We talked some about recording sessions, RBA continues. Yes we did, AR replies. We talked about the one with John Hardee’s band with [Jimmy] Archey, and [Dan] Burley. Right, AR says, and we talked about the Lakefront Loungers, too. That was one of my favorite sessions....

We’re going into a second edition of the [Rose, Al and Edmond Souchon, New Orleans Jazz: A Family Album [Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana University Press, 1978], AR says, but it was very interesting the process by which it came about originally.

And that is that first Dr. [Edmond] Souchon, and I, both had extensive corrections about photographs, and other miscellaneous material....(Defective tape that is impossible to hear.)

I didn’t have to record to satisfy America, AR resumes....One of the problems is that the music grew up in a society that doesn’t exist any more....
The nature of the society in New Orleans provided so much incentive to play the way they played. The musicians to my recollection had a wonderful....They were part of the culture....It was also less competitive here.

Actually, in 1922-23, the only music they heard around here was either jazz or something...but you didn’t hear a variety of other kinds of popular....

Nowhere is this more dramatically demonstrated than in what they call a New Orleans jazz style. And, of course, I really have felt from the beginning that....the term, jazz, is very misleading to the public. One of the problems is, today, that the word jazz has been corrupted to such an extent that it means whatever the user wants it to mean....But, jazz is a specific thing. People don’t understand that....

Since there never has been a New Orleans rhythm and blues...There’s only been, like, a Harlem rhythm and blues which has been played by a lot of New Orleans people. But, it didn’t have any indigenous New Orleans quality, and the music itself has been played for many generations....

[AR speaks about the first New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.] At first, I was totally vocal about it before the first Jazz Festival. I was on television denouncing it....I don’t think it’s supposed to be for the out-of-town visitors. A few people come in that we happen to know....
The jazz that is played [there is] under the poorest possible circumstances, and these people are glad to see them, and it becomes a kind of a social event. But the big concerts in the auditoriums that encourages...and where the performers get the big money are all--neither jazz, nor jazz derived, nor jazz related....

I don’t think that [hotels and restaurants] go into business, fundamentally, to boost the city. I think it is to make money. I don’t think that it constitutes the city’s business to help you do it. I think they’re making enough money as it is....

I think that the political elements in the city have done the major damage, and I’m for them abandoning....

[On Louis Armstrong Memorial Park:] I’ve been asked to help out on that. It’s not up to the point where my assistance is useful but I will be eager to [help] in the development of that.

I want to preview the reconstruction of the Spanish Fort building, the silent movie theater...the ice cream parlor, Spanish Fort, and I think better housing for the New Orleans Jazz Museum.

Also, I expect to see the New Orleans Jazz Museum under different auspices, that was divorced from the [New Orleans] Jazz Club. Not that, that is especially an attack on the Jazz Club, but the fact is that the Jazz Club doesn’t seem to want it, and I would like to see some circumstance where the aspects of the
museum is assimilated by the [Tulane] University....

[The Jazz Museum] is losing money because of the fact that it is not financed properly and...things are frequently out of order, and not handled properly. Stock, merchandise that they’re supposed to be selling, is never up high enough to provide the maximum potential for sales in the place....

I remember characters in the Bourbon House from the time when Adam first started to work there when it opened in 1936. And I remember Earl Stanley Gardner[?]...Isiah the waiter....I really didn’t spend that much time in the Bourbon House, but I spent enough time to get to know it. But, I was at the Bourbon house when it opened....

My painting career ended in the very early [19]40’s, after two pretty successful shows at which time I decided that I didn’t have the potential to be a first class painter even though I have the technical capacity for it.

My emotional structure is such that it is impossible for me to do any painting without intellectualizing, and it finally came to the point where I obviously would have ended up trying to compete with photography, and there was no point to that. This is in spite of the fact that they sold very well.

I studied under Diego Rivera. I was an apprentice of Diego Rivera, and I lived in his house in Mexico, and did my graduate work at the University of Mexico. I learned, really, most of the
advanced technical knowledge that I have from him. He was a very demanding maestro.

I was also sub-apprentice to a paint-maker by the name of Sanchez from whom I learned how to make paint. I learned what metals to burn in order to induce certain pigments. I learned what kind of fertilizer to use to grow indigo plants....

I never knew Sanchez’s first name. He was just known as Sanchez, the paint-maker. I was in Mexico City. It was in Coyacan which is a suburb of Mexico City.

I’ve known quite a number of artists. I even had an interview with Picasso. I knew people like Thomas Hart Benton, and I knew some of the great cartoonists, and caricaturists, of our time, and previous times. I had a good time knowing all these people.

I lived in Hollywood, Florida. I lived in Hollywood, [California, but not for an extended period of time.] In 1937, I went to Hollywood as a writer, and I worked for six weeks [for Pete Smith but didn’t get any writing assignments.]

I was young, and eager to get something done. I quit in spite of the fact that I was making $700 a week for not doing anything, which was big money in those days.

But, I went in, and told him: either you give me something to do, or cancel my contract. They were really astonished by this because they didn’t think I had anything to complain about.
But, I did quit. I did get out of there. But then, I lived in Hollywood for a six month stretch in 1955, unrelated to either jazz activity or art....

Of course, when I was a kid, I went to work for Fleischer Studios in New York. I was just 12 years old, and I was doing the animation on a thing called "Out of the Inkwell."

There was a little clown by the name of "Coco the Clown" who used to jump out of the inkwell, and disport himself against a photograph background. I worked there 10 days, or two weeks, and I was stopped by the Gerry Society which was an organization designed to discourage child labor....

In fact, one of the reasons why I did come back to New Orleans the first time was that friends of mine were involved in making a movie with Richard Widmark. They asked me if I would come along, and check out the music.

It turned out there wasn’t any music in it. That was a movie that was called "Riot on Pier 6," and that was 19--I think, 1949.

Since then, I worked on - as a musical consultant - a whole lot of films, mostly to sort out the tunes that were played by accident in the streets to make sure no copyrights were violated.

Of course, now, I’m working on the Storyville film being produced by MGM, and will be shot in New Orleans, and California during this coming summer....
Summary
February 19, 1975

[The] producer is Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Thomas Mount, and there is a sub-contractor involved which is [ ] Films in New York. The person involved there...her name is Hannah Weinstein, and they have told me that they have Robert Redford to play the part of Tom Anderson. I expect to bring him up to the [Tulane] Jazz Archive next month....

Paul Sylbert is with Paramount, and he's working on the two-part, that is two full-length feature movies. The first of which is to be the early life of Louis Armstrong, and the second is to be Armstrong-Part 2. They have asked me to function as technical consultant, and musical coordinator, on that film which I will undoubtedly [contract?] in the next week or two....

I opened an advertising agency when I got out of the Army, and took on mostly show business type accounts, and had a lot of interesting experiences with it which I'll tell you at a later date.

You want to do another reel? RBA asks. Not now, AR replies. Let's do it another time. I'd like to work with Paul, and them.

I think I have a few more musicians, a few more people to talk to now, RBA says, so we can just stop it for now. Thank you.

END OF REEL