

Tales from the Albright
Episode 92: Multi-generational Discussion, Part I

Alyssa Loney: Hello, welcome to Tales from the Albright: A Podcast by the Scranton Public Library.

AL: Hello, everyone. Welcome to Tales from the Albright. Today we are having multi-generational discussion as a podcast episode. It was born out of feedback that we received from the book discussion Brianna and I did about the 90s by Chuck Klosterman. Scott, who's the Director of the Scranton Public Library, asked if we could do an episode kind of talking about the differences between what randomized memories of the 90s were versus people who were in their 20s and 30s and remember the decade vividly. From this we got a group together and kind of had more of a discussion that weekly follows the book itself, but it turned more into kind of a social discussion about what our memories are like and what it was like for the people who are entering their late 20s and early 30s now and what their experiences were like growing up. And that would be Brianna and I. Versus the people who were in their 20s and 30s during the 90s and what their life experiences have been. All of the content in these episodes are our personal opinion and personal experiences, and it doesn't really represent everyone's experiences, but it's our own take on it. I hope you enjoy today.

AL: We have more of a special episode. Where last season, Brianna and I did a book discussion on the The Nineties by Chuck Klosterman and it's expanded into an intergenerational type podcast where we now have Scott and Ann.

Ann Kovach: Hello.

Scott Thomas: Hi

AL: So what do you want to talk about first?

ST: There's a lot to think about with with this particular decade, and how different it is now. So, and and one of the things about the book that was interesting was it talks about generational differences, and now I'm I'm technically a baby boomer, but I don't feel feel like. Do you feel like?

AK: No, I don't feel like I'm a Baby Boomer at all.

ST: No, I feel. Like I'm in the slacker generation should speak because I was born in 1963, which is the cusp

AK: Right. And I was 62. So now you know how old we are.

ST: But, Ann, I don't know about you. But from my mind, the 60s generation, the the true baby boomers was this amazing, amazingly accomplished generation that did so many things with civil rights, fighting the Vietnam War, protesting at the same time, and we came after, and it was like. What was all this came before this 1970s and 80s and we're somehow, we're somehow not as great.

AK: No, no, when you think about it, no. We partied a lot.

ST: Yeah, some did.

AK: Yeah, some did.

ST: Some read a lot of books, but I mean there is, you know. So that's one of the most things you know. And then you know, to hear you folks talk and it was it was interesting in your first one which is why we

AK: Right, exactly why we decided because it is really very interesting. Like a lot of times even when we are on lunch and that I would mention something from like the 80s early and people would look at me like what are you talking about? Like the OJ?

Briana Cimino: Yeah, cultural moments.

AK: They so young. They don't remember. They weren't even born at that time.

ST: One of the things, I don't know about you Ann, that the two things that about the younger people that I surprised me was those of us who were older, did not react to COVID in his radical. We were like, I thought I'd be dying in nuclear Holocaust, and it's the young people. That were so, so interested in masks and and I was like, I'll do what they tell me to do, but I don't see what the big deal is

AK: Yeah, that's true.

BC: Yeah.

ST: And the other thing was George Floyd the younger folks, the outrage. When you talk about Rodney King

AK: Yes.

ST: For us, it's more of the same

AK: Yes, exactly.

ST: And we, you know, we have memories going back to when the N word was used, even when I grew up in high school

AK: That was nothing.

ST: People used it. That progress has been made. Not enough. And so you folks, the outrage and and the COVID response

AK: Yes, very surprising.

ST: Very surprised

AK: Yeah

BC: Yeah, it's like the difference between historical memory and personal memory. We don't have the personal memory. We have, like the history textbook level, but we don't have the personal experience of those things that you do, right.

AK: Thats true

ST: Yes, you didn't live with the Cold War.

BC: Right about that.

AK: Right, that's true, yeah.

ST: I don't know about you, Ann but I never thought I'd make it this far. I thought we would be incinerated.

AK: A lot of times, yeah, yeah.

ST: Cause I mean It was not good

BC: Right, yeah

AK: It was scary at times,

ST: And so when things like a pandemic come, you knew something was going to come.

AK: Right

ST: You know? It's like, OK, this wasn't as bad as as the dystopian thing

AK: Yes

ST: that we're going to experience was, well, this is all it is,

AK: Yep

ST: so that informs you.

BC: So, it's almost like that makes me think of the intergenerational difference between like we now have school shooter drills. But weren't there, like, bombing drills, like afraid of, like nuclear bombs? Wasn't there a thing that was that?

ST: Yeah

AK: Not when I

BC: I was going to say

ST: We did not have that. The generation before did. They did have duck and cover. By the time you get into the 70s and the late 60s there wasn't such a thing

BC: Ah okay okay interesting

AK: We had the drug dogs.

BC: Ah

AK: Where they used to bring the drug dogs in every once in a while.

ST: They did

AL: I remember the drug dogs

AK: Yeah. And like, close down all the and you couldn't leave the class and. They go through the whole school.

BC: Oh interesting

AK: Yeah, that's what we had.

AL: Yeah, I had that too. I remember that.

AK: Oh, you had that too?

AL: Yeah. Because I remember cause I was always scared because I knew the kid who's locker was next to mine definitely had drugs in his locker. So I was so scared that I was going to get called every single time

BC: That they would think it was you all along?

AL: Yeah.

BC: Oh, no.

ST: Ann what would happen in your high school if someone brought in a gun? A kid.

AK: Nothing.

ST: Nothing.

AK: Nothing. Not a darn thing.

ST: Nothing. Not a darn thing.

AK: Nope the doors weren't locked. Anybody could walk in.

ST: Anybody could walk in, if a kid came in with a gun you wouldn't have thought anything about it.

AK: They'd be like

ST: Oh it must be hunting season

AK: Yeah or they'd be like oh go to see the principal

ST: Go see the principal they did do that

AK: And come back at the end of the day

ST: Yeah

AK: And pick it up

ST: Seriously

BC: Ohh

AK: You would've never thought anything about it

ST: And no, and I mean you you know. Somebody in in my my school blew up urinal with half a stick of dynamite. It was nothing.

AK: They would shut that bathroom down. That's it.

ST: They got suspended

BC: Right, right right?

AK: I mean

ST: Oh what was that sound? Someone blew up a urinal again

AK: Oh okay, alright.

AL: I think someone blew up a garbage can when I was in high school with a firework

BC: Oh my goodness.

AK: Now when you guys were in high school were the doors, locked and everything at the time?

BC: Oh yes,

AL: Mine were, for the most part.

AK: OK.

AL: Because I'm in that, like, awkward era whereas I was graduating, things start to get more strict but before then

Ann: Okay

AL: it's just like I remember people just wandering the halls.

AK: Yeah

ST: Yeah

AL: I remember like people were graduated just coming back at the end of day and walking in and like going to visit teachers. I'm like an in between,

AK: OK,

BC: We had to. You had to be buzzed in and we had an entire lockdown because of a student from another local public school that had snuck in, someone let him in and they didn't know who it was so they fully locked us down and it turned out it was just another high

AK: Oh gosh

BC: School kid who had shown up from another school.

AL: I don't even remember having lockdown drills

BC: Oh, we had plenty of those.

AK: Different, so different

ST: Oh we had fire drills

AL: We had fire drills

AK: Fire drills of course

ST: But I mean that was about it. There wasn't anything.

AK: Nothing. Yeah. I would never, ever in a million years think that schools would be locked down.

AL: Yeah.

ST: And the other thing that that's you know, I I had bad experiences with bullies and

AK: No one did anything

ST: basically no one. If you have told the administration they'd say you're on your own

AK: Exactly

ST: Which I which I was basically told now its zero tolerance which it should be

AK: right there should be I agree, I agree.

ST: Zero tolerance. But in those days, it was part of growing up, you know?

AK: Exactly. Yeah, you'll survive it.

AL: Yeah, I remember kids getting into fist fights in the hall and stuff.

ST: So yeah, there's always fights.

AL: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ST: There's a difference between kids getting into a fight

AL: Yeah

ST: and being bullied where you just sitting there minding their own business

AK: minding their own business, yeah

BC: OK. So I mean tied to what we were sort of talking about, that's a lot of like what it was like when you guys were growing up, which was just before the 90s, then right? Like a little bit before.

AK: Yes

BC: So like, what was it like, do you remember? Like the decade of your life you were in in the 90s, what you were doing, what it was like. Like, do you have any distinct memories of it?

AK: That's a good question. I'm I'm trying to remember the 90s.

BC: It was a blur.

AK: It was a blur a lot of times. I think I was probably in my early 20s, mid 20s, so it was sort of a blur. I'm not gonna lie.

BC: Fun and eventful?

AK: That very fun and eventful. Like I said earlier, before we started, I remember having a little black briefcase to go to work and I would put in like my newspaper and all the fun stuff. I don't know why I did it and I would dress to the nines to. Go to work.

BC: Ohh yeah.

AK: You know, I mean, it was,

BC: yeah,

AK: We'd dress to the nines to go out.

BC: Oh yeah. Thats fair.

AK: Yes. I mean, we buy \$0.99 pair of earrings and have to buy \$100 outfit to go with it. But the earrings were only \$0.99.

BC: That's amazing.

AK: Yeah, it was just. It was a fun decade. I mean, I don't remember specifically everything that went through, but that was when my friends and I really started really growing up and people started getting married

BC: Right

AK: and having children.

ST: And I mean the first thing about it that happened was a Cold War was over.

AK: Yes.

ST: And it was like this big burden is lifted off your shoulders. The Gulf War came in not soon after that, which for a lot of us, like you remember Vietnam as the the green on the TV. It was always green

AK: Yes

ST: and. And that was the first war that the first war. They talk about the first televised war.

AK: Yes

ST: And that was

BC: Yeah

ST: But this was the first time where when there was 24 hour news service and you watch CNN like, what's going to happen and you got worried that something you know like now the situation in Israel could turn into something far worse, if enough bad things happen. And as you're worried about you're watching this thing on TV.

AK: Right.

ST: So that's but then that is over within two months it was all over.

AK: Exactly

ST: Its over. We won. Everything's great and the rest of the decade from that kind of worry, there wasn't any.

AK: There wasn't, right?

ST: There was nothing. You know if you're, you know, like, you know white, middle class, and all that kind of stuff, it was a good decade for you. I mean, I began it single and I ended up married, you know? And so those changes in my life and in maturation.

AK: Oh Yes. Yeah, definitely yes,

ST: We were around 30

AK: Yeah, so you figure that's that's when we start growing up.

ST: Like you folks

BC: Yeah.

ST: And and so you know, it's and it began with no Internet.

AK: Nothing

ST: And and personal computers around

AK: Right

ST: And and ended with the Internet.

AK: The dial up

ST: With the dial up, yeah. So, I mean, it was, you know, a lot change. It, you don't have, you didn't have the problems you have now with with the with the polarity and the politics and all that kind of stuff that didn't exist. There was some material in here about the 1992 election.

AK: Yes oh definitely yes, yes.

ST: You know, and if you can, can compare that to what's happening now. It's tame.

AK: Oh, it's very. It's nothing.

ST: It's tame.

AK: You don't even think you forget about it actually, you know, somebody brings up. And you go oh my god that's right, 1992. I totally forgot about that election.

ST: When Bill Clinton won. George Bush in his remarks, said. We have a smart young man, as our president

AK: Yes

ST: lets support him for him. I remember him saying that after they had a tough, you know, they're only tough, they're going at each other a little bit, you know. But not but not to the level of now.

BC: Right.

ST: Yeah.

BC: And that's interesting because that's like the benchmark for the beginning of our lives. question mark. Yeah, I was born during Clinton's presidency.

AL: Yes

BC: So, like, that was the first real presidency that existed

AK: Okay

BC: for us and then growing up, I think I remember Bush and Obama, decent amount being a child. But being so young, it's not the same. I think seeing it

AK: Exactly:

BC: as being an adult who sees it.

AK: Exactly

AL: I remember the Bush Obama election I was in high school.

BC: Oh yes

AL: So I remember that a bit more.

BC: Right.

AK:OK

BC: Whereas Clinton, I just, I don't remember as much about it.

AL: No.

BC: I just he seemed pretty cool at the time, but I don't know about that. I was so young, you know.

AK: Yeah. He was like our first television president. Well, even though JFK was.

ST: Do you folks have memories of the 2008 election?

AL: Yeah

BC: Yeah

ST: Do you remember how big that was?

BC: I feel like the idea of the first Black president being a possibility was the biggest thing that was talked about

AL: Yeah

BC: that I remember.

AL: Yeah, yeah.

ST: Yeah, I it's one of those moments when when you remember where you were.

AK: Yes.

ST: When Obama won, you know.

AK: I know I just remember going oh my god

ST: Because you just never thought you would see that.

AK: No

ST: You know, but I'm wondering if you felt that too,

AK: Yes exactly

ST: because it was big.

BC: Yeah

AK: It was very big

ST: For all

AL: I think really my political like awareness at that time just came from listening to like, Green Day.

BC: Well, that was the thing in the early 2000s.

AL: Yeah

BC: It became like the the like, the music.

AL: The music

BC: evolution. There was a lot of, like, my see my band of choices Rise Against and they talked more about, like, the wars that were happening in the East. But it was a lot of political rock music.

AK: Scott, wasn't Obama like the first president that was close to our age too. So that's made us feel more comfortable. I did. I feel more comfortable with them. I related more to him and Michelle

BC: Interesting

ST: And I mean his stylistically,

AK: Yes

ST: you know, very different from previously. You know, it depends you relate to different people. I mean, this is a personal thing. They're people

AK: Yes

ST: you're going to relate to them differently. This band you mentioned I have never heard of them.

BC: Oh really? See. I feel like. It's more of an our generational sort of. There was a lot of. Because this is where it's interesting to see the wars that like we grew up with, where it's like knowing like you saw Vietnam and then how you just talked about the Gulf War and stuff in the 90s that we saw post 9/11 wars

AL: Yeah

BC: and a lot of rock artists started to do that,

AL: Yeah,

BC: Where they would reflect a lot on our role in those wars in the Middle East and all that. And it was really interesting. It was a lot like political commentary through music.

AL: Yeah, I remember. I don't know why we had it on the television, but I remember when the United States invaded Baghdad. And the guy chewing bubble gum in the tank? I remember like watching that in the middle of like, science class and I don't know why.

BC: That's a very specific one.

AK: Yeah.

BC: Wow.

ST: That's so cool

AL: I was like oh, OK. Like I don't know. I don't know if this is comforting or not, but I don't know why we're really watching. This but OK.

BC: Yeah, yeah

ST: The music they talk about, I mean Nirvana and and

AL: Yes

ST: Did they have a social conscious? From what I know, I mean, I listen to Nirvana and I don't know. I haven't picked up on any.

BC: Yeah, no, it seems like more lighthearted, fun music. A lot of it or just dark.

AL: I think it. I don't know. I always got the impression that it was more social commentary rather than like political commentary, if that makes sense.

ST: It does

AL: I don't know. Because now when I think of Nirvana, I just think of their little exhibit at MoPop.

AK: MoPop?

AL: Its the pop culture museum in Seattle.

AK: Oh okay

AL: They have a like section for them.

AK: Oh, that would make sense.

BC: Oh, that's cool.

AK: That would make sense

AL: They have like Kurt's cardigan from MTV Unplugged and home photos laid out

AK: Ohh wow.

AL: And Dave Grohl's drum set and like some of the guitars and things like that.

ST: And one of the things that they talked about in here was right at the end of that 90s era is when you all of a sudden had Napster and the sharing of Mp3s.

AK: Yes

ST Where we all grew up in an era when you physically own music,

AK: Yes

ST: There are those of us - and one thing, by the way, of your generation, the younger folks, that that I cannot fathom, is why would you ever stream music? Why would you do it? You don't own it. How could you not own music?

BC: Yeah. And that's the fascinating thing is it reflects the transience, I think, of life because if you think about it because you're not investing in it, it reflects the fact that your music taste can change.

AK: Okay

BC: You can go from one year or even one month being like I want to listen exclusively to Taylor Swift and then you can go. Never mind. I want to listen to rock music

ST: Or to Nevermind

BC: and it doesn't. Yeah, Yeah, there you go. But you don't have to. It doesn't change anything. You pay a standard \$12 \$15 a month for whatever music you want, and you don't have to commit to purchasing and owning and identifying with a piece of physical media in the way that you used to have to.

AL: Yeah, I feel like it's also it's harder to buy physical music now.

ST: Well, no, they actually what I what I do OK is I download the MP3s and keep them on my hard drive. So I don't buy CD's.

AL: Yeah

ST: You don't buy vinyl, right? And I, but I own those MP3

AK: Right

ST: And because basically what happens with me is that my musical tastes have expanded but not contracted, so you know the the same records I bought in 1975, I was still listening to them, okay

AK: Yes

ST: As well as you know into the 80s and and even Taylor Swift there's downloaded some of her songs. For me, it's part of who who I am

BC: Right

ST: and you gotta own that. I'm glad you explained it to me. I can understand that.

BC: Well, and it's interesting because I feel like it's a mix of generational and personal. So something I think I've noticed about you, Scott, is that music is a core part of your identity.

ST: It is

BC: And I feel like that's the same for my husband. He's the same way he likes to own. He will buy the vinyl records, even being someone who's in a couple of days haha turning 30, he still likes to buy and own vinyl and physical and like he likes to download and have his physical media because he has his particular musicians, the groups he knows he loves he reveres and as he finds new ones he acquires them. But his taste never change enough that he would let go of the ones he cares about, whereas for me it's less part of my identity. I go through phases. I listen to different things I don't commit financially to owning the things that I listen to, yeah.

AL: Yeah

ST: And it's and the other thing that that's different about is that everything is available.

AK: True

ST: So they're in growing up. There might be a book you badly wanted that is out of print. And the only way to get it was to scour the secondhand bookstores. You might have an album. I can think of. Some that I badly. Wanted and it was part of your, you know, every time going to record store. You'll hope it's in the it's in the cut out bin eventually. Oh my God. There it is. I'm looking for four years. You don't know that the songs are gonna sound like.

AK: Right.

AK: You know what the times are? You've seen a list. You don't know what the album's gonna sound like. Now you can sample it.

AK: Yes

ST: You guys order it from anywhere. There's a census of of quest that is gone.

BC: That's true

AK: That is so true.

AL: I think in a

ST: And what you find on the way

AL: I think in a way it's kind of changed because I remember listening to songs on like Myspace back in like and like I can't find those songs anywhere anymore because of the how digital things tend to disappear after time and like I remember, they're in my brain

BC: Right

AL: and I know what they sound like, but I can't find them or like old versions of songs,

AK: Okay

AL: because then they're replaced with like the newer ones or like the single version online. And its

BC: So born digital things you mean?

AL: Yeah.

BC: Okay

AL: Where now, It's just like I know they existed at one point, but I can't find them no matter how hard I search.

BC: Yeah, born digital is just such a strange concept that we have now. That's just sad. Like, even with trying to help people find movies and TV shows that they're interested in

AK: Okay

BC: now, and the fact that at least I feel like I don't know. In the past was there at least a guarantee that it would be physically released somehow?

ST: No

BC: the way because I was like, cause now we have streaming and you you still can't get it physically.

AK: Right.

ST: No, I mean, I mean it with the advent of VHS tapes.

BC: Right

ST: Then they started to practice, and most major motion pictures would come out in a VHS version. And then they started doing older TV shows and things like that

AK: Right

BC: Right

ST: and they started going back up. But up. And that was up until the the, you know, the 80s. There really wasn't that before then. You just hope you caught old movies like at 2:00 in the morning.

AK: Ah yes

ST: Yeah. No, for the TV Stations would go. Off at midnight.

AK: That's true. They used to go off at midnight

ST: Yeah they did

AK: with the national anthem.

ST: with the national anthem.

BC: Thats crazy to me

ST: Yeah, There was nothing. It was dead there after that.

AK: Yep

BC: Wow

ST: And so, you know, but at off hours, they would show movies.

AK: Yes

ST: And that's how you get old movies, if ya know,

AK: And if you didn't see the movie or the show.

ST: You didn't see it

AK: There's no taping it. There was no you had to hope that they reran it in the summer when they used to do reruns.

BC: Oh, interesting.

AL: I do. I remember that

AK: Yes,

AL: because I remember there were some like random shows. I mean they're not random now because people talk about them. But I remember watching The Little Mermaid animated series and Gargoyles at the Chip'n'Dale animated series. I would mention them and no one remembers what they are. There's some Disney Channel shows from like Early- late 90s, early 2000s that I talked about and no one knows what they're talking about.

ST: Oobi?

AL: No,

BC: Oobi? I feel like I know that.

AL: No

BC: That sounds familiar. Yeah.

ST: My my son, he was a hand.

BC: Oh I think I do remember that

ST: My son is gonna be 22 soon and so the early 2000 children shows are something that I am well versed in. Yeah the hand and the Boobas, wherever they were.

BC: Yeah

ST: Things like that.

BC: Thats so funny

AL: I

ST: Yeah

AL: Like The Jersey on Disney, like no one remembers it. They put on this like the sweater jerseys and they would transport into like sports stars play the sport. I don't know. It was fun.

AK: Interesting, very interesting.

AL: Yeah like not even, a lot of shows they put on Disney+ but this one is just like gone

BC: Disappeared

AL: Yeah

BC: Yeah, that is crazy

ST: Yeah. So you would know a little bit of what its like.

AL: Yeah

ST: To to to lose things like that that are just.

BC: Wow.

AL: Yeah. And I feel like now. It's more like weird obscure books now that I'm like I can't find this. Or it's just like.

AK: Then I get obsessed. If I want it like

AL: Yeah

AK: if I'm an old book that I remember reading and I can't find, then I get so obsessed. It's like I'll scour everything

BC: Yeah

AK: just to find it, yes.

AL: Right now I'm doing that and I'm like I want to read this novel, but it's nowhere

BC: Interesting

AL: It was hard to find like the Goodreads page or like anything that was

ST: Was it published?

AL: Yeah. It was published. It was like in the 30s or 40s. Well,

ST: Can you get it through interlibrary loan?

AL: No

BC: Scott's pitching?

AK: OCLC?

AL: No

BC: It's just not wow.

AL: Its not, I don't think it was ever popular

BC: Interesting

AK: And if it was a small,

AL: Yeah

AK: small publisher,

BC: Yeah

AK: you know we do, then you get obsessed with it and it's like I have to have it.

BC: Yeah.

ST: That that interests me because that contradicts what I said earlier that I thought you could find anything.

BC: It feels like there is that gap

AL: If its obscure enough, you can't find it.

AK: Yes

BC: Yeah, because it's like there's that in between that you lost. Like, there's a lot of stuff that was chosen to be preserved and anything that wasn't chosen to be preserved during that time got lost to history. Whereas now anything we had left, we can just immediately preserve and have access to and anything we make now we can have access to, but there's like that lost gap piece. That's interesting.

ST: So you're saying in the early digital era? Things would disappear, but now they don't.

BC: Now, I don't think we lose anything because of the way that we have like access to. I feel like that's a technology component like the cloud and the Internet. And the way that

ST: That is true.

BC: Those things exist, but yeah, early digital, you could still lose things.

AL: Like with the wayback machine with Internet Archive that's preserved a ton, but there definitely are things that have fallen through the gaps.

AK: Definitely

BC: Yes

ST: If you think about, for instance, you know, a writer, you know, practiced in the 20th century or before. You may have access to their their early drafts and their notes. You're not going to have that for anyone who was writing in the latter part of the 20th century onward because they were doing on the word processor

AK: Right

BC: That's true

ST: and and so you're going to get the final product. So a lot of that,

AK: That's gone

ST: That process is gone

AK: Yes

BC: That's true

ST: You know, and even in if you're in. Institutions such as this one what we choose to keep is always something that you have to ask,

AL: Yeah

AK: Yes

ST: you know, because basically they're all in a folder on the server and I leave and they delete the server folder or something,

BC: Yeah

ST: you know, I mean, so you have to have policies in place so you're preserving institutional history

AK: That's true

ST: Where before you kept in a filing cabinet

AK: Exactly

ST: You know which, they did by the way, and we still have.

AK: We still have the filing cabinet

BC: Oh yes

ST: Which, by the way, we still have reason to look at every now and again

BC: Yes, very much so.

AL: That's where we're going to end the discussion today. Our discussion went out for an hour, and I like to keep these more towards 20 minutes to 30 minutes. We'll be back in two weeks with Part 2, and with that episode we'll jump right into the discussion. I hope you enjoyed it. If you have any comments, questions, suggestions or anything else, please feel free to e-mail me at aloney@albright.org or call the library at 570-348-3000. Thank you.