

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
To access a full recording or transcription of this oral history, contact:
archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Anonymous_001

Interviewer: Kathy McCormick

Date: November 19, 2015

Place: Narrator's home in Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Sarah F. Wakefield

Proofreader: VJ Kopacki

Abstract:

In this oral history, Anonymous_001 starts off discussing his family life. He states that his family life was not the best but not the worst, however after his mother left and his father developed borderline personality disorder, he decided to find ways to escape reality. He then goes on to say how his sexuality and sex cannot be disconnected from his life. After being exposed to pornography at a young age, he struggled with porn addiction throughout his adolescent and adult life. Porn introduced him to different types of sexuality and it was through porn that he discovered that he is bisexual. He discusses how his struggle with pornography led to misconceptions of what a healthy relationship looked like, as well as what a healthy sexual relationship looked like, with either a man or a woman. Consequently, his porn addiction led him to child pornography when he was 12 years old. His addiction, specifically to child pornography, continued until he was arrested in 2010 for the consumption of child pornography. After being arrested, he was admitted to a center for sexual compulsion and trauma and it was there he was told and accepted that he was addicted to sex. After his rehab was over, he was sentenced to prison for up to five years. He only served 3 ½ years, but it was during his incarceration that he had his first "real" homosexual relationship. He mentions that before this relationship, even though his friends knew he was bisexual, he had been dating a woman and only acted on his homosexual desires behind closed doors in secret and through cybersex. This relationship showed him that he could have a healthy homosexual relationship if he wanted to, and that his homosexual urges did not have to be expressed only in secret. Now he is discovering himself again and discovering other people. He warns the younger generation to be careful with what they do on the internet, because the internet is not reality and will never be reality. Reality is trusting people, loving people, and accepting yourself for who you are. He also warns the younger generation that "Living alone is not a way to live and there is no reason for it." The world is full of good people that will love you and help you, all you have to do is ask.

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Interviewee: Arlene Ackerman and Jacquie Bogle Ackerman

Interviewer: Mary Merriman

Date of Interview: August 17, 2014

Location of Interview: Ackerman home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Arlene Ackerman was born in San Francisco, California, then adopted and raised in Lodi, California. Jacquie Bogle Ackerman was born and raised in northern Minnesota. Arlene became licensed as clergy with the Metropolitan Community Church in 1977, and Jacquie has supported Arlene by traveling with her when needed, performing odd jobs such as office work and driving buses in order to help financially. In this interview, the couple discusses their long journey in adopting a child as a lesbian couple while living in Minnesota together. They faced discrimination from their adoption agency, but after approximately nine months, they were finally able to adopt a baby girl named Amanda, and shortly after, moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Arlene and Jacquie explain the challenges of gaining parental rights for both of them and with raising Amanda as an adopted, biracial child of two LGBT parents. Despite that they became married for primarily legal reasons, the couple also discusses the emotional significance of their recent state-recognized marriage in June of 2014. Lastly, Arlene and Jacquie reflect on the gay rights movement and agree that they never thought that gay marriage would have been possible in their lifetimes, but they are grateful to see it happening today.

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Interviewee: Peggy Allan

Interviewer: Nicole Price

Date of Interview: March 20, 2015

Location of Interview: Peggy Allan's home

Transcriber: Nicole Price

Camera: Liam Fuller

Proofreader: Katie McCauley

Abstract:

Peggy Allan grew up in Oregon, where she attended Northwest Christian College for a year before marrying and having two sons with her first husband, Gary, a pastor. After 10 years of marriage, while the two were living together in Northern California, Gary came out as a gay man, and the two divorced. Peggy then married her second and current husband, Don, whom she has been with for 40 years and with whom she has another son. In this interview, Peggy discusses the initial struggles she and her sons faced in their relationship with Gary after his coming out, and then the later friendship that she and Don developed with Gary and his partner, Hal, and the family unit that they all came to form, including Peggy's children. She describes how her lifelong friendship with Gary and Hal brought her to understand and become a great supporter of the LGBT community in Northern California, especially in trying to help foster open and affirming faith communities there, and how she and Don have continued to support the LGBT movement since their retirement and move to Lancaster in 2007.

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Interviewees: 1960s Group Interview: Frank Pizzoli, Larry Wilson, Bob Kegriss, P. David Walker, Richard Hause, Lawrence von Barann, William “Bill” Heffner, John Folby

Interviewer: Bill Burton

Date: June 16, 2016

Place: LGBT Center of Central PA

Transcribers: Dan Duchaine, Sarah Wakefield

RESTRICTIONS: Contact Frank Pizzoli or Lawrence von Barann before publishing or publicly sharing their statements, names, or images.

Abstract:

The group discusses what it was like to be gay in earlier years, specifically the sixties. They talk about the cultural environment, which included religion, family, social networks, etc. The main topic of conversation throughout the interview is the emphasis on gay bars in the central Pennsylvania area, particularly in Harrisburg.

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Interviewee: John Barns

Interviewer: Cathy McCormick

Date: December 16, 2015

Place: Camp Hill, PA

Transcriber: Sarah F. Wakefield

Proofreader: Ashley Tucewicz

Abstract:

John Barns was born in Perry County, Pennsylvania. He comes from a family of farmers and is Pennsylvania Dutch. He grew up on a farm, joined the military during Vietnam, and then worked for the Pennsylvania government for 30 years. He discusses his experience of being gay in a small farm community and the conflicts that arose within his family because of his sexuality. He discusses the gay community in Perry County, Lancaster, and Harrisburg, as well as relationships that developed in each. The most prominent relationship that he discusses is his relationship with Walter Lear, the Regional Health Commissioner of the Pennsylvania Department of Health. He also talks about Dignity, a Roman Catholic organization that was a refuge for gay Catholics and/or gays of any religious background in the Harrisburg area. He discusses the impact that Dignity had on the gay community in Harrisburg and as well as on him. Also, he touches on certain people in his life that helped him come to terms with his sexuality.

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Interviewee: Morgan Bates

Interviewer: Liam Fuller, Barry Loveland

Date: August 24, 2017

Place: Bosler Hall, Dickinson College

Transcriber: Asazina Yasmin Cooper

Proofread by: Taeya Viruet

Abstract:

Morgan Bates was born in Reading, Pennsylvania in 1996. She is a senior at Dickinson College whose passions include music and social justice. After going back through her own story and working with children at a music camp, Morgan ultimately wants to be a resource and confidant for those who do not have a space to explore or express themselves. She discusses her childhood experiences and the ways they have influenced her today. She addresses the role of her parents, her family, her friends and her religion in her development as a child. Morgan tells the story of how she came to discover and accept her identity as a queer individual, and how her personal experience has fueled her passions and interests.

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Interviewee: Alanna Berger and Blaise Liffick of Silent Witness

Interviewer: Mary Merriman

Date: July 22, 2014

Place: Marietta, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Andrew Dietz

Abstract:

Alanna Berger and Blaise Liffick are the co-founders of the Silent Witness Peacekeepers Organization. Alanna was born in 1954 in Hummelstown, PA. Before committing full time to Silent Witness, Alanna by profession worked as a systems analyst after having received undergraduate degrees in philosophy and computer science. Alanna also serves as an adjunct professor at Lebanon Valley College in the Women and Gender Studies department. Blaise Liffick was born in southern Indiana (his birthdate was not mentioned). Blaise by profession is a faculty member at Millersville University in the Computer Science department after receiving his doctorate in computer science from Temple University. Alana Berger and Blaise Liffick are married. Alana and Blaise are a part of the congregation of the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg. In 2005, under Alanna's initiation, the Silent Witness Peacekeepers Organization was established as a service to peacefully alleviate conflict between street harassers and the LGBT community during special events and ceremonies. Their work does not emphasize anti-protesting but conflict averse strategies to guarantee the safety of all parties. In this interview, Alanna and Blaise discuss their path to starting this organization, several fond memories of their work, as well as, discuss the presence of street preachers and protest organizations like Westboro Baptist Church. They discuss their commitment to the LGBT community and their plans for the future of Silent Witness Peacekeepers.

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Interviewee: Becky Boone

Interviewer: Lonna Malmshemer and Don Fitz

Date of Interview: November 25, 2014

Location of Interview: Becky Boone's home in Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Sarah Goldberg

Proofreader: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Becky Boone, who identifies as heterosexual, was raised in a religious family that was accepting of homosexuality, although they rarely discussed it. Her involvement with the Pembroke United Church of Christ in Harrisburg and as a parent of a daughter participating in Common Roads theater productions has encouraged her to become an advocate for the LGBT community. In this interview, Becky discusses her early understanding of LGBT couples, her church's experiences with families unsupportive of the LGBT community, and her experience during the rejection of DOMA [Defense of Marriage Act]. She also describes the process her church underwent in order to adopt a policy of being "open and affirming" toward LGBT members. During this voting process, Becky screened documentary films and brought transgender individuals to speak at her church in order to increase awareness for LGBT issues and to expand the inclusivity of her community. Additionally, she describes the gratitude expressed by LGBT individuals for her church's religious support at Pride festivals. Becky also admits that the passage of marriage equality so quickly in Pennsylvania was pleasantly unexpected.

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Interviewee: Tom Boone

Interviewer: Lonna Malmshemer and Don Fitz

Date of Interview: November 25, 2014

Location of Interview: Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Drew Strahosky and Sarah F. Wakefield

Proofreader: Emily Armando

Abstract:

Mr. Boone is interviewed as an ally of the LGBT community. From a young age, he encountered members of the LBGT community but never judged or discriminated against them. He later joined the board of a Community Center, and through this Center allowed the expression of young LBGT community to flourish, specifically through theater. His daughter was very active with the LGBT community.

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Interviewee: James “Jim” Bortzfield

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date: October 13, 2014

Place: LGBT Center in Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Andrew Dietz

Abstract:

James “Jim” Bortzfield was born in Lancaster, PA in 1934. He received his undergraduate degree from Elizabethtown College as a business major. Upon graduation, Jim moved to Harrisburg to work as a buyer for Pomeroy’s but after several years he switched careers and purchased a beer distribution facility in Hershey, PA. After this successful business endeavor Jim was searching for a new opportunity and decided the purchase The Neptune Bar, a local gay bar, in Harrisburg. In this interview, Jim talks about his upbringing especially talking about his knowledge of being gay at a very young age but still being able to find companionship among his peers. Jim states that for him it wasn’t too difficult for him to be out. Jim also discusses his two earlier careers paths and why he made those career shifts. On discussing his last major business endeavor, owning The Neptune Bar, Jim recounts anecdotes of being the bar owner and his overall experience. Since selling the bar in 1984/85, Jim discusses his retirement life and having moved to Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

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Interviewee: Jerry Brennan Story Circle: Richard Hause and Steven Leshner

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date of Interview: March 8, 2017

Location of Interview: Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Corine Lehigh

Proofreader: VJ Kopacki

Finalized by: Mary Libertain

Abstract:

This is a story circle with Barry Loveland, Richard Hause, and Stephen Leshner discussing the life and work of Jerry Brennan. They begin with the discussion of Jerry's childhood religion and his attendance of St. Bernard's Seminary in Alabama. Barry, Richard, and Steven also discuss Jerry's charitable works, including being a founding member of Gay Community Services, Gay Switchboard, and finally in the local Dignity chapter. The men attempt to nail down Jerry's personal life, from childhood to adulthood, although since he rarely talked about it they are only able to piece together clues from the time they knew him. They also discuss Jerry's social activism and involvement in both the Black Civil Rights Movement and the local gay community. Barry, Richard, and Steven go off on a pleasant tangent discussing comedians and speakers that Jerry had come to Harrisburg. The men finish reminiscing about Jerry by discussing what little they knew about his love life.

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Interviewee: Joe Burns

Interviewer: Lonna Malsheimer

Date of Interview: May 24, 2013

Location of Interview: Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Chalise Saunders

Abstract:

From the time Joe Burns came out as gay at around 27 years of age, he was involved in gay activism. He was a part of many organizations that have helped to move gay rights forward, including the Mattachine Society and Le-Hi-Ho. He donated his entire library of gay-related books to Le-Hi-Ho before retiring from his activism career, and he donated books to the LGBT archives at the Waidner-Spahr Library at Dickinson College as well. This interview focuses on his memories of activism in the early years of the Gay Liberation Movement just before and just after the Stonewall riots of 1969.

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Interviewee: Joe Burns

Interviewer: Unknown, "I" stands for "Interviewer"

Videographer: Lonna Malmsheimer

Date of Interview: October 10, 2014

Location of Interview: Unknown

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Joe Burns is an LGBT activist who actively participated in LGBT organizations, marches, and protests especially throughout the 70s, 80s, and 90s. In this interview, Joe discusses his involvement in several of those LGBT and women's rights organizations, including Berks County, Allentown NOW, the Gay Line, and Le-Hi-Ho, of which he was a founding member. He also recalls his involvement in attempting to have a gay rights ordinance passed through the Human Rights Commission and Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus for the Lehigh Valley area, which unfortunately failed. Additionally, in this interview Joe considers the importance of talking and listening to women in order to promote inclusive activism. In terms of his personal life, Joe briefly talks about his relationships with two of his lovers, both which sadly ended in divorce. In the future, Joe hope to learn about what happened to the Le-Hi-Ho library and his fellow activists from Berks County.

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Interviewee: Bobbi Carmitchell

Interviewer: Mary Merriman

Videographer: Michelle Probolus

Date: June 26, 2013

Place: Bobbi Carmitchell's Home

Transcriber: Josh Rosenbluth

Proofreader: Isabella Silvis

Finalizer: Mary Libertin

Abstract:

Bobbi Carmitchell was born in Willow Street, Pennsylvania. She spent most of her professional career as a full-time musician, but currently has added contracting work in stained glass and woodworking art. Bobbi describes her journey in the musical world – from the Wood and Wind trio, to playing with her sister, and then onto to a solo career – and how that journey has shaped her identity as a lesbian. She details how her early years with Wind and Wood, and the influence of women musicians enabled by Olivia Records, helped her to come out. She expresses amazement at how coming out today has become a non-issue for so many women. She describes several stories over the years that demonstrate her difficulty in balancing a life as an out lesbian with the desire to appeal to a broader audience, including how she is currently choosing to frame a novel she hopes to finish soon. Bobbi emphasizes that her parents were fully supportive of her, and yet relates stories of their difficulties with her sexuality. She details her involvement with the Central Pennsylvania Women's Music Festival and Women's Circle which highlight tensions within the LGBT community. A strong feminist identity and involvement in women's issues has powerfully shaped who Bobbi is.

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Interviewee: Joanne Carroll

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date: Friday November 18, 2016

Place: Joanne's home in Lancaster

Transcriber: Madison Arnold-Scerbo and Amanda Donoghue

Proofreader: VJ Kopacki

Abstract:

Joanne Carrol was born in Alberta Canada in 1940 as John Carroll. She spent the first 60 years of her life as a man, marrying twice and having two children. She worked a number of jobs throughout the country, primarily in the Air Force but also in hotel management and security. She transitioned in the 90s at around 60 years old, moved with her mother to Lancaster, and got heavily involved in trans advocacy throughout all of Pennsylvania as the president of TransCentral PA. In this interview, Joanne discusses a number of subjects relating to her experiences as a trans woman, including mental health, the transition process, and her experiences in coming out as trans to her family and friends. She also discusses issues of race, politics, white and male privilege, the current political climate (as of November 2016), and the importance of faith in her life.

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Interviewee: George Centini, Gary Hufford

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date of Interview: January 30, 2017

Location of Interview: Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: VJ Kopacki

Proofreader: Kailey Zengo

Abstract:

Gary Hufford (born 1952) and George Centini (born March 11, 1937) are a married couple living in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In this interview, George and Gary recount their time in the gay bar and restaurant business. Both grew up in the restaurant business and became business partners together. As successful restauranteurs, they provide insight in the running of their business, the Tally-Ho and the Loft, as well as other local gay bars. They also speak about employing family and friends as workers and employing both gay and straight workers. They also speak about how both of their families were supportive of their relationship and are both part of the other's family. They liken Lancaster to a "bubble" where many outside problems did not affect them strongly. Even so, they speak about the impact of the AIDS crisis on the young people who often visited their bars and the loss of many in the gay community in Lancaster. Additionally, they talk about their annual trips to Key West in order to live the "gay lifestyle." Finally, they speak about their choice to finally marry after many years together.

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Interviewee: Joe Christ

Interviewers: Liam Fuller, Barry Loveland

Date: August 8, 2018

Location: Coopersburg, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Mak Jones

Proofreader: Taeya Viruet

Abstract:

Joe Christ was born in 1927 with Klinefelter syndrome and assigned male at birth. The seventh of eight children, Christ was placed into an orphanage during the Great Depression where they stayed until age 18. Two weeks later, Christ was drafted into the Army and fast-tracked to work as a stool pigeon in a secret German Prisoner of War camp in Richmond, Virginia due to their fluency in German, Pennsylvania Dutch, and English. Following World War II, Christ got their degree in education from Moravian College, going on to teach English, German, and Social Studies while building and driving racecars, motorcycles, and flying planes as a hobby. In 1974, Christ went to Germany to teach American English on a Fulbright fellowship, where they met their second wife, Liz, a Fulbright scholar who was in Germany teaching British English. While working there, Christ helped improve the English skills of a German cytogeneticist to allow her to participate in the World Health Organization, and it was through this connection that Christ discovered they have XXY chromosomes. Christ had occasionally started presenting as a woman before learning they were intersex following the end of their first marriage in 1973, but never formally came out, electing to present as masculine or feminine selectively. Christ expresses comfort in being able to present as either/or, while not particularly identifying with the LGBT community.

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Interviewee: Lynn Daniels and Mary Margaret Hart

Interviewer: Barry Loveland and Bill Burton

Date: April 25, 2017

Place: Bellefonte, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Liam Fuller, Mak Jones

Proofreader: Alette Kligman

Abstract:

Mary Margaret Hart and Lynn Daniels are a married lesbian couple living in Central Pennsylvania. Lynn was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1931, while Mary was born in 1949 in Cleveland, Ohio. Throughout the interview, Mary and Lynn discuss their childhoods, how they met, and the difficulties of raising a family together in Central Pennsylvania during the 1980s. Mary, a therapist, had previously been married and had two children with her first husband, John, before meeting Lynn while completing graduate school. The couple discusses raising their daughters, Rachel and Sheila, at a time and place without other lesbian parents as role models. The two stayed active in the gay community, and they recount the differences they've observed growing up two decades apart, as well as what they've observed of their daughter Sheila's experience, who is also gay. The couple married in 2014 after being together for 35 years.

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Interviewee: Barbara Darkes

Interviewer: Anya Janssen

Present: Katherine Morales

Date of Interview: March 26, 2015

Location of Interview: Harrisburg, PA

Proofreader: Katie McCauley

Abstract:

Growing up in the conservative Lebanon County of central PA, Barbara Darkes attended grade school through the beginning of her pre-law college career without experiencing any attraction to women. It was at her summer job at the local YMCA during college that Barbara met and eventually fell in love with her long-term partner, Kathy. This same-sex relationship was the first for both of them, for neither woman had previously identified as a lesbian. Due to the conservative environment of central PA, the two women kept their relationship secret for years, which proved emotionally exhausting for both of them. Fortunately for Barbara, her work environment at McNees Wallace & Nurick, LLC proved to be accepting and embracing of her intimacy with Kathy, and it became the site of the beginning of their coming out experiences in 2012. Although Barbara and Kathy encountered some painful disapproval during their coming out process, they also found spaces of acceptance that embraced them. The two married privately in Maryland in 2013, and they continue to have a healthy and loving relationship with each other and with Kathy's kids. Barbara uses her position as a community organizer and as president of the LGBT Center to work towards generating a more accepting environment for LGBT people in the larger central Pennsylvania community.

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Interviewee: Nancy Datres

Interviewer: Lonna Malmshemer

Date of Interview: June 19, 2013

Location of Interview: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Nancy Datres was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania in 1948 and moved to Harrisburg to pursue computer science after becoming blacklisted by the Altoona Police Department when she was just 27 years old. Thereafter, Nancy moved through several careers, holding positions such as college professor, journalist, legal writer, and lawyer. In her interview, Nancy discusses the incredible impact of her sexuality on the course of her academic and professional life, which required her to change schools and even careers whenever an environment became too unsafe for her to stay. She illustrates several examples of harassment and discrimination in her life, as well as the inefficiency of local law enforcement, educational institutions, and court systems to help alleviate these injustices. Additionally, Nancy remarks on lesbian bar culture, her difficult financial situation, and her 20-year relationship and engagement with another woman. Although she began identifying as a lesbian as a teenager, Nancy explains her difficulty to fully “come out,” insisting that she does not feel completely “out” in all aspects of her life. She believes that her hardships have impacted her ability to consistently feel comfortable sharing her sexuality with others, but expresses great hope for feeling that freedom someday.

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Interviewee: Nancy Datres

Interviewer: Lonna Malmshemer

Date of Interview: August 27, 2014

Location of Interview: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Nancy Datres was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania in 1948 and first moved to Harrisburg to pursue computer science after becoming blacklisted by the Altoona Police Department when she was just 27 years old. Thereafter, Nancy moved through several careers, holding positions such as a community college professor, journalist, legal writer, and lawyer. In her interview, Nancy discusses the incredible impact of her sexuality on the course of her academic and professional lives, which required her to change schools and even careers whenever an environment became too unsafe for her to stay. She illustrates several examples of harassment and discrimination in her life, as well as the inefficiency of local law enforcement, educational institutions, and court systems to help alleviate these injustices. Additionally, Nancy remarks on her difficult financial situation and her 20-year relationship and engagement with another woman. Since her first interview with the LGBT History Project, Nancy has become at peace with her sexuality, saying that after everything she's been through, she does not care who knows she is gay.

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Interviewee: Ray Davis

Interviewer: Jennifer Ott

Date of Interview: April 14, 2015

Location of Interview: Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Sarah Goldberg

Proofreader: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Ray Davis was born on April 30, 1954 in Bethlehem, PA. After attending Catholic school, Ray went on to earn a bachelor's degree in ornamental horticulture from Delaware Valley College in Doylestown, PA. After moving to Harrisburg in 1986, Ray acquired his real estate license, serving a variety of clientele including many from the gay community. In this interview, Ray discusses the consequences of coming out to his Catholic parents, the success of his real estate business, and social life in Harrisburg during the late 1980s. He also explains his involvement in the economic development of Harrisburg and briefly about his personal relationships as well as the changes he has witnessed in the Central PA gay community over the years. Ray comments on the different experiences of gay youth today in comparison to his own and others' experience in the 1970s. Additionally, Ray touches on his perception of the 1990s AIDS Crisis and fondly remembers volunteering as a buddy for the South Central AIDS Assistance Network [SCAAN]. Ray credits the support of the LGBT community as well as the strength of his personal network in Harrisburg for the success of his business.

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Interviewee: Samuel “Sam” Deetz

Interviewer: Lonna Malmshemer

Date of Interview: October 27, 2013

Location of Interview: Community Study Center at Dickinson College

Transcriber: Deborah A. Troutman

Abstract:

Samuel Deetz was born in Quakertown (Pennsylvania), in 1951 on April 21st and was one of eight children. Sam’s father became a minister which allowed his family to move from place to place over Sam’s young life. Sam’s family wanted him to continue into the Christian faith, but as Sam continued through Christian schools, he realized he was different. He became a strong advocate in the Susquehanna Valley Gay Alliance, worked along Harrisburg Pennsylvania Council members, Senators and Representatives to form other gay and lesbians group. He was also instrumental in organizing and arranging meetings in order for other gay and lesbians groups to blossom within their own communities. Sam was influential in creating a social media site and continues to keep blogs current and updated for well-known gay and lesbian advocates to share their experience, strength and hope. He met the love of his life Jim, thirty-seven years ago, and because of the passing of the Marriage Equality Bill in Delaware was able to marry his best friend and confidante.

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Interviewee: Tammy del Sol

Interviewer: Corine Lehigh

Videographer: Catherine McCormick

Date: Thursday, April 20, 2017

Place: Harrisburg

Transcriber: VJ Kopacki

Proofreader: Emily Scheiber

Abstract:

Tammy del Sol was born in 1963. In this oral history, she discusses her college experience at several institutions, playing racquetball, her father's (now her own) dental practice, her close-knit family, her artistic side, her relationships with different girlfriends, and her continuing friendship with her ex Jen. Tammy also talks about her relationship with their three children who were conceived through several different sperm donors, all of whom were friends of the couple. Tammy discusses the importance of the extended LGBT family that includes friendship and relationships with exes and how this network has helped her and her former partner raise their children. Tammy identifies as a "New Ager," someone who enjoys many aspects of different religions, but who primarily is drawn to spiritualism. Though she has run a dental practice for 22 years, she would like to pursue other business ventures after the next five or six years, which may include screenwriting. Tammy also hopes that her business will become a "home" for people in the LGBT community who otherwise would not find a place where they could feel safe. The interview also touches on current politics and the future of social justice under the Trump administration.

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Interviewee: Margaret “Peg” Dierkers

Interviewer: Andrea Glass

Date of Interview: March 21, 2014

Location of Interview: LGBT Center of Central PA (1306 N 3rd Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102)

Transcriber: Jennifer Ott and Andrea Glass

Finalized: Mary Libertin

RESTRICTIONS: Narrator asks researchers to quote with appropriate context.

Abstract:

Margaret “Peg” Dierkers was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1957 and attended a Catholic school as a child. She earned both a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Ohio State University, and eventually enrolled in a doctoral program in Human Development and Family Studies at Penn State University. Peg relocated to the Harrisburg area, and soon began working for the South Central AIDS Assistance Network (SCAAN), which assisted individuals and families of those with HIV/AIDS. After leaving SCAAN in 1994, Peg has continued working for other social justice causes including the Domestic Violence Coalition. In this interview, Peg discusses her relationships with both male and female partners, raising her two daughters in the Harrisburg area while involved in a lesbian relationship, and her struggle to fit into the lesbian world after her marriage to a man. Peg goes on to discuss her family’s acceptance of her sexuality, and the importance of spirituality in her life. She describes her on-going participation in the LGBT Center of Central PA’s History Project, and the importance of the Center for the LGBT community of Harrisburg.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
To access a full recording or transcription of this oral history, contact:
archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Chris Dietz

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date of Interview: October 4, 2017

Place: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Taeya Viruet

Proofreader: Alette Kligman

Abstract:

Chris Dietz was born on April 6, 1975 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He lived in Carlisle shortly after he was born, before moving to Perry County with his parents and younger sister. There, he attended West Perry School District and participated in many extracurricular activities. From high school, Chris was accepted to Penn State and studied engineering until he graduated. In this interview, Chris shares his experience with coming to terms with his sexuality at 30 years old as a life-long member of the United Church of Christ Christian church, and in turn how it has influenced his parents' perception of him. He also expands on his achievements both as a manufacturer and a community leader. Chris worked as a mechanical engineer for a printing press until 2009, and now is a project manager at Alfa Laval, a manufacturing company for heat exchangers. Chris was appointed to Millersburg Borough Council in 2006, and has been a part of local politics ever since. Chris ran for state representative in 2012. The interview concludes with Chris' thoughts on social change in the future for LGBT rights and transgender awareness.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: MJ Dougherty

Interviewer: Marjorie Forster

Date: November 22, 2014

Place: Honey Brook, PA

Transcriber: Andrew Dietz

Abstract:

MJ Dougherty was born on May 20th, 1956 in Syracuse, New York. As a child of parents who traveled extensively for work MJ had moved around quite a bit before settling into Williamsport, PA where she attended middle school and high school. Upon graduating from high school, MJ started her first job as a file clerk at Liberty Mutual Insurance. Throughout her career in insurance, MJ has been successful moving up the ladder reaching executing positions of Vice President at several insurance firms. A majority of MJ's tenure has been in Harrisburg, PA. At the age of 24, MJ got married and was with her husband for 19 years but divorced as she addressed her true feelings as a lesbian woman. In this interview, MJ discusses the fact that at the day of her wedding she knew she was a lesbian but that she wanted to follow the tradition of her Irish Catholic roots. After 19 years of marriage and staying in the closet, she decided to free herself and live her life how she wanted to. She claims that her marriage of 19 years is a testament to the acceptance of the LGBT community and the need to hide. MJ further elaborates on her successful career path but also the tragedy she faced as being a victim of PTSD after witnessing the September 11 attacks at the World Trade Center as she was preparing to enter the towers just before the planes hit. MJ further accounts the aftermath of the experience and downhill slope of those events as she faced possible discrimination for being a lesbian as well as for her PTSD condition. MJ narrative concludes at her success of being able to look at her life from a positive vantage and her ability to move forward to new opportunities.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Benjamin Dunlap

Interviewer: Marj Forster and Barbara (?)

Date: November 23, 2015

Place: LGBT Center

Transcriber: Brianna Horgan

Proofreader: Daniel Duchaine

Abstract:

Benjamin Dunlap was born in Lancaster County Pennsylvania on December 23, 1957. He was born to a family with a mother, father, and sister ten years older than him. Throughout his life he was highly involved with LGBT community life and in Lancaster County was one of the originators of the community center and Common Roads LGBT community awareness. He remained on the board for many years, but recently retired. He, however is still highly involved. In this interview he talks about his childhood and how being gay influenced his life throughout school and beyond. He discusses his job atmosphere as an attorney and his marriage and life partnership to his husband, David. He also talks about different mentors he had growing up, especially Paul Kendall, a professor at Kutztown University. At the end he briefly discusses the changes he has witnessed towards gay life and the changes he would like to see regarding that and the community center.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Melinda Eash

Interviewers: Marge Forester, Barbara Biancome

Date: May 15, 2017

Place: LGBT Center of Central PA, Harrisburg

Transcriber: Mak Jones

Proofreader: Isabella Silvis

Abstract:

Melinda Eash, child psychologist and LGBT rights ally, discusses her upbringing near the New York Metropolitan Area and the influence of the church. As a young adult she attended Susquehanna University, where she made friends with a gay student who she helped sequester in the girl's dorm in secret as he was unsafe in the men's dorm. After college, Eash worked with developmentally disabled adults, going on to get her Master's degree and open her own practice working with youth as a certified psychologist. After encountering a gay patient, Eash realized she was under-educated in this area, and began teaching herself how to help LGBT youth. At this point she contacted and began going to a local LGBT youth group, becoming an integral ally and leader of Bi-GLYAH. The organization, later renamed Common Roads, expanded greatly in the following twenty years. In this interview, Eash describes the changes she's seen in the realities for LGBT youth, the changes in the organization, and the work done by current and former members of the group.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Kathy Fillman

Interviewers: Marge Forrester and Barbara Miller

Date of Interview: February 10, 2015

Place: Highspire, PA

Transcriber: Mallory Slusser

Proofreader: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Kathy Fillman was born in Coatesville, Pennsylvania to an Irish family that had their own business. Although she describes her childhood as idyllic, Kathy lived with her grandparents and three cousins due to her mother's alcoholism and attended a Catholic private school until the seventh grade, when she started living with her mother again. Once Kathy graduated from high school at age 18, she immediately began working in order to leave her home where alcoholism and abuse were major issues. She worked a number of odd jobs, including being an employee at Pepperidge Farm, a manager at Hess and Atlantic Refining and Marketing Corporation, and an assistant at John Barnes. In this interview, Kathy describes reconnecting with and supporting her mother, now deceased, who battled cancer on numerous occasions. She also discusses her interest in spirituality and healing, her involvement in civil rights during her 20s and 30s, as well her positive experiences with the health care industry in appropriately dealing with her and her partner's needs. Today, Kathy is recovering from several health issues but is optimistic about her own future as well as the future for younger generations of LGBT-identified individuals.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Donald Fitz

Interviewer: Kevin W. Barns

Videographer: Lonna Malmsheimer

Date of Interview: October 25, 2014

Location of Interview: Donald Fitz's home in Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Proofreader: Taeya Viruet

Abstract:

Donald Fitz was born on August 20, 1944 in York Pennsylvania. After completing high school he attended Elizabethtown College as a Pre-Med student and went on to pursue a Master's Degree in Special Education. In between his undergraduate and graduate studies, Don served for a year in the Peace Corps in Mumbai, India. Don in the past year has recently retired from a school administrator position in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and currently lives in Harrisburg, PA. In this interview Don discusses the relationships and experiences he had throughout his life and how they have evolved over time, especially as he came out as a queer man. Don first discusses how his initial sexual experience and his attraction to women and how he had a negative perception of gay men. Don discusses the relationship he had with his first wife. They were married for six years in Don's early twenties and had two children together. It was late into their relationship that Don began to realize his feelings for men. Coming out to his family after this realization was difficult. His immediate family was not supportive and ostracized him. For a couple of years he remained in the Harrisburg area still working as a teacher, but decided for a change and moved to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. In Florida, Don embraced the gay lifestyle with his friends and lovers. For quite some time he left teaching and explored several odd jobs. Don also details the experience of the HIV/AIDS outbreak and the many friends he lost. Don concludes his interview on his return to education work and his decision to retire and come back to Harrisburg to be with his grandchildren.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: John Folby

Interviewer: Blake Barker

Date: March 26, 2014

Place: John Folby's home

Transcribers: Blake Barker and Jennifer Ott

Finalized: Mary Libertin

Abstract:

John Folby was born in Pittsburgh in 1947. He was the oldest of five children in an Irish-Italian Catholic family. He relocated to Harrisburg in 1975 with his partner. John continues to live with his partner in Harrisburg in a relationship lasting more than 44 years. John is well-known for his activism in the LGBT community of Central Pennsylvania. In his younger days, John was involved in a Catholic group for lesbians and gays known as Dignity, and assisted in the Gay Switchboard Hotline. He began a 25-year career in a state government civil service position running a medical drug program for persons with HIV/AIDS. He continues his service to the LGBT community through consulting for the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health which offers the Pennsylvania Mid-Atlantic AIDS Education Training Center. John's work with HIV/AIDS has been recognized with numerous awards, and the John Folby Award for Excellence is named in his honor. He additionally volunteers for the LGBT Center of Central PA's History project. In this interview, John not only discusses his extensive activism efforts, but also his family's reluctance to address and accept his homosexuality, his relationship with his partner, and changes within the LGBT community within his lifetime. He also discusses his and his partner's decision to have John adopt his partner in order to financially protect themselves and their assets when gay marriage was illegal in Pennsylvania.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Paul Foltz

Interviewer: Brian Pridgeon

Date of Interview: March 20, 2015

Location of Interview: Dickinson College

Transcriber: Brian Pridgeon

Proofreader: Katie McCauley

Abstract:

Paul Foltz grew up in Steelton in a very Catholic household, a background to which he attributes his unawareness of his sexuality until later in his college years. It wasn't until he went to England to complete his graduate-level theatre studies, though, that he encountered a strong and open LGBT community that was growing after the recent decriminalization of homosexual acts, which encouraged him to come out and become comfortable with himself. Upon his return to the U.S., he remained out and was generally met with acceptance. He became involved in Pennsylvania's LGBT community in helping to establish the Harrisburg Men's Chorus and Dignity Philadelphia, as well as directing a drag troupe to raise money for HIV support. In this interview, he discusses these events, as well as his work as a costume designer at Theatre Harrisburg and teaching at the Bradley Academy for the Visual Arts and at HACC, in addition to his experiences with being out and gay in central PA.

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Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Cassidy Frazee

Interviewer: Liam Fuller

Location of Interview: LGBT Center

Date: July 27, 2017

Transcriber: Alette Kligman, Taeya Viruet

Proofreader: Taeya Viruet

Abstract:

Cassidy Frazee was born in 1957 in Cedar Lake, Indiana. Cassidy grew up in Cedar Lake with her younger sister, father and mother. They had a Catholic upbringing, but Cassidy explains she was no longer interested in religious affairs by the time she reached sixth grade, when her questions revolving around Catholicism angered the adults at her Sunday school. Growing up in rural Indiana in the 1960s and 1970s, there were not many positive representations of LGBT people. So, although Cassidy explains she had always felt that she was a girl, she did not learn of the term ‘transsexual’—the term used to describe transgender at the time—until reading one of her mother’s psychology books. After going through two marriages and securing a career as a computer programmer, Cassidy came out as a woman in 2015, after beginning to see a gender therapist in 2012. In this interview, Cassidy gives a timeline all the way through her transition and the experience of going through hormone replacement therapy (HRT); to explain the effect that estrogen has had on her as a person. Cassidy also shares personal, spiritual and emotional experiences that have time and time again confirmed her gender identity.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Jerre Freiberg

Interviewer: Mary Merriman

Date: December 3, 2014

Place: Lancaster, PA

Transcriber: Jennifer Ott

Abstract:

Jerre Freiberg was raised in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. His family has close ties to the Lutheran Church, and he has remained affiliated with the church throughout his life. Jerre attended Elizabethtown College for two years before leaving to join the Navy. He remained in the Navy for 22 years, retiring in 1986. After retiring from the Navy, Jerre continued to work as Lancaster County's budget analyst, and later as the Director of Administrative Services for the Lancaster Guidance Center. Jerre was diagnosed as HIV positive in 1992, and he subsequently became involved in several Lancaster area HIV/AIDS groups and organizations. In this interview, Jerre discusses his naval career —and being in a same-sex relationship during his years in service. He details his experiences as being HIV positive in Lancaster, including his own work advocating for other HIV positive persons such as being the director of the Betty Finney House which assisted low-income persons with HIV with housing needs. Jerre elaborates on some of his relationships, both before and after his HIV diagnosis. Jerre goes on to discuss changes he has seen since the early days of the AIDS crisis, and some of the challenges those who are currently HIV positive still face, particularly issues concerning senior citizens. He concludes with a reflection on changes within the LGBT community throughout his life — such as same sex marriage legalization and equality efforts.

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Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Deb Fulham-Winston

Interviewer: Amanda Donoghue

Videographer: Kailey Zengo

Date of Interview: March 19, 2017

Location of Interview: Dickinson College Library

Transcriber: Amanda Donoghue

Proofreader: Alette Kligman

Abstract:

Deb Fulham-Winston was born in 1952 in Boston, Massachusetts. She grew up in an Irish-Catholic family with eight siblings, and spent the first half of her schooling in Catholic school. Early on, she had a strong conviction for feminism and social justice which drew her away from the Catholic Church and inspired her to attend Bates College for two years and then transfer to the College of the Holy Cross in Wooster, MA, where she was one of the first 13 women to graduate. She has spent all of her career working with non-profits in the development sector, including agencies such as Planned Parenthood, various college fundraising organizations, and a variety of others. During this interview, she primarily discusses her experience at SCAAN [South-Central Aids Assistance Network], and her experiences with the social connotations of working with an AIDS foundation, the struggles that individuals with AIDS went through, the functions and day-to-day activities of SCAAN, and the annual AIDS Walk in Harrisburg, which she organized.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Steve Glassman

Interviewer: Bill Burton

Date: January 4, 2018

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Taeya Viruet

Proofreader: Lillian Sweeney

Abstract:

Steve Glassman was born on September 20, 1954 in Chicago. He was fortunate enough to grow up in a rather liberal household with accepting parents who were involved in political activism and social justice during the Civil Rights era. Glassman's story is unique in that he utilized his privilege in both his upbringing and education to further the activism that his parent's passed down to him. Glassman graduated from Brown University with a BA in Art History and Architecture and moved on to then receive his MA in Museum Curatorial Work from Yale University. In this interview, Glassman describes what it is like as a person of the LGBT community to work for a living while simultaneously dedicating their life to LGBT rights and the rights of other marginalized communities. He has owned his own architectural firm while successfully balancing governmental positions and organizational positions.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Ed Good and Thurman Grossnickle

Interviewer(s): John Folby and Lonna Malmshemer

Date of Interview: March 28, 2013

Location of Interview: LGBT Center of Central PA

Transcriber: Olivia Hockenbroch

Abstract:

For the very first interview of the history project, Edmund Good and Thurman Grossnickle describe their coming out stories.

Thurman is a retired Scientist Administrator and has spent many years in academia and in health professions, as well as in LGBT organizations. Brethren, as he considers himself, he no longer attends church, though a large part of his coming out process involved the organization, Dignity, which was primarily run by the late Father Saude (ph.). Upon discovering his sexuality, Thurman spent a considerable amount of his time dedicated to the LGBT community of Harrisburg, operating the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard, attending and hosting Dignity events, and serving as editor of the Dignity newsletter. Thurman discusses his involvement, his experiences living in Central PA, and his decision to never divorce his wife.

Edmund is a retired apartment manager, though he is still involved in the Brethren Housing organization, which finds places for mothers going from welfare to work. Edmund explains that though he was always kind of aware of his sexuality, he hadn't really come out before attending college. At Penn State, he was involved in several LGBT outlets, including the student organization HOPS (Homosexuals of Penn State), which was supported and funded by Penn State. Edmund, too, alludes to the friendly climate, which he's experienced during his life as a gay man in Central PA.

As the second half of their interview, Ed and Thurman tackle some deeper issues. He discusses how his work and family life didn't change too much overall, but there were some bumps. At first, Ed's parents didn't understand what it meant to be gay, creating an estrangement. But with the introduction of Thurman into the picture, they had a change of heart. Ed and Thurman discuss other difficulties they've endured in 33 years as a couple. Despite being made coal on the carpet, a church backs them up and defies their national organization, making it a known safe space for LGBT couples. On a less happy note, they discuss a community's reaction to Thurman's friendship with a gay teenage boy. As Ed and Thurman reflect on the past events they've encountered, they note where we've come from and where we still need to go. Ed mentions several websites, webinars, and workshops that helped him as a gay man, but could also help others to understand and love thy neighbor.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
To access a full recording or transcription of this oral history, contact:
archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Don Haines

Interviewer: Cathy McCormick
Date: November 24, 2015
Place: Columbia, Pennsylvania
Transcriber: Sarah F. Wakefield
Proofreader: Emily Armando

Abstract:

Don Haines was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and grew up there. In this interview he discusses his experience in Lancaster County as a gay man. He also discusses his experience in Columbia, PA and the acceptance that he has from his family and friends in that area. Topics focus on his interaction and practice of religion, specifically Catholicism, his job as a worker for the commonwealth of PA, his activism in college and while living in Columbia, PA, and what still needs to be worked on for the rights of the LGBT community in PA, particularly when it comes to the political culture in PA.

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Interviewee: Lori Hatch-Rivera

Interviewer: Mallory Slusser

Date of Interview: April 20, 2015

Location of Interview: Metropolitan Community Church in Harrisburg

Transcriber: Karin Carthins

Proofreader: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Lori Hatch-Rivera was born in Rockville Central, New York on Long Island in 1958. After Lori's family moved to South Florida, Lori enrolled into what is now Palm Beach Atlantic University and graduated in 1989 with a degree in history. After about ten years of teaching, Lori believed God was calling her to do ministry work and obtained her Master's in Divinity at Florida Center for Theological Studies, and she is currently attending Lancaster Theological Seminary to fulfill her Doctorate in Ministry. She is the founder of an interfaith group located in Venice, Florida, and works closely with the LGBT Interfaith Coalition group and Equality PA. In this interview, Lori discusses familial issues surrounding her sexuality, her relationship with religion and the Metropolitan Community Church [MCC], as well as her social justice work within religious community in order to bring them greater awareness of LGBT identities. She also mentions future challenges for the LGBT community and her appreciation of Harrisburg's tight-knit community. Today, she is married to her partner Darlene and is a Pastor at the kornheiler of Harrisburg.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Richard H. Hause

Interviewer: Nancy Datres

Date of Interview: September 20, 2013

Location of Interview: Richard's Home in Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Richard H. Hause was born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, on May 21, 1947, moving to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, after he graduated from high school in 1965. After coming out to his family when he was eighteen, Richard began working for the State Government in the Department of Highways, and he eventually retired from the State Government in the Department of Public Welfare just eight years ago. While Richard discusses in his interview the difficulties of identifying as LGBT in both personal and professional spheres, he also illustrates the vibrancy of the gay community by citing memorable experiences both occurring in Harrisburg as well as in nearby communities such as Washington, D.C. He expresses his regular interest in LGBT activism, from supporting the Human Rights Campaign Fund to participating in the local Pride Festival every year to being an active member in the Dignity Chapter of Central Pennsylvania, one of the first LGBT organizations started in the area. Throughout his interview, Richard expresses the historical changes he has witnessed in the gay community both nationally and locally, and he emphasizes his distaste for organized religion, asserting its negative political influence on the gay rights movement.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Walter Heiliger

Interviewer: Nina Tirado

Date of Interview: March 27, 2015

Location of Interview: East Asian Studies Room, Waidner-Spahr Library, Dickinson College

Transcriber: Nina Tirado

Proofreader: Katie McCauley

Abstract:

Walter Heiliger was born in 1944 and grew up in rural Carroll County, Maryland, the second of three children. Walter, who describes himself as “severely hearing-impaired,” encountered difficulties in school and in connecting with others growing up, as he did not receive support for his hearing issues. Over the course of his career, Walter worked in a number of different positions at a variety of companies, including Head Ski Company and Black and Decker in Maryland and York Technical Institute and Freezing Equipment Sales in Pennsylvania. Now retired, he currently works part-time as a custodian at South York School District. Although he was aware that he was interested in men early on and had several relationships with men, he decided to marry a woman in an attempt to live a “normal” life. While the marriage was unfulfilling on many levels, Walter credits his wife for greatly improving his quality of life by getting him hearing aids and speech therapy, and it was through that marriage that Walter was able to have his three children. Walter came out in 1999, then in his mid-50s, and describes the varying levels of support he’s received from his family. Since coming out, he has slowly become more vocal in the LGBT community, joining PFLAG in Mechanicsburg for a time, attending programs for seniors through the LGBT Center, and working part-time at Altland’s Ranch in Harrisburg. In this interview, Walter shares stories from his life, including his relationship with Bill, his most serious partner since coming out, who passed away in 2006. He also discusses the importance of reaching out to seniors in the LGBT community, as well as married men, and the idea of LGBT rights as a human rights issue rather than a political one.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Nancy Helm

Interviewer: Bill Burton

Camera Operator: Lonna Malmsheimer

Date: January 16, 2016

Place: Lancaster, Pennsylvania (Nancy's Home)

Transcriber: Brianna Horgan

Proofreader: Sarah Wakefield

Finalizer: Mary Libertin

Abstract:

Nancy Helm was born in Lancaster Pennsylvania and graduated from Manheim Township High School in 1981. After graduating she worked for a printing company and did other odd jobs before opening a hair salon with her partner. Not long after that she opened a book store across the street called The Closet. She opened the bookstore as an outlet for the gay community of Lancaster so they could meet and hang out and shop. But, the bookstore was eventually the target of anti-gay crime in the 1990s. It was bombed twice and received multiple threats, including from the KKK. In this emotional interview Nancy gives her story about how she dealt with this and how it affected her life as well as the life of the gay community.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Clarke Hess and Lee Stoltzfuss

Interviewer(s): Mark Stoner and Mary Merriman

Date of Interview: August 14, 2013

Location of Interview: Residence of the Interviewees

Transcriber: Olivia Hockenbroch

Date(s) of Transcribing: May 20, 2014 – May 30, 2014

Abstract:

Clarke Hess is one of the leading historians of Mennonite and Lancaster County history and has been involved in several committees relating to his interests, in addition to working for his family's company. Clarke grew up in Lebanon County to a Mennonite family and went through the public school system, before moving into his ancestors' house in Lancaster County. This house, filled with collections of antiques, resembles a museum of Lancaster County and Mennonite history. Lee Stoltzfuss has had several occupations over his lifetime—teacher, print shop worker, rare book-dealer, and more; but is partially retired. Lee was born into a liberal Mennonite family and spent the majority of his academic life in Mennonite schools.

Though neither of them claims to really be an *activist*, their perseverance in being true to themselves has impacted Lancaster County [Pennsylvania] and all those whom they have come into contact with. While peaceful, they stand their ground against intolerance, which Lee had shown through his ad in the Lancaster County newspaper in 1991; this made him and his peers, the first to use the word “gay” in the Lancaster newspaper. Though shy at first, Clarke was more active in the social LGBT scene. He traveled throughout Pennsylvania and the greater Pennsylvania area, going to several gay-pride celebrations, dances, and gay bars. This interview was conducted in the home of Clarke Hess and Lee Stoltzfuss, whom share a domestic partnership of over 27 years.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: HIV/AIDS Story Circle (Audience is not on camera. Only panelists Margeret “Peg” Dierkers, Bernie Pupo, John Folby, and Frank Pizzoli can be seen.)

Date of Interview: January 22, 2015

Location of Interview: LGBT Center of Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Jennifer Ott

Proofreader: Lillian Sweeney

Restrictions: Contact Frank Pizzoli before publishing or publicly releasing his statements. Narrator Margaret “Peg” Dierkers asks researchers to be careful to quote her comments in accurate context.

Abstract:

A group of LGBT people have gathered together to tell their stories about the AIDS crisis. Peg Dierkers, Bernie Pupo, John Folby, and Frank Pizzoli go back and forth, telling their individual stories and injecting anecdotes into others. They talk about the hospice care and their support of SCAAN.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Shaka Hudson

Interviewer: Don Fitz

Videographer: Lonna Malmsheimer

Date of Interview: August 3, 2015

Location of Interview: York, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Proofreader: Sarah Goldberg

Abstract:

Shaka Hudson was born in 1949 in Harrisburg as the middle of five children. An artist his whole life, Shaka attended John Harris High School and Penn State University before unenrolling in college and leaving Harrisburg to join the Washington D.C. Repertory Dance Company and Theatre Company as a dancer. There, he met his first male partner, and together they moved to New York City in 1975. While modeling for an art class at the Art Students League, Shaka met and fell in love with a woman who he later married and had one daughter with. After they divorced approximately 10 years later, Shaka moved to Richmond, Virginia with a new male lover who, unbeknownst to Shaka, was sick with AIDS. Shaka contracted HIV in 1987. After his lover's death, Shaka moved back to the Harrisburg area and had one more major relationship. In this interview, he thoroughly discusses his journey as an artist and a dancer. Shaka also discusses the AIDS epidemic, his relationships with family members, and changes he would make to the Harrisburg community. Additionally, he expresses his concern that the younger generation is too carelessly promiscuous as well as the importance of citizens exercising their right to vote.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Jon Johnson and Charles Maser

Interviewer: Mary Merriman and Mark Stoner

Date of Interview: May 8, 2014

Location of Interview: Unknown

Transcriber: Megan Murphy

Abstract:

Jon Johnson was born in Southern Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and lived on his family's farm in his early life. Charles (Charlie) Maser was born in Brownstown in Lancaster County Pennsylvania. Jon spent most of his life in Pennsylvania. He went to the York Academy of Arts in York, Pennsylvania and then worked in the Bon Ton department store doing store displays and visual merchandising. Charlie attended dental school in Washington D.C. and then enlisted in the Air Force. He was stationed in Charleston, North Carolina and then later on in Germany, and finally in Madrid. Jon and Charlie met in July of 1975 at a bar called the Fiddler when they were introduced through a mutual friend. In this interview they discuss what it was like to come out in rural Pennsylvania in the 70's and the challenges of living in an area that was very religious. Charlie also discusses his experience being gay in the military and how surprisingly he did not face much prejudice as a result of his sexuality, especially while in Europe. The couple also reflects on the difficulty of losing friends to AIDS in the 80's and the type of activism they became involved with during that crisis. In conclusion, Jon and Charlie express that they felt lucky that they had not faced a lot of prejudice in their lives, because of their relationship, and discuss how they feel that there are not a lot of differences between their relationship and a relationship between a straight couple.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Marlene Kanuck

Interviewer: Nancy Datres

Date of Interview: July 1, 2013

Location of Interview: Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Katie McCauley

Abstract:

Born in 1949 to a Lutheran minister and his wife, Marlene Kanuck married a man, had two children, and got a divorce after 11 years of marriage before realizing that she was a lesbian. In this interview, she discusses her coming out process and the effects that being a lesbian has had on her life. A teacher and a divorced mother wanting to retain custody over her children, Kanuck was not able to be openly gay for many years, and she discusses that experience, as well as her experiences in long-term relationships and in raising her children with those women. Additionally, she describes her relationship with religion and where she thinks the LGBT community is heading in the near future. Currently working at the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Kanuck is also a founder of the LGBT Center, in addition to being involved with a number of other organizations, and she discusses her involvement in opening the Center.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Bob Kegriss

Interviewer: Ann Van Dyke

Date of Interview: June 21, 2013

Location: Harrisburg, PA

Transcribers: Sara Tyberg and Chalise Saunders

Restrictions: Narrator's permission required for use by media.

Abstract:

Bob L. Kegriss, who was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1939, graduated from John Harris High School and began working full-time at a nearby Bowman's Department Store. Additionally, he spent one and a half years in the military before being honorably discharged in 1961 when it was discovered that he was gay after a security background check. In his interview, Bob discusses his experiences with gay bar culture throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, describing it as one of the only ways to openly interact with the LGBT community in Harrisburg during that time. Moreover, he recognizes the progress for equality that has been made since he was young, and talks about his appreciation for greater LGBT awareness, visibility, and acceptance with better spaces—such as the LGBT Center in Harrisburg—for gay individuals, young and old. He is actively involved in his church, the Metropolitan Community Church of the Spirit, and talks about its positive impact on his life, particularly when he was dealing with issues surrounding alcohol and overeating.

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Interviewee: Mara Kiesling

Interviewer: Bill Burton

Date: September 15, 2017

Place: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sakinah Hobbs-Jones

Proofreader: Yasmin Cooper

Abstract:

Mara Kiesling was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1959. Mara is a transgender woman, who is a transgender rights activist and founding executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality based in Washington D.C. In this interview, Mara discusses her upbringing in a political household as her father had political books and always watched the news, which influenced her interest in politics and activism. Also, she elaborates on her various jobs and the relationships she established and maintained at those places. Mara explains her transitioning stage and how she frequently traveled to different states to be a part of groups where she felt most comfortable in the journey to finding herself. She also explains her reactions to transgender people when she occupied certain spaces, prior to transitioning. Furthermore, Mara compares her experiences as a transgender women in cities versus small towns. She constantly acknowledges how lucky she is to have one of the best support systems in comparison to other transgender people. Ultimately, she expresses the strategic way she came out to her family, and their reactions.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: David Klinepeter

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date: December 1, 2017

Place: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Selma Siekert

Proofreader: Taeya Viruet

Abstract:

David Klinepeter, father of the late Daniel Klinepeter, gives insight as a parent of a member of the LGBT community. He also speaks about his experience losing his son to AIDS and his advocacy with AIDS Memorial Quilt: The Names Project.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Nikki Knerr

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date: October 9, 2016

Place: House of Bernie Pupo, Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Ashley Tucewicz

Proofreader: Amanda Donoghue

Abstract:

Nikki Knerr was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1945 and attended York College and Pennsylvania State University where she studied mass communications. In 1967, Nikki opened her first graphic design business which ran for 25 years in Camp Hill, before she retired to Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. When the HIV/AIDS crisis emerged along with negative social stigma in the late 1980s, she organized the Unity Festival to raise funds and awareness for those infected, as well as for the greater LGBT community around Pennsylvania. In this interview, Nikki discusses the joyful moments and struggles of belonging to the gay community. She emphasizes the role gay bars such as D-Gem and Altland's Ranch played in uniting LGBT individuals, as well as the compassion and perseverance demonstrated by the thousands of volunteers that participated in the Unity Festivals. In the interview, Nikki touches upon some of the amusing highlights involving the organization of the festivals. She marvels at the modern progress of LGBT rights and opportunities to unite in settings of merriment, yet admits that ostracism and societal barriers still exist in other spheres of life.

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Interviewee: Suzanne Kohr

Interviewer: Jennifer Ott * note Suzanne is interviewer's aunt on father's side, Andrew was their uncle

Date: March 25, 2015

Place: Newberrytown, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Jennifer Ott

Abstracts:

Suzanne Kohr:

Suzanne Kohr, formerly Ott, was raised in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. She is now 60 years old, and resides in Newberrytown, Pennsylvania. Suzanne had two children with her first husband, and has been married to her second husband, Tom Kohr, for almost two decades. Suzanne was the second oldest of 8 children. She had seven brothers: Steve, Danny, Alan and Brian are all still living —and John, Andrew and Greg have passed away. Suzanne was close to her youngest brother Andrew who died from AIDS complications in 1997. Sue discusses Andrew's strained relationship with his parents and siblings, and the prejudice he faced. She goes on to discuss some of his significant relationships, and life after moving away from Shippensburg to Virginia. Sue elaborates on Andrew's frustration over HIV/AIDS treatment available to him, and his treatment up until his death. Sue concludes by describing Andrew's legacy, and her hopes for increased acceptance of homosexuality by society.

Andrew Ott:

Andrew Ott was the youngest of 8 children born to Arthur and Evelyn Ott, and raised in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. He knew from a young age that he was homosexual, and faced prejudice from both his family and the small community he grew up in. Andrew attended Shippensburg University before relocating to Virginia where he worked and became involved in a serious relationship. Andrew contracted HIV that later progressed to AIDS — which he passed away from in 1997. Andrew remained close to his sister Suzanne, despite increased bigotry from the rest of his family after his diagnosis. Through interviewing Andrew's sister Suzanne, some of Andrew's frustrations and struggles as he dealt with both intolerance and illness are addressed.

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Interviewee: Colin Kreitzer

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Videographer: Catherine McCormick

Date: Thursday, February 16, 2017

Place: Colin's home in Harrisburg

Transcriber: Amanda Donoghue

Proofreader: VJ Kopacki

Abstract:

Colin Kreitzer was born in 1947 in Enola, Pennsylvania, and grew up in Wormleysburg, Pennsylvania with his parents and his younger sister. He attended West Chester College and moved to Harrisburg in 1977, where he began getting involved in the gay community through activism and social activities. In this interview Colin reviews his involvement in the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard of Harrisburg, Dignity, Metropolitan Community Church, and volleyball. He also talks about the stigma of growing up as a closeted gay man, the bullying he experienced in primary and secondary school, and how he came to accept his sexuality and come out when he was in college. He discusses his past relationships and the struggles that he has experienced trying to forge healthy, emotional connections with others. Colin is also involved in Alcoholics Anonymous, and explains the values he has gained from the organization and the changes in his own character and behavior.

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Interviewee: Lorraine Kujawa

Interviewer: Bill Burton

Date: October 28, 2015

Location: Provincetown, Massachusetts

Transcriber: Sara Johnson

Proofreader: Sarah Wakefield

Finalizer: Mary Libertin

Abstract:

Lorraine Kujawa was one of the co-founders of the *Lavender Letter* in Harrisburg during the late seventies and eighties. The *Lavender Letter* was created to provide events for the lesbian community to attend in Pennsylvania. She started the newsletter in order to bring the lesbian community together by highlighting events available in Harrisburg, Lancaster, and other parts of Central Pennsylvania. Additionally in the interview, Lorraine Kujawa compares the differences in the communities of Provincetown, Massachusetts, where she currently lives, and Central Pennsylvania, where she grew up, towards the LGBT community.

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Interviewee: David Leas

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date: June 1, 2017

Place: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Liam Fuller

Proofreader: Mak Jones

Abstract:

David Leas was born in 1955 in Columbia, Pennsylvania. He comes from a working class family and described the sense of independence he got from his first job as busboy for the Accomac Inn. This job led to a foray into the restaurant business, starting with opening the Railroad House in Marietta with his partner Marlon. David then went on to be an evening manager at Isaac's and then transitioned into a higher up management job with the restaurant job. Due to his pull at Isaac's, he was able to convince the restaurant and other local restaurant to raise funds and collaborate with the Lancaster AIDS Project and SCAAN. David was also one of the original members of Gays United Lancaster and The Rural Gay Caucus, an organization formed in reaction to the urban focus of the Council of Sexual Minorities, formed by Governor Shapp. He also was one of the main driving forces behind the newsletter, Gay Era, often spearheading the publication of it. He remarks on how many of his friends, such as Bari Weaver, had to move due to the extreme harassment they faced for being openly gay. He then touches on the evolution of gay bars in the area and how he met his partner, Ben, who he has been living with in Elizabethtown for around twenty years.

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Interviewee: Steven Leshner

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date: January 19, 2017

Place: LGBT Center of Central PA, Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Corine Lehigh

Proofreader: Amanda Donoghue

Abstract:

This is an interview with Steven Leshner of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He conveys his struggles of coming out in the 1970s and being a gay man in central PA through a series of anecdotes. Steven also talks extensively about his work at Dignity and his relationship with Jerry Brennan. While Steven was not active in S.C.A.A.N. (South Central Aids Assistance Network), he was involved in a group that later became S.C.A.A.N. Also of note, Steven talks about his first time with a man, life as a male nurse in the 1970s and 80s, growing up Jewish, Jerry Brennan's death, attending Pride festivals in NYC, and being a single gay man in Harrisburg.

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Interviewee: Rachel Levine

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date of Interview: February 6, 2017

Location of Interview: Health and Welfare Building, Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Kailey Zengo

Proofreader: Yasmin Cooper

Abstract:

Dr. Rachel Levine was born in Wakefield, Massachusetts on October 28th, 1957. She attended Belmont Hill School, and then went onto attend Harvard College. She attended the Tulane University School of Medicine in New Orleans, Louisiana. Dr. Levine discusses her process of uncovering her gender identity through all of her triumphs of adulthood. She discusses her relationships with family, as well as the many accolades she was able to receive throughout her career in the medical field at Penn State Hershey. Dr. Levine is currently the Acting Secretary of Health and Physician General for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry at the Penn State College of Medicine.

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Interviewee: LGBT Center History Group Interview: Louie Marven, Ben Dunlap, Marlene Kanuck, Elizabeth (Bebe) Mullaugh

Interviewer: Barry Loveland, Bill Burton

Date: September 16, 2017

Place: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Taeya J. Viruet

Proofreader: Sakinah Hobbs-Jones

Abstract:

The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Center of Central PA (Harrisburg) began to form in the late 90s. To receive fundraising through the National Lesbian and Gay Community Funding Partnership of New York, the founding group was led approximately 600 need-based assessment surveys around Central Pennsylvania. The study covered the eight-county region of Central Pennsylvania. In 1999, the group received a matching grant from the foundation – one out of the two states in the country to get that funding. From this funding, the LGBT group in Harrisburg was able to gain a community center. In this interview, Louie Marven, Ben Dunlap, Marlene Kanuck and Elizabeth Mullaugh speak on their experiences as board members of the LGBT Center in Harrisburg and each describe the functions and communal efforts made by the group, including starting Gay-Straight Alliances in Pennsylvania high schools.

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Interviewee: Gretchen Little

Interviewer: Sarah Goldberg

Date: November 19, 2015

Location: Harrisburg, PA (Midtown Scholar)

Transcriber: Sarah Goldberg

Proofreader: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Gretchen Little was born on October 26, 1958 in Elmira, New York. As a child, Gretchen was interested in sports and experimented with wearing women's clothing in the home. While studying Media Arts at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, Gretchen told some female partners about her interest in presenting as a woman, but remained largely closeted. After law school at the University of Pittsburgh, Gretchen went on to serve as the District Attorney for Sullivan County for several terms and then moved to Harrisburg to work for the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Association. While in Harrisburg, Gretchen worked for TransCentral PA and helped organize the first Keystone Conference. In this interview, Gretchen discusses the vocabulary she used to describe her feelings during the sixties and seventies, her past relationships, her work with TransCentral, and the process of finding an authentic presentation in balance with her professional goals and personal relationships. She also discusses some difficult movements of confrontation, her relationship with organized religion, and her perspective on dating in the future. Gretchen concludes the interview by talking about how she chose her name after a domestic violence advocate she met while she served as the DA.

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Interviewee: Julie Lobur

Interviewer: Bob Kegriss

Videographer: Nancy Datres

Date: November 12, 2013

Place: LGBT Center of Central Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Josh Rosenbluth

Abstract:

Julie Lobur was born in New Kensington, Pennsylvania in 1955 and moved to Harrisburg in 1970. She received her bachelor's degree from Penn State and added a master's degree in computer science in 2003. Julie briefly served in the military in 1983 where she met her wife Marla, but was discharged because she is a lesbian. She currently works as a computer architect for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and an adjunct professor of computer science for Penn State.

Julie discusses her coming out process at the age of 18, in large part aided by the existence of something that might be unique to Harrisburg: a diner – The Commerce Diner – that catered to a gay clientele. Julie details how she met Marla, how they decided to get married in Iowa in 2009, how they came to be part of a set of couples suing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to recognize their marriage, and how the lawsuit has completed her coming out process. She describes how attitudes have changed towards gay people over the years, and how this “sea change” in acceptance implies increased responsibility for gay people. She shows her gratitude to the gay men of Harrisburg by describing how they established the “gayborhood,” which she believes saved the city from blight.

Human and institutional support networks have played a major role throughout Julie's story.

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Interviewee: Harry Long

Interviewer: Liam Fuller

Date: August 6, 2017

Place: Lebanon, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Emily Scheiber

Proofreader: Lillian Sweeney

Abstract:

Harry Long was born in Lebanon, Pennsylvania in 1951 and attended Lebanon High School. After attending Millville University and becoming involved with an underground newspaper, Harry began his career of working for newspapers; in addition to doing freelance artwork. In the early 1980s, Harry came out publically as gay. In this interview, he discusses the struggles and joys of his experience affected by his sexuality, throughout his careers. Growing up in a fairly traditional family, it was a “long time coming” to be open about his sexuality to his parents. He discusses the challenges he faced in building up several successful newspapers and the relationships he made being a part of several gay rights organizations. Harry elaborates upon the importance of close friends and navigating through different jobs to find how one can be most accommodating in society. In this interview, Harry also touches on his experiences of being involved in politics and the changes (and similarities) that he has witnessed in Lebanon, Pennsylvania over the years.

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Interviewee: Barry Loveland

Interviewer: Korie Lain

Date: March 22, 2014

Location: Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Korie Lain

Abstract:

Barry Loveland was born December 28th, 1956 in Schenectady, New York. After graduating from high school, Barry attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he obtained a Bachelors of Science degree in Architecture and Building Sciences. Following his undergraduate career, Barry got accepted at Eastern Michigan University, where he earned a Masters in Historic Preservation Planning and became very active in the LGBT community. Since his participation, Barry has been an integral member of this community. From developing Montgomery, Alabama's first gay organization to the creation of Common Roads, Barry has demonstrated his drive and his passion for the success and the advancement of the LGBT community. In this interview, Barry discusses in great length the numerous activist roles that he has possessed in his lifetime as well as the opportunities resulting from his selfless work. Also in this interview, Barry reveals the details of his own personal lifelong journey of coming out and what support systems he uncovered along the way as he formulated his own identity.

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Interviewee: Daniel Maneval

Interviewer: Nancy Datres

Date of Interview: August 27, 2013

Location: Comfort Inn, New Cumberland

Transcriber: Mana Shaw

Abstract:

Daniel Maneval shares his experiences as an activist through organizations such as Homophiles of Williamsport (HOW), West Branch Gay Support Group, Susquehanna Lambda, and a gay switchboard in Williamsport. He describes how these groups served the needs of a rural gay community and their eventual decline in the area. Daniel elaborates on harassment he faced from a teenage gang in his neighborhood who saw him on television in association with HOW. Daniels discusses local gay and lesbian bars that have existed over the years in the Williamsport area and the community's reluctance to embrace LGBT persons. He does, however, take pride in the increased acceptance LGBT youth are gaining in the area, pointing to successes such as the local high school's group for LGBT youth called Port Pride. He briefly discusses his coming out to other gay persons, but not to family members. Daniels describes his interest in the Metropolitan Community Church, and his continued faith.

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Interviewee: Daniel Maneval

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Videographer: Lonna Malmsheimer

Date: July 24, 2015

Place: LGBT Center, Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Talya Auger

Proofreader: Sarah Goldberg

Abstract:

Daniel Maneval was born in Williamsport, Pennsylvania on October 3, 1947. In this interview, Daniel speaks frankly about his experiences growing up as an only child, homophobic violence he has experienced, and the gay organizations he has lead and participated in throughout his life. He specifically speaks on his experiences with his parent's death and the independence he was forced to cultivate as a result. He first became involved with Susquehanna Valley Gays United and was a founding member of Homophiles of Williamsport. He also was a critical component to leading a protest against Anita Bryant, and participated in several Rural Gay Caucuses. He was forced to move out of his family home after homophobic gang-related attacks on his property, and experienced gay-bashing outside a bar in Williamsport. Daniel reflects on the differences he sees in the Williamsport LGBT community today. This interview provides an in-depth history of gay life in Williamsport from the 1950s to today.

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Interviewee: Ted Martin

Interviewer: Lonna Malmshemer

Date of Interview: June 4, 2013

Location of Interview: Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg, Katie McCauley

Abstract:

Prior to coming out at the age of 32, Ted Martin had worked for many years for the government and public policy organizations, chiefly in the areas of communications and advocacy. Martin lived in Washington, D.C. and worked for Congress before returning to Pennsylvania, where he worked at the Historic Harrisburg Association and then his alma mater Dickinson College, at which point he came out. He became involved with the Team Pennsylvania Foundation and became part of the Rendell administration, serving in the Department of Community and Economic Development and as an advisor on LGBT issues. He currently works as the Executive Director of Equality Pennsylvania, the PA LGBT advocacy organization. In this interview, he discusses his life prior to, during, and since coming out, as well as the ways in which being out and gay has affected his life and his work.

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Interviewee: Louie Marven

Interviewer: Katherine Morales

Date of Interview: March 29, 2015

Location of Interview: LGBT Center

Transcriber: Katherine Morales

Proofreader: Katie McCauley

Abstract:

Louie Marven moved to central Pennsylvania from his hometown of Wappingers Falls, New York to attend Messiah College in 2003 and has lived in the Harrisburg area ever since. The school's conservative values and prohibition of "homosexual behavior" made Louie's time there complicated, and it wasn't until after he graduated that he came out. He then began working for the LGBT Center, taking on the role of Youth Director and Administrator when the Center merged with Common Roads, and then accepting the position of Executive Director in 2012. In this interview, Louie discusses his experience of being gay at an evangelical Christian college, recalling experiences both as a student and as an alumnus that have caused him to think critically about the specific issues of LGBT inclusion that arise from the environment of the school. He also talks about the issues that he finds most pressing for the LGBT community at the moment, what being out means in terms of his life today, and his hopes for the community's future.

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Interviewee: Teresa “Teddy” Maurer

Interviewer: Rebecca Cecala

Date of Interview: March 14, 2014

Location: LGBT Center

Transcriber: Lillian Sweeney

Abstract:

Teresa “Teddy” Maurer was born in Lykens, Pennsylvania. Following a move to Upper Dauphin County, she grew up and graduated from Halifax High School. From there she worked at the Nedrich shirt factory for a few years before moving onto a job with the state government. She eventually moved to Harrisburg and stayed there after she retired from her job at the state. She worked for the government for 37 years. She discusses her conflict with derogatory comments and other discrimination she saw in her workplace and in the greater LGBT community around her. She explains how her mother’s death at the hands of a drunk driver when she was 25 and how when a former girlfriend forced her to come out changed her life. She now works with the LGBT center to give back for the times when she could not.

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Interviewee: Melita McCully

Interviewer: Marjorie Forrester

Date of Interview: November 28, 2017

Location: LGBT Center, Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Taeya Viruet

Proofreader: Lillian Sweeney

Abstract:

Melita McCully was born on December 11, 1952 in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. After the death of her father, Melita moved to Florida with her family and became both the breadwinner and the caretaker of her six brothers and sisters, mother and grandmother. As a teenager, Melita volunteered when she was not in school in exchange for her brothers' tuition at their Catholic school. Unable to go away for college, Melita attended St. Petersburg Junior College and the University of South Florida. While in college, Melita held 2 jobs to support her family and herself. After graduating with a 3.7 GPA and 23 extra credits, Melita enlisted in the United States Women's Army Corp at the age of 21, not retiring until 29 years later. Melita gives a well-detailed overview on her experience in the U.S. Army as a lesbian woman starting off in a gender-segregated military. Furthermore, up until 2011, after the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell", LGBT people were not welcomed into the military and risked dishonorable discharge. This impacted Melita's experience and relationships greatly, but this did not stop her from achieving several ranks and overseeing hundreds of soldiers.

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Interviewee: Laury McIntyre

Interviewer: Karin Carthins

Date: March 29, 2015

Location: Bosler Hall at Dickinson College

Transcriber: Karin Carthins

Proofreader: Michelle Clinger

Abstract:

Laury was born in New Port Beach, California on March 20, 1961. She is the middle child with two brothers from a Presbyterian home. Laury and her current partner Jan are not married and do not live together. She currently resides in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and is the Director of the High School Outreach Program at the Antonelli Art and Photography Institute in Erdenheim, PA.

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Interviewee: Mary Merriman

Interviewer: Mark Stoner

Present: Sylvia Weaver

Date of Interview: August 28, 2013

Location of Interview: Lancaster, PA

Transcriber: Katie McCauley

Abstract:

Born in Chicago, IL in 1949 to a Catholic family, Mary Merriman joined the Air Force in 1967, where she struggled with her sexuality due to the environment, eventually becoming pregnant and discharging from the military before giving her son up for adoption. She attended Montgomery College in Maryland and received a degree in psychology, after which she and her then-partner moved down to Tampa, FL. Merriman got licensed and ordained as a pastor and started a Metropolitan Community Church in Lakeland, FL in 1983, where she and the congregation dealt with the difficulties of forming an LGBT church in a conservative town as well as the emergence of AIDS. In 1987, she was called to serve as pastor at Vision of Hope MCC in Lancaster, PA, a position which she held until 1995, navigating the creation of Lancaster's Human Rights Ordinance and the process of buying the church's current building in Mountville, PA. Since earning her Master of Social Work degree, she has worked as a social worker at Community Care Behavioral Health in Camp Hill, PA. In this interview, she discusses her involvement in the LGBT community, especially in the area of religion, and the advances that the community has made over time.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Daniel (Dan) C. Miller

Interviewer: Andrew C. Miller

Date of Interview: March 15, 2014

Location of Interview: LGBT Center, Harrisburg

Transcriber: Andrew C. Miller

Abstract

Daniel (Dan) C. Miller's colorful humor and personality were persistent throughout the interview. He shares his experiences growing up and coming out in his early 30s. His coming out experience was during his time working for Donald L. DeMuth. Specifically homosexuality was listed as a fireable offense in his contract, the contract also contained one of the most overly broad non-compete clauses held up in a court of law. As Miller fought for the rights of the LGBT community he found himself thrust upon the public stage. Miller shares how he was fired from DeMuth and one year later faced a lawsuit on the basis of the non-compete clause; Miller countersues for wrongful termination. Miller contributes his lack of resources and knowledge of the legal system, as well as Judge Kevin Hess's instruction to the jury, who did not want homosexuality to be a factor in the jury's deliberation, as factors which caused him to lose the case. Despite the financial and incredible emotional cost of this case, he cites that gays around the area who had also been fired reached out to him. Dan Miller, who grew up without gay mentors or people to look to, became the hero he was looking for.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
To access a full recording or transcription of this oral history, contact:
archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Cindy Lou Mitzel

Interviewer: Debbie Gable

Date of Interview: March 29, 2015

Location of Interview: York, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Proofreader: Sarah Goldberg

Abstract:

Cindy Lou Mitzel was born in April of 1942 in York County, Pennsylvania as the youngest in a big family. Growing up, Cindy knew that she felt attraction towards women but married a man just after graduating from high school and had three children. Throughout her life, Cindy has been involved in the National Organization for Women [NOW], the Lavender Letter, the Lesbian Alliance, and the Central Pennsylvania Women's Chorus, among other women's and gay rights activist organizations. Cindy remained married for many years before separating from her husband and, after the age of 40, began dating other women. In this interview, Cindy discusses coming out to her adult children, her involvement in the passage of a gay rights ordinance in York city, and how LGBT-identified individuals practiced safety while community building. She also mentions the importance of coming out, her experiences at the Metropolitan Community Church, and her attendance of the first Central Pennsylvania Pride Festival. Today, Cindy is pleased with the recent affirmative gay marriage laws, which were once thought "impossible" for the LGBT community.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Mary Nancarrow

Interviewer: Ann Van Dyke

Date of Interview: Oct. 9, 2013

Location of Interview: Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Katie McCauley

Abstract:

Born in 1951, Mary Nancarrow grew up in the Harrisburg area, and from a young age, she has been involved in the movements for LGBT and women's rights, especially for Central Pennsylvania. She has worked extensively with NOW, serving as the president for Pennsylvania NOW in 1984 and 1985. As part of this involvement, she helped to plan the first march on Washington for LGBT rights, which was eventually held in 1987. Additionally, she was one of the founders of the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus, and she was also very involved in the drafting and passing of the Harrisburg Human Relations Ordinance, ensuring that the legislation provided protection against discrimination for LGBT people. She recently retired from the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission after over 20 years. In this interview, she discusses what it was like to be gay in the '70s, '80s, and '90s, particularly in the Central Pennsylvania area, recalling discrimination she and others faced during that time period, her struggles with coming out to her parents, notable events of the era and her personal reaction to them, and her dedication to LGBT and women's rights and its role in her life.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Mary Nancarrow

Interviewer: Lonna Malmsheimer

Date of Interview: February 24, 2015

Location of Interview: Home of Lonna Malmsheimer

Transcriber: Sarah Goldberg

Proofreader: Sara Tyberg

Finalizer: Mary Libertin

Abstract:

Mary Nancarrow grew up in a suburb of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in the 1950s and 1960s with divorced parents and two siblings. After graduating from Shippensburg University, she became prominent in the women's movement and the LGBT movement in Central Pennsylvania, serving on the Governor's Council for Sexual Minorities and the Rural Gay Caucus. Mary was also heavily involved in the National Organization for Women [NOW] and was elected NOW Pennsylvania President, working to pass marital rape legislation, funding and campaigning for political races, and fundraising money for the NOW PAC. After her presidency, she helped to plan the National March for LGBT Rights in Washington D.C. and volunteered for the Harrisburg Gay and Lesbian Switchboard. Today, Mary lives in Harrisburg and sings in the Women's Chorus. In this interview, Mary discusses her childhood and early relationship to religion as well as her involvement with the anti-Vietnam War movement throughout high school and college. She also describes her contributions to Shippensburg Gays United, feminism within the gay rights movement, and the experience of coming out to her parents and friends. Mary concludes the interview by acknowledging the incredible extent to which the LGBT community has changed over her lifetime and expresses her hope to see ongoing growth in civil rights in the future.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Cathy Nelson

Interviewer: Sarah Goldberg

Date of interview: November 11, 2015

Location of Interview: Highspire, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sarah Goldberg

Proofreader: Ashley Tucewicz

Abstract:

Cathy Nelson was born in Brooklyn, New York, and moved to Staten Island, New York, at the age of two with her strict Italian-Swedish family. As a child, Cathy loved music and did well in school. She also participated in Catholic youth group retreats, where she first encountered anti-gay sentiment. Although she knew she was attracted to girls from an early age, Cathy did not act on these feelings until age 22, when she entered her first long-term relationship. Cathy worked as a teacher in Carlisle, PA, but stopped teaching after suffering a head injury that affected her speech. Currently, she does secretarial work for a friend and ally at Goldcrafter's Corner. Cathy was involved with the Pride planning committee and sang with the Central Pennsylvania Women's Chorus. In this interview, Cathy discusses the process of coming out to herself, her family, and her friends. She also describes the Harrisburg-area lesbian community in the early 1990s and the problems and successes of the Women's Chorus throughout her years of involvement. Cathy also discusses the general acceptance of lesbians in mainstream culture, but condemns the exclusion of transgender issues from the LGBT community and the transphobia that she sees as a major issue of the day.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Emily Newberry

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Videographer: Lonna Malmsheimer

Date of Interview: October 11, 2014

Location of Interview: Waidner-Spahr Library at Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Emily Newberry was born in June of 1944 in St. Louis, Missouri, shortly thereafter moving to West Haven, Connecticut, and then Schenectady, New York, after her parents got divorced—a shameful and hidden family secret—and her dad remarried. Emily moved to the Central Pennsylvania area when she attended Dickinson College. Emily became involved in advocacy work while attending Dickinson. After graduation, she became a member of the Socialist Party and was involved with the organizations the Cleveland Draft Resistance Union and the American Communist Workers Movement, Marxist-Leninist. Working as a machinist and then as an organizational development consultant, Emily has been married three times herself, and today, lives in Portland, Oregon. In this interview, she discusses her experience repressing her transgender identity throughout her life until 2005. After coming out, Emily has faced discrimination from her workplace, insurance company, and therapists. She also discusses the importance of her women’s circles in fundraising enough money to have gender confirming surgery. Today, she continues her advocacy work as a performance poet and writer as well as attending panels regarding LGBT issues. She expresses how welcoming the Dickinson community has been during her visit back to campus.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Heidi Notario

Interviewer: Liam Fuller

Date: August 18, 2017

Place: Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Mak Jones

Proofreader: Yasmin Cooper

Abstract:

Heidi Notario was born in Havana, Cuba in 1973, where she was attending college for Biology before moving to the United States in 1995. Heidi discusses her disillusion with the ideals of communism as a factor contributing to her desire to go live with her aunt in the U.S. After arrival, she learned English while working at a daycare center before returning to college, eventually completing a Bachelors in Sociology at Moravian College in Bethlehem, PA, and a graduate degree in Sociology from Lehigh University. Heidi discusses her relationship with her fifteen year old son, and what she has observed raising him as a lesbian and a single mother in Central Pennsylvania. She details her involvement as the vice-president at the LGBTQ Center of Central Pennsylvania, as well as her work on gender-based violence and Latinos at the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. Heidi touches on intimate partner violence against LGBTQ, and especially trans identifying, people, as well as the differences in LGBTQ communities in Harrisburg, Allentown, and other larger cities.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Eva O’Diam

Interviewer: Mallory Slusser

Date of Interview: April 6, 2015

Location of Interview: The home of Eva O’Diam in Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Karin Carthins

Proofreader: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Eva O’Diam was born in Dayton, Ohio in 1953 to her mother, a school teacher, and her father, an engineer. Growing up in conservative, rural Ohio, Eva lost her father at the age of 12 and moved to Covington, Ohio where she graduated from high school. At Manchester College, where she earned a degree in sociology, Eva was interested in ministry but grew disillusioned with the church during her last year of college and became a probation officer in Wabash, Indiana. About 18 months later, a Church of the Brethren pastor influenced Eva to return to the ministry, and she has since worked at various positions in pastoring, alternative ministry, and HIV/AIDS assistance. She currently lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania with her partner of 23 years, Mary Kelly, and is looking for work as a pastor again. In this interview, Eva discusses her slow personal journey to accept her sexual orientation, the challenge to make her Metropolitan Community Church [MCC] more inclusive of racial, sexual, and ability minorities, as well as her nephew’s unfortunate death that united her family and church community. Regarding LGBT issues, Eva is optimistic for the future but admits that the LGBT community needs to adopt a broader focus, be more inclusive, and address growing challenges for older adults.

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Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Brian Patchcoski

Interviewer: Lonna Malmshemer

Date of Interview: July 2, 2014

Location of Interview: Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Brian Patchcoski was born in Scranton Pennsylvania, brought up in a very strong Irish, German, and Polish Roman Catholic family. Brian progressed through high school, working for a Catholic church for 10 years and expecting to go into the priesthood until he left the Diocese of Scranton to get his education at the University of Scranton and Penn State, then continuing on to work at Penn State for five years. Afterward, Brian was the Director of the Office of LGBTQ Services for Dickinson College for two years, then accepting a position as Associate Dean of Students and Director of the LGBT Resource Center at Cornell University. In this interview, Brian discusses his journey managing himself, his sexuality, and his religion. He also discusses how he became involved in social work for the LGBT community in college, how supportive faculty influenced his development, and how he has handled the challenges of educating within largely rural, conservative areas. For the future, Brian hopes we will remember the important strides made by past advocates while acknowledging how much farther we need to go to achieve equality. He also praises the LGBT History Project, hoping it will continue to reveal marginalized voices in Central Pennsylvania.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Frank Pizzoli

Interviewer: Bob Kegriss

Date of Interview: Apr. 15, 2013

Location of Interview: Historic Harrisburg Association

Transcriber: Katie McCauley

RESTRICTIONS: Contact Frank Pizzoli before publishing or publicly sharing or publicly sharing any portion of this interview.

Abstract:

Frank Pizzoli, founder and editor-in-chief of the *Central Voice*, an LGBT newsletter for the Central PA community, discusses his experiences in the community and how he thinks things have changed over time. He describes some aspects of growing up gay in the 1960s and '70s and specifically the small community feel that the early LGBT community had, discussing the changes between then and now. He also discusses some of his experiences of living with HIV and how that affected his life in the early '80s, including his role in for formation of the South Central AIDS Assistance Network (SCAAN), which would later become AIDS Community Alliance and which is now under Alder Health Services. Finally, he discusses some of the books and authors that he found important to the LGBT community and their influence.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Frank Pizzoli

Interviewer: Bill Burton

Date: June 8, 2017

Place: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Liam Fuller

Proofreader: Mak Jones

RESTRICTIONS: Contact Frank Pizzoli before publishing or publicly sharing or publicly sharing any portion of this interview.

Abstract:

Frank Pizzoli has been a key member of the gay community in Central Pennsylvania since moving to Harrisburg in 1974. The interview starts off detailing the beginning of AIDS awareness, the associated fear and confusion, as well as helper organizations. He then goes into the time he spent traveling to New York in the 70s and the impact of the AIDS crisis on Central Pennsylvania in the early years, reflecting on his friends affected by the disease. Pizzoli discusses the medical community's paired treatment and rejection of the disease and his own work in local organizations such as PACASO (Pennsylvania Coalition of AIDS Services Organizations) and his involvement in the founding of SCAAN (South Central AIDS Assistance Network). He also talks about the impact of the Ryan White Care Act and the allocation of resources to various organizations across the state. He discusses his work in various hospitals and different medications he has used as a person with AIDS. He finishes the interview talking about various gay publications he was involved with like *Crossroads* and *Gay Era* and a reflection on his experience with the disease.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Amanda Porter

Interviewer: Liam Fuller

Date: August 16, 2017

Place: Telford, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sakinah Hobbs-Jones

Proofreader: Emily Scheiber

Abstract:

Amanda Porter was born in 1950 in Lansdale, Pennsylvania. Amanda Porter is a trans woman and transgender rights educator and activist. In this interview, Amanda repeats her goal of wanting to make transgender people visible everywhere. She discusses her time in the Air Force and in college, during which she thought of herself as “cross-dressing.” She then later explains how she began to learn the word “transgender” and ultimately identified as such. Amanda also explains her relationship with her wife, children, and friends before her coming out to them, but also elaborates on her time hiding her true identity. Furthermore, she touches on her current life being retired and owning a business. Finally, Amanda expands on how being a part of a transgender support group gave her the courage to be comfortable with herself as a woman, in addition to how it eventually led to her presenting on public speaking platforms and wanting to support others who struggle with the implications of being transgender in society.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Sharon Potter

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Videographer: Lonna Malmsheimer

Date of Interview: October 10, 2014

Location of Interview: LGBT Center in Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Sharon Mahar Potter was born in Buffalo, New York and raised in Scranton, Pennsylvania, commuting to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania for the first time when she was offered a position to build the early intervention system for disabled children in the city. Profoundly moved by a young gay man's speech in a meeting of the House Education Committee, Sharon established the Bi, Gay, Lesbian Youth Association of Harrisburg [BGLYA], later going on to receive a Master's degree in Human Sexuality, working as the sexuality consultant for the Office of Developmental Programs of Pennsylvania, and then finally moving to California, where she resides today. In this interview, she recalls many successes and triumphs with her students in BGLYA that include issues such as gay marriage, suicide, HIV/AIDS, and homelessness. She won the Fall Achievement Benefit [FAB] award for her work in the gay community and established a scholarship with Melinda Eash for LGBT graduating high school seniors. Sharon emphasizes the variety of support options for the LGBT community today compared to those available in the past, praising the work of the Center in its development and efforts.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Michelle Probulus

Interviewer: Mary Merriman

Date of Interview: Sep. 4, 2013

Location of Interview: Lancaster, PA

Transcriber: Katie McCauley

Abstract:

Michelle Probulus, 43, describes her experience with realizing that she is a lesbian at age 40, while married to a man with whom she had two young sons. She discusses the complications of figuring out her sexuality and coming to the realization she was a lesbian and the subsequent difficulty of coming out to her husband, her children, her family, and her friends. After getting a divorce, she began getting involved in Lancaster's LGBT community, and she describes her experiences in meeting people and working for greater LGBT acceptance, including starting her own oral history project to collect some of the experiences of women who realized they were lesbians later in life. She discusses how coming out has affected the way she raises her sons as well as her career choices, specifically her new sense of purpose as a guidance counselor in being an advocate and a support system for young people coming out.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Bernie Pupo

Interviewer: Nancy Datres

Date of Interview: July 24, 2013

Location of Interview: Bernie's hair salon in Harrisburg

Transcriber: Chalise Saunders

Abstract:

Bernie Pupo was born in Kulpmont, Pennsylvania in 1945 and attended Mount Carmel Catholic High School. After working in a factory after high school, Bernie moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where he worked as a window decorator for Pomeroy's department store for three years. During this time, he also joined SCAAN, the South Central Aids Assistance Network, which is now known as the AIDS Alliance. In this interview, Bernie speaks about his most memorable experience as a Boy Scouts leader, as well as his experience working in and visiting gay clubs in cities such as Harrisburg, Reading, Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and D.C. During this interview, he also speaks about how he experienced very little homophobia in both his family and overall social life, despite living in a small town during the 60s and growing up as a practicing Catholic. Bernie, still Catholic, now works as a hair dresser and owns his own salon.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Alex Reber

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date of Interview: October 4, 2017

Location of Interview: Office of Miller, Dixon, and Drake in Harrisburg

Transcriber: Mary Libertin

Finalized by: Mary Libertin

Abstract:

Barry Loveland interviews Alex Reber, now 32, who relates fascinating stories of what it was like growing up as an only child of an Evangelical Christian family raised on a farm in Bethel, a rural town between Harrisburg and Allentown and becoming an important political LGBT activist in Central PA. His accounts at camp and high school reveal the difficulty of being gay and the interesting paths towards his independence. In Lebanon Valley College he was outed and blackballed at church, being called evil and having parents refuse to help him pay tuition. A gay couple started a foundation to help gay students complete college and Alex, a gifted child who received a scholarship, graduated a semester early. His tales about finding and working with a thriving gay community in Harrisburg are enthralling. He got an internship and became friends with Dan Miller, a leader in the gay community, in Dan's accounting firm, Miller, Dixon, Drake. He tells in detail his work over ten years with Planned Parenthood, beginning with his own experience of being treated and shamed by a physician. He discusses his romance and marriage to his husband during the exciting time when marriage became legal in Pennsylvania. It was a momentous time. He explains what it was like attending the Equality March, primaries for Obama and Clinton, and his experience at the 2016 Democratic Convention. He recounts the inside stories of the contradictions and fun of local state politics— and stories about running candidates for state office and working on committees for the Democratic Party of Pennsylvania. He is very involved at the Center, FAB, and getting LGBT people to run for office.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Martin Rock PART 1

Interviewers: Amy Short and Carol Wise

Date: October 31, 2013

Place: Hyattsville, Maryland

Transcriber: Mak Jones

Proofreader: Taeya Viruet

Provided by the Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests Oral History Project

Abstract:

In the first part of this interview, Martin Rock is interviewed as a part of the Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Interests. Martin discusses his religious beliefs and his life working for the Mennonite Central Committee and Church of the Brethren. Initially, Martin worked for the passport division of the State Department as a secretary, preventing suspected communists from obtaining passports. After having a revelation, Martin began working for the church, living in Vietnam and working for the Mennonite Missionaries teaching English for two years. Upon his return to the United States, he worked for the agency's headquarters in the Africa department for eleven years, at which point he was outed as being gay. Martin faced outright discrimination from his boss, and while he not fired, he was considered incompetent and had job responsibilities taken away for six months until his contract came up and was not renewed. It was at this point he left job to go work for the Brethren Mennonite Council.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Martin Rock PART 2

Interviewer: Amy Short and Carol Wise

Date: October 31, 2013

Place: Hyattsville, Maryland

Transcriber: Alette Kligman

Proofreader: Taeya Viruet

Provided by the Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests Oral History Project

Abstract:

Martin Rock is the founder of the Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Interests. In this interview, he shares anecdotes about both his family and his church's journey towards acceptance of the LGBT community. An advocate when no one else in the Brethren/Mennonite Community was Rock.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Jeanine Ruhsam

Interviewer: Liam Fuller

Date: August 23, 2017

Place: Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Alette Kligman

Proofreader: Lillian Sweeney

Abstract:

For more than a decade, Jeanine Ruhsam was an advocate in Central Pennsylvania's transgender community. With the primary goal of providing support and resources for transgender people and their loved ones, she spearheaded the Trans Central Pennsylvania organization and the Keystone Conferences. Her projects have also included organizing initiatives like the Transgender Day of Remembrance, as well as political lobbying and legislation. Today she continues her career as a Women and Gender Studies Professor in New Hampshire. This interview discusses her personal experience as a trans woman, her thoughts on the Central Pennsylvania LGBT community, and her insight into the future of trans people in the United States.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Pat Saunders

Interviewer: Corine Lehigh

Date of Interview: March 5, 2017

Location of Interview: Lancaster, PA

Transcriber: Corine Lehigh

Proofreader: Amanda Donoghue

Abstract:

Pat Mastandrea Sanders was a hair stylist in Boston before moving up to advertising and marketing for 300 salons across the country. One fateful day she slipped on an ice cube and hit her head. Her life changed forever. Unable to work due to memory loss, Pat decided to give her time to various AIDS/HIV advocacy groups in the Lancaster County area. Pat worked with the Lancaster AIDS Project, Betty Finney House, and American Red Cross Foundation's yearly Oscar Party. She hand wrote hundreds of letters each year to celebrities requesting donated materials and the response she got was incredible. Pat also discusses LGBTQ in the Age of the Trump/Pence presidency.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Rick Schulze

Interviewer: Bill Burton

Date: March 12, 2017

Place: Lock Haven, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Liam Fuller

Abstract:

Frederick (Rick) Schulze was born in Delaware in the 60s and spent his childhood and adolescence in the 70s in the Harrisburg area. He first talks about his complicated relationship with his family and his gay identity, mentioning his mother's support and positivity, his dad's indifference, and other members' repulsion. He then goes on to discuss his first interactions with gay related material and media and his escapades cruising on State Street in Harrisburg. After high school, Rick went onto Mansfield University and was instrumental in forming The Mansfield Gay Alliance, first gay organization there. He describes the many abuses and acts of discrimination both he and his classmates faced. He goes on to detail the AIDS related volunteer work he did in the area, discussing the impact of the AIDS crisis on Central Pennsylvania. Rick worked closely with the organizations SCAAN, South Central AIDS Assistance Network, and AIDS Resource and then went on to work with the Department of Health in HIV/AIDS Counseling during the 90's. During this time, his mother and Hope Nancarrow, the mother of Mary Nancarrow, worked closely with PFLAG, Parents and Friends of Gays and Lesbians, and he talks about the speaking circuits she went on at different churches and community spaces and touches on the threats that have been posed to the both of them. He also talks about various activists and their interactions with anti-gay leaders such as Anita Bryant in the area. After his public service, Rick went on to a career in academia, eventually settling in as a professor in Health Ed and Public Health at Lock Haven University. Outside of the classroom, he works closely with students on an LGBTQ related focus group and has been instrumental in instating gender name change policies and gender neutral bathrooms at the school. Rick's story is a reminder to us all about the importance of public service and the impact just one person can have on a community and geographical region.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Mark Segal

Interviewer: Bill Burton

Date of Interview: July 20, 2016

Location of Interview: Office of the Philadelphia Gay News, Philadelphia PA

Transcriber: Emily Armando

Proofreader: Ashley Tucewicz

Abstract:

Mark Segal is a gay rights activist, author, and journalist for the Philadelphia Gay News. In this interview, Mark discusses his political involvement in the gay rights movement in Pennsylvania in the '60s and '70s. Particularly, he focuses heavily on his work with Governor Milton Shapp, the first United States governor to publicly support the LGBT community. While discussing his life as a gay rights activist, Mark recounts many personal stories and memories such as disrupting popular television talk shows, working alongside Walter Cronkite, and signing up to become a Pennsylvania state trooper as an act of political resistance. Throughout, Mark stresses the important but often understated role Pennsylvania played in advancing civil rights for the LGBT community, while emphasizing that his state still has a long way to go.

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Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
To access a full recording or transcription of this oral history, contact:
archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Dr. Eric Selvey

Interviewer: Jennifer Ott

Date: April 9, 2015

Place: Midtown Scholar Bookstore, 1302 North Third Street; Harrisburg, PA 17102

Transcriber: Jennifer Ott

Abstract:

Dr. Eric Selvey was born and raised in Harrisburg, PA. He attended optometry school in Philadelphia, but returned to the Harrisburg area after graduating. In his interview he discusses his relationship with his mother and grandmother — and coming out to them in his younger days. He goes on to discuss his prolific activist work including his involvement with Lily White and Company, which raised thousands of dollars for local AIDS related organizations including SCAAN and other gay causes. Dr. Selvey worked on the Harrisburg Human Relations Commission, which fostered community relationships between the diverse Harrisburg populations. He was an active member of SCAAN, and also worked to create the local LGBT publication Crossroads. Dr. Selvey explains that he is most proud of his work on developing Harrisburg's Pride Festival, and his instrumental role in organizing the first Fall Achievement Benefit (FAB) in Harrisburg. The interview concludes with a discussion of changes the LGBT community has encountered and what challenges they continue to face.

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Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Robert Sevensky

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date: July 29, 2017

Place: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Emily Scheiber

Proofreader: Lillian Sweeney

Abstract:

Robert Sevensky was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1948. Despite having an unpleasant experience in early education and having financial issues, Robert persevered and ended up pursuing an academic career in college. After two years at the University of Scranton, he studied English abroad. He then eventually received his doctorate in philosophy. In this interview Robert discusses the struggles and joys of sexuality and religion from childhood to retirement. Growing up in a heteronormative society, he was mostly quiet about understanding and exploring his sexuality. He also discusses becoming involved with the church and the Holy Cross Monastery. The monastery is a significant part of Robert's life as he and many other brothers there are openly gay. Furthermore, the monastery has become a safe space for LGBT-identifying folks to converse and participate in different programs. Robert elaborates on joining various LGBT rights organizations and other spaces that have become inclusive to LGBT folks. Though these spaces are inclusive, Robert explains the negative effects of how the HIV/AIDS epidemic was treated in medical facilities for a period of time. In this interview, Robert also touches on his current beliefs about how society has recently began to shift towards political correctness and what that means to him, specifically regarding queer theory and thus, queer people.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
To access a full recording or transcription of this oral history, contact:
archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Jude Sharp

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date of Interview: August 22, 2016

Location of Interview: Home of Jude Sharp

Transcriber: Ashley Tucewicz

Proofreader: VJ Kopacki

Finalizer: Mary Libertain

Abstract:

Jude Sharp was born in November of 1947 in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania and graduated from the Philadelphia High School for Girls. She then attended the Tyler College of Art and studied the art of making jewelry. When she was 21, Jude married her first husband and moved to Denver, Colorado, where she opened her first jewelry shop. Upon ending her relationship, Jude moved back to Lancaster where she met her first girlfriend. Jude has been working with jewelry for nearly 50 years since, and currently has her own business, J. A. Sharp Custom Jeweler. In this interview, Jude discusses the roles her relationships and artistic visions have played in her life. In her childhood, she and her family frequently moved from town to town as her father, a Methodist minister, was transferred to different churches. She speaks of a pervading feeling of ostracism that was assuaged when she came out as lesbian, finally being able to be true to herself. Jude marvels at the changes her community has seen, and laments at the continuing problems with drug and alcohol abuse that face many LGBT individuals today, relating to her own experience. She reflects upon her desire to put creativity to a good purpose and form relationships with others through the medium of crafting personalized jewelry. Additionally, Jude discusses how her own sexuality has played a role throughout the rise of her career.

LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections
To access a full recording or transcription of this oral history, contact:
archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Anthony Silvestre

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date of Interview: September 21, 2016

Location of Interview: Pitt Men's Health Study Clinic, Pittsburgh

Transcriber: VJ Kopacki

Proofreader: Kailey Zengo

Finalizer: Mary Libertin

Abstract:

Anthony Silvestre was born in 1946 in the Bronx in New York. He grew up in a working-class, Italian neighborhood and is familiar with stigma. He began identifying as gay in the sixth grade, but went through school still in the closet. After high school, he entered a Catholic religious group in the Boston area called the Holy Cross Brothers. He left after three years due to his disillusionment with the church, not his sexual orientation. While in the community, he went to college [undergrad], but finished his final year at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, PA, which eventually led to him moving to Pennsylvania to attend Penn State. He was introduced to LGBT rights while at Penn State, where he remained as student for five or six years. While there, Anthony became active in an organization called the Homophiles of Penn State [HOPS], and, as president, met many of Pennsylvania's leading activists. He was appointed Chair of the Pennsylvania Council on Sexual Minorities and became a leader in the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus, which supported numerous groups across Pennsylvania. He was appointed Chair of the Pennsylvania State Council and supervised all of the subcommittees, one of which worked with the State Department of Education to create a gay high school in Philadelphia for the young gay kids from the Cuban Mariel Boatlift. He worked with the department of Children and Youth Services to ensure that non-straight populations are not short-changed in the bureaucracy. He became executive administrator of the Eromin Center. Eromin [Ero: erotic, and min: minorities] is a center established to provide culturally competent mental health services. Silvestre discusses how the State Office of Administration during the 80s effectively handled issues related to the AIDs epidemic, including writing policies and conducting sensitivity training around gay issues in various agencies such as the State Police. He interacted with the Governor and made policy with the governor's aides, adding LGBT language into contracts and policies and requiring reports be generated concerning their efficacy, especially in regard to complaints that were made. He helped establish a community advisory board, probably one of the first in the country dealing with HIV. Silvestre was hired at the University of Pittsburgh at the Pitt Men's Study program for supervising their six-month grant sponsored by the NIH—and he still works there, thirty-plus years later. He is now working on non-discrimination policy and education for HIV individuals in nursing homes and home health care. He is married and a practicing Buddhist. He has created a group for young LGBT Buddhists, and has organized HIV services through the Ball community by supporting SILK, which is a group for African American young, MSM and trans kids who are members of the Ball community. Silvestre's fascinating stories are educational and provide a rare look at LGBT organizing in Pennsylvania from 1970 through today.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Amy Skillman

Interviewer: Marge Forrester

Date of Interview: May 5, 2016

Location of Interview: LGBT Center of Central PA

Transcriber: VJ Kopacki

Proofreader: Amanda Donoghue

Abstract:

Amy Skillman talks about her childhood growing up in Michigan in a large Episcopalian family and the influence of spirituality in her life, both as a teenager and an adult. Amy went to an all-girls school where rumors circulated about certain boarders and a book they were reading. Amy believes that this was likely her earliest introduction to LGBT alternatives to heterosexuality. Even before coming out and joining the LGBT community, Amy had frequented gay bars as a young woman and lost many friends to AIDS. However, it would be many years before she herself would come to terms with her own identity. Amy discusses falling in love with a woman for the first time at the age of forty. She describes coming out to her parents and siblings as both a challenge and a relief. Amy also discusses her activism and her interest in folklore, which is rooted in witnessing inequities as a child in the African American community in Detroit. While a graduate student at UCLA, Amy raised money for AIDS charities and for the people of Nicaragua. Amy also talks about the play she helped produce about and starring LGBT youth. Currently, she is the Director of Goucher College's Masters Program in Cultural Sustainability.

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Interviewee: Hannah Smith-Brubaker

Interviewer: Marge Forster

Date: October 27, 2016

Place: LGBT Center

Transcriber: Ashley Tucewicz

Proofreader: Kailey Zengo

Abstract:

Hannah-Smith Brubaker was born in Tioga County, Pennsylvania, and spent most of her childhood in Port Allegany, McKean County. She began to identify as a lesbian at the start of college, and she entered the political sphere for the first time when she participated in the Second National March on Washington in 1987. While on a study abroad program in Europe for about four years, Hannah worked for Onlywomen Press, a lesbian separatist book publishing company based in London. There she met Eileen, with whom she stayed for 16 years and had a son and daughter. Four years later in 2010, Hannah met Deborah, a Mennonite, with whom she is now happily married and maintaining a farm. In this interview, Hannah details her experiences of coming out as a lesbian to her friends and family, focusing upon her father, a Methodist minister. She chronicles her path of political activism, including a formal interrogation she experienced when departing from England on a plane. She also discusses the challenges of going through second parent adoption, and the importance of community, love, and acceptance in transforming the society of today.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Lindsay Snowden

Interviewer: Liam Fuller

Date: March 22, 2015

Place: Lindsay Snowden's home

Transcriber Liam Fuller

Proofreader: Michelle Clinger

RESTRICTIONS: Please contact interviewee before using in film, video, or any other medium.

Abstract:

Lindsay Snowden was born in Pittsburgh on March 15, 1976. Lindsay worked a bunch of odd jobs and has had an entrepreneurial spirit since a young age. Lindsay joined the military when sirb was 17. Lindsay realized after moving to Harrisburg that sirb would not be welcome in the military due to sirb's sexuality. Coming out to sirb's family was easy because sirb grew up with gay family members. Lindsay has worked on my projects in the area like forming the first all black drag king troupe in Central Pennsylvania, House of Gains; publishing a magazine called Studs Magazine; and running a female football team. Lindsay talks about sirb's experience with sirb's drag troupe and how difficult it is to get booked as an all black group in Central Pennsylvania. Lindsay talks about sirb's evolving gender identity, the intersections of sirb's identity, and the importance of family. Lindsay has been married to sirb's loving wife Shaashawn Dial-Snowden for the past two years.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Mark Stoner

Interviewer: Mary Merriman

Date of Interview: August 29, 2013

Location of Interview: Lancaster, PA

Transcriber: Katie McCauley

Abstract:

Mark Stoner, born in 1959, grew up and currently lives in Lancaster, where he has worked as a graphic designer for the past 30 years. He came out as gay early in his college years at Penn State University and thereafter became involved in Lancaster's gay community, both socially and politically. He was among the founders of the Pink Triangle Coalition and worked extensively with the organization for years. Additionally, he has been involved with establishing the first Central Pennsylvania Pride and Lancaster Pride, the Lancaster-area gay publication *Inquery*, and the Lancaster City Human Relations Commission's protections against anti-LGBT discrimination. In this interview, he discusses gay life from the late '70s to the present and its influence on his personal life, including his experiences coming out in a supportive environment, his personal relationship with religion over the years, the impact of the emergence of AIDS in the '80s, and political efforts to end anti-LGBT discrimination in Lancaster.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Larry Thomas

Interviewer: Ann Van Dyke

Date of Interview: July 30, 2013

Location of Interview: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Larry Lee Thomas was born in Burnham, Pennsylvania in 1941, living there for at least 19 years before spending four years in the military, and shortly thereafter moving to the nearby city of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. After his first experience dating another man through a 20-year relationship, Larry now lives with his partner with whom he has spent 31 years together. In this interview, Larry discusses his experiences as a self-identified gay man living in Harrisburg through the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, when there was a prevalent stigma against LGBT people and few places to safely express one's sexual orientation and meet others in the community. He also discloses his challenges of managing both personal and professional relationships by selectively deciding to "come out" or not within particular social circles. While he does not actively participate in LGBT activism, Larry admires the amount of freedom that he sees in the gay community today, while commenting that LGBT young people may be unaware of how difficult life was only a few decades ago.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: James Tompkins

Interviewer: Kailey Zengo

Videographer: Amanda Donoghue

Date of Interview: March 26, 2017

Location of Interview: James Tompkins' Home in York, PA

Transcriber: Amanda Donoghue

Abstract:

James Tompkins was born and grew up in Southern Pennsylvania, where he lived on a farm with his one brother, three half siblings, and parents. In this interview, James discusses his experiences coming out to his family, his art, and various bars and gay organizations in York and nearby areas. He also discusses his experiences having a partner with AIDS and working through Act Up and other well-known organizations to protest in the 70s, 80s, and 90s on the local, state, and national level.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Marty Tornblom

Interviewer: Corine Lehigh

Date: June 9, 2017

Place: New Cumberland, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Liam Fuller

Proofreader: Mak Jones

Abstract:

Marty Tornblom was born in Utah and was raised in the greater Salt Lake City area, as a member of the Mormon Church. She decided to get a degree in education which lead her to teaching. Following her marriage, she converted to Presbyterianism and moved all over the country, including Utah, California, Alabama, and Pennsylvania. Family is integral to her story, as she is happily married and has four children. She moved with her family to Harrisburg in 1980 and that began her involvement in the local community and work around HIV/AIDS. She worked for SCAAN (South Central AIDS Assistance Network) as a buddy for people with AIDS and the Prevention Educator for the organization. Marty discusses her personal relationship with many of her buddies and other people associated with the organization, her efforts to involve the greater local community, her work providing STI testing services for local people, her involvement in AIDS activism, and her hope for the continued progress within the LGBTQ community, reflecting back on all she's seen in her life.

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archives@dickinson.edu
717-245-1399

Interviewee: Richard Twaddle

Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Date: November 10, 2014

Place: Carlisle, PA (Home of Richard Twaddle)

Transcriber: Andrew Dietz

Proofreader: Lillian Sweeney

Abstract:

Richard Twaddle was born in Greensburg, Pennsylvania in 1947. He is currently retired living in Carlisle, Pennsylvania after a long career working at the local telephone company. Before settling in Carlisle he lived in Harrisburg working in Television and Audio repair with his received accreditation from a local vocational program. In this interview Richard briefly discusses his upbringing and further delves into his most memorable moments within the past 40 years. Richard highlights that he had always been assured of his sexuality, but given the social landscape of the time being completely open was not possible as the risk for discrimination was too high. Richard goes on to talk about the social scene despite the public perception of being gay around the Harrisburg area mentioning the local gay bar seen, as well as, his long participation with a gay men's social club, The Pennsmen. These were both outlets for the gay community to gather and have fun and develop long lasting friendships. Richard also discusses the friends he had lost due to the AIDS outbreak in the eighties and how that affected the social community within the area. Lastly, Richard goes over a photo album with pictures taken from social events taken throughout the years.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Joy (Ufema) Counsel

Interviewer: Jennifer Ott

Date: April 29, 2015

Place: Martin Library; York, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Jennifer Ott

Abstract:

Joy (Ufema) Counsel was raised in Altoona, Pennsylvania. After completing high school, Joy began studies to become a nurse at the Altoona Hospital, and later completed a nursing program at Harrisburg Area Community College. Joy worked in numerous hospitals and medical facilities in New York, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Throughout her career as a nurse, Joy developed an affinity for caring for patients who were terminally ill. Her work in the area of death and dying received considerable media attention resulting in her being interviewed on *60 Minutes*, a TV movie entitled *A Matter of Life and Death* (1981) about her work being made, numerous publications, and many speaking engagements across the country. In her interview, Joy discusses her work and experiences during the height of her recognition. She goes on to discuss the AIDS hospice she operated in York, Pennsylvania — elaborating on some of her most memorable patients and experiences running a non-profit. Joy talks about her family's reaction to her homosexuality, and her experiences as a lesbian in Central Pennsylvania. In the interview Joy goes on to discuss both challenges and progress she sees as being significant to the LGBT community. Finally, Joy discusses the role of spirituality in her life.

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Interviewee: Sabrina Valente

Interviewer: Shirley Tennenbaum (?)

Date: April 9, 2016

Place: Narrator's Home (?)

Transcriber: Ashley Tucewicz

Proofreader: Amanda Donoghue

Abstract:

Sabrina Valente was born in Baltimore, MD and lived most of her childhood and adolescence in Littlestown, PA in Adams County. She attended Eastern University for an undergraduate degree in Biblical Studies and Wagner College for a Master's degree in forensic psychology. Sabrina has spent all of her career in the mental health field, working in various organizations to help people with behavioral problems or crisis management. She is currently working for the non-profit organization TrueNorth Wellness as a clinical supervisor. In this interview, Sabrina discusses the how her liberal arts education helped to lead her to the LGBT community and her struggle with balancing religious beliefs and her identity. Sabrina emphasizes the importance of being open to change and fluidity in one's sexuality and lifestyle.

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Interviewee: Ann Van Dyke

Interviewer: Don Fitz

Date of Interview: July 29, 2014

Location of Interview:

Transcriber: Sarah Goldberg

Proofreader: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Ann Van Dyke was born in a farming community in Bradford County, Pennsylvania, where she was raised in a devout Methodist home. After moving to Mechanicsburg to work at the Methodist Home for Children at age 19, Ann was exposed to the more diverse Harrisburg community that challenged the ideals of her upbringing. She went on to study at the Middletown campus of Pennsylvania State University and then moved to Harrisburg to work for the State Human Relations Commission. In this work, Ann offered trainings about hate crimes and organized hate groups, collaborating with several major organizations such as the Community Responders Network and Equality PA as well as with the U.S. Department of Justice until her retirement in 2012. In this interview, Ann discusses her experience identifying and challenging her homophobic beliefs that were engrained during her childhood. Ann describes how she began to identify as a straight ally when several of her close friends, family members, and, eventually, foster son came out as gay. She also describes the legislative difficulties the Commission faced in preventing LGBT hate crimes, especially when sexual orientation and gender identity were added to the state's list of protected classes, but then were later repealed.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Joy Verner

Interviewer: Wendy Gomez

Date: March 24, 2015

Place: Bosler Hall, Dickinson College

Transcriber: Wendy Gomez

Proofreader: Michelle Clinger

Abstract:

Joy Verner was born in 1963 and grew up in Franklin Pennsylvania near Earie, Pa. Joy was one of three children and a mother and a father. She relocated to central Pennsylvania during graduate school where she attended school near Shippensburg. She now resides in in Central Pennsylvania with her partner, and now wife, Sue and their four children. Joy has worked mainly on student affairs and also worked at Dickinson College up until 2013. At Dickinson College Joy was an active staff for creating Pride@Dickinson and providing support for students. She is also active in her community church. Joy Verner comes from a Baptist family background and she struggled a lot with her identity as a lesbian and her strong faith. Today, she is active in her church and attends a Lutheran Church here in Central PA. Most of her life today is now defined by her life as a mother, community member, partner and balancing the intersections of all of those.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Lawrence Von Barann (Larry) Part

1 Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Videographer: Lana Molmsheimer

Date of Interview: August 2, 2014

Location of Interview: LGBT Center of Harrisburg

Transcriber: Andrew Dietz

Abstract:

Lawrence von Barann was born on June 26, 1928 in Queens, New York to an American mother from New York City and an immigrant father from Germany. Lawrence spent the majority of his upbringing living in the Queens borough but left to live outside the city in Long Island about the time when he entered high school. Lawrence is an artist, primarily painting. He found his passion for art in middle school when he considered attending a specialized high school in the arts. Unable to make the daily commute to Manhattan Lawrence attended a local high school. Throughout his high school experience Lawrence was completely dedicated to his art. He had a teacher name Mr. Wickman that played a major role in developing Lawrence's talents but also increasing his exposure to the art world. Lawrence discusses his adventures to the galleries and museums in New York during weekend class trips. Upon completing high school, at the end of WWII, Lawrence decided to enroll in art school but given the difficulties of applying during the G.I. admittance guidelines it was difficult to find a complete course load. Lawrence however did get an opportunity with the Brooklyn Museum art program. It was there that he received his first assistant position to his woodwork and carving professor in his private studio. Lawrence recounts his years working in the studio as well as his own business ventures at this early stage in his life. He also discusses some of his experience of living a "double life" as a gay man in New York City.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Lawrence Von Barann (Larry) Part

2 Interviewer: Barry Loveland

Videographer: Lonna Malmsheimer

Date of Interview: August 29, 2014

Location of Interview: LGBT Center of Harrisburg

Transcriber: Andrew Dietz

Abstract:

In this second interview with Lawrence von Barann he concludes his stories about living in New York and the events that eventually led to his move to central PA. Once he made the move to central PA, his business partner from New York got married so Larry was working independently. He started teaching at HACC (Harrisburg Area Community College) in fine arts courses. Larry also discusses the significant relationship he has had—including his life partner Bill as well as some others. He talks about his career evolved from not only working as an artist but becoming an advisor doing art appraisals and running a gallery. He discusses his never ending passion for the surrealist school is his own personal collection of famous works as well as encounters he has had with artists including Rothko, Pollock and Dalí throughout his life.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Maria Warren

Interviewer: Debbie Gable

Date of Interview: March 8, 2015

Location of Interview: York, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Proofreader: Sarah Goldberg

Abstract:

Maria Warren grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, in a religious family with both her blood-related and adopted siblings. Maria was very involved in her mother's church, attending Sunday services, Bible study, and choir rehearsal, but realized that she was gay around age 12. In order to escape her feelings, Maria immersed herself in religion and married her boyfriend after graduating from high school, but her marriage was fraught with tension and ended in divorce. In this interview, Maria discusses the issues in her previous marriage, her relationships with her three children, and the importance PFLAG [formerly stood for Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays] played in her coming out process. She also describes her experience of couples counseling with her ex-husband, who eventually outed Maria's sexuality to most of her family, and the LGBT community in Baltimore that she relied on when the two separated. Today, Maria is living her self-described "dream" life with her partner in York, Pennsylvania, and hopes that by participating in the LGBT History Project, she can help prevent other LGBT individuals from experiencing the same difficult coming out process that she did.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Brent Weaver

Interviewer: Merri Merriman

Date of Interview: February 5, 2015

Location of Interview: Grand View United Methodist, Lancaster, PA.

Transcriber: Andrew Dietz

Proofreader: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Brent Weaver was born in Corning, New York but primarily grew up the Lancaster, Pennsylvania area. Although his parents grew up in conservative Mennonite families, Brent and his brother were raised Presbyterian, and Brent recognized that he was attracted to boys as early as elementary school. He graduated from the University of Delaware with undergraduate degrees in German education, Spanish education, and geography. Brent continued his education at Welch University, obtaining a master's in educational curriculum, and at the University of Illinois, receiving a second master's in diversity and equity issues in education. Currently, he is a middle school teacher of Spanish and German and lives with his husband in Lancaster. In this interview, Brent discusses his personal struggle between his sexual orientation and religion, his ten-year marriage with a woman, and his experience coming out at the school where he works. Brent explains how he attempted to "become straight" as a young adult by seeking counseling groups such as Homosexuals Anonymous and conversion therapy to strengthen his relationship with God. Brent also comments on the fluidity of gender and sexuality as well as his distaste for labeling himself as strictly gay. In the future, Brent wants the LGBT community to look beyond their own singular issues in order to provide support to other minority groups.

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Interviewee: Delma Welch

Interviewer: Debbie Gable

Date of Interview: March 22, 2015

Location of Interview: York, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Sara Tyberg

Proofreader: Ashley Tucewicz

Abstract:

Delma Welch was born in Washington D.C. and grew up in Cardiff, Maryland as a Catholic with her three brothers and one sister. Delma began going to NOW [National Organization for Women] meetings in 1975 after becoming interested in feminism from an early age. After being in a relationship with a man for 23 years, she met her future wife at the YWCA and ended her marriage. Originally a stay at home mother, Delma has since held several jobs throughout her life, including her current position at the Margaret Moul Home. Today, she lives in York, Pennsylvania with her partner of 25 years, Peg Welch. In this interview, Delma discusses her involvement in many civil rights organizations and marches starting in the 70s, issues with coming out to her family, and marriage to Peg—once in Canada and once more in Pennsylvania, when gay marriage became legalized in the state. She also briefly expresses the importance of lesbian and woman-only spaces and her positive experiences dealing with the legal system as a lesbian woman in a same-sex relationship.

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Interviewee: Peg Welch

Interviewer: Debby Gable

Date of Interview: March 22, 2015

Location of Interview: York, Pennsylvania

Transcriber: Karin A Carthins

Proofreader: Sara Tyberg

Abstract:

Peg Welch was born in December of 1951 near in Chester County, Pennsylvania to her father, a carpenter, and her mother, a candy maker. A young mother to two children, Peg did not graduate from high school but received her GED and worked various jobs, eventually joining Parents Without Partners where she met her second husband, Phil. With his help supporting their family, she was able to graduate from Millersville University with a degree in social work, afterwards working at Big Brothers Big Sisters, the United Way, the YWCA, and Planned Parenthood. At the YWCA, Peg met her future wife Delma, whom she lives with today in York, Pennsylvania. Peg was an active member in York Area Lambda and helped to establish the Lesbian Alliance. In this interview, Peg describes her experiences as a single mother, her involvement in activism to get LGBT ordinances passed with the York City Human Relations Commission, her three marital ceremonies with Delma, as well as her belief in the importance of women's spaces. Today, Peg is optimistic about the evolving opinions of the younger generation towards LGBT-identified individuals.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Phil Wenger

Interviewer: Michele Metcalf

Date: March 23, 2015

Location: Phil's Home, York, PA

Transcriber: Michele Metcalf

Proofreader: Michelle Clinger

Abstract:

The interview performed on March 23, 2015 is with Oral History project volunteer, Michele Metcalf and long-time LGBT activist and self-identified gay man, Phil Wenger. Wenger was born and raised in Ethiopia in a large Mennonite missionary family and returned to his family's roots in Central Pennsylvania when he was 12. In this interview, he speaks about his coming out, his advocacy with Pride and the Harrisburg LGBT center, and with the Lancaster Aids Project. He goes on to speak about how all of these factors have affected his life, life path, and relationships.

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Interviewee: Kerry Wiessmann

Interviewers: Barry Loveland and Bill Burton

Date of Interview: April 25, 2017

Location: State College, PA

Transcriber: Mak Jones

Abstract:

Kerry Wiessman was born on October 26, 1954 in Glen Ridge, New Jersey. She grew up in Wayne, New Jersey in a lake community. Kerry discusses her upbringing in a large family and her relationship with her mother. Kerry also discusses her career in education and in helping children. With her long-term partner, Beth, Kerry adopted two daughters (Hana and Gabrielle) from China. They were one of the last lesbian couples to adopt out of China. Kerry founded or helped found several LGBT organizations, including the Center LGBTQA Support Network and the Gay Affirming Interfaith Network. Kerry also organizes “Drag Bingo” fundraiser event for the State College High School and her identification as a Quaker. Kerry speaks to her experience in a litigation regarding homosexual couples where the ACLU picked up their case and won the suit, eventually changing numerous policies regarding unmarried couples and insurance. Finally, Kerry discusses her fears regarding the current political climate as well as the Trump presidency.

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Interviewee: Larry B. Wilson

Interviewer: Lonna Malmshemer

Date: November 17, 2015

Place: Larry Wilson's home Harrisburg, PA

Transcriber: Brianna Horgan

Proofreader: Dan Duchaine

Abstract:

Larry Wilson was born in 1950 in Huntington Pennsylvania where he grew up with his mother, father, three brothers, and sister. In this interview, he discusses the atmosphere of the small town he grew up in and how that shaped his early opinions of gay life. He goes in depth about his career, beginning in 1970 with his enrollment in the Air Force and his work in Intelligence, through his experience in the corporate world, his operations in the gay bar business in Harrisburg, and finally his reintroduction to corporate America where he remained until his retirement. He talks about his coming out experience and how his career along with the gay bars and social life of Harrisburg influenced him. Larry touches upon the evolution of gay life in Harrisburg throughout his life, and how his bar (and others) helped aid this change. He discusses the many aspects of gay life in Harrisburg through his own experiences.

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717-245-1399

Interviewee: Rebecca Wolfe

Interviewer: Nancy L. Datre/ Lonna Malmshemer

Date of Interview: April 27, 2013

Location of Interview: Rebecca's home

Transcriber: Deborah A. Troutman

Proofreader: Lillian Sweeney

Abstract:

Rebecca "Becky" Wolfe was born in Lebanon County and has seen many huge changes in the LGBT community with growth and acceptance. She now lives in Hummelstown with her married partner Pat and works part-time at Hershey Medical Center and has been a Pediatric Oncology nurse and has worked at the center for about 33 years. She says she has had a fulfilling life and is very happy living in her area. She discusses her brother who has AIDS and is quite passionate about working with AIDS patients in a clinic she once supervised.