

ANDY ANDERSON
Reel I [of 2]--Digest--Retype
April 30, 1960

[Additional information & correction by AA,
June 21, 1973.]

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Also present: William Russell, Richard B. Allen,
Ralph Collins.

Andrew "Andy" "Jug" Anderson was born August 10, 1905, in Mandeville, La. He says Bunk [Johnson] used to come there every weekend to play music. AA's father [George. From AA, June 11, 1973] played string bass [with Bunk some?]. AA always wanted to play music. His father, member of a "spasm" band, consisting of violin, guitar and string bass, encouraged him to learn drums, so he could play with them. AA's brother bought a cornet for \$12, but could never play anything on it. AA liked to hear Manny Gabriel [Sr.], who would come over the lake on the boat Camellia every Sunday, play the tune, "Hindustan." AA played that tune the first day he picked up his brother's horn--not perfectly, but recognizable. His first job was playing for a party with a fellow called Black Eagle [Valsand]. He came to New Orleans in 1919, where he took a few lessons to learn how to read from a streetcar motorman named Mr. Paris. Then he began taking a correspondence course from the American School of Music, a little before 1922. The brother of [George] "Pops" Foster, Willie Foster, came to see AA to ask him to play in his band; AA told him he didn't play well enough yet, but that he was going to take some more lessons. [Compare WF, Reel ?] He went to Pinchback Tureaud, then leader of the WPA band; Tureaud was amazed that he had learned to read so well

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from a correspondence course, saying he had been told one could not learn to read music that way. AA went back to Foster and told him he was ready to play in his band. AA joined Foster's band, which had these members: Foster, [banjo]; Ernest Kelly, [trombone]; [Albert Fate? Faidon?] "Little Crump" [~~Frank Crump?~~] on sax; Augustine "Son" "BoBo" Johnson [sax] [Mack, Willie Foster's Son-in-law, d] Then Frank Jacquet, trombonist and leader of the band playing on the Pelican, got AA to join that band, and AA stayed there about 3 years. Alma Lillie Mae Hubbard, who had been in the play, "The Green Pastures," [on Sunday nights when in town] sang with the band; as the band read, she would buy almost any kind of number [special arrangements, not stocks] for them to play, including "Head-low" [sp?], "Listonia" [check sp] which was their theme song and "Louisiana Bobo." AA says that the more-popular bands would "raid" the younger bands to keep them from getting very popular and taking away some of their work. Professor Desdumes who taught at New Orleans University (now Dillard), "raided" the Jacquet band, taking Alvin Alcorn [trumpet], "Jim Little" [Sidney Brown], tuba, and the leader, Jacquet, trombone. AA [assuming the leadership] replaced them, respectively, with Leo Dejan, Boise Gray [sp?], tuba (was also a good trumpet player, and an old "show" [played with shows] man, and Sunny Henry. Later the band lost Son Johnson, who was playing 1st sax, and a piano player, replaced by the late Emily Hymes, Camilla Todd replaced

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Emily Hymes. Camilla is the sister of Clarence "Steeplehead" (because of the shape of his head) Todd, pianist, who went to Chicago. WR says he thinks Clarence Todd sang on some recordings by a Clarence Williams group. AA goes on to say that he replaced Alvin Alcorn with Louis Dumaine [this is not consistent--see above, Leo De-
[AA confirmed Louis D as first, then replaced by Dejan. RBA, June 21, 1973] jan], who told AA he would make a first-class trumpet player of him; after Dumaine's first job with the band, however, he told AA he was going to get AA to give him lessons instead. AA said he did not feel that way about it, but Dumaine said AA should be giving him lessons. Camilla Todd also praised AA's playing, saying she had no idea he could play so well. AA says he and Camilla had had a Dixieland band previously, with Willie Bontemps [probably six-string; singer
[banjo]], AA's cousin Earl Foster, drums, Gus Metcalf, trombone, AA, trumpet and Camilla, piano. AA says that once they each made \$90, although their salaries were \$15; they played a job at the Colonial Country Club, where a doctor, who wanted to play drums in spite of the objections of the other members, kept passing ten-dollar bills to the drummer to let him play. At the next Colonial CC job, all the band members called to the doctor, who said, "All of you can go to hell; I'm not drinking tonight."

AA went from the Pelican job into [John] Handy's band, playing at the taxi dance hall, La Veeda; others in the band were Handy, alto sax, Alfred [Williams], drums, Benny Turner, piano, Robert Hall, tenor

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sax and Emmanuel Sayles, banjo. AA was with them a year or so. One Monday, pay day, the place was locked, and the band discovered that they were not going to be paid for the previous week. AA left Handy and his Louisiana Shakers (Alvin Alcorn being in the band) and went into the Alamo Dance Hall, Canal and Burgundy, where he played for about 4 years. The owner of the Alamo, Mr. Burke then got the La Veeda, where AA began playing. Gene Hall came to town, and got AA to go with him into the Fern Dance Hall, next door to the La Veeda; the Fern was then the Budweiser, but after some fight the Budweiser [Anheuser-Busch] people withdrew their interest, and the place became the Fern again. AA says the place really did a lot of business. Then AA went into the Entertainers Cabaret, on Franklin Street [now Crozat], with Bill O'Connors and his Riffers; while there, they began to broadcast over WWL on Monday nights. Earl Williams was the vocalist; AA says he really liked the first number Williams sang, "Moonglow." About a week or two before the Entertainers closed, AA went with "Papa" Celestin, replacing the late Herman Franklin, who went with Joe Oliver. RBA adds that he played with Jimmy Gunn and wrote "To My Levee Home" [which Gunn recorded]. AA says that around New Orleans then, one was considered as really going somewhere when he joined Celestin's band; AA says the band was a very good one. He was with Celestin from 1934 to 1941. He then returned to the Fern Dance

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Hall for a few months, until he was drafted into the Army. He played his trumpet on the train to the reception center, making an impression on some of the officers. The reception center officers wanted to keep him there, for his playing, but could not. AA says the numbers, "This Love of Mine" and "You Made Me Love You" were popular at the time. AA also played "My Buddy" and "St. Louis Blues" and other requests from men being shipped out. Once AA was put on KP; an officer asked where he was, "that fellow with the trumpet." The officer had AA replaced on KP, putting him in a small office where the draftees' civilian clothes were shipped back home, and telling him to work there, but to play him a tune once in a while. AA was eventually shipped to Eglin Field, Florida. There was a white band there, but nothing in his [colored] outfit. He and Wallace Wilson, a Chicagoan who had played with Buddy Johnson, got a seven-piece band together. Sometime after that, a Colonel Brent called the band into his office, where he told them he wanted the group to arrange and play a song [written by ^{Gen. "Hap" Arnold or his wife} the next day] for General ["Hap"] Arnold, who would be there for a review. The band played the song, "Engineers Fight Song," which was well-received by Arnold. Col. Brent told the band he would not forget them; in two weeks, they had been authorized to form the 727th AAF Band. The white band was thereupon shipped out. AA says there was a rule that a band

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had to be organized a year before being shipped out, which was what kept his group in the U. S. AA says he used to play "Reveille" for the camp, also, and would then play "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," to which the troops would agree, and then "[On The] Sunny Side of the Street," to cheer them up. AA was shipped to Virginia, where he was in a six-piece Special Services band. The band could play a tune even if only one member knew it. The troops, white and Negro, were amazed at this. AA explained that it was the way we do down in New Orleans. Once his tent caught fire while he was at target practice; among the things burned was his King trumpet. Officers and men contributed to a "kitty" to buy him a new horn, but an officer who took him to get it bought it himself, telling AA to use the donation to take a furlough. AA had a letter of recommendation from the officers, in appreciation of the morale-building qualities of his playing, but envious fellow soldiers destroyed it.

RBA asks AA to name some of his favorite trumpet players when he was growing up. AA names Pete Locaze^[check sp], Kid Punch [Miller] and Kid Rena. He says Bunk Johnson's coming to his hometown many weekends when AA was young provided his inspiration to play trumpet. AA says Bunk seemed to put his "whole heart and soul and mind" into each note, and, another thing, he could blow loud and soft. AA knew Tommy Ladnier, and says he was surprised when he was told Ladnier had

become one of the greatest blues players. AA says Bunk was "mischievous," and that he especially was hard on drummers when he was drinking. [Compare his feud with Baby Dodds.] AA mentions Klebert, a drummer, brother of Ernie Cagnolatti. AA mentions again that his own father played with his trio at Jackson Park [Mandeville]; he says the colored dances used to go all night, or until everything had been sold, as that was where the band made most of its money. AA says Bunk had a sister, Bertha Jackson, living about 60 feet from the Andersons' home. Bertha and her husband would have a fight every Saturday night, breaking up all the furniture, etc.; they would go buy new things every Monday.

AA, at RBA's request, tells of the fight[s] between "Big" [Willie] Cornish, about 7 feet tall, and [Clarence] "Little Dad" [Vincent], about 3 feet tall. When they would get tight, they liked to fight each other; Dad would be hitting Cornish, but when Cornish would try to hit Dad, he would run between Cornish's legs. AA says Cornish would just be playing, anyway. AA mentions Cornelius [a guitarist], but does not elaborate.

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AA repeats the story of [Clarence] "Little Dad" [Vincent] and [Willie] Cornish, telling of their mock fights and of Dad's running between Cornish's legs when Cornish would strike at him. AA says Octave Crosby told him about the time Crosby and Dad went to Mexico with a band.

AA says he played with another band he had neglected to mention, [This was after the Celestin band--see Anderson folder, notes by RBA.], that of A. J. Piron, playing on the steamer J. S., and sometimes on the President, when the former got into St. Louis. Besides AA on trumpet, in the band were Joe Philips [tp]; Eddie Pierson, tb; Fats Pichon, p, and most of the conducting; Emmanuel Sayles, g; the late Booker ^{Double Bb Tuba} Washington [A]; Arthur Derbigny [a. sax]; probably [Oscar] Rouzon, [a. sax]; Bill Casimir, t. sax; Louis Barbarin, d. AA replaced Leo Dejan. AA says the captain of the J. S. [one of the Streckfuses] didn't like his playing at first as the captain was used to L. D.'s style. He goes on to say that Joe Philips encouraged him to stay, telling him if his uniform and trumpet was waiting at Memphis he was "in." His uniform was there, so he went on with the band as far as Davenport, Iowa, where he decided he wanted to leave, not liking the work on the boat very much, as sometimes the band would play for picnics from 8 AM [until late afternoon], and then have to play the night dance. AA was to stay two more weeks after he gave notice,

thereby gaining money for his return to New Orleans; [Willie] Pajaud, his replacement, did not come in that time, so Philips had to play 1st trumpet. AA was asked to talk with the captain, who told him he had made a mistake in judgment when he had not liked his playing at first, that he had fired Louis Armstrong from the boat, and everyone knew how great Louis had become. AA explained that he was not angry at anything, that he had an interest in [Celestin's] Tuxedo Band which he did not want to lose by staying away too long; so he left, but went to Chicago. His uncle offered to put him up for a month, until he found something or not. [Perhaps he stayed--not clear] AA came back to New Orleans, where he began working on the boat, Camellia, making trips to Mandeville. In the band, besides AA on trumpet, were Reuben Hughes, [as]; Reuben McClendon, [banjo];

Bob Davis, drums; Sadie Goodson, piano.

AA is asked to tell about Cornelius [Tillman?]. AA says Cornelius got into an argument with "Wallpaper", a bassist; Cornelius hit the man with his guitar, breaking the body of the guitar and imprisoning the man's head in the shell. Then Cornelius could pull him along.

AA says Buddy Petit had a style similar to that of Louis Armstrong, but he did not play high. Petit had a very pretty tone, and could play second parts "by head." AA demonstrates by scatting "Baby Face," Kid Rena was another sweet [meaning with good tone, perhaps] trumpet

player, who played quite high. "Kid Punch" [Miller] had a different style, being what AA calls a "chord man." Bunk [Johnson] also played his own style. AA says Petit was a master of the diminished chord, adding that he himself uses them on occasion, as does Alvin Alcorn. Thomas Jefferson plays diminished chords a lot, and well. When he was with Celestin's band, the saxes did not use diminished chords often. Oliver Alcorn used them sometimes; Clarence Hall, seldom.

In response to WR's question, AA says Isidore Fritz (from over the lake) was one of the greatest jazz clarinetists around, that he couldn't read anything, but he could play harmony to anything, and play anything anyone else could. WR says George Lewis talks about him, and AA says Lewis got his style from Fritz. Fritz had the Independent Band, which was the band Bunk played with over the lake. Louis Fritz, a brother, played trombone; their father, Joe Fritz, played bass; Bunk, trumpet; Leon Laurent [sp?], guitar; Ralph Laurent [sp?], violin; the late Klebert (Ernie Cagnolatti's ^{connect - still alive 1985} brother) drums. The band worked Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Buddy Petit would play in the band sometime, and would fill his playing schedule up by playing the neighboring towns on the other nights.

The Independent Band played at Voutran's [sp?] on Mandeville beach. [Also at Jackson Park.]

AA says he will go anywhere he can be happy and play his horn, and make a living.

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AA says he has played and recorded [one] LP with the Young Tuxedo Brass Band, and has made records with George Lewis. He went to a jazz festival in Monterrey, California last year, where some of the notables were Coleman Hawkins, Woody Herman, Roy Eldridge, Earl Hines, Sarah Vaughn, Lizzie Miles and Chris Barbarin [i.e., Barber].

End of Reel II

