

Inventory Number: tta0182nn			Center for Popular Music – Audio Log
Media: Uncompressed Digital Audio – DVD			
Title: Interview with Ledell Johnson – Ledell was the brother of Tommy Johnson.			Source: Originally recorded to Side 1 7" reel of 1/4" X 1800' tape at 7 1/2 i.p.s. – two track mono.
Date: 1969			
Place: Jackson, Mississippi			
Machine – Studer A-807; 5" reel 1/4" x 600'; 1.5 millimeter mylar; Nassau brand; 2 track mono			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.
Time In	Track	Title/Description	Artist or Interviewee
File Name		cpm_94048_tta182nn_010101_pres_	
00.00.00	1	Ledell talks about Mott Willis and TJ travelling to Rolling Fork; Ledell and TJ rode the train to Rolling Fork one time and a man hit Ledell's leg. By the time they got to Vicksburg, Ledell's leg was swollen very bad;	Ledell Johnson
00.02.19	2	TJ made his first records in about 1928-29; Just after that, TJ brought Ledell up to play a party for TJ's "bossman." IMPORTANT: TJ worked for a man who built bridges at that time; the party was not thrown by HC Speir; TJ and Ledell had to show many of the women at the party how to dance;	Ledell Johnson
00.03.50	3	Wardlow realizes that it was not HC Speir and Ledell confirms that Mr. Campbell was the "bossman." Ledell talks about the bridges that TJ worked on; Ledell mentions TJ recording in Nebraska; TJ "studded a whole lot" from the time he was a little boy; Ledell mimics TJ's studdering (hilarious);	Ledell Johnson
00.06.50	4	Ledell and TJ hopped trains and rode for free; indeed, they never payed; Ledell said that they were chased many times, but "they never did" catch them; TJ drank any alcohol he could get a hold of - canned heat, shoe polish, and denature (or knock-your-socks); TJ drank anything that would get him drunk all the time; Ledell says that alcohol is what killed him, "He died drunk."	Ledell Johnson
00.08.49	5	TJ died at Ledell's oldest daughters house in Crystal Springs, Mississippi; Ledell tells a story about TJ bragging about playing and getting drunk, when a white man took his brand new fifty dollars guitar and hit him with it;	Ledell Johnson

00.11.01	6	Ledell tells a story about a group of white men who had a barrell full of denature; They played for them all night and got drunk; somehow TJ's guitar got broken by a white man; According to Ledell, the white man apologized to TJ and they drank a bottle of liquor together - everything was fine; Another white man, Mr. Campbell, bought TJ a guitar;	Ledell Johnson
00.13.51	7	The last time TJ come out of the Delta, he had four to seven hundred dollars; People may have eventually stole all his money; when Ledell saw TJ again, he was broke; Ledell says that you couldn't hardly make TJ mad; Ledell comments that denatured alcohol stinks "so bad," and that the dcotors told TJ that the alcohol would "embalm" him;	Ledell Johnson
00.18.31	8	TJ sold his rights to his music about three or four years before he died - definitely after Ledell moved to Jackson in the late 1940s; Although he never said how much money he was paid, TJ told Ledell that he was not allowed to make anymore records after selling his rights;	Ledell Johnson
00.22.09	9	TJ did not gamble much back in those days, except when he was living at Drew in the Delta; Ledell and TJ won all the money from a white man that owned a commisary store; Wardlow plays Charlie Patton's records and the plays <i>Future Blues</i> by Willie Brown;	Ledell Johnson
00.23.53	10	Mrs. Johnson said that Brown had a high voice, and that he sang higher and louder. Ledell said that Brown never recorded any records, but that the guitar style on Futureb was that of Brown. Mrs. Johnson later contradicts herself and say that the singing does sound like Brown; Wardlow plays Mississippi Bottom Blues by Kid Bailey and Rowdy Blues; Ledell never heard anyone call him Willie or Bill - they called him Will Brown; Mrs. Johnson thinks that Kid Bailey was the Wil Brown that they knew at Drew -"That's him, cause he just loved to play."	Ledell Johnson
00.29.23	11	Mrs. Johnson was a resident of Drew, MS in the late 1920s; Brown was living on Jim Yeager's plantation outside Drew; She did not know who was the president while at Drew;	Ledell Johnson
File Name		cpm_94048_tta182nn2_010101_pres_	

00.10.01	1	Wardlow asks Ledell about being related to Mott Willis; Mott never played with the Johnsons in the Delta, but he played in Crystal Springs; Willis' two nephews were good guitar players; Wardlow asks Ledell if he wants him to try and get some money for Ledell from the sell of the records;	Ledell Johnson
00.11.48	2	Josie Johnson talks about knowing Charley Patton; Wardlow talks about David Evans' first article about Henry Sloan, Dick Banks, Patton, TJ; Wardlow persists in his "who was the best" line of questioning and Ledell contends that Tommy was the best; Nobody could play better or more than TJ; Wardlow asks about Willie Brown; Ledell says that everyone called him "Will Brown." Brown was about twenty years old at that time, and "married to Josie." Ledell says that Dick Bankston cam up with Pony Blues. Brown "was a young man."	Josie and Ledell Johnson
00.18.52	3	Wardlow asks more about Brown singing, playing style, and breaking strings; Brown smoked cigarettes all the time, but no cigars; Josie's father said that Josie died "over an ironing board" in Memphis;	Josie and Ledell Johnson
00.22.43	4	Ledell talks about his family on the Johnson side; Wardlow asks about Julia Dodds and Noah Johnson from Hazlehurst; TJ went to Rolling Fork and when he came back he knew Big Road Blues; Tommy Johnson was twelve years old when he first went up to the Delta; TJ worked for a man at Terry named Lynnefield Redmond; Redmond gave TJ a horse and a buggy; TJ ran off with an older woman, while Ledell ran with her daughter; TJ also married a woman named Maggie;	Ledell Johnson
00.27.34	5	Ledell tells a story about knee-high snow and TJ and Maggie fighting; TJ was getting beat by Maggie and ran off to the boss' house; They used to chase each other into the woods; when they came out, they would be happy again; TJ was not yet twenty-one at that time; Ledell tells a story about someone who planned on hanging Maggie and TJ - then he was going to smoke them. Ledell hit the man upside the head with a shotgun;	Ledell Johnson