

McElwee- We are meeting this morning, and having a conversation with Mr. John comet. This is November 2007, right after Thanksgiving, it's hunting season. We've taken John out of the woods, and we're very thankful that you've taken that time to do this John. John's a legend in this area um, he's legendary for many reasons—he was the longtime president of United Natural Gas. The big utility in Northwestern Pennsylvania, but also legendary for his youthful vitality, his great wit, his sense of enjoying life at all times, his beautiful wife and was always a brilliance ?? today, there was always that brilliant light that we could all see in your eye and we always-- were just pleased to be around you, John, and I want people to know that. So thank you for being with us this morning. I'm going to get going here. You and I are both from the Mon Valley—learned that a little earlier. You're from—originally from Monessen, is that correct?

Comet- That's true.

McElwee- Ok, and uh, why don't you tell us a little bit about your Monessen days, and then we will get along to school.

Comet- Well, then. I'm startin with the name itself. Monessen was named from Essen in Germany, which was a steel plant, steel city. And um, Uhhh, Monessen—the big thing was a steel plant. They had a blast furnace and um—which incidentally blew about every Saturday. It put a nice pall of brown dust over everything—but uh, they named the city from Essen on the Monongahela River. Called it Mon-Essen. And I was privileged to be raised there, there was a lot of ethnicity there. From particularly Russian people through Slavish people through Swedish people, Finnish People—they were all in Monessen so it was a very interesting place to live, but it was also a place that uh—for nature it wasn't that good because there was a lot of contamination from the coal mines—and. But I, I, I born and raised in Monessen, enjoyed it, and went to high school there with privilege to be the president of my class—and I was on the debating team. I'm afraid I'm going to do a little bit of bragging.

McElwee- That's alright.

Comet- Is it?

McElwee- That's fine. That's what, that's what—

Comet- And I played in the violin—I played the violin—

McElwee- Did you really?

Comet- And um, had a good time in Monessen. Then I decided to go to college and the—I was gonna go to Carnegie Tech. That was the big engineering school. I wanted to build bridges.

McElwee- Mmhmm.

Comet- That somehow—that got into my focus. I wanted to build bridges, and um. So I was going to go to Carnegie Tech, and then my dad who worked in the plant—steel plants there as a machinist. He came home and he said "I've heard that Penn State is a

wonderful place for engineering training and not quite as costly as Carnegie Tech was at that time. So I matriculated at Penn State, and enjoyed the—I enjoyed Penn State very much. Um, I started in as a Civil Engineer—hoping to be a Civil Engineer, but about halfway through—that is at the end of my Sophomore year I learned about this other course that were just opening up called Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineer. So I looked into that—it had a lot of chemistry in it and it had a lot more of variety than the old rules of Civil Engineering—setting up the transit and running it, that kind of thing. Well I changed over, changed over and I never regret it. I loved that, and that was my start.

McElwee- You had to be one of the earliest Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineers graduating from the state of Pennsylvania. Weren't you? One would think so.

Comet- I would probably think so, although Pitt had a course in it and there were courses like it—Marietta had Petroleum Engineering. Umm, but that's what I did in the way of school.

McElwee- Now you never—we have to tell folks this—you never really got away for your—you fell in love with Penn State too and you never really got away from your love for the school—and for what I've learned from your friends. Every year, you've religiously gone to all the games. You have one of the better seats up there (laughs). You probably know Joe Paterno, like he's your son for all I—I'm not sure. But you did miss a game or two this year, didn't you?

Comet- Oh yes, yes, yes.

McElwee- Yeah.

Comet- I had to stop that. I've enjoyed Penn State—but my life at Penn State was a good one. There's so many bad stories about fraternities for instance, and I belonged to a fraternity that was above all kinds of levels of being a good place for a person to be. And incidentally, we used to listen to a farmer, excuse me a barber in nearby Bellefonte—

McElwee- Mmhmm.

Comet- Who uh, whose name was Mills, and he had some sons and they called them the Mills Brothers.

McElwee- Oh, is that right?

Comet- Mmmmmhm.

McElwee- Is that right?

Comet- And then—

McElwee- Is that where they came from—

Comet- and then—and, yeah. They came from Bellefonte. And so we used to listen to this—we uh, went through, particularly our eating periods, and incidentally at that time they tried to teach manners, because you got all kind of people. You can't have people—they were all nice but you had different kinds of training, and um, you had the east and you had

the west, and one liked one kind of food the other didn't like the other kind of food. You had to do with it. But there was an upperclassman that sat at the table with the younger ones, and he insured that they had manners. That's a little bit different than what we have today.

McElwee- That's right.

Comet- And then they, they, they even taught manners in the fraternity house. We had some things that weren't that good. We had hell week for instance, but I could talk a little bit about that, but that wasn't that important. We—I loved Penn State. We—I had a—we walked about oh an hour and a—a mile and half to go to school from where the fraternity house was. And most of us religiously walked up to hear the Sunday sermon. And then I will say they had a wonderful chorus, beautiful singing. One time we would have a priest, the next time we'd have a Methodist minister, and sometime we'd have somebody from a foreign country, and it was the best show in town on Sunday, and we went there. So uh—

McElwee- The whole campus probably went in those days. That'd be my guess.

Comet- Well, a lot of us did, because it was good. It was worthwhile. I, uh—Penn State was good for me. I've since learned that other schools were giving better courses in what I was—

McElwee- Oh is that right.

Comet- entering. Yeah. But it was just opening up at Penn State. They were feeling their way, and so I worked with people that were trained better in geology than I was by far. Cornell for instance did an excellent job on—

McElwee- But that was the—that was the leading school in the country for—

Comet- Yeah, that's right. That kind of stuff, and Pitt was strong, good at that too. So that was my start.

McElwee- There we go, it's alright, it's alright. You graduated of course from Penn State with this degree in Petroleum and Natural Gas—entered in as an Engineer. Do you mind telling me what year that was?

Comet- 1934.

McElwee- 1934, depression years, those sorts of things. Um, you obviously are interviewing for a job I would assume. That's how that went and how'd that go? Just kind of tell us how that—

Comet- Well, there was a um, a man by the name of ?? Hubus, who was an Assistant Superintendent of Operations for the United National Gas Company. Which was at—located in Oil City, Pennsylvania. And he was there with a secretary, and they interviewed people to come and work for United Natural Gas Company, and um, I attended that Interview session, and I liked what I heard and I indicated that I was interested. That was the beginning of that.

McElwee- When you took your position, were you based in Oil City or did they send you somewhere else, because their territory was kind of extensive throughout Northwestern Pennsylvania.

Comet- Yes, we were, we were, we not only had United Natural Gas Company as a distribution company that provided gas for you to heat your home and go do your cooking. But we also had companies that were non-utility companies. One of them was called The Sylvania Corporation, and it was primarily a drilling company, and but it was not controlled by the Public Utility Commission. And um, then we had another company called The Mars Company, and the Mars Company was a company that took care of our petroleum products. These gas wells, many of them made distillates, which was a fluid, an oil—and we had some—we had a few little oil fields of our own, and so the Mars Company took care of the petroleum products. Sylvania Corporation took care of exploration and the drilling, particularly for deeper wells, because in the years, um late forties through oh um, the mid fifties there was a lot of gas that was developed in what was called the Oriskany Sand. It was a deep sand, it was—I generally think it was 5,000 feet deep, and uh, the Mars Company of course in the town would find oil or something, it went through the Mars company. And we had a couple of plants that would take that distillate and refine it into propane, and butane and things that people would come and buy for much to use in their camps or even to heat their homes with. So um, it was a company that had a lot of opportunities, a lot of variety to it. In the ah—accumulation of the land for instance, in order to drill gas wells—you either got a lease or if you could you'd try to get the whole land. We got land that had timber on it, and we got land that had coal on it. And people would come to the office and wanted to dispose of—for instance there was a period of time, and this wasn't me being the president at that time, but I was working in the office and with the president, who was J.G. Montgomery. A timber man would come in and clear cut thousands of acres, and when they were through, they had nothing except in taxes to pay for forty or sixty years.

McElwee- Right, right.

Comet- Because it took about sixty years for a tree to grow to maturity. And then they had the sight of getting the money now and then getting out of it. And so, J.G. Montgomery particularly got a lot of that acreage over around Driftwood, ?? that farther country over And later turned out to be very valuable petroleum or natural gas producing country. But it also grew beautiful, beautiful, beautiful trees; particularly cherry. And cherry, I don't know if know, cherry wood is expensive.

McElwee- Yes.

Comet- And we had, I've seen, I've seen cherry trees over there at breast high were about oh three, four feet—

McElwee- Is that right?

Comet- And straight up there for thirty feet without a branch or anything. Beautiful things. They're worth a fortune—each tree. In fact, they were taking down some of them and um veneer cut, it was that important.

McElwee- Yeah, yeah.

Comet- Yeah, so um. I ???

McElwee- Oh, is that right?

Comet- But I like working for United. I was hired as a junior engineer.

McElwee- Alright.

Comet- But this junior engineer was taught how to dig a ditch with a hand shovel.

McElwee- Oh. A working engineer (laughs).

Comet- Yeah. Working junior engineer, and I remember the first day I was determined to show them how good I was. Didn't know enough to put on a pair of gloves, working with a shovel all day was—oh my hands. Swoll up. And I remember foreman coming along and says "Oh, we gotta fix that." He went into town and bought me a pair of gloves, brought them out, and—

McElwee- Did—I, I gather that you enjoyed working with the men.

Comet- Yes.

McElwee- The men were a pleasure to be around.

Comet- They were.

McElwee- Right?

Comet- They were right for me. Yeah. Women weren't so much in the picture at the time. It wasn't until Rosy the Riveter came along that we got the women in there. And thank God. I always thought, we're bound to be ahead of everybody else because now we've got—after Rosy the Riveter, now we got double the workforce, and it's a good workforce. We got the women now working, and that has to be nothing but good for us. No, *wrong!* They were no longer at home taking care of Junior—

McElwee- Mmmhmm.

Comet- And so, I learned a little bit sometime when you give—

McElwee- You lose some.

Comet- You lose a little bit. Yeah.

McElwee- Uh, I don't want to get away from the company itself, but where did you meet your beautiful wife? Was it during this early time in Oil City or was it a little bit—was it at Penn State?

Comet- It was, no. It was, it was uh, later on. When I first came there, I was sent up to the Potter County Fields. Well, first I went to Bradford, and I worked on a pipeline there, and I graduated from working with my hands, taken out roots, to being a time keeper, and then after that sort of helping—they eventually worked me into a place where I was getting to experience a little bit of everything. So, I've stayed out in the field until about

oh, '38-'39. Then they brought me back into Oil City, and then I began to work then as a geologist, of all things. And uh, I love that job, I love that job. It was being a detective. You, um, you tried to figure out where that rock was gonna have a prop on the other hillside.

McElwee-

Mmmhmm.

Comet-

And the, you'd have a smidgen of training, and that's where I learned that Penn State wasn't that good at that time, but Cornell was. Because I—the man working with me had been—at Cornell and that was Don Seekerlin, and I learned a lot from him, but then I worked the geology for a long time, and I loved that.

McElwee-

You, you were really in a way fortunate to run into a Cornell trained geologist. That, that's like going to the ?? getting the best that you could get.

Comet-

Yes, that's true. Another Cornellian that I—uh, if that's the proper name.

McElwee-

Sure.

Comet-

But I liked, was Lee Forker.

McElwee-

Ah-Ha. Is that right?

Comet-

Lee Forker, yeah he was from Cornell, and I learned a lot of good things from Lee Forker.

McElwee-

Good, I'm sure his daughter would be glad to hear you said that.

Comet-

Well, she knows well how much I thought about Lee.

McElwee-

Speaking of personalities, you made a presentation several years ago at the Oil City Library, which a lot of us attended, and in that you mentioned as a young man out in the field somewhere you ran across Harry Crawford. Do you remember making that comment?

Comet-

Yes, yes I do.

McElwee-

Could you share a little bit of that with us. Because I remember that story—and could you recall, do you recall what you said?

Comet-

Yes, except that I—you asked a question that I didn't answer. How did I meet my wife.

McElwee-

Yes. Let's go back to that first.

Comet-

Alright. I met Opal at a safety meeting, at a school here in Oil City.

McElwee-

Ahh.

Comet-

I sat in one place and I looked across and I saw this beautiful woman, and I thought "I've got to know her." But I wasn't a very salesman.

McElwee-

Alright.

Comet-

Because it took me four years before she said yes (inaudible).

McElwee-

You were a good prospect, come on you were a good prospect.

Comet-

Well, she didn't let me know that.

McElwee-

(laughs).

Comet-

Um, so um.

McElwee-

Ok, now. Harry Crawford, you mentioned, like I said.

Comet- Oh, yeah. Harry Crawford.

McElwee- Yeah, yeah. Could you remember that—

Comet- I um, part of my functions with the old ?? wells that were drilled, particularly deeper wells. And um, we had a pretty good feeling among the drillers and different companies that you could go on a well floor and ask “How deep are you,” “What have you gone through,” “ Have you gone through any coals or anything,”” Do you have a log there I could look at,” “Would you mind?” And um, generally we exchange information, and uh, I remember going to see this one man that was drilling named Harry Crawford, was on that thing. And as I remember what I said at that time, I say it now. He had the coldest, steel blue eyes, when he looked at me, I started to choke up and step back—you know what I mean. But he gave me the information, and uh, that’s how I got to know that Mr. Crawford.

McElwee- Yeah, we, we should point out real quickly here. He was legendary at that time. He was—

Comet- Yes, he was well, well known.

McElwee- Emlenton refining, and all those other things, so.

Comet- Yeah, we got to know the personnel; I admire nearly everybody that I met in the oil industry.

McElwee- Well, ok, now, lets move forward just a bit. Um, your career progresses obviously. You were, you ran logs. Isn’t that what you told me?

Comet- I what?

McElwee- Did you say you ran Mohawk, the Mohawk part of the company?

Comet- No.

McElwee- Oh, I misunderstood there.

Comet- I don’t know what the Mohawk part of the company would be.

McElwee- I must have heard that one wrong. But you progressed, um. At some point in time, you’re getting closer and closer to being what you ultimately became: the president of UNG, United National Gas. What year did that occur, John?

Comet- That I became President?

McElwee- President. Yeah.

Comet- Umm, lets see. I was President for five years, and I retired in ’78, so must be about 1973 that I became President.

McElwee- Now where you done there at the uh, the building right at the head of Duncan Street that’s um, is that where you folks had your office?

Comet- Yes. That’s where we had our office.

McElwee- That’s a beautiful building.

Comet- Yes. Yes.

McElwee- Do you look back with pleasure at those last five years or was—

Comet- Yes I did look good. Um, I found that I was living on the shoulders of the men that went ahead on me. All I had to do was take what they gave me and at least maintain it or get a—we had a, we had a philosophy in the company that was, I described it as a um, three stooled—um—table. The three ?? and um, let me see if I can find it here. I can tell you exactly what that thing said. It was um, related to what we were going to do for a—(long pause as he searches for paper)—Having been our philosophy, you'd think I could recite it, but involved what we're going to do for the shareholder,

McElwee- Oh yeah.

Comet- What we were going to do for the employee, but most importantly, well as important, what we were going to do for the user, our customer. And um, this is what we had as a corporate philosophy. We we're going to let the customer shall be given the best service at a fair price. Secondly, that the shareholders can best be served by us being profitable. Shareholder's relationships were handled on the national fuel gas company level. National Fuel Gas being the holding company that had these kind—these different companies. Essentially three, three big units. One was the Oil City unit, which was United Natural, The Sylvania Corporation, and the Mars Company. Then we had a company at Warren, Pennsylvania, called the Pennsylvania Gas Company, and that essentially served Erie, and Jamestown, New York. Then we had the Iroquois, which was at Buffalo, and it served the western part of New York. That was National Fuel Gas. So um, shareholders can best be served by us being profitable, but the shareholder relationships were always handled on the National Fuel level, which was at 30 Rockefeller Center.

McElwee- Yeah, right.

Comet- Then the employees were to be treated with respect and care, and they were to be paid proper wages. And then—I would, I would say we were a constructive force in every community that we served. We encouraged our people to help the community, work with the community, and I think we were generally respected for that.

McElwee- I think you were. We, we've had some discussions, at least the Heritage Society's , and you've been there, but about the long ago beginnings of United Natural Gas, back in the 19th Century. I think we all kind of um, oh interested in knowing just where that came from. Do you, do you recall any, any of that um—

Comet- Well, the United Natural Gas Company applied for a charter and received it in March the 24th 1886, 1886. And signed by Governor Robert Patterson, and we had authority at that time to produce and receive natural gas in Venango Forest, Butler, Armstrong, Clarion, Warren, Elk, and Mckeen County in Pennsylvania. And um, we were given the right to provide gas to consumers in those towns and villages within those counties. And that since, been in large, but that was the start of it back in 1886.

McElwee- And that, and that was, that was a National Transit Company—

Comet- Well, um—to me it's always been fascinate the relationship between National Transit and Standard Oil. Of course Standard Oil and National Transit—that was the same thing—there was always a Standard Oil man in our company, but we were never Standard Oil.

McElwee- Ok.

Comet- They um, the attorney's were very clever at that. Every time there was something big that happen, you would find there was a Standard Oil man there, but we were never Standard Oil. Yet we headquartered at 30 Rockefeller Center, which was Standard Oil, and um, we had a lot of guidance from Standard—or from 30 Rockefeller Center.

McElwee- Hm, just the way they did business.

Comet- Well it was the way they did business. Now I don't know whether if Francas of the Mudracker that happened to occupy his fill with a women said "How bad Standard Oil was." Whether that was part of the reason we weren't to be called Standard Oil. But they—Standard Oil man was every place that we did anything—in our policy or anything like that.

McElwee- There was, there was at least culturally some—

Comet- Oh, there was, there was a connection there, but the lawyers were really clever at keeping it as not Standard Oil.

McElwee- Now, in later years John, you've been instrumental in bringing to Oil City, the artifact collection from National Fuel—I believe was in Buffalo—I'm not sure where that came from. But it's now in Oil City, and it's down there in the Weaver Garage, up there. Could you tell peop—folks what you—what you're hopes and dreams are for that—

Comet- Well, I had very little to do with that.

McElwee- Oh, is that right?

Comet- I had very little to do with that. They um, we had a foreman who was assigned to the Titusville area, who saw many of these artifacts, many of them quite valuable—being brought in as junk. And then being sold as junk—and he on his own, decided that was too valuable a collection just to be thrown away as junk. He began to collect it.

McElwee- Oh, ok.

Comet- And the—I'm not too sure that he did it according to the standards of the book, because if you sell junk, you get money from junk. And if you don't sell the junk, you don't get the money for that junk. And the uh, all the supervisors and me included—we would have sold it for junk, but he saw value in it, and so he collected it. But I think later on he began to understand that maybe he wasn't doing it quite according to the book, and he backed out of it. And I was contacted by the employees, who said "They're stealing us blind up here. They're taking—the people are taking away things might be valuable, and uh, will you do something about it?" And I said, "uh, well, why don't you go to National Fuel and offer them some money for the whole thing, and get it clean that way. Even

5,000 dollars. Just see what you can do with it.” I did not collect one bit of that stuff, I was just sort of a go between. See, and I made that suggestion, and National Fuel came through and they said, “If you have a competent acceptor of these, uh, we’ll give it to ya. Free. You have it.” And that was it. I did not collect any of it—all I did was make a suggestion as to how maybe they could get the thing moved, and it got moved down to what I call the Weaver, Weaver Garage. And they—it’s been professionally documented, and I think now it’s in the hands of the—

McElwee- Oil Region Alliance.

Comet- Hmm?

McElwee- The Oil Region Alliance.

Comet- Yeah, I don’t know—wherever it is now. But that was—I was just on the fringe. I was just on the fringe of making a suggestion of what they could do to make a move.

McElwee- Ok, well, um, the um—in your, in your working career, during your working career. It was prosperous in this area, generally speaking.

Comet- Yes it was.

McElwee- Certainly, certainly after—

Comet- And ugly. And ugly.

McElwee- And ugly.

Comet- Ugly.

McElwee- Ok (laughs)!

Comet- The river—yes! I heard this expression—to me—I was working, you know out of town, but I came in most every weekend to be in town. I rented a room and stayed there, but uh, there were six ways to come into Oil City, and every one of them was ugly. And they were! Oil City was not a pretty in those days. But it was prosperous. They were just too busy to uh, make it pretty really. Well, since then, we’ve made the town in my book into a very beautiful town. But I can remember sitting up at the Oil City Club and talking to uh, some of the mayors that we had then. Particularry Morrnick.

McElwee- Yeah. Mayor Morrnick.

Comet- Remember him?

McElwee- Right, right.

Comet- And he was saying “we ought to have a short cut across Oil City. We ought to have a faster way of getting from one part of the town out to the other part of the town, and that’s when we got the bi-pass. The road we go along the creek. Before that, we had to crawl through Second—Seneca Street—to get out that way. But I remember talking with those people, and they had foresight, and they were beginning to look to make Oil City the beautiful town now. This really is—but we were too busy making money in those days to even think about making it prettier or attractive.

McElwee- Joe Barr was involved in some of that—

Comet- Yeah, Joe Barr was one of the major ones. He was, he was at—he was so good that he was brought to—Harrisburg wanted him. They had him there for quite a while, and then he came back and he still ?? for Oil City. He was a great one.

McElwee- I had the privilege knowing him a little bit before he passed away. I think the town is a pretty town now.

Comet- It is a pretty town. It is pretty. The river's clean, I used to swim in it, and the froth from pot ash that would come in from people just dumping their stuff right into it—and feces—oh that was common. You had to swim around it, aww it was terrible. Now that river is clean, nice. Just beautiful as our—most of our shallow streams like French Creek, and Oil Creek. We, we made tremendous strides, and although we seem to forget the really true concept—and that is you fool around with nature, you better figure out how you're going to compensate for it. You cannot have a little pond, and then have it stay as a nice deep little pond. It will fill up with sediment for ya. And it was laughable to me that they were going to make a whitewater thing out of Oil Creek ?? I remember. The first year it would have been filled up with sediment.

McElwee- You, um, you're interest in these clean streams—I think you've actively involved in those efforts I believe. And I know you're interest goes back; you said you were a Boy Scout back in Monessen.

Comet- Yes.

McElwee- And uh, you had an interest in nature that goes way back, you're not—you aren't just out there, you are a very knowledgeable man about that. That, that's what I've learned from your friends. You're also a great Trout Fisherman, one of the best, and certainly one of the most knowledgeable—these creeks around here, I'm sure it's a pleasure to you see them come up.

Comet- Oh yes. Oh yes. I'll tell you, it's interesting to get the history of some of that—now you take French Creek for instance, it's what you call a warm water stream, and yet above that is Oil Creek and it's a coldwater stream. And that's because a glacier came down, and it, it took off what we call um, a what's that—hunchback, the uh, the hill there in Oil City that has the sign on it—

McElwee- Oh, um, Hogback.

Comet- Hogback.

McElwee- Yes.

Comet- Hogback, the glacier came down and stripped off the top of that thing. Took off about two-three hundred—two hundred feet out of it and dumped it. And then right below it, by um, that was all warm water, that was the stream had flowed north from the Pittsburgh Area north out, and now that was all at French Creek tied in as warm water. That's why you get Pike, and the different kind of muscle.

McElwee- Oh, yeah. Totally different kind of species.

Comet- Totally different species of fish. As ??? once you get north, which was a trout stream, which was north country stream.

McElwee- Mmhmm. Oh, yeah. Oh, Yeah.

Comet- Yeah. So it's, it's, we, we've cleaned the streams up, um. The one thing that we didn't need to clean up was people. We had wonderful people, always happy. Nice, nice people. Now, I'm not stupid enough to believe everybody was nice, but you gotta have some bad ones so you can compare. You can tell how good you are because you have to have some bad ones to compare them.

McElwee- I'm sure it, it—when you're, when you're in those moments of reflection, you think about what this place will be like years from now. Um, its, I think it will beautiful place. I think you'd agree with that. But what do you see, what do you see for this area twenty, thirty years from now.

Comet- Well, it'll continue to be a wonderful place to live. Um, I have, I really am thought about what resource it is, because it seems to me in the past it's been resource oriented. If you had a lot of oil, that was the resource, and that was the resource that we had here. That and timber. A little bit of coal, but not, not enough to even mention. Um, it'll be, people can work out for instance. This campus right here—

McElwee- This campus, yes. Yes.

Comet- This campus here is a perfect example, and also, the healthcare facilities that are coming out of UPMC Northwest, to me that kind of thing will make it go. That brings the doctors in, it brings in a lot of professional people, and um. The natural resource that we always look for, for the development of an area—I don't see it and I don't ???. But then the people that drilled for the first oil, they didn't know it was down there either, they suspected it because it's in on the ???. They'd see a fluorescent blue color, and they knew it was coming from some place, and of course we, that's the story of Titusville and Drake Well.

McElwee- Um, just to emphasize that minutes to minutes thing. It's a model for living, and life, and economic development in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, why not here. We have it, we have the beginning of it that's for sure. I happened to agree with you. You've always have been a man of education, you've always stressed education. You're a man of manners, you believe life should be lived to high standards. That's why you've been so admired in my view by so many, many people. Do you think the young people are listening? Do you think there's hope?

Comet- I um, I don't understand. Of course, at 94 years old, I'm so many generations older than what's come on, that I say nearly 3 generations have passed, and um, I just can't—I don't think like they do. I don't hear their music like they hear it. Um, I just don't understand their language. I don't understand their lack of respect. I don't understand their lack of manners. I think the thing that hit me first was music. Certainly Chopin, and

Mozart was not in a category of what they were interested in ?? change that stuff. It had a beautiful melody that we used to have. I think music is emphasized an awful lot the changes in the generations that come by.

McElwee- But there is always hope.

Comet- There is hope, and it's going according to a plan in my book. It's—we were told religiously, that uh, don't try to figure it out, because you can't. It's um, those thoughts are far apart from the way of the things are gonna go as the sky is from the land. We can't figure out how it's gonna end up. But I think you end up with hope, and even though you have to look awfully hard at that to find it. Again, there's a constant of very, very much goodwill that runs through the whole thing. You find the bad ones, and you get into places like the Hill District in Pittsburgh, or places like Detroit, where things are bad. But you find real good people and you find bad people. And I've never seen lot of good will expressed than just recently when we had turkeys and free meals for people. Just come! And it was a beautiful outpouring of how people want to help people.

McElwee- Um, we're coming to an end of this conversation Mr. Comet, and it's just been an absolute pleasure having this conversation with you. The community has been so much better off because you've been with us. I want you to know that. I mean that sincerely. There are people in this room who share that, and I'm sure there are many, many people in Oil City, who when they, when they or their children see this in years to come. They will say "That's John Comet, that was a man to be respected, and we are much better place because of you." And thank you.

Comet- Thank you.