

Chris Kelly was a wonderful cornet player who used to play at the Perseverance Hall. He was from down in the country, such as in Violet [Louisiana] [actually Deer Range, see Jim Robinson], but he made his home up here in the city. When the people would hear Celestin playing at a concert, [they would come to the concert when they heard about the man with the band, which was Chris Kelly?] He was a drawing card. If he was playing at "one of the main halls, which would be described for about a month" in advance that a party was going on, everybody who heard Chris Kelly was going to play would say "Well, we'll be there, because I know we're going to enjoy ourselves when Chris Kelly plays music." It would be advertised on a program for about a month that Chris Kelly would be playing there. Most of the people knew the whole band by the name of the cornet player.

The programs would be posted on doors of residences in different sections. People would read them and that would draw the crowd.

Some of the old dances, Bailey recalls, that people liked when Chris Kelly was playing are "ballin'", "the bucket" [later calls it "rockin' the bucket"], "shake that thing," "Lower the Bridge." These are not like the dances they have today, such as the "Lindy Hop." In the old days they had "Rock the Bucket," "ballin' jack," William Russell asks what "ballin' the jack" was like. Bailey describes it as follows: you put your two knees together, and start dancing, twist your knees, you had to know how to do it. Bailey really could do it; he loved it.

Richard Allen asks how you "shake that thing." Bailey says you stand steady, twist your body, don't move your feet.

William Russell asks about the "eagle rock." Bailey says that was a wonderful dance too, a slow drag. You shove your lady out, and come back and catch her. When the music says "halt" you go to rocking; then they start to playing and you go to swinging. Allen asks what you call it when the band is playing, everyone dancing, then the band stops entirely, but everyone continues, then the band starts playing again. Bailey says this is like the eagle rock, during the "stop" they would stay steady in one spot, just twisting themselves. Then when the music would start again, you would go on and dance, maybe the two-step.

Richard Allen asks about "the bucket." You had to have a good back for that. When they say "do the bucket," you go on and do the bucket, you kind of squat down and come up again. (Allen asks how far back you lean your back. Bailey misunderstands, says it was back around 1920). Bailey says you don't lean over backwards when you "shake the bucket," you go down almost to the floor, shaking yourself. You have your lady in your hand. You come up. Time you go down slowly and then come up, the music starts playing fast and you start dancing again.

Allen asks about the dancing you sometimes see on Mardi Gras when people get down on their knees, lean back, and shake. Bailey says some people used to call that the "elephant dance."

Richard Allen asks about the "puppy." It's something like "shake that thing," except that in "shake that thing," your feet are in one place but your whole body moves. In the "puppy" your feet are in one place and only part of your body moves. "You have your lady friend and you be dancing and then you stand and go just like a dog running, but you're in one spot. We call it 'shaking'." "You've got to know how to do them dances." [[Amen]]

Bailey talks about "engine" horses--fire fighting in the old days when you had to harness the horses to the fire engine when the alarm rang. The horses were beautiful. Bailey never heard bands at the fire houses; the men had to be on the alert there. The men didn't even cook at engine houses. (Allen says that today there are musicians in fire houses. See Moose Zanco interview).

Bailey says prohibition put beer out of existence in 1915. [Everybody tried to help the Brewers Union Local 161 keep beer on but it went out of business] [Incorrect date] Describes speakeasies. [See Reel II, Sept. 26, 1959, p. 10]

In 1918 the crevasse broke along the river down in the country. They had to get volunteers to try to stop the water with sandbags, keep it from coming into the city.

People couldn't always afford to hire a full band for a dance. Sometimes they would hire just "a little banjo" and a piano player. If you get up to four or five pieces you get a cornet, clarinet, piano, drum. But if you had a dance, you had to have some kind of music. Way back around 1916, if they didn't have money for music they would get an organ grinder. That was a man who went around on Friday,

Saturday, and Sunday, playing from corner to corner, trying to make a living. Sometimes they would hire him in a party. That's one of those organs you have to turn. They would be about three feet high, so many inches long, and about three or four feet wide. Had wheels on them. One man would pull an organ. You could rent one of the organs. They would charge you \$2 for most all night, then he would bring it on back after the party.

Bailey "disremembers" just what the music was, but claims it was jazz music, it was nice music, would make you dance and feel happy. One of the organ grinders was called Shorty; another was called Papa Lewis--he's dead--most of the old fellows are gone now--heard talk of Nicodemus, but didn't know him. Bailey knew many of the piano players around: Eugene Pellebon and a little fellow they called "Sweetie." Bailey says "Sweetie" is still here, but doesn't play any more. He knew quite a few more, about 8 or 10, but can't recall names.

William Russell asks about "Papa De Da Da." Bailey doesn't recognize the name. Richard Allen says Steve Lewis used to get him [Papa De Da Da] out of jail; he would play at Victor's. He would play piano for the night, then go back to jail. Steve knew the judge.

Bailey says the Ursulines Convent is one of the oldest buildings in the United States. It is the second church in the United States, St. Mary's Italian Church. In the gymnasium in the back of the church they used to have all kinds of entertainment, **prize** fighting, concerts, dances. In the old days they had a few dances there, more

violin players and things. High toned music, violins, guitar.

Some of the other churches had little concerts and things, no Catholic churches, but "some of them Baptist churches."

At St. Katherine's church they had dances; they had a big hall, music and everything. They have a big church, a school, a big hall.

Whenever they have dances they have music. The church still remains on Tulane [Avenue] near Marais [Street]. Bailey doesn't remember any of the men there. You go to these dances, get acquainted with people, just that night.

Around 1915 [earlier says 1918], they had a crevasse down the river, and they had to have volunteers to put out sand bags to keep the water from coming into the city. Many people left from down in the country; they had to come to the city. The chickens, hogs, houses, etc. floated away. They had a few boats down on the river: "Robert E. Lee" which had a band on it, but A. Bailey doesn't know the name of it. It was one of the old boats. Allen asks him if he has ever been on the "Sidney" or the "J.S." for an excursion. Bailey says he remembers going to one or two big boats that went on excursions, but he doesn't remember the names; they would be special boats when they would have an excursion going down to Chalmette. They used to go down to Chalmette on Armistice Day, May 30 [actually Memorial Day]. The cemetery which is still there has been destroyed now [[what does he mean by destroyed here??]]; they don't use it any more. May 30 was a great day and so was the first Monday in September, Labor Day. In those days, they were great days. Bailey's daddy was living in

those days, and he would have to parade for the Longshoremen. No working people would work those days; that was back around 1914. This lasted up to about 1920.

The River Boat would have a little jazz band when they would go on the excursions; they would have Papa Celestin playing on them. That was the only band that Bailey knows to have played on them. They came from down in the country, and that is where all the excursions would go.

Bailey went from Bay St. Louis to a place they called Logtown [Miss.] around 1925. Logtown had a sawmill where Bailey used to work. You had to cross twelve miles of water in a boat. They had piano players there; not much music [bands], but they had plenty of piano playing. They would play in places they called the tunk which is a gang of people like in a barroom where they would have dancing in the back of the barroom. It is a hall, but they called it a tunk, a hunky-tunk where they play piano and you go and dance around. They would have gambling in another part. They would play all kinds of games: cards, dice, cotch [ck. sp. Lomax is incorrect]. That was way back.

Bailey doesn't know any tunks in New Orleans; New Orleans would have dances. He only went to tunks across the lake. Richard Allen asks Bailey if he was ever at Spanno's or Kizer's [See RL for sp] or the Red Onion. Bailey says that they were bar rooms where a man might have a piano and dancing, but they weren't real dance halls. They would call them tonks, too. All them buildings which they tore down would be

tonks: around Poydras, Saratoga, nothing but bar rooms up there.

They had piano players at Spanno's. Richard Allen says the Red Onion was a famous place. Bailey was living way down town in the seventh ward, and he used to go to the third ward on Friday and Saturday just to enjoy himself and would stop in to get one or two little drinks.

He would see the ladies and men that would be dancing and the piano [playing?] would be rolling. [[Is he referring to a player piano here?]]

Gasquet Street was a few blocks from Canal Street. On Gasquet they had bar rooms with plenty of dancing, gambling, fish fries, and a little home brew. That was back around 1919. They had a few women hustling on Gasquet Street, plenty of them. They had women all around that neighborhood, but Bailey would just have his drink and go home, never fool with the women. There was plenty of them on Gasquet, Franklin, and Saratoga streets. Bailey was in the "Big 25's" around 1930; it was a gambling place, and a "sedating" barroom where you could bring your lady and sit down and drink and entertain. They might have a piano player, but no music. The "25" was a gambling place.

The Astoria had music up on top of the building. The bar room was down stairs. Upstairs was for music and entertaining. Dances would be given there. The Astoria was [& is in 1961] on Rampart Street.

Bailey says the Pelican was a little place, too, drinking, etc. Now and then on Sunday and Fridays and Saturdays, they would have a little music and singing and things. You had to pay to go in those places: about 50 cents.

Reel I--Summary--Retyped
September 30, 1959

Logtown had dwellings where the mill workers lived. The man brought logs from the swamps to the mill; the camp didn't move around. Bailey worked in the saw mill for about a month, but the noise was so great that it was making the people deaf or hard of hearing. He quit and got a job on the outside driving a cart hauling slab [wood] for the engine to burn. He stayed with that for about one year.

The fellows didn't sing in the mill. It was too noisy. There weren't many working outside. The mill ran from 6:30 in the morning till 6:00 in the evening, with an hour for lunch. Bailey didn't see the trees cut, but he saw them floating in the river. The logs were met at the river by a man who used hooks to put them on trucks and bring them to the mill where they were sawed into all kinds of lumber. Around 1928, Bailey had to use his cart to carry people to the hospital or the doctor as the mill blew up, perhaps from the boiler.

Parties and bands are much more expensive now. Bailey followed parades and went to funerals. Whenever he'd know where a body was he would be in the second line. They played nice hymns: "Nearer, My God, To Thee," and "Sing On" as they went to the cemetery, but coming back they would play ragtime [i.e., jazz], such as "You're Glad You're Dead, You're Gone".

Bailey heard lots of singing in the church; they would sing all kinds of hymns. Bailey is speaking of the Baptist Church. He never belonged to the church, but "had a Christian heart." Bailey has never been baptized, and they say you haven't been a Christian. Bailey was just sprinkled even though he was born a Baptist. Bailey describes the service of Baptism by immersion.