

LOUIS COTTRELL Jr. (LC)  
Reel I [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

(Transcript prepared by Christopher Wilkinson  
West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 6/89)

Also present: William Russell (WR)  
Ralph Collins (RC)

WR: I'll make a note here that we're interviewing Mr. Louis Cottrell at, uh, 731 St. Peter's Street, 'n the date is August 25th, 1961, and Ralph Collins is also present. And you mind stating your full name; if you have a middle name, and, uh...

LC: Yes. Louis Albert Cottrell.

WR: OK. Can you tell us just when you were born and, uh, what part of the city--.

LC: Mar--

WR: And all?

LC: March the 7th, 1911, right on Robertson between Dumaine and St. Philip [Streets, New Orleans]; I think the address is, uh, 915.

WR: Um hum. On Robertson.

LC: On North Robertson.

WR: North Robertson.

LC: Um hum.

WR: Um, naturally everyone remembers your father, that is of the old-timers that have told us, mentioned about his important part in music; is there anything that you could add, uh, your recollections, when you were a boy? By the way, I don't even know when your father died about; I don't know, we, we probably have the date someplace, but I've forgotten.

LC: He died on October the 17th, 1927.

WR: '27, huh.

LC: Yeah, he would have been, uh, forty-nine his next comin' birth-[day] which would have been December the 25th.

WR: So you were about sixteen then.

LC: Sixteen.

WR: Um hum. Can you tell us if he ever helped you much in music? Ha--had you started--when did you start in music?

LC: I started under my father; it was at the age of ten.

WR: Um hum.

LC: He began with the...old method which often, uh, you've heard before with solfege an'--it was--.

WR: Oh yeah.

LC: Sing an'

WR: Um hum.

LC: For ear training, and then after, when he thought I was ready to start on the instrument then he sent me to Lorenzo Tio, Jr.

WR: 'Bout how long did he work with you on the solfege?

LC: Worked wi'me just about nine months.

WR: Um hum. And old Manuel Perez they say did that and the--.

LC: Yes--.

WR: Tios too, wouldn't they--.

LC: They did.  
WR: Sing along too, I've--.  
LC: And incidentally, speakin' of Manuel Perez, he is my godfather.  
WR: Oh, is that right.  
LC: Yeah, my godfather, yes. Manuel was my godfather.  
WR: Um hum. ... Uh, by the way, uh, the clarinet then was your first instrument?  
LC: It is, yes; clarinet was my first instrument.  
WR: Did you ever want to take up drums or ever curious about 'em when your father had 'em around the house?  
LC: Well, a little curious, but it was so much to lug with that I didn't want to bo-- [laughs].  
WR: [Joins in laughing] Well, I don't blame you.  
LC: When I first began on the clarinet because of my fingers bein' short, uh, I had to use a C clarinet.  
WR: Oh you did--.  
LC: Yeah.  
WR: "Big-Eye Louis", I guess, u--.  
LC: Yes.  
WR: Used one a long time, they say.  
LC: Um.  
WR: Uh.  
LC: They weren't long enough to expand over the B flat or--.  
WR: Yeah.  
LC: Or the A clarinets, 'cause they were usin' those too at time--.  
WR: Yeah.  
LC: So, it was a clarinet of Tio's with--; he started me off on a C, it was a C--.  
WR: Is that the young Lorenzo Tio, not the old one--.  
LC: Not, no, it's the young Lorenzo--.  
WR: Or the other, older Ti--.  
LC: No, it was not the uncle or the father; it was the young Lorenzo Tio.  
WR: Uh, before we get into that, I wonder if you could tell us any more about your father, even what kind of a man he was; I mean we have pictures of him, b--usually sitting down; we don't know if he was taller than you; would you say he was taller than you?  
LC: Well, he was taller than what I have, yes.  
WR: He looked rather large, but I never knew.  
LC: He was about six [feet], one [inch] or two.  
WR: Oh, really, oh quite tall--.  
LC: He was tall, you s--quite tall, 'n...  
WR: Uh huh, he looks very much like you, I think his face is--  
LC: Yeah.  
WR: Pictured, like in the [Armand] Piron Band--.  
LC: Um hum.  
WR: Very similar.  
LC: He was slim, accordin' to his height. It, it made him appear much slimmer than he was, but--.  
WR: Um hum.

LC: The man weighed around, 'bout 175 to--.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: 180 pounds.  
WR: Uh, how old was he when he died, did you remember?  
LC: He was 48 at the time.  
WR: 48, not old at all, huh?  
LC: He would have been 49 his next birthday.  
WR: Today, we'd call that a young man, yet we--.  
LC: Yes, we certainly would.  
WR: We think of him as an older man; some people even as you know call him "Old Man" Cottrell.  
LC: Yeah. Well--.  
WR: That's because of you, the, the, the, uh--.  
LC: Not only that. The reason why they began callin' him "Old Man" Cottrell is when he had gone to Chicago in 1917, and, uh, the first six months when he returned he had gotten gray.  
WR: Oh yeah? --.  
LC: No, he began--.  
WR: In his forti--.  
LC: No, he wasn't in the forties then--.  
WR: Not in his forties--.  
LC: Yeah. It was jus' about...say in the late thirties, you see--.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: And, uh, when he came back and they begin callin' him "Old Man" Cottrell from then on.  
WR: From then on.  
LC: 'Cause, uh, gettin' gray so fast.  
WR: Well, I thought it was because of course he was one of the great pioneers, early, very early pioneers--.  
LC: He was one of the first pioneers of--it's often said that...he was the originator of the two-beat drummin'.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: Yeah, a--you know he was fir--was among the first one, or rather the first one to begin playin' traps in the orchestra in New Orleans.  
WR: I know at one time a lot of the bands, they say, didn't even u--.  
LC: Didn't use drums; he was the first one with the John Robichaux Band to begin usin' drums in the--.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: Orchestras in New Orleans. I-, it was mostly string ensemble--.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: With few brass instruments of that type, 'n, he was the first one to be use-.  
RC: Well, I, I suppose in those day he'd 'a used, he'd 'a used the overhead, uh, beater on his drums, would he?  
WR: Put that on--.  
LC: I think he did; I can't remember him with the overhead.  
RC: Um hum.

LC: I do remember the overhead because up until '29 they still had a lot of fellas that been usin' the overhead pedal, but I don't remember my father wit' a overhead; he always had the other foot pedal.

RC: Oh he did?

LC: Yes.

WR: Um hum.

LC: One thing, he was more of a stylist around here because he a--; anything new that came out, he was the first one to use.

WR: I knew tha--.

LC: Yeah.

WR: Some people told me once that, uh, he used to work for Werlein's [music store, Canal Street, New Orleans] or at least they had him to try out all their new equipment.

LC: He did.

WR: Do you remember anything about that?

LC: He did, yes, he did. Uh, up until the time that he died, in '27, he still was doin' that for Werlein. He was a representative, a salesman for them on instruments.

WR: Did he ever work in their shop as a repairman--?

LC: No.

WR: Or anything of that kind--?

LC: No.

WR: Or as a salesman in the store?

LC: No, he was just an outside--.

WR: An outside--.

LC: A street salesman. Yeah.

WR: Um hum. ... Uh, do you know anything about his drum set, his latest one. Of course, you knew, uh, about the last set--.

LC: The latest set that he had was a Leedy. I can remember that the latest set that he was was a Leedy. Now the set right before the Leedy...was a, uh, collapsible set that he had. He got that when he had gone to New York in '4-, in '23.

WR: With the P--.

LC: With Piron's Band. It was the foldin' bass drum. It's--when it would collapse then you could handle it jus' like any other suitcase.

RC: Huh.

WR: Um. I can't imagine exactly how it is; people have tried to describe it to me--.

LC: Yes.

WR: We've got some descriptions of it--.

LC: Uh, the way it was made, honestly...when it would fold; it was two head. It would be in a circle and it wou--, and a half circle, and it would form--; it would be almost like a triangle you could say.

WR: Well, the head would fold up too--.

LC: Yeah, the head would fold.

WR: Oh, I didn't know--.

LC: Yeah, the head would fold. See, the head--

RC: Uh.

LC: And the shell.

WR: Was the shell metal or wood, or--?

LC: Metal.

WR: Metal.

LC: It was metal. With hinges too.

WR: Hinges.

LC: Um hum.

RC: D'you think you could, uh, show us better; would it be clearer if I, if I brought a bass drum over? There's one across the street.

LC: Well, I, I guess I could. Now the other fellow that I've seen i--; it's only two that I've ever seen. My father wit' one, and Sonny Greer of the Duke Ellington Band, he had one.

WR: Oh, Sonny Greer had one.

LC: He had one wi--when they were on tour, and they were playin' theatres, and they would play dances on outside--.

WR: With Ellington then.

LC: With Ellington; he had a collapsible drum. He had a collapsible bass drum.

RC: Um.

WR: Did it have regular rods, you know--?

LC: Yes. It had regular rods--

WR: Once you get it set up, then you tighten up the rods--.

LC: Yeah, you tighten the rods--for both sides, that's right.

WR: Regular skin heads.

LC: Regular skin head.

WR: Yeah. ...

RC: Difficult to visualize it.

WR: Yeah, how that shell could fold up, but I guess they had something worked out--.

LC: Yeah, well, it was...with hinges, i--; you see.

WR: You remember who made that.

LC: [Pauses to think] No.

WR: We might even find an old catalogue with it illustrated some-time.

LC: That's possible, I'm sure.

WR: It came from New York, and all--.

LC: Yeah, it came from New York where he got it.

WR: Um hum.

LC: I can't remember the name. I really couldn't remember the name.

WR: Y'know that--you remember, did he ever say, or do you remember personally what kind of sticks he used; if they were heavy or light-weight or longer than usual, or what kind of--.

LC: They were just about a...number 5, I think in those time; they were run by numbers. They weren't real heavy stick, I know--.

WR: Weren't real--.

LC: No, he never did use real heavy sticks.

- WR: Did he used heavier ones on the street, by any chance?  
LC: No, the same sticks. He would use the same sticks each time.  
WR: And on the street, did he usually play the snare drum, uh--.  
LC: Most of the time--.  
WR: I'd been told that--.  
LC: Most of the time, he used snare drum.  
WR: Um hum.  
RC: Did he use a, same snare drum that he used in a dance orchestra?  
LC: Well, he did, but he had, uh, on the last he was usin' a duplex out on the street. Was a duplex snare drum. I think Lester Santiago had one of the...model of the one that he had.  
RC: Oh.  
LC: I think Lester has it now.  
WR: I believe, uh, Albert Williams; isn't that a duplex, the one the boy from England here last year [Barry Martyn] bought one from Alfred Williams.  
RC: Yeah, I'm not su--I think it was a duplex--.  
WR: I believe it was a duplex.  
LC: Because at the time, it was only two in town. It was one that was of nickel and one of brass, and my father had both of them; the first one he...had bought was the one wit' brass...and then he gave or traded that one over to a drummer durin' that period by the name of Willigan. Now what--I think his name was William Willigan or Bill Willigan, and he had the nickel one, and that was the only two that I've ever seen, and I do believe the one that Santiago have now is the one that my father had.  
[Transcriber's Note: Jim Willigan (1902-c1930) was a drummer with the Creole Harmony Kings (1923), later with Celestin's Original Tuxedo Orchestra, Louis Dumaine (1928), and Lee Collins, according to Rose and Suchon: New Orleans Jazz, 3rd. ed., page 129].  
WR: Really, we--.  
LC: I believe that's the one.  
WR: Um hum.  
RC: When you say "of nickel and of brass" and you mean the rods on it or--?  
WR: Shell.  
LC: No, the shell.  
RC: Oh, it wasn't a wooden shell.  
LC: Ah, where the head was was wooden, but the shell was nickel.  
RC: Oh, I see.  
LC: It was nickel, and it was a brass shell, and it was perforated.  
WR: Then the rim around up at the top wa--.  
LC: Was wood, that's correct.  
WR: As I thought.  
LC: Um hum.  
RC: You say it's perforated?  
LC: Yeah, it was perforated; the shell was.  
RC: With holes in it?  
LC: Yeah, holes in it. Very light.

RC: Um.  
LC: Maybe the..., I mean it is really; really was a light drum.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: 'S nothin' like what the drum now because the snare drum now  
h--, much heavier than what that was.  
RC: Yeah.  
WR: Was it a very deep one, d'you know, say five or six inches, or  
seven or eight--?  
LC: Just about five or six.  
WR: Five or six, rather--.  
LC: Just abou--.  
WR: Shallow or medium--.  
LC: Just about what they use--.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: Practically now.  
WR: And he doesn't use a deeper drum--.  
LC: No.  
WR: On the street--.  
LC: No.  
WR: Or anything.  
LC: Never did. It was jus'...  
WR: Can you tell us anything about, uh, his, uh, teaching, of, of  
drums. Did you ever see any, uh, drum pupils come there an'  
hear him give a lesson--?  
LC: Oh yes--  
WR: To any of them--  
LC: Yes.  
WR: What he did?  
LC: Oh yes. He always started them off first, just as I said like he  
did with me; he started them with the singing first, for sound.  
Then after, it would be with the [drum] pad...because he said  
they would develop a better wrist on a pad than to try 'em out on  
a drum.  
RC: Uh huh.  
LC: You see, he had a exceptional wrist, 'n I must say...of me and  
my father, I've had--never heard anyone roll a drum equally an'  
as smooth as he had.  
WR: Just about everybody's told us that--  
LC: Yeah  
WR: Ever mentioned, that he talked about that roll.  
LC: An', an' he believed in the wrist; of course, it from--it was  
from the way he was trained. Now the way he was trained, he--  
well, my father came up of very poor parentage, and it was a  
friend of his that was gettin' music instruction, and they  
were inseparable at the time; it's a fellow by the name of  
John Kornfeld--.  
WR: [Inaudible].  
LC: It's a...a white fella.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: You see they came up boys together.

RC: Um hum.

LC: And my father had the ambition to learn drummin'; didn't have the sufficient funds...to have anyone to teach him, so jus' because of the friendship as the boy would get his lesson, he would come back and he would teach it to him; now that's the trainin' that my father got. How he got his musical trainin'.

WR: Um hum.

LC: And, uh, he 'n John, I mean, they were inseparable up until death; well, John died first...an', uh, my father always kept in contact with his family.

WR: Did he ever amount to anything as a drummer, I mean the boy have professional--?

LC: Yeah, he was a good drummer too; he was a professional drummer; he, he played in several of the theatres an' the orchestras around here--.

WR: He was a good drummer--.

LC: Yeah, he was a good drummer also.

WR: Um hum.

LC: And that's the way he got his trainin', 'n there was one thing he always did stress was because of the wrist and the roll; that was the most essential thing about playin' the drums; he said that's the way he was taught, 'n especially when it came down to playin' tympanis; that would be same thing, you see.

WR: Yeah. Uh, while I think of it, did your father live most of his life on, at that Robertson Street, uh, home, or had he moved around, d'ya--?

LC: Well, he moved in several spot; that was the spot where I was born. Prior to that he was living on Derbigny Street right across from the Artesan Hall; that's where--.

WR: Um hum.

LC: The three older children were born, and me and my younger sister, we were born on the Robertson Street address, 'n after we left the Robertson Street address, that's when we moved down on Annette, where my father died, down in that section.

WR: Um hum.

LC: Well, originally he come up right...at LaHarpe and Claiborne, right across from where Mueller is...

RC: Oh yeah.

LC: Uh, basic business is right now. He came up right in that section.

WR: You think that Louis DeLisle, you know, "Big Eye"--.

LC: Yeah.

WR: Louis Nelson--.

LC: All those fellas--.

WR: Used to live--.

LC: Around that sec--.

WR: Born on LaHarpe, 'n--.

LC: Round in--.

WR: Raised right in that section--

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel I [of 3]  
August 25, 1961

9

LC: Round in that section, that's the same he came up.  
WR: I was goin' to ask--'n try to get real personal--, but about your home, did your father have a special room for the, uh, teaching of music, or is--?  
LC: Well, he always did, yeah; i-, it was always in the living room; that way he--.  
WR: Did you have...a piano, uh?  
LC: We did have a piano;...yeah, we did have a piano because he--.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: My sisters; the oldest one, she did learn how to play.  
WR: Well, you mentioned the three older children--.  
LC: Ye--.  
WR: Were they all the girls?  
LC: All girls.  
WR: All girls.  
LC: In other words, it was five of--and I was the only boy.  
WR: Yeah. ... And the oldest sister learned piano, then.  
LC: Yes, she did--.  
WR: Did she ever play with any band or--.  
LC: No, never did play, uh, professionally, jus'...played in the home. My younger sister, she still plays in the school right now, but--.  
WR: Is it mostly classical music or what kind of music--?  
LC: Classical, mostly classical music, an' sheet music, you know.  
WR: Yeah. ... 'N, uh, do you remember how much your father charged for lessons?  
LC: Yes.  
WR: Uh.  
LC: At one time he was chargin' twenty-five cents, and I think when he died, he was chargin' was fifty cents.  
WR: Um hum. Course money was little more valuable then than now, but still--.  
LC: I guess so.  
WR: It was a low price for a famous--.  
LC: It was.  
WR: Teacher like that. ... Twenty-five...  
LC: An' the last student of his that...really turned out to be a real nice drummer was Freddie Kohlman, that's the last one.  
WR: Oh yeah.  
LC: Kohlman was his last student that I can remember. Now another one that was his student, I was a very small boy at the time, was Albert Francis; I don't know if you knew Albert Francis.  
WR: Oh yes.  
LC: Albert Fran--.  
WR: We interviewed him a couple--.  
LC: Yes.  
WR: Of weeks ago.

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel I [of 3]  
August 25, 1961

10

LC: Albert was one of his student, Ernest Trepagnier was another one of his student...an' oh so many of the boys was student; practically most of the drummers in that period--.

WR: I think so too, uh--.

LC: Would, would come around.

WR: Yeah, the older ones--.

LC: Yes.

WR: They say they had a few lessons from him.

LC: Yeah, they would come around, that's right.

WR: And if they didn't, uh..., uh, uh, goin' to say quite a few of them maybe like [Warren] "Baby" Dodds even, who went to Chicago--.

LC: Um hum.

WR: I think he only had a few lessons; he wouldn't tell us too much about--I think your father, uh, didn't get along to well with him; he didn't learn to read fast enough or something--.

LC: Well, it could have been that, 'cause he's kind of impatient--

WR: Yeah.

LC: I'll tell you that, 'n, uh...that was one thing why I didn't want to learn how to play drums.

WR: But even if they only--.

LC: He was a little impatient.

WR: Even if they only took a few lessons; there's maybe some done none at all, they all tell about how they lear--followed him in parades--.

LC: Oh yes they did, a lot of 'em followed him; they did admire him a lot.

WR: Uh huh.

LC: Because you take of a few of the old timers that's still livin' like "Happy" Goldstein [Christopher "Black Happy" Goldston], he always remarked to me what a wonderful fellow my father was, 'n the way he used to admire walkin' behind him, second linin' jus' to hear him play, and so many of the other boys...

WR: Um hum.

LC: You take like the two Minor boys; they, I can remember faintly them coming over somehow. That was, uh, Minor Hall; I mean the two Hall boys--.

WR: Oh, yes.

LC: And "Baby" Hall--.

WR: And [Fred] "Tubby" Hall, yeah, they--.

LC: "Tubby" Hall, that's right.

WR: Yeah.

LC: Yeah, "Tubby" Hall. I think...

WR: I knew both of them quite well, one in Chicago and the other Los Angeles.

LC: Yes.

WR: Both dead now.

LC: They are.

[Transcriber's note: Minor "Ram" Hall died in Los Angeles in 1963, according to Rose and Suchon: New Orleans Jazz, 3rd ed., page 52].

WR: Minor Hall just died about a year ago.

LC: Jus' about.

WR: Yeah, just about everybody I ever talked to mentioned your father, I guess, from here [i.e. New Orleans] any drummer and others too. Is there any, uh, thing else you can tell us about his drum set, while I think; that is, uh, as far as cymbals or, woodblocks, or cowbells--.

LC: Cymbal, woodblock, he used all those; I can remember'm with orchestra bells; I can remember'm with the triangle; I can remember him with the woodblock, uh, crash cymbal..., the other cymbal that they used to place on the bass drum, also with a spar. And they would hit the bass drum and the cymbal on the side for an effec' at the time.

RC: Yeah.

LC: Several, uh, different whistles--.

WR: Oh yeah.

LC: That he would have...for when he would be workin' at theatres, 'cause he worked in theatres, accordin' to the old Lyric and several of those theatres; Dauphine was running at the time.

WR: Did he ever have one of those little rachets, little thing you'd turn?

LC: That's right, on the side.

WR: Yeah. I had one of those--.

LC: I think, I think, I'm not sure we may have one of those around the house now, if I'm not mistaken, uh, one of those small [inaudible] rachets.

WR: Yeah.

LC: Practically everything to go with drums at that period, he had it.

WR: Did he ever use a slapstick?

LC: Yes, he had one of those too.

WR: He was one of those? ... An' I know some drummers--of course, [Abbey] "Chinee" [Foster] used to play the, uh, solos on the slide whistle--.

LC: He had--.

WR: Louis Armstrong later had one too--.

LC: That's right, Louis did.

WR: Did your father--.

LC: My father had one--.

WR: He had all of them, just about everything--.

LC: Father had one of those, and one time my father--he didn't do it often than other fellas--had a way that he would take the snare drum and he would hollar through it.

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel I [of 3]  
August 24, 1961

12

WR: Oh, he did that; I've seen--.  
LC: Yeah.  
WR: "Chinee" had a--.  
LC: "Chinee" does it.  
WR: Showed us that once, and Sammy Penn a little bit--.  
LC: Yeah.  
WR: Does it sometimes.  
LC: It gives...certain effect with the snare--.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: And the vibration that it would give.  
WR: Did he sing, he really sing or--?  
LC: No, he didn't  
WR: Just try to give a special, like at break or something, a few little hollars, or something?  
LC: It would be more, more on a type of a rhythm.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: While the band would be playin', an' it's jus' another effec' of a rhythm that--.  
WR: Yeah.  
LC: Come out of that.  
RC: Y--, y--, you say like he'd, he'd, holla', holla' into it?  
LC: Yeah. They would be playin', you know, and it would be like a, like a after beat or somethin' with the snare drum, the way they would...for I guess it's from the...pressure--.  
WR: He would put it right up against his face sort of--?  
LC: No, he would blow on it.  
WR: Blow on it.  
LC: Yeah, blow on it; some--, some effect, against the snare and with the, uh, head--.  
WR: Yeah  
LC: You see--.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: An' the effect of the snare on it would give a--.  
WR: Oh yeah.  
RC: Yeah.  
LC: Sound.  
WR: Not sure; that's nothing, not what Sammy Penn does in his act--.  
RC: No, no, Sammy Penn sings.  
WR: He sings through it some way to make it rattle along with him.  
LC: No, my father didn't sing.  
WR: Yeah.  
RC: Would you, would you think it would, might be the vibration of the, of the lips, like when you play a trumpet or somethin' like that?  
LC: No, it wouldn't; it's more of a "huh", "huh", you see--.  
RC: Oh, I see.  
LC: A vibration on the snare.  
WR: Yeah.  
RC: Oh.

- WR: Yeah, pretty good. ... Is there anything else, unique, unusual that he did...like that that you can think of; I hate to keep asking you so many questions, but--.
- LC: No, it's all right.
- WR: It's the best chance that we'll ever have to learn anything about him.
- LC: One thing about him, especially on the street, he didn't have what most fellas would have would be one of those belts around--.
- WR: Yeah, the old harness--.
- LC: Yes. He wouldn't use any of those; all he would use would just be an ordinary book strap. A book strap and the way he would [inaudible] to balance his drum. He say that it was much better that way from the way he wanted.
- RC: Around his shoulder, you mean?
- LC: Jus' across the shoul--.
- WR and RC: Oh.
- LC: Jus' with one strap. A regular book strap in those days, some-thin' like, uh, you know this with an army belt, only thing was one of those little narrow book strap of that period.
- WR: Yeah.
- RC: Yeah.
- LC: See, an' he would jus'--.
- WR: Yeah, that's kind of neat. ... Hum. ... Just fasten it onto the drum probably at one place then.
- LC: Yeah, he, he wou--; that it would go over his shoulder an' the way he would hold it.
- WR: Probably had a very light, as you mentioned, was a perforated drum.
- LC: Yeah, it was light; it was light drum; it was light drum.
- WR: Um. Is there anything else about his drumming style; you mentioned the first about the two-beat rhythm and all that he developed, was probably the first one, you say, in the dance bands at all...
- LC: Yeah, yeah, that's...supposed to be, of course, I can remember him in the dance band, but--.
- WR: Um hum.
- LC: Often heard that he was the first one to be used in the dance band.
- WR: Anything about his style of playing...that you can say, that is, uh, say compared to the drummers now; of course a lot of people think that drummers today are too noisy an', uh, uh, jump all over the place, you know?
- LC: Yeah.
- WR: Did he, uh, was he very active or di-; was he a rather quiet drummer, or what would you say?
- LC: Well, he was active I think for his--for the period of time; I tell you someone that reminds me a lot of him now is Josiah Frazier.
- WR: Oh really.
- LC: Yeah, he was more on that type.

RC: Uh huh.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: Jus' about the way th--, uh, Frazier plays, that was mos' my father's style of playing: the way Frazier plays--.  
RC: Yeah, I was noticing "Cie", uh, the other week 'n he seems to hit the bass drum on one and three.  
LC: One and three; that's right. That's the two beat--that's what they call the two beat: the one and three.  
RC: And then they--his, uh, his snares seem to more a--accent the two and four.  
LC: That's right. That's correct. ... Now [Alex] Bigard is another one of these--.  
WR: [Inaudible].  
LC: Bigard come around [i.e. studied with Louis Cottrell, Sr] awhile--.  
WR: Yes, he told us all about him--.  
LC: Yes.  
WR: Quite a bit about his lessons with him too.  
LC: Um hum.  
WR: Um, usually how often did he teach a pupil an'--.  
LC: Well, it was twice a week.  
WR: Really, twice a--.  
LC: Twice a week. Generally it would be Tuesdays an' Fridays, no, yeah, Tuesdays an' Fridays and' Wednesdays and Saturdays: those were the four days that he wou--.  
WR: Four days.  
LC: Yeah, um hum. They had different ones comin' on those days.  
WR: Uh, did he, uh, work almost every night that you can remember when you were young?  
LC: When I--well that's all he ever did; mostly every night he was workin'.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: Yeah, mostly that every night he was workin'. ... Of course, what I can remember...as a kid, the biggest lay-off that I can remember was when they came back from...New York.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: And, uh, '23 and '24, looked like he--when they came back, it was kind of rough at the time, but other than that he was always gone.  
WR: Um hum. ... And, uh, as I say, I'm not tryin' to get personal, but did he sleep pretty late then, or, uh--?  
LC: No, my fa--.  
WR: Did he have a day job or what did he do?  
LC: No, all he did was jus' played music.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: Now, he'd get up generally around 'bout 9:00, 9:30, and then he was gone, then he'd come back in the aft--,oh, 'round about 4:00 or in the evenin's that he would teach--say about 3:00, 3:30 when the boys would be comin' from school.

WR: He would start teach--.  
LC: An' he would teach an', an' get about an hour...sleep in the afternoon, then he would be gone again.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: 'Cause he was a fellow that had to go out everyday.  
WR: Did the, uh, most of the jobs that he had, do you remember, if he had to take his drums almost every night to different places or--?  
LC: No, mo--, mo--, mos' of the job was always appointment job where he--.  
WR: Didn't have transportation problems.  
LC: That's right.  
WR: Did he ever complain about it; like you say you--that influenced you in pickin' clarinet; did he ever complain or...?  
LC: Yeah, especially when he had to get permit; at that time there was little dinky street car, somethin' like the street car in 'Fr-, 'Frisco, you know?  
WR: Oh, yeah, those little things--.  
LC: Yeah.  
WR: Turning, um, the, um, what do y'call it, chain or somethin'--.  
LC: Yeah, that's right.  
WR: Under the floor, cable car.  
LC: Cable car, well the only thing that would run by electricity down here, and they had to get permit, and they wouldn't be allowed on --at a certain time on the street cars with an instrument. He would always manage whenever he had to go someplace or play that he would there in the day. 'Cause I think it was between 4:00 and 8:00 that they weren't allowed and, or from 6:00 to 9:00, 'n so he would go in the day an'--.  
WR: Yeah.  
LC: An' set up his instrument for that night.  
RC: Um, so there were only certain hours that they were allowed to take the drums--.  
LC: Drums onto the street car.  
RC: Oh really.  
LC: That was the only means of transportation in--they mostly had--.  
RC: Um hum.  
LC: During that period.  
WR: Yeah, and nobody had a car in those days.  
LC: No.  
RC: And you had to have a permit even for those hours, huh.  
LC: Yes, for drums an', uh, those bass violins, they have to have a permit.  
RC: Um. ... Uh, this, this to me suggests that there must a lot of drummers an', uh, bass players that--going on street cars, an'...  
LC: They did. If they weren't goin' on street cars, they would be walkin'.  
RC: Yeah, that's...  
LC: You'd take so many of the guys would walk from one engagement to another from their home. I heard, uh, [Peter] Bocage state on a

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel I [of 3]  
August 25, 1961

16

session, uh, that the Jeunes Amis Hall--that drummer that he played with during that period was a fella by the name of [Jean?, John "Ratty"?] Vigne, an', uh, Vigne walk all the way up to the Protection Levee [near Carrollton and Oak] an' back with his drum.

WR: One funny story--I remember Natty Dominique, that's--you know Don Albert of course--.

LC: Yes, I know. I know Natty too.

WR: I knew Natty very well in Chicago, an', uh, we got about six or seven tapes, the story of his life; talked to him a long time, an' he started out on drums, I'm pretty sure; maybe he had a few lessons with your father--yeah, I know he talked about your father--.

LC: I wouldn't be surprised 'cause they were very good friends.

WR: Only a short time, because on his--about his first job; I think it was a job with, uh, Buddy Petit, he said way up at Louisiana Avenue, so he was goin' to walk up there.

LC: Um hum.

WR: An' he got up, to--long in where the pawn shops are on Rampart [Street], took his drums in there, and pawned them and wal--went back home.

LC: Went back home.

WR: Didn't show up for the job. His father gave him a hard whipping that night and all, an' then, well then later he went, he went to Manuel Perez and took up trumpet.

LC: Trumpet.

WR: Well, cornet. But that's the way he did on his first job, gave them up right there, stopped and pawned 'em.

LC: They were good neighbors too because they lived right across from each other.

WR: Oh yeah?

LC: Perez and Dominique.

WR: Yeah, right straight across the street.

LC: Down on Urquhart Street.

WR: Yeah.

LC: 'Cause that's where I can recall them very well.

WR: Oh, another thing here...just getting ready to fill in your name here on the, uh, first tape box, we're about out of--, and, uh, how is that spelled, the last name? The "Cottrell".

RC: How do you spell it?

WR: How do you spell--?

LC: C-o-t-t-r-e-l-l; that's the way we register.

WR: Two "l's".

LC: That's right, but truthfully the name is really "C-o-t-r-e-l-l-e".

WR: Um hum.

LC: My father dropped it somewhere, and that's the way we all been were registered.

WR: How come--?

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel I [of 3]  
August 25, 1961

17

LC: It used to be Cotrelle, the way they would pronounce it would be Cotrelle ; "C-o-t-r-e-l-l-e".

WR: You must have heard a lot of people around here call it "Contrell".

LC: "Contrell", "Cantrell".

WR: Yeah.

LC: So many thing, but it's "Cottrell"--.

WR: Yeah.

LC: All we know is Cottrell.

WR: I just wondered how it got started; I looked up in the, uh, city directories; I noticed there must have been an Italian name: oh, maybe a couple a dozen of Cantrel [Canterelli?], "C-a-n-t-e-r--.

LC: Yes.

WR: And probably a lot of people knew maybe Italian name, but you hav--do you have any explanation for the reason they call it that or--?

LC: All I can see is because of, uh,...that French section down in town; plenty would call him "Contrell", "Cotrell", and from their accent would--how that started I can't say.

WR: In your father's time would they call him that too?

LC: They'd call his "Contrell"; they'd call him "Cantrell"; some would call him "Catrell".

WR: Right to his face--.

LC: Yeah.

WR: They didn't know the difference.

LC: But mos' of the old ones called him "Cotrell" [long "o"].

WR: "Cotrell", uh huh.

RC: That's sort of a French spelling.

LC: French, it is.

RC: Uh huh.

WR: I didn't know if is--I guess i--, uh, "Cantrell" looked like, almost like an Italian name; from I guess the first names I'm not sure.

LC: Um hum.

WR: So, I always wondered how that got started, 'n I never knew for sure, for years--.

LC: No, I don't know how i-; because they--a lot of them call me the same thing now.

WR: Yeah.

LC: I'll see "Contrell" or "Cantrell" or "Catrell".

WR: Yeah.

LC: And what Peter Bocage an' the fellas then always called him [LC's father] was "Cotrell" [long "o"].

WR: Um hum...uh, you know anything about your father's ancestry? If they came from France--.

LC: Yes, my f--.

WR: Were French--.

- LC: Yes, his father did come from France; his father came from France. There was two brothers of my--which would be my grandfather and my...grand uncle. They both were from France. His mother came from up at Saint...Saint John, Saint James [Parish], one of those...
- WR: Yes, up the, up the, uh, river there.
- LC: That's right; she came from...an' that's as far as I can remember from any...
- WR: Yeah.
- LC: His mother's name was Miriam Bernard an' his father's name was the same, Louis Albert Cottrell--.
- WR: Yeah.
- LC: Jus' goin' down the line, jus' carried it through.
- RC: Your father's name was exactly the same--?
- LC: Same as that, uh hum; in other words, I'm the third.
- RC: Um, oh, I see, yes.
- LC: But the--called "junior"; you know after the grandfather died begin call me "junior" 'n jus'...
- WR: This reel is about over; there's another minute or two if there's anything else we can think of about your father, then we'll get into your life, an', uh, uh for instance do you know how old he was when he--this other boy began helpin' him with the drums?
- LC: Yeah, jus' about eleven, twelve years old; just about that period--.
- WR: Quite young, then.
- LC: He was quite young.
- WR: An' did he ever tell you about his first jobs or the first bands he played with? You mentioned Robichaux for one.
- LC: Robichaux is one of the bands that I do remember him speakin' of as, as an orchestra, but you take way b--back was the old Excelsior Band...which was not of the group--in later years it was with the--I think it was the original band was Tio and Doublet Band an' then it went into the name of Excelsior Band. [Transcriber's Note: See Rose/Souchon: New Orleans Jazz: A Family Album, 3rd ed., p. 159 for an early personnel list of the Tio-Doublet Band; NB: no mention of L.C. Sr.].
- WR: Um hum. Was that brass band mostly?
- LC: It was brass band; all of it was brass band. Of course the brass band in that area would play for outdoor parties an' everything else durin' that time.
- WR: Yeah; that's what I've heard; they played for dancing even.
- LC: They would. An' that was in--men made up of, I think, uh, some of [Manuell] Manetta's relatives, some of his old rela--some of the older group. Some names that I can't--that I don't even remember. Another name that I am recall was Croustaut [Sylvester Coustaut?].
- WR: I've heard that na--.

LC: He was a trumpet player; I think that, that taught [Manuel] Perez, if I'm not mistaken. Croustaut an' then there's fellow by the name of Boisseau; he was an old baritonist [baritone horn] in the area. ... Father also worked wit' a old--well they were about in the same area [Transcriber's note: "area"="age"?]... like Vic Gaspard an' his brother [Nelson Octave "Oak" Gaspard]?

WR: Oh yes, "Oak".

LC: "Oak" Gaspard..., George Fihle; he was in Chica--I think he's dead jus--.

WR: Yes, he died.

LC: About five, six years ago, maybe.

WR: Yes.

LC: Another fellow he played with was Charles Elgar.

WR: Um, I knew him. He still up there--

LC: Yeah, he--.

WR: Officer in the [Musicians] Union up there--.

LC: He is Vice-President.

WR: For many years.

LC: They were jus' about same age; my father may be one or two years older than he.

WR: Um hum.

LC: Fella by the name of Ralph Montague, that was another one in that old brass band in that area. ... Ralph Montague...[pausing to think] there was Charles Elgar...oh, I said--didn't mention--uh, I said Croustaut...

RC: Does the name [Dede] "Dee Dee' Chandler--?

LC: "Dee Dee" Chandler came up right around in the same area with my father. I often heard of him speak of he an' MacMurray.

RC: Oh, yes.

WR: Never did know much about McMurray--.

LC: McMur--.

WR: Did you happen to know what his real name, uh, I--someti--people say that his first name was "Mack" and his last name "Murray", or--.

LC: No, that was his last name; his last name was MacMurray. Now I'm tryin' to think what was his first name? ... I can't recall, but it was his last name...

WR: Paul Barbarin maybe thought his name was John MacMurray.

LC: I think he was John MacMurray.

WR: But I'm not sure.

LC: I'm not sure, but MacMurray was his...

WR: Was his whole, one big name.

LC: Yeah, was his last name, but...

WR: Uh, you remember anything about Jean Vigne?

LC: Well, yes. I can remember Jean Vigne.

WR: His son is up[town].

End of Reel I

LOUIS COTTRELL (LC)  
Reel II [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

(Transcript prepared by Christopher Wilkinson,  
West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 7/89)

Also present: William Russell (WR)  
Ralph Collins (RC)

WR: ---I didn't know. The lady who lives over there that's sort of  
superintendent of the, uh--.

LC: Of the buildin'.

WR: Of the hall?

LC: That's Jean Vigne's daughter.

WR: Oh, I didn't know tha--.

LC: Yeah, that's his daughter.

RC: The Jeunes Amis Hall.

LC: The Jeunes Amis Hall.

WR: At the time you made the records--.

LC: Yes.

WR: An' we got to see her.

LC: Yes.

WR: She let us in the back door some--.

LC: She's still there right now. The one that prepared the sand-  
wiches an' things durin' the...?

WR: Oh yeah?

LC: Well, that's his daughter: Jean Vigne's daughter.

WR: She probably knows a good deal about his--.

LC: Oh, I'm sure she can...give plenty of evidence.

WR: Yeah.

LC: Yeah, I can remember him...I was...jus' where the...Iberville  
[Housing] Project is now which was part of Storyville at the  
time.

WR: Um hum.

LC: Well, he used to run a wood an' coal yard, an' he...uh, and I  
know my daddy, and then they would have rehearsals sometime...  
in the back of the coalyard some days--.

WR: Yeah.

LC: When business would be slow an' the guys would meet around  
there, an' I can remember him from that area, going there  
listening to them rehearsin'; I was jus' about 7, 6 years old  
around the time--.

WR: Um hum.

LC: I can recall.

WR: Very interesting.

LC: Yeah, Jean Vigne...[John] McMurray, "DeeDee" Chandler, an' my  
father, oh, it was aroun' same period 'n I guess jus' about on  
the same type.

RC: Um hum.

LC: Because those were the one that I often heard him mention about;  
also, this other fellow--well, he'd strictly played jus' bass  
drum in the brass band--was [Clay] Jiles. Now what's Jiles'  
first name, I can't remember.

WR: Um, yeah, I can't remember now; wait a minute.  
RC: Albert Jiles's father, you mean?  
LC: I don't, I don't--.  
WR: The uncle, the uncle of--.  
LC: I don't know if he's a relative or not, but I know his name was Jiles. That was the las' funeral that my father played because Jiles' funeral was jus' about a month, or month and a half before my father.  
RC: Oh.  
LC: Um. ...  
WR: Your father was active right up to the end...?  
LC: Oh yeah, he was active until to the day before he...  
WR: Oh really?  
LC: Yeah, he--  
WR: Sudden?  
LC: Yeah, sudden death; it was a heart attack he had. He had worked that night...up on the [Pythian] Roof Garden. It was Piron's Band there; he was runnin' the place at the time...an' up until...it was jus' about...11:30--they were gettin' ready for a break, an --because he spoke to me an' he said "Now, I want you to get home; you know you have to start school early in the morning." So I said, "OK" an'...when I got home--I just did beat him home to be truthful about--.  
WR: Yeah.  
LC: Maybe about ten or fifteen minutes, because when I heard the door --he was comin' in--I jumped in bed 'n I had clothes and everything, jus' with shoes off, 'cause I didn't want him to know that I had jus' gotten in...an' about 20 minutes after he was in, we jus' heard a sound an' when we got to him, he was jus' smotherin'; when we got to him he was jus' passin' out, jus' with that heart attack.  
RC: Um hum.  
LC: He worked up until the time that he died. ...  
WR: I was going to ask you about Walter Brundy, another drummer--.  
LC: Walter Brundy was another one; now I jus' faintly remember that was another one of my father's s--scholars.  
WR: You mean he studied with him.  
LC: Yeah, he came--.  
WR: I've never gotten to know Walter at all; Bundy used to talk about him--.  
LC: Yeah, well I met Walter jus'...a little before he died; well, he was playin' saxophone then; he was out in Texas at--.  
WR: That's right.  
LC: That time.  
WR: He played clarinet and sax.  
LC: Yeah. Um hum.  
WR: An' he was killed in an auto accident or something.  
LC: That's right.  
WR: He was run over or something. ...

- LC: Those were--I can remember a picture with Brundy; instead of havin' the...rods to tune, why, it was with a rope.
- WR: With a rope?
- LC: Yeah.
- WR: With th little ears, something like little leather ears--.
- LC: That's right. ... That's what they used to tune bass drums at that time.
- WR: You remember if your father ever used one of those? You probably not, uh?
- LC: I can't remember him with those.
- WR: Probably had the most modern equipment; you say he always--.
- LC: He did. I must say he always kept the most modern equipment an' anything came out new, he always had it.
- WR: Um hum. ... Uh, before we leave him--as I say, I don't like to keep pumpin' you for more information about your father, but it's a wonderful opportunity for us to hear about him from the best possible source. Anything else about the bands he played with, uh, something about the Piron Band in particular: the trip to New York, did you remember what he told you?
- LC: Oh yes, I can remember...when he first--that I can recall that era--when he first left New Orleans was 1917. He left with Manual Perez's Band; they went to Chicago.
- WR: Oh yeah.
- LC: I think I--it was at, I think, Mike Fritz was the proprietor's name that they worked up there for. It was before Joe ["King"] Oliver an' them had gone up there; that was in 1917 an' in that band was Perez, Lorenzo Tio [Jr.], my father, Eddie Atkins, an' Frank Ahanyou [?] was playing piano.
- WR: Yeah.
- LC: Well, he stayed there for about...nine months, and then he came and made a visit home on a vacation for two weeks, an' he went back; came back in 1918. 1919 he went back again an' came back in '20.
- WR: Was that with Manual Perez again?
- LC: Yeah, that was with Manual Perez 'cause Manual stayed up there the whole time through.
- WR: Oh, yes.
- LC: But my father...you know he went an' then came back.
- WR: Um hum.
- LC: Then in '20 he came, an' he stayed an', uh, went with John Robi-chaux again in the '20s; that's when they were workin' in the Lyric [Theatre] an' stayed there for about a year; then he joined Piron's Band; they were workin' out at Spanish Fort at the time. An' he stayed with the Piron's Band until the time of his death.
- WR: Um hum.
- LC: In 1923 that's when they had gone up to New York; they were workin' at the Roselan' an--Ballroom--an' I think it was Cotton Club too; uh, I don't know if they--.
- WR: Did he ever say how the band was received up there; write letters back or anything saying whether--?

- LC: He wrote to say that the band was--well, it was a different style playin' altogether than what they were playing up there because they were alternatin' in the Roseland Ballroom at the time; that was when Fletcher Henderson was--.
- WR: Oh, Henderson.
- LC: Jus' beginnin' to get prominent, prominent back there in '23, an' there was, uh, dancin' school, in other words it was a taxi dance--.
- WR: Oh yes.
- LC: Roseland Ballroom was at that time, an' they were alternatin' with the Fletcher Henderson Band, an' of course there was two different style of playin' altogether, different type of music.
- RC: Um hum.
- LC: Because Fletcher was more of that Eastern style at the time then what they had. Said the band was received pretty well, but it was one of those things like you were lookin'...for that pot of gol' at the end of that rainbow, an' look like it never happened. They came back, an' the popularity was--it began increasin' down in here again an' they made one or two more recordin'; they went back in '24--.
- WR: Oh yes. That, uh, have you ever heard those recordings--just picked up one of 'em last week, the "Red Man Blues" written by Peter Bocage--.
- LC: I was jus' askin' Ralph had he--that's the las' one that I can recall that they made down here.
- WR: It had Tio almost all the way through.
- LC: I think it did.
- WR: It was surprising.
- LC: Yeah. An', uh, that was the record...that was made down here; I think that was in '25 when they made that down in here, that "Red Man Blues".
- WR: Uh, you, uh, you of course have heard about--just wonder if you're familiar enough with 'em; can you compare that to the way the band really sounded in person; did it sound as good as the band? Of course no records ever sound, I guess, as good as the real thing, but, uh, you know, I mean--.
- LC: Well, to be truthful with you, it's been so long since I heard one of the recordin's--.
- WR: That's what I thought.
- LC: I can't remember. I couldn't remember as of now.
- WR: I just took that up to Tulane last week; I wish I'd kept it here--.
- LC: Yeah.
- WR: I could have played that for you, and get your reaction.
- LC: I really couldn't remember, but in that time Piron had really what you would call a society band. It had a nice punch, an' the majority of the musicians were al--were always did look up to Piron's band as bein' more of the cultured band--.
- WR: Yes, I know the type you mean--.
- LC: And then, yeah, that they played--.

WR: You can tell somehow on the records too.  
LC: Um hum.  
WR: Along with the violins, featuring--.  
LC: Well, that's true.  
WR: The violin an' everything too. It's a--it's more of a smooth sweet band, I guess--.  
LC: That's right  
WR: But, uh,...uh, Tio comes through quite a bit, um, some of those things too, but otherwise you can't always tell so much about Tio's tone and all; just, uh, we might as well get on with your, uh--.  
LC: No.  
WR: Life now. Maybe you can tell us a little more about Tio too since he's also gone--.  
LC: Yeah, well--.  
WR: Just what style he played, an' how his...tone was, an' style, 'n you know, his ideas--?  
LC: Well, I thought was...to be frank with ya...I, other than the f--recordin', I didn't hear Tio too much as a player. [Inaudible] I mean that I could make any comparison as--whether to like or not to like.  
WR: It's funny, uh, Omer Simeon, you know, who was a--.  
LC: Yeah.  
WR: A very great clarinetist in New York and also studied with Tio--.  
LC: Yeah.  
WR: And, uh, up in Chicago, an' he says the same thing: he was so young he didn't--wasn't allowed to go around to dance halls--  
LC: Well, that's what--.  
WR: He never really heard him play much, he can't--.  
LC: Well, that's what--.  
WR: Remember whether he used Albert or Boehm [fingering] system hardly.  
LC: Well, I knew he used Albert; I can--.  
WR: Yeah.  
LC: Re--readily remember that--.  
WR: Well, think he knew that much, but I mean he couldn't remember much about his instrument or how he played--.  
LC: Um hum.  
WR: Or sounded because he just took lessons--.  
LC: No, I--.  
WR: And that was about all.  
LC: An' speakin' of Simeon, Tio used to tell me all the time when I was taking lessons from him. He always rated Simeon as his best scholar.  
WR: He did, huh?  
LC: He did. He said for one reason: Simeon had that initiative and that determination to really learn, and he said that's the only scholar that he ever had that he didn't have to send 'm back the second time on the lesson.

WR: Really, uh hum.  
LC: Yeah, he said Simeon was just...just that way, an'--  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: He said each time he came, he was ready. There was no sayin',  
"Well, come back; you don't know it that well this time."  
RC: Um hum.  
WR: Let's see, about what year now did you study with him; let's see,  
you were born in 1911--.  
LC: I was born in 1911; I began studyin' with Tio in 1922.  
WR: '22.  
LC: Yeah.  
WR: Quite young.  
RC: An' you say, uh, that first you had to solfege, uh?  
LC: Yes.  
RC: How long did he keep you with ensemble--.  
WR: Well, that was your father--.  
LC: Well, my father had me on solfege.  
RC: Oh. An' that--but did Tio also?  
LC: No, Tio didn't, 'cause when I went there; well, he want to see  
jus' how advance' I was; well...after goin' over and learn  
some of the rudiments and divisions, uh,well he said I was ready  
for the instrument.  
RC: Uh huh.  
LC: And he placed me on the instrument.  
RC: And, uh, he, uh, loaned you a C clarinet?  
LC: C clarinet; yes, he did. It was a C clarinet he got. Even a C  
was a little large for me, an' his Eb clarinet, well he was usin'  
it quite regular then, so he wouldn't let me [laughs]; say,  
"well, use the C."  
WR: Would have been wonderful, he played that one. [General  
laughter].  
RC: Well, I t--; you say he used his Eb, uh, what, he used it on  
parades, uh?  
LC: Parades an' funeral.  
RC: I see.  
LC: Yeah, because he...played brass band around here until he was  
paralyze.  
WR: Oh, I didn't know about that.  
LC: Yeah, he took w--.  
WR: You know he was pa--?  
LC: Yeah, he took with a stroke in 1925. Laid him up for about ...  
'bout six months, then...he was able to play again, but, uh, he  
wasn't able to march on the street or anything else--.  
WR: Oh, I never knew that; we interviewed his brother--.  
LC: Up to the time of his death.  
WR: And every--lot of people that had studied with him--.  
LC: Um hum.  
WR: And nobody ever told us that before.  
LC: Yeah.  
WR: Really?

LC: In '25. He got...he was...he 'came stricken with, uh, paralysis; uh, he was playin' a funeral one evenin', an' it began on him, and that night, after he got on the job, he worked awhile an'...they had to bring him home.

WR: Yes, terrible.

LC: Uh, you take--I don't know if you've ever met Adolphe Alexander [Jr.]--.

WR: Oh yes, "Tats"?

LC: Yeah, "Tats". That's another one of his ex-students too.

WR: Oh that's right, I guess he mentioned that.

LC: An' "Tats" always remarked now that he knew just what it was after Lorenzo had gotten paralyzed because s-something about his finger--he cannot...execute on his clarinet like he had once--.

RC: Uh huh.

LC: Did before, you see--?

WR: Um hum.

LC: So he say he knew what Lorenzo was sayin' when he say, well, that was it as far as playin' like he used to, 'cause he never could regain that form that he had.

RC: Uh huh.

WR: Well. ... That was after the New York trip then?

LC: That was after the New York trip; that was in '25. Uh--.

WR: Did he die up in New York, though, or--?

LC: He went back to New York; he stayed here until...about 1930, or latter part of '30, then he went to New York, an' he died while he was in New York. I think it was either '30 or '31 when he died.

WR: I knew his wife just--.

LC: Or '32, somewhere--.

WR: I think his wife just died two or three years ago.

LC: Jus' about, jus' about.

WR: Had two or three sisters--.

LC: That's right, because--.

WR: An' she was--I thought, I thought he'd died there too.

LC: Yeah, he did die over there because--.

WR: Did he go back to play on that trip, can you remem--?

LC: Yeah, he went back--he was playin' while he was up there, 'cause I think he was with "Jelly Roll" [Morton] at the time, or workin' in an' out aroun' there what--at the time of his death. 'Cause that's what he had gone back up there--things had--Depression had set in after '29, an' things had begun...to get very slow an' money was hard to get.

WR: Oh yeah, that's right; the Depression was on then.

LC: So--

WR: Um hum.

LC: He went, and he went by boat up there, 'cause that was the cheaper way of transportation.

RC: Um hum.

LC: Got up there. Now, uh, it's either '32 or '33; I don't recall exactly th' year that he died.

- WR: I think maybe his brother might have told us.  
LC: Yeah, but it was along in that period that he died.  
WR: Um hum. I was going to ask, uh; it reminds me in New York I heard years ago, uh, rumors that he had sold some numbers to Ellington, like maybe he'd helped write, uh..."Mood Indigo," you know, that slow blues-type thing, and Barney Bigard once told me, uh, I remember, oh not--'bout the last time I saw Barney, when he was back with Louis [Armstrong] the time before the present time--.
- LC: Yes.  
WR: In Chicago, and he said that Tio had sold him [Ellington] several tunes, he thought.  
LC: Um hum.  
WR: Had written some of those things; do you know of any of his composing activities, or anything that he ever wrote, or did your father ever--?
- LC: Directly, I don't, but I do recall on several times goin' for lesson where he would be writing, and he use' say that if this ever would go over what it would mean to him. He said this is somethin' that I'm composin'; now what it is or how many it is, I don't know.  
WR: Well, at least you know he was active.  
LC: Yeah, I know he was active to that extent.  
WR: Yeah.  
LC: You know, speakin' of Tio, so many days that I would go there, and I would be disappointed because he did drink a lot, and he would be drunk, an' he say, "Well, I'm sorry I just can't give you no lesson today; come back next time--."
- WR: Um hum.  
LC: "Or next trip."  
WR: Yeah.  
LC: One of those thing.  
WR: I don't think anybody ever mentioned--not that we're--we try to specialize in learning those things, but, you know--.
- LC: Well, no, I mean it's just the way it is.  
WR: Nobody ever mentioned that he--.  
LC: Yes. It's just facts.  
WR: Yeah.  
LC: It's just the way he was. That was the thing what they's claim; why, uh, when he'd gone back to New York, and he'd begin drinkin' again, an' after he was told that it was detrimental to him, an' that he would continue that, it would shorten his life so...his wife had told me, well, nothing she could do; it was just the way he took it--.
- WR: Yeah, well--.  
RC: Huh.  
WR: Part of--.  
LC: See, and then when he met up with [Sidney] Bechet up there again, that was it. See, 'cause several days she wouldn't see him; when she would call to find out, he was somewhere with Bechet.

WR: Yeah, well, it's hard to say how that--; think about [Warren] "Baby" Dodds an', uh, Johnny Dodds, I guess you did know the Dodds brothers very well, do you remember them?

LC: I don't remember one; I knew of 'em after they left.

WR: I knew them both in Chicago, 'n Johnny never took a drink in his life, hardly, and "Baby" was quite a drinker, an', uh--.

LC: Yeah.

WR: Johnny died when he was 48, an' "Baby" kept drinkin' an' drinkin', and yet he lived to be 65--.

LC: Oh, yeah.

WR: Or so, so--.

LC: That's right.

WR: Doesn't usually really kill 'em, but, uh, might make it a little worse if they have that--.

LC: Um hum.

WR: Stroke, 'n "Baby" had that trouble too, but he kept on. Johnny died from sort of a stroke that way too.

LC: Johnny died of a stroke.

WR: Oh, uh, speaking of the Tios, uh, do you remember the, uh, older men, either the, the old Lorenzo or the "Papa".

LC: I remember the uncle, "Papa", very well.

WR: Louis?

LC: I don't remember th--Lorenzo's daddy, Lorenzo, Sr., but I do remem--.

WR: I think he was--I believe he was, uh, uh, uh, I think it was Louis Tio--.

LC: Louis Tio, that's his name.

WR: His brother that's still living--.

LC: Yeah, yes.

WR: Said that their father went back, I believe, to, uh, over on the gulf coast, either Biloxi or someplace--.

LC: Bay St. Louis, that's where they were--.

WR: Someplace over in there.

LC: Um hum.

WR: You remember the uncle then.

LC: Oh, I remember the uncle very well.

WR: How did he compare with, uh, in playing with the young Lorenzo.

LC: Well, uh--.

WR: If you can remember well enough to, uh, the sound, I know it's--.

LC: The sound, I think the sound were about the same. ... And, uh, the old man was more of, uh, oh like we would use the term, was more of a...a softer player than Lorenzo. Lorenzo was more forceful.

WR: Um hum.

LC: But the sound was almost the same, only thing it just wasn't that much in volume, you see,

WR: An' you remember in your childhood the youngest, very youngest remembrances if the old man was still teaching, that is "Papa" was--?

Reel II [of 3]--Transcript

August 25, 1961

- LC: Yeah, I can, I can remember 'cause he died in '22.  
WR: The old man.  
LC: Yeah, he died in '22. I can remember very well when he died, 'n he used to visit home quite often...he an' his wife both.  
WR: He would have been a friend of your father's--.  
LC: Yeah, he was.  
WR: Naturally, a very close worker--.  
LC: Because my father was more...as a son or somethin' under him, you see--?  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: An'...he's--an' at one time they were neighbors too, the--.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: An' Mrs. Tio and th' Old Man, they used to visit home often. An' I can remember 'em on the street, but...like I said before as to remember the playin' and the style, I can't. I really can't remember his playing. ... Um--.  
WR: I remember once, uh, speaking of Natty Dominique again, uh, he said he remembers when he was a little boy once "Papa" Tio heard a jazz band, like out on a wagon or something, and came running in their house an--.  
LC: Uh huh.  
WR: Wanted to hide under their bed, or some--; [he said] "That noise is a disgrace to music--."  
LC: [Chuckles].  
WR: "It's a disgrace to New Orleans. Didn't really like jazz--.  
LC: No.  
WR: Liked only classical music. He didn't--.  
LC: Yeah, I guess so.  
WR: Like even symphonic, uh, work he did at times--.  
LC: He did.  
WR: And, uh, conducted that group and everything else.  
LC: Um hum.  
RC: Uh, speaking on this: we was, we were saying a few minutes ago when talking about the, uh, the band at the Tuxedo, uh, an', an' nightclub.  
LC: Yeah. Tuxedo... was organize' in the year of 1910. I don't remember the exact month or date, but I did get that information from the picture which William Ridgely, "Bebe" Ridgely--died not so long ago--he had of the Tuxedo Band, an' that Original Tuxedo Band, it was Ridgely on trombone, Celestin on trumpet, my father was playin' drum, Lorenzo Tio was playing clarinet, Peter Bocage was playin' violin, and it was at the Tuxedo...Club, somewhere down in Storyville, or the old District where--.  
WR: Franklin Street.  
LC: Yes, somewhere along in there; that was the first Tuxedo Band, an' they were replace afterwards, well Ridgely and Celestin continue, an' the next one to come in the band that--that was the second picture--I remember was Jimmy Noone. He was the clarinetist in that band, an' they had, uh, Ernest Trepagnier was the drummer in the band; I think they discarded the violin; instead

of the violin, they had the guitar which was, uh, Willy Bontemps.  
I don't know if you ever--.

WR: I met him once.

LC: You met him?

WR: Oh yeah, yeah.

LC: Is he still living.

WR: Oh no, no.

LC: No, he's dead now. Well, it was Willie Bontemps; I can remember that picture just as well in Ridgely's home as if I'm looking at it right now.

RC: And you say that's, uh, where the name The Tuxedo --.

LC: That's where it originated: from the Club.

RC: Um hum, from the Club.

LC: An', Ridgely an', uh, Celestin, they kept that name [inaudible]; it was the Original Tuxedo Band till they had this, this--.

WR: Oh, by the way, uh, speaking of Willie Bontemps--I can't pronounce his French name--Zutty [Singleton] I used to know him quite well and--.

LC: That's his nephew.

WR: An' he--.

LC: Yeah.

WR: He used to tell me about his uncle an' so forth; I ran across him on a parade, I recognized the name as soon as I was introduced, of course--.

LC: Um hum.

WR: Didn't get to talk to him but a half a minute, of course; in those days I didn't--wasn't studying the history as much I am now.

LC: Am now, yes.

WR: But, uh, uh, thinking about Zutty, did he ever study with your father; you remember anything about him?

LC: I can remember Zutty, but as for taking lessons--.

WR: You don't remember?

LC: I don't remember; no, I don't recall.

WR: Um. ... Oh, uh, uh, you mention Jimmie Noone, do you remember much about him? Here--.

LC: I don't.

WR: Ever heard him or anything.

LC: All I remember is seein' pictures of Jimmie an' hearin' recordin's of Jimmie, an' I did meet Jimmie in Chicago; that was back in 1937.

WR: Um hum.

LC: But other than that I didn't know too much other than I hear.

RC: You don't know, uh, where he learned, uh, who he studied, uh, with?

LC: No, I don't; I really don't.

RC: 'Cause, uh, the reason why I ask is, uh, he seems to have something in common with, uh, with your style and, uh, Omer Simeon's style. I, I wonder if, uh, he was a Tio student too?

LC: I couldn't say; I really don't know.

WR: I talked to him a little bit when we wrote that book Jazz Man, which is pretty much out of date, but, uh, we didn't have any tape recorders to remember what they said; I have a few notes; I remember when I talked--.

LC: Um hum.

WR: To him in 1938. He was a wonderful clarinetist--.

LC: Yes he was. He really was.

WR: During that period was great.

RC: He didn't mention then.

WR: He might have told me; maybe I can look up my notes.

RC: Um hum.

LC: I real' couldn't say.

WR: I have some notes there--.

LC: There's one that's still aroun' that may could give a little more information on that is, uh, Wilhelmina Bart [De Rouen]. Do you know her?

WR: Oh yeah. I, I met her once, uh, Lizzie Miles introduced me to her as her teacher or something--.

LC: Uh huh.

WR: Backstage at the Mardi Gras 'bout five or six years ago, a long time ago.

LC: Yeah.

WR: I've never seen her since.

LC: 'Cause she always speaks of Jimmie Noone an' the time that they were playin'--.

WR: Really?

LC: Cause she worked with Jimmie for quite some time, you know, now--.

WR: I must try to see; remind me, Ralph.

RC: She in town, uh?

WR: I think she's across the lake, isn't she?

LC: She--sometimes; she's alternatin' between here and across the lake. ... You can reach her, or her whereabouts..., I think at 1608 or 1610 Annette Street. They can tell you jus' about--.

WR: 1610--.

LC: Eight or ten.

RC: Eight or ten, 1608 or 10.

LC: Yeah, it's somewhere along in there.

WR: Annette.

LC: Annette. An' they can tell you jus' about how to contact--.

RC: Um

LC: Wilhelmina.

RC: That'd be nice, if we could talk to her.

LC: Um hum.

WR: Yeah, Bunk [Johnson] used to talk about her too. I knew Bunk very well. He used to be a pianist at some of their Sunday concerts, as they called them, that they used to give, and, uh ... Barthe, Bart, how--? B-A-R-T--.

LC: T-H-E, I think.

WR: T-H--.

LC: B-A-R-T; it may be B-A-R-T.  
WR: I forget, anyway--.  
LC: Wilhelmina Bart.  
WR: They'll know who we're talking about.  
LC: It's Wilhelmina Bart De Rouen, that's her name. D-u--.  
WR: Oh--.  
LC: Yeah.  
WR: That's right, I remember there is another name.  
RC: Uh, do you know--how, how would you spell it?  
LC: Yes, I--capitol D-u, capitol R-u-e, R-u-e-o-n, the way she--it's spelled.  
WR: Isn't she the one that used to always be sending cards into Tony Almerico [New Orleans radio personality] asking for Lizzie Miles a number of years--.  
LC: I think she is. Yeah.  
WR: He'd give her full name sometime; I'd wonder--.  
LC: Yeah.  
WR: 'Cause sometimes I'd get mixed up wondering just who--if that's Wilhelmina Bart that I'd heard about. ... She played with Jimmie Noone.  
LC: Yeah, 'cause she used to always speak of Jimmie Noone, you know, ...an' the days when she was playin' with him. Wilhelmina played with so many during that period, an' believe with so many those that's still playin' now.  
WR: I guess so.  
LC: Um hum. ...  
WR: Uh, are you watching the time; by the way, do you, uh, do you have anything else that you have to run along to; we don't want to keep you too long--.  
LC: No, I was jus' [inaudible], no, it's alright.  
WR: Uh, Ralph arranged the interview, an' I didn't know--.  
RC: No--.  
WR: How long you had.  
RC: Louis arranged it himself.  
WR: Oh, you mean he just happened to see you--.  
LC: Real--really, I...s-saw Ralph over here when I worked that night, an' I came that Friday, but no one was here. Dick [Allen?] happened to be here.  
RC: [inaudible] likely, yeah.  
LC: An' no one was here; you had gone out; Dick was here a while.  
WR: That's right.  
LC: An' so today, when he came, well I do know on Fridays is the only day that I do have a little time, so when I saw him today, well I said it's best today 'cause I don't know when I'll have this time again.  
WR: We've been wanting to talk to you for a couple of years, an' so...  
LC: Yes, it's--.  
WR: Made connection.

LC: An' it seems if I was the one that was always evadin'; I would tell you "Airight,"--.

WR: Well, I know how--you're a busy man, naturally--.

RC: [Inaudible] yeah, sure.

LC: Well, you know the type of business that I'm in now; if you don't get out there an' hustle... 'cause I work on commission, you know how--.

WR: Insurance.

LC: It is.

RC: That's right.

LC: You know how the commission business.

RC: Oh yes.

LC: Um hum.

WR: An' with your musical activities, an', uh, officer of the-- president of the [Musician's] Union [Local 496] is--naturally, you goin' to have one of the busiest man I can imagine,--.

RC: Um hum.

WR: I think. ... Well, let's see, if we, if we have a few more minutes, uh--.

RC: Can we get back to, uh, we'll talk about the C clarinet.

LC: Oh, the C ciarinet.

WR: The start of your career, so to speak.

LC: Oh, what's... I kept the C clarinet... he kept on the C clarinet for about six months, an' after the six months he said, "Well, I think, uh, from price an' all that your fingers may can stretch to the B-flat"; well, that's when I got my B-flat clarinet.

RC: Now, uh, ca--, uh, did he, uh, say anything about your mouthpiece or your reeds, or, di--, for instance, uh, do you put your teeth on the upper part of the mouthpiece, or do you, uh, use just your lips on the upper part?

LC: Well, the way I was trained, he, uh ... had to hold my lip kinda tight on the bottom with the teeth, um, coverin', yeah.

RC: Could tee-teeth covered the--on the bottom?

LC: Yeah.

RC: A-against the reed.

LC: No, lip coverin' the teeth--.

WR: Yeah.

RC: Uh huh.

LC: An' the... upper teeth on the mouthpiece.

RC: An' the upper teeth on the mouthpiece.

LC: On the mouthpiece.

RC: Oh, uh huh.

LC: He said, "Now, of course, that's the way I-I was taught." He said, "But those kinda things, they vary; depends on the individual sometime." He say, "You may take it, an' always have a bite like that, an' it may come a time when you don't want no bite." So... truthfully speaking, you notice I don't have the mouth like mos' of them had; I [inaudible] it awhile, but it kinda worried me awhile.

RC: Uh huh.  
LC: An' you take--they have a lot of clarinetists that they--.  
WR: Wear down their teeth.  
LC: Wearing it out, cause Tio's was partly worn his out, you see,  
'cause he did have the bite, but I never did really get myself  
accustomed to really bitin' with my upper teeth.  
RC: No. Tha-that's what I thought when I, when I watch you play, you  
seem to have more pressure with your lip--.  
WR: On the upper--.  
LC: That's right.  
WR: Part of the mouthpiece.  
LC: I never did--'cause he's--he told me that's the way he was  
taught; he thought that was the proper way, he said, but you  
can't go by those things because, he says, it's so many others  
that can get so much out of instruments, an' they violate rules  
an' regulations, so he say, "Whatever way you can get the best  
result an' the way it sound to me, I'll let it go at that."  
RC: Um hum. ... What about the reed, did you use a hard reed or a  
soft reed, or...?  
LC: Well, I, in the beginnin' I used a very soft reed, but then it  
was too reedy, playing. That--it wasn't yet the sound that he  
thought would be best.  
RC: Um hum.  
LC: So, told me to use a little stiffer reed, an' then it depend on  
the way my embouchure came; now sometime I can use a st--a much  
stiffer reed, an' other times when I have to switch to a softer  
reed as of now.  
RC: Um hum.  
LC: It depends just the way my mouth feels.  
WR: You know what kind Tio used himself, did he ever say?  
LC: Mostly it was just about medium-hard.  
WR: Um hum.  
LC: It was a medium-hard reed that he used.  
RC: That would be about a Number 3 nowadays, would it?  
LC: I guess so.  
RC: Um hum.  
LC: 'Cause in those days they weren't numbered anyway.  
WR: That's right.  
LC: Everyone would either shave or cut 'em down to the way they felt  
was best.  
WR: You remember anything about his instrument, uh; how many keys  
he had on it, or...?  
LC: He had a thirteen--.  
WR: Thirteen.  
LC: Thirteen kind that I can remember now.  
WR: Remember the make by any chance?  
LC: Buffet.  
WR: Oh.  
LC: Yeah, it was a Buffet; I can remember it bein' a Buffet.

RC: Oh wh--the C clarinet that you had, do you remember the, the make of that?

LC: No, I really don't remember the make of it.

RC: Was that a regular fifteen key?

LC: No, I think it was a thirteen key.

RC: Thirteen key?

LC: Yeah, thirteen key.

RC: Um.

LC: Um hum. Yeah, it was a thirteen key.

WR: It belonged to Lorenzo Tio.

LC: Yeah, it was his; it was his.

RC: Now when you, uh, you say you were on that about six months, when you went to the--when you went to the B-flat, uh, was that also on loan for, from him?

LC: No. Uh, he told my dad it was no need of purchase 'cause he knew that it wasn't goin' to be too long, you see, since--my daddy bought me one.

RC: Uh huh. An' what make was that?

LC: It's the one that I have now.

RC: Is that the same--?

LC: It's the same, the same clarinet.

RC: Wait a minute, that's a Penzel-Muller.

LC: Penzel-Muller.

WR: Yeah, I remember seeing you with the, uh--.

LC: Yeah, it's the same clarinet.

RC: Um.

LC: [Laughs].

RC: Wow. That's a--that's really held up a long time.

LC: It really did.

RC: Yeah. Um hum. And, uh, what about the, uh, the mouthpiece. Uh, did you do anything to the mouthpiece or did you just, uh, have the same one?

LC: Well, the mouthpiece that I'm usin' now is a mouthpiece that was given to me by Barney Bigard.

RC: Oh yeah.

LC: Yes, an' Bigard gave me that mouthpiece back in '33, but before that it was the same regular style of mouthpiece from the horn that I had used.

RC: An', and do you find any difference in the tone between the two mouthpieces?

LC: Well, yes I did; that's why I began usin'; it made it a little broader.

RC: Uh huh.

LC: 'Cause it was more of an open layer.

RC: Yeah. ... But, uh, 'bout the same kind of reed you've always used, or--?

LC: Just a little...little softer reed.

RC: Little softer.

LC: Now, than what I had been usin' before; I was usin' a much harder reed because the mouthpiece was a little closer, but the mouth-

piece that was given to me by Bigard, by the layer bein' a little open it mean I use a--.

RC: Um hum.

LC: Softer reed.

RC: Softer reed.

LC: Um hum. You know Bigard, I--when my father an' them had gone to...New York, well he taught me also.

RC: Oh yeah.

LC: Yes he had, um hum. Because after they had gone, an' Lorenzo said he didn't want me to jus' be idlin' around an' takin' things on myself, so he had the choice of either sendin' me to, uh, Adolphe Alexandre or Bigard, so he said, "Well, I think I'd rather send you to Bigard"; now at the time that he sent me to Bigard, Bigard wasn't playing clarinet at all. He had stopped playing clarinet, in other words, around here he wouldn't even employ him as a clarinetist; they thought that he had played so bad.

RC: Yeah?

LC: But, uh, Lorenzo said he thought that...he would be the better instructor for me.

RC: Well.

LC: Um hum. An', uh, I stayed with him until they came back, an' Bigard then didn't pick up his clarinet, he told me, until 'round 1925 or 6, somewhere when with the [King] Oliver Band Oliver--.

WR: Oh yeah, in Chicago, I think--.

LC: Yeah; told him--.

WR: Really worked on him.

LC: "What's the matter. You got that thing up there for--why don't you try to play the thing." An' he said looked like they gave him ambition.

RC: Yeah, yeah.

LC: Then he began studyin' hard, an' all that, beginnin'--.

RC: Was there any, any particular thing that Lorenzo, uh, uh, would teach you; fr'instance, uh, would he teach you anythin' about tapping your foot.

LC: Yes. He wou--did teach how to keep in time. He said, of course as time go along, he wanted us to count with our foot whenever he would teach us, that was to keep us right there, that we wouldn't vary. He said, but then we mus' remem--remember after we reach a certain stage that if we ever got to where we was playin' professional music that that thing mus' stop. We must memorize those kind of thing, or jus' have that feel for it.

RC: You more or less keep time in your head.

LC: That's right.

RC: Um hum, um hum. Well, uh, it, um, I know when I, when I go to Manetta, he teach me, uh, in my foot to--

LC: Um hum.

August 25, 1961

RC: Tap on 1 and lift it up on 2, down on 3, and up on 4.

LC: Well, yes, that's the method that he taught, but, uh, Lorenzo didn't teach me that method. Those that was takin' lessons wit' him durin' that time--it was down on 1, lef' on 2, uh, right on 3, an' up on 4.

RC: Um hum.

LC: That's the way he taught us. 1-2-3--.

RC: Yes, uh, uh, uh, Manetta did mention something about that to me too, but he said that, uh, for me not to do that because it would wear out my shoe. [General laughter].

WR: That's the way they, uh, conducted each time.

LC: Same way, 1-2--, that's the way he taught me.

RC: Uh.

LC: An' then there other times, you know, when, when, when it was waltz time or two-eight or two-four, it would always be just the way they'd get 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3, 1 and 2 and 2 and 3 an', you know, that's the way he teaches.

RC: Yeah.

LC: Um hum.

WR: Oh, just happened to think, this, uh, this is changing the subject, but I've heard people imitate Lorenzo Tio talking... as if he had a regular French accent, like when they'd say "think", he'd say "I t'ink this," or someth--did they--?

LC: Yeah, he did, he did have; yeah, he did have that accent.

WR: Sort of a French accent.

LC: Um hum.

WR: Did your father by any chance have sort of a French--?

LC: Same thing, he did.

WR: He did?

LC: Um hum.

WR: Lot of those Creoles--.

LC: Lot of words that they...couldn't say in English, then they would go back to French, and then they would come back to English, yeah.

WR: Your father talk much Creole at home or French?

LC: Yeah, he talk, talk a lot of it. Yeah, he did.

RC: Can you speak it at all?

LC: Very little now.

End of Reel II

LOUIS COTTRELL (LC)  
Reel III [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

(Transcript prepared by Christopher Wilkinson,  
West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 8/89)

Also present: William Russell (WR)  
Ralph Collins (RC)

RC: Uh, is there anythin' else that, uh, uh, that Tio, uh, stressed,  
uh, when you were--.

LC: He stressed on tonation.

RC: Uh, getting a nice tone?

LC: Yes, he did. He did stress on that. An' he said only way to  
develop it would be by practicin' an' only way to get it was  
by whole notes.

RC: Um.

WR: Long notes.

LC: Long notes. Yeah, he stressed on that more than anythin' else.

WR: By the way, uh, do you remember, maybe did we ask what method  
book you used, do you remember?

LC: Yeah, Klosé. Klosé.

WR: Kl-Klosé, yeah, that's a famous--.

LC: Klosé.

WR: Method.

LC: Yeah.

[Transcriber's Note: Hyacinthe-Eleanore Klosé (1808-1880) was  
professor of clarinet at the Paris Conservatory from 1838 to 1868;  
his most widely circulated method book for the instrument was pub-  
lished in translation as H. Klosé Celebrated Method for the Clarinet.  
Newly revised and enlarged by C.L. Staats. I. II. (New York:  
Carl Fisher, 1898) in 259 pages. It is possible that this is the  
edition used by Lorenzo Tio, Jr. in his teaching].

WR: I've seen it.

RC: I have one somewhere.

LC: Um hum. Yes, Klosé method, that's the one that he used.

RC: That's a, quite a big, thick book.

LC: Yeah. it was--at that time, I remember 'cause I thought it was so  
expensive: it was \$4.00 then, an' it was a compl--supposed to  
have been the complete method.

WR: Yeah, uh, I think it, sometimes three books or else--

LC: Yeah--.

WR: One complete book.

LC: It was one complete book.

RC: Um, um. ...

LC: I still have my method.

RC: You still have it?

LC: Yeah, I still have it, of course--.

WR: You put many markings in it or anything?

LC: Oh yeah, quite a lot.

WR: [Manuel] Manetta marks all those--.

LC: Oh yeah.

WR: Foot patterns going up and down, an'--.

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel III (of 3)--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

2

- LC: Plenty markin's are in it [chuckles]. ... Yeah, quite a bit of markin'.
- RC: Uh, you say this, uh, this stressing of tonation and playing whole notes, uh, what do you think it does? Do you think it strengthens your lip or...?
- LC: Yeah, I think it give a equal balance of the lip.
- RC: Um hum.
- LC: An' when [inaudible] give an equal balance of the lip will quite--an' you can tell when you goin' flat or when you goin' sharp.
- RC: Um hum, i-i-i-in other words you say that on a long note you tend to, you tend to start sharp or even on the note an' then sort of go flat--.
- LC: Yeah, yeah--.
- RC: Sort of thing?
- LC: Yeah, it will in my practicin', an' continuously; I mean you get in the habit of knowin' that a pitch an' a sound, you know--.
- RC: Yeah.
- LC: You can tell jus' how it...
- RC: Um hum.
- LC: To develop it. An' it does help the muscle...
- RC: Um.
- LC: Because, uh, one thing in...practicin', especially with whole notes if...you notice the muscle, it will get tired...
- RC: Yes.
- LC: An' you'll go flat or sometime you'll tighten up too much an' make it sharp...
- RC: Right.
- LC: As gettin' the control.
- RC: I noticed one thing about you when you play, uh Louis, that, uh, uh, that you have a very, uh, sort of, shall we say an easy way of, of breathing. You, uh, you don't, you sort of, uh, you sort of, uh, how can I say, you sort of seem to pace yourself, so that you'll, you'll blow, uh, you'll blow a passage, an' then you take a nice, easy, uh, breath.
- LC: Well, that was somethin' else that he would stress on too. When to breathe and how to breathe, you see; of course, you know like in music you do have the breathin' mark an' all, sometime he said...you would have to disregard those. It all depend on jus' what passage an' jus' how it would fit in wi' what you were playin'. An' he always believed in takin' advantage--you takin' advantage; not let the instrument take advantage of you: that was his main motto of, uh, his method of teachin'. An' in breathin', he always...the diaphragm--he believe in a good diaphragm when you breathin'.
- RC: Um hum.
- LC: Of course, you take mos' of us, after we get to playin' we get careless with it, you know, an' that keeps us from playin'

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel III [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

3

much better too an' executin' also an' blowin'--he believe in always a nice posture when you're would be playin', even though he was one that--.

WR: Hunched over too.

LC: Stooped.

RC: [Inaudible].

LC: Yeah, yeah. 'Cause he was tall--.

WR: Yeah.

LC: I'll tell you someone who resembles him, uh, alot is Willie Humphrey, in a way of speakin'. He an' Willie Humphrey from the back could almost look alike.

RC: Huh.

LC: Yeah.

WR: Yeah, that's right...from the pictures I've seen, yeah.

LC: It's kinda...this fella was kin'a stooped...but he did believe when he was teachin' though, uh, that the diaphragm--oh, he'd tap you on the back if you did not straighten up.

RC: Oh.

LC: He believe in...

RC: Oh, yes. ... Um, was there, was there anything, uh, when you went to, uh, when you went to Barney, Barney Bigard, uh, was there anything that, uh, he, uh, stressed, uh, Lou?

LC: Well, [Irelgardin' over to Barney after all it was jus' a follow through.

RC: Um hum.

LC: It re--, mos'ly a follow through wi' Barney jus' to see that I was dividin' an' callin' right an' makin' the right notes, but, uh, other things he said, well, I already had gotten part of that so it wa'n't--but it was jus' to see that I was doin' it correct.

RC: Um hum.

LC: Yeah, that's what he was tryin'.

RC: Uh, say that people t'ought Barney played badly in those days, uh, what was y--what was your, uh, opinion of, uh...

LC: Well, that's another instance, I didn't know; I never a--.

RC: You didn't hear him yourself.

LC: The only time that I heard Barney, it's after he got with Duke [Ellington].

RC: Um hum, um hum.

LC: Or on the records wi', uh, uh, Joe Allen; where you see those records, an' it was mostly sax he--an' in fact it was just sax that he played with Joe Allen, but firs' hand Barney was not until '33. An' he came through Texas; they were on that tour right after they had come from Europe, that's the Duke Ellington Band; that was the firs' time I had ever heard him playin' anyplace.

RC: Um hum. ...

WR: That's the same year I heard him too, yeah.

LC: It was.

WR: I'm pretty sure, '33.

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel III [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

4

LC: Yeah, it was '33. He was playin' in, uh, Majestic Theatre in Austin, Texas; where I firs' heard him play.

WR: He was in New York when I heard him. Now, last time I saw Barney he, uh, told me he was using--I wondered, in the old days, uh, did he--he covered both teeth, upper too.

LC: Yeah.

WR: He does that now; the double, they call double embouchure--the French do that, an' do you suppose he learned that in France or had he--he didn't from Tio then anyway.

LC: I don' know; I couldn't say.

WR: He wasn't doin' it when he taught you; he didn't show you any-thing--.

LC: No, no, he didn'; he didn'.

WR: Somethin' in late years that he picked up.

LC: Um hum.

WR: Wondered. ... 'Cause we wondered if some--, uh, some of the other Tio pupils might of--I never knew any others that did that I talked to either.

LC: Um hum.

WR: [Omer] Simeon didn't.

RC: But apparently Sam Dutrey, Sr. did.

WR: Yeah.

LC: Yeah, from what--from what I understand, he did. Yes, Sam Dutrey, Sr.; I can remember him. Well, he was more on the ...wa'n't but what you'd call a real Jazz man.

WR: More straight, you mean?

LC: More straight--.

WR: Legitimate, or--?

LC: Yeah, more the legit style, Sam, you see, yeah. ...

RC: Um, can you tell us anythin' 'bout Baquet, George Baquet?

WR: Before your time. You'd be pretty young when he left too.

LC: I don't know anything, other than jus' what you hear of him, you know.

WR: I don't think he ever came back here after 1915--.

LC: Yes, he was back; he died here.

WR: I, I know; I mean to play though.

LC: No, no.

WR: No.

LC: No, I don't think he played--.

WR: [Inaudible] so he couldn't play anymore. He came back after he had his stroke.

LC: That's right. That's when I met him, when he came back here, but other than that I didn't know--.

WR: I heard him play only on tenor sax though--.

LC: Yeah.

WR: In Philadelphia.

RC: Oh, uh, can you give us, uh, any, uh, anything, uh; you don't, uh; I never have seen you play sax, uh, Louie; do you play saxophone?

LC: Yeah, a little bit.

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel III [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

5

WR: Generally.  
LC: Play more sax then, uh, in a way of speakin', more engagements come through sax than do clarinet.  
RC: Uh huh.  
LC: Yeah, mos' of the engagemen' we playin' now then--you know when I work wi' some of the other fellas like--well, Peter Bocage or Jim Robinson on those--mos'ly on sax, an' they use [inaudible] to work regular which I [inaudible] since.  
RC: Do you find that playing sax affects your clarinet playing?  
LC: I don't.  
RC: You don't think so?  
LC: No, I don't. ... And then maybe it would; I, tell you the truth, this--by not playin' as regular like a fella that's really following it day in an' day out, maybe it does effect, but I've never notice it. ...  
RC: What sax do you play, uh?  
LC: Tenor.  
RC: Tenor sax.  
LC: Um hum. ...  
RC: You play anythin' else?  
LC: No, that's the only instrument.  
WR: D'you ever at play anything else, like piano, or any other in--?  
LC: No, no.  
WR: Guitar?  
LC: No.  
WR: Nothing else.  
LC: No, jus' those two, that's all.  
WR: [Inaudible] must have specialize in something, you see. ...  
RC: Uh, we were talkin' about the, uh, [Sam] Morgan Band.  
LC: Well, yes, we were.  
RC: Um hum.  
LC: I was tellin' Ralph that the first Morgan Band...it's not the one that we have the recordin' on; it's the one prior to that. Mos' people believe that the Morgan Band is the one that made the recordin', but when they really got popular an' they were really at a height, they--well the original band was Sam Morgan [trumpet], Joe Watson [clarinet], [Arthur] "Yank" Johnson [trombone], uh, "Guye"--I think his name was Butler Rapp if I'm not mistaken [banjo]--Alfred William[s] [drums], an' a fella by the name of "Ti'Boy", an', uh, was playin' bass, but I can't think of what was "Ti' Boy's" name [Eddie Gilbert?].  
WR: I've heard of him, but--.  
LC: But that was the original Sam Morgan's Band, an', uh, dissension rose in the ban', an' the band that Sam later...got was his brother's band which was known as the Young Morgan's Band.  
WR: Oh yes, Isaiah is--.  
LC: Yeah, Isaiah's band, an' they jus' took Sam in after he had fallen out wi--, an' tha's when they went up to s-s-stardom you can see aroun' in [inaudible]--.  
WR: They made the records, you know.

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel III [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

6

- LC: They made the records an' became known more than the other which was the original band, but the original band was the one that really...started things kinda groovin' around here durin' the early '20s.
- RC: Now did he have the saxes in the early band?
- LC: No. There was jus' clarinet which was Joe Watson; he didn't have no sax. It was Isaiah that had the sax.
- RC: Um hum, um hum.
- LC: An', well, his brother Andrew was alternatin' on tenor [saxophone] an' clarinet at the time, you see.
- RC: An' you say the majority of those, uh, you might say smaller bands, didn't have saxophones.
- LC: No, they didn't have sax; it was clarinet then; [Henry, "Kid"] Rena didn't have sax, it was clarinet; Chris Kelly didn't have sax. I think I was about the firs' one or Israel Gormon, between Israel and I, that played sax in Chris Kelly's band.
- RC: Um hum.
- LC: Because everything was jus' on that six piece outfit at the time: clarinet, trumpet, trombone, banjo, bass, and drum, or sometimes seven pieces would be two trumpets.
- RC: Yeah.
- LC: An' various of them would be eight pieces, when would be eight pieces, then they would use a piano.
- WR: Yeah.
- LC: Sometime would be this boy I remember, "Tink"; that's all I can remember.
- WR: George Dana has talked about him.
- LC: Tink would play--.
- WR: Tink Baptiste, maybe was it?
- LC: I-I-I don't know what was Tink's other name.
- WR: I'm not sure.  
[Transcriber's note: According to Rose/Souchon: New Orleans Jazz: A Family Album 3rd Edition, p. 8, Tink Baptiste (1897-1960) played piano in the '20s with the Foster Lewis Band and recorded with the Sam Morgan Band for Columbia in 1927].
- LC: They would get a fella by the name of "Plutsom"; I don't--I don't even remember what Plutsom name--.
- WR: They have some funny nicknames--.
- LC: Or "Li'l Willie", "Red Cayou"...
- WR: Yeah. Someone talkin' about him the other day.
- LC: Yeah. Some other...of these--you know--Georgie Parker; I don't know if you met George Parker?
- WR: No, I never, an' I'm sorry I didn't 'cause--.
- LC: Yeah, George died jus' about two, three years ago.
- WR: Not more than two years ago.
- LC: That's right. George Parker, we-well those were the one in that area [eral, you know.
- RC: Um hum.

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel III [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

7

LC: To be playin' the jazz music like was called around here, or the ratty-type music that some of 'em would call it.

WR: Um hum.

RC: Um. ...

WR: Can you remember your earliest band job, about--?

LC: Yeah, my earliest band job I'll always remember--.

WR: Heh.

LC: Was with the Golden Rule Band..., uh, that was the firs' job that I worked professionally. That was back in 1925. Well that was considered kind of big band at the time 'cause it was eight pieces--.

WR: Um.

LC: A, we had--it was four rhythm an'...four horns: two sax, a trumpet, an' trombone; now, the members in that band were Lawrence Marrero was playin' banjo, his brother Eddie Marrero was playing bass, Josiah Frazier was playin' drum, Dwight Newman was playin' piano, and a fellow by the name of Paul Ben was playin' trombone.

WR: Um hum.

LC: [Inaudible] this old time fellow by the name of [Sam] "Bush" Hall was playin' trumpet.

WR: Um hum.

LC: Uh, Dennis...Harris was playin' alto sax, an' I was playin' tenor; that was my firs' band.

WR: Uh, remember what the date was--the, the, the job you were playing, or--?

LC: Yeah. In the firs' engagemen'...that we played...I can--Cinderella Hall they called it; it was located right down on Perdido between Rampart and Saratoga at the time, but I--it was another name, an'...they had just renovated this place an' they called it the Cinderella Hall, an' they tried to run a...taxi dance out of it; it didn't last but a week.

WR: Which side of the street--is it the same block as the Zulu Club used to be, is it? Between Saratoga and Rampart?

LC: It's between Saratoga and Rampart on Perdido.

WR: Um hum.

LC: An' it was upstairs place I can recall ver--.

WR: Yeah, yeah.

LC: That was in 1925. [Transcriber's Note: LC was then 14 years old].

WR: Never heard much about that.

LC: It was in September of '25.

WR: Um hum. ...

RC: An; how did it go? How did the job go?

LC: It didn't go. [Laughter]. It jus' operated for one week. [Laughter]. Yeah, it was one week an'...

RC: How did the band sound?

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel III [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

8

- LC: Well, to me it sound good; it was my firs' band, you know how-- it sound really good. Well, we stayed together; that band did stay together for about a year, jus' about a year, year--'bout fourteen months. After that engagemen', we played several other engagemen' an' then we began to be the regular band at the New Orleans Country Club on weekends.
- RC: Oh yeah.
- LC: An' we stayed in there an; played another casual engagement in an' out of town...an' after that band...from that band, uh, Paul Barnes [clarinet and saxophone] organized a band...an' mos' of the band was still of the same men from that band; well, that didn't las' long; we played 'bout two engagemen', an' that was all of that band,...an' then from the Paul Barnes Band, an', uh, Sidney Desvignes--I went with Sidney Desvignes' Orchestra. Worked with Sidney for about...three or four months.
- WR: Um, it was a pretty big band.
- LC: Yeah, it was out on the [Riverboat] Island Queen then.
- WR: Oh, yeah.
- LC: It was another excursion boat just like, uh, steamer President. Well, it was--the Streckfus Company had the steamer Capital now an' then; this Island Queen was from out of Cincinnati, an' they came in competition to...the Streckfu', but--.
- WR: Um hum.
- LC: Stayed out there 'bout six weeks, an' that was all--they just couldn't...give the competition to the other company that was--.
- WR: Um hum.
- LC: The older company here. ... From that band, then I went--I played with, uh, Manual Perez; I worked for him for a li'l while. An' from Manual's Ban' workin' with several li'l outfits aroun' here: one was with Willy Pajaud--one of these...taxi dance--right on Canal Street, right where Grant is now--.
- WR: Oh, yeah.
- LC: Only thing was upstairs; it was called the Alamo.
- RC: Oh yeah.
- LC: Taxi dance an' work there, couple a weeks there with him, an' then f--, jus' from one guy to another worked several engagemen' with Chris Kelly, was considered a member of his band for a while with same Emile Barnes, he was playin' clarinet, I was playin' tenor in it then, an' from that outfit then I went with William Ridgley's Ban'. That was in '28, that was Ridgley's Band, stayed with Ridgley up until '29 when I left here with Don Albert's Band which--.
- WR: Oh, yeah.
- LC: Went out to...went out in Texas, stayed away until 1937 when I came back. I came back in an' I joined [Armand J.] Piron's Band back here;...we worked at The Silver Slipper it was then which is The Dream Room right now on Bourbon Street. Then from The Dream Room...I mean from The Silver Slipper, we went on a boat; we worked the '38 and '39 season on a boat. It was the steamer

President. Came back here, worked for a while aroun' it an' ...joined in with Paul Barbarin, worked with Paul Barbarin; he had jus'...got back from with Louis [Armstrong], an'--.

WR: Um, yeah.

LC: He organize', he had an eight-piece band; worked wi' him... oh, about six, seven months; from Paul I worked with Herbert Leary. Stayed with him for a while and rejoined Sidney Desvigne's Band up until 1947 when Sidney...disbanded his band an' went out to California.

WR: Um hum.

LC: From Sidney's Ban'...came the nucleus of, uh, Joe Phillips' Band which was mos' of the men an' worked with Joe until--.

WR: Um hum.

LC: [William] Houston came in, an'--well, it was mos'ly the same band that Desvigne's Band--that's the regular band that I'm working with right now: William Houston.

RC: An' tha'--you also play regularly with Peter [Bocage], don't you when Peter--.

LC: Yeah, well Peter when has somethin', work regular with him.

RC: Um hum. ...

WR: One second...go ahead.

LC: Mos' of the years when I'm with Pete, mostly Mardi Gras, one or two, not over four gig, maybe, but generally whenever Pete has anythin' like that, well, he always call on me.

RC: Yeah.

LC: Yeah. I've worked with him.

RC: Uh, see now; had, had something in mind that, that, but went out of my mind, uh,...w--you say your firs' job was, uh, was on the, was on the, was playin' the sax; you didn't play the clarinet--.

LC: No.

RC: At all?

LC: No, no. It was the sax.

RC: Um hum.

LC: The firs' engagement I had with jus' plain clarinet didn't come way back until aroun' 1941.

RC: '41.

LC: That's right.

RC: Yeah.

LC: I mean you know in the band we'd double, playin' a few solos on the clarinet, but as a whole it was mos'ly sax.

WR: By the way, to change the subject, did you ever, uh, play a date with your father at all, any...?

LC: Yes.

WR: You did.

LC: Yes, I did. I did. I work' a few engagement in Tio's place... when he was sick, when he had taken with the stroke--.

WR: Um hum.

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel III [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

10

LC: Well, I used to go an' fill in for him because he didn't have no income comin' in at the time, you know, jus' for the experience; that was right after I begun playin' an' I worked with my father along then.

WR: Um.

RC: Was that with the, uh, clarinet?

LC: No, no. That was with the sax in Piron's Band, that was with the sax, you see.

RC: Um hum.

LC: An', uh,...I alternated for Tio an' also another one of his pu--, pupil was Eddie Cherie--I don't know if anyone had ever--.

WR: No, they'd mention him, but--

LC: Yeah.

WR: We don't know much about him.

LC: No, he died; he was aroun' in Chicago. He and I used to alternate; whenever I wouldn't be doin' anything, I'd always go an'...kept his family goin' till he did get well again, you know?

RC: Yeah.

LC: Um hum.

RC: I--would you care to say anythin' about the, uh, uh, seein' as you're president of the union [Local 496 of The American Federation of Musicians], would you care to say anythin' about the growth and the organization of the union; you must of, uh, seen it almost from the beginning!

LC: I had. I jus' begun playin'...when it was organize', 'cause it was organized in 1926, an' I was playin' jus' 'bout nearly a year then, when they organized the union. An' the union began...to get organize' was because we were boycotted from playin' some engagements around here by not bein' union. And one of the reasons for the engagement on the Steamer Capitol, [Oscar "Papa"] Celestin was engaged to play the job, but by him not being union, he was boycotted from it, an' he was determined to organize a union then, an' instead Sam Morgan played the job because they had belonged to the union in Mobile [Alabama].

WR: Yeah.

RC: Un huh.

WR: That's right. I believe I had heard that.

LC: An' that was the beginning of...the fellas gettin' interested in organizing the union. Well, when I joined, which was when they had just gotten their charter--well, my father had to sign because I was too young; I was 16 at the time...you see, an', uh, I was too young to join, so I had to have someone to stand for me, so my father he was the one that s--stood for me. Well, it started with...Celestin as the president;...Willie Bontemps was the vice-president; Osceola Blanchard was the secretary; Peter Bocage...was the, uh, treasurer. That was the f-firs' one. An' then they stayed in office with the exception of, I think, uh; Alec Lana-ville [sp?] came as--became president aroun' 1928. He succeeded Celestin. Well, at the time that I lef' New Orleans in

1929, well, Lanaville was still president; of course, I kept my active membership in the local ever since I joined it. I wasn't a delinquent member or anything that I can remember ever since. But the--during the Depression area [eral], well,...looked like the union had lost its prestige an' members had gotten out; it was jus'...mostly Don Albert's Band an' one or two others that kept the thing on balance an' that kept 'em ongoing through that time. And in 1940...uh, it was--you could say that the union was...reactivated in a way, but durin' that period of time, fella that kept it goin' wa' name' George Augustine, an' he devoted his time to hold the charter, he, he used to put out some of his financin' everything jus' to keep it--

WR: Um hum.

LC: Goin' at the time.

WR: Um hum.

RC: Was he a musician?

LC: Yes, he was a musician. He was a--played bass horn. ... Then in the '40', then it was...reactivated, you can say revise', an' it came under Houston; became the president of the union, an' he stayed in office until 1957.

RC: Who-who was that?

LC: William Houston.

WR: Houston.

RC: Oh, yeah, um hum.

LC: Yeah, until 1957, an' that's when I became president.; '57 I succeeded Houston.

WR: I was wondering, is there any, uh, history; would anybody around the union ever keep any, uh, records or history. The real old union; I understand even John Robichaux back in the [18]90s might have tried to start one or did have one.

LC: Well if they did, I don't know.

WR: Nobody's ever written up any account of that or anything--.

LC: Not that I know.

WR: Wouldn't be linked up with your in any--.

LC: Not at all. I do know that they had a...some musicians, uh, "Social and Pleasure Club"--.

WR: But that was independent association.

LC: Yeah.

WR: Of the [American] [Federation of] [Musicians].

LC: But it wasn't American Federation of Musicians. That was the first time--.

WR: Yeah.

LC: For the American Federation of Musicians. Well, John Robichaux was one of the members; I think he's a charter member only, if I'm not mistaken--.

WR: Probably is.

LC: He may be, but I know he was among the first officials--.

WR: Um hum.

LC: Either as a board member or one of the chartered member.

LOUIS COTTRELL

12

Reel III [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961.

- RC: Well, I--you mention that you say there might have been an old musicians social and pleasure club--.
- LC: No, they did have a Musician's Social and Pleasure Club.
- RC: Oh, they did.
- LC: Yeah, it was something like a frat[ernal] organization, but it wasn't with the American Federation of Musicians.
- WR: Yeah, that's what my impression was.
- RC: Um hum, yeah. ... In other words, it would be, uh, a sort of a, a mutual aid, uh--.
- LC: Yeah, that's right. ...
- RC: Uh, I don't know whether, uh, uh, whether it, it's slipped by me, but did you say what year, th-, uh, the union got the charter here?
- LC: 1926.
- RC: 1926.
- LC: 1926.
- RC: Um hum.
- LC: Yes, 1926.
- RC: An' that's Local 4--?
- LC: Four-nine-six.
- RC: Four-nine-six.
- LC: Um hum. Local Four-nine-six. ...
- WR: I think we've covered your life pretty well; I don't want to keep you any later unless there's something else that you can add. Is there anything that you think you'd like to add about your life or your father or the musicians you've worked with or anything else?
- LC: Well, I practically worked with all the musicians in the area [era] that I came up under: the ol' one' that was still active an--.
- WR: Yeah.
- LC: Along with the young one', with the exception of a very few, uh, ...an'...as I mentioned before, I did work with my father; I worked with him in the orchestra, an' I did work with him in--on several occasions in the brass band, but each time it was playin' sax.
- RC: Um hum.
- LC: To play all as a clarinetist, my father never did hear me play.
- WR: Is that right.
- LC: No, he never did hear me play. ...
- WR: Uh, I might ask did he have any brothers or any, you know--.
- LC: He had sisters, no brothers; he was the only boy.
- WR: He was the only boy just like you.
- LC: Yeah, he was the only boy; he had another sister and, oh, she died jus' about nine years, nine, ten years ago.
- WR: Um hum.
- LC: Um hum. ...
- WR: We've certainly appreciated all of the, uh, wonderful interview and the things you've told us, especially about your father an'

LOUIS COTTRELL  
Reel III [of 3]--Transcript  
August 25, 1961

13

Tios, an' people that are gone now.

LC: Um hum.

WR: We don't know too much about.

LC: Well, I was glad that I was able to give it to you. An' may be plenty that I just can't recall.

WR: Well, maybe later on we'll think up some more questions--.

LC: Yeah.

WR: We can ask you some other day--.

LC: Alright.

WR: If you have time.

LC: Be more than glad to.

WR: Certainly, uh, glad we finally, uh, found you had a little free time because you're one of the important men we wanted to interview, of course.

LC: Um hum.

End of Reel III