

EDDIE MORRIS

REEL I. + Retyped
DECEMBER 21, 1958

1

[Russell:] [Could you tell us] some of the bands you played with?

[Morris:] Huh?

[Allen:] What is your name?

[Morris:] Eddie Morris.

[Allen:] That's your full name?

[Morris:] My full name.

[Allen:] Where were you born and when?

[Morris:] In Algiers.

[Russell:] What is your birth date; do you remember the exact birth date? Get that on here.

[Morris:] 19, the 19th--wait a while; hold it there just a minute.

[Allen:] O.K., we better. [Machine off.]

[Morris:] 18--1996.

[Russell:] It's 1896?

[Morris:] Yeah, 1896.

[Russell:] What is the exact date?

[Morris:] The 19th day of July. [Actually, he does not know his age.] On the 19th of July.

[Russell:] The 19th of July?

[Morris:] Yes.

[Russell:] And you were born in Algiers. Did your parents play any instrument? Your father was a musician?

[Morris:] No, no, no instrument; he was a hostler in the roundhouse.

[Russell:] Oh, for the S. P. [Southern Pacific].

[Morris:] Yeah, Southern Pacific, yeah.

[Russell:] What was the first music you remember hearing? Did you hear anybody sing around the house?

[Morris:] Well, yes--Senator Brady first had a band, you know, and he put them all to, had them all out to learn music; Professor [Jim] Humphrey teach them, Professor Humphrey taught the whole band; he had about twelve or fifteen pieces.

EDDIE MORRIS
REEL I
DECEMBER 21, 1958

2

[Russell:] Was that right in Algiers?

[Morris:] No, in Waggaman.

[Russell:] Oh.

[Morris:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Did you live in Waggaman?

[Morris:] Yeah, I have lived in Waggaman, too.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Morris:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Well, when, which years did you live in Waggaman?

[Morris:] It was around 1910, 1911, something like that--1912.

[Allen:] Did you ever know a fellow named Eddie Atkins?

[Morris:] Yeah, I come up with Eddie Atkins.

[Allen:] Where was he from?

[Morris:] From Ama.

[Allen:] From Ama.

[Morris:] Yeah, Eddie Atkins come from Ama.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Morris:] Yeah, I come up with Eddie Atkins.

[Allen:] He's about your age.

[Morris:] No, he was away older than me; I was a kid; I was under him.

[Allen:] Oh, I see.

[Morris:] Yeah. And Ernest Kelly, I was under him.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Morris:] That's why I wanted to learn trombone, because Ernest Kelly was playing trombone, and I loved the trombone, yeah. So that's why I used to try to play cornet; I was a good little cornet player, you know, but not for out--just for myself.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Morris:] And now and then I would play a little funny job over there at the Come Clean--you know where Gretna is--back in the Come Clean and all over there.

[Allen:] Where is that exactly? I don't--

[Morris:] Right out from the ferry; they used to have the Come Clean [Hall] and the Big Easy--oh, all them.

[Russell:] How far from the river? About a mile or two blocks or?--

[Morris:] They call it in the East Green, they used to call it--the East Green, over the East Green--and I used to play there.

[Allen:] Is it near where, by the Owl's Club?

[Morris:] No, it's over from the Court House--you know, way over on this side.

[Allen:] Oh, I see.

[Morris:] They used to have a green back there, and gambling of all kinds used to be there, and people from all over used to come there and gamble. And so, that's where I used to play--play there, too. I used to play music at the, at Harvey's Canal.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Morris:] They used to have a night house there--all them women. [I] used to go out there and play with Wooden Joe [Nicholas] there.

[Allen:] Oh! Wooden Joe.

[Morris:] Uh-huh, play there with Wooden Joe. They used to have a cabaret there, they used to call it--yeah, we used to play there.

[Russell:] You started on cornet. Was that your first instrument?

[Morris:] I started on cornet, but I didn't like it.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Morris:] I liked the trombone; that was my instrument, and I--

[Russell:] How old were you when you started, about--how big a kid?

[Morris:] Well, I was about 20 years old--18 or 20 years old, something like that.

[Russell:] Well, when did you take up trombone; pretty soon?

[Morris:] Yeah, I took up trombone regular after that. Senator Brady paid for that.

[Allen:] What kind of trombone did you have?

[Morris:] Well, I'll tell you the truth: I got a piece of that trombone now; got it right there in that drawer. Piece of it here, that will show you how long that I've been had that trombone.

[Russell:] Was it a slide or valve?

[Morris:] A slide--slide, yes. One of them cheap ones, you know--well, he bought a whole gang of instruments, and he got the cheapest. You know, it was a high price--he bought them from Werlein's--but he had the whole thing: clarinet players, trombone--he had two trombones, two clarinets, drum--oh, he had a great big band.

[Allen:] Who was in it; do you know the other guys' names?

[Morris:] No. Well, plenty of them is dead now; they got--a few of them is living; they're real old, too.

[Allen:] Who did you play with in the Come Clean Hall when you were playing cornet?

[Morris:] When--well, I didn't play cornet on no jobs.

[Allen:] Oh, you just sit--like, sit in.

[Morris:] Just liked it; yeah, just sit in. But I used to play at the Come Clean Hall with Kid Rena.

[Allen:] Oh.

[Morris:] Uh-huh.

[Allen:] Did he play good or not?

[Morris:] Ooooooh, yes, indeed; Rena--Rena and Buddy Petit was the best here in this town. Yeah, Rena was a more keener cornet player than Buddy--than Louis Armstrong.

[Allen:] Is that right?

[Morris:] Yeah. So, it's just the trouble: you couldn't keep Rena off that liquor; that liquor had him gone. I played with Rena for quite a while. Played with the Silver Leaf Band; Batiste, played with--

[Russell:] [That] was brass bands?

[Morris:] No, I was--a string orchestra.

[Russell:] Oh, strings?

[Morris:] Yeah. He was--that was Robichaux, John Robichaux' partner.

[Allen:] What was Batiste playing?

[Morris:] Violin. Oh, he was a violinist, yes; him and Robichaux was about the best and Piron.

[Allen:] And what was Batiste' last name?

[Morris:] Batiste something--I disremember now, it's been so long.

[Allen:] Did he play any other instruments?

[Morris:] Who, Batiste? Oh, yeah; he was a teacher; he'd teach you.

[Allen:] Well, was he--that's not the same guy that played slide? [Baptiste Delisle]

[Morris:] No, that was Batiste.

[Allen:] Two different guys. I've got it straight now.

[Morris:] Two different--yeah.

[Allen:] I got--

[Morris:] See, him and John Robichaux was partners--them was two violiners--and one would get a rich job. Well, Robichaux couldn't get off, him. But Batiste--well, we was out in the field, you see, and everything Robichaux would get--well, just if I'm connected with another band and if I get something, I ain't going to give it to nobody else; I'm going to give it to the one I am connected with--well, that's the way Robichaux used to do.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Speaking of getting off[playing variations]: what kind of music did Robichaux play?

[Morris:] Robichaux was violin.

[Allen:] Yeah. But I mean, did he play strictly by note, or was he a head man[an improviser]?

[Morris:] Oh, yes, strictly by the--he was the teacher, the professor.

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Morris:] If when they'd get that music, Robichaux was the one to show them all that.

[Allen:] Well, did any of the guys in his band play by head at all?

[Morris:] Well, you couldn't hardly ever tell; they all would have their music.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Morris:] I guess they--they would have rehearsal, though, every day, and when one wouldn't know it, I guess the other one would have to know it if they wanted him to play--they was going to make him know it. So, that's why that was.

[Allen:] Who did he have in his band--Robichaux?

[Morris:] I disremember, but he had all good musicians. Red Happy [Bolton] used to

EDDIE MORRIS
REEL I
DECEMBER 21, 1958

play drum with him and Black Benny [Williams]--all them different fellows. Well, now it's been so long I have forgot a whole lot of them.

[Russell:] What was the very first job you ever played--can you remember--that you got paid for?

[Morris:] Well, the first job--I don't know the first job, because we used to have to play for Senator Brady every Saturday night.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Morris:] Then he used to throw up sacks of money, you know; he--and he'd have that there just for his people out there. Well, we had to go and play for him every Saturday night, and he's paying all the teaching from Professor Humphrey, and that was it. So he come with a sack of money in each hand--that's to make you "razoo" for it.

[Telephone rings]

[Russell:] Well, you can answer that; we can turn it off. [Machine off] We were talking about Dave Bailey.

[Morris:] Yeah, Dave Bailey--I was a little bitty boy when Dave was playing. He don't look it though, do he?

[Allen:] No.

[Morris:] Yeah. He going down now plenty, though; he can't take all of that walking right now.

[Allen:] Now you said something about the Liberty Bell.

[Morris:] Yeah; that was the band name.

[Allen:] And who was in it?

[Morris:] Dave Bailey, Duck Ernest [Johnson], Fostair [Lewis], a cornet player was Dude, was Dude [Lewis].

[Allen:] Fostair's brother?

[Morris:] That's Fostair's brother, yeah. Then after Fostair, he got into the band too. [Who was before Dude?] Yeah. So that's why they used to go and--they had a nice little band. Then after they'd put Dude out and they took Wesley Dimes; he [was] the one that got killed in Baton Rouge; he was a nice little cornet player. And then Blind Freddie [Small], too, used to play in there. I don't care where you tell him

EDDIE MORRIS
REEL I
DECEMBER 21, 1958

7

[to] meet at, he could meet [you] there, and he ain't had no eyes at all--but he could play, and he'd be well dressed up, and everything--but Blind Freddie'd be there; don't know how he'd get there, [but] he'd get there.

[Allen:] Well, could he--how did he compare, Blind Freddie? [Who] was the best clarinet players for head?

[Morris:] Well, I don't know, but Blind Freddie was good.

[Allen:] I wondered who--how long did he?--

[Morris:] Must just had a gift; I guess the Lord just give him that gift to make a living.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Morris:] Yeah, yeah, and he had one, too.

[Allen:] Sounds like a good band. Did you ever work with them?

[Morris:] Yeah, I used to play with them, but I played with [when] Wesley Dimes [was] in, in the band. See, he got killed in Baton Rouge, yeah; [he] was a little bitty fellow, but he could play a nice cornet.

[Allen:] Oh, we were talking about Senator Brady.

[Morris:] Yeah, Senator Brady.

[Allen:] What did you say? You had to "razoo"?

[Morris:] Oh, yeah, you had to razoo. Oh, that was the best senator they ever had in the state, I believe. he had everything out there, and he'd come on Saturday night with one sack of money in each hand.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Morris:] Silver money, you know--that's to make everybody razoo for their money. I used to get down off the stand there and go razoo too.

[Russell:] What did "razoo" mean?

[Morris:] Throw up money, you know, till he done empty the sack.

[Russell:] Throw the money up in the air?

[Morris:] Up in the air on the floor. And you know, people used to come for that; gee whiz, the hall would be packed and jammed, and you had to grab for that money. Yes, sir, that's what he used to do.

[Allen:] And then after you worked for Senator Brady, who did you play with?

[Morris:] Well, after I worked for Senator Brady I believe the first band I got in was the Golden Leaf Band, for Jesse Jackson.

[Russell:] And what did he play?

[Morris:] Well, he played guitar--banjo, you know; them banjo like Sam [Charters] used to play there. Well, he used to get plenty jobs too, 'cause John Robichaux used to give him jobs, too; we'd always be playing, all right. And from that I was gone, so I quit him and I got in somebody else's band--let's see, I think it was Buddy Petit wanted me. I've got some of his music right there now.

[Allen:] Sheet music?

[Morris:] Yeah.

[Russell:] Are they arrangements or something?

[Morris:] Yes, arrangements.

[Russell:] [Something that he arranged?]

[Morris:] No, orchestra, orchestra. I've got plenty of it right there now in the drawer. So and from that I was gone then, then everybody was grabbing me; I started to making it going and coming then.

[Russell:] Did you have any other teacher on trombone except Jim Humphrey?

[Morris:] Professor Humphrey? No, sir, no other one [unintelligible]; no sir.

[Russell:] Who were some of the trombonists you liked when you were a boy and young? Who were the best?

[Morris:] Baptiste DeNeel [Delisle], that's the one what I always did like; I just used to see him pull that horn, you know.

[Russell:] Did he play valve or [slide] trombone?

[Morris:] No, slide.

[Russell:] Slide.

[Morris:] Yeah. But I tell you who used to play a good valve trombone--Frankie Duson. Duson--yeah, Frankie Duson used to play a good valve trombone.

[Allen:] How did he compare with Baptiste Delisle?

[Morris:] Who, Frankie Duson? Oh, he couldn't compare with him, but he just had the break, you know, for the outside[?] people; yeah, for jazz stuff, he had it.

EDDIE MORRIS
REEL I
DECEMBER 21, 1958

But Baptiste Delisle and with them was real people, you know; they just hit it right now. And John Robichaux, he used to teach them fellows; see, you had to rehearsal there for the Lyric twice a day, I think--but I know you could go every day around two o'clock and you hear them rehearsaling in the back there.

[Russell:] Did Frankie Duson read music much, or by head?

[Morris:] Well, he could read it by getting with the good fellow--you know, what you didn't know, they show it to you. That's the way you get the music part.

[Russell:] Who did Duson play with when you heard him, do you remember?

[Morris:] The Eagle Band.

[Russell:] The Eagle Band.

[Morris:] Yes, sir, that was his band, the Eagle Band; yeah, that was Frankie Duson's band.

[Allen:] Who was in the Eagle with him? Do you know any of those guys?

[Morris:] Oh, I disremember who all was in the Eagle now; it's plenty of them. They're all dead now; yeah, they is dead now.

[Allen:] Did you ever know Bunk Johnson?

[Morris:] Sure, I used to play with Bunk.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah.

[Morris:] When Bunk first came here to live here that last time he come here to get me, but I was busy working; that's why he had to take Jim Crow[Jim Robinson]. And then Jim Crow and Howard and them, they was working together all the time, so he couldn't get me the first week he was here, so that's why I just let them went on with him. But Bunk come right here to get me. Bunk was playing with the Black Devils up in Thibodeaux up there; I was playing with Punch--you ask Punch about it--we used to run them everywhere we'd catch them.

[Allen:] Whose band was that?

[Morris:] That was Evan's band; Evan [Thomas] was his name, out in the country. They had a good band, but when we'd meet them out there, we used to buck like I don't know what; Punch was playing with us then ~~Punch was the leader?~~

[Russell:] When did you start playing with Punch? When did you first meet Punch, do you remember?

EDDIE MORRIS
REEL I
DECEMBER 21, 1958

10

[Morris:] Yeah; weel, I knowed Punch from playing with Jack Carey; somehow or another they fell out or something, and then I took Georgie Boy[d]--that's the clarinet player--and Punch and Walter Preston and Joe Gabriel. Then we went together, and we was burning up everything we seed then, everything. We was in on one train, gone out on another one. I believe we were the first band start to traveling [here?] after Louis left.

[Russell:] Go on excursions mostly, or what kind of trip?

[Morris:] Excursion--we have played excursion all the way to Chicago; you wouldn't get there like now. Punch was playing then with us[in Punch's band]. Yes, sir, we would go to Chicago: you sleep on that train--they used to leave--we have played it from the I[llinois] C[entral]; we have played from the L[ouisville] & N[ashville]. That train wouldn't get there till the next day, way in there, the day after that.

[Russell:] Where did you play? Did they have a little dance floor on one of the coaches, or something?

[Morris:] On the coaches, well, different people selling and eating and drinking, and you play in the coach.

[Russell:] Did you ever play in a baggage car and have dancing or anything like that?

[Morris:] No, it wasn't no place to dance; we'd be in the coach.

[Russell:] I heard something one time, somebody said they had dancing in a baggage car. Was the band up there?

[Morris:] No, they'd sell, they'd sell all the lipuor and stuff in the baggage. But the band would be in half of a coach, and they'd have their part, you know. They wouldn't give them no room to dance. I guess that's why they did that--not the dancing--because they'd start a fight or something, maybe--throw somebody out [of] there. But after all, that's they way we used to play them excursion to Chicago.

[Russell:] Then you'd stay there a few days?

[Morris:] Stay there a few days, then we'd come back; yes, sir.

[Russell:] Did you ever play in Chicago, when you went up?

[Morris:] Yes, sir, we played; we played at the big hall there--I forget the name of it again; got lights all around the floor; oh, it's a big hall. And you don't go

play there till eleven o'clock at night; see, people here start to dance around eight o'clock, but the dance start there at eleven o'clock.

[Russell:] Do you remember the name of the place? Would it be like Plantation, or the-- it wouldn't be Royal Garden, hardly.

[Morris:] I think it was the Royal Garden, yes, sir.

[Russell:] Sure enough? They had lights all around?

[Morris:] All around the floor.

[Russell:] The Dreamland--do you remember that?

[Morris:] I think it was the Royal Garden where we used to play.

[Russell:] The Elite? The DeLuxe?

[Allen:] Lincoln Gardens was another name for the Royal Gardens.

[Russell:] Lincoln Gardens they called it sometimes.

[Morris:] Yeah, I--

[Russell:] The DeLuxe, Entertainers'---

[Allen:] Pekin was a theater there.

[Morris:] Yeah. Well, I disremember the name of it, but I know it was a big hall, and them lights was all around the floor and all up on the music stand.

[Russell:] Might be Lincoln Gardens or Royal Gardens.

[Morris:] Yeah, that's where we used to play. Now, when you see Punch, maybe he can tell you the name and think of it.

[Allen:] When did you work with Bunk?

[Morris:] I worked with Bunk out there in Thibodaux a couple of times. But Bunk used to be here.

[Allen:] Whose band was it in Thibodaux that you worked with?

[Morris:] Evan.

[Allen:] Evan's band.

[Morris:] Yeah.

[Russell:] What did Punch play like in those days; did he have the same style like now, or was it a different style--muted or anything? How did he play?

[Morris:], Well, Punch was a--he had a nice style. You see, that show ruined Punch.

REEL I
DECEMBER 21, 1958

[Telephone rings.] No, that's the party. [Machine off.]

[Russell:] Okay, we'll let it go then.

[Morris:] Yeah, that show ruined Punch. You know that Punch stood away over twenty some years on that show.

[Russell:] Played a different style.

[Morris:] A different style, yeah. That show ruined him. Well, if we'd a been playing regular, now he'd done come back to us. But Punch was--oooh, Punch was--they called him the "Iron Man"; they used to call him the "Iron Man." Yeah, we had a good band.

[Allen:] What did the "Iron Man" mean?

[Morris:] He played so hard and played so much. We used to be so tired we have slept side of the levee, and coming in, automobile would break; we just get on the side of the levee or the side of the road, out of the way, and go to sleep. I see once we was going to Galves[ton], Texas in an automobile--7-passenger car--and when we got to Morgan City we wore out two tires. So we was lucky enough to buy two more. We said, well, we gonna hike on in now, and we stopped in Beaumont. We played there. Well, we made good money. The next day we helped the man buy him two tires, and that's why we hike on out. We went to Port Arthur; we played there two nights. We just was making them stops, you know, but I never want to go that far no more in an automobile. Oh, you'd be broke down and you got all the instruments. Them times we used to have them 7-passenger cars, you see; we'd had plenty of room, and all the instruments tied on there like a Egyptian, so there you go--we just went right on. That's the way it was.

[Russell:] Did you ever play many picnics around here?

[Morris:] Oh, yeah. Picnics! I used to play for the Dixie Cottage every Sunday, on the lake. I used to play on the Susquehanna, go over in Mandeville.

[Russell:] On the boat.

[Morris:] On the boat. Yeah, we used to have that job, yeah. The Dixie Cottage, that was our job regular, every Sunday. You couldn't get off from them people, because when it wouldn't be one it'd be somebody else, then they had to get the same band. We played there for years and years.

EDDIE MORRIS
REEL I
DECEMBER 21, 1958

[Russell:] Funch talked about playing once at a ball park up there--National Ball Park.

Were you in the band?--

[Morris:] Oh, yeah, we used to play there, too. I'm there now, that picture over there now.

[Russell:] Oh, I see.

[Morris:] You ain't never seed it, Mr. Bill?

[Russell:] No, never did see it.

[Morris:] Wait, let me get it for you. Here it is; I got it here.

[Russell:] Move this chair out of the way.

[Morris:] Yes, sir, I'll go back here; I'll get it. O. K. [Telephone rings.]

[Russell:] Is that the other people or is that yours?

[Morris:] That's mine.

[Russell:] O. K. Turn her off, Dick, for a minute. [Machine off]

[Allen:] Who has the picture?

[Russell:] Funch has.

[Morris:] Fuch have it.

[Allen:] And that's the ball park picture.

[Morris:] Yeah, that ball park picture, he got.

[Allen:] This is a nice picture of the E. R. A. band.

[Morris:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Who are some of these fellows?

[Morris:] Oooh, Lord, that's all of them.

[Allen:] That's everybody, huh?

[Morris:] That's a many of them, yeah.

[Russell:] Three French horns on there.

[Allen:] They're melophones, Bill.

[Russell:] Ten drums. No, they may be French--I don't know.

[Allen:] Two of them are French horns and one's a melophone.

[Russell:] Are they? Yeah, I can't see it.

[Allen:] No, no, they all look like they got valves, and not those--

[Russell:] Levers, or keys--

[Allen:] Not those levers, keys they call them. And they got that key--

[Russell:] I don't know, they look wound up enough--

[Morris:] Oh, we had a wonderful band; ooh, people used to come from everywhere just to hear that band.

[Allen:] That looks like [Kid] Shots[Louis Madison]--I don't know.

[Morris:] Shots is there too; he was there. He dead now; yeah, he dead now.

[Allen:] Was Louis Dumaine there?

[Morris:] Yeah, he was the director. You sure know them, don't you!

[Allen:] That looks more like him down front, maybe. That's a fine picture.

[Morris:] Yeah, yeah. I got to throw out a bunch of stuff; I'm telling you, it's something.

[Allen:] Well, you want to keep it all, you know.

[Russell:] When was this, the E. R. A.?

[Allen:] It says January 15, 1935--I believe that's 15th, 1935.

[Morris:] You got good eyes you can see [that].

[Allen:] January 15, 1935. [Note: Picture in Charters, Jazz: New Orleans, 1885-1957 bears date February 2, 1935.]

[Morris:] Yeah, you got good eyes you can see that now.

[Allen:] Say, I was wondering: when you were a little boy, what was this ragtime music like then? Was it the same as what they call Dixieland jazz now?

[Morris:] Yeah, that's what they call ragtime music. You just jump when some--you talk about ragtime music, all you got to do was just make a motion and--but now, they got this kind of music now a old man would fall down trying to dance to that now.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah.

[Morris:] Yes, sir.

[Russell:] Want me to wrap that up? I'll wrap that up; you all can keep on talking.

[Allen:] Well, now--

[Mrs. Morris:] Here, you want a clean piece of paper?

[Morris:] No, that's all right.

REEL I
DECEMBER 21, 1958

15

[Allen:] Now ragtime: who were the outstanding bands--you know, for head music, ear music?

[Morris:] I'll tell you the truth, Kid Rena was pretty hot.

[Allen:] When you were a little boy?

[Morris:] Rena was big then. It's the same thing what they got now; Rena was playing what they say, the ragtime band, that's the same thing what they call, what they call--not jitterbug; jitterbug is this--

[? :] Rock and roll?

[Morris:] Yeah, rock and roll music. Now that's the same thing; now rock and roll is mostly--a person most--just jumping and jiggling.

[Allen:] Now what about, though, when you were a little boy; do you remember the names of any bands that were good then?

[Morris:] Well, I used to run all around to see Joe Oliver and--

[Allen:] Oh?

[Morris:] Yeah, to see Joe Oliver and Freddy Keppard; they used to pass on a lit--on them wagon, you know; it wasn't no trucks then. For the advertising, they used to have a wagon and horse, and you could keep up with them. And furniture wagons--you know, one time we used to have furniture wagons, you know, with the four wheels. Well, that's what they used to get to advertise in. And you could keep up with them.

[Allen:] Did you get lost doing that?

[Morris:] No, I ain't never got lost; where they start out from, they always was going to come back there.

[Russell:] In those days, did you still live across the river? When did you move over here?

[Morris:] Oh, I move over here then when I got to be a man. But yet I used to run around for to see them bands and keep up with them.

[Allen:] Did you ever hear Edward Clem?

[Morris:] Yes; Edward Clem used to play cornet and he used to wear eye glasses.

[Allen:] And what was he like?

[Morris:] Well, he was good; Edward Clem was good, too.

[Allen:] Was he a musicianer or a head man?

[Morris:] Yeah, Edward Clem. He used to wear--he had one eye out, I think, and he used to wear a little pad on one of them eyes.

[Allen:] But he could read? Or was he more of a head man?

[Morris:] I don't know; he was--he would always get good men. Edward Clem used to play with Frankie Duson, too; that's right, Edward Clem used to play with Frankie Duson.

[Allen:] What was the name of the band then? Was that the?--

[Morris:] The Eagle Band.

[Allen:] Yeah. Well, I figured we'd get around to it eventually.

[Morris:] Yeah, that's right.

[Allen:] You thought of it.

[Morris:] Yeah, it was the Eagle Band.

[Allen:] That was the cornet player?

[Morris:] Uh-huh, Edward Clem, used to be the cornet player.

[Russell:] Do you remember a cornet player by the name of Ned? They called him Ned; I don't know if it was his first or last name.

[Morris:] Ned, Ned? No, I'm trying to think of him now; no, I don't remember Ned.

[Russell:] Do you remember Tig Chambers?

[Morris:] Yes, I remember Tig Chambers.

[Russell:] What was--who'd he play with, and what did he play?

[Morris:] Tig Chambers used to play--wait, wait, wait, I'm going to tell you who Tig-- Tig Chambers used to play with Frankie Duson too.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah.

[Morris:] Yeah, Tig Chambers used to play with Frankie Duson.

[Allen:] Was he good on blues, or was he a reader?

[Morris:] Oh, yeah, he was a big heavy-set fellow; yeah, Tig Chambers, used to play with Frankie Duson.

[Allen:] Did he have any special numbers?

[Morris:] No--well, I couldn't realized his special numbers, but I know--I tell you that much of it, anyhow.

REEL I
DECEMBER 21, 1958

[Russell:] Do you remember Joe Johnson? What was he like?

[Morris:] No--Joe Johnson, what he used to play?

[Russell:] Cornet.

[Morris:] Joe Johnson, Joe Johnson? No. I remember Joe Howard. You remember him?

[Russell:] Yeah, yeah.

[Morris:] He used to play cornet; now, I used to play with him too.

[Russell:] He played tuba in the [later?] [years].

[Morris:] That's right; when he died he was playing tuba, yes, sir. I used to play with him. He was a good cornet player, too, yes, sir; he was what you call a real musicianer; anything you put for him, he could hit it.

[Russell:] I was wondering about some more of the old trombonists, like Joe Petit.

[Morris:] Joe Petit, he used to be a hard one, you know; he used to play with Albert Nicholas--they call him Wooden Joe [Albert is Wooden Joe's nephew.]. Them two used to be together all the time. That was their band; that band was named the Camellia.

[Russell:] Did Joe Petit ever play the slide, or mostly valve?

[Morris:] No, he used to play valve; then he tried to get the slide, but he played it, you know, he played it. Because once you play a valve you're, you can get the slide part, maybe because you got the embouchure and--just that division[positions?] you got to make.

[Russell:] Did most of the fellows play slide when you came up? You don't remember many of the valves except Duson?

[Morris:] No, no more than Joe Petit and Frankie Duson.

[Russell:] Do you remember old Willie Cornish? Did he play slide or valve, or what?

[Morris:] Wait, wait--when I knowed Willie Cornish I believe he was playing slide. He was a big tall fellow. He used to be on Rampart Street around Uncle Jake all the time, him and--wait, wait, wait--him and the fellow that used to play bass--well, the bass player used to work for Jake, Uncle Jake there. If you'd want a bass or any kind of instrument, he'd go there and get it for you--tell him; Uncle Jake, he'd stand for it.

[Allen:] Did you ever know Bob Lyons?

[Morris:] Bob Lyons! That's the one! You sure get them names. Now, that's the one

EDDIE MORRIS
REEL I
DECEMBER 21, 1958

10

used to work for Uncle Jake; Bob Lyons was the bass player.

[Russell:] Was Uncle Jake the one that had a pawn?--

[Morris:] That's his son's place; the big pawnshop, yeah, that's his place.

[Russell:] Is that Fink?

[Morris:] Yeah, that's his son's place there now at Tulane and Rampart.

[Russell:] That's Fink's place?

[Morris:] Yeah, he got his leg cut off now, yeah.

[Russell:] Do you remember Baba Ridgley on trombone?

[Morris:] Yeah, I remember Baba Ridgley when--that's when they put the Pelican [Stadium] up; Baba Ridgley had [that whole one?] in charge, and the Pelicans used to be there. He used to play there. .

[Russell:] Did--another trombonist: did you ever hear Zue Robertson? Zue? He left here pretty early; he might have left before you came up.

[Morris:] Yeah. Well, I know Zue used to play cornet when I used to play in the Silver Leaf Band.

[Allen:] Zue?

[Morris:] Yeah, he was a cornet player, the one I knowed; he was a youngster under me, though.

[Russell:] He was younger than you? No, this fellow would be--he wasn't very old, but still he would have been a few years older than you.

[Morris:] Yeah.

[Russell:] Roy Palmer: did you ever hear him play? He went to Chicago very early.
Roy Palmer: he was a pupil of Jim Humphrey too.

[Morris:] Yeah. But I used to heard talk of Roy, but I didn't know him.

[Russell:] Didn't know him?

[Morris:] No, sir.

[Allen:] He went up with Lawrence Duhé and Sugar Johnny [Smith] and those fellows.
Who worked in Joe Oliver's band? Do you remember any of those guys?

[Morris:] In Joe Ol--I don't remember none of them [that] used to work in Joe Oliver's band.

EDDIE MORRIS
REEL I
DECEMBER 21, 1958

19

[Allen:] Remember any of the guys with Keppard? ,

[Morris:] No, not him either, because they left here right behind one another--yeah. But I mostly believe Frankie Duson worked with all of them, him. Yeah, Frankie Duson, he just was a fellow, you know; he used to get all them jobs and he, he get all them jobs and get who he want. See, on account of that Pelican: that was Frankie Fuson's place there, that Pelican place there; that was his place.

[Russell:] This tape is just about over here; we just have a half hour on each one of these. We'll put another one on.

END OF REEL I

EDDIE MORRIS

DECEMBER 21, 1958

[Morris:] No, I'm just here with you; I'm just--

[Russell:] Okay. Well--

[Allen:] Well, did you know Buddy Bolden, ever?

[Morris:] No; I used to hear talk of Buddy Bolden; I didn't know him.

[Allen:] Say, I wanted to ask you: how would [Willie] Cornish play on valve trombone? Could you give me sort of a--sing, a little like him?

[Morris:] Well, I'll tell you, I'll tell you: Cornish wasn't too much on the valve; no, Cornish wasn't too much on the valve.

[Allen:] What about somebody like Duson? Could Duson play?--

[Morris:] Oh, Frankie Duson, he had everything skinned of him.

[Allen:] Well, would he play a lot of notes, would he hold a note, would he play like a boogie woogie bass, or how would he do?

[Russell:] Was it sort of like a tuba part or did he play a part almost like a sax plays now? What kind of a part did he play?

[Morris:] Well, I'll tell you: about valve trombone, Frankie Duson was near about the best was here. Frank--wait--Frankie Duson and Buddy Johnson. Buddy Johnson was from Algiers; that was Yank [Johnson]'s brother, and Yank come up on trombone. Yank--

[Russell:] Which was the best one, Yank or Buddy?

[Morris:] Oh, Buddy was better than Yank; yes, sir, Buddy was better than Yank. Them was two brothers, yeah; them was two brothers, but Buddy was better than Yank.

[Allen:] What about Ernest Kelly? Would he compare with those fellows?

[Morris:] Well, Ernest Kelly was a musicer; Professor [Jim] Humphrey teach him, too. Professor Humphrey teach Ernest Kelly, he teach Eddie Atkins and he teach me, on trombone.

[Allen:] Was Eddie Atkins a get-off man or?--

[Morris:] Oh, yeah, he was a musicer man. He died in Chicago. He left here--they wanted him out there--he went out there with a big band; he "stood" out there; he died out there.

[Allen:] Did he play any jazz?

[Morris:] Yeah, he could; the professor, he really learned him, too.

[Allen:] But could he play by ear?

EDDIE MORRIS
Reel II--retyped
February 12, 1960

[Russell:] Did you ever hear him called Dude Ory?

[Morris:] Dude? No, not Dude.

[Russell:] Some people call him Dude, even today.

[Morris:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Why did they say Ory and Jack Carey; what did that mean?

[Morris:] Why, when they was going to buck against one another, you know? That's the way it was, just to draw the people. Yeah, that's the way it was.

[Russell:] Did you play on many of those wagons, to advertise?

[Morris:] Oh, yeah, I have played on the wagon too; I have played on the wagon when they advertised. After I got so--. And after trucks and automobiles got so popular, then it wasn't no more wagons; you don't see a wagon no more. That's too slow. Cause when you get on somewhere now, them people are going to bring you all over town; you got so many places to go where they can get, where they can see their friends at, so they'd come to the ~~dances~~ dances. That's the way that used to be. Sometimes you used to have different stops to make; you'd be over your time there, to make them stops for the people. I believe--to my idea--I believe Buddy, Buddy Petit and Kid Rena, them was the sweetest two cornet players they had in this town. They played a sweet cornet. And after Punch--after he got here a long time, well, he started to getting good. But since he went on that show, that's his biggest mistake. If he'd have stood home here, he would have been somewhere now. See, when you go on a show--he wanted me to go; yes, sir, he wanted me to go. I got--I didn't want to leave here to go on that show, go on that show and catch all that cold. And sometime you'd be hungry and can't get nothing to get nothing to eat, and you got to ask the boss for something. Uh-uh; that would have been really tough, there. Well, Punch took all that. Now, that's why he's so sick [?]. You know, what Punch would a had if we would have stood out in front there--he was coming back fast, but he just had got nervous, you know, like--and then again, with the time, he couldn't get the time

right like they got here now. [also he "cuts back"]. That stationary time they got here! You take a band come from anywhere, [to they] come here and get this time, they got to do something. They got to be here a good while to learn that time. Time is something for music. You can't just jump on music and go any kind of way--a person may think that, but [they miss it?], he'd be [outta out the] line.

[Russell:] Speaking of time: you mentioned your drum set once--you never did play any drums, did you? Are they yours?

[Morris:] Well, I--

[Russell:] Did you play any other instruments later?

[Morris:] No, Sir, nothing but trombone.

[Russell:] Nothing but trombone.

[Morris:] Trombone and cornet. I can play guitar, too.

[Allen:] What style guitar do you play? Do you play chords or finger picking?

[Morris:] Finger. I can pick and play chords, too.

[Allen:] Can you play blues picking?

[Morris:] Uh-huh; yeah, I pick blues.

[Allen:] Well, I know some people who'd like to record that, maybe.

[Morris:] Yeah?

[Allen:] Can you sing?

[Morris:] Oh, no; I can grunt, though. I never was, I never was a singer, not on music. I'll help you sing, but not for me to lead it, not and sing.

[Russell:] Not solo.

[Morris:] Yeah. I'll get there and grunt for you; I'll make you know I'm doing something

[Allen:] Which was first, guitar or cornet?

[Morris:] What was first? Well, I used to play guitar first. Used to go around, you

EDDIE MORRIS
Reel II--retyped
February 12, 1960.

24

know and pick the blues and things for people to dance, and get liquor, and that was, that was it. Oh, I'd pick the blues. That's all a person playing guitar--but now since these other guitars come up, then after--I played just to know that I could chord with a guitar in some band, rehearsing and chord, too. I look at some people play guitar they don't be making the right chords. You can tell when you're making a chord to correspond to music. Then I know I could rap in a band.

[Allen:] When you started on guitar, what did you use? Did you use a flat pick, thumb pick, finger pick?

[Morris:] My fingernails.

[Allen:] Just fingernails, that's all you ever used.

[Morris:] Yeah, yeah, I used fingernails. Take a little matchstick and a piece of whalebone. You know, they used to have them lady corsets, you see, and you get you a piece of whalebone out of there; people don't do that, but that's the best thing to get for a guitar. When you can get that kind, bend good. Then you take it, and you set down and you take a knife and you scrape the p[lo]int and you won't have--it's better than them picks they make now, piece of that whalebone. But I guess you got to hunt for an old pair of corsets now to get that whalebone out of there. And if I was playing guitar now I'd look for one of them old corsets and get me enough whalebone to last me a many years, cause I'd save it.

[Allen:] Do you have a guitar?

[Morris:] No; I'm going to get a guitar, though; I'm going to get an electric guitar.

[Russell:] Speaking of the blues: did the band play, did the dance bands play Many blues in those days when you were first starting out?

[Morris:] Oh, that was it, that was your crip, anywhere you go for them people, 'cause it's mostly like dragging you foot; it ain't nothing too much, not with that. And then after you play the blues, then you get you some schottische, you know. You don't catch people dance schottische no more.

[Russell:] No.

[Morris:] Schottische and waltz. Oh, then you got them some then.

[Allen:] What kind of dances did they have other than schottische, waltz, and blues?

[Morris:] Yeah, Well, schottische, waltz, blues, and two-step, they call it, but you hardly catch many people make two-step now.

[Russell:] Did they ever do the polka down here?

[Morris:] The polka? Well--

[Russell:] Remember ever doing that any place?

[Morris:] No, Sir.

[Allen:] I saw an old dance program that had "Potpourri" on it. Did you ever hear of that? Potpourri, potpourri?

[Morris:] No.

[Russell:] It just means like a medley, I guess, of different numbers.

[Allen:] Yeah, we'll have to ask.

[Russell:] The mazurka, mazurka, whatever you call it?

[Morris:] Yeah, mazurka.

[Russell:] Did they have that?

[Morris:] Yeah, that's a kind of funny dance, too. Now I'll tell you something else what they have: you say, about a waltz--now that 's the sweetest thing going, when a person can dance a waltz. Oh, a waltz is something sweet, when they can dance it. sometimes I set down and look at television at people dancing a waltz, it just make me be patting my foot like they be dancing. It do me good for music, 'cause I love music.

[Russell:] I was wondering about the big WPA band they had during the depression [and] what happened here those years.

[Morris:] We used to play out there. [Telephone begins to ring]

[Russell:] How big a band and who all was in it?

[Morris:] Yes, Sir.

[Russell:] We may as well turn that off again. [Machine off]

[Russell:] ...about guitar or something?

[Allen:] Yeah, what was your age when you started on guitar?

[Morris:] Well, I couldn't tell; I really wouldn't know.

[Allen:] Short pants or long pants?

[Morris:] Oh, I was in long pants.

[Allen:] I see.

[Morris:] Yeah, I just used to like to see them women dancing, you know, when they'd have the blues, and you'd be picking, and [unintelligible] the guitar wasn't too much to learn nohow--just that fingering--so I said I'm going to get me a--and my guitar cost two dollars and seventy-five cents. You could get them on Rampart Street then. They used to have them hanging up all on the outside; you don't see them no more.

[Allen:] Did you hear any good blues guitar players when you were young?

[Morris:] Well, anybody, long as you played the blues it was all right--any kind of blues, yeah.

[Allen:] Just like something else.

[Morris:] Uh-huh. Yeah, I got my guitar on Rampart Street there--\$2.75. Now they're way up yonder in the money.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Who played--who did play the blues around, do you know? Would it be just anybody?

[Morris:] No, you just can sit down and pat and play the blues on a guitar.

[Allen:] I just thought maybe you had a teacher or something to help you.

[Morris:] Oh, no, you just keep afooling with a guitar until you could get it.

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Morris:] Pick the blues.

[Allen:] Did you know a guy named Rabbit [Richard Brown]? Played guitar, used to hang around James Alley--you know where that is? [Now Jane place]

[Morris:] No, not them kind of places. I know that's back of Perdido Street, somewhere back in there.

[Allen:] Right back of where the jail is now.

[Morris:] Yeah. Well, I'll tell you: a heap of times them fellows [who] mostly would play blues and things and get around them barrooms what like that liqour. Well, you may could find anything around there, them kind of places.

[Russell:] Do you remember many of the guitar players that played sacred songs, spirituals--like Blind Willie Johnson--work on the streets and all, sometimes? I think he was here a while. [Right. He even recorded in New Orleans.] Any of those singers from the churches that?--

[Morris:] No, Sir. Well, you mean like singin' them spiritual churches?

[Russell:] Yeah; sometime even on the street, tmake their guitar out on the streets and sing.

[Morris:] Well, I hardly see maybe but two or three of them on the street singing, but I don't know 'em. No, Sir.

[Allen:] What church were you a member of?

[Morris:] Huh?

[Allen:] What church were you a member of?

[Morris:] Member? Well, I'm just a, this religion that I follows, is Catholic; but ain't any churches do me good now.

[Allen:] You were brought up, born a Catholic?

[Morris:] Catholic, yeah.

[Allen:] I see. I just thought maybe you had heard some music in church when you were young that impressed you.

[Morris:] No, not in church, no.

[Russell:] Oh, I was asking some more about that WPA band, those--

[Morris:] Oh, yes.

[Russell:] Groups during the depression, what happened in these years?

[Morris:] Yeah.

[Russell:] Who had, who was the leader, and how big a band they had.

[Morris:] Oh, we had a big band. See, I'm standing up there--you see with that long tie?--[in the picture] that's me standing up on that WPA band. Now we used to play out there, and we used to go at Pettony [spelling] there; that's where we had to meet there every morning.

[Allen:] Where is that?

[Morris:] Pettony, on Dumaine Street. Where the prize fight ring used to be?

[Allen:] Oh.

[Morris:] Well, that was us headquarters there. But I'll tell you what happened: that man used to take, get all them checks there, for liquor and things, and the WPA band didn't want that, and them WPA people, you know. And they come to find out all them men there in one place like that, and them fellows was half beginning to get drunk and everything, and cashing all their checks right there. Well, they didn't want that, so they moved us to the Tulane. Now we had to go all over town then, in different places, and they moved--that's why we had to meet there, at the Tulane after that.

[Allen:] Where was the Tulane at?

[Morris:] On Perdido Street. The Tulane Club? [On Gravier?]

[Russell:] Oh, yes.

[Morris:] Well, that's why we--

[Russell:] Up near Roman, up near Roman.

[Morris:] That's right, yes, Sir. So they move them there, you see. Now we had the best place out there you want to see, at Pettony's, 'cause nobody couldn't see nothing. And then besides that, you was in a nice place, and when you leave home--everybody'd most be near in the same settlement--you could walk there. But after they moved it to Tulane, why it was a whole lot of difficulty.

[Allen:] You said that some of the musicians drank, huh?

[Morris:] Oh, yeah, they'd drink, gee whiz. That's why they cut it out from up, out there, 'cause Pettony was getting all them checks; I guess they didn't want him to get all them checks.

[Russell:] In those days, did you have to report every day?

[Morris:] Every day, yes, Sir.

[Russell:] And practice every day?

[Morris:] Every day, every day. And when you'd miss, that was a bad mark against you. They'd want to know what's the trouble, if you get sick or something, you have to let them know.

[Russell:] Did you ever have a parade that you had to play, or a concert? What did they do?

[Morris:] Oh, yeah; we used to have to play. Everybody's name was checked and called. Just like you calling the roll here, your name had to be checked and called.

[Russell:] Did they have any small groups or a dance band, too?

[Morris:] Well, they used to split them up.

[Russell:] Split them up, then.

[Morris:] Yeah. You see, now I used to play at night down there by the --Poland and Rampart--Poland and St. Claude, down there by the Fifth Precinct. I was playing there with Rena at night, see. Well, somehow or another they found it out.

[Russell:] You were getting paid then for the other job, too.

[Morris:] Yeah, I was getting paid, yeah. But they found it out; well, that's why they stopped knocking you off at two o'clock in the day. Then they started making you come in the morning and make three hours; then you'd go back six and seven o'clock and eight o'clock at night and make your other three hours. That would keep you from going on any job. You couldn't get a band, 'cause all the musicians was in that WPA there. You couldn't hire a band not funny not easy. So that was something,

wasn't it? Them people found a way somehow or another to bust you up. Sometimes they'd send maybe about eight in this place for eight o'clock tonight; tomorrow night they'd send about eight in the place, or ten in this place, or twenty in that place or fifteen in that--and you had to go to all them different places where they send you. All them different streets--I guess I done been all over this town here; I wouldn't know half the way where to go now. Yeah--and had to do that.

[Russell:] Did you play for a dance then; they'd send you out for a dance?

[Morris:] Yes, Sir, dances. That three hours--you wouldn't play any more than three hours. No, Sir, they couldn't keep you any longer than that; that's the orders. They had that paper. When that three hour up, you're gone; they knock you off. And they had a man there to take your--timekeeper to take your time. Yes, Sir.

[Russell:] Somebody said they finally broke up that whole project--no more music--and they sent them out to dig ditches at the City Park, or something. Would you remember what?--

[Morris:] Well, no, Sir.. Well, me, I didn't dig no more--

[Russell:] [Was it out by the Lake there, where they?]

[Morris:] I didn't do no digging at all, 'cause when it got slack and they had to break up and different things, I went on back on the riverfront. I went on back down by the Port of Embarkation and went on back to work. And I told them I was going to work; I wasn't going back with that no more, not right then.

[Allen:] [unintelligible]

[Morris:] You see, when that--huh?

[Allen:] Excuse me, go ahead.

[Morris:] You see, when you leave a good record behind, you got a good record.

[Russell:] Sure.

[Morris:] So they told me they'd give me credit for that. And I went back there at the Port, and I've been there ever since. Course, when work get bad--but after all, I'm

too glad that I had a place to go there at that time.

[Allen:] What do you do down there at the Port?

[Morris:] I handle freight, and handle automobiles. See, like all them different automobiles come in? Well, I don't have that same job every day, but I may have it one or two days, and then somebody else get it. You see we--you just got to leave every member make something. It's not no special place that you is, but just naturally I'm a freight handler, but I have to haul any kind of freight it is to be handled there. I'm--my gang or some of the other members is the one to handle it--any kind of freight, anything needs to be done, well, that's the way that's done.

[Russell:] Do you still have your trucking business, too, with your old truck?

[Morris:] No, Sir.

[Russell:] You don't do that.

[Morris:] I don't do no hauling. I'm gonna put--I'm gonna cut my truck up, I believe. Yes, Sir, don't do nothing, not hauling no more.

[Allen:] Who was in charge of this WPA band?

[Morris:] Well, that was the Governor.

[Allen:] Yeah, but I mean you must have had a musicianer in charge.

[Morris:] No, it'd be a--

[Allen:] Director, or something?

[Morris:] Yeah, we had a director. Just like you say you're going to send eight or ten men on a job tonight; all they'd do give you a paper tell you where to meet at. You're there for--you know how many jours you'd have, no more than three hours.

[Allen:] You were saying something about Louis Dumaine.

[Morris:] Yeah, well, Louis Dumaine, he was the director when the whole band start out.

[Allen:] I see.

[Morris:] See? That's the say that was. Now, if you go to either place they're going to give every man his paper telling him where to meet at. You start at such and such a time and knockin' off at such and such a time. Well, that's the way that was. And the timekeeper would be there in his car to take your time. I don't care--anywhere

you'd go to play, we had a timekeeper. He's gonna come there; he know where you're at, and he's gonna check your time; you got that day on the payroll. So that's the way that was.

[Allen:] Well, did anybody take Louis Dumaine's place, or did he last the whole time?

[Morris:] I disremember how he's last. Then again they had a fellow, the head boss, come here from Washington.

[Allen:] You don't remember his name?

[Morris:] No, I don't remember his name.

[Russell:] Do you remember a fellow, Martinez?

[Morris:] Martinez, yes.

[Allen:] What did he do?

[Morris:] He was supposed to be the big man over the white and colored. He didn't do no more than ride around and see whether they had all the mens there, and how they was getting along, or anything it was. That was the big fish, Martinez.

[Russell:] He never got up and directed a band with a baton, or anything?

[Morris:] Now and then, yes.

[Russell:] He did that too.

[Morris:] Now and then. But that was Louis Dumaine's job.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Morris:] Yeah.

[Allen:] And what instrument did Martinwz play? Did he ever play?

[Morris:] I don't know; I just didn't see no instrument he played at all. But I'll tell you he'd come stand over you and see whether you was making them notes right or not. He'd go from one to another one.

[Allen:] He knew music, huh?

[Morris:] Yeah; oh he, he must be. He was the whole thing; they sent him from Washington here. And he'd go over everybody. He'd take from one end, and he'd put

something up there and tell you to make it, and then he'd see whether you're making it or not.

[Telephone rings. Machine off]

[Morris:] I'll give it to Mr. Bill.

[Russell:] Yeah, we'll make some copies of the pictures sometime.

[Morris:] Yeah, I got some nice ones here.

[Allen:] Who have you got?

[Morris:] Oh, I got some more here in this thing here.

[Allen:] Yeah, I see.

[Morris:] When you pass again, I'll--

[Russell:] Yeah, we'll come out some other time when we--

[Morris:] Yes, Sir.

[Russell:] We were going to ask about some of the brass bands. What was the first brass band on a parade you played in?

[Morris:] The first brass band on a parade--let me see, let me see, let me see--I disremember now--

[Russell:] Did your same group with the dance band go out on parade?

[Morris:] No, Sir. I think it was John Casmir, I think.

[Russell:] Do you remember some of the big brass bands, like--

[Morris:] Peter, Peter Locage.

[Russell:] Oh.

[Morris:] Yeah, Peter Locage, he was an excellent good player. He used to play with the Silver Leaf Band, too, with me. And different men, you know, what they had for the brass band.

[Russell:] Do you remember Manuel Perez? You didn't mention--

[Morris:] Yeah, I played with Manuel Perez too, yeah, I played with him when he first come back from California--no, he come from Chicago, I think it was.

[Russell:] I think he was up there. [Right.]

[Morris:] Yes, Sir, he come back here--well, he played good after he come back. He played a long time after that.

[Russell:] Did you play in his brass band?

[Morris:] Yes, Sir, I played with him.

[Allen:] What did he call his brass band?

[Morris:] I think the Onward, or something of other 'twas named.

[Allen:] [Did he] have two cornets, or three cornets, or what?

[Morris:] Three cornets.

[Allen:] Three?

[Morris:] Had three cornets.

[Wife:] [?]

[Russell:] Do you remember the old Tuxedo Brass Band; did you ever play with them?

[Morris:] Yeah, Celestin.

[Russell:] Did you ever play in that?

[Morris:] *Twas--I believe I played once or twice with Celestin.

[Allen:] [Unintelligible]

[Morris:] I think I played once or twice with him.

[Russell:] Do you remember the old, real old bands like Excelsior Band, or do you remember Henry Allen's band across the river?

[Morris:] Oh, I played with him plenty.

[Russell:] Oh, you did?

[Morris:] Yes, Sir, I played with him plenty. Before little [Red] Allen left here. You know, when he used to play with us, he was in short pants then. Yeah, Henry Allen. He kept that band for years and years.

[Russell:] How many musicians have they had in Henry Allen's band?

[Morris:] I don't know. Somethime he'd be shorthanded, you know [but] them fellows, they'd just go out anyhow.

[Allen:] Would he have as many as, say, twenty?

[Morris:] No, not that many.

[Allen:] What would be the full band?

[Morris:] Yeah, well--

[Russell:] How many trumpets? How many trombones?

[Morris:] Well, they generally used two trombones and three trumpets. You see, the fellows done got so now they cuts down on them band.

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Morris:] Yeah, they cuts down on it.

[Russell:] Did they use saxophones those days?

[Morris:] Yes, Sir--didn't use a saxophone.

[Allen:] What would they have, then, if they have--instead of saxophones?

[Morris:] They have a--wait, I'm going to tell you--one of them little horns like that--a tenor, they call it. Louis Keppard used to play one of them things, you know--alto.

[Russell:] Alto.

[Morris:] Yes, Sir.

[Russell:] The "peck horn", did they ever call them that?

[Morris:] Yes, Sir. They used to have a flute, but you don't think of everybody playing them flute now, you know them.

[Russell:] No.

[Morris:] Thing with a hole there, in it--

[Russell:] Like a piccolo.

[Morris:] Yeah, like a piccolo. You don't catch many people play that now. They had one or two people here playing them things.

[Russell:] Did they use the big clarinet, a B flat, or the little short one?

[Morris:] And the little short one, yes.

[Allen:] Would they use those flutes in the street?

[Morris:] Yeah, they used to use that in the street.

[Allen:] How long were they about?

[Morris:] Oh, it's about that long.

[Russell:] About fourteen inches, or something a little over a foot, then.

[Morris:] Yes, Sir. That thing was loud, too, when you could play. Let's see, somebody I remember could play that thing; I disremember who it is, But you could hear that thing louder than you do the cornet. Yeah.

[Allen:] Did you ever hear Bab Frank?

[Morris:] No. Maybe I done forgot him by that name.

[Russell:] Do you remember the Peerless Band--McCurdy and?--

[Morris:] McCurdy, the Curtis boys, eh?

[Russell:] Uh-huh.

[Morris:] Well, wait, I'm gonna tell you--

[Russell:] There was a fellow worked with him on piccolo too; Bab Frank, I think.

[Morris:] Yeah.

[Allen:] Charlie McCurdy.

[Morris:] Charlie McCurdy. Yeah, he's from Algiers, too, huh?

[Allen:] Is he? I didn't--

[Russell:] I'm not sure, I don't remember.

[Morris:] I know they used to have some McCurdys from Algiers too, used to play [this] music.

[Allen:] Who all was over there in Algiers, when you were a youngster--the musicians?

[Morris:] Who all was over there? That's where they--[A.J.] Piron and them come from over there.

[Allen:] Piron's from Algiers?

[Morris:] Yeah, Piron's from over there. Piron--I tell you, used to have a brother,

too, played music. 'Cause they used to come across on the ferry all the time at night. [Perhaps he has Prion & Bocage confused.]

[Russell:] Do you remember Peter Bocage?

[Morris:] Peter Bocage? Yeah, they come from over there, too--from Algiers. Peter Bocage make boats.

[Russell:] Oh, yeah, that's right; I heard that.

[Morris:] Yeah, they make boats--you know, like all of them fishing boats, and them race boats. That's what they do.

[Allen:] Well, how big is that family? There's several of them there.

[Morris:] Oh, That must be a mighty big family.

[Russell:] Oh, there was another trombonist used to play with them. I wonder if you remember George Fihle?

[Morris:] I heard talk of George Fihle. Well, you see--

[Russell:] He left here very early, I think.

[Morris:] You see, them fellows, you could hardly keep up with some of them; you may see them now and don't see them no more for a year or so.

[Allen:] What about Johnny Lindsey? Where was he from?

[Morris:] Johnny Lindsey's from uptown. Johnny Lindsey, Joe Lindsey. Now Johnny Lindsay used to play trombone. You sure know them, all right; you keep up with them better than me. [I hope so]

[Russell:] Was he uptown, or across the river? Where did he come from?

[Morris:] He come from uptown there somewhere.

[Russell:] Uptown.

[Morris:] And Joe Lindsey used to play drums--Johnny Lindsey on trombone, Joe Lindsey on drum. And after, Johnny Lindsay, I believe he went on bass. The after, he died.

[Allen:] I asked Joe if they were related and he said no--just good friends.

[Morris:] Yeah, they're brothers, they're brothers.

[Russell:] Johnny, Johnny and--

[Morris:] And Joe Lindsey.

[Russell:] Let's see; who was the guitar player?

[Morris:] Let's see--

[Russell:] One of them played guitar and their father played guitar--

[Allen:] Herbert played--

[Russell:] And violin.

[Allen:] Herbert Lindsey.

[Russell:] Herbert, yeah.

[Allen:] Herbert Lindsey played violin.

[Morris:] Yeah? I knowed they had some brothers of them all right, yeah. But Johnny Lindsey and Joe Lindsey, them was brothers. Unless they must have just played off brothers or something. 'Cause they both used to play in the same band; they couldn't get along together.

[Allen:] The couldn't get along?

[Morris:] Uh-uh; there'd always be some humbug with one of them.

[Russell:] We're just about out of tape. Is there any other question you can think of, Dick?

[Allen:] Who were some of the outstanding drummers in the old days?

[Morris:] Well, in the old days, I'll tell you, Happy is the outstanding drummer.

[Allen:] Which Happy?

[Morris:] From up on Louisiana--used to live on Louisiana Avenue. He used to play with--

[Allen:] Red Happy?

[Morris:] No.

EDDIE MORRIS
Reel II--retyped
February 17, 1960.

39

[Russell:] Black Happy.

[Morris:] Black Happy.

[Russell:] Happy Goldston.

[Morris:] Happy Goldston--that's right; Mr. Bill knows him. Now, he was an outstanding drummer. Arthur Ogle and that is an outstanding drummer, them good drummers.

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Morris:] And Sammy Penn, that's a good drummer; when he come here, he--[came from Thibadoux, La.]

End of Reel II
Eddie Morris, December 21, 1958