

Leah Zackus interview with Charles "Bo" Fasold, 22 April 2024

Leah Zackus (00:01):

All right. So this is Leah Zackus interviewing Mr. Charles "Bo" Fasold on Monday, April 22, 2024, at the Blough-Weis library, room 121. I have asked for permission to record this interview, and Mr. Fasold has agreed. This interview is part of a local history project conducted by students in the public history course at Susquehanna University. So my first question is tell me what it was like growing up in Selinsgrove?

Charles "Bo" Fasold (00:27):

Well, I was born on or lived when I was first here on Market Street in Selinsgrove, where it would be catacorner to where the Evangelical Church ...All Saints, Episcopal Church, catacorner to All Saints Episcopal Church was the former Susquehanna Female College. And I lived there for about the first six years.

So from living, the nice thing was I grew up as a little kid on the main street of Selinsgrove, and my dad seemed to know everybody up and down the street, and we'd walk up and down the street, and those were the days of a lot of stores, a lot of people that ran just small operation businesses. And we'd walk down and, you know, meet a lot of people along the way. And I just felt so comfortable to be in the downtown.

We'd walk down, Rea and Derick was where the Commons is now, walk down there and get ice cream. They had hand-dipped ice cream in the back. And all the, most of the shopping that my parents did in those days were in the downtown. We didn't have the, the chain stores yet. We had an A&P downtown and then just a lot of mom-and-pop stores that sold groceries and any women's, men's apparel, shoes. It was all downtown. And my parents seemed to know, as did a lot of people, seemed to know the people up and down the street.

So it was fun. And I felt comfortable and I went to Pine Street School, which is where the borough building is now, and could walk home from school, just come right out to the corner and walk, you know, two and a quarter blocks and I'd be home. So it was all really what you expect of a small town. So I enjoyed that. And that was my early years of just remembering things like that they, going to the Halloween parades, they were always a big deal. And we still have those, and they're still kind of a big deal, but remember going to those and a lot of things we were involved in.

Leah Zackus (02:48):

Yeah. So when you grew up as a teenager, what did you mainly do? 'cause I know you said a lot of it was downtown. Did you go out into like Sunbury or,

Charles "Bo" Fasold (02:56):

Well, no, I was out, I'd moved to Orange Street by the time I was about seven years old, so I wasn't on Market Street anymore. I moved in the north end of Orange Street. I think I was kind of a geeky or nerdy teenager, though. I think I had two main interests, baseball and auto racing. And I think I pursued those almost all the time. One way or the other. And I know we've talked about Rolling Green Park. I was not somebody that spent a lot of time at Rolling Green Park. My mother, when I was younger, went up and played bingo, and I'd go along while she was playing Bingo at Rolling Green. But I wasn't much of a swimming pool guy either. And that was the big attraction at Rolling Green Park, I think for so many people. And I believe you're gonna talk to Linda Youngman at some point. She was a Rolling Green Park person, as her husband Jim was.

But no, I didn't spend a lot of time just playing unorganized baseball too, around town little, there were so many empty lots in town that weren't houses yet. I mean, I could point out five of 'em that I think we played ball and you didn't hit the ball as far when you were, you know, 10 years old. We played ball in those lots, and you could ride your bicycles to the place, and get home in time for lunch seemed to be the one of the few rules that you had when you were a kid that age. Just, "I don't care where you go, just be home in time for lunch."

(04:25):

So we, we generally get home in time. And what your question was, what were we doing as kid? I enjoyed summertime, not a real big fan of school, but the summer, I mean, I was always counting on the days. Now my dad was the high school principal, so it kept, kept me out of trouble and I think made me more, less of a bad behavior threat than I would've been otherwise. So that part was all good. But yeah, I had a good time as a teenager. Got my driver's license as soon as I could. I never rode my bicycle after that. It was gone at that point. And loved cars. Loved, as I say, auto racing too.

Leah Zackus (05:15):

So what got you into auto racing?

Charles "Bo" Fasold (05:18):

The fact that the racetrack was just a mile, a mile below or a mile south of town, south of the main part of town. And I think we first went there when I was probably four years old, and I've been going ever since. So that's, the track opened in 1946, and I think in '51 or '52, I was going to the races already and I loved it and still do. So. Yeah. And my dad liked it and just, it was a natural thing to do on Saturday night. And it was always— in the early days, it was Sunday afternoon, and then they

switched Saturday night and that was an ideal time. My mom would go and play bingo on Saturday nights there was always bingo in Selinsgrove too. There were multiple places, but we'd go to the races. So it was a lot of fun.

Leah Zackus (06:17):

I know you said your mom went to the Rolling Green Amusement Park every like for bingo all the time.

Charles "Bo" Fasold: _____

She did, played a lot up there. Yeah. Yeah.

Leah Zackus:

So besides that and swimming, was there anything else to do there?

Charles "Bo" Fasold:

At Rolling Green Park? The rides were fun. And as a little kid, I remember picking there was a one of those water rapids things where you picked a, a duck, a swimming duck out, and if you turned it over, it told you what prize you were going to win. And I remember doing that. I think my mom spent a lot of money on me, you know, seeing if I could win a nice prize. And I was, I know initially I was scared of the bumper cars. But I did like those as I got—it took a while, though. I think somewhere around the time I got my driver's license, I actually was felt comfortable with the bumper cars, like I say, it was a while.

Roller coaster was a really big deal up there. If you've talked to anybody that's mentioned that, that was a very, very nice wooden coaster that went all through the park, went through the wooded area of the park, and it was quite nice. There's maybe a piece of it here, somewhere up in the Rolling Green Park area. But it's been developed now that there's homes up there, homes up and down the landscape of the park where it used to be. There was an old lake there. The lake has been drained.

We had a really classy swimming pool, as I said that, that a lot of people loved the pool. The Crystal, I think they call it the Crystal Pool. And a lot of people, maybe you'll talk some that were lifeguards up there. And yeah, they had a lot of, and a big dance pavilion too. And in the old days, in the 1910s and twenties, they brought big dance bands in the... what do you call that? The jazz bands. Yeah. They brought those in and then it kind of switched to more rock and roll later on. But that drew really nice crowds for a long time. Those things are, you know, obviously all gone now.

Leah Zackus (8:30):

So how was the ~~community's~~ reaction to like, when it closed down or like your mom feel about no more Bingo there?

Charles "Bo" Fasold:

She found other places ~~to play~~ Bingo. There, there was always a fallback on that.

It was on, its last days before the '72 flood, and I'm not even sure if the flood closed it or it prevented any opportunity of it being reopened. I don't remember. But it had really fallen in into hard times by that point, Knoebels Grove is still going. That was a competitor in Shamokin had an amusement park. I think it was called Edgewood, which was very nice also. But this one just lost its luster. And it was so good in the past. They had a community picnic every year that there were family reunions that were had up there Weis, the early days Weis Markets and Wood Mode and other places had business picnics. They invited everybody. And there was always something going on.

The Boatman's Association, which were the old canal boat people here in the area.

They had their reunion up there every year until they got, you know, too old to do that anymore. And just, and nice. We had a vaudeville-type theater up there that showed, initially showed movie old movies and vaudeville and that went away. That became the Fun House. I think you could, and that was a neat ride riding through the Fun House. I think by the time it went out of business, people probably didn't miss it as much as they would've in the old days.

Trying to think what else. There was a little miniature train ride that was, everybody loved that, no matter what age you were. And usually a summertime school teacher with no other occupation in the summertime would drive the train through. And it was fun. It was a very nicely painted miniature train that hauled, I don't know, maybe you get up to 30 people on the train with multiple cars. Went through a tunnel at one point, went right under the roller coaster at another. So, yeah, that was quite nice.

Leah Zackus (11:00):

So you said your dad was the high school principal. Do you think that affected you, in school or out of school, much?

Charles "Bo" Fasold: _____

Definitely both ways. I think that, at least for me, it was hard to avoid that, you know, you get picked on maybe a little more than you would've. I think I was pretty good at letting it roll off without getting too upset about it. But yeah, just comments like, "you wouldn't have gotten away with that if you weren't," you know, things like that. And it's just, it was okay though. And I got along with my dad, so that part was nice.

I got detention twice and deserved it both times, so that was okay. And that was funny. One time I think I got detention when the World Series was going on. They used to have afternoon World Series, and I was, I think the only kid on detention that day. So he changed the speaker system in the school that I got to listen to the World Series while I was sitting in detention. So that wasn't too bad. That was a nice kind of treat. Yeah, I don't know. I've never really talked to other, other kids whose parents were the high school principal. And I don't know how they took it, but it was okay with me, but I did have to make sure I stayed out of trouble a little bit and got grades, at least adequate grades, I think, also. So it was a little more pressure.

Leah Zackus (12:31):

Yeah. And did you see the school system or any of the schools in Selinsgrove, had like an impact on the community? Or did you do community events?

Charles "Bo" Fasold: _____

What about the events?

Leah Zackus: _____

Did your school do community events or did your school have a big community around it?

Charles "Bo" Fasold: _____

I'm not sure how to answer that question. We didn't have, the school itself didn't have too many community events other than football games. Of course, were the Friday night and still are, I mean, people love that.

We had, we had plays, that if you call those community events, and they're still quite popular. The plays, the adult band still performs at the school. And I don't think we had too many other things that I would actually call community events. But when the school was downtown here too, it was it much more a focus of the--we had all 12 grades plus kindergarten here, I think for a few years.

Although I'm not sure about kindergarten. It may be that kindergarten didn't begin until after they moved some kids out of that. I think they moved the seniors away by that point. But yeah, all the grades were in one small compact school building, which we're gonna talk about. I think Don Housley and I are gonna do some things on that. I don't know. Is there any, you want to ask more about the school?

I'm not quite sure where you're going with that question.

Leah Zackus: _____

Yeah, sorry, I wasn't too specific. I just meant dances or football games, stuff like the community can come to where stuff kids went to that the school put on.

Charles "Bo" Fasold:

Well, definitely the plays and the football games. Even the other ... when I was still in high school wrestling, high school wrestling was really a popular thing and packed our gymnasiums at that point, more so than basketball. And I haven't been to wrestling events that much lately. I don't know if they're still I think they're a big draw yet. And our local people love that they, you know, kids didn't participate in other sports, found that they were good wrestlers and they drew a crowd of their own. And I don't know what else to tell you. That was about what the school provided. Just nice entertainment, though. And people took advantage of it and still do.

Leah Zackus (15:20):

So you said when you were ... first six years you were really close to the Susquehanna, did you notice how, the community or you had views on Susquehanna's campus?

Charles "Bo" Fasold:

I always was very proud that Susquehanna was in Selinsgrove,. And I think I knew I was gonna go there from the time I was probably in seventh grade and, you know, whatever. My dad had gone there. His two sisters had gone to Susquehanna. My dad's mother went to Susquehanna. His uncle and his uncle's son all went to Susquehanna. And my dad's mother was one of the App family who provided the land for the college. I think she, and some of her relatives may have gotten a bit of a perk to attend the college. I think she was, she graduated in 1892. I think my dad's mother, she was old when my dad was born. I think she was in her forties when my dad was born. So she was one of the early female graduates, I think, of particularly. I don't--what year did we change from university or from Missionary Institute? I think she graduated from Susquehanna University, I think in...

Edward Slavishak:

The sign says '95.

Charles "Bo" Fasold:

Oh, well then she was Missionary Institute if that was the case. Yeah. And I think she was one of nine. There were eight male students and herself, I believe, were the graduating class of that year. I do have her, I still have her diploma and a graduation photo of these nine people. One of them, you know, Tillie Pierce Alleman, her son was one of the graduates with my with my great, it'd be--that'd be my grandmother. Yeah. And wait, your question again? I'm sorry. I'm straying you off track here.

Leah Zackus:

No, you're fine. You're fine. What was your view on Susquehanna?

Charles "Bo" Fasold:

No, I always was very happy they were here in town. I think they did a lot, a lot for the community. And it set Selinsgrove and Lewisburg kind of apart from some of the other small towns around here that didn't have colleges. You could see what

the difference was in the community. The people that were living in the community, I think was an asset to have those. And I know I went to school with kids whose parents were profs out here. And it was always nice. They were good additions the whole way through. And the other thing, I think a lot of them were interested in the community enough that they would take part in Borough Council and Borough Manager, one of one of our early SU graduates became the Borough Manager. And they ran for office. And I think that helped our town also to give you, you know, kind of a different viewpoint on what our inside people would've had at that time. So yeah, I think it was all positive.

Leah Zackus (18:55):

So what do you think made, ... How do you think the climate of the downtown Selinsgrove, or the businesses of downtown Selinsgrove, has changed over the years? 'Cause I know you said there used to be a lot of mom-and-pop shops. Nowadays we have the Strip.

Charles "Bo" Fasold: _____

Yeah, of course. The our bypass that, you know, I think that came in in late '76. Does that seem about late 1976? That changed the whole downtown at that point. We lost, we lost many of our, our stores, understandably, to the mall. But we've now transformed into a kind of a restaurant...a nice destination to go to eat on any night. We have a lot of nice restaurants. But the bypass really changed things.

US Route 11 and 15 would come right through town, and traffic was so jammed up on a Friday night downtown. Often you couldn't, if you could get a parking spot downtown, like to go to the bank, you couldn't get back out onto the street. It was that just bumper-to-bumper with big tractor trailer trucks, you know, everything until the bypass. It took years for the—that was planned, I think as early as the late 1920s. I think the bypass was planned. I think it was initially gonna go down the equivalent of Broad Street and then through part of the campus of Susquehanna. But they nixed that at some point, and then thought they were gonna go up, which they kind of did, up the Isle of Que, which they kind of resorted back to, but many years later.

Yeah, the whole climate changed downtown though when we lost, you know, lost the ability to get retail customers coming downtown 'cause of the mall and malls elsewhere, too. They were, you know, the whole shopping thing changed. Walmart didn't, didn't even exist here in '76, but there were other department stores that opened up up the strip that took away so many different things that we had here. We had, a paint store, we had toy stores, hardware stores, and it kinda all, all went away as that went in. But we've replaced them with, you know, restaurants now. I think that really serve their purpose well.

Leah Zackus (21:40):

So we talked a lot about the Selinsgrove history. What got you interested in Selinsgrove history? Was there a specific moment or point in time that you just wanted to study it?

Charles "Bo" Fasold: _____

Well, my dad was a bit of an amateur historian himself. He began photographing Selinsgrove in the 1930s and kept his photos, kept his negatives, and I always had interest in those. But when the Selinsgrove Sesquicentennial was in 2003, I decided I was going to spend more time on Selinsgrove history. I actually had the opportunity. I quit my job in Harrisburg. I wanted to be retired in time before the Sesquicentennial. And I did, I retired in the spring of '03. And it was at this time was right to do it. So it worked out well. And I started studying Selinsgrove history, and I really haven't stopped now since then. And I have a pretty extensive photograph collection and I, and read a lot of books, talk to a lot of people. And unfortunately the historians that I remember have all have all since passed away now. But yeah, that got me interested in it. I'm glad I did. And I think I've gotten some other people involved in it, too. I think I've helped do that, so that's been fun.

Leah Zackus: _____

What's your favorite moment in SU history that you've studied, that you've been to...

Charles "Bo" Fasold: _____

In SU history?

Leah Zackus: _____

Or in Selinsgrove, I should say.

Charles "Bo" Fasold: _____

Oh, let me think about that. The biggest event, I think that happened, and I was only five years old, was the original centennial, the hundredth-year anniversary of the founding of Selinsgrove. That was a week-long event, and people just went all out. They were giant committees and people volunteered for all sorts of things. And we had many parades and many activities downtown. There was a play especially written for, for the event, which they tried to resurrect here a couple years ago. And they found it was too politically incorrect to—it was about the early dealings with the Indians and it was it was good for 1953, but it didn't work for 2003, but that was such an event.

Maybe as a 5-year-old. You, you know, thought it was a bigger deal. But people wore, they grew beards for the event, and ladies had special costumes made to, you know, to look like 1853. And there were train—they brought a train. The trains were gone in Selinsgrove at that time, but they brought a centennial train in, and we rode that from Selinsgrove, I think, to McClure maybe, which is the far end of Snyder County. I think, the train, went all the way back there and came back and, you know, people did those rides. It was, I don't know that we're gonna top that. Really. That was nice. The Sesquicentennial was the one in 2003 was good, but it didn't match up to the old one. Maybe what would the next year be? 20, 2053. Yeah, that one. Good luck. Are you two from around here?

Leah Zackus: [I am](#) from Pottsville...

Charles "Bo" Fasold: _____

That's close. Sure, sure. I know Pottsville, how about yourself?

Emma Martz: _____

I'm from Phoenixville. It's outside of Valley Forge...

Charles "Bo" Fasold: _____

I know where that is. Yeah. Yeah. That has to be the biggest event. I think that we had, I imagine World War II had had some great events with it. There was some parades when certain soldiers came home, they had parades in their honor, and soldiers, available soldiers came out. And it those were nice, but I, you know, obviously didn't get to see those. Anything else you'd like to talk about? Maybe I was too quick on some of the subjects.

Leah Zackus ([26:28](#)):

No, you're fine. So you keep mentioning parades, like what's one of the parades you remember and like, what was in it?

Charles "Bo" Fasold: _____

The Halloween, I'm sorry, not that. The Centennial Parade of 1953, I think was preceded by a dog parade. And you, we have dog parades now, but all these dogs were dressed up in the typical costumes. I remember, I remember that. And then the, I have photographs of the actual Centennial parade, and people just dressed up in

period costumes. But then the Halloween parades over the years have been great, also. They've, it's kind of a little more commercialized now than it used to be, the Halloween Parade, but in the old days, it was local businesses would have a float and there'd be, you know, people on the float. And they'd be still, like we do now, throwing candy off the floats. And many people in costumes, many clubs would take part. The Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Future Farmers. Yeah, they were all fun and Halloween Parades used to get really gigantic crowds downtown.

And then I started, I think I started bowling on the same night as... I bowled on Tuesday nights, and the Halloween parade was always Tuesday nights. I think I went 25 years without seeing Halloween Parade, which I really didn't miss that. I didn't get to see 'em because of bowling. So I can't comment on about 25 years, but I'm back going to 'em now. And they're pretty nice. Again, I enjoy them. Selinsgrove in the past they had a special parade that celebrated and celebrate, we shouldn't have used this word, celebrated the Penn's Creek Massacre of 1755, I think it was 160th anniversary of the Penn's Creek Massacre.

And this was in 2015, in 1915, I think. I think we were starved for a reason, for a parade at that point. And they said, well, let's do this. World War I shortly broke out, and we had a big parade, a big victory parade when World War I, and if I said two, I meant World War I, World War I ended in, in 1918, they had a giant parade for that.

But this other one was so unique and it was so again, so well organized and for its time. They made a special book for it. And again, the whole community participated in this. There was a Queen of the Massacre, and there were persons dressed up as, as Indians and re- they actually recreated a portion of the Penn's Creek Massacre on an island. I can't think of the name of the island. It's a politically incorrect name for the island, so I'm not gonna say the island, but, anyhow, that was nice. And the Civil War had a couple victory parades after it all. So Selinsgrove has been a, been a town that's had a lot of parades over the years. They're all, they've all been very nice, apparently.

Leah Zackus (29:59):

Then my last question for you, you talked about baseball, about your two things you did as a teen. So what got you into baseball?

Charles "Bo" Fasold:

Well, my dad had a big interest in baseball, but I think actually baseball cards led me to baseball, which is an odd way of something happening like that. I had early baseball cards and the Milwaukee Braves at the time had one of the neatest uniforms that you could possibly have. And I know I collected baseball cards of the Milwaukee Braves, and I'm still a Braves fan. This is, what year would I have had my first Braves...

Probably '53. So that is what, that's 80. That can't be 80 years ago. 70 plus years ago. Yeah. And I'm still a Braves fan. And that, I think the baseball cards, they were so colorful and so attractive and yeah, I still have some cards, I guess a lot of people do. I still have some ball cards from those times.

So that's kind of what got me started. And I'm a numbers nut, and if you're a numbers nut...baseball, there's so many numbers floating around in baseball. It was a good way to, you know, calculate batting averages and all sorts of things like that, which I did. So yeah, that got me started. Auto racing, but it was just obvious because it was here at the end of town. Yeah. They were all nice things. And baseball has really been special my whole life. I wish I got to more major league baseball games. It's just a little more difficult to get there now with the tickets and, and downtown situations in some of the cities and parking and number of things. But I'm still a big TV fan of it.

Leah Zackus: _____

All right. Thank you so much for sitting for this interview.

Charles "Bo" Fasold: You're welcome.