

Finding aid for the Higgins family papers 502

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Grand Rapids History and Special Collections

111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

localhis@grpl.org

URL: <https://www.grpl.org/research/history/>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Grand Rapids History and Special Collections
Source:	Higgins, Susan
Title:	Higgins family papers
ID:	502
Date [inclusive]:	1924-1994
Physical Description:	2 Linear Feet 2 boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	<p>This collection of family papers was donated by Susan Higgins, the granddaughter of Ira and Ethel Higgins and the daughter of Robert and Barbara Higgins. Ira Owen Higgins was born in 1897 in Henderson County, Kentucky and came to Grand Rapids, Michigan in his 20s. In 1925 he married Ethel TenBrink (1902-1989) and together they had two sons, Robert and Edgar. Ira died in December of 1965 and Ethel died in 1989. Robert H. Higgins was born in 1926, in Grand Rapids, Michigan and graduated from Creston High School in 1944. The Higgins family papers is made up of photographs, newspaper clippings, high school programs and high school reunion materials. The collection also includes employee magazines and newsletters from Consumers Power Company and Meijer, notably a directory of retired employees of Consumers Energy published in 2002. Robert married Barbara Lind (1927-2017) in October of 1953 and retired from Consumers Power after 30 years in 1984. This collection may be most useful to the local family researcher and the researcher interested in the Creston Neighborhood of Grand Rapids, Michigan.</p>

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Biographical / Historical

Ira Owen Higgins was born in 1897 in Henderson County, Kentucky and came to Michigan in his 20s. Prior to moving to Michigan, Ira worked in a furniture factory as a cabinet maker and he continued working in the furniture industry in Grand Rapids. In 1925 he married Ethel

TenBrink and together they had two sons, Robert and Edgar. Ethel (Effie as a child), was born in Michigan in 1902 to immigrants from the Netherlands and was one of at least nine children. Ira was a salesman for the Colonial Baking Company in the 1930s, likely out of necessity during the Great Depression, returning to work in the furniture industry in 1948. Ira died in December of 1965 and is buried in the Pilgrim Home Cemetery in Holland, Michigan, as is Ethel, who died in 1989.

Robert H. Higgins was born in 1926 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He attended Creston High School, graduating in 1944. He married Barbara Lind (1927-2017) in October of 1953 and together they had two children, Susan Higgins and Jamie Higgins. Robert retired from Consumers Power after 30 years in 1984. He also served with the U.S. Air Force during World War II. Robert died in November of 2005.

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Scope and Contents

The Higgins family papers is made up of photographs, newspaper clippings, high school ephemera, high school reunion materials, and employee magazines and newsletters. Notable are eighteen snapshots of Ira and Ethel Higgins with Sue and Carl Bengert taken in the 1920s. The collection also contains newspapers from April of 1933 with stories of the murders of Sue Bengert and her two sons.

These papers also include reunion materials and photographs from the 50th reunion of the Creston High School class of 1944. There are employee publications in the collection, primarily from Consumers Power Company, including a directory of retired employees published by Consumers Energy in 2002.

Local family researchers may find the employee newsletters and publications from Consumers Energy and Meijer, along with the information from the Creston High School class of 1944 particularly helpful. Those researching the Creston Neighborhood might find this collection useful as well.

It is also interesting to note the drafting work done by Robert Higgins in high school and the maps he drew years later, during his time with Consumers Power.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

The Higgins family papers were donated by Susan Higgins, daughter of Robert H. Higgins.
[2020.014]

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Controlled Access Headings

- Murder -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Grand Rapids (Mich.) -- History
- High schools -- Michigan -- Grand Rapids
- Higgins, Susan

Collection Inventory

Ira O. and Ethel TenBrink Higgins

Title/Description	Instances	
Ira Higgins with unidentified man bathing in Grand River, at Jone's Camp, 1923-07	Box 1	Folder 1
Ira, Ethel and Robert Higgins with Sue, Carl and Carl Bengert, Jr. (18 snapshots), 1924-1927	Box 1	Folder 2
Wonder Ships of Today, published by the Colonial Baking Co., about 1940	Box 1	Folder 20

American Indian Chiefs published by the Colonial Baking Co., about 1940	Box 1	Folder 21
Issues of The Grand Rapids Press and The Grand Rapids Herald with headline stories about the murder of Maggie Sue Bengert, Carl Bengert, Jr. and Thalbert Allen Bengert, 1933-04-06-1933-04-09	Box 2	Folder 3
Ethel Higgins with Friday Nite Group at Renery Park Dance and Ethel Higgins with Leta, 1982-1984	Box 1	Folder 3
Carl Bengert obituary and remembrance card, 1986	Box 1	Folder 4
Ira and Ora Marshall remembrance cards and obituary, photograph of Ora Marshall with Ethel Higgins at Marshall home on Edith Ave NE, 1955-1986	Box 1	Folder 5

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Robert H. Higgins

Creston High School

Title/Description	Instances	
Robert Higgins high school drafting work, 1939-1941	Box 1	Folder 6
Robert Higgins high school drafting work, 1941	Box 1	Folder 7
Creston High School programs: Senior Banquet Dance, Eighteenth Annual Commencement Exercises, Second Mid-year Commencement, 1944	Box 1	Folder 8
Newspaper clippings (undated); Gordon Gritter, 805 Grandville Ave. SW, Pvt. Norman Ingersoll, 467 Knapp St. NE	Box 1	Folder 9
Creston High School Class of 1944 reunion materials; correspondence, schedule, program, class roster, 1993-1995	Box 1	Folder 10
Creston High School Class of 1944 reunion group photographs with identifying information, 1994-1996	Box 1	Folder 11
Obituaries; Charles Richard Smith, Leo O'Donnell, William Maycroft, Chris Warber and 50th Anniversary announcement for Donovan and Jackie Joslin, 1992-1996	Box 1	Folder 12

Consumers Energy

Title/Description	Instances	
R.H. Higgins business card	Box 1	Folder 13
Consumers Power News, pages 7-10, from the late 1940s. Photographs of employees who worked at the Division St. location in Grand Rapids.	Box 2	Folder 4
	Box 2	Folder 4

Proposed Reconstruction of Conklin-Marne Circuit and Agreement with Penn. Railroad to Place Poles and Wire Lines; both drawings created by Robert Higgins for Consumers Power Co., 1949-1950	Box 2	Folder 6
Sidwell aerial plat maps, misc. sections including some Grand Rapids Twp., Cascade Twp., Kentwood Twp., Paris Twp., and Wyoming Twp. 10 pages , 1960-1970	Box 2	Folder 2
Consumers Power News, 1972-02	Box 1	Folder 14
Consumers Power World magazine, Nos. 3-4, No. 2, 1973-1974	Box 1	Folder 15
Hand drawn map of the Grand Rapids area, 1990s	Box 1	Folder 26
Progress, Consumers Power Company Fall and Winter, 1994	Box 1	Folder 16
Consumers Energy Retiree Directory, 2002	Box 1	Folder 17

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Miscellaneous

Title/Description	Instances	
Berean Baptist Church Summer Bible School group photograph, 1930s	Box 1	Folder 18
Mailing list, single sheet, unknown organization, 1951	Box 1	Folder 19
Grand Rapids Aquarium Society Constitution and By-Laws, 1952	Box 1	Folder 22
Humor, business cards, poem	Box 1	Folder 23
Michigan Bell Telephone Almanac, 1963	Box 1	Folder 24
The Cracker Barrel, Meijer employee news magazine, 1979-03	Box 1	Folder 25
Meijer News, an employee publication of meijer, inc. 255th edition, 1979-04-18	Box 2	Folder 1
Poster of Grand Rapids City Hall 1888-1969, drawing by H.J. Delano; Celebration!! An Arts Gala!!! at Mary Free Bed Hospital and Rehabilitation Center poster , 1980	Box 2	Folder 5

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