Russell: You might give you name first.
Warner: Albert Warner.

Russell: Any middle name?
Warner: No, any middle name. Born New Orleans, Louisiana, December 31, 1890. When I first started learning music was with a half-brother of mine; he learned from Honoré Dutrey. Well, when he left [bottle opened] --before he left, he had bought him a new trombone; and a boy wanted to buy his old trombone from him, and he refused to sell it to him--he say he wanted it for his brother. Well, he sent downtown and got me, and I went on up to his house to see what it was all about. I got there; he gave me this little old brass horn, with about a bell the size of a saucer—little Chatot (check sp.), little French horn. Well, then, I told him I didn't have time to be worried with that thing. He says, "Well, you got to learn." He say, "I'm getting ready to leave New Orleans", he says, "and I want you to take and learn this thing". I said, "Oh, I don't have time with that". Well, what he did--he went and put it together; he handed it to me. Says, "Well, blow on it". Well, when I first picked it up, I couldn't blow it. So, he say, "Well, keep on". I just took the thing, kept a-blowing first position; so, finally, I made a note in there. I said, "What note is that?" He said, "Well, that's B-flat". So he said, "Keep on blowing". So after I made that note, I say, well, he pushed it in the second position; he held my hand, and showed me the second position. Well, I made that note. Well--then he turned around and shoved my hand in the third position; I made that note. Well, after that, that kinda made me kinda like the thing. I said, "Well, shucks; this thing ain't as hard as I thought it was". So, finally--before I left there, he had me making those three positions. He said, "Now, all that I want you to do now", he said, "go down and buy you a method", he says, "and come up here twice a week", he says, "I'm gonna give you lessons".

Russell: How old were you then?
Warner: Oh, about twenty-two. And ah...

Russell: Had you played anything before that, at all, like drums, or guitar, or anything—fooled around with anything?
Warner: No, never worried [with] music; I had the opportunity to learn to play piano, but I
WARNER: was a fast man at the time; didn't have time to worry with the music. See, and ah—
So, after that, I went and bought the method and started going up there twice a week. So, finally, I got the first, second and third position and learned how to make those notes in there, and so—after he left, I went with Steve. Well, Steve, well, he wasn't a great musician—well, I went on to him and taken a couple of lessons with him. So . . .

RUSSELL: Did he play?
WARNER: He played the trombone, too.

Allen: Steve?
WARNER: Yeah, Steve.

Allen: What was his last name?
WARNER: What was Steve's last name, Sonny?

Henry: Arthur.

WARNER: Arthur Steve?

Henry: Yeah.

WARNER: Yeah—that's his first name, Arthur, huh?

Henry: Yeah, Arthur.

WARNER: Yeah, Arthur Steve—he live right around here, St. Philip Street.

Allen: He's still living, huh?

WARNER: No, he's dead now—yeah. And ah—so, I taken a couple of lessons with him. So, finally, [Oscar?] Jiles was putting up a band—Clay Jiles' brother. Well ah, after I learnt—but, before that, I got a self-instructor; fellow sent off to New York and got me a self-instructor. Well, I went on, and I started practicing out of the self-instructor. So, at the time, I was in the pressing business, too, and still working where I'm at—where I just retired from, in ah . . .

RUSSELL: Telegraph.

WARNER: Yeah. And so every time I'd blow the horn, I'd lay it down, I'd go press a piece; I'd come back, blow the horn, go back and press another piece. And my wife say, "Gee whiz; you make me sick with this thing". I say, "Well, I might make you sick now", I say, "but some day this thing'll come in handy"—cause I'd found out what it was all about, you see. So
Warner: 'ah--finally, after I'd kinda got good with it, Jikes come along; he wanted me to join a little band he was putting up--a little brass band, back [on] Conti Street. So, I went on the bra--brass band there, and so--they called it the Bull's Band. So I used to rehearsal with them every Sunday. So, this same boy what he was talking about--Pete [Pete Pierre]; what we call him, bean, be ah---"Peapicker", huh?

Henry: Yeah.

Warner: Yeah. And I used to go by Pete, and Pete used to help me out a whole lot, you know; and he'd show me different things, cause he used to come around the band, too.

Russell: Oh, what part of town were you born? Did you give that street and ah . . . ?

Warner: Well ah, right around St. Ann and Roman.

Russell: Lived around there?

Warner: Yeah, uh-huh.

Russell: For most of your life?

Warner: I'm brought up around this neighborhood, though, right around what they call the "Treme" [section], see?

Allen: Uh-huh.

Warner: I was brought up around this neighborhood here. And ah, so bringing back to this ah . . .

Russell: Pete, you were talking about.

Warner: This Pete, there--so, we'd go to the barber shop on Bienville Street, there, and we'd rehearsal up in there, him and I--just the bass and the trombone. And so, this fellow, Amos White--Amos White would come along; he'd join in with us, and he would write off a little piece of music there, and he'd make me go over that music, you know, and . . . so, finally, I got pretty good with it, and . . . this little band formed up, and so I went with them--they called it the Bull's Band--so, I went on and started playing with them. So, first job they had, for Carnival Day, Steve say, well, I wasn't good enough, he wouldn't take me out. So, the boys say, well, he say, "You better take him with you so you'll have some kind of help". So he went on out there, and when he came out there, he fell down on the job. [laughter]

Next job that we got was down at the Holy Ghost Church, there--Holy Redeemer--down on Royal and Elysian Fields. So, I went on down there, and I played this job with him, and went back,
Warner: back in the woods here, [back o'town] somewhere, they had—they was short a trumpet player and they picked up a trumpet player back there. So, this fellow walked up to me and says, "Where you from?" I say, "I'm from New Orleans". He say, "I never seen you". I say, "No, it's the first time I was out". He say, "Well, you say you—the first time you was out?"; he say, "I don't understand it". He says, "You playing as good as this fellow here, and this is an old musicianer". I say, "Well", I say, "That's my teacher". He say, "Your teacher?" He say, "You donebeat you teacher". So ah—after that, I just jobbed from band to band, after I kinda got good, you know. And I started playing with ah—what you call this fellow, what they used to call there—Louis Dumaine, and Eddie Jackson. So they'd send downtown and get me—they was living uptown—so they said they wanted me to play with them; so I went on and started playing with a little bra—little band they had up there, and ... Russell: No name to it? Just the ... ?

Warner: Just Louis Dumaine and Eddie Jackson, that's all. So, I went on to playing with them. So after this, I went with—left them, I went with a fellow by the name of William—the Columbia Band, see. And after I left the Columbia Band, then I went on with the Camellia Band. Well, the Camellia had a pretty good pull around this town here; they had work in the countries and down in Violet and all those different places—Bertrandville. . . they was doing pretty good.

Russell: Who was in there? Who was leader?

Warner: Ah, Joe Nicholas—remember Joe Nicholas?

Russell: Oh, sure. Yeah; I knew him quite well.

Warner: Yeah—he was with them then.

Henry: "Outlaw" band.


Allen: "Outlaw" band, huh? [laughter] Why you call it that?

Warner: I was playing along with them. So, I went with Chris Kelly, and different fellows, you know, I would go around playing with . . .

Henry: Okay, that's good. [Talking about drink]

Warner: . . . and . . . So, next band I got with was "Kid" Rena—well, I stayed with "Kid"
Warner: Rena a good while, and I ... 

Russell: That was a brass band, or the dance band?

Warner: No, dance band ... yeah. Then I'd leave him, and well, when I left him I went with another fellow had a band around here. Well, I played with him a pretty good while until it got around depression time; when it got around depression, then I just give up playing—stopped altogether. [That must mean late-1929 and 1930].

Russell: Yeah. I was going to ask some more about some of the names you mentioned—Eddy Jackson, on tuba. . .

Warner: Eddy Jackson on tuba. Full

Russell: . . . people tell me he was pretty good; was he really that good, one of the best?

Warner: Yeah, he was the best they had.

Henry: That's right; he was the best because . . .

Warner: Best they had.

Henry: Because, with the Tuxedo, that band, I used to play with Eddy.

Warner: You see, Eddy—you could be fifteen blocks off, and if Eddy blowed a horn, you could say—blowed that tuba—you could say, "That's Eddy Jackson coming there".

Russell: Oh, somebody was telling, I believe "Fess" Manetta, the other day, was talking about how he used to blow down a fence now and then [laughter].

Warner: You see, Eddy Jackson . . .


Warner: Eddy Jackson blowed—he had a different tone to anybody else, see. And you could tell—any piece he played, you could tell it was him playing it; cause he played it different to anybody else.

Henry: Yes, sir.

Russell: Did he do a lot of—more notes, or faster fingering, or just louder—or what was he so good at?

Warner: He just—it was just a tonation that he had in that horn—I don't know; the other fellows looked like they just didn't have it.

Allen: I see.

Warner: Just didn't have it.
Henry: Then, in other words, he could go up and get a note, regardless of how high it is.
Warner: And drop down, see?
Allen: Uh-huh.
Henry: Drop down there and come in there.
Allen: Uh-huh.
Russell: Big range.
Henry: I don't understand it; yes, sir.
Warner: Yeah; just like say,—WOOOaaah [imitates sound of tuba]—come right on down with that note. Like these fellows—there's a number they plays around here . . . we played it all the time, Sonny.
Russell: [Wilbert] Tillman puts in a thing like that, sometime . . .
Warner: "Lead Me, Savior".
Allen: Yeah.
Warner: I ain't heard nobody else played that thing since Eddy died.
Henry: Yeah, that's right.
Allen: Well, those breaks that John [Casimir] plays on clarinet, you know.
Warner: That's for the bass to play.
Allen: Yeah, I want to get that straight.
Henry: Yeah, that's for the bass, that's right.
Warner: That's for the bass.
Allen: And who would be good on that—Eddy Jackson and who else? Anybody else?
Warner: Eddy Jackson's about the only one I ever heard made that and made it right.
Henry: Oh, no—but of course ah, Porter could do it.
Henry: Yeah, John Porter—yeah.
Warner: John Porter, yeah.
Allen: Who was this guy "Bassie", by the way?
Henry: Huh?
Allen: "Bassie".
Warner: Oh, Little "Bassie"—Little "Bassie" was good, too—the little kid went, you know, little bitty kid went to California—bout that big?

Henry: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Warner: Oh, yeah; he was good on it, too.

Henry: Yeah, yeah, he was pretty good on that, too; that's right.

Warner: Yeah, Little "Bassie".

Henry: Yeah.

Warner: He went to California.

Allen: What's his right name, did you know?

Warner: Ah—I know his family good; they used to live right at the corner from us, Sonny.

Henry: Yeah.

Warner: Right at Orleans and Roman.

Henry: Yeah, Roman.

Warner: Mitchell.

Allen: Mitchell? "Bassie" Mitchell, huh?

Warner: Yeah.

Allen: I never heard him. Bill, did you meet him out in California?

Russell: No.

Warner: Yeah, he's in—he's a little bitty short fellow; he's just about that big.

Allen: Did he play trumpet, or anything else? ...

Warner: No, he played ...  

Allen: ... or string bass?

Warner: ... he played string upright bass, and bass violin.

Henry: Bass violin, yeah.

Warner: Yeah.

Russell: Los Angeles, or San Francisco, do you think? We'll find him, some day.

Warner: Let's see. I believe he's in Los Angeles.

Allen: We'll ask Sidney DesVigne or somebody

Russell: Is he about the same age as you, Mr. Warner, or is he younger?
Warner: Oh, he's young, he's younger than us.
Russell: Just a young fellow.
Warner: He's younger than us, yeah. Yeah, he's younger than us; he's ah—he was a kid when we was around Orleans St.
Henry: Oh, yeah, yeah.
Henry: Yeah.
Warner: Yeah.
Henry: His brother live right in there.
Warner: His brother live here?
Henry: Yeah.
Warner: Well, his brother can tell exactly where he's at.
Allen: Where's his brother, on—on Villere, or Robertson?
Henry: No, but he isn't here; he's at work; he's on
Warner: Oh—well, you can find out what part of California he's in.
Russell: Yeah.
Henry: Yeah.
Russell: Well, when you first learned on your trombone, did you learn to read right away out of that method, or by ear?
Warner: Start right, right and learn how to read, 'cause I couldn't play a thing out of head...
Russell: Yeah
Warner: ... see. And whenever anybody contradict me—say I wasn't making something right, I went to this man here, see; him and I got in the room together, he say, "Well, go on over it". So, I'd go on over the piece of music; he'd say, "There's nothing wrong with it". I say, "Well, they tell me I'm wrong". He say, "You not wrong". I say, "That's why I brought it to you, see if I'm wrong". I say, "If you say it's right, must be right, then." I'd go back to the fellows; I'd say, "Well, you all can play the way you want", see.
Russell: What about "Kid" Rena's dance band—now, did he play by ear, or by—was that music?
Warner: Well ... they played music, and by ear too, but they was better on this routine stuff
Warner: [jazz] than they was on music.
Allen: Uh-huh.
Warner: You see, because lot of time they had music up there, they just was guessing at it, see—specially the sax, you know.
Russell: Who all was in that band at that time?
Warner: Well, the time I was playing with them, they had an "Kid" Rena, Edna Mitchell, Joe Rena, myself, Manny Gabriel—what's this boy what you say work with up there with you all?
Allen: Handy?
Henry: Handy.
Allen: What did Henry Harding play?
Warner: Henry Harding played
Henry: B [flat] tenor
Warner: saxophone
Allen: But he wouldn't play alto?
Warner: No, he played a baritone.
Russell: Did Handy play clarinet then?
Warner: No, he played saxophone.
Russell: Played alto, too.
Warner: And they had another boy from Bay St. Louis there—his daddy's a musician in Bay St. Louis.
Allen: What instrument did he play, sax?
Warner: He played sax, yeah. And they had this other boy playing bass—what his name there?
—"Lizard"?
Allen: Chester Zardis.
Warner: Chester "Lizard", yeah.
Henry: Chester, Chester, that's right.
Warner: Was playing bass . . yeah.
Russell: Had pretty big band, then, wasn't it? It was five . . .
Warner: Yeah, it was ten pieces
Russell: ... ten pieces.
Warner: Yeah, ten-piece band—yeah.
Allen: Two trumpets, or one?
Warner: Had ah, let's see—they had Rena, had Rena, they had ... myself, Edna Mitchell, Joe 
Rena, Chester "Lizarda", and ah, Henry Harding, ["Son"] Thomas on guitar, and they had Manny 
Gabriel, Handy, and this boy over the river—ah, from over the lake—it was ten, ten, ten-
piece—they had about ...
Allen: Who was Thomas, on guitar; what was his name?
Warner: Remember Thomas, used to live on St. Ann and Claiborne? Remember he used to play 
guit—play banjo?
Henry: Yeah, Thomas did that; that's all I ever know him by.
Warner: That's all I ever know him by, Thomas.
Allen: Was he related to Tom Benton, or ...?
Warner: No, his last name was Thomas.
Allen: Oh, I see.
Warner: Yeah, his last name was Thomas—yeah. . yeah.
Allen: Who was in some of the other bands you played with?
Russell: Once more, about that Rena band—was that before the depression? About when was that? 
Warner: Well, that's just a little before ah, little before depression; they was playing on 
[the] Astoria.
Russell: In the 1920's, up ... 
Warner: Yeah, yeah—around about '27, '28—because we played up there, it must have been 
about a year and a half.
Russell: Was that before Lee Collins and [Joe] Robichaux and a bunch went in there, or was 
it ... 
Warner: Well ... 
Russell: ... after that?
Warner: ... Lee Collins used to come up there—well, you see, after they left from up there, 
then they started playing what you call "percentage" jobs; then they was using different bands.
Warner: Then Lee Collins left here, and he went on up to Chicago, I believe--New York, some of those places--yeah.

Russell: Somebody called that the Astoria Roof--was it sort of a roof garden? Did they call it that?

Warner: Well, they used to call it a roof garden, but it was just the same as a dance hall, you see.

Allen: It was all closed in.

Warner: All closed in, yeah.

Allen: Davy Jones was in there after you, or before you?

Warner: Oh, he must have got in there after us.

Allen: He's in California, too, now [Dominique Remy].
Allen: Get out there again, sometime.
Warner: Fine.
Allen: See all the fellows.
Warner: I guess I'll be up there pretty soon—not to stay, though.
Allen: Oh, just going out for a visit.
Russell: To visit.
Warner: Yeah, I got my son up there.
Allen: The saxophone player?
Warner: Uh-huh.
Allen: Oh... what was you half-brother's name? I didn't get that.
Allen: Never heard of him.
Warner: Yeah; he's dead; he's ah—he died in ah—he died in Chicago.
Allen: Who did he play with?
Warner: Well, he used to play with the Excelsior Band then; that was years ago, you see.
And then he left—he didn't stay here very long after that—and he left, and he went to Chicago.
Allen: Uh-huh.
Warner: He played with Honoré Dutrey.
Allen: Uh-huh.
Warner: You remember when Honoré was playing with Excelsior?
Henry: Dutrey, trombone player?
Warner: Yeah.
Henry: Sure.
Warner: You remember that big fellow, big heavy-set fellow, looked like a Turk?
Henry: Oh, yeah, yeah.
Warner: That's who I'm speaking of.
Henry: Oh, yeah?
Warner: Yeah.
Henry: I'm a son-of-a-gun. Sure, I know him.
Warner: 'Cause Honoré learnt him, you see.
Henry: Yeah, I understand.
Warner: Well, after Honoré learnt him, he say, well, he say, "You see to Albert learning how to play".
Henry: He was a good one, too.
Warner: Yeah.
Henry: I'll say.
Warner: Good musician, he was.
Allen: Who else in your family played?
Warner: Well, I'm ah--just my son, the one that's in California, that's the only one plays. My daddy, he played bass, but that was, fo--way before Sonny's time.
Allen: Yeah.
Warner: Yeah.
Russell: What kind of bass did he play?
Warner: Bass violin.
Russell: I mean, in dance bands . . ?
Warner: Yeah, dance bands, yeah.
Russell: Was a string bass?
Warner: Was a string bass, yeah.
Henry: He played with the bass, I believe.
Warner: He mighta, he mighta played with the bass [laughter]. That's before your time, and my time.
Henry: Yeah, sho'.
Allen: I just wondered who he played with--any particular band you remembered, or that he mentioned?
Warner: No, no particular band, that I know of.
Allen: Yeah.
Warner: I guess he played with some of these old musicianers like hisself; but, right now, if he was living, he'd be about ninety years old.
Henry: Scrap band— you see, he just pick up— say, "Come on, let's go have a little fun"— I guess that's the kind of band he had at that time, you see.

Warner: Yeah. Them fellows used to have— back in that time, they had a lot of old musicianers, you know, like ah, Jimmy Brown— that fellow's name, used to play there?

Allen: Uh-huh.

Warner: Uh, Jimmy Brown and— there was another dude there used to play over here at the Cooperators' Hall— I can't think of his name.

Henry: Well, you see at that time . . .

Warner: They was, they was all— well, you wasn't, you wasn't in the city, then.

Russell: Do you remember Billy Marrero, Lawrence Marrero's father?

Warner: No, I don't remember him well.

Henry: You don't remember . . .

Allen: You don't remember the Superior Band?

Henry: Billy?

Warner: I remember the Superior, but I don't know Marrero's daddy.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Henry: Well . . .

Warner: I know his brothers— you see, I know all them boys, but I don't know, I don't know the old man.

Allen: You heard it— you heard him, I guess, and didn't know him, huh?

Warner: I didn't know him, see.

Allen: Ummmm — 'cause I know he was— had the Superior; it was really his band.

Henry: Yeah . . . . . . yeah . . . . . . yeah.

Warner: Yeah, I remember it back, where they had back in that time, they had the Superior, and some other old band they had there— they had a lot of old bands at that time.

Russell: Remember the Olympia Band with [Freddy] Keppard, or anybody around here— you remember hearing Keppard when you were a kid?

Warner: Oh, yeah . . .

Allen: Tell him about what they used to call you. You remember, we were talking about how people get your name confused?
WARNER: Oh, yeah, there's—well, you see, Keppard was kind of a little cousin of mine; you know—well, they used to call me Freddy Keppard [laughter]. And his brother, Louis, live around on Villere Street now, you see, and ah...they say, "Well, that's my cousin, you see". Well, they called, they called him—called me Freddy Keppard, see; everywhere I went, people used to call me Freddy Keppard.

RUSSELL: Did you look like him some, too?

WARNER: Well, I looked just that much—just...yeah.

RUSSELL: He got awfully heavy, of course, before he died; I never saw him.

WARNER: Yeah, well you see, when Freddy start, he started off on the violin, see...

ALLEN: Uh-huh.

WARNER: ...yeah—up here on Villere and Villere and St. Louis, see; he was nothing but a little kid, then. And from that, he took up cornet.

ALLEN: Uh-huh. What was happening around Villere and St. Louis; was it a barroom, or one of those spots?

WARNER: Well, Villere and St. Louis—well, no, there was houses, like, and in one part they had a bakery, and at the corner they had a grocery—grocery and bar; and that other part there, what they had a barroom in...

HENRY: Yeah.

WARNER: ...on the riverside, yeah, barroom.

ALLEN: And would he play in the barroom, or would he just stand outside?

WARNER: Well, he pah—he played ah—you know, he used to play at home, but after he learnt, you know, and he started playing all them different little "tunks" around there, you know, then he left, and he went away, see—yeah, he left here and went on to Chicago—I believe he left before Oliver did.

ALLEN: Uh-huh.

RUSSELL: Yes, I think so.

WARNER: Yeah, I believe he left before Oliver left here.

RUSSELL: Did you hear—remember Oliver playing here?

WARNER: Oh, yeah; I used to go dance by Oliver's music. He used to play around here at the Ec—ah, Economy Hall.
Russell: How did Ory play? Was he a head man, or read much, or pretty rough, or nice tone-what . . . ?

Warner: Well, he had a nice tone in his trombone—to me he did, back in that time, as far as, you know, as I had any understanding; I used to like his playing. Yeah, cause everywhere he was playing, I would be there.

Russell: Uh-huh.

Warner: Yeah, you see.

Henry: I heard him . . .

Warner: But I didn't have no interest in no music, then, you see, back in those days, see.

Henry: I heard him a couple of times, but I think he was most of a head man.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Henry: Course, he can play. You see, Jim [Jim Robinson], him and Jimmy is on the same style.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Henry: √ They understand. √ They they gonna play it, . They gonna play nicely, too. But I thing he's most of a . . .

Warner: Well, what is he? Is he a routiner?

Henry: Yeah, he's . . .

Warner: You see, that's the thing I didn't know; I'm telling you right now, back in those days I didn't know . . .

Russell: Yeah.

Warner: . . . all I'd know, I'd just go to the dances, they could just sit down there and play—I wouldn't know . . .

Henry: I know though, a little bit, but not too much, you understand, but I know that he wasn't a man on my type or Harrison Barnes? You understand—he Louis Nelson, he wasn't on the type of them; but, he was a good man, you understand. Take Jim; what they do. What they call me "Jim". Everytime they see me, "hello; Mr. 'Jim'". But I'm

Allen: (laughter)

Henry: Plenty people call me "Jim", but my name is not "Jim". √ You say "Jim". I say "O. K.", I say "How you feel". "O. K." Because they says I and Jim is brothers. Of
Henry: course, we kinda favors, and when we talk, we almost talk alike sometimes. But we is no kin at all.

Allen: You taught him trombone and taught him how to talk, too?

Henry: No, no. Hell, no. [much laughter].

Warner: I--------it looks like that.

Henry: Wait wa-wa-wa-wait a minute. Wait-wait-wait-wait a minute. I couldn't talk my own self. How the hell and I--how can I teach him how to talk [if] I couldn't talk my own self. But "kicks", let me tell you; it's "kicks" sometimes when he and I get together. I say "partner," I say, "I'm learn you how to talk good, eh?" He so [laughter]. He say, "I punch you in the mouth sometime," he say.

Warner: They did tell me that Sonny was - uh - Jim's - Jim's uncle.

Henry: No.

Russell: I wondered.

Henry: No, we is no kin at all.

Russell: But you did know him, of course, down in the country, too. Knew his family.

Henry: I know. I know him and understand him personally. You understand.

Warner: I gotcha.

Henry: So, by Ned, I think I am his teacher. But the idea. Sometime we got to talking I say, "Partner, you learning good, how to talk." I say, "just keep on, you'll learn." [laughter]

Warner: To get back now to that Eureka Band there.

Henry: Yeah, go ahead.

Russell: Oh, yeah.

Warner: See, way back, about as far as--far as I can remember--[Willie] Cornish had come to get me to play with the Eureka Band; well, Cornish; he wasn't no kind of reader, which Sonny know that, but he always wanted somebody that, you know, could help him out. So, he come and he got me to play one job; after he got me to play one job, well, he did just like I did Sonny. Well, then, he say, "You stay here." So, I said, "All right." So, I continued playing with them. So, after I got to making a lot of jobs out in the country--the band was kind of going down, they wasn't doing much work; I started going to the country and playing.
ALBERT WARNER: REEL I

Retyped

January 8, 1959

Warner: And Wilson was running a little candy plarto--candy stand, and he didn't have time to rehearse. So, I say, "Well, you run your candy stand; I'm going to play music!" So, when they'd get something, they didn't--want me to play, I told him, "Well, I'm going to the country." So, he say, "Well, I have to get somebody to play." So, I say, "All right, you get somebody to play." I say, "Well, get 'Red' [Clark]." Say, "'Red' play trombone." So, that's how they got "Red" in the band, you see.

Henry: He play with it, yeah.

Warner: Yeah, see . . .

Russell: You were in the band before "Red"?

Warner: I was in the band before "Red", you see.

Russell: And his--you remember his father? His father had been a . . .

Warner: Well, I don't know his father.

Russell: You don't remember him.

Warner: No, I don't know anything about his father.

Russell: He'd been one of the organizers of the real old band.

Warner: Well, see, me, I'm the only old, old man in that, in--I mean from old back . . .

Henry: Yeah.

Warner: . . . I'm the only old man in there.

Russell: When did you join; do you remember about what year?

Warner: Well, I wouldn't know exactly what year it was.

Russell: That before the depression, the time you were with "Kid" Rena, or after that?

Warner: No, that was after depression. Let's see, that's--'30, '31, around about--let's see, the depression in '29 . . .

Allen: Uh-huh.

Warner: . . . must have been around about '20--'37, '38, something around about that, yeah.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Warner: Or it might have been before that, you see . . .

Russell: Yeah.

Warner: Long before that; but I'm just giving a rough guess at it, you know.

Allen: Yeah.
Warner: 'Bout around 'bout that time, you see. Well, at that time, we used to rehearsal up and down Rampart St.--see they-- sometime they rehearsal in, in the back of one barroom, and then next time they rehearsal in the back of a restaurant; see, didn't have no regular place. You remember the time Louis [Armstrong] came down here to play that "Peanut Vendor"?

Henry: Yeah.

Warner: Well, that's the time I . . .

Henry: Oh, I see.

Warner: . . . was playing with ah, I was playing with them then. Well, that was around what? It was around about 19--in the thirties, anyway.

Allen: Was that when Louis was at the Sunburst Gardens?

Warner: Yeah--what year was that?

Russell: That was way back--1931, then.

Allen: Yeah.

Warner: Yeah, round 'bout that time.

Allen & Warner: [Garbled]

Russell: About the time Buddy Petit, about the time Buddy Petit died. You remember when . . .

Warner: Yeah, when Buddy Petit died; cause we played Buddy Petit's funeral, you see.

Allen: But--you were in the Eureka when you played Buddy Petit's . . .

Warner: I was in the Eureka . . .

Allen: . . . funeral?

Warner: . . . I was with, in the Eurekas, but I went and played with Rena to play on, to play Buddy's funeral, you see.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Warner: But ah, for the Louis--when Louis came in, why, then, we went and picked up Louis up at the L. & N. depot, there.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Henry: Oh, I see.

Warner: And Louie had--that "Peanut Vendor" was out then--that's the time he was playing the "Peanut Vendor". They had people around there like ah, like they couldn't--they didn't know what was coming up until they seen him getting off the train there.
ALBERT WARNER: REEL I

Retyped

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Allen: Uh-huh.

Warner: And we brought him through Canal St. there.

Russell: Whose band were you playing with then?

Warner: Eurekas.

Russell: Eureka, at that time--already.

Warner: Yeah, that's right--yeah. It had to be the Eurekas because that was the Zulus, the Zulus band then, you see.

Russell: I wonder if they had all brass bands, or some dance bands went down there--I heard there were several bands down there to meet him. Were there?

Warner: Well ah, they had ah, they had one brass band, and, if I'm not mistaken, they had one band in a wagon, like--you know, playing on, playing on the furniture wagon, yeah.

Russell: Yeah. I thought maybe "Kid" Rena or somebody was there at that time, too on the wagon, that you were with.

Warner: I don't remember what band it was that was in the wagon, but I know we was the marching band, you see. And ah, cause we played, we played on through Canal St.; brought him on up to the hotel there--he was staying at that hotel on Julia and Rampart.

Henry: Yeah.

Warner: What you call it, the Patterson?

Russell: Patterson.

Warner: The Patterson Hotel, yeah.

Allen: Had you just joined the Eureka then, or had you been with them long?

Warner: Oh, I hadn't been with them very long, then.

Allen: Uh-huh.

Warner: Just about that time, yeah.

Russell: Who else was in the Eureka then, when you joined?

Warner: Well, at that time there was Willie Wilson, Johnny Wilson, myself, Cornish . . .

Henry: Good. [Allen pouring drink]

Warner: ... ah. Flowers, . . . Flowers - let's see, who they had on bass drum? I think "Little Jimmy" was playing - what . . .?
Henry: "Groundhog?"
Warner: Yeah, "Groundhog".
Allen: "Groundhog?"
Warner: Yeah.
Henry: Yeah, that's what we used to call him.
Warner: And they had, they had another fellow on ... 
Henry: He little bitty fellow. Black.
Warner: ... on snare drum--I don't think of his name.
Allen: Was it [Daniel] "Jim" Mukes; is that the one?
Warner: And had ah--if I'm not mistaken, George Lewis was玩in' clarinet.
Allen: "Black Benny"'s buddy, huh?
Henry: Yeah, yeah.
Allen: "Black Benny"'s buddy.
Russell: George Lewis?
Warner: Yeah; I believe George Lewis was playing clarinet.
Russell: Oh, ah--when did [Louis] "Shots" [Madison] play with the Eureka? I used ... 
Warner: "Shots"? Yeah, "Shots" was playing ... 
Russell: Way back then?
Warner: ... "Shots" was playing, too.
Allen: Uh-huh.
Warner: There was three trumpets--"Shots," Willie Wilson, and they had some other fellow playing with Willie Wilson.
Allen: When did [Alcide] Landry come to town?
Warner: No, Landry, let's see--no--I believe--yeah, Landry was with them; yeah, Landry was with them, cause I used to kid Landry about begging cigarettes--remember how I'd do that? [Power of suggestion?]
Henry: Sho'.
Warner: Lick his, lick his finger, he meant for somebody to give him a
cigarette, you see.
Allen: Uh-huh.
Warner: That's where we used to get a kick out of him. So eh--when I first saw him do that, I didn't know what he was talking about; and a fellow say he was begging for cigarettes.
Henry: Whoop!
Warner: Yeah..yeah, he'd be begging for cigarettes. That was their line-up; Landry, "Shots!" and Willie Wilson; Johnny Wilson on baritone; and Verret on tuba--you remember Verret?
Henry: Yeah, Verret, yeah, I remember him.
Warner: Cornish and I; and ah Flowers on that ... 
Henry: Alto.
Warner: ... alto; and they had them two ah .. them two drums--let's see, they had a clarinet--I'm most sure it was George Lewis.
Allen: Does Flowers still live around here, or did he move down?
Warner: He runs on the bass--he runs, I mean, he runs on the ship; yeah.
He lives down my way somewhere.
Henry: I saw him a week before--let me see--Christmas week.
Warner: Yeah, he lives on ... 
Allen: We want to get his address, too, you know; he used to live around here, I know, didn't he?
Warner: Yeah, he lived at ... 
Henry: Yeah, he used to live .. yeah.
Warner: He used to live around at Villere Street--Villere and ah, Dumaine.
Henry: Yeah.
Allen: Not far from here.

Warner: Yeah, he moved down below, cause I see his wife sometime around by, around St. Bernard Street ... yeah. But he's, he's running on a ship all the time.

Henry: Ship, yeah—he ships, yeah.

Warner: Yeah, he's mostly on the ship.

Henry: He don't play any more, at all.

Warner: No, he don't worry with it.

Henry: Flowers.

Allen: Doggone, that's too bad. There's no alto players and no . . .

Henry: Boy, that ain't no joke.

Allen: . . . and no baritone players.

Warner: No baritones. You see, that's what's missing in those bands, though—the baritone and those alto, and those melophone—the little French horn, we used to call them.

Allen: Uh-huh, I see.

Russell: Were there any saxes in the Eureka Band when you joined?

Warner: Well, no—they had a clarinet, and this ah, this ah, peckhorn—melophone.

Russell: Baritone horn, and all.

Warner: Yeah; and the baritone horn—Johnny Wilson was playing baritone—yeah. Just after that ah—after the band started getting scattered out, they started putting clarinet, I mean saxophone in [place of] baritone horn, like they got now.

Henry: Yeah; cutting out the . . .

Warner: Cutting out all that, you see.

Henry: Brass instrument, and that's the—main thing what they should have peckhorn in the band.
Warner: That peachhorn and that baritone is missing.

Henry: Baritone—yeah.

Warner: Because they—they got they got some of that—we got some of that old music up there now; if "Red" was to go through it—show you that old music we used to play—I was showing "Sonny" a piece there that—what you call it, the "Chicago . . ."?

Allen: "Tribune."


Warner: "Chicago Tribune" [by Paris Chambers].

Henry: I'm got it, right over there. [old music]

Warner: We got all that there. "Red"'s got a lot of that/we used to use up there, see.

Russell: Yeah, I saw some of it . . .

Warner: And all that is, all good music.

Henry: He's 'fraid if it, though, because that bass has got to work there, and then he know doggone well if he come there with me, I'm going to be on him with that bass part, because, you know, I can play bass.
[Russell:] The bass part is sort of tough on some of those things.

[Henry:] Yeah, tough.

[Warnen:] You see, those bass parts there you some of these fellas are not fast enough with these fingers, see them fingers, they they got their fingers too stiff on 'em. Fingers got to be supple, just the same as it is on the trumpet. But you can't, you can't press down on the things, like that.

[Russell:] No, heavy [unintelligible]

[Warnen:] You, you fingers have got to be supple, now here's a man that can handle one of those, he can handle the bass. But I'm gonna

[Henry:] Now listen. You see... 

[Warnen:] Put him on the bass, you see.

[Henry:] See, The idea is: with your bass irregardless you've got to know the the artificial fingering.

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Henry:] So if something come difficult to you well you mustn't know how to make one thing one way. You must know how to steal and do everything--you must take advantage of your instrument and never your instrument take advantage of you, you must always try to take advantage of your instrument. So that's the way I figures at all times, you understand? The things that I see are easy to make, well that's the way I makes it.

[Warnen:] The same way with the trombone--there are things that you can make on the trombone, you can make a artificial note.

[Henry:] Yeah, that's the idea.

[Russell:] Oh, yeah.

[Warnen:] Make it a artificial note's you see on the trombone.

[Allen:] Use that third valve, sometimes and catch funny things, you know.
[Warner:] Yeah.

[Henry:] Now, you right.

[Allen:] I know on that bass.

[Henry:] That third valve. And sometimes that first and third valve catch a devil of a lot of things, too.

[Warner:] So, yeah, but if you don't know it, how are you going do it.

[Allen:] Yeah, that's right.

[Warner:] If you don't know it, you can't make it, there you are. So you just gotta be guessin'. You see, while you're guessin', the band's gone.

[Henry:] That's right.

[Allen:] Look, now. Don't be afraid [of] what you are going to say, we can save these tapes and not play them for anybody--I say, this is for a hundred years from now. You know, if you want to, you can put like a restriction on it they call, you know, and not to be played for ten years, you know, or something.

[Henry:] Oh--

[Allen:] Don't worry, just speak your mind.

[Henry:] Sure [unintelligible]

[Allen:] You know what I mean.

[Henry:] That's all you can do is say anything that you know. You see ah Jim [Robinson]--

[Allen:] Uh-huh

[Henry:] Just they like they always say about Jim, Jim, he's my friend.

[Russell:] Yeah, we all know that, we know [that] you are buddies, yeah.

[Henry:] Yeah [unintelligible] They all--sometime some guy, "oh Jim beat cha you playing." I say, "yeah" "Jim know more that you." I say, "yeah". I don't tell them that Jim isn't just as good. I said, I said, I say one thing, I say, "Jim, he makes his livin' off of it--I have too,
I have made my livin' off of this, too." I say, well what is the use of me knockin' Jim--you understand when I come along and I did good.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Henry:] [unintelligible] But, this [is] the question I ask them: I sez, ah, "If a man goes to school," I says, "understand me very well, you no go to school," I sez, "if a newspaper--if I can take a newspaper and read it, and you can't read it," I said, "who is the most best man?" The question have not been answered as yet to me which is [unintelligible]

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Henry:] "Oh, he can do this, and the other," but I say, "Answer my question." As yet it have not been answered as yet.

[Warner:] In other words, if he get a check, he put a cross mark and you can sign your name, there's a big difference in it, huh?

[Henry:] [unintelligible] But and then they sign like this. [unintelligible]

[Warner:] You see, he's all right in his style of playing--

[Henry:] He can play. Don't let no one fool you.

[Warner:] You can play with fellas that can use you in those [unintelligible], too.

[Russell:] I know

[Henry:] I like his playing

[Warner:] You go get with some other bands like up the line there [up North] when you go up the line, well that routine [playing by ear] is all right, but they want you to see, [i.e. read] too,

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Warner:] See.

[Henry:] Yeah, well--
[Warner:] You can't only say ah I'm a trombone player, you see, and I can play, all right, now but when you say that you can play, they're going to get that music and they are going to put it there. All right, now whatcha gonna do? Are you gonna wait until somebody else starts a-playing--well, that man, he ain't waitin' until somebody else starts a-playing, he want to see what you are doin'. And you can't fool them people. They, when they, when you see it all the time, we get it and you read that ah that musicianers book there, Dick. Sometimes callin' for men. They want a man that can fake and read, too. You gotta do both.

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Warner:] Well, how the hell are you gonna do, you can't--if you can take and you can't read, well you can't use you. You can get out here and play with these fellas that know that you just can fake, well, then they're gonna let you go by with that. See, but if they ever get in a place where they got to--all of them do some readin' themself, well, then--that's where you're at.

[Henry:] Torpedoed, ain't it.

[Warner:] You're handicapped. You're just like a crippled child.

[Henry:] Well, I'm gonna tell you--about Jim, I just wish that that I could play like him in a way of speaking, you understand, of course, I know that I'm his superior, ya understand, but what I'm speakin' about in his stype of playing, understand. And Jim, if he ever get in there one time. Boy!! He gonna make you sick. But that man don't forget nothing at all.

[Russell:] No, he's got a lot of life to his playing. Barrelhouse style.

[Henry:] I'm gonna tell you. You can say whatcha wanta, I don't care
what nobody say, Jim is a good tail-gate man.

[Russell:] That's right.

[Henry:] To me, I've tried my whole life to try and make him learn how to read like I could, but if Jim had learned the way I learnt.

[Warner:] Jim never did want to learn how to read.

[Henry:] Wait, if Jim had learned the way I learned, Jim would be one of the best trombone players in the city.

[Russell:] I wonder, did Jim learn to read a little bit--he told me once that he could read some, and I thought maybe his eyes, you know his eyes aren't too good for reading without glasses, I thought maybe that was part of it.

[Henry:] No, his damn head.

[Russell:] He still couldn't read even with glasses.

[Warner:] This man tried his damnedest to learn him how to read.

[Russell:] I wondered whether he really wanted to or not.

[Henry:] No, this is the truth, I ain't telling you no lie.

[Allen:] Say it.

[Henry:] His head ain't right. But, I'm going to tell you [unintelligible]: that son of a gun, he can play; I'll tell the world, any time you jump on Jim, you done jumped on a man. With his band, he put [everything ?] in there. But, now, of course, if he going to come around with the Eureka, it's a different attitude; you got to change, change, change your lip--if you don't, you're in a hell of a fix.

[Warner:] Just like he said; he said if "Sunny" or I there, he don't mind filling in for either one of us.

[Russell:] Yeah, I've heard him get along pretty well.

[Warner:] But, but if, he say if either one of us ain't there, he say he don't want to play.

[Henry:] No, because this the idea, of it you see; I don't work
against, against nobody, if I can help out, you understand?, you understand? But now, if a guy want to come in and see what he can do this thing here, well, I'm going to try him out, too [unintelligible] I'm going to take my horn out [and] I'm going to see what he going to do, see? But if a person comes there--you understand, [if he] be a nice fellow, Well, sure, I'm going to help him out. And then, again, my band--I ain't going to let my band fall for trying to take revenge or hurt somebody else. No. I wouldn't do that. And if I see he's kind of weak and come in some place, if I know where his weak spot at, I'll come in there. And that's my band; I don't what my band to go down just because a guy come in there to see what he can do, then when he get there, he can't do it. Well, that don't make sense to me. Then, I know, and then I'm going to let my band go down? I wouldn't do it; I'm going to come on in there. In my old band, that's the way we'd do. [Warner:] You see, like him and I, we are about the onliest two that, that I know of yet--

[Henry:] [Work ?] together.

[Warner:] [That stay?] I--see, now like sometime you might see me look over at him; well, that means that I'm going down, you see? Or if I throw my horn up, he know I'm going to pick up, and if I put my, lay my horn down like this, he know I'm going to pull down. If he do the same thing, I know he's going to take down, see? And if he put his horn up, I know he's going to, he going to go up. So that's why you see him and I, sometime you see one of us down and one up--

[Henry:] We understand.

[Warner:] We understand it. [Unintelligible]

[Russell:] [Unintelligible]

[Henry:] That's the idea. And then another thing--

[Warner:] And we never let one another get out of step.
[Henry:] I give him hell all the time.

[Warner:] Yeah.

Henry and

[Warner:] [Unintelligible] Only this last time, only this last time he messed--

[Henry:] One time I was out there.

Henry and

[Warner:] [unintelligible] Last time he messed me up.

[Warner:] He kept saying to me, he say, "AI, AI, aauuh, huh, huh." [unintelligible] I say, "God durn," I say, "everytime I come, I come on." He say, "You know something, I done made that humbug" I say, "I know you made the humbug" I say "Sun, ain't you out."

[Henry:] That's right. You see, when I'm wrong, I give up, you understand? That's one thing with me: I don't care how good you is, you can be wrong one time.

[Russell:] Oh, sure.

[Henry:] I don't care how good you is, you can be wrong. So I say, "Well Al, it's me, it's on me this time." And that's the first time since we been playing that I [have] gone out of line.

[Allen:] That was when we ended up around Claiborne and, and--what was it?--Louisiana. Is that the one you're talking about? Where we rode back in the car together? Where you had the humbug? Yeah, we all came back in the car together.

[Henry:] Yeah, the thing--

[Warner] What was it, that last funeral?

[Henry:] Yeah, the last funeral, yeah.

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Russell:] In the old days I understand they used to march with the right foot on the first beat, like (demonstrates) one, two, right, left.
[Henry:] But now they're doing it left, [right].

[Russell:] The army does the other way now. The young fellows who went to the army, they do the other way. What do you all try to do now?

[Henry:] Left, left—on the left [all the time ?].

[Warner:] Left, right, left, right, left, right.

[Russell:] Some of the other bands still—occasionally you see some of the old fellows will put their first foot—

[Henry:] [Yeah, on the] right; yeah, I understand.

[Warner:] Well, I'm telling you, some of them don't know their right from their left.

[Russell:] Some of them don't know or care.

[Warner:] They don't know right from left and you—

[Russell:] Some don't know or care.

[Warner:] See, some's on the right, some's on the left, you see. And there it is, and it's all mixed up, you see.

[Henry:] But listen, I can tell you one thing: in this here band of ours, [in the Eureka Band: usual] you look at the picture and I'll guarantee you'll always see, pretty near, the left one. I, Red, and Al is got the same step you can see our left foot is out there at all times. Because me, I watch him, I keep him straight all the time. I tip my horn, I hit him on the [side]. I say, "watch your step there." And then [skips] he change and get on the step.

[Warner:] See, sometime I turn around and look at a chick, you know. "Al," he says, "watch it, watch it, watch it." I say, "All right I got it." I'll make my skip, and I got it. All I do is just make that skip and I get back in there.

[Allen:] When you started out, how did you do it?

[Warner:] What, the?—
[Allen:] With the step—the left foot first or right foot first?

[Warner:] Well, no; I'll tell you: they broke me in on that, you see. Well, they had to tell me, because I didn't know right from left, me. See, I didn't even know if you had to put the right foot down or the left foot, you see? Well, Clay Jiles, he was one of them old-time drummers, huh, Sunny?

[Henry:] Yeah.

[Warner:] And he was a bass drum beater. And so I told him, I say, "Well, Jiles, I even don't know how to march." He say, "That's all right," he say; "come on," he say, "come in my room." He say, "now listen when I hit that drum. Listen now: put that left foot down." I put the left foot down. He say "now everytime I hit the drum, put your left foot first. Now here. Now here the right foot, now your left foot, now your right foot." Clay Jiles learned me how to march.

[Allen:] You say you played with his brother? Were you the one who said that?

[Warner:] Yeah, I played with Clay Jiles and he had a brother they called Oscar Jiles.

[Allen:] Is that Albert Jiles' uncle [Oscar?] or father, or what?

[Warner:] That's—Clay Jiles is Albert's uncle; that's his uncle. His daddy was—see—I can't think of his daddy's name [Albert Jiles, Sr.]

[Allen:] Well, we'll ask him; he'll know.

[Warner:] Yeah. I can't think of his daddy's name.

[Allen:] We'll get it; I just wanted to get those guys [straight].

[Russell:] I was going to ask about—in marching, the trombones are always out in front; but where does the tuba belong? Right with you, or sometimes the tuba in back of you, in the old days? Way back?

[Warner:] The tuba was supposed to always be in the front.
[Henry:] No; sometime ago the tuba used to be behind us, because if you had two trombones the tuba used to be back in the second [rank]. But you see, now, here of late, we got it so that we go three--

[Russell:] Three in front.

[Henry:] Yeah. See--

[Russell:] But if you had only two in a row, then two trombones, then the tuba in back. Who else back there with him?

[Henry:] Well, on this side--on that side there's your tuba and your--

[Warner:] Sax?

[Russell:] Where'd the baritone horn go?

[Henry:] Alto sax and the baritone behind me.

[Russell:] Baritone horn back of you--

[Henry:] Yeah, behind me.

[Russell:] Over on the right side.

[Henry:] Yeah, behind Al [Warner], yeah.

[Warner:] Yeah.

[Russell:] With the tuba?

[Warner:] Yeah.

[Henry:] Yeah. [Yeah, when they, were ?]


[Henry:] Yeah, that's right, right with the tuba, that's right.

[Warner:] Yeah, baritone--

[Russell:] Where'd the alto horns come then?

[Henry:] He come next.

[Russell:] Next. Where was the clarinet? Were they?--

[Henry:] They come next to the trumpets, but the trumpets would be last.

[Russell:] Were the trumpets last or the drums last?
[Henry:] No, no--the trumpets would be next to the alto and then the drums.

[Warner:] The drums in the rear.

[Russell:] The drums last.

[Warner:] The drums was last.

[Russell:] How come the Eureka does the other way now? They put the trumpets in back.

[Warner:] Yeah--

[Russell:] Was that Perry's [Humphrey] idea or--

[Warner:] I don't know how Perry's got that lined up now, but I noticed that myself: he put the drums in--

[Russell:] In the middle--

[Warner:] Between, between [Manuel] Paul [tenor sax] and them [the trumpet's]. I noticed that myself.

[Russell:] In the old days I understand [that] the drums were always in back.

[Warner:] Always in the back, yeah.

[Henry:] Always in the rear, rear rank.

[Russell:] I wonder if he had a reason for that or--

[Warner:] He didn't say what was his reason or anything; I don't know.

[Russell:] I imagine he likes to stay back there where he can keep an eye on the whole band.

[Warner:] That might be it; [ ? then] keep an eye on that time, you know. Then in case they get out of the time, well then he could call them down.

[Russell:] That's the only band that does it that way that I ever saw; I wondered why he did it.

[Warner:] Yeah. That might be the reason.
[Russell:] We'll ask Perry.

[Henry:] Yeah. You ask him.

[Warner:] That might be his reason, you see, to keep—when those drums get out of line that he could be right there to guide them, you know? Get them in right.

[Allen:] I forgot to ask you where you were christened at.

[Warner:] I was christened at the oldest church in here, this St. Boniface—Catholic. Well, that church now is not even in existence. It was back on Galvez, Galvez and Onzaga.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah. Where did you go to school here?

[Warner:] Robertson School.

[Allen:] Robertson School.

[Warner:] I first went to [Bayou Road ?] (pron. Bayrow) school, down at Derbigny and Governor Nicholls. Well, we used to call it Bayou Road Street then, back in those days, see.

[Allen:] Governor Nicholls was called Bayou Road?

[Warner:] Yeah, back in those days it was Bayou Road Street, you see; now they call it Governor Nicholls. Well, that was an old brick building that was there; now they got a new school there, you see, got an all new school there. See, well, way back in that time they had all white teachers in there. Well, after they moved us from there, they moved us up to Bienville and Robertson, the old Robertson School, across from the cemetery.

[Allen:] These were public schools?

[Warner:] Public schools, yeah. See then, from that school, well then, that's—where they tore this, tore that school down they build up—there's one on Bienville Street they call it the Wicker School; Wicker School, that's the old Robertson School. That's way back in 1910 or so no, further back than that—1903, 1903.
[Henry:] I wasn’t here then.

[Allen:] Did you have a band at school?

[Warner:] No, they didn’t; they used to teach you music, but they didn’t have any bands then; they wasn’t teaching no music in school. All they did was teach you the notes and things, you know.

[Allen:] Would you sing, or?

[Warner:] Had a great big—yeah, they used to learn you how to sing; they had a great big—

[Henry:] The blackboard, eh?

[Warner:] Oh, you know, like them great big sheets, you know?

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Henry:] Oh, yeah.

[Warner:] And they had notes and things on there; learn you the different notes. And they’d throw that sheet over and get the next lesson that they had [there ?]. It was just the same, like they used to have in some of the Sunday schools, Sunny, like they have those lessons on.

[Henry:] Oh, yeah.

[Warner:] Throw them sheets over?

[Henry:] Oh, yeah.

[Warner:] That’s what it was like, see. That’s the way they used to learn you how to read music. But they didn’t have any teaching of bands or anything. Teaching the bands, that just come up here lately, learning you—taking and learning you how to play music in these schools.

[Allen:] What did they have in the churches now? Would they have an organ in the church, or a piano, or any instrument whatsoever?

[Warner:] Well, back—you mean way back in time?

[Allen:] Yeah.
[Warner:] In the olden times?
[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Warner:] Well, no they mostly was organs; they didn't have no pianos that I know of.
[Allen:] And what about out in the country?

[Henry:] Well, they didn't have no pianos or nothing at all; your voice, you understand—you'd get up there and tough it out, you understand, with your voice—everybody would get together, you understand, and sing together.
[Warner:] Didn't they used to call them melodions?
They was—

[Russell:] Little reed organ.

[Warner:] Great big thing and they had like pipes, you know [that] come up, and they had small, and then they'd go right on straight on up, some as long as what he [Henry] is there. They had like hole[s] cut in them like—long like them flutes. You know those flutes that you play. That used to call them melodeons, and in later years they started calling them organs, pipe organs. Well, then they'd have a fellow back there, he'd be there pumping the thing while the organist [would] be playing; he'd be back there, he had to be pumping there as long as she [was] playing, he just had to stay there and pump.

[Russell:] I used to do that.

[Warner:] You did it too?

[Russell:] Yeah.

[Warner:] Well, you know what I'm talking about. You know what I'm talking about, eh? What they called a melodeon, huh?

[Russell:] No, this was a pipe organ.

[Warner:] Pipe organ—well, pipe organ, yeah; they had them big
pipes there.

[Allen:] I didn't know you were a musician, Bill.

[Chorus:] [Unintelligible, laughter]

[Warner:] Yeah, pumping his way through. Well, you know what I was talking about, eh? You just was [listening until you found out?] what I was talking about. That old fellow used to be back there; man just had that pull hands, sometime you would, see he'd be weak back there. Used to could see him pumping there, but he kept a-pumping. 'till they stop.

[Russell:] Wondering about some more of the trombonist, when you were young: did you ever hear Roy Palmer; do you remember Roy Palmer?

[Warner:] No, I don't remember Roy.

[Russell:] Played in the District a little.

[Allen:] Who were some of the trombonists, when you first started playing, that you heard?

[Warner:] Well, I heard [this] fellow--he was a young fellow here; he was--oh, I can't think of that boy's name. He left here--Zue Robertson.

[Russell:] I was going to ask you; I started to ask you. Yeah, Zue Robertson.

[Warner:] Zue Robertson. Well, he was a good friend of ours, you know; he was a good musician. Zue Robertson, and I heard this other boy--

[Henry:] ["Norah"] Dutrey.

[Warner:] Dutrey and--

[Henry:] He was a good one, too. George Fihle was a good one.

[Warner:] George Fihle.

[Henry:] Let me see.

[Warner:] Had another boy here.

[Henry:] Atkins used to play, too.
[Warner:] Atkins.

[Henry:] Eddie Atkins.

[Allen:] I saw his grave.

[Henry:] You saw it?

[Warner:] There was another one, what-you-call-him there, this Vic Gaspard.

[Henry:] Oh, yeah, [there was ?] Vic Gaspard, yeah.

[Russell:] Oh, yeah.

[Warner:] Vic Gaspard.

[Russell:] Know anybody by the name of Baptiste?

[Warner:] Baptiste?

[Henry:] Man, that son-of-a-gun, he was hell.

[Warner:] I don't remember Baptiste.

[Allen:] Baptiste Delisle, is that the one?

[Warner:] Yeah, Baptiste Delisle, yeah, Baptiste Delisle.

[Henry:] I knowned doggone well.

[Warner:] That's right, Baptiste Delisle.

[Henry:] I'll tell you: he was the first [one to start] playing trombone, I think; that's what I heard I don't know.

[Warner:] Baptiste Delisle, yeah.

[Allen:] The first one to start trombone, huh?

[Russell:] Playing slide.

[Henry:] Yeah, slide, that's what I mean.

[Warner:] Yeah, Baptiste Delisle, he used to play all these halls around here.

[Russell:] Did you hear Morris French?

[Henry:] Yeah.

[Warner:] Morris French--well, Morris French, he come after all those fellows.
[Russell:] He was younger.

[Warner:] Yeah, he come after those fellows.

[Henry:] He was good, too.

[Warner:] Yeah, he was all right.

[Henry:] Yeah.

[Warner:] Yeah, he's good.

[Henry:] A reader.

[Warner:] Yeah, Morris French. But this boy that I was telling you about that had left here and went away---

[Russell:] Zue, Zue Robertson.

[Henry:] Robertson, yeah.

[Russell:] You remember him, too, Sunny?

[Henry:] I played with him, too, in [Henry] Allen [Sr.]'s band a couple of times.

[Allen:] Was he a--did he play barrelhouse, too, or did he just read?

[Warner:] Who, Zue?

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Warner:] Yeah, Zue could read and play barrelhouse.

[Henry:] Yeah, Zue was an all-round man.

[Warner:] He played down in the District there.

[Allen:] Oh, yeah?

[Warner:] He played down in the District sometimes, before he left here; then he went away and he came back and played down there a while, and he went and left, went on off again.

[Allen:] Well, I'm too young to know about the District. What was that, [I mean, like]?

[Warner:] Well, that was when--

[Allen:] I never really got a good picture of that.
[Warner:] Well, that was when--

[Henry:] That was the whores' district; you go there and get a little bit.

[Warner:] That was when you wanted to be loved up, you see; you'd go down there.

[Allen:] Yeah, would they have bands in the houses or?

[Warner:] Well, they'd have bands in all them different barrooms, like Tom Anderson's, Basin Street was in bloom then; you'd catch a band at this corner and a band across the street and a band around the corner, a band on that side--most every corner you'd hit they had a band. Used to call'em cabarets. See, like they got them now, barrooms and cafes and things, but back in that time they called them cabarets.

[Allen:] What was Zue up to down there--I mean, who was he with?

[Warner:] Well, I don't know what particular band he was with, but he played at the Lyric a couple of times with--what's that old man's name--violin player?

[Henry:] Robichaux?

[Warner:] Robichaux.

[Henry:] Robichaux, sure.

[Warner:] Yeah. Zue played with Robichaux a while at the--

[Russell:] Lyric.


[Henry:] I played there, too, about four or five times with John Robichaux's band.

[Warner:] John Robichaux, yeah.

[Allen:] Well, what kind of bands would they have in the District? Would they have musical bands or would they have barrelhouse [ ]

[Warner:] They had--say like they'd have mostly string instruments,
sometimes trumpets, and between there they'd have like--sometimes they'd have a bass, mandolin, guitar--see?

[Henry:] Yeah.

[Warner:] Sometime they'd have a full band; well, at that time they had six-piece bands, you see; they'd have trombone, cornet, clarinet, bass, drums and banjo--they mostly would use banjos back in those days.

[Allen:] Would the string trios like, that--where they'd have three pieces, would they play in one place or would they wander around from one place to another?

[Warner:] They'd play in one place. You see, like if Tom Anderson had them, they'd stay there at Tom Anderson's and play. Then they had others that they used to call hustlers; they'd play at this place a while and then they'd go down to the other place.

[Henry:] All around, [he?] used to play that way, yeah.

[Warner:] But like Tom Anderson, Tom Anderson had his Regular men.

[Allen:] Would that be Nooky Johnson? Did you know him?

[Warner:] Johnson?

[Allen:] And Willie Jackson?

[Warner:] Willie Jackson?

[Allen:] Nooky Johnson and Willie Jackson--[those used to be. ?] singers.

[Warner:] This old man [who] used to play bass--I can't think of his name.

[Allen:] That just died recently?

[Warner:] Oh, no, he's been dead. Yeah, he was a bass player. Well, him and Johnson and this other fellow you was talking about, there was three of them used to play together: one played the mandolin, one played the guitar and the other one played the bass. They was
the ones composed that song about "Maestri's Wagon Done Been Here and Taken My Furniture and Gone."

[Allen:] I don't know that. How does that go? Sing it.

[Warner:] There was a song there: they had a furniture store there on Rampart and Iberville; that fellow would come to you to collect the furniture, and if you didn't have money to pay, well then the [guinea?] would have the wagon back up there to take your furniture]. So he taken so many peoples' furniture away from them until these dudes just composed a song; and they said, "Maestri's wagon done been here and done taken my furniture and gone away."

They just composed--I can't think of the whole thing, but that's the way, yeah. You remember that?

[Henry:] Yeah, I remember that.

[Warner:] Yeah, 'cause they was still singing it when you was back on St. Ann Street.

[Henry:] Yeah, "Maestri's wagon done been here and took my furniture and gone away"--

[Warner:] "Maestri's wagon's been here and taken my furniture and gone." Them three fellows was the ones [that] composed that song.

[Allen:] This guy [have] been dead, huh?

[Warner:] Oh, yeah.

[Allen:] This starts a guessing game: Johnny Prudence?

[Warner:] Johnny Prudence? Well, Johnny Prudence used to play with me in the Camellia Band.

[Allen:] It wasn't him, huh?

[Warner:] No.

[Russell:] It wouldn't have been [Johnny] Lindsay, from across the river?

[Warner:] This fellow--no, he started on this side; he stayed right around up in this District part. He was a big, tall fellow.
[Allen:] Brown.

[Warner:] No, his name ain't Brown.

[Allen:] French name, [like ?], a French fellow?

[Warner:] I'm trying to think of that dude's name.

[Russell:] Wellman Brand used to play in a trio--mandolin with a bunch, too.

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Warner:] I can't think of that--

[Allen:] Somebody from Glenny's era, around the time of Glenny, huh?

[Warner:] Way around the time of Albert Glenny, yeah.

[Allen:] We'll check into it.

[Russell:] Yeah, we'll find--somebody'll mention it again sometime.

[Warner:] Yeah. Used to play at Tom Anderson's. His daddy used to shine shoes around up in there; yeah, his daddy used to shine shoes, and he used to play bass.

[Allen:] Did you know Bob Lyons, by the way?

[Warner:] Oh, yeah, Bob Lyons, yeah.

[Allen:] What kind of musician was he? [?]

[Warner:] He was a routiner, too, wasn't he?

[Henry:] Ham.

[Warner:] He was a routiner [non-reader], yeah.

[Allen:] He was a routiner, huh?

[Henry:] Yeah, a ham; he was a ham--a big one too.

[Warner:] That's the routiner system. Most everthing that came from around Rampart and Perdido around in that neighborhood, that was mostly--

[Henry:] Ham.

[Warner:] Well, we used to call them jambon; in French that mean ham.
[Allen:] Jambon, huh?

[Warner:] Jambon.

[Allen:] You speak French, too?

[Warner:] A little bit.

[Henry:] I don't know nothing about no French: I call them hams.

[Warner:] Well, it's all the same; [it's] ham right on.

[Allen:] Yeah.

[Russell:] Down in the country, Sunny, do you remember and guitars or banjos down that way when you were a boy?

[Henry:] Well I'm going to tell you: no, they didn't have no banjos down there, nor guitars at that time. All they know is to blow and beat--beat your way out and blow you way out. And I was in the bunch to blow your way out. Trombone, bass--and baritone; now, I can play that. It was in the same clef and them I knowed the trumpet--I used to play trumpet--now what's the difference in the trumpet and the baritone is the same doggone fingering.

[Allen:] Do you use the same mouth piece on trombone and baritone?

[Warner:] Yeah, you can use the same mouth piece.

[Henry:] Yes, of course, same thing.

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Warner:] The baritone mouthpiece might be a little smaller, but you still can use yours. You see like the one I use? You can use that on the baritone; that's the same size.

[Henry:] The baritone, it fits the same size.

[Warner:] The same things.

[Russell:] Did you ever play anything else?

[Warner:] I started out, started to learn baritone but I give it up.

[Russell:] Tuba, cornet you never tried?
[Warner:] No, I never tried cornet; I had that around the house there and I never did worry with it.

[Allen:] How come you didn't like baritone?

[Warner:] I don't know--

[Henry:] [It's ?] a sweet instrument, that is.

[Warner:] I picked it up--they give it to me up at the office, too; yeah, a fellow gave me a baritone up at the office, and I had it home there and I fooled around and sold the thing. You see, I was so busy, I had so much on my hands: I had my wife there and seven kids, and I had my pressing business to run, and I was working up in the office, and now and then I'd get out and had to jump up and go play a little music. I had a lot to contend with at the time and I couldn't put in too much time with it; I put in enough time when I tried to learn how to play the trombone. Yeah, I put in enough time with that. That baritone--I wish I had learned that baritone, you see, because that's a sweet instrument to learn how to play.

[Henry:] I'm going to tell you--

[Warner:] Yeah, it's sweet.

[Henry:] It's the man, too.

[Warner:] Yeah.

[Henry:] You see that baritone, you got to be on your toes at all times with that thing, I'm telling you; that thing goes. Now don't you think your trombone, it ain't going to be like that baritone; that baritone now, you got to work, and you work from the beginning to--that baritone is all over, with the trombone and with the trumpet and everything.

[Russell:] Do you miss that part in the Eureka? Does your sax fill in on that part now, or not?

[Henry:] Yes, that B [flat] tenor sax, he's really good for that.
[ ? baritone part], he'll sure gets it, no joke about that. [Manuel]
Paul--he gets it, don't he, Al?

[Warner:] Yeah, he gets it on [pretty good]

[Henry:] One thing about him, God dern: when he isn't there, if
he isn't there, me, I'm really lost, because I'm so used to him
getting in, in that part, you understand.

[Warner:] Like that piece we play, there--"Westlawn" [Dirge]?

[Allen:] Uh-huh.

[Russell:] That solo.

[Warner:] That solo comes in there just like that baritone.

[Henry:] He's the only one can play it.

[Russell:] That was a baritone solo?

[Henry:] Yeah.

[Warner:] I tried that with the--what-cha-calle:--the Tuxedo?

[Allen:] Uh-huh. .