

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel I--retyped
December 22, 1958

S U M M A R Y

1

Interviewer: William Russell
Also present: Howard's mother,
Howard's daughter, parakeets

Howard was born April 22, 1908, on Bourbon Street, now renamed Pauger Street. His mother, Mary Eliza Howard, named him Avery, after his father who died in 1944. She sang in church choir, but not professionally. She says Kid used to beat drum on a box with sticks, when he was about twelve years old. When he was sixteen, he was a drummer. They lived at 922 St. Philip Street when Kid was young. He has lived around there all of his life.

Kid's father didn't play a regular instrument, but he used to play on a comb, "make-like a trombone," and he used to dance.

Howard's parents went to dances and his mother remembers hearing Sam Morgan's band when she was young, and Manuel Perez and [John] Robichaux.

The earliest band Kid remembers is Sam Morgan's. After Sam died, he joined the Morgan band, with Isaiah Morgan. He played second trumpet. Then he had his own band.

The first instrument he started on was drums. Before his first marriage, when he got his first drums, he didn't know how to put them up. He had bought them at Werlein's. He and his first wife had a time trying to put them together.

Story about his first attempt at the drums (see S. B. Charters): Sam Morgan had the original Sam Morgan Band; Isaiah Morgan had the Young Morgan Band. Rudolph, ^{L.B. Smith} the drummer (which band--probably Sam; cf. p. 3 - inconsistent) got cut one night. Kid had been claiming he could play the drums but he had never played, so when he arrived at the party, at Dumaine Street and St. Claude Avenue, they pressed him into service. After he had been playing a while, Andrew Morgan, Dr. Leonard Bechet, "Son" [Legier ?] and some

others, took him into the band, because he did all right. That's when he bought the drums he couldn't put together.

He never played with homemade instruments in kid bands in the street (Russell's question). But he used to bang on the guitar when they had fish fries at 922 St. Philip Street.

When he started playing trumpet, and had his own band, they would advertise in a truck on Sunday. His mother says they only knew two pieces to play, the "Gutbucket Blues" and the "St. Louis Blues."

His mother didn't want him to be a musician, and refused to co-sign for the drums. He got them by himself, even though he was a minor.

His father was a cement finisher. His father liked his [K.H.'s] music, would go everywhere to hear him play. Always followed his parades.

Kid didn't follow parades when he was a kid.

Avery is a Baptist, went to public school. His daughter went to Xavier to college.

Kid played drums with Chris Kelly, Sam Morgan, Kid Rena. His first band was Sam Morgan's. Others in the band at that time: Isaiah Morgan, Jim Robinson, Earl Fouché, "Little Jim" [Sidney Brown], Johnny Dave (banjo). Rudolph was the drummer before him.

He (who-Sam ?) gave Avery the idea of cornet, sold him his brass cornet, which he didn't like, for \$5. They were both working on Canal Street. Avery took his first cornet lessons from Chris Kelly, who showed him how to tone the horn and started him on the C major scale and "started to running that". In about two months, he could play. He had no regular book, but the scale was written out. Chris was a pretty good reader. Then took lessons from

Professor Delmar for three or four years, then worked at La Vida Dance Hall.

Played drums for Chris Kelly before he got the cornet. Also in Chris's band then: Yank Johnson, [trombone]; Albert Martin, [no relation to Henry Martin] drum; "Mehlie" (Emile) Barnes, clarinet; Chester Zardis, [who recorded with Howard in 1940['s]]bass; Pratts now dead, banjo. Chris Kelly came from somewhere around Deer Range, Louisiana, down in the country. Jim came from there, and Sunny Henry, too.

Description of Chris Kelly's mutes: He used rubber flushers with a mute in the horn. "It was very soft and very good." He used a little brass C. G. Conn mute, like Howard has. Howard plans to buy himself a rubber "wa-wa" mute. Used mute on blues; on "Goin' Back To Jamaica" ["West Indies Blues"], "Careless Love," others. [Scats "West Indies Blues."]

In the old time bands, like Louis Dumaine's, there would be only one man who really knew anything about the music. He would start playing. Then the others would come in as soon as they could "feel" it. That's the way the average guy plays. That's the way Howard does leading on trumpet. He can feel a piece, if he's playing with another band, doesn't ask for key.

Story about a band playing parade "yesterday" (December 21). [Russell keeps interrupting] Sunny Henry's sister had died [and he was upset-^{implied}] The bass drummer [the Snare drummer's signals ^{Don't know} ?] didn't understand, and didn't come in right. The other trumpet was wiping his mouthpiece all day long. "Thank the Lord we didn't have to go very far with it, because I couldn't put up with it myself."

Howard says he could still play the drums, in a parade or in an orchestra. If he looks at the lead sheet and knows where the breaks are, he can make it. Never took lessons on the drum. When he was playing the drum, they had a side cymbal and an overhead pedal. [explains] They had snare drum, and wood blocks, temple blocks, crash cymbals, Turkish cymbal, anyway, two or three cymbals up there. One reason he gave it up was that it was too much to carry, a load. At first, when he first started playing, he would carry the load for as many as fifteen blocks, wanting everyone to see that he had a job playing. You had to go get a free permit to carry the load on the streetcar.

When Howard was playing with Chris Kelly, they played "My Maryland," "Indian **S**agva" [spelling ?] and all the numbers from the Red Book of Rags, Kelly was not much of a high note man. Kelly has a son here, Jack Kelly; he was just a boy when his daddy died. Jim [Robinson ?] would know more about his early life. Howard missed Chris Kelly's funeral; he had been in Greenville, Mississippi, with Isaiah Morgan and got back the day after they buried him. Everybody said it was like Carnival Day; that is how well he was known. Chris Kelly has a brother, Ben Kelly, who is still alive and here in the city. He is an older brother. Chris Kelly's wife, Edna Kelly, is still living; she lives somewhere in the neighborhood of Tremé, between Dumaine and St. Ann Streets. Her husband, Robert, has a peddler's cart.

Chris used a short horn, a C. G. Conn cornet. Howard never saw him with a trumpet. They played in the Economy Hall, the Cooperators, Perseverance, New Hall, Italian, and the Tin Roof for white on Tchoupitoulas and Napoleon. They played at the Masonic Hall, near St. Bernard Circle, too. And over in Algiers.

The Perseverance is located on N. Villere, between St. Bernard and Annette.

They also played down in the country, Louisiana and Mississippi. Howard didn't play too much with Kelly.

Howard started, in two months time he had a band: Earl Humphrey, Willie and Percy Humphrey's brother; "Mehlie" Barnes; and George Lewis before he got with Bunk; Jim [Robinson ?]; Paul Barnes. They played at the Palace Theater for about five years on Iberville and Dauphine. He played at the La Vida Dance Hall on Iberville, between Burgundy and North Rampart; and at the Fern, next door, which was changed to the Budweiser and is now a lot. He played at the Moonlight, at Poydras and Carondelet. They called the dances, jitney [i.e. taxi,] dances. Hours were from 8:00 to 2:00 or 3:00 and they alternated positions when one wanted to get off for a 20 minutes or so. "It was 100% easier than playing on Bourbon Street because anybody could pick up the number." They played "so many slow ones, a few fast ones, so many waltzes." It used to be a nickel a dance and then it got to be a dime. "If I pick up the number and play the first chorus, then the saxophone plays the other chorus out."

END OF REEL I
AVERY "KID" HOWARD
DECEMBER 22, 1958

Interviewer: W. Russell
Also present: Howard's
daughter

During five-minute, or bargain, dances, which was "when a guy got a break", they would mostly use the music. "In other words, we'd use the music, but wouldn't play nothing, maybe, but the chorus. Then we had a card with all the head numbers, so you wouldn't get confused. . . . You could look on the card and see what number you wanted to play and then you had the music to play. Now whatsoever that you're going to play a five minute waltz, well, then we would play, instead of . . . repeat[ing] the second ending, you just [make ?] the introduction and keep [reading] straight on down [through the entire music but without repeats] and by that time you do it, five minutes will be up. . . . You'd play no more than two choruses, fast or slow, but when they played the five-minute dance, that's the time we'd get a chance [on] a piece of music they liked . . . you'd play that all the way . . . that means play everything but don't repeat, just go on down with it . . . you skip the first ending and make the second ending and go on on down and go out with it . . . we played a lot of waltzes and when we played a waltz it would be the same thing. I'd pick up the first chorus, the saxophone rests." They played things like "Tiger Rag" and "Panama." However, most of the music was bought for them: every week they would be given some money to go to Werlein's to buy five or six new pieces, orchestrations for everybody.

At the La Vida dance hall there was: Jim Robinson, Paul Barnes, Sidney Pflueger on guitar, Robert Davis on drums, and Benny Turner, "a real good musician" on piano. Turner who is still around is the one who would go and buy the music. WR states that BT was with Big Eye Louis [Nelson] at Luthjen's.

WR asks if Howard has played at Luthjen's, but he misconstrues as Lutchter, La. and says he's played in a hall there.

When Howard was first starting he would spend one week on the Gulf Coast, the next week he would be gone to Meridian, Hattiesburg, Poplarville, Picayune, Snyder in Mississippi, then they would go to Mobile, Alabama and Pensacola, Florida and back into Biloxi, Gulfport, Pass Christian, and Bay St. Louis in Mississippi. They would travel by two cars which they rented.

When he took up with Isaiah Morgan, they had a truck. Couldn't go but twenty-five miles an hour; it was slow but sure.

At the dance halls they would hire about twenty-five girls; they would get half of the tickets. When a fellow would go to the ticket office to buy a ticket and would have to give it to the girl every dance. At quitting time, they'd split the take. These dances were all for whites. They tried one time to have one for colored on Rampart and Julia; but it didn't go over, he doesn't think it lasted a week. Sometimes they have a fight in the dance hall. The dance halls seemed to be pretty profitable and often kept the same management for some time. Soldiers and Sailors would come, but so did the civilians from around town. Sometimes "they'd play slow, slow and everybody [would] get together."

The Sam Morgan or Isaiah Morgan Band: Howard was playing trumpet in his own band when they made some records of spirituals. They played the Red Back Book of Rags and they had some pretty good musicians: Yank Johnson on trombone, Earl Fouché, Alfred Williams on drums, Rudolph on drums, Roy Evans who's dead, [also on drums], Sidney "Little Jim" Brown on bass. Sam Morgan played the trumpet on the sweet side--straight, sweet. It was a wonderful dance band.

Yank was a good trombone player, not high; he could play "Dixieland" but he could read too. Yank played a different style from Buddy Johnson. They both played slide. Howard preferred Yank.

Howard never knew anyone who played a valve trombone, but he had seen it, because he had played a valve trombone--it fingers like the trumpet or the E flat bass tuba. When he was working at the Fern Café with Andrew Morgan, he used to bring the trumpet and the straight-up bass tuba because the only difference was the mouth-piece. "You pronounce the notes different, but finger the same thing." "You don't find many bass tuba players in New Orleans fooling with the double B [flat]. They don't play with that."

The Morgan band used to use the slap stick and Howard used it with George Lewis's band, too. Kid Thomas uses it, too. Sam Morgan used to use the slap stick "because he was the funny man about [i.e., concerned about] that time." When he set the tempo, he wanted the drummer to stay right there.

Howard used the slap stick in San Francisco when he was playing at the Hangover Club; he stopped using it because some of the people said that they couldn't hear the banjo, nothing but the slap stick. A man in Los Angeles tried to buy the slap stick from Howard. They are a novelty. Howard also played a song whistle [slide whistle ?] "real good," when he was playing the drums, Sam Morgan was the only one in his band to use a slapstick.

Howard played on the excursion trains to Chicago in the late twenties. Sam Morgan was the first band to go; he was there, probably in 1928. In late 1928, 1929, 1930, and 1931 Howard played on the eight day trip. Sam went the long way on the L. and N. R.R. Howard went on the I. C. R. R. They would play at the Warwick

on 47th around Indiana; and that was the first time he remembers meeting Louis [Armstrong--strongly implied]. He's a fine man. Howard would play in the baggage car and they had dancing in there, too. Eddie Morris told Russell he had played on excursions where they played in the coach, but did not have nay dancing. Morris did not go to Chicago, just around different places, probably shorter distances. When Horard would stop in places like Jackson, Mississippi, and Memphis, you would be there for quite a while. "Then we'd break'em down." Howard had eight men in his band then: Guy Kelly, a wonderful player on trumpet; Percy Humphrey [which instrument]; Joe Howard on tuba; Eddie Johnson; Henry Horton, who's dead; [John ?] Handy. A man by the name of Andrew Jackson, he thinks, hired them to go to Chicago; he worked for the railroad as a porter or something and was head of it.

When they got to Chicago he [Andrew Jackson] would arrange for them to play at the Warwick. It was all open to the public-- pay at the door. They would be in Chicago about four nights but only played two of them.

One time Howard played on a wagon to advertize his dance at the Warwick. Lee Collins, who was working at the Astoria here on Rampart St. and went to Chicago for some other people. Collins got a truck to advertize. Both trucks tied up at 47th Street and South Parkway, where the Regal Theatre is, and had a bucking contest. Punch Miller came along and jumped up on the truck, because it looked as if Percy was afraid of the people. Ethel Waters and all the other theatrical people were around. They had never seen anything like it. They stayed there for hours. They went all over Chicago, playing at corners. He mostly played in Chicago, or around New Orleans in his earlier years.

Howard always wanted to play the trumpet, even before he got hoist on his own petard and had to play the drums. Nobody showed him how to play the drums, or how to drive a car. He just watched others and then did it. Drummers varied beat according to the tune. [Discusses drum styles with demonstration ?] Howard doesn't remember King Oliver or Freddy Keppard.

Howard played Buddy Petit's funeral. Louis Armstrong was here, playing at the Suburban Gardens. It was about 1930-1931. Armstrong was a pall bearer. Two bands played the funeral, the Eureka Brass Band and Howard's brass band. Howard doesn't remember all the ten men in his band at that time, but he remembers George, Jim, and Little Jim (playing a tuba).

Howard knew Buddy Petit about five or six years before he died. He met him in Bogalusa. He was a great trumpet player. Didn't use mutes, used open horn. Not a high note man. Sweet, but good. He could finger very well. Fine tone. Something like Bunk Johnson. Played everything in the Red Book. Howard doesn't know about his reading ability.

Buddy played the same places everybody else did: dances, halls, parties, the Fair Grounds, bars, and others, as did Chris. People used to have parties at their houses Monday nights, hire four or five piece bands.

Red Allen and every body else played lawn parties. Howard says they still have lawn parties and fish fries in the summer, where they hire small bands, three or four pieces, rent out the yard across the street for Howard where the Eureka was recorded. Fish fries were only Saturday nights. Lawn parties were Saturday, Sunday, or Monday.

Howard says he played a lot of picnics just last summer.

Lately picnics have been held at Nine Mile Point, down in Gentilly.
And they've been having a lot of them at La Place, Louisiana. [check this]
He also played at Milneburg years ago.

END OF REEL II
AVERY "KID" HOWARD
DECEMBER 22, 1958

Howard played at Milneburg when they had all those camps with Jack Carey (on drums), when he was playing out there. Also played out there with his own band. He played trumpet at a white night club out there with a fellow called Hickman, Albert Burbank, [cl] Louis Gallaud, p, somebody else on drums, on weekends for quite a while. This night club, open with music on weekends, was strictly for white. The camps out over the water were for colored people. The white camps were out at Seabrook. Spanish Fort and Bucktown were for whites; Howard played there. West End was all for white.

When Howard was playing drums with Jack Carey the trombone player, a fellow named Gordette was playing trumpet with them. Gordette went to live in Los Angeles and died out there.

When Howard first heard Buddy Petit, he was over in Bogalusa, Louisiana, just playing with some fellows. Since they were usually both working at the same time, Howard didn't get to hear too much of Petit. He didn't have a steady band in New Orleans.

Buddy Petit's brother, Sonny Petit, is still alive, lives in the next block from Slow Drag Pavageau on Burgundy Street.

Howard's favorite trumpet player is Louis Armstrong. Next to Louis, he loved to hear Chris Kelly, loved that sweet playing with the mute.

When Avery Howard first started and got his band together, he used to play exactly like Chris Kelly, with the mute, the "wa-wa" and everything. In Algiers, the people were crazy about Chris and he used to send Howard on a lot of jobs. Chris always played

"Careless Love" in F, E flat concert. George's band uses it in G and the trumpet and he doesn't use the mute anymore. Chris used to start it with the blues, with two beats of the drum. (scats) He played the first part open, used the mute for the "Careless Love" part. [compare Geo Lewis on Climax] He had a little "lick" he used to make on the horn to call the band together, would keep doing it over and over until he was ready to start off. At that time there was no union and the band was apt to be scattered throughout the hall. Breaks were frequent.

They used to play from eight to two in the old days. Howard started at the end of this period. But at 12 o'clock everybody would come off the stand, sit at a long table, and have a free meal. Used to have banquets on Monday. Howard doesn't know where the bands today get that stuff about standing up to play Dixieland; they used to sit down. You might stand up if you wanted to take a solo or something. When they played at Childs Paramount in New York, they were offered chairs, but George said no.

In the old days, in the halls, they used to save the blues until people got crowded in there, then they could work easier. They played new numbers, waltzes, blues, popular songs, never just sat there and played "Panama" and "Tiger Rag" all night long. They'd play a new number until those who couldn't read would catch on.

Manuel Perez had a musical [i.e., reading] band. He didn't play like Howard does in the streets now. Everything was by music. They played those 6/8's [marches] and they played funeral marches; maybe, a hymn when they were picking up the body, then funeral marches in 6/8. Although they could jazz, Howard never heard them play anything but written music at a funeral. Sometimes, with a six-piece band, advertising for a store, he'd play head

music, but when he was playing at the Roof Garden of the [Pythian ?] Temple, his band was reading.

Perez was still active in 1930.

Kid Rena was a wonderful player in earlier years. Howard was a pallbearer for his funeral. Howard played with him in brass bands. He could go up for the high notes, clean. Big tone. Wonderful trumpet man.

The common people kept Chris Kelly so busy that he didn't often get time to play the dicty, classy places. "In other words, money, money. First come, first served." He did play white dances, though.

"Fidgety Feet" and "War Cloud" are one and the same, a real old number. It can be played in the streets.

[K.H. too young for this question.]

"Don't Get Funky 'Cause Your Water's On" is same as "Tin Roof Blues," but with different licks.

He doesn't know any other name for "Tiger Rag" nor why one song would have two titles.

Howard has an extensive collection of music, much of it dating from when he had a big band, when Willie Pajaud and Bill Matthews used to work for him. When "Professor" John Robichaux died, his wife, Miss Anna, gave Howard quite a bit of music. She also gave Maurice Durand a lot of it according to WR. She gave Howard half. Other fellows borrowed the music from him, but he is so out of practice at reading that he'd have to "set my mind to it" for it to come back.

Howard played with the Eureka Brass Band at one time. It was when Willie Wilson was leading it. Red Clark was playing trombone at that time. Johnny Wilson was playing baritone. Louis

"Kid Shots" Madison and Ernest Rogers, [one of them ?] got Howard to come into the band. Shots Wilson and "Gasoon" [Joseph Phillips, Jr. ?] were talking about what part to give Howard. They gave him first part and they were surprised at how he took care of his part; hired him in the band. Shots was always a wonderful second man, and good for first. They gave KH the first part as they were afraid to give him the solo part in the beginning. Later they put Howard onto solo, and from there put him to be leader. Never did go to night rehearsal. He used to like that kind of music [reading], but he doesn't care for it much anymore. After Wilson was taken sick, "they put the leader thing on my cap," and I [unintelligible] a long time. [See Red Clark interview for discussion of this period in Eureka Band history.]

Howard also played in the Young Tuxedo with John Casimir for a while. Also played with Eddie Jackson when he had the Original Tuxedo Band. Says he was leading that band, with Willie Pajaud, Maurice Durand, George Lewis. Celestin had given up; Eddie Jackson had the band. Eddie Jackson was the best tuba that ever lived, in New Orleans. Henry Harding [spelling ?] and Earl Fouché played saxophone in that band. Thinks Yank played trombone but he's not sure, as he is about the three trumpet players. It was a good band. Everybody was right. Black Happy Goldston played [snare ?] with them and Bat Moseley, [bass drum ?]

Great drummers: Roy Evans, Alfred Williams, Albert Martin, [WR suggests:] Red Happy Bolton, who he heard at the Lyric Theatre. Also remembers Zutty [Singleton] there. Heard Baby Dodds after George went to New York, but never knew him down here before that time. [He probably means in 1944] Old Man Louis Cottrell was a good drummer, a musical [reading] drummer.

Georgie Boyd was a good clarinet player [at WR's suggestion].
Emile Barnes was one of the good ones. So was Zeb Lenoir. Zeb
used to play with Rena.

END OF REEL III
AVERY "KID" HOWARD
DECEMBER 22, 1958

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel I [of 4]--Digest-- Retype
May 22, 1961

1

Also present: Anders Dyrup, Richard B. Allen.

Kid Howard was born April 22, 1908 [in New Orleans] on (he thinks) Bourbon (now Pauger) Street near St. Claude. He lived in Phoenix, Louisiana from about age 5 until about age 12. He remembers little of the music he heard when living in Phoenix; there were only guitar players, who played [and sang?] the blues. KH attended (a Baptist) church, where the choir, unaccompanied by instruments, sang standard hymns (i.e., "Nearer My God To Thee" and "What A Friend We Have In Jesus"). Upon his return to New Orleans, he got a porter's job in a curio store on Canal Street, next to Werlein's [music store]; he became interested in music then [about age 12], and began playing drums when he was 14. KH heard bands on the street playing to advertise some occasion [dance, prize fight, etc.]. Answering a question about bands in stores, KH says Manuel Perez and others played at various clothing stores on [South] Rampart; Sam Morgan played at Maison Blanche, both inside and on a truck. With Morgan during that time were: Jim "Big Jim" Robinson [trombone]; Sidney "Little Jim" Brown [bass]; Johnny Dave, [banjo]; Alfred Williams [drums]; Earl Fouché [alto sax]; Andrew Morgan [tenor sax and clarinet]; [Isaiah] "Young" Morgan, 2nd trumpet.

KH took his first [trumpet] lesson from Chris Kelly. He began playing drums just by talking about it, saying that he could play

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel I [of 4]--Digest--Retype
May 22, 1961

2

drums; one night, at a dance where Isaiah Morgan's band (with Jim Robinson) was playing, the band needed a drummer; when KH walked in, he was forced to play. He played well enough to decide to buy a set of drums the next day. Andrew Morgan heard him play that night and hired him for his band, which included in it: Dr. [Leonard] Bechet, trombone; "Son" Legier [sp?], trumpet (is now a barber, on Prieur, between St. Philip and Dumaine, KH thinks); Bouton [check sp.], bass. KH played with various bands after that, including that of Chris Kelly. Kelly's band played for anybody, but mostly for colored. His special song was "Careless Love," featuring Kelly's using the plunger (the first use for wa-wa effect, according to KH). (RBA plays the George Lewis Climax recording of "Careless Love.") KH says Kelly would play the tune almost exactly as it is recorded on the record; he agrees with RBA that most of the men in the band played with Kelly at one time or another (KH names Jim Robinson and George Lewis), and that they should know how Kelly sounded; [KH himself is the trumpet player on the record]; KH says he played just like Kelly years ago. All the bands KH knew about, in his time, had solos, the same as the bands of today; he doesn't remember any band which was mostly ensemble.

KH was with Andrew Morgan's band (with Son Leger) between

3
AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel I [of 4]--Digest-- Retype
May 22, 1961

six months and a year. He was never with Kelly as a regular, but substituted some. When KH began playing trumpet, he also worked with Kelly some, playing 2nd trumpet. When Sam Morgan died, KH joined the Morgan band as 2nd trumpet, Isaiah Morgan moving to first trumpet. Kelly's regular drummer was Roy Evans. Personnel of Kelly's band changed, but he had, at various times George [Lewis], Georgie Boy[d], Zeb [Leneries] [all clarinetists]; [Butler] "Guyé" [Rapp], banjo; Peter Pappin [sp?]; Yank Johnson and his brother, Buddy Johnson; Earl Humphrey, Kelly's usual trombonist; Chester Lizardi [i.e. Zarādis], bass. KH doesn't remember that Kelly ever had a piano in his band. Israel Gorman also played with Kelly, on alto sax; [Henry] Pajaud, a barber, played tenor sax. The saxes were added when the band was enlarged (i. e., when Kelly's band played every Tuesday night at the Bulls' Club, where two or three bands would be playing competitively -- Bulls' Club is now the Elks' Club, near Danneel Street [on 8th or Harmony?]).

Talk about Milneburg and activity there every day. Sometimes seven or eight bands playing there--Kid Rena, Kid Punch Miller, Kelly's, Jack Carey's, Sam Morgan's, others.

Kelly would sometimes have three or four jobs in one night; he would send other musicians to fill the engagements, appearing

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel I [of 4]--Digest--Retye
May 22, 1961

4

at only one himself, although his name was used at all the jobs; most of the leaders used to do that, says KH, with the exception of Sam Morgan and Papa Celestin. KH, on Kelly's jobs, got his first jobs as leader from the people he would be playing for, as they could not tell any difference in the music, except by sight, and they had more confidence in him than they did in Kelly.

During the Twenties, KH usually had his own band; he played at the La Vida [dance hall] (Jim Robinson was in charge of the job, but KH was the leader). KH's band played at the Palace Theater, his own job. KH was at the La Vida in 1926 (he remembers because social security cards were first issued then). In the band: KH, trumpet; Robinson, trombone; Paul Barnes, sax; Sidney Pflueger, guitar; Bennie Turner, piano; Robert Davis, drums. (Barnes could play clarinet, but didn't at the La Vida; he played only sax on his recordings with Papa Celestin, Jelly Roll Morton and on jobs with Joe Oliver, too.) [Cf. discographies and Walter C. Allen & Brian Rust, King Joe Oliver.] In the Thirties, KH played at the 802 on Bourbon Street [name of club?] for Sam Colombo, right across the street from the Paddock Lounge which had just opened. In the band: KH; Sammy Hopkins, piano; Charlie Sylvester, drums, Chester Lizardi [i.e. Zardis], bass. John Handy was later added on [alto] sax. When Handy was known as a clarinet player, he was playing at the

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel I [of 4]--Digest--Retype
May 22, 1961

5

Hummingbird Cafe (Bienville and Marais), and KH was working at a night club on Iberville, between Marais and Villere. JH was about the best clarinetist here. RBA comments that JH's lip was down [on clarinet]. KH says he has lost interest in clarinet. KH had JH in his band at Sid [Davilla]'s Mardi Gras Lounge, and JH was dissatisfied with his clarinet playing. (Handy has recorded in recent years on clarinet, with Punch Miller.)

KH took quite a few lessons from Professor [Delmar, Dalmas? Check spelling] (as a lot of musicians did); Delmar, from the country, was most often located at a pressing shop at Rampart and Common, with Professor Pritchard. Chris Kelly was KH's first teacher; he taught KH how to read some--Kelly was about an average reader, although not generally credited with being able to read. Kelly didn't play arrangements, like Papa Celestin and Sidney Desvigne, but he kept up with the latest tunes; he bought orchestrations and would play the introduction and the chorus. Yank Johnson, with the band, was a good reader. Paul Barnes helped KH a lot with his reading; Louis Dumaine helped KH, also. Dumaine did a little faking; he was also an arranger (RBA says the Eureka and Young Tuxedo, both brass bands, play some of his arrangements). KH has a lot of arrangements [lead sheets?] written by Dumaine.

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel I [of 4]--Digest--Retype
May 22, 1961

6

KH usually had a big band. Bill Matthews worked a long time with him; Willie Pajaud played 2nd trumpet with him. Manuel Crusto, sax and clarinet (also trumpet) worked with him. KH had a ten-piece band. Matthews played trombone in the band; KH never heard Matthews play drums. KH worked with Matthews' brother [Remus

] in the [Original] Tuxedo Brass Band. KH led the brass band when Papa Celestin and Eddie Jackson [?] split up. KH was lead [trumpet], Pajaud played 2nd and Maurice Durand was solo (KH says "we two was on solo" [meaning that he and Durand were both playing what is technically the lead, or melody--PRC]). The drummers in the band were Batiste Moseley, bass drum, and Remus Matthews, snare drum. Eddie Jackson played tuba.

End of Reel I

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel II [of 4]--Digest-- Retype
May 22, 1961

7

Also present: Anders Dyrup, Richard B. Allen.

KH worked with practically all the brass bands during the Twenties; during depression years, he practically made his living off funerals. During the Twenties, he worked with the [original] Eureka Brass Band, led by [Willie] Wilson [trumpet and leader], with [Louis] "Shots" [Madison], trumpet; Johnny Wilson (brother of the leader, [baritone horn]); [Isidore] Barbarin [alto horn]; [Joseph] "Red" [Clark], trombone; [Willie] Cornish, trombone. When leader Wilson became ill, KH became leader. KH also played with the Pacific Brass Band, led by Kid Rena; when Rena quit, KH became leader of that band. Others in it: [Elmer] Talbert, trumpet; Edgar Mosley, bass drum. George Lewis was quite often on clarinet with the Pacific; Manny Gabriel played alto sax. Flowers, a "Jewmaker" [i.e., Jamaican], also played alto horn in the Pacific. KH also played with the Tuxedo Brass Band when Eddie Jackson [brass bass] took over [as leader].

Joe "Gossoon" Phillips, a banjo player, worked with various bands, including those of Chris [Kelly], Kid Rena and KH.

KH played second trumpet (i.e., first [harmony part]) in the Eureka Brass Band his first job (Ernest Rogers, drums, who had also played with the Pacific, recommended KH for the job.), until he proved his ability to read and play; he was then moved to first,

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel II [of 4]--Digest--Retype
May 22, 1961

8

along with Willie Wilson, and Shots was moved back to second. When Wilson left the band and KH took over as leader, Louis Dumaine and Huntley Gardette often played trumpet with the band. Gardette, who was taught by Dumaine, usually led his own band; he died in California. Gardette played with "a lot of those fellows," including Jack Carey; he played with [other] "ratty" bands, too.

Talk of KH's father; no musician (none in family except KH), he would make kazoo-type instrument from a comb and cigarette paper, put a broom on his shoulder and pretend to play trombone; accompanied by guitar[s].

Rudolph Beaulieu (related to Arnold Depass, drummer) played drums with Sam [Morgan] for quite a while; Beaulieu is still alive.

Besides trumpet and drums, KH has "fooled" with the guitar, "rapping the blues," but he didn't make much progress.

KH tells how he got his first cornet,--he was playing drums at the time--, and how he went to Chris Kelly for his first lesson; describes first lesson.

Pratt, a banjo player, was the right[-hand] man of Chris Kelly. He was a relation of Edgar "Sambo" Joseph.

The first tune KH played was "Yes, Sir, That's My Baby." While studying with Kelly, he began playing the blues, "Maryland,

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel II [of 4]--Digest-- Retype
May 22, 1961

9

My Maryland," "Going Back To Jamaica," (same as "West Indies Blues") and most everything Kelly played.

A jitney dance [hall] charged 5 cents per dance for men to dance with the girls employed at the place. KH tells how the bands at such places worked--the routine of tunes, lengths of tunes, etc. Mentions Paul [Barnes, who worked in the band with KH at a jitney dance hall--see Reel I of this interview]. KH worked there [La Vida], and also at the Moonlight, upstairs, on the riverside-downtown corner of St. Charles and Poydras.

KH tells of making [home-type] recordings when he was working for Sam Colombo [on Bourbon Street--see Reel I]; he doesn't have any of the discs anymore. He recorded "Mahogany Hall Stomp," "Chinatown, My Chinatown," "When You're Smiling"--all the numbers associated with Louis [Armstrong] at the time.

KH first met Armstrong in Chicago, 1929; KH played excursions from New Orleans to Chicago; his first excursion was for the L & N [Railroad], in 1928; the rest of them were for the Illinois Central. The entire excursion trips required 8 days; the band played the [big] dance in Chicago, at the Warwick Hall. Armstrong came to visit an old acquaintance, Joe Howard (playing tuba with KH on first trip only). Also in KH's band: Percy Humphrey, second trumpet; Edmund Washington [alto sax]. The

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel II [of 4]--Digest--Retype
May 22, 1961

10

band was eight pieces-- two trumpets, two saxes, bass [tuba], drums, banjo, and [sometimes?] trombone (once Hamp [Benson] was hired in Chicago, to play trombone; KH says Hamp was from New Orleans). The band played in the baggage car, at stops only. Henry Harding played tenor sax in the band. Joe Phillips played banjo. Bat[iste] Mosley was the drummer. KH tells how he took Guy Kelly [trumpet] to Chicago; Kelly's people were in Chicago, so KH took Kelly along on an excursion without pay or paying; Kelly played when he wanted to play; he stayed in Chicago. Eddie "Big Head" Johnson (who works at Werlein's) made a couple of trips to Chicago with KH; he played alto sax. (There was also a "Little Eddie" Johnson who played sax.) KH saw Punch Miller in Chicago; he also saw Lee Collins, who was making an excursion run for the L & N when KH was making one for the IC; their bands met on the street in Chicago, while advertising their dances, and had a "bucking" contest. In Collins' band: Collins, trumpet; George Washington, trombone; Theodore Purnell, alto sax; Davy Jones, tenor sax; Danny Barker, guitar; Al Morgan, bass; perhaps Roy [Evans] on drums, but KH is not certain; Joe Robichaux, piano.

[Abbey] "Chinee Bebe" [Foster, drums] played slide whistle in New Orleans; KH also played that instrument; he says the people seemed to enjoy it.

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel II [of 4]--Digest-- Retype
May 22, 1961

Black Benny [Williams], drums, also worked with Chris Kelly, although KH never worked with Benny.

Hickman, alto sax, played with Kid Rena. KH worked quite a bit with Hickman--at Milneburg, and also advertising on a truck for Maison Blanche Annex [clothing store]. On the Milneburg job with Hickman: Louis Gallaud, piano; KH, trumpet; Albert Jiles, [KH thinks], drums.

[Albert] Burbank worked with KH; KH would also take over Burbank's job of advertising for MB Annex when Burbank couldn't play it. MB Annex had bands advertising about twice a week.

Discussion of what makes a good jazz musician--no conclusion.
Discussion technique. Kid Clayton, trumpet, is mentioned.
Papa Celestin is mentioned.

Trumpet players KH liked when he was growing up, other than [and including] Chris Kelly: Punch Miller, Kid Rena, Sam Morgan--all of them. Sam Morgan played in a sweet style (Earl Fouché was in the band); he had a solid style, was not a rough trumpet player. Morgan had a big name on the [Gulf] Coast; his band also played at the Astoria, but most of his work was out-of-town. KH says Morgan's recordings sound like Morgan did in person and do him justice.

Manuel Perez was a loud trumpet player; he played jazz, in

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel II [of 4]--Digest--Retype
May 22, 1961

12

his way. Brass bands of Perez's time didn't play jazz, as the brass bands of today do; they played all straight marches. KH doesn't know of any "tonk" [i.e., jazzy] brass bands during that time.

End of Reel II

Also present: Anders Dyrup, Richard B. Allen

Chris Kelly and Kid Rena, among others, would sometimes get together brass bands which would play in the rough style associated with the New Orleans brass bands of the present. KH describes the kinds of music used for playing a funeral, saying the band would "put 'em in the alley" when coming back from the burial; the term is applied to blues.

KH had a "get-together" band to play Buddie Petit's funeral; the Eureka [Brass Band] also played; Louis Armstrong was a pall bearer (he was then in New Orleans at the Suburban Garden [check spelling]). Some in KH's band that day: Jim Robinson [trombone]; Edgar Mosley [bass?] drum. The operator of a speakeasy, a friend of KH, Ernest Delarose, paid the band for playing Petit's funeral; the funeral began at his place and KH's band returned there, bringing the crowd with it. KH played a lot of dances for Delarose, at various dance halls; Delarose died in Chicago, several years ago. Mention is made of the Delarose brothers, musicians, who have a shoemaker's shop on Claiborne. Petit's funeral attracted not quite as many people as that of [Alphonse] Picou.

Hamp Benson was the trombonist KH picked up in Chicago for some jobs [when KH's band was up on excursions--see Reel II, this interview].

(Anders Dyrup questions KH.) The first time KH went to

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel III [of 4]--Digest--Retype
May 22, 1961

14

Europe was with George Lewis Jazz Band [1959?]; the band played in England three or four weeks, in Denmark, Sweden, Germany (where they did television shows, not concerts). Lewis remained in Germany, joining Ken Colyer's band [English] for a tour. KH has had previous television experience--New Orleans, New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. European [concert] audiences were wonderful. KH heard European bands; talks about jam sessions; level of music good. Brass band which greeted Lewis band in London was good; played same tunes New Orleans brass bands play. Brass bands greeted Lewis band at almost every city they played; smallest group was a three-piece (sax, banjo and one other), in Sweden. Talk of arriving in Copenhagen and some difficulty due to bad weather. In London, Colyer had about a 20-piece band; many people, some on sheds; one shed[s?] collapsed, injuring people. Lewis band met a lot of fans, were interviewed. KH would like to go to Europe again. KH mentions John [Selton, ^{Eric the lute (sp?)} Selter?] a young trumpet player who plays exactly like KH. KH knew Ken Colyer in New Orleans. Joachim Berendt had the Lewis band on TV in Germany. Dyrup says the Lewis band did a concert in Copenhagen's largest hall, the KB Hall--very successful, AD says. Lewis was talked into staying in Denmark to open the Montmartre Club, Copenhagen; Lewis' band was the first to play that

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel III [of 4]--Digest--Retype
May 22, 1961

15

place. Lewis band very successful there; remained eight or ten days. Stan Getz there over a year; also successful; Mose Allison has played there. George Lewis draws about as well as anyone appearing in Europe, except Louis Armstrong, who draws better than anyone [in jazz?], including a lot of classical artists. [AD was one of the owners of the Montmartre].

(RBA questions KH again.) KH demonstrates the recall to the bandstand used by Chris Kelly; same as the one used by street bands today; KH doesn't know who started that practice.

Huntley Gardette died about 10 years ago, although KH is not quite sure.

KH played drums once or twice with Jack Carey; Mutt Carey played trumpet with him; Gardette also played with Jack Carey. KH remembers that Mutt Carey played second trumpet occasionally with Chris Kelly, at the Bulls' Club; Mutt went with Ory about that time. [MC left (about 1919?)]

KH was leader of the Eureka for a long time, although he doesn't know exactly how long. Afterward, he worked with Eddie [Jackson], and with various other bands. KH didn't ever have a day job. In later years, KH has worked with various brass bands. The Eureka and the Young Tuxedo (the latter led by John Casimir) use a lot of the same men, says KH. [Wilbert] Tillman [regularly]

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel III [of 4]--Digest-- Retype
May 22, 1961

16

and [George] "Sheik" [Colar] [occasionally] work with both bands. KH worked steady for a long time with John Casimir, until KH became ill.

McNeal Breaux worked with KH; he even lived with KH, where KH left him when he went overseas, with Lewis. Breaux played in KH's big band. KH played with Lewis on recordings made for Bill Russell in [19]40 [cf. discographies.]; before Lewis was with Bunk [Johnson], Lewis worked with KH's band. KH worked with Lewis at Mannie's [Tavern] off and on; Jim Robinson worked in that band once in a while; the time was before Lewis 's band went into the El Morocco [club on Bourbon Street], some time during the [late] Forties. Lewis played in KH's brass band which played in the movie New Orleans, which featured Louis Armstrong. The brass band played a staged funeral which was never shown. In the band: Jim Robinson, Bill Matthews [trombones]; Sidney "Little Jim" Brown [tuba]; Louis Dumaine, [Henry] Allen, Sr. [and KH], trumpets; Arthur Hogan [i.e., Ogle], John Batiste Mosley [drums]; Howard Davis, George Lewis, clarinets. There were two others in the band (perhaps saxophones, but KH doesn't remember). The funeral was staged from Algiers to the McDonoghville Cemetery.

RBA says KH listens to records more than most musicians. KH likes jazz records. He likes Armstrong, always has; he plays

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel III [of 4]--Digest-- Retype
May 22, 1961

17

mostly Armstrong and spirituals. He likes everything Armstrong ever made, and all the spirituals. RBA says he heard "Walking With The King" on Arthur Godfrey's program. KH thinks he [with Lewis' band] is the only one who ever recorded that spiritual; RBA says Nappy Lamare and Ray Bauduc have later recorded it, and imitate KH in his vocal.

End of Reel III

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel IV [of 4]--Digest--Retype
May 22, 1961

18

Also present: Anders Dyrup, Richard B. Allen

KH likes recordings by Louis Armstrong and of spirituals; he likes all of Armstrong's records, from any years and with any band.

KH likes all the trumpet players.

Clarinetists he likes: [Louis] Cottrell [Jr.]; from an earlier time, when KH was beginning to play music: George [Lewis]; Zeb [Leneries]; Georgie Boy[d]; [Emile] "Mealy" Barnes. Barnes played with KH when KH was "just getting together with the band" [i.e., finding out how to play in a band?]; KH could play the songs, but he didn't know how to make jazz endings. Barnes was playing with Chris [Kelly] who gave KH a job in Buras, [Louisiana], on which Barnes played; Barnes made all the endings--KH says, "When he come to stop the band, ... I couldn't stop; I could play, but I couldn't stop." Comparison by RBA of Barnes' style and [Sidney] Bechet's style; some things similar, but a lot of difference. KH says "he was tops at that time." After Paul [Barnes] went into the service, Emile Barnes played with KH at the Palace Theater for a while. The band rehearsed on Tuesday, played that night at the Ritz Theater, and played at the Palace on Wednesday and Saturday nights. (The Ritz was [and is now--Sept. 1965--a church] at Howard [now LaSalle] and Felicity.) Later they played at the Gem. Movies were shown between the stage shows; KH and

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel IV [of 4]--Digest--Retype
May 22, 1961

19

band played for the stage shows. Acts: comedians, chorus girls, singers, etc. Individuals: Alma Purnell, song and dance; Harold Dejan's wife, who was leader of the chorus girls; ^[probably Memphis Lewis - Tad Jones] Milford Lewis; "Lollipop" Jones, comedian. KH played for Jones in 1927, when Jones first came to New Orleans, with the Twenty Dots, at the Lincoln Theater; KH was to go on the road with Jones, but didn't, because he didn't want to leave town. Another individual: "Sweetie" Walker, comedian. Jones was a singer and comedian, had funny costumes [cf. Photographs in Ralston Crawford Collection. RBA]. Butterbeans and Susie ~~are~~ mentioned; "Pigmeat" Markham is mentioned --KH didn't play for either of them. KH was playing at the Palace when vaudeville was discontinued there.

KH worked with Abby Williams' band on a lot of different jobs, among them one around Pauger and Burgundy; he was working with Williams in 1959, when KH became ill. RBA mentions that he heard and danced to the music of KH [with Williams] at Fump and Mannie's.

KH was for years in charge of the two bands which played for the Lyons Club at Mardi Gras; when he began playing with George Lewis, he gave up that job. KH played many Mardi Gras parades, including that one of the Eleonore [check spelling] Club; he first worked that job with Willie Parker (bass drum and leader)

KH has played for the [Jefferson City] Buzzards, also.

One of KH's favorite trombone players is Sam Williams, who worked with KH when he first started; KH has been trying to get in touch with him, but without success. When KH first began [his own band?], Williams played trombone in the band; Sam Robinson (brother of Jim Robinson) played clarinet and sax; Walter Arnolia (close friend of Chris Kelly) was the drummer; Lawrence Martin (now a letter carrier) played banjo; [Jose, Hosea, Hosey?] Harris was on bass violin. KH had played with [Andrew] Morgan and with Son Legier before that time, but on drums; the band he has just named was his first when he began playing trumpet. KH and band were jobbing at the time, here and there; Chris Kelly would send him on jobs he himself couldn't take care of.

Other trombonists KH likes: Jim Robinson, Sunny Henry, Albert Warner, Yank Johnson, Buddy Johnson, Bill Matthews (who at "that" time [when KH was starting on trumpet?] was with Papa Celestin's big band).

Piano players KH mentions: Jeannette Kimball (then also with Celestin, he thinks); Benny Turner (also worked with Celestin); Mercedes Fields (who worked a long time with KH).

Good drummers around when KH began playing drums; Roy [Evans]; Alfred Williams; Black Benny [Williams]; Red Happy [Bolton] (at

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel IV [of 4]--Digest-- Retype
May 22, 1961

21

the Lyric Theater when KH heard him).

Earl Fouché was a great saxophone player; John Handy and Son Johnson are mentioned.

Banjo players mentioned: [Butler] "Guyé" [Rapp]; Jonny Dave (who worked with Sam Morgan); Percy Severe (now in Natchez [,Mississippi]); John Marrero (brother of Lawrence Marrero). KH mentions no guitarists; banjo was the thing then.

String bass was in then. [Sidney] "Little Jim" [Brown] played string bass, doubled on tuba when he was with Sam Morgan. Ransom [Knowling] was a great [string?] bass player; he worked with Sidney Desvigne. Herman "Bassie" [sp?] Mitchell was good, on both string and brass; when Eddie [Jackson] died, Mitchell took his place in the [Original] Tuxedo Brass Band, on bass horn.

KH thinks Chris Kelly died after Buddie Petit; KH was playing with "Young" [Isaiah] Morgan at the time, having replaced Sam Morgan, sick or deceased. KH played Sam Morgan's funeral, with his own "get-together" band; Isaiah Morgan didn't play the funeral, contrary to some information.

KH's favorite European musicians are all of them.

(RBA plays George Lewis' recording of "Caldonia" with Kid Howard, Jim Robinson, Joe [Watkins], Alton [Purnell, vocal], Lawrence Marrero [and Slow Drag Pavaeau. Storyville 12" LP,

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel IV [of 4]--Digest-- Retype
May 22, 1961

22

SLP 106.) RBA comments, says KH's style, tone, etc. are different from his other recordings; KH says he played the way Lewis told him to play. (The record must be ordered special from Denmark [~~where it was recorded?~~].)

KH did not know Dave Perkins, but he played DP's funeral; Papa Celestin and the Original Tuxedo [Brass] Band also played it; KH and Chris Kelly played with a get-together band led by trombone player Joe Harris.

[Adolphe] "Tats" [Alexander, Jr.] worked many times with KH, several years ago, on all kinds of jobs--funerals, big band, small band.

Steve Angrum worked with KH, off and on, in George Williams' [brass] band.

KH started Edgar Mosley on trap drums; Mosley played bass drum in [brass] bands, but KH helped him with the traps. (RBA heard KH play drums at Fump and Mannie's when Abby Williams left the stand once.) KH never tried to teach anyone trumpet, as he doesn't have the patience.

During the depression years, Sidney Desvigne's band got the most work; William Houston, the pianist, was the arranger; the band played all the top tunes--those which were popular on the juke boxes. Herbert Leary did all right in those times, too, and

AVERY "KID" HOWARD
Reel IV [of 4]--Digest--Retype
May 22, 1961

23

KH did pretty well.

Towns in Mississippi where KH has played: Pass Christian, Gulfport, Biloxi, Pascagoula, Picayune, Poplarville, Lumberton, Hattiesburg, Electric Mills, Meridian; in Alabama: Mobile, Bessemer; in Florida; Pensacola; Mississippi again: Hazlehurst, McComb; in Louisiana: Emmett, Hammond et al.

KH has played the rags in the Red Back Book, in his own band.

Types of jobs KH has played: picnics, parades, parties, dance halls, night clubs, fraternity parties, et al.

End of Reel IV

