Interviewer: Okay, uh, what do you love about Meadville? Um, can you tell me something about Meadville that you like, reflects what is great about it, what you like about the community?

Well the community is really good in some areas like any other place. But, the main thing is the school system because the kids get a good education, through Crawford Center. They talk about Crawford Center, but Crawford Center is awesome.

Great! That's a nice thing to hear you know.

And, what is your favorite memory about Meadville? I mean when you think about a memory what do you think of? What do you think about?

I think about when I was little, and I lived over on Elms street and my Uncle, Joe Bass lived on the other side of us. But, it was just everybody got along with everybody. Um, there were two black families on Elms street. It was my dad and mother's side, Mosley side, and then my uncle. The Basser side was my mother's brother. And, we lived on Elms street and everybody else was white down there. But, we were the only black families. But, we all got along, we ate together we spent a night with each other. There was nothing about color. We never saw color, never. And, it was just awesome because everybody got along. We even ate butter sandwiches together. We took it and spread butter on the bread, and we split the butter and had butter sandwiches. I just enjoyed like period.

Ya, that was a nice memory.

And, I always go back on it.

Nice, cause you know things can be better.

Oh ya they can be!

That's a great memory, I love it!

Um, what about the spirit of Meadville. What do you think of the spirit right now in Meadville?

Well, right now its, its a bad spirit because well the news for one thing.

Well social media...

Social media is horrible everything that's going on and Trump is not sure what he wants to do or how he wants to do it. And, since I have been watching it every promise that he was making to people before voting, everything has failed. Nothing is going right. And he's got his daughter and he's got his son and they’re in office. They don't know nothing about the government, nothing.

What about Meadville the spirit of Meadville? What's the feel you get about Meadville?

Well, the closeness like I said.

Ya, the community.

You still have some because you have some bad blacks, you got some bad blacks, you got some bad Hispanics. Whatever, you got that. The people walk around in fear anymore, and then they got all these drugs out here. So, you're not really sure who is a druggie and who is not. Then, you got young people dying. They got this bad case of suicide, that's going around. And, the young people are being failed I feel. They are not getting what they need to get as a community, and the love that we used to have, all of that's gone.

So, the spirit is a little bit, questionable right now. It can go either way.

It can go either way, either way, because it explodes one minute, they'll explode in the next minute. They might be okay but you are not really sure.

What would you miss in Meadville if it wasn't really here? Something that you would frequent, or you associate with Meadville and parts of it.

We used to go to Conneaut

Lake Park all the time. That was the big thing. Everybody loved going to Conneaut Lake Park. I heard it's something now.

It's starting to be something now, they opened the water park last year.

Oh, really. Well see I didn't know that.

Five dollars it was great.

Wow!

Ya, they are trying. It's like a Phoenix, you know, coming out of the ashes. It's like all of a sudden hear Conneaut Lake is going downhill and there's nothing there, and it looks like a ghost town. And, then, all of a sudden it just...

keeps on coming back...

it just will not let it go. It's weird, and then the magic ballroom gets burnt down. And, then, and then you're just thinking that's it, that's it, we are not going to...

and the next thing you hear its open again...

I just heard it was open!

I know! I know! And it's a cheap place. I know what you mean because when I was young we would go from Erie, because I grew up in Erie, and it was a place we went. It was, but, now of course, it's not at the same level that it was. But, it is an inexpensive way for people to have a fun afternoon.

Right! Because you have the picnic table and can go out take your family out on an outing like on a Saturday or Sunday. And, then they have a few rides. They don't have the blue street..

they don't have that...

but it's old so I don't know. I don't know if I want to take chances.

So Conneaut lake is something you relate to?

Oh, yay!

Is there anything in Meadville that you kind of think about as far as...

J.C. Murphees downtown, after school we used to go to J.C. Murphees, D.N.K..

those days are gone...

I loved their towels and what not. They sold in there because they were thick and you had a real towel there. And, well you can go uh, to the Rec Complex during the summer, the kids, you can take the kids. And, then they had the roller rink, o n Baldwin St. extension and I hear people all the time wanting to know can't we go rollerskating somewhere or someplace else.

And Canna..Cannadotta or something...

But, we had it right here in Meadville. So, why can't we have it back.

Wouldn't that be nice?

Awesome! Because I would be there.

Um, ya I remember we used to roller skate in Erie a lot.

Ya, so, I miss that, I really do. But, the kids enjoy the Rec Complex during the summer. You know...

That is nice!

Those bother were nice!

And what would you like to see happen in Meadville for the future? What do you think we need to make it happen?

Well, right now I am going to speak on behalf of the elderly. We need, senior citizens a housing, ya, they made all them beautiful homes downtown but who can afford it? And, if they were going to do something downtown they should have made Senior citizens apartments because you got a, only thing that you got right now I know is housing, Holland Towers. And, I'll stop it there because I could go further but I am going to stop right there.

No, that's true housing is an important thing. Right,

Affordable housing, right! Because they were making they said that up here at the old Tallen building. When they first started tearing it down they said they were making senior housing. That was going to be for the seniors. Then, two months after they started I heard, through a reliable source, that is was like people that sell their house and want a place to live like, they were building them up for people that already got something, and then decided to sell out, and their rent was going to start at a thousand dollars.

I don't know about that. I mean, what I thought of it was that it was going to be a variety of different, I didn't think it was going to be that but, I don't know now there is arsenic in the soil.

So, we are out of luck there too.

Well, they have to do some research and testing before they can allow them to build, it's still in process though. It sounds like its going to be for a variety of incomes, I'm hoping.

Well, I am hoping to so if you hear something, let me know.

Ya, I will because that's a nice place.

Right and we have all talked about- the seniors- we have no place to live that's affordable. Like, I'm in housing and this is07:42 . Well, my rent is low but I have to pay gas, light, water, all that, and then it's like upstairs after you get a certain age. You know, you have stairs and I fall up the steps, I don't fall down. But, we need housing for seniors.

That's a good one.

Mhm, right!

And, what do you think you want for your children or your grandchildren when they grow up? What would you like them to think?

Well, what I tell them now is get your education, go to school get your education, graduate, go to college, and stay out of Meadville. And, that's bad I have to say that but stay out of Meadville. Go where you know you are going to get a good job, I mean its bad probably every place, but Meadville there is no place for young people once they graduate to stay. There is nothing but trouble. There are no jobs. There is nothing for them to do. When we were coming up, we had plenty to do. And, we did, made ourselves you know do different things. But, the kids don't see that anymore they are bored, they always say we are bored.

Ya, and they don't have any ya...

There is nothing for them to do no more. No place to go. And, as big as this community is there should be plenty of things for young people, teenagers, and middle-aged adults, there should be something that they can do.

That the can afford. You're right! You're right!

So, what would make Meadville better, I mean can you think of a couple things that would make it better, that we could change this up somehow.

Well,

Or if you had a wish for Meadville what would it be? If you could just have a magic wand and say, this is what I want to add to Meadville before I go?

Well, I would basically, it would be for the youth, because there is so much that they would like to do and that they don't have the opportunity to do. Sometime, I used to you had something like a community center, when I was coming up, and we went down rights where Harlen Towers was built, but we had the community center. It was run by some vary awesome people, but we had places to go and things to do, because these people stayed busy with the youth and they took us different places. We had like little parties, little dances..

Ya, right! There's just not enough going on...

there was a lot of activity. Then we had the parks at one time, in the summer. Ramona Park, Heidy Cooper Park...

And they had people there...

They had teachers there. I remember Priscilla Piper and her husband Bill. They were awesome! They spent time with every kid! I mean they didn't just pick a few to hang with. They spent time with everyone, we had volleyball, we had kickball, they had a little swimming pool for the kids.

A safe place to hang.

Right! And, that's where they went because everybody was safe. And, they had all these different park events, when they ran little Miss. Famona and all them other things like that. And, I maybe missed Famona one year...

What was that?

It was something, like a little, similar to a beauty pageant, but, something else, and they picked certain kids got picked and then we went down to diamond park where they used to have the sage up there. And, you would go up there and all the ones in front of the different parks were up there. And, we just had a blast!

Oh neat! Ya, those days are gone. Nothings, happening these kids aren't doing... a lot of it is to do with social media I think.

Right!

They are not going out as much. They are not outside as much.

No they are not, they are not.

But, then they have to have something to do when they get out there.

Right! because we always had something to look forward to you know, because our parents were strict-which was fine- I'm grateful mine were. But, you had to do your housework first and then you could play in the park, because the park was open from nine to four I think it was.

Nice, they need to reenact that.

Ya, cause Shady Brook had it too.

That's a doable thing to get supervision at the Parks.

Mhm.

All you need is supervision.

Someone to orchastraight activities.

Righr, and that's what they did.

It doesn't take a lot of money.

Nope!

It's just a matter of someone being there.

Ya, cause we got um, they brought in watermelon sometimes and they always had chocolate or white milk, you could get, and they kept it inside the little building, and they had a refrigerator and everything, and we just had a blast. And, then sometimes they would tell us we are going to have a picnic today, you guys come at 9 and at 12 o'clock bring your lunches and everything. And, we had a blast. We sat any place we wanted they had a picnic bench, the grass was out there, and the most of us would just get out there on the grass and just laugh and have a good time.

Cool!

It was awesome! When I was coming up it was awesome!

Yup, good memories!

And, you just brought them all out today!

That's what these are about memories and stories because that's what we are trying to do get people to tell their stories. So, we have something to work with, I mean that's a wonderful memory you have.

Well, they had park tournaments too. They had camrin, they had volleyball, um, they had all kids of different things and you went against the other parks. They had this big thing called event day and all the different parks went against each other to see who won, and we got little...

Oh, wow, they really lost the park thing...

My parents did not worry about nothing, they knew we were in the Park and they knew four o'clock, three-thirty we would be home because the park was usually closed.

How nice?

It was awesome because you always had something to look forward to. Ya, they have nothing no nothing, they used to have the after school programs after school but now that died down too.

And, we wonder where are things are going...

Yep, all the fun things they just took.

And, what about occupation what do you think about that? What would help people stay in Meadville?

Well, if they had a place for them to work and decent pay. You know they are doing the fast food restaurants and then the gas station here, but they are still not getting the amount of pay that they need. And, even some adults, when I started out, I started out good but, the pay. By the time you finished you don't get your 40 hours in, then if you work any over, you are working for Uncle Sam, because they are taking that. Because, l like I said I was working at the nursing home and that was my dream, and which I did then I got sick and you know I couldn't go back. And, I would give both of my hands right now to go back and see after the elderly...

You were so good at it...

And I loved it, and I still love it. And, I have even tried to get back at it but the doctor said no. So, I'm trying to find something small, just something to keep me busy, part-time or anything. I haven't had any luck right now, but I won't give up.

You would be so good at that too. You are such a good person with people.

Well, thank you. I am a people person. That's what I call myself. You are, you definitely are.

Well, this was fun, it's neat to know about your...I have been here 24 years but not growing up here. I grew up in Erie, so its neat to hear what Meadville was like, you know, before.

I'm glad...

Try and work towards making...

it a nicer...

for our children. And, our grandchildren. We want that same memory. You know, instead of saying, ah it was terrible, nothing to do. And, that kind of memory, we want a memory like you have. You know so we need to bring, bring some of that back you know, and then all the kids won't go to towards the drugs.

Ya...

That's the problem, they get so bored, and then the next thing you know they are out drinking and smoking marijuana and know you know they are into this heavy duty drugs and what not.

Horrible, just horrible.

And the young people don't need to be around that or see it. because they are just going to say what they were doing it15:15

That's right well thank you Carol, anything else you want. I think that's it. Do you have any other ideas you got such good things to think about? Um, what makes you stay here?

Ya because, I went to Florida for 15 years, 15 years, and I came back, because my dad was sick and my sister was sick. Then, they got well after I got back but eventually, you know they passed on. Well, you can leave Meadville, I don't care where you go and there's no place like Meadville, because Meadville is an awesome town. I have been telling young people this is really a retirement area for older people, so you are not going to find to much because there is not too much out here for them to do. So, that's what I used to tell them, it's just a retirement place, you get your good education through Crawford center, graduate, go to college, and I would like to tell them to come back, but the way things are right now I wouldn't tell them that. Get as far away as you can, until there's a change. There is always changes, I see changes always. I see changes going around here in Meadville everyday.

There is, there is a lot of change going on a lot of change going on.

But, there's nothing for the youth.

I know, and that's the important, that's the target, that we need to work with. Getting them to stay, and to want to stay and to be a viable part of this community.

Right! Ya!

Nice interview Carol, thank you so much.