Oral History Interview with Dianne Dugaw and Amanda Powell

Interview conducted on July 11, 2018

By Professor Judith Raiskin, UO Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Linda J. Long, Curator of Manuscripts, UO Special Collections and University Archives, UO Libraries

For

The Eugene Lesbian Oral History Project

Amanda Powell and Dianne Dugaw in 1990

Amanda Powell and Dianne Dugaw on July 11, 2018

Recorded in the University of Oregon Libraries

Preface

This is an ongoing community-engaged oral history project. Linda J. Long, Curator of Manuscripts in the University of Oregon Libraries, and Professor Judith Raiskin of the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department at the University of Oregon, conducted video interviews with eighty-three narrators in the summers of 2018 and 2019. The interviews were held in the UO Libraries' recording studio. This collection includes the video interviews and the bound and on-line transcripts. Associated with the interviews are materials collected from the narrators, including photographs, diaries, flyers, business records, letters, posters, buttons, and T-shirts that document the businesses, organizations, and cultural and political activities discussed in the interviews. These collections will be made available separately as individual archival collections and can be searched and retrieved using the Library's Online Catalog.

In the 1960s-1990s hundreds of lesbian-identified women came to Eugene, Oregon from across the United States. These women founded cornerstone organizations central to Eugene's history and influenced Oregon's political landscape. They created and worked in collective businesses, ran printing presses, and founded cultural organizations (theater companies and dance troupes, music bands and choirs) and gathered in lesbian cultural spaces (book stores, martial arts studios, restaurants, bars, and softball teams). They became leaders of Eugene community service agencies and worked in City and State government positions. A number were instrumental in leading important legal challenges of discriminatory policies at the county and state levels regarding employment and housing protections, benefits, lesbian and gay adoption, and marriage equality. Those who came to study or teach at the University of Oregon were influential in making institutional change protecting the rights of lesbians and gay men.

The artist Tee Corinne, whose papers and photographs also reside in the University of Oregon Special Collections, asserted, "The lack of a publicly accessible history is a devastating form of oppression; lesbians face it constantly." The Eugene Lesbian Oral History Project seeks to preserve a specific and vibrant history that otherwise is lost. This collection of interviews captures a range of engaging and important stories that reveal new angles on lesbian history, women's history, the counterculture movement in the 1960s-1980s, Oregon history, feminism, sexuality, intentional communities, and women working in jobs reserved for men. Looking back over twenty-five - fifty years, the narrators reflect on the complex relationship of individual aspirations and larger social

movements in times of dramatic historical change. Many of the narrators have retired and continue to be involved in vibrant artistic, scientific and political work.

Abstracts

Interview conducted on July 11, 2018

Dianne Dugaw was born in Seattle, the oldest of twelve children. She was raised in a rural area of Cowlitz Prairie, Washington, where her family had a cattle and horse ranch, and her father was a country doctor. Her family was devout Catholic, and Dianne attended a small Catholic mission school from first grade through high school. Her family was socially and politically conservative. From the time she started school, she had an uneasy sense of not fitting either of the two gender categories. She discusses rural Pacific Northwest culture. As she got older, she felt confusion about her sexuality. After high school, Dianne became a nun in the Franciscan order, and was in the novitiate for three years. She discusses Franciscan theology. As a nun, in the late 1960s she attended the University of San Francisco and spent time in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, a few blocks away. She decided not to take vows, and instead finished college at the University of Portland. She went to graduate school at the University of Colorado in music, then to UCLA for a Ph.D. in folklore and English. While on a faculty fellowship at Harvard, Dianne met Powell:, and fell in love. She describes the negotiations (including a job for Amanda) to come to the University of Oregon. They talk about being out lesbians at the UO. Dianne discusses the nature of homophobic reactions. She also talks about rejection by her family ostensibly because of politics. She and Amanda discuss the anti-gay political ballot measures and their efforts with other faculty to promote awareness of LGBTQ concerns on campus. They discuss gay marriage and their various civil unions and marriages with each other on the road to state and federal legal marriage. Dianne and Amanda conclude their interview by discussing aging and healthcare.

Additional subjects: Alcoholism; Alley, Henry, 1945; Bars (Drinking establishments); Brand, Myles; Catholicism; Closeted gays -- United States; Coming out (sexual orientation); Counterculture -- California, Northern; Disowned by family; Douglas, Sarah; Drug use; Farwell, Marilyn R.; Franciscan sisters; Marriage equality; Ryan, Cheyney, 1948-; Sheklow, Sally; Springfield (Or); University of Oregon. Department of English; University of Oregon. Task Force on Lesbian and Gay Concerns; Vetri, Dominick R.; Wood, Mary Elene

Amanda Powell was born in Boston in 1955 and grew up in the Boston area. She is the oldest of three children. She went to a girls' high school, which was formative for her. Although her home life was troubled, there was a lot of support for education. Amanda discusses negative aspects of the culture of the 1950s. Amanda describes a very disturbing dream she had when she was a child, which indicated her subconscious understanding of the suppression of women in society. Amanda discusses a correlation between growing up gay and the ability to develop critical thinking. She discusses her bourgeoning sexual awareness as a teenager. She managed to make her way to nearby Cambridge, where she located the offices of the Daughters of Bilitis. The women there were welcoming. At this time, she recognized she was a lesbian, but had no idea how to act on that. After high school, Amanda went to Yale. She discusses her experiences there, the sex roles she was supposed to meet, and the pressure in that masculinist environment to fit gender stereotypes. Eventually, with the support of lesbians and gay men on campus, she came out. She graduated in 1977. She met her partner, Dianne Dugaw, in Boston. Love and a job brought her to Eugene with Dianne. She and Dianne discuss the spousal hire process at the University of Oregon. They discuss being out lesbians at the UO. She and Dianne discuss the anti-gay political ballot measures. They discuss their efforts with other faculty to promote awareness of LGBTQ concerns on campus. They discuss gay marriage and their various civil unions and marriages with each other on the road to state and federal legal marriage. Amanda and Dianne conclude their interview by discussing aging and healthcare.

Additional subjects: Alcoholism; Ballot Measure 9; Brand, Myles; Concord Academy; Douglas, Sarah; Farwell, Marilyn R.; Marriage equality; Chauncey, George; Ryan, Cheyney, 1948- ; Springfield (Or); Wood, Mary Elene; University of Oregon. Task Force on Lesbian and Gay Concerns.

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Long: This interview is part of the Eugene Lesbian Oral History Project. The recordings will be made available through the University of Oregon Libraries' Special Collections and University Archives. This is an oral history interview with Dianne Dugaw and Amanda Powell on July 11, 2018 taking place in the University of Oregon Libraries' recording studio in the Center for Media and Educational Technologies. The interviewers are Linda Long, Curator of Manuscripts in the UO Libraries' Special Collections and University Archives and Professor Judith Raiskin of the UO Department of Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies. Amanda, please let us know if you agree to be recorded for this project and that you give your permission to the university to preserve and make available your recorded and transcribed interview.

Powell: I do.

Long: Okay. Thank you. And Dianne, please let us know if you agree.

Dugaw: I agree.

Long: Thank you.

Dugaw: Thank you.

Long: We thought we'd start out just with some basic questions. So should we start out with Amanda? If you could tell us where you were born, where you grew up in something about your early background.

Powell: I was born in The Boston Lying-In Hospital for Women, which was the maternity hospital in Boston, in 1955, and grew up largely mostly in that area in the Boston area. I'm oldest of three kids in my little nuclear explosive family, and Dianne and I were talking about our experience prior to this interview and one of the things that we realized that we have in common that I had never thought about was in relation to our feelings about women's only space and lesbian community and early experiences with attempts or the enthusiasm for lesbian gatherings and lesbian space was that we both went to girls' high schools. So we had an experience of that in different ways. So I grew up in a family where I like Elizabeth Warren, the US Senator's phrase about the ragged, bottom edge of the middle class. My parents were from working-class backgrounds, but very upwardly mobile and as members of the intelligensia. And they both went to college and education was all-important. So I was a reader and I'm a good student and there was

a lot of family trouble. But also a lot of support for education and I was a scholarship kid at a really good girls' high school and that was a great start for a lot of what I wanted to do.

Long: Yeah. Thank you. How about you, Dianne?

Dugaw: Well, I'm the oldest of twelve children and I was born in Seattle, Washington and I was raised in this very rural place called Cowlitz Prairie, which is south of Chehalis, Washington. It's a little bit west of Mount St. Helens. And my dad was the only doctor in the south half of the County, so he went on house calls in a very old fashioned way and we had— it was a little ranch, so we had horses. First we had sheep, then we had cattle and I went to school at a Catholic mission school from first grade through high school. And the high school part, well, it was very small. There were eight kids in my eighth-grade graduation class and the grade school had three rooms and the high school had about six. The school was the high school was for all girls. And we lived across the field from the school. So, we walked to school and then we also were— it was a Catholic school and my parents were very, very strongly Catholic. We went to church every day and so Catholicism was really important as was the school. And my parents were— my dad just read all the time, so we had a lot of emphasis on books and stuff. And I learned to read when I was about three, my mother taught me and then I taught my younger siblings. Anyway, it was an interesting way to grow up. And also it was very strongly influenced by these Franciscan nuns who very independent. So

when I graduated from high school, the smartest girls in the high school would become nuns.

And so I became a nun. And so I was a nun for three years in the Bay Area and then I also taught music at a Catholic school in Portland. Then I did some of my first few years of college as a nun, and then I left and went to San Francisco in the summer of '69, I guess it was, or '68. I also I went to USF as a nun and so I hung out in the Haight District and it was kind of a relief because they thought that was no weirder than anyone else.

Powell: In full habit.

Dugaw: In full habit. Yeah. So it was great. So, I left and then I finished college at the University of Portland and then went on to graduate school in different— University of Colorado for music, UCLA for folklore and English lit, those kind of things.

Long: What order were you in?

Dugaw: I was in Franciscan order and the priests at our mission church were also Franciscans. So it was kind of Franciscan theology, which still is useful. I mean, it was a little bit like an early modern upbringing on the prairie. And then I went into the Middle Ages.

Long: Did you— just for clarification, were you a novitiate?

Dugaw: Yes, I finished the novitiate, so it was three years I finished the novitiate, but then decided not to take my vows.

Long: Okay.

Raiskin: What did you know of yourselves around your sexuality growing up? What was the environment for thinking about that when your childhood and young adulthood? Either of you.

Dugaw: Well, I really identified something that was queer when I was really young, like seven, eight. I also— was interesting that my family, they were extremely conservative and right-wing, but also growing up in the country, there's just a way that you just pick up bales of hay and stuff. And I also loved sports and my dad encouraged me, so I was the oldest and, and I kind of identified with him. And so I wanted to be a football player and it was really interesting that eventually I was sort of expelled from the family over politics in the early '70s. But I remember for when I was about nine or ten for Christmas, I wanted a football outfit and they gave it to— Santa Claus brought a football outfit. And I was kind of in charge of the football in our neighborhood, which meant out in the sheep field with me and Jimmy, my best friend and my little brother Danny. That was two people would be the offense and one person would be the defense. And it was kind of like that. But anyway, so I had a sense of myself— when I went to school, it was a shock to see this division between boys and girls.

I kind of wrestled with that uncomfortably. So then when I was about nine, I just completely became in love with my piano teacher Sister Marie Celine, she was just awesome. And also I really was entranced by the music. So I just played the piano all the time. And

I think I was kind of uncomfortable with the way that school was organized. So, I actually played the piano through recess to avoid going to recess and stuff. And so that was a big influence I think for— I mean, there was just a way that the idea of being in a women's context was not strange or there was just— and there was a kind of capability about— even my mother who could have run a small country— so there was some kind of— and there was a resilience about being on that little prairie and the way that rural Pacific Northwest culture works. There's some really interesting way that being queer in a rural context is— in a way it's restrictive, in another way, people were— everybody went to church and I don't know, there was just a way of absorbing weird diversities in a way that was sort of like the early modern era, I think or the way I picture it. There was a way of absorbing diversities and watching cows and horses and sheep and rabbits get on with each other.

And if you're paying attention, it's not completely strange to picture things queer if you're really paying attention. But also then once I got older because of the political sort of charge to it, it wasn't okay. I felt shame, guilt, confusion, you know, not nothing I was told helped me think about how to identify in any way. So that's what the early upbringing was. And then I think I wanted to go to San Francisco. I did not want to go back. I was afraid of going back to the prairie and also it was interesting, my parents, neither of them actually went to college. So that was another reason for going into the convent because my dad went and became a doctor sort of through the GI bill, not, he didn't really— and my mother, they

couldn't afford college, so she became a nurse. So they were very educated, but they were educated not in the way of my being able to picture how you exactly went to college from that prairie.

Long: I'm starting to imagine what it might have been like in your household with so many children. You must have been your mother's helper with the other children as they came along.

Dugaw: Oh, yes.

Long: And it must have been time consuming.

Dugaw: Yeah, it was time consuming and it was interesting. It was sort of like growing up in the army or something I suppose, or but, like I remember bottle-feeding my brother who's seven years younger than I am, so I was seven and he was being bottle fed. I mean, I remembered that. So childcare was part of it and we had these animals and also it was very organized. When we got enough kids, we started out with croquet and then we had to switch to baseball and then we had to go to volleyball as there came more and more people and also—

Powell: Charts for everything.

Dugaw: Yeah, we had charts. We had upstairs cleaning charts and barn charts and yard charts. And it was really organized and some people, older kids were in charge of younger kids and getting their socks on and getting to church on time. And it was very organized and in a way it was interestingly diverse because the other thing is

that my parents brought in people, so some of my siblings are adopted and became multi-racial and exchange students from South America and kids from the school who didn't have a place to go at Christmas. So it became— it had an interestingly variable diversity to the family, underneath this very sort of paradoxically totalitarian structure.

Raiskin: From the prairie to the city.

Powell: Well, yeah, I'm kind of a suburban-easter, but and then part of the time was small town on the North shore of Boston. The young people should know the 1950s were a terrible time. It was just a terrible time. Gender roles were so segregated. I mean, it's just so oppositional and defined and it was absurd and we were going to fit in with the, not just the middle class, but the upper-middle class. So, I had the white gloves experience and the little hats and a special voice that I was supposed to use and for important occasions and fit in. And I remember from where we lived, I must've been about seven or eight and I had braids and I remember being in front of the mirror and pulling my braids back and thinking I could be a boy. All the boys had crew cuts then and the girls had long hair. But what's the difference? It was like that old poster where the two kids are, "Oh, that explains the difference in our salaries." It was just, "What is the difference here?" There's no difference. My best, best friends were girls, but my best friends were boys, and we played cops and robbers, cowboys and Indians. I had braids, I was always the Indian, but we palled around.

So that's an experience I remember as important. I remember a dream I had in that same place when I was seven or eight . No, I was, at the most and my mother and I were in a place by a lake and there was a sort of a ceremonial space that was a sort of a boathouse also and there were these young women in white robes and there was chanting and there was an older woman guiding them. And it was very beautiful and very solemn, but creepy. And they were walking down to the lake and they were walking on into the lake and they just kept walking into the lake and they went under the water.

And I said, "Why are they doing that?" And they were dressed in these beautiful white, long gowns and, and it was very deeply distressing. And the older woman said, "Because that is what they're supposed to do. That's what they are here for." And so those were some early flags that I was thinking, this doesn't make any sense. A lot of things didn't make any sense. And it's very, very useful to be a young queer person as far as developing a capacity for critical thinking. So as we all know, because a lot of things that they're telling you simply aren't true and don't make any sense. And, but as far as what I had to go on, I mean, I was slow to develop, so I didn't start explicitly and knowledgeably falling in love with women or other girls until I was about fifteen. So by that time there was a tiny bit of a context for it, by about 1969, '70 maybe. And, but what I knew was the diaries of Anais Nin and that she had gone out dancing with June. I mean, there wasn't much.

And I had Mary Barnard's translations of Sappho. That was pretty much what I— there was talk and somehow I got myself— at that point I was in high school at this girl's school, but at the girl's school was anyone talking about lesbianism? "No." And, I got myself into Cambridge, Massachusetts, and I went to the Daughters of Bilitis organization. And now I know how those women must have felt when it's like, "Oh, we've got a live one," when this young fifteen year-old turns up, but I just wanted to find out about it. They were so nice and I—

Raiskin: How old were they?

Powell: They were really old, I mean, I don't know if they were twenty or forty, I don't know. They were really old. They were grownups. There was a poster and it was two women kissing and the caption was, "Oh, do not call me mirror." The idea being— the thing I remember was so awful about the 1950s in the early '60s was, I mean the rigid roles for people, but the psychology where there was something really— and women's psyches were so fraught and there was always trouble lurking. And if you questioned anything and the movies that reflected that and I think that poster was about the idea that, how could you— about homo-sexuality and how could you be loving someone who's the same as you, that there's no difference. It's a failure to individualize and properly go through your different Freudian cycles.

Anyway, so then I had crushes. I had an early— my first boyfriend, I really had a crush on his mother and in fact his whole family, but I

really, especially his mother and then when I really fell for— I never know where to say girl or woman— a girl at school. I remember sitting late at the kitchen table at my house and because I was not a boarding student, I was a day student. Which is slightly lower class and thinking, "Oh, well I must be a lesbian. Oh, I see. I'm a lesbian." And I went on having boyfriends because I didn't know how to *do* being a lesbian, but I thought I must be a lesbian.

Raiskin: How did you feel about that?

Powell: Well, my very first feeling was just like relief, like clear. "Oh, I see. I'm a lesbian." After that, it was a lot murkier because I didn't know how to do it, but right then the fresh thought was good, it was like, "Oh, I get it."

Long: How old were you again?

Powell: About fifteen.

Raiskin: Fifteen?

Powell: Yeah. So there was that. I started reading all the, I mean, I guess I read everything I could find by women. And then when I went to college and there weren't any women's studies classes, but there were elsewhere, then I started organizing for women's studies and just taking every course on women that I could and—

Raiskin: And where was that?

Powell: Yale. And I became aware that I was having— that it was easier to have— if you had a boyfriend— well, that was it. So I went from a girl's school to Yale in the very first years of women having been admitted. So women were a real minority. I thought it was more interesting and it would be a good contrast, but it was a terrible place for me. But I did have wonderful friends and wonderful, some wonderful professors when the few women that were teaching women's studies courses and— it was easier to have a boyfriend— that took care of that. That slot was filled and you could present the boyfriend, but so that was hard on the boyfriends. It wasn't fair. And I wasn't very good at it until— and then when I was in college I started coming out finally after the last I gave it the college try and then I gave up with heterosexuality and came out and because I'd been already going and spending all my time at the women's center and already going to the meetings of the fledgling lesbian group and they just said, we've been waiting for you. Oh, good. Welcome. And going to the bar.

Long: What year was that?

Powell: I graduated in 1977. So, 1976. Yeah. So that some more familiar profile of lesbian coming out and so forth.

Raiskin: And what brought you both to Oregon or into Eugene?

Powell: I always say love and a job.

Dugaw: Yes. Well, I had been, I finished at UCLA and then I had been teaching at the University of Colorado and then I had a faculty

fellowship to teach and do research at Harvard. And that was when I met Amanda and we fell in love, really. I mean, I had been with women since high school really, sexually, and then I was kind of trying to sort it out and I didn't have as much information as you would in the city. I sort of was trying to figure it out on my own. But by the time I went to Harvard, I had been— the closet was a big part of my experience with women. And by the time I had been sort of in that closety way known as a lesbian to some people, but not others when I was at Colorado, but I wasn't with a person, a woman, wasn't with a partner or spouse. But then when I was getting really sick of the closet, and so actually when I went to Harvard, I just decided I was going to be out about being lesbian/queer whatever— the whole thing. And I also was never quite sure how to think about it. But anyway, I was there. We fell in love. I had been teaching at Colorado and I thought— I had a book at Cambridge, I had a bunch of articles.

Powell: Cambridge University Press.

Dugaw: Cambridge University Press and I thought they were being a little slow about the tenure deal and also I—took me so— I had such a hard time finding a job that I kind of every fall applied for jobs just to see what was happening, including fellowships and such. But anyway, so, but the Colorado— I had training at UCLA that was really clearly both early modern eighteenth century British culture and literature and Anglo-American folklore, British and American folklore and Colorado didn't have a program. Also, I'm from this

part of the world. So I had always had this sense in my career that I wanted to have an actual folklore program to work with students and have not just the occasional class. So anyway, so there was a job that came up and also I was just in the habit of— and I thought I wasn't going up for tenure soon enough or one thing would be either. And so I applied for a job and I actually got a few interviews, but I was interviewed here and it was a good fit, I think because of the Folklore Program here.

And also I think there were other reasons that I was a candidate that a kind of fractured department might be able to agree upon. So anyway, I came out and I did the whole job interview thing. And in the course of the interview I was asked "Is there anything that if we don't do it, you won't come here?" And it was, and I was like, "Excuse me?" And it was at that point that the then department head said, "Well, this is where you can talk about who you'll be discussing coming to Oregon with." This was about February, I guess, of 1990. So it was early in the history of that kind of thing. And so— and we were really madly in love and trying to figure out what in the world was going to happen—

Powell: Madly and newly in love.

Dugaw: And somewhat newly in love.

Raiskin: Can we back up one moment? Where did you meet and how did that happen?

Powell: We met when Dianne arrived at Harvard for a yearlong— she had a research and teaching fellowship and I had a job at Harvard, not a teaching job, but I worked as an editor with a small program that was based at Harvard and I edited materials in various languages for that program. And we met at a friend's party, Labor Day. So it was early. Dianne had just arrived and we had a long conversation in which we discovered that we both research, I researched sixteenth and seventeenth century Spanish and Latin American nuns' writings. And Dianne had completed her book on early modern English ballads about cross-dressing women. And so she worked in the long eighteenth century, which we all know is really the seventeenth century, primarily, that being the most important period that there is. And so we— and we talked and we both loved poetry and she worked on ballads and she was a singer and we both love music and we both like to sing and we both like folk music. And it was kind of uncanny; that was how we met.

Dugaw: Yeah. So, and I had been committed to being out, partly because my work was sort of— it was transgender. Basically, it was these women, these really interesting ballads and stories about women who passed as men and the heroism of a woman dressed as a soldier. And it was basically, I mean—it was a queer— it was a big queer space that I was working in. So, in that sense it was in a way that was an opportunity to be out as well because of my work. But I also just was kind of done with the closet thing, which I think is— it's just wonderful. It's not happening now. Anyway. I had asked Amanda if there was before I went for these— I also had an

interview it in Dallas. But anyway, I asked her if there's anything she wanted to know about Oregon.

And so she had interest in teaching poetry and she had interest in teaching Spanish and she had interest in the Comp Lit program. So, I just told the department head, "Oh, well, there's this woman in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and she has three questions and she has three areas of interest about Oregon." She would like to know if she might be able to teach poetry in the English department. She's a poet, has a master's from BU. She's fluent in Spanish and has worked on Spanish literature, could she teach Spanish? And she's interested in the Comp Lit program. Anyway, I just said that and eventually when it came to the phone calls to negotiate— then what was really good is that the negotiation happened so that Amanda had a separate negotiation. Now, part of it too is that— - it was kind of a tenured position, so they were a little more amenable to thinking, well maybe we can talk the higher ups into hiring both of these people, but also Romance Languages had worked on—they had a translation emphasis and the chairman of Romance Languages at that time was really enthusiastic for translation and also for poetry. And he— I don't know, somehow they said, “Well wait, maybe this is a good thing.” Now, the other thing, too, is you can get two women cheaper than you can get a man and a woman. But it was under the presidency of Myles Brand. And he had sort of opened some things up around queer/gay women.

Powell: And he had just issued a kind of fiat saying that we were going to, University of Oregon is going to actively support couple hires right at that time; we have trouble, we've lost some possible candidates because their spouses—And their spouses couldn't find jobs in Eugene. The job market was particularly bad at that time in Eugene also. So, he— and he had said "spouses" and then— this is how— we were told: faculty came back and said, "What do you mean by spouses?" And he said, "Well, partners." That had just happened and was the context for these department heads thinking openly and creatively about this.

Also the fact that Dianne was being brought in not with tenure, but in with an understanding that her tenure was there was going to be a process for tenure, but it was going to follow immediately and be expected based on her work. And I was hired at the time as a visiting instructor. So the visiting part had to be renegotiated and changed. And I was the trailing spouse, the partner hire. So it was very clear in that way. But it is true that Romance Languages got interested in, I mean, asked for my materials and I sent them and got interested in me on the basis of just how— also having some courses in translation— and the person who had been teaching them had just left. And so there was— it just worked.

Dugaw: Yeah. There was a lot—

Powell: Felt like it was meant to be.

Dugaw: Yeah. And there was this kind of opening. And—

Raiskin: Did you experience or hear any pushback about your being couple like spouses?

Powell: Almost none, very little. And the people— I mean, I remember sitting down at a meeting, it was the first time I was— because I hadn't gone through— I didn't have a campus interview and stuff. I was interviewed on the phone to see if my Spanish was good enough. I thought, I could just put someone else, my friend who's sitting here with me on the phone, but who's a native speaker. But I didn't, I spoke myself. So, I was meeting people when I'd already been hired and that was interesting. And I was sitting in a meeting of the Spanish sector within the Department of Romance Languages. And the woman next to me said something like, "Now who did you say your husband is?" And I said, "My partner, she— ", and but she was just embarrassed. "I'm so sorry. I'm not this way. I don't want you to think this of me." I mean, it was like that.

Long: It seems like it was a good time to come because just a year before in 1989 Myles Brand had set up the Task Force on Lesbian and Gay Concerns.

Dugaw: That's, yeah.

Powell: That was part of this context in this awareness.

Dugaw: The awareness.

Powell: Burgeoning awareness.

Dugaw: I wouldn't say that— I mean, in my department, I felt some—you know, "Who is this person?" Definitely. I've always felt that, "Who is this person?" But it wasn't actually new to me because I've almost always had a kind of resistance to my way of picturing queer. I mean, when I was at UCLA doing this dissertation on the cross-dressing women, I— the feminists wouldn't be on the committee. It wasn't a woman's topic. So my sense of the closet or feminism, I mean, now I also grew up in this family where South Americans were coming in and out. And I mean, so I had a kind of a weirdly ad hoc queerness in my ability to say, "Well, shouldn't there be a woman on my committee?" "No, this is not a feminist project." So anyway, so in that sense—

Powell: There was that little problem of heterosexual feminists accepting lesbian and queer and seeing— and seeing what they were seeing, when those materials and projects were before them.

Dugaw: Yeah. And a kind of rural cowgirl, farm girl, football player "Well, this is what it looks like to me," hitting academia. I mean, I've always had that. I'm from a different culture.

Powell: And then also, I mean, frankly, the Romance Languages department is more cordially welcoming in style than an English department, for the most part— just is culturally.

Long: When you came to campus, did you— were there other lesbians on the faculty that you connected with that reached out to you?

Powell: Yeah, right away.

Powell: We had breakfast with Mary.

Long: And that's Wood, Mary Wood.

Powell: And Marilyn Farwell, and who's the other person? And we had just had the night before Barbara May and Cynthia Stockwell had taken us out to dinner and we both got the worst food poisoning. It was terrible. Then we had this breakfast where the lesbian colleagues were kindly inviting us and we were at the Glenwood and we said could I have some weak tea and maybe I'll have a little toast?

Dugaw: Burnt toast.

Powell: No butter, please. Kind of pale. It was so nice of them to invite us and I don't think we felt we could tell them. You want to make a good impression, probably. They were probably wondering what is the matter with us. But call Mary and say that, by the way, that's what the matter with us.

Dugaw: Well, also, we didn't how to be out and the thing is being hired that way– we also felt really happy about it, relieved about it and we felt it was part of our job to be out. And so we just were like out and trying to learn how to do it and how to teach people how to do it and how to coach them how to act right a little bit.

Powell: And always, especially for the students, but with this awareness that the lack of anyone to see, I mean not anyone. I mean there was Gore Vidal.

Dugaw: Yeah. Allen Ginsberg.

Powell: And so, and you thought it about people or maybe they whispered it to you or— and so we wanted to get out of the whispering and out of the closet. And we felt, I've remembered—we felt it as a great privilege. I mean, it was a privilege. It was one of those situations. I feel that way now about retiring and having a pension. In our world, this is a privilege. This is the way it should be. Everyone should have this. But in our world, this is a privilege. So I feel now like the State of Oregon is giving me a grant to continue my writing and my research on lesbian poets of the seventeenth century and that kind of thing. And at the time we felt, okay, we've experienced this thing as quite normalized, relatively speaking that is quite unusual. We were the only academic— we were the only lesbian— I think there was another gay couple somewhere that people knew about. But at that time we were the only lesbian couple that anyone we knew knew about in the United States hired as a couple. And everyone should have this if that's their situation. So we get to live this, so we need to share it.

Dugaw: Well, and also when I was— when I went to Harvard and I thought, Oh, my gosh! I'm from the prairie and I'm teaching at Harvard and I'm going to be out. And it just felt— and my book is accepted at Cambridge University Press, holy skamoly! And so one of the things I discovered is that there you are in this bastion of enlightenment and rational thinking and open-minded, whatever, progressive, this and that who think around every corner. But the people that I was open with, like even with the faculty groups, were so grateful because at that time, all the straight people knew,

they must know some queer people somewhere, but they didn't know who they were.

Powell: Or you couldn't talk about it.

Dugaw: Or you couldn't talk about it, or you couldn't out people or you couldn't— or maybe there— shshshsh [whispers]— it was that closet thing. So, they were so grateful that I just said, "Yeah, I'm a lesbian, I'm queer." And then I brought Amanda to everything and then I said, and I just said, I just was out. And people were really grateful. And that is a really interesting thing about our experience at Oregon with regard to the ballot measures and the politics here in those first few years as well, is the service it is to be out there and learn how to do it.

I kind of learned this with my parents too, because they didn't act very well. The first few lovers— they just didn't. And they— And I had this realization, once I had been queer and trying to also be a member of the family for a few decades and after being thrown out of the family, arguing over Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos of the Philippine Islands and politics of the 1970s, but anyway, I realized that when people are phobic, they panic and don't know how to act and they, and so they don't do the right thing. I mean, sometimes people are just plain hateful. But actually, most people who don't know what to do if they think there's some horrible thing in front of them, they just freeze. So, I actually told my parents how to act. I didn't want to know what they thought.

I didn't want to hear. I don't want— I didn't want to be in their heads. I didn't ever want to go there. But I told them how to talk with Amanda when I introduced her to them, I said, "Well, no, this is how you, I want you to act. And I just got it clearer about how to pay attention. I said, "Well, you ask her about her family and you pass her the peas and you remember her birthday and you put it in your calendar." And just help them know what you do.

Powell: Whatever you do for the other in-laws—

Dugaw: You do for her and—

Powell: —you do for this one. And when— this was hard for them, and when somebody comes to the door and you introduce her as my partner and when you're introducing the other in-laws.

Dugaw: And they could figure out how to do it. And as long as — I didn't tell them any— nobody has to ask why. Apart from that, I want you to— this is the way to behave. And so some of it too is to— as I had to learn how to be an out gay, queer, lesbian person and I had to learn how to best help the phobic people behave and not take it on. If it's their problem, it's their problem and just be really clear about not having to save the world or get in people's heads, but just do the right thing and be out there and be active.

Long: If you wouldn't mind backtracking a bit and tell us first, Dianne, and then Amanda, tell us what it was like when you came out to your families?

Dugaw: Well—

Long: And what year how old were you and what year?

Dugaw: Here's the thing. I don't, I heard that I was outed from my siblings, so I'm not sure.

Powell: And it probably did have to do with, ostensibly, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos incident where that was the stated subject at which Dianne was expressing the wrong views and therefore was no longer welcome in the family.

Dugaw: And however it wasn't good for the little kids, but I'm not sure.

Powell: But it's unknown whether that was in fact the result of someone saying something to someone that got passed on.

Dugaw: Yeah, I'm not really sure. I mean, I think that by the time l was with this woman named Frankie, it was kind of an unspoken— I wasn't really out about talking about it until about 1983. I mean, because the thing is because my parents were so to the right of anyone you've ever known, you don't want to talk to them about a lot of things. My family was good at playing volleyball and they're very loving, but you have to, it's about doing things, not talking and thinking about things. So—

Long: Well, what about your siblings? Did you come out to them?

Dugaw: Yeah, I think so. Kind of. But I was the most out when I figured this all out finally by 1989. And that was when I thought about it and

said, “Wait a minute, this is what has to happen. It has to be out. We have to talk.” But how—

Powell: But it wouldn’t have been news to anyone in your family at that point.

Dugaw: No, it wouldn't.

Powell: But it became explicit, and conversable.

Dugaw: Yeah. And it became conversable as, “This is my partner, she's invited, too” and talking about it in terms of being a spouse. So, there was a long time of controversy and I actually think— we had a custom in my family once I had left the convent, that my younger brothers and sisters, not every one of them, but a lot of them would get to come when they were about fourteen or fifteen and they got to come and visit me wherever I was, L.A. or Colorado or wherever and go on a camping trip or something. So, it was kind of the big sister thing and I think I was like already in the ‘70s with gay liberation, women's liberation, women's music, all that. I was kind of out to the younger kids maybe, in the sense that I would— I just don't remember exactly, but it might've been taking them into these contexts and it may be that's what somebody told my parents.

Raiskin: Are any of your siblings gay?

Dugaw: Nope.

Powell: Defying statistics.

Dugaw: Yeah.

Raiskin: What about your relationship with your family?

Powell: I was going to say, the question is— do you— did you hide your record albums? Did you hide your books? Did you turn the books to face the other? when family came to visit. I remember a conversation with my mother in which probably around that time when I was about fifteen my mother who adored me and taught some— I can't remember what sparked a conversation about lesbians and she— my mother said it would be better to be dead than to be one of those women. And I remember another conversation where actually I was a high school student, and I was dating a man, young man who was African American. It was a Harvard student. And that was fine, but not, if I was— it was like these little lines and anyway, so I was talking with my mother about it. She didn't— we had a kind of family benefactor and that she didn't want to know about this. And I just remember, I'm not sure what— I know what I was thinking. My mother said something like, "Well, I just don't want you to limit yourself. I don't want you to get, I don't want you to go down that road." And I was saying, "What road? I just see a big field. I just see a big field, it's a big empty field and I don't want to be assigned to a rut, when there's a big field."

But, I have to tell you that I'm an alcoholic and I was killing myself with drinking through my— the early stages of my brilliant career. And after I graduated from college and on the one hand I was

really driven. And on the other hand I was really lost because I was drinking a lot, I come by it honestly, genetically, it's the long dynasty of alcoholics, both sides of the family. I had to quit, so I had to get into recovery. And so I had been living in Spain. I had gotten a grant to go and live in Spain and I was researching these weird nuns from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. And working by day in the libraries and archives. And at night I was working with these different women's groups that had, because the dictatorship just ended, and different leftists and feminist groups were just coming out of literal hiding, clandestinity, every single week. And I helped during that year that I was there, I helped organize the first lesbian and gay march in Madrid, among other things that I did. And I was also drinking myself to death. And so when I came back I had— I mean, thank goodness I was able to deal with that and get into recovery. And so I had to have a conversation with my mother saying, "I'm an alcoholic and I'm a lesbian." And her answer was "No, you can't be."

And she wanted to— and I was living in the Boston area and that's where my family is, it was, and she wanted to have lunch with me every week and get together frequently and talk a lot. And I couldn't be either of those things. And of course, at that point in my development those— that was absolutely, I mean, I was coming out, out , out, out, out, and getting sober. So, that was really, really rocky. But one of the things— basically, I divorced her. That's what it felt like. I mean, it was that— it was brutal, it was awful. And she let me know how brutal it was. But she got help on her own

independently. She went into therapy herself and got someone else to talk to about it. Anyway, completely, completely came around. There was also a man in the early ’80s. There was a man in her church who had— was a respected member of the church community forever and was married and had three daughters. And he came out, which was incredibly brave and that— and it was an Episcopal church.

And so like good Episcopalians, they formed a study group and they met and it was the very beginning of the AIDS epidemic. And so they, how they did that was—and it was very much in honor of him and figuring out how to continue to have him as a member of this congregation. And so they started— it also galvanized them to start working on AIDS, their attitudes and forming themselves. So anyway, so that was in that all part of that period of time. Well, that's what I remember about that. And yet still— and I went to work in one of the feminist women's self-help health collectives in Cambridge, Massachusetts and which was mixed lesbian and straight women and mixed race and mixed class.

And so all of this was very central and explicit and yet, then as I went on and I had to get jobs where you could actually support yourself and stuff, there was still that semi-closet and a few people who knew and some people who didn't that, through much of the ‘80s, it just got to be cumbersome and hard to figure out how to do. So yeah, it was a great relief to be here and be really completely out.

Raiskin: Yeah. You both talked about teaching people how to be, and I think Dianne, you were connecting that with the activist work around these ballot measures that you confronted when you came to Eugene. Can you tell something about what that was like? You came just around some of those measures?

Dugaw: It was, yeah, it was very shaping for us because we were out and then we got here and then it was the second of the anti-gay ballot measures, which was Measure 9. And right away we were—I don't remember if both of us were on the task force initially, but definitely—

Powell: Actually, you and were and I tagged along.

Dugaw: Yeah, the president's Task Force—

Long: —on Lesbian and Gay concerns.

Dugaw: —on Lesbian and Gay Concerns. And so right away, one of the first things— we worked with Dom Vetri, Harriet Merrick, Hank Alley, Dick Rahm, Cheyney Ryan.

Long: Sarah Douglas.

Dugaw: Sarah Douglas. Yeah. So, and so one of the first things we did was to start the interSexions.

Powell: Except we didn't call it that yet that year, but it was— we had some kind of scholar—. We said, "Let's do an academic thing on this topic." We brought George Chauncey out, who's a historian who

had not yet— I think he hadn't yet published *Gay New York*, but he was publishing a lot of things on the history of homosexuality.

Dugaw: So, that became something that we did. And the one that was the most—well, 1992 was that one, and it was the first one, and then 1993 we really put something together to try to educate the whole community. And it was— we got a lot of support from the president's office. It was on that task force and we brought in four people and they were big-name people and in fact they were there— we looked them up. They're all still on Wikipedia. Yeah.

Powell: There—

Dugaw: It was a great— but among the organizing things that was really important to us at that time was to try to get the university and the town—

Powell: Together.

Dugaw: —Together. So it wasn't just a closety-thing at the university. And that was— it was a lot of work, but it actually worked, it worked really well, I think partly because of the pressure of these anti-gay ballots and how Springfield passed one and that really woke some of the— I mean, it wasn't a big surprise to anybody who's gay or queer or lesbian, but the straight people were shocked.

Powell:: Yeah. It didn't— Springfield voted in, right before Measure 9, Springfield voted in— I think it was about teachers in the schools.

Raiskin: And then they also voted at sort of was called the "Son of 9" —after 9. They did a "Son of 9."

Powell: Yeah. And that was, yeah, it was shocking, too, to straight colleagues at the university that that would happen.

Dugaw: That helped galvanize. And anyway, that was kind of the most extra— I don't know, the biggest sort of dimensional one of these annual symposia that we put together. But the really good part about it was to try to get to be a community thing and to include Sally Sheklow and Enid and to include the community. And because there's a problem that the university is just not hooked into the town.

Raiskin: Who were the people you brought?

Powell: The way— I found this— we had lots of materials from— and there was a student who was working with Chicora Martin, and I don't know if it was around 2005 somebody did a project in which they did something on the history of the interSexions program, which we called it "inter" lowercase "Sex" "ions." And we just absolutely pasted the place with flyers and some of the initial publicity reflected the discourse of that time around sexuality because we put post— we put these flyers everywhere that said things like, "When did you first begin to suspect that you might be heterosexual?" It was held in April, 1993, and we brought Carol Queen, who's a sex educator and a writer and activist.

And her topic was "The Melting Pot is Boiling: America's Struggle to Accommodate Sexual Diversity." And she was introduced by Frank Avalaise, who was editor of the *Lavender Network* newspaper in Eugene. And the discussant was Dean Hamer. And then the next speaker was Dean Hamer, who's a molecular biologist, geneticist from the National Institutes of Health. And his topic was "Biological Approaches to Human Sexuality." And he was doing— so Carol Queen was talking about sex toys and lesbian— educating a public to lesbian sexualities. And Dean Hamer was talking about the studies he was then doing about that were revealing a pattern of what do you call it? But anyway, that there were often gay uncles and gay nephews. And—

Dugaw: So there's a genetics to it—

Powell: And it was highly controversial. There were people who hated hearing that there might be a genetic basis and people who were fascinated by it. And so his topic was "Biological Approaches to Human Sexuality." And he was introduced by Alan Siporin, who was then a commentator on KLCC radio, and the discussant was Carmen Vasquez. And then the next speaker on Saturday was Carmen Vasquez, who was at that time the coordinator of lesbian and gay health services at the San Francisco Department of Public Health. And she is active or as far as I know, has been active and in public health topics on lesbian, gay, and queer issues. And her topic was "Men on Top: A Look at Enforced Heterosexism." And the introduction was given by Anne "Izzie" Harbaugh of Mother

Kali's bookstore—lesbian-feminist bookstore in Eugene, Oregon. And the discussant for that one was Elias Farajajé-Jones and then he was the next speaker, Elias Farajajé-Jones, Professor of Religious History of the Divinity School at Howard University. His topic was "The Religious Right and Its Religious Wrongs." And he— you can still look him up under that name. He changed his name to Ibrahim [Abdurrahman]—

Dugaw: Farajajé.

Powell: Farajajé. And he was introduced by Tier Mathison Bowie, who was the Presbyterian pastor at the Presbyterian Campus Ministry. And the discussant was Carol Queen. And then we had a community panel and we had Alicia Hayes from the Eugene Human Rights Commission, Frank Avilés from the *Lavender Network* newspaper Tier Mathison Bowie and Alan Siporin. And the topic was "Beyond Measure 9." Everything was free and open to the university and local communities. And we had a lot of community involvement in the planning. We were basically— at the very end of the campaign before we started planning this, before Measure 9 was settled and we went— so we presented the idea that we were going to be doing something at a lot of the organizing meetings around the fight against Measure 9 and then in a lot of the wrap-up meetings and we went to just a lot of different meetings of different organizations and got and called people in. But especially what are you doing? I mean, participating in what those groups are doing, inviting them

to be a part of this, which is the way you do coalition work, which is a lot of work—

Dugaw: It was—

Powell: —on top of an academic gig.

Dugaw: Yeah. It was really hard to do.

Powell: And was—

Dugaw: It really hard to do.

Powell: And people were—

Dugaw: It's hard to do in this town because this town isn't used to that.

Powell: People in the community are rightfully kind of skittish about the university and—

Dugaw: We— I think we even tried to deal with parking by figuring out some lot or something. But I mean we, because it's very hard and we were actually thinking of churches, so we had the religious angle and biology, the healthcare angle and the social, I mean, we—

Powell: And sex. What about sex?

Dugaw: What about sex? We tried to figure out a way to really look at it and it was about the ballot measures and then we continued with those interSexions, educational symposia. But that was the one that was the most successful and it was so much work that we couldn't replicate that. But—

Powell: That's what you do when you're young.

Dugaw: When you're young. But one of the things that was really interesting about those ballot measures and about this thing about being out and just being matter of fact about who I am, how much I do understand it or don't. We went to the— we actually went to a conference in 1995, so there was still another one was coming down the pike of these measures. But the country, there was we went to the gay March on Washington, D.C. in 1995.

Powell: Which was enormous.

Dugaw: It was enormous. And but it was really interesting because Oregon had been through all of this community organizing and all this trauma and all this drama and all of this confrontation. And it was very interesting that we all— people were really out in the face of all that. And so we just all wore our buttons, whether we were "Straight, but not Narrow," "Better Gay than Grumpy."

Powell: We had good buttons.

Dugaw: We had really— but buttons are good thing because see, then you don't have to have the awkward conversation. But anyway, one of the things I had thought to talk about with this closeting issue it— we got on the airplane and Colorado had passed—

Raiskin: Two. Measure 2.

Dugaw: —Two, Yeah, had passed those. But one of the things that was clear as we talked to people, even on the airplane and had the buttons out.

Powell: And we paraded up and down the concourse with our buttons and at first while we were in Denver.

Dugaw: And even at the March, is that people in Oregon had come out because of this ongoing persecution and weird wrestling, and so it was in the public discourse in a way that it wasn't in other places. And I think it made a huge difference, both in the way the people, the queer people felt, but just that these issues and trying to figure this out together and having it be in the public discourse and having a kind diverse approach to it. But lots of it being present was a really amazing experience. And I think it was partly the all of this kind of homophobic stuff and but then pushing back at it, both from an educational point of view, but also just personally and being out, just not being puritanically Americanly squeamish about diverse sexualities and how it's— this is who I am and I'm not going to ask you to think differently, but I'm not going to cower on the shame that I have inherited from this world.

Powell: It helps to be Catholic because, because of that attitude that we don't need to know what you're thinking, but you what you do. We're saved by our acts, not our faith. And that you do the right thing and people can— it's not the Protestant angst about, "Am I thinking the right thoughts or are they— what thoughts are they thinking? I don't know if I can be in the room with them,

depending on what their thoughts are." I don't know if you follow this, but that is an observable, another cusp I was brought up on was Catholic-Protestant. So I had a chance to observe this close and personally. And Dianne, of course, was raised hyper Catholic. This— people being out— just no one can pretend they don't know someone. It's enormously helpful.

Dugaw: That's really important.

Raiskin: The other side of Oregon politics, which is interesting, is our roller coaster in terms of domestic partnership, marriage—

Powell: Right. Now you're married, now you're not!

Raiskin: Now you're married, now you're not. And we were very late to actually install marriage in the state. Could you tell us some history about your—

Powell: We've gotten married— we've gotten married many times. We ran off to Vermont and had a civil union because I always resisted having a commitment ceremony partly because Dianne's a folklorist and I'm in whatever relationship I'm in to spirituality and custom and ceremony and we would have to be making it up out of whole cloth. And that just didn't feel like quite the thing. And Vermont, the civil union in Vermont was the first thing where you could— you weren't making it up. There was an external form into which you could step. Now—

Raiskin: What year was that?

Dugaw: Two thousand.

Powell: Two thousand. Now, before— now leading up to that, however, is the whole thing about what business is it of the state? Any state, the state, the government? What do you mean marriage? Continually over all the years, we're married, unmarried, remarried to each other without ever breaking up. It's like, "Contextualize this again for me, honey, what are we—" Because marriage was not—

Dugaw: —Radically—

Powell: —it was never an aspiration. It was what I was avoiding. It meant all those things, chattel, and dishes. And I didn't want to get the cutlery and the set of dinnerware and then have to wash them all and yeah, 1950s. So on the other hand, you live a little while and you start realizing that—

Dugaw: It's not fair.

Powell: It's not a fair and this isn't my first rodeo and what's going to— what road or what road are we on and how are we providing for each other and ourselves and we don't have children. And anyway, it's not fair. There seemed to be a lot of advantages to this marriage thing. And it, for better or worse for, everything, there's always an upside and the downside. It became what we were rallying around. And I think it became a kind of— I guess we all have our ideas about why that was important, but it's hard being a sexualized category in a sex phobic—

Dugaw: Culture.

Powell: Country, culture, setting. So, there was some propriety about it or something. You want to be a rebel and you want to change everything and you kind of want to fit in at the same time. So anyway—

Dugaw: Anyway, we—

Powell: So, we did Vermont, it was very lovely. We should've eloped but we brought my family. I was surprised. My family didn't respond very well, but that's, I think they have all the right, they're blue-state-pinko-leaning-all-the-right-attitudes, but they don't know how to welcome outsiders into the family the way Dianne's predominantly red state-all-the-wrong attitude-family knows how to welcome people. Anyway.

Dugaw: I think they're phobic too.

Powell: There was a little phobia they hadn't examined. So anyway, but it was lovely for us and we had our civil union, then we gave a year— we sent out a basically "save the date" a year in advance so people had a chance to get their minds around it that we were going to have a ceremony of our own. And we had our own ceremony in 2001 at Mount Pisgah in the— what was then the Quonset hut. And now is the lovely pavilion.

Dugaw: And my mom made rolls for the whole group.

Powell:: Dianne's mother and father went and talked to a kind priest who helped—

Dugaw: Several kind priests. Several Benedictines.

Powell: Who helped them get their minds around it. In the Benedictine monastery that they often went to services at which— you only had to go to one mass at the monastery to see that the place was full of really queenie guys and it was so obvious. And really nice and really academic, educated intellectuals, what I'm trying to say: men, priests, who some of them obviously did some counseling with Dianne's parents and they came and Dianne's dad danced with her at her wedding and to us that was our wedding. That was with our tribe.

Long: And what year was that again?

Powell: That was 2001.

Long: Two thousand-one. So you first you went to Vermont for, what was that? Domestic partnership?

Dugaw: Yeah.

Powell: It was a civil union. We were civilly united if we live in Vermont.

Dugaw: If we lived in Vermont. Yeah.

Powell: Which we didn't, but it was—

Long: Oh, right. There was civil union that could not be called marriage.

Powell: Right.

Dugaw: Yeah. And it was in Vermont.

Powell:: In Vermont only, but it was the first place.

Long: Vermont only.

Dugaw: So then, Kate Brown and Portland and Corvallis. Was that what, 2004?

Powell: Multnomah.

Dugaw: Multnomah County. And Linn County for that brief two weeks or whatever it was in March. Pouring down rain, end of finals week.

Powell: Stood in the rain, like refugees.

Dugaw: Yeah.

Powell: Somebody ran and got a bouquet at a Safeway or something and then sort of distributed it to other people and it just—

Dugaw: So we did that.

Powell: So we were married and then we got it— then we got the check back when people—

Raiskin: Because they were annulled by the state.

Dugaw: They were annulled by the Supreme Court.

Powell: They were annulled by the state and they sent back the money for your license. And everybody else, we turned around and sent that check straight back to Basic Rights Oregon which was fighting for our rights.

Dugaw: Then, the citizens of the State of Washington passed a ballot measure and voted on it across the whole state. And it passed pretty significantly. And it was in 2013.

Raiskin: Making marriage legal in Washington.

Dugaw: Making marriage legal in Washington. It's the only place that had a popular vote that wasn't done through the courts. And so, we just went to Olympia.

Powell: Yeah. And it's Dianne's natal state and where a lot of the family is.

Dugaw: Where I'm from and they did the right thing and we didn't want to do Oregon because it was domestic partners, it was not the real thing. So we just said—

Powell:: It felt so Jim Crow.

Dugaw: It was Jim Crow and it was kind of right-wing Oregon. And so freewheeling Washington passed it across the whole state. And so we went to Olympia and went before the judge. So now every time we passed the courthouse, we sing, "Goin' to the cha— the courthouse and we're—" And anyway—

Raiskin: So, 2015 made—

Dugaw: That was '13.

Raiskin: But 2015 made that marriage in Washington legal in Oregon.

Dugaw: Legal here. That's right through the Supreme Court of the U.S. So we married in Washington in 2013 the same way we'd done all the other ones. Well, the one in Oregon was valid until they annulled it. The one in 2004. But yeah, so then we— then it was the Supreme Court decision that noticed that it was the only fair thing to do. It was unjust to do anything else. So, we've married quite a lot.

Raiskin: Can I ask a question about your—so you have this very active life on campus and you really want to bring community into campus and have that relationship. What was your relationship like with lesbians in the Eugene community who were not associated with the university? Were you able to socialize?

Powell: They tolerate academics there. Yeah.

Dugaw: Yeah. We—

Powell: I do think they think we're a quirky bunch, but yeah—

Dugaw: Yeah. We have friends, but we're not as our— I think our most active queer community is in the recovery community. And that's partly because in some ways, I had to get sober and clean because I was an addict and an alcoholic as well. And a lot of it is the shame and guilt and all the trauma and drama around growing up in a culture that doesn't give you very much to work with on this topic.

And also the culture of the queerness, especially in the '60s and '70s was in the bars.

Powell: And '80s.

Dugaw: And then I was in L.A. in the '80s, and so— Anyway, so I think that I had to figure out how to be okay with myself and I had to get clean and sober to do that. And that also made it much better for me to figure out exactly what the best way of doing it with other people was, too. I think that's when I got clear about who I was and where I came from. But I think I was the most linked to the, maybe when I was in L.A., I was the most linked to the—

Powell: The women's music.

Dugaw: The women's music thing where everyone was drinking, shooting up, and swapping girlfriends, or whatever. But that was back then and anyway, and here, Sally Sheklow, Enid and Marlene and yeah, a lot of the people.

Powell: Yeah. That you're interviewing.

Dugaw: Yeah. That you're interviewing. Yeah. But mainly around issues, I think.

Powell: Yeah, those would be, they're all people we met either through campus or through or through issues as Dianne is saying and then, I don't know, we just know a lot of people in Eugene. One thing we were talking about is, when I worked at women's community health center, the feminist self-help health center in Cambridge,

Massachusetts, that was around the purpose of work, getting things done about women. But neither Dianne nor I has been really big on— except for the purpose of respite or getting work done, seeking out women-only space. It just, I always respect it. I get it. And we were thinking, Well, we did get to go to those girls' high schools. We had that and on the other hand, neither of us really imprinted on summer camp either. It just seems like, I know just to me it's sort of culturally and anthropologically or gynepologically or whatever we say. It seems like that would be the model in many ways.

But I I'm not sure, but with all respect, but I'm sure that women who lived on women's land and I really, I having been in a lot of meetings where we tried to do things by consensus, I have all the respect in the world, plus you're dealing with the pump freezing or something. But I just want to say one thing, parenthetically, about going to the girls school. The girls school turned coed while I was there before the end of my time. So I graduated in 1972 in Concord Academy. It was great for me because it was really, really strong academically and really artsy. And they started accepting— there was a small group of boys when I was a senior and I had been all for co-education because this is unnatural and it just seems repressive. And it seemed part of the kind of anti-sexiness thing. The boys came and the girls started acting different.

And I was shocked. And I remember a particular girl, young woman who was really good at tech and she had long curly red

hair and she just used to get, go right up the ladders and she would be changing the lights for theater and dance concerts and stuff. And all of a sudden she didn't know how to do it anymore and she was giggling and I was so sh—. I was appalled. I just, in that one moment I thought this was a terrible mistake. So it was a wonderful thing to have girls be it, and really good at things.

Dugaw: It was similar in the convent. I was in charge of all the cars.

Long: In terms of what?

Dugaw: All the cars, there's a fleet.

Powell: Yeah, women didn't.

Dugaw: Now, there's the, some of why I left was that I did get irritated about the fleet of Buicks and stuff.

Powell: Given the vow of poverty.

Dugaw: Given the vow of poverty, but, I was in charge of all the cars. I checked the oil, I put the gas in— just did the cars. And I also kind of grew up in that way, that somehow, I don't know, my mother just was very capable and she just, if you needed to have something done, you just did it. And I think that to have these strong women be in charge of the choir and running the hospital. And it's a world that no longer exists, the world of that kind of Catholic education. But, the biggest hospital in Los Angeles was run by Sister Noella.

Long: And the Sisters of Providence in the Northwest.

Dugaw: Yeah, and all of that has gotten corporatized and secularized.

Powell: Something is lost when something else is gained.

Raiskin: And your political work sounds like it's often been with gay men.

Dugaw: Yes.

Raiskin: And not women only.

Dugaw: Yeah.

Powell: Yeah. And with straight allies. And a lot of my political work has been around issues. Going back to the '80s, women's health, lesbian, gay stuff, and then, U.S. role in Latin America and internationalist stuff. And so it was always, it was always absolutely important that lesbians and gay men be welcome and known and included and that we formed affinity groups and, but I didn't choose to be in the women's only or the lesbian or the, what would then be lesbian-gay affinity group. I just, I don't know, it just seemed— Dianne had the phrase for it from a long time ago that it can feel like a larger closet being, and yet for respite or for practical purposes to get stuff done. Because you can't always bring everyone along quick enough on the issues that you need to focus on or because you get exhausted dealing with attitudes.

Dugaw: Well, also I think theoretically because early on I had this project that was basically a sort of trans project before that was how things were thought. It's also theoretically or conceptually, all of these categories are going to change. It's—

Powell: We've seen them all change—it's not like we arrived where we now we know what they are.

Dugaw: We've seen them all change, they're going to change again. And so I also have a theoretical as well as political perspective on trying to get everyone able to talk about whatever it is that they need or are having to fight or need help with or to be part of who we are and where we are.

Raiskin: Well, this leads right to my next question, which is about looking to the future. Thinking about aging, about health care, things that you've been thinking about your whole lives, how do you imagine aging together? Aging as lesbians? Aging in community?

Powell: We're going to die peacefully in our sleep together at the same moment in time. Piece of cake. Next question. Like, do we have a plan?

Dugaw: Well, we're working on it.

Raiskin: Do you have concerns? About medical care or?

Powell: We have concerns. My mother is in a memory care unit. She's ninety-four. She had her— the slate was wiped pretty clean. It happened gradually, it's heartbreaking to me. It's heartbreaking. A very long grief. She's in a very wonderful place in Brookline, Massachusetts with a lot of art and music. We're very lucky that on her secretary job, she saved enough. She was amazing. But anyway, it's of enormous concern. This country is— I can think of no other

phrase than "fucked up in the area of health care" and in general the society caring for society. And I hope people in the future are listening to these, watching these videos, listening and saying thank God we solved that. Now, we have single-payer, socialized medicine like we always should have. And we also have a judiciary that's well balanced and we have representative government in this country at last. I hope that that's what they're saying.

It's kind of awful. So we picture aging in place, we picture ways to get our house, which has two stories— the main part to one story so that we can be on— and we've given a bit of thought, quite a bit of thought, but like a lot of people, we cross our fingers, we go to the gym, we take our fish oil, we do crossword puzzles, we hope for the best. We, aren't, I know people who are— I know women. I know a heterosexual woman who's Native American, really good friend who's planning to be in an intentional community near the coast and they're going to grow some of their own vegetables. She thinks we're going to have to go to ground. And she's planning, including for aging and community with Indian, with native people and not native people, but planning for the long term. We're staying in our house for now.

Long: You didn't have any thoughts about going to a retirement community?

Powell: Well, that's kind of the same feeling as, we don't have kids, but it just seems so stratified. And we haven't—

Dugaw: Well, we haven't got to think about that. We've—

Powell: I've thought about it with my mother some—

Dugaw: Yeah, it was her mother and—

Powell: We do wonder about my family history of dementia and—

Dugaw: Yeah.

Powell: But, we don't have a plan. That's why, for—

Dugaw: We don't have a plan of that sort. And though we can walk to the doctor, we can walk to the grocery store, we can walk to the dentist.

Powell:: As long as we can walk.

Dugaw: As long as we can walk or hire a cab or I don't know.

Powell:: Yeah. We like the place where we are. We haven't thought about a retirement place. We haven't bought into anything. We've thought— part of the non-plan is that we will find the ideal person to live in the downstairs of our house, which is the other part to help out. The perfect scenario would be the perfect person who would be wonderfully compatible. They will be able to help around the place and do a little personal assistance as needed. Of course we have a good friend whose mother is in her nineties and is now starting to have the problems and in California where there is a cooperative, a collective or cooperative for in-home health care for people. That makes so much sense. That would be a great thing to

organize and be a part of along with the different movements for basic minimum wage, basic minimum wage for healthcare workers and for at-home healthcare assistance and unionization and for those workers, because I've walked through a lot of that with the care from my mother back in Massachusetts when she was still at home and then she needed more help and then as she was declining in her cognitive impairment and needing a lot of help and we were organizing it at the house. And it's a really big topic.

Raiskin: I see the political projects for you.

Powell:: Yeah.

Dugaw: That's a big project for—

Powell:: Yeah, that kind of stuff is, I mean, I want to write poetry, but that kind of stuff is granular kind of organizing. Yeah.

Raiskin: Is there anything you'd really want to make sure that is in this interview that we haven't asked? A little piece or snippet or a memory or something that you just want to make sure is in there?

Dugaw: Well, one thing, as difficult as it was growing up and feeling different and all the different anxieties, shame, something's wrong with me, I better drink some more, whatever. There was some part of me that was really, even in the worst of it, there was some part of me that was really glad to have the clear experience that there was something I knew that was true despite what they were telling me. And it does occur to me that just as a queer kid, I felt glad that I

knew. I thought, If I weren't queer I could swallow some of this stuff, and not really know that it was just horse manure or whatever.

Powell: And she knows what horse manure is.

Dugaw: But even when it was really, really hard and it was so confusing and it was just so different from what you were told. Once, I had to kind of get around the corner of that. But I've felt like it was good. There was a really deep resilience there. And I think I see it in the young people, whatever you want to call them. I see it in the young people that I work with and it's like there's a very deep resilience that's there.

Long: How about you, Amanda?

Powell: I want to say don't lose the sense of and the knowledge of history. Herstory.

Powell: And the long and deep past. It wasn't much to have Mary Barnard's translations of Sappho, but I'm really glad I had them. And there are only fragments of Sappho and knowing that and knowing why, how that came to be is really important and useful and those fragments are really useful. And one of the projects that that we've worked on together is this research on the seventeenth-century fashion in women's love poetry to women, which was across Europe and many of its colonies. And this was a form, a cultural form that had cache that was in some ways privileged in that period. And that was written out, invisibilized afterwards.

And that we started finding, because of the Spanish poetry that I know and some Portuguese poetry I came across and Aphra Ben and Katherine Philips in English. And then we started looking further and we found examples in Italian and Flemish and French and I'm sure there's German, but we haven't found it. Some of it we were finding because I have some knowledge of romance languages and some of it we were finding through translations and we've written and published a couple of essays together and we want to do some more on what that was and what, what cultural work those poems were doing and then why was it a prestige form then and what happened to it? Why did it fall away and fall out of view? And who were those women? And what does it represent? I think that there's always a horizon of change and changing nomenclature and terminology.

And yet there's something that we recognize with, however you group them, there are clusters of sexualities that seem to be tied to behaviors and more. And more. And are understood in very different ways, in different cultural settings and cultural— I mean, history poses cultural change. So that will continue to be changing. And in our work on this stuff, we once talked with a really interesting philosopher or someone who works in the field of philosophy, Jill Kraye in London. And because she had written something about the heterosexualizing of Plato and Platonism in the so-called Renaissance in the Italian Renaissance by Pietro Bembo and people that, who took the as the ideas of Platonism became the ideas of what, for instance, Petrarchism and it all got

heterosexualized. And what had been the adoration of the ephebe, the beautiful young man who represented the platonic unity of the beautiful and the good as that became the beautiful young girl.

The Beatrice or the really young Laura Petrarch fell in love with when she was thirteen. So, we were talking with Jill Kraye about her thinking about that and the heterosexualizing of that Platonism and related phenomena in the history of philosophy and literature. And she just had this great phrase, she said, "Well, you're always going to have your lumpers and your splitters." People would want to separate and parcel out, divide and categorize and then people say, "Yeah. You can be part of this, too. Yeah. Come out. Yeah. This looks, it's different, but it looks it has a lot in common with this," and I want to be with the lumpers. Yeah. I just do want to be with the lumpers because what do I know? And there's always, the more often— you know how it is. We all know this personally. The more homophobic someone seems, and then the more you find out and you find out about early trauma or their story or what you know and you might have more in common. And it's easy for that person at that time to vocalize. So, it always seems like more will be revealed.

Dugaw: Yeah.

Powell: I just—

Dugaw: Or the more we can all do to make it okay to be who people are and not take it out on each other. Not take it out on each other.

Powell: And survive the rising of the oceans.

Raiskin: The more shall be revealed.

Dugaw: Yeah.

Raiskin: Yeah. Thank you.

Long: Thank you very much.

Powell: Thank you. It's wonderful to be a part of it. Thank you.

Dugaw: Yeah. Thanks.

Powell: Thank you for doing this work.

Dugaw: Yeah.

[END OF INTERVIEW]