

Lawrence Duhé  
Reel I  
1960

Also Present: George Brown, Jack  
~~LaBlanc~~ LaBlanc (both from  
S.L.I. music dept.)  
Hans Raidl, Walter  
Spencer (pupil of  
Bunk Johnson), Mrs.  
Duhé

Digest : Mrs. M.L. Spencer  
First Check : J. Infiorati  
Second Check : Richard B. Allen

*Proofreading* : S.M. Goodson

George Brown announces that this study of the musical life of Lawrence Duhé, "one of the jazz greats of America", is a project carried out by the students of Southwestern Louisiana Institute with the cooperation of several of the faculty members.

12:17 [ ?] questions LD. LD started playing music when he was young in LaPlace. His brothers had a band. One of the members, the guitarist, left so LD took up the guitar. [Cf. LD, Reel I, June 9, 1957]. The whole band played by ear. They got so good that "they" [i.e., ?] organized the Kid Ory band there and came to New Orleans.

12:31 All of LD's family played "ordinary music" in those days. They just picked it up and played together. One brother played violin; one played bass violin; another played trombone. LD's sister played autoharp. His mother was a dancer, his grandmother was a singer, and his father played violin.

In LD's early days, the musicians played "ragtime". DD says this was the only type of music played then. They ragged all the pieces. LD particularly remembers ragging "Turkey In the Straw"

1:02 LD, in the Kid Ory band, came to New Orleans, heard jazz and picked up on it. The Kid Ory band played these well known pieces: "St. Louis Blues" <sup>and</sup> "Tiger Rag", both featuring LD's

clarinet. Asked about "Maple Leaf Rag", LD says they didn't play "Maple Leaf Rag" often. Asked about the following, LD says they played "Oh, Don't He Ramble," "The Beale Street Blues," "South Rampart Street Parade" [copyright <sup>date</sup> is 1938 on sheet music], and "High Society,"

LD met W.C. Handy once when LD took his job. WCH had gone ahead of LD to Chicago, beating LD to Chicago. Lil Hardin, [later] the first Mrs. Louis Armstrong, LD's pianist, came to Chicago with WCH. [Cf. other sources, Louis Armstrong's second wife. RBA, Nov. 27, 1971]

L:40 LD says that in New Orleans bands there were usually seven instruments played: trombone, trumpet, clarinet, piano, drums and bass [sic]. The guitar was never used in Kid Ory's band, in which LD played, [Cf. above. Cf. photos <sup>and</sup> other sources]. Kid Ory's band started off with banjo. The guitar was used to substitute  
1:57 for the banjo. LD says that in all his playing, the tuba was never used. LD's guitarist doubled on violin. All the members of the orchestras in which LD played could read except LD. However, he played so well that [A.J.] Piron, violinist, offered to teach LD to read for nothing.

Band engagements came about through phone calls to the leader of the band, who usually distributed business cards. Two [dollars and] seventy-five [cents] per man per night was the going rate on a job that lasted from 8[P.M.] to 12 [midnight]. [Cf. other sources].

While in New Orleans, LD's band played at The 101 Ranch, Pete Lala's Cabaret, Nagel and Huntz Cabaret (all three in Storyville), the Blue Room of the Roosevelt Hotel (with A.J. Piron), the race

track, Tranchina's , West End, the Monteleone Hotel Blue Room [sic, check this, leading here], Milneburg and old Lady Lee boat excursion [on Pontchartrain] to Covington [La.]. LD played outside New Orleans as a sideman in Biloxi, Brookhaven and Natchez [Mississippi].

2:38 Regular brass bands of twenty to thirty pieces played for funerals. [Cf. other sources]. LD never played in these brass bands, but a few of his men did. Sometimes the band went into the graveyard with the burial party. Mrs. LD says that in the graveyard the band played and the drummer[s?] beat the drums. When coming from the graveyard, the band would play "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You"

2:58 LD and his men usually went from hall to hall to learn a number. Then next day they would rehearse this number. After work, LD and his band went over to 101 Ranch and to [the Big] 25 to have fun, playing pool and doing other things.

3:08 LD heard these bands: Joe [i.e. John ?] Robichaux, Papa Celestin, Eagle Band (with which LD played) , Kid Ory and King Oliver [leading on Ory and Oliver]. The Hot Five [i.e., Louis Armstrong's] "wasn't out." The white musicians came to the plates nightly and had gotten so good that they asked to sit in so Duhé and the rest of the musicians could rest.

3:20 LD met and knew Buddy Bolden. LD states that there's no question that BB started jazz.

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In 1917, two Chicago booking agents heard LD's band playing at Pete Lala's, in the red light district at Marais and Bienville Streets [cf. other sources on location] and hired them. There were other jazz bands in Chicago before LD's band, i.e., the [Original] Dixieland [Jazz Band], Manuel Perez, and the Creole Band. His was about the fourth band there. These bands were not "stationed" in Chicago. LD stayed in Chicago, signing his contract for Chicago before having left New Orleans.

3:35 King Oliver came to Chicago "way after" LD. LD's first trumpet player died and his replacement, Mutt Carey, returned to New Orleans because of Chicago's cold climate. MC sent King Oliver to LD to take his place.

3:42 LD's first job in Chicago was at the De Luxe at 35th and State Streets. The salaries were thirty-five dollars a week per man plus another ten dollars for the leader. LD also played at the Dreamland and at the Royal Garden. The "walking delegates" [from the Chicago union] sought out LD, because he "was raising too much sand up there". He had to join the union. That made the price different. LD says the thirty-five dollars a week pay was more than New Orleans musicians' pay of seventeen dollars and fifty cents a week. At this time there was no union in New Orleans.

3:54 [Jack LaBowe <sup>in Jazzmen</sup> ?] asks about a picture of LD's band at a world series game <sup>in Chicago [No doubt he meant Shining Trumpets RBA, Feb 23, 1976]</sup> LD and his band played for the World Series

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[baseball] in Chicago in 1919, when the Chicago White Sox played the Cincinnati Black Sox. <sup>[sic]</sup> His was the only colored band in history to play for a world series.

4:00 The musicians LD knew or played with while in Chicago were: Sugar Johnny [Smith, cornet], who came to Chicago with LD, became ill and was replaced by Mutt Carey who was replaced by King Oliver. KO stayed with LD awhile, then sent for Louie Armstrong. LD thinks LA is "one of the world's greatest." LD liked his style. LA added a little to the "same ole Dixieland".

4:11 The orchestras from Chicago visited New Orleans, went from nightclub to nightclub to learn jazz. They came to New Orleans to find out about jazz, not waiting for LD to go to Chicago, [leading here].

4:17 LD admires Sidney Bechet, a fellow clarinetist. SB played with LD. They "fell out" because LD read and SB didn't, but SB could outplay him. [Cf. LD, Reel I, June 9, 1957].

LD's parents and all his family are all Catholic. Most of the musicians of New Orleans in the growth of jazz were Catholics. LD lived Downtown where most people were Catholic. [Cf. other sources on Protestant musicians].

4:28 LD and his group did not record. King Oliver recorded later, after LD quit playing.

4:31 LD composed three pieces: "The Evangeline Blues," "I Like To Take My Girl To The Beach" and "Lafayette Stomp." They are copyrighted.

4:34           After leaving Chicago, LD worked on the Orpheum Theatrical Circuit [for a year or so ?] and worked in cabarets. LD does not know the exact year. LW returned to New Orleans for reasons of health after his doctor had told him to stop playing and to "rest up" After LD rested in New Orleans, Jack Carey got LD to play for a Sunday dollar excursion in Lafayette [Louisiana]. A dollar excursion, LD explains, is an excursion with the fare of one dollar for the round trip by train from New Orleans to Lafayette. On these excursions, the band played in the baggage car of the train.

4:49           In New Orleans, LD played on wagons, advertizing boxing matches, river excursions, etc. The bass and the trombone were on the tail end of the wagon.

4:53           During Carnival all clubs [marching ones, e.g., Jefferson City Buzzards] had some kind of a band, even though it might be only a Jew's harp and a guitar. All musicians were employed on Mardi Gras day.

4:57           The members of the Black Eagle band of Crowley [La.] heard LD play while in Lafayette on a dollar excursion. They made LD a good offer. LD accepted and made Lafayette his home.

The famous colored bands playing in this area were: The Banner band of New Iberia, The Black Eagle of Crowley, Clairborne Williams of Donaldsonville, Toots Johnson of Baton Rouge, and the Black Devils of Thibodaux. ([Walter Spencer ?] makes a

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correction: The Black Devils were originally from Plaquemine).  
Bunk Johnson, coming from New Orleans, and LD, joined the Banner  
Band of New Iberia about the same time. [           ?] about a  
year [machine off in part of LD's statement] [cf. LD, Reel I.  
June 9, 1957].

5:11           The white bands playing jazz in the Lafayette area were:  
Frank Muntz['s] [sp.?], Bill Landry['s]. LD taught several boys  
music: Goubert, trombone; Abraham Martin, guitar and Buster  
Banks, saxophone. LD played all these instruments, picking them  
up by ear. LD, as do all clarinet players, played the saxophone.  
About twelve years ago, LD had to stop playing the clarinet be-  
cause of bad health. LD says that he does miss playing the  
clarinet now. Now he just looks at it. If he could play it,  
LD would be in an orchestra.

5:27           Most of LD's friends taught at [Southwestern Louisiana In-  
stitute ?] His friends there are well acquainted with Professor  
Osier. The young man addressing LD didn't know Professor Osier.

[End of Reel I]