

Interview with Richard Bosard

**Interviewed by Scott Paulsen
University of Minnesota**

**Interviewed on October 31, 1993
at Mr. Bosard's home
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

SP: This is interview with Dick Bosard and we are talking about the gay community.

Dick, I wanted to ask you, where did you grow up?

DB: In Minneapolis.

SP: At what time did you grow up, when did you become an adult?

DB: You mean like age eighteen?

SP: Yes, I suppose.

DB: I was born in 1913 so, that would have been in 1931 when I graduated from high school.

SP: Why did you stay in the Twin Cities?

DB: Well, I went to college in the east to law school and, did not intend to come back here. I got out of law school in 1938, which was a time of recession. Law firms in New York, that used to hire a certain number of Harvard law graduates every year, that year were letting go of those they had hired the year before. A friend of my family's, who was an attorney in New York, recommended that I come back here from New York because, I could at least stay at home and cut down on expenses. That's how I happened to ended up in Minneapolis when I did not intend to.

SP: What was your background, what did your parents do?

DB: My parents were divorced. My father was a lawyer in Minot, North Dakota. My step-father was president of Toro Manufacturing.

SP: Toro. Is that lawn...

DB: They make golf course equipment, lawn and snowblowers now.

SP: That's a Minnesota-based company?

DB: Yes, Minneapolis.

SP: So, you came back to Minneapolis and why did you stay, was it the Depression mainly?

DB: That wasn't the Depression, it was a recession. I guess, technically the Depression went on until maybe 1941. That is why I stayed and I got a job here.

SP: Was that in law?

DB: Yes.

SP: Where was your first work in the Twin Cities?

DB: Our office was in the Northwestern Bank Building. Originally, I guess, it was called Melren, Brown and Sherman. By the time I went in Brown had died and Sherman was out so, it was Melren at that time.

SP: That was your first career. How long did it last?

DB: I went into the service in the spring of 1942 and got out in 1946. I went back to work for the same law firm.

SP: Which branch of the armed forces was that?

DB: I was in the army in military government overseas and the military police in this country.

SP: You came back and went back to law. You stayed in it until what period?

DB: 1975 when I retired.

SP: Were you in Minnesota and Minneapolis that whole time?

DB: From 1938 on but, from 1931 to 1938 I was four years at Princeton and three years at

Harvard Law. After that I was here except, when I was in the service.

SP: After the economic difficulties of the country, did you consider moving on again?

DB: No.

SP: You were settled in?

DB: I had a family and friends here.

SP: I would like to ask you personal questions about coming out. I know "coming out" is a more recent term.

DB: Yes.

SP: Can you tell me when you started to understand that you were different from straight people?

DB: I suppose all my life I have known that. I do know that my freshman year in high school at Blake, a boys school, it was considered very funny to use "fairy" instead of "very". They'd say they had a fairy nice time and, they'd laugh. I didn't know what was so funny about it. I asked one of my classmates and he said that's a guy who likes guys. I thought to myself, "yes, I agree." [laughs] That's when I found out at least there was a name.

SP: This was a good friend of yours?

DB: No, I don't remember the boy just some classmate. I wouldn't do it in a group of people because, I was embarrassed for not knowing, I wasn't on the inside of the joke. I had to ask someone what was so funny about it; what was a fairy?

SP: I'm sure you heard other things like that.

When did you begin to identify your sexuality as different from other people? [pause] Did you ever think that this was going to change someday?

DB: Oh, yes I hoped that.

SP: Can you tell me more about it?

DB: Freshman year in college I had an affair with one person. I fought against it. After the first year, he wanted me to room with him and, I wouldn't do that. He was the only male I had any sex with until long after the Second World War. [interruption]

I was fighting against it and always hope that someday I'd meet the right girl or something.

SP: Was your understanding toward this person that it was this person and not my sexual orientation; this is the person who appeals to me and that is why I am so close to him.

DB: No, I don't think so, I had always been attracted to boys and just didn't do anything about it until a certain age.

SP: How would you present yourself to your friends, family and at work. I'm sure there was expectation that someday you would...

DB: Yes, certainly, I was dating girls and didn't have any close male friends. It wasn't too much of a question except, when are you going to get married.

SP: Was there some point where you had to make up your mind and identify yourself and stop dating women...

DB: No, that was just gradual.

SP: You said that after the war you had an affair with someone again?

DB: No, not with women. I had sex with men starting about 1946 or 1947.

SP: At that point you were out of the service?

DB: Yes.

SP: I want to ask you, where did you meet men, through friends?

DB: Initially through friends, through one of the girls I was dating who had a friend who [she] was also dating, a guy who also turned out to be gay. Then, he introduced me to more people. It was a very gradual kind of thing.

SP: So, it wasn't that you went to a bar?

DB: No.

SP: It was mainly through contact with other people you met through your friends. Can you tell me about when you came out?

DB: To me coming out was when I admitted to myself that I was gay, irretrievably gay let me put it that way. That was after I read the Kinsey Report. Although I knew gay people before that, somehow that report made it more o.k. because, "ten percent of the population is." It isn't just you and a few other crackpots who are. That wasn't coming out in the sense of now that I went out in the street and told everybody I was gay. I don't know that I've ever told anybody I was gay. Even other gay people either know it from conversation but, I don't think I've said, "Yes, I'm gay."

SP: Did you ever have to duck from that question; "Are you gay?"

DB: No. I was only asked that once. That was at the bar of the third floor of Harry's. A guy who knew who I was, he was a younger brother of a girl I knew and a neighbor when I was growing up. He was back from Texas and was very drunk. He asked me, the first person to ask that, "Say, are you gay?" Immediately I said, "Well, of course not." because, no one had ever asked me that question before. Conversation went on and he was drunk enough so he was repeating himself. The second time he said, "Are you gay?" I kind of giggled and said, "No more than you are." He giggled and said, "that's a good answer." That's the only time I know of that anyone asked me that question. It was actually the first time I denied it, that was my first reaction but, the second time I calmed down a bit and came up with what I thought was a good answer. He obviously did too.

SP: I like that. How did people know you were gay? Was this ever important to you, to know that you weren't interested in girls as far as...

DB: No.

SP: How did you find other people like yourself that you wouldn't have to feel the pressures of the straight world? Did you feel pressure from the straight world?

DB: Oh yes, of course, I felt pressure from the straight world. Through the person I mentioned before who was dating a friend of the girl I was dating, I met other people. We had a little group going of gay guys who were dating girls. It wasn't a sex group thing at all. I guess gradually from one or another of those people I found out about gay bars. A gay bar in those days was not what it is today, it was a regular bar to which some gay people went. One of the gay bars I was taken to by a woman, the Dome. I remember we were sitting at a table. I commented how nice it was to see only men at the bar because, during the war women had to go out by themselves and after the war a lot of them did. I commented on the fact that it was nice that apparently there weren't a lot of women waiting for pick ups or something at the bar. Later I found out that the reason for that was that most of the men at the bar were gay but, I didn't know.

SP: She didn't bring that up?

DB: I don't think she knew it.

SP: Could you think of a few of the bars downtown, like where they were located, even if you don't know the names.

DB: The bars of that time: the Dome and the Music Box next to the Nicollet Hotel, Frolics was across from the Dome, the Hurdle Bar in the Dyckman Hotel and the third floor of Harry's (one of the best restaurants in town). Later on the Dug Out and the bar at the old Shieks and to an extent the bar at the newer Shieks but, that never quite made it. The Panther Room in the original Ritz Hotel, then it had to change its name to the Minnesotan Hotel, it was across from the federal building. Herb's Bar across from what is still the federal courts building.

SP: Are all of these in a certain area of downtown?

DB: At that time all bars were in a certain area of downtown. They were in what was called the patrol limits. I don't think there were any bars south of Eleventh Street of any sort so, yes.

SP: Was it around Washington Avenue?

DB: That would have been the north part. Apparently at one bar on Washington, the Persian Palms, I have been told that during or before the Second World War that there was a small bar behind the main room which, some gay people went to. I wasn't here during the war but, the Viking Room at the Radisson Hotel was known as a kind of gay bar. It was very helpful to gay people because, the Radisson had a rule that no women could sit at the bar. Actually, there was a Minneapolis ordinance passed at the request of the hotels who did not want the single women or prostitutes (whatever you want to call) preying on men at their bar. Women had to be seated at the tables. I didn't cause great consternation but, there were only men at the bar, not that they were all gay but, I was told that was a place for picking people up like they do today.

SP: Some hotels were...

DB: They were all mixed.

SP: I understand. It made for an environment which was favorable.

DB: Yes. They usually had some kind of entertainment. That was a hangover from the days of the Second World War. As I said before there were a lot of single women and almost every bar would have entertainment behind the bar so, women could sit at the bar

and watch the entertainment rather than sit at the bar for pick ups. I think that was the main reason they had entertainment in most of the bars, it could be just a piano player.

SP: Can you tell me of any ordinances in either Minneapolis or St. Paul which were of concern to gay men or women?

DB: No.

SP: I read that there were sometimes drag balls on Halloween.

DB: Oh, yes. The Gay Nineties had used to have one, that was later.

SP: Were you aware of any earlier than when the Nineties had them? I guess that would be in the late 70's that the Nineties had them.

DB: No, I don't think so, I wasn't aware of any before. There may have been some. I'm not a person who goes around in drag so, I wasn't too interested. Originally, the drag balls were actually in the Gay Nineties. Almost everybody from there would go to The 19 afterwards so, I'd usually be at The 19. They'd all come in their costumes anyway so, you'd get to see them. Later on, the Nineties started having them at the Lemington Hotel, Radisson Hotel and various hotels. They got to be quite large. I went to a couple of them.

SP: Were they on Halloween?

DB: Yes, or around that time.

SP: I'm just curious because, I heard this in Seattle, that was the one night you could go out in drag or for women to wear a t-shirt and jeans because if the police stopped them they could say this is a costume. There was an ordinance that said that you couldn't be wearing more than two articles that weren't of your gender. In an article here, I read, that you could be arrested for dressing in drag.

DB: That's possible, I'm not aware of that. I am aware of one thing that is the opposite that was written up in the paper. A person, I don't remember if it was male or female, was arrested or stopped by the police for some traffic violation. [It] showed drivers license which indicated sex opposite from the way that person was dressed. The person was arrested, under perhaps this ordinance you speak of. A judge in Minneapolis dismissed it because, he said there was no law against that and the person did not claim to be of the opposite sex. The person admitted, "Yes, I am" a he dressed as a she or a she dressed as a he. I may say that the judge who made that decision was Graham Winton who himself was gay.

SP: How did you know that...

DB: ...that he was gay?

SP: Yes.

DB: I knew him. He was in disroded, disrobbed, whatever you want to call it because, he was gay.

SP: Really?

DB: Actually because he picked up an underage hustler at Loring Park. It kind of acknowledged that he was gay.

SP: Do you remember if that was in The 1950s or 1960s?

DB: Oh no, that was in The 1980s. If you mean when the person was stopped in the car, that was before that, probably 1970s.

SP: Do you remember the first time you went to the first exclusively gay [bar].

DB: Exclusively gay? The first ones I went to were in New York. [In the Twin Cities] I suppose the first exclusively gay bar I went to was the Dug Out in Minneapolis. It was across from the Metropolitan Building. It was a large working man's bar. The sort of place where men would stop in after work and order their boilemaker. After about six o'clock the business died out entirely. They were having their lights turned off because, they couldn't pay their bills. At that time they had a gay organist. During one of his breaks, Ebe, the son of the Danish owner came over to Herb's Bar, a mixed bar. Ebe came in and, with the help of his organist, went around and started buying drinks for everybody. Then, Ebe would say, "Come on over to my bar, come on over to my bar." How Herb ever allowed that, I don't know. Except, later on, Herb wanted to become just a jazz bar and not have any gay people in it so, maybe he welcomed that idea. Following that, I went over that night or the next night. I ordered a gin and tonic and the bartender had no idea what I was talking about so, I changed and ordered something else. The next time I was in there at the bar, Ebe was there as bartender too. The person next to me ordered a gin and tonic. I turned to the guy and told him they didn't know what that was here. Ebe came up to me and patted my hand and said, "Oh, yes we do. I heard you order it the other night and I found out what it was and now we have it." That was kind of the attitude there. Every night Ebe was at the door and he would shake hands with everybody who went out and say, "Thank you for coming, come again." That was very unusual for bars in Minneapolis; not only did they putting up with you, they were courting your business and actually made you feel comfortable.

SP: Did it become a place for you where you liked to go?

DB: Yes, it did. Although, since it got known it attracted a lot of straight tourists also, which wasn't too pleasant.

SP: What was the attraction?

DB: They wanted to see what "those people" were doing, what the freaks were.

SP: The Dugout was in Minneapolis?

DB: Yes.

SP: Were there any bars you would go to in St. Paul or anything you would go to in St. Paul that would be of interest to gay people?

DB: There was a lesbian bar on Front Avenue, The Townhouse, which originally was a straight restaurant, then became a gay bar, then a lesbian bar and of course now is a country bar. Later on [there was] the Noble Roman, which had drag shows on Sunday, the Grand Finale now Rumours. That's about all I can think of in St. Paul.

SP: When you said the Noble Roman, that makes me think of Grand Avenue. Do you remember areas of St. Paul that were considered to be gay areas like Loring would be or the Groveland area?

DB: No.

SP: Where were most gay people, the gay neighborhoods?

DB: In Minneapolis?

SP: Yes, has it changed? That's the question I want to ask. Has it changed since you first started living here?

DB: I don't know because, the first gay people I knew were scattered all over. By reputation "Loring Heights (Homo Heights), Gay Ghetto" was one. I've heard Powderhorn Park area although, I vaguely know were it is. From what I've heard it is still a "gay area" but, I couldn't name some streets on that.

SP: Do you recall when Powderhorn became or, if it always was a gay area?

DB: I don't know, I've only heard it referred to recently.

SP: Is that gay men?

DB: I assume so but, I don't know. Today, unfortunately, gay only means men. I prefer to think of "gay" as covering male and female but, the females don't want it that way. That's a little editorializing on my part.

SP: Would you say that there are more men than women in this neighborhood?

DB: Yes, I would say so.

SP: Can you see a reason for that? Do you have an opinion?

DB: I think there are more gay men than there are gay women in Minneapolis. St. Paul seems to have mostly lesbians. Some of them may live in Minneapolis but, at least they go to bars and things in St. Paul.

SP: That seems like a mystery to me. Do you have any idea why more women would live in St. Paul? At least we know their bars are there.

DB: Their bars are there. I don't know, maybe they live there because the bars are there.

SP: Are you familiar with a city ordinances which allow only a certain number of liquor licenses to go out?

DB: Yes, I don't know if it is city ordinance or state law. It's state law I think.

SP: Do you think that has anything to do with why we have fewer bars than other gay communities?

DB: I'm sure it has something to do with it, how much I don't know. Liquor license are very expensive here. In order to get one you have to buy the license from someone who has it. By law you are only allowed to pay the amount of the annual license fee. But In order to get it, you have to pay an outrageous amount for the furniture and other things. In other words you are paying a lot for the license; you don't pay it for the license, you pay for a lot of other things the owner wants to get rid of. Consequently, the bars have to make more money, than in other cities and states because, they have a larger investment.

SP: Do you know anything about the ownership of the bars?

DB: Today?

SP: In the late 1960's and early 1970's because, that's when we can identify gay bars. Do you know

anything about the people who owned them, any names?

DB: Yes. The Gay Nineties actually wasn't owned by Al Cohen, he was the brother-in-law of [pause] I can't think of his name.

SP: Was it Pesish?

DB: No. Ernie Pesish owned Suttons. His son, Ron Pesish, at one time bought the Saloon. He didn't start it, he bought it and then later sold it. Al Cohen had the bar the Roaring Twenties. He also had started a bar called Big Daddy's. Al was the manager of the Happy Hour side of the Gay Nineties, the gay side. He said he started the first place built or remodeled strictly as a gay bar. I had a friend who was doing the redecorating. But, it was in a bad area, maybe Fifteenth Avenue near railroad tracks. People were kind of afraid to park their car and walk to the bar. It got torn down for the freeway I guess.

SP: I read an article in the *Advocate* which talked about the Twin Cities and the author said that this was a city where there were very few gay owned bars.

DB: That's true. [Although] The 19 bar was bought by Everett, I can't remember his last name, and his lover George Koch. It was and still is a three-two bar. It seemed to be frequented by prostitutes, many of whom lived across the street at Vine Hall or next door at the Parkway. George and Everett were gay and decided to make the bar gay. I couldn't tell you how they did it, [I guess] word spread that it was gay. We started going there. It was much like a private party or a club. Being in this the "gay ghetto" it was a great place to go any night.

In those days liquor bars were all closed on Sundays but, three-two bars could stay open so, The 19 did its biggest business on Sunday. They had a piano player in the afternoon.

SP: It's a pretty small bar? Even today in comparison it is dwarfed even more because you have something like the mega-mall, the [Gay] 90's.

DB: Yes, although the 90's is very unusual in that respect. I guess there is one in Orlando, Florida Disney World or something like that, that may have a hotel in connection with it. Generally, bars are much smaller than that.

SP: It is kind of an unusual thing, the 90's, to be so large. It has like eight bars in it? [pause]

DB: I don't know exactly who they sold it [The 19] to but, George and Everett and moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I was told that at one time a teacher or instructor, I don't think a professor, at the University was the owner of it. I stopped going there. It, presumably, was frequented by a lot of people pushing and using dope, drag queens. Later on ownership changed several times, then they tried to clean it up, and I guess they have. I haven't been in it for about a year now. It has changed its image and gotten better. For a while it was apparently very bad.

SP: Could you describe it as a neighborhood bar to begin with?

DB: It was the closest bar to meet other people [unclear].

SP: Do you have an idea of why this area around Loring Park is gay?

DB: No, except you may have answered it when you said around Loring Park. Loring Park didn't used to be dangerous and look a lot different. It had shrubs, bushes, etc., it was much prettier. It was a cruising place. At that time I lived at 510 Groveland and I called the park my backyard. If it was a hot summer day, I'd often would go down and sit on a bench where it was cooler.

One night word got out that someone was harassing a gay person down by the pond. A guy in the park named Chuck Clark, who was at that time a bouncer at the Dugout, recruited gay people in the park. We all started up at one end corner by the Ole Bull statue and fanned out walking through the park. Whoever this person was who was giving the guy a hard time, [they] left. I mention that because, it's just the opposite from what, by reputation, it is now; it's the hoodlums that get up at the corner and go through and kill the gays or whatever. At that time we took the stand and took over the park and prevented damage from occurring. Things have changed a lot.

SP: It was organized to some extent, how was it organized...
[unclear]

DB: Since he was a bouncer at the bar, he sort of knew most of the gay people who just happened to be in the park and said, "Come on, we're going to do it." and did it.

SP: I had heard that during and ending in the 1940's there was a military presence around Loring Park, Dunwoody [trade school] also. It may have made for more single men in this area than other areas of the Twin Cities. Do you know anything about that?

DB: No, I don't know about the military, of course I wasn't around during the war. I know the armory was down there, that was called the Parade Ground. It's possible. Most of these questions are things that haven't occurred to me and things just happened. [unclear]

SP: You look at the housing around here, there is a lot of rental, like one-bedroom places and not very big. I just want to make the connection of why that is.

DB: One reason for that is that most of the apartments around here were built after the Second World War. In order to get federal money for them, they were limited to a small space. Apartments that had been built before the war, which would have been large three, four room bedroom apartments could no longer be built with government backing. That would account for a lot of the studio and one-bedroom apartments.

SP: Do you think there is anything in this neighborhood that brought the gay influence here or that the gay influence brought here; you have the Guthrie, the Walker...

DB: That started later.

SP: Any other activities or arts in this area this end of downtown?

DB: Of course, the Walker Art Center.

SP: Has it been there long?

DB: Yes, its been there a long time, although not in the same building. Its been there as long as I can remember.

SP: So, the Thirties?

DB: Yes. [pause]

SP: Do you know of an art dealer named George Shea and a hairdresser named Gordon Locksley?

DB: Yes.

SP: They lived in this area?

DB: Yes, they lived on Mount Curve.

SP: Just a little further, near the lakes?

DB: Yes, they had a huge house there. I think it was the Columbian Embassy, not Embassy but Consulate was also in the same building.

SP: Is this where they lived also?

DB: Yes. They had large opening parties, etc. when they would have an art show. Invitations to them were in great demand.

SP: In great demand, so they were big social events?

DB: Yes.

SP: Did you ever go to any?

DB: Yes.

SP: Could you tell me about it?

DB: They were just large parties with of course a number of gay people, also I don't know if they were society or would-be society people. I think most of the women were probably people who went or had their hair done at the Red Carpet, which was the name of the salon that Gordon

Locksley had. I believe the gallery started because he had some paintings hanging in his hair salon, by whom I don't know, local artists. They were all for sale and he became part dealer because of that. Apparently he got wealthy enough to buy the mansion and make the first floor of that into an art gallery. They lived on the second floor.

SP: Could you be more specific on what kind of parties they had; were they masquerade or costume parties, did they have a theme?

DB: Not that I know of. A party that I was never invited to, although Gordon was always saying that I was about to be, on New Year's Eve was black tie dinner for men only. Otherwise, at the gallery openings sometimes they would be a little outlandish. I wasn't there for the one where they had a nude model who was wrapped in cellophane as a centerpiece in the dining room. Another one that I was not at was one that Andy Warhol was at. I do remember one for the art part. When I walked in I was looking for the exhibit, I saw blank canvases around. I thought they were put up until they can pictures. Later, I found that that was the exhibit. Each large canvas had around the edge maybe an inch inside a quarter inch wide line of blue on one; that was the whole picture. Then he said, "And, it was all done in free-hand." Oh, great. [laughs] He tended to be very trendy and have fur-lined bathtubs and things like that on display.

SP: He was openly gay? It just sort of went along with being a hairdresser?

DB: I think so. He used to be interviewed on the radio. Although I don't think he ever said that he was gay, he scandalized a bit. He was very witty. I remember he was taken off the radio, because at one point he was asked about a new park or playground being built across from the Guthrie Theater, what had been the parade grounds. He said it was so dismal there that, "no self-respecting child molester would go there." That caused a great commotion and he was taken off the air for that.

SP: Was it censored or did it get on the air?

DB: It went on the air and there was commotion after that. That's the kind of remark he would make. It would give you a good description of the playground, which is no longer there. He had an outrageous sense of humor.

SP: I'm just curious, would you have any reason to not want to be associated with someone who was that flamboyant, professionally or...

DB: Yes, and I can give an example. I at one time was interested, with some friends of mine (one was a country club manager), in starting a gay bar. We looked at various places around. Suddenly, Gordon Locksley got involved and he did start what was called Suttons, although he called it Sutton Place, I think. When he got involved I dropped out and most of the people I knew dropped out because, we didn't want to be involved in a business way, in other words, in a public way with him because he was flamboyant. He was fun and I invited him to my parties but, that was a little different.

SP: George Shea, what was he like?

DB: He was very quiet, very much of a gentleman. I think I read just recently that he was on the staff at the University but, I never knew what he did.

SP: Recently? Like in the last year or two?

DB: No, no. They haven't lived here for years. They live in Europe and Palm Springs. He was everything that Gordon wasn't; a very quiet, sweet guy. You couldn't say that about Gordon.

SP: No?

DB: No. Gordon was outrageous, wonderful but, outrageous.

SP: They moved for business reasons?

DB: I don't know. They moved let's say for health reasons. From what I've heard and this is you know. Number one, it could have been like I heard; because they were dealing dope, because they were very much in [trouble] on taxes because they were selling stolen art. I've heard all sorts of reasons. Anyway they left the county. People were saying that they would never be allowed back in however, they are because, they winter in Palm Springs and summer in Rome or somewhere. All of that is rumours and gossip that I've heard. Of the things I've mentioned, not all of them, if any of them could be true. When I say they moved for health reasons, it was to escape something or other. That was the rumor.

SP: Do you recall when they moved?

DB: No, I don't.

SP: They didn't come back here ever?

DB: I don't think so.

SP: I want to ask you about people who talked about their sexuality, these are popular people and not from the Twin Cities, people like Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. Could you comment on them? [Or even] Locksley and Shea.

DB: I didn't know the first two. Ginsberg, of course, was very open. Kerouac was presumably bisexual but, I'm not sure he ever made any claim to it.

SP: Did you associate them with gay people?

DB: Ginsberg, yes but, Kerouac, no not until fairly recently. He was just beatnik. Speaking of beatnik, another bar called the Mixers over on Seven Corners, which I think now is Sergeant Preston's, was known in those days as a beatnik bar. That had a lot of gay people but, I would

assume that the clientele was at least seventy-five percent from the University, gay or not.

SP: Was the West Bank area a kind of artsy place, beatnik?

DB: I guess so. The Holland bar was over there and that had been a lesbian bar. It has always had theater. I don't really know but, I assume that's where University people go.

SP: Speaking of the University, Jack Baker was at the University.

DB: Yes.

SP: What did you think to these people who identified themselves as leaders who were using a platform of gay rights; people like Karen Clark, Allen Spear, Steve Endean?

DB: Those last three I know or knew but, I don't put them in the same category as Jack Baker.

SP: Let's go back and talk about the people who came before the political people, like Jack Baker at the University, Robert Halfhill, Koreen Phelps. I don't know if you know these people but, Jack Baker you had heard of?

DB: Yes, and I've met him briefly. I guess he's still around although, you never hear of him anymore. [unclear] He was running for State Legislature for whatever district it is the University is in. He had some good ads, like one with high healed pumps saying something like, "put yourself in my shoes." I didn't think much of him because, he was just a publicity seeker, a contrarian. For example, at the time they were trying to repeal and did repeal the St. Paul gay rights ordinance, he was quoted as saying he hoped they did repeal it because, that would force the state of Minnesota to pass the law. It, of course, did a number of years later. It was just things like that, that if he hadn't thought of it he would be against it. He was always chaining himself to radiators, etc. over at the State Legislature. Somebody did introduced a bill and because of the expression "sexual orientation," he objected to that but, he could never come up with the right thing. He would say, "They shouldn't pass a bill like that." Of course, then all the people who were against the bill say, "Even Jack Baker says this is a terrible bill." Then the bill wouldn't get very far.

My own opinion of him is that if he didn't start it, he would have nothing to do with it, and do whatever he could to tear it down.

SP: That was early on?

DB: Steve Endean worked very hard and I don't think it was just for himself. I had a feeling that Jack Baker was. Jack Baker's lover adopted him, so he became his son and then they were married so, they became husband and wife. Then even after our Supreme Court said they couldn't be married, they filed joint tax returns.

SP: How did you feel about that? This is something that is...

DB: Stupid.

SP: Stupid. Professionally, being a lawyer, did think it was making any progress?

SP: We were talking about all the legal things Jack Baker tried to do, challenge...

DB: Jack Baker was a lawyer. This maybe you don't know; after he was graduated from the law school, he had a very hard time being able to take the bar examination. They claimed that because he admitted that he was gay, he was tinged with moral tripeptide and therefore was not fit to be a lawyer. Finally, after an amount of wrangling went by, he was allowed to take the bar examination and was admitted to the state bar. There were some provisions, that he could never actually practice law in a court or something like that. Of course, that has all gone by the boards now but, he was the first admitted gay who wanted to become part of the Minnesota Bar.

SP: So, you were probably watching him as he went through that?

DB: Yes.

SP: Did you watch because you wanted this to happen? Even though he was very dramatic, you wanted to see someone challenge the bar.

DB: I don't know if he did it to challenge the bar; the bar challenged him but, actually he won on that. I was obviously interested in watching it. It's the same way now in some denominations will allow their ministers to be gay and some won't. I watch with some interest.

SP: Later people, like Steven Endean, Allen Spear and Kerry Woodward, did you know her? She worked with Steve Endean also.

DB: No.

SP: How did you look at them, did you think they were on track anymore?

SP: Yes, I think the first time I met Steve or saw him in action was when there was a picketing of the telephone company downtown. I assume it was because of their attitude toward homosexuals. I was walking by, and Steve was out there. He was yelling and before he recognized me he yelled, "you bigot!" Suddenly he recognized me, that didn't get us off on too good of a start. I never knew him very well. I used to go to fund raisers, etc. and he was always there. When he was in town, as far as I knew, he used to come to see me. This last time he called me but, he was so ill that he couldn't get around too much. He did call and thank me for all the help I've been in the past years, etc. I wasn't aware that I have been much help.

SP: You don't have to be modest. Can you tell me how you think you think helped or what he was

referring to?

DB: I suppose giving money. I did a fundraising thing when they were trying to repeal the first St Paul gay rights ordinance. That caused some comment because of what I did. Because of some of my personal connections, I was able to get some porno films that were shown in theaters around town. I was doing a "retrospective", made it sound very respectable. Everything I sent out said that it was for the anti-repeal, but not sponsored by the group. [unclear] The Reverend, I don't remember his name, got it all wrong and said, "they were showing dirty films." Of course they weren't, I was doing it to prevent the repeal. We used the upstairs of a bar downtown to show them. Getting back to your question of how I helped; I don't know exactly [except that] I gave some money.

I've never been an activist or a militant, I make a distinction. Militants say, "you have to tell everybody you're gay." Activists say, "you should but, you don't have to. I would appreciate it but, you should help."

SP: Who were the activists and who were the militants in the community?

DB: I would assume Jack Baker was a militant. John Preston, who used to live upstairs here, is now an author. For about a year he was the editor of the Advocate out in California. He was with a sex education something or other in New York. I would consider him an activist. He started Gay House. He appreciated the fact that I didn't want to get out and yell I was gay. That was up to me.

SP: Are there any other activists you can think of?

DB: No, I'm pretty much apolitical.

SP: About Gay House, you said it was around the corner. Is it still?

DB: The building is there but, no it isn't. I guess it was like this 201 presumably [gay youth center in early 90's]. It was a house to which young boys, men and maybe women; I haven't heard. They could go for counseling. It was before a gay hotline, it was to help people to come to terms with themselves. It was there for a couple of years, I don't whether other things took over or it ceased to be funded.

SP: Do you know where any of the funding came from?

DB: No.

SP: Would you guess it was through the city or privately funded?

DB: I would assume it was privately funded.

SP: In this area there was a socializing center, like a house and I don't remember how long ago it was, I'm foggy on that right now. Do you recall anything else in this area?

DB: There is the gay fraternity.

SP: Now?

DB: Yes.

SP: That's recent.

DB: Yes.

SP: You don't recall anything before?

DB: Well, Plymouth Church at One Groveland. They started, I think, as being all-around gay. It was an alternative to the bars. It turned out to be just lesbian. [unclear] Whether it is still going or not, I don't know.

I did contribute a little money to Tom Mauer at the University. He was head of the Human Sexuality [Program] or something like that.

SP: Would that be long ago?

DB: In the 1970's.

SP: Can you recall what appealed to you about that at the time? Why would you want to support it?

DB: It was a place for gay people either because they were alcoholics or too young to get into the bar. I think the opening night I looked in there and I didn't find it very interesting to me. It was just to get the thing started, the same way I did to help found the *Equal Time* newspaper. I'm a sucker [for] some things.

SP: I want to clarify something. Were you talking just now about the Human Sexuality Program or the Gay House?

DB: Which?

SP: When I asked you about why you thought it would be a good idea to fund this.

DB: I was talking about One Groveland, the non-liquor nightclub for gay people.

SP: Is that what it was called, One Groveland?

DB: I think so. It may still be going but, as I say it soon developed into a lesbian-only thing and I couldn't tell you too much about it.

SP: And the Human Sexuality Program?

DB: That's at the University. You'd have to find out about that.

SP: I misunderstood you. I thought you said...

DB: I said Tom Mauer, who was the head to the Human Sexuality Program at the University, hit me up for money to start Number One Groveland.

SP: That was in the 1970's?

DB: I think so.

SP: As far as publications, you said that you helped start up *Equal Time*. Was that in the early 1980's?

DB: Yes, I guess so.

SP: There weren't any gay papers for a while, were there?

DB: No, not in Minneapolis. I subscribed to the *Advocate* and the *New York Native*. Actually, when they brought up the thing of *Equal Time*, that there was no paper here, I didn't agree with that. *The Advocate* used to have, and it still does, although I resubscribed and haven't received anything. They still have things from Minnesota and Minneapolis but, I think they used to have more. I've forgotten who their local correspondent was, he was running one for City Council but, not as a known gay person. I was aware of somethings in Minneapolis and, in fact, all over the country because of the newspapers and magazines I got. I could see there was a need for it [a local paper]. I think now, and this is my sexism coming out I guess, but it is too much of a lesbian paper. It didn't start out that way. I suppose it was to counter later the *GLC Voice*, that Tim Campbell was running and now [is] *Gaze*.

SP: His paper wasn't representing the whole community, is that correct?

DB: Whose paper?

SP: Tim Campbell's

DB: Tim Campbell himself wasn't and isn't. There again, he is pretty militant and has his own ideas. That's all right. But, because he is so well known, just as Jack Baker used to be, the newspaper reporters when they want to verify something, they will call him and print that as the gay response to the thing. Its Tim Campbell and I don't think he represents the feelings of anybody that I know but, I'm sure he represents many gay people. I don't think he could speak for a gay community if there is one, I don't think there is.

SP: Why do you say that? Why do you think that there is a community as some people might perceive?

DB: I think there are too many people with divergent viewpoints to be a community. It may be a matter of nomenclature.

This is my own idea; I'm kind of against all this Gay Pride thing. I much prefer San Francisco where they call it Gay Freedom Parade. I'm not proud to be gay. I'm not ashamed to be gay but, I'm not proud of it. I don't think there is anything to brag about but, [for] freedom, yes. Therefore a Gay Freedom Day or Parade makes much more sense than Gay Pride.

SP: They basically celebrate the same thing, it's the name?

DB: Yes.

SP: Have you taken part at any of the Parades?

DB: No. I've occasionally gone down to Loring Park. This year I was invited to a brunch but, couldn't park (I was on crutches at that time) and couldn't get to it. But, I've gone to the park a couple of times.

SP: How would you describe them; what would and wouldn't appeal to you about Gay Pride Week?

DB: The name, as I said, kind of doesn't appeal to me, "Freedom" is better. Gay Pride, that part is all right, except now it's changed to Gay and Lesbian, Transsexual, Transvestite. You start in and you go on and on. I think that gets a little ridiculous.

SP: Do friends of yours go and say, "Dick why don't you meet us at the Park for Gay Pride?"

DB: No. I had friends and still do who live in buildings on Loring Park and had brunches before we would go over to the Park afterward.

SP: I would look at Gay Pride as being quite a bit activist. What would you think? Not just celebrating but also rallying.

DB: Yes, that's true, and that's perhaps one of the reasons I object to the use of "pride". I think Gay Pride smacks of the idea that, "we are better than you are because, we are gay." I don't feel that and that's why I'm for Gay Freedom.

SP: Have you heard of the Knutson brothers?

DB: They lived in St Paul. According to rumor, they would often dress up in widow's "weeds" and attend funerals of people they didn't know. I used to think there were two but, I think there were three Knutson brothers. I never knew them.

SP: I've heard three names.

DB: Yes. Occasionally, they or one of them would dress in drag along the highway and thumb rides with truck driver and presumably go down on the truck driver, who never knew they were in drag. Those are rumours I heard. Sometimes they would go to funerals and carry on and sob in their black gowns.

SP: You heard of them, did you ever know what they looked like?

DB: No.

SP: Where would you hear about them?

DB: It was just sort of common gossip. I shouldn't say common but, among gay people.

SP: So, it wouldn't appear in the *Tribune*?

DB: Oh, no. Let me also state that, I don't think I would want to have known them. Today, maybe I would but, in those days no way.

SP: I want to ask you about your career, being in law. How did it effect you, being in an institution like law which may not have fought for gay rights before the 1970's? Did you feel it was something used against gay people?

DB: I guess I never felt one way or another about it. No, except we still have our laws in Minnesota that any or almost all sexual activity, even between unmarried straight couples: fornication, sodomy although it is not usually enforced. It never pains the conscience that I was breaking the law and yet I was suppose to--well, I wasn't suppose to be upholding it I suppose exactly. I wouldn't see any conflict there.

SP: Did you at some point feel that, by being a lawyer, you had some power, a little pull for gay people?

DB: No.

SP: You didn't feel that you could use your influence if people came to you and said, "Because you are a lawyer, I think you should be aware of this, you might be able to help."

DB: No.

SP: Those are all the questions that I have. Is there anything that you can think of that I didn't ask or anything you would like to elaborate on more?

DB: No, I think we have pretty much cover it all.

SP: Thank you, Mr. Bosard.

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