

WILLIAM "BABA" RIDGLEY
Reel I--Summary--Retyped
April 11, 1961

Those present: John Handy,
Richard B. Allen, Marjorie
T. Zander

This recording was made in the Howard Tilton Library at
Tulane University.

Mr. Allen plays the record "Original Tuxedo Rag" which Ridgley
has not heard for over thirty years. Ridgley names Manuel
Manetta, [piano] and Paul Barnes on [alto] saxophone.

Mr. Allen plays "Black Rag". By WR's singing, RBA means on
trombone. Ridgley names John Marrero on banjo and says he's good.

After John Handy's prompting, Ridgley names "Kaiser" [Willie
Joseph] on clarinet and tenor sax, [Compare discographies.]

134 Mr. Allen plays "Careless Love" and Ridgley names Louis
"Kid|Shots" Madison as taking the lead. Handy names "Chinee" on
the slide whistle, but Ridgley doesn't answer when Mr. Allen
tries to confirm it. Ridgley says "Shots" is playing the trumpet
behind the slide whistle. Simon Marrero was playing string bass.
Mr. Allen says "Chinee" was playing on wood blocks and that some-
times covers a lot up.

Ridgley says Handy worked with him at Suburban Gardens and
other places, but was so popular at that time that he could work
anywhere he wanted, and he didn't stay in one band too long. Handy
says they worked together at Pete Herman's for a long time.

Ridgley tells Handy that George McCullum was dead about two
years before he knew it. Handy says George McCullum was dead about
a month and a half or two before he knew it.

Ridgley then tells about Jack Sheehan: No one could fool
Jack Sheehan, no indeed. Handy says that Jack Sheehan was Ridgley's
right hand man and Ridgley agrees.

Ridgley says [Jenkins (Jahncke ?) died some time ago in an
airplane ?]. Had so much to do with Flint-Goodrich Hospital. Ridgley
played his wedding announcement at Antoine's.

Handy says he plays a little every now and then, but he can't make the parades anymore on account of his feet.

[Black] Happy [Goldston] joined the church Sunday before last (Ridgley says "at last."), says Handy, and Bill Matthews joined the church last Sunday and was baptised. Happy hasn't given up playing. Ridgley says it is different now to the way it was when he was playing: they had to practice so much that they didn't have time to pray. Handy played clarinet with Paul Barnes. On the recordings with Ken Mills, however, he played one number with the clarinet and then played sax and Barnes played clarinet.

Mr. Allen plays "Tiger Rag." That is with Punch [Miller]. Handy says Mills didn't give him any notice to play the clarinet. Handy says he hadn't played clarinet since 1927. [Untrue. I had heard him c. 1957. RBA] Ridgley names the band at the Suburban Gardens in the beginning: [Papa] Celestin, Ridgley, Willie Bontemps, Emma Barrett on piano. Ridgley says that they didn't have any saxophone at the old Suburban Gardens; they just had the clarinet, Willard Thomy [check spelling?]. Ridgley says Willard Thomy was very good.

Mr. Allen tries to find another tune on which Handy plays saxophone. The piano player is Louis Gallaud. Paul Barnes is playing. [saxophone] [Tape of "Georgia On My Mind" See Paul Barnes, Reel, , 1960 ?]

Mr. Allen says Handy is coming up now: [Record "Sleepy Time Gal"]. The number is incomplete.

Jack Sheehan's place was called the Suburban Gardens. [The Archive has a copy of the contract]. Paul played with Ridgley after Willard Thomy. [Newspaper clipping in Archive file shows that both flew in the airplane.] Willard was with Ridgley when

WILLIAM "BABA" RIDGLEY
Reel I--Summary--Retyped
April 11, 1961

3

they played in the airplane in Audubon Park, in June 13, 1924.

[Check recording date for OK. Compare personnel. Check Obit of
Thomy.]

END OF REEL I

WILLIAM "BABA" RIDGLEY
Reel II--Summary--Retyped
April 11, 1961

Those present: John Handy,
Richard B. Allen, Marjorie T.
Zander, Elizabeth Snapp

Mr. Allen asks Ridgley who was in the band at the 101 Ranch. Ridgley names: Louis Cottrell, Sr., on drums; Jean Vigne, Jr., on piano. His father was a drummer, also named Jean Vigne. Sidney Vigne, a brother [of Jr.] was a clarinet player, and Mr. Allen says he thinks that there was a cornet player in the family, too, Chinee Baba, but Ridgley didn't know of him. The Vignes's sister runs the Jeunes Amis Hall. Sidney would work on some jobs with Ridgley, but not regularly. At the 101 Ranch, there were also: Lorenzo Tio [Jr. ?] on clarinet, [Papa] Celestin on cornet, "Baba" Ridgley on trombone. Ridgley didn't have a bass player, banjo, or guitar. Ridgley was at the 101 Ranch for more than a year; that was in 1914 before the big storm of 1915. They were there when the war started. Celestin went with George Jones, a big black bass player after they left the 101 Ranch. He was kind of a comedian and used to play out at the lake. Celestin [but not Ridgley] was at the Tuxedo Dance Hall before the 101 Ranch and before the calamity in the district where the man [Harry Parker - RBA] was killed. [At the Tuxedo Hall] Billy Phillips was there, too, at the 101 Ranch. "Gyp the Blood" was there, too. The district closed after that and when it reopened Ridgley and Celestin went into the 101 Ranch. At that time the band didn't have any particular name.

After the 101 Ranch, they just jobbed around, anywhere that they could. They set up another band. Then Celestin came back. Celestin on cornet, Peter Bocage on violin, Louis Cottrell, Sr., on drum, Lorenzo Tio on clarinet, Johnny St. Cyr on banjo, Ridgley on trombone. Amos Riley took Celestin's place when he [Celestin] was with George Jones. Amos Riley is dead now.

Mr. Allen recalls Amos White out on the West Coast. Ridgley doesn't remember him. Mr. Allen says that White was around here for

a while. Handy says White was a bright [i.e., light] fellow. Mr. Allen says White wears glasses now.

After Cottrell on drums was Ernest Trepagnier. After Trepagnier was Henry Zeno.

"One-eyed Baba" Phillips's wife is Henry Zeno's sister. [Check interview] Zeno was playing with Ridgley when he [Zeno] died [which according to SBC was c 1917]. Zeno played one night, took a drink the next morning and it stopped his heart. The doctor had told him not to drink. Ridgley played Zeno's funeral and said it was pretty good. Zeno had a Masonic funeral with only one band. They weren't allowed to play anything from the church till they left the cemetery coming back home. They played after they left not inside the cemetery after he was buried. They marched from the church to the cemetery. Bille Willigan substituted for Zeno that day. Willigan used to play with Louis Dumaine. Willigan carried Zeno's drum all the way and played on the way back, just as the rest of them did with their instruments.

Ridgley was just spotting around after they left the 101 Ranch, and they worked up a pretty good trade. Their next steady job was at the Suburban Gardens some time later. When the Suburban Gardens closed Celestin went back out to the lake to play. Ridgley kept the band going. Mutt Carey played with him then. [Mutt Carey left for California in 1919.] When the new Suburban Gardens reopened Handy was with Ridgley. The first time at the Suburban Gardens Ridgley had: Celestin, Ridgley, Emma Barrett on piano, Willie Bontemps. Ridgley had five members, he thinks. This was before Ridgley was on the boat. Richard B. Allen says that according to Baby Dodds, [The Baby Dodds Story shows Ridgley with this group in 1918--p. 98--see next page] Ridgley was on the boat around 1921. Baby Dodds, Louis Armstrong,

Davy Jones, Joe Howard all played on the boat together. [See The Baby Dodds Story, p. 21, et seq.]

Ridgley says that Emma Barrett played with him for fourteen years before he stopped playing. Emma Barrett was always Ridgley's piano player. Ridgley used Manetta on the records because he had more experience than she [Emma Barrett] did. "She wasn't too particular about it." Manetta was not playing regular when they made the records; Manetta was teaching at that time. Manetta hardly ever joined any regular band, but he would play a regular job someplace. Ridgley used Manetta in the old days before that whenever he could. Manetta would play a regular job like at [Tom] Anderson's, but didn't care much about bands. He was a very nice fellow.

After he left Jack Sheehan's [Suburban Gardens] the first time, Ridgley went back out to job around. Ridgley was at Jack Sheehan's before he went on the boat. Ridgley left Celestin and others with Jack Sheehan when he [Ridgley] went on the boat. Ridgley let his band go as he was expecting at any time to go to war, and he had gone out and got himself a job; he got one for the government out on the river front. It was during the war that Ridgley was on the boat. In the Baby Dodds Story Mr. Allen finds a picture of Ridgley with Joe Howard, Louis Armstrong, Fate Marable, Davy Jones, Johnny Dodds, Johnny St. Cyr, and George "Pops" Foster [p. 98]. Davy Jones is shown with the melophone. The boat was the steamer "Sidney," a Streckfus steamer. The date was 1918 on the picture. [Ridgley was called but didn't get into the service because peace was declared ?]

Ridgley thinks Louis Armstrong made a couple of trips on the boat before he [Louis] left New Orleans. In the Baby Dodds Story Louis Armstrong is shown with three different bands [pp. 98, 99].

Ridgley thinks the Grant Cooper in the Louis Armstrong picture in the Baby Dodds Story was a St. Louis man, a trombone player. Grant Cooper took Ridgley's place in St. Louis when Ridgley came back to play [with ?] Celestin. Mr. Allen says Cooper looks like he might be a red fellow [is "real dark" in photo. Marable was red]. Mr. Allen says that Nat Story from up there is suppose to be a great trombone player. Ridgley says it wasn't Story; Ridgley thinks it was Cooper.

Baby Dodds said in his book that "Bebé [sic] Ridgley was also a very nice guy who played nice trombone. His playing wasn't rough but sweet, more like Honoré Dutrey's." [p. 19]

Baby Dodds talks also about the band with Celestin, Willie Bontemps, Ridgley, Lorenzo Tio at Jack Sheehan's. Ridgley says Baby Dodds did play with them at Jack Sheehan's. Ridgley adds that Tom Benton played there with them, too. Baby Dodds also tells about Emma Barrett being there and that they called her "Eyes," because she had big eyes. Ridgley says Emma was really a good girl to be with; they took her everywhere they went, and she never did give them any trouble. She didn't mingle with the fellows at colored dances. Mrs. Emma Caroline Benjamin [Soards lists Emanuel Benjamin at 5531 St. Charles] [who lived at] St. Charles and Joseph, a multi-millionaire, a real piano player and a couple of other white ladies. They liked the way she [Emma Barrett] would juggle the piano, and they helped them a lot. They would talk about her [Emma Barrett] and said that they would help them, and they did.

Ridgley never did play for any boxing matches. Ridgley played at Heinemann Park every baseball season during World War I when things were dull and people were wearing so much black and looking sorry. [Handy leaves.] The games were every Sunday morning at ten o'clock.

The games were put on by the Bankers League[s?], it wasn't the Southern League [Association]. It was sponsored by the city so that the people could have a little fun. Ridgley's band at the park: Celestin, "Cato" on bass whose name was [Cab?] or Louis. John Marrero on banjo. Ridgley thinks that "Chinee" [Abby Foster] was with them on the drums. They also had Willard Thoumy [sp?] on clarinet and Ridgley. They didn't have any piano there.

After Ridgley left the boat, he went back to Suburban Gardens to play with Celestin. Ridgley left the boat in St. Louis; Ridgley was only on the boat for one month. Ridgley could make more money by coming back home. The same bunch was at the Suburban Gardens: Willie Bontemps on guitar and banjo, Emma Barrett, Celestin. There were five of them. Ridgley can't remember who the drummer was [or sax or clarinet?]. Dodds was still on the boat. Zutty [Singleton] wasn't on any of the regular jobs; Zutty didn't stay very long with them. Zutty was a very good fellow, a good band man. Zutty would just take spots with them, but he was a member of the band.

After Suburban Gardens, Celestin and Ridgley went back out into the field together. They closed the Suburban Gardens during³ prohibition, gambling, or something like that. Ridgley bought out a pressing shop on Howard Avenue between Baronne and Dryades. Ridgley had his band headquarters there. The band was going by the name of the Tuxedo Jazz Band at that time. Mr. Sim Black, the master of Boy Scout Troop 13, would visit Ridgley's headquarters often and got plenty of work for them from different organizations. Mr. Black came one morning and said he had a suggestion to make. The drummer,^[4 1] Zeno, was there with Ridgley. The time was around November when all the debutante activities were beginning. Mr. Black suggested that they wear black tuxedo suits, black derby hats, white shirts, and black

ties. Mr. Black also suggested that they call the band The Original Tuxedo Band.

When the Boy Scout Troop No. 13 went on a summer vacation to Kentwood, [La.] Ridgley's band had an occasion to go to Kentwood to play one Friday night so the boys met them at the train that morning. The band stayed in the swamps all day with them. They played music, ate, and had a good time. Then the troop brought them back in time that night to play for a dance. They played that night for Mr. Fields at the Peoples' Drug Store in Kentwood, Louisiana.

Ridgley went to Fort Worth in 1923. That was before they made the recordings. [Willard] was the clarinet player in Fort Worth. [However, on Reel I--June 2, 1959, he says Paul Barnes went to Fort Worth on saxophone--no mention of clarinet]. The recordings were after Willard; Paul Barnes had come in then. Willard also played saxophone in Fort Worth. Simon Marrero was on bass in Fort Worth.

Sam Dutrey was with the Silver Leaf Band which was before Ridgley played with the Tuxedo. Sam [Sr.] was Honore's brother.

Ridgley never could do much walking, so he only played now and then in funerals with Celestin. Ridgley had charge of the Original Tuxedo Orchestra and Celestin had charge of the [Tuxedo] Brass Band. Ridgley didn't interfere with the brass band and Celestin didn't interfere with the orchestra. Celestin was the leader of the orchestra and Ridgley was the business manager.

The brass band with Celestin had: Ridgley and Charles ["Sunny"] Henry, who died recently, on trombone; George Sims, who's been dead quite a while on baritone; Eddie Jackson on tuba; Celestin on cornet; Joe Howard [cornet ?]; Peter Bocage, Ridgley thinks [on cornet ?]; Ernest Trepagnier on bass drum, Henry Zeno on snare drum. Joe Howard stayed in regular until he got into another band. He was there when

Ridgley left. Louis Armstrong played with the band later. When Louis came in Joe was playing second and Louis was playing first with Celestin. Louis took Peter Bocage's place. [compare Bocage Reel ____]

Ridgley says he had a picture of a brass band he wanted to bring but couldn't find it.

Mr. Allen shows Ridgley a picture of Henry Allen's Brass Band of Algiers. The baritone player is George Sims, an old man. The picture is in the book Jazz Men. The trombone player is Jack Carey, [Ridgley identified it as Sunny Henry, but doesn't have his glasses on.] but Ridgley adds that Carey and Henry look pretty much alike. Clay Jiles is on bass drum. Also in the picture is George Allen [on Snare] who was Henry's brother. The Tuxedo Brass Band did not wear tuxedos in the street; they wore blue uniforms. Most of the them [uniforms] were given to them by the policemen when they first started. Ridgley was with the police band in Fort Worth, and they were very nice to Ridgley. The police band would come over every day to see how they were getting along. Ridgley and others lived in a place where there had been sort of an underworld, and the police came to see how they were getting along.

Mr. Allen asks Ridgley about a photograph that Ridgley has at hom with Clarence Williams, Jimmie Noone, Celestin, Ridgley, Benton, and St. Cyr. Ridgley says that it could have been made before the big storm. [check Russell Levy newspaper work] Ridgley has not played music for thirty years, and that was a long time before, so it could have been made forty-five years ago. Mr. Allen says that it has to be pretty early because Jimmie Noone had gone and Johnny Lindsay was only here until the twenties. "That picture was made--we would have been the first colored band on the Orpheum Circuit. Clarence Williams was going to get that job for us, but somehow Williams and [A. J.] Piron disagreed. [Of] course Clarence had the money and the job so he just left us there."

In the picture Benton is playing a small banjo. He was a good banjo player, also a singer and [ear] piano player. Johnny St. Cyr had the big banjo. Ridgley doesn't know why they used both banjos.

The first sliding trombone player in town that Ridgley remembers was a bright fellow who left here for Chicago and there joined the detective force. His name was Tucker. [Batiste] Delisle came along with the John Robichaux band, after this.

End of Reel II

Present: Richard B. Allen
Marjorie T. Zander
Elizabeth Snapp

[Sgt.] Tucker, who went to Chicago was first to use slide trombone [in New Orleans Negro bands]. Pete [Bocage] might remember his name, but Ridgley does not. Pete is about seven or eight years younger than Ridgley. Baptiste Delisle came in at Lincoln Park. "Fess" Manetta, Mr. Allen says, is about Pete's age. Tom Albert is older than Ridgley; Tom is about eighty-three or eighty five.

Mr. Allen asks Ridgley who played trombone with Celestin after the Tuxedo split and formed two bands; Ridgley says Bill Matthews was the first one [that August Rousseau came later ?] [check this.] Shots [Madison] was playing second cornet when the band broke up. Ridgley had played a job at the Pythian Temple, after which Shots called him about four o'clock in the morning about the meeting that he had overheard, which was held by John Marrero, Paul Barnes, and Celestin; the meeting was about leaving Ridgley. Ridgley went down to the Southern Yacht Club office in the United Fruit [Company] building. [Mr. Garcia ?] asked Ridgley what he was doing down there; [Mr. Garcia ?] had heard that Ridgley had quit playing music. Ridgley denied this. [Mr. Garcia ?] told Ridgley that the cornet player [Celestin] and the banjo player [Marrero] were in to see him that morning to tell him that Ridgley had quit playing music and had turned everything over to them. Ridgley denied this. Mr. [?] called the stenographer and had her write a letter to Celestin telling him not to show up Wednesday night, that other arrangements had been made for the dance. Ridgley still had the piano player, cornet player, and the drummer. Ridgley played the job with a pickup band, as instructed, by Mr. [Garcia ?], and the people said that they couldn't tell the difference, but Ridgley could. That was when Davy Jones joined Ridgley. They used to play at the Pelican on Gravier and Rampart. [All the bands in Louisiana came up there ?]

Ridgley's band would win music contests against Celestin's band every time they had one. When Paul Barnes left with Celestin, Ridgley had Robert Hall on tenor sax, and a young fellow named Minor on sax who played until Davy Jones came up. Mr. Allen says Herbert Hall, the youngest Hall, is doing well in New York now. (Herbert Hall was once with Don Albert.) Ridgley says that Robert Hall was a nice tenor saxophone player; and he was a real cabinet builder, do anything with wood. Besides the saxes, and Ridgley on trombone, there was Shots on cornet, Emma Barrett on piano [holdover from Tuxedo who stayed with William Ridgley for years], and Willie Bontemps on banjo. Ridgley remembers because he and his band used to play every Saturday for one of the big Canal Street stores, and Willie Bontemps was with Ridgley then. Willie used to sing "a plenty." Alex Scott was with Ridgley on bass, Joe [?] was the drummer who had been with Celestin and Ridgley. At the department store, Ridgley's band played for advertising for two hours, inside the store.

Ridgley doesn't remember the members of Jack Carey's band. Ridgley doesn't think that Mutt [Carey] was with Jack. [Compare other interviews. Mutt's biography in the Jazz Record.]

With Kid Ory, who Ridgley says was good too, was Punch [Miller] on cornet, and Johnny Dodds.

Henry Martin, the drummer, played with Frankie Duson, Ridgley thinks. Frankie Duson also had Jimmy Johnson on bass--the same Jimmy Johnson played with Ridgley, later--and Big Eye Louis Nelson [Delisle] also.

When Jimmy Johnson was with Ridgley, Ridgley was just playing spot jobs.

Duson also had Edward Clem on cornet, and Bob Lyons, bass, sometimes.

Ridgley played bass violin in the beginning; Professor [Jim] Humphrey was his teacher. Professor [Jim] Humphrey used to come to Jefferson Parish, where Ridgley lived, at 9:00 every Sunday morning. Ridgley studied the bass violin for about a year, after which Professor Humphrey urged him to take the trombone. Ridgley studied the trombone for about a year and a half. After the trombone lessons, Ridgley started playing it with the Silver Leaf String Band [i.e., orchestra]. Ridgley's first tune on the trombone was "Harmony Rag"; it was easy, just a few whole notes and vamp. The first thing Ridgley played by "head" on trombone was "blues [and anything like that.]"

Ridgley won some prizes for winning music contests; he beat Ory's band at Third and Willow at the National Park, a big baseball park. In the old days there was an organization called the Turtles made up of colored men; they gave one big parade with a thousand or more men in it; they had a big dance at the National Park that night. Ridgley's Orchestra beat Ory's that night.

Ridgley also beat Kid Rena's band at Gypsy [Smith ?] Camp on Clio Street. The Gypsy [Smith ?] Camp was a big place and was being used for a church meeting; after the church group left, a bunch of white boys rented it and gave a dance for which they hired Ridgley. Ridgley whipped Rena there and got a souvenir for it.

Ridgley also whipped Celestin at the Pelican and [got a medal for that ?] In all Ridgley got three medals. Ridgley kept one of the medals, gave one to someone else, and gave one to his brother. Ridgley thinks that the one he has left was from the time he whipped Rena.

Ridgley doesn't know if they won the contests because they had a good band or because they had such a good name. The people that gave the contests had judges who decided the winner.

The Turtles Club was made up of the sewerage men who laid all the sewer lines in the city; they called themselves turtles. The night of the Turtle's dance a man [one of the members ?] stole all the money and ran away with it before the dance was over.

Ridgley was quite small when Buddy Bolden played, but he says that Buddy once lived up in Carrollton on Hillary Street with some of his kin. Ridgley had the privilege to hire him to play for a dance in the country where Ridgley lived when he was a boy. Ridgley adds that Buddy was a wonderful fellow. Buddy had a style of his own; he didn't play like Celestin or Shots or Rena. Ridgley has never heard anyone imitate him; Buddy was very strong, and had a good tone. Ridgley doesn't think Buddy read any music at all. Mr. Allen asks if Buddy would sound modern today; for example, Louis Armstrong's old records sound good today. Ridgley says he guesses the people would like Buddy's style.

Zeb's last name was Lenoir, Lenares.

Joe Payant [sp ?] played in Allen's Brass Band, on alto horn. Mr. Allen wonders if that was Joe's real name; Ridgley only knew him by that name. Mr. Allen asks if Bolden's hand played at all like Robichaux's. Ridgley says no, that Robichaux had a reading band; Bolden had a gut-bucket band. Bolden played quadrilles and mazurkas; they were his forte. Ridgley never did, although he tried to play one, but those dances had not been popular for a long time. Ridgley says he played waltzes. He has heard of Varieties and Lancers, but never played them. Albert Glenny used to tell Mr. Allen about playing them.

Oscar Randall played violin--Ridgley played with him--Randall was pretty good, but his temper was so high he couldn't keep a bunch of men together. Randall had his own band. Oscar Robinson played bass in it, and George Sayles played guitar; Ridgley can't remember the rest. The band was about the same as the Silver Leaf Band; the leaders were about the

only difference. Albert Baptiste was a coffee parcher, and he couldn't always get off work to play music. The men were all mixed up between the two bands. When Albert Baptiste could get off work and could get the job, he would hire the men. Other times, Oscar Randall would get the job. Both leaders were violin players.

Ridgley does not remember Bolden ever having a second cornet player. Willie Cornish played with Bolden. Mr. Allen shows Ridgley a picture of Buddy Bolden and his band and points out Jimmy Johnson, Buddy Bolden, [Willie] Cornish, Brock Mumford, Frank Lewis, and Willie Warner. Ridgley recognizes all of them except possibly Willie Warner, whom he confuses with Louis Warnecke, who used to play with [A. J.] Piron.

Mr. Allen shows Ridgley a picture of Dave Perkins. Ridgley recognizes him, remarks that he was a tuba player and a very good teacher. He rented out all kinds of instruments. Ridgley never played with Dave Perkins.

George Baquet played with Ridgley a couple of times, although he was never a regular member of the band.

Dave Bailey played a couple of jobs with Ridgley's band, but he wasn't quite good enough for Ridgley's band at that time.

When Ridgley first started playing, there were no foot pedals on drums, except for that of a one-eyed fellow named Jurden Scott, who had a trap. Before the traps came out, they didn't use so much drum as they do now. The first trap drum Ridgley remembers seeing was played by Louis Cottrell at Lincoln Park, with Robichaux's band. This was before Deedee Chandler came in [with traps].

Ridgley doesn't remember any numbers Bolden played.

Mr. Allen asks what Jim Humphrey's arrangements were like. Ridgley says he arranged simple things they were already familiar with: songs, hymns. When Ridgley first remembers Humphrey's coming out "home", Humphrey was teaching a little brass band of about twelve to fourteen fellows. He would make simple arrangements for them. The tunes would already be almost in their heads, but at the same time, they were learning to play the instruments. Humphrey was a good old teacher, smart.

Mr. Allen mentions "One-eyed Babe" [Phillips], a bass player who was married to Henry Zeno's sister. Ridgley remembers a one-eyed fellow playing bass, but doesn't know much about him--"He wasn't in my time."

Mr. Allen questions Ridgley about Louis Armstrong. Ridgley says Celestin left his band, and he had to have a cornet player. The band used to play for a club in the 300 block of North Dupre Street twice a year. The club would go out to Milneburg on a Saturday evening and stay out there until Sunday evening--the club would stay out there all night, but the band would go home and come back out the next morning. Ridgley needed a cornet player [to make this date] but had trouble finding one. He asked Joe Oliver. Joe said he was sorry, but he was playing and couldn't be with them. However, he had a good scholar he would send. Ridgley was glad to have any cornet player, although he did not know Louis at this time. Joe sent Louis Armstrong. The rest of the band were all on the job, waiting for Louis, when they saw a boy coming. He had on a police cap that looked as if it were too large for him, a little old blue coat, and a little dirty bag under his arm for his cornet. Ridgley wondered [what ?] [how ?] he was going to do. He met Louis, who had been in Jones Home, [the Waifs' Home] and they had a little talk. Everything he asked Louis about, Louis said yeah, he could play

it. Ridgley began to feel better. The members of the club used to request numbers for the band to play, not just dance music, but songs like "Old Kentucky." [Check Spaeth] They'd have a little beer, and ask for all kinds of songs.

The band was "a string [i.e., orchestra] band, no piano." They would meet at the club, and march the three blocks to the train to take them to Spanish Fort. They would march to the music of the cornet and drum. When they got out there, they were all having a good time. When the club members began asking for special numbers, Louis could play more of them than the rest of the band. After that Ridgley was always glad to have Louis, whenever he was short a trumpet player. Celestin was a sick man, had "ulcers of the stomach." He had to miss many of the jobs they went on. They used to pay him off. Louis played many jobs with Ridgley in place of Celestin.

Louis was a devilish little boy. When Louis was playing with Ridgley's men in the brass band, if they were playing a funeral or something like that, in the rough part of town the bad boys would follow Louis up, get right by him, call him everything they could think of, tell him "'cause you're playing with the Tuxedo Band you think you're somebody." Louis would run them off down the street, for about half a block. Louis used to dance, shadow-box, everything. "You couldn't learn what Louis learned as quick as he did; it had to be given to you [by God]. Louis got that from his birth. When he went on the boat, he could just 'spell' a little; he couldn't read much, but with that wonderful ear of his, he could play third cornet; he was good."

Ricard [Alexis] worked with Ridgley. Ridgley didn't like Ricard much, because when Ricard got to drinking he wouldn't listen. Ridgley always had first class work; his musicians had to listen to him. He did hire Ricard a few times, though. Ricard was playing cornet. But

he would drink a little, then he'd get contrary, and "you couldn't tell him nothing." When Ridgley was on a job, he didn't drink. He always kept himself in order so that he would be able to meet his people. He didn't allow his men to drink, smoke, or "do nothing else" on the job. If the men were given liquor at intermission or at the end of the job, they could take it home to drink. Ridgley felt they were being paid a salary to play music. If the men came on a job and wanted something to eat first, he told them they knew they were coming to work, should have eaten first. Told them they weren't going to starve in a couple of hours, that they would have to wait until after the job.

End of Reel III

Louis Cottrell, Jr., clarinet and saxophone, played with Ridgley, but not for long. Arthur Derbigny was playing violin [!!!] with him at the time. Louis Cottrell and Derbigny went with Don Albert. Their leaving broke up Ridgley's band. Ridgley says Don Albert was a good cornet player.

Mr. Allen shows Ridgley a picture of the Tuxedo band, about 1925, reproduced in Samuel B. Charters IV, Jazz: New Orleans, 1885-1957. Drum player in picture is identified as Bill Matthews. Ridgley says it is not Bill, but is his brother "Babe". Picture also shows Ridgley, Shots [Madison], Willie "Kaiser" Joseph, Emma [Barrett], Arthur Derbigny [holding alto saxophone], a saxophone player from St. Louis playing either a tenor or C melody sax, Robert Hall on saxophone, Willie Bontemps playing a banjo, and a guy called Jessie [sp ?] on tuba. Jesse is a big, dark fellow. Ridgley says the one called "Jesse" is really John Porter. Ridgley also says the unknown saxophone player must have been the one he was trying to tell about.

Earl Fouché was a pretty good saxophone player and played with Ridgley a while; "but he's another fellow got a big head--you couldn't get along with him. Thought he was the only saxophone player in town." He went out to California; he left here a while ago and went out there and found out there were some [other] saxophone players; he was pretty good here. Ridgley doesn't remember exactly when Fouché was with him, whether or not it was before [John] Handy was with him; on second thought, he thinks maybe it was before Handy. It was after Fouché was with Sam Morgan. Mr. Allen says Fouché made records with Morgan in 1927. Fouché came with Ridgley's band because they made more money than Morgan's. But Fouché was hard to get along with.

Ridgley knows Albert French, the banjo player, but he never played with Ridgley.

Gilbert Young played with Ridgley a while, but he got the big head too. "He's still got it." "I taken him when he . . . tried to read, and he couldn't play four quarters in a bar. . . . He got so his head got so big I had to get rid of him." He started with Ridgley when he was quite young, playing second cornet. He had a good tone, could make high notes, had "good ragtime in his head." Ridgley thought he would make good, but he was hard to get along with, especially in Ridgley's kind of [music] work.

Celestin would leave Ridgley's band, but whenever he got ready to come back, Ridgley would have an opening for him. This was always understood. They never tried to keep him out. Whenever Celestin was out of a job, he came right on back to Ridgley, because they started together and they both were country boys. Ridgley kept the band going. Celestin left Ridgley three or four times. That's how Amos [White ?] [Riley ?] and Mutt [Carey] got with the Tuxedo, and that was how Buddy Petit got with the Tuxedo, and that was how Buddy Petit got with Ridgley. Ridgley didn't get rid of Buddy, Buddy got rid of himself. Ridgley had too much work for Buddy. Buddy said he didn't want a job; [if he did] he would go on the riverfront. Ridgley figures Buddy wanted to set up his own band.

Mr. Allen asks Miss Zander to find a photograph of Louis Nelson, the trombone player, from the file.

Mr. Allen asks about Arnold Metoyer. Ridgley says Arnold played with them some, but didn't like the idea of being with them much. He was a real good cornet player, but the Tuxedo didn't care too much about him.

Mr. Allen asks how Buddy Petit played. "He was good, That guy

could play like anything. But he drank--hard to get along with at times, you know; when he'd be sober [he was] all right, but if he felt like drinking, he didn't care what kind of job you have, he'd just go on to sleep and wouldn't send nobody." Once they had a job in Kentwood, a big job. Ridgley lived way uptown, had to send all the way down around Esplanade Avenue to rout out Buddy. "A man [who would] go to sleep on you and forget something like that [will] get you in trouble."

Ridgley never did have any trouble on his travels, mostly around Louisiana and Mississippi.

In response to Mr. Allen's question about whether anyone else now plays like Buddy Petit, Ridgley says he was something on the order of Louis [Armstrong]. Ridgley says many tried to imitate Petit's style. Mr. Allen plays record, "Cornet Chop Suey," by Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five, Co. Album. Ridgley says it is Buddy's style all right; it's either Buddy or somebody just like him.

Ridgley says there is a white boy, an old, old musician, a cornet player, who has a band, who plays something like Buddy Petit. The white boy has been making good money lately.

Ridgley says people used to like Buddy's style better than Celestin's, and also they liked Mutt Carey's style better than Celestin's. They liked Shots [Madison's] playing better than Celestin. Mr. Allen suggests that Celestin's ability to get along with people was better than his style of playing. Shots was good, sweet.

Record ends. Ridgley repeats that it is Buddy's style; "If it ain't him it's somebody just like him." Mr. Allen says it is Louis Armstrong, copying Buddy. "That's every bit of his style. He was good. People used to ask for him all the time. But he just had that bad habit, you know. Celestin was just such a nice fellow everybody liked him."

Buddy helped everybody out in the band. He taught the trombone player how to make his part.

Mr. Allen asks when they started "playing by head" in the street. The downtown bands always had better "reading" musicians than the uptown bands. Most of the faking was done by the uptown bands. George Moret's Excelsior Band and Manuel Perez's Onward Band were both downtown bands, with reading musicians. If you didn't know how to read, you couldn't play with Old Man Moret or Manuel Perez. Ridgley says he ~~knew~~ knew all these old musicians from working in the country grocery store in Jefferson Parish, about a mile and a quarter beyond the city limit. The bands would be hired for funerals and other parades; they had to stop at the store to get where they were going. Ridgley would take those he knew in, give them a big, cool drink of water, or even a drink of whiskey--he had that privilege. They all got to know him; he knew almost all of them by name. Ridgley worked in the country grocery from the time he was eleven years old until he got married--a period of about eighteen years. [Compare with earlier statements about this job.] The people were very good to him; they helped him along with his music business.

Ridgley says they didn't have brass bands that played entirely by head, even uptown. Somebody had to be able to read. They always played some fake numbers, though.

Mr. Allen shows Ridgley a picture that includes Paul Barnes and Louis Nelson. Ridgley says he has seen Louis Nelson in the street, but he never did know him. Ridgley questions Mr. Allen about one of the men in the picture. It is Kid Thomas [Valentine], the trumpet player "from across the river."

Ridgley remarks that Paul Barnes didn't do so well upon his return--that he's not doing what he thinks he can do. Paul Barnes came back

from California and tried to get Ridgley to set up a band with him, but Ridgley refused. "He done me a dirty trick once, he wasn't going to do it a second time."

Mr. Allen pauses to search for a tape he wants to play. Sound of thunder [also rain, but inaudible]. Miss Zander remarks that it is storming out.

Mr. Allen says, "That's old Baby Dodds, there." [Where? Probably in a picture.] Ridgley remarks that all those boys are dead now.

Ridgley's brothers played music in the Spanish-American War, but they didn't play dance music. They didn't play with any bands "outside of [their ?] Uncle Sam's Band."

In the beginning, Ridgley thought Celestin was older than Ridgley, but when Celestin died "he was younger".

Mr. Allen asks Ridgley where he was educated. Ridgley requests that the machine be cut off temporarily.

Mr. Allen plays tape, "The Entertainer," by the Love-Jiles Band. Ridgley says the style sounds like the old style, way back, of Frankie Duson and Bob Lyons. "They might not be old musicians. . . ." Mr. Allen: "Oh, they're old, but that was only made about a year ago." The tape was made June 12, 1960, by Peter Bocage on violin, and Charlie Love [trumpet]. Ridgley says it sounds like Frankie Duson on the trombone. Mr. Allen says the trombone player is Albert Warner, who plays in the Eureka [Brass Band]. Ridgley says "He sure make it nice, doesn't he?" Ridgley says he never played with played with Warner. "He came after my time" [Compare Albert Warner, Reel _____]. Paul Barnes is playing clarinet with this group.

Manuel Sayles is on banjo. Ridgley says Sayles is a wonderful banjo player.

"Peter Bocage, if there's anything in you at all, he'll train you. He really can make you [play ?]."

Ridgley asks if Manuel Sayles doesn't play something else besides banjo. Mr. Allen says the guitar, now. Ridgley says Sayles was on the boat with them, playing for Fate Marable. He seems uncertain upon reflection. Sayles is a smart kid. His father was a good guitar player. Sayles worked with Ridgley's band regularly, a good while, before they got on the boat. After the job on the boat, he never did come back. Mr. Allen doesn't think Sayles looks old enough to have played with Ridgley during World War One. Ridgley says Sayles's daddy never looked old, either. [Compare Manuel Sayles, Reel _____]

George Fihle was the first [slide] trombone player Ridgley knew. He said Tucker before, but he meant Fihle, although Tucker was a [slide] trombone player too. Ridgley was just a little boy when he knew Fihle, who was already playing slide trombone. George Fihle played with Celestin in the District, at the Tuxedo Hall. He was a good trombone player. Helped Celestin a whole lot. Tucker left town long before Fihle.

Eddie Atkins was a good trombone player too. He worked for Joe Oliver a long time in New Orleans. Eddie Atkins is dead. Mr. Allen has been to his grave, in Ama [Louisiana], near Waggaman [Louisiana]. Joe Avery is buried in the same grave yard.

Ridgley says Zue Robertson was a good trombone player too. He was Batt Delisle's nephew; Batt Delisle taught him in the beginning. He played more in circus bands away from here than around here.

Roy Palmer played in the Tuxedo Brass Band with Ridgley. Palmer left here a long time too. Palmer didn't play enough dance work to get in a good band; Ridgley believes that is why he left here. He was a pretty good player. Mr. Allen says he had a good sense of humor, could play funny stuff and had fast execution. Ridgley says he studied hard.

Mr. Allen is going to get a Roy Palmer record out to play for Ridgley.

Longest time Ridgley ever left New Orleans was thirty days. He was on the boat then.

Mr. Allen plays Roy Palmer record. [West African Blues ?]

Ridgley says Kid Ory was good, but his execution was not so fast as Roy's in those days. Ory's style never came up to what Roy Palmer was doing on that record, approximately thirty years old. Jack Carey was good. He could play on that order, too. Real, real rough. All of them were rough; Frankie Duson was rough.

Mr. Allen asks Ridgley why he stopped playing at the Boston Club. Ridgley says it was just that he quit all music when he joined the church. Ridgley has been everything in the church but the preacher "and I didn't try to be that because I wasn't "learnt" enough for that." He has been class leader, helped in the choir, and is on the steward "bench" now in the church.

When he quit, he gave his music to a fellow he knew only by the name of "Red." Red didn't live here; used to come through here every year on the circus. He always stopped with them when he came through. Last time before Ridgley stopped playing when he came through, Ridgley wanted to quit because he had begun to get pyorrhea, so he asked Red about taking his place with the band. Red had to go to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where the circus was to be disbanded, and he would write when he got there. He did that, and Ridgley wrote for him to come. Red's horn was "kind of bad," so Ridgley let him use his. Red offered to buy it. Ridgley sold it to him for \$25, although he had paid \$192 or \$192.50 for it. Red gave Ridgley \$5; Ridgley never saw Red again.

END OF REEL IV