

August 25, 1960

Also present: Richard B. Allen, Rolland Golden (her grandson)

(Interview recorded at 3143 Chippewa [Street]; New Orleans)

Loretta Rolland Evans was born in New Orleans July 14, 1891. Her first husband, Mr. Rolland, was the father of Rolland Golden's mother. She has always lived in uptown N. O., in the Garden District and in the area known as the Irish Channel. She was widowed at age 26 and afterward enjoyed dancing; she couldn't dance as a teen-ager, as her father was very strict. She has always loved jazz. She thinks there was a lot of ragtime mixed in with the jazz she heard. Some of the dances they did then were the Turkey Trot and the Black Botton. She says the Big Apple of the 1930's--PRC], and reminds her of a dance done by members of the Golden Age Club, of which she is a member. The Big Apple was like a square dance. There was also the Virginia Reel, with 8 or 4 dancing it; there was a caller, as with square dances. There are lessons in square dancing given at Lyons Center; a new class will begin next month; LE intends joining the class, as she says the dances are good exercise.

LE says that all one hears now is rock and roll. Jazz bands [sometimes?] play at the Corner Club. The best jazz bands she ever heard were colored; they didn't need many men, and they didn't need a soloist, although there were infrequent solos with bands about 1910. LE talks of hiring an organ-grinder to play for dancing in the yard of any of her acquaintances; before she married at the age of twenty; if they couldn't get the organ-grinder, they played the piano for dancing; all of them could play piano; they played jazz and ragtime. One of LE's sisters would sneak off to Bruning's Pavillion, at Bucktown, where a band played.

There were also brass bands; they "gave jazz its lusty richness."

There were also three strung basses.

LE says Rolland Golden's mother played piano in a little band of boys.

LE says "they" [?] played popular pieces, which sounded as good as the old ones; the popular pieces were played with a powerful beat and variations.

LE mentions the girl pianist with Lawrence Welk's band [which she watches on television]. She mentions various dances.

LE thinks ragtime ended about 1910. The Original [Dizieland] Jazz Band began in 1917. She considered their music ragtime. Louis Armstrong wasn't heard of in the 1920's, called the Jazz Age, but he really can play jazz [Cf. Discographies and biographies] LE says Armstrong has mentioned Paul Mares, [trumpet] with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings in the Twenties, with Leon Roppolo [clarinet] and George Brunis [trombone] also in the band. Brunis later joined Ted Lewis. She had heard of these people but did not know them. LE says Armstrong's performance last night reminded her of Louis Prima and his antics.

Movies were silent until 1926, LE thinks, when talking pictures were introduced. [Cf. other sources RBA] Some of the theaters which has vaudeville were Loew's State, Saebger, Dauphine, Ersebt, Tulane (the latter two were high class and charged higher admissions, and Palace. LE went to the shows at the Saebger because she admired Louis Prima's trumpet playing.

Talk of Carnival [Mardi Gras] marching clubs, including the Corner Club, the Jefferson City Buzzards, Garden District Club, Lyons Club and Eleanora Club. She is reminded by the Carnival talk of colored funerals with music.

Talk of increase in size of bands from 5 in the O. D. J. B. in 1917 to 12 in 1930 and more later.

Rudy Vallee is mentioned.

The Original Memphis Five is mentioned. King Foliver is mentioned.

Bands played in the vaudeville houses. Bands also played at theaters showing silent pictures; they performed between [showings]. The bands were released when talk-

were introduced.

LE talks of the songs she played on piano in the old times; she sings one, or parts of one, occasionally.

Val Barbara is mentioned; LE told him at a concert Sunday in the [Audubon] Park that his band wasn't playing jazz, as she had asked, that each one of them was standing up to play a little bit, but they weren't playing together all the time, which is the way jazz should be played. Louis and Leon Prima are mentioned. Pete Fountain is mentioned.

Talk of the train "Smoky Mary," Milneburg, West End, Bucktown, Buning's Pavillion, My o My Club, Spanish Fort. LW went to Mancina's at West End, when she was between 19 and 20; there was good music there, but not for dancing.

Talk of Golden Age Club and their dancing.

End of Reel I

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Talk of hand organs; There is one at Kolb's [Restaurant], says RBA.

Talk of instrumentation.

Talk of Carnival [i. e., Mardt Gras].

Talk of fish fries held by the Negroes during the Twenties; had bands at them.

LE reads a short piece praising the city of New Orleans.

LE reads some of her own poems.

LW studied music in public (through grade 5) and parochial (through grade 11) schools, learning to sing a lot of songs. She talks about the Golden Age Club, and about their singing. While in public school, she went with other school children to place flowers of the statue of JohnMcDonogh; they would sing "Maryland, My Maryland" (with the words in tribute to McDonogh substituted, says RBA) at the ceremony.

LE reads more of her poems.

RBA mentions trombonist TomBrown; he mentions [cornetist] Nick La Rocca [of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band]; both lived in the same general neighborhood as LE does now. Rolland Golden mentions [drummer] Paul Barbarin.

LE reads another poem.

Most of the music at neighborhood parties LE attended was furnished by piano players or by phonographs; a band was hired once at one of them; Ione, a daughter of LE, and mother of Rolland Golden, played with her band (which consisted of sax, cornet, drum, piano and

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one other instrument, LE thinks at the parties sometimes; Ione was a very good dancer, too; although she married at age 16, she had appeared at many benefits before then,

LE says that in her younger days there wasn't any interest in Bourbon Street; the interest was in the red light district, centered around Basin Street. She didn't go in the French Quarter in those days. LE doesn't think jazz is played on Bourbon Street; she agrees with RBA that the musicians in the bands there play too many solos, which doesn't fit her conception of what jazz should be. She didn't go in the French Quarter in those days. LE doesn't think jazz is played on Bourbon Street; she agrees with RBA that the musicians in the bands there play too many solos. She says the dancing there is not jazz dancing either, including that she saw at the Blue Room 2 years ago, when Sophie Tucker was the star attraction there.

LE used to see the Zulu parade [Mardi Gras day] when it would come along the river or the bayou [Bayou St. John?] on a boat; she describes the activity at landing, and mentions that a band was present. She says Rex used to come along the river on Monday preceding Mardi Gras day, the day of his official parade. The Zulus landed their boat at Jahnke's [building supplies, including shills]. LE says the Zulus dress better now than they did in the earlier times, when they dressed like Zulus.

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Rba mentions [George "Happy" Schilling, band leader; LE thinks she remembers his band; his mother owned several houses at Annunciation and Toledano, and an aunt of LE, ["BABE"?] Duvernay, at his place of business, a barroom. LE thinks Schilling played a lot of jazz. She says there were a lot of jazz bands and society bands in N. O. during the twenties. She remembers the Tuxedo Orchestra, led by [Oscar] "Papa" Celestin, and Sharkey [Bonano's] band; they played in dance halls, not in [private] homes. LE mentions "Fats" Waller, Count Basie, Paul Whiteman, Abe Lyman, Fred Waring, Rudy Vallee, Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman and Guy Lombardo; she heard their bands on recordings.

LE thinks dances in her youth ended at 11 o'clock, instead of at 12 [or later]. She remembers that there was a dance called the "Slow Drag," and also a [music] piece by that name. Blues music was played a lot in the Twenties, but ragtime was brought in [to the blues?] and that spoiled it. "St. Louis Blues" was popular. LE remembers "Maple Leaf Rag." She mentions "Tiger Rag." She mentions "Bourbon Street Parade," a piece of recent vintage. She says people would sometimes sing "Everybody's Doing it," to which they would dance the slow drag sometimes and sometimes the Turkey Trot. LE says some children from a dancing school recently danced the shimmy as it was danced years ago, and another group later danced the Charleston. LE mentions ["I Found A] Million Dollar Baby." a song she doesn't hear played anymore. LE mentions the Castle walk, originated by Irene Castle. She mentions the cakewalk. She mentions the Lindberg hop, named for [Charles A.] Lindberg; it was later called the Lindy hop. LE says colored kids used to walk around the streets, playing at corners, on washboard, tin pans, etc. (something like Spike Jones had years ago), playing and dancing for pennies.

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LE talks of lawn parties; there were booths for selling things, and a dance area with band, where people paid to dance. LE mentions "penny parties,". The same kind of party is still given, but is called by different names, such as "festival," when held at churches and schools. She discusses prices then and now.

End of Reel III

