

GOLDBERG: Ultimately became The Temple.

MAZIAR: It ultimately became The Temple in 1876. Frank Neely. How was he involved in this again? He was involved in Davison's?

GOLDBERG: No. Frank Neely had worked for Rae Schlesinger's father in the candy factory. Mr. Schlesinger owned the candy factory and then went with Westinghouse Electric in Pittsburgh. Back to Atlanta where he went to work for the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills. And built himself a national reputation.

MAZIAR: Okay.

GOLDBERG: Walter convinced Frank Neely to join Rich's. Thus, it came about that Rich's was the only department store in the nation which was run for a quarter of a century by an engineer. He was a freshman at Georgia Tech when he met Rae Schlesinger. They married eight years later in a grand wedding at the Schlesinger home. Frank initiated dramatic change at Rich's including the method of inventory and stock control. A noble first was the introduction of air conditioning to the store, the first store in the country to be completely air conditioned.

MAZIAR: That would draw people in during the summer.

GOLDBERG: Yes. He created new policies that stand to this day, such as "the customer is always right," "customer makes their own adjustments," "quality for quality," "Rich's will never be undersold," a very liberal credit policy, and the famous "Atlanta Born, Atlanta Owned and Atlanta Managed." And he created new standards for the workers.

MAZIAR: Excuse me. Was he the first outsider to work for Rich's?

GOLDBERG: First outside of the brothers.

MAZIAR: Out of the family.

GOLDBERG: Right.

MAZIAR: This Mr. Strauss was also in the family?

GOLDBERG: Strauss was not. He was the accountant.

MAZIAR: The accountant.

GOLDBERG: Right.

MAZIAR: What was Frank Neely's position at Rich's?

GOLDBERG: Came in as a vice president. He created a new standard for workers, a quota bonus plan, a free employee clinic, an employee credit union, and insurance and pensions for all employees. During World War II when all the young men in the store including Dick Rich were

in the service, Frank Neely and Walter Rich ran the store and served the war effort at home. In 1926, Frank Neely was named Atlanta's "Citizen of the Year." He served on several commissions of presidents, organized and chaired the Georgia Department of Commerce, was chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank in Atlanta for 16 years, a Regional Director of the War Production Board, and was responsible for bringing Bell Aircraft [Corporation] to Atlanta, subsequently becoming Lockheed [Martin]. Frank Neely had built himself a nation-wide reputation. First chairman of the Georgia Nuclear Advisory Commission, Frank Neely was instrumental in the construction of a nuclear research reactor at Georgia Tech, and the establishment of Georgia Tech's School of Nuclear Engineering, both done with funds from the Rich Foundation. In recognition, Georgia Tech named the school the Frank H. Neely Nuclear [Research] Center. Dick Rich came home from running Rich's New York office in 1935 to take his first executive job at the store as the advertising director.

MAZIAR: What was in New York at the time?

GOLDBERG: The buying office. David Strauss died in 1936, and Mr. Dick became vice president and treasurer.

MAZIAR: And his parents are . . .

GOLDBERG: Mr. Dick was his famous . . . that's what everybody called him. They called them Mr. Walter and Mr. Dick.

MAZIAR: And Dick Rich's parents were?

GOLDBERG: The Rosenheims. I'm going to elude to that in just a second. In 1930, Dick married Virginia Lazarus of New Orleans. It was Walter's idea that Dick take his mother's maiden name of Rich if he were to ever head the family business. His parents, Herman and Rosalind Rosenheim, agreed to that.

MAZIAR: His mother was one of the original sisters? Is that right?

GOLDBERG: Morris' daughter. The Rich Foundation was established to distribute a large share of the profits of the company to the Atlanta community. First, was a contribution of a business school building at Emory [University] to honor the three founders, Morris, Emanuel, and Daniel. Later, a donation of a radio station to the city and county school system, which still exists today; a computer center at Georgia Tech; an outpatient ward at Georgia Baptist Hospital; a laboratory for industrial engineering department at Georgia Tech; and a wing at St. Joseph's Infirmary, now known as St. Joseph's Hospital. The foundation today is private, and I serve as its president. Walter Rich,

widely respected in the community, genuinely loved in the store, received many awards in his life time. One of the most prized came the last year of his life, the famous Tobe Award⁵² presented him in January 1947 in New York City for distinguished contribution to American retailing. Walter died the following November. A member of the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation, now known as The Temple, he supported churches and schools and hospitals no matter the denomination. He served on the Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority, which is Grady [Memorial] Hospital. He was a valued member of the executive committee of St. Joseph's Infirmary and a major supporter of Young Harris College in North Georgia. Following the death of . . .

MAZIAR: Excuse me. How did he get to do that?

GOLDBERG: Customers.

MAZIAR: Did he know anyone in particular or did he just . . .

GOLDBERG: No, he just knew people there who solicited from the foundation, and he personally became a major contributor. Following the death of Mr. Walter, Frank Neely became president until 1949 when he became chairman of the board.

MAZIAR: Who is Frank? Oh, Frank Neely.

GOLDBERG: Dick became president. In 1961, Harold Brockey became the fifth president of Rich's, Dick Rich became the third chairman of the board, and Frank Neely chairman of the executive committee. In 1971, I became the sixth president of Rich's, and in 1978, the fifth chairman of the board. The biggest building program in the store's history would be launched during Dick Rich's regime as president.

MAZIAR: Which spanned what years of him again?

GOLDBERG: 1940. Want to cut that off?

<Interruption in tape>

MAZIAR: Dick Rich was president from 1949 to 1961.

GOLDBERG: Harold Brockey became President in 1961 when Dick became chairman of the board. I became President in 1971 when Harold Brockey became chairman of the board. Dick then became chairman of the executive committee. That was our line of succession. As we continue, I will get into more detail on the 1950 to current times.

MAZIAR: That's wonderful. You were talking about the expansion program that began. Is there anything else?

⁵² The Tobe Award was one of the outstanding honors which can be awarded a retail merchant.

GOLDBERG: Two more stores.

MAZIAR: Okay.

GOLDBERG: In 1959 was Lenox Square. Actually, in 1954 they went to Knoxville, Tennessee. I guess the company had a philosophy that they would not . . . they so dominated the Atlanta marketplace. In fact, in Georgia, they would not ever build anything within 150-mile radius of Atlanta, so they went to Knoxville, Tennessee. That was their first venture. Atlanta grew so rapidly in those next four years that in 1959 Lenox Square was built. That was the first Atlanta branch. Right behind that was three, four more branches.

MAZIAR: How did it happen that they picked that spot at Lenox? The Alexander⁵³ family had their estate right across the street. Did that have . . .

GOLDBERG: It so happened that Rich's didn't pick it, although Frank Neely was somewhat instrumental. The land was bought by the Noble Foundation out of Oklahoma. Ed Noble was a real estate developer, who moved to Atlanta and started buying real estate and bought all that farm land. It was some just under 80 acres at the corner of Lenox Road and Peachtree [Road]. That became Lenox Square.

MAZIAR: It was all undeveloped out there?

GOLDBERG: Farm land.

MAZIAR: At that time.

GOLDBERG: Strictly farm land.

MAZIAR: But the Alexanders had their home. Their home was established.

GOLDBERG: Yes, that was across the street.

MAZIAR: But that was just across the street.

GOLDBERG: Behind what is now the . . . the Buckhead Loop goes through it. It really would be behind what is now the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

MAZIAR: Right. And that would be . . . the home is still standing.

GOLDBERG: Yes. I don't think it's going to be much longer.

MAZIAR: Oh really?

⁵³ Henry Aaron Alexander, Sr. (1874-1967), husband of Manya (Marion) Klonitsky-Kline Alexander, was born in Atlanta, Georgia. He was a prominent attorney, scholar, and religious leader. Alexander served in the Georgia State House of Representatives and was a veteran of World War I. He was also a president of the Atlanta Historical Society and a prominent Atlanta attorney. He was a member of the defense team in the trial of Leo Frank. In 1930 he built one of the largest homes in Atlanta on Peachtree Road, with 33 rooms and 13 bathrooms. Alexanders sold part of their land for development of the Phipps Plaza Mall which opened in 1969.

GOLDBERG: With the plans that are underway. Are you familiar with Longleaf? You know, Longleaf that comes off of Wieuca [Road]?

MAZIAR: Yes.

GOLDBERG: That's practically a Jewish street.

MAZIAR: Is that right?

GOLDBERG: They've all been bought out. Mendel Rohm have moved. Jerry and Henrietta Gilbert are in the process of building a home at Lake Forrest. Dick Rich's sister lived there and several other Jewish families. The owners of Phipps [Plaza] bought them all out and gave them six months to move, or some period of time to move, and they will clean that whole thing out and all the way over to the Alexander property. That will become a housing development, some apartment. I don't know what the rest of it's going to be.

MAZIAR: I recall right before they built [Georgia State Route] 400 there was a lot of discussion about what was going to happen to the Alexander home.

GOLDBERG: Yes. There were all kinds of arguments about it. I think they finally have settled it. When Equitable redid Phipps, they built a fire station. I don't know if you've been over that way, on the back, and gave it to the City of Atlanta.

MAZIAR: Of course.

GOLDBERG: That was part of their contribution. That enabled them to get some of the rights to redevelop that whole thing. Whether they specifically own the Alexander property or not, I don't know. I think they do, in addition to that whole Longleaf area. I think they own everything from Wieuca clear over to the back of the Ritz Carlton.

MAZIAR: What really strikes me about this story is how the family had such a vision about what they were about.

GOLDBERG: And at a very young age.

MAZIAR: It was just incredible.

GOLDBERG: I mean, Morris started Rich's.

MAZIAR: And the nerve! They not only had the vision but the nerve.

GOLDBERG: William was the oldest, and as I said, he was flamboyant. He was an entrepreneur. But he made millions and he went broke. He started a dry goods store in Atlanta. He was the first. There isn't much mention of it because he had his finger in everything. I don't think he stayed in it too long because he opened a distillery on Broad Street. Then he got in the coal mining business in

Alabama. He made money and he lost money. He was a real gambler. Morris came and stayed with William in Atlanta. As I told you, he stopped in Chattanooga and went to work there. When he came to Atlanta in 1867, he was 20 years old. He borrowed \$500 and started that store on Whitehall Street.

MAZIAR: Who did he borrow the money from?

GOLDBERG: From William. That was one of William's rich periods. Then Daniel and Emanuel sold their store or their property in Albany, Georgia, lock, stock and barrel. They came. They were in the same type of business, the dry goods business, merged it with Morris' and went to work for Morris.

MAZIAR: Does anybody know what happened? Their father hung behind in Hungary.

GOLDBERG: Their father stayed behind in Hungary because they could only get them out in small pieces. First came two brothers. Then came two brothers. Then came the mother with one of the sisters. In those years, that revolution going on, it spread all over Europe. The Jews were typically not in a very comfortable position. He worked to get everybody out before he came himself. There is nothing to tell. From 1875 to 1880, there's nothing to tell what he was doing. He was in Hungary. His wife died in 1875. He didn't get over here until 1880. I find no record of anything that says what he did those five years.

MAZIAR: Has anybody been to their original community and visited the cemetery or looked up . . . there may not be anything because I think some of those communities were wiped out.

GOLDBERG: Not that I'm aware of. I don't even know if that community even exists today. It was a small Hungarian community. Small town as I recall reading about it. They moved from there into a larger Hungarian city when they started to move the whole family over to America. So there is nothing in there. There is nobody in the family today that could even tell you. Michael, Dick's only son, passed away a couple of years ago. He was very young, early 50s.

MAZIAR: Was he involved in the business?

GOLDBERG: Yes. Michael worked for me for a number of years. His last job, he was vice president of personnel. He was the store manager at one time. He was a buyer for me. That was his first executive position. I was merchandising in what was known as the Rich's Basement in those days, later became known as the Budget Store. He was my junior sportswear buyer.

MAZIAR: That must have been very . . . what was it like with all the children of the original people involved? Did they all want to have participation in the store or how did that work out?

GOLDBERG: Is that on?

MAZIAR: Would you like me to turn it off?

GOLDBERG: Yes, I think we need to.

MAZIAR: Okay.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

MAZIAR: I wanted to ask you. We were talking about the family involvement in Rich's. Harold Brockey, who was your father-in-law, how did he come in the picture?

GOLDBERG: He was working for Macy's in New York. Macy's sent him to Atlanta because they owned Davison-Paxton in 1949, I believe it was, to run their Home Store. He did such a great job there that Dick Rich and Frank Neely called him and hired him to run Rich's Home Store. He came. One year at Davison's and he came and did a great job in our Home Store. He replaced a member of the family. He replaced Oscar Strauss. They let Oscar Strauss go, who is Margaret Weiller's father. Brockey took his job. From 1949 he was vice president of the Store for Homes. He became general merchandise manager of the entire store in the mid-1950s and then became president in 1961. He was a New Yorker. Well, he was from New Jersey and moved to Atlanta in 1949 with his wife and two daughters.

MAZIAR: He hired you when you came down here?

GOLDBERG: No. A fellow by the name of . . . when I came here, I came as a . . . no, he was running the Home Store. I came as a fashion buyer, a women's dress buyer. I was hired by a fellow by the name of Bud [Louis] Long. Bud Long was the general merchandise manager of the entire store of the time. He was Brockey's boss. Bud Long and a fellow by the name of George Sanford [sp], who was general merchandise manager of the Home Store, hired me. I became a buyer. I came up through the Fashion Store.

MAZIAR: Let me ask you. What attracted you to Rich's? What is it that really made it stand out? From the history that you presented, there just seemed to be this aura about . . .

GOLDBERG: There truly is. I started in the business in [W.] Filene's [Sons Co.] in Massachusetts, my home, after World War II and after graduating from college. Then I spent a year with a resident buying office in New York City called Associated Merchandising Corporation.⁵⁴ They were the resident buying office for Filene's and Rich's in Atlanta and some 25 of the largest department stores in the country. I got to know the people at Rich's because as a

⁵⁴ Associated Merchandising Corporation is based in New York, New York. It operates as a retail merchandising sourcing services provider in apparel and other general merchandise. Associated's largest store member, Federated Department Stores, left the fold in 1983.

resident buyer, I was buying merchandise for Rich's. They had a department in which the New York office was doing their buying. They had a department manager who did all their buying for them. I knew the store very well. They had an opening in the better dress department. The merchandise manager, who I knew from her travels back and forth to the New York buying office, said, "Why don't you come to Atlanta? I've got a buying job. You'd be a natural for it." So I, tongue in cheek, flew to Atlanta. It was a very unique experience. On the plane coming down, [I was] sitting in the seat next to a young fellow about my age. I was thinking. I was 29 then. We got to talking and he says, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm going to Atlanta for an interview." He said, "Where?" I said, "Rich's." He said, "Let me tell you a story about that store." He said, "One day I came home from work and I found a vacuum cleaner sitting at my door step. It was [from] Rich's. So, I called Rich's. I said, 'There's a vacuum cleaner at my door. It doesn't belong to me. Probably belongs to some other customer. Would you please come pick it up?'" He said, "A week went by and it still sat there, and I called again. I was quite angry about it. I said, 'Come get that vacuum cleaner. I'm going to give it away.'" They apologized profusely, and some man called him back. I forgot who the name was. He told me at the time. He said, "We apologize for the inconvenience we have created for you. Please keep the vacuum cleaner as a gift from Rich's." How many stores will do that kind of thing? I said to myself, "What kind of screwballs am I going to work for" because I worked in a Yankee department store at Filenes. We didn't have policies at that time. But I heard story after story after story. I came down and interviewed and liked what they had to offer and I came to work as a dress buyer. One of my first experiences was the wife . . . the son of a governor of Georgia was getting married. We'll have to leave the name out. His wife came to my department to buy her mother-of-the-groom dress for the wedding. She bought a lovely dress. That was on a Friday. Monday morning, she was back in the store with the dress. One of my sales girls came back to my office. She said, "Mr. Goldberg, the governor's wife is out there with that dress she bought last week. She wants to return it." I said, "What do you mean, she wants to return it?" "Well, she spilled champagne down the front of it. She can't get it out and she really has no use for the dress." She said, "I think you better come out and talk to her." So I did. I went out on the floor. I said, "Yes ma'am, can I help you?" She says, "I'm returning this dress." I said, "I'm sorry, I can't take that back from you. You've spilled a drink on it. I can't return it to the manufacturer. I can't sell it. We don't sell seconds. We don't sell used clothing here." She says, "What do you mean you can't

take it back?" She says, "Rich's policy is you'll take it back." I said, "I'm sorry, ma'am." I had been at Rich's all of three weeks. She took the dress out of the sales girl's hand and disappeared. About 20 minutes later, I get a call from Dick Rich. He said, "Young man, would you please come to my office." I went to Dick Rich's office. He proceeded to lecture me on the history of the business, the success of the business, and the less than one-tenth of one percent of people like the governor's wife who would take advantage of us. And look at all the friends we'll make if we take the dress back from her and she goes and tells all her friends what a wonderful place Rich's is. That's better than full-page advertising. He said, "I took the dress back. It's now back in your department. You will issue her the credit for it." I said, "Yes, Sir." I learned with the best. He was absolutely right. It's a shame that policy doesn't exist today, but that was the policy.

MAZIAR: But he wasn't afraid. He had the absolute 100 percent conviction.

GOLDBERG: Absolutely. There was no question about it. The department I bought for, we had like a 35 percent return rate. Women would come in and buy three or four dresses, take them home, try them on, bring all four of them back or bring three of the four back and keep one. I used to grin and bear it because I knew what kind of business it was. Back in those days, when I came in 1959, we had reporting figures. I've forgotten who this is from. All the stores reported their figures, so we'd get Davison's, J.P. Allen [Co.], Sears [Roebuck and Company], and [J.C.] Penney. There was a clearinghouse. I can't remember what it was, whether it was one of the banks or the Federal Reserve [Bank]. They issued the figures once a week. You would know what your figure was. You couldn't identify who the other people were. In those days, Rich's did 63 percent of the reporting business in this town of those stores. Sixty-three percent. That's incredible. The largest of any store in the country. The most dominant.

MAZIAR: Was it loyalty? Do you think it was built up over time?

GOLDBERG: Absolutely. The policies: The customer is always right, the customer makes his or her own adjustments, liberal credit policy. There are stories I didn't get into because they pertain more to the merchandising, the techniques of running the store. I was trying to get in for this oral history into the personalities of the people that developed it. But there are stories that when the City of Atlanta went broke, and it did go bankrupt, Rich's issued scrip⁵⁵ to the teachers.

⁵⁵ Scrip was used during the Great Depression era as a substitute for government issued currency. Because of the banks closing temporarily and the lack of physical currency, someone had to come up with another form of currency to keep the economy going and a way for trade to continue. Therefore, the old idea of local currency was reborn. Paper, cardboard, wood, metal tokens, leather, clam shells and even parchment made from fish skin was used. At one

You may have heard this story.

MAZIAR: I have heard this.

GOLDBERG: It was like cash. The teachers could bring the scrip into Rich's and cash it or they could bring it in and buy merchandise with it. Incredible. That's an unheard of story. When the cotton crop went bad one year, they gave free credit to the farmers, the cotton farmers, until the following year when their crop came in and they could pay their bills.

MAZIAR: It's interesting. Do you think, on the one hand, people would have seen that as a very liberal policy, but did Rich's, as a store, ever experience any sort of Jewish, not backlash, but difficulty.

GOLDBERG: Never. Never in my history. From what I've learned going back, none then either to my predecessors. Dick Rich became president of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce in the 1950s. He was the first and only Jew to become president of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce. He couldn't join the Piedmont Driving Club or the Capital City Club, but he participated with all these people in their homes and everything else. He was one of the half dozen most respected business people in Atlanta. Walter Rich. The same thing about Walter.

MAZIAR: The family was not seen as being clannish or closed?

GOLDBERG: Not at all. The heads of the store were so active in the community. That's one of the things that Dick taught me when I came. Between my father and Dick, they really emphasized to me. As you look at my bio that I left with you, I've been involved with literally dozens and dozens of organizations in this town on a volunteer basis because it was the thing to do, number one. But it was the thing to do for the business because the business got tremendous recognition out of it. I became the second Jewish president of the Chamber of Commerce. In 1976, I became president of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce. We belonged to everything. We didn't belong to their country clubs. We belonged to our own. That was the only place.

MAZIAR: All the brothers were involved in the founding of The Temple, is that right?

GOLDBERG: William was a charter member. Morris belonged. I find no mention of Daniel and Emanuel in it. I'm sure they did because they built these three houses together on Pryor Street. They all were members of the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation. How active they were, I don't know, except that William was a charter member. That I do know.

MAZIAR: Has a family member done the family tree and done the whole . . . has someone in

point, the government considered issuing a nationwide scrip on a temporary basis.

the family done that?

GOLDBERG: I've never seen it done.

MAZIAR: You're not in any way, through marriage, involved with any of the direct descendants of the Rich family?

GOLDBERG: No.

MAZIAR: It's interesting <unintelligible>

GOLDBERG: Dick and Virginia had three children. One son, Michael, who came into the business. Sally and Virginia. Two daughters.

MAZIAR: Who are they?

GOLDBERG: Sally married . . . she's been married a few times now. She married a fellow by the name of Bill Rose [sp] when she was very, very young, a New York stockbroker. She went away to live in New York. Virginia was a ballet dancer. She danced with the New York City Ballet Company. She married Bobby Barnett, who is a dancer with the New York City Ballet Company. They subsequently came back and became members of the Atlanta Ballet. He became the artistic director of the Atlanta Ballet. She formed another company with Carl Ratcliff. Carl Ratcliff and Virginia Barnett formed the Ratcliff Dance Theatre. They ran a ballet school as well for a while. Michael came into the business. Michael, as I said, I told you early <unintelligible> he was a buyer, an assistant buyer.

<End Tape 2, Side 1>

<Begin Tape 2, Side 2>

GOLDBERG: . . . divorced his wife and subsequently found another life style.

MAZIAR: Do you want this on tape?

GOLDBERG: No.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

MAZIAR: Let me just ask you, because so many people became involved in the business and there were so many descendants. Did every descendant carry with them company stock?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yes. The company became public in 1929. All the families were shareholders.

MAZIAR: All the family were shareholders, so everyone approached the situation feeling that they had a certain interest and degree of power in a situation?

GOLDBERG: Not so much power, because the power really belonged with the management and the foundation and the employee pension fund. As I said to you, one of the things that Frank Neely started

was insurance and pensions for everybody, every single employee. A big portion of the pension fund was funded with company stock. Back in the 1950s and 1960s, the pension fund was the largest stockholder.

MAZIAR: Every family member, no matter what their actual position of authority within the store, would be financially secure?

GOLDBERG: Yes. They all were.

MAZIAR: That was quite a measure of insight and planning . . .

GOLDBERG: That's right.

MAZIAR: . . . on the part of Frank Neely as a way of helping to control a lot of sensitive issues.

GOLDBERG: All of the family members, I mean, Dick Rich's kids, all had trusts. I think the same thing existed on the other parts of the family. Dick's sister, Kitty [sp], was married to a doctor, Charlie Reeser [sp]. That is Dr. John Reeser, who is an ophthalmologist. His sister, Roz, was married to a fellow by the name of Neavil [sp]. They were never involved in the business. None of them.

MAZIAR: Are the descendants close? Is there ever such a thing as a family reunion?

GOLDBERG: No. Not to this day. They're scattered everywhere. There's some living in New York. There are so few of them surviving today that are close knit. It just doesn't exist. One of them passed away at Wesley Homes not too many years ago, who had come here from out of town. There's a Nashville branch of the family. Some in New York. Some scattered throughout other parts of Tennessee. But no group that you could call together. In terms of cousins today, I don't know if you could identify 15 or 20, at the most. They are scattered everywhere.

MAZIAR: Why don't we stop for today.

GOLDBERG: Okay.

MAZIAR: This is truly fascinating.

<End Tape 2, Side 2>

<Begin Tape 3, Side 1>

MAZIAR: The date is March 29, 1994. This is my third meeting with Mr. Joel Goldberg for the American Jewish Committee Oral History Project. We are ready to tape. I want to ask you, you have some information prepared.

GOLDBERG: Yes.

MAZIAR: We have just celebrated Passover.⁵⁶ I was wondering if you could just tell me a little

⁵⁶ Hebrew: *Pesach*. The anniversary of Israel's liberation from Egyptian bondage. The holiday lasts for eight days.

bit about your family and how they celebrated Passover this year.

GOLDBERG: We had a very unique experience. My sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Phyllis and Lew Kravitz - I don't know if you know them or not.

MAZIAR: No.

GOLDBERG: They just bought a house up at Lake Lanier [Georgia] about a month ago. They decided they would have the whole family up to Lake Lanier for a very casual *seder*,⁵⁷ Casual attire. My wife, my children, the grandchildren, their grandchildren, and their children went up and spent the day at the lake. I came up late, about five o'clock on Saturday afternoon. They had been out riding in the boat and all that kind of thing. Time came, and we sat down and had our *seder* in their new A-frame, this new A-frame they had just purchased. We just had a delightful time. I mean, nobody had a coat or tie on. We were all in jeans and T-shirts and that short of thing and [had] just a wonderful, very informal *seder*. Everybody participated. Everybody read some portion of the *Haggadah*,⁵⁸ except the real tiny ones who don't read yet. We probably took about maybe half an hour for the *Haggadah* service itself and then sat down to a very sumptuous meal and had a great evening.

MAZIAR: It's interesting to me how families are very hooked into traditions for Passover and how it's difficult to change and do something different.

GOLDBERG: Yes. For example, I always do the blessing over the wine, the *Kiddush*.⁵⁹ That's my job. I always do the ten plagues.⁶⁰ The *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, borei*

Unleavened bread, *matzah*, is eaten in memory of the unleavened bread prepared by the Israelite during their hasty flight from Egypt, when they had not time to wait for the dough to rise. On the first two nights of Passover, the *seder*, the central event of the holiday is celebrated. The *seder* service is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life. In addition to eating *matzah* during the *seder*, Jews are prohibited from eating leavened bread during the entire week of Passover. In addition, Jews are also supposed to avoid foods made with wheat, barley, rye, spelt or oats unless those foods are labeled 'kosher for Passover.' Jews traditionally have separate dishes for Passover.

⁵⁷ *Seder* (meaning "order" in Hebrew) is a Jewish ritual feast that marks the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Passover. It is conducted on the evening of the fifteenth day of *Nisan* in the Hebrew calendar throughout the world. Some communities hold *seder* on both the first two nights of Passover. The *seder* incorporates prayers, candle lighting, and traditional foods symbolizing the slavery of the Jews and the exodus from Egypt. It is one of the most colorful and joyous occasions in Jewish life.

⁵⁸ A Jewish text that sets forth the order of the Passover *seder*. Reading the *Haggadah* at the *seder* table is a fulfillment of the scriptural commandment to each Jew to "tell your son" of the Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt as described in the Book of Exodus in the *Torah*.

⁵⁹ Hebrew: 'Sanctification.' A blessing recited over wine or grape juice to sanctify the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. In many synagogues congregants gather for *Kiddush* reception after the Friday night or Saturday morning service to recite the blessing over wine or grape juice and have something to eat.

⁶⁰ One of the most dramatic moments of the Passover *seder* is with the recitation of the 10 plagues, the narrative where G-d brought on the Egyptians to persuade Pharaoh to free the Israelites from slavery. As each plague is recited, a drop of wine is spilled in recognition, according to many interpretations, that the process of liberation caused suffering to the Egyptian people. A number of rabbinic sources describe the plagues as retribution for Pharaoh's rejection of G-d and for the Egyptians' idol worshipping practices.

p'ri hagafen, and so on. That's relegated to me every year.

MAZIAR: Is it usually at your home?

GOLDBERG: We alternate between homes.

MAZIAR: Which ones?

GOLDBERG: My sister-in-law's or mine. This year it was her turn, and because they had bought this place up at the lake, they decided they'd like to have it up there. It's the first time we've been this casual. It was great. Just a great evening.

MAZIAR: It's important to try something new because, when you think about it, Rabbi Goodman⁶¹ gave a sermon on Saturday morning. It's the Jews who tried something new. Not all the Jews left Egypt. A very small percentage went with Moses. We talked about taking the risk of trying something new and what does it take to do that, to pursue a different course. It was fascinating.

GOLDBERG: They did not all leave?

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

MAZIAR: Was all your family here? Were all your children at the *seder*?

GOLDBERG: Yes. Except I have a son and daughter-in-law living in Orlando, and they could not get up for it. They both travel, and they would not have been able to do it. But everybody else was there.

MAZIAR: You have how many children living here?

GOLDBERG: I have two living here. One in Orlando.

MAZIAR: What have you got for our tape?

GOLDBERG: Are we ready? All right. We've been devoting this portion of the interview to Rich's.

MAZIAR: Right.

GOLDBERG: In this session today, I will conclude the Rich's story.

MAZIAR: Okay.

<Interruption in tape>

MAZIAR: We're going to start to record again. Go ahead.

GOLDBERG: <Goldberg reads> As the decade of the 1950s started, Dick Rich, now president of

⁶¹ Rabbi Arnold M. Goodman served as senior rabbi of Ahavath Achim from 1982 to 2002. He came to Atlanta from Minnesota where he served as rabbi of Adath Jeshurun in Minnetonka since 1966. He currently serves as its senior rabbinic scholar. Upon his retirement, the synagogue honored them by designating its adult education program as Beit Aharon: The Rabbi Arnold and Rae Goodman Learning Institute for adult studies.

the company, found himself running the store in a very different retail world than either his grandfather or his older cousin, Walter knew. While Morris Rich was concerned with staying close to 800 employees in a one-store location, Dick worked hard to stay in touch with thousands. In his day, Walter Rich called himself the "eternal floor walker" and was famous for visiting each department and speaking to each sales person every day. Dick, through a determined decentralization of authority, depended on seven other top executives to keep him abreast of the happenings throughout the organization. This executive committee included Dick Rich, Frank Neely, Harold Brockey, Louis Carrol, Joseph Asher, and Alvin Ferst, all prominent members of the Atlanta business community. As Morris Rich's first male heir, Dick Rich was destined from early childhood to one day take a hand in running the store. He started during vacations when he was a teenager coming up from his parents' home in Savannah [Georgia] to stay with his grandparents and work at the store. Dick graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in economics. He spent an extended internship working in silk mills in New Jersey, the garment district in New York, and at [L.] Bamberger [& Co.], a major New Jersey retailer. He spent a year running Rich's New York office and returned to Atlanta to head the advertising and public relations departments.

MAZIAR: Should we reiterate here that his name was not Rich to begin with? Was Dick . . . no. Excuse me.

GOLDBERG: It's already in there. We did it on the earlier session.

MAZIAR: Okay.

GOLDBERG: He spent a year running Rich's New York office and returned to Atlanta to head advertising and public relations, becoming vice president when World War II broke out. After a three-year stint in the [United States] Army, he returned to the store. With the death of Davis Strauss, Dick became vice president and treasurer. The late 1950s saw the beginning of Rich's Atlanta expansion into the suburbs: Lenox Square Shopping Center and Belvedere [Plaza] shopping center in 1959; in 1963, the third suburban store in Cobb County; and in 1965, two more stores in North DeKalb and Greenbriar Malls. An athletic individual, Dick played tennis and went swimming in his back yard every morning, weather permitting, arriving at the store each day at 8:30 a.m. He spent his day downtown at meetings, both business and civic, far into the night. The list of organizations for which he worked as chairman, director, or trustee numbered in the 30s. He led the creation and construction of the new Arts Center, which you recall was dedicated to the Atlanta people who were killed in the Orly plane crash. He was the leader in that.

MAZIAR: Would he have gone on that? Was he part of that group?

GOLDBERG: No, he would not have. He was instrumental in the building of the Atlanta rapid transit system, MARTA, one of the key people in it. Dick gives his credit for the time and the attention he gives to civic activities to his luck in having such able people as Harold Brockey running the store. Harold Brockey came up through the department store ranks starting with Macy's training school in New York. He was sent to Atlanta by Macy's in 1949 to head the home furnishings division of Davison Paxton, a Macy affiliate. Recognizing his talents, Frank Neely and Dick Rich convinced Brockey to leave the Macy affiliate a year later to join Rich's as general merchandise manager of Rich's Store for Homes. He was named the director of the company in 1953 and was promoted to executive vice president and general merchandise manager of the entire store over the next four years. In 1961, he became president of Rich's, only the second person outside the Rich family to head the organization, Frank Neely being the first. He too, like his predecessors, followed the Rich's tradition of service and civic and philanthropic enterprises. In 1964, Brockey headed the Community Chest⁶² drive, now known as the United Way, and exceeded its fundraising quota for the first time in decades. In the early 1970s, he was the most outstanding leader of the downtown business community called Central Atlanta Progress. Brockey had an excellent team of merchants in his executive group: Louis Carrol, Joseph [F.] Asher and Joel Goldberg, all active members of the Atlanta Jewish community and the community at large. Lou Carrol joined Rich's in 1955 to succeed Brockey as general merchandise manager of the Store for Homes and advanced to senior vice president in charge of merchandising and publicity for the entire organization. Lou had been with Bamberger's of New Jersey. Joseph Asher was born in Midville, Georgia, and joined Rich's in 1921 as a shirt salesman in the Whitehall Street store. He progressed to his most senior position as general merchandise manager of the Men's Store before retiring in the late 1960s. Joel Goldberg, a native of Worcester, Massachusetts, and a graduate of Dartmouth College, started his retailing career in the training squad of Filene's of Boston. Joining Rich's in 1954 as a women's fashion buyer, he held several executive positions before replacing Brockey as president in 1971, only the third person outside the Rich family to head the organization, as Brockey became chairman of the board and Dick Rich, chairman of the executive committee, with the retirement of Frank Neely. In addition to the executives in the store, Rich's

⁶² The Community Chests in the United States and Canada were fund-raising organizations that collected money from local businesses and workers and distributed it to community projects. The first Community Chest, "Community Fund," was founded in 1913 in Cleveland, Ohio by the Federation for Charity and Philanthropy. By 1963, and after several name changes, the term "United Way" was adopted in the United States.

had on its board of directors some of the most outstanding business leaders in the South, among them Paul Austin, President of Coca-Cola; Howard Dobbs, Jr., President of the Life Insurance Company of Georgia; Ben S. Gilmer, President of AT&T; Joseph Heyman, Sr. Vice President and Chief Economist of Trust Company of Georgia; A. Carl Kotchian, president of Lockheed Corporation; Walter Mitchell, vice president of Draper Corporation; Louis Montag, senior partner of Montag & Caldwell Investment; Oscar Strauss, Jr., of the Selig Manufacturing Company; Robert Troutman, Sr., of King & Spaulding; and Jesse Hill of the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, the first black elected to a Georgia corporate board. The decade of the Sixties saw further expansion of the business into the suburbs of metro Atlanta as the Atlanta population in surrounding countries increased in numbers quite dramatically.

MAZIAR: Was Jesse's appointment to the board at Rich's his first appointment?

GOLDBERG: First one.

MAZIAR: So Rich's really set the lead.

GOLDBERG: We were the first ones in the Atlanta community.

MAZIAR: . . . for broadening the scope of the people on their board.

GOLDBERG: I believe, if I'm not mistaken, we were the first ones to put a woman on the board shortly before the merger. [Beatrice] Be [Hirsch] Haas was put on Rich's board. That was just a few months before we merged.

MAZIAR: Was her family related? She's not a relative in any way?

GOLDBERG: No.

MAZIAR: There were no other relatives that were on the board?

GOLDBERG: Louis Montag was related by marriage. His wife, Mrs. [Jane Rich] Montag, was a Rich, part of the Rich family.

MAZIAR: And she had income coming from the store. I think that's absolutely fascinating that there were no family . . .

GOLDBERG: Michael was put on the board. That was it. There was nobody else.

MAZIAR: I think that's fascinating. Neither the family lobbied for more . . .

GOLDBERG: Never.

MAZIAR: Do you think there was a conscious decision to kind of exclude the family from the running of the business to kind of take it to a different level?

GOLDBERG: No. I don't think it was a conscious decision. There was just nobody coming up who had any interest in going into the store at a starting level with the exception of Michael.

Michael went to Vanderbilt [University], and when he graduated, he came to the store. Louis Montag's son, Tony, had no interest in the store. Jimmy, the youngest son, did work in the store part time for a while, but it was not a permanent career thing. The others were all living out of town.

MAZIER: So they really had to prepare in some way what would happen to the business.

GOLDBERG: Rich's leadership felt its reputation in the South merited expansion outside of Atlanta, and we sought opportunities to buy other retail stores from Washington, D.C., south to Florida, and west to Alabama and Tennessee. The approach from a firm with the stature of Rich's raised the asking price of the organization we sought to acquire to the point of making such acquisitions not feasible economically. So, we turned our expansion to the opening of new stores outside the Atlanta metro area. First to Birmingham, Alabama, then to Augusta, Georgia, followed by Greenville and Columbia, South Carolina, all in the early 1970s. It was at this time that major discount stores were expanding into the South. Seizing another opportunity for growth and expansion, we created our own discount division, called Richway, and successfully opened discount stores in metro Atlanta, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Florida. In 1975, Dick Rich suffered a stroke and passed away. Within a few months we were deluged with requests from some ten major national and international retail corporations with requests to acquire or merge with Rich's. After a great deal of soul-searching and some serious disagreements among top management of Rich's, we entertained three of the proposals. They were Dayton-Hudson Corporation of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Carter Hawley Hale of Los Angeles, California; and Federated Department Stores of Cincinnati, Ohio, three very strong department store chains. It was in the summer of 1976, that the decision was made and the board approved a merger of Rich's with Federated Department Stores. On October 29, 1976, Rich's, Inc. ceased to exist and became a division of Federated Department Stores, 110 years and 5 months to the day Morris Rich first opened the doors of his new retail establishment on Whitehall Street in downtown Atlanta, Georgia. Perhaps more than any other store-keeping family anywhere in America, the Rich's had created the feeling in their community that their store was not merely a store but an institution, and one whose honesty, compassion, and credit the individual members of the community could count on absolutely. More than any bank or public utility or branch of local or state government, Rich's was perceived by virtually everyone within a radius of several hundred miles of Atlanta as reliable, responsive, and humane. Virtue was more than just its own reward. With its great reputation came great business until finally no other store in the south even approached Rich's success. Most of America's great

Jewish store builders came from Germany, but a few, especially in the south and west, were from Eastern Europe: Birmingham's Louis Pizitz [Department Store] from Russia; Arizona's Mike Goldwater from Poland; and, Atlanta's Morris Rich from Hungary. Just as the terrible fire in Chicago in 1871 made possible that great city by destroying it, so with the burning of Atlanta by Sherman's troops in 1864, its growth began in earnest. It had been nothing before the Civil War, not even incorporated or named Atlanta until more than a century after Georgia's founding. But after the war, it boomed, not as part of an antebellum cotton plantation economy, but as a new distribution and manufacturing center. In the main, this new Atlanta was made by newcomers such as Morris Rich. There were several stores in the new Atlanta owned by both Jews and non-Jews, but what made Rich's outlast most of the other stores and surpass all of them, was its treatment of customers, its insistence that people are more important than things. In each generation, there were dozens of tales, the true stories often more remarkable than the <unintelligible> ones, of how Rich's resolutely unremittingly satisfied its customers no matter how unreasonable, outrageous, or provocative. The store refunded the full price of an unused pair of high button shoes that were 30 years old, of an unworn man's shirt 10 years old, of a dead canary. It accepted for credit or exchanged merchandise that customers had not bought at Rich's, but from its competitors, because when a Rich's customer alleged that she had bought it at Rich's, Rich's did not propose to call her a liar. Rich's had no complaint department. Every employee had to accept goods for return without a question.

MAZIAR: How about all the clothes that were worn that were returned?!

GOLDBERG: Did I ever tell you my story of an experience when I first came?

MAZIAR: It's on the tape, about a woman who brought back a gown that she had spilled champagne on.

GOLDBERG: The governor's wife.

MAZIAR: We've got it on tape. What a way to find out about the policy.

GOLDBERG: The store's liberal return policy was only one aspect of our insistence that the store must be run to suit the needs of the customer. Rich's credit policy was tolerant to a fault. If a farmer could not pay his family's bill only once a year when he was paid for his crop, that was okay with Rich's. If you couldn't manage even that in a bad crop year, that was okay, too. To a degree, the customer made not only their own merchandise adjustments but their own credit and payment program as well. In the 1914 Depression, when the price of cotton fell to unheard of lows, Rich's advertised that it would buy and store bales of cotton at well above market price, and the farmers did not forget.

After the disastrous [Great] Atlanta Fire of 1917,⁶³ the store's credit policy was an important factor in the city's rehabilitation, and the citizens did not forget. In 1930⁶⁴ when the virtually bankrupt city had no money to meet the school teachers' payroll, Walter Rich called the mayor to suggest that the city issue scrip to pay the teachers, which the store would not only accept in payment, but it would also cash at full value with no obligation that a penny be spent at the store. Rich's paid out \$645,000 for the script and had it until the city could redeem it. The school teachers didn't forget nor did their children nor did their grandchildren.

MAZIAR: What about the banks? Loan money without interest?

GOLDBERG: What Rich's did better than anyone else was to identify their store with their area, not only to advertise it as a Southern institution, but to make it just that. The history of Rich's that I have presented here has not dealt with the financial success of a major American retail establishment. An examination of the facts and the figures and statistics are a testimony to its position as one of America's most successful department stores. The Rich's I would try to portray in the story is a story about people, a business built on the premise that people are more important than things. Their history could be entitled "From Rags to Riches" since the store is a dramatization of the theme of lowly born to highly risen. Such stories of early American leaders who have risen from the log cabin to the White House have never tired the rural school boy of the urban adolescent. Similar tales of business men who started as newspaper delivery boys and who have risen to the presidencies of our largest American corporations have increased the ambitions of thousands of young men and women throughout our nation. Rich's, too, exemplifies this theme of young ambition, perhaps even more dramatically than our classic American success story, for here are added variations to the story. Instead of a young American born in a log cabin in the Midwest, we have immigrants from Hungary. In place of a more typical Anglo-Saxon Midwesterner, we have three young Jewish boys who overcame racial, language, and religious

⁶³ The Great Atlanta Fire of 1917 began just after noon on Monday, May 21, 1917. It blazed all day and was finally brought under control by 10 p.m. This fire started in a warehouse at Fort and Decatur Street and rapidly spread. It burned whole blocks of homes so quickly that people couldn't even get anything out of the buildings. Soldiers arrived to dynamite buildings to try to stop it. Fire fighters came from cities in Tennessee (Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville), Jacksonville, Florida, Greenville, South Carolina, and across Georgia including Rome, Augusta, Macon, Newnan, Marietta, Griffin, Gainesville, and Savannah. The area continued to burn and smolder for a week. 300 acres had been burned, 1,938 buildings were destroyed and 10,000 people (mostly 'Negroes') were made homeless. Property loss was \$5,500,000. See Atlanta and Environs, Franklin Garrett, Volume II, page 700 to 706 for details.

⁶⁴ The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic depression in the decade preceding World War II. The time of the Great Depression varied across nations, but in most countries, it started in about 1929 and lasted until the late 1930's or early 1940's. It was the longest, most widespread, and deepest depression of the twentieth century.

difficulties as well as financial and social ones. Although the pattern is typically Horatio Alger,⁶⁵ we find here that truth is indeed strange. The Rich's story is at times more dramatic and more touching than most creations of the imagination. Warm and extremely human throughout, the story of Rich's is truly one of man's inherent ability to cope with his environment granted incentive, drive and character. This theme has passed on from generation to generation for over 125 years. *Fini.* Fire away.

MAZIAR: I think there's an awful lot here.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

MAZIAR: You really put that together beautifully.

GOLDBERG: Thank you. I tried to keep this pretty much in a Jewish vein because that's what we're dealing with. There were a number of people in Rich's who were not Jewish, successful executives, who I left out of the story because I was trying to maintain this oral history we're looking for of the Jewish community, except in the case of the board of directors, where I listed all of the highly successful men, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

MAZIAR: Some of it is selective, but I think the thing that you focused on, which is the real fact, is that values were so important to this family. It was the whole thrust of their business and what they wanted to represent and that they really wanted to be identified with the best values and the best in people. They wanted to, for the South, to be represented in that way. That kind of humane way of relating to each other.

GOLDBERG: I wish I had had the opportunity to work with every one of them, because each one of them was unique in his own personality as I read through the history of it, and yet they all made significant individual contributions.

MAZIAR: It, too, would be fascinating to know a little bit more about their upbringing and the kind of values that their parents had and the kind of things that they did. The kinds of traditions and the kinds of habits that families develop are things the children aren't always aware of, yet, they lend a certain sort of identity and strength. We talked about your wanting to put on *tefillin* every morning. There are certain kinds of rituals and attitudes and values that become ingrained very early on, and one doesn't even question them. One just does it because it's such a comfortable . . . it satisfies a spiritual sense. I have some questions, some things that I'd like to go over with you, if that's okay.

⁶⁵ Horatio Alger Jr. (1832-1899) was an American writer who became famous for writing over 100 books for young working class males portraying 'rags to riches' stories. His characters gain wealth and honor and ultimately realize the "American Dream."

GOLDBERG: Sure.

MAZIAR: Feel however you would like to answer them briefly or if you'd like to expand on some of them. I'm very naive when it comes to business. I wanted to get back to why Rich's felt it needed to sell at all. Why couldn't it have just stayed the same? Why couldn't it have remained a local entity and just gone ahead and done business as it had?

GOLDBERG: I think because Brockey, at that point, was not completely healthy. I think in his own mind, he didn't have the confidence in the rest of us, the seven of us who were his executive staff. I shouldn't say didn't have the confidence in us. I don't think he had the confidence in himself, to be honest with you. Dick was dead, and I don't think he had the confidence in himself to carry that business to greater lengths.

MAZIAR: Can you tell me a little bit about him, what kind of man he was?

GOLDBERG: Great family man. His wife and his two daughters, he idolized. They were his whole life. He had no interest outside of that, unfortunately. When I first married Carole, I tried to get him to go play golf and things. He had no interest whatsoever except the store and some gardening around the house. He did that. Other than that, that's the only thing. He read a lot. Avid reader, primarily fiction. But it was the store. Everything was that store. He lived, ate, and he breathed the store. That illness affected him more than he ever realized, and I think more than anybody else, that heart attack, the first one. Subsequently, he had open heart surgery. Over a period of time, his health deteriorated and, I think, his thinking capacity. I think he felt it. I think he felt that he didn't have the capability to take that organization forward.

MAZIAR: Do you think that he may have had some second thoughts?

GOLDBERG: Yes. I think he did. In 1976, he thought that was right for the company. The company was going to grow. It needed funding. It needed the help of a major corporation such as Federated Department Stores. But as the years went on and he sat by and watched what was happening to the business, he had great regrets about it. He wished he had never done it. He told me at one time it was the biggest mistake he made in his career.

MAZIAR: What was happening? What did he see happening to the business?

GOLDBERG: It wasn't Rich's that has been related in this story. Don't misunderstand me. Federated bought Rich's and has made a huge success out of it. They bought a very successful business and took it to even greater heights. Profit wise, it's outstanding. It's one of the best stores in their entire group. But what it took out of it, it took the whole flavor out of the business. It eliminated

all of the less unprofitable and less profitable parts of the business, the French Room, the Specialty Shop, and those kinds of things. Dick Rich and his predecessors always maintained that we give our shareholders a fair return on their money. We have a primary interest of taking care of our customers because that's how we take care of these shareholders. We want to do things in our store that, while they're not all profitable, they bring people to our doors and they bring them in greater numbers than they do to anybody else, to any of our competition, and they did exactly that. If you look at Rich's today, virtually all of that stuff has been eliminated. All of those marginal departments are no longer part of their stores.

MAZIAR: How would say the image of Rich's has changed in terms of the level of quality or kind of aura of Rich's?

GOLDBERG: I think it's changed dramatically. People can see it in the results. At one time, the Macy affiliate, Davison-Paxton, did less than a third of our business. Less than a third of Rich's business. Today, my guess is, they do better than 80 percent of Rich's business. So, while Rich's continued to grow, Davison's has grown tremendously. That is the major competition.

MAZIAR: What happened, do you think, that allowed that?

GOLDBERG: I think this change in hands. I said to one of my friends at Davison's-Macy's that the Rich's Federated merger did more to help Davison-Paxton than the years affiliated with Macy's. There was great concern among people, customers, when the merger was announced, what was going to happen. It was written about all the time, great concern of what was happening to their store. The major change that took place was the great influx of people from outside Atlanta, from the Northeast, from the Midwest, to the point where Atlanta's population was becoming very much non-natives.

MAZIAR: Right.

GOLDBERG: As it is today. They came here not knowing Rich's. They didn't know Rich's. Didn't know the history of Rich's. Whereas, prior to the merger, the grandmother and the mother and the daughter and the granddaughter, they all shopped at Rich's. That became a way of life, particularly from the hinterlands. When I said 700-mile radius earlier in the conversation, it literally was. We had customers from within a 700- mile radius, and it was all because of this reputation that the Rich's had built.

MAZIAR: Other people felt that they were getting a fair shake.

GOLDBERG: Absolutely. I can recall when Lord & Taylor and Saks Fifth Avenue came to town,

their policies on credits and returns were their New York policies, which were not very liberal, if you've ever had a shopping experience in either of those stores. Their initial response in Atlanta was not good, to the point where they had to redefine their policies of adjustments and credit because of Rich's.

MAZIAR: What did they eventually do?

GOLDBERG: They became much more liberal in their returns, much more. When I came here as a buyer, as I mentioned to you earlier, I bought a better dress department. It was kind of moderate priced in those days, in which we had a 35 percent return rate. I'd have customers come in and they'd pick four or five dresses and take them home and bring all four or five back. Or they might keep one and bring four back. We had a 35 percent return rate, and yet we made money because we had customers coming every day. Knocked on our door.

MAZIAR: Let me ask you, what happened to the officers and the people who were involved in the business once Federated came in? You were not ready for retirement?

GOLDBERG: No. That's the strange part.

MAZIAR: How old were you at the time?

GOLDBERG: At that point, I was 51, and I had a 9-year contract. They gave me a nine-year contract which, according to Federated, was the longest contract they had ever given in the history of the corporation. They gave Brockey . . .

MAZIAR: How old are you now?

GOLDBERG: Sixty-nine. They gave Brockey a five-year contract, I think it was.

MAZIAR: Did all of the old agreements about compensation that applied to family, were those still holding up, trusts and things like that? What happened?

GOLDBERG: You lost me.

MAZIAR: Yes. We'll get into that later. Brockey, how long was his contract?

GOLDBERG: I think it was five years. We were the only two that had contracts. Nobody else.

MAZIAR: What happened to everybody else?

GOLDBERG: The chief financial officer resigned the day of the merger. Eventually, and we knew it would happen, Federated brought their own people in.

MAZIAR: Sure.

GOLDBERG: Eventually replaced me and my two general merchandise managers, Leonard Levy and Albert Maslia, both left the store. Alvin Ferst left the store. To the point where today

in Rich's, I don't believe, I'm almost positive of this statement, there is nobody in the upper management group left from prior to 1976. None of them. They've all changed.

MAZIAR: That's really incredible. What did you do? I mean, you had a position there, but what exactly?

GOLDBERG: I became chairman of the board when Brockey retired. We brought in a new president from Bullock's [of Los Angeles], which was a Federated affiliate.

MAZIAR: Were you involved in that decision or not?

GOLDBERG: Yes. Sort of. I interviewed him.

MAZIAR: But you knew all these people, is that right, through professional organizations? Did you know a lot of the people? Did you know a lot of Federated people?

GOLDBERG: Sure. Yes. I didn't know this particular fellow from Bullock's because he was a general merchandise manager. He was not president or chairman of the board. Those were people I had been dealing with at that stage. And then they started. I became chairman executive committee for the last five years, and they brought in another one of their own people. They had a two-man team of theirs, both Federated people, who were running it. They proceeded to lop off the top executives from the Rich's organization prior to 1976.

MAZIAR: And yourself included.

GOLDBERG: No, I had my contract.

MAZIAR: I see.

GOLDBERG: My contract ran to 1985.

MAZIAR: But did you have responsibilities?

GOLDBERG: Yes. I was chairman of the executive committee until I retired in 1985. You know, some they fired and some they terminated, to be polite. Others, they gently persuaded them to leave. That sort of thing.

MAZIAR: The maneuvering must have been quite incredible.

GOLDBERG: It was incredible to watch.

MAZIAR: Did you think that you were going to be able to stay on? Did your contract allow you to go off and develop other businesses and other ventures?

GOLDBERG: No. I had a non-compete contract. At age 60 when my contract was up, I would have had to leave Atlanta if I wanted to stay in retailing. And there weren't too many other places in the United States that I could go where there weren't Federated Department Stores. There were a few

places, but no place I was really interested in. So, I retired. Remember, I told you we took the foundation out at the merger in 1976?

MAZIAR: And that was part of the condition of the merger.

GOLDBERG: Yes. Shortly after that, I became president of the foundation.

MAZIAR: Who was responsible for that piece? Who had the foresight to get that worked out about the foundation?

GOLDBERG: I think we just sort of told them. It was an individual. It was a corporation unto itself. It had nothing to do with the business, although the business did fund it.

MAZIAR: Right. Does it still? How do you work that out? Is Federated obliged to contribute a certain amount to it?

GOLDBERG: No. They did for a while because of our United Way gift, and that was their request. They weren't in the position, they felt, to give a huge United Way gift that Rich's, Inc. gave every year.

MAZIAR: How is it funded now?

GOLDBERG: The foundation?

MAZIAR: Yes.

GOLDBERG: Just growth.

MAZIAR: Stock and holdings.

GOLDBERG: Yes. It's grown tremendously. It's up almost \$29 million.

MAZIAR: Really.

GOLDBERG: I would guess at the time of the merger, it was maybe \$11 or \$12 million. It's had tremendous growth. We have an investment manager that manages it for us. By law, we give away our five percent of the profits each year.

MAZIAR: Your retirement of whatever was really tied into those contracts that you were given to by Federated?

GOLDBERG: Yes. They did not renew my contract when the nine years was up.

MAZIAR: Right.

GOLDBERG: Nor did I expect them to.

MAZIAR: Right. And it sounds like you had a position, but they really wanted their own people to run things.

GOLDBERG: Yes. Absolutely.

MAZIAR: Were you bored? Did you have enough to do?

GOLDBERG: I took care of all my civic activities and ran the foundation and was involved. As a matter of fact, there was a write-up on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* shortly after I moved to chairman of the executive committee, telling about how at Rich's we believed in our executives getting involved in the community because I was devoting virtually full-time to my extracurricular activities, civic, philanthropic, cultural, all that kind of thing. Which is sort of how I got involved with 30 organizations like Dick Rich. Been involved in a lot of them before the merger came.

MAZIAR: Harold Brockey. How much longer did he live past the buyout?

GOLDBERG: Let's see. It was 1976. He stayed in the store until 1978, at which point they sort of retired him and put him in an office across the street in a bank building with a secretary. He spent his time there doing his civic stuff for another three years. That was 1981. He lived another 10 years but in very poor health.

MAZIAR: I would imagine he must have gotten a lot of comment from the business community of Atlanta. Was there a lot of criticism?

GOLDBERG: You mean in 1976?

MAZIAR: Yes.

GOLDBERG: Yes, he did.

MAZIAR: From outside of Rich's.

GOLDBERG: Yes, he did, shortly after the merger, though. Within a couple of years, he was out of the business, and that was all forgotten about. There was no communication with him. I was very active in the Atlanta business community. There were no other retailers involved. Davison's never participated. None of their people. None of their operation. Sears Roebuck, at that point, had practically nobody involved. J. C. Penney had virtually nobody involved. Today, they do. They have a regional man who is. So, it was Rich's. When Federated bought us out, I continued. I was the Rich's representative at that point. But then the new president came in and got involved in the community. The chairman did not.

MAZIAR: Who was that?

GOLDBERG: Allen [I.] Questrom. He never got involved in any outside activities. But Jim Zimmerman, whose uncle had worked for Rich's many years before that. He was involved in CAP. He and I were both on the CAP executive committee.

MAZIAR: CAP is?

GOLDBERG: Central Atlanta Progress.

MAZIAR: All the other executives left and went out and either developed businesses or worked for another company.

GOLDBERG: Yes. Albert Maslia. I don't know if you know Albert.

MAZIAR: No.

GOLDBERG: He went into business for himself. He opened a series of Hallmark card shops.

MAZIAR: Right. Social Expressions?

GOLDBERG: They're called Social Expressions. Been very successful at it. Leonard Levy, who was the other general merchandise manager, left here and wound up in Baltimore [Maryland] working . . . I can't think of the name of the company offhand - and then moved around. He was in Texas for a while, and right now he's up in Chicago in the furniture manufacturing business. Alvin Ferst, who was our planning director, he built stores and that sort of thing, they retired him and he got involved a little bit in real estate. He's still here.

MAZIAR: When the business was sold, what did the family do? Did they say anything?

GOLDBERG: Michael was.

<End Tape 3, Side 1>

<Begin Tape 3, Side 2>

MAZIAR: And their income, they drew incomes from Rich's?

GOLDBERG: From whatever shares they held.

MAZIAR: But their shares became Federated?

GOLDBERG: Yes. They did become Federated.

MAZIAR: In essence, their income or wealth was key to whatever happened to Federated?

GOLDBERG: Yes. Eventually, if they held onto those shares, they made a lot of money when this [Robert] Campeau fellow, this Canadian, remember he bought out Federated. All of us made a lot of money on Federated stock. At the time of the merger, I think the stock was in the 30s, and we got over \$70 a share when Campeau bought it.

MAZIAR: But then what happened?

GOLDBERG: It went bankrupt.

MAZIAR: Right.

GOLDBERG: A major department store chain in the world went bankrupt. Came out of bankruptcy just a year ago at this time.

MAZIAR: So what happens to the value of the stock?

GOLDBERG: Fortunately, for those of us in the inner circle, Campeau bought it. I mean, in order to take over Federated . . .

MAZIAR: He bought your stock.

GOLDBERG: He bought our shares. At that point, we owned no shares.

MAZIAR: Fascinating. Did you ever think that it was going to turn out that way?

GOLDBERG: Never. I had people tell me that, people in the industry. But I never believed it. I think I was very naive.

MAZIAR: Because here you were in a situation where everything was humming along and perfect and successful business.

GOLDBERG: I sort of got a clue. I had been on this trip around the world. I don't know if I told you that.

MAZIAR: No. I'd love to hear about it.

GOLDBERG: I had been on this trip around the world with Al Maslia, who was merchandising the Home Store at that point. He and I left here and flew to Tokyo [Japan].

MAZIAR: When was this?

GOLDBERG: This was 1978.

MAZIAR: We went in 1975.

GOLDBERG: We were going on this buying trip. We went to Tokyo and to Bangkok [Thailand]. We went into India. We did Bombay and New Delhi. From there we were going to Israel. We had to fly TWA to Tehran [Iran]. The *Shah*⁶⁶ was still alive in those days. We picked up an El Al plane. No. Maybe it was TWA plane and went a different plane on into Tel Aviv [Israel]. From there, on into Europe and back home again.

MAZIAR: How long were you gone?

GOLDBERG: I had been gone for three and a half weeks, the longest I had ever been gone from the store. I got back and Brockey called me at home that evening. He says, "You've got to go to Cincinnati in the morning." I said, "What for?" I said, "I've been gone for three and a half weeks." I said, "I haven't seen my desk yet." He says, "Ralph and Harold" . . . Ralph Lazarus [of

⁶⁶ 'Shah' is the Persian word for "king" or "sovereign." Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1919-1980), also known as the *Shah* of Iran, reigned from 1941 to 1979 until his overthrow by the Iranian Revolution. He is known for his policies of modernization and secularism. He died while in exile in Egypt, whose president, Anwar Sadat, had granted him asylum. He is buried in Al-Rifa'i Mosque in Cairo, Egypt.

F. & R. Lazarus & Co.] was chairman of the board and Harold Kresge was the president. "They want to see you." I said, "What do they want to see me about?" He said, "I don't know, but they want to see you." So, I did. The next morning, I got a plane to Cincinnati. I walked into Ralph's office and he said . . . is this recording now?

MAZIAR: Yes.

GOLDBERG: I think we better take . . .

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

MAZIAR: For the sake of clarity, Mr. Brockey was no longer able to participate in business for various reasons.

GOLDBERG: That's right.

<Interview pauses, then resumes>

MAZIAR: Can we say that on the tape? How did it work out when the new management came in, with Allen Questrom coming from California? How was the transition?

GOLDBERG: It worked fine. He took over the merchandising function. I took over the CEO and financial and all that kind of thing.

MAZIAR: During this time, did you feel then that you would leave in 1979 when your contract was up?

GOLDBERG: No, I really didn't. When Brockey came back from Federated with this nine-year contract for me, he was so excited about it. It was the first time they ever gave a contract this long in their history and so on. I said, "That's great." They gave me excellent salary. When I replaced him, when I went to Cincinnati on that trip I was telling you about, they gave me an excellent increase. I had no complaints. But when he was put out, I could smell it was coming. I knew there would not be a renewal of my contract at that point. By then, they would have all their own people in, which is what they did. As you go back in history, you look at other acquisitions they made over the years, that's how they operated.

MAZIAR: Has the Federated executive pool kind of remained stable or do they go through a lot of executives of people moving in and out.

GOLDBERG: No. It's a lot of people moving in and out. They've had a lot of changes, particularly with this bankruptcy thing that went on. It's affected the business dramatically, but it's coming back very strong.

MAZIAR: It sounds like their main focus is the bottom line.

GOLDBERG: It is. It's exactly what it is. There's nothing wrong with that.

MAZIAR: Yes. But they don't seem to get terribly involved in the communities where they have their stores.

GOLDBERG: No. Very little. Used to, but very little today.

MAZIAR: Could you share with us a little bit about what you're doing now? You're building schools and you've gotten involved in some other activities.

GOLDBERG: Yes. When I came out, when I retired from Rich's, I started this construction business. I got hold of a Dutch concrete modular technology through these friends of my son's and started building schools.

MAZIAR: How in the heck did you decide on that?

GOLDBERG: These two young men, architect and engineer friends of my son, had been invited over to Holland by this Dutch company who were looking to come into the Southeast as an opportunity for expansion of their business. While they were over there, the Dutch company was sold to a British company, and they met the British principals. The British principals said to them, "Listen fellows, we're not going to America. We bought this company to expand on the European continent because they're a mainstay in this particular type of technology, but you can have whatever you want. Any information we can give you, blueprints, take them with you. God bless you. Go back and have fun. And so they did. They gave them a set of blueprints of this technology. They came back and they were having dinner with my son a few days after they got back. They said, "We need somebody who's got some money and somebody who knows how to run a business. We've got a great idea. "He said, "Talk to my dad. He's getting ready to retire from Rich's in about a month." So they contacted me. I had dinner with them. I looked through the thing. It was in Dutch. I had to have it translated. I checked with a number of people, including the state superintendent of schools, who happened to be a very good friend. He looked at it and had some of his people. He said, "Looks like a great idea." He said, "If you can do it economically, you know, if you can match current costs or beat them." Time wise, it was incredible. We could put up a school in no time. Almost overnight. It was that fast a process. I said to the two guys, "I'll put some money up. We'll start the business. We've got to go out and find customers." We went looking. It was kind of tough because it was like a good old boy society. They all had their private, their own group of friends who they used as contractors and that kind of thing. I found a school superintendent up in Cherokee County, up in Woodstock [Georgia]. Incidentally, just as an aside, I was watching the weather . . . the storm the other night. There was a student in Etowah High School

[who] killed himself in class. The reporter from Channel 2 was up there taking pictures and took pictures of the building I had built. I was looking at the TV set and [said], "Oh, God no." Anyway, I found this Ms. Kline who was the superintendent of schools in Woodstock. She had a bunch of trailers on her high school grounds, and she wanted to replace them. She needed a building, but she didn't have money. It's all state and federally funded is where it all comes from. I said, "Ms. Kline, I'll tell you what I'll do with you." She needed a ten-classroom addition to this high school, a free-standing building. I said, "I will build you, my first customer, I will build you this ten classroom [building] at my cost, whatever it costs. But you've got to do one thing for me. You must send out, when we're finished, send out an invitation to your 153 colleagues" . . . There are 154 school systems in the State of Georgia. Every county has one . . . "and invite them to an open house when we're finished." I said, "We'll furnish some refreshments." So she did. We built the building. It came in about 20 percent over estimate, but I sold it to her for what I promised. She sent out the invitations. We had 54 people come on a Sunday afternoon to this open house at this new school building. I got six contracts out of it. And I was in business. I started building school buildings: Marietta, Cobb County, Pickens up in Jasper.

MAZIAR: Have you been outside of Georgia too?

GOLDBERG: No. Only in North Georgia. We started in 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988. The federal and state government started tightening up on school money, on money for new school building. By 1989, the recession had come in, and there was no money. Over that period of time, from 1985 to 1989, I built 11 school buildings and made a lot of money. It was very, very successful. My bank was very happy. I was paying my notes on time and everything. So, I had no business. I mean, nobody was building anything. At that point, I did have some staff, and I had to let them go. But I kept the one, the engineer, my primary person. He stayed with me. said, "Ed, if you can find something else for us to do, I'll fund it, but otherwise I'm going to have to close the business down." I was running the Rich Foundation at the same time. I was president of the Rich Foundation. It kind of brought me in here as a place to house it when Rich's closed the downtown store because one of Rich's employees was sort of a bookkeeper for the foundation. He did that as extracurricular work. When they closed the downtown store, I pulled all the records out here <unintelligible>. Anne Berg is the grant coordinator for the foundation. Anyway, we went looking. We went in these small industrial parks and there seemed to be a demand for these small office warehouse buildings. I said, "I'll tell you what. Let's buy an acre

of ground, and we'll build one of these things." They are metal buildings with brick facades. We did a nice job. I said, "Let's build one and see what happens to it," because these were spec buildings. While I was building the one, a customer came along and he bought it. Gee, that's very nice. Ed said to me, "Are you ready to go now?" I said, "No, Ed. Let's buy another one. Let's buy another piece of ground." We bought a two-acre lot, and we built a building. Just as we were finishing it, a British company came to town. They were bringing the new wire stuff that telephones . . . fiber optics. They were going to manufacture fiber optics cable. He bought my plant. Paid cash for it. We were in great shape. Ed says to me, "You ready?" I said, "No, let's try one more." We started building another one, and another opportunity came up for another piece of land. We had two going at this point. We sold them both. They were sold ready for whenever we finished them. We finished them within just a few months. He said, "Are you ready?" I said, "I'm ready." So we went out and we bought three pieces of land, and we built three office warehouse buildings. That was in 1991. This is 1994. I am sitting with those three office warehouse buildings. The fortunate part of it is I went ahead and rented them. I leased them so at least I'd have some money coming in.

MAZIAR: How many square feet are they?

GOLDBERG: Two of them are 10,000 square feet. The other one is 8,750. They are fully occupied and I'm getting a positive cash flow. I'm paying my bank every month. Right now, everybody is happy. But I'm waiting for this real estate business to perk up so I can get rid of these three buildings. By then, I'll be 70 and I'll spend a little more time on the golf course. I'll run the Rich Foundation and do my other extracurricular activities.

MAZIAR: Do you feel that you have done what you set out to do?

GOLDBERG: Yes, I really do. I moved up very fast in retail. Very, very fast. That was not my intention. When I came out of the Navy and finished college, I wanted to be a radio announcer. I had a sister who was an actress. The guy she was dating at the time said, "Don't do this. There's no money in radio announcing." I said, "I'm going to be a Graham McNamee⁶⁷ or one of those kinds of people." He said, "No. Get into merchandising. If you get a merchandising background, then," he says, "you want to get into radio, it doesn't help you in announcing any." He says, "But there is lots of money in the administrative end of radio." So, I wound up at Filene's in their training program. I finished the training program, and six months later I was a buyer, the

⁶⁷ Graham McNamee (1888–1942) was an American radio broadcaster, the medium's most recognized national personality. He originated play-by-play sports broadcasting, for which he was awarded the Ford C. Frick Award by the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2016.

earliest anybody had made a buyer in the history of Filene's. That's a very young age to . . . six months, not chronologically, but very young for the span of time. I had been three months on the training program, and six months later I was a buyer. I bought junior sportswear, and I loved it. Fascinating business. After that, I picked up the junior coat and suit department. Then they moved me into the misses dress department. It was a huge misses dress department there. That's where I got my first experience. It was owned by Federated, incidentally. Filene's was a Federated store. The then head of Federated came through one day, Ralph Lazarus' father. He was going through Filene's, and the merchandise manager brought him over and introduced me to him. He said, "How long have you been here?" He quizzed me. He says, "Our buying office in New York is looking for somebody to buy better dresses." This was an operation called the central dress division, in which we purchase the merchandise . . . we resident buyers in New York, we would actually purchase the merchandise for something like 14 of the 20 AMC [Associated Merchandising Corporation] stores, of which, most of them were Federated. He said, "What would you think?" I said, "Gee, Mr. Lazarus, it sounds like a great opportunity." At that point I had been there about five or six years. He set up the interview. I went down to New York and got interviewed, and I got the job. I spent the year as a resident buyer, misses dresses. I hated it. I hated New York. I liked the job. I did not like New York at all. But one of the stores I was buying for was Rich's. I was buying for the moderate priced department at Rich's. So, I knew all the people. The merchandise manager was in New York, and I was working the market with her. We had department managers in departments because we did the buying for them. She said, "Would you think of coming to Rich's?" She says, "I've got a great job in the better dress department. I need a better dress buyer." She said, "You look like you've got the kind of <unintelligible> we want." And she went off. I'm fascinated. I'll come down for an interview. So I did. I flew South. That's where I met the young guy sitting next to me on the plane where I told you the story about the vacuum cleaner.

MAZIAR: Right.

GOLDBERG: I was interviewed by Rich's that day and they offered me a job and offered me good money. I flew back to New York. I started working in the market place there then came South.

MAZIAR: What do you think it is about you that's made you so successful if you had to kind of look back on things? I have my own ideas.

GOLDBERG: Perseverance, I think, more than anything else. I had a good pace level. That

sort of came as I grew up. I think a lot, my sister, who was the actress, rubbed off on me. But perseverance. I worked. I worked hard. I was very thorough. I like people, and I enjoyed being on the floor working with customers as sales person. I didn't go into fitting rooms or anything like that, but I wouldn't hesitate to sell a woman a dress.

MAZIAR: And that was very natural.

GOLDBERG: I loved it. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

MAZIAR: You have a very strong sense of not being afraid to try new things. Very flexible.

GOLDBERG: Yes, my dad taught me that. I bought dresses for Rich's. I came in 1954. I bought this department 1954, 1955. Carole was at Skidmore [College]. She was home for the summer and she was on Rich's college board. The college board kids were always assigned to the junior department because that was the juniors or the teen department. She was in juniors. That was right across the floor, on the fourth floor downtown, from my department. This young kid was always hanging out at the water fountain. There was a water fountain right on the corner of my department. This young kid was drinking water all day long. I thought she was going to float away one day.

MAZIAR: Was she supposed to be working?

GOLDBERG: One day, I'm walking by, and she banged into me, which she subsequently told me was done on purpose, and we got to talking. She told me who she was and her father was the general merchandise manager of the Home Store. I didn't know him from Adam. He was the enemy as far as I'm concerned. I was in the Fashion Store. We had nothing to do with the home furnishings people. They were aliens. I asked her for a date. I took her to . . . I'll never forget our first date. We went to see *Mister Roberts*, the movie. Then we started dating after that. She never went back to Skidmore. We were married a year and a half later. We were married in 1956. In 1957, I was promoted to divisional merchandise manager in the Budget Store, which in those days was called the Basement. I had the whole apparel area, women's apparel and accessories in the basement. That was 1957. I was there for three years. In 1960, I was moved upstairs as divisional merchandise manager of all the upstairs ready to wear.

MAZIAR: It was a perfect fit.

GOLDBERG: Just worked out beautifully. Then I went back downstairs to the Basement as the general merchandise manager over the whole basement. That was in 1965. That was when I was put on

the Rich's board.

MAZIAR: I have a feeling that you're going to come up with another business. I think that you're going to sell those buildings and something else is going to turn up because something is going to sound interesting and appealing to you.

GOLDBERG: I did own something in between. It was a partnership. I doubt if you ever heard of it. It was called the Atlanta Golf Center. It was out on Beaver Ruin Road. It still exists today. You know where Beaver Ruin Road is?

MAZIAR: It's out that way. Up [Interstate] 85.

GOLDBERG: On 85 just before Gwinnett [Place] Mall. Four friends of mine, three other friends and I, bought this piece of land as an investment 20 something years ago. We decided to make a golf driving range out of it. Part of it was flood plain so it was easily convertible. We made a golf driving range and we hired the pro from our club, from the Standard Club, who had been let go at that point, and his brother, who was also a golf pro living down in Texas. He came to work. We built a little clubhouse and we build this golf driving range. We started making money like wild fire. In the third year, this thing was making a profit. We couldn't believe it. So, we held it and held it and held it and held it. In 1992, we sold it to a Korean from Chicago for \$1.2 million.

MAZIAR: We're hearing about all the successful deals. Wait a minute.

GOLDBERG: I've had some bad ones. Believe me. I've had some bad ones. But this one worked out very well. I started a chicken business, a chicken processing business. Do you know Arthur Scharf [sp]? Do you know him at all?

MAZIAR: No.

GOLDBERG: He died a few months ago. Middy's [sp] husband. Arthur and I got involved in a chicken processing business. We started producing chicken breasts out in Rutledge, Georgia. We built a small factory out there. We were selling it to Delta Airlines, their food kitchen kind of thing. The guy who was running our business was stealing from us, we found out. He was stealing us blind. He was down in Rutledge running it and we were back here doing our thing. We brought the sheriff out and padlocked the door and got rid of him, and we sold it. We were lucky because outside of Rutledge, a young fellow had come down from New York City and he took over what had been a horse meat factory and was producing chicken parts other than breasts to be frozen and shipped to Saudi Arabia. Every night he had trucks coming up to his place taking this chicken out. His plant was awful. It was horrible. The board of health had told him that if he didn't

clean it up they were going to close him down. He bought our plant, and we gave him a mortgage on it. We gave him a note, which we closed on December 10 of last year. He took it over, took the factory over. We didn't lose any money on it. We didn't make any, but we didn't lose anything. We went down on December 10 to close. This was after this ten-year note. He said to us, "Why don't you guys come over to the plant." He said, "You haven't seen it since ten years ago when I bought it from you." He says, "I'd like you to see what we're doing." We went over there, and as we drove up I said to Arthur, "This guy, he's expanded the plant. It's twice the size." He never said a word about it. Never told us he was doing it. I said, "He must be doing very well." As we drove around the back to the parking lot, there were ten refrigerated trailers sitting out back.

MAZIAR: Oh, my goodness.

GOLDBERG: We walked into the factory, and there were 60 people processing chicken for a shipment to Saudi Arabia. He was shipping 10,000 pounds a day of processed chicken to Saudi Arabia. Those refrigerated trucks are taken to the Atlanta airport and off it goes overseas and eventually Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait. So that was my chicken venture.

MAZIAR: Well, you wound up being successful for someone. Yes, you do have a knack, I have to say. Let me ask you, because the time is really rolling on and we're going to close briefly. You said you got something from your dad. I was wondering what it was that your dad taught you about perseverance or not being afraid to try new things.

GOLDBERG: My dad spent his whole career in the ice cream business.

MAZIAR: Doing?

GOLDBERG: He was not an adventuresome individual. He was superintendent of an ice cream plant in my home town in Worcester, Massachusetts. He always felt there were opportunities that he didn't go after, that he wanted me to think of things differently. He sort of raised me that way. I went through college. My parents [Rebecca and Max Goldberg] never paid a penny. I earned it. I worked for it. I went in the Navy when I was 17 years old. My mother wasn't happy, but I went.

MAZIAR: Just because you wanted to do that, you were ready?

GOLDBERG: The war was on. I became a Navy pilot. I came back four years later and went back to Dartmouth College and finished up. But my father was one of the most respected people I've ever met in my life. I never heard a cuss word out of that man. I never heard a damn or a hell

or anything. I mean, he was a puritanical Yankee if there ever was one. He was born in London [England]. Came to the United States when he was like 18 months old with his mother because his father was over in South Africa hunting for diamonds or some damn foolish thing. Got caught up in a world war or whatever it was. He taught me right as a youngster to look for opportunity and not to be afraid to take chances.

MAZIAR: And how about your mother?

GOLDBERG: My mother was a go-getter. My mother was what my father should have been. She was kind of the impetus between some of the things he did. He started in the ice cream business and then they were married and had my older sister [Eleanor Goldberg Neddleman]. They got into the bakery business. My mother had had some experience with it previously, so they had a bakery in my home town. They lived upstairs over it. Then they decided to sell the bakery because the ice cream business . . . their people wanted him back again. They wanted to promote him, so he went back. He spent 40 years in the ice cream business with National Dairy Corporation which is Sealtest Ice Cream.

MAZIAR: And your mother, did she work again?

GOLDBERG: No. My mother never worked. My mother couldn't read English. My mother could speak English. She couldn't read it. Never went to school. She came over here as a girl of 16.

MAZIAR: From?

GOLDBERG: From Lithuania it really was. It was on the Polish-Lithuanian border.

MAZIAR: Did they speak English at home?

GOLDBERG: No.

MAZIAR: They spoke Yiddish at home?

GOLDBERG: Spoke Yiddish at home.

MAZIAR: Even though your father was born in London?

GOLDBERG: In my home.

MAZIAR: Yes.

GOLDBERG: I thought you meant my mother's home. No, they spoke English.

MAZIAR: In the home you grew up in?

GOLDBERG: Yes. They spoke Yiddish when they didn't want us to know what was going on, but eventually I understood. She wasn't fluent in English. I mean, she could look at a paper and

make out some of it. She spoke Polish, Lithuanian, and Russian very fluently. So, she just raised kids and kept the household.

MAZIAR: You do have wonderful taste in things, looking around at your office and at your artwork on the walls. I was wondering if you had any of that in your own family. Were there opportunities for . . .

GOLDBERG: No, there really wasn't. One of the activities I got involved in was the High Museum. In fact, I became vice president in charge of operations at the High Museum. I enjoyed that. I was on their board for over 12 years. I enjoyed that. That's where I really got an appreciation for it. But nothing in my family.

MAZIAR: And your sister? What happened to your sister?

GOLDBERG: My sister was an actress in radio. She went to the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City and graduated from there. Did some radio work because television didn't exist in her day. Did some radio work in New York City and met a guy from my home town that she fell in love with. She came back to Worcester and joined one of the local radio stations and was doing a program of her own, an hour show. She was married and raised kids and did that show for a good number of years.

MAZIAR: Is she still alive?

GOLDBERG: No, she died. She had a massive heart attack at age 65. Quite some time now. She did all our radio work before World War II. Walt, her husband, joined the Navy. He wound up in Puerto Rico during the war, at the Guantanamo Naval Air Base, and subsequently back to Norfolk Naval Station. She was able to live on base because there was housing there. With their first child, she moved down there and gave up her radio life. She was a very creative person. I think some of that wore off, I'm sure.

MAZIAR: Yes. I think that was obviously percolating in your family.

GOLDBERG: Yes. Mine, by exposure to Judi [sp]. In later years when the kids were grown, she became an interior decorator and did a fabulous job of it. Excellent. Just make some spending money.

MAZIAR: With your own children, I'm just thinking about this. Is that why you sent them to Galloway because Galloway tends to be more creative? It has a kind of creative . . .

GOLDBERG: No. I sent only one kid to Galloway because he had a learning disability. As it turned out, Galloway was not the school for him because Galloway allows a kid to work at his own

speed, and this kid needed strong discipline. I told you, I became chairman of the board at Galloway School. <unintelligible> and I agreed after a couple of years that this was not the place for him. So we talked to some counselors and sent him up to, just outside of Augusta, Maine, to a school up there. He spent a year up there going to school for kids with learning disabilities and did well. He learned how to ski more than anything else. He came home and we put him into Brandon Hall School, which was exactly the kind of school. It was perfect. Brandon Hall, at that point, heck, they threw him out and brought in a new man. The school was in all kinds of trouble. Jimmy came back, and he finished up. The last few years of high school he did at Brandon Hall. Then he went to ABAC, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College down in Tifton, Georgia. Liberal arts kind of stuff. He didn't want to become a farmer.

MAZIAR: Did any of your kids become involved in merchandising or business?

GOLDBERG: No. My daughter is with Manning Selvage & Lee.

MAZIAR: Which is?

GOLDBERG: A public relations firm here in Atlanta. My oldest son is with Solo Cup Company out of Urbana, Illinois, just outside of Chicago. A year ago, he was promoted to national accounts manager, which is a fabulous job for a kid in that position. He travels the whole country, meeting with heads of companies and planning programming for business. He's done extremely well. He started with them as a salesman in the Atlanta area working under a supervisor. Within six months, they were so impressed with him, they sent him down to Orlando [Florida] and split the Florida territory and created a territory from Orlando to the East Coast, the Kennedy Space Center and Daytona. He opened Disney World for them. They did not have the Disney account. Their competitor had it. Jeff opened the Disney account. It became a multi, multimillion dollar account.

MAZIAR: It sounds like he has the same gene.

GOLDBERG: Yes. He was on his way.

MAZIAR: Sounds like he certainly was. And the other child is?

GOLDBERG: And then there is the crowd.

MAZIAR: That's the crowd?

GOLDBERG: Yes. <Shows a picture> Jeff is on the far right, then his wife.

MAZIAR: And baby.

GOLDBERG: Debra, my daughter, with their first child. Her husband [Chris] right behind

them. The kid with the beard on the top is Debra's twin brother, Jimmy, who is not married.

MAZIAR: Good looking group.

GOLDBERG: Thank you.

MAZIAR: I hope they give you much happiness.

GOLDBERG: Oh, they do. They do. Now I have a second granddaughter. Debra had another child. She's a year and a half old. That's the two of them sitting in my lap in the picture right by the chair.

MAZIAR: Okay. And they live?

GOLDBERG: They live in Sandy Springs [Georgia]. They just bought a house in Sandy Springs just a year ago.

MAZIAR: So you get to see them?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yes.

MAZIAR: You get to play with them.

GOLDBERG: All the time.

MAZIAR: Let me just do a little bit of . . . I think you have to sign something.

GOLDBERG: All right. What, you want a release?

MAZIAR: No. I'm telling you our time. Do you realize it's almost 12 o'clock?

<Pause in tape>

MAZIAR: Today is the 29th.

GOLDBERG: Don't forget to turn your clock ahead Saturday night.

MAZIAR: I need you to sign right down here. [Is there] anything else you can think of?

GOLDBERG: Not a thing.

MAZIAR: We've covered it?

GOLDBERG: I think we've covered it.

MAZIAR: I'm looking forward to reading your book.

GOLDBERG: I have enjoyed meeting you in the first place and spending this time with you.

MAZIAR: Thank you.

GOLDBERG: I have thoroughly enjoyed it.

MAZIAR: I think the tapes are wonderful. I appreciate the attention you gave to them and organizing them. I think they are going to be quite a fascinating piece in the tapestry of the Atlanta fabric. Thank you so much. It was just great.

GOLDBERG: Thank you.

<End Tape 3, Side 2>

INTERVIEW ENDS

Cuba Family Archives