

Burke Stevenson was born in Plaquemine[s Parish], La. [Not Plaquemine, a town in Louisiana.] on April 14, 1899. His father was a cornetist in a brass band. Alec Tayloy, Ben Cole, William Stevenson (an uncle), and his father, Earl Stevenson [or Burl?], played in the band. Earl [or Burl?] Stevenson died during World War I at age forty-four [?]. WR leads BS into saying that he was about fifteen when his father died. [He could have been nineteen--RBA, April 30, 1970.]

Jim Humphrey taught a band at Deer Range which is in Plaquemines Parish. [Charlie Love came from Plaquemine, the town--RBA.] When BS was a boy, he wanted to play music. When BS was eighteen years old, he registered for the draft. Peace came and he was not drafted. He was taught trumpet by Chris Kelly, who had come out of the service. Later he played parades with Chris Kelly. Percy Humphrey and BS played with Chris Kelly about 1922 in the Zulu Parade. Chris Kelly sent BS on jobs. The first song Chris Kelly taught him was "Margie," then "Hold Me." [Check publication dates of sheet music and records.] Chris Kelly took BS everywhere.

BS bought his first trumpet from the Dugan[sp?] Music Store on Canal Street. When he was around twenty-one years old he made up his own band. He had Sammy Williams, trombone, [Elvis?] Brown, clarinet; Oliver [?], banjo; George "Mooker" Jones, drums, and Tom Harris, bass. His next band had Hosey, [i.e., Hosea?] Harris, bass, who is now in California; [?] LaCroix, second trumpet; Jesse Charles, clarinet; Charlie Hamilton, piano; Joe ["Gossoon"?] Phillips, guitar. It was based in McComb, Mississippi, and they traveled throughout Mississippi. BS went back to New Orleans, and formed a band with

George Lewis during "WPA times". It also had Edgar Moseley, drums, Billie [Pierce], piano; BS, trumpet, and they played at the Kingfish, on Decatur and St. Philip Streets. [BS does not know Billie Pierce's last name.] Before that he played in the WPA band, with [Djalma?] Ganier, Wilbert Tillman, sax; and Adolphe Alexander [,Jr.?]. [BS was one of the first men in the band?] After it grew and grew, there were around one hundred and some odd men in the band. At first the WPA band played in an old garage on Claiborne Street [sic]. The WPA band rehearsed at Patorno's place, Dumaine and Decatur Streets, during the days, and BS played at the Kingfish at nights. He was paid \$1.25 for playing from eight to three or five in the morning. The WPA band members took outside jobs. Next he started playing second trumpet with Kid Rena. They opened the Gypsy Tea Room at St. Ann and Villere Streets. Bassists were scarce then. Narvin Kimball helped BS learn bass around 1936, so BS became a bass player.

Next, BS played with Kid Howard, then Isaiah Morgan, then Kid Thomas for fifteen or sixteen years. [Cf. photos of KTV band--RBA, April 30, 1970.] Kid Rena's band had Clarence Tisdale, guitar; Earl Barnes, alto sax (now tenor saxophonist); (young) Joe Rena, drums; Benny Turner, piano; BS trumpet and bass; and an unremembered trombonist.

BS does not remember Bunk Johnson. He heard Bunk on records and heard talk of him.

BS heard Manuel Perez often on [Pythian Temple] Roof Garden and on parades. MP was a powerful trumpet player.

King Oliver took Louis Armstrong on parades during World War I when Louis Armstrong was in short pants. Talk about the raid at the Royal Garden on Rampart Street. A lot of people jumped out the window, "a lot of them broke their legs and things." King Oliver then left town. [Cf. Stella Oliver, reel ? and others.] Louis Armstrong then took over the band. It had Kid Ory, [actually his band], Johnny Dodds, Johnny St. Cyr, banjo [cf. other interviews], Bob Lyons, bass, and Red Happy Bolton, drums. Red Happy Bolton "went in the show" [Lyric Theater with John Robichaux Orchestra?--RBA, April 30, 1970?], and he was replaced by Mac [Lacey], who died. BS thinks Mac Lacey was replaced by "Little" Roy [Evans?], who died too.

WR asks if Manuel Manetta was in the band with Oliver. BS replies that Manetta was and that BS thinks he was playing piano. [Cf. Manuel Manetta & Kid Ory interviews; also Ory-Manetta visit.]

BS played with Punch Miller's band. It had Jack Carey, trombone; BS, trumpet; Eddie Morris, trombone; Georgie Boyd, clarinet; Walter Preston, [banjo]; [Punch Miller, tp]; it was a six-piece band. [Cf. other sources on Jack Carey's and Punch Miller's bands.] BS says that Punch had fast fingering [on trumpet]. BS also played with Lee Collins in parades; this was a made-up band. Lee Collins played Buddy Petit style. BS thinks that Petit taught Collins, judging from Collins' style. Buddy Petit was "one of the best" second trumpet players "around here." BS never played with Buddy Petit, but did play with Sam Morgan and Isaiah Morgan. Sam Morgan had his own band. When he became paralyzed Isaiah Morgan took over Sam's band. Isaiah Morgan also had his own band at one time.

BS had his own band, called Kid Stevenson's band, with Sammy Williams, George Jones, [the drummer] [see above].

Chris Kelly taught BS in New Orleans [after World War I.]. BS was

too small to play when he lived in Deer Range. He did not play until he came to New Orleans. He was fourteen or fifteen years old then. The Deer Range Brass Band was pretty good; it played for dances and parades. On holidays, if they did not have enough bands in the city, they would hire them out of the country. This band played "very few ragtime songs." They played largely marches, quadrilles, schottisches, waltzes, etc. There were many people then, the bands travelled to plantation, playing for outings.

Magnolia Plantation had a good band. It had Pierre Anderson, trumpet and later sousaphone; Harrison Barnes, and Sunny Henry. Chris Kelly is much older than BS. [Cf. ANOJ on CK's birthdate.] BS heard and knew Chris Kelly in the country. Chris Kelly always used a cornet, not a trumpet. "He was the only one who could play 'Careless Love Blues.'" Chris Kelly used a mute and a plunger simultaneously. Chris Kelly would put a mute in the horn and a plunger on top of it. He played at the Young Friends' Hall in Algiers. He would stick the cornet out the window, playing "Careless Love Blues" to draw a crowd. He had a sweet tone. He made up the "Burgundy Street Itch", another blues which he did not record. He never recorded at all. In the country Chris Kelly had a band with Jim Robinson, guitar; (his nephew) Sidney ["Little Jim"] Brown, lead violin; Sammy Robinson (Jim Robinson's brother), clarinet; Effie Robinson (Jim Robinson's brother), bass; Walter Arnolia, who is BS's cousin, drums [Chris Kelly, cornet]. Guitars were being used then. [Banjos were used later. Cf. photos. RBA April 30, 1970.] BS was small when this band was playing. Chris Kelly's band, a wonderful group, in the city was made up of Harrison Barnes, trombone; Alex Scott, bass; Dave Bailey, drums; Emile Barnes, clarinet; 'Ti' Boy, an old man, banjo (soon replaced). They had no piano [cf. EB, HB, DB interviews].

Around 1919 BS started lessons. He played with different brass bands,

including Chris Kelly's and Kid Rena's, but was not a regular member of any of them. He played for the Merry-Go-Round, and the Square Deal [Clubs]. He was with Kid Thomas for about fifteen years. He joined him in 1943. He quit the trumpet in 1936. One of the best bass players here (of many good ones) was Albert Morgan. Also Ransom Knowling, Cleo (killed during World War II on a ship), Simon Marrero (a reader who could play too) and Eddie Marrero werer pretty good. BS hears [Henry] Kimball on the "boat" [Streckfus steamer?] probably with Manuel Perez. [Cf. Narvin Kimball interview.] BS remembers Jimmy Johnson, Bob Lyons, and Albert Glenney, who was a good bassist at that time.

Talk about the best trumpet players follows. BS says that Kid Rena was the best trumpet player he ever worked with. He was a sweet trumpet player, and he made everything he tried. Buddy Petit had fast fingering. Chris Kelly was a good trumpet player, but had slow fingering. Punch Miller and Lee Collins had fast fingering. Lee Collins was pretty good, a nice trumpet player. Buddy Petit never played high. Lee Collins played high. Kid Rena always played high. BS thinks Louis Armstrong got his high notes from Kid Rena. Louis Armstrong didn't play high then. Ricard Alexis was very good, and also made high notes. Kid Rena was the best for making clear notes and keen notes.

BS promises to return to William Russell's shop and talk some more. BS wants to record a hymn. BS has a job [that samt day?]. William Russell asks him to try to remember things about his father and tell him next time.

End of Reel

