

Interview for the 30th Anniversary of the Club (2001) with Billie Krenzler
This is only part of the original interview - discussing the "girls at the Club"

Kevin Kooistra, Community Historian of the Western Heritage Center

Interview with BILLIE KRENZLER

(The Gordon referred to below is Gordon Eldredge, the original Executive Director.)

So you've been here (Billings) your whole life. What role have you played in the Boys Club?

It was Boys Club originally when we started. At the time, I was the director of the Youth Employment and Training Program and we were working with low income youth and placing them into jobs. It was only natural that we checked to see if the Boys Club needed some of our kids to work there.

The Youth Employment and Training Program has been around since 1965 and we provide jobs during the summer and also jobs during the school year to youth 14-21 who meet certain income guidelines required under the Department of Labor. It allowed us to place youth at the Boys Club to help run activities there.

Gordon had no staff at that time, I assume? So this was a big plus.

I believe he had a part time secretary in the beginning. So we just kind of ended up being there because the kids were there - and then a lot of my staff that worked here ended up being involved as volunteers at the Boys Club. One of the staff that I had, who now lives in California, actually started the Girls Club at the Boys Club before it became the Boys and Girls Club. We had a Girls Club one evening a week that we did activities and things with the girls there.

So you found an obvious need for a Girls Club?

Oh, there definitely was a need and there was a need to have it located within that facility because that's where their brothers went. Sisters wanted to follow their brothers and seeing all the things that they were doing, the girls wanted to do them as well. They weren't really interested in a sewing club, or anything like that. They wanted to do the activities that their brothers were doing.