

RESTRICT until Tom Bethell's biography  
of Geo Lewis is published or until 1973.

George Lewis interview

3327 De Armas St. Oct 12, 1968

The personnel of the Evan Thomas Band at the time of his murder was Johnson, [Big Eye], "Bunk", Louis Robinson, piano; Walter Preston, banjo; [Foster], Chinese drums; Evan Thomas; Al ~~\*\*\*~~ tenor sax; no bass. There were two saxes but the day before one of the two saxes quit. I had to go to the trial, everyone in the band was a witness. The trial came up the next year, in May. The murder happened a week or two before Thanksgiving. The night of the funeral, which was on a Monday, we played a dance in Crowley, but no one was there, you understand, and then the band dissolved. The majority of us came home, came back home until May of the following year, '34, when we were summoned, and the sheriff came down here and got us in two automobiles, and the trial lasted one day, and I came back home with Walter Preston on <sup>the</sup> bus. And I've never been in that neighborhood since. The murderer escaped and he killed the sheriff after he escaped, and then they killed him. He looked like a white fellow .....(?). His name was John Guillory, you never forget anything like that.

"When the Depression came on I was living at 1117 Burgundy, between Ursuline and Governor Nicholls, and Johnny Matassa's house was available, I stayed at <sup>this</sup> (first?) address for about two or three years. I moved into Johnny Matassa's house, he was Cosimo's daddy, he owned it, then I moved to 827 St. Philip, about the latter part of the '30s. And when I made 45 years old I was still living there, but we were due to move because they had a housing -- what do you call it? -- where the landlord couldn't raise the rent; but that bill went out, so the landlord raised everybody's rent. And he had to go to trial, call it a trial, or court <sup>they call it rather</sup> .....(?) housing project people. And I moved to Governor Nicholls between Villere and Robertson; then we come to September '45 I go away. So I put our things, furnitures, into storage, and Jeannette, my wife, went to stay with her sisters, and Shirley. I went on to

\* Clarence Vincent

New York. When I came back everything I stored at the place I found was too small, on <sup>in Panzer [for Bourbon?]</sup> ~~Peydres~~ St., right where Mrs Fletcher, <sup>[Fletcher]</sup> you know the WDSU mid day program, she lives there now, that's how I know. And then from there I went to 1819 Dauphine, and I stayed there until <sup>we</sup> (they finished?) this shack here, and I've been here ever since.

AMP 072

"I wasn't playing anywhere in '46, (after returning from 2nd NY trip,) spottin'. For that whole summer I were playing picnics and funeral <sup>and</sup> parades. I didn't go into Manny's until the latter part of '46 or the early part of '47. <sup>[cf. RBA's notes.]</sup> And I worked for three men there. The first one I worked with was Johnny Matassa's nephew; <sup>Manny?</sup> and I worked for a man they called <sup>[Golomi? See RWG.]</sup> Germellen; and another one by the name of Steve, he has a big restaurant now up in Carrollton. I've had three bosses at that place, Manny's. We played Fridays, Saturdays, sometimes on Sundays. We had a good crowd, a large following; young people, a few older ones, not like Luthjen's - Luthjen's had the real old, old people. I got the job at Manny's by my mother living <sup>right</sup> across from Johnny Matassa's. Johnny Matassa's nephew knew me and he gave me the job. And after that he pulled out and sold to a man named <sup>[Golomi?]</sup> Germellen, and then he sold out to an Italian fellow, and then I quit. I got where it paid me to do spot jobbin', and I couldn't do it on Saturdays -- if I was going to make \$5 or \$6 I could go and make \$10 or \$12, the prices were low '?)

"Herb Morand played in Talbert's place some time, but he never worked there regular. Talbert worked there from the beginning, but sometimes Morand would play, if Talbert got a better job. But most of the time he didn't care about finding another job because it was more convenient for him at Manny's Tavern. But Morand played with me in his last days; after Talbert died, Morand came in and joined with me, at the El Morocco. And then he got sick, he couldn't play any more, and then Percy came in. Talbert overworked himself. He had a pressing shop, done a lot of pressing for the <sup>[besides his customers?]</sup> tailors, on Rampart St. So that he would be working till 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, and he had to be up

at 5, getting his boys started, you know, getting the steam for the press, and then he would play every night. So he almost -- wrecked his own self. Morand was sick also. *[Thin Morand was a very heavy drinker]* I don't know whether it was drinking or what, and he worked with me about 3 or 4 weeks and then he had to stop.

"Nick Gagliano sent for me, his father had a grocery store at Touro and Robertson I think, and that's how Nick and I got acquainted. I played for some of the students at Tulane, at the back end of the stadium, somewhere round in that section. That's how I got *[reacquainted]* with Nick. And he liked it so much, he asked about running the business, and he ran the business real good. And he's still *[AMP 131]* running my business-- he's my lawyer. Dorothy Tait and Nick got acquainted through records, and she got the first outside job for us, in China Lake, California. *[re atlas]* From then on, she ran the business in California-- her and Nick corresponded. Nick used to come up any time we had something important like a Festival or a recording, anything important he would come up. And after he got acquainted with her, she started to look after the business for him. After he started going to school he just had to turn us over to her.

"The first place the band went on tour (ie. the George Lewis Ragtime Band) was Cincinatti, University of Cincinatti, and from there to Miami University in Oxford. But at that time Nick was still *[was with me]* ..... at that time. Nick got in with me just before I went in to the El Morocco, and he done the business at the El Morocco, he done the business *[See re. Nile G. m.d. in Sept 1942]* at the Sid Davilla's, he done the business at the Silver Slipper, and he started all the college tours that I made, and did the business there."

Talking about Bourbon St. in earlier days, (not really specified when he was talking about,) GL says, "Hyp Guinlee was there, the Paddock was there, on the corner from the Paddock, on the downtown river side, was the Vanity Club-- the Brunies Brothers Band used to play there. *[Esce Bernard Le mann (esp), The Vieux Carré.]* They didn't have too much. They had the Old Absinthe House but they didn't have any music. Hyp Guinlee didn't want any music until Papa Celestin *[went in there with Ricard [Alexis] and them...]* ..... (?) I've only played three or four *[revenue]*

places, The Paddock, The El Morocco, The Mardi Gras and the Silver Slipper, and at Toulouse and Bourbon...!" (can't remember name.) <sup>[Probably the Old French Opera House Bar. P. 11]</sup> GL says that he never did play in the Bourbon House, although he admits that "during the Depression, I am not ashamed to say, we would call it hustling, and we went different places, played, and if they had a bar room we would go in there and play, and pick up money; like the Old Absinthe House <sup>[i.e. Bar]</sup> on Conti and Bourbon, we would go in there, but that Bourbon House, we didn't go in there."

<sup>c. 3:30</sup> <sup>AM.P 186</sup> George recalls that during the Depression, "I would play till 3 o'clock in the morning, <sup>From 8:30 to 3 in the morning</sup> at the Kingfish, and then I would come home and go to bed; get up ~~there~~ at 6, and get myself ready to catch the truck to go to work on the WPA. And I worked till 2 o'clock every day, or 2:30, and I would get home round about 3, it all depends, sometimes <sup>I get home</sup> not ~~till~~ later. Then I would eat and lie down and go to sleep till 6:30, <sup>and</sup> get ready to go to work. Because at that time dog ate dog and you had to be on your P's and Q's. If you didn't, your job was gone. Somebody would take your job even though they was only paying a dollar, with tips. I worked there two solid years, without missing a night. And they had floor shows--Smiling Joe will tell you the same thing, <sup>[Esp?]</sup> he wasn't playing, he was singing, just singing and tap dancing at the Kingfish. Playing there--it wasn't my band--there was Burke Stevenson, he was the first one who had the job, the trumpeter, and he hired me, Billie (Pierce) and a drummer called McGee--he's out on the West Coast if he ain't dead. Four pieces. And we worked there for a long time and then Billie told the man that she couldn't work with this boy, and so they let Burke go, and she brought De De in; they wanted ~~me~~ to take it, but I didn't want it, the boss said the leader would be getting the same thing as anybody else, and I didn't want all that trouble. Billie and De De went together for about a year or so, and then I <sup>[best man]</sup> stood for them, I was the onliest one."

Working for the WPA, George says, "I done everything, the <sup>rolled</sup> shovel, rolled the wheelbarrow, ~~made~~ concrete, fight black widow spiders - where the

[Or Elysian Fields Ave.]

the incinerator is now. They built an incinerator on Almonaster St. There was a dump there and they was clearing up that dump to build this incinerator that they got in there now. The black widow spiders were real bad; several of these fellows were catching them, putting them in jars and selling them. The Board of Health would buy 'em. I never tried to catch them, because I was afraid of them."

The Kingfish, on Decatur St., "was a beer parlor. They'd dance, and they had a lotta womens in there, and they had <sup>were</sup> a lotta B-drinking. [They hadn't worried about B-drinking then. <sup>And we passed the kitty.</sup> I believe the man <sup>that</sup> ran the place is still living yet. His name was Shots. I haven't been there in the day time but he was renting out juke boxes on Dauphine between St. Louis and Conti. A little short grey headed fellow."

George Lewis says Burke Stevenson is now in California. "He could play some tunes real good. And he got in church, over here, <sup>[on the west side]</sup> and he married, and he gave up music, and then he went back, he went back to bass. He played with Kid Thomas, he certainly did.

"After the Kingfish I went to spottin', anywhere I could get something, anywhere I could get out and play. There wasn't no steady jobs; I worked at the Harmony Inn for awhile for Red Hill (?) on Claiborne there. But I didn't like the way he... I don't know, I just quit. On Decatur St. I ~~worked for~~ played at The Popeye for <sup>Pescoraro</sup> ~~Peck-Larera~~, something like that, they called him Joe Peck, he had a artificial leg. He's got a place on Orleans St. now where <sup>used to be the old Galvez Restaurant</sup> ~~(?)~~ And after I left there, I didn't work outa Decatur any more because it was <sup>a little</sup> rough out there, and you didn't make any money you know. At the Popeye I was working with De De and Billie, and Klebert Cagnolatti, Ernie's brother, he was playing drums, and for a while I used Gossoon, 'One Eyed' Babe's son, on banjo; he died <sup>some weeks</sup> ~~a short time~~ back.

"I played with Jim (Robinson) off and on; I really couldn't tell you that, (when first played with him,) You see, Jim played with a band, the Sam

Morgan Band. I never knew Jim to play with any other band but Sam Morgan's. The original Sam Morgan Band Jim didn't play in, but what they call the Young Morgan's Band, with Jim and Isaiah, Andrew Morgan and Jim Little, and Shine <sup>[Nolan Williams]</sup> and so forth; that come up after the original Sam Morgan Band. The original Sam Morgan Band had only six mens, and they would hire a piano whenever needed. There was Butler Rapp-- he played banjo with them, he was called Guy-A, and Thomas Copland, he played bass; Joe Watson was the clarinetists. Arthur Johnson - 'Yank' - was the trombone, and <sup>Alfred [Williams]</sup> ~~Ibery~~ <sup>[Gorman Fields]</sup>, that man Alfred he died, he played drums. And he used Edna Francis, or Mercedes, you know, they had a lot of piano players around here."

George Lewis says that he played with Jim Robinson "in the 30s, sometimes with Howard. If Howard would get a job we would play together because I didn't run no band then. Howard, Jim, myself and Edgar Mosely. Then Howard got a larger band - he wanted to read the music, but I didn't read any music. And everybody was saxophone crazy then, you see. I just formed my own little band, and if I could get a job I'd just get the best of the mens I could. Whoever would have been available. I'd get Bob Anthony on trumpet, he died of TB, and I had Walter Reed, he died of TB. I used Howard sometime, and on rhythm, Lawrence Parrero, One Eyed Babe, sometimes Joe Morris, he played bass, ~~(drums~~ <sup>Little Joe, he played drums,</sup> ~~in~~audible,) different people, because nobody had a real organised band. Everybody was playing around, trying to get what they could. So if you got a job, it was your band. People couldn't afford six piece bands too much. You played picnics - six or seven hours, all day - for a dollar and a quarter. If you used four pieces, you'd use trumpet and clarinet, the trombone would be missing; piano if you had one, most of the places didn't have any piano, <sup>it would be</sup> banjo and drums."

George says that Jim Robinson, "as a regular, he did start with Bunk, because after Bunk ---"      END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE 2

"I joined the Musician's Union when it all was first made up, and I got out, because they had (no?) protection. I went back, and I got out again, and the last time I got out I stayed out. Then, when I was put in there— I didn't put myself in the Union. I was put in the Union in the '40s by the New Orleans Jazz Foundation— there wasn't such a thing as the Jazz Club. They put me in, and Lawrence, Drag, ~~it~~ and Jim. They got jobs for us here, at the St. Charles Hotel, for a French Organisation, and they put us in the Auditorium. We had to be in there (the Union) when Benny Goodman came down and played the first jazz concert in that Auditorium, and then Louis came down after that."

Talking about the Union in earlier days, George says "they went and had a petition, you didn't have no contract in the Union, nowhere to meet, you'd meet in a hall, or you'd meet in the end of a saloon, anywhere; and they were just stealing your money, just run off with your money then, a lot of times. Now, you see, I don't go to meetings, I guess it's all right; I know as long as ~~it~~ I live I'm going to stay in the Union, I hope. The Union is ran by— all the Unions now is international, Petrello is the head of all the Unions, he was President, but before that the Union wasn't international, but, I would say it looked like they hog fat (?) off the money they needed, you know, while we were starving."

Advice to young clarinet players: "I don't know, tell them to keep it up, if he likes the instrument. Don't expect to play it in no one day, of course; and don't expect to become popular in one <sup>no</sup> <sup>year</sup> ..... (?). But he could become popular, though. But I don't know how long this music is going to last."

"When a man gets older, he becomes accustomed to one thing. For instance I'm accustomed to buying shoes in one place, you see, but I could buy them some place else, <sup>where's</sup> in fact I know that there's the same brand of shoes, but I don't feel it's safe, and that's the truth. Like you 've got two stores here that sell

the same make of shoes. And one I go to but I never go to the other one. And it's the same way with reeds. I used to use a No.5 reed, a hard reed, but then I had to change my teeth, and every year I was getting older I was losing strength, you lose strength. So then I went down to a 4, and four's kind of hard, it's all according to the grain of the wood. And now I'm using a  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , or a 3. I found out that just testing the reed don't mean that the reed is good; you can pass it along your finger nail at the end to see if the reed is split, of course, because sometime the grain, you know, of the cane... Now for <sup>clarinet</sup>, I don't like no plastic reed, and I don't like the majority of the people who use them, you know what I mean."

Asked if he ever played Boehm system clarinet, George said, "Yeah, sometimes, but I never did like the Boehm system. Soemthing to do with the tone, it was too keen, I didn't like the tone. They're much heavier in weight, of course, more keys, more mechanical, it helps you to make so many things, you know, where with the Albert system you've got to do it from, with your tongue, and your fork fingering, you see. Some notes you made like that, (demonstrating how the middle finger of the left hand has to be held down while all the others are raised,) "some notes are all open. Called fork fingering, but not on the Boehm system. ~~But before the Boehm system got popular~~ You take right now, you've got more young clarinetists from the age of say, six, six years of age, you see a parade, you see them walking in the street, and they're playing the Boehm system. But before the Boehm system got popular, very few kids you saw in a parade. It's easier. You can find some Alberts with the key underneath, you know, that is the (speaker) key on the bottom, but I don't like it because of the water, the moisture gets in, and leaks; it all depends on the man and what is easier.

"I know how I ke my music, I guess a lot of people could say I could be wrong, but I like my music peppy, and I like four beats . I don't like this, (clapping a 2/4 beat). You hear that on the streets, you hear it on a funeral,



you hear the brass band, boom boom, BOOM, exploding all the time; I don't like that. I like snare drum, if you've got a snare drum player. But you don't get, nobody play~~s~~ snare drums. You don't hear a lot of press rolls; they ain't doing press rolls right. I like a bass, I like a banjo, and of course, I like~~x~~ a piano. But I like a banjo that brings out the tone; I like chords, I don't like the fancy stuff. Now when it comes to his solo, then do the fancy stuff, if he has a solo. That banjo is a time keeper, like the drum, or mellophone, or alto horn, what do you call it? (Hums 'boop, boo-boop.') That answers if you don't hear but those notes - boop-boop, boop-boop - but that is one of the important instruments in the band, in the brass band, because he's the banjo.

"But if you have these banjo players making what the horns make or what the piano makes, then... The first thing he should try to make is to stop smothering the strings, smothering the note, which don't bring the right tone out. And another thing I don't like, I don't like the plastic heads on the banjo, sounds like someone is striking on a dish pan or something. You take solo banjoin', it's all right, if you're getting the right tone out of it, but if you don't be getting the right tone out of the banjo....But then most of the banjo players playing around here only play <sup>the after</sup> ~~on half the~~ beat, (indicating a 2/4 beat.) The banjo player should be steady, that's what Lawrence had, he was steady. George Guesnon had a certain amount of time, but then he started that, (indicating playing fancy stuff.) Lawrence had the ~~fingers~~ wrist, Lawrence had the fingers, and there's only one person I enjoy listenin' at some, and only one person I really can play with, and I like to hear him playing, and that is this boy way out in Minnesota there, Mike, <sup>E. Polak</sup> He fingers the banjo right, rather than just smotherin' it. They don't get the tone out of it, they used to make any banjo ring and get the tone. That banjo is supposed to ring, it's supposed to cut through just like an Eb clarinet.

"If you've got a 20 piece band with one clarinet, you can hear that Eb in there somewhere. If the wind is blowing behind me you can hear it almost, well let's say <sup>To Behrman Ave. J.</sup> to the end of the Navy Yard. But it's going to cut, so keen it'll cut

right through. You don't see too many Eb's in a band, in a brass band, or school band; maybe you might see one, and about 8 or 9 Bb clarinets."

Asked about the horns as opposed to rhythm instruments, George says, "Personally, ain't none of them playing dixieland music, outside from <sup>some of</sup> the white bands. Dixieland music, few of us could play it, because we don't rehearsal, in the first place. Dixieland music is ensemble, every body get up, and then they take down. Just like some authorities on jazz, I've heard that, and I wouldn't argue with them. If you've got six mens, you've got a hard band-- fill in everything. Somebody should be going all the time. It's a conversation, just like if I would tell you 'no', and you say 'yes', you know that? Somebody should be underneath; that's the sort of music I came up with, and play. And not if you've got six mens, and you play that ensemble, and then everybody take down excepting the drum and the rhythm. Well you don't have a damn band then. You've got a quartet.

"You take <sup>[kid]</sup> Thomas have the idea of it. Thomas just play the chords. Thomas play very little lead on his trumpet; but he's up there all the time, he's doing something underneath, even just one or two notes, you know what he's doing. He has the right idea of this type of music. But the rest of the fellows don't have that. You take like, the piano players in the first place. You can't get no chords, the piano player is playing melody all the time, just like the band, right now, in bands right now. I'd go for <sup>[the late]</sup> Mercedes. Mercedes is about the best piano player you got, not Mercedes, Mrs. Kimball; she's heavy, and she makes the right notes, but <sup>[Woman Fields]</sup> she's playing the melody. The only man that ever played chords, and he didn't know the piano, at all -- he couldn't play every key -- was Joe James. No, I like chords. I'd rather chords, because you get in one another's way, you see, whatever I'm going to make he's going to make the same. I notice that with Charlie. Charlie makes the same thing I make-- ah, 'Pay attention now, watzh out Charlie, I hear you.' He started off playing melody, and then changed himself, but I told him I don't care what he do. <sup>[Hamilton?]</sup>

"You take Joe Robichaux. Joe Robichaux wasn't no.....(?) piano player. But Joe had, Joe liked the key notes, you know, the light notes. For a piano player you take Alton Purnell, although he was contrary, I think he get the music better because you can hear, you can hear the rhythm. And the rhythm is the most important thing in the band. It ain't the horns, it's the rhythm. If you've got good rhythm, just like when Lawrence was Livin', Drag could hear better, and Joe, <sup>[Watkins]</sup> They put down (on?), and you could hear that. I don't believe there's a band in New Orleans that had the rhythm they had. Although Joe, they say I worked him hard. I didn't work him hard, I mean, he worked his own self hard. And then, if you've got a band you've got to work your men hard; because most of the leaders don't want to work. They want to put up their horn when they like. You take Thomas Jefferson, he leads a band, although he's not hard at 'em you know, he plays a pretty good jazz trumpet. But he don't play, he don't want to play anything. If he would work harder, like Talbert— Talbert was working all the time. You see when Talbert played he would be underneath, and you can hear on some of the records; we only rade one for Doctor Souchon and one for Good Time Jazz. It hasn't got to be fancy, because yo listen at the rhythm of it, and that's what counts. Because that's the man <sup>those the one</sup> (..... ?) that give you the uplift. And if you've got good rhythm, the trumpet or the trombone or whatever you use, he can execute his instrument more better; because he know the chords are coming out; because if he's going to say 'doh', you're going to say 'doh' with him. You ain't going to say it differently and you're going to <sup>English accent</sup> (act better?).

"When I first went to California I was interviewed on the radio, and I says N'Orl'ns, 'Nyawl'ns,' and man they laughed. And then when it was over they said, "Why did you say 'Nyawl'ns'?" And right then and there I knew I was wrong. They say 'New Orleens'. If he says New Orleens and I says, "Do you know what it means to miss Nyawl'ns?" And he say, "That sound different

banquettes  
 don't it?" And I say 'banquettes' for those, sidewalks. So Charlie makes the same thing I make on my clarinet. Now when he's playing by his self, his solo, I don't care what he make, or when the band play all together I don't care what he do. I asked him, when we was in Japan, and it helped him, even though the piano (low?)."

Asked about his ~~gr~~'All Star Band', George says, "Well, I would say Chester Zardis would be one, because he know that music, he come up with it; and Alex Bigard would be the next one, if he could hear, you see; because he play more snare drum than all of them. I would say Cie — Cie is a good drummer — but the drummer is not supposed to play drums for his own self, he's supposed to play for the band. So if you set a tempo (clapping beat,) he's going to pull it down back, (clapping slower,). He's better than a man named Christian (Depriest?). Alex plays a lotta drums; a lotta people don't believe it. He would be the drummer. And I ~~heard~~ heard, I played the other night with Earl Humphrey, and I was surprised. I mean, I'm not going above Jim's head. Earl plays a lot of trombone. I suppose he's an alcoholic if he don't play that, you see. But he has ideas, you see. Now he's playing a real tailgate. And he still could be very good, because I noticed that the other night. I would take him above Jim. Jim plays the melody on his trambones. And Nelson plays a good trombone, but Nelson plays nervous trombone, you see, going out, on his out notes. That's because he never come up playing this music. He come up playing big band, you understand.

"Banjo, you've got to have a banjo. I'd rather get Mike, although it would be better if you didn't have to send away to Minnesota to get a banjo player. Trumpet, now. There ain't none of them know too much about the music. Little Cag know—he's got a bad tone— but Cag know the music. Albert Fernandez. Another one would be good, Andrew Anderson, but he's so damn soft though. And for piano, little Frank Moliere, because he can chord, and he's anxious to learn, but, you.....(?) only once, and he get to chording."

George's "All time, all star band" was "Buddy Petit would be the first one, of all the men I've played with, Buddy Petit. Now on trombone I would like 'Yank' -- what's that boy called? -- we used to call him 'Yank' for short, Arthur Johnson, <sup>Arthur</sup> Buddy Johnson's brother. Bass, Simon Marrero, Lawrence's brother. Banjo, I'd rather Lawrence better than I did John; John was supposed to be the better. On piano, they didn't have too many piano players, but they had one guy by the name of Fink, <sup>[Batista (sp)]</sup> and to me he was better than, I mean more -- a lot of people which I like maybe you don't like -- but I would like him. For bass between Chester and Duck Ernest, <sup>[Johnson]</sup> I'd have to make a choice there, you can't have two. On drums, well there was Irving Joseph, who was cross-eyed, Papa John's brother, er nephew. .... (?) Purnell, he's brother of Papa John's nephew. And then there's Roy Evans. (I suggest there's another drummer he might have thought of, who he played with quite a bit,) "Chinee? Joe Rena? I can't recall, I played with so many I don't know, oh yeah, well Dodds, well Baby, well, he was no exceptional, Baby was, like I said, well Baby was.; ..... (?) stars, er, Baby was a star, but the rest of them, what they call a star, they wasn't no star, as far as I know. I played with Eddie Woods, we called him Face-0, and that's where that name, er, what's that drummer play with Tony Parenti now? <sup>[also known as "Face"]</sup> Zutty, Zutty, I don't like Zutty's playing, but he's certainly good at one time, but now I don't care for his playing. From men out of town, not New Orleans men that played real good drums was Kaiser Marshall. He was out of town though, of course, but he played real good drums. And then you had, <sup>lot of other</sup> of drummers down here, <sup>round?</sup> Joe Rena, Kid Rena's brother.

"I would say Buddy (Petit) was about the best trumpet player I ever heard in New Orleans. That's what my estimation. I would say it in front of Louis, I would say it in front of Red Allen if he were living. His tone was better than the majority, and he had ideas, he could do so many things with the horn. He never ranged with the high notes. Buddy never played when he would make too

high of a note. Outside of Kid Rena his self--he was the onliest one I knew of who would hit high C. Now they had some cheap (?) people like -- he drank hisself to death, I can't 'call it, he sort of straight(?).

"Chr's Kelly didn't make no high notes. In the range, I mean, you know stay right in there. I'd rather a fellow stay in than go up high, because, like at Preservation Hall, I try to play in one way, and the band's playing in another. I like to play low register, you see, and the trumpet players now, they overblast you. Now if there was a mike it would be different. Those mens, they didn't use no mike in those days, but we played, when they were living, the clarinet played low register too."

Playing in Bunkie in 1942, "Well the set up was, Billie and De De, that was there job. Robert Davis--<sup>[bassist? pianist?]</sup> Jimmy Davis's brother, the drummer. (No relation to Jimmy Davis, the Governor, who GL says "stayed in the stove too long, because he's darker than I am,") "and myself, One Eyed Babe's son Gossoon who died not so long ago, a hell of a trombone player by the name of Gibbs, he was a cripple, I think his first name was Frank. We were playing at a little night club, every night excepting Monday nights, we were off on Monday nights, and I ..... to play with Billie and De De and them, but I played with them a long time, till I just got disgusted of 'em, because at that time-- they're nice people now, they were always nice people, but they drank a little bit too much. Of course, I drank too, but when they were drinking I just couldn't take it(?), and they would get unruly. There was many fights that they broke up at Luthjen's place. But I think it was the best thing that ever happened to him because they have <sup>know</sup> a-new life now, and they know what to do with their money and how to take care of it; and you know they're making money. It's just a pity that, his eyes, he can't see."

by or of?  
 Tex  
 ✓ my notes  
 Billie & De De  
 reels