One Ashland, Many Voices Oral History Project
Transcript of Interview with Cathy Daugherty

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KD:  Okay. Please tell me how you came to live in Ashland.

CD:  I came to live in Ashland because I became engaged to Professor Gregory Neil Doherty. I had been living in Chapel Hill, teaching at the high school there. We both met in Rome one summer. We were both Fulbright scholars and one thing led to another once we got back and it was much easier for me to move up here um than him because he was on a tenure track in a college. And being in a high school teacher, I had a lot more mobility. So that's how I came to be in Ashland.

KD:  How long have you been professors here?

CD:  Well now Greg was a professor here before I met him in Rome so and I moved up here in 1980. And I have just been an adjunct on and off probably the last ten years. But he has been a professor for over 30 years now.

KD:  Do you have any stories of any interesting students that you may have encountered?

CD:  Well I tell you, the most pleasant memory I have, and they have all been pleasant, but the most pleasant has been this past year. I just retired from public education and didn't really...I wanted to do something different. And Greg approached me about being an adjunct professor and teaching two
sections of Latin and I wound up having an absolute ball with the classes because they were just one year beyond what I had been teaching in high school. So it was like I still had the same students, but I had them in a different environment. And in particular I had one student who was just absolutely at my side all the time. He wanted to make sure that he got off on the right foot and constantly come see me in the afternoons. It was great. In fact he knew he could just meet me at the gym he wanted to and we could walk around the Brock Center and decline nouns and conjugate verbs. Um so it's been very great to see how the students have adjusted to having a former high school teacher as a professor and they've been very receptive. Very receptive.

KD: So do you think Randolph-Macon is different because it's liberal arts or in a small town atmosphere than other colleges?

CD: I certainly do because like I said I did work at Chapel Hill High School for several years before I moved up here and that environment was totally different. I'd always dreamed of living in Chapel Hill and then when I did live in Chapel Hill, it did not turn out what I wanted it to be. Living in Ashland, living here in Randolph-Macon College has been wonderful. The small town atmosphere is exactly something that a lot of students need and I think many adults need it as well.

KD: Tell me some more about your neighborhood please.

CD: I live out in the Elmont area. In fact, Greg and I purchased the old Elmont Elementary School before we got married, several months before we got married. And we've spent our marriage instead of having children, we've been taking care of this house um and renovating this old school to make it a home and to landscape the yard around it and put in some gardens and so forth. It's a very quiet bucolic area. We look out from our deck in the back across the street in front and we see horses and stables. We can see the sunset in that direction. We just have to barely turn around and in the morning over a cup of coffee we can see the sun come up. It's just a wonderful rural area. We've had a wonderful neighbor Mr. Clarence Burkett, until he died in October, has just been a wonderful person to know and his family. His daughter now lives in the house and it's just a very close neighborly area. We just love it.

KD: So during what area...I mean what time period was your house a school?

CD: The turn of the century and I mean the last century from the 1800s to the 1900s. In fact the house will be I think 100 years old this August...1909 somewhere in the 1909-1910, this year it will be 100 years old. And there are parts of it that look exactly the way it did the last day of school. There's one room that we haven't touched. It has the bulletin boards and the black boards and the industrial, school industrial, green paint um on the walls but it's been a labor of love and we treasure the fact we've had these years to work with this house but we know the next people who buy it from us will be able to take it further and do more with it.

KD: That's very interesting. I'm going to have to come by and visit someday.

CD: Oh, please do. You won't be able to tell that it's a school house but let me know when you're going to come by because a lot of people have mistaken it for a church. Um in fact, we had some people who
were. We were having a party one night, a Christmas party, and some people thought it was where the location of a wedding was. And so before we knew it, we had part of the wedding party in the house with our party um because we had luminaries out front and it does have the imposing front to it that makes you think that it's something different from a home.

KD: Tell me what has changed in your lifetime as far as physical appearance is concerned in your neighborhood. What have been some major changes?

CD: Uh the major change out where I live is just south of Ashland. It's been the traffic and I noticed that in Ashland as well. Umm many more cars, many more people have discovered this area um and it's a little more crowded than it used to be. I will say that when I first saw the campus 28 to 29 years ago after kind of living in Chapel Hill, I was in shock. I wasn't really sure that I wanted to come up here. Umm where the admissions building is with there at the beginning of the campus that used to be a bank. That used to be where Dairy Queen was. Um and I remember sitting there thinking, "What have I done? What have I left?" But over the years, I've seen Randolph-Macon change so much for the better. The buildings have been restored. I'm very much into the fact that they've done that. They have not torn old buildings down. They've restored them. They've found new uses for buildings. Um when they have added on, they've done it in such a way that it meshes very nicely with what is here and enhances what was already here. It's a beautiful campus today but I can truthfully say I was not impressed with it 28 years ago. So it has come a long way.

KD: Has college involvement in the town changed over the years?

CD: I think it has. I think you find more people who work on the campus becoming a bigger and better part about what's going on in the community. Um you know just to take for an example, the fact that Professor Spagna is now on the Town Council. That's a wonderful opportunity and Anthony Keitt has done the same thing for a number of years. I think it has become less of town and gown and grown more together and that can only help the community. I know that the community realizes that Randolph-Macon is a significant economic feature in the town, but I think they also look to Randolph-Macon as a significant social feature. Many performances and things come to Blackwell that this community would not be able to take...would not have if it was not for the college and I think they've learned to work together um during both good times and bad times to solve problems and to enhance the community. So I'm very positive. I feel very positive about what's gone on these last 30 years.

KD: Have there been any major events that have taken place recently? Like cultural events that the college has sponsored?

CD: Hmm...I'm not sure I'm the one to ask about that. While I enjoy taking part in those things, I have to be truthful that my husband does not. And that's just because he's not into crowds. He's just not someone who likes crowds. So we don't get to take part in as many things like that. Every now or then, I'll get him out but I have...there has been a significant increase in um social opportunities for faculty meetings...members since President Lindgren has come on board. He and his wife Cheryl have just stepped up and made sure that there are opportunities for faculty members to be together, to see one...
another, and that is what has impressed me most recently about what's been going on. But that's strictly on campus. That doesn't quite flow into the Ashland scene. I think one of the things that I am most impressed with Ashland is the fact that we get big name music these days at the coffee house and so forth. While I don't get to attend because I do uh respect my husband's desires not to go out since he's not into that. I have friends that tell me wonderful things that go on. I think it's great for the kids. I think it's great for the adults in town. I think many of the adults my age are excited about it because they remember doing that when they were your age. I mean I remember going out and seeing concerts, especially with my friends that went to UNC uh Chapel Hill. We would always get to see concerts and things like that. And it's great that you can see these people here and you don't have to go into Richmond or you don't have to go into Fredericksburg or D.C. You can see the entertainment here. So I think that's a wonderful draw to the community.

KD: What do you feel about the businesses here? Do you have any special memories?

CD: Well I think the business that uh that I frequent the most along with my husband is the Ironhorse. We have um we looked early on for a place in Ashland where we could go out at least once a week because uh we determined before we got married that we wanted to have one night a week as a date night and Tuesday night was it which coincides with the Woman's Club. I can go to the Woman's Club on Tuesday afternoon and then meet him at the restaurant that would be across the street. It wasn't always the Ironhorse. There have been several other eateries there, some more for college students than for an older clientele but we've really enjoyed going there. We knew Mimi while she was there and her children and would watch them grow and we know we'll be able to do the same thing with the new owner. So we've really enjoyed that particular business. Um we have frequented other businesses most notably the Caboose. We love that and I love Cross'. I don't go there very often but there's a reason why I don't. My father was a grocer. He had a grocery store that was very similar to Cross'. It's very hard for me to go in there because I look for my father when I go in there. So um I love it. I love the fact that it's there. It reminds me very much of his grocery store and he used to do the same thing. He used to take groceries to people who couldn't get out to get them and I can remember my dad doing just what they did. They go to the house, deliver them, and sometimes put them on the shelves or in the refrigerator if necessary. So that small town atmosphere, that piece right there reminds me so much of my childhood in Hickory, North Carolina and so it has a very tender part in my heart because of that.

KD: Do you think any of the businesses are being threatened by new development?

CD: Uh you know I know there is a segment that feels that Wal-Mart was really going to do it. Um I think because of their stand against that and a smaller Wal-Mart going in, that the threat has been lessened of the big box. I think that whenever you are close to a highway the way Ashland is and I mean really close, uh it can hurt you and it can help you. Uh the community benefits from the economy, that economic boost of people coming through the town but it can also be...it can be a distraction and detract from the town. I think the Town Council has worked very hard. The Town Council has worked very hard to make sure that that doesn't happen. I live, by living south I don't see it as much as my friends who live in Ashland. We have the best of both worlds. We live close enough to be here in three minutes. We live close enough to be in Henrico and Richmond in 15 minutes. But all of Hanover is threatened because
eventually those circles of business radiating out from Richmond are going to reach just as the north. The businesses radiating out of Washington and now Fredericksburg are going to collide so we're going to be caught in the middle of it at some point. But I think it will be some time.

KD: Does the town have any problems with the expansion of the college?

CD: They always have problems with expansion of the college. I know the college for years has wanted to close the major road through it and make it more of a walking campus. I'd love to see that happen. I think it would be. It would enhance the college. I think it really would um enhance the neighborhoods on either side of the college. But that would involve planning roadways um and I don't know if that has been addressed to the satisfaction of the people living in both the north and the south of town. It would involve, I know it would involve, some homes being removed. I know they would have to and because of that I can see why it has not happened. And you've got to consider everyone in the town. We all have to live together. And if it's all just not feasible, it's not feasible. I would like to see it happen but I don't live you know as I said in Ashland. So I can see why it's not as much as an issue for me. So it would for someone else. I'd hate to have to be on US-1 all the time if I lived in the northern part or in the southern part and couldn't make access some other way.

KD: Right now what are the big gathering places in your neighborhood?

CD: The Ruritan Club in Elmont in the big place to be. Uh they sponsor scouting activities. Um and the Ruritan Club is also the place to go to for yard sales and wedding receptions and they twice a year have a wonderful day when they sell Brunswick stew or barbeque chicken or homemade barbeque sandwiches was made by our neighbor Clarence Burkett and now his daughter has taken over doing that. So that's one of the major places. The other one would be the churches in the area. They will always be a draw and the schools also um are very much a center of the communities and the school system in Hanover has very much um an open door policy with the community in allowing community events to take place in them. Just as Randolph-Macon does.

KD: What do you feel about Duncan Memorial's involvement in the town? Because it is located right near the college.

CD: You know there was a time where I thought, "Poor Duncan Memorial." I mean how can they function because they are just part of the campus but I don't feel that way anymore. And they are such an integral part, not only of the campus but they make a nice bridge between, I think, the college and the community um and their closeness between the two. I mean they really are a bridge. I think they are a guiding force and always have been because first and foremost, no matter what happens, this will have always originated as a Methodist institution. The college and the influence that they have and have had over the years is something that can't be denied. They are so receptive to opening their facilities to the college and to the community just like the schools are. Not all churches are able to do that but this church singularly in the community does that. And I think that says a lot about the community. It says a lot about the church. And the churches in general are a very vital part of this community. Definitely.
KD: Are there any events that take place between the churches? Like a collective effort?

CD: You know I know there are gospel sings that take place. I know that there are um arts and crafts fairs that they work on and I feel sure, I'm not a member of this community per se as churches go. I feel sure that there is some kind of ecumenical council but that allows these churches to work together. I know that when anything in the community happens, you can expect Saint Anne's and Saint James and the First Baptist Church, and all the churches with Duncan to unite behind whatever catastrophe is going on and to assist in any way. Shiloh, all of them work together and I know they...I know their ministers know one another. When I taught in Hanover County Schools, I would quite often go to the school board meetings, especially when I was the supervisor of foreign languages at the school board level. And every school board meeting, a different minister would in Hanover delivers the opening prayer. And I just...and they knew one another. And they knew the school board members. And you could tell it was an integral part of the community. Churches, schools, community working together.

KD: So that's a trademark of the small town atmosphere?

CD: Definitely. That is something you don't see as readily in the larger towns. I think in the larger cities, they may have more of a structure. I think you don't need as much of a structure and organization between the churches in a smaller community. I think they don't think one thing about picking up the phone and calling one another instead of going through some kind of hierarchy and structure that you would find in a city situation.

KD: Tell me about some of the organizations in Ashland such as the Woman's Club and their involvement in the town.

CD: Okay um I belong to two organizations, two women's organizations in the town of Ashland. One is the Woman's Club and the other is the Ashland Garden Club. And I've been a member of each for just about the same amount of time. I remember I got my invitations to join um like within one month of each other and it was very heavy for me to become a part of this, especially the Woman's Club. That was the first invitation that I got. I had admired that group for a long time. When I moved here from Chapel Hill, I moved into an apartment um an apartment over Ms. Craddock's house. It's the umm...it was the guidance office on campus. I'm not sure...it's the Bailey House. And I moved up there and Martha was a member of the Woman's Club. And she invited me to go while she lived on several occasions. Especially for the teas because you could invite guests for the teas. And often uh Greg would do a paper for her because in her later years, she wasn't able to do her paper. And we all, all 35 of us, are under obligation to do a paper each year unless we are a treasurer uh or the president or on either of the social program committees now. That wasn't the way it was when I first started. Those have been the most remarkable, wonderful Tuesdays of my life. Tuesday is my favorite day of the week. I know a lot of people like Saturday or Sunday, but Tuesday is my favorite because every Tuesday for one hour from 4 to 5, I learn something new.

I sit and listen to a wonderful presentation that is the result of someone's research for a year. This is not a social club. This is not the Junior Woman's Club. This is not that type of social club. It is...in fact a lot of
the members don't see each other socially at all. We see each other from 4 to 5 on Tuesdays, October through April, and we listen to these papers. Um sometimes in later years and I've done this myself, they've developed into powerpoint presentations. Or sometimes you have a guest speaker who comes. But my favorite papers, the ones I've given and the ones I've attended have been the ones that are by a speaker who has not only researched her topic, but she has devoted time to writing up her topic um and read her paper to us. It is probably a very archaic practice but I know I have to credit it with my ease speaking publicly and I certainly credit the year or two years, I think it was two years, I was secretary because I had to write the minutes. And I learned how to write. I mean it was like journaling and my writing skills were honed during those two years and I am the writer I am today because of that. I'm not sure every secretary would say that. Some of them spend more time on it than others and of late, there has been a tendency to make the secretarial minutes as brief as possible, but I'm of the Dorothy Jones frame of mind. Dorothy was one of my favorite Woman's Club members and the Marion Herget frame that um if someone took a year to do it, you can take five minutes to write it up and really get the essence of what that paper was really about. So it's been a love of mine. I've truly enjoyed it.

Um the other organization that I'm active in in the town of Ashland is the Ashland Garden Club. And it is more of a social setting. It is a group of women who love gardening and love conservation and preservation and those are the two missions of the club. We meet monthly, about the same schedule as the Woman's Club but we do meet in September and May and June but we don't meet during the summer months like the Woman's Club does not do that either. Um...I've learned a great deal about gardening. I've been privy to some absolutely wonderful um women who have shared their garden secrets and um ideas and flower arranging is one of the things that this club is very big into because it is a member of the Garden Club of Virginia. And not all garden clubs are. This is the only one area that is so there's competition. There's a lily show. There's a rose show. There's a daffodil show. The three big shows each year and the club is responsible for them. But it has enhanced um the programs, the other programs on campus with the students. So that renovation in particular I think has been wonderful. I also want to say I think the renovation of what used to be lovingly called the motel dorms has been great. I heard the students talking about that this year, especially the recent renovations in those buildings. They love those buildings and when I think about the fact that it was custodial staff years ago that built those buildings and that they are still used and still in good condition, very solidly built, and it's a great place especially for freshmen. They need a place they can call their own. I remember when I went to UNC Greensboro as a freshman, I lived in the freshman quad and there were six dorms there and it was all freshman and we really bonded. We did things together and I think that's something that's just very special. You don't find that in your big universities anymore. Even I have to say my lovely UNC Greensboro, the freshman quad is not quite the freshman quad that it used to be. So I think this is something that sets Randolph-Macon apart from other schools and the renovations are a part to enhance that.

KD: There's a lot of programming for the freshmen. Do you see that in other colleges? Orientations?

CD: You know orientations, yes. I think all colleges are worried about their freshmen because just because somebody has come to your school doesn't actually mean that that person is going to stay
there and graduate. There are lots of enticements to pull freshmen away and sophomores. And um and I know I almost got pulled away myself when I was at UNC-G...barely though. Almost got pulled away to UNC. But I think Randolph-Macon College does a very good job of this. They're on top of things. I was and have been very impressed with the administration and the quickness which they would respond to my SOS when a child wasn't coming to class on a regular basis or somebody was not performing the way that I thought they would. I got a lot of support and those students were getting a lot of support. And I don't remember hearing my peers talk about that kind of support back in the Stone Age when I was in college so I think college has come a long way but I don’t think it’s unique to Randolph-Macon. I think it is something that has just become part of the business of higher ed these days.

KD: I know Randolph-Macon has a small professor to student ratio.

CD: Mmhmm and that’s wonderful. It’s better than what I came from, the high school haha. And I have to say you know as a Latin teacher especially in the upper levels. I had small classes. Several of my classes, the last year I taught I had one class of five. I had a class of ten. I mean but Hanover...Hanover County schools were very good about making sure that students got to complete their cycle. Um I love the fact that the classes are smaller here. I do think it is very important for them to have small classes. We have a student clientele here that needs that attention. I mean one of the things, it didn’t surprise me, I know it surprised my husband when he first realized it. We have a lot of students with special needs and with IEPs and so forth as it were. That’s not something that was foreign to me when I cam because I was used to that in a public school setting. But I think for the professors, it has been a shock to them. But what you have at a lower level is going to find its way up at the next level because you have to meet the needs of the students that you accept and Randolph-Macon has done that not only with special programs and smaller classes but I will say the HAC. Having the tutoring program, amazing, I loved being able to contact the Latin tutors and say, “So-and-so and so-and-so will be calling you. This is their email and if you don’t hear from them, let me know. So we could make sure that those needs of the students were addressed at the beginning of a slide downward instead of the end when nothing can be done. So I have really appreciated that and it’s very easy. I love the fact there’s less bureaucracy when it comes to this than what I encountered in public schools. It’s a much more professional way of handling things but I do realize that in public schools you have... you have other concerns that, especially the age of the students. Here the age is age appropriate. The intervention is age appropriate. Um and so there’s less bureaucracy. Lower level has to be more because of the age.

KD: What do you feel about fundraiser events and Macon a Difference Day?

CD: I think those are exciting opportunities for the students because they create an atmosphere where a social consciousness is raised in the students. Now that was a big thing in the sixties, the late sixties, ’68 through ’72 when I was in college. We knew about Vietnam. We knew about social issues. We reacted on campuses. Um there’s not been a lot of social unrest in the intervening years. Perhaps there should be more and I am not advocating that there should be more but I do think an awareness is very important for our students. They need to know how to live in this world. The world that they came from. The nice cocoon of their parents, house, and community may not be what they find is the reality of the situation when they graduate. I do believe a college owes students much more than a learning
CD: The experience associated with a book, a classroom, and a lab. That’s why I think the dorm life is so important. I think all students should live on campus. That’s why I think having a strong library system is very important. And that’s why I think having things like Macon a Difference Day and the fundraisers, bringing canned goods in instead of a library fine. I think that’s just a marvelous idea. Let them know there’s a food bank that needs help. Those opportunities are tangible ways in which students can learn about the world around them and they can say, “Oh okay, when I graduate I can do something more about this,” or continue. And so I think it’s a great service we offer the students and our community by offering these opportunities.

KD: Do a lot of the graduates return to Ashland to live?

CD: You know I don’t know what the percentage is but like I know in the Classics department, in recent years, the students that have graduated and gone into teaching have settled here. We grab them as quickly as we can. I know I wouldn’t retire if somebody in that department hadn’t graduated, but the time was right. She wanted the job. I wanted to retire. It was perfect. Um...they want to stay here. In fact, one of the ones that graduated this year who’s not going to graduate school, that was her big goal. She wanted to get a job in the area because she wanted to live in a small town. She had enjoyed the experience she had in Ashland and she wanted to replicate that in her life.

KD: And do you think the rise of students owning cars has changed student life...over the years?

CD: Yes, because they can get in their cars and go anywhere they want to. Um but I think they can also get on the internet and go wherever they want to as well. So I think there’s lots of things out there. The world is not a small place anymore. It’s not unheard of for students to have traveled overseas numerous times before they get to college. I know students that I had in high school went with me. Some went with me twice to Italy in the time I had them over a six year period so it’s not just cars. It’s internet. It’s television. It’s everything that is out there. It’s amazing when I think about the changes in our lives since I was a student and then when I think about my parents, both whom lived during the Great Depression and World War II. I don’t know how you know they handled all of this because I find it hard to handle all of the changes. But students take it for granted. They don’t know they’re just 20 or 40 years away from having outhouses instead of indoor plumbing let alone internet. But I do think cars pose a distraction, but they also pose an opportunity. You have to look at it both ways.

KD: How does it feel to live in a town with railroad tracks running through it?

CD: Very good question. I know that I did not want to live on the tracks when we were looking for a house because I didn’t want the danger. I see it as a danger especially with some of the fast trains. Um but we live very close to the tracks where we live in Elmont and if something happens and that train does not come by, I mean you get so used to it. I will wake up at 2 in the morning if I don’t hear the train. And that will happen sometimes in the winter when there’s snow and there’s ice and I know something is wrong because subconsciously I didn’t hear something. So you know...it’s a tie to the past. It’s also a tie to the future. I mean I love the train because we can flag it down and go to D.C. and Greg and I prefer to do that rather than get in a car and drive up there because neither of us are into 95 in a
big way. So it’s a blessing and a curse and I think over the years I realize it’s more of a blessing than the
curse I thought it was. I grew up in a town with a railroad track down the middle, but the railroad that
went through the town I grew up in was not a distraction as far as the noise. It was a social
distraction. You truly lived on the right side of the tracks or the wrong side of the tracks. In Ashland, it’s never been
right or wrong. Everything is right on either side of the track. It’s just the track is there in the center. It’s
not a dividing point. Again, it’s like a bridge and it’s just taking you to other opportunities but that was
not. I thought it was going to be like the train I grew up with in my hometown which divided social
classes, divided one middle school from another middle school, that type of thing. It wasn’t an unifying,
the train in Ashland, the tracks are unifiers.

KD: Has Ashland always had good relations between social classes?

CD: You know I really don’t know the answer to that. I have not perceived that there’s not been a good
um relationship, but I can only speak from what I’ve seen and the interactions that I’ve personally had.
And I think a lot of whether you’ve had good interactions or poor has to do with how you’re raised. And
this community, everybody works together. Everybody goes to school together and I know that of
course wasn’t the way it always was, but and it wasn’t that way where I grew up either. But it doesn’t
seem to have had the same...they didn’t seem to have had the same problems that say Richmond
obviously had and still has because I think a lot of their problems stem from past racial problems that
they had.

KD: So race relations have been good in Ashland?

CD: As far as I have seen in the 28, 30 years I’ve been here, but again I came here after the issues were
legally resolved and so it’s hard to tell. I don’t know but I hear stories. And the stories I’ve heard from
the people who have lived here all of their life indicate to me that there weren’t problems. There was an
understanding that there were people were treated differently, but I think there was such a social
conscious in this area that when the opportunity came to resolve those differences, it was met with
open arms not with resistance. But again, that’s the take on what I’ve heard and I’ve only heard one side
of the story.

KD: What do you think are Ashland’s most colorful characters? Personality-wise?

CD: Hmm...dead or alive. You want them alive?

KD: Either...either.

CD: Well dead would have to be first and foremost would have to be Nina Peace. She was a member of
the Woman’s Club, gave some just wonderful papers. I remember one on baseball. Who would have
thought Nina Peace was a baseball lover? Um forthright, could get herself in a lot of trouble with people
but her heart was always in the right place. The words just didn’t always come out exactly the way I
think she really wanted them to come out. The meaning...people didn’t take the meaning for what she
thought. I thought she was um a professional in every sense of the word. There wasn’t anything she
wasn’t willing to do to help somebody else, any cause that she wouldn’t take on and I thought she had a
lot of integrity because of that. Um again I didn’t agree with her speeches all the time and her choice of words all the time but her heart was the best. Her heart was Ashland. I hated to see her die so young. It was rough.

KD: There’s a statue of her outside the library.

CD: Right, there’s a bust of her outside the library in the plaza. And from one angle, it really does look like Nina. And I love it being there because I see it every Tuesday I go into the Woman’s Club of Ashland. It’s like she is just right outside the door. You know, so it’s very special and I know a lot of the members feel that way because she was um a member for a number of years and we meet every Tuesday at 4 and she worked her schedule as a lawyer and as judge around that 4-o-clock meeting as many of us did around things. But that was really rough for her to do, but she didn’t like missing those meetings.

KD: Her son was interviewed for this project.

CD: Yes and he has of course his political aspirations and uh ideas are the antithesis of his mom but she would and did support him and his views totally and completely and was totally and completely proud of him. And I’m glad he was a part of this because I’m sure he had a lot to say about Nina. And that’s a voice that has been silenced but needs to be part of this because she is definitely a voice that helped to shape Ashland.

KD: Are there any voices like that you can think of? Any other influential people?

CD: I’m trying to think. See I know there are others and I know their names but they don’t have a personal...I don’t have a personal connection with them the same way. See I would say Martha Craddock, but Martha Craddock wasn’t the voice. She was very quiet, little lady, retired schoolteacher, but had an opinion. Devout in her religion. Presbyterian, went to the Ashland Presbyterian Church. Uh a really, for me, a really special person. And she, thinking of her, makes me recall the other two that I did have personal contact to and again it’s going to be women: Marion Herget and Dorothy Jones. The greatest compliment ever paid me personally was Marion telling me how much she appreciated my Woman’s Club papers. That woman was an author. She was a writer. She was a very special person and for her to say something like that about something I had written was just what I needed. I mean it came in the right time in my life and it has propelled me into writing more and doing some publications, professional publications in education. Um I miss her terribly. Just down to earth but also really out there too. Cosmopolitan, she spent time in New York City um and knew movers and shakers up there, but yet was her happiest here. And found a niche for herself and shared her immense writing talents and speaking talents here. That was amazing. Same with Dorothy Jones, a professor in a college in South Carolina but couldn’t get back to Ashland fast enough when she retired. Um sharp to the very end, as sharp as she could be. Very opinionated but oh what a wit! What a dry sense of humor! And always had a kind word to say and really up on things going on in the world today. You just don’t see that in many people their age in their eighties. You just don’t see that. I don’t see that in my own mother. So I admire women which I have seen that...um wanting to know more. Grasping the new technology, not shutting it out. And wanting to live to see even more.
KD: And that has been a fundamental part of the Woman’s Club since it started?

CD: It is. I mean it was started by sixteen women in 1896 who just decided, “We need to have a current events club,” and it was a current events club to begin with. They subscribed to magazines, read the articles, and reported on them. And they shared the magazines. It’s not like today where everyone has a subscription or can go online and download but um yeah. This whole idea of knowing about the world, sharing what you learn about the world, um stretching your mind, seeing beyond Ashland. They loved living in the small town, but, and I think that’s true today, you can live in a small town but you can take advantage of the opportunities and reach well beyond the small town. Pluck what is most appropriate for your life or for your community and use it to the advantage of your community. That’s what I see going on in Ashland today.

KD: So how does it live...how does it feel to live in the Center of the Universe?

CD: In Elmont? Haha. Dick Gillis would hate that wouldn’t he? Um how does it feel? You see I’ve been accused of not really living in Ashland. Some of the things that are going on for the birthday, I wanted to be very active in one particular element and I was said, I was told, “But you don’t live...” So it made me wonder. I think I live on the fringes of the center of the universe. But I think the Center of the Universe is wherever you live and whatever you make of it. I just think that it’s an appropriate phrase for Ashland because somebody people have made something of living in Ashland. They made it the center. They used it as a centering agent for their life and I think that’s what makes it the center of the universe. Not where it is physically on the map or so forth. I just think it’s a state of mind more than a place on a map...and I like living in that state of mind. Haha.

KD: So what is there to be done for fun in Ashland? I know there a lot of outside activities such as biking.

CD: Right and I know about the bikers, not because I am sitting astride one, but I’m on the 76 bike trail and on Saturdays we don’t leave the house between 8-o-clock and 11in fear that we will kill one of them or they will do damage to us. So I know all about the bikers. What is there to do in Ashland? I think anything you want to do, you can do in Ashland. Uh it’s all here. It’s just are you going to take advantage of it and you know, the good thing about Ashland is that most people, not all, but there most people will not hold it against you if you don’t dabble in everything. Pick and choose, do what you want to, and they leave you alone. And I like that about Ashland because there are some things that I don’t want to get sucked up into because I know it will drain the life’s blood out of me like the um...what is it...what is it that they do every year with the talent show with the...

KD: The Variety Show?

CD: The Variety Show. I think it’s a wonderful idea but I know if I got involved in it, I’d never have a life again because that’s what happens when these things happen. And so I’ve stayed away from that. My answer to them has been, “But don’t you need someone in your audience? You can’t have everyone on stage. You need a few of us in the audience.” So my contribution is to be in the audience, but you...it’s an opportunity that I can take or I can leave. And you have those opportunities I think more readily
available to you in small town than you do a large town. Sometimes way too much in a large town and a lot of times it has to do with the price tag in a larger setting. And in a small community like this, there’s less expense. There’s more opportunity. It’s more along the lines of volunteering an hour here, an hour there but not necessarily a big ticket item or something that will unless it’s the Variety Show um take your life away from you. Haha.

KD: Well that concludes my questions. Is there anything else you would like to add?

CD: No except that um I may live in Elmont physically but my wellbeing is all because that is a suburb of Ashland. Ashland is the greater picture and I love being able to draw upon the assets here. Thank you for the opportunity to.

KD: Thank you very much.

CD: You’re welcome.