

ARKANSAS EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS COUNCIL  
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Official transcript of:

Jessie Cecille Boyd

President Alread Extension Homemakers Club, Van Buren County

Original recording made 7 December 2011

at Alread, Arkansas

Recorded by: Katherine Bensuk

Highway 110 Extension Homemakers Club Secretary, Van Buren County

Interviewed, transcribed and edited by: Cynthia J. Pace

Van Buren County Extension Homemakers Council Vice President





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Oral History Program

Cynthia J. Pace, Van Buren County Extension Homemakers Council Vice President

7 December 2011

This is an audio recording of Jessie Cecille Boyd, President of the Alread Extension Homemakers Club of Van Buren County. This interview is part of an Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program, and Cecille is answering questions asked by Van Buren County Extension Homemakers Council Vice President, Cynthia J. Pace.

Questions and comments by Cynthia are in boldface type; Cecille's responses and comments are in lightface type.

**I am Cynthia Pace and this is the interview with Jessie Cecille Boyd for the Arkansas Extension Homemakers Council Oral History Program. And it is being done on December 7, 2011, at the Extension Homemakers Building in Alread, Arkansas, in Van Buren County.**

**The audio recordings and transcript of this interview will be donated to the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and—Visu—Oral and Visual History at the University of Arkansas.**

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**Are you, Cecille, willing to give the Pryor Center permission to make the audio file and transcript available to others?**

Yes I am.

**Excellent. First, I'd like you to say your complete legal name and spell**

**it for me, and then tell me the city and county in which you presently reside.**

Jessie Cecille Boyd, J-e-s-s-i-e C-e-c-i-l-l-e B-o-y-d, and we are at Alread—the Alread-Rupert community, 20 miles west of Clinton in Van Buren County.

**Good. Now, Cecille, this is going to be a very informal interview, and I want you to share your memories of your involvement with the Extension Homemakers program, the good times and the challenges, so let's get started. What has been your association with the Extension Homemakers program?**

I have been a member of the Alread EH Club for about 13 years now, but I can remember when my mother was in what we called the Home Demonstration Club. I can remember playing under the quilts when I was very young and also I have a sister that's very active in the Lonoke County Extension Club.

**And how did you learn about the Extension—Homemakers Extension program?**

Well, it's a little story. We moved up here about 13 years ago and I read in the paper that they were going to have the Extension Homemakers Club meeting and I saw—we saw this building out here and it had a little sign—"Alread EH"—and I thought, Hmm, that sounds like a good idea, so once on the second Thursday of each month I decided, well, I'm gonna [going to] go and I just diddly-bopped in here and set down at the table and did I get lots of strange looks. No one had ever seen me and I had never seen any of those women, but it didn't take but about maybe 15 minutes and I knew I was welcome.

**Excellent. So, how long have you been associated with the Alread EH Club?**

Right at 13 years now.

**OK. And this is the first club, obviously, that you've ever belonged to and what year was that again?**

AEHC Oral History Program  
Boyd/Page 3

Nineteen ninety-nine [1999].

**Nineteen ninety-nine [1999]. And you are still presently a club member?**

Yes ma'am.

**And what's the name of that club again, county and district?**

Alread EH Club, Van Buren County Extension Office, and the district is Ozark.

**That first day—do you have any special remembrances of that first meeting other than, you know, feeling strange and then lovingly comfortable?**

Well, they—it seemed like they had so much business they had to do that day, it was just business, business, business, and I thought this is a group of women that are really on the ball, they're organized and then—we—I can't remember exactly what the program was, but I know it was very informative. And then we always had a treat. We always had refreshments, and that was—we don't do that now, but we had refreshments back then and everything was always home-made and it was delicious.

**Wonderful. And so, was that prompted you—what made you join the club officially?**

Well, I moved up here and I didn't know anyone and I knew this was a good way to get to know women in the community.

**And what has kept you in the membership—membership—why do you continue?**

All the wonderful relationships. We have a meeting and we don't necessarily do exactly everything the way other clubs do, but we do our own thing, and the programs we have are very informative. And several years ago we were down to three members and we were going to consolidate with Crabtree, which is the next community. But the Good Lord sent so many people up here, and now then we have anywhere from 10 to 12 at each meeting and I know we just have a special bond, and that's because of EH.

**Excellent. So, how involved did you become? List any offices, committee chairmanships or special responsibilities that you've held in the club?**

Well, if anyone knows me they know, if I'm going to be a member, I'm going to support it. I can't remember exactly everything, but I know one year I was the secretary and then I served as program chairman. I have been on the scrapbook committee, the chairman of the candidate speaking dessert auction, which I will tell about later; I was also chairman of the Fall Festival and on the County Council I served as Historian by making the scrapbook, and I can't remember how many years now I have been president.

**So have you attended any of the State Council's meetings and if so, what year did you attend your first one and do you have any particularly special remembrances of that event?**

No, I haven't. I've—it's just too far to go to Hot Springs.

*[Laughter]* OK.

And we were always so busy in the garden, and doing other things up here in this community that I never did, just didn't have the time to go to the state convention.

**Did you go to your local board meetings?**

I don't go very often. And I told them when I joined, I said I would gladly support you if we can do something in the community, but you know it's around fifty, 60 miles to Clinton and back; but I can do stuff on the phone and I can call people, so I don't attend 'em [them] very often.

**Fine. So how has Extension Homemakers touched your life?**

Oh, there's, I just can't name all the reasons, but one—the special thing is the lasting friendships. We have had many of our founding mothers that have passed away. We have many people that have moved, but there's some of us that are still here and just, and, programs that we have are so informative and we've learned very, very—there's just so many things I just can't name all of 'em [them].

**Don't you kind of wish we had done this years and years ago so we could have added those voices to our history currently?**

Yes.

**What has been your favorite event or activity since your involvement?**

Well, the main thing I've, that we—I've really really enjoyed the fund-raisers. And the head—the main thing and where we've made most of the money has been the candidates speaking dessert auction. And I'll tell about that later.

**Oh, good. OK. And, what—do you have a least favorite event or activity?**

Oh, Yes.

*[Laughter]* **Let's hear that . . .**

Those volunteer hours, and record keeping. I taught school so many years and —when I—promised myself when I got through teaching school, I wasn't gonna [going to] have to keep up with all that stuff, but I do try because there's a reason for it to keep up with those volunteer hours. I worked on mine last night.

**So you were a teacher, how long was that?**

14 years.

**Was that here in the Alread community?**

No ma'am. We lived in Conway from [19]'67 to [19]'98, but I taught across the river at a small school; it was in the City of Bigelow, but it was called East End.

**How do you think that being a teacher has helped you be an effective Extension Homemaker member?**

Oh, the responsibilities, caring for people, loving people.

**What changes have you experienced in the Extension Homemakers organization since you came on board?**

Well, not many because we get our yearbooks, and we do the same thing each meeting, and I am sure there's been a lot of other changes that I have not realized.

**Has Extension Homemakers taught you anything about people?**

Oh, Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. When we're discussing certain projects, everybody's got a different idea, and we have to vote on it; we have to be in one accord and there's some people you just can't convince that things need to be done the way—the way that they should be done.

**Do you have any other memories or experience or thoughts on that, that you'd like to share right at the moment?**

Yes, we have on display over here on one of our tables, all of the yearbooks, and I took it on myself to clean out the filing cabinets and to look and study what our founding mothers did for the Alread EH Club. And it has been amazing and I really—it's just been so helpful to see what all has been done for the Extension Homemakers Club, and I tell these new members I said: "Listen, you need to look at these—look at these scrapbooks and see what's gone on. And we have a—a—member now, Lue Butler, that has taken over the scrapbook committee and the past four or five years and we work real hard on our scrapbook. We enter it in our county fair and in our district fair and the state fair and also we have a contest for our local program, Van Buren County age—Van Buren county all of—all of the clubs in the county. And for the past three or four years we've won the top prize, which is \$25. And that's really what helps pay those bills.

**Impressive. It sure adds to the coffers. Now, in its heyday, how many members were there in the Alread Club? Can you remember off the cuff, or do you have any idea?**

It seemed like several years ago in [20]'05 or [20]'06, we had right at 30, but now a lot of those were—ver—were inactive, but they paid their dues and when

we had special projects they would—would support us. And I imagine in the years past we've had probably that many and some—some years maybe not so many.

**Can you tell me some of the member names that maybe folks who aren't with you in the currently club anymore that you'd like to—to mention?**

Yes. We have some founding mothers and some of 'em [them] that I knew who've worked very hard: Dorothy Henderson; Edith Lake; Joyce Goodman; Beatrice Summers—we called her Bea; and Ellen Ruth Pack; Carolyn Yates; Louise Hall; Lewis Emerson; Mrs. Wilma Walker—most people called her Wilma, but I called her Miss Wilma; Scottie Toombs; Fern Waddle, who I always called my mountain momma; then there was Miss [Interviewee's Edit: "Mrs."] Enid Hefner and Mrs. Ila Hefner; and Louise Mc—McCutcheon, I believe it is, and some of those founding mothers that are still members of our club are: Burtie Harder and Loretta Isreal and, of course, Joyce Goodman and several that have moved would be Willa Dean Smith and Ramona Drenner.

**Wonderful. OK. Excellent. So, let's talk about some of the projects that the club has been involved in, but first of all what one project would you like to see your club do now, and why might that be?**

[Pause and Noise]

I guess I would say just to repair and maintain the building. We've had this building for so many years, and we've—it's just like home. Things happen and they have to be repaired. And after our, this building was built, the women knew that they had to have funds to maintain the building. They had to buy all of the furnishings. We have a list of all of the years, of what happened each—each year and it was very, very impressive what—what happened and what year they went, and I'm going to just briefly go over a few of 'em [them].

We had to have a septic tank and water storage tank; they were paid for in [19]'82. Then a heating system was paid for in [19]'83. And it continues on and says Karen and James Strange wrapped the heat ducts in December of [19]'83. That's very important. We now have to use propane, and we keep the heat on low and I imagine tonight we'll have to leave the heat on and, of course,

that will be an expense. Roy Henderson, one of our members' husbands and who later became a member, put gutters on the building. And also helping him was Goodie Goodman, Cephas Waddle and Mr. Ralph Baker.

We had a stainless steel sink installed in [19]'83; also tables and chairs were bought. A serving bar was installed and cabinets, and Doug d'Orsay, Fran's husband, built our serving table and our cabinets. Storm doors were installed by Mr. Otis Walker and Mr. Reeves. And the bathroom signs that we still have up today were painted and put up by Jackie Pickett. We had a attic fan put up in August of [19]'84 and ceiling fans were put up in January [19]'88. I don't think they need the ceiling fans in January, but I'm sure they had funds and they put 'em [them] up.

Then we had a new refrigerator that was bought in 1993. Later on, of course, they had an air conditioner and I need to look up, and I'm sure I can find when that was bought. And also we have a freezer—and there—and a new sew—almost a new sewing machine. It's— it was donated to the club and we have had it repaired, and I'm saying I don't use it, but some people do use 'em [them], sewing machine. And it's an antique. There were many, many fund-raisers held over the years and we still have 'em [them] today. We have to meet the expenses of our phone bill; to pay for electricity and much, much later we finally got on the Van Buren County water system. We have insurance we have to pay, fire dues, propane and other expenses. The fund-raisers that we use, we/they used back then and still today are numerous. And I'm going to hopefully not leave out any of 'em [them].

We had family game night. There would be a snack bar and tasty homemade goodies and, of course, you had to pay for it. Also they would play Bingo with all kinds of prizes. On October the 29, 2011, the club sponsored a Fall Festival. On the menu was taco salad and all the trimmings and to get more money, we had lots of, [pause] and we had baked goods available. We knew that that would bring more money in. We had a cont—costume contest and games for the children, and, of course, Bingo. Those adults attending provided treats for the children to take place of the traditional trick-or-treating. The money we made will be used to purchase new tables, and we're going to talk about that tomorrow at our EH meeting.

The making of quilts was another fund-raiser. Several members would come

and quilt and they would quilt for others and in time of need if there was a fire or someone just needed a quilt, they always had quilts provided. In 1976 a centennial pattern quilt was made and raffled off. As late as 2009 club members pieced and hand quilted a quilt and raffled it off. More than \$500 was made and one of our new quilters won that quilt. There was numerous bake sales held on the popular square in Clinton. There were many yard sales, white elephant sales and several years they had Christmas bazaars and this brought in more funds. As I was reading some of the old secretary's books, I found out in 1977 the club managed a concession stand, they called it a "eat stand" during a blue grass festival at the Van Buren County Fairgrounds. Greeting cards were sold. When I was looking at some of the old checkbooks it would say "cards," "cards," "cards." I wondered: Why did they need so many cards? Now I finally found out they were selling cards, and that was another profitable fundraiser.

Now the most popular and the one that I really enjoy and get into is the, what they used to call candidate speaking pie supper; now called candidate speaking dessert auction. In April of 2010, we had 15 county and one state candidate come to speak. After—well, first we eat; we had finger foods, and then we have the candidates get to speak and they have to sign in and that's the way they—they know when they will speak. There were over 50 items auctioned off. Everything from a quart of dill pickles, now I personally make those and it's from a recipe from a former member, my mountain mom, Fern Waddle. They went, and I'm not braggin' [bragging], but we sold—sold 'em [them] for \$65— a quart of pickles!

**Phew!**

But this year, since the drought; no pickles. But I think maybe I can find some back in my cabinet. We had everything from the pickles to apple, apricot and peach fried pies and they went for as high as \$80 a dozen.

**Let me interrupt you a minute. I have never heard of a fried pie, nor have I ever heard of a pie supper. Can you—before I let you go on, can you tell me just a little bit about what's a pie supper and what's a fried pie?**

Cindi . . .

*[CP Laughs]*

. . . we can tell you're not from Arkansas. Every Arkansas [Arkansan] knows what a pie supper is. And every Arkansan should know what a fried pie is. I will try to make some; the next time I see you I'll bring you a fried pie. A pie supper goes back many, many years. And I can remember when I was very young, a long time ago, we lived right across the road from a school in the county that adjoins Van Buren County, and it seemed like they would have it when it was time for an election. And the women would make a meal, I mean they would make like sandwiches and they would put it in this beautiful box, and they would decorate the box that nobody was supposed to know who brought the box. Then they would auction it off and, of course, the prettiest box usually got the most money, of course, not knowing what was in the box. And that person would have to eat with whoever made the—the box. And I can remember as a young—very little, little kid maybe less than 5 years old that we'd always think: Ohh, who would mother get to eat with? and then who would daddy get to eat with? And the kids, and I can't remember what we ate; I'm sure there was some food there for the kids.

Now fried pie: I can't believe you don't know what a fried pie is. You have your crust you have to make; you have to roll it out and then, now then, I do have a new—new-fangled thing—fangled piece of equipment that you put the pie in and then whatever you're gonna [going to] make, your filling is aple—apple, apricot, peach, even chocolate fried pies. And then you have to [uses hands to demonstrate] close it up and crink it around and usually I use milk. You can use—you can use my new piece of equipment or you can get a fork and go around it and make it real fancy and then you have to fry it in a skillet, but, now I don't use my cast iron skillet, I use a electric grill that my sister gave me and you put a little bit of vegetable oil in it or Crisco or whatever you want to use and you fry it. So much, so many minutes till it gets brown on one side and then you flip it over.

**Can't wait 'till [until] you share one with me.**

Ooohh, you talk about good ones. Now, and sometimes I make little bitty ones so they go further or you can give out, give 'em [them] out. But they are good, and I promise you, I will make one. OK. These candidates really get caught up

when it comes to bidding. And, as club members we get excited, too, because we know that they keep on bidding that means more profit for us. And it's usually right. I think last time it was right at \$1,600 we made. So that was always good and then we get to know the candidates. Last, in April of last year, our state candidate was from Conway and he graduated with our daughter in 1986 and I was thrilled to see him and, of course, when he saw me here he was thrilled to and, of course, I went over and gave him a big hug and everybody wondered what was I doing hugging that young man.

*[CP Laughs]*

But, and then years ago we had our—a former student of mine came because he was running for senator, and he was Bob Johnson and I loved having him here so I could say that I taught him in sixth grade. And he was happy that I was here and I think he was happy I was his sixth-grade teacher.

We have many more things that we have done, we have—we sell cookbooks, but of course ,we just get a portion of that and the rest of it goes for the—to the County Council. Our club accepts donations when the building is used for various events and over the years there was a young ladies' exercise class that met here and in the past few years Tai Chi class has met here. We've had rehearsal dinners, wedding receptions and many, many 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary celebrations. Also, baby showers, wedding showers, birthday parties for all ages. I think the last one we had was a lady that turned 80.

We have bereavement meals that have been served many, many times after funerals; we've had county quiltings and workshops, inside yard sales and families use it this as a gathering place and serve meals especially during the annual homecoming in June when we have our decoration day at our cemeteries. And then we have many families use it at Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. The senior citizens' potluck used to meet here on Tuesday and I remember when my mo—husband and I moved here we would come on Tuesday, and it was a way to meet so many different people in the community. And also we have donations that have been given in memory of our loved ones.

**... question I have. When you referred to quilts earlier and that you raised funds for the quilt, what were those funds directed to? Was that a**

**scholarship program or . . . [Pause] No? OK. So I know that the raffle quilt that was . . . [Static]**

Oh, I remember. About the quilt and the quilt raffle. Each year the Van Buren County Council holds a quilt raffle with proceeds going to the—a nursing scholarship. There's a stipulation that the person work within the county for two years, in Van Buren County for two years. In 2009, our club, the EH Alread EH Club, decided that we wanted to learn how to quilt. So one of our members suggested that we make the sampler quilt, or quilt the sampler quilt for the County Council to raffle off. One of our members' mother had donated some fabric, so we cut the fabric in pieces and each—anyone that wanted to could make a, a block, and we chose the best blocks for the quilt, and our club put the quilt together and hand quilted it and it was, I'm not bragging, but it was a beautiful, beautiful quilt, but I can't remember who won it. I'd have to look that up in our yearbook or in our scrapbook. I'm sure that the person's name . . . [Noise]

And while we're talking about scholarships, I would like to explain a little bit about our Alread EH scholarship we have. This started years ago, I believe it was back in the [19]'80's, and each year we have applications for the students, and, of course, they have to be a senior in high school to go to a college and we—they fill out the applications and we have a committee. And for several years it's been fascinating to see the help that we've given these students. But now funds are getting a little low. We have a, we have a little savings—that[s] where the money comes from, and we have consolidated the Alread EH Club Scholarship and the J.D. Puddy scholarships because of the funds. And last year we gave our—the scholarship to this young gal, but right at the—when it was time for school to start she decided that she would not be able to go to school, so we have those funds put back and maybe next year we can give a scholarship and the recipient would be able to attend a college. And this—the—we—of all the money-making projects we use, a lot of that goes to the scholarship funds.

Another thing that we have done over the years and a way we can fund-raiser, which I had forgotten to mention a while ago, is the county fair. Each September we have the Van Buren County Fair and for several years, being a member, we didn't do anything, and then here comes Lue Butler. She is a new

member in the past say eight or nine years and she got us all excited about the county fair. And, this year wasn't a very good year because of the drought, but year before last was our biggest year and I remember I personally—we as a—I personally and then as a club we challenged all the other clubs in Van Buren County to enter things in the fair. We need this with so many younger people not being members of EH Clubs, we need this to—to help the fair, and I personally, I really enjoy it. And you get to meet so many people there and then when you go to the fair you get to see all of the blue ribbons and it's with, my sister in another county we always have a contest to see how many blue ribbons and red ribbons and yellow ribbons and above all, the Best of Show. And she always beats me. One year I got three Best of Shows and what did she do—she got four.

*[Laughter]*

Then another sister never did get a Best of Show 'till [until] year before last and she got her first Best of Show. So we both congratulated my sister.

**Are either of your sisters Extension Homemaker members?**

Oh, yes. My oldest sister is. She is served as—on the district—district—officer and a county—for her own county and for her own club. But now the other one doesn't—she does not belong, but she surely does help 'em [them] out with all the special projects. So that's good to know that we—we have a special bond and just this interview; I'm the person that's getting interviewed and she's the one doing the inter—interviewing, so that's been lots of fun.

**And what county is that?**

Lonoke County, which is just south of our county. Another person that I would like to mention is what we used to call Home Demonstration Agents—that's what I remember—now then they're called county agent and this is back in the [19]'70's was Mrs. Mary L. McKnight. I did not know Mrs. McKnight, but now I know her daughter who is a personal friend, and I saw her just about a month ago and it's exciting to see so many people that you know from where I used to live that still have relatives and have ties with Van Buren County. And every time that I go to a funeral it seems like I see someone from Conway that

has relatives up here. So that kind of ties us all together. It doesn't matter where you live with—there's ties with this county and with the people that you know and dearly love.

We have various organizations have used this building over the many, many years. Now then we have a Fire Department that is just south of the building, but years ago they didn't have a building. So the volunteer fire department used, had their meetings here and the ladies auxiliary had their fund-raisers. And, I as I see in our minutes, we got a certain percentage of what they made. So, of course, that was more money for our club. And we've had 4-H clubs have met here and we've sponsored the 4-H clubs and I do not know a lot about the clubs but we don't have one presently, but in the past we've been very, very successful and we have county workshops pertaining to 4-H clubs. We also have the ACRDC [Interviewee's Edit: Alread Community Resource Development Committee] has had their meetings here; the ladies book club meets here sometimes. The church, which is north of this building, used to have their potlucks here because we didn't have a fellowship hall and—we've all—Rupert Baptist Church also used this building here in Vacation Bible School and the boys hiking club have met here.

Several years ago the Van Buren County Sheriff's Office, the Arkansas State Police and the FBI used this building for a command post and it's too sad to say why they had to use it, but as members of the EH Club we sponsored them or helped them with food and many, many things and I never will forget my husband and I brought food up here and I asked the sheriff, I said: "Do ya have plenty of – of supplies?" And I even whispered, "toilet paper"? [Pause] Yes. I whispered and asked the sheriff or one of the deputies: "Do you have everything covered, even toilet paper?" He said: "Oh yes ma'am. We have a whole case." And would you believe when they left, they left that whole case of toilet paper and we're still using it today! Oh it's kinda [kind of] rough; it's not near as soft as we usually like. Also, our building is used for a polling place for elections, of course, for the county, state and national officials. You can see over on the door right now, that was the results of the last election we had back several, several months ago.

**What do you think—let me ask you—about the 100-year celebration, the commemoration of 100 years of EHC?**

I think it's great. It's awesome. To think 100 years—you know that's a long time ago and to think how it started and why, what it means to people today and I'm just excited to be a part and to know that I had maybe just a little bit to help with this 100-years anniversary.

**And talking about a hundred years, what—what items would you put into a time capsule today to be opened a hundred years from now?**

Oh, the biggest thing I guess would probably have in our Already EH Club, would be that auction they had years and years ago with over \$6,000 being made to begin that scholarship. And also all of the money that's been raised to keep, upkeep on this building and for our own scholarship and just to know that this building is here for the community to use in any way.

**How—how do you think we might be able to get some younger members involved in EHC? I know that's been difficult as our members are aging, we're trying to recruit youngsters. Do you actively recruit member and—and how would you suggest maybe we—we recruit some younger folks?**

That's gonna [going to] be a big problem. We do have, I believe, three members that are in their early, early 40s. One just turned 40 in August. But most of 'em [them], I'm not gonna say the ages because I would probably get in trouble. In fact, I don't care. I'm 66 and I'm proud to be 66. And you know just a while ago we had a—a person that had moved back to this community, and she said she would like to come tomorrow just to see what our EH Club does. And, just a few minutes ago another lady in our community came in, and we've already tried to recruit her, and we think maybe that we'll win her over, and she will be a member of the Alread EH Club so that we can —she can help us do the things that we do.

**Question—what have you learned—is there anything you have learned through your EH experience that you use in your everyday life?**

Oh yes, yes, yes. There's so many things I've learned just in the demonstrations, on—e—make things easier to do in your kitchen in your house, to make your house safer, and I live in a two-story house and the—the things that you can do to make it safer to get up and down those stairs. And I'm, and

every time I do something, I think, “Oh me, we learned that in EHC.”

**OK. They’re good programs. Has your club ever hosted a Spring or Fall Council Meeting, and—and if so, how was that experience?**

Awesome, awesome, awesome. I remember the first meeting that I attended and I thought, “Oh, my this is great,” and the one that stands out for me, and I can’t remember what year—yes, I do, it was—it was in May of [20]’04, I think. We had—had to come up with a theme. And I am antique and I love antiques. So we were going to have a program about antiques and that just happened to be the same year that we had a apron contest, For, for I think one was for like the oldest apron and maybe the newest apron and the winner would go to state convention. And in this building we started right here [uses hands to point around the room] and for all the way around the building we had aprons and people had to vote on the apron that was the prettiest and—prettiest and most original, something like that, I can’t remember. And then on the tables we had all kinds of antiques and I remember my friend, Marge Koone, dug up some violets. And we used those in our containers for—for arrangements and she, I had always wanted violets, and she told me, she said “Ceil, if you plant those violets they’ll spread.” Every spring and summer I get out and work in my flowers and Marge was, Marge was truthful. I have violets everywhere and I tell Marge every time I see that violet you told me the truth. But I love those violets, and I love to see them blooming.

And we have had many more Council meetings. Well, the last time I think we had one with Crabtree, and it was in September and a idea I had used for many other organizations: It was everybody’s birthday party and everyone—we had 12 birthdays, 12 months—so everybody had to sit at the table when your birthday was. And luckily, one of our members, our dear, dear Ramona Drenner, had a birthday the same month that I—I do in September, so she and I were the only September birthdays, and we loved sitting at that table. And then for our centerpieces we had birthday mugs and put artificial flowers in it, but we didn’t give ‘em [them] away as door prizes 'cause [because] we saved ‘em 'cause we knew we were gonna [going] have a yard sale comin’ [coming] up, and we sold several of ‘em and that was more funds to use for our building.

Everything we do some of us try to think: Is there profit in it? Can we use that

money for this building? and one thing now we've—as I mentioned before from our Fall Festival—we had money for our new tables, which we surely need. Then we need to repair both doors and we've got a water leak and we have to turn the water on and off when we come and we're gonna [going to] have to get that fixed. And the big thing that we're—we're working on and we don't know exactly how we're gonna do it, but we know that with all the effort of each member we need a new floor. This carpet has been here for goodness knows and it's hard to keep clean and you can see how ragged it looks, but we know as EH members we will work hard to strive to have fund-raisers and do what we can for a our new—new flooring for our building. We don't know what it will be, but we will have a committee.

**Well, you should be proud of what you've accomplished so far 'cause [because] this is a lovely—ely building. Another thing . . .**

Can I talk just a minute?

**Sure.**

. . . about our—we had new windows put in last year. Gene Medley, a former member's husband put the windows—new windows in at no cost, and Liz Alvord, one of our members, made the—made the curtains, and Wendy Dufrene kinda [kind of] did some redecoration and decorated and we have lots more things that we need to put up on our walls to show the history of the Alread EH Club.

**Great. Question—did you ever find—or was it sometimes difficult to balance family and club obligations?**

Not really. Because that, besides my church activities, EH was right next to church. And since we are right here close to the building, and so many members are in the same church that I attend and are member of, it just kinda [kind of] went side by side. And the other church members in the other churches were always good supportive of our, of the Alread EH Club and are members of EH Club and even when we had our school out here, EH Club was always sponsoring and/or helping with things and activities, I know we gave library books. There, there were many members that would go up and help read

to children and then they even worked in the concessions stands. So Alread—  
Alread EH members were very helpful when we had a school out here.

**Excellent. Well, I can certainly speak on behalf of the Van Buren County Council and say how delighted we are to have you on board as—as Alread’s President. And I can’t thank you enough for your time and your efforts today. We are very grateful. Is there any last thing that you’d like to add that we maybe didn’t cover that you’d like to—to mention before we close?**

Well, the only thing that I will say, *[tearful]* and it’ll be teary. I know I will be leaving this area, but I can still come up one day, one day a month to support the Alread EH Club and I hope I can do that.

**And we do, too. Thanks.**

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