ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE FASHION INDUSTRIES

FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

MEMOIRS OF

MAURICE RENTNER

FROM VARYING PERSPECTIVES

THE FASHION INDUSTRY LEADERS

DATES OF INTERVIEWS

Arthur Jablow - Friday, May 14, 1982
Selma Frankel - Tuesday, August 31, 1982
Mildred Klare - Monday, August 23, 1982
Bernice Rentner Jablow - Tuesday, May 11, 1982; Monday, September 20, 1982
Paula Neiman - Tuesday, September 14, 1982
Ira Rentner - Tuesday, August 31, 1982
Lillian Sloan - Wednesday, September 1, 1982

INTERVIEWED BY

Mildred Finger
MAURICE RENTNER was, in the opinion of many people involved in the high-priced apparel business, one of the greatest forces in the industry. He is remembered for his great taste, business acumen, innovativeness, and helpfulness to people of talent.

Despite the fact that he died in 1958, he is still remembered as the Dean of the fashion business, whose influence in the markets spanned a period of some forty years.

These interviews with people who knew him from different perspectives were undertaken in an attempt to reconstruct the life and character of someone who had such impact.
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INTERVIEW WITH
ARTHUR JABLOW
son-in-law to Maurice Rentner

DATE OF INTERVIEW
Friday, May 14, 1982

INTERVIEWED BY
Mildred Finger
Q: Could we talk about Maurice Rentner, starting from the time that he was born, and tell us about his family and when he came here and so forth?

A: Well, yes, we can. But the interesting part, Mildred, is the fact that when Maurice died, he was 68-69 years of age. So in his years in the dress business, he was a young person all the years in the business. He never was an old man in the dress business.

Q: When was he born?

A: He was born in... Let's see. He died in '58, so he was born in 1889. Yeah. Something like that. He came to America as a youth. His father was here ahead of him. But Maurice, when he was 11-12, and that's when he came here, really started out as a salesman. And he did many, many different jobs. He sold shirtwaists; he sold buttons. But he never really could do anything, because by the time he came back to New York after selling and so forth...

Q: You mean he went out on the road?

A: On the road. Yes. His people were out of business. So he finally he made up his mind--and by the way, he told me this very directly, that he decided when he was very young to go into business for himself. And he did. He opened a very small place and he started to work and peddle... I think it was shirtwaists...

Q: You say he took a little place, in what part of New York?

A: In... Where the garment district was. It was downtown at that time.

Q: All the way downtown on the lower East Side.
A: Right, so this went along... Now, of course, I didn't come to know Maurice until the thirties. When I went into the business, Maurice was very well established at that time. I had met him on my trips to Europe.... We got to be very friendly. In fact, I personally think he was hustling me for his daughter. But, we liked each other, because he was a genius. He was so smart and he was so dynamic and everything.

Q: About what year did you meet him, do you think?

A: I would say I met Maurice in the early thirties, which...

When I came out of college I went to work for B. Altman & Company, and I had chosen the retail business as a field, and I loved it. I met Maurice at that time. He knew my father. They used to know each other for many years.

Q: Your father was a coat maker.

A: Yes. He was. And I got to know Maurice, and when I started to take his daughter out, it was very amusing because there were so many coincidences, knowing the business as I knew it. Because I left the retail field to help my father in the wholesale business, and once I got in there.... Once you get into the wholesale business, you gotta stand on both feet or you're finished.

Q: And by then, in the wholesale business, you were uptown.

A: Yes. The whole industry had... My father originally was on 27th Street. That's where the apparel trades were. And then they moved up when these large buildings were being built. And by the way, that's where a lot of Maurice's money came from, because he was interested in the garment center, and they built 498 Seventh Avenue and 500 Seventh Avenue and one other...
Q: Five twelve...
A: Five twelve, that's right. And Maurice was a large stockholder there, and this is when he was known as "The King." But Maurice actually became much better known when he conceived the idea of the Fashion Originators' Guild. Now, I think that was sometime in the thirties also. I don't know the exact date.
Q: I think it was
A: It was outlawed in '41.

But Maurice's great success was the fact that he had a wonderful touch of fashion. I don't know if you remember Molyneux...
Q: Oh, yes.
A: Well, Maurice was always a firm believer in "Captain Molyneux." From the very start, and he patterned all his dressmaking and his suits on Molyneux, that he had seen in Europe. This went on for many, many years.
Q: Have you any idea when he made his first trip to Europe?
A: Ah...Also I think Maurice made his first trip to Europe in the early thirties. It wasn't fashionable to go to Europe before then, except for a vacation. But when...After Poiret, it really started the couture makers in Europe. And then Dior came in and some of the others.
Q: Dior was much later.
A: Much later. But I say, that's when it really became popular. But it was in the thirties that Maurice went, and that's how the business grew. But he was the master of it because he had a great feel for
fashion, even though he couldn't sketch and he couldn't... He never knew anything about cutting or making...

Q: Or draping a fabric...

A: Nothing! He had good selectivity. He could select a beautiful fabric. He would like that very much. He had wonderful taste. I think what you could say...He was a man who loved beauty. By the way...Beautiful women. He did love beautiful women. He thought that was what made the world go 'round. So, that was...His whole life was predicated upon that. Now, my mother-in-law, Dorothy Rentner, I don't know if many people would remember her, but she was a very, very pretty woman. And when Maurice met her, I think he met her on one of his road trips up in Albany, New York. That's where Dorothy had family someplace. He met her up there, and they fell in love and married. In fact, I think that's the reason I married Bernice; the fact that when I saw Dorothy, I said to Maurice, "Do you guarantee that when Bernnice is Dorothy's age they'll look alike?" And he said, "Yes, I guarantee it," Because she was a stunning woman. And they were married, and they had three children. I don't know if you knew they had a son, who died very young, about 15-16 years of age. His name was Lloyd, and he died from the damndest thing--mastoid--which today would never happen.

Q: Yes. But in those days it was a killer.

A: But in those days it happened. But...Another thing that was so important about Maurice was that he was always very successful. People didn't generally know that that kind of a fashion firm could do that kind of a business. But he always did a smashing big business, and always made a lot of money, and it was very amazing to me to see that that could be done in
the apparel business. Because I guess there was no riskier business in
the world than the apparel business. But Maurice had the touch.

By the way....He also never had "name" designers as such. He had....There was a woman...I can't think of her name off hand. She's a
heavy set woman, who worked there for many years...

Q: And he would style the line and tell her....
A: He would tell her, "I don't like that." I was there many
times when he would say to her, "I don't think that has the look that we're
after. It hasn't got the softness, or the touch," and so forth. "Throw it
out. Get something else." And it was just amazing that he had that feel for
the apparel business. But, that was Maurice. And then he was in business in
his younger days with his brother. He had a half brother by the name of Harry
Rentner, a capable man, but they never got along too well. They just didn't
like each other too much. And it never amounted to anything,

Q: Was he also Ira's brother?
A: Ira was also a half brother.

Q: A half brother.
A: Yeah. It was the same father but a different mother. But
he always got along with Ira very well. They split up and then Maurice went
by himself. But Maurice was always the dean, because he loved to help people.
Particularly like with buyers, it was the funniest thing, some of the things
that happened. One I remember--you'd get a kick out of this--Walter Deiches...

Q: Who was at Bonwit's,
A: Who was at Bonwit's, But Walter Deiches is the great genius,
Nobody told Walter...Well, Walter was not a great genius. In fact, when Walter
worked for, I think it was Saks, they let him go. People didn't generally know that. Bonwit's hadn't hired him. But he came to Maurice one day and let his heart out, and Maurice listened, and then Maurice always called me. So I said to Maurice, "Look, why don't we place Walter, someplace, and then work him back into New York?" A lot of the stores had to do that, because of politics and so forth. So we arranged for Walter to work in Chicago, temporarily, but he... Here's a guy who is out of work. He belly ached like hell. You'd think the world was coming to an end. But he went to Chicago, because I said, "You gotta go to Chicago." And eventually they brought him back as General Manager, to Bonwit Teller. But he soon forgot that. You know, it was so amusing.

Now, one thing you must remember. Maurice had all these friends and connections, but they all made a lot of money on his merchandise. His merchandise sold the most readily of the better goods, and the reason for that was very simple. It was made much better than any of them...

Q: What was his price range, say, in the '30s and '40s?
A: Well, it was... I would say... from $150 up. You know what I mean?

Q: Retail?
A: Retail, yes. Which was very... It was high priced at that time. But he was always high priced. But they always sold his goods. The interesting thing was, in New York City, a woman that wore a Rentner outfit was considered well dressed, And it was amusing to see how that took over and it finally hit the whole damn country. And Maurice did a very large business in days gone by when large business was not the thing, in the
ready-to-wear field. I mean, you know, if a dress manufacturer was doing a couple of million dollars, it was considered a large business.

But he went on like that, and, as I say, he was still very young when he died, because he was in his late 60s, and today many of these men still running businesses are in their 80s.


A: Yeah, But I got such a kick out of him because he always had time for everything and everybody. And he was very charitable. He spent lots of time with charities, I'm talking about, for example, even Andrew Goodman....Andrew Goodman was a tough charity man. Tough giver-upper. So Maurice said, 'We've got to get him.' So I said, 'Let's make him man of the year at the Denver thing.'

Q: The National Jewish Hospital of Denver,

A: Yes. That's how Andrew got into that, Before Maurice twisted his arm, Andrew wanted no part of it. And to this day, Andrew is one of their big sponsors, in the National Jewish Hospital. But Maurice went along like that for so many years, creating a new collection every season, every year....

Q: In those days, were collections twice a year or more than that?

A: No, they were usually twice a year. There were three or four collections, actually, but the summer collection was never very big for, you know, the expensive houses. They did a resort collection, which they ran into the summer, and so forth. You must remember that Maurice had a sister called Anna Miller, Anna Miller was very successful also, but
Anna Miller was only successful with Maurice behind her. Anna never did a damn thing without discussing it with Maurice. And he was there, backing her up and encouraging her and helping her as much as he could. And she did very well. But it was under his guidance. Ira Rentner also, in a different field completely—he was in Juniors—did very well. Never did a damn thing without coming to talk to Maurice. It was just amazing how he found time for all these things, and running his own business.

Q: He never had any training. Never had any formal training....

A: Never had any formal training. And he never had any formal education for goodness sakes. He went to school...By the way, he was very learned in the Talmud. He could quote it, and so forth. But that was all self-learned. He did things that were just amazing to me. That's why I say he was such a bloody genius, you know. Most of the kids all had schooling, and so forth. But Maurice never had that, and his mind was so sharp the way he used to work. In later years, he...Louis Nizer was a great friend of his. They played cards, and Maurice loved to have people around him. He loved to gamble....And that was his nature. So Louis also was a gambler. Now, when the war came on...

Q: The Second World War,

A: The Second World War. And...You know, everything was frozen and, what was it, the OPA and the other things...,?

Q: The limitation on fabric...,

A: The limitation on fabric and labor and all those things...

Maurice was very active in that. In fact, Maurice was the guiding genius behind Stanley Marcus at that time. You know, Stanley was made head of that
...for the government,...And he was a capable retail executive. But what did he know about limitations? But he had a very good friend in Maurice Rentner, and he and Maurice worked it out. And it really worked very well for the industry as a whole. And then when the war was over, Maurice started to go back to Paris. Now, that was 1945...Yes...And it was interesting to see how...Because at that time, I used to go, and we used to go together. We never got on the same plane together, because he would make a plane by the skin of his teeth. I couldn't operate that way. But we used to meet in Paris, and we would spend time together, and I enjoyed being with him because we understood each other and understood...By the way, I must tell you a wonderful anecdote of Maurice in Paris. He loved beautiful things, and when he went to Paris, he always bought things that he saw, not for the business but for gifts, for buyers, for friends...to anybody that he liked he would send an expensive gift. But he met a Russian shoemaker....Now, this Russian--I don't remember his name--but every time Maurice would come, he would bring back his shoes from the last trip because he loved the shoemaker, but the shoes would never fit him. They used to hurt him. So I said to Maurice one day, "Why do you buy these shoes? Can't you just love him and not buy the shoes?" And he says, "He's a wonderful gentleman, and he's really basically a great shoemaker, but something goes wrong." So he used to stay at the Plaza Athenee, and the shoemaker would come on the first day that he arrived to take...to retake the measurements of the shoes. But he would never deliver the shoes until the day he left. So he never,... Most of the time he never had a chance to try the shoes on before he left.
But this was a ploy on the part of this Russian shoemaker, and it was so amusing. I don't know how many years it went on, but that was one of our greatest jokes; to wait for the Russian to come with the shoes, and I would accuse the Russian of being a crook. But Maurice just loved it. And also he used to buy antiques. He had a woman who had a shop on Rue St. Honore...She would bring these things, and she was very smart, because she used to say to Maurice, "I want you to live with these things for the few weeks that you're in Paris." And she used to leave everything at the hotel. And he would look at them. And then after two weeks he would be so attached to them he thought they belonged to him, and that's how she did her business, But this went on for years. Every time we made a trip, this would happen. She would arrive the first day and leave everything in the room and... It was a howl!

Q: It sounds as though he was a good salesman, but also very good at being sold, too.

A: Oh, no question about it. He had... This was his big heart, too. And I remember distinctly all these things that happened. Even in later years when he took Herman Siegenfeld with him a couple of times, and he never liked to take Herman along...

Q: Herman... He was a relative wasn't he?

A: Yes. Herman was his nephew. His sister's son. But he was a nice man, but Maurice dominated him and Herman never knew how to handle Maurice. Because Herman really wasn't too smart. He was good, but he just...

Q: He was a good salesman, ultimately.

A: Oh, yes. Ultimately a good salesman. And Gene Lewin was a wonderful salesman. By the way, I must tell you why I mentioned Gene Lewin's
Gene Lewin originally worked for Anna Miller, and he was the one that liked Bill Blass, because Bill Blass worked for Anna Miller. So they decided after Anna passed away that they would go into business together, and they came to Maurice to discuss it, and Maurice liked the idea, and he spoke to me and I said, "I think it's a wonderful idea." By that time prices had risen so high, and they were starting new, so their prices could be a little cheaper. So Maurice said he would put up the money for the new firm. And they... It was organized and so forth, and just as they were about ready to go, Maurice died. Well...

Q: This was in 1958.
A: Fifty-eight. Yes. And...Gee, this was a terrible thing. But I decided that as long as Maurice was gone, why start a new firm? Gene could come in and help Herman Siegenfeld. They could run Rentner, and Bill Blass could be the designer. So I convinced them that that's what they should do. And the deal was that at the end of a couple of years they would have the business for a nominal sum of money, and run it as their own business. Which they did, by the way. They followed everything that I....

Q: They also gave Bill Blass a piece of the business, did they not?
A: Yes, But that was later on. When they started, he was just working as a designer for Gene Lewin. But it always ran well. Rentner's was a successful business, right up to when Maurice died.

Q: Incidentally, on the trips he made to Europe, when you saw him, did he have a designer with him, or did he himself get the feeling from the collections?
A: No, he usually had a young lady in Paris who did sketches. And she used to sketch under his auspices, and then he...

Q: In a secretive way.

A: Of course. And he bought a lot of merchandise. And then once in a while, he did take one of the Assistant Designers.

Q: But in those days, the designer really wasn't....

A: It wasn't...It developed in...When the name designers started to hatch...Isn't that funny? I keep going back to that woman. I can't think of her name. She was such a good designer. She was a big, fat lady. You probably knew her. When you were a kid, she was around.

But anyhow...It went along beautifully, and Maurice, as I say, was very successful. He made a world of friends. There wasn't a retailer in America who wasn't fond of Maurice.

Q: Did he do a lot of traveling to the stores?

A: No. None. They would all come to pay their respects in New York City.

Q: Specialty stores as well as department store people.

A: Yes, both. Because, like, all the Federated Department Store people would come to see him, even though most of them weren't in his price range. He was too high for him. But they all respected him for his ability and his knowledge and so forth. And then later on, when the big stores started carrying the better goods, you know, when that development came about, they used to just kiss his foot. It was so interesting....

Q: Actually, in the late forties some of the department stores were carrying his price range, because I remember Bamberger's in those days
had a lot of Maurice Rentner's merchandise, at the end of the forties...

A: That's right. Remember when the New Look, with Dior, came out in '45, Maurice...

Q: The "New Look" was '47....

A: Forty-seven...Maurice made the best copies of that "New Look." He made a taped waistline in a suit that 90% of them couldn't do in New York City. And it was very interesting to see how all the retailers bought those suits, with the full flared skirts, you remember? And he was the one that created that thing...He out-Diored Dior. And Maurice did very well with it. Now...What else can I tell you.

Q: Just a minute more on the business of the specialty stores in those days, I assume there were showings, as there were later on. On models?

A: Not as many as came later on. But there were, and Maurice had...Do you remember Paula Neiman? She did those kind of fashion shows. And took models and the line to these stores and put on shows. But Maurice was too smart a merchant to get too involved in that, because...He always said to me, "Why should I sell the merchandise for them? Let them buy it, and sell out of their own stock." Which was, naturally, the correct thing. Because later on it became so bad that those specialty stores weren't buying the merchandise, they were just having the shows.

Q: And taking special orders.

A: And taking special orders. And you can't live on that. So he didn't like it too much, and discouraged it wherever he could. Even though they always did very well when they had a Maurice Rentner showing,
But he never went on those shows. He would go down to, like, Neiman Marcus, when they had Special Fashion Week, and he might address them down there, but not for a fashion show.

Q: Actually, I was really also just talking about fashion shows, right in the showroom. Were they formal collections? Formal presentations?

A: Yes. There was always a presentation in the showroom. It was never outside the showroom, but always...Maurice always had a very luxurious looking showroom. You remember.

Q: No, I don't.

A: Well, it was always very roomy and he always had...He loved soft greys...Also, that comes from Molyneux by the way. Molyneux's place in Paris was like that. And grey and white, and it always looked beautiful and the clothes looked beautiful, and that was the way he developed it. And there was a quality air about everything he did, and he was a quality man. There was no question about it.

Q: The reason I'm especially interested in that point is that I have talked to a number of people who were in 498 Seventh Avenue, and what they used to do was cut stock and then buyers would simply go in the stockroom and pick up stock. A very different method of operation.

A: In the early days, a lot of these manufacturers used to job a lot of goods. You know, cut their own stock. They used to bring it in. But he never did that. That was...In the very early days, they used to have this kind of a jobbing operation, but that disappeared after a while. Once the manufacturing got important...
Q: So then, he cut to order...?
A: He would sell merchandise and cut to order. He never had excess stock to any degree. Yes, he had one or two numbers that were selling so big, and so forth. And he had a contractor that was making it, so they might have a few hundred garments over. But it was nothing. Everything was to order.

Q: And in those days, were there reorders in that price range? Or just special orders?
A: Mostly special orders, I would say. There weren't reorders as such. They were very glad to sell the merchandise. You know, sell out. The retailers I'm talking about, they did very well with his goods. They sold them out. Some of the records that I saw were just marvelous. You would have loved it. The stuff came and it was really made well. It was made so beautifully. The tailoring was there, and the way it was handled,...

Q: So how did he develop his feeling about marvelous tailoring and great fabrics and so on?
A: He always...As I say,...I guess he was born as a 'quality man,' because he always had a sense of quality. He was very dapper in his own looks. You know, he was a little fellow. Maurice was very short. But he always looked good. His clothes always fit him. He had a tailor, when most fellows didn't have tailors as such. Maurice always had a tailor. And with his love for antiques, and his love for good looking women--he developed these things over a period of many years.

Q: An awful lot of people never develop them.
A: Oh, I know. Look, you and I know, some people have bad
taste their whole life. But they never know they have bad taste. But Maurice always was a quality man. Were you ever to his home?

Q: No, I did not know him.

A: Oh, you didn't. He had the most beautiful things in his home. Like, there was a carpet, that he just loved. And it was the most beautiful carpet. The coloring...A carpet that he had seen in Europe and bought it and brought it back. But that was Maurice. Whenever he saw something that was unusual he bought it and kept it. And he loved watches, for example. When he died, we must have found 15 watches. Where he kept them and why he needed all that...But he liked them. They were pretty. They were unusual. They were different. He had them. And that's where that thing developed. And, for example, whenever he traveled any place, it was...He liked it if it had good service and it was beautiful and the people were nice. That was the kind of man he was. And I got such a kick out of him. In later years, when the kids, when the grandchildren started to come around...And Maurice, by the way, was wonderful with the children. He devoted so much time to them that it was amazing to me. And he was the only grandparent I ever knew that did that. He went out of his way to take the kids to a good luncheon. To take the kids to something that he thought they should see at a museum. That's very unusual for a grandfather. You know. They usually see the kids in passing. But every one of the children--Billy Frankel's kids and my kids; they're all grown up today--remember Maurice so well, because he worked at the kids, to train them into thinking about beautiful things, beautiful thoughts. Seeing good things and nice things and all that...Mildred, you would have gone out to see how this man did that. In fact, I recognized it so many years
before when I asked him to come over one day to my office to look at a few things, and you could see he didn't like it. There was no question he didn't like it. But he didn't want to hurt my father's feelings. So he told me in the evening that he didn't think it had a touch, or a feel. And he said, "By the way, I have a designer." And you know, that's how I got David Kidd,

Q: Really.

A: Yeah. Maurice had met David Kidd, and Maurice liked him. He didn't think he was the greatest designer, by the way, but he liked him, because he had a lot of brass. And he did have a lot of brass. So Maurice convinced me to hire him. And we made a designer out of him. And by the way, did you know that Maurice...that Jimmy Galanos worked for Maurice?

Q: No,

A: Yes. Jimmy Galanos worked for Maurice about two weeks. Maurice met him and liked him. He came to see Maurice...Maurice was taken with him, so he said, "Come on, You come to work for me." So he did, but Maurice was so involved with so many things, and so Jimmy didn't have enough to keep him busy. Jimmy got discouraged and left after two weeks.

Q: And then did he go to California?

A: He went to California. Yeah. And opened his own place.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about the Fashion Originators' Guild? Why he started it?

A: Well, that was a very interesting thing. Because the apparel business in New York was..., They used to copy everything from two cents down to a nickel, and everybody knocked everybody off. And Maurice
saw this trouble coming on, and he conceived the idea of the Fashion
Originators' Guild. In other words, what they would do, they wouldn't sell
a store that bought copies of a member's merchandise. For example, a fellow
like Jack Mulqueen today couldn't be in business, because he copies
everything. And now, of course, they're making it for him too. The designers.
But it was a very good idea, at that time.

Q: How many manufacturers belonged to the Guild?
A: Oh, I would say that most of the better....

Q. Fifty people? Fifty firms? Twenty-five?
A: Hmmm... Yeah. Between 25 and 50. I don't think any more
than that. The better ones. Because they were very choosy who they took
in, you know. They all were copying Paris, I want you to know. It was...
We used to laugh about that, how do you rationalize this kind of thing? Well,
if you knew firms like Rentner, they had a fashion of their own. You develop
this fashion on your own, over many years, and it was selling, and he wanted...
Why should somebody else reap the benefit of their hard labor? It got them
all in line, and it was wonderful publicity, you know, for the manufacturing
business in New York City. And it put the crimp in a lot of places. Like
Los Angeles
was trying to come to the fore. Well, they didn't have a chance. You know what I mean? Because the Fashion Originators' Guild was definitely a New York thing. And it went on, and Maurice was the genius who thought it up and who directed it, and he did a wonderful job of it.

Q: And how did it come to...
A: Fall apart?
Q: Yes. How did it come to...?
A: Well, the retailers weren't foolish either. They knew it was in restraint of trade. They saw that they had to put an end to it, so they started this....

Q: Do you know who?
A: I really don't know who the people were. But there was a basis of fact in what they thought. And it was the cheaper stores that really were hurt by it. You know, Because they were restricted from buying from these manufacturers, and they couldn't even buy the copies, And it didn't work out well at all for them. But as far as the manufacturer was concerned, it was a very good thing,

So that came about. And then Maurice's,... They continued without it. It really didn't hurt him, as far as that was concerned. Because his name was so well known by that time, that he was the genius of the dress business. And it was interesting,... Today I walked by,... on 57th Street... I just happened to go by Bonwit's and they had a window of Mollie Parnis dresses. How old is Mollie Parnis?

Q: Late 70s, early 80s possibly.
A: Yeah, And she still,...
Q: She was born in 19... I'm not sure. I have the dates but I don't remember. She's somewhere between 78 and 80.

A: Yes. But I got a kick out of seeing the clothes. And they were quite different. You know. Prints and things like that. And it was very interesting to see...And the other one. You know. Adele Simpson is still around.

Q: Yes. And she's 78.

A: Oh, easily. Easily. I remember when Adele Simpson worked for Ben Gerschel. But it was very interesting to see how Maurice, his feeling for beauty and so forth... He was one of the first fellows who loved the park in New York. Central Park. By the way, he had an apartment at 65th Street and Central Park West. The most beautiful apartment, overlooking the whole park. It was just interesting to see how... He selected it, he furnished it. He was the one who picked all the furniture. Not my mother-in-law, but he did. And always loved it. Then he moved, you know, to the East Side, when that developed, And there's a story there. It was so amusing. Do you remember Louis Adler?

Q: Yes.

A: Louis lived in this building at 875 Fifth Avenue. That's where Maurice took an apartment. And Louis told me one day that they were going to co-op the building, and Maurice probably would buy his apartment. So I said, "Yes, if Maurice told you, that's all right." But he says, "Every time I go to look for him, he's in Europe." So I said, "Louis..." (Louis was my landlord, you see,) So I said to Louis, "Don't worry about it. We'll take care of it." So the next time I get a call from Louis saying, "I can't find
Maurice. Where is he?" So I said, "What's the trouble?" "Well," he says, "He was supposed to put up the money for the property and he didn't put it up and he's in Europe." So I said, "I'll put it up for Maurice." So he bought the apartment for $25,000. It was on the 15th or 16th floor, a terrace apartment at 875 Fifth Avenue.

Q: What year?

A: Oh, I don't know. Maybe 10 years before he died, or something like that. So, that was one of the real assets of his estate, you know.

Q: I'll bet. Thank you. Okay....
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