

Idaho LGBTQ Oral History Project

James A. Odell England



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

ALBERTSONS LIBRARY

Idaho LGBTQ Oral History Project

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: James A. Odell England

Biography: James A. Odell England was born in Blackfoot, ID in 1950. He moved to Boise in 1969 and graduated from Boise State University. Odell worked as a teacher but became a hairstylist and has owned Graeber & Co. for 26 years. He grew up in an open-minded family and described himself as “just a gay person in a real world.” Odell participated in Boise’s first gay pride parade and No On One events, and devotes time to support local arts and education organizations.

Keywords: education, farm, Mormon, bars, bartender, teacher, hairstylist, No On One, Shuckey’s, San Francisco Bridgeworks, family, AIDS, love

Interview date: 11/30/2011

Interviewer: James Ady

Interview duration: 28:05

City: Boise

Timed Notation:

| | |
|------|--|
| 0:00 | Introduction |
| 0:15 | Background information: year born, location, ethnicity |
| 0:30 | Childhood/upbringing |
| 0:56 | Religion |
| 1:07 | 1 st coming out, parents reactions |
| 2:06 | Feelings towards being gay in various communities |
| 3:03 | First time falling in love |
| 3:44 | Shaped identity by being gay |
| 4:24 | 1 st remembered attractions to a man |
| 5:20 | Arrival in Boise, college at Boise State University |
| 5:30 | Prior residences |
| 5:44 | From past to current, Boise’s LGBTQ community |
| 7:07 | Relationship with daughter’s mother |

| | |
|-------|---|
| 7:55 | Boise's first gay bars: Shuckey's and San Francisco Bridgeworks |
| 8:30 | Boys of Boise |
| 8:54 | Discrimination/Ironic memory from work while teaching |
| 10:01 | 1 st years at Shuckey's and outrageous moments |
| 11:15 | Significant milestones in Boise's LGBTQ community, No on One campaign |
| 12:00 | Gay Pride events |
| 12:30 | No on One campaign, creator, supporters and detractors |
| 13:46 | Graeber & Co. (Personal business), locations, events that helped to lead here |
| 15:15 | Former professions and education |
| 16:10 | Transitioning into an Aveda stylist |
| 16:42 | Traveling, for professional and pleasurable reasons |
| 17:08 | Employee outreach program, further explanation about Head Start program |
| 19:26 | Volunteering in the community |
| 19:36 | Graeber's Mission Statement |
| 20:34 | Feeling comfortable in Boise |
| 21:17 | Describes "role" within Boise's LGBTQ community, praises parents |
| 22:06 | Hopes for the future within Boise's LGBTQ community |
| 22:28 | Discusses gay marriage views |
| 23:07 | Advice for young people coming out in Boise |
| 23:48 | Advice for the interviewer about finding a "potential mate" |
| 24:00 | Proudest moments in life, being a father and grandfather |
| 25:21 | Final additions to his story, wishes for the future |
| 26:13 | Relationship with the AIDS epidemic |
| 27:24 | Closing moments |