

BOB MCCURRY

Interview 103a

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Terry White, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT: In an interview with student Terry White, Bob McCurry recalls life as a child during the Depression. He doesn't remember specific details, but does know that his father, a farmer, worked hard to provide the family with everything they needed. Mr. McCurry is unimpressed with what he sees as liberal policies that give money to those who don't work.

This is Terry White. I am taping an interview with Mr. Bob McCurry. Mr. McCurry is the advisor to the Future Farmers chapter here at Diboll. We are going to be talking to Mr. McCurry today concerning his views on the Depression in the United States from the late twenties to the early forties.

Terry White (hereafter TW): Mr. McCurry, how would you like to start this interview off?

Bob McCurry (hereafter BM): Terry, the first thing, I am not going to be able to tell you very much about the actual happenings of the Depression in the early thirties as I was born in 1925. You can do a little figuring and right at the height of the Depression, I was ten years old. As you probably know ten year old boys are not too concerned with the economic happenings of the country. I did not realize that we were in a real depression at that time—just as we have now—ten or twelve year old boys who live in the ghettos don't realize what is happening about them. I would say this—that I believe that the Depression we had then is altogether different that what we would have now, if we should have such. The reason for that being the people at that time were more or less making their livelihood from the farm, and they didn't know anything but work. They did know that if they did not work, they would not receive any money. The people then, if they didn't have jobs, they wanted them. In comparison today, I don't think we have very many people without jobs that want work. I think I heard where we have about 5, 6, 7 million people without jobs and on relief. In my way of thinking, those people could be working if they really wanted to. Our present generation is a generation of, in my way of thinking, the lower 5 percent of the population of people who don't want to work. I would be the first one to say that they should be forced to work in some way. I would sure hate to see a depression now because we have too many people who just don't want to work. This comes back to our way of liberal thinking that we have today. These liberal people believe in these handouts. I am one that really in the conservative way of things and I believe that a person should work for everything he gets. The liberal way that our supreme court and the way a lot of our governmental officials lean, is leaning too much toward a liberal movement in this country. When you have that, you have more

people that are trifling and they don't want to work and things of that sort. Really, I would hate for a depression to happen but on the other hand, I might say that a little depression might wake a few of these liberals up. They are going to get out here and quit giving away everything, so a little taste of a depression might help more than it would hurt. Do you have any other comment, Terry?

TW: Well, just a few other questions, I would like to ask you. During the Depression can you remember what your father's occupation was and about how much money he was making during the Depression?

BM: I know exactly what he was doing. In fact he is still doing the same thing right now. He is still living, about 78 years old. I wouldn't say that I am a chip off the old block, but he is still working harder than most of the supposedly working people right now. He lives on a farm and drives a tractor, still working. At that time, he was following a pair of mules, working 100 acres of land. I was trotting along with him.

TW: Can you tell us what was the state of your money?

BM: The state of his money. I don't know how much money they were making, but I know back during the Depression, he was making 25 or 30 bales of cotton and cotton was selling for two or three cents a pound. A bale of cotton weighed 500 pounds and they were getting about 15 or 20 dollars a year. They raised their own garden, had their own hogs, had their own milk cow, and had their own beef. In fact, you lived off the soil, just about. I would say he made 5 or 6 hundred dollars a year. There wasn't any such thing as an automobile; much less me having one like all you boys today, the parents didn't even have one.

TW: In describing your family, would you say you had the things you needed or were you lacking the things that you really needed?

BM: I would say we had all we needed. And I would say you boys have more than you need and still want more. We had a good place to sleep; we had food; we didn't go hungry; we worked for what we earned. Now days people are not working for what they get and they still want more. That, again, is my philosophy of this liberal government.

TW: Well, enough of this slander. Do you ever remember your parents discussing President Hoover and his policies?

BM: Yes, I remember hearing them talk a little about the Hoover hogs and things of that sort. That as long as we had a republican president, we would have to eat armadillos and first one thing and another. When you come right down to it, the way of my thinking, the way the country has gone since the New Deal era of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, we might have to eat armadillos year because of the blunders that the liberal democrat bunch made then.

TW: Since you seem to want to dwell on the fact that you disagree so much with the liberal democratic government, could it be that your experiences during the depression somehow had a traumatic affect on you that made you disagree with the liberal type of government. Could you have been influenced by the depression is what I am saying, make you have these rather outstanding views?

BM: Well, I don't know that it was anything that happened then. Certainly, I am not one that believes an "eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth." I don't think that had anything to do with it. As I seem to grow older, I see that we have got to have business to generate jobs, and I think that is one of the things that a lot of people overlook. They say tax this and tax that and tax the people that make the money. If we are not careful, we are going to overtax these people and after all if it wasn't for business, there would not be jobs for people like you and me. That is what your liberal person overlooks. They say we want to tax business and make them pay all the bills. Whenever you tax business too hard, they are going to cut back and little people like you and me are going to be out of work. Again, that is one of my pet peeves against this liberalization that we have in America today. We seem to follow too far down the liberal road and we need to be more conservative. Again, I am one that I think we ought to pay as we go. I don't mean by that if you go out here and buy an automobile or television set that you ought to pay cash for it. But I am one that I think you ought to search your soul and not overbuy more than you can pay for. The same thing in our economy right now. I will get on Nixon some—some of these days there is going to be a pay-up day and I don't know where it is all going to come from. I think we ought to pay as we go. Quit buying so much on the "extortionate" plan I might call it.

TW: One thing I might ask you—when you did get a little older and you started to get a job yourself, did you feel any effects from the Depression in getting a job?

BM: No, I wouldn't say that because the first job I really ever had was after I finished college. Of course, I was in the Air Force about 3 years. I guess you could consider that a job, the job I had was the one when I got out of college and that was in 1950. Of course, we had gone through 5 or 6 years of the most booming years in America's history—from 1945 to 1950. The Depression was not in the minds of anybody at that time because we were accumulating money of all sorts. I started out the first year and I think I made \$3,200.00 teaching school. Now that has tripled and so forth.

TW: Well, thank you Mr. McCurry. Joe, do you have anything you want to say? Thank you for your comments and your views. We really enjoyed talking to you. We could go on and on about this. Oh, you have one other comment?

BM: I have one other comment—if we could get more down to earth people, real conservative people in our government such as John Dowdy and people in our community like Fred Douglas, we would be better off.

END OF INTERVIEW