

New York's Radio Row revisited - By 1951 David Rockefeller was at it again, taking up the family tradition in Manhattan by re-shaping NYC for the Middle Class, Morningside Gardens - a high rise of six buildings. The Rockefeller's would continue planning a World Trade Center in Manhattan but split with authorities on where it should be located.

In January of 1962 Oscar Nadel (1914-1987) was vacationing in Florida when he received word of the WTC proposal. Nadel owned two radio and TV Shops in the area immediately to the west of the H&M terminal buildings in an old but thriving district known as Radio Row. Look out small business men, eminent domain will rule. By February 1966 - 32 business owners accepted the buyout proposal from the NY Port Authority - Row Leader (Downtown West Businessman's Assoc) the defiant Oscar Ronnie Nadel said "They've knocked out 32 of us but we still have nearly 200 left" as Nadel told the NY Times, "If they want to evict us, let them try it."



The demolition started on March 26, 1966, the destruction finally came, over 300 businesses, employing 30,000 people and directly providing the livelihood for as many as 120,000 more, were destroyed. "They never had a chance," said Ronnie Nadel. Morton Brody is one of the lucky few of those who relocated, his store, Morel Electronics, stood at 185 Washington Street since 1950. "Some merchants went over to Chambers Street," he said. "I ended up on West Broadway." There he remained until he retired in 1982. His wife and partner, Jacqueline, died in 1998. Now 80 and in ill health, Brody is still bitter about the Port Authority "They threw out private enterprise," he said.

East Radio at 76 Cortlandt Street owner Irv Jaffe in business for over 50 years went to work for another retailer and never recovered from the ordeal of losing his business. Herb and Marg Simonoff of Leonard Radio rebuilt elsewhere and upon retirement in 1990 sold their outlets and moved to Florida. Simonoff believes that Oscar Nadel was one of those who passed away from the stress. "Oscar died a broken man," he said. "There were a lot of broken men."

The remnants of Radio Row had been dispersed so successfully that the Port Authority, in their mind could justifiably claim that a new Radio Row was developing on West 45th Street. Still the merchant who tried to stop the project, also relocated his business but failed, he filed bankruptcy by February 1968. The individual businesses had succeeded earlier in "Row" district but when scattered and relocated, they mainly failed. An auction was held on May 11th 1969 to sell the remaining assets of Oscar Nadel's business. Material and facts by Steve Patterson and Syd Steinhart. W8SU 2009