

JEAN SHILEY NEWHOUSE  
1928 & 1932 OLYMPIC GAMES  
TRACK & FIELD



JEAN SHILEY NEWHOUSE

1928 OLYMPIC GAMES - AMSTERDAM  
HIGH JUMP

1932 OLYMPIC GAMES - LOS ANGELES  
HIGH JUMP  
Gold Medalist

INTERVIEWED:

September, 1987  
West Los Angeles, California  
by George A. Hodak

AN OLYMPIAN'S ORAL HISTORY  
INTRODUCTION

Southern California has a long tradition of excellence in sports and leadership in the Olympic Movement. The Amateur Athletic Foundation is itself the legacy of the 1984 Olympic Games. The Foundation is dedicated to expanding the understanding of sport in our communities. As a part of our effort, we have joined with the Southern California Olympians, an organization of over 1,000 women and men who have participated on Olympic teams, to develop an oral history of these distinguished athletes.

Many Olympians who competed in the Games prior to World War II agreed to share their Olympic experiences in their own words. In the pages that follow, you will learn about these athletes, and their experiences in the Games and in life as a result of being a part of the Olympic Family.

The Amateur Athletic Foundation, its Board of Directors, and staff welcome you to use this document to enhance your understanding of sport in our community.

ANITA L. DE FRANTZ  
President  
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## AN OLYMPIAN'S ORAL HISTORY METHODOLOGY

Interview subjects include Southern California Olympians who competed prior to World War II. Interviews were conducted between March 1987, and August 1988, and consisted of one to five sessions each. The interviewer conducted the sessions in a conversational style and recorded them on audio cassette, addressing the following major areas:

### Family History

Date/place of birth; occupation of father/mother; siblings; family residence;

### Education

Primary and secondary schools attended; college and post-collegiate education;

### Sport-Specific Biographical Data

Subject's introduction to sport—age, event and setting of first formal competition; coaches/trainers/others who influenced athletic development; chronology of sports achievements; Olympic competition; post-Olympic involvement in sports;

### General Biographical Data

Employment history; marital history; children; communities of residence; retirement;

### General Observations

Reactions and reflections on Olympic experience; modernization of sport; attitudes on and involvement with the Olympic Movement; advice to youth and aspiring athletes.

Interview transcripts were edited and may include additional material based on subsequent conversations and/or subject's own editing.

JEAN SHILEY NEWHOUSE

Interviewer: George A. Hodak

Hodak: First off, I'd like you to talk a bit about your family background and when and where you were born.

Newhouse: I was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, November 20, 1911. I think I was a complete surprise to my mother, in those days, women didn't know very much at all. My mother didn't even know where I was coming from, but my father had a nurse in. They were going to have dinner, and my mother said she would go upstairs to the bathroom to freshen up. Really what she wanted to do was go to the bathroom. When she got there her water broke and she thought she had wet her pants and was very embarrassed. So she was up there a long time trying to clean up the mess. The nurse came up, looked at my mother, grabbed her from the bathroom and laid her onto the bed. I was born blue-black or cyanotic. If it hadn't been for the nurse being right there and having to beat on me and breathe into my mouth, I wouldn't even be here. My poor mother. That's how ignorant females were kept in those days.

Anyway, the family didn't stay in Harrisburg very long. They went to Philadelphia, where my father worked for the Packard [Automobile] Company. Of course, I don't remember very much about the first few years. When I was five or six years old we moved from Philadelphia to the country, outside of Philadelphia, to a place called Brookline. I think it is now called Havertown, Pennsylvania. It's about 26 miles outside of Philadelphia. It was very rural.

I remember as a child growing up, even at six and seven, we

would roam far from home. We were completely independent. I remember catching polliwogs in the creek and jumping from rock to rock and coming home wet, which my mother didn't appreciate very much. We would find the first violets in February when they came out. The snow was half there and the violets were just peeking through. In the summer we would climb trees and pick wild cherries, raspberries and strawberries. There was a big farm across the street. The cows would be there, and the corn and the pumpkins for Halloween. We used to have fun baiting the bull. We would wave a red sweater in front of the bull and run and sit on the fence. But we were completely independent.

I was the first child in the family and then subsequently came three boys. So I was really brought up in a family of boys. I was a tomboy, I admit it. I never wanted to play dolls. I just wanted to play football, baseball, marbles or whatever the boys were doing.

Hodak: So, early on you had some athletic inclinations?

Newhouse: I guess so, I don't know. I know we used to climb trees. I can remember my mother saying everytime she looked at me my legs were up in the air. I was constantly doing handstands and cartwheels and all that kind of thing.

Hodak: When did you first engage in any sort of organized sports?

Newhouse: Well, when I went to school, we had eight years of grammar school and four years of high school. So in the seventh and eighth grades in grammar school we played baseball. We had a baseball team. We also played hockey. It wasn't organized or anything like that. We did have games but they were sort of pick up games between schools who were in adjacent communities. And we played real baseball, not softball.

But when I got to high school it really became concentrated. I really have to say that I went to a high school that was 50 to 75 years ahead of its time—Haverford Township High School. The boys had their regular schedule of football, basketball, track and field, tennis, golf, and swimming. And the girls had hockey, basketball, track and field, and tennis. And we were treated equally. When the boys had a schedule, we had a schedule—a regular hockey schedule, like 10 or 12 games or a basketball schedule. The school paid for all our equipment and all our transportation. In traveling across the country with my children over the years, none of the schools that my children attended had anything like this.

So I did play hockey, basketball, track and field, and tennis from my freshman year on. I started high school in 1925 and in 1927 we had a basketball game against some other team in the county. A reporter from the *[Philadelphia] Enquirer* was there. We were covered pretty well by the Philadelphia newspapers. So the reporter was sitting in the bleachers and a little boy was sitting next to her. This reporter was saying, "Oh, that girl jumps so high." And the little boy said, "Well, she broke the record last year. She jumped 4'10". The reporter must have been a very knowledgeable reporter. Her name is Dora Lurie and she now lives in Laguna Beach. We still see and talk to each other. If it hadn't been for her, none of this would have happened. She called me the next day and asked me if I would like to compete in the Olympics. I said, "What is it?" I had no knowledge of the Olympics whatsoever. So she explained it to me and I thought, "Well, it's just another track meet. Sure. Anything in sports is great." I was ready.

So she made an appointment with Lawson Robertson, down at the University of Pennsylvania, to give me a tryout. My principal had given me a Wednesday morning off to go. So we went and when I talked to him I was petrified. He had a very gruff, Scottish burr in his voice and he didn't smile. So I went

through my little routine and I went in to get dressed. Dora remained behind and she came screaming almost: "He's going to take you. He's going to take you!" Well, I didn't realize then how big a thing this was. So if it hadn't been for Dora, I wouldn't have had the first opportunity to do something. It could have turned out badly but, as you see, it didn't.

Hodak: Lawson Robertson was in some ways the dean of track coaches at that time.

Newhouse: He was the head coach at the University of Pennsylvania and was also going to be the Olympic head coach on the 1928 and 1932 teams. Of course, I didn't know that then.

Hodak: Did he, in a sense, take you under his wing as a type of mentor?

Newhouse: Yes, he did. My principal gave me every Wednesday morning off so that I could go down and practice. Lawson Robertson was coaching me. Everything I learned, I learned from Lawson Robertson. I had to make up all my school work, but my principal was very cooperative and let me do that. Then, of course, the next summer the Olympics came up, in 1928. So I was ready but I didn't represent any club or any school. I had to pay all my own expenses, send in my own entry and get there. The tryouts were held in Newark, New Jersey. I don't know really how I would have gotten there because my father sort of looked on this in askance. Here was this girl who was supposed to be brought up as a young lady and she was doing all the things that the boys should be doing; and they weren't doing it.

My parents were both German and my father was sort of like the king of his household. The children were to be seen and not heard. He didn't encourage me but he didn't discourage me either, except when his eyebrows went up in askance: "What

have I got here?" But I loved it so much that I just kept doing it.

The other people I want to tell you about is an aunt and uncle who lived in New Jersey. He was very sports-minded. If it hadn't been for them coming to get me and taking me over to the tryouts in Newark, New Jersey, the whole thing could have blown up right then. To this day we talk about this as one of the big experiences of our lives. My uncle, Joseph C. Hook, is 93 years old and was out here in October.

My aunt took me to the meet. I really didn't know what to expect. The shoes I had weighed a ton. I had spent my babysitting money on a pair of shoes, but I learned that you had to have jumping shoes on. I had been jumping in sneakers. So I went and bought a pair of shoes and they really were heavy. I thought they were perfect until I made the Olympic team and they gave me a pair of shoes which were really very light and soft and buttery. I don't know how I jumped with my shoes. Anyway, I came in second, from out of nowhere. Nobody knew who I was. The Olympic team didn't know who I was. I came in second so I made the Olympic team.

We had a week to go home and prepare to leave from New York aboard a ship to go to Amsterdam, Holland. Well, my family was in an uproar. My father's family were just distraught. My father's mother said, "You're not going to let her go to Europe by herself. She needs a chaperone. And, not only that, she needs a chastity belt." This is the way my somber Pennsylvania Dutch ancestors looked on this. My other grandmother was delighted. She took me downtown and bought me clothes. I had never been so outfitted before. So you can see what it did to my family.

Hodak: But there were no real obstacles thrown in your way? You were welcome when you returned?

Newhouse: Yes, the only obstacle came later. I think I had \$25 to spend while I was in Europe for all that time. Twenty-five dollars seemed like a lot of money. But when I went to Europe there were so many beautiful things that I came to know. The music and the architecture, the beautiful churches, the various cultures, and the many faces of mankind were so beautiful in their variety. I learned so much in that short period that the whole rest of my life was changed forever.

We left for Amsterdam, Holland, a week after the Olympic tryouts. I had never been aboard a ship before. I didn't know anyone. I was strictly on my own. Since I had never been away from home before, away from the bosom of my family, it was interesting. The first dinner was served with all the fancy china, fancy forks, knives and spoons and I didn't know which one to use. By the time dinner was served a lot of people were already seasick. I didn't get seasick. I don't know why; I think I was too dumb and didn't know you were supposed to get seasick.

Then I began to meet people and we'd have various meetings within our own track and field group. I think there were about 350 of us on that ship, plus the horses for the equestrian events. And we did have a five-day storm. It was not a smooth trip. I was more worried about the horses than I was about myself. The other thing that I found very interesting is that I spent a lot of time down in the bowels of the ship, with what they called the "black gang." They weren't black people, they were the people who made the pistons and the big motors work. Being raised with boys, I was interested in that type of thing. So I spent a lot of my time down with the "black gang." And they were very happy to show me how everything worked.

There wasn't much training you could do because the ship was not very stable. They didn't have stabilizers on them then. We did run around the deck when it was possible. The swimmers

had a small swimming pool. I guess Jane [Fauntz Manske] must have told you about that. They put a belt around them and they had to swim against the pressure of the belt being held tightly. I began to know the other people. I roomed with Anne Vrana O'Brien from California and Rena MacDonald, a shot putter who was from Boston. It was interesting because when I came home I was saying "watter" for water. The accent had rubbed off on me a little and I didn't realize it until after I had gotten home.

Hodak: So would you say there was a good camaraderie on board the ship?

Newhouse: Oh, yes. It was like a family. General MacArthur was aboard ship. He was on the Olympic Committee at that time. General MacArthur gave everyone on the Olympic team a little gold world with a shield on it. He gave that to every one of us. My apartment was robbed some years ago and a lot of my medals and that was stolen. My Olympic medal was someplace else, thank goodness. But I would have liked to have had that.

Hodak: Was MacArthur much in evidence on board the ship?

Newhouse: Yes, because we all ate in the dining room. There was a lot of walking around and sitting around. You just couldn't help it, you were all in a small area there. The *SS Roosevelt* was not a real large ship, but it was one of the big steamers of the day.

Hodak: So once you land in Amsterdam, how did you find the facilities?

Newhouse: Well, as we came into the canal at Rotterdam one of the American warships was coming in the opposite direction. They had the band out on the foredeck and they were playing "The Star-Spangled Banner" as we passed by and they gave us a big salute. That was a real touching moment. I cried. I don't know why but I did. When we came into Amsterdam we lived

aboard ship, which was really very nice. I enjoyed that. Looking back on it, in comparison to the 1932 Games, it was a more intimate way of living. It did not preclude any interaction with the members of other teams from other countries because we met them on the practice field. And we had other activities that we participated in together.

We had to take a water taxi from the boat to land, but it was accessible at all times. We could come and go as we pleased. There was nothing like security. When we were not doing what we were supposed to do, the rest of our time was our own. We could go into Amsterdam anytime at all.

One instance I remember, there was this little boxer, a lightweight boxer, standing by the rail aboard ship. Tears were coming down his cheeks, so I said, "What's the matter?" And he said, "I'm homesick." And I said, "Oh, for goodness sakes, let's go do something." So we took the water taxi to shore and here was this little man with a horse and buggy. He looked like he was about 97 years old and he was only about four feet tall. He kept saying, "Show you. Show you. Show you." And I said to the little boxer, "Let's go see what he has to show us." So he took us for a ride through the city and stopped and when we got out I realized it was a museum. And he said, "Show you. Show you." So he took us in the museum and he showed us this big picture that had to be 15 feet by 15 feet, a very large picture, burnt on a corner. I looked at it and said, "Oh my goodness, we have that on the wall in our living room." No one in our family knew what it was. I didn't know what it was. It was a picture we had inherited from an aunt of ours, my mother's sister. It was the *Night Watch* by Rembrandt. And that was my first indication that there is a lot to see in this world, a lot to know that I didn't know. From then on I was very anxious to see and hear and do everything I possibly could. I was just so curious about everything.

We had lots of sidetrips. We went up to the islands—Maligadam, Edam, and Volendam. They maintained their old way of dress and old way of doing things. Their houses were so exciting the way they were built, the beds were in the walls. It was really a very nice compact arrangement. I've often wanted to do something like that but never got around to it. It seemed like such a space-saving tactic.

I must admit, I don't remember much about the Games. First of all, my event always takes place on the last day. Part of my training was to stay off my feet on the bed for three days prior to my jumping event. That was Lawson Robertson's technique in those days—that you save your spring, if you had any. Certainly you wouldn't be a high jumper if you didn't have any. So I missed three days of the Games. On the last day, it was not a nice day. It was damp and cold and heavy. By that time I was so filled with all these new experiences, and it was happening so fast and furiously, that it took me a while to savor everything.

I must admit that I don't remember much, except that it wasn't a very nice day and I was so happy to come in fourth, which was a big deal. I never even expected to place. So it was exciting in that respect.

Then, of course, we stopped over in Brussels and had a post-Olympic meet. Usually there are post-Olympic meets after the Olympics. We had a nice stay there. Then we touched on Paris for just one night, and then we came home.

Hodak: And so you returned rather pleased with your outing?

Newhouse: Oh, I did. I came home and, of course, I was changed forever. My father realized it. I had an interest in music and art, museums, other people; and I brought those people home and my father didn't like it very much. I just thought nothing of it.

As I said, I was changed for the better.

Hodak: And did you make long-term friends with some of the athletes?

Newhouse: Yes, I wrote to Janusz Kusocinski, from Poland, who won the 1500 meters and Hana Konopacka, who was a shot putter from Poland. Interestingly enough, they were killed, I think, as the last ship came out of Poland. They were to bring the gold out of the country to the last ship that came out of Poland before World War II. That was the last I heard from them. It was my understanding that there was some kind of a deal where they were supposed to get the gold out of the country before the Germans came in. I hadn't heard anything since then. There was Lord [David] Burghley, who was a real nice guy, and Lady Heath, who was very interested in track and field. She was a former aviatrix from Great Britain. I met a lot of nice people.

Hodak: One other thing that I meant to ask; listed as your coach is Melvin Sheppard for the women's track and field team, who had been in the 1912 Olympics. What sort of interaction was there between the women and the coach? Was he actively coaching you or helping you out much?

Newhouse: Well, they do what you call coaching, but I think world caliber athletes know pretty much what they're doing by that time. But he's sort of like a father-figure that goes out with you when you're practicing. And he may make a suggestion or two, but that's about the size of it. Lawson Robertson was on that trip with me so I had access to him. In fact, he was like my father. There was also Jack Kelly, the famous oarsman from Philadelphia. He had a son named Jack Kelly too. I was the only girl from Philadelphia. There were some men from Philadelphia, but I didn't know them until I was aboard ship because they were in sculling and that sort of thing. So I did get to know them. Jack Kelly was like my father too. He sort

of took me in hand and if I needed anything or wanted to talk to anybody I could talk to him.

Hodak: And what about the return to the United States? Was there much of a reception for you in New York?

Newhouse: We had a big parade in New York. Jimmy Walker was the very colorful mayor of New York. He gave us all a medal and a ticker tape parade, and then we went home. My little, small community of Brookline was very excited about what I had done. They had a night at the movies for me at our one little movie theater. And they had a parade and I rode in a Cadillac to the movie house. They gave me a free pass for the next two years to go to the movies whenever I wanted to. (laughter) That was the size of it after 1928.

I was still jumping unattached. I didn't have any club. I was still in high school and my high school didn't sponsor me or anything like that. So for a year or two I was jumping unattached. I was attending a track meet one night—it was for men only—and a young man was standing next to me and we got to talking. His name was Tom Ottey. I said that I was still jumping unattached and he said, "Well, why don't you go down to the Meadowbrook Club and see if you can be accepted in there." Meadowbrook was mostly a men's club and was sponsored by Wanamakers in Philadelphia. You had to work at Wanamakers in order to belong to the club.

Well, I felt like I was going begging. Under very difficult circumstances I was sent up to the top floor to see Lou Spieler, who coached the Meadowbrook Club. It was dark and gloomy and there were all these places where they stored leftover clothes or they brought in clothes from the manufacturers to be marked and put on the floor. It was just like a warehouse with all these men running back and forth in semi-attire. I stopped one of them and said, "I'm looking for Lou Spieler. Where is

he?" So he told me and I said, "Would you please tell him that I'd like to see him?" So he came out to see me. Ultimately, I did work for Wanamakers on Saturdays in the summer because I had to if I wanted to be under their auspices.

Everytime I went up there to see him I could never get there because all these men were running back and forth, half-clothed, and I would have to stop one of them to ask him to come out and see me. It was very difficult.

I practiced up there, on these hard floors. He would bring out two standards and a jumping bar and a mat. I would practice in one of these large areas. They did have a track up on top of the building, but in bad weather and with snow in winter you couldn't practice up there. So that was the extent of my practice over the next couple of years. Aside from the corn field that was across the street, I really didn't have any place to practice. In the backyard I put up two clothes props with nails in them and a bar and jumped on the lawn. I really could have killed myself. I don't know why I didn't.

Hodak: And was your father still raising eyebrows?

Newhouse: Yes. He just didn't really know what to do with me. He never saw me compete. We were just like two trains going down separate tracks and the twain never met. I wasn't bothering him and he wasn't bothering me. But I think he had difficulty explaining me to his friends. That gets into a very delicate subject. I think a lot of young men and boys thought the same thing—that maybe I was a lesbian. At that time, I didn't know what that was. I had no idea what that was. It was only later that I thought that perhaps this was what they were thinking. But I loved what I was doing and it was no hardship. If I had a choice between going to a party or going out and running and practicing jumping or playing basketball, I would run and jump and play basketball. It was sheer joy for me to do it.

I graduated from high school in 1929 and I was lucky enough to get a small scholarship—75 dollars—that would pay for my tuition, but not for anything else. It was books and uniforms—I was going to major in physical education—so I needed a lot of extras, besides lunch and carfare. I had to ride three forms of transportation. It took me an hour and a half to get there. But the scholarship was helpful. I had to work almost every day to supplement it in order to attend every day. But the shock was that when I got to college. Temple had a new policy of no sports for women. I have a feeling that maybe the scholarship, which was not an athletic scholarship but a scholastic scholarship, was tipped in my favor because of my Olympic experience. So it was a shock when I got to college to find that their policy was no sports for women. It became very difficult for me because when I would pass the professors in the hall they'd say, "When are you going to quit? When are you going to quit?" And the pressure was on me for three or four years. However, as I said before, it was such a sheer joy that they couldn't stop me from doing it. I just kept on doing it outside of Temple. I was being sponsored by the Meadowbrook Club.

Hodak: And how would they help you? Were they of much help in getting you to various competitions or meets?

Newhouse: Oh, yes. They paid my expenses per diem, \$2.50 per day for breakfast, lunch and dinner. That was adequate in those days. It sounds like such a little bit, but it was adequate. If I needed anything extra, I had to take care of that, which was alright. I made it. It was very difficult because I was working and trying to study. Because of the times—it was during the Depression, and it was pretty severe—my father had lost everything. He couldn't help me. He also didn't think a girl should go to college. He thought only the boys should go to college and that it was a waste of time and money for a woman to go to college. He thought I should go out and work, bring the

money home, get married and have children. But that wasn't my idea. So I had to find my own way.

Hodak: What about other sports such as hockey and basketball?

Newhouse: There were no sports of any kind for women, just intramural sports, which was "dullsville." It was terrible. We had a blue team, a green team and a red team and we played each other. The teams changed all the time. You didn't even play with the same people. But I didn't mind that either. I put up with that because I had this outside activity and I was in it on my own.

To compete for the Meadowbrook Club you had to work for Wanamakers, who was the sponsor of the club. So I worked on Saturdays and holidays like Easter and Christmas and during the summer. That barely took care of my expenses but, somehow, I didn't mind it. I was having a lot of fun. There were meets—indoors and outdoors—in Boston, Dallas, Chicago, Newark, Philadelphia and various other places. I would go to those with the Meadowbrook Club and from 1929 until 1948 I held the world's record because it would go up a little bit each year. Therefore the record was held by me, also the Olympic record, which is sort of a separate item.

Hodak: Did you develop any refinements in your approach to high jumping?

Newhouse: No, I stuck pretty much to the same techniques that had been taught to me by Lawson Robertson. I tried to get enough rest between doing all this. When you're young you don't think about this, you just grab life and take it in your hands and embrace it and enjoy it. So I really didn't rationalize it at all. I just took each day as it came and looked forward to the track meets and meeting the people. When you are a world-class athlete you really don't need any additional coaching. You may have some small infraction but world-class athletes should know

what they're doing by the time they get there.

Hodak: Given your success in placing fourth in the 1928 Olympics, and you certainly appreciated that experience, were you gearing up for the 1932 Olympics? Was this uppermost in your mind?

Newhouse: Yes, I was thinking of it, believe me. I am not a person that has expectations. I wouldn't be very good at hyping somebody out. I would go to each meet and do my best and if I lost, okay, if I won, okay. I was lucky, my best was pretty good. I can't blame it on anything, I must have been twice blessed by God or something. My father always used to say, "Maybe you've had a lot of practice, you're one jump ahead of the sheriff." That was a saying in those days because of the Depression. Everybody was in a pretty tight boat.

Hodak: When did you first meet [Mildred] Babe Didriksen?

Newhouse: Not until the outdoor championships in the qualifying meet for the Olympic Games in 1932. That was the first time she appeared on my horizon. She was a very good athlete, very good. She did everything well. In fact, at the tryouts she won the team event all by herself. She was entered in five or six events and did very well in all of them. The Olympic rules were that a woman could only be in three events, so she had to choose three. She chose the javelin, the high jump and the hurdles. Of course, you know what she did in those.

Hodak: Let's continue with a discussion of the 1932 tryouts in Evanston, at Northwestern University.

Newhouse: Well, I left home with five dollars in my pocket. It was the time of the deep Depression and my family had lost everything, as many families did. Consequently, I had a ticket and my per diem, \$2.50 a day. So instead of using my train ticket, I knew of a reporter that was driving to Chicago to report on the

tryouts and I asked him if I could drive along. He was more than delighted so he drove me there. So I turned in my train ticket so that I could bring some gifts home from the Olympics.

We arrived in Evanston around July the Fourth. It was hot! It was terribly hot! We had the tryouts in Evanston and it was so hot that one of the girls ordered a 100-pound block of ice and we all took turns sitting on it. The tryouts were all in one day and the next day those who made the Olympic team were going to leave for the Olympics. That was the first time I had met Babe Didriksen and she was really the star of the show because she was in five or six events and won the meet title all by herself. The rules by the Olympic Committee were that you could only be in three events so she had to make a choice. She chose the javelin, the hurdles and the high jump. But she was a little upset that she couldn't go in all five events. However, the rules were as they were.

We left the very next day on a train for California. We got to know each other a little bit better because some of the girls were strangers to each other. On the way we had an election for captain and three of us were chosen: Lillian Copeland, who had been on the 1928 team. Babe, and myself. But Lillian withdrew and the outcome was that I was elected captain, which was very, very nice. I didn't realize that it was going to be a lot of work, but it was. And I learned a lot anyway.

So we arrived in Denver and stayed at the Brown Hotel, which was a very nice hotel. The people in Denver were just lovely. They entertained us and invited us to dinner. They had a radio program on which we all appeared. One of the funniest things that happened was that somehow or other the interviewer was talking to some of the girls and Babe wasn't included in that group. So she was off to the side and she started playing her harmonica, which got our attention immediately. She was very good at it. (laughter)

Then we went on to California. The boys had their living quarters in Baldwin Hills at the Olympic Village. But the girls didn't stay there. We stayed at a lovely hotel. I think the people had all been invited out so we could move in. Each was like a little apartment. It was called the Chapman Park Hotel, right down the street from the Ambassador Hotel and the Gaylord Hotel. And it's still there. Our nickname for it was the Happy Jesus Hotel. It was a joke.

Hodak: And how did you find the hotel?

Newhouse: The quarters were very nice. We had a large reception hall where we could meet and greet our guests. There was about three girls in each apartment and they were very large. They consisted of a kitchen, a bathroom and a large bedroom with desks and chairs. They were beautifully furnished. It was very, very nice. Of course, everything was taken care of. The food was very good. Practice was usually at USC or UCLA and buses would come and take us to and from the hotel. But the people of the city were most solicitous. They invited us out to their homes. They would have big affairs for us. Clubs would invite us, like the Breakfast Club, which was very popular then on the radio. They had us one morning and we saw the sun come up over the ocean. I was surprised though that there was no one on the beach and here it is the middle of the summer. I asked why and they said, "The water's too cold." But, of course, you must realize, this is 1932 and the beach was not as populated. There was just a scattered house here and there. The city from Fairfax [Drive] on out was rural, it was country.

Hodak: It was a day's outing to go to the beach.

Newhouse: Yes, it was. I guess that's where the people took the trolley to go to Venice to the beach for a vacation. The weather was perfect, absolutely perfect. I had no complaints about that.

Hodak: Were you able to mingle and meet many athletes from other countries at Chapman Park?

Newhouse: All the women athletes, from all over the world, stayed at Chapman Park. So we visited back and forth all the time, traded costumes, learned a few words of this and that—Spanish, Japanese, German, Polish. It was very, very interesting. I liked that part of it very much.

Hodak: And what do you recall of the Opening Ceremonies?

Newhouse: The Opening Ceremonies I remember very well. The Olympic Committee furnishes all your costumes, all your clothes for competing, for play and leisure, as well as your parade uniform. On the day of the Opening Ceremonies it was hot and we had to stand around waiting our turn to enter the stadium. We entered last because we were the host country. Well, the shoes they gave us to wear were tight and didn't exactly fit. So we arrived on the stadium floor with our shoes on, but when we lined up we took our shoes off. So we were standing in the Opening Ceremonies in our bare feet with our shoes beside us.

It was very exciting of course. I think about 39 countries were represented. That's few countries in comparison to what they do today. In those days the only way of getting there was by train or boat, or within the country by old fashioned automobiles. It was surprising. The stadium was just chock-full, from the top to the bottom. It was interesting that a lot of the movie people attended. They seemed to accept us and wanted to entertain us. They were very excited about the Games. When we marched in, in the Opening Ceremonies, there was a little fence with seats right behind it and people were excited and cheering and leaning over the fence and waving. As we went by, Norma Shearer was one of those and she was so excited and leaning out so far that she fell over the fence. It was a very exciting and colorful event.

Hodak: As far as your event goes, as you indicated on the other side, the high jump is always the last day of competition. Did that allow for you to see other events? How did you spend your time?

Newhouse: Most people could see all the events but my training was very specific. I have to go back to Lawson Robertson and still adhere to his training. It worked, so why not? So I took three days off my feet before my event. Therefore, I only saw the first few days. I could only go, of course, and see them when I wasn't in training. I had to go after I had done my training exercises.

Hodak: And what would the training consist of, simply jumping or are there other exercises?

Newhouse: No, there were no other exercises, stretching or anything. I would go out maybe every other day and train just for form. I could do it with my eyes closed. I would practice concentration and form. Which brings up another matter. You probably have seen today's high jumpers run for a long distance and propel themselves forward into the bar. Well, I didn't jump that way. I only had three or four little shuffling steps to my mark and then three steps up and over.

Hodak: Was that your own style or was that the rules as they were then enforced?

Newhouse: No, some of the girls took a longer run, but not as far as they do today. I look at them today and see them doing those stretching and kicking exercises and running and that was against all the training I had had. I was to conserve my energy and the spring in my feet. So I did not do that. I did do some kicking to perfect the motion of lift. I only took little shuffling steps to hit my mark and then one, two, three, up and over. It looked like it was very easy but it isn't. And concentration

is very, very important. That was something that Lawson Robertson, or Robbie as I called him, taught me. You could stand behind me and shoot a gun off and I wouldn't hear it. I wouldn't know anything else was going on except exactly what I was doing.

Hodak: And your coach on the women's track and field team was George Vreeland?

Newhouse: Yes, George was the Olympic coach of the women's team. Lawson Robertson was the head coach of the men and women's track and field team. George Vreeland would go out with us in training but by that time most of the athletes knew what they were doing. It was just a matter of him checking up on you. If he did see something wrong or had a suggestion he would give you that suggestion. But most of it was just putting into motion what you had already learned.

Hodak: Did you know Vreeland previously?

Newhouse: Yes, I knew George Vreeland because he was the coach of the Prudential Insurance Company girls which was a big club in Newark, New Jersey. A lot of very good athletes came out of that organization. They also played basketball. But in my case, I was the only woman from Philadelphia and didn't have anyone to travel with. So the Meadowbrook Club would send me over to Newark and they'd pick up the train and me in Newark or I would meet them at the station and take another train if I was going to Toronto or Chicago. I traveled with that team so I'd known George Vreeland for maybe four years. It was nice to have someone along that I knew.

Hodak: Was there a tendency to get a little edgy or anxious, given that your competition comes so late? Do you recall being anxious at all?

Newhouse: No. I had been in the previous Olympic Games so I more or less knew the formula. So I took it all in stride, except that there was a big competition going on because Babe had won the javelin on Sunday and the hurdles on Wednesday. If anybody was going to defeat her it was up to me. It was a friendly competition. We were both on the same team and whoever won it was fine, just so it was for the country. I really never went out with any expectations. I just loved what I was doing and went out and did the best I possibly could. I tried hard and I was lucky enough to win the event.

Hodak: Let's talk a bit about the event.

Newhouse: Yes, there has been a controversy involved over the years. It comes up all the time. Let me see how I can explain it. The rules for high jumping in those days were very precise and very exacting. You had to take off with one foot and land with the other foot. Your shoulders were not allowed to precede your body over the bar. In Olympic competition you have five judges, each one speaking a different language. It isn't easy for them to get together. What actually happened was that Babe was using a western roll, which the men had just started using, and for women, it was not the usual jump. In fact, Babe was the only one that was jumping that way. It's the western roll where you either turn away or toward the bar, which is the choice of the jumper. But you lay out at the top of the bar, and if you accidentally overexert yourself you might put your shoulder over the bar first. And that, of course, would constitute a foul in those days. The second thing is, there were no ties in the Olympic Games at that time. So you had to jump it off. Subsequently, a little bit later on, the person who had fewer misses would win, if there was a tie. Fairly recently, they award medals to both people if they tie.

So, we both made 5 feet 5 and one-quarter inches and then they put it up to about 5 feet 6 and one-quarter inches. It's

always problematic in the high jump, because the two standards from the outside have two little flat surfaces on which the pole will rest. But in the center it sags and so they have to measure it all the time. So it might say 5 feet 7 inches on the outside but it might be only 5 feet 6 and one-quarter inches or something like that, depending on the sag. One time Babe missed because she layed out too near the standard and kicked the standard over, thereby knocking down everything; because her body was laying out on top of the bar and not going up into sort of a scissor kick. I used a scissor kick but it was not exactly a scissor kick. It was a scissor kick with a hitch over the top, to get my hips out of the way. But I took off with one foot and landed on the other foot, which was required. That was the standard way of jumping then. It wasn't until later that it changed dramatically.

So when they put it up to about 5 feet 6 and one-quarter inches and we missed three times, each one of us. So they put it down again to 5 feet 5 and one-quarter inches and I jumped first and I made it. Babe made the next jump and the judges all of the sudden declared it a foul.

Hodak: But she had been jumping this way all along.

Newhouse: Well, that's what she said to the judges because she was a little upset that a foul should be claimed at that time when she had been jumping that way all afternoon. But that was the danger of that jump. I tried it with Lawson Robertson and he said he didn't think I should be doing it at that time—there was too much danger of fouling because your shoulder very often precedes your body across the bar.

Hodak: Technically, you could have claimed a foul. Was that an option that you had?

Newhouse: Very definitely it was an option that I had. But I did not

choose to do that because I felt that . . . well, I have to go back to my training in high school. You played the game out and you smiled no matter how much it hurt. No poor sportsmanship. I don't know whether I mentioned it or not, but in any of the sports we participated in in high school, our coach would not let us show any sign of poor sportsmanship. If we did, we didn't play the next week. The other thing was that if our grades were not up on Friday when she received reports for that week, we didn't play the next week until we brought our grades up. So I am afraid that my training back in high school stood me in good stead because this way it was fairer and I was satisfied with the decision. I don't see where there was any controversy. The controversy came because people were not aware of the rules or how the Olympic Games function, with five judges at each event that do not communicate very quickly or easily. So when they see it from the outside they may assume that "something's wrong here." I can understand that but there really wasn't any controversy. Babe understood it. She was a little upset because she was hoping to win the three events in which she was participating. She was a little upset but it didn't last very long with Babe.

Hodak: She got over it.

Newhouse: Yes. We had a party that evening for me because I had won. They had a party for each one that won. She came to the party late, but she came, and everything was alright.

Hodak: And the controversy was, in a sense, fueled by sports writers?

Newhouse: It was the same as today. They like to write about controversy. In fact, that's what they're looking for. Grantland Rice and Paul Gallico wrote sports books. In those books they say that something was wrong and it's been read as a source book and repeated and repeated over the years. So the controversy still exists. I was working for the 1984 Olympic Committee as a

goodwill ambassador and making speeches to colleges and high schools and various other organizations to promote the 1984 Games, and this question came up often. People were rather embarrassed to bring it up. They would hem and haw and say, "Well, ugh, you know, what about . . .?" And I'd say, "Oh, you mean the controversy." Then I would explain it to them and they would understand. In those days, the rules were very precise and the Olympics were not as sophisticated as they are today. In fact, if you want to know, they were very primitive. The place where we jumped was uncultivated. The pit was sand or sawdust and you were constantly taking your shoes off and getting the sand and sawdust out of your shoes. We didn't have those nice high cushions to fall into. Sometimes the sawdust pit was much lower than the takeoff area. You would come down with a big thump and your whole body was jarred.

And just think of Babe, she was coming down on her shoulder. In fact, I have a cartoon in there from the *Los Angeles Times* in 1932 showing her with her feet up in the air and her head in the sand. It's a cute cartoon. She came down on her shoulder because you see, her shoulder did go over the bar first. It was a dangerous landing in those days because you were jumping in a low pit with sawdust and sand which could really clump up.

Hodak: I imagine the runways were different then too.

Newhouse: Yes it was sort of an unprepared area.

Hodak: And what about the bar itself? Would that be much different today? A little bit lighter, maybe?

Newhouse: No, we jumped with the same kind of a bar. The standard seems to be the same. I was looking at it the other day on TV for the meet last week. It's pretty much the same. You barely have to touch it. It just rests on it on two little round pieces about as big as a silver dollar. It just rests on there so . . .

Hodak: It doesn't take much at all to knock it—just a graze of your leg or your arm.

Newhouse: Even if your pants touch it. In those days we had very awkward pants. I guess I started it—I wasn't going to wear those goofy pants so I put rubber in the bottom and elastic and turned them up so they would be closer to my body.

Hodak: A little more streamlined.

Newhouse: Yes. But they gave us the same kind the men had. That's really what they were. So we put elastic in them and pulled them up close so that they wouldn't droop so much. (laughter)

Hodak: Now do you recall the awards ceremony? That must have been quite an honor.

Newhouse: Yes, I guess it was. I never can explain it. I have talked to other athletes about receiving the Olympic medal. There is something about it that goes so deeply, something unexplainable is stirred up inside. When they played "The Star-Spangled Banner" I just cried. I've seen a lot of people do it since then. No one is able to explain it. It's a feeling that surges up and even though you try to control it and retain your dignity, you just can't do it.

Hodak: So, all in all, the 1932 Olympics, this is what you set your goal towards—the gold medal?

Newhouse: Well, no. I told you I never went into an athletic event with expectations. Anything that came to me I always seemed to be completely surprised it had turned out that way. I just loved doing what I was doing and it was a sheer joy to do it. I competed mostly against myself. I was delighted to win the medal for my country but I also was doing it for myself. I was really competing against myself. I knew what I had done and I

tried to do better each time. But I had no expectations.

Hodak: You mentioned earlier that you were elected team captain? What sort of responsibilities did that entail during the Olympics? Did anything arise as a result of that?

Newhouse: In those days, the Olympics were geared for women but all the coaches were male. The managers and the coaches were male and then they might have a woman along who was like a chaperone. Half the time we couldn't find her, I don't know where she was. I know she had a good time but I don't know where she was. You see, there was no security in those days. We were free to come and go, although we did have curfew, and we were supposed to obey the rules of training.

So there were a lot of things that came up with women that were purely women things. And the men really weren't prepared to help or to take care of those things. So it was my job to take care of that. If there were any dissatisfactions—of which there were hardly any—and a lot of other things that had to be taken care of.

One thing that happened which was very disturbing at the time was that I received a telegram from the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]. It was complaining about the fact that none of the black girls—we did have two: Tidye Pickett from Chicago and Louise Stokes from, I think, Boston—were represented on the Olympic teams for the 100 meters and the relay. You have eight girls who have competed in the 100 meters and the first three who competed and won in the tryouts would run the 100 meters. Then from the eight girls would be chosen the four people for the relay team. There are certain things that a relay team has to do well and one of them is passing the baton. So when I received the telegram—it shouldn't have been directed to me in the first place, it should have been directed to the coach—I took it to the

coach, George Vreeland, and said, "We have to do something about this. I think that we ought to give everybody a fair trial." So that is what he did. He took all the eight girls out to the track and tried them for ease in passing the baton within a certain number of feet and time. As it turned out, the two black girls did not make the relay team. But you can see that the problems black people had were still prevalent and still being coped with in various areas of our culture. I was very sad that they didn't make it because they were capable girls. In fact, Tidy Pickett, I think, has retired from being a principal of a big high school in Chicago. I don't know what Louise is doing. I haven't heard about her recently. She sort of disappeared, as women do when they marry and lose their name and identities. So I haven't been able to locate her.

Hodak: One woman who didn't lose her identity was Babe Didriksen. Did you stay in touch with her?

Newhouse: Oh, yes. We were very friendly. Babe didn't compete anymore after the 1932 Olympics and neither did I. She went into golf and her record was outstanding. Whenever she was in the area where I was living at the time, which was several places, we got together and renewed old stories and generally had a good time. She really was a very, very superb athlete. In almost anything she attempted she was a good athlete.

Hodak: Were there any post-Olympic competitions following the 1932 Games?

Newhouse: Yes. We had the British-American Games in San Francisco. Most of the athletes went from Los Angeles to San Francisco for these competitions. I have a nice belt buckle that I brought home for my father. It was a sterling silver belt buckle and on it were the American and the British flags in inlaid enamel. It was very beautiful. I guess they figured there weren't any women in it because it was a man's belt buckle. But I won it

for the high jump so I brought it home for my father.

Hodak: What about the reception at home, not only from your father, but others?

Newhouse: Well, from San Francisco I took the train to Chicago. Most of us were taking different routes to get home because we lived in different areas. I took the train home with Fred Steers, who was the manager of the women's track and field team. He was there with his wife and son. His son was about seven or eight at the time. In fact, I did a little babysitting for Mr. Steers. He took me home and I turned in my train ticket from Chicago to Philadelphia for a bus ticket. By that time I had run out of money. I had started out with five dollars and had turned in one train ticket.

So I took a bus and, of course, the people would be waiting for me at the station but I had sent a telegram from Chicago and told them that I was coming in on the bus. It came in at 1:00 a.m. at night. I was very happy it was coming in at 1:00 a.m. because I figured just my family would be there and there wouldn't be anyone and I wouldn't have to go through all that. As it turned out all my friends and family were there waiting for me at the bus station. Then my town had a big parade for me and I drove in a nice, big car, I took Dora Lurie with me because Dora was my friend and had started me out, so I asked her if she would ride with me. We went to the little movie theater we had in our town and they had a special night for me. They were really very nice. In fact, the sweet shop in town made a sundae for me. You see, I came from a very small town. Those were big doings in our town. (laughter) But after that I went right back to living my ordinary life.

Hodak: And what did that include for you? Did you go back to Temple?

Newhouse: Yes, I was getting ready to go back for my senior year at

Temple. It was very difficult because I didn't have that much money and I had to work every day in order to make the money to get to school the next day. It was rough—between studying and traveling and trying to make ends meet. Finally, after the first semester, I didn't have enough money to finish so I had to borrow 100 dollars. Seems like that's a little bit of money, but it was a lot of money then. So I had to borrow 100 dollars to finish school. When I graduated there were no jobs for any of us really. I was a world champion and an Olympic champion and was offered one job with a very posh private school, but only for carfare and lunch money. I couldn't take it. I had to get some kind of a job to bring some money in to the family. As it turned out, the only job I could get was in a shoe store for 14 dollars a week. Ten dollars I brought home to my mother and four dollars was for me. I was fired from that job. I just wasn't fit for that kind of job.

Hodak: During this time did you continue competing?

Newhouse: No, I wasn't competing. I had to get out into the world and earn some money. All I can say is thank God for WPA (Works Progress Administration). Now the story can be told because maybe all the people involved aren't with us, but I got a job by lying. I happened to be in the office on an interview asking for a job when one of the persons in the office came in and said, "We've lost our typewriting teacher. She won't be there tonight." You know WPA had adult classes. They had orchestras and construction jobs. They had the writer's project. So I was sitting there and I heard him say it and, I don't know, there was no thought, it just came out of me. I said, "I'll do it." I hadn't had any typing, only one semester in high school. I didn't realize what I had said until after I had said it. He said, "Why don't you come tonight?" So I got the job. I went home and got a typewriter from a journalist over at *Haverford Township News*; as I knew the editor. I went to the high school and got a typewriting book. I was just one lesson

ahead of the class.

Well, that lasted about ten days and one of the managers of the educational project asked me if I wanted to be his secretary. That was an advancement. I could make a little bit more money, like 27 dollars a week. So I went and worked for him and the first letter he gave me, I think the wastebasket was just chock full of paper. I made so many mistakes. I was so nervous writing that letter. Luckily he wasn't in the office. Finally, it worked out fine. The longer I tried, the better I got. I was supervising high school principals that were out of jobs, conductors of orchestras that were out of jobs, musicians, contractors. People just didn't have work. They were people who were highly educated and highly capable. It was really a difficult time for everyone.

Hodak: Around this time you must have resumed competition?

Newhouse: No, I wanted to because the 1936 Olympics were coming up. I had also taken a job teaching swimming and doing lifeguard duty at a country club pool. But when the time for the 1936 Olympics came up I felt good enough. I was only 24 and the record hadn't been broken so I felt that maybe I stood a chance that I would be admitted by the AAU. But the rules said that I was a professional by virtue of teaching swimming to youngsters and doing lifeguard duty. They wouldn't permit me even to tryout. I made a special trip to New York to see Dan Ferris and Avery Brundage. They just said no, and that was it. Although, it was talked about that the rules had been bent for other people. I couldn't prove it, it was just talked about. Evidently, the answer was no for me, so I had to give that up. So I didn't go back in training.

Hodak: And you would have undoubtedly had a very good chance at defending your title in 1936.

Newhouse: Possibly. As I said, I never went in with expectations. So I would have just done my best.

Hodak: Well, the record suggests that you would have.

We've discussed the Olympics. In the 1928 Olympics you were certainly a pioneer. You were also a pioneer in serving in the Navy. Would you talk a bit about that?

Newhouse: My brother was going down to enlist. He was 12 years younger than I am, so he needed an adult to go with him. So I went with him and before I knew it, I was enlisted too. So we both enlisted the same day. That was a little before the Navy was taking women into the service, but I was on the list and when they did decide to have the Waves they notified me. I was delighted. So I was in the very first class of enlisted personnel.

Hodak: And this was in what year?

Newhouse: Nineteen forty-two. No, the end of 1941.

Hodak: And where were you assigned?

Newhouse: I was assigned to the University of Wisconsin for radio training. It was interesting. It was the first girls to be enlisted. There was a men's radio school in Chicago. It took the boys eight weeks to get through the radio and communications course but in our class it only took us six weeks. So the girls were doing pretty good. They were rather surprised.

After that I was assigned to the Naval air station in Jacksonville. When we arrived they didn't know what to do with us. They hadn't made any plans it seemed. We were treated just like the men. We were put in barracks and treated like men. There were some strange practices. I was a little older, I

was 31 then, but some of the girls were 20-21. Some of the treatment that the boys got, they used for us. I don't want to go into it, but it was shocking . . . . Nevertheless, everything turned out alright. I was there for six months.

Then I was asked if I wanted to go to officer's training. I was rather reluctant. I had enjoyed the girls because they really were the cream of the crop. Most of the girls in the first class had college degrees. They were very intelligent and dedicated girls. So I was enjoying just being an enlisted girl although I had been given a promotion to specialist first class. That's like a petty officer for men. In fact, it really is petty officer first class, but I was a specialist. Then I said no to officer's training and a few months later I changed my mind and said I would go. So off I went to Smith College for officer's training. From there I was sent to Rochester, New York, as an administrative officer at Bausch & Lomb. Bausch & Lomb had a Navy contract and there were Navy officers stationed there. I didn't particularly like it there but one good thing came out of it; I met my husband there.

Hodak: And were you married shortly after?

Newhouse: No. Every month I kept putting in for a transfer. I just felt like the fifth leg on a horse. I didn't know anything about optics and it was very difficult. When I arrived I said, "I'm glad to be aboard, sir." And the commanding officer said, "You won't be." He didn't want women. He didn't want any women at all. But, nevertheless, I got transferred and went back to the Naval air station in Jacksonville and was there for the rest of my four and a half years. Then I came home and we were married after the war was over in 1945.

Hodak: What line of work was Mr. Newhouse in?

Newhouse: He's a physicist. He was working as a civilian for the Navy.

He was indispensable. That's what they say if you're in a specialty of some kind. Even if you wanted to go into service, they would not let you. You were very essential to the war effort. They were making all kinds of equipment for aircraft carriers, destroyers, battleships and that kind of thing—in the field of optics.

Hodak: And following the war where did you find yourself?

Newhouse: Well, we stayed in Rochester for a while and I had all of my children there—one, two, three. Then we went to Washington and then to Los Alamos and then back to Buffalo. Then we came to California.

Hodak: And Mr. Newhouse was working for . . . .

Newhouse: He was working for various companies: Taylor Instruments, Cornell Aeronautical, and then Los Alamos, New Mexico, is very famous. That's where the bomb was made. Then we went back to Buffalo with Cornell Aeronautical and then we came out to California where he worked for Douglas Aircraft, Hughes Aircraft, and finally ended up with TRW.

Hodak: And he still works as a consultant?

Newhouse: Yes, he's retired now and has been for some years, but he consults with Hughes Aircraft.

Hodak: Tell me about your children. You mentioned you have three.

Newhouse: Yes, two girls and a boy.

Hodak: Did they follow in your footsteps?

Newhouse: No, they didn't. They were very good particularly in swimming and tennis. But they somehow lacked the three things I think

you need: desire, dedication and discipline. And they didn't have that competitive spirit.

Hodak: But they were very good athletes.

Newhouse: They were good athletes but didn't have an opportunity in the schools. They attended schools all over the country but they didn't have the opportunities I had. It's strange.

Hodak: And there was definitely less support for your daughters?

Newhouse: Yes, particularly for my daughters. They did have football for boys but my son wasn't interested in football. He was sort of into his studies. He's now an engineer. My youngest daughter is an artist and my oldest daughter is in management. She just went back to college and got a degree in Systems Management.

Hodak: And you have some grandchildren.

Newhouse: Oh, yes. I have three; two girls and a boy. How about that? (laughter)

Hodak: Did you maintain an interest in other sports? How did you keep fit over the years?

Newhouse: Over the years I played golf and bowled. I stopped golf about five or six years ago but I bowled up until about two years ago. I just quit because there were a lot of things that I wanted to do that I hadn't had time to do. I wanted to do that more than bowl. Now I am very sedentary and I love it.

Hodak: And what keeps you occupied these days?

Newhouse: I read a lot. I read almost every night for three or four hours. I do a lot of knitting and hooking rugs. A 9 foot by 12 foot rug takes a long time to do. I crochet and I make things for

the grandchildren. Just whatever happens to come up.

Hodak: Throughout the time we discussed, did you maintain much of an interest in the Olympic Movement? Were you following the Olympics?

Newhouse: No, until the Olympics were coming to Los Angeles there was practically nothing going on insofar as action in the Olympics. I knew that they were going on and I followed the newspapers and TV, but I didn't become involved in them until 1982 because the Olympics were going to be here. Then, the Olympic Committee (LAOOC) decided that they were going to let former Olympians take part. This would be the first time that former Olympians had been included in the preparation for the Games. They formed what was called a Spirit Team. We acted as goodwill ambassadors between the community and the Olympic Committee. We would speak at various organizations, schools and colleges. We would take part in athletic activities like awarding medals and that sort of thing. We would do some radio and TV promotional work. In fact, I think that Spirit Team had a lot to do with the success of the Olympics in 1984. They did a very good job.

Hodak: I agree. That's very evident.

Newhouse: They generated a great deal of goodwill. Particularly because there was a lot of antagonism in the beginning about having the Games here. It wasn't readily accepted in the very beginning. So I feel that the Spirit Team did a great deal more than people know. We know because we had the interaction between people in the community and were a part of it.

Hodak: I think people in this community are very fortunate to have been exposed to your experiences.

Newhouse: It just seemed to take off. It snowballed all by itself.

Hodak: I wonder, as an Olympic gold medalist, how much interest, over the years, has there been in your career?

Newhouse: There was a long vacant period when nothing was happening. I didn't even mention it. Even my children didn't think it was a big deal until the Olympics were held here. Then they realized that there really was something big going on out there that they had really paid no attention to. And I didn't like it. You can't stay in that time slot. You have to go on to other things. That's what happened.

Hodak: And what thoughts occur to you when you think of the Olympic Movement as it has changed over the years? What things come to mind? What things strike you as you compare the Olympics in your time with the Olympics of today?

Newhouse: I don't think I can really compare them because they are so vitally different today. I think the Olympics today have become sort of big business and show business and are not for the athletes anymore. In my day, it really was for the athlete. There was no security problem. There were no drugs. There was no politics, other than maybe the newspapers keeping score on the number of medals. There was the camaraderie, the sense of real personal contact with other athletes. It makes me sad because I think maybe that's missing in all the hype and rah-rah stuff that goes on today. The way I view my time slot is that the Olympics were a microcosm of the world. The many faces of mankind were so different and interesting and such a vital part of our interaction. It changed my whole life forever. I was interested in the history of various nations I had never heard of before. I was interested in their culture, their religion, their music, their mores. The whole world was open to me. I was a little country girl. I was very confined in a very small area with people that were all alike. It just intrigued me and enriched my life so.

Hodak: I'd like to think that other athletes today are similarly moved by their competition in the Olympics.

Newhouse: I hope so. I don't think it comes as naturally as it did. I don't think I can explain it very well. We weren't surrounded with all the ritual and money. Of course, we didn't have any so all of us were in the same boat.

Hodak: Certainly the institutions that surround sport today are vastly different.

Newhouse: Yes, they are. That's why I say I really don't think I can make a comparison that has much validity. That's the way it was for me, that's all I can say.

Hodak: Again, I would like to think that athletes today benefit as you did from competing and have the same natural set of incentives. Obviously there are other incentives . . .

Newhouse: I'm certain that if I were born today, I'd go for it too.

Hodak: When you watch high jumpers today, do you marvel at some of the heights the women manage today?

I think maybe that's a misnomer when they call it high jumping. It's more of a dive, which we weren't allowed to do. It's perfectly natural to expect it to become higher that way—following that form—than you could the way we had to do it. Yes, I think this last week one of the women jumped 6'10" or something like that. It's amazing and very impressive. I noticed during the 1984 Olympics that the girls were much taller. Evidently they are taller now and the boys are also taller. I remember in 1932, Harold Osborn was not a tall boy and he held the record for a number of years. He was not over six feet.

And now you wouldn't find many high jumpers under six feet.

Newhouse: That's true. So you get an additional advantage, which is height, jumping the way they do today. I recall one woman who was a high jumper and she was over six feet. But it was strange because she didn't have the spring that some of the shorter girls had. Babe wasn't tall and I was about 5 feet 10 and one-half inches. But this gal was over six feet, Mildred Riley of Boston, and she came in third in the 1928 Olympics. She was tall but she didn't have that much spring. Actually she got it from her height. But she didn't have the spring. Of course, today, she probably would have done 6 feet 10 inches using the form they use today.

Hodak: So anything goes, more or less, in the high jump. There are no restrictions.

Newhouse: Another thing, we didn't have those nice cushions to fall onto. We landed in a sand or sawdust pit, and if it had rained it was hard. We didn't know any better. (laughter) You'd think somebody would have thought of cushions before that time. But nobody did.

Hodak: To conclude, how would you pin down the significance of sport in your life? Can you talk a bit about what impact sports has had on you? As you mentioned, certainly after competing in the Olympics you came back a changed person.

Newhouse: For me, it gave me something to do. I wasn't hanging around on street corners or doing a lot of stuff. I was too busy. Meeting people of various cultures was a real big thing for me, having lived in a small rural community and never having traveled. Other than that, I just think it's a healthy thing to do, and for me it was pure joy. I just loved doing it. It was a pleasure and a hobby.

Hodak: Are there things that you would recommend or advise modern athletes today? Obviously we are talking of a different context

but is there any sort of advice that you could offer?

Newhouse: Well, keeping fit isn't going to hurt anyone. I'm sure that if they have an opportunity to go for it, they will. It will lead to many discoveries, all of which are to be appreciated and can be useful. I can't say anything else for it. As I said, it opened a whole world for me and made me a better person, I think. In my community there was a lot of prejudice and that just flew out the window for me the first time I went to the Olympics in 1928. The various people I met, I was so curious and interested and wanted to know more. This leads to more knowledge and certainly makes interesting conversation. Other than that, I can't really say much more.

Hodak: I want to thank you for allowing me to come over and interview you and I'm very, very glad to have met you.

Newhouse: It has been delightful. I don't often get a chance to talk about it.

Hodak: I think that your interview speaks for itself. Again, I thank you and the Amateur Athletic Foundation appreciates your participation in this project.