

DINK JOHNSON  
REEL I (only)  
NOV. 12, 1950  
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Also present: Jack Stanley,  
a woman; another man  
Notes: Richard B. Allen and  
Ralph Adamo

Digest: ~~Transcript~~: Ralph Adamo

[A fragment on piano, then:]

Jack Stanley asks Dink Johnson if there are any stories from the days when he first went out there [i.e., California] that the ["kids"?] would be interested in. DJ mentions the story of his starting to play drums. This was in New Orleans. DJ's brother's band [Bill Johnson's Original Creole Band] was traveling, and DJ was just a kid. They came to town and didn't have a drummer. So DJ, who had seen some drums in a pawn shop, told his brother that he was playing drums. His brother told DJ he could use him, and so DJ bought the drums from the pawnshop.

DJ says the funny part was that he didn't even know how to set up the drums. That same night, his brother's band was playing a dance. DJ couldn't get the pedal right and told his brother that he didn't know how these things worked. His brother said hadn't he been playing them. DJ told his brother that he had broken his own pedal and that some guy had loaned him this one and he didn't know how to put it up. So his brother put it up for him.

DJ says that the first time he knew he could play drums was when he was "beating on the porch with some sticks out of a chair... had some pretty good licks."

He's been playing drums ever since he played the dance with his brother.

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JS asks how DJ started playing clarinet. He started in Los Angeles when he saw a "kid from New Orleans" playing clarinet. DJ says this kid was playing with him and Chink Snowden in Watts. (DJ was playing drums.) DJ: "That boy blowed so much clarinet I said, 'I'm going to get me one of these things.'" He went to a pawn shop and bought one.

JS mentions that DJ has been playing piano all along. DJ says he has since he was a little kid.

JS asks if he's played piano professionally. DJ says no. (Other[male]voice suggests: "Clarinet.") DJ says he's played clarinet and drums. (In a brief exchange, he answers "no" to someone's suggestion of saxophone.) DJ says he's done a lot of playing, but not all of it "big-time." Some of the big-time included the Orpheum and Pantages circuits--He played clarinet on the former, drums on the latter.

DJ was about nineteen when he left New Orleans. His sister sent ~~from~~ <sup>for</sup> him from Las Vegas where she had a saloon. DJ played piano at night and tended bar in the daytime there.

JS asks if DJ can play some of Jelly[Roll Morton]'s tunes, and requests "Milneburg [Joys]." DJ doesn't know that one. (He plays a ~~fragment~~ <sup>fragment</sup>, then woman's voice says: "Kids will like that, 'cause they're going to hear you talking to them.")

[COPY TAPE RUNS OUT EARLY]