

RESTRICTED

George Lewis Interview IV3327 De Armas St., Nov. 25, 1968

"When I was born, my mother had [chosen] several names: Francis Joseph Lewis Zeno. 'George' was nowhere around. My mother had — all the children that my mother had were two before me; they died. So my grandmother said; 'Call this one George.' And my mother never had it in her mind to call me George. But my grandmother kept calling me George until my christening time, when my mother went and had me christened in St. Augustine church, under Joseph Francis Lewis Zeno. But — I don't how she started — she started calling me George too. So George just grew right in. In the latter part of the '30's, when I got a divorce from my other children's mother, this Italian lawyer who was at Decatur and St. Philip, and him and I was talking about it, so he said "Why not have it changed legally?" Because social security, registration cards all were 'George Lewis,' you see. Although some of my childrens were registered 'Zeno.' So I had it legally changed to George Lewis, because then I didn't have an alias, so if I had continued 'Joseph Zeno,' and yet being called George, well that would have been a big difference. So it was legally changed to George Lewis." He had been calling himself George Lewis before that "for many years; I belonged to different organisations, mens organisations, and they would call me Joseph Zeno, and sometimes I wouldn't even pay attention to it, because I was so much in the habit of hearing George, from the time I can't remember until this day.

"So I had it legally changed, so I had, let him while he was in the process of making the divorce, I let him change the name legally; so I had to pay for it and everything like that.

"When I applied for my first visa to go to England, I went to the church where I was christened, and the priest put that on there, Zenon, but he made a big mistake, you see. He made a mistake. Then I had

trouble and I had to get, Bill Russell went and got a notary I think, because I was in San Francisco, get them to straighten it out; you had to have an affidavit to straighten it out, you see. But I've never been to the church and had it changed at all. It's ZENO, four letters.

"I played in the Storyville, I played there, at the Ramona, I played at the Humming Bird, I played at the Funky Spoon, which was on Villere between Iberville and Bienville, <sup>in the basement</sup> ~~on Basin~~, that was the Funky Spoon. The Ramona was on Iberville between Villere and Marais, coming this way; and the Humming Bird was (at) Marais and Villere, I played there. And they had a lot of other little places. And then I played in small places, I played at St Louis and Marais, little joint there. I played there with Chris Kelly, for one. I played at the Ramona with Howard. I played at the Humming Bird; I played there with Clayton; he was just starting out. So they had a lot of places I played at; and many times I played at the 101 Ranch, right by the Big 25. Punch <sup>for a while</sup> Georgia Boyd was playing clarinet there, the piano player was Udell. They used-ed different trumpet players. I played there several times and I played at a place across the street, it was called the Tuxedo.

"Well, I lived at 1226 St. Philip St., from the age of about 6 years, when I made my first communion in the Catholic religion in 1910, my yard, where I was living -- living in the rear of course -- gave right to the back of Hope's Hall, it was called Hope's Hall; so I heard a lot of music there. I got a lotta, in fact I got a scar on my (head?) right here from someone threwed a brick at my, bust my eye open, fightin', second line. Every Monday, at this hall, they would have banquets, societies, the Negro societies, what they call the Benevolent Associations, mens societies -- of course the mens

would parade but the ladies societies, or the Insurance societies, every year they would have anniversary banquets. They would start it out around 12 o'clock and it would last till six. And it was by invitation; I could hear the music just as good as I can see you. And we would dance out in the yard as kids. I would say I was born with the music [

(?). Before I moved to 1226, when my mother and father separated, I was 5 years old, I lived opposite, almost opposite, that hall. You see, there was the Hope's Hall, and they turned it into the Co-operators Hall.

"People I would see I know like old man Jimmy Brown, a bass player, I was aware of him. 'Oke' Gaspard, Vic Gaspard, I was aware of that band; banjo player, Lorenzo Staulz, also Buddy Manaday, I had a opportunity to play with him. Willie Bontemps was an old one, I had a opportunity to play with him. Ernest Kelly was a member of my band one time, when Red Allen and I had a band. Trombonist, he's been dead many years. Well they used-ed different trumpet players. Sometimes it would be Louis Dumaine, or Sugar Johnny <sup>[Smith]</sup> was one. And they had another one, we used to call him Zue, Zue Sullen, he was killed very young right in front of Krauss. Jim knew him, he comes Jim's home. <sup>[The Jim Brown after was a phone call.]</sup> Zue Sullen. I never played with Manuel (Perez), I heard Manuel many times, but I never played with Manuel, because there was a prejudice there amongst them people, segregation. Some of those bands wouldn't hire a man whose hair wasn't silky like your hair. Some of the halls wouldn't accept you in there. There was one on Robertson St <sup>there</sup>, there was a hall there, Jeunes Amis. You wasn't accepted there. And they would look at you hard if you was playing in that band. Well, I don't say he (Manuel Perez) ever segregated anybody I know of. But everyone in that band was light skinned, you know.

Asked if Manuel Perez played 'jazz' or played 'straight': "To me he was jazz; everything — in fact, they didn't say jazz when I was a kid, they said Ragtime then; so he played like the average fellow like, er, I

would say) for instance Peter Bocage when Peter was in his prime, he, you went like hell, he (Manuel Perez) was very strong. I know, I was playing when he died. And before he got sick; his mind kind of went away from him. He was strong, but he was rough, you know. Like the majorities of these fellows that come along. They were all different professors, you know, school teachers, *music teachers*. [Murray?]

"I heard Freddie (Keppard), I used to hear Freddie practically every Monday at the Hopes Hall, banquets. Now he <sup>was</sup> rough, too. He was very rough. I heard ~~Henry~~ Henry Zeno, drummer, he's dead many many years; everybody was <sup>is up there seen</sup> dancing in the streets to the cemetery (?). No relation. And little Mac <sup>[Lacey]</sup> the drummer, <sup>[Murray?]</sup> MacMurray. Jimmy Brown, bass, I heard him; Santiago, Willie Santiago, he's an older timer.

*C 2.15* "Clarinet players? Picou was one. Big Eye Louis Nelson was one. Charlie <sup>[McCurtis?]</sup> McCurdy, he was one. Tio, Lorenzo Tio, he was one. And then they had Johnny <sup>[down town?]</sup> I can't recall his name, anyhow he was in the <sup>age</sup> drayers' business, you know, with a horse and wagon; er, Johnny Brown. I would say that Big Eye Louis was exceptionally good. He played at one time nothing but C clarinet. So that made it come out, after <sup>[to?]</sup> you know, play music, and talking with people I find out it was a C clarinet that he played. Naturally he was playing opposite of the — say, for instance, like I play my clarinet, the same key as the trumpet, he didn't. He played the same key as the violin; more sharps <sup>[then?]</sup> and more flats." George Baquet? "I heard a lot of him, and I have a picture taken with George Baquet. Me and him and Bunk, Lawrence Marrero, Jim and Drag. Alton missed the train. We played at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. He lived-ed there a long time. And this concert was a day concert. Sammy Price had something to do with it, invited Alton; he got drunk and missed the train. Sammy Price played the piano.

"George Baquet was good. He was better to me on the E flat than,

er, you know, because I never heard him too much in dancing places. He was one of those, well, I call 'em yellow people, that stays in a band that though they're all colored sells it as all white band. And his brother even got a chance to play with a white band — ~~Shield~~ <sup>A. C.</sup> Baquet. Mardi Gras parades, people didn't know he was colored — some people knew he was colored, some didn't. Just like this man that used to rent all the instruments, Dave; everybody thought he was a white man, Dave Perkins; he was a colored man; he rented drums, trumpets, and everything; you could rent from him. He was up round in the Garden District, up round Louisiana Avenue, <sup>in that area</sup> you might say. I never knew exactly where because I never rented anything from him. But I know a lot of fellows that <sup>mostly</sup> wanted drums, or bass, something like that, they would rent 'em. But every Mardi Gras parade, he was in there, playing the mellophone or the trombone, he was in there."

→ What did George Lewis like especially about the clarinet to take it up? "I know <sup>clarinet</sup> ~~I was conscious of~~ something hit me, just like, you know, somebody will say, 'Go out there and see something,' and you say 'I don't want to see it' or, you see something one time and the more you see it the more you want it. My mother did wanted me to, or at least she was thinking 'bout it some way or another, violin, but I didn't care for violin. Because violin use to make me, you know, make my blood seem like, <sup>scrap my stomach</sup> ~~excruciate~~ (?) I didn't care for violin. And she said I was too delicate, <sup>I was this that and the other</sup> ~~this that and the other~~. So when I got my first piece of money — not my first money but -- I had saw a toy violin, in the Woolworths, that's Bourbon and Canal; <sup>but</sup> it was called Kirby's; 5 and 10 cents store. 5, 10 and 25. You couldn't buy nothing in there ~~worth~~ over 25 cents. And I went for the violin, because I had <sup>r</sup> bought some clothes on St. Louis, between Dauphine and Bourbon, the big house with that long porch and ball used to be shiny all the time -- brass ball --

my mother working so I had brought some clothes there, and asked her could I go buy a violin; she told me yeah, and went up Bourbon St. to Kirby's, ~~said~~ <sup>[I sees the flutes like?]</sup> they were out of 'em; so I buys a flute. So I went home, ~~played it, and went right to~~ <sup>like the?</sup> clarinet.

3:04 "I just admired the clarinet. I could tell the difference between who sounded good to me and who didn't; but I admired some of the passages in the funerals <sup>[dirles?]</sup>. I played funerals and yet I don't read no music. And I played funerals where nobody in that band had no chance to fake. The first Eureka band, nobody there could have blowed 'Home Sweet Home' if they didn't have no music. And I was the onliest one that didn't have a lyre on my clarinet. The first time I played my E flat clarinet it was the second to the last parade on the 30th of May. <sup>Memorial Day, R.D.]</sup> What they used to call Oddfellows Day, we would call it. <sup>Oddfellows Day was 1st of May, 30th</sup> It would start early in the morning, and would wind up between 5:30 and 6. The Masons would come from all over the surrounding country, make a big big parade like they used to do there. <sup>Labor Day.</sup> Willie Parker brought me into that ~~place where the Eureka played.~~ <sup>[first?]</sup> He said he had heard me play. And when I got there, they told him, ~~they said~~ <sup>what you doing with that?</sup> "Who's that little boy?" <sup>[inaudible sentence]</sup>. So Willie told 'em, he said, "If he don't play right, don't pay me, pay him, but don't pay me." And Landry had the E flat clarinet with him. They didn't know that he had it with him, and I had my B flat. And I say I'm going to take it along because if I can't play his E flat I'm goin' to ~~use my B flat.~~ <sup>play the</sup> It was my first time on E flat, and Sam Morgan's clarinet player, Joe Watson, it was his first time. Each one of us had it in our back pocket. He was with Sam Morgan's pick-up band, you know, made together; but this Eureka Band was an organised band. I played with them about two or three years I think. That's when it was just organised. There was no Eureka Band, if there was, it must have been

way before I knew. There was Al Landry, a fellow by the name of Santamore he died, and Willie Edwards, three trumpets. And Santamore quit on account of his work, and <sup>say</sup> he was a roofer, big fat fellow, and it didn't pay him you know, play a funeral and a parade was nothin', a little over \$5, and he would make more than that, so he wouldn't lay off no more. So then they took er, I'll 'call his name, on trumpet, and Landry, and sometimes they used Louis Dumaine until they got a regular trumpeter. And Alphonse, very dark fellow who was pigeon-toed played alto (horn). And old man V<sup>er</sup>et played the bass horn. Willie Cornish — who played with Buddy Bolden — he was on trombone, him and a man who was the manager of the band, who was a barber — I 'called his named sometime ago to you. But anyhow he died, and then Albert Warner came in. Old Man Cato was playing drums, he was a little short man -- he had mahogany sticks I remember — he was playing drums; Willie Parker was playing bass drum." George dates the time when he joined the band at "just at the beginning of the twenties. Smith; Smith was the ~~I~~ don't remember his first name." On trumpet was "Santamore (phonetic); I forget his first name, I never did know his first name. He was a little darker than me, and he used to (snap his fingers) all the time. Well none of them could <sup>play</sup> no jazz. Landry couldn't play no jazz. Santamo' couldn't play no jazz. Willy Edwards was the leader; and when he quit, they got Willie er -- one was called Willie and the other brother was named Johnny. Johnny played the baritone, and Willie was the trumpet. And then Willie took over the band: Willie Wilson." [initials]

George Lewis asked if most of the bands were like that, readers who didn't really play jazz: "I can't say that they didn't really play jazz, no. Because the same music I play today, I was playing that many years ago. There's just a little change now you know, because if we played

like we played ~~along there~~ we couldn't get nobody to play it. Because there ain't nobody can play it." How has the music changed? "Well you hear riffs; you hear a little modern licks in there; that's a change right there you see. The tunes -- even now the tunes -- I had a book and I lost the book, and Shirley will -- she won't tell a lie to you, it had over 500 numbers -- you call Nick Gagliano; he was the manager of this band I played in, with 500 numbers I didn't have to play one

to repeat ~~it~~." Has the beat changed at all? "No, no, I don't know" nothing about the beat -- that's only BOM BOM, like on the street parade." <sup>Tommy's</sup> Tell him I'm talking about a dance band. "Well, I'll tell you, the band, in the same time if I'd knock off (claps a fast beat) they'd play it that way. If I knocked off (claps a slow beat) they'd play it that way. They used a little tom-tom, very seldom they used it; they had what they called a overhead traps, like Joe Rena <sup>used to</sup> ~~would~~ make 'em; ~~or~~ different fellows would make 'em out of an umbrella handle. You see with the ball (?) and string, they'd come over and hook with the wooden pedal. And the side cymbal; and the crash cymbals, none of them zilljans (?)." <sup>SP?</sup>

"Sam Morgan, yeh, well Sam Morgan, not the same kind of rhythm. Sam Morgan, of course, he was recorded; but Chris Kelly, he never was recorded. Chris Kelly had, to me, a better beat than Sam Morgan; because Chris was heel-and-toe (tapping his foot) just like what we used to call 'coon Jive' -- had that in chruches; <sup>protestants</sup> because on account of, always jam ~~(?)~~ together. And you notice some of the trumpet players that normally -- you watch Shiek's foot sometime. He uses that heel-and-toe. Howard would do the same thing." I say there used to be a tendency towards 2/4 music. "Yeh, ~~or~~ double <sup>rap</sup> ~~riff~~ (?). Boy the other night there with Frank Demond. Lawrence used to be good at that, on some of his tunes. Lawrence used to do that a lot of times, and he

kept -- all the banjo's I can show you I know ~~as~~, two man (?) banjos  
~~that plays now, you know say Manuel Sayles and that boy there Kimball,~~  
 and who else, ~~Reubelow (Rebilo?)~~. ~~Rebilo~~ comes closer -- he don't  
 know ~~that~~ much, and his chords don't come out as clear -- but he's  
 closer to the old time than any ~~one~~ of those, because he's er  
 but the rest ~~is~~ playing on the after beat: Kimball, and also Sayles,  
 chk chk." Marrero played a steady beat. "That's the older  
 style. That's the older style. Marrero was very much  
 and he doubted his self a lot. Because he couldn't pick a tune, onli-  
 est thing he would pick, he would trill, was that 'Just a Closer Walk  
 With Thee,' he could trill that.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE 2

c. 4:19 "Going to New York with Bunk Johnson was one of the big thrills I ever had, in all the while I had been playing music. Because, I would say, he had his ways, but if it wasn't for him I would never have had the opportunity, and I appreciate it very much. I treated him with respect, even though he was a little, you know, difficult<sup>?</sup> towards me, and not only towards me, towards the other fellows. Some of them, I know, hate him right now; I never hated him, but I never hated anybody. I just didn't like his ways. I enjoyed playing with him; I enjoyed playing with him, because Bunk had a lot of ideas. He was like the old musicians — the old piano teacher that try to teach you and beat you on the knuckles with a board if you wouldn't learn, and <sup>he got</sup> [he got] tired and disgusted, you see. And that's the kind of man I think he wanted to be. But you can't take an old monkey and learn him new tricks. His ideas was so much different from the [ ] <sup>?</sup> everyone listen to him. He played peices that the fellows hadn't played or if they had played 'em, they had forgotten 'em, and that made a little difference, because you've got to play. He can't take all the weight on his shoulders, out of the band. Well no — [nothing] <sup>entertain the people?</sup> ~~became a pupil~~, and I guess that irritated him, and even if we had somebody that could read, er, [reading], we didn't have the music, you see. So you had to follow him, you understand. And he [didn't] <sup>First</sup> he didn't like to see nobody get popular, he didn't want that; he wanted it to be Bunk — which it was Bunk's band. Because I had a opportunity to do a recordin' — which I would like to have done it then. But a man, and I went to the music store, <sup>black</sup> [ ] sent for me at the union; Lawrence and myself, Baby Dodds, we went up there. But this man told me, he said: "I'm sorry, but you can't record." He said <sup>be</sup> "You came here with a <sup>man</sup> band, you see. You came here with Bunk Johnson, you're working under him. Onliest way you can record is to

have him in your band as the leader." And the man we was due to record with said he didn't want Bunk. The man say he didn't want Bunk. And he said, "I'll come down to New Orleans and record you," which he did. And this man told me, he said, "I have been hearing a lot of talk about Bunk." And I said "Well he's all right," I said, "but just sponsor this recordin'," but, you know, he don't want that. He said "Yeh," he said, "I would let you go, I'd <sup>give the do-ahead story, but?</sup> remember, I'm a Jew." And that's all he said. I'm a Jew and you're a Negro, you see, so we're both treated the same way. He didn't want to lose his job and he didn't want to see me get myself into trouble.

"Well, it was a big thrill to me, you know, New York, I saw some of it — Ryan's, <sup>[I was always real well?]</sup> ~~pop-eyed all week (?)~~ in New York. And of course I made friends with a lot of people, Muggsy <sup>[Springer]</sup> and Pee Wee <sup>[Crawford]</sup>, and I knew Simeon and I knew Albert Nicholas, er Frankie Newton which got to be an alcoholic. I went to see him every day, because he would be where we passed <sup>[for his?]</sup> drink. Pops Foster was there, <sup>[Oria Brown?]</sup> was there.

"The Stuyvesant was a huge, great big place, it had a capacity of, oh, 550 people, and we would have more people than that, say Thursday, Friday and Saturday. On a week night, a lot of people would have to work, of course, wouldn't have that many. But we would always have one or two hundred head of people. They sold beer by the pitcher, got it in a pitcher, and I believe they paid a small admission. When we first got there they didn't dance. There was a colored fellow called Al, and Al would walk around the people <sup>[the more like and that was it]</sup>, and first there ain't no dancing that was going on. Leadbelly was a regular customer, he was a good dancer, he would be along all the time. Cow Cow Davenport, he was there. And they always had musicians there, and you were aware that they were listening at what you were doing of course. They were better than (we were?), and a lot of <sup>the line of</sup> music, techniq<sup>ue</sup>, execution, they were better mens than

we were, but there was <sup>64</sup> [something we would do] that they couldn't do. For instance, that type of music we're playing, right now the jazz bands up there, they don't play — the time is either too swift or too slow, the tempo of the music, you see. They're playing Dixieland. But I have heard <sup>E</sup> ~~we say~~ Dixieland band, but there ain't no Dixieland band playing at Preservation, none of 'em, even though they try to take down, or let one man play, so he still ain't Dixieland. Dixieland is swift, and the beat is different, big difference, like you go by the Famous Door by Santo Rocora and then and you hear a big difference. We were always improvising <sup>?</sup> [time?]. The De Paris brothers was the best band we heard; I heard 'em in New York, I mean in that type of music. And they wasn't playing the kind of pure — they gave Bunk's band greater praise than they gave them. They praised-ed Bunk's band because they saw the mens <sup>5:10</sup> were creatin' something. <sup>[experts that praise had heard the]</sup> music, but they could tell we wasn't aware what we was doing. We were playing the same tune — maybe play it this way right now and the next half hour or hour play it, <sup>same melody</sup> ~~say~~ and they got something? somebody will do that's different.

"I spoke to one man, spoke to me — oh a lot of them claim to be experts, I wouldn't say whether they was, <sup>you</sup> I don't know, I don't want to commit myself — but there was one man called me to his table. And I was drinking then. <sup>?</sup> I went there, him and me spoke to each other you know. And he was from the Boston Conservatory. We got to talking. "Fine clarinet," (he said). "Depends on how you like it," and I smiled. He said, "Well, it is." He say, "because I am a professor at Boston Conservatory." He say, "if I would write down on paper what things you are doing on your clarinet, <sup>[say probably?]</sup> you 'd be afraid." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you're doing some things you do that I believe would be impossible. You know that I could <sup>[point you?]</sup> ." I never had no lessons, and I never <sup>have?</sup> had told anybody I could read music, and I never had told

anybody ~~that~~ I was a better man than this one. I played 'cordin' to my own, you know, because I like the low register and why I like to play low register, er, a man who was living in the same yard where I was living, and I used to run over my clarinet and as a beginner you're going to get them screeches and all. And he'd stand in the yard, I remember he had two big ulcers on his leg this man, and he'd say, "Hey, there, George, <sup>the geese are</sup> ~~are you still flying~~ <sup>huh</sup> ~~huh?~~" And so I blowed easier (and easier you know.)

I never copied anybody. If I was under a teacher, I would have might, you know, got to be <sup>louder?</sup> like him, but I didn't have one. On my own, Just the way it come out on my own, because <sup>ideas</sup> myself, and I guess by the time I came out I was satisfied ~~and working (?)~~ right you see."

In New York "we stayed at 68 Washington Square, 68 or 69. We were staying with Gene Williams. We were staying up there <sup>what he had?</sup> way up <sup>?</sup> on the sixth floor. Lawrence and I (shared a room), Jim had a single, Bunk had a single. Baby Dodds <sup>[Lorraine?]</sup> Bill Russell was staying there with us. Gene was working during the day time. I would do the cooking, Alton would <sup>[inaudible]</sup>, everybody had something to do.

"Smiling Joe, he was up there then, <sup>for singing? huh?</sup> playing with Sid, Sidney Bechet.

I never heard the band, but I knew they were playing. He used to come by <sup>And he'd make you laugh. Isay them? beans--</sup> and listen. <sup>We had to?</sup> ~~(inaudible)~~ We couldn't get a pot big enough, <sup>to cook in</sup>

buy a brand new chamber pot. And we got along pretty good until er, for nothing Bunk got angry at me. Because, <sup>[here]</sup> we were in the band room, everybody was blowing their horn, you know, that wants to. And he went down to the men's room, and we were picking tunes, <sup>what ever?</sup> to play. "Ice Cream" or anything we played was new to the people. Not new, everybody knew that "Ice Cream" was a pop song, but not played by a jazz band. Well, I was playing "Ice Cream", and we had a ball, but wait until he come back. And when he came up, when he came up into the room, he <sup>Talked me about...</sup> cussed me, mother this and that. And I was so angry I said to him, "If

it wasn't for your age," I said, "You and I would (inaudible). That's all right," I said, "I'm going to go home." And when I got through <sup>this</sup> rehearsal -- we hadn't opened the job yet. And I went <sup>and came</sup> heading back to the place. I knew if I'd stayed in the house something would have happened. I felt that way. I felt just that much hurt to see -- good as I had been to him -- how he treated me. And I sit in the park. Bill Russell, he was there, he came out and he sit alongside me. And I told him, I say "Bill, I'm going home (inaudible sentence)." He begged me not to go, because if I left everybody else would leave. Lawrence was playing with me before. He knew Bunk by Bunk used to come to his house <sup>where?</sup> when his daddy was living. Alton didn't know about Bunk. Drag didn't know nothing about Bunk. Baby knew of him, hadn't played with him. Jim had heard the name that was all. And they all was willing to go back home. <sup>But?</sup> By Bill being so nice, Gene treated me nice too, so I stayed. And we got along, but if it would come for me to play or Jim to play alone, something like that, we wouldn't stand up. And people would make signs and say like (whispering), and I knew they must be saying they're scared, or, you know, well, it wasn't that but we knew what was going to happen if we stand up. He's going to make <sup>an awful</sup> ~~it~~ (hard for you) he's going to cut in with his horn, something to make the other fellow feel bad. <sup>He said to me</sup> that night, that he <sup>say</sup> ~~said~~ you're trying to take over, trying to take over your band, I said I'm not trying to take over your band. But I think a band is just like a baseball team or any kind of team. If you work together, <sup>respect to</sup> you ~~start to get~~ things together. Not work against one another.

5:55 "And that blowed off, until we went back the following year, and the following year was worse. Because Gene Williams <sup>wasn't</sup> was in there with him, and the boss man, the man that ran the place, he saw they done so good, he got a whiskey license also. When we were supposed to leave (for New york), we were going to go back on Friday morning, on Saturday, Bunk was

down at the Coliseum Arena, Conti and St Louis, I mean on Roman and St. Louis, they had a fight there, boxing. Him and Ricard was down there with four or five young women, down ~~in the~~ ringside, <sup>I think</sup> it was \$3 or something. And he was showing the tickets to everybody. But then even the next day when we were supposed to go off, Bunk didn't never show up. Bunk didn't show up. And that Sunday, Mr Menchell, the man up there, got in touch with me. I could have lied and said that we were at the railroad station but Bunk took sick, I knew Bunk wasn't sick. And he say, "well, George you try to get him <sup>here</sup> some way," because he was due to open on that Monday. And actually didn't leave till that Monday. Me, ~~and~~ Drag and Jim. We had promised Lawrence, they had promised Alton, they had borrowed money from Alton. They had promised Lawrence; Lawrence got angry at me because he didn't go. I was <sup>only</sup> ~~out~~ working just like <sup>I was work with them boys as a sideman,</sup> (I hope, but I didn't go out?) ~~that was Saturday night.~~ Didn't have a thing to do with that. But the man put his <sup>confidence in me.</sup> ~~got~~ to see if Bunk would, you know. So I <sup>walked</sup> [walked with him?], Jim, me and Drag. We <sup>we</sup> were all that Sunday evening, looking for Bunk, and <sup>we</sup> couldn't find him. So that Monday morning -- it was <sup>the beginning of the week?</sup> we finished there in June -- I was living at my sister's because Johnny Matassa had taken the place <sup>that old house</sup> (827 St Philip St.) <sup>you know,</sup> where I lived-at, Johnny had taken that, so I stayed at my sister-in-law's, and Jim's wife, Pearl, she came there, and said, "Bunk is at my house." Bunk was sitting on a chair, asleep, <sup>No</sup> horn, no coat. Jim's wife got the horn out of the pawn shop, out of the bar room at the corner where Bunk had pawned his horn, and his overcoat, camel hair, <sup>called a camel hair,</sup> somebody had <sup>given</sup> gave him. He didn't have a cigarette to his name, I bought him tobacco, he used-ed Bull Durham, you know, rolled his own. Jim's wife made enough food, and he stayed there a day. I guess he was sick from all the drinking. And we left that night, that Monday night. We had to take a slow train, go all round through Chatanooga and all

them places; and when we got to New York, they drive us to the Stuyvesant Casino. The man says "Well, there ain't no sense in startin' tonight." Art Hodes was replacing, he said let Art Hodes work. And Bunk say "I'm going to take a little walk." And the man say "No, you're not, you're going to stay here." The next night Bunk wasn't talking to us; me, <sup>&</sup> Jim, we had Don [Ewell], Baby Dodds motored all the way from Chicago, figuring <sup>on?</sup> out he was going to play, and he hired Alphonse Steele. Alphonse was the one <sup>that I know</sup> I know how he stated it he was going to fix to <sup>where he stayed</sup> cut his throat.

"There's a lot of things that went on in that band that I don't really want to talk about. Alphonse Steele played with Sharkey, after <sup>the Brynics</sup> this boy dropped dead, his drummer, and Sharkey was playing at <sup>[The Child's Parliament (57?)]</sup> 42nd and Broadway, right there by Times Square <sup>[where? I remember [is at?]]</sup> the Belmont Theatre, and I went there Saturday, 'cause they was finishing up, and none of them wanted to talk to me in <sup>the street</sup> [this state?], and I knew <sup>practically</sup> right there every one of them: Harry Shields, drummer, <sup>the</sup> Alphonse; <sup>I knew practically all of them</sup> ~~Sunny Price~~, all of them <sup>some</sup> none of them didn't want to speak to me. He had Alphonse Steele and Sharkey said, "Glad this job is ended; had enough." And he passed bad remarks about the drummer. And that boy got on him. He said "You're the <sup>Y'all the</sup> one <sup>that</sup>." But Harry Shields, he didn't say nothing to me. The trombone player was a younger fellow, he was the onliest one that spoke, and Sharkey. And Sharkey spoke, complaining because this boy was a colored boy, that's what it was."

"I started working on the docks around '36, and I worked there until the '40s. And a lot of people want to know if that picture <sup>of</sup> George Lewis pushing a cotton bale, published in "Jazzways" <sup>is</sup> was a posed picture. That wasn't no posed picture. George Rosenthal, which is a millionaire, had influence on the dock board, 'cause you had to have it — everybody had to have it; him and Skippy Adelman -- Skippy's still living,

the photographer who taken the picture; because they didn't know that any man — regardless of his size — could tote twice his weight, just like the ants. Well that's true, that's a fact. [Looking in wallet:] I've got so much junk in there, but I keep this, my identification, [from the dock board] because those fellows that were working on the wharves that had been arrested on a federal charge, well, he was put off.

o. 9. 35 "I done trucking coffee; ~~xx~~ I done reconditioning coffee, what they call reconditioning. A bag would be damp with sweat, and the coffee done rot, there's a certain way you've got to know how to dump that bag with a trowel which is made out of a piece of tin or a dustpan; you skim that bad part off you see. And they had to be re weighed, and that bad part is called good dams (?) and bad dams. (2?).

"I first started on the docks at Roberts, you know where the bridge. I started there working for the pipe-line. Jeanette was working for the foreman, Steve, and that's where I started there. And they learned me how to run <sup>electrical</sup> the winch. They learned me how to run <sup>the</sup> winch. And I would truck cotton, but it was not but one bale. There was a certain way to catch it on his truck, to balance it you catch it half way in the middle. That way it balance the truck: you don't feel it. I winch into <sup>er,</sup> on nothing but the Norweigan boats. Tonnage would be wire or iron, or barbed wire — I never fooled with nothing like that. I digged — what they call [digged (?) coffee — just put it up, pull 'em out, and throw 'em on the sling. I done that, I done water <sup>boy</sup> ~~boy~~ (beller?) work. I done sack <sup>with nails & lead.</sup> sewing. Sample coffee — lot of bags come from Brazil wouldn't be, wouldn't have the mark — the mark faded on it, and they have a thing called a trowel, you'd stick it in, the coffee come in your hand. You go on from there <sup>you could?</sup> to see what lot it's come from. Some weeks I was paid over a \$100 a week. But the tax people take it, I would never draw a hundred. The last time I <sup>[work before?]</sup> went there, oh, around the time I went to New York.   
 - I think it was around

At that time you didn't know when you got off at night whether next morning you have a job. The next day you don't have a job. <sup>So then call it</sup> <sup>Here at the shipside.</sup>

"But I worked <sup>at</sup> ~~there~~ regular. And I worked there <sup>more</sup> because I could get off when I wanted. I'd take my cap, and ~~he~~ I'd have my shirt, and I had my bicycle; <sup>I had my tie</sup> ~~I'd tie on~~ on my handle, <sup>in my pocket?</sup> and when 12 o'clock come, I'd change shirt, put my band cap on and <sup>go to</sup> play a funeral. I was only getting two and a half (dollars) <sup>for a funeral</sup> but you know, and there I was making nothing under 18 dollars a day. <sup>I will lose that eighteen</sup> <sup>we went up!</sup> I was losing money. I worked there off and on <sup>(after returning from New York)</sup>: I worked there when I moved here <sup>(to</sup> his house in Algiers) because soon as I got this <sup>little?</sup> shack put up and moved in here <sup>down near like</sup> ~~that was about~~ to fold up on us. <sup>I never liked no inside work.</sup> The only work I like to be out. <sup>And all the work I know,</sup> A lot of fellows would say, 'look at the musician ...' <sup>[inaudible]</sup>

END OF TAPE

\* The term was