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 "Bunk, Louis Robinson, piano, Walter Preston, banjo, Chinee, 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 the 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 this (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 .....(?) 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

New York. When I came back everything I stored at the place I found was too small, on ~~Poydras~~ Bourgeat [or Bourbon?] St., right where Mrs Fletcher [Fletrich], you know the MDSU 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 (~~they~~ we 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 and parades. I didn't go into Manny's until the latter part of '46 or the early part of '47. [Cf. Rida's notes.] And I worked for three men there. The first one I worked with was Johnny Matassa's nephew; and [Then?] I worked for a man they called Germellon [Golemi? See RWG.]; 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 right 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 Germellon [Golemi?], 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 tailors [besides his customers?], 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. 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 in 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 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. 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 ..... 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 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. 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 .....(?) I've only played three or four

places, The Paddock, The El Morocco, The Mardi Gras and the Silver Slipper, and at Toulouse and Bourbon...!(can't remember name.) 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 on Conti and Bourbon, we would go in there, but that Bourbon House, we didn't go in there."

George recalls that during the Depression, "I would play till 3 o'clock in the morning, 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 ~~e~~very day, or 2:30, and I would get home round about 3, it all depends, sometimes ~~not till~~ later. Then I would eat and lie down and go to sleep till 6:30, ~~and~~ 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, 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 stood for them, I was the onliest one."!

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

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 ~~a lotta~~ B-drinking. They hadn't worried about B-drinking then. I believe the man that 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, 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 ~~Rock Larera~~, something like that, they called him Joe Peck, he had a artificial leg. He's got a place on Orleans St. now where _____ (?) And after I left there I didn't work outa Decatur any more because it was 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 ~~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 [Nolan Williams] 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 Oppland, he played bass; Joe Watson was the clarinettists. Arthur Johnson - 'Yank' - was the trombone, and Ibery(?), that man Alfred [Alfred Williams] he died, he played drums. And he used Edna Francis, or Mercedes [German Fields], 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 Marrero, One Eyed Babe, sometimes Joe Morris, he played bass, ~~(drums inaudible,)~~ Little Joe, he played drums, 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, it would be 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, ~~dr~~ and Jim. They got jobs for us here, at the St. Charles Hotel, for a French Orgabisation, 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 ~~I~~ 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 .....(?). 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, 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 teeths, 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 3½, 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 [illegible], 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 clarinettists 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 playes 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 likex 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 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. 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 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 the white bands. Dixieland music, few of us could play it, because we don't rehearsal, in the first place. Dixieland music is ensamble, 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 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 (?) Mercedes. Mercedes is about the best piano player you got, not Mercedes, Mrs. Kimball; she's heavy, and she makes the right notes, but 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 anothers 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, watch 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.

"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. 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 made 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 (..... ?) 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 (act better?).

"When I first went to California I was interviewed on the radio, and I says N'Orl'ns, 'Nyawlns,' 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

don't it?" And I say 'bankets' 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 '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, 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 trombones. 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 them mens 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, 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 Tink, 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 Ernestm , 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 abother 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-O, and that's where that name, er, what's that drummer play with Tony Parenti now? 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 menout 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, of drummers down here, 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 toom

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(?).

"Chris 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 clarinetplayed low register too."

Playing in Bunkie in 1942, "Well the set up was, Billie and De De, that was there job. Robert Davis--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 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 makking money. It's just a pity that, his eyes, he can't see."

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George Lewis interview II — 3327 De Armas St. Oct 21, '6

Asked about the first clarinet he had: "Well, to tell the truth, I really don't know; it was wood, but the name, I don't know the name of it. I bought it out of a pawn shop. It was an Albert system clarinet, but it had button keys, one half didn't have no rings on it. One half had two rings, the bottom half didn't have any rings. I bought that for $4." He describes the rings as "round things that go over the holes. Well this, it's made just like a flute, either it was one part of it; less keys. 12 keys or 13 keys, it didn't have as many keys as the ordibary Albert clarinet that we have now, you see. And it cost me $4, I played $4 for that clarinet. And then I got a case, it was shaped like a coffin; it was leather. You take your clarinet apart, into two compartments, you put one half here, one half there, you see, and so it come open... it was safe.

"And I used that, and then the next clarinet my daddy bought for me, at Werlein's. And then my mother bought me one, after that wore down, and I started out for myself, you know, getting a horn. And the metal clarinet, I bought that metal clarinet, which is in the [New Orleans Feb 27] Museum. I bought it at Werlein's. It was on--on a show you know, they show, exhibition, and I paid $30 some dollars for I think, for that. It was the best metal clarinet made, I think, because the bell came off, and it was as thick as a dollar, thick as a silver dollar. It's in the Museum now." George Lewis bought it "during the Depression, about 32, 33 years ago I guess. Because I had decided to get a metal, since they had one there, it was the onliest one there. I couldn't wear it out, you see. Because perspiration causes a certain amout of soft, and they wear the holes down, as you can imagine, so that gives your horn you get a leak; outside you get a steel rings put in the hole; and then that would make the clarinet false, I imagine, because each hole has got a different size you see."

Asked about trouble with clarinets splitting: "Yes, the one I used the other night cracked. Well they tell you if a clarinet don't crack it's no good.

The grain, you see. So the weather will crack it. And the one I've got now, and used the other night, has got a steel, a metal tube, you see, with two metal rings around to hold it together. But I've had clarinets that split, and I've put sealing wax into it. They will crack from the barrel down, to one of those keys; and sometimes they don't crack through and through, but they crack so that when you blow you see bubbles coming."

Asked about any difference in tone between wood and metal clarinets, "Well, I'll tell you, a lot of ~~people~~ fellows say that the tone is different, but I didn't find any difference in tone. I did Burgundy Street, the original Burgundy Street we made for Bill Russell. Ah, with Shots, all those were made with the metal clarinet. I think the tone is different if the clarinet is cheap. But this clarinet which is at the Museum was a Harry Pedler, that's the name of it, Harry Pedler. Just like you ~~had~~ have Conns ~~is~~, different brands, Leblancs, Selmers, they're named after somebody in the business."

George says that all clarinettists in New Orleans played Albert system when he was starting. "All of them. I never saw any (Boehm systems.) I know Israel Gorman, he was--he played good on--and in that time, he played Albert. Eddie Cherie (?), he played Albert. Zeb, Zeb, ~~Landry~~ Lenores [sp], his neice ~~who~~ lives around the corner there, he played Albert. Georgie Boyd, he played Albert. I used a Boehm system once, twice. They wanted to sell it to me, and I didn't want it, you know. That was Al Landry, he was leader of the Eureka band, and he was working with Grunewald's as agent. I used the Boehm system. It was metal though. I also used an Eb clarinet--wood though--Boehm system." Lewis says he never used an A clarinet, although "they used to, years ago, they used to some of them use it. But the A clarinet was so low, the music that they was playing, say for instance in Eb, and cornet in A, so he had to swithh his cornet to the low key. And that would make--a lot of fellows couldn't cross. But I were lucky; their few pieces that we played in A with Buddy Petit like--what do you call that, (humming,) --Maple Leaf Rag. Those kinds of numbers I'd push my clarinet....., but I'd

have to play in a different key. You see, the trumpet, if he's playing in the key of Bb, I'm playing in the same key as the trumpet, because he uses a Bb instrument. And naturally, if he shift to A, it would throw my Bb clarinet into a different key. Maple Leaf Rag was cornet in A; that mean he had to pull his shank out, or turn, you know, to get real low, say like a piano's low, some pianos are below the 440 mark in range. Every clarinet will lose, (pitch) you see. Buy a brand new clarinet and hit the tuning fork and you make the tuning note on the clarinet, which is A, and it will correspond, you see. After you blow on it for one or two days you will find that the clarinet has lost--it's not up to the standard."

Asked about mouthpieces: "Yeah, the mouthpiece I'm going to use tonight is a Selmer, and I have one in my case which is the mouthpiece belonging to this metal clarinet. I used to like the wide lay; with a wide lay I could use a softer reed. Buying a clarinet with the mouthpiece, if you've got a close lay you can use a hard reed. If you've got a wide lay(er), you use a soft reed." He syas he never tried to alter the lay. "No, that would ruin it, I never tried that. I've tried--in fact when my daddy was living he tried a goat horn, you know, the horn of a goat, to make a reed. Couldn't get nothing out of it. He didn't have anything to do, so he cut it out and he scraped it, but he couldn't get it so it ~~ever~~ would produce a tone. It was something on the order, to me, like the plastic reeds [that] which they're selling now." George says his father never played any musical instrument. "No, he just took [?] hold of a [?] reed and saw how it was made. He didn't play. None of my folks ever played any music."

ST0369

George never tried to make a reed himself, and never heard of any other musician trying to do so. "No, I knew of one man who made a banjo, out of a turtle shell, and it had a good tone to it, but it didn't carry like an ordinary banjo. It was a turtle shell, and a certain amount of wood; and a certain place to put the soundpost, you see. You could hear it, but it didn't carry. He made it because he was idle, he would always be ~~makki~~ making something--

Buddy Manaday, he played with Buddy Petit. I played with that same band. In fact I joined that band after Edmond Hall, when Edmond Hall left. He made banjos, but this turtle thing he made, it was a beautiful instrument. Because he would pick up pearls, you know, and he would inlay them, and knew how to set the frets and everything. But it didn't give the tone. Well, you take any banjo, without the resonator--that back piece--it will sound altogether different."

"I had one reed, I'll tell you, on my first trip to Japan, I used it for three months. Never changed. That was an exception." Asked about normal life span of a reed: "It all depends on how you breathe. They get wet, saliva you know, and you can't get the tone, or your reed gets dry rot.....but it's no good, outside you scrape it, now I don't like to scrape a reed, because you get it too soft. I'd rather use a new reed. With a new reed you've got to get used to it, because the cane is sweet, and it makes you salivate.

"For a long time I used a No. 4 reed. I use a 4 now on different mouthpieces. When I was in New York before I had changed my teeths--they were cut around and wored down--I used a 5 reed. That was as hard as a plank. The hardest reed you can get." Asked if he trimmed reeds: "I would cut 'em with half a dollar or a quarter, I would put it on the round and light a match--burn it. I've got a reed cutter somewhere in there, but they don't last, they split the reed; one out of two reeds they cut, it ain't no good no more. They lose the edge you see. For me, I would rather burn them. A reed cutter, it's just like a pocket knife or an ordinary knife; when it's new it's as sharp as a razor, but you get a couple of shaves off it and it's dull, you've got to discard it."

"I like a wood clarinet best, but before I got this Boehm system (?) I useded (sic) a rubber clarinet. And I got the same thing out the rubber clarinet as I did the wood. But the wood is better, because, if you drop the rubber one, that ~~have a mark where it fall on it, or it could~~ knock a piece off it, you see. But the wood, you might bend a key, or put it out of line, but it

won't break that easy. No, I didn't find nothing different in the tone, the one I had, the one which I do have, I just loaned it to those people, the metal clarinet. It's on loan, and whenever I want my clarinet, I can get it." George says it was still working when he loaned it, "but it was out of line. I loaned it to a musician one time, he wanted to buy it, and he kept it about two months. Then I asked him , I says, 'Are you satisfied?' He say, 'Yeah, but I'm going to buy a Boehm system.'" (GL doesn't want to say who the musician was.)

Asked about any preference for improved Alberts, simple systems, etc., "Oh well, I don't like a simple, not a simple. I'm going to use one tonight, of course I've got two clarinets, it's a different make. The Boehm system is much easier to play. You can see all the Mardi Gras parades and all the school bands, you never see nobody with an Alberts. Now they don't make Alberts in the States any more, but before, when they were making 'em, selling them when they were popular, you never saw a child with none. The children wouldn't play it, couldn't play it. I don't know which one they call the simple. I call the Boehm clarinet the simple." It is explained that simple means a primitive kind of Albert. "That's the first kind I used with my first clarinet."

"Well, I'll tell you, you're not going to mention his name, but a fellow when they make a clarinet, or any instrument, all those keys are supposed to be used, some use. I've seen a lot of fellows pull that key off, so that they can close up that hole, but I never do that because I know it's for some use, and I do use it sometime. With the Boehm system they've got six rings on it, and everyone of the keys is for some purpose, or they wouldn't put 'em there. And it's easier for the technical, technique, it's much easier. You take kids, they got kids right around here, in this neighborhood, schoolboys, school kids, they play a Boehm system, and you see 'em in the Mardi Gras parades."

George says he uses all the keys. "Every, the time I have to play where I had to use that key I'll use that key. The trill keys, I use them, they're on the right hand side, yeh, I use it."

(ST0592) Asked about tonguing, playing 'dah dah' instead of 'ah ah'. "Staccato, you mean. It all depends what I play. I tongue my horn, but you don't ever hear it pop. I make it [F-r-r-r?] ~~fuzz~~ like--(indicating growling,)-- I make it do that you know. But I never pop a reed. I don't like to pop a reed, not like, you know, some will make it pop; but I never like-id that." He refers to slap tonguing. I say Willie Humphrey does it sometimes. "Well, that's who I was referring to. I didn't want to say the name. But he do it sometimes. It change the tone around.

"But I like a tone. What put me on playing a tonex was, when I first started clarinet, quite naturally, like all young people you screech, you know, and the gentleman who lived in the same [house?], he aks, "~~lay~~ Hey up ~~them~~ stairs there, who's got ~~em~~ them boids?"(laughs.) So I learned to ~~play~~ blow soft [-er?] ~~on it~~, and I got a very good tone. Like before I played that Eb clarinet, I played in a brass band with a Bb clarinet. No, I didn't want anyone to hear me, so I blowed sort of soft, you see, with a stiff reed, and that's where I got my tone. I play a different tone, although I say it myself, different from any clarinet player. But you can listen, to radio or television, and you hear a clarinet, you can tell it's a Boehm system. Because the tone is light, you know, it don't have the body, it's not as deep as the Albert system. But it's faster, you see, it's fast."

Growling. "You loosen up your lip and you let the reed vibrate." GL does it"now and then when I'm feeling good, or the people are, you know." Asked if true that N.O. clarinettists are reluctant to growl when playing in N.O. "No, because I knew a clarinet player, I used to go and play with him, and his father had a band. And he was the clarinettist. He's dead now. He done all that pop, everything. He didn't have no tone, he couldn't finger, you know. He had nerve,

[also known as Kid Ernest.]

that's all he had, nerve. Ernest Moliere, Paul Moliere, the son he was a trumpet player, or a bass player, he converted his self into a trumpet player. It was one of the first bands that Marvin Kimball played in. And also Ernest Poiree, saxophone player. 'Cause he started banjo his self, and he switched to saxophone. But Kimball played with Paul Moliere, and it was considered a bad band. And so I used to go along with them, and play with them. Fields [Frank?] bass player was a relation to him. The clarinet and the drum were his two sons, so he got all the money." [What was Father's name? what did he play? RBa]

Plastic reeds. "Yes, Bill Russell bought me one, and they were expensive then; I never could use it. I tried it but I couldn't use it. I just couldn't get the right tone. It was--well did you hear Paul Barnes?--not powerful enough. I didn't like it. I appreciated it all right, but I had to get back on my cane reed. Because, just like the banjo, the banjo was made with a hide,, I don't know what hide it is, but it's a hide. So the plastic head don't sound like a banjo. It's got a tone, I don't know what it sound like, it sound like a drum or something. You don't get the same tone. It lasts longer but you don't get the tone."

Make of reed. "I buy a Lavoe [-sp?], it's supposed to be French, well, all the reeds are supposed to be French; sometime I get a Vibrator. I used to use a... (can't remember name) that reed was my first reed. But I always like-id a stiff reed for playing funerals before I started on Eb, and parades, on Bb clarinet. (because it would carry...) And he's got to blow like hell. And then when I switched to Eb, Sam Morgan's clarinettists, Joe Watson, he died of lung trouble, he was the one man--"

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE 2

"We played a parade, the Oddfellows used to parade from 8 in the morning till 6 in the evening---all day parade. They had the Masons come from out the country, everywhere. It was a big to-do, on the 30th of May. And they had picnics at the fairground, all day for the children, and at night it would be for grown people, they would use brass band, ~~and~~ grandstand, or what they call a "tunk", a hunky tunk, would be out (on) a platform they would build while they would dance to a regular ragtime band. But, Joe Watson, this was the first time he was using an Eb, so he borrowed an Eb. Al Landry was the leader of the Eureka Band--the original Eureka Band--he was working for Werlein's as a agent selling instruments, and he bought me that Eb, but I had my Bb along with me, and I played the Eb, and then I continued on, but before that I played always Bb."

Asked about embouchure: "Well, I hold mine, I used to when I first started out, I used to hold the lip there, (over the teeth), but now I don't do that." The lower lip over the teeth, "and also the top lip, but I learned better because the lips would get sore, you see. Very sore. I used to play the jitney dance at St. Charles and Canal where Rubenstein's store is, and my lip would be bleeding all the time, and so I learned to catch the top (of the mouthpiece) with my teeth, and would pucker the bottom lip, like that, (lower lip sticking out,) That was many years ago, I can tell you that. The Music Box this place was called, oh about '24, between '24 and '23. You see all this what's coming up now, we didn't pay attention to that, you know, dates and all." The change of embouchure "didn't change my tone, because I wore ~~(would hold?)~~ my teeth down, you can see, the record with Shots. You can see my teeth cut like a crescent, in the mouthpiece." (What does this mean?) The new embouchure: "I know you get less sore, because your lips don't get..... The bottom one get a groove, you see, like that (showing bottom lip,) and

and under there, you see, it's hard. Now if you don't play then it gets soft, of course, just like a corn on your hand, you wash your hand, you know. And a saxophone player, he have a larger thumb than mine, you see; because you see the thumb, it's out of shape. The saxophone player, his instrument is heavier ..... This come from--you see that--what do you call that? - well that come from a nerve which lead right into that, sometimes it hurt like hell." (Bump on thumb.)

Teeth: "The first time I had 14 taken out, that was in New York; I also had pyrohhea treatment, they kept three teeths, just tried to save them. They filled 'em, bored 'em, filled 'em with silver. One was filled so you just could see the top of it. The dentist told me ten years, they would last ten years; and it was exactly--not the same date--that when I pulled the bridge out I pulled one out. Also was..... And the next time the other one came out--I have one right here--so what I used to do to stop, these teeth was wobbling, you know, would shake, I would take a piece of paper and would ..... it up, put it in my mouth, like a prize fighter puts a mouthpiece in. Well that's what I would do to stop from...When I got the last six teeths out of my head, my teeths was put back in; so I never was without teeths, you see." Playing with false teeth; "No, I don't find that hard because I never played without 'em. Some people wait until the gums heal, you see, but the dentist that I used, and I've got the bill in there somewhere right now--it's four hundred some odd dollars, Bill Russell can tell you that--that the teeths, including pyrohhea treatment and gas. I didn't want the needle; and that's whay he pulled so many, you see. And it was, Decca? Victor. I only had the teeth at the bottom. I had just come from the dentist. And I was only four days without playing at the Stuyvesant. The fifth date was a Friday, (er, Monday they put 'em in, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday,) the fourth date, I went and played. Because Albert Nicholas played in my place; and I ..... a little trial, and I played the whole night." By then George had his false teeth and didn't find them any

trouble, "Because I hadn't done (without?) 'em. Soon as they pulled 'em, the last one, they put them in. And then I had to go to the dentist every day, for about three or four days. Then he told me to take 'em out myself--he show, told me how they do--and I would get in the middle of the ~~bay (?)~~ bed because the gums was sore, you see. The sockets what the ~~gums was in~~ teeths was in, they cut down, they were jagged, you know, like a bit sunken. And they had to cut them bones, and they swolled just a little bit.....~~I thought.~~"

Asked about playing standing up or sitting down: "Well, at a concert I'd rather stand, I'd rather stand to play a ~~mmk~~ solo, you know to play you see, because a concert, because you've got a certain amount of time, it's not like playing in the Hall, you know. 45 minutes, probably you might have an hour. Well that man can stand an hour if his legs is good. But if he sits down he looks too lazy, he don't make appearance. One thing I can say about the band when I had my band, we had a uniform, three or four uniforms. Nick Gagliano, which is a lawyer now, saw that we had it. And to stand, you know, would make a better appearance." Asked about his feelings if there weren't any people there to worry about, then which would he prefer: "Well, I'd rather have people around, you know, because then you don't think, you don't think about it just so much. It gives you a spirit because somebody is patting his feet, you know, and it gets your mind off. Because you want to do so, you want to do it right and most of the time you do it wrong, you see, you get kind of tense, you see.

"When I was recording for Victor, not Victor, Verve, Norman Grantz, Verve, the jazz band, they didn't worry about--let him picked his own tunes. The onliest thing, the man would give you the sign to go. And he would tell you if--a lot of fellows don't start together. Start together and end together, going out. Outside of that he wasn't worried. He'd let you make your own balance (confirms he's talking about Norman Grantz,) and the records come out

much better, I believe; 'cause whoever you're recording for, he pick the tunes, you see. He know what tunes he want.

"If you play in a recordin' my idea is, if you play the tune three times: take one, take two, and sometimes even take five and six, you lose it, because that man will lose an interest in that tune, you see. He ain't (gettin' on it ?) for some reason. So if you take two, or three, and you don't get it right, forget about that. Go on to something else. Because the first time, I'll tell you, to my estimation, the first time you play, that number is the best one. And then the big companies like that, they have the--what do you call the man, he's in there, there's one there that supervise, he knows music, you know, he's got a hearing, and he stop you. And you start again, he stop you again. And you sort of lose--it sort of loses it. And that tune'll sound worse; every time you play it, it will sound worse and worse." [NG is well known for requiring only one take. RBA.]

"No, I never learned to read (music). I take-ed one or two lessons, in my spare time, a man what they call Professor Delmore, Delmore, Delmoe; I went there about twice. (GL agrees this was when he was young.) I know all the signs of the music, but to read, I can't read. And I want to tell you something else. All these musicians around here, colored, and some of the white ones, they can't read. You know, books, you say reading, you're going to read, you pick up a newspaper and you go right on. You don't say "Er, I..T..A..M.. Item," you go, you say "Item". That's a reader. So the guy who rehearses, he's got to come back and make this part, he's a speller. Then I had a man tell me in New York, in '45, he called me down, they was serving beer by pitchers, at the Stuyvesant Casino. And he spoke, he say, "How long you been playing?" And I told him, "Since I was 14 years old." And he said "I enjoy listenin' at you." And he say, "Do you read?" I said, "No sir." He said, "Well if I would put ~~what~~ --" ~~you can play on clarinet~~ he was teaching at the Conservatory in Boston--he said "If I would put what you can play on your clarinet on paper, you'd get afraid, you'd be afraid." So many notes, so many notes, you know, that you don't, you

[Delmas? ck. sp.]

know, you're not conscious of it, you know, of what you're doing."

"I always breathe from the abdomen; you see the [serpentine] vein comes out here [in his forehead] of course. But it's mostly the abdomen because, if the drummer is pulling you, and you're playing so many notes--you've got to get 'em--you...(he draws in breaths as though in pain,) so you feel it right in the stomach there, that pain. From the abdomen, that's where. It's the drummer that slow down the time, you see. I can't call many drummers--but I don't want to make enemies--that are not something snappy, it's supposed to be snappy, let it be snappy. If it's supposed to be slow you don't want--not too slow. You see because you've got a small band; if you've got a big band there's always somebody to fill in, you see. But you've got so many notes to get in there, and if he's pulling you back, and you see, right up in here, it start hurtin' you, you feel it. Now they've got some fellows that blow from the jaw, (puffs his cheeks out,) but I never could blow that way. I will.....some ~~notes, maybe.~~" [play a little in here. It all depend on what notes I make?]

High notes. "Well I'll tell you something, I don't read, and I imagine my fingers know what they're going to do before it get up here (pointing to his head,). My fingers feel that they know what it's going to do before it gets up here you see. And I can tell when I can't make a high note though. I know when I feel that way, that I can't make it, I don't try for it. But I always try before I start, I'll make a high G, or whatever note, and if I can't get it then I'll pull my reed down to make the reed a little stiffer. If I can't get it then I'll change my reed.

Asked about practicing: "Low register (No regular?) no, blow in my horn to get my lips set, that's all, no special, no. But mostly I practices at home, I play a hymn or something like that, or a little blues. 'Cause I like the low register, I like the low register. I like to go in and out, which I could do well. I know I ain't the best, but that is where I like low register. Very few clarinets you find playing low register."

I say I think he's more famous for high register playing than low. "Well no, I don't think so. A place like Preservation Hall you can't hear this. Low register, the band is supposed to come down, your background, you know, your drums, whoever, so that your low register can come out. Because that's the beauty part of the clarinet, going from high to low, you know, high to low. Now you find clarinet players who don't play low register, period."

"Soloing, you know, say like we're playing Tin Roof Blues, well I put in there 'Blues For Jimmy'. One tune I used to put 'Snag It' in there, whatever come in my mind. I played, for blues, 'dum de..!(hums tune) you know. Well I play that soft, in the low register you know; the band is overcrowding you. 'Closer Walk With Thee', I play that soft, in the low register. The low register's the best, but you tell the guys to come down, they don't, they don't.

"With the English bands, Acker Bilk--they had a white clarinettist around here who I admired, Bill Shea, we would play duets together--low register. And I'd shift to high, he stayed low. And he shift to high, I stay low. Well that's the beauty part of it. Of the high register, it's the trill note more, you know it's, it appeal to some people's hearing, but it appeals to mine too. Some tunes I have to play I would always, I would never start in the low register, but I would weave in and out as variation. And I stick to some of the leads, too, so the band will never get lost. I would say for instance, now you have a trumpet player plays, and he variates, till he gets off the tune you see; well, now right, if he's variating, and the clarinet is variating, and the trombone, whatever he's doing, you don't have no melody, the tune, somebody got to carry the tune. So you carry some of the melody, and variate some, some of the melody, and variate some, you see. That's the way I learned myself, and that's the way I play this."

"Well you take 'Old Rugged Cross', or you take 'West End Blues', nobody want to play on account of the introduction. Thomas Jefferson; Howard could

make it, ~~sssss ss~~ at ~~tim~~ times, you see. They got a lot of ~~them~~ things that if the band would come down soft, and it would sound, you know I mean, and then you swell, I don't read music, but the music is going up. For instance the funeral, I played funeral, and everybody would have the music, and I would be playing my part, clarinet part, different from what the music would be, you understand. I played low register, that you can hardly hear ~~you know~~ on the Eb clarinet, in the streets. And you could hear the foots 'sshh'. Because Landry was a man when he leaded his brass band, he was always on the outside. And you see him walking~~xp~~ up and down the ~~members~~ length of the band, you see. So, like pieces the Eureka Band played, 'West Lawn [Dirge]' and 'Silence', and hard marches, he'd know just how to get 'em down. Because on the music that they had, the triple, double f, which means 'very soft', you see, so you'd be whispering almost. That gave the reeds time to sing. He 's carrying the lead, like 'What A Friend We Have In Jesus', he's carrying the lead, ~~thexcxxxd~~ 'Upper Garden', and the band is underneath him, you see. So that's the beauty part of the clarinet."

(ST 3551) "I have played a funeral, and ~~on a job; it didn't particularly.....~~ honestly, it don't pay me to lie I didn't ~~don't~~ get no money of course. I have played a funeral going to the Washington Street cemetary, [Lafayette No. 2 ?] and a woman ran out and smacked my horn down and said 'stop that man from playing, because he's playing soft.' I snatched it [out ?] ~~up~~, and you'll find it in the book. [Jay Allison Stuart (sp?), Call Him George ?] And she say, 'Oh, for God's sake stop that man!' And that's because I--if I wouldn't have held it, it was there, the corks had swolled, she'd have broke it. But I could play Eb; I play it now, ask them Japanese boys."

Asked about playing sharp. "Well yes, sometimes I guess, ... but if he's a critic he don't know sharp from flat, you know, he don't even know what he's hearing [you know ?]." Told there is some truth in the claim. "Yeah, sometime there is, or maybe I might overpower the horn sometime, when I feel good, or strong. Well, playing like [there] at Preservation Hall, anywhere, everybody tune to their own hearing, and if they would have, the way they should tune the band

with a tuning fork, you know--if they don't have a piano of course. Because you've got to tune to that piano; and you actually can't get there, so you're gonna be..., and the more you pull your joints out, or the more I use that (tuning) roller there, your horn is, air is escaping, you see. The horn is getting flatter and flatter and flatter. The top notes or the bottom notes, you can't get 'em at all. So you have to be a little bit sharp you see. You see me at night—I have always tuned. Because I hear a different thing; now, I know when I'm sharp and I can tell when I get the note for Burgundy Street and then the piano is not tuned, or Bill Russell, he tunes it. You take a man like 'Sing', or Charlie, some of those men, they can't tune no piano so you get this note right, that note is sharp, so you, you know. I'll tell you, for instance, you take Thomas, Thomas never tunes his horn. He get there and he blows 'Baah'. And then he don't be tuned. Because the piano is accordin' to the weather. It might pull up or it might go down. Or some of the strings is missin', it ain't gettin' the full values."

Asked about early pieces he played. "Let's see, I forgot all see, the blues, Tiger Rag was another. They (Black Eagles) didn't have too many tunes, we were all boys just starting out. 'Any Rags, Any Bones, Any Bottles Today'. That was a rag man's song, he'd just blow the horn; Christmas horn, played blues on corners, and they'd have bags of peppermint, candy, the kids would bring him bottles or bones, you know, rusty nails, and he'd give you a little candy or he'd gave you a little prize, or a thing you'd stick on your finger you can't pull off, well that was one tune, and then there was a tune my mama used to sing, hum to me, (he hums it.) It was a opera tune. And I started that on a little flute. I knew the name, but it just got away from me, you know. My mother spoke a lot of Creole, and also I could speak Creole up to the age of 7, then I started C ~~from her~~. But you get a bad piano, you ain't never going to be tuned. One piece it'll be tuned, one tune, and you get on something else, it's off you see."

END OF TAPE

"Well my clarinet, I had a rubber, bought a rubber clarinet and it fell and it broke a piece off the ring. I went into the music store in Los Angeles, on Vine St., and asked them to see if they could fix it. They said they could fix it but I wanted to borrow one for to work. They didn't have any Albert systems, he told me. So I started out, he said 'wait, come back, George,' -- I ordered my reeds there -- he said 'Wait, I have we got a Albert clarinet,' and he got up on the shelf and he came down with this clarinet that he told me was Jimmy Noone's. He had bought two clarinets, and he redeemeded one, and this one, he died before he could redeem it. So he let me use the clarinet, and some people put in, and we decided to buy it. Jimmy Noone had ordered them through the music store, these two clarinets from France that they wasn't selling in the United States at that time, and he redeemed one from the music store, and he had them to hold the other one as a lay-away, you see, the one I'm using now. And after he died well there was nobody to use 'em, so that's how it was sold, and it was given to me." George Lewis doesn't know if Jimmy Noone had ever played it. "I don't know, but it was brand new. That was around about fifteen years ago. I went to Europe in '57. Between '55and '56. That's a French Selmer, that's the one I'm using now."

On Jimmy Noone: "I heard him play, yes, I heard him play: in New Orleans."

On Effect on style of playing in trios. "It don't worry me any. Because I can play melody, although, the more mens they have of course -- I can't produce all the sounds like the trombone. And you know, the trumpet player, but I can play that. I never get worried; I played a lot of three piece jobs: banjo and bass; piano and bass, piano and drums, I played a lot of 'em." He doesn't think playing lead has any effect on his style.

1:00 Clarinet players he heard when young: "Well I'll tell you, there was a lot of them. Everyone of 'em made an impression on me, because every one had their own style. I heard Charlie McCurdy [sp?], Picou at his best, George

Baquet, Lorenzo Tio, Johnny Brown, and so many others. Zeb, Eddie Cherie, Sidney Cherie rather, Georgie Boyd, many good clarinet players. Some of them didn't read of course. Georgie Boyd didn't read any music, and a lot of others that didn't read, but they played like 500. So, I always admired every one of em's style, different playing of course." Asked if they had different tones, he thinks I say TUNES. "No, they didn't have different tunes. These fellows, they didn't hve no different tunes, all the tunes was the same. You find with Punch recording with Al Wynn, 'She's Crying For Me Blues (sings part of it), same was played that time, as Punch played it in Chicago. Panama didn't change, some of the white Dixieland bands changed. Some of the white bands changed 'em around, made different arrangements. Like you take for instance Sharkey's band, or a band that was coming up behind these fellows, Louis Prima, Leon Prima, they change it around, you know, and a lot of things they couldn't memorize they had to — rewrote it you know. Johnny Lala, not the one playing at the Famous Door now, the old-time Lala, who was the butcher in the old Treme Market, would play the same tunes as we play. A lot of them was composed by them like, er, (wouldn't say Muskrat Ramble), but a lot of tunes thy made their own self you see. Anyway, did a lot of copying behind the colored musicians, because Kid Rena, he had a lot of musicians, white musicians; Sharkey was one of his scholars I know for a fact. Sharkey was there every day on Marais between Esplanade and Kerlerec; I went past playing funerals and going back into the Perserverance Hall, bringing the Perserverance Society; also the Young Men of Liberty Society, back to the hall after the funeral. And Sharkey would be out there, on his porch. Louis Prima, not Leon, not the one running the 500, Louis Prima, he taken lessons from Rena; and a lot of 'em taken lessons from ... Eddie Miller, famous saxophone player, he follow d a lot of funerals. Also Tony Almerico, they all backed behind some of the older ones, Buddy Petit, but not Chris so much because, but I think Chris had a different style that they couldn't catch

on for the tempo, for the way he set his time, you know. The way he knocked off his er ... (claps a beat). Probably the why didn't take behind it because probably, he had a different heel and toe, keep the tempo." Did any sound like Chris Kelly? "Not exactly, no. I know a lot of fellows tried to play like him. Howard was one who tried to play like him, he used to make some of the phrases he made, but not sound like. He even beated ... till he died he had that tempo of course. That's church, (clapping a beat) he got that in the church, and but to say to blow like Chris, he didn't have the tone, something was lacking."

Asked which clarinetists had a tone George Lewis admired. "Well, Jimmy-le. Noone was one; Picou had a good tone; George Baquet had a wonderful tone. Those were really professional men. Charlie McCurdy, those men had played in pit bands, played for vaudeville. Isidore Fritz had a good tone but not compared to none of them people; he was; Isidore Fritz had a tone something like - I hate to say - Edmond Hall. That's the sort of tone he had. But he was very fast, and he knew what he was doing. But for the tone he didn't have the tone. You take Edmond Hall's tone, it's more raw than, you know, some of the musicians that you can hear; although I'm not knocking him, he's a first class musician, but his tone was not the same as those people. Well, Fritz created his own ideas, as he went along. Had to because that band there was in that band before I joined Buddy Petit's band, there were few of 'em done any reading. Very few of 'em; Bunk was about the onliest one could read; Bunk played in that band, and also Ernie Cagnolatti's oldest brother Klebert. They was the two mens that used to come over and play with that band. Old man Louis Fritz was the bass and Junior was the trombone, Isidore clarinet; and they had a cousin Ralph Laurent who played the violin; sounded just like clarinet, he played a lot round there. After Bunk they would send and get different trumpet players you know; Tommy Ladnier played with them too. Tommy played better than Bunk though. Because Bunk would have to be a little up there, you know, although he had good lips, but Bunk never was a man who could blow.... Bunk was a fellow

who whould blow in his days something like Alvin Alcorn. Alvin was not a loud trumpet player.

I first played with Bunk before the latter part of the twenties, across the Lake, Mandeville, also here on advertisements. Not Bunk's band of course, it wasn't Bunk's band because Bunk would be hired , because up above Canal St. ~~like~~ Louis Dumaine, old man Guss Metcalfe was trombone, also baritone and everybody was using him. He was one of the best baritone players playing in the city. I played with a lot of bands from up above Canal St. And I know Bunk was not the best. Bunk was around here, Bunk didn't leave. Bunk was in and out, in and out, in and out. You've got musicians playing here right now that don't live in the city. ~~I played with him of~~ You take, Sam Dutrey's daddy, he was one of ~~the great~~ them great clarinet players also. Sam Jr., big fellow who plays clarinet now, he don't live here. He goes home every week end, in Opelousas you see. At that time we was getting disgusted with Bunk. They was doing towards Bunk something like they was doing towards Buddy Petit. They was leaving his band, because Buddy was uncertain, you know. Supposed to be getting dances, and Buddy would be off somewheres else andplaying. Leave you stand up there with a hall full of beer. He's lucky that he never got himself arrested. No that wasn't towards the end of his life, he done it so often, he just was pulling a jump (?) you see. I came over here, I was playing in Mandeville with Leonard Parker, and I came over here after Edmond Hall left the band I got in the band, the Black and Tan. You see the picture with George Washington, trmb, Buddy Manaday, Chester on bass, Eddie Woods, whom we called Face-O that's where Zutty and all them got that word calling people face. When Hall left that band, they used to play at Jackson Square in Mandeville, like they take-ed me, you see, because Fritz and them had their own band, they wouldn't leave because everyone of them had their trade, they were brick masons. So they make more money from playing music at that time, you know, because, prices was way, $5 was a big price. Earl sent for Buddy, and that's where I played with Earl and Buddy.

Because my father was still alive then, then he was sick. I come over on Thursday and stay till Monday, or whatever date they had, then I'd go back. Come back the weekdays until my father died. And then we got a-rid of his chickens and everything and moved back over here. I taken my oldest daughter Mildred - after I got over there she was sick during that time. My father died in the month of October, it wasn't too long after my father died.

I had played with Earl when he fired Buddy, and he used Percy. Percy was a .... And then they got Lee Collins. Lee played for a while, and then Earl and Chris got into a little fuss. Earl left the band and I continued with Chris, all of us continued with Chris' band. Roy Evans, drummer, Dave Ernest, his brother we used to call him Duck Ernest, he was playing bass; we all stuck together, Walter Preston and Duck Ernest on banjo and bass; myself on clarinet; Chris, and they picked up Ricard, he played second for a while. And Roy, and the trombone was Buddy Johnson's brother, Yank. Arthur Johnson. And after that Chris' band was going so good they took Manuel, Manuel Manetta. They let Ricard go because Ricard knew more then Chris, I guess, and they was gettin' in one another's way. He knew the instrument better than Chris. Ricard was a good reader and everything. Chris was what you call a speller; well he had ideas, you see he was more of a blues man, but for setting the band off with a swing, I don't think nobody could do that, even Sam Morgan. Well Careless Love was one of his tunes, a lot of old ones, Mr Ga-l-.. and Mr Sheen-(?), came out in the early twenties. Black Snake Blues, he played a lot of blues, Maryland -- he played the hell out of Maryland, and a lot of the old standards. But his favorite number was Careless Love... Chris used a silver mute that would come with the cornet, and a toilet flusher. He was the first one I saw that used the toilet flusher, rubber plunger. He would squeeze that thing so close to the bell you could barely hear the horn whisper. Dances, we used to play for dances, no concerts; we played encores, they'd clap we'd play the same thing over again. I think he, he was a good trumpet player. I played with him, well every Tuesday we were playing at

the Bull's; 8th Street I believe; they'd have two bands. They had two yards. One gave onto Dryades St. and a yard gave onto Rampart, what they call Danneel now you see. Ane we were on the Danneel side facing, and first it was Rena, Rena's band before I got in Rena's band; they would be facing Dryad St. And then Sam Morgan came in with his band, the men facing Dryad St. That was every Tuesday, every Tuesday night. Besides that hall, Perserverance Hall, Economy Hall, the Co-operators Hall, (what they used to call ... Swells (?) on Bienville between Robertson and Villere. And then on Tulane, we had a lot of things going on.

There was a lot of Jamaicans coming into town. West Indians, well every week we played two or three of those. So the money was, ain't no benefit playing in those brackets (?). And I just got tired of playing with Chris after a certain fellow got in the band. The job would be over half the time and Chris wouldn't have the money to pay the band. Sometime a fellow would get nothing, he had drawed it all in advance, you see. He begged me to stay, but I couldn't stand it; my first wife was looking after the children and I needed the money, ~~they didn't pay~~ me, I didn't get the money like I should have got it. On account of a certain amount of ... my wife had just had my youngest son or the youngest one living.

You were gettin' paid advertisements, truck, say like the dance would be tonight or tomorrow night. Say today was Sunday, well you'd advertise the dance for Sunday night, ~~You'd~~ and ballyhoo all around the streets. If it was on a Monday ~~night~~ night, you'd ballyhoo Sunday also. Monday they didn't do no ballyhooing. They'd send out to different clubs, there were so many different clubs, what they call wavers, that would be a column of people they were inviting out of that particular club, and they would march and when they'd get to the door, they give you the sign, and the tune would be, all the time to march them in, was Gettysburg March. And they would come in with their regalias or their banners, you know, representing the club. And then they would go to the bar, and they might spend, that whole group, if they could afford it, $50 right then and

there. That's why there were so many clubs. And they use-ed that tune to march 'em in. And they use-ed that tune also in the concert. After (?) there was two dances played. Gettysburg March would mean you take your girl to the table and buy her something to eat; a candy or a stick of gum worth a penny, you'd pay five cents for it, or ... break it in pieces, apple or a banana, whatever she want. The job would be $7, that would be for advertising and the job. $5 for the job, $2 for the advertisement. You would start about one o'clock and end about five, so if you had to play that Sunday night. You'd play at first, say you'd start like down here, and end up way in Algiers, and you'd come right down here (??) with this band through the different places, different streets, where you knew the people were living, more lively streets. And then, a lot of times you met up with another band, advertising something else, and there would be a battle right there you see. They ain't nobody .... Because you were working for certain people, say for instance you'd be playing for me, and another band would be playing for somebody else. Well they had a route they would want to make, you know, and they'd play three or four tunes one band would pull off, and the band that would pull off, that didn't necessarily say that they lost, because they were working for someone. His party was giving that money to make that route make their destination. I used to play for a club that was called The Jolly Uncles, and that group would make up at Son's, Son Fewclothes — you ever heard of him? -- at his house. ... club warden. His step father was called Jessie Jackson, he was a banjo player. The man who was the head of the Jolly Uncles he was named Cus Wilson, he was a pimp ~~and ...~~ He'd start that advertisement up so when you'd wind up down here, you know what we called, some people still call it the Tremé, like Liberty Street, Treme St., was always known as the Treme by the people .

So, a lot of times we'd meet bands, and we'd be the first ones to pull off, we'd meet some smaller band, but it doesn't mean to say that we lost. Sometimes we'd get a bunch that just want to, the band would be that drunk they would even

tie the wheels together, chain the wheels up, and nobody would get away then, you'd work youself to death."

Arnold DePass: "Well in that band, Arnold De Pass' band, Arnold was the head of the band, it was his band, There was Elmer Talbert, Benny Benois on banjo he's Cie's brother-in-law ——Thomas Copeland, bass. Blacky Santiago played piano, Isiah Robertson was (the) trombone, and er, six pieces, seven pieces whenever they had a piano, Blacky Santiago was the piano player. And when that band first organised I don't know who played with them, I know Picou played with them for a while, and I went in and played with them for a while, about close to a year, something like that. Mostly they worked with white jobs, Ponchatrain Hotel was one, out there where the Saints have got their office building on the Circle, Canola's (?) Club, a lot of white jobs. " He played " I guess twice a week sometime. I'll tell you, I was pretty lucky I ~~didn't really have my~~ clarinet ....(?) I never went without a job. I always had a job. Then ~~I was~~, whatever I was playing with, if they didn't [nothing a ~~job~~] I had a job somewheres else. Because like I told you I played with a lot of Uptown bands. I would say I was in demand, yes, because I was younger than more of the fellows, and I could play as much as they could, playing. I'm not going to tell you I knew as much as they were playing. Like I say there was Georgie Boyd; they ~~wouldn't be~~ playing. it was the nerve that's what ~~they were~~, you see. Because I don't care who he was I was going to ~~cut him~~, I don't care who was playing I was going to ~~cut~~ play him, you know. Because I know things that, what you can do, a fellow that's considered better than me, can't do what you can do. There was one fellow Pill, we called him Pill, he was crippled ..., he was a very fine clarinet player. And er Cherie, Sidney Cherie, he looked like a white man -- he went to California and died -- he was a fine clarinet player. Georgie Boyd, would go play with Georgie Boyd, but I would bring my own horn because Georgie Boyd always had saliva ("sleeva"), and he had big, big lips, the mouthpiece would always be wet and dirty looking; but for playing you couldn't take it away from him. I'd go to ~~Rain~~

(Rena's?) place, at the Savoy on Rampart St. near Gravier, it was upstairs. Sam and them: Sit down and play for Joe Watson out at ... play clarinet for Sam, the original band.

"So, I would go different places and play just to be playing. I'd sit in with the whole band, the clarinet player would go off. Very seldom (were there ~~two~~ two clarinets at once.) The man would want to get out, drink a little or go out, or ~~whatever~~. No, I wouldn't get paid.

"I consider myself a beginner from the first time I started till now. I'll tell you, I played because I loved-ed to play. I would ~~go out on~~ the street and I would just say well ~~I'm going.....~~or I'm going on up to the Savoy, ~~or~~ I'd wind up on the Roof Garden or someplace where I can do ~~a little~~ music, and I could sit in and play. Maybe I would play an hour or two hours, or maybe I would play for two or three tunes. You know, it all depends if I could feel the band, you understand. Sometimes I didn't feel it.

"Well, when they say cut, that would mean contest, you know like a cuttin' contest, two bands meet on a corner. But two clarinetists, you could call it a cuttin' because both would play the same thing." Asked if, when A sat in for B, the band would prefer the one who sat in: "Well, none of that was mentioned, but that would be because somebody was jealous of someone in the band, or didn't like someone, you know. They might say, 'Man, why don't you come and join us,' you know, ~~some of the time, something~~ like that. But the mens didn't feel that way towards each other." Asked whether it was musical or personal. "No, it was (wasn't ?) musical, because you sit in the band, I feel that I would learn more from different people's styles. Every band that plays, they have a certain style of playing. Every man that they had in the band them days, they ~~were~~ reading, but they were playing like hell. You got a different feel instead of playing with the same men all the time."

"Now, they got fellows who wouldn't go out at all. But I know I drink. I would drink at that time, out at the 101 Ranch, Pete Lala ran that liquor (business?), I would to there at least three times a week, four times sometime. I would come from the Bulls playing. I would stop there, you see, and stay there until daylight almost, sometimes it would be daylight. And I'd just come from the Bulls playing from 8 till 2 in the morning. And I'd go there and sit down and play for Georgie Boyd. George would be sittin' ~~out~~ sleeping."

George said he never used the other mans clarinet. "No, I'll tell you I never used ~~nobody's~~ anybody's clarinet because I ~~feel~~ couldn't blow anybody's clarinet. Everybody's clarinet don't feel the same in your hand. Not afraid of catching anything, I just couldn't because it's the reed, could be different. A lot of those mens, like myself used-ed rubbers, my feel might be not strong enough for the amount of rubbers he had, so it make it miss, you know. So, what I would do, I would always have my own horn. And I would tell my wife I'd tell her 'I'm going to such and such a place, sit down and play for so-and-so for a while.'"

"I played, I think, in the thirties I was better than in the twenties, that's my idea. That's what I feels, I think I was more mature. The Forties, for a while, I played, I never stopped playing, I played but I had lost interest. I was losing it because the money wasn't the same as what we were making, ~~other tan '45 when I went to New York~~ around 1945. Some jobs I played for 50¢ a night. I was giving it everything I had, but I just would say er, ~~playing~~ well if you like it well I was happy, if you didn't like it I was still happy. That's the way I would feel many times. And I didn't want to quit because I knew it was something I like-ed to do, and I was going to do it regardless ~~of whether~~ if I got paid or not. And I accepted those ~~fucks~~ jobs. Sometimes you would play for what? A dollar and quarter picnic, from nine in the morning till 4 or 5 o'clock in the evening, in the

country. I worked at the ~~Knick~~ Kingfish out there at Ursuline and Decatur, two years and something, from 8:30 till 3:30 in the morning, for one dollar. I never missed a night, for two years. Right there out at, there's Toulouse, they have a short street there in between, they had a joint there one of Lawrence Marrero's cousins used to play there, a job, 6 bits a night. Some nights we would make more and sometimes less. I could have put the horn down and say I'm going to do something that would (enhance? advance?).

1052 Asked if his style changed at all over the years. "Well I'll tell you, I never ~~never~~ paid too much attention to that, but it's a possibility, yes, sure. Because sometimes when I plays I don't feel as strong as the others, you know. Don't get the same feels, don't get the same feelings as ~~when~~ I, you know, a younger man. The older ~~you~~ get, I feel, the more I pay attention. Before I didn't pay much attention

I paid attention but only to a certain extent. And I feels the older musicians, because I did notice Peter Bocage interfering (?) with the drums, the drums was off, and one time he Manuel Sayles talking about Peter Bocage at San Jacinto Hall recording session, during which Bocage lectured both Cie and Sayles in the middle of a number. Well he got that he could feel you know, that something was holding him back, probably was the drum. To me, banjo, well I mean, that's the truth I'll tell you the truth, banjo because they're not playing on the after beat. The onliest one who to understand, and the onliest one I hears ~~at~~ round here, the Japanese girl. (played with her) just sittin' in a couple of nights. Now Frank, the boy from California, he used to play a steady beat, but I noticed there the other night he don't play that steady beat no more. Well there ain't none of them, I'll tell you, only two people that I know, that play banjo that get a good tone, ~~one~~ that little

girl, and the boy from Minneapolis, that's all. But I don't say that they if you play ~~with awkward people~~ they're ~~faulting~~ one another, fighting as a rhythm, fighting. On the after beat as opposed to the time Lawrence, Drag and Joe had. Because the banjo is an important part of the band.

Everybody wants people take up guitar, put the banjos down, just like you take the majority of fellows playing saxophone today, they were clarinet players. You take Handy, Handy was a fine clarinet player, he was rough, they called him ~~John Noore~~ (?), but he could play. ~~the~~ saxophone. He come back he couldn't get an embouchure, you know, the different type of tone, something to slow you, you've got to use wide fingers, you just can't get it. Plastic reeds.

"I played saxophone for about three or four years, but I didn't tell you I liked it." When? "I had come over here from across the Lake. First saxophone I ever used was a C melody. My father bought it; he bought it from some people he knew. It was brand new. I didn't know exactly what it was but I started playing with the Humphrey band. I knew it was worse because the C melody is very hard to play. I used the C melody but then I stopped carrying it because it's so long, the case was that long. I just stick to my clarinet." Picture in Jazzways: "I was playing with Paul and Paul was playing clarinet. Well I'll tell you I played sax. I just got rid of a saxophone a couple of years back, I kept it around and I sold it to Mr. (Russells?), alto I didn't play tenor though because I couldn't get the right idea (?) proper tone in my , I couldn't get the proper tone.

Bass: "Well, I played in one or two keys. I played one or two notes, that's all. But I like a bass. I always had loved the bass, and I always said if I had to give up clarinet, you know earlier, bass would have been the instrument I would like to use. Now, I wouldn't

want that totin'." Asked if he ever played a job on bass. "No, just fool around when rehearsin(or something like that you know. And er, wasn't more than one string. If I was to learn bass I'd want to learn it the right way." Talks about something he heard on TV the other night. "A young bunch of kids just the other night, 10 years old. I wish you'd have heard 'em on the bass." He asks Shirley "What was that program the other night? When they had them 3 boys, 2 white boys and a colored boy playing the bass?" [Art Linkletter show] "Well they were playing on this great composer, compose this high class music."

Ever listen to classical music? "Yeh, I like classical music. When I started out that's all my mother she knew, she had French opera since she was sixteen, ~~listen~~ at French opera, ~~I guess~~ that's high class music. She ~~recalled a lot of it~~ but then she got old she started to lose her memory a little, couldn't remember the tunes. But she would hum a lot of them to me when I first started out on my fife, little ~~fiddle~~ flute. She used to look to me to make the practice this, but it was impossible to make it on six holes. You see the fife got a different pitch, just like the mouth organ or harmonica. Come in a different pitch, you can get a C, you can get a B flat, a ~~flat~~, different pitch. So that make you play in one key all the time you see. You could get 'em (sharps and flats), the way you finger, your fork just like you fork on six holes on clarinet. But you know, some keys would be too high, so e would be too low and you couldn't get down.

"I started on fife in 1907, and I played fife until, oh, 1910, but I still didn't come out (till 1914?) with the clarinet. And I got my fife in a box, it was all bent up. [Sentence inaudible up to _]: Woolworths at Bourbon and Canal. It was Kirby's. They used to have kid

parades, call them Field Bands. Have a drum, a couple of fifes, three or four boys I knew could play fife, at that time. They never took to music though, you know." Field Bands didn't exactly copy the brass bands, "no, not copied, we just played a game (?). You never could get (the same tunes) because on fife you've only got six holes, and you can copy it; just like the harmonica - you buy it in pitch, you look on the side and see B flat, and so forth, G, cross mark, tell you what pitch that is. So if the band is playing at that pitch you can play like hell. But if not, you got to shift that thing all the way round."

Did people pay attention to the Field Bands? "Yeah they did. It would be at night they would always make you take carbon (?) boxes (?) and cut different designs, use soap paper on the inside, put a candle in there inside, you see it glow. Also they would take cheese boxes; cheese that would come in a round box, and they'd make drums out of it, the wooden box. Get 'em from the grocery store, and they would put a goat head on it or that kind of skin that would produce a loud tone. Last fellow I knew (in a field band) he didn't become a musician, but he played, was a fellow by the name of Walter Baptiste. Believe he played fife. There was one more ? Vincent his name was, he used to come by (with Ricard sometime?) well he switched from fife to clarinet but he never made a clarinet player. His name was Vincent but we called him Van- Son (French pr.)."

George Lewis says the house he now lives in, "I helped put the finishing on it myself; me, Lawrence and Drag. This was two houses, in fact, the frame of this house is real good (inaudible section). I didn't want to live in Algiers, but I couldn't find no other where to live, see (inaudible).

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE 2

"They started me at school when I was about the age of six I think. I went to school until I was about twelve, beginning of my thirteenth year and then I went to work then. First one I went to -- if I tell you where I went to school you wouldn't believe it -- first school I went to was called Bienville school, at Rampart and (St. Louis), where the First precinct jail. And then they moved from there to Bienville and Robertson, and from there across Claiborne, the school was called, Bienville School was called Wicker's(~~Academy~~?). The principal was called Mr. Wicker, and after he died they named the new school after him. I didn't learn anything in the public school. My mother sent me to a pay school, Professor Medar H. Nelson, (after the public school) because at the 4th grade I couldn't read the primer. And she sent me to this school, a dollar a month. This old man was teaching so much French, Spanish, and there was colored and white at that school, right there at Mother Cabrini's, near Barracks and Burgundy. They got a little house on Burgundy, near Barracks, and they used that as the office and that's where this man lived, in that little house; and that's where I went to school; rough bench. He was a teacher because he taught me the little I know now. He beat it in me. There were about 25 (students in the school,) something like that. Practically everybody you talk to knew old man Professor Medar Nelson; and most all the boys in my class -- they're men now -- had got an opportunity to go there. And he was going to make you learn something. Because he didn't play. He didn't play and you didn't play. So, 12 o'clock in the day, lunch time, you'd eat your lunch, you'd sit there if you'd brought your lunch with you, and you'd sit right in your seat and eat your lunch. And you'd start school back again. And nobody played there, he was very strict, about your finger nails, about your neatness, trousers and stockings, shoes shined,

and everything, hair combed. Colored and white went there, yes. It wasn't unusual because I went to public shool and they had white teachers, I had a white teacher, and I remember her name ~~xx~~ good as I remember mine; her name was O'Hara. It was a big high school back there on Governor Nicholls between Derbigny and Roman, I think it's ~~Croft~~. remember another called ~~Barbara~~ Rose . (?) she was teaching us. ~~It wasn't unusual~~. But this man, when I was going to his school, it was a little unusual you know, a lot of Italian people went there. Take for instance Louis Massina's brother-in-law, Louis Massina the prize fighter promoter, his brother-inlaws Mike and Johnny and several other white boys I knew, went there. And they were treated the same way we were treated. If he come to whip you, he whip anybody. He was colored, Professor Medar H. Nelson. Now he's got a grandson who work right there by Pat O'Brien. He's been there quite a while.

We had no special subjects, 'rit'metic, spelling, definitions, a little Spanish, little French; we ~~started~~ all that for a dollar a month. There's a big high school named behind him right now. He was He was tall, wore a Prince Albert coat and striped pants like they use for a weddin', with boots. He always had a piece of silk - between his teeth like ~~xxxx~~ that (polishing teeth). cravat ties, he'd put 'em away and throw 'em away after one wearing. That's what he wore. And he would tell you to stop at a period; a lot of times ~~you'd try to~~ cheat, to make a period ? Music? no. The only music we had was saying our prayers, in the morning. And he would give grace, you know, before lunch.

Then, ~~like he~~ he'd pack up your books, you, you, you, you, and if I lived in the same neighborhood you lived in, he would send you home probably an hour or half hour ahead of time -- started throwing them out at 2:30 then he'd let me go, as in order we wouldn't be together.

And he'd come and he look in he 'd say, 'What? How is it? You ain't gone home yet?' You'd say 'No.' 'Well, I'm punishing you? What you punished for?' 'Nothing.' He'd say 'Oh, I punished you for nothing? ~~Well~~ pack them books.'" [Cf. Danny Barker interviews]

Public school. "Well it was too easy, too much a playing. The teachers didn't care, ~~what they get into you~~. They've got a lot of 'em right now that they don't manage to get results. But if if sets you on fire, and I mean I was set on fire many many years." At that time George Lewis was living at 1226 St. Philip St.

Willie Cornish: "We played together on the first Eureka band, I played with him. All that band there what they call the Eureka Band, ain't none of them original members of that band. Right now I think I'm about the onliest one alive. Even Albert Warner, he was not an original, I mean of that first band. I imagine there might have been many (men who played trombone with Bolden,) but this particular picture that you see in the magazine, that's Willie Cornish. And some of them mens, like you got one of the pictures with old man Jimmy Johnson, bass. Now I played with him, he lived up there by the Touro, ~~believe it was called~~ [Infirmary] on what you the 12th ward. Well he went to Georgia, and he used to play with Don Albert's band, and -- him and a young boy was called Buddy Collins, he went somewhere through Georgia and they beat him up unmerciful, and Buddy Collins didn't live six months after that, and Buddy [i.e. Jimmy] Johnson he died also after. I think Howard was playing with that band then. They caught him on the highway and beat him up for ~~his~~ nothing at all.

Willie Cornish "was a friend to me, I can tell you that about him because he helped me out a lot, because many times I didn't have money to buy food for my kids, and he helped-ed me (get it?). Well there ain't nobody I could say that play like him now. Eddie Summers is about

the onliest one." I suggest he played in a "simple" style. "Well I don't know why they call it simple, I don't see nothing simple about it. No I mean like they're playing, you take for instance like a trombone player who sing, they call it singing, well he get to taking the melody, the trombone is not supposed to play that way. It's a vamp instrument you know. It's a vamp because pah pah pah (imitating trombone style) its a vamp instrument. In other words, it's a 'feel' instrument. Bass is a 'feel' instrument. Yeah, I mean, in between you don't have no frets, so you feel for that note, you see, and you become accustomed to that , your ear become accustomed so you know just where to put your fingers. Most of the bass players today are not that way now. Play like the way Chester Zardis play, Twat. Now I'm not talking about the younger bass players like Placide and them that's fingering, note for note like a violin. But that trombone, sometimes you get, most of them that they don't even get to the proper note. They're always a little bit out, you see; it's a 'feel' instrument. Now you take people like Bill Russell, they know exactly where to put their fingers on a violin, but it's different because the violin plays the melody but on trombone; but I don't think that's simple. Because, the reason I say that, the majority of trombone players you see now they don't play a note further than that much away from their lips. So, naturally they're trying, they're doing it more with their lips. Well the trombone's got seven positions on it; just like you're supposed to go down and make that pedal note, you never see 'em go way down there, very few go way down there. But Willie Cornish went that way, Yank, Old man Joe Petit who was Buddy Petit's step-father, went that far down. And many others. That's why they call it a tailgate. He never carried no melody. But you hear a trombone, you hear that melody, just the same way Tommy Dorsay and them.

Buddy Petit's last few jobs. I tell him of the versions in Charters and Rose and Souchon. "He played a — it wasn't no picnic, it was a job, the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of July; no it wasn't no picnic. He had played ~~with~~ Lawrence Toca, Buddy, two trumpets, Ernest, milton, myself; we had played in two nights. Come back every morning. It was at Empire, down there below the river on this side goin' towards the mouth of the river. That 4th of July morning, the 4th or the 5th I think it was the 4th, because we had one more job to play, when we come there he was dead. He couldn't go. He was dead yes, he couldn't make it. He died ~~on~~ right on St. Philip between St. Claude and Liberty. A little house that used to be a church; he lived upstairs, it was called the 'Try Me.' After the church they made a hall out of it. Try Me Hall they call it. It was named behind the soft drink. He lived-ed up there, with a woman from Mandeville, that was his wife. And I could bring you (?) Buddy's brother, show you, he'd tell you the same thing. He lives on Dumaine and Burgundy, all the time. He lives ~~in~~ around that neighborhood, still livin'. Joseph Crawford, that's his brother's name (i. e. Buddy Petit's name). I think his brother's name is Crawford too. I think (Joe Petit) raised him mostly." [Buddy Petit's brother's name is John Ventress. I spoke to him about a week after this interview. He is aged 78, and lives at 1026 Dumaine. He was not very willing to be interviewed. He and Buddy Petit had the same mother, different fathers. He said Buddy Petit was buried in St. Louis No. 2 Cemetery, but did not know when. He and Buddy were not raised together, and he said he never could "keep up" with his brother. He said Buddy was influenced by Manuel Perez, and would follow him on parades "all the way from Canal Boulevard right down to Chalmette."]

"Well Buddy had been playing little jobs off and on with that group of mens, because it really wasn't an organised band. I played with that band the whole three nights, down in Empire. And when I came back, in the morning Buddy was dead. 'Cause he missed one of the nights. He got sick; he went on across the street, right opposite to this place; they had a speakeasy. And he went in that speakeasy and done a lot of drinking. Right opposite where he lived on St. Philip, and he went in there and done a lot of drinking; and so he was sick , got sick -- he had been sick anyway, and he couldn't make the last job, so we came in from the last job, and he was dead. He died early that morning we left.

"He was playing pretty good (those last few nights), he wasn't say like the Buddy of years, you know, before, but he was playing pretty good. He was a very heavy drinker. Probably could have been kidney trouble. He must have in his 40's I'm sure, close to 40." In the band, "Ernest Milton was the drummer, Lawrence Toca, he's still alive, ~~he even teach,~~ using two trumpets, Ike Robinson I believe, Isaiah Robinson, I can't remember bass. We were playing for a dance, right on the water, at Empire, Louisiana. It's down there about ten miles before you get to Buras, not quite ten. Also during that year Louis Armstrong was down here. It was the first trip that he had made here, to play at the Club Forest, out there when ~~Buddy Petit~~ on South Claiborne [?] Kenner, (?) Louis was playing there when Buddy Petit died. That's where Louis was playing. 'Cause Louis was a pall-bearer. But this band wasn't my regular band. I was still playing with -- not with Buddy Petit -- mostly with Howard sometimes, I was playing in the Eureka band, because some of those men hadn't done died. round about that time (when playing with Arnold DePass.) But I know it was before it changed to the

Thirties. (I say Louis Armstrong supposedly came here in 1931, thus possibly identifying the year of Buddy Petit's death.) "Well he came here twice, I mean Louis did. First time he came down 'Peanut Vendor' was very popular. They had a saxophone player that was playing with him. I never saw him, all I could hear em say was 'hold it Al.' He holded one note, like you could hear Andrew Morgan play so long. And the next time he come down here was in the Thirties, I know it was in the Thirties because I was living at 1215 Burgundy St. and we went to meet him at the railroad station at night, and marched him off to the Patterson Hotel on South Rampart and Julia, I was playing with the Eureka band then." Which of these two times was it that Buddy died? "I think it was the first time, I'm sure it was the first time. Well there ain't but one way to find that out (when Buddy Petit died) go and see, let's see, since I've been down with my damned ankle - try and strengthen up a little bit — I could see Sonny, his brother, they call him Sonny. He could tell you.

"I played for Buddy Petit's funeral, I played for Chris Kelly's funeral too. Buddy had two bands, he had the Eureka Band , and another pick-up, get-together band. And Chris Kelly had, oh, I don't know how many bands, maybe he had about twenty (?) of 'em. He was very popular. Also Buddy was popular too, but Buddy had come on up before Chris you see. Chris was right out of the country, and then he started playing; he started a band down in the country, oh I don't know, I guess him and Jim, Sam and all that bunch started out in the country. They all come from the same place, Deer Range, that's where Chris come from, that's down, down the river, by the coast. Jim, come from Deer Range, Jim and his brother who died, Sam. Sam Morgan, they all from the same , the other side but, they all knew one another, they'd cross the river, they'd come in

a skiff you know, from one to the other. I'm most sure that it was the first time that Louis came, it seems to me it was before the Thirties, because in the early Thirties I was living on Burgundy, 1215 Burgundy, and I also made my 33rd year there, 1215 Burgundy, and I only remember one time meeting Louis during that time, was from Burgundy St. The first time Louis come in I didn't meet him.

George Lewis says date of Evan Thomas murder, "that was in '32, because I made 33 years the following year, and this house where I told you I was living, so it would have to be around '29; but anything Sam Charters writes, just don't read it; he's just as full as a Christmas turkey. He came back here and helped put up a chicken fence; he showed (?) that he helped me build this house, he helped me build this house, sure, stretched a piece of wire across the yard to keep the chickens in. Sam, he wrote a lot of things that just wasn't so. If I couldn't get the thing right you know, I wouldn't put an accurate date on the thing. You see, say 'between such and such a time.' But he wanted to write, he wanted money. He should have done more research. I can get, try to get, somebody would have remembered. Buddy Petit was buried around the corner from Claiborne St., the cemetery right there, St. Louis No. 2, on the corner facing. He was buried in a vault. Sometimes they do (have the date written on the vault) sometimes they don't, it all depends on the people. You can go back in the same Cemetery, and look for Marie Laveau's grave, there's no name on her grave, she's buried right in there, that same cemetery, the wall giving on to Iberville St. You go in the big gate there, you go towards Claiborne as far as from here to that wall, and there was more than that much of big Maire Laveau, chalk marks and things." Buddy Petit, "I think he was buried in the first part of the cemetery, which would be St. Louis St., back of the wall facing, in other words,

I'm sure it was."

END OF INTERVIEW

RESTRICTED

George Lewis Interview IV 3327 De Armas St., Nov. 25, 1968

"When I was born, my mother had [chosen] several names: Francis Joseph Lewis Zeno. 'George' was nowhere around. My mother had -- all the children that my mother had were two before me; they died. So my grandmother said; 'Call this one George.' And my mother never had it in her mind to call me George. But my grandmother kept calling me George until my christening time, when my mother had went and had me christened in St. Augustine church, under Joseph Francis Lewis Zeno. But -- I don't how she started -- she started calling me George too. So George just grew right in. In the latter part of the '30's, when I got a divorce from my other children's mother, this Italian lawyer who was at Decatur and St. Philip, and him and I was talking about it, so he said "Why not have it changed legally?" Because social security, registration cards all were 'George Lewis,' you see. Although some of my childrens were registered 'Zeno.' So I had it legally changed to George Lewis, because then I didn't have an alias, so if I had continued 'Joseph Zeno,' and yet being called George, well that would have been a big difference. So it was legally changed to George Lewis." He had been calling himself George Lewis before that "for many years; I belonged to different organisations, mens organisations, and they would call me Joseph Zeno, and sometimes I wouldn't even pay attention to it, because I was so much in the habit of hearing George, from the time I can't remember Until this day.

"So I had it legally changed, so I had, let him while he was in the process of making the divorce, I let him change the name legally; so I had to pay for it and everything like that.

"When I applied for my first visa to go to England, I went to the church where I was christened, and the priest put that on there, Zenon, but he made a big mistake, you see. He made a mistake. Then I had

trouble and I had to get, Bill Russell went and got a notary I think, because I was in San Francisco, get them to straighten it out; you had to have an affidavit to straighten it out, you see. But I've never been to the chruch and had it changed at all. It's ZENO, four letters.

"I played in the Storyville, I played there, at the Ramona, I played at the Humming Bird, I played at the Funky Spoon, which was on Villere between Iberville and Bienville, ~~on Basin, that~~ was the Funky Spoon. The Ramona was on Iberville between Villere and Marais, coming this way; and the Humming Bird was (at) Marais and Villere, I played there. And they had a lot of other little places. And then I played in small places, I played at St Louis and Marais, little joint there. I played there with Chris Kelly, for one. I played at the Ramona with Howard. I played at the Humming Bird; I played there with Clayton, he was just starting out. So they had a lot of places I played at; and many times I played at the 101 Ranch, right by the Big 25. Punch Georgia Boyd was playing clarinet there, the piano player was Udell. They used-ed different trumpet players. I played there several times and I played at a place across the street, it was called the Tuxedo.

"Well, I lived at 1226 St. Philip St., from the age of about 6 years, when I made my first communion in the Catholic religion in 1910, my yard, where I was living -- living in the rear of course -- gave right to the back of Hope's Hall, it was called Hope's Hall; so I heard a lot of music there. I got a lotta, in fact I got a scar on my (head?) right here from someone throwed a brick at my, bust my eye open, fightin', second line. Every Monday, at this hall, they would have banquets, societies, the Negro societies, what they call the Benevolent Associations, mens societies -- of course the mens

would parade but the ladies societies, or the insurance societies, every year they would have anniversary banquets. They would start it out around 12 o'clock and it would last till six. And it was by invitation; I could hear the music just as good as I can see you. And we would dance out in the yard as kids. I would say I was born with the music [(?)]. Before I moved to 1226, when my mother and father separated, I was 5 years old, I lived opposite, almost opposite, that hall. You see, there was the Hope's Hall, and they turned it into the Co-operators Hall.

"People I would see I know like old man Jimmy Brown, a bass player, I was aware of him. 'Oke' Gaspard, Vic Gaspard, I was aware of that band; banjo player, Lorenzo Staulz, also Buddy Manaday, I had a opportunity to play with him. Willie Bontemps was an old one, I had a opportunity to play with him. Ernest Kelly was a member of my band one time, when Red Allen and I had a band. Trombonist, he's been dead many years. Well they used-ed different trumpet players. Sometimes it would be Louis Dumaine, or Sugar Johnny [Smith] was one. And they had another one, we used to call him Zue, Zue Sullen, he was killed very young right in front of Krauss. Jim knew him, he comes Jim's home. Zue Sullen. [Cf. Jim Robinson interviews or phone him.] I never played with Manuel (Perez), I heard Manuel many times, but I never played with Manuel, because there was a prejudice there amongst them people, segregation. Some of those bands wouldn't hire a man whose hair wasn't silky like your hair. Some of the halls wouldn't accept you in there. There was one on Robertson St. [next] there, there was a hall there, Jeunes Amis. You wasn't accepted there. And they would look at you hard if you was playing in that band. Well, I don't say he (Manuel Perez) ever segregated anybody I know of. But everyone in that band was light skinned, you know.

Asked if Manuel Perez played 'jazz' or played 'straight': "To me he was jazz; everything — in fact, they didn't say jazz when I was a kid, they said Ragtime then; so he played like the average fellow like, er, I

would say for instance Peter Bocage when Peter was in his prime, he, you went like hell, he (Manuel Perez) was very strong. I know, I was playing when he died. And before he got sick; his mind kind of went away from him. He was strong, but he was rough, you know [ ]. Like the majorities of these fellows that come along. They were all different professors, you know, school teachers, music teachers.

"I heard Freddie (Keppard), I used to hear Freddie practically every Monday at the Hopes Hall, banquets. Now he was rough, too. He was very rough. I heard Henry Zeno, drummer, he's dead many many years; everybody was dancing in the streets to the cemetery (?). No relation. And little Mac, the drummer, MacMurray. Jimmy Brown, bass, I heard him; Santiago, Willie Santiago, he's an old timer.

"Clarinet players? Picou was one. Big Eye Louis Nelson was one. Charlie McCurdy, he was one. Tio, Lorenzo Tio, he was one. And then they had Johny I can't recall his name, anyhow he was in the drayers business, you know, with a horse and wagon; er, Johnny Brown. I would say that Big Eye Louis was exceptionally good. He played at one time nothing but C clarinet. So that made it come out, after you know, play music, and talking with people I find out it was a C clarinet that he played. Naturally he was playing opposite of the say for instance like I play my clarinet the same key as the trumpet, he didn't. He played the same key as the violin; more sharps and more flats." George Baquet? "I heard a lot of him, and I have a picture taken with George Baquet. Me and him and Bunk, Lawrence Marrero, Jim and Drag. Alton missed the train. We played at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. He lived-ed there a long time. And this concert was a day concert. Sammy Price had something to do with it, invited Alton; he got drunk and missed the train. Sammy Price played the piano.

"George Baquet was good. He was better to me on the E flat than,

er, you know, because I never heard him too much in dancing places. He was one of those, well I call 'em yellow people, that stays in a band that though they're all colored sells it as all white band. And his brother even got a chance to play with a white band — Shield (?) Baquet. Mardi Gras parades, people didn't know he was colored -- some people knew he was colored, some didn't. Just like this man that used to rent all the instruments, Dave; everybody thought he was a white man, Dave Perkins; he was a colored man; he rented drums, trumpets, and everything; you could rent from him. He was up round in the Garden District, up round Louisiana Avenue, you might say. I never knew exactly where because I never rented anything from him. But I know a lot of fellows that wanted drums, or bass, something like that, they would rent 'em. But every Mardi Gras parade, he was in there, playing the mellophone or the trombone, he was in there."

What did George Lewis like especially about the clarinet to take it up? "I know I was conscious of — something hit me, just like, you know, somebody will say, 'Go out there and see something,' and you say 'I don't want to see it' or, you see something one time and the more you see it the more you want it. My mother did wanted me to, or at least she was thinking 'bout it some way or another, violin, but I didn't care for violin. Because violin use to make me, you know, make my blood seem like, excruciate (?) I didn't care for violin. And she said I was too delicate, this that and the other. So when I got my first piece of money — not my first money but -- I had saw a toy violin, in the Woolworths, that's Bourbon and Canal; but it was called Kirby's; 5 and 10 cents store. 5, 10 and 25. You couldn't buy nothing in there worth over 25 cents. And I went for the violin, because I had bought some clothes on St. Louis, between Dauphine and Bourbon, the big house with that long porch and ball used to be shiny all the time -- brass ball --

my mother working so I had brought some clothes there, and asked her could I go buy a violin; she told me yeah, and went up Bourbon St. to Kirby's, ~~said~~ they were out of 'em, so I ~~buys a~~ flute. So ~~I went home, played it, and went right~~ to clarinet.

"I just admired the clarinet. I could tell the difference between who sounded good to me and who didn't; but I admired some of the passages in the funerals I played funerals and yet I don't read no music. And I played funerals where nobody in that band ~~had no chance to~~ fake. The first Eureka band, nobody there could have blowed 'Home Sweet Home' if they didn't have no music. And I was the onliest one that didn't have a lyre on my clarinet. The first time I played ~~my~~ an E flat clarinet it was the second to the last parade on the 30th of May. What they used to call Oddfellows Day, we would call it. It would start early in the morning, and would wind up between 5:30 and 6. The Masons would come from all over the surrounding country, make a big big parade like they used to do ~~there~~. Willie Parker brought me into that ~~place where the~~ Eureka ~~played~~. ~~He said~~ he had heard me play. And when I got there, they told him, ~~they said~~ "~~Who's that~~ little boy?" [inaudible sentence]. So Willie told 'em, he said, "If he don't play right, don't pay me, pay him, but don't pay me." And Landry had the E flat clarinet with him. They didn't know that he had it with him, and I had my B flat. And I say I'm going to take it along because if I can't play his E flat I'm goin' ~~to use my~~ B flat. It was my first time on E flat, and Sam Morgan's clarinet player, Joe Watson, it was his first time. Each one of us had it in our back pocket. He was with Sam Morgan's pick-up band, you know, made together; but this Eureka Band was an organised band. I played with them about two or three years I think. That's when it was just organised. There was no Eureka Band, if there was, it must have been

way before I knew. There was Al Landry, a fellow by the name of Santamore he died, and Willie Edwards, three trumpets. And Santamore quit on account of his work, and say he was a roofer, big fat fellow, and it didn't pay him you know, play a funeral and a parade was nothin', a little over $5, and he would make more than that, so he wouldn't lay off no more. So then they took er, I'll 'call his name, on trumpet, and Landry, and sometimes they used Louis Dumaine until they got a regular trumpeter. And Alphonse, very dark fellow who was pigeon-toed played alto (horn). And old man Vet played the bass horn. Willie Cornish — who played with Buddy Bolden — he was on trombone, him and a man who was the manager of the band, who was a barber — I 'called his named sometime ago to you. But anyhow he died, and then Albert Warner came in. Old Man Cato was playing drums, he was a little short man -- he had mahogany sticks I remember — he was playing drums; Willie Parker was playing bass drum." George dates the time when he joined the band at "just at the beginning of the twenties. Smith; Smith was the -- don't remember his first name." On trumpet was "Santamore (phonetic); I forget his first name, I never did know his first name. He was a little darker than me, and he used to (snap his fingers) all the time. Well none of them could no jazz. Landry couldn't play no jazz. Santamo' couldn't play no jazz. Willy Edwards was the leader; and when he quit, they got Willie er -- one was called Willie and the other brother was named Johnny. Johnny played the baritone, and Willie was the trumpet. And then Willie took over the band: Willie Wilson."

George Lewis asked if most of the bands were like that, readers who didn't really play jazz: "I can't say that they didn't really play jazz, no. Because the same music I play today, I was playing that many years ago. There's just a little change now you know, because if we played

like we played ~~along there~~ we couldn't get nobody to play it. Because there ain't nobody can play it." How has the music changed? "Well you hear riffs; you hear a little modern licks in there; that's a change right there you see. The tunes -- even now the tunes -- I had a book and I lost the book, and Shirley will -- she won't tell a lie to you, it had over 500 numbers -- you call Nick Gagliano; he was the manager of this band I played in, with 500 numbers I didn't have to play one to repeat ~~it~~." Has the beat changed at all? "No, no, I don't know nothing about the beat -- that's only BOM BOM, like on the street parade." Tell him I'm talking about a dance band. "Well, I'll tell you, the band, in the same time if I'd knock off (claps a fast beat) they'd play it that way. If I knocked off (claps a slow beat) they'd play it that way. They used a little tom-tom, very seldom they used it; they had what they called a overhead traps, like Joe Rena ~~would~~ used to make 'em ; ~~or~~ different fellows would make 'em out of an umbrella handle. You see with the ball (?) and string, they'd come over and hook with the wooden pedal. And the side cymbal; and the crash cymbals, none of them zilljans (?)."

"Sam Morgan, yeh, well Sam Morgan, not the same kind of rhythm. Sam Morgan, of course, he was recorded; but Chris Kelly, he never was recorded. Chris Kelly had, to me, a better beat than Sam Morgan; because Chris was heel-and-toe (tapping his foot) just like what we used to call '~~coon Jive~~ coonjine' -- had that in chruches; because on account of, always jam (?) together. And you notice some of the trumpet players that normally -- you watch Shiek's foot sometime. He uses that heel-and-toe. Howard would do the same thing." I say there used to be a tendency towards 2/4 music. "Yeh, ~~or~~ double ~~riff~~ rap (?). Boy the other night there with Frank Demond. Lawrence used to be good at that, on some of his tunes. Lawrence used to do that a lot of times, and he

kept -- all the banjo's I can ~~show you I know, or~~, two ~~man~~ (?) banjos ~~that plays now~~, ~~you know~~ say Manuel Sayles and that boy there Kimball, and who else, ~~Roubelow (Robillo?)~~. ~~Robilo~~ comes closer -- he don't know ~~that~~ much, and his chords don't come out as clear -- but he's closer to the old time than any ~~one of these~~, because he's er but the rest ~~of them~~ playing ~~on the~~ after beat: Kimball, and also Sayles, chk chk." Marrero played a steady beat. "That's the older style. That's the older style. Marrero was very much ~~and~~ he doubted his self a lot. Because he couldn't pick a tune, onliest thing he would pick, he would trill, was that 'Just a Closer Walk With Thee,' he could trill that.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE 2

c. 4:19 "Going to New York with Bunk Johnson was one of the big thrills I ever had, in all the while I had been playing music. Because, I would say, he had his ways, but if it wasn't for him I would never have had the opportunity, and I appreciate it very much. I treated him with respect, even though he was a little, you know, difficult towards me, and not only towards me, towards the other fellows. Some of them, I know, hate him right now; I never hated him, but I never hated anybody. I just didn't like his ways. I enjoyed playing with him; I enjoyed playing with him, because Bunk had a lot of ideas. He was like the old musicians — the old piano teacher that try to teach you and beat you on the knuckles with a board if you wouldn't learn, and he got tired and disgusted, you see. And that's the kind of man I think he wanted to be. But you can't take an old monkey and learn him new tricks. His ideas was so much different from the everyone listen to him. He played peices that the fellows hadn't played or if they had played 'em, they had forgotten 'em, and that made a little difference, because you've got to play. He can't take all the weight on his shoulders, out of the band. Well no — nothing ~~became a pupil~~, and I guess that irritated him, and even if we had somebody that could read, er, reading, we didn't have the music, you see. So you had to follow him, you understand. And he didn't he didn't like to see nobody get popular, he didn't want that; he wanted it to be Bunk — which it was Bunk's band. Because I had a opportunity to do a recordin' — which I would like to have done it then. But a man, and I went to the music store, sent for me at the union; Lawrence and myself, Baby Dodds, we went up there. But this man told me, he said: "I'm sorry, but you can't record." He said "~~You~~ Because you came here with a ~~band~~ man, you see. You came here with Bunk Johnson, you're working under him. Only way you can record is to

have him in your band as the leader." And the man we was due to record with said he didn't want Bunk. The man say he didn't want Bunk. And he said, "I'll come down to New Orleans and record you," which he did. And this man told me, he said, "I have been hearing a lot of talk about Bunk." And I said "Well he's all right," I said, "but just sponsor this recordin'," but, you know, he don't want that. He said "Yeh," he said, "I would let you go, I'd remember, I'm a Jew." And that's all he said. I'm a Jew and your a Negro, you see, so we're both treated the same way. He didn't want to lose his job and he didn't want to see me get myself into trouble.

"Well, it was a big thrill to me, you know, New York, I saw some of it — Ryan's, ~~pop-eyed all week (?) in New York~~. And of course I made friends with a lot of people, Muggsy and Pee Wee, and I knew Simeon and I knew Albert Nicholas, er Frankie Newton which got to be an alcolholic. I went to see him every day, because he would be where we passed drink. Pops Foster was there, was there.

"The Stuyvesant was a huge, great big place, it had a capacity of, oh, 550 people, and we would have more people than that, say Thursday, Friday and Saturday. On a week night, a lot of people would have to work of course, wouldn't have that many. But we would always have one or two hundred head of people. They sold beer by the pitcher, got it in a pitcher, and I believe they paid a small admission. When we first got there they didn't dance. There was a colored fellow called Al, and Al would walk around the people, and first there ain't no dancing that was going on. Leadbelly was a regular customer, he was a good dancer, he would be along all the time. Cow Cow Davenport, he was there. And they always had musicians there, and you were aware that they were listening at what you were doing of course. They were better than (we were?), and ~~a lot of~~ music, technique, execution, they were better mens than

we were, but there was something we would do that they couldn't do. For instance, that type of music we're playing, right now the jazz bands up there, they don't play — the time is either too swift or too slow, the tempo of the music, you see. They're playing Dixieland. But I have hear we say Dixieland band, but there ain't no Dixieland band playing at Preservation, none of 'em, even though they try to take down, or let one man play, so he still ain't Dixieland. Dixieland is swift, and the beat is different, big difference, like you go by the Famous Door by Santo Pecora and then and you hear a big difference. We were always improvising (time?). The De Paris brothers was the best band we heard; I heard 'em in New York, I mean in that type of music. And they wasn't playing the kind of pure — they gave Bunk's band greater praise than they gave them. They praised-ed Bunk's band because they saw the mens were creatin' something. Experts that praise had heard the music, but they could tell we wasn't aware what we was doing. We were playing the same tune — maybe play it this way right now and the next half hour or hour play it, say and they got something? somebody will do that's different.

"I spoke to one man, spoke to me — oh a lot of them claim to be experts, I wouldn't say whether they was, I don't know, I don't want to commit myself — but there was one man called me to his table. And I was drinking then. I went there, him and me spoke to each other you know. And he was from the Boston Conservatory. We got to talking. "Fine clarinet," (he said). "Depends on how you like it," and I smiled. He said, "Well, it is." He say, "because I am a professor at Boston Conservatory." He say, "if I would write down on paper what things you are doing on your clarinet, you 'd be afraid." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you're doing some things you do that I believe would be impossible. You know that I could explain to you?." I never had no lessons, and I never had told anybody I could read music, and I never had told

anybody ~~that~~ I was a better man than this one. I played 'cordin' to my own, you know, because I like the low register and why I like to play low register, er, a man who was living in the same yard where I was living, and I used to run over my clarinet and as a beginner you're going to get them screeches and all. And he'd stand in the yard, I remember he had two big ulcers on his leg this man, and he'd say, "Hey, ~~there~~ George, ~~are you still~~ flying ~~[illegible]~~?" And so I blowed easier and easier you know. I never copied anybody. If I was under a teacher, I would have might, you know, got to be like him, but I didn't have one. On my own. Just the way it come out on my own, because myself, and I guess by the time I came out I was satisfied ~~and working (?)~~ right you see."

In New York "we stayed at 68 Washington Square, 68 or 69. We were staying with Gene Williams. We were staying up there way up on the sixth floor. Lawrence and I (shared a room), Jim had a single, Bunk had a single. Baby Dodds Bill Russell was staying there with us. Gene was working during the day time. I would do the cooking, Alton would [inaudible], everybody had something to do.

"Smiling Joe, he was up there then, playing with Sid, Sidney Bechet. I never heard the band, but I knew they were playing. He used to come by and listen. ~~(inaudible)~~ We couldn't get a pot big enough ~~to cook in~~ buy a brand new chamber pot. And we got along pretty good until er, for nothing Bunk got angry at me. Because, we were in the band room, everybody was blowing their horn, you know, that wants to. And he went down to the men's room, and we were picking tunes, to play. "Ice Cream or anything we played was new to the people. Not new, everybody knew that "Ice Cream" was a pop song, but not played by a jazz band. Well, I was playing "Ice Cream," and we had a ball, but wait until he come back. And when he came up, when he came up into the room, he cussed me, mother this and that. And I was so angry I said to him, "If

it wasn't for your age," I said, "You and I would (~~inaudible~~). That's all right," I said, "I'm going to go home." And when I got through ~~the~~ this rehearsal -- we hadn't opened the job yet. And I went ~~heading~~ and came back to the place. I knew if I'd stayed in the house something would have happened. I felt that way. I felt just that much hurted to see — good as I had been to him — how he treated me. And I sit in the park. Bill Russell, he was there, he came out and he sit alongside me. And I told him, I say "Bill, I'm going home (~~inaudible sentence~~)." He begged me not to go, because if I left everybody else would leave. Lawrence was playing with me before. He knew Bunk by Bunk used to come to his house when his daddy was living. Alton didn't know about Bunk. Drag didn't know nothing about Bunk. Baby knew of him, hadn't played with him. Jim had heard the name that was all. And they all was willing to go back home. By Bill being so nice, Gene treated me nice too, so I stayed. And we got along, but if it would come for me to play or Jim to play alone, something like that, we wouldn't stand up. And people would make signs and say like (whispering), and I knew they must be saying they're scared, or, you know well it wasn't that but we knew what was going to happen if we stand up. He's going to make ~~it~~ an awful (~~hard for you?~~) he's going to cut in with his horn, something to make the other fellow feel bad. He said to me that night, that he said you're trying to take over, trying to take over your band, I said I'm not trying to take over your band. But I think a band is just like a baseball team or any kind of team. If you work together, you ~~start to get~~ 'spect to do things together. Not work against one another.

5:55 "And that blowed off, until we went back the following year, and the following year was worse. Because Gene Williams was in there with him, and the boss man, the man that ran the place, he saw they done so good, he got a whiskey license also. When we were supposed to leave (for New york), we were going to go back on Friday morning, on Saturday, Bunk was

down at the Coliseum Arena, Conti and St Louis, I mean on Roman and St. Louis, they had a fight there, boxing. Him and Ricard was down there with four or five young women, down ~~in the~~ ringside, it was $3 or something. And he was showing the tickets to everybody. But then even the next day when we were supposed to go off, Bunk didn't never show up. Bunk didn't show up. And that Sunday, Mr Menchell, the man up there, got in touch with me. I could have lied and said that we were at the railroad station but Bunk took sick, I knew Bunk wasn't sick. And he say, "well George you try to get him some way," because he was due to open on that Monday. And actually didn't leave till that Monday. Me, ~~and~~ Drag and Jim. We had promised Lawrence, they had promised Alton, they had borrowed money from Alton. They had promised Lawrence; Lawrence got angry at me because he didn't go. I was ~~out~~ working just like ~~(I hope, but I didn't go out?) that was Saturday night.~~ Didn't have a thing to do with that. But the man put his ~~got~~ to see if Bunk would, you know. So I ~~walked with him?~~, ~~Jim~~, me and Drag. We ~~were~~ all that Sunday evening, looking for Bunk, and couldn't find him. So that Monday morning — it was we finished there in June — I was living at my sister's because Johnny Matassa had taken the place ~~you know~~, where I lived-ed at, Johnny had taken that, so I stayed at my sister-in-law's, and Jim's wife, Pearl, she came there, and said, "Bunk is at my house." Bunk was sitting on a chair, asleep, no horn, no coat. Jim's wife got the horn out of the pawn shop, out of the bar room at the corner where Bunk had pawned his horn, and his overcoat, camel hair, called a camel hair, somebody had ~~gave~~ given him. He didn't have a cigarette to his name, I bought him tobacco, he used-ed Bull Durham, you know, rolled his own. Jim's wife made enough food, and he stayed there a day. I guess he was sick from all the drinking. And we left that night, that Monday night. We had to take a slow train, go all round through Chatanooga and all

them places; and when we got to New York, they drive us to the Stuyvesant Casino. The man says "Well, there ain't no sense in startin' tonight." Art Hodes was replacing, he said let Art Hodes work. And Bunk say "I'm going to take a little walk." And the man say "No, you're not, you're going to stay here." The next night Bunk wasn't talking to us; me, Jim, we had Don [Ewell], Baby Dodds motored all the way from Chicago, figuring out he was going to play, and he hired Alphonse Steele. Alphonse was the one I know how he stated it he was going to fix to cut his throat.

"There's a lot of things that went on in that band that I don't really wants to talk about. Alphonse Steele played with Sharkey, after this boy dropped dead, his drummer, and Sharkey was playing at 42nd and Broadway, right there by Times Square -- the ~~Belmont~~ Theatre -- and I went there Saturday, 'cause they was finishing up, and none of them wanted to talk to me in this, and I knew ~~right there~~ every one of them: Harry Shields, drummer, Alphonse; ~~Sonny Greer, all of them;~~ none of them didn't want to speak to me. He had Alphonse Steele and Sharkey said, "Glad this job is ended; had enough." And he passed bad remarks about the drummer. And that boy got on him. He said "~~You're the~~ one " But Harry Shields, he didn't say nothing to me. The trombone player was a younger fellow, he was the onliest one that spoke, and Sharkey. And Sharkey spoke, complaining because this boy was a colored boy, that's what it was."

"I started working on the docks around '36, and I worked there until the '40s. And a lot of people want to know if that picture of George Lewis pushing a cotton bale, published in "Jazzways", was a posed picture. That wasn't no posed picture. George Rosenthal, which is a millionaire, had influence on the dock board, 'cause you had to have it -- everybody had to have it; him and Skippy Adelman -- Skippy's still living,

the photographer who taken the picture; because they didn't know that any man — regardless of his size — could tote twice his weight, just like the ants. Well that's true, that's a fact. [Looking in wallet:] I've got so much junk in there, but I keep this, my identification, [from the dock board] because those fellows that were working on the wharves that had been arrested on a federal charge, well, he was put off.

"I done trucking coffee; I done reconditioning coffee, what they call reconditioning. A bag would be damp with sweat, and the coffee done rot, there's a certain way you've got to know how to dump that bag with a trowel which is made out of a piece of tin or a dustpan; you skim that bad part off you see. And they had to be re-weighed, and that bad part is called good dams (?) and bad dams (?).

"I first started on the docks at Roberts, you know where the bridge. I started there working for the [pipe-line]. Jeanette was working for the foreman, Steve, and that's where I started there. And they learned me how to run the winch. They learned me how to run the winch. And I would truck cotton, but it was not but one bale. There was a certain way to catch it on his truck, to balance it you catch it half way in the middle. That way it balance the truck: you don't feel it. I winch into on nothing but the Norweigan boats. Tonnage would be wire or iron, or barbed wire — I never fooled with nothing like that. I digged — what they call [digged (?)] coffee — just put it up, pull 'em out, and throw 'em on the sling. I done that, I done water ~~boy (boiler?)~~ work. I done sack sewing. Sample coffee — lot of bags come from Brazil wouldn't be, wouldn't have the mark — the mark faded on it, and they have a thing called a trowel, you'd stick it in, the coffee come in your hand. You go on from there to see what lot it's come from. Some weeks I was paid over a $100 a week. But the tax people take it, I would never draw a hundred. The last time I went there, oh, around the time I went to New York.

At that time you didn't know when you got off at night whether next morning you have a job. The next day you don't have a job. So they call it Hire at the ship-side.

"But I worked ~~there~~ regular. And I worked there [more/most?] because I could get off when I wanted. I'd take my cap, and ~~I~~ I'd have my shirt, and I had my bicycle; ~~I'd tie em~~ I had my tie on my handle, and when 12 o'clock come, I'd change shirt, put my band cap on and [go to/for a funeral] play a funeral. I was only getting two and a half (dollars) ~~but you know~~, and there I was making nothing under 18 dollars a day. [I would lose that eighteen/I was losing money.] I worked there off and on [after returning from New York]: I worked there when I moved here [to his house in Algiers] because soon as I got this [little?] shack put up and moved in here [that was about/damn near like?] to fold up on ~~us.~~ ~~The only work~~ I never liked no inside work. I like to be out. A lot of fellows would say, 'look at the musician ...' [inaudible]

END OF TAPE

* The term cost