Idaho LGBTQ Oral History Project

Emilie Jackson-Edney
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This Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) Oral History Project began as a key component of a cross-listed Boise State University course, Intro to LGBTQ Studies (GEN 380, HIS 381, SOC 497). Dr. Riley Caldwell-O’Keefe taught the course and designed the project as an interactive learning tool to help students understand LGBTQ history, with special emphasis on Idaho history, and the impacts of this history on local individuals. In addition to this history and context, students learned interviewing techniques throughout the semester. We discussed ethical considerations and obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the project. Throughout the process, we worked with Boise State Special Collections and Archives librarians, Alan Virta and Cheryl Oestreicher. The culmination and digital release of the collection would have been impossible without them. We are thrilled and honored to offer these first-person insights which help provide a more well-rounded and comprehensive story of Idaho history.

**Name:** Emilie “Emi” Jackson-Edney

**Biography:** Emi’s interview centers on her gender reassignment journey. Growing up in Nampa, Idaho, Emi was raised with conservative Christian beliefs. During her childhood, she always felt female but felt obligated to accept her male gender. She met her wife at Boise State University, and the 37 year marriage produced two children. Emi talks about going to a gender psychotherapist and beginning the process of becoming female. Emi outlines the steps required for someone who wants to undergo gender reassignment and the experience of surgery in Thailand. Now as a woman, Emi refers to herself as a woman with a transsexual history instead of a “real woman.” Also discussed are the issues of dating and the difficulty of getting insurance coverage.

**Keywords:** Christine Jorgensen, Renee Richards, depression, hormone therapy, suicide, denial, Thailand, psychotherapy, gender reassignment

**Interview date:** 11/29/21
**Interviewer:** Linsey Amaya
**Interview duration:** 2:44:53
**City:** Boise

**Timed Notation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00:14</td>
<td>Name, intro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:33</td>
<td>Place of birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00:49</td>
<td>Identify- race/ethnicity/gender/soc eco stat/sexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01:24</td>
<td>Growing up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04:53</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06:03</td>
<td>Relationships in high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:03</td>
<td>No real memories of growing up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:32</td>
<td>Family, sister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Family, parents
College, mom’s desire for Christian school
Puberty
Earliest memory of transsexuals, in the news
How met ex-wife
College and Vietnam War draft/military duty
Marriage/children/grandkids
Coming out story
Visits Las Vegas, drove by a transgender lounge, afraid to go in
Returns to Las Vegas, went into lounge as male
First public appearance as a woman
Tells wife she is a cross dresser/marriage falling apart
Religious affiliation, role in church with wife and kids
Resigned as deacon at church
Depression, suicide tendencies, began psychotherapy
Tells general practitioner, gets help finding new psychotherapy, discuss hormone therapy
Discusses diagnosing of transsexual (DSM)
Explains that once transition is complete no longer diagnosed with a mental condition
Insurance for transgender, no coverage
Hormone change
Facial/head/hair removal
Continues coming out story, daughter
Recalls ex-wife’s reaction and response
Coming out to daughter-in-law
Getting diagnosed with gender identity by doctor to be able to begin treatment
Requirements of first year before transition
Coming out to son
Daughter in prison, relationship with her
Son and daughter, estranged relationship with son
Daughter
Current relationship with ex-wife
Life situation making transition possible
Parents
Start of transition, surgery, two months in Thailand
Try to wrap it up, anything left out?
Psychotherapy benefits, diagnosis needed for reassignment surgery
After retirement.....now what.....activism! (reluctant activism)
Fear of dating again
Why the name Emilie?
Place feel most comfortable in Boise
Places feel unsafe
Experience the world from both genders/sexes
Identify self as a woman of transsexual history, not a “real” woman
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:24:24</td>
<td>Discrimination because of transition? Endocrinologist refusal to treat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:28:48</td>
<td>Hormone replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:37:30</td>
<td>Memories from work/delegating</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:44:48</td>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
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