

FRANK AMACKER
REEL I
September 30, 1960

ALSO PRESENT: Marjorie T.
Zander, Richard B. Allen
SUMMARY: Richard B. Allen
AUDIT: Bruce Raeburn
RE-AUDIT: Joel Palmer
TYPING: Dan Weisman

Frank Amacker's address is 2602 La Salle Street, New Orleans, La.

Frank D'Landry [sp?] was one of the greatest guitarists Amacker has ever known. He died about fifty years ago and was probably from New Orleans. He was a jazz player and played in the [red light] district, which was called Storyville, not the Vieux Carre' then [sic]. "Going down the line" meant going to the district for pleasure.

FA was born on Calliope between Dryades and Baronne. He grew up there until he was about twenty-seven years old. He moved to Dryades between Second and Third [Streets]. He moved from Dryades between Howard Avenue and Calliope to Dryades between Second and Third. [Confusing here.] This area was and is called the Garden District [sic]. He then moved downtown to Perdido between Franklin and Liberty.

He left Fisk School which was on the corner of Perdido and Franklin, at the age of fifteen to go to Southern University at Soniat and Magazine. [Compare other data on this location.] The principal of Fisk was Arthur P. Williams, called "Arthur Principal William" or "A.P. Williams." Some of the lady teachers were Miss Lewis, who taught vocal music on Fridays, Miss Fager and Mrs. Emma Rose Williams. Miss Lewis taught pupils including Amacker individually.

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Prof. William Nickerson taught FA [compare other data on Nickerson's first name] violin at Southern. FA still plays violin. He once was a master, [but] one loses one's ability if one does not play violin. He played classics, semi-classics, popular, jazz, and swing. He would cause people to stop dancing and come to the bandstand. He featured "Black and White [Rag]," "Rubber Plant Rag," "Maple Leaf Rag," and "Rose Leaf Rag," on violin.

When RBA asks which tunes [sic] from "The Red Book [i.e., Standard High Class Rags] he played, Amacker names "Avalancia" [sp?], exercises, "and things like that." [Compare "The Red Book."]

Music seems to be mechanical to Amacker. He can put his guitar down until next year, pick it up [?]. He could read so fast -- he used to hold a conversation and read music. All [other] instruments are toys compared with the guitar.

RBA requests a rag by [Scott] Joplin, such as "Maple Leaf Rag," or James Scott, and FA suggests "Someday Sweetheart." RBA insists on a rag, then he asks for "Any Rags" which Amacker doesn't know.

FA plays "The House Got Ready," Frank D'Landry [sp?] named it. FA doesn't know if it was ever published.

FA plays fragments [of "The House Got Ready"?]. People on Bourbon Street want FA to show them how to play this. Others

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can't play it. (The microphone is moved to record FA's foot patting louder.)

Frank D'Landry [sp?] is almost comparable to [Andres] Segovia.

The name Snoozer Quinn is unknown to FA.

Nobody is comparable to Segovia. He is too far ahead of the rest in the whole world.

When asked about jazz guitarists, FA says that anyone can play with a plectrum. One must be able to play finger style or the playing does not count.

FA plays fragments of "Lover, Come Back To Me." He discusses his bass [line].

Amacker worked with [A.J.] Piron for years and with Manuel Perez. In Piron's band were: Piron; Freddy Keppard; George Baquet; Billy Marrero, bass; and Ernest Trepagnier, drums.

Amacker plays the introduction to ["Lover, Come Back To Me"?] several times. He will give RBA "all kinds of money" [if he can prove that?] anyone around here can play this introduction.

For a while, Piron's trombonist was Eddie Vinson [sp?].

In the district, a band might play for months at a place and find another band in their place. Bosses did not notify bands that they were fired. A musician might play with the new band. Once, FA walked in to find Piron was leader of the band.

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FA once was manager of a band at George "Fewclothes" [i.e., Foucalt's]. Clarinetist Jimmie Noone was in the band. RBA asks if "they used to smoke all the hop," there, and Amacker's answer is not relevant. "Fewclothes" was opposite [The Big] 25.

FA also entertained as solo pianist in sporting houses. A pianist came to work at nine and played one rag. He then went somewhere where the landlady could find him in case company came in the house. When she called him, he would play a few pieces. Then she would pass the pianist's hat. Even if someone gave the pianist ten dollars the first time, she would pass it again after three or four more tunes.

Amacker remembers the name only of a tune, "Company in the Parlor."

FA says that Andres Segovia was tops on Spanish tunes like [???].

RBA tells FA that his recording of "Liebestraum" has been issued [on Folkways' Music of New Orleans series]. FA asks if this record will be on a juke box. His name was spelled Frank Ammica or some similar way.

FA plays "Liebstraum." (Traffic noises are recorded also.)

Frank D'Landry [sp?] was always a leader or soloist. He played at Lulu White's, Josie Arlington's, and Willie Piazza's. His band consisted of himself and probably three or four [other] men, playing guitar, bass, mandolin, and sometimes a trumpet

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[or?] saxophone. FDL sometimes played guitar as a soloist. FDL was the champion guitarist and mandolinist. The tenor sax was used about 1906-1908 [!!!] The C melody saxophone has been popular about fifteen years [!!!]

Amacker played in the houses [of prostitution] of Gypsy Schaeffer, Mae Tuckerman, and Miss [Gertrude] Dix, who was Tom Anderson's girl friend. Her place was next door to Tom Anderson's Annex.

END OF REEL

