

Others present: Richard B. Allen, Paul R. Crawford.

This interview was recorded at the French Market Fishermen's Supply, 813 Decatur Street. Albert Artigues, Sr. is talking to young Louis Armstrong, a trumpet player, who claims he is a "little off cousin" of the well-known Louis Armstrong. The younger Armstrong played with George Lewis's band when he first started. Armstrong's band had an old man named Willie "Kaiser" Joseph, John Joseph's brother. When he was about fourteen, he talked to Elmer Talbert who sent him to see Professor [Henry] Pritchard. Pritchard was full of students so he sent him to see Professor [Delmar? Delmas? Dalmas?] [sp?] who taught him to play.

Albert Artigues, Sr. was born August 23, 1907 in the house he lives in now at 2733 Dumaine Street. His father built it the year before he was born. Nobody in the family played music except Albert. He became interested in playing the horn when he was at Holy Cross College. He started to take lessons at school but they taught march music, and Albert was interested in Dixieland so he quit and started playing by ear with his own band, then with Joe Clesi's band. When Sharkey [Bonano] left to play with the Wolverines in New York, Albert took his place with Norman Brownlee's band. Albert picked up most of what he learned from Sharkey. He used to sit in with the band when the Tonti [Social Club] was running. Sharkey's about ten years older

than Albert.

When he was young, Albert heard several good, colored Dixieland bands: Chris Kelly's, Punch [Miller's], [Kid] Rena, Papa Celestin, Buddy Petit, and Sam Morgan. There were some good white bands too, like "Pansy" Laine and Johnny Bayersdorffer, who played the Tokyo [check sp.] Gardens at Spanish Fort. Papa Celestin's Original Tuxedo band was across from there at Tranchina's.

They used to give "King-cake" parties where there was a little doll or [pecan] in the cake and whoever got it had to give a party the following week. It started around February 8 and would go for two or three weeks until someone who got the pecan didn't give a party. They would serve beer and whiskey and would hire a band for about \$18. Many times the band got "muled" and wouldn't get paid. P<sup>n</sup>ch [Miller], Kid Rena, and Sam Morgan half-expected to get "muled, i.e., not get paid." Sometimes they hired two bands. There were some good contests, especially when there were all those camps at West End: the Lillian Cottage, the Dixie Cottage, the American Club. The trumpet men would come out on the wharf and blow at one another. Albert used to play at the Lillian Cottage and got in some duels himself. For \$1.00 a couple, you could go there on Saturday evening, eat and drink all you wanted and dance from 9:00 A.M. until 6:00 P.M. Sunday [?]. They would pay for it by putting out an ad card and

collecting \$5 or \$10 from business people and placing the ads around town advertising the picnic and the businesses. This way the picnic was paid for before it started. There would be three or four on Sunday. Milneburg was a favorite spot for them.

Albert "bucked" against "Hook" [Pansy] Laine, Punch [Miller], [Kid] Rena. Albert would blow so much, his lip would split right open just trying to hit the high notes. The music really sounded nice in those tin roof camps.

Albert played in a five piece combo about five years ago with Johnny McGee, clarinet, and Bill Walde [~~check~~ <sup>sp.</sup>], bass, at a camp between Little Woods and the airport. Tony Shriner was on drums and Sam <sup>Callia</sup> ~~Calliet~~ [~~sp?~~] on guitar. Sam <sup>Callia</sup> ~~Calliet~~ sounds like a piano when he plays guitar, very nice. Mr. Allen asks if Albert played with Gene Hemard, a guitarist, but thinks it must have been "Red Hot" [Stewart Bergen]. Albert played with Frank Durfee, clarinet, whose brother played guitar, and Harold "Katz" Maestri in drums, when Albert first started playing. They used to play Firemen's Hall in Westwego. He also played with Norman Brownlee there, at Thomassie's near Harvey, and at the Red Top Inn in Gretna. Brownlee was a good piano player and a fine fellow. He sat in with Raymond [Burke], and Paul Crawford in [Tony] Almerico's band in 1958. He was one of the few to play lead piano, set the tempo and play the introduction and the [chorus].

After the "take-off" he would play chords in the ensemble. Sam <sup>Callin</sup> Calliet could do the same thing with a guitar. Sam used to play at Charley's [or Charlie's] Tavern at Magazine and Peniston, later called the Elbow Room with [Johnny] McGee's band.

Albert sat in with several bands before he became professional--Pinky [Vidacovich] when he was with the [New Orleans] Owls and Sharkey [Bonano]. Albert didn't try to model his playing after anybody; he just played it from the heart. The more relaxed the group is, the better he likes it. He doesn't like to extend himself to keep with the band, for example, extending himself to reach the high notes like some do when they go "modern." Some men put so much in the damn horn that it confuses their style. Tempo is very essential. Albert doesn't like to play a fast tempo unless it's a standard like "Tiger Rag" that was written to be fast. He likes a relaxed two beat tempo. (He gives the tempo he prefers for "Tiger Rag" and "Just Because You're You.")

Albert never used the expression, "the New Orleans drop."  
Mr. Allen has heard Monk [Hazel] and Wingy [Manone] use it.

The first band Albert played with was Joe Clesi's, except for his little four piece group he mentioned above with Frank Durfee, his brother, and Harold "Katz" Maestri. [Next?] he also played with Hilton "Nappy" <sup>R</sup>Lamane and Lester Bouchon on Clarinet and tenor sax. They played in Firemen's Hall about thirty-four years ago. He was

about sixteen when he started playing with Durfee and seventeen when he played with Hilton and Lester. He didn't play with Joe Clesi long but he hated to leave. They had a real swingin' six piece group. "Katz" persuaded him to go with Norman Brownlee and he's sorry he did, although he enjoyed playing with [Harry] Shields and [Joe] Loyacano [tb]. In Joe Clesi's band, the front line was Albert [tp], Joe Clesi, [tb] and Raymond [Burke] [cl (and s?)], with Philly Miller on bass, "Katz" Maestri on drums, and Freddie Loyacano on banjo. Freddie's brother, Joe Loyacano, [not the tbist] played tenor with them for awhile. AA gave Maestri his nickname because he looked like a Jew. "Katz" Maestri is still around but doesn't do much of anything now. They used to play the beer joints: the White House in Harahan and in the Channel. It was during prohibition, but everybody was selling "homebrew" in those days. They used to have a lot of fights in the Channel. It was on the waterfront and a lot of sailors would come in looking for a fight. Albert heard of some places where they had a wire cage to put over the musicians when fights would start. Raymond [Burke] played in some of those joints.

Albert's father didn't like him to play music. If he had continued, he might have wound up as a drunk or something.

In Brownlee's band, Harry Shields played clarinet, Joe Loyacano on trombone, Alonzo Crumley<sup>in</sup> [sp?] on drums, Norman French on banjo,  
*see Brownlee's int.*

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and Brownlee on piano. French was Brownlee's brother-in-law. Crumley<sup>6</sup> was from across the river. Joe Loyacano played a nice tail gate trombone. The first night Albert played with them at Haynes and Martin's Dancing School on St. Charles, Joe's tail gate trombone and Harry [unintelligible] helped his nervousness. Albert never enjoyed playing with a piano player as much as he did with Brownlee. Harry Shields played tenor and alto sax. Brownlee was working for C. G. Conn and would get Harry a new instrument whenever he wanted. The dancing school would put on the dance; it was a [sub]script[ion] dance costing about \$.75 admission and open to the public. Sometimes, the script dances sold the tickets in advance except for well-advertised places like the Frolick and the Top Hat. The Frolick was one of the first open air dances they had in the city, run by Frank Pattengill [sp?] and Hype Guinle. [check sp] Sharkey [Bonano's] band opened it up. They had two trumpets in the band: Sharkey and Leon Prima. It was on St. Ann between Dorgenois and Broad. After "years" they moved to the Top Hat on St. Claude where Schwegmann's is now. Frank opened the first twenty-five cent club in New Orleans across the street from the Honeysuckle Inn, but there were so many fights, they had to close it. A man or a couple could get in the Frolick for \$.50 and dance all night, buy the set-ups and bring your own bottle. There were some good dances on the 2:00 to 5:00 ride on the [S. S.] President

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and[S. S.] Capitol on Sunday afternoon. Fate Marable played on the boat, Dewey Jackson played trumpet with them. Jackson would put on a woman's dress and do some acts. (PRC adds an early Kid Thomas.) Emmett Hardy played on the [S. S.] Sidney but that was before Albert's time; he never heard him. Oscar Marcour told Mr. Allen that he, Brownlee, and Hardy made some home records. *[If Mark by hand]*

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End of Reel I



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Albert doesn't think there are any musicians today that can touch Sam Morgan, Buddy Petit, [Kid] Rena, and Punch [Miller]. Punch was what they called a "barrelhouse" trumpet player. George [Boyd] played clarinet with him. For dance music you couldn't beat them. Buddy played a nice, relaxed horn and so did Sam Morgan. AA thinks SM had the one of the nicest tones of any of the Negroes. Sam played nice arrangements, but he didn't read them; he did not play a barrelhouse style. His drummer just had one cymbal and one cowbell. He played the same style as Leo Adde who played with Johnny Bayersdorffer. The old records don't do justice to the drummers. Adde wasn't a spectacular drummer but he had a fine beat. Ray Bauduc is a spectacular drummer, even more so than [Gene] Krupa. Sam Morgan's drummer was Alfred Williams, who still plays [1961]. Albert likes the drummer to set a firm tempo like "Katz" Maestri does. Sharkey [the trumpet player and leader] sets the tempo and that's it. He always plays the same numbers in a set tempo.

After Albert left Brownlee's band, he stopped playing. "Katz" tried to get him to come back with Joe Clesi; Red Bergman (not to be confused with Bergen) was playing with them. He played a loud trumpet, is dead now. Joe Clesi was a prince of a guy, and he really liked musicians. He would go the limit for them. He was a butcher and



came from the neighborhood around Tulane Avenue between Hagan Avenue [now Jefferson Davis] and Carrollton. Albert never saw anybody "put the mule on" Joe [not pay the band]. RBA heard he would pay the band out of his own pocket and AA agrees. He played drums and trombone, has been dead eight or ten years. Albert sat in with him at the Cadillac on St. Claude near Poland one time--Raymond was with him and Philly Miller on bass who is dead too. Philly's brother, Teddy Miller, used to play guitar. Teddy was the one who composed "Angry" and "Prunes." (Albert sings "Prunes.") Mr. Allen says he made his first dollar playing music with Teddy at the Rendezvous at Bourbon and St. Peter. Teddy played banjo with Joe Clesi at first and then Joe Loyacano started playing with them and brought his kid brother, Freddie Loyacano to play guitar. [Confused section here?] Joe was playing sax then. Teddy Miller's father was the one man band on Canal Street. Mr. Allen used to see him when he was in the Navy in 1945. Johnny Miller and Eddie Miller, the tenor man, aren't related to Teddy. Charlie Miller played trombone with Sharkey [Bonano] in the early 1950's and years ago at the Frolick. The Frolick opened up around the early 1920's. Johnny Miller made some records as the New Orleans Frolickers, when he was playing at the Frolick. [Apparently AA thinks that of the Millers only Teddy and Philly are related.]

After he quit playing, Albert loaned his horn to Johnny Coltraro for two or three years when he was playing at the dime-a-dance joints like the Fern. Mr. Allen used to hear Johnny during the war at the <sup>Sho the P. W. R. 80</sup> Puppy House. Albert got his horn back and started giving a few sessions at this house about 1950 until they got too big. Charlie Lecompte [sp?], trombone; [Otto] "Coco" [Hymel (check sp)], guitar; Bill Waelde, bass; Stanley Mendelson, piano, used to come. Albert's got some good pictures of Doc Souchon playing guitar, of Raymond, "Katz", Johnny McGee, Bill [Hayden or Heyden] from over the river [i.e., Algiers. RBA] who played piano, clarinet and tenor, and Tony Fougerat, trumpet. Albert thinks Tony was playing at the Famous Door but Mr. Allen says he played with the Last Straws at Pete Fountain's place [temporarily replacing Moose Zanco]. ~~Murphy~~ Campo, Sharkey, and Leon Prima play at the Famous Door now. Sharkey has Harry Shields on clarinet, Emile Oullibert, Dan LeBlanc [bass], and Monk [Hazel, drums]. He kept most of Mike Lala's old band. Mike plays Saturday and Sunday nights at Happy Landing. It's Frankie Mann's job. Also he had two nights a week as relief band at the Dream Room.

RBA mentions unusual tunes played at AA's session, e.g., "Brown Eyes, Why Are You Blue." \*top 13.

Tony Fougerat can remember all the old tunes. He likes to drink beer, as do Bill, Henry and August Waelde. Henry used to play nice,

relaxed guitar at Albert's sessions. Albert played a benefit at the Plum Plant [The American Legion (Gentilly Post) Dance Hall] one time with Alvin [Artigues] on piano, Henry Waelde on guitar, Bill Waelde on bass, Albert, and Raymond. It sounded nice because it has a low tin roof the music bounces off. They had fights there. Mr. Allen used to hear Buck Banville there.

When he played at the Tonti, Sharkey [Bonano] had Roy Montgomery, his nephew, on drums; Leonce Mello on trombone; Harry Shields on clarinet; and Albert doesn't remember the bass or piano; Leonce's brother, Manuel Mello, played cornet; Sam [Mello] played drums. Albert played with Sam Mello with Harold Maranto's band. He was supposed to cut a record of "Peculiar Rag" and "Dirty Rag" with them about 1925: Sam on drums, Harold Maranti on piano, Albert on trumpet, Raymond on clarinet, Philly Miller on bass, and someone else he can't remember. They rehearsed at Harold's barber shop. They never did cut the record though. It was just for themselves, i.e., not for commercial issue. Sharkey's band plays "Peculiar Rag" but not like it was written. Norman Brownlee's band was the only one that did. There's a piano part after the introduction that Brownlee used to make.

When Albert quit playing, he went to work for his father who was a rice miller. Albert got in the Fisherman Supply business about twenty years ago through his brother, Sidney [Artigues]. His family

has been on Decatur Street since the 1800's. His great-grandfather had a general merchandise store on Decatur. He has varied merchandise in his store. Most of the people who come in are from the country.

Albert plays odd jobs once in a while when someone, such as Johnny McGee, gets in a spot. It's hard to find non-union men. Mr. Allen asks how Albert thinks he should play in an ensemble. Albert says he just plays the way he feels with drive. Generally, the ensemble will play the first chorus, the clarinet man will take it for a chorus, then the trombone, then the piano and ensemble on the last chorus. If you're going real good, you might want to kick it off to an extra chorus. The extra one you really break down. Last night he was playing "Wang Wang Blues" to himself and thought of some things that would have sounded nice with a band. On the last chorus, Albert makes variations on the melody, but he likes to stick to the melody so everyone knows what you're playing. The other day Albert was playing "Tin Roof Blues" when [Percy] "Butz" Massicot, a drummer, walked in. Butz played in the Blue Room with [Leon] Kelner for years.

End of Reel II

\* AA adds that Raymond Burke knows many old tunes. AA discusses mutual effect of drive.

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Albert heard of the Fortmeyers, but he didn't know them very well. "Katz" [Maestri] played with them and is sure to remember them. Albert thinks they might have played after he quit playing. Albert doesn't remember the Rosenmeiers or Tom Early.

In [Alfred] "Pansy" Laine's band, there was "Katz" [Maestri] playing drums, Raymond [Burke] playing clarinet, Pansy playing trumpet, and he thinks [Leonce] Mello playing trombone, but he's not sure. Raymond would know. Albert used to sit in with them now and then on Saturday nights over the river at Thomassie's [sp?] after he quit playing regularly. "Pansy" was a character. He composed the "Pluto Blues." One day he and "Katz" went sailing from Biloxi with two girls and the wind blew them far from shore. "Pansy" started blowing his horn and attracted the attention of the people on shore; he could really blow hard. He didn't like to be called "Pansy." AA refers to him as "old Hook."

Albert knew Sidney Arodin and heard him play when Sharkey [Bonano] opened at Pete Herman's Ringside, but was not friendly with him. Sidney was playing clarinet and Harry [Shields] was playing alto sax in "one of the sweetest bands I hever heard . . . in this town." Chink [Martin] might have been on bass, and Freddie Newman was on piano. It was one of the only Dixieland bands with three part harmony;

it was really tight. They didn't read either. The acoustics at Ringside were perfect; it was all padded. Henry Waelde had a good band in there too with his Melon Pickers. Raymond played with the Melon Pickers.

Albert heard [Leon] "Rap" [Roppolo], the clarinetist, play a few times. He played with Paul Mares, the trumpet man, in the [New Orleans] Rhythm Kings for benefits at the Italian Hall and French Union Hall. Albert thinks one of the Brunies, Merritt maybe, played trombone with them. Albert was quite young then. [See discographics.] Merritt and Abbie Brunies have a band in Biloxi, Mississippi, now. Abbie used to play at the Halfway House [and the Budweiser?]. The [New Orleans] Owls played there too. Pinky [Vidacovich] played with them. Albert thinks the Owls and Sharkey's Kings of Dixieland were the best white bands in New Orleans. Johnny Bayersdorffer had a good combo too when he played at the Tokyo Gardens with [Nunzio] "Pete" [check nickname] Scaglione. Leo Adde played [drums] with them. Tom Brown played trombone with them. Later, when J. B. came back from Chicago, AA heard Johnny again and couldn't understand what had happened to him. He got "willie." He had the lip but not the ideas. Mr. Allen says he made one terrific record of "Waffle Man Call" and "I Wonder Where My Easy Rider's Riding Now."

Another great team was a colored man named Willie Jackson who used to dance and had a tall Negro playing with him at an ice cream pavillion across from Tokyo Gardens. Mr. Allen says Steve Lewis played with Jackson some and he had a partner named Nooky [check sp] Johnson, but AA does not remember the pianist's name.

Albert didn't know George Brunies, but he knew Abbie Brunies. The Halfway House used to be called Chris's. AA thinks it's torn down now. [No. RBA] Abbie had a good band there. That was one of the first nightclubs in New Orleans outside of Bucktown. Frank Bruning had a night club there. At Bucktown they didn't have any spectacular music. The cabarets were different from those they have today. It would cost you \$30 to \$40 to get out of Bucktown. It was more drinking than dancing. Frank Pattengill [sp?] opened one of the first 25¢ clubs around the 1920's. AA asks if RBA remembers the Honeysuckle Inn. [Compare Monk Hazel, Reel ?]

There were a few solo piano players around town. They used to hire just a Negro piano man for those "King cake" parties when they were kids. When they got older, they'd hire a band, sometimes putting the "Mule" on the band, i.e., giving them drinks and not paying them. Punch [Miller] used to drink, but he doesn't anymore. He's over 65. Albert heard him playing one carnival day opposite Dixie's. Al Rose asked Albert to bring his horn, but he didn't see Al. Mr. Allen was



there. "Dixie" [Fasnacht] played a tune or two on her gallery. There was a four piece group with "Slow Drag" [Pavageau] on bass, Manuel Sayles on banjo. He had his horn the other night when he came to hear PRC's band [at Preservation Hall] but didn't sit in as he didn't know the trumpet player [Jack Bachman].

Albert liked to play as many verses as he knew: play the last two bars, then the verse and then the chorus. Today, they often just play the chorus. Stanley Mendelson heard Albert play "Zero" once and thought it was an arrangement but he was just playing the verses too. Albert thinks a standard should be played like it was written; for example, "Zero," "High Society" or "Muskrat Ramble." Mr. Allen says if you're going to play a tune like "Tin Roof Blues" you should play all the parts. AA agrees and adds, "play it like the [New Orleans] Rhythm Kings made it. . . . Give the trombone man the solo that they took. . . . Now if you want to put an added chorus like Sharkey does into it . . . that's all right."

The places on Basin Street and Franklin Street were closed before Albert's time. RBA says Monk [Hazel] had a band at the Bienville Roof at Lee Circle, but Albert doesn't know anything about that. Albert never heard the Original Dixieland Jazz Band with [Nick] LaRocca. Albert thinks when [Papa] Celestin had his band at Tran-china's with [John and Simon] Marrero on bass and guitar, it was a

better band than when everybody was making such a fuss over him. In later years, Albert didn't like the way Papa's band played. At Tranchina's he didn't have a second trumpet. He played a straight horn. Sharkey [Bonano] sounds good playing second trumpet. Leon Prima plays a nice lead trumpet.

Albert played on trucks advertising boxing matches but the band didn't play much at the actual match, just about five tunes. This was between rounds and before the fight. [and after?] Albert didn't like to play on trucks or at parades, but played both a few times. In those days there weren't as many musicians to draw from. A piano player like Charlie [Cure?] might end up as a trumpet man in a parade. Albert remembers playing with Charlie.

Going back to the time Albert played with Hilton ["Nappy"] Lamare, it was a make-up band. It was the Durfee brother's job, Albert thinks. . . . One Durfee brother played alto sax, one Durfee brother played trombone, one played [drums?]. [Lester] Bouchon played clarinet with their band. Hilton's about Albert's age--54. He has a brother Jimmy Lamare who plays sax. RBA adds that [Eddy? Eddie?] Lamare played piano.

End of Reel III

