

Charlie Love

Bill Russell: This is an interview with Mr. Charlie Love. We're doing it down on Chartres Street with all the doors open in the summertime where it's quite hot, so there's a lot of street noises on here from the car, which we hope won't disturb you too much. All right, Mr. Love, can you tell us when you were born, and just where?

Love: Oh, yeah. I were born in Plaquemine, Louisiana, on October the sixth 18 and 85.

Russell: What was the first music you remember hearing, did your father and mother play any instruments?

Love: My father and mother played music together and my sister and my little brother, too. He was named was Herman Love.

Russell: Herman Love.

Love: Herman, Mary and Nettie.

Russell: What did your father play?

Love: My father played cornet.

Russell: Cornet

Love: My mother played celluh [cello] bass

Russell: Cello bass, why did they call, oh, the cello you mean, the one you where you sit down and play?

Love: Yes

Russell: They're usually call that cello.

Love: Then my father had a band. At that time they fellows used to have meetin', every time they had a meetin' they'd put so much money up until they get enough and they'd buy a set a instruments. And they would rehearsal together, they had a teacher and ah when they sent and got those instruments, they had the understandin' that any fellow would quit the band he had to leave his instrument if he was gonna quit and go away, or something like that. He'd leave, he'd leave his instrument with the band. So the band last for some years till I was born. When they first started I wasn't born yet. But later on they ah the band busted all to pieces and everytime the fellows would leave their instruments, why they left all the instruments. Here I come---I was a kid then. Little fellow about five years old. I used to try all them instruments, had a whole room full of 'em. And I picked out the

cornet, I like that better than any o 'em.

Russell: That's the first instrument you tried to play?

Love: Yeah, I couldn't play it, then I pick out a bass violin and I played that awhile. So, after I got started, could make a few notes, I had a little friend, a boy they called George Lewis, in Plaquemine, and he liked music, too.

Russell: What did he play?

Love: He played bass violin

Russell: Bass violin George Lewis.

Love: Yes. He couldn't play no other instruments, so he thought he take the bass Violin, you know, and I had so many instruments I let him have a old bass we had there and then I taken one of the old trombones my father had in the band there and I used to play that with him, so we had another boy they called Joseph Watson. He used to play the guitar. So it comes, so our instruments got broke, then we didn't have no more instruments, so George was working for Dr. Reveal the mayor of Plaquemine, so we got some cigar boxes and things and made instruments. And I still had my old trombone there, and we used to serenade him at night, And he come so he liked the band, he said 'boys, you all doing fine,' he say, 'you all keep that up and get to playing a little better, I'm going to buy you all a set of instruments.' And he did. Bought me a bass; got George a violin, George learned how to play the violin. So I continue with the old trombone, later on I got a cornet.

Russell: Did you have any lessons in those days or just pick it yourself

Love: No, I didn't have no lessons at that time. I just kept on a-playing so I switched over to cornet, and I was doing well on that, my father didn't want me to play unless I knew how to read so he was working, he didn't have time to teach me, he put me under Prof. Claibrone Williams in Donaldsonville.

Russell: How far is Donaldsonville from Plaquemines?

Love: It's about thirty miles, and he used to come up to Plaquemine twice a week to teach the band they had there, another colored band. So he would give me my lessons when he come up there and I done so well after I'd taken about six or seven lessons he was comin' up to teach the band and I was gettin' on the train to go to Baton Rouge to play with "Toot" Johnson's

and, and he laughed about it, (laughter) and from then I started to working with the Baton Rouge Band, "Toots" Johnson. I stayed with him for a number of years, playing cornet. And ah then I left there, I went back home.

Russell: About how old were you then

Love: I was about, about sixteen years old, I was fifteen, sixteen

Russell: And how did "Toots" play, he was a cornet wasn't he?

Love: No, at that time "Toots" was playing a guitar.

Russell: Oh, I forgot

Love: Guitar, and then he change ~~into~~ into bass later.

Russell: Bass

Love: Yes, "Toots" Johnson. I used to play bass too with him sometimes. Switch around, you know.

Russell: Yeh

Love; And I left ah Baton Rouge, come back to Plaquemine and my paw got up another band and I played with my father. Well, he played t e cornet, and I played bass.

Russell: Was that a dance band?

Love: That was a dance band. Used to play little jobs around town, so later on I learned so well on the cornet my paw used to show me, and teach me himself. He got a trombone so he start to playing trombone, a valve trombone, and we got up a band and we called it the Love's Band. This little fellow George Lewis he used to play with us, we played a number of years. And I left Plaquemines and went to Alexandria. That's when I joined, ah, Harry Walker's band, I played with him

Russell: Was that for a show, or was it a dance band?

Love: It's a dance band. Russell: Dance band. Love: And in and out of town, all around Alexandria, Shreveport, out to Opelousas, different places

Russell: Who else was in the band, can you remember?

Love: Yes, uh, let's see, Will Green, Will Green, Willy Reed, Munts Williams, Munts Williams, and Will Nolan,

Russell: Oh, yeah.

Love: Will Nolan, Dan Howard, Charles---Charles E. Harris. He's from Pine Bluff.

Russell: Pine Bluff

Love: Yes, that's that fellow plays all those different instruments, saxophone, play the whole family of saxophones and he plays an oboe, he's in Chicago

Russell: Oh, he's in Chicago

Love: He plays with Fess Williams' band.

Russell: Oh, I didn't, I never did meet him

Love: Yeah, great little musicianer, and ah after I worked with Harry's band all around to Shreveport, all out that way then I went to Shreveport and I joined the Markham's band.

Russell: Markham

Love: Yeh, Shreveport's oldest band, and they called it the Caddo Band.

Russell: What?

Love: The Caddo Band

Russell: Caddo band, it's Caddo Parish? isn't it?

Love: Caddo Parish, yes, and I played about eight years around there

Russell: About how old were you when you went to Shreveport then to join that --

Love: I was about 18

Russell: Around 18

Love: Just about 18 years old

Russell: And you stayed with them

Love: Stayed with them 'til I came to Chicago in 1917

Russell: In 1917. Love: Yeh. Russell: You stayed with them until 1917.

Love: 1917. I come to Chicago with that band, ah when the war started the band broke up. You see, I come back, come back down south to Shreveport again.

Russell: Yeh

Love: Then I got into the Star Theater on Texas Avenue

Russell: In Shreveport.

Love: In Shreveport, and I worked there about three, about 3 years steady, and then I, they gave us, ah they gave us a trip two weeks with pay and we stayed on the trip sent for us and

we came back to Shreveport and then I wanted to go down and see Mexico and I got a chance to go down there with Jim Miller's band from Houston.

Russell: From Houston?

Love: Yes, so while I was down in there the theatre closed, the Wiley Moore theatre.

Russell: Had you been playing in Texas then awhile?

Love: Yeah, I played around Texas

Russell: Well, when did you first come to New Orleans, when was the heard any music here

Love: 1922

Russell: 1922, you came

Love: Yeah, I come here to live and stay here.

Russell: You told us one time that you'd heard Buddy Bolden play when you were young, can you tell us about where was that.

Love: That was Flaquimine, I was a little, little fellow then. Buddy Bolden came to Flaquimine. I was wearin' short pants, I don't know exactly what age I was. But anyway, Buddy played at the Odd Fellows Hall and he had a new cornet and something got the matter with the guide on it, you know

Russell: With the

Love: Something got the matter with the middle valve, something with the guide on it

Russell: Oh, with the valve, yeah, it jammed up, huh

Love: He couldn't get it loose, so I'se standin' by and I had a little pot metal cornet there made out of nickel-plate, you know a little funny 'cornet, you know. So what I done, I told him, I say well, I have a instrument at home a cornet, say you wanta borrry mine, I'll go get it for you. He say, Yas, I can use it. It can do anyhow for a night. So he say I don't know how long you gonna be, I say I won't be long, I say, I got a bicycle out there I jumped on my wheeland I went out to the Fortville,^{that's} down to the levee

[unintelligible]

Russell: Down towards the levee where you lived.

Love: Yes, In the Fort they called it, Fortville. And I got the cornet and come back you

know and Buddy hold it up looked at it and laughed at it and he say look what this boy done brought here. How in the world I'm gonna play this

Russell: Well, what was your cornet like, a little short one

Love: Yeh, a little short horn, I don't know how many inches it was, it was the smallest cornet you ever seen.

Russell: It was a regular B flat tho, wasn't it?

Love: B flat, in B flat

Russell: It wasn't E flat, What did his cornet look like, did he have a bigger one, longer model or---

Love: It was right up-in style, you know. Longer, a little longer

Russell: A little bit longer, yeah

Love: And he taken it and blowed it and he made out with it, he finished his job with it.

Russell: Finished the job on your horn, then

Love: Yeah, and the next day I was out there and Louis Armstrong was a little boy then (laughter) he was a little boy there he was at the Jones home or some home out there, and they had brought him to Plaquemines the next day and I was down there, you know, boys out there rolling on the grass, you know, and ah I had that same little horn and we was kidding the boys, playing you know, and Jones, I believe it was old Jones come out on the gallery and say ah "Boys, what you all laughing at," said. Then the boys told him say we got a boy down here kin play that thing yo got in your band, beat you all playing band y'all ain't got no band.

Say send him up here, so they send me up here. I went up there and I went up

Russell: It was Jones's band from Jones's Home

Love: Yeah. It was the first time I seen him, Louis Armstrong, oh, he could play then, you know.

Russell: Yes, I guess he was all right

Love: They had Kid Rena, he was in the bunch. Black Benny, this boy they called Black Benny

Russell: The drummer.

Love: Yeah, Black Benny, they was all little bitty fellers

Russell: What did he play in the band then, drums?

Love: Yeah, drums, he always did play drums

Russell: Always did, hun

Love: So I went up there and the man asked me what instrument I wanta play, I told em I thought I could play anything, once "I play all them instruments." Say what you wanto try on. I say gimme that baritone. They give me the baritone, you know, and I play a little march there, I played like I want, you know, I put the, what I want in. I wasn't reading no music then, at that time, I played the baritone very well, and he liked it, say that's good. I say I play alto too, he say play me a tune on that. I played a number on the alto you know, after I don't that you know, I tole him, I say, let me see your cornet there.

Russell: The whole band, you played with the whole band

Love: Played with the whole band

Russell: You just didn't play along

Love: I played with em, yeah

Russell: But you played with the whole band, yeah.

Love: And the boy gave me his cornet, I played that, you know. Say, "Boy, you is all right that sound good." Say, "you want to go to New Orleans with us." I say, "Yeah, I be glad to," well I was a kid I didn't know, you know, bunch of bad boys you see

Russell: You didn't even know they were like almost like a reform school

Love: Yeah, Reform school, I say, ah I'll see my paw and if he say I can go, I'll go. So he say who is your father. I say Eddy Love, He say well hoo(rising inflection) no wonder!

boy you can play some music. Say Eddy's a fine musician he used to come down there and play himself long ago. So that was, ah that was the Plaquemine band. That's all of that. Went down in Mexico, like it down there. Stayed a whole year about eleven, about twelve months.

Russell: Could you tell us about--you told me once before about that band you worked for, that they were afraid to quit, you know and all that.

Love: oh, yeah.

Russell: Who was that, I forget that story, could you tell it again, if you want to --

Love: Yeah, this fellow's named ~~was~~ Jack, he's out of Saint Antone, you know, got down there and settled oh, he's a big shot, you know

Russell: Yeh

Love: Used to shoot his pistol off around there and nobody'd do him nothing, you know. When I first went over there will Miller's band we worked for his wife. His wife had a big place -- some palace.

Russell: What part of Mexico was that?

Love: Tampico

Russell: In Tampico

Love: Yea

Russell: That's right on the coast about, is it, about

Love: Yeah

Russell: (Dick Tolbert: closed for reddecorating?), Right near Texas. Oh, hello. (Laughter)

(End of recording with arrival of Dick Tolbert)

Russell: All right, it's going.

Allen: Charlie Love's life recorded at 700 Thayer, Algiers, his home, done on the Ampex Model 601.

Love: We went down into Mexico with uh Miller's band from Houston, 1920

Russell: Oh, by the way Charlie, you can just lean back there, relax, it'll pick you up any place in the room.

Love: And we went to work for Miss Iris at the Royal Palace in Mex, in Tampico, Mexico, After working about two-three weeks they had a fallin out some kind of way and Miss Iris' husband take the band with him to the Union, they called it the Union over there and ah we started playing for him

Allen: Well, who was in the band, I didn't get that.

Love: Let's see. Jim Miller

Allen: His instrument?

Love: And ah, he's trombone, Stanley, piano, Edgar Perry, piano, and ah Tobe Mitchell, drummer. Two pianos?

Allen: Tobe Mitchell?

Love: Tobe Mitchell.

Allen: Why did they call him that?

Love: That's his name I think, he's over in Mexico, yet.

Allen: How do you spell that first name, I didn't get it

Love: Tobe

Allen: Oh, Tobe

Love: Yeah, T-O-B-E, Tobe Mitchell. M-I-T-C-H-E-L-L, Mitchell, spell it like Mitchell

Allen: Yeah, I see.

Love: Mitchell. So we worked with the band over there until this fellow Jack, Miss Iris husband he taken the band, stole the band from her. We went out in the Union in Mexico, that's what they called it, the Union.

Allen: What was the Union, was it a nightclub or ~~cafe~~ or a cabaret or what?

Love: No, just, nightclub, dancehall

Allen: I see

Love: Nightclub and dancehall. We played there until about, about four months and ah we didn't like this fellow Jack and I wanted to get away from the band, and this fellow was kind of a bad fellow, over there he used to fight the musicianers and one stuff and another, so I find an Italian over there out in Tamcocoa, that's Vera Cruz, he was run a big place out there. And he was one of them kinda bad fellows, too, you know, didn't 'low no, he was one of them gun men. So I taken a job working for him and taken a trombone player they call S. B.

Davis from Houston and we went on out in Vera Cruz and I stayed out there the rest of the year of 1922, with a five piece band, they had. The drummer was named "Dodo"

Allen: And where was he from?

Love: He was, he's from somewhere in Texas, he was down in Mexico already I got him that's the time we had that China man in the band.

Allen: Yeah

Love: Playing 'Cordion. Man called, I can't think of that fellows name, then we had a Mexican boy playing saxophone. And had a valve trombone and S. B. Davis, and myself on trumpet. Will Grisby on piano, it was a very nice band.

Russell: What kind of music did you play for the Mexicans, did you play any of their mexican numbers, Spanish style, or mostly just

Love: Yeah, we played tangos and played ah played numbers like Noche de Trista(?) that's a regular rhumba, you know, Noche de Trista (?), we played Danson, that's the black dance, We played that, and then we play all the rest wuz uh rhythm, music from the States, you know jazz.

Russell: Sure. These people that came to see you, or hear and dance, were they Mexicans or American tourists, mostly

Love: They were mexicans, they liked music from the States and in that year we was over there they used to send over there to get musicians, they liked American music you know because it had plenty pep to it, you know.

Allen: Did you ever know a chinese fellows named Ming, or Ling?

Love: Ming?

Allen: or Ting?

Love: I don't know, I can't

Allen: I once heard a Chinese fellow used to travel with carnivals, and this girl I knew danced for^h carnival.

Love: I remember Japanese used to travel with the Alabama show all time

Allen: Really,

Love: They called him "Jap", they called him "Jap". I don't know where "Jap" is now, but he was a good musicianer, he used to play trumpet and he used to play clarinet, too, but he was good, he's 'bout 'round San Antone, Texas somewhere now.----

Allen: San Antone, Texas, Bill.

Russell: "Jap", huh.

Allen: We might look him up, if we get out there.

Love: Yeah, you can find him because he left from here around^h, He was in Shreveport awhile, he played with the band down there awhile when I was there, when I was in the theater, he come, it was strickly colored theater ya see, he come to the theater to visit the band you know, and he always be with colored people you see on them shows, and we invited him in, the band did and our manager put him out the show, you know says this was strickly colored, he couldn't come in there, he say well, 'I'm same as colored, I go with the colored bands all the time, and says never had this to happen to me in my life, before. He cried. He was crazy

about music you know. So he couldn't come in he left Shreveport, he wouldn't stay in Shreveport, went back on Alabama Shore.

Russell: What did he play again.

Love: Played --he was a clarinet player, but he played trumpet too, he could play trumpet too. He was a Japanee, a pure Jap.

Allen: Well, back to Mexico, I got you off the subject.

Allen: Now, ah, I played in Vera Cruz, and Mr. Lewis used to send us round them political places you know, them fellows runnin' for Confident or anything like that and he just lent 'em the band, just give 'em the band, and no charge, you know, and we'd go over there and play and then come back pick up where we left off at.

Allen: What was Mr. Lewis's name?

Love: Lewis Lombard.

Allen: And he was

Love: He was Italian, and ah we'd go over there and play and come on back to Tampico and pick up where we left off at with our, our band we used to send to other little places like

"Renventadero", "Verdadéro" that's in Vera Cruz too, ^[G. 1. 1112] Reventadero, a little village like, we used to go over there and play. Sometimes for the major or something like that. And we used to go to Monterrey, that's about towards Matamoros [sp.]

Allen: I've been there. Seen that saddle mountain? You know those two mountains.

Love: Yes, we used to go there and play sometime, they got a Union there too you know, its a kind of a district like they call it a Union and played in all them little joints down around in there.

Allen: Did you ever know a fellow named "Pep"? A bass player?

Love: Yes, he's from here.

Allen: umhmm

Love: He's a big dark fellow, they call him Pep, Pep, but his right name is Wiley King. He was down there when I was playing in Tampico, he didn't want no job. Man he's one of those bass violin players you know, he'd take his bass and he'd go out and look in a place like that and if it's crowded, a big crowd in there, where he can make some money he go on in there with his bass you know and set down on the bandstand every body knows him been over there,

been over there and they ax him to do a number you know, he'd get right on up and the Mexican fellas start to playing, they know what his tunes what he played and all. Man he'd get to whipping that bass you know, and he had a looking glass in the back of it. He'd spin it all around you know, and look at hisself and then throw it down on the floor and get on top like he was riding a horse you know, whipping it with the bow. And then the longer he played the hotter he'd get, you know until he'd get to the end, he'd get up and make his bow, You know and spin his bass around, you know, and look in that lookin' glass and man the money would just rainta down you know, he'd pick the money up, he'd sweep it up you know, and he'd go to the leader of the band and the leader just let him have the monty, they didn't want it you know. They was gettin' paid for their work, and he'd give the band what he want 'em to have anyhow, just give 'em something. He'd do that about twice if it was a big gang there, you know, and then he'd go to another place. He peep in the door and didn't see no crowd, he'd pass that one up and go to another one. He's over there now, doing that, if he ain't dead. I never heard of him, uh.

Russell: Still in Mexico, maybe.

Love: Still in Mexico, yeah. He's the greatest bass violin ^{uh} the-----player that Joe ^{Osier} ~~Osier~~ ^{11/} Crowley, he taught him. He's a good bass player. Professor Joe ^{Osier} teaches like Prof.

Manetta.

Russell: Oh, yeah. In Crowley

Love: In Crowley, yeah. I taken some lessons from him myself. He's great. Great cornet man. He used to sell instruments, used to sell instruments for Lyon -Healy, and in New York, he sold instruments, he's still in Crowley, teachin'

Russell: What's his last name? James---

Love: Joe, Joe Osier,

Allen: Osier

Russell: Oh, Osier.

Love: Professor Osier

Love: He taught that Shreveport bunch what I was in there taught me too. I couldn't read so very well when I got to Shreveport and they made a trip over there just for my, for me, and ah

he give us a nice dinner, he run the pool hall, we used to play Overtures, like "Raymond" and all like that. "Poet & Peasant" And he had that old cornet in the pool hall, hanging up there on the wall, he says, 'e talkin' in Italian "I haven't played this thing for years," he say, "but I'll take it down." We had rehearsal in there for my benefit, you know, and he play 'William Tell,' 'Light Cavalry,' 'Prince of India', and things like that he played 'em on the cornet with my hand for me, you know. And then he straightens me out. And after he straighten me out an' everything he told Henry Walker, that boy gonna be a swell cornet player, you got there, make him practice every day so he's good say he can play good now, better than a lotta fellas.' So we's on the road with a little band then you know, me and Harry Walker.

Allen: And what kind of system did he use, for teaching you, did he have any special things.

Love: You mean ah

Allen: In teaching you, did he use any particular kind of fingering? or

Love: Oh, yeah, he learn me all the, all the artificial fingering on the trumpet you know

Allen: Oh

Love: On the trumpet

Allen: And-uh-how much pressure would he use, would he be a pressure man, or would he

Love: Oh, he was a none pressure, he was professional trumpet player. Professional trumpet player.

Allen: Oh, I see, Well, who was that other fellow from Crowley over there that was a trumpet player, was famous jazzy trumpet player, I believe a famous trumpet player.

Love: Well ah

Allen: Around Crowley and

Love: That was Evans, that's the one of Joe's scholars

Allen: He's the one of his scholars. Love: He got kilt, yeah. Evan was his name.

Love: He was a nice trumpet player.

Russell: How did Evan play? Was he big?

Love: He'd had a broad tone, you know, and high notes, wasn't nothing for him to make. Just play different range, you know, and just range up there and make everything.

Allen: Did he play ratty?

Love: Yeah, he was kinda jazzified, More of a trumpet like, play on the style of Joe Osier.

Allen: ulmmmm

Love: We was good. To finish, I was tellin you about Mexico you know. It got bad over there. The Fellas, Villa and that bunch during the time I was there, they would come up in the little towns and rob the whole town, you know, take all the money outa the bank and things and they wouldn't catch 'em, they'd get out in them mountains, you know, so I decided to try to get away from there.

~~End of Spool~~

Well, then, I came back from Vera Cruz back up into Tampico, you see, and start to working in the Union again. So they had a strike over there, that year of 1920. They had a strike and we couldn't even go out the hotel. We hadda stay in side keep from being hurted. They was shootin fellas off in the houses over there in one stuff and the other. You see the company, the electric car company owned the water board and everything, you know, and they stopped cars from running, and cut the lights off, and we had to have candle light in the hotel where we livin at there, so, that throwed me way back, you know, you spend a lot of money when you ain't workin', so I planned on comin' back home just soon as I could get ready, you know. Christmas was comin' too and I hadn't ever missed a year home on a Christmas. So they was fighting so bad over there and they started to overthrow the government, you see, and they blowed up the track at ah Victoria. That's between Tampico and Monterrey. That's the state of Tam (aulipas?) So I went and seen an American counsul; told him to write me somgkind of paper that I could go home for Christmas, wouldn't be stopped on the border.

END OF REEL I

Summary: Betty B. Rankin

First Check: Marjorie T. Zander

Second Check: Richard B. Allen

Love: [the consul] He got some kick out me

Russell: Ok, it's going. You said you went back to the Consul to get a Visa or--

Love: Yeah, I went to the Consul and ah he give me a card - a certificate you know a card that they wouldn't hold me up on the border and he say, now, listen, says they blowed up the track there today in Victoria on the way to Monterrey and say, you got a chance to go, say, gonna have some soldiers on the train. You can't guarantee you'll get there safely, you want to take a chance? I told him, Yeah I wanta take a chance, I say it's bad over there, I was scared over there, everybody fighting. So he wrote out the certificate and he told me when I get to Monterrey I had to stop overnight anyhow, to continue to Matamoros the next morning, you see, say go to the station, to to American Hotel you get a room. Six o'clock in the morning, when get on the train goin' to the border, say they'll check your suitcase. They wiped all marks off and check my suitcase, so he say, now when you get to Matamoros if they ask you where you come from, you just tell 'em you just come from Monterrey, and they ask you what you're doing down in Mexico, just tell 'em you was visiting and playin' music at the same time, and ah you wanted to go home for Christmas, you thought you'd just go home. So they ask me, say where you come from, I say, Monterrey. He told me not to say nothing about Tampico it might hold me up then, you see, for a while.

Russell: (Lost in the overmodulation) What is wrong? Who knows?

Love: So, ah,

Allen: Turn it down, Bill.

Russell: It's down, it has nothing to do with turning it down. Wait a minute, Charlie, OK

Love: So I lit out for the border and ah when I got there on the Mexico side of the border, they have a Mexican there to search you again. I got there, they searched my baggage and everything, then they let you go to the middle of the bridge. There they have a United States soldier and a Mexican soldier. You got to take your clothes off, undress go in another room and they go all through your clothes you know. They do that on account of the --gettin' dope you know, they catch people with dope coming from over there and rip your tie open and ah so I passed in there. Well, when I got on the United States side in Brownsville, Texas I was satisfied then, you know. All American fellas but they sho' had to tell where you was born, how old you was, or who was your mother, your sisters and brothers, even ask you do you think

you was gona go back over there again, you know. I told 'em well I didn't gonna live over there, I live in the United State I'm going home for Christmas and if [excuse me] if I don't find a good job I might go back over there and work some more, I might, but I say I ain't made up my mind whether I'm going back or not. I didn't want 'em to think I was scared, you know. But I was. I was so busy getting home. He said, well OK, and I was all right then. I went and got me some cards, and wrote home you know on the border.

Allen: You didn't stop in Matamoros to see the sights there?

Love: Matamoros.

Allen: Yes. Well what, what---

Love: Oh, yeah, I stop there when we was going down in there. When we went down there.

Allen: Well if you didn't tell us before, what was Matamoros like, I'd be interested to know.

Love: Oh it's a little, it's like the front on Canal St. you know, Got one big saloon up on the hill and fellows laying all over the galley like alligators, you know loaded, they go from Brownsville, go over there to drink, you know, and they lay all on the gallery, and when they get tired of drinking, they come back on the Brownsville side and go to sleep. You see there's no liquor on the Brownsville side.

Allen: Well, did they have any music there?

Love: Oh, yeah, all kinda band, you know, some of the nicest, prettiest music, just little band going around on the street playing, they call that serenadin'

Allen: Uhhmm

Love: All kind of pretty music

Allen: Did you ever hear any mariachis? Did you ever hear o' that word? Mariachis, what they call 'em.

Love: Mariachis.

Allen: Mariachis. You know, they have stringed instruments, mostly, and sometimes a trumpet, they might have a harp, several guitars, different kinds of guitars.

Love: Well, most all the little bands that I heard, you know around the street like that, they use ah violin.

Allen: Uhhmm

Love: And Big Guitar, bass violin, and ah trumpet, clarinet, sometimes a trombone.

Allen: And would they play Mexican music.

Love: Oh, yeah, they're very good musicians, man they plays pretty music, lovelu--I used to like to hear 'em myself, and many times like that you know, I'd become known over there and ah fellow's known me they'd call me to play. [In Spanish] Tell me played cornet with 'em and I'd to start to playing with 'em and they'd just look at one another when I'd get through playing, you know, and they'd mock whatever jazz I put in there Toot-toot. Try to get that rhythm you know.

Allen: Did you play the regular Mexican music with 'em?

Love: Oh, yeah, they good musicians and they got the music ranged up you know Towards last.

Allen: Were you reading?

Love: One of 'em. Yeah, towards last, they got had a good job before they blowed up that track there, we was goin to Mexico City, I had been practiced up with the band. They was gonna they had a good job there, \$20 a night, all expense paid, you stay right in the hotel and tips. Oh, I'd had some dough when I come back here, so the fella had done made the contract some kind of way and short by after that that's where they blowed up the tracks at Victoria and that bust up the trip.

Allen: HMMMMM.

Love: And I didn't get a chance to go. That's why I wanted to come home. I was disgusted then you know, that big job. That \$20 a night, no expense. I'd a had money saved and tips is so good over there you make over 15 or \$20 a night tip: That's why I come outa there and come back here and time I got back here Harry Walker come down here with his big old bus. He's getting the band to go to Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota. And we picked up some musicianers in Jackson, Mississippi, and Memphis, and a entertainer and went back to Alexandria for two weeks rehearsal. We rehearse for two weeks got the band in shape and left, by the way of St. Louis, we give a dance in Blytheville, Arkansas, you know we work all the way going up. Blytheville, Arkansas then we went to St. Louis and gave a dance in St. Louis, Peoria, Illinois, we give a dance there.

Allen: Who was in the band then, do you remember their names?

Love: Harry Walker's band, a fellow by the name of wheat in Alexandria in played alto sax, and he had another young fella used to be on the show there, I can't think of his name, any-

way they had another cornet player. I was playin' a second trumpet, this boy had been with Harry's band a long while, his name was Charlie, too, just like me, Charlie Bolier. He's a nice nice trumpet player, Charlie Bolier, and ah the trombone player was named "Mack", and we had Jackson from Mobile, banjo player. He's good, a good banjo player, and we had "Ship" on bass. He used to play cornet with Harry long, awhile ago, right after I had left the band, he played bass, let's see what drummer we had, oh, yeah, we had this boy, from here, Joe Stroughter, he died. He went to Chicago, he didn't come back. The band come back but he stayed up there, his mother was in Chicago.

Russell: What'd he play?

Love: Drums.

Allen: He used to play with Lee Collins?

Russell: Yeah, I remember him, now.

Love: He used to play solo whistle, too, you know, play solos on the whistle one of them then slidin' whistle, he was good at that. I'm trying to think of somebody, the fellas the entertainers what was with us was named "Rock" they called him "Rock".

Allen: How do you spell that?

Love: Just like ROCK, just like any rock.

Allen: Was that like a eight rock?

Love: Yas, something like that

Allen: Was he dark like an eight ball?

Love: No, he about my color, he was from Memphis.

Allen: They used to call "Pigmeat", Markham "Rock", and They used to call him "Eight-Rock" That was his color, did you know that?

Love: This was a brown skin fellow, 'bout my color. He come from Memphis.

Russell: Did you ever hear "Chinee", you know Abby Foster play the slide whistle?

Love: Little Chinee

Russell: Yeah with Celestin's band or---

Love: I never heard him play the whistle, I heard him play drums, great cymbal beater. He lik to beat cymbals, and tom-tom. But this boy used to really play that solo he'd play a solo just like a man would on a trombone or something.

Allen: So what happened with the band, you went on up north with Harry Walker?

Love: We went on up and ah, after we got up there and we got to St. Paul, Minnesota, we didn't give no dance there. We went right on into ^{Chippewa} Chippawary Falls [sp.]. I know I stop at the Ot-wah [sp.] hotel, and the whole time we was there, bout two-three days, we rehearse you know, and ah, the booking agent lived in that town, Mr. Lyons, that's his name, Mr. Lyons. Well he come down when we got, when we got the band all ready, he listen to it and then we got out on the road then, Steven's Point, Iowa, ^{Wisconsin} [Wise?] we played all out that a way, Waterloo, Iowa, turned around and come back. And made some more Iowa and then we goes over to Milwaukee at the Dells room, we played there. Played there twice, played in Wisconsin, and all them town around, and then we commence to having some bad luck. The boys had commence to syndication 'n the bunch from Jackson. They want to get a smaller band you know. We was already out on the road, and they want to get a smaller band and pull out, you know, a regular cabaret bunch. And ah I got in on the----got in on the conversation they was runnin, you know, and ah Dilly Alexander, he was playing piano with us you know

Allen: Which Alexander?

Love: Milton Alexander, Biscuit's brother, you know Alexander play the saxophone, he used to play in the band.

Allen: Don't know him.

Russell: Adolphe?

Love: Adolphe, yes, his brother.

Russell & Allen (in chorus): "Tats", "Tats"

Love: Yes, Tats brother, he's the piano player with us. He was a young fellow you know and his daddy let him go on my account and told me to take care of him, you know, and I took care of him on the job. So these guys had syndicated and got him to play piano, you know, and they gonna take the band away from Harry Walker, and they didn't want me in there. I knowed too much for 'em--they couldn't use me like they want, you know, and they was gonna use, Joe [Stroughter] cause Joe wanted to stay up that way in Chicago, you see and they gonna use one CORNET, THAT FELLA WAS playing first trumpet. So they stole the music. That's what give the whole thing away. Harry had about \$25 or \$30 worth of new music which belong to him

personally and ah when we went to bed in a little town up around Iowa there somewhere, the boys went to bed and they stole the music [interference] you see, we had a big job to play in ah--what is the capital of Wisconsin, ah Madison.

Russell: Madison

Love: Madison, yeh, we had to play in Madison on a big job, had signed a contract, made a contract and everything. So dese boys stole the music that night, when we went over that played this big job with the big band, they wasn't going no further, with Harry, they was gonna take the job you see, well--me and Harry had to come back and Ship three who had to come back to Alexandria, they didn't want me and they didn't want Ship. They wasn't gonna use no bass, so I told Alexander I say, look, I say, don't you fool with them fellas, I say, I'm coming in that syndicate thing now. Say the best thing you can do, I say, that's a nice fella. You know I work with Harry for years, I say, and Alec was kinda scared, see, well supposin he get mad and I'm way up here and they don't bring me home, I say, I'm the one to look after you, your daddy tole me to look out for you, I say, and you're not going with them fellas. And he fool around and he say, well, you think I oughta tell Harry. I say, that's the thing you should do, tell him. Tell him what 'em fellas's fixing to do. And I say, ah, he say, well I took \$35 from 'em. They give 'em Me and Wheat, they gonna take Harry's alto sax player, too.

Russell: Take his sax?

Love: Yeah, they give 'em \$35 apiece you know, those youngsters didn't know what it's all about, you know.

Allen: Take his saxophone player,

Love: Yeah, gonna take his player.

Russell: Oh, I was gonna say "what they wanta steal---"

Love: He told me that, you know I say, well, you go tell Harry just what them boys gonna do, I say, that's a nice fella, I say, you might want to play with him again, you know and I say, you're goin back to New Orleans, I say, he goin' take us back to New Orleans just like he come down there and got us, I say, that's a gentleman. So, Alexander told him, you know, and then I come up with him, told Harry, I say, "Yeah, they got a syndicate on here, you better look out for yourself, you know, Mr. Lyons, he is--he went back home Chippewa Falls,

you know. And he come pick the band up the next day. Harry say, Mr. Lyons, say I owe you 'bout \$15, say, here's your \$15, say, now you owe for the gas this week. He say, "I'd like a settlement." Mr. Lyons say, "why you want a settlement?" He say, "well, I that's the way I run business, I want to get my business right I done paid my debt and now I want you to pay for the gas." Got the money for the gas, and everything, you know. So we's so busy gettin away from that town to Iowa we loaded up, you know, and this syndicate done quit riding with us, they's ridin' with Mr. Lyons in his car, you know, a great big car. Harry said, "Uh-huh, I see what they doing." So we lit out, you know. So, Harry say, where is the music at? Say, look here, I say, we got to stop and get out our music. That settle it. I got too much music there to lose. So Harry say, I'm gonna stop in this next town and get that music. So when we got to the next town there was a sheriff there waiting for us. (laughter by Love) Waitin' there for me, Harry and Ship and Wheat and Alexander. They was waiting for us, you know. He say "course I ain't got no charge against you, I can't arrest you boys, but them fellas say you all took their music, and you all got the music." He say, "Yeah, I took it, it's my own property; say they stole it from me and hid under a mattress." He say, "I got the music back, he say, well I'd like for you all to drive to the curb there" and say "you're not 'rested or nothin', you can go on an eat, some breakfast or whatever you want, 'til them fellas get here They're right behind you all, they ought to be here in about a half hour." So we waited there and then the big thing come off. We went over to the City Hall and Harry told the chief of police you know all about it, say, "well the fellow syndicated on me." say, "We had a contract in Madison to play," he say, "but now, I don't want none of it, say I been a musicianer all my life," and he say, "Love here he's been with me, and Ship took Love's place when Love didn't play cornet no more. I use Ship on the bass". Ship say, "this fellow here", say, "I raised him in Alexandria my saxophone player say, they have him too, and they even bribed him gave him \$35. Told him if he didn't like the job he could come back on the Cushion's [by train]. He say, "now I don't want none of it, and I'm goin bring these boys back where I got 'em from." And Rock wanted to speak then, he was from Memphis, he said - uh - "Well, Harry I don't wanta go back down there no more, I want to stay back up north here, I ain't goin down there no more, ~~I want to stay back up north~~ Harry says, "I ain't got nothing to do with you all." Say, "I come and got you in Memphis and I'll bring you back home, if you wanta go home,

So, if you want to stay up here with them, you can go ahead on and stay. But Alexander is going home with Love and Wheat, I'll take care of Wheat because I raised this boy" and say, "Ship don't want nothing to do with it and say I'm through, Harry say." I can see the jail doors yearning for me. I quits, he says cause I never been 'rested in my life, never been in no trouble, never give nobody no trouble, and so the sheriff spoke, you know." and he says, "well I'll tell you what you do, why don't you boys just go on and finish that engagement and then quit after that, and then go home. Harry say, "No, when fellas get that dirty to do a trick like that, I don't want nothin' to do with 'em", he says. "I never been in trouble and I don't intend to get in nothing, I'm through. He told Mr. Lyons, I'm through. Man, Mr. Lyons was outdone, you know. Mr. Lyons had advertised that big dance. Well they had enough band, enough men to play for it, you know, but it wasn't but ten pieces, so Harry, say so we all go on and take the job, say it's your job, you've taken the band anyhow, just go ahead on and take it. So they went on, we come back South. We got home a day after Christmas. And on that trip coming back to Alexandria, something happened, something happened to me there, man we had a blowout, and fixed the old car, we had a trailer, you know with nothin' but instruments in it. It was 'fo' day in the morning, had day was just breaking, you know, and the people all up that away round Illinois in the country like that they's scared O' people at night, they ain't gonna get up give you no gas, [Unintelligible], and we stopped there for the longest, hollered for the man to get gas, you know. He wouldn't come outa there. So they send me on to the next nearby little town, you see to get a gas. An two big bulldogs got at me, I was hollering, you know, 'round the station there trying to get the man up, you know, and up the post I went, and that dog kept me there a full hour, man. I was up on that post and everytime I'd come down he'd start to growlin'; so, I finally got away from there. A fella got up and come outand say, "Come down, I'll bring em off" and run the dogs home you know I come down. And ah I went back and Harry and them pulled up and got gas and we left and we come on, got in, got in Alexandria the day after Christmas. Harry give a big dinner. And he was so tired of driving you know. He ah he give it to me and Alexander train fare and we come home, you know, w e come home on the cushions from Alexandria, and he tole us, he say, "Wait here a week anyway, say, I might get a good job or something and make up a little band here and play, so ah ah we stayed there and me and Alex got tired you know, we there,

wasn't gonna be nothing much so we decided to come home. Harry had to fix his bus up you see, and say "when I get it fixed if I come to New Orleans for you fellas, will you go back with me, huh". I say, "Yeah, we'll go back," but we had jobs when he want, when he come down there for us. So he went to Jackson and pick up Joe White and some of them fellas. He went back up there.

Allen: Say, I wanted to ask you something. How old were you when you wrote "Black Cat on the Fence"?

Love: Oh, I was a little bitty fella, me and George Lewis was playin together, Dan Williams, Clarence Williams' brother, he was a guitar player, guitar, and he played guitar and bass. George Lewis, he come up playin strings, you know, like cigar box violin, he gotta a old violin of mine there now. I didn't give it to him, I just bought it when I was workin in a jewelry store up for F. L. Trepangier Brothers and he kept the violin, he think it's his now. He raised some sand, I went by Baton Rouge to git that violin once you know, he say, "Man, that's my violin, you have to take me to get that". You know, I laughed at him. I let him kept it. You know we's friends from boys. He learnt the violin, he learned mandolin, and he's professional on all them instruments, he plays good, but he is a wonderful bass player. They call him the "String King" in Baton Rouge.

Allen: I wonder where his address is now?

Love: I think it's Liberty Street there his people own that property. You know where, I believe it's State St. where the blind institute there?

Allen: I don't know.

Love: It runs into that street, it's Liberty

Allen: Hhmmm

Love: That's the last I heard of him--he was living on Liberty Street, but he can easily be found, you don't know where them saloons are at out there, near the that depot, I forgot what they call it, The Cotton Belt, ain't it, and going into Baton Rouge on the bus, they got a lot of little saloons in there, he can be easily found by asking they fellas, because he always stop there.

Allen: Well, that would be nice, I'll look him up sometime when I get up there again.

Love: Yeah, just ask where is Baranco's Barbershop, or Bernard's Bernard's Hall, I don't know

what street that's on, but just ask for Bernard's Hall and Baranco's Saloon. He be easy to find, everybody in Baton Rouge knows him.

great granddaughter. ?? [unintelligible]

Allen: That's all right.

Love: After that trip I got a letter from Buck Nelson on the Florida Blossoms Minstrel Show. And ah in '31 I worked over there, you see, and ah, they liked my playin when they opened up in, no in 1930, they liked my playin, in '31, they send for me to be the leader of the band over there, you see, and I bought Victor Spencer over there with me you know they wanted me to bring a cornet player, Earl Humphrey, that's Willie Humphries [Humphrey] brother, he's trombone he's over there yet, so we goes out with the show that year, and just about three or four weeks before the show was to turn round and go back to Macon, Georgia, we got some bad news. We had to find a place to park all the show and they found a place in Salisbury, North Carolina, parked everthing and closed the show, and ah Mr. Cliff Sparks offer to any man working in the kitchen on anything on the show to go to New York to work for him, you see, he's gonna open up some kind of bus line, you know. open up a bus line in New York, and he called me, offer me a job, and I told him no, all my family was in New Orleans, and I was going back you see, end of spool

continue Reel II

Well, like to have you over there, he said, we'll find something for you to do. So I didn't go and they pulled off two, three of the buses, you know, all them want a go to New York steada goin home, go to New York. I come home, and the show closed and I ain't been out since.

Allen: What year was that?

Love: That was 1931.

Russell: Can you tell us some more about some of the musicians you worked with like Punch, for instance "Punch" [Miller] told once he used to work with you awhile, traveled with you on a show,

Love: He worked with me ah in the Duconge Brothers show, in-uh-Chattanooga, Tennessee. We worked there the whole season. Wasn't very successful, there wasn't much money around there then, and I had to leave t ere, I left there and come back home, you see.. "Punch" used to

rehearsal with me everyday and then we'd go up on Lookout Mountain you know and look around. Everyday he'd come over and me and him would play together. He got straight on that cornet and ahhh Billy Mack picked him up. I told him show he was good for him, would learn him a whole lot, you know, make him faster and quicker so he went with Billy Mack and he did pick up right a whole lot and I left shortly after that, I left Ducongé 's band in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Allen: Well who was in the band, were there any New Orleans boys in all?

Love: Well, they had Punch and Little ^{Bill} Phil Coycault was up there already.

Allen: Oh, is that the clarinet player?

Love: & "skinny" Lewis---yeah, little crippled clarinet player. He's kinda good, yeah

Allen: Coycault

Love: He was up there already and ah he had his brother on tenor, he wasn't so good, he was just learnin.

Allen: On tenor sax?

Love: Yeah, Ducongé's brother, Earl, they call him, Earl Decongé,

Allen: Oh, I see, I thought you meant Cripple ^{Bill} Phill's brother.

Love: Phill died you know. Phill was up there already, but he was in the band, too.

Allen: Well, what was the what were the Ducongé's name?

Love: Ah, Adolphe Decongé, that was the oldest one. That was a piano player. That was his band, Earl Ducongé was his brother.

Allen: And where were they from?

Love: They're from here. Down in the Seventh Ward. He got kilt too, you know.

Allen: They're some of 'em around still I think, Pete Ducongé was here, Ralston Crawford met HIM.

Love: Yeah, Pete was in France, you know. Kinda little brockly face.

Allen: What kinda face?

Love: Brockly face, spots on his face

Allen: Oh, yeah. I think he made some records with Louis Armstrong over there, Bill, we'll HAVE to look that up.

Russell: Yes. Did you ever play with Bunk Johnson, any plays?

Love: Ooooooh yeah, Bunk came to Alexandria during the time I was with Harry's band when I first start to working with Harry. Me and Bunk woth was young fellers but he'd a little older than me, and uh, well he didn't do so well round Alexandria on accounta the fellows around there play a kinda classified music like, you, and Bunk used to play that ragtime then you know. So he left there and went to H_ouston. I don't know what band they had over there, got with some band over there.

Russell: I think a theater band, maybe, but who did he play with in, is it Alexandria, you way, you hear him.

Love: He used the play, his first job was with Peter Bocage and Buddy Johnson [Superior Band?] Right here in t e city. When he left here, that's where he come up around Alexandria.

End of Reel II