

EDDIE RICHARDSON

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October 29, 1960 Also present: Richard B. Allen, Marjorie T. Zander. (Interview recorded at Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University.)

Edward Richardson was born April 18, 1903 in the section of New Orleans called "The Battle field," around Lafayette and Cypress [streets]. His musical listening experience before he began playing included [trumpeter] Kid Rena and the Excelsior Brass Band; he heard the Excelsior playing parades. ER's family were not musical. ER was about seventeen years old when he began listening to Rena; he was in his late teens when he began following parades; he says the older people, his parents or others, wouldn't let young children follow parades. When ER first began learning to play the trumpet, he had a teacher, Professor Hansbury [sp?]; Hansbury was a good teacher who had a way with young people. ER guesses he himself was in his twenties when he began studying. Hansbury taught his students individually for about a month; then they formed a little band; the first tune they learned was "Little Liza Jane." Others besides ER in the band: Albert Brown, drums, and the late Charlie Lonzo, guitar. RBA mentions a left-handed guitar player named Charlie[Dowden] who played with "Noon" [Johnson] and Sam [Rankin]. The band with Brown and Lonzo played mostly from music; ER can recall only four tunes that he knew by head then; they were: "Little Liza Jane," "Some of These Days," "Down by the Riverside," and "It's A Long Way to Tipperary."

Another of the old trumpet players to whom ER listened a lot was Buddy Petit. Batiste Brown, of the Carrollton section, also taught ER, using a method book and his own manuscript. ER is sure Hansbury, his first teacher, used a method as well as manuscript, but he can't

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remember the name of the method. So far as ER knows, Hansbury didn't play in any bands at the time ER studied with him. Bat Brown played with a band which mostly played parades.

The band formed by the Hansbury students played for contributions; they might make some money or not. The last place ER remembers playing with that band was at a place on [North] Claiborne [Avenue] about three blocks below Elysian Fields [Avenue], where they played every Sunday evening. The band was led by George Jones, an old-timer who played guitar and sometimes bass; he sang and was a comedian; "Little Liza Jane" was his favorite vocal number. The band remained together a year or two.

Later ER began playing parades with Kid Rena. Sometimes George Lewis played [clarinet]; sometimes Buddy Petit played [cornet]. ER thinks Rena's brother [Joe Rene (sic)] was the snare drummer. [See also Reel II below.]

RBA says he and Punch [Miller] recently saw trombonist Morris French in the country.

After leaving Jones' band, ER and others formed an orchestra, but they were not successful, so they broke up. Louise Delvie [sp?] was the pianist; Duffy played alto saxophone; Albert Brown played drums. Louise Delvie, who was also organist at St. Katherine's Church, continued her job at the church after the orchestra broke up. The band played mostly from [written] music, although they had a few "head" numbers. ER thinks he began playing a few parades with Rena after the orchestra's demise. The time was before the Depression.

Rena's brass band read music. Rena usually played lead.

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Buddy Petit and ER also played trumpet in the band; ER says Rena and Petit were on a par as brass band performers.

When ER was young, before he began playing, he would go with a group to Chalmette [National Cemetery] on May 30 to observe Memorial Day; although ER doesn't remember Louis Armstrong, he says Armstrong played [in a band?] for the ceremonies; Armstrong was still in the [Waifs] Home at the time. RBA says he thinks [Louis] "Shots" [Madison] was in the home at the same time [Cf. other interviews]; ER remembers seeing "Shots" around the Astoria, where he played music, and the Cooperators Hall.

ER went to dances before he began playing; he attended dances at Cooperators Hall, Economy Hall, the Pythian Temple Roof Garden, and various lawn parties. Some of the musicians who played at the the various halls were "Shots" [Madison], Kid Rena, [Henry "Red"] "Sonny" Allen [Jr.], and [Oscar "Papa"] Celestin; ER heard Allen and Celestin and their bands alternating at a hall on the same night, one band at either end of the hall.

Buddy Petit and Sam Morgan (brother of Albert Morgan) were among those who played for lawn parties; both were trumpet players. Morgan had a nice band.

Most of all the bands, including Celestin's and Sam Morgan's, used two trumpets during the period prior to ER's taking up trumpet. Albert, a trumpet player from across the river, was the last second trumpet with Celestin, as ER recalls. ER later says the trumpet player mentioned was "Sonny" Allen.

Playing with Rena's brass band was the only job ER had at the time; jobs were few, but ER's family were still supporting him, as he was quite young. Clubs ER remembers playing for with Rena's band were the Deweys

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Club, the Tulane Club and the Violet Club; club members dressed much the same as paraders today, e. g., the Jolly Bunch; all paraders then, however, were on foot [Cf. other interviews].

Rena might play for only three or four funerals a year.

The two most well-known brass bands for parades during the time were Rena's and the [Original] Tuxedo Brass Band [led by Celestin?]. [Cf. other interviews.] Their repertoires were much the same. Some of the hymns, etc., the bands played for funerals were "Bye and Bye," "Over in the Gloryland," "Sing On" and "[When the] Saints [Go Marching In]." On the way back [from the cemetery] they played [secular] songs for the second line to enjoy rather than hymns. The bands played hymns from memory which ER learned from hymn books in church; they read the marches, such as "Maryland, My Maryland." The arrangement used then was the same as the one the Eureka Brass Band plays today. ER says Percy Humphrey [leader of the Eureka] plays the trumpet solo [bugle call] in "Maryland" much the same way Rena did. Tunes the Rena band played when returning from a funeral might include "The Sheik," "Marie," and "Put on Your Old Grey Bonnet."

Blues were mostly played in dance halls, and during the latter part of a dance. A lot of jump numbers were played earlier. Blues were played at a later time in the streets. They played "ST. Louis Blues" and the "old blues."

End of Reel I

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Zander.

After playing with Kid Rena [and his brass band], ER formed his own band, which was not successful [see Reel I]. He then began playing occasionally with the brass band led by Jimmy Jackson; Jackson didn't play a musical instrument, but led the band. Dave Bailey played [bass] drum in the band, and Batiste Brown was one of the trumpet players; ER thinks the Jackson band was the one which later became the E. Gibson Band, with which ER plays at present. [Cf. interviews with members of E. Gibson and photographs in Archive. RBA.]

ER worked with Rena about one year. He played with the Jackson band after World War II. He didn't play with anyone during the [19]30's or the early [19]40's because there wasn't much work.

ER was playing with Rena when he joined the [musicians] union; RBA says [Adolphe] Alexander, Sr., father of [Adolphe] "Tats" [Alexander, Jr.], signed a paper which bears the date of ER's admission into the union; ER still has the paper.

The next band after Jackson's that ER played with was the Eureka Brass Band; ER was operating his own pressing shop at the same time, and overwork caused him to have a nervous breakdown. ER says none of the members of the Eureka came to see him when he was sick. He intended to continue as a member of the union after he recovered, but union policy wouldn't allow him certain benefits, so he became non-union. He doesn't think he paid any union dues while playing with Jackson; RBA thinks Jackson's band was non-union.

Percy Humphrey, [Dominque] "'Ti'-boy" Remy and ER were the trumpet players in the Eureka; ER thinks that when Remy left town [Willie] Pajaud replaced him. Humphrey played lead; Remy played

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second trumpet; ER played second or lead. ER says most music was arranged for only two trumpets, fo of the three trumpets in the band, two usually alternated lead, while the other played the second part. ER describes the usual second trumpet part as being either harmony to the lead or doubling the lead an octave lower. Other members of the Eureka Bfass Band when ER was a member: Albert Warner and Sunny Henry, trombones; [Robert] "Son Fewclothes" [Lewis] was the bass drummer. ER doesn't remember who the snare drummer was. RBA says Arthur Ogle, called "Hogan," was the snare drummer with the Eureka for years; "Son" White and Ernest Rogers also played snare drum with the band at different times. [Joseph] "Red" Clark was playing sousaphone when ER joined the Eureka. [Reuben] Roddy played [alto] Sax and Manuel Paul played [tenor] sax. [RR moved to New Orleans after his discharge from the Army, during or after World War II. RBA.] George Lewis sometimes played clarinet with the band, although the instrument was seldom used. ER doesn't recall which trumpet player he replaced in the Eureka; RBA says [Alcide] Landry and [Louis] "Shots" [Madison] played trumpet in the band at one time. [Cf. Jazzways.]

Tom Anderson's place in the District is mentioned. ER says Chris Kelly, a trumpet player, worked all through the District. Kelly, like most trumpet players in small bands using only one trumpet, playedⁱⁿ all ranges.

When ER recovered from his nervous illness, he began playing with his present band, the E. Gibson Band. Personnel: [A.B.] Spears, manager [and tenor sax]; Johnnie [2 sp.] Wimberley, John [Henry] McNeil [and ER], trumpets; Dave Bailey, bass drum; Calvin [i. e., Carroll, called "Cal"] Blaunt, Freddie Miller [i. e., Thompson], trombone (RBA says Miller has "Red" Clark's old trombone, add that

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English trombonist Chris Barber says the instrument, which has a 5 1/2 inch bell, is a military style instrument.) Leon [Vageon] is playing trumpet as the usual replacement for McNeil. Louis Keppard is playing [brass] bass. George Sterling plays snare drums. [Robert] Davis [i. e., George Davidson] plays alto saxophone. ER agrees that Lawrence Dent sometimes plays clarinet or sax with the band. [I have not heard him play sax. RBA.] ER says trombonist Eddie Morris played a couple of jobs with the E. Gibson in the past. ER has played only one dance with the E. Gibson; they play parades and funerals almost exclusively. He prefers to play for dances, but can't get any dance work.

Talk of Carnival [i.e., Mardi Gras season] parades and organizations, ER doesn't like to play funerals because they bring back too many memories. He enjoys playing [social] parades, and says he could play one every day.

ER tried to get [Oscar "Papa"] Celestin to teach him, but Celestin was too busy with his Tuxedo Band. ER never played with that band, nor did he ever play with John Casimir's Young Tuxedo Brass Band, although he played with John Casimir and his brother, Joe Casimir, in a "jump up" band sometimes put together by George Jones [see Reel I] for specific occasions.

Some of the hymns the E. Gibson Band play: "Bye and Bye," "Over in the Gloryland," "[When the] Saints [Go Marching In]," and "[We Shall] Walk Through the Streets of the City." Two marches they play are the "E. Gibson Special" [Cf. notes on E. Gibson Brass Band] and "Maryland, My Maryland." They also play various blues and [standard popular] songs. The band rehearse every Thursday evening.

The Eureka Brass Band rehearsed only when they had a new number. Kid Rena would rehearse his band about three times a month, mostly on head numbers; ER says they never used any music.

END of Reel II.

