

"What I Remember"

Recollections of a Small Town Doctor

William Henry Roberts, M.D.





William Henry Roberts was born in North Baltimore, Ohio, in 1920. He grew up on South Main Street, and graduated from North Baltimore High School in 1938. After receiving a bachelor's degree in Pharmacy from The Ohio State University in 1942, he entered active duty with the United States Naval Reserve. During his wartime service in the destroyer escorts USS EDGAR G CHASE (DE-16) and USS TRUMPETER (DE-180), he rose to the rank of Lieutenant. After the war, he earned a master's degree in Pharmacy at OSU before attending Western Reserve University School of Medicine.

He graduated from Western Reserve in 1951 and served two years of internship at Hartford Hospital in Hartford, Connecticut. In 1953, he returned to North Baltimore, where he opened a medical practice on East Broadway.

"Doc" practiced medicine in North Baltimore for 37 years. During that time, he served on the Library Board and the Board of Public Affairs, and as medical adviser to the North Baltimore Volunteer Fire Department. He also served as Chief of Medical Staff at both Blanchard Valley Hospital in Findlay and Wood County Hospital in Bowling Green, and as medical director of Bridge Hospice.

Dr. Roberts observed that in a small town, every conversation includes history or genealogy. He especially enjoyed discussing and recording North Baltimore history, and his interest in the broader field is evident in the William H. Roberts History Collection at the North Baltimore Public Library.

Dr. Roberts married Ruth Jane Biehler in 1943. They had two children, and were married for 39 years until her death in 1983. He married Ingrid Cornelius in 1985 and she died in 2011. Dr. Roberts himself died in 2014, having lived in North Baltimore for 78 of his 93 years.

*Front cover: Emerson Apple and Bill Roberts in "Old 97," their homemade railroad engine. The boys are on South Main Street in front of the Roberts Pharmacy.
Back Cover: Bill Roberts in front of the Roberts Pharmacy.*

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Recollections of a Small Town Doctor

by

William Henry Roberts, M.D.

Edited by

William H. Roberts

Thomas W. Boltz

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“What I Remember”: Recollections of a Small Town Doctor

William Henry Roberts, M.D., was born in North Baltimore, Ohio, in 1920. “Doc” spent nearly eighty of his ninety-three years there, including thirty-seven years of medical practice in which he specialized, he said, in “the skin and its contents.” Doc recorded his memories of Twentieth Century North Baltimore in manuscript and in a series of oral history interviews, and they are the basis of this pamphlet.

North Baltimore Background

The story began with his grandfather, also named William Henry. Grandfather William and his wife Amy moved to Northwest Ohio in November 1859 with their young children, Alonzo and Rosa. In June 1861, they bought 40 acres of land in northwest Allen Township, Hancock County, and William built a cabin on it.¹ The Roberts farm was just south of the Wood County line and west of the Rocky Ford, as shown on an 1863 map of Hancock County (below).



This map, from the Library of Congress, shows Allen Township in 1863. The Roberts farm is just west of the Rocky Ford (here called Portage Creek), at the tip of the arrow.

Three more children followed: daughter Alma in 1861, son Charlie in 1867, and daughter Leni in 1869. Although the farm was only a couple of miles south of Bassett L. Peters’

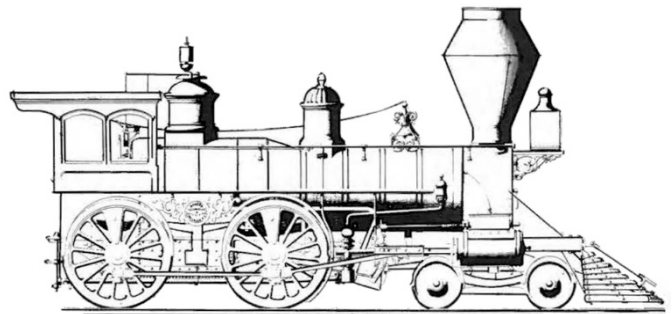
¹ William Henry Roberts, “How They Went to Mill,” Tom Boltz, ed., North Baltimore *Beacon*, July 26, 1901. Edited version by The NBXpress, <http://www.thenbxpress.com/nb-pioneer-days-series-iii-a-first-person-account/>, accessed February 27, 2018. Harrison Downs recalled that in 1860, he and his family “helped W. H. Roberts get out logs for his cabin.” Harrison Downs, “Describing a Pioneer’s Many Adventures,” Tom Boltz, ed., North Baltimore *Beacon*, October 25, 1901. Edited version published by The NBXpress, <https://www.thenbxpress.com/nb-pioneer-days-series-iv-a-first-person-account-2/>, accessed July 23, 2019.

general store at Peters' Crossroads, William later recalled, "In 1861 the country for miles around got mail, did their shopping, and repairing done at Vanburen. This included Henry and Bloom Townships of Wood County, and Cass and Allen, of Hancock. There was a post office near where Cygnet now stands, but the people had to go to Vanburen for milling and trading and largely got their mail there also. In the spring of the year, at times it was impassable and out of the question to get to mill with a wagon."² In 1860, Allen Township's population of 1,009 was more than double that of Henry Township, and in 1870, Allen Township's population was still a third more than Henry Township's.

Van Buren was a center of trade because, until the early 1870s, the Henry Township settlement of Peters' Crossroads (also known as Peters' Corners) consisted only of a few houses and stores, a grist mill, and a factory that made barrel staves.³ It was barely a wide spot in a very poor road. The situation changed dramatically with the arrival of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which in 1873 selected Peters' Crossroads for its local depot. William's son Alonzo (Lon) Roberts reminisced, "We remember the first grade stake of the Railway we discovered on our way to Sunday school and the talk of a town being built, first called Petersburg then New Baltimore and finally changed to North Baltimore."⁴

"Railroad fever" had long been evident, but roads such as the Bellefontaine and Perrysburg and the Dayton & Michigan either were never built, or they bypassed the area.⁵ The B&O was a real railroad, and as William recalled, "The B&O was the leaven that gave a boost to the country, and the young men were not slow to catch on and keep the ball a rolling."⁶

The railroad definitely started small. Franklin Swinehart brought the first train—the locomotive "Thomas Riley" and three cars—



Frank Swinehart described his engine, the Thomas Riley, as a "20 ton engine of the Rogers type." The Riley would have looked like this "American type" 4-4-0, a standard product of the Rogers Locomotive and Machine Company, ca. 1865."

² Roberts, "How They Went to Mill." The town now called Van Buren was at one time Vanburen.

³ Nevin O. Winter, *History of Northwest Ohio (Vol. I)*, A, (Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1917), 640. Thomas W. Boltz, *North Baltimore and Its Neighbors* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 7.

⁴ North Baltimore to simplify mail delivery; there was already a New Baltimore, Ohio, in Stark County. A. J. Roberts, "The Old School House," *North Baltimore Beacon*, August 16, 1901; Tom Boltz, ed., <https://www.thenbexpress.com/nb-pioneer-days-series-iii-a-first-person-account-3/>, accessed 5/29/19. William lived in Hancock County, so he probably did not sign the 1875 petition that resulted in Peters' Crossroads becoming a village.

⁵ Winter, *History of Northwest Ohio (Vol. I)*, 437-38.

⁶ Winter, *History of Northwest Ohio (Vol. I)*, 640. Roberts, "How They Went to Mill."

to North Baltimore on October 7, 1873.⁷ In 1923, Swinehart related his impressions: “North Baltimore was quite a pleasant place those days. I think there were six houses. Maybe one of them was a general store. I remember that when we brought our train to the end of the track, we asked someone where the town was. He pointed to the little group of houses and grinned....The tracks did not run through what is now the central part of North Baltimore, but ended abruptly near what is now the site of Rockwell’s flour mill. The end of the line was blocked by a wooden fence.” The first depot was in Basset Peters’ store and the first platform, built of logs, was on the northwest corner of the intersection of Railroad and Main Streets.⁸

On that same day, the railroad carried its first passengers from North Baltimore, who went to Galatea and back seated on benches placed on a flatcar. William’s son Lon recalled that there was to be a celebration at Peters’ new barn the day the first railroad cars were to reach the town. “They did not quite reach the town that day, having the track laid as far as the creek...” but the celebratory dinner was held anyway. A promised excursion to Fostoria fell through, but the railroad company “allowed us to climb upon a flat car and ride out east to a water tank located somewhere near where Bloomdale is now located. We enjoyed the ride, which to many of us was our first ride on a railroad.”⁹

The way in which the young men “kept the ball a rolling” is evident from the explosive growth that followed the railroad’s arrival, and from the way that places with no railroad connection suffered by comparison. Between 1850 and 1870, Allen Township grew from 743 inhabitants to 969, while Henry Township grew from 454 to 685. The effect of the railroad first appears in the 1880 census, in which Allen had grown by 6 percent (1,025 people) and Henry had grown by 140 percent, to 1,688.

Yet while the railroad provided rapid and cheap transportation over long distances, it did little to facilitate local commerce. That still moved at the speed of horses, which could draw a wagon over country roads at a rate of twelve to fifteen miles a day—less when the roads were muddy or in poor condition, since paved roads were rare.¹⁰ A day trip to town and back was possible within a six to eight mile radius of North Baltimore, and thus the town became the marketplace for farmers within that surrounding area.

⁷ Image from Ralph J. Leo (1975) “An Examination of the Technology that Evolved from the Rogers Locomotive & Machine Company, Paterson, NJ,” *Northeast Historical Archaeology*: Vol. 4: Iss. 1, Article 4. Available at <http://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/neha/vol4/iss1/4>, accessed July 22, 2019.

⁸ H. E. Boltz, “First Train Arrived 80 Years Ago,” *North Baltimore News* Vol. XI, No. 6, October 8, 1953. Swinehart found the town pleasant enough to settle there—he, his wife Jennie, and their son Horas appear in the 1880 census at 118 Railroad Street (now State Street) in North Baltimore.

⁹ A. J. Roberts, “The Old School House.”

¹⁰ Ann Norton Greene, *Horses at Work: Harnessing Power in Industrial America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 45, 79.

As North Baltimore grew, so did its civic infrastructure. The New Baltimore *Enterprise*, established in 1875 as the town's first newspaper, soon failed. The first successful newspaper was the *Beacon*, founded in 1884.¹¹ The *Beacon*, available on microfilm and at the North Baltimore Ohio Area Historical Society (NBOAHS), is a bountiful source for the town's history.

William's wife, Amy, died in 1879, and in 1886 he married Sarah Melissa Trout, who had been a widow since 1875. The images below of William and the farm barn appear to have been taken shortly before his death in 1910. The farm remained in the family until 1937.



These images show William Henry Roberts and the Roberts farm ca. 1910, shortly before William's death. William farmed this ground in Allen Township for fifty years.

This typical 19th Century Ohio farm barn was built with a heavy timber frame and covered with wooden siding—the size of the timbers shows clearly in the top photograph. The first floor contained animal stalls, grain storage bins, and open areas for storing farm equipment and vehicles. The second floor, reached by the ladder at right in the top photo, was a haymow where hay was stored for feeding cattle and horses during the winter. A wood-peg rake, likely home-made, appears over the open door just to the left of the ladder.



The bottom photo shows more of the first floor, built with large doors on each side of the main area for "drive through" access. Three horse-drawn vehicles are evident. William's bucket likely contained animal feed; note the chicken in the left foreground.

¹¹ Winter, *History of Northwest Ohio* (Vol. I), 636.

The Roberts barn was ground level, but some barns were “banked.” A banked barn required more effort to build the foundation and approach ramp, but it saved work later because the barn was accessible on two levels—items such as the hay seen through the open door could be brought into the second floor by wagon and dispensed to the first floor with the help of gravity. This barn was on the Biehler farm on the corner of what is now Interstate 75 and State Route 18. The woman holding the pony is Gertrude Biehler and the child riding is her daughter Rachael; the image is ca. 1915.



The first oil field in Wood County was drilled in North Baltimore in 1886, and the ensuing oil boom widened the gap between southern Wood and northern Hancock County. In 1900 Allen Township’s population was 1,354 while Henry Township boasted 5,461, and North Baltimore’s population was almost ten times that of Van Buren. William’s farm was in the oil field, and in 1889, he signed an oil and gas lease with two North Baltimore men. The lease required them to begin drilling operations within three months or pay a dollar a day rent, and to “fully develop” the field within two years. Several clauses addressed the provision of gas to the farmhouse, starting with the requirement that the drillers pipe fuel gas to the house “within thirty days after gas is found on this lease.” As late as the 1920s, the farmhouse was heated with this natural gas.¹²



This photograph, taken by Charlie Roberts, shows an oil field scene near North Baltimore ca. 1890-1900. The boiler that powered the operation appears at center left, between the two four-wheel carriages. When a well did not produce, a “shooter” would drop a nitroglycerine charge down the well to fracture the rock and release more oil; during that operation, the boiler would be shut down.

¹² William H. Roberts, M.D., [hereafter WHRMD] “What I Remember About the Railroad in North Baltimore and About North Baltimore in General” [“What I Remember”], unpublished manuscript, 2012. Oil and gas lease granted to C. A. Craig and Ross Wetzal by W. H. and Sarah M. Roberts, January 8, 1889. The gas provision is preprinted on the lease form, but a hand-written addition requires the lessors to bury the piping.

William's son Charlie Roberts worked in the oil fields in the late 1880s as a tool dresser—that is, someone who sharpened drill bits. “The power for the wells was a big natural gas engine and on occasion they would cook a chicken on the exhaust manifold and have chicken for lunch.” Steam engines also provided power, with boilers that looked like a locomotive without wheels or cab. Before Main Street was paved, “there were wooden sidewalks on both sides and the street itself was dirt.... When they moved one of the steam boilers down Main Street, they put teams on the ends and pulled it sideways so it didn't bury itself in the mud.”¹³ Charlie was an amateur photographer and, as shown below, he documented the oil fields, including some of the gushers that were then common.



In the early days, tapping the oil fields around North Baltimore often meant a gusher, as with these two wells photographed by Charlie Roberts. Most commonly, a gusher resulted when the driller dropped a nitroglycerin filled cylinder called a "go devil" into the well to fracture the oil bearing rock, allowing the sudden release of natural gas and crude oil that created the gusher. "Shooting" a well was planned in advance, so drillers could be prepared to rapidly cap the well and photographers could be ready for a dramatic picture. If the drill unexpectedly hit a high-pressure pocket of natural gas and crude oil during normal drilling, it could cause an "unscheduled" gusher or a spectacular and sometimes deadly explosion and fire.

¹³ WHRMD, "What I Remember."

Prosperity came with the oil, and by the end of the 1880s North Baltimore boasted houses that were far from the cabin that William had built 30 years before. In 1889, George Franks moved his existing North Main Street house to build a larger one at what is now 328 North Main Street. Franks' new house is shown at right as it looked in the early 1900s, when Dr. George W. Foltz lived there.

Prosperity also brought more people. As one author noted in 1917, "More than half of the oil workers in the Wood County fields came from Pennsylvania."¹⁴ One of them was Thomas Davis York, who had emigrated from England with his parents in 1857. He appears in the 1870 census in Mauch Chunk (now Jim Thorpe), Pennsylvania, as a 22-year-old laborer, and by 1880 his work there was "pumps oil well." His daughters Nellie and Henrietta were born in Pennsylvania in 1881 and 1882. Thomas and his wife Annetta were in Ohio by 1888, when their daughter Myrtie was born in Lima. When Annetta died in 1891, the Yorks were in North Baltimore, where Thomas appeared in the 1900 census as "Supt oil wells" for the Ohio Oil Company. He supervised wells on several properties, including those on William Henry's farm, and made his rounds in a buggy as shown at right.



Some residents took advantage of the prosperity of the 1880s to build homes. This Victorian, at what is now 328 North Main, was built in 1889 by George Franks. The "gingerbread" decoration is typical. Like many Victorian houses, it had a parlor for visitors and a less-formal living room for the family; the parlor is behind the first floor bay window on the left.



Thomas York used this buggy in making his rounds of oil wells for the Ohio Oil Company.

¹⁴ Winter, *History of Northwest Ohio* (Vol. I), 636.

1902	Well No.	May 3	May 10	May 17	May 24	May 31	June 7	June 14	June 21	June 28	July 5
C. L. Goony	1027	200	200	185	200	190	210	205	200	200	190
B. G. Goony	12, 9, 10, 11, 12	60	47 1/2	30	50	60	50	60	60	60	60
B. B. Morris	40, 21, 30, 27	460	360	477 1/2	500	500	500	500	505	505	525
J. B. Trout	104	12 1/2	10	8	10	10	6	12 1/2	12 1/2	12 1/2	12 1/2
H. Madden	105	120	115	85	120	120	87 1/2	120	115	120	120
H. Davis	106	40	35	35	40	40	30	30	30	30	30
W. H. Hough	107	90	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	75
Bawmley & Son	108, 109, 20	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	80	80
W. H. Hough	4, 12, 13, 15, 16	10	5	8	5	3	5	5	2	4	10
W. H. Hough	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	25	15	15
W. H. Hough	1	3	2	3	3	2	1	2	1	2	2
W. H. Hough	1, 2, 4	25	23	25	25	30	25	30	25	11	0
J. B. Trout	7, 8, 9, 10, 11	7 1/2	67	50	33 1/2	30	17 1/2	35	23	12 1/2	12 1/2
W. H. Hough	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
W. H. Hough	7	53	56	55	54	50	45	40	35	30	30
W. H. Hough	5, 6, 7	5	0	2 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2	2 1/2	10	4
W. H. Hough	1, 2, 3	12	20	10	17	16	25	21	5	25	25
W. H. Hough	3, 4	0	0	1 1/4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Thomas York supervised oil wells for the Ohio Oil Company and this record, for part of the year 1902, shows how many 42-gallon barrels each well or group of wells produced. Clearly some wells were more productive than others—the bottom two lines show that William Henry Roberts's wells 1, 2 and 5 averaged 18.7 barrels per week, while wells 3 and 4 produced almost nothing. William's share was 1/6, or about 3 barrels per week. The average price of crude oil during the period from 1900 to 1910 was 80 cents per barrel retail so William made, at most, \$2.40 per week. He also received \$300 per year for each producing gas well.¹⁵

Although the oil boom was long gone by the 1910s, some "stripper" wells produced for decades after that. Since the wells didn't produce very much oil, it was stored in tanks at the well and hauled away when the tank was full. "Guys who pumped wells had barkers on their engines. If they were pumping at night, you could hear the barkers going, and if the barkers weren't going, the guy knew there was something wrong. So he had to go and find out what happened." A "barker" was a device to make the engine exhaust sound louder, and just as different railroad engineers had different-sounding train whistles, different pumpers had different barker tones, so that a person could identify his own wells.¹⁶

¹⁵ In 2019 dollars, \$300 equates to roughly \$7,800. <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/>, accessed October 18, 2019.

¹⁶ WHRMD "What I Remember"; Edward York Roberts (EYR) and WHRMD, in "North Baltimore: A Windshield Tour." Unpublished transcription ca. 1997. One type of barker used a piece of pipe set at an angle to the end of the exhaust. It made a sound like blowing over the opening of a pop bottle, only much louder.

Charlie Roberts' work in the oil fields was interrupted (or, more likely, ended) by his decision to pursue higher education. As a 21-year-old, he entered the School of Pharmacy at Purdue University as a junior in 1888, just four years after the school's founding.¹⁷ In the group photo below left, Charlie is third from right in the back row. His classmate George W. Lacey, second from right in the front row, appears to have been Purdue's first African-American graduate.¹⁸

P. R.—The Rules of the University require all Fees and Charges to be paid IN ADVANCE

Purdue University, Ind. *Sept 19. 1888*
Char. L. Roberts Pharm. —
 To Purdue University, Dr.

To entrance fee for <i>Course ending Nov. 19. 1887</i>	\$ 5.00
" Incidental fee for Term ending " " "	6.00
" Laboratory fee " " " <i>Dec 19. 1888</i>	12.00
" Room-rent, heat and light for weeks	
" <i>Deposit in Chem. Lab'y</i>	10.00
"	\$ 33.00

Received Payment,
H. W. Swan
 Assistant Treasurer

This photograph shows Charlie's class of pharmacists in 1889. Nellie's later annotation is a year or two off, and Purdue counts Charlie as a graduate of the class of 1890.

Tuition at Purdue University's School of Pharmacy was free, but Charlie's fees amounted to \$33 per term. Formal training in pharmacy, instead of learning through apprenticeship, was a sign of the growing professionalism of American medicine in the late 1800s.

¹⁷ <http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/psd/id/1707/rec/2> accessed December 8, 2018

¹⁸ <http://blogs.lib.purdue.edu/asc/2018/02/01/celebrating-black-history-month-firsts-by-purdue-african-american-students-alumni/> accessed May 4, 2019.

Returning to Allen Township, Charlie married Emma Idelle Kuhlman in 1891. He and his brother-in-law, Ed Kuhlman, kept a general store in Van Buren, Ohio, from about 1890 to about 1900.¹⁹ Charlie was appointed Postmaster at the same time as the name of the Van Buren Post Office was changed to "Vanburen" in February 1895. Ed Kuhlman and Charlie appear at right with Charlie's prized bird dog, Queenie.²⁰ The image below it, taken in the late 1890s, shows Queenie with Charlie's children H. Clark and Rose.



Charlie was very proud of Queenie, and she appears in many photos. Quail were often hunted from horseback, so to be "quail trained," Queenie had to learn where to be in relation to the horse and rider; to "point" the bird; and to retrieve the delicate bird with a very soft mouth. Horse, dog, and hunter had to be a well-coordinated team.²¹



¹⁹ Like many merchants, Roberts & Kuhlman used a code to record the wholesale cost of each item on its price tag. The code let the merchant know the price for which he purchased the goods, enabling him to bargain with the customer without losing money. A price code word had ten non-repeated letters that equated to the numerals 1 through 0, and Roberts & Kuhlman used "CEDKUHLMAN." Many drugstores used "PHARMOCIST." With bargaining now rare in retail stores, the use of price codes has largely died out.

²⁰ Charlie served as postmaster from 1895 to 1899. Richard E. Hronek, *Van Buren Ohio 1833-1983* (Van Buren, Ohio: Van Buren Sesquicentennial Committee, 1983), 59. Nellie recalled that the first thing she remembered as a new bride was cooking mush for Queenie and her pups. WHRMD, "Windshield Tour."

²¹ I am indebted to Ms. Peg Phillips, CVT, for insights into the level of skill required.



The two top images appear to have been taken at roughly the same time, with the left one looking at the back of the store and the right one looking toward the front, as indicated by the windows. In the left photo, most of the wall is stocked with dry goods. The roughly dressed men at right are likely hunters since the man second from right is carrying a double-barreled shotgun. "North Baltimore & Findlay Roberts & Kuhlman's Store" can be made out on the sign hanging from the ceiling, so the unreadable top line is likely "Halfway between." The right photo shows local hangers-on and local merchandise—the stack of bagged flour at the right rear is "Pansy" brand, made by the Toledo Grain & Milling Company, and the barrel in rear center is Lion coffee, roasted in Toledo by the Woolson Spice Company.

The lower left image appears to have been taken at a different time but also faces the rear of the store. The door at right appears to lead into a storeroom. The large bins in the left foreground contain another Toledo product: J. M. Bour's "Celebrated Blended Coffees."

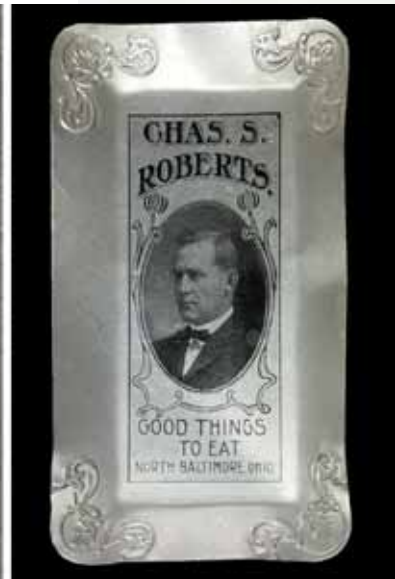


Charlie and Emma's first child, Henry Clark (at left with his father, on a surprisingly modern-looking bicycle), was born in 1892, followed by Rose in 1894. Emma died in February 1897, a week after the birth of their son Ralph.

An announcement of new wallpaper designs for 1898 shows that Charlie, now a widower, was still in business with Ed Kuhlman. He was boarding in Van Buren at the time of the 1900 census. Since Charlie could not care for three small children while working, seven-year-old Clark, three-year-old Ralph, and five-year-old Rose (at right), were being raised by their aunts and uncles.



Early in the 20th Century, Charlie moved to North Baltimore, where he operated the South Side Grocery.



The South Side Grocery's well-turned-out delivery wagon includes a hood to keep the rain off the driver. The image is taken looking west across South Main Street, with the interurban tracks in the foreground. A sign for Al Smith Shoes & Wallpaper and a window sign for "C. Knoke" appear in the background. The second floor bay window marks what was later Steiff's building. At right is a promotional ashtray advertising, "Good Things to Eat." (Ashtray courtesy of Sam Bretz)



In North Baltimore, Charlie met Nellie York, Thomas York's eldest daughter. Nellie taught elementary school and Presbyterian Sunday school, so they may have met at church—Charlie transferred his membership to North Baltimore on April 26, 1903.²² The image at left shows Nellie and the other North Baltimore schoolteachers in 1904. Alternatively, they may have met through their fathers, since, as we have seen, Nellie's father Thomas managed the oil wells on Charlie's father's farm, and Thomas and Charlie clearly shared an interest in photography.

Nellie, born in 1881, was the eldest of three sisters. Henrietta (Etta) was the middle sister, born in 1882, and the youngest was Florence Myrtie (Myrtie), born in 1888. Their mother Annetta died in 1891, making Nellie the lady of the house at age 10. At this remove, it is difficult to discern how much Nellie's decisions to stay in North Baltimore and to marry were influenced by a perceived responsibility for her father, but her sisters sought careers in the wider world. Myrtie earned a master's degree and eventually became a high school principal in Toledo. When Etta graduated from high school in 1900, "Father York" would not let her go to nursing school because he didn't think nursing was respectable. Etta's solution was what a later generation called "gentle steady pressure"—she stayed home. Her father soon gave in, and she earned an R.N. from the Park Avenue Hospital in Chicago in 1903. She went the farthest afield of the three sisters, serving as a Presbyterian medical missionary in Guatemala from 1913 to 1918.

Charlie would have courted Nellie at the York residence, shown in a 1904 photo taken by Thomas York. The house, on the northeast corner of West Broadway and Central Avenue, is still occupied.²³



²² Presbyterian Historical Society; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Accession Number: 01 0515 59J 2 Box 1, through Ancestry.com. U.S., Presbyterian Church Records, 1701-1970 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016 (accessed February 20, 2019).

²³ Right-hand photo, taken in November 2018, courtesy of Margaret Bobb.

Charlie and Nellie and several friends appear at right in the waiting room of the railroad station at Galatea in 1904. Charlie is at right in the front row and Nellie at right in the second row. Their friends are Laura Burrell, Leona Walters, May Smith, Bench Wilson, Wilbur Nigh, and “Mr. Cragg.”



The railroad station at Galatea served the Ohio Central Lines, advertised by the poster at right. The large poster advertises the Pennsylvania Vandalia Short Lines serving the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.

In 1905, Charlie and Nellie were married—Charlie, a thirty-eight-year-old widower, and Nellie, then 24 years old. After a wedding trip to St. Ignace, Michigan, on a Great Lakes steamer, they returned to North Baltimore to set up housekeeping.²⁴

This group of friends may have been going to Toledo on the Toledo and Ohio Central for a day's outing at Walbridge Park or the zoo, or perhaps they were seeing a friend off on a trip—the T&OC connected to the Pennsylvania Railroad in Toledo. The facial expressions make a story in themselves—Nellie's look may reflect fondness for Charlie, or perhaps Wilbur Nigh had just said something amusing.

Charlie and Nellie took a honeymoon voyage to St. Ignace, Michigan, aboard the sidewheeler City of Mackinac. The ship and her twin, the City of Alpena, were operated between Toledo and St. Ignace by the Detroit & Cleveland Navigation Company. An 1894 timetable indicates that the trip took just under two days each way, with stops at several ports on Lake Huron.



²⁴ In 1905, *City of Mackinac* and her sister *City of Detroit* were sixteen years old. *City of Mackinac* was still in service, as a mooring platform, in 1969. Richard J. Wright, *Freshwater Whales: A History of the American Ship Building Company and its Predecessors* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1969), 106, 111

Charlie maintained a friendly relationship with Ed Kuhlman and his wife Emma, and the two couples socialized—the image at right was taken on a drive in the North Baltimore area, likely around 1905.²⁵



We may suppose that Charlie normally did the driving, since Nellie noted years later that she “was not a good driver.” Charlie’s shadow appears at the bottom of the photograph.

A letter of August 31, 1905, sent to Charlie on his honeymoon by his grocery store clerks, shows that he was still in the grocery business at that time. He had likely left it by 1906, though, since in that year, Nellie used his grocery letterhead paper to draft an address to the Literary and Lyric Circle. Although an image of similar date (right) focuses on Charlie, his dog Queenie, and Queenie’s pups, the Southside Grocery wagon in the background appears decidedly unkempt.



²⁵ Ed Kuhlman married Emma P. Yohe in 1903. By 1910, they were living in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

A photo of South Main Street ca. 1910 (courtesy NBOAHS) shows part of a sign advertising the South Side Grocery, with M. T. Heminger listed as the proprietor.



Through the end of the decade, Charlie worked as a druggist at Frank P. Clark's drug and furniture store in North Baltimore. The photo below shows him (center, no hat) in front of Clark's store, and the date on a family copy of "Ransom's Family Receipt Book" (below) helps to confirm that he was there in 1908. In the 1910 census, Charlie gave his occupation as "drug clerk" and stated that he was a wage earner.





Clark's North Main Street store was near the scene of the 1906 fire pictured at left, and family tradition holds that Frank Clark gave Charlie a dresser and platform rocker that Charlie had rescued from the store. The items, still in use in 2019, may have been listed as "lost in the fire" when it came time for the insurance settlement.

The "Receipt Book" that Clark offered was one of many such advertising giveaways, printed in bulk and distributed widely to local businesses. This pamphlet promoted Ransom's Remedies, including King of the Blood Tonic for "impurity of blood"; Trask's Ointment ("Its Distinctive Ingredient: Tobacco") for a myriad of diseases; Miller's Universal Balm for pain; and Ransom's Hive Syrup for croup and cough.²⁶

Patent medicine companies and others printed stock pamphlets, containing their own advertising with a leavening of other content. Each local store added its own imprint to the stock pamphlet, avoiding the expense of making up a custom booklet. Scattered among the patent medicine testimonials in this example are recipes for dishes ranging from baked bananas and chicken chowder to "corn oysters."

²⁶ A. Emil Hiss, *Thesaurus of Proprietary Preparations and Pharmaceutical Specialties* (Chicago: G. P. Engelhard, 1898), 228, 262. Hive Syrup contained squill (from a kind of lily), senega (snakeroot), and tolu (a kind of balsam), while Magnetic Ointment was reported to be "fine-cut tobacco, raisins, lard, equal parts of each. Simmer together and strain."

Charlie and Nellie's first child, Edward, was born in 1907, in a house they owned at 113 S. Tarr Street.²⁷ Charlie likely stabled his horse there, instead of boarding, since the background of this image of Charlie and Ed appears to be a stable attached to the rear of a house. The horse may be "Fraudulent Maude," who made a great show of infirmity whenever they started out for a drive. Once they turned for home, she was suddenly cured of all ailments.



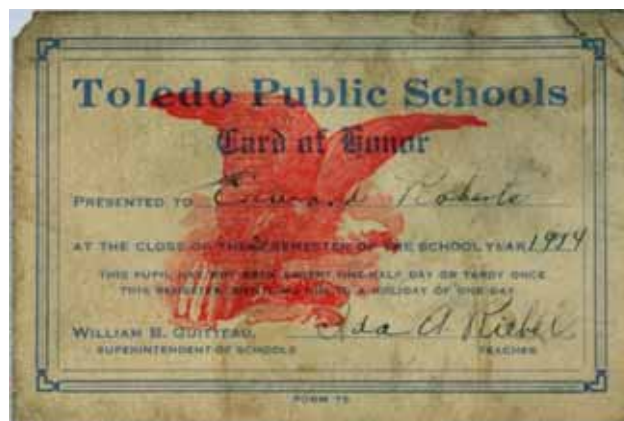
Horse trading was part of the culture at the time, and knowing good horseflesh was a point of pride. Charlie told about swapping horses with Sam Feese, to whom he traded a "windsucker"—that is, a horse with asthma. "They traded at night and [Charlie] said the horse tripped a couple of times on the way home, but he didn't think much about it until the next morning, when he found that the horse he got was blind. He and Sam kidded each other about that for years. I guess in horse trading, a deal was a deal."²⁸

The oil boom had stumbled in the mid-1890s, but in late 1895 the fields were discovered to be more extensive than originally thought, and a renewed boom was the result. By 1910, though, the oil boom in North Baltimore was clearly over, in part due to poor conservation practices such as flaring off natural gas. Directly, oil companies had contributed to the economy by buying, operating, repairing and transporting machinery to drill for and pump oil, as well as buying land and minerals leases. Indirectly, the wages they paid their workers had helped to support local businesses—storekeepers, liverymen, saloonkeepers, bankers, grocers, lawyers, clergymen, doctors—and cheap energy from their products had encouraged the establishment of industries such as brick making, tile making, and bottle and glass making. As oil and gas production slumped, those industries moved away, and many oil workers departed for new fields farther West. From 2,857 in 1890, the town's population peaked at 3,561 in 1900, dropping to 2,503 in 1910. In the first decade of the century, a sense of decline must have been evident, and that may have been a factor in Nellie and Charlie's decision to leave North Baltimore.

²⁷ EYR, "Windshield Tour."

²⁸ WHRMD, "What I Remember." Sam Feese, who owned a saloon before Prohibition, started a beer distributorship after Prohibition ended.

Their second child, daughter Henrietta, was born in 1910. In the autumn of that year, Charlie moved to Toledo to work, and in December the family followed. Charlie worked as a pharmacist for the Cooley Drug Company, which operated several drugstores in Toledo.²⁹ In 1913, the family lived at 1076 Fernwood Ave, which was within two miles of several Cooley stores. While in Toledo, son Ed completed a semester of school with perfect attendance, earning a “Card of Honor” (right) and a day off.



By the middle of the decade, it was becoming evident that the agricultural economy of the North Baltimore area, overshadowed during the boom, had not disappeared. Served by the main line of the Baltimore and Ohio; a B&O spur (previously the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton [CH&D]); and the Toledo and Ohio Central (T&OC) railroads; and the Toledo, Bowling Green and Southern (TBG&S) interurban line, the town was well-placed to be a hub of commerce. That likely influenced Nellie and Charlie when, in 1915, they decided to return to North Baltimore.

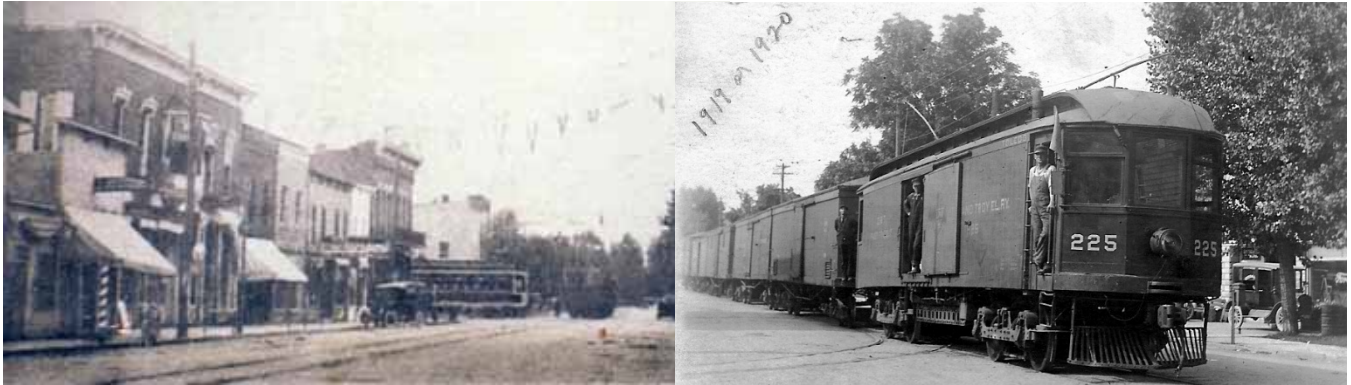
December 9, 1915, was a busy day for the Roberts family. On that day, Charlie purchased “fixtures and stock of drugs and sundries” from Cora B. Jones of Rudolph for \$800 (equivalent to \$20,300 in 2019), and Charlie and Nellie bought the south half of the Sloan Block, a building at what is now 111 South Main Street, from Duncan and Lucy Sloan for \$2,250 (\$57,150 in 2019 dollars).³⁰ The purchases came together at the end of that month, when the ground floor of the building became the Roberts Pharmacy and the second floor became the family home. The family’s household goods from Toledo and the drugstore furnishings from Rudolph both arrived on the TBG&S, which ran down Main Street in front of their new home.

Ed later noted, “When we moved into the drugstore building upstairs it took them a long time to get it ready because it didn’t have any water or sewer or electricity. We lived there several years with just gas. [Then] we changed over; took the gas lights out and put electricity

²⁹ R. L. Polk & Co. *Polk’s Toledo City Directory for the Year Commencing July 1913* (Toledo, Ohio: The Toledo Directory Co., 1913), p. 1311. Nellie’s notes date the period: “We lived in Toledo from Dec-31-1910 to December-31-1915.” Contract between Cora M. [sic] Jones and Chas. S. Roberts, December 1, 1915.

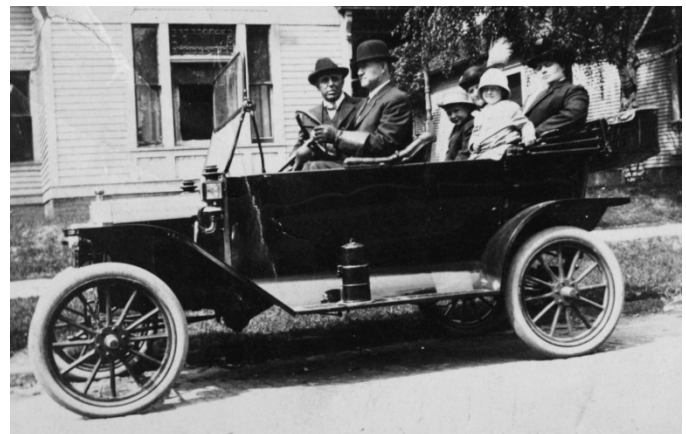
³⁰ Inflation calculation from <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/>, accessed October 5, 2019. Mrs. Jones may have decided to sell after a robbery, which was reported in the *N.A.R.D. [National Association of Retail Druggists] Notes*, Vol. XXI, No. 8 (November 25, 1915), p. 387: “The drug store of Mrs. Cora Jones, at Rudolph, was entered by thieves, who ransacked the place, but left without securing anything. The post-office safe was unlocked, but no valuables were in it.”

in.”³¹ North Baltimore had had electricity since Dr. A. G. Henry built the first generating plant in 1891, but electric service was still relatively rare. “When your Granddad [Charlie] Roberts was in the restaurant and the lights went out, he told the guys there was a bubble in the electric wire. They believed him because he’d moved down from Toledo where they had that stuff.”³²



The Toledo, Bowling Green and Southern Traction Company, which ran from Toledo to Findlay, reached North Baltimore in 1902. The line ran north and south along Main Street before turning east at Water Street. The image at left above shows an interurban car ca. 1910 near the interurban station, on the east side of Main just south of the first alley south of State (then Railroad) Street. The car has backed onto a spur to unload; the spot is now (2019) Kelley’s car lot. At right is a TBG&S freight like that in which the Robertses moved. (Courtesy NBOAHS)

In the 1910s, automobiles became more common, and by the middle of the decade, Thomas York had adopted one to replace his buggy. At right, he is shown ca. 1916 on a drive with his second wife Lydia (whom he married in 1906), Charlie, and grandchildren Ed and Henrietta.



Horses continued to play an important role, though, and Father York kept at least one horse-drawn vehicle, as is evident from the post-tornado image below. Until the roads caught up to the exploding number of motor vehicles, rail would still be the primary means of long-distance travel, local travel would still be limited, and small towns would remain as the primary centers of commerce for their local areas.³³

³¹ EYR, “Windshield Tour.”

³² WHRMD, “Windshield Tour.”

³³ In 1900, 8,000 motor vehicles were registered in the United States. In 1920, there were 9.2 million cars and trucks, and in 1930 there were 26.7 million. Roads did not grow in proportion—there were 387,000 miles of

A tornado hit North Baltimore in April 1919, damaging buildings on West Broadway and North Main. At right, Thomas York inspects his Model T Ford in the ruins of his barn. The wheels of a horse-drawn wagon are visible in the wreckage behind the three people



The first farm tractor with a gasoline engine was built in 1903, but it took some time before tractors had evolved sufficiently to replace horses. The images above, from the late 1910s, show working horses on the Elva Glick farm. At right, Henrietta drives a pony carriage past an automobile, probably at the Roberts farm in Allen Township.



hard-surfaced roads in the US in 1921, but only 694,000 miles in 1930. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1960), 462, 458.



Charlie's son Ralph appears in Army uniform in 1918. The "Smokey Bear" service hat and canvas leggings were issued to troops stationed in the US. The raw wood building and elevated wooden walkway behind him testify to the improvised nature of the American war effort.

The United States entered World War I in 1917, and local citizens supported the war effort. Military service directly but lightly touched the Roberts family—although Charlie was too old to serve and Ed was too young, Charlie's twenty-one-year-old son Ralph was drafted in September 1918.³⁴ He spent three months training at Camp Sherman in Chillicothe, Ohio. After the Armistice, he was honorably discharged in December 1918.

By the time of the Armistice Day parade in November 1918, the Spanish Flu epidemic had reached North Baltimore. Between October and December, hundreds of residents fell ill and twelve died.

Only one of the town's six doctors was available—two were in the military, two were flu victims themselves, and one had broken his jaw when the

crank on his automobile kicked back. As one of the town's pharmacists, Charlie was likely very busy during the epidemic.³⁵



This image shows Charlie as a marshal of the town's Armistice Day parade. The camera was looking northeast across North Main Street from the southwest corner of Main and Broadway.

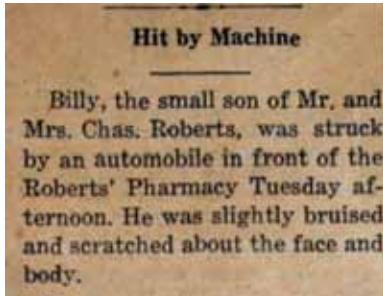
In 1920, Charlie and Nellie welcomed their third child, a son named William Henry in honor of his late grandfather. "Bill" later became "Doc," and much of the material in this pamphlet comes from his reminiscences and from oral history interviews conducted by Tom Boltz for the NBOAHS.

³⁴ Ralph and a number of other draftees left for Camp Sherman on September 6, 1918. "Names of Selects who Leave Sept 6," *Findlay Morning Republican and Courier*, August 30, 1918.

³⁵ Margaret Bobb, <https://www.thenbexpress.com/the-1918-spanish-influenza-strikes-north-baltimore/> accessed 7/19/19.

North Baltimore Childhood

As Bill later recalled, living in an apartment meant that he grew up “on the street... my playground was the street and the railroad.”³⁶ The clipping below shows one of the learning experiences that came with that playground!



Children generally made their own fun. One game was "can out," also known as “kick the can.”

You had a condensed milk can, and you'd set that out in the middle of this yard, and then somebody got to kick the can. The guy who was 'it' had to go get the can and bring it back and put it there. Meanwhile, everybody would hide. He would try to find them and get back [to the center] without somebody [going to] kick the can again, and [if someone did], everybody could go hide again. That could go on for hours and hours.

Sometimes you'd just go on home and leave the rest of the guys playing. My [time to be] home was when the lights in my dad's drugstore went out. He'd turn the lights out at nine o'clock. I knew he was going up the front steps, so I went up the back steps to beat him home.

There was an unloading platform at the railroad station that had a ramp down. It was on the south side where that siding is now. We'd slide down that [in the wintertime]. Of course, in the summertime, everybody went to the Wixom. They had an old building out there, I think it had been the ice house, and you could go in there and change into your bathing suit. If you lucked out as you were walking along the road, somebody would pick you up. That was the big entertainment in the summertime, a real mob scene. They swam on the south end, and there was a diving board right off the bank, the high one. Most of us never got guts enough to go off that one, but there was one a little lower down. The old guy that used to be the crossing watchman, Chip Ramsey, would dive off

³⁶ William H. Roberts, M.D., Oral History Interview with Thomas W. Boltz ("WHRMD Interview"), August 25, 2009.



An example of “making your own fun” was the railroad engine that Bill and his friends built. “Number 97’s” barrel body was supported on baby carriage or bicycle wheels and augmented with paint can cylinders and smokestack. The front of the cab roof was from a packing crate addressed to “C S Roberts, No Baltimore.” At left, Bill and Emerson Apple are headed south at full steam in front of the Roberts Pharmacy. In the right-hand image, Bill’s friends (from left) are Em Apple, Bob Boney, Mel Neilson, and Harland Garno.

high diving board and swim all the way out to the raft under water. You’d swear he was never going to come up. He always did.

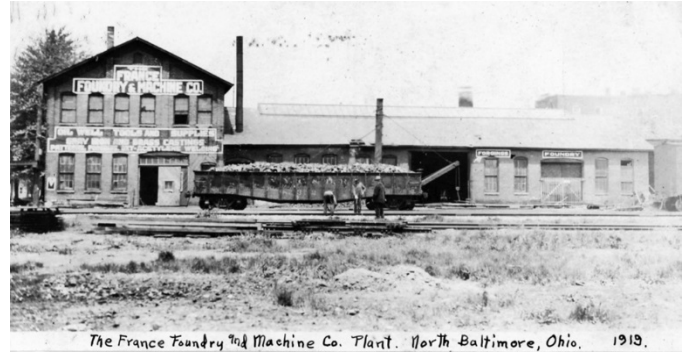
“When we were kids we went all over town, visiting the cigar factory and the *Beacon* [newspaper] and so on.” The typesetter at the *Beacon* would make Linotype slugs with a kid’s name on it, and the cigar factory’s rolling machines, which worked on the same principle as a cigarette roller, had cloth drapes as wide as the length of a cigar. Bill recalled, “Some of the men who didn’t want people to know they used chewing tobacco would chew on a cigar to cover the Mail Pouch.”³⁷

The local machine shops were also fascinating places to visit.

Since NB was in the oil field, there were a number of machine shops and machinists. One was the Hardy Machine Co (the Hardy Bank ‘Hardy’) on the east side of North Second Street at the railroad. We used to go and stand in the doorways to watch the machines work. It was all run by line shafts overhead and I remember a huge turret lathe in the northeast corner. They did repairs on all sorts of things. In later years, after the France Co. took it over, they did all the repairs and parts for all of France’s operations—NB, Bascom, Whitehouse, and someplace in Indiana.

³⁷ WHRMD Interviews September 8, 2009; August 25, 2009. WHRMD, “What I Remember.” Charlie chewed Happy Jim scrap. “One time I gave him a dozen packages and he said, ‘Oh, I’ll never live to finish all that.’ He finished those packages and many more besides.”

You didn't go in, but you could stand there in the door watching. They all had black shirts and black pants on, probably to keep the dirt from showing.³⁸



Bill Exline's dad, Adam, ran a similar but smaller operation on East Walnut Street. After the oil field business died out, Bill and his dad would fix anything, clocks included. It was 50 cents for most things, but if he had to start the natural gas engine, the fee went up to 75 cents. Later, Morris Brown bought the operation and used it for machinery repairs for his shop. Bill Exline's tools were marked X— [Ex-line].³⁹



Machine shops used a steam or natural gas engine to turn an overhead shaft, and individual tools were driven by belts from the line shaft. In this image of the Exline shop ca. 1915, the drive belt for the lathe at left runs up to the line shaft pulleys at upper center. (Courtesy NBOAHS)

The broom maker's shop was another popular place for watching. Cleo Lewis, who was blind, lived on South Tarr Street and made brooms in a building at the back of his property, across the alley from Roberts Pharmacy. "They were good brooms. We used to stop in and see him and watch him make brooms. Of course, he loved to talk." Lewis labeled his product "Blind Boy's Best Brooms."⁴⁰

The center of town was also the center of town life—in addition to being a center of commerce, Main Street was also a social center.

People came to town on Wednesday and Saturday night. Some of the farmers would bring the car in early to get a good parking place and then go home.... I don't know whether they had two cars or [had] somebody else bring them back up, but they always wanted to be in a good spot to visit.... There were mobs of people walking the sidewalk

³⁸ WHRMD Interview August 25, 2009. In the 1960s, that machine shop held the same fascination, with the same "watching from the door" by a younger generation.

³⁹ WHRMD, "What I Remember."

⁴⁰ WHRMD, "What I Remember"; WHRMD Interviews October 20 and 21, 2009. Cleo Lewis died in 1935.

from one end of town to the other.... The people from out in the country came to town. Of course, the people who lived in town probably went up town to be there. The stores were open on Wednesday nights.⁴¹

There were two town water pumps on Main Street, one in front of the old city hall and the other on the east side of South Main in front of where the bowling alley is now.

Both pumps had a communal tin cup hanging on a wire hook on the pump. There was never a second thought about drinking from them. Viruses? Bacterial illnesses? No one will ever know, but I would guess the death rate stayed about the same for all those years. One factor may have been isolation. People stayed in town and a trip to Findlay or BG [Bowling Green] was an adventure, so there obviously were fewer 'imported' germs. The water wasn't sulfur ('egg water' was the term) but very tasty. I don't know who provided the tin cups, but they only cost a dime apiece.⁴²

I used to come home for lunch, but once in a while, I would get a quarter for lunch at Jakie Smith's restaurant, which was located where the bowling alley is. Pork sandwiches were five cents, a bowl of soup was five cents, and a butterscotch sundae was ten cents. No sales tax, either.⁴³

"Characters" were part of life in a small town, as were nicknames that stuck.

During the Depression before World War II, there were guys who spent the whole day around the railroad. There was a barrier on both sides of Main Street to



One of the town pumps, on the east side of South Main Street, appears just over the hood of the roadster above. The lower image shows Jake Smith's restaurant, next to the South Side Tailor Shop, with the pump just to the south of the restaurant. A communal tin cup hung from a wire hook on each pump, and no-one thought twice about using it.



⁴¹ WHRMD Interview September 8, 2009. When Bill entered medical practice in 1953, he opened his office on Wednesday nights. His evening and Saturday office hours enabled people to visit the doctor without taking time off work.

⁴² WHRMD, "What I Remember." "It was a big night ... or a big time when you got to go to Findlay, to the movie theater or go to Toledo or something like that." WHRMD Interview September 8, 2009.

⁴³ WHRMD, "What I Remember."

prevent driving along the north side of the railroad, and the guys would sit on the barrier. In the late afternoon, the guys would watch for ladies walking on the west side of Main Street where the sun would shine through their dresses. There were no pants suits then. I never knew the real names of some of them. 'Bump-on-a-pickle' was one guy. Obie, Irvie, and 'Johnny Anyhow' were some of the others.

Archie J. Martin was another local character, whose standing offer was to eat the glass if you bought him a beer.

[People would bet Archie] that he couldn't turn a back flip on the sidewalk and he'd throw himself up in the air and land on the back of his head and it would've killed a normal person. And he'd just get up and beat his chest and say, 'I'm Archie J. Martin the iron man!' and do it again.⁴⁴

During Prohibition, there were a number of bootleggers. One of them [known to the boys as 'Dagger Dan'] lived across the alley from the back of Dad's drugstore. He would put a pint of whiskey in Dad's trash barrel, and then the buyer would come along the alley and take the bottle out of the trash. Sometimes we would intercept the bottle and take it in to Dad, and he would make a face and pour it down the drain with some remark like, 'Pah. Colored with caramel.' Now, I know, he would [have liked to] have taken a slug before dumping it. We then would sell the bottle back to the bootlegger for two cents. With a lot of penny candy around, this was worth the effort. A four ounce Baby Ruth was a nickel and a good sized Tootsie Roll was one cent.

There weren't many alcoholics:

This was during Prohibition and the bootlegger took cash only. Nobody had the cash.⁴⁵



During the Depression, idlers used the railroad tie barrier on the left side of this image as a gathering place. The man at right is the railroad crossing guard. When alerted of approaching trains by a signal device, he would take station with his sign to prevent people from crossing the tracks. (Courtesy NBOAHS)



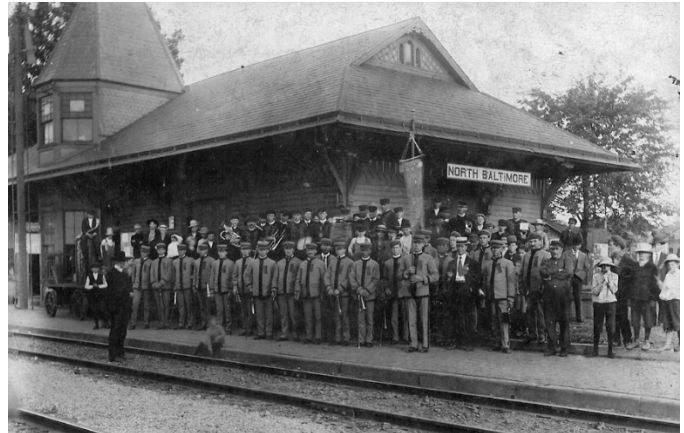
The photo above, of the east side of Main Street just south of State, is annotated, "This is where they tore Peanut [Archer]'s and Dagger Dan's down." Marion "Peanut" Archer, a World War I veteran, ran a barbershop for many years, and "Dagger Dan" was what the boys called the local bootlegger.

⁴⁴ WHRMD Interview September 8, 2009.

⁴⁵ WHRMD, "What I Remember."

Collective Amusement

In the twenties and thirties, entertainment was generally home-made and collective. A favorite evening activity during the summer was the band concert. “There was always a town band.” (The image at right, courtesy NBOAHS, shows the “NB Volunteer Fire Dept. and Citizens Band” at the railroad depot ca. 1900.)



Charlie Roberts said that when he and Nellie were married in 1905, his band buddies ‘belled’ them (shivaree) through town playing ‘Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight.’⁴⁶ The American Legion had a drum and bugle corps (a ‘headache band’ to the more sophisticated) and later another town band was formed.

The folding bandstand, made from an old truck chassis, was always set up on Main Street. For some time, the director was Hod Smith, who had played in the Hagenback & Wallace Circus Band and was “one hell of a cornet player” as well as being a master machinist. “He would direct with his right hand and play cornet with his left, switching to whatever part needed help or was missing.” As with all community efforts there was occasional friction. “Every time the band broke up, a different guy claimed the drum. Nobody would admit having it, but it showed up later.”⁴⁷

Over the decades, North Baltimore raised a good crop of talent for the band. George Smith (Hod’s father) made violins and repaired musical instruments. Garth “Dick” Staver played clarinet and his brother Toppy played cornet. Joe Busch played a baritone of the old helical kind with the bell over the shoulder, Charlie Roberts played tuba, and Butch Biehler played alto horn. Ober McKenna was a trombone player; Hector Boney played cornet; Marion “Peanut” Archer was the drum section; and Donn Foltz



The town band marches in a parade. From the spectators’ attire, it is likely in the nineteen teens. (Photo courtesy NBOAHS)

⁴⁶ Shivaree: a noisy mock serenade performed by a group of people to celebrate a marriage.

⁴⁷ WHRMD Interview September 8, 2009; WHRMD, “What I Remember.”

played alto saxophone, which he called his “snore bugle.” Bill, Reed Teatsorth, and Galen Brown played cornet trios.

Since parades were good fun and inexpensive, they were not uncommon. The image at right shows a “Remember the Maine!” float built for the 1931 parade honoring the reunion of the Second Ohio Volunteer Infantry, a National Guard unit activated for the Spanish American War. Other images of the float and a description of the reunion appear in Margaret Bobb’s *The Saga of North Baltimore’s Company K*.⁴⁸ The image below, taken very early in the 20th Century, shows a parade passing the town’s Central Park, between the B&O railroad and Railroad (now State) Street.



This image looks southwest over the railroad from the east side of North Main Street. The pool room in the left foreground was probably named “The Office” for the same reason that bars in college towns are named “The Library,” and the Midway Restaurant appears in an 1898 North Baltimore directory. The heavy chimney in the right background served the original electric generating plant built by Dr. A. G. Henry.

The biggest festival was the Golden Anniversary celebration in October 1923, fifty years after the first B&O train arrived. It began Tuesday, October 9, “Pioneer and Farm Day,” with concerts, a parade, and speeches by early settlers. Wednesday was “Baltimore & Ohio Day,” featuring speeches by railroaders, more concerts, and contests—the women’s nail driving contest offered a \$3.00 prize, while the winner of the men’s pie eating contest got \$2.00. Thursday was “Mardi Gras,” with races for boys, girls, mules, and men “200 pounds or

over”; a tug-of-war between township teams; and another parade, with prizes. Other prizes were offered for county-fair-style exhibits, in more than 200 categories ranging from the best quart of Japanese buckwheat to the best embroidered fudge apron.

⁴⁸ Margaret E. Bobb, *The Saga of North Baltimore’s Company K* ([North Baltimore, OH]: North Baltimore, Ohio, Area Historical Society, n.d.), 25-26.



North Baltimore's Golden Anniversary celebration took place in October 1923, fifty years after the first B&O train arrived. For the celebration, the B&O Railroad provided a replica of an early engine and cars (top left). The engine, labeled as the "Atlantic," is now (2019) displayed at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore, MD. (According to the Museum, the engine was actually the "Andrew Jackson," built in 1836 and altered to resemble the original "Atlantic" of 1832 for an exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893.)



The cars in the image at left are on the siding between Main and Second Streets. As the sign below the coach states, the car was originally built in England for use in Nova Scotia. Purchased by the B&O in 1883, it is now (2019) on display at the B&O Railroad Museum. (B&O photos courtesy of NBOAHS)



The image at bottom left shows Charlie Roberts and his family in their 1916 Mitchell touring car, headed south on South Main Street. The sign on the car says, "Chas. S. Roberts Drug Store Sundries." Ed Roberts, then 16, is driving, and Hank, then 12, is the front seat passenger. Charlie and Nellie are in the back seat with three-year-old Bill, and the dog running alongside is Sport. Although they may have entered the car in the "Decorated Auto Parade" at 7:30 Thursday evening, sunset that day was at 6 PM, so the brightly lit photo was likely taken Tuesday afternoon during the Parade of Farmers, Merchants, Pioneers and Manufacturers.

NORTH BALTIMORE GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY
THURSDAY, OCT. 11—(Mardi Gras)

10:30 A. M.—Band Concert and Free Acts.
 1:30 P. M.—Fat Man's race. 50 yds.—200 pounds or over.
 First prize \$3.00; second \$2.00; third \$1.00.
 2:00 P. M.—Mule race, 1/4 mile, best two in three heats;
 First prize \$5.00; second \$3.00.
 2:30 P. M.—Free Acts.
 3:00 P. M.—Boys' race, 13 to 15 yrs. 100 yards.
 First prize, \$2.00. Second \$1.00.
 3:30 P. M.—Girls' race, 13 to 15 yrs., 50 yards.
 First prize, \$2.00; second, \$1.00.
 4:00 P. M.—Boys' bicycle race—16 yrs. and under, 1/2 mile.
 First prize, \$2.00; second, \$1.00.
 4:30 P. M.—Tug-of-War; Henry township vs Jackson township, 10 men on each side. Captain Henry township, Henry Apple; captain Jackson township, Dr. Dan Spitler. Prize \$10.00.
 7:00 P. M.—Free Acts.
 7:30 P. M.—Decorated auto parade. First prize, \$20.00; second, \$10.00; third, \$5.00.
 8:00 P. M.—Fraternal Order Parade. Largest number of any order in parade. 1st. prize \$25; 2nd., \$15.

Chas. S. Roberts
 - The Family Druggist -

We will sell you a GEM safety razor with five blades, regular price \$1.00—
FOR THREE DAYS, Oct. 9th, 10th. and 11th.
FOR 69c
 Make our store your store
Roberts' Pharmacy

The program for Mardi Gras Day included two parades. Charlie's advertisement offers 30% off a razor and blades.