

ARCHIE MARTIN
I [of 2]--Digest--Retyped
September 3, 1960

Also present: Richard B. Allen,
Laurena Diggs, Carrie Boote

[According to Carrie Boote on August 3, 1966, AM is dead. RBA]

Archie Martin was born March 26, probably in 1896 at Second and Franklin [streets--the latter is now Loyola Street at the intersection mentioned--PRC] in New Orleans. The first music he remembers hearing was for a dance called "Jack Johnson" (in honor of heavyweight champion of that era), played by Kid Ory and his band, which included Joe Oliver [cornet]. [JJ won the title in 1908 and lost it in 1915.] "The Bear" was another dance of the same period. AM mentions the tunes "It's A Long Way to Tipperary" and "The Blue Danube." Another dance was the "Eagle Rock", popular about 1914-15. "Careless Love" was a tune which "came out" around the same time. [Compare folksong books. RBA] Bands operating at the time, besides Kid Ory's band, were [Oscar "Papa"] Celestin's Tuxedo Band, the Excelsior Brass Band, Jack Carey's band, and Punch [Miller]'s band. Punch played a lot of advertising jobs on wagons then, for dances at various halls around the city. Buddy Petit's band was also playing. Some of the bands which played at the Bulls's Club [Eighth near Danneel] were Punch Miller's, Jack Carey's, the Tuxedo, the Excelsior; Louis Levine, cornet and clarinet, also played there. [Could this be Louis Dumaine, the trumpet player?RBA.] [John] Robichaux and his band also played there. Cab Calloway and his band played there one time. Sometimes there would be three bands playing the Bulls's at the same time; there would be one in each of two yards and one in the central hall itself. AM was around fifteen or seventeen years old when the "Jack Johnson" [see above] came out.

RBA makes reference to a cornet player [Buddy Bolden] who lost his mind, but AM can't recall his name.

Some bands which played at Lincoln Park: Punch Miller, the Original Tuxedo, and the Excelsior Brass Band. The Original Tuxedo had most of the work there. AM says he was too young to go to Lincoln Park when he began going; activities at the park included dancing, baseball, picnics and skating. There were also many balloon ascents, especially on holidays; AM remembers Buddy Bottley, a balloonist; AM was small when Bottley was performing. A preacher named Sunshine Money [Reverend Casmir L. Des Londe (check spelling)], who took an airplane ride, is mentioned.

RBA mentions Frankie Duson, trombonist and leader of the Eagle Band. AM remembers the Silver Leaf Band; RBA mentions talking to Hypolite Charles, cornetist with the Silver Leaf Band.

The Jazz band which had the best beat for dancing in the old times was the Ory and Oliver band; that band was followed [in rank?] by Buddy Petit, Jack Carey, and Punch Miller. "The next heavy [i.e., reading] band was the Tuxedos; well, they played all kind of music, you understand--good music, sweet music, bad music [i.e., evil?RBA]--all kinds." The Ory and Oliver band was better for dancing because they played more jazz. That band had a regular Wednesday and Saturday night job at the Royal Garden. Punch also played there. Louis Armstrong, Johnny Dodds and "Black Benny" [Williams], the latter a drummer, also played with the Ory and Oliver band. AM demonstrates

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the usual tempo the Ory-Oliver band played for dancing [about one-hundred twenty beats per minute--PRC]. One fast dance was the "Winter Garden strut", named for the so-named local dance hall. AM talks about other dances, including the "Perdido Street strut", which was also a number made up by a band; the "shim-me-sha-wabble" was another popular dance. AM talks about the "eagle rock", another dance. Other dances named for animals were the "chicken trot", the "turkey trot", the "fox trot" and the "bear." Other dances were called "the sheik" and the "vampire." The "shimmy" and the "Charleston" came out at the same time about 1918 or 1920.

AM mentions some tunes, including "The Thirteenth Street Rag" and "[Oh,] Didn't He Ramble", and says it was composed by a great cornet player named Buddy Bolden [Compare copyright. RBA]. Bolden went crazy while playing a parade.

AM says people started dancing to phonograph records about 1910; his mother had one; he was ten or eleven years old at the time. Paul Whitman [no doubt Whiteman]'s band was featured on a lot of those early records. Louis Prima's band wasn't featured until sometime later. Early records were mostly of orchestras, operatic works, and vaudeville.

Most of the minstrel shows which played at the Tulane Theater had their own bands playing for the pre-show parades; AM doesn't know what bands were used inside the theaters.

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[Neil?] O'Brien participated in minstrel parades which advertised shows at the Tulane [Theater]. Al Jolson sang at the Tulane. AM knew Butterbeans and Susie; they sang, danced and told jokes; they played at the Lyric [Theater], which later became the Palace [Theater]. Butterbeans and Susie also played at tent shows; a lot of tent shows set up in the space now occupied by the Flint-Goodridge Hospital.

[Abbey] "Chinee" [Foster] was a top-flight drummer; he worked at the Palace Theater. "Red Happy" [Bolton], another fine drummer, also worked there at one time. RBA mentions [Christopher] "Black Happy" [Goldston], who plays with the Eureka [Brass Band], and says there were three "Happy's" here, the other being "Brown Happy" [Matthews]. "Black Benny" [Williams] played drums with [Kid] Ory's band. "Black Happy" played with the Excelsior [Brass Band] also, says AM.

Ma Rainey used to sing in tent shows at Toledano and Freret [streets, location of Flint-Goodridge Hospital]; she never used a megaphone for singing, as she was powerful enough to project without one. AM remembers Bessie Smith; he heard her in person; he knows about the other Smith women singers, but he never heard them. Ma Rainey's voice was louder, and she danced more; Bessie Smith was a better singer. RBA mentions a well-known lyrics which Ma Rainey featured; it was called "If You Don't Believe I Love You, Look What A Fool I've Been." Ma Rainey did a dance, or step, called "fallin'

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off the log." Some other dances were called "the frog", the "deer trot", and the "Charleston." All the bands could play the tunes and rhythms required for the various dances.

AM says Chris Kelly added parts to "Careless Love." AM mentions "When The Saints Go Marching In." He mentions "Bourbon Street Strut", [i.e., Bourbon Street Parade] which is played by brass bands now. There were "Basin Street Blues" and "Basin Street Strut." "Three O'clock in the Morning Blues" was slow.

AM, an Elk, is caretaker of the Elks's [clubhouse] now.

AM says Ace Watson was the best grand marshal "they" ever had. Johnny Salisbury [spelling?] was next best; Alexander was next in line. The best grand marshals are dignified; they do not dance and shake, as do the lesser grand marshals. A marshal's job is to see that his group does the right things in the procession. Watson's second marshal was old man Alexander, who is now dead; the second marshal directs the band, except for a funeral, when the band assembles behind Ace Watson; during a parade, however, Ace Watson leads the members of his club. The band is always at the head of the procession. The grand marshal blows a whistle to signal that music is to cease because the procession is about to pass a church; the marshal also signals the band to begin playing again.

Clubs of which AM has been a member: Tishomingo, Eclipse Aid and Pleasure Club, Frogs (located at National Park, Willow and Third

[streets]. The Tishomingo Club was located at First and Rampart [streets].

Some clubs never used music at funerals. The clubs which used music furnished it only if the family requested it.

RBA says the Inseperable Friends, of which Noah Cook is a member, is going down.

Carrie Boote says the San Jacinto Club must have been one of the richest clubs. The club has collapsed since the leaders absconded with the treasury funds. The clubhouse building has been sold. CB and AM say the same thing happened to the Bulls. AM thinks Dooky Chase and others have taken over the San Jacinto [club or clubhouse?]. RBA says a club formed at Johnny Lala's Big Twenty-five [saloon] of sporting men in the District was broken up when one of the officers absconded.

AM mentions the Million Dollar Dolls and the Baby Dolls organizations.

AM mentions [dance] halls he frequented; some were the Economy Hall, which was downtown; the Royal Garden, which was the same as the Winter Garden, located at the downtown river corner of Rampart and Gravier. RBA asks about a club identified as the Pelican by AM; it was across the street from the Astoria. Fabacher, who owned the Pelican, also owned the Royal Garden; the original name was Royal Garden; it was called Winter Garden later because it was a good place to go in the winter; the Pythian Temple roof garden was closed during

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the winter as it was too cold. The bands which played on the roof garden of the Pythian Temple were those of [Sidney] Desvigne and Joe Robichaux; they worked for the house; some clubs might hire other bands to play there for their private functions, but those two bands were regular house bands. All the bands, including Buddy Petit's, played at the Sans Souci [Club], which was on [old] Howard Street [now LaSalle], next to the present-day Dew Drop [Inn] night club. Another place was the Palm Garden, which was on Rampart between Sixth and Seventh [streets]; various bands played there, but Punch [Miller] and Buddy Petit were there most frequently. The place was for rent to various organizations to hold their dances, etc., and they hired the bands themselves. Many bands, including Kid Ory's and the Eureka Band [!RBA.], played at the Economy Hall and at Cooperators Hall. No dark people could go into the Francs Amis hall; it was restricted to Creoles [i.e., Creoles of color].

End of Reel II

