Arthur A. Vigne spells his name; his father spelled his own name John Vigne. AV was born February 4, 1903; his father died about 1916; AV thinks he was about 52 years old at the time. John Vigne played with the Excelsior Brass Band, with the Imperial Band, and the Peerless Band. WR knew Manuel Perez, leader of the Imperial Band. AV mentions his own brother, Sidney Vigne, who also played music; Sidney Vigne was 35 years old when he was killed by a truck; he was good, and played clarinet and sax. WR may have confused him with trumpeter Sidney Desvigne. Sidney Vigne was struck and killed by a truck on New Year's morning around 1925, at the corner of [North] Claiborne and Allen.

John Vigne picked up drumming when he was quite young; he played with many bands and for many purposes; he worked in the red light district, and also played in brass bands for funerals and parades. He preferred playing bass drum in parades and funerals, but he played traps in other [stationary] jobs. AV mentions old friends of his father, men who played in the same bands with John Vigne: drummers Louis Cottrell, Sr. (whose son is still playing, says WR), and Ernest "Nenesse" Trepagnier; string bassist Albert Glenny; Sidney Bechet, who then played clarinet and gave clarinet lessons to Sidney Vigne. Sidney Vigne later taught music.

AV's paternal half-brothers all played music in the District; three were piano players, the other, like his father, a drummer; they were John, Cooney, Man, and Boy Vigne. AV is younger than his half-brothers. AV says he had another brother who played music. WR mentions that he met AV's sister at the Jeunes Amis Hall on N. Robertson St; she was the caretaker when some recordings were made there for Riverside Living Legends series, but she has given up the job now, as it became too hard to do. The sister is younger than AV.
AV mentions drummer Arnold DePass; WR says he was the [half-] brother of drummer Rudolph Beaulieu. AV says DePass's son [Arnold] Jr.] plays trumpet around N. O. AV mentions clarinetist Dave DePass, another brother of Arnold, Sr.

AV tells how his father acquired a "kettle" [probably a snare?] drum from a sailor; that drum and the rest of John Vigne's drums were left to AV when his father died; AV's cousin borrowed them and subsequently lost, or misplaced, them. AV describes the drum equipment his father had. AV believes the use of wire brushes for drumming began some time after his father's death. AV says his father was sick for one year before he died; he became sick when his wife died, when AV was twelve years old.

WR asks about the Peerless Band, and about a photograph copy of that band; he asks if Bab Frank or [Charlie] McCurdy was leader, or if both were, or if someone else was; AV doesn't know. RL suggests that a trumpet player shown in the photograph is Andrew Kimball. AV identifies Oke Gaspard and Vic Garpard, [A. J.] Piron, and clarinetist Charlie McCurdy. AV thought the trumpet player might have been Freddie Keppard, but is now doubtful. WR says Andrew Kimball was some sort of brother of Henry Kimball, bass player with Fate Marable, and father of Narvin [Henry] Kimball, who might be able to identify a picture of his uncle. AV says the photograph of the Peerless Band, in which his father is shown, was taken a long time before his father died; the location was the "Racket Green," on Bayou St. John, where a game, perhaps lacrosse, was played; the band was playing there. [See Federal Writers' Project, New Orleans City Guide, 1938, pp. 84-5.]
AV could never remember the name of the guitar player shown in the photograph; WR says Coochie Martin, guitarist, is said to have played
with the Peerless at one time; he had a brother, Henry Martin, who played drums; their mother took care of a school on Perdido Street, around Louis Armstrong's neighborhood, Perdido and Rampart.

AV's father's band had rehearsals at the house; Sidney Vigne, AV's brother, had the band in which he played rehearse even more than AV's father's band, as Sidney's band were just beginning their career; the Vigne family lived then on Claiborne [Avenue] between St. Philip and Ursuline [streets], on the "back of town side of the banquette near St. Philip."

AV was born on Orleans between Robertson and Villere, "right across from the old Treme Market." His father was born on Burgundy towards Dumaine; he lived downtown all his life.

AV and his family were living on Claiborne when AV's brother, Sidney, began playing a tin flute; after a while, he became good enough to take up clarinet. [Henry] Kid Rena [sic] and his brother Joseph Rene [sic], rented a room at the Vigne's home. Joe Rene was a clarinet player at that time; he later became a drummer. AV's mother helped bring up the Rene boys; she made Kid Rena attend school and go to his first communion; Kid Rena's mother was always working and not able to look after her boys.

AV's father, John Vigne, was a shoe maker; he later opened a shoe repair shop, and later still, a wood and coal shop, located in the District on Marais between Conti and St. Louis [streets]; he had that shop many years before AV was born; the shop closed when John Vigne died; when AV was thirteen years old. AV doubts that any of John Vigne's brothers played music. After [the death of] Sidney Vigne, there were no musicians in the family until recent years, when a son of AV's sister has become a good sax player [Warren Bell?].
AV talks about A. J. Piron's band playing at the Roof Garden, before it had a roof over it; AV was sixteen or seventeen years old then; the name became the Pythian Temple when a roof was put over the dance area, around 1920.

John Vigne taught a small, dark man called "Little Black Joe", who worked in JV's show, how to play drums; JV sometimes sent "LBJ" on jobs he himself couldn't play. "LBJ" wasn't Joe Lindsay; Lindsay was around John Vigne when he was playing drums [learn by watching]. WR says Lindsay died five or six years ago, perhaps more. JL was "a little older" than AV.

AV played drums with Fats Pichon and his band when they were both young, "but I never did like music." AV also studied clarinet with his brother, Sidney, "but I just didn't go for music." AV began playing drums because he could play better than a boy named Louis Dugie [sp?], who rehearsed with Pichon's band, but couldn't play very well. AV played for about two years before he decided to quit.

One of AV's older sisters, who died about 1933, was a non-professional but pretty good piano player; there was always a piano in the Vigne house.

AV says "Dixieland " music of the present and the past is about the same; however, concerning "what I'd call ragtime music, well, there's a big change in ragtime music from the days of my dad, when they played, like for a dance. There's a big difference in the music of today and in their times; the music they played in them times were mostly a one-step, a two-step, or a three-step dance, but you couldn't dance that on the music they're playing today." AV describes the dances, saying a three-step was fastest, a one-step slowest; a person danced more waltzes and schottisches in the older times. He
had just learned to schottische "when it went out." Sidney Vigne was playing "Three Little Blackberries" was the piece played for schottisches. AV says a group of people still dance the cakewalk and the quadrille at Peter Claver Church. WR mentions the quadrille dancers at one of the Creole Festivals; they are people AV referred to above. AV says, "They were out in the park one time when [Alphonse] Picou played, out at the big square, Beauregard Square." WR says there was a Dave Garroway television show about three years ago on which Paul Barbarin, Lizzie Miles and others participated in this show. AV says a group called the Creole Fiesta [correct name for the Creole Festival] still dance the cakewalk and quadrille; they had a dance at the Autocrat Club about two weeks ago.

The name Vigne is French; AV's parents and a grandmother spoke French.

End of Reel 1, Track 1.
Talk of cousins of AV, Tony Vigne and Ferdinand Vigne; the latter lives in California. Talk of AV's half-siblings; almost all of them are dead; a half-sister lives in California; his half-brother, John [Vigne, the younger], has been dead several years.

WR asks for information about the Peerless Band, in which AV's father [John Vigne, the elder] played. AV heard his father play perhaps six times in cabarets; he heard him play many times in rehearsals at their home; AV didn't hear his father play for dances, as AV was too young to attend.

AV thinks the person who was called "Ratty" Vigne must have been his half-brother, Man [sp?] Vigne, who was a drummer. [cf. Chas. Edward Smith and Frederic Ramsey, Jazzmen, Harvest, New York, 1939, p. 19.]

AV tells about the last time he remembers seeing his father play music, at a funeral; shortly afterward, his father became ill, dying a year later. John Vigne and his family were Catholic, but a band or perhaps two or three, played for his funeral; Catholics approved of bands for funerals in those times, but they disapprove of them now. [See notes in ANOJ on Isidore Barbarin's funeral.] When AV's brother, Sidney [Vigne] was killed, there "may have had about seven bands' playing in his funeral procession. Usually when a musician was buried they had a band.

There were nine children in AV's family [including half-siblings?]; AV was the eighth child. If SV were living, he would be in his seventies. AV's father died 45 years ago, when AV was thirteen years old; the father was in his fifties.

AV remembers that his father played at Tom Anderson's place on Basin [Street], corner of Customhouse [now Iberville, Street]; the place was near Lulu White's [brothel]. John Vigne also played at a
cabaret on Liberty Street, but AV doesn't remember the name of it.

AV says "Coke-eye George," so called because he was cross-eyed, was a great piano player. Another good piano player, says AV, was Udell (Wilson, says WR, from Kansas City [Missouri]); he played in a cabaret on Franklin [now Crozat] Street.

AV says the brass bands of earlier times seemed to have more big brass instruments (e.g. baritone horns) than the bands of today. AV thinks the parades were better in the earlier times; he describes some of the costumes. The marching style was different. The parades were at night; the official marchers, carriages, horses, etc., were equipped with small, battery-operated lights. [cf. other interviews.]

AV says the Odd Fellows, the Bulls Club, the San Jacintos, and the Lions Club competed to present superior parades. AV talks about bands riding on wagons and playing to advertise dances for which they were playing that night. AV says people could afford to hire bands to advertise, as the musicians received only about $1.50 for playing a dance and about $1 for playing the advertising. AV says a band of seven pieces could be hired for about $15; a deposit of about $3.50 could be paid when the contract was made, so that each man would get about 50¢. AV says that when a man bought something at a dance for a girl it would be a piece of fruit, which the girl would give to her mother (or other female chaperone) to put in her basket; today the custom is to buy the girl a drink rather than punch. The era of which AV speaks was around 1917-1920. AV himself began dancing in later years, during the 1920's, some time after the popularity of dances such as the Turkey Trot and Ballin' the Jack.

AV believes his father could read music, but he doesn't know what his father ever wrote [i. e. composed] or arranged any music;
AV's brother, Sidney Vigne, did arrange and write music, however.

AV says his father worked with Joe "King" Oliver, and that Oliver worked with his father and with his brother; AV remembers Oliver well. AV remembers Louis Armstrong. AV says Red Batiste had a place (saloon-restaurant) on Howard Street [now LaSalle], in the black down[town] from the Dew Drop [Inn, a nightclub], where many photographs of old-time musicians, including Armstrong, in short pants and just out of the [Waif's] Home, Batiste has died; AV doesn't know where the photographs are now. Armstrong, at the time of the photograph mentioned, played in bands of his contemporaries for "matinee parties," which were given by the children; punch, etc., were sold at the affairs. AV says Armstrong "was playing plenty trumpet then." Batiste has been dead twelve or fifteen years.

Talk of photographs of the Peerless Band; WR says another [other than the one AV has] was published in "Esquire" [yearbook?] in 1945; the photograph was taken, perhaps, in 1906. WR says the negative was acquired from Maurice Durand, cornetist, who died last week on Thanksgiving Day. That photo of the Peerless Band showed Bab Frank; some writing, perhaps added to the photograph, listed Frank and [Charlie] McCurdy [as leaders].

(Talk of Fats Pichon, and of his son; Pichon's mother helped raise AV.)

End of Reel 1, Track 2.