

NARRATOR: Miriam Higgins
INTERVIEWER: Troy Reeves
DATE: August 8, 2005
LOCATION: Boise, Idaho
PROJECT: Idaho State Capitol Oral History Project

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000	0	TAPE 1 SIDE 1
002	1	Introduction
007	1	Higgins had given the ISHS a story about the Capitol. She was born and raised in Fruitland. Her grandfather, Levi Schubert, came from Ohio with her father in 1901. They had a fruit ranch in Fruitland. She talked about the fruit in Fruitland. Her mother's father came to Idaho in 1910 from Indiana. Her parents met in 1911 in Idaho.
031	2	Higgins was born at home. She has four siblings. She told the story of her birth and that her then seven-year-old brother thought she came out of the doctor's satchel.
036	2	She talked about her house that her dad built and that her uncle, Zane Schubert, wired. Her uncle established the Winchell telephone system in Fruitland.
041	2	Higgins's dad passed away when he was 38 years old. Her mother left all five kids with her parents in Fruitland while she went up to Lewiston to renew her teaching certificate. She raised the five kids on a teacher's salary. During the Depression, her mom didn't have to take any vouchers to pay back later. All the kids learned how to work their land, and that helped their income. The Church of the Brethren was a good support to them.
056	3	Higgins told how she has done some research into her family's background. Her grandfather (her father's father) didn't sell fruit in Fruitland, but put all his fruit on a train and sold it in Chicago. She commented that her parents and grandparents were enterprising.
076	4	Her grandfather on her mother's side was a missionary minister for the Church of the Brethren and established new churches in southern Idaho and Montana and other states. His missionary work brought him and his family to Idaho.
092	5	Higgins explains the Church of the Brethren. They're Protestant, like the Baptists. One of their members started the Heifer's

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		Program, where a person is given a heifer and has to raise one for someone else. Heifers International started out of that program. The members are also notable for their views on war. During World War II, there were many conscientious objectors. Instead of going to war, they helped with experimental health research. She mentioned a little about her Sunday School teacher during the war.
116	6	Higgins discussed her high school time at Fruitland High School. Her time there was social and academic. Higgins had her mother as a teacher in 3 rd grade. She knew some of her teachers because they were friends with her mother. One teacher that stands out to her is Bethia [?] Baldrige. Her uncle was a Governor of Idaho [H.C. Baldrige]. She was the English and Latin teacher. Because so few people took the second year of Latin, Higgins had to wait until her senior to take the second year she'd had the first year her freshman year. Miss Baldrige took time after school to help her, and she did well.
144	7	Higgins told about Senior Sneak. Every year, the seniors could take a day off of school. Usually they went to a park or a place not far away, but the seniors her year went to Boise. Senior Sneak was always in the spring, after all the tests. Thirty-three people were in her class. They got to Boise in a school bus, which was basically a farm truck with a canvas canopy. It was a 55-60 mile trip before the roads were paved. Most of the kids went downtown when they got to Boise. She went inside the Capitol. She loved its architecture, both inside and out. Higgins was 17 years old at the time. She's gone back to the Capitol when she has talked to legislators about issues that were important to her.
244	10	When she was in the Capitol on Senior Sneak, she saw the stairway that led up to the top of the dome. She had to look up or else she could see that she would fall down on the mineral display far below her. Higgins walked down the stairs backwards. It was dinner [lunch] time by the time she was done. Some of the kids went to the Mechanafe café. Her mother had given her a sack lunch, and she ate on the Capitol lawn.
296	11	Even though her mother didn't have much, college was still an expected part of their lives. Higgins attended the University of Idaho. She worked in California at a cannery for three summers to save money for college. She didn't become a nurse. She met her husband at the U of I.
335	12	Higgins didn't become a nurse because she met "the right guy at the right time." She met her husband, Bob Higgins, at a youth group meeting of the Baptist Church at the U of I in January 1941. He had

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		a Model A car. His job was checking on crops of peas, so he had to have a car.
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385	12	He asked if he could take her home after they met at the youth group meeting. They had their first date. Bob worked down in Wilder soon after, and they kept up their relationship through writing letters. Bob asked her to marry him in May, and they were married in July 1941.
416	13	Bob worked for eleven months in Wilder with agriculture. The products the students made were displayed at the Canyon County fair. They had canning centers where farm wives could can things in bulk, and Bob helped them do it.
436	14	They were married for about two years before Bob went to war. He had always wanted to own a farm. He had a sister and brother-in-law who had a farm in Rupert, and Bob helped run the farm while the brother-in-law was in the war. He also helped run the farm work of another man, John Rensberg [?], who later became a board member of the University of Idaho. Bob had been born in Boise and lived in the North End. In high school he had worked at a small dairy business/farm. He met John Rensberg, who was an agronomist, at that farm. Bob knew he was going to be drafted while he was working on those farms, so he decided to join the Navy in 1944.
474	16	While Bob was in boot camp, Higgins lived with her mom. She had a two-year-old daughter. She substitute taught occasionally, but she didn't do any war work or help with the war effort. Higgins backtracked to Bob's proposal, which had been in May 1941. Once she had accepted his proposal, he said they would start their family right away. She was only 19. As she got to know him, she realized he wanted a family right away because he hadn't known his father very well. Bob's father was 66 when Bob was born. He helped build one of the wings of the Capitol. Before Bob left for the war, he had worked to save up money. Higgins used the money to follow Bob to the military bases. After boot camp, he was stationed in Pensacola, Florida. He taught aerial gunnery. Now the military is supportive of families being close to their loved ones in the military, but that wasn't so during World War II. Higgins talked about how the war brought people together. Bob was offered to go to officer's training, but he turned it down so that he could be with his family. They went back to Idaho when Bob had leave before he went to Alameda, California. They had navy housing in Alameda. Their

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		daughter was three, and they decided they wanted another child. Higgins could distinguish among different ships in the estuary, and whether or not an aircraft carrier was there. If there was an aircraft carrier, and it left, she knew that Bob might have left. She talked about how the military found her a place to live so that they could get her out of their office.
660	21	When asked to give positive and negative experiences, Higgins said that because she's an optimist she turned the negatives into positives. She had an uncle in the fruit packing business who helped her get a train ticket; she had a nice coach room for her and her two-year-old daughter. Her daughter had still been drinking milk out of a bottle, but she'd broken her bottle the night before they left on the train. Her daughter loved the "sippy cup" which helped to break her habit. Her husband's friend's wife met her when they got off the train. and they became friends. Her arriving in Pensacola was a positive experience. She had negative times trying to find a place to live. At the office where they were trying to get a place, someone mentioned that a woman who worked there might let them stay with her. Higgins told of the experience of finding the place. She encountered Blacks but didn't feel prejudiced because she hadn't really met any before. Her daughter's name was Roberta Lou, but they called her Bobby Lou. They finally found the home of the woman who might rent her place to them.
796	0	END TAPE 1 SIDE 2 TAPE 2 SIDE 1
000	24	The woman, whose last name was Burann [?], rented the place to them. She talked about how Black people helped with the yard and the house. Higgins talked about a lily that was in the garden that her daughter picked. They ran out of time to talk.
041	0	END OF TAPE TWO SIDE 1 END OF INTERVIEW

NAMES AND PLACES INDEX

Alameda, California
Baldrige, Bethia
Boise, Idaho
Canyon County Fair
Church of the Brethren
Fruitland, Idaho
Fruitland High School
Idaho State Capitol Building
Pensacola, Florida
Rensberg/Rensburg, John
University of Idaho
Wilder, Idaho
World War II