

BILLIE AND DEDE PIERCE  
Reel I--Summary--Retyped  
October 7, 1959

Those Present:  
Ernest Trepagnier  
PRC, RBA

This recording was made at 1619 N. Galvez St. in the back, in the home of Billie and Dede Pierce. Billie's full name is Willie Madison Goodson Pierce. And Dede's full name is Joseph LaCroix Pierce, but everybody calls him Dede which has no meaning that he knows of. Dede is spelled with only the first "D" capitalized [in illustrating, he also spells it DeeDee. Also see release from April 2, 1959, giving De De.] Also at the interview was Ernest Silver Trepagnier <sup>who lives</sup> ~~Trepagnier wife~~ <sup>loves</sup> at 2307 D'Abadie Street. Ernest is no relation <sup>to</sup> the drummer, but he knew him. The drummer has a brother by the name of Frank Trepagnier who is around still. Ernest was to tell Billie and Dede Frank's address.

Billie is fifty years old [sic]. She was born June 8, 1907. Billie has three <sup>s</sup> ~~s~~ <sub>λ</sub> <sup>s</sup> ~~s~~ <sub>λ</sub> sisters living who play piano and all of her nephews and nieces play piano and different instruments. Billie doesn't have any brothers. There were seven girls in her family [all pianists-RBA]. Billie's mother and father were both pianists. Her grandmother and grandfather didn't play anything. They were very religious. None of Billie's uncles or aunts play anything. Billie's mother and father played hymns. They both sang in the choir at the Baptist church. Billie's mother's favorite song was "Shine on Me," and her father's favorite was "There are my Shepherd." [sic].

Billie and her sisters "come along ragtime." Her two oldest <sup>s</sup> ~~s~~ <sub>λ</sub> <sup>s</sup> ~~s~~ <sub>λ</sub> sisters are dead: Mabel and Dalla [sp?]. Mabel

was a great piano player. The next great piano player is Sadie who lives in Detroit, Michigan, now. She just plays for herself and her husband. She doesn't care for it much anymore. Billie's mother and father played by ear. Sadie reads, but she can play by ear. Billie doesn't read, but "she doesn't have to."

Billie was born in Marianna, Florida, which is between Pensacola, Florida, and Jacksonville, Florida. She left Marianna as a baby and was raised in Pensacola, Florida.

The music around Pensacola at the time was "Ragtime" jazz. They had bands, among them George Douglas Orchestra and the Joe Jesse Orchestra. Douglas played the trombone. The line-up would be: trumpet, trombone, banjo, drum, piano and bass. "Same thing as New Orleans jazz." The Douglas Brothers had a band [unintelligible ?] trombone, banjo, and clarinet. Clarence Nelson was one of the "greatest jazz violins that was in that time." Nelson was from Pensacola, Florida. They had jazz in Pensacola since Billie was old enough to know what music was.

They had halls in Pensacola where the bands played in the winter and parks in the summer. The parks were on the water. There were the [daVillaz?] Street Hall, [Caldwell?] Street Hall, but the Casino wasn't going then. They had bath houses along the water.

Papa Celestin, Buddy Petit, Kid Rena, all the old

New Orleans bands came to Pensacola, Kid Punch [Miller], Joe [King] Oliver, "Bebe Chinee" [Abbie Foster], the drummer. Chinee is Billie's brother-in-law. He was Sadie's first husband. Sadie and Chinee worked together in Celestin's band when they were together.

Billie and her sister Edna used to slip out and go to hear the bands; their father wouldn't let them go. After he went to bed, they would slip out and go to the dance. Sadie would be playing those dances a lot, she would see them, but she wouldn't say anything. Edna and Billie would slip in through the window or anyway they could. Billie's baby sister, Ida, worked in the band with Wallace Rankin, a great saxophone player. Dede worked with him, too, after he knew Billie. Ida worked with different bands over there.

Sadie worked mostly during that time with Mack's Merrymakers. Mack was a New Orleans man; Billie worked with him for years. They were on the road a great deal, very seldom played a dance at Pensacola. Mack had the band and was the only one in it from New Orleans. He liked Pensacola, found someone he cared for there, so he stayed there, got musicians from around Pensacola, made his band up with home talent. He was a trumpet player. His original home was "over the river" possibly in Westwego. He looks just like [Kid] Thomas [Valentine]. This is [Thomas[Mack]], NOT Billy Mack. She doesn't know whether the two are related. Last time Billie

saw Mack he was here, working at the Western Union office.

Billie also worked with the Mack Merrymakers, Billy and Mary Mack. She thinks they are both from Mobile. She worked with them at the Belmont Theatre, Pensacola, Florida.

Edna worked by herself in various spots, parties and such. She is working in a hotel on the Gulf in Florida now, not playing music, just working.

Mabel was the oldest sister. She died when she was 19 years old. She was a great piano player. Played for house parties and such, but didn't get out with bands like Billie did. Dalla was the next oldest sister, then Sadie, then Edna, then Billie, then Ida. [This is only six.] Dalla played mostly for churches. She could play a little ragtime, but she mostly spent her time in church. Ida has a son, now in the Air Force. He plays trombone, piano, and bass. His name is Danny Crumb [sp?]. He just got married in May. Played with the Air Force Band. He is a good reader. Is stationed in Texas somewhere.

Mr. Allen reads from a marriage license stating that Mr. Joseph LaCroix Pierce and Miss Willie Goodson were married on March 28, 1935. It was recorded April 9, 1935, in the Parish of Orleans by P. Henry Lanauze in Book No. 53. Same recorder recorded Dede's birth certificate. Dede's father was named LaCroix Marine Pierce. Dede was recorded as LaCroix Pierce, Jr., Book 127, Folio 259. (Dog, "Brownie,"

enters and is shooed by Billie.) Dede was born February 18, 1904; birth was recorded March 9, 1904.

Billie brings some pictures to show. One shows Billie and Dede with Charlie Brewton with an alto sax, in Pensacola, Florida. One is R. D., now an undertaker in Pensacola, used to play the drums there with them.

After considerable discussion about when "Junior" was born, Billie guesses that the picture is about twenty years old. It must have been during the World War II because Dede has a V for Victory and stars painted on his derby mite. This was the the Mecca [or Makers] Nightclub, Pensacola, Florida.

Next picture, Mr. Allen recognizes as Luthjen's. Includes Billie, Dede, a violin player named Manuel Roberts, but called "Clancy." Doesn't show drummer. Photograph is by Ralston Crawford. Picture was taken from left side of stand. Billie says George Henderson was working with them, but [Crawford] didn't want anybody but Manuel, Dede, and her [in the picture.] Billie says picture was made before she was taken sick the last time, "before I had that stroke." [check diagnosis]. Mr. Allen says she took sick in 1956. Shows a sign saying, "Please don't stand in front of the handstand."

Next picture was taken by Ralston Crawford at the Apex Apartments, where Harrison Brazley was living, in the 1600 block of Robertson Street. Shows George Henderson, drums;

[North]

^

Cap

Harrison Brazley, trombone; Dede on trumpet; "Mealy" Barnes, clarinet; Billie; [Albert] Glenny, bass; Emil Riley--no, not Riley, Fortier, Albert Fortier, guitar; his brother, George Fortier plays guitar and bass. Mr. Allen was present when this picture was taken. Says they had a little rehearsal around there that night, and "Mealy" said, "pour me a little more of that blood." Other nicknames for wine are "Sweet Lucy" and "Sonny Kick Your Mammy."

Next picture is one two sailors gave Billie when she was working in a night club in the French Quarter, down where the Pig Pen used to be. [See Reel III, P. 19. Is this Lawrence Gentilées?] Ernest Trpagnier painted the interior-- he is a painter by trade.

Next picture is Billie's little niece when she was in school, in a concert or play. She must have been about five years old at the time. Is married now.

Mr. Allen asks what tunes Billie played in Pensacola. He recalls playing at the San Carlos Hotel with an orchestra up there. The first numbers she ever learned were "The Bells Are Ringing for Me and My Gal," "Pretty Baby," "[That Dada Strain," "Alcoholic Blues." Dalla played "Careless Love" at that time, not in church, but at the house. The Goodsons had a piano at their house; all of them could play; they had a house full of girls and boys all the time. A waltz Billie used to play was "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles."

Ernest Trepagnier suggests "Shine On Harvest Moon."

Billie played "On a Cocoanut Island" at the Pig Pen; they changed the name of the place to "The Cocoanut Grove" and adopted "On a Cocoanut Island" as a theme song.

PRC remarks that his home is in Atmore, Alabama, near Pensacola. Billie and Dede recall that Edna played in Atmore, Flomaton, Alabama; Molino, Florida; and Century, Florida. Billie also played in Century and Molino. PRC asks if Century was a rough town then. Billie: "I don't know if it was rough or not; I was rough right along with it." Billie says she made good money around through there, playing solo.

Dede says he worked with Mack all through there.

Mr. Brooks, the insurance man, enters. He talks about how, when the boat would be coming in to Madisonville, everything would be quiet. Then all of a sudden the band would start playing full speed, make the landing. All the people would come on to walk around, see the boat, the band, etc. He tells about going out to "catch" one of those 65¢ chicken dinners, all in the world you wanted eat, and they would furnish some drinks too. Then you'd come back to the boat and go right on back. Sometimes it would be 6:30 or 7 o'clock before the boat would start back.

Billie says she used to get in here [off the boat?] about nine o'clock at night, then she would go down to the

BILLIE AND DEDE PIERCE  
Reel I--Summary--Retyped  
October 7, 1959

8

"The Old Folks Home" at Luthjen's, and meet Dede, who was playing down there.

Mr. Brooks says her favorite number is "Is It True What They Say about Dixie?"

Mr. Brooks leaves.

END OF REEL I  
October 7, 1959

Century was a wild town. It's a little tame, a little civilized now, not like it used to be. They had gambling, moonshine liquor, dancing, "jooks," where they would just have a piano and sometimes drums, no band, plenty to eat, "chitterling struts."

Billie's first trip to New Orleans was when she was playing with the Nighthawk Orchestra in Birmingham. Her sister Sadie took sick. Billie went to work on the boat in her place until she was able to go back to work. That was when she [Sadie] and Chinee were together. That was around 1929.

Billie traveled all through Alabama when she left Pensacola: Dothan, Ozark, Micanopy [Florida], Kendrick, Reddick, [Florida], Montgomery, Selma, Bessemer. She played in these places by herself. She played at the Frolic[k?] Theater at Bessemer, Alabama. Played different places all around these towns for white and colored. They didn't have bands; these were mostly house parties.

When she played Montgomery, she was with Mack's Merrymakers. From then on she has been working with bands: Mack's Merrymakers, Joe Jesse Orchestra, Douglas Orchestra. The Nighthawks was a nine-piece band, a Birmingham outfit. Billie can't remember the names of the boys in the band. She played Mobile, Alabama, with "Slim" Hunter's orchestra. She broadcast at the Battle House in Mobile at a radio

station there. Slim played the banjo. He was a great entertainer, great songster, and banjo player.

When Billie first came to New Orleans to stay to work, she played with Alphonse Picou. She and Lawrence Toca [Martin] went to work with Alphonse Picou at the Rialto Nightclub on Jefferson Davis Parkway. Johnny Dave and Ernest Milton were also in the band. Ernest Milton played drums; Johnny Dave played banjo; Picou, clarinet; Toca, trumpet; Billie, piano. They had just the five pieces in the band.

When Billie came over to take Sadie's place, she didn't stay in New Orleans, just worked for Sakie until she got better. That was in 1929. Then she went back to the Nighthawks in Birmingham. The band she replaced Sadie in temporarily was Buddy Petit's. Buddy played trumpet. Chineé played, Israel Gorman played sax; the bass player was heavy-set, real dark. Billie can't remember his name. Dede says he used to live on Clio Street and/or Dorgenois and was barber by trade. Can't recall the name of trombone player either. Billie is confused as to whether any of the group of musicians mentioned that she has known - "Jim Crow" Robinson, Sunny Henry, Johnny Dave, and George Washington - were with her at the time.

Billie remembers a banjo player named Buddy Manaday. She called him Buddy [Manvél] because he was from Mandeville, Louisiana. He may have been in this band.

Billie was getting back to Birmingham and Sadie was

ready to go back on the boat when Buddy Manaday and Lawrence Toca came by and wanted to go over to play a dance. Billie went with them over to Mandeville, La. or Madisonville where they played in Covington, La., for the Saturday night dance. Billie left New Orleans on Mondy<sup>a</sup>.

Going back to the Nighthawks, Billie stayed with them about a year. Then she went home to Pensacola where she worked different bands including the Mack Merrymakers. They went out of town playing: Tallahassee; Quincy; Panama City; Apalachicola, all through Florida. She had a good time in Apalachicola. It was Jimmy who was home then. During Christmas holidays they would go back and forth between Tallahassee and Quincy. They would play an evening dance in Quincy and a breakfast dance in Tallahassee and then back to Quincy for an evening dance. This lasted for about one week and then they went back to Pensacola for a rest. Then the band was made up of: George Morris from Louisiana on trombone, Sawyer on drums, [Wilbur - something like that?] who lives in Mobile on banjo but stayed in Pensacola, Leech out of Chicago on saxophone. It was about a six piece band.

Billie came back to New Orleans in [1930?]. Then she started with Picou. Buddy Petit was on the Steamer Madisonville. When Buddy left the boat and went [over to] the lake on a regular job, Dede joined Sadie on the boat in Buddy's place. The band remained the same except for Buddy: Reuben Oliver [Reuben

McClenon or McClemon] on banjo, George Nelson on saxophone, [implies Louis Nelson on trombone], Nelson Jones <sup>[or Jones]</sup> on trumpet, Wills on drums. Wills took Chinee's place at drums. Reuben Oliver who is 55 or older, lives on Rocheblae <sup>v</sup> between Onzaga and Lapeyrouse. When they sold the boat, Oliver went to work driving a truck for a lumber company [now Southern Hardware.]

Billie stayed with Picou a couple of years at the Rialto, working every night. From there she played at Luthjen's. Luthjen's was on Almonaster [Franklin Avenue] and Marais Street. Before Billie went there, it was a restaurant and bar where they had seafood. Billie says that it hasn't changed a bit through the years. Dede says that where the dance part is now was open and the house where they lived was in the back and they closed the lot between the house and the bar and built a dance hall. "Mealy" Barnes was <sup>[i.e., first band leader]</sup> the first band in Luthjen's. Then Billie went in as band leader. She had: Dede, George Lewis on clarinet, Klebert [on drums], Cagnolatti, four pieces. Billie met Dede when he was working with her sister, Sadie, when they were working in the French Quarter for Corinne at Ursulines and Decatur. Billie was working then at the King Fish at Ursulines and Decatur. Billie got married at the King Fish. At the King Fish Billie had: George Lewis, McGee on drums who is now in California. McGee is not Herb Moran's

brother. She had Burke Stevenson from over the river on trumpet. "He put that trumpet down and played bass [after that]." When Burke quit, Dede took his place.

Billie tells how she met and married Dede. Billie lived on Orleans and Prieur at that time. They have been married for twenty-four years. They had a nice wedding at the St. Peter Claver Church.

Billie and Dede then travelled with Ida Cox down in Florida with a show.

All Billie's sisters sang: "They all had beautiful voices." Dede thinks Sadie had the best voice. Sadie sang the sentimental songs but not the blues. Ida didn't sing any blues either. Edna, Dalla, and Billie loved the blues. Sadie sang "classical" music; she had a pretty voice. Edna traveled a lot with shows, talks a lot, would be a good interview subject. Billie hadn't seen Edna for twenty-five years [till] she came to see Billie when Billie married. Dede worked with Edna some here in New Orleans around Decatur Street. Dede also worked with Ida.

When Billie first came to town, the good piano players she knew of were Jeanette Kimble<sup>ALL</sup>, May, Edna Francis. May lived on St. Bernard Street near Villere, was tall and slender. Billie also knew Wilhelmina [sp?]. Jeanette is the one who worked with Celestin. Jeanette's husband Kimble was a banjo player. Dede thinks Edna Francis also worked with Celestin. Billie knew Edna through her husband [Albert

Francis who plays drums?]. They played ragtime music [jazz]. Walter Decou was about the only one who could play the classics. He featured mostly Spanish numbers and spoke Spanish. He probably learned Spanish working on the ships. The Alvarez family speaks Spanish also and it helped Alvarez when he was working on the boats. Popeye's was right there at [Ursulines and ?] Decatur streets; the places were all lined up on Decatur; and Billie and Dede played them all. If there was a little misunderstanding, they would cross the street and go into another one. There were the Popeye, the Kingfish, Charlie Palooka, which is where Dede was working with Sadie, Corinne's, [Filipino's]. They all had three or four piece bands. On the corner of Ursulines and Decatur where the bank is was a Filipino nightclub and on another corner was "Big" [Alcide] Landry's place where they played "The Lady in Red." Kid Howard, "Jim Crow" Robinson, and all of the colored bands were around Decatur Street. They'd switch from job to job.

END OF REEL II

People from all walks of life, some of them celebrities, frequented the places on Decatur Street. They used to have floor shows on Decatur Street. Annie Bell, a Jamaican who is in New York now, did the Banana Wiggle [with Billie and Dede's show?]. Billie and Dede saw her when they were in New York on Coney Island. They didn't have "strips" in that time because it was all colored, but had dancers. They had little skits, comedies like end men in minstrels. Dede worked once where they had seven shows in one night, every hour on the half hour.

After Decatur Street, Billie went to Stell's Wiggling Wagon on St. Claude and St. Bernard. They had the same thing: a floor show. From there they went to Bunkie, Louisiana, with Stell. Stell opened the Club Playtime on the highway there. Kid Ernest Moliere and Paul Moliere went with them. They worked in Bunkie for about one year and when things got slow they came back here. Then Billie went to "the Old Folk's Home," i.e. Luthjen's, where Billie stayed till she got sick. Billie was at Luthjen's before Bunkie.

For a show Billie would play numbers like "I Got Rhythm," and other fast pieces. "Pork Chops," and "Yeah Man" were with them; they were the comedians. Billie hasn't seen them for a long time. This was probably not the "Pork Chops" who danced with "Kidney Stew." Milton [Schott] [sp?] was the King Fish. Schott fired Billie and hired her

back. Milton Schott and Vincent Serio<sup>✓</sup> were in a partnership, an Italian and a Jew. [Soards 1933 lists Vincent Serio, Jr as having a restaurant at 1101 Decatur.] Billie was fired because she wanted to have some time to rest and they wanted music, music so Billie quit. "McGee" [the drummer?] quit, too. They were only getting about \$1.25, or \$1.50. They did make nice tips there though. The place used to be packed like sardines in a can. Dede stayed on. Billie joined the Filipino band across the street. Schott hired another piano player and Dede kept him drunk so he couldn't work. The drummer was named Joe. Dede kept him drunk, too. They were allowed 7,8, or 10 drinks a night but had to go get them. Dede laid off drinking, poured it in the other guys.

On St. Bernard and St. Claude, Billie was with: Albert Jiles on drums, Dede on trumpet, and Billie on piano, just three pieces.

From there they went to Bunkie; they took Paul Moliere and his brother Kid Ernest to Bunkie. Ernest, the clarinet, died. The Moliere brothers were not married so could take the trip without leaving families. Stell got kind of low and went to Texas. He wanted them to go. Frank Gibbs was the trombone in Bunkie. "He was a wonderful trombone player." Gibbs was crippled [as was A. J. Piron]. Gibbs was from Texas.

Billie worked with A. J. Piron at the Absinthe House. "Doc" [Edmond] Souchon knew Piron well. Mrs. Piron still

lives near the Pierces. "Doc" also knew Steve Lewis the piano player. Trepagnier took violin lessons from Piron when he was ten years old. Billie and Steve Lewis used to have fun playing together at the Pelican on Rampart. They would alternate. Steve sang smutty songs. So did Billie.

From Bunkie, Billie went to Luthjen's where she had: "Big Eye Louis" Nelson, Ernest Rogers, and at another time, Lucien Barbarin on drums. Billie turned the job over to Rogers. Rogers got Octave Crosby on piano. Billie didn't know a Sadie Crosby who is supposed to have played piano in New Orleans.

"Smilin' Joe" [Pleasant Joseph] worked with Billie and Dede at the King Fish. They started him off. They would shove him out on the floor and make him dance. "Smilin' Joe" was more of an entertainer. He was playing the ukelele at the King Fish. He went to New York and then came back here and is working in the Absinthe Bar. Billie worked at the Absinthe Bar with Piron. Piron and Billie worked alone, piano and violin. Dede worked there, too, for a short time, about a month or two, with Walter "Fats" Pichon and either banjo or say, three pieces. There never was much of a band there. Billie also worked in the Cave around Royal Street, three pieces, piano, drum, and probably sax.

Billie stayed at Luthjen's off and on for about twenty-four years. It was during the war when Billie went

to Bunkie. Billie has a postcard from the Club Playtime.

Dede was born February 18, 1904 in New Orleans, on Rocheblave Street in the section around St. Ann Street and Orleans Avenue. No one in Dede's family played music nor did his parents sing around the house. Billie shows a picture of Dede's grandmother and brother. His grandmother's name was Cecile after his mother, [sic] Marie Cecile Olivier. Billie shows also Dede's aunt, mother's sister. Dede is not related to Adam Olivier who was a band leader here years ago. Billie also shows a picture of Dede's little brother, sister, and mother. Dede's first teacher was Kid Rena when he was about nineteen years old or a little younger. He studied under Rena for about six months. He was "kind of a hard fellow to get hold of," always either working or resting with his family, so Dede thinks. Dede then went to Paul Chaligny, an old man, on St. Claude, Dede thinks, and Dumaine. He taught all instruments. Dede learned most of his "dots" [i.e. notes] from him. When Rena would need a man to sit in, he would send Dede as trumpet. He got his start working as a sit-in or extra for all the old heads. He imagines Rena influenced his style. Dede liked Rena's playing. Dede picked up his mute style himself, tried until he found what sounded good to him. Chris Kelly influenced Dede's blues. Paul Barnes, in later years when they had an orchestra, taught Dede a lot.

Arnold DePass, a drummer, was playing lots of fraternity jobs and such around St. Charles with his son-in-law called "Coco" Elmer Talbert. They had a disagreement and Arnold heard Dede's playing. Dede joined their band in Coco's place. That was Dede's first job and he played a lot of jobs with DePass. Then he branched out from where one fellow would hire him, then another. He formed his own outfit sometimes. He travelled awhile and finally got on at Luthjen's where he stayed on. Arnold DePass had: Reese Cobette on saxophone, [Sadie Goodson, piano ?], Wilhelmina Bart on piano, Gus [August] Green on bass, who is now dead. He was old then, was a good man at the time. Also Green worked with Dede's band. Dede also worked with Albert Glennly on different jobs. [Many with Emile Barnes; see AM LP.]

After Arnold DePass, Dede spotted with Rena, Chris Kelly, Guy Kelly. Guy Kelly was with Papa Celestin. [When both would get work, they split the band with Dede filling in.] Then with a small orchestra: Dede, <sup>Rouzon</sup> [Oscar Rouzon?] who is a preacher now and played nice saxophone, Gus Green on bass, Simon Frazier on piano, Walter or Henry Wright on tenor saxophone. Dede has played second trumpet to Rena and with Buddy [Petit] at times. They would have so much work that they would split the bands and hire Dede to go with one group. Rena took a liking to Dede because

he followed his style. The others saw that he could uphold Rena's part so they hired him, too.

Rena had: Glenn<sup>who</sup>y on bass was Rena's ace [French pronunciation], Sunny Henry on trombone, [doubtful, no mention in Henry interviews nor does Glenn<sup>y</sup> give personnel, see George Lewis Reel<sup>f</sup>], "Big Eye Louie" Nelson played with Rena a lot, too. Dede worked with Nelson also. The bands split up so much but bass and trumpet would usually stick together [or other small combinations<sup>?</sup>].

Dede's favorite trumpet players: Rena first, then Punch Miller, then Guy Kelly who had fingering. Punch didn't have a regular line-up but would be leader. He'd get a job and then hire men, Dede thinks.

Dede worked around at different spots in the French Quarter, before he met Billie: Corinne, several places on Decatur that he forgets the name of. Dede worked with Celestin for a while. Celestin had "Big Head" Eddie Johnson [alto?]. Mr. Allen says that Celestin liked to have a woman on piano. Billie would sit in some with Celestin like when he was in Florida. Dede worked with Paul Barnes about thirty years ago<sup>This was</sup> before Dede got married, which was twenty-four years ago. Paul Barnes had: Rouzan, Wright, Dede, Shelly Lamelle who is from New Orleans, (on second trumpet to Dede), He may still be playing in spots.

"Eh! La Bas" came about when Dede was playing some-

where around the racetrack and a Creole said, "Eh! La Bas," and Dede said, "Eh! La Bas," and that was the beginning of it. He started telling Dede verses in a joking way and Dede took it from there. Dede added verses especially when he was around Creole people.

Billie shows a card of the New Cocoanut Grove Nightclub which was located on 300 Burgundy with four shows nightly: 9:15 p.m., 10:30 p.m., 12:15 a.m., and 2:30 a.m. Jam session every Sunday morning at 4:00 a.m. which lasted until about 11:00 a.m. Lawrence Gentile, proprietor. This was around [1940?] when [Trepagnier painted the place ?].

END OF REEL III

When Billie left the job at Luthjen's with Ernest Rogers, she went to Stell's. From there she went to work at the Harmony Inn with "Mealy" who had the job. "Mealy" was on clarinet, and Lawrence <sup>[Martin]</sup> Tocca on trumpet, and Gilly on drums. They fired Lawrence and Dede came in. She was at the Harmony Inn for about a year. Then they were fired and the man put a white hillbilly band in there. Billie worked at the River Bell with: Dede, "Mealy", and George Henderson. They played a lot of places and most people liked them. "Mealy" and Morris who ran the Harmony Inn couldn't get along so Morris put the white hillbilly band in. "Mealy" drank whiskey, and Billie would drink wine. "Mealy" would work during the day making mattresses, get up there at night, and go to sleep. Billie tells of a fire on New Year's Eve at River Bell that brought the fire department.

Billie's first record was made on ~~Baronne~~ Street for Alden Ashforth and Dave Wyckoff. [Karl] Kilinski did the recording [at 315 St. Charles St. RBA] The band was made up of: Albert Glenn, Albert Jiles (who took George Henderson's place), "Mealy", Harrison Braley on trombone, Dede and Lawrence [Tocca Martin alternated] on trumpet. They played "All of Me," "Careless Love," "Eh! La Bas," "Billie and Dede's Blues." This record had Billie's picture on the sleeve. It came out on WR's label [American Music]. [Actually, Josiah Frazier was drummer.] Dede did broadcasting at Lake

{641 33-10"}  
American Music by  
Emile Barnes

Charles with KLPC [?] but didn't record there.

The piano player with Paul Barnes was Nellie Lutcher out of Lake Charles.

Dede worked with Don Albert on a tour for about a month. Dede had split up with Paul, and Don needed a trumpet so Dede left Lake Charles and went with Don through Texas. Then he and Dede went to New Orleans to visit parents of both of them; then <sup>Dede</sup> played sever<sup>.al</sup>/jobs with Don and then back with Paul Barnes. Most of the boys with Don were from Texas. Don had about 14 pieces. Don had two bass, string and tuba. Mr. Allen thought perhaps Henry "Nick" Turner, tuba and valve trombone, played with Don. Dede doesn't seem to remember. Mr. Allen tries to remember some of them: Lloyd Glenn, a piano player who was with them at one time, Allan Vann, piano. Don was the only other trumpet when Dede was with him.

Dede knew Clarence Hall, Herbert Hall's brother, who played with Celestin or Sidney Desvigne. Herbert Hall [was] a baritone player [now primarily clarinet]. Louis Cottrell [Jr?] lived next door to Billie and Dede. Dede didn't work with Louis Cottrell. Dede worked with Arthur Derbigny. [Derbigny] worked with Arnold DePass, who was playing saxophone some then. Arthur Derbigny lost his mind on the bandstand on a job on St. Charles Street with Dede and started saying all the music was his and they had to send him home. Mr. Allen says he is all right now.

Billie played the "Gulf Coast Blues" for Bessie Smith in Pensacola, Florida when Clarence Williams<sup>✓</sup> and Billie played Bessie's show and Williams had a heart attack. Billie was about fifteen then. Billie imitates Bessie's singing.

In those years, Ida Cox and Bessie Smith were the only ones Billie liked. Billie didn't like Mama [i.e. Ma] Rainey or Sara Martin. Bessie and Ida influenced Billie's singing. Billie and Dede were on the road with Ida about twelve years ago. The band was made up of: Kid Ernest Moliere [clarinet], Dede, and Billie, and some musicians from over the lake, a drummer from Biloxi.

Willyama [sp?] was a drummer who worked with Billie at Luthjen's and cut some records with Billie and Dede. Willyama worked for the railroad. He is Josiah "Cie" Frazier's brother. "Cie" cut some records with Billie, too. [See above]. One night at Luthjen's someone tried to make a tape of Billie and steal the music, but George Henderson saw the recorder under the table and Billie went to them and stopped it.

Ernest Trepagnier met the drummer of the same name during the time of the welfare, WPA. Ernest was cleaning stumps out of City Park Annex and building golf courses. Ernest was born October 12, 1899 in New Orleans. Louie Robichaux, Louise, and Ernest have the same birthday and they always get together. Ernest is the oldest. Ernest didn't

have any musicians in his family, but his wife's brother, Frank Crump, and another brother-in-law Henry Julian were saxophone players. Frank also played clarinet. Frank has been dead about eight years. He was a short fellow with bushy hair. Frank's daddy, Ernest Crump, was an old time musician but didn't read. Frank read. Ernest Crump played the banjo. Dede went across the river once with Ernest and played a job. On the way they had a wreck going downriver.

Ernest Trepagnier got interested in music and started in 1910, but gave it up when he found they weren't using violins so much. He [played] every now and then at home. A. J. Piron wanted him to go on with it and offered to teach him for nothing, even came after him. Ernest had a good start: he had his first lesson in 1910 as a birthday present from his grandmother. He took lessons for about one and a half years from Piron. Ernest thinks he still has his first book at home. Ernest is sorry he didn't finish. Ernest's father-in-law taught him some banjo and Frank knew a few chords, but the old man used Ernest's banjo so "doggone" much that Ernest sold his banjo. He had bought it when a man sold him a pawn ticket and he was able to get the banjo for \$34. It was a \$154 banjo, a Vega Orthophonic.

Ernest played a little mandolin which is the same as violin with double strings. One of the first pieces he learned to play in 1910-11 on the violin was "Can You

Shimmy Like Your Sister Kate?" [i.e. "I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate"]. Also played the [Blue] Danube Waltz from the books. He bought a piano arrangement of this at Werlein's.

Ernest heard a lot of orchestra music in the early days. He heard Piron who had the Tuxedo [was Celestin's] Band at the Spanish Fort on the Lake. He had a big orchestra for one of the clubs out there. He heard Manuel Perez, Joe Oliver, and Buddy Petit.

One of the first brass bands that Dede played with was for the Jefferson City Buzzards with D'Jalma Ganier, a trumpet player and carpenter who is now dead and who was Ernest Trepagnier's cousin, in charge. It was called Ganier's Brass Band. There were eleven men in the band: "Bucko" on bass tuba, Henry ["Booker T"] Glass on bass drum, Archy Robinson on trombone, [Wilbert] Tillman on saxophone and ["Big Eye Louie" Nelson ?]. The band played by music and by head. They played marches which came mostly from the Bennett Band Books such as "Military Escort." Dede thinks he still has them. The jazz was mostly by head. They would play in marching time, in the streets. They'd play according to the steps - walk fast, play fast. Dede played some funeral marches too. Some of the tunes were written out: "Flee As A Bird," "Nearer, My God, to Thee," a lot of hymns. Coming back [from the cemetery] they would play

tr

"[oh,] Didn't He Ramble" as the finale. Jazz coming back was customary.

Mr. Allen asks Dede if he remembers the book [i.e. Orin Blackstone, Jazz Finder, 1949, p. 49]. that he gave him with his picture in ti. The page has a picture of Louis Armstrong when he was king of the Zulus and underneath it has a brass band with [Elmer] "CoCo"[Talvert], Dede, and George Lewis. Dede played for Louis Armstrong when he was here. The float broke down. The band belonged to John Casimir, the clarinet player [He is uncertain of this.]

Louis threw the first ball at the Lafon Home for Boys and gave them their baseball outfits. Dede played for the game and then the dance afterwards. Louis called the team "Louis Armstrong's Secret Nine." Louis Armstrong and Kid Rena were both in the home.

When Ernest was 14 or 15 years old he started second-lining. Lots of times he sneaked away from school. Some of the men he remembers were Manuel Perez, Buddy Manaday, Joe ["King"] Oliver. He had no preference, just followed wherever there was music.

Mr. Allen asks Billie if any of the piano players play other instruments in parades. He has seen Lester "Blackie" Santiago playing snare drum in the streets. Billie doesn't know.

Danny Barker and George Guesnon both have taken their banjos in the street and also "Duck Ernest" Johnson took

his bass in the street one day in a parade.

PRC remarks on the annual Mummers' Parade in Philadelphia in which they use bass fiddles. Dede thinks they put it on a little wagon and somebody pulls it.

Ernest used to go to all the dances; he went to Artisan's Hall, [France] [?] Amis, the Globe, Economy, Artisan's, [Des Jeunes Amis?]. The latter is where his niece got married. It's back of Kerlerec Street, going toward Rampart Street, somewhere in that section. Billie thinks she and Dede went there with "that fellow named Bechet."

Ernest says now they have new halls, like the Autocrats. The Jolly Boys give dances around the corner now.

Billie is talking about Bechet's birthday party, at which Dede and Bechet both played.

Ernest mentions the Lion's club and the San Jacintos. He doesn't know whether the San Jacintos are still giving dances or not, but the club [i.e. hall] is still there.

END OF REEL IV