

**LGBT Center of Central PA History Project
Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections**

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/>

Documents Online

Title: LGBT Oral History: James Tompkins

Date: March 26, 2017

Location: LGBT Oral History – Tompkins, James - 113

Contact:

Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

Interviewee: James Tompkins

Interviewer: Kailey Zengo

Videographer: Amanda Donoghue

Date of Interview: March 26, 2017

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

Transcriber: Amanda Donoghue

Abstract:

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

KZ: Now it's rolling. Okay, so. Okay, so today is March 26 and we are here interviewing James Tompkins for the LGBTQ History Project of Central Pennsylvania. I am the interviewer, Kailey Zengo and we are ready to start, right?

JT: Yeah.

KZ: Okay, so, can you tell me a little bit about yourself, like from an early age, where you grew up and what your family life was like?

JT: I grew up on a 90 acre chicken farm down in southern Pennsylvania, near the Maryland line, around Stewartstown area. It's actually, it was called (??? 00:42) most people wouldn't even know where that is nowadays, it was dirt roads, those roads are all paved and developments, you know it used to be rolling 90 acres of just fields, no nothing.

KZ: Did you grow up with any siblings, or...

JT: Yeah, one brother and there was three children to the first marriage, my mom was married before. Divorced and remarried and had me and my brother, yeah.

KZ: And you all lived out on the farm?

JT: Yeah. There was five kids.

KZ: And were you working on the farm or were you going to school at that point, or...

JT: Oh, well I was only probably five, six, seven then. I wasn't really...I was running around on the farm I wasn't working [laughs] really.

KZ: And you grew up there your whole life?

JT: No, moved one other time and that was to like a smaller farm down in Airville Pennsylvania.

KZ: Okay. And so where did you go to high school?

JT: Kennerdell [PA], and then Votech, York Votech [PA].

KZ: And did you go to college after that? Or start to work?

JT: I went to a technical institute after that for like drafting and design.

KZ: And what was your time like there?

JT: I don't know, just. It was right before computerize started hitting drafting. Yeah.

KZ: And so when you were at school there were you working at all, or...

JT: Yeah, well I was working in the post office. Had a job with the post office... Well I graduated at 17 was in the post office at 18 years old.

KZ: And that was your, you worked there for a while?

JT: Over 20 years.

KZ: Wow. And you mentioned earlier you were an artist, so how did you start, first start to get into that?

JT: It's always been there, just finally evolved into actually, I don't know, I guess being serious. Website and actually selling and setting up at festivals and you know the whole bit, stuff in galleries, random here and there.

KZ: And when did that start?

JT: Probably the 90s sometime. Like early 90s I would say.

KZ: And how did you first get involved with that?

JT: I was doing it anyway, just a hobby that turned into more.

KZ: What kind of works specifically do you do with that?

JT: I don't paint, I'll just say that right off. I'm not painting like everybody, seems like you say the word artist and you paint, and it's not that. I've done that when I was younger but not now. Mostly custom-made jewelry, belt buckles, some sculpture, I guess you'd call it mixed media if you had to, but a little bit of whatever, somebody commissions me for it I'll do it.

KZ: So the stuff that you mentioned was put in galleries during the 90s, where was that work showcased?

JT: In the 90s? I don't think I had there was anything in the galleries in the 90s. York hadn't evolved into the little arty land like it is now, it wasn't there yet. But...I had an antique shop at one time so I would sit there and do that and be downtown there, and that's kind of how it started so I was kind of selling stuff right there.

KZ: Yeah.

JT: And...hm. That's a good question. Hm. Set up at art festivals, you know. Now there's more galleries. You know it's 2017 there's more galleries downtown. York. I have stuff over at Ironic right now that's a gallery.

KZ: Cool. And the art festivals, how did you get involved with that?

JT: [shrugs] Just researched it and did it, I don't know. Set up down at a visionary art museum before and (??? 5:07) in the city here and up in Harrisburg...Whatever, you know, was going on.

KZ: Yeah, and did you get then like a customer base off that and then people would start asking you to do stuff for them?

JT: Yeah, off it, yeah, yeah, some. Some comes from that. Some of it was just off the website, like that stuff, but...Probably some more at a festival like that. I do craft things, I mean like around Christmas there's local galleries here that have you know special Christmas things. And during the summer, you know, whatever. It's intermittent.

KZ: And the majority of that work is like jewelry and belt buckles?

JT: Yeah, it's mostly that. Whatever I feel like making, I don't know. I made a picture frame the other week and that's way off base. I jump around. You know. I don't want to be known for like wood burning, but I'll go in a phase where I just do that. I'm mostly known for like turquoise and stuff like that I worked with that more than anything. As far as stones, but...Yeah some of it's like upcycled stuff.

KZ: Cool. And...Sorry, I lost my train of thought. You mentioned before that you had organized a photography, or you were taking pictures here or at your home or something along those lines? You had a photoshoot set up?

JT: There was, there was photographers that were set up that I worked with here. They used the house they wanted to do steampunk shoots.

KZ: Woah.

JT: So, you know, they wanted an authentic Victorian backdrop for that and it's fun. Did that a couple times.

KZ: Can you tell me a little more about that?

JT: There's been some models in here, I won't say what they were not wearing, cause they weren't. [laughs] For some artists that do that type of photography.

KZ: Mhm. And that was primarily taken at your home, where we are today?

JT: Yeah, yeah.

KZ: And can you expand on that a little bit? Like what that entailed or the people who were here, the kind of work...

JT: [laughs] It was fun, it was some of it was like [laughs] almost like campy stuff a couple of the pictures were. They were... You know we had a drag queen with some makeup artists, the kitchen was crazy, there was lighting and all this craziness. You know the backdrop things and all that, whatever they are those light things. Look like umbrellas and all that. It was fun, that kind of stuff. [laughs] You had guys in here two or three hours trying to make up this woman so she would look perfect for this stuff. She was dressed up more like tacky 50s almost like divine type craziness. Something you'd see on those funny cards.

KZ: Yeah.

JT: Yeah, it was a fun shoot. She's out in Oregon now I guess, she was out in San Francisco for a while and now she's out there.

KZ: And this is the photographer?

JT: No, one of the models. Photographer's still around here.

KZ: And what was the shoot for?

JT: Just... Mostly probably for her career, I bet, I would say. Cause she was a tattoo artist so, I don't know.

KZ: She was marketing herself?

JT: Yeah and so was the photographer. And I would make custom jewelry for it, it was kind of like campy stuff they were... It was kind of crazy.

KZ: And so by campy you mean like over-exaggeration?

JT: Yeah.

KZ: And so were these friends of yours, that you had worked with previously?

JT: Yeah, they were friends. The one guy actually worked with, well not worked. They used to have these photoshoot things at Club Excess, believe it or not, when it was still in York. You'd

go up and pay and they would take pictures of you and your boyfriend or you and your girlfriend, you know all that blehlehle. You know, for so much, just things they did.

KZ: And what is Club Excess?

JT: Well, it was a gay bar here in York but it's not here anymore. So... It's gone, there's nothing here now.

KZ: And did you frequent that a lot? Like during what time period did people go...

JT: Oh boy, you've got me thinking back here.

KZ: [laughs] Putting you on the spot a little bit.

JT: I don't remember exactly when they closed. It's been a while. It's been what probably eight years, ten? Eight? Okay... I mean it was, seems like it's been a long time.

KZ: And so was there like a large community of LGBTQ individuals that would frequent there?

JT: Yeah.

KZ: And why did it shut down?

JT: [laughs] Boy how honest should I be here?

KZ: As, we've had all discussions so as honest as you want to be is fine cause we have heard it all.

JT: Well that's in northern regional police district, they're not the most gay friendly area in this area, and it's more like a residential commercial strip mall area, I mean it's not a lot of houses houses, like down here, but I always felt like the police had nothing better to do so they focused on the gay bar.

KZ: That's unfortunate.

JT: Do you know what I mean, you know cause they had no one else to pick on or bother or whatever. They would even park at the end of the parking lot down there and wait for all the people to come out just to get them for DUIs and try to, you know...

KZ: So was there a lot of like, harassment? Or was it more, they tried to play it under the radar, kind of?

JT: Probably under the radar, more.

KZ: Did you ever experience any of that first hand, or friends of?

JT: I didn't, it was mostly the younger people that got in trouble, not me really.

KZ: Like the younger members of the community that would...

JT: Yeah I mean stupid, people think they're going to get in underaged or something, you know.

KZ: Oh, okay. That's interesting. So the police just basically intimidated them out of business almost? Or...

JT: Kinda, yeah. Just looking for something, anything. Trying to get the liquor license out of the way for them. Saying it was a nuisance bar.

KZ: And are there other bars in the area, or?

JT: There's no bars here at all anymore. It's 2017 today, no. Nothing. Atland's Ranch was the last bar.

KZ: And it was...

JT: That one had been there 30 years or more, it was historical gay bar of York and... There was a time in York we had five bars, so I don't, I really wonder if we went ahead or back. You know, blame some of that technology, the internet, dating sites, all that crap. Cause before, the bar was, you're meeting at day church so that was kind of your church, that's where you met people, socialized. There was no community centers.

KZ: And so, how did you, have you formed an LGBTQ community in this area without the gay bar being present?

JT: I was involved in, oh my god there was York support, there was a lot of different ones. I was around the first hospice was here in the 80s.

KZ: Can you tell me a little bit about that?

JT: With Joy Ufema, organized all of that over on Duke Street here.

KZ: And who's Joe Ufema?

JT: Joy.

KZ: Joy, Joy.

JT: Joy...Ufema... God I'm not sure how you spell it, it's one of those weird names. U-F-E-M-A, I'm hoping. I don't know. Cause they had the quilt up here not long ago, like last fall or something, I don't remember. And, yeah. She was involved with that.

KZ: And what was your relationship to her?

JT: We were just friends. I was a caregiver, you know. What they called a buddy or caregiver.

KZ: And what was the first group that you mentioned, the support group. What was that?

JT: Used to be called York Support, it was a gay and lesbian group. Way back, they used to meet and just like picnics and stuff and went bowling and stuff like that.

KZ: During what period was that?

JT: Hmm... That was probably 70s through the 80s, somewhere in there.

KZ: Did that have any relation to the Lavender Letter?

JT: That was around there then, yeah.

KZ: I'm doing research on the Lavender Letter, so I was just wondering.

JT: Lavender Letter was around then. They were handing out the same time, like flyers, yeah.

KZ: So did you ever see any of those letters or go to events that they sponsored or anything?

JT: The Lavender Letter? God I can't remember, some of that was Lancaster, I think it was out of Lancaster more than here. So I probably wouldn't. I used to go to the church over...oh boy, I can't think of the damn name of that little town on the way to Lancaster, over there. Mountville. Mountville, there's a gay church. I used to go to that.

KZ: What was it called?

JT: I think it's still there but I don't know. I'm not sure right now...It was what I used to...yeah. It was gay, whatever that acronym for gay church, I can't remember.

AD: Was it the MCC [Metropolitan Community Church]?

JT: Yeah it was the MCC but it was in Mountville, in that small town over there. It, I don't know. I used to go to that at one point. I mostly went to Baltimore [MD] more than anywhere though, cause there was more to do, more different people to meet. When I was younger I did anyway. If you grew up on a farm down in southern York county and you know you come out in like 1976, you want to go to the bigger city, you're not going to come up here in redneck land where people are going to try and start shit, you want to stay away from that. You want to go where there's more going on and more culture, wasn't here. [laughs] At that point, not in the 70s.

AD: I'm going to stop, it's at like one minute.

KZ: Okay.

[video 1 stops]

AD: Yeah I started it.

JT: Yeah and the newspapers are still upstairs from it. I'm right on the front. It's funny.

KZ: So, you just mentioned the gay ordinance, do you want to talk about that?

JT: When York, you know we were trying to get a gay ordinance, get protections for the gay lesbians blah blah blah. They, of course they couldn't handle the word trans, you know that still has trouble today, but you can't have that word in there and that's the only way we could get it pushed through, you know. They can deal with gay and lesbian but nobody could deal beyond that and just nobody could deal with it. And it's like that now. They were still saying "sexual preference" and they didn't even know how ignorant they were, talking to them and it's like are you kidding me? You know, you got up and decided that was the preference that day. It's that easy, do you want coffee or tea you know, don't work that way. Yeah they ended up protesting there, and that was actually, yeah, Bill Althouse was a republican mayor and it was his last term and ironically a republican mayor was the one who pushed it through, not a democrat, believe it or not. And a democrat committee (??? 1:13) in the city for years here and that's ironic cause you would thought it would be the other way around. But I think he had relatives, you know. He knew what was the right thing to do and if you're on your last term in office you aren't going to be really, it's not going to hurt your career either.

KZ: So what time period was that? Sorry.

JT: Oh boy... I'm guessing it's the 90s, early 90s. Probably '89, '90, '91, in there somewhere. I'm assuming. Boy. [nods head slowly] Probably in the early 90s somewhere, in the 90s.

KZ: And was there any other activism going on at that time, like pushing any other legislation? Or any other things that you were involved with in that regard?

JT: Not here in York, really. It was mostly Harrisburg and higher up. Yeah.

KZ: And you were living in York?

JT: Yeah. Because I mean I think I moved here in '89, I grew up in the country but I moved into the city in '89 and had two apartments in between there and blah blah blah, and so that's how I could figure out when that was, cause I wouldn't have been living downtown, had to be probably 90s.

KZ: And were you living with like friends or family during that time?

JT: What here? No I bought this house and still in the same house. Since '89.

KZ: Wow. That's amazing. So you mentioned briefly before coming out in the late 70s, and '76 I think you said? So who was it, your family that you first came out to? Friends, coworkers?

JT: I came out to my family first, really.

KZ: And what was that like?

JT: I decided to sit them on down at the kitchen table, and...god, it's like it was yesterday. And just my mom and my dad and just sat there and...My dad goes "Oh, just go on like there ain't nothing wrong with you anyway." And I'm like oh god, thanks a lot. I didn't say nothing. My mom was like "Oh we love you anyway," she did that love you anyway no matter what, you know. But dad was like, he didn't know what at all, where was that, what that meant. Did it mean like oh well you're screwed up but just keep getting up and doing whatever you're gonna do and I'm like okay. Not sure I'll take that. [laughs] But that's southern York county.

KZ: And what about your siblings, were they present during that?

JT: No.

KZ: Did you ever come out to them, eventually?

JT: Well my brother, yeah. My brother probably figured it out anyway, I don't know. It's pretty, well, obviously this is 2017 York County voted for Trump that should tell you something, I grew up in that area. I don't know if stuff really changed that much, did it? From '76 to now?

KZ: We'd like to think.

JT: Well, I want to think that...I mean, I don't know.

KZ: And are you still in contact with any family members?

JT: Not really. Not really. Well all, the siblings to my mom's first marriage they all died. They're all dead. They were a lot older than me. And my brother, I haven't seen him in a long time. I have one brother alive, but we don't hardly ever see each other, I mean, when our...

KZ: So just backtracking a little bit more, to when we were talking about the bars and you briefly had mentioned two other ones, I think it was the Railroad...

JT: Railroad House, over in Marietta [PA]. Everybody used to go there. And you had the Altland's Ranch. Altland's Ranch, Railroad House, Jenny's was in West York, that was a bar. Town Tavern. Even the Stockade was like gay-friendly. [??? 5:50] It was all that. There was that much to do. Now, I guess I assume it's cause it's I guess technology or what but... I almost liked it better when there was bars. Then this internet crap. Don't I sound like an old man now? I think people, you know, people sat down and talked to each other, and it was a little more personal than somebody texting or trying to hook up on stupid hook up sites or something. Yeah, you can't trust, you don't know what the hell's going on on that.

KZ: So can you tell us how those gay bars became like such prominent gay bars in this area? Like where did they start off that way or did they kind of develop in that?

JT: Some of them had always been there, I mean since like the 70s. They were there. You know they didn't have a big sign out front you know "we're a gay bar," but you know what they were they didn't hide what they were, but. I remember at the 14 Karat that was on West Martin street there at [??? 6:53]. They used to, they used to walk past the front door and throw bricks at it and stuff, yeah here in York, it was crazy. You'd be sitting in there and then there's the "Oh we'll kill you you fucking faggots," that kind of stuff. And, yeah it was... The cops really worked with the gay community then. They really weren't, nobody, you know. It wasn't a problem that way. They weren't, as far as downtown, you know. But there was idiots out there. I'm sure there's gay bashings they just weren't never reported as gay bashings, you never heard about it.

KZ: So you found during that time the police were more on your side than they were in the recent years like you had mentioned?

JT: Well... [laughs] Well that was Excess, these bars were downtown back in the 70s, 80s, you know. The ones I just, you know, said. Nobody really bothered anybody, there's no reason to, really. But there's always those idiots who do something. It wasn't, the police weren't after the bar, it wasn't like that. The police didn't care about the bar unless somebody had to call for the bar there was no reason, they didn't have time to care in the city. Excess was outside the city, that's a different area Mhm.

KZ: So how did, I know you mentioned everyone just kind of knew that these bars were gay bars, but like was that articulated by just the people that were going there? Or was there a forum that was like...

JT: I'm trying to think, I guess it might've been... What were the... Oh that's a good question. [sighs] There was, I'm trying to think what flyers there was then, you know you said about Lavender Letter but there was other ones, there was other stuff. Mostly at the church, and stuff. Oh well you could get like Philly Gay News was in there and Baltimore but that was it, at that time, I'm talking 70s 80s there wasn't I don't think Harrisburg had anything. Lancaster didn't, you know it was the bigger cities as it always is.

KZ: Mhm. But the church would promote like going to these bars?

JT: Well, you know there'd be flyers, you could get flyers to know what was going on, yeah. Yeah.

KZ: And what was the church called? That was in York?

JT: No, no it's over in Mountville. MCC Mountville. I assume it's still there, I don't know.

KZ: And how did you get involved with the church initially?

JT: Started going. I don't know. I thought it would be a way to meet people, I don't know.

KZ: Did you grow up going to church? Or...

JT: Yeah, yeah. I grew up Presbyterian. And if I had to put a label on myself I'm probably Unitarian if anything, really. Spiritual, whatever.

KZ: Something in between.

JT: More or less how you treat people in the end. Not what religion you are, but. That's basically what Unitarian is, basically.

KZ: Mhm. And you mentioned prior to the interview some involvement with militant activism, I believe?

JT: Well, back in... Oh boy, when was that? In the 80s, yeah, oh yeah. Early 90s, 80s, 90s, yeah. I had a partner that was supposedly dying of AIDS a hundred times but kept surviving, now he's a long term survivor, we're not together anymore but... You know still on good terms and stuff, but we used to go to the quilt in DC, went to two or three of them. But Act Up was around back then, okay, so I... I still have the shirt, you know, you lay down in front of the federal courthouse and you're spray painting around people, you know. It was fun. Those days. Just to get the [throws hands up] drugs released. So that was probably as militant, if it was militant, but you know it was peaceful protest, we just laid there and tried to...you know. There wasn't nobody throwing bricks or anything. Usually it was somebody else throwing them. But that was probably the...Further I ever really got like that.

KZ: And how did you initially get involved with Act Up, just being with this partner?

JT: I would, well, I was going to bars in Baltimore and stuff so you had Baltimore Gay News, all those, you know, Baltimore and DC had everything, they were organized. And that kind of stuff was already organized, like not really underground but, you know. They knew they were going to do it. Just people sometimes, just like nowadays, you would get a group in a van or carpool down and do it. To protest. That's just what you did. It's not much different than what's going on now.

KZ: Exactly. So...

JT: But there was no internet. It was more word of mouth and newspapers and meeting in a church or some organization or... That kind of stuff, it wasn't... You might have had email but there wasn't Facebook or none of that crap going on.

KZ: So could you just briefly explain to just like what the AIDS quilt was, like what its purpose was?

JT: Just a memorial to all the people that were lost. It's funny I'm, there it is, there's the main project magnet from it [points off screen], I knew it was there somewhere, down in that corner [points again] that's it, believe it or not. [laughs]

KZ: Oh wow, that's amazing.

JT: I thought there was a couple in there somewhere. I don't know. [mumbles inaudibly and laughs] But, whatever.

KZ: So activism when you were with Act Up in DC when you would go down, what did that entail, specifically?

JT: It was just people meeting somewhere and protesting, it really wasn't, that's what it was, you know. I heard about it when I was in Baltimore and I thought shoot, I'm going. Yeah.

KZ: And you went down and was it mostly like picketing, or was it like, different...

JT: It was picketing, it was different levels of activism, you know there were people who laid down who were spray painted around in front of the courthouse, you know, just protesting up on the top steps there in front of, you know, there wasn't really anybody violent or anything. There might have been some religious wackos down in there corner there somewhere yelling at themselves, but nobody was paying attention to them. Nobody gave a damn about them. [laughs] Really. Just laughed at them.

KZ: And what was the spray paint for, when people were laying down?

JT: That was, they just laid down and spray painted around so it left an image of like a dead body,

KZ: To symbolize

JT: Cause people were dying and they were not releasing the drugs, we couldn't get them. So it was just, you know, kind of like if you do that today if they're trying to get rid of your health care, to get the message across, you know, it's just ridiculous.

KZ: So besides from your one partner that you had talked about were any of your other friends at the time affected by AIDS?

JT: Yeah there was a lot, in the 80s there were so many people just dying all the time. I was mostly around hanging out in Baltimore then but it was ridiculous, totally, can't even... Oh god. Can't even imagine. What it was like. Cause you'd go, you had certain people you'd go down and like on the weekend or stay there and by the next weekend somebody you talked to in the bar is dead, you don't even know it. It just went, snowballed. You never know. It actually brought the gay community together. In a weird sense. And lesbians too. Gay and lesbians came together there. You know, feminism didn't separate yet then, because everybody was so against us as a whole group [laughs] and there was a lot of lesbians there was gay nurses that came out of the woodwork. Cause nobody else was doing nothing. The government wasn't, no one was.

KZ: And did you find that once, in the 80s Reagan like started to talk about it, like the FDA [Food and Drug Administration], did the rhetoric around this change? Or was it still like a negative narrative?

JT: There was still... Things changed eventually but I wonder even nowadays if it's even really, should have been cured a long time ago. I could just sit here and say all kinds of stuff like conspiracy theories or something crazy but... You can't, they're never going to prove it, but I think if they really wanted one there'd be one, a long time ago.

KZ: Mhm, well they had one.

JT: It's too much money in keeping people sick. [laughs]

KZ: Yeah, well they even had one-

JT: Even now. [laughs] And that was, you see it was a gay white male disease. They started it, right? It was not going to get into any of the other communities, you know it didn't exist, cause nobody else had sex, just gay white men. That's the only people that were having sex, you know. No one else did, right? And then you get this, that stupid idea of African bullshit [laughs] and some steward, some airline steward created it or something, oh my god. You used to hear the dumbest stuff. Which maybe there was a patient one or whatever, it could've been, but what the hell does it matter at that point? Looking back, what the hell does it matter now? We're still not, you know, they may have, what is it "prep" and everything, that may slow it down and stop the transference of it but it's still, there's, it's not gone, there's not a vaccine so it's still here.

KZ: And what was, prep was the pill that you could take, correct?

JT: No prep is now what they're doing in the last 10 years, god, I don't know all the names of these drugs, I mean I don't know. I'm still negative so I don't have to, I didn't have to take any of those drugs. But the drug, he might now, the one that is in prep is the one that was created over the years for people with AIDS, got rid of the viral and you know, so guys that are negative are still negative. Now, you take it to keep from transference, you know. But. And that comes down to if you had the money to get it, it does. You know. I tried, I couldn't get it. I don't have the money, I mean even with the... Oh my. Even with my insurance and that drug companies' card with their, you know, thing that gave you so much off, it still would've been over a hundred dollars. And me with a limited income retired... Who can afford this. And you know, on top of regular insurance it's just ridiculous. So there is prep and there is that so-called, it's not a cure it's just something that you know, maybe stops the spread as bad, but it's not a guarantee and there's still STD's, blah blah blah, no I sound like somebody who's trying to sell prep, but I'm not. I often wondered if it would make gay men more promiscuous, if that was, it might just work the other way and then STD's would start floating, and not AIDS but it would shift, but, I even got told I was crazy for saying that. But, I think I probably know men [laughs] better than some people think. Yeah, I can remember saying that in a meeting one time, and somebody just jumped on me like blelelele.

KZ: So you went to meetings about AIDS?

JT: No I went to meetings about the prep part and that kind of stuff. I checked into it. I went to the Gay and Lesbian Center. Went up there off and on for years. Known Barry Loveland for years. Friends with him, I used to work with Tom his partner at the post office in Harrisburg.

KZ: Wow, wow. And so-

JT: We're all still alive. [laughs] Those three are. I don't know. Tom's an artist.

KZ: Awesome. Um, do you think we missed anything, or anything you want to touch upon?

JT: I don't know.

KZ: Do you have any final questions?

JT: I went through what they really, I've been through what all they wanted, I don't know.

KZ: Yeah, I think we covered. It was amazing to hear your story, and everything. So, thank you for this experience.

JT: I did make some good art out of this experience, believe me.

KZ: That's awesome. We usually just ask all the interviewees if they want to donate anything to the LGBTQ History Project, if you have anything. You know, you mentioned that you have a t shirt from Act Up, but if there's anything along those lines...

JT: I have a bunch of them. I'm sure somebody's donated Silence Death shirts before.

KZ: Well if you think of anything-

JT: With the upside-down triangle. I don't know. There's 14 Karat t-shirts in the bar up there that I saw at a thrift store, like three or four years ago. And I had gone up to Harrisburg, in the summer I go up there to you know go to Midtown and all that. Even make art on the street and sell it, stuff like that. And I put that shirt back upstairs somewhere and I don't know where it is now but there is a 14 Karat t-shirt from the bar that I plan on donating and there's even match packs, pens...

KZ: Well if you find anything...

JT: There's a bunch of little things like that. From this area. You already got plenty of stuff from the gay ordinance being passed.

KZ: Yeah, that would be amazing.

JT: That's up in the file cabinet there. I mean I don't know if anybody's given that stuff up or not.

KZ: I don't know either but I do know that more is better, so but you said you're friends with Barry so if you find anything, whether it's today or tomorrow or in a month, however long-

JT: Oh I'll figure it out. Since it's getting warmer I'll get up there. I'll just, whatever.

KZ: Yeah! Well, thank you again for taking your time, and I think we're good. Okay, you can unstrap your mic.