

MALOOLEY: Yeah. But a lot of these fellows do sit around here now, and I ought to start writing down . . . they start talking about old times and old things that they remember well. I could go back to almost 5 years of age on certain incidents that took place. Like me falling in the horse trough at the side of the store. You know, there was a spout that came out and the trough was filled with spring water. And everybody that was thirsty would cup their hand and drink cool water and keep walking. And, of course, I always wanted to do that. So, I had to get back to the wall and run and jump and grab and try to climb up there and get it and finally fell in.

BB: (laughs)

MALOOLEY: Well, of course, everybody's heard about the red light district. It was big. I sold papers around there and I can remember . . . and I knew some of the names -- like /Nell Bandy/. I knew Madam Brown's place. I sold papers to her. I knew Kate Adair. Another one, the name escapes me. She was one of the last ones. But it was . . . on Saturday evenings, I think, everybody walked there. I mean young people would walk up and down just to have fun, just walking. I mean it was like . . . if you didn't have enough money to go to a show, then you walked up and down -- the young men did. It was quite an attraction for Terre Haute, because they say they came from St. Louis, Chicago. This was "Little Chicago" at one time. All the gangsters hung out here 'cause Blackie Traum had a bookie joint out on East Wabash. How I know about Blackie Traum, his brother, Joe Traum, had the National Hotel on 4th Street when I had the pool room. And he used to come over there and tell us stories about the old rum-running days. Of course, a lot of the madams from the red light district would come over to the National Hotel where he had a lunch counter and floor show at night. Then, that hotel

MALOOLEY: was one of the famous hotels, but it disappeared
. . . it's where the parking lot at Schultz is now.

And I think I told you about the flying Reo.
The first time . . .

BB: Is that the car that went . . .

MALOOLEY: Yeah. It was Jimmie DeTraney. I remember
the name. And Ralph Calabrese was another Italian
that had a produce delivery, and I worked for him.
But Jimmie DeTraney came out of that National
Hotel and this beautiful white convertible, Flying
Reo, . . . "Hey, Jimmie, how fast can that car
go?" He says, "Hundred miles an hour. Get in!"
He took me to North Terre Haute and back.

I don't know. They liked newsboys. Newsboys
were everywhere. You know. You hollered, you know.
"Get your paper today." All about something news
on there -- "Read about this," "read about that."
You walked up and down the street, shouting and
holding the paper up like you see in the movies
today of old times. It was done that way. It was
really done that way.

And you fought over corners. "This is my
corner; you go down to the next corner."

BB: Um hm. What was the best corner in downtown?

MALOOLEY: Seventh and Wabash.

BB: Seventh and Wabash.

MALOOLEY: Seventh and Wabash was the busiest corner.
And whoever had that had it made. But they used
to sell papers everywhere; and if they saw a cus-
tomer across the street, man, they'd dash, every-
body'd run. (laughs) "Buy one from me!"

And, of course, Gillis Drugstore had . . . up

MALOOLEY: near 7th and Wabash. A certain fellow in there always gave me a nickel for a paper. It was only 3 cents, 2 cents and then 3 cents. Give me a nickel for it. Boy, that's, you know, that's big.

BB: It's a good customer.

MALOOLEY: Yeah. And you had certain places. Barber-shops. They'd take the paper from you. There were a lot of barbershops. And like I said, I remember the 25-cent haircuts.

BB: There were a lot of small shops.

MALOOLEY: Ooooh, that's what it was. It was all small shops, owner-operated or family-operated. The stores were all mom-and-pop stores. The bakery shops were all small bakeries. Every block. You know I was in Germany in '76 and it's that way in Germany; and I just had . . . I couldn't pass up a bakery, that big, nice bread. I went in there and got a loaf of it. (laughs)

BB: (laughs)

MALOOLEY: But Germany reminded me of this country prior to World War II. They carried baskets to the grocery store. They didn't buy like today. You know, big supermarkets, these carts. Everybody . . . they didn't have sacks. You carried your little basket or little bag to the store, bought what you need. Went to the bakery. Went to the vegetables . . . little grocery store and home. Every block. And some of them rode their bicycles. You know, if they were going someplace else to shop, you'd see 'em with their baskets. And I enjoyed Germany because they remind me of this country prior to World War II.

And it's too bad that those small shops are gone because I know the big stores have taken over.

MALOOLEY: The TV and the news media and the advertising have gone so fast and so far that they guide you by the nose to what they want you to buy. But it's probably good, too.

But the small stores did help during the Depression by giving credit; and many a people, many a people lived off of credit like they do today. But it was groceries then.

BB: Then it was . . .

MALOOLEY: And drugstores.

BB: . . . necessity.

MALOOLEY: Doctors. Each drugstore had
What else?

BB: What about your family's first car?

MALOOLEY: Oh, yeah! In those days when you bought a car, they instructed you how to drive. And my father bought a Studebaker -- it must have been 1924-25 -- and the man was teaching him how to drive. And I got in the back seat; and we were going down North 3rd Street coming to the railroad tracks and, of course, he says, "Now, you step on the brake when you get to the railroad track." And my father blew the horn and he says, "No. That's the . . . you don't blow the horn for a train; you step on the brake down here!"

(both laugh)

MALOOLEY: But they taught you how to drive a car.

BB: Um hm.

MALOOLEY: Instructions went with the car.

They had those seats. They had the back seat

MALOOLEY: . . . the front seat, and they had the two extra seats that folded up. They were folded out to get more people in the car. You could get eight people in the car. And in the summer around the Fourth of July when you'd go like to Turkey Run or Robinson Park, you'd pile everybody in it that wanted to go. You'd get two or three cars and you'd take a whole gang /and/ go up to Turkey Run, for the day you know. That was a big thing. And go to Twin Lakes over in Illinois. That was a big thing, too.

That's about it. Other than that, just nothing clicks yet.

BB: What about your own first vehicle?

MALOOLEY: My what?

BB: Your first vehicle.

MALOOLEY: Mine? (laughs) I had a . . . no, prior to that, I had one you had to crank. I had a Model-T, my brother and I. And you had to crank it and set the spark and jump in there and get it and start it going, you know. After you'd give it a couple of good cranks, she'd chug along. And they were top heavy, tall. And if you didn't watch how you turned a corner, you could turn them over.

Then, I finally got a '30 panel Chevrolet that we hauled our musical instruments in. Then, after that, I didn't have any more cars.

BB: For a while.

MALOOLEY: Yeah.

But I remember the Packard was a beautiful limousine and on 4th Street there one shop sold Packards; and they were limousines, beautiful, big black shiny cars.

MALOOLEY: And they had electric cars, too. I used to see electric cars. Some of the rich women would drive an electric car with a stick like this. It wasn't straight . . . well, it was a stick.

BB: Yeah, a stick.

MALOOLEY: And they would travel up on Wabash Avenue in their little, quiet electric car. Even when everybody had gasoline combustion-type engines cars, they stayed with them. And I remember one was . . . seeing one almost 1940.

But cars got plentiful. You didn't need . . . we didn't need one. Like I said, I didn't have a car for a long time after that. I'd say since 1936 'til I went into service, I didn't have a car. Didn't get a car until '48, after service. I rode the buses.

BB: Well, with streetcars and buses and your own two feet, you could get around a lot in those days.

MALOOLEY: A lot of people lived in our house that came to this town. Like I said, we had a big house, two-story. And you know the Kassises . . . you know Mose Kassis?

BB: Um hm.

MALOOLEY: His mother and father, when they got married, lived in our upstairs for a year. In fact, his brother Charlie was born in our upstairs.

And the Georges and Coreys and a lot of them. See, we being one of the first and my dad being a merchant, a businessman, they came to him. And we put 'em up sometimes as much as a year, 'til they got going. Then they'd go out and get a place of their own. That we were . . . just became the cross-section. Even as I grew up, all the fellows came to the house, waited on me. They was going to

MALOOLEY: go out somewhere. The house was always full of fellows or girls. My two sisters had their girl friends. But they all came there and whenever I got home, you know, from work, /they said,/ "Hurry up, we're going to go out." There might be six guys waiting on the front porch.

BB: (laughs) Why do you think Terre Haute had such a rich ethnic mixture in those days?

MALOOLEY: Well, I think mainly because of the coal mines. The Hungarians, the Romanians, Lithuanians were all coal-mining people. And I think they needed people . . . wherever there's people and work, there was always something to sell. The needs were there. The needs were there. Grocery stores or dry goods stores, that's . . . Terre Haute grew because of coal-mining. It was a very strong coal-mining area, and all these people came here because they were coal miners. And worked.

Of course, you had the tie plants and railroads had a lot of people working. They came here because there was work, and it wasn't a big city where you had to fight your way against too many other groups. Some of your big cities were pretty well strongly set and you couldn't just move in. Terre Haute was pretty open to 'em. And they were well received. This was a German town for a while, too, you know. That's what . . . St. Benedict's and St. Joseph's were German. In the early years when they were built -- St. Joseph's will be 100 years old this year, I think, 1881. I think I saw it on the cornerstone the other day. Of course, they even talked German in those days. As the thing became more English -- American -- they switched. Even when we started our church, it was in Arabic. And, of course, we said, we don't know it. We don't understand it. You've got to go English, and they did. It's all English all over the country now.

MALOOLEY: The ethnic people, I think, were well received. And the work was here. You had . . . the river had boats. They even had the old Reliable which was a dance boat. The music you could . . . it was rented one time. I went to a dance on it as a young man. Went up the river, up and down, you know, the whole night, dancing on the boat.

And the river had a lot of traffic.

The railroads were everywhere in this town. You can see the tracks still. There were a lot of tracks and they were all busy. And you had the big roundhouse. There was small shops, too, you know. They were needed with all this other stuff. As the needs grew, the shops opened. And I think that's why they came to Terre Haute. There was work. And being well received. Oh, yes, as a kid they'd call you Hunky or something like that which . . . this is all you know with kids. And the main . . . the most of them were, I would say, /living in the/ 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th /street area -- the/ north end. The south end wasn't as much coal mining as the north end. Most of your coal miners lived all the way up to Locust and further and over to 1st Street. South end homes were more influential people that had been here longer and they We always said the south end was the rich end of town, as kids, you know. And on . . . when I said we shoveled snow, the place you headed for was the rich area which is South Center.

BB: Oh, yes, yes, all the big homes.

MALOOLEY: Yeah. And they wanted somebody to shovel snow. And on Christmas morning -- we were about 12 years old -- they had a newspaper that was a special edition. Me and this fellow decided that he'd take one side of the street and I'd take the other. We'd knock on the door, "Merry Christmas. Christmas edition." And I'm going to tell you, they gave you

MALOOLEY: apples, oranges, 50 cents or a quarter. Before we got through by noon, we had five or six dollars in our pocket. We'd split it, you know. And we always had a bunch of apples and oranges to take with you. You know they'd always give you something on Christmas day. And we did that for a couple of years.

BB: That was a pretty good racket. (laughs)

MALOOLEY: Yeah, it got to be a nice racket.

BB: So, what do you think the future of downtown Terre Haute is?

MALOOLEY: I think it's good. I think that there's a great future. There will not be . . . I don't look for any big department stores, but I look for offices. I look for many professional people to be downtown, even government. And all these empty lots, there'll be buildings go up regardless. You can only stay that way so long and there's a need. When the need arises, it will be there. And you cannot -- I do not believe -- you cannot hurt a main area of any town. It may slip. It may go down. But they're not out.

The shopping centers have done great and it is fine. But they're still not going to kill downtown. Like I said before, there are enough cars parked in every area in downtown that, if put together, would make Honey Creek look sick. And there's got to be people driving those cars and they've got to be somewhere. And at noon today as you walk around . . . if you walk around town, it's busy. People are out. Whether they're going to lunch, going to work, going to whatever. It dies at night, yes. After 5 o'clock now I'm speaking, it does quiet down. And they say, "Well, they roll the sidewalks up downtown." But it's not the old days of window shopping and all these things

MALOOLEY: have gone. It's a new era. And I don't see downtown going downhill except uphill. And I feel dedicated to it and I worked for it and I would stay with it. And like I said, I preserved this building. And I've had many people come in and congratulate me, says, "Thank God, somebody is keeping something old." And I believe in downtown. It will come back. I mean, I don't know how long -- 3 years, 5 years, 10 years -- but it'll be there.

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