

Jan. 29, 1959

Retyped

[Russell:] Give your name and age first.

Barnes: Harrison Barnes, born 1889.

Russell: What was the birthdate exactly?

Barnes: January 13, 1889.

Allen: Were you born here in the city?

Barnes: ^{No,} On Magnolia plantation. It was owned by ah Governor [H. C.] Warmouth at that time. Our daddy he was ah kinda foreman, ya know.

Russell: Uh-huh.

Barnes: And I had ah four other brothers--three other brothers rather.

Russell: Four of 'em in the family, huh?

Barnes: Yeah. And ah they got a band, ya know--they ah put together and they bought them a band at that time. Well, their instrument wasn't very dear, and ah they had about 18, 18 or 19 fellas that joined the band at that time. And my brothers: one played E flat cornet--littie bitty ole' short instrument--one had the baritone, the other E flat clarinet. And they had ole' man Jim Humphrey to come teach 'em, ya know. And we used to go around where they were givin' them lessons ya know, and they wouldn't let us come too near for interruptions, scared of interruptions. So he give 'em first the scales, ya know, and he would put down what finger to give for them to get their [in]tonation, ya see, of the instrument--first, second and so on, like that on the card. ^(i.e., he was teaching them how to finger it.) Give 'em the scale. Concert--all just concert music with the whole band. And next he give 'em oh little common pieces of music like that and [so] on. And I would taken notice after I got the music down by ear, by ear, ya know--and ah I'd watch my brother--ah how they played, ya see.

Russell: Were your brothers older than you?

Barnes: They all was older than me.

Russell: All older.

Barnes: When they went in the field, like that, I would take them same pieces of music and ah they already had the fingerings on the baritone, ya know.

Russell: Yeah

Barnes: And I would work at it, and play it, ya see.

Russell: You started on baritone, then?

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Barnes: Well, when I first started, yeah; had the E flat cornet there, too, ya know. But I'd rather, I'd rather the baritone at that time. And after I learned good, they would go to rehearsal, so one night they were rehearsing--my brother he wasn't there--^Ihad his instrument waiting for him, ya know, and he didn't come--and they played, played a coupla of numbers and I just went right on ahead and played; they was surprised, ya know. But I had by ear and I had been practising along, too. So that made me watch the notes and thing as they progress, ya know; and ah I say, well, if they got to mark all them notes like that and I knowed where to, how to play 'em, ya know, so I got so I didn't need, I didn't need that, ya see. They had a little catalog and a thing--I didn't need that; I knowed. Only thing I had to learn there the key (s), see.

Russell: Yeah.

Barnes: And I could ah I always--I got that down; when they'se playin' in B flat or whatev^{er}, was one flat, two flat, and so on--well I knowed how to figure that. And ah we went along. (Silence)

Allen: Excuse me for interrupting you for a minute.

Barnes: No, no, no!!! √ Tryin' to concentrate, ya see.

Allen: About your father--did he play?

Barnes: No, he was, he was ole' man; there wasn't much music in that time, around that part of the country.

Allen: They didn't have any instruments? [Bad questions. Can be answered "yes" or "no"]

Barnes: No; now and then you'd see a fella with a mandolin or somethin' like that--nothin' down my way there where I lived at, there wasn't much. Harmonica was the biggest thing there and old jew's harp and things like that.

Russell: Yeah.

Barnes: So ---

Russell: Where did you all get your band instruments? Send to New Orleans for them, or where?

Barnes: Well, there wasn't that much--when they would send to get, it would be about three pieces--bass violin, and ah small violin, like that, and a guitar--well, that's all they would use, see. And ah the record came out--ya know, the ah Edison, with them little ole' record?

Russell: Yeah [H.B. misunderstood question] [Cylinder record (?)]

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Barnes: A fella come down there with there, had about six seven records, and they would charge ten cents--like he'd come in this house, well, people that would come to hear the record would have to pay a dime, you see?

Russell: To hear the record.

Barnes: Yeah, pay a dime; he might get 80 cents, 90 cents at different houses, and things like that.

Russell: Did they have any good bands on those records? Any bands from New Orleans?

Barnes: No, no, no, no, they had ah mostly preachin' and jokes and ah, you know how the minstrel used to act in them times--well, that was what was on them records. They had ah plenty of but; you know, that "Grizzly" _____ "If You Can't Help Me, Don't Help That Bear" and things like that. [Correct title, "Preacher and the Bear"(?)]

Russell: Yeah.

Barnes: Well, they had all that on there. And the band just came on up, you know and the fellas, some of them just fall out, drop out, ya know. They, they couldn't make good, see; it was some failure, one way or the other. They, they, they didn't make good and some of 'em too old and they didn't--had no good emboughure so they was about to break up. So we revived it, when we came up and a fella by the name of Pierre Anderson and a few more young fellas we got--I was sixteen years old when I started, when I got in the band and started over again. I commenced to gettin' music from H. N. White. I used to pay a dollar a year and they used to send me three copy or four copies every month. And the "Merry Widow Waltz" is I can remember that was in one of 'em. That been years ago, that was, I was--and I learnt that.

Allen: Was that just the lead or the full band music?

Barnes: The full band music, the full band. Oh, they had for orchestra, you know, all different instruments---

Russell: Yeah.

Barnes: That's the way it used to come out in them days. And ah, and ah I learnt--I learnt the "Merry Widow Waltz"--well, it was parts down at the bottom what the band never could play, you see.

Russell: Yes.

Barnes: But the ah chorus and the things like that, I learned that; but I never did give it to

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Barnes: the band, but I used to play it myself. Then I had a big ah method with a whole lot of songs in it, ya know--ya know--three or four lines, things like that. Well I used to play some of them--well some of them, I would need somebody to teach me, if I played that; it would come in certain division, ya see--that is ah, the syncopated notes and things, now I commence learnin' them, you see.

Russell: Would you take lessons from Jim Humphrey, then?

Barnes: Well, I only took concert lessons with him; I never take--he was here in the city, and I was in the country.

Russell: Yes.

Barnes: I only would--when he come out there with the band, well I took about four lessons with him--but in concert [with the full band]. Now by me getting that ah from ah H. N. White and setting down--I didn't have nothin' to do but concentrate and trying to figure on that music, ya know-- I give the band a coupla lessons.-- let them play it--I commence teachin' them instead of sending here to the city --- well I was gettin' my part down good and I had a cousin that I used to be show him, you see; well, we had that lead. Then my brother, I used to show him the baritone part; I got him so he didn't need ah to be puttin' them fingers [fingerings] and things on there, see. And we--we had several numbers, and that same "Sonny" Henry, he left and come to the city here and he brought a coupla number out there, and he, he gives the band coupla numbers, ya know.

Allen: You remember the names of any of 'em?

Barnes: Huh?

Allen: Do you remember the names of these pieces?

Barnes: Ah, I can remember one good---"Greater Pittsburgh"; [see Henry interview] I don't know if you ever read that.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Barnes: Then

Russell: I don't remember it.

Barnes: Huh?

Russell: I don't remember that; a march, was it?

Barnes: Yeah, it's a march. And ah, I notice down in the bottom when they got on there,

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Barnes: they had a solo and he give it to the boys, you know; like he come in there and give it to 'em--like that, and he came on back to the city. And I figured that thing out, I figured out--I'd say, "That can't be right." You see, we were playing what we used to call the split "C" time, you see, and when it got down in that it had had a piece in there, he gi 'em, it but it wouldn't fit. It had to be double time, you see, you ----the way he give it to em shoulda been double.

Allen: Was it 4/4 time, or somethin'?

Barnes: It was split "C".

Russell: It was split time, what they call it cut time, sometimes. [check this]

Allen: All split time.

Barnes: Yeah, yeah. And ah I couldn't figure--I couldn't see how it could go like that. So when I come to the city, here, I called him and I say "Look", I said, "That piece that away what you got there"---I don't know whether--he couldn't have knowed too good himself. Cause if he was, he wouldn't have teached the boys that, you see.

Russell: Yeah.

Barnes: So, I told him where the mistake was, he had gone (scats out rhythm) and got it (scat out more) -- you see, it went double-up fast, you see, and I showed him ---he say, "you right, you right". He said, "But they got it down like that, so I let 'em stay like that, giving the trouble tryin' to change it. So, after the band commence--fellows commence leaving and dying out, the band kinda disband, well, some of 'em come to the city, and in 1913, there wasn't, they had what break--breakin' up you know, just like that, so, I came to the city in 1913--I was--I played trumpet, ya know, when I was out there. [therefore "Sonny" Henry in N. O. La. what year?]

Russell: That was your main instrument down at Magnolia--trumpet?

Barnes: Yes, we used to call it cornet.

Russell: Yeah cornet.

Barnes: Yeah, the main instrument. And after I got here, the fellas tried to coax me to play ya know. The fellas around here in Algiers, but I--I couldn't see it, you see. They wanted me to get in the band--I just thought the band was too good for me, you see.

Russell: Yeah

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Barnes: So, ah after I've here awhile, I got with ah--a fella say you can play good why don't you try--he say go around where they're playin' music and--but they had ah I didn't think I was good enough, to play. I'm used to that street, street music, ya know, and wasn't used to this orchestra music. So Henry Allen [Sr.] asked me play with him once, well, he wanted me to play the alto [horn]--well I could play any of them instruments, you know. I told him all right. So I played alto with him that day. Next time he was in a jam for a baritone [horn] player, well, that was right down my line, you see.

Russell: Yeah.

Barnes: So, I played ah baritone with him. Next time be short on a trumpet. Played with him, played whole carnival parade--just me and him--the other fella blowed him up. Just, just the two of us. And he couldn't--couldn't play by ear at all, you know, he'd have to put up his card.

Russell: Was Mr. Allen a pretty good trumpet player, though, could he read well, I mean could he play well?

Barnes: Well, no, I don't like to knock a man, you know, but he wasn't much neither way.

Russell: Uh-huh. I'd heard he wasn't as good as his son, I guess.

Barnes: Well, he wasn't half as good as his son. He didn't even know, for a fact, I learned now he didn't know his instrument.

Russell: Uh-huh

Barnes: You know when you had to make a bugle call or something like that . . .

Russell: Yes

Barnes: . . he'd kinda make it the har---

Russell: With the valves.

Barnes: When he could make it just one way. All that - you gotta know them instrument ah ah trumpet or anything else to play easy, you know.

Russell: Yeah

Barnes: Fellas can have a cornet a long time and still don't know the instrument. So, I I learned it by--from the method, you see.

Russell: Yeah

Barnes: I looked to see how them notes could be made, when you in the country like that you

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Barnes: can concentrate, you see.

Russell: Have more time there than here.

Barnes: Yes. And ah when they get to them bugle calls and things I'd make that in one position I could do the same thing with that trumb----when I took that trombone, I could do the same thing with that trombone. Right here, playin with the W P A Band, I seen fellas would be runnin' all over the horn to make notes, ya know. I'd be makin' them in one position. You gotta know them instruments. You must know 'em, to play easy. So ah Allen, after he found out I could good why he he depended on me, ya know. He wanted--I was playin' with him when the boys was goin' to ah to Camp, World War I, ya know. You used to ah have a parade and ah carry 'em to the train. So we'se in Gretna, Allen's band and the Excelsior Band, well I'se on trumpet and ah a man by the name of George Moret he's leader of the Excelsior Band, and he heard me playin' with Allen, ya know. And he came over and inquire about me and everything. I tole him I'm from the country. So he say I played well, you know, that's the first time he had seen me. So after the fellas went to war the model the cornet I had was leakin' ya know. Kinda leaky, you used to have to put ✓ and different things up. So, I quit playin'. Now Sonny Henry he had a a trombone, he's buyin' ah a better trombone, ya know, there's a demand for trombone players. (End of spool) So ah I taken it and ah commenced learning the trombone.

Russell: On Sonny Henry's old trombone, huh?

Barnes: Yes, ah took ah his ole one--he bought a new one, yeah, I taken that. I learned the position--got a method and I learned the position [s], how many notes to be made in that position and everything like that and I went along, I went along slow, but I had the music in me and when I commenced to getting that in me, I could play by ear and when I learned the instrument, you know, then I learned the notes, and ah the trombone players, the few they had here at that time, they wasn't readers. And ah Uncle Sam taken most of them and ah the bet----orchestras was playin' without trombone players. So that made me taken up--take up trombone, so I worked with a feller by the name of Johnny Brown and he wasn't all that--just four or five pieces, you see, and I played with him awhile, well you didn't have to do too much with a trombone in them times you mostly vamp [PRC please define], you see. And that time makin' run, well with me bein' a kinda of ah experienced well I could do a little bit more than other

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fellers. You see--whatcha got is--whatcha got in here. Yeah. Well that helped a little band That helped the little band, and I got I--by me playin' trumpet and and commenced knowin' the trombone, I could play on the trombone lead, I could play the lead, you see, on the trombone. So, that was that would full up a little band. And ah I played with him I have some of them ole' books now. The dates, you know you used to have a date book that date 'em and--four, five times a week. You didn't have, they didn't have these radios and things, when people would go birthday parties and everything they would ring him in his neighborhood, Irish Channel, all up there. Well, Two, three times a week or four times a week like that they would call on him. Well, they wasn't payin' nothin' much. Two and a-half, three dollars [per man ? ?].

Russell: Who was the leader of that band?

Barnes: A fella by the name of Johnny Brown. He never did make---

Russell: Johnny Brown.

Barnes: Johnny Brown, you know, he never did make good, he died, I believe. Anyway, I played with him now--then after the war the fella that used to play with him, he say, he say, "Barnes ah a fella,"--his name was Percy--"is comin' back". He'd say, "to his position, you know with the band." I say "It's alright, Johnny", I say "I'm too glad that I played this much with y'all", I say. Well, he taken Percy back in the band--in about two weeks he sent for me--he ringed me to come play with him, asked me could I come. I told him "Yeah." When I went over, he told me that Percy can't make it.

Russell: Can't make it.

Barnes: Couldn't--no---say, he couldn't make it. Well, he had got used to me fullin' in.

Russell: Yeah

Barnes: All them weak spots, you see, and cover in the weak spots. He had a fella playin' with him by the name of Edward Clem at that time. Fellow used to have--had a bad eye, but he wuz a nice trumpet player. He's not a blast trumpet player, and he wasn't full of jazz, but he had a nice swing, you see. And he had ah nice swing. Well, we played and we got plenty of work. Everywhere we played was satisfactory. So Edward Clem, I guess he got sick, or I don't know--he was from ah the country, too, you know. Anyway they didn't have Edward no more so, I recommend a fella by the name of Chris, he's from down my way, you know, Chris Kelly. So Chris got in the band, and ah he was full of the ole' blues and, and ah we used to call it jazz.

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Barnes: music, you know.

Russell: Yeah

Barnes: He's pretty good on all that ole stuff, so that boost the band up. So, Brown's band, I commenced to gettin' jobs on this side of the river, I used to get nearly all the work from this side [West bank], white and colored.

Russell: What did Brown play, I forget?

Barnes: Huh?

Russell: What did Brown play?

Barnes: Clarinet.

Russell: Clarinet?

Barnes: Uh-huh. Well, he couldn't, he couldn't play "Nero [Nearer] My God To Thee" without he had his music. Then he couldn't, he couldn't write his music.

Russell: Uh-huh.

Barnes: Good enough to--uh--ah to play, you know, he tried to play--write his music different from the lead, you know. I don't know how he used to write his music, but he used to write out his own music and things, but it 'twasn't much.

Russell: Did he have a good ear? Could he play pretty good a clarinet, nothing

Barnes: He couldn't play off, he couldn't, he couldn't And very little--you see, we used to call that very little seeing he could do. What I mean by seeing, when you're when you can read, you see . . .

Russell: Yeah

Barnes: When, when you would go in a band and you say you got a new fella say he can play pretty good, see, the other fellas wanta know could he see. Say no, he's blind as a bat.

Know what that means, he plays by ear, you see.

Russell: Yeah.

Barnes: So, ah, that's the way it was. Now we stayed with Johnny for a while playing both sides of the river and we used to meet other bands, you know, we commenced to gettin' jobs at these halls, we had to get on these trucks, and advertise for 'em. We commenced to meetin' other bands, you know. And the other bands kinda hot, that is what they know, you know they

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Barnes: knowed it, and they could play well. Well, Johnny got too slow, he couldn't make it, so we decided to take on another clarinet player with him, so we was playin' with a six piece band, we had to take seven pieces, you see, so, so, we could play the clarinet part in some of them pieces, you get on you need - - -

Russell: Who did you get? For clarinet?

Barnes: Huh?

Russell: Who did you have on clarinet?

Barnes: We got [Emile] "Mealy" Barnes.

Russell: Oh, yes.

Barnes: We got "Mealy" Barnes to play clarinet and that given the band plenty more boost, you know. When we meet them fellas there, on the street there, we had something to throw back at 'em, you see. Then I improved on my trombone, too, you know. And ah and that's where we commenced gettin' in big halls and things over the river, and we had Johnny Brown on well he had plenty work, he know with his customers and I had work over here, well we were going all the time. So decide ah, I used to give 'em--straight 'em when they buy music, you know, and I used to have the music to play--we had odds on the other band. We could play a little music and they couldn't play nothin' but them ole' pieces. So as we go along, we had to charge more on account of having seven pieces, you know, and they say that man say he gets work all right, they say but he can't produce? And ah we get less because we got to charge the sa---we couldn't charge--we had to charge what the other bands, had the real price, you know. And say, they decide to ah pull out from him. So they pulled out from Johnny, and ah just taken "Mealy", that's for--where we could have

Russell: Yeah

Barnes: the right price. And we made out fine. And he got to be one of the leadin', not say the leadin' band, but among the best bands there's Jack Carey, Sam Morgan, Buddy Petit, ["Kid"] Rena, [for hot bands] where where them bands was--was callin' them bands, but they always would call Chris's band, too, among them, you see we got--got up so we played along. Now Chris, he was the man, he was--he wasn't a man that wears a collar--he likes to ah if he's got a collar, he's gonna throw it open when he gets, when he gets on the job or sometime he

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Barnes: didn't he never look upon himself too much that away, that's why we didn't--we couldn't get no real nice jobs, you see. We used to get in these halls and we used to get three or four jobs a week. We used to go on Saturday, play on Saturday nights and say a Sundays, sometimes we played a advertisement on Sunday. We played Sunday night and Monday and I was workin' every day and playin'. I was workin' on this side--in the Southern Pacific. I had a pretty good job, I was a welder, flue welder.

Russell: Uh-huh. You did that for many years, didn't you?

Barnes: Yeah, I did that sev----for a fact, seventeen and a half years I work at flue welding. And ah playin' with Chris--how he got so--he was gettin' so much work, he used to give other bands work. Sometimes he would send a trumpet player with us, and he'd take another bunch to go over there. We used to M--they used to get five dollars deposits on a job and when they'd come with the five dollars, he'd--he couldn't refuse it. (Russell laughs) he take two two jobs or three jobs like that, see. That wasn't right. So I took a--taken a job over here, a place we used to call the Eagle Eye's Hall and Chris, he had taken the job up in McDonoghville. He know I had this job, you know. Then he--uh--taken another job up at McDonoghville with another, he'd pick up another bunch and go, so I take--had the band with me. So we had a nice crowd and Chris came. His job blowed up where he was, you know. Nobody, they was all down here where I was.

Russell: Yeah.

Barnes: So he came there about ten or ten thirty and hang around, you know, and ah since then I made up my mind not to play with him no more, see, I didn't like that double-cross . . .

Russell: Well, where did Chris live? On this side or over there?

Barnes: He lived on the other side, yeah, he had double-crossed me like that, so I went with another band. Another band--it's called the Nola Band, ^{Sunny} Sonny Henry used to play with 'em, but I don't know how them fellows---they got me to play with 'em. And that was ah three nights a week. We was playin' at a place they called Sans Souci, that's that fella, he couldn't--he couldn't play nothin' by ear, but he's a good reader.

Russell: Was that up on Howard Avenue?

Barnes: Howard Street. [Now LaSalle Street]

Russell: Howard Street.

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Barnes: Howard, yeah, near the square [Shakespeare Park], but, and ah I played there 'bout a year or two with him. And he's a good musicianer, he used to buy mo--believe in buyin' music, you see. And that helped me out with the trombone, and ah we used to go to rehearsal, now he got good, and the Union come up now, the Union came up, we joined the Union, we had got a fella by the name of Dutrey to put at the head of the band. You see, I'se workin' and ah the leader of the band, Pete [Locaze]; he was workin', he was an blacksmith. He had a trade, you see, so we got ole' man Sam Dutrey [Sr.], to lead the band. So he would, he'd put out cards and things, he would get the jobs, for the band. And a lot of jobs...he wouldn't take a job then under five dollars. That was big money in them times. The other band was playin' around like four dollars, you see; but we had somethin' to give to the people. We had music, music, you know, he'd, we had all first--late music off the press. We had a good, big pile of repertoire. We used to play good music, now, I played there about a year or so like that. What we didn't like about that--we found out he was turnin' down a whole lot o' good jobs. Cause he couldn't get the price. You see, he wanted, at that time, he wanted ah double price for the leader, and some how or other, they found out he was--if he couldn't get it, he just wouldn't take the job, and we found out he was turnin' jobs down, and he had a--he had a pressin' shop or some-^{thin'} himself. So, we didn't like that, so well. So, that made us kinda split up. That's the time I went with ole' man John Robichaux, that is ole' man John Robichaux was after me, you see, and soon as he found out the band was going good there well he got ah--he sent for me and asked me would I play with him---I told him yes, so I used to have to go to rehearsal and he's another man plays nothin' but music. Nothin' by ear--nothin' at all.

Russell: Nothin' at all.

Barnes: No, nothin' at all, and that man had a house full of music. So, ah by going with him, that made me better still as a trombone--I had to play

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HARRISON BARNES

[Russell:] You were talkin' about when you played with [John] Robichaux you played only music you said.

[Barnes:] That's all. Only strictly ^{like} [within] of music. We used to play at the Country Club. We got all high class jobs. You see, coming around carnival time now, we'll have all those carnival balls at the Antheneum [check spelling] and different places like that, Country Club.

[Russell:] About what date was that--in the 1920's? Along in--after the war?

[Barnes:] That was between '23 and--between '23 and '27, around in there, you know.

[Russell:] Did you keep a book on all those dates, too?

[Barnes:] No, no, no. I only

[Russell:] I saw your little book about Chris's band one time.

[Barnes:] only had ah them little yearly books and . .

[Russell:] Yeah

[Barnes:] and put it down every day. Had to do that, they keep from being confused.

[Russell:] Sure.

[Barnes:] Otherwise, we was gettin' so many jobs that--if you didn't have 'em on the book, you---you get a job like your playin' now, you get a job--next week sometime, well, you mark that you see. Then I would mark the price what I'd get for it, too. And ah played with Robichaux, now when we ah used to play at the Country Club on Saturday Night, on Sunday we get on the boat called the "Susquehanna" [check spelling] We would go over Mandeville over the lake. We'd just take them over there and we hang around all day and just bring them back... We---

[Russell:] You play on the boat and over there, too, or just on the boat?

[Barnes:] Just on the boat. We're free to loaf around.

[Russell:] Did you dancing on the boat, too?

[Barnes:] Oh, yeah. Then we had ah through the week, we had excursion on the lake on the same boat----I disremember what night, but it was two night we used to have excursion on the "Susquehanna." Way out. It be just as cool out on the lake--way out on the lake you could see ah the ah lights, you know, the guide light, there (?)

[Russell:] How long did it take the boat to get across the lake then?

[Barnes:] Oh, used to take about an hour, an hour and a quarter, at that time. One hour now, you could say one hour. It was a pretty fast boat.

[Russell:] Yeah, that's fast.

[Barnes:] Yeah. And ah we used to play out on the ah every night on them--go on them excursion and play. And we come in, come back, and you could hear the band playing at the night clubs after we get back, you see. You, you could hear -- used to have a band near where we had the boat landed.

[Russell:] Where did that land--at West End or--Spanish Fort, or about where?

[Barnes:] West End.

[Russell:] West End.

[Barnes:] Yeah, uh-huh. Used to leave from there, too. And ah had a band--had had different places have three or four pieces band in it, you know, and oh, and it was nice out there. And they used to have the Owl band [New Orleans Owls].

Well that was a big band like ours; [New Orleans Owls were ten pieces probably]

they used to be playing in a club out there, too. And when we be coming--coming home--or coming along after we got out the boat, we could hear them playing. It's a good band, too.

[Russell:] Did they play at the Southern Yacht Club, is that or where?

[Barnes:] Well, they wasn't at the Yacht Club then, there was some club they used to play every night.

[Russell:] Right at West End?

[Barnes:] Ah-----?

[Allen:] The West End Roof, wasn't it? [Should save information]

[Barnes:] Yeah,

[Allen:] It was the West End Roof, wasn't it?

[Barnes:] I think---I think it was. I think that's the name of it. They had so many different playces-----I

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] get confused, if I try to tell for sure.

[Russell:] Yeah, that would be West End.

[Barnes:] Yeah, used to play out there. And we used to come on----they sho' sound so good on that water at night, them--that music sure sounded nice out there, late at night, you know. They could play, too, they could play. And we'd come on in. We'd catch the car right there and the West End car and bring us in town. And ah we was playing at ah at Antoine's one night. We used to played a big dance there, ya know, and we had ten pieces that night. Yeah, Robichaux got a coupla more other pieces, ah we was playing there, and a fellow come at [ask] for a piece of music and

Robichaux really had a big bundle of music, he went down there and got a couple of pieces out. Well, the man say--he said, "Take a look at it, we're going to play that the next piece." The man--told the man first he told the man, "I'll look and see if I got it," ya know, and he had so many he couldn't remember 'em himself. So he had it. Yeah, and he put it up there, when we started off it was nice in a ten piece band--I thought I could hide, ya know, sometime you can get by on some things, but you keep your eye on that music, you know. Anything get too hard for you well you kinda get over that and catch the next one. So I played that night and was a part in there for the trombone, you know, and uh---that was the first time I had seen that, --uh, piece of music, so when I got there, I miss it. Course the fellas in the band--I don't guess they knowed the difference, you know, all right, you have to come back and play the encore to play it again--I missed it again. I missed it----it's very ah teglous [tedious] piece of music. But they---they never know----you see. So when I finished, a fella came up to me and says nice piece y'all played. Yeah. He said you missed something in there, didn't ya? I say, I say, "I sure did." (laughter)

[Russell:] He knew the piece.

[Barnes:] Yeah, yeah. You know who it was, when I come to find out who it was. It was the fella that played in that Owls band, what I had been hearing--and he's good, too. He's good, and he says, well, I'll tell you, he say that piece gives me sand . . . He said, "I had listened for you to come out with it but he says you missed it." He say, "I missed it, too, and I try to get it down, you know, try to get down, you know."

[Russell:] The first time you ever saw it, and you did pretty good to keep going.

[Barnes:] Yeah. When you're playin' like that, if you can keep up with the music, and you skip, if you miss here, don't miss over there 'cause if you get out, you're out altogether, you see.

[Allen:] This was ah was this [Frank] Netto, was that his name?

[Barnes:] Who?

[Allen:] Netto, the trombone player with the [New Orleans] 'Owls.

[Barnes:] I think it was, yeah, he now he was a guest at that--he had on his Tuxedos, and everything and he was a guest at that dance.

[Russell:] When you played at Antoine's there, was that for a sort of a private party or was it a regular dinner or what?

[Barnes:] No, that's private.

[Russell:] They didn't have the band every night?

[Barnes:] No, not our band, no, I don't think--

[Russell:] Just special.

[Barnes:] And that, at that dance, we was to play 'til one [o'clock] and the fella hired us a hour over.

[Russell:] Uh-huh.

[Barnes:] Now, we was gettin' room ten to one--we started at ten and played 'til one, that's--we was gettin' ten dollars for that job.

[Russell:] How big a place--now they have five or six dining rooms all over that whole block, they took over so about, but how many dining rooms did they have in those days? Was it a big place then upstairs?

[Barnes:] Well, I'll tell you, we was in a certain place---and we didn't even see the

waiter or the kitchen, where we were that night. We're in a place like where we play at, we couldn't see the kitchen or neither where they were--only dancing when we were dinin!

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] They, they must have dined in the other place because they had their little hats on and things like that, but they were dancing where we was sittin'---- we just--

[Russell:] A special room.

[Barnes:] Yes. Could see the dancers.

[Russell:] I wanted to ask some more about the plantation down there, we talked to "Sonny" Henry a couple of weeks ago, he couldn't remember who else was in the band, he said you'd know all of those fellas. He told us about your three brothers and you.

[Barnes:] Yes.

[Russell:] And do you remember who else, some of the men?

[Allen:] We never did get the brothers' names.

[Barnes:] I know--I know all the men that's in there, but they're not livin'.

[Russell:] Well, if you know their names--and the names of your brothers, too.

[Barnes:] You wanta know that, too.

[Russell:] It would be nice to have those, yes.

[Barnes:] Thomas Barnes was the oldest.

[Russell:] Is he still living---are any of your brothers still living?

[Barnes:] No, they are all died.

[Russell:] Uh-huh.

[Barnes:] Thomas Barnes was the oldest, Freddy Barnes.

[Russell:] How much older was the oldest brother than you . . .

[Barnes:] He's about three years difference.

[Russell:] Three years.

[Barnes:] Ah, Freddy Barnes, ah was the second, then Alfred Barnes. Then I had a sister well ah she's older than I am, there was four boys and one girl.

[Russell:] Did she play any instrument?

[Barnes:] No, she wasn't.

[Russell:] Piano, guitar, nothing like that.

[Barnes:] No, she wasn't. And ah I was the last.

[Allen:] What instru----

[Barnes:] We wasn't. but three years apart, my oldest brother might have been about fifteen years, fourteen or fifteen years older than me, you know, on the average.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Allen:] What instruments did they play, now, Thomas played what?

[Barnes:] E flat cornet.

[Russell:] Cornet.

[Allen:] And Freddy?

[Barnes:] Huh?

[Allen:] And Freddy Barnes?

[Barnes:] Baritone. Alfred Barnes played E flat clarinet.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. [P.R.C. check this story. His music was E^b cornet anyway?]

[Barnes:] Now we went to play, we went up about four miles from home to a little

dance. And ah they had a little orchestra there, playing, you know. And ah my brothers, say, "Think we can play a little bit ah, with them fellas?" Well, uh, they said ah, that couldn't be, you know, ah that was a C, C trombone, built in C what he had. And ah my brother plays -- was ah E flat clarinet--this fella had a B flat clarinet. They want Charlie ^{McCurtys} McCurdys, not Charlie ^{McCurtys} McCurdys, anyhow the fella that, he's kind of a professor, and they got there and he explained ^{sound} us that and said now that wouldn't good like that, say--it wouldn't, you couldn't make it, you see, and I--I had the trumpet, you know. And I'se playing trumpet, so, what I did, I say y'all, let's see how, I said, "Let's see how y'all playing?" Now when they played, they correspond, you see. Now, and ah the way I played, I wouldn't---I couldn't correspond, you see. That trumpet had been in A, you see.

[Russell:] Yeah. In the wrong key for you.

[Barnes:] Yeah, it had to be in A. So, don'tcha know I played that trumpet there now.

[Russell:] You did it anyway, huh.

[Barnes:] I played it in tone, too, you know, yeah. You know what I had to do, I had done practiced that already--on my trumpet--you see I took that--that third valve on the trumpet and put it down.

[Russell:] Kept it down all the time?

[Barnes:] Kept it down, that put my, that throwed my ah ah my instrument in A. And I played, played with them other just like that.

[Russell:] Played with the other just like that.

[Barnes:] Now, when I, when I get to the place where I had to use that third valve, I let it up. And that made--they don't know today how I could play--how I made out

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to play that.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] They don't know. But I did it.

[Russell:] That's good.

[Barnes:] From experience, yeah.

[Russell:] Oh, ah--

[Barnes:] I hold that third valve down and that throwed my instrument in A and I played along with -- it correspond with them.

[Russell:] Ah, while I think of it, after we talked to Sunny Henry, the next day we saw him and he said "Oh, I forgot to tell you about the big bell or something down at Magnolia.

[Barnes:] Oh they used to go to work by?

[Russell:] I don't know what it was, he didn't tell us. He said he forgot to tell us.

A

[Allen:] plantation bell.

[Barnes:] Yeah, they've got a big bell. It sets up on like a tower, and they would ring one about in the summertime they would ring a bell--about--about four or 4:15 in the morning.

[Russell:] In the morning, that early? Wake you up.

[Barnes:] Yeah. In the morning. Well, it's daylight, it's near daylight, it'll be daylight around 4:30, it's pretty near daylight. Then they'd ring the other one around about about fifteen minutes apart, anyhow, they ring--well, they used to call it the first bell and the second bell. However, you gets up then and go 'head and go around the stable and get the mules and things and get on out there, sometime

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when you get out there, and be going out there you be near to your work, mile or sometime a half a mile, the sun don't just be peeping up sometimes. But the glare of the sun in that morning is day, but the sun don't be up, you can--

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] The rays of it comin' up when you start out there, but say around about 7 o'clock or 7:30 a boy'll bring your breakfast. There's a fella with a-- the water boys used to breakfast out there and we'd have a half an hour, set down and eat breakfast and then we'd get up and go again, and maybe 11:00 was when the sun [was] hot, well, you knock off around about 11:00, and you know-- go home and you come out. At 1:00 or 1:30 you come back. And then you're there 'til about 6:30.

[Russell:] Did they ring the bell at noon all the time for that, too, or just--

[Barnes:] There have bell at noon, yeah.

[Russell:] All the time.

[Barnes:] You didn't have to be--you didn't need to be right upon--prompt with the bell you know,--

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] See when the bell ring, you be home. That mean for you to come to work. That didn't mean for you to go, be on the job when the bell rings, you leave home. Well, I used to--like for my daddy, he was foreman, you know, and when I was young, younger, my--all my brothers was working, was giving money to my daddy. So, they built a house, a place and things just about a mile and a half from there and my brothers went and live over there. One--the oldest brother, he made truck and fish, you see, and trapped and went--

[Russell:] What kind of work did you have to do on the plantation? Is it all, sugar, or what down there?

[Barnes:] On the plantation why it's--I was one of the first class mens out there. How much you reckon they give me more than the other men? A nickel.

[Russell:] A nickel. (laughs)

[Barnes:] They was gettin' 80 cents a day.

[Russell:] A nickel a day? Not an hour?

[Barnes:] They'se gettin' 80 cents a day, and I'se gettin' 85 cents a day. Was-

I had about seven or eight of us making that kind of money, you see. That is down when [?] they get to new ground and they done harrow off level. You know how they harrow it off?

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] Well, now you had to make rows. And makin' them rows, they'd have to be certain distance apart. And you, you take your measuring stick and you--and you put it down and you have sticks you know, that make that rows straight, you had a coupla sticks that away. And you had to keep it right straight. You call that laying off rows. And you had to go right straight to the stick, and when you get to that stick, you stop, and you take it over. You lay it down for the next row. You understand, that what--bring it back.

[Russell:] Yes.

[Barnes:] Well, you call that laying out rows, and if you wasn't good on that when they would get to a ditch bank or something like that, if you didn't go straight, you would have short rows would come in there on you. So to keep them rows level, you'd have to have it straight. Sometime you gotta know how to take a little bit off of this--a little bit by a little bit, little by little to get it--if you get out of the way a little bit, you got to inch back.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] And they never can tell the difference. So, them's what you call first-class men, we used to do that and on the plantation, otherwise, why you just had ordinary work, we had machines that we could sit upon all day. The cultivators and things, we would just sit upon wheels and ride different machines. Then we had one used to run with three wheels, you see. You straddle^{dd} the row and had

two discs on each side and this [?] throw on each this side of that and you had to guide it like that, and the mules.... I used to love it. Didn't know no better, you see. And when they sold that plantation--they sold that plantation the governor came around and he recommend the boss to the fellows, you know. Say this gonna be the next man to take the place and I'd like for y'all to work for him just like you did for me. He say he's a fine man, and everything. When he got to me and he said, "What you say about it, huh?" I say, "Well, I can't promise you," I say, "I don't think, I couldn't promise you I'm gonna be here." So, well I went to work when the man taken it over the first of the year, and it was in February, everything was going pretty good, and we'se cane rows, well, we was throwin that dirt down from the cane rows, and we was going to make rice, you see. And one day, it come a rain, and rained all night, and that morning I was layin' in bed the fore--the fella that was ~~max~~ foreman at the time come around and call me. I said, "I ain't stirrin'". Say, "Why?" "You going to work this morning?" I say, "Work?" I say, "Man," I say, "it rain all night," I say, "How you gonna work--well, on a cane farm you didn't work, you know."

[Russell:] Yeah. Rice you need the water.

[Barnes:] It was too wet.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] He say, "This is a rice field, now, man." He say, "It's just right now." I said, "What!" I said, "Now," I said, "well, I don't want to be contrary, you know." Be the contrary one, so I say, "Well, I go." I didn't like it. I got up, and I went out there, and they had water laying in the middle, see, yeah, and water on this side, and water on that side, [Of]course, the row, well, they didn't have--it wasn't covered. I got there to plow. I didn't like--I didn't like that water, and I was_n't used to being in that water and the mules, they didn't like it. They would knock one another on the side, ya know. To keep from walking in the water, the other one pushed him back on this side and I'se back there and I had to

plow with one hand, trying to keep my foot out of the water, but I know I--when you, you~~am~~ had to get wet,--

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] You had to get in that water. I made that day, and I came home. And I had \$40 save up. I told my mother, I say, "I ain't going back there. I ain't going out there no more." I gave her 20 of the dollars that I had. Got a freight train that passes, you know, and I knowed every--part of the fellas on there. You could work your way on there, work your way to the city, you see. If you go down, and you come back, you can go on to the city then. If you're working your way, you wouldn't have to pay. So, I told them to have my clothes out there when I passed back, and they had 'em out there, and I came on to the city, you know. And been here ever since.

[Russell:] What happened to that plantation? Was there a break in the levee, I believe Sonny or somebody told us it's washed out. It is water over that, or what happened down there?

[Barnes:] No, no, I wnet down there about--about three months ago, and I hadn't been down there for years and I didn't know the place when I got there, it was growed up in weeds and grass.

[Russell:] Not much there, huh?

[Barnes:] No.

[Allen:] Well, what happened to Deer Range?

[Russell:] That's the place that went under water I guess when--

[Barnes:] That's the place where the water was. Yeah, Wood Park and Deer Range and around there.

[Russell:] That's something--they still have--the land is still down at Magnolia.

[Barnes:] Yes, yes.

[Russell:] Is the house there? Was there ever a big plantation house, is it still there?

[Barnes:] Well, yes, the one that the governor used to live in, you know, it's nice, it's put up. It's still there. I seen it.

[Russell:] Still There.

[Barnes:] But the other places is gone--ain't got no land mark at all. I'm just like a stran--like you down there. I'm a stranger down there. Yeah, the ol' land mark is gone.

[Allen:] Did any city bands ever come down to Magnolia to amount to anything?

[Barnes:] Yeah, they came on like excursions.

[Allen:] Uh-hum.

[Barnes:] Yes, and I thought they was great, great musicianers, you know. They, they used to--they stop about a mile and a half below where I was, you see, and nice, place, nice--went down to--the same Allen, Henry Allen band come out there. I look at them fellas playing, and we had a little country band, but I thought they was the best band, what they had, you see.

[Allen:] Who was in Henry Allen's band then?

[Barnes:] Huh?

[Allen:] Did you know the fellas in Henry Allen's band?

[Barnes:] Well, they pretty near all died out, yeah. I know them, I knows--

[Allen:] Well, we want you to speak for them.

[Barnes:] Plenty of 'em. Huh?

[Allen:] They can't speak for themselves, so you tell us who some of them were.

[Barnes:] Well, he had his brother.

[Allen:] And his name?

[Barnes:] He brother used to beat snare drum. Used to have a fella to beat bass drum they called Younts [sp?], well, you wouldn't know the name, that name wouldn't--

[Allen:] What's his name?

[Barnes:] We--they used to call him Younts.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. And was he--

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[Barnes:] That's a Creole name.

[Allen:] Yes.

[Barnes:] He got plenty people around here.

[Allen:] Was he there before Clay Jiles was playing bass drum? [see photo]

[Barnes:] Oh, that's a different band, altogether. That's the Excelsior Band.

[Allen:] Oh, I thought Clay Jiles played with Allen at one time.

[Barnes:] Not that I know of--he wasn't there--but I know Jiles was playing with the Excelsior and I was playing with the Excelsior. A fella by the name of Younts was beating bass drum when--

[Collins:] Does that mean anything--that name Younts? Does that have any meaning?

[Barnes:] Younts?

[Collins:] Uh-huh.

[Barnes:] No, you know how them Creole people all them funny names, I guess it don't mean nothin'--not what I know of. I know his people. They had plenty of fellas that they are, old musicians--you see they were--I've livin' in the country then.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Barnes:] The time I'm tellin' you about when they came out there, when I come here, well, they had done disband.

[Russell:] Do you remember if Frankie Duson ever went down in the country that way, did you work with him?

[Barnes:] He was playing with Allen, too, he was one of the fellows playing with Allen at that time.

[Russell:] Did he ever come down there in a dance band or anything?

[Barnes:] No, I never seen him in a dance band, but I came up here and heard him in a dance band at the--

[Russell:] Do you ever remember hearing Willie Cornish in a dance band down there in the country any place?

[Barnes:] No, I heard him up here. I heard him up here, I didn't hear him down

there. the only--we didn't have no big dances at my home, the excursion bands used to come out there, you see, where they had the band--excursion, that's the only big band, sometimes white would come by there, too. I heard a band playing (scats melody for "Alexander's Ragtime Band") [Get date on "Alexander's Ragtime Band"] That's the first time I heard that, that was a long time ago.

[Russell:] "Alexander's Ragtime Band"?

[Barnes:] Yes. Yeah, and I learned it, you know, and they played that, you see, they'd take water to the place we was, and I went up and ask the fella, I say, "What's the name of that piece?" He told me "Alexander's ragtime Band." And that ain't been today, that's an old number.

[Russell:] Yeah, that's right.

[Barnes:] That's an old number.

[Russell:] Do you remember a cornet player, Buddy Bolden, did he ever get down there on excursions or anything?

[Barnes:] Not that I know of. Bolden was on his way out when I got here, I never heard him except several times, I used to go around by the--they use to have the Square right where the auditorium is now, that square there, used to go straight across there, used to be named Congo Square. They changed it to Beauregard Square. And they had a hall used to call it the Globe Hall right there, where you could set down out in the square when they're going to have a dance there and they'll come outside and play two, three numbers. That's where I heard Bolden and Manuel Perez, all different bands come around there, they get out and play a couple numbers, Frankie Duson--

[Russell:] Did you hear Bolden after you moved up here, or did you come up here on a visit Sometime before?

[Barnes:] On a visit.

[Russell:] On a visit.

[Barnes:] Yes. And he, he had a couple of pieces, he made famous, never did put on record and things like that, see. Used to call 'em Bolden--[?] So we--our

Magnolia Band came up here and played a parade, you know.

[Russell:] You did up here in the city.

[Barnes:] And the Odd Fellows give a layout every--around the 10th of May every year, they used to call it the 10th of May anyhow--

[Russell:] Yes, I've heard of those.

[Barnes:] And they had our band, came up and we didn't even have uniform at that time, well, we got white coats, you know--

[Russell:] Just had a white coat and a white cap, you could get a cap for 25 cents at that time, that would last you a day. Things was cheap.

[Russell:] Uh-huh.

[Barnes:] And, well, our drum player, the bass drum player had to get a pair of tennis shoes like, you know, black ones like that. His feet was hurting him. He had tennis shoes to make that parade. And, man, we--we went on that parade and all them bands, big bands, well, we didn't think--we think--we thought our band was the least one there, you know. And we start playing that day and they used to make some long parades, they used to start around 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock and play until five or six o'clock in the evening. So we played and played and we'd see musicians done, got burnt out, you know, and settin' out, and the same Sonny Henry say, "Man, I'm gonna quit." Say, "Look at that man over there." One fella dropped dead, you see.

[Russell:] Uh-huh.

[Allen:] Who was that?

[Barnes:] That was a fella used to play, he's from this side, too. He was play with Allen, I think. He was playing with Allen's band?

[Allen:] Cornet player.

[Barnes:] Yeah, trumpet. Well, no, I guess it might a been heart trouble, or something else. Someone like--

[Allen:] It wasn't Walter "Blue" Robertson, when did he die? I'm tryin' to remember.

[Russell:] I don't know. Did you say Chris Kelly was with you at that time? Was he playing in the Magnolia Band?

[Barnes:] No, no, no.

[Russell:] He . . . [?]

[Barnes:] You see--

[Russell:] His time.

[Barnes:] No. He wasn't playing ~~any~~ at all at that time, you see, by me being right there--he used to live just on this side of us, you see, and he was about six mile above. We used to know one another, ya know.

[Russell:] Yeah, he didn't belong to the Magnolia Band?

[Barnes:] No, no--he wasn't livin' right there on that plantation, he was--

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] Livin' at a place where Deer Range at.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] What they call Deer Range now, that's where he--Chris was. See, he probably didn't have music on his mind at that time.

[Russell:] I interrupted you telling us about that parade, though, that you played, that 10th of May parade.

[Barnes:] Yeah, we played. And when we got [?] they say [?] pass around [?] where'd them fellas with them white coats come. But you know when you pass these--they have different cracks, ya see.

[Russell:] Yes.

[Barnes:] And they got on, got downtown, they had a what they call the district. That is where they got a . . .

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[Russell:] [?] about your white coats there in the band there, again--

[Barnes:] Yeah.

[Russell:] Then you went through the District, you said--to the District?

[Barnes:] Yeah. Now we had been done, been off--made a round all uptown coming down, you know. And we had passed--we was coming through the District--that is, around Franklin Street--

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] And then they had a place between Franklin and St. Louis you run dead into the cemetery like, you know. Well, they used to--around in there it was all fast people, you know--they used to call it--

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] The District. So we was coming through there late that evening, you see. Different bands is--they had about, maybe sixteen, seventeen bands, all they could get--they had to go in the country and get us, you know; they had plenty of them. So we came--coming through there we played a piece what Bolden had made famous, you know. I never know--[I] don't know the name of it.

[Russell:] How does it go?

[Barnes:] (Scats out tune) And we was strong on them trumpet, too, me and my cousin, you know. And them women comes out of there and say, "Here comes Bolden's band." Oh, they just clapped, just clapped for us, you know, and they just run out there--that must be Bolden's band; [unintelligible]. Our--them country boys was strong, you know. And [part of?] them fellows here in the city was falling out and things--we [were] used to being in that sun and thing out there, plowing and things like that--we were strong. We went on through.

[Russell:] Was that the same piece that Bolden played, that you played it, you say?

[Barnes:] Yeah.

[Russell:] [When was it published, then?]

[Barnes:] We played that in the country, yeah.

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[Russell:] You had the music for it?

[Barnes:] No, we [know?] music.

[Russell:] Just head.

[Barnes:] Yeah, just by ear; you see, [we'd] just catch them things by ear.

[Now he could?]-[unintelligible].

[Russell:] I don't remember that tune. What does it [go like]? Sing a little more of it; maybe I've heard it; I don't remember it, though.

[Barnes:] I don't think you heard that; it was very famous around here.

[Scats tune again) It was very nice.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] Yeah.

[Allen:] That was the cornet part you were humming?

[Barnes:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Must be "Don't Go 'Way Nobody" [?], huh?

[Barnes:] Oh, it was something on that order, but I--

[Allen:] "Eccentric" [?], too--doesn't it sound like "Eccentric"?

[Barnes:] Them people, they used to make up all them different blues, and give them all funny names. You know, they'd have all funny names they would, they'd give the tunes; some of them was pretty nice pieces.

[Collins:] Like a blues?

[Barnes:] Huh?

[Collins:] Like a blues it would be, would it? Something on [that order?]?

[Barnes:] But, I mean--the bands used to make their own names for the pieces. See, just like Louis [Armstrong] and them used to make it and call it "Gut Bucket [Blues]", and all different kind of old funny names.

[Russell:] "Cornet Chop Suey", eh?

[Barnes:] They had to have a name, wo they just called it that name, but it was never published.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] You understand, they just--it was never published, the name, or nothing. So we made a hit, and the people givin' us a big hand, that band from the country. And they had a band from St. John Parish; they were good, too--at that time. I believe they used to call them the Pickwick, or something like that--they were pretty good; they was really--. And the year before that, they had made a piece by the name of "Hiawatha"; they made that--they made a hit with that; they had to play that--it was in the paper, you know? They played it about, I'll bet twenty times, or something like that. 'Twas in the daily paper.

[Russell:] They wrote it up?

[Allen:] Is that "There's A Lizard on the Rail?"

[Barnes:] Yeah, yeah, that's it, but "Hiawatha" is the name of it; they just put--

[Allen:] Used to sing that.

[Barnes:] Add words to it--yeah, yeah, "Lizard on the Rail".

[Allen:] "With his tail--"

[Barnes:] Yeah, they made it--that's one of Jim Humphrey's band, he had up there, too. They made good; that was before we came.

[Russell:] Oh, did you--talking about Frankie Duson--somebody told us that he used to go down in the country, I believe on the other side of the river, and taught some of the bands, like Sam Morgan's band, or something. Did you ever hear of Frankie Duson teaching anybody, or going around [unintelligible]?

[Barnes:] He didn't know nothing about music hisself.

[Russell:] I wondered, too; somebody told me he couldn't read; I wondered how he could go around teaching bands.

[Barnes:] It's wrong. The last place I played with him I, when I went in--course, we had a project band; we used to call it the WPA Band, you know? And he was in there when--he was signed up, was in there before I was: I went in there and found him there--and he was just as blind as he ever was, [around that line?]. He couldn't, he couldn't read.

[Russell:] Uh-huh. Do you remember who else was with Bolden when you heard him in Globe Hall? Did you know any of the other men?

[Barnes:] [Willie] Cornish used to play trombone with them, at times; I don't know none of the other fellows was with--I don't know none of the other fellows. I might have know them after, but I don't whether--they didn't tell me whether they played with him, because I knowed a good many old musicianers.

[Allen:] Well, was he out that day when you played his tune? Was he on the street?

[Barnes:] No, no, he was past--I think he had quit at that time. Shortly after or before that once, he had kind of lost his mind.

[Allen:] Did you ever play in the same band with him, ever?

[Barnes:] Ho, no. I don't know him too good. But I heard him; I used to be in the park. See, I didn't come here 'til 1913, and he's famous around from 1910 and 1912 [wrong dates], like that; you couldn't hear nothing but Buddy Bolden. Well, you see, he was one of them old musicians, and he was famous; you see, he was strong and he'd make up his own tunes. Well, it was something different; the people would be after [it]. Now you take like Manuel Perez: well, he was more of a music [reader] man; he had a pretty good band. He had a good band, but he was more--he wasn't after that rag--he wasn't much on that rag time. He was a strong man, but he was a music man.

[Russell:] You mentioned [that] they wrote up in the paper about the Pickwick Band--did you ever see any pictures of the old bands in the paper, or did anybody have pictures, like of Bolden or those old bands?

[Barnes:] Not that I know of.

[Russell:] Photographs? Did anybody ever take a picture of your Magnolia band down in the country? A photograph anytime?

[Barnes:] Oh, we got plenty of them that it was taken down while we was home, you know?

[Allen:] & [Russell:] Uh-huh.

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[Barnes:] People--sometime we'd go out to the train. You see, in the country like that, when we were out like that, we'd just parade 'round the street.

[Allen:] Eh-huh.

[Barnes:] And we'd go out when the train come to take [on] water there, you know, and it'd be, stay there about ten minutes, and we'd play a couple of tunes, like that. Some people used to would snap [photograph] them, and--right on the place [plantation] they used to snap us; everytime we'd have a big outing, people would snap, but there never was no pictures delivered to us so we could--

[Russell:] You never got any of those pictures?

[Barnes:] No.

[Allen:] Any pictures of Chris Kelly around?

[Barnes:] No, uh-huh.

[Allen:] I guess Ben Kelly's still alive.

[Barnes:] He's still alive, yeah, [unintelligible].

[Allen:] We'll ask ["Slow] Drag" [Pavageau]; he may know him.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Or his son.

[Barnes:] He's still alive.

[Russell:] Was there much difference in the style of the bands, the brass bands, up here in the city, before they got tired and wore out? Did they play more "head" music, or read all the time? Was there much difference in your band and the other bands?

[Barnes:] Well, I think the country bands was the best, because they had fellows-- they would pick up men, different mens in some of these bands and they wasn't good as--the band just had a big name.

[Russell:] Yeah, that's right.

[Barnes:] The band just had a big name, and that's all. And when the fellows from the country, that learnt that [music] off the card, what they had, they knowed, and

they wasn't gonna play no more then what was written there, see?

[Russell:] Yet you played some head things like that tune--

[Barnes:] Yeah, yeah; but we'd get together on that, you see? We'd get together on that and practice that and they gonna play it that way.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] Yeah. See now, I had a cousin playing trumpet with me; he was pretty good on making that, them extra notes in there, you see? And I was, I was pretty good, too, to fill in, you see, you know?

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] To make it sound good. So, I used to think the fellows here was way above us, and I didn't find out 'til I got in the WPA Band, and it come down where they had to put that music up there, and I had much chance as them, you see?

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] They ain't knowed nothing; I had to teach them.

[Russell:] Ha!

[Barnes:] Fellow come in the Excelsior Band; he was--I used to think he was a great man. Call him Georgie Hooker; he used to play trumpet in the band over here, the Pacific Band. I thought he was a big shot. And they [WPA] had him on baritone, and he come over there, and [I] had to show him how to divide [note values] the music. Oh, I was surprised. Then they hired me from the country to play with a--"Stunny" Henry recommend me to a band they called the Terminal Band, down in the Ninth Ward, to come up here and play a parade with them. He say, "Stunny" Henry say, "You send the music out there," say, "That fellow be all right." So they sent to music about a week ahead of time, you know, and they, they had me on what you call the 2nd cornet--they had 1st and 2nd, you know? They had me on 2nd cornet parts. So I went over them and there wasn't none too hard, you know? They had a few marches there; well, I got them down good; they had one of them marches called "Old Faithful." So I came up here that Sunday to rehearse with the,

, to go out that Monday. And I got up--we was down in the Ninth Ward, and I, we was playing down there, and rehearsing. I knowed mine already; I had mine down. So this same Georgie Hooker, he came over; he must of heard they was rehearsing down there. He come over and brought a few of his pieces, you know? Come down there--we was rehearsing--he come there and [said] "Now, I got some pieces here I want y'all to look over." They had the trumpet player playing with us, couple of them. Soon as he come in there and put that down, they commenced blowing [unintelligible]. So I took it and look at it, and I look at it. I say, "All right." So, two or three of us just run over it, you know?--we wasn't going to play it the next day nohow, but we just--. And I played it, and I played it pretty good, you know. I found out I did well; they found out I did well, too. I wouldn't run. So when--well, I think he played that piece, we played that piece. I say, "We going to play this one now." I put that old number we had there, "Old Faithful," you know? He went out in the back; it run him. I say, "You wouldn't play that?" and I say, "You brought that here for them fellows to play, [and] here you running out." So I didn't find out [he couldn't, he wasn't that, all that other fellow--he come in the Excelsior Band after I was playing, had come back here to town, and I found out about all the musicianers?] And when I got in the WPA Band, what we called the WPA Band--I don't know; we was--. So, they had twenty trombone players in there; they must have had about a hundred altogether, maybe more--hundred, you know, unstruments. So, Frankie Duson was, had the lead chair, you know, and when he seen me, he say, "You take the lead." I say, "No, you stay where you at." He want me to take the lead chair. I say, "I'll sit any place." You see, it didn't make no difference to me, because the music wasn't all that hard. And we played around; ain't had nothing too hard to play. So, the fellow what we was playing for said, after we played with [him] a month or so, he said he gonna have a test, you know?

[Russell:] Who was the leader, the boss of the whole band?

[Barnes:] A fellow by the name of Mr. Gilbert, you know; he had in charge, had it in charge. So he say he's gonna run a test. He run a test, and put the music up, you know, and wasn't, the music wasn't all that hard, but a whole lot of fellows couldn't make it--didn't know nothing at all. In a week or so, they cut the band down to about seventy something. They had all kind of trombone players in there before: fellow [who] played from the left side and all.

[Russell:] Uh-huh.

[Barnes:] So, they had, they cut it down to about seventy some--odd. And--

[Russell:] Who stayed in on trombone? Frankie Duson still there?

[Barnes:] They passed him some kind of way;; they liked him, you know.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] They, again, Frankie would bluff you; if he hear something once--

[Russell:] He got it.

[Barnes:] He got it, yeah. And they got another man to take [charge], by the name of Old Man Martino [Martinez]; he took the band over after they[cut it?]. And Gilbert, before he left, he bought a whole lot of orchestrations, you know; [He wanted to set up the band so you could dance by it?]. So they had that same "Sonny" Henry playing trom, playing the trombone. And they practiced and practiced and practiced. So, they asked me to play one day--I don't know; "Sonny" wasn't there. And I taken and played the trombone piece, and I went right along with them, with them pieces you know. So I had been playing, with [John] Robichaux in all them places like that. That music was--I was-- you be sharp when you keep up [unintelligible]; it's nothing, nothing; heck, you're, it's no work.

[Russell:] Uh-huh.

[Barnes:] So, when I went there, they told me that--they kept me on the trombone. And we had a orchestra and a march band,, you see?--the concert [band, rather?]. And we played with them, and [again?] what they call the "Lay out," you see, dance like. Well, they had--they taken two bands, and they had--another bunch, they had

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a orchestra, and we'd take turns playing. And we had a piece [that] we had practiced, and they didn't know we had practiced; I think [it was named] "Camellia"--"Vamelia"--I can't call it--"Cecelia" or something like that (sings). [The excerpt is too short for positive identification, but Mr. Barnes' attempts to recall the name suggest "Vilia," by Franz Lehar, although the rhythmic pattern he uses suggests "The Merry Widow Waltz", by the same composer; both are from the opera, "The Merry Widow".] [unintelligible].

[Russell:] [What's the name?]? [Put the name down again?].

[Barnes:] Yes. We had that--

[Allen:] "Delia". Vili

[Barnes:] And late at night, the fellow that we was playing with, he, we'd put that up, you know; and we played that number. It ain't so easy, neither, when you get way down in there [further into the music].

[Russell:] I don't know it at all; I've [never heard it?]

[Barnes:] No. We played that number, and the [people, or other band] said, "Where you all get that from, where you all get that piece from?" We had been rehearsing it for the dance; it was a nice dance number, but you got to know your business on them numbers. And, they played some nice numbers, too, you know; and--they got mixed up on a number; they was trying to play a jazz number, you know, and the fellow [leader] had been drinking, and he picked it up in the wrong key. And I tell you, that was a mess; that was a really mess.

[Collins:] What was the name of that, [again?]?

[Barnes:] Huh?

[Collins:] What was the name? What was the name of that tune, again?

[Russell:] How do you spell that?

[Allen:] "Delia".

[Barnes:] Yeah; that's a nice number.

[Russell:] Gee, I don't know; I really don't.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah; well, it was very popular; I'll get you the music sometime.

[Barnes:] He brought a plenty [of] popular numbers, you know. He come, came up with that, and we did--

[Russell:] How late did you stay in music? When did you retire from music?

[Barnes:] Oh, the sickness; I had what they call a tumor grewed out on my hip, and it got gradually, 'til about a year or so it got pretty near big as a baseball. Then my blood was bad. [He had syphilis]. Now, how that--I had got a test about six months [before]--less than six months. I was--it was negative. And I got another test, it was positive. So--so the nurse said--where I got a test the first time--said, "[It] can't be." Say, "We taken your blood test and [it was negative?]." And so they took it again, and they told me, yes, it was bad. Well, I had to get treatments, you see. I had to get treatments, and I had that tumor growing out on my leg. That hinder me in the, whilst I was in the WPA Band. Well, I was stuck around in there a good while. Towards the last I just had to give it up. They didn't last long after I--. I only left two trombone players when I left; there was "Sonny" Henry and a fellow by the name of Arthur--only had two trombone players left [after I left?].

[Russell:] Just two of them left after you.

[Barnes:] Yeah. And the band disband a little while [after that]; they didn't stay together too long after that; they went out. And I had to go on an operation; that's what slowed me up. And, my instrument wasn't all that hot; you see, I need[ed] another instrument. They came here many times and I'd tell them "yeah", and would go against me will, you know? And [they would] ask me to play with them and--even [Henry] Allen [Sr.], he'd come to me, [He'd] say, "Friend, I'm in a jam"; say, "Come help me out." Well, I'd go out there, but I couldn't walk like I wanted, you know. I just told him--well, I'd say, "Look, make this the last one"; I say, "I ain't making no more." So I got operated on and I never did make no more parades.

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And my instrument wasn't good enough for me to--I needed a new instrument, and at that time, it was tight, tough--

[Russell:] Yeah, that's right--during the depression.

[Barnes:] Tough to get a new instrument. But my teeth was bad; I had to get my teeth fixed; I had to get that first. And I couldn't get both of them, I just give it up and told them don't ever come for me. And I got ringed up--the people would ring me, you know, the different musicians to come play, but I wouldn't go. I figure my health was better then--that made, that was, I was on the way out then. And I kept the instrument in here till I went to play in church; went to, joined the church and went to play in the choir, and I played in there--

[Russell:] Which church was that^{that} had music, had a band?

[Barnes:] In the choir--yeah, yeah.

[Russell:] Which church was that?

[Barnes:] Plenty, plenty of them have--

[Russell:] I know some of them do here.

[Barnes:] [Unintelligible]. And I--it was [the] First Remission Baptist Church, you know; [I] played with them/

[Russell:] Remus Matthews played in a church, didn't he?

[Barnes:] Yeah, he played in a church. He [plays] on a drum; I don't know if they had any other instruments or not. But trombone went good in there. I'd have my mute, you know, and certain numbers, when they played them over--like overtures, they called them--anthem, you know--and they played that with certain part they had--it sounds nice.

[Russell:] Can you tell anything about the music in the churches down at Magnolia? Did they have a church down there that you belonged to?

[Barnes:] I wasn't joined up with the church at the time.

[Russell:] Did you hear any music down there in the churches, ever, from outside or

any place there? Spirituals or?--

[Barnes:] Instrumentals, you mean?

[Russell:] Well, any kind, even singing: spirituals or gospel songs. What kind of music did they have?

[Barnes:] They didn't have, they didn't even have a piano there--you know how the country churches was; they didn't even have a piano.

[Russell:] No organ or piano?

[Barnes:] No organist, nothing.

[Allen:] What would they sing?

[Barnes:] Huh? Sing, yeah.

[Russell:] What kind? What was the singing like?

[Allen:] Did they sing hymns?

[Barnes:] The singing was like an anthem, like. They--

[Russell:] Slower numbers?

[Barnes:] Then they would sing jubilee[s]; they would mix them in, you see, just like they do now. They--I think they called them anthems. They'd word it out, then they'd sing that strain; then they'd word it out again and sing some more, you know? I don't know how to call that.

[Russell:] What were the jubilee songs like? Were they fast--fast beat?

[Barnes:] Oh, yeah; sometime when they--sometimes they would start to clapping their hands on the jubilee, yeah; sometimes the sisters would shout, you know?--just like a person would dance there.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Barnes:] Yeah. That would be, that would be in after preaching and things like that would get on them things. Then they had what they called a "Social"; sometimes they would give a "social", you know, and selling different things and they would sing hymns because they [were] around the churches. And they'd be shouting--I don't know what they call it; it wasn't dancing, [but] it was so near dancing I

don't know what it is.

[Allen:] To change the subject--did Chris Kelly ever use two trumpets?

[Barnes:] No; not, not in my day, no.

[Allen:] Well, what would you do when he'd blow you up like that?

[Barnes:] Huh?

[Allen:] What would you do when he'd blow you up?

[Barnes:] Well, he would notify me.

[Allen:] And he, he'd send a man?

[Barnes:] He'd send a, he'd send somebody with me and he'd go on the other job where he had [the] deposit on the job, see?

[Allen:] Yeah. Who did he send in his place?

[Barnes:] Well, he'd pick up just who he could get, what he could--somebody he could cheat, see? He'd take that job [and] he'd be done got--I'd be done given him the deposit on the job, you know? And he'd take another job, you see? And he'd take another band and get a trumpet player and send with me. Sometime he'd send a good one and sometime he'd just send somebody not used to playing with the band. Well, that [is] what got me disgusted.

[Allen:] Did y'all ever make any records, with Chris?

[Barnes:] No, no.

[Allen:] And who was in the rhythm section with Chris?

[Barnes:] Well, we had a fellow they called--he's living yet, got one of them living here--at that time, oh, a fellow they used to call "Titt" [Rouchon?].

Well, the Creole just called him "Titt", you know, but I can't think of his other name now, but I knowed his other name.

[Allen:] He's alive now?

[Barnes:] Huh?

[Allen:] He's alive now?

[Barnes:] No, he died.

[Allen:] He died? And what did he play?

[Barnes:] Bass. And a fellow by the name of "Ti' Boy", he played banjo. And they were good. We had so many different [players?]; we changed them men so many different times. We had a fellow by the name of Mitchell; now he was good on that--take the back of the bow and pick; that's before they started picking with their thumb.

[Allen:] They'd hit with the back of the bow, huh?

[Barnes:] No, no--the part what you hold like that?

[Allen:] Yeah?

[Barnes:] You'd take that--

[Allen:] Oh! I see.

[Barnes:] Man, them dudes could play that; that's--

[Russell:] Down at the--where the screw is.

[Barnes:] That was, that's the way it started--that's the way it started right here. Had a fellow--that's the way it started right here in the city. Used to pick it with that back part of it.

[Allen:] Uh-huh--that screw?

[Barnes:] With the handle.

[Russell:] Yeah, of the--yeah.

[Barnes:] Uh-huh. Then they tried, started with this. Them fellows used to put--their hand get sore, they used to put tape on there. That--all that started right here in New Orleans. They didn't hear of it, or--that's when rhythm started to coming in; they was double-timing and all. You see, before they used to boorp, broorp, boorp, broorp {demonstrates sounds made by bowed bass}, but they cut that out and they start that[picking the bass]. And this other fellow, he start double-time with the back of the bow, you see?

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Russell:] yeah.

[Barnes:] Had a fellow by the name of Chester, I believe; he was the best they had on there. They, he--I think he was the man [who] started that, too.

[Allen:] Is he alive? Chester?

[Barnes:] I don't know--he's alive, but I don't remember seeing that man for years.

[Russell:] [What Chester was it?]

[Allen:] Chester "Lizard"?

[Barnes:] Huh? Bass player.

[Russell:] What's his last name, do you remember?

[Barnes:] No, I--

[Allen:] Not Chester "Lizard", huh?

[Barnes:] Is Chester "Lizard" a bass player?

[Allen:] Uh-huh; [he's a] little short guy--Chester Zardis--Chester "Lizard", they call him.

[Barnes:] It might; I ain't seen him for years.

[Allen:] Used to work with "Buddy" Pettit.

[Barnes:] That must be him.

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Russell:] Little short fellow--real short.

[Barnes:] Yeah.

[Russell:] [Unintelligible]

[Barnes:] That's where that rhythm and thing started, huh?

[Allen:] Good drummers?

[Barnes:] Huh?

[Allen:] Did they have good drummers in those days?

[Barnes:] Oh, yeah; oh, yeah, they had what you call ragtime drummers. See, when we first start Johnny Brown--with Johnny Brown, we had a drummer by the name of "Face-O" [Eddie Woods]; He died early and then we got a fellow by the name of Dave [Bailey?]; now, I can't think of his last name right now--he had a brother called

Ernest *John*

[Allen:] "Duck" Ernest?

[Barnes:] Huh?

[Allen:] "Duck" Ernest was his brother?

[Barnes:] "Duck" Ernest was his brother, yeah--half-brother, different fathers.

[Allen:] "Duck" played bass.

[Barnes:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Well, he must be Dave Ernēst. [See Punch Miller interview, Aug. 20, 1959]

[Barnes:] Dave was a good, he was a good drummer, too, Dave was; he had to be good, becuase [unintelligible]--he'd charge them up if he wasn't good. That is, he had to keep that rhythm--you can't increase; you don't want no drummer to increase and you don't want one that's gonna lag. You got to be right on the beat--you know? Like that--you play more easy, it's more easy on everybody. You get some drummers, they kind of lag just a second of a fraction; [they will] drag you back, you see? We start to hitting our foot there, we know it means to come up on that drum a little bit. And if you had to keep a-doing that, we'd get rid of him--couldn't lag [unintelligible]. All that started right here in the city, putting a little more to it, a little more to it. And now, I think I could, with the trombone--not bragging on myself--I could out-play a whole lot of them; I could play two, three--by playing the trumpet and haveling] talent in music, I could put a whole lot in there, in the piece, you see, and like a--

[Allen:] Before our tape runs out--what were some of the other tunes "Buddy" Bolden played?

[Barnes:] I couldn't think of all of them because [they] didn't have no names, you know? They didn't have no names [or nothing?].

[Allen:] I thought maybe you knew some of the different parts in them, or something like that he would have.

[Barnes:] And he was, he was about going out when I come here, you see? I was--

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he was about passed on.

[Collins:] Do you have your instrument now?

[Barnes:] It's all mashed up; it was back there. I got runned over; I'd been playing in the choir now. I got it out--I done throwed it out in the shed.

[Russell:] You trom--your old trombone?

[Barnes:] Uh-huh.

[Allen:] What about your baritone?

[Russell:] Yeah, baritone, too.

[Barnes:] I didn't--I used to have [to] borrow the baritone; the last time I played baritone--I played a street job with it--I had to borrow John Porter's baritone.

[Russell:] Oh, yeah.

[Collins:] You just played with the choir--just yourself; there was no band; just yourself accompanying.

[Barnes:] Yes, sir; yeah, After I joined the church well, I just taken it on with them; and they seemed to like it, too.

[Russell:] Yeah, I'll bet it was good.

[Barnes:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Who was the first person you ever made a record for? When was that?

[Barnes:] I didn't make no record until I made one with a [the Original Zenith] brass band down there.

[Russell:] You played paritone, wasn't it?

[Barnes:] Yeah.

[Allen:] With George Lewis?

[Barnes:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Oh, I see.

[Barnes:] They didn't have much of a bass horn on it. The fellows just jump[ed] up and made them records, you know; they wasn't, didn't practice or---. The bass player, he didn't have no embouchure; couldn't, couldn't hear him.

[Allen:] How do you like the records you made with [Emile] "Mealy" Barnes?

[Barnes:] I didn't have no idea to do that.

[Russell:] [You hadn't played at all?]

[Barnes:] They just grab me up, sent me---I went there to hear them make the record and---

END OF REEL III
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