

ANDREW MORGAN
 I [of 2]--Digest--Retyped
 July 4, 1961

Also present: William Russell

Andrew Morgan was born "around" Pensacola, Florida, March 13, 1901, but he was reared in New Orleans. The Morgan brothers, in order of birth, were: Sam Morgan [deceased]; Robert Morgan (deceased); Isaiah Morgan; Andrew Morgan; Albert Morgan (much younger than AM); Herbert Morgan (who didn't play music). AM's father was a "songster"; he sang jubilee songs, in the Baptist church; AM's mother also sang in the Baptist church, where she was a steward sister. Isaiah, Sam and Robert were born in Louisiana; AM thinks there were only one or two of the brothers not born in that state. AM says his father was a man who bled trees [for turpentine?], did timber work, and traveled around [in connection with that work].

Sam Morgan had a brass band when AM was quite small; it was the Magnolia Band, which was in New Orleans. Some members: Sam, trumpet; Joe Watson, clarinet; Alfred Williams, drummer; [Eddie] " 'Ti'-Boy" [Gilmore], bass; Yank Johnson, trombone. [Compare personnel of SM's dance band. RBA] The band was playing around 1918, at various places in the city, including West End. Talk of West End and Milneburg; the train, "Smoky Mary", is mentioned; Manuel ['s?] Pavillion is mentioned. Buddy Petit and Louis Armstrong were around at the time.

AM mentions some brass bands which were playing in the city then [the time around 1918]: the Excelsior, the Tuxedo (led by Papa Celestin), the Imperial and the Silver Leaf.

Bunk Johnson was around during this time. AM remembers that Manuel Perez, trumpet and Eddie Jackson, sousaphone, played in those bands, but he doesn't specify which ones. The Eureka Brass Band came up later; some members: Willie Wilson, trumpet [and leader]; Willie Weber [spelling?], trumpet; Jack August, saxophone; AM, E-flat clarinet; [Joseph] Red [Clark] (later manager [and sousaphone player] of the Eureka), trombone.

AM was about twenty-two years old, and married, when he began playing music; Isaiah Morgan took up cornet, which encouraged AM to take up clarinet. He bought his first clarinet from clarinetist Albert Nicholas, who sometimes played with Sam Morgan. AM took lessons from [Paul] Chaligny, from Pinch-back Tureaud (who had a brass band, and was [at one time] in charge of the W. P. A. Band), and a few (on tenor saxophone) from Davey Jones. AM began playing in little bands. His first band (if he is not mistaken) was the Imperial; some members: Jack August, alto saxophone; AM, clarinet; Willie Weber, trumpet; Dr. [Leonard] Bechet, trombone; Hudson, bass. Arthur Derbigny, trumpet, came into the band later; others: AM; Whitney Arceneaux; Dr. Bechet. AM can't remember who the drummer was, but he remembers that Kid Howard, then a drummer, joined them later. AM then joined the band of his brother, Isaiah; it was called Young Morgan's Band, which later had Sam Morgan join it [at which time it became Sam Morgan's Band]; some members of the Young Morgan: Jim Robinson [trombone]; Sidney Brown, bass;

ANDREW MORGAN
I [of 2]--Digest--Retyped
July 4, 1961

3

Johnny Dave, banjo; (AM thinks) Rudolph Beaulieu, drums (WR says Beaulieu has been sick, having had a stroke some time ago, but is better and may be able to begin playing again). AM replaced Sam Robinson, brother of Jim Robinson. AM remained in that band for a few years; he became a member of Sam Morgan's Band when Sam, too ill to keep up his own band, joined the Young Morgan and took over as leader. Some members: Sam Morgan, [first] trumpet; Isaiah Morgan, second trumpet; Jim Robinson; Sidney Brown; Johnny Dave; Rudolph Beaulieu, replaced by Nolan "Shine" Williams (who made the records with the band), [Compare below, p.5] replaced by Roy Evans, drums. Evans remained with the band until Sam Morgan gave up playing and died; Evans died shortly after Sam's death. When the Morgan band broke up, AM played with various bands around the city; among them: Kid Howard; George Williams, the drummer.

Talk of AM's lessons with Chaligny: used Otto Langey method, charged fifty cents per lesson (standard price in New Orleans at the time), had two lessons per week. Joe Watson had given AM lessons on clarinet, not charging him; Tureaud and Jones charged fifty cents. AM adds that Earl Fouché, a wonderful saxophone player who worked in the Sam Morgan band (WR says Harold Dejan [saxophone] talks about Fouché), gave AM a lot of ideas about playing tenor saxophone; Fouché and AM played duets together. [Joseph] Brother Cornbread [Thomas]

ANDREW MORGAN
I [of 2]--Digest--Retyped
July 4, 1961

studied with Chaligny at the same time as AM. Chaligny had a brass band made up of his students; if a band leader was not able to play the advertising for the dance he was to play Sunday or Monday night, he would get Chaligny to do the advertising with his band; about thirty of Chaligny's students would ride around the city on a truck, playing the advertising job.

WR mentions the brass band at St. Katherine's Hall; it was not that of Chaligny.

AM mentions the W.P.A. Band, which consisted of about one hundred-nineteen pieces when he was in it; he was in that band until it was cut down to nineteen pieces. The band rehearsed at the Tulane Club, and also at the Fifth Ward Club (Dumaine near Chartres Street), which was an athletic club.

Continuing talk of his career: AM played with Billie and De De [Pierce]; with Ernest Rogers. The time was the same as the W.P.A. Band's existence. AM played a job with Bunk Johnson and George Lewis; WR remembers it, says it was at Violet (WR says Bunk wanted to use AM on clarinet in New York.) [See Jazzways] Continuing: AM worked on Bourbon Street, with Bill Matthews; AM continues to work with Matthews on spot jobs. WR remembers hearing AM at the Paddock [on Bourbon Street]; AM says he worked that place with Matthews, with Thomas Jefferson, and with Freddie Kohlman. They [the Kohlman band] left the Paddock to go into the Mardi Gras, where he remained

about six weeks; AM also worked at the Mardi Gras with Kid Howard, on Tuesday nights. AM played with Kid Thomas's band from 1936 until about 1940 or 1942; some others in that band: Elton [Theodore, banjo? Kid Thomas, reel ?] Joe James, [piano]; Joseph "Kid Twat" Butler [bass]. The band worked a lot of spot jobs in the country, along the Bayou [Lafourche], and as far down as Grand Isle.

Talk of clubs and halls in Algiers, McDonoghville, and Gretna; AM remembers the Elks meeting at the Eagle Eye Club; Young Men of Algiers, Young Men of McDonoghville, Wolves.

Sam Morgan used the slapstick in his band. The band was very popular. AM thinks the recordings of the band were made in the old Godchaux Building, on Canal Street in New Orleans, in about 1926 or 1927. [Compare discographies]. Walter Decou was the pianist on one or two of the records; [Xavier] "Tink" [Baptiste] was pianist on others. AM thinks Roy Evans was the drummer on the records [previously said Williams was the drummer on the records. See above, p. 3].

AM thinks the name of the hall on Elmira Street in Algiers was Casino's; he played several dances there with Kid Thomas. He says the people to ask about such things are Peter Bocage, Manuel Manetta and Kid Thomas. He himself has lived in Algiers only since 1953; he previously lived at 919 St. Peter Street in New Orleans.

Drummers used to use slapsticks; Sam Morgan began using it in his band because he had been very sick, and using the slapstick would make it easier on him, as well as helping the band. AM says [William] "Bebé" Ridgley used the slapstick, too, when he was trombone. WR says Kid Thomas and Emanuel Paul use the slapstick now; AM remembers that Thomas used the slapstick when he played with him. The Morgan Band played at the Astoria (on Rampart Street) every Sunday night; they also played at the San Jacinto Club, Economy Hall, Cooperators Hall and at the Sans Souci Hall.

End of Reel I

ANDREW MORGAN
II[of 2]--Digest--Retyped
July 4, 1961

7

Also present: William Russell

[The Sam Morgan Band] played at Sans Souci Hall (which did not front on the street), and at the Bulls Club. The band played in the summer at the One Hundred Men's Pavillion, in Bay St. Louis [Mississippi], and at the Dixie Theater, Pass Christian [Mississippi], for dances. They also played at a park in Gulfport, for Young's [?]. The Dixie Theater was a movie theater. WR says George Guesnon has laughed when remembering some of the percentage dates the band played, some of which didn't bring them any money; the financial flops were called "hams." AM says Guesnon played with the band when Johnny Dave couldn't get off from his [day] job. The band played in Biloxi; AM thinks it was at the Odd Fellows's Hall. They also played at a park on the back bay in Biloxi. They also played at a place called the Palace, Main and Division [streets] in Biloxi; Earl Fouché was still with the band. They also played in Mobile [Alabama], at Gomez Auditorium, and at the Battle House.

More talk about halls in Algiers, Gretna. Turtleback Hall is mentioned.

The band also played in Prichard, Alabama, and in Pensacola, Florida. (WR mentions that Sadie Goodson and her sister, Billie Pierce [wife of DeDe Pierce], came from Pensacola. AM met Sadie when she played with Papa Celestin in New Orleans.) The Sam Morgan Band played railroad excursions to Chicago, where they played at Warwick Hall. They also played a party

ANDREW MORGAN
II [of 2]--Digest--Retyped
July 4, 1961

8

Also present: William Russell

for the "Two Black Dagoes." They played for Kid Ory, at Palm Beach, Indiana. They were around Chicago about eight days. The next trip AM took to Chicago was with Kid Howard's band, in 1929 or 1930. Punch Miller was playing at a Chinese place [in Chicago]; AM sat in; a man named [Fred? RBA] Howard was playing tenor saxophone; Newell was on drums. AM's trip with Howard was the first one Howard made to Chicago; Guy Kelly went with the band, but did not return to New Orleans.

No jazz band had recorded hymns before the Sam Morgan Band did it; the Morgan band didn't play hymns until the recording session; they were asked by recording officials to record the hymns. The other numbers on the sessions were composed by Sam Morgan. No bands played hymns then; AM thinks the brass bands played mostly marches then. AM thinks Louis Armstrong was the first to record "When The Saints Go Marching In." Old-time street bands played marches and [secular] songs, but not hymns. The Morgan bandmen were paid for recording, and royalties were paid later to Sam [as composer or to be split with sidemen or?]

AM tells how the [Negro musicians] union started in New Orleans: Four bands played on the steamer Capitol. The Morgan band were members of the union in Mobile. The other bands on the boat were: Fate Marable, Dave Perkins and [later?] Papa Celestin. The Morgan band played on the boat Sunday [afternoons],

and would have another date in the city some night during the week. Celestin was not in the union, so his band joined the Mobile local (there was no colored local in New Orleans at the time) in order to be able to play on the boat, on which only union bands could play. Afterward, a local was organized in New Orleans. Celestin was president of the local at a later date. Morgan's band later was forced to join the New Orleans local also. (WR says Bunk Johnson talks of a musicians's union in New Orleans during the 1890's; [John] Robichaux was an official; WR says it was not American Federation [of Musicians], but probably just a local local.) AM says the local here was organized about 1926-27. That later local broke up sometime later (AM's brother, Isaiah Morgan, got some money from it at the time, but AM didn't, as he had been dropped from the roll), and another local was formed. WR mentions the current president, Louis Cottrell [Jr.]. AM says [William] Houston was president at one time.

Some of AM's favorite musicians from the earlier times: Sidney Bechet (AM heard him play advertising jobs); Jack Carey; Buddy Petit; Kid Rena; AM's brother, Sam Morgan; Punch Miller, who had a wonderful clarinet player named Georgie Boyd; Joe Watson (clarinet). Sam Morgan played straight trumpet (melody) on the recordings; Isaiah Morgan took the hot solos. Sam's band was so popular because of the good dance tempo they played.

Sam Morgan's widow is still alive. Sam, who died around Mardi Gras time in New Orleans in 1934, was about seven or eight years older than AM. Sam had a brass band early in his career; it was named the Magnolia Band. The Morgan family lived in New Orleans but they did live in Plaquemines Parish for a while (where [Kid] Howard is from). In his early days, Sam played cornet. Kid Howard and his [brass] band played for his funeral. AM says someone put in the newspaper that Sam had requested that "The Music Goes Round And Round" be played for his funeral; the statement was later retracted. Sam was a good reader. In his early career, he used six pieces in the band; later, his band would be from eight to ten pieces. The band used some stock arrangements, and some specials ^{made} from piano scores.

End of Reel II