THE VERDIGRIS PROJECT

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JIM MOYLE

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Oral History Transcript of Jim Moyle

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Aubrey Jaap: It's March 8, 2018. We're here with Jim Moyle. Jim, I want you to tell me, how did your family first come to Montana? Do you know?

Jim Moyle: Well, I know snippets of it. My great grandmother came from . . . actually, they settled first in Utah and then they moved up to Butte. And if I remember right, her husband was killed in a mine explosion early in the 1900's. So she had my grandmother and my two aunts on my mother's side. And she was quite interesting. She actually purchased a boarding house on East Park Street and it stayed in the family for a number of years. And then she purchased the house that I grew up in on Mercury Street and spent all my time there through high school. And I didn't have a chance to look at it too much.

Actually, we had talked about how it was part of a mining company at the time, and I found what I thought was the deed of title going back to when my great grandmother had this property. And I looked the other day and I haven't researched it too much, but she was being sued by the mining company for back rent. But because she . . . and it's like a litigation procedure. And I thought, OK, before I turned this into the archives, why I'm going to read through it. But yeah, that's how my great grandmother got here. My grandfather on my mom's side immigrated from Austria, a little place right on the Austria -Hungarian border and right at the time when the Austro-Hungarian war was going on. Shortly after that, he immigrated to Red Lodge, worked at the mines over there, eventually came to Butte, a larger mining operation.

My dad's grandparents and family - my grandfather's family was from Cornwall in England. My grandmother's was from Germany and they had settled in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, first, before they were married back there and moved to Butte. So that's how the family kind of migrated toward Butte at the time.

Jaap: And then tell me a little bit about your parents?

Moyle: My mom, well, my grandfather, Joe Novak, met my grandmother, Mamie Powers. And my mom was the third of four children. And they actually grew up around the Clark's Park area. My grandfather built a house down there and not putting words into his mouth, but I think he had gone through some things in the mine. My grandfather was a boiler maker and things. He had lived through an explosion at one of the mines and realized that, you know, it probably wasn't a long term sort of job. So he started Joe's Pasty shop down on Grand Avenue.

And again, he was kind of an entrepreneur because he was, as I remember, still had quite an Austrian-German accent, but picked up on the idea that all those Cornish miners just loved their pasties and wrote out a recipe for it and started this little business, you know, kind of catering to the English miners, basically. So even growing up, my mother always had a job there. You

know, it was the family business. I had a job there. All of my cousins worked there at one time. It stayed in the family, I think, 43 years or 44 years, something like that.

Jaap: And it just recently moved out of the family?

Moyle: Yeah, in about the mid 80s, it moved out of the family. So yeah, and then my grandfather, when they moved to Butte, he was an accountant for the Kelly and Alton Furniture Company, which was on East Park Street. And it's roughly where, might be the same building that Tony the Trader, Tony Canonica used to be in. His career was bookkeeping and accountancy and then my dad, actually, before going to the service and when he came back, he worked for a small company called Lyndy Air Company, and they supplied oxygen and acetylene to the mines, the hospitals, welders. So he spent 40 years plus working for Lyndy Air Company down there...

Jaap: So when were you born, Jim?

Moyle: I was born in September, 1954. September 24th, 1954. And I guess a little prior thought. I was thinking about the neighborhood I grew up in, and again, I said it was actually my great grandmother that purchased this property and it was at 449 East Mercury. And that's rough. That's exactly where the CCCS building is now on East Mercury Street. It's like a block and a half west of the Belmont Center, which was the Belmont mine at the time. But kind of the unique thing and one of the memories that I have when I was thinking about this, I went to Sacred Heart School, which was the Catholic school, and that was almost a straight shot up from my house on Park Street. So it was like less than half a block away.

The Grant School was a block and a half to the east. The Washington School was like a block or two blocks to the northwest a little bit. And I tried to remember - Sacred Heart at the time was not a large school. They had combined classes, but there were probably 130 - 140 students in there. Grant School was much bigger. Washington, which may have been a junior high at the time, that was a pretty good size. So within like a four, five block area there were five hundred kids. And in my recollection is we, and again, this house I grew up in was actually mining property at one time. So there was an old mining shed in the back that my dad put a basketball hoop on.

And literally you could walk out the back and dribble a basketball and you'd have enough for two full sized teams within ten minutes. People would just come down and, you know, you had subs that you had to . . . So, you know, the neat, unique part about that was there was just all this - there were all kinds of young people and there was just this opportunity for everybody to get together and you know, play basketball or ride bikes or explore mine dumps or anything like that. So, I think about that when I go past CCCS. How there's just . . .

Jaap: How different that area is now.

Moyle: How different that is. Where, you know, in the 60s it was just crawling with kids. You would always have somebody in your backyard and, you know, yelling at you to come out and play. And it was like a diverse hub, too, because there were definitely a ton of Irish people or

Irish kids. But it was also, you know, a lot of my best friends were Spanish, Mexican. And we just kind of all got along together.

Jaap: Yeah, you're right in the middle of a few different little cultural areas.

Moyle: Not quite in Dublin Gulch, but close enough and not quite in Finn town. But the Finn kids were there anyway.

Jaap: Did all the school kids intermingle then? There was no like . . . Was there any school, you know, "Don't cross that line"?

Moyle: You know, I do recollect a little feeling of that. That between the Sacred Heart School and the Grant School, there was like this certain boundary line I didn't go past to play with friends. And I would have to say the majority of kids I interacted with all went to the same school. And later on, there were some other kids from the Grant School and stuff. But there was a little bit of that territory sort of thing that you just didn't, you know, yeah, you could go to the Grant school or you could walk past it, but you didn't go to the playground because that was their turf. And they didn't come down.

Jaap: Were there any turf wars?

Moyle: I was kind of a chicken. I wasn't really involved in any. But I do remember.

Jaap: Were you a bystander?

Moyle: I was a bystander for a few of those that were just moreover, "What do you think you're doing in our neighborhood?" and things like that.

Jaap: And we looked at the East Sanborn. And so you grew up right next to a mine dump and a mine.

Moyle: Yes. And, well, we had talked about it before, but three doors to the west of where I grew up there was a mine dump and it was that yellow slag which incidentally, the playground areas for the Sacred Heart School were that yellow slag mine dump. But somebody had black topped them off and on during the course of the years. But you had this little stretch of blacktop, but then you dropped about eight feet off the end of this slippery, yellow mine slag sort of stuff. But the one next to where I grew up, that was like a little meeting ground. And it was large enough you could ride bikes on it and, you know, play catch or play a little football and stuff. But it was uncovered. It was just yellow slag. Mine waste.

And it was level with Galena Street. And then it dropped off to Mercury. And it was a great hill to ride your bike off because it probably dropped 14, 18 feet down to Mercury Street on a fairly good angle and stuff. And I think the last time, two or three months ago, the Sandborn maps, like you were saying, we found where the hoist house was. And I didn't realize at the time right where the mine dump was that's where the shaft was. So we found it on the Sanborn maps. Yeah,

it was right dead center of this mine dump. I didn't realize it. I knew there was a shaft around someplace, but I didn't realize it was right there on.

Jaap: Because that was pretty old, wasn't it?

Moyle: That was old. That was 1900's, 1920's. And I think, going back to the litigation papers I have, I think the mine was still active in the late teens or early 20s because I think this is dated to right around that time that they basically thought my great grandmother was a squatter on their property and they were demanding back rent. And it's getting pretty interesting.

Jaap: How did your grandmother react to this?

Moyle: You know, I haven't gotten into it yet, but I think she fought them tooth and nail because I think the upshot was that the mining company lost the case. Basically, she won the rights. She had been there and improved the property. But I'll have to get more facts.

Jaap: Well, good for her. So you went to Sacred Heart.

Moyle: Yes. And of course, I didn't remember it, but there are great old pictures. The church was built in 04 or 06, and it's a huge cathedral sort of looking space, but they had a fire in 1912 and basically took the whole top half of the church off. And that became the school. They just re-roofed it. And roughly about that time, they built the Spanish style church farther down on Park Street. And that's actually the one I remember the most. That's the church that I grew up in.

Jaap: You weren't around for the 1912 one.

Moyle: Wasn't around for the 1912 fire.

Jaap: What was the inside of Sacred Heart like?

Moyle: It was very much, what I would say, like a Spanish style church. It wasn't very ornamental. It was very plain, kind of dark wood. Even the altar itself was . . . there wasn't a lot of statuary or marble. It was a working man's church, because, if I remember right, even the altar was wood. It wasn't anything really elaborate or anything. And even the back areas were . . . plane would be the word. It was just a very simple non-ornamental sort of place.

Jaap: What else did you do as a kid, Jim? What else did you do for fun around the neighborhood or in Butte?

Moyle: Well, you know, one of the things, and I was thinking about this earlier, and fairly, I want to say first through third or fourth grade in Sacred Heart, we had now they would call it "blasting cap awareness" lessons. And you got together and somebody, the safety guy from the mine or maybe a policeman would bring in some dud blasting caps. And you were warned not to pick these up because they were pretty prevalent around the mine yard. They're just a simple little cap that explodes the larger piece of dynamite. But they're very explosive in their own right. And I vividly remember sitting through and handing these around and making sure and the guy

telling us, you know, if you see one of these, tell an adult, don't pick it up. But I got this impression, I thought every school did this. And not only just in Butte, I thought, you know, well, everybody does blasting cap training. It's part of life.

And, you know, later on in, I think maybe even beyond high school, I was visiting with some friends that grew up down like in St. Ann's or the Emerson area, and I said, "Well, you remember blasting cap training, don't you?" And they looked at me like, "What are you talking about?" But I thought it was, you know, something everybody did. And I asked an older friend of mine one time, I said, "Do you do remember this? Do you remember?" Because I vividly remember it. And he had grown up in Meaderville. And he said, "No, I don't remember that." And I don't remember the example's name, but he said, "We didn't need blasting cap training. We had Beeny. Because Beeny only had two fingers on his right hand. So if you ever saw one and thought about it, you thought about this guy with only two fingers on his hand because he blew the fingers off with the blasting caps."

Jaap: He was the warning.

Moyle: He was the warning. He was the living example.

Jaap: I was going to ask more about your childhood. Did you have another story you wanted to share, Jim?

Moyle: Well, you had asked about other activities and sports. And I think I was pretty fortunate. My grandparents lived across the street from Clark's Park and I spent a lot of time in that area and they would always flood Clark's Park and make the gigantic skating rink down there. And I'm sure there were smaller places up on the hill someplace. But that was the place I learned how to skate and learned how to . . . well, we used to have skating games at the time. There was crack the whip and pull away and things like that. So even on skates, things got a little bit rough and tumble, but I spent many hours down there doing that and just enjoyed the usual Butte things.

And I had . . . kind of a topic shift . . . But my grandmother's sister lived on the very end of, I believe it was, East Broadway Street. It was like the last block and this was before open pit mining. They were literally in the mine yard themselves. Their house overlooked this small mine yard. And I used to love to go up there as a kid because they had this like a metal box in their backyard and the top of it was curved and it was metal, but it was latticed metal and it was just big enough for a six year old. You could jump up and kind of straddle it like a saddle. But it was the air vent for the mine shaft. And I used to love I'd take rocks and jump up on this thing and drop them down. And, you know, ten seconds later, listen for the splash of water, if it made it all the way down. And I never gave it another thought. I thought, "Oh, this is the coolest deal in the world."

Jaap: Does not sound very safe.

[00:21:29]

Moyle: Well, looking back, yeah. In retrospect, maybe not the best thing to do.

Jaap: Yeah, the mine yard is your playground.

Moyle: It pretty much was. Yeah. And various mine yards around it. The other thing, and I don't know which railroad it was, but they had the ore bins where they would pull the train out and load the ore bins to truck it away someplace. But fortunately, I don't know if they at the time, the bins were shut down or what. But we used to play hide and seek in the bins and they were open. You could get up the ladder. And there were these big, huge metal boxes that you could just pound on and yell and scream and, you know, like I said, play hide and seek in these. And some mine yards became our playground equipment, pretty much.

Jaap: I'm surprised I've never read of an accident or something like that.

Moyle: Well, I think there were quite a few accidents, but I was fortunate not to.

Jaap: Did your mom and dad know that's what you were out doing?

Moyle: A little later on they did. Not quite at the time I was doing it, but I think I shared with them later, like, oh yeah, we'd always go down and, you know, the ore bins were maybe that was in my roaming area. They were a block and a half, two blocks away. So I was kind of free enough to roam afoot that far. Well after all, I was six or seven years old. So I was mature.

Jaap: Yeah, you're mature. You can go play in the ore bins.

Moyle: Well and I used to . . . the Len Waters reference. But my grandfather was quite a musician and always encouraged . . . both my mom played and my aunts. And he was just thrilled that I was taking music lessons. But after school, I would grab my little clarinet and walk from East Mercury Street over to Main, up to Main, to Len Waters. And it was actually my mom's cousin, but we had a relative that ran the Heidelberg Bar, which was kind of on the way. It's a block down on Main and across the street. It's where . . . there's a little cafe that was right, the B.S. Cafe was right next to it. North of the B.S. Cafe. And that was the only thing I had to do, basically, was I would stop on my way up and tell Uncle Frank that I was going to music.

And then after my lesson at Len Waters, I would sit at the Heidelberg Bar until my dad got off shift and Uncle Frank would pretty much watch me and supply me with pop and chips and things like that. And I was probably six or seven years old and it was like it was yesterday because Frank was the ultimate Butte bartender. I mean, he had the white shirt, the black pants, the garter. And he was pretty imposing. I mean, he was a pretty good sized guy. And I'm sitting there at six or seven with my clarinet and having a seven up. And there was one other guy in the bar and he's sitting at the far end and he said something. There was a ballgame or something the night before. And he swore. He let out the F-bomb. He swore. And Uncle Frank reached over the bar, grabbed him and pointed to me and he said, "You see that kid? You don't use language in front of that kid." And threw this guy out of the bar, literally, by his shirt, threw him out on Main Street. And again, you have to picture this little seven year old kid.

Jaap: Little Jimmy Moyle.

Moyle: It was just so shocking to me. And later on in life, I thought, Well, gee, you know, Frank's feeding me all this pop and chips. And here he's throwing this paying customer out of a bar. But I think that was kind of the guidelines in Butte sometimes of the day. If you were with a group of adults or minors and, you know, yeah, swearing was tolerated. But if there were kids around, no. That was the guideline maybe.
Jaap: How was it walking from Mercury Street to Main? Did you have to walk through the red light district?

Moyle: There were a couple of bars on the east side. And again, a lot of my family were in the bartending business. And so I was pretty comfortable around them. But there were a couple on East Park Street. And I want to say one was like the Golden Fan, and I forget the name of the other one, but nothing ever happened. But I was always kind of wary when I walked by them because they kind of had a reputation to them a little bit. And if he was out hanging around, Tony the Trader would always stop and visit and talk to me. And, again, I've got my little clarinet or saxophone.

And I remember he mistook it for a suitcase. He said, "Where are you going, kid? Good luck to you." Like, you know, so you're seven years old. It looks like you're leaving home. So good luck. But the other Sacred Heart school closed after my seventh grade. So I went to St. Patrick's for my eighth grade year. And that was a straight shot over Mercury Street. So that's where I would pass the Dumas and the Victoria and the Windsor. And they were neighbors. I mean, if somebody happened to be outside, they were adults and you said hello, and they said hello back. And there was nothing really . . . I just considered them neighbors. And didn't quite know exactly what their job was or their occupation at the time. But they were always very nice to me and always spoke. Always said, hello.

Jaap: Where did you go to high school? Did you go to Central?

Moyle: I did go to Central. It was Boys Central for the first year. And then they combined for my last three. So the Christian Brothers gave me an eye opening education that first year.

Jaap: The handball courts?

Moyle: The handball courts. Yes.

Jaap: Because we were there when the building was being redone.

Moyle: Oh that's right.

Jaap: We stored some of our stuff in the handball courts and we'd show people they'd be like, "Don't go down there." Those brothers took you down into those handball courts.

Moyle: Well, and I like to think back that, you know, I was this chubby little kid with a very smart mouth. And after the second or third week at Boys Central, there was this, hey, when I say something that's kind of smart ass, these people hit me. And what's the correlation here? Well, let

me . . . No, that can't be it. Let me try it again. And sure enough, they hit me. It was a tough way to get my attention. But I kind of realized early on that, OK, if you treat these folks with respect, they maybe would not invite you to the handball courts so often. But they were very much . . . I think there's a philosophy, it's called "education through discipline." It's like the Neo-Thomist philosophy of "Well yes, they're teachable. But first you have to get their attention and this is how you get their attention."

[00:30:42]

Jaap: Sure. So what did you do after high school?

Moyle: I, actually, I think I started it in the eighth grade at Joe's Pasty shop. So I had always worked through there. And after I graduated, I actually went to MSU with an interest in going into business and I realized how boring accounting is. So that didn't last long. And at the time they needed some student volunteers for one of the elementary schools in Bozeman. And so I spent a few hours down there and I thought, well, maybe there's something to this education sort of stuff.

And actually I transferred to Eastern Montana College and got a degree in education. And fortunately, it was pretty much right at the time where the federal government was mandating special education for all in the program. So Butte really had a need to fill the numbers for special ed teachers. And it was just like I had recently got my degree and it just fit perfectly in. And actually, Kathy finished up a year after I did, and the need was still there. So we both spent our careers at school district number one, and the majority of the early part of my career was in special needs.

Jaap: And what school did you teach at?

Moyle: I've closed a number of schools behind me. So I started actually at West when it was a junior high, and then they kind of transferred that into the elementary that it is now. From there, I went to the Emerson School. Longfellow until they closed up. Did another one in. And worked at East for a number of years. And actually towards the end of my career I got into technology, when technology was becoming a little more common. And so I broke computers for the school district for the last six or seven years in the school.

Jaap: Well, at least, you weren't closing the schools anymore.

Moyle: Yeah, not closing the schools behind me or anything. I had a very interesting career. I was able to, I guess, transfer different age levels. And like I said, I started out with, at the time, junior, the junior high at West included freshman in high school. So you got that age group. I did another resource type of area along the same fourth, fifth graders. And then whatever possessed me, they had a need for a preschool special needs classroom. It was technically three to five year olds, but I think I had three to seven year olds. I can't remember the reasoning why I transferred into that.

But I did get the job. And that was an interesting perspective on education, because our children

were still very young at the time. And it was like you deal with two and three year olds at home and then you go to work and you deal with three and four year olds at work. But I learned quite a bit at that. And had a wonderful aid that spent like 25 years in kindergarten and pre-kindergarten. And I consider myself smart enough to throw all my college education out the window and just listen to this lady because she knew how things were gonna run and she knew the mind of a five year old.

Jaap: Which is important.

Moyle: Yeah. And when I had this little group, we were kind of in the kindergarten wing. And the two kindergarten teachers had multiple years' experience, and I probably had six or seven years at the very most, and kindergarten teachers are not all that innocent. They see an opening when they get one. But anyway, we interacted and my kids, I became part of this kindergarten program. And again, these ladies had 20 plus years in a kindergarten classroom. And the one story I remember, the one lady came in and she's quite a bit older than I am. And she said, "You know, we have an assembly this afternoon and I have an appointment. I would sooner not take the whole afternoon, but could you cover my class for an hour and take everybody to the assembly and I'd sure appreciate it." "Sure. I can do that." I felt kind of honored that she would consider me, trust me with . . .

And maybe an hour later, the other kindergarten teacher came in and she said, "I hear you're going to take Tony's class. And yeah, I do have some things I'd like to do. And again, I would hate to call a sub. It'll just take 45 minutes or an hour. But would you consider taking the kindergarten group down?" And I was feeling fantastic. This is great. So I was like Father Goose. I had 35-40 of these little five year old kids following me. And we all got in the bleachers and I'm sitting in the middle of them. And it was a Native American assembly and the curtains opened and these folks were in full war paint with the feathers, and they jumped off the stage. Did the war whoop and 40 of these little bodies started crying all at once. And they just smothered me. And literally these guys had to stop the assembly so we could calm down all of these. And I managed to get everybody back to class. And these two kindergarten teachers are standing there smiling at me. And I said, "You knew that was coming, didn't you?" They said, "Oh yeah." "You set me up." "Oh, yes, we did."

Jaap: Father Goose.

Moyle: Father Goose.

Jaap: Oh, that is really fun. So step back a little. At Joe's did you have a specific job that you did?

Moyle: I did. I was the potato peeler.

Jaap: Oh no. What did you do wrong?

Moyle: I would go into the basement. Well, that was the majority of the job, but I was also the stocker - the pop case, beer case stocker. And when they were closed I was the swamper on

Mondays. But the majority of the job was potato peeling. And you had this industrial potato peeler that would handle maybe five pounds at a time. And the interesting thing - family legend said my grandfather kind of designed this, but I don't know if that's true or not, but there was a piece of channel iron which had two sides on it. And it was finished. It was polished and one end had a jack handle. So what happened is after the potatoes were peeled, you would put the potato in this channel and run the jack handle down and this bar at the end would slide the potato through a series of cutters and it would cut it lengthwise, French fry wise.

And then as you pulled the jackhammer back, there was another set of cutters that would come down and dice it. And so, like for two hours a day, I had the strongest right arm in Butte because all I was doing was pulling this jack handle back and forth. And that was the majority of my job, and, of course, being a high school kid, I broke this machine one day. I broke one of the cutter bars in it. And to a high school kid, I wasn't thinking about the work, I think, hey, I'm done for the afternoon. I get a day off. This is cool. This is all right. And so I had to go up and explain to my uncle that I broke this. And I said, "You know, I'm sorry, but I damaged it." And he didn't say anything to me other than just "wait here." And he handed this over to a guy at the bar. And 20 minutes later, this guy came back. He was a machinist on the Hill and they repaired all the equipment. This guy took it up to the machine shop on the Anaconda Hill, fixed the blades, and I was back working in 25 minutes. I thought, "Ah, I didn't get my afternoon off."

Jaap: I thought you were going to say that you had to do it by hand or something.

Moyle: Well, yeah, that was the alternative. And you really appreciated that machine after doing it by hand. Yeah. Because usually it was eight to ten, five gallon buckets of diced potatoes that you did on a shift. You know, so.

Jaap: So on Thanksgiving, is that what you are assigned to now?

Moyle: Every once in a while I will take the hand peeler out and dazzle everybody with my speed skills.

Jaap: Watch me dice.

Moyle: Watch me do this.

Jaap: I love that they took the piece of equipment up to the machine shop. That's funny.

Moyle: And so maybe there is . . . again my grandfather was a boilermaker and a machinist and you know, maybe there still were some ties up there, but literally it was back within a half an hour, perfectly repaired and ready for another two hours of peeling potatoes and dicing potatoes.

Jaap: So your family, we found the settlement papers, your family, when the company bought their [house].

Moyle: Yes. Yes.

Jaap: Can you tell me a little bit about that transition, your family moving from their home?

Moyle: Yes. And we were, Kathy and I, we were married in '77. And this happened in roughly 1980, if I remember right. But my father, and even looking back, they were very set in their ways. There wasn't a whole lot of change that you really tolerated in your life. And probably in the early 70s, that East Mercury neighborhood started to transition and, well, actually probably in the 60s. But even though going to school out of town, when I came home, you could see the transition in it, that more houses were derelict, some were being moved. There was a huge convent about a half a block from my house. The Sacred Heart Convent, which was this huge three story building. And I think I was working one summer and it burned down and it was literally gone within two days.

There was nothing but a foundation there. But I think looking back, my dad was comfortable where he was, but he didn't see how the neighborhood was changing around him. And, you know, more and more of their friends either moved out or were bought out by the Company. And my dad and my mom were actually the last house, at least on that block on Mercury. I don't think there was anybody behind them on Galena Street and there was nobody south of them on the other side of Mercury. So they were like the last stronghold. And there might have been one or two folks, you know, scattered. But you had this neighborhood of hundreds of people and all of a sudden you're the last one.

And it really did bother my mom more than my dad. You know, she really had problems with it because there weren't any neighbors anymore. I think even some of the environmental things, because without any houses, everything around you is weeded and overgrown and dusty and derelict. And it really did affect her. And you found the letters that my dad had written to whoever it was in the Anaconda Company, and I can't think of the guy's name. But in the age before cell phones and tape recordings, this guy wrote in longhand all of the conversations that he had with my dad.

Jaap: Yeah, he had like a call-log.

Moyle: Yeah, he had a call-log of every time my dad called or every time they interacted. And there's correspondence in there. And I believe my dad got to the point where he was going to sell out. And I forget the exact amount. But I want to say it was like $30,000. He would sell his property for $30,000. And this was 1980. So it was roughly 1980. So, you know, housing prices at that time. That was probably in the ballpark. And there's correspondence from the Anaconda Company side saying, You took it to the board and they felt this was very high. And they authorized this agent to offer my dad $20,000. And literally it's in the correspondence.

This guy said, we're willing to offer you $20,000. And my dad always had a smart comeback. And he said something like, so is that for the car in front of the house? Or the house itself? And things didn't go well in that interaction. But eventually, I believe they came pretty close to the $20,000 price. And it was, you know, looking back, I want to say it was affecting my mom's health. You know, she needed to be around people and she needed to be in a neighborhood again. And my dad was kind of proud about this. But if you take this huge neighborhood or this area that was a block of people and you suddenly start dwindling things down . . . until he showed me

one day, I'd never thought of it, but if you don't regulate the water pressure, as you've got a block's worth of people using water and now all of a sudden you have one or two households with the same water pressure. He would put the garden hose on, and we were probably 50 yards back from Mercury Street and he could hit Mercury Street with . . . And, you know, finally, they came down and put some sort of a regulator on the water line. But he'd say, "Look at this! Look at this!"

Jaap: He could fight fires with it.

Moyle: Yeah. He was squirting cars as they went by. And, you know, wait a minute, now, that can't be really good, because if you blow a water pipe, it's going to blow half the house off, you know. Had great water pressure.

Jaap: Did it affect the sinks and stuff as well?

Moyle: Oh, you could eat through a plate.

Jaap: So where did your parents move to after they left?

Moyle: They moved down to Florida Street. And I'm trying to think, it's three or four off of Harrison Avenue, a nice little community. And again, I think even my dad was very satisfied with it because when they had first moved in there, the whole neighborhood was roughly their age. And so they knew people that they had common friends with. And it was again, it was a Butte neighborhood where, you know, well, maybe I don't know you, but, you know so and so. And we're good friends. And so it became very nice and comfortable for them there. So they were back in a neighborhood again. Mm hmm.

Jaap: So how did you and Kathy meet? I'm kind of jumping.

Moyle: Oh, no problem. So I had transferred to Eastern Montana College in Billings and she had transferred from Missoula. I think she was starting a psychology major and decided pretty much the same way. She wanted to look at teaching and things like this. And everybody has a goofy roommate at one point in their lives. And my goofy roommate decided at Halloween that we should dress up and he found some cheesy clown costumes and face paint and the whole schmear and we went to the cafeteria looking like this and met these two girls.

And now you'll have to verify with Kathy. But to her friends, she said, "You know, I'm going to marry that clown one of these days." But she was pointing at the wrong clown. She was pointing at my roommate, but she wound up with the right clown, I think.

Jaap: I think so. And she doesn't like clowns.

Moyle: No, she doesn't. Hates clowns. Doesn't tolerate crop clowns at all.

Jaap: Oh, that's fun. How many kids do you and Kathy have?

Moyle: We have two daughters. One's gonna be 37 here pretty quickly. And the other 35 this year. Yeah. So that's a scary sort of thing age wise. But yes we have two and pretty much grew up when they were little, our first house was on West Mercury Street. And again it was a great neighborhood. Our very first neighbor, she really took an interest in us and we did, because she was a retired teacher, Helen MacGregor. Helen taught in the school district for like 45 years. And she was still very active. I want to say she was at least 75, 80. And one of those people that knew everybody in town and everybody knew her because they had seen her at Butte High or had her in class.

And again, a topic shift, but the best insult I have ever seen in my life. We were just newly married and, you know, didn't even have a lawnmower at the time. And Helen was up in years. And I noticed she had this old electric lawnmower. And we struck a deal that if I could borrow her lawnmower, I would take care of her lawn. And it just worked out really well. But the second or third year we were there, and again, she was probably late 70s at the time, very well-spoken, very eloquent. And it was a very hot day. And I'm mowing her yard. And she came down, had this long stairway. And we're visiting for a while. And she said, "You know, Jim, I'm not feeling very good. I'm just gonna sit here for a minute." And I was kind of watching her a bit. And like I said, it was a very hot day. And we were having this conversation and all of a sudden this conversation was kind of one-sided. She wasn't responding to me.

And the first thought I had was she was a baseball nut. She loved baseball. I know nothing about baseball. I started throwing out. "Did you see the game last night? How about those Yankees? How about that?" And I'm not getting a response from her. And I looked over and her eyes rolled back. She fainted on the stairs. And just at that time, Kathy came out of our front door and I said, "Call 911." And on the westside of Mercury, of course, with the hospital there and you're close enough to the fire department, you start hearing sirens coming and it's like they're coming from everywhere and people start arriving. There are two fire engines. There's an ambulance. There's police cars there.

And as all these people are converging on her, Helen wakes up and she starts looking around and she knows everybody. And to the fireman she's saying, "Well, hello, Bill. Hello, Clark. Hello, Dan, how are you? How's your family?" And they're all going "Fine, Miss MacGregor. Fine. Miss MacGregor." And her eyes really narrow. And she looked at me and she said, "Why did you call these people?" And I said, "Well, Helen, you passed out. And I kept asking you questions about baseball when you couldn't respond to me." And I consider it the best insult I ever got in my life. And she said, "Did it ever occur to you that what you were saying wasn't worthy of an answer?" And one of the firemen said, "You know, Miss MacGregor, I think you're OK." To me said, "I think you're in trouble." And she was pretty mad at me for three or four days.

Jaap: So you and Kathy, tell me about the Art Chateau. Didn't you guys take a look at it one time?

Moyle: Oh, we did. Oh, yes. Thanks, had to jog my memory there a little bit, but we were fortunate enough or however it worked out when we were first married, we decided to buy a house and we found this nice place on West Mercury Street, fixer upper. They all are. And we

had just moved into this place. And I want to say it was like two weeks. And the realtor we had dealt with called us up and he said, deal of a lifetime. We'll put your house back on the market. I'll take care of the loan papers. We'll talk to the bank. But you have to see this property because this is a deal. And we had paid probably $28,000 for our house on West Mercury. And I remember asking him saying, "Well, you know, how much is this place?" And I forget it was roughly $32,000. And I remember the conversation going, "What? I don't know how I'm going to afford $28,000, let alone $32,000." "No, you have to see this place. You have to go up." Well, it was the Clark Art Chateau.

They were getting ready to file for bankruptcy. It was gonna go up for a bank sale. And he got us into the place saying, you know, look at this place. $32,000. And I'm looking around, going, I can't afford this. I don't. And the things I remember just looking through this was at that time the Chateau was run on either a train boiler or a ship's boiler. It was an antique. It was huge. It took up a whole room. And the other thing is the roof leaked. I remember the roof leaking up on top. Even young and naive, I could see this place would have been way beyond us. But Kathy's point at the time was, well, there's no lawn. And it's a busy street. So we decided not to get it on the basis of "it's on too busy of a street for us."

[00:58:33]

Jaap: Not many people can say they looked at the Chateau and almost . . . you didn't almost buy it, but you looked at it.

Moyle: Yeah. And it's funny the things you remember, but I remember walking into what would have been a furnace room and this thing was huge. It would have gone past this office. It was probably 14 feet long and it looked like the front of a freight train, basically. So I thought it might cost more than twenty dollars a month to heat this place.

Jaap: Yeah, it might. Clark, do you have any questions?

Clark Grant: This has been really enjoyable.

Moyle: Oh, it's fun for me too.

Grant: Do you like pasties?

Moyle: I do. But the funny thing is, I hate to say it, not from Joe's anymore. The other owners changed the recipe enough that they're not the ones that I remember growing up. So I very rarely go back to Joe's because I remember the taste from when . . .

Jaap: Do you have the recipe still?

Moyle: My cousin has the recipe. Which I keep bugging him for to get a just a paper copy.

Grant: Can you tell us a bit more about Joe?

Moyle: My grandfather? Yeah. Well, I have an older cousin that was at an age where she could kind of interview him a little bit. And through her, he told her that basically there was a little place in Austria, Trefal, Austria. It was right on the Austro-Hungarian border. And at the time, it didn't really make a lot of sense to me. But he told my older cousin that you would get up in the morning and look out and see which flag was flying in the village to let you know whether you were Austrian or Hungarian for the day. And I don't know if that was part of the reason that he immigrated to get out of that.

But I kind of suspect that there was enough hostilities going on in the area. And he had three or four brothers in roughly the same time period. They all emigrated out of Austria at the time. And he was very self-taught, even later on in his life. He was always trying different things. And again, loved music, taught himself, played trombone in the Butte Mine's band in the Boston and Montana. Again, encouraged music in the family and taught himself three or four different instruments. And he even . . . late 60s anyway. But one of his brothers was in Las Vegas and his brother down there was encouraging him to move down because there's going to be a boom down here.

You really need to . . . The new big deal of the time is air conditioning, and you need to learn how to . . .You're an old boiler man. You can work metal. You need to work on figuring out air conditioning. And I remember my uncle saying the week previous to when my grandfather passed away, all of these self-taught heating and air conditioning books came in the [mail]. So he was gearing up to maybe even move down because it was a very lucrative air conditioning change, Las Vegas. But he was always kind of intrigued with learning something new.

Grant: Did you ever play music with him?

Moyle: Never did. No, I was lucky enough to inherit some of his instruments, and I still have those. And so I play them fairly regularly.

Grant: Another question I had was about playing on my mine dumps as a kid. Are all the places that you used to play capped and fenced off?

Moyle: You know, for the most part, yeah. I want to say they're pretty much all capped now. I think about it when I go by and if you look at where the CCCS building is. Right to the east of it is kind of a landscaped area and it looks very nice. But, you know, it's kind of, well, you didn't really have to landscape that, but then thinking back, well, that's where that mine dump was and that's where the shaft was. So it's probably easier, rather than expanding the building, just make it look nice and cover up the . . . And I'm fairly positive, it's pretty level with Mercury now, so I'm sure they remediated all of the mine waste out of there.

But the other sort of interesting thing is five or six years ago, Tech did a study on heavy metal ratios to blood. They coordinated with one of the Butte blood drives. And so I remember they asked if they could take a blood sample and do a heavy metals test. And I thought that would be really interesting. And I remember telling the person that, oh, yeah, I grew up in this stuff, you know. And this is great. And about six months later, I got the test and I'm worth my weight in molybdenum and cadmium and a little bit of arsenic. So Cathy checks the molybdenum metal

rates everyday in the paper saying, you know, I'm $7.95 a pound today. [Laughter] See, yeah, I might cash in.

Grant: If I'm not mistaken, Sacred Heart is the church in the infamous picture with the haul truck backing up to it. Is that it?

Moyle: No, that was Holy Savior.

Grant: Where was that located?

Moyle: It would be further east, on the other side of the Berkeley pit. Well, as you're driving up Continental Drive and before you make that bend by Montana Resources, you'll see that big mine dump directly ahead. That's quite a ways north of that. Yes, it would be quite a ways east and stuff.

Grant: And you said it was an aunt of yours that lived way out on East Broadway?

Moyle: It was a great aunt.

Grant: And you would go out there and visit?

Moyle: Yes. My family would.

Grant: Can you tell me about that section of road? Broadway just ends at a barricade and a fence. So was it dense all the way out there?

Moyle: It was dense all the way out. I actually have a picture that the Archives are going to get, but you can't tell how far it goes. But the picture is taken about a half a block looking east on Broadway. But the reference points, you can see the old Helsinki bar on the corner, but it's literally lined with fourplexes and duplexes. And at that time, probably in the early 60s, they were at the very end of Broadway. Probably where the initial Berkeley pit would have started. And I want to say their address was like in the 1300's. And the Helsinki is roughly like the 200 or 300 block of Broadway. So Broadway extended all the way out to at least the 1300 block in the 60s. And it was all for fourplexes and duplexes. There were no empty spaces uptown.

Grant: The process you described of the Anaconda negotiating the price of people's homes. Do you think Anaconda ever took matters into their own hands, when someone wouldn't sell or wouldn't sell at a favorable rate?

Moyle: I do, to an extent. And one of the other things, I think it was a collective sort of thing at the Anaconda Company, if you want to break a neighborhood, where does everybody go in the neighborhood? Well, they go to the neighborhood store? So you target. That's the first person you'd approach. You'll go to the guy that runs the grocery store and it's the only grocery store within two or three blocks because everybody had their own. If you can make him an offer and close him down or buy him out and move him out, then people tend to migrate out of their neighborhood and they have to go someplace else. And now instead of walking across the street

to a grocery store, you have to go . . . I mean, they were all over the place, but now you have to go three blocks this way. Well, what if you target that grocery store. And the churches or the other social organizations. Maybe people don't want to move out of the neighborhood, but if you take away the stores or the drug stores or things like that first, then it kind of makes it a little more direct. Well, now it's creating a hardship on this neighborhood. And I really think there was kind of a consensus where it was almost a game plan to do that. And whether they did anything illegal to do it, I don't know. But at least that would be kind of immoral to do.

Grant: I was going to say, don't you consider that immoral?

Moyle: I do. Yes, very much so. And actually, there was a drug store / general store. But I still remember the building as we went on East Mercury Street and the guy did sell out of the neighborhood, but he knew how to bargain with the Anaconda Company. And it's a two story building and it's actually out on Continental Drive now. And he basically told the company, yes, I'll sell out, but you will provide all the moving. You will provide the cement, you will build the foundations. You will build it to my specifications.

And, you know, whether it was right or wrong, he at least made the company pay to get him out of the neighborhood. And again, you know, that's my thought. Is that illegal? Maybe not. But I believe they knew that if you could take away that little secure area of the neighborhood, get rid of those grocery stores. The Catholic Church at the time had a lot of churches and not a lot of money. If you can get the dioceses to close the church or close the social club, you tend to break up that neighborhood. And I do believe that was pretty active.

Grant: A lot of people say there would be no Butte without the mine. But as techniques changed and the pit became the convention. Was it worth it to trade those neighborhoods for the jobs?

Moyle: That's a good question, I think the mindset at the time was, yes, this is progress and yes, I'm not an underground miner anymore, but I'm an open pit miner and they need open pit miners. And I can drive a truck and I can still make a living for my family. So in that time period, in that respect, it was providing income. And, yes, maybe you had to move out of your neighborhood, but you still had a job and you could still support your family and you could still kind of work in a field that you had worked in forever, that you had a lot of camaraderie with the other guys in. Looking back now, it's hard to justify that. We traded huge amounts of neighborhoods and things for a waste pit site. And, you know, looking back in that perspective. Boy, that's a good question. Was it worth it to do it?

[01:13:44]

Grant: How did Sacred Heart go?

Moyle: I believe it was 1967. I was trying to make a mental note of how many students were in each class. And it was a combined class, first and second grade through the eighth grade. And I want to say, OK, class size, probably 25 to 30 per room. So first and second grade may have 30 students in it. Again, looking back, that sounds quite a bit. But as the neighborhood started to disperse, the kids moved away. And all of a sudden you had this old building that you only had

110, 120 students in. And at that time, the Catholic schools were run by the sisters. So again, there was this crunch of well, there aren't a lot of teaching sisters to go about. But I really think part of the demise was the student population wasn't there anymore. And it was hard to justify having this huge building for 100 students where, you know, the Grant was available still roughly for a few more years. I think the Grant was available a block away. And St. Patrick's was a walk down the road. So I know the majority of from my seventh grade class, we went to St. Patrick's. We all wound up over there.

Grant: And the building itself?

Moyle: It was . . . And the other popular thing at the time . . . if the Anaconda Company owned a property, you could buy salvage rights to a property. And the story I had always heard, this went on . . . I skimmed on the dollar for the salvage rights, but I salvaged the house that I grew up in on East Mercury Street. But the school building, I actually worked with a couple of the guys that bought the salvage rights to it. And it was minimal. It was a token dollar salvage right. One fellow told me he made roughly ten thousand dollars off the building materials that he pulled off of the [salvage]. But the other thing that always struck me, it kind of hurt to talk to this guy, knowing that he had torn my school down.

But I remember him saying the first thing I did was break into the cornerstone. Because very much it was a neighborhood mining sort of area. But there was a book in there that listed donations by everybody in the church and they were like a nickel donation to this. And there were, I think, a set of coins from the year and a number of little things, not monetary wise, but historically were, you know, really interesting. And this fellow was a teacher at the Washington School at the time. And I remember him saying, he said, "I looked out the window and I saw all the loaders and the trucks headed toward Sacred Heart School." And he said, "I knew what to do. I grabbed that box. I went up to the Hennessy building and I put it on . . ." I forget who was the head of the Anaconda company. And he said, "I put it on his desk."

And the guy made a grab for it. And he said he took it back. And this fellow, he'd said something to the effect like, well, you know, that was a Catholic school, but I'm Baptist and it's Baptist property now. So call off your trucks till I can salvage that building and you get the box. And they did. They pulled the trucks off. But a young Catholic kid having somebody say, "No, that's Baptist property now" really grated me the wrong way too.

Grant: What about the Washington school?

Moyle: I don't have a lot of recollection about that. And again, I think it was part territorial sort of thing, too. It was like I was comfortable walking across Park Street and felt, you know, not intimidated or anything, but it was something about going up through to . . .

Grant: Grant?

Moyle: Yeah. Yeah. And it was like the dividing line. Well, you know, you can play around the Grant School, but you don't play on the Grant playground.

Grant: In your first 18 years, you said you were born in 54?

Moyle: Yes.

Grant: So up until 72, I guess, during that time period what would you say are the most notable changes you observed in Butte?

Moyle: The amount of pedestrian traffic uptown. Because, again, there were just mobs and mobs of people. Well, like I said, in eighth grade, I went to St. Pat's. And Boy's Central and I would always walk home over Park Street and right where the Metals Bank building is and Woolworth's and that area, you couldn't walk in a straight line. There were just hundreds of people. It was a bus stop. You couldn't get through this mass of people. And it's Butte, so you always found somebody to stop and talk with anyway and stuff. I see that as a big change. I mean, if you go uptown now and you see a dozen people maybe on the street where if you were walking home or after a shift change, when everybody's coming down from Main Street, there were just hundreds and hundreds of people out on the street. So that's a big thing.

I guess one of the other things there was even growing up, or like I said, boy, started out, you could go to your backyard and dribble a basketball and you'd have a full team with subs in your backyard. And actually I played peewee baseball for a bar, you know. And you never thought about it. But there was a lot of impromptu not necessarily all sports things but being a little guy, you always had an opportunity to play sports. Towards the end of that, like 72 or mid seventies, there aren't people in your neighborhood anymore, you have to join this group that plays organized sports three times a week and you have to practice and it's like, oh, sports aren't impromptu anymore. Or skating or hockey isn't impromptu anymore.

You have to be part of this organized team. And I think that goes way beyond today, too. I mean, you don't see a lot of, you know, kids. There's extended seasons. Oh, you have to be on the honors basketball team or whatever it is. And no, you don't. You need to just go out and pick three or four of your friends and play. Or run around the neighborhood or something.

Grant: I noted that you barely missed Vietnam.

Moyle: I did.

Grant: You turned 18 in 1972. With your dad's combat experience, did you ever consider joining?

Moyle: He didn't speak at all about his experience. What little he said, he was opposed to it. At the time I thought it was just the Vietnam War. But I think even later on in his life, when things were heating up in the Middle East, he was totally against it. And funny you mention that because I was working at the pasty shop, doing my potato thing, and it was like three weeks before I'd signed up to go to MSU in Bozeman. And I wasn't a stellar student to begin with anyway, you know. And I remember it just hit me and I thought, you know, this is crazy. I'm not college material. I don't see this as going. And I thought, I'm just going to enlist. I'm going to join the service. And I shut off the machines. And I was gonna go upstairs to tell my mom. I said,

you know, I just can't see this. I'm not gonna be a success at school. And I got about halfway up the stairs and I thought, you know, this would just break her heart because she wanted me to go to college. And I think I even had the idea in my head that my dad would be very opposed to doing this. And I thought, all right, well, I guess six months aren't going to hurt. I'll try school for six months and see how it goes. And the first few months didn't go very well. Fact is, one of the deans actually encouraged me to maybe look at military service.

Moyle: But I did burn my draft card, too. So, yeah, I found it in an old wallet in like 1988 and stood in the backyard and burned my draft card.

Grant: It's a good thing you went into education. To me you seem so gentle and kind.

Moyle: Oh, thank you for that. I pay people to say nice things about me.

Jaap: Father Goose. Father Goose.

Moyle: Oh that's going to stick, isn't it?

Jaap: Yeah.

Grant: Father Goose. All the school closures, having spent your career in education, how did those affect you personally?

Moyle: Some more than others. I spent time in schools and not like the whole time, but I really enjoyed the Longfellow School. There was just something old school about it. The teachers and the staff, most of them had been there forever and ever. And it became this little neighborhood that, you know, if you needed a hand, somebody was there to help you. And that's where part of Father Goose came from. I was Father Goose at the Longfellow School also. And I guess that one did kind of bother me that boy, there were a lot of really personal memories that were there.

And actually somebody at the school, and I was unfortunately, I never got a hold of them. Even through, like the 40s, 50s, 60s, or whenever they started taking student pictures, somebody at the school would always get a copy of every student's picture and keep a scrapbook. Keep an album of them. And when the school was facing closure, they threw them away. They tossed them. And I was just heartsick. I knew about these things and I tried to inquire on it and they were already gone. But it was like 30 years of student pictures. So I had some feelings when the Longfellow went.

Grant: As a kid, especially that image you paint of walking west on Mercury Street, right across from St. Pats. And to think of the brothels being there and just like you describe the bustling nature of it. The Butte you describe is so rich. How does that compare to the city that you see now?

Moyle: I see a resurgence of, you know, very small. But like your radio station coming back. The locals, small, younger people that are starting small businesses and the arts and creative things that are starting to happen in Butte. I see it as gradually growing a new kind of

perspective. It's not the huge, bustling mining, booming sorts of things. But, you know, it's you folks at the radio station and it's the programs that they're running out of the Art Chateau and the archives. And I think it's attracting more people and younger people, another generation into Butte. And, you know, younger people are saying, hey, this is a little rough around the edges, but it's kind of a nice place to live. So, yeah, I think there's hope. Yes, there is always hope.

Jaap: I thought of a question. Kathy didn't grow up here. What did she think of Butte when you came here?

Moyle: Other than her crying?

Jaap: Because she would have come at the downhill slide. She did not get to see it like, you know, you playing in the mine dumps. So, that's your answer? She came here crying?

Moyle: Well, the story of that was, I think it was the first time I invited her to Butte and she came. Now, my parents' house, this was a duplex. The mid 70s were pretty . . . and she'd seen pictures of the East Side just recently and said, "You know, you did live in a ghetto. You realize that." But the first time I talked her into coming to Butte, where else do you go for the first time? But we had to go to the Pekin Noodle Parlor, of course, you know. And because this was class and so went in and went to the booth and pulled the curtain and somebody had thrown up all over the inside of the curtain. And I think that's when the crying started.

But she warmed up to it very quickly. And actually did her student teaching here. And actually she rented a place on East Park Street. And I want to say it was $30 a month, plus she had a roommate for a little bit. So it was fifteen dollars a month. And the building is still there. But. So yeah, she did her student teaching in Butte and I think that helped a little bit. And yeah. Yeah. And she's of the mind now that there's nowhere else but Butte. She'll stay here. She doesn't want to move any place else.

Jaap: Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

Moyle: No thank you very much. I appreciate this. It's been fun. You've put me at ease.

Jaap: Well, thanks, Jim.

Moyle: Well, thank you. Gosh.

[END OF RECORDING]