THE VERDIGRIS PROJECT

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JIM KILLOY

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Oral History Transcript of Jim Killoy

Interviewers: Aubrey Jaap & Clark Grant
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Jaap: All right. It is October 15th, 2018. We're here with Jim Killoy. Jim, I'd like you to start off. Can you tell me a little bit about your grandparents?

Killoy: Well, my grandparents, Killoy, they came from . . . Well, my great grandfather, they came from Ireland and then my grandfather was born in Butte. Uh, not in Butte, they were born in Grass Valley, California. And that's where he was working in a mine, my great grandfather. And they stayed there until the mines started to peter out. And then they moved to Virginia City, Nevada, and they worked in the mines there until 18. . . I think they came to Butte 1889.

Jaap: So they were here nice and early.

Killoy: And so then my grandfather worked in all the mines and then my dad went to work in the mines and he worked. And then I went to work through the company. So. That was that. And then my mom's. They came from Lebanon. They lived in Pennsylvania, for a while, and then they came to Spokane. And then they came to Butte. My grandfather ran the Oriental rug store in Butte.

Jaap: OK. Do you know what that was called?

Killoy: Yeah. Khoury and Sons.

Jaap: Oh, so she's a Khoury. OK.

Killoy: My mom was a Khoury. Yeah. And then my mom worked for them for years. Then she went to work in Hennessey's and Burr's. She worked all over.

Jaap: So your dad worked in the mines. Tell me a little bit more about your dad. When was he born?

Killoy: 1906. Yeah. And he went to work in the mines when he was 15.

Jaap: Did he go to high school?

Killoy: Freshmen. Then he went to work. His dad died. [Inaudible] So somebody had to go to work. So then, that's what he did. He started at the Diamond Mine as a mucker. They had no contract miners then. And so that's what he did for a long time. And then he moved from mine to mine as they opened and closed.

Jaap: All right. Did your dad have siblings?

Killoy: Yeah. He had three brothers and a sister.

Jaap: Was he the oldest, your dad?

Killoy: No. He was the second. His older brother ended up . . . he was the superintendent of the Kelley Mine. And then the superintendent of the Berkeley pit.

Jaap: That's interesting.

Killoy: And he started the same way. When he was 15, he worked his way up from shift boss.

Jaap: And what did your dad work his way up to?

Killoy: My dad didn't want to be a boss. He went boss once and he did it for six months and quit. He says, "I don't like worrying about the mine all day." So he quit bossing.

Jaap: Was he a union member?

Killoy: Mmm hmm. Ever since he started. Me, too.

Jaap: Did he ever talk to you about any of the strikes or anything that happened in his lifetime before yours?

Killoy: Well, I remember taking us downtown during the '46 strike and looking at all the lines and the soup kitchens.

Jaap: Yeah. We have pictures of the soup kitchens.

Killoy: Community Creamery down here.

Jaap: On Broadway. Yeah.

Killoy: And they had miners lined up all the way down the street. And then we went down, took us down on East Park with all the houses that were blown up.

Jaap: So born in '06, so he was alive during quite a big time here, so. Did he remember anything? You know, the Miners' Union Hall in '14 or anything like that? Or, he was pretty young. How about the war and the flu? You know, it's 100 years this year. Yeah, did he recall that?

Killoy: Yeah. I think one of his brothers died from it.

Jaap: Yeah, we're doing some research on it. A thousand people in Butte died.

Killoy: Oh, yeah, yeah. His young brother died from it. But they didn't really talk about it.

Jaap: How about your mom's side then? When was your mom born?

Killoy: 1907.

Jaap: And so she worked in Hennessy's and worked in stores. What else about her, the Lebanese side?

Killoy: Well, she worked for their dad for a while. And then, women, once they got married, they couldn't work. So but until then, she worked for her dad. And then when she got married, then she had to quit work.

Jaap: What year were your parents married?

Killoy: 1935.

Jaap: So the rugs, did they make them by hand or did they just import?

Killoy: My grandfather would go on these trips to New York and they'd pick them up there. Buy them there and have them shipped out. My mom went with them a couple of times. It took them four or five days on the train to go to New York. Yeah. And then he did that and then he closed the store and then he went to work for Hennessy's and he ran their bread department.

Jaap: Oh, okay. Interesting. Your parents were married in '35. When were you born, Jim?

Killoy: 40.

Jaap: 1940. Are you the oldest?

Killoy: No. My brother, he was born in '37.

Jaap: All right, so you're born in 1940. Where were you born at? Where did you grow up? Where's your house?

Killoy: I was born right down the street in that parking lot there.

Jaap: In the Murray Hospital.

Killoy: Yeah, I tell my grandkids that. I was born in a parking lot.

Jaap: And they look at you and say, "What?" And where was your family home?

Killoy: On Copper Street. The 900 block of Copper Street. Went to the IC school. Graduated from there and then went to Butte high. And then went to work for the company.

Jaap: Did you go right out of high school, went and worked for the company?

Killoy: Yeah.

Jaap: Where did you start?

Killoy: I started at BA&P. Gandy Dancer.

Jaap: Tell us what a Gandy Dancer is.

Killoy: Well, I worked for Ellen's dad. Well, her dad was the big boss. I worked for his brother. And he was the foreman of the crew. So that's who I worked with. Yeah, you put ties in. Change rails. We were all over the hill.
Jaap: Interesting. And then what did you do after?

Killoy: Then I got an apprenticeship down at the Berkeley garage. Diesel mechanic. Served a four-year apprenticeship. And then I just worked there till it closed. And then I worked in construction all over. Wherever there were jobs.

Jaap: So when did you start working?

Killoy: 1958.

Jaap: Did you go underground?

Killoy: Oh, yeah.

Jaap: Tell me a little bit about what that's like.

Killoy: Well, I wasn't down there a lot. Probably about six months total. When I was a mechanic, we went down and worked on some of the diesel equipment they had down there. They started in the later years doing diesel loaders. So I worked there. I worked at LHD. Do you know what that is?

Jaap: Tell me.

Killoy: The Load Hauling Dump. And what they did is they drove two big drifts in the side of the pit and they mined the old Anaconda, St Laurence and Neversweat areas that were left. And they did it with diesel loaders, diesel drills. It was. And they pulled a lot of rock out and they trammed it out with the loaders. They were big. They were big loaders. They weren't very high, but they were about as long as this room. Then I went back to the pit.

Jaap: So when you started were people still in Meaderville?

Killoy: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Mm hmm.

Jaap: We've asked everyone this: When you were working, did you think of people moving out? Did you just keep your work as your work or did you? Was it hard when you see these neighborhoods kind of being torn apart?

Killoy: No. Because mine wasn't. I lived up on the Westside. No. Every time we'd go to work, there were less buildings there. And pretty soon there was nothing but foundations. I took a picture of Main Street of Meaderville, and I showed it to everybody and nobody knows where it is. Because the Leonard mine is there in the rain, but no other buildings. And the street is dirt. They dug it up. And it's a pretty neat picture.

Jaap: Oh, yeah, yeah. So you didn't think too much of it, though, when you were . . .That's kind of been the general consensus between everyone. It was your job, right?

Killoy: Yeah.

Jaap: So when you were growing up, what did you do for fun growing up? What did you do as a kid? Did you go to theaters? Did you?

Killoy: Yeah, we went to the show. We'd go every Saturday. They had these continuation shows. Just when it was getting good. The guy fell off the cliff. "To be continued." So we go back the next week.

Jaap: Yeah, and where did you usually watch those at? What theater? Was there a certain theater you always went to?

Killoy: Well, we went to all of them. We went to the Park and the Rialto and the Montanan and the Bowl or the Fox or whatever you want to call it. And we could get in for a dime. You get a quarter, you go to the show, you get in the show and get a pop and a candy bar. So two bits.

Jaap: What else growing up? What did you do as a kid?

Killoy: In school, we played sports.

Jaap: Did you play sports?

Killoy: Yes. Football, basketball, track. That's about it.

Jaap: That's about it. Sure. That's all there is to it. Right?

Killoy: Yeah.

Jaap: So tell me a little more about mining. I mean, I know you're a wealth of knowledge when it comes to mining. I mean, your name is thrown out all the time. I'm sure you know that. I know Jim McCarthy is always running stuff to you.

Killoy: Yeah. He's always coming over with pictures.

Jaap: Have you always taken an interest in history?

Killoy: Yeah. Butte history buff. 45 years of it. I got in with Al Hooper. Years and years. About 45 years ago. I was doing it myself at first. And then somebody told me about Al. And then we would collect them together. And then they asked us to go up and look at the museum. Anything we could do with their pictures. They were all in boxes in their big room. So we did. We started numbering them and copying them. I've been doing that ever since.

Jaap: You just know so much.

Killoy: Yeah. A lot of years. Then every time I'd get a picture of a mine, I'd want to know what it was. I'd go to this engineer that was the head of the pit and I'd ask him if he could get me a map of the area where the picture was and he'd say, "Oh, come on." And he'd take me up to the Hennessy building on the fourth floor where the engineers were and he'd go, "Get this area." Then they'd print it out, give it to me. I'd go home and then I'd find the shaft. So I did this about

four times and finally he says, "You're getting to be a big pain. So come on, let's go." So we drove up there and he told the guy, print every one of them. And the guy said, "Well, who's paying for this?" He said, "The Pit is. Just print them." So I had every area in town. And I looked at them 5000 times a day.

[00:17:50]

Jaap: And what did those have? Just where shafts were on them?

Killoy: It had the street, you know, and it had all the original shafts and all the names of them. They were pretty good. And I used them for all them years. And then I gave them to Jim McCarthy.

Jaap: What were those maps called?

Killoy: It was just the engineering. Yeah. They were official maps that they drew up and they had everything on there. They were real good. So Jim has them now.

Jaap: Jim's pretty good. With our pictures, he's getting us in order.

Killoy: Yeah, he's learning real good.

Jaap: Yeah. You're teaching him. So were you a union member when you were working?

Killoy: Oh yeah. The Machinists Union.

Jaap: How about strikes for you? That 59 strike?

Killoy: Yeah. I worked 28 years for the company. And in 28 years with the company, I was out 28 months on strike.

Jaap: Wow.

Killoy: And that don't count Wildcats. And we had a lot of them. They were usually one day.

Jaap: And tell us what a wildcat strike is.

Killoy: It was just a no contract strike. Somebody'd get mad and they'd just walk off the job. Put a picket sign up.

Jaap: And did those happen pretty often?

Killoy: They did then. They don't now. They didn't at the end.

Jaap: So, 28 months in 28 years, you were out. You were on strike. What would you do during the strikes?

Killoy: Go looking for work. Yeah, I worked in Portland. I worked in Wyoming. Idaho.

Jaap: Other mining type jobs?

Killoy: No, I was working in truck shops. Then I worked construction down in Wyoming and Idaho.

Jaap: Was that pretty common? Did a lot of people leave during the strikes?

Killoy: Well, yes. A lot of people did. A lot that didn't. You never knew how long they were going to last.

Jaap: How did people feel about that? They are on strike, but you're going elsewhere to work. Did people care?

Killoy: You know, we never had a strike in this town unless the Company wanted it. Did you know that? We never had a strike when the price of copper was good. OK, never. We always had a strike when the price was in the dumps. And that's when we'd go on strike. I'll let you figure the rest of that out.

Jaap: Interesting.

Killoy: So anyhow, we didn't think much of the strikes either.

Jaap: No, no, because there are a lot in that timeframe.

Killoy: Oh, yeah. Nine months. '67. Nine months. '59. Six months. Yeah, and then you get a nickel raise and you come back and you lost, you never regained it.

Jaap: Was that your opinion on it? Did you ever think the strikes were worth it?

Killoy: No. I didn't. A lot of people did.

Jaap: So when did you quit working for the Company? Was it when they shut down?

Killoy: When they shut down.

Jaap: Tell me a little bit about that. Could you see the end coming for the Company?

Killoy: Kinda. Yeah. They kept closing everything down. And they shut the pumps off to the mines. So you knew they weren't gonna open back up. And then they closed the Berkeley down. And they were only running the East Continental Pit and they were only running one shovel and six trucks.

Jaap: Okay. So pretty small.

Killoy: So, you know, you didn't see much future there. They finally said they couldn't make it. We were at the meeting when they told us they were closing down. A guy says, a boss, "Yeah, what do you want?" He said, "Well, it's been running 125 years and everybody else seemed to make it. What's wrong with you guys? Can't you run the place good?"

Jaap: What was the response to that?

Killoy: I thought, well, you're not going to get hired back.

Jaap: You're probably not first on the list. Did they respond to that in any way?

Killoy: No, they didn't say anything.

Jaap: Because they let people go in kind of ways. Were you kind of one of the last ones to go?

Killoy: Yeah.

Jaap: Did you think it was the end?

Killoy: Well, no, I didn't think it was the end. I knew they'd probably start up again. They had a lot of copper and they had that moly [molybdenum] in the east pit, you know. So they were just waiting for somebody else to run it. You know, Anaconda, they were a big company. They had big offices. New York, Denver, L.A.. And then they had mines all over. And then towards the end, you could see all they had going for them was the Berkeley Pit. And it's kind of hard to pay all them offices and all them big shots when you only got one mine running.

Jaap: It stretched a little too thin.

Killoy: I think so.

Jaap: What did you think when they shut the pumps off? Did you have an opinion about that?

Killoy: Yeah, I just thought it was dumb. I think if they were still running, they wouldn't have all those water problems.

Jaap: Yeah. And I saw a thing in the paper, something that said to the effect of, "Well, we could always turn them back on, if we ever wanted to."

Killoy: Well, you can't turn them back on. You can't get to them. They're still down there, though. But you can pump it out. They pumped the Pit out. They're going to mine again. There's lots of ore down there. I worked every Friday the last six months. They drove a big drift in the pit all the way to the Gardens. And they went through the old [inaudible] country, up through there. And then they diamond drilled. What they do is they go in at one hundred feet, one hundred feet and they put a crosscut in and they put a drill in there. Then they do that on the other side in between the hundred. And then drill down, up sideways every way. They hit more good ore in there. All this was supposed to be mined out. And the boss that was the head of the drilling program, he wanted to underground mine it. And they said, "No, leave it for the pit." [Inaudible] down level, he, that boss, he, they diamond drilled down on the 4600 and the Steward all through. They found lots. Lots of moly too. They only hit the molly, the handle of the molly dome.

Jaap: Oh, really?

Killoy: Yeah. Down on the Steward. They hit molly down there. But in them days when they hit the molly, they just threw it for waste. So did the Pit, when they first opened the East Pit, they had no molly plant and it was waste.

Jaap: And then they went back and mined all of that, didn't they?

Killoy: No, they didn't remine it. They just built a molly plant and started shipping what they were mining over there. You ever seen molly?

Jaap: I don't know if I have ever actually seen it.

Killoy: You ever seen the molly plant?

Grant: I've been to the concentrator here and the floatation unit and stuff.

Killoy: The molly plant, them guys working there, they're black. It's like grease. You can grab the rock and rub it and your hand is all black.

Jaap: I didn't know that.

Killoy: But then if you see it on the ground, it just looks like a rock.

Jaap: So you brought in, since we're talking about rocks, that gem. That's calcacite?

Killoy: Yeah, that's calcacite.

Jaap: And I thought that was really interesting what you said about the purity of it.

Killoy: Oh, how pure it is? 70 percent. Yeah, it's the highest grade copper in Butte.

Jaap: So it was 70 percent copper. And what is generally, though?

Killoy: Now when they mined it, they don't get 70 percent. When you take a vein out, you get lots of dirt with it that's not any good. So underground mines was anywhere from four to maybe seven percent. And the Berkeley pit was like .05.

Jaap: Because there was so much more waste with it.

Killoy: That's the Copper Glands. That's its nickname, the Copper Glands. All the copper in Butte is the same. This geologist said, if you want to know how come you got different coppers in Butte, take a pitcher of water, take eight shot glasses, put a teaspoon of salt in one, dump it in and a teaspoon of pepper and dump it in, and then mix it all up and then pour it into the eight glasses. And every one of them will have, this will have three percent salt, this will have eight percent, this one will have one percent salt and so on. They're all different. So that's where you get the different colors. And the different grades, because there's sulfur and copper. There's more sulfur and less copper. More copper, less sulfur. But when you melt them down, they're all the same.

Jaap: It's all salt and pepper at the end. Interesting.

[00:28:53]

Jaap: Clark, do you have any questions.

Grant: Did you ever work on those pumps, then?

Killoy: No, I never did.

Grant: They weren't diesel?

Killoy: In the Kelley? No, they're electric. They had eight big pumps down there, centrifugal. When you went down, they had them at 3900. And it was a big room. It was all cement. You'd never believe it, when you go down 3900 feet, you'd see a room like that.

Jaap: Sure.

Killoy: Yeah. It's like walking into a small civic center. But they're big and then they pumped. They replaced the High Ore. The High Ore used to have all the pumps and they had them big old pumps down there and they could only pump like a thousand feet so they would pump them from the 3900 to the 32, 32 to the 28, the 28 to the 20, and then they pumped to the 300. And then it went out a drift. And it come out right on the east side of the hill and then had the precip plant there. The old one. And then the Kelly, when they put them in, they pumped from the 3900 all the way up, straight up, all the way across the Anaconda road, and then up Anaconda road, to the top of the hill and then it went down and like sluice box, down to the precip plant.

Jaap: So it's just enormous, the pumps that they used.

Killoy: Yeah, they were big. So I don't know what kind of pumps they're going to use in the pit to pump the water for the creek. But I know just pumping the Kelly pumps, we got pictures of the water coming out of the pipes going into the box. Wouldn't make much creek.

The meandering creek, whatever they want. Creek. They were asking a bunch. And I said, "You ever see the creek before?" They says, "No." I said, "Well, it wasn't very nice." Do you guys ever remember seeing any of it? Or, you're too young? Yeah, that's what it was. It was that much deep on the sides and all the copper water and everything else. It was a mess. The only thing that kept us all from getting sick was the copper in the water. I think it killed all the bugs.

[00:31:42]

Jaap: That's interesting. So how do you feel about the efforts then with the pit - the pumping - what's your take on all of this?

Killoy: Well, you know, at one time when the pit first cut into the creek, they were out in it. They took that water coming down and didn't run it into the creek where they were working it. And they blacktopped. They went down Hayes Street, ran alongside of it. They had blacktopped the ditch and they ran the water, ran right back in the creek. And it was good water. Flows right out of the Junction Canyon, whatever it's called up there. And I thought, why don't they take pipe

and go up there and take that water and run it down the pipe. Instead of trying to do all this other stuff. I don't know. How clean do you think the water will be coming out of the pit.

Jaap: I don't know. I don't know if I can imagine.

Grant: It's going to be expensive.

Jaap: I guess my kicker with it is the in-perpetuity thing. I think anything can be worked for a length of time. But I think to say something has to be done forever. That is a tall order.

Grant: There's some vanity there. Assuming that we will be here forever.

Killoy: Forever. Well, yeah. Because no matter what you do, even if you drained the dang thing and went underground mining again, you've still got all that mine water. It's gotta go somewhere.

Grant: Do you feel a sense of loss considering all those tunnels are flooded?

Killoy: Yeah, but that just holds the ground. That's good. That's what they used to always do.

Jaap: When they were done?

Killoy: They used to bulkhead them, you know, and flood them and it would hold the ground. So when they wanted to mine again, they drained them and they could go right in and start mining again. If they left them, the ground of Butte is not the best. Stuff would start sloughing off. If these mines were all left dry and you went back down, it'd take you forever to open up everything. Where with the water in there, it probably holds them pretty good.

Grant: I guess I just have a sense that it's all these people of your generation that spent so much time down there and so much effort and now it is just forever blocked off.

Killoy: Yeah. Well, you know, I went down the Badger on the 900 and the 1000 and they had, you could go back into the drift and then they had a big bulkhead there and it was full of water behind the bulkhead because they had a spigot there. And I thought well if the damn thing ever broke, you'd get washed right out. But they had about 100 of these little one-ton ore cars in there. Everybody wanted to buy them dang things. I said to the guy on the cage, "Can't you bring a few of them up?" He said, "Oh, no. They told us if we bring anything up, they'd fire us."

Jaap: So they just bulkheaded the ore cars and everything down there?

Killoy: Everything. They're under water now.

Grant: How much equipment is under water, would you guess?

Killoy: Quite a bit. Well, you know what they did, Arco did, put a new cave block at the 20. They just got it done.

Jaap: What's a cave block?

Killoy: It's a different type of mining. And that's what the Kelly mine started out as. They had a cave block on the 600 and the 1300 and they caved. And what they do is they get a block maybe, I don't know, one or two hundred feet square and they go underneath and they drive in and they put all these finger raises in and slusher lay underneath it. And then after they get it all set up and then they've got these tunnels like that go underneath it and they can bring the trains in under the cave block and then they can load the cars out of about four or five different chutes, you know.

And they could bring three or four trains in at a time. And they cave blocked that way until they kicked the 600 cave block, caved all the way to the surface. And if you ever see any pictures where the St. Lawrence Mine was on East Broadway, you could see where it all sloughed. Everybody that it was the pit. Well, it wasn't. It was the Kelly cave block. And then when they emptied the both of them, then they shut them down. Then they went back to conventional mining. So ARCO, then they put in a cave block on that and it cost them like 30 to 60 million dollars. And it's all done. All cemented. Then they shut the underground down, flooded the mine.

Grant: So it would have been a 600 foot deep hole?

Killoy: Yeah, big caves. The only thing is the cave zone was kind of like pit rock, was low grade. The Kelly used to pull, you know, the average mine like the Steward or the Con, they'd pulled four or five hundred ton in a day. And the Kelly was pulling 18,000 on the 600, when they were running the six. And they would hoist, they had 14 ton skips. And they would hoist, from the time they dropped the cage down the shaft, loaded it down, skip locked it, brought it up and dumped it. 58 seconds.

Grant: What?

Jaap: Really?

Killoy: Yeah, it was a pretty good organization there. But. Then they went to the 1300. They went down to 14-ton skips, loaded it, went to hoist it, almost pulled the gallows frame over. Did you ever see that gallows frame? Big.

Jaap: That's amazing.

Killoy: They had to take the cages off and they had to take them down to the Parrot and make them smaller. And then they could go back and start pulling. Yeah.

Grant: Did your dad live to see these new innovations?

Killoy: Yeah, my dad worked at the Kelley when they first started. They were running experimental cave blocks at the Badger. And he was up there working, and then in the 50s when they got the Kelly going, they all came down and that's where they worked, in the Kelly. He stayed there until they had that one strike and then when the strike was over, he went down to the Berkeley in the parts room for one year and then he retired.

Grant: Did he dislike the pit?

Killoy: No, he liked that job. Nice and clean. Yeah. Didn't have to go down the mine.

Jaap: He saw a lot of advancements.

Killoy: Well, he did. He saw it all. He started at the Diamond mine in '21, '22 something like that. And they had carbide lamps. And he said some of the levels still had mules. Some had [inaudible] motors on different levels. He said the first day he climbed up in a stope with the carbide lamp, you know, you climb up like this. Well, the damn thing shoots flame out about that long. Then the miner he was with, he didn't tell him nothing. He just let him go. He burned the back of his hand. So he said, "You're going to learn real fast."

Grant: Did he have any near-death experiences down there?

Killoy: No. Broke his leg. Chopped his thumb off. They sewed it back on, but it didn't work. It was always just like white. Especially, when he was cold.

Grant: How did he break his leg?

Killoy: They were on a motor and they come around the corner and they ran into another thing that was on the track and stopped dead.

Grant: How did he feel about you going into the same line of work?

Killoy: He didn't. There wasn't a lot of work around Butte that paid the money they paid. So. If you didn't want to go to college . . . I tried that for a little while.

Jaap: Did you? Where did you try that?

Killoy: Tech. School of mines.

Jaap: Didn't work out, though?

Killoy: No. I'm not the studious type.

Grant: Did you go to bars?

Killoy: I never was much of a drinker. No, I didn't really hang out in bars.

Grant: So if you're not studious and you're not drinking, what are you doing after work?

Killoy: Well, had a wife and three girls. So, I was busy.

Jaap: You had your hands full. When did you get married?

Killoy: In '62.

Jaap: And you have three girls?

Killoy: I do. Yeah.

Jaap: Are they here? Are they in town?

Killoy: Well, one works in Missoula. She's a professor at the college. And then my other daughter works at Tech. And my other daughter works for Harrington Surgical.

Jaap: So is your wife, the studious one? Is that where the professors came from?

[00:42:54]

Killoy: That's what everybody says. They didn't get from me.

Grant: I'm curious what differences do you see between like your parents' generation and your grandchildren's generation?

Killoy: Oh, yeah.

Grant: Do you think much about that?

Killoy: I don't think much about it, but it is a big difference. I just think. I don't know. Times are really different now. You know, you could not go to school and you could go get a pretty decent job and you could make a living. Where today, if you don't have education, I don't think you could make a very good living.

Jaap: No. And even sometimes I think it's hard for people.

Killoy: Yeah, yeah, but even some kids graduating college can't get decent jobs. You know. So I think you better go get something that's a pretty good education. Don't waste your time going to be an art major or something like that.

Grant: I don't know a lot of people my age that have any manufacturing experience, for instance, or things like mining. It just seems to me that . . .

Killoy: It's kind of a lost art.

Grant: Yeah.

Killoy: Yeah, well, it is. My brother's grandson, he's a miner, and his dad was a miner. But, you know, they didn't get to go learn it like they did here in Butte. A lot of guys took their sons to the mine and they worked with their dads or they learned it and stuff. But for him to go, he was down in that Stillwater mine. And they had a program down there for student miners and you just did it eight hours a day. There were trainings, you know. And then after so long, they put you in the mine. But them days, though, you didn't, you just went to work.

Jaap: Did your dad take you to the mine like that? Is that how?

Killoy: No, he didn't take me. Took my brother. I went on the railroad. And then when I went and got an apprenticeship at the Berkeley. I didn't have to.

Grant: Railroad has to be hard work.

Killoy: Oh, yeah, it was. It was hard. It was cold in the winter. And they had no place to go. You were out the whole day except for lunch. You tried to go into one of the mine yards and go in the dry. Eat lunch in the dries. Should of went down the mines. You could get real warm.

Jaap: Real warm. Yeah.

Killoy: Did you ever hear how hot they were?

Grant: Only a little bit.

Killoy: Well, that Steward, you got off at the 45. It's like a 120 degrees, 100 percent humidity. And the water was 165 degrees. And it would drip on them miners. I'm telling you, I don't know how they did it.

Jaap: Did they have to go out in shifts?

Killoy: Eight hours.

Jaap: So they were down there. And were they eating their lunch down there?

Killoy: They ate their lunch right where they worked.

Jaap: How did they do it?

Killoy: It was tough. They passed out. It was rough. There was a miner I knew, he'd get out of the Steward and then they had to have somebody drive him home. He couldn't drive his car. He'd say, "I'm going to go home and drink two gallons of beer and a good shake."

Jaap: I love it.

Grant: So that kind of commitment, do you think the company rewarded people appropriately?

Killoy: No. Well, they paid their contract miners pretty good. And, you know, they didn't have a set fee for contract miners. A lot of mine bosses would tell these guys, "I put you in this stope here. It's kind of rough. It's not good. But I'll pay you better." You know. So a lot of times they all got different pay.

Jaap: So they could fluctuate that?

Killoy: Yeah.

Jaap: Could contract miners demand higher wages?

Killoy: They made higher wages. They make good money.

Jaap: If they felt they still were making enough though. Was there ever anything like that?

Killoy: What?

Jaap: That they, like, striked or anything?

Killoy: Oh, no. They were the same union, everybody. You know, if they got a raise, they got a raise for base pay. But they didn't ever make base pay. They always made a lot more. Well, they should; they earned it.

This one guy I worked with on construction sites. He said, "Ah, lumberjack is the toughest job in the world." And I said, "Well, I won't argue with you because I've never been a lumberjack. But I'll tell you what, I'll take you down to the Steward mine. I'll bring you a lawn chair, a gallon of lemonade and a book. And you just sit down there on the station for eight hours. Just sit there. You don't have to work." I says, "When you come up at the end of the shift, you tell me what you think is the hardest job."

Jaap: Yeah, you go introduce him to that guy who is going home and drinking two gallons of beer.

Killoy: And then you got off on the 44 and you couldn't see this far. It was foggy.

Jaap: I can't imagine. That's interesting. I guess I assumed there were some type of safety rules about heat exhaustion, you know.

Killoy: No. No safety rules. That's why they paid them so much to be down there and do what they did. That was tough.

Grant: People talk about the 10,000 miles of tunnels underground. That's a number that is always thrown out by tour guides. Are the majority of those drifts?

Killoy: Well, no, it's stopes. Everybody thinks you mine out of a drift. It's a way to get to the ore. That's all. If you're lucky enough to cross some ore when you're driving it, that's nice. But when you go in, they know where the veins are. You know where they drilled it. And so then you raise up on it and you raise up on it at 100 feet. The vein is like this. You come up here and up here and then you put a man way in and a rock slide. You make one opening and you divide it with timbers. One side is a rock slide or chute. And then you put a door down in the bowl. And then when the trains come in and they open the door, because they dumped the ore down the chute.

Jaap: They are always coming from below?

Killoy: The ore, yeah, the ore always goes down into the cars. Yeah.

And what was really weird was when they put them diesel loaders in the Kelly. You'd be walking down this drift and there'd be an opening for a man way to go up, you know, and you go up there about 50 feet. You're climbing up into a hole 50 feet up.

Grant: A ladder?

Killoy: Yeah. And you get up there and there's this big diesel loader sitting there. How did that thing get up here? If you've never been in the mine, if you saw that, you wouldn't believe it. But what they did is they ramped up off of the drift. They dug in and then ramped up seven feet. And

then they mined into the vein and then they backfilled and they put a tube. And the man ways weren't like they used to be. The man ways used to go up the ladder. Seven feet. Go cross an opening like this and then go up seven feet and over. So if stuff fell down, it wouldn't hit you on the head. These were just a corrugated pipe. Straight up. The ladder hooked to it. You climbed straight up and then that's what their chute was too. A big round corrugated chute. And then the loader would come over and you'd dump it down.

Jaap: But they didn't know that safety precaution of every few feet having a . . .

Killoy: Oh, not on the man way, no. No. And then at the Kelly at the end they were paying them by the ton. Miners always get paid for every stall they put in, for every rock bolt they put in, for every timber they had to put in, [inaudible]. Then they quit. They just paid them by the ton. And a lot of them miners, they'd just bar down, they were just making money. So a lot of it wasn't the safest.

Jaap: Did that result in a lot higher rate of accidents, do you know?

Killoy: Well, I don't know if they had any more accidents. But they could have.

Grant: How did these guys communicate underground? They're going to be dropping rock down the chute. There was a guy that just came on shift. He wants to go up there.

Killoy: Oh, no, the chute don't have anything to do with the man chute. That's separate. There's no communications. And then if they drop rock down a chute, they'll go out on the drift. It's caught there. They got a door. And then when the train comes, pulls underneath that, they open the door and fill the car. Yeah.

Grant: What would you say was the most dangerous point of the process? Where did the most people get injured or die?

Killoy: Well, as soon as they blast and go back in. They got to count their rounds. If you don't and there's one left, and you start mucking into it - Boom. And then falling ground. Loose rock. They used to timber in the old days. Then they quit timbering, then they used rock bolts. So what they had to do is put a big bar underneath a big slab to hold it up. And he had to stand underneath it and drill a hole right through it until he got into solid ground. And then they put a big plate up there and then it would have an expander on it that opened in the hole like that. And then they tightened it and now it would hold the slab. Better make sure you get in solid ground.

Jaap: That seems like it would be awfully dangerous, just drilling into it as well.

Grant: You're saying people do that without barring down?

Killoy: Well, yeah, some of them were at the end.

Grant: When it's about tonnage.

Killoy: Yes. Getting tons out.

[00:55:09]

Jaap: Can you recall any accidents in your time, maybe that you weren't there, but do you know anyone who...

Killoy: Oh, I seen guys in the shop get hurt. Not bad. I saw a guy that was under a cat. There's a belly plate under a cat so that the boulders and everything don't hit the engine. And he was taking it down, and he left a couple of bolts in. And he shook the last bolt out here. Well, the bolts over there were broken off inside. Didn't know it. And the belly pate fell down on top of him. The only thing is there was something on this side. So when it come down, it come down like this. So he got banged up pretty good, but he didn't get squished, because it weighs about three ton.

There was a guy that was a dump [driver]. They used to have a lot of old miners that would come to the dumps and back the trucks up when they dumped. And I don't know if he was watching somebody else or doing something. The truck backed up and ran right over him. And then they couldn't find him.

Jaap: Someone else told us the same story, yeah.

Killoy: He was stuck up in the tire tread.

Jaap: Oh my god.

Killoy: And he's driving around with him.

Jaap: That's terrible.

Grant: Very gruesome. When you talk about the strikes corresponding with the price of copper. Are you suggesting that union leadership would collude with the company?

Killoy: I don't know. Not our unions here. Big shots back in New York. That's [hand gesture]. You can erase that part.

[00:57:20]

Jaap: Do you think, in your opinion, were the unions a little too? What's the word I'm looking for? Maybe aggressive? Do you think that had to do anything with the company? Do you think the company was going to shut down regardless? Do you think the union had anything to do with it?

Killoy: Nothing. No. Because when they opened back up, they paid more than they did with the union guys. Yeah, they gave them profit sharing and they were making a lot of money down in that pit.

Jaap: After the closure, what did you do, Jim?

Killoy: I went to work for his construction company out of Billings. We put fiber-optics in. And I ran a Cat. A ripper Cat and I plowed. Pre-ripped and then backup. We'd hook on to the other

Cat that had the reel on it and away we go. And we put them everywhere. Up a mountain, down a mountain. We did them down through Cody, Wyoming, Red Lodge and. Idaho. We were in Idaho, Sun Valley from Ketchum all the way down to Boise. It was a good job.

Jaap: Did your family stay here? Did they move?

Killoy: Stay here.

Jaap: Did your wife work during this time?

Killoy: Yeah, she went to work after I got laid off. She worked at Dr. Rosen's office as a receptionist.

Jaap: How old were your kids at that time? Were they young still?

Killoy: When they closed? No, they were all gone. No, I had one. My youngest daughter, she was going to Tech then.

Jaap: So you didn't have any little kids in the house?

Killoy: No.

Jaap: So on a totally shifted direction. So your mom's side is Lebanese. Did you do any Lebanese traditions or anything?

Killoy: Well, I cooked all the dinners.

Jaap: Did you cook all the dinners?

Killoy: Yeah.

Jaap: What was your favorite meal?

Killoy: Do you know any of them? The lubi?

Jaap: What's that?

Killoy: The lubi? Beans and rice.

Jaap: Beans and rice is your favorite?

Killoy: Or kibbie.

Jaap: What's kibbie? I've heard of that.

Killoy: It's like a meatloaf. Yeah, yeah, there's tabouli. That's good. I think most people like tabouli. And cabbage rolls.

Grant: Is your house still standing?

Killoy: It is. And this guy I know that bought it. We haven't been near it in 30, 40 years, you know. But anyway, he bought the house and he was fixing it up, because he rents it to Tech students. So he was just about done fixing it. So he said, "You guys want to see it?" So he gave us the key. We went up. They had dug all of the grass out of the back yard and in the garage. And I said, "Are you going to put in a new garage?" He said, "I didn't tear it out." He said, what's the organization that checks the dirt for . . . Well, anyway, they went and checked and all of the grass was full of arsenic. The garage was too. So they tore it up and put the new sod in. And then in front of the house, I said, "How come they didn't put sod in the front?" He said, "They put gravel." But he lucked out pretty good. Because he was gonna tear them down.

Jaap: Were they going to rebuild his garage or did he not want his garage?

Killoy: No, he don't have a garage. He rents it to Tech students. They'd destroy it anyway.

Jaap: Was it hard seeing your home different or did you care?

Killoy: No. I used to always go up and look at it. It just kind of went to pot. Grass. Never cut the grass, just weeds. The bushes in the front were over the windows.

Jaap: Yeah. Rentals.

Killoy: Pretty bad. The whole neighborhood. Used to be nice up there. They weren't beautiful, but they were all kept up. Painted, you know, and grass was cut. Not now.

Grant: What changed?

Killoy: I think most of the people that lived up there passed on or moved out. And these people buy them and they rent them to kids to go to school. Because it's only about four blocks from the school. And then kids don't take care much.

Grant: Like you say, you were born in a parking lot.

Killoy: That that's no lie. My kids, "What? You were born in a parking lot?" I says, "Yep." And then there was the jail across the street.

Grant: There's a lot of parking lots uptown.

Killoy: Oh yeah, a lot of them now. And there's still no place to park. Well, we do. We have a parking garage.

Jaap: Have you parked in there yet?

Killoy: No.

Jaap: Me neither.

Killoy: No. I don't go shopping.

Jaap: So do you remember any of the fires.

Killoy: Any of them?

Jaap: Or all of them?

Killoy: Probably all of them.

Jaap: Do any stick in your mind?

Killoy: Well, Penny's. My mom was working there when it burned.

Jaap: Was she?

Killoy: Yeah. And then after it burned, they bought up about six stores in uptown. You know where the Party Palace is? That used to be a drug store when they built it. And so they moved in there, one department. And then my mom was down, you know where Kavanagh's is at? They moved in there. Then they moved into another store across the street near where the five and dime was. And they were in there. Well, they had like four or five stores just to replace the one. And then they bought that place out on Harrison. And then they finally went out there. But I remember that one good. That was a big one.

Jaap: That was a bad loss because it took the Clark Hotel too.

Grant: How long did it stand after it burned?

Killoy: They started mucking it up pretty fast. They had to do something. Bricks all over the place. I remember one fire. The Butte Hotel. That wall fell down on the street, dang near. That was a big hotel. Right there where the parking garage is. The first one.

Jaap: On Broadway.

Killoy: Yeah.

Killoy: Then the American theater. Park theater. I don't know why this town had bad . . .I give the slide show and all the buildings. People say, "Where did that go?" I say, "It burned." "Where did that go?" "It burned." This lady said to me, "Did everything in this town burn?" I said, "Pretty close."

Grant: Who burned them?

Killoy: I have no idea.

Grant: Come on.

Killoy: Everybody used to think it was the Company trying to get everybody out of uptown because they tried to buy them all out, you know.

Jaap: There was that Model Cities program going on.

Killoy: Well, I don't know. The Company just wanted them out. Everything. And then they were going to mine through here.

Grant: And that's a fact.

Killoy: Yeah. But they wouldn't move. Because they were gonna build them a mall out there. Not that mall that's there. But they were going to build a new one and move everybody out.

Jaap: And redevelop like the Stodden Park area. Is that correct?

Killoy: Yeah. Somewhere around there.

Grant: That was a serious plan.

Killoy: Yeah. But it didn't happen. Nobody would leave. Well, it's good.

Jaap: Yeah. Can you imagine if that did happen?

Killoy: If this all was gone?

Jaap: Yeah. We wouldn't be here today, I don't think.

Killoy: No.

Grant: It stands to reason then the Company probably didn't burn them. More like the building owners were trying to cash in on insurance.

Killoy: Maybe. I don't know. But you'd get thrown in jail for saying that.

Jaap: We can restrict whatever you want Jim. You say whatever you want. So what did you think? So, you know, the mines are shutting down and years prior there's all these fires in uptown. Butte is burning. What did you think? Like, what's happening to my home? Or did you ever have a doubt?

Killoy: I didn't think much of it at the time? Then there was this group that started the Butte Historical Society. So we went up to a couple meetings. Boy, they thought mining was terrible. They wanted to close all the mining down. So one day they were talking and I said, "Oh, did you hear about the new mining plan?" And they said, "What?" And I said, "They're going to build a new cave block right under Park and Main." And they said, "What? What will that do?" I said, "It'll cave the whole uptown in." "Oh, they can't do that!" I said, "Yeah, they are." And then I got up and left.

Jaap: Did you get some phone calls later about that?

Killoy: No, I didn't get nothing.

Jaap: I can only imagine what was said after you left.

Killoy: Oh, I know.

Grant: I kind of feel like the Restore Our Creek is misdirected and they should just build a giant sluice box down there. So every time it rains, you make money.

Killoy: Oh yeah.

Jaap: What about the balance of . . . do you think Butte has a hard time with . . . OK. We want to preserve, you know, its historical integrity, but also not wanting to change. Do you think we're stuck in a weird . . .

Killoy: Do you know what's wrong? I know for a fact that when people come in like doctors and people want to go to school here and do stuff, you come in and you look at Butte. And it don't offer much. Not for kids. It's old. All the buildings are all deserted up in the top part. The windows are broke out of them. The houses are, half of them are falling down. So it's not a good environment for . . . you can go to Bozeman. It's a nice town. Go to Missoula, it's a nice town. And then Butte, it's not a nice town.

If you were born and raised here, you think it's all right.

Jaap: Or if you take some time to get to love it.

Killoy: But if you just come in and look at it. Like that Dr. Silver, he was your dentist and he said he was on the committee getting doctors in. And he said, they fly in and they pick them up and they'd be driving uptown and the wives would say, "No way."

Jaap: I've heard that. Yeah. They were going to come but then . . .

Grant: Was it ever nice?

Killoy: Butte? We thought it was. You know, the uptown when I was a kid, it was all uptown. All the buildings were departments. They were hotels, apartment buildings, and everything was full. There were stores in everything. Theaters. Big department stores. We had Hennessy's and Burrs and Penny's. Now, we don't have a department store. So if you want to go shopping for Christmas, you've got to go to Missoula or Bozeman or Helena. Helena isn't that much bigger than Butte is. Is it?

Jaap: No. Population wise, it's really not.

Killoy: And look at all the stores they have. We were there yesterday. They got every store you want.

Jaap: Every time we go to Helena there's something new.

Grant: Someone told me once there was a time in Butte when you could buy shoes at 4:00 in the morning.

Killoy: Oh yeah? I never did.

Grant: Sometimes you needed shoes.

Killoy: Yeah. Probably.

Jaap: Depends who you're buying them off of.

Killoy: I know you could get booze any time you wanted.

Grant: Maybe it was booze, not shoes.

Killoy: Yeah. Maybe that's what it was. There was that old bet that if you could drink a beer in every saloon from the Pacific to the Atlantic, you were a good man. There's about 50 bars between there and there.

Grant: Do you think Butte's decline is over?

Killoy: Oh, yeah, I do. I think we're kind of stable. And if they could get some businesses, a few department stores, one department store even would be nice. You know, everybody says, "This will bring people into town. They could go shopping." Where are they going to go shopping?

Grant: What do you think about local smaller stores?

Killoy: Yeah, it would be nice.

Jaap: I always feel like there is a balance there, you know, you need some big stores to bring in some people and then . . .

Killoy: You do and then you get better prices at big stores.

Jaap: I always feel like if you have a healthy balance of both. Jim is there anything else you want to share with us before we . . .?

Killoy: Oh, I don't think so.

Jaap: This has been really interesting.

Killoy: Now what are you going to do with this?

Jaap: It's just going to go in the archives.

Killoy: Then some day somebody will listen to it.

Grant: Tomorrow it will be front page news: Unions Collude with Company Says Jim.

Killoy: Yeah, "says Jim." Oh jeez, don't say that. Well, probably half the guys I worked with thought the same thing.

Grant: Especially the international unions. They always got guys pulling strings somewhere.

Killoy: Well, you know where their offices were in New York when the Company's were in New York and then they used to gather, go into lunch, drink martinis and "you give us six months

down, we'll get the price down here. Get her back up and then we'll give you 20 cents. Okay? "Okay."

Grant: Meanwhile, people in Butte are standing in line.

Killoy: Yeah. Soup kitchens. I mean, the old days, I don't think it was that way when the local unions ran it. They did what the guys wanted.

Grant: Yeah, like a union should.

Killoy: They did good. They got a lot of good stuff for the guys. But then it got bigger and bigger.

Grant: The radio station I work for is in the Carpenter's Union Hall. And so, you know, you're probably aware that there's a whole history there. That the 112, the local, that's one thing. But then they consolidated. There's a statewide local now, 82.

Killoy: Oh, yeah.

Grant: It has nothing to do with the guys who built that building or ran that building.

Killoy: No.

Grant: And they dissolved the 112. And then the International Carpenters Union, Pacific Northwest Regional Council, tried to assert ownership over the building and tear it down because it's a liability they said. Anyway, the Carpenters Union, I think, after they saw the Miners Union Hall get blown up, they put the building in the name of a private corporation.

Killoy: Oh, they did?

Grant: And that was back in the 20s. And so they proved that this corporation owns the building and always has and had nothing to do with International. So they couldn't take it. They couldn't tear it down. The carpenters were thinking ahead on that one.

Killoy: Yeah, I think anything when it keeps it local. I know you don't have as much clout. You think, well, the more we have, the bigger it is, the more clout you have, the better. You got a chance to get something. Sometimes, though, it don't work that way.

Grant: I don't really want any clout outside of . . .

Killoy: No, I think you leave it right here and solve your own problems.

Grant: Yeah.

Jaap: Yeah.

[END OF RECORDING]