

Inventory Number: tta0182jj			Center for Popular Music – Audio Log
Media: Uncompressed Digital Audio – DVD			
Title: Interview with John Willis – John Willis knew Joe Holmes (aka King Solomon Hill)			Source: Originally recorded to Side 1 7" reel of 1/4" X 1800' tape at 3 3/4 i.p.s. – left channel only by Gayle Dean Wardlow.
Date: September 12, [1968]			
Place: Sibley, LA – RT 1 – Box 56			Transferred to 10" reel of 1/4" tape – 2 track mono @ 7 1/2 ips by Bruce Nemerov. Audio digitization by Martin Fisher. Historical Consulting and description – Tyler DeWayne Moore.
Machine – Studer A-807; 5" reel 1/4" x 600'; 1.5 millimeter mylar; Nassau brand; 2 track mono			
Time In	Track	Title/Description	Artist or Interviewee
File Size		cpm_94048_tta182jj_010101_pres_	
00.00.00	1	Tones: 1K, 10K, 400 Hz @-2Vu	
00.00.55	2	Wardlow plays King Solomon Hill record; Willis contends that the record was made by Joe Holmes; Holmes was from Sibley, LA and he polayed in Yellow Pine and Roytown; Willis used to play with Holmes in the mid-1930s; Holmes usually sang in a high-pitch, but as the night would drag on, his voice would get lower; Willis does not remember Holmes as having a guitar preference;	John Willis
00.03.12	3	Willis and Holmes used to play with tow other men, one played a rubboard and the other played a two hand saw;	John Willis
00.04.17	4	Holmes told Willis about the records he recorded; Charlie Holmes was Joe's brother and a jook operator; Holmes was a lush and only weighed 125 lbs; Wardlow mentions that Holmes recorded under the name King Solomon Hill and claims that he got the name from a local church - King Solomon - and the hill adjacent to the church;	John Willis
00.07.51	5	Wardlow asks about mandolin player Ben Curry and discusses Holmes' recording session - Marshall Owens was an old man who recorded at one of Holmes' sessions; Wardlow mentions Roberta Allums/Hagan	John Willis
00.09.49	6	Wardlow asks about a meeting with Blind Lemon and a song called My Buddy Blind Lemon; They discuss the lyrics to Gone Dead Train;	John Willis - dropouts till 18.00
00.17.59	7	Willis contends that Gone Dead Train was about King Solomon Hill train; Willis heard him sing about Fryburg and other north Louisiana towns - Minden; Willis said that Holmes was a big drinker and it liked to have killed him; They discuss the creation of Holmes' repertoire; Willis met Holmes around 1925 in McComb, MS;	John Willis

00.22.09	8	Salty Dog Sam and Holmes played much the same; Willis never played with Sam, but Holmes played with him in McComb; Willis and Holmes used to start playing the barrelhouse blues around 4 pm until five the next morning; Holmes used to play with a broken bottle slide on his electric and acoustic guitar; Holmes played the bottleneck "all the time."	John Willis
00.24.32	9	Wardlow asks about The Midnight Special; Holmes got the song in MS somewhere, and Sam took it from him; They discuss guitar tunings; Holmes said Sam was the best guitarist to play with; Willis talks about Holmes travelling around and playing the blues for handouts; Wardlow mentions Ramblin' Thomas; Wardlow lists Thomas' songs;	John Willis
00.30.37	10	Willis was born in 1903 and was five years old when he left Lincoln Parrish to go to Sibley; Willis says that Holmes never really got into fights, but Wardlow tells a story of him getting shot at; Willis says that Holmes drank "canned heat" and alcorub to get drunk - anything you got;	John Willis
00.32.58	11	Wardlow asks about where Holmes lived while around Sibley; Holmes once played at Bentonia; They discuss Skip James' music and how he is living in Philadelphia somewhere; Holmes met James in the 1920s sometime; After Bentonia Holmes went to Memphis; Holmes liked to be alone;	John Willis
00.37.18	12	Holmes still played blues before he died; he started bleeding internally and then passed on; Roberta Allums gave Holmes' records away; Wardlow talks about the man who has the records in Roytown; Wardlow asks about leads of Holmes' relatives that might still be living;	John Willis
00.43.16	13	Holmes was good man and agreeable with anything, but if there was fighting, he would get out of the way; Willis never tried to play Gone Dead Train; Willis talks about how Holmes' voice changed as the night went on; Holmes could play anything you wanted - set dance and playing behind a fiddle; Wardlow asked about Willis' brother, Duke; Wardlow asks about Percy Mayfield; Willis knew Mayfield when he was young;	John Willis

00.50.20	14	Willis talks about Charley Jordan playing in Helena, AR around 1933; Wardlow asks about High Henry Brown, Robert Johnson, and Charley Patton; Willis remembers Pony Blues; Texas Alexander and Gene Campbell;	John Willis
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