Tye Brown Interview: My Meadville

Interviewer: I think we are recording, okay. I think that's it, okay. The first question is, um, what matters the most to you living here? What is your, you know, what do you like about living here?

Brown: Well what I like about living here is the community its, uh, its a tight-knit.

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: You know? Um even tho you're not family uh you're actually friends uh or friends of the family. Everybody knows each other um. Just for instance I went to a funeral, and the pastor was like, how many people are related to this person that is in the coffin here? And 70% people stood up. How many people are cousins or family of the family member that is in there? Probably about 15% stood up. So uh then they asked do, were you, do you know this person or were you friends with the person or the other person, then everybody, the whole congregation stood up.

Interviewer: Oh right (chuckling)

Brown: So that's why I am saying it is a tight-knit community.

Interviewer: What happened to my my recorder? It just disappeared.

Brown: It does that when its not, I think its still doing it.

Interviewer: Is it still doing it, you think?

Brown: Is it up here? What's it doing up there?

Interviewer: It's the um dang it. Wait, where is it? It just disappeared. It was uh. Oh there it is. Oh its still doing it. Okay, okay. I got nervous when it disappeared, so it can disappear and still

Brown: Oh yeah and it's still recording.

Interviewer: So, you're saying that 15% of the people were just people that that

Brown: That were family members of the of the family, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah right

Brown: So or friends of the family so.

Interviewer: There were just a lot of uh of people that came together and you find that

Brown: Came together hmhmhm absolutely

Interviewer: Right, what are some of your fondest memories since you lived...have you lived here for your whole life? Or

Brown: Um I have probably been gone out of 44 years. I probably been gone about 4.

Interviewer: Okay, so you grew up here. You were born and grew up here.

Brown: Yes yes

Interviewer: Okay, so what are some of your fondest memories? I need some of the memories you have when you click on memories.

Brown: The sidewalk sales

Interviewer: Oh yeah

Brown: The different uh uh uh. It's the like the whole block from Chestnut Street down to Water Street um. Everything was, it was a lot of stuff going on. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah

Brown: Um...you know when you have been gone so long the smell of the air. You know that that smell is Meadville. You know?

Interviewer: That's cool (laughing)

Brown: So (coughs) uh. Growing up, I was always a sports fan.

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: I played a lot of sports and that's how I got to know the people that I know and uh still know.

Interviewer: And that opened up your network, yeah

Brown: Opened up my network and as far as me winning, you know? I coached baseball. I coached little girls', I mean 5th and 6th grade girls' basketball

Interviewer: Nice

Brown: I empired uh um. We won the first time in 9 and 10 year old um District 1 championship and my mom got to be there before she passed.

Interviewer: Nice (laughs)

Brown: And they loved my mom. And uh it was just a beautiful thing. That made my network more bigger. Um and so I took it upon myself to try and get these kids out here thats not doing anything or that is in trouble. Or their mother or their, have a single parent

Interviewer: Yes yes

Brown: They don't, they don't spend the time with them. So when it comes to being sunny and things like that. This is what I do. I don't go do my backyard without saying hi

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: You know what I'm saying? Make sure you respect ME. As Imma respect you. When we have barbecues out here.

Interviewer: I know you always, I see when I go to Stephanie's. You always have something going on. A crew of people over here.

Brown: Mh Mhm yes

Interviewer: You're the magnet.

Brown: Well um I mean

Interviewer: The magnet house. There is always a house in the neighborhood that usually brings people to them.

Brown: Together, yes. And that that's me.

Interviewer: Yeah yeah

Brown: Whether it's kids. Whether it's adults or anything else like that.

Interviewer: Right

Brown: I want to be that person like I do the uh free hair cutting thing in the summertime. It's called the "Back to School Bash."

Interviewer: I know. I remember seeing. That was so cool.

Brown: Yeah, so hopefully the kids. I have a bigger network and more uh. How do you say it? Sponsors to help me out with that.

Interviewer: Definitely

Brown: Because the last two years, I have been using my own stuff.

Interviewer: Well you definitely. Yeah this and this might help too. Just being involved in this.

Brown: Absolutely.

Interviewer: That's wonderful

Brown: And how I can, I I would like to do it.

Interviewer: And we would like to have you, so that's wonderful memories you have. Um what brought you here? You were just born here, right? That's pretty much.

Brown: I was born here, so my mom, you know, she basically came down here with her sisters.

Interviewer: From where?

Brown: From um Grindstone, PA

Interviewer: Grindstone. Oh wow that's a harsh place (laughing)

Brown: No actually actually it's a beautiful place so

Interviewer: Yeah but you know the name sounds like harsh.

Brown: Mh Mhm that's where she grew up at so. And then we moved to Allison, PA. It's um. You ever heard of Union town?

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: It's like ten minutes from Union town so yeah.

Interviewer: What uh why do you stay here?

Brown: I stay here because it's a tight-knit community and my. It's a good place to raise your kids without the violence. It's not Erie. You know, I would never go there and raised my kid in Erie. No way.

Interviewer: Right

Brown: I just its uh its safe to me. Its

Interviewer: And what would make staying here easier for you? You know, what would like what would you find to be something that would be easier for you to live here? What are some difficulties you have um

Brown: My mom being gone. You know, that's that's it's tough. You know, myself. I have my daughter for six years now. Um it's it's it's tough not to seek her advice. You know?

Interviewer: I know. No matter how long you get, you still you miss your family. How bout like just getting around Meadville and doing things in Meadville. Uh what would you find to be easier for you if you had something available to you that would make your life a little easier? Other than your mom, which we know would be the ultimate ease.

Brown: Uh something for the kids to do. I mean uh there's nothing of value for kids that are 12 and under to do. Um it's like this like. For instance, Hyde Cooper Park okay. Or the YMCA. You got your kid. The young kids who are between six and 12. And then you got your kids between 15 and 18. And then you got your adults. And now when we playing. When the kids are playing basketball, they only get to play for like an half hour until the 15 to 18 year olds come on the court and knock them off the court. Because they too scared to open up their mouths. And then either the hey you're qualified to play if the adults come. You're qualified to play if you're good enough, but if you're not good enough, you're sitting on the sideline and not being able to play.

Interviewer: Right right. You would like to give everyone a chance.

Brown: Everybody an opportunity. At different hours.

Interviewer: Yeah

Brown: You see, break it down different hours, so the kids can play. All the kids can play at certain times. You know break it down with the ages. So that everybody can have an opportunity to do something.

Interviewer: Hmm you're right. You're right. That would make it easier for a lot of the kids that live here

Brown: Absolutely. absolutely

Interviewer: The spirit of Meadville. Do you feel it has a spirit? And what would you think would be something that would think of if you think of the spirit? That's a little abstract. But I mean you know? What do you think of when

Brown: The spirit of um. I think it's gone. I I In a lot of ways um.

Interviewer: I think it has a lot to do with our change right now within to from from manufacturing to uh you know computers. And that to me makes a difference. You know?

Brown: It does make a difference but what I'm talking about is uh uh. Oh my goodness. Uh the way the way people think nowadays, you know what I'm saying? I know that you know, they got the smart TVs and the things like that. But there were more wiser people in the day. You know, these days kids all they want to do is play video games. You know, they don't want to read no book. Um but I forced that in my kid, you know? You got to read everyday, you know?

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: Um it's just that the parents treat the kids as friends instead of their parents, which then the the the the child runs over the parent. So the parent doesn't have a say so. And then the kids grow up to. Kids raising kids. And and and it's just it's just lost. Its its this generation right now is just lost. Because there is nothing for them to do. Nothing for them to to uh uh to a person to look up to, you know? Um there's there's no strive. You know? Its falling and and and I feel bad because myself. I should have that opportunity I should took on that opportunity when I had it. And I should've kept onto it. When when when I still had it, you know? But being that my back and everything but it's getting better. So you know? I'm forced I'm I'm force myself to do whats right. And to to generate my dream.

Interviewer: That's right

Brown: And get it going

Interviewer: So the spirit you feel that the spirit of Meadville kind of been squelched a little bit and and much of that has do because we don't have uh well a lot

Brown: Anybody to look up to

Interviewer: Yeah

Brown: I mean really I mean

Interviewer: Mentoring and and uh and you know a place for, yeah. That's a that's a good point. That's a very good point

Brown: I mean I'm uh I see the commercial with the big brothers and big sisters

Interviewer: Mm Hm mm hm

Brown: I mean, in the day, when I was 10, 11, 12. They them people were involved. I mean really involved. No matter what you had going on. If you need some homework done, you know? Or you're stressed. I mean

Interviewer: Did you have a big brother?

Brown: Uh no but I participated

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: Because that is what I wanted to do, you know? But I didn't get a chance to go out much. But when it was the opportunity for me to go, that's what I did, you know? Because

Interviewer: No, you can see that with what you're doing in here. You're you're doing that in your own little

Brown: Try to translate it. Yes, I am

Interviewer: Yeah, you are. You are doing that because that's going when people come here and have barbecues and sit outside and you do haircuts. You're doing all that, you know? You're you're you're doing it. You're not doing it like you know big brother. You're not in a specific group, but you're doing it in your neighborhood.

Brown: I'm I'm doing it in in I'm doing it to the best of the ability because

Interviewer: Right

Brown: They and and and you know, kids around here I mean they're by themselves

Interviewer: Yeah, I know. A lot of them are

Brown: So you know, I go up to them, "What's your name?"

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: You know?

Interviewer: That makes a world of difference to people

Brown: You know what I'm saying? Yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: It does. It it

Brown: It's in the talking and then they come by and say, "Hi, Mr. Brown," or "Hi, Tye." You know?

Interviewer: Right right

Brown: That makes me feel good

Interviewer: So the spirit is a little loose right now. Um as far as our cumulative spirit. The spirit of what we are and what we're gonna become

Brown: (coughs)

Interviewer: And we're hoping through, you know things like this and various other things that are happening around town that we can kind of bring it back

Brown: The Meadville Football Team

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: Going to states. The Meadville Basketball Team. Going to states. That's got something some some additives

Interviewer: Atmospheric, yeah

Brown: For people to look up to. For little, for generations to look up to

Interviewer: Right right

Brown: This kid right now here on my back

Interviewer: Mm Hm oh yeah. Oh yeah I've heard of Jeremy Brown

Brown: That's my that's my cousin

Interviewer: Is it?

Brown: Yes

Interviewer: Oh he's quite the man

Brown: His mom's my first cousin. He's awesome.

Interviewer: I know (laughing)

Brown: I mean personality-wise. It gives me chills because

Interviewer: Oh he's gonna go far. If he he plays his cards right. But he's got a long way to go though

Brown: If he doesn't, he's going to be a a great great great great great mentor uh

Interviewer: Hmm is he of that personality?

Brown: Pastor or he's just so lovable

Interviewer: Aw nice

Brown: You know? And that's how you know I I want to be too, you know what I'm saying? And and

Interviewer: Right and you are. You are doing it in your own world. You know? I mean we all can only cover so much. That's why I kind of when I said I'm really thinking you know working more on local politics. Cause I can hand handle that

Brown: Right

Interviewer: I can't handle the big stuff. I just too big for me. Its way over my head and and I uh that's why I'm getting more involved in in getting people to vote because that's we have to get people who are making decisions for us

Brown: Yes

Interviewer: To be on board, you know?

Brown: I was shook. I I I was shook this this year.

Interviewer: Yeah we all have been. A many of us. Not all of us. 50% of us have been shook. So what would miss in Meadville if it wasn't here uh? If it was gone uh, it would seem like Meadville anymore. What what

Brown: Pizza Villa.

Interviewer: aha (laughing). I love Pizza Villa

Brown: Pizza Villa. Its use to the Whole Darn Thing but I'm imma still consider that because

Interviewer: Okay (laughing)

Brown: That's that's it's one of the icon in Meadville

Interviewer: Yeah it is. It's been around for a long time

Brown: Um geez. Chestnut Street. That was it was just so real. It was always something to do in Meadville

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: You know you had a park over here. Up here. Had a park. A park in Morgan Village. And you had people participating. You had kids coming out. They use to have the the breakfast program in the summertime. The lunch program, you know? They still got that. The lunch program but it's just not the same

Interviewer: It's in the schools now, isn't it?

Brown: The lunch program here is right there. In the um community center right here

Interviewer: Oh is it? Okay

Brown: I I volunteer for that and uh but the breakfast program's not anymore

Interviewer: Yeah yeah they're cutting all the important things

Brown: Yeah

Interviewer: And what do you about Meadville in the future? What do you think needs to be done if we're going to have any kind of a viable future for us as a Meadvillites, you know?

Brown: We got to get more adults involved

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: Um we need to get the kids out of out out and about. See, in Franklin, its its its probably a smaller community than Meadville

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: But they play basketball all year round

Interviewer: Well you know they started that neighborhood basketball thing over at Second District. Did you know about that?

Brown: No

Interviewer: Uh whats her name? Um Kunny um what's her first name? They're involved with the creative landscape uh. They they started a a grade school one.

Brown: Ah yeah?

Interviewer: Yeah I'll have to let you know. I'll find out the details.

Brown: Ah yeah. Do that

Interviewer: They play once of week on Wednesdays. Over at the the uh the Second District gym

Brown: Ah man

Interviewer: Yeah

Brown: Cause my son he coach he coaches uh he coaches the um the uh Special Olympic Basketball

Interviewer: Rosemary. That's her name

Brown: Oh Miss Rosemary

Interviewer: Yeah

Brown: Yeah yeah yeah

Interviewer: Get in touch with her. She's in charge of it

Brown: She's the one that help. She she help me out um um doing the yeah. Um lunch program

Interviewer: Okay

Brown: Yeah we we grew. We're real good friends

Interviewer: Yeah tell ask her about that because she's in charge of it and it's been really successful. It just started so I mean a couple. I don't know how many

Brown: (coughs). And that's that's the type of people we need in the (coughing)

Interviewer: I know. She's a leader. That's right

Brown: In this community, you know what I'm saying? Sorry about that

Interviewer: That's true. That's it

Brown: Mh Mhm

Interviewer: Anything else you think about for getting us in the future? Um

Brown: Okay, well like I said we need to get more parents involved. Um to to and and and and find things for kids to do, of all ages. I mean especially the ones that are from six to 12, 13 years old so that you know uh and keep them involved

Interviewer: Yeah

Brown: Um

Interviewer: And have them make connections. You know they need to make connections with their community.

Brown: Have a don't give up program, you know?

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: Because they try and then it's okay for them to quit halfway through the season. Naw you get them involved. You make them make them feel good about themselves, you know?

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: So they keep going. I mean I had one I had one kid that I was coaching and his name was Zach. And he he was a little kind of chubby little kid, you know? But this kid gave everything he got. No matter what it was. He ran the first the hardest he could

Interviewer: Aw

Brown: When he struck out, he ran the dugout

Interviewer: Yeah

Brown: You know? Uh he was just an awesome kid and I put him on my all-star team. My nine and ten year old all-star team and he. I pitched him and you know it gave me it gave me chills because this kid's confidence just because of what I did for him

Interviewer: Yeah just went way out up

Brown: It just skyrocketed, and then he became an awesome baseball player as a senior

Interviewer: Isn't that something?

Brown: And and

Interviewer: Just because you didn't put him on the bench the whole game

Brown: Just because I gave him the opportunity to succeed

Interviewer: Right right

Brown: When those kids parents and stuff was like, "Well my kid's better than him. He has an attitude." He never gave me that

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: All he gave me was his best

Interviewer: Yeah nice

Brown: He pitched his best. When our semi-final game when we beat Linesville, which got us to the finals for District One. And that was awesome. He will always remember that opportunity

Interviewer: I know he will. I know and look at you provide. That's when you're saying, you know? You're following your dream

Brown: Mh Mhm

Interviewer: Don't think you aren't and um what would you like your children to experience here when the grow up? I mean what would you like to take away from Meadville. You know? As they live here? You what kind um

Brown: Dedication. The dedication of what Meadville brought and brings to you each and every day

Interviewer: Dedication to Meadville, yeah

Brown: Yes

Interviewer: Be a part of

Brown: To be a part of is awesome. I miss it so much because I can't empire right now so once I get my surgery, them empires I got kids coming from Linesville, Jamestown, Cocative. Some of those kids' mamas parents might be prejudice but you know what? I talk to each and every one of them

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: And when we in the game, I give out my my uh player of the game for both teams. Give them a baseball

Interviewer: Ah man. You gotta get that back going. You got to be out there

Brown: You know what I'm saying? So uh but I mean give me them opportunities to to feel good about themselves. You know? And hey even though we lost, I still did good.

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: You know? And and that's what I want my kids to understand. You gon fail to succeed but don't succeed to to fail

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: You know what I'm saying? And if you do, get your butt back up and and and dust yourself off and and continue on succeeding

Interviewer: And those are the the messages we need throughout their life. I mean really

Brown: Mh Mhm

Interviewer: I mean cause we all fail. We all screw up. We all come back again but the the ability to come again and try again is the real essence of it

Brown: Absolutely

Interviewer: It's the failure. It's the rebounding of it, you know?

Brown: Absolutely absolutely. And that's what Meadville brings to you. I mean if if you look at it. I mean look look at how long the the Meadville community has been without a a somebody going to uh uh uh states

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: I can put into sports because that's what I do

Interviewer: Yeah, right. But you're right and they finally made it

Brown: And they finally made it. Took them 30 years

Interviewer: Haha

Brown: Now see when I. Back in 1988, 89. No I'm sorry. 86, 86, 87 is when Meadville. Every single last one of the teams. The swim team boys and girls. The hockey team boys. The basketball team, the football team, the volleyball team boys and girls. All went to states and either won at states or was lost in the finals. You know what I'm saying? And the 30 years ago. Boys are back in the the football team and the basketball team is there. The hockey team is hopefully going to get there. So everything is transcending down to you know?

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: And and I can put like I said, I put it into sports. Its its its kind of refreshing, you know? I get to see that

Interviewer: And I think that's happening in Meadville a little now. Its uh resurging. Its

Brown: Exactly

Interviewer: It's starting to develop. Its saying we have some young people in here saying okay we need to change things up and

Brown: Mh Mhm

Interviewer: And that's why it's important to know who's running so they can grab onto those changes instead of saying, "Oh no no we like it like we did. We want to keep it like it is." You know? We want. We don't want it like it is. We want it to evolve all the time

Brown: We have to adapt

Interviewer: Right. As a culture, we really do. Faster than we can

Brown: Faster than what we know

Interviewer: I know and I know. Um and what would you change about Meadville to make it even better? I mean if you could have a wish and just say okay, I don't care about money. I have as much money in the world as you need. This is what I'm going to do for Meadville. You know? Like if you were one of the big uh NBA player that had multitude of millions and they come to your little town and say, "This is what I want you to do for my town."

Brown: I would consistency on all the sports around here and as we. I know they have the soccer, you know? But I would

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: Make sure there was a league for like they do in Erie at Family First. All year round, that there's always something to do. There's basketball courts. The kids can play

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: Like we have clinics. We have um um um age differences. Age groups

Interviewer: Yeah

Brown: Where that. And that's what Family First does and they play and play. In the wintertime, they're playing

Interviewer: Yeah

Brown: And you know it gives the kids an opportunity to to to pick a sport. You know? The baseball. I'll have more baseball faculties so for instead of because you have to be a Meadville player to get in

Interviewer: Into that building

Brown: Into that building

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: You know? And I would have an indoor facility for kids who just want to be there and have it open

Interviewer: Mhmhm

Brown: All most of the day

Interviewer: Yeah I know that would be great

Brown: You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: So you're looking at like uh facility

Brown: A facility, you know? For the kids. Something where each player. Each person can go and supply their skill. You know?

Interviewer: Well the MARC is trying to expand. They're trying to do a track and um expand their faculties. They had a big uh survey not too long ago to see you know what people wanted. So maybe there something will happen there, you know?

Brown: Like for instance, they do that um for the kids um um you know? The get involved. They do the weight thing, you know? And they take the kids in the summertime. They take the kids to this one uh place and they go workout and and things like that. They don't have that around here for little kids like that. For them to do the obstacle courses and things like that

Interviewer: We need brains like you. People who know all of this stuff. That would be great so hopefully your back comes to be and uh you can be back in the saddle again huh? I hope so

Brown: Absolutely and get more involved

Interviewer: Yeah yeah

Brown: Definitely

Interviewer: Well we've um. There's a lot to be said about small town. Like you said it's safe and it's uh doable. You can get around, you know? If you need to get around. And there's a connection with a lot of people

Brown: Absolutely

Interviewer: And um I don't know. Big towns big cities have a lot to offer too but I don't know, I kind of go with you. I I like that part of it as much as anything

Brown: Right

Interviewer: And uh so hopefully you and us and everybody will be a part of this change happening in Meadville. And we'll see some things going on that'll be good for our kids and good for us. Don't you think?

Brown: Absolutely absolutely. I I I really enjoyed the Housing Authority and what they what they do for the summer and things like that

Interviewer: They really do. A lot of places are trying hard to get it

Brown: You know? And its its great. Miss Barb. She she a wonderful person

Interviewer: Yeah

Brown: She she soft-spoken but don't get her irritated because she'll tell you like it is

Interviewer: Yeah right right

Brown: But I mean they got the dancing where uh

Interviewer: Right they're doing

Brown: They do the dances and stuff like that

Interviewer: Right

Brown: Then um the what's the place right there. The academy sponsors their program, you know? So they can do it on stage and things like that. You know? I really got a kick out of the year and I never thought like my daughter. She's a shy girl but she's not shy on stage

Interviewer: Yeah she's uh yeah

Brown: And when she got up there to sing. It broke me down because

Interviewer: Oh I bet

Brown: She wasn't even scared. Wasn't none of the kids scared

Interviewer: And that's what those programs do. They promote people to be familiar with being on stage

Brown: Absolutely

Interviewer: So that the sooner you do that. Where you get rid of your butterflies

Brown: Mh Mhm

Interviewer: Because you get older, you say, "Anh no I don't want to do that."

Brown: Absolutely

Interviewer: You get more and more guarded about doing it

Brown: Mh Mhm

Interviewer: And when you're young, you can kind of mold them a little quicker, you know?

Brown: Absolutely absolutely and that's it's it's just a wonderful thing with they're doing

Interviewer: Ah that's nice. You're very positive person. You're not disgruntled and saying we don't have this we don't have that. Its nice to hear someone that says things positive about Meadville. So many people easily can say negatives but

Brown: Absolutely absolutely

Interviewer: You're a really positive person

Brown: And I mean Miss Rosemary

Interviewer: Oh she's a dynamo

Brown: Oh my God, she's dynamite. I mean really. Everything no matter what she got going on with her. Which is a lot. She don't. Don't nobody see that

Interviewer: Yeah I know. She's something

Brown: You know what I'm saying? She's she's awesome

Interviewer: She's a caring person. That's for sure

Brown: Absolutely

Interviewer: Great yeah

Brown: And that's what we need Interviewer: Mhm Hm Brown: Caring people Interviewer: I sure hope this worked because I'll be mad if it didn't. I'll be real mad. Cause this was a great interview. I don't. Let me see where that is. Yep it did it

Brown: All right

Interviewer: All right. Now how do I do uh finish. I click on finish