

The University of Arizona College of Agriculture and
the Arizona Historical Society Oral History Programs

Narrator: Phyllis Hislop

Interviewer: Gerry Eberline

Transcriber: Beth Thrall

October 12, 1993

Eberline: Today is Tuesday, October 12, 1993. I am Gerry Eberline representing the University of Arizona College of Agriculture. Today I am in the company of Phyllis Hislop for the purpose of recording her recollection of the early days in Arizona. We are in Mrs. Hislop's home at 1723 East Gold Dust Avenue here in Phoenix. Phyllis, am I correct in stating that it is your intention to give this tape and the typed transcript resulting from this interview to the Arizona Historical Society?

Hislop: Yes.

Eberline: Phyllis, would you please tell us a little bit about your early life? Tell us where you were born and how old you were when you came to Arizona?

Hislop: I was born in England. We came to Arizona in 1913.

Eberline: What did your Dad do?

Hislop: Building of houses. He was a developer.

Eberline: Where did he build homes?

Hislop: In Phoenix.

Eberline: Which area?

Hislop: Any place. In those days they weren't built by the thousands like they are now. He would build a house and then when sold it we would move someplace else. He built custom homes.

Eberline: How large was Phoenix when you arrived here in 1913 approximately. What were the boundaries?

Hislop: I think McDowell Road was the North boundary, I'm not sure about the South.

Eberline: Where did you go to school?

Hislop: I attended the Adams School then, but later the Grace Court School, and now all has been torn down. Phoenix Union High School was the only high school at that time.

Eberline: How many were in your graduating class in high school?

Hislop: The largest class up to that point, probably 50 students.

Eberline: What did you do after you got out of high school?

Hislop: I got my first job at the First National Bank of Arizona on December 3, 1924.

Eberline: And what was your position there?

Hislop: Stenographer. I worked for Sylvan Ganz. His father had been Mayor of Phoenix. I don't know how many years. Their home was at Fourth Avenue and Monroe - a big yellow house in the middle of the block with a split rail and iron fence around it. That's where the First Presbyterian church is now.

When World War I came - we took our money to school on Monday mornings to buy more Savings Stamps. It was very exciting when a plane landed here, and in my sister's class was Regina Luke, sister of Frank Luke, Jr., American Ace.

Eberline: Was that where Luke Air Field got it's name?

Hislop: Yes.

Eberline: How long did you work at First National?

Hislop: I worked at First National until October 31st, 1970.

Eberline: And then what did you do?

Hislop: I worked for Snell and Wilmer from November 1st until October 31, 1978.

Eberline: When did you meet Roy and marry him?

Hislop: I met Roy in 1932 when he and Vi, his wife, came to Phoenix. Vi died in 1977 and a year later, in 1978, Roy and I were married. He died in 1986.

Eberline: Were you aware of his cattle business?

Hislop: I had been to their home and seen their ranch at 35th Avenue and Buckeye Road -- Triple A Ranch.

Eberline: What kind of cattle did they have?

Hislop: First they had Brahma and later Charolais, a French breed. He was president of the American International Association I believe in 1960's. The ranch was sold and he retired in 1976. He showed the cattle all over the United States.

Eberline: When did Roy Hislop come to Arizona?

Hislop: 1932.

Eberline: From where?

Hislop: New York, but he was born in Minnesota.

Eberline: Did he get right into the cattle business when he came to Phoenix?

Hislop: No, he purchased from George O. Ford the building at the northwest corner of Central Avenue and Jefferson Street, now the southeast corner of Patriot's Park, and operated Roy's General Hotel Supply. In 1939 and 1940, he was City Manager.

His idea was to cross-breed Charolias with other breeds, to produce beef with a minimum fat so they would be a useful food source, not just heavy show animals.

Eberline: What are some of the pleasant experiences that you can recall. I understand you were a Trustee at the First National Bank.

Hislop: I made lifelong friends through my experience through the bank.

Eberline: Did you work with the family then during this period as a Trust Officer?

Hislop: Sometimes, yes.

Eberline: What was the role of the bank as the Trustee?

Hislop: Each will and trust was tailored to the needs of the trustor or testator. The customary, fiduciary capacity, trustee-ships, the bank handled all the investments, etc.

Eberline: Did you find that many of the customers of First National set up a trust for their family or did you find that it was very few of the total customers?

Hislop: More people are now trust conscious because of the probate casts than what they used to because of the taxes. Arizona, over many other states, does not have an inheritance tax, which is an advantage.

Eberline: Phyllis, would you tell me about what Phoenix was like when you arrived here in 1913?

Hislop: The Court House a red brick building was on Washington Street, between First and Second Avenues. The City Hall a gray frame building was on Washington between First and Second Streets. The Phoenix National Bank was at First Avenue and Washington which later became part of First Interstate Bank of Arizona, now First Interstate is located where the Plaza is now.

Eberline: What other banks were there besides this one?

Hislop: The First National Bank was at Central and Washington, Valley Bank was on Adams Street between Central and First Avenue. There was a Citizens Bank at Five Points.

Eberline: Where is Five Points?

Hislop: The intersection of Seventh Avenue, Van Buren Street and Grand Avenue. Then McDowell was Christy Road after it passed the Fairgrounds. East Van Buren was Tempe Road.

Eberline: Did Phoenix, at that time, have lots of citrus groves and cotton growing nearby?

Hislop: There were peach and apricot orchards then and was replaced by cotton planting. The citrus started at Bethany Home Road on North Central, later, were in many more places. There were acres of melons, cantaloupe, strawberries, and grain in the Glendale and Tolleson area.

Eberline: Later it went on Baseline?

Hislop: Yes. East of Mesa was the McKellip's property. It was supposed to be a frost-free belt where they developed varieties of citrus.

Eberline: At that time, were there towns by the name of Scottsdale and Mesa?

Hislop: Scottsdale was just a wide place in the road - Mesa was a pretty good-sized town, and Tempe, of course, was the college town, Tempe Normal School. There was also a little town called Marinette out beyond Peoria.

Eberline: How about Glendale?

Hislop: Glendale was a farming community. There was a Russian colony in the area.

Eberline: Were all of these towns separated by a few miles whereas now they're all together?

Hislop: Yes. There was many miles between them.

Eberline: Were there horses and buggies at that time?

Hislop: Yes, and there were surreys. Central Avenue Dairy was on Central Avenue where they (Park Central) delivered their milk every morning with white wagons and white horses and you could hear them "clop-clop". It was that way into the 1930's.

Eberline: When you first moved here, did you go from one town to the other by horse and buggy?

Hislop: No, we used a car but there were probably just as many horses and buggies as there were automobiles.

Eberline: Where was your favorite place to go when you were a child growing up - to Mesa?

Hislop: You mean as far as going to a city - well we used to go to Scottsdale for an ice cream soda after going to the movies. Well, it was a park for everybody - quite a popular place. And then there was a Riverside Park later down by the river. They had a big swimming pool there. I remember sometimes downtown you'd see prospectors starting out with their burros all laden with their stuff.

Eberline: Where would they go?

Hislop: Oh, to the mountains around. All these mountains were prospected. You'd see little mines that they had worked at some point.

Eberline: Was that gold mines?

Hislop: Copper, there were some silver mines in Arizona. What they were prospecting for, I don't know.

Eberline: Is there anything else you'd like to add to our interview?

Hislop: Not at this time. Roy Hislop was interviewed sometime in the 1970's by someone in the Archives.

Eberline: Thank you so very much for this interview today. It was very much appreciated and was so very informative and interesting.

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