

ANDREW BAILEY  
Reel I--Summary--Retyped  
September 26, 1959

Those Present: William Russell,  
Richard B. Allen

The recording was made at 600 Chartres Street. Andrew Bailey which is his full name, was born July 25, 1899.

Bailey did not have any musicians in his family, and he never did play. Bailey used to go to dances. He loved music.

The first musician Bailey can remember was Wooden Joe Nicholas who used to play at the Perseverance Hall for parties on Sunday night "from eight till late".

Bailey was raised in the seventh ward in New Orleans, Louisiana. This was on Pauger and Villere Streets. Pauger used to be Bourbon at one time.

Bailey used to go to the churches where, in those days, they had concerts. This was around 1914. The program would consist of singing, joking, and entertaining. They were on week days like on Monday nights or Saturday nights.

Wooden Joe had about six or seven people with him. Bailey knew two or three of them but can't recall their names.

The featured instruments of those days were the cornet, violin, clarinet, and drum. Can't remember violin players names, but could get them.

One of the outstanding trumpet players was Manuel Perez. He was "best cornet player in New Orleans." Manuel Perez lived down in the seventh ward on Urquhart Street, on the corner about two squares

[i.e., blocks] from Bailey's house. Bailey heard Perez in parades back in 1916. Bailey would "second line."

Different organizations would put on the parades: clubs such as the Zulus, the Square Deal. They had plenty of fights at the parades, but the law would be there to back them back. [Note that Allen's question fails as irony]. It was a little better to go to a funeral than to a regular parade. [Means what?] Going to the cemetery they would play plenty of hymns, but coming back they would be playing only ragtime. Everybody would be there dancing coming back. Some of the fights were caused by people in different wards like the 7th, 8th, 9th ward when they didn't want a certain person coming into their ward. They would use their fists. Some would try to use broomsticks, but the police would be there, behind the parades.

Organizations would have parades at a certain time of the year. Bailey was a member of a society and marched in many funerals with music. He wasn't a member of the Vidalia, Charity, or Liberty benevolent societies. The societies would make arrangements for the funeral and the music. The money for the bands would come from the society. Some of the families didn't want any music. They taxed the members when the family wanted music, but if they didn't the family got no money. The societies were not secret, just benevolent for when you are sick or die. Anybody can join as long as you pay your dues. They would keep the corporation [i.e., city?] from taking care of you.

The dues were every month, sometimes twice a month. They had monthly dues every month, and they called the one that comes twice a month ["quarterly" ?]. The "quarterly" came when someone died. [Sort of like an assessment?] The dues were 75 cents a month. It would be 50 cents to 75 cents more if someone died for the "quarterly." Bailey's society didn't have uniforms. If someone died you had to wear your own black clothes. [William Russell] The Masons had aprons and hats.

Most of the people were buried in the city at St. Roch, St. Louis, Holt, and Girod [St.] which they tore down. Most funerals, in the old days, started at the house. There were few undertakers then. Bailey's folks still bury at the house, although most people today bury from the undertakers. The club starts marching at the house after they have met at their hall such as the Perseverance, the Economy Hall, or the Cooperators Hall. The band would be at the hall; go to the house; when the undertaker arrived, they'd begin. Everybody had to walk to the funeral, but they were glad to. They walked to the music of nothing but hymns going to the cemetery such as, "Nearer My God To Thee." Some of the ragtime numbers were : "Tiger Rag, " "Jelly Roll, " "Kick The Bucket." When the latter is played, everybody dances and kicks their legs similar to the "ham kick". They had all kinds of dances. We have the jitter-bug today; then they had the slow drag, the shimmy, "Kick The Ham", and "Kick the Bucket".

Bailey used to like the "Tiger Rag." He would mainly dance the two-step and the slow drag. Bailey couldn't dance the quadrille, but he would watch others doing it. About twenty would take part in the quadrilles. With ragtime [i.e., jazz] everyone would dance together, but for the quadrille only those who knew how would dance, while the others watched. They would give prizes for the quadrilles in the old days, also for the waltz. They would have the quadrilles two or three times in one night. Each one lasted about fifteen or twenty minutes. That was around 1918.

Bailey remembers the September storm in 1915. He was working for the Klotz Cracker Company, and they let everyone off at 2:00 o'clock, and it took him till 9:00 o'clock to get home. It was the worst storm that Bailey has ever seen: It knocked down churches, buildings, etc. The storm winds started about 11:00 o'clock and at 2:00 o'clock they were still coming, and "when she really got late, it was around 8:00 to 9:00 o'clock, then she was doing it." Bailey's house was okay. He gives more details.

Bailey remembers that there were dances and music before 1915, but he doesn't remember any of the names of the people. Bailey started going to Joe ["King"] Oliver's dances around the year of the storm. Before that he was too young.

Bailey liked to go to dances especially on Carnival or Mardi Gras nights. You had to wear long pants so he would wear his daddy's. Bailey liked the Carnival better in the old days: "It was Carnival then." Then

you had only maskers on the streets. "Today you have people walking."  
Bailey was dressed as a monkey once and someone set him on fire.  
Many people were set on fire as a joke. They had a lot of music and  
parades on Carnival Day. They had the Rex, Comus, Proteus then as  
they do today. Bailey used to work in the parades; he would carry  
lights [flambeaux] and lead the mules. He was working for John  
[Everett?], a big teamsters union place.

The clubs would hire bands to play. Rex, Comus, etc., would not use  
colored bands. They had a few white ragtime-jazz bands which played  
mostly sentimental songs. Other organizations, such as exist today used  
jazz bands. Someone said that a lot of the big white brass bands came from  
Mississippi to play. Bailey would still get to strut even though he was  
carrying a heavy light. Most of the people would look at the light-toter.  
You had a hard time getting a light. They had a big den on Calliope and  
Magnolia where you went to get a light, but you had to fight to get in  
the yard. Once you got in, you had a chance to work. People didn't  
throw money in the streets to the people with lights.

Bailey met Joe Oliver at the Cooperators Hall. He was one of  
the good cornet players "right behind Manuel Perez" [in age?]. Joe  
Oliver had several different mutes, but he mainly used his derby which  
he used till he died. Other players had things they put in their cornets.

Bailey remembers Freddy Keppard; "he was good, too." Sometimes  
he would play at the Cooperators. Manuel Perez was outstanding so  
Keppard couldn't come to the Economy Hall because they [Perez] had a  
contract all the time for every dance that would come there. Freddy would

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get any band they wanted at the Economy when they would have a dance. Bailey heard Freddie in about 1914. Bailey didn't know Bunk Johnson. Bailey knew Walter "Blue" [Robertson] the cornet player who broke his gall string one Sunday behind a parade and died that night. Walter Blue's son plays at Luthjen's, "Little"Blue [Robertson].

Buddy Petit was a good cornet player who had a contract with the Perseverance Hall downtown. Bailey knew him well.

Bailey used to go to dances uptown: The Roof Garden and a place on Gravier Street. They had schemes to get in when they didn't have any money. This was when they were small. Bailey didn't go to the Roof Garden much, but he went to the Winter Garden on Gravier near Rampart a lot. The Roof Garden was more sedate. They had dances at the Pelican and the Astoria but Bailey didn't go there much. A few new fellows played in the places uptown. The old-time downtown guys didn't play uptown joints; they (Freddy Keppard, Joe Oliver, Buddy Petit and Manuel Perez) played at places like the Roof Gardens. Not everyone could get in the Roof Garden. Wooden Joe used to play downtown in places like the New Hall. Two or three of the old halls near Bailey have turned into churches today like the Francs Amis, which was a nice, big hall back of where Bailey used to live. Bailey couldn't go into that hall much in the old days because he was too dark. It was for the light Creoles [of color]. <sup>B</sup>Bailey says he is Creole, but he never did speak their language. He just knows a few words, such as "Bon soir." The outstanding drummers when Bailey was young were: [Paul] Barbarin; a fellow called Red Happy [Bolton]--a bright fellow--who played at the Palace; and Little Chineé "Bébé" [Abby Foster]. Red

Happy would throw the sticks and put on quite a show.

Bailey heard John Robichaux, but that was really more in his daddy's time. John Robichaux used to play at the Odd Fellows' Hall by the Basin.

Lincoln Park on Broad was running when Bailey was a child. When he was about twelve, he went there once. He went to a ball game.

Bailey's daddy used to hear a band at the Odd Fellows Hall on Toulouse and Basin. That was in the days of the schooners. There was water all the way from Basin to Canal to the Bayou [St. John]. That is where all the charcoal used to come in. After they did away with that, the charcoal had to come in by railroad car. His daddy used to "talk about Buddy Bolden, won't you please come home?" [He has this confused.]

Bailey didn't know Louis Armstrong when he first started, but he heard fellows say that he came up with Papa Celestin who "learned him plenty." And then he heard about Joe Oliver who "learned him coming up." Celestin is the one who took him out around the night clubs and gave him his start.

Bailey had just put on long pants when the District was closing up.

Bailey knew Lawrence and his brother Simon Marrero who used to play bass. He was one of the wonderful bass players. He used to play with Manuel for a while, but his daddy was the main one with Manuel. Simon's daddy was Billy Marrero. Billy Marrero was a

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little short fellow just like Lawrence. Bailey knew the whole family, because he went to school on Villere St., which was where they lived. John Marrero was a guitar [and banjo] player, and he died up in New York. John was one of the good guitar players. Bailey was just a boy when John left here, but Simon always did stay here. Simon's cousin [Emile] "Mealy" [Barnes] plays clarinet. "Mealy" used to come around with Wooden Joe. Bailey knew Sidney Desvignes also who was a "good cornet player."

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Bailey never went to the French Opera [House], but there used to be nice French singing there. Mr. Russell says it burned down in 1919, but Bailey thinks it was around 1915. He didn't see the fire. They used to have just French there. At the Dauphine Theater they had burlesque shows. They can't have such things today because children go to such places, whereas in the old days only the men did.

Sidney Bechet was "one of them good old clarinet players." He came up with his uncle and them, Sidney Desvigne. Desvigne and others were from his neighborhood, the seventh ward. They had the Imperial Band. Manuel Perez was with the Superior Band.

Bailey remembers when they made a big club out of the San Jacinto Hall when they built it. It was a club, society. Bailey's uncle used to be in it. Sidney Desvigne played there. Buddy Petit played there plenty, too. Bailey knew Buddy by going to his dances. Buddy was a little, short, brown-skinned fellow. Chris Kelly was another good player, but Bailey didn't know him too much. Bailey knew Sam Morgan. Sam Morgan used to play at the Economy Hall. Morgan, a cornet player who died, used to play at the Perseverance Hall. The Cooperators Hall was called Hopes Hall. The name was changed "on the late watch," years later. They had a society there, too. They used to have "banquets" [bahnkay] there. That was just like a party, dance. Everybody couldn't go in; you had to be a member or they would give you one invitation for a friend. Bailey went there. They had plenty to eat and drink and everything was free. When you first got there you

started dancing. The music started at one o'clock in the afternoon and lasted till six o'clock. They were in the daytime. You would go to the kitchen when ever you wanted something to eat. People in Bailey's day went there to dance and drink. They drank wine but they also had lemonade and such. Plenty of drinking in those days. When liquor was illegal th would make their own. Bailey used to make home brew, too. If you take time to make it, it's good beer.

Mr. Russell says that [Louis] "Kid Shots" Madison's main job during prohibition was the selling of home brew according to [Manuel] "Fess" [Manetta]. Kid Ernest was in that, too, Mr. Allen says. "Shots" lived uptown in the Battlefield on Cleveland Street and played in the parades. Bailey doesn't seem to know him.

You could sometimes get corn liquor at "speak-easys" during prohibition. Bailey called all of the "speak-easys" "hole in the walls." He didn't know the names of any. You had to know someone to get in. You couldn't make any noise or you got thrown out. Bailey's uncle had a speak-easy. While he was working in the day time, a white policeman came there with his face blacked and that night he arrested his partner. That's how policemen worked in those days.

They gave picnics at the Fair Grounds. They would have dancing and plenty of music. [From 1918 to 1925?] they had all the colored picnics at the Fair Grounds. Colored used it more than white. All the holidays, like Old Soldiers' Day which was Labor Day; Odd Fellows' Day, May tenth. every year there was a parade, on five or six different holidays and they would go to the Fair Grounds for a picnic. That was the biggest place to hold the people. They would have two bands,

a sedating [sedate] band, a sentimental band, and a ragtime [jazz] band out on the field on a platform. They would play nothing but rags [jazz tunes]. Everybody would be out there dancing. The ragtime band played slow drags, and everyone would be out there shaking. Bailey wouldn't go to work the day of a picnic, just go to the picnic. They wouldn't go home until two or three o'clock in the morning. The children had the picnic during the day, but at night the grown people would take over, stay from eight until 4 a.m. They had plenty to eat, plenty to drink, plenty of entertainment. That was where Bailey first rode in an automobile. Spent \$4 one evening, at 10 cents a ride. He would meet a girl, want to treat her, take her to ride. They had flying horses and all kinds of entertainment. Plenty of nice music.

Bailey used to go to lawn parties at Mrs. Cole's, up on Thalia Street. They had nice parties every Sunday. They can't have them today because the younger generation is too rough.

They also went out to the Lake, to Milneburg, on Sundays. That was the best, in fact the only, place the colored people could go at one time. It was better than Lincoln Beach. Freddy Keppard used to play out there, and Buddy Petit and them. They had a big dance hall. "Smoky Mary," the little train, used to run out there on Elysian Fields Avenue. Sometimes you could catch it on Canal by the river, but most of the time you had to get it at Elysian Fields and St. Claude avenues. You could get a ride on the train right on out to Milneburg for fifteen cents.

Out at the lake there was plenty of dancing, fishing, entertainment. The dance halls would be out on the water. You would pay to get in--not much, two-bits, sometimes fifteen cents. Some places they would have shows, show-girls, singing. Bailey repeats that Milneburg was the only place the colored people had to go. There was also Lincoln Park--he didn't go out there much, but heard talk of it.

Bailey remembers one girl he knew, called Alice, who sang the blues out there. She was from down town in back. Singing was her job. She sang by herself or with another girl. Her sister probably didn't sing. Bailey occasionally sees the fellow who used to be her husband, but he believes Alice has died.

Bailey offers to bring "my boy, George" to talk to Richard Allen and William Russell. This is apparently George Guesnon. Bailey says he [George] is kin to the Desvigne, Bechet, and them. Plays guitar, used to play at the Paddock. William Russell brings a picture [of Guesnon?]-Bailey doesn't recognize Guesnon, but does recognize George Lewis. "Me and him used to bum together." Knows him as a clarinet player, used to play at the Paddock, used to stay on Orleans Street, played with <sup>"MEALY?"</sup> Mehle Barnes and them.

Mr. Russell returns to the subject of lawn parties. A. Bailey says you had to pay two-bits or 35¢ to get into them. Drinks were ten cents a glass, wine or beer. The beer was home brew. Sometimes the dancing was right on the mud ground. Some people put a tarpaulin down. The band would be sitting on chairs right out on the ground. Bailey says they're having one of those big old-fashioned lawn

parties just four doors from his house "tonight." He lives at 2040 Pauger Street. At this party they will have a little new band (young band). The party will last from "eight 'till late," . . . about two or three o'clock in the morning. They have a permit and all, and may even have a policeman. They don't have lawn parties very often anymore. Bailey says they had a party there three months ago, too. Some club is giving this one. He knows the people in the house; they rent the yard to whomever is giving the party.

6:10. They had music and dancing and drinking at the lawn parties, but no gambling. Now and then they would give prizes for the best dancer. The prize might be a little present, or it might be money, \$5. Today they don't give prizes, just want you to come to the party, buy something, dance and eat and enjoy yourself.

Andrew Bailey went to fish fries. They didn't have music. It was just a little entertainment amongst your friends. Some of the houses had a piano player. One good piano player he knew (now dead) is Eugene Pellebon. He also knows Walter "Fats" Pichon, who is a good piano player. Pichon used to stay on Claiborne Avenue, a few blocks from Bailey.

Bailey says he featured blues. He used to play the piano with his feet. "He was the best piano player going." Pellebon's people live in the Treme section of New Orleans. He was well known in the seventh ward.

Bailey says the serenading groups like you see around St. Peter Street sometimes entertained at parties. They

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weren't really musicianers, just made up a band. Used to have harmonicas, and a whistle they used to blow, a little whistle you put in your mouth, underneath your tongue.

Bailey says he can blow one, but he knew fellows in those days could make music to dance to on them. Knows a white man who can play one today--thinks maybe he is dead, though. Walter [Hamington, Hamilton, Hamlin, I think]--a judge or something. He came from around St. Anthony and Villere streets. Bailey remembers when WH was in short pants, he used to be around the bar rooms playing that music.

When there would be a little party, the colored boys would come in with a little whistle, a harmonica, that whistle like a flute, which they would make with a cane reed, and furnish music. They made a lot of their instruments at home.

Mr. Allen asks if he ever heard any good rub [wash]-board players. He remembers hearing one at the Palace Theatre. Remembers another fellow he heard at the Palace (later says it wasn't the Palace, was the Auditorium) who had about ten instruments on the stage, cornet, slide trombone. He was a peg-leg fellow, came from over the river. Came here on Lionel Hampton's show. He's up north now, with them. Mr. Allen suggests it may be Peg-Leg Bates [but very doubtful].

Bailey used to go to all those shows when they came here. Cost him \$4.50 to see Louis Armstrong, \$4.98 twice. He is not going to pay any more. The crowd came to see Hampton's son, but he didn't show up. Has seen Nat "King" Cole.

Mr. Russell asks if he knew Ann Cook. He heard talk about her but doesn't know if she's the same Ann Cook who used to sing and used to sell, be a "marchand," around the boats on the river. [See Danny Barker Reel] Used to stay up around Gravier and/or Perdido streets, Mr. Allen says she was a hustler. Bailey says she was a working person.

Bailey didn't work on the boats, but he used to drive from them, haul from them. Mr. Russell asks if they had music, musicians down by the docks. Bailey says they had plenty of fellows who sang blues, some of them had guitars. He has hears them sing "Swanee River." Didn't hear work chants unloading the boats; heard the fellows on the railroad do that. On the railroad, used to hear them "picking and singing" all kinds of songs.

Mr. Russell says George Lewis told him when he worked on the docks they used to sing, four of them together would sing. Bailey says they don't have those big old boats any more, like the steamer "Grace," the "Tennessee Belle," and all that. They were roustabout boats. He used to bring stuff to them. The fellows would be singing as they picked the stuff up off the dock and went to load the boat. Didn't have the "President" here in those days. He remembers "when all that was closed in." [Think he means when the sheds and wharves were built.] Back in 1915, 1916, he was driving mules and wagons. Used to come from way up in Carrollton [now Carrollton section of New Orleans], way down to Esplanade. That was the furthest you could land. All the rest of the sheds have been built lately, mostly after the war [World War I?]. Up to Esplanade [from?] the Mandeville Street Wharf was the most you could go except for banana boats. You

could come down right to the wharf, walking. Can't do it any more, they have partitions between the wharves. Used to be wide open, you could walk beside the water all the way downtown.

Bailey says he went on plenty of excursions. They used to have them all the time on the Shell Beach Road, which used to be a little railroad from St. Claude Avenue, would bring you all the way down in the country to [St. Sophie sp?], Pointe a la Hache. Used to hear nice music that way. Buddy Petit used to be on that, be on the train, playing, play on the train till they got where they were going. Couldn't dance on the train. They would have a dance at a big hall where they were going, that was what some people were going for, but some would be just going along for the ride. Used to have plenty of fights on the excursions. Remembers a fight on the train; somebody got off the train, called the police, they were waiting at the depot.

7:00. Bailey's mother went on one of them. They had a fight on the train, cutting-up. She never went on a train excursion again. Band would be playing in the coach, with all their instruments. Bailey reiterates that there was no dancing on the train. [Compare Punch Miller Reel? 'who told us that the band played in a baggage car, people danced in there. That was a longer excursion--to Chicago?]

Mr. Allen asks where he knew Danny [Barker]. [His wife's sister is AB's (girl's daughter) father-in-law?]. He had French Quarter friends at house next door to Danny's mother-in-law's. He heard Danny play at Dixie's Bar [Bourbon and St. Peter] [with Barker.]