

PETER LACAZE
REEL I
January 27, 1972

Also Present: Lars T. Edegran,
Richard B. Allen
Summary: Richard B. Allen
Audit: Bruce B. Raeburn
Re-audit: Richard B. Allen
Typing: Dan Weisman

Peter Lacaze spells his last name and says that it is a French name. He pronounces it. Some people spell it LaCaze.

Lacaze says the date is the twenty-sixth, but he then says he does not remember.

RBA says that people would confuse Peter Lacaze with Peter Bocage. They worked together [in] street bands [i.e., marching bands].

Lacaze guesses he worked with every street band "we had here" at one time. He might have had one or two jobs with them. He was a member of Amos Riley's parade band [i.e., marching band] only. He played second and third trumpet with Riley for quite a while. He was never with [Amos Riley's] Tulane Band.

Lacaze was born on July 14, 1893, which RBA says is Bastille Day, in the New Orleans part of St. Bernard Parish. [Note that many older musicians gave their birth date as July 4, December 25, another holiday or a date near a holiday. RBA, 20 April 1982.] His parents spoke in French to conceal things from their children.

Lacaze did not know Jimmie "Jimbo" Noone personally. Lacaze thinks he was from around Merauxville.

Lacaze thinks the Durands, including Maurice, were from St. Bernard Parish. [See also Maurice Durand interview.]

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Jim Robinson, whom Lacaze confuses with his nephew [Sidney] "Little Jim" [Brown] told RBA that he [Robinson] heard Durand with the [Original] Tuxedo Brass Band and the Excelsior Brass Band. [See Jim Robinson, Reel I.]

Lacaze was the only one in his family who "took to music." He started on the violin around 1913. He had an instructor for a couple of months, but Lacaze could not play violin.

He got another instructor to teach him "trap" drums [i.e., dance-band drums which include various accessories like a pedal] which he liked. He did pretty well with drums for a couple of years. Then "they" did not want bass drums on the trolley so drummers had to hire wagons going and coming. He could not afford this so he quit drums.

His friend Maurice Durand played trumpet in the band in which Lacaze played drums. Durand showed Lacaze fingering on trumpet.

Prof. Nicholson [i.e., Henry Nickerson?], who did not play trumpet himself, but did play other instruments, taught Lacaze trumpet at his [the teacher's] home. He had many other pupils, but Lacaze did not know them. RBA speculates that the teacher was Camille Nickerson's father, and Lacaze says, "Probably so..."

Lacaze started trumpet after 1913. [See above. He started on violin which he played a couple of months, and then played drums for a couple of years; therefore, he must have begun trumpet in

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1915 or after.] He played it until 1934 when he became so discouraged because of pyorrhea and low pay that he quit.

Lacaze knew Joe ["King"] Oliver well because they played together in parade bands. Lacaze knew Louis Armstrong "somewhat the same way."

Most of the marching bands in those days were always short of men. If they needed fifteen or twenty men, they had to hire "extras" [i.e., those who were not regular members]. If you could play at all, someone always needed you so Lacaze got a chance to play with almost all the parade bands.

Sometimes you might play only one or two jobs; sometimes you might be asked to join the band. You might accept the offer and leave to join another band after maybe two months. There was plenty of work [in parade bands] but pay was small. There were more jobs than musicians. Lacaze guesses that this was true in many businesses.

Lacaze played with Louis Armstrong in Papa Celestin's [Original] Tuxedo Parade [i.e., Brass] Band. Celestin was the leader, Armstrong played solo [cornet], and Lacaze played second and third [cornet]. [Therefore, Celestin played first cornet? And Armstrong played second cornet when Lacaze played third?]

Another time, Lacaze had played a parade and did not have a job playing that night. He went to the Royal Garden where there were dances every Sunday night. Willie Johnson, who was called

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"Bunk", was in charge of the job. He asked Lacaze if he would rent his horn to Louis Armstrong so he could substitute for Johnson. Lacaze said he would lend Armstrong his horn without any charge, and just sat and enjoyed. Lacaze says, "I was in love with music that much..." He became well acquainted with Armstrong that night.

Lacaze sat on [the bandstand at?] a job with Bunk Johnson to listen to the band when he was playing in "what they called Storyville at that time." Lacaze was very interested in bands, especially trumpeters. Lacaze would try to learn what he could from any trumpeter "who could play something."

His favorite trumpeter was Louis Armstrong, based on hearing both his records and him in person. He also liked Manuel Perez's style which was very good. Lacaze listened from his backyard at 5327 Dauphine Street to Perez on Saturday nights when he played lawn parties at 816 Andry [Street]. A tarpaulin was stretched out and people danced [on it].

Lacaze does not recall guitarist Rene Baptiste, but he knew Big Eye Louis Nelson well [both of whom played with Perez]. Before Nelson died, he lived on Derbigny [Street] near Kerlerc Street. Lacaze knew him well from the Ninth Ward where Lacaze was reared.

Some of the Ninth Ward musicians were Maurice Durand, clarinetist Joseph Watson, guitarist Charlie Bernard, and

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trombonist "Joe Hoodoo," who, RBA thinks, played with "Willie Parker or somebody." Lacaze is quite sure "Joe Hoodoo" was with Parker.

Lacaze does not know of "Ambruces" [i.e., Ambrose Powell] being from the Ninth Ward. RBA thinks he went there with [Emile] "Mealy" [Barnes], and [Tom Albert?]. They also went down to Delacroix Island and other [nearby] places.

Lacaze knew Freddy Gould, Henry Ford the younger, and Henry Ford the elder. The younger Ford was a violinist, and Lacaze played drums in his three- or four-piece band for quite a while. Lacaze also knew Ford the elder who was a bass violinist.

Edegran says Lacaze said he started drums in 1913. Lacaze guesses he played drums about two years. [Compare above ca 1:03-1:12.]

The first band in which Lacaze played trumpet was the Supreme which was organized by Edward "Eddie" Jackson, who played bass violin and tuba, and Lacaze. Jackson played bass violin with the Supreme which consisted of six pieces.

Sometimes a band might last for a couple of months, but the Supreme Band lasted for a couple of years. Lacaze can not recall the woman pianist so RBA names some women pianists. Camilla Todd and Lacaze worked together in the Silver Leaf Orchestra. The Supreme's pianist was Wilhelmina Bart DeRowen.

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Edegran asks who the Supreme's clarinetist was. RBA then asks Lacaze if he worked with a clarinetist named Arthur, and Lacaze says he worked with Arthur Williams. However, he can not recall in which band. [Compare Henry Russ interview.]

The Supreme lost members one by one. You could always hustle a few musicians [i.e., get a few to play in a hurry?] This left the one who tried to keep the band in line in the soup.

Next Lacaze went to Ernest Johnson's band. He was called "Duck Ernest."

RBA asks about Dave Bailey [who was Johnson's half-brother]. Lacaze identifies Bailey as a drummer. Bailey was working as a janitor at Sara [sp?] Mayo Hospital the last time Lacaze saw him.

Lacaze was in the Supreme some time between 1914 and 1917. He worked hard on his instrument [then]. He had a day job; he had to concentrate on trumpet during any time he had off.

At one time, the Supreme Band played three nights a week at a dance hall, which he thinks was named the Sans Souci, on Howard [Street, now LaSalle Street] between Sixth [Street] and Washington [Avenue]. RBA confirms the location. [Compare Harrison Barnes, Reel I, 29 January (?)].

RBA asks about "Ninny" Coyeault. Lacaze knows the name "Nene" well but can not remember the man. RBA says he was "Pill's" brother. Lacaze says that he was called "Cripple Pill," but he does not know his real name. They worked together for a

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good while. RBA asks about Pill's [other] nickname "Crow Back or Crow Back or something" [similar]. Lacaze says, [Covette?].

RBA mentions Henry Russ, and Lacaze says he was a drummer and played cornet at one time. Russ played in the Nola Band. Eddie Jackson might be called the manager of this band. Lacaze was in Duck Ernest [Johnson]'s band for maybe six or eight months.

Lacaze can not remember what band he was with next. Lacaze can not remember who the other trumpeters with Duck Ernest were. RBA says Punch was with Duck Ernest, and Lacaze adds that Punch Miller played with [Johnson] quite a bit. [See also Dave Bailey and Miller interviews.]

Miller played quite a bit with trombonist Jack Carey, too. Lacaze played with Carey quite a bit, too, but they never had an organized band. Carey hired Lacaze as often as possible.

Lacaze might play with one band tonight and another band tomorrow night so it is hard to remember whom he was with years ago. He thinks the Nola Band lasted until he quit playing trumpet in [19]34. Occasionally the members would change.

Lacaze confirms the fact that Henry Russ was with the Nola Band for a long time. He does not remember any other members.

Lacaze was not in [the armed services]. He discusses the draft system.

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Lacaze only played on the Capitol [river]boat as a substitute trumpeter for one night with Fate Marable among others. Marable [the leader no doubt] played an instrument which Lacaze thinks was called the organophone which was played by steam. Edegran says that it is a calliope. [Compare Henry Russ and Verne Strickfus interviews.]

When Edegran brings up Lacaze's day job, he says that Edegran will laugh at his being a blacksmith. This was in the days of wagons, carriages, and carts. He was a blacksmith from about the age of seventeen until he retired about fifteen years ago. This business changed, but it was [still] similar [with the rise of] automobiles and trucks.

There were not many blacksmith shops in his neighborhood. If you knew how to [do the] work, people wanted you so getting a job was not hard. This was true for good musicians, too, and Lacaze worked all the time. Playing trumpet and working also made it hard for Lacaze.

Lacaze worked every night at a place run by Johnny Ciolina on Iberville [Street] between Bourbon and Royal [Streets] from nine until four a.m. Lacaze lasted about six months.

He rented a room "in town" [i.e. in the Central Business District?] near his day job. He would sleep after playing music at night until time to go to his day job.

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Lacaze tells how he lost his job. Every night about midnight, he would go to the men's room, wash his face, sit around and take a nap. Alex Bigard, a drummer and the band's manager, got mad and fired Lacaze. There were a couple of entertainers, singers and dancers, and a male pianist. Herbert Smith played alto saxophone; and Thomas Parker, tenor saxophone. Lacaze can not remember the pianist's name. There were about five men in Bigard's band.

The band played jazz and read. Wherever Lacaze went, he had to bring some arrangements because he had to have [notations of] music usually. He played some without [notations of] music.

Lacaze can not remember the place which "was a nightclub like" [i.e., was a nightclub] and where "they" had two women entertainers who sang and did a little dancing.

Lacaze, Edegran and RBA discuss sources of information. Edegran says that the above job must have been one of Lacaze's longest jobs in music. Lacaze agrees. RBA suggests that this must have been an awful job [based on what Lacaze has said.] He replies, "It was pitiful."

Lacaze worked for a couple of weeks at the Music Box on Carondelet and Canal. It was too hard for him because the band had to play continuously. It was sort of a taxi-dance hall [i.e., was a taxi-dance hall]. At a taxi-dance hall, the horns would play one chorus, and the other instruments would play the other

chorus. The pianists could play all the time because this was not so hard; but the horns, clarinets and trumpets, had to get a little rest.

Lacaze says this group at the Music Box was not a band [i.e., it was not organized? Then who would choose the pieces to play? Tempi? Keys? Personnel? Etc., etc.?] He does not remember the date of his job at the Music Box. He thinks [trumpeter] Arnold Metoyer had the job originally. Edegran suggests that Lacaze took Metoyer's place. Lacaze agrees that he did so.

Charles McCurtis was with [John] Robichaux's orchestra. Occasionally McCurtis played with Lacaze, but McCurtis was not with Lacaze regularly. [Compare Henry Russ interview, 18 January 1972, p.?].

Ricard Alexis and Lacaze were pretty good friends and rarely played together inside. They played together in brass bands. [Compare Henry Russ interview 18 January 1972, p.?]. Trombonist Harrison Barnes belonged to the Nola Band Lacaze knew him well, too.

Red Allen and Lacaze never played together, but he knew both Allen and his father [Henry Allen Sr.]. [Compare with Henry Russ interview 18 January 1972, p.?]. Lacaze played in the father's brass band several times.

Lacaze does not recognize the name Mercedes Fields, but he recalls Mercedes Gorman when Edegran asks about Mercedes Gorman

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Fields. Mercedes Gorman played in either the Nola, Silver Leaf, or another band. [Therefore, this was before she married Fields?]

Albert Baptiste was the manager of the Silver Leaf. He was a violinist and worked for a coffee company. The Silver Leaf Band existed before the Nola Band. Edegran says, "First it was Supreme and then the..." Lacaze interrupts with "Yeah, that's right..." [which only confirms that he was in the Supreme first and nothing else!]

The only member of the Silver Leaf recalled by Lacaze was named Baptiste. RBA asks Lacaze if he remembers George Sayles who Lacaze recalls as a guitarist. Lacaze never had any dealings with him. Lacaze does not respond to RBA's mention of Philip Nickerson.

Lacaze knew trumpeter Hypolyte Charles well -- who had to quit playing because of heart trouble. Lacaze also knew Sam and Honore' Dutry well. Lacaze used to visit their home. Sam Dutry had a pressing business on Antonine and Magazine [Streets]. The brothers Honore, Peter, and Sam were regularly there. Sam Dutry worked in the Nola Band with Lacaze quite a bit. [See also Henry Russ and Harrison Barnes interviews.]

Lacaze knew clarinetist Alphonse Picou very well, but Lacaze never worked with him. Picou probably played saxophone later, but Lacaze does not know.

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Lacaze never heard of trombonist "Durium." Harrison Barnes was the only trombonist with the Nola Band, Lacaze believes.

Lacaze only knows of sousaphonist Booker Washington. Lacaze knew banjoist Lawrence Marrero as well as Lacaze knew a book. Marrero played with Lacaze. This was in the Nola Band. [Leading the Nola Band.]

Lacaze played with Lawrence Marrero's brothers, Simon and Eddie in various bands, not Lacaze's own band. John [Marrero, another brother,] was with the [Original] Tuxedo [Orchestra] for a long time. He went to New York where he dies.

Most of the bands in which one played had more non-readers than readers. Most of the readers, including Lacaze, were not professional readers, i.e., sight readers.

Often, Lacaze would have to run over new sheet music on muted trumpet between tunes. Since he was the leader [i.e., played the melody], the others could play. Those who did not play the right note [i.e., as indicated on the arrangement?] would harmonize anyway.

The only bands with two trumpets were the street bands [i.e., marching bands]. People used five-to-seven piece bands. The Nola was a small band.

Lacaze always had the whole orchestration on jobs because a musician might ask [for a part]. Often you did not know what musicians could do until they were on the job. Some admitted that

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they did not use the parts. Some would try to fool you as they could do so well without [reading] the part. But they could not fool you.

Even if Lacaze went on an advertisement [i.e., a job advertising another job, such as a dance, played on a wagon or truck] where only three or four tunes were used, he brought orchestrations with him. Lacaze has none of his music.

RBA mentions that Edegran's band plays orchestrations of "Scott Joplin and that kind of stuff." Lacaze played and liked this sort of music.

He had no favorite numbers; he made all his favorites. He tried to do everything well because he liked it.

Sunny Henry was not a first-class reader, but he read. Lacaze worked with a few first-class readers when he substituted with Armand J. Piron's and Mr. [John] Robichaux's bands. Lacaze worked with a few others. RBA says McNeal Breaux told him about Lacaze.

Lacaze recalls " 'Ti' Boy," but Lacaze did not know him personally. Lacaze knew a saxophonist named " 'Ti' Boy." RBA mentions trumpeter Dominique " 'Ti' Boy" Remy, drummer Paul " 'Ti' Boy" Barbarin, and the confusion of identities. Lacaze adds that people die and you never know their names. Lacaze's only nickname was "Pete."

Lacaze explains why he became a musician: he listened to music around the corner from his house when he was about fourteen, as he said before. [See ca 2:18-2:26, above.] He thought he would like to be a musician, so he began trying.

He had no troubles getting money to buy a violin because he worked. People do not work like this anymore. They must be eighteen to work. This is a good thing in a way and a bad thing [in another] because it makes many people lazy. He liked to work and went to work with a good heart. First he delivered orders for a drug store for fifty cents a week. He helped in a blacksmith shop [later].

His father drove a team of horses on a wholesale-meat delivery wagon at night. His name was also Peter Lacaze.

Lacaze went to the place where his father worked one day, and one of the workers threw a piece [i.e., piece of meat] at his foot. The floor was slippery and he was knocked down, getting a hump [i.e., a knot?] on his face. He never went back. "They" could keep that job.

He played music for the love of it. Several times, he would play in someone else's place without pay [i.e., "sit in" for the remainder of the job?] He didn't like the jitney dances [i.e., taxi dances] because he never got a chance even to take a breath.

He played drums with Henry Ford and a couple of others whose names Lacaze does not recall. [See above ca. 2:41-2:42.] He knew

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Freddy Gould but never played with him. [See above, ca. 2:41.]
Gould was raised in the Ninth Ward.

Manuel Perez was the trumpeter in the first band Lacaze heard. [See above, ca. 2:18-2:26 and ca. 6:06-6:08.] He liked Perez's style; in fact, Lacaze was more interested in Perez than the rest of the band. There was a valve trombonist in it. He does not remember any members other than Perez.

Before Lacaze started playing, he heard a band on Saturdays with bassist William "Billy" Marrero, the father of John. This band played in another place [than the band with Perez]. Lacaze does not remember the years that he heard Marrero's band. RBA tries to recall members of Billy Marrero's [Superior Orchestra]. Walter Brundy, the drummer [with the Superior], worked with John Robichaux the entire time that Lacaze knew Brundy.

At first, bands used guitars, then six-string banjos. Some returned to guitars [later]. Few bands had pianos. It was hard to get a piano to the job if there was none there.

Bands used violins. There were none in Perez's band which had trumpet [or no doubt cornet], clarinet, valve trombone, drums, and string bass. [There were] about six [instruments].

Lacaze never played for the Carnival club in Arabi or other Carnival clubs. [For the club in Arabi see Maurice Durand and Harold Dejan interviews.]

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Lacaze lived at 5327 Dauphine Street before he was married. After he was married he lived at, he thinks, 822 Piety Street. Then he moved uptown to Washington [Avenue] and Derbigny [Street]. Next he moved to Derbigny between Second and Third [Streets]. From there, he moved to Desire and Tonti [Streets], followed by a move to Havana [Street] near Law [Street]. He does not remember where he went next. He now lives at 1413 St. Bernard Avenue.

When he married in 1914, he was starting to play trumpet. He did not play at his wedding reception. He might have, but he was not good enough.

Bunk Johnson was a nice trumpet player, and Lacaze liked his style. Lacaze heard him before Lacaze started playing. As far as Lacaze knew, Johnson was a nice fellow.

When Lacaze first met him, he was playing in Storyville with a band of four or five people including a pianist. Lacaze saw him a few times later, but he stayed for a half a night the first time he met Johnson. He encouraged Lacaze to play trumpet.

There was a band at every corner down there. There was so much music that it sounded as though one [band] was trying to outdo the other, Lacaze does not remember any by name.

Lacaze knew the Humphrey family: Willie [J.]; Percy; Earl, whose name requires RBA's prompting; Willie [E.] and perhaps Jim Humphrey.

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Lacaze played with Willie and Earl, but not Percy. Earl played trombone with Lacaze. Edegran asks if this was in the Nola Band, and Lacaze agrees. [Compare above on Harrison Barnes above, ca. 5:24-5:27.] Earl's trombone playing attracted people's attention.

Lacaze played with Willie Humphrey only occasionally. The best trombonists then were Zue Robertson, with whom Lacaze never worked; and Frankie Duson, who did not read. Lacaze does not remember Eddie Morris.

Lacaze thinks that the Imperial Band was good. [Note that Manuel Perez led the Imperial Band.]

Sam Morgan's band was good. Lacaze thinks the first Sam Morgan band was the better. This was the one with Alfred [Williams] on drums. Lacaze never played with this band. The band used music, but they worked from memory mostly.

In the Manuel Perez band, everyone had music in front of them.

END OF REEL

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Also Present: Lars I. Edegran,
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Audit: Bruce B. Raeburn
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Typing: Dan Weisman

Peter Lacaze has been talking about Manuel Perez's cutting the titles off sheet music so that some other musicians could not get [the sheet music of] the tune.

Perez played Scott Joplin compositions and similar ones. He played for dancing. He played waltzes, schottisches, and quadrilles. RBA asks if he played polkas, and Lacaze agrees. Lacaze liked Perez's band better than many [others] because he played such a variety of pieces. Sam Morgan played more popular songs.

Perez's band did not use sheet music when they played the blues. Nearly all bands or orchestras learned the blues first because there were few notes to play. None of the bands which Lacaze heard except brass bands played hymns.

Kid Thomas [Valentine] was considered a good [trumpet] player. He was well known on the [East] side of the [Mississippi] River. He did some good work with his band [i.e., they played well or had good jobs?].

Lacaze knew George Lewis well, too. He was a good clarinetist who worked with "everybody."

Lacaze also knew Chris Kelly. Lacaze's band played several times for him, [i.e., Kelly had two jobs and sent Lacaze's band

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to one]. One night "the people" did not want to pay Lacaze's band because the band was not Chris Kelly's. This got Lacaze in trouble with "the people."

Lacaze thought that Kelly did well [as a cornet player]. Lacaze never saw Kelly mad. As a rule, those who could play well without [notation of] music did not read [because] they thought it was too hard.

Lacaze saw Kelly's band play many times. Kelly never used a violin. A violinist was sometimes used when a clarinet[ist] or a saxophon[ist] was not available. Many did not like to use a violin because it was too soft. The band wanted some noise.

Edegran asks if most of the reading bands used violin, and Lacaze agrees. Lacaze's Nola Band used a violin but "not all the time." They depended on the trumpet and the clarinet to carry this thing along [i.e., to play the melody? To be featured?]

Lacaze never worked with Buddy Petit, but Lacaze knew him well. Lacaze liked his playing. Lacaze thinks he was more of an ear musician than a reader.

Since violinists were not used much, it is hard to remember them. He only recalls Joseph Welsh [sp?] at present.

Manuel Ridgley was the brother of trombonist Will Ridgley [i.e., William "Bebe" Ridgley]. The former ran the Pelican at Rampart and Common [Streets] for Fabacher.

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Lacaze played then in the dance hall, which was upstairs above the barroom, in the Silver Leaf Band and, at the end of his musical career, in the Nola Band. The Royal Garden was across the street from the Pelican. Lacaze played there for perhaps a couple of months. Edegran asks if this was with just a six-piece band, and Lacaze agrees.

Lacaze has nothing like old business cards or photographs, but he has a photograph of himself taken by "some boys from England." The photograph has the date, May 1970 on it. [This could be the date taken or printed.]

Hypolite Charles played in the Silver Leaf Band before Lacaze. Albert Baptiste managed the Silver Leaf. Lacaze thinks Sweet Emma Barrett played in the Silver Leaf at the same time as Charles. She was not in this band when Lacaze was in it.

Lacaze does not know of the Silver Tone Band which Henry Russ talked about. [Compare Henry Russ interview.] Russ was in the Silver Leaf.

Sam Dutry, Sr. played with Lacaze quite a bit, but Dutry was never a band member. They were practically the same age. [Compare Harrison Barnes and Henry Russ interviews.] RBA mentions "Norah" [i.e., Honore' Dutry. Noah is often pronounced "Norah" locally.] Lacaze remembers clarinetist Arthur Williams playing in the same band as himself, but not as a regular member of any band. Lacaze does not know of his playing sax. Pianist Camilla Todd and Peter

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Lacaze worked together for "quite a little while."

Lacaze thinks working on the Capitol [river]boat was nice, [but] it was not so nice for him since he was there only one night. He felt skeptical [i.e., about his ability to play such a job? Lacaze worked pretty hard.] [Fate Marable's] was strictly a reading band. Everyone had [sheet music] in front of him. They used stock arrangements. [See Peter Lacaze, Reel I, 27 January 1972, ca. 4:--.]

Lacaze played with three or four bands which had special arrangements. He did not arrange, but he copies [i.e., the parts?]

The Pelican sometimes had two bands playing alternately opposite each other. This was what was called, Lacaze thinks, jazz festivals. Lacaze does not know of the Tick Tock. Bebe' Ridgley sometimes worked at the Pelican with [his Original] Tuxedo Band. Claiborne Williams' band from "up in the country" [i.e., Donaldsonville] was there at one time.

Lacaze does not know of Bud Scott of Natchez, Mississippi being there. Scott's band burned up in a fire in Natchez. [Compare Walter Barnes sources.]

Lacaze does not know Toots Johnson of Baton Rouge.

The Autocrat Club had dances regularly. These were in the club's present building which has been remodeled. Lacaze's band, among others, was there.

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Lacaze worked quite a bit at the Bull's Club which was at Rampart and Sixth [Streets. Compare other sources on location.] The Sans Souci was on Howard [now LaSalle] Street. Lacaze usually played for dancing. He has heard of the Lions Club and the Hobgoblins.

In the Ninth Ward, there were dance halls around Independence Street. Lawn dances [i.e., lawn parties with dancing] were held in an empty lot as he told before. [See Reel I, 27 January 1972, ca. 2:16-2:20, above.]

All of Lacaze's outdoor jobs, other than ones with brass bands, were at Lake Ponchartrain in camps. The camps were at Milneburg, West End, and Spanish Fort. During the summer months, it was a rare thing [for a musician] to be idle on a Sunday. They worked from about 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. The jobs were not exactly outdoors because there were sheds or, RBA adds, pavilions. RBA discusses present-day Spanish Fort briefly.

The camps at Spanish Fort were on the lake and Bayou [St. John] and people used them on Sundays; some used them for vacations. Most of the camps were on the water, and there were platforms built from the wharf used to walk to the camp. [Is he speaking of Milneburg?]

The jobs were "a little decent" rather than hard. When people ate or swam, the band did not have to do anything. A musician was paid about six dollars a day and given all the food

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and drink he could consume. Everyone paid about the same.

The people danced on the porch around the building. These jobs were practically all private parties and there was no admission. There would be quite a few people at one of these parties.

Lucien's [sp?] Pavilion was on Frenchmen Street near the lake. Lacaze believes he played there one time. "Some sort of banquet or something" was there practically every Monday. He never played at Zuarrella's.

Some musicians in the Ninth Ward were in the carpentry business. Many had jobs on which they did not have work every day. If they stayed out too late, they were able to stay home. Sometimes Lacaze would be the only one of five or six who would have to work the next day.

Lacaze wondered how they did [i.e., fared] if they made a dollar and a half a night and did not work the next day. Many tried to get a job every night, but they could not do this often. Lacaze could hardly make out, and he worked day and night. Some people just do not give a damn.

There were trappers, and moss pickers down there [in the Ninth Ward]. There was a Moss Pickers and Conn Trappers Club. Lacaze never worked for them.

RBA says that trumpeter Kid Sheik Colar of the Olympia [Brass] Band told him about playing in the Ninth Ward when the

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second line told him that he would have to share his money [with them].

Lacaze never heard of such a thing but people now do many things that they did not do then [i.e., when Lacaze was playing.]

Fights were rare. The band played during the fight. Then some one would stop the fighting.

A couple of people sneaked in a place in St. John [The Baptist] Parish without paying admission. They were caught, a fight started and about five shots were fired. About four hundred people disappeared! Lacaze stayed on the stand. Anywhere he went, he might get shot. Eddie Jackson stooped behind his "straight" [i.e., string or upright brass?] bass which was about as thick as paper. RBA suggests that it is better to get under the piano, but there was none there. This was the only serious incident in Lacaze's musical career.

Lacaze was never robbed going home from a job. Often he walked through all kinds of neighborhoods because there was no [public] transportation after about one o'clock. He never heard of any musicians having any kind of trouble like this.

Edegran brings up Richard Alexis getting his mouth hurt so badly that he had to stop playing trumpet. Some people beat him on Canal Street, Lacaze heard.

Lacaze never belonged to the musician's union. There was an effort to organize a union, but the union was not effective.

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There were a few bands in it. Later there was a group of musicians [who formed an effective chapter.]

Lacaze did not travel much, leaving the state rarely. He went to Mississippi, but not Texas. The way a band got an out-of-town job was having someone from New Orleans recommend the band to someone from out-of-town. Lacaze sent substitutes on out-of-town jobs because Lacaze could not get away from his day job. Some of the musicians who were not working would go anywhere.

Lacaze never played in markets or stores. He did play drums on advertising wagons. He does not remember playing these jobs on trumpet. [Compare above.]

A market would have four posts, a roof, and no walls. There were stands [in the market]. Markets were open day and night, and there was no trouble with any one. No one would steal. Later the markets were closed.

Edegran asks if Lacaze ever played in the WPA band.

END OF SIDE

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Also Present: Lars Edegran,
Richard B. Allen
Summary: Richard B. Allen
Audit: Bruce Raeburn
Typing: Dan Weisman

[Side 2 continues with Lacaze saying the WPA band started about the time he quit playing music.] He knew Louis Dumaine [who was assistant director and later director?] well, but could not get in the band. [I should have asked if his job as a butcher would have prevented his getting in the band. RBA, 21 May 1982.] Lacaze thinks that his not getting in was political.

Most bandleaders hired musicians on the basis of their being able to play. It was hard to get musicians. Most could not read. When a leader got enough readers, it did not matter if the others read or not. Some of the leaders could not read and did not care if no one else read. Most bands did not read. [Leading on last sentence.]

When musicians set up music racks, people would say out loud, "They don't know what they doing... They gonna play that old note music. We don't want that." A musician had to put up with this because he was hired.

Lacaze considers himself lucky because he played in white places most of the time. He hates to say that the pay and treatment were better in white places. His people were awful. RBA says that they did not have much money in the first place. Lacaze

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agrees, but he adds some did not want to do anything in the right way. They would not give you a sandwich if they could help it. Edegran says this has to do with money.

Lacaze played several times in the Irish Channel with Ernest Johnson, [known as] Duck Ernest, who lived in the Irish Channel around St. Thomas Street. He knew people there and got work from them. They were nice people and gave Lacaze a meal. Every now and then youngsters would start a fight and some would tell the band to play. After a couple of bars [i.e., measures], the fight would stop.

Lacaze does not know if he ever played for any Germans. He knows that the Irish Channel was the place where Irish were supposed to live.

Lacaze played only once or twice at the San Jacinto Club.

Lacaze considers himself a Creole, but he does not speak Creole. Edegran says that many [Creoles], like Lionel Ferbos, do not speak Creole. Lacaze says that young people avoided speaking Creole. His grandparents and parents spoke Creole, but none of "us" [i.e., his brothers, sisters, and himself?] spoke it.

He never heard any Creole singers. RBA brings up Creole singers DeDe Pierce and Albert Burbank.

Lacaze sang the chorus of almost every song until he injured his lungs while soldering. He has been going to the hospital occasionally perhaps fifteen years. He had a pretty good voice.

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People liked his singing. He sang through a megaphone. He does not remember any other Creole singers [!!! RBA, 8 February 1972.] The musicians with whom Lacaze played were Creole and non-Creole.

Lacaze played with Louis Keppard occasionally, but not with the Magnolia Band. Lacaze heard Freddy Keppard many times with the Olympic [i.e., Olympial] Band but never met him. Lacaze thought he was a nice trumpet player.

If a group of people in New Orleans recognize someone's ability, the others will go along with this. This makes for a big build-up.

When Louis Armstrong was here, he was the most popular trumpet player. Edegran asks about Joe ["King"] Oliver, and Lacaze says he was both good and popular. RBA asks about Kid Rena, and Lacaze says he was real good and popular. He was not more popular in one part of town than another. Some musicians were more popular with whites and some with blacks, but Rena was popular with all. Some musicians were more popular in certain sections.

Lacaze does not think there were any musicians who played only in black places. In the South, many "colored" people would say that they were victims of discrimination, but that is not so. Among the people, they do not care what color one is. If one can do something, they recognize one as a person. This applies to musicians and athletes.

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A band would feel out an audience's taste, whether black or white, by playing various numbers. People in high-class places wanted common, rather than sophisticated music. They got to like common music and would tell you so.

Lacaze does not belong to a single "society" [i.e., a benevolent association] or [pleasure] club. [See Marjorie I. Zander, The "Brass Band Funeral and Related Negro Burial Customs..." Chapel Hill, 1962, Thesis (M.A.) - University of North Carolina, 1962.] RBA says that he has seen Lacaze's photograph in The [Louisiana] Weekly sometimes.

Lacaze once was a salesman for the Unity Insurance Company. Agents of various companies would meet each other on the street. Lacaze does not know [trumpeter] Tony Fougerat who is an agent and played in mixed bands.

If a colored musician looked white, he would play in any band because "they" wanted somebody who could do the job. Lacaze names Arnold Metoyer and Eddie Cherrie as examples. Lacaze did not know others. White musicians would pretend not to know of this passing for white. There were many musicians who passed.

Lacaze does not know if whites played in black bands because whites can pass more easily than he can. There are many negroes who look like whites so "they" could say that a white was colored but looked like [a white].

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Lacaze has heard of Achille Baquet, but Lacaze knew Achille's brother, George Baquet, who could not pass. George Baquet and Lacaze never played together.

Lacaze loved music and wanted to learn. He would go to places and get acquainted with [musicians].

Lacaze had a few lessons from Professor Nickerson [i.e., Henry Nickerson?]. Maurice Durand gave Lacaze the most coaching on trumpet.

Lacaze went to the Alley [a speakeasy] which was only a block from Lacaze's residence. Andre Domingues used to run it.

When Lacaze first met Manuel Manetta, he was playing violin, but he played piano, trombone, and cornet too. He played two trumpets simultaneously.

Lacaze says, "Some people think that they [musicians are] low class people, and some people..." [He is interrupted.] A long time ago, people did not look down on musicians.

His parents did not like his practicing, but they were proud of him after he learned his instrument. He did not tell them he worked in the [red-light] district. His father worked at night, and there were too many other children so the parents could not follow him.

His wife did not mind his playing music. She tried to play piano. She went to his jobs once or twice, but she became jealous. When he played for colored people, sometimes women whom

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he knew slightly would talk to him. His wife would ask about them, so it is best not to bring one's wife. His wife's maiden name was Mabel Mitchell [sp?].

Most musicians let their wives stay at home when the musicians went on a job. Musicians might meet girl friends on the job and go as far as they could. When musicians had to go home, they would tell the girl friends good night. Lacaze never played in restaurants or at boxing matches.

RBA says [Henry] Russ told about the program on the Capitol [riverboat]. Lacaze confirms the existence of the program and says he knows of no other places with programs like this. One member of the Streckfus family [who owned the Capitol] was a violinist, Lacaze believes.

Practically all picnics were from ten [a.m.] to six [p.m.] Other jobs were four or five or sometimes three hours. Three hour jobs were so short that they seemed strange. Most jobs were four hours. Jobs were from eight to twelve or nine to one or something similar. Intermissions were ten or fifteen minutes of each hour. One could walk around during intermission. The "damn jitney stuff" [i.e., work at taxi-dance halls] was the worst thing he ever saw, but the other jobs were all right.

There were musicians' rooms in the places where one could rest. Musicians could mix with customers. Edegran says that he has heard of dance halls where musicians could not mix for racial

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reasons. Lacaze says there were some like this.

Lacaze never remembers a band photograph being made. He discusses a photo of his son, the son's daughter, and her daughter.

Lacaze never made any recordings.

END OF INTERVIEW

