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Brown: Well, ah folks, my name is Steve Brown to the music world. My real name is Ted Brown. I was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana. My parents had a musical background, and I guess my brother and I we were talented in that respect. We began playing early in our teens and ah I guess ah ah just after our father and mother's death, we were quite young and we fooled around with different types of musical instruments and ah gradually ah decided to ah stay on on instrument. Trombone was my brother's and ah bass fiddle was mine. And ah we ah played around New Orleans for years in all the best places in the city and we had up to 1913 when I left them one of the best bands in the city. I left to follow my trade as sheet metal worker and proceeded to Jackson, Louisiana, in the East Louisiana State Hospital. After being there about three years, I married and ah came back to New Orleans for a little while and proceeded to ah Natchitoches, Louisiana, where I opened up a business of my own. I remained there for about three years, and ah came back into the music field; that was in 1920. I arrived in Chicago an to my surprise no one was using bass fiddles. Everyone had tubas in their orchestras and it seemed to be impossible for me to get a job. However, I continued to bother the best booker considered in Chicago at that time, Cope Harvey, and succeeded in getting a job date ah at the Blackstone Hotel. In order to get more work I done everything I could to attract attention and succeeded in having the people gather around the band and ah refrain from dancing until we're finished playing. I ah had no trouble from there after, the different contractors offered me jobs and in a short time I had all the work that I could do in Chicago. I remained there for oh up until 1926 and ah left to join the /Jean/ Goldkette orchestra in Detroit. I signed a contract with Goldkette for five years and remained with him during that entire time, until the band broke up in New York and then I joined /Paul/ Whiteman. Ah I may say that ah up until the time I reached Chicago I never knew a note in music. I've never taken a lesson. And that when I was offered jobs in larger bands it was necessary for me to learn how to read. So I had to put my mind out in reading. And I learned how to read good enough in which to cover different types of work in the orchestral field. And ah when I joined Whiteman the music was a little different from me. It was ah ah a little symphonic in conjunction with rhythmically played pieces, and ah that seemed to worry me quite a bit and I never enjoyed myself playing as much as I did with the Goldkette outfit because we played practically everything rhythmically. Only

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Brown: when we played shows would be would it be considered ah differently you know, I mean, ah ballads and things like that, that we had to play. But ah I played and it was satisfactory all right, I got by with ah the type of music that was put before me and ah we were, Whiteman was offered a contract to ah terminate his ah recordings with the Victory people and go over to the Columbia. And they in turn were going to ah send the band around the world, visit in every principal city and ah Paul had told me that he was willing to pay my wife's fare along with his orchestra but that I'd have to leave the children on this side. I consulted my wife about it and ah she felt that if anything happened to the children while she was across water why ah she'd never forgive herself and ah she urged me to go ahead and she'd remain on this side. Well I wasn't feeling any too good at that particular time, so I decided to stay here, too, and ah told Paul about it. Well the depression was setting in at that-this particular time and the trip around the world was canceled for Paul. And Paul had to cut down his orchestra considerably. There was quite a numbers of boys left when I left--Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, a little later [Henry] Busse and quite a lotof well known boys left the orchestra. And then Paul during the depression days had to resort to cheaper musicians, you know. And he got by the best way he could at that particular time. I returned to Detroit and played for Jean Goldkette again. And then ah he sent me down to Chicago to start his new orchestra, he was starting a new orchestra called the WGN orchestra directed by Earl Stokes. Stokes, an accordian player. And ah I didn't like the band and ah so I told Jean Goldkette to put someone else in my place that I was going down to New Orleans and ah that I'd ah return back to Detroit later on if he had anything for me to do, well I, I begun to play for him again. So that WGN Bandcontinued for awhile and made some records. Ah however they didn't have any market for that type of a orchestra and it soon disbanded. I joined another unit of Goldkette's called The Vagabonds and traveled around the country a little bit for them, although we didn't make any records. I didn't make any records with the Vagabonds. And ah I went down as far as San Antone, Texas and ah returned with them, and they made a trip later up East. And I failed to go with them. I thought I'd remain locall and stay in Detroit. At that particular time, I wasn't feeling so good, and not knowing what was the matter with me I soon found out that it was arthritis that I had and ah as the weeks and months grew why I began to be crippled more and more until I had to confine myself indoors for

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Brown: ah couple years or so. And ah after the art-attack of arthritis subsided for a little bit, I tried to play music a little but it didn't satisfy me and I ah later on looked for othe types of work to do, such as salesmanship, and later on I took an examination for (?) steam engineering. And ah I haven't ah played since, since then. That was about ah let's see, I been out of the music field now for about ten or twelve years and ah up to that time why I played with different organizations in Chicago when I arrived in Chicago in 1920 I played with a lot of small Dixieland groups and ah later larger orchestras such as the Friar's Inn Band [New Orleans Rhythm Kings] and then later with the Midway Garden Orchestra which was when I started to ah learn how to read. And ah up to that time, of course, as I said before, I never knew a thing about music and ah had no idea what it was all about until I went up north. But shut it off. I don't know what to say. (machine is shut off)

Allen: Let's go, let's start all over again, and I'll ask you a question. What date were you born and where?

Brown: I was born in January 13, 1890 in New Orleans.

Allen: And your

Brown: And there was five of us born in New Orleans here. We were all christened in practically the same church, Father Lambert's Church.

Allen: That's a Catholic Church.

Brown: Yeah, Father ah Cath [olic]. . . . .

Brown's sister: It was Father Lambert's then

Brown: Father Lambert, at that particular time.

Brown's sister: It's Our Lady of Good Counsel Church now.

Russell: Lady of Good Counsel.

Brown's sister: Yes

Brown: Now, yeah.

Allen: I see.

Brown: However, my father was a Catholic, my mother was a Protestant, so later on my mother brought us into the Protestant faith, however my brother, Tom, who has just passed away, why he was buried in a Catholic faiths, he was, his wife is Catholic, so she evidently had him returned back to the church.

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Allen: uh-huh.

Brown: But anyway in those particular days, we were in poor circumstances so we were very young when my mother passed away, my father passed away about, what was it Louise, a year or two before my mother, huh?

Brown's sister: A year and ten months.

Brown: A year and ten months before my mother passed away. And ah so we were quite small, I was twelve and Tom was fourteen and in those days why we were in poor circumstances, and we had to ah work in the day and try to get a little education in the night by attending night school. And ah--

Brown's sister: Went to school, Sophie Wright school.

Brown: Well, yes, I attended Sophie Wright school during the night. But none of us received any too much education.

Allen: Yeah. And did your mother and father play music?

Brown: Yes. My father was ah, had a little band of his own well not of his own, but he played in the band. I think he played different string instruments, violin and different ones of them would get together and they played different affairs and my father was ah quite active in dramatics of different kinds and his mother, my grandmother, on the Brown side was a piano teacher. And my grandmother on my mother's side also knew how to play piano so we were gifted in that respect see that's the reason we were able to pick up instruments and learn how to play 'em quickly.

Allen: Well, now, would your father be a faker or did he read music or---? Could he fake?

Brown: No. I think he played by ear. I think he played by ear.

Allen: Well, would he play what they call jazz now, Dixieland jazz?

Brown: Well, no. At that particular time there were lancers, and mazookas [mazurkas], and schottische and reels, and there were no such thing as ah as ragtime music at that particular time.

Allen: Oh, I see.

Brown: Ah, it came, ragtime came into effect a little after that around the time when we was starting to play. Ah that Stale Bread Band [Emile August LaCoume Sr.] was around there, I used to go around when I was a kid to hear him play. And we had what we call lawn parties given

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Brown: partically every neighborhood around the city in those days. Particularly in the ah Negro section they'd have tarpaulins spread over the yard and the back and the Negro bands would play and as kids we'd go listen at 'em, you know what I mean. Hear 'em play all types of tunes. But they didn't have what we call or considered the Dixieland combination, see, and some of those bands went to New York and Chicago at different times and played, but their type of music wasn't considered a jazz type of a Dixieland combination. They had violins and flutes and thing like that in their orchestras. And a real Dixieland combination consisted of five pieces, mainly, sometimes they put six, sometimes they put seven or eight pieces.

Allen: Well, what instruments were those?

Brown: Huh?

Allen: What instruments were those?

Brown: The main instruments was, the main five, ah five instruments were cornet, trombone, cornet, ah drums, and we didn't have a piano in those days. We had guitar, fellows, a good many guitar players played a twelve string guitar to give enough body and rhythm to be heard. In so many lit---the places they didn't have a piano for the musicians to play.

Allen: What were the horns, I didn't get the horns straight?

Brown: Cornet, trombone and clarinet, and then we used bass, guitar, and drums.

Allen: Did they add different instruments later?

Brown: Later on, after they got up north, why they had to have piano.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: Guitar wasn't loud enough or somethin'. And everybody had to have it, have a piano with all the bands, so, so the boys had to send down here and get different piano players until they got the right one. I think [Henry] Ragas, Ragas was with the Dixieland, wasn't he?

Russell: Yeah.

Allen: Did they use any of these homemade instruments with those groups or would they use all regular instruments?

Brown: Oh, at that particular time, they were, these boys had all battered-up instruments, you know, I mean, they bought 'em, the majority of 'em bought them second handed, they couldn't afford to buy the new ones they were too expensive for them. And ah later on as they played and made, played a lot of jobs, why they got new instruments. But ah, they were pretty high in

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Brown: those days. That-ah--the instruments weren't so plentiful as they are today and whenever we got an old battered up instrument we tried to repair it the best way we could and learn how to play something on it. Now we had what we called ah ah [Johnny] Fisher's Band around New Orleans ah one of the boys ah ah by the name of Schilling, did you meet him yet?

Russell: Happy?

Allen: Yeah.

Russell: Happy Schilling, yes.

Brown: He's an old fellow now, isn't he?

Russell: Played trombone?

Brown: Yes, that's right.

Russell: That's the one, yeah.

Brown: Well, he's largely responsible for us playing--Tom and I, we decided to go batching at one time, and we rented a house and we furnished it and Hap Schilling used to come over there and ask permission at different times to leave a lot of instruments over there. Trombone, tubas, clarinets, and you know, different band instruments, well we were tickled to death to let them leave it over there, because Tom and I used to ah fool around with them during the day and before we knew it, we knew how to play a lot of 'em. See, we just out of curiosity we just wanted to see if we could play them. We applied ourself enough, and sure enough, we learn how to play. I played a little bit on the clarinet, the cornet, trombone, tubas, things like that. And Tom did the same thing. Well, Tom seemed to ah love trombone, and I loved the bass more than I loved any other instrument. And we used to sit down at the piano you know, and ah play, the, learn to play a num--ah, few numbers on piano. And ah, well we liked all instruments but still the bass seemed to appeal to me. Seemed like I loved that instrument. And Tom seemed to love the trombone more than any other instrument too so ah we ah we start playing so well, that we attracted attentionand people start hiring us for different dances.

Russell: No lessons uh--?

Brown: No lessons on anything. Well, in fact, we had a trumpet player Ray Lopez he played the ah his cornet as I call it, because it was short see, left handed. Instead of right handed fingering. He'd put his left hand over the horn and finger it that way--left handed. Well, ah that was his style of playing. And he wasn't taught. The only one that knew how to ah read a

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Brown: few notes was Gussie Mueller. And he could only read the ah the lead part on top of a piano part.

Russell: uh-huh

Brown: And he'd ah play that over and we, we'd catch it just that quick, see. And we'd form our own harmony and rhythm to it. And ah that's the way we learned our numbers.

Allen: Now what was your first instrument that you took up? Your very first one?

Brown: Oh, I ah strummed on a guitar and ah flute and harmonica, I think I ah played harmonica first, jew's harp and flutes and things like that when a kid. Then later on I got a hold of a guitar, I think my father's guitar was laying around the house, we learned how to play, make all the changes, and we called different boys in and we teach them the changes, you know, what I mean.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: And ah had them to play with us. So before long we had a little band, and then we got a little larger band and then as we became known we start playing at different affairs.

Russell: How old were you then?

Brown: Well, as the time go along, I guess ah I started at twelve so I must have been around 15 or so. When we were really making headway, and attracting attention. And ah so we, we were offered a job to play in the carnival parade, for the Garden District Carnival Club. They said if you can get ahold of a brass band and play as good as you do with your orchestra, why we'll give you the job in carnival. [Mardi Gras] So we ah agreed to that. Well, Tom and I, we were worried about gettin' uniforms to have for the men to play. So we joined the ah ah state militia and we asked the Captain to loan us the blue uniforms, the blue coats you know and we got enough for the ah entire men, ten men in the brass band. And everyone had to get white pants, see. And we had tan shoes and leggons. And the ah parading down the street we had the ah name of the band on top, see, that covered the the company's ensignia on there, see.

Russell: Yeah.

Brown: We took off the cross guns, see, so we looked like we had band uniforms. Well the club at that particular year won first prize. And in the paper, they mentioned the how wonderful the band looked. See, in the paper. So Tom didn't remember that, so I felt like going into the libraries and looking over the papers on that particular date and see if I could get the

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Brown: clipping of that particular affairs. So that was the first brass band affair that we played. And the club won first prize and we had quite a nice mention about the band and how well we played.

Russell: About how old were you for that parade then?

Brown: Oh, I guess around 15 or 16 years of age.

Allen: Well, we could have found that in the paper, in the library, we'll do that.

Russell: 1905 or '06

Brown: I was thinkin' about lookin', I wanted ah, I wanted Tom to go down with me and I could look over the paper in that particular year.

Russell: We'll look it up, we'll find it, I know.

Allen: It might take a while, but we'll do it.

Brown: Well, yes, but anyway, that ah that was our first brass band job. Then we had ah-- became acquainted with Jack Laine. Jack Laine, more or less, had brass bands. He didn't fool around with orchestras much, he had a big brass band, he was the bass drummer, himself. And ah, whenever he had orchestra jobs, he'd gave us a lot of orchestra jobs, you know. But a lot, a great many times, I'd play with Jack Laine in his band and he'd want me to play tuba for him and Tom would be hired in different musicians. We all worked along with different others, but we got so towards last that we wanted, we were unable to play with anyone, we had enough jobs to keep us busy. In fact some of the boys quit their work. We had Ray Lopez, the trumpet player, why he was playing enough to justify him in ah qutting work. He was making enough money just as was, he wanted to sleep in the daytime.

Russell: Well, a question about Lopez, was he really left-handed in everything he did, did he write left-handed, and eat left-handed, or just play the trumpet that way?

Brown: That I don't remember.

Russell: You don't remember.

Brown: I could ask him, but I don't remember whether he wrote left-handed or

Allen: Now, where, where is he now, in California?

Brown: He's in California. He and Gussie Meuller are in California.

Allen: Do you know where they live, in what part?

Brown: Yes, I have the address.

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Allen: Oh, we'd like to get that.

Russell: Cause you know Nick LaRocca and Sharkey /Bonang/ both fingered with the left hand.

Brown: Oh, by the way, Gussie Meuller's daughter is writing his story.

Allen: Oh, that's wonderful.

Brown: And ah she is writing a story and I don't know whether it is supposed to be published pretty soon, and I think ah for my understanding, they put me in the band. And I says, well I wasn't in the band when you fellows went up there. Well, Ray says you were in the band originally. So we put your name in the band. So they left Loyocano out. So I says, no, that isn't fair, Loyocano was with the band when they wentup there, and I didn't have a thing to do with the band when you fellers wentup there, I'd already quit. ? ? night, and when I came back into the field, of course, all this had been pioneered but they hadn't had anyone to play bass, like I did, see. Now for instance, when we were playing, when we were playing in New Orleans, we played for all the prize fights. In those days, we played between each round. Keep the fans satisfied and then before the fights we'd play and play and have the crowds applauding and put 'em in a good spirit, see. And to advertise the fight we stand on different corners, or go on the truck and play, so I was standing in the, on Royal Street around Iberville /St./ or one of the streets down there, in the business section, and many times when we were playing down there, a lot of men would poke their head over my shoulders and be watching me while I was playing, and some of them would say, "My God, I've been traveling all around, but I never heard anybody play a bass like that." And to me I thought they were just criticizing me, you know what I mean, I just figured that they were just thinking that I couldn't play. Well, it sounded good to me, so I didn't care.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: And up, for a long time, my, I thought the same thing, even when the people applauded me up north, I just figured that they they were just, didn't mean it, you know, and even when the boys were raving about how well I played, and they'd come pat me on the back, and things like that, I still

Russell: Didn't know

Brown: thought they was joshing me, you see. And ah this Russ Morgan, he wrote an article some time back in the ah----oh Post, he'd write practically everything about me and how when I first

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Brown: came there and how other people would come around the band stand and Steve thought the people was just putting him on and things like that, you know. But it was really a fact.

Russell: But tell me, where were those fights, where did they have them?

Brown: Right here in New Orleans, New Orleans Athletic Club.

Russell: About where? I don't know where.

Brown: Well this one, seemed to be downtown, the stadium was ah seemed to have been on

Brown's sister: Same place that it is now, or did they tear it down?

Brown: No, they must have torn it down.

Allen: They have a new one now.

Brown's Sister: Yes. The Coliseum, that's where

Brown: Well that's where, no, no, this was downtown, just ah about two or three blocks below Canal Street in the middle of the block at one place, I think it must have been Royal and the Royal and somethin' on the, on the downtown side.

Russell: Chartres, sure, I know now.

Brown: It was some old place they had, Athletic Club, or rather the Pavillion was there.

Russell: Oh, yeah, where the court house is now, I think, or was.

Brown: Maybe so.

Russell: Yeah.

Allen: It would either be Royal and Chartres or Royal and Bourbon, one of the two.

Russell: About St. Louis Street along in there---Conti----

Allen: Well, which Loyocano was it-----

Brown: Well, I could find out the correct address.

Russell: I know, I can check on that now. I know what you mean, I think.

Brown: Well, anyway, ah the people would stand around and listen at the band, particularly these strangers, ah out-of-town people, they'd come around and oh--they'd just holler, you know, I mean, they didn't hear that type of music, you know, so I guess it was that ah ah kind of music Tom was playing at the Yacht Club or someplace where Frisco, the dancer, was, that ah caused Frisco to go back up to New York to ah tell ah the people in Lamb's Cafe [in Chicago] about the band he heard down in New Orleans. But anyway, we played all the ah Yacht Clubs in the eh

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Brown: gymninistic clubs and we played for ah all the best people in New Orleans at that particular time, up until the time I left them, and we were rated very highly by all the public in general as being a very good band. One of the best bands down in New Orleans. But ah they never ah the newspapers never did give us write-ups like they--do today. They mention a lot about the musicians and bands, but in those days, they just said, "The band had, maybe they may say, had a good orchestra," you know what I mean, or something like that, but generally the band's name and that is about all it was.

Allen: Well which Loyocano was it that you mentioned was it ah

Brown: Arnold Loyocano, he went

Allen: Arnold, huh?

Brown: He went up to, ah with Tom

Allen: Oh, I see.

Brown: He took my place when I left, when I left the band in 1913 he took my place and played from then on. Ah he played in Chicago and then went to New York with 'em. And ah the going got pretty rough in New York, I understand, from Tom and them, and ah Loyocano and ah /Billy/ Lambert, and ah /Larry/ Shields, I think beat it out of New York.

Russell: One other question----what did you call that band down here, what was the name of it?

Brown: Well, we ah, we ah call it just ah "Brown's Band".

Russell: "Brown's Band".

Brown: An d sometimes some people would ca---put across on the streamer at picnics that we played "Brown's Ragtime Band." You see.

Russell: uh-huh.

Brown: And ah that's all, we was just known as "Brown's Band"---

Russell: Who was the leader?

Brown: Huh?

Russell: Who was the leader?

Brown: Well, we called Ray Lopez the leader. Tom was the manager, I was nobody for that matter but I go around and book the band. I was a booker and I'd keep the boys working cause in the daytime I'd watch all the papers, every affair that was being given, you know, I'd go see the chairman of the committee and ah sell him on the idea of the band, see? And tell him who we

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Brown: played for and after I told him who we played for and had them to verify my statement why I'd get the job very easy, because we did have a good band. And I'm acquainted with all the musicians that are well known down in New Orleans at that particular time.

Russell: What pieces did you play then? Do you remember some of the numbers?

Brown: We played the same pieces that are played today, only they all have different names, see we used to call "Meatballs", and "Snot", "No.2" (laughter). We'd make up some of these numbers and we'd just give 'em a name--that way, see, just joking, and like ah a great many times one of the fellas would start off and we'd ask what we gonna play, and he's say, "Oh, that's all right, just follow me." So, if it sounded good, he'd try to repeat the same thing, you know, and maybe we'd play it different each time, and gradually it would simmer down into one type of number. So, in those days, /Nick/ LaRocca used to come up before he could play trumpet and he used to sit up along side of Ray Lopez on Marengo and Magazine. We used to play up there, and he used to learn how to play the same notes that Raymond Lopez played. And ah he soon learned how to play the numbers, and Eddie Edwards used to play fiddle at first, see. And his, his father bought him a trombone, and ah he told me, he says take Eddie around and with you, and he says, let Eddie sit in and learn how to play his trombone. So, I took Eddie around with me, and pretty soon, Eddie started picking up on his trombone, see, and ah so that's how Eddie Edwards started on his trombone. But they couldn't play before, we were playing long before LaRocca and Edwards were playing. Shields was just ah well he was a pretty good clarinet player but he was nothing in comparison to Gussie Mueller, see. And ah he couldn't play as many numbers as Gussie Meuller. You can shut that off now.

Russell: Well, the tape is just about over now.

Allen: It's just about over.

Russell: Ah, I was gonna ask, what was number two, what was that tune like? Remember, the one you called.....?

Brown: "No. 2" was "Tiger Rag"

Russell: That was "Tiger Rag"

Allen: What's the name of "Meatballs"?

Brown: Ah, I think that was Dixieland One-Step", I don't know now what the boys up there give it.

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Allen: Oh, yeah.

Brown: Names again, I think it was "Dixieland One-Step".

Russell: Okay, this is the end of this ( ) now.

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Russell: Now, you were talking about Eddie Edwards and he was smart in organizing, what was it?

Brown: Well, ah, he knew the trouble that Tom had in Chicago, see, and Tom was up there, the band was going so good, and attracted so much attention that the ah, the band leaders would try to break up Tom's band by trying to offer one man a little bit more money.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: See. And some of them would quit Tom. And Tom would come back to New Orleans and get someone else, that's the way it was, so in order to avoid that trouble, Eddie Edwards, incorporated the band, see. And neither one of them could leave. So they had to stay together as one unit. That saved the day for the Dixieland Band. And if Tom had did something like that, it'd been allright. But ah he could have taken advantage of all the recordings, but up until that time, they weren't recording so much, in fact they didn't want anything to do with hot music much, you know ah. And jazz as you call it, everything was new to them ah later on after the Dixieland Band commenced to do so well and have so much success why they had a contract to record. And that's why they put all these numbers when they found out they wasn't copyrighted why they ah took a copyright on these numbers and I don't blame 'em, I would have done the same thing. I wouldn't, I don't feel sore against any of the boys for (any of) those numbers, I would have did the same thing if I knew a number wasn't copyrighted I'd---

Allen: Somebody just get it up north who didn't deserve any of the credit.

Brown: Huh?

Allen: Somebody up north would just have gotten it, who didn't deserve any of the credit.

Brown: Why certainly. If it hadn't been, I'd rather see a boy from down here get it.

Allen: I wanted to ask you, I didn't understand somethin' quite---no one has ever explained this to me fully, ah what's the difference between ragtime bands and this kind of band and that kind of band that they had in New Orleans, and the different kind of music up until that time?

Brown: Well, at that particular time, you see, we more or less played lances, and schottische, and [mazurkas] mazookas, and reels, and things like that, and the two step, and ah now and then we'd put in the little hot numbers, you know what I mean, as we gradually....people were beginning to wean away from the old-fashioned dancin' to the modern dances, see. And, and, as the time went along, why we went into fox-trots, and one-steps, you know what I mean.

Allen: Uh-huh.

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Brown: And hesitation waltzes and things like that. And that's how the changes took place. But up until---er around that time when I was playing, well we still had to play reels when we were called upon and waltzes and mazookas [mazurkas] and schottische and along with the ah two steps. And ah we played a lot of our lively numbers mostly in 2/4th time and ah that's what al our general ragtime music was. And it's, in my estimation, it's still the same music, it's th same pieces, that I played when I was in knee pants that they are playing today, all these Dixieland numbers. And ah it's just everyone plays something a little different than the othe feller, that's all. Oh, it's just a matter of taste, whoever seems to produce something that' ah satisfies the public why that's what the people want.

Allen: I wanted to get some dates, too, that's another thing. When did you ah go up to Jackson and Natchitoches?

Brown: Well, I went to Jackson in 1913 right after I left the band. And I was employed there as a sheet metal worker. I made practically everything that the institution needed including utensils, you see they, there was no machines to turn out ah turn out er coffee pots and bake pans and heavy enough gauges. The patients would break them up, so I had to make 'em out of heavy gauge. Coffee pots, pots, and kitchen utensils and bake pans and things like that. Ah and then besides I kept the eh old buildings in repair and ah done anythings the doctors want in that particular line...made blood refrigerators and things like that. I stayed there, remained there for about three years my wife was a seamstress there, and that's where I got married. I ah then I came back to New Orleans just for about a year or less than a year and then I left to go to Natchitoches, [La.] I ah let's see, I got married married in 1916 (inside of) three years I was in Jackson and ah I opened up the business in Natchitoches about the latter part of 1917 I guess. And ah remained there until 1920. In 1920 I left and ah went over to Chicago and ah

Russell: Who asked you to come up there, who was (it) up there?

Brown: Well ah, Tom urged me to come on up and he ah he gave me a few names of friends he has, that would see that I was taken care of, you know. And ah in fact one of his friends, had a little band that ah I could get with, but the job didn't last long and I was running around there with ah like a chicken with his head cut off. I couldn't understand why I couldn't get a job around there, you know. Everybody and his brother had a big tuba or I can tell you, it

Retyped.

Brown: was somethin' to look at with all the lights, turning on and off and I just concluded that I had to do the same thing in order to get a job, but, as I told you -- it just so happened that ah booker must have been short one night and he gave me that job in the Blackstone Hotel. And I never will forget that because it ah was a treat to me to see the people just standing around the band instead of dancing,

Russell: You used your string bass that night?

Brown: Oh, yeah I was spinning it and riding it and ah I would darn near breaken it in order to, you know, to create an impression, you know, to get another job. And from then on, why, I ah I didn't have any trouble, the bookers they wanted me and I had more calls (than enough for) string bass and I remained in Chicago up until 1926. See.

Russell: Tell me about those lights and the tubas again, where were the lights, inside the tuba?

Brown: Inside the bell, down inside where it couldn't be seen, but the reflection of these lights would go on and off and it was a beautiful sight there, you see they'd have sousaphones more of them, they'd have sousaphones, with these large bells, the larger the bell the bigger the show. See, and they'd have a large bell for a show and when all these lights would go on from a distance you would look at it, and it was beautiful.

Russell: Yeah, uh-huh.

Brown: And ah

Russell: Were they, were they connected with each valve? Say if you pushed down the first valve

Brown: No, no, no, it was just the same as a Christmas light going on and off see, the switch would be down on the floor, see

Russell: I thought maybe it was connected to the valves

Brown: No, this would be hooked on in the back and that would be going timed at different intervals, the light would go on and off. And it was beautiful but ah to me that grunting sound of the tuba was--it wasn't a true bass tone to me, you see. And ah after I started playing and they heard the recordings why all the band leaders thought the same as I did, because they all started changing to string bass. But for awhile, I had the field all to myself and I traveled all through the New England coast and those places and when ah when I'd return on my second trip, I'd see basses seem to appear in different bandstands, you know, as I went along, and then after

Retyped.

Brown: I made about the third trip or so, why everybody and his brother had a string bass on, and they discarded tubas completely. They'd put them away. And in a great many bands now, bringing tubas back a little bit and also banjos. But ah very few it is very few tuba players that can continue playing smooth tones, you know what I mean. It depends upon his stomach and the condition of himself, physically. Ah, but a string bass, you can always get a nice smooth tone out of it, you know. Now I played a different type of bass, I played what they called 'slapstick bass', see. When I first ah when we were playing out at Milneburg and West End and those places out at all day picnics, one place in particular the drummer failed to show up. And I had used the bow up until then. I had used the bow, learned to bow (?) the bow, just bass like, any legitimate bass player would play, and ah this drummer not showing up left us without any rhythm, so I put the bow down, and slapped the bass, just slapped the strings against the finger board, which produced an after beat effect which gave it a rhythmic effect to the band, and the boys all liked it so well they even though after we did get a drummer why they wanted me to continue. So I continued that way.

Russell: You just slapped the string against the bass and then pluck it on the way out again?

Brown: That's right, that's right.

Russell: ? (You hit against the thing and then pulled the string out and it)

Brown: Yeah. Well ah with the aid of the ah finger board, I used to make triple beats, see, you'll hear it on "Dinah" [with Jean Goldkette, Victor (See Jazz Director)] see, the string will hit the finger board and I'll just catch it see, catch it on the bounce see, and it make a sort of triple effect. And ah that way, it was so pronounced that all the musicians could hear it see, and they didn't understand how I did it. In fact, I wasn't able to explain it myself. And ah so, they liked it that way, and ah they'd never heard anything like that before.

Russell: Tell us some more about that "Dinah" while you're talking about it that record that you made....."Dinah".

Brown: Well "Dinah", ah, to me, was the first record that we made. And as that, to me, that was the first record to be to have a string bass record. I'm sure of that because of the extra amount of money I made by other recording companies paying me to come over to their studio and ah play, oh, a few bars on the bass, that's all I had to do they said. It won't take anymore

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Brown: than fifteen minutes we'll pay you be glad to pay you a coupla hundred dollars or so to come on over. Some of them would give me a hundred dollars, some of 'em give me a hundred and fifty, few (?) two hundred dollars or so, get the money, just have me to come on over to their studios and play, so I knew that there must have been something to it. And up until that particular time, with all, with Mr. King he was in charge of the recording at that particular time, on 44th street in New York. He said that ah, naw, he said, we can't record string basses. He says, no, I'll [King] just show it to you, he says he showed Goldkette how they bass spread the wax on them on the test but ah this is the way I figured that out the composition of the wax on the master...it must have been harder than the one on the test because the tones come out alright, it surprised everybody. And from then on, why they wanted plenty of bass and I, I when I was traveling, I'd stop in different music stores and I'd get different ones of the salesmen's viewpoints of things how they was selling, how the records were moving, and he says "Oh, they like plenty of bass, the people like a lot of bass in them, they like that heaviness that you have in there, he says, they like that." So ah ah that's why I continued to play that way, I had heavier strings on my bass for larger orchestras, you know, and because if I'd put the regulars, legitimate size strings on why it wouldn't come out, it wouldn't be as pronounced as it was on the records that you hear.

Russell: What kind of strings did you use, the ah ah E (?) and the ah

Brown: Well, I'd I'd, have a heavier G than was ordinarily used

Russell: That was a gut string.

Brown: Yeah, a gut string, yeah G and D gut strings. Then I'd add A and E wrapped

Russell: Wrapped.

Brown: Wrapped with silk and then that would have, being heavier, that would give me ah ah a deeper vibration, see.

Russell: What kind of a bass did you use, do you remember the instrument, how much you paid for it, what was it, ah---

Brown: Well, it was a German bass

Russell: German Bass

Brown: And I only paid seventy-five dollars for it. And after I had it graduated and fixed up like I wanted it, why I was offered seven or eight hundred dollars for it. In fact eh, at

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Brown: one time, in Cincinnati I think the Wurlitzer people offered me a thousand dollars for it. Ah, but I liked it and it responded so well, and I could do anything I wanted with it, almost, so I traveled all around until it was stolen from me. That was, I forget the year it was stolen, it was during the depression. And ah it was just like losing somebody in my family after I lost my instrument.

Russell: I guess so.

Brown: So, but I played locally for quite a long time around in Detroit and ah I've had my fun, my only regret is the young boys are not paid as well and don't have quite as much fun as they did have years back. For instance the recordings, we ah we got paid ah with Whiteman, we got paid like the string sections got paid twenty-five dollars a side for recordings and the brass men fifty dollars a side, and we'd make as high as eight sides, eight sides a day. With four in the morning and four in the afternoon. See. So that, that was in ah outside of my salary I received from Whiteman. That was extra money, or if we played any extra dances besides ah our theater well we were paid extra for that. And we made good money in those days but they don't get paid that way now, they get paid for a session regardless of how many records they make. See, and that's my only regret that the young people don't have ah have the opportunities that we had years back.

Allen: Well, what years were you with Whiteman and Goldkette? I didn't get that straight, exactly.

Brown; Well ah, I was with Whiteman around the latter part of '28 and '29, ah '28 and '29. Then I went back to Goldkette. Now I've ah I've ah now you've heard a lot of talk about Bix [Beiderbecke], he was a great character. He's one that ah every musician talks about. Because he had eh oh, he was, his mind was always on music, nothing else, he'd play a job with us that would terminate maybe one or two o'clock in the morning he'd be out with a group of boys maybe playing or jamming with someone until about four or five in the morning, six in the morning. And I roomed with Bix and a great deal of the time, and Bix would come in by the time I was getting up to go out, and ah Bix was kinda forgetful at times. In one particular instance I remember his leaving the hotel and leaving his cornet, cornet there coming on the job, you know --and no cornet. He'd have to get a cab, pay a cab driver to ah haul his trumpet from where he left, you know, clean out there to the job. And a great many times, Bix would be late,

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Brown: and he'd have to catch a cab--ah a cab and follow the train to our next destination, you know. Maybe the cab fare would be real high uh ha, but Bix didn't seem to mind that and there was a lot of musicians I run across with this [Frank] Trumbauer, he was quite a character too. The musicians certainly loved the way he played. And ah, I had a lot of fun in the music game.

Allen: What about down here was there anybody who played Bix's style down here? Before you went up north?

Brown: No, I can't say that I heard anyone phrase like Bix.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: Bix had an individual phrasing of his own, so many of 'em claimed that he copied it from this one and that one and some of 'em claimed that he copied it from [Nick] LaRocca, well he may have ah learned the numbers that LaRocca knew, that were recorded, you know.

Allen: Yeah.

Brown: But his phrasing was entirely different. And his phrasing up today in comparison with LaRocca you can find a different phrasing entirely. But Bix had ah had ah a different type of phrasing entirely. Very noticable to all trumpet players. And if they wanted to tell the truth they'll tell you this. It's no copy of anyone, it's an individual phrasing of his own. See, Bix, ah came from a musical family, too, ah Bix learned how to play piano I think before he played trumpet, I think he knew something about piano before he played trumpet. Ah, and his fingering was ah entirely different from a legitimate piano player's fingering, you know what I mean, Bix learned how to play by ear, and when they learned how to play by ear, and wher they tried to ah write the music for "In A Mist", and several other numbers of Bix why the piano players themselves were confused because of Bix's false fingering, you know, in order to get certain passages you know, they tried to copy it, see. But musically, they finally got it down. See, to where it was anyone could play it legitimately. And so is there anything that you would like to ask me right now, that I can't think of myself?

Allen: Yeah. I'd like to ask you about ah Emmett Hardy, what did he play like, or did you ever know him?

Brown: Emmett Hardy, yeah. Well Emmett Hardy played all right, he played a good instrument,

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Brown: but he ah I wouldn't comparison compare him with Bix.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: Although he had a style of his own.

Allen: uh-huh. I see.

Brown: And he had, Emmett Hardy, he was more or less around Chicago. And he had a style of his own, too, but ah both of 'em were had good styles and they were well liked and ah, but I wouldn't say that ah Hardy phrased like Bix at all.

Russell: Do you remember where Hardy came from?

Brown: I thought Hardy came from Davenport, Iowa /no/ but I'm not sure of that. But I thoug he did.

Russell: You never heard him down around here,

Brown: No.

Russell: Hardy

Brown: No, he wasn't down here then. We ah we had Emile Christian down here at that particu time, in fact I started Emile Christian out on trumpet at that particular time. And we had him playing with us for awhile and then Tom and Emile Christian got on the outspots something and Ray Lopez took his place.

Russell: Yeah.

Brown: At the Majestic Hall then, it was on 7th and Magazine at the time they had the dance hall there, the ballroom.

Allen: What was your very first music job, by the way?

Brown: My first, well I'm ashamed to say that our (?) first music job was ah in a private home, I remember that job well, they served us ice cream with a fork (laughter). And I think they give us about 25 or 50 cents a number.

Allen: uh-huh.

Brown: to play. We were kids we were just tickled to death to be playing not alone in in accepting money from anyone, you know what I mean, we just thought that was great to be in a party to be invited in a party, you know and play.

Allen: Who was there?

Brown: Huh?

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Allen: Who was there in the band?

Brown: Oh, we, yes, we had some boys that ah just played a little for fun, but they ah haven't been in the music field to.....

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: To, ah...

Allen: Did you have a trombone player?

Brown: No, we just had strings instruments at that particular time.

Allen: Oh, was Tom in the band?

Brown: Yeah, Tom played violin.

Allen: Oh!

Brown: And I played bass and ah we had another kid playin' guitar, by the name of Joe Weathers, Weathers, who later became a priest, so therefore, that's not worth mentioning. But anyway, he, we built our band up gradually, as we learned how to play and when we start batching ourself, and we got ahold of those instruments that /Happy/ Schilling had left there, why we branched out and had a band so quick and ah /Johnny/ Fischer's band at that time was a well known band and Schilling, I think, is still living, isn't he?

Russell: Yeah

Allen: uh-huh.

Brown: Well, he'll tell you that we had a very good band in a short time after we started. And we were attracting quite a lot of attention. The Fischer's band was also a good band, but ah we later developed into one of the best bands around the city.

Allen: Did you have any favorite bass players, other musicians when you were young then that might have influenced your style or helped you in any way?

Brown: No. Ah, it seems like I depended more on my ear for everything, it seemed like I was happy when I got the right note, and I knew when I got the right note, my ear told me when I got the right note. But there are a few characters that I admired around in New Orleans, that ah I admired their bass playing. There was Chink /Martin/, ah the ole' man Chink.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: His son, I think is playing around, but I mean--and there was another feller by the

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Brown: name of Johnny Guitar [really Willie Guitar] who we always used to laugh about played guit---played bass and lived on Music Street.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: Well, I got a kick out of him, not for his playing not for his playing, but the way he'd make a face with every change (laughter) and I'm telling ya he wasn't laughing either, he was that's his style. He was ah he'd have to squirm his face up in different expressions in order to make every particular note, and I'm telling you it was quite a treat to see him. And his name was, I'll never forget him, he was Johnny Guitar played bass and lived on Music Street, I thought that was a funny saying, I told some of the boys up there that ah if I ever ran across him, if he was still livin' why I'd try to get a picture of him and send it to 'em they heard he talk about him so much. But those two and the Loyacano boys they ah Arnold Loyacano, I used to like his guitar playing, and Jules Cassard, you may have met him in Chicago

Allen: That's Raymond's uncle, huh,

Brown: Yeah, Raymond's unche, yeah.

Allen: Raymond Burke's uncle, I never met him.

Brown: Well, he was a good guitar player and ah Bud Loyacano, he played bass andhe's over in Gretna I believe now, livin' over in Gretna, he's retired over there. But he used to play a bass the reverse style, like ah Shupaine or what, do you have another bass player around here by

Allen: Mangiapane

Brown: Surpainia

Allen: Mangiapane

Brown: [Sherwood] Mangiapane [left-handed]. Well he plays bass wrong, see.

Allen: Instead of like....

Brown: The reverse

Russell: Yeah

Brown: Bud Loyacano plays the same way.

Allen: uh-huh.

Brown: And I used to get a big boot out of that. Even when he played guitar, he played

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Brown: guitar the reverse.

Allen: uh-huh.

Brown: See, instead of strumming it this way, put the neck this way and pick it up. "Pinc"

Allen: Oh. (laughter)

Brown: I don't see how he done it.

Allen: Pick it up with his left hand, huh?

Brown: Huh?

Allen: He'd go up with his left hand, I don't see how he made those chords with his right hand.

Brown: I don't see, but he did.

Allen: Fantastic

Brown: And that's the way he played bass. And so those were the ones I remember a whole lot about. Now this Jung---

(telephone rings)

Allen: That may be for me. I'm supposed to...

Brown: You know Jung?

Brown's sister: Ya, what's your name.

Russell: No, I don't think so

Allen: Dick Allen

Brown: You know anybody by the name of Jung?

Allen: I never heard of him.

Brown: They used to have a saddle place. Used to make saddles for horses and things like that on Magazine between Sixth and Seventh.

Allen: How do you spell their names?

Brown: J-U-N-K, ah J-U-N-G, I think, and his father was the bass player, he played bass in my father's band, and ah I thought maybe you knew him.

Allen: No.

Brown: Well, now I don't know just what I could tell ya' ah

Allen: Well, there are different things I would like to ask you about---

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Brown: Everything is so badly screwed up in the "Jazz World" I, I (laughter) I, myself I don't know what they are gona' call it next, you know. They are calling it progressive jazz and they callin' it, it's all the same, regardless of what they call it, it's all the same, and ah it all depends upon who'll get by. Now Benny Goodman tried to get by with it as "swing" for so long, you know, but it's just the same numbers played in a faster tempo, or a little bit more futuristically, you know what I mean.

Russell: When you were a boy, what did they call it?

Brown: Huh?

Russell: When you were a boy---what did they call this music then?

Brown: Just hot music, ragtime music, we never knew anything about jazz

Russell: When was the first time you heard it called jazz?

Brown: Well, when I ah when I was told about it, eh, in Chicago by the musicians. That's the only thing I heard, even when I come down to New Orleans here to get a bass, to buy a bass to go up to Chicago why ah I never thought of having this music being called "jazz", you know.

Allen: Well what was "plantation music"?

Brown: "Plantation music"? Plantation music was a different type of ah music, you know, like "Old Black Joe" (hums out song) and such numbers like that, ah the slaves would play and ah and they'd play mazookas [mazurkas] and schottisches and things like that in their style, but instead of playing it in the regular schottische or mazooka [mazurka] tempos they'd go make a differerent tempo out of it, and play it a little bit differently, see? And that's what attracted attention, as it went along, it would build up and I think more of us, ah we we ah we took ideas from out in through that country as wekk as through the darkies that we heard play, around here, too, you know what I mean, we took the ideas, the white people did--that's the poor white trash as we call ourselves in those days. And ah we played what sound good to us you know, whatever sounded good to us, we played, and we all felt that if when we struck the right note, why ah we knew it was right because it pleased everyone. Now you take the Friar's Inn band [NORK], and none of us could read a note of music in that band except Elmer Schoebel. And Elmer Schoebel would hold a rehearsal and he'd give everybody their notes to play, see, and one piece we would rehearse on that one piece for hours and everybody would commit to memory everything they'd suppose to do. And then when we would play in the nighttime, everything

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Brown: would be perfect, you know what I mean. We had musicians from all over the city, visitors too that would come in this cafe to hear us play. And we did have a fine band, that was really a good band.

Russell: Can you tell us about when you joined the band, how you happened to join you were already in Chicago you say.

Brown: I was in Chicago, yeah. I happened to stop in the cafe and I wasn't ah, I wasn't working I was just jobbing and I happened to stop in the cafe that particular night and it just so happened that Arnold Loyacano had been playing in that band, but he took sick and didn't show up, and they wanted a bass player so bad that they asked me to sit in and play. Well when I played a coupla numbers, they just went crazy, so Arnold was out from then on so I had the job. And ah I played with them and at one time I played two jobs at one time. I played the Midway Gardens up until twelve o'clock and then from there I jumped over to the Friar's Inn and played then until five o'clock in the morning you see. And I did that for a long time, and I made a lot of money in the music field, that's true, and where it went I don't know. (laughter) Spent it as fast as I got it.

Russell: Who else was in the band when you joined? Friar's Inn.

Brown: Briar's Inn Band? Well Elmer Schoebel ah Elmer Schoebel was playing piano at that particular time, and we had ah Mares, Paul Mares and we had Roppolo, /Leon/ on clarinet, Georg Brunis on trombone, and we had ah ah ah ah Benny Pollack on drums. And I was playing bass, and then other times we changed changed around and

End of Reel II

Retyped.

Russell: It's going, I guess. Can you tell us about the--you just named everyone in the band, can you tell us a little bit about Georg Brunis and his family, you mentioned Georg Brunis.

Brown: Yes, well they had quite a large family, there's Abe [Abbie], and we used to--well one of them we used to nickname Jughead, I think (laughs) and ah there was, you're acquainted with Ab?

Russell: Yeah

Brown: And ah Georg played trombone, and ah let's see his other brothers, name is in St. Louis now - Bay St. Louis I understand, Everett is it or Merritt.

Russell: Merritt

Brown: Merritt Brunies, yeah, yeah, he played trumpet; but ah different style, all of them have styles of their own, you know.

Allen: Who was Jughead? What did he play?

Brown: I don't know what he played, I think he played fooled around with bass a little bit. But he didn't come out very much, I think he just played around for his own amusement more than anything else, he didn't try to commercialize on anything that he knew [probably Rudy].

Allen: Well, who was added on---

Brown: You can get that information out of Merritt himself.

Russell: Yeah, we'll have to ask

Allen: Well, who was added on to the Friar's Band later, you gave us the original men?

Brown: Yeah, well we had ah

Allen: Who came in later?

Brown: Elmer Schoebel had to ah leave and at times we had Mel Stitzel who was another rhythm band piano player; and ah when [Leon] Roppolo had to leave, to go come back here to the sanitarium--he was sick--we got another boy by the name of Volly DeFaut to play clarinet in his place; then we had Jack Pettis playing saxophone; and ah, Jack Pettis played for a long time with the band after I left, and it seems like after Roppolo left the boys just couldn't get together right, there was always something lacking and they sorta disbanded. After--when I left the band Chink--Chink Martin joined the band, he played he made "Tin Roof Blues" and a few other records with tuba with the band.

Allen: What numbers did you make with the band?

Brown: I made "Farewell", "Bugle Call", "Eccentric", and ah I think "Lots O' Mama" ah oh I

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Brown: forget now just all the records I did make with 'em. But ah you you just can't hear the bass at all on it, as I said before you you it wouldn't record in those days. And they didn't there was no records there was no record that I know of by any company that produced the sound of a string bass with the exception of the Victor people...that was in 1926 or the fall of 1925, I don't know which when it finally came out, but it was 19---I think it was 1926. [Goldkette's "Dinah" recorded Jan. 28, 1926. Issued soon thereafter].

Russell: And then Chink took your place then and went to Chicago--up there

Brown: Chink--Chink took my place in the Friar's Inn band when I left them.

Allen: uh-huh. Well, where was he before he came, before he joined them?

Brown: Oh, they got him from New Orleans.

Allen: They got him

Brown: Chink--Chink had about eight kids, see, and he was always worried after he got up in Chicago about his eight children. And ah I didn't see Chink at the time, I know he was in Chicago playing with the Friar's Inn Band, but I was busy with other bands, see?

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: Besides playing with the Midway Garden Orchestra, I'd be booked on a Monday night that I was supposed to be off with some other orchestra. And Benny Goodman ah I was on a job date one night and he appealed to me so much his playing appealed to me so much that I told him that the next opening I would try to get him in our orchestra at the Midway Gardens. Well, we had Roy Kramer playing clarinet in that band at that particular time and Roy quit and I told the boys about this Goodman, Benny Goodman and they said "Yes, bring him over, we'll hear how he sounds". Well, Benny Goodman was afraid to come over to that orchestra, it was so big, you know, he figured, "Oh I couldn't play with them, a big band like that", so when he played, why the boys was all satisfied so he played with this band with our band for quite a long time, and he played with the band up until the time I left.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: I'd played with --- he was playing with the band at the time I left, and went to join [Jean] Goldkette. Then later-ah-Goodman quit that band and ah formed a band of his own, see. With Benny Pollack [actually leader] and those. Benny Pollack played with him at first.

Allen: Yeah

Retyped

Brown: And ah they had a real good band. His brother played bass with him /Harry Goodman, bass/ and ah I used to see him every now and then when I'd come into Chicago. But ah my most enjoyable music years was spent with the Goldkette outfit because it was in my estimation a very good band for the size--it was a big band and they played rhythmically-the rhythm was perfect, I mean it was--it had a nice body to it and ah the people liked the music very much--everyone that we played for. We played the Ivy Ball which is an exception, do you know anything about the Ivy Ball?

Russell: No.

Brown: Well, it's given every year in in Philadelphia and they hire the two most outstanding orchestras around the country each year for that affair. And the one that receives the most applause at this particular dance is booked for the next year.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: But then they hunt around the country for the most outstanding orchestra for the next one. Now if this new one receives more applause than this other one, why that's replaced, see? And that's the way they work it. This Ivy Ball is one of the largest affairs in the country. And we were very fortunate in playing that for several years, and we had to play against a lot of fine bands at that particular time and ah I enjoyed myself playing with the Victor Band, I think more than--Goldkette's Victor Band more than I did with any other orchestra that I've been with. With the exception of the Friar's Inn. The Friar's Inn was a smaller band, but it had a lot of body on it, and we made good money with it.

Allen: I wanted to ask you about some of those fellows we were talking about in the grocery store, when we took that break, from New Orleans,who you considered outstanding down here--musicians. . .

Brown: Who?

Allen: When you were young?

Brown: A grocery store you said?

Allen: We were talking in the grocery store about different musicians down here and you named some that were outstanding--this fellow Babb you talked about, and ah all that.

Brown: Oh, I--I mentioned ah ah let's see I can't recall now just what we were talking about,

Allen: We were talking about Babb Frank, a trombone player /actually he was a piccolo player.

Allen: Possibly he means Frankie Duson/.

Brown: Oh, Babb Frank, yes, yes. Well, he was quite an ole man when I was a young boy. But I mean at that particular time, I have--I remember how he played and how everyone talked about him. See.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: But ah you'll evidently find his name in some of the books, although I've failed to find it. Ah, that's the same way with Johnny Guitar, /he means Willie Guitar?/ I've never found his name. Well, he's never pioneered in music at all, see. All he played in one catagory, morely downtown than anything else. He very seldom come on this side of Canal Street, you'd always find him around the French Quarters. See. Johnny Guitar, so therefore, he wasn't known as well as a lot of the other musicians. Now the bands in that particular time, playing in lawn parties over the city and then at night, after some dances or another you could it wasn't common to see, it wasn't out-of-place to see any orchestras serenading people.

Allen: uh-huh.

Brown: Three, four o'clock in the morning. Different ones, we'd run across different orchestras as we'd pass by and they were going to some place to serenade somebody and we'd be going to some other place. And we'd wake the people up, and they'd seem to enjoy getting up, at that time of the morning and invite us in--in their underclothes, in their nightgowns and everything, and before you'd know it the neighbors would all come out of their houses, wouldn't be dressed up, and before you'd know it there was a party going in the house--everybody was drinking and happy. Well, in those days you can imagine, no radio and nothing like that, when the people heard just a note of music, well everybody was out. We used to have German bands, that used to travel around the city of New Orleans and play a few numbers; the people'd all come out and gather around, and then they'd pass the hat around.

Russell: How many would be in those German bands?

Brown: Huh?

Russell: How many in the band?

Brown: The German band? Well, they had quite a number of violins, first, second, and third violins, flutes, cornets, trombones, and things like that. One band in particular that used to

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Brown: be around, .. Ithink it's called the 11th Ward, the Garden District, tenth or eleventh ward, around 6th and 7th street from Louisian--Washington Avenue or Jackson Avenue up to Louisiana Avenue around that area, there used to be a German band that'd come regular and play around in the neighborhood and pass the hat around. Well, the rumor was that they were stranded over in this country, and that they were trying to get enough money to get back to Germany. And they would play..and around in that particular section's known as little Germany anyway, see around Laurel and ah between 6th and Washington--all that area around there is all more or less German people. And ah then, of course you know where the Irish Channel is.

Russell & Allen: Yeah.

Brown: And that's the way New Orleans is, it separates, you know, the middle class people live on this side of Magazine Street and the lower class would be from there to the river, you know, and that's the way it was in those days. But now I don't remember all the musicians in the [Johnny] Fischer's Band, but they had ah quite a good band at that time. But they never ventured out of New Orleans, I don't think [no. Went to Chicago] maybe played danced out of the state for a little bit, but they never went up. I don't think Fischer, I don't think Fischer or any of them went up there, if they did, I never did read anything about it. Did you ever ask Schilling in regards to anything like that?

Russell: We'll ask him, we'll ask him.

Allen: Well Schilling told me he went to Chicago once, I forget who was in the band.

Brown: Well, maybe they did.

Allen: But he came back ah. Who did Billy Lambert play with? You mentioned him awhile ago.

Brown: Well, he went up with Tom.

Allen: uh-huh. Who did he play with down here?

Brown: Well, he played with different bands around here, from what I understand, just jobbing just like the musicians are now. You never know who they're playing with. They liable to (?) only play with one group one week, and another group another week, you know, and it's sorta a mixed up affair. [Prize understatement] And the musicians as a general rule, they--even in all bands, big bands, [Paul] Whiteman's band included, while I was there they made quite a number of changes, see?

Allen: uh-huh.

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Brown: Roy Bargy came in while I was there, and ah we had /Harry/ Parella fella with the bushy long hair played "Rapsody in Blue" on the piano you know at first.

Allen & Russell: Oh yeah, uh-huh.

Brown: Well he got so temperamental, that he thought he couldn't that Paul couldn't do without him so when he did--when he left the orchestra--Paul never would fire anybody..when he left the orchestra why he got a hold of Roy Bargy and Bargy took over the job, and in no time he was playing just like Parella. "Rhapsody in Blue" first in his place(?).

Brown: But they made quite a lot of changes in Whiteman's Band alone. And that's the way it is with ah ah these other small orchestras I was in.

Allen: Now who was Joe Meyers? I never heard of him before.

Brown: Who?

Allen: Meyers, you mentioned a drummer.

Brown: Joe Meyers. Well he's dead now, he used to play drums with us quite a lot around New Orleans on job dates. And ah he was..he came back here and went on the Police Force later on from what I understand, married and his father was ah--had some sort of a political job at that particular time. In fact his father used his influence to ah get me a string bass...

Allen: uh-huh.

Brown:..when I was growing up. I first had a half size bass that I bought, and as I grew up why that little half size bass was gettin' too small for me, see, I was standing up and the little bass was down here, and I was fingering down here, see.

Russell: Wasn't even up to your shoulders.

Brown: That's right. And so Joe Meyer's father had some sort of pull down town in one of the stores..

Russell: Yeah

Brown: ..so he told me to go down there and pick out a bass and pay so much a week and he'd stand good for it, which I did. So that was my first--first bass that I paid a hundred and twenty-five dollars for, I think, at that particular time which is a high amount. But playing music as we were then, why it didn't take no time to pay off everything.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: But in those days twenty-five cents was a high amount. A person could take [illegible]

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Brown: out all day and have a good time with it. It's just like a five dollar bill. I mean I could take--for five cents I could get a chicken dinner and ah a great big glass of beer enough to fill you up for the rest of the day you know what I mean--that was lunch for five cents. And I mean you could go to a show for ten cents, see, and ah people--admission charges were twenty-five cents for a dance, why my goodness, that was a high price for them to pay. But in those days why that was big money.

Russell: What did they pay the musicians?

Brown: We paid, we played an all day picnic for around three dollars and a-half.

Allen: uh---

Brown: From nine o'clock in the morning till six o'clock in the evening. The people danced all day ate dinner out there and all that. They charged the people maybe a dollar, a dollar and a quarter admission. Which entitled them to dance and a big dinner. So all they could drink. They had drinking all day long. Barrels of beer, barrel after barrel. So you can see just how the money values were in those days. And so the musicians as a general rule all those that played ragtime as I'd say were more or less poor. All those--the people that were wealthy that taught their sons legitimately they didn't have the knack you know what I mean.

Russell: uh-huh

Brown: They played mechanically, you know what I mean.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: ...even if they played something from memory, it was from notes alone, see. No improvision /improvisation/ or anything like that. But ah we trained our ears so that we could just hear a piece

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: We could hear a piece and we could go right home and sit down and play it. We--the melody remained with us, see. We trained our ears so that, oh--I could, I fooled quite a lot of 'em--they thought I was readin' music a great many times in orchestras.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: But I wasn't, I was just lookin' at the music bluffing.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: But as the time went along, I saw where I had to quit bluffing and get down to reading.

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Brown: So, I did; I got down and studied music and

Russell: Did you take any lessons in those days or just learn it?

Brown: No, I bought myself a method and I knew the finger board and I--in a short time I learned where all the notes were. And when I was played with the big bands why of course I made those notes in the positions that the notes called for.

Allen: Who's your favorite bass player of all time? I was wondering about that. You know, if you had to choose one for a hot bass player.

Brown: Ahhhh--Well, what do you mean.. in that time or now?

Allen: Anytime--now and at that time or you know..of all time, in other words.

Brown: Well, ah the boy that ah really has a nice style and has put out several methods and is deserving a great deal of consideration was--ah what is his name again ah he was with ah with Bob Crosby for a long time..with Ray Bauduc and all the ah, what's ah

Allen: Bob Haggart

Brown: Bobby Haggart. Well now, he put out quite a lot of methods and his ah his explanation of the bass is of considerable value to a lot of the young boys that are takin' up bass because it gives them the proper steps on workin' around each note you see what I mean...

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: ...walkin' the bass, and ah workin' 'round each individual note, see. In other words it teaches them improvision /improvisation/ see. Now I myself I don't believe that anyone can improvise quickly and correctly unless they have the picture of the keyboard of the piano in mind. They ah there's so many of them that learn how to play instruments, they should learn the keyboard of the piano first. Now my own sons and daughters, they wanted to take up music and I told them I said well there's the piano, you learn how to play all the scales on the piano and I'll buy you any instrument you want. Oh, the boys said, "we won't have that, we won't do it." And my daughter says she would. So I had a good teacher for her. But my sons, they had the talent if they'd want to play because ah my son Jimmy /Brown/ proved it to me right after he came out of the service; he sat down at the piano and in a short time he was playing all boogie woogie pieces and everything else.

Allen: uh-huh.

Brown: That showed that he had talent if he wanted to learn. But his mind is more to ah the

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Brown: type that I hoped that he would get into rather than music because music is awful nice in a respect but there's the musicians spend their money as fast as they get it you know what I mean.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: In other words, you have to get around and drink with the boys in order to become known, you know what I mean and you have to produce something. If you produce something outstanding why you have a lot of admirers, you, you can't afford to fluff them off. Now like Bix [Beiderbecke], he was admired by so many musicians the poor devil would be comin' in he'd be traveling all day on the train--all tired, and we'd get into a hotel where all of us would want to stretch out a little bit and relax a little bit for an hour or two before playing that night and here a whole crowd would meet Bix at the station, you know.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: And it was during the dry days they'd have hootch [whiskey] on them and Bix would try to be polite and when he'd fluff them off a little bit and get to the hotel there was another gang waiting for him, see. And they all had a bottle, and Bix was constantly drinking all the time. That's what put him to his death, you know. But ah he was loved; I think Bix was loved by the musicians more than any other musician I know of. And there was a lot of fine boys that I've met in the music game ah, such as Speigan (Spaigle) Wilcox, he'd ah got a little Dixieland combination now around Cortland, New York. His father left a coal business to him. He used to play trombone with us in the Victor band. Now he didn't play a hot trombone, but he had a beautiful tone, round beautiful tone; we'd use him for beautiful numbers to come out on solo. Bill Rank would come out with the hot numbers more because he had that type of a trombone, but ah Speigan Wilcox would have a beautiful round tone, smooth, and the boy had a nice personality, well educated, and well liked by everyone he used to come in contact with.

Allen: Oh, who did you record with, you said the Friars boys and who else?

Brown: Well, I recorded with the Friar's Inn, [NORK] of course, and the ah the Midway Garden Orchestra; we made some for Brunswick and ah none of those records of course in my estimation were what I'd consider good. I had to play tuba on that, and I wasn't good on tuba. (laughs) In fact, I think I--I think I was about the poorest tuba player on anybody's record, but I did make a few records with them. And I recorded with them on tuba. But ah

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Allen: Maybe we can play some of the records now, Bill.

Russell: There's a coupla other questions I was gonna ask. Of the old time bass players he in New Orleans, which would be your favorite? When you were younger. Or is there more than one.

Brown: Well, there used to be a fellow by the name of [?] McKinney, McKinney ah but ah out side of working and playing extra with dances he never showed himself much and there's anothe bass player that ah I'm trying to think of the name of now that ah seemed to appeal to me whe I was a kid, but I just can't think of his name now.

Allen: It'll come to you.

Brown: I'd have to get it from ah someone who remembers those days. Ah, Bultmann, Bultmann, Bultmann, a feller by the name of Bultmann, he was a nice bass player. Had good tone and everything, buthe never played the type of bass I played. I say, I think I started off that way, playing by..with the bow but after I put it aside to give the aft'beat [afterbeat] rhyth ah in place of the drums, the boys liked it so well that I had to continue it that way, and from then on I never knew what a bow looked like.

Russell: Did you ever hear anybody pick it before you did?

Brown: Huh?

Russell: Did anybody ever pick that bass before you did that do you remember.

Brown: No, well after I was pickin' it for awhile, the only time I run across, I run across ah Johnny Guitar--he was pickin' it then. But I had been pickin' it

Russell: Before

Brown: Long before I heard him so how long he was pickin' it I don't know. But, he'd squinch up his face and I tell you it's the truth---it was so funny to watch him---but ah outside of that, I don't remember any of them.

Russell: And the Loyacanos

Brown: There's a lot of them pizzicatoing it, you know what I mean, like you do legitimately, they always did do that, see.

Russell: Oh, they always did pick it.

Brown: But they'd never slap the bass, it'd never have that afterbeat effect, see. I used to get an afterbeat effect, you can notice from a lot of the pieces when they take a solo and

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Brown: instead of just playing the straight note like you hear a lot of them playing now, see, a very few of them slap the bass. Because of it's too troublesome to the bass player, it creates a lot of trouble with their finger board, it ah puts too heavy an indentation in the finger board, and they always have to have it dressed, which I had to do constantly in order to keep my bass.

Russell: When you pick how many fingers do you use to pick with? Your first----

Brown: I used to use, I used to use two, three, two and three fingers, sometime I'd slide it over like this.

Russell: Oh, yes, one after the other alternating.

Brown: Then sometimes I'd, I'd when there was heavy music, I'd have the support of these three fingers.

Russell: The first three fingers, altogether.

Brown: I'd grab them, I'd when there was heavy music, I'd have the support of these three fingers.

Russell: The first three fingers, altogether.

Brown: I'd grab them, I'd grab them, because mine was heavier string heavier strings than were ordinarily used on the string bass. They weren't soft and pliable. Now you take for legitimat work, I couldn't finger it as well as a legitimate man could, because my strings were too heavy, but I had to have them heavy on account of the body, to produce with all that heavy instrumentation that we had.

Russell: Did you ever put tape

Brown: Eighteen or twenty men...

Russell: Put tape on your fingers or

Brown: I didn't at that particular time.

Allen: You didn't.

Brown: No, and my fingers were still tough.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: And the more I played the tougher they got. They got calluses on 'em.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: But all these boys that was startin' to play bass, they used to come to me and ask me

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Brown: what they could do about their fingers and some of 'em I told 'em, I said well the best thing I can tell you to do is to put a little tape on 'em or ah put your fingers down in formaldahyde the tips of 'em in formaldehyde...that gives it sorta a coating over there a dead feeling that you don't feel it. But you see, it don't give you the correct feeling any how after you put that on.

Russell: No, no

Brown: But it does prevent your fingers from gettin' sore, see. And there's other stuff they put on there now; ah I don't know what it is, it is told to me, but I forgot it. But ah I never had to do it myself, 'cause my fingers was so callused up that they were--I don't know, I could play all night and all day without my fingers hurting me or bothering me at all, but as I laid off of bass for awhile--I had arthritis and I come back trying to play a little bit--I felt it when I picked quite awhile. My fingers commenced to gettin' a little sore. They softened up on me, see. But you can readily see why it had no effect upon me because I was handling sheet metal for about seven years and that was strong.

Russell: Can you tell us about those tin violins and instruments that you made once?

Brown: Well, Tom made them more than I did. He experimented with all those kind of things; in fact if the credit was rightfully due, Tom was the first one to make that type of a mute for the trombone.

Russell: Oh, is that right?

Brown: Yeah, he made a tin mute and put the catches for cork in there you know

Russell: Yeah

Brown: So he could slip into his--to create different effects.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: And he'd make a different type. Well, ah as years went along why someone had the same idea and made it out of cardboard and plastic; anyway they got a patent on it, you know, different ones got patents on it, and they made a lot of money. If Tom had a got a patent on it, at that particular time, he'd been alright.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: But ah, he never bothered about it, but we made ah as I told you we made our, I made the first bass fiddle--he and I worked on it together--and the damn thing sounded just like a

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Brown: bass after we got through with it, but always stunk like anything from the cheese that was in it you know.

Russell: Well, what (laughs)

Brown: Cheese, originally cheese boxes. But we had these heavy, heavy ah twine strings.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: And when we'd bring up the tension to the desired pitch why it sounds

Russell: Real rope

Brown: Yeah, just rope, this ah, and it sound enough to please us for about three pieces, you know violin, guitar, and bass, so ah it gave us a kick out of it something, you know, just like a kid taking a box and puttin a stick across it and puttin' strings across it, why-or like /Emile/ "Stale Bread" 's /Lacoume/ band. "Stale Bread" had a half a barrel, a barrel cut down.

Russell: Oh, yeah

Brown: ....see. In the center, from the top to the bottom, and then they had it all boarded up with F holes cut in it, and they had a neck that protruded from there, see, and the strings were down, I don't know what sort of strings, he had, but they used to sit out there and play with that type of a bass and guitar right along the sidewalk near the St. Charles Hotel and places like that, collecting nickels, dimes, and quarters, see.

Allen & Russell: uh-huh

Brown: The passer-bys just stand there to hear them play. But in those days, no radio, television or anything like that, why when anybody would play a musical instrument, people would stand by.

Russell: Sure.

Brown: And listen at them play, see. So, ah that time that I experienced was entirely different from now; everything is so conglomerated with different other's ideas, that I don't know whether you'll benefit by anything thatI say or not.

Russell: I know we will.

Allen: Yeah, this is very good.

Russell: You're straightening out a lot of things there for us.

Brown: If you got any questions to ask me about who

Allen: Yeah, what about, what about saxophones? Did they ever use saxophones in those early

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Allen: days?

Brown: No. No, we didn't know what a saxophone was.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: Ah, ah the saxophones didn't come out until around, I'd say around 1913, 1912, and that the /Six/ Brown Brothers come out with those

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: Tom Brownand I think it was the four Brown brothers, I think they call themselves the Four Brown Brothers.

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Brown: Tell them that's where after all.

Russel: Tom got a nice write-up there in the paper.

Allen: He deserved credit.

Brown: Yeah, well he was in reality a pioneer in the jazz field. There and there was other colored bands that were up there. This was before Louie Armstrong come up there

Russell: Oh, it was.

Brown: This was before ah the ah ah King Oliver and all those come up. Ah, ah King ah ah and the bands that King Oliver played and Armstrong when they first come up from New Orleans wasn't a Dixieland combination at all. They had violins, they had flutes, and they had about eight-ten-twelve men, sitting on a stand.

Russell: Yeah.

Brown: And they played ah regular music as all the other colored people.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: But the Dixieland combination, just five pieces--that's entirely different.

Russell: Yeah, Oliver, I think, got up there about 1918 in Chicago, and you say "Papa" Laine had mostly just the brass bands.

Brown: Mostly brass bands

Russell: And didn't do much dance work, then.

Brown: No. He'd take the small bands but, I mean, you see what--he played drums if he maybe in a small combination, but I mean I, I don't remember seeing--we didn't have no competition with these bands at all. In fact, the only bands that gave us competition in a respect was ah

[Johnny] Fischer's band, and that band was--in in the estimation of the dancers and the people that I talked to that employed us was second raters in comparison to our band.

Russell: Yes.

Brown: And we played ah all the most exclusive affairs in New Orleans at the time up to the time I left 'em in 1913.

Rullell: You say Papa Laine would turn some of his dance jobs over to you then when he'd get them.

Brown: Oh, yes, great many times he had bands, ah dances downtown and he'd give us the job.

Russell: Did you ever----

- End of Spool -

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Brown: And of course he'd get his booking fees, you know.

Russell: Yeah. Did you ever work in any bands with ah

Brown: Jack Laine?

Russell: Jack Laine.

Brown: Yes, yes.

Russell: Or did you

Brown: I played tuba with Jack Laine--Jack Laine quite a number of times across the river as I remember it at different affairs,

Allen: Would that be dances or

Brown: Dances, yeah dances

Allen: Oh. What sort of a rhythm did he get?

Brown: See, we used to employ brass bands for dances, too, great big dances. Now they used to have ah dances out in all the large pavilions. They'd have a great big brass band in order to be heard. Well that was added. But later on like in Milneburg and in West End, they had certain pavilions out there that it all depended upon the chairman of the committee, if he wanted an orchestra he'd specify an orchestra, you know, or if he wanted to hire a brass band, he'd hire a brass band. But as a general rule, they ah they the orchestra used to sound better to the dancers than the brass band, in fact, they could dance much better than they could with a dance band to the brass band. A brass band couldn't get in the groove like the orchestras could.

Russell: Do you remember who was in Papa Laine's band, any of the other musicians that you can think of now?

Brown: "Papa" Laine's Band,

Russell: uh-huh.

Brown: Ah, uh, I remember a lot of them, but names I can't--you'd have to get that from Jack Laine himself, I imagine he know, remembers all the names of

Russell: One clarinetist, [Achille] Baquet did you ever know of him?

Brown: Baquet, yes, I remember him. Now I think he played with the ah band quite a bit. He played for Jack Laine and Baquet used to at times, play job dates with us. Maybe when Gussie Meuller was sick or couldn't get off or something happened--Baquet and Yellow Nunez and ah

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Brown: [Larry] Shields, and different ones at different times, the same as Harry Shields will play with different combinations around here now, and you'll see 'em on television with ah, with ah what's this little short fella's name again?

Allen: Sharkey.

Brown: Sharkey and he'll play around with different combinations, any place that will offer him money, you know.

Russell: Yeah, sure.

Brown: And that's the same way with the (?) musicians were when I was down here up until 1913.

Russell: Do you remember a fella by the name of Dave Perkins--I think he played trombone.

Brown: Dave Perkins, yes, he was outstanding fella at that particular time.

Allen: Who'd he play like? Did he play like jazz (?)

Brown: Well, I didn't like his playing as well as I did Babb Frank that's when I was little

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: I remember Dave Perkins when I was little. And ah they had a bass player a colored bass player ah I can't think of his name now--He was a light complected Creole sort of a fella he played a good bass. I used to admire him with the colored bands. He used to play a good bass and played the good notes as I call them, you know.

Allen: Do you remember which band he played with?

Brown: I think he played with the Creole band.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: A band called themselves the Creole Band. And I think the Creole band used to be around our neighborhood.

Allen: It couldn't be Bill Johnson?

Russell: I just started to say, I think it might have been

Brown: I think they lived on--I think one of the members lived on Sixth near Laurel Street

Allen: Huh?

Brown: On the downtown side, and they used to hold rehearsals, rehearsals quite often. They had violins and things like that, and flutes in the band. And we lived around the corner from them and I used to hear them rehearse.

Allen: Oak Gaspard, did you ever know him?

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Brown: That name is familiar to me, but I just can't

Allen: A colored bass player, I think he was pretty light.

Russell: Yeah, I never did know him either.

Brown: Now, they used to have a professor that used to teach music, I think his name was ah Barnett--and ah the whole family played music, and we were at one time--we went over to their place to play for the old man. And there I remember the old man being a teacher in legitimate music business. It was just amazing to him to see how we played, so well withoutusing notes, you know what I mean. And from everything--everything from memory. And completely dependent upon our ear. To him that was quite a sensation. And ah Broekhoven, I remember Theodore Broekhoven. I did, I went overto his place one time and I took one lesson on tuba. (laughter)

Russell: On tuba

Brown: And after he give me one lesson--I figured I knew enough. I had the idea, he just showed me how to blow it you know.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: And ah--ole' man Broekhoven. Theodore Broekhoven, was the one that gave me my first Carnival job for the parades. Now I'm not talkin' about the first Carnival job we played for the Garden District Club. But for the floats in between the--no, the bands.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: In between the floats--we had professional bands, no school bands as there are now.

Russell: Like the Rex Parade, those big ones.

Brown: Yes, the big ones, we played all the parades. And in those days, we didn't have school bands.

Russell: Yes

Brown: All professional musicians... each band. And he'd ah go outa' the state in Mississippi and Alabama and Georgia and even as far as Florida to get different bands to come in there and to play this parades. These parades, behind each floats, you know.

Russell: Between each one of those floats there was a band.

Brown: Oh, beautiful and the bands would be playin' and it was a much finer carnival than they have today. In my estimation--I mean

Russell: How big a band?

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Brown: Everything is, huh?

Russell: How big a band?

Brown: Well, about ten pieces, ten

Russell: Ten piece

Brown: to twelve pieces for each band

Russell: uh-huh

Brown: And ah dependent upon what unit it was--some of these country unit'd maybe had twelve or fifteen. Theodore Broekhoven I think would only pay 'em one lump sum for a band, you see, they would have to split that up amont themselves. But ah the Union would furnish as many bands as they could, out of their own organization, and then from there they'd import a lot of bands. So I happen to see Theodore Broekhoven down there, and I was nervy as anything. I'd talk to anybody.

Russell: yeah, sure.

Brown: I told him I had a good band, and he signed me up. He evidently heard about us, you know, and so he gave me the job, gave me the first Carnival job that I played. So, I had quite a lot of fun around New Orleans in my young days and

Allen: Well, which

Brown: And I didn't expect to be so successful, so successful with music when, after laying off it for so long, for seven years you may as well say, and then returning to it and start playing and working my way up from I was just steppin' from one orchestra to another, better orchestras and better orchestras and more money and more money up until the time I got to [Paul] Whiteman. When I got to Whiteman, I figured well I can't go any further. So, that was the time when, when I'd get out and play before the band Whiteman used to make me come out in the front and play a solo and ah in grabbing them strings, my arm used to pain me awful and I didn't know what was happening.

Russell:

Brown: And my fingers were feeling bad and I didn't know what it was but anyway, after I left Whiteman, I went to the hospital and had them to take X-ray of my fingers thinking that I had a fractured bone or something that was aching me so, and the doctors told me, no it was arthritis

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Brown: And they told me--I asked them what they could do--and they said, well we can't tell you, there's not a cure known for it.

Russell: Yeah, that's right.

Brown: So up-to-date there's not a cure known for it.

Russell: My mother has it, too.

Brown: So I read a book one time and it said that the only thing that they could advise a person to do that any sickness was caused by what a person eat so they advised me to go on a diet. (phone rings) Strict diet, just change around

Russell: You want me to answer, I think that's Ralph [Collins]

Brown's sister: I can answer it.

Russell: My friend, go ahead and talk.

Brown: They thought that ah they thought the best thing to do would be to reverse things of what I had been doing. So I quit drinking coffee, I quit drinking any sort of likkers and I quit eating meats of any kind, nothing but vegetables nothing but ah barley coffee and things like that. And I done that for about four years. And my fingers commenced to limber up. And I think that's what largely did it.

Brown's sister; It's not five o'clock, is it?

Russell: Yeah, just about five, about two minutes to five.

Brown's sister: It is!

Brown: Then in conjuction with that, I took ah what they call "Neutralite"(sp?) and that seemed to help me a whole lot, too. That was sort of a vitamine.

Allen: Oh, I see.

Brown: And then later on I start eatin' meat again and so far I've been able to navigate around, but my fingers--are--I'm not in, not so that I could finger a bass like I'd want to. I can bluff things around a while and maybe as old as I am, I'm liable to be like Tom--a little later on grab hold of a bass all of a sudden, you know, and sit in with a band and start playing again, but it will never be anything like I used to do.

Russell: Well you can still get better, as I say, better and...

Brown: Well, that's what a lot of musicians said, but my playin' didn't satisfy me and

Retyped

Brown: because it didn't satisfy me why I tried to do something else, you know.

Russell: We can play some of those old records, and then--I wondered first though, if you have anything more to add about Tom going to Chicago since he's not here to speak for himself... anything else you think he wanted known about himself and the things that he originated and first started.

Brown: Well, ah I was away from Tom and all the boys at that particular time and in a differen line of business entirely with sheet metal works--therefore I can only tell you what he'd write and how the band was going along and what letters I received from Ray Mue----Ray Lopez who ah would write me now and then. Gus Meuller'd never write me, and Tom would very seldom write me at that time. But Ray Lopez told me says, "You know, he says, when we first got to Chicago he says the people thought we were drunk. They thought we were crazy. They refused to come into the cafe. He says they ah ah just peeped in there and looked in there and they saw some fellas sittin' on the piano playing (laughs) and here's a fella doing something else, he says, My God, he says. Lamb [owner of Lamb's Cafe?] come to Tom, and he says say he says something's wrong, those people are not comin' in. Well he says ah the next day he says I happened to be down in the Loop and I met some actors that were in the theatre there--and they said, "Ray, what are you doin' in Chicago?" Oh, he says, "I'm here with Brown's band." "You are, they say, with that band down there". He say "Sure", he says. "My goodness, where you playin at?" He says Lamb's Café. So they call up and reserve seats in Lamb's Café. And from then on the damn place start being packed. And Ray Lopez tells me that the people were waiting a block and two blocks long. Waiting to gain admittance at the Lamb's Café, at that particular time. So, it really went over fast in Chicago. The people accepted it and took over to it very quickly. But when they went to New York, Ray says, the people didn't take to it so quick, but went into it as act, as a rube act. And ever' place they played, you know, the people get the drift of things, you know.

Russell: Yeah

Brown: And ah because they didn't go over so well, they didn't get the booking. So, finally the some of the boys left New York and left Tom and Ray up there. So they had to fight it out the best way they could, so Tom drifted in with other bands, and Ray Lopez drifted in with other bands, too. And Ray Lopez, and Ray [Gus, he means] Mueller he played at the College Inn.

Retyped

Brown: And later on joined Whiteman.

Russell: We'll try to get to talk to Ray, and he's out in Hawthorne?

Brown: Hawthorne, California, I'll give you the address before you leave.

Allen & Russell: Good

Allen: And one more thing I want to--two more things, who was Baquet's name, do you remember? There was more than one of them here, I know, ah

Brown: That's been so long ago.

Allen: Could it have been Achille or George or something like that or could have been

Brown: No, no I couldn't help you out in that.

Allen: You couldn't.

Russell: I think it must have been Achille.

Allen: You never know

Brown: The only way---I tell ya' the only one that could help answer that question would be ah ah Chink [Martin] he he

Allen: Oh, yes, we'll ask him.

Brown: He remembers Baquet and all those and could give you their first names more than I could because he's been down in New Orleans more or less ever since.

Russell: Yeah, that's right.

Allen: uh-huh.

Brown: He, he left just for a short time up to Chicago and then came right on back. So he'd remember those names far more than I could.

Russell: uh-huh

Allen: And another fella, did you ever know a fella by the name of [Wellman] Braud that played bass?

Brown: Braud, ah ah what city--New Orleans?

Allen: Well, he's from New Orleans, but he was with Duke Ellington for awhile. And he traveled all over with Ellington.

Brown: Braud--no. I don't imagine so. He was evidently a young kid when I was ah

Allen: No, how old is Braud?

Brown: gone.

Retyped

Allen: He's about your sixty-five

Russell: I think he was born in '92, about two years younger

Allen: Wellman Braud...he said he played with Duke Ellington and said you were his favorite bass player.

Brown: Is that right?

Russell: He said, last night he said that you were the greatest bass player he had ever heard

Brown: Well, maybe, maybe he ah

Allen: You'd know him if you saw him.

Russell: I think so.

Bfown: Huh?

Allen: You'd know him if you saw him.

Brown: Well, I played along side of Duke Ellington, see.

Allen: uh-huh. Yeah.

Brown: At the Roseland ballroom, they had two bandstands there, see.

Russell:

Brown: And they used to have that for a novelty. They'd have one colored orchestra and one white orchestra. And when the Victor band opened up why we we held our own, we had a good ban And this Duke Ellington's band was good and also ah ah ah (chuckles)

Allen: Piano player

Brown: No, the cornet player, Armstrong.

Allen: uh-huh.

Russell: Oh, yeah.

Brown: I played along side of Armstrong there, see. And Armstrong would come up there, we usedto have more fun with Louie than enough, see. He'd come up there with the valet come upon the band stand with his coon rat coat on, you know (laughter) and have his valet to take the coat off right where all the people could see him. He'd stand up there you know and put on a lot of monkey shines and he had all the dancers laughing. And he used to stand out on the other side, too, and play against us. We made several trips to the Roseland Ballroom, see, that used to be our stopping off place there and in the day time we'd record and then at night we'd play at the ballroom, see, that'd take care of our expenses. But ah

Allen: What about McKinney's--that's another Band I wanted to

Brown: McKinney's Cotton Pickers

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: Well they originated in Chi----in Detroit.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: Ahhh---they were organized and promoted principally by George Horvath (sp.), who's de now.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: And ah, he's ah Charlie Horvath, Charlie Horvath--he was a promoter for the Goldkette Enterprises as they call 'em. Goldkette never did promote anything--he could sell, he was a good salesman

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: He could go there and sell. But ah promoting anything Charlie Horvath was the one re promoter, and he'd--he'd promoted the Cotton Pickers. After the Victor band broke up when he promoted the Cotton Pickers and he also organized the W G N Band in Chicago. And ah I guess you got a record of that--of that Goldkette outfit haven't you?

Allen: Yes

Brown: Under the directions

Allen: I just wondered if we needed any

Brown: of Stokes....Harold Stokes

Allen: Yes

Brown: Harold Stokes was ah ah

Allen: It's in that book.

Brown: That was the other Goldkette unit.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: Was that the ah--they made quite a number of records but their records didn't sell any thing in comparison to the Victor records, so.

Allen: You got the box there--you want to put the machine up so you can hear some of 'em?

Brown: You better shut that off, huh?

Russell: Yes, I'll shut it off for a minute.

Retyped

(Record /"Clementine" by Jean Goldkette/ begins to play and during this time the conversation continues)

Brown: We made that record.....we took stock orchestrations. We just run to the studio quickly and cut off the introduction.

Brown: We made up our own introduction, and our--our ending--the rest of it is just like the notes are written. Except for a little improvision /improvisation/, see.

Allen: Well what happened after this record's made?

Brown: Huh?

Allen: What happened after you made this record?

Brown: The band disbanded--that is the last record that they made.

Russell:

Brown: That's Bix /Beiderbecke/. Now, ah, that's Joe Venuti playing violin. Now, in the choruse when I slap the bass you'll notice a difference, see, now it's a difference from the way they're playin' now, see. See, they just--they pick the bass and they don't let the strings hit, see. They just get the tone. I used to do that--I used to slap it to get a rhythmic affect.----- I think I'm bowing that, I'm not sure. That's Bix Beiderbecke. He played a good trumpet.

Russell: Yeah, had a nice style.

Brown: And he's still is style, yet.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: These records, these records don't sound corny--you know.

Allen: No.

Brown: But we were ahead of the time with this orchestra, we were about--I think we were about four years ahead of time with our arrangements; we had the best arrangers in the country. See this /Bill/ Challis went with Whiteman, too. 'Cause our records were outselling Whiteman's. You know, soon as the band broke up Whiteman reached in and grabbed all the boys he wanted, see. Yeah, that's ah ah an improvised ending. (That particular record ends) that we had.

(Another record begins to play)

Allen: "My Pretty Girl" /by Jean Goldkette/

Brown: Yeah, I heard those on this "Hi Fi", and, boy, that bass comes out loud as hell. You

Retyped

Brown: could hear it there, too. That's, that's Spiegel-[Spiegel] Wilcox, he--beautiful tone, hasn't he?

Allen: I knew that clarinet player--he's dead now.

Brown: Yeah.-------On, no. On this particular record? At the time we were supposed to record, Don Murray took sick had a streptococcus throat and while he was in the hotel room, Don Murray wrote out all the parts he played--clarinet parts, and we gave that job to Don [correct name, Danny] Polo. And he took his place on that particular record. And he played just like Don Murray. A lot of musicians think it was still Don Murray. You hear thatslappin'? That's ah different from the way a lot of them play.

Allen: Good trombone break there.

Brown: That's ah---hear thatslappin'. I used to think that was good.

Russell: It's still good.

Brown: Huh?

Allen: Still good.

Brown: Freddy [Fredde] Grofé wrote a number out you remember, "Slappin' The Bass".

(The second record ends and ["That's Just My Way of Forgetting You"] begins).

Russell: Oh, yes.

Brown: You know it. He told me, he said Brown I'm gona write a number, "Slappin' the Bass", and he wrote it, and I don't know what orchestrations, I don't guess he could get the bass players to play it much, you know.

Allen: This is a little bit later.

Brown: That's not the Victor band. That must be the other Goldkette band. That fella cued in there, see, there, everything was Goldkette at that particular time, and Goldkette had up to 1925 he had all long-haired music. And then he had this here other band recording from Chicago, so this fella evidently got them mixed up.

√ : Did they state on who it was from? Did they think it is from the Victor band?

Allen: Well, it says that this is a later band.

Brown: Yeah, that's, that's the WGN band, that's

Retyped

Allen: It says, vocal by Jean Napier--they don't know who's on this record.

Brown: Not my playing.

Russell: Ha, ha, not you, huh.

Brown: In the first place--his bass hasn't got the tone as mine's got. His, and he's tryin' to do the same as I did--and he's not, you know--ah

Russell: Not gettin' it, huh?

Brown: And he's not gettin' it like I

Allen: Well half the stuff is wrong on the back of these covers anyway.

Brown: Wait, now

Allen: I wanta play it for you.

Brown: Huh?

Brown: I'm gettin' a copy that this fella made, and see if it's the same thing.

Brown: Well, I made that; sounds different to the other one...

Russell: That's "Proud of the Baby"?

Allen: That's "Clemtine From New Orleans "isn't it?

Russell: "Clementine"?

Brown: Yeah, I think that's "Clementine".

Allen: This is still "Clementine, From New Orleans".

Brown: That's the same piece.

Allen: That's end of "Clementine".

Brown: Now then you had that on there. Now what's this one?

Allen: Let's see.

Brown: This is "My Pretty Girl's Stomp". We had that, too.

Russell: Okay. Let's turn it on the other side.

Allen: I think we've got more on my record than on this one.-------Come on----give.

Brown: Well, this is a home-made recording. See.

Retyped.

Allen: Yeah, see.

Brown: A fella recorded this in Detroit for me.

Allen: This is "Proud".

Russell: Yeah, that's the Victor Band. Yeah, that's what they call it.

Allen: "I'm Gonna Meet My Sweetie Now".

Brown: Yeah

Allen: Let's play the original.

Brown: Let's see, now now play that last one. That last part, and see if you can get that other number there, that I said wasn't one. Yeah.

Allen: Same tune. This is "My Pretty Girl" a different arrangement.

Brown: Yeah, they don't have that--they don't have that extra one. You say you're giving me more than I got on there, huh?

Russell: Yeah

Allen: He must have not given you the later ones, you know, that you're not on. Let me shut it off.

Brown: But you're sure this is the same record, huh?

Allen: Yeah, it's the same. Now, let's see what's next. It should be "Gonna Meet My Sweetie Now".

Allen: This is "Proud", huh.

Allen: "Proud of a Baby Like You".

Russell:

Allen: That's "Proud".

Allen: Let's, yeah--

Brown: Well, that's alright.

Allen: Let's play my-my record and I think it will sound better.

Brown: uh-huh. I recorded that. I remember that. [starts "My Blackbirds Are Bluebirds Now"]

Allen: This is a Goldkette, but I don't know if it's---

Brown: Well, there are a lot of numbers I don't remember to tell the truth. If they weren't as good, I would get any of the records--I wouldn't take any of 'em.

Allen: But I don't know if this is you or not. That's what we're playing it for.

Retyped

Brown: No, that's not me. No, that's that's the--I'm sure that's the WGN band, that got cued in there. That's how they sound, see. A lot of people take that for Bix.

Allen: I wonder who it was.

Brown: Ray Ludwig.

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Retyped

(music playing)

Brown: This is the type of bass. Well, I don't know whether it's the one. See, I joined [Jean] Goldkette in 1926 - - - up to that time he had ah--long haired music. And ah that couldn't be the long haired music because that's more of a hot style so that's evidently the WGN Band that they organized in Chicago. But I don't hear the accordion. You see , huh.

Russell: What title was that?

Allen: "My Blackbirds Are Bluebirds Now".

Brown: Yeah, is that the name of the piece "Blackbird and Bluebird"?

Allen: "My Blackbirds Are Bluebirds Now", it says.

Brown: "My Blackbirds are Bluebirds"

Allen: I was wondering did any of the McKinney's men ever play with - - - -

Brown: That's true, now that may have been Goldkette's McKinney's Cotton Pickers.

Allen: Did they mix it up?

Brown: They was under the direction of Goldkette.

Brown: Well, I don't know they ah in the plates in these whoevers in the recording laboratory they may have picked it up just because it was Goldkette's, see everything was Goldkette's in those days. And Goldkette had different bands, that come in there.

Allen: Well, one thing I was wondering about was ah did they ever take a half McKinney's and a half Victor band and mixed them up like that? You know put them together on a date, like they have Prince Robinson on clarinet

Brown: On a record

Allen: From McKinney's and still have you on bass. Would they do that?

Brown: They could have done that; it's possible for 'em to have done that. But ah, ah outa sheer ignorance of the party that was ah puttin'--makin' up this special plate, see.

Allen: Yeah

Brown: They had a plate for it. In those days they had a plate for each one of these records. See?

Allen: No, what I mean is would they take ah say a coupla men from McKinney's Band and add them to the band you were in.

Retyped

Brown: Oh--no, no

Allen: They never did that?

Brown: No, no, no, we never did augment, is that what ya' mean?

Allen: Yes, with McKinney's men.

Brown: No, no.

Allen: Well that's

Brown: They played separately, themselves. I think that's a jig band as it was.

Allen: Yeah, well that's what they say, you know, some people say that's true, but I'm glad to get it straight.

Brown: Yeah, I'm sure that's ah Goldkette's McKinney's Cotton Pickers. No? That was the colored band, that ah

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: Was under the supervision of Charlie Harveth [a drummer]. That was under Goldkette enterprises, see? So evidently it had those that would go up to New York and record. Now I'll guess you'll hear a lot of records, or maybe you have some that's under the direction of Stokes.

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: Harold Stokes

Allen: Yeah

Brown: Well, that's the WGN Band, that's another Goldkette band, after the Victor band was disbanded.

Allen: Here's one called "I'm Gonna Meet My Sweetie Now". Let's see if you recognize this.

Russell: Wait a minute. Yeah, that's right. Gonna be 78 [RPM]

(music begins)

Brown: What are you doin? Recording that, too?

Russell: Yes, get this all on tape. Oh, ha ha.

Allen: Well, we want your comments, on who's soloing and all that.

Brown: Oh, is that it.

Russell:

Brown: I remember this record. We made that. That's Trumbauer.

Retyped

Brown: Bill Rank, (end of spool). This is Don Murray. This is Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang, and I'm playin' on the side of 'em.

Allen: I wonder who that clarinet player was?

Brown: It coulda been [another record begins to play] Don [correctly Danny] Polo.-----see he made a session with us-----he made several recordings while Don Murray was sick. That sounds like his playin'. Now this is a different version.

Allen: Different master. Called "My Pretty Girl".

Brown: Haven't heard them in a long time. (coughs) [another record begins ("Proud" title of tune) to play]. Well, I don't know. Sounds like that--we made that one, too.

Allen: uh-huh.

Brown: ----That's "Doc" Ryker playin' the lead sax there. -----He's a legit man--good musician--just legit--straight lead. Now Don Murray was an improviser and also Trumbauer. They, ah------

Allen: Were the Dorseys in here anywhere?

Brown: They-uh-no colored have never played with us.

Allen: No, I mean Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey?

Brown: Oh, you mean Dorseys

Allen: Yeah

Brown: I thought you said darkies.

Allen: No

Brown: Oh, naw, well, on some. In 1926 Jimmy Dorsey was in there, but I don't remember just what records he made with us. Now, Tommy Dorsey wasn't with us. He played with the Goldkette unit but in Detroit. In the Book-Cadillac Hotel. Played with Owen Bartlett, I think, at that particular time.

[New record begins to play, "I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover"]

Brown: I think Chink Martin playing tuba [talk about record he is looking at]

Allen: uh-huh

Russell: In the New Orleans Rhythm Kings.

Brown: I can tell that this is the one because Husk O'Hare, he's the one who got could make

Retyped

Brown: the boys to make the record.

Russell: The "Tiger Rag", you say, you're on the "Tiger Ray", on Gennett

Brown: Ooooh, I, I don't . . .

Russell: We'll play those in a minute, and see what you think of them.

Brown: "Tiger Rag", I guess I was on there with 'em.

Allen: We'll play it.

Brown: , but you can't hear bass.

Russell: No, you won't hear the bass, you'll remember the arramgements.

Brown: I can tell you the arrangement.

Russell: Which one?

Brown: "Made A Monkey Outa Me."

Russell: Oh

Allen: We'll play that. (Brown laughs) You wanta hear that?

Brown: Huh?

Allen: You wanta hear that?

Brown: I mean it never, never sold, but I mean it a -- it was, at that time when they were taking the glands outa monkeys and givin' 'em to men . . .

Allen: (laughs)

Brown: ....ya' remember?

Allen: Yeah.

Brown: You don't remember that?

Allen: I heard about it though, that doctor.

Brown: Well, some doctor discovered by taking the gland out of the monkey, he could put it into a ole' man and he'd jump around - - - (laughs) so they made this piece. Meyers, Meyers, an entertainer in Friar's Inn Cafe, wrote this piece. . .

Allen: uh-huh
ah

Brown: . . . and they published it ah and we recorded it for 'em. Ah, there's a lot of singin', I doubt (record begins)

Allen: I just took a guess, that maybe you were on this record.

Retyped

Brown: Yeah, well I was on that record, and ah----the thing that makes it sound like a bass is ah---Georgie Brunis had a habit of ah playin' bass parts on a trombone a whole lot, see, and that's why you think you hear a bass on there.

Allen: Did ya ever hear the lyrics on that?

Brown: Those are pretty good. Yeah, I mean it was funny in those days, they could sing it in the café.

Allen: Who's the clarinet player?

Brown: That was Volly DeFaut.

Allen: The cornet?

Brown: Naw, clarinet.

Allen: Who's the cornet player?

Brown: Oh, Paul Mares was the cotner. We had him playin' corn with that type of music.

Allen: Well, is this the Rhythm Kings under another name?

Brown: Huh?

Allen: They call this the Original Memphis Melody Boys, I believe. I just wondered, if this--who this, you know the

Brown: Oh, I know now what---we did call ourselves the Memphis Melody Boys, but some of the boys now I know I was mistaken.

Allen: Yeah.

Brown: I was thought it was the Friar's Inn band. It was part of the orchestra from the Midway Garden Orchestra and we called ourselves the Memphis Melody Boys on that. We recorded it also on the Brunswick. See? That's [Lew] Black playing the banjo on there, see (laughter)

Brown: Oh, that's funny if you hear the lyrics. I can't hear it, I can't hear what they're sayin'. -------After he got the glands in him, ya know, he crawls all over the chandelier, and jumps all around the place. Well, that was good in a Café. Let me look at that record again, so I can . . .

Allen: Yeah.

Brown: . . . see that. I forgot. . .

Allen: Featuring Billy Meyers, the "Original Monkey Man".

Retyped

Brown: That's under the direction -- I don't remember recording this on the Gennett myself, to tell the truth.

Allen: uh-huh.

Brown: I remember recording it on the Brunswick. (another record begins, other side "Wonderful Dream")-----. Naw, that's evidently Elmer Schoebel. Elmer Schoebel will have to straighten ya out on that.

Allen: Yes

Brown: I don't remember. ---- I recognize [Lew] Black, I think---I don't recognize the trumpet player. I don't recognize the, the----I don't recognize the ah the trombone player, either.

Allen: Say, did you ever know Murphy Steinberg?

Brown: Yes. Now, is he on is he supposed to be on . . . ?

Allen: I don't know. I'm not sure; they say that. . .

Brown: Well, Murphy Steinberg played with ah us----in the Midway Garden Orchestra.

Allen: Was he on this order?

Brown: Huh?

Allen: Did he play on this order of trumpet? That you heard?

Brown: A little--more of a hot style than a legitimate style.

Allen: What about a guy named- - -

Brown: He could play legitimate because he was a good reader and good musician all around musician--that is, he could play hot and he could play straight, too, if he wanted to.

Allen: What about a fella named "Wingy" that played clarinet?

Brown: "Wingy" Manone--no, cornet.

Allen: No, / a clarinet player named "Wingy"; there was suppose to have been another fella.

Brown: "Wingy" Manone?

Allen: No, just "Wingy"--that's all I know, that played clarinet. He's supposed to be in this band, but I don't know if he is.

Brown: Why they'd call him "Wingy"? Did he have one arm?

Allen: I don't know.

Brown: Did he have one arm?

Retyped

Allen: All I know is the name.

Brown: Well, I don't know who you're talkin' about. They'd--a lot of times, they'd put "Wingy" to a fella's name if he was smoking this marijuana, see.

Allen: Yeah.

Brown: Be flying all the time--"Wingy"--they put that name to 'em. But, now, who they're referring to, I don't know, ah- - -

Allen: What would you like to hear next?

Brown: Well, let's see ah.

Allen: Anything you wanta hear, we'll be glad to play.

Brown: This one here, under the direction of Husk O'Hare

Allen: All right.

Brown: . . . and this one here, I made.

Allen: uh-huh.

Brown: See. All those that were under the direction of Husk O'Hare on the Gennett I was on with the Friar's Inn Band. But all those that are just on the Gennett there, just with New Orleans Rhythm Kings, was evidently Chink ah Martin playin' ah . . .

Allen: Well, we'll play 'em and check.

Brown: Just play a little of that, anyway don't go through all that. ["Panama" N.O.R.K. music begins]. That's Jack Pettis, Jack Pettis is on there. [Leon] Roppolo, Paul Mares, [Lew] Black [Elmer] Schoebel played ah, Schoebel was playing piano, and I think ah ah ----- a fella by the name of [Frank] Snyder at that particular time playing drums.

Allen: Did he play before Ben Pollack or after Ben Pollack?

Brown: Before Ben Pollack.----Well, I made that one. Let's see has have they got the other side now? What's on the other side?

Allen: "Tiger Rag"; let's see now.

Brown: What's on the other side?

"Tiger Rag".

Russell: That was "Panama".

Brown: "Panama", well, I made that, yes. (record begins)-----yeah, I made that, that's all right. Now,----put, put this one on. This one here, I think, ah this Gennett record, I think

Retyped

Brown: ah Chink Martin is ah, I think he's playin' that now--plays on that. I think he played "Milneberg [Joys"]. Now he plays tuba. (another record begins) -----Too slow for it----too slow for that.

Russell: You think it should be faster a bit?

Brown: Should be faster.

Allen: There's a tuba there. I hear a tuba.

Brown: You hear the tuba---that's Chink ah---that's Chink playing on that one. That's all right. He's on this also; this one here---is formerly the Friar's Society Orchestra, see.

Allen: uh-huh

Russell: Yeah, "Tin Roof [Blues"]

Brown: So this was "Tin Roof"; yeah, Chink Martin was on that

Russell: We'll play a little bit of that.

Brown: And "That's A Plenty"---yeah, he's, ah he's on that one, too. So he made several records after I left so he's on that one. (record begins)-------. Well that's all right, that enough---(Record stops) ----. Now--this one here is Tom, huh, Tom [Brown] and [Johnny] Bayersdorffer.

Russell: Yeah.

Allen: Yeah.

Brown: Ah, play that just a little bit, will ya--ah ah--they all sound more or less alike after you get to hear 'em. (Record begins)+-------- When ah, when did they make that recordin' do ya know?

Allen: In [March 17, 19] 24---down here, it's supposed to be; I'm not sure, I believe that's right. They were playing out by the Spanish Fort, I think.

Brown: Now, now when was this recorded, can you tell me? [Speaking of another record] Does the book tell ya' that?

Allen: December of '27, we'll play it and see if you're on it if you wanta hear it?

Brown: *~~December of~~ '27. Well, I musta been on it.

Allen: The very end.

Brown: What?

Allen: The very end of '27.

Brown: The end of '27---I don't remember it.

Retyped

Allen: We'll play it and see.

Brown: Oh, yes, that's Tom playin'. Everybody's fightin' to be heard. That's the only trouble that I can find with a--with a group---if they're not playin' by music, ever'body wants to be heard, ya' know. They're afraid one will outdo the other, and they all keep blowin' harder and harder and before ya' know it, you got---just a mess of notes together. (record ends) Yeah, ever'body--no individual solo at all; ever'body wants to do his part. Now this one here, "Here Comes the Showboat"--I don't ah remember the name--recognize the name, and I could, I could tell just by hearin' it.

Allen: All right.

Brown: Well

Allen: We told--you told us about Jean Goldkette breaking up. You could tell by listening, huh? [Record, "Here Comes the Showboat" begins]

Brown: Ah, ah, I got it. Git it?

? : Yeah.

Brown: You say they got that down the latter part of 1927?

Allen: Yeah, December. -----Does it sound like you?

Brown: That's not me, no; what's, what's confusing me, that sounds like Irish Henry on tuba. ---And ah, the records, the records may be released at that time. But they may have been recorded in 1925 . . .

Allen: Yeah

Brown:..which I think it was. I think this was part of the first band that ah Goldkette had. Sort of a long-haired effect, see---although that's "Bix" on there.---I don't know whether that's Bix or not, that's sounds like--more like Ray Ludwig--sounds more like Ray Ludwig. (record ends)

Allen: Wanta hear the other side?

Brown: You've ah heard ah Ray Ludwig's playing, haven't you?

Allen: Yes.

Brown: Ah, he's ah, in St. Louis, and I think that's ah--he was with the band in 1925, 1924.

Retyped

Brown: Bill Rank was also in the band, five years before I joined it. And they made all types of long-haired music; they went to New York and they flopped. And ah Goldkette revised the orchestra and brought in ah ahOwell, I took Irish Henry's place, Ray Ludwig remained in the band, Bill Rank remained in the band, and he made changes all around. Charlie Harvath used to play drums in that band, was playin' in that band, was playing on that particular record; and we had Chauncey Morehouse to take his place on drums, and we had Frank Trumbauer to come in there, and "Bix" at first of course we had Jimmy Dorsey for one season. Then Jimmy left and we had Trumbauer to come in and take Jimmy's place. But ah, see, I don't recognize Jimmy, or I don't recognize, Jimmy coulda been on there. But I don't---Trumbauer wasn't on there, and I'm sure Bix wasn't on there; I'm sure that ah solo that I thoughtat first was "Bix", was Ray Ludwig. And that's about what it was. I think that was recorded in the early--around 1925, and wasn't released until 1927 . . .

Allen: I see

Brown: . . . along with the other Goldkette at the time they were all moving.

Allen: Yes.

Brown: You see the idea of it at that particular time--it may have been a reject at that particular time. . . ,

Allen: uh-huh

Brown: . . . and after the Goldkette records start moving real good, they figured--well here's our opportunity to shove this in and it will move along with the others, see. So, that's why it's confusing to a lot of people who are trying to trace that up. But that's what it was, was ah . . .

Allen: Would you like to hear the other side, or do you want to go on to something else?

Brown: No, no, let's go on to something else. That's about solved that. Now here's Johnny Dedroit; I don't know anything about his band.

Allen: Well, all right.

Russell: Well, we'll go on and play another.

Brown: And ah,

Allen: Let's see, we've played that, and played that.

Brown: I know he was a good trumpet player.

Retyped

Allen: And that's "Milneburg", we've played that.

Russell: How did you pronounce that, Milneburg, or Milenburg, or what?

Brown: Well, we used to say Milneburg here, up there they say Milenburg [due to misspelling]. Now up

Brown's sister: The right pronunciation is Milneburg, isn't it?

Brown: Huh?

Brown's sister: The right pronunciation is Milneburg.

Brown: No, ah Milneburg.

Brown's sister: M-i-l-n-e-burg, that's the way you spell it, pronounce--the right pronunciation is Milneburg.

Allen: Well, let's try anotherGoldkette.

Brown: Well, up there they call it Milenburg.

Russell: Yeah

Bro-in-law: I don't care how they pronounce it, I wish it was there. (laughter)

Brown: They call it Milenburg up there. They call it Milneburg down here. Doesn't matter, we all know what you mean, but ah---you weren't down here when they had ah all those places out in Milneburg, ?

Russell: No, but I've seen pictures of it, though.

Brown: Oh, my God, the people used to had . . .

Brown's brother-in-law: That was the best place in the world.

Brown: It was, really-people really enjoyed them something in those days; now everything is...

END OF REEL V, Steve Brown, April 22, 1958

STEVE BROWN
Reel VI
April 22, 1958

[Record begins to play, "Sunday" by Jean Goldkette.]

[Allen:] Do you know that trombone player? Did you hear him?

[Brown:] That's Bill Rank.--I'm bowin' the bass on that one. See. Hear the bowin', the difference in the bowin'? (singing on record begins)

[Allen:] That's the Keller Sisters and Lynch.

[Brown:] What?

[Allen:] Keller Sisters and Lynch, singing.

[Brown:] The Keller sisters, yeah.--Well, we had, we had the Bausdoufh [Boswell] [Connie, Vet, Martha] Sisters, we had the Keller Sisters, and we had the Williams sisters on different recordings.

[Allen:] What was the name of that first one, the Bausdoufh?

[Brown:] I thought that was the Bausdouph Sisters.

[Allen:] How do ya spell it?

[Brown:] Huh?

[Allen:] How do ya spell that?

[Brown:] B-a-u-s-d-o-u-f-h I think. I think that's the way, anyway, they had one crippled girl in there, they used to have to wheel her on the stage--you remember--one of 'em was paralyzed?

[Russell:] I never saw 'em.

[Mrs. Cook:] Boswell.
The
[Cook:] Boswell Sisters.

[Brown:] What?

[Mrs. Cook:] Boswell Sisters.

[Cook:] Boswell Sisters.

[Brown:] Huh?

[Mrs. Cook:] Boswell Sisters.

STEVE BROWN
Reel VI
April 22, 1958

[Russell:] Boswell Sisters.

[Allen:] Oh, Boswell.

[Brown:] I thought it was--

[Russell:] Yeah, Boswell.

[Allen:] Connie Boswell and Martha and Vet.

[Russell:] Yeah, that's right

[Brown:] Boswell, then I made a mistake.

[Cook:] B-o-s-w-e-l-l, yeah.

[Brown:] Yeah, Boswell.

[Allen:] Connie, Vet, and Martha--is that the one?

[Brown:] Yeah, I think that's ah . . .

[Another record begins to play]

[Allen:] Who played the clarinet?

[Brown:] Don Murray.

[Russell:] She was at the Roosevelt a few months ago.

[Allen:] [unintelligible]

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Nice break there.

[Brown:] Yeah, that's Don Murray.

[Allen:] He was a wonderful clarinet player.

[Brown:] Yeah, that's good--good musicians there.

[Allen:] Would you want to hear "I'd Rather Be the Girl in Your Arms" [Vi 20273]?

[Brown:] Ah.

[Allen:] Or you wanta play something else?

[Brown:] Now there's one thing I want you to play, ah here's, this has got me puzzled here.

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[Allen:] Well, one side is Nat Shilkret.

[Brown:] On this side--well, no it's not Nat Shilkrest, Nat Shilkret--yeah, that's right. "Me and My Shadow." This one here, "I'm Gona' Meet My Sweetie Now"--yeah I made that one. But ah I heard that on the other record.

[Allen:] It's on the LP, too, yes, that's right.

[Brown:] Huh?

[Allen:] It's on the LP, too.

[Brown:] Yeah.

[Allen:] And there's "I'd Rather Be the Girl in Your Arms."

[Brown:] Yeah--and "Sunday"--yeah,that's, that's mine. Now that's ah . . .

[Allen:] Let me put it on, this ah "I'd Rather Be the Girl in Your Arms."

[Record begins to play.]

[Brown:] Yeah, I remember that.

[Allen:] Who's the guitar player on it?

[Brown:] Lang, Eddie Lang--he's dead now. I'm bowin' that one. (whistling) Any piece that wasn't hot, I'd use a bow. (ha, ha) Now I use the bow later on.--good guitar player Lang was. Joe Venuti wasn't on the slouch; he was a clown, there's a lot of interesting stories can be told about Joe Venuti. I guess you heard some of 'em, huh?

[Russell:] [Unintelligible.]

[Brown:] Haven't ya? About directing an orchestra in the Biltmore Hotel in New York?

[Allen:] What'd he do?

[Brown:] (laughs) Well, I'll tell ya' that later. (laughs) That's not for print. (laughs)

[Russell:] I've heard of it [unintelligible], but I've heard some of it.

[Brown:] I found out I was on the 'air,' (laughs) I was recording. I didn't want to say anything because I--[Singing on the record begins.] (whistling)--Now after ya' get all this data collected and go over and boil 'em down and ah you'll about come to the real references that a person should accept. Is that it?

[Allen:] That's what we hope.

[Brown:] That's the way it should be. --Because after all, it's so confusing for a student to go into a library now and get these books.

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Brown:] There's so many books, every one of 'em ah ah contradict each other in a way, you know what I mean. So ah all of this will have to be brought together and ah each individual will have to be brought out as far as you can, you know, to . . .

[Russell:] One thing I'd like to talk about is the music from the red light district. You said that really wasn't typical.

[Brown:] To me, no, that's completely out, that's wrong. But the majority of writers, they, they put--that's the easiest way to write about it, see.

[Russell:] That everything came from the district?

[Brown:] That's right. But it isn't so; the music down there was entirely different.

[Russell:] What kind of music did they have in the district?

[Brown:] Barrel house and ah as I call it bump music, and ah, and they--the slow drag music, we never played no slow drags and things like that, see.

[Russell:] What were the slow drags?

Retyped:

STEVE BROWN
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[Brown:] Slow drag? Well, it was a regular 4/4 piece, and ah, ah, real slow, with a lot of bumps in it and ah . . .

[Russell:] Would they be blues sometime?

[Brown:] Huh?

[Russell:] Would they be blues?

[Brown:] In the form of blues, yes. Now we couldn't play in that type of slow tempo; all our tempos were lively. And it was entirely different. And we couldn't ah--anyway, it wasn't the same type of music that Tom brought up to Chicago, ah ah named "jazz." And that's what everybody is--and called jazz--that was what everyone is interested in, see?

[Russell:] Uh-huh.

[Brown:] And well they--the story of the reflection of that part, you know, I mean what they call it, the way Tom considered it, ah couldn't be ah classed as ah music that was comin' directly from there.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Brown:] Ya' see? Now Tom--the type of music we played down there, we could never get a job in any of the places down in the tenderloin district and play. Because our music would be too fast, too lively.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Brown:] See?

[Allen:] What was barrel house?

[Brown:] Huh?

[Allen:] What was barrel house music?

[Brown:] Oh, barrel house, that's kinda hard to explain--it's a a type of piano,

ah show, more of the blues type, ya know, and ah . . . .

Cook: Everything was dragged out.

Brown: It was dragged out, more or less, in those days. And, in fact, they none of them had any what you'd call Dixieland combinations; ah some of the places could only afford to have around two musicians--maybe a piano and drums. And ah the larger places maybe they'd have six, seven men to 'em, but they'd never play the same type of music that we did, for dancing. And they never played mazookas [marzurkas], or schottische or walls, or waltzes, or reels, and things like that there, see?

Allen: But they didn't----

Russell:

Brown: It was all slow drag, bucket shop, ah barrel house, and bumpy music and things like that to put the band in ah--to put the people in a good humor.

Russell: Did you ever . . . .

Brown: Give them time to get around the floor; they wasn't in any hurry in those days, see? Yeah, here's your friend.

Mrs. Cook: Come in. [Ralph Collins enters]

Allen: Hi-dey.

Brown: Come on.

Russell: We'll be ready in a minute.

Brown: He's driving? Is that your chauffeur?

Russell: Yeah, we'll be leaving in a minute, I know it's your dinner time.

Brown: Take the rocking chair.

Collins: Hah, hah--all right.

Russell: I know it's your dinner time, and we don't want to keep much longer.

Brown: Well . . . .

Russell: Did your band ever play any jobs at all in the district, in any of the dance halls any time?

Brown: No, not in the--oh no, never in the district. [Compare Johnny Lala interview] As I told you before, our music, our music, our type of music wouldn't be acceptable there. It wouldn't, ah it wouldn't ah fit in with that type of

Russell: Yeah

Brown: But yet the writers would have, try to have people believe that that type of music, jazz music, originated--there it didn't. It was entirely different music than ours.

Allen: What did they play at 7th & Magazine?

Mr. Cook: Played jazz at 7th and Magazine.

Brown: We played--we played what we called ragtime at that time. See, it was the same type of music that Tom played at 7th and Magazine--he played in Chicago.

Mr. Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: That was named jazz, then, after it got up there. But before that, the people in New Orleans as itself--we never knew anything about jazz; we never thought of calling it jazz. But after they got up there, they called it jazz.

Allen: Now ah Mr. Cook, you mentioned some good bands at ah 7th and Magazine.

Mr. Cook: Naw, the only two I said was, that they had in the city was Blessing and Brown.

Allen: Blessing?

Brown: Don't you remember [Johnny] Fischer's Band?

Mr. Cook: Fischer, yeah.

Brown: You remember him--he had a good orchestra, too. I don't remember so much----

Allen: Who was Blessing?

Brown: Blessing? Ah, ah, ah, that was Blessey's band, wasn't it?

Cook: Blessey.

Brown: Ah, ah, ah, Blessey band, he played trumpet.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: And ah, I don't know much about his band at all.

Cook: He was from the downtown section.

Allen: Oh. Well, we'll have to look up on Blessey.

Brown: I don't think you'll find anyone in his band livin' yet, huh?

Cook: Not hardly.

Brown: Cause I don't know--he's . . . .

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: The only ones that I remember is, that ah really were considered good was Fischer's band and and my brother's band. Ah, and we did if, I'm not bragging, but we did have one of the best bands down here. And ah that's why--when Tom went up there and was so successful, the people were all waiting a block or so to gain admittance. Other cafe owners, they were losing business so fast that they told the union, say, "Say, you have to do something about that," he says, "We losing business." And the fella says, "Well the only thing I can tell you to do is to go down to New Orleans and try to get a band similar to the one that Brown's got and try to compete." So they did. They come down and picked up any band that said they had a band similar to Tom's band. And so everything centers around Tom in that particular area. Now Gussie Mueller, he played with different orchestras. And also, Ray Lopez. And by the way, before you leave, I'll ah try to give you the address of . . . .

Allen: Didn't you have some ah piano rolls or something you wanted to ask about?

Russell: I was gonna ask a little bit about--if you remember any of the other bands that Tom played with, like Ray Miller--uh--and do you know anything about his activity with Ray Miller, for instance?

Brown: Yes, he was playing ah, ah--he played with what they called the Memphis Melody Boys. Ray Miller had the Memphis Melody Boys in Ed Wynn's production show. I caught the show when I was in Chicago and ah Tom was ah--the whole band was perched upon pedestals, way up high in the scenery of the show; it was quite a large show. And ah that was in 1920 that I heard Tom in that particular band. And he went back to New York with 'em, and later on he come back to Chicago. And he played with Bert Kelly quite a lot; Bert Kelly's Stables was well known all over Chicago.

Russell: He played at Bert Kelly's, huh?

Brown: Yeah; Bert Kelly's Stables.

Russell: Yes, I remember that.

Brown: The ah--he had a sort of a, an affair; he had his café built like a, like a horse barn, with stals in it--with harness and hay and everything else. And he'd tell the people as they came in in their full dress suits and tuxedos and everything, "There's your stall; get into it." You know. (laughs) And they--it was really funny; they had hay all over and old pieces of harnesses and decorated the place and--quite an outfit. And the "Four Hundred" class got quite a kick out of it, you know. And he made quite a lot of money, so they could have shows, entertainment and things--Tom played there. And I, at one time, played with Tom's band, in Chicago, just for a little while. Would

you like to see the picture of us?

Russell: Yeah, we would like to see it after awhile.

Allen: Yeah, very much.

Brown: I think this is something I----for some information I took out of some of the books sometime. Like Jelly Roll, Jelly Roll Morton.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: Well, he happened to be in Chicago--was ah, he was 2- in ah Chicago in 1905; he was born in 1885 in New Orleans--died in 1941. I guess you got something about this fella.

Russell: Do you remember him, ah?

Allen: Do you remember him?

Brown: Yes, I remember going there and hearing him play; played a lot of piano, and he used to play singely, mostly. Sometimes he would play with a little band, but most--a great many of them had violins, and as I said at first. It was a different type of music entirely.

Russell: Yeah.

Cook: Couldn't be in color.

Allen: Did you hear him down here?

Brown: No, I didn't hear him down here, but up there I did. Ah, now then I read, the origination of "jazz." I tried to get it from the library; of course they have no records of any word like that before 1915.

Russell: Yeah.

Brown: And then the origination of the word "jazz"--now as a great many writers put it, and all this talk about the ah ah the word "jazz" being to discredit the orchestra and everything else--course I'm sorry I'll have to differ with Tom in that respect--wasn't meant that at all. It was taken, from a French word, ah 'jaser'--'jasez' to pep up, to accelerate, see; that's

a French word. And it evidently, it could have been some French person that used that particular expression and did give it the name of "jazz"--j-a-double s--at first; then later on it was spelled J-a-double z. Louie Armstrong was born July 4-- I just wrote this down, lotta times--

Allen: Yes, go ahead.

Brown: And he joined King Oliver's band at Lincoln Gardens Café in July, 1922 in Chicago. So, that's the time he came up there.

Russell: Yeah, much later than Tom.

Brown: See, that's much later. Ah, Joseph "King" Oliver was born in 1885 on Dryades Street, New Orleans--I guess you saw that in the book.

Russell: Yeah.

Brown: Well, I copied a lot of things that I read out of the book in here.

Allen: Sure.

Brown: In notation. I thought maybe I'd read some of these.-------Did you ever read Charles Dela[u]ney's book?

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: Columbia"Sixty-Four [Thousand] Dollar" Jazz Album?

Russell: Oh, some of the . . .

Brown: The "Sixty-Four Dollar" Jazz Album.

Allen: Oh, yes, uh-huh.

Russell: Yes, I've seen some of that.

Brown: And then ah--oh, I guess that was from the show, "Sixty-four Thousand Dollar [Question].

Russell: Television.

Allen: Yes, that's an LP, a record.

Brown: Ah--Maxine (Maxi Me?) Skelton--did you read his article?

Allen: No, I don't remember that.

Brown: He mentions Tom Brown on page five. Puts Kelly with Dixieland band. (laughs)

Allen: Kelly?

Brown: And [Nick] LaRocca has--well there is a lot of them that has got everything mixed up in the . . .

Allen: Yeah.

Brown: . . . writings, ya' know.

Russell: Yeah.

Allen: Well, it's good for you to correct it.

Brown: And as I went along--well, that's what I had in mind when I wrote to the University, so if there was any questions that they wanted to ask me regarding different ones like that . . .

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: Why I--accordin' to what the books state, or what they're trying to accept, I could tell 'em as much as I know about it, because I, I should remember what was ah going on. Now there's Jazzways, volume number 1 by Robi, ah Rosenthall.

Allen: Yes, we---

Brown: Did you read that?

Russell: We have that, yes.

Brown: You have that? And Frontiers of Jazz?

Russell: Yes.

Allen: Do you have any corrections you wanta make on those?

Brown: Well, there are a lot of things; I'd have to look over the book again, in order to ah . . .

Allen: Oh, yeah--well, anytime you would want to write us about that, we'd appreciate it.

Brown: Well, ah, I intend to, when I write this book . . .

Russell: When you write your other material, that would be good.

Brown: I intend to bring in, mention different books . . .

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: . . . and state what I ah, what I know to be wrong.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: You knowwhat I mean--to give my version of it anyway; now the hell with whoever wants to believe it, ya know.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: I mean, I'm going to give my version of it.

Russell: Get it down right.

Brown: Because after all, these fellas wrote, and they gave their version of it--so why not me?

Russell: Sure, you have----

Brown: I was born, way, hell, before they was, so I should know a little more--in that respect. Only thing I'm---and I got all that "I Hear You Talkin' To Ya," "Oh, Hear Ya Talkin' To Ya' ["Hear Me Talkin' To Ya"?]

Russell: Oh, yeah.

Brown: That's the story of jazz by the. Now, who put that, all those stories in there, did you?

Russell: No, no, no, some fella in New York--some critic up there.

Brown: Well, he seemed to have gone all over and interviewed different musicians.

Russell: Yes, a lot of that he got out of Down Beat; a lot of those interviews came out of Downbeat--were published years ago.

Brown: They did?

Russell: The others were made in New York.

Allen: He interviewed some . . .

Brown: Well, I noticed he interviewed different musicians and talked.

Russell: Yeah.

Brown: Well, he's never interviewed me and ah and I don't guess he stopped in Detroit.

Russell & Allen: No, no.

Brown: But ah he ah [Arnold] Loyacano, he talked to Loyacano, and ah Johnny Stein. Now Johnny Stein was another drum---he was a drummer in New Orleans.

Russell: Yeah, ✓ .

Brown: He was looked up to as quite a good drummer in those olden days. And ah, there was another drummer by the name of Stevenson--not "Ragbaby" Stevenson [Stevens], but another Stevenson; I can't think of his first name ✓ was quite a find drummer, too. Ah, they all played ragt----now here--this fella, Rudi Blesh, had quite a lot of good ideas. He said they all played ragtime, which is true; it was all ragtime, but--before it was ah called jazz. So it is still the same type of music, only called jazz. Now they're changing it around to progressive jazz, jazz and swing and what have ya--ya know.

Russell: Yes.

Brown: Ah--Oh yeah, there's one fella claimed that he ah, when he visited New Orleans, he went down on Bienville Street and met someone playing piano ya know, and it's quite a story in there. And ah, he, he talks about a lot of colored musicians, too. I, I wrote all these down, so later on when I get ahold of these books again, I can ah, ah look over each one of them separately then ah comment on different ones, ya know, mention the names, see, in the book.

Russell: Comment.

Brown: Now the History of Jazz in America, did you read that?

Russell: No, I don't think so.

Brown: You didn't read it.

Allen: Is that Ulanov? Who is that, Ulanov?

Russell: Oh, no, I don't know anything about----

Brown: Yes. Barry Ulanov.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Russell: Oh, yeah I saw that.

Brown: He's not so much. He (laughter). He gives you his viewpoint, but he's all screwed up in a way. Did you ever read it?

Allen: Yeah, I read it.

Brown: Huh?

Allen: Yeah, I read it.

Russell: He's written two or three books, too.

Brown: Yeah, oh, yeah, he's got several books there. But boy, he's all wet on a lot of things, I forget now just what it was.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: New York was ah--let's see, what was that--New York was a sad ~~for~~ tenth or twentieth--oh yeah, it, he tells about New York, New York which was true--New York was very slow on accepting jazz; not like Chicago. New York was very slow, so that's the reason Tom had such a terrible time when he went to New York.

Allen: I wanted to ask you about some of those bands he played with in New York, did he play with Yerkes', or something like that?

Brown: Yerkes?

Allen: Yerkes.

Brown: Yerkes Band, yeah; he played with Yerkes. "Hear Me Talkin' To You," Rinehart and Company, Incorporated, New York; do you know, did you hear, did you read that?

Allen: Yes.

Brown: And ah, Arnold Loyacano has a full story on page eighty-one.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: I got down there "most all lies." (laughter) There's another one about Johnny Stein, read Johnny Stein's, page thirty-two, eighty-three, eighty-four. Now, that's "Hear Me Talkin' To You," yet.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: I got a little notations--I got, Shining Trumpets.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: Did you read that?

Allen: Yeah.

Russell: Yeah.

Brown: And ah, there's a lot of 'em, are really nice, and they are nicely written up and ah and ah they just go out of a dream world, boy. Some fella writes a book and he stays down in the Tenderloin district from the beginning to the end.

Russell: Uh-huh.

Brown: Ya know what I mean? And if an ordinary person reading the book, their conception--"well, Jesus Christ, Brown's band musta come right from a whore house, and was--" (laughs). And we never did play around there; and our music wouldn't have been, as I told you before it wouldn't have been acceptable for any type. You know the type of music they played down there, in comparison to the type of music we played up here, so you couldn't consider that; and yet these writers would have the people believe that they did.

Cook: They shouldn't, 'I hung around Tom Anderson's enough.

Brown: My God, I used to go down there. I guess that's before your days, isn't it?

Russell: Yeah, oh yeah, that's right.

Brown: Let's see, what time did they break up that red light district?

Cook: They broke it up around, around [19] '34 or '35.

Brown: They used to have the "House of All Nationa," you see; you go in there, and, you'd well pay so much, and you were fed; you take your time, ya know, it may take days, but you go all around (Russell laughs). Go around to every nationality in the world, ya know; you go around--they had a great big hallway there, rooms, rooms, rooms, ya know all around, and here's Japan, China--oh, Christ, you gotta go through it, that is if you wanta go through it; you can drop out if you want, but you pay your money and--you recording this? (Russell laughs).

Russell: Oh, that's all right. Nobody there's nothin' in there (Allen laughs) it doesn't make any difference.

Brown: Well, that wasn't music.

Allen: No, but--

Brown: Well, anyway, in those particular days, why, they had a type of music entirely different from what we played; and it couldn't be classed as that type of music.

Russell: No--I see what you mean--couldn't.

Brown: And ah I'm only sorry that there isn't any recordings; we didn't have any recordings in those days, nothing to record by; otherwise you'd see what I mean.

Russell: Yeah.

Brown: You know, there is some musicians that can ah--some ole' piano players

that can ah, some of these old colored piano players that you ah contact, they'll play the barrellhouse music . . .

Allen: Uh-huh

Brown: . . . for you, and they'll play all that type of music they used to play down there, and you'd be surprised, it, it can't be classified as the same as . . .

Russell & Allen: Yeah.

Brown: . . . the type we played.

Allen: Are there any other records that you've made that you wanted to mention as outstanding, for people to hear?

Brown: Well, it don't me, don't do me any good; I got paid for the, I got paid for the side.

Allen: No, no, yeah, I know, but I just thought you might want people to hear them.

Brown: I do know that there are a lot of record collectors that are after the records.

Allen: Yes.

Brown: They've wrote me and asked me if I ever know when they're gona release some more of them, and they'd like to get some. I've had different musicians from Australia, some from England and France, they wanted to get ah other copies of it, and asked me if there is any releases comin', oh, I don't know anything about it.

Allen: No, they---

Brown: In fact, it doesn't mean anything to me. It's no money in my pocket, and I told them I don't know just when they'll release 'em. But they do--ever now and then, they'll come out with a group of numbers of different bands, you

know, like they did with this Goldkette unit. Now they sold out of all of these; in fact I can't buy any; I've been lookin' for some, and I, I certainly appreciate you giving me. By the way, where is it?

Allen: Here it is. (laughs) There, it is right there.

Russell: One question here, about some of Tom's pieces--do you remember some of his titles, pieces that he wrote, or?

Brown: Yes, he had some numbers he published; and ah, ah I don't know, he didn't have them in the hands of the right people, they wasn't plugged much; the only one that plugged it was him, himself. I didn't, I, myself, I didn't think much of them; I didn't think that they had any good commercial value to them, so--but let him have his fun, you know--there is a lot of people that write numbers, you know what I mean, and it doesn't mean anything. But he did have some numbers, wrote some numbers, and had them published.

Russell: Remember the number "June"?

Brown: "June," yes.

Russell: That's one of his.

Brown: And he had somethin' to do with ah ah oh--it was a Spanish number.

Russell: "Rose of Spain." [Words by Fred Fisher, music by Tom Brown, Billy Fraziol, and Roy Miller.]

Brown: "Rose of Spain," yeah.

Russell: We have a piano roll of that, and "Love Dreams."

Brown: Yeah, he had some--did he have ah, did he put that on rolls, "Love Dreams?"

Russell: Yeah, . . .

Brown: Yeah.

Allen: And the Halfway House [orchestra] recorded "Love Dreams," too, I believe.

Russell: Do you remember a piece "Our Bungalow of Dreams?"

Brown: "Bungalow of Dreams?" Yes, I remember that.

by

Russell: Was that his, do you think? It was a Brown, but it had the 'e' on the end of it.

Brown: Yeah, well--ah, it seems like I heard Tom speak of that, but now whether that's his or not I couldn't say; I'd never seen the music to it or anything, but I've heard Tom speak of it.

Allen: It's Lew Browne, maybe.

Russell: Might have been.

Brown: There's another Brown with 'e' on it, that means he's Irish, and ah we're English, so it's B-r-o-w-n, see.

Russell: Yeah.

Brown: And ah, if you put 'e' on it, it's Irish. But ah, I heard Tom speak about that, now whether he wrote it, I don't think he did.

Russell: No.

Allen: Where do you think hot music originated?

Brown: Hot Music?

Allen: Or ragtime, or whatever ya wanta--

Brown: All down in this particular section of the country.

Allen: And what does that include; does that include any particular states, or only one, or what?

Brown: Ah, more so down in New Orleans. It was all through the plantations and things like that.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: The ol' Negroes out there--I used to, many time, when I was a kid, go along the river and these Negro roustabouts would be sitting out on the cotton bales waiting for the boats, and they'd be singing. And they'd harmonize so beautifully, you know what I mean--oh, you've never heard anything like it in

your life; I'd just sit around there and listen at them for hours. And they'd just sing until the boat would begin to come to be loaded, and they'd have to go to work then. But I'd sit around, and some of them would bring their instruments; and some of them would have a banjo or something, some of them would have a trumpet, an ole' battered up trumpet; and they'd play their tune, some, some popular number, ah like they'd think it should be played, ya know--improvising and playing ah, playin' it in their way, their style. And ah--like I heard a Negro one time in ah, in one of the churches, playing ah an organ. Well, instead of playing the organ like you would ordinarily play, he'd, make a lot of arpeggio notes, ya know--on the basses. And he had a rhythm going of his own; it sounded just like an orchestra in those days, see.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Brown: And ah, that's his way of playing. But I think hot music originally started right down here in New Orleans, and it all drifted in here from the plantations, you know.

Russell: Yeah.

Brown: You could find it, like in Baton Rouge, all that center, you'd find music comin' in through there, and in New Orleans the same way; we'd all get ideas from all around that section. And then, for harmony, we used to love to pass by these Negro churches and hear 'em sing. And their harmony--we used to love to hear how--

END OF REEL VI
STEVE BROWN
April 22, 1958