

Idaho LGBTQ Oral History Project

James A. Odell England



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

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

Name: James A. Odell England

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

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

Interview date: 11/30/2011

Interviewer: James Ady

Interview duration: 28:05

City: Boise

Timed Notation:

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

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