

**Oral History Number: 359-001**  
**Interviewee: Arthur J. Mosby**  
**Interviewers: Unknown Speaker and Stan Healy**  
**Date of Interview: circa 1960s**

*Note: This interview was likely recorded for a radio or television broadcast.*

Unknown Interviewer: Well, Mr. Mosby, you have a lot of trees being taken out here. What are your plans with those?

Arthur Mosby: The shrubbery of the old Greenough place will be excavated and taken up to the Leisure Highlands Golf Course and be placed around the course.

UI: They're going right along with the house then?

AM: They go right along with the house. Some of them are up there now. We have several hundred of them up there now, and there'll be over 1,000 bushes from the Greenough place will be eventually placed around the golf course.

UI: Well, when this house was first built, was it out very far from Missoula?

AM: Well, it was practically [unintelligible] in the town.

UI: I noticed when we climb from the mobile unit out to the front yard here that you mentioned stepping on the magic stone. Would you mind telling me the history of that?

AM: Well that is a granite stone there that was placed by Mr. Greenough when they built the house in 1897, I believe it is.

UI: And you say there was also a hitching post there.

AM: Yeah, there were two hitching posts there for people to tie up their horses. The horse and buggy.

UI: Did they have a dairy farm and other items of that nature at that time?

AM: No, they had cows so they had their own milk, and then they had their own pigs and their own chickens and an enormous barn where they had the carriage and [unintelligible]. They had a footman and a man to take care of the horses and take care of the barn and the vegetables. A couple of them working in the garden.

UI: Was the Greenough Park, as it's now known, included in the property at that time?

AM: Well, they owned considerable land in this area, but just when the little bridge was built there and the park was developed, I don't have the dates on that.

UI: How many rooms is this mansion?

AM: I've been through the place hundreds and hundreds times, but I've never counted it.

UI: About when would you say that the mansion was built?

AM: 1897.

UI: And this was built by whom?

AM: The thing was...The house was designed by a fellow by the name of Gibson [A.J. Gibson], an architect that came from the east and designed also the county courthouse at that time.

UI: The present Missoula County Courthouse?

AM: The present Missoula County Courthouse, yes.

UI: This was owned by Mr. Greenough. Which one of the Greenoughs was this?

AM: T. L. [Thomas L. Greenough].

UI: And he had the original fortune?

AM: He came here with practically nothing as a tie contractor on the Northern Pacific, and then he learned how to build bridges and got to be a bridge builder. Then he worked for a Swedish chap by the name of Larson (?) who stopped at Coeur D'Alene and did a little prospecting up there, and finally located a very rich mine.

UI: I see. So the mining properties amassed the fortune which now made this house possible which you are moving to the Highlands.

AM: That is right.

UI: Well we're going to be going into the house, and we'll be back with you in just another time with another chapter of the history of the Greenough Mansion with Mr. A.J. Mosby.

[Break in audio]

Out here on the grounds, what all did you have? I noticed a large swimming pool. What else was on the grounds?

AM: There's a change house—a little three room change house—and the center room is used for visiting and then there's a change house for the men and a change house for a woman. The barn over there is about 40 by 75 [feet] and the great big hay mow in the top. Then there's a place for a garage in the middle on this west end, and in those days they were afraid the automobiles might catch fire and so they had the thing all bricked in—two sides, three sides and the top. Then on the inside are the stalls for the horses and a place for the carriages and whatnot.

UI: Well, you seem to be standing in a circular concrete form on the side of the house. What was that for?

AM: That's so that you come in from the side and turn around and get out on the kitchen side and then turn around and go back again.

UI: I see. So this for the guests to come in or was this for regular deliveries?

AM: This is for regular deliveries. In those days, they didn't have any meat markets in town, and there was a fellow that lived up on the present [unintelligible] area by the name of Hansen (?) that used to run around with a wagon and half a side a beef and couple of sides of pork. He would go down the street and holler, "meat, meat, meat," and the housewives would rush out and stop him. He'd drive in and carve off whatever the housewife wanted, in the way of meat for the family.

UI: Was it very expensive about that time?

AM: No, meat was pretty cheap. Everything was cheap at that time.

UI: Was he selling wild game or was it domesticated animals?

AM: No, domesticated animals.

UI: Very good. Is there anything else about the grounds you'd like to point out to us?

AM: Well, I think the rock fence is quite a feature here, and that's all going to be covered up with the highway.

UI: I noticed that's rock that's all just been picked up or is it hand hewn?

AM: Oh, a lot of it's hand hewn and has...The top is covered with a concrete slab on the top all the way around. See, the area here is better than a couple city blocks, but that means it's a very, very long fence—a lot of yardage in it.

UI: Do you know how long it took to build that fence?

AM: I haven't any idea.

UI: Or to its cost?

AM: Or to its cost, no.

UI: As I look to the east from here, are we looking on the Greenough property?

AM: We're looking on the Greenough property until you come to the area where the new highway overpass is.

UI: That's about a block away.

AM: That's about a block away, yeah.

UI: That overpass indicates the highway's going to go right through the house.

AM: Right through the ridge of the roof, yes.

UI: With this in mind then, you're going to move this house and take it up to Highland Heights, right?

AM: Highland, Leisure Highlands Golf Course.

UI: Leisure Highlands Golf Course. That will be quite a view overlooking the Missoula area.

AM: Terrific.

UI: Mr. Mosby, when you're moving this house, I understand that it's going to cost quite a sum. Would you care to disclose approximately how much?

AM: Well, it's better than 70,000 dollars. The house is being moved by Ketlow Brothers (?) from Spokane. They are experienced movers, and they have the equipment.

UI: Since they've come this way, they, I notice, have quite heavy equipment. Now, about how much does this house weigh?

AM: Four hundred and fifty tons—t-o-n-s.

UI: Four hundred and fifty tons. I hate to ask the question, but how are you going to get it across the river?

AM: That's not a problem, that's Mr. Ketlow's problem.

UI: [laughs] Well, I trust he can solve it. On what date do you expect him to do that?

AM: Well, it will take at least a week before they...in showing up and getting the iron beams onto the house and getting it leveled. Then he has a four-wheeled gadget that have a spring gadget that tells how much weight is on each pair of wheels, you see. That way, why, they can adjust it. If they can cut the weight down to 200 tons, they can get it across the Madison Street bridge, and if they can't, then they will have to ford the river.

UI: How do you expect to cut down some of that weight?

AM: They're going to remove the front porch and the rear porch and all the extra chimneys. The top part of the chimneys are going to shake off anyway so they're going to remove them first before they start moving it.

UI: Then how long from the time they leave here, do you anticipate, that you'll have it on top of the hill.

AM: Well, that too is their problem. It will take about three weeks, I'd imagine.

UI: Three weeks. So you anticipate going down Higgins Avenue?

AM: It would be quite a spectacle, but then we have to confine it to the outskirts.

UI: I see. So you'll be going all the way around Missoula up to the top of the Leisure Highlands where you'll be using the house for what purpose?

AM: That'll be our new clubhouse. They're going to use the dance hall on the third floor of the Greenough place as an activity room for the University [University of Montana] people or wherever they want for their small dances and a room of that particular size.

UI: Will the, say, club be able to rent various rooms?

AM: That is the idea, yes. There are more rooms in the building that you'll need for a clubhouse, and we planned on renting out the other rooms for parties except one room which will be used for M.I. [Montana Institute of Arts] displays and also the hallway on the present second floor.

UI: So portions will be restored for the Montana Institute of Arts?

AM: That's right.

UI: Now, are they sponsoring this too?

AM: No, but they have worked with us for some time and worked hard really in trying to get the city to do something about preserving the house and also the county to preserve the house. We feel they're entitled to some space for that reason.

UI: As well they should. The thing should be preserved, things of this nature, to show what happened in Missoula's history.

AM: That's right. I think people should be interested in the history of early Missoula.

UI: They sure [unintelligible]. Well, let's take a tour of the house and see what we see inside.

AM: All right, let's go.

UI: Before we do though, Stan... [speaking to another person]

I'm speaking to you now as I enter what is known as the Gold Room after passing through one of the most unusual entryways to a residence I've ever seen. Mr. Mosby, about this Gold Room, how would you describe it?

AM: Well, that's beyond description for me.

UI: Are those walls a felt? I noticed the curtains as we come in, they just appear to be of felt. They have a very luxurious appearance. What was the Gold Room used for?

AM: It was a sitting room for the important people that came to visit the Greenough family. They had silk-covered seats [unintelligible] and a cabinet for display of a lot of trinkets they brought from Paris and Germany. The girls traveled all over the world and brought little gadgets home that if they were important enough they put them in the cabinet.

UI: And the lights, I noticed they're all electricity, but were they gas at one time?

AM: No, the place is piped for gas, but the gas was never hooked up. They used electricity.

UI: About the entrance way that we came through, I noticed the floor is quite unique.

AM: Yes, it is, it's all parqueted, and it's of oak and different colors. As is the ceiling cross beams and seats around the fireplace in the sitting room.

UI: The rest of the hallway as it goes around through the house, I notice is also the same way. Would you have any idea what it must have cost to just put the floor in?

AM: I haven't any idea as to that, but in those days labor was cheap. I don't think they paid over 50, 60 cents an hour at that time. [unintelligible] was a retired contractor from Missoula was one of the men that worked on this house.

This is the music room here. Green tapestry, and they have a piano and a settee along on this side that was quite ornate. The fixtures are a little old fashioned. They still have carbon lamps in some of the light fixtures, that is really unusual.

UI: Were they using this carbon lamps?

AM: Yes, in the living room fixture they still used the carbon lamps. They give a red light, a little better than the white light like the present [unintelligible] do.

UI: Were those a very beautiful light to watch?

AM: Well, they were sort of a reddish yellow—a little unusual. I wouldn't say they were beautiful. There are lights where [unintelligible] fixtures are lovely, rather ornate, but things where then. To be nice then it had to be ornate.

UI: That's true. Do you anticipate that very different windows that are in here will be—the colored glass that's been installed—do you think that they'll be able to transport the home and keep that intact?

AM: Oh yes, without a question. They take it pretty easy. I have full confidence in the Ketlow operation.

[Loud background noise]

UI: Sounds like Niagara Falls. That's a sound I think everyone knows—the sound of a flushing toilet. We are in one of the, just off the master bedroom, wouldn't you say?

AM: Just off the master bedroom.

UI: Mr. Greenough's bedroom in the bathroom, and the toilet bowl itself is one of the most unique I have ever seen.

AM: [unintelligible].

UI: [unintelligible] and it has quite a bit of carving on the side of it. Made by Nelson Manufacturing Company in where did you say that was made? St. Louis Missouri.

AM: That must be 1890s.

UI: A very beautiful, and it's one you've heard about in many [unintelligible]. You had a pull chain. Only in this case, a braided cord with the water chamber high on the wall overhead. How long would you say that bathtub is, Mr. Mosby?

AM: It must be six feet. Made for a good-sized man, and it looks very comfortable. It is very comfortable. [unintelligible] bathe in this tub when Ruth [Greenough] and I were first married.

UI: How many years ago was that?

AM: It's a long time.

UI: Is your wife the only surviving Greenough?

AM: In the Greenough family, she has the one brother in Spokane, a chap by the name of Jack. He was the youngest brother.

UI: And this shower, it's quite a shower stall. Does it still work?

AM: I haven't tried it. I'd rather fill the tub and enjoy myself in the tub than the shower.

UI: If this tub were to be duplicated, how expensive do you believe it might be?

AM: Oh, a couple hundred dollars at the size of it. Steel and the cast iron legs and the marble base. [unintelligible].

UI: It sits completely on a marble base about six feet long and about three and a half feet wide, wouldn't you say?

AM: I think it's around in there.

UI: Then a different type of marble is used for the sinks. The ancient fixtures in it also, and it sits on marble also. What type of a marble would that be?

AM: Chocolate-covered marble.

UI: Would that be from somewhere in the Northwest?

AM: I don't know. Most of it was bought in Chicago and back East. The Northwest was a little [unintelligible] too. [unintelligible].

UI: That's the dining room. I noticed something there on the middle of the floor. Again, inlaid floor. What was that wire and metal gadget for?

AM: That was for the hostess to step on the button and call the maid.

UI: Oh, they didn't use the little bell in those days on the table then?

AM: No.

UI: The house was a bit large for that anyway.

AM: Yes, and the bell wouldn't cover enough ground to get the maid in.

UI: Now, where were the maid's quarters? We're on the first floor.

AM: The maid's quarters are on the third floor, or living quarters are on the third floor.

UI: Then she worked just off here?

AM: Then the pantry [unintelligible].

UI: This pantry I noticed has a complete pounded copper sink.

AM: That's right.

UI: That's unusual. The room we just left, that dining room, is it all hand painted on the walls and ceiling?

AM: That's right. There's a cloth on the, pasted on the wall first, and it was covered with gold leaf, then they had an artist from Chicago that painted the leaves on the wall of the dining room.

UI: Now, we're in the kitchen at the present time. This is linoleum, very well done for even those days. I noticed you have a little bell here with the arrows telling from which point the rings came from.

AM: Different floors, yes.

UI: Made by the Montana Electric Company in Butte, Montana. Are they still in business?

AM: How do you know about that.

UI: When did they go out of business?

AM: Sometime between Christ and the early days.

UI: [laughs] That's quite a—

AM: [unintelligible].

UI: Again, marble to work with.

AM: [unintelligible].

UI: And on the second floor, we're just up the back stairway, and it's all bedrooms. These are all quite elaborate curtaining that was used. Did every one of these bedrooms have an adjoining bath? The bath between you...the bath adjoining or two bedrooms with a bath in between one and the other.

Again, we see marble being use used quite extensively. Did they use marble in all the bathrooms?

AM: Yes.

UI: Can you tell where these windows of flowers came from that are in between the first and second floor?

AM: No, no, I don't remember that. I have been told several times, but I forgot.

UI: It would be quite a feat to replace them.

AM: Yes, it would. I don't think they make them anymore. They're quite ornate.

UI: They would be imported?

AM: Possibly. Possibly. This is the Edith's room over here.

UI: A room which is well decorated with—

AM: Violet-colored. [unintelligible].

UI: Very, very nice. Violet as he says and pink with blue-ribbon wallpaper. Very beautiful. Again, the woodwork being so ornate—as the word is often used—that just fits the actual house itself. Now these—

AM: This is Ruth's room. [unintelligible].

UI: Oh, is this the old four-poster type bed?

AM: Yes, the old four-poster bed.

UI: And Ruth is which Greenough?

AM: That's the second oldest girl. She was the Greenough girl that I married. The oldest girl was Estella, who married the past president of the Bunker Hill Mining Company in Coeur d'Alene.

UI: How many were there in the family that lived here at one time?

AM: Well, there were three girls and three boys.

Tennessee

UI: That's where Mr. Greenough himself came from?

AM: That's where Mrs. Greenough [Tennie Eperson] came from. I don't remember whether Mr. came from there too. So they must have because they were sweethearts there and he came West then—"go west," as Mr. Horace Greeley said one time. Then when he was able, she came, and they were married in some place in North Dakota in the gold fields there.

UI: I noticed in this room, which is a bedroom, doesn't have a bath but it does have the marble as you call it, chocolate-marble wash basin I guess. Which room would this be a part of the family again?

AM: This was the mother's bedroom. [unintelligible] above the door of the closet, so you never have a musty smell in the closet, see.

UI: Oh, is this just this room or all the rooms.

AM: All the rooms, all the closets.

UI: Then an adjoining bath, which again is marble and described as the one on the first floor with the overhanging water cabinet and the pull cord to flush the very ornate toilet and very, very large, again, type of bathtub. Was this house wired originally?

AM: Yes, wired and in some places it had gas too.

This was the twin bedroom and two of the boys—the younger boys—lived in here [Harry Paul and John Epperson].

UI: And the home was completely heated by steam?

AM: Oh, yes. [unintelligible].

UI: On the third floor, you say, this room was used by the maid?

AM: Yes, when Ruth and Edith were here.

UI: Were the other rooms also used by other servants?

AM: That I don't know. When I lived in the place, there was no man servant. [unintelligible] didn't sleep in the house.

UI: The servants even had ornate fixtures and wallpaper and other items.

AM: They were well taken care of.

UI: They were well taken care of.

AM: This is the ballroom.

UI: And the star on the ceiling out of lights?

AM: It had electric lights.

UI: Some of those lights appear to—

AM: [unintelligible].

UI: Well, some of those lights look as if they came with the house. They darn near came with Noah's ark. Some of them are lead the original bulbs that came with the home, and I know notice only about a third of them still light but they're still there.

AM: Still there. They're trying hard.

UI: Pictures are being taken of the home and a sun porch wrapping around the third floor also. About what time of the century, would you say, those bulbs were sold?

AM: They were in the 1890s.

UI: This held many a party for some very prominent people.

AM: Yes, Mr. Greenough I've heard had professors from the University up here for weekend parties, and they had the orchestra in the corner—the round area right here—and seats all around the wall and they served punch.

UI: Did you ever attend any parties up here?

AM: No, that was before my time. I had a younger brother though that was editor of the *Missoula Sentinel* [newspaper], and he came to the parties, played tennis on the tennis court, and everything like that.

UI: And Mr. Greenough went from here to Spokane.

AM: Yes, when he couldn't get along with the city council on that expansion of the park, why, he left Missoula and went to Spokane.

UI: About when was that?

AM: That I don't know.

UI: But Mrs. Greenough stayed?

AM: She stayed at the home, yes. She wouldn't leave Missoula. I think she was smart. She showed better sense than he did.

UI: He had the business sense but she had the sense of knowing something fin.

AM: That's right. She enjoyed the town.

UI: No doubt she did from the looks of the items that the house is built of and the things that they put inside of it. Now, the items that have been removed from the house now as the house is about to be moved, are they going to be in the mansion when you restore it to the hillside?

AM: Largely, yes.

UI: Downstairs will you use the same pictures as you use for a clubhouse, or will you change it around?

AM: Well, we're going to retain the library and the Gold Room on the main floor. Then up above on the second floor, why, we'll retain Ruth's room and Edith's room and maybe one other. That will be furnished as it was before we moved it.

UI: You know as is always with an older home—especially when it's being torn down and a home that was belonging to a prominent family—there have been rumors, and one of the latest ones is that the wreckers, as they went through the house, found 60,000 to 70,000 dollars worth of jewels.

AM: Marvelous.

UI: [unintelligible], you'd like to hear it too, fight? Well fine. Have you heard any other rumors?

AM: They haven't split it with me. [laughs]

UI: You'll have to next to the [unintelligible].

AM: I'll have to learn.

UI: Yes, we'll save those. [speaking to someone else]

Stan Healy: [unintelligible]. Those are rare.

UI: They're even colored, I notice, on the end of the bulb.

AM: [unintelligible]. House was abandoned there for quite a while. During the war [unintelligible] the family was all split up and the house was left vacant. [unintelligible] took over and some of the plaster's gone and the roof had leaked in a couple of places, but it won't take much to restore it to its original condition. There is an old painting along the wall there of [unintelligible].

UI: Most of it actually was very artistic.

AM: It is.

UI: It would take just some cleaning actually on some of it.

AM: Well, it'll all have to be gone over before we open it up there on the golf course.

[Break in audio]

AM: Have to hold this place down and hold the place down on the hill.

UI: You say Mrs. Greenough...or Mrs. Mosby, rather, lived here until about two weeks ago.

AM: Yes.

UI: That would make it about March of 1965, and she has lived here how long?

AM: You mean alone with her maid?

UI: Yes.

AM: Oh, it's eight months or something like that.

UI: And who occupied the home before she?

AM: Well, lived here together previous to that, and previous to our marriage she lived here with her sister Edith.

UI: By present day standards, about what would it take for your expenses on lights and that sort of thing just to keep the house up?

AM: Oh, it runs around 80 dollars a month, 80 to 150 in the winter time for heat.

UI: Did it use gas?

AM: Gas, yes.

UI: Is that an original—

AM: No, oh no, No that was...In the first days, it was fired with wood—the furnace was fired with wood only.

UI: Did they ever switch to coal from the old coal mine?

AM: Yes, yes. Later on, they used coal and then when gas became available for heating, why, they had it switched to gas.

UI: All this being converted to steam, of course.

AM: Hot water.

SH: Do you know of any famous...In the history of this house, was there any famous people came to visit here from, say, Europe or some people? Did they ever have a house guest from—

AM: Oh yes, but that was before my time.

SH: You don't recall any famous house guests who stayed here?

How about in your memory, what is the most important thing that you can remember happening here? Do you remember any legends or stories from the old days of famous parties here or famous things that happened in this house?

AM: No, that was before my time.

SH: I see.

UI: You were quite a pioneer to the town at that as you—

AM: I came into the picture late.

SH: When did you come to Missoula?

AM: I came to Missoula in 1925.

SH: 1925, I see. Then you lived up in Whitefish once, did you not?

AM: No, I lived in Kalispell.

SH: Kalispell, and you came down here from Kalispell, I see.

AM: From Kalispell. I bought an electric store next to the Wilma Theatre. I think there's an insurance outfit there now. It was a candy store when I came there.

SH: You didn't go into the radio business immediately then?

AM: I bought an electrical retail store that was owned previously by General Electric—one of their factory stores. They went on to retail business, and I was in the retail electric business in Kalispell and they wanted me to come down here. Took me down to Missoula, showed me the town, and I liked it pretty well and they made me a good deal on the store. I bought it, and left my younger brother to run the store in Kalispell.

SH: Where are you from, Mr. Mosby? Where were you born?

AM: Born is St. Paul.

SH: St. Paul. What is your birthdate?

AM: October the 20th.

SH: What year?

AM: Must I tell that?

SH: Well, I would like to.

AM: 1888.

SH: I see. You went to Kalispell first and then came down here.

AM: Yes, my dad came out with the Great Northern Railroad when it was built through Kalispell [unintelligible].

UI: Well, you've come a long way since then in starting...wasn't this the first radio station that you had here in Missoula?

AM: That's right. That's right.

UI: About what year was that?

AM: That was about 1926.

UI: Did you run that together with your electric store?

AM: Yes.

UI: What kind of a broadcasting did you first do?

AM: Oh, phonograph records.

UI: Were those those round-type cylinders?

AM: No, no. They had the flat records, the flat records out at that time. They weren't too good, and then we moved our electric store to where Heinrich's Jewelry Store is now and flower shop. I rented a room in the present radio central building, and we had our studio on the third floor of that building. There were wooden stairs on the alley side, and we used to run out the back door of the electric store, then up the stairs to the third floor and then go on the air and sing our songs and record our commercials and do the announcing and so on and so forth.

UI: About how much did commercials sell for in those days?

AM: Oh, 50 cents to the dollar. Prices were down.

UI: Prices were down. [laughs]

[Break in audio]

UI: Quite a view from the library room. What about the library itself, what are you going to do with it?

AM: That will be restored. We'll keep that. We think that will be a general interest and will be another thing outside of golfing that will bring people up to the clubhouse, you see.

UI: Will we actually be able to look at the works that were in here?

AM: That's right.

UI: Now, are there any first editions that you know of or anything of that nature?

AM: No, I don't know. We had one history book of Montana, but that disappeared someway or other. I don't know how that happened. It's one of the things that people, the University people, were very much interested in. There are pictures of Montana's first legislative session. Here are of the pictures of the men that were in that meeting. Where it is now, we don't know.

SH: Anyone ever tell you how long it took to build this house?

AM: No. I tell you George [unintelligible] could tell you because he worked on it.

[End of Interview]