

Norman Baker (A Life History)

Ron Bopp

Who was Norman Baker (a.k.a. “Inmate 58197”)? Why did some people not like him? The Norman Baker that outdoor mechanical music enthusiasts are familiar with invented the Tangley Calliope, and like Rudolph Wurlitzer, Eugene deKleist, Adreas Ruth and Gustave Bruder, they admire him. They admire him because he invented one of the beloved instruments that they cherish today. Unlike Mr. Wurlitzer, Mr. deKleist, Mr. Ruth or Mr. Bruder, however, Mr. Norman Baker was a very diverse individual pursuing many activities in his lifetime, some of which were “below board.”

Fortunately there are many references to Norman Baker in the lay press and although none are primarily with the intention of informing the public of his mechanical music achievements, they do, in passing, lend more information to the history of his company. It is this information I wish to pass on in this article as well as a brief synopsis of his varied and “wild” life.

His Beginning

Norman Glenwood Baker was born on November 27, 1882, in Muscatine, Iowa (Figures 1 & 2). He was the last of



Figure 1. Norman Baker as a child.

Photo: *Doctors, Dynamiters and Gunmen.*

eight children. His parents were John and Frances Baker. His father operated the first sheet iron and boiler factory in Muscatine and his mother was a poet and wrote short stories. John Baker developed canning machinery and owned 126 patents regarding his inventions of the time. While in the 10th grade Norman quit school to work in machine shops (thus providing basic knowledge useful in the development of the air calliope).

During the time of Vaudeville he became envious of a Professor Flint, who gave stage mental shows (performances featuring the power of mental suggestion). Norman had worked in the circus as a barker promoting a two-headed calf and other oddities. He had also recovered from a serious illness and felt mental abilities helped him with his healing. He would soon (1904) mimic Professor Flint by creating his own mentalist show (demonstrating the power of suggestion) but with a different twist—featuring a young woman (as a mind reader). He named her “Madame Pearl Tangley”(Figures 3, 4 & 5). His

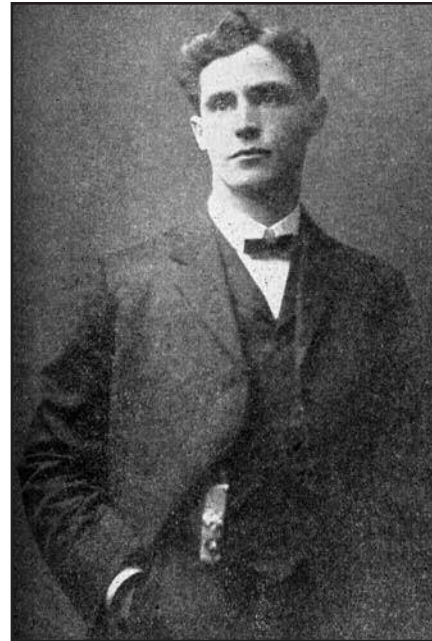


Figure 2. Norman Baker in his ‘teens.

Photo: *Doctors, Dynamiters & Gunmen.*

mentalist acts were successful in Indiana, Illinois and Ohio (Figure 6). During this time Norman used the stage name of Charles Welch.

After some time the young woman left the show (1909) and he replaced her with a young college girl, Theresa Pinder. She became the second “Madame Pearl Tangley,” and soon they married. The show continued with this “Madame Pearl Tangley” until 1914 (Figure 7) when they returned to Muscatine. He then continued as a machinist while waiting to return to the Vaudeville circuit.



Figure 3. Mme. Pearl Tangley's *Complete Instructions of Mentalism*, printed in 1907.

Courtesy: Marty Roenigk



Figure 4. A photo of Pearl Tangley. It is not known whether this is the original Mme. Tangley or the 2nd, which was became Norman Baker's wife.

Photo: Marty Roenigk.

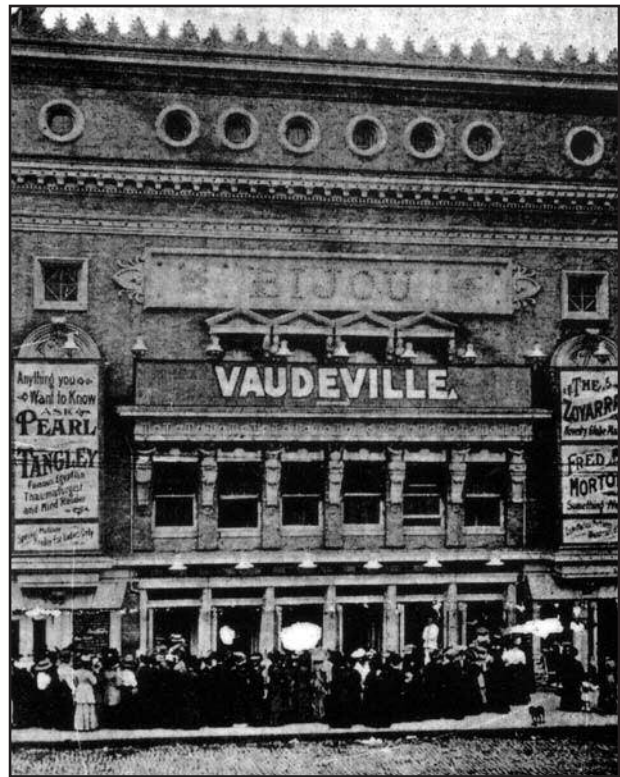


Figure 6. Pearl Tangley was highlighted as a Vaudeville act at the Bijou Theater.

YOUR FORTUNE TOLD FREE.

MADAME TANGLEY ADVISES YOU UPON ANYTHING SUCH AS:

LAWSUITS,	SEPARATIONS,
YOUR FALSE AND TRUE FRIENDS,	WHOM TO TRUST,
LOCATING LOST AND STOLEN ARTICLES,	DOMESTIC AFFAIRS,
ADVISING YOU UPON ALL LOVE AFFAIRS,	WHEN AND WHOM YOU WILL MARRY
PREDICTING FUTURE BUSINESS EVENTS, WORRIES, Etc.	

Figure 5. Mme Pearl Tangley's pamphlet lists the items in which she could help clients



Figure 7. One of two postcards featuring the Savoy Theater in Eugene, Oregon. The other card noted a record attending Pearl Tangley's show (8,000 admissions in six days). At the time the population of Eugene was 9,000. The card above was signed by Ms. Pearl Tangley and Charles Welsh (Norman Baker).

The Origins of the word "Tangley"

According to Alvin Winston in *The Throttle* Baker had decided that he needed a name for his lady mind reader that was more unique than "Baker." He had thumbed through the alphabet trying to come up with something when the letter "T" caught his eye. "Ah, that had an impressive curve followed by a long sweeping line over the stop of the stem for the top. It would look wonderful in script on a billboard." He then added more letters until he again was impressed with "Tan" and then "Tang." Finally he arrived at the word "Tangley," a word that he had never heard of before and one that wasn't even recognizable by the local post office authorities. This would be the word that would be used for his star performer. As we all know it then became the feature word for his invention, the Tangley Calliaphone (calliope).

Another, slightly less plausible explanation came from Barbara Kerr in an email to Marty Roenigk in 1998, which she explained that her father (a distant cousin to Norman) said: "Early in the century there was a popular vaudeville figure named Eva Tanguay*. Norman went into vaudeville and named one of his leading ladies Tangley to echo Tanguay's name."

*Encyclopedia Britannica printed that Eva Tanguay was an American singing/dancing comedienne billed as "The girl who made vaudeville famous." At the turn of the century she shocked audiences with her scanty costume and her risqué songs, such as *I Don't Care*.



Figure 8. A Tangley Calliophone mounted in a display trailer at a rally in the 1990s.

The Calliophone

Around 1914 Baker developed the first air calliope (Figure 8). It was called the Tangley Air Calliope, and later renamed the Calliophone. It used compressed air instead of steam. When Norman and Theresa moved back to Muscatine, her father moved in with them. He was a preacher as well as an organist and piano/organ repairman. Theresa also played the piano. With these facts in mind, as well as a need for more advertising with his continuing vaudeville shows, the idea of the calliope surfaced. Alvin Winston in *Doctors, Dynamiters and Gunman* noted:

Baker desired a musical instrument to be used for outdoor advertising purposes; there were none on the market except hand organs and electric bell instruments, which later had been played to death, and offended the esthetic ear by being more of a noise-maker than a musical instrument. No doubt the presence of a wife who was a pianist, and a father-in-law who was an organist and more, spurred Baker, with his inferiority complex, to demonstrate his aptitude in music, though he had no musical education. Besides, in Muscatine, his brother still operated the machine shop which Norman Baker had an interest in. So Norman Baker loafed around the machine shop, and pondered and tinkered, and suddenly produced what he named at once the Tangley Air Calliope, played with air pressure instead of steam.

Norman didn't work on this alone—his father-in-law also helped. According to Thomas Hofer's *Norman Baker and American Broadcasting*, "Baker's object was to mount the device on an automobile and use it for advance publicity with the vaudeville act." He had consulted with Fred Manhart

(known as the "Music Man of Muscatine" at the time) regarding the number of notes to be used and at least 30 were recommended—the resultant number, however, was 43.

The first machines were made on a one-on-one basis with Norman selling them to nearby companies who heard the calliope while he was tuning it, and subsequently wanted one for their own. The initial price was \$500.00—in 1929 the asking price was \$1,064.00, Figure 9. Interestingly the first sale was to the Patterson's Carnival Company (the Calliophone was often a sought-after instrument by carnivals). He began building calliopes out of a mule barn on Mississippi Street in Muscatine. The Muscatine Chamber of Commerce reportedly asked Norman to drop out of the vaudeville business and open up a factory in Muscatine to build calliopes. He did so with the chamber arranging for a building to work in. Soon, he had a small business with seven men working, plus his wife, Theresa, as secretary.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

\$7.00 to \$10.00 PER HOUR. ENTER THE outdoor advertising business. Travel from Coast to Coast in your auto and earn as you go. The Calliophone is an automatic playing musical instrument with a volume that can be regulated to be heard a mile away. Store Sales, Theatres, Celebrations, Fairs, Sales, National Advertisers will all pay from \$7.00 to \$10.00 an hour. The Calliophone can be mounted on a ton truck chassis, giving room also for living quarters. In each town you visit, contracts for advertising can be secured. Calliophone costs \$1064.00. Don't write unless you mean business, and capable of handling a \$3000 to \$5000 yearly business. Calliophones sold on easy terms of one-third cash. CALLIAPHONE CO., Muscatine, Iowa.

Figure 9. An 1929 advertisement in Baker's magazine, *TNT*, which exalted the business opportunities of Calliophone ownership.

Hofer's book, *Norman Baker and American Broadcasting*, also noted that the first year of operation grossed \$60,000.00. He advertised in *Billboard* magazine from 1914 for many years. In the late 'teens Baker had boasted "that his air Calliophone grossed \$200,000 in a single year." The gross sales totaled over \$1,500,000.00.

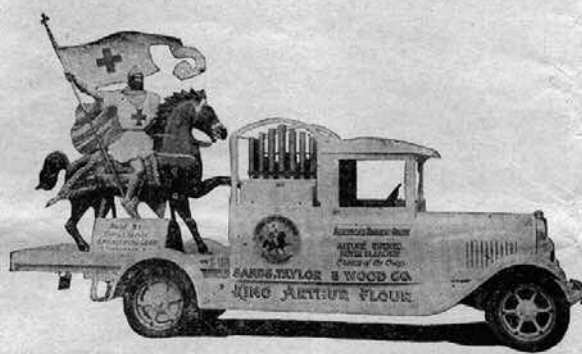
Winston (*Doctors, Dynamiters and Gunman*) went on to say:

The whole world knows of the musical instruments, the only new tone keyboard-played instruments invented in the last forty years. At first, of course, the instruments were designed to be played by hand; later Baker added an automatic player (1915), and both types of machines are still manufactured, amply guarded by seven patents (Figure 10).

In 1916 Norman and Theresa amicably divorced. He never remarried. From that time to 1920 the Calliophone business flourished. There were eight to ten employees working day and night, making instruments as fast as they could be made.

Figure 13 (next page). A two page advertisement becomes the centerfold of Baker's 1929 Calliophone catalog.

National Advertising



TELL THEM WITH MUSIC

It wrecks the advertising manager's brain to try to produce usual stunts or methods. We see many expensive automobile outfits unless by chance one "meets them face to face."

With the Calliaphone mounted in such outfits, the beautiful thunderous volume that is pleasing near or far, will attract all desirable atmospheric conditions, the tones can be heard a mile away.

We recommend our Model CA-43 Calliaphone for these outfits, with a blower unit as shown herein. Impossible to run blower from power of car, which makes the music "sharp" and "full."

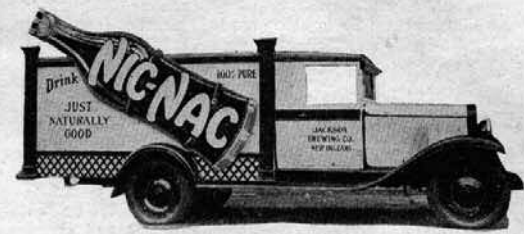
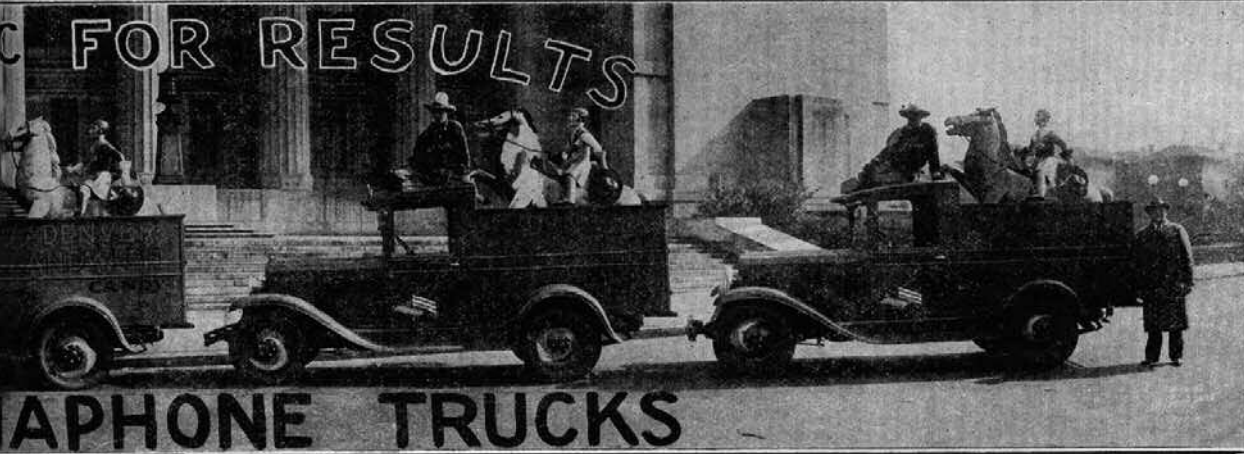
Floor space of Calliaphone 24 in. deep by 32 in. wide. Height about 37 1/2 lbs. Fastens to car by "U" shaped rod over top of instrument and projecting down each side through floor. Engine-blower specifications shown elsewhere in this folder.

Instrument plays automatically from 10-tune paper rolls, costing as low as \$2.00 per roll. Plays ten tunes and automatically rewinds, playing over and over without stopping. Can also be hand played by an ordinary Pianist, keyboard having 43 keys, chromatic scale, tuned and voiced musically perfect. One man operates and drives. Special bodies furnished of any design. Complete outfit can be installed in any Auto in a few hours by the average handyman. Read the success of "NEHI" next page.

IT MAKES THEM
STOP-LOOK-LISTEN

"Once Heard Never Forgotten"

ing That Impresses



MUSIC They'll Never Forget

something along advertising lines that is different and more effective than the
its passing through cities, driven by salesmen and others, and no one knows

tones which do not grow monotonous, with their
making them STOP, LOOK and LISTEN. Under fav-
y, and still are not annoying when standing near by.
fits. It operates with a small direct connected engine-
ver of car because of the unsteady speed of blower at
t' as air-pressure goes up or down by change of speed.
ight 59 in. Can furnish same 49 in. high. Weight



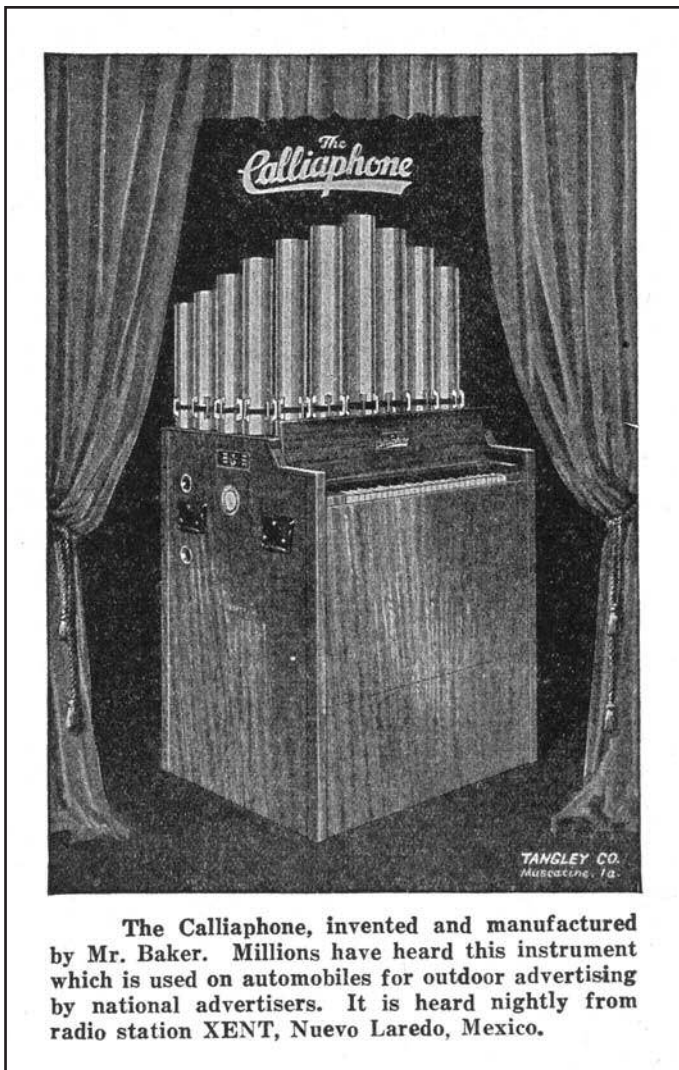


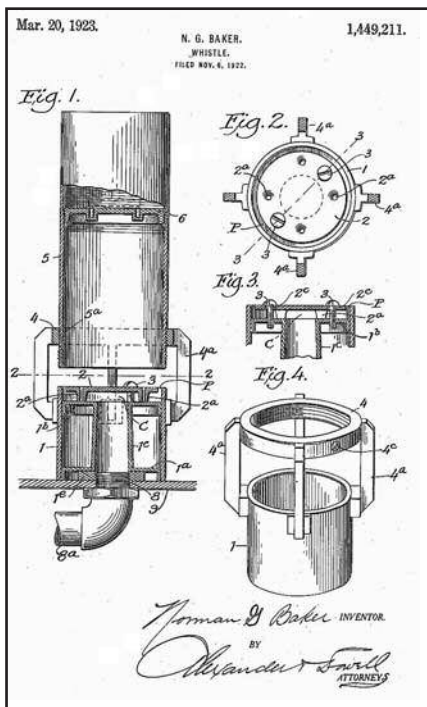
Figure 10.

At one point in the early years of the business Baker needed more capital (to meet payroll) as he had spent most of his profits on machinery to produce the Calliophones. He approached a Mr. Stein, the President of the First National Bank of Muscatine, for a loan, but was eventually turned down. The following conversation, noted by Alvin Winston, is of interest to us:

Mr. Stein asked: "Why, Mr. Baker, what in the world do you need three fifty to build calliopes for? When you have built two, you have the world supplied: one for Barnum and Bailey, and one for Ringling." . . . Baker explained how many he had built; how he had sold the two circuses mentioned, and many more circuses, and for airplane advertising like the one at Anderson, Indiana, and for outdoor advertising, city parks, beaches, skating rinks, homes and a dozen other uses.

In July of 1920 a fire destroyed his entire calliope factory. His insurance company was partially bankrupt and he could only pay back the deposits made for future orders. The Calliophone business eventually revived and Mr. Winston noted (1934) in detail:

Within a few months this factory (a three-story building on Chestnut Street in Muscatine) was running two shifts day and night, the machinery in the factory never stopping for months at a time, even for Sundays. Once every twenty-four hours his factory built, sold and shipped a complete automatic musical instrument; and three or four times a month, in addition, a complete automobile outfit, requiring a special body built on an automobile, was turned out for national advertising campaigns. The pleasing tone of the instrument lay between a pipe organ and a calliope; as soon as Baker's next venture, the radio station, got under way, he called upon his Calliophone to introduce to the air-conscious listeners a new musical tone. He is still building them in his Muscatine factory, from loud toned ones that can be heard a mile away to soft-tone instruments for the home. It is on the air now, from the station across the Rio Grande; it blends with any musical instrument from a piano or a violin to an orchestra, and is, a startling agreeable accompaniment for singers.



Several patents were taken out to protect his calliope business including U.S. Patent #1,449,211 (Figure 11) which stated:

This invention is a novel improvement in whistles for musical instruments, such as calliopes. The object of the present invention is to insure more direct and uniform pressure of the air discharged from the cup of the whistle; and to improve the construction of the air distributing devices in the cup of the whistle.

Figure 11. Patent #1,449,221 illustrating a calliope whistle.

A look at a 1929 Tangley Calliophone catalog (Figure 12) reveals many suggested uses for his calliope including but not limited to advertising trucks (Figure 13, on page 20 & 21), skating rinks, theaters, radio stations and orchestras.

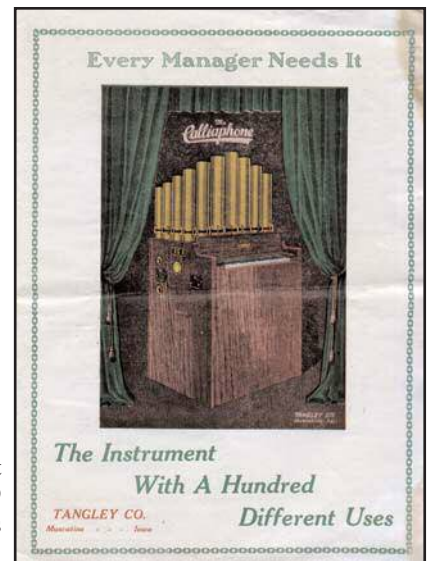


Figure 12. The front cover of Baker's 1929 Tangley Calliophones catalog.

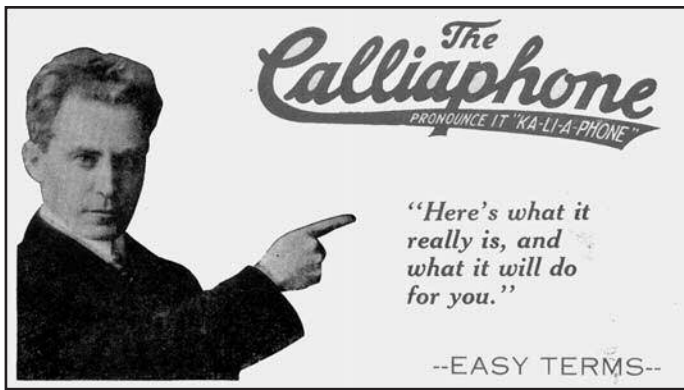


Figure 14. Baker pointing to the pronunciation of the word “Calliophone” as “Ka-lia-phoné.”

Baker’s photo appears in the catalog (Figure 14) noting “Here is what it really is and what it will do for you.” Pages 14 and 15 (of the 16-pages) are not calliope-related however. Page 15 is dedicated to “Baker’s Linseed Oil Paints” including house, barn and wagon paints. Page 16 is devoted to the Baker Hospital [a.k.a. Baker Institute] in Muscatine. Not wanting the readers of this catalog to be left out of his newly founded medical aspirations (see section following on Norman Baker’s Medical Endeavors) he began the page with “This advertisement is printed for the benefit of *sick show folks.*”

At this point in Norman Baker’s life, it could be argued that this man was a normal but an enterprising individual, having theatrical capabilities, machinery skills, as well as the ability to capitalize on these attributes. Where did he earn his reputation that followed him to the grave? It is from this point on until his death in 1958 that the energy pent up in Norman Baker paved the way for self-destruction.

Baker Enterprises: Tangley School of Art and General Merchandising

When the fire destroyed the Calliophone business in Muscatine in 1920 Norman was devastated. He wandered the nearby buildings during the days following the fire and came across an itinerant artist who was tinting photographs. He gave the artist \$5.00 to teach him how to tint and paint photographs as well as still life with oil paint. This was the start of another



business, a mail order art business that had students buying enlargements of their photographs from him as well as framing and other art supplies. The Tangley School of Art prospered, grossing over three years exceeding \$75,000.00 (nearly 3,000 students).

Figure 15. Baker’s general catalog of 1929.

Photo: Marty Roenigk

The Calliophone business, however, had recovered during these three years and Norman dropped the art school in favor of the air calliope. The profit, however, was helpful to rebuild the Calliophone factory.

Baker also entered the general merchandising arena (Figure 15). A 1929 catalog illustrated most everything a person could want in the late 1920’s. Thirty-six pages were printed and included foods, clothing [imagine impressing your COAA friends with a pair of Tangley-shrunk eight oz. Denim Overalls], live plants, and bedding. Many other items were listed such as the Tangley Master 5 (a five-tube radio—of course you would attach it to a Baker’s Underground Antenna), automobile batteries, the “TNT” Furnace, and even trained canary’s.

KTNT—Know The Naked Truth

In 1924 Norman approached the Muscatine Chamber of Commerce with ideas to build a radio station. He had promised to “lift Muscatine from being a little berg lost in the Mississippi corn-fields, to a city the whole world would know about.” The chamber agreed and KTNT was formed in 1925. KTNT or Know The Naked Truth (TNT represents dynamite in

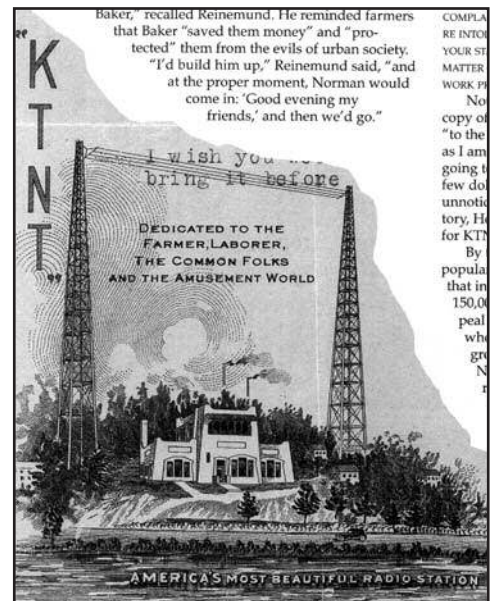


Figure 16. KTNT radio station as pictured on its letterhead.

Photo: Iowa Heritage Illustrated.

many people’s minds) was allowed 500 watts of power but Norman consistently, and illegally, broadcast at 10,000 watts. In 1928 he was allowed 10,000 watts which meant his signal could reach well over 1,000,000 homes Figure 16. The station began broadcasting on Thanksgiving Day in 1925.

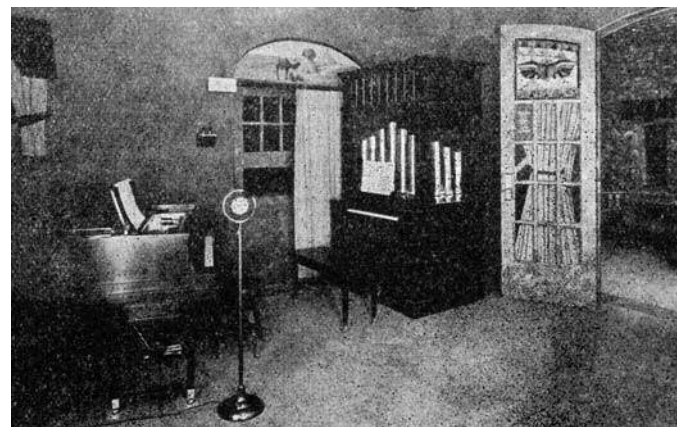


Figure 17. A softly-voiced Tangley Calliophone in the studio of KTNT.

Photo: Doctors, Dynamiters & Gunmen.



Figure 18. Norman Baker poses at the piano with a singer used at KTNT. Photo: *Iowa Heritage Illustrated*.

As mentioned above, the Calliophone was used as background music for many of the programs (Figure 17). Lee Munsick has done considerable research on Norman Baker and remarked that Norman would start and stop the broadcast program with the Calliophone. If the Calliophone wasn't working, the station would not start until it was. KTNT became quite popular in the Iowa farm country as it was known as the common folks' station. Crowds (from 5,000 to 15,000) would assemble on weekends around the station where Norman would arrange live shows outside (Figure 18).

TUBE FREE
With Each 2 Tires

Dealers Prices to You. Save 25%

OUR CHALLENGE

WE WILL BEAT ANY OTHER TIRE COMPANY'S PRICE ON ANY TIRE OF EQUAL OR BETTER QUALITY.

TANGLEY TIRE CO.
MUSCATINE, IOWA

AT LAST! pure gum!

16 Months Protection Against Any Road Hazards

Lifetime Guarantee Against Defects

Figure 19. The "Tangley Pure Gum Rubber Tire" — advertising from a 1929 edition of *TNT*.

The station was built on the highest hill in Muscatine (Figure 20), and according to Spence's article, *Pure Hoax: The Norman Baker Story*, "Norman postured that his station would be a beacon of light for 'the masses, the hordes of farmers, and laborers and small business men, as well as humanity in general.'" Coincidentally, it was also positioned at the top of the road

coming from town and it was reported that when inspectors came for a visit the wattage was turned down to the legal limit of 500 watts. Intertwined with local human-interest stories and general news, his broadcasts contained attacks on the American Medical Association (AMA), Aluminum Trust, and Wall Street. He began broadcasting anti-Jewish pro-Hitler comments, again aimed at the medical establishment. As the station's popularity grew the attacks on prominent people and established organizations earned distrust among the local listeners and soon people turned against him. An example of this was quoted in Juhnke's book *Quacks and Crusaders*:

Not only were Baker's harangues repulsive, as R. C. Conybear of Cedar Rapids reported, his programs were "no longer necessary" since "There is now in our city one of his wonderful Calliophones and whenever we feel like listening in to his station we can open our windows and get his music directly off the street."

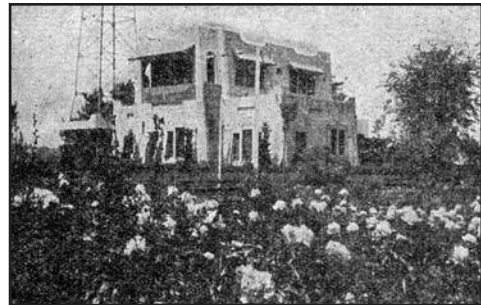


Figure 20. KTNT as seen at the top of the hill in Muscatine, Iowa.

Photo: *Doctors, Dynamiters and Gunmen*.

Baker's attack against the medical establishment using his radio station (quoted in Juhnke's *Quacks and Crusaders*) was quite ridiculous:

Baker also invoked horrific images of physicians as pedophiles, asking KTNT listeners why doctors vaccinated young children in the leg rather than in the arm. "Is it because they like to feel the legs of these innocent little girls?" he asked. "Is it not a fact that many of these men use their profession as an excuse to fondle and gaze upon the nude parts of innocent children."

In the late 1920s Norman Baker began using the radio for promoting cancer cures. The AMA lobbied the Federal Trade Commission to stop the broadcasts, and in June 1931, the radio station was forced closed on June 5, 1931 by the Federal Trade Commission. The business climate in Muscatine dropped following the closure.

After KTNT was off the air Baker moved his radio station endeavors to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico and formed XENT, which began broadcasting in 1933, and closed in 1937. Winston noted in *Doctors, Dynamiters and Gunmen* that the South Texas Citizen (Laredo) printed on September 23, 1933, that "the XENT programs will be like the K-TNT ones, homey rather than highbrow; the voice of the mellow Calliophone playing *The Bells of St. Mary, Beautiful Isle of Somewhere, O Sole Mio*, . . . (Figure 21).



The studio of XENT, showing the latest model Calliaphone installed. The only studio in the world thus equipped. Tune it in any night on 910 Kc.

Figure 21. Again, at the XENT studio in Laredo, the Calliaphone makes a presence — “The only studio in the world thus equipped.” Photo: *Doctors, Dynamiters and Gunmen*.

Norman Baker's Publishing Career

TNT: The Naked Truth, a new magazine (Figure 22), was introduced in April of 1929. Baker used the magazine to promote his medical attacks. One of the firsts was that on aluminum, the metal that he claimed to be the cause of cancer. The magazines also contained guest articles on subjects that were

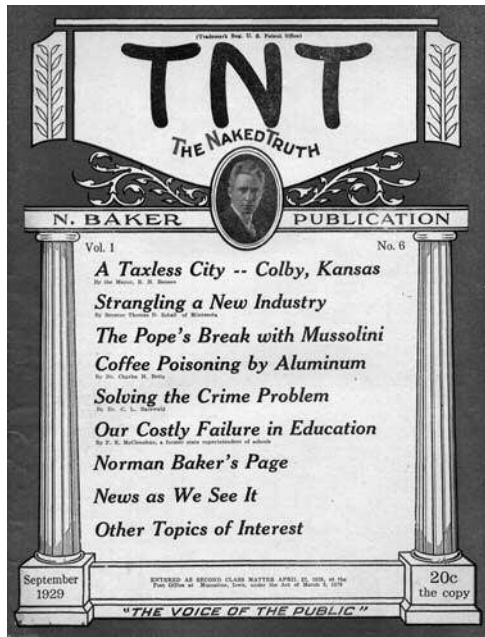


Figure 22. The September, 1929 issue of *TNT*.

Letter to the Editor . . . continued from page 3

So the Seabreeze Park carousel, now beginning its eleventh year in the 125-year old park, combines the best of PTC #31, PTC #36, modern artistry and engineering.

The result is a smooth, fun ride on a machine that, due to good maintenance and annual paint touch-up, looks as splendid as the day it was inaugurated.

Music is provided by a replica Wurlitzer 165 band organ, built by

agreeable with Norman's cause as well as editorials, advertisements and helpful hints for the homeowner. Interesting articles from a copy of *TNT: The Naked Truth*, September 1929 edition are “Coffee Poisoning by Aluminum” by Dr. Charles H. Betts (Figure 23) and “The Power of Mind Over Body” by N. Tangley. Three guesses who Mr. “N. Tangley” was—in the Editor's Note [Norman Baker] it noted “Mr. Tangley writes from actual life experiences!”

This magazine was discontinued in December 1931 to be replaced by the Mid-West Free Press, which was published from December 1930 to January 1934.

Part II of *Norman Baker (A Life History)* will appear in the next issue (#29) of the *Carousel Organ*. Included will be his medical endeavors, politics and a four year term in prison.

References will be listed at the end of Part II. I wish to thank, however, Marty Roenigk and Lee Munsick for their help in providing data and photographs for this article.

Matthew Caulfield

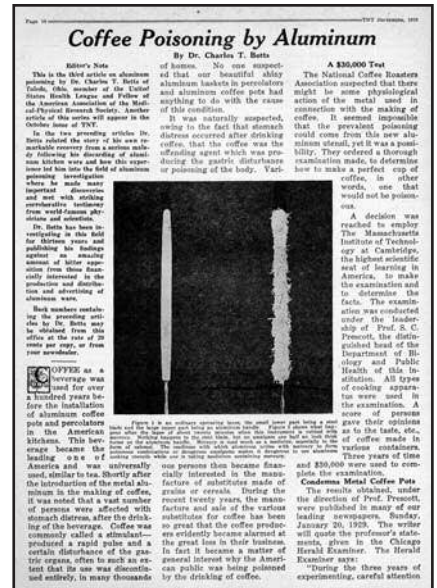


Figure 23. “Coffee Poisoning by Aluminum” as it appeared in the September, 1929 issue of *TNT*.

Norman Baker (A Life History)

Part II

Ron Bopp

Norman Baker's Medical Endeavors

Alvin Winston noted in *Doctors, Dynamiters and Gunmen*, that Norman became a friend (1926) with Dr. Barewald, an Iowa physician, who said he had a cure for varicose veins via a simple injection. Baker noted that the AMA promoted surgery for varicose veins and thus he took up the fight on this issue. Dr. Barewald and Norma Baker began the Tangley Institute in Muscatine for the treatment of varicose veins and ulcers by painless injections in 1926 (Figure 24).

**VARICOSE VEINS
LEG ULCERS CURED OR
NO PAY**

Never before, to our knowledge, has a Medical Institute ever agreed to refund all money paid in case a cure was not made. We have treated over 6,000 cases of Varicose Veins and Leg Ulcers. A new discovery. Consultation Free. If we accept your case, we guarantee to refund every cent, if we fail to eliminate Varicose Veins or Leg Ulcers. Patients from all parts of America and Canada have been cured.

Throw Away Bandages

1. No Operation
2. No Hospital
3. No Bandages
4. No Pain
5. No interference with daily duties
6. No Medicine to take internally
7. Simply a few injections into the veins
8. Costs Less than operations
9. Six to ten treatments cure Varicose Veins

2 Free Booklets - - Send Today

We have no medicine to send you. Our treatment for varicose veins and leg ulcers is done at the Institute. We will arrange good rooms and board in private homes at low expense. You need only stay one week, ten days or perhaps 2 weeks depending on severity of case.

Requires about ten minutes for treatment, no pain, hospital or operations. No interference from your daily business. Treatment consists of painless injection. This wonderful discovery is credited to our attending Physician, who has successfully been treating these cases for over 6 years. Send today for our free booklets, entitled, "Varicose Veins" and "Leg Ulcers." They are free for the asking. You need not delay writing for appointments. Come any time.

MEDICAL INSTITUTE
Box 297 - Muscatine, Iowa

Figure 24. An ad appearing in the September, 1929 issue of *TNT* suggesting a “simple injection” for varicose veins.

**VARICOSE VEINS?
VEIN & LASER CLINIC!**

Insurance Accepted
Medicare Physician
No Hospital Stay
Laser Treatment
Sclerotherapy
Microsurgery

488-8888

6801 S. Yorkdown Ave.
Tulsa's vein specialist.
"Bye-bye varicose veins."

Call for
www.VeinClinic.com FREE BROCHURE!

Leg Veins
Face Veins
Hand Veins
Other Veins

Figure 25. A contemporary ad in the *Tulsa World* (December 29, 2004) advertising treatment for varicose veins without surgery.

Interestingly this method of treating varicose veins is gaining acceptance today. Figure 25 is a current ad taken from the *Tulsa World*. According to the *Merck Manual* (current online version):

Injection therapy was common in the United States between the 1930s and 1950s but fell out of favor because of poor results and complications. Current techniques are more likely to be successful and are safe for varicose veins of all sizes.

In November 1929 Baker opened the Baker Muscatine Cancer Hospital (later known as the Baker Institute). This was a feat in itself as he had only a 10th grade education and no

medical degree. Despite that, he hired local physicians who became loyal to him (Figure 26). According to an Internet article *Soak Your Spokes* he used his “secret cure which had been given to him by a South American Witch Doctor.” The “secret cure” consisted of watermelon and clover seeds along with corn silk which were boiled in alcohol and carbolic, and then injected into patients. He would repeatedly advertise that “we do not use knife, x-ray or radium.”



Figure 26. Physicians and nurses line up in front of Baker Institute in this 1929 photo. All dedicated professionals to the Baker way of treatment.

Photo: *Quacks and Crusaders—The Fabulous Careers of John Brinkley, Norman Baker, & Harry Hoxsey.*

In November 1921 Baker's mother died of cancer. This fact carried onto his later business years as the Baker Hospital's letterhead noted: “Baker Hospital, founded by Norman Baker —whose mother's untimely death created interest in life extension.”

In 1929 he and Dr. Charles Ozias, who was operating a cancer hospital in Kansas City, offered to treat five patients, free of charge, to see if Dr. Ozias' cure would work (Figure 27). Reports were offered to the public in his magazine, *TNT: The Naked Truth*. While reports indicated all five had improved, the fact was that all eventually died. The formula, needless to say, was that used at the Baker Institute.

The AMA called Baker a vicious quack at which time he sued them for \$500,000.00. This was the first time the AMA

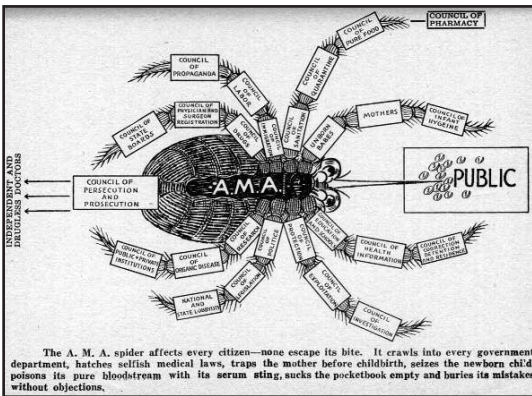
Cancer Problem Solved
 By Dr. Charles Othello Ozias, 400 West 63rd St., Kansas City, Mo.

HE is a noted specialist on nutritional diseases. He has devoted many years to the study of cancer and has developed a practical, medical cure that has proven successful in thousands of cases of cancer of stomach, liver, bowels, breast, pelvis and other parts. He has recently reported his work in the Medical Press. He is now giving a series of lectures over RADIO STATION KTNT on subjects of: Cancer and It's Relation to Other Diseases, such as Diabetes, Tuberculosis, Anemia, Cancer Symptoms, and How We May Know We Have Cancer. Other subjects of his talks are: Cancer Causes; How to Prevent Cancer; Cancer Prevalence and Cure and a number of other subjects pertaining to the disease. Friends have persuaded Dr. Ozias to put out a book with reprints of these lectures and include in the book his experiences in treating desperate cases successfully in different stages, many of which had failed to respond to other recognized treatments, acknowledged in statements from the institutions from which the cases came. ALL LETTERS OF INQUIRY WILL RECEIVE CAREFUL ATTENTION. OPPORTUNITY IS OPEN TO THOSE WHO WISH TO ASSIST IN THIS GREAT WORK.

This is Considered an Unusual Discovery bearing on Cancer

Figure 27. Dr. Charles Ozias claim to curing cancer. This advertisement appeared in the September, 1929 issue of *TNT*.

was making a test case against quackery—Baker lost the case. Of interest was that, at one point in the trial, he was cited for contempt when he was found to bring a revolver into the courtroom. Baker often referred to the AMA as the “American Meatcutters Association” as well as the “American Mummy Association.” He once said that M.D. stood for “More Dough.” **Figures 28a & 28b.**



Figures 28a & 28b. Norman Bakers loath for the American Medical Association is evident in these graphic charts depicting the A . M . A . “Spider” and “Medical Octopus.”

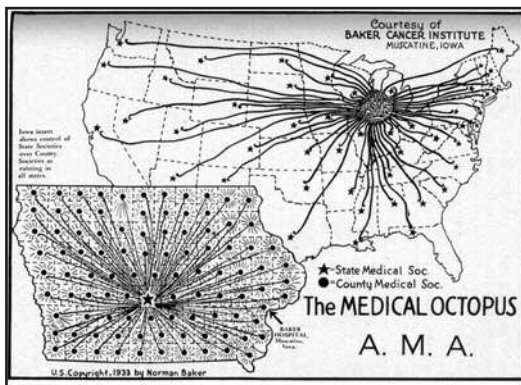


Photo: *Doctors, Dynamiters & Gunmen.*

This trial was followed by an arrest warrant issued against Norman for practicing medicine without a license (around the same time his radio station KTNT was forced closed). He fled to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, where he not only started a new station (XENT) but also a cancer hospital. This was short-lived

and he came back to the states were he served a one-day sentence for his Iowa warrant. In 1932 he unsuccessfully ran for Governor of Iowa. He lost that election and left Muscatine (and Iowa) permanently.

An Unusual Institution---A Friendly Place

*On the Mountain in Eureka, stands a Castle in the air,
 Founded on the cures of Cancer, that no other record bares.
 'Tis the home of the Baker treatments, and many there you'll find,
 Who did heed his wondrous message, that he sends to all mankind,
 Now their grief has turned to joy, in a hope of life found there,
 On the Mountain in Eureka, in a Castle in the Air.—BY JENNIE ROSS*

Figure 29. A photo of the Crescent Hotel hospital and a poem—one of many enticing portions of Baker’s booklet advertising his hew hospital.

Photo: *The Castle in the Air—
 Where Sick Folks Get Well Atop The Ozarks.*

In 1937 Norman moved his cancer hospital operation to Eureka Springs, Arkansas where he leased the Crescent Hotel (now owned by COAA members Martin and Elise Roenigk), **Figure 29.** He remodeled the “Grand Old Lady of the Ozarks” by painting his penthouse and office as well as the grand lobby and its massive fireplace purple, hanging machine guns on the walls and installing secret passages for him to escape in case the AMA “enemies” would attack. Juhnke, in his recent book, noted that Baker had told his employees that he would “make a million dollars out of the suckers of the state.” Initially the Eureka Springs community backed Baker with his cancer hospital endeavor because it was good for the town as well. Eureka Springs was depressed financially—no tourists, few businesses and many empty buildings. Baker’s own brochure noted “We are just like one big family living in a mansion like plain folks” (**Figures 30a & 30b**).

Figures 30a & 30b. Two booklets advertising the Baker Hospital in Eureka Springs, Arkansas.

Fiction has directed legends of Norman's cruel treatment, legends, which have claimed that skeletal remains have been found when the hotel's walls were remodeled. Supposedly jars of preserved body parts are also hidden within the hotel. Troy Taylor, a professional "ghost" expert wrote in his book, *The Haunting of America*:

An apparition that is believed to be Baker himself has been spotted around the old recreation room, near the foot of the stairs going to the first floor. Those who have seen him say that he looks lost, first going one way and then another. Could Baker be "trapped" in the hotel, perhaps paying for misdeeds that were committed many years ago?

The Crescent Hotel's current owner, Marty Roenigk, has added that there are regular "sightings" of a nurse pushing a gurney down the hall at night. Reportedly, Baker waited until after 11:00 p.m., when patients were required to be in bed and sleeping, to remove patients who had died in their rooms during that day. No one would see them being removed. He also noted that there were six to eight active undertakers in town during this time.

Norman's medical aspirations, while profitable in Eureka Springs, lasted only two years as it was then that federal authorities were collecting evidence for mail fraud which would close the door on his now-known-to-be-fake cures.

Baker's Political Aspirations

In 1932 he ran for Governor of Iowa (Figure 31). By that time his popularity had diminished to the point that he only garnered 5,000 votes. He ran for the Iowa senator's seat as a Republican in 1936 but only finished 5th. Of note is the Calliaphone was used in specially constructed vehicles during both the 1932 and the 1936 campaigns. His campaigning took on a carnival atmosphere as Juhnke's *Demagoguery In The Corn Belt* noted that Baker's candidacy was "more of an amusement than a serious contender—Baker received more attention for his



Figure 31. Norman Baker as photographed in the 1930s.

Photo: *Quacks and Crusaders—The Fabulous Careers of John Brinkley, Norman Baker, & Harry Hoxsey.*

bullet-proof lavender roadster than for his economic proposals." **Conviction and Prison**

Norman was convicted of mail fraud in 1940—seven counts were his downfall. He appealed but it was denied. The court's opinion was that Norman Baker's cancer cure was "pure hoax." He began a four-year sentence in Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary. He was now "inmate 58197" (Figure 32).

The United States Post Office Department (Little Rock, Arkansas) in a memo of January 25, 1940, noted that Norman had "defrauded cancer sufferers out of approximately

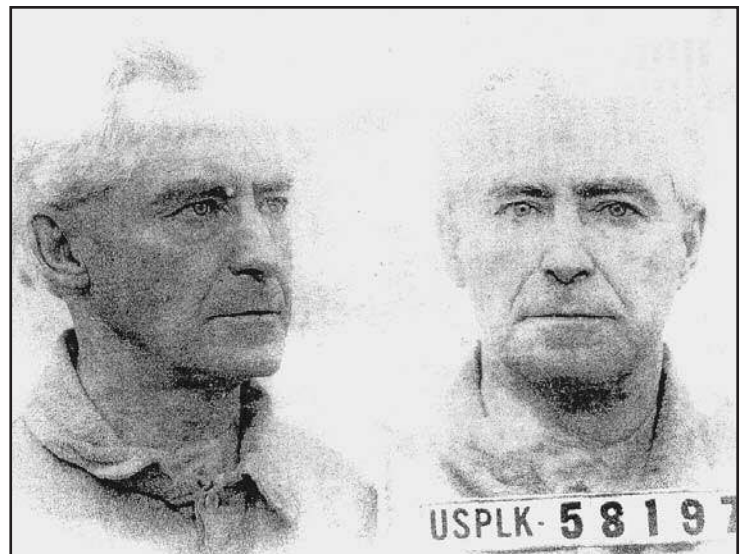


Figure 32. Norman Baker's prison photograph.

Photo: Courtesy Marty Roenigk.

\$4,000,000.00."

They went on to say that the fraudulent treatment "hastened the death of the sufferers in most of the cases" and "the sentence of four years which Baker received and the fine of \$4,000.00 was an extremely light penalty under the circumstances."

In the Senior Associate Warden's Report it was noted in the "Statement by Inmate:"

I am not guilty. They have never proved anything in the indictment. We figure this was a rail-roading proposition. It is my opinion that the jury was fixed and influenced. We have hired private detectives to look into the matter. It is believed that whiskey and women were made available to the jurors. We were railroaded by the American Medical Association who have been after us for years.

Finale

Norman Glenwood Baker retired to Florida to live on a three-story boat formerly owned by a railroad baron. His health subsequently failed and he died at the age of 75 of cirrhosis of the liver (1958). A Miami paper (source unknown) headed his obituary (Figure 33, right) with the headlines "'Radio Doctor' is Dead. He wore purple shirts and white suits and owned an orchid-colored car in an era

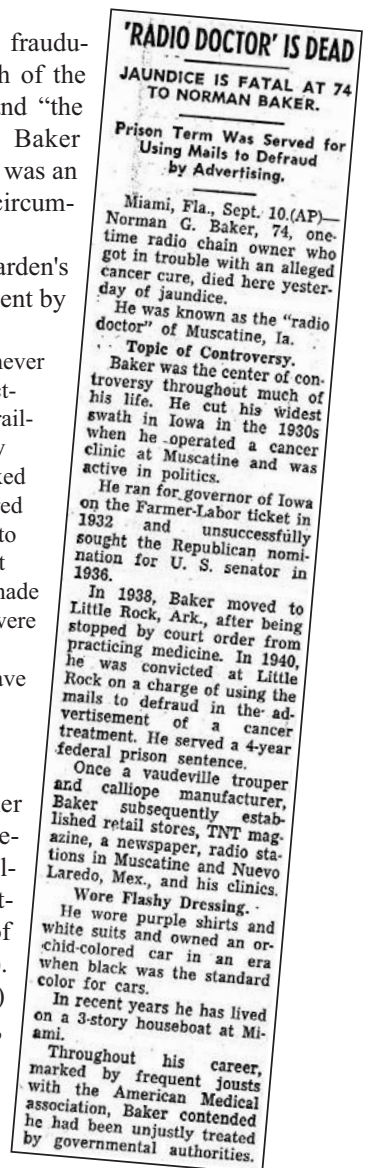




Figure 34. The author at Baker's tombstone. Irma was his older sister.

when black was the standard color for cars." According to Max Churchill there were just ten onlookers at the funeral service in Muscatine. Six community college students were hired to carry the casket. He was buried in a white suit with a lavender shirt and a purple tie. He now lies in Lot 9, No. 4, Blake 4, Fletcher 1st section in Greenwood Cemetery (**Figure 34**).

Calliope enthusiasts, however, kept his memory alive with a memorial service in July, 1992 when the Mid-America Chapter of the Musical Box Society International (MBSI) held a "Calliope Recall" in Muscatine (**Figure 35**).



Figure 35. A commemorative funeral was held for Norman Baker by the Mid-America Chapter of the MBSI. It was led by Baker enthusiast, Max Churchill (at pulpit).

In spite of his tumultuous last 35 years Norman Baker will still be best remembered (at least by the readers of this journal) as the inventor of the Tangley Calliope. The following words from Alvin Winston's *Doctors, Dynamiters and Gunmen* can summarize the good things about him:

Norman Baker is one of America's outstanding self-made successes. Born of good simple American immigrant stock, with little book education, he has made a success of everything he has attempted. He never studied music but he invented a musical instrument, which still leads its field, and is widely popular. He built and managed the most popular radio station in the United States, K-TNT, which attracted as many as fifty thousand visitors in one day.



Figure 36. Norman Baker at his six-sided Desk.

Photo: *Doctors, Dynamiters and Gunmen*.

The non-musical events mentioned in this article represent only a portion of Norman Baker's raucous life. The interested reader is directed to Eric Juhnke's *Quacks and Crusaders* as well as Stephen Spence's condensed Internet article, *Pure Hoax: The Norman Baker Story*.

Events in the life of Norman Baker

(by year)

- 1882 Born Norman Glenwood Baker
- 1909 Married Theresa Pinder
- 1914 Developed Tangley Air Calliope (Calliaphone)
- 1916 Divorced Theresa Pinder Baker
- 1920 Calliaphone factory destroyed by fire
- 1920 Opened Tangley School of Art
- 1925 KTNT begins broadcasting
- 1929 *TNT—The Naked Truth* magazine produced
- 1929 Baker Institute (Baker Muscatine Cancer Hospital) opens
- 1930 *Mid-West Free Press* magazine replaces *TNT—The Naked Truth*
- 1931 KTNT closed by Federal Trade Commission
- 1932 Ran for Governor of Iowa—lost
- 1933 XENT begins broadcasting (Nuevo Laredo, Mexico)
- 1936 Ran for Iowa Senatorial seat—lost
- 1937 Opened "The Castle In The Air" Cancer Hospital in Eureka Springs, Arkansas
- 1940 Convicted of seven counts of mail fraud
- 1940 Begins sentence as "Inmate 58197" at Leavenworth, Kansas
- 1944 Released from Leavenworth, Kansas
- 1958 Dies at age 75 of cirrhosis of the liver

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Figure 37. The Tangley Manufacturing Company building advertising both ‘air and steam calliopes.’”

Musser Public Library
Photo: Brian Walters.

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Lake Winnepesaukah Band Organ Restoration
Excerpted from the Griffin (GA) Daily News

Anna Boyle

Philadelphia Toboggan Company’s Carousel No. 39, as it is formally known, was constructed in Philadelphia for Atlanta’s Southeastern Fair (located in Lakewood Amusement Park) in 1916. The large four-row machine boasted large panels of European Scenes, all of which were accented by the sweet music of a band organ.

But that music slowed and stopped in 1967, when the carousel and organ were moved from Atlanta to Lake Winnepesaukah, in north Georgia near Tennessee.

The organ no longer played. Years of use and neglect had taken their toll. The band organ originally operated on a folding cardboard system, as opposed to the common paper roll mechanism. A lot of the organ’s inner works were lost or discarded during the last century, since new cardboard music became scarce. No one would work to restore the instrument and most assumed the band organ would never play again.

Charles Walker, conservation chairman of The National Carousel Association became reacquainted with the Lakewood band organ a few years ago when the officials at Lake Winnepesaukah called him in to work on the carousel. Although the organ, then disassembled and locked in a dirty storeroom, was not their priority, Walker saw the opportunity for what it was.

So began the long process of restoration. “Working on the Lakewood organ was self-imposed,” Walker said. “No one else would work on it. It was my drive to try to get the organ to play again because I remembered the beautiful music I had heard as a child visiting the carousel at Southeastern Fair.”

“It was going to be very difficult to get it to play paper rolls,” he said, “so I put in a new mechanism that can be played with a MIDI, floppy disc.”

That innovative and complicated process got Walker’s beloved Lakewood band organ back up and running (just in time for the 2006 Carousel Organ Association of America’s spring Rally at Lake Winnepesaukah) when Walker returned the organ to the carousel.

“The work I did there was a learning process,” he said. “It took two years to get it to go, but its working.”

This weekend the old Lakewood merry-go-round will light up once again as young children climb on board for a ride at Lake Winnepesaukah. As the carousel begins to turn, the organ will begin to play, consuming the air with its boisterous music and transporting them to another world.

May 28, 2006