

The Arquives, Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives.



Fifth Foolsap Gay Oral History with Alan McMurray (tape 1 of 3)

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions30939>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Sound recording
Date Range: 10-4-1988
Part Of: Foolsap Gay Oral History Project fonds
Fonds Number: F0083
Series Number: 2
File Number: F0083-02-075
Item Number: 2017-059/081
Digitized Media Type: WAV file
Physical Condition: audio good

Scope and Content:

SIDE A:

The interview opens with Lionel saying they will 'pick up where they left off'. Alan discusses taking the first gay-oriented course at University of Toronto, taught by Michael Lynch. Alan also mentions attending a few CHAT meetings. Alan also discusses the danger of cruising, and particularly cruising theatres in Calgary. Alan discusses evaluating where he wants his future to go, and trying to under go a life 'cleaning' physically, emotionally and intellectually. Alan also mentions taking a weekend course titled 'AIDS Mastery'. Alan discusses the various lessons taught in the workshops, including telling himself that he loved himself, and looking at himself in the mirror for at least one minute every day. Alan mentions being caught cruising in Bloor station by the police, but he can't remember if he was taken to the police station.

Dates and locations discussed: Toronto, Calgary, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s

SIDE B:

Alan recounts a story of him cruising north of the creek in David Balfour Park, and being caught with a partner. Alan also recounts his positive test results for his HIV test, and how he coped with discovering he tested seropositive at a time when very little information on HIV and the validity of test results was available or accessible. Alan recounts telling his sexual partners about his results, and many of them still wanting to have sex with him. Alan predominantly has oral sex, and he does not enjoy using condoms due to the texture and taste of them. Alan questions the terminology of not taking any 'unnecessary risks' — as, under that framework, it appears sex as a whole is unnecessary. He considers attending a sex addiction treatment program, so that he can go abstinent. Alan talks about his other HIV positive friends, some of whom have stayed with him. Alan discusses attending church, and particularly his likes and dislikes for MCC (Metropolitan Community Church). Alan says he feels like an alien, a misfit on the planet. Many of the churches he has attended have validated this feeling for him.

Dates and locations discussed: Toronto, 1970s, 1980s

Access Restrictions: N/A
Location - Original: CLGA only in possession of digital copy. Cassette tape retained by Lionel Collier
Description Level: Item



Fifth Foolscap Gay Oral History with Alan McMurray (tape 2 of 3)

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions30940>

Collection: Archives

Material Type: Sound recording

Date Range: ?

Part Of: Foolscap Gay Oral History Project fonds

Fonds Number: F0083

Series Number: 2

File Number: F0083-02-075

Item Number: 2017-059/082

Digitized Media Type: WAV file

Type:

Physical Condition: ?

Scope and Content:

CLGA never recieved this tape, but archivist believes it should exist.

Access Restrictions: N/A

Location - Original: CLGA only in possession of digital copy. Cassette tape retained by Lionel Collier

Description Level: Item



Fifth Foolscap Gay Oral History with Alan McMurray (tape 3 of 3)

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions30941>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Sound recording
Date Range: ?
Part Of: Foolscap Gay Oral History Project fonds
Fonds Number: F0083
Series Number: 2
File Number: F0083-02-075
Item Number: 2017-059/083
Digitized Media Type: WAV file
Physical Condition: audio good

Scope and Content:

SIDE A:

NOTE: The archivist notes that this interviewee's voice sounds extremely similar to Alan McMurray. It is likely that 'AM' refers to Alan McMurray. However, note that — if this is true — we presently only have sides 1 and 2, and sides 5 and 6, of Lionel's fifth interview with Alan McMurray. Additionally, there is no date written down on this tape, nor is it mentioned in the recordings.

Recording begins mid-interview, with AM discussing flirting a member of a church he is somehow affiliated with. AM reviews a set of photographs with Lionel, with subjects including AM's family, himself working as a dance teacher, and previous partners of AM. Lionel tells his own story of a police encounter, while cruising and having oral sex with a man in a park in Toronto. Lionel ran away from the police and managed to escape arrest. Lionel and AM then discuss about Peter Maloney being 'slimy'. They also discuss having sex with men whom they are not attracted to.

Dates and locations discussed: Toronto, 1970s, 1980s

SIDE B:

Lionel continues to review photographs, including photos from AM's trip to Salt Lake City, and his extended family. AM discusses various places he lives, and the places he would cruise — including park washrooms and hotels that had glory holes in Sarnia and Detroit.

Dates and locations discussed: Sarnia, Detroit, Toronto, 1970s, 1980s

Access Restrictions: N/A
Location - Original: CLGA only in possession of digital copy. Cassette tape retained by Lionel Collier
Description Level: Item



First and Second Foolscap Gay Oral History with Bob Sleat (tape 3 of 3)

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions30970>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Sound recording

Date Range:	5/6/1988 and 18/6/1988
Part Of:	Foolscap Gay Oral History Project fonds
Fonds Number:	F0083
Series Number:	2
File Number:	F0083-02-095/096
Item Number:	2017-059/102
Digitized Media Type:	WAV file
Physical Condition:	tape, audio both in good condition

Scope and Content:

SIDE E:

Bob recounts being arrested for taking a young sex worker to a John, after his wire was tapped. At the time of his arrest, the baths were already surrounded by the police as well. Upon returning to the baths, there were about 300 gay people on the streets, screaming and shouting and rocking the police cars - gathered from the nearby bars when folks realized the Tubs were being raided (including George Hislop and Peter Maloney). Bob mentions that the Hot Tub raids were the only baths where they did not arrest any of the 'found-ins'. Bob mentions another bath, where patrons during the raid had the room numbers written on their backs in black crayon. While being interrogated, Bob requested to see Peter Maloney, Maloney told Bob they had 18 charges on him. Bob and Peter were taken to 51 Division. Bob's bail was set at 5000\$. The Tubs opened up the night after (closed only for one night), but fewer and fewer clients came due to fear of the raids. Soon after, they had lost 70% of their patronage, and Bob decided to close it. But, the employees demanded to keep it open, offering to reduce their wages or work for free. Interview cuts out at 15 minutes, and subsequently the audio comes in and out. Bob has to leave, so the interview cuts out.

Another interview recorded on the same tape begins. This was recorded on June 18, 1988 (two weeks later). Bob decided to drive down to a Florida with a young man, where Bob got jobs working at two hotels, and the young man got a job at Burger King (this was around June). The young man, Derek, stole all of Bob's stuff and left Florida back for Toronto. Bob rented another car and tried to find him, driving all the way to New York. While in New York, Bob began working at an escort agency, and then expanded the service into Boston. While in Boston, an informant let the police know Bob was there. The police caught an underage sex worker working with the agency. Bob was taken to court, and charged for 'transporting a minor across state lines for prostitution'. He says he could not be charged for this as he had not transported the sex worker. Bob discusses the details of his court trail, and his experience at a federal prison in Lake Placid. Bob came back to Canada through a prisoner exchange program, and thus was able to serve the two jail sentences at once. Bob moved to Middlehaven, a maximum security prison in Kingston, and was then transferred to Joyceville (medium security), where he served time for two years.

Dates and locations discussed: Toronto, Boston, Kingston, Florida, New York, 1980s

SIDE F:

While in Joyceville, Bob received a large inheritance, and called a lawyer in Kingston, who guided him to plead guilty to all 18 charges (including sodomy). After pleading guilty, the judge did not give Bob much time (even despite the unrecovered car) - totalling to only 18 months total, running concurrently with the sentence from the states. In the end, Bob was in prison from the beginning of 1981, until 1984 (and was away from Toronto for all the bathhouse raids demonstrations). Bob further discusses his friend, Eddy, who was bludgeoned to death by an ashtray by a young man. Bob talks about the evolution of gay community in Toronto, and no longer feeling like there is a 'gay family' because of influx of gay men attending the bars. Bob also mentions a dissatisfaction with Xtra, and the closing of Body Politic. Bob also discusses the guides to gay businesses in Toronto he published in Toronto. At the end of the tape, Lionel and Bob talk about perceptions of the gay community in the 80s and the impact of HIV/AIDS. Bob speaks briefly on his faith, and seeing 'certain prophecies fulfilled'. Lionel strongly disagrees, having also been raised as a Jehovah's Witness, and emphasizes his feelings on JW perspectives on 'homosexuality'.

Dates and locations discussed: Toronto, Joyceville, Kingston, 1980s

Access Restrictions: N/A

Location - Original: CLGA only in possession of digital copy. Cassette tape retained by Lionel Collier

Description Level: Item



First Foolsap Gay Oral History with Alan McMurray (tape 1 of 2)

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions30932>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Sound recording
Date Range: 24-8-1985
Part Of: Foolsap Gay Oral History Project fonds
Fonds Number: F0083
Series Number: 2
File Number: F0083-02-071
Item Number: 2017-059/074
Digitized Media Type: WAV file
Physical Condition: audio good

Scope and Content:

SIDE A:

Lionel briefly discusses with Alan his own experience living in Toronto. Alan was born in Orton, Alberta in 1926. When he lived there, it was a rural farm community, that was mostly Mormon. McMurray gets emotional discussing a his father's nervous breakdown, suicidal tendencies. His father was eventually was taken away. McMurray began crying. Alan discusses his own mental health, and his feeling "really deserted". At age 38, Alan found out that his birth was by accident, and that his mother wanted a daughter or no child at all. Alan moved to Calgary later in life. Alan begins to cry again, about leaving his brother in Orton when they moved to Calgary. His brother in Orton died, by committing suicide, while living in Calgary. Alan felt it was his fault, and stating that if he wasn't born his brother would not have died.

Dates and locations discussed: Orton, Calgary, Alberta, Toronto, 1930s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s

SIDE B:

CW: Misogyny, ableism (use of the "r-word"), bestiality

Alan discusses early life experiences, around the age of 5, including a sexual experience with a young girl, which involved oral sex. The young girl then told his mother about it, and Alan was punished. Alan said that, after that, he made a decision that "women could never be trusted". Alan also describes Orton as an exclusionary community, and the mormons there as hypocritical. Alan discusses other early sexual experiences with boys. Then, Alan recounts a sexual experience in Calgary at age 13. Alan recounts engaging in bestiality, having a sexual experience with a dog. Alan, says that, contemporaneous to the interview, he does not practice safe sex. He says he has come down with a flu, and is afraid that he might have HIV/AIDS. Lionel advises Alan to have safe sex, and that "safe sex is better than no sex at all". Alan feels that there are "no guarantees". Lionel describes the HIV/AIDS epidemic as "war". Both him and Alan feel that, in the future, not only their community (gay men) will be suffering from HIV/AIDS. Lionel discusses boycotting Donna Summer due to her comments about HIV/AIDS.

Dates and locations discussed: Orton, Calgary, Alberta, Toronto, 1930s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s

Access Restrictions: N/A
Location - Original: CLGA only in possession of digital copy. Cassette tape retained by Lionel Collier
Description Level: Item



First Foolscape Gay Oral History with Alan McMurray (tape 2 of 2)

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions30933>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Sound recording
Date Range: 24-8-1985
Part Of: Foolscape Gay Oral History Project fonds
Fonds Number: F0083
Series Number: 2
File Number: F0083-02-071
Item Number: 2017-059/075
Digitized Media Type: WAV file
Physical Condition: audio good

Scope and Content:

SIDE C:

Alan recounts later sexual experiences in Calgary, with older men. Alan was paid a dime for one of his sexual experiences. These experiences happened in parks, bathrooms and movie theatres. Lionel says that Alan is "more honest than anyone [he's] talked to", but cuts the interview short. Lionel intends to arrange another interview session. The recording re-resumes. Alan discusses his health issues. Alan continues to discuss sexual experiences, including one at Calgary Stampede with a Black man. Alan discusses his attraction to Black people, and his limited experience around Black folks while growing up in Calgary. He also mentions racism in the Mormon community. This man asked Alan to move to Gary, Indiana with him and form a long term relationship (which Alan refers to as "marriage"). Alan declines, as he had "never heard of anyone doing such a thing". Alan also mentions that he got gonorrhea around the same time.

Dates and locations discussed: Orton, Calgary, Alberta, Toronto, 1930s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s

SIDE D:

Alan describes going on to visit a doctor to discuss the gonorrhea. Alan let him believe the person he got it from was a woman, but did specify that it was from a person who was part of a travelling show. The doctor suggested that Alan should not sleep with people who are part of travelling acts. Alan confronted the man (named Jesse) about the Gonorrhea, but Jesse denied it. Alan also suggests that Jesse being Black was part of him losing interest. Alan discusses going to his first gay party, at someone else's summer cottage. This person's father was a senator, but Alan feels very uncomfortable disclosing the senator's name to Lionel. Eventually, Alan discloses the name of the senator's gay son: "Hugh Buchanan" (sp?). Alan mentions taking dance lessons, so that he could "become popular".

Dates and locations discussed: Orton, Calgary, Alberta, Toronto, 1930s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s

Access Restrictions: N/A
Location - Original: CLGA only in possession of digital copy. Cassette tape retained by Lionel Collier
Description Level: Item

First Foolscape Gay Oral History with BC (tape 1 of 2)

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions30851>



Collection:	Archives
Material Type:	Sound recording
Date Range:	7-4-1986
Part Of:	Foolscap Gay Oral History Project fonds
Fonds Number:	F0083
Series Number:	2
File Number:	F0083-02-011
Item Number:	2017-059/015
Digitized Media Type:	WAV file
Physical Condition:	appears good, audio fine

Scope and Content:

SIDE A:

BC was born in 1929, in Fort William, Ontario. He describes his early childhood; wearing his sister's clothing in 1935 and his family commenting on his femininity. He was very close with his mother growing up. BC's real name is mentioned in the interview: William Edward. He goes by 'Bill'. He discusses being feminine/femme a lot of his life: he dressed up as a woman at a masquerade party in 1948, and some of the men being attracted to him. A man at the ball offered to drive Bill home, Bill accepted. Driving home, they decide to drive up through the mountains. The man asked Bill if he was a man, and Bill said yes. The driver said he looks cute, and asks to have oral sex with Bill - Bill accepted. Bill describes enjoying it thoroughly, and how he 'felt like he really loved me'. Later on, Bill met the man's wife at a store. This made Bill feel very guilty. He also found out the man had two kids. The man continued to ask him to have sex with him. Bill went on to work at a bank, and attempted to initiate sex with another man. This was not successful, but Bill played it off as being too drunk. Bill recalls going swimming during the Depression, and seeing other boys swimming nude and being attracted to them. An adult man noticed, and told Bill to have oral sex with him. Bill was 8 at the time. Bill was excited to do it again, but moved away and never saw him again. Bill discusses a third man he had sex with, named Dick. He also mentions another man, Elle, who Bill considered to be a 'fruit'. Elle had a wife, but his wife knew he was gay and even knew that Bill was sleeping with him in the 1960s. Elle was also in love with Dick, and jealous of Bill's relationship with Dick. Elle had another friend, Donnie, who was gay as well. Bill felt 'sick' because Donnie was so effeminate. Bill describes himself as being very cruel to Donnie. Then, the phone starts ringing. Lionel answers the phone.

Dates and locations: Toronto, Fort Williams, Port Arthur, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s

SIDE B:

Bill describes visiting Toronto while living in Port Arthur. He quit his job in Port Arthur and began going on lake boats. On the boats, he began meeting other men and taking them to bars and 'whorehouses' in Fort William. He was fearful of them discovering he was gay. He became attracted to one of the deckhands, and sees this deckhand mutually masturbating with another deckhand. Bill does not join. He quit the boat and, through the Seamen's Union, got a job on the DC Everest from Marathon, Ontario. BC fell in love with another man on the boat, Johnny. He confesses his love for Johnny, but Johnny rejected him. He ended up going up to another man's room, but then rejecting this man. The next day, the other men on the boat made fun of him for spending time with the gay man (they use the term 'crabapple'). The chef on the DC Everest takes an interest in him. The chef also mentions that the captain of the ship is interested in Bill. Bill arrives in Toronto and goes to visit his mother there; his mother had married and had three other children. A guy in his quarters invited him to show him 'the hot spots', including Retros, the St Charles, the Municipal, and the Bay House. Bill punched the guy in the face after seeing that the bars were 'full of queers'. The man confesses his love for Bill. Bill tells the captain about the boy, and moved onto the Humber Dock. On the Humber Dock, he fell in love with the electrician. He would smell the electricians' underwear. After the shipping season finished, he moved to St Catherine's for the winter, where he met a man named Herbert. Herbert didn't work, and instead lived with an older man. Bill and Herbert slept together, and Bill grew fond of him. Bill decided to move to Toronto. Herbert took Bill to Letros. In Toronto, Bill "broke into the gay life". Bill moved into a home with a group of other queer people, by Park Plaza. One of his housemates, Kit, fell in love with Bill.

Dates and locations discussed: 1950s, 1960s, Toronto, St. Catharines, Marathon, Fort William, Ontario

Access Restrictions: N/A

Location - Original: CLGA only in possession of digital copy. Cassette tape retained by Lionel Collier

Description Level: Item



First Foolscape Gay Oral History with BC (tape 2 of 2)

<https://collections.archives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions30852>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Sound recording
Date Range: 7-4-1986
Part Of: Foolscape Gay Oral History Project fonds
Fonds Number: F0083
Series Number: 2
File Number: F0083-02-011
Item Number: 2017-059/016
Digitized Media Type: WAV file
Physical Condition: appears good, audio fine
Scope and Content:

SIDE C:

Bill describes Kit as possessive, and says he did not love him. AS a result, Kit kicked him out, and Bill moved to a place in Yorkville. Bill's experience with Kit made him 'lose faith in the gay life'. In his new home, Merle, a housemate, confessed his love for Bill. Also, Bill met a man at the King Cole Room named Paul, a lawyer, who asked Bill to live with him. Bill ran into Paul sleeping with a woman, and decided to move out. Bill moved into another man's home, Lorne, down the hall from Paul, but he was uninterested in Lorne. He then met another man in the King Cole Room. He mentions wasting 10 years of his life with a man named Nuell (sp?) who was older than him. They stayed together until Nuell died. He also describes his experiences with alcoholism, and quitting drinking with Alcoholics Anonymous. Bill feels sadness about the gay community in the 1980s. He describes the St Charles as dreadful, and full of loneliness. He then describes some of the drag queens at the Bay House: Peggy O'Neill, and Geraldine. He describes them as 'tough'. He never got into any fights, but he feels that gay men were 'tough' in those days. He discusses his sobriety, and the impact it has on his sex life.

Dates and locations discussed: 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, Toronto

SIDE D:

The archivist notes that the date recorded on this tape seems to be incorrect. The recording picks up mid-sentence, discussing someone named Michael who has been phoning BC Bill discusses Paul: Paul got married, and moved to England. It is rumoured that Paul passed away. He also mentions that Kit moved to Florida. Bill says he could never sleep with close friends, Collier says that doing that is 'what friends are for'. Bill discusses visiting the Romans, his first and only experience in the baths; Bill met someone who was nice there, but he did not take him home. He describes feeling 'guilty' after visiting the bathhouse. He discusses lesser known parks for cruising, specifically a park near Lawrence station in Toronto (possibly Muir Gardens?). He slept with a priest that he met in this park. He also mentions that he has a partner, John, at the time of the interview, but he feels uncertain if John loves him. He mentions that he is not interested in younger men, and does not do the Grosvenor strip. Bill also expresses his attraction to Lionel Collier, the interviewer. Bill discusses Peter Marshall. He met Peter Marshall through Letros. The audio is interrupted at this point (approx 20 min in). The audio returns with Bill continuing his description of Peter Marshall. Bill also discusses his experience coming out to his aunt, and his experiences with alcohol. He also discusses an altercation with the police, and the murder and investigation of his friend Jim Taylor, who was beaten to death by baseball bat 12 years prior to Interview. He discusses the murder of his other friend, Jimmy McIntyre, and the suicide of his friend Ray.

Dates and locations discussed: 1970s, 1980s, Toronto

Access Restrictions: N/A

Location - Original:	CLGA only in possession of digital copy. Cassette tape retained by Lionel Collier
Description Level:	Item



First Foolscape Gay Oral History with Bill Atkinson

<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions30846>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Sound recording
Date Range: 28-7-1983
Part Of: Foolscape Gay Oral History Project fonds
Fonds Number: F0083
Series Number: 2
File Number: F0083-02-007
Item Number: 2016-034/002
Digitized Media Type: WAV file

Scope and Content:

Transcript available; see F0083-03-002 Transcript of Interview with Bill Atkinson.

SIDE A:

In this oral history interview, Bill Atkinson, a 67 years old gay man, describes the traumatic experience of being cashiered from the navy during a period of gay witch-hunts beginning in the late 1950s. Bill describes his life before, during and after being discharged from the Navy. He was born in England in 1916 to a middle class family, and discusses a difficult childhood. During his time in the Navy, Bill moves between Ontario and the Pacific Northwest, occasionally travelling to Detroit to meet gay men at Bar 1011. After his career in the Navy, Bill took up modelling and acting to support himself, as well as managing a restaurant for a period of time. Bill discussed his involvement in the gay political community in Toronto, working for George Hislop's political campaign in the 1980s. Topic discussed include the experience of being gay in the Navy, sexual harassment, mental health, financial insecurity, and gay politics in Toronto. Dates and locations discussed: Toronto, Vancouver, Detroit, England, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s

SIDE B:

In this oral history interview, Bill Atkinson, a 67 years old gay man, describes the traumatic experience of being cashiered from the navy during a period of gay witch-hunts beginning in the late 1950s. Bill describes his life before, during and after being discharged from the Navy. He was born in England in 1916 to a middle class family, and discusses a difficult childhood. During his time in the Navy, Bill moves between Ontario and the Pacific Northwest, occasionally travelling to Detroit to meet gay men at Bar 1011. After his career in the Navy, Bill took up modelling and acting to support himself, as well as managing a restaurant for a period of time. Bill discussed his involvement in the gay political community in Toronto, working for George Hislop's political campaign in the 1980s. Topic discussed include the experience of being gay in the Navy, sexual harassment, mental health, financial insecurity, and gay politics in Toronto. Dates and locations discussed: Toronto, Vancouver, Detroit, England, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s

Access Restrictions: N/A
Location - Original: Digital copy and original audio cassette. Original cassette tape located in A/V room.
Description Level: Item

First Foolscape Gay Oral History with Bob Slea (tape 1 of 3)



<https://collections.arquives.ca/en/permalink/descriptions30968>

Collection: Archives
Material Type: Sound recording
Date Range: 5-6-1988
Part Of: Foolsap Gay Oral History Project fonds
Fonds Number: F0083
Series Number: 2
File Number: F0083-02-095
Item Number: 2017-059/100
Digitized Media Type: WAV file
Physical Condition: tape, audio both in good condition

Scope and Content:

SIDE A:

There is music playing in the background of this interview. Lionel recalls the night of the Bathhouse raids, his participation in the protests, and feelings of fear (the raids happened when Collier was 21). Bob's hot tubs were raided in 1978 - the first raids were at the Barracks prior to that, while the hot tubs were being constructed. The tubs went forward with construction despite these raids, as the police said they only raided the Barracks because of the S&M. Bob Sleas was born August 4, 1948. (may have stated 1938) in Niagara Falls. His mother stayed at home, his father was a carpenter. Both parents were English. His mother was a Jehovah's Witness, and his father was a member of the United Church. Bob did not attend church much. Bob says his exposure to religious attitudes were not 'brainwashing,' rather 'take it if you want it' Bob never celebrated birthday, or Christmas as a kid - instead, 'presents all year around' as his parents were "very generous with their children". He says he had nothing 'bad to say' about his religious upbringing. He still attends church to this day occasionally. As a kid, the 'word gay wasn't in anybody's vocabulary at the time. You were 'artistic'" Bob also had a gay brother. At age 11, Bob became aware he was interested in men, which made him feel 'quite strange' - no one ever spoke about men being attracted to other men. Around age 14, at the 'backyard boys club', boys would sleep overnight in a hut in the backyard where they would experiment with each other, but none of the boys turned out to be gay later in life. No one really talked about being gay, per Bob - in fact, the boys would often feel a sense of shame the day after. Bob recalls being attracted to one particular girl while travelling, whom Bob fell in love with - but he did not have sex with her until after he married her. He was aware he was still attracted to men, but wanted a family and thought it would work out with her. She was aware that he was attracted to men, and she too hoped it would change after they married. However, it did not change - they separated 3 or 4 times over the 20 year marriage. The couple had one daughter and then divorced in 1981. He discusses Letros and Club 511 (which he mistakenly calls it Club 501) on Yonge St. He says that was the first public place where men could dance together. The night it opened, uniformed police were in the club - but. Bob felt that in those days, there was a good rapport between the police and gay men. Not too long after that, the Jukebox opened on Wellesley, owned by two lesbian women - the second place where two men or women could dance together. Bob worked at a lot of dance studios. As a kid, his brother worked at the National Ballet of Canada, and was a best man for Celia Franca's wedding. Bob started taking summer ballet courses - although he did not enjoy ballet. He was much more interested in ballroom. Bob was never very close with brother, and was never able to sit down with him and talk about being gay. Bob feels he was quite obviously gay (mannerisms, the things he liked, etc.) so his brother must have known - but his brother seemed to not want to befriend Bob. Bob would often attend gay bars with his dance colleagues, and felt that at dance studios they 'preferred gay people'. Bob's recalls a cruising experience on the subway and at Broadview and Danforth, where a man approached him and asked him if he was gay - Bob at the time (likely around 1958) did not know what 'gay' meant. Bob found him attractive as Bob was attracted to older men at the time. The man invited Bob to his house (near Greenwood) and Bob spent the night with him. This was before Bob was married. While attending the clubs, Bob

thought 'gee I really want to own one of these clubs'. Bob discusses the workflow of attending the bars, and how he would meet many more people at the bar then compared to the time of interview. Bob mentions his friend "Jim Greene" - "I thought he was the only Black person in Toronto" - "never saw a Black person walking down Yonge St." He also mentions seeing other Black drag queens performing at 511, including performers impersonating Eartha Kitt. Bob and Jim Greene opened a gay brunch club, after attending one of the brunches, you'd have to host the brunches. This became a major way to meet people — "An excuse to get together on a Sunday" - with 30 or 40 members. Seeing the success of this, the two opened a Dinner club where people would attend restaurants. At that time, Bob was living on Sherbourne by Dundas. Bob could not remember how they advertised, a lot of it was through word of mouth - he mentions that he may have possibly advertised in One magazine. Noted Montreal was much more open at that time, when recalls saw men kissing one another and meeting many Lesbian women while visiting Montreal. Bob lived with a McGill student while visiting Montreal, and worked at an elevator in Simpsons, but eventually had to leave because of his poor French. Bob also lived in Puerto Vallarta for three years. Bob recalls Peter Marshall's parties - Collier mentions dinner plans with him. Bob notes that a lot of the gay party throwers were connected to the CBC, does not want to mention their names. He remembers attending parties in The Red Lion Room, in 1961 (also the year his daughter was born) - it did not remain open long. Bob also recalls a couple of taverns across from City Hall, with drag queens. Particularly recalls and describes Geraldine, a vibrant, happy and very funny drag queen that performed at these taverns. Also recalls large busloads of men who would visit the taverns in this area, who were very rough/often alcoholics. The drag queens 'ran the place', and were very accepted despite the patronage. Bob Sleas recalls it as very rowdy (no fights, but lots of laughter and shouts, etc.) and a lot of fun. Bob remembers a lot of alcohol on the scene, even moreso than at time of interview. Bob feels people are drinking less at time of interview for health reasons, and also due to increased popularity of smoking marijuana. Bob recalls another drag queen, Brandy, who he thinks was one of the first queens to perform professionally. Brandy lived by Jarvis and Huntly, across from the police headquarters. Brandy dealt with a lot of trouble travelling between their apartment and the Warwick Hotel, being harassed by police who thought they were a sex worker. He notes that one would often dress up for Letros and even St Charles, and also that there was good Chinese food at the restaurant at the St Charles.

Dates and Locations mentioned: Toronto, Puerto Vallarta, Montreal, Niagara Falls, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s

SIDE B:

Bob reminisces for the disco scene. He notes the big change from sitting at a table to drink to standing up at a bar, and how this changed the bar scene significantly Bob felt that Peter Marshall 'seemed to [be] a very quiet, shy person' despite throwing such parties, yet 'no-one seemed to know what he did'. Bob only ever saw Marshall at the St Charles and Letros. Bob used to go to Burlington, where a man had a yacht and a club. Bob went twice, often declined invitations because of the distance. Bob could not remember his name. Bob describes Peter Marshall's parties in further detail. Bob recalls living with a lover on Jarvis St. One time, this lover threw a gay dinner party, and Bob saw (at age 20) his brother as a guest at the party. This was the first time him and his brother confronted each other about their sexualities face to face. They had suspected it, as they often would mention mutual gay friends. Bob's lover knew whom he was inviting. This made Bob feel very uncomfortable. Bob also recalls the circular bar at the St Charles, and discusses the increased sociability of the bar. Bob discusses the Ford hotel, which had a gay organist and the 'cruisest bathroom in town'. Bob would meet men at the pub there, and then take them to a room. Bob noted that the rooms were very expensive - and some rooms didn't even have a full bath. Bob stayed there often, and met a lot of people there. The bar was a 'sing along bar' where the organist would play music and patrons would sing along songs like 'Bye Bye Blackbird'. Bob mentions 'you would see every gay man in town there at some point'. Before being known as a gay bar, the St Charles was really known as a quality Chinese restaurant - 'you wouldn't be embarrassed to tell anybody you were going for dinner at the St Charles.' Bob visited it the night it closed, and mentioned there was a sale where they were selling chopsticks, etc. to patrons. Bob recalls never wanting a permanent lover. He was 'promiscuous', and could not contemplate being with just one person. Bob also discusses affairs with a German lover and another man for a year and half. Bob feels that as long as he

change, with a common meter and another meter a year and then Bob feels that, as long as he can remember the "Gay Ghetto" has "always been in this area", but also notes that when he opened the baths on Isabella, it was not known as a gay area. The baths were an empty factory for Evangeline. They leased the second floor because they wanted to be by Bloor and Yonge. The venue next door (which is Comrades at time of interview) was a straight bar that Bob believes was named Dominoes. Bob intended to open a club downstairs, with the baths upstairs. Bob met his other lover at a party at 110 Maitland, which he said was an 'all gay building' Bob notes that CBC was once a big part of the community, but since things have 'spread out, things have grown'. He discusses the construction of the City Park apartments, and how it attracted gay men (Bob lived at City Park) as well as the discussion of 'Vaseline tower'. Bob also discussed militant gay men at Stonewall, fighting the police, throwing bricks, etc. by Christopher St. It sounds as though Bob may have been at Stonewall. Bob worked as a sex worker at age 17 or 18, while visiting New York. There he met an actor at a club who worked for NBC. Bob was staying at a YMCA (The "Sloan House"). The man (who's name was Art) invited him to parties, and clubs and back to his place. Bob mentions sex in clubs in New York, and a much more liberated atmosphere. Bob felt 'repulsed' by Art, but still lived with him at his apartment. He would introduce Bob to men who wanted to sleep with him, and Bob would agree - often much older than him (35 or 40 years old). Bob applied for papers to move to the States and was looking for work. Bob recalls that one morning, after sleeping with one of those men, the man had to leave early in the morning for church as he was a priest. Then, the man said he would not see him again because it was 'very expensive'. It turned out Bob's partner (Art) was charging the men money to sleep with Bob, unbeknownst to Bob. Then, Bob began hustling on 42nd and 8th in New York; he says 'I never really had any trouble'. At time of interview, he mentions there are a lot of drugs in that area. But in those days, he says it was all sex no drugs. Bob was never harassed by straight people, and never felt bothered while hustling in New York. Bob spent 3 or 4 months in New York, living with Arthur. Bob's parents knew he was in New York at the time, and knew about Arthur (who would pay for Bob's plane tickets to New York). His parents did not have much response. One night, while Bob was living in City Park, and his father was visiting Toronto for a convention at the King Edward Hotel. Bob ran into him. Bob was heading to Letros with a younger man with bleached hair and 'man tan' - a spray tan - and tight clothes at the time. His father was very surprised by this man, and confused about the men Bob associated with. Bob was in New York for more than three summers, while in high school.

Dates and locations discussed: Toronto, New York, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s

Access Restrictions: N/A

Location - Original: CLGA only in possession of digital copy. Cassette tape retained by Lionel Collier

Description Level: Item