

Idaho LGBTQ Oral History Project

Matt Bragg



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

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This Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) Oral History Project began as a key component of a cross-listed Boise State University course, Intro to LGBTQ Studies (GEN 380, HIS 381, SOC 497). Dr. Riley Caldwell-O'Keefe taught the course and designed the project as an interactive learning tool to help students understand LGBTQ history, with special emphasis on Idaho history, and the impacts of this history on local individuals. In addition to this history and context, students learned interviewing techniques throughout the semester. We discussed ethical considerations and obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the project. Throughout the process, we worked with Boise State Special Collections and Archives librarians, Alan Virta and Cheryl Oestreicher. The culmination and digital release of the collection would have been impossible without them. We are thrilled and honored to offer these first-person insights which help provide a more well-rounded and comprehensive story of Idaho history.

Name: Matt Bragg

Biography: Matt Bragg was born in 1971 in Akron, Ohio. After high school, he joined the U.S. Navy and served for four years. The defining moment of his military service came with the beating death of a gay shipmate. After his military service ended, Bragg lived in San Diego. It was there he accidentally became a stand-up comedian after the scheduled comics backed out and Bragg filled in. This opportunity was first a hobby, then became a career. At the time of this interview, Bragg worked as a bartender at a local bar. He considered himself to be an accidental activist. His goal was to change the perceptions of the gay community through his comedy.

Keywords: military, Facebook, comedy, hate crime, Don't Ask/Don't Tell, media, Metropolitan Church, Ellen DeGeneres, pride parade, gay marriage, Gay/Straight Alliances, privacy, witch hunting

Interview date: November 29, 2011

Interviewer: David Cowan

Interview duration: 49:30

City: Boise

Timed Notation:

0:00	Introduction/childhood
1:33	Religious background
2:53	Relationships to parents/coming out
5:00	Father
8:00	Why comedy?
11:30	Navy
20:00	Figuring out sexuality
22:00	Gay in Navy/ Politics
23:15	Death of shipmate in Navy for being gay
34:50	Boise gay community/are we safe?
40:20	How far and where does the gay community gone/still needs to go

43:00	More about Navy DADT
45:11	Personal identity/ Comedy
47:05	Wrap up/Boise community/final thoughts