

MALOOLEY: There was Hertz . . . Herz, rather. There was Root's; there was Silverman's furniture store, Lederer's, Schultz, of course, and Smith's. Schultz and Smith was one at one time. They were brothers-in-law. Then they got mad and split up; and one went on this side of the street and one on that side of the street.

And then Herz became Alden-Herz, bought it later. That's the building they tore down at 7th and Wabash where that parking lot is /south of the federal building/. That building was hard to tear down. That was a well-constructed building. It had wrought irons going through the building, the walls, and Of course, Root's finally sold out to Mercantile and it's gone. And all you have left is Meis. They were there for many . . . all the time. They owned . . . Brown Shoe Company owns that now. And Schultz is about the only home-owned department store left in Terre Haute.

And downtown on Saturday night was a very busy town -- all the farmers and people from Illinois. This was a good-sized town. And I remember the barbershops. In those days you could get a haircut for 25 cents, the old story of a shave and a haircut, you know . . .

BB: Two bits?

MALOOLEY: Yeah. And they /the barbershops/ had bathtubs. This was before homes became modern. And it cost 25 cents to take a bath, and all the miners would line up in the barbershop. That's where they'd get their bath and get a shave and a haircut and the story is "smell like a barbershop." And they would all head for town. So they'd get cleaned up and bathed up and shaved and head for town. And their straw hats, you know, cocked over to one side and stroll up and down the avenue. And people . . .

BB: And the stores would be open on Saturday night.

MALOOLEY: Oooh, 'till 9:30! And they were busy. And people on Sundays would window-shop. You know, to pass the time away. And the streetcars, I remember how we used to as kids on a hot summer Sunday we would walk all the way down to almost Hulman Street on South 3rd; and for a nickel we would ride the streetcar all the way up to Collett Park -- up on the north end up near Fort Harrison -- and play there. And then for another nickel you could ride all the way back. Then we'd walk back home. /We did this/ just to get the long ride because the windows were down. It was summer. We had straw seats and it was just nice and fresh and cool as the breeze, you know, 'cause the streetcar drove lickety-split.

 And, of course, in those days sometimes when we'd go to the . . . they had ball games out to the stadium. The guys would pull the trolley off the trolley, the back end, and the car would stop because it was run by that trolley, electric. And the guy would go back and put it back on; and before he could get started again, we'd hop on the back and ride all the way out there free. And we'd ride across to West Terre Haute a lot of times that way. And they used to put these little bombs on the track. The streetcar would go over it, /and it would go, / "POP," you know, just for noise.

BB: Like a firecracker?

MALOOLEY: Yeah.

 We did many things in those days to have fun. And when telephones came in . . . I remember the first telephone. The operator . . . our number at the store was Wabash 5634J and that stuck in my mind. Then came the dial system when I was in the 8th grade. /I remember/ 'cause they came in and

MALOOLEY: taught everybody the dial system -- in school --
so we'd know how to use it -- how to call the Fire
Department, the police, everything. But I don't
. . . .

BB: What telephone system was that here, do you
remember?

MALOOLEY: What what?

BB: What was the system that was here -- the
company?

MALOOLEY: Oh, that was the Bell Telephone. They were
here first.

 The operators . . . before, you know, you
called the operator and you asked for your number.
Then the dial system, of course. And we used to
call up people . . . you know, the old story, you'd
call 'em up and you'd say, "Do you live on the
streetcar line?" You know. They'd say, "Yes."
"Well, get off. Here comes a streetcar." And,
call up a grocery store and say, "Have you got
Prince Albert tobacco in the can?" And you'd say,
"Well, let him out." Things like that.

BB: Kids are still pulling that.

MALOOLEY: Yeah, they're still doing it.

 Talking about Prince Albert, I remember the
old store. And it was a long store and a long
counter and they had a big icebox, was refrigerated
with ice. The iceman put ice every morning up in
the top. And behind it was the old potbellied
stove and the old men sitting around playing check-
ers. They would sit for hours, and the men . . .
the guy that used to smoke Prince Albert made me
think; he had a pipe and I always remember him.
I'd sit there and watch him. And there was a cracker

MALOOLEY: barrel right there, too. And they would study an hour before they'd ever make a move 'cause they had . . . they were old people. And they'd just sit around the store and played checkers, and sometimes some of them would eat. They'd, you know, make a sandwich for 'em. But there wasn't a lot of business. It was just a good, smooth time.

Not . . . today it's hustle. You have to work at it today. The things were just so natural and so peaceful and quiet. No cars, no this or that. I grew up with it. I think I came through the best years because /I lived/ from the horse and buggy, and you might as well say, to the moon. /I/ remember the first airplanes and how they used to have the airplane circus and how they used to stand on the wings and do acrobats at the circus in the old biplane. And that's when the air . . . the Paul Cox airport was on South 7th. And everybody'd go down 'cause that way the plane didn't fly very fast. They went 60s, miles an hour. And these acrobats would get on top of the wings and stand on each other's shoulders -- of course, their feet were strapped -- and do things like that. And it was fun. And they used to give rides for a dollar, take you all around the town. Today, they don't . . . they have air shows once in a while, but they're all sky divers . . .

BB: Um hm, and jets and things.

Can you . . .

MALOOLEY: When the circus came to town, it would unload down here on Wabash Avenue. The track, the railroad track went through. It would unload there and they would all parade off the train in parade fashion with the calliope playing music and right down Wabash Avenue all the way out to 25th Street, where they'd pitch their tent. And everybody got out of school when the circus came to town. And you'd line Wabash Avenue, and I used to follow them all the way

MALOOLEY: out there and work just to get into the big tent.

BB: Did they come every year?

MALOOLEY: Every year.

BB: What did you work at? What did you do to
 . . .

MALOOLEY: Oh, I just hauled water or something for the animals and things. We used to say, "Hey, we're willing to work. We want to see the circus tonight." And they'd work and they'd give us a ticket. We'd go to the circus. And my mother would be so mad. I'd never show up home 'til I got home late. (laughs) We walked everywhere, see. She'd just figure, well, we had to be at the circus 'cause they let the school out. Schools would get out. Go to the circus.

BB: They probably figured you'd all want to cut or not pay attention anyway so . . .

MALOOLEY: That's right! But, oh, the animals -- the elephants, everything came off the train right down the walkways and right down Wabash Avenue.

BB: Can you put your mind back to when you were a young man growing up in Terre Haute what . . . can you describe to me what Terre Haute, downtown Wabash Avenue, was like? We've talked a little bit about it but . . .

MALOOLEY: Yes.

BB: . . . could you describe the stores and people and atmosphere?

MALOOLEY: Yes. There were a lot of movie theaters downtown, a lot of furniture stores and small shops and ten-cent stores. There were a lot of ten-cent

MALOOLEY: stores -- Woolworth, F. W. Grant, McCrory's some of the names don't come. There was quite a few in this . . . I think there's one still down here. Is it? No, it's gone now, isn't it? Yeah. It was right there at 6-1/2 and Wabash /Kresge's formerly was at this location/ Avenue that lasted so long -- Woolworth's.

BB: Woolworth's is still there, isn't it?

MALOOLEY: Is it still there? Yeah, there's a store there. And it's still standing there. It was there since I was a kid. And

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MALOOLEY: Downtown was . . . there were no empty buildings. My English isn't right. There weren't any empty buildings. There was . . . starting with the Savoy theater, the Fountain theater, then between 6th and 7th were two small theaters called the Princess and the Crescent. Then we went to the Liberty, then the American theater near 9th Street. There was the Grand theater at 7th and Cherry and the Indiana theater at 7th and Ohio and the Hippodrome at 8th and Ohio.

And vaudeville was still on when I was a kid. I think I failed to bring that out. And I had seen some vaudeville. And it was said in those days that if you could make it in Terre Haute, you could make it anywhere in the vaudeville circuit. 'Cause Terre Haute was a tough place to . . . and if you can get applause, you can go to New York. And there were some famous people who came through here in those days and famous bands.

Then the . . . of course, the talkies came in. The movies . . . the first two movie houses to disappear was the Crescent and the Princess between 6th

MALOOLEY: and 7th Street, mainly because more stores were wanting the room. They were sold and rented as shoe stores. Becker's was there for years.

Right across the street was Thom McAn, and alongside that building was a stairway on the outside going up to the apartments. And under the stairway was a little building where a man sold popcorn and candy bars, chew tobacco in a little . . . under the stairway /in/ a little cubbyhole. In the wintertime, he had a little kerosene lamp that kept his feet warm.

And there used to be vendors on every corner with bananas in the summertime and apples, hot tamales. A man used . . . they used to walk up the neighborhoods when I was a kid in the winter -- fall and winter -- /shouting, / "Hot tamales! Red hot!" And sold /them/ for a nickel. And you could buy them. And downtown was always busy because there were people vending. There were hucksters on every corner that'd set up card tables /to/ sell something, to sharpen scissors, knives, hose . . . garden hose. And there were jewelry stores, shoe stores, furniture stores. Second-hand stores were on 3rd Street off of Wabash. There were second-hand stores. You could go and buy second-hand things.

And 3rd Street . . . North 3rd at one time when I was a little kid, my dad had told me, was called Market Street. The market and everything was along 3rd Street. And the city market . . . /later, / Wabash came /to be main street/ because . . . it finally bent around and came this way and Wabash became the main district. Third Street in the beginning was because they had boulevards, nice big poplar trees up and down the middle. That's why 3rd Street is so wide. They had boulevards in the middle and it was a beautiful street. And, of course, as Wabash gained momentum it became the main street.

MALOOLEY: The city market was over here on 2nd and Walnut between 2nd and 3rd. And the farmers would bring all their things in and had stalls. Then they finally moved down to 2nd and Chestnut where there was a big city market -- made it a bigger place. And they all . . . in the summertime you'd go there; all the people would go with wagons or if they had a carriage or if they had a car. You could buy tomatoes 50 cents a bushel, and they'd go home and they'd can. Everybody canned all summer. They canned and made jellies and made fruit preserves, all summer long for the winter. Everybody had a pantry in the basement where they would store the things for their winter needs. This is going back in the '20s.

And downtown was always thriving; and on Saturday night even my mother would take me when she wanted to go downtown, and the Salvation Army would play on 4th and Wabash . . . right there. The Salvation Army in those days would play at a corner and take collection and preach religion. And my mother used to sit me right there on the curb 'cause they were my babysitter. I'd just sit there and just listen to 'em. And they'd play music and talk. When she was through shopping, she'd come and pick me up. And she'd say, "O.K., we'll go to a show." We'd go to the Fountain theater. For being a good boy.

(both laugh)

MALOOLEY: That's when it was a nickel.

The Salvation Army would parade from one corner, and they would play the music and parade right in single file right down Wabash Avenue to the next corner or two blocks and then start there preaching again. And there used to be different small groups that would also preach on different corners. And they would preach the gospel and salvation to everybody, and they always had a nice crowd and people

MALOOLEY: did donate. And, of course, the Salvation Army has done a lot of good since then, and they've become quite something in the community here. And throughout the world, I mean, they've helped a lot. Even during wartime, disaster times, just like the Red Cross.

The Indiana theater, of course, was the biggest theater and it still is. It was a beautiful theater, and I believe it was built around 1925. I'm not sure, but I think it was '20 or '25 -- the same time that the Terre Haute House was built. It used to be the Prairie House. Then they built the Terre Haute House around 1925 to '27. [I recall] 'cause going to the Grand theater, there was a . . . they had that boardwalk where they were building above and they had . . . that's how I remember when it was built. And, of course, the first dormitory was also built at Indiana State Normal School for girls around that same time. Being a newsboy, I covered the territory; and I remember playing on the hump of dirt and the girls upstairs would holler down at us and tease us 'cause -- "Look at the cute kids," you know. And they were college kids, girls, you know; and they threw down a piece of candy or something.

So, the main drag . . . the policeman, I remember him. The tall policeman named Rickleman must have been 6-1/2 feet tall. He was the one that was always . . . paraded Wabash Avenue. Then when the cars came in, he marked them with chalk, parking. And they had about 2 hours I think it was then, just like now.

BB: Did you go to many of the vaudeville shows?

MALOOLEY: I went to a few of them. It's hard for me to remember who they were, but I remember how they used to come out and put the names out on the side. There were jugglers, magicians, music groups; nothing really sticks in my mind except that it was

MALOOLEY: vaudeville, and then they had the movie. They had vaudeville in between the movies.

Then later came short subjects and Pathe' News. And vaudeville disappeared.

BB: Did your parents take you to the shows or

MALOOLEY: No. They would pick one of the oldest guys in the block. There were about six of us. He was given the money and we had to follow him. He paid the way and he brought us back. It was all walking distance anyway, but, no, he carried . . . in those days he tied the money . . . they tied it up in a handkerchief, in a knot. And don't lose it! And we all went to the show and he was the boss, like follow-the-leader. He was a cousin of mine. He's a pharmacist today even; he's still living, Faris Corey.

The scariest show in the silent movies was when "The Phantom of the Opera" came on. In those . . . in that day when "The Phantom of the Opera" came on and they showed his face get as big as the screen, people did run out of the theater 'cause it was scary to them. And that was at the Grand theater.

Of course, you know, like I say, we used to catch the short subjects, the Pathe' News; [they] all took the place of vaudeville. I didn't see a lot of vaudeville. We didn't go to the show that often. But when I was selling newspapers, I finally made some of the shows. After we'd sell papers or in the afternoon, we'd go see a movie. And if we got downtown between 7th [Street] . . . past there you were . . . 10 cents a show. These little shows were still a nickel. Popcorn, they all sold popcorn right out in front, 5 cents a sack.

What else can I tell you about downtown?