















included: Louis Cottrell on drums, Peter Bocage on Cornet and violin, Lorenzo Tio Jr. on clarinet and tenor sax, Louis Warneke on sax, Arthur Campbell playing piano, J. Marrero on banjo and Henry Bocage playing Bass. Steve Lewis replaced Campbell within a few months. In the summer of 1919 when Tio and Cottrell left the orchestra to work with the Maple Leaf Orchestra, Willie Edwards was playing cornet, P. Bocage was playing trombone. Tio and Cottrell returned in the fall and Johnny Lindsay began playing trombone with P. Bocage going back to cornet. Johnny St. Cyr replaced J. Marerro for a few months when he left the band, then C. Bocage, another brother, replaced St. Cyr.

The recording trip to New York was in May of 1923 with the band of Papa Celestin temporary replacing Piron at Tranchina's. On a second trip to New York, Hypolite Charles' Band replaced the Piron Band. After returning the band remained until 1928. Louis Cottrell died in 1927 and was replaced by Paul Barbarin and in time by Cie Frazier. In 1928 Piron decided to change the sound of the group and let the entire group go and revamped his musical ideas to stylize the group into a more 'modern' sounding ensemble. With this new sound Piron changed jobs and with his new group, the "Moonlight Serenaders" began playing on the S. S. Pelican on the Mississippi River.

Many musicians and writers have written about Piron while at Tranchina's and this will be our main interest - Piron while at Tranchina's.

In the many oral interview at Tulane University's Jazz Archives early jazzmen speak about Tranchina's.

Pops Foster: "From about 1915-1917, I was with Armand Piron's Orchestra at Tranchina's. At first we had Arthur Campbell on piano, Pete Bocage on trumpet, Tom Benton on guitar, Me on bass, and Piron on violin. Arthur Campbell left



after awhile and Tom Benton took over on piano, and the Johnny St. Cyr took his place on guitar. About this time piano started being used in some places, usually we didn't have a trombone but once in a while we did. Spanish Fort was like Coney Island. It was on the lake,. In about a week I quit at Tranchina's."

**Irvin Leclere**: "A J. Piron played at Tranchina's at the Spanish Fort for years and years."

**Monk Hazel**: "I remember that Steve Lewis played a lot with A. J. Piron, when he played with Piron was out at Spanish Fort. Piron must have been at Spanish Fort indefinitely almost, he must have been 25 years out there in Spanish Fort."

While it was not quite 25 years but 10 (1918-1928), others do remember Armand playing at Spanish Fort at Tranchina's:

**George Justin** mention that "Piron played out at the Spanish Fort." Punch Miller while never working with Piron said "Piron always worked at the Spanish Fort. **Billy & De De Pierce** also mention they heard Piron at Spanish Fort on the lake." **Bebe Ridgley** mentions playing with Piron at Spanish Fort around June 1924 at that time at Tranchina's Restaurant at Spanish Fort."

**St. Cyr** played with Oliver's Band from 1915-1917 then joined Piron at Spanish Fort. "I worked until I joined Fate Marable Riverboat Band in 1918. I was playing with A. J. Piron at Tranchina's at Spanish Fort when banjos became popular around 1917. At Piron's suggestion I made a banjo/guitar out of a regular 5 string banjo body and a neck. I made out of a piece of oak."

**Piron began playing at Tranchina's in 1918 He left New Orleans twice to record in New York City. Once in 1914 (before Tranchina's, in an ill-fated vaudeville band that did not tour as was thought), in Dec. of 1923, and from Jan. through March in 1924.**

**He went to New York to check with Clarence Williams about his royalties from his music and of course the jobs that took him to nearby cities such as Baton Rouge, Hammond, etc. Before returning to Tranchina's, the band also took bookings in other states.**

**Peter Bocage reminisces about Piron and Tranchina's:**

**"We stayed out to Spanish Fort for Tranchina's out there for 10 years on that job. Had a great, big restaurant out at Spanish Fort that was the Piron Band. We started with a string aggregation and we wound up with an 8 piece orchestra. We went to New York, recorded and played Roseland Ballroom. We came back. While we was away, Celestin was out there with Bebe Ridgley (1924). The people wanted us back so we went back on that job again." (Sic: Buddy Petit played at Tranchina's. His music was not the smooth style of Piron and the band only lasted 5 days.)**

**In another interview Bocage, who played violin and various brass in a musical ensemble, talks more about the Tranchina situation:**

**"About 1915 me and Piron got together a band which played at Tranchina's Restaurant at Spanish Fort for about 10 years (Sic: the actual date was 1918). The Piron Band played every night at Tranchina's. We played music from New York shows, songs which have become standards, we played waltzes, and the latest hits. We didn't play blues, because the people**

wanted sedate music. Paul Whiteman was popular at this time, and people would ask for tunes his band played."

Opposite Tranchina's Restaurant at Spanish Fort was a public dancing pavilion. Probably knowing an orchestra was needed, A. J. Piron went to the manager and as a result the Amos White Orchestra began playing there. Piron, as was the practice at this time, acted as promoter or contractor of the band and got a percentage. The public dancing pavilion was not in competition with Piron's Orchestra at Tranchina's as the public pavilion drew their customers from a different social position and each would go to their appropriate social place much as some today that can afford it would go to a 1st class restaurant and others go to a chain family restaurant.

Lawrence Duhe' recalls "playing with Piron at Tranchina's Restaurant at one time," as did Harry Fairconnetue: "I played at Tranchina's around 1928."

Chinee Foster, a musician in Piron's Band at Tranchina's recalls "the band that was playing at Tranchina's was the same band that recorded "Black Rag." Piron had worked at Tranchina's before Celestin."

We can usually place the "dance bands" of the first decades of the 20th century into either a reading band (usually playing for higher social status) and the 'faking' bands, who did not read on dance jobs and played more for the general public. John Handy talks of this:

"Piron playing at Tranchina's and was playing for a better class of people and they didn't go for too much of that rough music, so all his stuff was smooth and soft...And then he had you playing it note for note, and crescendos and different

things. Well that's the way he wanted it played, and that's the way you had to play it for him. So, if you'd go set in his band, you understand what I mean, you had to be a pretty polished musician to go set in his band."

August Laurent remembers Lorenzo Tio Jr. played mostly with Peter Bocage, they were on one job together for 35 years, playing at Tranchina's seven nights a week (Sic: It was 10 years) Vic Gaspard was good with Tranchina's Band all those 35 years. (Sic: also exaggerated).

Bill Matthews also played with Piron after Piron told him "Billy I want you work over there at Tranchina's with me. I'll give you \$15 a week." Fifteen dollars was big money in them days. Go to work at eight, knock off at twelve. All overtime you get paid for. Piron had a pretty good lineup - So I went over there with Piron. I met Steve Lewis on my way coming into town on the West End car. I said "Steve I'm going to play with Piron." He said, "Well I'm going to play with Piron myself." (Both started the next night) At the time Piron had: Tio, Bocage (playing valve trombone), Piron on violin, L. Warmick on Sax, Udell Wilson on piano. When we were out at Tranchina's, Tranchina bought a xylophone and Peter Bocage took the xylophone home. He could really play it. Felix Tranchina was a musician and bought a bassoon and L. Tio Jr. played it sometimes at Tranchina's. He bought the instrument because he like the sound."

Louis Cottrell Sr. (perhaps the most respected early New Orleans drummer) joined Piron playing at Spanish Fort and was with Piron until his death in 1927.

It is interesting that Piron, like Paul Whiteman and John Robichaux, had 'hot men' in their band and when requested could get 'hot.'

Fan Bourgeau mentioned that "Piron played the violin." The violin, as lead instrument of the 'string band' was the leader in the ensemble. As jazz began to dominate with a four man rhythm section two trumpets were added and later saxes. The violin was faded out as volume was a big problem against the wind instrument. Bourgeau mentioned that "Piron continued to play although violin had gone out of style. Piron was a good violinist and a jazz violinist. He read. He was first class. Played on the lake. He was at Tranchina's with his 6 piece band."

Leonard Bocage remembers that the Piron Band was carried by WDSU radio each day:

"Piron at Tranchina's., broadcast over the radio every day from there. The personnel in this band included: P. Bocage-trumpet, Cottrell-drums, L Warnick-sax, H. Bocage-bass/tuba, and Charles Bocage-banjo. I think they broadcast over WDSU."

In these oral interviews we are quoting the information and facts Their words must be taken 'with a grain of salt.' These men were trying to remember events and places from 40 or 50 years in the past.

Peter Bocage was a close friend of Armand and began playing together when they "had a 4 piece combination at the St. Charles Hotel. I played banjo. We had: violin, banjo, drums and mandolin. This was called a 'tango' band..

I started playing brass and got with Piron and we stay out to Spanish Fort at Tranchina's for 10 years. Had a great big

restaurant out at Spanish Fort. That was the Piron Band we started with a string aggregation and we wound up with an 8 piece orchestra.

After then, we went to New York and recorded for the Victor, Okeh and Columbia. And we played Roseland Ballroom. (Sic: They also played the Cotton Club.)

We came back and went back out there (Spanish Fort) again. While we were away, Celestin was out there with Ridgley. When we came back the people wanted us back. When we closed there we went up to Metairie for old man Dominick Tranchina-at the Beverly Gardens; then went to the Victory Inn. When we played there we had a six piece group.

Then Tranchina opened another place in Metairie. It's a church now. Big place there on the highway. We stayed there awhile. Then we went to Suburban Gardens for Jack Shean. Worked there a couple of years, all with Piron.

Piron was a pretty good musician. Yeah and a pretty good businessman. He was very up on his toes. But he just played, he didn't worry a lot. Anything else in the band, I had to take care of. Just like that demonstration we had there, that waltz? I had to make, take the record, make the parts for our band. The song-Mama's Gone Goodbye-Piron wrote the lyrics, I wrote the music."

In 1918 Piron and Bocage formed the famous 'Piron' orchestra and played at Tranchina's for 10 years. When they went to New York to record they got together with Clarence Williams who had a very successful music published business. Williams secured engagements at the Roseland Ballroom (the first negro band to do so) and at the Lafayette Theater. The primary purpose of the New York trip was to record. The sessions had been set up by Werlein Music store of New Orleans.

After playing at the Victory Inn, the band played casual jobs around New Orleans, later traveling out of town to

Florida, Tennessee and other places. These jobs were for 2 or 3 nights a week, sometimes more.

Piron's band was more 'legit' than jazz. They played strictly from music. They didn't play anything like Dixieland. They played numbers like "All the World is Waiting for the Sunrise," and "Say it with Music." Piron's band never used female singers."

Charles Bocage recalls that:

"Piron's group was the first colored band to play a permanent engagement at the Roseland Ballroom, 51st and Broadway. The Piron Band members didn't want the job at George White's Scandals, the men wanted to go home; they had plenty of work there. It hurt Piron when the men refused to take the job because his ambition was to reach the top. The orchestra leader whose band played opposite them at the Roseland (the Mal Hallett Orchestra from Conn.) said: "I would cut off my right arm to get the job with the Scandals."

Charles further remarked that

"It was a success in New York and would have been greater if they had taken the offers they had. Such as the one with the Orpheum-Keith circuit. Piron wanted to stay in New York -had the chance with that band to get to the top."

In "History of the New York Scene" Charters writes:

"There had been changes at Roseland since Bix had been playing down the street at the Cinderella two years before. Sam Lamnin's "sweet" band had held down the job for years, but they had objected when the management hired a colored group, Armand J. Piron's, in June 1924."

"Fletcher Henderson had been approached by the management of the Roseland, which at the time was the most

important ballroom in the country, and when the band left the Club Alabam there was a job for them at the Roseland. Armand J. Piron's fine New Orleans Orchestra, with the great clarinetist, Lorenzo Tio, Jr., had been playing at the Roseland for several months, but the New Orleans musicians were homesick and the band was beginning to get restless. The management had found Negro musicians very popular, so Fletcher was asked to take over the job."

Perhaps this experience in New York was the incident that made Piron, a few years later fire his existing band. Perhaps he could still make it to the top with a more modern sounding band. Did he think that the old band didn't want to get to the top and he stood a chance to do so with a new band?

In Sidney Bechet's book "Treat It Gentle" he has a few pages on his knowledge of Piron. Bechet writes:

"Armand Piron played in the old Olympia Orchestra that Freddie Keppard made up, and he published a piece of music that became really well known. That was *I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My sister Kate*. Piron published it, but the music for that piece came from Louis Armstrong. Whether Piron bought it from Louis or not I don't know, but I do know that Louis composed the music and then later Piron got the rights to it.

Around 1913 Piron had a partnership with Clarence Williams down in New Orleans for publishing songs. They were doing real fine, too. Piron was playing and publishing his songs and being liked by all; he was a man who got a lot of respect from people.

Clarence, though, was seeing big chances. He wanted to go North; he saw that was going to be the place where a whole lot of opportunities were going to open up, and it wasn't long



after this song came out that Clarence saw his chance. He left for Chicago but he didn't stay there long before he went on to New York and opened his own publishing house there. And right off he published *Sister Kate* in New York. Well, the way it was in those days, when a man published a song, it was almost like it was *his* song. The writer of it, his name didn't even have to be on it, and I don't even know if Piron knew at first how well *Sister Kate* was selling. But after some while when Piron heard about the publication, he went up to New York to collect for his advance royalty which was bringing him seven or eight hundred dollars. Clarence gave it to him, and Piron, as soon as he got it, went right back to New Orleans.

Then a few years later-this was about '20, '21-he was back again in New York, and this time he brought his band. While he was there he got his band together and recorded some numbers, like *Mama Gone*, *Goodby*, *Ghost of the Blues*. Those were great records too: he had some real fine musicianers with him; there was men like Steve Lewis on piano, Peter Beaucart (Sic: Bocage) violin, Pete's brother on guitar, Degaston playing bass, Lorenzo Tio on clarinet, Louis Warnock alto, and Louis Cotrelle and Johnny Lindsay playing clarinet and trombone. (Sic: Sidney or the editor of the book didn't give the correct spelling of the names: Cotrelle-Louis Cottrell-drums, Warnack - Louis Warnick-sax, Charles Bocage-banjo, Degaston -Tom 'Oke' Gaspard-bass.)

And about this time too he took his band into the Cotton Club and the Roseland so that a lot of people were hearing the music for the first time. That's one reason why Fletcher Henderson, when he come along later, could be so popular; in some ways Piron had made it possible. It was Armand who was responsible for Fletcher Henderson even being able to come into the Roseland in later years.

Off and on at this same time, Piron was around Clarence's office helping to boost his own songs. That's all

pretty natural, the way it is: if you're writing songs and a publishing company's been publishing them, you just naturally work a bit for that music publishing office. In a way it's just no more than scratching your own back.

Piron didn't have his worries then. He had his health and he had enough money and he had things to look forward to. *Sister Kate* was doing well and it wasn't giving him any concern. But even that didn't seem like enough reason for staying on in New York; it wasn't his natural place. So he packed up and went back to New Orleans. Staying in New York wasn't the same for him as it was for someone like Clarence' it just wasn't Piron's way. New Orleans was more personal to him, more natural like; he was more used to the New Orleans way of doing.

But there's something else that has got to be explained here to really understand Armand J. Piron and what happened to him. It's about this ASCAP. It's supposed to be, you know, if anyone composes some numbers and one of those numbers becomes popular, it's quite easy for him to be admitted as a member of this ASCAP. Anyone what has written a piece that becomes popular, they *can* become a member. When that happens, there's a rating made up to show how popular the number becomes, and ASCAP pays you money according to that rating. Well, Armand had written more than one number, and now that he was back in New Orleans and he was getting along in age and had fallen ill somewhat, he wanted to see something setting him up so he wouldn't have any worries. Those last ten or thirteen years, they'd really made a big difference in his life . . . changed so many things-his health, his way of feeling things.

So he began writing up to Clarence that he wanted to become this member, that *Sister Kate* wasn't bringing him any more royalties, and that he was needing some security like what would come to him when he was made a member of

ASCAP. And just at that time when Piron was writing to Clarence, hoping for some money, there was a meeting going on in New York and it seemed ASCAP were meeting on giving Clarence a higher rating, wanting to advance *him* to being a higher officer, and a lot of the reason for this was because of how popular *Sister Kate* was becoming. Because *Sister Kate*, you know, was really responsible for a many, many people's success who played it or sang it. It really had a hold on the public. Every two or three years it was coming out all over again in some different kind of issuing.

Clarence knew that it was Armand who should really be a member, and he didn't let him down. He really worked for him. That meeting, it was almost convention-like . . . all the ASCAP officers getting together with a whole lot of business, and before the meetings ended, Clarence brought Piron up from New Orleans, and he finally saw to it that Armand was admitted as a member.

Piron, he was really happy when he got back to New Orleans. He was thinking he hadn't any more troubles now. But he hadn't been back long when a trouble did come upon him; a family thing and it was serious. It was something money would help, too . . . the kind of a situation that could all be changed if he had some money. Well, it got Piron worried bad. He fell really ill. He hadn't got his health any more.

But still he was sure all his troubles were going to be over by his becoming this member in ASCAP. You don't know why he hadn't been one sooner, but there are all sorts of things in what happens to a man . . .you just don't know all the reasons what are behind something. Right now, Piron, he was sure he could live in New Orleans peaceful-like and his family would be able to work out of their difficulty; they'd all be looked after. And the only thing he'd got that was going to bring this around' he wasn't playing any more at this time and he didn't see much people-the only thing he'd got was *Sister Kate*. And he

really believed that, being a member, he was going to get royalties amounting to between \$5,000.00, near \$10,00.00. He didn't know that the first cheque that's sent to any member of ASCAP is usually for \$5.00 or \$10.00, and after, *after* that, the regular amount is sent.

Well, he got this cheque for \$5.00 or \$10.00, and looked at it and turned it over once or twice. And that was the end of it. He went completely out of his mind. He just looked at it, turned it over, and he couldn't believe it. And that was the end of Piron.

That's what I know of this one man. He had all those troubles, and he had his music. His music is what he had for explaining himself, for making his troubles over so they would have a pride to them. It was his way of being a man that could stand up to himself."

## TIME LINE

**Born 1888, died 1943**

**1900 - Piron/Gaspard Orchestra (1892-1902) Piron joins around 1900**

**1903 - Bloom Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Peerless Orchestra (1903 or 1905-1913)**

**1912 - Olympian Orchestra**

**1913 - Playing at Lala's Saloon**

**1914 - Tulane University script dances**

**1915 - Piron/William Publishing Company. (1315 Tulane Ave.-  
between Liberty & Franklin**

**1916 - Orpheum Circuit Band (only in appearance-no tour developed)**

**Tuxedo Orchestra**

**1917 - Piron Band formed with Peter Bocage**

**1918 - Tranchina's (fall of 1922) during prohibition.**

**New Orleans Country Club from 4-7 pm**  
**1920 - Joyland Revelers-tour throughout South**  
**1922 - New York**  
**1923 - Club Deluxe, Lafayette Theater-New York**  
**1924 - Roseland-New York,**  
**1924 - Pelican Ballroom (S. Rampart & Gravier Sts.) Every**  
**Saturday night.**  
**1924 - Baton Rouge Community Club - August 7th and**  
**October 24th.**  
**1924 - Victory Inn-New Orleans**  
**1924 - Tranchina's - till 1926?**  
**1926 - Plays in Ponchatoula-April 30th**  
**1926 - S. S. Pelican ) riverboat in New Orleans**  
**1928 - Fires band - hires a more 'modern' sounding band**  
**1929 - S. S. Capital**  
**1930 - S. S. Pelican**  
**1930 - Piron's 'Garden of Joy Club-to 1931**  
**1931 - Roosevelt Hotel (Jan. 15)**  
**1938-39 - Strekfus Line.**

**Piron and Robichaux were the most popular of society**  
**bands in New Orleans and had virtually all of the society work.**  
**When Robichaux took the job at the Lyric, it left the field**  
**wide-open for Piron.**

## **MUSIC PUBLISHING**

**In 1915 Piron and Clarence Williams formed a music**  
**publishing Company which was located on 1315 Tulane**  
**Avenue between Liberty and Franklin Streets.**

**Piron's music writing career is addressed by Paul**  
**Beaulieu. He states that:**

**"A non-musician, Freddy Ratliff, brought in an original poem "What is this World to me?" to Piron, who set it to music. Piron had me make a piano arrangement of it. They had about 50 copies of it printed which they passed around among their friends. It was Piron's first composition. The time was around 1912. Then Piron met Clarence Williams. Piron wrote down "Brown Skin" which he had been playing with his orchestra for some time. Piron & Williams published it."**

**'Brown Skin' became a big hit and started the duo direct into publishing music. They published a number of dance band arrangements - both originals and songs by other song writers. Below are listed a few:**

**I Can Beat You Doing What You're Doing me - 1916 (Sic: My own band: "Musicum Jazz Antiqua" performed this song at the New Orleans Jazz Fest in 1996.) The song is a march/two-step and highly recommended. It has a sound of a piece that might be played on the Broadwalk in Atlantic City. It can be ordered through Basin Street Press Music Catalog.)**

**Long, Long Time Before You See My Face - 1916 -by Jimmie Cox, Arrg. by Peter Bocage**

**Mama's Baby Boy - 1917 - Piron/St. Cyr-Arranged by Peter Bocage: a popular song with some syncopation.**

**You Can have it, I Don't Want it - 1917**

**America They are Both for you - 1918**

**A brass/concert band arrangement by Frank Fuhrer written during WW I. Marked a March or One Step. No co-writer, only Piron's name appears on song.**

### **"SISTER KATE"**

**A controversy remains to this day about the composer of the tune "I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate." Louis**

**Armstrong said he wrote it. Piron and Williams have their name on the publication which was published by Williams Pub. Co. in New York City in 1922. Writing in 'Jersey Jazz,' Jack Bradley addressed the controversy:**

**"Louis Armstrong did, in fact, compose Sister Kate. His title was 'Up in Maddie's Bunk.'" In 1915 he sold it outright to Piron for \$50. without knowing it, he relinquished all rights to the tune. This is documented in "Treat It Gentle," by Sidney Bechet, "Jazz Masters of New Orleans," by Martin Williams and "Hear Me Talkin' to Ya," by Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff. The latter book quotes Louis directly. If any more evidence is needed, I have in my possession a copy of a letter from Louis Armstrong stating that he wrote "Up in Maddie's Bunk."**

**Piron had it copyrighted in 1919 and in 1922 the copyright was assigned to the Clarence Williams Music Publishing Co., Inc. (Sic: The Piron/Williams partnership lasted only about a year. Williams left for Chicago and then New York about a year later.)**

**The tune was never recorded by Louis Armstrong as he felt Piron took advantage of him and therefore did not want to contribute to Piron's royalties by recording it. For some strange reason, Piron himself never recorded the tune either." (Sic: First recorded by the "Memphis Five' in June of 1922)**

**In New York, Clarence Williams did publish some music of Piron. Mama's Gone, Goodbye, 1924 by Peter Bocage and A. J. Piron, Purple Rose of Cairo in 1920, Bouncing Around in 1924, New Orleans Wiggle in 1924 and Mama's Got It by Piron & Williams in 1942.**

## **POPULAR SONGS BY PIRON**

**Brown Skin**  
**I Can Beat You Doing What You're Doin' Me**  
**I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate**  
**If Your Man is Like My Man, I sympathize With You**  
**Purple Rose of Cairo**  
**Call he Shine**  
**New Orleans Wiggle**  
**America, They are Both For You**  
**I Wonder What It Means**  
**Mama's Gone, Goodbye**  
**Day and Day**  
**Come Back to Me Mandy**  
**Mama Knows Where Papa Goes /bouncing Around**  
**Mama's Baby Boy**

### Recorded songs

**From Dec., 1923 to Feb. 21, 1924:**

<b>Mama's Gone Goodbye</b>	<b>Do-Doodle Oom</b>
<b>New Orleans Wiggle</b>	<b>Purple Rose of Cairo</b>
<b>Bouncing Around</b>	<b>Day By Day</b>
<b>Kiss Me Sweet</b>	<b>Ghost of the Blues</b>
<b>Sud Bustin' Blues</b>	<b>Bright Star Blues</b>
<b>West Indies Blues</b>	<b>Lou'siana Swing</b>
<b>Sittin' on the Curbstone Blues</b>	

**In New Orleans''**

**Red Man Blues and Do Just As I Say**

**Piron also played at the New Orleans Country Club while he was playing at Tranchina's, playing on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 4-7 before going to his job at Tranchina's.**



**Dr. Edmond Souchon was a close friend of Piron's and talks of his energy, dedication and work habits:**

**"Armand was an indefatigable worker. The handicap of the childhood injury, which made one leg shorter than the other, did not slow him up one bit. After playing at a dance or night club until 4 or 5 A. M. he would be met at the door by his wife with a cup of New Orleans "black-tar" coffee. Refreshed, he would then go to bed, sleep until about 9:30 and then get up for breakfast. After he had eaten he began a series of violin lessons which kept him busy until about 2:00 P.M. Back to bed for a short rest until 6 and then up to meet his regular musicians to rehearse and rearrange parts until it was time for the night's work. Year after year he kept this pace up."**

**He also described Piron the musician:**

**"Piron was a sweet violinist and a remarkable leader. he insisted on a perfect rhythm section. He surrounded himself with the best men, the hottest, wildest, most inventive men, and with perfect arrangements and constant practice, his band burst forth with the finest music of that era.**

**Souchon was with Piron shortly before he died and relates the following:**

**"As a physician friend of the family, I was called in consultation. Piron had been ill for several days of a rather difficult condition to diagnose and treat in the pre-antibiotic days. He was practically in extremis from a brain abscess. His condition proved hopeless, and shortly after my last visit to him he passed away.**

**In his final few days, he was wildly delirious, but he was constantly rehearsing his band (while in bed). Repeating**

passage after passage over and over again, giving the signal for the curtain to go up in the night club where he played for so many years - explaining certain last minute changes to his musicians. And so he died happy. For Piron loved his music."

One of the mysteries of his career. I found an advertisement about a place called "Piron's Garden of Joy", from a Dec. 26, 1931 Louisiana Weekly. I believe that Piron was owner or part owner in this club but there has been nothing written about it.

Piron's place in jazz history is well founded. Using jazzmen that were also reading musicians raised the standards of the dance bands in the New Orleans area. Reading bands such as Robichuax, Piron, Celestin, Perez and others gave the early jazz musicians examples of how dance music should be played and gave them a chance to hear the popular 'hits' of the day so that they might listen and then copy them for their bands and dancers.

## **BUD SCOTT OF NATCHEZ**

**Clarence "Bud" Scott was born and raised in Natchez his home with the Stone family. Bud's talent for music was recognized quite early by his elders. When a child he could be found singing and dancing with a group of children around him. He came into possession of a mandolin, and with this instrument he began to entertain others. He was called upon by Miss Stone to furnish music for her dancing class. His Friend, Ed. Shaw, joined him with a guitar and from time to time another instrument was added until Bud finally had a well organized band. Serenading throughout the city was his specialty. Bud had a splendid voice. He played mostly for the white people of this city. As the years passed and his band gained fame, he played for all the large activities of this section. His band had the distinction of playing for President's McKinley, Teddy Roosevelt and Taft- while on visits to this section. They accompanied the grain dealers of New Orleans to Indiana and filled an important engagement in the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans. In 1938 they were still playing engagement in Natchez and other places each week.**

**The Natchez Times newspaper ran a two part story on Bud Scott, written by Edgar Simmons, Jr. The story, while not giving any definite dates, does give an account of the development of Bud Scott's music. It is as follows:**

**"The history of Bud Scott and his band cannot be tossed off in a few paragraphs. It deserves to be a book. short of that, I hope these two feature stories will sketch, if broadly, the history of the man and his band.**

**A common public misconception about Bud Scott was that he could not read music. He was excellent at it and bought up the sheet music of new tunes as soon as they came out.**

His first band was made up entirely of strings - no reeds, no brass, no piano. The members included Bud himself, who played the mandolin and sang; Mitchell McAllister guitar, Willie Holmes who played bass, who later worked with Otis Smith in Ville Platte, Louisiana; Ed Shaw, guitar; and Charlie Lavender and Fred Polkinghorne - mandolins. These six men, then, comprised the original Bud Scott aggregation.

They wore a uniform similar to the band uniforms worn by today's high school and college bands including the peaked caps. They played waltzes and fox trots, the latter given a new treatment when that pre-jazz style of rather ragged syncopation called ragtime came on the scene.

It is well known that Bud Scott's Band played nearly every town within a radius of 250 miles of Natchez, but it is perhaps not generally known that the original string band traveled as far as West Baden, Indiana, with one day stands at every important town between Natchez and Indianapolis.

It was at West Baden that they were invited to play at the winter headquarters of one of the largest tent circuses then traveling America. Guitarist Mitchell McAllister, who today at the age of 77 - he played with Bud for 43 years - runs a grocery store in Natchez, remembers playing with in sight of the circus lions and elephants.

They of course, played the Gulf coast country and were the first colored band to be booked into the St. Charles Hotel and the Haymarket pavilion in New Orleans. And although New Orleans boasted some fine individual musicians at this time, the Crescent City did not have a band with the reputation of Bud Scott.....McAllister said that the jetty was on the front of the bandstand "like a headlight," and its take would often "overcome" their night's salary.

The songs of this era, 1910 and earlier, included such favorites as "Alexander's Ragtime Band," two popular waltzes,

**"Clover Blossoms" and "Someone." "That Same Silver Moon," and "The Rosary."**

**Bud did not begin using his famous megaphone until after the band was modernized. He ordered these out of New Orleans and they were brown in color and ranged from 8 or 10 inches in size to nearly three feet.**

**Chief of Police Mike Ryan was a great fan and when he raised his finger in the crowd, Bud knew he wanted him to sing "My Wild Irish Rose."**

**It was not until the twenties that Bud Scott decided to enlarge his original six-man string band. Trombones were coming into vogue and with slurs, smears and tin derby mutes they made a satire of music, brought laughter to the lips of the crowd. Sensing this, Bud hired trombonist Frank Blake. It was a fateful decision, for it meant finally opening the doors to jazz, Dixieland jazz."**

**There then followed a succession of new men and new instruments. There was Tom Griffin, pianist, who today still plays some of the finest piano around. Bud Scott's son, Clarence, learned to play saxophone from the first reed man Bud hired, one Walter Brundy, a clarinetist from New Orleans. It was Clarence's tragic fate to become one of the victims of the Natchez Rhythm Club fire. It may be remembered that the nationally known Walter Barnes Band met their death there.**

**One of the most famous of Bud Scott's musicians is Percy Sevier who plays guitar and tenor banjo. He played with the Louie Armstrong band for a time and is now with Otis Smith at Ville Platte.**

**Jessie Washington was tenor sax man with the band for a time. Louis Mazique was one of Bud's alto sax men in the late twenties and Rollin McCoy played cornet. The cornet, once so popular with early jazz bands, has been almost universally abandoned in favor of the trumpet.**

Both Otis Smith and Earl Reed worked with the Scott band intermittently until they formed bands of their own.

The only member of the early band I have a crystal clear memory of was the drummer they called Snake. His name was James Carter and in a somewhat unorthodox manner he set down one of the finest jazz beats I have ever heard. He played several of the Pilgrimage tableaux when they were held at the Memorial Building. When Snake played Dixie you could see Fort Sumpter firing back.

It is my understanding that James Carter is now on the West Coast playing with one of the fine California groups. He left Natchez playing drums with a minstrel show.

Walter King was the band's violinist and he, later, married Bud Scott's daughter. And David Hawkins was another popular member of the band, along with Fred Polkinghorne, mandolinist.

The final modernized version was a fourteen piece band using four winds, guitar, piano and drums.

Mitchell McAllister, the 77 year old sole survivor of the original string band, remembers their first dance job was for Miss Treeby Poole on North Union Street.

Later the band often worked - a week at a time at Louisiana Parish fairs in Rayville and Winnsboro. A unique feature of these fairs were the jitney dances. There were railing on all sides of the dance floor and rolls of tickets were sold at five cents each

In an interview on March 19, 1960 McAllister relates the following information:

"I was born March 15, 1882 in Natchez. I remember that the son of Bud Scott ran away from "the band" and asked his father to buy him a sax, which was done. The son was reading a little within a month; 'He got to be a perfect wizard on that sax.' He left town for some time; then returned.

**Bud Scott began adding musicians to the band until they numbered 18. The band played nothing but serenades and similar informal occasions until Mr. Trilby Poole gave them their first important dance jobs, which was held at the Institute Hall; the band made \$1.00 per man that night.**

**Bud was a strong singer, he used only a small megaphone while singing. The band began playing in the various small towns surrounding Natchez. Then Mr. Peabody (of Memphis) came through. The band played in New Orleans at the Pup, The Haymarket, The Grunwald Hotel and the St. Charles Hotel. There wasn't any colored orchestras in there during that time.**

**The band was taken to New Orleans on a riverboat; their first public appearance in the city was on the waterfront; Bud Scott sang so loudly that the mayor of the city had to make him stop because people were pushing others into the river in their efforts to get closer. The band then opened at the St. Charles Hotel, where they were dressed as farmers; again Scott and the band were so powerful that they were barred from playing in New Orleans.**

**The bands in Natchez played jazz, the same as the ones in New Orleans when jazz first began. It was called jazz from the time I knew about it.**

**The band - Bud Scott's - consisted of voice, 2 guitars, 3 mandolins and violin. I played with Scott for 43 years. Wind instruments were added to Scott's band in the following order: Trombone, Cornet, cornet again and clarinet. Walter King of New Orleans played violin in the band. The trombone was added during World War I. Besides singing, Bud Scott played mandolin.**

**But Scott sang: "Meet Me Tonight in Dixieland," "Bill Bailey," "Sometimes You Cause Me to Wonder," and "Dinah."**

**Louis Mazique played sax with Bud Scott's Band. The saxophone came into the Scott Band after World War I. Bud**

Scott's son was the first to play sax in the band. The son was killed in the fire. Griffen, a piano player with Scott's Band still plays (this was 1960).

Bud Scott was of medium height (5'9") and weighed about 230 pounds. All of the members of Scott's Band remained in or around Natchez.

The first band comprised: Willie Holmes-bass, Charles Lavender-mandolin, Fred Polinghorne-mandolin, Bud Scott-vocal and mandolin, Ed Shaw and me-guitars.

Walter Brundy and Walter Barnes played clarinet with Bud Scott for a time. Bud Scott was a good singer. We had a vocal quartet also: me (McAslister)-tenor, Bud Scott -lead, Walter king Baritone, Ed Shaw-bass. Toots Johnson's Band played in Natchez. Few bands came to Natchez during Bud Scott's time, as Scott took care of everything (musical). including carnival and big dances. The band traveled at least as far as Oklahoma and California, to Mobile, North Mississippi and other places. Scott had many good offers to travel but he wanted to remain in Natchez."

Bud Scott was a product of the sweat-drenched Dixie River towns and jazz flowed out of his mouth and fingers, out of every wide port of him, like honey out of a barrel. He played pure, foot-pattin Dixieland jazz like it's on tape nowhere. It hovered under the moon and over the sucking swirl of the mud bottomed river like heady perfume and God like it so much he took it up with him.

Those boys played in smoky dance halls where even the choked blue air pulsed with the crushed roll after beat on the thin snare drum

They beat green wood Fourth of July speaker platform planks black with the stomping of their big bunioned feet and sweated luminous marbles under the red sky.



**Bud sang on the galleried second story of the Natchez Confectionery on summer nights with a megaphone that his ham-like hand nearly swallowed. The gallery seemed to hang in the night sky and it dripped with the evening dew.**

**I learned that Bud's own favorite song was "I Wonder If You Miss Me," and I think the answer is yes." (Natchez Times, 1940)**

**There are running accounts of the Bud Scott Band playing, not only in Natchez but in nearby towns and parishes. We give a few of them, not a complete history yet but one that is unfolding with time and research:**

### **Natchez in 1911**

**Bud Scott's playing career was well under way by 1911 and his band was in demand for most of the local dance jobs. Our first entry in 1911 has Scott playing for a local club:**

**"Dance at the Beavers - another delightful dance last evening in their elegant clubroom over the Natchez Printing & Stationery Co. on Main St. Bud Scott's orchestra was engaged for the occasion." (Jan. 4)**

**Bud Scott also had a minstrel troupe and they give a performance in the Baker Grand Theater:**

**"Bud Scott and his "Thirty Phunny Phellows" who will appear at the Baker Grand Friday night, promises to be a treat in Minstretrety - Blood worth and England "two of the "Phunny Phellos" are considered to be the best of all colored comedians. The boat race between the Robert E. Lee and the Natchez with the typical scene of the darkies hanging around**

the levee singing the old river songs, is said to be one thing to be presented." (Jan. 18)

Another write-up about the up-coming Minstrel show appears in the next days paper:

"Two wonderful magicians - That's what the public will say of Profs. Blkocksmand and Johnson in Bud Scott's "30 Phunny Phellows" at the Baker Grand Friday night. Smiling Moon with Sidney Kaston in the leading role is said to be one of the best features of the show. Bud Scott says that it would be well to bring along a sponge to dry your eyes as the "30 Phunny Phellows" is a continuous rip-roarious laugh. Entire lower floor reserved for white people. admission-50 cents." (Jan. 19)

Still another story appear in the paper for a third day in a row publicizing the minstrel show:

"Bud Scott tonight - Bud Scott and his "30 Phunny Phellows" are billed to be at the Baker Grand tonight and lovers of good music are promised the best colored minstrel performance of the Day.

By request Bud Scott has added "Sweet Italian Love" and "Stop, Stop, Stop," to his musical numbers

The steamboat race, showing the old steamer Natchez backing out of port as the Lee blows her whistle, is said to be a charming scenic effect sure to please.

Jake Carrole in his "I'm' going crazy" is certain to win many an encore

The entire lower floor has been reserved for the white patrons of the house. Admission 50 cents." (Jan. 20)

The next day's paper contains a review of the night's performance of the minstrel show:

"Scott's Phunny Phellows the local aggregation of colored artists banded together for the purpose of presenting an entertainment of their own, had a crowded house last night at the Baker Grand, the entire downstairs being occupied by white theater goers, the balcony and gallery being devoted to the colored population. The upstairs was sold out before 3:00 yesterday afternoon.

The song numbers were good, though some of the vocalists were a bit nervous on account of their appearance in public

There were several good jokes, but there were others that should have been eliminated showing that a censorship would have done some good before the last rehearsal. The same statement applies to the monologue of Jim Scott, and to the action of the negro who obtained the hat from the negro in the orchestra. With these eliminated and a few rehearsal Bud Scott can take his "PP" on the road and make a good hit, as they can present as good a show as the average negro company on tour and are better vocalists. Bud Scott came in for the greatest share of the applause." (Jan. 21)

The band again plays for the Beaver Club. The item states that: "One of the most enjoyable affairs of the season was given at the Beaver's Club last night, where quite a number of young people attended a dance. Bud Scott's Band furnished the music." (Feb. 2) We read that for the "celebration of the 10th birthday of Louise Metcalfe" they "danced to the music of Bud Scott." (Feb. 23)

**Bud Scott was chairman of the ball committee for the colored ball at the Samaritan Temple and his orchestra "rendered an appropriate musical program." (May 23/25)**

**In Oct. the band again plays for the Beaver club:**

**"A delightful dance was given at the Beaver's Club last evening to Miss Retta Miller of Vicksburg who is the guest of Misses Carrie May and Mae Kaiser, at their home in N. Pearl St. Bud Scott's Band furnished the music." (Oct. 6)**

**Finally in 1911 the Bud Scott Band furnished music for the Elks Reception which featured the "Bud Scott mandolin Orchestra has been engaged by the Elks." (Nov. 23)**

### **Bud Scott in St. Joseph/Tensas Parish 1911-1927**

**Bud Scott's Band was in demand in all the nearby towns and the band traveled quite a bit. It played often in St. Joseph in Tensas Parish. We have a running account of the band's activity from 1911 to 1927. Besides St. Joseph, the Scott Band plays in nearby towns such as Vidalia, Waterproof, Ferriday and Newellton. Our first entry has the band playing in Waterproof, La.:**

**"The young people of Waterproof gave a swell dance on Thursday evening, which was attended by a number fro St. Joseph, who went down on the train Thursday morning and returned Friday morning. Bud Scott's Band from Natchez played." (July 21)**

**1913**

**We know New Orleans bands played for baseball games and that after each game there was always a dance. It is the same in the upper Louisiana towns. The band plays for such a dance:**

**"A match game of baseball...between Vidalia and Waterproof.. to be followed by a 'Bud Scott' dance is scheduled for St. Joseph for Wednesday." (June 20)**

**Bud Scott was very popular in the country side as well as in Natchez. So popular that the word Bud Scott became synonymous with the word dance. Instead of saying there would be a 'dance,' we read that there will be a 'Bud Scott' on a certain date. We will read in later entries his name being used this way. The next entry is for a dance at Waterproof:**

**"A most delightful dance was given at Waterproof on Monday evening. "Bud" Scott's Band was secured for the occasions and maintained its well-earned record for discoursing enchanting music." (July 4)**

**The Band travels north to St. Joseph for a dance:**

**"Young men of St. Joseph will give a dance at Masonic Hall on Tuesday, Sept. 16th. Bud Scott's Band from Natchez will furnish the music on that occasion." (August 29)**

**We read an account of the above dance in the Sept. 19th St Joseph paper:**

**"Tuesday night's dance - at Masonic Hall - Bud Scott's Band furnished the music and dancing was kept up until the early morning hours. among the novel features of the entertainment were the modern and up-to-date dances seen**

here for the first time, and which were witnessed with much interest by the guests present." (Sept. 19)

Another dance is held in St. Joseph and we read:

"Dance on Friday night. A Bud Scott dance is in anticipation here and is looked forward to with greatest pleasure." (Oct. 17)

1914

While it does not mention the band by name, only the 'Natchez' band we assume that Scott's Band is the one that plays for our next mentioned dance:

"Masquerade ball given at Knights of Pythian Hall, Friday night. The music for the occasion was furnished by the Natchez band." (Feb. 20)

The band played for a dance in Ferriday, La. and the paper writes that: "Quite a merry crowd went to Ferriday to a Bud Scott dance Wednesday;" People in this upper part of Louisiana around the Mississippi River frequently traveled to nearby towns for dances and entertainment. Natchez was the biggest city nearby and Scott's Band was available for their dances. Scott next travels to Newellton for a dance:

"Newellton Society notes. The big tango ball given at old Music Hall on Friday night was one of the most delightful affairs of the season and was a brilliant success in every particular. The dance was under the special management of Mr. W. P. Martiniere, who is an acknowledged epicure in the promotion of such enterprises. The attendance was unusually large, many coming from a distance. Tallulah, St. Joseph and

**Waterproof were well represented, about 25 cars coming from these towns. The hall was beautifully decorated for the occasion and Bud Scott's Band never discoursed more inspiring music and the dance was kept up until the morning star lighted the way for the homeward bound." (April 14)**

**The band, with its good reputation, is continuously hired for public, private and school dances. They appear in St. Joseph again for a school dance:**

**"Dance - Masonic Hall, next Tuesday, complimentary to graduating class of St. Joseph High School. Bud Scott's Band from Natchez has been engaged for the occasions and it is a foregone conclusion that the dance will be a great success." (May 22)**

**As is the custom in these days, every public function has a dance that follows. Upon graduating High School there is a dance:**

**"Commencement exercises of Newellton High School, Murdock Hall, Friday night. A dance followed the school excurses, the music being furnished by the Bud Scott Band from Natchez." (May 22)**

**The success of the St. Joseph High School dance is mentioned in the St. Joseph paper on May 29th:**

**"The dance given on Tuesday evening was one of the most delightful affairs that has ever enlivened our town. The attendance was unusually large and the music was in keeping with Bud Scott's usual reputation. As stated last week the entertainment was given as a compliment to the graduating class of St. Joseph High School and as farewell to the faculties**

**of the several schools of the parish who were leaving for home, and also to complete payment of the annex to the Masonic Hall just completed. A substantial sum was realized for the purpose. The addition to the hall is quite an improvement and certainly fills along felt want." (May 29)**

**The paper also does a follow-up story to the Newellton High School dance:**

**"Newellton High School commencement exercises. After the program as outlined was finished, Bud Scott's Band was called to the stage, the seats cleared away and the great crowd of several hundred people participated in the various steps." (June 5)**

**The band plays for a dance for St. Joseph 'young men' and both the announcement and the follow up are printed below:**

**"The young men of St. Joseph and vicinity are making arrangements for a magnificent Bud Scott Dance to be given at Masonic Hall next Tuesday, July 21." (July 17)**

**"The dance given at the hall on Tuesday night formed another link in the chain of delightful entertainments that have enlivened our community and contributed so much to the pleasure of our people the past summer. Bud Scott's Band discoursed the music for the occasion, which is sufficient guarantee that the affair was one of unusual attraction." (July 24)**

**The paper announces that "the young men of Waterproof will give a Bud Scott dance on Wednesday, Nov.**



**18th," and again the paper announces a dance and writes a follow-up article on the dance's success:**

**"Young men of Newellton will give a Bud Scott dance on Wednesday, Nov. 18th" (Nov. 6)**

**"The Bud Scott dance given by the young men of Newellton and vicinity at Murdock Hall on Wednesday night was truly one of the most elaborate and successful affairs that has ever graced our social world, and which has long been famed for the elegant and delightful gatherings that have contributed so much to the pleasure of our people." (Nov. 27)**

**Usually after a wedding you have a reception where the guests can eat and dance. The wedding that is announced in the paper does not call the affair a reception but a dance:**

**"Wedding Hallie Fay McAllister and Louis Arthur Rhodes. A big Bud Scott dance followed the wedding and everyone enjoyed it thoroughly, people coming from all over the parish to hear and see and be seen." (Nov. 27)**

**In the Dec. 11th paper we read of another dance in St. Joseph that the Scott Band plays:**

**"The Bud Scott dance will be given in St. Joseph on Tuesday night, 22nd insts. and all the dancers are invited to come - young and old." (Dec. 11)**

**1915**

**Scott's popularity is assurance that a dance will be a success and dancers come from near and far to attend. We see**

**an example of the word dance being dropped and all the people know that it is a dance:**

**"The big Bud Scott of Friday night was a great success and was attended by guests from adjoining parishes, while Tensas was represented from its greatest length to its extremist breadth." (May 28)**

**The dances are extremely popular and another is planned almost immediately:**

**"The Bud Scott dance given here Friday night was such a complete success that arrangements are already being made to have a repetition of same on June 17th." (June 4)**

**The dance is held and is also a great success, the Scott band again playing its music for the dancers:**

**"The big Bud Scott dance of Thursday night was the success that all such events are with our people. The attendance was unusually large and practically every section of the parish as well as neighboring parishes, was well represented and every one present enjoyed a most delightful evening." (June 18)**

**The towns of Tensas Parish seem to take turns holding a Bud Scott dance. This time it is in Waterproof:**

**"The young people of Waterproof are perfecting arrangements for a big Bud Scott dance to be given at the Knights of Phytian Hall on Friday night next. An admission fee of \$1.50 will be charged all gentlemen from Tensas Parish, but all ladies and visitors will be admitted free." (August 20)**

**A dance was held in St. Joseph and the Nov. 26th paper prints a follow-up item:**

**"The big Bud Scott dance given here on Wednesday night was a huge success and old Murdock Hall was filled to utmost capacity, visitors being present from almost every section of the parish." (Nov. 26)**

**The paper also writes about the success of a dance given in St. Joseph and mentions that "Bud Scott never played and sang better, altogether making the occasion one of the greatest and happily with all who were to fortunate as to be present." (Dec. 17) It seems to be a forgone conclusion that any dance that has the Scott band will be a success. We know that dancing was very popular during this era and with its popularity and a good band every affair is an expected success:**

**"The Bud Scott dance given here on Wednesday night was the usual success that such affairs always are when given by our people. The attendance was large and a most delightful evening was spent." (Dec 31)**

## **1916**

**Attendance at these dances each time seem to be bigger and each dance more successful. One such occasion we find in the April 28th paper:**

**"The Bud Scott dance given by the young men of Newellton and vicinity on Wednesday night was a delightful success, the attendance possibly exceeding any occasion of similar nature, some three score autos being in evidence on**

our streets - young people tripped the light fantastic to the strains of Bud Scott's unresisting rag-times." (April 28)

This is the first time we read that Scott is playing ragtime. It is 1916 and ragtime is the vogue of the young set. Ragtime is mentioned again in the next dance announcement in the paper:

" Bud Scott dance given here on Wednesday. Bud Scott was at his best and when he struck up that irresistible rag everybody just had to dance." (July 14)

In August there are three dances, each in a different town of the parish. All use the Bud Scott Band:

"The young men of Newellton will give a Bud Scott dance on Tuesday night, 22nd insts. to which the public is cordially invited." (August 4)

"The young men of Ferriday are arranging to give a big Bud Scott dance Thursday, August 10th." (August 4)

"Young men of Waterproof are arranging to give a Bud Scott dance at Pythian Hall Tuesday night, Sept. 5th." (August 25)

The announcement of a baseball game is read in the paper, followed by a statement that Scott dance is given on Tuesday. I think that the dance will be scheduled to follow the baseball game that night.

1917

**Dances continue to increase in attendance which seems to be judged by how many autos are seen:**

**"A Bud Scott Dance was given at Murdock Hall Tuesday night which was attended by almost everybody in the parish. It is estimated that there were possibly 200 automobiles lined up on the streets of the town during the night. The dance was altogether a great success." (May 18)**

**The Scott Band continues to play for the parish citizens and play for the dance after the school commencement:**

**"Bud Scott Dance for St. Joseph next Thursday night. The young men of St. Joseph and vicinity are arranging to give a Bud Scott dance at the Masonic Hall on next Thursday night following the graduation exercises of the St. Joseph High School." (May 25)**

**The Tensas auxiliary of the Red Cross arrange for "a Bud Scott dance at Masonic Hall in St. Joseph next Thursday, July 12th." Another dance is held for a Thursday night, a popular night for dances and we read that "A delightful Bud Scott dance was given by the young men of St. Joseph Thursday night." (August 17)**

**Finally on two successive weeks the band plays for dances in St. Joseph:**

**"Newellton and vicinity were well represented at the Bud Scott dance given Thursday at St. Joseph of last week." (August 14)**

**"A Bud Scott dance will be given at the Masonic Hall at St. Joseph on Tuesday, Sept. 11, following the opening of**

**school, in compliment to the teachers and High School pupils."  
(August 21)**

## **1918**

**We so read that the band plays in Ferriday, La. and the dance "was attended by many people." (August 16)**

**We find Red Cross benefit dances also held in the St. Joseph area as they were in Baton Rouge. These are the WW I years. Scott plays for two of these-in Newellton and Waterproof:**

**"The Bud Scott dance given at Newellton on Wednesday night. \$100 realized for the Red Cross." (April 26)**

**"Red Cross dance - Waterproof, Tuesday, May 28th. Public invited-music by Bud Scott's Band." (April 26)**

**The next time is interested as it is compared to the statement that Mark Twain. Scott was not a victim of the 'flu.' epidemics:**

**"The reported death of the well-known and popular musician Bud Scott of Natchez, who was said to have been a victim of 'flu' caused much regret wherever he was known, and we are relieved to know that 'Bud' followed the example of the late Mark Twain, notified his friends that the news of his death had been greatly exaggerated. 'Bud Scott' is very popular with the pleasure-loving people of Natchez territory, and all will be glad to know that he has survived the epidemic and his melodious voice will again be heard in various dance halls." (Nov. 22)**

## **1919**

**In 1919 the Scott band is mentioned in only three items in the St. Joseph Paper:**

**"There will be a Bud Scott Dance in Waterproof on the last night of Chautauqua, May 5. Everybody invited." (April 25)**

**"A Bud Scott dance will follow the graduating exercises of the St. Joseph High School at the Masonic Hall on Thursday night, June 3rd." (May 23)**

**"Baseball - Waterproof & Vidalia. A Bud Scott dance will follow that night, June 13." (June 6)**

## **1920**

**There are no entries in 1920. Perhaps the band is traveling There are dances but the band is not used.**

## **1921**

**The band again is hired for numerous dances in Tensas Parish in 1921, more than any other year so far. In April they play for an excursion to Vicksburg:**

**"Excursion to Vicksburg - steamer Betsy Ann. Natchez Knights of Columbus. Bud Scott Orchestra has been retained for the occasion." (April 8)**

**Dances continue and of course use the Bud Scott Band, both in Waterproof and Newellton:**

**"A Bud Scott dance is to be given at Waterproof on 13th of May, at Newellton on the 27th and St. Joseph on the 27th."  
(May 6)**

**The band plays for the dance that followed the commencement for the Newellton High School (May 13) and in Ferriday:**

**"People of Ferriday barbecue on Labor Day, Sept. 5th. Culminate in dance. Bud Scott's Band will furnish music for this." (Sept. 2)**

**For the first time we read that a dance using the Scott Band is not well attended:**

**"The Bud Scott dance given on Friday night, while delightful, was poorly attended. Several came from Newellton but none from Waterproof. The results was receipts ran behind expenses." (March 24)**

**Another dance is given in Waterproof on Thursday night and "was attend by the following representatives from in or near Newellton." (Sic: This list is given but we will not quote.)  
(June 30)**

**The band next plays at Lake Bruen, now the site of a state park and a new location for the band to play at the City Club there:**

**"A Bud Scott dance will be given at the country club, on Lake Bruen, on Tuesday, August 1, for benefit of the club house. This will be the first dance given over Lake Bruen water and will be a most delightful affair." (July 14)**

**The dance was a huge success and we read that:**



**"The public will not forget the Bud Scott dance at country club on Lake Bruen, Tuesday August 1st. The pavilion is large and airy and is built over the water where good breezes blow continuously." (July 28)**

**"The opening of the country club on Lake Bruen was celebrated by a Bud Scott dance on Tuesday evening and was well attended by revelers from this part of the parish. Owing to the condition of the roads between here and St. Joseph many were deterred from making the trip." (August)**

### **1923**

**The Band plays for a dance that is sponsored by the boys basketball team of Waterproof. They "arrange to give a Bud Scott dance in the school on Friday, Feb. 23." (Feb. 2)**

**A few years back we read about the band playing ragtime. Now we read about the band playing 'jazz.':**

**"The young men of Waterproof will give a Bud Scott dance in that town on next Thursday, June 28th. Bud says he will be there with the jazz music." (June 22)**

**The band again plays at Lake Bruen at the country club for two consecutive weeks:**

**"Bud Scott dance at the country club on Lake Bruen, next Friday evening. The pavilion will be brilliantly illuminated and the ever-present lake breezes will make the evening one of delight. Bud promises to be there with the 'jazz' and all who will not be there will miss a treat, for a dance at the country club makes life to the revelers a pleasant, sweet as a passing dream." (July 13)**

**"All lovers of the terp. art will remember the big dance at country club on July 26-Thursday. Music will be furnished by the well known and popular Bud Scott String band of Natchez. Good time is store for those attending a Bud Scott dance at country club. (Sic: the dance was a great success.)" (July 20)**

**Three dances are scheduled in August that use the Bud Scott dance. They are the last entries for the year 1923:**

**"Colored population of St. Joseph fraternity meeting August 10-Friday. Discuss labor question - ballgame. Bud Scott will regale the gathering in music and song and a dance at night with same band at the Knights of Pythian that conclude the day's festivities." (August 3)**

**"Colored festivities a success. The dance that followed at the Knights of Pythian Hall at night, with Bud Scott's String band was present for the occasion." (August 10)**

**"Public invited to a Bud Scott dance-Waterproof, Tuesday, August 21." (August 17)**

## **1924**

**In 1924 the only entries are those of the band's activities in Waterproof. A new place is given-that of the Castleman Theatre in Waterproof. One of the items is an excursion to Mardi Gras in New Orleans that the band plays for the entire trip:**

**"Bud Scott dance given in the Castleman Theatre at Waterproof on New Years night." (Jan 4)**

**"New Orleans Mardi Gras on the George Prince - March 3 & 4. Leave Vicksburg Feb. 29, touching St. Joseph and Goldman, other place, night in Natchez, Donaldsonville for church services. Return after Midnight of Mardi Gras Day. Bud Scott's popular String band will be in attendance for round trip." (Feb. 15)**

**"Public cordially invited to attend a Bud Scott dance at Waterproof, on Thursday night, May 22. Waterproof, La." (May 16)**

**"The Gazette is requested by the committee on arrangements to extend an invitation to the public to attend a Bud Scott dance at Waterproof next Wednesday night, August 27. Dancing from 9:30 to 3:30." (August 20)**

**"The dance given at Castleman Theatre last Wednesday night was a most enjoyable affair. The young folks - quite a good crowd, danced to old Bud Scott's happy tunes, while time passed by all too rapidly. Upon dispersing all expressed the hope that in the near future the management would favor them with another dance." (August 29)**

**1925**

**It is not until spring that the band plays again in St. Joseph:**

**"There will be a Bud Scott dance in the Masonic Hall at St. Joseph on Tuesday, April 14. Benefit of athletic fund of St. Joseph High School." (April 3)**

**The band next plays for a benefit for a newly organized baseball team:**

**"A Bud Scott dance will be given by the young men of St. Joseph and vicinity on April 14, benefit - organizing a baseball team." (April 10)**

**A new dining room where dances to be held in the Morris Hotel hire the band for a number of dances. While in the first article Scott's name is not mention we understand, after reading the second that it is the Scott string band that plays for both dances:**

**"Opening of new dining room of Morris Hotel at Newellton. A string band discoursed sweetest music during the dinner hour. A Bud Scott dance followed at night, which was largely attended, many coming from great distances, and the dance was enjoyed by the fullest by everyone." (May 15)**

**"Mrs. E. E. Morris will give another Bud Scott dance in the new dining room of her hotel at Newellton on Tuesday night, June 2." (May 15)**

**The band plays for a wedding reception at Pythian Hall:**

**"Watson-James wedding (colored) After wedding, at Knights of Pythian Hall, a Bud Scott dance follows." (June 12)**

**1925**

**There is only one entry in the year 1925 but it is the first reference to a Bud Scott marching band:**

**"Parade of Grand Lodge - St. Joseph - procession beginning at Knights of Pythian Hall, wending its way through the principle streets of town and back again to the hall, the train including about 250 members, the well known Bud Scott Band preceding the procession and playing the grand march. The parade was followed by a magnificent banquet and Bud Scott dance at the hall at night."**

**1927**

**The final entries in Tensas Parish are in 1927. The first a dance, the second a reference to the Bud Scott Band playing for a motion picture:**

**"Young people of Waterproof arranging a Bud Scott dance Thursday night, July 28." (July 22)**

**"A fine picture will be shown at the Blackman Theatre on the evening and night of the 26 inst. featuring Charley Chaplin in 'The Circus.' Bud Scott's Orchestra will provide music for each occasion. At night a big dance will be given at the Country Club on Lake Bruen." (Sept. 21)**

### **Baton Rouge**

**The band plays in Baton Rouge rarely, but they invade the Johnson territory for a few dances in the years 1913, 1913 and two appearances in 1919:**

**"5th regular German Club, Jan 31. Bud Scott's famous band of Natchez, Miss. will furnish the music for dancing, Friday night. (Jan 19,1913-LSU Reveille)**

**"Governors Hall vacationing at Brown's Well. As a compliment to the prominent guests, Bud Scott's full orchestra of Natchez, has been engaged to play for the summer dance on Friday night, instead of dancing until 11:00 this dance will begin at 9:00 and continue until the 'wee small hours." (August 9, 1914-Baton Rouge Advocate)**

**"Kappa Alpha give brilliant Hawaiian dance in pavilion. Bud Scott's Orchestra played Hawaiian music." (May 1, 1919-LSU Reveille)**

**"Elks dance - 19th. It is the opinion of all Elks who are students at the University, that with Bud Scott's Band, the affair ought to be the most successful event of the year." (March 12-LSU-Reveille)**

### **Bogalusa**

**In 1921 Scott's band plays in Bogalusa for two dances - both sponsored by the American Legion:**

**"Legion dance - Bud Scott's Jazz Band was kept busy from early in the evening until earlier in the morning playing continuously and the crowd was the largest ever gathered on the floor of the armory." (Oct 6)**

**"American Legion Armistice dance - Bud Scott's Band has been engaged to render music for the occasion." (Nov. 17)**

**"Record attendance at Armistice dance - more than 100 couples danced to the music furnished by Bud Scott's jazzers of Natchez." (Nov. 17)**

### **Kentwood**

**In 1929/1930 the band travels to Kentwood, La for engagements:**

**"City Fire Dept. to give dance, Friday night, Kennon's Hall. The fact that they have secured Bud Scott's Music Hounds, more than prove the efforts behind the dance. The dance will be given in Kennon's Hall, which is known as the best dance hall in the south and all the younger set of the parish can vouch for the excellent floors, which will be expertly waxed." (Feb. 21, 1929)**

**Another dance is played in Kentwood and "Music for the occasion will be furnished by Bud Scott's famous jazz orchestra. (June 6)**

**In 1930 (Feb 20) the band plays for a Fireman's dance:**

**"Fireman's dance, Feb. 27th. Kennon's Hall, Kentwood. The music for the dance will be furnished by Bud Scott's famous music makers." (Feb. 20, 1930)**

**St. Tammany Parish Newspaper - "The St Tammany Farmer"**

**In the St Tammany Farmer (newspaper) we find entries of the band playing in Amite, Covington, and McComb, Mississippi in 1928:**

**"Smilin Acres, Amite, La. Bud Scott, the singing demon and his famous Nigger Band at a dance, Thursday, August 16." (August 11)**

**"Covington Athletic Association dance, October 9, Masonic Temple. Music furnished by Bud Scott the singing demon and his wonderful jazz orchestra." (Oct. 16)**

**"Electric Park ready to open - Everything is in readiness for the grand opening of the Electric Park dance Pavilion on the brick highway just about one mile South of McComb, Miss. says its owners. Perfect order is guaranteed, and an officer will be on the ground during the dance.**

**Music for the occasion will be furnished by Bud Scott's famous jazz orchestra, and everyone who enjoys a well directed dance, on a perfect floor amid a quiet of perfect order, out in the fresh country air, should attend this opening ceremonies. (It's about time for something worse to take the place of jazz.'" (June 6)**



## **OSSCAR "PAPA" CELESTIN 1884-1954**

For most of a long, distinguished career (approx. 45 years) Oscar "Papa" Celestin was one of the most popular and beloved musicians in New Orleans. He was born in a small Louisiana town called Froggmore, near the larger town of Napoleonville on January 1, 1884. His father, Joseph, during Celestin's youth, was a migrate sugar-cane cutter, moving from cane field to cane field, wherever he could find work. His mother, Lucy, bore 13 children, although some accounts give the number at 6. This is probably due to the new born child mortality rate. Celestin was the youngest of the children.

His early life brought of wealth of experience in changing environment and new acquaintances, probably helping him in behavior techniques and adjustments that witnessed Celestin ability to get along with most of the people he had contact with and the accounts of his fellow musicians expressing how Celestin was well liked by most of his fellow musicians, although there were a few he will elaborate on that were at odds with him (notably Kid Ory and an older Ridgley).

Celestin expressed a desire to become a horn player while quite young. One experience when he was five years old, while on the levee, saw one of the many traveling show boats on the River. As he remarked about this desire to become a trumpet player. "Playing a horn seemed the whole idea of my life-even as young as I was."

On a cane plantation in about 1902, Celestin as an 18 year old was said to have been given an old battered cornet. In an account by John Curren, in the Jan./Feb. 1955 issue of the New Orleans Jazz Club Magazine the "Second Line," tells the story of how Celestin use to listen through a knot hole to the great band of Claiborne Williams of Donaldsonville, one of the most popular bands in the up river parishes from New Orleans. The

**Claiborne Williams band frequently played in New Orleans and is documented as winning band contests against some of the top bands in the city.**

**Celestin, told his good friend John Curren that he was about 12 at that time and that "Claiborne heard of my great interest and asked me to come inside and listen to the band."**

**This relationship continued for a few years and he was thought of as the mascot of the Williams band, accompanying them up and down Bayou Lafourche to various jobs at Parish fairs., dances and social activities. Celestin mentions that he was close to the band, continued listening to them and "dreaming and practicing." His musical schooling must have begun with this affiliation with the Williams band. Being about twelve this time with the band must have been around 1895-1896. If it was not until 1902 when he was 18, Celestin must have borrowed or used a cornet from one of the players in the Williams band, probably receiving some tips on brass playing from the men in the band. During this time the Claiborne Williams band consisted of William Daily, Sullivan Sproul, Edward Duffy, Israel Palmer, Lawrence Hall-cornets, George Williams, Ernest Hime, Harrison Homer-trombones, Marble Gibson, Ben Bauddeurs-clarinet, Jim Williams-Tuba, Joe Walker, Buddy Curry, "Bow Legs"-drums, and Fred Landry-piano and substitute trombone. This was the St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville - Claiborne Williams the leader - around 1888-1895.**

**Curren also states that the first band Celestin played in was the Triste Band, which was sponsored by a Mr. J. C. Triste. The band that Celestin is associated with when he first arrived in New Orleans was the Jack Carey Band. This band included Mutt Carey and Punch Miller. Celestin also played with the Indiana Brass Band, the Allen Brass Band and the Olympia Brass Band before the Tuxedo Band.**

Fresh from the country Celestin came to New Orleans as an unskilled laborer and eager to play music. In his Tulane interview Cassius Wilson remember the young Celestin and the beginning of his band:

"Celestin, fresh from the country, got his start in music at the Lambeth Swells club house. He and his band, the Tuxedo, rehearsed at the club house twice a week. Celestin was just beginning to learn then - Lambeth Swells was a club like the Jolly Bunch."

The Tuxedo Band was organized around 1910 and secured work at the Tuxedo Dance Hall, located at 219 North Franklin, between Iberville and Bienville. In this band was Celestin, George Fille-trombone, Peter Bocage-violin, Manuel Manetta-piano. Soon Celestin was gaining in popularity, probably due mostly to his showmanship. He was described in an article in the Times Picayune:

"The leader of the band at the Tuxedo (Celestin) was the pride of the house. Harry Lander, Billy Van or George Evans never had anything on him in funny facial expressions or funny twists of the legs. When he led the band peopled stopped to watch his antics."

The job at the Tuxedo lasted until March 24, 1913, and came to a very abrupt end on that Easter morning at 1 am when an incident occurred that resulted in the closing down, by the police of that section near the edge of Storyville. When many of the places shut down opened again the Tuxedo did not. This was the famous shooting that included a man called Gypsy Blood. This, of course, affected Celestin's career and suddenly he was out of a job.

When the Tuxedo did not re-open after several weeks Celestin secured a job for the band at the Villa (that would

have been in April of 1913).The Villa was at 225 Franklin., across the street from the Tuxedo. (At a later date the Tuxedo was called the Villa. It is not clear as to the locations of many of the dance halls in New Orleans as they frequently moved, the owners many times renting empty halls or buildings and putting up temporary signs and promoting dances.).

Upon first arriving in New Orleans Celestin secured as daytime job as a longshoreman. With the security of a job, Celestin was free at night to take his cornet and visit the many places using music. While this young, rather naive country boy visited the various music clubs, his mind was on playing music full time. Getting to know the working musicians he got occasions to sub much the same as Louis Armstrong began. He began to sit in on the spicy jam sessions, some lasting all night. He played in the marching brass band and met and became friends to the likes of Oliver, Noone, Picou, and became a close friend of Jelly Roll Morton. He was making the rounds of the place using this new 'jazz' music. Frequent visits to Tom Anderson's and other "joints" made him friends with most of the working musicians. At Frenchman's he became a regular musician playing in the jazz sessions and was beginning to emerge as a leader of these sessions. Celestin gigged for various bands until he was ready to lead his own group.

Celestin and Bebe Ridgley had played together occasionally for a few years and Ridgley contacted Celestin and together they formed the famous Original Tuxedo Band in 1916 or 1917. They got the tuxedos by playing advertising jobs for the tailor shop for months. They wore them on every job, and there are photographs of the Tuxedo band playing in the hot July sun. They had a very successful partnership until 1925 when Celestin, Barnes and the Marrero's broke away from Ridgely and formed Celestin's Tuxedo Band. Ridgely continued to call his band the "Original Tuxedo Band." The Celestin/Ridgley band was together for about 10 years and it

was one of the most popular orchestras in New Orleans, playing for private parties and dances at the southern Yacht club, New Orleans Country Club, Antoine's Restaurant, briefly at Tranchina's and at the Boston club for Mardi Gras.

As a contemporary of John Robichaux he became familiar with Robichaux's repertoire and came into possession of a lot of his music.

Celestin did record and a listing of his recording is found in the Jazzfinder of April 1948.

In 1941 he took a job as a welder at a shipyard. In 1945 he had an auto accident and was inactive until about 1949 when he started playing at the Paddock Lounge on Bourbon St. in the French Quarter. Papa Celestin was a dignified person and, outside of his performances, he maintained a quiet solicitude. He was well-known for a dry sense of humor than was, above everything, clean.

He stated:

"I feel that I have made a wonderful mark and a wonderful success as a native born southerner. "

He always considered the river as the greatest single influence on his life, and he never missed a chance to brag about his union card as a longshoreman. But, above all else he may have loved about the river, Papa loved the memories he had of gaiety and showboats and even the singing cotton-picking times he spent as a youth around the levee.

**APPENDIX I**  
**A. J. Piron**

**Piron's Garden of Joy  
Nightclub**

**Piron Band**

**Front: Clarence Williams**

**Middle: Trepagnier, Piron, Benton, St. Cyr**

**Back: Noone, Ridgely, Celestin, Lindsey**

**From cover of sheet music**

**Cottrell, P. Bocage, Lindsey, Tio, C. Bocage  
Sequire, Lewis, Piron**

**Vaudeville Band**

**L to R - Williams, Lindsay, Noone, Ridgely**

**Seated: Celestin, Benton, St. Cyr.**

**Snare;Trepagnier, Violin: Piron**

**A. J. Piron and his Novelty Orchestra**

**A. J. Piron Orchestra-about 1925**

**L. to R. - P. Bocage, Lewis, Cottrell, Piron**

**Marrero, Warnick, Tio, Lindsay**

**Piron's Society Orchestra**

**Ysaguirre, Tio. C. Bocage, Cottrell, Piron,**

**P. Bocage, Lewis, Lindsay, Warnick**

**OSCAR "PAPA" CELESTIN**

**Celestin & Manetta**

**"Papa" Celestin**

**Original Tuxedo Jazz Band - July, 1923**

**Original Tuxedo Orchestra - cc 1928**

**Original Tuxedo Orchestra - 1924**

**Bud Scott String Band**



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### **Advertisement of March 20, 1920**

**The Original Tuxedo Orchestra pose for a picture as they play for the Gates Flying Circus exhibition - field at Audubon Park. (Jan. 18, 1924)**

**Claiborne Williams and his daughter, Bella (Mrs. James Sullivan) stand behind Claiborne's dance orchestra.**

**Two large advertisements appeared in newspapers announcing the appearance of the Piron Band. The Pelican Adv. took up over a page in the paper and the Bradley Hall Adv. was about a tenth of a page.**

**OSCAR "PAPA"  
CELESTIN  
(1884-1954)**

**ARMAND J.  
PIRON  
(1888-1943)**

**BUD  
SCOTT  
(18---19--)**

**Pops Foster told why New Orleans pianist Clarence Williams's name was on so many jazz tunes.**

**“Clarence wasn't down there too long when he and Armand Piron opened a little music store and music publishing house. I think that was around 1910 or 1912. We used to rehearse there sometimes. If you had written a number, you'd go to Clarence to write it down. He could write very fast; as fast as you could do the number, he could write it down. After he'd write it down, he'd arrange it and send it to have it copyrighted and published. Clarence always managed to cut himself in on a number. When a number was published, it would have four or five names on it. Clarence would get as much of it as he could. His name would be in two or three places and the guy who really wrote it was usually way down the line. After he got through, he had more of your number than you did. Louis Armstrong wrote 'Sister Kate' and had Clarence put it down, copyrighted and published it, and Louis never did get nothin' for it. Clarence was a real horse thief.**

