Bessie A. Roberts died when she was only 5 years of age, of scrofula. Scrofula is a term used for lymphadenopathy, or infection of the lymph system, by the same mycobacterium that causes tuberculosis of the lungs, bones, intestines, etc., or a variant. It usually presents on the neck and face from infection in the cervical lymph nodes. It has also been known as “The King’s Evil” and Europeans once thought that the touch of the king could cure it. It is found most often in immunocompromised adults, where it is usually caused by *M. tuberculosis*.  In immunocompetent children – which Bessie presumably was – scrofula is often caused by the atypical mycobacteria *M. scrofulaceum* or other nontuberculous mycobacteria (source: Wikipedia).

Little is known of Bessie A. Roberts other than that she was African American and was born about 1889 in Pennsylvania. She lived with her parents George and Mary Roberts in Wilmington, at 9th and Union Streets.

There were several men named George Roberts who lived in Wilmington in the 1880s and 1890s, with various middle initials, but it was not possible to tell if any of the many newspaper articles about them referred to Bessie’s father. There are no records of any children being born to George and Mary Roberts in Delaware. There was a household of African Americans in the 1900 census named George and Louise Roberts who lived at the right time in Wilmington, and who had a number of children, including a daughter named Bessie who was born in 1896, but this is almost certainly not the same family unless George had remarried before Bessie A.’s death ; see: [George Roberts (1868-1953) - Find a Grave Memorial](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/226326991/george-roberts).

Certificate of Death for Bessie A. Roberts

