

JOSEPH "RED" CLARK
November 11, 1959
Reel I: retyped

SUMMARY Present: WR, RBA, MTZ,
Charles Victor
[friend of Clark]
Recorded at 1717 Dryades,
in Clark's kitchen
his first instrument

Clark's teacher was Dave Perkins, who taught him trombone; Clark now plays sousaphone, exclusively. Clark, as manager of the Eureka Brass Band, would like to have baritone horn, alto horn and E flat clarinet in the band, but cannot obtain players for those instruments. Clark did not know Paul Barnes [who sometimes plays E flat clarinet with the Eureka] until he joined the Eureka recently. When Barnes joined the band, he ~~was~~ played B flat clarinet, but the sound did not fit the band, so he bought an E flat clarinet, the sound of which is better for the particular band.

The young instrumentalists of today play "that bop stuff," and are not interested in brass band music; they play marches in school, but only because they have to; it is ~~very~~ difficult for a person to figure out what they are playing, because of the style and the tempos. Some organizations hire bands of these younger musicians because they can pay them almost as little as they want, but the organizations which hire the Eureka do not hire the school bands at the same time. A member of one of those organizations told Clark that the school bands ~~can't play~~ *are not capable of playing* funerals. Before the advent of the school bands, the Carnival parades used nothing but old-time, ten-piece professional bands; when the parades became bigger and the schools set up bands, the men belonging to the different organizations prevailed upon the leaders of the organizations to use the school bands, which had as members the grandchildren and children and other young relations of these men. Clark remembers when there were only the parades of Momus, Proteus and Rex. At 12 noon or 1 P.M. on the Monday before Mardi Gras Day, Rex had a parade, the prelude to his big parade the next day. The Monday parade became extinct during World War II, when the parades of Hermes and Babylon came into existence. World War II brought many changes: for instance, the Young Men of Liberty had used music at

all of their funerals, but with the beginning of World War II they were asked not to assemble in crowds, and the organization no longer has big funerals. Sometimes, however, on the Momus parade, on Thursday night, there will be a band called the Reliance Band, composed of nine old-time musicians. Clark himself never played in the big ^(Mardi) Mardi Gras parades. ~~(White)~~.

Dave Perkins did play in the big parades, and also in the orchestra in the Roosevelt Hotel ~~XXXXXX~~. In teaching, Perkins used a method book, written by Otto Langey. Perkins instructions for holding the trombone: hold the slide between the first ^{hand} finger, and the thumb and hold the bell section between the first finger and the thumb; use the tips of the fingers in holding the slide. From the ~~XXXX~~ first to fourth positions use only the wrist for motion, not the entire arm. In placing the mouthpiece on the lips: place 1/3 of the mouthpiece on the upper lip, 2/3 on the lower lip. On breathing: take enough breath, through the corners of the mouth, to play the notes you intend playing. Perkins' main instrument was the bass; he used a four-valve bass in the key of E flat. He played drums only to teach. His studio, in his house, was on Sixth Street between Dryades and Baronne, uptown side of the street, and about the second house from Baronne going toward Dryades. The studio was in a loft over the kitchen. There was no piano in it. He used oil lamps for light. He played with each student, on the same kind of instrument he was teaching. He was strict, and would not listen to an unprepared lesson. Lessons were for one hour, and cost \$1. Perkins was friendly to everyone. He was almost white; "If you didn't know him, you'd take him for a white man." Perkins admired Clark's father, Aaron Clark, and said that if Clark became the musician that his father had been he'd be doing all right. Clark did not know his father; he only saw pictures of him.

Clark's first job was with a concert band being set up by Pritchard and Willie Wilson; Wilson was leading the Eureka Brass Band at that time. Clark went to Perdido Street to see Pritchard, telling him that Wilson had

~~XXXXXX~~

JOSEPH "RED" CLARK
November 11, 1959
Reel I - retyped

sent him, but that he, himself, didn't think he was good enough to play in a concert band. Pritchard wanted him, because he wanted to train someone his way. The rehearsals were held in St. Katherine's Hall, behind St. Katherine's Church, at LaSalle Street and Tuhane Avenue. Clark knew many of the fellows in the band; Wilson's brother, who was a butler in the Garden District at the time, was playing baritone. Clark did not do so well the first rehearsal, but the others encouraged him, and he went home and practiced. The band rehearsed for about a year.

John L. Webb, from Hot Springs, Arkansas had an outfit called the Woodmen of the Union. He would send instruments to various cities where that organization operated, and bands would be organized. Webb wanted the Pritchard band to go to Hot Springs to meet in competition with bands from Wichita Falls, Dallas, Fort Worth, Hope, Arkansas and other towns. The band began having rehearsals twice each week; they rehearsed three overtures: "Light Cavalry," "Operatic Mingle," and "Ex Tempo." They perfected their playing of these pieces and went to Hot Springs, where they won the competition with their playing of "Light Cavalry."

The band had most all of the necessary instruments: baritone, alto, clarinet, saxophone, trombone, three basses. But when they got back home from Hot Springs, the members lost interest in the band, and then the depression of 1929 came along. The band numbered thirty-five men; the name of the band was the Tonic Triad Band. Clark has a picture of the later Tonic Triad, not of the original group. In the [original?] band were Alcide Landry, Willie Pajaud, Willie Wilson, trumpets; Oscar Henry, Tom Steptoe, Red Clark, trombones; Johnny Wilson, William Ybor, [a Jamaican], baritone horns; Gill, alto horn; Andrew Stevens[spelling?], Oscar Grammar, bass horns; Jones, clarinet; Albert Francis, snare drum and Peter Rayfield, bass drum. The picture of the later Tonic Triad Band that Clark showed to the interviewers was made during the year of the "Colored Fair." ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Standing at the extreme right of the

November 11, 1959
Reel I-- retyped

4

picture is Professor Fritchard. Members identified were: Alcide Landry, Willie Pajaud, Loomis Hamilton [George Hamilton's son], trumpets; Oscar Henry, Albert Warner, Llopis [son of the operator of Carr and Llopis Mortuary on Dumaine Street], trombones; Bell, baritone horn; Isidore Barbarin, alto horn; Professor Dalmas [spelling?], George Hamilton, bass horns; Fonterette [spelling?], clarinet; Albert Francis, snare drum, and Peter Rayfield, bass drum; two Grigsby girls, saxophones. The picture was taken before World War II, some ~~XXXX~~ time in the Thirties, at the old race track in Jefferson Parish. The photographer was Paddio, who committed suicide by jumping off the Huey P. Long Bridge; no one took over his studio, so all his records are presumed lost.

Clark never played in dance bands, and he never played string bass. When Clark was with the Tonic Triad Band, he did not play with any brass band marching in the streets. After the Tonic Triad broke up, Clark became a member of the Eureka Brass Band, in the year 1931 or 1932. He took the place of trombonist Willie Cornish, who had become ill; the other trombonist was Albert Warner. Clark went to one of the Eureka's rehearsals and sat in with them; when ~~KK~~ he went home that night, he was walking with Ed Verret, the bass player, Willie Wilson, and Johnny Wilson--

END OF REEL I

T-boy got Louis "Kid Shots" Madison and Percy Humphrey to replace Mullin and Marcel--Percy used to pinch-hit in the band years before, but now they made him a regular member. When Shots died, Eddie Richardson came in. [About this time, around 1951, the band recorded ~~for William Russell~~.] Eddie had a nervous breakdown shortly after joining the band, and was replaced by George "Kid Sheik" Colar. When T-boy went to California around 1950, he got Willie Pajaud as his replacement. Sometimes the band used Maurice Durand on trumpet; he had played in the Onward Brass Band with Manuel Perez, but has been California now for over ten years.

A man becomes a member of the Eureka in this manner: the band will invite a prospective member around, or hire him when they need someone, and ask him if he wants to become a member. If he accepts, they take him; if he doesn't, they try to get somebody else. This is done by the whole band, as a unit; every job is passed on by the whole band. Clark never signs a contract until the whole band has approved it; they have ~~XXX~~ never yet turned him down. Some jobs are too hard for the Eureka Band because the members are getting on in age; for instance, they won't take a parade for the Jolly Bunch, because it would last for ten hours. They used to play an eleven-hour job for the Eleanore[spelling?] Club on Carnival Day, but the weather is cool then. In the month of July, it is too hot to play a long job.

The duties of the manager of the Eureka Band include keeping records of all jobs; he also "intercedes" for [gets] all jobs. Every job they play is recorded in the manager's record book; sometimes when someone comes back to hire the band, he will ~~XXX~~ claim that he got them cheaper a couple of years before; Clark will show the record book to him, and prove that his quote for the job is correct. When Clark first started playing funerals each man got \$2.50; the leader always got a dollar or so more. The Eureka splits the leader money three ways, among Pajaud, the assistant

leader, Percy Humphrey, the leader and Clark, the manager.

The assistant leader of the Eureka Band assumes the duties of the leader if he is unable to be on a job. The leader is in charge of the whole band; no one dictates to him; he carries the music and decides which tunes to play. The manager is in charge of business; the leader is in charge of music and the band on the street. This has been the system in the Eureka Band for the past twelve ~~XX~~ to fourteen years.

Clark doesn't remember whether brass bands had managers when he was a child; he does remember that they had leaders. In those days men had more time to look for jobs, because some of them did nothing but play music for a living; but now, most of the men in the Eureka have other jobs to do--for instance, Percy collects for insurance, and he doesn't have time to go see about jobs for the band.

Clark gets in touch with the men in the band by telephone; they are easy to reach, as they are all settled men. If one of them has to work, Clark has to hustle to get somebody else. On Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday it is hard for Percy to get off work; those are his busiest days with his insurance business. Around the first of each month is also hard. Son [Robert Lewis] works for a moving company, and he can get off when he wants to. Happy Goldston is retired; Albert Warner is retired; Oscar Henry is retired. Manuel Paul and Paul Barnes play music for their living; they can get off. Red Clark works until 1:30 P. M. on his job; his boss let's him off for jobs, and Clark makes up the time lost by working longer before or after the job. Clark's job begins, usually, at 5 A. M.

Clark especially admired the trombone playing of Vic Gaspard, who died a year or so ago; he had a wonderful tone. He also played baritone horn in the Onward Brass Band, with Isidore Barbarin and Manuel Perez. He played trombone in the Silver Leaf Orchestra--Willie Pajaud played in that orchestra, too. Others in the Silver Leaf included Oke Gaspard,

JOSEPH "RED" CLARK
November 11, 1959
Reel II

bass violin. Clark does not remember the name of the drummer or of the clarinetist.

Clark has a wooden box, 18" long by 10" wide, containing nothing but funeral marches, all on standard brass band cards. Many of them were arranged by Louis Dumaine: "West Lawn," "The Last Mile of the Way," "God Be With You," "The Beautiful Beyond," "Silence," "Lead Me, Saviour," "On Calvary Hill," "Beautiful Isle," "Softly and Tenderly." Number 190 is a new one the band hasn't played yet; it was written by C. H. Collins, and is dedicated to the memory of bandmaster Charles Dorian. The music is identified by numbers; the old custom was to cut off the names of the pieces of music so that other bands could not find out what piece was being played, and the custom still holds in the Eureka. "Golden Gate" is an old number; the music sheets are so old that they have to be handled with care. The Eureka hasn't played it in a long time, and Clark wants to bring it out again, perhaps at their next funeral. Manuel Paul wrote the baritone part [for tenor saxophone] from the cornet part. Number 12 is so old that Clark does not know what it is; it has "FM" on it, which means "Funeral March." There are two solo B flat cornet parts and one first B flat cornet part; a bass horn part, a baritone horn part--no saxophone parts; alto saxophone plays E flat clarinet parts and tenor saxophone plays baritone horn parts--there is one part for first and second trombones [two sheets]; one trombonist plays the top notes of the part and the other plays the bottom notes. Both ~~THE~~ cards have the same thing on them; Clark used to trade parts with Albert Warner.

Clark has another box of marches. Clark said, "Every time I run across a part of years ago, it gives me the blues." "Trombonium," from 1914, is in the box. There is another march they haven't used yet. Some of the cornet parts are marked first cornet, some second cornet. There are no drum parts; years ago, fellows like Ernest Trepagnier and Peter Rayfield could read, but drummers today don't read parts. Clark has

yet another box of marches--"Wake Up," "3" "1144," "1182," "Under the Double Eagle," "Albania," "373," "On the Square," which is number 15, dated 1916. The dated on some are cut off, blurred off or worn off.

The band buys its music; when Clark buys a march, each member contributes his share. Years ago a march cost \$1 or \$1.50; there are still some available for \$1, but they are for "kid" bands; a good march, like "On the Square," will cost \$2.25, including tax and postage. "Funeral dirges" cost the same. "Head" numbers cost study-- the Eureka doesn't like to play "head," but they have to do it for people they work for; if it was left to the band, they wouldn't play anything by head. When Clark first joined the Eureka Band, they carried two bags of music for each funeral; going to the funeral and the cemetery, Willie Wilson would carry the funeral marches in one bag and Tom Albert would carry the marches in another bag; coming back they would swap bags. The Eureka has gotten away from playing only marches now; the people want them to play the things they hear on the [Orthophonic?].

When Clark first started playing with the Eureka, the personnel was: Willie Wilson, Tom Albert, Alcide Landry, trumpets; Albert Warner and Clark, trombones; Johnny Wilson, baritone horn; Alphonse "Buddy" Johnson, alto horn; Ed Verret, bass horn; John Casimir, E flat clarinet; "Little Jim," bass drum and Thomas "Crackers," snare drum--"Crackers," who lived on Eighth and Saratoga Streets, was so called because he worked for the National Biscuit Company.

These are some of the societies and clubs for which the Eureka Band plays funerals: Young Men's Protective Benevolent Association(over the river; Young Men's Olympian Benevolent Association, Senior Division(on Eighth Street)--the Young Men's Olympians has two divisions, but the Eureka does not play for the Junior Division; Young and True Friends Benevolent Association(in Carrollton section).

yet another box of marches--"Wake Up," "3" "1114," "1182," "Under the Double Eagle," "Albania," "373," "On the Square," which is number 15, dated 1916. The dated on some are cut off, blurred off or worn off.

The band buys its music; when Clark buys a march, each member contributes his share. Years ago a march cost \$1 or \$1.50; there are still some available for \$1, but they are for "kid" bands; a good march, like "On the Square," will cost \$2.25, including tax and postage. "Funeral dirges" cost the same. "Head" numbers cost study-- the Eureka doesn't like to play "head," but they have to do it for people they work for; if it was left to the band, they wouldn't play anything by head. When Clark first joined the Eureka Band, they carried two bags of music for each funeral; going to the funeral and the cemetery, Willie Wilson would carry the funeral marches in one bag and Tom Albert would carry the marches in another bag; coming back they would swap bags. The Eureka has gotten away from playing only marches now; the people want them to play the things they hear on the [Orthophonic?].

When Clark first started playing with the Eureka, the personnel was: Willie Wilson, Tom Albert, Alcide Landry, trumpets; Albert Warner and Clark, trombones; Johnny Wilson, baritone horn; Alphonse "Buddy" Johnson, alto horn; Ed Verret, bass horn; John Casimir, E flat clarinet; "Little Jim," bass drum and Thomas "Crackers," snare drum--"Crackers," who lived on Eighth and Saratoga Streets, was so called because he worked for the National Biscuit Company.

These are some of the societies and clubs for which the Eureka Band plays funerals: Young Men's Protective Benevolent Association(over the river; Young Men's Olympian Benevolent Association, Senior Division(on Eighth Street)--the Young Men's Olympians has two divisions, but the Eureka does not play for the Junior Division; Young and True Friends Benevolent Association(in Carrollton section).

JOSEPH "RED" CLARK
November 11, 1959
Reel III

church on St. Maurice Street to play~~ing~~ for a cornerstone laying, and the Odd Fellows had their memorial service there in May.

The American Legion probably handles the Memorial Day service in Chalmette National Cemetary on ~~XXX~~ May 30. The musicians' union ~~E~~ sends the Eureka Band to ~~XXX~~ play for the ceremonies, and Clark does not really know who is in charge. Years ago when they went down there they would stay all day; there would be speeches, songs and food. Memorial Day used to be called Grand Army Day--for the Grand Army of the Republic. When the old soldiers were living the celebration was on a large scale, but the soldiers of World War I and World War II do not gather as the old ones did.

The ~~XXXXX~~ Eureka plays for the Masons. Years ago the Masons used music at every funeral, but in the later years the men who have come into the Masons "they have kind of abolished that." But it is in the Masons' constitution that every Mason is supposed to be buried with a "band of music." According to the interviewers, Catholics are not supposed to be Masons, but there are some here in New Orleans who belong. Clark has never buried Catholics with music, but he's been to Catholic cemeteries; he is a Catholic himself, and he has been to the cemetery to take the body, with the band, but the band did not go inside the cemetery. The band would meet the funeral at the church.

The Eureka plays mostly for the Baptists and sometimes for the Methodists, but for hardly any other denomination. Years ago there was a Spiritualist church on Melpomene Street that had a parade every year, and all the members would come out barefooted and walk in the hot sun. They wore white gowns and their leader was called "Mother Kate." She ~~XXX~~ died, and the church isn't there anymore. They didn't have funerals with a band.

Clark has played a funeral for a woman occasionally. The high officials in the Eastern Star and the [] have music at their funerals. Clark has played many of these, in early and late years.

The music is the same for a woman.

Allen says that Percy Humphrey tells the story of how his brother Earl Humphrey and Buddy Petit would play a sample of music for the widow at the wake; Clark says this is just a joke.

A funeral usually meets at an organization's meeting place and is ~~XX~~ disbanded at the same place; they never meet at the home of the deceased, except when the person who dies doesn't belong to any organization and friends get the money together to hire a band. Then they meet at some corner and go to the home, church or wherever the body is. Sometimes they meet the rest of the procession at the undertaker's parlor and take them to the church. The distance between the funeral home and the church is of no consideration as to where the band meets the funeral; when the body is at the church, it has been there all night, for the wake. In Algiers they are nearly always in the church.

The funeral for Murray Henderson [a funeral director] had five bands and that of Henry Allen, Sr. had four bands. Clark played for both of those funerals; he had just started with the Eureka Band at that time. The bass player in the Eureka at that time, Joe Howard had paralyzed his lip by playing high-note trumpet; he became a good bass player.

It has been about a year or so since Clark played a funeral with more than one band; the last one was when John Casimir [and the Young Tuxedo Band] had the other band. Papa Celestin's funeral had two bands of fifteen men each. Clark played Buddy Petit's funeral; it had only one band. Kid Howard and Ernest Rogers "scrapped up a band" for that funeral and they went to a church on Annette Street or Lapeyrouse, somewhere downtown. Petit was taken to a Baptist church. When there is more than one band, they ~~XX~~ play alternate selections; the bands are separated in the parade. If a man has belonged to two or more organizations, each organization may hire a band, but will hire only one each. The organization that is in charge of the body goes first in the procession.

JOSEPH "RED" CLARK
November 11, 1959
Reel III

The Eureka plays only hymns in fast tempo when they are going to pick up the body; when they have picked up the body they play funeral marches, in slow, 4/4 time. In the cemetery they play a slow number for the march to the grave. Sometimes a particular number will be requested, but not often. "Nearer My God To Thee" is sometimes requested; they haven't played that for a long time, but they used to play it very often. Clark once went to Carrollton to play a funeral for the Young and True Friends. The members made the comment, "Well, We'll hear something different today." Clark has always tried to play something different on his jobs. Some bands play the same thing all the time: "What A Friend We Have In Jesus," "Nearer My God To Thee," "Just A Closer Walk With Thee." Clark doesn't play the latter anymore; he is "letting it rest." The Eureka was the first band to play that on the street; Louis Dumaine wrote the arrangement for them.

Through the years Clark has played for over five hundred funerals. Once he played one every day for a week; he once played two in one day. He played twenty in 1959 up to November. In 1958 he played thirteen; in 1956 he played thirteen. John Casimir ~~XXXX~~ plays a lot of funerals, too. The George Williams Band doesn't play many funerals; Williams doesn't care much about playing them.

END OF REEL III