



NEWTON ROSENZWEIG
1905-2002

Honored as a Historymaker 1999
Business and Civic Leader



The following is an oral history interview with Newton Rosenzweig (**NR**) conducted by Reba Wells Grandrud (**RG**) for Historical League, Inc. on February 13, 1998 at his Phoenix home. Also present was his wife Betty Rosenzweig (**BR**).

*Transcripts for website edited by members of Historical League, Inc.
Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Heritage Center Archives, an Historical Society Museum, Tempe, Arizona.*

RG: First, congratulations on being named a Historymaker.

NR: This is Newton Rosenzweig, a member of the state of Arizona since my birth in 1905 and it's been my home for most of the years since I began my life in Arizona, and it probably will be my home for the rest of the years that I have anything do with local activities of one kind or another.

RG: I know from looking at the records in the Historical Society in Papago Park that you were interviewed by Wesley Johnson back in 1976. I went over those so we won't have to go over everything that you told him then, but we got to thinking, that's been 20 years since that tape and a few changes have happened in those 20 years. I'd like to ask what about influences on your life? You've been recognized as a civic leader and someone who's been very influential in Arizona and national happenings. What do you credit at this point in your life with really influencing you?

NR: The first half my life didn't seem to bring up anything that particularly interested me in the community. I think, to some extent, my brief service in World War II kind of got me to thinking about there were more things going on in the world than I realized and perhaps the time had come for me to become active in some way, in some segment of the community. So, on my return to Phoenix after my military service, I shortly thereafter began to sample some of the activities and interests that made up the community. And once I began to be somewhat of a more visible, a more active person in this place called Phoenix; I rather liked what I had experienced. I just sort of seemed to gravitate to one kind of community work. And from then on I got to be a bit busy, as I think everyone who becomes a volunteer, once they



know they have someone who's willing to give up some of their time and find an interest they like, that it is quite rewarding in one way or another. So, since that -- well, going back to late 1940s on up to within 12, 15 years ago, I never lacked for some- thing to help me find a way of keeping busy in my so-called leisure time, which became less and less.

RG: I don't recall seeing anything in particular about your military service. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

NR: I'm not so sure that I really can say it was truly military service, because my four and a half years in uniform were spent entirely within the boundaries of the United States. I started off in the artillery, field artillery, which was, incidentally, the first artillery unit after the colonies became states. But I was rather proud of the fact that I was associated with this beginning of our military units that took part in various wars and ways in which they were expected to serve.

RG: Where did you do your training?

NR: In Oklahoma, Fort Sill. Incidentally, my service in the coast artillery was terminated about two years after I first entered military service; and later years I spent some time in what was called the transportation corps.

RG: Were you in the draft in the early '40s?

NR: I was among the first, I think number 13 in the state of Arizona.

RG: When you did finish your military service, what were you?

RG: What base?

NR: What place? It doesn't sound very military; New York City.

RG: When you came home then Phoenix looked a little bit different perhaps? I also recall from the transcript of the earlier tape that you mentioned having music in your background. You learned violin and so forth. Was music an influence in any way?

NR: I was exposed to some training or teaching that went along with learning how to play a violin, but it never really attracted me to the extent that I thought it might become a lifetime career or a pleasure or enjoyment of some kind. But it wasn't entirely wasted because one of my early activities had to do with the establishing of a professional orchestra that became the Phoenix Symphony. It so happened that the interest must have been sufficient to see what might be put together, developed in the way of a symphony. And my beginning had to do with the invitation from this particular group to come to together over to the home of Dr. Howell Randolph. And he and his wife seemed to be taking a leading part in trying to develop interest and see whether there was enough interest to have a local symphony orchestra. That was in about



the middle of 1947. We had considerable success in finding enough interest and finding people that seemed to be wanting to see Phoenix develop a symphony. And we went through whatever procedure that I guess they felt was a fair way to estimate the kind of support they could get and how we might go about actually creating such an orchestra.

RG: And where did the funding come from for that?

NR: Oh, the funding was all local and it was very modest. The first season, which started in the fall of 1947, I think two concerts in 1947, and then two more in the spring of 1948, and the funding involved a budget of around \$28,000. And I was the treasurer at the time. I did none of the actual fund raising except what I might have contributed out of my own, and my family helping provide some of the needed support.

RG: Mentioning your family, I know your brother, Harry. Were there others in your family?

NR: There was a sister, Anna, who at that time was living in California; never really spent a great deal of time in Arizona, just occasional family visits.

RG: Anna. But what about your brother, Harry, could you describe him from this viewpoint? I know he's been gone a while.

NR: Well, he was younger but a good bit more outgoing than I am and had an earlier interest in getting to be more of a part of the community than I did. His interest started back before World War II by at least five or six years. My interest didn't develop until after World War II.

RG: So were you both pretty much involved in the same organizations or circles?

NR: Well, in some respects we duplicated or overlapped, but generally it just seemed sort of we drifted in a different direction. His interest in the Boys Club for one thing, and he was also active in helping to establish Blue Cross and Blue Shield here. I think he served as treasurer for a few years. And he also began to develop an interest in politics and served as a Republican state chairman for about a dozen years. And Barry Goldwater's campaign every few years -- being involved in reelecting him.

RG: When do the Goldwater family and the Rosenzweigs become acquainted, because the two names often would come up together?

NR: I'd say probably in our growing up years our families lived within about two blocks of each other on Central Avenue, close to downtown. But when I say close to downtown where the residential areas were, today are much different in the way of the makeup of our community because of our tremendous population growth. But everything in the early 1900s was probably -- oh, you could walk there in about fifteen minutes, or if you had a bicycle you could get there in five minutes.



RG: Your home was there on North Central Avenue. How close were-- do you remember the block, what block you were in?

NR: 500, 504 was the actual house number.

RG: Who were some of the other people, families who lived there as you were growing up?

NR: Oh, let's see, on our right side going toward town was a Dr. Craig, Robert Craig, a surgeon. And two houses away was a family of Silva, known in the community, but not as well as it was then. And another was our mayor, I can't remember whether it's one term or two terms, name was Peter Corpstein. He had two sons, one by the name of Bill and another by the name of Pete, who was quite a swimmer as I remember.

RG: Speaking of swimming, was this something you enjoyed earlier? I believe you had a pool at your house. Now, was that there on Central where the pool was located?

NR: Well, no, because the house on Central we have just been talking about was where I was born and raised for about until the time I went to college, so that would be from 1905 to about 1923. And during the time I was in college, the family bought what became our family home on Third Street beyond McDowell-- actually, the corner of Third Street and Monte Vista, which is the same street the Heard Museum is on. And that was considered out in the country.

RG: And that house is gone, I suppose? The house is gone?

NR: Sadly. It's gone. It became an apartment house development.

RG: Oh, there's the house. We're looking at a photograph, a black and white.

NR: Whether that was taken before or just after my folks moved in, I'm not sure, but I think my father -- well, the fountain must have been there because my father came along later and added what we refer to as a concrete bench.

BR: We have it out in the back yard.

NR: And then he added a flagpole in this area here. This is looking toward Monte Vista. And this would be over toward Third Street which ran north and south.

RG: So the house is facing Monte Vista? And then it's on Third Street?

NR: Yes. I was just going to ask, if you run across anything pertaining to Dwight B. Heard -- he is the one who was the developer of that area. And his home was originally what then became -- not his home; he



actually put up a separate building on his property that became the Heard Museum, which was privately owned by their family. But on his death, I think it was, or his wife's death, this was then a contribution to the city. No, I can't say actually a true contribution to the city, because it was always privately funded. So, just how the Heard Museum evolved into anything that might be called a public, well, place where Indian art is exhibited, as far as I know I think it always continued private. That might have been because Dwight B. Heard was the owner of a morning newspaper, which in those years was called The Republican. And about, oh, in about-- this area was developed in 1915. And about a dozen year later Dwight B. Heard passed away, but the newspaper was continued as part of the Heard holdings share of the estate. And there was a long-time employee by the name of Stauffer, business manager, and then a brother-in-law of Stauffer, the two of them took over the operation of the newspaper.

RG: I think so. I was just going to comment on the house. Your family had built the house or had it built, or was it already built?

NR: No, it was built by a local family who I think the father was a doctor, I'm not sure. And they had about five or six children, because the house we bought from them had seven bedrooms.

RG: Wow. I was going to ask, was that considered a prairie style architecture, or do you know?

NR: I wouldn't say so. I think it was just an ordinary everyday house with a little extra space because they had a lot of children. And we had also the good luck to buy a house with a finished off basement under the house. And luckily, because Phoenix had no type of air conditioning in those days, when you got below ground level there was some cooling effect because of the dirt that filled in around the foundation. This would be, on an average, about, when the hot weather came along, about 15 degrees cooler. So, that was pretty much our living quarters for four or five months of the summer. The swimming pool, we put in along about 1928, and we also had put in a tennis court a little bit earlier. And I think that was about the extent of anything of an athletic nature. We also added, on the far side of the house, what you usually refer to as a porte-cochere and the roof of the porte-cochere served as a summer time bedroom. It was all open and the nighttime air outdoors was considerably cooler than the indoors.

RG: So a sleeping porch, in a sense.

NR: That's what it was. We also had room for two cots out there.

BR: That's correct. I think Dr. Shackelford built their home in 1918.

RG: Right, right. I also wanted to go back, you mentioned the Stauffers who took over The Republican. I'm sure you've known Sylvia for a long time, Sylvia Laughlin.

NR: Sylvia and Eleanor lived in this area.



RG: Now, Eleanor is her sister?

NR: Her husband's name is Neely, Guy Neatly, who is a CPA; came here right after the war.

RG: In the earlier tape that I keep referring to that was done in 1976, you credited air conditioning with being one of the reasons for the growth of Phoenix. It certainly helped. And what else? What were the other--

NR: I'd say number one was the building of Roosevelt Dam which provided a supply of water that would help perpetuate the agricultural makeup of the valley. And, number two, I'd say was the-- well, I'm not going to say I'm positive, but I'd say it's one of the things, was the bringing of a transcontinental railroad service. And number three was development of airplanes which made a trip from Chicago to Phoenix in less than half a day. If you had to depend on a train it would take roughly about three days. And then I think the last one that I have come to mind was the, was the tremendous amount of people becoming acquainted with Arizona that came about through World War II, because we had two air fields here, and one in Tucson and, more importantly, from the standpoint of numbers of individuals exposed on infantry training fields which made up a great percentage of our military. So there was that day-after-day exposure, and I think those individuals who were lucky to be here just in the winter months thought this was a pretty nice place.

RG: What would you have to say about water today? Is that a problem as far as you're concerned, or a lack of it or is --

NR: Well, frankly, I don't really give it much thought. I think since the Central Arizona Project was developed we have a pretty reliable source of water. The Colorado River, I don't think has ever been dry to my knowledge. We have, of course, the canal that brings that share of water that we negotiated some years ago. We first started talking about getting water -- well, my beginning knowledge of doing something about planning a reliable source of water beyond the original dam came along in 1922 with the enactment of the Santa Fe Compact. I think this has worked out locally between our state and New Mexico and probably Colorado, I'm not sure. But the Santa Fe Compact indicates the compact summaries. You've got the name of Santa Fe and New Mexico.

RG: What about transportation; do you --

NR: You mean in terms of the present day transportation?

RG: Yes. And what should we be doing about mass transit and so forth? If you were 50 years younger, would you be in there trying to get us mass transit?

NR: No. I, luckily, got to know a little bit about it, but a little bit late. I also read a couple or three articles that had quite a critical way of looking at mass transit and the fact that mass transit really applies to a city



where they have a huge concentration of population within a short distance, because it doesn't work out too well if it's spread out and they have to pick up people in outlying areas. It just doesn't serve its purpose. It might for the handicapped individual who is limited in getting about. But there is something that I have read from time to time called *America's Love Affair with the Automobile*, and if something can be done mandatory, an approach to thinking about mass transit might succeed. But if it's left up to the people, they want to go when they want to go, where they want to go, take as long as they want to do it, change their mind as often as they want to.

RG: So what do you think is the answer to our pollution problems with all of this driving our vehicles? Have you ever thought of that?

NR: Oh, yes. I am very conscious of it. In fact, I'm affected by what's happening, especially the 5:00 o'clock traffic. I can't say I have any right to make up a person's mind where they want to live, but Arizona and a state like New Mexico, certainly Nevada, probably Colorado, there is a great deal of open space and they don't all have to concentrate in the same general area. When my father came here there was even more space, but he wanted to start his business in a town that looked like it had a future, and he chose Arizona. He was successful. But for every person that comes here with that attitude of mind, I don't know what the percentage is, but half or more do not accomplish what they had in mind when they came here. They move on elsewhere, and maybe they're successful in the next place. But there's lots of other parts of the country that I think have considerable potential if the right people come along and have the right kinds of organization to back them up.

RG: So other communities could grow as well as Phoenix, rather than everybody coming here to Phoenix?

NR: Well, just like, you know, in a way what's been happening here in the Valley. Originally there were only two towns here. I think Tempe was one. They were perhaps 10, 15 years earlier than Phoenix, because that seems to be the way the irrigation needs or, rather, the need for water for crops, because Tempe was right alongside of the Salt River, so they didn't have to wait for a dam if it wasn't as -- of course, it's -- wells were developed later, came along through the water that was generated for storage. Tucson, as I'm sure you know, is an older community -- but they were not primarily an agricultural development. Prescott was older but their interest was mining in the early years.

RG: Right. Let's talk a little bit about the volunteer type work you have done, some of the organizations. Could you name a few over the years that you felt were important and you enjoyed particularly?

NR: Well, I can name probably some of them, but I did put together a list. Here it is. This is just in the way of a brief synopsis.

RG: This is impressive, and I know that you-- there's some red dots by some. We're looking at a list of --well, just before we talk about some of these, let's talk about your work time. Did you work like an 8:00



to 5:00 day or were you pretty flexible, real early when you first went into the store?

NR: When I first went in, which was in 1927, I'd say I spent virtually all my daytime working time. You must remember that in the pre-World War II years, the average business -- well, it depends on the type of business, but many of them would start about 8:00 in the morning and continue to about 6:00 in the evening. And that wasn't five days a week, that was six days a week. I can't say I was one of those, but I think even though I gave quite a bit of bit of time to volunteer efforts, the fact that we worked six days gave me a feeling that I kind of evened up my time I devoted to volunteer activities, although that six-day period and many a time, particularly in the fall of the year which is our busiest time, I'd go down to our store and put in a few hours on a Sunday catching up on detail work. didn't have anything in the way of a hobby. I had no personal interest in anything that took, really, much time. I did play quite a bit of tennis, but that's a high concentration of activity that you can do in about an hour. So I just didn't sit around and play Mumbledy Peg or get involved in a card game or do any fishing or whatever some of the things are that interest other individuals.

RG: I'd say that Phoenix and the Valley are very lucky that they became your hobby, in a sense, because this is an impressive list. And we're aware that you have done much, much community service. Is there any one organization or activity that stands out in your mind from all of these, over many years that you have contributed?

NR: Well, I don't want to say I wasn't a typical volunteer, but I found that maybe after a few years with a particular organization I no longer had the same incentive to continue on with it so I was kind of a drifter.

RG: Did you like being in on the forming of the organization, the early period of an organization?

NR: Well, truthfully, most of the organizations that I in some way or other participated or was active in was, at least a few years after an organization beginning had taken place, so I wasn't involved with them like I was with the symphony. There were only a few others that I was in from the beginning. Some I stayed with a year or two, some I stayed with as much as 20 years. St. Luke's Hospital, I served about 20 years on the Board. I was active in city -- well, I don't want to call it political affairs for about 20 years. I was active in the Phoenix Civic Plaza on a 20-year, 25-year period of service; Arizona Community Foundation, 10 or 12 years. Well, I don't know -- I just tried to move from place to place wherever they thought they wanted to have me around.

RG: With the Civic Center, are you pleased with how it's turned out and the way it looks now and what's happening? I think we're getting a shaking of the head negative.

NR: Well, I -- are we allowed to be negative?

RG: You are allowed to be negative.



NR: Let's put it this way: When a group of people get together and say this is needed in our community and they all seem to be sincere, and I have no reason to question this, but then there is a, over the years a gradual evolvement in what they feel are now the needs of what we originally thought had really in mind, because we were supposed to concentrate in getting a certain job done. So I just sort of went along with what I thought was appropriate, set forth what we were sincerely trying to accomplish. And today-- how long have you been in Phoenix?

RG: About 15, 16 years.

NR: Well, Phoenix had a tremendous change began to come about throughout the United States, particularly, not necessarily big cities, all cities where it had been tradition- al, people just had gone along with it because there it was. When you have a city reach a certain point, beyond 2,000, not everyone who maybe worked there in the central part of the city, or at least lived there, didn't want to remain in that same kind of an atmosphere as they started off with. So Phoenix had reached a stage where there were people, particularly new people, coming here and saying that we no longer wanted to put up with downtown such as you had. We want to, well, both accommodate and one way or another show our progress as a city to begin developing shopping malls. So, because of this, the shopping mall approach, having - I can't remember exactly when it had its beginning, I think around 1920. It -- this changed the makeup of our community and that of many communities throughout the U.S. So we said in order to keep people wanting to visit downtown, we've got to do something to show that downtown deserves their support. So I can't say how many others cities decided that a convention center would be a means of bringing more people into downtown for just the ordinary everyday life, but that's the premise we started off with and we were going to restore or rebuild or regenerate.

Interview with Newton Rosenzweig continued March 3, 1998 .

RG: Mr. Rosenzweig was talking about the Civic Plaza and when this was first conceived and started as a way to revitalize downtown.

NR: I can't remember the exact instance or time which we left off before saying what I had to say on your first visit here, but the Plaza, as I think I said in an overall way, had its purpose to help along with the reviving of the downtown business district which was really the only business district that Phoenix had since its founding. And while a number major stores and various specialty type businesses had moved to other parts of the city, there still remained a major business activities that had always taken place in that part of Phoenix. We didn't have anything to really say to us what we were trying to do would be successful or not or part way achieve its purpose, but we had visited some places in other parts of the United States where they had done a development going back over the last five or ten years, and they generally were quite successful. I think the cities we visited -- one was San Diego and also Las Vegas. I had read about a number of others, and we felt we were pursuing the right path to accomplish what we had in mind. I can't really say it was a complete success, nor was it a failure, it just seemed to take somewhat longer to have a pattern or to start seeing some activity developing in certain areas. Our Convention Center, I would say,



was moderately successful. But, of course, the size of the center, 50,000 was the number of square feet recommended by Stanford Research. However, before any actual development of the plans, the architectural drawings was made, the council decided that we should increase the size from 50,000 to 100,000 which would make our convention facilities more attractive to a greater variety of groups, particularly those where they might attract a larger number of people to either attend the convention or something in connection with it such as a trade show.

RG: Do you recall what was on the site where the Convention Center now is when you first started talking about this?

NR: Well, actually, we had three, oh, I think, specific locations that we thought should be among those considered as the actual building location in the downtown area. One was on First Avenue in the vicinity of the YMCA about in the neighborhood of where First Avenue and Van Buren intersected. The second was to be located permanently facing on Van Buren and occupy land from, say, Third to Fifth, but I'd really need you to refresh my memory to come up with something a little bit more exact. The third one, which seemed to be generally looked on as the number one location is where the Plaza now is. And it accomplished both the ideal site in our mind for the Convention Center; just really not outside the business district nor inside the central business district. It was about, oh, a block or so removed from such stores as Diamond's and Korrick's and Penney's, and the variety stores that generally would be the major business type of, oh, not only business, but having to do with things with the home and with their business activities, because Phoenix was, to a large extent, the center where people involved in agricultural activities, whether it had to do with planting vegetables or raising like -- well, sheep or cattle, and they from time to time would find it necessary to come in and shop for what would be necessary to continuing the conduct of their business. Their wives would usually accompany them, sometimes children, depending on their age. And the mothers were primarily interested in visiting stores that might have something for the home- either an appliance or something needed in the kitchen or had to do with general housekeeping, as well as clothing. You replenish whatever they have need So that was a location that finally came about. That area was not solidly occupied, but there were a variety of stores. I remember one being a fairly good sized furniture store called The Globe.

RG: Globe. Now this was in the '60s that you're thinking this; is that right?

NR: Yes, yes, in the -- oh, my personal experience was in the years from about '63 to '68.

RG: Those three locations, was that pretty much debated in city council or with a group of business men?

NR: I think there was a certain amount of, I don't know whether it was strict something to do with what they felt might be the success of the Center which might maybe benefit their business. I remember one man calling me on the telephone regarding Park Central, and he was hoping that we would locate the Convention Center either adjacent or near the Park Central, for obvious reasons if it helped simulate business among those who had located in the Park Central Mall.



RG: Do you recall what the final vote was? Did everybody finally come around?

NR: I don't think it was really a vote. I think it was sort of a matter of talking back and forth, and they finally reached -- I don't know whether they had the support of every council member, I can't say, but enough to make a final determination.

RG: And how long was it -- how long was the construction ongoing? I suppose buildings had to be moved or torn down.

NR: We, of course, would like to have had it done in the next week after we started in. But I think that only two bidders came along, one from Tucson and one from Phoenix; the one from Phoenix area, Del Webb. And the one in Tucson, it had been in Tucson probably as long as or longer than Del Webb. Del Webb had the lower bid of the two that came in. And at the time of construction was, I can't say whether it was put in days or put in months, but it was approximately one year. However, we ran into a number of factors which more seriously affected the building of the Convention Center Plaza than we had anticipated. One had to do that evidently that was that was a rather wet year in Phoenix in the number of the rain storms. Each was equally -- in some way affected the building, but they did have to shut down maybe for a day, maybe for four or five days. And it finally ended up that the completion of the Plaza was in either late August or early September of the second following year. Construction got under way in late April of May or so of 1969, and completion was in September of '71.

RG: '71. Who was mayor at the time, do you remember, when it was completed? Who was the mayor at the time?

NR: At the time the Center, the Plaza was completed was John Driggs. I think he was originally elected for a two-year term in, let's see, would be about 1968. He then would have taken office in January of '69, but I may be about a year off. In those days the mayor was elected for two years. Four years is now the period of service. During that time there was a good deal of discussion about the Symphony Hall as to whether it might be primarily designed to serve the symphony or maybe with some minor changes could be what would be desirable for more than just a musical program, concert. But that never got very serious. That particular period, as I remember, Phoenix didn't really ever seemed to show much interest in what I would call traveling productions, whether it had to do with another type of another, another symphony orchestra from another part of the United States or it had to do with a theatrical production or ballet or perhaps a grand opera. We made a very, not major attempt, but we wanted the community to know that if they were interested in the theater that we would like to hear what they had this mind. And it seems that though we talked to several different people that felt what we were doing was going to be very helpful to the community in terms of providing entertainment, they just couldn't seem to come up with a representative. There was no single group that desired to go ahead with the auditorium. So, actually, that didn't enter into any of our later discussions (inaudible). We did go as far as to, in a way, reserve one corner of the area that we later on purchased. This would have been the corner of Second Street and



Adams, directly across from where the Herberger is now located.

RG: Okay. And you reserved that corner?

NR: That's right. We said for future-- I don't know if we said theater or auditorium. We probably maybe just said whatever would be in the interest of the public, that we try to go along with what accomplished that purpose. And, of course, the second auditorium, since we were going to have the Phoenix Symphony, they both could be quite helpful at times in helping us to bring a convention to Phoenix, because sometimes conventions will break up into groups. And we did provide in the main building for convention activities that could handle groups from 25 up to 100 or so. So that took care of that particular type of need.

RG: Now, was the symphony already pretty well established at this time, the orchestra?

NR: It had been going since 1947. As I remember, they had their first concert, I believe, around the early part of November, 1947. We just had four concerts the first year.

RG: Was there a big celebration when the Center was completed?

NR: I think that the community did make a special effort or, rather, the council made a special effort for the community to know about the convention facilities, where they were and what they could do, and there's a program of sorts. And at that time I was for about a year the president of the Symphony Board, so I was supposed to offer some kind of remarks. We did have one distinguished visitor - the daughter of President Eisenhower. I think maybe Mayor Driggs or someone on the council sill maybe had asked certain people back in Washington to suggest someone to add to the importance of the Plaza having reached its stage of usefulness. And she did talk, I think, for about 15 minutes. It was around 6:30 in the evening; whether that was done to accommodate business people that would normally be tied up until about 5:00 or a case of being involved in the retail store operation could be till 6:00. So the program itself got under way about 7:00.

RG: Was there any real vocal opposition to doing this like the newspapers?

NR: The newspaper went along with it. The local opposition was -- well, it wasn't organized, but there really wasn't a very strong support group for the Plaza facilities either. They had mixed feelings about what its chances for success might be and how well it would help to restore, rebuild downtown as you know. You said you've been here for 15 years?

RG: Right.

NR: This would have been, I think, a little over 20 years ago.



RG: Right. How has it changed since that original opening of what was there when it was completed? How much change has there been now in recent years? It was completed in '71, so that's 25 years ago. I know it was refurbished and the fountains redone and so forth in, what, the '80s, late '80s?

NR: Well, there was a virtual doubling of convention facilities that got under way in 1984. And we spent, at that time, 40 something million dollars, compared to the original building with the auditorium, the others facilities went along with it, buying the land and parking, we got that under way for about \$27 million. And the doubling of the convention facilities only, nothing in the way of another facility like a second auditorium or buying more land, we spent some \$40 million getting it done. It was kind of another one of somebody else's dreams, Phoenix having the kind of weather it did, didn't stand much chance of bringing conventions here in the summer months. That eliminated about five months of the year. So the hotel people, who were the ones who were pushing an additional facility or lease more space were saying, "If we could have a second facility it would bring in more conventions or enable more conventions to take place in the cooler weather." And the idea behind what they were trying to do, maybe they accomplished what they hoped to accomplish, was, it takes time to set up a convention, particularly those that want to have a trade show trade show along with it. Say it takes about two days to set up such a show and it takes about one day to disassemble it. So they thought sometimes it might be two groups who would already have scheduled the time for their particular convention and it might not coincide, but overlap some of the time of another group that was coming here. So, while this group that was here a little bit earlier was, I want to say disassembling their show, another group could be coming in here occupying space that wasn't already given over to another convention. I never really got into that because that was handled by the Convention Bureau in Phoenix. I can't remember who was the head of it at the time. Later a man by the name of David Radcliff came in, and I think he was the first professional convention executive that we had ever had. He is a former Phoenician in his growing up days, and then somehow they got into the field of convention activity and also what might be called a visitor's center to make whatever facilities that would be needed. In fact, he's still here. I haven't seen him for years but he seems to know what he's doing.

RG: Now, when this started, you mentioned a Board. Is it still governed the same way? Is there a Board that kind of manages and --

NR: Yes.

RG: How has that changed over the years?

NR: Originally the Board was made up of members of what might be termed the convention and auditorium facilities, and for a long while that same group stayed one way or another with the project. I think we -- our first Board was to be, first appointed Board was to be somewhere between-- could be as low as 11 and as many as 15. And I was appointed to continue with the original Board. And, as I say, everyone else also had the experience of wanting to bring about a convention center.

RG: So you were on the Board for quite a number of years?



NR: Well, the Board actually was appointed, as I remember right, by the mayor at that time. Whether or not that would have been Driggs or someone else, I'm not sure. But I ended up as one of the dozen or so who made up the Board. During the early years, I was never in any sort of executive position or the executive Board, or whatever they called it, group that made some minor decisions. But when the election took place, I was elected vice chairman. And the man who was president, I think I might have mentioned his name before, Eugene Lee, whose business activity was heading the Investment Department of the Valley National Bank. And Gene had occasion to come along in, I think, August or sometime during the summer. He had his wife and maybe children, who were going to be going to parts of Europe for their vacation. He fell ill. And I can't remember whether the plane made an emergency landing or not, but by the time they got to New York, I think they already knew, suspected quite strongly that it was his heart, and he didn't survive. So I automatically fell into the job of becoming president of the Civic Plaza Board. And they couldn't get rid of me for about 20 something years.

RG: What about women on the Board? Were there any in that original group?

NR: No.

RG: Are there any now?

NR: I know of one. She's active in downtown community college. I think they have been having some of their classes in what we knew as the xxxCord Department Store building on First Street and Washington. But she was elected I'd say, roughly about either late 1970s, early 1980s. She still might be on the Board, I don't know. Our Board, I haven't yet mentioned it, is very similar to a private corporate board. We are not subject to making changes in our Board unless we want to. We don't have to live up to certain guidelines in any way.

RG: So if it's working well, it continues. What about during this whole history of the Civic Center and the changes, Convention Center, did the public mood change particularly or how do you see that whole period of time?

NR: Only as we have seen some real changes. I would say part of it is due to the fact that there are different periods in Phoenix in the Valley since World War II when we would have considerable influx of people from other parts of the country. And there might be two or three years or five years where there wasn't a noticeable change in the population. Many of these people already, prior to coming to Phoenix, had been living in cities where the shopping mall was becoming more and more predominant, particular in retailing. So, what finally seemed to be something that both earlier residents and newer residents seemed to favor was to be able to shop closer to their homes. And that had its beginning, at least on a major scale, with Park Central. But a number of established firms didn't wait for Park Central, they thought they'd get a competitive edge to move to another part of the city. I remember a variety of others and for whatever reasons decided to locate where they did. And what actually ended up as a business center, retail



shopping center, the downtown never fully came back, at least in its original pattern. But some businesses had the need of considerable checking, picking up of information that had to do with courthouse records, or it might be a law firm that a large part of its legal services was involved in trial work, so they obviously didn't want to be too far away from wherever their primary activity is. And I was also on that committee. I can't recall what the name of it was. It was another committee in the way of having a final decision. We were only an advisory group on what the County should do regarding its need for expanded space. I know you've have heard of a man by the name of David Murdock. He was chairman and I was vice-chairman. We didn't have too many meetings. I can't recall exactly what we were supposed to advise about, but evidently we were to come up with the recommendation for an architect. This would have been at that time a very, very substantial kind of a development whether it took place downtown or a few blocks away or what. But the architect would have the overall responsibility for the job no matter where they located. And Mr. Murdock had recommended somebody who had handled some of his architectural work when he was building along Central and in that area. And the Board didn't seem to feel he was either capable, or he maybe belonged to the other political party, so he got mad and kind of just-- well, he wouldn't be flexible about who the architect would be. So, I was next in line. I inherited the job. So, in my opinion, a decision that the County made about where they were going to locate their new court building, their new administrative building, their new jail really played a much more important part in the life of Phoenix at that particular time. And conventions, something that's planned ahead four or five years, particularly a big one, it takes a while for people to say, "Well, I'm not ready for a change." But here we were asked to come up with recommendations for our development. And that really had a great deal to do with keeping downtown Phoenix at least partly together, because whether it was an engineering firm or a legal firm or a banking firm, they wanted to be where it was best for their type of clientele. That hasn't been mentioned much but it does occur to me about once every ten years.

RG: Just a little side here in connection with the new City Hall down right by the County building and so forth, what do you think about refurbishing the Orpheum Theatre and incorporating it into that new [building]? Do you like that idea of saving the old and adding it, or how do you feel about that?

NR: Did I swear to be truthful?

RG: Very truthful.

NR: Well, I don't personally think that the spenditure of the amount of money, I think it ran somewhere around \$12 million, did not justify using taxpayer money that way. It cost around \$500,000 for the Orpheum originally, and it was built in January, 1929. But, of course, it was within a few blocks of just about anyone in Phoenix who wanted to go to the theater, and all our movie houses were in the downtown area.

RG: There's a lot of nostalgia that grows over a time for things like that. I think that's part of it. Recently did you follow the Cine Capri, that building where-- how many petitioners were there that wanted to save [it]?



NR: I thought it was a waste of time.

NR: Those who happened to be kind of moved by nostalgia that says, "Oh, this was wonderful," they're never going to change. That's fine, but I can understand why the business interest, the ownership of that location, I'm sure it cared very, very little about what happens to it.

RG: Earlier we were talking when I first asked you about this whole idea of the Civic Center, and you kind of shook your head, so let me ask this: If you were doing it again, you are on the City Council and you're helping to make this decision, what do you think might have been a better way or would you do the same thing eventually again?

NR: Well, I really don't, because Phoenix was in the midst of its population explosion, and there would have been no way of telling in what direction the city would have been -- sort of become a center again. I think that other cities went through pretty much what we did. San Diego particularly located their convention facilities in the downtown area just as we did within a couple blocks. In the last ten years or so they moved their convention facilities, at least the larger one.

BR: Mission Valley?

NR: I think that would be it. But there's a large body of water there. And along the rim of the water are some of the entertainment facilities and the other side of the convention hotel development.

RG: So it really is kind of a tossup then, you really don't know what's going to happen?

NR: Well, like this man that called me that was one of the developers of Park Central, and obviously it would have been to his advantage and his tenants to be located there. Now, my brother and I had some property farther out on Central, almost Indian School. And we didn't know it at the time, it was vacant property, but later on we developed that into a complex. I don't know whether you're familiar with Rosenzweig's Center. It's on Central and about one block from Indian School on the west side of the road. It was a joint development that one company and ourselves put together. It was originally, when father first bought the location, it was to be the site of our future home when we maybe became a little more mature. But then they ran into a stumbling block. There was no gas service out there. My mother said she wouldn't go any place that she wasn't able to have gas to cook, so that kind of knocked it out, and we ended up in a home being built by someone else a couple years earlier. And it was on Third Street and Monte Vista.

RG: So about what year are we talking about? We talked about it earlier, but I've forgotten.

NR: Well, you talked about if I was going to be involved again in building another Convention Center Plaza where would I have probably wanted to locate it, so I've already mentioned two other possibilities,



but the way the town's grown, maybe we should have located it out in the area where there are more hotel facilities.

RG: Farther north?

NR: Yes, we might have ended up in Scottsdale. I don't know.

RG: Before we leave all of this, what about the bond program? How did that work?

NR: The bond program to pay for all this. It worked out fine except for it had what they call a sunset clause. Because they've allowed that to continue, and as the cities become larger, it still has the same sources of revenue that it had back in the 1960s. But with the population we had at that time, and particularly the fact that we didn't have nearly the amount of construction now. Now, the reason I say construction, because the main source of revenue from those sales taxes that were set up to finance the Civic Plaza are still in effect and the largest chunk of money, at least when I was on the Plaza, came from construction, both home construction and commercial construction. And nobody seems to want to admit it, at least being quoted as saying, "This is the way we ought to do it," but I think it's unfair to the taxpayer who wants to build a home and he has absolutely no interest in the Plaza why he should be forced to pay a sales tax to help not only keep up the Plaza, but the last ten years, much of that revenue that keeps coming in, is used for facilities that have nothing to do with the Plaza.

RG: Such as?

NR: Such as the basketball arena. Personally, I happen to be one who favors a low tax, however, it should not be so low as to not make it possible to provide necessary services that serve the majority of residents in the community. When we get down to specific types of activity such as a cultural center or a sports center, or anything that is going to be limited to those people who naturally have an interest in that particular type of activity, whether you call it entertainment or just a pleasure or being a spirited supporter of a particular kind of activity, I'm thinking of whether it has to do with the symphony orchestra or a theater that would provide housing for whatever might be offered in the way of something that appeals to a portion of the community. They tell me in the symphony orchestra only about five percent of the community have an interest in that type of music. When it comes to a sports activity, it is likely that it is a larger percentage, but I don't think it is in any way a majority of the community. When it comes to entertainment, whether it has to do with a traveling orchestra or a skating group or a theater program, that naturally would have some appeal, but, again, I don't think it would be something that the majority of the residents in the community who have little or no interest should be asked to pay taxes to provide this entertainment for the group that seems to enjoy either the music or dance or theater. That is a personal activity. Many people are able to travel to other places where they might have that, and they would probably be wanting to enjoy a trip down there to see a particular type of entertainment that would fit in with their vacation plans.

RG: What do you think about the transient problem over the years, the people who come here in the



winter, the street people? How long has that been going on, when you were first on city council?

NR: I can only speak for Phoenix. And having lived here the greater part of my life, there is always a transient problem going back to my growing up days. It didn't just develop over the last 15 or 20 years, but there's always been a certain element that perhaps are known as a free spirit who don't want to be tied down to one place in the United States or one place anyplace else. So we call them hobos or tramps or hitchhikers, or whatever, and this was their way of life. Unfortunately, some of the homeless have been those who came out of mental institutions, and then I guess numerous incidents they had no place else to go. They have no family here to look after them, not even a United Way type of agency to say that "We're here to give you help in any way you need." The third group-- I'm calling them groups, I don't know what to say -- have to do with those on drugs, including alcohol. And there is no stability in their lives when they are subject to what might come out of their particular desire to say that they want to remain on drugs or they want to be a person who can just live off the community. So the feeling is well, why should I work if we make it so inviting. Surely there was no question that there's some who are victims of circumstances, particularly family violence or a happening in their life other than caused by an accident. It may be a temporary situation, but some of those are permanent disability that comes up because of whatever happened at that particular time in their lives. And we do have a United Way, who are ready and able to provide essential service to help these people get along through their lives. But as far as the so-called homeless, that's a nice sounding term to those who feel they are going to go out of their way to provide for people who have a temporary family situation that they can't do anything about. And they certainly deserve some help, but we, I think, ought to make an effort to try to have people who are willing to make an effort on their part to meet the community half way and try to become responsible citizens. And, of course, on the other hand, too, we have to recognize that there's been a complete change of the make-up of our country, starting with the time when welfare and other kinds of government payment for whatever their particular problem was, and it's hard to say that whether we'll be able to change the community on our own or are we going to have to wait until the government makes some changes, some of a minor nature, some radical. Who knows what will come along in the next 20, 25 years.

RG: Right. Thinking about taxpayers and citizens, how do you feel about the Arizona Heritage Fund, the \$20 million that we voted to give to Game & Fish and to Arizona State Parks out of the Lottery money? You know, the question, it may be coming up, going back out to the voters. Do you have any thoughts on the Heritage Fund or the good it's done?

NR: When you say "Heritage," are you talking about people, are you talking about buildings that has something to do with our development?

RG: Both. Ten million dollars of this lottery money, after it goes to education and transportation, goes to Arizona State Parks, for example. And 1.7 million is used for preservation of buildings that are eligible for the National Registry. Then there's another portion that goes to buy land for state parks, and another part to improve hiking and biking and equestrian trails. And then the other ten million, Game & Fish use that for the natural resources. And I just wondered if you had any thoughts about the lottery, whether that's a viable



fund that we should tap into somehow?

NR: Well, actually, I'm afraid it's going to come down to what sort of personal feeling you have about each of these type of funds that come from tax money. Did they decide yet about the use of the money from the tobacco?

RG: I don't know.

NR: Some of it goes to general help around the state. Well, I happen to be a person who got into any particular kind of program that I felt was important in my life where I'd like to give time to and maybe some support to, so I never really developed a very strong feeling about a game of sports or what to do with leisure time. Most of my leisure time over the years has been partly in sports, but certainly those sports where my friends or neighbors are a part of whatever that particular activity is and do it on the basis of we enjoy it, that's all it is. We don't feel we have to be at a certain place to witness it or participate.

RG: So you feel strongly about community involvement?

NR: Yes, I do.

RG: I liked what you said about in the list of things we were looking at for background information, the Town Halls. You enjoyed those for the information you gained.

NR: Oh, yes. I tell you, this should be a part of every individual's life who has time and has, particularly, the interest and whatever money goes along with making it a part of his life or his children's life or his neighborhood's life.

RG: Let's talk a little bit about the Arizona Community Foundation. That's a good organization that you had a hand in earlier, you and your brother. How did that all come about?

NR: I think the desire had been in the, at least in the minds of maybe not so much local people who had grown up, gone through the stages when Phoenix sort of moved along from a village to a small town, and from a small town to a small city, and later kept expanding as just the course of events pointed people toward Phoenix or the people already in Phoenix began to think in terms of the community rather than the neighborhood. I was not a part of the group that organized the Town Hall. I was invited to the first one. The subject happened to be taxes and I begged off. I said I just really didn't know enough about taxes or felt I could make a contribution. But I guess that went on as Town Hall continued. It's still on as you know. The first one, I think, was in 1960. And who the sponsoring group or the organizing group is, I can't say. Now, we were talking about the Community Foundation. I think that was something that a program or a project or undertaking that has something to do with, in a sense, of like a United Way way of getting the kind of support, the kind of money needed for taking care of major projects that, again, were community type projects, whether they had to do with education or it had to do with a handicapped person or a



youngster trying to, well, develop in the normal way, give some of the attention to family violence, do some attention to education, particularly where young people are concerned that have maybe reached a stage in life where it's of importance to keep going to school but they don't have the financial means to continue on into a higher education, whether it's college or some other field of interest, whether going on to becoming a professional musician. And just a personal thing, Betty and I set up a limited scholarship over at ASU for two different kinds of future interests. One has to do with music, the other has to do with theater. Some individual, some student who has a desire to continue in the field of music or theater and seems to be dedicated to where it's something they want to continue, maybe teach or maybe participate one way or another, I think that deserves encouragement, but as a private individual, not necessarily by the government.

RG: Right. So, again, that's another; you feel very strongly that there are people who will give money and time. Tell me about the Volunteer Bureau and the Anna Rosenzweig Volunteer Award.

NR: Well, where the idea came from, off and on I got to thinking (this would be back in the maybe 1960s) that volunteers have been with us since the start of civilization and one way or another they have performed a great deal of valuable service in helping along in certain areas that might have to do with the unfortunate. It might have to do with those who are fortunate. Again, here, we had a symphony orchestra going before the war that I think was made up completely of volunteers. The individuals who formed the orchestra did this on a volunteer basis, and I guess those are helped along one way or another, whether it had to do with ushering or putting together a bit of food for the rehearsals. So volunteers, I think -- I wouldn't say that a community could live without them, but it does make a tremendous difference to have them. The Volunteer Bureau, I was only with them actually as a Board member for a few years. But how it came about, I got to feeling that they deserved recognition and that perhaps we ought to put together some kind of a program or activity that would have them given more public attention, more attention by the public, and also to encourage additional volunteers who had to be sort of motivated to become one of the volunteers, whether it was an organized group or it was an informal group, someone maybe, well, had to do with an illness or an accident that had no family and, of course, it would be very, very helpful if there was somebody who they could depend on to run an errand for them, pick up groceries. So, as part of our foundation which we started through the Arizona Community Foundation, and the Volunteer Group which is a United Way agency, we thought that there should be an annual kind of a time when we would in some way recognize what they had contributed to the community. So my brother and I, out of our Community Foundation, set up a fund of several the dollars to underwrite this recognition program. And we had the support of the community council and, of course, the Volunteer Bureau, plus one or two others who sort of wanted to be a part of this. And the few thousand dollars that we provided each year was mostly to underwrite the luncheon so that, especially individuals with just average incomes would be encouraged to at least attend a luncheon and hear what was going on. And we also gave each of the volunteers -- we recognized five each year, and each of those five would have been chosen by an anonymous committee. They ranged in age from around 14, 15 to in their '90s. We gave a wall clock and that was separate. My brother and I did that on our own. So did I give you what you were seeking?



RG: Yes. Will this be a program that will continue?

NR: I wish. We had felt that what we were doing was that important, but during the course of the period, there is roughly about ten years, several others came in the picture who were pretty much duplicating what we did. And they were, in a couple instances, nation-wide organizations. One was JC Penney and another one was, I think, the telephone company, I believe was still AT&T at the time. And they didn't exactly duplicate what we were doing but it was similar enough, and with their size organization, their resources, we didn't feel that we were going to continue to do much good.

RG: So that's not being done anymore?

NR: No. We started about the time Reagan became president, so it would be 1981. We continued it into 1990. At one time when we started we were hopeful Mrs. Reagan would come out and be our speaker, but that was just wishful thinking. Of course, she used to come here to visit. I never met her. I met the mother, but not Mrs. Reagan. I met Mr. Reagan. I attended a dinner one evening, Tucson Chamber of Commerce, and he was the featured speaker. This is a good many years before he got into serious politics.

RG: Were you impressed at the time?

NR: Oh, yes. He was a good speaker, he had the talent. And the fact that he had been in pictures, of course, made him naturally the kind of personality that you pay a little bit of attention to.

RG: I do want to mention the Habitat for Humanity, because we talked about that earlier. Tell me again how you got involved with that.

NR: Habitat for Humanity had been going a year, two, maybe three years, but they had not reached the stage where they were very well known for what they were trying to do. It was, of course, to build housing for low income families. They put together a proposal that was submitted to the Arizona Community Foundation. And for whatever reason, I never heard, the proposal was turned down. They were asking, I think, at that time for enough money to build three houses. Well, I learned of this situation where they were rejected. And I already had picked up a little knowledge of Habitat for Humanity, and I said, "Well, this is something I think I'd like to learn more about and maybe there would be some way to provide necessary essential financial help." And I took it on myself to go visit their office which was one person located in the corner of the basement of a church on Thomas Road and, let's see, I think it was about the 4000 block of East Thomas. After talking to this person, after kind of asking around, I became more and more convinced that this deserves support. So I did finally come up with a program about being a part of the program to build three houses. Are you familiar with the way in which Habitat for Humanity builds houses?

RG: Urn-hum. There's some sweat equity, I believe they call it.



NR: That's right. It consists of three elements. One has to do with donations that come up with the essentials of furnishing the house once it's built. And one of the essentials even more is having someone find a way a piece of property that might be donated. In this case the city of Phoenix had taken over an area that had to do with the approach to the airport because they felt it would be more and more a hazard for people living there. But if you talked to the right people, you were able to pick up one of these lots where a house might have been standing in earlier years. So they already, I think had gotten one or two houses built, and mine were added to it. I think they had a total of six, and mostly in this approach area to the airport. Pretty good sized lots, I think maybe 150'. It wasn't anything fancy in any way. It didn't have air conditioning, had air cooling. You probably know there's a considerable difference. The ones that I put up the money to build were all in the area where there had been housing earlier. When they enlarged the airport, they had to provide more and more space to eliminate any possibility of a serious accident, a plane falling to the ground. Now they have this area out in South Phoenix out toward Baseline Road. Have you seen it?

RG: No, I haven't seen it. I will have to go take a look at that.

NR: Whenever you have a spare hour or so. And there's still enough land to put up a fair number of houses. I can't remember. I think it was roughly about a hundred acres to start with. I'm not sure.

RG: Now, this is all private money and labor?

NR: It is volunteer labor, volunteer donations as far as the furnishings for the house. They have the labor. They're expected to give to you or your family five hundred hours of time.

RG: Now let's talk about your dad, and tell me about when he came here. He was from Austria.

NR: That was the area in which he was living at the time. Austria, as you may recall from history books, was hooked up with another nation called Hungary. There was an Austria-Hungary, I think, up until the end of World War I, but I can't say for sure. And thanks to Mr. Hitler, he, during his time putting up his power structure, was practically invited to come down to Austria because they were both German speaking countries.

RG: Now what brought your dad to this country? He came as a young man.

NR: I think the immediate reason was what brought a lot of other people here, and that was that almost every one of these European countries had compulsory military service. And I think when he reached-- anyone one reached the age of 20 they had to be available for drafting or whatever they called it. And this compulsory military service went on for two years. My father knew this was coming up because of his birthday, and he decided to leave the country. And, as far as we know, I can't say for sure, he might have first gone to Romania where there were some family relations, but that's just a kind of hearsay. Whether they were the ones who encouraged him to come to America or he already had his feeling he was ready to



make a change into America and had something worthwhile to offer. His ship, when it sailed out of some port in Germany or another country, I don't know, evidently was destined to travel to Montreal. That's where he arrived.

RG: And that date was about what time?

NR: Well, if he actually was just trying to keep a little ahead of his 20th birthday, he was born in 1870, he landed in Montreal right around his 20th birthday, which would be 1890.

RG: And how did he end up coming to Arizona?

NR: Well, this is anybody's guess. But what we think happened is that he had already made up his mind that there was virtually no opportunity in Europe at that time. And how strong a desire he had to go out and sort of explore what other parts of the world offered and kind of found a place that he felt would give him an opportunity to make something of his life, I can't say. But when he landed in Montreal, it must have been either the beginning of winter or the winter hadn't yet ended, and it was too cold a climate. He had no desire to settle in a place like that. So then he tried a town in North Dakota, virtually a duplicate of Montreal. I think he lived for a while in Minnesota. But that too was not a climate that he enjoyed. So then he went westward from Minnesota and ended up in Seattle, Washington. And as I'm sure you're familiar, that area has quite a bit of rain. How long he stayed in Seattle, I can't say, but his next stop was in Portland. And each time he was looking, hoping that this would be the right place that there was where he wanted to make his start in life. But Portland wasn't it. And whether on his own or through friends he got to know, he ended up in Los Angeles, which was then a city of about 50,000. Why he didn't like Los Angeles, I don't know. His original trade was making cigars, a friend who was a traveling salesman went into the territory of Arizona, the territory of New Mexico, Colorado, I don't know about Utah.

And anyhow, he had whatever his particular contact with people was within a certain section of the United States. And on one of the occasions we've heard that he encountered this traveling salesman, and in the course of their conversation he knew my father was looking for just the right place to make his home. He said, "You know, I've been hearing that Phoenix is a town with a future." And it makes a good story, but how much of it is true, we don't know. And it seems that's about all my father was waiting to hear. So he, soon after encountering this traveling salesman, moved himself and his belongings from Los Angeles to Phoenix where he didn't know anyone. And he evidently like what he saw. I don't know, something that kind of took over his person. And what little belongings he had, he had with him, I guess. And from that time on he became a citizen of Phoenix, Arizona, and started his business. Whether that was the one he always wanted to have as his main occupation, I don't know. But he acquired a second hand shop that probably sold musical instruments and guns and maybe small pieces of furniture, and also a bit of jewelry. And everything must have been just the right time and the right place, because he ended up quite successful. About his wife, we don't know, again, what actually happened. Some say she was sort of like a mail order bride, about 10 years younger. So by the time he was read to marry three, four years after he arrived in Phoenix, he would have been about 34 maybe, and she was around 24. And she also, her family had originally lived in Austria.



RG: Now, her name was Rosa Gross.

NR: Her family originally consisted of an older brother. I think he was the next oldest, there were two younger sisters, plus their mother. First the brother came over and eventually, I guess, whether it was a permanent job or a temporary job, I don't know, but that at least provided him with some income. And out of this monthly wage, he saved up enough money to write to his family and let them know that he could finance their coming to America.

RG: Did your mother ever talk about coming out to Arizona?

NR: No.

RG: Do you know that she came on the train or --

NR: No, I have no idea.

RG: But they were married in 1903?

NR: Correct, October.

RG: And at that time there was a good number of Jewish families here; is that right? Do you remember his ever mentioning any of them? I know the Goldwaters, the grandfather.

NR: He probably did, but either we weren't paying attention or it was just conversation or whatever. It must have been-- my guess, this is strictly a guess, I'd say there were maybe two dozen families here. The Phoenix population, I haven't looked it up, I'm only repeating what I've heard what others say, probably around 5,000, but including many, many other immigrants. And some were from distant places. Some were from Mexico or so-called Latino countries. Indians, I'm sure, were part of the population. Whether they ever really entered into anything of a local nature, I don't know.

RG: As you grew up, were you part of the Jewish community? I know there wasn't a synagogue here.

NR: No actual congregation of any kind. It was just that we were here. And there were a couple religious holidays of importance that they would then come together in a hired hall, so to speak. Whether they at all ever reached a hundred or so, I don't know.

RG: And while your father was living, did he expand into just jewelry or did he continue to do --

NR: Yeah, I'm not sure whether he was started, it was in the first year or two after he acquired his business, but it wasn't too long before he had pretty much transferred his way or kinds of merchandise to



more and more a jewelry type store, plus the fact that he didn't give up being a pawn shop, particularly where guns were concerned. I'm sure, as you can imagine, guns played a considerable part in the lives of people.

RG: Now, when did he leave the business or turn it over to you and your brother?

NR: Well, we tried to get him to leave from about 1938 on, and his retirement lasted one day. He was active until his death in 1944. By that time I was in the military. And, of course, nobody knew when the war would end, so he remained quite active. I think he developed a serious illness, perhaps, though, just in the last month or two of his life.

RG: In the 1930s did you know another young man named Otto Schmieder?

NR: Yes.

RG: What can you tell me about Mr. Schmieder?

NR: Otto, I think, came over sometime in the 1920s, but I didn't meet him or I didn't have reason to sort of get acquainted with him until about the middle 1930s. His was a, primarily, when he came over, he had what we call the particular occupation of being a watch repairman and that's, I guess what gave him his necessary living expenses. And the spot that he occupied was-- did you ever hear of a theater called the Rialto?

RG: Right.

NR: Well, it was just east of the Rialto Theater, maybe about -- well, I'd say the same size shop that my father might have had originally, but my father had gone considerably beyond that size establishment from what he had.

RG: Mr. Schmieder came to my mind because the Schmieder name and the Rosenzweig name are both big in Arizona with jewelry. And I interviewed Otto Schmieder a number of years ago, and I know he came from Germany and how he got started. He came out for his health. So your father died in 1944, and then you came back from the military and went back into the business.

NR: I came back about a year later.

RG: Before we finish this up, I did want to ask about -- there's another interview that was done in 1976, so I know we talked about-- in that one they talked about your education and so forth. But tell me about your honorary degree. I think that is very, very interesting -- from ASU. When was that bestowed?

NR: Well, I won't say it came on me as a complete surprise, but I didn't really have any good reason to feel



that I might be similarly honored. I don't know what the basis is for this kind of recognition. I'm not sure. I haven't really done too much in the way of being an active supporter of ASU, We did however, both Betty and I, know the president, Coor and his wife, and we particularly knew his wife, going back a number of years.

RG: What other honors have come to you in your long life that you're proud of, particularly? Is there any that stand out?

NR: Well, we, I say "we," my brother and I have run through a couple, three where we were recognized in a joint way. One is the annual dinner of the organization that was originally known as the National Conference of Christians and Jews. We were honored by them, about 20 years ago. It was 1978 or 1979. We've also been honored by the Phoenix Advertising Club as Man of the Year.

RG: Were you and your brother close?

NR: Not really. Partly because of our ages; I'm approximately two years older, and partly that we didn't have identical interests. We had some interests that we shared jointly, like a lot of things that had to do with-- well, each of us got into an area of being active in the community that didn't always duplicate each other. One of the things was, my brother worked with the establishing of a unit here, it had to do with providing insurance for working people, the Blue Cross/Blue Shield. And he also was a more outgoing person than I was and he liked to be with, well, not particularly just friends of his age, people that might be ten years younger or ten years older. So, he was active in the Junior Chamber of Commerce. He was active a group known as the Demolay, which is part of a Masonic organization.

RG: Did he spend his lifetime here? Did he raise a family?

NR: He had a family of three; two boys and a girl. The two boys are still living, the girl is not.

RG: Well, you tell us about your philosophy of philanthropy.

NR: Well, that's something that seems to have just sort of grown on me. I didn't really give it serious thought, other than being a supporter of the United Way, which, of course, in the earlier years was known as the Community Chest, but I did participate in their annual fund raising campaign going back, again, to the early years after World War II. And then I think what gave me more of an understanding or a focus on something that I ought to -- I should go out of my way to be a part of is things that had to do with the community, particularly trying to be helpful in the lives of those hadn't achieved much success. And there was also a particular happening that kind of gave me sort of a way of feeling that I could help in some ways if I just would make more of an effort. This particular instance had to do with a sermon. I can't remember the exact year, but I'd say it was within a few years after World War II. The sermon covered the general subject of giving. And during the course of the remarks made, there was a particular phrase that sort of seemed to fit what I was trying to-- well, I just didn't know exactly what. The phrase was, when it



comes to giving and helping others or an organization that has maybe a particular goal in their program, is that you are a part of the solution or a part of the problem. I'm sure you've heard it many times. So, I said, "Well, I think I should be making more of an effort to be a part of the solution. I have no reason to want to get involved in being a part of the problem." So that's had a lot to do with the way of being guided in what might be the philanthropic part of my life.

RG: That's commendable and you've been doing that now for 50 years or so.

NR: It goes back quite a ways.

RG: One last thing that I do want to mention is the fact that I learned that you've kind of been known as a person who writes to the newspaper. How did that -- do you remember the first time you did this?

NR: The first time, really, I'm not sure. It occurred, I think, with the beginning of my military service. And I believe-- I don't have anything to show for it, but I believe it was to Collier's Magazine, and it seems to me it had something to do with my military service. I can't say that I go out of my way to be a complainer, I try to come up with constructive criticism.

RG: Have you seen things happen because, perhaps because of your letters that kind of maybe nudged people to think?

NR: I don't think they were ever that important, but I have, not exactly come up with something that took care of a particular problem, but I tried to include what I might be doing in the way of philanthropy is helping you provide an organization with a place, needed headquarters or facility or something to do with their overall program, and some of these, I remember. To what extent they served their purpose, I can't say. But, for instance, the Habitat for Humanity that we've talked a little about was one of them. And I can't say what I did all of a sudden helped to get this organization out to number one community need, but it helped to provide them with additional ways in which they were trying to establish such a program here. I was on the board of St. Luke's Hospital, so I naturally became quite interested in things having to do with health and getting people well. And it was in 1980 that I got to know a good bit about the program that Phoenix Memorial Hospital was trying to replace their wartime buildings that had been provided by the government to take care of the military and civilians engaged in the war effort. So one of the basic parts of the program had to do with establishing a surgery unit that would make available ambulatory surgery. This is something that I had heard of before. Other hospitals had been doing it, but Phoenix Memorial didn't get to have the facility. So, since they were going through this program of replacing or redeveloping a hospital into a permanent medical facility, I volunteered to provide them with some ambulatory surgical suites. And from what I've heard, now almost half of surgery that takes place, at least in this hospital, has to do with these walk in, walk out surgery units. Phoenix Memorial was particularly deserving because of the fact that this is where a large segment of our low income population resides. And while many of them had the necessary insurance to take care of their expenses if they needed surgery, many did not; some partially, some absolutely nothing. So this has been very, very important to people in that situation because,



otherwise, if there wasn't this type of surgical facility in the area where they live, they would either have to go to another part of the city or it would involve additional expense, because most surgery always required a person to come in the day before, the evening before, which added considerably to the cost of the operation. So this was eliminated and made it easier for people to have the necessary surgery whenever it was needed.

RG: Phoenix Memorial is the hospital on Seventh Avenue and, what, Buckeye, that area?

NR: It's very close to Buckeye Road. It's Seventh Avenue-- well, I can get that for you.

RG: That's fine. I think I know where it is.

NR: Right across the street are a number of organizations that are also in the nature that they serve a large number of low income people.

RG: Like Friendly House?

NR: Well, Friendly House isn't quite in that general neighborhood. I'm thinking of the Urban League. And there were two or three others, but the name doesn't come to mind. **RG:** In your growing up years, do you recall going out to Sunnyslope? That was a tubercular camp. What do you remember about Sunnyslope?

NR: I can't say very much for the nature of that particular area; the fact that it did, in a sense, cater to people with TB. Most of those people, as far as I know, didn't have to go to a hospital but they did have to go to a place where there was some-- well, I wouldn't call it a program, but facilities because carrying TB years ago involved getting a person in a warm climate, a dry climate, and having them live in, essentially, an outdoor facility with a roof over its head and probably screening openings around the four sides of the room that supplied them with an abundance of fresh air that was supposed to be healthful for their illness. The cure for TB came along, I think, in what, about 1940 something? It was an Englishman who came up with the particular medicine, and that's reduced the amount of TB infective. It's supposed to be on its way out, but there evidently was a building up of a particular, something in the body that no longer was resistant to the TB germ that allowed it to redevelop and become again a very critical illness.

RG: Were there any doctors, medical doctors as you were growing up that stand out in your mind? Did your family have a particular physician?

NR: Well, we lived next door to one of the two top surgeons in town, by the name of Craig, Robert Craig. The other top surgeon was a man by the name of Palmer. Our own family doctor was a typical family doctor. His name was Plath.

RG: Oh. Do you remember a first name?



NR: Can't give it to you at the moment.

RG: That's all right. Well, anything else? We've covered a lot of territory here.

NR: Well, you've sort of touched a bit on this matter of letters -- and we got as far as Collier's.

RG: Right. What happened? What kind of topic did you find yourself --

NR: Well, I came out of the military service and I guess I must not have been talking to the right people or ignoring maybe what I heard, but I really didn't get going, but sort of adopting as a hobby, letters to the editor. But I did once in a while write to a man I never met, although we got to be quite friendly just visiting over the telephone. He was editor of the Gazette editorial page. His name was Fitzhugh. I think I got it right, Fitzhugh.

RG: What was his first name?

NR: And I would every now and then write a letter commenting about whatever news at the time that bothered me in some way. And-- but I'd always end the letter that this is not for publication. I was just writing to go him as someone I wanted to let them know what my feeling was, my point of view. And he kept remarking about my ending the letter with "Not for publication." He says, "I think that what you're writing about is something that people would enjoy reading." So finally I told him, "Okay. Go ahead and print the letter, if you wish or don't wish." And this was the start of these letters. I'd say that I kept this up -- it might have start around the late 50s, and I kept writing these letters for about, oh, roughly 25, maybe 30 years. Sometimes I'd have a letter in each week in the Republic or the Gazette. There was one period when I had four letters in a two-week period. It was something that became a challenge. It expressed however I felt about whatever I found disserving in some way or wanted to encourage. So that, what you see there, has letters probably about the first ten years, and after that we just kind of kept shoving in the blank pages, but they are in no particular order.

RG: Mr. Rosenzweig is pointing to a large scrapbook, something like maybe 18 inches by 20, or something like that, and it contains copies of the first ten years or so, and then maybe others. And I understand that perhaps you'll finish this and give it to the museum. Is that a possibility?

NR: Well, if I thought they had a reason to have it in the museum.

RG: It would be excellent research material. I'm sure you've covered many topics.

NR: Well, let me say this. I appreciate what you're saying, and I think in many cases it would be helpful, but we didn't sort of give this a whole lot of thought, it just kind of grew. And one of the things that I've regretted is that I seldom have the article in the paper that caused me to sit down and comment about. I think in that way it would have been very helpful for a research standpoint, but this is sort of a halfway job.



RG: Well, it's quite a collection, though.

NR: If you ever want to look at them, feel free -- I won't say I don't trust you, but the way it is, the stuff is just, so much of it is loose. It might end up falling off.

RG: Mrs. Rosenzweig said you might consider really putting it together and doing something with it. Did anyone ever write back to your letters and then you respond? Did you carry on a dialogue through the newspaper?

NR: I had occasionally someone who would write to me, or sometimes they would write to the newspaper and say, "This guy's all wet" or might look on it favorably. And, of course, that would be music to my ears. I remember one time somebody wrote my grammar wasn't very good.

RG: What were some of the topics?

NR: Probably trivial. I haven't looked inside that for a number of years. And, of course, my illness came along and health problem, and things are just not as easy or as simple or as -- well, not inspiring, just wasn't the same feeling; went off in a different direction. But, it is nice. I haven't had this opened for several years, but it used to be I'd occasionally be out in public someplace and meet someone and they'd say, "Well, are you the Rosenzweig that used to write these letters?" They'd acknowledge it.

RG: Right. Well, you certainly have been a solution for a lot of problems in Phoenix --not the problem, the solution to it. So, thank you very much for sharing these memories, and I'm sorry you've had problems from time to time with various things here, but I think we've got some good tapes.

NR: It's a pleasure having you as the interviewer and taking some of the difficulties in stride. I hope it doesn't discourage you from your next kind of meeting with someone.

RG: Not at all. And we will duplicate the tapes and have them transcribed and then you will have a chance to look at them and edit them, and so I will be seeing you again, I'm sure.

NR: Did my wife ask you about the interview done in 1976 --

RG: Yes.

NR: -- whether it's restricted or could we go ahead and have it duplicated?

RG: You may keep this one. There's one page missing, and I'm going to get that copy. I hope it's not completely missing. And, no, you may keep that one. It's really quite interesting.

NR: I thought the problem was maybe it was under a copyright, because I know, as a member Mr. Johnson



--I should say Dr. Johnson. Isn't he a Ph.D.?

RG: Right, right.

NR: And, I don't know, he just very casually said because they were trying to tape a number of others they wanted this included. And so it's been kind of interesting to read that 20 years later and see what I had to say.

RG: Well, we will also furnish you a copy of this one, too, and you will have that. Thank you very much.

