Dr. Voorhies when I was here as a student. I stayed in touch with Dr. Voorhies just on an informal personal friendship basis. In fact, I had expressed to him on a number of occasions if anything ever came open that I might be interested in and he thought that I might be able to fulfill the responsibilities and the duties to contact me. One day in February of 1965 he did call me. He said, "I think we are going to have a job down here that you'd be interested in doing." He explained to me that they were going to start a campus planning office because at that time they were beginning a lot of work in construction and expansion. Dr. Voorhies did this as an add-on

responsibility, as additional job to his regular job. So, he needed some help and he called me and asked me if I would be interested. I told him yes I would be at least to the point to come down to discuss it further which I did. I met with Dr. Voorhies and Dr. Quill Cope who was president at that time. Dr. Cope hired me and I stayed with for 27-28 years until I retired in 1992.

FORSYTHE: What memories do you have of working here?

PIGG: I have a lot of fond memories of working here. The most satisfying memory is to see the development of the institution in an orderly manner, too. That was our responsibility to be sure that we developed in an orderly manner that we wouldn't be sorry that we did something years down the road. I'm happy to say that we did do enough prior planning and master planning in order to get things in the proper location from the standpoint of the campus orientation. Just an orderly development and to see the place develop in order to meet the needs of the institution is a very fulfilling experience.

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

PIGG: I remember Mr. Smith in a very fond manner. He was a very stately gentleman. I had a lot of admiration for Mr. Smith. I'm sure based on what I know now that he served in at a time when he didn't have a whole lot of resources available to him at this institution. He was here during the war years and that would have been a very trying time for a president or a chief executive officer to keep a place running and operational. So, I certainly would have to admire him for what he did. I also admire him from my viewpoint in the Campus Planning office that he had the foresight to acquire properties that were contiguous and adjacent to this campus. We are reaping those benefits even today because he had the foresight 50 years ago to acquire a 200 acre farm east of here. That's a very significant action that took place at that time, and he probably was even criticized if people had known. I do know too from the fact that when Memorial Alumni Gym came online in 1949, it was constructed to seat 2500 people. Mr. Smith was criticized for building a gym so large. "Why in this world are you building something so large to seat 2500 people," critics said. At that time, we probably would not have had more than 1300-1400 students. It might have been a legitimate question to ask. In retrospect, you can see the folly of this question. I do remember that, and I remember him very vividly in the office in the Old Main building, which was called the Administration Building at that time. As you went up on the main level up the steps from the outside, the executive office suite was on the left, and Mr. Smith occupied that suite on the left and on the other side, the right side, would have been the Dean of Admissions. One other thing unique from my era, when I entered as a student in 1951, there was an auditorium in the Old Main Building in the administration building. Freshmen had mandatory chapel one day a week, Wednesdays as I recall. You had a seat assigned to you and you were expected to be in that seat when the roll was called or when the seats were checked. If you were absent, you would have to answer to the Dean of Students. That lasted for I

think one year and then they did away with it. I have some very fond memories of Mr. Smith and the family and certainly as I can look back now over the last 40-50 years, I admire him even more because of how effective he was in his operational procedures and techniques because I'm sure he operated with very limited resources.

FORSYTHE: What about Dr. Cope?

PIGG: I remember him very well. Dr. Cope hired me as I alluded to earlier. He was a very forthright person, very decisive. He had really firm opinions about what he wanted and what he didn't want. There wasn't a whole lot of guesswork of where he stood on issues or on anything. If you asked him a question, he would give you an answer. Dr. Cope came to us from the State Department of Education, the Tennessee State Department of Education. By virtue of that fact, he knew a lot of people and he had contacts. That worked to our advantage. At that time, the institution was under the control of the State Board of Education which he left as a commissioner. So, he had contacts. Those contacts served us well during his tenured position. I admire Dr. Cope very much. He was a forthright, strong personality, and a real strong leader.

FORSYTHE: What about Dr. Scarlett?

PIGG: These are all different people and had different methods of leadership. I think Dr. Scarlett came along at a time when the institution needed him. The institution was ready to look to the future, to branch out, if you will, and to open up some perspectives that perhaps we hadn't looked at in the past. Dr. Scarlett offered us that vision. Even this building we are sitting in is as a result of Dr. Scarlett's vision. Now I will relate an experience with Dr. Scarlett. When he came here, we were right in the midst of designing a new athletic facility for basketball. We were thinking in terms of building an arena strictly for basketball. Then, we were thinking of building another facility that we called a Field Sports Facility. Dr. Scarlett came in here, and we advised him and enlightened him on what we were doing. He thought about it for a while. He came back and said, "I think what we ought to do is to combine that into one facility. Let's build our sports facility and our arena all under the same roof. In fact, large enough so we can have convocations in it." Heretofore, we had convocations at Jones Field where we were subject to weather conditions and that sort of thing. He sold that concept, that what we call an HPER athletic/convocation center. Now that's a long name. The state bought that concept. We went ahead on that basis. We talked to our architect. We designed a facility that fulfilled all of those needs. Look at the facility today 23 years later. It still serves us well and it still looks well. We owe that to Dr. Scarlett. We were off on tangents. Not to say that that would have been a mistake, but I think that he synthesized our thinking into one type building. Not only that, but when the state bought that concept almost to the point all other institutions did the same thing. I'm talking about East Tennessee State, UT Chattanooga, Tennessee Tech, and Austin Peay, specifically designed facilities

that were around that same concept. I'm also happy to say that even though we were the first to come along, in my opinion, I hope I'm not immodest by saying so, I say we still have the best facility both functional facility and best-looking facility than any of the others. They had an opportunity to go to school on us because we were the first. I remember that about Dr. Scarlett. He was very flexible, very perceptive, and he had a vision for the institution. He opened up some things for the institution. Mass Communication owes a great deal of gratitude and thanks to Dr. Scarlett. He came from a journalistic background. He had the background and knowledge to envision what we could do here in Mass Communications.

FORSYTHE: What about Dr. Ingram?

PIGG: A different type of leadership was displayed with Dr. Ingram. People would probably have the tendency to say he is conservative and that is not all bad. In fact, there can be some real good aspects of that. Dr. Ingram wanted to know what your job was and how you contributed to the overall mission of the institution. He left you alone to do your job, which I appreciated very much. He, obviously, could not be intricately involved in everybody's job and position. He let one operate as it pertained to the institution. Also, he was very visionary. He had a vision for things. He understood what some facilities could do to the community and for the campus. I'm thinking specifically now about the Livestock Center. That facility developed primarily during Dr. Ingram's tenure as president. Its impact to this campus and its impact on this community. It has a significant impact as you probably know. At that time, Dr. Ingram was under some adverse circumstances here too as a president because by this time the Tennessee Higher Education Commission had come on the scene. They were exercising some principles and procedures that we hadn't operated under before. In other words, you had to justify the monies you asked for in the way of Capital Outlay Funding. It had to meet not only a perceived need but it had to meet an explained need. So, it wasn't a matter of just saying, "We'd love to have this such type building." You had to be able to explain that need. Although, we had at that point in time more needs at MTSU, still, the needs were not there to the point that the Higher Education Commission felt were priority needs.

FORSYTHE: Before the Higher Education Commission, who did you report to or get permission from?

PIGG: We reported through the Board of Regents. They were our immediate and regulatory board. They, also, would take the capital budget and programs to the State Building Commission.

FORSYTHE: How are they different from the Higher Education Commission?

PIGG: The Higher Education Commission was a coordinating board that had general supervision over the State Board of Regents and the Tennessee Board of Trustees. It was the coordinating body over those two boards.

FORSYTHE: Was that an improvement?

PIGG: In many respects it was. What was happening or beginning to happen was you were getting a duplicity of programs at campuses and institutions. That would depend on the political force they could bring to bear, to be quite frank about it. I think in that sense you would have a coordinating board that could look at all institutions and could determine where the needs were and what institution ought to have this program, and what institution ought to have that program. As opposed to everybody fighting for the same type of programs. In that sense, it served a very useful and vital function.

FORSYTHE: What about Dr. Prescott?

PIGG: He came to us at time when he was sorely needed for sure. We were in a transition position between Dr. Ingram and Dr. Walker. I think, the institution fell in love with the man. I think, the community fell in love with the man and his family. He was cut out of my mold because he was an engineer by background. I could relate to that, and he could relate to things I was doing. I had a very personal, special relationship with him because I think he understood and appreciated the things we were doing. He did come to us at a time when we needed pulling together again maybe even some minor healing. We were growing, and people had needs and they couldn't get the needs satisfied. There was friction here and friction there. I think he came at a time when he could give us a little solace and pull us together and get us reoriented again . He served at a time when we needed him.

FORSYTHE: What about Dr. Walker?

PIGG: I don't remember a whole lot about Dr. Walker although I was with him for about a year or so, I guess. I was not on the committee that selected the presidents, but I had a responsibility, as given to me by Dr. Prescott, to all of the candidates that came into the campus to interview for president, I was to give them a tour of the campus. I certainly enjoyed it, and I got to meet all of the candidates and get to know them on a person to person basis. I was very much impressed with Dr. Walker. Dr. Walker makes a very good impression to not only the campus population, the students and the faculty, but to the community. He makes a very good impression to the public in general. I think the public understands that and appreciates that. I think he has cultured and developed the appropriate contacts in the higher level that can serve the institution well. I think he is doing a good job of discharging those duties. He is very perceptive, and he has visions. I admire the man for that, and I admire any leader who has those visions because an institution has to have visions. If they don't have visions and not moving

forward, then you become stagnate and complacent and pretty soon you begin to die.

FORSYTHE: I want you to tell me about the buildings. What you were saying before about the Murphy Center was very interesting. Anything you can tell me about any of these buildings would be great. Start with the Cope Administration Building.

PIGG: I don't remember a lot about it because it was online when I came back for fulltime employment. It did open in January of 1965. It still serves in that capacity. Although many functions that were in the Cope building have now vacated the Cope Building and have gone elsewhere. The institution has evolved over the years. The three original buildings were the Old Main Building, Rutledge Hall for women, and the cafeteria which is now the Alumni Center. Isn't it interesting that we didn't have a boys dorm on campus until 1921 when Jones Hall was built?

FORSYTHE: Did anybody ever explain to you why that was?

PIGG: Yes. I'm not sure I believed it, but it was explained that boys lived out in the community but they couldn't trust the girls to live in the community. They had to live on campus. That's the only boys dorm that they had until Fall of 1951 when I started to school here. Thirty years later they opened Smith Hall which is named, incidentally, for Mr. Q. M. Smith. Then, in Fall 1951 there were two dorms for men, Jones Hall and Smith Hall. Before that Lyon Hall came online in 1928 as a second women's dorm. Monohan Hall was built in 1954. That's the third women's dormitory. So, up until the 1950's there were the three dorms for women and two dorms for men.

FORSYTHE: To keep an eye on the girls?

PIGG: Yes. I remember a whole lot about facilities. I could talk a lot about them. I don't know how much you want to hear. I could shorten it up. The institution really began to develop physically in the late '50's. Todd Library came online in 1956. I could get some of these wrong by a year or two. I'm relying on my memory at this point. Up until that point in time it was housed in a little building in front of Old Main called the Murfree Building which we later tore down to build Peck Hall. We created some static when we tore that down, too incidentally.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about that.

PIGG: People don't want to see (and I have some mixed emotions about that) buildings torn down. Although that building was built with a floor below grade which is not good around here. The water table was too high and too susceptible to moisture getting in. So, the building was not functional, and it was sitting on a piece of real estate that demanded more from it than what this building could

offer. The decision was made that this one needed to be torn down so that we could put a more dense building in there that would serve more students. So, we did. We got some reaction from the campus community and the community at large about demolishing the building.