

SCHIRO, LUKE
Reel I [of 4]
Dec. 5, 1967

Present: Richard B. Allen
Interviewed at 910 Royal Street.

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SUMMARY: *Joseph G. R...*
ADDIT: *Richard B. Allen*
INTERVIEW: *Richard B. Allen*
MARCH, 1981

LS was born in New Orleans on Sept. 24, 1911.

He remembers that Johnny Frisco had the nickname "Mule Foot."
JF was with Buck Banville on and off and was with Happy Schilling
for a long time. Some of Buck Banville's band ^{was} with Schilling also.
They all had nicknames. [Irving] "Faz" Fazola was called "Sack" or
"Goat" because in school he once brought a goat into the classroom;
he was always in trouble with his teachers. He was in "Opportunity
Class" for a while and was too much for the teacher.

Jake Sciambra had the nickname "Putty Nose" or "Putty" given
him by Faz, LS thinks.

LS came from a non-musical family. His father was in the ice
cream business and had an ice cream parlor on a corner near his
house where Negro bands would meet each other every Sunday, adver-
tising for "dances and so forth." There were picnics and sales.
There were dances at night at the Economy Hall or the San Jacinto
[Hall] or the Astoria or the Pelican. LS was born on St. Ann between
Liberty and Marais, near the Tremé Market. This was behind the
Auditorium in an area that has since been torn down. His father's
ice cream place was on St. Phillip and N. Villeré. It was moved
once to the middle of the block on St. Phillip between N. Robertson
and Villeré. This was a bigger place.

LS lived around the corner from Economy Hall and the San Jacinto
and a few blocks from the Perserverence. He heard the bands there.

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his next door neighbor was Big Eye Louis [Nelson], whose style LS admired when he was eight or nine years old.

LS got his first clarinet at about age 15, bought by his father for about \$30 (which was a cheap one from LS's viewpoint). He took lessons at the Italian Hall from a Prof. Cucci [sp?] for about \$5 a month. Cucci was in the Contessa Entellini [Benevolent Society] band. LS also studied with a Prof. Litto [sp?] after Cucci's death. LS' father and mother were from Contessa Entellini [Sicily], The name Schiro is Albanian and "goes back to around Alexander the Great" perhaps. Albanian music is similar to Italian.

LS agrees that [Leon] Roppolo was probably Sicilian. Roppolo's family tried to play the clarinet like Rap. There were several Roppolos named Leon. Fano R. was a good musician. He drank like Fazola, who drank a lot, drinking such things as gin with beer chasers.

Faz "was actually a beatnik at heart." He liked to eat and would go home at night and eat a whole head of lettuce for supper, and then read dime novels which he liked through the night. That was how he got most of his education. He had only gone as high as about 6th grade. Faz "just liked his booze, liked his women and music." "If he didn't like you, that was it." He didn't like Louis Prima.

LS knew Faz while in school and together they went to listen to music at "home brew joints" like the Fern and the Arcadia and the La Vida, listening to [musicians]. LS showed the fingering on his Albert system clarinet. LS started on clarinet. LS bought a sax

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from Jules Bauduc who was a salesman for C. G. Conn, and Faz used LS' clarinet. Faz went to Prof. Dan Sanderson (who had been with [Happy] Schilling, RBA thinks). Faz went through three method books in a year. This was on sax. Faz started on a C melody, then bought a soprano, clarinet, alto, baritone, tenor, then started to play a little flute; he picked up his sister's piano lessons when she tired of them. He played some trombone and trumpet.

Faz, Jake Sciambra and probably Ewell Lamar went to the Loyola School of Music and studied harmony, transposition and theory. They would make up arrangements.

Fazola got his nickname from Louis Prima. One night Prima was looking for Fazola and was told he was over at the Italian Hall. Prima said, "Oh, you mean the Fasola Hall." Fasola means bean in Italian. Faz started to call Prima "Feet" because he stomped his feet when he played the trumpet.

LS' full name is Luke Lawrence Schiro. Around 1928 he used to go to all the home brew joints, house parties and dances. He had another school friend named Winnie Strahle [sp?] who was a fine sax man and took from Dan Sanderson also. [Check sp. on photos.] Harry Shields taught him how to use chords. [Censored remark]

Another boy from school was Francis "Slim" Mays, nicknamed "Nanny Goat" who played fine sax but didn't read. He may be presently running an oil station somewhere. He was nicknamed "Nanny Goat"

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because he was so thin that he looked like one.

LS was nicknamed "Flaxseed."

Description of home brew joints follows. They flourished during Prohibition, and were in "hole-in-the-wall" places or people's houses. Iced home brew was sold for 15¢ or 25¢. There was dancing, e. g., blackbottom, foxtrot and waltzes, to live music.

The Italian band, a military band, rehearsed from about 9 to 12 on Sundays and Monday[mornings?]. Fazola and LS would attend. Sometimes when playing a march, Faz would hit hot licks. Once the professor threw his baton at Faz when he discovered where the licks were coming from. Everyone laughed.

The Contessa Entellini band played parades and concerts at City Park.

About 1933 LS started to play at the St. Bernard Country Club with Tony Giardina. TG's wife Lou played piano; Dick [Fraley or Praley?] from Oklahoma, trombone; Willie Gerbrecht, trumpet; Nat Geraci, sax; Johnny Scheuermann, Sr., drums; Roscoe Legnon, bass. Draft beer and wine were a nickle and a highball was a dime at the St. Bernard Country Club; "they used to pack 'em in down there."

Willie Gerbrecht had brothers: Pinky, the oldest, died; Johnny and Willie both had heart attacks. Johnny played drums and trumpet. Pinky was very good on trumpet; he [Johnny?] did arranging for the Shriners' band; sometimes he leads the band at the Jerusalem Temple (when Make Caplan doesn't do it, RBA adds).

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LS also played with the Sun Dodgers : Dan Maser, sax; Joe [Dutilh?], drums; [Cronrich?], banjo; [Cohen?], piano. They played a lot at the Deutsches Haus and broadcasted [from there?] "about every week." LS has a picture of that group at his home.

LS also played with Arthur Seelig, Sr., at the St. Bernard Country Club after Tony Giardina left; AS, Sr., bass and guitar; Roy ^{Z-} Simmermann, piano; Pierre [Theriot?], LS and [Claude Dana?], sax; Otto Bubert and Charlie Dupont, trumpet; Lester Gause, drums with Leo Adde, who died; substituting for him sometimes. Arthur Seelig is over at the Famous Door now.

LS also played at the Palm Garden which was across the street from the Silver Slipper at the time, on Bourbon Street, with Joe ^{Garrow?} [Gary?], piano. There were Henry Carubba, drums; Whiffle Rogers (some relation to "Stew Meat" Rogers, LS thinks), drums. Buck Rogers was called "Stew Meat" or perhaps it was Emmett Rogers ^[C] who had the nickname.

LS also played at the Spotlight, across the street from the Famous Door. He used to make \$1.50 per night and tips there. LS also played in a band with Joe Clesi; Tweedy; Francis Murray; Louis Caravella, drums. who now plays bass and works on the railroad. LC sometimes "sits in with us" (at Luthjen's), sometimes on the drums, sometimes on bass. [Cf. notes for band's name.] Then this band played at the Roma Cafe above the Roma Restaurant on Decatur Street, across the street from the Morning Call. There were Arthur Sears,

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banjo; Joe Stevens, the son of [Ragbaby?] Stevens, drums; LS, clarinet and sax. From there they went to the Wonder Bar on Decatur Street (a "queer joint," [i. e., a homosexual bar]) with Joe Stevens, drums; Red Dingman, piano; Tweedy, trumpet; and LS. "They" thought the band was queer, so the band quit. LS played in a three-piece band for \$1.50 per night (as usual) and tips at Madame Rita's (a fortune teller) on Decatur Street. This was around 1937, during the depression. He also played at Heavy's Seventh Heaven on Decatur Street with George [Henn?], and at the Green Goose on Poey-farre Street. Harold Nomandale, the "bad boy of New Orleans at the time," came into this place one night and began to shoot it up with a sawed-off shotgun. LS quit. LS played at the Golden Dragon on St. Ann Street with George Schlico [sp?], piano; Joe Stevens, drums; and LS, who was only about 18 at the time. They called themselves "the Three [Asses?]." There was a girl there named Leslie who was about 18 years old who flirted with LS; her boyfriend, the bartender, then threatened to kill him. LS and RBA agree that there was a place up near Audubon Park which was so tough that the band had to sit behind chicken wire. From there LS went to the Silver Star on St. Claude and St. Bernard; Grover Shiffer [sp?] was the [piano?] man and leader; Whiffle [Rogers], the drummer. There were singing waiters there, Rock and Russell, and a Negro floor show; [Cy Girard?] sat in on sax. Then LS was with the ERA-WPA dance band and military bands, to which all the best musicians in the city belonged, including Henry Raymond, Jean Paquet [sp?], the Papalias [Russ and Tony?], Charlae Dupont, Charlie Cordilla, Pete [Percopa?],

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[Bad Bo Boy?, real name Arthur Q. Del ^{pit} ?], a black-face comedian and trumpet player who had the [Evolution?] Trio years ago. LS and Arthur Seelig got together [a show?] at City Park and St. Roch Park which drew two or three thousand people. LS describes a black-face act in which they had a Jumbo [i. e., soft drink] bottle of muscatel wine. LS and [Bad Bo Boy?] used to call each other [Bloaty?]. [Bad recording.] LS describes jam sessions with AS, guitar; [Lefty] Eiermann, sousaphone; Henry Raymond, sax; LS, clarinet; Bo Boy, drums, between parts of the show. Charlie Cordilla played rarely as he wanted to give LS a chance.

End of Reel I.

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Reel II [of IV]
Also present: Richard B. Allen

Summary: Unknown
Audit: Richard B. Allen
Kay L. Wicker
Retype: Alma D. Williams
Date Completed: March 12, 1981
Proofread: Richard B. Allen, April 30, 1981

Luke Schiro discusses his blackface act. [See end of Reel 1].

They told many jokes. The [WPA-ERA] marching band went through the park at the end of the concert and all the crowd would follow them while they played pieces like "When the Saints..." or "High Society." It was a lot of fun. The crowd danced and listened. The band had some dance music and some marches, and "some light overtures and so forth."

LS played with Buck Banville at the American Legion Dance Hall, Gentilly Post 203 or the Johnny Lynch Post, called "The Plum Plant." In the band were Art "Bo Boy" [Delpit?] on drums, Bob Aquilera on piano, Henry Knecht on trumpet, Fred Dantagnan on alto sax, LS on tenor sax and Buck played trumpet. Bob Aquilera died so Buck took over the piano. In the meantime Henry got sick so they hired Otto Bubert. Dantagnan died, and they hired [Roland] Leach. RL and LS "used to team up nice." LS could never get along with FD because FD was "up and down the sax" and was mechanical. FD was a fine saxman, and he used to overpower LS. He had about a [number] 5 reed, and LS had "about a two-and-a-half." FD said, "[Whyn't the hell don't you blow louder?]" LS replied, "It's the best I can do, Dan." And FD would get frustrated. [FD's hard reed enabled him to play loudly.] Mouthpieces have changed, and "lays" [i.e., apertures] are wider; thus, one doesn't need so hard a reed now.

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About 1950 RBA first came to this dance hall [i.e., the American Legion Dance Hall]. RBA discusses the band. Otto Bubert was on trumpet; Roland was on alto; the late Charlie Favrot was on drums. There were several substitutes: Pascal Ugarte, a fine drummer; the three Mike Lalas [trumpets], and Jac Assunto, trombone, played a few [times]. A lot of leaders tried to get that job [the union?], but they had the job sewed up for fourteen-and-a-half years. [They were non-union musicians. RBA, January 30, 1981.] LS comments, "I knew the job wouldn't last, though." (Laughter from RBA.) Lefty [Eiermann] was the best on Sousaphone in the country in LS's opinion.

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Buck played chords [accompaniment on piano] rather than solos. He had a good ear. He didn't know all the changes. He had that steady 4/4 beat which helped a lot.

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LS played at a country club with a "butterfly" or "Lily Belle" pianist. He wouldn't play chords and the drummer would play solos so there was no rhythm at all. They lost the job. LS was with Johnny McDonald then. LS picked up on a good pianist, Don O'Neal [sp?], who had a style like Teddy Wilson, and a fine drum player, Lee [Tomlin?], now a bus driver for [New Orleans] Public Service. LS also played with Dominick Barrocco [sp?] who still plays the banjo. [DB's band includes an] old violinist, Louis Chapman, who has an amplified violin. He knows all the old tunes. His late wife was a real fine piano player. LS played with them about three

weeks ago at a wedding.

LS also played with Nick Beninate, a fine trumpet man. NB employs Henry Waelde, a fine guitar player, who worked at the Club Plantation. The band ^{at the Club Plantation} included Ray Burke, clarinet; Charlie Dupont, trumpet; Jules [i.e., Julius] Chevez, piano; and Al Doria, Sr., drums.

LS asks RBA to ask Doria about LS's being with Fazola constantly. [This was confirmed. Doria said that Schiro knew Faz well and that they grew up together. RBA, December 11, 1967.]

The band was called the Melon Pickers. LS used to listen to them every night. Al Doria also played with [Buck Banville's band] a couple of times.

LS also played with pianist Morris Escat a lot over at Antony's at Esplanade and Galvez. LS also played with George Wagner, drummer. ME is now at Soiree's on Sunday night. "The Duchess" plays there on Fridays and Saturdays. ME plays those nights at the Silky Satin.

LS played a long time with Johnny McDonald's [Melody Masters?], spotting. JM played at Luthjen's on Chartres and Marigny after this band broke up. [Later the band consisted of] Bill Mayeux [correct spelling in files] guitar; Johnny [(see file)], [drums]; Johnny Neuroth, trumpet, [valve] trombone, singing, who replaced JM; and LS, [clarinet, sax].

Tony Fougerat, Martin Tramuta [sp?], [trumpets] came by; Clive Wilson sits in. Hank "Ants" Bellas, who used to sit in, but no longer plays trumpet, played at the Casino Royale, now Al Hirt's.

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HB had a slight hemorrhage and, LS thinks, sold his horn to his nephew, Johnny Neuroth. In HB's band were Al Moore, [trombone]; Cyril Dill, [drums]; Greenwald [sp?], [piano]; and LS, [sax, clarinet]. LS thinks Stormy [a stripper] was there. HB was a good showman and featured himself on "Estrellita." LS never heard anything like it from "a home boy."

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→ LS traveled with Burt Massingale [sp?]. BM was at the Plantation a good while. He had a band with special arrangements in Phil Harris' style "or something." BM's band had about eight or nine men. BM lead the band and sang. They traveled through Mississippi and Alabama. BM had Speck Reagan [sp?] on bass, who LS thinks he was not a New Orleanian, but knew Sidney Arodin and others.

Noel Foucher is a "colored" piano player whom RBA should hear. He was raised with Louis Prima "and all of us." He has a Civil Service job. His uncle, called Little Willie [Forrest], played piano. He died.

Burnell Santiago, who was handsome and could pass for Spanish, played with "us" [white musicians] a lot. BS used drugs and died young. LS was told of BS playing piano at age four. He was heard by [Louis] Armstrong and big band musicians. He wouldn't read [music]. "He could make that piano rock," even though he weighed only about 112 pounds. He could play "Mahogany Hall Stomp" and

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"High Society," complete with variations. Foucher has a style something like that. He is staying in the house where Fazola stayed at, 1907 or 1915 Ursulines. [The 1969 telephone books lists Noel Foucher at 1719 Ursulines.] RBA mentions BS's home recording [in the Arkansas Art Center]. BS's widow had another home recording according to [Nasimova] "Chinee" [Brunious]. LS says he was tops. He lived across the street from LS. Parties at his residence were frequent.

Pianist "Plitzum" [Johnson] played well.

Little Willie played a very fine piano.

On his own clarinet style Schiro says: "Who do I play like? I don't really know. I just play around the melody. That's it."

RBA mentions playing a Big Eye Louis [Nelson] record for Schiro, but RBA doesn't believe that Schiro sounds like Nelson.

RBA asks about a picture with Buck [Banville]. It was made at a lakefront job near Covington, on July 4th. There was a big fight. The sheriffs threw tear gas. The band had to quit for about an hour.

One band played a job at an American Legion Home on the lakefront "a good while back." They played all kinds of music. Nobody danced because they wanted to talk! The band was asked to play an hour overtime.

LS never played at places which had no dance floor, except for the [New Orleans] Jazz Club. Places on Bourbon Street always

Luke
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NB

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had dance floors, but, RBA adds, there is now no place to dance in the French Quarter. Places now with dancing are: Soiree's [Lounge], "the boat" [Steamer President], Luthjen's, the Fontaine-bleau [Motor Hotel], the Bistro, the Monteleone [Hotel], and Munster's. Da Wabbit is the place where LS first played with Johnny McDonald, a good while ago. RBA was told that . Bill Crais sat in with Mike Trapani there. Trapani can't find steady work. Schiro says that something is lacking although he plays all right. RBA adds an aside: Trapani drives a pony and cart around the [Irish] Channel. At the New Orleans Jazz Club, sometimes Dutch Andrus and others play. An announcement requesting a musician playing a particular instrument might be made. A group is formed and "off they go." LS got few jobs there, but he had a lot of offers [i.e., throughout his musical career?]. He didn't try to push himself too far.

He mentions wanting to hear that piano. [See above.] He has him [i.e., Banville?] on his mind.

Some students (possibly of radio), who were from Florida, recorded Banville's band about 1950 at the Plum Plant according to RBA. He doesn't know what happened to these [audio] tapes. [Don Perry, who was friendly with the students, doesn't remember these recordings. RBA, August 1, 1970.]

On the people who came to the American Legion Dance Hall: Don Perry, RBA, Nick Gagliano [who was once George Lewis' manager,] and many musicians including Harry Shields, [Tony] Fougerat and [Tony]

Almerico. Most people came from various neighborhoods to dance. The band was paid sometimes one dollar or \$1.50 nightly on 60 - 40 percentage basis until [World] War [II]. Then they made from \$25 to \$30 a man nightly until the union made them play for scale which was \$13. There were some large crowds. Admission was always charged. LS thinks it was fifty or sixty cents for men and about thirty-five for women. RBA says the band played arrangements and played by ear. LS adds that they used stocks and jammed. They played waltzes in between.

LS still plays waltzes at Luthjen's. Every fourth set they might play a waltz medley if there are no requests, or they might play anything they want, but the waltz medley is followed by a fast number. [Does a set consist of two pieces as it did at the old Luthjen's? RBA, January 29, 1981.] They might play a slow one, than a medium [tempo] one or a slow one and fast one. About the fourth set they play a waltz and a fast one. After a couple more sets, there is an intermission. After it, they return to their routine. Hours at Luthjen's are: Friday, 8:30 [p.m.] - 1:30 [a.m.]; Saturday: 8:30 [p.m.] - 2:30 [a.m.] and Sunday 8:00 [p.m.] - 1:00 [a.m.].

Cold weather hurts business until their customers get adjusted to it. Just before Christmas and during Lent business is slow as it is now. After Lent and Easter people take vacations.

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There is a list of tunes [i.e., titles of compositions, on the front of the bandstand] to remind people that the band is "open for requests and so forth...and then some of the latest numbers." There are three new ones on it now. LS buys most of the sheet music with his own money. He buys piano copies. They are used to get the harmony. LS transposes from them with no trouble.

END OF REEL II

LUKE SCHIRO
Reel III [of IV]
December 5, 1967
Also present: Richard B. Allen

Notes: Lars I. Edegran and
Richard B. Allen
Summary: Richard B. Allen

*Re-type [Alma D. Williams?]
Interview: Richard B. Allen, 4 May 1981*

Tunes requested by people at Luthjen's include new and old ones and Latin American numbers. It depends on the crowd. Italian seamen might ask Italian numbers; the band know only a few like "Oh Marie" [sp?] and "O Sole Mio." "We like to play those two, that is, "Trees," and "Martha." Some real old ones requested are "Mary Lou," "Angry," "Tin Roof Blues," "High Society," "March of the Bobcats," and the blues. RBA notes that Schiro plays Fazola's solo on the "March of the Bobcats." The tempo of "March of the Bobcats" must be "just right" for him. "After You've Gone", could be played fast. They have a special arrangement, a medley, which starts with the "Lady of Spain" and ends with "Caravan." (He stomps the tempo of "After You've Gone.")

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two pages*

They have over 1000 tunes, some of which they hardly ever get to play. When business is slow, they go through the books and "make a few medleys" to break the monotony. Some nights they play almost entirely requests. They often repeat some numbers such as "Release Me", "Born Free", "Born to Lose" and "Your Cheatin' Heart." "Release Me" is very popular.

People who come to Luthjen's are married, divorced, widowed, or they had some hardships somewhere along the line and were unable to get along. LS walks around the tables to see what they want. They tell him their affairs. He says, "I'm a pretty good listener."

to

One night (on St. Ann Street LS almost got shot at the Golden Dragon). LS thinks he is pretty well liked at Luthjen's. People

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like the way LS plays "[Just] A Closer Walk With Thee," "Sister Kate," "High Society," "Sweet Sue," and many old numbers.

On age of people at Luthjen's: one old man named Joe is 106 years old. He said he had an uncle 132 years old. He danced a fast waltz, "Over The Waves," with a "girl" of about 47 or 48 years old. The ages range from 18 to 106. Mostly, people are in their 40s, 50s, and 60s on up. Few are young.

LS went to old Luthjen's only once as he was working at the [American] Legion [Hall], but he heard a lot about it as the Legionnaires went there after the Hall closed.

The Sweet Potato Inn was a "home-brew joint." Al Doria [Sr.] played there. [Confirmed by AD on December 12, 1967--RBA.] It was "somewhere on Iberville Street or Bienville Street." Louis Prima played at the Whip. LP also played at The Frolick where Irving Fazola played. It was on St. Ann and Broad. LS played a few spots with LP.

Rodney Ogle, trombonist, had a band at the Vanity a while. RO was from out of town. Leader Abbie Brunies; Fred Dantagnan, sax, Irving Fazola, Lefty Eiermann, Sousaphone, and Roy Posey, sax played at the Silver Slipper. RP played like [Coleman] Hawkins. He now sells real estate.

LS's own sax style is mostly based on the melody. He didn't try to copy any one's style.

Lester Nelson teamed up with Winnie Strahle and another tenor

Schiro and RBA discuss a photograph of the Prima-Sharkey Orchestra, p. 148, Rose & Souchon. Louis Masinter played Sousaphone and string bass. Meyer Weinberg played alto and clarinet. His whereabouts are unknown. LS played a lot with Charlie Hartmann, a trombonist.

LS played verses "a good while back." They read [i.e., arrangements or piano copies?] the introduction, then the chorus or the verse, then the last chorus. If it was good, they played it all the way through.

LS liked the way the bands played coming back from funerals. [?] Bands competed on the corner near his house for about a couple of hours.

LS sold ice cream in the old Red light district. He heard good bands there, e.g., Joe Robichaux and Kid Rena who played a fine trumpet and drank a lot of wine. This was from around 1929 up to about 1937. Then the district was closed; afterwards they made a housing project out of it, before the war [WW II]. LS thinks there should be another district. It helped business. It was bordered by Iberville, Basin St., N^{orth} Robertson and St. Louis. [Compare other sources.] Eclipse Alley was in there. LS made a lot of money there.

They also had another district further up where LS "made that route also." LS was well known uptown, too. There were some houses on Burgundy Street. Streets in the uptown district: Cleveland, which had a few houses; S^{outh} Robertson, with some; Saratoga, where there were "colored" folks; Poydras; Rampart; and Dryades.

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Cleveland's former name was Gasquet Street. He mentions the New Basin area. The prostitutes were almost all "colored." Later there were prostitutes on Baronne St. Still later the prostitutes scattered all over town. Thw women bought lots of ice cream from LS, who also gave credit and sometimes gave ice cream to them. They paid him after working. There were some nice looking girls there. Some had had a bad marriage or a bad family situation. They charged from one to five dollars for "short time tricks".

Lulu White's and the Stag Hotel were on Basin Street. The rear of Willie Piazza's house was on Franklin St. [now Crozat], and the front was on Basin. Sometimes there would be a piano player playing blues or something soft. [Musicians?] would go there after the job. There were some beautiful houses there with thick rugs, chandeliers, and furniture. One could smell incense. LS went there often himself.

LS was about 16 or 17 when he started selling ice cream. He had a blonde, 16-year old girl friend. His father found out and put a stop to it. She, LS and Tony Almerico were good dressers; Schiro was one of the best-dressed amateur musicians in New Orleans. LS had around eight tailor-made suits, about seventy-five Arrow shirts, about three silk shirts, and over a hundred ties. Every week he got a ^en~~ick~~tie, matching shirt, and socks from Rubenstein's on Carondelet St. LS made around \$300-400 a week selling ice cream. Then "everything went bad." His father went "bankrupt and so forth."

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LS got married at 18 years of age. LS paid five dollars a month for a room about the size of [RBA's living room at 910 Royal Street, apartment 3]. There was no electricity, and water was in the back [i.e., backyard?]. They had to bathe in a number 3 tub. They used a washboard. His first boy was born in a house on Barracks and Liberty. LS was then playing at Roma Cafe on 1000 block of Decatur Street. This was about 1935-'36. The Schiros had nine children with one set of twins. It was a struggle, but he enjoyed every bit of it. LS has about twenty-four grandchildren.

LS used to buy Okeh records of [Louis] Armstrong, and Bix Beiderbecke, and others. LS learned a lot from records. He lent his Armstrong records to Louis Prima and never got them back. LP played cornet and violin. He played good violin when he was going to ^{LS said} Aloysia ^{US} ~~school~~ school. Hot violin players were: Oscar Marcour; Herbie Christian, who was mostly a reader, and LP. Herbie Christian, a relative of Emile and Frank Christian, was with Manuel Allesandra's WPA dance band. Charlie Cordilla was in it, also. The WPA had a symphony, a military band and a recreation band [led by] Cliff Curry and Pete Percopo's "little outfit." They were rated first and second class. LS was second class. Prof. Paquet and others professors were there. "Old Man" Fontana had the symphony. Then Sabadie, violinist, "sort of took over" [the symphony]. Every Wednesday night the consolidated bands played at City Park, playing overtures. For the last half hour there was a jam session with Arthur Seeling, LS, [Lefty] Eiermann, and Henry Raymond.

END OF REEL

SCHIRO, LUKE
Reel IV [of IV]
December 5, 1967
Also present: Richard B. Allen

Summary: Jane D. Julian
Audit: Richard B. Allen

*Typed by Jane D. Julian
Reviewed by R.B. Allen, 5/10/68
R.B.A.:*

Luke Schiro [played with] the Orleanians at house parties. He can't remember the personnel as it has been so long ago. RBA asks about the Blue Horseshoe. [Cf. Irving Fazola record (Camden 12" LP)] "Stoppin' At the Blue Horseshoe." LS says it was a place where you could go with a woman and rent a room for a couple of hours [i.e., a house of assignation]. LS says it was for "shack jobs." There was no music there.

Johnny "Candy" Candido, a comedian, played violin at first; then he changed to drums. He did the Charleston "and all." His band was called the Little Collegians. It had [Irvin Montaldo?], Jack Miranda, Irving Fazola, saxes; and Louis Prima, trumpet or cornet. Herbie Pelligrini was hired for good jobs [on trumpet?]. The band was to play at La Louisianne, a restaurant which had refused to hire Louis Prima. HP made a better front and was a better reader than Prima.

RBA talks about going to Grunewald's School of Music; he and lots of musicians were there on the GI bill. He thinks perhaps Herbie Pelligrini was there. Raymond Burke, "Coco" [Otto Hymel (sp?)], Pinky Wadlington and others were there.

Most of [Little Collegians?] went to [Warren] Easton [High School]. They had a band called the Eastonites [cf. photo] with Irving Fazola; Anthony Foto; Clinton Garvin (from out of town), sax; and Ewell Lamar, piano.

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close* → Candy Candido used to live on Canal [Street] and Hagan [Avenue], next to a drug store. He was an only child. He changed from drums to piano. Luke Schiro played with him a good while, along with Irving Montaldo and Dan [Wirth?], on trumpet. Candy was always funny. "Anything for a laugh" was his style. Then Candy played string bass. He made movies. He lives in Burbank, California and has apartment house [a?]. He uses a false bass and falsetto voices. He had a three-range voice. He also had a few good skits.

LS was born near the Treme Market on St. Ann. [See reel I, paragraph 4.] Then he moved to North Claiborne between St. Philip and Bayou Road ([now?] Governor Nicholls). [Compare maps.] Then he moved to St. Philip and Villere, where his father made ice cream. His father, Theodore Schiro, is alive. He is 86 years old. Then they moved to the middle of the block on St. Philip Street. The business was big then. His father had a stroke and is now in a home [for the aged]. Schiro moved next [door?] to his mother-in-law. Then LS moved to St. Roch Street, then to Prieur Street, and lived there around 28 years. About a year and a half ago he moved to Prieur and Ursuline Streets. On Prieur Street, he was right around the corner from Irving Fazola. IF lived at Ursuline and Roman. Lester Lala lived next door to IF. LL was a sax player and played like [Coleman] Hawkins. He now lives in Biloxi. He is a technician now. He repairs radios and television sets. LS now lives on North Lopez between St. Philip and Dumaine Streets.

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The Eastonites played neighborhood and suburban shows. They had Fazola; Clinton Garvin, sax; Ewell Lamar, piano (LS thinks); Anthony Foto. Talk about the positions of men in the photo described. LS's sister liked music and knew musicians.

Tony Giardina told LS that he made records. LS played with Tony Giardina's band about three years. LS sent Nat Terasi [sp?] as substitute. He was a nice sax man and a good clarinetist.

LS is now in his third year of working at Luthjen's. Before he went there, they had a six-piece band. There have been several changes. Now there are four. George Holloran [sp?], trombone, gave zip to the band. They had Benny Waller, bass; a pianist who cannot be named as he is a union member. [LS is not in the union.]

LS played with Russ Papalia, Johnny Dedroit, and Val Barbara. He also played with Tony Almerico a few times. LS made out-of town trips with, he thinks, Arthur Pons and Tony Almerico in, he thinks, Johnny Randolph's band. It was a "Mickey Mouse" band with three tenor saxes. It was a nice band, but TA didn't like that kind of music. LS liked it. TA liked "Dixieland."

Talk about Johnny Dedroit. LS thinks that Dutch Andrus' brother Burt Andrus played clarinet and sax with Johnny Dedroit. Also drummer Sam Maggio played with Dedroit. They changed drummers a lot. Norman Falks, drums, and LS were with Johnny Dedroit. NF may be with Johnny Dedroit or [Russ] Papalia. LS was with Val

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Barbara, whose personnel changed frequently. LS was with Dutch Andrus for a little while.

Dutch Andrus was also with the WPA band. Trumpeter Leo Broekhaven who was in the pit at, Schiro thinks, Loew's State, [was in the WPA band?]. The WPA band had several leaders because some were unqualified. LS was with Phil Zito at the Silver Slipper at the Dreamland or the Silver Slipper for a few nights [The name was changed, but this was the same location]. He had a day job and couldn't keep up night work.

RESTRICTED MATERIAL

When Joe Clesi and Fazola got together, "it was a little bit too much." Clesi drank gin out of a pitcher like water. Frank Murray, sax, teamed up well with LS [in Joe C's band?]. [See FM autobiography.]

Tweedy, a trumpet player, now a church worker, also drank a lot [when with Joe Clesi?]. Tweedy played with Leon Roppolo, tenor saxophonist, [not the clarinetist] at a strip joint in around the 1400 block of Canal Street [around 1949], according to RBA. When LS last played with Tweedy, he was at the Wonder Bar, now the My-O-My Club. Tweedy was chased off Decatur Street. When he was drunk one night, the spotlight was put on him, and he fell off the bandstand.

Decatur Street was full of joints from Canal Street to Esplanade Avenue. LS went straight home after his job. He didn't stop in the joints since he was too tired. Al Doria told RBA that he played

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at Dumaine and Decatur. There was a pretty nice spot on Dumaine Street near Decatur. LS played on Decatur Street, and on Magazine Street, and at all the country clubs. When LS made \$1.50 and tips a night, he was satisfied.

Fazola's first job was with Pete Percopo's Susquehanna Orchestra. They made around eight dollars [each? or in total?], and Fazola was excited. Fazola was around 16 or 17 years old. The orchestra may have been named after the lakeboat. LS never went on its excursions because he worked on Saturday and Sunday with his father. He started music to break this routine of monotonous work. Johnny Pelisser played a weird style. ^{old-time corny} [Cf. photo of Susquehanna Band in Al Rose and Edmond Souchon, NEW ORLEANS JAZZ...p. 179.] He played an old-time corny style. LS believes that he could imitate Johnny Pelisser. Tony Fougerat is his cousin, says RBA. [CF. Tony Fougerat interviews.]

LS had day jobs working for the government [at the Port of Embarcation?] for twenty-four years. He was like a trouble shooter, helping to move the troops around. He was sent to Camp Leroy Johnson, then back to Port, then to the Delta ship yards, then back to Port. He was laid off as he was not a veteran and wouldn't go out of town to work. So he retired and got a job handling boat parts at the Blue Streak Enterprises. He worked there eighteen months, was laid off, and then went to work at the American Marine.

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Now he is a microfilm technician and wants another job. This one is too monotonous; LS may get another job. He has to walk about twelve to fourteen blocks to get to work.

The Shoe Polish Band was Buck Banville's band. They sometimes made two dollars or one dollar on commission. "They" said "two and one, shoe polish band." The origin of this saying is unknown to LS.

Guitarist Tony Schiro is a relative of LS's father. He played at the Little Club. His style is similar to Joe Capraro's, and he played well.

Talk on LS's favorite records: he liked Armstrong; Hawkins; Bix Beiderbecke; blues, e.g., Bessie Smith; and others. Most of his records have disappeared. He liked "Heebie Jeebies" and "Mahogany Hall Stomp" by Armstrong; "Singin' the Blues" by Bix with Frank Trumbauer; "High Society" by Sharkey; and "Body and Soul" by Coleman Hawkins. He says it's the best ever put out by Hawkins. LS thinks that Roy Posey, when with Russ Papalia, played this solo note for note. Roy Posey also played with Fazola and Abbie Brunies.

Talk on good pianists: Red Dingman played full chords, had good rhythm, and had a good fast left hand. He also played good string bass. He didn't take many solos. RD, Joe Stevens and LS played together a lot all over Decatur Street and at the Dandy Inn. Talk of Bill Gallaty's record. [Creole(1?), 10" 78 rpm.] BG plays tp and melophone well.

On the New Orleans Owls: Pinky [Vidacovich] and Bill Padron are mentioned. LS was a substitute one New Year's Eve. He was in the local [chapter of the union] at the time. LS was nervous with the New Orleans Owls as this was a big band and he was just starting. He was young and unmarried then.

LS played a few spots with Armand Hug and played with Bert Peck a lot. RBA says that Hug is now at the Royal Orleans [Hotel].

LS gives advice to young musicians who want to learn how to play jazz: Young musicians should learn scales and chords. Then they should pick a style that they like, e.g., Benny Goodman's, Artie Shaw's, Pete Fountain's (one of the best, LS thinks), or Irving Fazola's. They should listen to old records. They should read some; you can't just play by ear now.

LS switched to the Boehm system. He gave his Albert system to Pete Fountain, and Irving Fazola started on this clarinet. Jean Paquay [sp?], LS's teacher, taught Boehm system only. LS thinks the Boehm system is better for speed, and the Albert is better for tone. "It all depends on the man behind it, too, ...and the mouth-piece and how you fill your horn and so forth." Santo Guiffre [or Giuffre] taught the Albert system; he taught IF after LS showed IF the fingering. Talk on "lay" [i.e., aperture]: LS ruined a few mouthpieces opening up the lay.

LS mentions his speech handicap.

END OF REEL