

LEMON NASH  
I [of 3]  
June 20, 1961

Also present: Richard B. Allen, Russell Levy\* Joan  
Grace Levy [Mrs. Russell Levy], Allan Jaffe, Sandra  
Jaffe, [Mrs. Allan Jaffe], \*then a history graduate  
student at Tulane doing research on the redlight  
district.]

1

(Interview recorded at Jaffe's apartment, 920 Royal, New Orleans)

R. Levy asks about tunks.

Spano's "tunk" [i.e., honky tonk] was located at Liberty and Perdido [streets]; a piano player and a man beating with sticks on a chair provided music there; they played old tunes: "Stack-O-Lee", "Winter Night", "Junk Man Rag", "Basin Street [Blues]," "St. Louis Blues," "[It's a] Long Way to Tipperary," "Yes, We Have No Bananas," "Steamboat Bill," "Casey Jones" and others then popular numbers. There might be fifteen or twenty women dancing to the music; dances favored then were the ~~X~~ Grizzly Bear, the Snatch Back, and the Eagle Rock. There was usually a tap dancer around to perform; one man, called "Fox," who is in his seventies now, was often there; "Fox" was born and reared in Algiers. LN last saw "Fox" sleeping on a newspaper box on Canal St. Savoca's was another place where "Fox" danced. He danced in the [uptown] red light district. The women watched themselves in mirrors as they danced at Savoca's. Savoca's always had a piano player; musicians were paid \$2 or \$3 and all the wine they could drink. Sometimes they would have a band of from two to five pieces. The late George Jones, a bass player, played at Savoca's LN mentions violinist Cornelius [Tillman?]; he says Cornelius, [Manuel] Manetta, and Claiborne Williams were great violinists. Claiborne Williams' band, from Donaldsonville, Louisiana, won a musical contest in New Orleans once.

LN says Buddy Bolden was the best trumpet player of those days. His career preceeded that of Louis Armstrong by many years. Bunk Johnson [trumpet] was a contemporary of Bolden. Later musicians were Kid Rena, Buddy Petit [both trumpet players], Jack Carey [trombone]

"Kid Son" [i.e., Henry "Red" Allen, Jr.?]. LN knew Buddy Bolden. LN's mother operated a rooming house at 1211 Howard [now LaSalle], between Clio and Erato. [Apparently there was a player piano there]. LN says Bolden played excursions and picnics; his band consisted of himself on trumpet, with violin, guitar, bass and drums. There were excursions from New Orleans to New Roads [Louisiana]. LN himself didn't go on the excursions; he was about thirteen years old at the time. [cf. Thomas Sancton article on BG in the Second Line c, 1952. RBA]

LN remembers the Crescent Saloon; another place, Vic Dubois's was at Howard [Avenue] and Rampart [Street]; it was there before the [New] Basin [canal?] was closed. LN talks about the traffic on the Basin. Another place was Pratt's, at Lafayette and Rampart; Kid Green, who trained prize fighters, operated it. Pinky Allen, who operated the Old Man's Saloon, had a barber shop at Howard Avenue and Rampart; he cut LN's hair. Vic Dubois's place, a dance hall, was upstairs over Pinky Allen's saloon. [later on this tape, LN says Dubois place was over Allen's barbershop] "Blind Freddie" [Small], currently playing harmonica, played clarinet and led the band which played at Pinky Allen's saloon; besides Small on clarinet, the instrumentation comprised tenor banjo, bass violin, drums, piano and trombone. The bass player was Hosey, [Hosea Harris?] who was about sixty years old when he moved to Los Angeles, California, where he still lives, twenty-seven or twenty-eight years ago. LN says Johnny St. Cyr [banjo and guitar] lives on Wall Street in [Los Angeles] California; RBA agrees.

Hustler's Saloon, at Perdido and Rampart, was also called Ben Mulligan's, for the manager.

LN mentions the Tic Toc.

The Chicago Royal Garden[s?], at Gravier and Rampart, had a band for dancing. LN mentions the Pelican.

The Tic Toc became the Golden Dragon, which became the Astoria,

LEMON NASH  
I [of 3]  
June 20, 1961

3

the present name of the place. Louis Armstrong played at the place after he had become famous. [See handbill (in Archives files?) RBA]

Peter Williams, a Dixieland drummer, and his band played at the place; other instruments in the band: piano, bass violin, and tenor banjo. [Butler] "Guyé" [Rapp] played banjo with the band; he was killed at the Cadillac, [a taxi dance hall] at Iberville and Burgundy. One of the tunes the band featured was "Has Anybody Seen My Kitty?". (LN plays the ukelele and sings the song.) The Song was popular long before 1910. [See end of reel \*].

*KIZER'S*  
(1.52) Marshall ~~Kaiser~~'s tonk, located across from the Union Terminal, was closed about 1907 or 1908, according to RL. RBA says he was in the New York Cafe in 1945 for the beginning of an advertising job played by Joe Avery and Wilbert Tillman's band; the cafe was on Rampart between Howard Avenue and Calliope Street; LN says the New York Cafe was in the same general location as the earlier Marshall *KIZER'S* ~~Kaiser~~'s tonk RL mentioned.

RL mentions the Star Saloon; LN doesn't remember the location.

RL mentions Dorsey's, at Perdido and Dryades; LN says the place was first called Pratt's; "it was tougher than tough."

LN knew the piano player "Drive-'em-down"; he played anywhere there was a honky-tonk with a piano. His main hangout was at Liberty and Perdido. LN hasn't seen him in a long time, so he may be dead. RBA agrees with LN that the piano player, "Stormy Weather[s], " is dead.

LN agrees that the Nancy Hanks saloon was on Iberville and Marais; LN says a lot of prostitutes congregated there; RL says Ada Hayes, a madam, operated the place and acted as barmaid. LN says it was another tough spot.

Gamblers frequented the Big 25, at Iberville and Franklin [now Crozat]; there was a good piano at the place, and all the musicians who worked on Bourbon Street would come there after work; some of them were Steve Lewis, "Drive-'em-down", the late Burnell Santiago and his brother, "Cooney" [Santiago?] [cf. Lester Santiago, reel ?], and "Papa" Yellow, who was also known as "Little Tut" and "Little Yellow" [i.e. Isidore Washington.] LN thinks "Cooney" has also died. RBA mentions another brother, Lester "Black" Santiago; he says he didn't know "Cooney".

RL mentions the killing of Billy Phillips at the 101 Ranch or at the Tuxedo [Dance Hall], in which "Gyp the Blood" was involved; LN says that was before his time; RL says it was in 1913. LN mentions the killing of the Chief [of Police David Hennessy] by some Italians; RL says that happened in 1895. [cf. literature]

RBA asks for a blues which might have been played in Spano's or a similar place. (LN plays the guitar and sings "Went to the Station")

LN mentions a man called "Fewclothes Willie." RL says the place called Fewclothes [i.e., Foucault] was on Franklin, [now Crozat] just off Iberville, [then Custom house] extending through the block to Basin. LN mistakenly identifies it as Mouton's Cafe, across from the Hummingbird Cafe, but they were located at Franklin [now Crozat] and Gasquet [now Cleveland]. RL thinks Fewclothes place was called the Union Cafe or the Union Beer Hall. Pete Lala's is mentioned. The Entertainers, across from the Big 25, is mentioned. Some of the piano players who worked at [The Entertainers]: Burnell Santiago, Cooney [Santiago?], Lester "Black" Santiago, and Red Cayou, who moved to California, where he died.

LN doesn't remember The Frenchman's, operated by John Laban, according

LEMON NASH  
I [of 3]  
June 20, 1961

5

to RL; another place was Charles Young's, which RL thinks was called Cabaret, Limited. LN knew about Tom Anderson's and about Lulu White's; he was quite young at the time, so he didn't ever play in them.

\*[During the course of this reel, Jack and J.B.Beers have entered the room where the interview is being conducted.]

End of Reel I

LEMON NASH  
II [of 3]  
June 20, 1961

Also present: Richard B. Allen, Russell Levy,  
Joan Grace Levy, Allan Jaffe, Sandra Jaffe, Jack  
Beers, J.B. Beers.

6

LN sold women brick [dust] to scrub their ~~bux~~ steps. [Carey?]  
Fritz was a star entertainer at the Entertainers Cabaret; his theme  
song was "I'll Get By"; other songs he sang: "Anybody Seen My Kitty,"  
"Listen to the Mockingbird," "How Many Times Have I Said I Love You,"  
"Me and My Shadow," "Bye Bye Blackbird," and "Someday, Sweetheart."  
Fritz also sang about Maestris' wagon [a reference to the wagons used  
by the Maestri family in their furniture business. cf. Sunny Henry  
and Albert Warner reel. ?].

LN made up a song about a raid on a place (i.e. the Tumble Inn [?])  
where he was one night.

(LN plays the ukelele and sings "There They Go With My Gin.")

4:58 (LN plays the ukelele and sings "Sunday.")

(LN plays the guitar and sings "Keep On Drinking.")

LN says, "Those blues make a blind man catch a freight train."  
He says he got that line from Blind Lemon Jefferson; LN knew Jefferson  
in New Orleans.

RBA says LN has already recorded his original "She [Was] Born  
In New Orleans" for him.

(LN plays the ukelele with a pick and sings "Bye, Bye, Pretty Baby.")

(LN plays "Camptown Races" and "Dixie" on the Jew's Harp. He  
then plays the ukelele and sings "Dixie.")

(LN plays the ukelele and sings "IF you Could Fight Like You Could  
Love.")

LN says he made a lot of money singing that song to men leaving  
the railroad station [to become soldiers?] in 1919. [or 1917 or 1918?]

(LN plays the ukelele and sings "Come ON, Baby, Let The Good Times  
Roll.")

(LN plays the ukelele with a pick and plays "Panama" on the kazoo.)  
[LS] is apparently unfamiliar with this type of kazoo.]

LEMON NASH  
II [of 3]  
June 20, 1961

7

A lot of good-timers and racketeers were on Gasquet [now Cleveland] Street. A man named "Sweet Joe" had a rooming house on Gasquet between Franklin and Liberty; he gave house rent parties and sold corn liquor. There were many sporting women on that street.

End of Reel II

LEMON NASH  
III [ of 3]  
June 20, 1961

Also present: Richard B. Allen, Russell Levy,  
Joan Grace Levy, Allan Jaffe, Sandra Jaffe

8

[While in the Merchant Marine,] LN sailed [apparently regularly] from Norfolk [Virginia] to New Haven [Connecticut]. LN was injured during his seafaring career, and spent some time in the hospital in Norfolk. Some time afterward, he traveled with a quartet in [the upper western part of] New York State.

LN says he made a lot of money with his ukelele while on his ship. (He plays "Harbor Lights" on the ukelele.)

(LN plays the ukelele and sings "Show Me the Way to Go Home.")

(LN plays the ukelele and sings "Say, Mister, Have You Met Rosie's Sister.")

(1:12) (LN plays the ukelele with pick and fingers, performing "Song of the Islands.")

(LN plays the ukelele and sings "The Boston Burglar.")

(LN does a preacher comedy routine.) LN is a Catholic.

LN mentions being in Asheville, North Carolina. (He does a medicine show routine.) The show with which LN traveled was the [Big] Chief Indian and Western Cowboy. (LN plays the ukelele and sings a song he sang with the show, ["Way in the Hoo-a-hoo"?.] LN says he was with the show around 1917 [see previous interviews.]. LN discusses "The good old days", about the doctor, his patients, and itinery of the show. (LN also does a comedy routine), Winter quarters of the show were in Saratoga [i.e., Sarasota,] Florida. LN says the best comedians in the show were from Georgia. He talks about the funny talk during the years of slavery.

In the medicine show he sold medicine and played guitar with a four piece string group. There were no other New Orleanians in the show with LN. LN was called "Banjo Boy" when he was with the shows. He was with Robinson Circus, Downey Brothers, Sells-Floto [sp?], Taylor and Mack,

LEMON NASH  
III [of 3]  
June 20, 1961

9

and Big Chief Indian. The best place for the medicine show in Tennessee was Nashville.

LN has worked with vegetable and fruit peddlers in New Orleans, selling from push carts.

End of Reel III

