

John Wiggs DIGEST
Reel I
August 26, 1962

Also Present: William Russell, Betty
(Mrs. John W.) Hyman.

Interview was held at the home of John Wiggs, 345 Betz Place or 238 Duplessis Street,. JW's real name is John Wigginton Hyman. He was born on July 25, 1899 in the 1700 block of Louisiana Ave, one block and two doors from St. Charles Avenue on the Lake side. His mother played piano by ear and sang, his father sang and had a talent for music. They had a piano in the home. JW remembers vaguely Colored washerwomen singing with a beautiful roughness when he was very young. Later, when he was seven or eight years old, JW heard the bottle man. His family was living at 1115 Henry Clay Avenue then. They had lived in the 700 block of Henry Clay Avenue prior to that. [check city directory]. Henry Clay Avenue is two blocks from Audobon Park. Their house was near the Louisiana Retreat for insane people. (Now DePaul Sanitarium). JW went to LaSalle School which was a public school.

JW feels that the Bottlemen played a very influential part in his early musical life. The bottle man collected bottles . He went around blowing on his horn and gave the children dolls [minuature] furniture, and candy in trade for bottles. The bottlemen's horns were of New Years Eve and Mardi Gras noise making variety. They were well made compared to today's souvenir horns. The horns were about three feet long and made of tin. They had a brass reed soldered on, th a wooden mouthpiece. These colored men removed the wooden mouthpiece and "humored" the brass reed [double] with their mouths like a clarinet

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player humors his reed, to get various intonations, pitches. JW feels they were most likely the most gifted people in the world for playing the Blues and all the bottlemen played beautiful blues. They went all over town, one could hear them several blocks away. When you heard them, you ran to the shed to get your bottles ready for him. JW later heard that sound in Negro trumpet players. JW calls it the "bending of notes". The bottlemen did not use cries but sometimes had cowbells as well as their horns.

JW remembers the street criers, especially the blackberry women. The blackberry women brought their children with them and sold blackberries. They picked the berries all over as there was much wilderness in New Orleans then. (c. 1907 - 1908) JW's wife once wrote a poem about the blackberry women.

JW remembers being especially impressed with one parade because of one band. JW would not be surprised if it was Papa Laine's band. He heard a young boy playing a clarinet in the band, he never knew who the kid was. [Papa Laine often used young kids.] At that time JW was playing mandolin and violin. JW heard this boy on Carnival Day at Canal Street and Carondelet Streets. JW thinks this boy was younger than he was at that time. It made JW think he could handle a wind instrument, too. Instead of "going crazy" for the clarinet that he had seen the boy play, he went "crazy" for the cornet.

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JW said the first instrument he learned to play was the mandolin. He was about seven years old then. A much older cousin taught him how to play it. At that time almost everyone had a string instrument around the house. Later on ukulele became popular. When JW was about nine years old he "went crazy" over the violin. Another boy in his neighborhood played violin and JW would play on it. The fingering on the mandolin and violin is similar. JW's parents promised that if he passed his [school] grade, they would give him a violin so he did. He took lessons under Madame [Tascani or Pescana?] who had her home on Louisiana Avenue off Magazine Street. JW says she was rather severe and made him hold a book under his right [bow] arm. The smell of resin was so strong in the lesson room that it smelled like candy to JW. JW took enough lessons to learn to play by ear, then played by ear the rest of the time. He played with the rest of the kids in the neighborhood. JW went to school with and played with Earl Crumb who was later the leader of the Owls. EC used to play the ukulele and drums while JW played the violin. Later, as the kids got older and could play better, they formed neighborhood "groups", they were not called "bands". JW played with the Invincibles group which was centered around Napoleon Avenue. The Six and Seven-Eighths group, which [] played with, was from various parts of town. They [6 & 7/8] may have started on Prytania Street at Bob [Reynold's], (guitarist), house. BR lived in the same block as Bill Kleppinger who was with the Invincibles and not with the 6 & 7/8

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until much later. This was around 1917. JW's father died when JW was fifteen years old and after that he was in and out of school. He had a young brother, about age seven, and between himself and his mother they were able to keep the younger one in school. JW says he had many jobs during this period but he often got fired or quit.

In the beginning the Invincibles consisted of Harry ["Mose", "Hod"] Farrar, piano; Frank Farrar (Harry's brother), violin; Lester "Monk" Smith, guitar; Earl Crumb, [drums]; Bill Kleppinger, [Mandolin]. Sometimes Teddy Fontelieu [sp?] played with them. TF played a large ukulele called a terrapatch. [sometimes Rollo Tichenor, bass, played. JW, June 5, 1970]. The group played jazz tunes, none of them could read. JW says he doubts that they would have had anything to do with someone who could read. They did not play for money. They played mostly at parties for dancing or at girls' houses. Once they played for an affair at the St. Charles Hotel (for free) and thought they were really "cutting up" by getting to play there. Usually they played for the fun of it at "Monk" Smith's house. They didn't call it practice. MS had a music room.

JW had a very low opinion of white musicians at that time. JW feels he simply wasn't exposed to the good white musicians that were around. He heard only the "corny" ones, not good ones. There are still musicians on the west coast who play cornets in the corny style. JW had already heard Joe Oliver and others of his style by

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1917. There were two styles. The Freddy Keppard style which JW's group always considered "corny", was what the white bands in New Orleans played. JW says that style is still being imitated. JW's group preferred the Joe Oliver style and JW now feels they were proved right as that style is considered best now. Dick Mackey played Joe Oliver style which is a hot, lush style. JW never heard Emmet Hardy. JW was out of town when EH became ill with T.B. JW followed EH in [Norman] Brownlee's band. JW had heard nothing but good about EH. Nick LaRocca and other white cornet players played FK's ricky-tick style. JW heard Joe Oliver around 1917 at a subscription dances in the Tulane Gym where they had them every Saturday night. They always tried to get JO for those dances. At that time JO had Johnny Dodds, clarinet; Kid Ory, trombone; Happy Bolton, drums. JW feels HB was one of the greatest drummers he has ever heard in his life. JW says he will never forget the feelings he had when he first heard that band. The group reminded JW of the Negroid music he had heard early in life, the bottleman, washerwomen and the rest. JO had a bending or stretching of notes up to half tone or more if possible. Monk Smith, Bill Kleppinger and JW were all flabbergasted and spellbound at the music and were more interested in standing in front of the band than dancing with the girls. JW took some courses from Tulane University but graduated from Loyola with a Bachelor of Music. He took some graduate work toward a masters at LSU. Certain boys with a gift of business would hire Tulane Gym and a band, then charge everyone a dollar to get into the dance. This was a subscription dance. JW wasn't really too aware of the

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money business. JW was more interested in the pretty girls and the band.

The name "Johnny Wiggs" is fairly recent and happened about seventeen years ago. JW had been teaching school, but not music. He felt lost without music and especially wanted to play jazz which he had not played in twenty years. He went to see Teddy Fontelieau [Sp?], sales manager of WSMB radio (this was around 1945) and asked him about getting a band and playing for WSMB. TF had a legitimate band at the station but agreed to take JW while the legitimate band "got the skids". As he was still teaching, he used a professional name. He knew the [Orleans Parrish] school board would frown on his playing such indecent music while still teaching the "saintly children". [Irony here]

END REEL I

JOHNNY WIGGS
REEL II
August 26, 1962

Also present:
William Russell

Summary:
Richard B. Allen
Completed:
March 21, 1983
Audit: Bruce B. Raeburn
Retype: Feb. 22, 1984

Johnny Wiggs changed his name when he went on the radio because he knew the [Orleans Parish] School Board would not want him to continue teaching. [The Board considered jazz] disreputable music so he took Wiggs from his middle name of Wiggington, and no one except a few friends knew he was on the air.

On Wiggs' Victor records [of 10 March 1927], he used his real name [of Hyman]. The pianist [Horace] Diaz was very good. He went to New York afterwards and played commercial music. Wiggs assumes that he made a lot of money and does not blame him for this. Wiggs says, "He wasn't going to get stuck with this damn fool jazz business...; give your soul away and get nothing back. To hell with that." Diaz played beautiful jazz piano.

Monk Hazel was on drums. Elry Maser was on clarinet even though he swore he could not play the instrument, being a saxophonist and a good one. He did very well on the record, and Wiggs thinks he has not played clarinet since.

Nappy Lamare was the guitarist, and this was his first recording date. The trombonist was Charlie Hartman, later the business manager of the [musicians'] union [local chapter 174]. Wiggs played trumpet.

Sometimes, in those days, only one side was made. Wiggs was lucky enough to make two sides. They began at nine in the morning and stopped about two or three o'clock in the afternoon. [The Victor employees] accepted only perfection. The record was made in [the music store] Werlein's warehouse on, Wiggs thinks, Bien-

040 ville Street. It was in about the five hundred block [i.e.,
between Chartres and Decatur Streets].

042 Russell says recordings were made in the warehouse now
used by Decca Records. Wiggs says there is a studio used for
047 recording in the Godchaux Building.

Wiggs arranged a rehearsal of very fine Negro players
including cornetist Guy Kelly, who was tough and hard to get
along with, and another top-notch cornetist, who was easy going.
This was across the street from Werlein's [music store]. Both
057 played together in Papa Celestin's band. Wiggs was trying to
get Victor to record the band, which rehearsed. Wiggs took
them, without permission, to rehearse in a sort of warehouse
belonging to Werlein's.

067 A fight started, and the people at Rapp Trunk [Company]
069 below complained to Werlein's. Wiggs hurried over when the news
071 reached the band instrument department and got the band out.
[Wiggs was probably working in Werlein's band instrument depart-
ment. Compare other sources. See below ca. 220-230 & 237-268.]

This was the end of an awful good record date with "two top-
notch trumpet players and a fine clarinet player and trombone and
piano." Wiggs does not think he had a bassist and drummer because
it is easy to put them in [with the rehearsed nucleus].

076 Wiggs had another projected date for Victor with Snoozer Quinn, guitar, Siegfried Christensen, piano, Eddie Miller, clarinet, Wiggs, cornet, and a trombonist whose name Wiggs does not divulge and who later became very famous. They rehearsed original tunes [no doubt by Wiggs] on two days, and the trombonist could not learn them. Wiggs then gave up in disappointment. [This was about 1927-1928. Johnny Wiggs, telephone conversation with RBA, 11 September 1972.]

088 Snoozer Quinn was never recorded except for twelve "sides" which Wiggs recorded. [Side was used to describe a side of a 78 r.p.m. record. It was considered of a recording of one composition unless it was of classical music.] Wiggs issued four sides. [Compare discographies.]

094 Russell brings up a newspaper article of about four or five months ago mentioning Quinn. Wiggs says "the great almighty god
095 Bing Crosby" wanted to know something about Quinn, and everyone fell on their face trying to get information to Crosby. [Compare correspondence in Archive. As I remember it, Wiggs asked me to write to Crosby and send him Wiggs' records of Quinn! RBA, 19 March 1983.] Russell and Wiggs agree that few people knew Quinn was dead.

101 Wiggs thinks he recorded with Tony Parenti for Columbia or
104 Okeh. [Columbia. See discographies.] Wiggs knows nothing about

Parenti's records, except for the one Wiggs made. The tunes were "In the Dungeon" and "When You and I Were Pals." On this date were: Tony Parenti [, clarinet and alto sax], probably Ellis Stratakos, trombone, Buzzy Williams, piano, Monk Hazel, drums, and Wiggs [, cornet]. There were five pieces, he believes.

117 This date was also long, and the engineer kept fussing at Wiggs for playing too loud. Wiggs was playing the lead in a heavy fashion as he should and did not pay much attention to the engineer. The records turned out all right, Wiggs thinks.

126 Wiggs later made two sides with Ellis Stratakos' big commercial band. In spite of its size, it sounded somewhat like the [New Orleans] Owls. Stratakos' band had a New Orleans sound. 133 Wiggs then says Stratakos' record sounds like a Fletcher Henderson 133 band. Russell says, "All arrangements and all." Wiggs adds, "...and solos sprinkled in."

136 Wiggs played with Happy Schilling about 1926. This was right after he left [Norman] Brownlee.

141 About 1909, Wiggs saw a little boy playing clarinet in a parade and wanted to play in a parade. Wiggs' family insisted that he save his money for the cornet he wanted. JW & his father priced cornets at Grunewald's; they were pretty expensive. Wiggs' family had a Sears Roebuck catalog as did nearly everybody. There were unbelievable bargains in the catalog, and Wiggs got "a damn good 159 cornet" for \$6.95. He saved every copper cent he got for things like penny ice cream cones and motion pictures. He was paid fifteen cents for cleaning the backyard. Wiggs even persuaded the

ice cream man at school to give him a cone for unneeded help!

169 It took six months to save the money. He counted the money
175 every night.

176 Finally the cornet came, and Wiggs began to play using only
the scale from the cornet's instruction book. He had already
181 studied the violin and mandolin a little so he understood the
scale. The one in the book must have been a chromatic scale.

187 At the beginning of his career in big bands, leaders wanted
him to play trumpet--"that stylish instrument"--but he used a cornet
190 for his [solo] choruses. He liked "the flat, auto quack" sound
of a cornet. Also he liked the broad, velvet tone [color] when
it is played prettily. [Compare previous interviews with Wiggs.]
He guesses he got the love of it from hearing Joe ["King"]
195 Oliver's cornet in 1917. The trumpet was not very popular in New
Orleans then. Russell says that they did not come in until the
198 twenties. The first time Wiggs ever saw a trumpet in a Sears,
Roebuck catalog, he thought it was ugly and still does. A
beautifully-made cornet is much prettier.

211 He cut down one of two identical Vega trumpet mouthpieces to
fit his cornet. He used the other in his trumpet.

When Wiggs was with Earl Crumb at Suburban Gardens, he got
a Buescher cornet at Werlein's. Wiggs was working in the band
instrument department behind the counter there, and this cornet
did not sell because it was uncomfortable to hold at first, but

it has a great big, beautiful tone. Wiggs can not understand why Buescher stopped making it. He never had much respect for Buescher Manufacturing Company and does not believe many other people did.

237 Wiggs worked for Werlein's as a [sales] clerk in the very late twenties; later he returned and was in charge of the music school.

269 Wiggs left Werlein's to work for the [Orleans Parish] School Board in, perhaps, 1930. He retired in 1960 or shortly before. He was then sixty.

279 Wiggs studied legitimate violin in New York in the early twenties. He had not been playing cornet for a long time. There were no [jazz] bands there around 1923-1924. Possibly there were a few, but Wiggs never bumped into them. The only [jazz music] he heard was an occasional hot fiddler in a nightclub in [Greenwich] Village where he lived most of the time. Mostly there were string groups made up of violin, piano, and drums, the same instrumentation used in picture shows throughout the country.

297
303 One day Wiggs was in the Academy of Music on Fourteenth Street and heard a Dixieland jazz band that knocked him completely
311 unconscious. This was not Ted Lewis' early band [or anything like his band?]. Wiggs says there were many Negroes in New Orleans who
314 played Ted Lewis' style. Wiggs says, "As a matter of fact, Tony Par--", but Russell interrupts him. Wiggs now decides that this was around 1923.

321 Wiggs is sure the Academy of Music was a vaudeville house
because he played trumpet there with Ken Whitmer's band in a
vaudeville troupe years afterwards. Their act was owned by
dancer Bill Seeberry [sp?]. After Seeberry left Irving Berlin's
Music Box Revue, Seeberry went on the road with this vaudeville
332 revue in which he did an act with a girl dancer. The band was
featured also.

342 Jazz was in the back of Wiggs' mind all his life. As soon
as Wiggs got away from teaching, he ran to WSMB [radio station
344 in 1946] to get back to jazz from reading. You need to build
355 up a sort of framework to fall back on. This gives you a
feeling of sureness. He had not improvised for twenty years.
369 Wiggs did not know this [so] it was a good thing his band
374 rehearsed for several months before going on the air. They were
on salary. One of [President] Franklin Roosevelt's rules was that
379 radio stations which made a certain amount of money had to
hire a certain number of men [i.e., musicians]. WSMB had to
381 hire six. As soon as the Taft-Hartley law was passed, the band
was given notice.

400 Wiggs thinks New York style differs from New Orleans style
405 in many ways. For one thing, it is almost impossible to get a
New Orleans band to rehearse, even for recording. Many recordings
412 are of the first time a band ever played a tune.

414 Sometimes the tune has never been heard or played before.
Wiggs describes a recording of a tune which [Edmond] Souchon [, M.D.]

427 sang accompanied by his guitar [only]. After he had sung it once
he motioned for the band to play. The pianist, bassist, Wiggs and
Harry Shields listened to the chords and played. Wiggs believes
that he played a single ending, and Souchon played a double ending.
When a tune is heard [only] once, you can not tell if there is a
double ending. Too many things go on at a recording session [for
430 a musician to grasp everything without rehearsal]. Many times
records of the New Orleans bands are unrehearsed in Wiggs'
experience.

434 This was not true of Wiggs' record from 1926 or 1927 for
Victor. It was well rehearsed. [See above on Johnny Hyman's
43 Bayou Stompers at ca. 036.] This was also the case with Tony
Parenti's record. Wiggs and the rest of band were with Parenti
441 at the La Vida Cabaret [sic], and they rehearsed the tunes every
night on the job. The band may have played the tunes several
times a night because the crowd [of customers] stayed for about
a hour.

448 It is next to impossible to get the group Wiggs has been with
for the last ten or fifteen years to rehearse, and this is true
454 of a lot of other New Orleans bands.

This matter is altogether different with New York groups.
They were made up of very, very fine musicians like Miff Mole,
460 Red Nicholls, Arthur Schutt, [Irving] Brodsky, who is probably the

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terrific New York pianist now in charge of British Broadcasting
002 Corporation's music department, and Dorsey. [Probably Jimmy
003 Dorsey was meant.]

These top-notch men could [read] arrangements. Most New
Orleans [musicians] can not read and do not know harmony.
Recording is work and is chancy. Unfortunately, recordings are
008 usually issued whether they are good or bad.

Of course, there is a slap-happy sound about the New Orleans
bands, and many people will have nothing else. The well-rehearsed
011 bands do not get this sound. A great many people will have nothing
but Negro music because it has this sound. Wiggs thinks the
014 large majority of people who like Negro music are taken by the
015 marvelous rhythm section. They are the kings in rhythm.

END OF REEL

JOHNNY WIGGS
Reel III--Summary
August 26, 1962

Summary: Richard B. Allen
Audit: Bruce Raeburn
Second Audit: Richard B. Allen
Date Completed: March 25, 1983
Retype: February 22, 1984

Also Present: William Russell

022 The New Orleans beat is Negro. The white has no beat. By
this, Wiggs does not mean an individual white can not play, but
030 that you may have a good drummer with the rest of the rhythm
032 section no good, or perhaps a good pianist in the same situation
in another band. There is no solid rhythm section in a white
band.

Very, very seldom do you run into a bad colored rhythm
038 section, and, when it is good, it is out of this world. Any one
who can not play in front of a rhythm section like that just **can** not
042 play music. It pulls more out of you than you ever thought you
had in you. Wiggs has played with colored rhythm sections, and
he knows what they can do.

A front line needs this kind of help, and Wiggs thinks the
046 New Orleans white rhythm section musicians do not even know they
049 do not have a beat. He describes the front line's struggles with
no help from the back line [i.e., the rhythm section].

Negro rhythm-section musicians know that they are to promote
054 a good front line. It is not necessary to tell them "to quit
056 that foolishness on the cymbal and quit trying to play piccolo
057 on your bass fiddle and play like Snoozer Quinn on your guitar...."
062 It is maddening to have lived with bad white rhythm sections for
forty years. Wiggs continues with such description in an
emotional manner, which he recognizes as such.

065 Wiggs changes the subject to the saxophone. Most people
067 in New Orleans do not like a saxophone, but Wiggs says the
instrument itself does not matter. What comes out is what
076 counts. He has never heard anything more beautiful, anything
more clever, or any better jazz than Eddie Miller's tenor
077 saxophone playing. Wiggs loves every note Miller plays.

 He also plays clarinet just as well or maybe better, but
080 he has made his **name** as a tenor saxophonist, and he must make a
living. Wiggs continues in this vein emphatically.

087 Wiggs can not think of any alto saxophonist he ever liked,
091 but he does not dislike the alto saxophone itself.

099 The following three play the finest jazz Wiggs has ever
heard in his life: Bix Beiderbecke, Louis Armstrong, and
Snoozer Quinn. Few have heard Quinn. Wiggs read a book about
Beiderbecke by an Englishman or two which criticized Quinn. Even
106 though the authors had not heard him, they compared him unfavorably
to Eddie Lang. [No doubt Charles H. Wareing and George Garlick
in Bugles for Beiderbecke (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1958).
See p. 169-170.] Wiggs condemns them for what he thinks is a
108 cheap, stupid thing. Wiggs says Quinn could play more music in
114 two seconds than Lang did in his whole life. He was a very, very
great guitarist, but Quinn was a Paqanini!

116 A Snoozer Quinn occurs maybe once in a thousand years. His
recordings were made [by Wiggs] when he was, you might say, dying
124 of tuberculosis; yet no one has ever come near them.

129 Quinn's movements were gentle, but spitfire technique was
coming out like sparks off an emery wheel.

142 Quinn created the style that Jack Teagarden sings. Wiggs
heard Quinn singing in this style long before Wiggs met Teagarden.
[Cf. other sources on Quinn's knowing Teagarden.]

146 You never heard a dirty hot fiddle [comparable to that which]
Quinn played. He tuned his fiddle a little lower [than is usual]
to play in ordinarily hard keys, and the strings buzzed, giving
that dirty sound such as Tom Brown gets out of his trombone. It
153 was funny and marvelous.

155 Quinn [loosened] his bow strings as Joe Venuti does [, bowing
from beneath with the bowing strings over all four strings to
produce] chords. There was nothing Quinn could not do.

160- Many had the audacity to call him a hillbilly. He was
163- born in Bogalusa, and his family is still there. His brother
[i.e., "Foots" Quinn?] visited Wiggs several years ago.

167 Snoozer Quinn's head was deformed. He was a marvelous
171+ person. WR says most of the very best musicians are like that.

176 Quinn played guitar the entire time he was out of bed. When
Wiggs was working at Werlein's, Quinn would come in, and it would
not be two seconds before the whole store would have gathered
around to hear Quinn play one of the store's guitars.

179 Guitarists are so frustrated at not being heard that even
 Quinn liked and had an amplifier. He insisted on using it on
183 three or four sides which Wiggs recorded.

187 He could not be heard in [Paul] Whiteman's large band. Wiggs
 says you could put a microphone in front of a guitar. Wiggs says
 everyone thinks the sound of an amplified guitar is horrible--
193 even Bill Kleppinger has wanted to amplify his mandolin for years.
 Everyone talked him out of it-- Quinn may have left Whiteman
198 because of this problem, or Whiteman may have felt that Quinn
 could not be heard. [Compare other sources. Did the banjo drown
 out Quinn's guitar?]

200 Wiggs repeats stories from [his Quinn article in] Oren
 Blackstone's magazine [Jazzfinder, later Playback. See its index.]
 Bix [Beiderbecke] and [Frank] Trumbauer discovered Quinn at Paul
206 Mares' house on Metairie Road when Whiteman's band was in New
 Orleans. When he heard Quinn, he hired him immediately.

 The jazz musicians from Whiteman's band were playing at Bee
 Palmer's house one Sunday afternoon. She was a beautiful, blonde
214 singer who was on vaudeville circuits. When she heard Quinn's
220 guitar, she finally asked to hear him solo. Quinn took over, and
 he really took over. Blackstone has a letter from her confirming
 the truth of Wiggs' description of this event. She was completely
231- knocked out of her mind by Quinn.

233 Beiderbecke, Trumbauer, Quinn, and musicians like them always
had their instruments. They played for the fun of it,
and Quinn began to hum the same "licks" he was playing on
238 guitar. Trumbauer, always alert, took them to a [recording] studio
239+ immediately to record Quinn's humming and playing. Quinn was not
242 sure if it was a Columbia studio or not [; therefore, Wiggs'
source was Quinn?]. But he thought it was Columbia's. "Singin'
the Blues" and other pieces were recorded, and they, like [almost]
everything that Quinn recorded, were never issued. [Check Wiggs'
article on Quinn to find Wiggs' source.]

He recorded a dozen solo sides for Victor which were never
issued. Wiggs will bet ten dollars Victor does not have one
248 master left.

250 These were recorded right after Wiggs made his Victor records.
He told the Victor people about Quinn. The recordings were not
considered commercial[ly salable].

The same thing happened in Houston. Columbia recorded a bunch
of Quinn's tunes [i.e., original compositions????] and never
released them. [Compare (Brian Rust?) The Victor Master Book
257 ML 156/.2, R8V5] Quinn could not be heard on Whiteman's records.

258 Quinn recorded with Jimmie Davis, the moron who is called the
governor of Louisiana, who sings from beginning to end, and you
265 can hardly hear one note of Quinn. Oren Blackstone had these
records. They are vile. Wiggs has never heard any one hog a
record like Davis. Wiggs continues his insulting of Davis at

length. [See Wiggs' article on Quinn to check Wiggs' sources.]

283+ Wiggs says the whole country is run by stupid morons and
continues in this vein.

294 Wiggs likes a rehearsed band. You can still get that good
New Orleans sound with musicians who know what they are doing.
He just does not like to play the way musicians play down here,
298 and he has lived here since he was born except for a few years.

The only way he would like to play here is with a good
301 Negro rhythm section. Then you can do no wrong. You are walking
a tight rope here when you play with a rhythm section that will
304 upset you "any two seconds."

Wiggs can not get musicians to rehearse; really no white jazz
310 musicians in New Orleans who like jazz. If they really liked
jazz, they would get together and play. They have various reasons
for not playing: one only plays when paid, another because some
one brings his babies to his house, another because he has jobs, and
319 another because he has to deliver babies.

All over the country, string groups, like [H. L.] Mencken's
and William Russell's are delighted to play once a week. For
seventeen years, Wiggs tried to get musicians to play once a
327 week for the love of jazz so he gave up last year!

339 Wiggs thinks popular tunes, Dixieland favorites, and blues
are good. Rhumbas and similar pieces are hard to do much with.
Pieces that last, like "My Blue Heaven" and "[Back] Home in
351 Indiana" from the popular tune category, are good.

353 Most of the jazz tunes lend themselves to jazz of course.
356 Wiggs loves most "the old Negro sort of spirituals" like "[Just
364 a] Closer Walk With Thee." He also loves "Ole Miss." Joe ["King"]
Oliver played only the chorus rather than the whole composition
at the Tulane gym[nasium]. Wiggs says the whole composition is
terrific.

369 Russell says "Ole Miss" is played as though it were the trio
of "Bugle Call Rag." Wiggs was the first to record the chorus
of "Ole Miss." Tony Parenti's band introduced it in their recording
of "In the Dungeon." Russell says that musicians around New York
379- thought that the chorus of "Ole Miss" was part of "Bugle Call
[Rag]." [Compare recordings.]

379+ Russell names "Congo Square" as one of Wiggs' tunes and asks
383 Wiggs to name more. Wiggs mentions "King Zulu Parade," "Gallatin
Street Grind," "Chef Menteur Joys," "Postman's Lament," and
"Pelican Panic" which Al Rose recorded and gave that title to.
Russell mentions Wiggs' "Canal and Royal."

407 Wiggs copyrights the lead sheet, i.e., melody and chords,
most of the time. He did most of the arranging of these pieces
at his desk at Warren Easton High School on the [Orleans Parish]
School Board's time. Wiggs was at WSMB when he arranged most of

those things for his band. [Machine off??]

Russell says that Wiggs did not mention Joe ["King"] Oliver before among the three great[est] jazz musicians and that Wiggs
425 has told him at other times that Joe Oliver had something Louis
[Armstrong] never quite got. Wiggs says [Armstrong] does not
429 resemble Oliver much any more; however, Wiggs thinks [Armstrong]
is a very great jazz performer today in spite of what most
432 dyed-in-the-wool jazz people think. He just has not been in
good settings.

Oliver had a dirty tone which [Armstrong] almost copied to
437 perfection when he first arrived in New York. He comes close
to Oliver's dirty tone which jazz people have come to love so
much on the Clarence Williams' recordings like "Everybody Loves
449 My Baby." Since then, Armstrong has gotten away from it.
Playing like Oliver puts too much strain on a person's lip.
Oliver held his mute halfway in [his cornet's] bell working
465 the mute in and out with his hand to help bend tones. Of all,
[Armstrong] comes closest to this sound. Oliver knocked Wiggs
out of his mind at the Tulane gym as he has said before.

001 Oliver was a supercilious Negro, and took nothing from
anyone. He was the "big boy" in music in New Orleans, knew it,
005 and had all the jobs tied up. When some one asked for the title
of a tune Oliver had played, he would say, "Who Struck John?"
no matter what the real title was.

007 Oliver had skin, possibly a cataract, over his cock-eye.
He would put his brown derby over his good eye and stare into
012- space to the left with his bad eye. Sometimes he used his derby
as a mute.

016 He was cute as hell and mean. It was surely fun to watch
017 him. He had the band under control, too. He was the boss.

020 Tom Brown was an interesting and unique person, having an
analytical mind and a hair-trigger temper. He was very different
from Steve [Brown] who, Wiggs thinks, is the greatest white bass
025 player Wiggs ever heard. Wiggs says, "Too bad those kind..of
white rhythm people can't stay in New Orleans.... But we have
piccolo players on bass fiddle here." Wiggs says, "Tom [Brown]
was a cute guy to be with...."

END OF INTERVIEW