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LARRY CYR

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Oral History Transcript of Larry Cyr

Interviewers: Clark Grant & Aubrey Jaap

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[00:03:22]

Aubrey Jaap: We're good to go. All right. It's July 27, 2018. We're here with Larry Cyr. Larry, would you like to start. Do you want to talk to me a little bit about your parents and grandparents? Where did they come from? What are their names?

Larry Cyr: My grandparents, on my dad's side, was Bern Cyr, senior. I'm junior and he was born in Spokane in 1917, came to Butte in 1919 when his dad decided to come to Butte and be a miner. And then my maternal, my mother was born in Minneapolis and her dad worked in the mines in northern Minnesota, got in an accident. She was born in 1921. He had a mining accident in 1924 and they sent him to Hayes where my grandmother was from and he died of pneumonia about three months later, in 1924. My paternal grandmother was born in Oregon, I can't remember the name right offhand, and her name was Alice Werner and she came to Butte, I'm not sure when, but she married my paternal grandfather in 1935 in Butte and I don't really know what she was doing here. She died in 1950. She was only about 60 years old. My paternal grandfather died in 1938. He's buried in Harrison and my paternal grandmother was buried in Butte, and there's a card on her in the index file.

Yeah, I looked for my grandfather, but he didn't have a card, although he died in Butte. And then on the maternal side, my grandfather was, I never knew him since he died, obviously in 1924. And my maternal grandmother died in about 1979. And she was about 80 years old. She was born in about 1890, or so, 1889. And she always claimed she was born on the prairie. She was half, well at least half, Indian, not sure which tribe, but I'd say Métis, and she lived most of her life in Cut Bank and married my grandfather. I don't know when, probably 1917, or so. Then she moved to Cut Bank after he died and married Jim McGovern and they had five or six more kids. Most of them are dead except for one. And my mother was born here. Do you want to go back further to my second grandfather?

Jaap: Well, how did your family end up in America? Where do they immigrate from?

Cyr: Yeah, my paternal grandfather came from Montreal and moved to Spokane, but I'm not sure when, let's say, in the 1910's. And my dad had three brothers and one sister and they're all dead now. I would say that in the Second World War, my dad was in the Navy, one uncle was in the Navy, another uncle was in the Navy, and the third uncle was in the Army. He got shot in France in the Second World War and lived his life in San Francisco. Then he had one sister who lived in Livingston. And let's see where my paternal grandmother came from Oregon, Baker City, Oregon, it was and I really don't know much about her family, except there's still a family in Oregon. Most of them are in Portland now. And her last name was Werner. And on the paternal side, I'm not sure where my paternal grandfather or maternal grandfather came from. I

think in Massachusetts is what I'm told. I haven't researched that part. I'm kind of lazy these days. So I don't do everything I want to.

Jaap: So what year was your dad born, Larry?

Cyr: He was born in 1917.

Jaap: And where was he born?

Cyr: Born in Spokane. And he had an older brother who was also born in Spokane, and his older sister was born in Spokane. And his other two brothers were born in Butte in 1919 and 1921. One died in Oregon. No, they both died in Oregon. One of them, Vic, got out of the Navy in about 1951 and moved to Butte and worked in the mines and was a miner like everybody else, I guess. Then he decided he didn't like that, moved to Spokane and became a mailman, as the other brother did.

Jaap: So they came right during that war time. Did he ever mention, you know, did his parents ever talk about kind of life during that time at all?

Cyr: They never talked about it. You know, I never really knew him, my paternal grandfather because he died in 1938. And my paternal grandmother died in 1950 and I was only about 10 years old.

Jaap: And so you did not care at that time?

Cyr: Well, I didn't really know her that well.

Jaap: Yeah. Yeah. All right. So what year was your mother born?

Cyr: 1921. June of 1921. And she died in 1995.

Jaap: And how did your mom make it to Butte?

Cyr: She met my dad when he was in the army in Missoula. He was getting out of the army in Missoula at Fort Missoula. Well, I forgot to mention he was in the Army before he was in the Navy. So he was in the Army in 1936 to 1939, got out of the Army and wasn't out of the army. He was still in the army, getting discharged in Missoula in 1939. Met my mother there. And what was she doing in Missoula? I really don't know except going to school, she was young. She was only 17.

Jaap: OK, yeah. And how long did they know each other before they got married?

Cyr: I don't know. A year, maybe two. I don't know. Yeah, I never talked about it.

Jaap: What year were you born, Larry?

Cyr: August, 1939.

Jaap: August. When's your birthday? We're almost there.

Cyr: August 25th.

Jaap: Perfect. All right. And where did you grow up?

Cyr: I grew up in Butte.

Jaap: What neighborhood did you grow up in?

Cyr: By the Whittier School on Lafayette Street. We were the last house east. I could walk up to Saddle Rock and not hit a house, except there was a house in the canyon up there and we didn't have many neighbors. The Stern's, the Browns, the Erwin's, the Taylors. That's about it. There was only one other house on the block.

Jaap: Did you go to Whittier School?

Cyr: Went to Whittier? Graduated in 1954? Whittier burned down, so we were going to school in the Civic Center.

Jaap: Oh, we have some pictures of that.

Cyr: Do you? It was kind of fun, though.

Jaap: Was it kind of fun as a young kid going to school at the Civic Center?

Cyr: Oh yeah. When the basketball tournaments would be on, they'd let us out early. Yeah. Then we'd all go watch basketball games.

Jaap: So no one was too heartbroken that the school burned down.

Cyr: Oh yeah, it was. You know, nobody likes to see their school burned down . . . unless they burned it down themselves, you know.

Jaap: We have a picture of these little kids and there was a school that burned down. I can't remember which this particular photo is and this remnant of the wall. And there are these three kids, like peeking out the window with the biggest smiles you've ever seen, you know? Oh, yeah. You could tell they were really heartbroken.

Cyr: Probably for the camera.

Jaap: Yeah. That their school burned down. Yeah.

Cyr: It was a profitable thing for young kids because you went over and took all the copper wiring and piping and things like that. Sold them.

Jaap: Did you sell them on the streets?

Cyr: No, there was a place down. I don't exactly remember where it was but that you could go sell them.

Jaap: So you went to Whittier. Where'd you go after Whittier?

Cyr: Butte High. I graduated in 1958.

Jaap: All right. Did you play any sports or anything in high school?

Cyr: I did. But, you know, I wasn't a big star or anything. No, not like my brother. He made all state in football.

Jaap: How many siblings do you have?

Cyr: A brother and a sister.

Jaap: What order are you?

Cyr: I'm first. My sister is second. She was born in 1942 and she died in 1995. And my brother was born in 43. And he's still alive. He lives in Minneapolis. Yesterday was his birthday. He's married, has three kids, three kids by his first wife. None by this wife.

Jaap: All right. So after high school, what did you do, Larry?

Cyr: Well, I worked around Butte for a year and a half, and then I joined the Navy and I was in the Navy for seven years from 1960 to 1967.

Jaap: And where were you stationed at?

Cyr: Well, I went to boot camp in San Diego, then I went to a school, a Morris Code school in Imperial Beach, California. Then I went to a Russian language school in Washington, D.C.

Jaap: Russian language school? Do you speak Russian?

Cyr: I used to. I don't have much occasion anymore.

Jaap: A little out of practice.

Cyr: Yeah. So that was in Washington, D.C., then I went to the National Security Agency for three years in 1962 to 1965. 1965, I went aboard the USNS [inaudible], and our home port was Cape Town, South Africa. And all we did was float around Africa, west and east, up to Mombasa, Kenya, on the west side.

Jaap: What was that like, the experience?

Cyr: It was great. Mombasa, we got to go on a week, 10 day safari, not a hunting safari, a tourist safari. Saw all the animals. It was great.

Jaap: So did you always want to be in the military because of your family?

Cyr: No, I never really thought about it much until I decided, in fact, I hadn't really decided what I wanted to go in until I got there. Yeah. So I guess I'll go into the Navy. And I was in Portland, Oregon at the time. That was my first plane ride from Portland to San Diego.

Jaap: Your first plane ride ever? Was that pretty terrifying?

Cyr: Just another trip.

Jaap: All right. So what did you do? You were in the Navy for seven years. How about after that?

Cyr: I got out, went to school in Missoula in August 1967. Yeah. And I graduated in June of 1970.

Jaap: What's your degree?

Cyr: In Russian.

Jaap: Really? Did something draw you to that topic particularly?

Cyr: Oh, the Navy told me where to go. So I just stayed there. Yeah. Then after that, what did I do? Let's see. I worked in Missoula for a year or two. Then I went to work at the prison. I was looking for a job in Maryland, either at the National Security Agency or Naval Intelligence. So it was a long process. So in the meantime, I had to work. So I worked at the prison and I worked there for about two years. I was a sergeant when I left and went on the Butte police force, worked there about a year and then got the job in the Office of Naval Intelligence in Washington, D.C. That was in 1973, January 1973.

Jaap: And how long do you stay there for?

Cyr: Well, I worked there till April of 1985 or 1982, sorry, and I went to Germany and worked for U.S. European Command, worked there for three years and went back to the Office of Naval Intelligence in Washington for, let's see, for five more years. Then I went to work for Army Intelligence as director of counterintelligence.

Jaap: Sounds like some pretty serious jobs, Larry.

Cyr: I worked there for five years, and decided to retire. I was a GS15. I probably wasn't going any higher.

Jaap: Yeah, that's really impressive.

Cyr: And then I came back to Butte. Yeah.

Jaap: So did you come back in 85 or was there a couple of years?

Cyr: No, I came back in 96. In 1990 I went to work for the army and worked for them till 1996. Then I went back to Butte and decided to retire.

Jaap: Decided to retire.

Cyr: Yeah, retired. And when I came back to Butte I got involved in politics with the Democratic Party. I served two terms in the legislature in 2000, 2002 and then I started having back problems, couldn't go door to door. And that's how you get elected in Butte. You have to go door to door. And I couldn't do that. So I just decided to find another occupation, which I didn't. So I just stayed retired.

Jaap: All right. How did you meet Judy?

Cyr: Just met her in Butte in 1972. Sorry she might beat me if I say the wrong date. 1973. Yeah. And we got married on December 31st, 1973. And I went back to work in Washington DC in January 1974.

Jaap: So did she go with you? Did she travel with you?

Cyr: She did. But initially she had to work. She worked at the Emerson School Annex school and so she had to finish out that year. So I left in January and she came back to Maryland in 1974. And it was about June when she got there. June, July in that ballpark. Mm hmm. And we lived in Accokeek, Maryland. So she had two kids when we were married. And then I didn't have any, of course, but we had a son who was born in 1975 and he's an old boy now. He's forty one years old.

Jaap: Is he still here in Butte?

Cyr: Well, he is for a while. He's living in Barcelona, but he had to come back because of some difficulties not with his passport, but something else, and so he had to get that finished. He's still here for a while. He'll go back in September. Yeah, so he was a recon Marine, so we always have something to fight about the Navy versus the Marines. He wins, of course, because he's bigger.

Jaap: Hey, this is a recording, though, and he's not being recorded. So you can say whatever you need, Larry.

Cyr: I'm sworn to the truth.

Jaap: So when you came back in the 90s . . . did you visit Butte in between at all?

Cyr: Oh, yeah, just about every year.

Jaap: So it wasn't a big, big shift from when you left to when you came.

Cyr: No. We came back just about every year. The only year we didn't come back was the year we got back from Germany. And when we were in Germany we did come back once in 1983 for a month. So, you know, it wasn't like we were strangers.

Jaap: And what was that like in 83? How was the town in 83?

Cyr: Well, my mom and dad had moved to Coeur d'Alene in 1967 because the mines, you know, were on strike and it was a bad time for miners. So he moved back there and worked in the mine there until he retired.

Jaap: OK, um, let's see, Larry, Ellen wanted me to ask . . . this is kind of a question from Ellen. She's gone today, but she wanted to know if you want to share. What are your thoughts on our relationships with Russia going on now?

Cyr: I think they're not very good. You know, they are our enemy. And, you know, the spy thing. Well, according to the fake news, anyway, the spy thing going on about the election is nothing new. They've been doing that forever. And, of course, it's the FBI's job to watch them in continental United States. And the Naval Intelligence, the part I worked for, watches them outside the United States. So I really don't know much about what they do in the United States except from people I talk to. And I can't tell you what I know about what they did outside the states, but it was not very good. One time, I was on a ship, the USS Banner, which is AGER1. And the Pueblo is AGER2. And we put Pueblo on a station off Vladivostok and we got some bad weather and I had an accident at sea and hurt my back, my leg, my arm. Spent a month in Yukuska. That was in 1966. I was stationed in Edak and went to temporary additional duty to the Banner, so I was in Japan for three months, except for when we were at sea, which is about six weeks out of the three months.

Jaap: All right, Clark, do you have any specific questions to ask right now?

Clark Grant: Yeah, you talked about your first kind of agency job as a national security agency. What was your purview there or what was the culture like at that job? What did you do?

Cyr: Well, I was a young third class in the Navy. And about the time I got there, the Cuban crisis came up. So we worked that crisis and we worked almost 24 hours a day. In fact, in our office spaces, they had cots for us to sleep on, and needed to have showers right there. So we worked that problem for about a month. And so it was pretty interesting.

Grant: What was your role?

Cyr: Uh, well, I was a Russian linguist, so I don't think I should tell you exactly what I did. But you can figure it out.

Grant: That period that you were in these intelligence agencies. I mean, they basically span all of Vietnam. I'm curious what, if you can speak generally about what your knowledge of Russian had to do with their influence in Southeast Asia?

Cyr: Oh, yeah. I never worked that problem. I worked on the Russian navy outside of Russia. So the Russian navy wasn't involved in Vietnam. So I really didn't have much to do with Vietnam.

Grant: And so what were they doing and where were they in the world at that time? Where were areas of concern? Cuba, but . . .

Cyr: Well, they had a fishing fleet off the grand banks and the great banks off Newfoundland. And so we followed that problem and then they had their spy ships there. And in Cuba, of

course, was a big deal. And they had just wherever the Russian navy went. And another time I went to Florida and caught a ship, the USS Saratoga, USS Shangri-La, and went two weeks to the Mediterranean and then transferred at sea to the Saratoga. And when we came back, it was my job to . . . if the Russians tried to overfly us, which was what they usually did was overfly our carriers. And so my job was to tell the captain of the ship when the Russians were coming, so to speak. And so I told the flight officer, the flight commander CAG, they call them, the carrier aircraft group, and told him the Russians are coming.

So he got the airplanes, the fighter airplanes out and they flew next to the Russian T95 bears who would fly over the carriers and take pictures. And we would take pictures of them. And he always took a picture from one airplane to another with one aircraft of the U.S. in the same picture with the bear so that you would know that we were people. I mean, it was kind of a political picture so people would know that we were paying attention to the Russians. So that was a pretty interesting job. I was there for four weeks, but we didn't have any activity when I was on the Shangri-La, just when they came out of the Mediterranean on the Saratoga. So I had my headphones on, you know, and I could listen to see when the Russians were coming and had to tell the captain.

[00:27:15]

Grant: You said a minute ago that Russia is our enemy, even in the mid 60s when you were working. Is that the premise that everyone in naval intelligence works from, they are our enemy?

Cyr: Yeah.

Grant: What makes them our enemy?

Cyr: Well, it's totally different political systems, totally different economic systems. And the reason we have a navy, the military, is to defend your system. And so since we have different systems and we're at odds all the time.

Grant: Do you think we're at odds in more ways than economically? Is it a cultural opposition too?

Cyr: I don't know that it's cultural. It's cultural because of people growing up in that environment. I've been to Russia three times and I never really had any problems going there. So it wasn't a personal thing. You know, it's all political and politics.

Grant: And I mean, do you think it's . . . is it just? You know, our military actions against them and theirs against us?

Cyr: Well, we don't really have any military actions other than watching what they're doing.

Grant: Would you say surveillance has been constant for half a century?

Cyr: Oh yeah. Or more. Lot of money going out there for that. Yeah. Now he wants to buy new planes. Thirty eight billion dollars, a copy or some crazy thing, I'm not sure I think that's a good idea.

Grant: What about in naval intelligence? Never having met anyone who worked there. I don't know anything about it. So like your office, what is the atmosphere like there? What is the building like that you walk into when you go to work?

Cyr: Oh, it's a secure space. So you have to have a clearance to, you know, just to get in the business. And then in order to get into the building, you have to have a card, which has your I.D. and has all your information on it, your name, your picture, what you're cleared for. And so every time you go anywhere, somebody checks the card.

Grant: And your colleagues, are they very severe or is it a jovial atmosphere?

Cyr: Oh, no, it's yeah. It's always fun, you know, I mean, everybody is serious, but still have play time, you know, it's just like any other job.

Grant: Is it?

Cyr: Oh yeah. Except sometimes you have to put your nose to the grindstone and get busy.

Grant: It's like any other job except the lives are on the line.

Cyr: Oh yeah. My last job with the Navy, I was a department head. GS15. I had about, I don't remember, a hundred people working for me and they were all involved in the same thing which was keeping an eye on the Russians.

Grant: And so was that just the Russia department?

Cyr: That was just the Russian department. They had other departments.

Grant: And did you collaborate with them, if there were regional concerns?

Cyr: Well, in a part of the Navy, I worked we were just devoted to Russians. So I didn't really know, you know, like at NSA, they have different departments in the agency.

Jaap: How many people make up a group like that? How many colleagues did you have?

Cyr: In the Navy?

Jaap: Is it a large group of people?

Cyr: Yeah, it was probably I'm not sure, maybe 200. And it was in a suburb of Washington, D.C., Suitland, Maryland. It was right next to the border of D.C.. Big place. Parking in the basement.

Grant: Are there any projects that you're particularly proud of that you can elaborate on?

Cyr: No, I don't think so.

Grant: That you're not proud of or that you can elaborate on?

Cyr: Maybe both. For sure I can't elaborate.

Grant: So the agreements you made when you took the job are binding for life?

Cyr: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Grant: And you're comfortable with that?

Cyr: It really doesn't seem to bother me at all. And I don't have any effect from it. I mean, I'm not sure anybody's watching me. Only if I try to do something bad like spy on us from Russia. I don't think . . . I'm not doing that.

Grant: Right. Does that kind of intrigue really take place where we have agents within naval intelligence who are working with Russia? I mean, do those things occur?

Cyr: It has happened at least twice that I can think of. And even the FBI had a turn, so.

Jaap: Are those times you had personal experience with during your time?

Cyr: Yeah, I did. I had a guy who worked for me part time. I mean, because he was waiting on a clearance and then worked for me because I could give him some unclassified or classified information. And I think he just got out of prison after 40 years or so.

Jaap: Really?

Cyr: Yeah. I won't tell you his name. It's probably not fair to him, although almost anything would be fair to him. He was a spy, but he was spying for the Israelis, not the Russians. But still, if the money was right . . .

Grant: Now, you said you met your wife in 72, 73. What was Butte like then?

Cyr: Well, Butte was a going concern. I mean, you could go on the streets and they were crowded and I was on the police force and I worked from 10:00 at night to 6:00 in the morning. And all we ever did was break up bar fights for the most part, which was kind of fun but wouldn't be fun now. But it was then.

Grant: Did you carry a nightstick?

Cyr: Yeah.

Grant: And so there were occasions where you had to knock someone over the head.

Cyr: I never did. I did, but not with a nightstick.

Jaap: Were people usually, though pretty rowdy. But were they when you had to break up something were they pretty . . .

Cyr: Oh, no. Sometimes it's kind of hard to get the fight out of a guy. So you had to take physical care of them.

Jaap: Do you have any more interesting moments on the police force that you remember?

Cyr: No. It was kind of 10:00 at night to 6:00 in the morning. You know, we were only busy till about 3:00.

Jaap: Yeah, probably mostly with the same type of thing, I imagine.

Cyr: Yeah, just about every night.

Jaap: How about your time at the prison?

Cyr: Well, that was kind of fun, too. I made sergeant in six months, which was good because, you know, guys, there were two of us up for sergeant and there were two jobs. One was a sergeant permanent and one was a sergeant at a six month probationary period. So I got the permanent position and I had only been there six months. So you can imagine how some of those guys felt. But I didn't have any problems. Yeah. So my best friend in high school was in prison. I'm not going to tell you his name, but he used to give me kind of information. Yeah. And he was kind of the con boss, so.

Jaap: Really. So what kind of information?

Cyr: Just who is doing something and what they were doing and narcotics, drugs, you know, that sort of stuff.

Jaap: And did he just do that out of the goodness of his heart or was he hoping he'd be compensated in some way?

Cyr: No, I think he was just my friend. Yeah. He never asked for any compensation. I didn't offer any.

Jaap: Right. Yeah. Yeah. So we'll go back a little more. So when you were younger, what did you do for fun, Larry? What did you do as a kid around here? So you kind of lived further. You didn't have a lot of neighbors, so what did you do to entertain yourself?

Cyr: Well, we had, uh, well, you know, we had the regular school things . . . play football, basketball, whatever, track and skating and all that sort of stuff. And, of course, my nearest friend was about four or five blocks away. And then, you know, and that's a long way when you're a little kid. And I don't know if you know the housing project north of the Whittier, probably not a housing project to you, but it was then. That was all open field when I was a kid.

Jaap: And when did that start being developed?

Cyr: I'd say in the early 50s, early to mid 50s, not mid 50s, probably early 50s.

Jaap: Yeah, yeah, right when that kind of greater Butte project started? Is that kind of when housing started developing out there a little more?

Cyr: I think that was later. But I'm not sure.

Jaap: Where did you go ice skating at?

Cyr: Clark Park. I was a great ice skater. Yeah. I broke my arm once. That's how good I was. One of my many broken bones.

Jaap: Did you go to the Columbia Gardens?

Cyr: Oh, yeah. Yeah. It was quite a walk from where I lived.

Jaap: Could you walk from where you were?

Cyr: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Jaap: Did a lot of kids walk?

Cyr: Everybody I knew walked. It was quite a ways when you're walking but you know, you're a kid.

Jaap: Was there a bus line that came down this far?

Cyr: You had to go to uptown to catch the bus.

Jaap: Which is another quite a walk.

Cyr: Yeah, well, no, you could catch the city bus and go uptown. But who's going to do that?

Jaap: Yeah. That's picking into your roller coaster money.

Cyr: Yeah. There you go.

Jaap: What are some of your memories of the Columbia Gardens?

Cyr: Oh the Columbia Gardens is a great place. You know, it closed in 73 and we were up there the last day it was opened.

Jaap: Yeah. Tell me about that.

Cyr: Well, I was kind of surprised about how few people there were at the Gardens that day. Yeah. Yeah, it was not very busy, but it was a great place. You know, we'd go up there all the time and it was cheap. You know like a ride on a roller coaster or the airplane, the biplane, the horses were like a nickel, as I recall. I'm not sure. They had the boardwalk and you'd get ice cream and everything, hot dogs, whatever, if you could afford it. I never really had a nickel. But you could play on a cowboy swing as all that other stuff up there.

Jaap: So do you think not many people were there on that last day as a sense of just sadness or wanting to not . . .

Cyr: Maybe. I'm not sure. Maybe they went on to the last day. I'm not sure how it went. Yeah, I was just surprised at how few people there were. Somebody else might tell you there are a lot, but I didn't think there were many.

Jaap: That's interesting.

Cyr: We had dances up there when I was in high school.

Jaap: You had your prom up there?

Cyr: Yeah. Couple.

Grant: What was the pavilion like?

Cyr: It was nice. It was a huge place, had a kind of a boardwalk around the top where people could watch it, and then the dance floor was huge. I'd say it was probably at least as big as the city center, the floor, maybe even bigger. I'm not sure.

Jaap: Oh, it was that big?

Cyr: Oh, it was big. It was huge.

Grant: Do you think it was worth it? The mine?

Cyr: No, absolutely not. I think that was a disgrace what they did. But it's what they do. Big business.

Grant: How often do the interests of big business and military intelligence intersect?

Cyr: A lot. A lot. You couldn't believe the number of private companies there are that try to do the same things we do in military and military intelligence. Lots. And they're contracted out. They won't let the military hire people, so they will give their money to contract work out and they do that all the time. Studies. Strength of the Russian navy.

Grant: You said Butte was a going concern. What do you think it no longer is?

Cyr: Oh, no, it's not anything like it was. Nobody should like what's going on in Butte with the businesses closing like, you know, Kmart and things like that, all we have now are fast food places. And they claim they can't hire enough people to.

Jaap: We are going through a really hard time with Kmart closing. And now I know it's just a clothing store, but Herberger's closing. It really kind of leaves a gap in what we can access here.

Cyr: Well, it was really the only clothing store you had in Butte. And yeah, for other little things like small appliances, I mean there are other places but not all in one place like Herberger's or Kmart for that matter.

Jaap: It leaves Wal-Mart as the standing giant I suppose.

Cyr: And you go out to Wal-Mart, it's packed all the time. I don't go out there after midnight, but I guess it is then too. I'm not sure. But yeah.

Jaap: Maybe that's when you should start going. Who knows? Yeah. Yeah. Do you see this turning around?

Cyr: Well I don't know how. Maybe, maybe somebody does. I don't.

Jaap: On one hand, it's kind of interesting because I feel like there's growth uptown, you know, I feel things are growing, but then . . .

Cyr: Well, it's getting nicer, that's for sure. But you still have that problem with the pit and all that. And people are reluctant to move here because of that. Yeah, I think they feel they're going to die the next minute because of that. And maybe they are. I don't know.

Jaap: I don't know. It's an interesting thing to think about because, you know . . .

Cyr: Well, you see people moving to Bozeman and it's such a crummy little town, you can delete that part if you want. But I don't know, I don't know who'd want to live in Bozeman. Now Missoula is a little different. I'd move to Missoula, but I don't have any plans to.

Grant: Is it mining that caused these declines? You know, when they opened the pit, how did that change the town?

Cyr: How many people were driving in the pit? Not very many. You know, they closed down all the mines. And just about the time the mines closed down, I think it was 1983 and the last mine

closed down, underground mine. And my dad had left in 1967. And a whole lot of people were leaving by that time. But the mines were still open. They just weren't employing 10000 miners.

Jaap: Did you ever think the company would close? Because you hear a lot of people say that, you know, we never thought mining would not be here. We never thought it wouldn't be an industry. Did you?

Cyr: You know, I never really thought about it because I joined the Navy when I was 20 years old. So that wasn't on my mind when I was in the Navy. And when I came back, it was different. But it was still going on. My dad was working. But the mines were on strike that year, when I got out 1967.

Jaap: Did a lot of people leave?

Cyr: I think so, yeah. Pretty sure they did. I know my dad did and I know all of his friends did.

Grant: So do you think the unions should be blamed equally for the decline of the city?

Cyr: No, I don't think so. I think it's totally an economic thing. I think the mines went on not because of the union, but they were just a thorn in their side. I think, I mean, figured out how many people were in the union and how much money was coming out of the city from the mines. Unions couldn't have any effect on that, my opinion.

Grant: Is there anything you'd hope to see in Butte? Some particular change or project?

Cyr: Well, I'd like to see some kind of businesses come here. I'm not sure I'd like to see industrial businesses like mining, but somebody could . . . like this hospital. This hospital training type thing. Praxis. I don't know how that's coming along. It seems like they're having a problem raising the money they want to. But in theory, that sounds like something would be good for Butte. I mean, it's going to employ about 4000 people, something like that, not employed, but that many students.

Jaap: Yeah, getting people in is a big part, isn't it?

Cyr: Yeah, and this isn't a real big physical area either, you know, from here to the nine mile, while it's not a whole lot of room out there for big business. So you can compete for . . .

Jaap: What about this Bitcoin mining now? This new type of industry going on . . . I don't honestly, Larry, understand it, but do you?

Cyr: Well, I can't say that I really understand very much. I can tell you, though, that I was looking for a hotel room in Missoula. Yeah. On the 1st of September when the Grizzlies played. The first game was a night game. Yeah. And you can pay by credit card, names on the credit card. And if you don't have a credit card, you can pay by bitcoin.

Jaap: You can. Really? I didn't know that.

Cyr: Yeah. I didn't either till I saw that. Huh. So it's you know, it's getting in there. Even if we don't understand it.

Jaap: Someday we'll understand it. Clark, do you have any more questions? Larry, is there anything else you'd like to share before, you know, anything we didn't ask you that you want to share?

Cyr: Well, I don't think so. We just hope the Grizzlies beat the Bobcats this year.

Jaap: There you go.

Cyr: Football. Yeah, that's all we care about now and every other year.

Jaap: Do you go to all the games?

Cyr: I've had season tickets since I retired in 1996. I don't think I've missed any home games. Well, I might have missed one or two, but not very many.

Jaap: That's pretty good. Yeah.

Grant: Thanks for your time today.

Cyr: Yeah, thank you. Appreciate it.

Jaap: Thanks, Larry.

[00:47:55]

[Well, must be expensive hotels. One Bitcoin right now is close to seven thousand dollars, but it hovers around eight hundred seventy two hundred right there.

I wonder if they give change in bitcoin bills or in.

Yeah. What is what is the smaller. Yes it is a bit.

What is it.

It's such a weird thing to we, I, I just don't know. It'll be one of those things. Like I also thought the iPad was stupid when it came out, you know, I thought who would.

And then I heard they put a camera. I thought who would ever want something?

Who would do that? And now you see I think, oh, I was wrong.

I should not like I grew up with computers, but not with tablets, you know. Yeah, right. So I'm not comfortable all the time, but I can. Yeah.]

[00:48:47]

Cyr: Well, I got to work on one of the first emails. You know, when I was in Germany in 1982, we had email. Yeah, the army was the executive agent for that.

Jaap: What did you think of that? What did you think of the email?

Cyr: It was just another thing, you know. Yeah. Before we talked on the phone.

Jaap: Did you think this is not going to last or did you care?

Cyr: I figured it would last. So we used to talk on secure phones to the Pentagon or something, for example, or to another agency and pretty soon we're talking by email. Sure. That was in 1982 when I was in Germany. I don't really know when it came online. I'm sure it was before that, but.

Grant: I think the military is always, you know, 10 steps ahead of the general public as far as technology.

Cyr: Yeah, well, that's where all the money goes. I'm not sure that's a good idea, but that's where it goes. It's a fact. So. Good or bad.

Grant: I didn't ask you much about your experience in the legislature. Did you sponsor any bills?

Cyr: Yeah, the big project was this Destination Butte. Do you remember what that was? The hotels over here.

Jaap: What do you think about that?

Cyr: It was really a good idea. Could have gone someplace for Butte.

Jaap: Well, now you see, you know, Spokane now has that, is it called Northern Quest? That's big because and people love it.

Cyr: People are just jealous of Butte. You know, they really are. You can't believe how some people have a bad feeling for Butte. Not so much in Great Falls, Billings or Missoula, but the Republicans, because Butte dominated the Republican status of the state for so long. Democrats. All the Republicans are still jealous and still trying to get even. Even the young people. It's sad. We will overcome. We shall overcome.

Grant: Were you in the legislature with Fritz Daily by chance?

Cyr: No, he was in before me.

Grant: He often talks about on the legislative level, the anti-Butte mentality. Yeah. Did you observe that?

Cyr: Oh yeah.

Grant: That's real?

Cyr: Yeah. Not so much in like Missoula and even the city of Billings and Great Falls. But otherwise it was not good.

Jaap: Bozeman not so good. I notice you keep leaving them out of that list.

Cyr: Well, actually, there were some good Democrats from Bozeman. Not like Butte. Where are you from?

Grant: Arkansas. I've been in Montana for 10 years. I'll never return to the South.

Cyr: I don't blame you. Well, Arkansas is not that bad.

Grant: I love the land.

Cyr: Yeah, the land is great. Yeah. Yeah, that's right.

[END OF RECORDING]