

Un-edited first draft

HENRY "PICKLE" JACKSON
REEL I [of 2]
August 9, 1961

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

[William Russell says, we are interviewing Henry Jackson at 3505 Magnolia, and the date is August 9, 1961.]

My name is Henry Jackson...I was born right here in New Orleans in the Uptown section. This is what you call the Garden District of New Orleans.

I was born November 24, 1909...I'm the only musician in the family. I'm the only one played.

When I was a kid, I used to love to hear "High Society" played by [Oscar] "Papa" Celestin, and Kid Ory.

I remember riding...lots of time on the trucks with Jack Carey. He was one of the leading musicians of New Orleans at the time. I used to love to hear them play "Chinatown." I would get on the truck, ride.

Chris Kelly was one of the musicians [with Jack Carey]. They had a drummer at the time. I don't know his real name, but they used to call him "Chinee" [Foster]. [WR says he's still around.] He was a wonderful drummer at the time.

There's a lot of good musicians. I enjoyed their music. They was playing a lot of swinging jazz music, just like they're doing today. They were wonderful guys.

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I taken up drums when I was about 20 years old. I used to go around, and listen to that Buddy Petit, and those guys, and "Papa" Celestin's Band.

Always loved to play the drums. I would get on tin cans, and tubs, and beat like that...Started out beating on boxes with sticks.

I got my first set of drums when I was about 20 years old. From then on, I started playing with different bands.

Sidney Desvigne had one of the finest bands in the city. I stayed with that band three years.

I never did take lessons. I just played myself, picked it up. Started from scratch from the soap box, and a tin can, and went on to the drums.

When I first started out, I bought a Ludwig set--a drum set from a pawn shop. I went to a pawn shop, and got me my first set of drums--Ludwig.

I played those...cymbals, tom-toms, wood blocks; had the chinese cymbals, and a gong. Had all that. I had the tom-toms, big round tom-toms. I played those. Stayed around, and played it a long time.

I bought my first set of drums from Security Loan Office on Rampart Street, near Canal. That was where I bought my first set of drums.

[WR says it's still there, but I don't know what they have

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in the way of instruments any more. A few trumpets, I think...]

I bought my first set from those people at the company. I played a long time with them.

I played in different clubs. Played around here at different little bars. Played at different little picnics. In all, I played a lot of picnics.

I finally joined up with Sidney Desvigne's Band. I had been playing, I'd say, about 10, or 15, years before I joined Sidney's band.

[In the band were] Alvin Alcorn, on trumpet; Sidney [Desvigne], on trumpet; Joe Phillips was on trumpet; Louis Cottrell, the [musicians' union] president, on tenor; Sam Lee, he was on tenor.

We had Jerry Green. He was playing bass. We had Oscar Rouzan. He was an alto man. And we had myself, I was on drums. We had Buddy Charles. Rueven [?] Charles. He was playing guitar. Raymond Ancar [?], who was a singer, and director of the band, at the time.

They had a wonderful band. We played different clubs, all the campus schools. We played Xavier University. We played the [Xavier] Prep. We played St. Katherine's. That was a church auditorium.

We played all the balls for the different clubs...Young Men of Illinois, and we played a lot of different clubs around town.

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The Audubon Tea Room, played there...Played a lot of dances at the San Jacinto, and the old Gypsy Tea Room.

The Old Gypsy Tea Room. We used to play there every weekend. We played...a lot of those clubs around New Orleans--white, and colored clubs.

They...had a few stocks. Then, they had Joe Phillips, and Alvin Alcorn writing. Joe Phillips used to write for the band. They used a lot of arrangements that Joe Phillips written for the band. We played those.

We used a lot of stock. A lot of numbers like "Anvil Chorus," and old numbers.

We really had a wonderful band. I enjoyed the time I played in it. I enjoyed the stay I was in it. Sidney was a wonderful guy to work for. Wonderful guy. He died [about a year ago] in California. [WR met him there two years ago.]

I never did work the [river]boat. When I would join the band was after he left the boat.

But, I remember Fate Marable, and [A.J.] Piron. They was on the boat. They were wonderful musicians, too. But, see, when I joined Sidney's outfit, they had left the boat.

At that time, I didn't have to read as much music because all they wanted to play, all I had to do was play. Push the band, you know, and the solos. I played the solos the way I felt.

They had written drum parts, but they never did demand to

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read them. I just played like I felt. Kept my ears open, watched the band, and played. Just swing the band, that's all I had to do. I just push them, push them, and they loved it. They enjoyed it.

When it came time - the music had a solo in it - I'd take my solo the way I felt. I took my expression. I played it the way I felt. They enjoyed it. But, I never did have to worry about reading anything in Sidney's Band.

I have another set of drums. I bought another set from Hall about four or five years ago, from Hall Drum Shop. I got one sitting there now I bought from Hall Drums.

The drums I had with Sidney, I just wore them out...Just played them, and wore them out.

The set I used with Sidney was the one I got from the pawn shop. I wore them out.

So, I have another set I bought from Hall Drum Company. That's what I'm using now. Other than that, that's been a wonderful lifetime for me for music.

I never did play no parades. I had a lot of opportunities to, but I never did like to walk. (Laughs.) I had a lot of opportunity to play parades.

I always was a jazz musician, though. I remember hearing Sam Morgan in a parade [while] following those. Celestin Original Tuxedo Band. They had a marching band. The Eureka Band. When I

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was a kid, I remember those.

[The] drummer they used to call Benny [marched]. I never did know his real first name, but they used to call him "Black Benny." [WR says he was a friend of Louis Armstrong.]

He was a drummer. I remember him. He played a bass drum in the parade. But, he was a good trap drummer, too. He played drums outside of the parade. He played in small combos, small bands. He was the only one I could remember.

Chinee' [Foster]. He was a wonderful drummer. He was one of Celestin's Original Tuxedo drummers. He was a fine little drummer.

He was the one [who] give me my inspiration. I used to go, and watch him. I used to go to a club they used to call the Black Gold, and the club they called Chinatown where he would play. [It was] on Seventh and LaSalle.

He was my inspiration. I used to watch him. He was a wonderful drummer. He could play.

He was little. He sit at one of those bass drums - they had those big 28-inch bass drums - and he was sitting. You could hardly see him under the bass drum, but you could hear.

I used to watch him. He was the one I got my inspiration to play from watching him because I loved to watch him play.

[My first bass drum] was 28-inch, then I went down to 26- [inches], 26 now.

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Another wonderful drummer who used to play with Celestin-- his name was "Happy." I used to enjoy him. He was a good drummer, too. I think it was Happy Goldston, the last one that was working out here at the Paddock. [That was Happy Goldston, WR says. He played with the Eureka.]

I liked him and...Henry "Red" Allen. That was my trumpet player. I used to love to hear him play trumpet. Him, and Chris Kelly, and Buddy Petit. Those were the trumpet players.

I used to get on the truck. When they would be playing on the truck, I would hop on the truck, ride around, and listen at them.

They didn't mind me getting on the truck because I used to be so little. I could hand the handbills out. They would give me a handful of...and I would hand the handbills out.

I would enjoy hearing, listening to them play. They would stop at every corner. Every corner, they would stop. I would hop off the truck, and give the bills around.

They would be playing numbers like "Chinatown," "Tiger Rag," all of those favorites. "Muskrat Ramble." I used to like that.

I don't remember who was in Buddy [Petit's] band. That was a long time ago.

He was playing here at...that old club they called the Entertainer's Club, down on Iberville. He was playing there.

I can't remember who was in his band. He only had four, or

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five, members of the band at the time.

Chris Kelly's Band, I think. I don't know who was members of his band. That's been pretty long.

I don't have my own band now. I've just been playing with different bands now.

[WR refers to a picture taken in 1951.] This picture was taken in [19]51. This is where I was born. This is a trumpet player, Ganier. This is...Johnny Fernandez, the piano player. This fellow...Let's see who he was. I forgot this guy's name.

Yeah, that's the same drum set I'm using now. To me, the 26-inch bass drum has much better tone than the 28-[inch drum].

They have a 22-, 20-inch, 24-inches; but, those are too small. Those are nice for...small combos playing in nightclubs, cabarets, cocktail lounges. But, those 26-inch bass drums are what I like to play on...Love the sound, the hit.

I guess different drummers like different instruments to play. Like different size bass drums.

I had cowbells [on my old set]. I have cowbells now, still use them. You use them in a different way than you did at that time.

I played cowbells with the blocks, the tempo blocks at the top. The difference in the cowbells now is you use a more modernistic [beat]. Even when you're playing Dixieland, you don't beat them as much as you used to.

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Sometimes, guys would take two sticks, just take two sticks, and stay on the cowbells; maybe, all through a number, all through a chorus. They get off one cowbell, go on to another one.

He doesn't do that anymore. He might take them, play him a little rhythm. Play a Dixieland rhythm on one cowbell. He might not use the other cowbell all night.

In my time, we'd use both of them. The average drummer you see now - whether he's playing Dixieland, or modern drumming - he don't have but the one cowbell. Those drummers don't have but the one cowbell now.

You had from three to four [cowbells in the old days], and tune them a little differently. They was mounted on top of the drums at that time. They used to sell them in the music store.

You'd get them in the music store. You don't see them lately. You could get them in the music store. I never did know what company made them, but you can get them in the store.

Sidney had 15 pieces...15 piece band. After the big band went out, I started to hear a lot of small combos, from 3-to-5 pieces.

I played with from 3-to-5 pieces after I left Sidney's band. That's about what I've been playing in ever since I been playing, since I left the big band.

I played [in a] six piece band like this, five pieces, seven piece band. But, most of the time, it'd be made up of five

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musicians. Most of the smaller bands are made of five musicians.

I was with [Sidney] during the Depression. He got a lot of jobs. Sidney had more jobs than anybody else. He had the largest band around here. He was well known, well liked, and he was playing what the people liked. So, Sidney had more jobs than he could handle.

The most I got with Sidney's band for a night working was \$4. During the Depression everyone got from \$3-to-\$4. If it was a Depression now, you couldn't hire a band for what they pay a band now...For what they pay, and get now, you couldn't touch them.

But, at that time...that was a lot of money to us...a lot of money to musicians. That was a lot of money. When Sidney would hand me that \$4, that was a lot of money.

We played. We played hard. We played good. We enjoyed playing. That was a wonderful time. During that time, Sidney's band.

Then, we started with the small combos. Started playing with the small combos, and I've been with that ever since. I don't know when I will ever go back to a big band again, unless it would be a boon.

The only big band I see with anything happening in the world today is the band like Count Basie, Duke Ellington. Not many big bands.

But, at that time, they had a lot of big bands. Sunset Royal

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Entertainers, Jimmie Lunceford, Andy Kirk. All those were coming. A lot of big bands at that time.

There was a fellow by the name of Roy, who used to play with Sam Morgan's band [when I was coming up]. I forget his last name, but he was a wonderful little drummer. His name was Roy.

They had one that used to play with Kid Rena. [It was] his brother...When Joe Rena was with his brother, he was another wonderful little drummer. [WR says Joe Rena is a preacher now,] a Jehovah's Witness. Well, those two.

And Chinee. I mentioned him. He was a wonderful little drummer. He used to throw [his sticks] up into the air. Throw them up in the air, and catch them. Play them, and twirl them on his fingers. He was a wonderful guy then.

[WR describes how Chinee used to hit his sticks together.] I used to watch him do that thing. He used to hold his snare drum up to the mouth, and used to sing to that.

[Held his mouth] against the head of the snare drum, right to his mouth, and he would sing. Right on the skin, and you could hear the vibration from the drum while he was singing. That was wonderful. I had forgotten about that. (Laughs.)

Sidney Montegue. He was a wonderful drummer, but he always used to play it straight.

Black Benny had a lot of tricks. He would throw the sticks up in the air. He would hold the drum different kinds of ways

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when he was playing. He would hold the bass drum on the side, and play, and the people would notice.

He'd do a whole lot of little things with his bass drum. In the parade: he would take the drum off the strap, and hold it down, and play it. Hold it in his head. He was a wonderful guy, Benny. He was a wonderful guy.

I never did play any parades. I never did play those concerts. Just dance bands, and theaters.

I played a lot of theater work. During the time, they had those stage shows at the Palace Theater. I played a lot stage shows. The Palace was at Dauphine - it's still there - Dauphine and Iberville.

The Lyric was the next corner...Just before my time, Robichaux, Professor [John] Robichaux, and them, were at the Lyric...Kid Punch [Miller], and all them. They were playing at the Lyric at that time. I never did play with Punch.

They had a drummer with them named ["Red] Happy" [Bolton], too. He used to do a lot of tricks with the drums. He used to play the bottles. Had the...pop bottles, strung up along the side of the drum. He'd play those bottles.

That was Red Happy. He used to play the bottles. He had the bottles strung upside the drum. He could play you a lot of drum, and he could play those bottles too.

I know how he do it. Some of those bottle have water in

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them, and some of the bottles'll be empty. Coca Cola bottles. Them old-time pop bottles.

I used to love to hear him play those bottles. Red Happy. I used to love to hear him play. He made them sound like those bells.

He put water in them. Filled some up with water, some empty, and some half filled with water and played them. Had them tied with strings, and he hit them with regular snare sticks.

I think that was his own creation because I never saw that before in my life--then, or afterwards. That was his own creation.

They would shine the spotlight on him [down in the pit], and they would see it. That was a wonderful thing to see. That was his own creation because I haven't seen it since, and I haven't seen it after. Didn't see it before.

There were two [drummers] I got inspiration from. Paul Barbarin, and Louis Barbarin. Those were my inspiration drummers later. They come later. Sally come later.

They were wonderful drummers, and still are. They still are. They're both still playing. I got a lot of ideas, and nice ideas, from Louis Barbarin and Paul.

Paul was playing with Louis Armstrong at the time when he came down here at the old Coliseum. Louis had a big band, 14 pieces. I went in there, and got a lot of inspiration from Paul.

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Talked to Paul, and he told me to stick with it. I followed.

[I] used to go around, and listen to his brother play. Louis Barbarin. He's still playing now. I got a lot of inspiration from him. My first one was from Chinee. Later, when I really wanted to play, and wanted to join those big bands, I got a lot ideas from Louis Barbarin.

The old-timers I played with when I was very young was...a banjo player by the name of Father Al [Lewis]. Have you heard of him? [WR has.] I played with him in a band during that time they had. (Tries to remember.)

I never did play with Jack Carey. I was too young, at the time, when I met him.

I played once, or twice, with Buddy Petit's band. Sat in the band. I worked in...

I never did play with Chris Kelly. I used to go see him, listen to him, but I never did play in his band.

My favorite trumpet player[s] at that time was Buddy Petit, and Papa Celestin. Papa Celestin, Buddy Petit.

Of course, all of them was good trumpet players. Chris Kelly, Sam Morgan, and Kid Rena. But, those was my favorites...Buddy Petit was a wonderful trumpet man. I was very young when I used to go hear him.

The only difference [in drumming] from that time to now is the drummers are a little more modernistic. In other words, it

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looked like they beat more modern.

But, for the feeling...those drummers at that time - to me - had more feeling than the drummers have now.

You take a drummer at that time. They be playing. They be doing anything. They be making all kinds of motion expressing their feelings. They be playing to show you what they're feeling.

The drummers nowadays look like they're playing more modernistic. They're playing more difficult than the guy was playing then.

But, I don't know. Somehow, they don't have as much of the feelings as the guys during then. Of course, they're playing a lot of drums now.

It looks to me the drummer doesn't have the feelings the drummers did in those days. In those days, the drummer, if he do something, he always did it.

If it was throwing the sticks around. If it was hitting on the side of the bass drum...hit on the side of the drum stand. They'd make all those kind of things at that time.

Now, the drummer, he's got so modernistic now, he's let those things go by. Just stick to the regular beat. [More mechanical.] There are a lot of them playing now. They're playing a lot of drums.

I think the music was played faster then than it is now. The reason why I say this is because numbers like "Chinatown,"

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"Muskrat Ramble," and all those; "I'll Be Glad When You Dead, You Rascal," they were playing those numbers up-tempo.

Now, the drummers - the band as a whole - they play in a modern tempo. They play more softer, more sweeter. They play in a more medium tempo.

At that time, the band used to let themselves go, and just play, just play wild. [They] let everybody have the feeling, running all over the floor, doing them old two-step.

It looks like now the band calms down now, and plays medium tempo. It's just once in a while you might hear a band play up in tempo.

[At] that time, that's all you hear. Even the trumpet players, trombone players...they get on the end of those tail-gates, and just blow, blow like they felt, and the tempo would be up in there.

They was playing the two-beat, so you don't care how fast [they played.] They could never get away from the drummer, no matter how fast they played.

That was on a two-beat tempo. But now, the drummer's on a 4/4 beat now. He's on a modern time...

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The dancing is much different [now.] When I was playing for...the dancing...The time when Chris Kelly, and Jack Carey, and Sam Morgan, and all those were playing for the dance--the dancers used to do a two-step, what you call a fast two-step.

During that time when I was playing, when the bands I would play with...would do a dance, they would call it the Lindy Hop. The younger generation was doing a dance they called the Lindy Hop. That was a fast dance where they'd be hopping, doing different steps on the floor....

If I play for a modern dance now. If I don't play Dixieland. If I play for a modern dance now, or go to a modern dance, the dances the younger generation are doing something like a jitterbug.

They're playing what you call a rock-and-roll music, a modern music. They got some Dixieland music that can make you just as happy, and make you feel the way you're playing it now. Make you feel just as happy, as good as if it was Dixieland.

They playing some Dixieland music now that would sound like rock-and-roll. An actual fact. If you would take the bands, like the Dukes of Dixieland...They play some Dixieland music that will rock you, move you.

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The way Louis Armstrong's playing now. A lot of music Armstrong's playing now, he didn't play in his time. I heard him on the Ed Sullivan Show a couple of times.

He's a wonderful musician. A lot of music that he's playing now, he wasn't playing [before]. He's put a more modern test to it.

When I was a kid, when I was going to all those matinees, [most of all the dance] I saw were waltzes--the dances they called the foxtrot, and the rhumbas.

Now they do a cha-cha. But, they was doing a lot of rhumbas, waltzes, a lot of two-steps. Lots of dances you don't see anymore. You don't see them.

I don't know the names of the marches [they danced to.] When I was a kid, they used to start [with] everybody marching around the floor. If you didn't have a couple, you didn't march. But, if you had a partner, you'd march around the floor. That's when the dances first started.

There used to be a lot of cocktail dances--dances that started around 3:00 [p.m.], 3:00-to-5:00 for the younger people.

You used to do a lot of marches then. I forget the names of the marches we used to play. Some of the marches used to be "When The Saints Go Marching In." They would play that. That's something you don't see now.

You picked out your girl before the dance started. When they

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played the march, you found your partner sitting down...You asked your girlfriend to dance. That's the way that worked.

You picked out a young lady, and you marched. After the march was over, that was your partner. That simple.

I think that was what that accomplished. You picked out your girl, you marched, and you had your date for the dance.

[Sidney Desvigne] played a lot of Carnival balls. We played the Young Men of Illinois balls...Maybe, they liked that name because it was from the North...But, they never worked for no railroad.

Sidney played a lot of Carnival balls, a lot of Carnival balls. I don't know who we were playing for, but they were a lot of Carnival balls. They'd be in costume, and masks. At 12:00 [midnight] they'd take off their masks. That was a law.

They'd be in pretty gowns. Some would be in devil's suits. Some would be in all kinds of costumes. They had masks on, and you wouldn't know who they were until 12:00. When 12:00 come, then everybody would unmask.

We played at the San Jacinto Hall [for Carnival balls]. We played St. Katherine's Hall [for] Carnival balls. We played the old San Souci Hall, you might have heard of that.

[WR has, and guesses they tore that down.] They tore it down. We played a lot of balls there.

We played most of them at the San Jacinto Club,

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St.Katherine's. We played a few at the Gypsy Tea Room. You might recall, might have heard of the Gypsy tea Room. [WR says that's still there].

It was the High Hat. Then, they renamed it to the Ebb Tide...We played a lot of balls there.

Most of the balls were played at the old San Jacinto Club. They've renamed it now...They still use [the San Jacinto]. They renamed it the 504 Club, and reopened it on Sunday night...

They reopened on Sunday night with an out-of-town band: Etta James, on Sunday night. When they open a new club like that, they use an out-of-town attraction to draw the public.

After the people get to knowing it, they use the local [bands] also...It's not a question of better. It's a question of your not seeing [the new band]. Something new.

[For Carnival balls], we'd play [a] different type of music. Something like soft, sweet music, for those things. They would put on a little floor show.

If they didn't have that, they would have a fashion show, or something like that. We'd play...a lot of the sweet music, sweet numbers for the fashion show. Things like that.

That might last about an hour, maybe, an hour and a half. After that, the band would go back to swing, go back to playing all these swinging, hot numbers--sweet tunes, and waltzes.

During those fashion shows - or, if they had a little floor

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show, or something like that - the clubs would have...Sidney would have special arrangements of sweet music he would play for that special occasion.

Other than that, the band just jumped, swing all night long. The people would forget about those gowns. They'd forget about those evening gowns they were wearing, and just dance. Just dance as if there was a regular street group. It was a wonderful thing to see.

[Sidney's whole band] played numbers like "High Society," and a number they called "Back Beat Boogie." We had another number they called...We had a lot of boogie woogies that we just played when somebody asked for it.

They'd say, play me a boogie woogie, and the music was forgotten about then. Everybody would play. The whole band would get together, and swing that.

There'd be many times they asked us to put the music up. They asked us to close the book when we played those numbers. Those boogie woogies, and those jump numbers that we had.

We had a lot of jump numbers they would call playing by head, by ear in Sidney's band.

His band was well-organized. He could play all that stuff. Sidney had a lot of numbers he could play, and they wouldn't even have to open the book.

He had a lot of wonderful numbers the band could play, and

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he wouldn't have to use any music at all. We'd play those. A lot of those numbers would sound just as good, or better, than the music that was written by the members of the band.

I think the band compared as powerful as Count Basie's band, at the time, because they had a lot of young musicians in it. A lot of good ones, and they could play. They could blow.

To me, the musicians were just as good as any musician you could find anywhere in the world. Just as good a musicians as you could find in Count Basie.

Playing with Basie might have been playing a different type of music. Might have been playing a little faster, or something like that.

But, as far as the musicianship and the playing, Sidney had just as good a musicians as you could find anywhere in the world.

Sidney had musicians that could sit in anybody's band, that could leave Sidney's band and go to Count Basie. I guess Basie had members of his band that could leave his band, and come to Sidney. That's how good the musicians was.

That's the only way I can compare them. They had just as good musicians in Sidney's band as Count Basie had in his band. They had a lot of wonderful musicians that could blow you a lot of horn, play you a lot of music...

[There were] members of Basie's band that left here. That were playing right here, left here; went, and joined Basie.

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Like Joe Newman. Joe Newman was a home-town boy that played around here with us. He left here, played in small bands around here.

He left here, went North, and stayed up there...I guess he played those pieces so long, he wouldn't know how to play with no other band.

[Earl] Bostic played here, but Bostic...played with Sidney. When he played with Sidney, I wasn't in the band. He was a wonderful musician, one of the best you got.

He was a home-town boy. He was born, and raised here. He left here, went up, and been on his own ever since. He had his own band.

Bostic is a New Orleans musician. He could play as good, or better, than any musician anywhere in the world. He improved himself. He's a wonderful musician, Bostic.

Sidney Desvigne stepped with the band from the time he organized it until the band broke up. He was always with the band.

He had four trumpets, and he was one of them. He'd sit right with them. He never did stand up. Joe Phillips, and Alvin Alcorn, would do the standing. Those were the solo men.

Alvin Alcorn. He used to play out there with Kid Ory. He's playing now with Papa Celestin's band.

Alvin Alcorn, and Herman Franklin, and Joe Phillips were the

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featured men. Sidney just played his horn. Sat there, and played. He never did stand up. Sat there, and played.

Read. He could read anything you put before him. He'd sit there, and play. When it got time for the solo, either Alvin Alcorn, or Joe Phillips, would stand up.

[Sidney] never did solo, but he could play. He had a powerful tone. You could hear it. He had good lips for blowing. Wonderful, beautiful blowing. [WR can't remember if he heard SD].

He had wonderful lips for blowing. He could blow, and you could hear him. He'd sit right there, and blow for you.

He didn't take his horn, and set in his lap, and hold it. He'd play. But, for soloing--Sidney never did solo.

I heard the [Armand J.] Piron band once, or twice. They were playing in the [Pythian Temple] Roof Garden here.

That was his favorite spot. He had that spot sewn up. Whenever there would be a dance up at the Roof Garden, it would be Piron.

I don't remember who was drumming for Piron at that time...

Piron had more of a concert band. His band was more from the soft music style. Like you hear those guys, say Guy Lombardo, sweetest music this side of heaven. Well, Piron had one of those bands with the sweetest music this side of heaven.

He was a violin player. He was a little crippled fellow, one of those little violin players. His band never was no hot band,

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or no soloists, but it was a sweet musical band. He played a lot of sweet music, concert music.

It wasn't as big as Sidney's. He had about 12 pieces...At that time, the big band was on the [upswing]. A lot of big bands, like Walter Barnes. But, Walter Barnes got killed in a fire. His band got burned up.

There was a little saxophone player that used to be in his band at that time. Earl Barnes. The band left without him. No relation, this Barnes.

They missed him one night, or something. He went off, or the band went off without him, intended to send for him. He was going to meet the band after they leave Natchez. Before he could get to the band, the band was burned up.

In older days, [Papa Celestin] had more of a swinging jazz band. Papa Celestin always did have a swinging jazz band. He had guys...a trumpet player by the name of Guy Kelly that was playing in the band. Louis Barbarin was playing was his drummer--a featured drummer.

Papa Celestin had one of the best swinging bands in the South, at that time. His band always would swing, a lot of swing music. When Celestin played soft music, or concert music, was only when you would request it.

He had some powerful members of the band. [Narvin] Kimball. You might have heard of Kimball. He was playing banjo at the

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time--guitar, and banjo.

He had...Bill Matthews playing trombone. This Bill Matthews was a powerful trombone player.

Papa Celestin had one of the best swinging bands you want to hear. It was known as the Original Tuxedo Band.

Guy Kelly was a powerful man, but Kelly was a solo man. Celestin played a lot of horn, but he wasn't as powerful as Kelly was.

Kelly was a powerful man on the horn. People used to just go to the dances to hear Kelly play.

He was standing on back of those trucks, and he was a powerful man...He was much [more] powerful than Celestin. They both were good trumpet players, but Kelly was more powerful, more the better trumpet player.

They had a swinging band. They had one of the best swinging bands in the South.

They had this Kimball. He was playing banjo, and guitar. He was a wonderful banjo player.

They had Miss Kimball, Kimball's wife [on piano]. Jeanette Kimball. She was a wonderful piano player. She could play. She was playing. She played a lot of piano. Still playing. That was his featured pianist.

He had Oliver Alcorn on alto. He's in Chicago now. That's Alvin's brother. He was a wonderful alto player. He was a

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powerful alto player. He could blow...the roof off the house.

Lee Collins was another trumpet player from here. He was a wonderful trumpet player. He had his own group. He had a small group.

Celestin had one of the best bands in the South. It was swinging. They always was swinging.

They was a good drawing card. They said Papa Celestin was playing somewhere. They didn't have to worry about the people turning up 'cause he'd always draw a crowd.

[The Sam Morgan Band, and Celestin's Band] both were about the same [drawing crowds.] They used to have battles of music. Celestin was playing at the old San Souci Hall. They used to have ballot boxes.

You see, at that time, you didn't clap for no band. You put the name of the band on a piece of paper, and drop it in a box.

When the people come in...Celestin box people on this side, and Sam Morgan box people would be on this side. You had a sheet of paper right there, and you write which band you liked. Just put it in a box.

Now you clap for a band. Win by applause. But, at that time, you put your name - to see who was popular - you put your name on...Celestin, the Original Tuxedo Band, he would have the most ballots in the box.

I used to wonder if anybody would steal the ballot box,

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(laughs) but no. That was a wonderful thing. This was just the honor of winning. There never was any prize. Just to know who was the most popular. Sometime the count would be close, but Papa Celestin would always win.

I enjoyed talking about [the old times]. The only thing [I'd like to add is] I went off with a few bands, played a lot of concerts.

I went off with the World of Mirth Cavalcade of Amusement [Carnival]. Stayed out there. Had a wonderful time out there with musicians that I didn't know. When I got there, they had the musicians already, but needed a drummer.

Some of those bands...they had nice bands out there. Nice swinging bands. But, I don't know...None of those bands out there were swinging like the musicians from the deep South.

They would play. They were wonderful musicians that would play, but they didn't have the feeling that musicians from New Orleans had; or, from Baton Rouge; or, from down here.

It looked like they just didn't have the feeling. But, they would play. They were good musicians who could play.

It looked like all the New Orleans musicians, or the musicians close around New Orleans territory, had better, or greater, feeling than a lot of guys who would be on the road.

They'd admire you. They'd say, 'Man, you come from New Orleans?' I'd say, 'Yeah, I come from New Orleans.' [They'd say,]

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'I like the way you play. I like your style. I like your feeling.'

I ran into a lot of good musicians out there. But, all the musicians I'd seen, I played with out there. It seems to me that none of them had the feeling a guy had from New Orleans.

Guys from this part of the country had more feelings towards music than guys [from elsewhere]. Like, the guy from here put his whole heart, and soul, in his music.

I made one recording with a singer here. I forgot the name of it. Just accompanying the singer. One.

[WR says that about covers HJ's life, and wants to take his picture which HJ doesn't mind. Tape concludes with some, apparently unrelated, violin music...]

END OF REEL II

