

## **Transcript of an Interview with Ann Hubbard**

Interviews with LGBTQ Elders completed by Keith Gemerek, Box 74

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[ ] = indicate extra information or uncertainties where scribe couldn't decipher what was said

**Keith:** It's November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004. We're recording for the Mid Atlantic's Foundation Project hosted through CEPA gallery, the elders of the gay community in Buffalo. Elder has nothing to do with age, has everything to do with in whose footsteps we follow. And Madeline Davis is here, and Jim Haynes, and Ann Hubbard.

[short pause]

**Madeline:** Good. Um, I guess the-the first question I'll ask you in kind of an open ended is, um, when did you—when and why did you uh get involved in a gay organization?

**Ann:** 'Cause there wasn't any.

**Madeline:** When was that?

**Ann:** About twelve years ago.

**Madeline:** Twelve years. And what was—

**Ann:** For Shades, if you're talking about Shades.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh, okay.

**Ann:** Yeah. About twelve years ago.

**Madeline:** How did that come about?

**Ann:** Carole Spencer suggested it.

**Madeline:** Mhm.

**Ann:** She said there was no black organizations at all—

**Madeline:** [in the background] Mhm.

**Ann:** —so we got together and tried to form Shades.

**Madeline:** Mhm.

**Ann:** That's how that got started was Carole Spencer.

**Madeline:** And, um, who was—there were other people involved in starting that, right?

**Ann:** Yes. Hilda Ramos.

**Madeline:** [softly] Oh yeah.

**Ann:** And um...well Holland Christensen, she was in there.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh. And Joan, wasn't Joan Laughlin involved in the beginning of that?

**Ann:** Uh yeah, Joan, myself, a whole bunch of us was involved. There was a lot that was involved at the time, but a lot of 'em dropped out.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** For some reason or another.

**Madeline:** Yeah, what—what kind of organization were you aiming at? What did you want it to be?

**Ann:** Well, first of all, it was a thing where we was trying to integrate a little bit, tryna' let folks know you can, you know, we could get together instead of being so separate, you know?

**Madeline:** [softly] Mhm.

**Ann:** And we've been working on that mostly. You know, because it was always—we weren't involved in anything and nobody had any place to get involved in, so we started Shades.

**Madeline:** [softly] Mhm.

**Ann:** And tried to get involved in different things in uh what was going on with other organizations, which worked out okay for a minute, but then it started fading away. But we still try.

**Madeline:** What started fading away?

**Ann:** Uh...oh trying to get folks to get involved with us.

**Madeline:** [thoughtfully] Ohhh.

**Ann:** They all do it.

**Madeline:** Why do you think that is?

**Ann:** I have no idea. I heard that one time: "Well it's all black, and no white people are in it." But I had to let folks know that that was the idea. We wanted a black thing going on to let other folks know that they could be involved with us.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** And we can be involved with them. But it worked out for a minute, and then it just stopped.

**Madeline:** So, you think that the working together with other organizations kinda was a victim of racism.

**Ann:** I don't know, but I hate to say that, but it seems like it gets—it's still there a little bit. You know, it's still there a little bit. You know 'cause I go to different things, and uh, it's still that, you know, 'Look at [inaudible],' but I'll still be there anyway, doesn't bother me.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh. You think that MOCHA, the rise of MOCHA, has helped black organizations in Buffalo?

**Ann:** I really don't know. I really don't know. 'Cause see, MOCHA, uh, has got a lot of grants and they got other people uh with money working with them.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** Which at the time, we decided—Shades has decided—we're gonna try to start something like that. In fact, I was in Eagles when they were doing things for elder gays.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** And I'm trying to get Shades to get in that. You know, do things for elder gays, you know. We uh—at the—Eagles was working with the nursing homes and etcetera, and there's a lot of gays that get sick, nobody comes to see them, or they need somebody to go to the store for you, or uh, shovel snow...Not me! [chuckles]

**Madeline:** Right, [chuckles] but somebody does.

**Ann:** Somebody to come around and see about you. 'Cause there's a lotta older gays that are really alone. Nobody hardly bothers with them anymore since they've gotten older. And then they don't want to come out, sometimes I drag some of 'em out. Get outta here.

**Madeline:** Ha!

**Ann:** We're sittin in here with uh—they get that feeling that nobody wants to bother with them.

**Madeline:** Yeah. Well, now, Eagles is more than twelve years ago.

**Ann:** No, Eagles is not that old.

**Madeline:** No?

**Ann:** No, uh-uh. Eagles is uhhh...well, I'll say about nine years ago maybe—

**Madeline:** And how—

**Ann:** —And they—they didn't do very well. It was because they went broke. You know, trying to do too big, expensive things and they didn't get too much results, either.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** You know, for some reason I find in Buffalo people seem to be very tight on spending money to do things.

**Madeline:** Mhm.

**Ann:** If you—if it's too costly, they don't come on.

**Madeline:** Do you, um, participate in the gay pride stuff, the marches and—

**Ann:** Every year.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** Every year.

**Madeline:** And when did you start doing that?

**Ann:** As soon as they started.

**Madeline:** Really?

**Ann:** Yeah, yeah.

**Madeline:** That's—that's probably, I don't know, that's 'least fourteen—

**Ann:** I don't know I can't remember how long ago it w—Oh, I don't know about fourteen years ago.

**Madeline:** I think it's '90 and '92—

**Ann:** [overlapping with Madeline] I don't know if they had it—

**Madeline:** '92 I think was the first one.

**Ann:** Yeah, well, I started—as soon as they started having them, we got into it.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** In fact, we're trying to get, uh, in touch with Roz so we can go to—so I can go [inaudible] march meetings.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** I was going to them for a while, but then I had other things to do.

**Madeline:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ann:** Trying to get in touch with Roz for that. And uh, that's about it. But I go to the parades every year. I'm in the parades. Not go. I'm in it every year.

**Madeline:** Yeah, yeah. Right.

**Ann:** Every year.

**Madeline:** You spent a lot of your life not doing that kind of thing. Not do—um, not being that kind of politically public. What—

**Ann:** There was no reason to. There was nothing going on to do that.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** [chuckles]

**Madeline:** And—

**Ann:** But nobody was doing anything.

**Madeline:** Do you remember when the Mattachine Society started?

**Ann:** No, I never heard of it.

**Madeline:** Really?

**Ann:** No, I've just heard of it in the past few years, but I didn't know anything about that at the time.

**Madeline:** It's been gone now for a number of years.

**Ann:** Yeah [incoherent mumbling].

**Madeline:** It started in 1970. But you never heard about it then?

**Ann:** No.

**Madeline:** So, it didn't get to the black community, at all?

**Ann:** No. I never heard of it.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** You know, well, I think [inaudible] black community.

**Madeline:** Why do you think that is?

**Ann:** Nobody comes and tells them. Nobody bothers. Unless I have a white friend, which I do have. They'll tell me, and then I'll pass it on.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** That's the only way to get to them.

**Madeline:** Right. So the—the bars that you went to when you were younger or maybe even now, have mostly been bars in the black community.

**Ann:** No, there isn't any. How do you mean that?

**Madeline:** No that was a question. It-it—so there-there are no bars in the black community now?

**Ann:** Well there—eh [sighs]. Yeah there's black bars! But I don't go to them—

**Madeline:** I mean gay bars.

**Ann:** No!

**Madeline:** There's no gay bars.

**Ann:** There's only one. And I don't even go there.

**Madeline:** What is that?

**Ann:** It's called—we call it The Dirty Floor, but it's uh [laughs gleefully, Madeline chuckles] it's on Dewey.

**Madeline:** [thoughtful pause] Dew—Yeah, I've heard of that!

**Ann:** [overlapping with Madeline] The Dirty Floor that's what they call it, yeah.

**Madeline:** [thoughtfully] Yeah, yeah.

**Ann:** Yeah.

**Madeline:** Near St. Mary's Home for the Deaf, down that...[inaudible] down that side street.

**Ann:** No, no, no. It's um...mmm... I can't tell you exactly where it is, but it's on Dewey.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** Can't miss it. Uh, but they're only open on weekends.

**Madeline:** Ohh, okay.

**Ann:** It's a straight bar, but on weekends, it's gay.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** You know, but I don't go there 'cause they fight too much. Too m—[incoherent word fumbling] you know, just don't go there.

**Madeline:** Do you go to-to any bars now? At this—

**Ann:** I did go to all of them, but then some of 'em are start closing up, and then there's all this new ones coming up, so I go try to see how they're like.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** 'Cause I used to go to the Lavender Door. Well, there's no more Lavender Door. I used to go to the Compton's, there's no more a Compton's.

**Madeline:** Right, right. Yeah .

**Ann:** And-and uh, then I used to go to Joey's and that's not Joey's anymore. Let's go—

**Madeline:** What's Joey's? [incoherent mumbling]

**Ann:** It used to be right over on Allen. It's called Friends now.

**Madeline:** Oh, Yeah. Yeah.

**Ann:** Yeah.

**Madeline:** [softly] Mhm.

**Ann:** It changes its name so much. Too many people come in and change the names. And I go—I used to go to all of those—it used to be Secrets, what's it called now? I don't know. [chuckles]

**Madeline:** I don't remember.

**Ann:** And then there—I hear there's another one opened up.

**Madeline:** Secret—was Secrets Cabaret?

**Ann:** Uh, I think that was—uh wait a minute. Joey's changed to Friends I think, and then Secrets...I can't remember that name. I just—it's right down the street, that [inaudible] down further.

**Madeline:** Yeah, then it's the one in the middle.

**Ann:** Yeah.

**Madeline:** That's-that's um Cabaret now.

**Ann:** Yeah, see. It used to be Secrets.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** [inaudible] They changed the names.

**Madeline:** Right. [chuckles]

**Ann:** [chuckles] I go to that one too. I go to Buddies. I go to The Underground.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** You know. I go to all of them when I go out sometimes.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** Yeah. Then I hear uh—there's a new one up on Delaware again.

**Madeline:** Oh yeah!

**Ann:** Uh, it used to be uhh...Oh, what was the name of it? They closed 'em up, but I hear they opened up again. On Delaware. Uh, down further—what was the name of them place at the time? Hmph.

**Madeline:** [softly] I don't know.

**Ann:** They changed the name so much it—

**Madeline:** Oh! Yeah, I do know. Um, it's near Chippewa. It's downtown from The Underground.

**Ann:** Yeah.

**Madeline:** Right.

**Ann:** Uh-huh.

**Madeline:** Yeah. It's on that-that curved corner where Chip was.

**Ann:** Yeah—

**Madeline:** I can't remember—Carousel it wasn't a Carousel. Um...

**Ann:** I can't remember.

**Madeline:** Yeah, I can't remember the name.

**Ann:** Yeah, well I hear that they opened again.

**Madeline:** Yeah.



**Ann:** I haven't been there yet.

**Madeline:** Right, right. Me either. But I don't—I haven't gone to bar—I used to go to the Lavender Door, but I haven't gone to bars in ages. I just don't—You know what, I can't stay up that late.

**Ann:** [snickers] Well I can. I can stay up.

**Madeline:** [chuckling lightheartedly while Anne continues laughter] I know.

**Ann:** [through laughter] I can really stay up. But [stammering through laughter] it's just I don't get out that much. Number one, it—uh, the price of liquor and stuff is so expensive. If you go out now days you got to have 60, 70 dollars in your pocket.

**Madeline:** [softly] Yeah, yeah.

**Ann:** And sometimes I'm just too cheap to give up that kind of money.

**Madeline:** [chuckles lightly]

**Ann:** I'd rather go to your house, have some drinks or whatever, and have a good time, and eat, play cards, whatever we're gonna do. Rather than spend 40, 50 dollars of uh, of shots. 4.50, or a bottle of beer is 3.50. Two 4.50's I could get a—

**Madeline:** [in the background] Yeah.

**Ann:** —six pack of beers. [laughs]

**Madeline:** Right.

**Ann:** And I—and I have friends come in town then I take them out, you know—unless something is going on, an occasion, I'll go.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** You know, but otherwise. I don't hang out there much anymore. You know, it's just too expensive.

**Madeline:** What do you think about the state of gay rights and gay politics in Buffalo?

[short pause]

**Ann:** I think it's getting a little better.

**Madeline:** Do ya?

**Ann:** Yeah. Because, see, at one time, uh, they were closing all the bars. You weren't allowed to have a gay bar.

**Madeline:** When was that?

**Ann:** It was against the law.

**Madeline:** [repeating] When was that?

**Ann:** Uhh...ohh...way back...in the days of...offf...[soft incoherent mumbling]. I'd say in the 60—early 60s. You couldn't keep a gay bar open. They would close it.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** It was against the law—

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** —For a gay person to have—be in a public bar. So therefore, they'd be open for a while and then next thing you know, it closed, and people would move to a different part, and as soon as you got used to going to that, they came and closed it.

**Madeline:** And why would they close it? Who would cl—it was—it was the cops, of course.

**Ann:** Oh, yes. Cops were terrible.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** Yeah.

**Madeline:** 'Cause you know before that, like in the 50's, the bars stayed open longer. Um, and I think because the cops took bribes. And when they stopped being able to take bribes [chuckles while speaking] then they started closing the bars.

**Ann:** I don't know anything about that.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** All I know is, when I did start going to some that it was always a problem. The police was always there. They was either jumping on somebody or closing it down.

**Madeline:** [in the background] Mhm.

**Ann:** I don't know if the police closed it down or why. All I know is, next thing you know, they're closed.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** They couldn't keep it. Now you can have a gay bar no problem. That's the big difference.

**Madeline:** And then, gay people didn't own the bars. They were straight—they were owned by straight people mostly.

**Ann:** I don't know anything about that either.

**Madeline:** Yeah

**Ann:** No, I don't know.

**Madeline:** There was the time I think of the Havana Casino and the Jazz Center. Remember—

**Ann:** But the Havana Casino uh, it's a-it was a thing like, if the person might own the, uh, the license, but they would lease it to somebody else. If they leased it, anybody can get the lease.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** But if they found out that you had leased it, they closed it. If they found out it was gay, n—you can do that. You can lease a license.

**Madeline:** Ohhh.

**Ann:** The person has a bar and they gonna close up if they keep the—their liquor license, you can lease that.

**Madeline:** Huh.

**Ann:** Yeah.

**Madeline:** Never knew that.

**Ann:** Yeah, yeah. [short pause] So I don't know...

**Madeline:** When they were doing that, closing the bars all the time, did you ever think or did you ever talk to friends about what could be done about it?

**Ann:** No—

**Madeline:** Did you ever—

**Ann:** —No 'cause at the time I—uh I really—it didn't bother me 'cause I was going to all kinds of bars. So then one certain bar didn't bother me at the time.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh. Yeah.

**Ann:** They had too many bars back then that you could go for entrainment, not whether it was gay or not, not like, uh, certain bars of entertainment a lot of time allow a [inaudible] I didn't worry too much about—

**Madeline:** [in the background, softly] Yeah

**Ann:** —what it was. You know.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** I was just out there having a good time. So, I really didn't care if I went to a gay bar. If it's closed, well let's go [inaudible] here.

**Madeline:** What was the place on Jefferson, um, that had jazz? Uh...a big—it was a big bar.

**Ann:** Pine Groves?

**Madeline:** Yeah, yeah. Pine Groves.

**Ann:** That's the spot everybody went to, gay and everybody went there.

**Madeline:** Yeah, we all—and then around the corner, the Revalot.

**Ann:** Yeah, yeah. [sniffles] Everybody went there.

**Madeline:** [in the background, softly] Mhm.

**Ann:** So, you didn't worry too much [inaudible], you know. Then there was uh, on Michigan and William was um—I should have remembered the name of that—

**Madeline:** Oh...j-yeah—it was j—uh...

**Ann:** —Ooh...Jack Schaefer and them ran that place. Uh-uh...

**Madeline:** It was Dan Montgomery's wife who uh—

**Ann:** No, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about a corner of Michigan and William where all the entertainers came and put on shows, [inaudible] shows and everything.

**Madeline:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ann:** Shay Madison and all that stuff.

**Madeline:** [mumbling thoughtfully to herself, incoherent]

**Ann:** What was the name of that place? Now that makes me mad.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** 'Cause I used to go there all the time. 'Cause there's entertainment—

**Madeline:** And it burned, didn't it?

**Ann:** No, it's still there. In fact—in fact the, um, Musicians Club was gonna go move in there, and they never did. They was going to leave Broadway—they never did, and now it's all closed up and the building is still there. I hate it that—what was the name of that place. Man, that makes me—

**Madeline:** [sympathetically] Yeah, I can't remember either.

**Ann:** [frustratingly] Mm!

**Madeline:** But I remember the place, and we were in the—

**Ann:** Right on the corner—

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** —of Michigan and William.

**Madeline:** When-when we were gonna have a party for the book, we were gonna have it there. And then something happened, like, I don't know, they had a fire in the kitchen or some-some sort of thing [trails off].

**Ann:** Oh, that was in Montgomery's up the street—

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** —That was uh, the Little Harlem Hotel.

**Madeline:** That's right!

**Ann:** Little Harlem!

**Madeline:** You're not talking about that.

**Ann:** No!

**Madeline:** Ohh, okay. I thought you meant—

**Ann:** Up fur-up fur—past that. That's uh, that's not on Michigan and William anyway.

**Madeline:** Okay.

**Ann:** This sat on the corner. It was well-known. Because all the top artists went there.

**Madeline:** I don't know it.

**Ann:** Uhhh...Jack Schaefer ran it. I'd have to call—I bet I can call [inaudible] downstairs [inaudible].

**Madeline:** [chuckles softly]

**Ann:** Uhhhhhhh....[mumbling dialogue to self, incoherent] That makes me mad. When I want to think of something, and it doesn't come to me.

**Madeline:** [chuckles]

**Ann:** It was—that's where I used to go there all the time. Because there was always somebody coming in. Everybody who was any type of person s—entertainer came there all times. And they had uh [inaudible] and a band and all that stuff.

**Madeline:** When was the first time that you heard of people trying to do something to—you know, to stop the cops from closing bars or make life better for gay people here. Do you know how—

**Ann:** I didn't hear of it, just all a sudden it started happening. Next thing I knew, a bar was opening, they were closed.

**Madeline:** Huh.

**Ann:** It just happened. All of a sudden. How it happened, I really don't—then again, I wasn't in Buffalo constantly at all times anyways. Uh, I was in Toronto. I moved to Montreal, I moved to New York City—

**Madeline:** [thoughtfully] Ahh.

**Ann:** And so therefore I wasn't constantly in Buffalo.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** I left several times.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** And I come back—when I came back, then that's when I found out that the bars were staying open, and how that happened I could not tell you.

**Madeline:** Right, and there were people that were talking to the police and negotiating and—

**Ann:** I don't know.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** I couldn't tell you that. When I came back from New York City is when I found the change, and that was in the 60s—'67, '68.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** [mumbling softly] Somewhere along there. That's when I noticed that bars that were open—and then they hadn't—they weren't closing. 'Cause they're gone now, but at the time—

**Madeline:** [in the background] Yeah.

**Ann:** —Nobody was coming in to close 'em.

**Madeline:** Right.

**Ann:** They was staying open no problem—

**Madeline:** Longer.

**Ann:** —at the time. 'Cause at one time you—uh it was terrible, you know.

**Madeline:** But—

**Ann:** And then they'd start bothering people the way they were dressing. 'Cause they started bothering you the way you were dressing, you know.

**Madeline:** Now what was that stuff about tr—you know I heard that thing about, you had to wear three pieces of—

**Ann:** Oh, yes! Yes.

**Madeline:** What was that?

**Ann:** It was all about the gay women that dressed in men's clothes. They had to have at least two pieces of feminine clothes on, and the guys had to have at least three pieces of clothes on under their—whatever they were wearing. In drag, they better have on two, three pieces of clothing. And if you didn't, they [inaudible], they arrest you, if you didn't have it on.

**Madeline:** And now how—I mean like, if a woman wore women's underpants and a bra—

**Ann:** [at the same time] And a bra. That was okay.

**Madeline:** —How'd they find out? I mean they—

**Ann:** 'Cause they took her to jail a-and made her undress. You got arrested. A-and-and they didn't know what you was, they probably beat you. And then when they got on top they'd find out what you was. Some of the times they knew anyway.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** They just did it to be doing it. And the same thing with the fellas.

**Madeline:** [softly] Yeah.

**Ann:** They did the same thing. [inaudible] in Albany [inaudible], I know they killed one guy in Albany, beat him to death.

**Madeline:** [softly] Uh-huh.

**Ann:** Albany wasn't much better either. I just suddenly—stopped. How did it happen? I don't know. Who did it? How it happened? I have no idea. Because I haven't been constantly living in Buffalo. I have moved out of Buffalo several times. I ended up coming back. You know, every time I came back there was some kind of change. Who did it? How they did it? I have no idea.

**Madeline:** Mhm.

**Ann:** I really don't know.

**Madeline:** So, your first involvement in an organization was the beginning of Shades?

**Ann:** Yes.

**Madeline:** To really do...

**Ann:** To try to do something, yes.

**Madeline:** Mhm.

**Ann:** M'yeah. It was the first time.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** Yes, it was. I said: "That sounds good. Okay, let's do it." So, I started trying to get involved in Shades. Well fact, when they first started, I-I've been with them ever since.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh. And you were president at one time?

**Ann:** At one time, yes.

**Madeline:** [at the same time] yes.

**Ann:** Yeah. Now I'm vice president.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh. And are you doing umm, you're having—are you having any social stuff? 'Cause I remember you used to down in Hamlin House.

**Ann:** Yes, we're still having—we're still trying to be the first ones to have the gay pride dance.

**Madeline:** Ohh, are you?

**Ann:** We like to start the gay pride mo-month off with that, but now we're trying to get into some different things, and um, not quite sure what it's gonna be. Like jazz, different outings. We're trying to find us something entirely different to do now. You know? I guess a little political uh maybe. You know. We're trying to make a change.

**Madeline:** [softly] Yeah. You know, some of the people that have been really, really anti-gay and very vocal about it have been some of the black ministers.

**Ann:** Oh, well, they're always going to be like that. [burst into laughter]

**Madeline:** You think?



**Ann:** [stammering] Uh, some people try to uh—uh who was that? I don't remember. Wanted to have a gay something at a black church and we told them, never happen. Those gay ministers are definitely no-no's. That's the way they are.

**Madeline:** Yeah, it's—I've heard some of them talk about gay stuff and it just seems like for them it's a horror story.

**Ann:** [passionately] Mmhmm. I don't know of any black church—'cause gay people go to these churches. They go to them.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** Some of them play the piano. Some of them in the choir.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** You know. But you just can't go to them and say: "We want to have this gay such and such thing here." [inaudible] Oh no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

**Madeline:** Well what if you're just an individual and you sing in the choir and—would you be able to tell the minister that you were gay?

**Ann:** I don't know, because I haven't been in a choir and I don't [laughs] know anything about that.

**Madeline:** [chuckles]

**Ann:** I just know that some of the guys and girls that I do know are gay—

**Madeline:** Mhm.

**Ann:** —and that when I go to church sometimes, some of them play the piano, and some of them are in the choir.

**Madeline:** Mhm.

**Ann:** And that's all I could tell you about that.

**Madeline:** But there—

**Ann:** There was one grape— uh grape, oh my goodness. There was one, uh, gay gospel group, and when they found out that that group was gay, they no longer let them sing in their churches. They would go different places and sing, when they found out they were gay people, some churches would not allow.

**Madeline:** Wowww.

**Ann:** Yeah, that's the way they are.

**Madeline:** Was it all men, or all women?

**Ann:** No! It was mixed. I'm trying to think of the name of it because I never heard them sing.

**Madeline:** [softly] Uh-huh.

**Ann:** And um...[short pause] I may not have mentioned the group anyway. But anyway, [chuckles] they're gay. And when these churches found out that they were gay people, they just definitely closed them out—don't let them come to their churches. 'Cause some churches have different groups come in—

**Madeline:** [in the background] Yeah.

**Ann:** —and have what they call programs. They have two, three, five gospel groups, or four gospel groups—some gospel groups from out of town. But if they find out you're gay, you're not invited anymore.

**Madeline:** Has anybody from Shades thought about approaching any of these ministers to try and change their minds?

**Ann:** [inaudible] I would probably lose my religion if I did. [laughs] They would probably make me mad. [continues laughter]

**Madeline:** [chuckles]

**Ann:** I'll tell you the truth. Not really. That's a thought, though.

**Madeline:** Nobody wants to tackle that. It's a tough one.

**Ann:** Oh, very tough. [laughs heartily] You just don't know how tough it would be. I don't think so.

**Madeline:** I remember Jim—Jim told me a story about this uh rabbi in Buffalo who said to a group of people, there are no gay Jews.

**Ann:** [scoffs] Huh!

**Madeline:** There are no gay Jews. And Jim said well it will be interesting to-to tell the president of our organization that, because she's a lesbian and she's Jewish.

**Ann:** I don't know why that is, but that's the way they are.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** Oh yes, most definitely. In fact, one of them was on TV here recently talking about he said he didn't like women who said they didn't need a man in their life because they had to be lesbians. [laughs]

**Madeline:** [jokingly] Ohh. That's how you can tell.

**Ann:** [continues laughter] Mhm. You had to be lesbian. One was supposed to do this, that, and the other. So, nuh-uh. Mm-mm. You know, they don't like that [inaudible]. They can take care of themselves. Well if you hear that, according to this minister, you are a lesbian.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh, okay. You know, they're—they have so much influence, minsters. I mean they—from the time you're a little kid, you hear what they have to say, and I don't know.

**Ann:** Well I went to too many different types of religions. And I'm like this, ummm, I don't pick any as my religion. I like a little bit of all of 'em. But you know, I—so I just—I like different things in different religions.

**Madeline:** Have you tried anything other than Christian religions?

**Ann:** At one time I-I-I [inaudible] and I've been in that. You know, well I wasn't in it, but I was interested in it.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** Different things, yeah. I just—I read up on it and certain things I liked. I had to go to a uh Catholic school, my parents sent me to a private school.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** And it was Catholic. And the whole day I got tired—my knees got tired. [laughs heartily]

**Madeline:** [laughs]

**Ann:** [through laughter] I said when is this standing up thing gonna start [inaudible]. [continues laughter]

**Madeline:** [continues laughing]

**Ann:** 'Cause I wasn't accustomed to that. But there was certain things in the Catholic religion that I uh—that I liked.

**Madeline:** Like what?

**Ann:** Well I [inaudible] when they say anything you do is a sin. If you overeat, if you over drink. [sniffles] You don't pay your bills. If—you know, things like that. I do—I go along with them. That to me, that is [inaudible] oh you're rich you better go do something else with it then hey, you know, certain things like that. I agree with that. Take care of your business first, and what's left have a good time. You know, certain things like that.

**Madeline:** Did they ever say anything in the Catholic church about gay people or—

**Ann:** I never heard it. Well, and see, at that time I was going to private school.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** And I was uh—it was a high school, so I guess [laughing] if they was talking about that then.

**Madeline:** They probably weren't.

**Ann:** Nuh-uh.

**Madeline:** They probably weren't.

**Ann:** Not back then. [continues laughter]

**Madeline:** Right. They were doing it, though.

**Ann:** Well, uh-huh. [chuckles]

**Madeline:** They just weren't talking about it.

**Ann:** [through laughter] They just weren't talking about it.

**Madeline:** [softly] Right, right.

**Ann:** No—I don't know. At that time, I didn't know too much about gay life at that time. I was in high school, and I went to this private school in Rock Castle, Virginia, called St. Francis de Sales.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** So that's—

**Madeline:** That's funny I lived on-on—near Humboldt Parkway.

**Ann:** Uh-huh.

**Madeline:** Right near St. Francis de Sales.

**Ann:** This was in Rock Castle, Virginia. This was in Virginia.

**Madeline:** Yeah, I know, but it's interesting.

**Ann:** That was my first time going to the south before it was integrated.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** You know, and I was a doozy down there 'cause I wasn't used to that. [laughs]

**Madeline:** You were used to being integrated in the North?

**Ann:** Well in Cleveland, yeah. I could sit where I wanted to. I wasn't accustomed to, uh, front seats white and the back seats black.

**Madeline:** How did that—

**Ann:** And colored water and white water... Oh no, I wasn't having that. [laughs]

**Madeline:** So, you were pretty political even as a high school kid?

**Ann:** [incoherent mumbling through laughter] Always was defiant.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** Yes, indeed.

**Madeline:** Right.

**Ann:** I couldn't understand that. And the first time I went to Florida, and we stopped some place, and I had to drink some colored water, and it tasted terrible, so I went around to the front, drank me some white water. It was nice and cool. The guy just looked at me, didn't say a word. But I was defiant. I just could not. Nuh-uh. I wasn't allowed—I was in Daytona Beach, Florida. I wasn't allowed to try on any clothes. I had to buy 'em off the hangers. I wouldn't buy. I wasn't allowed to wear shorts in the publ—uh, downtown. We couldn't wear shorts.

**Madeline:** Why? Could white kids wear shorts?

**Ann:** Oh please, big ones lookin' like that but I'll bite you too. [laughs]

**Madeline:** [quietly] Jeez. [chuckles]

**Ann:** Rolls of fat. They was walking around in shorts, but we couldn't wear shorts.

**Madeline:** Wow!

**Ann:** Yeah, I went through all that. And didn't like it. In fact, I used to work at Kresge's by the Tinson store, my first job in Cleveland, and I was in umm—Huh! I was down in Florida and, uh, they took me—"Let's stop and get something to eat," and the lady said, "Oh no, you can't do that." I said, "Why not? I used to work for Kresge's!" "Oh no, you're not allowed to eat in there." I said, "Well, did you ever try?" [laughs] She snatched me out of the store.

**Madeline:** So, where did you go?

**Ann:** Uh, we didn't go—we went back home. But I was gonna go sit down and see about why I couldn't eat a hamburger [mumbling] Kresge's by the Tinson Store. So, I guess I always have been politically, uh, defiant in some kind of—I just didn't understand it.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** I don't know. And it made me angry.

**Madeline:** Of course.

**Ann:** Yeah. I didn't know anything about it really. I never forget one of the—we were going to St. Francis de Sales. My dad took me down there, and we had to catch a bus, and that's when I first saw the white seat—the white in the front and the black—it was so small. It-it didn't care how many black people got on that bus or streetcar, you had to crowd behind it. Sometimes there was no place to sit, but you still had to pack yourself back there. And uh, I got on the streetcar and the front—I didn't pay attention to white and black, so I sat down in the first seat, and my father just snatched me on the back of my collar and lifted me up. And this black man was sittin' in the back, he looked at me like this. I said, "What is he doing?" He said, "Get your behind back there in the back!" I said, "For what? All of this is empty up here." He said, "Just get back there!" And he had to explain it to me. He said, "You're going to find a change when you get down here."

**Madeline:** And what was your reaction?

**Ann:** Mad. I didn't like it at all. I didn't like the idea you had to be packed in like sardines. You couldn't sit down, and you didn't have that many seats to sit in. And they didn't care how many got on there, you better crowd your behind behind that uh—in the black area.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh. How are we doing chief?

[noises in the background, man enters room and has brief, unclear dialogue with Madeline]

**Ann:** Oh okay.

**Madeline:** Yeah, it's great stuff. It's great stuff.

**Ann:** Oh, really?

**Madeline:** Um, yeah. I think your history is so interesting. You know, all the stuff that you told us for the book, and you know, and this stuff about-different kinds of politics, you know. People-people are—act politically even though they don't think they are. You know, when you get mad 'cause you have to sit in the back of the bus, it spurs you to start acting—

**Ann:** It stayed on me.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** It stayed on me. You know, and, um, I just didn't like it. In fact, I didn't understand it anyways 'cause I wasn't raised that way, and then I was in Cleveland. I didn't see any of that.

**Madeline:** Mhm.

**Ann:** So, I didn't understand it, number one.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** I didn't think anything like that was going on.

**Madeline:** Yeah. When you came to Buffalo and-and you became gay over a period of time whatever, um, were you comfortable going to the white bars?

**Ann:** Didn't bother me at all.

**Madeline:** And were they fine with you?

**Ann:** No, they would give me a hard time, but I didn't care.

**Madeline:** [shocked] Really?!

**Ann:** I'd stick my head over there and keep steppin' while like, uh, if you get to the door you had to have three or four IDs of proof of age.

**Madeline:** But only for black people?

**Ann:** Yeah.

**Madeline:** [thoughtfully] Uh-huh.

**Ann:** And I performed so bad one time that it was—some friends of mine pulled me away. But then a lot—that's when we started filing suits against these places. We started filing suits.

**Madeline:** You did?!

**Ann:** Oh yeah. We started filing suits against them—against them.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** And then, uh, same thing with the...what's this—they just opened up, used to be down at the waterfront. It had all these seafood dinners and whatnot.

**Madeline:** Not the Hatch.

**Ann:** No, no, no. What's the name of it? They just opened up a new place. They did the same thing. We started filing suits. People would start filing suits.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** Because it didn't make sense that we had to have three or four IDs, and like you said, and let all the white kids come on in, come in. They get to me: ID. Then I always kept my ID.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** Driver's license, plus my birth certificate, but I had to have another one. For what? Why did I have to have three IDs?

**Madeline:** Right, right. Oh...

**Ann:** Yeah, going through that. At the time when these bars were open, oh yeah, they gave us a hard time. And then, in fact, it was nice when they'd try to tell us we couldn't come in, but I got in anyway. [mumbles and laughs heartily]

**Madeline:** [laughs] Um, what were the years that that happened?

**Ann:** [mumbling thoughtfully] You keep putting years on things...

**Madeline:** I know, I know.

**Ann:** I'll say in, um, the 70s.

**Madeline:** Yeah. Still.

**Ann:** Yeah.

**Madeline:** Still going on.

**Ann:** Yeah, ever since 70s.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** I can't think of any of the bar that was right on Main Street. Great big place.

**Madeline:** Uhh...Granny Good—uh, Granny Goodness was down there, um...

**Ann:** Big Daddy's.

**Madeline:** Big Daddy's, right.

**Ann:** Those bars would tell us, all these attitudes and whatnot.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** Then they got to know me, then they wouldn't bother me.

**Madeline:** Right.

**Ann:** "Oh hi" and... [laughs heartily]

**Madeline:** Well, I mean, over the years, everybody knew who Ann Hubbard was.

**Ann:** Right, it got to that point because I—I don't know what I did. I would just go and: "Hey my name is Anne. Hi, baby. How you doing sweet thing?" And they cut the talkin' trash.

**Madeline:** Right.

**Ann:** And it—so overtime got accepted and then became friends.



**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** And then it got to the point where: “Here’s Ann, let her in.”

**Madeline:** But they still did it to other people?

**Ann:** Oh yeah. If you got to be known, then they would slowwly let you in.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** But uh—majority of the times, no. You had to have IDs.

**Madeline:** Wow.

**Ann:** But then I had friends I would come with.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** With some white friends, then they couldn’t give you any problems: “Come on! She’s with us!” “Oh, okay.” So, nothing was said.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann.** No, nothing was said then.

**Madeline:** Wow.

**Ann:** But if I came by myself it would be a different story. If a group of black kids came alone, then it would be a different problem. If you came with a white person, it was okay. Because you was somebody white.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** But if you came with a different type of group, then it was IDs.

**Madeline:** Mhm.

**Ann:** Yeah.

**Madeline:** So, you—you started being uppity. [chuckles]

**Ann:** No, I would just—I would just say, “Hmph, I’m going in there.”

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** And I had my three IDs and step in there. And I don’t know, I guess I’ve always been easy at making friends. And I can always tell when somebody really doesn’t want to be bothered. So, I would just say, “oh you poor thing,” and keep on going.

**Madeline:** [softly] Uh-huh.

**Ann:** And then, I've been to parties and say, uh, "whatchu doing?" and—one day this guy asked me one time—I was way out, and he said, "What are you doing in redneck neigh—uhh, country?" I said, "Was there any difference?" He didn't answer. What's the difference? He just turned his head. He didn't say anything to me.

**Madeline:** So, you're probably—your boldness, intimidated people, and—

**Ann:** Maybe so.

**Madeline:** —they didn't have an answer for you, you know.

**Ann:** No, I guess not. I don't know, I just—I guess I've always been like—I've never had too much of a problem. I just said if you didn't try—step your foot in anyway. But be proud, but don't be obnoxious.

**Madeline:** Yeah, right.

**Ann:** Don't be nasty. You know. I guess, maybe me, I just never had too much of a problem. Maybe I'm fortunate. You know. Maybe I'm fortunate. I can't say.

**Madeline:** Well I think it's—I think it's more than luck. I think it's, yeah—I think it's a particular kind of bravery.

**Ann:** I guess it's where I be tall and they say the way you carry yourself sometimes when you really step up in your statue, the way you carry yourself, that a person—[chuckles].

**Madeline:** Nobody's gonna mess with you.

**Ann:** Yeah, nobody bothers me.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** I stand up—I try to stand up tall.

**Madeline:** Yeah. You do.

**Ann:** 'Cause I am tall. So, I try to stand tall.

**Madeline:** Uh-huh.

**Ann:** [chuckles] Yeah. And well, probably.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** When I feel like it. [chuckles]

**Madeline:** Right. And people can feel that. I mean, see it and feel it.

**Ann:** [overlapping with Madeline] Yeah, the charisma. Yeah, yeah.

**Madeline:** [softly] Yeah.

**Ann:** And then I smile: “Hello, sweetheart. How are you doing?”

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** Whether you like it or not, I keep talking: “Oh, you having a bad day?” Then keep going.

**Madeline:** Yeah. That’s great.

**Ann:** Mhm.

**Madeline:** Well this is great stuff, Ann. I really appreciate you doing this.

**Ann:** [timidly] Okay...

**Madeline:** We’ll just take your picture and let you know when—if there’s either going to be a show or a book or a whatever this turns into.

**Ann:** Okay.

**Madeline:** It’ll probably be a show.

**Ann:** Where’s it gonna be?

**Madeline:** Down at the CEPA gallery. Um...

**Ann:** Where is that?

**Madeline:** Uh—uh what is—you know the Market Arcade movies?

**Ann:** Yup.

**Madeline:** It’s right there.

**Ann:** Really?

**Madeline:** Yeah. Upstairs. Right next door.

**Ann:** I’ve been learning new places, and I didn’t even know they exist.

**Madeline:** Yeah. We’ll let you know, um, when-when it—when there’s a show. It’ll probably not be until spring, ’cause there’s a lot of stuff to, you know—

**Ann:** Okay.

**Madeline:** —transcribe and all of that.

**Ann:** Yeah, because see, we're gonna try to get us a grant going so we can get somethings started.

**Madeline:** Good.

**Ann:** Really. We're thinking about getting into something slightly politically.

**Madeline:** Right. Go after those ministers, man. [chuckles]

**Ann:** Girlfriend, please. I don't know—

**Madeline:** They influence children, you know, and children grow up feeling like crap and—

**Ann:** [stammering] You know, I'd hate to go to one of those churches and have it come out of his mouth like that because they probably throw me out because I stand up and talk about it real big—in a nice ladylike way. But see, the thing that bothers me is that some of those ministers are ex-gay guys! [laughs]

**Madeline:** Yeah, yeah.

**Ann:** [laughter intensifies]

**Madeline:** Or they're gay on the side.

**Ann:** Oh—oh heyyy can we talk! And some of them are child abusers, they mess with children.

**Madeline:** Yeah.

**Ann:** You know? They're not all that, [mumbling] you know.

Interview Ends

Keywords: Shades, MOCHA, CEPA, Eagles, gay bars, Buffalo bar scene, segregation, racism

Bar Names: The Dirty Floor, The Lavender Door, Compton's After Dark, Secrets, Cabaret, Joey's, Friends, The Little Harlem Hotel, Big Daddy's, Granny Goodness, Pine Grove, Revalot

Key names: Ann Hubbard, Madeline Davis, Carol Spencer, Ann Hubbard, Hilda Ramos, Holland Christensen, Joan Laughlin

## Summary

In this interview, Madeline Davis sits down with Ann Hubbard to discuss her role as a political activist in the gay community. Starting with her involvement in Shades, an organization which Ann says was born out of the desire to integrate the LGBT community, Ann reveals that lingering racism is likely to blame for failed community partnerships. Madeline and Ann also discuss the rocky history of gay bars in Buffalo, leading Ann to disclose how her friendly, confident persona enables her to hold her own in the face of discriminatory policies. Lastly, Ann discusses her faith and the black church and gets to the root of her defiant nature as she recalls the anger that she felt as child when she experienced segregation for the first time.