

I [of 3]

April 21, 1957 Also present: Nesuhi Ertegun, Robert Campbell, *Muggsy Spanier*

Pops Foster says that Easter Sunday in New Orleans used to be a bigger day for [social activities, such as] picnics, etc., than New Year's [Eve]; everybody went to church on New Year's Eve, but as Easter marked the end of Lent, everybody began attending more-pleasurable events. PF talks about Milneberg, and about the camps where the picnics, parties, etc. were held; colored people had a section for their camps, white people another section for theirs. PF talks about milk today and yesterday; he was a sickly baby.

PF says the reason New Orleans bands wouldn't leave the city for years was that conditions were so good in New Orleans for musicians. PF used to watch the prostitutes from the window of the place he was working. Louis ["Big Eye Louis"] Nelson (clarinet) was working with the same band.

[Muggsy Spanier enters.]

PF had to stay in the cabaret where he was working once he got in for the night as he was under age and would have been picked up by the police if he had gone out again. PF says a girl friend brought him his food; "King" Oliver and PF's brother [Willie Foster?] kidded him about that for a long time. Eddie Groshell was PF's boss at the place. PF says [Honore?] Dutrey [trombone?] and Louis Keppard [guitar], [also in the band?], kidded him about the girl and the food, too.

MS was born on the North side of Chicago; he spent a lot of time on the South side, listening to Joe Oliver and others; the first [New Orleans] jazz players he heard were Jelly Roll [Morton], [Natty] Dominique, Manuel Perez, Jimmie Noone and Freddy Keppard. PF mentions "Sugar Johnny" [Smith]. MS chose to be a musician rather than a doctor or a [base]ball player. MS was about 14 years old when he played his first professional music job. He was born in 1906. He became interested in Joe Oliver after he bought some Gennett recordings by Oliver's band, so he went to hear Oliver in person. Oliver was then working at the Dreamland ^{Cafe} [South side]; MS would attend the Wednesday matinees there, sitting in the balcony. After that job, MS thinks Oliver went to California for a while; when he returned, Oliver played at the Royal Garden. MS, playing professionally by that time, liked the use Oliver

made of mutes; he got his ideas for using mutes from Oliver. The first band MS worked with had Elmer Schoebel and [Georg] Brunis in it; the band had no name; they worked at ^{Blatz's} Black's Palm Garden, on West [North?] Avenue. The band played standard tunes rather than "pop" tunes. Schoebel was the only one in the band able to read; MS learned to read later. (PF says in "their" band, his brother, [Alphonse] Picou, Dutrey and Eddie Atkins could read; Oliver didn't read much.) MS says he sat on the curbstone outside the Pekin [night club in Chicago] to hear Joe Oliver, working there at the time; MS was about 14 years old then; he knew Oliver already; Oliver was very nice to him. MS was one of the first white persons to be allowed to sit in with Oliver's band. Oliver's band was very popular with musicians; some others who came to listen were Brunis, Paul Mares, [Leon] Roppolo, Ben Pollack, Schoebel and Steve Brown. MS would visit Oliver at the Plantation [Club], which was just across the street from the Sunset [Cafe], where Louis [Armstrong] was working; MS would then visit with Louis. MS would take Oliver home from work. Oliver, a good pool [pocket billiards] shooter, frequented a pool hall at 31st and Indiana, and could usually be found there in the afternoons. MS worked out pitching baseball at the White Sox stadium; Oliver would be playing cornet in the bleachers; MS couldn't concentrate on pitching, as he would listen to the music. MS would have probably become a baseball pitcher, but his mother wouldn't let him leave school to go to the Florida [winder] training camp of the [New York] Giants.

The first records MS made were with the Bucktown Five; others in the band were Volly DeFaut [clarinet], Mel Stitzel [piano], Marvin Saxbe, guitar [cf. discographies.] and Guy Carey, trombone. PF says he had a picture of the Chicago Rhythm Kings, with Miff [Mole] [this]; MS says he himself never played with them. MS recorded only two tunes with ["Red"] McKenzie and Eddie Condon; they were ["There'll Be Some [Changes Made] and "I Found A New Baby." [Issued as the Chicago Rhythm Kings.] MS later made more [with McKenzie-Condon?] with the Blue Busters [i. e., The Mound City Blue Blowers?] when he went to New York.

There was plenty money to be made in Chicago in the Twenties; MS

quite often worked two steady jobs a night; the musicians made most of their money in tips, which were most generous. All the gangsters, such as Al Capone, came to places where MS worked. MS heard the New Orleans Rhythm Kings at Friars Inn; gangsters also frequented that place. MS mentions Mike Fritzel. The Valentine's Day Massacre is mentioned; Bugs Moran is mentioned. Friars Inn was at Van Buren and Wabash.

PF says Chicago and St. Louis were the best places for musicians in those days, with Chicago having more than the latter. Jelly Roll Hogan, a gangster, and Danny Colby had Chicago "sewed up" then. PF and others would sometimes go to Beardstown, Illinois, to work. MS says he himself went to school with Dion O'Bannion; he even had a fight with him, when they played baseball together.

D'Banion

End of Reel I

April 21, 1957 Also present: Nesuhi Ertegun, Robert Campbell, (George Wein enters near end of reel)

[Restrict Obscenity] Talk of Creole patois; PF says his mother spoke 7 languages, but he doesn't speak 1 language well.

MS says he played with one of the first swing bands in Chicago; it comprised 10 pieces, and was led by Sig Meyers, violinist.

PF mentions Ralph, a heavy-set guitarist who worked with Georg [Brunis?] at one time; PF worked with Ralph in St. Louis, in 1921; [Louis?] Panico was with Ralph's band then; in 1923, Panico returned to St. Louis with his own band.

MS first met [Frank] Teschemacher in 1925, when [FT was?] playing with Jimmy McPartland and Bud Freeman at White City [Ballroom]; when MS left there to go to Midway Garden [Ballroom], he took Teschemacher and got Jess [Stacy] in the band, too; the band was considered the best in Chicago at the time. It was a house band [i. e., no nominal leader?]. [Cf. Paul Edward Miller, ed., Esquire's 1946 Jazz Book, p. 30, and photograph facing p. 114.] The Midway Garden was at 60th and Cottage Grove; it was designed by [architect] Frank Lloyd Wright; it was first called Sans Souci Park; it was demolished around 1932 and is now a *filling station* parking lot. MS worked at the Midway for about 3 years; when he left, the band went to the Triangle, with MS, Teschemacher, Jess, [Stacy] and George Wettling as members. The next engagement was at Merry Garden Ballroom on the North side. When MS left that job, he joined Ray Miller at the College Inn, remaining awhile before joining Ted Lewis. "That was a nice sentence."

MS and PF knew of each other for years before they met. PF mentions the Apex [Club], where Earl [Hines] and Jimmie Noone were playing. He mentions the Palais Royal, which was at 395h and Cottage Grove, now the [northern] edge of a housing project.

PF says liquor wasn't the ruin of musicians in his youth; it was women.
[Restrict Obscenity.]

MS played professionally for about two years before he began studying music [i. e., to learn to read]. After playing with Ted Lewis for eight years

(during the Depression, when he earned \$250 a week), he went with Ben Pollack, with whom he was playing when he became ill; Dr. Alton Oschner operated on him at Touro Infirmary in New Orleans [hence, the title of a well-known Spanier recording, "Relaxin' At The Touro"]; Oschner now heads his own Foundation Hospital. MS and Oschner have been friends ever since the operation, in 1939; the operation saved MS's life.

NE traveled from Washington, D. C., to New York to hear MS's band appearing at Nick's [in Greenwich Village]; George Zack was on piano; NE says that band was one of the best bands of all time, in his opinion. [Georg] Brunis [trombone] and Rod Cless [clarinet] were also in the band. The band worked on ensembles rather than on solos; PF adds that he does not like so many solos. He considers the bass a rhythm instrument. They rehearsed at least twice a week. They worked out head arrangements. PF says that the people overseas have many records by MS; the French, who were the first to list band personnels on record labels, have all the data pertinent to the Spanier records. PF also made records with Red McKenzie and by Gene [?], who played suitcase.

MS liked Louis Armstrong when he first heard him, but not as much as he liked Joe Oliver. Armstrong played second trumpet with Oliver. PF says that even with 3 brass (two trumpets [actually, cornets?] and trombone) the band played so softly one could hear the feet of the dancers moving. MS says Oliver would cover his fingering hand with a handkerchief so Armstrong wouldn't know what break he was going to play; Oliver would tell Armstrong the number of break they were going to play, as they had all their breaks numbered. MS says Oliver never dreamed that Armstrong could copy his breaks just by hearing them!

Brunis was playing a beat-up trombone when MS first met him. PF says Armstrong first played peck horn (i. e., alto horn) when he was in reform [Waif's Home] school; PF, not confined to the place, wanted to play with their band; he tried all the instruments.

MS says he played drums before he took up cornet. PF says all the best swing trumpet players were required to play bass drum when they first joined

brass bands. MS began fooling around with cornet while still playing drums in a grammar school band; pretty soon he was able to play cornet with the band.

MS first sat in with Oliver's band at the Royal Garden; he played "Dippermouth" the way Oliver played it; he says if a person doesn't play with three choruses the way Oliver played it, it is not "Dippermouth." "Snag It," Armstrong's "Cornet Chop Suey" and "Carnival of Venice" are mentioned. MS says the introduction to "West End Blues" was created by Oliver; MS heard Oliver play it a long time before Armstrong played it. Oliver most often used a Conn mute when he used mutes; he played open a lot, too. MS has a Conn mute Oliver gave him. PF says Oliver used to tie two kazoos together and play [his cornet?] through them; PF says Tony [Catalano?], from Iowa, got a patent on a mute made of two kazoos put together like Oliver's. MS says they are called [Bomman?] mutes. Oliver used anything for mutes, including glasses and derby hats. The Oliver band played all ensemble for 5 to 7 minutes; nobody quit playing except to dry his lip; sometimes the clarinet and cornet would take a solo. [Cf. records.] MS says his own band had some solos, but the other [blowing] instruments would play a background for the soloist. EF emphasizes straight rhythm. PF mentions Luis Russell's band, with which he played. PF says he thinks Oliver and Armstrong started the solo routine, because other trumpet players wanted to sound like them, and would copy them, wanting to be featured. PF says "Kid Punch" [Miller] wanted to play all of Armstrong's endings; he says Punch had power, but he didn't know his horn. PF says Guy Kelly and Punch looked like each other. PF says he and Lorenzo Staulz paid \$3 for a horn for Punch; when they became angry at Punch, PF decided to chop up the horn, but Jack Carey, Mutt Carey's brother, stopped him from doing it.

PF mentions Joe Glaser [manager of Armstrong] and Armstrong.

When he was working on Clark Street [in Chicago], MS would finish his job, go to Mike Fritzel's [Friar's Inn] where the New Orleans Rhythm Kings were working and wait for them to finish; then they would all go to listen to Joe Oliver play.

MS and [Bix] ^{Beiderbecke} Beiderbecke used to work as a cornet team; Bix played with MS at the [Vista?] Ballroom three nights a week; MS met Bix through Eddie Condon. Bix and MS also sat in with Jimmie Noone when the latter was working at the Paradise. The year was around 1922. When MS worked at White City in 1925, he also had a late (1-6 AM) job at the Rendezvous; Beiderbecke, working [at the Rendezvous] with Charlie Straight's band, would stay on and play with MS on the late job. PF first saw Beiderbecke in 1922; Pee Wee [Russell] and [Frank] Trumbauer were with him; they were playing at the Arcadia [Ballroom] on Olive Street in St. Louis. MS says Beiderbecke was in Chicago in 1922. MS says Beiderbecke was more concerned with piano than with cornet then. PF says it was 1921 when he saw Beiderbecke in St. Louis; Trumbauer played C melody sax, Beiderbecke played piano. There was a vibes [i. e., vibraphone--in 1921?] player in the band, too. [Cf. Charles H. Waring and George Garlick, Bugles For Beiderbecke.] MS doesn't know who influenced Beiderbecke's cornet style. PF says Dewey Jackson, of St. Louis, didn't have a good tone but could really play cornet. MS thinks Beiderbecke tried to play like Emmett Hardy, of New Orleans. PF says Johnny Lala, of whom nobody ever heard, "was a hell of a trumpet player" [Lala, of New Orleans, died October, 1966--PRC]. PF says Lala's father owned half of the French Market.

[George Wein enters.]

MS says "he" [Beiderbecke] was quite a piano player, who was influenced by [Claude] Debussy. MS says Beiderbecke wrote all his [own] tunes on the piano. MS says that if Beiderbecke had lived, he would have probably given his time all to the piano, and to the classics.

End of Reel II

April 21, 1957 Also present: Nesuhi Ertegun, Robert Campbell, George Wein

Talk [about Bix Beiderbecke] continues; MS and Beiderbecke played together every night in Chicago, sometimes on MS's job, sometimes on Beiderbecke's job.

[Leon] "Rap" [Roppolo] could play good blues on guitar; he never played with a band, just for his [and others] entertainment. MS and others would rent a boat, go out on the Lake [Michigan], and "Rap" would play for them for hours.

Talk of the uniform of Joe Oliver's band; MS says they wore black shoes with white socks, tuxedos, etc. PF tells of bringing attention to the fact that Louis [Armstrong] forgot to put on his trousers once while wearing full-dress [with exception noted] clothes.

The Pekin seated about 125 people, says MS; he describes the physical aspects of the place. MS speaks of other night clubs; he played in one where two men were shot one night; the band continued playing. MS mentions Mike Fritzel, operator of the Arsonia, where Gilda Gray [Sp] and Bee Palmer got their start; MS sat in with the band at that place. All the places talked about were speakeasies. Later, the [South side] Dreamland, the Royal Garden and the Apex are mentioned. There was trouble occasionally in some of the places, but the musicians were never hurt, although someone once accidentally put his fingers in the mouth of Luis Russell (in New York), who was hiding under a piano during a scuffle. [RESTRICT] is mentioned. J. C. Higginbotham and James P. Johnson are mentioned.

MS says the [unissued?] records Jess Stacy recorded with him are not so good; Stacy is good, but MS and other things are not.

PF has a dub of a Ted Lewis recording; MS didn't record with Lewis until 1929.

Bill Russell is mentioned.

MS's band [of the late Thirties and early Forties] is mentioned; Joe Bushkin [piano] was in it [at one time]. The band made recordings which have become known as the "Great 16" [on a LP]. MS mentions recordings with [Sidney] Bechet.

[RESTRICT]

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George Wein

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[RESTRICT] [Moe Asch is mentioned.]

During the Twenties in Chicago, MS's favorite musicians were Joe Oliver, Joe Oliver's band, Louis [Armstrong], Georg Brunis, [Leon] Roppolo, Paul Mares and Benny Goodman. White and Negro musicians kept to themselves pretty much; only rarely did they sit in with each other; there were no mixed band. [Cf. Velly De Faut biography. RBA.] Dave Tough is mentioned. The Apex Club was originally called The Next. [Frank] Teschemacher was just starting to find himself when he [was killed] in an automobile accident.

MS's family had the first Marmon-Hupmobile [automobiles] service in Chicago. Talk of the car MS had. MS would drive Joe Oliver home in it from Oliver's job at the Plantation 3 or 4 times a week. Oliver had a big band then; PF says Buster Bailey and Rudy Powell played reeds with Oliver before Darnell Howard; Oliver later had Barney Bigard and Albert Nicholas in the band.

Talk of musical prostitution and of various styles of jazz; conclusion is that labels are ridiculous. Talk of critics; Leonard Feather is mentioned. PF says Feather and Georg Brunis had a fight one night; apparently Feather had a lot of fights. [Jack] "Papa" Laine, friend of Brunis, is mentioned; he still lives in N. O. [died 1966--PRC], but quit playing in 1917. [Cf. J "P" L, reel ?] (NE replies to MS, saying he doesn't think Laine is related to trombonist Julian Laine [also of New Orleans].)

MS talks of photographs he has. One of the Beiderbecke band [i. e., a band with Beiderbecke?] shows Adrian Rollini, Don Murray, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, others; MS thinks it is the only photograph of its kind left. *Probably the Rollini band at New Yorker H*

[MS leaves.]

PF mentions a photograph showing himself, Sidney [Bechet?], Albert Glennie [and others?]. RC says he [and NE] say Glennie in New Orleans. Others in the photo were Louis ["Big Eye"] Nelson, [Alphonse] Picou, Louis Keppard, and a trombonist; they made records for the Army, [at the direction of] John Reid, a disc jockey around Cincinnati [Ohio]; PF doesn't know what became of the records.

*J. S. Spanier
4/21/57*

PF played in only one place in the District [operated by Eddie Groshell [Sp.]-- see Reel I]. There were only three places in the District which employed bands; they were Rice's, Billy Phillips's, and Hunt's [Sp?] and Nagel's. The Tuxedo Dance Hall opened later. PF was playing at the Come Clean Hall, in Gretna, when "Gyp the Blood" killed Billy Phillips; it was on a Saturday night. "Gyp" operated the Tuxedo Dance Hall. PF lists the locations of the dance halls: Rice's was at Marais and Customhouse [now Iberville], PF worked at Liberty and Customhouse, Billy Phillips's was at Franklin [now Crozat] and Customhouse; the Tuxedo was on Franklin between Customhouse and Bienville. Fewclothes [i. e., Foucault's] was another place nearby. Tom Anderson's saloon was at Basin and Customhouse; he had another place at Canal and Rampart.

PF talks about "bell hops" [not in hotels]; they would deliver beer from saloons to people working in the houses in the District.

[RESTRICT: Obscenities]

End of Reel III

