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[Allen:] Now, what is your full name?

[Casimir:] My name is John Frank Casimir.

[Allen:] John Frank Casimir. And where were you born?

[Casimir:] I was born here in New Orleans; I was born December 17, 1898.

[Allen:] And what street were you born on?

[Casimir:] 737 Pine Street in New Orleans.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah--I know where that is.

[Casimir:] That's right beside of Broadway.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. Were your family musical at all?

[Casimir:] Who?

[Allen:] [Were] your family musical?

[Casimir:] All by brothers and them play music--all my people play. My daddy used to play with the old Pickwick Band, you know.

[Allen:] What instrument?

[Casimir:] Melophony--peck horn, melophone. [Fa's name?]

[Allen:] And did he play in any of the dance orchestras, string bands or anything?

[Casimir:] My daddy?

[Allen:] Yes.

[Casimir:] No, just in the brass bands he used to play.

[Allen:] Just brass bands.

[Casimir:] That's what he told us--used to play in the brass bands.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. When did he die, or is he still alive?

[Casimir:] My daddy died around 1931.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. And how old was he when he died?

[Casimir:] Fifty-four years old.

[Allen:] Uh-huh--fifty-four. Was he an ear man or a reader or both?

[Casimir:] No, he used to play in the band; he was a player.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. But he didn't--he didn't fake at all?

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[Casimir:] No, he used to read those 6/8 marches, that's all.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah, I see.

[Casimir:] Old Wil--old man Humphries [Jim Humphrey] used to teach the band.

[Allen:] Which Humphrey is that; is that Wil--

[Casimir:] Willie Humphrey's grandpa.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] I had to take lessons from their grandpa.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah, you mentioned that. Is that Jim Humphrey?

[Casimir:] Old man Jim Humphrey. (Telephone rings).

[Allen:] If you want to stop it at anytime, we can--if the phone rings or anything.

[Casimir:] [Unintelligible]

[Allen:] O.K. (Machine off).

[Casimir:] You say did my people play an instrument?

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Yeah. My brother played. Bill Casimir [was] one of the best tenor players they had. [He] used [to] work with Walter [Fats] Pichon on the boat and quite naturally, he [was] out playing [in] the neighborhood every night, some little band. Bill Casimir [is] his name--plays tenor sax.

[Allen:] That's [the one] up in Chicago now, isn't he?

[Casimir:] Yeah, yeah. Sam [Casimir], he out in Chicago; he plays guitar. He used to play for Walter Pichon; both of them [played for Pichon].

[Allen:] He recorded for Bill Russell, Sam did--with Natty Dominique's band.

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] He recorded with Natty Dominique's band in Chicago, for Bill Russell.

[Casimir:] Sam, the guitar player??

[Allen:] Yeah. I guess they all made a lot of records, huh?

[Casimir:] Yeah. Mr. Russell know both of them.

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Casimir:] Good guitar player. Williams was the best tenor player they had here.

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[Allen:] Uh-huh. [I've] heard a lot of people talk about him.

[Casimir:] That's right.

[Allen:] Now, did any of your other brothers play?

[Casimir:] Noe, the other one don't. I ain't got no more. [?]

[Allen:] [Any] sisters?

[Casimir:] Us, us three, that's all--William and Sam and [I and John?].

[Allen:] Uh-huh. And what about your mother--did she play any music, too?

[Casimir:] No, not my momma didn't.

[Allen:] And uncles or aunts or anybody like that?

[Casimir:] No. My cousin Tillman, he plays bass.

[Allen:] Wilbert Tillman is your cousin?

[Casimir:] That's my first cousin: we [are] brother and sister's children.

[Allen:] I didn't know that.

[Casimir:] Uh-huh. He's my first cousin; we [are] first cousins.

[Allen:] I had no idea. Well, let's see now--how long did you take lessons from Jim Humphrey?

[Casimir:] About five years--about five years.

[Allen:] You must have started young, I guess.

[Casimir:] Oh, yeah, I started when I was young--around 19, 1918.

[Allen:] Around 1918?

[Casimir:] Yeah, around 1918.

[Allen:] During the war?

[Casimir:] Yeah. Well, I started out paying two bits a lesson. Started playing in a brass band over the river--old man Henry Allen.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] That little clarinet I got, I got it in a pawn--he got it in a pawn shop for me for \$7.50, and then I bought a mouthpiece to put in there.

[Allen:] What kind of clarinet was this?

[Casimir:] It had an E flat I got.

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[Allen:] Uh-huh. You started on lessons on a E flat or a B flat?

[Casimir:] I started on a B flat.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] But he bought a little E flat at Cohen's on Rampart Street.

[Allen:] Where?

[Casimir:] Been a long time.

[Allen:] You got started with Henry Allen then?

[Casimir:] Yeah, that's right. When I started playing, after I tried [to see] if I'd [could] walk, I couldn't make a note. If I'd make a note, I couldn't walk.

[Laughter] Watching the other fellas. Just anybody can't get out there and play no funeral; got to learn how to play the--

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Plenty guys don't know that; you got to learn how to play a funeral.

[Allen:] How long did you stay with old man Allen?

[Casimir:] About four or five years. Then I start to playing with Henry "Red"

[Allen, his son--you know?

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Me and him and Johnny had a little four-piece band. He was in short pants, "Red" Allen.

[Allen:] Little four-piece band?

[Casimir:] Little four-piece--house parties and things like that. Had Mitchell in the band. Got "Lutchie", Albert Jackson on trombone. We got a little six-piece band. We used to get all them jobs going down to Delacroix Island.

[Allen:] Who's Mitchell?

[Casimir:] We used to get plenty jobs.

[Allen:] Who's Mitchell? You say you got Mitchell in the band?

[Casimir:] Sanofor Mitchell, bass player; he died here. Albert Jackson on trombone, Johnny Thomas on drums, and Leonard Bocage playing the banjo. We used

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[to] get plenty work.

[Allen:] Did you know the bass player named "Bassie", around here? "Bassie" Mitchell.

[Casimir:] "Bassie"?

[Allen:] I wondered if he was related to that Mitchell you just mentioned, Sanofer?

[Casimir:] Had a fellow they call I.T. Mitchell kin to him. Had his fingers all like this. Got a [untelligible] there. But he died--lived down on Dumaine Street. His cousin named Sanofer Mitchell used to play with us--dark fellow. He died.

[Allen:] Probably the same family. And how long did you play in the dance band? Remember what years that was?

[Casimir:] Oh, we kept the dance band about five or six years. And the Henry Allen, they hiring him; they kept a-hiring hem. He got better than us, you see. And then he got on the boat, and this fella hired him. "Sonny"--they called him "Sonny" Allen, Henry "Red" Allen, they call him.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. Who was he on the boat with?

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] Who was he on the boat with? Whose band?

[Casimir:] On the boat, Fate Marable, Fate Marable, Fate Marable. He had "Sonny" "Red" Allen. After he made one or two trips on the boat, that's all.

[Allen:] He was gone, huh?

[Casimir:] Gone, yeah.

[Allen:] And then who did you get on trumpet?

[Casimir:] Oh, then I started to using a tall fellow called "Mutt" Carter. Used to come from Kenner; he out in Wichita, Kansas now. A tall skinny fellow.

[Allen:] Well, back to your days before you played--who did you listen to before you started playing music?

[Casimir:] Who I listened to? See, I was taking lessons from Professor Humphrey; then I "second-lined" wathhing Johnny Dodds.

[

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] [Dodds?] played with "Kid" Ory all day long--funerals and parades.

And Jack Carey--I [used to] sit and watch them--just watch the clarinet player.

I liked clarinet; I used to watch him.

[Allen:] I wonder if he played E flat or B flat?

[Casimir:] I play B flat in the orchestra and E flat on the parades.

[Allen:] No, no--I mean Johnny Dodds.

[Casimir:] He played a B flat clarinet.

[Allen:] In the street and everything, huh?

[Casimir:] Yes, B flat; Johnny played a B flat. He ain't never had no E flat.

[He played] B flat.

[Allen:] Who else did you see in the street?

[Casimir:] Well, in the Onward Band, Joe Watson and them; Joe Watson played clarinet in the old Tuxedo Band.

[Allen:] Yes.

[Casimir:] He had an E flat in the Tuxedo Band and played a B flat in the orchestra.

I used to follow him sometimes, but none of them blow no clarinet like Johnny Dodds; that ^{is} ^{the} ^{one} ^{that} ^{he} ^{had} ⁱⁿ ^{the} ^{orchestra} tonation was there.

[Allen:] Yes.

[Casimir:] [Scats some music] That tonation, on, that tonation--yes, he had it.

Plenty guys (imitates musical instrument), all that--but that tonation! Like I play a funeral or a parade--[I] get that tonation out of that E flat clarinet.

That's the principal thing about playing.

[Allen:] And what about Johnny Dodds--did he have any special numbers, Johnny, that he fea--he was featured on the street?

[Casimir:] Yes, he'd feature any of them.

[Allen:] Any of them? It didn't matter, huh?

[Casimir:] Yeah. See, they took Johnny Dodds--they had Sidney Bechet playing

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with "Kid" Ory's band, and Bechet would blow them up so, would blow them up--what I mean, you get drunk and don't come on the job.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Dodds would make a clarinet player, they took Dodds and made a clarinet player out of him, and let Bechet alone. If you want Bechet to play tonight, you got to bring [him] here. It took more of a [Bechet player?] than that "Come on, man, get something to drink, come on." Something like that to keep [him] here. If you don't, somebody's got him and gone. And his horn all broke up in his back pocket. Just got tired of that.

[Allen:] Did Bechet play any good?

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] Did Bechet play any good?

[Casimir:] Yes. He was a bad clarinet fellow, but you had to keep him, keeping him right to, get him half drunk to keep him.--"Oh, man, let's get another shot"--to bring him on the job with you. Or else he [would] be gone with somebody else--blow anybody up, see?

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Played so much clarinet, put him on soprano sax now--Sidney Bechet.

[Allen:] Who were some of the other good clarinet players for ragtime?

[Casimir:] For ragtime--well, they had George Bacquet, but I didn't know him so good; I was too young to know him--I made sixty years old, December 17, [1958]. Them guys [were] way, way older than me. Lorenze Tio and them fellows, they play with that music all the time. [Alphonse] Picou and them fellows had that music up there in front [of them]. Dodds, Dodds hear them play something, he got it.

[Allen:] What about "Blind Freddie" [Small]--did you ever hear him?

[Casimir:] "Blind Freddie"?

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] "Blind Freddie" play[ed] on the order of Johnny Dodds--that tonation!

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[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Did you ever hear him play?

[Allen:] Never have heard him play anything except harmonica.

[Casimir:] Oh, [he] play harmonica.

[Allen:] Yes.

[Casimir:] You hear him play harmonica--that's just the way he play[ed] clarinet.

[Scats] Tell him to meet [me] Tulane Avenue and Hagan [Street] for quarter to five; [he'd] be standing on the corner. Don't know how he got there--right there on the corner, his horn under his [unintelligible]. He play his horn just like he play his harmonica.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] He plays it, too; it's a gift he's got. [He] used to play in the ^{Liberty} Bell Band.

[Allen:] Who was that, Wesley Dime[s]?

[Casimir:] Wesley Dimes, yeah, that's right. Dimes got "kilt" in Baton Rouge. Dimes was a nice little trumpet player.

[Allen:] Yeah. Eddie Morris mentioned him--you know, the trombone player.

[Casimir:] Eddie Morris used to play with "Kid Punbh" [Miller] and them.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah.

[Casimir:] But Eddie and Wesley Dimes was played [playing] out there in Baton Rouge with "Toot" Johnson and them.

[Allen:] Uh-huh, yeah.

[Casimir:] Eddie Morris used to play around here with "Kid Punch" and them. He's a good trumpet player. Getting old now, "Kid Punch"--he's somewhere downtown.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah; I got his address if you ever want it.

[Casimir:] On Rampart Street, huh?

[Allen:] Yeah. You got it?

[Casimir:] In the Roxy Hotel, huh? Somewhere around there.

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[Allen:] That's right; he's in the Roxy.

[Casimir:] Yeah. I don't know if "Punch" [is] in the union or not.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Yeah--I don't know.

[Allen:] No, he's not straight with the union yet.

[Casimir:] No. Plenty of them guys out [of] the union, but they ain't doing nothing, you see. They ain't working.

[Allen:] Yeah, they got to stay straight with that union.

[Casimir:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Now, let's see--who did you play with after you left [Henry] Allen's [Sr.] Brass Band?

[Casimir:] After that Allen Brass Band, afterwards I played with the Eureka Brass Band.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] I stayed in the Eureka Brass Band a long time. Then one night they had the rehearsal up there, [and] "Red" ^{Clark} [?] told me [that he] could get somebody on [clarinet who was] better. I say, "Go ahead on add get him." So I quit, so they got George Lewis to play with them. They put this march up [that] they called the "Longfellow's"--432 "Longfellow's" march. Over the river, playing a funeral, [they] play 'til they reach the try-o [trio]. George Lewis didn't know what to make; wasn't no "doodle-oodle-oo" there, you see--you just play what you see there, all right. A fella says, "Wilson want to see you tomorrow." [I said], "Wanta see me about what?" [Oh, man, you know that man can't read." I said, "I don't know a thing about that." [A man can't read?]. I said, "You don't want to see me. I made up my own band, the Young Tuxedo." [Wouldn't] have nothing to do with the Eureka.

[Allen:] Since that time. Well, about what time was that?

[Casimir:] That was around 1920, '22. [Conflicting information].

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[Allen:] And they kept [up?]--they kept George Lewis on, though?

[Casimir:] Uh-huh. They had, they hire different fellows, but they can't keep no clarinet player.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] They work the reeds too hard, see?--the cornets taking down, playing three or four or five blocks on the reeds [i.e.--cornets not playing].

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Can't keep no clarinet. They ain't got no clarinet player with them right now.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] They got Manuel Paul on tenor, and they ain't got no regular alto, because [Ruben] Roddy's sick.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. Is Roddy at home or in the hospital?

[Casimir:] He's in the hospital yet.

[Allen:] I don't know. Have you seen him?

[Casimir:] I don't believe he out. [They] tell me he's got marks all around. Something's the matter with him.

[Allen:] Gee.

[Casimir:] The 8th floor.

[Allen:] Terrible what?

[Casimir:] Somethin' the matter, I don't know what's the matter, somethings the matter with his throat or something.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. Did you ever work with any other brass bands while you were working with Henry Allen?

[Casimir:] Yeah, I worked with the Young Tuxedo then.

[Allen:] The Young Tuxedo--

[Casimir:] I mean the old Tuxedo, After Joe Watson died, they sent for me.

[Allen:] Yeah.

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[Allen:] Yeah.

[Casimir:] And I stayed there--

[Allen:] Well, you played in both bands at the same time then? Henry Allen and--

[Casimir:] I played after Allen--I went to the Eureka then left the Eureka, went to the old Tuxedo Band.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] I stayed in the old Tuxedo Band 'til it got almost broken up, then I made up my band, the Young Tuxedo. I like the Tuxedo. Papa Celestin--

[Allen:] Oh, yes.

[Casimir:] Papa Celestin, Willie Pajaud, a feller called Louis Madison. We call "Shots",--

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] 2nd cornet. Willie Pajaud. Tuxedo had a good band. Eddie Jackson was on the bass horn. Sonny Henry, August Russell [Rousseau] on trombone.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Yeah, and ol' man [Isidore] Barbarin on melophone, see. I was on clarinet. They had Georgie Hooker on baritone, [or] either John Porter. Either one o' them on baritone. See, melophone, baritone and clarinet, E flat clarinet, that's a brass band. Those saxophones ain't no brass band. Can't tell them fellows nothin'.

[Allen:] Well, you can't find a melophone player now, huh?

[Casimir:] You've gotta have that dum, dum, dum, that complement there in a brass band--

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] That melophone tone--tum, tum, you see the snare drum (scats out music) that's the beat, two baritones (scats more) that's a band, melophone, baritone, an E flat clarinet.

[Allen:] Well, when you play "Closer Walk With Thee" slow, you know that clarinet part you play, slow--where does that come from?

[Casimir:] (scats song) I just makes that in there, that's so much open, see.

[Allen:] Yes.

[Casimir:] No melophone. (scats more) And make that in there 'cause it's so open. Give it a complement in there, you see.

[Allen:] I see, and it's sort of a melophone part that you play.

[Casimir:] That's right. To fill out.

[Allen:] I was gonna ask you about that. That's what I was drivin' at,

[Casimir:] Yeah.

[Allen:] [?]

[Casimir:] Fillin' up there.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Fillin' in. For the guys when Handy was playing with me say, "I don't want that part," I say, "That's the part I want you to play. That's where the harmony is--just like that guitar.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] One, two, three--take it slow, though. (scats music) All the harmony in the band.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] With that melophone, that alto. But you can't get them guys to play that part. ~~Make it take~~ Nice and soft and take your time, make it nothing real loud.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] But you hear it, nobody won't play the melophone part. That's the main part you gotta play.

[Allen:] Now suppose in the original Tuxedo, what would they do? Suppose they were going to play "I Want to Go Where Jesus Is". Would they play that strictly by the music?

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[Casimir:] No, Louis used to pick that up, Louis Armstrong. After the body part Louis'd say (scats out melody and trombone part)--Louis Armstrong used to lead that. Then catch his part. Louis play anything he hear. Just naturally play anything he see--anything he can whistle, he got that.

[Allen:] Did you play with Louis much?

[Casimir:] No, I didn't play with Louis at all. Louis used to be in Jones' Band [From Waif's Home].

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] And they'd come by the--back there by that Tulane Theatre on Common Street.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] All of those boys used to come out and... (sings "Alabama Jubilee") Kid Rena, Georgy George Washington on trombone, ^{key} they smooth--a gang of 'em. Ten or fifteen bring them out there and they let 'em play 'round there. When they get to the run and everything (scats out more melody) give Louis all the runs [solos]. Little skimmy, little bitty fella dancing with those fellows in the band . . . ? . . . come on Louis (scats out more melody). But he was a jazz man. Five or six fellas there playin' cornet give Louis all the breaks.

[Allen:] What was that number? "Come On--

[Casimir:] "Come On Mandy Put Your Glad Rags On" (sings and scats out melody). Everything stop. Louis (scats out more of same melody), Louis take all the breaks.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah.

[Casimir:] Anything they play Louis take the breaks. Give Louis all the runs, see, and he made 'em with the help the good Lord, I'm tellin' you. Used to stay in an old brick road ^(row) down [2] on Perdido ~~and~~ Street. The good Lord was with him, I'm tellin' you.

[Allen:] Well, He's got it. The Lord gave him a talent.

[Casimir:] Yeah, the good Lord gave him one. He wasn't no bad boy. Used to

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be on Rampart Street. Stiff overall suit on. Meet them jews. I got you, I got you, now. Grab them jews' beards.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Mischievous boy. Play with them jews. Put him back o' Jones' Home. Fine boy, used to drive a coal cart by Andrews' Coal Company. [C.A. Andrews Coal Co., Ltd., Perdido corner Freret, Soard's 1917 Directory].

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] On Tulane Avenue he used to come around all the time. And Prof. Humphries used to show me how to make C sharp. Louis sneak around there. "How you make that?" C sharp--B natural-- Prof. Humphries come 'round there one day and caught me showin' Louis. I be payin' for it and I was givin' it to the other fellow. (laughter)

[Allen:] Who was playin' trombones when you were in the Original Tuxedo, you say Sonny Henry and August--

[Casimir:] Sonny Henry and August Rousell [Rousseau] playin' ^{with} for the old Tuxedo Band.

[Allen:] And they played that trombone part on "I Want to Go Where Jesus Is" that you just hummed there, sorta scatted. That's a nice part.

[Casimir:] He's a good ol' trombone, Sonny Henry, this fella [Albert] Warner--

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] He used to play along with Chris Kelly and them.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah.

[Casimir:] I couldn't see them bands, trombone players, then. August Rousell

[Rousseau] ^[J.P.] Then he got other trombone players, one of 'em. Then they got Sonny Henry in the Eureka Band, well Sonny always played with the top bands, brass bands, used to play at the "Music Box" on Carondelet and Canal every night with Louis Dumaine. Eddie Jackson played a string bass.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah. Who were the best barrelhouse dance musicians when you were a kid?

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[Casimir:] Barrelhouse--the best barrelhouse trumpet player?

[Allen:] Yes.

[Casimir:] Today?

[Allen:] No, when you were a kid.

[Casimir:] You mean when Louis was comin' up?

[Allen:] Yeah, around that period.

[Casimir:] Well, I'll tell ya, the best barrelhouse trumpet player around here when Louis was comin' up was Buddy Petit.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Buddy Petit. Anywhere Buddy played was packed and jammed. Then Kid Rena, they had Buddy Petit, then Louis passed all them boys.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] He was younger then them, ya see. Went right up. But they all did praise that old man, Buddy. All the time praisin' him.

[Allen:] Well, what about Buddy Bolden and Freddy Keppard and Bunk [Johnson] and those guys, do ya remember them?

[Casimir:] I didn't know them. I heard 'em talkin' about Buddy Bolden. Louie Keppard and all them.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] "Big [Willie] Cornish", I used to play with Cornish.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Trombone player, he said he used to play with Buddy Bolden. But I never did know Buddy.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. (Phone rings)

[Casimir:] Played a key [valve] trombone with Buddy Bolden.

[Allen:] Built sorta like a cornet, I guess?

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[Casimir:] Yeah, but I never did know Buddy Bolden.

[Allen:] Did ya ever hear Bunk?

[Casimir:] Never heard Bunk Play. Used to all time be with the Banner Band out there, New Iberia, But I never did hear him play. Tell me he was a nice trumpet player.

[Allen:] That's what everybody says, I never heard him in person.

[Casimir:] Bunk Johnson. Tell me, he come down here with Benny Goodman--

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] To play at the Auditorium ^(See) [NJF's Basin St. News]...brought him ~~back~~ there back on a stretcher.

[Allen:] I guess he drank?

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] I guess he drank?

[Casimir:] . . . a hundred dollars. Bunk come back there on a stretcher, so they put him on a stretcher. We played out in Beaumont, Texas. With the Liberty [jazz?] Band, Liberty ~~band~~ Jazz Band with Wooden Joe on trumpet--Joe Nicholas.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah.

[Casimir:] And that same night the Banner Band, we used to come in there the Banner Band to leavin' out up. So Bunk stayed there. . . . Bunk. . . .They were playin' in Lake Charles that night, and we were playin' Beaumont, Texas, that night. The fellows left Bunk there. So when they got on the music stand that night say Bunk walk in the door. Just tell where the job was next night. He gone off with some woman. Go off and get drunk somewhere but he be there when he get ready to play. . . .Them guys gets crazy 'bout that "likker" so much.

[Allen:] Well, I never have seen you take a drink.

[Casimir:] No, I don't fool with it. Don't care 'bout it.

[Allen:] Who was this Liberty Jazz Band? That is Wooden Joe's Band?

[Casimir:] Huh? Who that?

[Allen:] Well, who had the Liberty Band.

[Casimir:] Oh, Big Cornish, Willie Cornish had the Liberty Jazz Band, me and Wooden Joe used to play with Cornish. I played with Wooden Joe all the time, I played with Wooden Joe Nicholas long time. He was a strong cornet player.

[Allen:] How did Cornish play?

[Casimir:] Cornish--one of them ol' time trombone player with Buddy Bolden. He put the upright [valve?] down and playin' that slide then.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] (scats out melody) Slide that. He used to get right smart of jobs.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Cornish was mostly by head or could he read a little.

[Casimir:] He could read a little, 'cause he used to play with the Eureka brass band.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] He could spell a little. Him and John Mullin on trombone in the Eureka Brass Band. "Red" [Clark] and them just come--got in the band lately, you see. Him and a boy they call Albert Jackson used to play trombone with the Eureka Brass Band.

[Allen:] "Lutchie", you mean.

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] That's "Lutchie".

[Casimir:] ^{"Loochie"} "Lutchie", yeah, that's right. ^{"Loochie"} "Lutchie" and Cornish played with Willie Wilson in the Eureka Band. "Red" wasn't studyin' about playing no music.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] No, indeed. Used to see "Red" pass, drivin' some white people around in a automobile. Then "Red" come around with an old trombone. Tryin' to play ~~the~~

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a trombone. Couldn't play. Then he bought the bass after Mr. Verret died. Ed Verret used to play with us in the Eureka, Big Brownskin. Ed Verret.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. Who was in the band--in the Eureka in those days?

[Casimir:] Eureka Band?

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Casimir:] Willie Wilson, Santimore, a fellow called Santimore played trumpet and Willie Weber.

[Allen:] Uh-huh, three trumpets.

[Casimir:] Yeah, well, Willie Weber died; they got big, bright fellow called Alcide Landry.

[Allen:] I know him.

[Casimir:] Well, Willie Wilson took him in the band, and had a fella they call "Trap" Jewmaker [Jamacian] in the band. Then after him they started hirin' in the band different fellows.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] And I played in the Eureka Band a long time.

[Allen:] So when you first went in what'd they have, did they have saxes or horns--

[Casimir:] No, the Eureka band had Buddy Alphonse on melophone, and Johnny Wilson playin' the baritone, E flat clarinet.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Went all over. Had John Mullin on trombone and Cornish.

[Allen:] Went all over. Go where Claiborne Williams at out there. Every year we used to play out there.

[Allen:] Donaldsonville.

[Casimir:] Donaldsonville--Had Willie Wilson, had Landry, before Landry had Santimore on trumpets. All out there and every year we play out there against Claiborne Williams. Play one of them 6/8 marches. (scats out melody) "Salutation"?

"Red" wasn't thought about then. "Red" just got around there and got into the Eureka lately. Got in the Eureka Band here lately.

[Allen:] Have good drummers in those days with the Eureka.

[Casimir:] Had ol' man Gato on snare drum, who'd we had on bass--"Little Jim", "Jim Bush", "Little Jim", "James Daniel" [real name: Daniel Meekes ?], little short fellow. (scats bass drum part)

[Allen:] "Double Rap" [his nickname], huh?

[Casimir:] Yeah. (scats out a melody)

[Allen:] Short dark fellow.

[Casimir:] Just lately now "Son Fewclothes" [Robert Lewis] used to play trap drummer with his dad. Jesse Jackson had a little orchestra. "Son Fewclothes!" And they hire "Son" [when they] couldn't get Little Jim. Jim used to be one of the best bass drum players 'round here. "Black Benny" learned him how to play; Benny Williams.

[Allen:] Oh, yes. Now, what about Willie Parker, was this before Willie Parker or after?

[Casimir:] Oh, Willie, he come after Willie Parker. That's right. Willie Parker came first.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] 'Cause he helped to make up that band. Willie Parker and Willie Wilson. Jim took Willie Parker's job. They heard Jim play, that's all for Willie Parker. Hired Little Jim. Willie Parker used to play--

[Allen:] He's still alive.

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] He's still alive.

[Casimir:] He downtown, ain't he?

[Allen:] He lives down on St. Philip.

[Casimir:] He is crippled, ain't he?

[Allen:] Yeah, he can't get out, he just sits there all day long.

[Casimir:] He don't hear nothin'?

[Allen:] He can't get outside.

[Casimir:] He can't get outside.

[Allen:] He sits in the doorway.

[Casimir:] Ou, let me tell you. Drive a big cotton truck. Ol' cotton--ol' big strong-arm man. How they all paralyzed.

[Allen:] Uh-huh. Yeah, he lives next door to where Little Jim used to live. I think it is 1314 St. Philip.

[Casimir:] Yes, down there.

[Allen:] Right down there.

[Casimir:] He used to be one of the good ol' bass drummers, Willie Parker. He can't get outside, And Arthur Ogle [A] what played with the Eureka band lately--

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] On the snare drum. Man had both his legs cut off. "Red" hadn't seed the man.

[Allen:] Terrible.

[Casimir:] Stay with his kin people down there on North Tonti.

[Allen:] Yeah, right down behind "Pickey's" [John Brunious] house.

[Casimir:] Rocheblave, right behind Picket's" house.

[Allen:] I saw him. Who were the good barrelhouse trombone players back Buddy Petit's time.

[Casimir:] During Buddy Petit's time?

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Well, trombone players--they had little George Washington, was a good trombone player--and Morris French.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] George Washington, Morris French, ^KRed Ory, Frankie Duson, tall skinny fella.

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[Allen:] These guys all play slide?

[Casimir:] Slide.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Slidin' trombone.

[Allen:] Who played valve, anybody play valve?

[Casimir:] Oh, no, I wasn't playing valve around here. Cornish told me he used to play valve with Buddy Bolden. Time I was playin' around here had slides. "Yank" over the river and "Buddy" Johnson, them two brothers they used to play slidin' trombone, too.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Big, fat "Yank" played for the Sam Morgan band. "Buddy" Johnson used to play with [Maurice] Durand and [Willie] Humphrey. Willie Humphrey and Maurice Durand had a band. Maurice Durand was a trumpet player. Lived on the other side of the Industrial Canal down on Lizard Street.

[Allen:] Were they strictly ear men or were they readers?

[Casimir:] Yes, good readers. Durand and Humphrey had a good band.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Yeah, had good band. "Buddy" Johnson is a good trom--good readin'.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] Yes, and Sam Morgan had one of the sweetest bands around here. Sam Morgan, 6 or 7 piece band.

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(copy)
[Allen:] By the way, about your schooling: how did you get you schooling? Did you go to a catholic school or a private school?

[Casimir:] I went to McDonough [No.] 24, a private school. [He means public.] I went to the seventh grade.

[Allen:] Did you go to the Catholic schools at all? You are a Catholic?

[Casimir:] I went to a Catholic school: St. Dominic, up on Cambronne. They call it St. Joan of Arc now. I made my first communion up there.

[Allen:] Did they have any music in school in those days?

[Casimir:] Didn't have no music in school then. Didn't [nobody ?] learn how to play music then.

[Allen:] You had to pick it up on your own, then.

[Casimir:] That's right.

[Allen:] I just wanted to check on that one point. Let's see, we've gotten you in the brass band; we've gotten you up to organizing your own Young Tuxedo and you've had that ever since you organized it. Was that before the depression that you organized the Young Tuxedo, or after?

[Casimir:] Young Tuxedo?

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Casimir:] After [the] depression [1929].

[Allen:] It was after the depression?

[Casimir:] [That's right ?].

[Allen:] Were you playing in the WPA band at the time you organized?

[Casimir:] In the WPA band. No, I wasn't playing in my band yet. I stayed in the WPA band three years. [On the WPA after work ?],

the man needed a clarinet, one clarinet, player, one more. I was right there to see Mr. ^[Joseph] Martinez. [Coming with ?] E flat clarinet. I stayed in there three years.

[Allen:] I see. How long had the Young Tuxedo been going when you joined up with the WPA.

[Casimir:] Oh, I didn't have my band [then when the WPA ?].

[Allen:] It came after the WPA?

[Casimir:] It came right [afterwards, came after the WPA band ?].

[Allen:] Who was Mr. Martinez?

[Casimir:] That was the head man over the WPA band--director, superintendent.

[Allen:] And who was underneath him?

[Casimir:] Had a colored lady--Pinchback Touro was directing the band, and he was [Washington supervisor ?]. And then after they put him down and put him on the bench, they took a lady called Mrs. Roberts, [a big, stout (?) woman ?]; she was director. [Some other director came ?].

[Allen:] Well, what would you all play?

[Casimir:] We'd play all them 6/8 marches first; we'd play songs after. We'd go in the morning for two hours; learn your part right for to play that Friday, for the [unintelligible] concert that evening two hours--seven to nine or eight to ten [or] ten to twelve like that. Then you go home and be down there from three to five at Lemann Playground on--let me see, Monday, Wednesday--every Monday [that's seven to nine ?] at the jailhouse, Wednesday at the [Milne] boys' home, Thursday at Lemann Playground, three to five. We'd go to rehearsal every morning, though, from nine to twelve--three hours.

[Allen:] Did you ever play a dance?

[Casimir:] No, [but we ?] rehearsal [sic] at the Tulane Club. They'd rent the Tulane Club, see, rehearsal, run over them pieces, get them straight. Then we go in the Charity Hospital from two to four, like that, different days; jailhouse on a Monday night, seven to nine; Wednesday,

the boys' home.

[Allen:] But never played a dance. People didn't--never played a dance with the WPA band.

[Casimir:] Oh, yeah, Louis Dumaine and them played dances, for different organizations. I'll tell you another [band ?] they had [unintelligible] [Mr. Miller ?] or somebody. Had to turn all that money in. Louis marked down every dance he played, in a book like, every dance he played: who he turned the money in to--Mr. So-and-so--

[Allen:] After you got out of the WPA, did you play in the street any then?

[Casimir:] [Oh, yeah ?], I was playing in the street; different bands hire me.

[Allen:] Sort of spotting, huh?

[Casimir:] Yeah, things was slow, I'm telling you. WPA was something.

[Allen:] And then, how long before you got a steady job on the street?

[Casimir:] Ain't got no steady job, playing no music.

[Allen:] I mean, you weren't regular with any band?

[Casimir:] Yeah, I was playing with Wooden Joe [Nicholas] at Claiborne and Tulane [I was playing ?] every Friday, Saturday and Sunday--for Jake Graffagnini, Tulane and Claiborne. Played there about two years, three nights a week.

[Allen:] But I mean, you weren't with any street band steady, any brass band steady then?

[Casimir:] Oh, yeah, I've done played with steady bands. Played with the old Tuxedo Band, Eureka--Eureka first, the old Tuxedo; then I made up my band. They don't have no more E flat clarinet [except himself].

[Allen:] Who was in Wooden Joe's band that you were playing with?

[Casimir:] Me and Wooden Joe was playing a little five-piece job

with [unintelligible]. Wooden Joe never did play no brass band until Carnival Day, with Manny Gabriel's daddy--play for the Zulus; used two cornets.

[Allen:] But you just had four pieces with Wooden Joe then?

[Casimir:] Yeah, me on clarinet, Wooden Joe on cornet, Walter Preston on banjo, [my little brother ?], Joe Casimir, playing drums--he died about five years ago.

[Allen:] What would Wooden Joe play like?

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] What did Wooden Joe play like? What kind of style would he have?

[Casimir:] Tell me Wooden Joe had been a good clarinet player. I don't know. Used to play cornet, though; [he] pick it up his own self. Well, he played a straight cornet--strong, straight and strong cornet; powerful man on a cornet.

[Allen:] Much variations?

[Casimir:] No.

[Allen:] No. Mostly lead, huh?

[Casimir:] Not on cornet. Tell me he played good clarinet; I hear them all say Wooden Joe was a good clarinet.

[Allen:] He played mostly lead, then, on trumpet?

[Casimir:] Yeah, mostly lead on his cornet, trumpet.

[Allen:] Did he use much mutes?

[Casimir:] Mute now and then. He could blow; you could hear Joe from here to Claiborne (imitates)--five blocks--Wooden Joe. You would know he was there if he was there.

[Allen:] Who did you have in the Young Tuxedo when you first organized it?

[Casimir:] [The first time I ?] [unintelligible]?

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] I had a fellow [from] uptown they call Page on sousaphone; had Albert ["Loochie"] Jackson on trombone; I had Joe Avery on trombone; and I had my cousin on alto sax [Wilbert] Tillman; I had "Little Jim" [Meekes] on bass drum; I was using [clarinet and alto sax ?]; Old man Cato I used on snare drum. Old man Cato used to play with the Eureka Band; [I hired him with the Young Tuxedo ?]. After [Ernest] Rogers and them had the Tulane [Brass] Band--Rogers and [Alcide] Landry and them had the Tulane Band; they come ask me to come with me because they couldn't get no men to play with them, so I took Landry, Rogers and "Big Head Eddie" Johnson to play in my band--alto [sax] player, Eddie Johnson, work at Werlein's. Come ask me [by my house ?]--"Look, man, can we come with y'all?" Landry, Rogers, and Eddie Johnson, I took them in my band.

[Allen:] Didn't have a baritone [horn] or a melophone, [I guess ?]?

[Casimir:] I used to use Peter White sometimes on baritone and a boy they call Flowers on melophone--they call Flowers. See, the Eureka Band used a boy they call "Buddy" Alphonse. I used a Jamaica[n] they call Flowers; he run on a ship; I ain't seen him in a good while now. A melophone and a baritone, that's a brass band. But now they got the idea a alto sax and a tenor sax, [they got mixed up about it ?]. You can't get them fellows to play them alto, "peck horns." That's where all the harmony, all the music is, them "peck horns."

[Allen:] Well, that about brings us up to date on brass bands, I think--

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] That about brings us up to date on the brass bands, doesn't it, yeah? And we know pretty much what's happened since then. I've got records of that. I've written down. [Also see photographs]. Now, did you play with many other dance bands other than your own?

[Casimir:] Oh, yeah, I played with--you know Chris Kelly?--

[Allen:] I heard of him.

[Casimir:] Chris Kelly a couple of months. Some of them guys so crooked with that money they can't keep nobody. Harrison Barnes used to play trombone--fellow what is paralyzed [and lives] over the river [in Algiers]--good trombone--big, dark fellow--good trombone.

[Allen:] And who else was in the band? Have a piano player or not? They use pianos much then?

[Casimir:] Piano player?

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Casimir:] I used to use piano player sometimes.

[Allen:] No, I mean Chris Kelly, did he use--he would sometimes?

[Casimir:] Piano player? Yeah, he use to--Georgie Parker used to play with him--fellow what died, lived on Laharpe street.

[Allen:] No, I saw Georgie Parker the other day.

[Casimir:] Georgie Parker died, didn't he?

[Allen:] No, I saw him at Eddie Pierson's wake. He's crippled now.

[Casimir:] He's crippled, huh? Little, short brown skin.

[Allen:] Yeah. I got his card in my pocket.

[Casimir:] I thought he died. [Died Jan. 29, 1960]

[Allen:] No, man. Did he have a good drummer, Chris, regular?

[Casimir:] Chris Kelly?

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Casimir:] Yeah, used Dave Bailey on drums--you know the fellow playing bass drum that jump[s] up and plays in Nickerson's Band--Gibson Band, isn't it?

[Allen:] Yeah, Gibson [Brass Band].

[Casimir:] That's Dave Bailey. He was good--

[Allen:] Where does Dave live now, you know?

[Casimir:] I don't know where Dave stay. [Somewhere ?]

in front of town. But Dave Bailey is a good trap drum, too.

[i.e., full set of dance drums]. Dave is old, I'm telling you; Dave Bailey's got a good age on him.

[Allen:] I'll have to dig up his address; I'll ask Eddie Richardson; he'll know, I guess.

[Casimir:] Dave Bailey--you might have his address in your [address] book. [Unintelligible].

[Allen:] Because I know he's a old-timer.

[Casimir:] Dave is a old-timer, yeah.

[Allen:] "Mehly" [spelling?] Barnes tells about working with him.

[Casimir:] "Mehly" Barnes used to play clarinet with Chris, too, long time ago--"Mehly" Barnes, Chris Kelly, Dave Bailey on drums.

[Allen:] Was "Mehly" a good clarinet player in those days?

[Casimir:] Yeah, a good old ragtime clarinet. "Mehly" Barnes, [he was old-time ?].

[Allen:] Who was your favorite clarinet player for blues, speaking of ragtime? Who could play the blues in those days?

[Casimir:] Clarinet player for blues around here, that's old Georgie Boyd. He's dead, used to play with Kid Punch [Miller].

[Allen:] He was good? Back to Chris Kelly, did he have a banjo player? A bass player?

[Casimir:] Banjo? He had a banjo player. Used to have a boy called Alex Scott used to play bass with him. On banjo--let me see, who Chris would use on banjo? [Them fellows ?] used to play with Kid Ory's band, Chris used to hire all them. I think Chris [died ?] [unintelligible], he had an old "tunk" band, I'm telling you.

[Allen:] Did he have a good funeral?

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] What kind of funeral did he have?

[Casimir:] What kind of funeral band? He played with the Onward Band: Chris Kelly, Sam Morgan, and Maurice Durand played with the Onward Brass Band; Joe Watson played clarinet with them.

[Allen:] Did you work Chris's funeral when he died?

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] Did you work at Chris's funeral when he died?

[Casimir:] I don't believe I played at Chris' funeral.

[Allen:] You work [Kid] Rena's funeral?

[Casimir:] I don't believe they had no [music ?] for Chris Kelly. I don't know; I know I didn't play that funeral. He died downtown. I played in Chris Kelly's band and all of them. Earl Humphrey on trombone--Percy's brother, Earl, plays good trombone, good trombone. He's away from here. Willie plays clarinet, you see, and Percy plays trumpet, and Earl plays trombone. I was raised up with them.

[Allen:] Who would Chris play for? What kind of people? What kind of places would Chris play in and who would he play for?

[Casimir:] He'd play at the San Jacinto [Hall] and the Cooperator's Hall [spelling ?] and the Economy Hall. They'd hire him all around. [He had a good old band ?]. They'd hire him all around.

[Allen:] Was Chris a flashy dresser or did he dress plain?

[Casimir:] Yeah, he was attractive. [Say, "Chris Kelly gonna be there. Chris Kelly gonna--" ?], and all the people go there. Sam Morgan and Chris Kelly had a crowd all the time. Kid Rena--anywhere they play at, packed and jammed.

[Allen:] Were they using one cornet in those days or two?

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] How many cornets would they use, one or two?

[Casimir:] One. Cornet, trombone, clarinet, banjo, guitar and bass.

Sometimes they'd use a piano instead of a bass player.

[Allen:] What are some of the other dance bands that you played with?

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] What are some of the other dance bands you played with?

[Casimir:] Well, I was playing with Mutt Carter and until that band broke up and all. Till the work stopped, then guys would go to the man [that] got work, you know. If you don't get no job, some of those fellows got to work. I'd get a job, I'd hire those fellows that ain't doing nothing.

[Allen:] And after you left Mutt Carter who did you go with?

[Casimir:] I just scrapped around here, took jobs our own self. (machine on and off)--bass player.

[Allen:] Henry Page. What was Cato's name? Did you know his full name?

[Casimir:] Who's name?

[Allen:] Cato.

[Casimir:] Louis Cato ain't it?

[Allen:] The sanre drum player. Louis Cato?

[Casimir:] Louis Cates.

6282 [Allen:] [I] wonder if we can locate him. What are some of the different clubs you've played for at Carnival time?

[Casimir:] I have played for the ²Elenore⁰ Club ² Elenore Club; I played for the Lions' Club; played for the Buzzards; played for the Zulus. Played for the Zulus most every [other ?] year, the Zulus.

[Allen:] There's one thing I wanted to ask you about, too. What goes on at Carnival? What kind of music do you play on Carnival Day? You don't play dirges; you don't play funeral marches.

[Casimir:] All ragtime ^[music?] tunes.

[Allen:] All ragtime for Carnival.

[Casimir:] [All ragtime tunes ?] [All Marches ?] blues, songs and all. They don't care about no marches. They wants to jump. (h)

[Allen:] What about a cornerstone laying. What would you play?

[Casimir:] Play ^gsons till you get there. When you get there,

[unintelligible] I play hymns. Play all hymns.

[Allen:] You start out on a cornerstone laying where? At what point would you start out? Would you start out at the clubhouse? or-
(h)

[Casimir:] We'd leave from the Club, then go to the church the nearest to the ground [to lay the stone], I'm gonna leave there with a hymn, you see, play most all hymns 'til I get there [unintelligible] When they get ready to lay the stone, play a funeral march. When they bring the stone out, we play a ^{hymn} funeral march, "Lead Me, Savior" ^{or} "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," "Just a Closer Walk." Play anyone you want until they've laid that stone.

[Allen:] And then after the stone is laid, do you stay at the church, or do you go back to the club, or what?

[Casimir:] No, you be finish at the stone laying. Then you march 'em back--[there'll be a parade and you make a regular march on back to the place. ?]. Most of the time you just have to lay that stone, then you're finished.

[Allen:] How do you get your sheet music for the--

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] How do you get your music for the Young Tuxedo? You told me you order that, and sometimes--

[Casimir:] I sends off and get my music.

[Allen:] Yeah, but some of it, you told me it was written out by

a guy. Who would write it out?

[Casimir:] Louis Dumaine. [Machine off while Casimir gets receipt & music.]

[Allen:] Louis Dumaine. You pay \$4.39 for--that's one arrangement for a band. [From music house.]

[Casimir:] Two of them.

[Allen:] Two of them.

[Casimir:] "The Eternal Last Rest" and "Eternal Peace."

[Allen:] Where did Dumaine get the idea to arrange things?

[Casimir:] Louis Dumaine, he copied some songs to help the bands out, you know. He died. Used to play with the old Tuxedo.

[Allen:] Where would he get these songs that he copied out?

[Casimir:] You could buy a little piano copy at the music store like that, you know, and write everybody a little part off, to help them out, you see, like.

[Allen:] I see. Would that be hymns and songs both?

[Casimir:] He'd buy--get the hymns out of the hymn book, too, and write them.

[Allen:] And he'd buy songs too?

[Casimir:] Uh-huh.

[Allen:] I never heard any of his songs played; I've only heard the hymns.

[Casimir:] He died; you know, Louis Dumaine died. He used to play there with Eddie, Jack [in] the old Tuxedo band after he was leading the band, [Willie] Pajaud playing solo, Louis would lead, using "Shots," Louis Madison was with the old Tuxedo, Louis Dumaine was leading the old Tuxedo Band--

[Allen:] Oh, yeah.

[Casimir:] In the late days.

[Allen:] And Celestin wasn't playing at all then?

[Casimir:] No, Celestin stopped playing with the brass band; Eddie Jackson was running the band then, you see.

[Allen:] Oh, I got the idea now.

[Casimir:] Yeah, Louis--like Louis Dumaine was leading the band.

[Allen:] Now, say, on an average funeral how would you, how does that happen? What happens first on a funeral? Where does the band go to start?

[Casimir:] Where the band would start? Usually the band would meet at the hall.

[Allen:] They'd meet at the hall.

[Casimir:] Meet at the hall. [Unintelligible]. [Wanted to know if he was ready to leave before they was ?].

[Allen:] And the club and the band--

[Casimir:] The club would be there forming, ready to leave after a while, to go to the church, undertaker, and get the body.

[Allen:] Go to the undertaker to get the body, and then?

[Casimir:] Go to the church [unintelligible] [care dismiss ?]; make the rounds with that "second line" [and] come on in.

[Allen:] When you go from the hall to the undertaker, what do you play? The first piece, what would be it?

[Casimir:] Well, sometimes play, "West Lawn [Dirge]" coming out with the body, but then [any piece ?] the leader'd feel like pulling out, you know--"Flee as a Bird" or "Eternal Peace," "Last Rest,"--that's a good one there; that's a good old [dirge ?].

[Allen:] It'd be a funeral march or a hymn, then?

[Casimir:] [Louis ?] had to play a funeral march, coming out with the body, all kinds of funeral marches. You could play a hymn going to get it, but almost [unintelligible]--"Just a Little While to Stay Here" or "Lord, Lord, [Lord, You Sure Been Good To Me];" [leader could

say ?] anything you want when you go in to get it, but you got to play a funeral march coming out with the body.

[Allen:] And then you take the body to the church. What do you play on the way to the church?

[Casimir:] You take the body where?

[Allen:] From the undertaker to the church.

[Casimir:] To the church? Well, you'd play the funeral march all the way, and get on the side and get ready to go take him out and [bring him with you ?], and [play] another funeral march to bring him into the church, get ready for [him, play a ?] funeral march and bring him out of the church; as long as you got that body, you got to play a funeral march. After they dismiss that body they play a hymn; when they come on they start to playing rags. The first hymn [is played] when the body is gone, dismissed; afterwards [they can ?] play hymns or anything they want.

[Allen:] What would be some of the numbers they'd play after they leave the cemetery?

[Casimir:] Well--

[Allen:] Just for example--

[Casimir:] Sometimes five or six numbers would bring them all in, [because you hold a number for about two blocks ?].

[Allen:] But after you'd come out, you say you'd play rags, huh?

[Casimir:] After you play the first hymn. Then when they leave the body, play the rag, after your hymn.

[Allen:] Any old rag would do? Nothing special?

[Casimir:] Nothing special. After your first hymn they'd pick up with "Panama Rag" or the blues, "Joe [Avery]'s number" [or] "Joe's Piece", anything--(scats)--anything you'd feel like, after you played the hymn.

[Allen:] Now, what about a "banquet"? Do brass bands ever play "banquets"?

[Casimir:] I played a "banquet" with Wooden Joe [Nicholas] and them, but it looks like they don't have that any more.

[Allen:] Was that Wooden Joe's brass band, or dance band?

[Casimir:] He^{Nd,} dance band played a "banquet"; five or six pieces at the Liberty Hall down there played a "banquet" -- New Hall, they call it, down on Allen and New Orleans [Streets]. It was at Perserverence^a Hall I played the "banquet." But you don't have that no more, for a long time now. They call them banquets [Anglicized pronunciation] now.

[Allen:] What about De De [Pierce]? Did you ever work with De De?

[Casimir:] Yeah; De De used to lead my brass band.

[Allen:] Is that right?

[Casimir:] Yeah. [Unintelligible]. He was a nice little trumpet player [unintelligible] got his own self blind; doctor told him he ought to make him take treatments; he wouldn't. I don't know if he's playing at all now.

[Allen:] I think he could, if he--

[Casimir:] He could?

[Allen:] He could play, I think, if he'd get straight you know, but he and Billie are so--just let themselves go; they're both sick.

[Casimir:] [Unintelligible].

[Allen:] What about Coo Coo [Elmer Talbert]?

[Casimir:] Coo Coo died, you know.

[Allen:] Yeah. Did you play with him, ever?

[Casimir:] Coo Coo used to play with the Tuxedo Band with me.

[Allen:] What would he play, first or second?

[Casimir:] Trumpet, carried the lead.

[Allen:] He'd play lead, too.

[Casimir:] Coo Coo was a good old trumpet player--Talbert. Coo Coo was a good trumpet.

[Allen:] I liked him with mutes, too; he was good with mutes. Now, say you're playing a parade: how do you choose which number you're going to play?

[Casimir:] Well, you just tell the leader [or the one who picks them, say, ["Pick a number, pick up Joe" ?]--(scats) [Unintelligible].

[Allen:] Who would request it, though? Who would ask for numbers?

[Casimir:] Different fellows would ask for numbers in the band.

[Allen:] The guys in the band, then?

[Casimir:] Yeah, the players; [the players would go, ?]

"Play 'Lady Be Good'."

[Allen:] What about the members of the club? Would they ask for numbers?

[Casimir:] Sometimes they ask for them.

[Allen:] Grand marshal?

[Casimir:] Oh, yeah, the grand marshal asked up to play numbers for them. ^{Play 'St. Louis Blues'} [Unintelligible].

[Allen:] What does the "second line" like to hear?

[Casimir:] Oh, they like them ^{whooping blues} wheepee tunes.

[Allen:] They like that--

[Casimir:] (Scats) They likes that. I'll bet it [is what is] making that record going over good, too.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah, I think that does.

[Casimir:] My sister-in-law works down by [at] Grant's. She says all them people come in [and say], "Where you get the records?" She say, "Right over there."

[Allen:] They're selling them at?--

[Casimir:] Ten cent store--Grants, somewhere down there--Metoyer, huh?

[Allen:] McCrory's, that's what it is.

[Casimir:] They're selling them, too--four dollars. And I mean, people are buying them.

[Allen:] Well, they're sure worth it.

[Casimir:] Nice record. I'm glad that man making money.

[Allen:] Yeah; well, they'll make more records, you know.

[Casimir:] They're really selling it, though. That make us feel better.

[Allen:] That'll be good for you, man.

[Casimir:] Yeah, [in the long run, might get a little change back ?].

[Like to get his money back ?].

[Allen:] Did you know Johnny Metoyer?

[Casimir:] Who that?

[Allen:] Johnny Metoyer?

[Casimir:] Johnny Metoyer [Me-twoi-yah]?

[Allen:] Metoyer--"Me-twoi-yah," is that how you [say it]?

[Casimir:] What he was president of the Zulus?

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Casimir:] Johnny Metoyer [Me-twoi-yah].

[Allen:] That's how you pronounce his name, Metoyer?

[Casimir:] Johnny Metoyer. He died. He was the best president Zulus ever had, at least ever since Johnson--Johnny Metoyer.

[Allen:] Would he be the grand marshal at the parades?

[Casimir:] He was the president of the Zulu.

[Allen:] But he wouldn't march in front of the band?

[Casimir:] No--sometimes, but he didn't care about that; the president

would ride in an automobile.

[Allen:] Who was the best grand marshal you think you ever saw, for really stepping and strutting?

[Casimir:] Well, they had a fellow they called Son Carter around, he was a [good fellow ?] for the Tulane [Club]. There's a pretty good one around here now. A big fellow called Preston, he was a good grand marshal; he died.

[Allen:] And what makes a good grand marshal? How do they do it?

[Casimir:] Make the "second line," "Get on back!" [Get ~~that big~~ ^{r45} ?] and make them on the side. [Didn't need no (unintelligible) when Preston speaking ?]. "Get on the side," he'd tell them; they'd get on the side, too. [Unintelligible]. Big, fat fellow named Preston. Keep that "second line" back. But I don't know--over the river they have better conduct than down on this side, because everybody would get [on the band ^{banquette} ?]. [Those fellows would walk all over everywhere ?]; can't blow your horn.

[Allen:] The "second line," I think, sometimes cut up too.

[Casimir:] Oh, yeah, they fight and everything, that "second line."

[Allen:] Do they fight as much as they used to?

[Casimir:] No.

[Allen:] It used to be worse?

[Casimir:] [It used to be an uptown fellow couldn't come downtown ?], [all kind of-- ?]. Got civilized, that's what; got civilized.

[Allen:] [Guess they'd ?] knock you in the head. What did they hit each other with?

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] What would they hit each other with?

[Casimir:] Bricks and sticks and everything.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah?

[Casimir:] Yeah, fight like dogs.

[Allen:] Did they use knives?

[Casimir:] Sometimes used knives, cut you, and shoot you, too; take an old broom handle, beat you all up.

[Allen:] I see them walk around with a chair leg, every once in a while.

[Casimir:] Huh?

[Allen:] I see guys walking around with a chair leg every once in a while.

[Casimir:] Them guys fight with anything.

[Allen:] What about umbrellas? Could they hurt you with one of those?

[Casimir:] Umbrellas? Yeah, they fight with umbrellas, too. That side line, see they have umbrellas and everything, "second line" behind the Jolly Bunch and all them [unintelligible].

[Allen:] That Jolly Bunch has ^{uh} a fancy dress, too.

[Casimir:] Yeah, that's about the best club we got in the city now, the Jolly Bunch--only good club, it look like, the Jolly Bunch. But the Tulane [is] getting back on its feet again now, you see--yeah, the Tulane. Since Frank Smith been tending to it, they're really coming out with the [unintelligible] he's really bringing them out. They got an anniversary on the last Sunday in March; ^{be by} the Tulane *Club*.

[Allen:] Do you think the clubs are going to last, continue on?

[Casimir:] It looks like it. Tulane Club, [well, it's ?] getting back on its feet again.

[Allen:] Do you think brass bands are going to continue on--for a little while?

[Casimir:] I don't believe the brass bands will continue on long--couple of more years; looks like the youngsters don't want to learn

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(Interviewee)

Richard B. Allen
(For the Archive of New Orleans Jazz)

no brass bands; they don't want to learn it, don't want to learn.

[Allen:] But the clubs want them--the young guys in the clubs, they like brass bands, huh?

[Casimir:] Yeah, but the fellows who learn that music don't want to learn; all they want to play is be-bop. Don't want to learn that lead on a 6/8 march, don't want to play that. Got to learn them 6/8.

[Allen:] Well, I think our time has just about run out. I think it'll make a good story *and everything*.

[Casimir:] I hope it do.

[Allen:] Maybe something will come out of it some day; you never know what will turn up.

JOHN CASIMIR
END OF REEL II
January 17, 1959

