

ORAL HISTORY T-0109
INTERVIEW WITH ELIJAH SHAW AND VIVIAN OSWALD
INTERVIEWED BY IRENE CORTINOVIS
JAZZMEN PROJECT
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Today is May the third, this is Irene Cortinovis of the Oral History program at the University of Missouri. I have with me Mr. Elijah J. Shaw, a piano player, jazz piano player, and Mrs. Vivian Oswald, one of the founders of the St. Louis Jazz Club. As the tapes begins, we are talking about the massive jazz record collection of Dr. Hubert Pruitt.

OSWALD:...I don't remember his name right now, but he had been out to [Huntsville] and at that time [Huntsville] this was some time in the spring.

CORTINOVIS: ...we went out there that summer. I took one of the professors with to me [?] was playing and live and the professor just went mad because he said he didn't know when he had such a good time since he was a kid. He was a actually a bonafide New Yorker.

OSWALD: Born and raised in New York City?

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh. And he was kid growing up in the 30s and 40s I guess. And oh, he could hum those, a lot of those songs. He and Dr. [?] really had a lot of good time together. Now we've been out to see Mr. Phillips, too, you know, and of course it's not nearly as extensive, but I have an idea that it's more selective.

OSWALD: John's collection is far superior in the quality, selection, completeness, than Hub's. A lot of Hub's records there's no [purpose?] left on them. Now John [Volk?] was the kind of guy who bought these like in mint condition and he bought them when they came out. So a lot of, I would say the majority of his collection, is mint. And, but Hub's, there so much in that collection that really isn't audible and not very usable.

CORTINOVIS: Of course, I adored their piano and could hear that really good ragtime. I was just talking to Mike about if there are any really good ragtime players around because last fall, I had been talking to a number of musicians and last fall, on November 19th was the first one, I invited Eddie Johnson out and he brought five fellows and it was and you know how kids liked it and they can convey...

OSWALD: They go wild over it, actually...

CORTINOVIS: There were wall to wall kids! It was an absolute sensation. They stomped and cheered and everything else. So much so that we had to give another one because so many people couldn't get in. The guards were there and they stopped letting people in. And the next day, which was a Monday, people kept coming up to me all day saying, "well, I

couldn't even get in." So we had them on again about two weeks later and that was just great.

OSWALD: I gave a talk to a teen group that was meeting at the St. Louis Public Library and you walked into this gang and you talk about cheerleading, but you're going over it all...

CORTINOVIS: Kids are cool nowadays.

OSWALD: So I brought them samples of the recordings of certain periods and I was preparing to lead them up from the beginning to, say, the swing era. Everything was going fine and I gave my introduction and explained what I was going to do and what I had in mind and what I hoped to accomplish and I hoped they would like it. And nothing. Absolutely nothing. So I played the first number and I think the first one I played was a [kid orry?] and the feet started to move and you'd see an eyelash move, a little something happened. By the time I was through they were having a ball and they [unintelligible] had school newspapers or school publications of some sort came up and interviewed and wanted to more about the records and could I come to their school or could I meet with their local groups. So they really do become enchanted with it but it was an absolutely new exposure for them and I think they're all trying for something new anyway and here is something...

CORTINOVIS: What really tickled me, too, and I mentioned this to Lije, we had Martin McCay on drums, or, you know, Eddie Throckmorton, and he's really kind of a light drummer. I mean he has really pretty subtle...

OSWALD: A subtle touch...

CORTINOVIS: Yeah. But the kids are used to really beating them. Wow. They went wild over his solo. It was...

OSWALD: They're used to running it so loud and so...uh, just like a repeat riff constantly over and over and over again. When something new like this just comes in they're picking it up whether they would want to admit it or not. But they are learning...

CORTINOVIS: There are too many terrible guitarists, you know, they all just sound alike and it's awful!

SHAW: Oh, yes. And all this is three chords. That's about all most of them play.

CORTINOVIS: That's right.

OSWALD: Same keys, same chords, same everything.

SHAW: Did you go out to the Ramada Inn and catch Joseph Hill? He was a guitar player that was out of this world.

OSWALD: I didn't even know he was there until afterward and I picked up the paper. I don't see the paper from one Sunday to the next practically. And I picked up the paper and saw he had been there and I practically sat down and wept because it was the...

CORTINOVIS: Who?

OSWALD: Johnny Johnson. I adore him. I adore him.

SHAW: He had [Koozy Cool] playing the drums.

OSWALD: Of course he would.

SHAW: He's something. He's something.

CORTINOVIS: Did you go out to hear him?

SHAW: Oh yeah. I went out there and stayed. I went out there and it was so cold. I went out there and stayed until [Cool] packed up his drums to leave. I went two nights.

CORTINOVIS: Did you?

SHAW: Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: This was at the Ramada?

SHAW: Yeah. Ramada Inn.

OSWALD: Well, Breckenridge has definitely become very interested in jazz, I understand, so he'll probably be doing work with them.

SHAW: I went out to hear Lionel Hampton too. I went out and stayed all day with him. Well, I went out there early because some of his friends and some of my friends, the Calloways, are very good friends with him. And I went out there early thinking that being so far out, they might be handicapped by me waiting to get in.

OSWALD: Yeah, oh.

SHAW: I went out to bring them in and got in about fifteen minutes, about forty five minutes before they started to play.

CORTINOVIS: Do you mean Ernest and DeVerne Calloway?

SHAW: No. William and Olivia. She was the first black person to ever be on the board of education.

CORTINOVIS: Yes. Yeah, uh huh.

SHAW: She was a politician.

CORTINOVIS: Right. Well, I know of Ernest and DeVerne but I know of Olivia. She was a supervisor in the reading program, wasn't she?

SHAW: Well, she's been involved in a lot of things.

CORTINOVIS & OSWALD: Yeah, uh huh...

OSWALD: She's active in a number of professions.

SHAW: Now she's in love with the Cancer Society.

CORTINOVIS: Oh, is she?

SHAW: Plus she's always...

OSWALD: Cal plays nicely himself...

SHAW: Yeah. He brought his banjo out, to play the job the other night, when he played down to the Malcolm Bliss. He brought his band job and it kind of sounded like old times because that's what he really is, a banjo player and not a drummer. But he took up the drums...

OSWALD: Yeah. He took it up because he needed a little [unintelligible]

SHAW: That had a lot to do with it...

CORTINOVIS: Who is this?

OSWALD: Cal Calloway. William Calloway.

SHAW: William Calloway.

OSWALD: We call him Cal Calloway.

SHAW: He's a retired letter carrier.

CORTINOVIS: Uh hmm.

OSWALD: Is George Reynolds still around?

SHAW: Yeah, George is here, but whenever you get him you have to go get him and take him back.

OSWALD: How old is that man?

SHAW: George is about eighty six.

CORTINOVIS: My goodness. Who's George Reynolds?

SHAW: A ragtime...

OSWALD: A ragtime time piano player...

SHAW: ...honky tonk, house party piano player. That's the best way you can describe it.

CORTINOVIS: Does he still play?

SHAW: Oh yeah. That's all he did all his life was play.

CORTINOVIS: I wonder because I would really like to give a ragtime program next fall, in September or October. Do you think we could get him?

SHAW: Yeah, well...

OSWALD: If you can pick him up and get him there.

CORTINOVIS: Sure, that's no problem. You got ten thousand kids on campus.

SHAW: Yeah. He lives at the James house. That's at Newstead, I mean at Pendleton and St. Francis. He lives there. And you could call there and you could get him. I don't think he has a phone in his room but they would call him.

OSWALD & CORTINOVIS: Uh huh.

SHAW: They know George couldn't find, he's from Chicago and he's really afraid to get out at night unless he has a way.

OSWALD: He has to be sure about who's picking him up...

CORTINOVIS: You see, at eighty six he could really have been from real ragtime.

SHAW: Oh yeah, he was back in that era...

CORTINOVIS: Yeah, he sure was...

SHAW: Like Scott Joplin and Louis Jordan. He know them.

CORTINOVIS: Did he?

SHAW: He knew them. And Bob, uh...oh, he knows all them... Bob Hampton and Lawrence Henry, and all those, Charles and Tom Turpin. He knew them people personally.

OSWALD: Is Lawrence Henry still playing anywhere?

SHAW: Yeah...well, he takes a job whenever he gets one. Somebody wants to hear him play...

OSWALD: He's gorgeous. I love to hear him play.

CORTINOVIS: He's the one that you said was a ragtime player too.

OSWALD: Yeah. Uh huh. Great. He just took down and he'd make the place come alive.

CORTINOVIS: Does he really?

OSWALD: He'd be on [Sir John's Band????] on Clayton Road. No matter where we were we'd stop by. It may have been for just three or four tunes. The problem there was that that

crowd didn't understand his abilities. They would ask for dumb things like "You Are My Sunshine" or something. Of course, Lawrence would play it. He knows every tune that was ever written, I think. But when we'd come in he'd start playing really ragtime and he would thoroughly enjoy it. Where is...

SHAW: Peanut?

OSWALD: Peanut Butler?

SHAW: Peanut played a job with us down to Malcolm Bliss...

OSWALD: You said that he had played...

SHAW: Yeah, he play in' out on Hanley Road just a little bit south of highway 40. I don't know the place but he's been out there on Fridays and Saturdays for at least the last seven or eight years.

OSWALD: Really? On Hanley?

SHAW: On the right hand side.

OSWALD: Of Hanley...

CORTINOVIS: Go past the overpass then.

OSWALD: On the right hand side.

SHAW: It's right...it's between Highway 40 and Clayton Road, somewhere along in there. I don't know the name of the place. But he's still out there, he's been out there for a number of years. In fact, he's been out there now ever since he left down to the Biltmore Hotel at Ninth and Pine. Down that way...

OSWALD: Uh huh...and he was there a long time.

SHAW: He's been out there ever since.

OSWALD: He's great.

SHAW: He's retired from his...

OSWALD: I'll never forget we had that jazz concert some place and he just sat down and ninety seven out of the ninety eight were out of tune and that man really...anybody else would not sit down and play a piano that was that out of tune. And I mean out...

CORTINOVIS: [laughs]

OSWALD: Half the keys and everything and they stick. But he sat down with the band and...well, he just wouldn't look up. . .he had it figured out which keys were bad and he just missed them...

SHAW: All them kind of... a guy does that and I call him a magician, that's what I call him...

OSWALD: That's what I'd call him.

CORTINOVIS: There was an old [mariner?] called Dollar Bill? Do you know?

OSWALD: Who's that?

CORTINOVIS: Who was it?

SHAW: Who was it?

CORTINOVIS: Yeah, I mean his last name.

SHAW: That's all I knew was Dollar Bill.

CORTINOVIS: You never did know his last name either?

SHAW: I never did. And I'll tell you, about the only person that and he'll be there on the ninth is Redd Foxx. He'd be down to the American Theater on the ninth. He knows Dollar Bill, because he used to hang there all the time in his young days. He used to hang at Dollar Bill's place.

CORTINOVIS: Where was Dollar Bill's place?

SHAW: It was on Jefferson Avenue between Chestnut and Pine Streets. He had a place there kind of a record shop and he sold soft drinks...kind of a hang out for musicians.

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh.

SHAW: Of course, I didn't know much about him at that time because I was president of the musician's union and the ones that hung around there was the ones that was outside of the union. So they kept steered clear of me.

CORTINOVIS: He did book...

SHAW: Huh?

CORTINOVIS: He did bookings for non-union bands.

SHAW: Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: Well tell me a little bit about your interest in the union, Lije. How did you get interested in the union?

SHAW: Well, I was with the union all my life and I always wanted to get some place where I could get in a union. St. Louis was the first place I lived where they had a black union that I knew of that you could get into. Most of the places I knew of they had a union that was a white union and the black musicians couldn't get in it, with the exception of a very few places. Like for instance, every year as far as I knew that they didn't have the black musicians

in Memphis. In later years, after I left there, they did have one. But, you see, you just had to play outside the union because they just wouldn't take you in the union, you see.

CORTINOVIS: So what year did you first join the union?

SHAW: 1917.

OSWALD: Lije was once instrumental in...well, you were in every office there was, weren't you?

SHAW: Huh?

OSWALD: You held every office there was to hold...

SHAW: Except secretary, I never did want that. No way. Too much work involved.

OSWALD: And you were president for a number of years.

SHAW: Ten years. And that I held office, or was either on the board of some other office, my whole life almost, up until about five or six years ago.

CORTINOVIS: A lot of other musicians I've talked to always give you credit for the merger.

SHAW: Well, they give me credit for re-establishing our union. I didn't have nothing to do with the merger because the merger was a thing that had to be whoever was in office. The merger was coming and should have been and there should never had been any two unions, see. It was just a thing that was inevitable. But the boy who was vice president for a long time, he was president at that time George Smith. He was vice president of the union for a long time and he was president at the time of the merger. But I always knew that there shouldn't have ever been any two unions in the same field. It just caused friction all the time, caused one group to

OSWALD: They would use another against each other.

SHAW: And kept up friction all the time. And this wasn't good.

CORTINOVIS: every body wasn't for the merger, though, were they?

SHAW: Oh no. The merger was a thing that we had to do. That was two years ago this past January first.

OSWALD: Is it known as number 2 or 197 or what?

SHAW: 2-197.

OSWALD: 2-197. That's the way it's in the phone book. I didn't know where to look.

SHAW: You see more than that...by the way the musicians were formed, uh they formed [four full] locals. The musicians went in their pockets and they furnished money for a...and one musician's name was John L. Field...he played piano and harp and viola, you know,

someone, and I don't know if it was harp or piano, he hocked his piano to go to his first convention in 1896 and then later on they formed 44 Local. And the Negro musicians of St. Louis musicians was the only ones there to represent the Negro groups. And they got the last number. 44. For years he had local 44 [unintelligible] in 1931.

CORTINOVIS: How did that happen?

SHAW: That happened because... the real reason for it happening was because about that time all the theaters in St. Louis went silent, including talking pictures. The bulk of the musicians that belonged to number two that could play, played in all those theaters. And the miscellaneous ones, which was the dance ones and the nightclubs, most of them weren't particular about it because of the hours that you had to be up at night and the kind of stuff you had to play. So we more or less controlled that. But when the silent pictures come then they sought to acquire this one that we had been living off of all these years, see. And, of course, that's why the friction came. And that was a restaurant down on twelfth street called the Bizmarck. It's still down there.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah, I remember that.

SHAW: And the president of our union was playing there. He was a [?] player and the waitresses had a strike and one night he went to work and I think he went to work at about six o'clock because he used to play for the dinner hour. I think that's the way it was now. That's kind of far back for me. I can relate the story as best as I can remember. He went to work that night and of course when he came off there was picket lines there of waitresses, see. So they used that as the means of revoking our charter because he was the president of our union, see, and they charged him going through this picket line.

OSWALD: Oh yeah.

SHAW: That was the basis, which, one of the basis on which our charter was revoked.

OSWALD: And you were instrumental in getting the charter back again, weren't you?

SHAW: I went individually. Went on my own and got it back. It was a fight I put up for ten years to get the charter back. And many times I went to conventions to request our charter back, which you always had to do. I had to go in my pocket a lot of time to furnish money to go and stay long enough to get your, to get to uh, to get to be heard by the international [unintelligible] And sometimes I'd have to send back to here to get money to pay for food so I could eat while I was there. Well, the strategy they used, see, the last day of any official business or all them things on a Thursday. So when I always write in to have a request to have an audience with the board of directors of the National Federation of Musicians, they'd always slate me down there for Thursday, which meant I had to be there all the week, see. If there was any repercussion that I wasn't bringing it about, I couldn't do it anyway because I couldn't take the floor because I only came as a representative from the area local and I wasn't an authorized delegate to the convention. And they would always at least have to hear, so they were always keeping me there whole weeks, see. So a lot of times I would take off from my work and go and the union would pay my transportation. But I seldom ever had the money enough to, you know, have a room and a place to eat.

CORTINOVIS: Did the union stay together even though you didn't have a charter?

SHAW: Well, you see, what we had when they revoked our charter, they set up what they call a subsidiary local, see, which meant that we were subject to management by [?] but we didn't meet together. So they were supposed to be representing us but under the circumstances they couldn't do it because we didn't meet together. They didn't know our problems or nothing. All we did was collect the dues from our members and...

OSWALD: try to stay in business...

SHAW: ...take it up to the white unions. Collect the dues and the fines and we had to turn it over to them, see. Now this I always said was taxation without representation. Because they couldn't represent us if they didn't meet with us. They didn't even know our problems.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah.

SHAW: See. And this was the fight I put up all the time. I finally got them to see it after ten years.

OSWALD: That's what perseverance will do for you.

SHAW: Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: And then what year did you get it done?

SHAW: That was back in '44.

CORTINOVIS: 44...

SHAW: 1944

OSWALD: That's ironic, isn't it?

CORTINOVIS: How did you happen to get it back do you think that particular year?

SHAW: Well, you see, at that time they decided to [unintelligible noise]. They started a policy of making all the black local subsidiary locals to the white locals, which just creates a problem in all the jurisdictions where it existed. Because it took away the autonomy of the black local and the offices and all. In other words, we were puppets to the white locals. And we were subject to everything they'd say to do, which way to do. And we didn't meet together and when they were able to hear our problems and our grievances, because we had to still flush them out like we had local autonomy, see. Because St. Louis was the only local throughout the life of the subsidiary locals and they would send a representative to the Federation to fight for the charter back, see. While all the time they kept taking the charter away from this local and that local until they had pretty near all of them taken away. Why it wasn't panning out because we really should have been together if we were going to be represented by the white locals. But they wanted to have the credit for representing us but here we meet separately and we have our own organization aside from that. Which was no good, see. It just didn't pan out. Of course, we had a lot of older fellows that were just used

to our society functioning like that, see. And we had a lot of young fellows that didn't want to accept that. We just never was satisfied with it. But they gave us a proposition and I've got the subsidiary mandate at home now saying that we can be and how we must function and everything we did we had to report to the white union. And it just didn't pan out. And we just kept fighting away. The first thing is they used to take all the [???] and we had tried to have a place to meet and we had to pay the rent and we had to pay the heat, things like that. And we just didn't have any way to do that without some of this money coming back, coming in, coming back to us. So I kept plugging away on this subject and I finally ruled out an agreement for at least we thought that we were entitled to at least 15% of the gross receipts that come in to our union, see. And I kept plugging away on that. And I submitted this grievances to the International Labor Board on several occasions that I was going to the convention. And to my surprise, the Federation decided that all the moneys that all the moneys to come in to the black unions, any activities regarding black musicians, must come back to the black musicians' unions, [unintelligible] because they weren't getting anything for it. But the only thing they'd do, they'd take it and take it up there for a certain length of time and they'd have to turn it back to us because we had to have some means of living ourselves.

CORTINOVIS: So you finally won then?

SHAW: Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: [unintelligible]

SHAW: Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: And was [?] president then?

SHAW: Oh no.

CORTINOVIS: Who was?

SHAW: Joe N. Weber.

CORTINOVIS: Joe?

SHAW: N. Weber was president then. He was a coronet player formerly from Denver. Joe N. Wells.

CORTINOVIS: Joe N. Wells.

SHAW: I used to walk behind him so much he could hear my footsteps. I mean at the conventions, I see him on the street and I'd get right behind and head him off and start a conversation in reference to our hearing, see. I'll never forget, it was in Atlantic City and I was walking behind him and his wife and he heard my footsteps and he turned around and said, "Lije Shaw are you back here again?"

O&CORTINOVIS: [laugh]

SHAW: I say, "Yeah, I'm back here again." I was just persevering with the facts. So the last

time I went to the convention to apply for the charter for a the local. We even wanted to be in the [???] as members or either have our own charter back. That's what we wanted. We didn't necessarily want our separate unions, we never did. That was the white musicians idea in the first place, which was a common things and [?] thing.

CORTINOVIS: Sure.

SHAW: So I walked into the convention, they elected me to go to the convention to represent the local while I was at work one night, which was an unusual thing to do because you don't detail somebody to do something like that unless you get their consent before you do it.

CORTINOVIS: But they'd knew you go.

SHAW: Well, yeah, I spent my life in the union. They'd know I'd do anything for the union.

CORTINOVIS: Sure.

SHAW: So when I went in, walked into the Sherman Hotel in Chicago [unintelligible] was standing there [unintelligible] and I walked in and as soon as I walked in [Batrilla] says "Here's my ex-charter. You won't have to fight for your charter this time, we're going to give it back to you and [?] and Local number 2 have agreed to it. So I didn't have no more worries, see.

CORTINOVIS: Mm hmmm.

OSWALD: You could out and have a steak.

SHAW: Yeah.

OSWALD: Mission accomplished.

CORTINOVIS: That's a great story, Lige, really. You did a wonderful thing there for the rest of the musicians.

SHAW: Well, I think so and a lot of them think so, but they don't, some of them never said..

CORTINOVIS: Well, you know...but Gus was telling me last week he said that the [???] is still active in the [???] and that he travels around the country enforcing the anti-discrimination laws...

SHAW: That's right. That's his detail, yeah. Well, [Petula] was a legal minded man. He saw things as I always saw them, that there was no reason why musicians shouldn't be together just as musicians. Not black musicians, not white musicians, just musicians. That's the way it should be.

CORTINOVIS: Do you think, uh, well, of course, it's obvious that in the case of this union and this job business that there's been a lot of discrimination. But do you think that for you personally that your life would have been different if you hadn't been black?

SHAW: I know it would.

CORTINOVIS: In what way, Lige?

SHAW: In the first place, the way I applied myself and the consideration I've always gotten as a drummer, it's highly possible that years ago I would have been in the St. Louis Symphony.

CORTINOVIS: Mmhm.

SHAW: It was just until the last three or four years they never had a black person in the symphony. Now we got three. But that's the type of thing that I always looked forward to and trying to get myself good enough and I always thought I was until the year. And I know I was. And when [???] fired me the first thing I done was start playing with the Gateway Arch Professional Symphony Orchestra. I stayed in there four years. I was with that and I went to play at Maplewood/Richmond Heights, of course, that's a non-profit organization and I went just because I wanted to play and I wanted to be exposed to that type of music.

OSWALD: Well, it kept your hand in...

SHAW: And I stayed there until I went back [?]

CORTINOVIS: Who do you most admire as a musician in the jazz field?

SHAW: Who do I most admire?

CORTINOVIS: Mhm.

SHAW: Oh, there's an unlimited number. I could name them. One of the most magnificent jazz musicians, I think, was Les Sutton. And he has a sister as good as anybody in jazz and she got married and started raising a family and that always interferes with everything.

CORTINOVIS: That's Barbara, huh?

SHAW: Barbara, yeah. And, of course, I always admired Benny Goodman. Oh, I could name them for the rest of the night for you.

OSWALD: How about drummers?

SHAW: Well, [Coozis Cool?] was one the greatest drummers there are. Next to him. Louie Bel sen [sp?] and...

CORTINOVIS: Louis Belsen, is he, who was he? He married...

OSWALD: [unintelligible]

CORTINOVIS: [unintelligible]...Rose Bellington...

OSWALD: He used to enjoy Dick Catalan [?]

CORTINOVIS: Who was this?

OSWALD: Dick Catalan played with Louie Armstrong.

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh.

SHAW: These drummers you could give them a choice and they could play. A lot of these others I know can perform well and they exciting to look at and I don't know that much about it but these fellows, they take a drum part and play it like a piano, like a concert pianist sit down and play a piano part, see. We got a lot of guys that beat the drums and a few of them that play. That's the difference.

OSWALD: Well, [Cozy Kullers?] is not only a technician but he's a really good musician. He tells it like it is right from the inside of him. Do you feel that way, Lige?

SHAW: Yeah. He plays the drums...if you understand drumming, they just talk.

CORTINOVIS: How did you first get interested in jazz, Olivia, do you remember?

OSWALD: Well, let's see. My mother used to play ragtime with all the doors and windows shut and the curtain pulled down [laughs.] And I always thought it was a very happy music and always enjoyed it. But then after I was married and left home I didn't really, well, I didn't have money to go hear musicians. The only music I heard was coming into the theater and leaving it if I had enough money to go to a movie. Then we came to after the war. During the war, I somehow before the war we had somehow met John Phillips. And after the war, we ran in to him at a cocktail party some place. So he invited us over and we went there one evening and he played a [Kid Orrie?] record and I nearly lost my mind. And that just set me off into a wild, blue wonderful thing and I got involved and I guess this was about '47 and I was working at the time but I spent an awful lot of time researching, studying books, listening to records, getting records and I think Lige remembers we were always hunting for records. And then in about 1950 I decided we ought to have a jazz club in St. Louis because of all these wonderful musicians that were available. The problem with John was he didn't know a lot of musicians because he always sat in his basement listening to the records. And my thought was I have to know people who make the music. So I started out to find try to find jazz music and there wasn't any. Nowhere in St. Louis could you hear it. So I guess one of the first live musicians I met was you, Li

SHAW: Yeah, I think so. I was playing then at...

OSWALD:...over at that dance place on Delmar. Was that the Universal Studio?

SHAW: Universal Dance Studio. Yeah. And then, you see...

OSWALD: Later I found out about this being there.

SHAW: In 1948 it was very, very sad story for all the unions. And I was at a lady's house at 7171 Washington. Her name was [Mary Rouge], and I was tuning piano for her and she had...what you would have in your rathskeller she would have up in her attic. And I found on her wall that she had a lot of pictures of a lot musicians I knew And I was going to ask her

how she got them pictures, most of them was autographed. I remember well she had [Milt Mose]s picture up there and Albert Nicholson...

OSWALD: Albert Nicholas...

SHAW: Albert Nicholas and Wild Bill Davidson, I don't know how many. So I questioned her as to how she acquired these pictures and why she had them. And she told me, she'd go to Chicago and all these different places and she'd meet these guys and she would get pictures from them. And she asked me if I thought there were any musicians around St. Louis that were old enough to play some of the old time jazz that we'd been playing all our life like on the boats tape sound quality deteriorates markedly here and stuff. So I'd say, yeah, I know 'em and I'd say I probably got their names and addresses and phone numbers [unintelligible] pocket and carry them with me all the time. So I said I'd look up the phone numbers and addresses [unintelligible] and [unintelligible] and she'd call up and [unintelligible] she'd say I have no money to pay you [unintelligible] and she'd ride them out there and we got out there and she'd have all kinds of barbecue hot dogs and hamburgers and [unintelligible] so we got home at around 2 o'clock one Sunday evening and we stay there until about 2 O'clock at night. No music or nothing. The guy would just say, "let's play so and so" and we'd play that and see well we could do with it. [unintelligible] and we'd do this once a month and we'd move it around to anybody's house there that had a piano who would have it.

CORTINOVIS: Do you remember who came to the first time?

SHAW: I know some of the people who came. There was a woman who lives off of Forsyth here and her name was [unintelligible] They was one of the first ones to come and Dougherty [unintelligible] they was one of the first ones there.

OSWALD: Was [unintelligible] there?

SHAW: Huh?

OSWALD: [unintelligible]

SHAW: I don't remember that one.

CORTINOVIS: I meant more the musicians. Do you remember who...

SHAW: The first musicians?

CORTINOVIS: Um hm.

SHAW: Oh yeah, the first musicians in St. Louis were [Dave Jackson?] and Sam [Shelton?], not Sam, Ed Shelton and we had David Hemingway. He was one of the best piano players [unintelligible] he could play. He played piano. And Otto, uh, he had the...there was only one drummer in town [unintelligible] played the drums until he'd get somebody deaf. And I played the drums and we had Pete Jackson [?]. We had Pete Jackson come to play the banjo. We had him come play the banjo and we had Norman Macy come play the clarinet.

CORTINOVIS: Hmmm. That must have been good.

SHAW: Uh huh. But never, no two times in succession did we have the same musicians because after they got a job they just weren't available. See, wasn't none of us working at that time. We was just doing something we liked to do.

CORTINOVIS: This was about '48, huh?

SHAW: To be exact, this was May the 19th, 1949.

CORTINOVIS: Um hm.

OSWALD: Um hm.

CORTINOVIS: When was the first meeting of the Jazz Club then?

OSWALD: The first Monday in October of 1951.

SHAW: That's how come we were playing...

CORTINOVIS: So the Jazz Club was really sort of an outgrowth of this first...

OSWALD: Not really.

CORTINOVIS: No.

OSWALD: No. Because I had not, although I knew John Falkland [?] and he knew that Mary and Dorothy Root [?] were doing neat things and people were meeting and, as I said, John would always stayed in his basement and listened to his records and he didn't go out and hear a lot of music. He still doesn't very much. So I really didn't know that this was going on but...who was the fellow on the radio station WWL, no that's New Orleans, WEW St. Louis, Charlie...

SHAW: Charlie...I know who you're talking about...

OSWALD: We'll think of it later. . .and he played jazz music on one of his programs and I thought this was beautiful.

SHAW: What was Charlie's name?

OSWALD: Charles Bexter Burger was a young avid boy in an advertising agency, wasn't he? And somehow...

SHAW: Roy May. He was down at WEW.

OSWALD: Yeah. It was Charlie and I found out about him and somehow Bexter Burger found out about me. I guess it was through New Orleans jazz clubs. That was it. Because I was a member there. And we sort of got together somehow, you know, fate. And we sent out cards to everybody we could think that had ever listened to jazz records. I had met Lije by this time I think and he gave me names of people and he was serving on it to. And we used the radio station as a clearinghouse.

CORTINOVIS: [unintelligible][Menees?]

OSWALD: No, no. The younger Charlie. The younger boy that moved to Boston. Menees was a jazz a fan but...

SHAW: He was the one that I was thinking of...

OSWALD: Um hm. He was a local boy that was a critic. Anyway.

CORTINOVIS: He's at McDonnell been at McDonnell for years.

OSWALD: So I called Rose at the Hamilton Hotel and told her what we were doing. I didn't know Rose from Adam. Tureen owned the hotel. And I called her because it was a nice central location. I just took it out of the phone book and called and she said alright I'll get a room and if you continue to hold me of you meet her and the rent was something like \$25 a month or something. So we'd meet there and we had seventy five people. It was just gorgeous. And I called a lot of radio personalities, Tom Dailey, who was large. He played a lot of jazz. Any guy who played any record that smacked of jazz I invited down. So we wound up with some radio personalities and Dick Lodge was elected the chairman of the group at that time and we were off and running. We took up a collection to pay...who did we entice to pay the piano because I couldn't drag out enough cash out of anybody to...and I didn't want to ask the musicians to play for nothing. I think we gave Charlie Thomson twelve dollars that night from a collection.

SHAW: That was comparable to union scale at that time.

CORTINOVIS: [laughs]

OSWALD: Well, that was, I think, how we got it. You know, fifty cents out of everybody or however it was to pay Charlie. And then I started in and got names of people and so on. And I worked my tail off. Lije was extremely helpful. Tom Dailey was very helpful. He was plugging it. A lot of people we knew were plugging it on the radio. The next thing we knew, we would get postcards on the table at every meeting and I'd say write letters, you know, fan letters to programs where they played jazz music...

SIDE B

OSWALD: and then that guy on WEW came up with a full jazz program, thirty minute program.

CORTINOVIS: Charlie Menees is going to do a jazz program on our new university radio station.

OSWALD: Oh, is he?

CORTINOVIS: Out of his own library because although they have some records, you know, you don't build a library of records or anything else over night. And I took our property manager to see John Phillips and he offered to allow them to take some of these records from his home.

OSWALD: He has a wonderful...

CORTINOVIS: So they are trying to work that out because he just had some marvelous things. But you know, the [Ruth's?] girl comes in, she's a student at our school and she comes in...

SHAW: Is her name Pat?

CORTINOVIS: Patty Ruth[?]. Her name is Williams now and she and her husband come in to see me. And she has brought some of the really old records in and I have dubbed them off.

SHAW: Well, at that time Patty was about eight years old. Her mom used to come to the store...

CORTINOVIS: She was just a little tiny thing.

SHAW: Her mom used to come to the door and blow a whistle for her and her brother and they'd be out in the neighborhood to be called.

CORTINOVIS: She use to tell me something about a jazz boat her parents had. When was that? Do you know?

OSWALD: Her parents didn't have the boat. That was on the, uh, [unintelligible] and we had jam sessions down there on Sundays but they didn't own the boat. It was one of [Streckfus] boats, wasn't it?

CORTINOVIS: The [Fort Gauge]? I don't remember the Fort Gauge. I thought I knew all the boats.

SHAW: It was a work boat. It was a boat that had oil and fuel for all them folks that went up and down the river. It wasn't at stationed there.

CORTINOVIS: Oh, I see, it wasn't an excursion boat.

SHAW: No, no, it just sat there. It was a work boat. And it had a big roof up there and it had a second deck and we'd start playing there on Sunday evenings and you couldn't get on there. We used to come down there to keep them off. I got some of the pictures of there.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah, I'd love to look at your scrapbooks, you know. You see, I had researched most of the boat and I thought that I had heard of them all but I didn't know about the Fort Gauge.

OSWALD: When was that that you were playing down there?

SHAW: That was around in the fifties.

CORTINOVIS: Early fifties.

SHAW: Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: Before you went to Gaslight.

SHAW: Oh yeah, long before then. Gaslight wasn't...everything that was going on that amounted to anything was from Clara and Delmar around on DeBalivere to Pershing.

CORTINOVIS: How many places do you think that, say like in, you might say this would be the jazz revival then in St. Louis. Say from about '48 to about '65 or something like that.

OSWALD: Because when the jazz clubs, remember, early the history of the jazz clubs, about 1951 and Singleton's band was organized at that time. It was 1951. We had Sing play a couple of clubs and the next thing they were calling it Sing's Little Jazz Club.

SHAW: Yeah, Singleton Palmer.

OSWALD: Singleton Palmer's band was really one of the organizers and there was no jazz being heard any place then. Really, that club did stimulate interest. When was it that you all went to work at the...

SHAW: Forest Park Hotel?

OSWALD: Yeah, Forest Park.

SHAW: That would be 1950.

OSWALD: Right. That was the place. There was no other band at that time.

SHAW: We went there to stay a week and stayed eight months.

CORTINOVIS: So you would really date the jazz revival that lasted through Gaslight from that first Forest Park Merry Go Round. It was the Merry Go Round bar, wasn't it?

OSWALD: Yeah.

SHAW: No.

OSWALD: No, no, not Merry Go Round bar.

CORTINOVIS: No? On the corner there?

SHAW: They still have it.

CORTINOVIS: Came on around...

OSWALD: [unintelligible]

CORTINOVIS: Oh, was it? What did you call it? Circus Bar?

SHAW: Circus Bar! That's right. Forest Park Hotel Circus Bar.

OSWALD: Forest Park.

SHAW: That's right.

OSWALD: Then you went over to the Palladium.

SHAW: You see, here's what happened. See, by the time that we got the jazz to go in', the band was fifty percent integrated. You had Barbara Sutton playing the piano, we had a white boy from out here in Ferguson named Sid Dawson used to sell clothes in a place right down there past that old [?] he played trombone. Then we had a boy who used to be a trumpet player with Gene Crupa that was playing trumpet. And we was having fun like mad. And everybody was just going crazy about the music but Bobby Sweeney, he was a violin player in the Symphony now, he was a music consultant for the [Carper] Hotels so Bobby Sweeney and [Hedda Carper] came over to this universal studio one night and heard the band and he was so impressed that he wanted to get the band for the Circus Bar of the Forest Park Hotel. But he wouldn't take a mixed band. I never did understand it. So we had to let Bob go, we almost cried. And we had to let Sid go and Miles Murphy, he got disgusted and he left town. So that's when we got Ed Jackson, we got Gus and we got Lyie McCoy I to play the trombone. We had been using Macy and Macy got a steady I job and we lost him and we had to get the boy who was next best to Macy playing the clarinet, named Alfred Bishop[?]

CORTINOVIS: Oh yeah.

SHAW: Then we went to work at the Forest Park Hotel.

CORTINOVIS: And that's basically the same band then that went into Gaslight.

SHAW: Yeah, it was except when went in there. Bishop had had a stroke and we took Macy still.

CORTINOVIS: Well, [Geshart?] is on one of the Singleton Palmer records that was made in '52, though. I've got a record at school called Singleton Palmer at Gaslight. It's got you on it, Gus, and Geshart, I'm pretty sure.

SHAW: No, no. Geshart wasn't there. Geshart had a condition. We were playing at a little place called the Cow Path[?] and they had this festival down on the riverfront while they was building the Arch. They had a festival down there and they tried to establish something to bring the people down there. Geshart was playing his clarinet and he had his first stroke down there playing for this. So that night we went to work and we kept waiting for Geshart to come to work and it was on the southside on Delmar in the 5600. We were waiting for Geshart to show up and the way we found out we called up his place, we called his wife and it happened that the girl I was going with was at Geshart's house. They said call up the hospital. So we called up the hospital and the police had to pick Geshart down on the riverfront and took him to the hospital and he had the stroke. So we didn't have no clarinet player so then we had to get Macy because there was no clarinet player to get. He got so that if you didn't know beforehand he had a stroke, you couldn't tell he had one. But his alertness was so...

OSWALD: Um hm, the brain...

SHAW: He couldn't play.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah.

SHAW: He couldn't play because he couldn't remember what we were doing. And the first time he got up well enough to come around and see us, he come down to the Opera House and brought his clarinet but he couldn't keep up with the band because he couldn't think fast enough, see.

CORTINOVIS: Well, you've got a wonderful...

SHAW: ...he wasn't used to the music...

CORTINOVIS: You've got a wonderful clarinetist though in Norman Macy.

SHAW: Huh?

OSWALD: He's gone.

CORTINOVIS: I say, you've got a wonderful--yes, I know--but you've got a wonderful...

SHAW: Well, he was the only one in town.

CORTINOVIS: He was a good one, though, wasn't he?

SHAW: He was the best there was. Yes. There was no one to replace him unless he was born later.

CORTINOVIS: One of the things that I always liked to talk to musicians about and you may think this is kind of corny, Lije, but I'd like to know and would like to include something, you spoke about that when you were in the Universal Dance Studios and Bobby [Twane] came over because he wanted a Dixieland band.

SHAW: Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: So, you were playing Dixieland then at Universal. Were you playing anything else?

SHAW: No.

CORTINOVIS: You were playing all Dixieland. For dancing?

SHAW: There was no dancing. It was all listening music. We never played no place where there was dancing.

CORTINOVIS: At the Universal Dance Studio.

SHAW: They just let us have this...

OSWALD: They let us use their...

CORTINOVIS: I see. This is a concert hall. I see. I understand.

OSWALD: We just sat on whatever there was to sit on.

CORTINOVIS: OK Let's go back a little bit further there than that. How did you learn to play Dixieland or where did you learn to play it?

SHAW: It just come natural. That's the music I heard all my life. It was nothing new to me. It was just the same music that they called Dixieland I heard all my life in my hometown when I was a little boy. Such tunes as was being played and was published, because you see the way Dixieland came about, they usually had one guy in the band two or three guys in the band who were fairly good musicians could read They would play the lead and the next guy would follow as best he could.

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh.

SHAW: So that's why all the different innovations came about, see. Because all them wasn't thorough musicians. Because really it was a hard time to get somebody to teach you. If you was black, there wasn't anybody was going to teach you. You had to pick it up.

CORTINOVIS: And this was around Jackson, Tennessee?

SHAW: Yeah that's right. So this music, everybody says that this music comes from New Orleans, but that isn't necessarily true, because I've been hearing it all my life and I didn't know New Orleans existed. But it's the same music as the older musicians that I would follow around as a little boy, getting a whooping every night for staying out because I was out and around where the musicians were. They'd play some place I was going to be there that night and I'd get a whooping every night with a hair brush.

OSWALD: Lije, don't you think, too, that some of that was learned from piano rolls that had been cut.

SHAW: Piano rolls? Nobody ever even heard of piano rolls at the time I was talking about. I hadn't.

OSWALD: But I'm thinking in terms of, let's see, who was it? Uh, bo, BoBo Williams who said that he learned to play the piano just by watching the keys on the piano roll.

SHAW: I think he did do that.

OSWALD: Yeah, yeah, player piano.

SHAW: I never saw a player piano or piano rolls because somewhere in the 20s, see, they wasn't getting it. I was following these bands around from the time I was seven, eight years old until I started playing when I was ten. And we had fellows around, one of them still living, one of the best clarinet players, if he could walk and I imagine he can, I'd like to have him here to take Macy's place in Singleton's band. A fellow by the name of John E. Brown. Now he was a good, thorough clarinet player. He could play anything he saw, anything he'd

hear, he could improvise. He was one of the first persons I saw do that.

CORTINOVIS: Where did you first hear the word "jazz"?

SHAW: Well, the first time I heard jazz...

OSWALD: The word.

SHAW: I was playing on a Memphis show called Bowen's and Blondon's Dandy Dixie Minstrels.

CORTINOVIS: What? Now what was that?

SHAW: Bowen and Blondie.

CORTINOVIS: How do you spell that?

SHAW: BOWEN

OSWALD: Oh, Bowen.

CORTINOVIS: BOWEN

SHAW: BLONDON

CORTINOVIS: Um hm.

SHAW: That was one fellow. He was from...where is that city where the University of Oklahoma is?

CORTINOVIS & OSWALD: Norman.

SHAW: Norman, Oklahoma. He was from Norman, Oklahoma. And Charles Bowen was from Zaynesville, Ohio. They got together and formed this minstrel show.

CORTINOVIS: The Bowen Blondie Dixieland...

SHAW: No, the dandy Dixie...

OSWALD: The Dandy Dixie.

CORTINOVIS: Dandy Dixie.

SHAW: Minstrels.

CORTINOVIS: The Dandy Dixie Minstrels. And what year was that?

SHAW: That was 1917. 1916 and 17.

CORTINOVIS: That was kind of the end of the minstrel era, wasn't it?

SHAW: No. the minstrel era lasted up into the '30s.

OSWALD: Uh huh.

SHAW: Yeah. The greatest minstrel there ever was wasn't from this country [unintelligible] and they went out of business sometime in the thirties.

CORTINOVIS: Um hm.

SHAW: Around '35 or '36. Because there wasn't no place to play when they put talking pictures in all the theaters.

OSWALD: Nobody had any money.

SHAW: Nobody would hire them.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah. In the minstrels, did you ever talk about playing jazz then?

SHAW: No. We just called it music, not jazz. The first time I ever listened to jazz music we used to call up in New Orleans the original Dixieland jazz band. We had some records that they made. There was very few records anybody made then of jazz because there wasn't anybody making any records. They couldn't get to place to even make records. And we used to play them records all the time. We had a record player on the shelf and we used to listen to records by the Dixieland Jazz band and it was the music we had been playing all our lives.

CORTINOVIS: You know, it's interesting when I talked to Doug last week he played on the Gulf Coast during '20, '21, '22 and I asked him about if he'd talk about using the word and of course all the books say they do but he said he never heard the word jazz until much later.

SHAW: I didn't hear the word jazz until some time about 1918, 1920 on up until now.

CORTINOVIS: Now see, Terry Long told me that when you were on the boat and Gus was on the boat at the same time as Sammy Long was, they were both on the President together, that one day in winter in New Orleans they would go up to the corridor and they'd listen. Now Sammy said that some time he would take his saxophone out and play. But, of course, playing a piano, you could hardly take it with you and if they've already got a piano player...but Sammy said he would go up sometimes and when they didn't have a saxophonist then he would jam with them.

SHAW: Well, you see, and the time Jesse and them was doing that I was playing in the silent movies.

CORTINOVIS: Oh.

SHAW: I was playing in the silent movies. Until they came the talking pictures I never played some place else. I played around them many years before I even played in a nightclub, see. I always played in silent movies because I liked that type of work because it was so varied.

CORTINOVIS: Well, I'm going to turn this over, Lige, and then I'm going to ask you something else.

tape change

CORTINOVIS: I'm writing all this down for students who transcribe for research purposes. It's much easier to use, although we use, we take the tapes, too. And as a matter of fact, the tapes that we made today of you and Eddie Randall I just made a copy of that and sent it to SIU because at their request because they have three sections of a course in the history of jazz at SIU Carbondale. And my a copy of [?] and one of Singleton Palmer's interview.

OSWALD: Have you talked to [Kimball?] at all? Is he still around?

SHAW: I saw him today for the first time in about six months.

CORTINOVIS: Now what?

[unintelligible]

OSWALD: [Kimball] is clarinet and [unintelligible]

CORTINOVIS: Uh, yeah, Lige before you get too tired, I want you to tell me although you told us a little bit on the tape, but the day you came there were four of them so that's why I asked Lige to come back to tell me a little bit about your travels like where you first played and then, you know...

OSWALD: Do you have your that copy of what was that magazine that we wrote the article for?

SHAW: I got it, whatever it is. Yeah, I got it but I don't know.

OSWALD: He and I are on honorable mention on that.

CORTINOVIS: I was wondering because you had written it.

OSWALD: I used to do a good bit by interviewing musicians and writing up stories and this was one of my copies of that.

CORTINOVIS: Oh, you had copies of that?

OSWALD: Oh yeah, this was when I was working for [laughter]

CORTINOVIS: And what's this, Lige?

OSWALD: This is [unintelligible]

SHAW: [unintelligible]

CORTINOVIS: 1917. Whose band were you with then?

SHAW: I with [?] His name was Fountain B. Woods. I would say that he was the greatest trumpet player that ever lived. But nobody ever knew nothing about him unless they heard him play because there wasn't nobody to write nothing about him.

CORTINOVIS: BAUREN. I wrote it wrong.

SHAW: No, not a "A," that's a "O." I drawed it for you.

CORTINOVIS: Oh, B O W...

OSWALD: & CORTINOVIS: E N

CORTINOVIS: That's what I got, OK. Alright...Oh, and Dandy is D A N D I E, uh?

OSWALD: & SHAW: Yeah. Um hm.

OSWALD: You were also with the Rabbit's Foot Minstrels.

SHAW: Oh, yeah, I've been with pretty near all the minstrels. But those was the first ones, yeah. The reason I liked it was...

CORTINOVIS: Sure. Georgia Minstrels. And this was the route book of the Alabama minstrels, huh?

OSWALD: Uh huh.

CORTINOVIS: All those none night stands. That was really a hard go wasn't it?

SHAW: Uh huh.

OSWALD: How do you feel when you look through these books?

SHAW: That's the reason I haven't had my hand on this one in ten years.

OSWALD: [?] wrote the article.

SHAW: This one is pressing on it. The shows...

OSWALD: Uh huh.

SHAW: ...we were playing in Chicago and this guy was one of the JW greatest trumpet players and he is in Omaha or Nebraska right now. JH

CORTINOVIS: Miles Cutler.

SHAW: No, this fellow right here, Charlie Williamson.

SHAW: Charlie Williamson.

SHAW: I was talking to him, I went up to Omaha last month, you know, month before last

and I played at the Holiday Inn.

OSWALD: Did you really up in Omaha?

SHAW: Yeah, we're going back up there again.

OSWALD: Where do you play in Omaha?

SHAW: Played at the Holiday Inn when we was up there before.

OSWALD: Oh, I see.

SHAW: That's a...I don't know what that is. Charles might actually know...somebody...

CORTINOVIS: It's an understudy. "You are a trap drummer. Salary eighteen. OK, if you are a good trap drummer will send ticket and twenty five Monday so as to arrive in Lodi, California on March 22. Need a good violin player. Answer by night message. Arthur [Hockwald], Grand Hotel." San Francisco, huh?

SHAW: Yes.

CORTINOVIS: That's, uh, 1921. Gee you kept that a long time, Lige.

SHAW: Yes.

CORTINOVIS: Um hm. Um hm.

SHAW: And these are the [?] I don't know [?]

OSWALD: There are towns and names of cities that I never heard of. Lubbock, Texas, I know.

CORTINOVIS: You were in some little bitty burgs.

SHAW: Oh, some of them, some of them only had one store.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah. I know you were in Dublin, Texas for four nights.

OSWALD: That's pretty good.

SHAW: That's all because of rain because we never stayed no place for four nights. It was probably raining until we got to do the show.

CORTINOVIS: Well, I'll betcha that a lot of these little places that are wide places in the road, of course, Arkana, Texas, I don't know.

SHAW: That where Tyree Glenn's from. He's a great trombone player.

CORTINOVIS: I never heard of him!

OSWALD: Ever heard of him?

OSWALD: TYRE...

SHAW: Tyree? Tyree Glenn?

CORTINOVIS: T Y R double E?

SHAW: Yeah.

OSWALD: Glenn. G L E double N.

SHAW: Yeah, he was here when the last time Louis Armstrong, the last time he played...

OSWALD: Yeah, uh huh...

SHAW: And he played xylophones, too. Yeah, he was one of the nicest I've seen.

OSWALD: Lige, who was the piano player that was with, not with Page, Val, what was his last name? Do you remember?

SHAW: That little skinny guy?

OSWALD: Thompson. Val Thomson. Is he still living?

SHAW: I don't know.

OSWALD: He was a New Yorker.

CORTINOVIS: Who was on that Scullin Steel band? Was that the Scullin Steel in St. Louis?

SHAW: Yeah. That was a band we had, an industrial band we had out there.

OSWALD: Oh yeah, I had forgotten about that.

SHAW: This was a program we published.

CORTINOVIS: Well now, you know, uh. Singleton Palmer I believe it was talked about that but that...

SHAW: He wasn't even...he was...

CORTINOVIS: That would have been much, much longer...

OSWALD: This was much longer before...

SHAW: Singleton was a little boy then. They had a band out there around the forties.

CORTINOVIS: You know, that makes a pretty interesting story itself, the fact that Scullin had a band in 1918.

SHAW: They had a black band and a white drum and bugle corps.

CORTINOVIS: Um hm.

SHAW: This fellow there, he knows a lot of popular tunes. Timmy White, he was a great trumpet player.

CORTINOVIS: Um hm.

SHAW: And this fellow was a nice trumpet player and I was secretary of the band.

CORTINOVIS: How big was this band?

SHAW: It was about thirty pieces.

CORTINOVIS: Well, did you work there?

SHAW: We worked there until 2:00 everyday and we went down and we rehearsed the band every day until it was time to get off.

CORTINOVIS: And who did you play for?

SHAW: We'd play for anybody. They'd pay us, that was part of [?] We'd go downtown and play, go to different parks and play.

OSWALD: It was really a public relations...

CORTINOVIS: I mean, in 1918, I think that was remarkable.

SHAW: This is Princess [Really?]. She was a featured attraction on the Ringling Brothers circus. And she stood about this high and she was perfect doll[?].

CORTINOVIS: A midget.

OSWALD: Um hm.

SHAW: She was about wide and she was tall, see. She was from Philadelphia.

CORTINOVIS: Um hm.

SHAW: And these some of the fellows that was on shore.

CORTINOVIS: Were these all Negroes, Lige?

SHAW: Yeah. They were all black. Now some of these fellows they would on where they had mixed bills, black and white people on the bill...

CORTINOVIS: The Georgia Minstrels.

SHAW: Yeah.

OSWALD: Did these have anything to do with the TOBA?

CORTINOVIS: What is the TOBA? What is that?

SHAW: Theater Owners Booking Agency and that was that black vaudeville circuit where the bulk of black musicians and entertainers played because they didn't have the establishments and that time to get in the theaters that were white, see.

CORTINOVIS: Did you play for whites or for black?

SHAW: Played for blacks. White people came. They always went anywhere they wanted to, but they didn't want us to go where we wanted.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah.

OSWALD: Although the other...

SHAW: We always went and this is what they call a route card. Every two, every three weeks, we'd get one of these cards. So if we had people we wanted to write to, we'd send them one of these route cards.

CORTINOVIS: Who would give you these route cards?

SHAW: The secretary of the show.

CORTINOVIS: Did you have a contract?

SHAW: No we didn't have any contracts. We'd just be hired. Only the band leader had contracts.

OSWALD: He could fire you but could you quit?

SHAW: Yeah, you could quit when you get ready to. Yep.

CORTINOVIS: Oh, now let's see what you played on the Georgia, Famous Georgia minstrels, [unintelligible] Dixieland. Remember of these numbers, Lige?

SHAW: Huh?

CORTINOVIS: Do you remember any of these tunes?

SHAW: I remember pretty near all of them.

CORTINOVIS: Do you?

SHAW: Yeah. Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: "Kentucky Blues."

SHAW: Yeah.

OSWALD: "Swanee Shore."

CORTINOVIS: Uh hm. "A Baby Will Never Grow Older."

OSWALD: "Goodbye Alexander."

C & OSWALD: [laugh]

SHAW: Them's was all minstrel tunes.

OSWALD: Looks like you're in Louisiana now.

CORTINOVIS: Hmhm.

OSWALD: Over in 1920. Look like you were having a big time in Shreveport.

CORTINOVIS: 9000 people were invited to this wedding?

SHAW: Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: Did you know these people?

SHAW: No. It was just, well, one of my traits, picking up things in different spots to put in my scrapbook. I forget who they were but they were really something. Those were people among the black people.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah, just inviting 9000 [?]

OSWALD: I would say so.

CORTINOVIS: Here's another [?] job, huh?

SHAW: Yeah, more than likely.

OSWALD: He played in the house band for Barnum and Bailey Circus, too. Of course, they played good jazz tunes for a number of their...

SHAW: Well, he played a lot with Jim McMartin [?]

CORTINOVIS: Yeah. When did you first go with Ringling Brothers?

SHAW: 1941. But I had been open to them throughout my lifetime, but I just...

OSWALD: What's Merle's last name? Merle Evans. He was like a leader for a hundred years. I don't know...

SHAW: From nineteen until about last year. I always go see him when he comes around.

CORTINOVIS: Would you like a beer or something?

OSWALD: A beer would be gorgeous.

CORTINOVIS: Not a high ball?

OSWALD: No, a beer would be just great.

CORTINOVIS: How about you, Lige?

SHAW: I could stand another gin and tonic if you can get bartender long enough to make it.

CORTINOVIS: Oh, I think so. I don't hear him counting any money. Hey, bartender!
[laughs] See, he answered.

OSWALD: He knows his name.

CORTINOVIS: Have you got any more tonic? Lige'll take another gin and tonic and Vivian and I will take a beer.

Bartender: Uh, you know, I don't have any tonic.

SHAW: You did before.

Bartender: Uh, OK, I'll see what I got. What do you want?

CORTINOVIS: Vivian wants a beer. And I'll just have a little diet cola please.

SHAW: Are you diabetic?

CORTINOVIS: Oh no, I'm trying to lose a little weight. I've never been fatter in my life and if I'm ever going to get back in my summer...[?]I don't have that many summer clothes and sure don't want to buy any more and I got to get back in my old ones. Well, Lige, what kind of music did you play mostly with?

SHAW: At the circus?

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh.

SHAW: We played more or less standard marches and light classics. You know, we played for the Elks and this was in the annex. I wasn't in the big band. You see we always had two bands and this was in the annex, and we play what we called the side show. And whatever was at the side show, we'd have to play for it. Whatever tune they'd designate, they didn't have their own music and we'd substitute tunes for the occasion.

CORTINOVIS: Who was in the side show, belly dancers and...?

SHAW: Belly dancers...

CORTINOVIS: ...and fan dancers...

SHAW: Freaks! We had a guy there that swallowed rats.

CORTINOVIS: No!

SHAW: Uh huh. He swallowed rats. I mean, he wouldn't swallow them but he'd take them—he had a big throat and he'd take a live rat and drop it down his throat to the edge of his tail. And we had a woman there who would bend down to her waist. We had a woman who had over eighteen feet hair. She was from Russia. And we had a woman there that was. . . she does a lot of things with sledge hammers and weight lifting, a lot of things like that. She'd lift anything.

CORTINOVIS: Oh. Uh huh. 1923.

OSWALD: Is your daughter still in Oklahoma?

SHAW: Yeah. That damn thing, I ain't heard from her lately. I'm gonna hafta call her up.

OSWALD: You're gonna hafta whip her.

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh.

SHAW: I ain't trying that now because she's bigger than I am.

OSWALD: Now you are in Alabama and Mississippi again.

SHAW: Now these are two of my favorite idols in show business. That's [Miller and Wild, the great shuffle along show?] This is this guy that used to be a [?]

OSWALD: Lige, was any one of these minstrel groups that Bessie Smith sang in?

SHAW: Yeah, she was with the, when I was with the...

OSWALD: Was she with Georgia Minstrels?

SHAW: No, she wasn't with Georgia Minstrels. She was with the High [?] Follies. That was a show that was owned by the [?] company.

OSWALD: That's right.

SHAW: That's where she was when she got, when she had the automobile accident of which she died. A year before that I played for her.

OSWALD: Uh huh. Was Jesse Crump playing piano for her then?

SHAW: Jesse Crump? He never played for her. He played for Ida Cox.

OSWALD: Ida Cox, OK. I'll get it straight after a while.

SHAW: This is boy that come up in show business with me...

Bartender: There you are ladies...

CORTINOVIS & OSWALD: Thank you.

OSWALD: What a lovely beer mug. I like that.

CORTINOVIS: Those are pub mugs, like you know they have in British pubs.

SHAW: This guy was a great showman. Natural born showman. He could do almost anything.

CORTINOVIS: [Amend?] T. Richardson.

SHAW: Yes. He was from a little town in Oklahoma, a little black town in Oklahoma called Bull[?]

CORTINOVIS: Lige has his route book and look at all these one night stands. You can see that in some of the places in Texas it couldn't have been more than a wide road [?].

Bartender: Little Rock's in there. A very wide place.

OSWALD: That'll do.

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh.

Bartender: We're putting the fireplace screen on and then we'll have it on.

CORTINOVIS: Oh, good. You're really accomplishing a great feat.

Bartender: Oh yeah, slowly but surely, we are.

SHAW: There's where I was out in front of a theater in Chicago. You see, we'd always go out in front of a theater and play a concert just before the show an everything.

CORTINOVIS: Who was Arthur Hockwald?

SHAW: He was a Jewish fellow out of Slat Lake City that he bought this original title of the first Georgia Minstrels, Roscoe and Hollin's Georgia Minstrels was the first Negro minstrels in this country. And he was one of the greatest minstrels in this country. And he bought this show from Roscoe and Hoi ling.

CORTINOVIS: Medium charge, one dollar per week day per person. The Hotel [Vindom?] in Buffalo...

SHAW: Buffalo, yeah.

CORTINOVIS: You have been around, Lige.

OSWALD: [Laughs]

SHAW: Well, the reason I got that was because [?] was from St. Louis named Al Jenkins. He had the band and I was visiting.

OSWALD: When you say Jenkins, is Freddy Jenkins still around?

SHAW: Oh no. Freddy's dead.

OSWALD: He died. He played with...

SHAW: Duke.

OSWALD: Duke Ellington. Came through St. Louis one time.

SHAW: Yeah, he was in bad health. He died.

OSWALD: Tubercular, wasn't he?

SHAW: Yeah. This is I think a ticket from when I went from St. Louis to Asbury Park, I think. I just kept the stub off the ticket. I got a half dozen album books. I don't know how far this one goes. I think this I handed to you started in World War 2.

OSWALD: Probably. What's the date on it?

CORTINOVIS: Well, '37, yeah.

OSWALD: Uh huh.

CORTINOVIS: Right.

OSWALD: Now what group are you with here?

SHAW: Here's the Georgia Minstrels.

CORTINOVIS: In California, huh?

SHAW: Uh huh.

OSWALD: Good heavens. California, Utah, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan. You really did...how did you travel?

SHAW: We traveled in our own pullman cars.

OSWALD: I see.

SHAW: We'd sleep, slept on the cars.

CORTINOVIS: That was the Georgia Minstrels.

SHAW: Yeah. All minstrels. All the traveling I have we've [?] shows. I wouldn't work with any of them shows that had to catch a train every time we got through.

CORTINOVIS: Where did you perform then when you'd get to a little place like...

SHAW: In the theater...

CORTINOVIS: James Farm, North Dakota?

SHAW: James Town.

CORTINOVIS: James Town, North Dakota. Where would you...

SHAW: In the theater, whatever theater they had.

CORTINOVIS: They always had a theater?

SHAW: Yes. Every town had a theater. We never played in anything but theaters. We played all the theaters, [opera?] houses, [?] houses, which was comparable to the St. Louis theater here that used to be a [orphan?] house...

CORTINOVIS: But this was a regular circuit you played on.

SHAW: Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: You didn't have anybody going ahead and making, uh...

SHAW: No, no. No, no. This was all pre-arranged through our offices. I think this is where I promoted [Elks Minstrel?], I think. Yeah, I was promoting [Elks Minstrel] one time when I was...

CORTINOVIS: Was that in St. Louis?

SHAW: No, that was in Jackson, Tennessee, I...

CORTINOVIS: Oh yeah, you know Gus used to play with [Johnny Brown's Playtone?] Orchestra.

SHAW: Yeah. Gus was at [?] This is this guy...picked up something out of the paper. He [?] in the service and come out, uh...

OSWALD: Did you sit down and write this out each night or did you schedule...

SHAW: I wrote it out on Wednesday, you know. I wouldn't stop no more than the one time to do all this right.

OSWALD: Uh huh.

SHAW: If I had me that kind of patience I'd have me several books out. I haven't got the patience to do that. I think we're starting to come in east now.

CORTINOVIS: "We'll wait five weeks per your request. Bringing in salary that was offered

some time ago. Wade H. Hammond." Who was that, Lige?

SHAW: That was band leader in the tenth calvary. He was trying to get me to enlist in the army for three years because he had heard me play and he was going to take the band on a tour of the South Pacific. He wanted me to make the tour but my wife didn't want me to go. I think I missed the best chance I ever had in my life. She didn't want me to go because she didn't want me to be that far away.

OSWALD: How long would you have been gone?

SHAW: I would have had to enlist for three years.

OSWALD: I see. Well I can't say I blame you.

SHAW: You see, he didn't have a drummer in that band that could play bells and tips and things like that. That's why he was so anxious to get me and the band because he heard me play once. In fact, we went out to [Pudwachooka?] Arizona, Douglas, Arizona, where the tenth calvary was stationed and we'd play a program for them. He heard me play and from that time on, clean up until he dies, he kept trying to get me in the army.

OSWALD: You never did go much into South Dakota it looks like.

SHAW: I never did go into South Dakota at all that I remember. I passed through there, I've been in there a lot of times.

CORTINOVIS: Mm hm...been to Washington state. Now here's one from the wild west show...

SHAW: Yeah, that's the hundred and one...

OSWALD: Oh, yeah.

SHAW: I was on the wild west show and this guy was trying to get me to come back.

CORTINOVIS: What wild west show was this?

SHAW: The hundred and one ranch. Three brothers used to have a show called the Miller Brothers' Hundred and One Ranch and they asked to establish themselves in show business by a negro fellow named, let's see, what was his name? They went to Kansas City for a rodeo and this negro won the top prize. Out of this, they started this show and he stayed with the show 'til he died. He used to ride a mule.

OSWALD: Wasn't their headquarters in Texas?

SHAW: No. No. In Oklahoma.

OSWALD: Oklahoma. OK.

SHAW: Out in Oklahoma.

CORTINOVIS: How did you get with them?

SHAW: Well, they knew of me and they just offered me a job and I went. You see, in show business somebody always knows about you because, from show to show, there's somebody knows about you they'd say, "Well, why don't you send and get Irene so and so? She can do so and so. Why don't you send and get Vivian Oswald?"

CORTINOVIS: Mm hm, mm hm. Now here's a letter from Clare Mathews...

SHAW: Well, he had a band in Omaha, see. And he wanted me to come to Omaha to join his band.

OSWALD: Is that the New Orleans Orchestra?

SHAW: Well, he was from New Orleans. But he had settled, him and his father both, had settled in New Orleans. And he had fellows in his band who had played with me, been on show with me, so they recommended me to him and he offered me a job, which I never did go. This is the time I was in Norman with a nervous breakdown. Everybody heard I was there and they were always writing on me to come some place. My wife said, "No, you can't go."

OSWALD: Who was F. S. Wolcott?

SHAW: Wolcott was the fellow from Jackson, Michigan who had the big plantation down in Fort Gibson, Mississippi and that was where his show headquarters was. He could always rehearse the show in Fort Gibson and take it out from there. And he bought all the equipment from the original [air dee?] Field Minstrels. And that's how he got in the minstrel business. I think he used to be with [air dee?] fields.

OSWALD: I see.

SHAW: He used to [?] went to Japan. He tried to tell how to deal with that. Everybody bathed together.

C&OSWALD: [laugh]

SHAW: I said, what the hell, I'll bathe with anybody that'll want to bathe over here.

OSWALD: If you're really looking for companionship in the bathtub.

SHAW: Yeah. I just kept it.

OSWALD: Just for fun.

SHAW: Yeah, he wanted me to come to Japan. I was looking at this country then. I wasn't thinking about going no place. I had a chance to go to London. I said, "Well, I'll go see America first."

CORTINOVIS: I think so. You ever been up in New York way?

SHAW: New York?

CORTINOVIS: Hm mm.

SHAW: Oh, many times.

CORTINOVIS: Ever play up there?

SHAW: No, I never did. I'd've enjoyed playing New York but I was always going there looking. I'd lay myself out looking. I never did have a job playing New York. I had job offered to me in New York. New York, Chicago, and all that, Los Angeles. I always avoid it because it's such a rat race.

CORTINOVIS: Did you ever play with any really big name bands, Lige?

SHAW: No. No. The biggest one I might have played with was Cab Calloway. But when I was with that he wasn't even with it. You see, it grew out, it came out to be Cab Calloway's band after I left.

OSWALD: Well, was the Missouriians...

SHAW: Well, that's the same band. That's the same band. I was with them.

CORTINOVIS: The Missouriians were with Morris White? That was the original Cab Calloway band?

OSWALD: Yeah.

SHAW: It started from here! It at first was...when we first started in the band here in St. Louis it was named the Wilson Robinson Bostonians. That's where it started.

CORTINOVIS: Wilson...

SHAW: Robinson. Bostonians. He was a violin player.

OSWALD: They played good jazz.

SHAW: And he had been out to Boston instead of the [?] conservatory of music, he began, when he came back home, his father was a waiter down to the American Hotel where that parking lot is now on the corner of Seventh and Market. And this fellow was talking to him and he'd tell him about his son having been out to Boston to study music. He told him, "Why don;t you get him a band together?" So that' s the way the band started. He got to... he had a booking agency here named [?]. When he got the band together, he started booking them. He went all through first tape ends ...I been to Nebraska, [the hallway?], Missouri, every place.

CORTINOVIS: Is [Mars White] still around?

SHAW: Yeah. He's still around. The only thing is I haven't seen him lately but he still working. He [?] up there on Kingshighway near St. Louis Avenue.

OSWALD: He used to do something with Ellis novelty. Does he still do anything with them?

SHAW: That used to be his company. That used to belong to him. I don't what he used to..

CORTINOVIS: [unintelligible] "Charles Creek's Arcadian Ballroom All Star Orchestra, May 1934. Worked on the steam machine Paul Streckfus with [unintelligible]"

SHAW: Oh yeah, I was just making notes.

OSWALD: [unintelligible] orchestra.

SHAW: That was my group.

OSWALD: Oh, and Andrew Webb. He's dead, isn't he?

CORTINOVIS: "Thomas Ferryman, piano." Is that Greg Ferryman?

SHAW: That's Gus.

OSWALD: That's Gus.

CORTINOVIS: Thomas is gus, huh?

SHAW: That's his name.

CORTINOVIS: Mm huh.

SHAW: Thomas Augustus. We just called him Gus.

CORTINOVIS: Oh. "Featuring Estelle Mitchell."

SHAW: It looks 'so good it don't even look like mine. [laughs]

OSWALD: A swell bunch made a swell job.[unintelligible]

CORTINOVIS: These are all cubs then, huh?

OSWALD: Yeah. I was just keeping regular where I had worked. I was working at that time I think I stopped right there.

CORTINOVIS: The Plantation.

SHAW: Yeah, I was in the [?]

CORTINOVIS: Thirty three...

SHAW: ...at the Plantation.

CORTINOVIS: Before [Deeder Fillers?]

SHAW: Yeah, they come in behind us.

OSWALD: [Sour?] I had forgotten all about that.

SHAW: We worked own there on S...

OSWALD: We know you did.

CORTINOVIS: Mm hm.

SHAW: When we went to work down there [Sour?] didn't have no business except Friday and Saturday night, see. He built it up to where he wanted us to work six or seven nights a week but we wouldn't work six nights a week because everybody wanted to be home one night.

OSWALD: Mm hm. What was Bugs Roberts orchestra?

SHAW: Yeah. Bugs dead.

OSWALD: Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: [?] Ricardo.

SHAW: Yeah, that was [?] in Ohio. We played there until the Italians got to fighting in there and broke up the place. I come in there one night and started to, uh, [unintelligible] he had a brother named Freddy. He used to hang around, he was kind of a hang around down there. He started a fight in there one night and somebody cut [?] and he closed the place up. Went out of business.

CORTINOVIS: He took it kind of personal.

SHAW: Yeah. Yeah. The guy cut him the side.

OSWALD: Who is that nice looking...

SHAW: That's the one we call Robert Bell. We call him easy. He was a guitar player and a good one.

OSWALD: Robert Bell?

SHAW: Yeah.

OSWALD: No relation to Jules?

SHAW: Oh no. No. He was from [?] And he left, went to New York and he's been out there ever since. [?] He had a big club up on Amsterdam.

OSWALD: Oh, I remember this story when the bands were called out on strike. Uh, the circus continued with canned music, [Merle Evans] band picketed the show for a two week duration.

SHAW: Yep, one time I got to draw strike benefits.

OSWALD: Billy Rose's Diamond Horshoe. What year is that?

SHAW: Uh, something about the troubadours.

CORTINOVIS: [?] record bar.

SHAW: Then we started making records.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah, right.

SHAW: So many places were...so many musicians were with recordings.

CORTINOVIS: What else have you got here in your bag?

SHAW: Oh I got stuff [?]

CORTINOVIS: My gosh!

OSWALD: This is really a history in itself, isn't it?

CORTINOVIS: These are all pictures, huh?

SHAW: Some pictures. [?] This guy was one of the finest drummers ever to play the drums. That was [?]

OSWALD: Well he was [refurnished?]

SHAW: No, there wasn't no black musicians making no records.

OSWALD: [?] Wasn't he ever on a record?

SHAW: No. This is one of my admirers.

OSWALD: Your public, Lige.

SHAW: Uh huh.

OSWALD: Now that, that's, he looks familiar but I'm sure it's not somebody I know.

CORTINOVIS: [laughs] Lige, your really handsome.

SHAW: Well, I had my face washed that day.

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh. That's a beautiful picture. You just always liked to cut things out, haven't you?

SHAW: Yeah. Yeah.

OSWALD: Most of the time it has to do with him. I think too frequently too...there he is, see.

CORTINOVIS: Oh. Uh hm. Uh hm.

OSWALD: You've got your 1972 type glasses on.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah.

OSWALD: Here's that article about the son.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah. Uh huh.

SHAW: Now there's Bob's sister.

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh.

OSWALD: Does that sound like Joe was in St. Louis.

SHAW: St. Charles. The father died two or three years ago and I didn't even know it then. I got a letter from Bobby and she told me her father died.

CORTINOVIS: Um hm. 1950 that was, huh? Because I can get that out on microfilm.

OSWALD: Yeah.

CORTINOVIS: Yeah.

SHAW: This other guy come in the place I played and drew that picture and said it looked like me. The only thing is [?] That was guy who would just be playing around drawing things. Now this is the rare first singer that ever sang with Cab Calloway.

CORTINOVIS: Emma King.

SHAW: She was the very, very first singer to ever sing...

OSWALD: Is she around any more?

SHAW: She's sanctified now. She sings in the sanctified church but she left here recently and went to California. I think she [?]

CORTINOVIS: Lige, let me ask you, did you ever hear a girl whose around here now, she told me she learned to sing in sanctified churches, uh, Olive Brown?

OSWALD: Oh yeah.

CORTINOVIS: Could she carry a whole program by herself?

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh.

SHAW: Well, I would, uh...I was out there [?] trying as well as she could.

CORTINOVIS: Well, you see, we have what we call the Noonday. And these are, we like to present programs in the area and we're in the process right now of everybody's supposed to propose them in the fall. Now I want to get one ragtime in and I'd like to get a blues program during the year.

SHAW: I would think that she could do that. I think she has [?]

CORTINOVIS: [?] with her.

SHAW: Yeah. While she's up there the piano player leaps, see.

CORTINOVIS: But I mean if we got a little group to spell her. [?] Do you know anybody else that you could recommend more?

SHAW: A singer?

CORTINOVIS: Yeah. A blues.

SHAW: I wouldn't know anybody better than she is.

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh.

SHAW: They're all doing something else.

CORTINOVIS: She's pretty good, though, huh?

SHAW: Oh, I would say she's about as good as you can get.

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh. Oh, we'll have a little group with her then. We go for about an hour.

SHAW: You mean to back her up?

CORTINOVIS: Yeah. And play in between maybe.

SHAW: Uh huh. Yeah. That's...now this girl here [?] has Vita Blues on it.

OSWALD: Oh, does she?

SHAW: [?] Louisiana. They're very different people down there, very different towns. This was on the show with me. This girl...

CORTINOVIS: Seems to have a lot of pictures of ladies, doesn't he, Vivian?

OSWALD: Yeah.

SHAW: [?] in my life at that time.

OSWALD: [Laughs] That's the way they like to have it. Let's see...Lige, Fountain Blue, was he with the Missourians?

SHAW: Yeah, he left here and went to New York with them. he wasn't up there long before he blew his kook. And he stayed in a sanitarium there in New York and they brought him home dead about three years ago.

OSWALD: He's the one you said played Benny Goodman before Benny Goodman played it. [laughs]

SHAW: Oh yeah. I had never heard of Benny Goodman before. Buster Bailey. Buster Bailey never heard of...

OSWALD: That's my husband!

SHAW: Oh yes [?].

OSWALD: Now who would possibly steal a picture of me?

SHAW: I wish I knew.

OSWALD: Look at it's gone, the picture of me. That was...I didn't even know that you had one of those, Lige. Here's Barbara.

SHAW: Yeah, there's Barbara. Now there's a girl that if you could find her [?]

OSWALD: Oh, she was something else, wasn't she.

SHAW: Yes, this was a uniform I had to put on one day I was going out to the ball park to play in the ol' gay 90s. This was my sweetheart.

OSWALD: Sure is.

SHAW: Didn't do nothing but...

OSWALD: What an unspoiled girl.

SHAW: She says, Lige, if you ever come back to California you come back to see me. She say, I don't know what'll happen to you. I says, I don't either. This is the wall that I tore down to play drums. He came over to...let's see, where was I playing? I was playing in Brooklyn and he came over to visit me playing Brooklyn. He's one of the great drummers right up there in New York now.

OSWALD: You look like Chuck Wilson there.

SHAW: Yes, them guys got me up out of bed there. That's is a boy that used to live with me. He's dead now too. He was [?]

OSWALD: His name was Jimmy, wasn't it.

SHAW: Yes. Jimmy Jones.

CORTINOVIS: What else do you got here in this grab bag?

SHAW: Shoot, I got stuff there that... that's the statistic book of Ringling Brothers Circus. There's the house where I was born.

CORTINOVIS: Oh!

SHAW: There's the stable.

CORTINOVIS: No!

OSWALD: Look like a house in Tennessee.

CORTINOVIS: Uh huh.

SHAW: This is my nephew and brothers.

OSWALD: Do you have any family left, Lige?

SHAW: Oh, I wish I...got about forty or fifty nieces and nephews.

OSWALD: No, I meant your own brothers or...

SHAW: Yeah, I got a brother in Austin. I got one in Jackson. My baby brother lives in uh...lives in...lives in Indianapolis.

OSWALD: Mm hm.

SHAW: There's my baby brother.

OSWALD: Alex.

SHAW: And here's the next brother that lives in Tulsa. And this is my brother, myself and [?
]

OSWALD: And Alex and Bob.

SHAW: This is I'm sitting in the back of a field in Dixie, California and a drum [trump?] was lost and I'm sitting out there the next day...

OSWALD: You look dejected.

SHAW:...making pedals so I could play the show that night.

OSWALD: Oh good heavens.

SHAW: Making pedals.

CORTINOVIS: Lige, I've never seen anybody for remembering names and dates like you do.

SHAW: This is my baby brother when he was a baby.

OSWALD: He is a baby there, isn't he?

SHAW: Yeah.[?] and that's here sweetheart.

OSWALD: Oh yeah.

SHAW: And I wasn't there.

OSWALD: Right.

SHAW: This is my aunt and uncle, my cousin. I had my father's picture here but I don't know what...[?]

OSWALD: I think I remember Lige's father. Maybe I don't. The uh...

SHAW: My mother-in-law...

OSWALD: Yeah. The reason I was asking whether you had any brothers and sisters left, you know, were you the last one in the family or...

SHAW: No. No.

OSWALD: Still...

SHAW: Yeah, my baby brother lives in Indianapolis.

OSWALD: Uh huh.

SHAW: And the brother that's next to me he lives in Jackson.

OSWALD: There's just the two of you.

SHAW: Four.

OSWALD: About what kind of money did you make when you were with the Minstrels?

SHAW: Well, I worked it the way to where I could almost name my salary. I didn't have enough sense to ask for nothing. I think the last thing I was getting was about thirty dollars a week. Of course, the biggest thing that most guys got on them shows was in them days you got your room and board.

OSWALD: You didn't have to worry about your food.

SHAW: You got the uniform from us.

OSWALD: That's not too bad a girl...

SHAW: There was not...[?] when I was a hot shot.

OSWALD: Oh boy.

SHAW: One of my big time, big time show partners.

CORTINOVIS: [Laughs]

SHAW: Now this guy...

CORTINOVIS: Jazz Lips Richardson.

OSWALD: Was he a trumpet man?

SHAW: No, he was a comedian.

CORTINOVIS & OSWALD: Oh.

SHAW: He could play drums. He could do anything but blow a horn. He couldn't do that.

CORTINOVIS: [Laughs]

SHAW: He was a natural showman, he was.

OSWALD: That's my writing.

SHAW: Mm huh. What's it say?

OSWALD: Georgia camp meeting, the chorus, when that band...

SHAW: You wrote that for me and I was going to sing it.

OSWALD: A chocolate cake [?] a big chocolate cake. I recognized it as my handwriting. There you are.

SHAW: You remember this girl used to come to the jazz club with me all the time?

OSWALD: I sure do. I can't think of her last name, their names.

SHAW: Garland...

OSWALD: Garland. Mm hm.

SHAW: There's Dexter Gordon's little boy. He's a grown man now. They'd come over to our house and we fix dinner for them. And Daryl. Daryl's married now. They live right over here across [?] avenue and [?]. Dexter died, you know.

OSWALD: Yeah.

SHAW: Oh you didn't get out to [?]'d funeral, did you? I set there all night and kept looking for you and never did...

OSWALD: I'll tell you why...

SHAW: Out there and White and Mullens...

CORTINOVIS: Whose funeral?

OSWALD & SHAW: Howard Johnston.

SHAW: He used to be a...

OSWALD: Well, he...whatever happened to his record collection I wonder.

SHAW: She was trying to sell them the last time I saw her. Now I was telling he about...

OSWALD: He had some of the... he had the best blues record collection that I know of.

CORTINOVIS: Did he? Did he?

SHAW: This is when Barbara got married.

CORTINOVIS: Mm hm.

SHAW: Here's some people that used to fly us around. Now here's the band just like it was when we really started to arrive [?] music. Add we had this boy on trombone.

OSWALD: Oh he looks so young and Barby [?] looks...

SHAW: Yeah. Barby looks sharp. There's [?] and myself.

OSWALD: I had forgotten that she looked like that.

SHAW: This is Garland's sister and her brother-in-law. They used to follow us every place we'd play.

OSWALD: Over at the Palladium that looks...how long did you stay at the Palladium?

SHAW: Nine months. We in there to stay a week and we stayed nine months.

OSWALD: He always went for a week and stayed the better part of a year.

SHAW: We went over to the Palladium and to stay five weeks and we stayed eighteen months. Now here's a thing down in the river.

OSWALD: That' s a goody. That was when we... what was that event? I can't remember.

SHAW: That's was when we had the jazz jam sessions every Sunday. You know, people would have a parade and see us coming up on the boat.

OSWALD: That's right. That was on the fourteenth. Jazz on the fourteenth, wasn't it?

SHAW: Yeah. That's me and Ruth there. I'm trying to find you on the...

OSWALD: [?] was back in the back part. I don't think there was... here's Wally Eckart.

SHAW: Yeah.

OSWALD: Bass player. Who's this?

SHAW: I don't know who that is?

OSWALD: I don't either.

SHAW: There this boy playing that horn.

OSWALD: There's a picture of...Bob did this thing. Bob Oswald did that picture.

SHAW: This girl she just played with her whole soul [Bob?].

OSWALD: She sure did and she'd-get in there and work like a little dog.

CORTINOVIS: [Laughs.]

SHAW: [?] gets you a little funny car I had bought and we were on a job one night and there wasn't nothing but a little old coupe [?] and myself all in that car. And we'd go down [?] I opened the door and we just poured out. We just fell.

CORTINOVIS: Like in a circus, huh?

OSWALD: Yeah.

SHAW: I was the only in the band there that had a car then nobody...

OSWALD: ...else could afford one then.

CORTINOVIS: [?] still doesn't drive and have a car, does he?

SHAW: Never can drive.

OSWALD: He never did learn how.

CORTINOVIS: I don't know how he hasn't gotten around all this time.

SHAW: There's always somebody in the band that always...

OSWALD: He'd always have somebody in the band who'd pick him up.

SHAW: This is something. Do you recognize your picture?

OSWALD: Where? Me?

SHAW: [?] and mine and who is that?

OSWALD: Ooooo...uh, Ollie Johnson.

SHAW: Is that Oilie?

OSWALD: Sure. We were the officers of the Jazz Club...king of the Dixieland drummers retained the vice-presidency with Richard Lodge as the new head. Lovely and talented. He was elected secretary and actually [?] with the typewriter.

CORTINOVIS: [Laughs.]

SHAW: The last time I saw Dick he told me a girl went to Kansas City or San Francisco.

OSWALD: She's in Amsterdam. Holland, with her brother and her brother is engaged and going to be married. Just when I don't know.

SHAW: That last time I saw him I thought he told me she was either in San Francisco...

OSWALD: Well, she was, for a while. She was. What was the man's name in St. Louis that taught...?

SHAW: ...a black priest in the Catholic Church.

OSWALD: What was the man's name that taught so many kids to play here in St. Louis?

SHAW: P. B. Langford. He taught...

OSWALD: Harvey Lankford. [?] Awright, then Harvey lived in New York.

CORTINOVIS: Did he die of cancer?

OSWALD: He was a gorgeous musician. I don't know if you were ever...

CORTINOVIS: Oh yes. I...I, yeah, I have.

SHAW: I don't know if I have a chance to work on this one. A lot of this stuff...

OSWALD: You got some goodies that you never got pasted in.

SHAW: Yeah. I thought there I can see, there's roe and Ruth. Myself and the kid's father.

OSWALD: Yeah.

SHAW: This was made at the annual party at the Club Riviera.

OSWALD: Oh. I think that [?] down at the Riviera.

SHAW: He was going to run off down to New Orleans every time you turn around.

OSWALD: That's why I didn't get to Oil ie Johnson's funeral. I was the national board meeting out in Las Vegas. I'd have much rather have gone to a funeral.

CORTINOVIS: Things were [?] what?

OSWALD: National [?]

CORTINOVIS: Oh. Uh huh.

OSWALD: Je vous aime! [laughs] Well, somebody must have presented you with a...oh, it's the Wild Circus.

SHAW: Yes, once I had the band with the Wild Circus.

OSWALD: What is this, for heavens sake?

SHAW: I don't know, what does it say? [?] I had the membership in the New Orleans jazz club.

OSWALD: I used to send that to, uh, I mean...this is the story of Bessie Smith, isn't it?

SHAW: I don't know. I have to look at it. There's Brook Robinson. You never did see him. There was a guy who was a tremendous musician.

OSWALD: Did he ever record?

SHAW: I don't know if he ever did or not. I'm trying to see if there's pictures of the band out here.

OSWALD: Oh, I guess this is the story of Buddy Boldham. [Tom Plankton] wrote this New Orleans item. Marvelous, marvelous item. Marvelous story. This is a familiar sheet I see hear.

SHAW: Yeah.

OSWALD: This is a real collector's item. We still have the other sides of that and we could never get it released on account of that dumb...what was that guy's name from [discoll]?

SHAW: I forgot myself now.

OSWALD: Um, urn. Victor lost one of the masters. I thought sure you'd have a copy of that article in here.

SHAW: I got it buried somewhere.

OSWALD: It's be in the other bag, the bag with the other goodies.

SHAW: Now I've got two more scrapbooks but...

OSWALD: Couldn't carry them all.

SHAW: I only work on it at night just when I go to bed whenever I got the paste.

OSWALD: Uh huh. Um. . .who were some of the other singers you worked with? I can't remember all of them, the blues singers.

SHAW: Well, I played with Ethyl Waters.

OSWALD: Yeah.

SHAW: I played for Ethyl Waters when I played at Bookers.

OSWALD: Uh huh.

CORTINOVIS: Played where?

SHAW: Booker T. Washington Theater at Twenty Third and Market.

CORTINOVIS: Oh yeah.

SHAW: Up there at [?]. I played for Bill Waterson there.

OSWALD: Yeah. Bojangles.

SHAW: Yeah. Everybody used to come there because they didn't have nowhere else to cool.

CORTINOVIS: [laughs]

SHAW: This one we played for showdown at Stix, Baer and Fuller.

OSWALD: Mm hm.

SHAW: [?] There's Mason. You know, you knew Bill died, didn't you?

OSWALD: Bill who?

OSWALD: Oh yeah. Yeah.

SHAW: He drove away from the hotel there one day and he got to feeling bad and he pulled back on the parking lot and he never did get...

OSWALD: What is...Benny Stark, is he still around?

SHAW: Yeah, he's a doorman at the Chase Hotel.

OSWALD: Yeah. He's been extremely active in St. Louis music.

SHAW: You can't get him to talk about his horn now.

OSWALD: Something got to him, didn't it?

SHAW: Yeah, he got in this church.

OSWALD: Is [People?] Scott no longer in St. Louis.

SHAW: Well, I see Scott [?] I'm going to run a speaker to where he is.

OSWALD: Oh. [laughs] He was a clarinet [?]

SHAW: No, he was a drummer. He had some drums. It was Cecil [?] the clarinet player [?] was in a wreck.

OSWALD: Yeah. That's right.

SHAW: One of the women jumped out of a window lost one of her legs. They got in a fight in New York and one of them jumped out a window and broke a leg and was laid up.

OSWALD: I think that you're the one that told me the Franky and Johnny story.

SHAW: I didn't actually know that but Ed McKinney and he was the one that it was impressed on him. Franky's got a brother that's got an undertaker's parlor out on Newstead now right at [Elem Back?]

OSWALD: Uh huh.

SHAW: That's uh, Franky's brother. His name's Baker. That's the two, one of the fellas that wrote...

OSWALD: Oh.

SHAW: That had the [bad apple scuds?]. That's one of the two.

CORTINOVIS: T. Everett White.

SHAW: T. Everett White, yes. He was a great trumpet player. He could drink as good as he could play, too. He went and got us all fired.

OSWALD: Where's the tavern where...

SHAW: Lawrence [?]

OSWALD: No, I'm talking about Franky and Johnny, which tavern was it?

SHAW: Oh, that was a place down on [?] street down there where, it was right along where the Kiel Auditorium is now.

OSWALD: [?] in that place.

SHAW: Yeah. That was... I thought we had this program of when we played with the symphony. That's what I was looking for.

OSWALD: Is St. Louis Jimmy still around?

SHAW: I haven't seen him in a long time, I don't know.

OSWALD: Oh, come on now, Elijah, were a Jazz Club session.

SHAW: Is that you?

OSWALD: This is me, that's [Joseph Scherrer] and [Jack Meyer].

SHAW: I never saw [Georgia?] take her and Bill separating...had Bill [Steel?] a couple of weeks.

OSWALD: Oh, wow, who's the trombone man here? [?] I'd forgotten all about...here's [Dewey], my heavens.

SHAW: Yeah, where is [Dew]?

OSWALD: She's up in Detroit, Michigan. Uh, Johnny Carter, [T.S.?] and Fred Delgaudo, Johnny Mitchell and Chuck Carter. Oh, this is when I got my trophy! I had forgotten all about this!

CORTINOVIS: Honoring the Jazz Club?

OSWALD: No, just honoring people who were promoting jazz.

CORTINOVIS: Mm hm.

OSWALD: And it's a very lovely uh...

CORTINOVIS: It's an Oscar.

OSWALD: Uh huh. Uh huh. I had forgotten that this was that event. That was a nice festival, very nice. Spider Burkes was in on that?

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SHAW: [?] worked with us a lot.

OSWALD: Oh yes, Josephine Johnson. Good heavens, I'd forgotten about her.

SHAW: Where is she?

OSWALD: I don't know. I just don't know.

SHAW: [?]

OSWALD: Here are things that really jog my memory. This is Easter Day Week I spent with [?] Oh, how dear. This is from Lige to his wife on Easter.

SHAW: A lot of the stuff you see there on Easter, on our anniversary, I better not come home because as soon as I get in the house, she'd start to cry and I'd have to go back out.

OSWALD: [laughs]

SHAW: I'd say, "What's the matter with you, girl?" "This is our anniversary." I'd say, "Oh, is it?"

OSWALD: [laughs]

SHAW: I was out there trying to make some money.

CORTINOVIS: You actually liked those straw hats, didn't you?

SHAW: Yeah.

OSWALD: Lige, you always had these straw hats. A trademark.

SHAW: I still wear it and people don't think the band's the same unless I got the straw hat.

OSWALD: Well, you have to have that when you're doing a show to tip it to the ladies.

SHAW: Yeah.