

Idaho LGBTQ Oral History Project

Becka Lewis



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

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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: Rebecca Lewis

Biography: Rebecca “Becka” Lewis was born in 1985 in Boise, Idaho. Becka identifies as a lesbian, Hispanic female who feels that her “growing up was very different.” Becka came out at the age of 16, as a sophomore in high school, and shortly thereafter met her current partner, Makayla. Her experience focuses on discovering her sexuality in high school, the reaction of her parents, and coming out to the community in a very public way after running away from home.

Keywords: Ellen DeGeneres, running away, hate crimes, mentoring, “It Gets Better” campaign, high school.

Interview date: 12/05/2011

Interviewer: Rhiannon James

Interview duration: 50:49

City: Boise

Timed Notation:

00:00	Introduction
00:53	Family background and childhood
05:44	Coming out story
35:51	Relationships/Communities not out in
37:28	Anywhere in Boise comfortable/not comfortable being out at
39:56	Prejudice for being out?
44:12	Current activist work in the community
46:44	Role models
48:13	Places to gather to meet people
49:31	Final question. Do you know of anyone else who’s story should be heard?