

The interview takes place at 1770 N. Dorgenois Street, Paul Barnes' home.

There is talk about Paul's family. An older brother, Andrew, played a [tin] fife, but did not take up another instrument. The fife was very popular in New Orleans at that time. Also [Emile Barnes] played the fife. Paul played the fife at six years; Sidney Bechet played the fife. Andrew Barnes was accidentally shot. He was trying to stop a fight and got shot. He was three years older than Paul. EB is about ten years older than Paul. Andrew was called "Boose", [which rhymes with "moose"] . Nicknames were very popular in New Orleans at that time.

Paul Barnes gives a list of his siblings: (oldest to youngest) Emile, called "Mealy" [according to EB, there is no correct spelling of this]; then came Emily, then Adam, then Andrew, called "Boose", then Alice, then Paul, called "Polo" (common nickname for Paul in New Orleans then), and Frances, the youngest, a girl. She died at about five years; she was the first of the siblings to die. "She taken sick and she passed."

PB's father played guitar, but not in a band. It was a musical family on both sides. His mother's sister [his aunt] played guitar. Her husband and children were Marreros: Simon Marrero, the oldest son, played bass; Billy Marrero, also known as Billy Moran, the husband, played bass, John, the next son, played banjo and guitar; Lawrence, the next son, played banjo and guitar; Eddie, the next son, played bass. The last son was William, who did not play. Eddie is alive, but does not play bass anymore. PB's aunt's children were all string players, but Polo's mother's side were all instrumentalists. [Confusing here.] His father did not encourage Polo to play. The Barnes father left home when Polo was six years old. "He never came back home anymore." Polo says that he would have played whatever instrument EB played.

The oldest brother [Raisable?] on his mother's side had children who

played music. Sam "Sugar Noo" [or "Sweet Noot"] [sp?] Frazier, was a drummer; next was Josiah "Cie" Frazier, who plays drums. The next son was Alex [sp?] Frazier, who played piano, and the next was Simon Frazier [piano]. Michel [sp?] Frazier was Mrs. Barnes' third brother. Mitchell Frazier, [son of?] Mrs. Barnes' youngest brother, played piano. Her sister Jeanette married [Billy] Marrero. As for living musicians on his father's side, Paul says that Paul Barnes's first cousin's son, Gus Wright, was a drummer. He is living in California.

Talk about jazz: When PB came back to New Orleans, many old musicians had forgotten the difference between traditional jazz and New Orleans jazz. [?? Confusing on New Orleans versus traditional?] PB says they were calling it all Dixieland, which it is not. The first thing in traditional jazz or most music is the beat. The beat in traditional jazz is like a parade beat--two to a bar. Dixieland is four beats to a bar. PB demonstrates by scatting how [the bass drum?] and the bass play in the two [kinds of] musics.

In traditional jazz the piano gives the band a foundation, playing a straight [accompaniment]. In a Dixieland band the pianist sometimes runs all over the piano. In the last chorus, the leader hits his foot down, and the band jumps on the four/four beat, like Dixieland, and the band goes out on the 4/4 beat. Then the drummer "hits the cymbal one beat" - called the after beat (demonstrates). This beat is something like one type of the Baptist church clapping. It is not on the beat; the pure races hit on the beat, but the mixed races, New Orleans people, hit on the after beat. (PB sings "John the Bell, Done Got Over", and demonstrates the Baptist beats with clapping.) One beat was picked up by the Dixieland [drummers].

Traditional jazz has a moderate tempo, a slow blues tempo, a slow tempo for a song [i.e., a sentimental song?], and a boogie woogie tempo. Boogie woogie is as old as jazz, and has an eight beat. Dixieland is fast. White people would tell the band to play hot music, i.e., fast music, which they

would, every now and then. After a fast number, they would play a waltz. The bands had to be able to play a waltz then. [Now] people hardly ever ask for a waltz. This was before World War I. After World War I Dixieland started. Dixieland is the last chorus of traditional jazz, with the 4/4 beat. In traditional jazz the drummer is not allowed to use the cymbal at the start. He always used plenty of snare drum, and the drummers used to do some beautiful work on the snares. Traditional jazz will shake you up more than any music. You do a lot of shaking with Dixieland [in the last part?], but it has not got anything to go to. When you play traditional, you get to the last and make that change, and jump to the 4/4 beat, then it sounds like a whole new band. It gives you great inspiration; people get to shouting, unlike bop and rock and roll. People sit down and listen to bop, but when you listen to traditional jazz, your feet get to moving, and you can't sit still. Even babies in people's arms dance. In traditional jazz, most musicians don't jump around and show off -- they are straight, trying to make you feel good, trying to make you get the feeling. Dixieland musicians want to make the people see how good they are; they show off and do funny things with their instruments, hold them in back of their heads, etc. This is a show where the people are not really interested in music, Traditional jazz is played to make you [the listener] get the fire and inspiration. They [i.e., the musicians] don't be jumping around, but they are playing so hot that you can't sit still. You grab your [baby?] and say, "Let's dance."

Polo played traditional jazz in 1919 when he was seventeen years old, in a band with Cie Frazier, d; Eddie Marrero, b; Mercedes [Gorman] Fields, p; Bush Hall, tp; who died, and was replaced by Red Allen. Then Polo was the only alto saxophone player in New Orleans. "They were playing clarinets, and my playing on that alto saxophone was so successful that it changed the whole city of New Orleans to saxophone." Johnny Handy was

inspired to play [alto] sax by Polo. Handy was a wonderful clarinetist, but after that, he never could get back to the clarinet. Andrew Morgan took sax lessons from Polo. He was a clarinetist. When Polo started playing music professionally, he became known as Paul Barnes. Just recently he has become known by his nickname. In the above band was also George Washington, tb. They lost GW and got Earl Humphrey. He left and they got a fellow named [Robert] Thomas, who died about three years ago. [Cf. other PB interviews.]

At that time Kid Rena had the hottest jazz band in town. Louis Armstrong was the only person who could outblow Kid Rena. Freddie Keppard was the best trumpet; then after him came King Oliver and [Papa] Celestin. Freddie Keppard left town, and Louis Armstrong took charge. Louis Armstrong picked up Buddy Petit's style and added high notes to it. LA hung around with Buddy Petit. Buddy Petit played beautiful "changes." Kid Rena didn't play this style. He played that other style of jazz. He hit high notes.

That other style of jazz was to punch out the melody, and to swing the melody, rather than playing a multi-note style, like Punch Miller. Kid Rena swung the melody and swung the whole house too. PB played with Rena then. That made the KR band, PB says "real great." Then PB joined the Original Tuxedo Band to make more money. This move was at the advice of some insurance collector-musician. This hurt Kid Rena a lot, but Polo couldn't help it because he was making more money.

PB joined the Tuxedo Band toward its end (before the split between Papa Celestin and BaBa Ridgley.). Nobody knows why PC and BBR fell out, but the band thought it was money. Before BBR died, he told PB it was about a little money. It was a mistake to split up the band, because it was too great. [Cf. BaBa Ridgley interviews.]

Talk about the formation of Papa Celestin's band [Tuxedo]. Simon and John Marrero, "Chinee" Foster and PB asked PC to form his own band. They couldn't get Emma Barrett, so they got Jeanette Salvant (later Mrs. Narvin Kimball). Lady pianists were then popular. This band was successful.

PB composed "My Josephine." The number was such a hit that it swamped Ridgley's Tuxedo. Ridgley's band died out and Papa Celestin's Tuxedo only remained. In 1927, King Oliver heard "My Josephine" in Chicago, and wrote to trumpeter Manuel Perez to learn the identity of the alto sax player. Manuel Perez and King Oliver have taken more musicians out of New Orleans than anybody else. Manuel Perez would notice who was great, and would tell KO, and KO would send for them.

End of Reel I.

Papa Celestin's became the "best band." PB played with PC until 1927. King Oliver was so "enthused" over "My Josephine" that he sent for PB in 1927. PB went to St. Louis with Red Allen to join King Oliver. [Cf. ^{W.C. Allen} ~~W.C.~~ S. Allen, KING JOE OLIVER, Red Allen's biographies in various other sources, such as JAZZ MASTERS OF NEW ORLEANS, SUCH SWEET THUNDER.] PB showed Red Allen and Papa Celestin "a lot on their trumpet." KO went to the Savoy Ballroom in New York City.

This band had Luis Russell, p; Willie Foster, brother of Pops Foster, bj; Paul Barbarin, d; [Lawson?] Buford, [brass?] bass; KO, Red Allen, tp; [?], [Cf. W.C. Allen, above] director and violin; Barney Bigard, PB, Omer Simeon, who was replaced by Darnell Howard, saxes. [OS doubled on clarinet?] DH replaced OS. This was a good band. KO made his mistake when he did not take the Cotton Club job, because he wanted too much money. Duke Ellington got this job. The Oliver band did not get jobs after that, and broke up.

PB stayed in New York and jobbed around for about five years after this. RA returned to New Orleans. PB played with Elmer Snowden (who had Duke Ellington in his band at one time), Chick Webb, (on gigs, not as a regular member). Luis Russell recommended PB to Jelly Roll Morton, and PB joined Jelly. Barney Bigard went with DE; Omer Simeon, with Earl Hines, and PB with Jelly Roll when KO's band broke up. PB got to New York just before Charles Lindberg flew across the [Atlantic] Ocean, and he was there [on , 1927], for the celebration when Lindberg came back.

In 1931 PB joined King Oliver and made an unsuccessful tour. Then PB returned to New Orleans until 1934. In 1934-35 PB toured again with KO and had a bad tour. They made no money. KO died in 1935. [Cf. KO biographies.] All the trumpet players whom PB played with liked him. What was it like to travel with a band? It was pretty hard with KO's

band. The bus would break down, and they didn't make much money. It was a pleasure traveling with Jelly Roll Morton, because Jelly Roll had a ~~big~~ bus with two seats for each man. They used to sit down and play checkers and cards. They traveled like rich people with Jelly Roll Morton. It was tough with KO. There just wasn't any money to be made. JDJ talks about PB's diary in KING JOE OLIVER. Most of their work was with white audiences, but they didn't have any money either. Crowds were "not too much." They didn't have money to go to concerts. [Cf. KING JOE OLIVER. Did they play concerts?]

When the band wasn't working they just sat around waiting for a date. They would stay someplace for a couple of days, and visit friends they made there. People liked to have them come around. They were treated right, but there was no money there. He didn't run into bad treatment racially. Probably other people did, but everywhere KO's band went, people had great respect for them as musicians. Colored and white dances were never together. You saw very little of it up North. White people would go to Harlem and mix, but colored wouldn't go downtown and mix with them very much. There was little mixing. White people always mixed more for some reason. Why? Maybe colored people weren't making enough money to go downtown.

PB never played on riverboats with KO. The only boat he ever played on was in New Orleans with Sidney Desvignes. It was the ISLAND QUEEN, the same boat the government wants to get rid of now [cf. notes on DELTA QUEEN].

PB used to play the "dance schools," [dancing schools], also called "taxi dances." He never saw a colored person at any of these dances. He never saw one of these places for colored. Colored girls

didn't work in them either. This was in the North; There were taxi dance halls in New Orleans too. On taxi dancing: they had tickets, short dances, etc. It looked as though there was segregation, but perhaps there was none. PB never heard of a colored girl applying for a job in one of the taxi dance halls.

Musicians in the North drank a lot, like those in New Orleans, but they seldom used dope. A few of them did, but mostly they thought it was terrible. In the twenties it wasn't popular, like now. Jelly Roll Morton and his men didn't smoke tea, i.e., marijuana, but they drank.

In Kansas with KO, PB ran into marijuana. A fellow was selling weeds, and the musicians bought some to get a kick out of them. They didn't get much of a kick, but PB brought some of the seeds to New Orleans, and his brother ^{MEHLY} Milé planted them. They grew so fast that Milé got scared and destroyed it. Milé didn't want it to spread. PB says that he and Milé were just experimenting; they didn't mean to sell it. *[Note in another interview Emile Barnes says that there is not a correct way to spell "Mehly." RBA, 15 April 1981.]*

PB has played Johnny St. Cyr, Kid Ory and other greats. Kid Ory played trombone at the Savoy Ballroom in New York with King Oliver. Thomas Gray [sp?] was the trumpet player. [See above.] PB played with Luis Russell's band, including Johnny Hodges. He has played with almost all the great musicians during his lifetime. PB played four years at Disneyland with Johnny St. Cyr, singer Monette Moore, Louis Armstrong, and pianist Harvey Brooks (who played with Mamie Smith). Mike Delay, tp; and Alton Redd, d; were also in the band.

PB also played soprano sax with Jelly Roll Morton, instead of clarinet [in addition to alto sax]. PB played a little clarinet before he played sax. PB played clarinet with KO, but he didn't play it like he plays down here. He played big arrangements

where you put down the clarinet, play a part, then grab up the soprano sax, then change to the alto. He didn't take special solos on clarinet like he does now.

PB got back on clarinet when he joined the Navy. He studied the clarinet, making rapid progress. When he went in as musician third class, he made second class musician [quite soon?]. Then he was promoted to musician first class [due to clarinet progress]. The [racial] prejudice was so strong here that you couldn't go any higher than first class musician, no matter who you were. You could never be a [chief?] petty officer. If you wanted to go higher, you would have to leave the Navy here and go someplace like Cuba with this Navy.

He learned to play "classica^s~~A~~, operatic music and all that" in the Navy. He became the most outstanding clarinet which they had. He instructed also. He gives repertoire: "William Tell Overture", "Morning, Noon and Night", etc. They had a sixteen or seventeen piece band that played for dances Saturday nights. Most of their work was symphonic, classical work. They had parades too. So he played in three different kinds of bands in the Navy, for three different occasions: parade, dance and symphonic.

He didn't play concert music once when he got out of the Navy. But if he wanted to now, he could apply to play in a concert band here, "because that prejudice is...kind of - people are getting away from that, this country is trying to get together." Then white people thought they were better than black, and vice versa. Talk on the influence of [social] environment.

JDJ asks why women don't play jazz. PB doesn't know why women don't play jazz, except for the piano, but says that women can do anything men can do. Men may be stronger, but now you need brains.

He says women are as liberated as men. When you have voting power, you can have anything. There have been a few women jazz musicians and women bands, i.e., Sweethearts of Rhythm, Dolly Hutchinson, also known as Dolly Jones. Women just don't care to do these things. They would rather stay home and keep house. A few women play clarinet, but quit when they leave school. Women just don't care for jazz band playing. They play the harp; men rarely do. They have men who go to the moon, but no women. Women could go; men haven't got any better brains than women, but, "she ain't studyin' about no moon."

If it was left up to women, there wouldn't be any war. Women aren't interested in war, except for a few like Golda Meir. PB says we had some queens in history who ruled. PB says it looks like the nature of a woman is different from a man. Children like different toys. Boys like hammers, saws and trains; girls like dolls. "A woman likes beauty, and that is why this world is so beautiful today.... Men like comforts; as long as something is comfortable, he's [right?]. But women will suffer pains for beauty." Women used to wear corsets. PB says that, when he was a kid, a woman would not put out the garbage without her corset on. PB talks about how women will decorate a place and fix it up. (Few seconds blank.)

End of Reel II.

Note: Before the interview, when JDJ and PB were having coffee in the kitchen, PB spoke with pride about how he knew how to, and did, perform, when needed, all the different tasks essential to housekeepin'.

Note: PB's signature here is what he calls his professional signature.