

*unedited  
first draft*

HENRY "SLEEPY" ROBERTSON  
REEL I [of 2]  
September 22, 1961

INTERVIEWER: William Russell  
ALSO PRESENT: Ralph Collins  
NOTES: Richard B. Allen  
SUMMARY: Dan Weisman  
TYPING: Dan Weisman

WR says the date is September 22, or 23, 1961. This is Bill Russell, and Ralph Collins, interviewing Mr. Robertson.

(Low and muffled sound throughout, makes listening difficult.)

My name is Henry Robertson, and they call me "Sleepy" for nickname....I don't know how I got the nickname.

The fellows over the river in Algiers - that's where I was born at - and all the fellows, youngsters used to come up, and I don't know. I guess I was about the slowest one in the crowd, and they would call me Sleepy.

Every time they'd come be to look for me, I'd be laying out on the ground somewhere. What they call me Sleepy.

WR makes a note that 2311 Jackson Avenue is the address where we're having the interview.

I was born 1894, SR says. When I was born, they didn't have birth certificates, but I had a bible. They kept the date, and I kept the date.

I always put this in a little book, and put it in my pocket. When I'd be walking, I'd carry the little book so I would have the right date with me.

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I know the date. I been laying off to write to Washington, and get me a birth certificate.

WR never got one either when he was born. They come in handy for social security, and things like that.

I would have trouble if I went down there now to try to get on social security, SR notes.

November 25, 1894, I was born over in Gretna. Now, it's all called Orleans Parish. At that time it was Jefferson Parish, but now it's all Orleans Parish.

I didn't have anyone else but me [in the family play music]. I was the only one that picked it up.

I started following a parade on Carnival Day...on the other side of the river. Here's how it happened. A fellow that was playing bass drum - I believe, he was coming from Gretna - well, he got to drinking, and just over-drink himself. Now, he couldn't play no more.

I was the biggest one in the parade, second lining on the banquette. Well, the fellow who was playing then, a fellow by the name of Baptiste [Mosley], by the name of Bat, over the river.

He called me, said, 'Come here Sleepy. Do you think you can play this drum? Can you carry it?' I said, 'Sure.'

'Do you think you can play it?' I said, 'I'll play it!' He said, 'Come on.'

He was playing snare drum, the little drum. I started right

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then from then on, then on, then on hitting the drum. From then I started to play, and kept me on going.

I was somewhere around in my twenties, about 22, getting on there....That's why I could catch on so good.

I was there every night looking at them fellas in different cabarets playing, right on there with them. When they wanted to get out, I'd come in. That's how they got me to playing.

Then they come out with these big bands. What they would call the Excelsior.

They didn't have these unions to do then that had to be done. That was out. They would take anyone who really could play.

The Excelsior Band was a great band at that time. They had this fellow [Henry] Red Allen [Sr.], old man Red Allen.

He's got a son out in New York now. He's got a band called Red Allen.

That was his father, old man Allen. I think he was the manager of the Excelsior Band. [!!! RBA.]

At that time, they had a fellow playing drums with them, the regular drummer. The same fellow I called Baptiste [Mosley].

They had a fellow by the name of...Eddie Jackson, one of the greatest tuba players in this city...upright tuba.

But, he could play. He could play with two bands. You have a band in front, and a band behind him, and he could play in the middle. That's the way he could play in the streets.

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You could hear him. He was coming right on this street with a parade, and you could hear him from here almost to Claiborne Street.

That sound was that strong. One of the best that they had in this city.

They had old Buddy Petit. And at that time, we had Joe Oliver, Louis Armstrong. All those men used to play with bands like.

They get those different good men with all those different bands. Like if you had a good band, and your band wasn't playing, and he wasn't working, you might hire him.

Still, that band carried that name. Regardless of what man was in that band - what band he came out of - it was still the Excelsior Band. Because that was the name of the band. They had their regular members.

Lots of time, like now, they don't have their regular members, but it's the same band. Those men can produce the same amount of music as those fellows tend to do.

That's why we had - now we have the old Excelsior - we had the old Tuxedo Band. Now, we had the Olympia Band. That was a street brass band, big band.

Well, they had a [ ] by the name of Kid Dry. He was a fellow that had a band--Kid Dry.

He left here, and went North. He played with those fellows,

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but he had a band. Yeah.

Kid Ory had a brass band because he was a trumpet player [!!! RBA]. Kid Ory. He had a band because he used to play Downtown in the Vieux Carre'. That's where he was.

Willie Wilson had a band. That was called the old Eureka. I played with him a long time. This was about the oldest band we had in the city.

[SR apparently looks at photographs of the Eureka Brass Band and a band he played in c. 1959-1960.] All the members of that band, now practically all those men are dead out.

Happy [Goldston] was one of the best snare drummers with the Eureka band years ago, SR continues. They had a fellow named Big Red - Red Clark - a bass horn player, who just died like that last December.

All of these were Eureka Band and John Casimir who used to play clarinet in the Young Tuxedo. All those men played all old-time music.

SR was thinking of getting together with some of them and play Dixieland. He really can't play modern.

But, Dixieland--he was talking with seven other old men about playing strictly Dixieland dance music. He had a fellow by the name of Buster - trombone player, Buster Moore - a nice fellow. He can play too.

They had a fellow who played banjo, a real shorty just about

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this high, "Little Dad" [Vincent]. He died.

[LDV] had two brothers of them who died too. It kind of stopped after the banjo player died.

It would be nothing but Dixieland, the old-time [songs] like "Basin Street." Got a boy, not so old-timer, to play trumpet who could play Dixieland. Jack [Wimberly] who come out from across the lake there....

We used to play all down in Violet. That big house used to go all the way to the lake where they had a dance hall in Mandeville and Covington.

SR says he used to play on that boat that went north of the lake to different places. It had nothing but old-timers, nothing but Dixieland music.

At that time they had a fellow by the name of [Richard] Baptiste, one of the best trumpet players who had to stop playing. He was a little bitty small fellow, and lost his teeth.

To show how good he is, a man gave RB \$150 cash money to go and get him teeth, and he wouldn't play.

We have lots of good musicians right now, SR notes. If you could go down to the union hall right now.

I was in that union. But I couldn't get nothing out of it, because they say, he's too old.

You don't get nothing out of it but the [        ]. How old you got to be. You got to be 35, 38 years old to get an insurance

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license.

You get too old, like you can't get in. It doesn't make any sense.

For the old-timers, the other people want to hire, that's a problem. That's the way the union....

You're a union band. A lot of them fellas. They hire--what they do they get old-timers to play with them, the union band.

People ask for Dixieland music, and they can't play it. Now, way back they had "Bucket Got a Hold In It." They couldn't play it. They couldn't play it.

They couldn't play a decent waltz until old-timers got back on the floor. They can't play it. They can't play waltzes. Why?

They got the bands they got now two and three men, or four men, on the music stand. They can't four men play no music not to save their life.

They got no compliment, mostly. They got no background mostly. They got none. You got to have a man for every part of your band to answer....

SR likes playing with old man Wilson on clarinet. He's an old fellow, pretty good. He's way back there before SR.

He can really jump up there, play that clarinet, and make that clarinet talk. He plays an E-flat, sitting on the dances there.

He was living Downtown. He's one of the old old timers. The

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only way you can get him is like if I go get a job, SR says, I had a job, and I could go find him.

He don't fool around you know with these youngsters. He can't play that type of music they play. They don't hire him, and he can't hire them because they don't come.

We had a guy a couple of months ago up there in the country. We had about the job wasn't paying much. The job paid us \$60 and we had three nice fellows in the band, around 60 years old.

He walked up to the bandstand, and said what you boys want to play? We said we don't care too much about....

We can't play no music and drink. The manager said I don't allow any drinking on the job at all....We can't play no kind of music and drink.

Afterwards the fellow asked could we play more. Well, we said, sure.

He asked, do you play "Bucket Got a Hole In It"? I knew that was way back there when I was a little bitty boy.

One fellow looked at the other fellow. One fellow looked at me, and I said, now we got to find the different chord.

The other fellow said you just follow me, and went off on the guitar. He went to humming.

When they come to us, "It ain't gonna rain no more, no more," well we got all that together. We played all that old time stuff.

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We didn't play the new stuff, but the old time stuff, the old blues. We all got a very nice thank you so much. He said, you boys very good. Next time you play the dance, they all coming over....

We stayed a year at least. We were hired for a month. We stayed there a year because we could play Friday, Saturday, Sunday.

Every weekend we played Grand Island now and then. I used to go down there.

We played Golden Meadows, Lafitte, all down around there we played years. Those want nothing but Dixieland music.

Fats Domino went down there, and you know that man can play. He went down there, and he was down there, and the fellow hired us for the first.

We went down there the same night. The same night we were down there, he was down there in the school, like over there.

We were playing for the school. The people came over there, and he wanted to know who we was. We told him. Where we were located, and we told him.

Then they come back to town. The manager of that great hall asked us could he hire his.

We didn't want to come in on no Fats Domino because the people wanted that type of music. He wanted to know could we come down there, and play that Friday night, and Saturday night.

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All the people in that place say that's the band we want. That's the type of music we want down there, and we stayed down there six or seven months.

We go on that side down there with that bridge, right down there where that bridge is coming. All them old bands we play in nothing but all old-timers.

They had this boy over the river there. He was from over there on that side because he used to have an ice company over there years ago. He was called Bunk Johnson [?].

He had a job. He had an ice company. He must have been on this side, but the people knew him so well. He was famous. He played trumpet.

We had Buddy Petit. That was the number one trumpet...player.

They had this old boy Joe Oliver. That gentleman, now that's the man hired Louis Armstrong away from here. Them all old timers at that time.

We had Red Happy [Bolton]. He used to stay at the Lyric at that time he was playing opposite me.

This boy, Red Allen's son, he was a trumpet player. He stayed with the old time bands. He left them and went North.

Old man Red Allen was a teacher, and he learned his son. His son played here....

WR asks about some of the old time drummers when SR was a

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boy. Let's see now, SR considers.

We had Matthews. He was a drummer--Remus Matthews. We had Bebe Matthews. We had Bill Matthews before he was a trombone player.

All three of them were drummers before he come with me. That's why he started to playing trombone because he was playing at the time - this fellow now on Bourbon street, a great trumpet player, [Papal] Celestin - he was playing drums with Celestin.

Then he left drums, and went to playing trombone with Celestin. But he was a drummer at that time. Two drummers were his brothers.

Then we had another fellow over the river, died....I know the man, an old time drummer. We had a drummer Downtown by the name of Parker. He was a tall fellow, Willie Parker.

I ain't seen Willie. The last time I seen the man he was walking on crutches. WR saw him sitting on his porch there last summer, but hasn't seen him for about a year.

Last time I seen him he was walking on crutches. He was an old time drummer.

Now, we had...Arthur Hogan [i.e., Ogle]. He was an old time drummer. He lost both legs.

Henry Martin? WR asks. Henry Martin? SR replies. He used to live right Downtown on Franklin--tall, kind of tall light brownskin. Henry Martin, he used to live around Franklin, Liberty

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and Perdido. They had a school on the corner that his mother took care of.

Then, another one we had. We had a fellow died here...Black Benny [Williams]. Black Benny, he was...tops in this town. SR says he was Black Benny's first cousin. Their mothers were sisters.

We had another lived Uptown here, an old drummer--Ernest Trepagnier. I forgot what they call him--Ninesse? I always called him Ernest Trepagnier.

Now, he's the only man I know that had a Pickwick drum kit. I don't know where he got it from. The only man in the town had one like that....

All them old drummers along in my time when I come along buck one another to see who was the best drummer. Manuel Perez buck who was the best trumpet player, the best band.

Like down there at that funeral down there. Now, the band that they had. They had three of them down there. They didn't have one old band.

The ones I had there [?]-the Young Excelsior. After the old Excelsior went out, all the men started to die out, and that completely went down.

They went to renew it. The name make it the Young Tuxedo. The Old Tuxedo we had made it the Young Tuxedo.

*unedited first draft*

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INTERVIEWER: William Russell  
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SUMMARY: Dan Weisman  
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RC says you were saying about the Young Excelsior. You see, SR continues, they had the Old Excelsior. So many of the old fellows died out.

Well lots of them come, and take like me, and several others who wasn't going to let it go down. They picked it up.

We picked up the best men that we knew that could compare with the men that dropped out. We renewed the name, and went on out again.

RC asks if you had any members of the Young Excelsior band that were also in the Old Excelsior band. Fellow that played clarinet, he played with them, SR replies, and I think they had three or four with the old.

But we were only three left. The others all practically died out.

SR and Wilson, the clarinetist, and Buster [Moore] played with [the Old Excelsior] several times. But, [BM] was young, young, young. You couldn't even count him because you couldn't even put him in there.

We got him playing just now, but he's just about as good as them playing in the older clubs at that time. He's good.

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We got some fellows from New York down here now want to take us over, white fellows. Buster went up there. They took a liking to Buster.

Him and his son's down here now. Quigley? WR says, something like that. And they want us to get together, SR resumes.

As soon as he can get straight, we going on with him. Taking nothing but an old set up. An old style band, WR says.

We going along with him. If he fall, we fall too. If he make it, we make it, and if he don't well, none of us make it.

That's our idea going along with him because he got confidence. It's one thing everywhere he put us.

We're going to work, and if there's money there he'll get it 'cause we're going to work. We're going to try to put us up on our feet.

We're going to try to help him, and he's going to help us. He got good confidence in Buster that we can do it, and we're going to try to do it.

You see all this new type of music now. It's alright for a while. It's lasted for a while.

But the people coming here now. You take all them Northern people. They come here for that type of music.

We got bands down there now, in the Vieux Carre' playing down on Bourbon Street there now. They have to get away from that new kind of music.

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We don't have to fool ourselves. We got some white bands down there that gives us plenty hell. White boys gives us plenty hell with that Dixieland music, oh yeah.

Don't say they can't play. They really can play, and they not no old-timers. They young comers. They give us plenty fight, that Dixieland music.

Because the type of music we were playing the average fellow was playing. They went, jump up, left it, and went fooling with this new type of music.

Those boys they just went on with that picked up that old-time music, went with that old-time music. I hear them over the radio.

And they can play too. They ain't just blowing. They can play.

Lots of time I yell on the radio. I have to shake my head and wonder whether Louis Armstrong or Joe Oliver, which one of them, is playing. They is them boys right down there.

You take this fellow right down there--Sharkey. You take Sharkey. Sharkéy's got a band, and a good band. He got a very good band.

They got another fellow down there...They are good. But, when it comes to brass bands, the old time bands here (coughing).

We don't have any more old time bands. You don't have any more left now.

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They have the Eureka Band. John Casimir have the Young Tuxedo.

You don't have any more organized band outside the Young Excelsior. You don't have any more organized bands.

Those bands are only made up bands. That's right, they make up. They don't have no more steady bands like they used to.

You see, one time you could get out there, you could hire a band. You see that face today. You see it tomorrow. You see it the next day. If you hire them for a week you see the same 10 faces out there.

But you can't do it now because they're now organized like they used to years ago. They're not organized.

RC asks if SR played with any of the earlier dance orchestras like the dance bands. Who did you play with in years gone by?

Oh, I used to play with old Buddy Petit. I played all over the lake there when they had that boat run up there the Mandeville.

RC asks who did they have in that band at that time? They had that boy, one of the best clarinet players we had here, SR replies.

He left, and went to California. His wife died over the river not so long ago.

He came from Mandeville, too. He used to play down there in

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the Vieux Carre' not so long ago. He played there quite a while.

He was good. He had a band, and then he went up North. George Lewis, that's who was playing with us in Mandeville....

He bought a home over the river, and his wife died. He still has a home there, WR says. He's out on the road right now.

I ain't seen that man since...the day he buried his wife. I was at that funeral and I ain't seen him from that day to this.

George Lewis, and they had a fellow at that time, we used to call him "E String." We used to call him "Big E."

He was playing with us. He played bass violin. We used to call him E String because when he first started to play he loved to play all the time in E-string.

It wasn't Chester Zardis. This fellow here, he was from Mandeville too.

And then we had a fellow out of there they called him "Black Eagle." He was playing trumpet, too, over there with us. Every time a man played way out of the penitentiary, you know he can play.

His wife fooled around, and he got in some trouble over there. He used to set up on the wall over there, and blow his trumpet.

They used to let him blow his trumpet, a little band up there. Some people got him out of there, paroled. Called him Black Eagle....That's all I ever knowed.

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At the time my mother was living in Mandeville. I was living here but we used to go over there and play in Covington, Mandeville, Slidell because Buddy Petit used to have all that work up and down the [Gulf] Coast, bands through there.

He'd pick up those fellows through there. He carried me out there with him, drummer, and we'd go run all through there.

At that time we used to have an old man who played violin. I'm trying to remember his name. He played violin.

I know you wouldn't know him because he's quite old himself, from across the lake. An old-timer, but man that man could play violin. Old man Mitchell - the violin player - and he was good. But, Buddy Petit and them played all over them.

RC asks about Steve Lewis, confusing the piano player with a clarinet player. I met Steve Lewis here, SR states.

Steve Lewis, the piano player, used to live right on Second Street. He was a piano player. RC and SR talk about various Steve's.

WR asks about any other drummers he remembers. Do you remember Henry Zeno? Yes indeed, SR replies. Old Henry Zeno, I knowed him good.

When I remember knowing him, and hearing him playing, I'd say Henry Zeno was playing with the Excelsior. That's who I think he was playing with.

He was either playing with the Excelsior, or the Old Tuxedo.

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It wasn't the Eureka.

He was a fellow much like a swing man. Any band would hire him because he was good. He was a great orchestra man. He was a good drummer.

WR asks about old man Louis Cottrell [Sr.]. Old man Cottrell? SR repeats. Downtown? Yeah, yes indeed, and Cottrell was another man along Buddy Petit time.

He was down there with Louis [Armstrong], and Joe Oliver. That's who he was on there with.

They had a band down there they called the Serenaders, and he was down there with them, all down in there. That was practically a real Creole band down there.

Was that the one with Peter Bocage? WR asks. Yeah, well, Peter Bocage, he come over here with Peter Bocage. (SR Coughs.)

The best band was the Excelsior because he come from over the river, and that's why the Excelsior band stayed there with all them "Buck Eyes" [sic], all them Buck Eyes over the river. I come up there with them.

Old man Peter Bocage, his son, all of them come from over the river. They're still over there, WR says. I know, SR agrees. I know.

Did you know Manetta, Manuel Manetta? RC asks. Manetta? SR repeats. Yeah, I knowed Manetta.

Speaking about the old time drummers, WR says. Did you ever

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know, or see, [John] McMurray, or DeeDee Chandler?

No, I don't remember running across them, SR answers. I've heard of them.

Walter Brudny, WR continues. He was another old-timer. I heard them tell about sometime.

No, I guess he's way back, SR states. I think he left here pretty young, WR says, and was killed in Baton Rouge or some place quite a few years ago.

They had a fellow that used to come here out of Donaldsonville, SR notes. He used to be here lots of times. He was a great drummer, too, they called Bowlegs.

But he didn't belong here. He used to play in that band in Donaldsonville, that great band they had in Donaldsonville. When he came here them bands would hire him, oh yes.

Did he ever play with the Claiborne Williams band? RC asks. Yeah, that was their drummer, SR says. Claiborne Williams, he married Claiborne Williams' daughter.

You never knew him by any other name? RC asks. Never did know him by no other name....

Was there any difference much in the old-time drummers the way they played in the street parade, say on the bass drum? WR asks.

Did they have any different special beats that they don't use now, or do anything different much? Did they have a cymbal

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fastened on their drum in those days?

I remember...when they used to carry the cymbal. They'd hit this. They had a cymbal sit there.

They had a cymbal in their hand, and they hit on it, but later they changed it. They put the cymbal on there. They take a wire, nailed it, and made a beater like that.

That's the difference. It's just like a sock cymbal and that's the difference in that (imitates) makes too much noise.

How long ago was it since they did that? RC asks. I was nothing but a boy. They did that before I ever started playing music because I remember when they had.

At that time I was around when Raceland had a band, Raceland band, Boutte'. They used to carry the cymbal. A man would have the cymbal in his hand, and cymbal on a drum, and they hit it like that on that. (Imitates.)

You could hear that thing going across but it was too much of a vibration. So somehow, I don't know, they got the idea to change it to that.

But the beats in the street now. We have lots of different beats.

Like the fellow adds on in the street, that's not in the music. Like you got 6/8, 4/4 time. The fellow can add on providing he can still hold his time.

You can fool around, get the wrong, make the extra beats get

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out of time there, throw the whole band. Now you got 6/7, 4/4 time, 3/4 time beat.

I can take a beat in the street, and play it like I'm playing in the orchestra. Just like that, play like that, and when it comes to the break, I know just how to hit it--Boom, boom, boom, boom boom boom boom boom.

Come back, come back just like that. (Demonstrates.) You're hitting four with your right hand, and two with your left like that, RC describes.

Like that, SR states. (Demonstrates.) Come right back there, but be sure you come back on the right time because if you make one missed beat you throw the whole band, and they can't get back.

You can't get them back. The bass drum will throw the whole band out of time.

We can add on a whole lot of different beats. We got some out there beating one beat to a measure, two beats to a measure.

You take the hardest music in the world to play is playing a funeral because there's the time, the left foot. Every time you go up, you come down with your left foot, you come down with your hand.

But if you hit off of the right feet, you throw the whole band. Everybody supposed to come down on the left foot when you hit. You get them down off the left foot, every man come down off

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his left foot, he'll be in time.

All that music will stay on the level....Like I say, you just got to know what you're doing.

You take Happy [Goldston] out there, me, lots of old men Matthews, a lot of us old drummers; Son Fewclothes [Lewis], you know, and you got this boy here...Uptown man, Son White [Washington], he's an old-timer.

Old, old-time drummers, good drummers too. We got one there now...George Williams, but he's not no old-timer. He's got a band, George Williams band, but he's not back in that bracket.

Would you say you're more or less beating now as the old drummers did when you were a boy? RC asks.

I'll tell what you band carries the regular beat like the old-timers, SR says: the Eureka, John Casimir and myself. Now those three bands carry that same type of old-time rhythm.

Were you going to say something about those old time dirges? RC asks. That something was difficult? Oh yeah, SR says. How do you beat on those? RC asks.

You see, on a funeral you got an afterbeat on the tune just like this here, (demonstrates). And then you count, one, two, you come on the third beat.

Then your instruments pick up just like what you gonna play "Nearer My God To Thee." (Demonstrates.) That's a different beat.

And how are you walking when you play like that? RC asks.

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Just like one two, you're stepping. (Apparently demonstrates.)

Just like that, you see the left foot. Where you move again. That's what makes it different in playing ordinary parade, and doing funerals.

That's why when they got to get a funeral they got that certain mens that they can use to play. 'Cause you take a snare drummer like this man here, Alfred Williams.

Now you can't take the average man can play the funeral equal with him because he knows the roll between the time and the beat, the layout. That's what that snare drummer got to know for that bass drummer to come in.

That bass drummer follow him. Every time he say (imitates), that's the way it goes....That's the way them funeral, the dude blows his horn.

It's different altogether from any other type of music. That's what you call you better have your head if you ain't got the music in front. If you ain't got it in front where you're looking at it, you sure better have it in your head.

Can't mess up with them. That's why they got to pick different mens out of different bands to play the funerals. [Cf. notes on brass bands in vertical files.]

Every time they have a funeral, you practically see me out there. They hustle me up.

'You gonna be able to work?' I say, 'Yeah, I'll work.' 'Come

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on brother.'

You enjoy those old jazz beats then, RC says. Oh yeah, it's plenty of enjoyment when you're out there with those fellows that know how to play, SR states.

It's enjoyment. You know the people is satisfied, going on, and don't mind playing.

WR was going to ask about the bass drum. The bass drum doesn't play all the time on the street.

But, the snare drum. Was there ever a time where the bass drum would play with the snare drum?

No, SR says. Sometimes those fellows just do it. Say an ordinary parade like that--the bass drum go along like that. But you don't have to.

That snare drum count the time all the time until it time to play. Then the bass drum come in.

The fact of it he don't work as hard as the snare drum. The snare drum don't never have no rest. He always work.

The bass drum--they walk two blocks, he walk two blocks, and don't play. If they walk two blocks-and-a-half, he walk two-blocks-and-a-half, and don't play. But that snare drummer still got to keep that time for to walk by....

They make them bass drums small now, 22 inches....They getting away from that [big bass] drum. That drum was too big. It was killing the drummers.

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(Girl's voice.) She wanted to see what it's all about. One time she was taking up music. She was writing some song. She signed a contract back there for her. It made me angry.

Did you ever play snare drum? RC asks. Yeah. (SR coughs.) I liked that better than I liked bass drum, but they wouldn't let me play nothing like that now.

All the time they wanted me on bass, and they wanted somebody else on snare drum. I'd rather play snare drum than play bass drum. I get a kick out of playing snare drum, but they'd rather have me play bass drum.

Did you have any special beat of your own? RC asks. I know some of them do.

Yeah, yeah man. I got a beat. I put all them beats to them, and take them. (Demonstrates.) Put all them there, and they say, 'Yeah man.'

I used to have fun with them, see. I could take it down there, and show you....

What kind of snare drum do you have? WR asks. Is it a little thin one, or fairly deep?

I have one. It's not too deep, a regular old time one--wood, best tone on drums. The same type [Leedy]....

When you play in a dance band how many traps do you have? WR asks. You have cymbals, and cowbells, or woodblocks?

Yeah, they're all in there. I got a tom-tom big as that

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recorder. The stand is that high. Stand for the tom-tom, and stand for the sock drum.

You see, what made me keep them like that. When I don't use them, I sit down, and sign them like that; put them, and fix them like that.

Fix them nice, so I keep them. That's what I do with my drums.

I take my drums, and wipe them, and everything. Keeps them brushed up, so when I have to go out with them always.

Some fellas put their instruments down, and never take them until they get ready to play. But I don't. I use mine all the time.

You loosen the drum if it's hot. Slack them all the way around.

When it gets real cold, I tighten them myself. Then you go there, and catch them. Slack them all the way around so you can give, and tighten them up.

Do you have any old photographs of 30, or 40, years ago, WR asks, of real old bands, like the old Excelsior band, or anything of that kind? No, I don't have any, SR replies.

Most people didn't bother to save those pictures, WR notes. I was just wondering if you had anything like that.

No, I don't have any. I had some when I was over the river, but I guess I lost them while I was moving around.

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The best one I had is up in that thing here. Why I had it so long is I had it in a bag.

A couple of years, or so, ago I put it up there in that frame. I said I'll keep one of them, but I don't usually fool with anything.

We have a lot of later pictures of parades, and all, WR says. I was just hoping to find some of those real old bands.

Oh, I was going to ask about Manuel Perez, and the Onward Band, WR adds. Oh yes, I played with Manuel Perez, the Onward Band. Years ago I played extra with them.

I played with all them old bands. They come and get me. I played snare drums sometimes, sometimes bass drum with all them old time bands there.

They went out so certainly. When the new stuff came in the old bands looked like they just went out.

What started out was those school bands. People started to pool those school bands for parade.

Rather than hire bands, and pay them money, get the school bands for little or nothing. Bands just went down.

Men got scattered. Now and then you couldn't get them together.

Now, people calling for that type back, and it's hard to get the men back. You take a lot of them just given up, not playing no more.

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They got their instruments. They got their instruments been laying there.

Some men got instruments, when they open the case they look at it. It look like it been there 100 years.

'Naw, I don't fool with that no more. There ain't nothing in it no more.'

They done give it up. That's what the matter is the people want something for nothing.

I myself was playing music, honest the truth, for \$1 a night. They didn't call them cabarets. They called them tonks, honky-tonks.

There were five, or six, men playing in a band getting \$1.25 a night for peanuts. Do you believe that, right in this city?

I heard about that, WR says. I played it. I played it.

