

Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Ira Neimark

Date 2006 September 18

Primary Maker Ira Neimark

Medium digitized audio cassette tape

Description Audio cassette tape of an interview with Ira Neimark. He was interviewed on September 18, 2006 by Bruce M. Stave and Sondra Astor Stave for the G. Fox Oral History Project at his home in Harrison, New York. Ira Neimark was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1921. In 1938, Neimark left high school early to help support his family. He got a job at Bonwit Teller during Christmas as a page boy for the 721 Club. He then worked as an assistant to the doorman learning how to greet customers. He then became an office boy for Bill Holmes, the store president. During World War II, Neimark enlisted in the Army Air Corps as a pilot and served in the Pacific theater. In 1946, he returned to Bonwit Teller as merchandise control manager. In 1951, he became merchandise manager at Gladdings in Providence, Rhode Island. The Gladdings store belonged to the Frederick Atkins Buying Office, who also had G. Fox & Company as a client. Some of Neimark's first interactions with Beatrice Fox Auerbach were at General Merchandise Managers' Meetings. Neimark then used his connection through Bill Holmes to connect with Beatrice Fox Auerbach, and Neimark became the Assistant to the General Merchandise Manager, Sam Einstein. From 1962-1964, Neimark served as President of Brown Thompson at the request of Mrs. Auerbach before returning to G. Fox & Company. After Sam Einstein retired,

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Neimark became the General Merchandise Manager of G. Fox & Company. In

1965, G. Fox was sold to the May Department Stores Company and Beatrice Fox

Auerbach died in 1968. Neimark did not like the management of the May

Company, so in 1969, he left G. Fox to become the General Merchandise Manager

of B. Altman and Company. Neimark discusses his relationship with Beatrice Fox

Auerbach, her approach to leadership, and how well liked she was within the

retail community. Neimark remarks, "So, I learned fashion at Bonwit Teller. I

learned merchandising principles in Gladdings in Providence. But I learned how

to run a store from Beatrice Fox Auerbach." He discusses the store layout, the

customers, employee benefits, and the Moses Fox Club. When discussing the

differences in leadership under Beatrice Fox Auerbach and the May Company,

Neimark opines, "So, the privately owned stores, under the directorship of

major chains, lost their identity. G. Fox lost its identity." BFA's philosophy was

service first, then expense, whereas it was the opposite for larger chains.

Neimark frequently refers to his book, "Crossing Fifth Avenue to Bergdorf

Goodman," which was published in 2007. In 1975, Neimark became the CEO at

Bergdorf Goodman. He describes some of the work he did there. Neimark retired

in 1992.

Dimensions Duration: 1 Hour, 24 Minutes, 18 Seconds