Baby Brousse plays "Twelfth Street Rag" and "Ciribiribin" on the piano.

Albert Broussard is known as "Little Brousse, the piano player", or "Baby Brousse, the piano player." BB started playing piano back when Clarence Williams was still around New Orleans; BB played Bert Williams numbers, and numbers by Clarence Williams and other fellows around town. BB "followed" his uncle, Henry "Jubie" [spelling?] Young, also a piano player; "we always had piano players in our family." BB, who will soon be fifty-five, was born April 30, 1906. His maternal grandfather played banjo; then the maternal uncle, Henry Young, played piano; when Henry died, another maternal uncle "took it over." Then another uncle, "Big Bill" Thompson, began playing piano. Then BB began playing; he started when he was seven years old. His godmother had a piano. He could span only three notes. His first number was "Home, Sweet Home;" his uncle [Henry Young] had learned that tune first, so BB figured it would be a good one to learn first, too. His uncle was a party piano player; he did not work with bands. He played along and around the lake, going to Tangiapahoa [Parish], Pearl River [Mississippi?], Slidell and various other small towns. BB's uncle, Bill, began playing then (some time before the death of Henry Young); Bill insisted that BB begin playing, too, as he wanted the tradition of having a piano player in the family perpetuated. BB's grandmother told him about "Home, Sweet Home" and showed him the first three notes; after that, he taught himself. BB started a younger brother, Henry [Broussard] on piano in about 1929; Henry was
good by about [19?]36 or [19?]37; Henry still plays, and comes to see BB about twice a week to have jam sessions. Once in a while they meet the sons of the old musicians, such as Willie Batiste, who played banjo. They [including Batiste?] started out together; they had a little band; personnel: [Joseph] "Brother Cornbread" [Thomas, clarinet]; BB [piano]; Frank "Carbonie" [spelling?] Thompson (another uncle of BB), trumpet; Caleb Gorman (deceased, and brother of clarinetist and saxophonist Israel Gorman), drums. BB also taught Caleb Gorman to play a little piano. The band played for house parties around Conti and Rocheblave, around Galvez and Bienville, and all through Orleans Street. BB later organized the Blue Hatters, a larger band, and began playing for fraternity dances, including the [Veni, Vēdi, Vici (spelling?)] Fraternity. (Terranova was the captain) BB also sang during this period. BB's band played for various other organizations, including some business firms. BB played for the wedding of Elton Cigali, scion of owner of Cigali Building. BB played for fish fries, mostly around Sixth and Howard [now LaSalle] for a lady known as "Ma"; they were held every Saturday night. Sometimes parties were substituted for the fish fries; Ten dollars or fifteen dollars would be put up as prize money for the best piano player, and a lot of them would enter the contest. BB mentions piano players: Udell [Wilson?], Big Cato, Little Cato, Craig, Little Willie Davis (prompting by HD), Red Cayou [spelling?], and Manny "Little Gabe" Gabriel. Walter Pichon sometimes entered the contests, but he competed mostly in the Fifth Ward. There were also quite a few
contests, around St. Peter and Tonti [streets]; BB remembers one, at the wedding of Henry "Submarine" [ ] (who talked a lot about submarines) in which Pichon, Big Bill Thompson and BB were entered; BB was quite small at the time, and not considered up with the big boys, but he says it was a close contest. Another pianist, "Stackolee", revised the old "Stackolee Blues", which had been played around 1910, 1912; "Stackolee" was about the same age as BB, perhaps a little bit older; he is still around. The winner of the contests at weddings would get most of the jobs (at the weddings of other girls in attendance); winner was determined by applause. Numbers particularly used for contests were "High Society", "What'll I Do?", and "Twelfth Street Rag", and a blues. Red Cayou's favorite contest number was "What'll I Do?"; when he used that, BB would play "Blackberry Schottische", because the shottische featured crossed hands, and Cayou's number did also. Piano players weren't considered in the contest if they couldn't play "High Society" and "St. Louis Blues"; when someone considered hiring a piano player for a job, the prospective employer would ask about "High Society" and "St. Louis" and "Twelfth Street"; if the piano player answered that he could play them, he would be hired, although the employer always had the piano player play "High Society", after hiring him but before leaving. BB says if a piano player could play "High Society" he could play anything.
Other piano players: Adams, who was really good; Alcide, who was from downtown. Each ward had its own piano players. At that time [the time of the many contests?], BB lived in the Fifth Ward, at 2422 St. Peter; when he first learned piano, he lived at 628 North Tonti Street. Joseph Hypolite, who lived next door to BB [Tonti Street?], also played piano and had one at home; Hypolite and BB would have contests through the wall; crowds would gather in the streets when they played. A piano player lost if he gave up. BB says that when piano players walked into a place where a contest was being held, they would first put their caps or hats on the piano; if it got too hot for them, they would take their headgear and go out into the alley; sometimes they would even send someone back to get the cap, to save themselves embarrassment. BB says the good piano players were so good that sometimes it seemed that there should be eighty-eight keys in addition to eighty-eight already on the piano. Individual piano players could be identified, unseen, by the way they ended a number; each one had his own personal "stop" [i.e., coda]. BB demonstrates his "stop" for the key of C-sharp (he always played that stop when playing a piece in that key). BB demonstrates a "stop" his uncle (?) used, mostly in B-flat. A piano player was very cautious to keep his personal "stop" secret when he was learning it, because other piano players would steal good ones which hadn't been used in public. "Stops" were typical of New Orleans [piano] music; their use has just died out about ten years ago; now piano players make "dry stops" (i.e., end the number without a special ending). BB demonstrates a "stop" used by Clarence Williams.
When BB was learning piano, there were a number of good trumpet players, including Kid Rena, Kid Punch [Miller], Sam Morgan, "Shake Up Melindsay" [spelling?], and Louis Armstrong. "Shake Up Melindsay" was so called because that was the name of his favorite tune; he would quote it on his trumpet in the middle of any tune he played, too. The trumpet players then were very powerful; they had strong tones. BB talks of bucking contests during advertising jobs; wagons with bands went out the afternoon of dances, especially on Sunday, the favorite night for dances; the band which played the best on the advertising job would get more people to come to the hall where they were playing for the dance that night. BB says people could tell how many people were at a dance by listening to the echo of the music in the hall. Sometimes there would be piano contests at the dances, too; Little Willie Davis, Baby Brousse and Red Cayou were often at such contests. "Curley", a piano player from across the basin, would often be "double-teamed" (two piano players playing the same piano against one piano player, who had made it "too warm" for them). Curley told BB that he [BB] had a bad [i.e., good] left hand, and invited him to come to a contest at the Rooty Dooty, a hole-in-the-wall place at St. Ann and Robertson. "Stackolee" was there, looking for BB, as BB had left a wedding where "Stackolee" was competing (BB says he left because his uncle asked him to, as it was in [his uncle's? Stackolee's] territory). The contest was about 1927. "Stackolee" played "What'll I Do?" and "Stackolee"; BB played "Smile Go Along" and "High Society";
"Stackolee" played "What'll I Do?" [a repeat?], and BB played "Blackberry Schottische." BB demonstrates the latter piece on the piano; he explains that the piano is not in very good condition, as he has not played it in about two weeks.

End of Reel I
BB plays piano and sings "New Orleans-Tennessee Woman", one of his own blues compositions.

BB plays piano and sings a blues; imitates a trumpet; demonstrates one of his "stops" [i.e. codas].

BB used to play in speakeasys; he played at the Rooty Dooty (Robertson and St. Ann) at Probst's [spelling?] (Dumaine and Robertson), and at Zanco's [spelling?] (run by Charlie Zanco and Salvador Lashere [spelling?], at St. Peter and Tonti); last-named place kept a piano. BB learned "The Night When Love Was Born" at Zanco's. BB played "I Still Get A Thrill" the other day.

BB plays and sings "When Love Was Born."

BB played in the speakeasys during Prohibition; sometimes the places would be raided by the police, but they didn't bother the musicians; BB says they would leave the piano player alone so he could get a good crowd again; then the police could make another good haul.

The last professional job BB played was in 1934 or 1935, when his sixteen-piece band, the Blue Hatters, played for Albert Charbonnet at his camp, called Diamond's Rest, in Little Woods. BB's band broke up when some of the members didn't show up for a rehearsal for a job for the Veni, Vedi, Vici [spelling?] fraternity; BB explains that some of the men, including the drummer, who wanted to take over as leader, were envious of BB's getting ten dollars more, as leader, than the rest of the musicians in the band. BB quit playing altogether,
not even playing solo. He began working as a service station attendant, doing mechanic's work as a hobby. He put the piano in his garage because he still likes to play; sometimes he has some of the youngsters come in to play, so they can learn about jazz. BB says there is some of all kinds of music in jazz; he tells of listening to Miss Luke, (who lived at St. Philip and Gálvez) a pianist, and daughter of Senator Luke; Miss Luke taught piano, played a lot of opera music; BB would learn some of the "licks" she played from operas, then put them in his playing to win contests.

BB plays "Ciribiribin."

BB plays a number, un-copyrighted, one of many, which he composed; he demonstrates a "dry stop."

BB plays and sings "St.Louis Blues."

BB explains that the "dry stop" is to end a number without any identifying, personal stop; he says that once a piano player had got his crowd, he could quit playing his own special stop and just use dry stops. People outside the place where a party was being held could identify the piano player by his personal stop. BB said people would advertise that he was to be the piano player at their party; when BB would go to see about it, they would say they had intended getting him, but they couldn't find him, and the tickets were already printed. BB charged more than the average piano player; he got about five dollars per night; some of the others might work for one dollar and twenty-five cents per night.

BB talks about how much he loves music, about how he dreams about music sometimes; he has first dreamed the numbers he has composed.
BB got his nickname, Baby Brousse, because he was so small when he began playing. He says that his father and four brothers also answer to the name "Brousse", so some distinction had to be made. Only one of his brothers, Henry Broussard, also plays piano. There are no others in the family coming along on piano; BB has four sons, any of whom would be good if they would take some interest in playing, but they do not. BB says a routine piano player [i.e., one who learned and who plays by ear] can play any tune, without practicing, once he has learned to play the piano.
BB met "Shake Up Melindsay" [spelling?] at a benefit given for the latter by several musicians; BB played at the benefit. "Shake Up" was originally from across the river, BB thinks; BB thinks "Shake Up's" mother bought the house next door to BB (where they lived when the benefit was held?). There were many trumpet players at the benefit; there were Sam Morgan, Kid Rena, "Shake Up", Punch [Miller] and Phillip Marrery [spelling?] [Possibly Philip Marrero. Compare Soards..., 1924] BB says Marrery composed "Panama", using part of a blues BB had composed ("Albert Blues", for BB whose real name is Albert Broussard), when he was about nine years old, as part of "Panama." [Compare composer credit on phonograph records.RBA]. Marrery was killed while hoboing to Chicago; BB says many musicians traveled in that manner, as they didn't have much money. BB says Marrery played with a good piano player called "Cross-eyed George". BB thinks his real name was George Harris. Marrery played "Panama" at the benefit; Punch also played it, as it was a good number. Marrery was about nineteen or twenty years old (BB thinks) at the time; Marrery played "much trumpet", and "was making it warm for the others" at the benefit. Kid Ory, then playing trombone, says BB; was at the benefit. Frank "Carbonie" [spelling?] Thompson, trumpet, was also there; he was playing then like the modern trumpet players of today; "he was always a half-note in front of the music that you was playing, but the way that he played it--oh, man, he was really strong with it." "Carbonie", an uncle of BB, died recently.
Carbonie played a lot of jobs around New Orleans; he frequently hired [Joseph "Brother" Cornbread" [Thomas, clarinet], and "Big Al", [Father Al Lewis?] guitar. Carbonie was a brother of "Big Bill" [Thompson]; HD says he played with Carbonie, who lived on St. Peter between Miro and Tonti. HD says Carbonie admired the trumpet playing of Chris Kelly, and could play the blues. BB says Kelly was the trumpet player who was famous for playing "Careless Love"; Kelly was also at "Shake Up's" party. BB fashioned his own imitation of trumpet playing [demonstrated soon] on Kelly's style and sound. BB played piano behind Kelly [at the benefit?]. Kelly was strictly a blues man. Some tunes he played: "See, See Rider", "Don't You Feel My Legs", "Blue Monday Blues."

BB plays piano, sings "Careless Love", imitates Chris Kelly's cornet playing.

HD says BB used to imitate Louis Armstrong's trumpet playing; BB says he also imitated Harry James. One reason he was so popular was that he could do the imitations, filling in when he didn't have a trumpet player.

HD mentions good trumpet player Willie Webber, who lived on Miro Street, and was a slater; BB says his own uncle married Webber's sister. BB says there were a lot of good trumpet players in the older times. BB remembers Buddy Petit, says he was one of the top-notchers. Other good ones BB remembers: Louis Armstrong, Kid Rena, Kid Punch, Sam Morgan; they, including Petit, were the ones who had bucking contests. BB raves about Rena. He gave up trumpet a while, and was not as good in his later days. BB says Sharkey Bonano patterned his playing after that of Rena; HD agrees. BB says Rena
would give Sharkey ideas; Armstrong would give Louis Prima ideas. Roy Montgomery, good drummer and brother [,i.e., nephew] of Sharkey [Compare Monk Hazel, reel?] patterned his playing after that of "Black Bennie" [Williams]; BB says Bennie was the one who put all the gadgets and effects in tunes; BB says when Bennie played at the Lyric Theater he pulled a resined cord through a hat-box to make the tiger roar in "Tiger Rag." "Tiger Rag" was a famous rag in that time; BB played all that kind of number. BB explains that he can't play those numbers now, because his piano, which is a good one, has been under water for at least two weeks, and it doesn't respond as it should.

BB plays part of "Dippermouth Blues."

BB says he played about seven different styles of piano; he had to, because when he played contests he would have to change sometimes, so that he could beat the others who might be making it warm for him.

BB talks of his sons; he says some of them play, and make up a little band [with him?]; most of them, however, sing. One of them has a voice quite similar to BB's.

BB says he would like to play a few professional jobs again; he feels that he can do it, with just a little practice. He says his fingers are almost as fast as they used to be, and just need some limbering up. He says he might come from under a car, after unscrewing some nuts and bolts, and play the piano a little; if his fingers don't do what he wants, he leaves the piano alone, coming back to it later. When BB first got his present piano, it had been standing outdoors, in rain and other weather, for about a month; he took it apart and fixed it.
BB plays "I Always Dream Of You."

BB plays part of "That's A-plenty", finishing with part of "Panama" as the main theme. He repeats this part of "Panama."

BB's godmother had a piano when he was young; BB could play it only at uncertain times.

BB talks about dances, including slow drag, two-step and one-step. He talks about the tempos of the various dances, and illustrates the tempos by mentioning various tunes: "Panama", "High Society", "Twelfth Street Rag." There were also waltzes; BB always featured the waltz, "Peggy O'Neill." The schottische was also popular; schottisches were used in [piano?] contests. [Compare above, reel I, pp. 3,6] There were only about six piano players around who played the schottische; BB names [Dwight?] Newman, Udell Wilson, "Big Bill" Thompson, BB. Udell was from Kansas City.

End of Reel III