

BOOKER T. GLASS  
Reel I  
May 19, 1972

Also Present: Bernadine Glass Zardis,  
Bill Crider, ~~Andy~~ Reed, RBA

Cindy

Booker T. Glass says his real name is Henry Glass but is better known as "Booker T." He made 91 on May 10, he was in Washington [D.C.] Born May 10, 1881, according to BGZ. [Cf. other sources!:] BGZ says [her?] aunt has the records. BGZ is his guardian.

RBA speaks of young musicians being interested-Booker T. agrees. Says they were all around him the other day. He's a Grand Marshal with Harold [Dejan's Olympia Brass Band]. His son, Norwell ["Papa" Glass] played the bass drum.

His grandson, lives in Baton Rouge, plays bass tuba and plays with Lawrence Lott. BTW's parents didn't play but loved music. His mother played organ in the Morris Brown Baptist Church. [sic.] She played hymns like "What a Friend We Have In Jesus", "[Lord, Lord,] Lord, You Certainly Been Good to Me", "Lord, I'm On My Lonesome Journey", "Nearer My God to Thee", etc.

Booker T. says numbers they play now were played in the churches a long time ago. That's why he likes to play them. His whole family had to go to church. He sang in the choir. He sang in "the band" until they gave him some corn whiskey in Fazendeville and it 'cut' his voice. Fazendeville is a place near Chalmette. He was with the Camellia Band - [Emile] "Mealy" Barnes, Johnny Prudent, Walter Blue, " 'Tite'" Rouchon.

He was playing with Walter Blue for a Stave Handler's (parade?) when he dropped dead just like [Paul] Barbarin. They were playing "How 'Ya gonna Keep 'Em Down On The Farm". They finished the parade. The Stave Handlers were a [union] local who worked on the river and made barrels. Also "we" played parades for the Longshoremen. For those they dressed in overalls. The screwmen

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wore patches on their knees. Booker T. was also a cotton screwman and cotton scaleman. He has all those cards at home. They carried heavy posts. This was when he was 21 years old.

People sang a lot on the river. Baptizing was done along the riverfront. Some places on the river was so shallow you' could walk over [above] on planks to fish. You could be baptized either in the river or a pool at the church. Booker T. was baptized at a church at Touro and Galvez Sts.

RBA tells of "Little Jim" [Sidney Brown] being baptized in the middle of the street. They set up a pool.

Booker T. was an old man when Reverend Bridges baptized him. On BTG's birthday party at [Preservation] Hall and cake. There's a lot of singing at baptisms, no music except for the organ when its taking place at church. Sometimes there'd be a 3 or 4 block march to the baptisms and they'd sing hymns all the way. After the blessing you're dipped into water twice.

While working on the riverfront, the men sang hymns all day. Most all the men in the locals were Christian men. Booker T. worked with Henry Allen [Sr.][tp, leader]; "Jim Little" [Sidney Brown] [b]; Joe Hunter; and John [Jackson?]. All were screwman and long shoreman. Henry Allen and " Jim Little" were musicians.

Willie Parker played with Booker T. His nephew married Willie Parker's daughter. BTG played his [WP's] funeral. Remembers they used to rehearse at Willie P's every Sunday. This was the Onward Band. [Cf. WP reels. RBA, May 26, 1972] All the men led bands. BT had the Camellia Band.

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RBA asks about procedure in event of death during a parade. Booker T. said the ~~Dead~~ Wagon would pick up the person. There was a patrol then. Dave Bailey [d] and Son Jackson worked on the river.

Speaks of first class funerals-using the old hearse at Cathedral Church [St. Louis Cathedral] with draped horses and carriages. The carriages are like those you see now in the French Quarter. [See hearse on cover of Jazz Journal, April, 1972, vo. 25, no. 4]

Bury with music - clubs turn out for parades. Hobgoblins, night parades, with cars & floats; or Bull's Club. Booker T. belonged to most every club - the Deweys, the Swells. When he was young he loved being where there was music, this was before he played music. He knew Big Eye Louis Nelson. He played with Black Benny [Williams]. That's how he learned to beat that drum with "Black Benny rhythm." Black Benny has a daughter living. She lives around Louisiana Ave. "That boy" or Harold Dejan would know address.

Big Eye Louis [Nelson] belonged to same societies as BT - Magnolias, Young Friends of Charity, Bulls Club and Perseverance and Young Men of Liberty. All the clubs went to sleep [died]. Tulane Club coming up again, getting members now. BT wants to get 2 societies to split up their treasures. Booker T. would like banners of old societies and flags, American Flag and Blue Jack [i.e. Union Jack. It has white stars on blue field. RBA May 29, 1972]. Members used banners, flags in the funerals. Members would be in uniforms of black suit, white gloves. Members were often musicians. BT believes he has death notices at home,

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locked up. They would put curtains (draperies) over the big doors. [Cf. photos]

Booker T. said he helped in the laying out process [of the dead]. He used to be the first man to the house and would wash the body, first placing him on the ironing board. Didn't have the embalming of today, used to use Tobacco. They'd lay them out on a door.

Booker T. is the oldest in two societies. BT upset about the banners - "they had no business moving nothing 'til they found out from me". Screwmen have their banner and flags. In the St. Rock graveyard is their tomb with 2 big screws on it. It is not to be sold. As long as you've been a screwman you can be buried there.

When a member died there would be a committee of 4 men to wash the body, they would then pack them with tobacco and charcoal dust-then put a diaper on them. This was to keep them from smelling, but in two days there were ready to go. A nickle or quarter was used to close the eyes. RBA mentions [old] saying of "steal the pennies off their dead grandmother's eyes."

Long time ago people had wide ironing boards. Didn't have caskets like now. They were smaller. BT calls them "pinto". BT remarks that sometimes dead people move - "they get off that ironing board". Had to tie the legs. Dead people also belch.

B.T. tells of hard times when he was growing up. He never went to school, [but] four days. His mother died when he was [young?]. He got out and worked, pounding brick. Unloaded gondolas [freight] cars by himself. He could unload one car of coal a day, one a night at Kelly's coal yard. During day from 6 A.M. until 12 to 2.

Booker T. is retired now. He quit his day job of washing brick houses in 1968.

He also was a plumber. He worked for years for [Gremaldi?] Plumbing. He was foreman for American Heat and Plumbing. Put in all that plumbing in at the Naval Station. He had 200 men working under him.

B.T. held two jobs up until 1968. Now he is making a living with his music.

They didn't make as much money in music [earlier]. When he started playing he was getting \$1.50 a night. Sometimes 50¢ a night. Played suppers and parties. 75¢ was considered big money when they were playing in the district. Rent back then wasn't high nor were groceries. There was a "quartee" then which was 1/2 a nickle. You could get "quartee" red beans - "quartee" rice and "Lagnappe" <sup>vsp</sup> black pepper for 5¢. "Quartee" was not an actual coin-just a manner of buying small quantities. He thinks he still has some checks. You could feed six people with a quarter. B.T. tells of running to the bakery early in the morning to get 2 loaves of bread for a nickle. There was always a line and if you were late there wouldn't be any left.

Marchand ladies sold hot lunches on the riverfront. Red beans and rice would cost 25¢; the men would go to the one that

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gave the most. Most of the longshoremen brought their lunches from home in a bucket.

Cotton screwmen "screwed" cotton in the ships. Done with hood [i.e. screw] and pulley into the hatch. Now days they roll it in. Men worked as a "gang", hired together. A "gang" consisted of 6 colored men and 6 white men. He also [trimmed grain?]

End of Reel I

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Reel II  
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Also Present: Bernadine Glass Zardis, Bill  
Crider, Cindy Reed, RBA

Before Reel 2 actually begins B.T. and RBA mention an  
Olympia band job on May 21, 1972 [vs Eureka] [2 concerts. BTG  
plays with Olympia and Eureka]

They continue Reed I's discussion of waterfront situation when  
BT was young. B.T. says there was no segregation back then; that  
all came later.

Bill Crider asks when he played music and B.T. said he played  
in between. Most bars had bands on Friday and Saturday and Sundays.  
They started with 3 pieces; piano, drum and trumpet. Papa Celestin  
used to work with them. BTG played at Luthjen's at Almonaster and  
Marais. B.T. used to play at the Plum Plant which was later the  
American Legion Dance Hall [Gentilly Post]. It's still referred to  
as the Plum Plant. The American Legion moved to Franklin Avenue  
near the overpass. It was at Claiborne and Music Street. RBA says  
Buck Banville's band played there for years.

B.T. tells of "bucking [competing] with Philby Ray's band  
(bass) and Bill Gallaty [Sr.] b, tb (not Bill Gallaty [Jr] tp).  
They "bucked" every Saturday and Sunday at Milenburg. "We" played  
at Moreau's and all those camps, playing across from each other.  
Most all of them old timers have died. Sharkey and B.T. used to  
"buck".

B.T. tells of the boat, the Camellia, that used to go across  
the lake [in the morning ?] and come back in the evening. It would

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leave from the wharf at Elysian Fields. The excursion train ran from Decatur to Milneburg. Sometimes they'd stay all day and all night "bucking" out there. Usually between a white band and a colored band. BT tells of how well the white and blacks got along. Didn't have "pulling and hauling" then. White even helped with the colored dead. Things have changed now.

B.T. says Billie and De De [Pierce] started with him, rehearsed at his house practically every day [but?] Sunday. Speaks of Bucko Grammer, D'jalma Ganier, Albert Francis, Sidney Bechet and Paul Barnes. (Mentions picture). B.T. says Sidney Bechet learned to play on a flute at his house. Barnes also learned on a flute. Flutes used to cost 10¢, for a big one, 50¢. BT has a plastic flute at home from the band. Also has from his drums: 4 cowbells, skulls, triangle. 'Take a hot' [solo] on the cowbell. Skulls are temple blocks according to RBA's guess. BT has old "Chinee" [Chinese] tom-tom.

B.T. said Bechet [Sidney] was a young man when he started. Sidney Bechet and Wooden Joe [Nicholas] were related. [Cf. S.B., Treat It Gentle] Paul Barnes, Mealy Barnes [brothers]. Booth Barnes, their uncle, played with Camellia Band, too and at the Plum Plant. [Cf Paul Barnes Interview Reel I]

B.T. tells of music on river-guitar, violin and accordian. [Had blues singers?] Bands were in the barrooms. Workers had



music as a sideline.

Fellow named Bob played mandolin and violin on St. Rock, not far from the graveyard. BT knew "Chicken" Banks. He was good.

BT said his first music job was at the Plum Plant. Then the Jefferson City Buzzards. When the leader [D'jalma] Ganier died, BT took the band over. When a [leader] died, a member took over. Therefore, most musicians including Jim Crow [Robinson] have been leaders.

BT said he was about 20 when he started playing music.

(Next few minutes blurred) (Poor recording)..too tell you truth...long time ago...be a man... policeman...run you if you were grown and wearing short pants. [About wearing short pants when grown] BTG will get a picture of D. Ganier. BT steps over microphone cord.

Bernadine shows picture of her father in [button-top] shoes. She tells how her father walks about a mile every day. She gives him carfare, but he walks anyway. He buys candy, peanuts, and cakes with the money.

Longest parade he played was Mardi Gras parade - from back of Paris Avenue - Endymion Parade - about 3 hours.

Jolly Bunch parade is all day. [sic] Starts at 11:30

BT has played 8 hours or more - after leaving parade they go to a place and play. Then they go to Buster [Holmes]'s [Restaurant

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and Bar] just for kicks.

With the Jefferson City Buzzards they left at 7 am and didn't get back till after 6. [BTZ:] "That's a long parade." Buzzard's Roost on Annunciation near Audubon Park to Canal Street. BT didn't figure it was long; he enjoyed it. Mr. Marks and "they" has his picture [in the Camellia Band?] up in the Jefferson City Club. When [D'jalma] Ganier died he took over Camellia Band. BT played for all those clubs including the Elenore. The parade had plenty of "stops". That's why they didn't feel it, they would be drinking and eating. RBA and BTG tell Cindy Reed about "Stops" where [the club members] go into bars and homes and get free beer and sandwiches. Some get so drunk they fall out. Bill Crider tells of parade with Pete Fountain and how for the last mile or so he was just making little vague motions down there - guy on each side holding him up.

B.T. said he and Sharkey were never in the same band, just bucked together. They got kicks out of each other. They joked.

Mentions a group of brothers, "TaTi" vl, Warner, bass, accordion and Bob Woodley, guitar, used to go all around the French Market and play. BTG can't remember their [Cf previous BTG interview] last name. They were from Pointe La Hache and St. Sophie.

Warner Reed played banjo with Onward Band. [Brass Band??]

Buddy Bolden used to play around Decatur St barrooms. B.B.

Warren Reed and "TaTi" would get together and make a big band. Booker T. nephew, Howard Mandolf hasn't been dead long. Buddy Bolden was a great ladies man. "Most all those old timers used to be lovers." B.T. says he used to be a lover. "Show me a musicianer who don't like the ladies." B.T. now only has one lady friend.

B.T. had an alligator named Pete and took him into the bars. He also had a duck that was built just like a jet [plane]. A man offered to give \$10 for the duck, but they [Mrs BTG and BTG] wouldn't sell it. The next morning a dog had broken its neck.

He tells of having a black dog-short legged and long. This dog mated with another dog and made an 'elephant (deformed dog that had a nose that looks somewhat like an elephant's nose) but it died after 3 days. BGZ shows the dog after embalming. Booker says he was away at the time but when he got back he took him to Emile Lobat [undertaker]. Word of the dog got around. Bernadine was at Preservation Hall and Alvin [Lambert] asked her about it. The Tulane Medical School was interested.

Booker tells of little black baby girl Leona, whose mother took her to a fish fry and when she came back home and gave her the breast the baby died, poisoned. The baby was literally 'petrified'. A fellow showed it to him when they moved the body from St Roch Graveyard to the Cathedral Church [St Louis Cathedral]. The man thought it was Booker's baby.

As a youngster he used to play in the St. Roch Graveyard. The St Roch street is filled in with garbage. He worked with all the Ward leaders - when one died they'd put him with another. When a ward leader died, he drove the city wagon. He won the prize

every year for the cleanest garbage wagon.

B T tells about the filling of St Roch, from the [St Roch] Market all the way to Franklin Ave. Horses and mules would get bogged down and would have to be killed.

Booker T. didn't play with Bolden. He knew the players by sight. BTG was busy. Buddy Bolden worked regularly. He was good. RBA asked if B T was around when they took B B off to jail and to the hospital. Booker T said he wasn't.

Booker T. talks of Big Foot Willis. He was a big, tall, black who wore a cape and played the flute. He played his flute on Decatur Street. Bill Crider asks B T how he got his nickname. He said Dr. Tudury raised him. He used to drive him around in a horse and buggy. He made calls up to 1 and 2 A.M. Booker T. thinks [his son] graduated from L.S.U. Also believes his son is still living. His son, Ralph Tudury, lost his sight, lives on Roman Street. There was also a Roy Tudury who played music in the French Quarter. Roy and Dr. Tudury adopted him. They called him Booker T. Washington because he'd never tell a lie [sic] BTG used to beat up the Levegurs [sp?]. BTG was the only colored fellow at Elysian Fields and Claiborne.

End of Reel II

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Reel III  
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Also Present: Bill Crider, Cindy Reed,  
Bernadine Glass Zardis & RBA

Booker T. tells how Big Eye Louie Nelson got his nickname. He said, "we [the players] named him...when one of us made a humbug Louie would open his big eye[s] at us and Johnny Prudent say 'Look at that Big Eye Rabbit'."

BT and Big Eye Louie [Nelson] belonged to the Young Men of Liberty, Young Men of Charity and the Perserverance. They belonged because of the music. They played for the clubs. Just like the Swells, the Deweys and the Hobgoblins, they played the parades. Hobgoblins was a big club and had a night parade. All of the clubs had baseball teams and gave picnics and dances.

The Bulls Club was sold [to the Elks] Eastern Star meets there now. Bill Crider comments that they used to have more fun around here than they do now. BT agrees. Money was made from picnics and dances.

They played the Creole [Fiesta Association] Festival. All creoles like to dance. They had parties and balls and things. Referring to costumes worn at an affair the previous Sunday BT says that's how they used to dress. Creole girls in long dresses and big hats - wouldn't catch a Creole girl in a short dress like now. They had to be way below the knees or the people would knock their head off.

BT says the fellows when dressed up wore stockings and short pants to the knee. The members of the Baby Doll Club wore short dresses when they paraded on Carnival, but they also wore a mask.

BT says that they played all through the district. The women there might wear short dresses, but that was different. The girls in families couldn't wear them short, like to church.

Pay in the district was good for those times. It started at

\$ .75 up to \$3.00, big money then. Also worked on the river too as screwman. BT could make it. He worked all the time. When they were loading 'beans' and rice and the sack tore they could get what they needed. Sugar, too. Sometimes they'd cut the sack.

The men carried their clothes in a bundle. When they came off the ship, the bundles would be much bigger. The crews would cooperate with each other. Which ever side the coffee would be on that side would get some for the other crew. Same with sugar.

Chester Zardis enters and asks RBA about Jane [Julian]. RBA said she was 'minding the shop' [Archive]. Chester said he was getting over to Billie and DeDe [Pierce] and leaves [at Preservation Hall?]

Booker T. said Dr. Tudury gave him his first drum, a snare drum, wooden. Had a big bass drum which he carried all day for the [Jefferson City] Buzzards. He has it home yet. It has overhead pedal.

Ralph Tudury played on the boat somewhere [i.e., the Strechfus steamer?]. He's a dentist on Roman between Marigny and Mandeville Streets.

RBA asks about 'funny' instruments. "Big Foot" Willis played the tin flute. One fellow played the washboard. There was a tub made like a bass. He'd pull it like a bass. There is a fellow who has one now in the French Quarter. BT played a section [jam session] with him. He played good rhythm. Big Foot Willis "and them" had a kazoo with them. There was a bright [light skinned] fellow that played a kazoo.

RBA asks about [Sammy?] Ford who played accordian [see previous BTG interview] and Sandpaper George.

Bernadine tells of Booker T. playing the comb, using bread paper and hitting the door with his foot.

RBA says Slow Drag [Pavageau] could rub on the door with a coke bottle in his hand and make a noise like a bass. Booker T. tells of playing bass with a broomstick. One roisined his fingers. All that was in old time music. He's never played spoons, but Jaques Pierre played bones. B T has J. Pierre's drum at home. He and his wife, Nita, stayed with Booker T.

RBA asks about his favorite drummer. B T mentions Black Happy Goldston as his favorite drummer. Red Happy [Bolton] was good. B T also liked [Paul] Barbarin: Cie Frazier, a relative is brought up by BGZ. Black Benny was a nice drummer.

Good cornet players all gone. "We" rehearsed every day. Red [Clark] tuba, is mentioned. Willie Pajaud was a good trumpet player.

Good clarinet players - Sidney Bechet, Big Eye Louie [Nelson] Mealy Barnes. [Sidney] Bechet had a better swing than Mealy [Barnes]. S B didn't have a nickname nor did Buddy Bolden [sic]. B T was never around when they joked with him. Nicknames come from being together and kidding each other.

Mealy Barnes' nickname is 'Patate'. 'Wooden Joe' Nicholas' nickname came from his never getting tired blowing. [Cf W.J. Nicholas reel].

B T says no one knows him by his right name. Speaks again of horse and buggies and of the old hearse-used for the funeral of Kid Punch [Miller].

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Dominique is the only undertaker that uses it, mostly for old musicians.

RBA brings up the Copeland family. Thomas Copeland was a bass player. Sherman Copelin [sic] plays organ. Sherman Sr. works for La. undertaker, Reverend Noah Copelin - brother of Thomas. Sherman's father's name Noah. They lived over the Industrial Canal.

Booker T. says his eyes are bad now. Girls come up and kiss him, tell him he looks good. He doesn't mind them kissing them, but he can't 'look them over'. After they leave he has to ask Papa [Norwell Glass, son of BTG] who it was.

They didn't travel much on jobs when he was coming up. They might go to Pointe a la Hache or St. Sophie but it would take them a day to get there going in horse and buggy. They also went on a train. Never toured with shows, but he used to sing with his uncle and "Black Patti" (Sisseretta (sp?) Jones) at the Elysian Theater at Elysian Fields and Burgundy which was the biggest theater then [along with] the Palace and the Orpheum. His uncle was Dennis Lindsey who had quarters. Never with carnivals or circuses. Pointe a la Hache had halls, churches and schools that gave dances and things. B T played Chris Kelly funeral. Chris Kelly's brother, Sonn  (possibly Ben Kelly) played. B T didn't go to C K's wake.

Booker T. used to like to dance the Two Step. He used to be grand marshal for the societies sometimes. B T didn't like the quadrille, but he danced it. Favorite was the waltz. Mentions a Cake Walk number "Dis Cake Belongs to You and Lisa" [Check title] B T can still step high. Musicians could only get to dance at



private parties.

B T says he'll get pictures of Willy [or Willie] Phillips. Booker T. never did Charleston, fox trot or bunny hug. Didn't care for dancing that much. He would rather buy drinks and stand up there, laughing and talking with the girls when he could get off.

Bill Crider asks if the 'old' music is played around town. B T says the barrooms have it. Barrooms don't like rock and roll; they want Dixieland. When they were in Washington [D.C.] people were wild over it. They have a different swing from rock and roll.

B. T. says he has been to Europe twice with Harold Dejan. He's fixing to go again. He enjoys the trips. Last trip to Washington they made 2 or 3 records "up there". [in Europe?]. Played for governor [government officials] in Berlin. Played at the White House for President [Richard M.] Nixon.

RBA jokes about who is to get interview money. B T signs release.

Albert Francis lives across the street from BTG.

End of Reel III