

MALOOLEY: kids go sliding. Now they /don't slide on the river/, you know. When the snow comes now, they go out to Deming Park and they go down the hills in these sleds. But we did use the river a lot for sliding all the way across it and come back. But it was dangerous. It doesn't freeze over like that now, because it used to get real thick. The weather was colder. I mean today you got automobiles, you got /all kinds of heat in the air/. You didn't have all that. I remember we made our house . . . in 1925 we made it modern -- furnace, bathroom -- and put water, you know, city water into the house. Before that it was all pumps. Every kitchen had a pump and metal sink. And, of course, my dad was one of the first ones to modernize in that block. And the thing I remember . . . why it comes to my mind so vividly, is when the man was all done, everything was finished, and they were discussing where to put something . . . did I tell you?

BB: Tell me again.

MALOOLEY: My dad called me. He says, "Tell Abie to come here. He's the littlest one in the house." He says, "Sit on the stool." He says, "Now, touch the wall with your right hand." I went like that /illustrates with his hand by reaching out/ and he says, "Put it right there." And that was the toilet paper. If I could reach it, they all could reach it!

(both laugh)

BB: (continuing to laugh) I love that story.

MALOOLEY: That sticks in my mind. And little things like that do stick in my mind.

I took a trip on a train in 1924 to Grand Rapids /Michigan/. I remember that one because that was my first train trip. My mother was a

MALOOLEY: matchmaker. She was going up there to match up some guy here. His wife had died, and she knew somebody in Grand Rapids and she got 'em married!

What else can I tell you about our people?

BB: I was going to ask you a question; I completely forgot about it.

How many children were in your family?

MALOOLEY: Six of us -- two boys, two girls, two boys -- four boys and two girls. I'm the caboose. Of course, we all had to go to work after my dad died. We had a mortgage on the house and had to pay that off. That was at McKeen National Bank -- McKeen Bank -- at 6th and Wabash, where Rogers jewelry store is now. We all shined shoes also. We shined shoes. My brother Mose had a regular job at the shine parlor right here on /South/ 4th Street. And we had newspaper stands. Besides selling newspapers on Sunday -- Saturday and Sunday -- we had newspaper stands. I had one at 4th and Wabash. There was a shoe shop there, and we had to stand all day up 'til ten o'clock at night before we Then we had to carry our stand and our papers back to the newspaper company. There was no trucks that come and picked 'em up. We carried them. That's why there was two of us.

And then I eventually got me a newspaper stand on Sunday in front of St. Benedict's church, which was the prime spot of all corners because you were done by 11:30. You'd be there at six in the morning and done at 11:30 (everybody else stayed all day) 'cause church was over and they were very generous. And they bought their papers. You could make yourself \$5 or \$6 on a Sunday, and that was a lot of money. The first job I took in 1933 . . . I quit school at the age of 16, took a job in a grocery store for \$3.50 a week plus streetcar fare and lunch.

MALOOLEY: And I worked that for three months 'til I taught his daughter, who came over from the old country, how to make change -- how to do it -- and I turned it over to her and her father. I went back to school, graduated from Wiley in January of '36. I was supposed to graduate in June of '35.

So, those were the ways that we were able to make some money. And, of course you know, dollars went pretty far. We could . . . when I got older, like I said, the dance halls, the Rainbow Gardens was in town, 9th and Ohio where the K of C /Knights of Columbus/ building /was/. Prior to the Rainbow Gardens, it was Bud Taylor's boxing gym -- training gym. Bud Taylor was world bantamweight champion. He was from Terre Haute and he moved to California after he became world-known and married Estelle . . . Estelle something. She was a movie star. You've heard the name Bud Taylor?

BB: Yes.

MALOOLEY: Of course, after that they converted to a dance hall called the Rainbow Gardens. And we would all /go stag/. The girls went /stag/. Very few people had dates. The girls would go on one side /of the dance hall/; the boys were on the other side. And sometimes the guy that owned the dance parlor had to say, "Come on, you want to dance," or something. And he'd get somebody together. Or you'd go over and ask the girl. You'd look and say, "Well, I'll go ask her," you know.

And that's how you'd have dances. And sometimes you'd walk the girl home, if she didn't live too far. And if she did, you rode the streetcar. It was still going. There was, like I said, the Stark's School for Dancing between 7th and 8th. Marlatt's was across the street above Tune Brothers at 5th and Wabash. And the big, fancy dance hall was the Trianon out on East Wabash, out around past 25th Street. And you had to have dates. And,

MALOOLEY: of course, they had good bands and it cost more money. Then it was 50 cents and on special band nights it was a dollar. And, of course, everybody had dates when they went to the Trianon because you're high class.

BB: (laughs)

MALOOLEY: And we used to go out there and sit. When there was a big band here, we'd go out and sit out in front just to listen to the band. Of course, that is what brought us to start our own band.

What else is there that I can think of?

BB: Well, since you're on it, you might as well tell me about the band.

MALOOLEY: Well, there was a few of us fellows. We decided that we wanted to start our own band. We went to Sterchi's music store down there between 3rd and 4th, and each one went in there and we would pick up an instrument -- one you thought you might be able to play.

And, of course, like I said, I picked up the trumpet and I could blow taps right now. They said, "Well, you play the trumpet." And we had ten free lessons with buying the instrument. We bought them on time 'cause we all worked, and we hired the instructor for 10 weeks. After that we thought we could get on our own because we elected one of our men to be the instructor. He'd learned enough. One of the fellows is still living. He works for Heini's flower shop. He was a good trumpet man, too.

Our first engagement was at Rockville at a high school show of some sort. All I remember is we played there in this theater. And then we also played in Indianapolis. We played at St. Mary's-

MALOOLEY: of-the-Woods, /and/ played around here in town a few places. Of course, by that time we all started getting steady jobs, and we had to either give one or the other up. But some of the fellows kept playing and got jobs -- steady jobs -- because they just liked to play.

BB: What was the name of your band?

MALOOLEY: The Caravan Band. The Caravan Band.

BB: About how long did you play together?

MALOOLEY: We played from 1929 . . . no, I'm sorry, 1931 to 1938, in that area. I forget exactly the exact dates.

I was working in a grocery store full time so I had to quit. A few other fellows had to quit, but some of the fellows kept playing. And they played at different dance halls, and two of them went to Chicago to make their way. They stayed about a year and come back. But nobody ever got big. But we had fun.

We used to practice behind a tavern up at 19th and Locust, so it had to be after '33. After '33 we were practicing behind a tavern in the back room 'cause we had to have a place to practice together. Each guy at home, I think their families got tired listening to them. So /they said/, "Go out and practice someplace else."

Those days were very good days and peaceful. Everybody was nice. Of course, as traffic got heavier and heavier -- cars and stuff -- it began to change. Times began to change. I finally quit the grocery business in 1939 and bought a pool room over on 4th Street -- still sticking to 4th Street -- from a Greek fellow named John Antone and ran the pool room 'til war came along and I had to sell out. Sold out to a retired Marine at that time.

MALOOLEY: He was up in years and he was retired. They weren't going to call him back so he bought the pool room.

'Course, we went to the army and served our time, came back, and we had this place. And we just worked here at the Saratoga and built this one up. It used to be just one little room and /we/ worked hard at it all these years. We've been here 39 and going on 40 years now.

It has become . . . this place has become almost an institution, they tell me, because of the local color that comes in here. And it is full of the lawyers, the judges, the businessmen. And we're almost . . . they say we're an institution.

BB: Um hm.

What about that comment you mentioned about you can't run for office unless you eat at the Saratoga or something like that? I can't remember how that goes.

MALOOLEY: Oh, yes. Yes, yes. Well, Harold McMillan was writing different articles for the ISU /Indiana State University/ paper, and he had said that . . . one time he says, "If you want to pick up a politician, you have to go to the Saratoga Cafe."

Then later, after everybody that came in here was elected, he says, "And if you want to be elected, I guess you have to drink at the Saratoga Cafe." Because everybody that came in here of the legal profession got elected. Why, I don't know. It's just that they all gathered here. And it seems like the deals were made or this or that and the votes. But they all got elected. And it's nice to know that, you know, that they do get elected.

And, of course, it keeps growing; I guess everybody feels like they should come. Maybe there's some luck rubbing off.

BB: Could be. Could be.

 Do you want to tell us then about the beginnings of the restaurant and the beginnings of the building and how you expanded?

MALOOLEY: Yes. I can tell you that because first of all the man that really originated and named the Saratoga was N. George Nasser, who is the oldest practicing attorney in Terre Haute today. He was my brother-in-law. He is my brother-in-law. I don't think he knew the name of the Saratoga, what it really meant. I think he took it from the battleship or the aircraft carrier, U.S.S. Saratoga, but later on I found out that it's an Indian name which means "gathering place," because of the Saratoga track, the Saratoga Springs. I dug up /the etymology/ and it means "gathering place," which is very good. And he started this with a little bar and a little sandwich counter. And then, of course, my brother Joe was running the Phoenician Club which burned down in '42. It was out on Canal Road -- South Canal. It burned to the ground so he /Nasser/ asked him /Joe/ to come up here and manage it. So, after a few months, he says, "You want to buy it?" So he sold it to us, sold it to my brother. So, when I came out of service, I came to work here and we built it up. But that's how it got its start.

BB: And that was just a corner

MALOOLEY: Just this corner building which was the first . . . one of the first banks in Terre Haute. It was called the Terre Haute National Bank. The picture's up there on the wall from the Historical Museum /of the Wabash Valley/. The vault was downstairs and the big slab of dirt and cement is still there where the big safe sat. Where these rest rooms are, the big vault sat there and that stone slab is still there; because to remove it out of the basement they said it wasn't worth it.

MALOOLEY: But we did take out the other vaults and put in a central heating and air conditioning unit, later on. Eventually, /later/ this was a hardware store, the Pentecost and Craft, which was here for many years, handed down. And when they finally moved out, they sold it to us. We remodeled it and made a dining room out of it in 1966 and '67. That's how we got this here.

Then I finally went to fix the building up and instead of covering up the old building, I restored it. I sandblasted and siliconed and put a new roof on just last year to preserve this building. Of course, I bought it . . . it used to belong to Hulman and Company. And Hulman and Company at one time was in this building, before they . . . while they were building the building down there at 9th and Wabash. They were here one time because I got the abstract and they even have the board of directors, how many shares was held by each one. The history of Hulman and Company is in my abstract. They were here. That's how . . . they owned the building.

BB: Before or after the bank?

MALOOLEY: Oh, yeah. The bank went out. Then, later on came the tire shop . . . no, Kables. Kables had a restaurant here. Kables Restaurant was here. And as a kid, I went to St. Joseph school down here and we would be going up this way home. I remember the iron railing which is in the picture. How I remember it so well is we used to take our rulers and we'd go brrrrrr along the railing.

Then, later on they took that out, closed it up, and they put /in/ a fire escape because there used to be apartments and meeting rooms upstairs. They had a fire escape. And, of course, as you got older, the guy that could jump up and grab the ladder and pull it down was a good jumper.

MALOOLEY:

Since I bought the building, I was upstairs treating for pigeons, and we found the articles of confederation of the unions in Terre Haute. The . . . 1899 the ice wagon and milk men, 1903 the poultry and the meat-cutters in 1901 . . . I skipped 1901, then 1903. And somebody had told the unions I had put 'em on my walls. They're authentic; they're cleaned up -- the way I found them. Somebody had told the unions about them, and they sent the curator down here for the unions and he examined them and said they were authentic. And Samuel Gompers name is on two of them, and then they brought the lawyer down for the unions, Mr. Jacobs. And they couldn't very well . . . they said we don't know what price to put on them, but we would like . . . we want to build a labor room at the Smithsonian Institute and we would love to have these, if you'd donate them. I said, "I will. When you get the thing done and you're ready and get me a certificate, and I'll donate them to the Smithsonian Institute."

So, I had to hide two of them. He said, "You ought to take them off the wall. Somebody'll break in and steal them," 'cause they could be worth something. Because the signatures are original and they were completely true by the curator, he says. One of them . . . the first one -- I can't remember the name on there now -- he says, "That man was president only one year and," he said, "that's excellent."

So, Samuel Gompers came after him and he became world famous. And I think Eugene Debs' name is on one of them. But I have them here and there are some old facts upstairs. And there are old winding stairways on both sides up on the third floor. To go to the top there was a stairway curved like that /motions with his hands/. And it's still walkable. You can walk up and . . . of course, some of the banister poles are loose and falling. I've got them.

MALOOLEY: I don't want to lose them but they're /the steps/ are very strong. And those banister rails, they tell me, they say, "You know, you could sell them for good money." I said, "Well, I'll leave it with the building." I don't know what I'm going to do. The HUD /Housing and Urban Development/ . . . the government has thought if they could get the money -- a low-interest loan -- they want me to put /in/ apartments which I had an architect /who/ said I could put eight apartments up here, two-bedroom apartments. So that's the reason I did the building first, got it in good solid condition, got a new roof. It's dry. So, some day we may put apartments back up there. They did have them. You can see the wallpaper hanging on some of the walls; and /you can see/ these big sliding doors, how they separate the living room from the dining room. They are still up there on the top floor. You can see where the old chimney for the potbellied stoves went to the wall.

BB: I'll bet those apartments would be beautiful, if they were done.

MALOOLEY: They would be. Well, someday . . . I've got the practical of the drawings; and I've said, "We'll get it." Just give us time 'cause they I've met with Dave Dunbar down at Valley Federal Loan, and I've met with Harold Baker of HUD /Terre Haute Housing Authority/. I've met with the architect and one other fellow, and we discussed it. He said you could rent them just as easy as anything because people want to live downtown. And I have faith in Terre Haute downtown. It's not gone. It's a very good downtown and business is good. All the stores are really doing good. They look at Honey Creek and they say, "Oh, look at that!" Of course, they're doing good. But the stores aren't hurting. You don't . . . you'll never see no big department stores /downtown/ again, no. Not like they used to be.