



THE JAZZ ARCHIVIST

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Volume XXVI, 2013

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Cover photograph: Mahalia Jackson at James Weldon Johnson Elementary School in the Carrollton community of New Orleans, December 10, 1963 (Photo by Porter's Photo News). According to the *Louisiana Weekly*, December 21, 1963: "She was welcomed by the Principal, Mrs. Celestine C. Graves, (left). She wept to see so many bright faces that reminded her, she said, of the sunshine. She sang for the children in the school auditorium. When she was presented a plaque by the ranking teacher, Mrs. Wilhelmine M. Green, (right), with tears in her eyes, she confessed that she had never received anything from her hometown of New Orleans. She said that she would treasure this lovely gift and thanked the principal, faculty and students for this great reception."

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CLAUDE BLANCHARD'S JAZZ ORCHESTRA PART I: THE BOGALUSA ERA

by Kathryn Hobgood Ray



Claude Blanchard, courtesy Blanchard Family collection

A white jazz band from Bogalusa took the Northshore by storm in the early 1920s, playing alongside and even matching in popularity bands led by notable jazz pioneers Bud Scott and Buddy Petit. Led by the trumpet player Claude Blanchard, the band had a short run in Louisiana—1920-1922—but its legacy and the legacies of its individual players live on in countless untold ways.

It is well established that the Northshore of Lake Pontchartrain was a hotbed of early jazz due to its resorts, camps, and regular excursion steamers from New Orleans.¹ In the 1910s and 1920s, the bands that played Northshore dance halls and pavilions were also regularly hired for dances in Bogalusa. Though Bogalusa was forty miles north of the lake (and seventy miles north of New Orleans), it was a thriving population center in those years, and demand for entertainment by its citizens was great. Originally established in 1906 as a lumber camp and saw mill in a virgin pine forest, Bogalusa exploded into a bustling town and saw such huge population growth in its early years that it earned the nickname “Magic City.” By 1920, the population was approaching 10,000, making it the eighth largest city in Louisiana.² The New Orleans Great Northern Railroad was headquartered in Bogalusa; with a major train depot connecting New Orleans



Figure 1. Claude Blanchard, c. 1919, courtesy Blanchard Family collection



Figure 2. Claude Blanchard in blackface, c. 1921, courtesy Blanchard Family collection

and Jackson, Mississippi, the town was a crossroads for people and culture and a frequent destination for entertainers traveling the region.

Around 1920, Bud Scott's Jazzers of Natchez, Mississippi,³ the Claiborne Williams Jazz Band of Donaldsonville, Louisiana,⁴ and especially Buddy Petit's Jazz Band of New Orleans⁵ were playing Bogalusa with the most frequency. These bands were hired regularly by the town's fraternal organizations to play for weekly dances and major events such as Mardi Gras masque balls, Fourth of July and New Year's Eve dances, and Christmas fundraisers. But in 1920 Blanchard's Orchestra, a white jazz band, formed in Bogalusa. As documented by the *Bogalusa Enterprise and American* newspaper, Blanchard's Orchestra became so popular in their hometown and throughout the region that by 1922 they were one of the most sought-after dance bands on the Northshore. Led by the trumpet player Claude A. Blanchard, this band has emerged as a fascinating topic of study for me, personally, because of its importance in the musical development of the pioneering jazz guitarist Eddie Quinn, who later in his career would come to be known as "Snoozer."

Claude Alvin Blanchard (born November 7, 1896, in Assumption Parish) was a member of one of Bogalusa's most prominent families. The Blanchards, originally from White Castle, Louisiana, owned the Magic City Theater in Bogalusa, a combination movie and vaudeville house with a seating capacity of about 900.⁶ Claude had previously performed in the Bogalusa Y.M.C.A. band and with the Marine band in Jackson, Mississippi.⁷ After being discharged from the Navy in 1919, he lived in New York City at the Halls of State (an organization similar to later-year USOs), where he provided musical entertainment for other veterans. In January 1920, at his parents' urging, Claude returned to Bogalusa and went to work managing the theater.⁸

Within weeks of returning home, Claude formed his band. On April 15, 1920, the first reference to Blanchard's Orchestra appeared in the *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*: "A number of young men have announced a dance for Friday evening which will be held at the Pine Tree Inn, starting at 9:00 to which the public is invited. Music will be furnished by Blanchard's Kings of Syncopation Orchestra, which has recently made a decided hit in Bogalusa."⁹

Throughout 1920, Blanchard's Orchestra played for numerous local events, such as an April fundraiser for the high school track team¹⁰ and other small dances hosted by members of "the younger set." In May, "The Marx-Cohen dance, held at the Elks' Hall Tuesday night, was a brilliant success from a financial as well as a social standpoint. Music was furnished by Blanchard's Orchestra. This is the first of a series of weekly dances these two popular young men expect to hold during the summer months, which will no doubt, be a Mecca for the lovers of Terpsichore in Bogalusa."¹¹ In June, "The first social affair of the Knights of Merriment, an invitation dance held at the Elks' Home Thursday night, was one of the most enjoyable held so far this season. ... The music was furnished by Blanchard's Syncopate Orchestra... the thirty-odd couples voted it a success."¹²

Though Blanchard's band was quickly making inroads, Buddy Petit's band remained by far the most popular band in Bogalusa in 1920—they played regularly throughout the summer for American Legion dances and returned for a weekly series in January 1921. Newspaper reviews show how they were embraced: "The music rendered by Buddy Petite's [*sic*] Jazz Band of New Orleans was declared to be the best ever, and this orchestra has been engaged for a dance to be given by the Legion Thursday night, August 12."¹³ "The fame of Buddy Petite's [*sic*] jazz band has attracted numbers of dancers that have heretofore kept away. The music was, as promised, the best heard in Bogalusa for many days and the Legionnaires are so well satisfied with the results of the evening that they are giving another dance tonight."¹⁴ "The first of the regular Saturday night dance of the American Legion, which are to be given every week henceforth by that organization in the Elks' Hall, will be held Saturday night. Buddy Petite's [*sic*] Jazz Band, which is admittedly the favorite over any other band that has furnished music for dances here, is under contract for all of the dances."¹⁵

Blanchard's Orchestra, meanwhile, continued to develop. The members and makeup of Blanchard's Orchestra were finally revealed on December 2, 1920, when the newspaper announced that they would serve as the movie theater's house band: "The Magic City Theater has secured the services of Blanchard's Kings of Syncopation, consisting of Claude Blanchard, leader; Newell Tilton, Eddie Quinn

and Inez Blanchard, and henceforth patrons of that theater will be entertained with music during the performances.”¹⁶

In addition to being an experienced player, Claude was also known as a good singer and entertainer, and numerous references to his minstrel performances turned up in the *Bogalusa Enterprise & American* during the same time he was leading Blanchard’s Orchestra. One news item references “Claude Blanchard’s far-famed blackface comedy.”¹⁷ Another offers context of a performance: “The Asulagob Minstrels, who entertained at the YMCA Tuesday night, were a great success. A big crowd attended the show and at the conclusion voiced their approval of the entertainment in no few words. Claude Blanchard as ‘Sambo’ made a decided hit, while his partners in the four-man act, Blackwell, Fendleson and Brayney, were a scant step behind. F.J. and Walter Taylor, Mixon, Underwood, Day, Lemeler and Young held down the singing end of the program with their rag-time and plantation songs.”¹⁸

Clearly, the Blanchards were a musical family. Claude’s younger sister Inez (born May 27, 1898, in Assumption Parish) had studied at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and specialized in piano (but she also played violin and possibly other instruments). She had been playing at the theater for several years, scoring music suitable to the theme of the pictures being shown, a role she inherited from her mother Mrs. Randolph “Lillie” Blanchard. Inez, interestingly, was named “Most Beautiful Girl in Louisiana” by the Louisiana department of the American Legion Auxiliary in 1922.¹⁹

Eddie Quinn (born October 18, 1907, in Pike County, Mississippi) was the youngest member of the band; he was only twelve years old when he joined, and one of his older brothers was required to travel with him to any out-of-town dances to act as chaperone.²⁰ During those early years, Eddie was known primarily as a fiddler and a banjoist (in fact, at Bogalusa High School, he had the nickname “Fiddler”)—but he also played guitar. Eddie, like Inez, was already working as a musician at the movie theater (he had lost his first violin in a fire that occurred at the theater years earlier). He was charged with creating sound effects, as well, which surely was a delightful prospect for a young boy; for example, Eddie used metal sheets to imitate thunder.²¹ In addition to his numerous musical responsibilities with the Blanchards, Eddie played violin in his school orchestra and for the Superior Avenue Baptist Church, and regularly played banjo at football games and minstrel shows.

The main instrument that Newell Tilton (born around 1897 in New Orleans) played with Blanchard’s Orchestra is unknown, but he was documented in the *Enterprise & American* playing both guitar and drum.²² It is likely that members performed on several instruments with Blanchard’s orchestra—though it is certain that the band did not have a drummer at least until January 1922. An article from July 1921 (the band had changed its name by this time to ride the wave of public zeal for jazz) said: “Blanchard’s Jazz Hounds is the only jazz band in the country attempting to play syncopated symphonies with but four pieces, and those who have heard the strains of the Hound’s musical endeavors admit that they are all there with the goods and they will furnish the music at these dances.”²³ One can imagine how young Eddie Quinn would have developed a heightened sense of rhythmic responsibility in these formative years, as the banjo was possibly the band’s main percussion instrument.

Throughout the summer of 1921 Blanchard’s Orchestra provided music for the dancing pavilion in Abita Springs,²⁴ as well as for weekly “dollar dances” at the Armory in Bogalusa. They were also hired to play at afternoon and evening dances for Bogalusa’s grand Fourth of July celebration: “Blanchard’s Jazz Hounds started the lovers of Terpsichore on the way shortly after three o’clock on the newly laid dance floor in Goodyear Park, and from then on until after the rain drove them to shelter the dancers made good use of the platform. At night another big dance was held at the armory, and it was estimated that no less than forty couples occupied the floor through each dance.”²⁵ While forty couples was apparently noteworthy, a dance featuring Bud Scott’s Jazzers at the Armistice Day Dance in November 1921 attracted “more than one hundred and fifty couples,” setting an attendance record for a Bogalusa dance.²⁶

Over the months, the personnel of Blanchard’s Orchestra changed. Inez left the band. Newell Tilton’s younger brother Frank, a blind piano player, and John Melancon, also a piano player, were both affiliated with the band at different points. The addition of a designated drummer (name unknown) in January 1922 can be seen as a professional turning point for the band: “Patrons of Magic City Theater will have the opportunity of hearing Bogalusa’s premier jazz orchestra at every evening performance in the future. Blanchard’s Jazz Band has secured the services of a drummer who is reported to be one of the best



Figure 3. *New Orleans States* newspaper announcement from August 6, 1922, naming Inez Blanchard “Most Beautiful Girl.”



Figure 4. Eddie Quinn in 1924. Senior picture, Bogalusa High School yearbook.

ever brought to this city and the other members of the aggregation have improved wonderfully in the past several weeks.”²⁷

During the course of 1922, newspaper accounts of Blanchard’s Orchestra became increasingly laudatory, and indicated growing attendance at their performances. In January: “The local band is rapidly achieving popularity among the devotees of terpsichore in this city.”²⁸ In June: “The dances which have been given at the Elks’ Home on Saturday evening are growing in popularity.... [Blanchard’s Orchestra] is giving better music than most of the bands which have been imported from other cities.”²⁹ In July: “the grand ball ...was attended by one of the largest crowds ever seen at a dance in this city. Young folk from every town within a radius of many miles were in attendance.”³⁰ A report in August shows that the band drew a crowd matching Bud Scott’s record: “Despite the warm weather more than one hundred and fifty couples attended the ball given by the Bogalusa Council Knights of Columbus... Blanchard’s Orchestra furnished the music.”³¹

How much of the band’s ascension should be attributed to Blanchard family connections and to whatever advantages may have accrued to their being white is unknown, but certainly these factors should be considered. It also stands to reason that it was more affordable to hire a good local band. A desire on the part of Bogalusan town leaders and the leaders of the fraternal organizations to save money can be seen in an editorial from April 28, 1921:

Unless you dance, or play some musical instrument, this will not appeal to you but figures will show that over \$2,500.00 is expended in the City of Bogalusa each year for an orchestra, jazz band, or whatever you desire to call it. For the past years or two many benefit dances have been given for local organizations, when, as a matter of fact, the band has been the real beneficiary, as it has been necessary to send to New Orleans to secure the music. After the railroad fare, hotel bill and the musicians are paid, the expense runs from \$75 to \$100, and as a rule, there is little left to go to the treasury of the organization giving the dance. As many musicians as there are in Bogalusa, we cannot understand why a local orchestra cannot be organized which would give just as good music as the bands imported from New Orleans. Even if the same price was paid the local musicians as it is paid those from New Orleans, the amount saved on railroad fare and hotel bill would be a big item in the course of a few months. Moreover, it would give Bogalusa musicians an incentive to improve, keep our money at home, and really give the organizations who give benefits an opportunity to profit.³²

By 1922, Blanchard's Orchestra apparently filled the bill. A key indicator of their popularity is recognized in the fact that throughout most of that year, Blanchard's Jazz Hounds was the only jazz band regularly performing in Bogalusa. The group had effectively supplanted the out-of-town competition, which, over 1920 and 1921, had included Buddy Petit's Jazz Band, Bud Scott's Jazzers, the Claiborne Williams Jazz Band, the Five Aces, and the Durand-Humphrey Band. Blanchard's Orchestra was also sought after by other towns in the region, such as Abita Springs, Ponchatoula, Hammond, Mandeville, Slidell, Poplarville, and Biloxi. During the summer of 1922: "The citizens of Hammond, La., were given a real treat Tuesday night when Blanchard's Jazz Orchestra, a local organization, filled a dance engagement in that city. The Hammond devotees [*sic*] of Terpsichore say it was the best music ever heard on that city. The Blanchard musical organization is now being offered engagement at Slidely [*sic*], Covington and on the Gulf Coast. They have been engaged to play every Sunday during the summer at Mandeville."³³

The last local performance of Blanchard's Orchestra that was documented in the *Enterprise & American* was a Halloween Dance held by the Knights of Columbus in October 1922.³⁴ The band's Louisiana period ended shortly thereafter, when Claude took a job with the Southern Pacific Railroad and moved to Houston, Texas.³⁵ By 1925, Claude had reorganized Blanchard's Orchestra in Texas and was working for KPRC, a brand-new radio station owned by the *Houston Post-Dispatch*. In this new chapter of their careers, Claude and his Bogalusa friends, especially Frank Tilton and Eddie Quinn, would find considerable musical success. Each would go on to impact the jazz world in personal ways and would play an important part in the development of jazz in the Southwest.

To be continued in Claude Blanchard's Jazz Orchestra: Part II: Texas

ENDNOTES

- 1 Dr. Karl Koenig, for one, has chronicled the development of the early jazz scene on the Northshore using research gleaned from small-town newspapers. See particularly his eBooks under *Music in the Parishes Surrounding New Orleans*, available at BasinStreet.com
- 2 *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930: Volume 1: Population* (Washington, DC: U.S. Govt. Print. Off, 1931), 455.
- 3 *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*: October 6, 1921, 1; October 27, 1921, 1; November 17, 1921, 1.
- 4 *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*: October 15, 1920, 1; November 4, 1920, 1; November 11, 1920, 1.
- 5 *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*: August 5, 1920, 7; August 19, 1920, 6; August 19, 1920, 7; December 30, 1920, 2; January 13, 1921, 4; February 3, 1921, 7.
- 6 "Bogalusa Has Movie Theater Which Shows Only the Very Best Pictures," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, November 25, 1920, Special Section Three, 4. The Blanchards had also owned and operated the Fairyland Theater in White Castle, and in 1921 purchased a Bogalusa competitor, the Garden City Theater (*Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, August 11, 1921, 1).
- 7 "Join Marine Band," *Bogalusa Enterprise*, June 15, 1916, 6.
- 8 "Personal Mention," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, January 22, 1920, 8.
- 9 "Dance Friday Night," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, April 15, 1920, 1.
- 10 "Many Attend Dance," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, April 29, 1920, 1.
- 11 "Dance a Success," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, May 27, 1920, 1.
- 12 "Knights of Merriment Dance Social Success," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, June 10, 1920, 6.
- 13 "Dance Big Success," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, August 5, 1920, 7.
- 14 "Legion Dance at Elks' Home Success," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, August 19, 1920, 6.
- 15 "American Legion Will Give Dance Saturday Night," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, January 13, 1921, 4.
- 16 "Orchestra For Magic City," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, December 2, 1920, 2.
- 17 "Magic City Vaudeville for Elks Christmas Fund," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, November 17, 1921, 4.
- 18 "Big Crowd Sees Minstrel Show," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, January 13, 1921, 1. "Asulagob" is "Bogalusa" spelled backwards.

- 19 "Most Beautiful Girl," *New Orleans States*, August 6, 1922, 1.
- 20 Al Hansen, "Snoozer's Song: If it could make a noise, Quinn could play it," *Bogalusa Daily News*, June 2, 1976, 18.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Several articles from 1916 list Newell as a guitar player in a string band (for instance, "Dance for Visitors," *Bogalusa Enterprise*, April 13, 1916, 6). Another item mentions him playing drum as part of a duet with his younger brother Frank Tilton playing piano (June 22, 1916, 1).
- 23 "Dollar Dances to Start Saturday," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, July 21, 1921, 1.
- 24 "Attend Abita Dance," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, May 19, 1921, 7.
- 25 "Dances in Armory and Park Popular," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, July 7, 1921, 1.
- 26 "Record Attendance at Armistice Dance," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, November 17, 1921, 1.
- 27 "Blanchard's Jazz Band to Play at Magic City," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, January 12, 1922, 4.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 "Dance at Elks Saturday Evening," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, June 22, 1922, 1.
- 30 "Fourth of July Celebration Goes Down as Greatest of the Many Events Held in Bogalusa," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, July 6, 1922, 1.
- 31 "K. of C. Ball Enjoyable Event," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, August 3, 1922, 1.
- 32 "For Dancers and Musicians," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, April 28, 1921, 4. In 1921, regular rail fare between Bogalusa and New Orleans cost \$2.79 per rider ("Fare to New Orleans Takes 20% Increase," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, March 24, 1921, 3).
- 33 "Local Band Makes Big Hit in Hammond," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, July 20, 1922, 8.
- 34 "K. of C. to Give Dance at Home on Halloween," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, October 26, 1922, 1.
- 35 "Claude Blanchard Gets Good Job as Secretary," *Bogalusa Enterprise & American*, November 9, 1922, 8.

BARRY MARTYN AND GHB

by Mike Pointon



Drummer Barry Martyn has been a long-time friend of the Hogan Jazz Archive. We got to work closely with Barry on several of his George H. Buck GHB Jazz Foundation projects, including the CD reissues of Bill Russell's American Music label recordings. When we heard that Barry had ceased his association with the Jazz Foundation after twenty-five years, we thought it would be appropriate to provide a summary account of what he had accomplished during that time. We were delighted to discover that Mike Pointon had already published such an article in the May 2013 edition of Just Jazz (no. 181). We thank Mike and the editors of Just Jazz for permission to reproduce the article here in The Jazz Archivist.

Mike Pointon: How did your involvement with GHB start?

Barry Martyn: George Buck asked me to be one of the original directors of the company; Rudi Blesh, Bill Russell, Art Hodes, myself, George and Wendel Echols, and John Steiner were the original people chosen, I believe. He had run the company by himself prior to this move, but he now wanted to form a 501 3(c) which is a tax free company to broaden the scope of what he wanted, and I felt honored to be in such company. They were like the main stalwarts of traditional jazz of that time so long ago.

THE BILL RUSSELL/AMERICAN MUSIC CONNECTION

About three years before Bill Russell died, he sold his American Music label to George. I began doing things with George in 1962, and I suppose I was the logical person to work with Bill on preparing his stuff for issue on CD. I had known and worked with Bill since 1961, and we had a great rapport; he seemed pleased I had been chosen, and we produced six-and-a-half CDs together before he died. I had spoken to him about expanding the series with other pertinent material. He happily agreed and suggested we keep his own recordings on a yellow label and use a blue label for other stuff such as the Icons, Monos, Circles, and whatever. This policy seemed to work from the get-go, and between starting the project and when I left, I produced 133 CDs for the American Music label. The amassment of all this material was certainly more that Bill or I could have ever imagined when we started. It took a whole lot of work to get it all together, but George Buck was tickled pink to watch the label grow.

Ken Mills of Icon Records was very easy to deal with. He was a tenor player in a Los Angeles R&B band, and his knowledge of the New Orleans style of music was extremely far reaching. He knew his stuff. We never met in person, but spent hours at a time on the phone until sickness took its toll.

The Bunk Johnson Commodores and the Deccas were the results of a swap for stuff we owned from buying Paramount. I enlisted the help of Stephen Lasker, who, incidentally, is the son of the old movie star Jane Greer. He dug up the stuff from the Decca files and even though there were only four numbers recorded, there were enough second and third takes to fill our American Music CD.

The rehearsal session from Kid Rena – I had been corresponding with the man who recorded them, Heywood Hale Broun, Jr. He was a huge sports personality in the U. S. in his last few years. He knew of me through Bill Russell, and it was a valuable connection. He gladly turned over his rehearsal session. He was really a nice man.

THE OXFORD SERIES OF GEORGE LEWIS RECORDINGS

Sometime in the early 1970s a lady named Phyllis Campbell had donated two boxes of master tapes to us. They were large boxes, marked simply “University Tapes.” I asked George about them and he said they were George Lewis Band classroom discussion material. I knew George and the band personally, and certainly knew none of them were big talkers, so I decided to investigate the boxes. The first tape I played was the band recorded live playing “Oh Marie.” Not Tommy Dorsey’s “Marie” but the Louis Prima hit. I had never heard them play it before, and the recording quality was first class. I took my time and went through all the tapes in the boxes. There was no talking. It was all concert material. I soon put it all in order and realized there would be enough for at least ten CDs. One session came from the church session issued on Empirical LP with some additional titles. Looking back, it was a great time. I wished Bill had been alive to see it all come together.

THE KID ORY GREEN ROOM SESSIONS

The Ory Green Room two CDs were quite simple. Bill had copies of it all on twelve-inch acetates, and he suggested we get permission to reissue them from Harold Drob, the man who recorded the sessions. Everyone we ever approached seemed more than willing to work with us. Many legendary figures actually approached us to issue their material. People like Sam Charters, Alden Ashforth, and David Wyckoff. There were some others I had to approach, like Jim McGarrell and John Bernard.

My Music of New Orleans (MONO) label had issued eighteen LPs, and I simply had to give them American Music CD numbers and add a couple of unissued songs. That was reasonably simple.

RUDI BLESCH'S CIRCLE LABEL

Sometime in the seventies George asked me if I could organize the Circle material he had bought from Rudi Blesh years earlier. This was the first time I had ever tried to organize a major label. I found it to be exciting work, especially the New Orleans stuff Rudi had recorded back in the 1940s. Most of the early Circle sessions we had on mothers and a few on acetates, and I had Rudi’s master list to work from, which proved to be invaluable. The one session I could not find anywhere was the Zenith Brass Band, together with the unissued Eclipse Ally Five sides. They were finally found, underwater, yet miraculously undamaged, in Atlanta. After methodical cleanings, they played perfectly and transcribed beautifully.

THE JOHN REID COLLECTION

Before Bill Russell died he told me of a session recorded by Victor’s A&R man, John Reid. Bill said it was with Reid’s collection that was donated to the University of Arkansas in Little Rock. Bill also thought it featured Peter Bocage and several New Orleans veterans. He also said we might find a couple of sides by legendary New Orleans pianist Burnell Santiago. So I made arrangements to make a trip to Little Rock. The people there were extremely helpful, but had no idea of what they had in the Reid Collection. I spent three days there and found a regular treasure trove of material. To my surprise they let me take them back to New Orleans, provided I flew on a private plane leased by Arkansas Light and Gas Company. I got home around midnight and had a phone call from Bill at approximately 3:00am: “Did you get them?” I heard him say. “Bill, it’s three o’clock in the morning.” “But, can’t you bring them down so we can hear them?” I

got dressed and drove to his place, arriving at 3:30 am. You couldn't fight his enthusiasm, even at that hour. It must have been 8:00 am before I finally got to bed. Before I could issue the material, Bill died, but he at least heard it.

DOBELL'S "77" LABEL

The Dobell's "77" label material was bought *en masse* from Doug Dobell, and it was quite easy to sort out session by session. This was much easier, as all the masters were on tape. It still took about five months. None of it was slated for the American Music label. George wanted to issue all the "77" CDs at one time, which I thought was a bad idea. It stunted the sales somewhat, but it was his company, so I went along with it.

"THIS IS JAZZ"

George asked me somewhere along the line if I would get the "This Is Jazz" series ready for issue. It was the only time he and I fell out. We had all the taped shows. Some we had bought from Rudi with the Circle deal, and some from a guy who lived in Green Gables, Florida – I forget his name. Anyhow, he had the very first broadcast, but it was missing about one minute of the set-up announcement. George said to take the missing speech from one of the later broadcasts. He claimed, "They're all pretty much the same." I disagreed – it would be better to fade in to what we had, only for the sake of authenticity.

We cussed each other out, and I took a month's leave of absence. He called after about ten days with a great suggestion. We would run a half-page ad in our magazine asking for anyone who had a "complete" first broadcast. We had just about 19,000 readers then. Somebody must have it, but, no dice. Not one of our readership possessed the first broadcast, so... we faded it in on the first CD of the series, which subsequently ran for nine volumes.

THE JOE MARES/SOUTHLAND LABEL PROJECT

In 1964 George had bought the Joe Mares Southland label. But, for a number of reasons he did not ask me to organize it until sometime around 2004. The master tape room was filled with tapes. The issued material was all mixed up with the unissued. It took recording engineer Richard Bird and myself nine whole months, but when we were finished with the project we had prepared twenty-seven CDs. Some of them were slated for American Music, but most for issue on GHB.

By mid-2012 I realized there was not much more I could issue on American Music. I had done 133 CDs. Bill had told us there was only enough of his own material for twenty CDs. Through the help of his brother William Wagner, we managed to squeeze out another two; as Brother Bill so aptly put it, "All that was left were interminable takes of such titles as 'Panama' and 'Ballin' the Jack,' takes of Wooden Joe Nicholas getting out of time on titles such as 'Maryland.'"

JAZZOLOGY PRESS

I started Jazzology Press after a long talk with George. We realized that our books were on a variety of subjects. Some would make money and some would lose.

George approved of everything I did, and we managed to publish eleven books total. The biggest sellers were Mike Hazeldine's *American Music* and the Jess Stacy one. The book *Song of the Wanderer* about Bunk was pretty close to those two, sales-wise. The least popular ones were the ones on Jimmy Archey and Tony Parenti; the Kid Howard – the last one we published – was the worst seller. In fact, we only printed five hundred. After that we just couldn't finance them anymore, and Jazzology Press came to an end.

By the end of 2012, I realized my work was pretty much done. Of course, I had published eleven books on our Jazzology Press, and made about seven films for American Music or GHB.

I always thought the next CD would be the most important one. There was always so much to do. The years just went by and the American Music catalogue kept growing. George just left me alone to do it. He never interfered. I think Bill would have been pleased with the result of the work. We were of a like mind. I think he would have loved the Bunk Deccas. I don't think he ever heard them. After twenty years of running American Music, I felt there was not anything much more to do. All the most important stuff had been done. All the major recording sessions were accounted for on CD. It was time to quit.

I have been working during the last four months at the Historic New Orleans Collection, identifying photographs taken by such people as John Bernard and Jules Cahn. This has been exciting work. When I finished that, I moved to Tulane's William Ransom Hogan Archive of Jazz, doing their photos by Ralston Crawford, Florence Mars, Lee Friedlander, and Jack Hurley.

I am currently working on a book dealing with racial intolerance in the jazz world. That is something I experienced first-hand; coming to New Orleans on January 8, 1961, I saw it first hand; but, that's another story.

Looking back, it was a wonderful quarter of a century, and now, on reflection, I realize I am the only one of the original directors to "get out alive." All the others died in office, apart from George Buck. Bless them all, especially George, my friend!

THEN AND NOW PHOTOGRAPHY

by Anthony DelRosario

Since returning to New Orleans in 2006 from a temporary exile due to Katrina, I have been documenting the built environment of New Orleans with a digital camera while mostly on bicycle. There is hardly a neighborhood of the city that I have not been in.

I have posted my photos to the social media photo sharing site, Flickr. In addition to my own photos, I have posted scanned images of slides, including a set of slides from Mardi Gras 1967 that I found at a yard sale before Katrina. Some of the slides were of buildings in the French Quarter. In February 2008, I decided to do my first “Then and Now” shots with some of these slides.

In August 2008, Keli Rylance, Head of the Southeastern Architectural Archive, posted the first Unidentified Photograph Object from their collection on the SEAA blog. This UPhO was taken by Walker Evans and described by him as “Degenerate period of early twentieth-century New Orleans architecture. Louisiana.” I knew right away that the building was one of two Victorian houses on Annunciation in the Lower Garden District, just a few blocks from my home. I did another “Then and Now” shot with this house.

A month later in September 2008, I stumbled across a small Tulane publication in the Architecture Library called *Diverse Fab: Bricks of New Orleans*, from 1967. The publication included photographs of 15 locations around New Orleans. I did some “Then and Now” shots with a couple of the locations.

In the summer of 2012, I was searching the LOUISiana Digital Library. One of the images I found there was “Members of the George Williams Brass Band playing and marching during a parade.” I recognized the buildings in the background being from an intersection in Central City, an area through which I bike (or sometimes drive) just about every workday. I shot a “Then and Now” photo of this intersection of LaSalle and Josephine.

In October 2012, I was searching the Hogan Jazz Archive’s newly digitized Ralston Crawford Collection of Jazz Photography for images of hand-painted signs on buildings around New Orleans. I decided to look through the 40 pages of thumbnails for the 786 photos in the digital collection. One photo that I noticed was “Members of the George Williams Brass Band playing and marching during a parade,” which I had not realized was originally from this collection. I also noticed several buildings, such as Krauss and Dooky Chase, which I had previously photographed while biking around the city. Another building that I recognized was the Blue Lamp, which I had photographed from nearly the same angle in 2008. I decided to make a list of buildings and scenes with which to do “Then and Now” shots. These included the Dew Drop Inn, the Magnolia Market, and Lafayette #2 cemetery.

While many of Crawford’s photos were intended to document the people and culture of New Orleans, the architecture of the city is also captured. Luckily, much of what Crawford photographed still stands and these “Then and Now” shots can be created and enjoyed.

Anthony DelRosario - library assistant Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, bicycle rider, cultural documentarian.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/anthonyturducken>



Young Tuxedo Brass Band marching and playing in a Sunday School parade (1958), Ralston Crawford
 Then and Now: Magnolia Super Market (2012), Anthony DelRosario



Blue Lamp Bar (1953), Ralston Crawford
Then and Now: 1843 Pauer (2008), Anthony DelRosario



Top: Basin Street (1956) , Ralston Crawford. Then and Now: Krauss,(2006), Anthony DelRosario

Bottom: Original Square Deal Boys parade (1952), Ralston Crawford. Then and Now: Dooky Chase's - 2301 Orleans Avenue (2008), Anthony DelRosario.



Members riding in the Jolly Bunch parade (1953), Ralston Crawford.
Then and Now: South Rampart at St. Andrew (2012), Anthony DelRosario.



Dew Drop Inn (1953), Ralston Crawford.
Then and Now: Dew Drop Inn (2012), Anthony DelRosario.



Top: St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church exterior (1958), Ralston Crawford. Then and Now: St. Paul Community Baptist Church, (2009), Anthony DelRosario.
 Bottom: Odd Fellows funeral (1953), Ralston Crawford. Then and Now: Lafayette #2 (2012), Anthony DelRosario.



Sunday School Parade near Dryades and Melpomene (1958), Ralston Crawford.
Then and Now: Oretta Castle Haley (Dryades) and Martin Luther King (Melpomene) (2012), Anthony
DelRosario.



George Williams Brass Band (1958), Ralston Crawford
Then and Now: Lasalle at Josephine (2012), Anthony DelRosario.

IN THE ARCHIVE



We've had a variety of visitors in the Archive this year from near and far. Clockwise from top left: Jason Hampton and grandfather, trombonist Wendell Eugene; Barry Martyn and Björn Barnheim; photographer Lee Friedlander and Nicole Shibata; Rebecca Dickerson, daughter of Al Hirt with Lani Ramos, lead singer of Big Pearl; members of the New Orleans Jazz Club of Tokyo; Mark Burford, professor of Music at Reed College.

BOURBON STREET 1949



Photo 1: Dixie's Bar of Music

Recent additions to the Tulane University Digital Library include a collection of some 200 photographs of Bourbon Street building facades, part of a larger collection of 3,000 images of French Quarter dwellings photographed by local architect Walter Cook Keenan between 1944 and 1952. The images reside at Tulane's Southeastern Architectural Archive, just down the hall from the Jazz Archive. As the first architect of the Vieux Carré Commission, Keenan was out to document evidence of building code violations. He was especially intent on eradicating what he saw as an unseemly glut of commercial advertising in the Quarter; while the record shows that he was fairly successful in this endeavor, the signage he despised survives in his photography to remind us of the vibrant music scene that Bourbon Street supported during the post-World War II era. The three samples reproduced here are from 1949.

Photo 1: Dixie's Bar of Music was a gay bar that opened at 701 Bourbon Street in 1949 after being in the Central Business District for a decade. Keenan took this picture on January 8, 1949. The owner, Yvonne "Miss Dixie" Fasnacht, was a saxophone and clarinet player in her youth, having played in bands such as the Harmony Maids, Smart Set, and Southland Rhythm Girls. She sold the bar in 1964, and the

building is now home to the Cat's Meow, a karaoke bar. Researchers interested in learning more about Miss Dixie Fasnacht may access her vertical file as well as a 1999 video oral history, both available at the Hogan Jazz Archive. Her correspondence pertaining to code violations may be found in the Southeastern Architectural Archive's Richard Koch papers.

Photo 2: When Keenan snapped this shot of Lenny Gale's Sugar Bowl, 201 Bourbon Street, on November 14, 1949, pianist and Deluxe label recording artist Paul Gayten was appearing there with his orchestra and featured vocalist Annie Laurie (Gayten's name is prominently misspelled on the overhead sign). A man can be seen in the lower left corner of the picture, toting a sign for the band that is equal in size to the ones for Bubbles Darlene. In terms of great New Orleans rhythm and blues bandleaders, Paul Gayten ranks with Dave Bartholomew. Lenny Gale was a popular local radio show host and emcee; his ad for the Sugar Bowl in the December 2, 1949, edition of the *Times-Picayune* has Paul Gayten and his band with Annie Laurie and added guest Chubby Newsome holding the boards from midnight to 6 a.m. The earlier time slot, 8 p.m. to 2 a.m., was held by Tiny Davis and her all-girl band, the Hell Divers. For a moment there, Lenny Gale's Sugar Bowl may have looked like Bourbon Street's answer to the Dew Drop Inn. The building now houses Mango Mango, a daiquiri bar. For more on Paul Gayten, see: John Broven, "Paul Gayten Part 1: 'I knew Leonard at the Macomba...'" *Blues Unlimited*, no. 130-131 (May-August 1978); John Broven, "Paul Gayten Part 2: 'I really got tired of the road, one-nighters, buying new Cadillacs every year...'" *Blues Unlimited*, no. 131/132 (September-December 1978); America's Historical Newspapers, NewsBank.

Photo 3: While this photo centers on Jimmie King's Mardi Gras Lounge, 333 Bourbon Street, it also takes in Ciro's, 327 Bourbon, on the left, and the landmark Famous Door, 339 Bourbon, on the right. A remarkable bunch of New Orleans musicians is represented in the signage Keenan captured when he snapped the photo on January 8, 1949. At Ciro's, pianist William "Bill" Houston, playing everything "from Bach to Boogie," should be better remembered as proprietor of the Houston School of Music, leader of a popular big band, and a teacher in the New Orleans Public School system, and president of AFM Local 496 from 1942-1956. Pianist Lionel Reason, "singing and playing risqué songs," was a veteran of bands led by Kid Ory and King Oliver. The banner advertisement for the Mardi Gras Lounge is devoted to Baby Dumplin', but an ad in the *Times-Picayune* places clarinet legend Irving Fazola on the bandstand just two weeks after Keenan took this picture. The Mardi Gras Lounge eventually fell into the hands of clarinetist Sid Davilla. Signage at the Famous Door shows both Sharkey Bonano and his Dixieland Band and Smiling Joe (aka Cousin Joe) and his Blues Trio in the house. Cousin Joe recalled himself and Sharkey trading 45-minute sets at the Famous Door. His blues trio featured himself on guitar, with Alton Purnell on piano and Theodore Purnell on sax. The current inhabitants of 333 Bourbon Street are trading as Voodoo Vibe. 327 Bourbon Street is now Temptations. The Famous Door is still in business; but the spirits of Cousin Joe and Sharkey Bonano have left the building. For more on William Houston, Lionel Reason, Cousin Joe, and Sharkey Bonano, go to: Al Kennedy, *Chord Changes on the Chalkboard: How Public School Teachers Shaped Jazz and the Music of New Orleans* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2002); Lionel Reason interviewed by Richard B. Allen, May 26, 1981 (Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University); Pleasant "Cousin Joe" Joseph and Harriet Ottenheimer, *Cousin Joe: Blues from New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Sharkey Bonano interviewed by Bill Russell, November 9, 1966 (Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University); America's Historical Newspapers, NewsBank.

The entire collection of Walter Keenan's Bourbon Street photographs is accessible at Tulane Digital Archive (<http://digitallibrary.tulane.edu/collection?id=103>). Special thanks to Keli Rylance and Kevin Williams, Southeastern Architectural Archive, Tulane University.



Photo 2: Lenny Gale's Sugar Bowl



Photo 3: Jimmie King's Mardi Gras Lounge

WALTER NELSON SR. AND FAMILY

by Per Oldaeus



Walter Nelson, Sr. carrying Alphonse Picou's clarinet at Picou's Funeral. The Grand Marshall is Fats Houston (Mina Lea Crais Collection, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).

I.

Walter Nelson, Sr. was an influential but little-remembered New Orleans guitarist, who went by the nickname “Black Walter.”¹ He and his wife Edna raised eight children in the Tremé neighborhood, including musical sons Walter “Papoose” Nelson, Jr. and Lawrence “Prince La La” Nelson, and daughter Dorothy Mae Nelson, who married singer Jessie “Ooh Poo Pah Doo” Hill (1932-1996).² Ostensibly talking about Walter Nelson, Jr., Professor Longhair was quick to acknowledge Walter Nelson, Sr. as a source of inspiration:

Papoose was with me in '49, he didn't stay with me but he lived around the corner from me. His daddy was a help to me, a pretty wise old man, his name was Walter Nelson too. And by him taking up so much time with me, showing me bars and different things through his guitar which I was playing the piano. So I didn't figure it was no more than right to help his son out. I couldn't teach him how to play his guitar with what he was doing, but I could teach him how the thing goes that I had in mind. But he was about the best guitar player, he was clever, it didn't take him long. His father still is a musician [March 1978], he can play majors, minors, ain't nothing to him. He's got that old lick, and he inspired me so much with his music as my mother's playing. All the way back in them days that's what they was playing, clear bass and straight strong picking.³

Walter Nelson, Sr. was born in 1904 in Verretville (now Verret), Louisiana, in St. Bernard Parish, some



Left image - L to r: unknown drummer, James Ursin, trumpet; Joseph “Cornbread” Thomas, clarinet; Walter Nelson, Sr., with his amplified Gibson acoustic guitar, in the H & J, Dauphine and Almonaster Streets, 1948. Photo by Don Perry or Arthur Carter. When this photo was originally published in *Jazzfinder* '49, the guitarist was identified as Walter George. But circumstantial evidence, including Joseph “Cornbread” Thomas’s Hogan Jazz Archive interview of September 29, 1960, assures that this is actually Walter Nelson, Sr.

Right image - The former Picou’s Bar and Grill, 1601 Ursulines Avenue, corner of North Robertson Street. Photo by the author, November 2012. The plaque on the wall on the right side of the entrance reads: “PICOU RESIDENCE. Alphonse Picou (1879-1961), clarinetist, composer, and sometimes bandleader, lived here at 1601 Ursulines Ave. from 1960 to 1961. He and his daughter, Olga Picou, owned the building which housed alternatively or concurrently many uses. These included a residence for Olga Picou, a private bar/hangout for musicians officiated by guitarist “Black Walter” Nelson on part of the second floor, a grocery store, and ultimately a restaurant and bar on the first floor. Picou was famous as an early pioneer of jazz, for his transposition for the “High Society” piccolo solo for clarinet, as a member of both the early Tuxedo Brass Band and the later Papa Celestin Band, and for his playing at the Paddock Lounge on Bourbon Street in the 1940’s and 1950’s serving occasionally as the bandleader. N.O. Jazz Commission /Preservation Resource Center.”

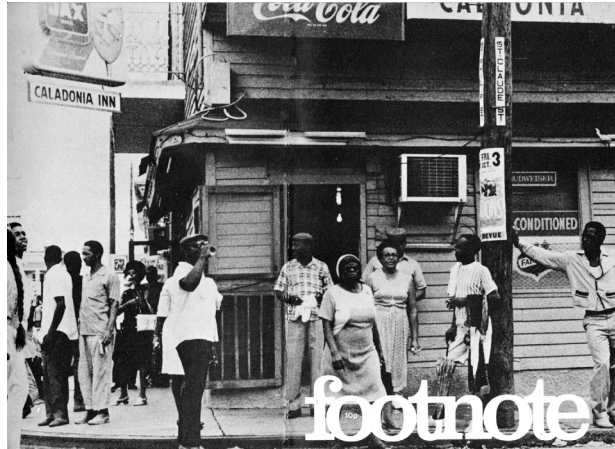
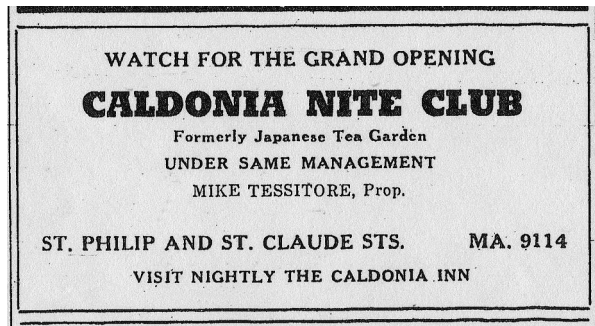
eighteen miles east of New Orleans.⁴ His older brother Henry “Stacks” Nelson (ca.1897-ca.1940) was also a guitar player. The Nelson family moved to New Orleans around 1914. Nelson, Sr. started playing banjo and guitar in 1922, and eventually studied for half a year with Manuel “Fess” Manetta (1889-1969), who taught him how to read music. Manetta was a famous musician and music teacher who lived across the river in Algiers.

Nelson, Sr. played his first professional job at the Silver Star (corner of St. Bernard Avenue and St. Claude Street) with clarinetist “Kid” Ernest Moliere (ca. 1900-1952) and trumpeter Herb Morand (1905-1952).⁵ According to Karl Gert zur Heide, Moliere used to slap-tongue his horn, and his special stunt was to take the clarinet apart while still playing.⁶ It is likely that Kid Ernest was the leader of a band that Jessie Hill used to sit in with on drums, around 1947. Hill called him “Kid Arnestine.”⁷

In the late 1930s, Walter Nelson, Sr. jobbed in a trio with singer-guitarist Smiley Lewis (Overton A. Lemons, 1913-1966) and Edward “Noon” Johnson (1903-1969). Nelson, Sr. claimed to have taught both Smiley Lewis and Noon Johnson on guitar. Johnson also sang and played the bazooka, a huge, homemade trombone-like invention. They used to play for tips in the joints along South Rampart Street, and sometimes on Bourbon Street, prior to its heyday. Nelson, Sr. penned a couple of original songs, including “Walter’s Blues.”⁸

The mid-1940s saw Walter Nelson, Sr. perform with musicians such as clarinetist George Lewis (1900-1968), drummer Joe Watkins (1900-1969), and bass player Alcide “Slow Drag” Pavageau (1888-1968). Another was Herbert “Kid” Morand of the Harlem Hamfats, a Chicago-based recording group that can be seen as a precursor to 1940s and 50s R&B bands. Morand returned to his city of birth in 1941, after traveling around and staying for some years in the Windy City. He recalled playing with Walter Nelson, Sr. at the Silver Star (St. Bernard and Annette or Urquhart Street), in 1945. Joe Watkins was the bandleader for a while, and Pensacola, Florida-born Sadie Goodson played the piano. Sidney Bechet sat in on a memorable night in early 1945.⁹

In his Hogan Jazz Archive interview, Walter Nelson, Sr. spoke about working at the “H & J” with “Brother Cornbread,” i.e., Joseph Thomas (1902-1981), who may be remembered for his association with



Top: Ad for “Grand Opening” of “Caladonia Nite Club.” *Louisiana Weekly*, January 15, 1947. Bottom: The Caldonia Inn, as pictured on the cover of the February 1972 edition of *footnote* magazine (photo by Don Smedley, courtesy Terry Dash).

the jazz bands of Oscar “Papa” Celestin and Albert French. Nelson, Sr. stated that he taught many on guitar, including both of his musical sons and also the great Smiley Lewis. In 1952 he went to Nashville, Tennessee, with Lewis, in a small outfit that included pianist Isidore “Tuts” Washington and drummer Cornelius “Tenoo” Coleman, of Fats Domino fame. Lewis later cut a remake of the Harlem Hamfats’ hit recording, “Oh Red!”

Bass drum player “Uncle” Lionel Batiste (1932-2012) recalled that “right there on St. Philip and Burgundy was a barroom called the Honey Dripper. That’s where Smiley Lewis, Cousin Joe, and Walter Nelson played. Walter was living across the street, in a rooming house called Monkey Puzzle.”¹⁰ Around 1936, Walter Nelson, Sr. linked up with jazz clarinet pioneer Alphonse Picou (1878-1961), who owned Picou’s Bar and Grill at 1601 Ursulines Street. Picou was a well-educated musician, comfortable with classical music as well as jazz. Nelson, Sr. played music and tended bar at Picou’s.¹¹ On weekends, Picou fronted a trio, and sometimes a larger band, in the dancehall section of the place – right up until the day he died. While in New Orleans in the fall of 1957, the late “Big” Peter Deuchar, a British banjo player, then 25 years old, got in touch with Picou and Walter Nelson, Sr. In spite of the prevailing segregation laws of the time, Deuchar was invited to participate in an informal jam session at Picou’s place.

Late in January 1960, a fire destroyed Luthjen’s beer parlor and dance hall, and also Walter Nelson, Sr.’s guitar and amplifier. Luthjen’s was located downtown at 1200 Franklin Avenue. The mother and son who ran the place died in the fire.¹² Walter Nelson, Sr. had performed in the band at Luthjen’s the final Friday night. Its bandstand was suited for a four or possibly five-piece band. Trumpeter Walter “Blue”

Robertson, pianist Sammy Hopkins, and a drummer (by the surname “King”) seem to have been Walter Nelson, Sr.’s fellow musicians. The dance hall was commonly referred to as “The old folks home.” British trumpeter Ken Colyer described it in 1952 as a “wonderful, dingy old dance hall with dancing in front of the band and tables either side.”¹³ At the time of the fire, it was one of the few remaining neighborhood bistros with live jazz music on weekends.

Alphonse Picou’s funeral in early February 1961 was one of the largest held in the city to date. Picou’s bartender-guitarist was prominent in the funeral procession, and he can be seen in surviving newsreel footage.¹⁴ Photographs of Walter Nelson, Sr. holding Picou’s clarinet were published in *Ebony* and *Sepia* magazines,¹⁵ as well as various newspapers: “The Eureka Brass Band plays slowly a hymn to escort hearse with body of jazz clarinetist Alphonse Picou into ceremony for New Orleans, La., burial. Clarinet to be placed on grave is carried by Walter Nelson.”¹⁶

In April 1980, Walter Nelson, Sr. attended a funeral with music by a pick-up brass band that included Milton Batiste and Kid Sheik Cola (trumpets). The latter introduced Belgian New Orleans music buff Marcel Joly to Walter Nelson, Sr. The band marched to the New Caldonia Inn in Tremé. The original Caldonia Inn was the venue where Professor Longhair, Walter “Papoose” Nelson, saxophone player Eddie “Apeman Black” Jones, and drummer Clarence “Big Slick” Fritz performed about 1947. The venue was famous for its female impersonators. New Orleans writer Jason Berry recalled Lionel Batiste’s story of a funeral that he organized for the Caldonia Inn itself:

With the destruction of 12 square blocks of housing in the 1960s to clear the land that eventually became Louis Armstrong Park, the San Jacinto Club and other hubs of the culture were bulldozed into memory. In an interview several years ago, Uncle Lionel told me of the memorial he organized for another casualty, the Caldonia Inn, a magnet for the second-line parade clubs. Professor Longhair took his stage name at the Caldonia. Louis Armstrong stopped there during his ’49 ride as King of Zulu. Uncle Lionel Batiste had a day job in a funeral home on Rampart Street “when they buried the Caldonia, tore it down” [in 1980]. He orchestrated a funeral for the club as it moved to another building, called New Caldonia. Uncle Lionel situated a mannequin garbed as a weeping widow on a bench at the bar, borrowed a casket from the mortuary and lined it with velvet. “I was the corpse,” he said dryly of his role, lying in the casket as pallbearers followed the Olympia Brass Band playing dirges for the Caldonia Inn.¹⁷

Walter Nelson, Sr. was honored with a traditional brass band funeral when he passed away in 1984.¹⁸ He left no known recordings.

II.

Walter “Papoose” Nelson, Jr. was Fats Domino’s guitarist for some seven years. Professor Longhair claimed to have placed Nelson, Jr. with Fats Domino, “because I didn’t have any work. He’d come back if I needed him. The last place we played together was the High Hat Club.”¹⁹ The reason for his American Indian nickname, “Papoose,” is open to speculation.

December 1951 marks the first time “Papoose” recorded, on a session for Professor Longhair. They cut the slow twelve-bar “K.C. Blues” (Federal 12061). Unfortunately, the track was ruined by Nelson’s out-of-tune guitar.

Mac Rebennack related:

I started going down to watch Fats Domino playing at the Cadillac Club [corner of St. Claude and Poland Avenue, owned by Mike Tessitore], I used to drive Papoose crazy



Left: Walter “Papoose” Nelson is the guitarist with Fats Domino’s band in this promo still from the 1958 movie, *The Big Beat* (courtesy John Broven Collection). Right: *Louisiana Weekly*, November 9, 1963.

standing in front of him all night, watching how his hands went. When the band came off I wouldn't let him go get high with the rest of the band, I used to ask him to teach me how to do that stuff. He'd be dragged because he was a guy who used to like to be high. He would get up in the morning and drop four bennies, five redbirds, drink a bottle of beer, smoke some weed and shoot some heroin, that'd be just to wake him up in the morning.

*I got to be tight with Papoose, and he was a cat who liked to enjoy life to the utmost. But he had a very miserable life, he was put down by everybody, cut loose by his family, and he had nobody but music. And his only side-kick from music was dope. But he was the most lovable sweet cat I have ever met. No matter how much I bugged him, he'd never tell me to get lost, he'd always show me something. Other people didn't like to have me around, they'd tell me get away from here white boy, what you tryin' to do, get me busted? From Paps I learned how to comp, how to play what was needed in a song.*²⁰

Lionel Batiste put it this way: “Papoose was a better player than his daddy, except for the blues – you can't beat those old men for playing the blues. He had a little brother – they called him Prince La La – he had in mind that he could play better than Papoose, but he couldn't ... People would come from outside the Tremé to play. Like the dance nights on the weekend. They used to go in the yard at the Monkey Puzzle and practice.”²¹

Ten years after his initial recording session with Professor Longhair, “Papoose” recorded with Herb Hardesty’s band (actually Fats Domino’s band), possibly his very last recordings.²² His vocal on the bluesy shuffle “Why Did We Have to Part,” displays a confident singer, and he executes some fine rhythm guitar. Composer credits are given to Hardesty and Nelson. The A-side is the Hardesty-penned “The Chicken Twist,” a tight instrumental with a Bo Diddleyish type of beat; an idiosyncratic rhythm pattern that is related to the clave beat, it is pretty common in almost all genres of New Orleans music. “Papoose” can be seen with the Fats Domino band in various films, among them “Shake Rattle and Rock” (1956) and “The Big Beat” (1958).

“Paps” Nelson Jr. died of a heroin overdose in the famous Theresa Hotel in Harlem, on February 28, 1962, while on tour with Fats Domino. He was found with a syringe in his arm.²³ Nelson, Jr. was only 29

years old – married to Mrs. Earline Hall Nelson and the father of four children.²⁴ The large funeral took place in his hometown on March 10, with music furnished by Dejan's Olympia Brass Band.²⁵ Invited were the family, relatives, friends, and members the American Federation of Musicians Local No. 496 and Fats Domino's Orchestra.²⁶ The funeral procession started at Picou's Restaurant & Bar. When the mourners came out of the bar, they met an enormous crowd. Fats Domino's band was on tour; hence they missed the funeral. In the later part of the parade, a marshal known as "Little Eleven" became so "juiced" that he had trouble standing.²⁷ Dave Bartholomew recalled "Papoose" as a "great guitar player. Oh he was out of sight. It was a shame, the boy died in his 20s, very young."²⁸ Papoose cut something like seventy recordings with Fats Domino, from 1951 until 1958. He also waxed with Bartholomew and Clarence "Frog Man" Henry. Papoose toured Jamaica in 1961 with Domino's band.

III.

Lawrence "Prince La La" Nelson, vocal and guitar, is mainly known for his recording of "You Put The Hurt On Me," cut in June 1961 for A.F.O. Records.²⁹ Nat Perrilliat and Red Tyler, saxophones; Harold Battiste, piano; Chuck Badie, stand-up bass; and John Boudreaux, drums, were some of the session musicians. "La La's performance in the vocal booth was outstanding," said Battiste. "He exceeded all our expectations and invoked the spirit that made magic in the studio that day."³⁰ The song made it to number 28 on Billboard's R&B chart. In a 1979 interview, Professor Longhair told Andy Kaslow that he had trained Prince La La to sing, in the same way that he did many other kids, and some of them became pretty famous, too.³¹ Professor Longhair pronounced Prince La La as "Prince La Lá."

Guitarist and singer "Deacon" John Moore (born 1941) recalled: "I used to go over by Papoose and Prince La La (Lawrence Nelson), who was his brother. I saw Papoose, Prince La La and his daddy passing the guitar around, drinking that white port and lemon juice, down at Picou's Bar. I was too young to be in there, but I would sneak in there in the daytime and just sit there and be watching them. One would be playing and one would grab the guitar and say, 'No, this is how it goes,' or the other one would take the guitar and say 'No, you playing that wrong – this is how it go.'"³² Moore declared that he used to visit the Nelson brothers at their mother Edna's place. He also claimed to be the guitarist on "You Put The Hurt On Me" (while Battiste cites Roy Montrell).

It seems Prince La La inspired Mac Rebennack's Dr. John persona.³³ La La's recording of the song "Need You" is an interesting illustration of that.³⁴ Rebennack suggested that the Nelson family "never wanted anybody becoming a professional musician, which was the lowest thing you could be in their eyes. I wouldn't be surprised if the family had something to do with his [Prince La La] being killed, there was always a lot of feuding among them."³⁵ Lawrence Nelson died in New Orleans in October 1963, only 27 years old.³⁶ The cause of death remains unclassified. His recorded output consists of around five songs. Like the rest of the Nelson family, he is buried in Holt Cemetery, near City Park.

Singer and pianist Oliver Morgan (1933-2007) was a friend of the Nelson family since the mid-1940s. He penned and recorded a song about Prince La La's death titled "Who Shot the La La?" Morgan provided music writer Jeff Hannusch with this summary account of the Nelson family of New Orleans guitarists:

Papoose played more like his father... They played a lot of heavy chords. I wouldn't say that La La was as good of a player as Papoose — Papoose was a legend around here. But La La really played a funk style of guitar before funk got popular.

Believe it or not, I'd go by their house and play Charles Brown tunes like 'Driftin' Blues' and 'Trouble Blues' on the piano and they'd all play guitar behind me. It was

something.

I never knew La La to do anything but play music. He played a lot at a place called Picou's which was on St. Philip. Miss Edna owned the joint – she was the woman La La's father stayed with. When I played in there with him and Jessie Hill, the place would be packed.³⁷

(With thanks to Bo Scherman and Karina Engman.)

ENDNOTES

1 Walter Nelson, Sr. interviewed by Bill Russell, October 6, 1960 (Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).

Other nicknames for Nelson, Sr. reportedly included “Captain Midnight” and “Rawhead.”

2 Edna Nelson obituary, New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, April 7, 1982, 24.

3 Bill Greensmith and Bez Turner, “Fess,” *Blues Unlimited*, no. 130 (May/August 1978), 7.

4 Nelson, Sr. interviewed by Russell.

5 Ibid.

6 Karl Gert zur Heide, “Kid Ernest, the Nehi Boy from New Orleans,” *Blues Unlimited*, no. 145 (Winter 1983/1984).

7 Jeff Hannusch, *I Hear You Knockin': The Sound of New Orleans Rhythm and Blues* (Ville Platte: Swallow Publications, 1985), 317.

8 Nelson, Sr. interviewed by Russell. Nelson also referred to his signature blues composition as “Walter's Special.”

9 Herb Morand interviewed by Robert Greenwood, Bernard Steinau, Edward Leaman, and Robert Matthews, March 12, 1950 (Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).

10 Mick Burns, *Keeping the Beat on the Street: The New Orleans Brass Band Renaissance* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 87.

11 Nelson, Sr. interviewed by Russell.

12 “Mother, Son Die In N.O. Fire,” New Orleans *States-Item*, January 30, 1960 (Vertical File, Subjects: Bars, Buildings, Etc., Where Jazz Was/Is Played: Local, Luthjens, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University); Nelson, Sr. interviewed by Russell.

13 Mike Pointon and Ray Smith, *Goin' Home: The Uncompromising Life and Music of Ken Colyer* (Great Britain: Ken Colyer Trust, 2010).

14 Walter Nelson, Sr. is visible in film footage used in *Sing On – A Film of New Orleans Brass Bands*, American Music AMVD-Two.

15 “New Orleans Bids Goodbye To Alphonse Picou,” *Ebony*, May 1961; “Laid to Rest ‘Dixieland Style,’” *Sepia*, April 1961 (Alphonse Picou vertical file, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).

16 *Stevens Point* (Wisconsin) *Daily Journal*, February 11, 1961.

17 Jason Berry, “Uncle Lionel Batiste: A player in time,” *New Orleans Magazine*, vol. 14, no. 6 (March 2009), 42.

18 Walter Charles Nelson obituary, New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, March 2, 1984; “Walter C. Nelson funeral today,” New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, March 2, 1984.

19 Jennifer Quale, “Rockin' along with Professor Longhair,” *Dixie Magazine*, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, February 6, 1972.

20 Charlie Gillett, “The Dr. John Story,” *Let It Rock*, June 1973, 18.

21 Burns, *Keeping the Beat on the Street*.

- 22 Herb Hardesty, "The Chicken Twist"/"Why Did We Have To Part," Federal 12460, 1962.
- 23 Rick Coleman, *Blue Monday: Fats Domino and the Lost Dawn of Rock 'n' Roll* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2006), 217.
- 24 Walter (Papoose) Charles Nelson obituary, clipped from unidentified newspaper and attached to an eyewitness account of the funeral attributed to Marjorie T. Zander (Vertical File, Persons: Harold Dejan, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University).
- 25 Richard Knowles, "Preface" to Mick Burns, *The Great Olympia Band* (New Orleans: Jazzology Press, 2001), 7.
- 26 Walter (Papoose) Charles Nelson obituary.
- 27 This according to Fats Houston, who also marched in the funeral, and who is quoted in the eyewitness account in the Harold Dejan vertical file, Hogan Jazz Archive.
- 28 Bill Dahl, "Fats Domino –The King of Blue Berry Hill," *Goldmine*, June 29, 2001.
- 29 Prince La La, "You Put the Hurt on Me"/"Don't You Know Little Girl (I'm in Love)," A.F.O. 45-301. On some pressings, the title is alternately given as "She Put the Hurt on Me."
- 30 Harold Battiste Jr., *Unfinished Blues: Memories of a New Orleans Music Man* (New Orleans: The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2010), 64. "You Put the Hurt on Me" reached number 20 on *Billboard's* R&B chart. The Spencer Davis Group (UK) cut a (slightly corny) remake in 1967.
- 31 Professor Longhair interviewed by Andy Kaslow, November 1979, included on "Fess' Gumbo," Stony Plain SPCD 1214.
- 32 John Sinclair, "Breaking Bread with R&B Legends Deacon John, Eddie Bo & Chuck Carbo," *Offbeat*, vol. 9, no. 5 (May 1996), 65.
- 33 Jeff Hannusch, "Talkin' 'bout New Orleans," *OffBeat*, vol. 10, no. 8 (August 1997), 27.
- 34 "Need You," an originally unissued track, was finally released on the 1993 CD compilation "Gumbo Stew: Original AFO New Orleans R&B," Ace CDCHD 462 (UK). Jessie Hill created the song.
- 35 Gillett, "The Dr. John Story," 21.
- 36 "Prince La La' Found Dead," *Louisiana Weekly*, November 9, 1963, 1.
- 37 Hannusch, "Talkin' 'bout New Orleans," 26 .

DEWEY JACKSON AND HIS PEACOCK ORCHESTRA, 1926



In 1926 Dewey Jackson's St. Louis-based Peacock Orchestra recorded four sides for Vocalion, with two New Orleanians in the line-up: Pops Foster and Willie J. Humphrey. The Jazz Archive recently inherited a ticket for a benefit dance held that same year aboard the *S. S. Capitol* in New Orleans, with music provided by the Charleston Peacock Band. It was transferred from the Martin Shepard Office Records, which are held by the Southeastern Architectural Archive here at Tulane. Keli Rylance, Head of SEAA, explains that Shepard's papers included several copies of the ticket, along with a letter related to the benefit. That Jackson's Peacock Orchestra and the Charleston Peacock Band were one and the same is confirmed by Rylance's discovery of an April 26, 1926, announcement in the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*: "Complimentary tickets will be honored aboard the steamer Capitol tonight, officials of the Streckfus Steamboat Line announce. Dewey Jackson and his St. Louis Charleston Peacock Band will play for dancing." An equally compelling artifact is the photo of "Dewey Jackson's Band," which came up for recognition during our current photo identification project with Barry Martyn. The Archive's copy of this photo is a contact print, not much bigger than a postage stamp, derived from a copy-negative that Bill Russell made from Willie Humphrey's original. Our digital enlargement reveals Pops Foster, upright bass; Willie Humphrey, clarinet; Dewey Jackson, trumpet (standing); along with two other participants in the Vocalion recording session, Burroughs Lovingood, piano; and Albert Snaer, trumpet (kneeling). The drummer and alto sax player appear to be additional Vocalion session mates Floyd Campbell and Thornton Blue, respectively. Obviously taken aboard a riverboat, the photo seems to be from the same period as the Vocalion recording session in St. Louis and *S. S. Capitol* dances in New Orleans.



The Behrman Civic League
 Invites You To Attend
Grand Moonlight River Ride and Dance DeLuxe
ON THE NEW STEAMER CAPITOL
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1926
 Committee:—G. W. Kaiser, Chairman, Mrs. H. Clark,
 Chairlady; Dr. J. P. Martinez, Ex-Officio; J. Bodenger,
 Rob't. Anderson, G. S. Cooper, Frank Duvic, F. Albrecht,
 A. Krauss J. J. O'Connel J. Higgins, S. Levy B. T. Monroe
 C. J. Cieutat.
ADVANCE TICKETS 50c AT WHARF 75c, NO TAX
 (This Ticket Must Be Sold Before 6 P. M. Date of Trip)
MUSIC BY CHARLESTON PEACOCK BAND
AN AVALANCHE! OF MELODY AND ENTERTAINMENT

Photograph: Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University, PH001981. Ticket: Martin Shepard Office Records, Southeastern Architectural Archive, Tulane University.

CURATOR'S COMMENTARY

This issue marks the inauguration of a new era for *The Jazz Archivist*. After more than a quarter century as editor, Professor John J. Joyce is stepping down. Professor Joyce was a founding member of the newsletter and played an important role in guiding its progress from its original four-page format in 1986 to the modest yet substantial publication that it has become today. We thank him for his years of service and also commend him on his recent masterwork, *Sam Morgan's Jazz Band: Complete Recorded Works in Transcription*, eds John J. Joyce, Bruce Boyd Raeburn, and Anthony M. Cummings, Recent Researches in American Music Volume 73/Music of the United States of America, Volume 24 (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, Inc., 2012), a repertory tool that will help to ensure the legacy of one of the greatest New Orleans bands of the 1920s. After more than a decade of producing the newsletter, Lynn Abbott will take over as editor, ably assisted by Nicole Shibata, who designed *The Jazz Archivist's* new look beginning in 2012. With this issue we have also made the transition to an electronic journal, available for free on the Hogan Jazz Archive homepage. A limited number of print versions will be available for those who contribute the \$25 annual donation and desire a print copy

Given the dearth of space in Jones Hall, the Hogan Jazz Archive has become much less aggressive in seeking new collections, concentrating instead on preservation and access initiatives, but every now and then an opportunity comes along that is too good to pass up. In December 2012 the Archive received the Laurraine Goreau papers, a compendium of Mahalia Jackson materials, the result of work done in the preparation of her biography of Jackson, *Just Mahalia, Baby: The Mahalia Jackson Story* (Word Books, 1975). The donation was made by Ms. Goreau's niece, Anne deVillier, honoring the wishes of her parents, Mary Anne Goreau deVillier and Lincoln deVillier, who have been longstanding supporters of Tulane University. The collection includes several scrapbooks and over 600 photographs, with an especially notable signed gelatin print portrait of Mahalia by Lee Friedlander. There are also more than 100 interview transcriptions and 6 linear feet of manuscript materials related to Jackson, as well as biographical and literary materials reflecting Ms. Goreau's career as a writer in New Orleans and elsewhere, including the libretto and other documents related to her "folk opera," *Ballad of Catfoot Grimes*, and examples of her poetry, musical compositions, and her long-running column in the *New Orleans States-Item*, "c'est la vie." Thanks to Associate Curator of Recorded Sound Materials Lynn Abbott for successfully guiding this donation to completion and for the processing work that is already enabling researchers to use this collection.

Jeff Rubin of Web Services and his team of student workers have been busy scanning images from the Archive's general photographic collection for the Hogan Jazz Archive Photography Collection database in the Tulane University Digital Library, which is now available at <http://digitallibrary.tulane.edu/collection?id=91>, although it will continue to grow for quite some time before it is finished. Thus, in addition to searching online metadata for this collection, researchers will also be able to view the images. Finally, I must mention the 2013 Satchmo Summerfest, now in its thirteenth year and recently reinvigorated via sponsorship by Chevron, which has stabilized programming and very likely led to record attendance this year. My assignment for 2013 was to interview Matt Sakakeeny, an Assistant Professor in Tulane's Music Department, about his new book, *Roll with It: Brass Bands in the Streets of New Orleans*, forthcoming from Duke University Press in November 2013. The level of scholarly interest in brass bands evident in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina has risen sharply, and Matt's work is setting the standard, so all I had to do was pose a few questions, sit back, and listen. But the highlight of this year's festival for



Laurraine Goreau, left and Mahalia Jackson. Photograph from the Laurraine Goreau papers at the Hogan Jazz Archive.

me was participation in the Satchmo Summerfest Seminar All Stars, a band made up of scholars, writers, musicians, and archivists who have presented at the festival over the years. The lineup lived up to the name, with Dan Morgenstern (vocals), David Ostwald (tuba and leader), Ricky Riccardi (piano), Wycliffe Gordon (keynote speaker this year, vocals and trombone), David Sager (trombone), and myself on drums, joined by a host of fellow musician/presenters, such as Yoshio Toyama (trumpet and vocals) and his wife Keiko (banjo), Tim Laughlin (clarinet), Ed Polcer (cornet), Seva Venet (banjo), and John Pult (ukelele and vocals) for two performances, Saturday on the outdoor stage and Sunday in the third floor concert hall of the Old U.S. Mint. Of course, every tune we played had a Louis Armstrong connection. After knowing these colleagues for years, I experienced a new level of bonding that only music can provide. It was great, and George Avakian was in the audience, which made it even better! Thanks to Fred Kasten and Marci Schramm for making 2013 the most rewarding Satchmo Summerfest yet.

Bruce Boyd Raeburn, Curator

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