

Unedited first draft

HERBERT HALL and
DON ALBERT
REEL I
August 3, 1978

Also Present: Richard B. Allen
Summary: Richard B. Allen
Audit: Bruce Raeburn
Typing: Dan Weisman
Proofreading: Richard B.
Allen, 21 March 1991

Don Albert gives the date correctly. The interview is held at 715 St. James [Street]. Herbert Hall does not use his middle name except "in the union." DA gives his name as "Don Albert Dominique" and laughs. [Compare other sources.]

HH says he was born in Reserve, La. on March 20, 1907. DA says, "Watch it!" RBA adds, "I'll ask Robert" [Hall, HH's older brother]. HH says, "I don't think Robert can remember that far back."

RBA says he doesn't think it is necessary to go into Marshall Lawrence and Kid Thomas [and their relationship with Herbert Hall at this time]. He mentions Leroy Robinet's interview.

Hall joined Don Albert's band because he was given a good offer. At the time he was with Sidney Desvigne in New Orleans, and they didn't have much work. HH was single and adventurous.

Hall played a couple of gigs on a riverboat with Sidney Desvigne. He never worked steadily on the riverboats.

Hall went to Baton Rouge from Reserve, his hometown. From Baton Rouge, he went to New Orleans, staying only about two years. He worked with Kid Victor in Baton Rouge.

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John Handy had left there, but he had played in Reserve often, coming from Baton Rouge. Hall does not remember Robert "Bob" Thomas. Toots Johnson and Wesley "Kid" Dimes were there. (Don Albert returns.)

Baton Rouge was much the same musically as New Orleans. There were no big bands. DA says, "They imported them there." Bands had two saxes. DA says, "That's what I'm talking about, them Donaldsonville bands." RBA mentions Freddy [sp?] Landry of Donaldsonville. The famous Donaldsonville band was Prof. Claiborne Williams.' These bands were smaller than DA's.

Hall says Sidney Desvigne's band was similar to DA's, i.e., a reading band with three reeds. It was a full band of that period. HH played lead alto and was the baritone soloist. He also played soprano sax and, DA says, clarinet.

Don Albert says that [Louis] Cottrell played the clarinet. Hall played the baritone, and Dink Taylor played the alto. [No doubt DA means as soloists.] There were very few tenor solos. RBA thinks there is a tenor solo on "Rockin' and Swingin'." DA and HH agree that LC was the only [tenor soloist].

HH played baritone on solos only as a rule. He says that there is different feel on baritone from the one on clarinet. This makes one play differently. RBA thinks that LC's tenor playing was much like his clarinet [playing]. Hall says some things one does are alike, but one can't "get over" the alto or

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baritone as fast as the clarinet. This changes one's style.

Members of Albert's band listened to Duke Ellington's band with [Harry] Carney, Barney Bigard, [Johnny] Hodges, "and those people," according to Hall. DA opines that Hall played in a style as close to Carney's as anyone whom Albert has heard in his life, pointing out [Hall's solos on] their "Rockin' and Swingin'" [sp?] and "The Sheik [of Araby]" as having the same 'tonation [i.e., tone and color] and the same figures. RBA mentions that [McCarthy, Albert, et. al.,] Jazz on Record, 1917-1976 [London: Hanover Books, 1968.] Hall's solo on "The Sheik" with Carney's playing.

The sound makes a big band "good" to HH. Although he likes to listen to big bands, he finds they restrict him too much. He didn't find Don Albert's band too restricting because he was used to that style then. He is now accustomed to small groups and prefers them.

He seldom uses arrangements with small groups; however, he arranged for DA's band and gives the sax section part on their recording of "You Don't Love Me," as one example. He had no favorite among arrangers.

He knew nothing of the piano and had no training in arranging, but Lloyd Glenn helped him with some parts. Like Hall, Billy Douglas arranged without an instrument. At first, Hall had a little trouble with transposition.

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Albert's first reed section was: Herbert Hall, lead [i.e., first alto sax]; Louis Cottrell, second tenor; and Arthur Derbigny, third [alto sax]. Hall doubled on clarinet and soprano sax musically [i.e., when reading the notation of music]. At first there were special choruses which might require using clarinet or soprano. These choruses might change keys "and what have you."

Herbert Hall joined the band in New Orleans, and all the members left together for the State Fair at Dallas. DA adds that this was in October 1929.

He says that Hall "got stuck in the deal." He didn't ask DA for any money. [Louis] Barbarin wanted forty dollars and came back just about the day before they left wanting forty more. DA could not give him any more since the thousand, which Bernard Goldberg had let DA have, was almost gone.

They had three automobiles: Arthur [Derbigny]'s Model T, Don Albert's Chrysler convertible, and Frank Jacquet's Dodge touring car. These provided transportation for all to Dallas. [Louis] "Bucks" Cottrell rode with "his buddy and friend" Arthur Derbigny in the Model T Ford which arrived before DA's Chrysler which broke down in Tyler.

Jacquet lived in New Orleans then, but DA had never met him before. Since DA needed transportation, he was going to use Jacquet whether he could play or not. There was then only one

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trombonist in the band which was known as Don Albert and his Ten Pals. They got the tenth member in Dallas when they "picked up" Hiram Harding [trumpet] and Henry Turner, tuba. DA had never seen nor heard of him before. Their's was the first band to use a "string bass" in Texas. Texans wondered what this instrument was. They got Jimmy Johnson, bassist, "a couple or three months" after coming to Texas. DA says he was a great man, a great bass player.

Louis Barbarin stayed in New Orleans so they got Fats Martin. Someone told DA that there was a good drummer at the Astoria. Martin came to DA's house on Miro Street, looking like a rag[la]muffin. DA [thought] that he could not play drums, but FM told of his ability and playing with Red Allen and Guy Kelly. DA then [thought] FM must be able to play to some extent so they tried him out. FM played gigs with Red Allen and Guy Kelly at the Astoria. [Were Allen and Kelly playing at the same time? Albert is unclear.] When FM played, he [turned out to be] a good drummer.

The late Al Freeman of Columbus, Ohio was DA's first pianist. At the time he joined the band, he was living in New Orleans and playing with Sidney Desvigne. The band members who were born in New Orleans were Derbigny, Cottrell and Albert; however they were all living in New Orleans except for Hiram Harding.

Frank Jacquet, originally of Lake Charles, La., was a

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straight reading trombonist. He was helpful in many ways, driving the bus, setting up instruments and fighting at dances. "They" [the fighters] would "tear them up," and "the musicians were right in the line of fire." [Frank] "Jack" [Jacquet], who was strong, would knock out a couple of "them," and the musicians would go on about their business.

When the band started, they had only stocks because the band was formed so quickly, according to Hall. Albert adds that [the leader of?] a white band which was playing at the Adolphus Hotel in Dallas told DA that he would bring them a stack of arrangements. The next day he brought a trunk load of arrangements because he "liked what he heard." Then stock arrangements cost about forty or fifty cents. He got complimentary copies mailed to him at the Adolphus. He gave the duplicates to DA's band.

Albert says that Herman Waldman[']s band] was in San Antonio. Hall says they played for the Baker Hotel chain.

The nicknames of DA's band members are discussed. Derbigny's was "Shook;" Henry Turner's, "Nick" or "Nicodemus." Al Freeman was nicknamed after a Jew with whom he hocked things on Commerce [Street] in San Antonio. DA says, "Sunset." [Is this the name of the hockshop or the street?] They called him "Freeman" also.

Hall had traveled before from Baton Rouge to Mississippi, including towns like Natchez, and all over Louisiana. DA says

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that they went longer distances in his band. HH says they got in all kinds of weather, going up to New York. DA adds that they went to North and South Dakota.

Hall asks if they went to New Hampshire or Maine on their first gig out of New York [City] with Billie Holiday. DA says they went upstate to Glens Falls, Albany, and Buffalo, but they didn't leave the state. They went to Detroit, but they didn't go to Canada.

Sometimes they traveled one-to-two hundred miles going from one job to another. Hall says that "those were miles" because of poor conditions. DA says that everybody had to get out and push when they got stuck. They put everything they could find under the tires.

They kept a couple of big rocks on the back bumpers of the bus in case the brakes didn't hold going up a hill or mountain. The members had to move quickly to stop the bus from rolling backwards. The bus had "commercial brakes," not air brakes. They were in the Virginia and West Virginia mountains which DA says were the highest he has ever seen.

Hall notes the band ran out of everything including money, but they were happy. They were young and wild. They agree. DA says they never had an argument until the Northern musicians like Geechie Robinson and Billy Douglas joined. Robinson was a troublemaker, but Billy Douglas wasn't much of a fighter. [See

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earlier Albert interview on Robinson's fighting ability.]

No one ever found out who "The Hawk" was according to Albert. [See previous Albert interview or interviews.] "The Hawk" stole his coat and old trumpet. DA swore it was Geechie. Hall doesn't remember "The Hawk."

Hall was in the band until the fall of '37, leaving the band in Pittsburgh where he joined another band for a year. Then he rejoined Albert in the place "where Notre Dame is" Indianapolis [sic]. He can't remember the name of the Pittsburgh band. They worked in Pittsburgh during the winter and went to Cincinnati, playing part of the spring. The band broke up, and most of the men returned to Pittsburgh, their home. However, HH joined a Cincinnati band which worked across the river at the Blue Grass Inn, 10 Licking Pike, Newport, Ky. There he got his social security card, which he shows. His number is 402 1613 10, and the card was issued on 6/6/38 [i.e., June 6, 1938].

To reach the Don Albert band on the road was difficult. They had "headquarters" when they had a week's stand. Mail was sent to General Delivery.

HH thinks that some one got in touch with him because Albert needed a trumpet player. Willis and HH were working with Shadina [sp?] Walker's band of Cleveland. [Compare John Chilton, Who's Who of Jazz, and other sources.]

Letters addressed to Don Albert or Albert Dominique [his

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real name] in San Antonio would be forwarded by his wife. When his wife was on the road with him, mail was sent to General Delivery, San Antonio, Tx. and his wife would pick up his mail when she came back.

Hall met his wife in San Antonio in 1931. There is joking here by HH, DA and RBA. DA says that she is a wonderful woman.

END OF REEL

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Interviewer: Richard B. Allen
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Re-Audit: Richard B. Allen
Typing: Dan Weisman
Proofreading: Richard B.
Allen

Don Albert's band played one date in Washington D.C. It was at the Howard Theater, "the only Negro theater on the circuit. It was similar to the Apollo Theater."

DA remembers Camille Nickerson, who is at Howard University, and her father, Prof. [W.J.] Nickerson. She is old if she is still living.

The band never played in Baltimore, but Philadelphia was their "home base" for a while. It was all right, but there was too much hilly country. DA voices the same complaint about Pittsburgh.

He played in Trenton, Newark, and Atlantic City, N.J., but not in Elizabeth. He played in such upstate New York towns as Glens Falls, and Albany. He did not play in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, or Connecticut, but he had Billy Douglas of Connecticut in his band. The last news that DA had of him was that he was in the penitentiary. RBA says that he is not in there and that he [saw an article in] the IAJRC [Journal] with Douglas' address. RBA told Benny Carter about this.

Albert's band played the whole state of Ohio, but they

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played mostly in cities in Kentucky. This was also hill country, and the McCoys and Hatfields who feuded were there. DA saw no shooting there.

People in Indiana were "beautiful." Indianapolis was a "tremendous" city [i.e., for musicians?] "South Bend was all right, but Indianapolis stopped them all." There were "worlds of" what RBA calls "colored people" there. [Note that DA does not comment on the use of "colored people." I probably did this deliberately. RBA, 16 October 1980.] They played over the Indiana Ballroom and at a big theater downtown which DA thinks was named the Follies.

When Albert was there, he didn't hear blues pickers [i.e., guitarists] since "most of that was almost obsolete." Sometimes he would run across Blind Lemon [Jefferson] and Leadbelly, whose [real] name was Ledbetter in the eastern part of Texas, playing in joints in towns like Longview. They were old and were not doing too much of anything. During the revision [i.e., revival] "they" tried to resurrect "them" [i.e., ^[Jefferson died 1909 - DCM] Jefferson and Ledbetter], but it was "kinda late then."

Blues are soulful feelings coming from the slaves. These feelings came from their bodies when they were blue or happy.

Boogie Woogie is an improvisation created by pianists. "You get a different full sound with a different beat." Albert's band played "some songs in that vein,..." One was called "Boogie

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Woogie."

He heard jug players in New Orleans only. "Jug bands and guys playing them 'kazoot things'" played in the streets of New Orleans, uptown, on Canal [Street], "wherever they could hustle a nickel or a dime." RBA asks about washboards, and DA says "washboards and -- the guy that played that kazoot thing -- that's where Bob Burns got that from." RBA asks about Hudson, who played a bazooka like Bob Burns and whose name Albert doesn't recognize. DA says that Burns "got it from him."

DA didn't know [Edward T.] "Noon" Johnson who RBA says sang blues and popular songs. RBA adds that he used to hear guys [including Johnson] playing blues on three or four guitars, one "seconding" behind the other. DA says that he has seen that.

DA never saw string bands in New Orleans. By string band he means a band made up of all stringed instruments, such as "violins, fiddles, banjos, guitars. Everything is basic." [Compare use of "string band" in other interviews.]

DA put on fish fries in his backyard when he was a boy. He hung a lit lantern out in the front about six p.m. to let people know that there was a fish fry. He served "the best fish you ever want to eat in your life." It was generally never catfish. "They" also served potato salad and would sell out before eleven o'clock. They served French bread and beer, but there was no heavy drinking.

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Kids had penny parties at their homes. They served lemonade. DA's cousin Barney Bigard and DA put them on at Bigard's house. They charged a penny to see homemade imitations of motion pictures.

Albert says Cawain is a delicacy made of snapping turtle. He has not eaten any in many years as people do not know how to fix it and he has not been able to get one to fix. Mobilian turtle can't be used. Bouzan [variant of bouzin?] means drinking.

[compare Danny Barber & Al Rose who interviewed]

The band ran into a flash flood in Virginia, but they got out of it quickly. The band never went West.

Albert never liked movies, but he would take his wife to them. He would take his hot dogs and drink into the theater and he would eat and drink as soon as the picture started. Then he would go to sleep. When the show was over, he would ask his wife what happened.

Albert has never owned a phonograph, but he does have a combination of a television set-phonograph. [During my visits, I do not remember his playing records, but he watched television often. RBA, 17 October 1980.] He heard records as a little boy when he went to other people's homes. He ran errands for neighbors and helped clean up their homes.

He listened to the radio when "it first came out" with earphones. DA was in school then. It was hard to receive music on crystal sets. Later he heard many bands. Duke [Ellington] and

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Louis [Armstrong] were always his idols so he tried to go somewhere to hear them. He also liked to listen to "the Casa Loma, the big one" of the big bands. Of the trumpet players, he liked to hear Bunny Berigan and Bix [Beiderbecke]. Ziggy Elman was a great trumpet player.

Albert's first trade was making [bed] springs. He worked at the Crescent Bed Factory which is still "on the other side" [i.e., the lake side?] of Tulane Avenue and Broad [Street]. It is three blocks past this corner on the left side.

Kid Sheik worked there with Albert. Colar was not playing trumpet then. His real name, George Colar, is not known to DA. He was called "Sheik" all his life, says Albert. RBA adds that he was also called "Gray-eye George" [by Willie Parker, probably in the late 1950s. RBA, 17 October 1980]. When DA left, Colar was learning [i.e., how to make springs? How to play trumpet?]

Years ago Albert used to work for the Chinese in Chinatown on Tulane Avenue. He would clean up their floors for a bag of "Chinee" fortune cookies. ["Chinee" is possibly a back-formation from Chinese. My speculation is that it is mistaken for the singular of Chinese. RBA, 17 October 1980.] He never had almond cookies.

The Chinese could speak enough English to let you know what they want you to do. They were no different from other people in New Orleans. DA has never found people very different anywhere he

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went. "It's just a matter of staying away from the bad element which is hard to do." RBA asks if even Yankees are the same as other people. [Compare Reel I, ca. 1025 on Northern musicians.] DA replies, "yes."

Albert says that the Chinese have a different way of cooking. He likes it. He adds that "it's mostly on the vegetation side." They do not have much meat in their food. RBA comments that Chinese food has always been popular in New Orleans and that all the musicians he knows like Chinese food. [This is misleading, but I have never heard anything negative that I recall. RBA, 17 October 1980.] DA has liked it all his life.

Both Albert's father and grandfather spoke fluent Spanish, English, and French. His grandmother spoke only French and English. Mostly men spoke Spanish "because of affiliating with those cigar makers." Most of them came from Cuba.

Mr. Morial, a cigar maker and the father of the Mayor^A of New Orleans, worked for Albert's father. Mr. Morial "used to pick me up and take me all over town." He was crippled. DA thinks that his name was Ernest and that Ernest ["Dutch" Morial, the Mayor] was named after him, but DA only knew him as Mr. Morial.

[Ernest 'Dutch' Morial]

DA never was around anyone who was cutting cane so he never heard anyone sing. He heard railroad workers sing when they hammered spikes. DA pumped a handcar and doesn't know what they sang as it was their own composition. It was timed precisely.

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RBA says that one hears [work-songs] that sound like the source of blues. DA says, "Well, it all ties in." RBA asks if women who washed or did dishes, sang. DA replies, "People are always singing....I notice you do that. I be washing dishes...by myself and I sing." People sing whatever they are thinking of rather than a special song.

Albert heard "Careless Love" which was changed to "Loveless Love." ["Careless Love"] was one of Chris Kelly's favorite numbers.

DA did not hear harmonica playing much in New Orleans. He does not think it was a popular instrument there.

DA's mother, named Georgianna, was a housewife. "She raised kids." The brothers and sisters were a sister, then Stanley, then Albert, then Maurice, then Dutch, and then Leo, the youngest. Their mother was forty-eight when Leo was born. DA says, "the last button on Gabriel's coat," Leo is now about fifty-two. RBA only sees him when DA is playing.

Albert says "New Orleans was a baseball city. You had the Crescent Stars [i.e., locally?]. The Bacharach [sp?] Giants, the New Jersey Giants, and other Eastern teams came to New Orleans, and they got great players from New Orleans. The Homestead Grays came regularly.

He had no special [i.e., favorite] team, but he had "a special time" of going to the baseball park where he would catch

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a foul ball which was hit over the wall. This got him in free.
Albert was never a great baseball fan.

When RBA asks about the [Brooklyn] Dodgers, DA replies that he liked them and they were a colorful team. He liked Satchel Paige, Bob Gibson of the [St. Louis] Card[in]als, and Jackie Robinson. DA had an autographed picture [i.e., a photograph] of Ted Williams, who often came to San Antonio. They were friends. Also in the picture is Congressman [i.e., U.S. Representative] Henry B. Gonzales [D-Texas]. DA helped get him elected.

Don Albert has known many baseball players, but he finds it hard to name one as the greatest player of all time since it is a matter of opinion and many things must be taken into consideration. He does think Satchel Paige was a [star?] DA doesn't think anyone could come near to him. DA has seen him pitch and was in his company quite a bit. DA calls him "a great gentleman" but qualifies this by saying it is a matter of opinion. RBA declares that it is a shame that Paige never got a break [i.e., early in his career]. RBA adds that Paige was working for the [New Orleans] Pel[ican]s recently.

RBA discusses sports in New Orleans ironically. Albert points out that New Orleans is supporting prize-fighting and basketball.

Albert says that his sister [Dutch, the wife of Frederick Braden] is active in politics on account of [her relative]

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[Henry] Braden [III?], the son of Dr. [Henry] Braden [Jr.?] and a [state] Senator. RBA comments that only his friend and himself had on [any sort of political button or sticker] when they went to a [Harlem] Globetrotters [basketball game]. Braden was elected by seven votes according to Albert.

"Tanglefoot" was Joe Robichaux's nickname. He was called this because he was pigeon-toed. John Robichaux was all right [i.e., physically]. RBA says that when people talk about Robichaux today, they mean John, the left-handed violinist. DA adds that Joe never made too big a name. He played mostly in Mobile, Ala., and a few dates in Mississippi. DA says his records made in New York "didn't jell."

Albert heard Mutt [Carey] and Freddy Keppard with John Robichaux. DA was about ten or twelve years old. He never played with Carey or Keppard since he was too young [i.e., when they left New Orleans?]. DA knew [Henry] Kimball, the bassist, but not Andrew Kimble, the trumpet player. RBA says that Alvin "Mickey" Alcorn talked about him and assumes that Andrew Kimble may have been with John Robichaux after DA went to Texas and before Alcorn joined DA's band. DA says that Andrew Kimball [sp?] must have been from uptown near Alcorn's neighborhood.

Crumb crushers are teeth. Albert used the term on August 3, 1978. Sterlin Holmsey [San Antonio journalist] is mentioned.

When DA listened to a band, he listened to the whole band

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rather than his own instrument, the trumpet. The violin was forced on him. [See other data. Does this mean by his family?]

Some of the straight trumpet players were Arnold Metoyer; Amos White; "Old Man" [George] Moret; and Willie Pajaud, whose first name RBA must supply. RBA asks what style Peter Bocage played, and Albert says that he was a straight trumpet player. RBA says that in later years Bocage could play good second trumpet although he was not the strongest trumpet player in the world. In RBA's judgment, Bocage sounded like Bunk [Johnson], Shots [Madison], and Buddy Petit. RBA qualifies this [i.e., as he never heard Petit, but there is evidence as to his style in demonstrations and discussions as well as recordings of other trumpeters in a similar style].

The interview is ended as Albert starts to doze.

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RBA says he doesn't think it is necessary to go into Marshall Lawrence and Kid Thomas [and their relationship with Herbert Hall at this time]. He mentions Leroy Robinet's interview.

Hall joined Don Albert's band because he was given a good offer. At the time he was with Sidney Desvigne in New Orleans, and they didn't have much work. HH was single and adventurous.

Hall played a couple of gigs on a riverboat with Sidney Desvigne. He never worked steadily on the riverboats.

Hall went to Baton Rouge from Reserve, his hometown. From Baton Rouge, he went to New Orleans, staying only about two years. He worked with Kid Victor in Baton Rouge.

John Handy had left there, but he had played in Reserve often, coming from Baton Rouge. Hall does not remember Robert "Bob" Thomas. Toots Johnson and Wesley "Kid" Dimes were there.

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Baton Rouge was much the same musically as New Orleans. There were no big bands. DA says, "They imported them there." Bands had two saxes. DA says, "That's what I'm talking about, them Donaldsonville bands." RBA mentions Freddy [sp?] Landry of Donaldsonville. The famous Donaldsonville band was Prof. Claiborne williams' These bands were smaller than DA's.

Hall says Sidney Desvigne's band was similar to DA's, i.e., a reading band with three reeds. It was a full band of that period. HH played lead alto and was the baritone soloist. He also played soprano sax and, DA says, clarinet.

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Members of Albert's band listened to Duke Ellington's band with [Harry] Carney, Barney Bigard, [Johnny] Hodges, "and those

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Full citation

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He seldom uses arrangements with small groups; however, he arranged for DA's band and gives the sax section part on their recording of "You Don't Love Me," as one example. He had no favorite among arrangers.

He knew nothing of the piano and had no training in arranging, but Lloyd Glenn helped him with some parts. Like Hall, Billy Douglas arranged without an instrument. At first, Hall had a little trouble with transposition.

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He says that Hall "got stuck in the deal." He didn't ask DA for any money. [Louis] Barbarin wanted forty dollars and came back just about the day before they left wanting forty more. DA could not give him any more since the thousand, which Bernard Goldberg had let DA have, was almost gone.

They had three automobiles: Arthur [Derbigny]'s Model T, Don Albert's Chrysler convertible, and Frank Jacquet's Dodge touring car. These provided transportation for all to Dallas. [Louis] "Bucks" Cottrell rode with "his buddy and friend" Arthur Derbigny in the Model T Ford which arrived before DA's Chrysler which broke down in Tyler.

Jacquet lived in New Orleans then, but DA had never met him before. Since DA needed transportation, he was going to use Jacquet whether he could play or not. There was then only one trombonist in the band which was known as Don Albert and his Ten Pals. They got the tenth member in Dallas when they "picked up" Hiram Harding [trumpet] and Henry Turner, tuba. DA had never seen nor heard of him before. Their's was the first band to use a

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"string bass" in Texas. Texans wondered what this instrument was. They got Jimmy Johnson, bassist, "a couple or three months" after coming to Texas. DA says he was a great man, a great bass player.

Louis Barbarin stayed in New Orleans so they got Fats Martin. Someone told DA that there was a good drummer at the Astoria. Martin came to DA's house on Miro Street, looking like a rag[a]muffin. DA [thought] that he could not play drums, but FM told of his ability and playing with Red Allen and Guy Kelly. DA then [thought] FM must be able to play to some extent so they tried him out. FM played gigs with Red Allen and Guy Kelly at the Astoria. [Were Allen and Kelly playing at the same time? Albert is unclear.] When FM played, he [turned out to be] a good drummer.

The late Al Freeman of Columbus, Ohio was DA's first pianist. At the time he joined the band, he was living in New Orleans and playing with Sidney Desvigne. The band members who were born in New Orleans were Derbigny, Cottrell and Albert; however, they were all living in New Orleans except for Hiram Harding.

Frank Jacquet, originally of Lake Charles, La., was a straight reading trombonist. He was helpful in many ways, driving the bus, setting up instruments and fighting at dances. "They" [the fighters] would "tear them up," and "the musicians were right in the line of fire." [Frank] "Jack" [Jacquet], who was

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strong, would knock out a couple of "them," and the musicians would go on about their business.

When the band started, they had only stocks because the band was formed so quickly, according to Hall. Albert adds that [the leader of?] a white band which was playing at the Adolphus Hotel in Dallas told DA that he would bring them a stack of arrangements. The next day he brought a trunk load of arrangements because he "liked what he heard." Then stock arrangements cost about forty or fifty cents. He got complimentary copies mailed to him at the Adolphus. He gave the duplicates to DA's band.

Albert says that Herman Waldman[']s band] was in San Antonio. Hall says they played for the Baker Hotel chain.

The nicknames of DA's band members are discussed. Derbigny's was "Shook;" Henry Turner's, "Nick" or "Nicodemus." Al Freeman was nicknamed after a Jew with whom he hocked things on Commerce [Street] in San Antonio. DA says, "Sunset." [Is this the name of the hockshop or the street?] They called him "Freeman" also.

Hall had traveled before from Baton Rouge to Mississippi, including towns like Natchez, and all over Louisiana. DA says that they went longer distances in his band. HH says they got in all kinds of weather, going up to New York. DA adds that they went to North and South Dakota.

Hall asks if they went to New Hampshire or Maine on their

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first gig out of New York [City] with Billie Holiday. DA says they went upstate to Glens Falls, Albany, and Buffalo, but they didn't leave the state. They went to Detroit, but they didn't go to Canada.

Sometimes they traveled one-to-two hundred miles going from one job to another. Hall says that "those were miles" because of poor conditions. DA says that everybody had to get out and push when they got stuck. They put everything they could find under the tires.

They kept a couple of big rocks on the back bumpers of the bus in case the brakes didn't hold going up a hill or mountain. The members had to move quickly to stop the bus from rolling backwards. The bus had "commercial brakes," not air brakes. They were in the Virginia and West Virginia mountains which DA says were the highest he has ever seen.

Hall notes the band ran out of everything including money, but they were happy. They were young and wild. They agree. DA says they never had an argument until the Northern musicians like Geechie Robinson and Billy Douglas joined. Robinson was a troublemaker, but Billy Douglas wasn't much of a fighter. [See earlier Albert interview on Robinson's fighting ability.]

No one ever found out who "The Hawk" was according to Albert. [See previous Albert interview or interviews.] "The Hawk" stole his coat and old trumpet. DA swore it was Geechie. Hall

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doesn't remember "The Hawk."

Hall was in the band until the fall of '37, leaving the band in Pittsburgh where he joined another band for a year. Then he rejoined Albert in the place "where Notre Dame is" Indianapolis [sic]. He can't remember the name of the Pittsburgh band. They worked in Pittsburgh during the winter and went to Cincinnati, playing part of the spring. The band broke up, and most of the men returned to Pittsburgh, their home. However, HH joined a Cincinnati band which worked across the river at the Blue Grass Inn, 10 Licking Pike, Newport, Ky. There he got his social security card, which he shows. His number is 402 1613 10, and the card was issued on 6/6/38 [i.e., June 6, 1938].

To reach the Don Albert band on the road was difficult. They had "headquarters" when they had a week's stand. Mail was sent to General Delivery.

HH thinks that some one got in touch with him because Albert needed a trumpet player. Willis and HH were working with Shadina [sp?] Walker's band of Cleveland. [Compare John Chilton, Who's Who of Jazz, and other sources.]

Letters addressed to Don Albert or Albert Dominique [his real name] in San Antonio would be forwarded by his wife. When his wife was on the road with him, mail was sent to General Delivery, San Antonio, Tx. and his wife would pick up his mail when she came back.

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Hall met his wife in San Antonio in 1931. There is joking here by HH, DA and RBA. DA says that she is a wonderful woman.

END OF REEL

Unedited first
draft

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Interviewer: Richard B. Allen
Summary: Richard B. Allen
Audit: Bruce Raeburn
Re-Audit: Richard B. Allen
Typing: Dan Weisman

Don Albert's band played one date in Washington D.C. It was at the Howard Theater, "the only Negro theater on the circuit. It was similar to the Apollo Theater."

SV
sub
DA remembers Camille Nickerson, who is at Howard University, and her father, Prof. [W. ~~W.~~ Nickerson. She is old if she is still living.

The band never played in Baltimore, but Philadelphia was their "home base" for a while. It was all right, but there was too much hilly country. DA voices the same complaint about Pittsburgh.

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He played in Trenton, Newark, and Atlantic City, N.J., but not in Elizabeth. He played in such upstate New York towns as Glens Falls and Albany. He did not play in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, or Connecticut, but he had Billy Douglas of Connecticut in his band. The last news that DA had of him was that he was in the penitentiary. RBA says that he is not in there and that he [saw an article in] the IAJRC [Journal] with Douglas' address. RBA told Benny Carter about this.

Albert's band played the whole state of Ohio, but they

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played mostly in cities in Kentucky. This was also hill country, and the McCoy's and Hatfields who feuded were there. DA saw no shooting there.

People in Indiana were "beautiful." Indianapolis was a "tremendous" city [i.e., for musicians?] "South Bend was all right, but Indianapolis stopped them all." There were "worlds of" what RBA calls "colored people" there. [Note that DA does not comment on the use of "colored people." I probably did this deliberately. RBA, 16 October 1980.] They played over the Indiana Ballroom and at a big theater downtown which DA thinks was named the Follies.

When Albert was there, he didn't hear blues pickers [i.e., guitarists] since "most of that was almost obsolete." Sometimes he would run across Blind Lemon [Jefferson] and Leadbelly, whose [real] name was Ledbetter in the eastern part of Texas, playing in joints in towns like Longview. They were old and were not doing too much of anything. During the revision [i.e., revival] "they" tried to resurrect "them" [i.e., Jefferson and Ledbetter], but it was "kinda late then."

Blues are soulful feelings coming from the slaves. These feelings came from their bodies when they were blue or happy.

Boogie Woogie is an improvisation created by pianists. "You get a different full sound with a different beat." Albert's band played "some songs in that vein,..." One was called "Boogie

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Woogie."

He heard jug players in New Orleans only. "Jug bands and guys playing them 'kazoot things'" played in the streets of New Orleans, uptown, on Canal [Street], "wherever they could hustle a nickel or a dime." RBA asks about washboards, and DA says "washboards and -- the guy that played that kazoot thing -- that's where Bob Burns got that from." RBA asks about Hudson, who played a bazooka like Bob Burns and whose name Albert doesn't recognize. DA says that Burns "got it from him."

DA didn't know [Edward T.] "Noon" Johnson who RBA says sang blues and popular songs. RBA adds that he used to hear guys [including Johnson] playing blues on three or four guitars, one "seconding" behind the other. DA says that he has seen that.

DA never saw string bands in New Orleans. By string band he means a band made up of all stringed instruments, such as "violins, fiddles, banjos, guitars. Everything is basic." [Compare use of "string band" in other interviews.]

DA put on fish fries in his backyard when he was a boy. He hung a lit lantern out in the front about six p{m.} to let people know that there was a fish fry. He served "the best fish you ever want to eat in your life." It was generally never catfish. "They" also served potato salad and would sell out before eleven o'clock. They served French bread and beer, but there was no heavy drinking.

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Kids had penny parties at their homes. They served lemonade. DA's cousin Barney Bigard and DA put them on at Bigard's house. They charged a penny to see homemade imitations of motion pictures.

(u) Albert says cawain is a delicacy made of snapping turtle. He has not eaten any in many years as people do not know how to fix it, and he has not been able to get one to fix. Mobilian turtle can't be used. Bouzan [variant of bouzin?] means drinking.

The band ran into a flash flood in Virginia, but they got out of it quickly. The band never went West.

Albert never liked movies, but he would take his wife to them. He would take his hot dogs and drink into the theater and he would eat and drink as soon as the picture started. Then he would go to sleep. When the show was over, he would ask his wife what happened.

Albert has never owned a phonograph, but he does have a combination of a television set-phonograph. [During my visits, I do not remember his playing records, but he watched television often. RBA, 17 October 1980.] He heard records as a little boy when he went to other people's homes. He ran errands for neighbors and helped clean up their homes.

He listened to the radio when "it first came out" with earphones. DA was in school then. It was hard to receive music on crystal sets. Later he heard many bands. Duke [Ellington] and

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Louis [Armstrong] were always his idols so he tried to go somewhere to hear them. He also liked to listen to "the Casa Loma, the big one" of the big bands. Of the trumpet players, he liked to hear Bunny Berigan and Bix [Beiderbecke]. Ziggy Elman was a great trumpet player.

Albert's first trade was making [bed] springs. He worked at the Crescent Bed Factory which is still "on the other side" [i.e., the lake side?] of Tulane Avenue and Broad [Street]. It is about three blocks past this corner on the left side.

Kid Sheik worked there with Albert. Colar was not playing trumpet then. His real name, George Colar, is not known to DA. He was called "Sheik" all his life, says Albert. RBA adds that he was also called "Gray-eye George" [by Willie Parker, probably in the late 1950s. RBA, 17 October 1980]. When DA left, Colar was learning [i.e., how to ^k mae springs? How to play trumpet?]

Years ago Albert used to work for the Chinese in Chinatown on Tulane Avenue. He would clean up their floors for a bag of "Chinee" fortune cookies. ["Chinee" is possibly a back-formation from Chinese. My speculation is that it is mistaken for the singular of Chinese. RBA, 17 October 1980.] He never had almond cookies.

The Chinese could speak enough English to let you know what they want you to do. They were no different from other people in New Orleans. DA has never found people very different anywhere he

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(cup)
went. "It's just a matter of staying away from the bad element which is hard to do." RBA asks if even yankees are the same as other people. [Compare Reel I, ca. 1025 on Northern musicians.] DA replies, "yes."

Albert says that the Chinese have a different way of cooking. He likes it. He adds that "it's mostly on the vegetation side." They do not have much meat in their food. RBA comments that Chinese food has always been popular in New Orleans and that all the musicians he knows like Chinese food. [This is misleading, but I have never heard anything negative that I recall. RBA, 17 October 1980.] DA has liked it all his life.

Both Albert's father and grandfather spoke fluent Spanish, English, and French. His grandmother spoke only French and English. Mostly men spoke Spanish "because of affiliating with those cigar makers." Most of them came from Cuba.

Mr. Morial, a cigar maker and the father of the Mayor of New Orleans, worked for Albert's father. Mr. Morial "used to pick me up and take me all over town." He was crippled. DA thinks that his name was Ernest and that Ernest ["Dutch" Morial, the Mayor] was named after him, but DA only knew him as Mr. Morial.

DA never was around anyone who was cutting cane so he never heard anyone sing. He heard railroad workers sing when they hammered spikes. DA pumped a handcar and doesn't know what they sang as it was their own composition. It was timed precisely.

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insert
RBA says that one hears [work-songs] that sound like the source of blues. DA says, "Well, it all ties in." RBA asks if women who washed or did dishes, sang. DA replies, "People are always singing... I notice you do that. I be washing dishes...by myself and I sing." People sing whatever they are thinking of rather than a special song.

Albert heard "Careless Love" which was changed to "Loveless Love." ["Careless Love"] was one of Chris Kelly's favorite numbers.

DA did not hear harmonica playing much in New Orleans. He does not think it was a popular instrument there.

DA's mother, named Georgianna, was a housewife. "She raised kids." The brothers and sisters were a sister, then Stanley, then Albert, then Maurice, then Dutch, and then Leo, the youngest. Their mother was forty-eight when Leo was born. DA says, "the last button on Gabriel's coat," Leo is now about fifty-two. RBA only sees him when DA is playing.

insert
Albert says "New Orleans was a baseball city. You had the Crescent Stars [i.e., locally?] The Bacharach [sp?] Giants, the New Jersey Giants, and other Eastern teams came to New Orleans, and they got great players from New Orleans. The Homestead Grays came regularly.

He had no special [i.e., favorite] team, but he had "a special time" of going to the baseball park where he would catch

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a foul ball which was hit over the wall. This got him in free. Albert was never a great baseball fan.

When RBA asks about the [Brooklyn] Dodgers, DA replies that he liked them and they were a colorful team. He liked Satchel Paige, Bob Gibson of the [St. Louis] Card[in]als, and Jackie Robinson. DA had an autographed picture [i.e., a photograph] of Ted Williams, who often came to San Antonio. They were friends. Also in the picture is Congressman [i.e., U.S. Representative] Henry B. Gonzales [D-Texas]. DA helped get him elected.

Don Albert has known many baseball players, but he finds it hard to name one as the greatest player of all time since it is a matter of opinion and many things must be taken into consideration. He does think Satchel Paige was a ^{pan?} [star?] DA doesn't think anyone could come near to him. DA has seen him pitch and was in his company quite a bit. DA calls him "a great gentleman," but qualifies this by saying it is a matter of opinion. RBA declares that it is a shame that Paige never got a break [i.e., early in his career]. RBA adds that Paige was working for the [New Orleans] Pel[ican]s recently.

RBA discusses sports in New Orleans ironically. Albert points out that New Orleans is supporting prize-fighting and basketball.

Albert says that his sister [Dutch, the wife of Frederick Braden] is active in politics on account of [her relative]

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Cup?
[Henry] Braden [III?], the son of Dr. [Henry] Braden [Jr.?] and a [state] Senator. RBA comments that only his friend and himself had on [any sort of political button or sticker] when they went to a [Harlem] Globetrotters [basketball game]. Braden was elected by seven votes according to Albert.

insw
"Tanglefoot" was Joe Robichaux's nickname. He was called this because he was pigeon-toed. John Robichaux was all right [i.e., physically]. RBA says that when people talk about Robichaux today, they mean John, the left-handed violinist. DA adds that Joe never made too big a name. He played mostly in Mobile, Ala., and a few dates in Mississippi. DA says his records made in New York "didn't jell."

Albert heard Mutt [Carey] and Freddy Keppard with John Robichaux. DA was about ten or twelve years old. He never played with Carey or Keppard since he was too young [i.e., when they left New Orleans?]. DA knew [Henry] Kimball, the bassist, but not Andrew Kimble, the trumpet player. RBA says that Alvin "Mickey" Alcorn talked about him and assumes that Andrew Kimble may have been with John Robichaux after DA went to Texas and before Alcorn joined DA's band. DA says that Andrew Kimball [sp?] must have been from uptown near Alcorn's neighborhood.

S & sub
Crumb crushers are teeth. Albert used the term on August 3, 1978. ^eStarlin Holmsey [sp?] is mentioned. *[San Antonio sax player]*
When DA listened to a band, he listened to the whole band

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rather than his own instrument, the trumpet. The violin was forced on him. [See other data. Does this mean by his family?]

Some of the straight trumpet players were Arnold Metoyer; Amos White; "Old Man" [George] Moret; and Willie Pajaud, whose first name RBA must supply. RBA asks what style Peter Bocage played, and Albert says that he was a straight trumpet player. RBA says that in later years Bocage could play good second trumpet although he was not the strongest trumpet player in the world. In RBA's judgment, Bocage sounded like Bunk [Johnson], Shots [Madison], and Buddy Petit. RBA qualifies this [i.e., as he never heard Petit, but there is evidence as to his style in demonstrations and discussions as well as recordings of other trumpeters in a similar style].

The interview is ended as Albert starts to doze.

END OF INTERVIEW