

orig

①

Aug 2, 1969

R Did you know Jelly in New Orleans?

O Yes I did.

R Where did you first see him?

> O I saw him in the gambling house there, called 25's

R Big 25?

O Yes

R Was he working in the District?

> O Yes he was working at Luke White's

R He never worked with a band much? ^{in NO.}
(as you wife said)

O First band he ever worked in was his own band, that I know of.

R Can you remember something about the recordings you made around

1926 with Telly, Simon, Michel, St. Cyr?

O Yes I do

Mrs O Don't forget the time he ran over to St. Louis & made that one with him

R Oh what was that?

Mrs O One of the red hat Peppers

R You made 1 record in St. Louis with him too?

O Yes

R There was one they found called the St. Louis crackerjacks - a piece called soap Suck?

Mrs O That isn't it. Because the one that he was on I have here & I forget which one it is. Of course I could go back over my notes

R It sounds like a New Or. trumpet

Qing

(3)

I don't remember the trombone, but
you ought to be able to hear Qing's
style

Miss O I can tell by his breathing

R Do you remember where those
records were made in Chi?

O Dountown you know

R Baby Dodds said he remembered one
studio up near the Drake Hotel
along the lakeshore

O Yes he's right too.

R Did you have any rehearsals
for those records?

O Yes he wrote out things you know

R He had it written out?

Miss O Everyone but him (only)

[I know they put a lot of New makes Pearls, 3/2 But, Dr. frog etc.]

R Did he have his own hand-written ^{manuscript} arrangements?

> O Yes, he'd write out things for me, but after I played them he'd say 'Oh play your own way'

O They were the eight chords you know but there wasn't enough in it, you know

R You'd fill in the parts then to make them fuller & better parts?

O yes uh uh yes

R About how many rehearsals did you have?

O For one recording?

R Yes

> O About 2

R Do you remember where you rehearsed?

Quesy

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> Q We rehearsed at the Union there.
in Chicago yes

R On South State St. about 39th?

Q Yes

R Do you remember where Telly
was livingⁱⁿ in those days?

Q No I never did get the location
what section he lived in

X ~~The only time I'd see~~ ~~him was~~ in a night club,
or when I recorded with him

R Did you have to try the number
many times at the sessions.
More than once or twice?

> Q No he had all good men
there. Most of them always came
out perfect first time

R I think Simeon & Mitchel too told
me they'd play them once & they'd
have them

O Yes, sure.

R Did Telly demonstrate any parts on the piano?

> O No he wrote it out. That was what he wanted + the boys would add on to it you know. That's just what I did. He didn't have nothing but bass notes you know + I wanted to put some harmony, some legato + - you know stuff in it - mix it up. And so he told me 'don't worry about it.'

R Was there anything unusual happened at the recording session? Anything funny?

> O Yes I remember him pulling his pants leg way up, he had a diamond in his leg quarter, + he'd get to the corner & stop ~~to~~ ^{to} talk ~~(to someone)~~ ^(somewhere?). He'd say 'I want to sit down man, w'd all on any corner'.

> I'm tired' & so he go to pull up his pants leg. ^{after} "What time it is", everybody looking at their watch - Eh look a here man ha ha

R People tell about the diamond in his tooth...

> O Yes in his mouth too, man

R In '38 when you saw him there did he have it?

Man O uh uh he showed it

O Yes he had it in his mouth too

Man O He didn't pawn that thing, Not then.

> O Yes he hardly... I never saw him once over across Canal St. You know uptown? He stayed right in [the district] ^{Stuyvesant}

Mrs O But he didn't buy those diamonds
did he honey? Didn't he get
those from women?

> O Women gave them to him. He had
a high collar hat you know
turned up

Mrs O I have a picture of him (orig) in one

R What is it - a soft hat?

> O ~~It's a soft hat~~ Medium, you know, soft. You don't
put a crease in it, you just
put the hat on & it's high up
there, I guess, & kind of wide

Mrs O A cross between a bunce & a derby

> O You look like a cowboy
[IMITATES JELLY SPEAKING] "Hey Girl,
~~come here!~~ ~~I don't want to talk to you.~~
"Hi-yo", ~~What you want - you mean~~
~~you don't~~ want to talk to Jelly?
I'm Jelly Roll Morton, you
know me? ^{They'd} say 'I heard of you'
"Well respect me when you
see me". He'd say "If you don't
[Exclamation about L. O. Con. & starting jazz.]

Amey

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believe me ask Lulu White". Lulu was the head woman down there you know, later she wanted to break me in. I played in there once *

Q In Lent when we didn't have much work we went around ^{Stammy} (the district) looking for a job you know. Worked a few hours. I met - who are we talking about?

* You know after in Lent I wasn't working steady, ~~it was~~ ^{was} working for all the rich people at other times.

Stammy Young Telly

O Eh?

All Telly

> O Yes. And Lulu White wanted a band & she called this club ^(on the cor-) didn't ^{they} have any musicians around there.

R That was Mahogany Hall?

O Yes, & I went there & worked, played for her. Oh she had a house

with a crowd there then. Money. That's the way she was. And boy I started playing, Lulu watched me, I was young you know & I had a nice brand new suit on.

She said 'why are you blowing that damned horn for?'

She grabbed at it you know to break it you know

Mrs O She wanted to keep him

> O Yes, 'you ^{aint} got no business blowing ^{that} ^{damn} thing' she said

R What other clothes did Telly wear?

> O ^{he had} Yes, Tight leg pants, & short coats, + long coat tails.

Mrs O Didn't you say he always had colored silk shirts?

O What? [Mrs O repeats] yes silk shirts yes

Terrence Somebody told me he had Cenchy

Amey

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Did he want that? Oh yes.

> striped silk shirts with a garter
thing on.

Q Garter, yes to hold that sleeve
up

T. Y He picked the best musicians all
the time?

Q Yes

T. Y. How did he treat them? Did
ever have any run in with
any of them?

> Q No, treat you just like he
was beholden to them more. And
(he) (knew) he had the best, you
know

R He treated you all right then?

Q Yes

R He didn't try to act like a
big shot & a big time leader?

O Oh no

R Do you remember what they paid
for the recording in those
days?

7 O They paid just what the other
hands paid with the Union &
all.

R Just the regular ~~rate~~?

7 O Or more you know —
most ~~of them~~ more, I got
more all the time you know.
Sometimes I'd get double you
know. [INDISTINCT] ^{I'd tell you} → come tired
until you give no other excuses
come less tired, playing there
till 4 o'clock in the morning &
you go right on to the
Studio you know, Too Hard.
So I asked to be paid
better than that. "I get ^{give you}
double, come on."

R Did you ever work any other jobs with him except the records in Chicago? *tour or dances?*

O No I couldn't I was working with King Oliver then. First I worked with Louis when Louis organized his band. I left my band in Los Angeles. Louis broke up & he went with Tate & I ~~went~~ *worked* with Joe, Joe Oliver at the plantation.

R That was on 35th Street?

O Yes

R Do you remember if Telly worked many jobs or had any regular job in Chicago?

O I never known Telly to play a job, a dance or a nite club or nothing. He never did play around Chi that I know of. You know - dance job

R In L.A., when he came back '40 - '41 he tried to get a big band together, did you play in that big band?

> O No, I rehearsed once with him

R Was ~~that~~ ^{Room} Hall in the band?

> O Yes Room + quite a few of the boys from N.O. We never did play, never did have no jobs.

R You only went to about 1 rehearsal?

O I went to one ~~time~~ ^(think). I didn't see any prospect, so I didn't want it taking my time. I told him when you get ready, if you get a job, why call me

R Did Buster Wilson play piano?

> O No he didn't at the rehearsal I went to, he (Jelly) played piano

any

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R Do you remember where the rehearsal was?

> O At the Union there on Central Ave., near Washington Blvd.

R How big was the band 12-14 pieces?

> O No he only had 7. I don't ^{know} what he had after, I didn't go back

R Did you hear him play in L.A. anywhere else?

O No

R Your wife said you saw him right before he died?

O Yes

? In Hospital

R He came to your house?

O Yes, his brother lived

about 3 houses from me in
L.A. & he lived the next st.

R Anita took care of him, Dink's
sister. Did you know Dink?

O Dink Johnson? Yes & his
sister, what's her name er...

R Anita

O Yes, sure

R Were you a pall bearer for
the funeral?

7 O Yes, Bud Scott like to pull
me in down, look like he
want to bury me. He ~~shook~~
me. He ~~shook~~ backwards, He & I were
in the front you know.

I was carrying the head
part where its light you know,
Ha Ha. and Bud gets ready &
he looked down at the hole.
He's scared he's going to fall in

and he pulled it, ~~cast~~ ^{the basket} it back over towards him

T.Y. Almost pulled you in?

O Yeah man + one of my feet did go in, + someone grabbed my hand

Miss O saved you?

O One of the guys that digged the grave you know, 'Ets Jelly Roll's burial' I say 'Oh hell are you going to bury me?' Ha Ha.

R I thought you were just an honorary pall bearer?

O No

R But ^{you} really carried it

O Well he wanted Bud + I. He requested ^{all of us for} already, pall bearers.

Miss O What did ^{he} talk to you about that last day you saw him?

O Eh?

Mrs O repeats questions

> O (What did say? Uh let me see)
He talked about what kind of
hand he wanted to have & what
he was going to do. And he was
~~waiting for someone & he was~~
waiting for someone else to come
to Los Angeles.

Mrs O Wasn't there somebody who
was coming on the train?

O Yes?

Mrs O That he told you about

O Yes

Mrs O Who was it do you remember?

O Was it Punch Miller?

Mrs O I don't know. He talked to you
& not to me. I wasn't there

O I left Punch in Chicago you know

R Punch is back in New Or Naa

O He's dead now isn't he?

R No not Punch he's still playing

T.Y. Guy Kelly died. You remember
Guy Kelly?

O Who?

T.Y. Guy Kelly from Baton Rouge

O Yes

T.Y. He + Punch used to run around
together all the time. Punch used
to talk about Telly all the time

7 O Yes Punch yes. Louis was playing
with me after Joe Oliver left
you know. I gave Joe a job
in Chi, I didn't want it.
Louis belonged to the club

> His Art club + he wanted to ride a horse so bad, he had just a few dollars, he had but 15-20 dollars he had made that week. And he rented a horse to get in the parade you know.

He couldn't advertise right there on the street you know on the wagon. ^{So} He got Punch to ~~work there~~ go in + play, and Punch just could play in B flat. Anything ^{we} he was going to play would be B flat Yeah?

T.Y. Yeah

> 0 Man I said you got these other keys can't you play in no other key F, C, G, E, anything, everything sounds alike. Some of them too low, some too high would it be, you know for the tune you know. He say 'No I don't know any more I know (how it be) 'abright come to my house + I'll show you'

any/

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T.Y. Did Telly ever have a band on a wagon

> O No The first band he played in was in L.A. where I he got the job himself. Did Johnson ever heard of him?

R Yes

O He was kind of kin to him by marriage

R Anita was his sister

O Yeah that's right

R So they were Bros in law

> O Well that was the first time I ever heard Telly playing in a band

R When he played with him in L.A.?

O It was his band. He named

at his band they tell me

R Was that at the Cadillac?

O Yeah somewhere I don't know where it was

R Did you ever hear Telly out at Leake's Lake, out at Watts

O I know, I played there (But) I ~~was~~ ^{played} there when it changed hands

R Mentions William Woodman

O Woodman, Yeah

[Much Tabber]

He retired eh?

I got a letter from him about week before last?

Proo I think so

O He had a gas station down there in Watts

orig

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R Remember Norwood Williams?

O yes.

R Zue Robertson, old time great trombonist.

O You are right! Zue was a good friend of mine. I went to the train with him when he came through there, he came from back east & he stopped by, his brother lived there

R Oh yes he was living with his bro when I saw him

O And he got him...

TABBER

O And he got a job...

Mrs O You know he was a nice looking colored guy. He has a picture of him upstairs. He was about between 35 + 40 in that picture wasn't he?

O myah

Tebber

O And er...

was O Ed used to play duets with him
He was his favorite trombonist

7 (3. yea)
O And er...

R Bunk told me he was his favorite too

Pause

7 O He said er, He went to Chi
you know & he played there
with Joe Oliver awhile & he
noted the women wasn't pulling
on him like they do in New Or
you know.

Told Joe, he said
[IMITATES VOICE] 'I don't like it here
PTU, he spits you know
PTU, PTU, PTU,

T.Y.

R That's Zee huh?

O Yeah, say 'Aint' got a mate,
 got ~~an~~ ^{aint} mate, got a ~~mate~~ ^{ain}.
 Mrs O. Chicago women ~~Chi. Women~~ ^{no}. New Or
 women, got em, got em.

...? gerah your horn & hug
 your horn not only you
 PTA PTA man I'm going back
 home'

All Ita Ita

O Remember when . . .

Mrs O Let's get back to Telly, you told
 me something about him

O What?

Mrs O If I remember rightly you said
 that Telly was on the train
 & you thought he was going
 east. Or that when he came
 to your house he had to
 make a train

O yes?

Mrs O To meet someone in N.Y. or
Chi, & he got sick

O Who?

Mrs O Telly

O Yeah?

Mrs O Do you remember that?

O Uh Uh (no)

Mrs O Think back about it

O Hum

Mrs O Didn't you tell me he actually
got on the train

O What?

Mrs O repeats question

O Yeah

any

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Mrs O And then he got sick

O Yeah he got on the wrong train

R Was that in NY

Mrs O No, L.A.

O Yeah

Mrs O And where were you heading for?

O Huh?

Mrs O Where he got sick & died

O Telly?

Mrs O Yes

O Going to L.A. he got on the wrong train that's where he died

R was that right before he died then?

O Yeah, in L. A.

Mrs O Where was he going to go before he got sick, that he got on the train?

O He was supposed to go to N.O. I think

Mrs O For what?

O Oh get some more men

O All the guys didn't show, backed up on him

Mrs O And he got on the wrong train & was sick

O Yeah

Mrs O Came back to L.A. went in the hospital & died

O & Died yeah

R I never heard anything like that before about him at the end

O He was worried, you could see he was worried you know He drove his car, he had ~~two~~ cars from Chi.

R What was your impression of his piano playing? How did you like his ^{pf} ~~he played~~ " " ["]

O Great, it was wonderful. Yeah He played everything as it should be played for Jazz. Yeah

Mrs O Personally I think he was a good composer

O Yeah, he was everything

T.Y. He had something that the average piano players don't have that's a good left hand

O Yeah

Mrs O Yes he wasn't any butterfly piano player

R Where did you get that term?

Mrs O Where do you think I got it

> O And Buster Wilson aint no slouch either. He's got a whole lot of Telly's stuff you know. He learned a whole lot from Telly. Yeah, he died too. He sure was a nice fellow. ^{He was a mugg} You never hear him swear. ^{never} ~~hear him talk about anybody,~~

Mrs O - Story of Buster's wife

O He got sick in S.F. & I got my doctor to treat him & I paid him his salary & medicine & everything & he got well.

He got well enough the doctor said you can go back to work tomorrow. And so I say I'll come back & see you before you go to work tonite

Copy

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O I went downtown & told Buster to get up & stretch out a little bait see how he act. Man he pulled his pillow there out a big fifth of Whisky. Here it come rolling out - say yeah Ed. Hadd.

R Its too bad

O Yeah, he ~~ever~~^{couldnt} stop drinking.

R Did you like Telly's pieces?

O Oh I liked everything he played I tell you the truth. All his numbers he written there

pronunciation of Milenbury - "That's out at Lake where we went for
Orymat in NO [FISH FOOD TALK] Orymat [on way back from Europe
from 1925 to 1956] 9 line between trains (abt 1956)

R Did Telly get along with the musicians alright even if he boasted

O Sure, it was just his way you know, & he ~~boasted~~^{boasted} himself. They started up that way you know the gang would get around

+ they'd start o

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→ - a little argument - like

25, say 'lets get Jelly here awhile'. One of them go start somewhere ~~thing~~ ^{*} [INDISTINCT] & then the whole gang jump on him ^{then}.

And then he start pulling up his ^{pants}. Open his mouth showing his diamond + "Look here I don't have to work every nite - the girls take care of me I'm mister Jelly Lord"

R Your main association with him was when you made the records

O Yes

+ Zitty said he never saw him, mad
Ory - no

R And that last band

O Yes, it didn't mean anything, it never did succeed.

MORE FISH TALK

Mrs O There was never any Band in N.O. known as Ory - Oliver "

END