Music of the Parishes
Surrounding New Orleans:
Ascension

Musical History of Donaldsonville
& Claiborne Williams
1868 - 1952

by
Dr. Karl Koenig
DONALDSONVILLE

Donaldsonville, in the lower Mississippi Valley was first established by William Donaldson, in 1806, and as of 1813, when the legislature granted the young city its charter - one of the first municipalities created by the State of Louisiana.

Explored

Robert Cavlier de la Salle on April 9, 1682, descended to the mouth of the Mississippi River and planted a cross upon the banks of the Father of Waters, taking possession of the entire Mississippi Valley for and on behalf of his king, Louis XIV, of France. He was followed about the year 1770 by Iberville and Bienville, who visited our own Lafourche des chetimaches. The city of New Orleans was established by Bienville in 1717 and the capital of Louisiana was removed from Biloxi to that city in 1722. A few Frenchmen settled along the river above New Orleans prior to the year 1765, but the region was sparsely settled until the arrival of the Acadian exiles, who fled from the prosecution of the British after the devastation of their beloved Acadia in 1756. Seeking homes in the midst of their kith and kin, they began arriving here about 1766 and continued coming until 20 years thereafter. The Spanish Government was in control of Louisiana at this time and its officials generously aided and assisted the exiles in finding new homes on the vacant lands in what is now Ascension and St. James Parishes, as well as in other parts of the state. These two parishes were later known as the county of Acadia in memory of their homeland. The local settlement is referred to in numerous ancient documents as the New Establishment of Acadians at Lafourche. A resident priest of the Roman Catholic Church, Father Reuillagodos, located here on August 15, 1772, and established a small church among the Acadians. He called his church 'The Ascension Parish,' a name it has borne to this day. The church was enlarged in 1781. His parishioners consisted of the Acadian exiles who had been despoiled of all of her property in their native land. Among the Acadian exiles to whom the Spanish government had granted lands on which to settle, we find that the tract on the right bank of the Mississippi River below the Laf. was granted to Pierre Landry in 1775. He died in 1805 and on Feb. 10, 1806, his widow, Mrs. Marquerite Allein, sold to William Donaldson, a young merchant of New Orleans, the land that he had acquired from the Spanish Government for $12,000 cash. The improvement on this property consisted of a dwelling elevated on brick pillars, 6 feet measuring 36 x 18 feet, with front and rear galleries; a store 22 x 12 feet, with front and rear galleries; a kitchen 20 x 12 feet, with front and rear galleries; a pigeonier; a Negro cabin and an old corn crib. The cultivable land consisted of 40 arpents.

At the time that Donaldson invested in this tract of land Thomas Jefferson was President of the United States, the vast Louisiana territory had just come under the folds of the Stars and Stripes; our state had not been admitted to the Union, W. C. Claiborne was governor of Orleans territory; pirogues and stage lines were the most convenient mode of transportation; no steamboats had ever sailed on the bosom of the Father of Waters; no railroads were in existence in Louisiana; the automobiles, electric lights, telephone, radio and airplanes had not been dreamed of, and New Orleans was a small city of 12,000 souls.
We know but little of the life of William Donaldson prior to his coming to Ascension Parish. He appears to have been a member of the House of Representatives of Orleans territory. A correspondent in the courier (New Orleans) of Jan. 1, 1808, describes him as the 'youthful Donaldson' who was then a member of the board of directors of the Louisiana band who was never absent 'when his own aper had to pass,' and as a person of 'well-known eloquence.

Immediately on purchasing the Pierre Landry farm he had it subdivided into city lots, naming the streets for each of the countries of old Louisiana, and in the Louisiana Gazette (New Orleans) of June 27, 1806, we find him advertising as follows:

"Fourche, 21st June, 1806, the subscriber begs leave to inform the public that on Monday, the 7th July, he shall commence the sale of lots in the town of Donaldson, new establishing at the entrance of the Fourche.

The plan of the town may be seen at his house on the premises and also at his residence in New Orleans, where the price and conditions of sale will be made know. William Donaldson."

On Sept. 14, 1806, he donated the site for the first town hall and constructed thereon a building 40 x 50 feet in depth at his own expense. In 1810, he donated to the county of Acadia the squares on which the elementary school, courthouse, jail and playground are now located.

He was associated with John W. Scott, a prominent citizen of Old Ascension, who, with Donaldson, owned several plantations near the present site of Burnside. In the Louisiana Gazette (New Orleans) of Oct. 25, 1807, we note that he was operating a sawmill at Manchas, "where a quantity of boards and seantling deliverable on the levee opposite the mill are offered for sale on reasonable terms."

Progressive city-builder that he was, Donaldson realized the importance of adequate postal facilities, and on June 17, 1808, succeeded in having Donaldson Town established - the only post office on the Mississippi River for 190 miles above New Orleans. Our city has a post office but what about the mails? It appears that the carriers operated at very infrequent intervals for in the Courier (New Orleans) of March 9, 1808. We read:

"An express will leave this city for Natchitechis (via Lafourche on Thursday next, the 16th inst., at 6 o'clock a.m.)"

His influence in legislative matters may be inferred from the fact that he had the House of Representatives adopt a resolution in March, 1808, to remove the seat of government to a village on the Mississippi about 100 miles above New Orleans evidently Donaldson town.

For some reason unknown to us the name of the post office was changed in 1908 to Lafourche and it so remained until 1822. It may be that during these years the post office was not located within the city of Donaldson. The first charter of the Ville de Donaldson was granted by the Legislature on March 25, 1813. Under this charter the affairs of the town were administered by 5 administrators to be elected on the first
Monday of June of each year, which body was authorized to force every person over 16 years and under 60 years to work on the streets of the town provided that no person could be forced to work more than seven days in each year. Unfortunately we do not know the names of these first city officials.

Another charter was granted the city on March 7, 1823, being the 2nd charter of the city of Donaldson. The charter of 1823 provides for the election each year of 5 municipal officers or trustees who would elect, from their own number, a president of the board of trustees. Again unfortunately we do not know the names of these city officials.

In 1812 there were 82 votes cast in the town of Donaldson while in 1823 the town is described as follows: "Donaldsonville now has from 30 to 40 houses and a population of from 150 to 200." Brooke's Gazetteer describes it:

"Donaldsonville, post town and seat of justice of the parish of Ascension, Louisiana. It stands on the point formed by the Mississippi and the efflux of Lafourche river, below the latter; contains 30 or 40 houses, and from 150 to 200 inhabitants; 81 miles above New Orleans."


In 1880 Wm. Donaldson Was referred to as "the youthful Donaldson." He departed his life in the city of New Orleans on Nov. 27, 1813. It appears that he was married but once, and then to Colgate Van Pradelles, and that he left no descendants. He was survived by his widow, and it further appears that she later married a Mr. Moore, and resided at Liberty, Texas. She died between Oct. 13, 1845, and Jan. 19, 1846, leaving all her property to her two nieces and adopted daughters. In the will of Wm. Donaldson, dated August 23, 1813, and written by Edward Livingston, he constituted his wife his universal heir. It is my impression that he left a comparatively small estate; the exact place of his burial in the city of New Orleans is unknown to us.

Prior to his death Donaldson offered the legislature the entire square in the city of Donaldson bound by Cehahanoce St. (Railroad Avenue), Opelousas, Claiborne and Houmas Streets. In 1825, the legislature authorized the construction of a state house building on this site. This structure was occupied, under reservation, by the legislature in Jan. 1830, the Courier (New Orleans) of Jan. 9, 1830 reported:

"On Monday last the two Houses formed a quorum. The Senate met in a tavern, and the House of Rep. in the court room of the parish of Ascension. After having
inspected the Government palace, the two houses were of opinion that it could not be received, and determined not to sit there, but Mr. Peytavin, the undertaker of the building, having agreed not to consider the occupation of it by the General Assembly, as a taking possession, they met on Wednesday in the rooms respectively assigned to each house."

On Sept. 23, 1830, it was resolved by a meeting of citizens here to solicit subscriptions to complete the state house, and to cover the roof with canvas. While Donaldson was having difficulty in completing the state house, the news papers of Baton Rouge and New Orleans were clamoring for its removal from its location here. The Legislature again met at Donaldson on Jan. 3, 1831, but on the 6th a bill was passed and approved by the Governor removing the Capital to New Orleans.

In 1830 the population of Donaldson was 492, of whom 261 were white, 76 free person of color, and 155 slaves.

In 1840 the inhabitants of Faubourgs Lessard and Conway, adjoining the village of Donaldson, were incorporated into a municipality known as Unionville. Several years thereafter Unionville was merged into Donaldsonville.

On August 9, 1862, the greater portion of the town was destroyed in a bombardment by the fleet of Admiral Farragut. Under date of August 1862, Admiral Farragut reported to Secretary of the Navy as follows:

"Sir - I regret to inform the department that at the town of Donaldsonville they have pursued a uniform practice of firing upon our steamers passing up and down the river. I sent a message to the inhabitants that if they did not discontinue this practice, I would destroy their town. The last time I passed up to Baton Rouge in support of the army, I anchored about a mile from Donaldson and heard them fire upon our vessels coming up. In the latter case they made a mistake, and it was so quickly returned that they ran away. The next night they fired upon the St. Charles. I therefore ordered them to send their women and children out of town, as I certainly intended to destroy it on my way down the river, and I fulfilled my promise to a certain extent.

I burnt down the hotels and wharf buildings; also the dwelling house and other buildings of a Mr. Philip Landry, who is said to be a captain of guerrillas. He fired upon our men, but they chased him off. We also brought off 10 or 12 of his Negroes, and supplied ourselves with cattle and sheep from his place."

The confederates made a bloody assault upon "Fort Butler at the head of Bayou Lafourche on June 28, 1863, and fought from 2 a.m. to daylight. The Federal reported that 350 Confederates were killed or wounded."

Up to 1869 the ferry service at Donaldsonville consisted of a small flat boat which was towed by skiffs. In 1871, the 'Little Minnie' a small tug, operated as a ferry, and we have had steam ferries ever since. Train service began operating between New Orleans and Donaldsonville in 1871. The Donaldsonville Chief of Oct. 21, 1871, rejoices that 'every day at ten minutes before 12 o'clock the whistle of the locomotive pervades the air, and we are reminded of the pleasant fact that we can receive news from New Orleans only 4 hours old.' Several years thereafter the railroad was extended as far as White Castle, and in August 1881, it became possible to travel by rail to Baton Rouge and return to Donaldsonville the same day. This was the occasion for quite a celebration.
The first telephone lines reached Donaldsonville in Sept. 1883, and an office was opened in the old Robt. E. Lee Hotel in Crescent Place. The Donaldsonville Chief was delighted to note that our citizens 'will be able to talk to each other and to New Orleans by means of the wonderful speaking telegraph.'

In 1888 the city was illuminated by 50 coal-oil street lamps while private individuals supplied 10 additional lights, and in 1890, 20 additional street lamps were installed. James Jones, colored lamplighter, whose face was wreathed in smiles at all times, made his rounds on his pony every evening for the purpose of illuminating the city.

The streets of the city were of the good old dirt and mud variety up until 1905, and the Police Jury adopted an ordinance in 1895 requiring all carts, wagon, etc., to drive in a zigzag fashion on the roads of the parish in order to keep from cutting ruts therein. In 1898 an empty wagon was wrecked in the mud in Railroad Avenue, and in the same year we boasted of 1050 electric lights in the city.

Bayou Lafourche

That part of Southern Louisiana between Donaldsonville and the Gulf of Mexico, embracing a strip of territory about 125 miles long and half mile wide and populated by one of the few remaining French Creole population, are one of the most picturesque spots in America and a most delightful place to spend a vacation in either winter or summer. Bayou Lafourche is an old split of the Mississippi River, rising above the swamps of southern Louisiana and flowing roughly parallel to the Mississippi for a distance of about 125 miles into the Gulf. The Country through which the Bayou Lafourche flows is composed largely of swamps and marshes, which extend to within a half mile or less bayou, leaving a narrow strip of fertile land along either side of its bands, which is a continuous village populated by planters, fisherman, trappers and farmers, this area mostly composed of small farmers where other Louisiana areas constitute large plantations. The soil along the bayou is extremely fertile and carried on 12 months of the year, with onions and potatoes the chief crop, along with orange and bananas. The swamps contain shrimp and crawfish and trapping is carried out with the swamp containing mini otter, raccoon and muskrat.

The commerce of this section is carried on largely by water transportation, small boats plying on the bayou and numerous canals through Lake Salvador to the Mississippi and thence to New Orleans. The old style stern wheeler freight boat is one of many such craft used in this section, similar to the kind plying on the Mississippi a half century ago, which Mark Twain immortalized. Smaller boats also are much used along the bayou having launches which are constantly used for both business and pleasure.

The scenery along the Bayou Lafourche both natural and man made, in most picturesque. Wild flowers and foliage grow in profusion, and the bit of the road alone the bayou bounced on one side by a levee covered with wild Cherokee roses, and on the other by a luxuriant growth of the magnolia trees draped with Spanish moss, is a typical example of the scenery in this section. Many colonial mansions survivals of the old Souty, are found along these flower bedecked roads, presenting a scene which looks as if it might have stepped from out the pages of a nature magazine. These mansions are still used as residences, were constructed by ancestors of the present owners. Most of these
old mansions were built of brick and stucco, and will be in good repair for many years to come.

The people living along the Bayou Lafourche, like their surroundings, are most picturesque. Scions of a sturdy Creole stock, they can in many cases trace their ancestry back through two centuries to the days when their for-fathers left the shores of France to become hardy pioneers in Louisiana, the French empire of the West, at that time not the present small state, but a vast dominion which extended from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great lakes and embraced the fertile section which comprise the Middle West and Northwestern states.

The traditions and ideals of two centuries ago are found today in the simple-minded unassuming, hospitable folks who live along the banks of the Bayou Lafourche. The manner is a charming blend of the courtesy and hospitality of the old south and the gallantry and gentility of France. The latch-string of their home hangs on the outside for every stranger, and they are both hurt and offended should he offer to pay for food or lodging. How well they have clung to the manner and customs of their forefathers is shown by percent of the people speaking English, except when necessary. There are fine school houses and liberal education along the Bayou Lafourche but only for about the last ten years has English been taught in them.

The entertainment and social affairs of the people along the Bayou Lafourche are as simple and enjoyable as their other customs. Almost every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night throughout the year there are dances in pavilions along the Bayou which are attended by all throughout the countryside who care to go for social cliques The French custom of chaperoning girls and unmarried young women is strictly observed, and they never appear in public unless accompanied by an elder relative, even though escorted by a fiancée. On Sunday afternoons prize fights and wrestling matches often are staged, and liberally patronized. These affairs are usually staged for the benefit of the local church with the approval of the priest of the community, most of the people along the Bayou Lafourche being Catholics.

Such in brief, is the picturesque bit of southern Louisiana. It is a simple peaceful God-fearing community, much like the peasants of Acadia enshrined in Longfellow's 'Evangeline.' One can not stroll through the dense weeds of that section without recalling 'This is the forest primeval, the murmuring pines and hemlocks.' And always comes the recollection it was here in southern Louisiana Evangeline and Gabriel torn apart on the eve of their wedding started on the long search for each other.

**MUSIC IN DONALDSONVILLE**

Our earliest entry of music in Donaldsonville is in the Jan. 6, 1871 'Chief.' It is an article on the celebration of the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and speaks of 'martial music.'

"Procession and Mass Meeting New Year's Day.

In accordance with previous announcements there was a large mass meeting held in this town last Monday, New Year's Day, for the purpose of celebrating the anniversary of the issuance of the Proclamation of Emancipation by President Lincoln."
About 12 o'clock noon, a procession headed by martial music and displaying several flags and banners, commenced marching about town, regardless of the muddy conditions of the streets, and after two hours tramping filed into the M. E. Church, on Houma Street, filling the church to its utmost capacity and crowding many persons out." (Jan. 6th, 1871)

Donaldsonville was a very culturally active community in the late nineteenth century. So numerous were the dances and the bands that the town council felt compelled to regulate them by ordinance.

"Charter II, Balls: Section 19: Be it ordained that it shall not be lawful for any person to give or hold any masked or other public ball, or any party where licentious or disorderly person may congregate, on penalty of a fine of $150.00." (Sept. 23, 1871)

"Charter XIII - Drums - An ordinance to prohibit the beating of drums. Be it ordained that no drum shall be beaten in town, except on occasion of military and society parades. Every person violating this ordinance shall be fined $5.00." (Sept. 23, 1871)

Charter - Itinerant musicians, mountebanks, etc. An ordinance relative to Section 85 - Be it ordained that it shall not be lawful for any perambulating musician, mountebank, organ grinder or player of any other kind of instrument to practice their profession without having previously obtained from the Mayor a permit to that effect, under the penalty of a fine not exceeding $5.00 for each contravention." (Sept. 30, 1871)

1872

Beginning in the January 2nd paper we read two items about the Donaldsonville Silver cornet Band and the Ascension Brass Band. We find that the Ascension Brass Band was organized in 1870:

"The ladies and gentlemen who had been invited to assist at the coming Fair for the benefit of the D. S. C. B. Association met at the Hall last Sunday for the purpose of arranging necessary preliminaries to the entertainment. The assemblage was quite a large one, indicating the success of the projected Fair, and the proceedings were eminently satisfactory to all concerned. The band appeared upon the gallery of the Hall after the business of the meeting was over and played several airs."

"On Saturday, the 31st inst., the members of the Ascension Brass Band will give their Second Anniversary Hop, at the spacious residence of Mrs. A. Gingry, corner of Railroad Avenue and Claiborne Street. The dainty invitations have just been issued, and the party promises to be quite an elegant and recherche affair. It is now two years since the formation of the Ascension Band, and during that time the organization has steadily increased its popularity until it has become quite a universal favorite with the people of our parish." (Jan. 2nd.)
The Silver Cornet Band plays on board the steamer Henry Tete as they drift down to New Orleans:

"Excursion - The steamer Henry Tete advertises to leave Donaldsonville at 8 o'clock to-morrow morning, arrive in New Orleans at five in the evening, and start upon her return trip at 5 P. M. Tuesday evening. This arrangement is made for the especial accommodation of those who wish to visit New Orleans to witness the firemen parade on Monday, March 4th, and will no doubt be taken advantage of by a large number of people. We learn that the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band will be on board, and their music will add greatly to the pleasure and hilarity of the occasion. The passage for the round trip is placed at the remarkably low figure of five dollars for each person." (March 2nd.)

The paper reports of the success of the above excursion in the March 9th paper:

"The party of excursionists who went down to New Orleans on the splendid coast steamer Henry Tete last Sunday and returned Tuesday night, or rather Wednesday morning, had a splendid time, and will long remember the trip as a pleasant episode in their lives. A combination of genial and attentive officers, superior accommodations and swift running powers serve to make the Tete an extremely popular boat, and a trip up on her at any time is a pleasure, consequently pre-eminently so when there is an excursion party on board with a splendid cornet band. (The D.S.C.B.) Upon her return Wednesday morning, the Tete made her first run of the season down Bayou Lafourche, and will her-after make two trips a week between Thibodaux or Lockport and New Orleans." (March 9th.)

The Catholic Church used brass bands in their many religious processions and ceremonies and many times sponsored these bands as part of the church activity:

"The Catholic Procession. - The procession which paraded the principal streets of town last Sunday afternoon in commemoration of the anniversary of the Corpus Christi festival was quite large in point of numbers and .......and attractive in appearance, was headed by the Ascension Brass band, which discoursed sacred music in fine style, adding much to the interest of the occasion. Following in the wake of the band cam numbers of young ladies, each." (June 8th.) (Sic: The article is hard to read in its entirety due to deterioration.)

There is another article associating the Catholic Church with brass bands and music. The instruments of the brass band are blessed in an interesting church ceremony:

"Interesting Ceremony at the Catholic Church. The ceremony of blessing the instruments just received by the new church band, or St. Cecile Philharmonic society, which was performed at the Catholic Church in this town last Sunday evening, was interesting and beautiful as the large concourse of people who witnessed it will attest. An admission fee of 25 cents was charged, but in spite of this the large church was filled with
spectators. The exercises consisted of a short address in French from one of the attendant priests of the church; music by the St. Mary-Jefferson College band, which had been invited expressly for the occasion; singing by the choir; blessing of the instruments by Father Cuppens and presenting them then to the members of the Philharmonic society. We can not close our notice of this ceremony without referring briefly to the St. Mary-Jefferson College band, whose excellent music contributed so much to the interest of the occasion. The playing of this band, which numbers some twenty members - all students of the College from whence the organization derives its name - is really fine, and denotes careful and systematic training under an accomplished musician. We opine the members of the band will not soon forget their visit to Donaldsonville, for they were most cordially received and royally feted during their stay of nine hours, they having arrived here on the cars Sunday noon and departed aboard the steamboat W. S. Pike about 9 o'clock in the evening. They were entertained at the residence of the priests of the Ascension Church during the afternoon. When the ceremony which they had come to attend was concluded and an excellent supper had been served them, the band proceeded to the residence of Mr. Chas. F. Smith, whom they serenaded, and were invited in to discuss a few bottles of sparkling champagne. From thence they went to the wharf to await the arrival of the Pike, but received and accepted an invitation from Mr. Marx Israel to spend the intervening time at his house, whence they repaired and whiled away a pleasant hour, discoursing fine music and receiving the generous hospitality of the host in the hope of good things to eat and drink." (July 6th.)

We continually read of a style of amusement called 'the entertainment.' In the era's terms, an entertainment was like a variety show with the band playing music, tableau by local citizens, vocal and instrumental solos. We read of such an activity by the ladies of the church:

"Concert at the D.S.C.B. Hall.

The concert and tableau entertainment given at the D.S.C.B. Hall by the ladies of the Church Aid Society Thursday night was successful in attracting a large audience of appreciative spectators, the spacious hall being just comfortably crowded. Commencing at 8 o'clock, the entertainment continued until 2 in the morning, and the beautiful tableaux, splendid music, fine singing, etc., held the marked attention of the audience to the last. The programme was carried out in the most satisfactory manner, no mistake being made, showing careful preparation beforehand. The state was nicely fitted up for display of the tableaux, and this, combined with the rich costumes of the performers, served to make these portions of the entertainment indeed beautiful and interesting. Two intermissions of twenty minutes each, gave the spectator's opportunity to visit the refreshment tables spread in the yard adjoining the hall, and reel themselves with the dainty eatables there exposed, and they were not at all slow to take advantage of these occasions. After the conclusion of the entertainment in the hall, a supper was spread for the members of the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet and Ascension Brass Bands, and discoursed by those gentlemen with considerable relish. In justice to these two organizations it must be said that their music was an indispensable feature of the occasion, bringing forth many bursts of applause, and serving to prevent the audience
from becoming wearied during the intermission between the tableaux. Both bands acquitted themselves with great credit, and the community has just reason to be proud of them. We have already paid compliment to the excellent management of the affair by the ladies of the Church Aid Society, and we think their labors were rewarded beyond their expectations, for a handsome sum must have been realized for the benefit of their church. To give those of our readers not present some idea of the rich treat afforded the lucky ones who did attend, we append the programme:

Part First - Overture, **Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band.**
Tableau 1st, Rebecca at the Well
Duet, *Zampa,* Mrs. M Israel & Mr. W Klopman
Music by **Ascension Brass Band**
Tableau 2d, *Mary Stuart;* Sec. 1st
Mary Stuart Distributing her jewels to her Maids of Honor; Sec. 2d, Execution of Mary Stuart.
Song, *La Reine de Chypre,* Mrs. L. D. LeBlanc
Music by **Silver Cornet Band**
Tableau 3d, *The Old Maids’ Tea Party*
Duet, Misses Hanson
Music by **Brass Band**
Tableau 4th, Roman Mother showing her Jewels
Music by **Silver Cornet Band**
Intermission
Part Second - Music by **Brass Band**
Tableau 5th, Night and Morning.
Song, *Linda di Chamoni,* Miss Sharp
Music by **Silver Cornet Band**
Tableau 6th, Preparing for Christmas.
Duet, *Barbier de Seville,* Misses Bradford.
Music by **Brass Band**
Tableau 7th, Exile of Siberia.
Song, Misses Kittredge.
Music by **Silver Cornet Band**
**Tableau 8th, Lament for Hinda**
Song, *Charles VI,* Mrs. L. D. LeBlanc
Intermission
Part Third. - Music by **Silver Cornet Band.**
Tableau 10th, The Tempter and the Tempted.
Music by **Brass Band.**
Tableau 11th, Amy Robsart and Leicester.
Piano solo, *La Somnambula,* Mrs. M. Israel.
Music by **Brass Band**
Tableau 12th, Faith, Hope and Charity: Peace, Despair and Gratitude.
Grand March, **Silver Cornet Band.**” (July 13, 1872)
The ladies of the church Aid Society sponsored a concert at Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band (DSCB) Hall that included selections by the Silver Cornet Band and a group
listed as just "the Brass Band." The program makes a distinction between these two groups but doesn't give the name of the "Brass Band." (July 13th)

As was the usual procedure a visiting entertainment group gives a benefit for the Silver Cornet Band:

"It was not a matter of surprise to anyone that the performance given at the D.S.C.B. Hall last Saturday evening, by the Crisp Theatrical Troupe, for the benefit of the Silver Cornet Band, was attended by a large audience, embracing many ladies, for the universal popularity of the band always brings out our people in force to any entertainment given in their honor. The beautiful drama of "Lady of the Lake" was well rendered by the troupe, and brought forth many hearty expressions of admiration, while the amusing burlesque of "Pocahontas" proved a source of much merriment. Mr. Crisp being called in front of the curtain by the audience, delivered a neat little farewell address, in which he returned thanks to the gentlemen of the band for their aid and encouragement, and said that, though not remunerative, the brief sojourn of the troupe in this place had been very pleasant and would always prove a gratifying reminiscence to them, individually and collectively. A short time after the conclusion of the performance, the Silver Cornet Band repaired, in the lovely moonlight, to the Magnolia House, where they gave Mr. Crisp and his fair daughters and accomplished wife a parting serenade." (July 13th.)

In the program of the previous mentioned celebration of the emancipation, a Mr. Pierre Landry is named as the chairman of the gathering. He again speaks at a picnic for the Century Second Union Band Society, a society that was organized at the Emancipation gathering:

"A picnic was given by the Century Second Union Band society at Mr. James Citizen's place, a short distance down the bayou, last Saturday, which was largely attended by old and young peopled of both sexes, and proved to be a most pleasant and successful entertainment. Refreshments were served in bountiful profusion, and the younger people amused themselves and all the other with numerous games and sports. Addresses were made by C. N. Lewis, Pierre Landry, C. Hunt and C. Bryant, and were warmly received by the audience. Not a single incident occurred to mar the perfect harmony, and all who attended went away improved by the social intercourse with their fellows. Such entertainments are productive of nothing but good feeling in a community, and can hardly occur too often." (August 10th.)

Donaldsonville was a very musical town and had town bands that could and did play for dancing and other social activities. However, even in Donaldsonville it was necessary to import bands, not only for dances but other activities such as political affairs:

"Kellogg mass meeting (governor candidate) music by Kelly's Band of Custom House employees." (Oct. 19th.)
In the November 9th paper is written "there was 'music in the air' Tuesday evening, for the three bands of which our town boasts all held meetings for the purpose of practicing upon their 'toot horns.'" These bands were: The Silver Cornet, The Ascension Brass Band, and The St. Cecile Brass Band. For a town the size of Donaldsonville, this attests to the resident's appreciation and need of music.

1873-74

The Ascension band, a band sponsored by the Catholic Church, also plays serenades to the delight of some of their friends and supporters. To begin the year the band play serenades for a number of citizens:

"It was our pleasure to accompany the Ascension Brass Band upon an extended serenading tour about town and vicinity Monday night. A number of well known residents were serenaded. Several of the citizens serenaded invited the members of the band to partake of liquid refreshments, which were quite acceptable to the musicians, for long continued blowing of their instruments was dry work. The Ascension Band displays marked improvement of late, and under the direction of its able leader, Mr. Leon Lacroix, will take rank as a first class musical organization. The band has many friends and admirers, among whom we are nothing both to reckon ourselves." (Jan. 4, 1873)

The size and make-up of the band playing for a dance depended on the importance and the size of the dance. Large dances sponsored by the many social societies often had large bands, either brass or string, (which usually contained some strings along with wind instruments such as cornets), Smaller balls might have just a piano, or piano and a few other instruments such as a violin and cornet:

"Calico Ball at DSCB Hall - the music was excellent, being a harmonious blending of the tones of piano and violin, each instrument manipulated by experienced players." (Jan. 18, 1873)

In the Feb. 9th paper we read that "the three bands are practicing with might and main, in anticipation of the coming fairs, at which we may expect a feast of music among the other attractions."

On Sunday, June 15, 1873, there was a Catholic Anniversary of the Fete de Dieu, and was to be celebrated by a procession "led by the St. Cecile Band, and the St. Mary-Jefferson College Band of St. James." (May 31, 1873) This procession did not take place due to bad weather.

In 1874 the town was very active, this activity appearing in the section of this book dealing with the popular town bands. (Sic: See text beginning o page 314.) There are private parties not using the larger musical ensembles and are held in private homes. Mrs. Gingry, a name we will be repeating, has a 'hop' at her residence. It is pointed out that the hop will be the last until after the Lenten season, emphasizing the point that social activities lessened during the religious season of Lent:
"The hop given at Mrs. Gingry's residence last Saturday night, was a very nice affair. Though not so largely attended as the second anniversary hop of the 31st of January, there were just a sufficient number of guests present to make the enjoyment perfect, and with good music, good humor and good dancing the hours slipped pleasantly away with all. Doubtless these hops will be revived after the Lenten season has passed." (Feb. 21, 1874)

1875

Donaldsonville seems to be, after much reading and talking to people who lived there, a town that was at peace with itself and its citizens, both white, black and Creole. There was little segregation, with white, black and Creole living on the same street, next to and across from each other and, indeed, citizens such as Claiborne Williams very early voted for town offices in all elections. We can read from the various items in the paper that the town was proud of its citizenship and encouraged activities of each portion. The music of all was welcome and their activities supported and encouraged. Thus we have an active town, and excursions often visited Donaldsonville:

"About 200 colored people arrived here on last Saturday's train, being members and friends of the St. Francis Benevolent Association of New Orleans. Procuring the use of the DSCB Hall and grounds, they had a nice time generally Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. The outdoor amusements consisted of baseball and foot racing, partaking of refreshments brought along in baskets, and promenading about town. In the Hall there was dancing, and at night a grand ball took place which lasted until dawn Sunday morning. Kelly's Custom-House Band was with the picnic party and furnished excellent music. The excursionists returned to the city by Sunday's train, seemingly pleased with their visit to Donaldsonville." (June 26th.)

An interesting short article appears in the New Orleans Republican mentioning "country brass bands":

"The column in the New Orleans Republican which is devoted to short editorial items of a miscellaneous character would seem a dreary waste without the facetious references to "country brass bands" and "musical contests in the rural districts" that appear with almost daily regularity. If the Republican's funny man could develop half the capacity and wind for blowing on brass instruments that he does in blowing about them, he would be a valuable acquisition to any band." (July 6th.)

The town ordinances written about earlier were also an attempt at controlling the atmosphere of certain dances - dances where many times might be trouble such as fights and killings. We read about one such incident:

"Ball given by colored people at McCall Plantation. A stabbing took place." (Sept. 9)
One of the new band bands in town was the Conway Field Band. It plays for a political affair:

"Meeting and torch light procession in 2, 6, & 5 wards. In the 5th ward: 'Headed by the excellent Conway Field Band, the procession moved down to the Riverton place and then counter-marched, coming up as far as Bringier's Hermitage place." (Sept. 30th.)

The formation of brass bands was much like the movement of today's youth in forming small rock and roll bands. One such brass band is organized in Smoke Bend:

"A fair and exhibition will be held today, and tomorrow the Smoke Bend School-house - 2nd Ward, for the benefit of a brass band, composed of young colored men, just organized in that neighborhood." (Sic: to be called the Excelsior Brass Band.) (Oct. 7th.)

1876

During the year we read about some of the bands that come to the area and perform. We had earlier read about the Kelly Band from Custom House. The Kelly Band again plays in the area along with the St. Joseph Brass Band, a band that we will become a major force in local music - see pages 185:

"Visit of Packard Campaign to parishes - It should not be overlooked that an important factor in the proceedings of the day was the excellent music furnished by Kelly's Brass Band of New Orleans, which accompanied the Packard campaign party on their visit to the river parishes during the fort-night preceding the election. The St. Joseph and Conway Bands also deserve honorable mention for their valuable and gratuitous services." (Nov. 11th.)

We read of many other bands playing in the area, many without having their names mentioned:

"A large party of colored excursionists from New Orleans visited Donaldsonville per special train last Saturday. They were accompanied by an excellent brass band and most of the party put in the greater portion of their time dancing in the DSCB Hall, which had been engaged for the occasion." (June 9th.)

Along with the Smoke Bend Band (colored), another band was organized at the Crevasse Settlement:

"A musical spirit pervades the colored youth of this parish. A brass band was recently organized at Crevasse Settlement and another in Smoke Bend, while still another is spoken of in Donaldsonville. The organization first named has purchased instruments and Albert Vives, leader of the St. Joseph Band is giving the members elementary instructions in the art of horn blowing." (April 7th.)
1877

The Excelsior Brass Band of Smoke Bend gives a concert and fair:

"A concert and fair will be given at Dr. W. H. Ballard's plantation today and tomorrow for the benefit of the Excelsior Band of Smoke Bend. The money realized will be devoted to the purchase of instruments for the band." (March 3rd.)

A number of minstrel shows visited the town in the area of Donaldsonville. The Waverly Minstrels of New Orleans is cited by the paper for a visit to be given at the DSCB Hall. (March 3rd) This hall was purchased by the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band which used it for rehearsals and rented it out to visiting entertainments. The band is in the process of disbanding, selling their instruments and the notation in the paper tells as the "DSCB Hall was sold to Mr. Charles Gecks (a member of the band) for $1650.00." At the end of the year (Dec. 25th) the Blue Bucket Hall is used by the Eureka Benevolent Association for a ball. (Dec. 25th.)

1878

We read of a band called the Crescent Band, a band that plays for the funeral of Mr. Simon Braud. We read that: "The funeral took place Wednesday morning, and the Ascension Hook & Ladder Company, of which deceased was an honorary members, escorted the remains to the Catholic cemetery, led by the Crescent Band." (May 11th.)

The intensity of the rivalry of nearby town bands comes to a climax with a band contest. We read:

"Fete Champetre for Catholic Church....Besides the Baton Rouge and Donaldsonville Firemen and Bands, there will be bands in attendance from Bayou Goula, Thibodaux, Plaquemine and other towns. At 5:00 tomorrow evening there will be a contest for a gold medal to be awarded to the band furnishing the finest music. The Friends of the DSCB express great confidence in the ability of that organization to carry off the honors of the contest." (May 29th.)

1879

There are two entries in 1897-80 about the Excelsior Band that remains active:

"Mass meeting - Republican 4th & 6th Wards - 1st Ward Adlard Laundry School House - The Excelsior Brass Band was present and its fine music did much to attract the large assemblage of people (Oct. 4th.)

1880

The Crescent Brass Band (a colored band) plays for an entertainment:
"Entertainment - An enjoyable entertainment was given at the Blue Basket Hall last Saturday evening, for the benefit of the Nazarene Baptist church. The programme consisted of an overture by the Crescent Brass Band: song - "I will sing a song," by all the performers." (Jan. 3rd.)

We find an advertisement for a Grand Ball given by the Centennial String Band and the Phoenix Fire Co for a series of 'Grand Balls.' (Jan. 3rd.

The Centennial String Band plays for a grand masquerade ball:

"THE MASQUERADE BALL - One short month, on the rapid spindle of time, will soon wind itself away, then the Lenten season will have expired; then the coteries of Terpsichore will once more be joyous, whilst those who are blessed with the gift of Proheus may attune their lyres, strike the strings and let their euphonious melody go forth to gladden the hearts of all. And, seemingly, the members of the Centennial String Band are aware of the desire of our mirth loving denizens, as they have settled upon the third day of April to give a grand fancy dress and masquerade ball, as will be seen by reference to our advertising columns. The Centennial String Band is comprised of some of the best citizens of our parish, and it is but natural to suppose the ball will be a pleasant and properly managed one. We bespeak for it the success it justly merits."(Feb. 21st.)

Donaldsonville was the location of a military group called the "Cannoneers of Cofield Battery, Donaldsonville." We read an account of one of their activities:

"Cofield's Battery Cornet Band was out on a serenading expedition Sunday evening. It was by no means such 'a starry night for a ramble ' as the familiar song describes, for the darkness was nify and the rain poured down in artful showers, but the boys rambled nevertheless, and had a barrel of fun. They began by serenading Captain Jones and Lieutenants Klopman, LaFargue, and Earhart, whom they surprised at the Lee Hotel, and a jolly crowd soon formed, composed of representatives of both our local military companies, reinforced by Col. A. J. Bachemin of the Orleans Artillery, who opportunity returned from a trip down Bayou Lafourche. Presently the entire party took up a line of march for the residence of Captain R. Propser Landry of the Cannoneers, where, after music by the band, all were invited to enter and partake of liquid cheer. Nearly an hour was spent in speech-making and toast-drinking, interspersed with music, when the party moved on to the quarters of Orderly Sergeant Beatley of Cofield's Battery, who was honored with a serenade that he highly appreciated. Mine host LeFevre of the City Hotel was next assaulted, and capitulated in his usual handsome and pleasant way. A short time was agreeably spent at Monsieur LeFevre's cozy house, and then the Serenaders returned to the Lee, where the remainder of the better half of the night was whiled away with instrumental music, chin music, mirth and jollity galore. The new band was heartily congratulated upon its organization, and Lieutenant Klopman, with the princely generosity which always characterizes him, volunteered to procure a new set of instruments at once to facilitate the progress of the members, leaving the question of refunding to him the money thus expended for future consideration. Besides the members of the band and officers of Cofield's Battery, Surgeon John E. Duffel, Lieuts. Jno. T.
Nolan and L. A. Landry, and Orderly Sergeant J. Tras. Landry of the Cannoneers of Donaldsonville participated in the 'doings' of this merry party of Serenaders, and contributed by their presence the hearty enjoyment of the occasion." (March 13th.)

The Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association hold an entertainment using the Centennial String and the Independence Brass Bands:

As might have been expected, the musical and dramatic entertainment given at Phoenix Hall, last Saturday evening, under the auspices of the L.H.B.A., attracted a full house, and the audience was as satisfactory in all other particulars. The programme included overtures by the Centennial String and Independent Brass Bands. After the performance the hall was cleared and the young folks enjoyed themselves a while." (April 17th.)

As with other bands, the Centennial String Band holds a ball for their benefit:

"THE CENTENNIAL BALL - Want of space prevented us from noticing, in our last issue, the brilliant ball given by the Centennial String Band, at Phoenix Hall on the 3rd inst. The attendance was large and select, and the affair afforded much enjoyment to all who participated. There were only a few maskers, and this feature of the entertainment was not very prominent, but it was amply compensated for in other particulars. To the splendid and inspiriting music furnished by the Centennial Band the merry throng kept moving in the mystic mazes of the dance until the gray tinge of the eastern horizon gave warning of the approach of the orb of the day. The refreshment tables on the lower floor of the building were quite freely patronized, and were an interesting adjunct of the more ethereal pleasure of the ball room. While the financial result of the entertainment was scarcely as large as was hoped, the members of the Centennial Band have the consolation of knowing that their ball was a brilliant success in special point of view." (April 17th.)

We read of a concert by the Donaldsonville Orchestra:

"Father Charles Concert
On account of other matters intervening, we neglected to give in last issue our promised report of the enjoyable concert which took place at St. Joseph's Academy on the 17th of April, under the direction of Rev. Julien Charles, assistant curate of the Ascension Catholic Church; the proceeds of which were devoted to the purchase of a new organ for the church. The large hall of the Academy was filled with a brilliant audience, composed of about equal proportions of the members of either sex-an audience well calculated in point of numbers, appearance and appreciativeness to encourage the performers to do their best, and this desirable effect was duly produced. The entertainment opened with 'Tancrede,' a beautiful and finely executed selection by the orchestra, under the leadership of Mr. J. J. Claverie. The quality of the music may be better imagined than described when it is known that the members of the orchestra comprised Messrs. Aime Beroegeay, John Ory, Dr. B. Claverie, Father Charles, Paul Leche, Lenard T. Duffel, Arthur Claverie and John F. Terrio, playing respectively the second violin, flute, violoncello, clarinet, bass
viol, bass horn, alto and cornet. Dr. Friedriche sang 'The Wanderer' a pleasing tenor solo, 
and was followed by Mrs. E. E. Shanks, who sang, 'Waiting' in a charming manner. 
Master H. Comstock rendered 'La Plainte du Monsse' in character costume, and won 
deserved applause. He possesses a remarkable voice for a boy, and with proper training 
and cultivation might make his mark in musical circles as a male soprano.

Part second of the programme opened with 'Italiana in Algiers' by the orchestra. 
(May 8th.)

In a review of the Ascension Firemen's Entertainment, the Crescent String Band is 
mentioned along with the Crescent Brass band, the Silver Cornet Band, and the St. Joseph 
Band:

"ASCENSION'S ENTERTAINMENT The Fair and Ball of Ascension Hook and 
Ladder Company.

Last Saturday evening, the 27th alt, the fair advertised to be given at Ascension 
Hook and Ladder Company's hall, under the auspices and for the benefit of that 
association, was opened by music from the Crescent Brass Band, and continued in 
operation until 10 o'clock at night. The usual attractions were offered. In the main hall of 
the truck house were the cake table, fancy table, punch table and a number of side tables, 
which in the smaller apartment on the right, where the hook and ladder truck is generally 
kept, stood the restaurant table from which the others were supplied. All were attended by 
polite and charming ladies, who exerted themselves with flattering success to supply the 
wants and contribute to the enjoyment of guests. Gumbo and coffee were prepared in the 
hall-yard, and the bar was located under an awning on the lot adjoining the hall on the 
lower side.

The attendance of visitors Saturday evening was very slim and the prospect for a 
successful fair was dubious. Sunday afternoon and evening, however, matters brightened 
up considerably, although there was nothing like the number of guests the firemen and 
their friends had reason to expect. The St. Joseph Brass Band rendered handsome service 
by playing all afternoon and until a late hour in the evening, and the Silver Cornet Band 
kindly volunteered similar assistance, giving several tunes from the stage inside the hall.

Monday night the festival closed with a ball, and this was decidedly the most 
successful part of the entertainment. The attendance was good and the guests appeared to 
enjoy themselves to the utmost. Music was furnished by the Centennial String Band, and 
to its harmonious cadences nimble feet kept tripping until three hours just past midnight."
(June 3rd.)

We read again of the Cofield Band. They receive a set of brass instruments for the 
band:

"Cofield Battery Band - Through the kindness of Lieut. Pierre Klopman of 
Cofield's Battery C, the band which has adopted the Battery's name received on last 
Sunday a new set of brass instruments, handsome in appearance and of first-rate quality, 
and as a consequence the playing of the organization evidence a marked improvement.
Their old instruments were originally purchased by the noted Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band, and have been in constant use for nine years.

By way of celebrating their new acquisition, the band boys took a turn about town Monday night and serenaded Lieutenants Klopmow and Lafargue and Orderly Sergeant Bentley, Capt. Jones was not visited because of sickness in his family. Lieut. Earhart received his chart of music later in the week - Thursday night. We learn from a reliable source that Sergeant Bentley got wind of the intended visit of the band and made some modest preparations to entertain them which seemed to prove quite satisfactory to the visitors. Should there have been any shortcomings, however, we hope the members of the band will excuse them, as we hear the Sergeant is, for the time being, dragging out a miserable existence in state of single, his better half being absent on a visit to New Orleans. Wednesday evening the Cofield Band attended the drill meeting of the Battery and played a number of tunes. The presence of the latter increased the interest of the usual exercises, and we are glad to learn that this feature of the meeting is to be made permanent." (June 19th)

Most activity during this era was accompanied by music. We read of a baseball game in which the band furnished music:

"Baseball - Grasshoppers vs. Hancock. The match game of base ball played between the Grasshopper club of Donaldsonville and the Hancock club of the fifth ward, last Sunday, proved quite an interesting a contest as was anticipated, and attracted a considerable assemblage of spectators. The Grasshoppers, accompanied by the Cofield Band and a number of friends, crossed the river at Donaldsonville at 2 P. M., and proceeded to the Hancock grounds, on the Clark Plantation, in two large wagons sent up for their accommodation by the courtesy of the members of the challenging club. The ride down was a very pleasant one, and the visitors met with a cordial reception upon arriving at the place of destination. After a few lively airs from the band, the ball tosses prepared for the fray and played a spirited and pleasant game, conducted with the best feeling throughout, the result of which is shown by the following detailed. More music from the band and then cordial good-byes were said and the Donaldsonville boys returned home in splendid spirits delights." (July 17th.)

Another baseball game is played between the Burnside Hancock Club and Hancock Club that also included music:

"During the first inning of the Burnside-Hancock game a five-minute shower of rain fell, and although it was not copious enough to compel a stipulation of the game, it was sufficient to dampen the ball and the field so as to render an exhibition of skillful play impracticable. The Hancocks received their guests in their usual courteous and hospitable manner, regaling them with lemonade and cake before and after the game. The Burnsides were accompanied by a brass band, composed of musicians from both the Independent and Cofield bands, and their music heightened the interest of the trip considerably." (August 21st.)
"Shanghai-upper Ascension - Last Friday the Excelsior Brass Band left Hohen Sohns by the Steamer Corona on an excursion to Plaquemine. The band makes good music, considering its limited advantages and time for practice. Should this defect be remedied? I am certain it would insure them such success, combined with more real pleasure and encouragement." (August 14th.)

1881

In 1881, besides the local musical groups performing, there are also visiting groups and other entertainments available to the people of the area:

"The French Opera was jammed this week and the opinion everywhere is that as artists they have no equal in America." (Jan. 1st.)

"Dan Rice's Floating Opera House and Museum, Wednesday, Jan. 12th." (Jan. 1)

These traveling entertainments, such as the showboats and "floating opera houses," could come up the Bayou only at certain times of the year. An article about the level of the bayou appears in the paper:

"River is rapidly rising and Bayou Lafourche is again open to steamboat navigation." (Feb. 5)

Musicians continue to seek publicity by serenading the editors of the paper, getting free mention because of this activity:

"Our acknowledgment is tendered to those accomplished musicians, Messrs. F. Armendt and Louis Orth, for their serenade of last Friday evening. Under the manipulation of their deft and practiced fingers, the accordion and guitar gave forth a harmonious combination of sweet tones that charmed the senses of all who heard them" (Feb. 5)

The Centennial String Band takes a cruise to Napoleonville:

"We accompanied the Centennial String Band and a few other choice spirits to Napoleonville on the steam ferry boat Lattie Minnie, last Saturday evening, to attend the concert and fair given at that place for the benefit of Christ Church. Rev. Robt. S. Stuart had charge at the party and hence it is almost needless to say the trip was a very enjoyable one. The concert was well attended and proved a pleasant and successful entertainment. Firemen's Hall was filled with the beauty and wit of Napoleonville and Assumption, and the efforts of the performers to please were rewarded with hearty applause. A ball had been given in connection with the fair the previous evening and we believe it was a brilliant affair." (July 21st.)
The Baton Rouge Band visited Donaldsonville on July 19th and "discoursed sweet music through the streets, after which they went to the Firemen's Hall and had a jolly time picnicking." (July 20th)

The town citizens that played in the brass band are usually the most important men in town - from the town mayor, Doctors and Lawyers, to business men. The same men often play on the various sports teams, such as the baseball team.

All country towns had their own brass band, perhaps not up to the standards of the larger city bands but nonetheless just as active and appreciated. The small country town of Paincourtville had their own local band. We read:

"Fete Champetre and Concert - A grand festival will be given on Sunday, the 4th prox., at Capt. Joe Dalferes' place, Assumption Parish, as a compliment to that well known and universally esteemed citizen, whose poor health and other adverse circumstances have severely crippled him, physically and financially. The affair has been devised by his friends, and its object should be sufficient to make it a grand success. The fete will embrace more than the usual number of attractions, including a mule race, cow race, croquet playing, a base ball match, etc., concluding with a concert by the juvenile amateurs of Donaldsonville under the direction of Mrs. O. Terrio. The concert, which will be one of the most interesting features of the occasion, will begin at 7:30 p.m.; admission, 50 cents; children, 25 cents. Music will be furnished by the Paincourtville Brass Band. We shall look confidently to see Donaldsonville largely represented at this entertainment. Capt. Dufres has rendered assistance to many people in the course of is honorable career, and the community ought to make a special effort in behalf of the success of the approaching entertainment for his benefit." August 27th.)

"The Burnsides of Donaldsonville were to play Paincourtville but they play in the brass band which had a turn out - the majority of the baseballers play in the band." (Oct. 8th)

The paper mentions various brass and string bands, often without giving their official names, and we have to figure out which of the many ensembles it is referring to. The paper of Sept. 9th mentions a string band that I think is the Donaldsonville String Band:

"Drama - Phoenix Hall - The celebrated String Band formed the orchestra and the Independent Brass Band favored the audience with some choice selections during the intermission between the acts." (Sept. 9th)

In the paper we find some interesting items that relate to activities outside the town but important or interesting to the area's musical and cultural history. It was the alderman Richard Story that drafted the document that bears his name and which created the famous Storyville Red Light District. In an item we learn that he wanted to also regulate throughout the state what he did in New Orleans:
"The Governor has vetoed Mr. Story's bill regulating prostitution throughout the State, because it would legalize prostitution and give the sanction of law to immorality." (July 8th)

We get a glimpse at the music given in concert in 1882 in a concert given by the Terpsichorean Social Club. This was the type of music that was around and popular as jazz was in its ancestry stage, mostly of a classical nature. When compared with the music of the 1880's we can understand why jazz music was so different and hard to accept by some in its infancy. The Programme is given in this article:

"THE CONCERT - A grand vocal and instrumental concert will be given on the 29th instant, under the auspices of the Terpsichorean Social Club, for the benefit of the New River sufferers from overflow. The management and direction of the affair is in the hands of Prof. Blanchy, and it is natural to infer that everything will be done in a first-class and perfect manner. Following is the program:

PROGRAMME
Part First.

Belissario-Bellini - Donaldsonville String Band
Vocal-Trovatore-Verdi - Miss B. T.
Piano Duet-Si jetais Roi-Adam..Misses C.P. and C. K.
Vocal-Little Mary Gaudet-Words by A. J. Reynolds
Piano-Souvenir du Theatre Italien-Gloria Miss L. B. Vocal-Compliments de Normandie-Music by M'ille Puget.- Misses B. T. and C.K.
Farewell Waltz-Blanchy-String Band
Comic Song-La Filtre-Dr. B.C.

Part Second

Piano-Largonnaise-Gottschalk-.Miss L.B.
Vocal Duet-Chretien et Musaulman-Concone.Mis L. M. and Mrs. P. L.Piano-Galop
Prestissimo-Lefebure, Misses L.B. and M. L.
Vocal Trio-I. Lombardi-Verdi-Miss C. C. Messrs, L. B. and F. G.
Piano-Les dames de Seville-Verdi.-.Misses E. M. and L. B.
Vocal Duet-Les Confidences-Brodise-Misses E. M. and C. C.
Galop-Blanchy - String Band.

A glance at the above programme will be sufficient to give the reader definite idea as to the character of the entertainment and persons who are to participate, and as the list contains the names of some of Ascension's most accomplished musicians it is needless for us to say any thing as to the brilliant rendition of the selections chosen. The laudable purpose for which the entertainment is given should be borne in mind by all, and we feel assured that there is not a man, women or child within the limits of this parish who will fail to respond to the cry of their suffering fellow creatures." (July 15)
The paper also tells us that Professor Hack is leading the band at Spanish Fort on the levee at West End. (May 20th) We also read of a Mardi Gras ball in St. James Parish "at Pamela Hall, Music by the Whitehall Band." (Feb. 25th)

1883

There is a good description of a ball is the early decade of the 1800's. It is a description of the Hook and Ladder Ball:

"Thursday evening the hall of Ascension Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 presented as pretty and attractive an appearance as could be wished for the most fastidious. Many and beautiful were the charming ladies present, and elegant and much-admired were their respective toilettes. About 9 o'clock were heard for the first time that evening the enlivening and sole-inspiring strains drawn from the piano, cornet and violin by Mrs. M. A. Gaudet and Messrs. John. F. Terrio and Paul Savoie. After the grand march, which was lead by Mr. and Mrs. P Klopman, the usual list of round, straight, square and bits up-and-down dances was gone through to the intense enjoyment of both spectators and participants. Immediately after the twelfth dance-the hour being ditto-an intermission of half an hour was announced, during which the trippers of the light fantastic filed into the long and cool supper room, where they were soon engaged in the enjoyment of the elegant and Epicurean repast spread for their benefit. Supper over, the dancers returned to the ball room and again began paying devoted and ardent tribute to the light and airy goddess, Terpsichore." (Jan. 27th.)

The same instrumental trio of Gaudet, Terrio and Savoie play for the Mardi Gras Ball:

"The Mardi Gras Ball - The masquerade ball given by Phoenix Fire Company Tuesday night, the 6th inst., was, in every particular, a success. The guests began to gather at an early hour, and by 9 o'clock the hall was filled with a merry throng of gay and grotesque maskers. Music was soon head, rising in sweet and inspiring strains, and such nimble feet were tripping lightly to its well measured symphony. Dance succeeded dance; and the long hours of night were whiled joyously away until the bright, roseatto tint in the glowing East admonished them that it was time to seek their quiet homes to draw the drapery of their couches ground their weary forms. The music was furnished by Mrs. M. A. Gaudet, pianist, and Messrs. Jno. F. Terrio, cornetist, and Paul Savoie, violinist, and came up to their usual standard of excellence." (Feb. 10th.)

The music published during the 1880's was of the sentimental ballad and classical variation. When comparing ragtime and jazz songs and feeling with the songs and with the size of the group - small groups using a solo piano and/or adding a cornet and violin (no rhythm), we can understand how incalcitrant ragtime and jazz music seemed during these times. A brief article mentions some of the new published songs:
"New music-Mr. A. E. Blackmar, the well-known music dealer of New Orleans, at present connected with the popular house of Philip Werlein, has favored Mr. Reynolds of the CHIEF with four beautiful pieces of music, which have just been published by Mr. Werlein: "Josie Mazurka," "Old Red's Saxon Waltz," by Schwartz; two songs, "Wayward heart can this be love?" words by Henry C. Watson, music by J. Schrenk; "My love, my last thoughts are of thee," words by C. Henry St. John, music by E. Clark Ilsley, dedicated to Miss Lulu Blackmar of New Orleans. They are charming and brilliant compositions, and should be in the hands of all musicians." (Feb. 24th.)

During this era there were some musicians that are best described as "phenomenal." Such a person was a Negro called 'Blind Tom.' He visits Donaldsonville and presents a concert in which the paper prints the program he plays:

"BLIND TOM - The performance given by this musical phenomena, at Phoenix Hall, Monday night, was favored with one of the largest audiences ever seen in this building since its erection. The performance was interesting and marvelous in the extreme, and the performer fully maintained the reputation he has made as the most wonderful thing the world has ever seen in the guise of a musician. Everything that it is possible to say about him has been said time and again, yet he still remains the same unfathomable, incomprehensible prodigy, in whose soul is an ever-flowing fount of the sweetest melodies that have yet been heard by human era. We give, as rendered on this occasion, the

PROGRAMME.

1 - Caprice. Liszt
2 - Fantasia pour piano - E. Prudhomme
3 - German song-When the Swallows Homeward fly....Franz Abt
4 - March, Delta Kappa Epsilon .Pease
5 - Waggin on Zion's Hill, song Blind Tom
6 - Wellenkarga.Francois Sexualise-Blind Tom.
7 - Yankee Doodle-left hand, Pisher's Hornpip-right hand-song, Tramp, Tramp, - all at the same time

Manager Bethune requested someone in the audience to hold up any object, and by striking certain notes on the piano, Tom would spell the name of the object.

Intermission

8 - Imitation of Scotch dancing master tuning his violin and playing for class-all on piano
9 - Imitation of Bagpipe Serenade
10 - Repeated a piece played by Mr. E. Von Hofe, note for note.
11 - Battle of Mananas-composed by Blind Tom-in which he represented the Southern army leaving home to the tune of the Girl I Left Behind Me-fife and drum-Northern army leaving Washington-Dixie, fife and drum also war trumpets of Gens. Beauaragard and McDowell; firing of cannon, and at the same time fife and drum playing Yankee Doodle, Marseilles, Hymn, Star Spangled Banner and the arrival of train with reinforcements." (Feb. 17th.)
The trio plays for another dance, after an entertainment:

"A BRILLIANT ENTERTAINMENT - The dramatic entertainment and concert devised by the Terpsichorean Social Club of this town, came off at Phoenix Hall last Monday evening, having been postponed from the 9th inst., on account of the unfavorable weather. We never remember to have seen a larger audience in the hall than assembled on this occasion. The seats were all crowded early in the evening and a large number of persons found standing room only and none too much of that. The ladies were present in strong force, and of course they imparted that charm and brilliance to the appearance of the throng which is peculiarly a faculty of their lovely sex." (April 21st.)

The concert included the String band playing an overture, with vocal selection and a drama play entitled "The Drunkard's Warning." There was a cornet solo between acts by J.A. Claverie. After the concert there was the traditional dance with the string band furnishing the music:

"Soiree Dansante. The efforts of the performers to please were highly successful and the manner in which they all fulfilled the respective tasks allotted them deserves unstinted praise. It would be almost superfluous to any that the string band, composed of Mrs. Gaudet and Messrs. Leche and Terrio, produced beautiful music, or that the strain which floated from the piano under the magic touch of Miss Louise Blanchy were almost divine; and those who know the vocal abilities of the ladies do not need to be told that the songs of Mrs. Leche and Misses Comstock, Mayor and Keating were applauded to the echo and richly merited this evidence of appreciation. Mr. Arthur Claverie's beautiful cornet solo was warmly received, and Mr. Gardemal made quite a hit on the occasion of his first appearance before a Donaldsonville audience." (April 21st.)

There are two items about a smaller musical group that is part of the local scene:

"Fete Champetre - the dancing pavilion was erected in the center of the grounds, under the majestic old live oaks, where the young, gay and beautiful 'tripped the light, fantastic toe' to the music of a string band under the leadership of that accomplished violinist Tegros Guidry, with the accompaniment of the flute in the hands of that expert, Fred Bread." (August 18th)

"The music - 3 violins and a flute, opened the dancing, commenced and continued uninterrupted until 3:00 the next morning. The platform large as it was, was crowded with the beauty of our backwoods and vicinity." (August 25th)

Bands played at the Lee Hotel (one being the Italian String Band). We read of two musicians playing at the Lee Hotel who leave to go on the road:

"Joe & Frank, the skillful performers on the violin and harp, who have been located at the Lee Hotel in this town for some months past, have made an engagement to
travel with the Claire Scott Co. and furnish music at their entertainment. They are fine musicians and good boys and we wish them success wherever they go." (Oct. 30th)

The Wagner Minstrels were supposed to perform in Donaldsonville but "didn't show-no excuses." This frequently happened, either because of bad weather and the risk of traveling or because these traveling groups would accept an offer of one or more nights in their previous engagement perhaps for a bigger house and salary than a smaller town could provide. (Dec. 29th)

1884

Mrs. Gaudet and Mr. Terrio play for the firemen's ball:

"Phoenix Ball - The annual ball of Phoenix Fire Company No. 1 took place at the company's hall last Monday evening, the 31st inst., and although the attendance was not so large as had been anticipated, the affair proved a very pleasant one and the participants derived much enjoyment from it. Mrs. Gaudet and Mr. Terrio sustained their reputation for furnishing first-class music, and the dancers responded to its enlivening strains until about 3 o'clock in the morning." (Jan. 5th.)

We find an increase of articles on the musical activities in Donaldsonville as the town is growing in population and there are more social activities.

The Leavitt's Gigantic Minstrel is in town at Phoenix Hall (Feb. 9th) and is followed by another minstrel troupe's performance at Blue Bucket Hall:

"Minstrel at Blue Bucket Hall of K of P. Music was furnished by LeBlanc's String Band, under the leadership of Mr. Jules LeBlanc of St. James and it was very fine." (March 1st)

The minstrel show was very popular during this era and there were numerous traveling minstrel shows. In April the Dr. Pratt Minstrels came to Donaldsonville via a showboat. (April 19th)

Another string band was the Poche String Band:

"Ball at Grange Hall. Music for the occasion was supplied by the Poche's String Band from College Point, and it was of a character so inspiring that at least one of the guests who was supposed to have long since abandoned all desire for such amusement, took part in an old-fashioned reel and exhibited a degree of sprightliness and agility that would have done him credit 25 years ago." (May 3rd)
The tour of the 8th Mexican Cavalry Band and an important influence on the Development of a new sound (reeds) in the bands of New Orleans.

St. James Parish was a neighboring parish. Following the custom of musical participation groups for each other, the band from St. James ventures to Smoke Bend for a benefit fair:

"The Pape Vert Brass Band of St. James, numbering 15 members, passed up on the tug Nellie this afternoon on their way to take part in the Catholic Fair at the Smoke
Bend Chapel. One of the Donaldsonville Colored Bands is also in attendance at the festival." (June 14th)

The paper the following week talks about the fair and mentions that it is the St. Joseph Band of Donaldsonville that plays for the fair:

"Fair - During Saturday evening and part of Sunday an excellent band from St. James discovered some exquisite music, and on their departure Sunday evening their place was admirably supplied by the St. Joseph Band from this town." (June 21, 1884)

In the July 5, paper we find a list of the members of the String Band. They are: "Chas. S. Gray, James Fortier, Paul Leche, Dr. B. Claverie, Dr. Jno. S. Thibaut, Numa Tnibaut and Paul Savoie. We read of the Donaldsonville String Band playing for a concert and ball:

"The concert and ball with which the day's festivities closed were attended by an audience that filled the Phoenix Hall from stage to stairway, and both entertainments were extremely enjoyable. Appended to the programme of the concert:

Tannhauser - Overture - String Band
Secret Love - song Mr. Henry Comstock
The Hunter's March - Sextet: D.I. Brass Band
Rising of 1776 - Recitation - Miss A. Israel
Queen of the Night. Song - Miss C. Comstock
Lone One by the Sea - Sextet - D. I. Brass Band
Tis Only a Little Love Token - Song - Mrs. Paul Leche
The Gypsy Countess - Duet - Miss C. Comstock, Mr. H Comstock
Reverie - String Band
Un petit Son - Mrs. M Israel
Les Cadeaux d'Noce - Dr. B. Claverie
Crowning of Queen of Love.

The singers were in fine voice and the musicians played at their best, and the applause with which their efforts were greeted attested the appreciation of the audience. Mrs. Leche, Miss Israel, Miss Comstock, Mrs. Israel and Dr. Claverie were encored, their second efforts meeting with as hearty applause as their first. When recalled Mrs. Leche sang "I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls," Miss Israel recited "The Pride of Battery B," while Mrs. Israel and Dr. Claverie sang French selections the titles of which we did not learn. The sextets were executed by Messrs. L. T. Duffel, J. M. Keating, W. D. Park, D. Ohlmeyer, Jno. T. Terrio and Fred Landry." (July 5th.)

Along with the St. Joseph Brass Band, the Dugas String Band plays for an excursion by the Blue Bucket Fire Co.:

"The Blue Bucket Fire Co. leaves on the 30th, on its excursion for College Point, St. James, by the Steamer Nellie, and will return the night of the 31st. The trip and
entertainment are given in celebration of the anniversary of the organization. The St. Joseph Brass Band will accompany the excursionists to and from their destination, and the Dugas String Band will furnish music for balls to be given on both nights on the grounds at the point." (August 23rd)

Also included in this write-up is a colorful picture of what activities were participated in during an excursion:

"All kinds of innocent amusement will be enjoyed by the pleasure seekers, who, as an inducement to their friends to join them, will furnish a very well shaved and greasy pig to be run after and caught if possible, will procure two nines to play a game of base ball and will see that all the usual and necessary accompaniments to such an affair are had. Refreshments will be served on the grounds and boat at very moderate rates, and the Nellie is going and coming will make landings at Green Hall, Jamestown and General Jones' Church, so that those who wish to participate in the excursion from those places will be able to do so." (August 23rd)

1885

We find a lengthy article on an entertainment at Smoke Bend that was presented in two evenings. The last paragraph of the article mentions the music:

"We must not omit to mention the fine music furnished both evenings by Mrs. M. A. Gaudet and Mr. Joe E. LeBlanc, on the piano and violin, nor that with which the Independent Brass Band favored the audience Sunday evening." (Sept. 12th.)

One of the new amusements is the skating rink and it uses live music to accompany the skaters as they go 'around and around.' We find a number of items mentioning the rink that opened the week of Oct. 24th and began with skating on Friday nights.

The Catholic Church was the center of social activity as this area was largely populated by those of the Catholic faith. The church always took the opportunity to have a public church ceremony:

"Mission - blessing of large cross at Catholic Church of Donaldsonville. Two brass bands have been invited to furnish music for the occasion." (Oct. 17th.)

1886

The Crescent Brass Band plays for a masquerade ball at the Blue Bucket Hall. The concert is given for the benefit of the band:

"A masquerade ball was given at Blue Bucket Hall, last Tuesday night, under the auspices and for the benefit of the Crescent Brass Band, and the affair proved very successful. The attendance was large and the dinners enjoyed themselves to their full
bent, but the fun was not permitted to go beyond the bounds of good order and the festivities were well conducted throughout." (March 13th.)

Because music was such a pervasive part of the culture, it was considered a social norm to be schooled in the art, with the result that there was always a musician on hand, making it easy to have an impromptu dance or hop:

"Hop at the Hook and Ladder Hall - Impromptu hop. Music was dancing was kindly furnished by Mrs. Lillie B. Hamilton and it was of the best order." (June 10th.)

Another popular activity was the picnic in summer time, weather permitting. Most picnics with more than a few individuals usually brought along a band or talented picnickers to provide the music for dancing - necessary on social occasions:

"Picnic of Merrymakers of Napoleonville - dancing commenced and continued until a late hour. Mr. Savoy at the piano and Mr. Landry with the violin gave very good music." (July 3rd)

We read of another visiting band to a local fair and ball:

"A grand fair and ball benefit of Lancelot Lodge #38 Knights of Pythias, special performances of the Independent and Violet Brass Band of Assumption." (July 31st)

On April 3, 1890 we read of a 'Phoenix Brass Band' that is organized.

1896

The other newspaper that was published in Donaldsonville was the "Daily Times." While it was only published for a short time we do find entries about the music scene in this paper. In the Daily Times (D.T.) of April 9th we find two entries:

"The Bazaar - Episcopal Fair at Ascension Hook and Ladder....In the evening the Independent Brass and Reed Band rendered a fine program, their music being one of the main attractions of the fair." (April 9th.-D.T.)

The Bazaar was a success and we read of this success in the next day's paper:

"THE BAZAAR CLOSED. The receipts were between three and four hundred dollars. The bazaar for the benefit of the Episcopal Church closed last night in a blaze of glory. The attendance was very large and by 10 o'clock everything on the tables, excepting a few cakes was sold and those will be disposed of today. During the early part of the evening the Independent Brass and Reed Band gave a fine concert and later on the
St. Joseph String Band played for the dancing which was kept up until after 2 o'clock this morning." (April 10th.-D.T.)

Finally we read of the St. Bernard Brass Band making an appearance:

"Janitor James William Thomas of the courthouse was serenaded last evening by the St. Bernard Brass Band in honor of his 45th birthday. William did the honor to the boys who with other who knew the genial janitor with him many returns of the day. (April 9th.-D.T.)

One interesting variation on the social ball was a 'Leap Year' dance where the ladies invited and paid for the men:

"The Leap Year dance. The Novel Society Function on last evening a grand success. Social Ethics reversed. Our beautiful ladies give a glimpse of how the new woman would act.

The Leap Year Ball given by the young ladies of this city at Hook & Ladder Hall last evening was by all odds the social event of the season and in many respects the most novel and unique function ever given here.

The ladies from the inception of the affair reversed the usual ethics and played the masculine role. They issued the tickets, invited their escorts and paid all of the expenses. The novelty was at first a little odd to our young men, but it soon wore off and they entered into the spirit of the affair with a zest and earnestness that made it extremely enjoyable and amusing.

The music, which was excellent, was given by the St. Joseph String Band." (April 10th.-DT.)

Two citizens of Donaldsonville travel to Lockport, Louisiana on the steamer Louisiana:

"Misses Carmelite Barilleaux and Pamella Treille were passengers on the steamer Louisiana yesterday. They went to Lockport to attend a fair held there yesterday by the Lockport Cornet Band. The fair closes this evening with a big ball." (April 13th-D.T.)

The papers, both the Chief and the Daily Times were proud of their city and its musical groups and we read an article, in the 'chief' reflecting that pride as voiced by the mayor that appears in both papers:

"A music city - The musical taste of Donaldsonville is of a high order and there are few places of its size that possesses more of genuine lover of music of the higher class," said Mayor Paul Leche this morning. Music with us is not a mere fad or an attachment to a social function, but it is cultivated for itself alone. There are some excellent instrumentalists and vocalists in this city whom we have every reason to feel a genuine local pride for." (April 14th.)
Other towns look to Donaldsonville also as a source of available bands:

"Dance at Bayou Goula. Dr. Alvery in Donaldsonville to get a string band for Wednesday." (April 14th.)

We read of another string band playing a dance job with a string band called the 'Ada String Band':

"The Eureka Social Club of Belle Rose gave a delightful ball at the Esperanza Plantation last evening, which was largely attended. The Ada String Band furnished the music." (April 16th.)

In the May 1st issue of the Daily Times when Mayor Leche closed his speech of acceptance as the next mayor of Donaldsonville at the courthouse, the band of which he was the leader played "I love you."

Our next entry finds the Independent Brass and Reed Band playing for the St. Vincent Institute graduation class:

"Graduating class concert. The graduating class of 1896 of the St. Vincent Institute will give a grand vocal and instrumental concert at St. Vincent Hall on Sunday afternoon June 7th. During the entertainment light refreshments will be served and music given by the Independent Brass and Reed Band which has kindly volunteered their services." (May 19th.-D.T.)

The IBR Band rehearsal is noted in the Daily Times as we read that: "Band rehearsal tonight - Members of the IBR Band are urgently requested to attend the rehearsal this evening without fail." (May 20th.-D.T.)

Two bands, the Phoenix Orchestra and the Independent Brass and Reed Band are mentioned in an article in the 'Chief' of May 21st: (Sic: also in the Daily Times)

"There was no rehearsal of the Independent Brass and Reed Band last evening on account of several of its members having to attend a rehearsal of the Phoenix Orchestra. This orchestra which is under the Direction of Mr. D. Ohlmeyer, has been engaged to furnish the music at the entertainment given in Paincourtville on Sunday next for the benefit of Catholic Church there. The Phoenix Orchestra is a fine one and our friends in Paincourtville are to be congratulated upon having secured their services. The Independent Band will rehearse tonight." (May 21st.)

The colored residents have pride in their community and are proud of the Hartzell Academy for colored. (May 22nd-D.T.) In the May 25th issue we read of the concert the pupils gave under the direction of Prof. Smith:

"Hartzell Academy Concert. The concert of the pupils of the Hartzell Academy on Friday and Saturday nights was a most pleasing success and reflected creditably on the
The Phoenix Orchestra plays in the nearby town of Paincourtville. In the announcement we also read the names of the members of this local orchestra:

"The Phoenix Orchestra went down to Paincourtville yesterday and played for the concert given there for the benefit of the Catholic Church at that place. The members of the orchestra are as follows: Chas. Langbecker, D. Ohlmeyer, August Heime, John F. Terrio, Dillie Ohlemeyer and Lucas Litty. The concert was a big success and the members of the orchestra were most royally and hospitably treated." (May 25th.-D.T.)

Still another string band is noted and is out serenading:

"Martin's String Band was out serenading several of our citizens last evening. The band contains some excellent vocalists as well as instrumentalist and their music is much above the average." (May 25th.)

The great minstrel Billy Kersands seemed to always return to his home town of Donaldsonville for the summer. During the season Billy traveled extensively and probably needed the relaxation of his home town:

"Billy Kersands Home. Billy Kersands, who enjoys the distinction of being at the very heart of Negro minstrelsy and at the same time the highest salaried performer in that line of amusement has arrived at his home in this city for the summer vacation. Billy entered the profession in 1867 when he became a member of the famous Colender Minstrels and has been continuously on the road ever since. He spent two years in England and at her command appeared before Queen Victoria. He has visited every city and town in the United States, Canada and Mexico. For a man of 50/60 Billy holds his age well and is as sprightly as he was 25 years ago. In an interview with a representative of this paper today Billy said that of the members who constituted the original Collendeer Minstrels all but himself are dead. He regretted that he had never had his mouth copyrighted for he believes that he could have made a million dollars out of it as it is used by almost every show as an advertisement. He was married in this city two years ago and has a most comfortable home here and has saved enough money to assure him a competency through the rest of his life." (May 28th.-D.T.)

We see a gradual disappearing of the traditional town band and the acceptance of the local high school band as the group that plays the activities that used to be fulfilled by the town band. From 1939 to 1942 we see the emergence of the school band participation in community activities that use music.

We read in the June 3rd paper that: "there will be a rehearsal of the IB&R Band at Langbeckers Hall this evening. All the members are earnestly requested to be present."

Another local band, the Martin String Band serenades some citizens:
"Martin's String Band was out serenading several of our citizens last evening. The band contains some excellent vocalists as well as instrumentalists, and their music is much above the average." (June 4th.-D.T.)

The I B & R Band is rehearsing for a performance, thus the notice in the paper:

"The Independent Brass and Reed Band held a rehearsal last night at Longbecker's Hall. The band will play at the St. Vincent Institute commencement next Sunday afternoon." (June 4th.-D.T.)

One way of raising money and also having fun is the band excursion. We read about an excursion by the I B & R Band:

"Mayor Leche is out of the city having accompanied the excursion of the Independent Brass & Reed Band." (June 9th.-D.T.)

"Off on their excursion - The Independent Brass & Reed Band started this morning on their excursion down the bayou on the steamer Lafourche." (June 9th.-D.T.)

"The Independent Brass & Reed Band excursionists are expected back tonight unless the Lafourche is wrecked and they are stranded on some inhospitable land along the bayou." (June 10th.-D.T.)

The Excursion was one of the most interesting activities of these early times. Either they were taken by train, boat or horse driven wagon. Most bands would take part either sponsoring an excursion or playing for the group sponsoring the excursion. There is a good article about a band sponsored excursion that explains the happenings of a late 19th century excursion:

"THE BAND EXCURSION"

A Royal Trip on the Handsome Steamer Lafourche. Two Days of Enjoyment Captain Charlet Entertained the Party in a Great Manner.

It was an ideally congenial party, comprising the Independent Brass and Reed Band's annual excursion that boarded the handsome steamer Lafourche early on Tuesday morning. The party was welcomed as they stepped on the steamer's deck by its commander, Capt. P. A. Charlet, one of nature's noblemen, who gave each of the excursionists a hearty handshake and then metaphorically turned the steamer and all its resources over to the command of the party with the statement hat while they were his guests the steamer and all its resources were at their disposal and their wish should be a law.

From that time until the excursionists arrived home yesterday evening pleasure was unconfined and joy and merriment reigned supreme. As the steamer moved slowly down the bayou the excursionists began to settle themselves and put in order the little rooms that had been assigned them and when this was done the steamer was inspected from stern to bow, the party being accompanied by the Captain and others in his employ,
who explained all the workings of the machinery, the latter of which were peculiarly interesting to the young ladies, several of whom became the Captain's special guests in the pilot house.

After taking breakfast which showed the marvelous resources of the culinary department, the excursionists gathered on the shady side of the steamer and whiled away the time listening to the music of the band and watching the roustabouts as they loaded and unloaded the freight at the various landings.

At 6 o'clock the steamer reached Elm Hall and the tourists were informed by purser Nicolle that he would remain there for a couple of hours and if anyone wished to go ashore they would have an opportunity to do so. This was taken advantage of by the entire party to visit Napoleonville, a short walk from the landing. The little town was thoroughly inspected and then a visit paid to the pretty new courthouse through which the party was shown by the janitor. Shortly before 7 o'clock all were back on the steamer again and remained on deck engaged in singing and other amusements until near 11 o'clock when all retired for the night. During the morning Captain Charlet informed Mayor Leche that when the boat reached Plattenville that he should leave it for a visit to his home, until the boat's return from Lockport, but while he was away he desired the Mayor to consider himself the commander of the steamer and he would find that all of his commands and wishes would be complied with.

The party was up at an early hour Wednesday morning and just as breakfast was finished the steamer reached Thibodaux and all went on shore for couple of hours. The first place visited was the Empire Hotel of which Mr. J. E. Moseman is the proprietor, and that genial gentleman took particular pleasure in showing the party over his handsome and well-managed house. Mr. Moseman extended to the entire party refreshments after which some of the crowd wended their way to the Catholic Church while the others strolled about the city until their leave of absence had expired when there was a hasty return to the boat which proceeded leisurely on to Lockport. But a short stop was made at the latter place and the steamer safely began her upward trip. On reaching Plattenville several of the young ladies got off and proceeded to Capt. Charlet's residence and escorted him back in state to the steamer. After supper on Wednesday evening the tables were re-set a couple of hours later and ice cream and cakes were served by Capt. Charlet as a special compliment to his guests. Following this came music on the piano during which there was some promiscuous dancing enjoyed by the young ladies. It was a late hour that evening before all had retired for their last night's sleep upon the boat.

On Thursday as the boat passed the convict camp near Paincourtville there was a burial going on. There had been three graves dug and a body enclosed in a rough plank box was being lowered in one of these just as the steamer passed by. A count of the graves showed 21 had already been buried on the levee and it was said by Puser Nicolle that there were many sick in the hospital of which the excursionists caught a good view.

The steamer was now fast approaching Donaldsonville, and the regrets were general that the pleasures of the past two days would soon be a memory only. Capt. Charlet was now corralled by the young ladies and each and everyone took him by the hand and thanked him personally, and through him every one of the employees' for the many kindnesses and courtesies that had been shown the party and assured him that it would ever live as one of the most delightful events in their lives.
When the steamer was finally made fast to the wharf three cheers were given for the handsome steamer, her royal commander and all employed on her." (June 12th.-D.T.)

The members of the band on the excursion were also listed. They are: Paul Leche, J.F. Terrio, Jas. Fortier, Paul Braud, Fred Landry, Felix Fortier, August Hieme, Henry Terrio, D. Ohlmeyer, and William A. Terrio."

Most bands, especially at their inception, play serenades for leading citizens which often included the editor of the paper. Most serenades are a surprise to the incipient. We read of just that situation:
"Serenade and Surprise. Last evening a number of young ladies and gentlemen assembled at the residence of Mrs. Luke Eris and from there proceeded to the home of Mr. Dominique Gentil to serenade and surprise Mrs. Marie Gentil, in honor of her birthday. Upon arriving at Mr. Gentil's residence about 10 o'clock it was found that every one had retired and the party noiselessly made their way to the gallery and the Pastime Orchestra composed of Jos. Babin, mandolin; Alfred Landry and Luke Eris, Guitars; Nic. Eris, bass viol; and Andrew Joseph, who had been specially secured, violin, struck up a serenade which soon awakened the greatly surprised inmates of the house and in a short time the doors were thrown open and the party invited in. Dancing at once began and was keep up until an early hour this morning. The music was a feature of the occasion, the playing by the young men, who are all members of the Pastime Club, being remarkably fine." (June 19th.-D.T.)

The I B & R Band do not play for the commencement program, rather the smaller group, the Phoenix Orchestra, furnishes the music for the commencement:
"Commencement Day - Tonight's Program of Ascension Academy. The Phoenix Orchestra will furnish music during the intermissions." (June 19th.-D.T.)

The Phoenix Band also plays for the St. Joseph C. I. commencement and we read that: "During the intermission and between the acts music will be furnished by the Phoenix Orchestra." (June 23rd.-D.T.) Some parties or dances did not use a dance band but smaller combinations for dancing. We read of a "surprise party - Mr. S. Prajean - Music for the dance was furnished by a piano and violin." (June 24th.-D.T.)

The Catholic Chapel of St. Francis of Assissium at Smoke Bend gives a fair. We read: "During the afternoon the Germania Brass Band was in attendance and discovered some excellent music." (June 29th.-D.T.)

In the next article we read why the Independent Brass & Reed Band publicized rehearsals and the band did not play for the commencement - a new brass band is forming with many of the musicians of the Independent. It was always hard to keep a full instrumented band as band members did not get paid but played for the pride and good of their town. This new brass band is announced in the June 29th Daily Times:
"A New Brass Band - A brass band was organized last evening in the Langbecker Hall of the election of the following officers: Dedrich Ohlmeyer, pres; John F. Terrio, leader; Lucas Litty, V.P.; Frank K. Sims, sec.; The band will be composed of the following gentlemen: Messrs. William A. Terrio, Dedrich Ohlmeyer, Paul Braud, James Von Lotten, Felix Fortier, August Heime, William D. Park, and Dillie Ohlmeyer. This band will be in readiness mostly to accept engagements for parades." (June 29th.-D.T.)

We next read of the string band called the Pastime Orchestra, previously mentioned:

"Pastime Club - The Pastime Orchestra made up of members of the club, is getting to be quite a noted musical organization." (June 30th.)

We again read of the Pastime Club and their Orchestra:

"The Pastime Club - The Pastime Club, which is now in a flourishing condition, will hold a meeting this evening, when some arrangements will be made as to giving a dinner on the 4th of July. This club's reading room is now thoroughly stocked with all the leading papers and magazines and the attendance at the rooms in the evening continues large. The Pastime Orchestra, made up of members of the club, is getting to be quite a noted musical organization." (June 30th.-D.T.)

In the summer of 1896, especially in the month of July, we find brass bands very active doing parades, picnics, balls, etc.:

"McKinley Club (Republican) parade through city - headed by St. Joseph Brass Band." (July 6th.-D.T.)

"10th annual commencement of St. Augustine School - Overture - St. Joseph Brass Band." (July 14th.-D.T.)

"6th anniversary of Protective Brothers Aid Association will be celebrated next Sunday by a parade, fair and ball Music will be furnished for the parade by the St. Bernard Brass Band." (July 15th.-D.T.)

Spring and summer were the times for excursions. All citizens participated but we will only mention those that concern musical groups. We read:

"We understand that Capt. William Campbell, the jovial commander of the post and elegant steamer Paul Tulane, has been inquiring whether the members of the Donaldsonville Brass & Reed Band intend to make another excursion trip on his boat this season. We have no doubt, if the Capt. makes a reasonable offer, the members of the band would be pleased to repeat the previous delightful excursions that they have had with him." (July 16th.-D.T.)
We read of another mention in the paper about the anniversary of the Protector Brothers Aid Association's celebration:

"6th annual anniversary of Protector Brothers Aid Association celebration parade/fair and ball. The parade was headed by the St. Bernard Brass Band." (July 20th.-D.T.)

The new band spoken about earlier, the Donaldsonville Brass Band, make their first public appearance:

"The Donaldsonville Brass Band has been secured for the cornerstone laying ceremonies of the Masons on the 28th inst. It will be the band's first appearance in public." (July 23rd.-D.T.)

This new brass band schedules weekly band rehearsals. To remind the members of the band about rehearsals. There appears in the paper a notice of the next rehearsal:

"The Donaldsonville Brass Band will meet for rehearsal this evening. All of the members are requested to be on hand promptly." (July 24th.-D.T.)

The St. Joseph Brass Band continues to play for activities in the Donaldsonville area:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band gave a successful picnic at Tropet Place last evening. The attendance was quite large." (July 27th.-D.T.)

The Donaldsonville Brass Band is very active and we read of another rehearsal in the July 28th paper. These rehearsals are needed as the band plays for a cornerstone laying:

"Cornerstone Laid - Ceremony witnessed by a very large crowd. Procession from Ascension Lodge to new building. The line being headed by the Donaldsonville Brass Band." (July 29th.-D.T.)

Finally on July 31st there is a moonlight party with music:

"Moonlight lawn party at Attakapas Canal - Music was furnished by the two best bands of the vicinity (by Incognito Club)." (July 31st.-D.T.)

Dr. August Heime, mentioned as a member of the Phoenix Orchestra, is now the band's musical leader. This orchestra is the house orchestra for Phoenix Hall. The next article quoted is interesting as it mentions a drummer that is to use trap drums: (Sic: a reminder that this is in the year 1896)

"Opera House Orchestra. Mr. August Heime, musical leader of the Opera House is organizing a fine orchestra which promises to be one of the best musical organizations the
city has ever had. It will be large and will contain a drummer, with traps, to be used in
imitations, etc. Mr. Heime has selected his orchestra with care, and there will be
considerable interest in its first appearance which will be shortly." (Dec. 5th.)

In the month of August the musical activity continues. We read of the activity of
the St. Joseph Brass and String Band, and the I B & R Band, now known as the
Donaldsonville Brass Band. The St. Joseph Brass & String Bands play for the following:

"Brilliant Party - dance given by Miss Felicie Esneault. The dance music was
furnished by the St. Joseph String Band." (August 8th.-D.T.)

"Grand Social Affair - residence of Mr. & Mrs. M. Goldstein on B. Lemann & Co.
Perseverance Plantation. Dancing began almost immediately upon the arrival of the
guests and was kept up until near 3:00 o'clock this morning, the music, which was
excellent being furnished by the St. Joseph String Band of this city." (August 12th.-D.T.)

"The St. Joseph Brass Band was out last evening serenading some of our
prominent citizens." (August 22nd.-D.T.)

The Independent Brass & Reed Band (Don. Br. Bd.) Play for two functions:

"The Independent Brass & Reed Band goes on a picnic to Bayou Corne next
Sunday." (August 18-21-D.T.) (Sic: This picnic was postponed to the following Sunday.)

"Moonlight Social (Bayou Goula) residence of Mrs. J. L. Viallon. The dance
music was furnished by the St. Joseph String Band of Donaldsonville." (August 29th.-
D.T.)

Receiving due publicity, we read that the famous citizen of Donaldsonville, Billy
Kersands is returning to Chicago after spending the summer in his home town of
Donaldsonville:

"The famous Billy Kersands, the well known minstrel who has been 'summering'
at his home in this city, left last week for Chicago to rejoin the Georgia Minstrel of which
he is the star." (August 3rd.-D.T.)

We hear from the St. Bernard Band again:

"Program at Ascension Park - racing - The St. Bernard Brass Band was in the
grand stand and furnished excellent music between the races." (Sept. 9th.-D.T.)

The Pastime Club, heard from earlier when they formed, a club and orchestra,
collapses - in just three months.
The Donaldsonville Brass Band remains organized and play for a political rally as
well as other engagements in September and continue to enlarge their repertoire:
All town bands need support from their own town as well as others:
"Charming Miss Ella Rylbiski of White Castle, was in our city yesterday soliciting subscriptions to the uniform fund of the White Castle City Brass Band." (Sept. 13th.)

The White Castle City Brass Band also plays for political meetings at the local opera house:

"White Castle Democrats ratification meeting at opera house - during the meeting excellent music was rendered by the White Castle City Brass Band." (Sept. 15th.-D.T.)

We hear from the next activity of the Martin String Band:

"Debut dance - at Mr. & Mrs. Rene Braud of Darrowville. The music, which was excellent, was furnished by Walter Martin's String Band of this city." (Sept. 18th.-D.T.)

"Big Bryan Rally - courthouse - During the evening most excellent music was furnished by the Donaldsonville Brass Band under the leadership of Mr. John F. Terrio." (Sept. 10th.-D.T.)

"The Donaldsonville Brass Band is now in readiness to accept engagement for political and other meetings. The band which is under the excellent direction of Mr. John F. Terrio, has now a repertoire of some 18 selections to which others are being constantly added." (Sept. 11th.-D.T.)

During the Civil War there was fierce fighting around the Teche area. In the Sept. 19, 1896 issue of the Chief there is an article about a war veteran reminiscing about the war and he mentions the band that they took with them from Donaldsonville:

"Reminiscences of Civil War Cannoneer of Donaldsonville. The Cannoneers were organized in 1837 and were the pride of Donaldsonville in the days of peace and a glory in the dark days of war. Out of the 110 that left here that morning only about sixty returned and of the latter number a large majority has since passed over to the great majority, gone to that bourne from which no traveler returns. One thing I remember distinctly about our departure was our field band of five pieces made up of John and Lanieee Barre, Propser and Gus Conway and Sosthene Braud, colored men, and we were very proud of them. Of the band only one now survives-Sosthene Braud, who was the bass drummer." (Sept. 19th.)

Finally on Sept. 19th we read: of a new brass band: "Mass meeting at Gonzales (New River) Democratic candidate for Congress - Robert Broussard and Senator R. N. Sims. During the meeting - there will be music by the Dutchtown Brass Band."

In October the Donaldsonville Brass Band continues to play for various functions:

"The fine playing of the Donaldsonville Brass Band at the meeting on Sunday was everywhere complimentary commented upon yesterday." (Oct. 6th.-D.T.)
"Big Democratic Rally at Dutchtown - There will be music by the Donaldsonville Brass Band." (Oct. 8-D.T.)

"Big Democratic Rally at Phoenix Opera House next Sunday. The music will be furnished by that crack organization the Donaldsonville Brass Band." (Oct. 11th.-D.T.)

The band renders popular selections before, during and after the meeting. Finally, the band plays on the steamer 'Mabel Comeaux':

"A jolly Steamer Party, Mabel Comeaux, The Donaldsonville String Band will be on board." (Oct. 30th.-D.T.)

In December we read of two engagements by the St. Joseph String Band:

"Leap year dance given by young ladies of Donaldsonville Hook & Ladder Hall Friday evening. At 9:30 the grand march was begun, led by Mr. William Terrio and Mrs. Loulie Israel followed by about 25 couples through the novel intricacies of the march, the music being furnished by the St. Joseph String Band." (Dec. 6th.-D.T.)

"Merry Club limited initial ball - shortly before 9:00 the St. Joseph String Band struck up the grand march." (Dec. 27th.-D.T.)

1897

While most parish fairs are held in the fall, many fairs, sponsored by various civic and social organizations, are held because of needs, regardless the time of the year. A fair is heard for the benefit of the Catholic Church and is held indoors:

"Fair opens to-day. The Catholic fair opens in the old church at 5 o'clock this afternoon, and continues for three days. The church, has been decorated and this morning the ladies and gentlemen who will have the active management in charge, will finish the dressing of the numerous tables, and everything will be in readiness of 5 o'clock for the opening of the doors. There will be many attractive features this year, and the outlook for the fair is for a great social and financial success. The restaurant will be the most thoroughly equipped of any yet introduced in a fair, and all the other features will be equally elaborate. The Independent Brass and Reed Band greatly enlarged and strengthened, will furnish the music."(Jan. 23rd.-D.T.) (Sic: The names of the bands that appear in the newspaper are not always accurate as to their present names.)

The above fair was a success and we read of the review in the paper a few days later. By reading this we can understand what a fair was all about during this era. Every fair had at least one band playing and we have the names of these bands recorded for history in the write-ups about these fairs:
"The Fair. The fair at the Catholic Church, which opened at 5 o'clock on Saturday afternoon, is proving a success, the attendance on the opening night and yesterday being quite large and the patronage extremely liberal. The old church in which the fair is being conducted has been nicely fitted up and presents a pretty scene. The tables which were well laden with articles of all kinds, are located on each side, giving the center of the room for small tables for the serving of meals.

Upon entering the church the first table to the right was the bar to which was attached a wheel of fortune. The bar and wheel were well patronized and were presided over by Messrs. Theo. Landry, Raymond Landry, Walter Morrison, Henry Buquoi, Jr., P. Ganel, Jr., Robert Landry and Charles Carmouche, Paul Braud was cashier.

The next table was devoted to toys and was ably presided over by Mrs. Paul Leche and Mrs. Edgar Fortier.

The tombola table was the next attraction at which a large number of articles were disposed of by chance, including some very pretty fancy work that had been donated by Countess Diesbach. This table was presided over by Mrs. Henrietta Buquoi and Mrs. P. Ganel, Jr.

At the back of the church was the restaurant in the charge of Madames Moril Braud, Oscar Gensil, Desire Landry and J. S. Thibaut. There was a group of very pretty waitresses attached to the restaurant composed of Misses Celestine Lestrappes, Aline and Stella Vega, Emma and Julia Fevrier, Laura Comeaux and Adele Landry.

To the left of the entrance on the entering was the punch table which was carefully looked after by Mrs. Charles Maurin and James Fortier, and these ladies did a splendid business.

Next to this was the cake table which was cared for by Madames Albert Esneault, Gustave Cire and P. Ganel Sr.

The Independent Brass and Reed Band, under the direction of its leader, Mayor Paul Leche, has furnished excellent music and has been one of the attractive features of the fair.

Upon entering the room there is a register upon which every visitor by the payment of a nickel can register and a number is attached to each name. At the close of the fair the person whose name is opposite the lucky number, will be presented with a very handsome good catch." (Jan. 25th.-D.T.)

One of the most impressive musicians in Donaldsonville is Prof. A. J. Montamat. We read that "despite the fact that he is always on the go, finds time to compose innumerable waltzes and marches. The Prof. is decidedly a gentleman of note. (Feb. 6) We read in the Feb. 10th papers that "Prof. A. J. Montamat takes part in benefit concert in Baton Rouge." (Feb. 26th.)

There are numerous new boats being launched on the river as the river is one of the main commercial sources for travel, entertainment and commerce. We read of a new boat that arrives from Natchez:
"The new tug boat Nancy, purchased by the Donaldsonville Nag. Co. arrived from Natchez. The boat brought with it 3 musicians - father, son and nephew - who discoursed the sweetest kind of music during the evening at different places. They play on violins and harp." (Feb. 12th.)

There is a Mardi Gras in 1897 as we read "Mardi Gras - arrival of King Carnival - parade - St. Bernard Brass Band." (March 1) Another band accompanied the arrival of Rex on the Carrie B. It was misnamed:

"It was Anthony's Band of Philapoint and not the Germania Band as announced that came down with Rex on the Carrie B, yesterday." (March 1st.)

Brass band in the country parishes did play for funerals, but there are no accounts of the band playing fast lively tunes on the way home after the funeral. There was an account in the paper of the band playing for a funeral that details the activity of a band playing a funeral:

"THE LAST SAD RITES - The Burial of the late Andrew Gingry last evening.

Last evening just as the sun was setting and the first shadows of night were falling on the earth, all that was mortal of the late Andrew Gingry was laid to rest in the tomb. The affection in which he was held was shown in the large cortege that followed him to his last resting place, the Catholic Church in which the services were held being crowded, and this despite the unpropitiousness of the weather that had left the streets in a very bad condition.

After bidding farewell to poor Andrew by his family, relatives and friends, the remains were transferred to the hearse and followed by a host of mourners and with the Volunteer Hose Company, under the command of their foreman, Mr. Charles Langbecker, as an escort of honor, the cortege wended its way to the church. When the body reached the church the Independent Brass and Reed Band, of which the deceased was a member, was lined up in the church yard and under the direction of Mayor Paul Leche played a solemn dirge.

Within the church was almost every prominent resident, representatives of every walk in life who had gathered to pay their last tribute of respect and to shed a tear in remembrance of him, who in life had so often paid the same respect to those who had gone before. At the conclusion of the services the remains were again tenderly borne to the hearse by Messrs. H. E. Hanson, J. S. Thibaut, L. E. Bentley, J. F. Oubre, J. J. Lafargue and Archie Colloigne, who officiated as pall bearers.

The Independent Brass and Reed Band preceded the hearse to the cemetery and played a mournful, tender dirge as the body neared the tomb and while it was being lowered to its final resting place, the sorrowful melody bringing tears to the eyes of many." (April 15th.-D.T.)

The parish newspaper also mentions musical activities in nearby towns. The 'Chief' points out that a new band is being organized in Plaquemine:
"A New Band.

Plaquemine is now able to boast of a new brass band. It is composed of boys ranging from nine to nineteen years of age, and was organized on March 15th with a membership of 20. Prof. Adam Dominique, a fine musician and teacher, is the director and instructor, and it is safe to say that the organization will soon be able to render first-class music. About fourteen months ago Mr. Dominique organized a similar band in White Castle, and now it is known all over the state as an excellent musical organization. It visited Plaquemine on March 17th, paraded some of the principal streets, serenaded a number of our leading citizens and created a most favorable impression. What the White Castle boys have done our boys can and will do, and Prof. Dominique will spare no time or trouble in instructing them is such a way as to enable them to reach a high degree of proficiency. The Knights of Columbus have kindly tendered the use of their hall for practice, and as soon as the instruments can be secured rehearsals will begin. The following officers were elected: Morris Hirsch, president; Milton Dardenne, Vice Pres.; Les Hebert, secretary; Sam LeBlanc, treasurer, Joseph Sovie, leader.- New Enterprise." (April 20th.)

We read of another excursion by the band. This article gives the names of the band members:

"The Band Excursion. Their trip on the Steamer Lafourche was most delightful.

The members of the Independent Brass and Reed Band, with their friends, reached home from their excursion down the bayou, at 4 o'clock this morning, and the trip is described as one of the most delightful the band ever made, thanks to the kindness and courtesy of Captain E. M. Charlet and Clerk Edward Nicolle of the steamer Lafourche, on which the excursion was made, these gentlemen bonding every energy to promote the comfort and pleasure of the excursionists. The members of the band were Paul Leche, leader; Alex Poche, Jno. F. Terrio, Paul Braud, Dick Landry, Frank Sims, August Heine, D. Ohlmeyer, Wm. A. Terrio, Henry Terrio, and James Von Lotton.

"The steamer left the city wharf at noon on Tuesday and as soon as the party had secured their rooms and stored away their baggage, they repaired to the dining tables and did ample justice to the well prepared and generous meal. After dinner the party gathered on the shady side of the boat and passed the afternoon hours in singing, conversation, music by the band and other diversions, varied by a visit to Messrs. Dugas and LeBlanc's Armeline Store by the band members upon an invitation from Mr. L. A. Landry, formerly of this city. The ladies and gentlemen took this opportunity to go over to Napoleonville, where, after strutting over the streets, they paid a visit to the Catholic Church. Upon returning to the boat the excursion party took supper, after which the band gave a concert, much to the delight of the steamers crew and the loungers on the levee; the ladies on board danced by the music." (June 3rd.-D.T.)

Donaldsonville is a good area for excursionist and on July 4th one excursion group will come to the city on that holiday:
"The Draymen's Association of Thibodaux will have an excursion to this city on July 4th. They will bring the Lafourche Brass band with them." (June 18th.)

Visiting bands are heard playing in the city frequently. There continued to be numerous social activities, all demanding music. The many excursions bring with them bands. We read of two additional bands playing in Donaldsonville in the June 22nd paper:

"Fete Champetre - At Ascension Driving Park - St. Bernard Brass Band, Plaquemine and Thibodaux bands." (June 22nd.)

Donaldsonville had a very healthy social and cultural atmosphere as well as a very good relationship between citizens of all races. We Read:

"Our Colored People. There are a very few, if any, cities in the South that have a better class of resident colored citizens than Donaldsonville. For several years these people have shown an ambition to rise that is entirely praiseworthy, and the result of their efforts is most marked. Their schools are above the average, both in point of instructive ability and in attendance, and the keenest interest is shown in the children's progress by their parents. They have also one of the prettiest church buildings in the South, presided over by one of the ablest colored pastors in the Methodist conference. A great pride is taken in the various church societies, all of which are extremely prosperous. In secret societies they are also making their mark by the character and earnestness of their membership. Musically, our colored people also show in their excellent brass and string bands their wonderful progress. Taking everything in consideration, we have reason to feel good." (March 1st.)

While the papers probably do not note all the impromptu dances that occur and the various and numerous activities of the larger bands and orchestras, eventually we do read of the active musicians in and around Donaldsonville. Such is the case with a surprise party:

"Surprise Party - music furnished by Mr. August Langbecke on piano." (March 20th.)

We read again about the Martin String Band:

"Walter Martin's String Band gave a concert at Sam's Saloon last night that was highly enjoyed. Martin's singing coming in for special favor. This band, it is understood, has been engaged for serenading by some young men tomorrow evening." (July 16th.)

The Kier, Adams and Geuday's Clipper Minstrels schedule an appearance in Donaldsonville and parade at noon on Saturday. This is a black minstrel company and the paper mentions that there will be "special seats for white people." (Dec. 15th.)
1898

The famous Georgia Minstrels, with two bands, appear in Donaldsonville (Jan. 17th) and the Indian Minstrels perform at the Phoenix Opera House with the music of the Comstock Orchestra. (July 1st) The Mohawk Club was the location for an informal dance Thursday, May 1st with music 'by an excellent string band.' (May 6th.)

We next read of a concert by the Jefferson College Band:

"Jefferson College Band Concert. The Jefferson College Cadet Band, under the direction of Prof. L. Stalart, gave a concert at Phoenix Opera House last Sunday night, and all who attended speak in the most lowing terms of the class of music played and the skillful manner in which it was rendered. The boys honored The Chief with a couple of selections on their way to the depot Monday morning and they have our thanks for the compliment." (June 3, 1905)

VERY FEW PAPERS AVAILABLE FROM 1905 TO 1906 AND NO INFORMATION FOUND FOR THESE DATES.

1907

The people of Donaldsonville do visit and take in the amusements in and around New Orleans. One popular spot is West End. The 'Chief' writes about the resort:

"West End is still doing business at the old stand and there is no diminution in the patronage this popular resort has always enjoyed. The 12 miles trolley ride and the delightful lake breezes always blowing merrily over the pier, draw big crowds even when the vaudeville program is not up to the required mark, which is seldom." (Feb. 23rd.)

A firemen's parade is held and participating in it are "the White Castle Boys Band, the Eureka Brass Band and a colored brass band supplied martial music." (May 18th.)

In the 'Chief' we read of the activities in New Orleans, at the famous Brooks Winter Garden, there appears the famous Brooks Chicago Marine Band:

"Brooks Chicago Marine Band closed its first New Orleans season at the Brooks Winter Garden in Baronne Street last Sunday night. The summer opera season at the garden will be opened about April 15th." (Feb. 23rd.)

An unnamed string band plays for a local banquet:

"Banquet - St. Joseph Commercial Institute Association - A string band furnished music throughout the evening." (June 28th.)
A number of Minstrel troupes continue to pass through Donaldsonville and usually give performances. These minstrels all had bands traveling with them, comprised of many first-class, classically trained musicians. One such traveling musician was George Pons of Donaldsonville:

"George Pons the talented young son of Mr. and Mrs. C. Pons of Donaldsonville, after studying for two years in Paris, France, has been awarded a diploma as violinist and will shortly return to his native home. Mr. Pons' second son, Albert, is playing first flute in the excellent band and orchestra connected with Dockstader's Minstrels. Both of these young men are musicians of note and promise, and it is believed by their legion of friends in this community that they will soon achieve wide prominence in their chosen sphere of endeavor." (Nov. 9th.)

1908

The progress of dancing is important to record as the musical styles used for dancing are intertwined and evolve together. There are items mentioned in the paper as each new dance step evolves. Such an article appears in the 'Chief' in the form of "A New Orleans Letter":

"A New Fad in Dancing.

At one of the recent carnival balls I chanced to see a number of young couples jumping and cavorting across the floor in a manner that was hoidenish and ungainly, to say the least. The fact that they were perpetrating the offense to the soft and dulcet strains of the "Amoreuse" Waltz seemed almost a desecration and added to the barbarity of the romp, and I was mentally cataloguing these young people as silly and outré when a friend standing near my box queried: "What do you think of the new 'barn' dance?" "The 'barn' dance?" I repeated, really puzzled. "Yes-that's it those couples are dancing now; it's quite the rage. Haven't you been reading of the 'barn' dances that have been given lately?" Oh, yes, I had been reading of them, all right, and I daresay I am one among a great many who thought that a barn dance meant a dance given in a barn, never guessing that the term applied to the manner of the dance itself and not to the place to which it was given. There is certainly no poetry of motion in the barn dance--no, not even blank verse. It is nothing more than a hideous romp, a jambalaya of leaps and slides, a fantastic riot of discords expressed in motion. I don't know where the virtue of the strange dance may lie; perhaps it is in the novelty of the thing or in the super abundance of animation that characterizes it; certainly it is not beautiful to look upon and lacks all the grace and rhythmic harmony of the old-time dances." (Feb. 23rd.)

Another group of musicians from Donaldsonville play for the high school closing exercises:

"Closing exercises of Donaldsonville High School. One of the most enjoyable features of the program was the exquisite music rendered by the orchestra composed of: George Pons-violin/leader, Albert Pons-flute, Maurice Pons-cornet, D. Ohlmeyer-bass violin, Leon Fortier & Miss Odile Cook-violin and Miss Leda Landry-piano." (May 16th)
The annual firemen's parade in 1908 had the following bands: "White Castle Boys Band, St. Joseph Brass Band, Peoples Brass Band of Napoleonville, the Eureka Brass Band and the Napoleonville Brass Band. (May 16th.)

Two of the traveling shows mentioned in the paper are:

"Coburn Minstrels coming (past title - Great Harlow Minstrels)." (Feb. 8th.)

"Lachman Company Show - Professor Eckel's uniformed Brass Band." (Nov. 7th.)

1909

In 1909 we find only a few entries in the paper. The Redmen sponsor a festival and parade: "music being furnished by the Darrow Brass Band and the celebrated Haymarker's Orchestra." (Feb. 6th.)

As with most small country towns, Donaldsonville had a number of brass bands, some remaining active for long periods of time, others for a shorter duration. Every so many years, especially if an old band had ceased as an active organization, new bands were formed. Thus we read in the Feb. 6th paper of a new attempt to organize a band:

"Concert Band Projected.

There is a movement on foot to organize a concert band here with the object in view of furnishing amusement to the members and affording pleasure to the public. The idea is to give open air concerts in Louisiana Square during the summer months, and all who care for this source of entertainment - which means practically the entire community - will hail the venture with enthusiasm.

Already 25 possible members have been subscribed and it is expected that several more will be obtained before the list is closed. Any one wishing to join the organization should communicate with Frank K. Sims, F. L. Tregagnier, or any of the other gentlemen interested in the movement. A meeting will be called shortly to perfect organization by electing officers and arranging the instrumentation." (Feb. 6th.)

The hold a meeting for band members and we find a list of members in the paper:

"Concert Band Organized. The Donaldsonville Concert Band was formally organized at a meeting held at Phoenix Opera House last Tuesday night, the following officers being elected to serve for the ensuing year; F. L. Trepagnier, president; D. Ohlmeyer, vice president; H. A. Terrio, secretary; Paul Braud, treasurer; Frank K. Sims, musical director.

Following is a list of the charter members of the organization, arranged according to the instrumentation:

Clarionets - D. Ohlmeyer, Ambroise Mathieu, Paul Braud, Alex. Poche, Ulysses Rodrigues.
Tenors - Alfred Landry, Clinton Chambers, Dennis Chambers, V. O. Wilson, F. E Wilson.
French Horn - James P. Fortier, Sr., Fernand Richard.
Flutes - Maurice Pons, Leo Bourdier/
Baritone - Frank K Sims
Trombone - Leonce Trepagnier
Tuba - Felix Fortier, Sr.
Saxophone - Rev. E. Hubert
Bass - A. A. Kling
Drums - Felix Fortier, Jr.

The Band rehearses and we read of a concert program in the paper of April 10th that gives the concert program to be played in Louisiana Square and another listing of band members:

"Program for Band Concert. The following program has been arranged for the open-air concert to be given in Louisiana Square at 5 o'clock tomorrow afternoon by the newly organized Donaldsonville Concert Band;

   Novelty introduction - "Yankee Doodle"
      Frank K. Sims
   March and two-step, "Royal Colors"
      B. G. McFall
   Overture "Neoaho" - Cook
   Waltz, "Ethel" - Farrar
   Overture "Coloma" - Farrar
   "The Serenade" - Heyser
   March, "Solid Front" - H. C. Miller

Following is a list of the members of the band; arranged according to the instrumentation:

Trumpet - Frank K. Sims, leader.
Cornets - Paul Braud, Junior Landry, F. E. Voorhies, Jas. Fortier, Jr., Emile Houllion, M. Pons.
Altos - H. A. Terrio, Wesley Profitt.
Trombones - Clinton Chambers. Dennis Chambers, J. Pons.
Clarionets - Ambroise Mathieu, L. Dehon.
Saxophone - Rev. Eugene Hubert
Baritone - A. Dugas
Tubas - D. Ohlmeyer, A. A. Kling.
Drums - Felix Fortier, Jr.
As previously announced, the concert will be free and the public is cordially invited to attend." (April 10th.)

1910

We find another mentioning of the Darrow Brass Band. As with other brass bands, the Darrow Brass Band also includes a string band without their organization and this group plays for a local dance: Darrow is a small country town directly across the Mississippi River from Donaldsonville:

"Young men of Darrow gave a dance last Sunday at E. Landry's Hall. Music was furnished by the Darrow String Band." (June 11th.)

Since area schools included music in their curricula, we now see an orchestra that becomes very active in the community, playing for a number of activities at the St. Joseph Commercial Institute:

"St. Joseph's Commercial Institution Orchestra (SJCI) has been the recipients of many compliments. The young men who compose it are pianist-Octave Terrio, violins-Pro. R. Landry & Elmo Landry, clarinet-Ivan Dehon, trombone-Ray Dehon and Jerome Pons, cornet-Emile Houillon, 2nd violin-Allen LaCour." (June 25th.)

There continues to be an active drama scene and we read of them giving a drama entitled "The Woven Web." Between the acts the "Gonzales Brass Band and Dutchtown orchestra rendered fine and appropriate music." (Sept. 24th.)

The St. Joseph's Commercial Institution orchestra plays for its school anniversary:

"Silver Jubilee of St. Joseph Commercial Institute. The program comprising selections by the SJCI Orchestra of the club." (Dec. 9th.)

The SJCI orchestra is about two years old (founded 1909) and is much appreciated by the community for its many endeavors:

"Entertainment by SJCI Orchestra at Gondran Theatre. The SJCI Orchestra rendered several selections which were especially enjoyed. These young musicians have won their way into the hearts of our people and are always a big drawing card since its organizations two years ago. The orchestra has steadily improved in efficiency under the enthusiastic management of brother Theodosius." (Dec. 30th.)

The brother (religious brother) in charge of the orchestra must have been well-trained musician for he wrote special arrangements for the young orchestra:

"Brother Theodosius, director of the SJCI Orchestra, has written four new orchestral selections which he expects shortly. Weekly rehearsals will be resumed, to the satisfaction of the members and the great pleasure of their admirers." (Feb. 3rd.)
This lay off must have been due to the summer vacation for the students attending St. Joseph's. When they are next mentioned we do get an idea of some of their repertoire:

"Program for Olio and grand entertainment - Music by the SJCI Orchestra. Selections: Lola Waits, Our Boys two Step, Good Fellowship, Italian Serenade, Respaz Band, When Broadway Was a Pasture and Our Band." (April 6th.)

1911

Within the town of Donaldsonville there were a number of civic and social organizations. In February of 1911 there was formed the Civic League, an organization formed by ladies of the town to pursue cultural activities. These ladies, in the future, do a real service to their towns and its cultural image, thus making this mention of its early existence an important one:

"Civic League Formed. Representative - Woman of Community Organize to Promote Activities Conducive to Betterment of City's Sanitary Conditions - Clean-up Day Projected.

A meeting was held in the auditorium of the local high school last Saturday afternoon which may mark a new era in the history of Donaldsonville. A representative body of women determined, that as women are citizens and have the same responsibility for community welfare as men, they would endeavor to improve the hygienic conditions of Donaldsonville by organizing, as an initial effort, a women's Civic League. The purpose of the organization is to co-operate with the municipal authorities and all public-spirited citizens in the promotion of the health-educational campaign now in progress, inaugurated by the State Board of Health, and to further activities which may be conducive to the betterment of the sanitary conditions of the city." (Feb. 4th.)

Another popular minstrel troupe, Coburns Greater Minstrels comes to town:

"Coburn's Minstrels coming.

That popular attraction, Coburn's Greater Minstrels, with their funny comedians, splendid dancers, laughter-provoking end men and jokers, will be seen again this season at the Gondran Theatre next Friday night, Feb. 10th. No guarantee is required as to the merits of this company as a first-class, reliable and progressive old-time minstrel show. The singers are the best, the music the latest, the comedy the cleanest, and the fun the funniest presented by any minstrel company which visits this city.

The old saying that 'all minstrel shows are alike' does not hold good with Joe Coburn's attraction, for the reason that he always brings a new show every year, new faces, new novelty and comedy features, new scenery, costumes, music and comedians. The performers must be 'live ones,' their music, jokes and acts the latest, or there is no place for them with this show. Coburn's minstrels never disappoint, never fail to please, and never break a contract either with the manager or the public. It is usually a good, wholesome, clean attraction, and will doubtless play to a crowded house on the occasion of its appearance here next Friday night." (Feb. 4th.)
The people and towns along Bayou Lafourche had embraced the Catholic faith and many of their activities and energies evolved around the church. We read of an activity involving the Knights of Columbus. The article includes a musical program:

"K. of C. Mass Tomorrow. As announced in last week's Chief, the members of Ascension Council No. 1087, Knights of Columbus will receive Holy Communion in a body at the 7 o'clock mass at the Catholic Church tomorrow forenoon, and it is expected that practically the entire membership of the council will be present to participate in the ceremonies of this notable occasion. As a compliment to the great Catholic organization, the well-trained boy choir and orchestra of the St. Joseph Commercial institute have prepares a special program of musical selections to be delivered at this mass, as follows:

"Strike the cymbal S.J.C.T. Choir & Orchestra
"Haec Dies" Choir & Orchestra
"Veni Creator" (Solo) A. LeBlanc
Prof. R. Landry, violin; E. Houillon, cornet,
Victory, "The Lord is Rense" Orchestra
"Serment au Sacre Coeur" Choir & Orchestra
"Holy God" Choir & Orchestra
Sorti Orchestra" (April 15th.)

We find an advertisement (Sic: See appendix) for a new show boat coming to Donaldsonville on Sept. 5th. During a certain time of the year larger boats could navigate Bayou Lafourche. Their principle water way being the Mississippi River.

1912

One finds stories about related fields in the parish newspapers. There is an article of interest about Negro Folk Songs in the May 15th, 1912 paper:

"NEGRO FOLK SONGS
Quaint Ballads of Southern Darkey, some of which are echoes of his primitive life in Africa-rhythm a prominent part of his emotional make-up.
Austin Texas, May 15, 1912 Editor Chief:
Dear Sir - As Sheldon Fellow of Harvard University I am engaged in collecting the folk-songs of America, my work being at present especially concerned with the songs of the negro. His 'yells,' his spirituals, and his play songs. I ask your aid in bringing together the words and music of the most distinctive Negro ballads precisely as he has sung them and in many places continues to sing them. Almost all Negroes sing. Sometimes their songs are versions of music-hall ballads; oftener they are a crude, natural expression of his emotions, his real life. Perhaps some are echoes of his primitive life in Africa. He improvises readily and rhythm is a prominent part of his emotional make-up; and his songs seem to rise spontaneously to march every emergency of his experience. In the cotton--patch he sings:

'Fus' time I saw de boll weevil
He was settin' on de square;  
Nex' time I saw de boll weevil  
He had all of his family dare,  
Dey was lookin' for a home,  
jes a-lookin' for a home.

As a Mississippi River man:

Long come de Katie Adams with her headlight turned down stream  
And her side wheel a-knockin; Great God-I been redeem."

Of one of his desperado friends:

"Twas on a Christmas morning, the hour was about ten  
When Stagalee shot Billy Lyons and landed in de Jefferson pen-Lawdy, po'  
Stagalee."

In his church:

"When my blood run chilly an' col' I se got to go.  
I se got to go, I se got to go;  
When my blood run chilly and col' I se got to go 'Way beyond de sun."

Among the reels 'Alabama Bound,' 'Frankie and Albert,' 'The Blues,' 'Big Jims  
Dead an' gone,' 'Railroad Bill.' Among the spirituals, 'Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray,'  
'There's a Little Wheel a-rollin' in My Heart,' 'God's Goin' t' Ride on a Whistlin' Chariot,'  
'Norah Hist de Winder,' are all genuine Negro folk songs.

Many of our readers know such songs or know where they can be had. I shall  
really appreciate any help given me in getting into a permanent form this illusive material,  
both the words and the music. Possibly the music of the Negro will turn out to be his  
most important contribution to American culture. It can be easily caught on the  
phonograph.

Others of your readers who have not been thrown into contact with the Negro may  
know ballads equally as interesting. There are current in America many ballads of the  
cowboy, the gold-seeker, the soldier, the mountaineer, the sailor, as well as interesting  
versions of the traditional old-world ballads. All are of interest to the student of music, of,  
and of social customs; and I shall be most grateful for any help in collecting this shifting,  
fast-vanishing expression of the American ballad spirit. I particularly invite this  
correspondence of persons who are willing to help in collecting this material. Sincerely  
Yours, John a. Lomax, President, American Folk-lore Society. (May 15th.)

1913

The SCJI orchestra plays for their school commencement in 1913

"SJCI Orchestra - A special feature of commencement program was the fine  
music furnished by the SJCI Orchestra under the leadership of Professor Richard S.
Landry. The members were Sam Landry, Masters Louis Goldberg, George Oschwald, Marcel Leumas and Lola Fortier, and brother Theodosius and Ilbest." (June 28th.)

1914

The SJCI orchestra next plays for the Catholic Fair May 30-31, 1914, and again the personnel is given, showing new members for a new school year:

"Catholic Fair, May 30-31. Each evening a concert will be given outside the building by the Peerless Brass Band, while the crack SJCI Orchestra will discourse music inside the structure. (The big Vega building at head of Railroad Avenue.) Members of the SJCI Orchestra: Brother Theodosus-leader and 1st mandolin, Paul Braud-1st clarinet, Adam LeBlanc-2nd clarinet, A. J. Meloncon, Sidney Mollere and Albert Landry-1st violin, V. Babin-2nd violin, Emile Houillon-1st cornet, V. Glorioso-2nd cornet, George Oschwald-piano, P. Meloncon-orchestra bells, and Janssens Holoncon-xylophone." (May 23rd.)

In 1914 the Women's Civic League inaugurates a concert series of music in City Park and builds a bandstand for the Bands; (See Claiborne Williams chapter, page 120)

"Band concerts in City Park - The summer series of open air band concerts in City Park under the auspices of the Women's Civic League was inaugurated with a delightful musicale last Sunday afternoon, when the Peerless Brass Band plays." (May 23rd)

Each year the town hosts the South Louisiana State Fair and the band engaged usually are given in the paper. In 1914 we read the names of "The Peerless Brass Band, the Gonzales Brass Band and a band named Thaviu's." (Oct. 3rd.)

1915

Besides the local groups the only other name mentioned in the 1915 paper is the Walker Orchestra of St. James.

"Picnic at Valcour Aime - Music furnished throughout the day by the Walker Orchestra of St. James." (August 14th.)

1916

Again we read of a new orchestra from the city, the Silver Bell Orchestra:

"Dance at WOW Hall under the auspices of Delaware Tribe of Redmen, for organ. Music by a lst class orchestra. Delaware Tribe will also host a dance on July 8th, music for which will be rendered by the Silver Bell Orchestra of this city." (June 10th.)

As previously mentioned, bands did march in funeral processions in Donaldsonville, with numerous articles citing this custom:
"Funeral of Mrs. Dominick Gaeta. Interment in Catholic Cemetery. Members of Italian Society and a large number of members of that organization, headed by a brass band, attended the Obsequies in a body." (Sept. 13th.)

1918

During the Lenten season we do not hear of many dances but once Easter comes more and more are scheduled. One such dance is noted:

"Dance at Ulysse Hebert's Hall at Grand Bayou upon celebration of Easter. First dance of season, resumption of these delightful entertainments following the solemnity of the Lenten period." (March 30th.)

Many times the local papers are a good source of hearing of bands from New Orleans. Unfortunately, many times they do not give the name of the band as in the case below, but it is important that we know that these towns do import bands from New Orleans:

"Fair at P. N. Gravois Par, Vacherie, a crack New Orleans band will furnish music." (July 20th.)

The First World War had a profound effect on the social life of the community and we see a slowing down in social activities until after the Armistice:

1919

It is in the July 5, 1919, paper we first read the name 'Jazz Band':

"Grand dance at Redmen Hall. Music will be furnished by a good jazz band."

We find no mention of music in 1920.

1921

We again read about the situation of decency in the new dances being done by the young, a constant occurrence as the dance evolves into new more aggressive steps and movements to accompany the new jazz music:

"On account of the many indecent dances given in Thibodaux in the past few months, the city council of that thriving town met recently and adopted the following ordinance, declaring such dances a nuisance and a breach of decency.
Therefore, be in resolved, that the board of trustee of the town of Thibodaux do now to be on record as being unalterably opposed to the indecent dancing now being permitted in the Woodmen Hall, and as being opposed to permitting young people who
dance at said hall to retire at the time of intermission from said hall, unaccompanied by chaperons, and to parts unknown for automobile rides.

Be it further resolved, that the board of trustees do now request the officers of the Woodmen of the World in charge of said building, refrain from permitting the use of their hall for the giving of any dances wherein any such misconduct and branch of decency is allowed, under penalty of having this board of trustees pass an ordinance declaring such conduct disorderly, and their place wherein allowed a nuisance and under penalty of having all such places condemned as a nuisance and closed." (Jan. 15th.)

Another new band the 'Leader Orchestra' is mentioned:

"Entertainment at Community Theatre - Benefit of Catholic Church. Music for the occasion was furnished by the Leader Orchestra, recently organized and composed of young white musicians of this city." (August 27th.)

Most of the bands mentioned now are "jazz bands":

"Fair at Woodmen Hall. Music will be furnished by a jazz band." (Sept. 3rd.)

1922

A group known as the “Toodle Kings” make their debut in Donaldsonville and for a few months gains much publicity and notoriety:

"The Toodle Kings made their debut in their brand new uniforms at the dance given by them at the Redmen Hall last Sunday night. They made a most favorable impression and inspired no doubt by their new togs, dispensed even better music than usual." (Feb. 4th.)

We can assume that this group is received favorably and are hired to play at two Carnival dances:

"Toodle Kings to entertain - Two grand carnival dances at Redmen Hall. Music will be furnished by the Toodle Kings." (Feb. 25th.)

After Easter, as dances become more prevalent, the group plays again:

"Dance - grand Easter Dance at Redmen Hall. The Toodle Kings will introduce some new dance music which in itself will prove a special treat to the bells, beaux who attend." (April 8th.)

As quickly as they appear they fade from view and the Toodle Kings are not mentioned again nor are we ever told the personnel of the group. We hear of a new band from Beaumont, Texas, called the Jazzland Six:
"Chat Noir's big dance, Friday, April 21st. The Original Jazzland Six of Beaumont, Texas, will perform for the occasion." (April 15th.)

The bayou that runs through Donaldsonville and to the Gulf of Mexico is Bayou Lafourche. It is the place that much activity is found. We read of a newspaper account of the bayou that is a major influence in the area of Lafourche and other parishes:

"BAYOU LAFOURCHE - Texas Man's Views of Conditions. Life and Industry Along Its Banks.

A correspondent of the Dallas Morning News, who visited the Bayou Lafourche section recently writes his vies and impressions of the country and its people, in an article published in that paper on June 1, as follows:

"That part of southern Louisiana, along the Bayou LaFourche, between Donaldsonville and the Gulf of Mexico, embracing a strip of territory about 125 miles long and half as wide, and populated by one of the few remaining French Creole colonies, is one of the most picturesque spots in America and a most delightful place to spend a vacation in either winter or summer, according to B. B. Bates, 531 West Eighth street, a Dallas traveling salesman, who spent some time in that section last winter.

"The Bayou Lafourche is an old bed of the Mississippi River, rising in the swamps of southern Louisiana and flowing roughly parallel to the Father of Waters for a distance of about 125 miles into the Gulf. The country through which the Bayou Lafourche flows is composed largely of swamps and marshes, which extend to within a half mile or less of the bayou, leaving a narrow strip of fertile land along either side of its banks, which is a continuous village street 125 miles long, populated by hunters, fishermen, trappers and small farmers. This is one of the few sections of southern Louisiana composed of small farms, agricultural activities elsewhere consisting mostly of large plantations."

"Land along the bayou is sold by the arpent, an old French surveying measure, based on a front of 192 feet and a depth extending back to the swamps, whether the distance be 100 yards or half a mile. The soil is extremely fertile and farming operations are carried on practically twelve months in the year, because of the mild climate, which rivals the far-famed seasons of California. Potatoes and onions are the principal crops, and Mr. Bates says he ate new potatoes early in January. Oranges, bananas and other fruits also are grown in abundance.

The swamps along the bayou abound in shrimp and crawfish, and one of the principal industries of that section are large canning plants, where shrimp are dried and flailed and packed in barrels for shipment. Another loading industry hardly expected in a country of so mild climate is the trapping and dressing of skins of fur bearing animals. The swamp teems with mink otter, raccoon and muskrat, and furriers say some of the best pelts of this kind come from the swamps along Bayou Lafourche.

The commerce of that section is carried on largely by water transportation, small boats plying on the Bayou and numerous canals through Lake Salvador to the Mississippi, and thence to New Orleans. The old style sternwheeler freight boat is one of many such craft used in that section, similar to the kind plying on the Mississippi a half century age, which Mark Twain immortalized. Smaller boats also are used along the bayou having launches which are constantly used for both business and pleasure."
The scenery along the Bayou Lafourche, both natural and manmade, is most picturesque. Wild flowers and foliage grow in profusion, and the bit of the road along the bayou bounded on one side by a levee covered with wild Cherokee roses, and on the other by a luxuriant growth of magnolia tress draped with Spanish moss, is a typical example of the scenery in that section. Many colonial mansions, survival of the old South are found along these flower bedecked roads, presenting a scene which looks as if it might have stepped from out the pages of 'Mo-Hun,' or 'The Surrey of Eagle's Nest.' 'Meadow' and 'Woodlawn,' typical examples of the old Mansions, which, though built more than 100 years ago, are still used as residences, and, in many cases, were constructed by ancestors of the present owners. Most of these old mansions were built of brick and stucco, and will be in good repair for many years to come.

The people living along the Bayou Lafourche, like their surroundings, are most picturesque scions of a sturdy Creole stock, they can in many cases trace their ancestry back through two centuries to the day when their forefathers left the shores of France to become hardy pioneers in Louisiana, the French empire of the West, at that time not the present small state, but a vast dominion which extended from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes and embraced the fertile section which comprises the Middle West and Northwestern States.

The traditions and ideals of two centuries ago are found today in the simple-minded unassuming, hospitable folk who live along the banks of the Bayou Lafourche. Their manner is a charming blend, of the courtesy and hospitality of the old south and the gallantry and gentility of France. The latchstring of their home hangs on the outside for every stranger, and they are both hurt and offended should he offer to pay for food or lodging. How well they have clung to the manner and of their forefathers are shown by the fact that French is the prevailing language of that section, less than 10 per cent of the people speaking English, except when necessary. There are fine school houses and liberal education along the Bayou Lafourche but only for about the last ten years has English been taught in them.

"The entertainment and social affairs of the people along the Bayou Lafourche are as simple and enjoyable as their other customs. Almost every Friday, Saturday and Sunday right throughout the year there are dances in pavilions along the bayou which are attended by all throughout the countryside who care to go for social cliques are unknown among the gentle, courteous folk who live along the Bayou Lafourche. The French custom of chaperoning girls and unmarried young women is strictly observed, and they never appear in public unless accompanied by an elder relative, even though escorted by a fiancée. On Sunday afternoons prize fights and wrestling matches often are staged and liberally patronized. These affairs are usually staged for the benefit of the local church with the approval of the priest of the community, most of the people along the Bayou Lafourche being Catholics.

"Such, in brief, is the picturesque bit of southern Louisiana. It is a simple, peaceful, God-fearing community, much like the peasants of Acadia enshrined in Longfellow's 'Evangeline.' One can not stroll through the dense woods of that section without recalling 'This is the forest primeval, the murmuring pines and hemlocks." And always comes the recollection it was here in southern Louisiana Evangeline and Gabriel,
torn apart in their youth on the eve of their wedding started on the long search for each other." (June 17th.)

There are advertisements in every issue of the Chief advertising the schedule of the local movie house the "Grand Theatre." We find the names of many orchestras that have been hired to play music for the silent movies of the era. In the August 12th issue we read of a weekly schedule for activities at the Community theatre: (Sic: See appendix.)

"At the Community Theatre.
Sunday - Ivy Duke in "The Bigamist" and an Educational comedy.
Thursday - Barbara Castleton and Montague Love in "Shame of Society" and a comedy. Music by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra.
Friday - Doris May in "The Understudy," and episode of "Fighting Trail."
Saturday - Frank Mayo in "Dr. Jim" and episode of "Winners of the West" and a comedy.
Sunday - Corrinne Griffith in "A Virgin's Sacrifice" and a Semon Comedy."

"Grand dance at Fair Pavilion on Monday, August 21st. Music will be furnished by the Original Jazzland Six, composed of white musicians. Dancing will begin at 8:30 p.m." (August 19th.)

The Jazzland Six Orchestra plays next for the Community Theatre as its regular orchestra:

"Community Theatre - famous Jazzland Orchestra of Beaumont, Texas has been engaged to furnish music from 4 to 8." (August 26th.)

Electric lights became the deciding factor in having a dance at Redmen Hall instead of the Fair Grounds Pavilion:

"Grand Dance at Redmen Hall. A grand dance was given by the young men of Donaldsonville at Redmen Hall last Monday night. It was originally intended to give the dance at the fair grounds pavilion but late in the afternoon it was discovered that there was no transformer at the latter place and that it would be impossible to have electric lights, it was then decided to have the affair at the Redmen Hall. The event drew an enormous crowd from all parts of the surrounding country, many being attracted through curiosity to hear the music of the much heralded Texas original Jazzland Six, and it is said that no less than 100 automobiles were parked in the vicinity of the hall. Another dance will be given by the same young men at the fair grounds pavilion next Thursday night by which time everything, including electric lights, will be in readiness and in shape. The Texas original Jazzland Six will begin at 8:30 o'clock. On the same day, from 1 to 8 p.m. the Jazzlanders will discourse music at the Community Theatre." (August 26th.)
In 1922 the riverboats are still playing the Mississippi River, stopping at certain cities on their way down to New Orleans from St. Paul, giving excursion for a few days before settling in the Crescent City for the season. The boat stops at Donaldsonville for a midnight excursion:

"Many on Moonlight Excursion. A large number of people assembled at the wharf last Wednesday evening to see the magnificent and palatial steamer Capitol, which gave a river excursion from this point that night. The handsomely bedecked and brilliantly illuminated craft presented a picture of great beauty and elegance, which was pleasing to behold and the sweet music dispensed by the band was a treat to all those who had the good fortune to come within reach of its inspiring strains. The boat pulled out at 8 o'clock with over 200 people aboard. The majority being dancing couples, while many went to enjoy the music. The steamer went up stream as far as the Iberville parish line and returned to the wharf at midnight. The dance fans of this city and vicinity tripped the light fantastic toe to their hearts' content, while those who did not dance enjoyed themselves by walking along the promenade deck and listening to the sweet music, which they say was the best they had ever heard. It is said of the band that of all the good bands that have played on the big excursion steamer Capitol, none equal the aggregation of harmony syncopators that are now under contract for the winter social season at New Orleans. This wonderful ten-piece colored band is composed of ten selected artists, the best talent picked from the best bands that played on the excursion steamers Saint Paul, J. S. and Washington this summer. This band is so peppery that the management of the boat is offering a grand prize to any human being that can remain absolutely quiet while listening to this mesmerizing music. The Capitol left shortly after midnight for New Orleans where it goes to keep a winter river excursion engagement." (Oct. 19th.)

The Jazzland Orchestra is also mentioned as "playing for a dance at Hotel Donaldsonville." (Dec. 16th)

The above is the last mention of this band playing in the Donaldsonville area.

1923

We read of the Mardi Gras Celebration of 1923 which falls on Tuesday, Feb. 13th. There are lengthy articles on the festivities and we read of three bands and 6 floats that are in the parade. The parade line up is as follows:

"Mounted Police
Louisiana State University Band
Mounted marshals
Carnival Association Committee in automobiles
City officials in automobiles.
Parish officials in automobiles
Military guard from Louisiana State University
A review and description of the Mardi Gras parade in given in the Feb. 17th paper. While this article is also lengthy I will give it in it’s entirely so one can compare today’s Mardi Gras day with one from 1923. While it is not as big as the ones in New Orleans, for a small town the size of Donaldsonville it is a very festive day:

"25,000 PEOPLE CROWD CITY TO SEE MARDI GRAS PARADE
Grand Pageant Passes Thru Streets Lined With People Coming from Surrounding Country.

Fully twenty-five thousand people did homage to King Progress during his visit to Donaldsonville on Mardi Gras day. Early in the morning the crowds began to gather. People from points as far down the bayou as Houma and from up the river as far as Baton Rouge came to this city to take part in the carnival festivities. All means of transportation was taxed to its capacity, the transfer line could not handle the numbers which appeared on its line between here and Thibodaux, every bus was crammed and jammed. The ferryboat Ruth made trips as rapidly as possible in order to accommodate the people from the east side of the river. The Texas and Pacific Railroad brought in hundreds on its main and branch lines, and jitneys were as busy as bees all day long.

King Progress arrived at 11:30 o'clock in the morning at the river landing, coming on his royal yacht the Revelry (Steamer Virgie), bedecked with flags and streamers of the royal colors. He was greeted by whistles, tooting of auto horns and cheers from the great crowd which lined the levee, several thousand standing on this point of vantage to see the landing of his royal highness. As the royal yacht steamed up the river toward the landing it blew its whistle continuously, while the ferry Ruth, left its landing and went down the river to meet the royal party, all the while tooting its whistle. Upon arriving at the landing King Progress, accompanied by his dukes and the carnival committee disembarked and proceeded up the walk to the top of the levee escorted by the Honorable C. Kline, where the king entered his car and proceeded to the high school building, the parade being formed in the following order: (See previous article)

The parade wended its way along Mississippi Street to Railroad Avenue.

The floats of the carnival association in the great Mardi Gras pageant were of exquisite beauty, and their execution showed splendid artistic taste while the ideas represented were most appropriate. The king's float, "Nature in Its Splendor," "Le Reve," "Better Babies" and "Love Conquers all," were the work of Mrs. A. L. Tullier of New Orleans, while the "Pilgrim Fathers" was designed and executed by the local carnival.
committee, which also assisted on the "Better Babies" float, V. A. Rodrigue being in
charge of the work. The description of each float follows: (Sic: I give just two of the
floats here.)

The King's Chariot

King Progress passed through the streets and avenues of his Carnival city in a
most beautiful chariot, upon which was mounted his royal seat, over which hung a
canopy. The King was Dr. A. W. Martin, attending him were two pages, Masters Lloyd
and Floyd Rodrigue. The heralds were Masters Delery and Gerald Vulliamy. The jester
was Master Tullier. The gracious king, surrounded by his midget aides, bowed from right
to left to his cheering subjects as he passed in triumph on his journey.

Nature in Its Splendor.

A float of soft beauty representing a garden of roses. In the six arches with
climbing roses and maiden-hair fern stood the six Rose Nymphets; Misses Hilda Dill,
Anna Mae Allen, Vivian Barthelmy, Muriel Bessonet, Josie Lawless and Eloise Naquin.
Their costumes of shell pink matched the beauty of the roses. Dressed in the same
harmonious color were ten little Rose-Fairies, who sat about them waving their wands of
roses. Truly they lured the sunshine and put happiness and joy into the hearts of the
crowds. Of course, no garden is complete without its elf-man and here were four of them
dressed in green with tiny pink jackets and a daring feather in each cap. Sitting on their
elevated platform you could tell by their smiles they were all "In the fine." (Feb. 17th.)

After a splendid day of celebration the lucky ones (the society of the town
participated in the dance while 500 looked on) attended the ever present Mardi Gras Ball
that night:

"Grand Mardi Gras Ball Was a Maze of Beauty, Gorgeous and Magnificent.
In a maze of beauty, gorgeous and magnificent in its appointments, the grand
Mardi Gras Ball was carried out at the parish courthouse last Tuesday night and was
attended by half a thousand sightseers, while some 100 couples spent the fleeting hours of
the night in dancing. The spectacle was one long to be remembered and was a complete
success from every standpoint.

The outstanding feature of the grand event was staged at the opening of the
festivities, the coronation of the queen. At 8 o'clock Claiborne Williams' melodious
orchestra struck up the melody, "In the Springtime," to the sweet strains of which the
King and his court entered the beautiful court room which was brilliant with hundreds of
electric lights. Coming in from a side entrance, his majesty, King progress, (Dr. A. W.
Martin) followed by his dukes, entered the royal arena and passed through into the center,
which was roped off to keep the vast throng of his subjects back from the center of the
court. The beautiful queen, (Miss Rose Lee Landry) attended by her maids, with two little
pages holding her train, entered from the rear door of the room and gracefully
promenaded to their places facing the dukes, who were in line on the other side of the
arena. The King mounted his throne and the queen took her seat beside his majesty, while the two little pages perched on each side at the feet of the royal pair. The ceremony of the dukes pinning their manties on the maids was performed and King Progress placed the tiara on the queen, crowning her his ruling mate for the hour. 

More maskers appeared on the streets of Donaldsonville this year than in any celebration in many years. This was noticeable especially among the white population. Another feature was many young ladies this year appeared in very pretty costumes on the streets. (Sic: A colored organization sponsored the Mardi Gras as usual.) 

A most remarkable peaceful day, was Mardi Gras day. Everybody was good natured and no disturbance of any kind was reported. No arrests were made and the police had no trouble clearing the streets for the parade, the people being in the mood to obey instructions at the moments notice. No accidents marred the occasion and there was only one case of speeding reported, this was two Negroes who misunderstood the ordinance and were reprimanded." (Feb. 17th.) 

Our next musical entry in 1923 is a band named "Waller's Jazz Band." They play at the Community theatre on Tuesday night for a movie entitled "Man With Two Mothers."

We next find the Jefferson College Band becoming active in the Donaldsonville area. After playing for a Carnival parade for King Progios (the band, called a famous band, must have been organized for a few years but have no notations in the paper) it plays for a theatre presentation:

"Convent players appeared at Grand Theatre. Jefferson College Band played some airs during the intermission, which were greatly appreciated by those present." (May 26th.)

The Jazzland Six were from Beaumont, Texas and frequently played in the Donaldsonville area. There was at times, a problem traveling to distant jobs for the band. It was mentioned about a bad rain storm that hit Beaumont:

"We had intended saying last week that the Jazzland Six Band, of Beaumont, Texas, is still 'on the map' not having been submerged during the phenomenal rain fall that recently had Beaumont, Texas to its mercy. At the last minute, however, our space got so jammed that we could not breathe if we did any more lacing. This week, we are pleased to announce the Jazzland Six played here for two dances - on Tuesday and Saturday nights and naturally afforded the dancers a good time. Mr. Ray, of the Six, being specially appreciated for the songs that he rendered so well." (June 28th.)

We continue to read new names of bands:

"Elks Club grand public dance. Music will be furnished by Marx Jazz Band." (August 25th.)
In the Oct. 27th paper we again read the mentioning of a new band playing in Donaldsonville, this time playing to accompany the film at the Grand Theater:

"Grand Theatre, Tuesday. Sunny South Orchestra." (October 27th.)

There were advertisements in the Chief for dances and activities in other nearby towns - Thibodaux, Labadieville and even as far as New Orleans. In the Excursion advertisement to New Orleans on the Texas and Pacific ($1.50 round trip), an excursion to see the ball game between the Pelicans and the Little Rock Club, the advertisement lists the band playing for the trip down. I quote: "Jack Carey's wonderful jazz band will play on train and New Roads for the colored folks." (Sept. 8th.)

The pleasure boat, the "Capitol" makes an appearance in Donaldsonville. The boat usually stayed a few days and nights in Donaldsonville on its way to New Orleans for the winter season. On a moonlight excursion on Sept. 19th, the band that is playing on the boat is "Tony's Famous Iowan Band." (Sept. 8)

Another grouped the Dixie Strutters Minstrels appear in Donaldsonville on Nov. 17th.

One can find other information about jazz history from these parish newspapers. Tom Brown was the first New Orleans based jazz band to play in Chicago. Vaudeville, was one of the major forms of entertainment in the early Twentieth Century. Vaudeville was a major institution in the spreading and popularity of early jazz. Tom Brown entered it and we read in the paper of his endeavors in that field as his band performs in Plaquimines 'Theater Wilbert':

"THEATRE WILBERT OPENS SEASON ON DECEMBER 15. Presenting a Wonderful Attraction With An All-Star Cast.
Lionel Delacroix, progressive lessee and manager of the Theatre Wilbert, Plaquemine, announce the formal opening of the season at his popular playhouse, on Saturday, Dec. 15, matinee and night, when Julien Eltings and Tom Brown and Brown Brother will present their Black and White Revue of 1924, with an all-star cast. A corona of beautiful maidens will surround the stars. Unusual care was exercised in the choosing of the many lovely girls who make up the chorus, and while beauty was one of the requirements, ability to sing and dance was not overlooked by those who made the selections. As an additional musical feature, Messrs. Eltinge and Brown, proprietors of the show, are carrying a forty-piece saxophone band, an unusually large assemblage of these popular instruments. Nothing has been overlooked in the way of costume splendor and production perfection, and the producer, Jacques Pierre, has left nothing undone to place his organization on the pinnacle of theatrical proficiency.

Mr. Delacroix states that he had booked many splendid attractions for the coming season, all of which are up to the stand of the exceptionally meritorious plays which have appeared at that popular playhouse and delighted large and sometimes over-flow audiences in the past, including many theatre-goers from this city and vicinity who have
taken pleasure in journeying to Plaquemine in automobiles to witness these interesting productions." (Dec. 8th.)

Another article appears that mentions the saxophone, an instrument that is becoming very popular and eventually becomes 'the' instrument of the jazz orchestra:

“Big Musical Show Tonight at Theatre Wilbert. Julian Eltinge and Tom Brown Black and White Revue of 1924, a high class musical comedy aggregation of beautiful maidens, catchy melodies and clean song and dance hits, will hold the boards at Theatre Wilbert, Plaquemine, tonight.

Toting around 40 saxophones of all sizes on a cross-country tour is as difficult a proposition and as embarrassing sometimes as holding someone else's baby, is the verdict of Tom Brown, who, with the Six Brown Brothers, world-famed saxophonists, is going with the Julian Eltinge and Tom Brown Black and White Revue of 1924, a saxophone band of 40 pieces.

"The saxophone, while an interesting instrument from a musical point of view," says Brown, is awkward in shape, and when you get it into the big bass sizes, it is somewhat like carrying around a baby elephant. It never fits anywhere, and you are always afraid of someone stepping on it, or tripping over it, or trying to play jokes on you by pouring water into it, or using it for a receptacle for cigar butts. Imagine the confusion of a saxophonist on the train, encumbered with a big saxophone horn, green-baize wrapped, when he meets a pretty girl. He wants to sweep off his hat and make her a grand eloquent bow. But if he does, he's likely to trip over the big horn, or it may trip over and hit her on the nose!" (Dec. 15th.)

1924

The year begins with the visit of the famous Budinsky Brothers Stock Company accompanied by a jazz band:

"Dubinsky Brothers Stock Company entertainment, as well as playing the latest and most popular selections from opera to jazz by 'Baldy' Wetzells' Syncopated Orchestra." (January 15th.)

The band written about below, is called the 'Baldy Iowa 5,' and seems to be the same orchestra called the 'Baldy' Wetzell Syncopated Orchestra in the above mentioning:

"The Baldy Iowa 5, a band of expert musicians, entertained at a delightful dance in the spacious dining room of the Hotel Donaldsonville last night. There was a large crowd in attendance and all had a pleasant time. Another dance will be given by the same musicians at Hotel Donaldsonville next Sunday night." (January 19th.)

With New Orleans known for its famous funerals and the Catholic Church for its many ceremonies, we see this also amplified in the colored Catholic Church of Donaldsonville:
"St. Luke was one of two colored Catholic Churches (St. Joseph the other one) in
the Donaldsonville area. Choir of St. Joseph's choir led by Miss Clothilde Chol provided
music for the mass and a colored brass band from Donaldsonville, the Corpus Christi
uniformed rank of K of P Claves, escorted the archbishop and also provided music during
the fair held in the afternoon. (Also the blessing of the new edifice)." (Feb. 2nd.)

This last quotation is interesting as it mentions Clothilde Chol, the daughter of
Emanual Chol, the great musician of Thidodaux. Prof. Chol was a white musician trained
at the Paris Conservatory. He was a Frenchman, by birth.

While we will read of Claiborne Williams' Band playing for the Grand
Theatre,(Sic: See appendix.) we have an orchestra playing for selected scenes during the
movie:

Another media for the spread of jazz and music in general was the radio. On the
college campus of LSU was a radio station that programmed music as part of its schedule.
This fact is reported in the Chief:

"Three concerts have already been sent to various parts of the nation from the
local station. The second week's program, given by the LSU band, letters of praise for the
music were received from the people in Kansas, New York and Washington, D. C." (Feb.
2nd)

"The Covered Wagon coming to Theater Wilbert (Sic: In Plaquemine, La.) A
splendid orchestra of selected musicians will play the accompanying scenes especially
arranged by Hugo Reisenfeld for this elaborate work. Two shows - 2:30 and 8:30 p.m.
(Feb. 23rd.)

The Theater Wilbert in Plaquemine, La. brings some interesting presentations to
its stage and the description of the band sounds like modern 'hype':

One of the greatest features will be the famous Symphonic Jazz Band of Frank Silvas,
said to be the greatest syncopated orchestra ever assembled in America." (March 8th.)

The dance bands of the early 20's were called orchestra, string band and other
assorted names. They are now called 'jazz' band. Jazz has become more symphonic and
more refined. The music the jazz band plays is now written down. Jazz bands are popular
in 1924 are now, many times are called 'syncopated orchestras.'

We read the name of 'Poche' in relation to a musical group:

"Don't forget the big musicale at Grand Theatre. Poche's vocal club and orchestra.
This orchestra, is a novelty which must be heard to be appreciated. It is composed of a
drum, tambourine, triangles, bells, cymbals, castanets, piano, 2 violins and a banjo."
(April 26th.)
One of the most popular places in the summer was the resort on Lake Verret, where a new opera house/dance pavilion is under construction:

"A large Opera House is in course of construction at Lake Verret - in two weeks. This pavilion will be 60 x 40 feet and have a 10 foot gallery all around. Valentine Goetz is the owner." (June 7th.)

We have seen where the 'Fair' was one form of social activity during the 19th and into the 20th Century and most fairs had one or more bands playing for concert and dance music. Often the notices in the paper do not mention the name of the bands playing, but, while they may not do so, we still know that bands were used for concerts and dances at these fairs and that these fairs continued in the early fall for many years and indeed still are held today. There was a mention of a fair in Bayou Goula:

"Fair at Bayou Goula. A big fair will be given in Bayou Goula tomorrow for the benefit of St. Paul's Catholic Church. The fair will open at 10 o'clock a.m. and there will be amusements and entertainment for children as well as adults. There will be flying horses, lotto games, tables with all kinds of beautiful articles, fancy work of all kinds, which will be practically given away. Meals and refreshments will be served throughout the day, spaghetti supper, and a dramatic play, entitled 'The Rose of the Southland.' Music will be furnished by a well-known orchestra." (August 4th.)

One of the most popular orchestras in Thibodaux plays in Donaldsonville. It is called the Comeaux Brothers Orchestra:

"Grand Theater - Comeaux's Orchestra will furnish music in connection with the picture. It will be remembered that this orchestra played here several months ago and delighted large audiences, when it was composed of only 6 members. Today the orchestra has increased to 8 artists and the music dispensed by it is said to be par excellence. A rare musical treat is in store for all those who attend the performance next Tuesday." (August 23rd.)

We read about this same group as it plays for a fair at Smoke Bend:

"Fair at Smoke Bend - Comeaux Brothers famous jazz orchestra of Thibodaux will furnish music tomorrow night." (Sept. 6th.)

Another Thibodaux band, the James Orchestra, plays for a dance;

"Grand dance at Rivet's Hall. Music for the occasion will be furnished by the famous James Orchestra of Thibodaux." (Sept. 27th.)

The Standard Oil Company of Baton Rouge sponsors the 'Stancola Band' that plays many of the parish fairs and other functions. It plays the Donaldsonville Fair along
with Al Decks' 108th Cavalry Band, the band that plays for the grand dance. Jimmie Shee is director. (Sept. 27th.)

1925

There is little mention about the use of jazz bands to play for the silent movies, but at Theater Wilbert it seems to be a standard practice:

"Theatre Wilbert, Plaquemine. No play of the sort would be complete without a jazz orchestra and Saxi Holtsworth and his associates make themselves heard throughout the performance."

The annual Firemen's Parade again lists a number of brass bands that participate in their parade:

"Among the bands engaged for the big Firemen's Parade on May 10th are the LSU Band of Baton Rouge, under the leadership of Prof. Guilbeau, Prof. Perrino's Italian Band, also of the Capital City, Ferra's Band of New Orleans and Claiborne Williams Band of this place. Negotiations are pending for the engagement of another band." (May 2nd.)

The parade, despite the inclement weather, was held. The LSU Band did not make an appearance. Bands that did manage to make the parade were the Tulane Band and Ferrera's Band #2 of New Orleans.

We again read of the James Orchestra from Thibodaux playing at Lake Ferret:

"There will be big doings at Lake Verret tomorrow. Besides fishing and bathing there will be a grand dance in the spacious pavilion of that popular resort. Music for which will be furnished by the James Orchestra of Thibodaux. Dancing will begin at 3:00." (May 16th.)

The Donaldsonville Elks, a popular and very active club, hold a dance and engage a new band:

"Elks dance. Music for the occasion was furnished by the famous Chicago Rambler Serenaders Band. The music was excellent and enjoyed by all." (May 16th.)

The steamer "Capitol" returns to Donaldsonville with a New York Jazz Band on board:

"Great Orchestra on Steamer Capitol. The deluxe excursion steamer "Capitol" of the Streckfus Steamboat Line has always been noted for the wonderful orchestras that have played on the boat, and on this cruise down the Mississippi en route to New Orleans for the winter season, they are presenting a wonderful New York orchestra, the Burke-Thurston's Melody Kings. This combination has been playing during the summer on the
"Capitol" as it toured the cities of the northern Mississippi, and the tremendous reception that they received at the different cities where the "Capitol" stopped, lead the management to select them from the orchestras upon their steamers; J. S., St. Paul, Capitol and Washington to play for the southern cruise to New Orleans.

Before coming to the "Capitol" this orchestra was playing in vaudeville on the Keith's circuit on Broadway, and in the East under the direction of Paul Specht, also at the Waldorf Astoria Roof Garden and the McAlphin Hotel. While under the direction of Ray Miller they were featured at the Brooklyn Auto Show held at the Twenty-Third Street Armory, and at the famous Paris Gardens.

Raymond Thurston, the trombonist, is now the director and arranger, J. W. Walker, the cornetist, and Edward Martin, who was with the steamer Leviathan orchestra, plays the tuba. The saxophone section consists of Harry Duke formerly in vaudeville with the original "Chicago Five," Arnold Biernbaum and R. B. Amidon; Lester Russell plays the banjo; Martin Jones the piano and Polk Burke with the drums complete the personnel of the best orchestra that the "Capitol" has ever had.

After the cruise to New Orleans this orchestra will return direct to New York City to play an extended engagement at the famous Broadway Cabaret, "The Silver Slipper." They will play on the deluxe steamer Capitol Monday, September 28, and this will be the only opportunity to hear this wonderful New York orchestra." (Sept. 5th.)

The private social life of Donaldsonville, while it does not get as much notice as large public activities, continues to remain active. We read of a small surprise party for the Cassos:

"Young Couple Given Surprise Party. A delightful surprise party was given Tuesday night by the younger members of the Elks in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Casso who returned Monday from their honeymoon. The newlyweds were the last ones to arrive and as they entered the dance hall the band played "Here Comes The Bride." Many toasts were made to their future health and happiness. The dance was one of the most enjoyable given recently. Music for the occasion was furnished by Comeaux's Jazz Band of Thibodaux." (August 15th.)

The Destrehan Fair engages the Pan-American Brass Band of New Orleans (June 18th) Many well-known bands play in Donaldsonville in 1925 that we shall read about. Another new band plays for a fair in Gonzales:

"Fair at Gonzales, benefit of Catholic Church. Music by 7 Snappy Serenaders of Baton Rouge." (Sept. 15th.)

The saxophone is becoming the most popular instrument in the jazz band, so popular that we see formed, saxophone bands. In the Sept. 26th paper we have a picture of the "Stancola Saxophone Band of New Orleans, fifty strong, (Sic: See appendix.) which, through the courtesy of the Stancola Company will be one of the feature attractions on New Orleans Day at the South Louisiana Fair." (Sept. 26th.)
The local Elks are known for their social activities, especially their fondness for dancing. The Elks give an Armistice Dance on Nov. 10th:

The officers of the local lodge of Elks have sent out letters to the members announcing a grand Armistice dance to be given at the Elks' Home, Tuesday, November 10. The letter read in part as follows:

"The dance committee has engaged through the Dixie Orchestra Circuit, the services of the Mississippi Six of Grinnell, Iowa, to play for this dance. This orchestra comes very highly recommended, and have been making decided hits at every place they played. The San Antonio, Texas, country club declared it to be the best orchestra they had ever had. This should be a treat for all lovers of jazz dance music, so come to the Elks' Home next Tuesday night, November 10, light-hearted and joyful; put aside all labor and trouble and participate in this Armistice celebration. The price will be $2, and all Elks, their families and guests are invited to be present." (Nov. 7th.)

The steamer Capitol is being redecorated and the Skreckfus Steamboat Line sends its band on an overland tour:

"Peacock Band to be here December 1. In response to numerous requests, the management of the big excursion Steamer Capitol, is going to send its wonderful Peacock Charleston Band on a special tour during the early part of December while the steamer is being redecorated.

Donaldsonville is included in the itinerary of the Peacock Band, and Tuesday, December 1st, is the date scheduled for a dance under the auspices of Donaldsonville Lodge of Elks to be given in their handsome home in Railroad Avenue and tickets may be secured from any of the members.

The St. Louis Peacock Charleston Band is featuring Dewey Jackson, the Cornet-Wizard and the originator of the Wah Wah cornet. Tom Lovingood is the King of the ivories and Roy Johnson performs on the saxophone, while Will Foster's big stunt is picking the bass violin strings. Charles Bailey is the saxophone wonder and the other members of the band are all musical stars.

This band is composed of colored musicians from all parts of the United States that were assembled by the chief musical director of the Streckfus Line, and have played all summer on an excursion out of St. Louis, and are now engaged for the winter season to play on the Steamer Capitol at New Orleans.

The date of Tuesday, December 1, is the only date assigned to Donaldsonville and that will be the only opportunity for the people of this community to hear and dance to the snappy musical numbers that took New Orleans off its feet and created a sensation among the dance fans of that city." (Nov. 21.)

1926

Dancing was the most popular social activity of this period and while not surprising, some controversy occurs as to the moral of dance halls and some of the
unsociable activities such as drinking that takes place in them. In an article reprinted from the Thibodaux paper in the 'Chief' we read:

"A Lafourche public speaker recently severely condemned the number of dance halls that are springing up over the parish. He said that they are in many cases "blinds" for the sale of liquor and to contribute to immorality among the young men and girls of the parish. In his opinion he declared, the license should be raised so as to put a stop to the erection of additional dance halls. "Nearly all the money young men can secure," he continued, "is spent at the dance hall and therefore the average young man is without funds for worthy purposes. The condition discourages marriages and bring on a situation that is sad to contemplate.

"There is undoubtedly much truth in what the speaker said. There was a time when a couple of dances during a season were sufficient to satisfy the desire of the young. Later dances were given monthly and it was not every young man who could even stand the financial strain caused by a monthly disbursement for dances. Still, the craze for dancing and money making on the part of the dance-hall promoters became so great that two or three public dances a week are becoming common things. If the dance halls limited themselves to dancing only the condition might not be so bad, but when, as is said to be the case at times, liquor is dispensed then the dance is no longer an innocent social affair. It becomes a debauchery and as such deserves to be condemned by everybody, especially mothers who ought to try and safeguard the purity of their daughters.

There was a time that certain families would not allow their daughters to attend what were known as "Terrebonne dances," the dances being staged between Thibodaux and Schriever. The mothers, with justification, condemned those dances because some of the boys got drunk, lights were blown out and fights often occurred. Today, however, some mothers do not appear to be as particular about their daughters' association." (April 10th.)

Boat rides continue to be very popular and the Elks sponsor a moonlight ride on May 4th:

"Next Tuesday night will be 'Elks Night' on the steamer Capitol, when the Donaldsonville Elks and their friends will board the steamer for a moonlight trip on the Mississippi.

The coming of the Capitol has been looked forward to for many weeks, and indications are that a large crowd will take in the excursion. It will be the only opportunity to ride on this wonderful excursion steamer until next fall, as the boat is on its way up the river to St. Louis.

Coming on the Capitol is that wonderful colored band that made such a hit here last winter on their tour of Southern Cities. This band was on the Capitol during its entire winter season at New Orleans and instantly became the sensation of the city. Dancers proclaiming them the best dance orchestra ever in the Crescent City. They will play for dancing in the Capitol's fairy dance palace on the Elks excursion." (May 1st.)
Many of the future dance jobs are played by the Black Devils and the Midnight Serenaders/Harmony 6 (Sic: See pages 315). There are constantly new bands being mentioned as the activity of dancing was very popular and there seems to be more dances then there were dance bands:

"Dance at Corbo's Hall, July 25th, music for the occasion will be furnished by the J. Johnson Jazz Band. (July 24th.)

I think this 'Johnson' is the famous 'Toots' Johnson of Baton Rouge.

The Fair is still a common activity in the parish and we read of one at Bayou Goula. Unfortunately for our research they do not name the band that is playing:

"A big fair will be given in Bayou Goula tomorrow for the benefit of St. Paul's Catholic church. The fair will open at 10 o'clock a.m. and there will be amusements and entertainment for children as well as adults. There will be flying horses, lotto games, tables with all kinds of beautiful articles, fancy work of all kinds, which will be practically given away. Meals and refreshments will be served throughout the day, spaghetti supper, and a dramatic play entitled, "The Rose of the Southland." Music will be furnished by a well-known orchestra." (August 4th.)

The Capitol returns to Donaldsonville on Sept. 11th, and an excellent description is printed in the local newspaper:

"Finest Excursion Steamer Coming Monday, Sept. 27. Romance, beauty and historical lore combine to make the Mississippi river a stream of great charm. The present day excursion steamers of the Streckfus line give you an opportunity to enjoy a ride on the father of waters, the grand old Mississippi, while enjoying every comfort and convenience. The hospitality of the steamer Capitol has never been taxed, and its capacity to entertain is well known, and will be proven to the patrons of the steamer in this vicinity when the Capitol will take an excursion out of Donaldsonville Monday, September 227, under auspices of the local Elks. Streckfus steamers have always been noted for their good music, and as usual in the ball room ten snappy syncopating artists will render the dancing program. Amplifiers that have been installed on this steamer broadcast the softest notes of the dreamy waltz to the farthest end of the deck, where rockers and comfortable lounging chairs have been placed so one can rest and listen to the music as the steamer glides over the water. Arrangements are under way to make this visit of the Capitol the most enjoyable, and all are cordially invited." (Sept. 11th.)

The band on this excursion is the Fate Marble 'Cotton Pickers' and we read of this excursion the following week in another story about the Sept. 27th excursion, this time the name of the band is mentioned:

"Excursion and Dance on Steamer Capitol by Local Lodge Elks:
"The young people of this city and vicinity look forward with much pleasurable anticipation to the coming of the steamer Capitol, which is due here on Monday, September 27. A grand moonlight excursion and dance will be given on the palatial steamer, under the auspices of the local lodge of Elks. The boat will leave from the ferry landing at 8 o'clock and will return at 11:30. Dancing music will be furnished by the celebrated Cotton Pickers' orchestra, said to be one of the best dispensers of music in the country. There are large promenade decks on the boat and nooks with comfortable chairs for those who do not dance but who can appreciate a delightful river ride to the strains of entrancing music. A very enjoyable time is assured to all those who "take in" this excursion." (Sept. 18th.)

The excursion is later noted in the paper as a 'success':

"The river excursion and dance given under the auspices of the local lodge of Elks, on the palatial steamer Capitol of the Streckfus line, Tuesday night, was a grand success." (Sept. 28th.)

We find picture of the Cotton Pickers Orchestra in the Sept. 18th paper (Sic: See appendix.) with a small text accompanying it that says: "The famous Cotton Pickers Orchestra will furnish matchless dance music on the Deluxe Steamer Capitol this fall when the boat lands at this port. A spot in Dixie is the impression given. They sing old southern songs and new, pepful ones as well." (Sept. 18th.)

We find another article talking about the excursion and remark that it was a success:

"River Excursion on Steamer Capitol Success. The river excursion and dance given under the auspices of the local lodge of Elks, on the palatial steamer Capitol of the Streckfus line, Tuesday night was a grand success.

The steamer bedecked with flags and brilliantly illuminated with hundreds of electric lights and with over 650 people aboard, departed at 8:15 and steamed up the river for a distance of about six miles and returned to its landing at about 11 o'clock. A large crowd of people gathered on the levee to witness the departure of the boat.

The famous Cotton Pickers' orchestra discoursed the very latest jazz music and all dancers hand a most delightful time. The excursion netted $80 for the Elks under whose auspices it was given." (Oct. 2nd.)

We read that the "Harmony Six (Sic: see page 317 for their history) plays for a K. of C. dance in which two other orchestras make a guest appearance:

"K. of C. Country Barn Dance Big Success. The country barn dance given by Ascension Council No. 1087 Knights of Columbus, at their hall Thursday night, was a most gratifying success both socially and financially. The attendance was very large and dancing lasted until long past the midnight hour. Excellent music was furnished for the occasion by the Harmony Six Orchestra, and towards the close of the affair, the Stratomos
Buena Vista Orchestra, composed of nine artists playing thirty instruments, after their engagement at the Grand Theater, rendered a few choice dance selections complimentary, and the orchestra of the Dubinsky Stock Company which is playing a week's engagement in this city, also played a few of the latest dance pieces as a treat to the dancers, all of which were greatly enjoyed by those in attendance." (Oct. 30th.)

After playing for a dance in Napoleonville the Harmony Six play for a dance at the Donaldsonville High School:

"Tomorrow night this excellent orchestra (Harmony Six) will delight the terpsichoreans of this city at a dance and party to be given by the Juniors of the Donaldsonville High School at the Knights of Columbus Hall. Gordon Glasclard, the popular entertainer and assistant manager of the orchestra, promise a big time to the belles and beaux attending the dance. Dainty refreshments will be sold at moderate prices. The orchestra boys are gaining in popularity day by day and are much sought after by social clubs all over this section of the state." (Oct. 30th.)

We next read of the popular Mex-Pet Concert Band of Destrehan that is in town to participate in the annual Firemen's Parade. News of the 3rd anniversary of the Plaquemine Sanitarium is included in the 'Chief' as the town is just upriver from Donaldsonville:

"3rd anniversary of Plaquemine Sanitarium at Daigle's Auditorium. Music will be furnished by Jefferson's Jazz Orchestra." (Oct. 16th.)

The Mohawk Tribe, a local social club, sponsors a dance at K. of C. Hall:

"Mohawk Tribe at K of C Hall. Music furnished by the Zulu Band. One of the amusing features of the dance was the waltz and two-step rendered by John Schaff." (Oct. 23rd.)

Many times the local social clubs would import an orchestra from New Orleans for their dance, either upon recommendation or because no local group was available. The Elks engaged the Ellis Stratekos Orchestra near the end of 1926. Ellis Stratakos, a trombonist, was born in New Orleans Dec. 1, 1904. He was a contemporary of the Dedroit Brothers and Johnny Wiggs. For many years he fronted a dance band at the Jung Hotel Roof in New Orleans. He was popular along the Mississippi Gulf Coast and in many country towns in Louisiana. His orchestra in the 1920s and 1930s included: Johnny Wiggs, Louis Prima, Howard Reed, Irving Fazola, Dave Weinstein, Johnny Reininger, Joe Loyacano, Eddie Powers, Joe Wolfe, Freddie Neumann, Frank Federico, Al Hessemer, Freddie Loyacano, Freddie Chretien, Louis Masinter, Don Peterson, Augie Schellang and Von Gammon. It seemed to be the custom when a new band had been engaged that it plays a series of jobs in the same area - thus Stratekos is likewise engaged for other jobs besides the first Elks dance:
"Dance by Young Members of Elks A Big Success. The dance given by the younger members of the local lodge of Elks Wednesday night, proved a delightful success. There were many couples on the floor and they tripped the light fantastic toe until a late hour. Music for the occasion was furnished by the Stratakos Buena Vista Orchestra, which gave a concert at the Grand Theatre just before the dance. The orchestra is composed of nine members playing thirty different instruments." (Nov. 27th.)

"Elks to Give Another Dance on December 3rd. The young members of the local lodge of Elks will give another dance at the Elks' home next Friday night, and have arranged with Ellis' Stratekos and his Gulf Coast Orchestra to furnish music for the occasion. The orchestra, played two nights at the Grand Theater and also at the Elks' home where a large number of people heard and enjoyed their music. The orchestra is composed of nine artists, playing thirty instruments. They play all of the latest selections and the music rendered by them is of the highest order. Over 150 post cards containing pictures of the members of the orchestra with their instruments have been mailed to the young people in this city and vicinity." (Nov. 27th.)

"Elks Dance Big Success Stratakos' Music Fine. The dance given by the young members of the local lodge of Elks, at the beautiful Elks' home last night, was one of the most largely attended and successful staged here in a long time. The music was furnished by Ellis Stratakos and his famous Gulf Coast Orchestra, who have been filling an engagement at the Grand Theater and also playing for entertainments and dances here and in neighboring towns, and who dispersed some of the best dance music ever head in this city. The music was a delight not only to the terpsichoreans, but also to the large number of people who did not dance but who went to enjoy the splendid selections rendered by the orchestra." (Dec. 4th.)

1927

Jazz was the subject of many editorials in the leading magazines and newspapers of the late 20's. Many predicted an early death for the jazz idiom. The minstrels were also influenced by the jazz rhythms and included jazz bands in their performance, i.e., the All-Star Minstrels:

"Lasses, Minstrels to Hold the Boards at Theatre Wilbert. Despite the prediction made by many critics during the past few years that jazz was but a fad of monetary popularity and would be forgotten very soon it would seem to have grown in favor with the multitude and certain it is that of all the volume of music of various kinds that 'Lasses' has incorporated in the current offerings of his all-star minstrels which comes to Theatre Wilbert, Plaquemine, Sunday, Feb. 6th. None have enjoyed greater favor than the jazz numbers for the rendition of which Bob Feagin and his Melody Boys have won the critics' praise. 'Lasses' has arranged a special number for 'The Jazzy Syncopators' and to it has given an arrangement of jazz numbers which as played by the all-stars never fails to win a commendation. The melody boys are: Roland O'Donnell, 'Bob' Maurin, Charles Pease, Eddie Allen, Charles McFeely, Emmett McAtee and Director Fegin." (Jan. 29th.)
Another riverboat, the Island Queen comes to Donaldsonville and gives an excursion:

"Island Queen to give river excursion here. America's largest inland water pleasure steamer, and in fact the longest in the world, will stop off at Donaldsonville, Thursday, March 23 enroute from New Orleans, where it has wintered to its home port at Cincinnati, and will give an excursion under the auspices of the local tribe of Red Men and Naponie Council, Daughters of Pocahontas, for the benefit of the Boy Scouts of this city. Here is a great palatial river steamer built at a cost of over $400,000, of sold steel construction and with features that surpass those of the greatest ocean liners. It is non-sinkable; smokeless and as clean as a pin from bow to stern.

The people of Donaldsonville will witness a salon that is the largest and finest on any ship in the world 250 feet long and 63 feet wide with a wonderful polished maple-wood floor. The salon is beautifully decorated and immediately charms. The Island Queen is bringing its own orchestra, an exceptionally superb collection of colored musicians. This particular orchestra is the pride of New Orleans society, having been selected as the principal orchestra for many of the society debut parties and the Carnival balls that the Crescent City is famous for the world over.

The Island Queen is the newest and safest pleasure excursion steamer plying the inland waters. Its hull is made up of 34 transverse water-tight compartments, not connected, and in case of injury would suffer only the flooding of the punctured compartment. The oil-burning is a feature of particular interest, for there is no cinders, no dust and no room lost in the storage of fuel.

The Island Queen is handsomely equipped. There are spacious decks with large roomy rocking chairs for those who wish to view the river scenery or listen to the music in the salon; a cafeteria restaurant with the finest cooking and most delectable and savory dishes; hundreds of tables for those who wish to bring their own lunches; hundreds of comfortable chairs for every one and plenty of room for the largest crowds for the Island Queen has a capacity of 5500 people.

The boat is beautifully illuminated at night time with a solid mass of brilliant white lights over the exterior and with soft, colored dome lights in the interior. Three power engines furnish the electricity for these 4000 electric bulbs. On the upper deck is a powerful search light that throws a white stream of light for many hundreds of yards and can be seen for a mile away." (Feb. 26th.)

During certain times of the year there is a slowdown in social activities. During the winter months, because of the weather, there are not as many dances. In the mostly Catholic area of Southern Louisiana, the period during lent sees an elimination of many social activities, especially dancing, which is, many times, given up for lent. While the Catholic Church was a very active social organization, the church parishes had their own halls to hold such activities, and the paper would run certain rules of the church for its readers to help communications between the church and its members, which most often included the editor of the local paper and the leader of the local band. To understand this period of Lent the paper published the following:


OBSERVANCE OF LENT

Origins of the ecclesiastical season known as Lent, which began on Ash Wednesday, March 21 have been difficult to trace, but it is known that this fact had been practiced by early Christians before the time of Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons in the second century, who mentions it in his writings.

In the beginning, however, the fast of Lent was observed for varying periods, by some only one or two days, by others for a longer time, until finally the present period of forty days, excluding Sundays, was agreed upon.

Pope Leo I, in the fourth century, recommended the fast of forty days as having apostolic authority, that number being taken to commemorate the forty days' fast of Moses, of Filijah, and particularly that of Christ. Ascension Day is observed forty days after Easter Sunday.

Theoretically, at least, the faithful abstain from food on fast days until evenings, while worldly amusements are to be avoided and marriages are held to be undesirable during Lent. The duty of fasting is modified with respect to laborers, children and women under certain conditions, but increased religious observances are enjoined upon all.

Lent is generally observed by the Roman and Greek Catholic churches, the Church of England, the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Lutherans and perhaps some others.

Being governed by the date upon which Easter falls, Ash Wednesday marking the beginning of Lent occurs on various dates, usually in February, but occasionally in March as is the case this year."(March 5th.)

(sic: The celebration of Mardi Gras occurred on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday and is the last chance before the Lenten season to schedule social activities.)

The Steamer Capitol is reported to be coming to Donaldsonville in May in an article in the April 16th paper:

"Steamer Capitol to be Here Next Month. The management of the Streckfus steamers have just announced that they have scheduled their deluxe steamer Capitol to play Donaldsonville, Tuesday, May 3. The steamer Capitol has been a semi-annual visitor and needs no introduction. Mississippi boat rides have long been the balance wheel of a round of pleasure. With fine new equipment, rare music, roomy deck chairs, excellent meal service, a steamer Capitol boat ride has become the best pleasure treat. Knowing what is wanted in the way of dance music, the management will offer a delightful evening of dancing on the smooth floor of the steamer Capitol, Tuesday, May 3, to the strains of feet-compelling music, rendered by the most famous dance orchestra in New Orleans. (Sic: The Cotton Pickers' of Fate Marable) The steamer Capitol is en route to the waters of the Northern Mississippi for the summer season." (April 16th.)

On April 21st the Capitol does return to the city for a cruise on May 8th.:

Steamer Capitol Coming Here Tuesday, May 8. Streckfus Steamers inform us that they have scheduled their steamer Capitol for a moonlight excursion out of Donaldsonville on Tuesday, May 8, under the auspices of the local lodge of Elks, leaving
Donaldsonville at 8:30 p.m. The steamer Capitol is bringing that same wonderful orchestra that has been aboard her last spring and fall, the Cotton Pickers. This combination has just completed its second winter engagement at New Orleans aboard the steamer Capitol where it is considered the best orchestra in the city. They are an exceptional superb combination of musicians versed in all the newest dance music. They play in the beautifully redecorated dancing salon of this deluxe steamer. Great plans are being made for this semi-annual event of the steamer Capitol, which is en route to St. Louis and waters of the northern Mississippi, where it is scheduled to ply during the summer.

For the benefit and convenience of excursionists from the east bank of the river, the steamer Capitol will return at 11:30 o'clock, in ample time to enable them to make connection with the last trip of the ferryboat Ruth, which leaves the Donaldsonville side at midnight. The dance on the vessel will continue until 12 o'clock." (April 21st.)

In its advertisement the Streckfus Line emphasizes their famous band, the Cotton Pickers:

"Famous Dance Orchestra on Steamer Capitol, The New Orleans Cotton Pickers Band is coming on the steamer Capitol. Eleven musical artists of jazz under the leadership of Professor Fate Marable, the piano wizard. Costumed and grouped in the beautiful setting of the blue fields of Virginia, they play the music of all music. Streckfus steamers in the past have always given the people the best in steamer service and music, and the success of past rides bespeaks for their popularity, and we again welcome the big whistle of the good steamer Capitol coming to Donaldsonville, Tuesday, May 3. This excursion will be conducted under the auspices of the local lodge of Elks. Their past rides have always been very successful, and judging from the advance sale of tickets, the coming trip will carry the banner for attendance." (April 23rd.)

The Catholic Church understood the power and influence of ceremonies and the Feast of St. Amico was observed every year with a procession with band (that is, until a new Bishop stopped the celebration, as it did not have the full backing of the hierarchy of the Catholic church).

"FEAST OF ST. AMICO TO BE OBSERVED SUNDAY, APRIL 24.

The feast of St. Amico will be observed with the usual ceremony this year by the Italians of 'A' Bend and this city on Sunday, April 24th.

There will be a grand procession in which the statue of St. Amico will be born, leaving the chapel in 'A' Bend at 9:30 a.m., and marching up the river to Donaldsonville, to the strains of appropriate music furnished by Claiborne Williams' band. High mass will be celebrated at the Ascension Catholic church, at 11 o'clock, after which there will be a display of fireworks in front of the church. The procession will then return to 'A' Bend and the balance of the day will be devoted to feasting on the grounds of the chapel.

At night there will be a grand dance and fireworks at the Fair Grounds in this city. The dancing will begin at 7 o'clock and the fireworks' display will be at 10 p.m." (April 16th.)
The Steamer Capitol, in a routine that will become regular, returns from further north to Donaldsonville for a May 3rd excursion. We read:

"The management of the Streckfus steamers have just announced that they have scheduled their deluxe steamer Capitol to play Donaldsonville, Tuesday, May 3. The steamer Capitol has been a semi-annual visitor and needs no introduction. Mississippi boat rides have long been the balance wheel of a round of pleasure. With fine new equipment, rare music, roomy deck chairs, excellent meal service, a steamer Capitol boat ride has become the best pleasure treats. Knowing what is wanted in the way of dance music, the management will offer a delightful evening of dancing on the smooth floor of the steamer Capitol, Tuesday, May 3, to the strains of feet-compelling music, rendered by the most famous dance orchestra in New Orleans. The steamer Capitol is en route to the waters of the Northern Mississippi for the summer season." (April 16th.)

The Capitol schedules this May 3rd excursion with the Cotton Pickers playing the music on board:

"Famous Dance Orchestra On Steamer Capitol. The New Orleans Cotton Pickers Band is coming on the steamer Capitol. Eleven musical artists of jazz under the leadership of Professor Fate Marable, the piano wizard. Costumed and grouped in the beautiful setting of the blue fields of Virginia, they play the music of all music. Streckfus steamers in the past have always given the people the best in steamer service and music, and the success of past rides speaks for their popularity, and we again welcome the big whistle of the good steamer Capitol coming to Donaldsonville, Tuesday, May 3. This excursion will be conducted under the auspices of the local lodge of Elks. Their past rides have always been very successful, and judging from the advance sale of tickets, the coming trip will carry the banner for attendance." (April 23rd.)

Another young orchestra was formed called the 'Collegiate Serenaders':

"Young Musicians Organize orchestra. The 'Collegiate Serenaders,' an orchestra composed of young men of this city, was organized last month and will dispense music for parties in the near future. The following compose the orchestra; T. O. Thibodaux, banjo; D. Crawford, drum; A. Chapman and N. Picou, saxophone; R. Picou, violin; P. Bessonet, cornet; T. Thibodaux has charge of arrangement for the orchestra.

All of the members are good musicians. They are popular with the young social set in this community and they are working hard and practicing often and their services will no doubt soon be in generous demand for parties, dances, balls and similar functions.

The many friends of the 'Collegiate Serenaders' wish the orchestra much success." (May 28th.)

Most activities have either the Harmony 6/7 Band or the Black Devils playing.(Sic: See page 314, etc.)
"Birthday party - Albert Dominque. The musical program, which was a treat to all those present, was rendered by the Jolly Serenaders, a recently organized orchestra of Donaldsonville." (June 1st.)

The Zulu Orchestras plays again for a dance:

"Dance at Grand Bayou was well attended. Another dance tonight - The Zulu Orchestra." (June 1st.)

A dance is held by the Moro Social Club with music by a female trio:

"Dance by Moro Social Club at Moro Factory. Music by a trio of the factory girls, with piano, guitar and banjo." (Nov. 26th.)

1928

The bands in this year's Firemen Parade include the LSU Cadet Band, the Loyola University Band of New Orleans, Denson's Band of this city, the Morgan City Band and the Thibodaux Band.

The Denson Band was then engaged to play for the next year's parade

"The Denson's Band made a decided 'hit' with the splendid music which it furnished and so well pleased was the fire company for which it played that the band has already been engaged to play for the same company in next years parade." (June 2nd.)

A new band, the Home Town Sparklers, plays for a dance at Corbo's Hall:

"Grand dance at Corbo's Hall, Barton, where good music will be furnished by the Home Town Sparklers. Those popular musicians will play with their usual amount of jazz and pep, and will have all the latest and most popular selections." (June 2nd.)

While we do not read of too many musical contests, there is one mentioned in the August 11th issue of the 'Chief.'

"Elks musical contest and dance, Sunday, August 18th. The contestants will be two good orchestras, the Silver Leaf Orchestra and the White Elephants." (August 11th.)

Still another new band is named when they play for a dance in Plaquemine:


A wave of the future is seen as the "Grand Theatre has acquired a new electric piano". (Sept. 1st.)
A group called the 'Deluxe Harmony Players' furnish music for a big two day fair at the Catholic Church in St. Amant. (Sept. 15th) and a group of musicians combines to play for the Catholic Daughters:

"Catholic Daughters celebration - 25th birthday. Delightful music for the occasion furnished by the following: K. Koche-pianist, Jean Aucoin-banjoist, Lowell Gisclard-who played the drum, 'Buddy' Chapman-playing the saxophone." (Sept. 29th.)

The Capitol makes it 1928 appearance for an excursion on September 27th:

"Cotton Pickers Orchestra on Steamer Capitol Excursion. The famous Southland orchestra, the Cotton Pickers, will again be aboard the deluxe steamer Capitol when it comes to Donaldsonville and Darrow on Thursday, September 27, for the Elks' moonlight excursion. Last winter it was considered the best orchestra in New Orleans, having played a limited engagement aboard the steamer Capitol and at several of the Mardi Gras balls, and Streckfus steamers were indeed fortunate to secure its services for the summer at St. Louis. It has taken St. Louis by storm this summer and here it is again. A rare musical treat! The choice of New Orleans and St. Louis dance fans will play for you the arrangements that sizzle with rhythm and melody. From the first irresistible blue note of the moaning trombone, to the final wail of the shivery saxophone, you'll have a real time aboard the Capitol Thursday, September 27." (Sept. 29.)

The riverboat Island Queen is in Donaldsonville for an excursion on October 19th:

"River Boat Excursion Benefit Local K. of C. A grand moonlight river excursion will be given on the palatial steamer Island Queen, on Friday night, October 19, for the benefit of Ascension Council Knights of Columbus.

It matters not whether it rains on the night of the boat ride, because the Island Queen is enclosed in glass, and can be heated immediately in case the night is cool. There are spacious decks on which pleasure seekers of all ages can enjoy a genuine treat, and surrounding the beautiful dance hall there is a balcony with comfortable rocking chairs for those who take delight in watching the dancers.

This great river steamer was built at a cost of over $400,000. It is of steel construction and with features that surpass those of the greatest ocean liners. It is non-sinkable, smokeless and as clean as a pin from bow to stern.

The dancing salon is the largest and finest on any ship in the world, being 250 feet long and 63 feet wide, with a wonderful polished maplewood floor that lets the dancers' feet glide as if they were dancing on glass. The salon is beautifully decorated and immediately charms everyone. The Island Queen is bringing its own orchestra, an exceptionally superb collection of Negro musicians versed in all the newest dance music. This particular orchestra is the pride of New Orleans society, having been selected as the principal orchestra for many of the society debut parties and the Carnival balls that the Crescent City is famous for the world over.
The young people of this city are looking forward to the coming of the Island Queen with pleasurable anticipation and the indications are that a very large number will board the splendid boat for the delightful ride." (Oct. 13th.)

We have seen how citizens of one town will travel to another nearby town to attend a concert or a dance, and we read about visiting bands in the local papers. Donaldsonville's population was on a par or larger than that of Baton Rouge during the early of the 20th Century but gradually Baton Rouge, now the state capitol grew. It is with this popular growth that we read in the Chief that the national famous Paul Whiteman Orchestra will play in Baton Rouge on October 30th:

"The famous Whiteman Orchestra, whose tantalizing jazz and modern American music has won fame throughout the nations of the world, has been engaged to play at the Baton Rouge Senior High School the night of Tuesday, Oct. 30, when those popular musicians will thrill their audience with their marvelous playing of all the latest selections of that type of music which has taken the world by storm.

"Jazz is the only international music," declared Paul Whiteman, leader of the Whiteman Orchestra, "For many years Europe ignored all our attempts at art. Now we have given them jazz, at first despised at home but now respected everywhere.

"To me, the so-called jazz harmonization serves two admirable purposes. The first is educational; the second, creative. Whereas people formerly bought popular records only to dance, they now buy them to listen to."

Mr. Whiteman and his orchestra ignore the mediocre class of music, giving their audiences only what is best. The former declares that there is both good and poor jazz as well as other kinds of musical quality, and that only the best of the so-called jazz, output interests him. Semi-classical music also forms a large part of the Whiteman program.

The fact that Europe went wild over jazz and American musicians who played it proves the superiority of that class of music over all others. The Whiteman boys were nearly mobbed in Berlin last year.

"Only the American dollar is more welcome than jazz in foreign lands," Mr. Whiteman remarked.

How jazz has become America's musical message to the world is told officially in statistics recently released by the United States Department of Commerce. These figures, together with records from London, Paris and Vienna now available, show the American music is exported to every country of the world.

Mr. Whiteman's contract in Baton Rouge will reveal clearly his conception of the new and popular American art, and a real treat is in store for all who attend." (Oct. 20th.)

School bands and orchestras are appearing as town sponsored bands are disappearing. We read of St. Joseph's school forming an orchestra:

"St. Joseph's Commercial Institute. A school orchestra was recently organized at St. Joseph's Commercial Institute, and their playing is really delightful. The members practice diligently, with most favorable results, and when they play before audiences, at the various programs rendered by the students of the two Catholic educational
institutions, they are encored again and again, which is sufficiently indicative of the pleasure which their music affords the fortunate ones who are present when they play. The members of the orchestra are: Pianist, Rev. P Gauci; violinist, Brother Finnian; soprano saxophone player, Brother Bernard; cornet player, Ned Picou; drummer, Duncan Crawford; alto saxophone players, Robert Picou; player of the clarinet, "Buddy" Chapman; bass, Leonard Schaff; C-Melody Saxophone player, Nolan Kooks." (Nov. 10th.)

1929

The "Jefferson Syncopators" play for a grand carnival ball in Plaquemine, La. (Jan. 26th.) to open the year, and the Traveling Sedwick Players (vaudeville troupe) present a play. Between the acts, music is furnished by the Melody Makers. (Feb. 2nd).

In Lauderdale the town brass band plays for a party in a private home:

"Enjoyable party/masquerade party at home of Bertaut in Lauderdale. Music was furnished by the Lauderdale Brass Band." (Feb. 23rd.)

In the spring of 1929 we read of another visit to Donaldsonville of the Steamer Capitol:

"Elks to Give Ride on Big Steamer Capitol, May 8. Spring brings the Steamer Capitol to Donaldsonville for a moonlight excursion on Wednesday, May 8, under the auspices of the Donaldsonville Lodge, B. P. O. Elks, leaving Donaldsonville at 8:30 o'clock p.m. and returning to Donaldsonville at 11:30 o'clock p.m. (Dancing will continue until midnight.) On its Striping cruise the palatial Steamer Capitol will only stop at the principal river towns enroute to St. Louis, and this summer it will ply the waters of the northern Mississippi river.

The Steamer Capitol is bringing that same wonderful orchestra that was aboard her last spring and fall - The Cotton Pickers. This combination of musical artists will have completed their third winter engagement at New Orleans aboard the Steamer Capitol when the Steamer Capitol leaves New Orleans this spring, and they have again been proclaimed the best dance orchestra in the city of New Orleans. You will love the music they play, from the old Mississippi melodies inspired by the mighty river to the most popular music of which originated from these old melodies. They play in the beautiful dancing salon of the high-class Steamer Capitol, which is only living up to its reputation, "Everything first class," deluxe steamer, service, syncopation, by bringing this orchestra on this up-river cruise of the Steamer Capitol of the Streckfus Steamers." (April 20th)

The St. Joseph Commercial Institute presents a play entitled "The Mummy and the Mumps." Their band, whose names are given play for the play:

"Apollo," the overture, "California March" and "The Dream Waltz' were very beautifully rendered by the orchestra of S. J. C. I comprising the following members; Rev. Paul Gauci, piano; Mrs. Louis Picou, piano; Brother Fiian, violin; Brother Bernon, Saxophone; Robert Picou, saxophone; Arthur Chapman, alto and clarinet; Ned Picou,
cornet and sousaphone; Nolan Kocke, saxophone; Duncan Crawford, drums; Emile Landry, drums." (May 4th.)

The Steamer Capitol has been redecorated and again returns to Donaldsonville with the famous orchestra "The Cotton Pickers" as the boat's orchestra. The advertising begins in the April 20th paper and again in the April 27th issue:

"Rivers are the blood vessels of the world. Every country has its river, and nearly all of them have received fame in song and poem. Our own Mississippi has been sung and written about. The love for the river in natural; it is hereditary. Mississippi melodies are played throughout the world, and the delightful music speaks for the beauty of the Mississippi. It has inspired much melodies as "Muddy Waters," "Mississipi Mud," "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers," "Ol' Man River," the song hit of the musical comedy, "The Show Boat," which is making a big hit in New York City today. The Cotton Pickers play all these tunes to the most popular music, jazz, which originated from these old melodies, aboard the Steamer Capitol, the deluxe steamer of the Streckfus fleet, which is coming to Donaldsonville Wednesday, May 8, for a moonlight excursion party and dance deluxe under the auspices of the Donaldsonville Elks. The hospitality of the Steamer Capitol has never been taxed and its capacity to entertain is well known. Its uniformed crews await you at every call. The new floral decorations, new wicker furniture, floor coverings, new rainbow dancing salon, in which the lights change color with each dance." (April 27, 1929)

A rather small, seemingly insignificant item appears in the paper but its material will issue in a new age for musicians: "Victrola used for music at a picnic." (June 15th). The popular use of the Victrola will grow and come to dominate the music scene. In the future it will become the most important music media, surpassing the use of sheet music.

We next read of the opening of a new swimming pool in Donaldsonville and what might seem incongruous to us today. The swimming pool hires a jazz band to furnish music for the swimmers:

"Local Swimming Pool Gaining in Popularity. That ole swimmin' hole of yore, which always during long, summer days was the rendezvous of lovers of that most popular of summer sports, a cool, invigorating dip and swim- has been replaced in Donaldsonville by a lovely, modern and strictly sanitary swimming pool, known as the Redmen Swimming Pool, which has increased in popularity as a rendezvous in proportion to its improvements as compared to that of its predecessors. The pool is a large one, the water cool, fresh and lovely in color, and the management of the place is such as to insure the safety of all who go in to enjoy a good swim. Large crowds of people are present each day and night and all have a splendid time each time they go in.

One of the outstanding features of the program planned by the management of the swimming pool in entering to the pleasure of the people of this city and community is a musical program to be rendered each Wednesday night by the famous White Elephants' Orchestra of this city, who are right there when it comes to furnishing all the latest and most popular musical selections. Last Wednesday night the place was crowded with
people swimming and onlookers and all enjoyed to the utmost the lovely music played by the elephants." (June 15th.) (Sic: The musical group the "White Elephants" is a group from Donaldsonville.

There is also an item telling of an event in the town of Luling, La.:

"K of C initiation at Luling tomorrow. A special mass will be said for the Knights at St. Anthony's Chapel at 9:00 and a 45 piece band will furnish music for the occasion." (July 13th.)

We read of the opening of the Redmen pool on July 17th. Not only is there a band but they have put in a place to dance:

"Dancing Pavilion to Open at Local Pool next Wednesday, July 17, will usher in a new era in the history of the Redmen Swimming Pool of this city, for it will witness the official "opening" of the dancing pavilion which the wide-awake members of Mohawk Tribe, Improved Order of Redmen, recently had constructed just back of the pool.

Being ever on the alert as to means of increasing the pleasure and amusement of the large crowds of people who went their way daily to the pool, those in charge have "hit" upon another very excellent plan which is sure to give general pleasure to all who go to the pool - that of having jitney dancing one night each week.

Hitherto, the feature night at the Redmen Swimming Pool has been Wednesday, when lovely musical programs were rendered by the famous and popular White Elephants Orchestra of Donaldsonville and brought joy to the hearts of all. Well, Wednesday will continue to be the feature night at the pool, but it will be quite a bit more so in the way of features. For besides being afforded the great pleasure of hearing the beautiful, tuneful harmony played by the Elephants those who care to do so (and undoubtedly there are many who will eagerly anticipate the joy) will henceforth be enabled to enjoy dancing, which will commence at about 7:30 o'clock.

Now don't by any means get the idea that the place for dancing is a rudely constructed outfit, for it isn't. There is a platform 48 x 32 feet, very durably constructed and finished with a lovely surface which will make you feel as though your feet are treading on air. To one side of the platform has been built a bandstand which has been so constructed as to have the sound of the music carried straight to the dancers, as well as to those who wish to merely be present for the pleasure of hearing the music. The platform is uncovered and is so situated as to be right in the path of the cool breezes blowing from the Mississippi river. The work of construction was in charge of J. I. Landsiche of this city, who is one of the very active members of Mohawk Tribe." (July 13th.)

The Swimming Pool dance attracts a large crowd as we read the results of the Mohawk Tribe's endeavor:

"Jitney Dances Attract Large Crowd at Redmen Swimming Pool. More than four hundred people were present at the Redmen Swimming Pool of Donaldsonville last Wednesday night to herald the official opening of the jitney dancing which is to be held at
that popular rendezvous every Wednesday night, and 'twas altogether a gala night presented. So many people went in swimming and many were diving. The band, the famous and popular White Elephants of Donaldsonville, were at their best, playing all the most popular dance "hits." Many people enjoyed dancing and there were others who went to the pool that night only to enjoy the cool, invigorating freshness of the place, hear the music and watch the fun. And a lot of fun there was, too, so that not one of the large crowd present felt as though he or she was "left out" of it all.

One of the features of the Wednesday night entertainments which give unlimited pleasure to all present is the singing of Sam Montero, one of our home boys, whose voice is such as to bring joy to his audiences when he sings all of the latest and most popular selections.

He sings in accompaniment to the band, and his singing is always looked forward to by all.

Much interest will no doubt be manifested in the diving contests which the management of the pool will conduct at 7:30 o'clock tomorrow evening, when prizes will be awarded the winners. All contestants are requested to hand in their names to the life-saver, Bennie Capone, just as early as possible. The contests will be sure to attract much interest, both as to the number of and the onlookers, for there are many in the vicinity of Donaldsonville and neighboring places who are apparently not in the least ignorant in the are of good diving." (July 20th.)

A popular attraction and form of entertainment was to have a 'Tom Thumb' wedding with music. Humorous weddings were a form of entertainment, whether it was men dressed up as women, or little children dressed as adults (Tom Thumb Wedding). The Jefferson Orchestra plays for the wedding." (July 17th.)

Still another steamer comes to Donaldsonville. The "J. S." will be coming in the fall and it is another steamer of the Streckfus fleet:

"Excursion Steamer "J.S." to Come Here This Fall. The "J.S." Steamer deluxe, the flagship of the Streckfus fleet, is scheduled for a cruise of the waters of the southern Mississippi river this coming fall. It will be the first time that palatial steamer is scheduled south of St. Louis, where it is classed with St. Louis's finest roof gardens and proclaimed the most beautifully decorated steamer on western rivers, catering only to the select class of people of St. Louis, giving high class service and limiting the attendance to one thousand, which is one-third of its capacity, in order to insure its patrons that it will give them this high class service.

The J. S. Steamer Deluxe will maintain this limited attendance policy on its cruise south in September, in order to give its patrons high class service, the same that is given in St. Louis, so that everyone may enjoy its hospitality. This, combined with its magnificent decorations - a water-spraying fountain to greet you at the entrance, steamer chairs, not a single folding chair being on the steamer, wicker furniture with gay colored cushions, gorgeous floor coverings, flower baskets hanging from the green and white canopied ceilings - will leave an indelible impression on the mind of everyone who rides this steamer.
Besides the unequaled decorations the J. S. Steamer Deluxe has an open-air dining room on the first deck and a cafeteria in the third deck serving delicious luncheons to satisfy the appetite of the most discriminating. And in the Venetian ball room, with its colored lights and gay colored swinging lanterns, the Cotton Pickers, with Fate Marable, the wizard of the ivories, at the piano and directing, play all of the popular dance music. It is the same combination of musical artists that was aboard the Steamer Capitol last spring and fall, and which will have just completed a summer engagement on the J. S. Steamer Deluxe at St. Louis, where it had been proclaimed the best orchestra in the city of St. Louis, when it starts on its cruise down the Mississippi.

The J. S. Steamer Deluxe is preceding the Steamer Capitol, which is another steamer of the Streckfus fleet and very familiar to the southern people, by six weeks. At present the Steamer Capitol is being entirely redecorated and refurnished and about six weeks after the J. S. excursion it will start its down-river cruise to New Orleans, where it has played for ten consecutive winters." (August 10th.)

The dances at the Swimming pool continue:

"Barn Dance at Redmen Swimming Pool The desire which is ever uppermost in the minds of the management of the local Redmen Swimming Pool - that of giving to the hundreds of people who go to the pool each week the very best there is in the way of amusement - has led those men to devise a clever idea which is sure to bring delight to the hearts of all. There will be unutterable joy in anticipating the event, and when the time arrives - why that joy will know no bounds.

On Wednesday, August 21, there is going to be a grand barn dance given at the pavilion which was recently constructed on the grounds in which the pool is enclosed. Overalls and gingham aprons will be worn, assuring all of comfort; splendid plans are being formed and worked out by the management, assuring all of a grand time; wonderful music will be furnished by the popular White Elephants Orchestra of this city - 'nuf said about that, for the name of the orchestra is sufficient to assure one and all of some of the best music they have ever heard.

The dances given at the Redmen Swimming Pool each Wednesday night has been increasing in popularity every week, the cost being either the regular rates for jitney dancing or one dollar for the entire time. And right here we might say that the charges for dancing at the barn dance to be given on Wednesday, August 21, will be the same as usual on Wednesday night.

The surface of the dance floor has been treated and planed with an electric machine, so that it is now so smooth that you have to watch your step when you walk on it. And when you dance on it you feel as though you are floating alone on airy space.

Another improvement which has been added to the large number of pleasures and comforts at the local pool comprises comfortable seats which have been placed all around the dancing floor for the accommodation of those who wish to enjoy watching the dancing and hear the splendid music rendered by the elephants." (August 10th.)

Another write-up appears about the barn dance appears in the following week's paper on August 17:
"Big Barn Dance Next Wednesday, August 21. The young, the old, the frolic, the sedate - they're all counting the days and even the hours which must elapse ere the dawn of that day toward which they have all been looking forward since the past few weeks Wednesday, August 21. No one will ask or even wonder why all the eager anticipation, for throughout this city and community and in all parts of the surrounding country the big topic of conversation has been and is the grand barn dance to be given at the open-air dancing pavilion at the Donaldsonville Red Men Swimming Pool.

Now it is an established fact that any amusement given by the Redmen at their popular swimming pool always furnishes the utmost pleasure to all in attendance. Hundreds of people enjoy cool, invigorating "dips" in the lovely pool each week, for the water is delightfully stimulating and of a beautiful color which invites all to enjoy its freshness; the comfort of the onlookers is provided by a large number of comfortable benches which have been placed in convenient places about the grounds in which the pool is enclosed; there is a first-class lifesaver who insures the safety of all and leaves no cause of intimidation among those who go in swimming; the management is such as to operate the pool on the highest plans of perfection; and last, and there is no need to add by no means least, delightful music is furnished each Wednesday night by the famous and popular White Elephants Orchestra of this city, which comprises a number of local young men who are skilled musicians and are always right there with the stuff when it comes to rendering the latest and most popular musical selections in a manner which makes you feel as though you must can't keep your feet still and must get out on that wonderful open-air pavilion and enjoy dancing to those sweet strains of melody.

Everybody is eagerly looking forward to the grand barn dance to be given next Wednesday night, for all feel confident that the affair will not fail in any ways short of the excellence with which all other affairs given by the Red Men are "carried off." And the Red Men are working and planning earnestly in their determination that their barn dance will give to everybody in attendance the wonderful joy and pleasure which all are anticipating and then some. Overalls and gingham aprons will be worn, and everything is so planned that those farmer lads and lassies, as well as all onlookers, will have a thoroughly delightful time." (August 17th.)

The large and famous Stanocola Band of Baton Rouge plays for the American Legion meeting at Lafayette along with the Crescent City Post Band. (August 24th.)

The swimming pool continues to be a popular place of amusement and we read of a waltzing contest to be given on September 18:

"Waltzing Contest at Local Swimming Pool. At the regular Wednesday night dance given each week at the open-air pavilion at the local Redmen Swimming Pool, to be given next Wednesday night, September 18, the feature of the occasion will be a waltzing contest to be conducted. There will be three judges, and the couple adjudged the best waltzers will be awarded a cash prize.

As usual at the Wednesday night dances, music will be furnished by the famous and popular White Elephant Orchestra of this city, who are always right there with the stuff when it comes to playing all the latest and most popular dance "hits." The Redmen's
open-air pavilion is a lovely dancing place. Situated near the river, there is always a
delightful breeze which adds so much to the pleasure of dancing, and the floor is ideal.
Go to the dance next Wednesday night and waltz your way to the prize to be awarded." (Sept. 14th.)

There is an advertisement for the moonlight excursion and dance on board the J. S. There is also an article about the Deluxe steamer coming to Donaldsonville:

"J. S. Steamer Deluxe Coming Next Thursday. The steamer J. S. Deluxe will soon be here. This steamer is called the Steamer Capitol's sister ship, although she is large and finer equipped than the Capitol.

The Steamer J. S. is carrying the Steamer Capitol's regular orchestra - Fate Marable and his famous Cotton Pickers - who are making a tremendous hit everywhere. This combination of the largest and finest Deluxe Steamer and this wonderful orchestra assures the Donaldsonville Lodge of Elks, under whose auspices the Steamer J. S. is coming to our city, that their excursion on Thursday, September 26, will be a big success.

Everyone is invited to this moonlight excursion, leaving Donaldsonville at 8:30 o'clock p.m. and returning at 11:30 o'clock that same night, with dancing continuing until midnight." (Sept. 21th.)

The Parish Fair is again held in 1929 and we read of the bands that have been secured:

"Other features of the opening day were a band concert by the Laundry D. C. Service band of New Orleans; grandstand free acts, consisting of Stanley's Hippodrome Races, Trick Riding and High Jumping Horses, The Royal Dance Steppers, Williams and Bernice in comedy acrobatic acts, Bee Kyle, champion girl high diver, Pers and glorioso in Balancing Perch and Barlow's Circus Rebvue, night show, with all different circus and vaudeville acts, and concert by Strout's Military Hussar Band; a grand and gorgeous display of fireworks; jitney dancing at the pavilion day and night, for which excellent music was furnished by Claiborne Williams orchestra, the White Elephant's Orchestra and Celestin's Orchestra." (Oct. 19th.)

The Island Queen comes to Donaldsonville for an excursion and dance on Nov. 18th with the Queen's aboard band, the "Royal Palm Band." (Nov. 16th.)

"Mohawk Tribe, Redmen, entertains at supper - After supper dancing was enjoyed to the strains of piano selections rendered by Henry Kocke Jr. and Armand LeBlanc, accomplished musicians of this city." (Nov. 16th.)

Another dance is given and some well-known musicians play for it:

"Impromptu musicale at K of C Hall. Music furnished by Armand LeBlanc-piano and Robert Picou-saxophone and Lowell Gisclard playing the drums." (Dec. 21st.)
Earlier we have seen the name of 'Miller's Band.' We once again read the name preceded by the name, 'Cutsy,' probably the same band:

"Grand dance - Oubre's Hall in Vacherie. Music by 'Cusy' Millers Orchestra of Plaquemine." (Jan. 18th.)

Returning from New Orleans, the steamer "J. S.", on its way to its northern port, stops in Donaldsonville:

"Palatial Steamer "J. S." to be Here Monday, March 31st. The palatial Steamer "J. S." which made its initial cruise south last fall, will return on its cruise up the Mississippi River and will be here for a delightful moonlight excursion on Monday, March 31, under the auspices of Donaldsonville Lodge, B. P. O. Elks.

Many of the people here were amazed at this beautiful boat last fall, and when the "J. S." Comes here for its Spring excursion they will marvel yet more, for the boat has been re-decorated and refurnished and will bring many new added attractions to the already handsomely furnished decks with its steamer chairs, wicker furniture, gay-colored cushions, gorgeous floor coverings, flower baskets, canopied ceilings, fountain, open-air dining room and Venetian ball room with hay-colored swinging lanterns. If you have not seen this incomparable river craft you have surely missed something.

The Cotton Pickers Orchestra under the able direction of Fate Marable, well known to music lover from New Orleans, La., to St. Paul, Min. on the Mississippi river, and which is the same wonderful orchestra that played aboard the "J. S.," Steamer Deluxe last fall, is coming again aboard this steamer." (March 15th.)

WE find another article in the March 22nd. issue of the Chief which stresses the ability of its orchestra:

"Cotton Pickers' Orchestra on Steamer De Luxe, "J. S."

The famous Cotton Pickers Orchestra, under the direction of Fate Marable, the wizard of the ivories, will play the musical program in the Venetian ball room of the J. S. Steamer, Deluxe on its spring cruise north.

This musical combination of artists plays all of the latest dance music in the rhythm enjoyed by dancers and audiences as well, which has won for them the title, "The South's Greatest Orchestra." They enjoy the reputation of having played ten consecutive winters at New Orleans aboard Streckfus steamers, five consecutive summer engagements at St. Louis, and six consecutive cruises North and South on the Mississippi river from New Orleans to St. Paul, Minnesota.

It was they who played that wonderful dance music aboard the J. S. Steamer Deluxe last Fall when it made its initial cruise South, and now they are coming again aboard this steamer, where the gay-colored lanterns, flower baskets, canopied ceilings,
fountain, gorgeous floor coverings, wicker furniture and steamer chairs make you feel the strains of their sweet music more than ever.” (March 22nd.)

Another article which repeats most of the information of the March 22nd article is printed in the March 29th issue of the Chief and the dance is set for Monday, March 31st.

The Jefferson Syncopators play for the Firemen's Carnival ball at Plaquemine (Feb. 15th.).

Today we have 'records minus one.' This is a recording of an ensemble where a person can play along with the record, his part being left out of the recording. We read about an interesting first example of this activity:

The J. S. is due to stop in Donaldsonville for an excursion on Monday, March 31st. and we read in both the March 13th and March 29th issue of the 'Chief' about this visit:

"Elks' Excursion Monday on Steamer "J. S."
The Steamer "J. S." will be here Monday.
You remember the beautiful craft which made its initial appearance at Donaldsonville Last fall - well, it is this handsome steamer, which is classed with ocean liners, that is coming here Monday. It is the only steamer of its kind plying western rivers, and has won for itself the title "The Pride of the Mississippi River." After you have seen it on Monday, March 31, you will agree that it is well deserving of this title, for its handsome decorations - flower baskets, lanterns, canopied ceilings, fountain, gorgeous floor coverings, wicker furniture and steamer chairs - makes you feel very proud of it.

Donaldsonville Elks are proud of the fact that they are sponsoring a moonlight sail aboard this steamer, leaving Donaldsonville at 8:30 p.m. and returning at 12 midnight. In the Venetian ball room the famous Cotton Pickers Orchestra, under the able direction of Fate Marable, will play all of the latest dance music, which will please dancers and audiences as well. It was they who played aboard this handsome steamer last fall and on the Capitol on many visits. Everyone is invited, so be at Donaldsonville, Monday, March 31, at 8:30 p.m. to see the most handsome steamer and to have a good time.” (March 29th.)

We read of a dance in which the music is provided by a Victorla (along with a sax), and not alive band. This is happening more frequently and will eventually take the place of a live band:

"Gravois Home dance - music by the Victrola and Curtis Dill on Sax.” (March 15th.)

In 1930 both the Island Queen and the J. S. Deluxe Steamers are in Donaldsonville. In the March 29th paper we read of the Island Queen's excursion:

"K. of C. River Excursion on Island Queen Success. The Island Queen, one of the most beautiful pleasure steamers plying along the Mississippi River stopped at
Donaldsonville last Monday night in order that the people of this city and the vicinity
might enjoy a moonlight excursion trip under the auspices of Ascension Council, Knights
of Columbus.

More than three hundred people went on the excursion trip, which started from
Donaldsonville at about 9 o'clock and ended here about midnight, and the affair was a
splendid success for both the public and the Knights of Columbus.

The Island Queen is equipped in rank with the most palatial ocean liners, with a
large and beautiful dancing salon, and the trip was made doubly delightful by the lovely
music rendered by the steamer's own orchestra, the Royal Palms, which has been the
pride of many exclusive social functions.

The people of Donaldsonville and the surrounding country will undoubtedly be
very glad to learn that the Island Queen will come to our city again next year for a
moonlight excursion under the auspices of the Ascension Council, K. of C." (March
29th.)

Another new name is seen playing for a dance at Oubre's Hall:

"Grand dance at Oubre's Hall, Vacherie - Kid Lewis Jazz Band." (April 19th)

The Capitol makes its yearly stop-over in Donaldsonville for a dance/excursion on
May 7th.:

"Steamer Capitol Here on Wednesday, May 7. Everyone remembers the beautiful
Steamer "J. S." which stopped at Donaldsonville for a moonlight river excursion just
recently, and many were amazed at the furnishings and service rendered by this beautiful
craft.

Her sister ship, the "Capitol Steamer Deluxe," is coming again after an absence of
a year, during which time she has been transformed into a beautiful floating palace - with
an entrancing Japanese garden, a ballroom representing Jungleland, and a romantic roof
garden.

As you board the steamer, you enter the Japanese garden with its waving palms,
lanterns, parasols, reed furniture and floral decorations, reproductive of far-off Japan. In
this garden, Japanese or American dishes will be served you, and you may relax in the
easy chairs and enjoy the ride.

Ascending the stairs, you enter a lobby gaily decorated and furnished with wicker
furniture, and there you get the first glimpse of the beautiful Jungle ballroom, which
glitters in the light of the moon and is decorated with pictures of the most handsome
jungle scenery and shiny clusters of grapes among the russet leaves cover the entire
ceiling. In it, Sidney's Southern Syncopators, (sic: Sidney Desvigne of New Orleans) one
of the best orchestras of the southland, will play the dancing program. This organization
only recently formed, renders a brand of music which pleases patrons of all tastes. The
Steamers Capitol and J. S. are noted for their high class service, equipment and a good
time. You will be surprised when you see the marvelous transformation on the new
Steamer Capitol Deluxe on Wednesday, May 7, when it comes to Donaldsonville for a
moonlight excursion." (April 19th.)
We read of Sidney Desvigne's band playing on board the Capitol in 1930 in separate articles in the papers of April 19th and April 26th. Many of these write-ups are similar in their description of the boats but each seems to have a little more about the bands playing on these boats:

"Steamer Capitol Here on Wednesday, May 7. Everyone remembers the beautiful Steamer "J. S." which stopped at Donaldsonville for a moonlight river excursion just recently, and many were amazed at the furnishings and service rendered by this beautiful craft.

Her sister ship, the "Capitol" Steamer Deluxe, is coming again after an absence of a year, during which time she has been transformed into a beautiful floating palace - with an entrancing Japanese garden, a ballroom representing Jungleland, and a romantic roof garden.

As you board the steamer, you enter the Japanese garden with its swaying palms, lanterns, parasols, reed furniture and floral decorations, reproductive of far-off Japan. In this garden, Japanese or American dishes will be served you, or you may relax in the easy chairs and enjoy the ride. Ascending the stairs, you enter a lobby gaily decorated and furnished with wicker furniture, and there you get the first glimpse of the beautiful jungle ballroom, which glitters in the light of the moon and is decorated with pictures of the most handsome jungle scenes and shiny clusters of grapes among the russet leaves cover the entire ceiling. In it, Sidney's Southern Syncopators, one of the best orchestras of the Southland, will play the dancing program. This organization, only recently formed, renders a brand of music which pleases patrons of all tastes." (April 19th.)

"Fine Orchestra on Steamer Capitol; Here May 7. One of the South's best orchestras is Sidney's "Firecrackers," the musical aggregation playing aboard the "Capitol" Steamer Deluxe now. This organization, only recently formed, renders a brand of music that pleases patrons of all tastes. Sidney has proven himself to be a master at arranging pleasing melodies of popular ballads, classics and red-hot jazz, giving a liberal sprinkling of all these types of music on every program.

This unit is composed of ten of the finest musicians in the South. An especially attractive feature is the singing, which, by the use of microphone amplifiers, is brought out so that every word can be clearly and distinctly understood by every dancer and the audience. No effort has been spared on the part of the Capitol's management to present the best musical entertainment available, and judging from the reception which these boys get at New Orleans, the patrons are well pleased.

As for Sidney himself, critics generally agree that he is one of the directorial finds of the decade. It's worth a trip to the "Capitol" just to hear this band which performs in the Jungle Ballroom, which glitters in the light of the moon and is decorated with pictures of the most handsome jungle scenes, and shiny clusters of grapes among the russet leaves cover the entire ceiling." (April 26th.)

Also in the April 19th paper we read of the yearly celebration of the Feast of St. Amico with the Claiborne Williams and Heim's Orchestras playing for the procession,
with the Williams Orchestra playing for the dance the same night of the procession. Also The parish fair is held and the ever present dance the night of the fair has music by the Harmony Kings Orchestra and the White Elephants." (April 19th.)

While there are juvenile bands read about in other parishes the first such band we read about in the 'Chief' is one from Houma:

"Houma celebrates paved road opening with parade. Attraction of parade was an orchestra of children ranging from 10 to 13 years of age." (May 3rd.)

A large advertisement appears in the May 24th paper of the grand opening of the Redmen's Swimming Pool and states that music will be by the White Elephants."

We next read about a group of musicians who play in some of the well-known organized groups, but without any name being given for the band:


While there were good relations between the races in Donaldsonville, the old traditional images of Negro stereotypes remain and we can see this in the next item from the paper:

"Miss Harrell entertains. Music by 'Shine' and 3 others of the city, one of whom performs the buck dance, which caused much merriment among the spectators." (July 5th.)

There were frequent dances but many did not make the paper and, when they did, the band was often not named. One such was:

"Grand Dance, Bayou Hall, Music by 7 piece orchestra." (July 5th.)

Finally the last item in 1930 is a dance given in the home of Claude Hymel:

"A delightful affair, Sunday and Monday at the home of Claude Hymel, music for both was furnished by the 'Fast Steppers' of Donaldsonville comprising: Frank Aynaud, Lloyd Ramirez and Emile Landry, who played all the latest and most popular jazz and selections, to the strains of which everybody present had a grand time." (Sept. 6th.)

The American Legion gives an excursion on the Steamer Island Queen:

"Legion's River Excursion on Steamer Island Queen. About 150 people "took in" the moonlight river excursion on the palatial steamer Island Queen, given under the auspices of Bennett Rabin Post, No. 98, American Legion, last Monday night. The boat left its landing near the wharf at 8:30 o'clock and crossed over to Darrow, where it was
boarded by a number of people from that place and then steamed up the river for some
distance. One of the pleasant features of the excursion was dancing, for which music was
furnished by the super Syncopators Orchestra. The boat returned at about midnight.

The regular monthly meeting of the local Legion post was held on the boat. This
excursion did not draw the large crowd that such events usually do, due to the fact that
the weather was bad and many people are away for grinding sugar cane.

From here the steamer, Island Queen went to Plaquemine, where an excursion was
given Tuesday night, and then to Baton Rouge, where an excursion was staged
Wednesday night." Nov. 1st.)

We read of the White Elephants playing for a Christmas dance:

"Christmas Dance at Grand Bayou Successful Affair. A very pleasant and
enjoyable Christmas dance was given at Grand Bayou Hall Thursday night, under the
management of Harvey Dupre. The dance was largely attended and delightful music was
furnished by the White Elephants Band of this city. Another dance will be given by Mr.
Dupre at the same place tonight, for which music will be furnished by the White
Elephants band. Mr. Dupre announces that these dances will be given every Saturday
night here after until Lent.

These dances are always largely attended by people from all parts of the
surrounding country, including many from this city, and are always a source of great
pleasure to the patrons. The dance hall is large and well lighted and heated and the floor
well waxed. The roads are graveled all the way and the music is always par excellence."  
(Dec. 27th.)

1931

There is a large advertisement for the opening of the Tivoli Night Club in
Plaquemines, La. with music by Jeff Riddick and his Orchestra. (June 13th.)

Two new names of musicians are given when they play for a party/dance:

"Jr. Catholic Daughters of America enjoy tacky party and dance. Music - Mrs.
Arthur Lemann-pianist and Arthur Lemann Jr. playing the drums." (May 2nd.)

A group called the Melody Makers of Donaldsonville play for dancing at the local
swimming pool. (July 11th)

The Redmen Swimming Pool and dance pavilion is still very popular but the
music is now being furnished by the Claiborne Williams Band (August 15th.) (Sic: See
Williams text)

A small musical group from New Orleans plays a few jobs in the Donaldsonville
area:

"American Legion dance at Clay Banks, Sept. 19th. Splendid music for the
occasion will be furnished by the famous Evolution Trio, the orchestra you've heard over
radio broadcast on Station WDSU, New Orleans" (Sept. 12th.)
The Evolution Trio plays at the Klotzville Hall and at Clay Banks:

"Evolution Trio at Klotzville Hall Tomorrow Night.

One of the best dances of the season will be given at the Klotzville Hall on Bayou Lafourche tomorrow night and is expected to be attended by a very large crowd of people from all parts of the surrounding country. Splendid music for the occasion will be furnished by the Evolution Trio, radio artists of Station WDSU, New Orleans, who are the hottest trio on the air and will keep everybody at the dance-spectators as well as those who are dancing - pleasantly entertained.

Don't fail to hear and see those jazz boys! It will be the treat of your life. There will be dancing from 8 to 12 o'clock. General admission will be ten cents, and gentlemen dancing will be charged $1.00." (Sept. 12th.)

Also on September 12th the same band plays a dance for the American Legion:

"American Legion Dance at Clay Banks, Sept. 19th.

A grand dance will be given at Clay Banks next Saturday night for the benefit of the American Legion Post of this place, commencing at 8 o'clock. Splendid music for the occasion will be furnished by the famous Evolution Trio, the orchestra you've heard over Radio Broadcasting Station WDSU, New Orleans. A feature of the occasion will be the awarding of Waltz prizes as follows; First, $10 in gold; second, $5 in gold; third, one bale of hay. A wonderful time awaits all who attend." (Sept. 12th.)

A follow-up article appears a week after the dance, a dance that was deemed a success:

"Dance - Klotzville Hall last Sunday under the management of Mrs. Philip Templet, one of the most successful of the season. The famous Evolution Trio of New Orleans furnished music." (Sept. 19th.)

We recognize some of the names of the musicians who play for the Catholic Daughters supper and dance:

"Catholic Daughters of America celebration 9th anniversary. After supper dancing to: A. LeBlanc-piano, Lloyd Ramirez-sax, and Lowell Gisclard-drums." (Sept. 19th.)

The same group plays another supper-dance for the Mohawk Tribe:

"Mohawk Tribe supper/dance. Much credit is due Emile Laundry-drums, Lloyd Ramirez and Frank Ayraud-sax, who furnished music for the dance and played with such keen enjoyment that a spirit of exuberance was imparted to all present." (Oct. 17th.)

The "J. S." arrives from the north and continues to port at Donaldsonville in Oct. of 1931. A cruise is scheduled for October 9th:
"On Friday, Oct. 9, the "J.S." Steamer Deluxe, largest and most beautifully decorated steamer plying island waters, and which made its initial visit to Donaldsonville in 1930 and was the subject of widespread and admiring comment, is coming again to Donaldsonville.

Making a moonlight excursion leaving Donaldsonville at 8:30 p.m., the J.S. returns at 12 midnight, but dancing continues until 12:30 a.m. Donaldsonville Lodge No. 1153, B. P. O. Elks, are sponsoring this excursion.

The "J.S." is the big ship of the Streckfus fleet, the pride of St. Louis, and a sister ship of the Steamer Capitol. It is the only steamer on western rivers that is so beautifully decorated and so gorgeously furnished - steamer chairs, wicker furniture, floor coverings, open-air dining room, Venetian type ballroom, illuminated fountain.

Harvey Lankford and his Synco-High Hatters play for dancing. This colored band, under the direction of Charles Creath, is now enjoying the greatest popularity in the history of the American dancing public. Their variety of music, from the stereotyped tempo and mood to the polished rhythm, has been the outstanding factor of their success.

The High-Hatters' novelties, entertainment, their new type rhythm, their dancing numbers, their unique trios and flashy duos, aside from featuring Charles Creath, the flashy trumpeter, has gained for him the popularity they now enjoy. Everyone can dance to their rhythm." (Oct. 3rd.)

The Klotzville Hall is becoming a popular dance hall and we can see from the item in the paper that it was a very busy hall:

"Segula Dance Called-Off.

Because of tomorrow being All Saints Day, the regular Sunday night dance at the Klotzville Hall has been called off; and due to the American Legion fair to be held at Klotzville next Saturday and Sunday, there will be no dance at the Klotzville Hall next Friday night. However, the three dances to be given by the Legionnaires-Saturday afternoon, Sunday afternoon and Sunday night-will be at the hall.

The dance at the Klotzville Hall last Sunday night was featured by a very interesting program of songs and fancy dances by little Miss Jo Lee Wisemier and Master Sam Montero of this city, popularly known as the two High Hatters. Young Montero sang 'Many Happy Returns of the Day' 'Million Dollar Baby' and 'When Your Hair Has turned to Silver,' to the accompaniment of which little Miss Wisemier performed tap, clog and acrobatic dances. The children were accompanied by a local children's orchestra composed of the following: Vincent Sotile, cornet; Bruno Savola, saxophone, Charles Sotile, clarinet; John Nizzo, drums; Bruno DeLeo, saxophone; Vincent Deleo, banjo; the program was thoroughly enjoyed by the large number of people who attended the dance." (Oct. 31st.)

This group of musicians seemingly becomes popular and plays next for the Redmen:

"Redmen supper/dance. Music - Armand LeBlanc, Lloyd Ramirez, Frank Ayraud and Emile Landry." (Dec. 5th.)
1932

We read the name of Heim's Orchestra, from Baton Rouge, when they play for a feast in celebration of St. Amico's Day. We will run across Heim's name again (March 26th.)

The regular dance halls of the area continue to have their scheduled dances. We read of them, although the items do not always give the name of the dance band engaged to play, i.e., "Dance at popular Klotzville Hall, Saturday and Sunday - Music by a high class orchestra." (April 23rd.)

The Klotzville Hall engages a band from Baton Rouge for its next dance:

"Record breaking crowd at Klotzville Hall Saturday. Victor Orchestra of Baton Rouge. The praise was to the extent that the managers decided to entertain them with the same music tonight and tomorrow night." (May 14th.)

Besides the James Orchestra of Thibodaux, the Gabriel Orchestra of that city was also very popular with dancers. Its name first appears in the 'Chief' on May 28th:

"Dance at Community Club of Plaquemine Tuesday night. Music for the occasion by Gabriel's Orchestra of Thibodaux." (May 28th.)

"The local American Legion, always active in social events, holds a dance and engages the 'Personality Boys' of WWL Radio in New Orleans." (June 25th.)

With the advent of the 30's we seem to see a new kind of business establishment. No longer are there just dance halls but the nightclub concept begins to evolve. We see this with the opening of the Club Villa:

"Club Villa - Jefferson Highway, one mile south of Hope Villa. Dance to the dreamy, exhilarating orchestrations every night. Club V., Baton Rouge's newest and smartest rendezvous for entertainment, fun and gayety. Weenie White and his truly marvelous recording orchestra puts pep in your feet and music in your step. Lillian Knight 'Blues' singer supreme." (July 23rd.)

Unlike the dance hall days, we read that this club will be open every night, a big difference from the 'small town' dance hall operations.

We again read of new names of musicians that perform dance music:


The Klotzville Hall presents another new band at its dance, novel in that it is an all-girl orchestra:
"Al Durning's musical girls, a bevy of southern peaches presenting a snappy, flashy, all girl dance orchestra are coming from New Orleans to furnish music at the popular Klotzville Hall next Saturday night." (Nov. 26th.)

**1933**

Another new band emerges. We read its advertisement in the paper:

"Good dance music - for home entertainment and school dances, call on De Leo's Jazzland Orchestra. 502 Nolan Ave., Donaldsonville for music. Their music adds pep to parties." (Jan. 21st.)

We read Heim's name once again, this time with a brass band, which is really not unusual as musicians formed marching bands when the opportunity presented itself. If a marching band is needed, a leader gets a group of musicians together to 'do the job.' I think that the following band is such a band:

"Feast of St. Amico - Procession, Sunday April 23rd, preceded by Ernest Heime's Brass Band march to Ascension Catholic Church." (April 15th.)

We next read of a dance at the home of Mr. Daigle and 'to the strains of the orchestra seated on the sun parlor at the rear of the house, the dance was opened by a grand march." (May 13th.)

The 'Rhythm Aces' of Donaldsonville is the new band we next read about as they play for a dance:

"Party for Catholic High School Juniors and Seniors - dance Thursday night by Miss Harriet Lemann. To the strains of music furnished by the 'Rhythm Aces' of this place. There was a grand march, followed by dancing to popular melodies which were enjoyed by the crowd of about 75 people." (May 27th.)

Interesting that these two above-quoted dances still used the Grand March, that usually began most dances of an earlier dance age.

The Advertisement of the De Leo Band must have made an impression on someone as the band is engaged to play for another dance:

"Dance at K of C for J. L. Dalferres Jr. by friends. Music by DeLeo Brothers." (June 3rd.)

The Riverside Revellers is the name of the next new band introduced:

"Dance at empty bungalow at Faubourg La Pipe. Dancing to the strains of good music furnished by the Riverside Revellers, a newly organized string orchestra." (June 3rd.)
Usually a new band is hired and rehired if its performance is appreciated. Often the band disappears, probably traveling to a new job and location or is a 'house' band in a nearby town. Such is not the case with the band 'the Happy Kings':

"American Legion Home dance. Music by Happy King & his Orchestra." (July 15th.)

We learn, from a large advertisement in the paper that this band is a 14-piece group that plays at the Heidelburg Hotel. This is a high class orchestra and we begin to see the shaping of the modern swing orchestra with written arrangements and support groups:

"Big dance - Elks' Home, August 6th. Music by Kerry Happy Kings and his 14 piece Hotel Heidelburg Orchestra. The orchestra features Miss Ruth Carson-pop singer, Clovis Rogers-tenor, the 3 majors trio and a violin quintet." (July 29th.)

The orchestra plays for a K of C party next and is engaged for a Saturday night dance at the American Legion Home:

"Balloon dance at American Legion Home. Music by Kerry Happy King and his Heidelburg Hotel Orchestra of Baton Rouge." (August 26th.)

The Elks prepare for a big festival with a new band not previously mentioned:

"Elks Festival preparations. Saturday a big dance with a high class peppy music - the Missourians of St. Louis." (August 19th.)

The Heidelburg Hotel Orchestra again plays for a function at the American Legion Home:

"Kerry Happy King and his 14 piece Heidelburg Hotel Orchestra of Baton Rouge, who made such decided hits upon the occasions of their previous visits to Donaldsonville are here tomorrow night at the big dance at American Legion Home with the Heidelburg elaborate floor show." (Sept. 9th.)

The Heidelburg Orchestra makes still another appearance, this time playing at the high school auditorium in St. James Parish. (Sept. 23rd.)

We next read some names that we recognize when a group of musicians play for a local dance:

During 1933 there were two orchestras that we find mentioned in the paper besides the regular ones mentioned: the 'Missourians,' 'Kerry's Happy Kings' and a group that later we will see as partial members of the 'Harmony Kings':

"Kerry Happy Kings at St. James Tomorrow Night.

Kerry Happy Kings and his fourteen-piece Heidelberg Hotel Orchestra, featuring Miss Ruth Carson and Clovis Rogers in a delightful floor show, will furnish music and entertainment for a big dance in the St. James High School Auditorium at St. James tomorrow night, under the auspices of the Parent-Teachers Association. The auditorium, which is cooled by large fans and has a spacious dance floor, is one of the most ideal dancing places in this section of the country - and Kerry Happy Kings and his orchestra are among the highest-classed musicians in the state. So all who attend the dance tomorrow night may feel assured of having a very nice time and enjoying the good music. Dancing will commence at 9 o'clock." (Sept. 23rd.)

Another dance is given by the Catholic Daughters of America and music is furnished by members of the Harmony Kings:

"Court Ascension, C. D. A. Celebrates Anniversary.

The members of Court Ascension No. 761, Catholic Daughters of America, celebrated the eleventh anniversary of the court last Wednesday night at a 'night club' party at the K of C home, at which the Daughters and their guests were present.

With its pretty decorations of lanterns, streamers, moss and palms, effectively arranged, the K of C Hall formed a gay setting for the happy crowd, some of whom enjoyed bingo and others danced to the strains of peppy music furnished by Armand LeBlanc, Ned and Robert Picou, Oneal Rome and Emile Landry. (Sic: Some of the members of the Harmony Kings.)

Of special interest to all was an Apache dance by Arthur Lemann, Jr., and Roy Sentilles, the former impersonating a young lady. Accompaniment was played by the orchestra.

Delicious refreshments were served and much enjoyed, and all present report having had a delightful time.

The Heidelberg group plays next for a Halloween Dance at the American Legion Home. The paper notes that 'Kerry Happy King and his famous entertainers will furnish music." (Oct. 21st.)

The famous band which plays over radio station WWL is engaged to play for an American Legion dance:

"Pinky's high class staff orchestra of WWL, which is one of the best and most popular orchestras in the country, will furnish music for a big dance at the American Legion Home." (Nov. 25th.)

"Pinky" is Pinky Vidacovich, known to New Orleanians as the voice of 'Cajun Pete' in an old radio commercial, was with the New Orleans Owls String Band, earlier
with the Princeton Revellers. He was most famous for being part of the 'Dawn Busters' over WWL Radio.

Another orchestra hired by the Heidelberg Hotel is the Missourians. We first read about this group when it participated in the Elks Festival and plays for a Saturday night dance (August 19th). We read that they are engaged for another dance:

"Dance at American Legion Home, Dec. 17th - Sunday. The Missourians, popular Heidelberg Hotel Orchestra, whose music will prove a rare treat for the dancers. When it comes to playing red hot jazz, dreamy waltz melodies and sentimental croon hits, Owen Reed and his Missourians really do the job." (Dec. 9th.)

1934

The Rhythm Aces are heard from again, playing in St. James Parish:

"Dance at Tourist Amusement Hall of St. James, March 19th - Monday. Music will be furnished by the famous Rhythm Aces Orchestra of Donaldsonville. (March 17th.)

The annual Feast of St. Amico is again held with the procession being headed by a brass band of F. A. Landry (March 31st) and his dance band plays for the dance that night.

A group called the Midnight Ramblers Orchestra is engaged to play for the opening of the Corbo Dance Hall at 8:00 (April 21st.)

The Missourian Orchestra of the Heidelberg Hotel in Baton Rouge is engaged to play at an American Legion Dance. With them is a new blues singer named Margaret Longmire. (April 21st.)

There were some schools of the era including music in their curriculum such as Jefferson College. The instruction is by a private teacher not a public school one. We read:

"Donaldsonville School Band now being organized by Morris Music School of New Orleans under the direction of Prof. St. Pierre, formerly of Jefferson College." (April 28th.)

The paper includes a roster of the music students of the school. Listing the student's name becomes increasingly important as the community brass bands are dying away and their place will be taken by the school marching bands who will be used for parades and other town functions. Dance engagements are still handled by professional and amateur dance/jazz musicians.

The Missourians play for the American Legion dance (they will play for another the next week):

"Legion Dance last Sunday a success. The dance given by the local Post of the American Legion at their beautiful home in this city last Sunday night, proved most enjoyable to all those who attended and
was a social success. Despite the fact that the firemen's festival in Thibodaux drew many from among those who usually patronize big dances in this city, the attendance was good, with about forty couples dancing and all had a delightful time. Music for the occasion was furnished by the famous Missourian orchestra of the Heidelberg Hotel roof garden of Baton Rouge, and the many new and splendid numbers offered by them were highly pleasing to all those present. Miss Longmire, the blue singer, delighted the patrons of the event with her sweet singing and she was loudly applauded at the conclusion of each number.

The Missourians and Miss Longmire will return to Donaldsonville for another dance engagement under the auspices of the local Legion Post on Sunday, May 13, when it is hoped that the attendance will be much larger than it was last Sunday night." (May 5th.)

The Rhythm Aces again play for a dance at the Tourist Amusement Hall in St. James Parish (May 5th) and the paper mentions the Missourians again:

"Legion dance tomorrow night. Owen Reed's famous Heidelberg Hotel Missourians, one of the finest orchestras in the South will furnish music for the occasion." (May 19th.)

The American Legion, ever active in social affairs, schedules another of its popular dances, this time engaging the 'Alex White Orchestra' of Houston which 'delights the terpsichoreans.' (June 23rd.)

The paper continues to mention the school band, in an item states that the" "local school band is making progress." (July 7th)

While the item about a popular young lady giving a farewell party is not important in itself, it does mention the name of a new band called the "Giambrone Orchestra." (August 11th.)

Another orchestra from the Heidelberg Hotel in Baron Rouge plays for a dance in Donaldsonville. This group is called the Frank Silva Orchestra - it is an 11-piece orchestra. (Sept. 15th.)

The American Legion next gives a dance at the Tavern rather than its own Hall and again we read the name of Owen Reed's famous Missourian Orchestra. (Sept. 22nd.)

1935

Most of the dances during this year use the local bands of Claiborne Williams and a new name, Joe Mistretta. The annual Feast of Amico again uses the Fred Landry Brass Band in its procession and celebration.

We do read of two new bands that play in the area:

"Grand Fair - benefit of St. Anthony Church, Darrow, La. Music will be furnished by Kid Dina Orchestra of Baton Rouge." (July 13th.)
"Big festival and fair at St. James High School, benefit for Catholic Church. Music by Tucker Kay and his famous orchestra." (August 17th.)

There is a dance scheduled at a new hall in Pincourtville and the band playing the dance is the Meledon Brothers' 10-piece orchestra." (Oct. 26th.)

The Tucker Key Orchestra is again mentioned in the paper:

"Two dances at St. James High School, Dec. 25th and Dec. 31st, Music for both will be furnished by Tucker Keys famous orchestra." (Dec. 21st.)

1936

The colored people of Donaldsonville again have their Mardi Gras celebration and the parade includes the Landry Brass Band. (Feb. 1st.)

We read of a dance using the Lloyd Ramirez Band. This name is familiar to us as he plays with some of the previously named musicians playing local dances:

"K of C celebration of 30th Anniversary with a banquet/dance. Music - Lloyd Ramirez's Band." (Feb. 15th.)

Yet another new name is mentioned:

"Carnival Ball at St. James High School - Sunday, Feb. 23rd. Music by the Creole Serenaders." (Feb. 15th.)

In the March 21st paper we read of the use of high school bands in a local parade:

"Plaquemine Cane Festival, May 2nd. The more than 100 piece LSU Cadet Band, the Catholic High School Band of Baton Rouge, and the Plaquemine High School until will furnish music throughout the day." (March 21st.)

The American Legion Hall is the location of a dance to celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph, usually the half-way point in the Lenten season, and one of the only opportunities to have a dance during Lent. We recognize the name and the orchestra - "Music being furnished by Anthony Sotile and his Merry Makers Orchestra." (March 21st.)

In the April 4th issue of the paper we read "the opening dance of the season at Legion Home in Gonzales, April 12th - Julien Brothers popular 10-piece orchestra furnished music," (April 4th.)

A band called the 'Rhythmic Kings' played for a dance at C. Simoneaux's:

"A dance was given at C. Simoneaux's Fairway driveway in the city, Wednesday night, for which music was furnished by the 'Rhythmic Kings' Orchestra. Mr. Simoneaux announces that dances will be given at the Fairway driveway every Wednesday night." (April 25th.)
The famous Public Service Band gives a concert in Donaldsonville:

"Concert by Public Service Band under Prof. R. J. Prosperie, with W.M. Russell as assistant director. For years this famous band has participated in carnival parades in New Orleans and is considered one of the best bands in the South." (June 13th.)

The Landry Hall in Brusly St. Vincent engages the Fred Landry Silver Orchestra for a grand dance. (July 4th) I don't know if it is the same man or a relative but it would seem a good idea to have both a dance hall and your own band playing the dances.

In 1936 the Fair uses more high school bands than town bands and we can see that the shift to using bands from the local high schools is becoming the norm with the result that the town bands are becoming obsolete. In the Oct. 3rd paper the high school bands playing for the fair are given as 'Hahnville High School, Catholic High of Baton Rouge, Lutcher, Plaquemine and Baton Rouge High.'

A club called 'Little John's,' about a mile above Donaldsonville, has a dance and uses the Ernest Himes Orchestra. (Nov. 28th.)

1937

In 1937 there is no colored Mardi Gras celebration. Claiborne Williams continues to play the many dances and out-of-town bands include the Dedroit Orchestra of New Orleans.

"Dance July 24th, St. James School at St. James. Music by Johnny Dedroit Orchestra which recently played in the Blue Room of the Roosevelt Hotel and in the Jung Hotel Roof Garden in New Orleans." (July 17th.)

At another dance in St. James the Russ Papalia's Orchestra of New Orleans plays at a high school dance. (June 12th) and another dance for the school benefit on August 15th (August 9th.)

Another first-mention orchestra plays for a dance after the football game in St. James:

"Football game and dance at St. James, Nov. 21st. Music by Al Streiman's Orchestra of New Orleans." (Nov. 13th.)

The LSU Band, growing in size plays for the Fair:

"The LSU Band, consisting of 298 pieces, under the direction of Castro Carazo, was unable to parade as it had been schooled to do, because of the bad weather, but gave a concert in the afternoon from the grandstand. The band played several numbers and its fine music delighted and was greatly appreciated by all those who had the good fortune of hearing it. Steve Brone of Baton Rouge, freshman drum major, gave an exhibition of baton twirling." (Oct. 23rd.)
1938

Both the previously mentioned bands of Dedroit and Papalia play for dances in January:

"Dance at St. James High School February 13th. Music - Johnny Dedroit's famous Orchestra." (Jan. 29th.)

"Other dance in Gym on Feb. 13th. Music - Russ Papalia Orchestra. Johnny Dedroit - Feb. 27th (Jan. 29th.)

Elaine Thibodaux and some 'home girls' sponsor a dance at LSU. They engage 'Barney Rapp and his New Englanders,' a band that has been heard over a nation wide National Broadcasting Network. Featured with the band are Ruby Wright, blues singer and the New Englanders, a vocal trio. (Jan. 29th.)

There are a number of bands that play for the Eucharistic Day celebration of the Catholic Church. They are listed in the paper as: 'Catholic High School Band of Plaquemine, Dominican College Band of New Orleans, the Hahnville High School Band, the St. James High School Band and the Holy Family School Band of New Orleans.' (April 2nd) We notice no town brass bands are mentioned, their place being taken by the high school and college bands, and bands sponsored by groups such as the American Legion Post and similar groups. This can be seen in an article about the American Legion Convention in Louisiana:

"American Legion National Convention in Louisiana. Parade - Louisiana represented by 3 champion bands: Crescent City Post Band, the Crowley Drum and Bugle Corps and Auxiliary Drum and Bugle Corps of the Crescent City unit." (Sept. 3rd.)

1939

We next find the names of two new bands in 1939:


"A grand dance, Friday, April 14th at Donaldsonville High School Gym. Dancing by De-Bessonet's Swingcopators, composed of 9 splendid young musicians, among them being 4 crack members of the LSU Symphony Orchestra." (April 8th.)

We see the gradual disappearance of the town band and the acceptance of the local high school band as the group that plays the activities that used to be fulfilled by the town band. From 1939 to 1942 we see the emergence of the Donaldsonville High School band participation in community activities that use music:
"D. H. S. Band Holds Regular Rehearsals. After a delay of two weeks the Donaldsonville High School Band has finally received the last group of instruments and is now fully equipped to go ahead with its work. Necessary band materials have also come in.


"D. H. S. Band Holds Regular Rehearsals. After a delay of two weeks the Donaldsonville High School Band has finally received the last group of instruments and is now fully equipped to go ahead with its work. Necessary band materials have also come in."

To close out the year the Himes Jazz Band plays "a New Years Eve party and dance at Bonne Chance Cafe in Klotzville." (Dec. 6th.)

This brings us to the end of our time span. In later year the bands that played during the swing era of jazz are well documented in the many fine jazz magazines available today.
CLAIBORNE WILLIAMS OF DONALDSONVILLE
1868 - 1952
Introduction

The evolving of the music we know as jazz occurs in the decades following the Civil War. The life of Donaldsonville musician Claiborne Williams spans this same period of time; thus his musical career coincides with the evolution of jazz. An examination of his life and musical progress may well give us valuable evidence and information of the progress and evolution of jazz and the musical atmosphere in which jazz was nurtured.

In the few mentions of Claiborne Williams (when indeed his name is mentioned) in the scarce literature on New Orleans Jazz published at this time, not even his birth dates are noted and only a few facts about his illustrious career related.

In the parishes and country towns surrounding New Orleans, there was a wealth of musical activity and talent. Local brass bands and string bands were found in all the towns and settlements, however large or small. These musical groups were the training ground for the budding young musicians that were to become the evolving jazz stylists and performers.

Brass bands and various type musical groups were imported from New Orleans when there were no local bands available or a special function deemed an outside band necessary or desired. Likewise, this country band frequently journeyed to New Orleans for parades and other functions. These country bands, when compared musically with the New Orleans bands, were on a par with them. All of the brass bands had excellent music instructors and there was stiff competition between town bands, each town having much pride in its own brass band. These town bands could be called semi-professional and usually consisted of the leading businessmen and town leaders. They played the many town functions voluntarily and would play dances or fairs for benefit of the bands’ expenses, taking paying jobs to meet other expenses such as travel, instruments, uniforms, and music.

Claiborne Williams, while well schooled and receiving excellent training musically, differs from other brass band leaders such as James Humphrey and Robert Hingle. He was, musically, more versatile. Much of his musical training and knowledge was self learned. He developed his own concert brass band as well as dance bands.

The populace of Donaldsonville was mixed racially but united in humanity. There seemed to be a closely knitted town with little or no racial trouble. Claiborne and the colored citizens were very respectable as we read in an article in the June 7, 1897, paper:

"OUR COLORED PEOPLE.

There are a very few, if any, cities in the South that have a better class of resident colored citizens than Donaldsonville. For several years these people have shown an ambition to rise that is entirely praiseworthy, and the result of their efforts is most marked. Their schools are above the average, both in point of instructive
ability and in attendance, and the keenest interest is shown in the children's progress by their parents. They have also one of the prettiest church buildings in the South, presided over by one of the ablest colored pastors in the Methodist conference. A great pride is taken in the various church societies, all of which are extremely prosperous. In secret societies they are also making their mark by the character and earnestness of their membership. Musically, our colored people also show in their excellent brass and string bands their wonderful progress. Taking everything in consideration, we have reason to feel the greatest pride in their progress, and to view with the keenest satisfaction, the great strides that they are making to a higher civilization, that makes them peace loving, law abiding, good citizens."

The Fire Department not only was a very necessary organization in the days when most houses and towns were built of wood and did not have sprinkler systems but also became an active social organization. Besides fighting fires they had their own social hall that was used for various activities, dancing being the most popular. All citizens of the town had their 'bucket' brigades, and served with pride as shown by their annual firemen's day parade and fair. These fire departments were volunteer and it was a sign of great prestige to be connected with one of them, this being a source of great pride for the colored citizens of Donaldsonville. We read of this pride and the colored 'bucket' brigades:

"BLUE BUCKETS

Wanted! - As a valuable auxiliary to the present means of preventing or extinguishing conflagrations, one that is the least expensive and ever prompt and reliable, we commend the 'Bucket Brigade.' The great advantage of this system is, that with an efficient corps of handlers, a fire may be quenched at its incipiency, and before the cumbrous engines could be made available.

In cities, with the advantages of paved streets, model engine houses, drilled members, trained teams, and fire-alarms, the steam engines are all that could be desired, but in rural towns, and especially during the prevalence of unfavorable weather, when streets are almost impassable, the 'devouring element' might gain a decisive mastery and destroy an immense deal of property ere the 'machine' could arrive on the scene of action.

In many towns (we need not seek further than Donaldsonville), the colored citizens have well-organized associations designated as 'Bucket' companies, and their services are estimated highly. The 'Blue Buckets' of Donaldsonville are a thoroughly active class of men, composed of the best material among the colored citizens in that wide-awake town. They have a very commodious hall, neat uniforms, and, in fact, are well equipped in every way. The colored people of Napoleonville can do likewise, and we dare say that their white neighbors will lend them all the encouragement desired." (Feb. 20, 1886) Nap.Pioneer
Claiborne Williams

Joseph Claiborne McLellam Williams was born on December 31, 1868, on the Valenzuela Plantation in Ascension Parish, the child of Eliska Anne Jacob and Valoir Williams. It is said that the young Claiborne possessed a talent for music and made his first violin from a cigar box. Madame Octavie (last name unknown), one of his earliest teachers, sensed his innate genius, gave him encouragement and also gave him a basic classical academic education. He later studied music with Monsieur Auguste Degue who is said to have schooled him in solid musical fundamentals. Claiborne was educated in both the French and English language and could read and write them. At the turn of the century he learned to use the typewriter. While still a young man, Claiborne worked for the Werlein Music Co. of New Orleans, learning to repair musical instruments and was enough of a repairman to be able to take a piano apart, piece by piece, reassemble it and then tune it. It is recalled that for a while Claiborne was the orchestra leader of the Billy Kersand Minstrel Troupe that toured the United States as well as Canada and Europe, performing before the King and Queen of England. Most of his musical career was spent in and around Donaldsonville where he led various musical groups. He was schooled in musical composition and arranging, using his education to compose and arrange for his own group. He was said to have set the highest standards of discipline and performance upon all those under his baton, this perfection also showing in the 'proper' attitude in every sense; his clothes, manners and courtly demeanor usually singled him out, indicating his high statue of refinement. He became a community treasure and made a great cultural impact on the community, teaching music to innumerable people of all ages, races, social status and talent. Evans Casso, of Metairie, Louisiana, a former violin pupil of Williams stated:

"He was a revered patriarch of my youth and one merely basked in the aura of his presence. His lifetime spanned a broad spectrum of evolvements in music. The stringed ensembles of salon music, the measured cadence of brass bands on parade or in concert, sedate waltzes, reels, one-steps, fox-trots or the sentimental tunes of the Gay 90's were all within the realm of his mastery.

When the syncopation of an industrial age expressed itself in sassy ragtime, brassy jazz or scat music, he was still the maestro of it all. He loved his violin more than any instrument, yet he changed his orchestra with the times.

As one who knew him as teacher and friend, it is my duty to say of Claiborne Williams that he towered like a cathedral spire among men in his service to society."

The town of Donaldsonville, in the heart of the plantation belt of Southern Louisiana, possessed an active cultural atmosphere in the segregated white, black and Creole societies. Williams took an active part in all of the societies. His career is intertwined with the cultural/musical atmosphere of the town.

The earliest mention of Claiborne Williams is in the Baton Rouge paper of Feb. 2, 1885. We read:
"Theatre Wilbert to Open Tomorrow.

The chief acknowledges receipt of an invitation to attend the formal opening of the Theatre Wilbert in Plaquemine, Sunday, Feb. 3. An attractive program has been arranged for the occasion, including a musical concert from 1:30 to 2 o'clock, with selections by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city and on the magnificent orchestral organ which is a feature of the Theatre Wilbert's modern equipment. Dancing from 10 o'clock until 12:30 a.m. to music furnished by Claiborne's Orchestra." (Feb. 2, 1885, Baton Rouge)

Claiborne Williams not only teaches individual music lessons but also teaches in nearby towns and directs their bands. Although only eighteen years of age, he is mentioned as the 'well-known leader' of the famous St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville:

"Claiborne Williams, the well-known leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band and Williams' Orchestra, went down to St. James last Sunday to participate in the parade and celebration of the Bee Hive Benevolent Association No. 1, a worthy colored organization of our sister parish. Music for the parade was furnished by the association's own band, which is being coached by Williams, and considering the short time the organization has been practicing its efforts of last Sunday was extremely satisfactory and creditable." (July 8, 1896)

The St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville, a famous and respected brass band of Southern Louisiana and Mississippi, is first mentioned in the 'Chief' on March 14, 1875:

"Another fair on the 25 & 26 day of April. A fair will be held in this town for the benefit of that worthy association of young colored men, the St. Joseph Brass Band. Donaldsonville has a deal of musical talent and it should be encouraged. The band have the best wishes of the chief for the success of their coming fair."

We next find an article in the Donaldsonville Chief about the Williams String Band plays for a 'pretty moonlight dance'.:

"PRETTY MOONLIGHT DANCE. A very enjoyable dance at the residence of Mr. Stark L. Davis.

A very pretty and highly enjoyable open-air moonlight dance was given on Wednesday evening at the residence of Mr. Stark L. Davis on the souvenir plantation. The dance was given in honor of Miss Alive Gourrier and Mrs. M. Zuberbler of Iberville, nieces of Mr. and Mrs. Davis.

The trees that line each side of the drive way leading from the road to the residence were decorated with Chinese lanterns, as were also the Chinaball trees in the midst of which the dancing was kept up uninterruptedly until 1 o'clock yesterday
morning, the dance music being furnished by Claiborne Williams' String Band." (Sept 25, 1896)

Claiborne Williams, since his early teens, had been active in the musical circles of Donaldsonville and the surrounding parishes. While the names of the personnel of the early string bands mentioned are not given, I believe that the young Claiborne was a member. Having taken the reigns of the St. Joseph Band as early as 1886, we find a void of his name in the papers from 1887 to 1896. I surmise that the string band that is mentioned in 1896 had Claiborne as its violinist. One such example of the mention of a string band states:

"Dance at Bayou Goula - Dr. Alvery in Donaldsonville to get string band." (Feb. 3, 1896)

1897

Leading the St. Joseph String Band, Claiborne and the band play for an impromptu dance:

"Impromptu dance - Hook & Ladder Hall. Music which was most excellent was furnished by the crack St. Joseph String Band." (June 11, 1897)

The string band also plays for an open air dance:

"Open air dance on lawn of Mr. Albert Esneault . . It was 10 o'clock when the St. Joseph String Band struck up a spirited march." (July 1, 1897)

The next article speaks of the string band playing for a complimentary garden party. This brief article confirms that Claiborne Williams is indeed the leader of the string band:

"Complimentary Garden Party.

A garden party was given last night at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. D. Variani, on Chetimaches Street, in honor of Misses Delta and Bella Fucich of New Orleans. A dancing platform had been erected and overhead of this was strung a number of Chinese lanterns, which with the lights in other parts of the yard and the mellow rays of the moon, added in presenting a very pretty and attractive scene. The music was furnished by Claiborne Williams String Band." (July 17, 1897)

The Claiborne name is given in the September 10th issue of the Daily Times when the band plays at the Hook & Ladder Hall. A group led by Claiborne Williams might be listed in various ways, many times at the mercy of the covering reporter. A string band did not have a set instrumentation and various combinations can be called a string band:
"Dance at Hook & Ladder for Miss Maria Poche - The music was furnished by the Claiborne String Band and the dancing was kept up until an early hour this morning." (Sept. 10, 1897)

In the nineteenth century attendance at social activities was at the mercy of the weather. The effects of the weather, especially the effect a rain storm would have on the dirt roads, would dictate attendance at these affairs. Dances were directly affected by the muddy roads, as patrons came from nearby towns, traveling by horse and buggy. A dance, featuring the Claiborne Williams String Band, also called the St. Joseph String Band, is affected by the bad weather:

"Last night's dance - The soiree dansante given at Hook & Ladder Hall last night, by several of our popular young gentlemen did not attract a very large attendance of our fair sex on account of the inclemency of the weather. There were only 5 or 6 young ladies present, and they had a most enjoyable time. The affair broke up at a late hour. The St. Joseph Band furnished excellent music for the occasion." (Dec. 9, 1897)

While the string band usually performed for dances, at times it was engaged probably because of its smaller size and softer sound for outside activities, such as serenades and smaller parading events:

"Quite a crowd of the supporters of the People's ticket were out last night, parading the several streets accompanied by Williams String Band, and serenaded at various places." (May 4, 1898)

From 1899 to 1904 we find no copies of the Donaldsonville newspapers but we do find mention in the Weekly Thibodaux Sentinel of May 3, 1902. We read:

"On last Tuesday night at the Opera House was given by some of the young gentlemen of this community, one of the most enjoyable dances ever given in our city. The hall was tastefully and beautifully decorated with ferns, palms, palmelloWS and evergreens. The music was furnished by the Donaldsonville String Band."

Again, on May 24th we read that there was a dance at the Opera House by the young men of Thibodaux with "music furnished by the Donaldsonville String Band."

The Williams Band is mentioned in the March 11, 1904, paper as we resume coverage by local newspapers:

"Enjoyable impromptu dance - at Mohawk Club - Sweet music was furnished by a portion of the Claiborne Williams String Band." (March 11, 1904)
1905

It is not until the year 1905 that we find Williams again mentioned in the Donaldsonville papers. In 1905 he was very active in playing for dances at various locations in Donaldsonville. His musical group is either called a string band, an orchestra or many times just a band:

"Apros Bazaar at Ascension Hall - Claiborne Williams' inimitable band has been engaged for the occasion and will discourse sweet music." (April 27th.)

While the above quote doesn't mention a string band, it is most likely a small group plays for the bazaar. In 1905 the band plays for a grand ball:

"A grand ball will be given by Dugas and Hebert at their large new hall on Grand Bayou Wednesday evening, May 15, for the benefit of the building fund of the Grand Bayou School. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 4th.)

"Supper at Evan Hall (plantation of the McCalls) followed by dance. Music being furnished by a portion of Williams' orchestra." (May 6th.)

"A very enjoyable subscription dance was given at Ascension Hall Thursday night by a number of the leading men of the town. The grand march was led by Clarence Bouchereau with Miss Laulie Cire, and about 26 couples participated in the dancing which followed. Music was furnished by Williams Orchestra." (May 13th.)

"Delightful dance by Donaldsonville Terpsichore Club. At Ascension Hall, music was furnished by Williams Orchestra." (June 17th.)

"Banquet - Alumni Association of St. Joseph Commercial Institute. Sweet music was furnished throughout the evening by Williams Orchestra." (June 24th.)

"Jolly girls of Donaldsonville dance at Mohawk Club. Music furnished by two of the members of Williams Orchestra." (July 1st.)

We have read where only a portion of Williams' Band plays a dance. This practice might have been because of economics (ability to play for number of musicians), it could be because of the size of the place where the activity would be held, or it could be that the Williams' Band had a number of jobs on the same night and broke up into smaller bands to enable the band to furnish music for both jobs. Continuing our listing of other jobs played by the Williams Band we read:

"Dance at St. Martin's house by young men. The spacious gallery of the hotel was used as a dance floor and music was furnished by a portion of Williams Orchestra." (July 1st.)
On June 3rd, the orchestra plays for a dance at Valenzuela Hall:

"Delightful Dance at Valenzuela

The young ladies of upper Assumption were the hostesses at a dance at Valenzeula Hall Wednesday night that proved enjoyable in the extreme. Claiborne Williams Orchestra furnished music for the occasion and delicious refreshments were served in abundance." (June 3rd.)

With the week the orchestra travels to play a parade and dance in St. James Parish:

"Claiborne Williams, the well-known leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band and Williams Orchestra, went down to St. James last Sunday to participate in the parade and celebration of the Bee Hive Benevolent Association No. 1, a worthy colored organization of our sister parish. Music for the parade was furnished by the association's own band, which is being coached by Williams, and considering the short time the organization has been practicing its effort of last Sunday was extremely satisfactory and creditable." (June 8th.)

There is no account of Claiborne Williams in 1906, and only one in 1907:

"An open air musical concert will be given in Louisiana Square on Monday evening Sept. 5, between the hours of 8 and 10 o'clock. Ladies will serve refreshments and music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams String Band." (Aug. 24, 1907)

There are only two items in the Donaldsonville papers of 1908:

"Redmen install officers - music furnished by Claiborne Williams excellent String Band." (Feb. 1, 1908)

and:

"Enjoyable banquet - 4th annual St. Joseph Commercial Institute - Claiborne Williams String Band." (June 27, 1908)

We do find an item in the Napoleonville paper in 1908:

"The dance given by the young ladies and boys of Klotzville last Friday evening was a grand success. This affair has surpassed any ever held in this section, in which the married and unmarried participated, and has been the topic of the past two weeks. . .Music was discoursed by Claiborne Williams Band from which the young folks enjoyed until the wee small hours of the morning." (Feb. 22, 1908), Nap. Pioneer

As in the previous few years there is no account in 1909. This probably is one of the times that Claiborne was touring with Billy Kersands.
1910

The use of the string/orchestra is even more obvious in 1910

"Entertainment given by Ascension Hook & Ladder benefit - program will be interspersed with musical selections by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 28th.)

"Dance by Ascension Hook & Ladder - music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams full orchestra of 8 pieces." (June 4th.)

"Dance - Men of Donaldsonville. Music was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of 8 pieces." (June 25th.)

"Dance at Brusly St. Martin - Assumption Parish - Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of Donaldsonville." (Sept. 24th.)

1911

There are three items in the paper in 1911 - two for dances and one about forming a new brass band. We must remember that this does not mean that Williams only did two jobs in 1911, it only means that the three jobs are the only ones mentioned in the paper, perhaps because of the society atmosphere of the jobs or that a public relations person saw to it that the paper received the items:

"An enjoyable dance was given at Valenzuela Hall last Tuesday night under the auspices of the wide-awake club - Music was furnished by the well-known Williams Orchestra of Donaldsonville." (Jan. 28th.)

and:

"An enjoyable dance was given at the Knights of Columbus Hall last night - and to the strains of the exquisite music furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra the merry throngs held revel until the early hours of this morning." (Dec. 23rd.)

The third entry speaks of Claiborne Williams' alumni forming a new brass band. We read for the first time that the Williams Band is called the Peerless Band:

"A New Brass Band Organized.

A new brass band has been organized by a number of well-known colored musicians of this city, many of who have heretofore been included in the personnel of the local and famous Claiborne Williams' Peerless Band. Its leader is Morris Victor. The first public appearance of the band will be on Sunday, February 18th, when a grand fair and masquerade ball will be given under the auspices and at the hall of the Protective Benevolent Association. The entertainment will open at 12:30
pm and will be preceded by a street parade. Music for the ball will be rendered by the
Bolo Orchestra under the leadership of Ray Percy Gibson." (Feb. 10th.)

1912

Whether Claiborne Williams had a great public relations man in 1912 or a
newspaper had a new policy or new editor, there is a multitude of articles on the
activities of Williams. Besides playing music, Claiborne Williams also worked as a
piano tuner. An advertisement appeared in the Chief:

"If your piano needs tuning or repairing, send for Claiborne Williams who will
guarantee to do the work in the best possible manner at very reasonable rate.
Satisfaction assured. A trial order solicited. Residence: 507 Opelousas St. Telephone
#11." (Numerous papers throughout the year.)

The Williams Band often plays in Napoleonville, a small town some 11 miles
from Donaldsonville and has been hired to play at the Masonic Building.

"One of the most brilliant social affairs ever given in Napoleonville took place
last Wednesday night, when the matrons and young ladies gave their Leap Year
Dance at the WOW Hall in the Masonic Building. The hall was very prettily
decorated, and the celebrated Claiborne Williams String Band of Donaldsonville
furnished the music." (Feb. 17th.) Nap. Pioneer

We read, in an article in the paper that George Williams, the brother of
Claiborne, has written a piece called "Logical Point Waltz":

"With the compliments of Claiborne Williams, a well-known colored musician
of this city, and leader of the crack St. Joseph Brass Band and Peerless Orchestra, the
Chief has received a copy of "The Logical Point Waltz," a tuneful melody composed
by Claiborne's brother, George Williams. The latter is himself. For months he has
resided in Denver, Colorado, where he is meeting with success as a music teacher.
The "Logical Point Waltz" is dedicated to the city of New Orleans, and is published
by a music house of that place." (March 16th.) Chief

Sic: If no name of paper is given at end it is the Donaldsonville Chief.

1912

In April of 1912 the Women's Civic League builds a bandstand in Louisiana
Square (see St. Joseph Brass Band) and the Williams Brass Band begins a series of
concerts there. Williams continues playing with his dance and smaller concert
groups:
"A concert and ball will be given at the Sacramento Schoolhouse on Wednesday April 17, to mark the closing of that institution after a very successful session of 1
and 11 months. Admission to the concert will be free and for dancing, which will
follow the entertainment. Only gentlemen will be charged, the fee being 50 cents,
music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' full orchestra." (April 13th.)

and:

"A grand dance will be given at the Redmen Hall in Geismar tomorrow afternoon
and night under the auspices of Geismar Camp #533, WOW, for the benefit of its
building fund. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams String band." (July
6th.)

"A delightful event of the current week was the dance given Monday evening at
the Knights of Columbus by Miss Hilda Park, complimentary to her house guest
Miss Della Billeaud of Broussard. Upwards of 30 couples were in attendance, and to
the strains of the exquisite music furnished by Claiborne's Band." (Aug. 3rd.)

George Williams again plays his composition "Logical Point Waltz" for the weekly
concert:

"The band concert in Louisiana Square Wednesday night attracted the usual large
audience and was greatly enjoyed. As on the occasion of last week's entertainment,
the "Logical Point Waltz," composed by George Williams made a hit with the big
crowd and was enthusiastically encored. These weekly concerts are a source of much
pleasure to our music-loving people and constitutes a summer-time attraction which
few cities the size of Donaldsonville can boast." (August 17th.)

The brass band that Williams lead was is now called the "Peerless Brass
Band." Many times Claiborne's musical group is misnamed, being called the
Claiborne Williams Brass Band or Williams' Orchestra, Peerless Brass Band,
Peerless Orchestra, Donaldsonville String or Brass Band, or the St. Joseph Brass or
String Band - all were led by Williams.

The 'Williams Band' plays for a meeting:

"Jones meeting a rousing success. The meeting was enlivened with music by
Claiborne Williams' Peerless Brass Band." (August 24th.)

The Brass Band also plays for a political rally, an activity that is common for
brass bands:

"Morgan rally next Tuesday night. The meeting will be preceded by a concert by
Claiborne Williams Brass Band and the speech making will be interspersed with
musical selections by this crack organization." (August 24th.)
"St. James Camp, WOW will give a dance at their hall on Sunday evening, Sept. 22, for the benefit of their building fund. Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city will furnish music for the Affair." (Sept. 14th.)

For most of the smaller jobs Williams uses a small musical ensemble, the string band:

"On Thursday Sept. 26th a wedding ball will be given at Daigle's Hall, Bursly St. Vincent. You are cordially invited to attend. Music by the celebrated Claiborne String Band of Donaldsonville." (Sept. 21st.), Nap. Pioneer

"Big doings at Geismar tomorrow - grand fair - music for grand ball will be furnished by the renowned Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (Oct. 12st.)

The Williams Band is booked for a series of concerts in the city's park on Sundays:

"During the winter, concerts will be given in City Park every Sunday afternoon by Claiborne Williams Brass Band." (Nov. 2nd.)

At the end of the year the band plays for Christmas activities:

"Christmas Festival planned - Christmas Tree Festival and dance at Ascension Hall Dec. 23 - Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 14th.)

1913

The advertisement for Williams' piano tuning business continues to run in the paper and the orchestra continues playing dance jobs and other jobs with the Peerless Brass Band and other smaller musical ensembles. The Williams Orchestra plays for a "fair at Brusly, Sacramento School House - music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (March 29th.)

The Peerless Brass Band begins weekly concerts and we read of the details of this endeavor:

"Band Concert Tomorrow - The weekly concerts given in City Park last summer by Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band, under the auspices of the WCL of Donaldsonville will be repeated this year, arrangements to this end having just been completed by the league. The first musicale of the season will take place tomorrow evening, from 5:30 to 7:30, and there will be a concert in the park one evening each week thereafter.

In order to raise funds to recompense the band for its services, the Civic League will give a subscription dance at Ascension Hall on May 22, and preparations for this function are under way. The amount to be subscribed by the gentlemen has been
fixed at $2.00, which will entitle the subscriber to be accompanied by a female companion. Only gentlemen who have been invited by the league to attend, and who have remitted the subscription fee, will be admitted to the hall, and the attendance of girls is limited to those who may have been invited by some eligible gentlemen or by the League." (May 17th.)

These concerts continue. We read of an entry in the August 16 paper that states: "extra large crowd for concert Thursday night. Netted $25.20 for WCL." (August 16th.)

We read next of a small problem: some of the people want to dance at the band concert. We read:

"Dancing in Park not prohibited. It having been currently reported that the children and young folks will not hereafter be permitted to dance in City Park on the occasion of the band concerts. The Chief is authorized by the WCL to state that this report is erroneous. No edict has been issued against the terpsichorean pastime, and the young people will not be interfered with as long as their frolics are conducted in an orderly manner. They are welcome to avail themselves of the facilities of the park at all times for innocent pleasure and amusement, says the league." (August 23rd.)

1914

Again there is a new name introduced for a Williams musical ensemble. The Claiborne Williams Orchestra is called the Peerless Orchestra and the orchestra plays for a benefit:

"Entertainment for benefit of Lock Association - Music will be rendered throughout the entertainment by the famous Peerless Orchestra, under the leadership of Claiborne Williams." (Jan. 31st.)

The sponsors of the above benefit give thanks to those who helped with the benefit and place a card of thanks in the paper:

"Expression of thanks - success of benefit - to the members of Claiborne's Orchestra "for their superior music and for the excellent public spirit they showed on this and other occasions." (Feb. 7th.)

Social organizations were very popular during the nineteenth century and most national organizations had a chapter in Donaldsonville. They gave many socials and dances during the year:

"Dance conducted - Ascension Hall by Donaldsonville Lodge #119, Loyal Order of Moose for benefit of Lafourche Lock Association. Excellent music was furnished by Claiborne Williams noted orchestra." (Feb. 21st.)

The summer concert series continues in 1914 as we read of the details:
"The summer series of open-air concerts in City Park, under the auspices of the WCL, will be inaugurated Easter Sunday afternoon, when Claiborne Williams' crack Peerless Brass Band will render a program of popular selections. Ice cream, cake, lemonade and other refreshments will be sold throughout the afternoon by the ladies of the League, for the benefit of the concert fund." (April 4th.)

The concerts begin on May 17:

"Band concert May 17. First Band concert of season. When a program of popular selections will be rendered by the crack Peerless Brass Band under the leadership of Claiborne Williams." (May 2nd.)

The band concerts continue and we read a write-up to encourage attendance:

"Band concert tomorrow - Everybody in Donaldsonville and all visitors to the city, are cordially invited to assemble in City Park at 5:00 tomorrow afternoon and enjoy the concert to be given by the crack Peerless Brass Band under the leadership of Claiborne Williams. The program will include many new and popular selections, and a pleasant afternoon can be spent listening to the music and strolling about the pretty park." (May 9th.)

The opening concert of the series is held and the paper mentions this event and also mentions that the band plays some ragtime music:

"Band concert in City Park. The summer series of open-air band concerts in City Park under the auspices of WCL was inaugurated with a delightful musicale last Sunday afternoon, when the Peerless Brass Band rendered a program of rag-time selections in the presence of a large gathering." (May 23rd.)

The band concert is scheduled for Wednesday and the band continues to play popular repertoire rather than the traditional band repertoire:

"Band concert next Wednesday. A musical treat is in store for the public next Wednesday evening, when the crack Peerless Brass Band will give a concert in City Park between the hours of 6 and 8 o'clock. The program will include the newest popular selections." (August 1st.)

The Peerless Brass Band plays for the South Louisiana State Fair from Oct. 9 to 12th.

A tragedy takes place when George Williams suddenly dies. The entry in the paper states:
"George Williams, a brother of Claiborne Williams, the well-known band leader, died suddenly at the latter's home in Opelousas Street Thursday morning, and his remains were interred in the Catholic cemetery yesterday forenoon, after services at Ascension Church. The deceased was the composer of "Logical Point Waltz" a musical composition of exquisite melody that has achieved wide popularity, and, like his brother Claiborne and half-brother Jules Williams, was a musician of unusual ability, playing several instruments with great skill. He enjoyed the aspect and confidence of the white citizens of the community as well as the members of his own race, and the announcement of his demise was received with sincere regret." (Oct. 31st.)

The Nov. 7th issue of the paper corrects an error as they print "Jules a full brother, not half-brother. It was at Jules home that George Williams spent the last few months of his life."

1915

Again in 1915 the Peerless Brass Band plays a concert series in City Park. The paper states: "Weather permitting, there will be a concert in City Park by the Peerless Brass Band from 5 to 7:30 tomorrow evening (Sunday). (July 24th.)

A number of dance jobs, involving the Williams Orchestra appeared in the paper:

"Big crowd at Germania Park. Between 500 and 600 persons visited Germania Park. Music for dancing - furnished by the crack Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city. One of the big buses of the Inter-Parish Rapid Transit Co. The latter will leave the X-Ray Pharmacy at 7 p.m., and will carry Claiborne Williams 8 piece orchestra which will give a 15 minute concert at the X-Ray corner before the hour of departure for Germania Park."(August 7th.)

"The Fair Grounds Pavilion was the scene of a delight children's dance Thursday night. . .and to the strains of the excellent music furnished by Claiborne's Orchestra they threaded the mazes of the prevailing dance." (Aug. 21st.)

"Dancing tomorrow (Sunday) at Germania Park. Open-air dance, every Sunday - music for dancing will be furnished by Claiborne's full Orchestra." (Aug. 21st.)

The Williams band next plays a dance at Tipperary Hall in Napoleonville:

"Mr. Guillot, wishes to announce that he will be given one of his usual first class dances tonight August 21st at Tipperary Hall and that the very best music will be furnished by Claiborne's Band." (Aug. 21st.), Nap. Pioneer

The Williams Band again plays at Tipperary Hall:
"Dance under auspices of Napanee council, degree of Pocohantas. Red Men Hall Friday night. Music will be furnished by Claiborne's Orchestra." (Aug. 28th.)

"We are requested to announce that the Claiborne Band will furnish music for the dance at Tipperary Hall tonight." (Sept. 18th.), Nap. Pioneer

"Dance at Smoke Bend School - benefit - music for occasion will be furnished by Claiborne's Orchestra." (Sept. 25th.)

"After football game at night, dance at the High School auditorium for which music will be furnished by Claiborne's Orchestra." (Nov. 20th.)

1916

In 1916 the Williams musical groups continue to play for social functions. They begin playing at the Tip Top Hall in Klotzville, La. This becomes a regular engagement. The opening is written about in the Napoleonville 'Pioneer.'

"There will be a grand ball at Klotzville, tomorrow, in celebration of the opening of the new hall; Claiborne's Band will furnish the music." (Feb. 26st.) Nap. Pioneer

"Dance tonight at Tip Top Hall at Klotzville. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (March 4th.)

"Elks installation ceremonies and Dutch lunch. Claiborne's Orchestra has been engaged to furnish music throughout the afternoon." (April 1, 1916)

The band again plays for the South La. St. Fair. The Peerless Brass Band shares the billing with the Silver Bell Orchestra. (June 24th.)

The community of Smoke Bend (a Negro settlement) is the site of a fair that hires the music of the "Claiborne Williams Band." (Sept. 2nd.)

The Clicquot Club has a grand dance at Woodman's Hall. In the May 18th Lafourche Comet we read that the "Claiborne Band of Donaldsonville has been engaged to furnish music." In the same paper in the issue of On Sept. 7, of 1916 the band again plays in Thibodaux:

"Clicquot Club dance - Donaldsonville band has been secured to furnish the music. - Claiborne's band furnished exceptional sweet music and entranced the participants."

Sept. 14 the Claiborne Band again plays for the Clicquot Club for the third time:

"Third dance given by Clicquot Club - Claiborne's Band furnished exceptionally sweet music and entranced the participants." (Nov. 14th.)
We read in the Thibodaux Comet of June 15, 1916, of the Band playing for a grand dance:

"Grand Dance - Claiborne's famous Band of Donaldsonville dispensed soft sweet music thus contributing largely to the pleasure and diversion amongst the happy crowd." (June 15th.)

The Williams Band continues to play out of town, and an item appears in the 'Pioneer.:

"A Grand Fair will be held at the Tip Top Hall, Saturday and Sunday, July 15 & 16 for the benefit of a Catholic Church. Everything usually found at first-class fairs will be in evidence and everybody is promised a good time. Music by Claiborne Williams Band." (July 8th.), Nap. Pioneer

"The wee folk’s circus parade will take place at the Fair Grounds next Friday afternoon at 3:00. Everyone's requested to sing 'Circus Day' with the children when 'Claiborne' plays the tune." (Sept. 30, 1916)

"A delightful dance was given at Grand Bayou Hall Thursday evening under the management of Ulysses Herbert. Music was furnished by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Sept. 30th.)

1917

The adv. for the piano tuning continues in the paper and the Williams Bands continue to play for dances and civic affairs in 1917, a 'war year' for Americans.

"Bal Masque brilliant event - Claiborne Williams' Orchestra furnished music for the dancing." (Feb. 17th.)

"Red Cross dance at Klotzville - the crack Claiborne Williams Orchestra of Donaldsonville will furnish music." (April 28th.)

The band travels to Thibodaux to play at Guillot's Hall:

"Dance at Hall of Dozillien Guillot, three miles above Thibodaux. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of Donaldsonville." (May 17th.), LaFourche Comet

"Dance - Ascension Branch of Red Cross Society of America. Music for the dance will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra." (May 26th.)
"Flag Day observed by Elks - Dance - It was early morn before the dancers were willing to leave, so enticing was the music furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra." (June 16th.)

The band plays one of their charity or gratis appearances for the Catholic Church:

"Grand Fair benefit of Catholic Church in Tip-Top Hall June 23 and 24. The crack Claiborne Williams Band of Donaldsonville will furnish music for the occasion." (June 16th.)

This is during the First World War and the band plays a benefit for the Red Cross:

"Italian Society Celebration - benefit of Red Cross - A grand parade started at the hall at 3 p.m. led by Claiborne's Band." (July 21st.)

In Sept. (20th) the band plays again at Guillot's Hall: "Dance Guillot Hall - Music by Claiborne Band."

Finally on Dec. 13 we read of a dance at the Old Woodmen Hall with "music furnished by Claiborne's Orchestra after the show at the Grand Theater." (Dec. 13th.), Lafourche Comet

1918

Claiborne Williams continued to help the war effort on the home front and to play at local and near-by town dances:

"There will be a dance at Melancon's Hall in Smoke Bend Sunday night, Jan. 27. Music will be furnished by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 26th.)

The colored citizens of Donaldsonville, being patriotic Americans holds a meeting and the paper prints: "Colored citizen’s patriotic meeting. Stirring music was furnished by Claiborne Williams Band." (Feb. 2nd.)

The band continues to be engaged for dances:

"Grand dance will be given at Melancon's Hall in Smoke Bend Easter Sunday night, under the management of Emile Dugas. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra." (March 23rd.)

Southern Louisiana was dominated by the Catholic Church. It was the majority religion in the region. There is an obvious lessening of social activities during the Lenten season of the Catholic Church. As a dominate social activity
dances were not sponsored by the church during the Lenten period. Claiborne was a practicing Catholic and we see a lessening of his musical activities during the Lenten season as did many musicians as well as social clubs.

"Dance at Ulysses Hebert's Hall at Grand Bayou upon celebration of Easter. First dance of season, resumption of these delightful entertainments following the solemnity of the Lenten period." (March 30, 1918)

"1st dance of the renowned Tip Top Hall in Klotzville, Saturday night, April 6." (April 6th.)

"Dance Melancon's - Claiborne Williams Orchestra will furnish music." (April 6th.)

"Benefit dance - Smoke Bend School House, Sunday night, April 12. The Claiborne Williams Orchestra will furnish music for the occasion." (April 20, 1918)

"Liberty Loan war relic exhibit train...promptly at 1:00 the 'Liberty Special' left for Plaquemine. The Claiborne Williams Brass Band which had furnished music during the stay of the train here, went along to enliven the trip to the next stopping place." (April 27th.)

Claiborne Williams was a respected citizen of Donaldsonville and was very active in civic affairs raising money for benefit causes and for education:

"Meeting for reopening of the local public school for Negro children - Claiborne - Claiborne Williams - treasurer." (July 20th.)

"Dance at Hotel Donaldsonville bi-monthly on Saturday night. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Oct. 19th.)

The Williams Band, being well received, again plays at Tipperary Hall in Napoleonville: There was two times during the year that the citizens of these parishes would not usually hold social activities - the Lenten season and the sugar Cane cutting and grinding season:

"The Claiborne Band will furnish music at the Tipperary Hall tonight and we are requested to announce that this will be the last dance for which Claiborne's Band will furnish music until after the grinding season." (Nov. 6th.), Nap. Pioneer

World War I ended in 1918 and Williams continues playing dance engagements: The Williams Band plays an engagement in Napoleonville:

1919

The Williams' Band continues its popularity in 1919 and plays for a young folks dance:
"The dance given last evening by the young folks of our town was a most successful affair. Claiborne's popular orchestra furnished the music." (April 26th.), Nap. Pioneer

The band plays for paternal organization's initiation, both the K of C and the Elks. The paper mentions first the K of C:

"Initiation by Ascension K of C - Parade. Claiborne Williams Brass Band. To the tune of patriotic music the knights and candidates marched down to Catholic Church. After leaving church to the strains of music furnished by Claiborne Williams Brass Band, marched to Ascension Hook and Ladder Hall." (June 21st.)

"Junior Class of Donaldsonville High School entertainment - graduates at a reception and dance at the pavilion of the Fair Grounds. Music was furnished by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (June 28th.)

"Initiation by Elks - grand dance - Music was furnished for the occasion by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (June 28th.)

We read of a "4th celebration by colored people of Donaldsonville. Parade-headed by Claiborne Williams Brass Band - marched up Railroad Avenue to Mississippi Street." (July 5th.)

Most small towns have a community center or 'hall' where they hold meetings and social affairs such as dances:

"A grand wedding dance will be given at Ulyssee Herbert's Hall, at Grand Bayou, on October 29th. Music by Claiborne Williams Band." (Oct. 25th.) Nap. Pioneer

There were a number of 'fraternal organizations' such as Elks, WOW, etc., and these clubs had chapters in many of the small country towns. We read of the Woodman of the World holding a dance in which the Williams Band plays:

"The young folks enjoyed a lovely dance given on Wednesday evening at the Woodmen Hall, music was furnished by Claiborne's Band." (Nov. 29th.) Nap. Pioneer

"Young ladies of Donaldsonville dance at Red Men Hall. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams String Band." (Dec. 20, 1919)

1920

In 1920 the Band again plays at Herbert's Hall on Grand Bayou:
"Posters are out announcing a Grand Dance tonight, January 10th, at Ulysses Herbert's Hall at Grand Bayou. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Band.' (Jan. 10th.), Nap. Pioneer

The band appears in Napoleonville again in late February at the Masonic Hall:

"A most enjoyable dance was given last Friday night by the young set at the Masonic Hall, though there were not as many dancers as usual. The music which was furnished by Claiborne's Band was usually good." (Feb. 21st.), Nap. Pioneer

The band plays another benefit - for the "grand dance - benefit of Donaldsonville High School. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' entire orchestra." (May 15th.)

The Williams Band travels to St. Johns Parish for a dance and we read that it is called a 'jazz' band. Jazz will reach its zenith in 1926 but early in the 20's we begin to see that dance bands are gradually developing its style to play 'written' jazz and using the jazz name helps its drawing power.

"Grand dance April 10. - the Famous Claiborne Williams Jazz Band will furnish enchanting music for the occasion." (March 20th.), L'Observateur-Reserve, La.)

The Williams Band again plays for the theater dance in LaPlace, La.

"LaPlace Theater - Monthly dance with music by Claiborne Band from Donaldsonville." (March 26th.), L'Observateur, Reserve, La

and:


and:

"May Festive - WOW. The biggest drawing card of all will be the dancing music by the famous Claiborne Orchestra." (April 20th.), L'Observateur, Reserve, La.

The Williams Band again travels to Thibodaux in 1920 to play for a dance:

"There'll be a dance tomorrow night in the Woodman Hall under the auspices of the Midnight Club. Claiborne's Orchestra will furnish the music." (April 29th), Lafourche Comet

The band plays another dance for the Midnight Club later in 1920. In the July 15th. Comet we read:
"The Midnight Club of Thibodaux will have a dance tonight in the Woodmen Hall in Thibodaux when an enjoyable time is expected by the young people. Claiborne Williams' Orchestra will furnish the music, which means something up-to-date."

The Williams Band plays twice more for the Midnight Club of Thibodaux:

"The next dance of the Midnight club will take place Thursday, July 29th. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (July 22nd.), Lafourche Comet

and:

"The Midnight club will give its next dance tonight, even if the weather men are not giving us what we consider a 'square deal.' Claiborne's Jazz Band will 'drive dull cares away.'" (Aug. 12th.), Lafourche Comet

The band plays another benefit, this time for the local High School:

"Grand dance - benefit of Donaldsonville High School. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' entire orchestra." (May 15th.)

"Dance at Elks Home - Claiborne Williams Orchestra discoursed the latest ragtime selections, which besides being enjoyed by the dancers proved to be a treat to the large number of ladies & gentlemen, was assembled on the spacious lawn in front of the Elks Home." (July 24th.)

While most of Williams' engagements are dances he still marches in parades with a brass band:


The Band is hired to play for a private dance at the house of Mr. Gilbert of Napoleonville:

"On Wednesday evening in the beautiful and spacious house of Mr. & Mrs. James Gilbert, there was a scene of great splendor, when their lovely young daughter Frances, entertained her friends, at a delightful dance, with Miss Amy Billiard of New Iberia, as her guest of honor, delicious refreshment was served, and to the strains of Claiborne's Orchestra, youth and beauty danced and made merry until the early yours." (Sept. 4th.), Nap. Pioneer
The Bogalusa Stores Co. opens a new store and brings in the Williams Band to play; and also pay the salary for the band to play an Elks dance we read of this in the Oct. 21, 1920 Bogalusa Paper:

"Bogalusa Store Co. Store donated money for Elks dance. The Claiborne Williams Band of Donaldsonville has been contracted for $100 and when time came to settle, the band leader stated they had already been paid by Mr. Wilson manager of Bogalusa Stores."

"The Claiborne Williams Jazz Band of Donaldsonville, Louisiana recognized as the finest jazz band in all the Southland will furnish music for the dance which is to be given at the Elks' Home on Next Monday night. The expense of bringing the band here before has been prohibitive, but by arrangements with the Bogalusa Stores Co. the band was secured for Monday night."

The Williams band plays again in Bogalusa for another Elks Dance. The Nov. 4th papers state that "The Claiborne Williams Band, known as the greatest in the Southland has been secured to render music. Record breaking crowd is expected to attend, as the Claiborne Williams Band previously furnished dance music here and was pronounced the best ever in the city."

The Williams band again plays for an Elks dance with their salary this time paid for by the G. S. Lumber Co. The paper states that "One of the features was a waltz played by the orchestra which had been composed by Julian Welloughby. The piece was encored a number of times and was pronounced perfect dance music."

There was to be a dance at the Pine Tree Inn with music furnished by the Williams Band but we read that "the band was unable to reach Bogalusa on account of the annulling of the evening train from New Orleans, but a local orchestra furnished good music. This mentioning is the last account of Williams Band playing in Bogalusa.

1921

Beginning in 1921, the Williams Band plays for the local movie house, usually on Tuesday nights. It continues to play for dances and we begin to read that the band is now more often called a jazz band, although the name used by the paper is not consistent with the band's instrumentation.

"Weekly dances at Tip Top Hall - Klotzville. Music will be furnished by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Feb. 12st.) (See movie advs. in appendix)

The Brass Band plays for the Elks who have a parade with the procession "headed by Claiborne Williams Brass Band." (Feb. 12th.) and, play for the Elks dance with "music furnished by Claiborne Williams String Band." (July 2nd.)

The band travels to LaPlace and play for a May Festival:
"The Claiborne Orchestra plays for the Grand May Festival at LaPlace with dancing to start at 8:45 with enchanting music by the Claiborne Orchestra." (March 7th.), La 'Observateur Reserve

"The LaPlace Theater hold their monthly dance with music "by Claiborne Band from Donaldsonville" (March 26, La 'Observateur)and the band plays the "May Festive WOW. The biggest drawing card of all will be there - dancing - music by the famous Claiborne Orchestra." (April 30th.), La 'Observateur, Reserve

We read, in the 'Pioneer of an engagement played by the band in Napoleonville:

"The young men of this town gave a very enjoyable dance on Wednesday evening. A large crowd attended. Claiborne's popular band furnished the music." (June 11th.), Nap. Pioneer

The Williams Band plays for a dance at the Napoleonville Masonic Hall:

"The young ladies and young men of this town with a few outside guests, enjoyed a very pleasant dance on Thursday evening at the Masonic Hall with Claiborne's Band furnished the music." (July 9th), Nap. Pioneer

The final entry in the 'Pioneer' is on August 27th:

"Of the many social affairs given lately, the dance held last evening was among one of the most delightful. Claiborne's popular band furnished the music." (August 27th.), Nap. Pioneer

1922

There are numerous articles and items in the papers during 1922. This is the jazz age and dancing becomes even more popular:

"Elks New Years Eve Festival - Claiborne Williams famous orchestra furnished music for the occasion." (Jan. 28th.)

"Valentine Party - music by several pieces of the Claiborne Orchestra." (Feb. 4, 1922)

"Masquerade Ball at Tip Top - Music for the occasion will be discoursed by Claiborne Orchestra will furnish music for the occasion." (Feb. 25th.)

"Grand dance at Tip Top Hall tomorrow. St. Joseph's Day. Claiborne Williams Orchestra will furnish music for the occasion." (March 11th.)
"Grand dance at Tip Top Hall tomorrow. St. Joseph Day. Claiborne Williams Orchestra will furnish music for the occasion." (March 11th.)

"Big K of C initiation and parade - Williams Brass Band." (April 29th.)

"Grand dance at Corbo's Dance Hall at Barton. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (May 20th, & 2nd.)

"Grand dance at Corbo's Hall on Bayou Lafourche. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (June 24th.)

"A most enjoyable dance was given by the young set of this town on Thursday evening at the Masonic Hall. Claiborne Williams Band furnished the music." (July 8th.), Nap. Pioneer

"Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Barton Jr. dance for little folks (for daughter). The first members were danced to the accompaniment of the piano. Then all of a sudden the lower floor was thrown open and Claiborne's Orchestra which was concealed on the stair case started to play and surprised the little guest so, that they as well as the older couples indulged in fantastic steps to the accompanying strains." (August 5th.), Nap. Pioneer

The Williams Band plays each Thursday at the Community Theater. A list of that theater's program is given in the August 12 paper. Thus the band plays Tuesday and Thursday nights at the Grand and Community Theaters.

"George Dodge and Willard Foley gave a joint party on Monday evening at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Willard Foley. Dancing was indulged into the strains of Claiborne's Band." (August 19th.), Nap. Pioneer

Catholic Church Fair on Sept. 9-10. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Brass Band and Orchestra." (August 26th.)

"Grand dance at Redmen Hall, Geismar. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' popular Orchestra." (Sept. 2nd, 1922)

"Grand Dance at Redmen Hall, Geismar, and Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams popular Orchestra." (Oct. 21st.)

"Carnival preparations - men will wear overalls, ladies aprons, music by Claiborne's Famous Orchestra." (Nov. 4th.)

The Elks hold a dance, Nov. 24. The music was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra:
"About thirty couples tripped the light fantastic at one of the regular dances given at the Elks Club which is always attended by the younger "Hello Bills" and their wives and sweethearts last night. The affair was in keeping with the usual splendid dances given by this group and all who attended had a delightful time dancing till shortly after midnight. The music was furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra." (Nov. 25th.)

Also in the Nov. 25th paper we read of a 'Big Barn Dance will be Featured on Thanksgiving and that "there will certainly be some cake walking on Thanksgiving night, and all to the music of Claiborne Williams' Orchestra."

The band traditionally is engaged by the local Elks Club for their dances. We read of their engagement for two Elks dances:

"Millionaire Club - dance at Elks Home. About 15 couples tripped the 'light fantastic toe' until the wee hours of the morning, to the strains of Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 2nd.)

"Dance Christmas night was big success - Elks Hall. The festival began to 9:00 when the first number from Claiborne Williams melodious Orchestra was rendered. From the first dance to the last the floor of the large hall was absolutely covered with dancers, many not being able to find room and stood or sat the number out." (Dec. 30th.)

Beginning in May 20th, 1922 we find an advertisement for the Grand Theater that mentions music by Claiborne's Orchestra. The orchestra plays at the Grand Theater weekly. The last advertisement in the paper seems to be on April 19, 1924. All the advertisements mention the band playing on a Tuesday evening. From an article of Dec. 15, 1923 that list the week's Bill at the Grand. The only time there is music mentioned is on a Tuesday night. The Williams Band was a regular fixture at the Grand Theater with some exception, which is mentioned in a May 10, 1924, article.

1923

It seems as if any group that wants a successful dance engages the Claiborne Dance Band. While the paper may not tell the whole story, we can see that the dance and Claiborne's dance music and brass band repertoire were very popular in this era:

"Grand dance for Knights of Columbus. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 6th.)

There is extensive coverage in the 'Chief' about the Mardi Gras activities and as many as 25,000 people are to see the big parade. Claiborne's band marches in the parade and plays for the court that night. I give a small excerpt from the Feb. 17th paper:
"The outstanding feature of the grand event was staged at the opening of the festivities, the coronation of the queen. At 8 o'clock Claiborne Williams' melodious orchestra struck up the melody, "In the Springtime," to the sweet strains of which the King and his court entered the beautiful court room which was brilliant with hundreds of electric lights."

"Grand carnival dance at Corbo's - Claiborne Williams Orchestra has been signed to furnish the music." (Feb. 10th.)

"Jolly Corks (Military Club) will burst forth after the long Lenten season and on next Wednesday night at the Elks Club, will give their first dance after Easter. Claiborne Williams will furnish the music as usual." (March 31st.)

"Grand dance at Simoneaux's Hall in White Castle. Claiborne Williams will furnish the music." (March 31st.)

"Grand dance in Red Men Hall in Geismar. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (April 14th.)

"MOGL entertainment at home of Arnaud Black. Music was furnished by portion of Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (April 14th.)

The band plays for the Red Men Fair and Parade:

"Grand parade for Red Man Fair - One of the striking features of the parade will be a jazz band and a concourse of clowns at the head of the parade will be Claiborne Williams Band." (April 14th.)

"Red Men Fair, parade - At night there will be dancing. At 8 each night the music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (April 21st.)

"Grand dance in Red Man Hall in Geismar. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (April 14th.)

"The band plays for a "MOG Lent at the Home of Arnaud Blake. Music was furnished by part of the Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (April 14th.)

While the band plays for the Red Man Parade they also play for the dancing at 8 each night.

One of the most important organizations in the small towns of Southern Louisiana was the Firemen. They are well organized and each year holds their own parade. We read:
"Firemen's Parade in Donaldsonville. The parade will be headed by the Peerless Brass Band which will distill music along the entire way. At night there will be dancing at the pavilion and Claiborne Williams Orchestra will furnish the music." (May 12th.)

"Big celebration is planned for 4th of July. Claiborne Williams Band and Orchestra will furnish music for the occasion and it is planned to have dancing at night." (May 26, 1923rd.)

"Delightful dance given by Junior Class to member of graduating class. Never has Claiborne Williams Orchestra played to a more happy gathering, which danced into the small hours of the morning." (May 26th.)

"A delightful dance was given by the young men last Wednesday evening at the Masonic Hall. Claiborne Williams Band furnished the music." (June 16th.), Nap. Pioneer

"Grand dance at pavilion in Darrow. Dancing, will begin at 8:00 and Claiborne Williams famous Orchestra will furnish music for the occasion." (Aug. 4th.)

"Enjoyable costume dance for Miss Aucoin. Claiborne Williams furnished the music during the evening." (Aug. 4th.)

The Italian Society of Donaldsonville hold their annual fair and parade "headed by Claiborne Williams Band." (August 11th.)

"Dance at Elks Home - Claiborne Williams crack orchestra furnished music for the occasion." (Aug. 18th.)

The band again plays at the South La. St. Fair (Oct. 6) and for a dance at K of C Hall:

"Dance at Knights of Columbus Hall. Music for the affair will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 8th.)

The following week's paper (Dec. 15) told of "the dance of the Knights of Columbus was a big success."

Next the Band, according to the Dec. 15, 1923 'Chief' states that:

"Next Friday night, Miss Aucoin will give a grand dance at the Knights of Columbus building, in the interest of her candidacy in the popularity contest. Claiborne Williams' Orchestra will furnish music for the occasion."

1924
The music for the Grand Theatre is still being furnished by Williams, whose jazz band is very active during the year 1924:

"Big benefit show - Grand Theatre next Thursday. Program to consist of vaudeville and pictures for local carnival fund. Claiborne Williams Orchestra will discourse the latest jazz music." (Jan. 26th.)

Continuing as an active person in the civic life of Donaldsonville, Williams' band plays for the candidate for Governor. The paper states: "H. Bouanchaud, candidate for Governor speaks at courthouse. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band." (Feb. 9th.)

Claiborne Williams is active in social activities and organizations. He becomes President of the local Benevolent Association:

"True Friends Benevolent Association, a colored fraternal organization of this city, elected the following officers to serve for the ensuing year: Claiborne Williams-President. The True Friends is one of the oldest organizations of its kind in the state and has a large membership and is in a flourishing condition." (Feb. 9th.)

Most small country towns in the United States have both community centers and a pavilion in their town park for town activities such as speakers, concerts and dances:

"The first dance of the season will take place tomorrow Sunday at the Napoleonville Pavilion. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra. Dance will be given every Sunday and Wednesday, on Sunday, music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra, on Wednesday by the Night Hawks." (April 11th.) Nap. Pioneer

In 1924 the Firemen's parade is on May 11 and they "engage the Claiborne Williams Brass Band for the parade and his orchestra for the dance." (May 3rd.)

Williams' Band is excused from playing at the theater the week of May 10th and instead a band from the town of Thibodaux plays:

"Thibodaux Band makes hit at Grand Theater.

The Comeaux Orchestra of Thibodaux recently organized and composed of 8 young white musicians - five Comeaux Brothers, two Adams Brothers and Wallace Stephens. The band replaced Claiborne Williams Orchestra which usually plays on Tuesday nights, but which had an engagement elsewhere on that occasion." (May 10th.)

The band next plays for a 'block dance' for the High School:

"An event that is being keenly anticipated by terpsichorean artists hereabouts is the 'block dance' to be given next Friday night, May 30, under the auspices of the Donaldsonville High School. Immediately after the commencement exercises are
concluded, which will be at about 9 p.m., the dance will begin. It will be held in the block fronting the school building, on Railroad Avenue, between Nicholls Avenue and Opelousas Street. By a simple process, the bitultic Street will be prepared into a suitable 'floor' for dancing. An array of high-powered electric bulbs will make every dance a moonlight special. Claiborne Williams ten-piece Orchestra will dispense the latest music to make the dancers happy." (May 24th.)

In the Napoleonville Pioneer of May 24th we read:

"Lilian & Rebecca Barton were joint hostesses at a delightful dancing party last evening. Claiborne's Band furnished the music as always." (May 24th.), Nap. Pioneer

The Williams Band begins playing at a new hall named Rivet's Hall:

"A grand dance will be given in Rivet's Hall, Brusly St. Martin tonight. Music for the affair will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (June 14th.)

The next item is one of the earliest mentions in the newspaper that describes the Williams Band as a 'jazz' band:

"Women Community club card party and jitney dance. Claiborne Williams popular jazz orchestra has been engaged to discourse music for the occasion and will be heard in some of the latest selections of the day." (June 14th.)

"Dance, Pavilion at Darrow, July 3, Thursday. Claiborne Williams' Jazz Orchestra will discourse music for the occasion. 8:00" (June 21st.)

"Wedding reception of Delouise and Regeria. The reception resolved itself into a dance, music for which was furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra." (June 21st.)

Next is a write-up about a dance at the West End Pavilion. This was not the West End on the South Shore of Lake Pontchartrain but the one in Assumption Parish:

"West End Pavilion opened under most favorable auspices. Over 3000 people in attendance - bathing, boating, fishing and dancing. West End Pavilion, on the shores of beautiful Lake Verret, in Assumption Parish, nine miles back of Napoleonville, was formally opened to the public on the glorious Fourth of July. There was bathing, boating, fishing and dancing. Music for the latter was furnished by Claiborne Williams’ Orchestra. So great was the number of dancers that the pavilion was not large enough to accommodate them all, and many had to content themselves with looking on." (July 5th.)
"Dance at Elks Home - benefit of Donaldsonville Carnival Association. Music for the event was furnished by Claiborne Williams popular jazz orchestra." (Aug. 16th.)

"Wedding dance - at Nick Rivet's Hall in Brusly St. Martin. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 16th.)

One can see how much Williams' Orchestra is working, playing dances at Rivet's Hall, the Darrow Pavilion and other places:

"A grand dance will be given tonight at Rivet's Hall, Brusly St. Martin. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra." (Aug. 25th.)

"A grand jitney dance at Fair Grounds. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Jazz Orchestra." (Aug. 23rd.)

"A grand dance will be given in the open-air pavilion, Darrow next Wednesday night. Dancing will start at 8:00, and music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams jazz orchestra." (Aug. 23rd.)

"Dance at Fair Grounds proves enjoyable affair.
	The dance given Thursday night by Gus Pizzalato and other young men, in the pavilion at the Fair Grounds, proved a most enjoyable affair. Music for the occasion was furnished by Claiborne Williams Jazz Orchestra, and the dance lasted until the wee hours of the morning." (Aug. 30th.)

"Grand dance at Rivet's Hall in Brusly St. Martin. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Sept. 20th.)

"Grand open-air pavilion dance. Claiborne Williams crack jazz orchestra of this city will furnish the music." (Sept. 20th.)

"A grand dance - open-air pavilion, Darrow. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Jazz Band." (Sept. 27th.)

"Dance Rivet's Hall, October 4. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams crack orchestra of this city." (Sept. 27th.)

"Rivet's Hall - Grand dance. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Nov. 8th.)

"Carnival Club dance Christmas night. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Jazz Orchestra, which will dispense some of the latest jazz selections." (Dec. 20th)
The Williams Band continues to be the popular choice for town dances with numerous mentions in the paper about scheduled dances:

"Ackman dance at Lauderdale home. Music for the occasion was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 31st.)

"Grand masquerade ball, Donaldsonville Carnival Association at Elks Home. Music for the occasion furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Feb. 7th.)

The above dance was hailed a success both socially and financially - so said the paper the next week:

"Grand Carnival Ball a grand social and financial success. Music was furnished by Claiborne Williams famous jazz orchestra." (Feb. 21st.)

The band next plays for a dance in Napoleonville:

"Dancing pavilion in Napoleonville - grand dance - Easter Sunday, for which music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (April 4th.)

The band travels again to Napoleonville to play an engagement at the Napoleonville Pavilion, a job that becomes a regular job on a weekly basis:

"The first dance of the season will take place tomorrow Sunday at the Napoleonville pavilion. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra. Dances will be given every Sunday and Wednesday, On Sunday music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra, on Wednesday by the N. H." (April 11th.), Nap. Pioneer

"Grand dance for benefit of local baseball team will be given in the pavilion at Smoke Bend, at 8 tomorrow night (Sunday). Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 23rd.)

"High School graduate entertainment Friends - B. Babin. Dancing was the feature of the occasion, music for which was furnished by a part of Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 23rd.)

"Dance at Darrow tomorrow - a dance will be given at the Darrow Pavilion tonight. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Peerless Orchestra." (May 30th.)

"Big fair and dance at Fair Grounds - The procession was headed by the Peerless Brass Band. Music for the parade and festival on both days will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Band and Orchestra. By Italian Political Association." (July 4th.)
"Party and dance for Catholic Daughters of America, at K. of C. Hall. Music was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (July 18th.)

"White Elephants Social Club give dance. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Orchestra." (July 18th.)

"Baseball game, 16th, Sunday - Following game a grand dance in the pavilion, benefit of baseball team. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 8th.)

"Grand dance at Dutchtown School, August 27, benefit of school. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of Donaldsonville." (Aug. 22nd.)


The Williams continues to be busy playing for dances:

"Grand dance pavilion - Smoke Bend. Music furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra, 8:00" (Sept. 12th.)

"Dance at Smoke Bend - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Sept. 26th.)

"South Louisiana Fair - Music will be furnished for the fair every day and night for the dances in the evening and night by Claiborne Williams Brass Band and Orchestra." (Oct. 17th.)

"Elks Armistice Dance a success. Music by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Oct. 14th.)

"Christmas Dance by local Elks. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra and the latest jazz selections will be dispensed." (Nov. 14th.)

1926

While the Williams Band is busy during 1926 we see more dance jobs being given to other bands playing in Donaldsonville. We have read about the other bands in the portion of this research in the part "Music of Donaldsonville." The Williams Band, even with the addition of other city bands, continues to be engaged for dance job:

"Elks see old year out and new year in - reception and dance. Music for the occasion was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 2nd.)
"Feast of St. Amico celebration April 11th. Statue in procession from chapel to Catholic Church. At night there will be a grand dance at Fair Grounds. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (April 3rd.)

"Independence of Brother and Sisters of Love and Charity, a colored organization. A grade parade of the uniform ranks of the order will be formed and will march and drill through the principle streets of the city, headed by Claiborne Williams Band." (May 29th.)

"The Redmen open swimming pool with bathing revue after lunch, will form in front of hotel and proceeded by Claiborne Williams Band marched to pool." (June 5th.)

"Elks grand dance, Thursday night, July 29. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Band." (July 24th.)

"Knights of Peter Claver to have Minstrel Show. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (June 24th.)

"Elks dance Wednesday August 25 at their home in Railroad Avenue. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 21st.)

"Elks dance postponed Sept. 1. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 28th.)

"Grand dance given by the local lodge of Elks at their beautiful home on Railroad Avenue Wednesday night proved a most brilliant social success. About 50 couples were in attendance and the young people tripped the light fantastic toe until the hour of midnight. Music was furnished by Claiborne Williams Jazz Orchestra. The next dance will be on the steamer Capital, which is due on Monday, Sept. 27" (Sept. 4th.)

The Williams Band plays for the annual Firemen's day parade and dance:

"Thousands cheer firemen in big anniversary parade last Sunday. Visiting fire chiefs and many ladies from other cities in line. Six bands furnish music - The affair was a magnificent spectacle. The Claiborne Williams Brass Band lead Protective Hose Co. No. 4 in parade. The celebration closed with a grand ball at the pavilion at the Fair Grounds, which was largely attended by local people, as well as visiting firemen and visiting city officials. Music was furnished by Claiborne Williams crack Jazz Band, and the dancers tripped the light fantastic toe until an early hour the following morning, the ball was a grand affair and all those who attended had a most delightful time." (Sept. 25th.)
and:

"Elks to entertain at dance tonight. The younger members of the local lodge of Elks' will entertain their friends at a Christmas dance, at the Elks' home tonight, which promises to be one of the peppiest and best events of the season. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra. Dancing will start at 9 o'clock and a good time is in store for all those who attend." (Dec. 25th.)

1927

The Williams Band remains an active group in 1927 along with the other dance bands from Donaldsonville:

"New Years Eve picture at Grand - 'Fascinating Youths'. Music was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra from 7 - 8:30 and the splendid selections rendered were a real treat to the audience." (Jan. 1st.)

"Elks Christmas Dance Big Success.
The dance given by the local lodge of Elks, at their home, on Christmas night, was one of the most brilliant affairs ever given by this popular organization. The attendance was the largest ever seen at a similar function. Everybody was in pleasant humor...The proper holiday good cheer and lively spirit prevailed and a general good time was had by all those who attended. Music was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra and some of the selections rendered were very entrancing. The young people tripped the light fantastic toe to their hearts content." (Jan. 1st.)

Annually the Elks and K of C give a dance on New Years Eve and the band engaged usually was the Williams Band:

"Last night, the Elks gave their annual New Years Eve dance, to bid farewell to the old and welcome to the New Year.
There were a large number of people in attendance and a most delightful time was had by all. Music for the occasion was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 1st.)

"Tonight there will be a grand New Year's dance at the K. of C. home under the auspices of the local council. K. of C. invitations have been issued and a large attendance is expected. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra. Dancing will begin at 8 o'clock and a good time is in store for all those who attend." (Jan. 1st.)

An interesting account of the performers in an all colored show called 'Louisiana Jazz Babies' is given in Donaldsonville with the Williams Orchestra furnishing the music:
"Louisiana Jazz Babies put on good show.

The Louisiana Jazz Babies, a colored show, gave a performance at the True Friends Hall last Monday night, to a packed house; there being a number of White men in the audience. The performance was staged by Victor Guedry and Andrew Barnett, assisted by M. C. Bertrand, who appeared as comedians. The female players were Irene Josephine and Alice Williams, Evelyn and Rosa LeBlanc and Hildred Howard. The songs and jokes of the comedians were all good stuff and elicited much applause from the audience. The songs and dances introduced by the women in the show were also very creditable and greatly enjoyed by those in attendance.

The performance on the whole, is said to have been good and proved one of the best amateur stunts ever staged in Donaldsonville, by local colored talent.

Geudry and Barnett are clever as comedians and they kept the audience in a continuous roar of laughter. The music furnished by Claiborne Williams ten-piece orchestra was of a high order, and was enjoyed by the spectators. The show will probably appear at the Grand Theater in the near future." (Jan. 8th.)

The band plays for a number of dances in 1927:

"Grand dance will be given at Rivet's Hall, Brusly St. Martin, Jan. 27. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 1st.)

"American Legion to give big dance, at K of C Hall, Sunday night, Jan. 23. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra and all of the latest dance selections will be discovered." (Jan. 25th.)

"Dance for benefit of American Legion. Tomorrow night, Jan. 23, a grand dance will be given at the K of C Hall for the benefit of the local American Legion Post. Next Wednesday night another dance will be given for the same benefit at Corbo's Hall on Bayou Lafourche. Music for each will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestras." (Jan. 22nd.)

"We are requested to announce that a Grand Dance will be given at Rivet's Hall, Brusly St. Martin, on Saturday, Feb. 5. Music by Claiborne Williams famous orchestra from Donaldsonville." (Jan. 29th.) Nap. Pioneer

"A grand masquerade dance will be given at the Woodmen of the World Hall at Vacherie, Sunday, Feb. 20th. The dance will be under the direction of Gordon Glaclard of this city and music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra. The price of admission will be 15 cents; gentlemen dancing, $1.25." (Feb. 12th.)

During his career, Williams' Band had a number of steady jobs and many lasted for a number of years:

"Dances to be given Feb. 20, 24, and 27."
A grand masked ball will be given at the W.O.W. Hall at Vacherie tomorrow night, for which music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra. Another dance will be given Thursday night, Feb. 24, at the Lake Verret Pavilion, under the management of G. R. Gisclard. A charge of 75 cents will be made for dancing. Music will be dispensed by Claiborne Williams orchestra.

Sunday night, Feb. 27, there will be a Mardi Gras dance at Corbo's Hall on Bayou Lafourche. A prize of $2.50 will be awarded to the person with the finest costume and $1.50 will be given to the one wearing the ugliest make-up. Claiborne Williams' Orchestra will furnish music and gentlemen dancing will be charged $1.00.” (Feb. 19th.)

The celebration of Mardi Gras by the colored people of Donaldsonville is written about in the paper of Feb. 26, 1927:

"Colored people to celebrate Mardi Gras.

The colored people of this city have decided not to let Mardi Gras day go by without 'celebrating.' They have organized a celebration which will no doubt draw a large number of colored folks to this city and furnish pleasure and entertainment to the colored population. King Zulu, will arrive in automobile from New Orleans at 12:30 p.m. and will be met by his faithful subjects at the foot of Miss. St., and headed by a brass band, will parade the principle streets of the city. At 1 p.m. a grand dance will be given in his honor at the True Friends Hall, which will continue until 6:30 p.m. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra. The affair promises to afford much pleasure to the colored people." (Feb. 26th.)

The Williams Orchestra usually is hired to play for a number of benefits and is a frequent performer at activities held at the Elks Home. They next play for a Boy Scout's Mardi Gras benefit:

"Elks to give carnival dance for Boy Scouts.

A grand dance will be given next Tuesday, Mardi Gras night, at the Elks Home, for the benefit of the Donaldsonville Boy Scouts. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra. A charge of $1.50 will be made for gentlemen dancing. Ladies free. This will be the last Elks' dance before Easter Sunday." (Feb. 26th.)

The band plays for many other dances in 1927:

"Another Legion dance at K of C Hall tomorrow. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra. A special waltz spot light will be featured on this occasion." (Feb. 26th.)

"A grand masquerade dance at WOW Hall at Vacherie, Sunday, Feb. 20. The dance will be under the direction of Gordon Gisclard of this city and music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Feb. 12th.)
"A masquerade dance - Rivet's Hall, Brusly St. Martin next Monday night. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (March 26th.)

Donaldsonville, like most of Southern Louisiana was Catholic in religious preference. One of the local religious holidays was the Feast of St. Amico. The Band plays for the procession:

"FEAST OF ST. AMICO TO BE OBSERVED SUNDAY, APRIL 24. The feast of St. Amico will be observed with the usual ceremony this year by the Italians of 'A' Bend and this city on Sunday, April 24.

There will be a grand procession, in which the statue of St. Amico will be borne, leaving the chapel in ‘A’ Bend at 9:30 a.m., and marching up the river to Donaldsonville, to the strains of appropriate music furnished by Claiborne Williams' Band" (April 16th.)

The band plays for a dance at Geismar on May 6th:

"A lovely time is in store for all the Terpsicoreanists who will attend the big dance to be given at Geismar tomorrow night, under the auspices of R. E. Warthen and A. Cobb. Delightful and up-to-date dance music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Jazz Orchestra of this city, and dancing will begin at 8 o'clock, continuing until midnight." (May 5th.)

The Williams Orchestra is signed for a series of dances by the Elks:

"Elks to give a series of dances.

The dance committee of the local Elks' lodge have scheduled several dances to be held during the period of vacation days. At all these dances, music will be furnished by Claiborne's Orchestra...

Dances at the Elks Home are always enjoyable social affairs. Claiborne's Orchestra has added many new hits in music to their dance music. So all attending will undoubtedly have a pleasant evening." (May 19th.)

"Grand Dance "hotsy-Totsy" tomorrow night. Corbo's Hall, Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (June 11th.)

American Legion dance - Elks Home - Next Friday. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (June 18th.)

"Local Lodge of Elks to stage big initiation and festival on July 3-4 parade - Headed by Boy Scouts and Claiborne Williams Band. Music day and night will be furnished by the Hay 6 and Claiborne Williams Orchestra and these features will no doubt be a source of much pleasure to many." (June 25th.)
"Elks July 4 festival and fair a grand success. The jitney dancing throughout the day and until late at night afforded much pleasure and pastime to many. Music for the dancing was furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra. The jitney dancing enabled the young people to enjoy themselves to their heart's content." (July 9th.)

"Gordon Gisclard, who has given a series of very enjoyable dances in the past, announces that he will give a dance at the fair grounds every Wednesday night, music for which will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (July 23rd.)

It seems as if a typical week in the life of Williams would be the week of July 30th. The paper lists the dances his band plays that week:

"Grand dance at Brusly St. Martin tonight (Saturday). Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (July 30th.)

"Dance at Daigle's Hall, White Castle tomorrow night (Sunday) Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (July 30th.)

"Dance at Fair Grounds every Wednesday night. Claiborne Williams Orchestra has seven new rags...waltzes which will prove a delight to the lovers of terpsichorean." (July 30th.)

Williams' schedule with the Grand Theater to play on Tuesday night continues and other dates give the Williams' Band a weekly scheduled performance routine:

"Daigle's new ringside at White Castle will be the scene of a dance tomorrow night, for which music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 6th.)

"Grand dance - Rivet's Hall, Brusly St. Martin Sunday night - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 6th.)

"A grand dance will be staged at Rivet's Hall in Brusly St. Martin tonight, under the management of Gordon Gisclard. Splendid music for the occasion will be discoursed by Claiborne Williams Orchestra. Don't miss it. A good time awaits all who attend." (Aug. 6th.)

"There will be a dance tonight August 6th at Landry's Hall, Brusly St. Vincent. Music by Claiborne Williams. (August 6th.), Nap. Pioneer

The Williams Band continues playing at weekly dances at the Fair Grounds every Wednesday. We read:
"The jitney dance which was given at the fair grounds pavilion Wednesday night of last week, proved a delightful and enjoyable social affair and attracted a large number of young folks from this city and neighboring towns. These dances are to be given every Wednesday night, but last Wednesday's dance was called off on account of inclemency of the weather. The latest rag and waltz music will be discoursed by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra." (Month of August)

We read of two dances given at Rivet's Hall played by the Williams band:

"A grand dance will be staged at Rivet's Hall in the Brusly St. Martin tonight, under the management of Gordon Gisclard. Splendid music for the occasions will be discoursed by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra." (August 13th.)

"Rivet's Hall grand dance Brusly St. Martin tomorrow night - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 20th.)

We find another write-up about the dance at the fair grounds in the August 20th paper:

"A large crowd attended the dance at the fair grounds pavilion Wednesday, under management of Gordon Gisclard, and many young people danced until a late hour to the strains of sweet music furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra, which included several new jazz selections."

"August 24 - a lotto party and dance at fair grounds, benefit of American Legion. Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 27th.)

"Delightful dancing to the strains of the latest jazz music, dispensed by Claiborne Williams Orchestra at the pavilion of the Fair Grounds, every Wednesday night." (Sept. 3rd.)

These Wednesday night dances proved very popular and an interesting description is given in the August 20th paper:

"A large crowd attended the dance at the fair grounds pavilion Wednesday under management of Gordon Gisclard, and many young people danced until a late hour to the strains of sweet music furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra, which included several new jazz selections. Spot light specials were featured and all those who attended had a most delightful time. Another one of these enjoyable dances will be given at the pavilion next Wednesday night." (Aug. 20th.)

The announcement of these Wednesday night dances is given in the Aug. 13 paper:

"Weekly dances at Fair Grounds every Wednesday.

The jitney dance which was given at the Fair Grounds Pavilion Wednesday night of last week, proved a delightful and enjoyable social affair and attracted a large
number of young folks from this city and neighboring towns. These dances are to be
given every Wednesday night, but last Wednesday's dance was called off on account
of inclemency of the weather. The latest rags and waltz music will be discoursed by
Claiborne Williams Orchestra. Another feature that will be much enjoyed by the
collectors will be the spotlight specials. Gordon Gisclard, under whose management
these dances are given, requests the Chief to announce that entrance to the Fair
Grounds is through the back gate near the pavilion. A fine gravel road leads directly
to the gate, thus making it very convenient to patrons of the dances. The general
admission is 10 cents. Gentlemen dancing are charged $1.00 for the evening or 24
cents for three dances." (Aug. 13th.)

"Fair Grounds Wednesday night dances - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Sept.
17th.)

The South Louisiana State Fair this year continues to have the Williams
Orchestra and they play for the jitney dances:

"South Louisiana State Fair. Hussar Band and jitney dancing with Claiborne
Williams' Orchestra." (Oct. 15th.)

A popular place for dancing was Corbo's Hall with the Williams Orchestra:

"Grand dance, at Corbo's Hall, Barton tomorrow. Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Nov. 12th.)

"Dance tonight at Rivet's Hall in Brusly St. Martin- Claiborne Williams
Orchestra." (Nov. 26th.)

"Legion Post entertainment - music for the event will be furnished by the
Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 3rd.)

"Supper and dance by Elks - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 14th.)

"Supper dance - Elks Wednesday night at Elks Home. Claiborne Williams
Orchestra, which dispensed the latest jazz selections to the delight of lovers of the
terpsichorean art. The Elks will give another dance tomorrow night - Claiborne
Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 24th.)

"K of C New Years dance - K of C Hall on Mississippi Street. Claiborne
Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 31st.)
Dancing was one of the most popular activities during the jazz age and indeed jazz music was dance music. The Williams Orchestra continues to be very active in 1928, the year beginning with a report of a New Year's dance:

"Elks New Year's Dance - Claiborne Williams." (Jan. 7th.)

"Dance at Rivet's Hall, Brusly St. Martin tonight and another at Corbo's Hall tomorrow night. Music for both dances will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 7th.)

"Dance at Rivet's Hall, Brusly St. Martin tonight and another at Corbo's Hall, Barton tomorrow night. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra for each event." (Feb. 4th.)

"Masquerade dance, Rivet's Hall Feb. 18, Corbo Hall Barton Feb. 19. Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Feb. 11th.)

The orchestra is still playing each Tuesday at the Grand Theater, and again plays for the 'Celebration of Feast of St. Amico.' Claiborne Williams Orchestra furnishes music for procession and dance." (April 14th.)

June is a very active time for the Orchestra:

"A jazzy, peppy dance will be given at the local Elks' Home tomorrow night under the favorable auspices of the Elks. Admission will be free, delightful, up-to-date dance music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Jazz Orchestra." (June 23rd.)

"Elks 'fun frolic' Wednesday July 4th. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (June 23rd.)

"Elks 4th of July celebration. Claiborne Jazz Orchestra will furnish music during afternoon and for the grand peppy dance to be held at night." (June 30th.)

"Grand dance last Sunday at Elks Home - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (June 30th.)

"Elks 4th a splendid success, Patriotic music was dispensed by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (July 7th.)

"Dance-benefit of Smoke Bend Catholic Church - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (July 14th.)

"Tomorrow night - grand dance, Elks Home. Claiborne Williams Orchestra - and for modern, peppy and popular dance and jazz hits, they're right there with the stuff." (July 21st.)
The above paragraph shows how Williams kept up with the latest styles in dance music, a characteristic that was a key to his continued success. The popularity of jazz music for dancing is seen in the next item as this stresses the dance will have jazz music and that the Williams Band did play good jazz:

"A grand, peppy dance will be given at the local Elks Home tomorrow night, under the favorable auspices of the Elks Lodge; and a wonderful time is in store for each and every one of you. All the newest and most popular dance 'hits' will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Jazz Orchestra, whose music will fill you with the buoyant spirit of jazz just as soon as you arrive. Dancing will being at 8:30." (Aug. 4th.)

The Williams Band continues to play for benefits. One such event is for the Catholic Church:

"Smoke Bend Catholic Church benefit. Claiborne Williams Orchestra play in an open-air pavilion." (Aug. 4th.)

The Fair at Samstown, near White Castle, has the Williams Jazz Orchestra play instead of the usual brass band that is used only sparingly during the jazz age. This performance is a benefit for the St. Anthony Catholic Church on August 18th. In the August 25th paper we read that the Elks have another dance using the Claiborne Williams Orchestra. In the Sept. 22 issue of the paper we read 'Supper and dance benefit of Catholic Church in Smoke Band - Claiborne Williams Jazz Orchestra.

As the year nears its end the band plays the regular Christmas and New Years Eve dances:

"Elks grand Yuletide dance - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 22nd.)

"Grand Christmas dance, K of C at Wilbert Hall, Plaquemine, with Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 29th.)

"K of C dance, New Years Eve dance - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 29th.)

1929

The Elks New Year's dance at the Elks Home was a success and we read two very similar accounts of the affair, only differing in a few places, the rest verbatim:

"One of the very brilliant affairs given in celebration of the occasion was as grand dance at the local Elk's Home, under the auspices of the local lodge of B.P.O. Elks, to which many people from this city as well as from neighboring towns, and other parts of the surrounding country wended their way. Music for the occasion was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city, who played all the latest and
most popular 'hits' in jazz, waltzes and dance melodies, delighting the hearts of all present; and many couples tripped gaily about on the wings of sweet harmony. The affair lasted until the wee small hours of the morning, thus affording the lovers of the Terpsichorean art the pleasure of dancing out the old year and dancing in the New Year.

Another affair given in celebration of the New Year was a big and wonderful dance at the local K of C Hall, last Tuesday night, under the auspices of the Ascension Council of K of C, when music was again furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (Jan. 5th.)

And the other:

"Ringing of bells, horns tooting, whistles blowing and general merriment throughout the city last Monday night sounded the knell of the old year 1928 and joyfully ushered in the New Year 1929. Not even the inclemency of the weather which threatened to throw a damper over the community could dampen the spirits of the people who set out so joyfully to celebrate the birth of another year in the history of our country.

One of the very brilliant affairs given in celebration of the occasion was a grand dance at the local Elks Home, under the auspices of the local lodge of B.P.O. Elks, to which many people from this city as well as from neighboring towns and other parts of the surrounding country needed their way. Music for the occasion was furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra of this city, who played all the latest and most popular 'hits' in jazz, waltzes and dance melodies, delighting the hearts of all present, and many couple tripped gaily about on the wings of sweet harmony. The affair lasted until the wee small hours of the morning, thus affording the lovers of the Terpsichorean art the pleasure of dancing out the old year and dancing in the New Year.

Another affair given in celebration of the New Year was a big and wonderful dance at the local K of C Hall, last Tuesday night, under the auspices of the Ascension council of K of C, when music again furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra of this city. A very large number of music and Terpsichorean lovers from here and all parts of the surrounding country were in attendance, and the large dance room of the K of C Hall is said to have been filled to its capacity." (Jan. 5th.)

The Grand Theater continues to use the Williams Orchestra on Tuesdays and while the orchestra plays for the usual activities, the dance engagements seem to slow down a bit. The Mardi Gras continues again in 1929:

"Colored people to stage Mardi Gras Festival.
A number of leading colored citizens of this and neighboring communities, headed by Claiborne Williams of this place, are making preparations for a big carnival parade and celebration to be staged in this city on Mardi Gras day, Tuesday." (Feb. 12th.)
The Mardi Gras celebration was a very successful on-going activity in Donaldsonville and brought much publicity and notoriety to the city. Claiborne Williams should be given much credit for its successful continuance. Thus the rest of the article is quoted to show this:

"It is planned to have King Zulu arrive here on board his royal yacht, the George Bisso, at 11 o'clock a.m. His majesty will disembark at the ferry landing and will be met by a committee of his loyal subjects and escorted to the royal float that will be in waiting, and will be presented with the keys of the city. The parade will then form and headed by Claiborne Williams Brass Band and accompanied by the King's dukes and couriers, mounted on horseback, will march through most of the streets of the city to enable his royal highness to receive the acclaim of his loyal subjects. The parade will disband in front of the True Friends Hall. It will be remembered that a celebration and parade was staged here last year in honor of the visit of King Zulu by colored people from this city and vicinity, under the leadership of Claiborne Williams, and it proved a gratifying success and attracted to this city a large number of visitors from all parts of the surrounding country. This year it is planned to make the celebration on a more elaborate scale and it is confidently believed that the even will attract a larger number of visitors to Donaldsonville than the celebration of 1928." (Jan. 26th.)

On the 26th the orchestra plays for a 'Masquerade dance - Elks Home. Music for the happy occasion by Claiborne Williams Orchestra.' In the Feb. 9th issue we see the headlines for a column on the coming Mardi Gras celebrations:

"All ready for colored Festival Mardi Gras Day
   Everything is in readiness for the big Mardi Gras parade and celebration to be staged in this city next Tuesday by colored citizens of this and neighboring communities under the leadership of Claiborne Williams of this place." (Feb. 9th.)

King Jolly, of this Mardi Gras is entertained at the Elks Home:

"King Jolly - Good Fellows and his Court royally entertained at Elks Home by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Feb. 9th.)

The orchestra plays for "a grand dance K of C Hall on Mississippi Street, March 31. Music by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (March 23rd.)

The Williams Band again plays for the Feast of St. Amico:

"Feast of St. Amico to be observed Sunday, April 24.
   The Feast of St. Amico will be observed with the usual ceremony this year by the Italians of 'A' Bend and this city on Sunday, April 24.
   There will be a grand procession in which the statue of St. Amico will be born, leaving the chapel in 'A' Bend at 9:30 a.m., and marching up the river to Donaldsonville, to the strains of appropriate music furnished by Claiborne Williams
Band. High Mass will be celebrated at the Ascension Catholic Church, at 11 o'clock, after which there will be a display of fireworks in front of the church. The procession will then return to ‘A’ Bend and the balance of the day will be devoted to feasting on the grounds of the chapel.

At night there will be a grand dance and fireworks at the Fair Grounds in this city. The dancing will begin at 7 o'clock and the fireworks display will be at 10 p.m. (April 16th.)

The Band travels to Ponchatoula and plays a dance for the Firemen of that city on May 8. At the Plaquemine 4th of July celebration we read that the town uses the Williams Orchestra: The Ponchatoula and Hammond papers print an account of the activity:

"Firemen's Dance Next Wednesday. The dance given at the city hall this week by the Ponchatoula Volunteer Fire Department was attended by one of the largest crowds ever present at a dance given by that organization. It is estimated that over a hundred and fifty couples were present. The music furnished by the Claiborne Williams Band of Donaldsonville received much favorable comment, and the department has secured this same band for their next dance, which will be given on Wednesday, May 8. All who missed this band's performance this week should plan to be present next Wednesday.

Electric fans will be installed next week, and the dancers are promised the coolest hall, the best music and one of the best floors in this section. So let's all go to the big dance next Wednesday." (Ponchatoula paper)

"Ponchatoula Firemen to give big dance, Tuesday, April 30th at their Hall. Music for the occasion will be furnished by the well-known Claiborne Williams Band of Donaldsonville, conceded to be one of the best in the state." (April 26th.), Ponchatoula paper

"Plaquemine 4th of July Festival for Firemen - Home boys Park - Cypress City. Grand dance at the Community Pavilion, for which music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (June 22nd.)

The Williams Band again play at Rivet's Hall:

"A grand dance will be staged at Rivet's Hall in Bursly St. Martin tonight, under the management of Gordon Gisclard splendid music for the occasion will be discoursed by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra. Don't miss it. A good time awaits all who attend." (Aug. 13th.)

On Sept. 21-22 the orchestra play for the K of C Fair - dance at night to music of Claiborne Williams Orchestra. The Williams Orchestra also plays for the South Louisiana State Fair in which the orchestra plays for pavilion dancing:
From the items in the paper we learn of other local and out-of-town groups that play for the various musical activities in Donaldsonville. The famous Papa Celestin Band of New Orleans is engaged at the Fair. Celestin was from the Donaldsonville area:

"Concerts by Strout's Military Hussar Band; a grand and gorgeous display of fireworks; jitney dancing at the pavilion day and night, for which excellent music was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra, the White Elephant's Orchestra and Celestin's Orchestra." (Oct. 19th.)

We read of the Williams Band playing for a Halloween dance:

"Grand Halloween dance, Elks Home, Nov. 3. All the latest and most popular dance selections will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (Oct. 26th.)

We find two entries in the Nov. paper of the Williams Band playing for local dances:

"Donaldsonville High School Juniors dance at Elks Home Big Success.

Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city, who as usual rendered all the latest and most popular selections, including dream waltz and jazz melodies, and all present, whether they were dancing or not, enjoyed themselves to the utmost." (Nov. 9th.)

"CDA dance for benefit charity fund. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city, who are always right there with the stuff when it comes to playing all the latest selections in dreamy, waltz and jazz melodies. Dec. 1." (Nov. 23rd.)

Most fraternal organizations had a large hall as their meeting place - spacious enough to accommodate their social activities, such as dances. In Donaldsonville, which had a number of these halls, one of the best was the K of C Hall where many dances were held and a hall that the Williams Band frequently played:

"The grand dance given at the K of C Hall in this city last Sunday night under the auspices of Court Ascension No. 761, Catholic Daughters of America, for the benefit of their charity fund, was a splendid and unqualified success from both a financial and social stand point and brought in a very handsome sum to assist the Daughters in carrying on their noble work of charity. A throng of people were in attendance at the dance, traveling from Donaldsonville and all parts of the surrounding country, and all report having had a perfectly lovely time.

The beautiful K of C Hall was recently renovated and made one of the most attractive structures in our city and it has a large dance hall with an ideal floor. That, combined with the wonderful music played by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra of this city, who played in such a manner which elicited many comments and much
applause, made the dance Sunday night one of the best ever attended by the crowd of people who were present." (Dec. 7th.)

We find two dances mentioned in the Dec. 21, paper:

"Big dance at Elks Home on Christmas night. Music by Claiborne Williams Full Orchestra." (Dec. 21st.)

"New Year Dance, K of C Hall. Delightful music this year - Claiborne Orchestra of this city, who as usual will play all the latest and most popular dance melodies." (Dec. 21st.)

1930

The year 1930 ends with the usual end-of-the-year dances and very little early in the year until August and September:

"New Year Dances Given by Elks and K of C:

One of the lovely social functions given during the Yuletide season was a grand dance at the local Elks' Home New Year's Eve night under the auspices of Donaldsonville Lodge, B.P.O. Elks, which was largely attended by people from here and elsewhere, music for the occasion was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city, and to the strains of the latest and most popular dreamy, jazz and waltz melodies played by them a large number of people glided about the lovely dance floor of the Elks' Home and tripped the light fantastic toe until the wee small hours of the morning.

New Year night another wonderful dance was given in this city at the K of C Hall and under their auspices of Ascension Council, K of C. The affair was attended by a very large crowd of people, so that the spacious K of C Hall was crowded, and the affair was a splendid success from a financial and social standpoint. Delightful music was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra, which was thoroughly enjoyed by both dancers and onlookers." (Jan. 4th.)

The Williams Orchestra plays for two dances in February:

"Big dance - St. Amico hall in 'A' Bend tomorrow night with Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Feb. 8th.)

"Minstrel performance and dance - True Friends Society at True Friends Hall, Feb. 10 with Claiborne Williams Brass Band." (Feb. 8th.)

Claiborne Williams and his musical groups are again active in the annual Mardi Gras celebration with the brass band playing for the parade and the party that night. Williams is general manager. (Feb. 22, 1930). In May they play for "Plaquemine Nights." The same group stages a jambalaya on June 8 with the Williams Orchestra." (May 31st.)

The band also plays again for the annual St. Amico celebration:
"Feast of St. Amico to be celebrated April 27.

A procession will form at the chapel at 9:30 o'clock in the morning of April 27 and will march slowly to Donaldsonville, carrying the statue of the Saint to the Ascension Catholic church of this city, where a solemn High Mass will be said at 11 o'clock. The procession will be followed by two bands, Claiborne Williams Orchestra and Heim's Orchestra of this city. A big dance will be given at the St. Amico Hall at ‘A’ Bend Sunday night, commencing at 7 o'clock and lasting until midnight. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra of this city." (April 19th.)

The month of August is a busy one for the orchestra:

"Corbo's Hall - Mrs. Templet dance - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 5th.)

The brass band plays for the parade of the Italian Society and the Orchestra plays for the luncheon. (Aug. 16th.)

Corbo's Hall becomes 'Ye Town Night club' and each Sunday gives a dance:

"Ye Town Night club gave dance Sunday night. Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 16th.)

The dance was a success according to the paper of August 23rd and the club plans to "have a dance very Sunday with Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 23 & 30, 1930)

The band next plays for a baseball game and picnic for the benefit of the colored school.(Aug. 23rd.)

Claiborne Williams' Band continues to be booked at the South Louisiana State Fair - the Fair uses the Claiborne Williams Band for concerts from the grandstand and the White Elephants for the dancers.:

"Entertainment for South Louisiana Fair booked: The White Elephants Orchestra will disperse jazz and popular classical music for the dancers. Claiborne's Concert Band has been engaged for grandstand performances." (Aug. 30th.)

An announcement of the South La. State Fair appears in the 'Pioneer' and mentions the Band:

"South Louisiana Fair - Sept. 28 to Oct. 15. The White elephants Orchestra (also called the Merry Makers) will dispense jazz and popular classical music for the dancers. Claiborne's Concert Band has been engaged for the grand stand performances." (Sept. 6th.), Nap. Pioneer

In the latter months of the year the band is very active:
"Another dance at Corbo's Ye Town Night club. Music by Claiborne Williams. Last one until after fair." (Sept. 20th.)

"Last dance of season at Corbo's Hall, Ye Town Night club - music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Oct. 11th.)

"Community Club of Plaquemine Halloween dance - Music - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Oct. 18, 1930)

"Elks big dance Christmas night - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 13th.)

"Elks dance, music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra - Last Thursday New Years Eve dance at Elks Home." (Dec. 27th.)

Claiborne Williams possessed a very good musical education and would arrange music for his bands. He also was a composer and in 1930 had his work accepted by Henry Fillmore:

"Music by Claiborne Williams on Radio, January 16:
Claiborne Williams, colored musician and orchestra leader of this city, a few days ago received a letter from Henry Fillmore of the Fillmore Music House of Cincinnati, Ohio, advising him that the manuscript arranged by him for a band of 35 pieces would be broadcast on the radio, station WLW, Cincinnati, Thursday night, January 16, between 10 and 10:30 o'clock, Eastern standard time.
The manuscript, arranged by Claiborne Williams, was submitted by him to Mr. Fillmore some time ago and was found so meritorious by the latter that he agreed to put it on the radio.
There is a rare treat in store for lovers of good music who tune in on Station WLW on the night of January 16." (Jan. 11th.)

and:

"William Manuscript on Radio Feb. 20
Claiborne Williams, well-known colored musician and band leader of this city is in possession of a letter from Henry Fillmore of Fillmore's Music, Cincinnati, Ohio, explaining that the reason of the failure to put his manuscript on the radio on the night of Jan. 16 as promised was due to the fact that his music became twisted somehow causing the manuscript to be overlooked. He states that the manuscript will be put on the radio, station WLW, Cincinnati, on the night of Feb. 20th on 10:30 o'clock. Lovers of good music should not fail to tune in for this selection in a rare treat is in store for them."(Feb. 1st.)

1931
The year 1931 is an active one with the band playing for the annual Mardi Gras, for broadcast over the radio and for regular dances at Corbo's, Elks, Rivets and in Klotzville.

The paper reviews and writes about the Christmas and New Year's dance and Mardi Gras comes early - Feb. 17th in 1931.

"Catholic Daughters of America give Valentine Party - Dance at night with Claiborne Williams." (Jan. 10th.)

"Elks - Feb. 13 King Jolly Good Fellow and court - Music by Claiborne Williams." (Jan. 24th.)

"Mardi Gras parade - colored, Claiborne Williams Orchestra, directed by Lawrence assisted by George Williams. Matinee dance - music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Feb. 21st.)

"Dance at Corbo's Hall of Barton tomorrow - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 2nd.)

"True Friends Benevolent Association (colored) sponsor a May festival - Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 16th.)

"Dance Elks Home last Wednesday for Donaldsonville High School. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 30th.)

"Dance Corbo's Hall of Barton. Music by Claiborne Williams splendid Orchestra." (June 6th.)

The band plays for a radio broadcast on a Tuesday night with a program of dance music on Tuesday, June 9th:

"The one-hour program of popular dance music played by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city, which was broadcast from New Orleans last Tuesday night, through the courtesy of the Donaldsonville Business and Professional Men's Association, proved a real treat to the many who heard them play. Many telegrams of congratulations were received by the musicians, and their selections included all of the latest and most popular dance melodies." (June 13th.)

The dances at the swimming Pool prove to be very successful and will be continued for a number of years using Williams' Band and other local bands.

"Open air dances - Red Men Pavilion Adv. June 13

"Dance at Corbo's Hall. Claiborne Williams of this city will furnish red-hot and snappy music for another big dance at Corbo's Hall of Barton tomorrow night." (June 13th.)
"Dance grand opening dance at Rivet Hall, Brusly St. Martin Thursday, Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (June 13th.)

Beginning June 24, the Williams Band plays weekly at the Swimming Pool:

"Commencing next Wednesday night, and every Wednesday during the summer, the local Red Men will resume their weekly dances on their open-air pavilion, adjacent to the swimming pool.

This will be good news for the many who know the joy of dancing on the open-air pavilion, where the air is so cool and fresh and the music is ideal. Those who desire may enjoy a dip in the beautiful pool where everything is strictly sanitary and altogether inviting, and then may either watch the dancers or join them in tripping the light fantastic toe.

Music for the opening dance next Wednesday will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city, who as usual will play all of the latest and most popular selections. A wonderful time is in store for all who attend." (June 27th), Ponchatoula paper

The Donaldsonville Chief publishes a review on the big dance:

"Red Men open-air dance proves big success;

A large crowd of people from this city, Napoleonville, White Castle and other sections of the surrounding country attended the big dance given last Wednesday night at the open-air pavilion adjacent to the local Red Men Swimming Pool. The weather was ideal and all present had a wonderful time dancing to the strains of beautiful music played by the Popular Merrymakers Orchestra of this city.

It is with eager anticipation that all who attended the dance this week are looking forward to another grand dance to be given at the open-air pavilion next Wednesday night, for the Red Men are going to make these dances weekly Wednesday night affairs. Music next Wednesday will be furnished by Claiborne Williams splendid Orchestra of this city. A banner crowd is expected to be present for the occasion." (June 27th.)

"Big crowds attends open-air dance here - pavilion adjacent to pool. Dancing to the strains of the lovely music rendered by Claiborne Williams splendid Orchestra." (July 4th.)

"Elks initiation, Supper and dance at Elks Home tomorrow - grand dance. Music - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (July 11th)

"Big dance at Corbo's Hall, Barton. Music for the dance furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (July 11th)
"Dance at Klotzville Hall every Friday night. Claiborne Williams initial dance Thursday." (July 11th.)

"Big dance, Corbo's at Barton on Bayou Lafourche, music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (July 11th.)

"Dance given at the Klotzville Hall on the Bayou Lafourche Highway last night was well attended and all present had a fine time. Music for the occasion was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city. In order to add to the comfort of the many who attend the dances given at the Klotzville Hall every Friday night, more opening have been added to the hall and electric fans have been installed." (July 25th.)

In the days of pre-air conditioning the heat was always a problem when having a social gathering. Most dance halls were built with many windows that were quite large, usually very high, and usually open during a dance."

"Grand dance - Corbo's Hall on Bayou LaFourche -- Music by Claiborne Williams." (Aug. 1st.)

"Corbo dances transferred to Klotzville Hall. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra (Aug. 8th.)

"A big dance was given at the Klotzville Hall last night and was largely attended by people from all parts of the surrounding country, all of whom enjoyed the delightful music played by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city. Another big dance will be given at the hall tomorrow night, and music will again be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 8th.)

The Williams Orchestra continues to play at the swimming pool, playing the last engagement before the pool closes for the winter:

"Swimming pool to close Wednesday - Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Aug. 29th.)

"Another grand dance at Klotzville Hall - Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra.' (Sept. 19th.)

Another large write-up appears in the Chief:

The Red Men dance pavilion and swimming pool close for the winter and the last dance features the Williams' Orchestra:

"Dance at swimming pool well attended.

The regular Wednesday night dance at the local Red Men swimming pool this week was very largely attended by people from this city and all parts of the
surrounding country, many of whom enjoyed a 'dip' in the invigorating pool before dancing. Music for the occasion was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city and was much enjoyed by all present.

An added attraction at the pool next Wednesday night will be a watermelon eating contest which will be participated in by several colored men from Churchville, which is expected to arouse much merriment among the spectators. There will also be the regular weekly dance." (August 15th.)

The final dance of the season at the swimming pool is with the Williams' Band:

"Swimming pool closes with splendid program.

The closing of the local Red Men swimming pool last Wednesday night was featured by a delightful vocal and fancy dancing program, in addition to the regular Wednesday night dance, and was very largely attended by people from this city and the surrounding country. Music for the occasion was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city, who played all of the latest and most popular dance melodies, and the dance was a merry one." (Sept. 5th.)

The Williams Band again plays for the State Fair and for the radio:

"Two Bands to furnish Music at Southern Louisiana State Fair.

Two of the bands that will be seen at the Southern Louisiana State Fair, Donaldsonville, Sept. 27 to Oct. 4, will be heard over the radio next week in concert broadcast from New Orleans.

Claiborne Williams' Band will go on the air from the WWL (Loyola) Broadcasting Station at 10 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 17, with a program that will last an hour. The Merrymakers, also of Donaldsonville will be heard from Station WSMB on Saturday, Sept. 19, in a program from 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m." (Sept. 12th.)

The Williams Band plays for three more dances the rest of the year:

"Another grand dance at Klotzville Hall - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Sept. 19th.)

"Regular dance at Klotzville Hall every Friday and Sunday - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 12th.)

"Local Elks Christmas Dance. Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 19th.)

1932

The Williams band continues to be active in 1932. The band first plays at the Klotzville Dance Hall:
"The dances given at the popular Klotzville Hall, under the management of Mrs. Philip Templet were all largely attended and all present had a very nice time. Music was furnished by different popular orchestras. There will be another dance at that hall tonight and also tomorrow night, with music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (Jan. 2nd.)

The colored citizens of Donaldsonville again have their Mardi Gras celebration and Williams takes a more active part in the activities in 1932:

"King Jolly Good Fellow and Queen - Elks dance. Spirited music for the dance will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city, who will furnish a program of all of the latest and most popular selections of dance melodies." (Jan. 16th.)

The Williams Band continues its popularity with the Elks and again plays for an Elks dance:

"Big dance at Elks dance for benefit of new home of Bennett Babin Post #98. Splendid music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 16th.)

The Band, as stated in the Jan. 16th paper plays for a "dance next Friday by Ladies Auxiliary of American Legion. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." In the Jan. 30 paper we read of a dance for the Mardi Gras King Jolly and that the Williams Orchestra will play for this dance. We read of the official announcement of Mardi Gras in the Feb. 6 issue of the paper:

"City to have Mardi Gras celebration conducted under the auspices of a committee of colored men, with Claiborne Williams as general manager. March through the principle streets of the city headed by Claiborne Williams Band." (Feb. 6th.)

Claiborne Williams rides in one of the carnival parade's floats while his band marches under the direction of Lawrence Hall and George A. Williams, leading the band who are situated on a flatbed truck.

The fair committee meets to formulate plans for the Louisiana State Fair at a banquet and are entertained by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra. (Feb. 20th.)

One popular entertainment was the 'womanless wedding.' This masquerade was done in fun and if the Williams Orchestra plays as part of this activity we can be assured it is good, clean humor. We read:

"Womanless Wedding a matrimonial burlesque - At Community Club of Plaquemine Sunday, April 24 by K of C followed by dance. Music for which will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city."
"The Klotzville Dance Hall continues their dances with the Victor Orchestra of Baton Rouge playing a Saturday dance and the Williams Orchestra playing on Sunday. (May 7th.)

The band next plays for the "dance and commencement of St. Vincent and St. UJCI with splendid music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (May 28) The Williams Orchestra also plays for the Catholic High School's educational exercises: "Large crowd witness class day exercises of Catholic High School." We read that: "several nice selections were also rendered by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (June 4). The band next plays for two dances in June:

"Wedding dance at Sanchez Hall at St. Gabriel. Tuesday night. Good music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (June 4th.)

"Big dance at American Legion home in Mississippi Street tonight - Splendid music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra. 100 couples present." (June 11th.)

Edward Gibson, clarinetist in the Williams band dies and we read of this in an article in the June 25th paper:

"Edward M. Gibson - member of Claiborne Williams Orchestra and brass band for the past 19 years died (40 years old). Funeral at St. Pelus M. E. Church - largely attended by relatives and friends including the members of the Claiborne Band in uniform. Gibson was rated a first class clarinet players." (June 25th.)

The Williams Band is a regular dance for the American Legion. We read:

"Legion dance every Thursday and Saturday in Mississippi Street dancing to the strains of good music furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra last Thursday and every Thursday night and by other various popular orchestras on Saturday." (July 9th.)

The Band plays for the LA. Fair again in 1931 and for a K of C jambalaya festival and the band "will play for the dance which will close the program. The dance will begin at 9:00 with a good march." (Aug. 20th.)

The band plays for the year ending Christmas dances and New Years celebrations:

"Elks annual Christmas dance Dec. 25, special music furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 3rd.)

"Elks Christmas Dance with Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Dec. 24th.)
"New Years Eve dance at KC Hall splendid music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of this city." (Dec. 24th.)

1933

The year begins for the Williams band when they play for a "big dance at American Legion on Jan. 21st." Williams used a 13 piece orchestra. (Jan. 14th.). They play at the True Friends Hall for a dance. This is the benevolent society of Claiborne Williams.

"A dance was given at the True Friends Hall in this city last Wednesday by the colored Community Club of Donaldsonville and was largely attended by people of this city as well as Napoleonville, Plaquemine and Thibodeaux, all of whom had a very nice time dancing to music furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra. A special musical program was rendered, directed by George Williams and featuring a piano solo." (Jan. 21st.)

In the latter part of January the band plays dances for the Elks and the American legion:

"Elks dance next Friday at Elks Home in Railroad Avenue. Splendid music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 28th.)

"Dance given by American Legion last Saturday night a splendid success. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 28th.)

The Williams Band again takes part in the Mardi Gras celebrations as we read in the Feb. 11 paper. They play for an Easter Dance at the American Legion Hall and for a big Elks dance on a Friday night. In the June 3 paper we read:

"Dance at Darrow Pavilion next Wednesday, benefit of Burnside Baseball team. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (June 3rd.)

Donaldsonville High School pupils stage a 'Revue' with music by members of the Claiborne Williams Orchestra (July 1st.) and the band plays for a big dance at the Plaquemine Community Club on July 4th.

As we have previously written, most special events warranted live music, from political campaigns to private commercial ventures. We read about such an experience as the band plays for the opening of a fruit stand:

"Formal opening of Ferris Fruit Stand celebrated. Occasion was celebrated by a block dance in front of the new building, music furnished by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (July 8th)

The band next plays for a dance at the Elks Home on a Saturday night. We also read of the band playing for a church fair in Plaquemine:
"Church fair and dance at Plaquemine Community Club grounds. Dance at Community Club tomorrow night with music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Oct. 21)

We next read of the band playing for a dance in St. James Parish:

"Big dance at St. James High School Auditorium, Nov. 5, music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Oct. 28th.)

The band plays for a Thanksgiving dance at the K of C Hall and for a "New Deal dance at the American Legion Home on Mississippi Street with splendid music by Claiborne Williams high-class 14 piece orchestra. All of the latest and most popular dance melodies will be played - with rhythms that the crowd likes." (Nov. 25th.)

The band again plays for the year ending Christmas and New Years Eve dances:

"Annual Christmas dance by Elks - music for the occasion by the Claiborne Williams Band." (Dec. 16th.)


The year ends with the death of Jules Williams, the brother of Claiborne Williams.

1934

The year's activity begins with an announcement of the Elks carnival Dance:

"Elks carnival dance to be a brilliant affair - splendid music for the occasion will be furnished by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 27th.)

The Williams Orchestra being a very popular and well-known group is in demand by groups that hold benefit dances for their needs. We read of one such an occasion, which is the rule not the exception:

"Big carnival ball by Plaquemine Community Club benefit of Fire Department. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Feb. 10th.)

On April 14 the Williams Band plays for a dance of the '4-8 Club' of Plaquemine. The Williams Band is popular with the younger crowd and continues to be hired by High School age groups:
"Grand dance - Catholic High School at Elks Home Wednesday night. Music furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 19th.)

"Dance at St. James School Auditorium - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 19th.)

The bands continue also to play for commercial dances:

"Grand dance at Brusly St. Martin tonight, music by Black Devils Orchestra and tomorrow by Claiborne Williams." (July 29th.)

We read about other bands other than the Williams Band in the paper and will be noted in the section on Donaldsonville. One such an item we will give to illustrate the point:

"Dance at St. James High School benefit football team - music by Celestin's Original Tuxedo Band. Another dance at St. James School on Oct. 21st with music by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Sept. 15th.)

In October the band plays for the Fair's dance (Oct. 13th.) and a dance on Oct. 21st for the St. James High School. They also play for a dance after the school football game of Nov. 11th. Finally, the band plays for a K of C dance on New Years Eve and we read in the Dec. 22nd. paper that the Williams Band play for the annual Christmas Elks dance.

1935

In 1935 the band again plays for the Elks carnival ball on March 2nd. and as early as Jan. 19th. we read that the "preparations begin for Mardi Gras celebration and Claiborne Williams is the general manager. The band will play for the parade sitting on a truck following Claiborne who again rides in a car in the parade." The band also plays for the King Jolly carnival ball on Deb. 2nd. On April 13th. we read that the K of C will give an Easter dance with music by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra. The band is still a big hit with the younger dance crowd and we read of their playing for the High School dance:

"Donaldsonville High School Jr./Sr. dance a big success with music by the Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 11th.)

The band next plays for a "grand dance at St. James High School " on June 2nd. and the May 25th. paper mentions that the Band would be playing for a "grand dance at Elks Home." On July 7th. (Sunday) the Williams Band plays for a dance at St. James High School.

The band next plays for a supper dance:
"K of C and CDA have joint celebration, followed by supper/dance. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Sept. 28th.)

In October the State Fair is again held at the Fair Grounds with the Williams Band again furnishing music. We read:

"Grand opening set for 23rd. Southern Louisiana State Fair. Claiborne Williams Band will furnish music with dancing every night. Music of Claiborne Williams 11:00 Claiborne Williams Band 1:00 dancing etc." (Oct. 5th.)

We read in the paper that the Band plays for an after football game dance for the St. James High School (Nov. 2nd.). In the Nov. 9th. issue we read of an alumni dance of CL High School that the band plays for. Finally the band plays for the annual Elks Christmas dance and the K of C New Years Eve dance.

1936

We see a slowing down of the activities of the Williams Band in the late 30's. In these years the band still participates in the Mardi Gras each year as well as doing the State Fair. They continue doing the Easter dance at the K of C and dances for St. James High School, Donaldsonville High School and benefit dance for the St. Catherine of Sienna Missions. They continue to play for the Elks Christmas dance and the K of C New Years Eve dance. No steady dance jobs are written about. I believe that Claiborne was in semi retirement playing only at certain playing jobs and leaving the steady work to his other musicians and his son.

In 1936 we read that the band plays for the "Annual ball of King Jolly Good Fellows - Claiborne Williams' Band will furnish music for the procession and play later for dance." (Feb. 8) It is not until the April 11th paper do we read that the K of C Easter Dance engaged the Williams' Band. We next read that there is a "Grand dance at St. James High School fund with music by Claiborne Williams crack orchestra." (May 9th)

We find two items in the 'Chief' during the month of May:

"Dance at Elks Home next Wednesday - Grand commencement/dance with Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 23rd.)

and:


The next mention of an engagement is in the August 1st. paper "Dance at St. James High School -Claiborne Williams orchestra." The band plays again for St. James High School " (Sept. 19th. paper)
The band travels to the West Bank and plays a grand dance:

"Little John's Club located at West Bank Airline Highway, a short distance from Donaldsonville grand dance Thursday night. Classy music for the occasion was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Sept. 19th.)

In December Claiborne plays three dance engagements:


Finally Claiborne's Orchestra plays for the annual Elks Christmas Dance. (Dec. 19th.)

1937

As usual the year 1937 begins with preparations for the annual carnival. We read:

"King Jolly due Feb. 6th. Claiborne Williams Band will furnish music for the procession and his orchestra will dispense music for the dance." (Jan. 30th.)

As with the previous years the band plays for the K of C Easter dance (March 20th.); the S. La State Fair; and in June play for the Jr. Catherine Daughters annual June dance (May 29th.). Finally they play for the Elks annual Christmas dance (Dec. 11) and the K of C New Year Eve dance (Jan. 1st.)

1938

The year begins with the band playing for the athletic fund of the Catholic High School Dance on Jan. 28th. The band again plays for the carnival on Feb. 26th. The Alumni of Donaldsonville have a dance and of course hire the Williams Band. They again play for the St. James High School dance (June 26th.).

The band continues to play benefits for the church. We read:

"Entertainment benefit St. Catherine of Sienna Missions for colored people dance at night, Fair Grounds 8:00. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (August 20th.)

In the Nov. 19th. paper we read "Donaldsonville High School Alumni Association. Thanksgiving Day parade. Claiborne Williams Brass Band. After football game a dance with Claiborne Williams Orchestra."

In the final days of 1938 the band plays their traditional year ending engagements:
"Elks Christmas dance - Christmas night, Claiborne Williams orchestra "(Dec.17), and, K of C New Years Eve Frolic tonight. Claiborne Williams music crack orchestra." (Dec. 31st.)

1939

We find only five entries, one in Jan., two in May, one in Feb. and finally one in Dec.

"King Jolly Festival - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Jan. 28th.)

"Club Ferris to Give Three Big Dances: Club Ferris, located on the West Bank Airline Highway, one-half mile above Donaldsonville, announces that three big dances will be given at the club Thursday, February 9, Sunday, February 12th., and Thursday, February 16th. The last named will be a carnival dance and souvenirs will be given to all those who attend.

Dancing will begin at 9 p.m., and music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra. Admission will be free. The charge for dancing will be 75 cents.

Michel Ferris, proprietor and manager of the club, states that the dance hall has been remodeled; that there are plenty of tables for all and that meals and beverages are sold at popular prices."(Feb. 4th.)

"Donaldsonville High School dance May 25th., music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra," (May 13th.)

"Donaldsonville High School Junior host Seniors at prom. Music for the dance was furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (May 17th.)

The finally item is from the Dec. 23rd. paper:

"Elks, K of C, Alumni to Give Dance, Party

The local lodge of Elks will give their annual Christmas dance next Monday night at their attractive home in Railroad Avenue, music for which will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' orchestra. Dancing will begin at 10 p.m. Admission for gentlemen will be $1.50. The public is cordially invited to attend.

Next Wednesday night, December 27th., the Donaldsonville High School Alumni Association will give its annual Christmas party at the D. H. S. gymnasium. All graduates, members of the faculty and the senior and junior classes of the Donaldsonville High school are invited to attend.

On Sunday, December 31st., Ascension council No. 1087, Knights of Columbus, will give their annual New Year's Eve dance at the Elks' home in Railroad Avenue, music which will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' orchestra. Pre-sale tickets are priced at $1.25 and tickets obtained at the door will cost $1.50. Any person not dancing but attending as an onlooker, will be charged 25 cents in the form of general admission.
A most enjoyable time is assured all those who attend these delightful functions."

1940, 1941

Claiborne's physical activity on the music scene is diminishing and we find very few items about his band in the year 1940. We still read about the Mardi Gras celebration with the Williams band heading the procession but he is not listed on the committee. In his place is his son George Williams (Jan. 6th.). In Sept. the Band is engaged to again play the S. La. State Fair. It states that: "Arrangements have been made with Claiborne Williams orchestra to play for the dances." (Sept. 21st.) We read in an article of Oct. 4th. in the 'Chief' that "Geo. Williams, well-known colored musicians and a former member of Claiborne Williams' orchestra of this city, but now residing near Marksville, spent a while in town Tuesday, having come to visit his father, Claiborne Williams and other relatives. George says he has a splendid 12-piece orchestra and for the past three months he has been furnishing music for the Casino Night club, situated about two miles north of Marksville. The place is patronized by large crowds each night, he says." (Oct. 4th.)

In the Oct. 10th., 1952 'Chief' We read of Claiborne Williams death:

"Claiborne Williams beloved and respected Negro citizen of this city died in a New Orleans hospital Wednesday of last week following a brief illness. He was 83 years of age and died from shock and the effects of a fall he suffered at his home here a few days prior to his death. He became inactive about five years ago because of failing health and had lived a quiet life with relatives, spending much of his time sitting on his front porch chatting with neighbors and passersby, many of whom were white friends. A native of Assumption he had lived here for the past 60 years.

A music composer and arranger, Williams was famed throughout this area as a musician and teacher of music. As a young man he toured the United States, Canada and Europe with the Billy Oasanne (Sic: Kersands) minstrel troupe as its orchestra leader, and with this troupe gave a performance before England's king and queen. He later organized the Claiborne Williams Orchestra which played throughout South Louisiana, including New Orleans.

The orchestra, now directed by Williams' son, George, still plays under the name of "Claiborne Williams," and is domiciled in Baton Rouge.

During his prime Claiborne played a variety of instruments, tuned pianos and taught music including piano lessons. Among his students were Albert Pons, now of Philadelphia; Joe Mistretta, Mayor Sidney A. Marchand, Jr., Mrs. Paul Montgomery, Johnny Spano, members of the Sotile, Nizzo, Savoia and DeLeo families and many others. For years he attracted a crowd to the local Grand Theatre where he played a regular Tuesday night concert during the era of silent films. A brother, George Williams composed a waltz "Logical Point" which Claiborne made famous with his orchestra. Although piano copies of the beautiful waltz were published, an orchestration version was never published. It was George's and Claiborne's wish that the waltz be associated entirely with the Claiborne Williams orchestra.
Funeral services for the venerable Negro were held here Saturday morning at a requiem high mass at St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church followed by burial in the Ascension Cemetery.

Survivors are the following sons and daughters; Alice Obey and George Williams both of Baton Rouge, Charles Williams of Los Angeles, Rainey Williams of New Orleans, Sister Mary Demetria of the Holy Family Convent, New Orleans, Irene Claviere, Josephine Jacobs, and Bella Sullivan, the latter three of Donaldsonville; 15 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.” (Oct. 10, 1952)

MUSICIANS QUOTES ABOUT WILLIAMS

In the oral interviews at Tulane University a number of musicians mention Claiborne Williams. We shall give their testimony in this section.

**Louis James (May 25, 1959)** The Joe Gabriel Band and the Claiborne Williams Band were the bands in that area then (Sic: James was talking about the Thibodaux and Donaldsonville area)

**John Joseph** (Jan. 18, 1962) J. J. played bass with Claiborne Williams. Bowlegs played with Claiborne, Bowlegs courted a daughter of Williams but Bowlegs was so dark Williams didn't approve of the match. Bowlegs was such a good drummer, however, that Williams allowed the marriage, which didn't last very long. The daughter, a good pianist, has a beer parlor doing good business in Donaldsonville. J. J. had a brother, Henry Joseph who used to play with Claiborne Williams. Freddy Landry used to play with Claiborne. Played with C. Williams in Donaldsonville. Sometimes he had two jobs and I was livin' about 11 miles from Donaldsonville and he comes picked me up and when he had 2 jobs I played in the second band. He used mostly 7 men. The time I'm speaking about with Wellman Braud, they didn't have any drums - use bass, guitar, no piano. Other instruments Williams had - clarinet, trumpet, bass violin, had no piano. Guitar, clarinet and ah valve trombone players. Violin: Had them in the first and only instrument in them days, before clarinet came out, was violin. That was the leading instrument. Played dance jobs with Williams in different houses and halls. Type of dancing they did was schottische, waltz, one-step, variety - a set, just like the quadrille, also mazurka. Didn't play blues.

**Bob Watts** (Feb., 28,1963) Bowlegs Barnett of Donaldsonville who had played with the Claiborne Williams Band at one time was the drummer with Guy Mole in El Paso.

**Kid Thomas Valentine** (March 22, 1957) Claiborne Williams of Donaldsonville had a fine band. Everything they played was strictly from the music. Williams Band played blues, but from music. They didn't play any Dixieland (i.e., improvised jazz)
The Williams Band was basically a reading band and played the written arrangements of the day. Some of the arrangements were entitled 'blues' but were not. [Ex: Basin St. Blues] - not in blues progression of 12 bar traditional but using some blue notes. Some of these arrangements were 12 bar blues but most were called 'blues' to help with the sale of arrangements.

**Worthia, Showboy Thomas** (Dec. 11, 1961) Worthia, born in Napoleonville Feb. 26, 1907. First music he remembers was that of a brass band led by Claiborne Williams of Donaldsonville, Louisiana. The band played for parades (Worthia was about 8). The band played only regular marches, not swinging like the New Orleans Brass Bands. The Williams Band (15 pieces) played the parade for the Odd Fellows, that organization also held a dance that night, Williams used only 7 pieces for that function. The band played a variety of music. They played almost the same style of music that today is called Dixieland, but they called it jazz then.

**Synigal, Mrs. (May 24, 1962)** Mrs. Synigal didn't play in Claiborne Williams Band she was too young. She played with him at his home in Donaldsonville where they were introduced by Mrs. Synigal's mother. (Williams was a groomsman at her wedding) Mrs. Synigal played piano, Williams played violin. She joked with C. Williams saying he was old enough to be her grandfather. Synigal says that a daughter of Williams is in Holy Family Convent. Freddie and Alcide Landry from Donaldsonville. William's son George, (in Baton Rouge) still plays.

**Ike Robinson** (April 28, 1961) Ike was born near Thib. March 16, 1891. A fine band in that period was the Claiborne Williams Band of Donaldsonville,

**Roger Mitchell** (Jan. 19, 1972) San Jacinto Club - dances at the hall - Yes it's very large and they used to have bands come there like Claiborne Williams. They loved Claiborne Williams from Donaldsonville, L.a. They hired him all the way from Donaldsonville. He had a big band. He had about 12 piece band. He played the violin in it. His son George Williams, was a fine sax player. He was an accomplished country musician. In the Navy he was playing trumpet and piano.

**Charles Love** (Jan. 16, 1960) I used to play that (Maple Leaf Rag) - The cornet is making what the violin makes in the standard rags, the clarinet and violin work together. Love has a different orchestra in which the cornet has a counter melody. ‘You got to count and watch it, and it's full of syncopation. That's a pure rag. But it's pretty when it's well played. I used to play that with the St. Joseph Band, a long time ago. Edward Duffy was the cornet player...Plaquemine about 30 miles from Donaldsonville. Claiborne Williams used to come up to Plaquemine twice a week to teach band they had there, another colored band. So he would give me my lesson when he come up there, and I done well after I'd taken 6 or 7 lessons.

In Donaldsonville, there was a swell orchestra, Prof. Claiborne Williams' St. Joseph Band. Some of the follows in Donaldsonville recognized Love. Lessons from
Prof. Claiborne from Donaldsonville. When Williams came over (to Plaquemine) to teach brass band, Love got a lesson too.

**John Handy** (Dec. 4, 1958) Leading bands (best bands) outside New Orleans - Toots Johnson, Bud Scott, Claiborne Williams-out of Napoleonville & Donaldsonville. Contest between Handy's La. Shakers & Williams of Donaldsonville up at the Pelican. We had so many people in there you couldn't get nobody else in the place. They were lined out all on the sidewalk, all around the building they was lined up. You wouldn't get nobody else in there. And then the next contest we had was...He had a fine band really a fine band. Also: There were 3 leading orchestras outside of New Orleans, **Bud Scott, Claiborne Williams, & Toots Johnson**. They were doing all the business out there when I was with Toots.

**Wellman Braud** (March 31, 1958) Best brass bands to come to New Orleans were Dejan Alexander-from La Place, and Claiborne Williams from Donaldsonville.

**Eddie 'Big Head' Johnson** (Nov. 6, 1962) Band around Baton Rouge were Prof. Claiborne Williams, Knox, Toots Johnson Band (Sic: Knox drummer with Toots)

**Willie Foster** (Jan. 21, 1959) Father and Uncle played music. Uncle got a lot of musical ideas from Claiborne Williams, W. Foster's cousin, whose band in Donaldsonville was 'the leading band in Louisiana.'...Claiborne Williams had all the popular (non-brass band) dances. The band would change music by whistle signals; used in Quadrille. Claiborne Williams Band played in about the same style as the Robichaux Band, more classical. The Williams Band could play some blues, but did so only on request. The bands had good swing, but they played classical music and didn't play any rough music.

**Ernest Himes** - used to play in Claiborne Williams Band.

**Emanuel Sayles** (Jan. 17, 1959) Every Sunday at the Square pavilion Claiborne's Band would play a concert in the pavilion. He believes it was hired by the city. Whites and colored would gather in the park to listen to the band. The band wore nice uniforms. The band would be in a circle. Claiborne, the leader, would direct with a baton. They were a reading band. Played marches and tunes that were popular for brass bands at that time. Claiborne was the elite band.

Besides Claiborne Williams, in Donaldsonville (1915) the firemen had a band. Claiborne taught both white and colored and many of them became known as good musicians - Williams taught his white pupils at their home. He used to travel with shows and such. Claiborne Williams' brother George played trombone. Emanuel's father compared him to Tommy Dorsey. George was an advertising fellow. Traveled around rather than stay in Donaldsonville much. Would travel with a show, come home after the season. Usually sick when he came home. Last time he came home, he was ill, possibly with pneumonia. They sent to France for a particular salve the doctors recommended; nobody would rub it on him, except Sayles father,
George. George Williams finally died. The Williams lived 2 half blocks from the Sayles in the same Street going away from Railroad Street toward the graveyard.

Claiborne's Brass Band would play for funerals in Donaldsonville like in New Orleans but didn't have so much 2nd line. They'd play a kind of jazzy tune coming back, but I wouldn't say it was as glamorous as New Orleans.

Excursion from Natchez - band of Bud Scott who had a name around Natchez like Claiborne Williams had around Donaldsonville. Claiborne Band came down one time to Pelican - on one particular night they had a buck with the Claiborne Williams Band and they drew a lot of people because there are lots of people here from Donaldsonville and the place was packed. There was a cup (trophy cup). Claiborne Williams Band could fake but he stuck mostly to the music; (against a Sayles Band with music, arranged by Davy Jones).

**Eddie Summers** (Sept. 16, 1960) Father played string bass with Claiborne Williams Band (Allen Leon Summers) about 1916-17. The Claiborne Williams Orchestra, one of the greatest bands in the South, had about 14 pieces (including violin-Williams himself played violin) when I heard it; it was almost strictly a reading band. Williams' son George played piano, both, however, played after the career of the father had ended.

The only members of the old Claiborne Williams Band I can recall, other than his father and Williams is Maurice LeBlanc, sax player.

**Louis Nelson** (April 18, 1960) Nelson was born Sept. 17, 1902 and died 1990. First studied with Claiborne Williams of Donaldsonville, who traveled the 12 miles to Napoleonville for the lessons around 16 years old. Williams taught Louis Nelson what Nelson considers the most important part of playing-breathing...Played a couple of dates with the Claiborne Williams Band. Claiborne Williams primarily a violinist, taught all instruments. He had a wonderful band. Once the band played in New Orleans at the Pelican Roof Gardens, to turn away attendance. Williams brother played trombone, staying in the high register; he died of consumption. Nelson doesn't know that Williams had a brother who played with W. C. Handy, he says the only kin of Williams he knew were a brother who played bass and a son George Williams, who now has a fine band in Baton Rouge. The Claiborne Williams Band used almost all stock arrangements, having very few specials. Williams composed a beautiful waltz "The Logical Point" which his brother (trombone) played in the high register. (Sic: George was the composer, not Claiborne.) The brother, suffering from lung trouble, had to be helped off the stand after a performance of the number.

Claiborne seldom led his band while playing the violin, nor did he lead with a baton, he sat and played while the trumpet player, Lawrence Hall kicked off the band. Claiborne also collected tickets - most of Claiborne's teaching was done in his home, although he did travel to nearby towns to teach students living in and near those towns. He had more white pupils then he did colored. He charged 50 cents for a lesson lasting one-half to one hour. Nelson says when he came to the Nelson house he might stay a long time, talking to his father. He was quite strict, expecting a pupil to have his lesson ready on time. Nelson demonstrates how he was taught to keep
time with his foot - Claiborne Williams had most of the work in towns along the Mississippi River as far down as Napoleonville.

**Harrison Verret** (August 10, 1961) Harrison Verret mentions Claiborne Williams and his band of Donaldsonville, 18 miles from Napoleonville. Verret played with the Williams boys (George and sons of Claiborne) band in Baton Rouge.

**INSTRUMENTATION OF CLAIBORNE WILLIAMS' BANDS**

**Claiborne Williams Band - 1920's**

- William Marcel – trumpet
- Clyde Kirr – trumpet
- George Williams – trumpet
- William Barnett – Saxophone
- Tony Price – piano
- William Alcorn – bass

**Claiborne Williams Band (Souchen/Rose) - 1888- 1895**

- William Dailey – cornet
- Sullivan Sproul – cornet
- Clarence Hall – cornet
- Marble Gibson – Clarinet
- Buddy Curry – drums
- Wm. 'Bowlegs' Barnett-sax
- Edward Duggy – cornet
- Israel Palmer - cornet

- Drag Drago - drums
- James Cotton
- Lowell Kirr - trombone
- Ewing Kirr - trombone
- Porter Kilbert - alto sax

- Fred Landry - piano/trb.
- Ernest Hime - trombone
- Harrison Homer - trombone
- Joe Walker - drums
- George Williams - trombone
- Jim Williams - tuba
- Ben Bauddeurs - clarinet

**Claiborne Williams Time Line**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1874 - March 14</td>
<td>First mention of St. Joseph Brass Band – The band he will lead in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1877 - June 28</td>
<td>St. Joseph Band plays for funeral procession.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18  1886 - June 8  Williams mentioned as leader of St. Joseph Brass Band

19  1887 -  Playing dance and parade jobs.

29  1897 - Sept. 10  Claiborne Williams String Band

30  1898  Dance and parade jobs.

39  1907 -  August 24  Louisiana Square concerts (began May 1st) Band called the "Peerless Brass Band.

40  1908  Dances at Klotzville Hall

43  1911  Concerts continue

44  1912 - Feb. 10  Homer Brass Band organized – Claiborne leader/teacher
                     March 16  George Williams Composes "Logical Point Waltz."
                     Last mention of St. Joseph Brass Band. Piano tuning business advertisement in paper-address-507 Opulousas Street.
                     Nov. 2   Winter concert series

45  1913 - Jan. 11  Piano tuning advertisement still in paper

46  1914 Oct. 31  George Williams dies.  Concerts continue
                     June 2  St. John's Fair

47  1915 July 24  Concerts continue. Dance at Tipparary Hall

48  1916  Playing fairs, dances, Klotville Hall

50  1918 July 20  School for Negro children – Claiborne Williams-
                     Treasurer

51  1919  Dances at Hotel - bi-monthly

52  1920 Oct. 16  At St. Tammany Fair-Ulysee Herbert's Hotel, Labor Day Parade

53  1921  At Bogalusa dances and local Masonic Hall

1921 Feb. 30  At Grand Movie Theater (Until Jan. 26, 1929) Weekly dances - Tip Top Hall, LKlotzville
53 1921 Sept. 10  Claiborne Williams Jazz Band
54 1922  St. Tammany Fair
55 1923 Jan. 6  Donaldsonville Mardi Gras Celebrations, parade & dance
56 1924 Feb. 9  Elected president of True Friends Benevolent Assc.
57 1924 June 14  Dances at Rivet's Hall in Bruly St. Martin-weekly
59 1927 Dec. 24  Dance at Elks Home and Rivet's Hall (also 1928)
60 1928  Feast of St. Amico-band in procession yearly
62 1930 Aug. 5  Dances at Carbo's Hall and South Louisiana Fair
63 1931  Dances at Klotzville Hall
73 1941 May 17  Last mention of music activity is Donaldsonville paper.
84 1952 Oct. 1  Death - Buried in Ascension Catholic Cemetery

Musical groups in Donaldsonville

Orchestra - March 1, 1873

Band - August 18, 1883
J. J. Claverie  Dr. A. Chverie  Tegros Guidry-violin
A. Blanqui  Octave Terrio  Fred Bread-flute

LeBlanc’s String Band-March 1, 1883
Poche's String Band - College Point

Orchestra - Oct. 30, 1883
M. Gaudet-piano  Paul Savoie-2nd violin
J. Terrio-cornet  Dr. B. Claverie-cello
Chas. Gray-violin  Paul Leche

Orchestra-Feb. 18, 1883

Band
M. Gaudet-piano  Paul Savoie-violin Adam
LeBlanc-piano  Robt. Picou-sax
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band - August 18, 1883</th>
<th>Orchestra - Jan. 3, 1886</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. F. Terrio-cornet</td>
<td>Chas. Gray-1st Violin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowell Gisclard-drums</td>
<td>Mrs. Gray-piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Gaudet-piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prof. J. LeBlanc-1st violin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jno. Terrio-cornet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P. Landry-2nd violin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. B. L.Claverie-cello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paul Leche-bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tegros Guidry-violin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Breard-flute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Kahn, L. Bergeron O. Blanchard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Brass Band - June 3, 1891</th>
<th>Phoenix Orchestra - May 25, 1896</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul Leche</td>
<td>Chas. Langbecher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Ohlmeyer</td>
<td>D. Ohlmeyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Poche</td>
<td>Lucas Litty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dick landry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jno. Terrio</td>
<td>Augustine Heime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Terrio</td>
<td>Jno. Terrio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Sims</td>
<td>Dille Ohlmeyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August Heime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Braud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Terrio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Von Lotten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donaldsonville Brass Band - June 29, 1896</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedrick Ohlmeyer</td>
<td>Felix Fortier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John F. Terrio</td>
<td>Wm. D. Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas Litty</td>
<td>Dillie Ohlmeyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. A. Terrio</td>
<td>James Von Lotten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Braud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cannoneers Field Band - Sept. 19, 1896</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Barre</td>
<td>Prosper Conway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laniee Barre</td>
<td>Gus Conway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sosthene Braud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Silver Cornet Band</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Terrio</td>
<td>Joe Dudenhofer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Keating</td>
<td>James Frost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felix Fortier</td>
<td>Wm. Terrio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Sims</td>
<td>James Von Lotten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Braud</td>
<td>E. P. Copponex</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
August heime Allen Landry
D. Olhmeyer Wm. Park
Dillie Ohlmeyer

Band - Feb. 14, 1903
Prof. L. Breitenmoser-piano Mr. H. Uhry-flute
Dr. A. J. Himel-violin Mr. H. Delanns-cornet

Klotzville Brass & String Band - April 2, 1904
Anatole Gros Eddie Landry

Paincourtville Orchestra - March 5, 1904
Sidney Rodrique-cornet/manager
Florence Webre-piano
Paul Landry-violin
Albert Guidry-flute

Paincourtville Brass Band - Sept. 11, 1905
Messrs. Tobias, Terrio, Swarez, Keating, J. M. Hebert (Leader) Sidney Rodrigue
(manager)
Dr. A. A. Landry (leader), Peve Casgrain, Chas. Dugas, Hy Barier, C. J. Jones. Paul
Landry
J. M. Hebert, Dr. H. A. leBlanc, Jos. Berniard, H. A. Degas, P. E. Landry, J. J.
Dugas, A. Guidry, pierre Charlet, Oscar Trahan, L. F. Boudreaux,
In 1906 add: Eddie Landry, Leonce Hebert, Sam Landry, T. Boudreaux, Raoul
Landry, Henry Aucoin, Henry Dugas, Jos. Guidry, Sam LeBlanc, Anatole Gros,
Charley Givoir

Orchestra - July 28, 1906
Paul Landry-violin J. J. Savoy-flute
E. E. Savoy-violin Miss Sarah Savoy-piano

Orchestra - May 16, 1908
George pons-violin Miss Leda Landry-piano
Albert Pons-flute Maurice Pons-cornet
D. Ohlmeyer-bass Leon Fortier-violin
Miss Odile Cook-violin

Donaldsonville Orchestra - June 27, 1908
George Pons-Director Albert Pons-flute
Chas. Rice-1st violin Odile Cook-piano
Leon Fortier-2nd violin D. Ohlmeyer-bass
Elma Dehon-2nd violin Felix Fortier-drums
Maurice Pons-cornet
Donaldson Orchestra - July 18, 1908
Miss Lee landry-piano  Adam Hebert-cornet
W. Blumenthol-violin  Emile Houllion-cornet
Henry Casso-violin  Melville Duke-flute
Sidney Mollers-violin  M. Constantin-flute
Frank Beatrous-clarinet  Louence Trepagnier-trombone
Ambrose Mathieu-clarinet  Richard Ohlmeyer-trombone
Diedrich Ohlmeyer-bass  Felix Fortier-trap drum
Henry Casso-Pres.  Sidney Mollero-Sec/Treas.

Orchestra - Jan. 21, 1911
Louis Richard-flute  George Landry-guitar
Louis LeBlanc-cornet  Michel Landry-bass

St. Joseph Comm. Institue Orchestra - 1914
Bros. Theodosus-1st mandolin  Adam leBlanc-2nd clarinet
Paul Braud-clarinet  A. J. Meloncon-violin
Albert Landry-violin  Sidney Mollere-violin
V. Babin-2nd violin  Emile Houllion-1st cornet
V. Glorioso-2nd cornet  George Oschwald-piano
P. Meloncon-bells  Janssens Holocon-xylophone

WhiteElephants (Merry Makers) - August 11, 1928
J. Minertta-violin  A. F. LeGrand-banjo
L. LeGrand-sax  N. Picou-tuba
Tony Sotile-sax  Armand LeBlanc-piano
Ig. Gramborne-drums  Philip Stile-trombone
Elmo LaGrand-cornet

Band - Sept. 25, 1928
K. Koche-piano  Jean Aucoin-banjo
Lowell Gisclard-drums  "Duddy" Chapman-sax

St. Joseph Commercial Institute Orchestra - Nov. 10, 1928
Rev. P. Gauci-piano  Duncan Crawford-drums
Brother Finnian-violin  Robt.Picou-alto sax
Brother Benard-soprano sax  "Buddy" Chapman-clarinet
Ned Picou-cornet  Leonard Schaff-bass
Nolan Kicke-sax

Band - June 28, 1930
A. LeBlanc-piano  Robert Picou-sax

Fast Steppers Band - Sept. 6, 1930
Frank Aynaud
Emile Landry
Lloyd Ramirez-sax

Band - Sept. 19, 1931
A. LeBlanc-piano
L. Gisclard-drums

Harmony King - March 28, 1931
O. D. Denson-trumpet
Marcel Riviere-trombone
Raoul Landry-tuba
Adam LeBlanc-sax/cl
Lowell Gisclard-drums

Hot-Cha Orchestra
Bruno Savoia
Jack Nizzo
Thomas Nizzo

Lloyd Ramirez-sax
Robt. Picou-sax/sop. sax
Guy LeJeune-sax
Chas. Giroir-piano
Jean Aucoin-banjo/guitar
Henry Kocke, Jr.-vocalist

Tom Mistretta
Vincent Sotile
Johnny Nizzo
The two most popular aggregations of musical instruments in the latter decades of the 19th Century were the brass band and string band. Even the smallest of towns in America had a brass and string bands. In Louisiana we find evidence of this in the many newspaper accounts that mention their town's band with much pride and probably boast of their accomplishments.

A typical band activity was playing for the popular fairs given by the Catholic Church and other civic organizations. The St. Joseph Brass Band is very active in fund raising activity of the church.

Still another was the serenade. A brass band would congregate outside a leading citizen's house and play a serenade. A serenade was considered an honor for the one being serenaded, many times the editor of the town paper, who would always reciprocate with a mention in the next edition of the newspaper. The bands would also use the serenade to advertise its next public activity, usually an event to raise money to pay for new music, instruments or travel expenses to gratis jobs. Leading politicians were also in line for serenades; they in turn would hire the band for a political rally. The serenade was good advertisement:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band was out on a serenading tour last Saturday night, and the boys seemed to enjoy themselves immensely. They visited the residences of Hon. Pierre Landry, Squire Wilkinson, H. O. Maher, Esq., and the editor of the Chief, and met with cordial receptions. Mr. Maher was absent from home Saturday evening, and when he learned upon his return of the compliment that had been paid him by the band, he indicted the follow note, which has been handed us for publication:

Donaldsonville, Nov. 8th, 1871. Frederick Cobb, esq., Pres. SJBB: Dear Sir - On my return from the sugarhouse last night I learned that your Band had been around and had honored me with a serenade. I am sorry that I was absent and did not know of your intended visit, as I would have been happy to show my high appreciation of the honor conferred by your excellent band to so humble an individual as myself. Hoping that you will continue to receive the good wishes and praise of the public in the future as in the past, and that in a short time I will be able to show my appreciation of the merits of the St. Joseph Band in a substantial manner. I am, respectfully, your Obdt. servant, H. C. Maher." (Nov. 14, 1871)

The town of Donaldsonville was no exception to the tradition of brass bands, having at least four brass bands at one time. Although not a large town there was an atmosphere in Donaldsonville that fostered musical cultural activities. In 1872 there were four bands of which the town newspaper the "Chief" boasted. We read:
"There was 'music in the air' Tuesday evening for the four bands of which our town boasts all held meetings for the purpose of practicing upon their 'toot horns'." (Nov. 9, 1872)

Three of these four bands mentioned in the above article are previously mentioned in earlier editions of the newspaper. On Feb. 3, 1872, the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Brass Band is mentioned; August 10, 1872, the Ascension Brass Band; and on Nov. 9, 1872, the St. Joseph Brass Band. The fourth band's name doesn't appear before the Nov. 9th date. The earliest band that could be the fourth would be the St. Mary Brass Band, mentioned later in the August 2, 1873, issue of the "Chief." The Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Brass Band and the Ascension Brass Bands are white bands; the St. Joseph Brass Band and the St. Mary Brass Band are colored/Creole Bands. The organizing of these early brass bands probably took place in the years after the Civil War, between 1865 and 1872 - so, in reality their history was in its early stages when we read about them in the 1872 newspapers.

We first hear of the St. Joseph Brass Band in the same Nov. 9, 1872, issue of the "Chief" when it and the Ascension Brass Band play for a political barbecue, one of the typical activities of a brass band in the latter part of the 19th Century:

"THE BARBECUE - The mass meeting and barbecue at 81 mile point last Saturday is reported by persons who attended to have been quite a success. A goodly number of people, belonging to both political parties, were present, and manifested great interest in the proceedings throughout. The ascension and St. Joseph Brass Bands went from Donaldsonville accompanied by speakers of liberal Republican persuasion, and a joint discussion of political questions took place between those which is said to have been well worth listening to. General Allen Thomas delivered one of the stirring addresses for which he is justly noted." (Nov. 9, 1872)

The St. Joseph Brass Band was a very active band, playing music for many fairs as well as giving their own pleasure excursions for the benefit of their band fund. These excursions would be either by boat, train or hay wagon. The May 17th issue wrote that "We have been compelled to defer an account of a pleasure/excursion of the St. Joseph Brass Band until next week which in consequence of precedence of other matters."

In May, July and August the band played for two church fairs:

"The Catholic Fair - Notwithstanding unfavorable weather the fair given last Saturday and Sunday and Monday for the benefit of the Catholic Church building fund was well attended, and proved a very successful entertainment. Father Cuppens and Weltke, assisted by a number of ladies and gentlemen who are always foremost upon such occasions, managed the affair admirably and contributed by every means in their power to the enjoyment of the guests. The Independent and St. Joseph Bands of Donaldsonville, and the St. Mary Jefferson College Band from St. James
furnished excellent music, the good natured rivalry existing between the organizations causing each to put its best foot forward." (July 6, 1973)

The excursion was a way of realizing some profit for the benefit of a musical organization. We read that the St. Joseph Band had given a pleasure excursion. The paper writes: "We have been compelled to defer an account of a pleasure excursion of the St. Joseph Brass Band until next week which in consequence of precedence of other matters." (May 17, 1893)

"Successful Fair - St. Mary Benevolent Association. The St. Joseph Brass Band in attendance during the whole time and the fair goers were highly pleased with their music," (May 31, 1873)

The band is active playing for the annual fairs, although the two listed are summer fairs, not fall ones:

"M. E. church fair: The Silver Cornet and St. Joseph Brass Band." (August 16, 1873)

In a very interesting article, the band combines an excursion and serenades in what is called a 'Frolic':

"A FROLIC - Saturday evening, two weeks since, the members of the St. Joseph Brass Band, having secured the fine large wagon of the Ascension Band for the purpose, visited the residence of Hon. C. N. Lewis, in the first ward, where they partook of a bountiful supper prepared for the occasion. On the way to their place of destination, the boys awoke the echoes of the surrounding country and brought the inhabitants to the roadside in gaping wonder, by playing several selections from their musical repertoire. Arriving at Mr. Lewis' they found that gentleman ready to receive them with his usual pleasant smile, and after a preliminary serenade they attacked the edibles with appetite sharpened by the long ride and of course enjoyed the repast hugely. Several hours were spent with their host in a most agreeable manner and then the members of the band again mounted the red wagon and returned home filled with a pleasant recollection of their frolic." (May 24, 1873)

Again in July the band plays for a church fair:

"The Catholic Fair - Notwithstanding unfavorable weather the fair given last Saturday, Sunday and Monday for the benefit of the Catholic Church building fund was well attended. The Independent and St. Joseph Bands of Donaldsonville and the St. Mary Jefferson College Band from St. James furnished excellent music, the good natured rivalry existing
between the organizations causing each to put its best foot forward." (July 6, 1873)

Bands of the 19th Century were sponsored many times by either the firemen of the town or the Catholic Church. Many times there was a close relationship between the firemen, who were mostly Catholic and the Catholic Church. Research has brought to light the role of the Catholic Church in sponsoring brass bands for its many church-related activities as well as for its many official functions. Such is the case when the Archbishop came to Donaldsonville:

"Archbishop Perche in Donaldsonville
The Services in Ascension Church
A Large Number of Confirmations and Communionists
The Departure of the Archbishop

The services at the Catholic Church last Sunday conducted by the Rev. Archbishop Perche, were interesting and imposing, and drew together the largest congregation that has assembled in the spacious sanctuary for a long while. So great was the crowd that there was only standing room left for those who came late, and but very little of that. A procession was formed in the church yard just before the hour fixed for the opening of the services, which made a circuit of the ground and then conducted his grace the Bishop into the church. This procession was headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band, followed by the candidates for confirmation and communion (numbering about sixty), the inmates of the St. Vincent Orphan Asylum under the care of the Sisters of Charity, a considerable number of children and adults, the Bishop under a canopy borne by four gentlemen, and the St. Cecile Band bringing up the rear. The bands alternately filled the air with harmonious sounds, and as the procession marched slowly unto the church, with banners waving and bands playing, the scene was in spiriting in the extreme." (July 19, 1873)

The St. Joseph Band was a proud and capable organization, with its pride sometimes turning into cockiness. This attitude was publicity criticized by other musicians:

"Advertisement: Mr. Editor,

As we have heard some of the members of the St. Joseph Brass Band state in public that there could not be any other band organized in this town unless it would join with them, because the money could not be raised to do so, we can assure you that if it had not been for Mr. Charles F. Smith, who was kind enough to lend them the necessary funds, which they have not been able to return, they could not now be in a position to slander others in public as they have done. Mr. Smith grew tired of waiting for the return of his money, and made them a present of the sum of $200."
Very respectfully,
St. Mary Brass Band Boys." (August 2, 1873)

A write-up about the previously mentioned fair for the benefit of the M. E. Church appears in the August 16th paper:

"HO! FOR THE FAIR Let everybody attend - A grand concert to be given to-night in the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band Hall.

The fair for the benefit of the M. E. Church is in full blast at the public square, and is succeeding beyond the expectation of the projectors. Despite the copious rain, the attendance has been large, and the visitor’s purchase of the good things offered for sale with commendable liberality. The fair opened Wednesday afternoon and will continue until Sunday evening. The Silver Cornet Band discoursed some of their splendid music at the opening, and the members were invited to a bounteous supper, which they partook of with great gusto. Thursday and yesterday (Friday) evening music was furnished by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (August 16, 1873)

1874

One of the occasions for a celebration for the colored people of Donaldsonville was the 11th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation:

"Emancipation,


Early in the forenoon of New Year's Day, the booming of little cannon in the vicinity of the Court-House reminded us that the colored people were to have a meeting for the purpose of celebrating in appropriate manner the 11th anniversary of their freedom. About half past ten o'clock the St. Joseph Brass Band appeared on the gallery of the Court-House and struck up a lively tune, and from this time until the opening of the meeting they filled the air with melody at frequent intervals."

One of the leading Negro politicians, P. B. S. Pinchback, made a visit to Donaldsonville and the St. Joseph Brass Band welcomed him:

"Republican mass meeting. P. B. S. Pinchback arrival on Steamer Natchez. The St. Joseph Brass Band was at the wharf when the steamer landed (Saturday night). Sunday morning the band embarked upon the Henry Tete for the old Marchand Plantation. The St. Joseph Brass Band
played a prominent part in the proceedings, their patriotic music serving to interest the spectator 'between speeches'."

1875

As has been noted, a fair was one of the principle methods of fund-raising in the small towns of Louisiana. Brass band benefited from this tradition, often giving fairs in their own behalf to raise money. This was necessary since they frequently played gratis for public functions. The fair during this era had a benefit for the band that played as it always guaranteed copious free publicity for the sponsor in the newspaper.

"Another fair on the 25 & 26 days of April. A fair will be held in this town for the benefit of that worthy association of young colored men, the St. Joseph Brass Band. Tickets of admission will soon be ready for sale at 50 cents each, and we recommend everybody to purchase one. Donaldsonville has a deal of musical talent and it should be encouraged. The band have the best wishes of the Chief for the success of their coming Fair." (March 14, 1875)

Again, on the 18th of April there appears another item about the St. JBB Fair:

"There will be a grand fair given for the benefit of the St. Joseph Brass Band in this town on the 25 & 26 insts. The members of the organization deserve to be encouraged, and as this is the only time they have called upon the public for assistance we trust their entertainment will be literally patronized." (April 18, 1875)

The St. JBB Fair is postponed the first time because of heavy rains that had a devastating effect on the town of Donaldsonville:

"The fair which the St. JBB proposed giving for their benefit on the 25 & 26 insts. has been postponed by them to June 6 and 7, owing to the scarcity of money in the neighborhood and the general desperation among the merchants and planters caused by the recent heavy rains, high water and numerous over flows." (April 25, 1875)

Again on June 6th, the item about the St. JBB fair appears in the paper:

"Saturday and Sunday the 6 & 7 insts. the St. JBB will give a fair for their benefit. The band first intended holding their fair on the 25 & 26 of April, but postponed it until the present time owing to the high water and danger of overflow then existing. We trust their efforts will meet with the pechiary success anticipated." (June 6, 1875)
The St. Joseph Brass Band had an excellent reputation outside of Donaldsonville and Ascension Parish. It was often asked to play in surrounding parishes. On one such trip they traveled to St. James Parish and played for a 4th of July affair:

"The St. JBB accompanied by Hon. Pierre Landry, the Republican nominee for State Senator from this district, left for St. James at an early hour this morning to attend a 4th of July celebration to be held in that parish. We fear they will have a uneasy trip through the mud and rain, but we hope the celebration will be a success and that our Republican band may make a favorable impression upon the St. James people." (July 4, 1875)

A follow-up story on the above trip explained the problems of travel when the weather was inclement:

"The St. JBB which had started for St. James early in the morning, to be present at a large meeting there, returned by the train at 12:30, preferring that mode of travel to riding in a wagon exposed to the weather."

The St. Joseph Band plays for a fair for the St. Mary Benevolent Assoc. The paper states that "The St. Joseph Brass Band was in attendance and dispensed good music to add to the enjoyment of visitors." (August 7, 1875)

In the August 1st issue of the paper we see that there is "a fair for the benefit of the 6th ward church. The St. JBB has been solicited to attend and will probably do so."

While it has often been thought that the custom of having bands at funerals was a New Orleans function, there were similar funeral processions in the country towns surrounding New Orleans and frequently in Donaldsonville. The St. JBB plays for such an affair:

"The death of Mr. Desire Fernander, a popular and estimable young colored man, has caused a deep feeling of sorrow among his numerous friends and relatives, as attested by the large concourse that followed his remains to the tomb Thursday evening. The St. JBB was in the procession and played dirges as the mournful cavalcade moved toward the Catholic cemetery, where the deceased was interred. Peace to his ashes." (Sept. 5, 1875)

1876

Brass bands in the 19th Century were utilized by the politicians at their rallies and speeches. Visiting politicians were met at the train or steamer depot and usually marched to the beat of the band to the place of gathering. At times, this arrival was at night and torch light processions were held. This type of activity was written about in the Sept. 23, 1876, paper:
"The campaign committee having secured from the State committee several hundred lamps, or torches, arrangements were made for a torch light procession Sunday night. As was anticipated, this event drew a large and expectant crowd. The procession formed on Crescent Place and moved on all the principal streets, there being about 200 torches in line and a large number of people following the pageant. The St. Joseph Brass Band led the column and just behind them was a vehicle bearing a large, transparency inscribed as follows: 'Give us peace, with Hayes & Wheeler, Packard and Antoine.'"

In Oct. the band plays for another political rally:

"Local Republican campaign - In yard of Landry school house, 1st ward. After a long march, enlivened by hearty cheering and inspiring music from the St. Joseph Band, the crowd dispersed." (Oct. 7, 1876)

When State political figures visited Donaldsonville the Band was again on hand:

"Kellogg, Packard Visit - Torch light procession at night. Horsemen were in the lead, followed by the St. Joseph Brass Band in their large wagon, a long line of footmen, with and without torches, followed the Conway Field Band occupying a position near the middle." (Nov. 11, 1876

1877

Most brass bands of the 19th Century also had under their wing a group of juvenile musicians who was aspiring future band members. Also, most small towns or settlements organized their own brass bands and would enlist the help of members of well-established brass band musicians to become their musical instructors. Thus the leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band, Albert Vives, is enlisted to train some young band musicians of nearby settlements:

"A musical spirit pervades the colored youth of this parish. A brass band was recently organized at Crevasac Settlement and another in Smoke Bend, while still another is spoken of in Donaldsonville. The organization first named has purchased instruments and Albert Vives, leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band is giving the members elementary instructions in the art of horn blowing." (April 7, 1877)

Brass bands in the 19th Century were the most popular source of music for both entertainment and other traditional activities. The St. Joseph Brass Band was called on many times to play funeral music and as earlier stated they did so on occasion, such as the funeral for Armand Degriuse:
"One of the largest funeral processions we have ever witnessed in this section passed through town, from the bayou ferry landing to the Catholic Church and cemetery, on Sunday last. The deceased was a much respected colored man, scarcely 21 years of age, named Arnmand Degriuse, resident of the 3rd ward, from where the cortege started. The St. Joseph Brass Band and a field band followed the hearse, alternately discoursing mournful airs. Many members of some benevolent society were in the procession, and the neat uniform dresses of the women presented a pleasing appearance' (April 28, 1877)

Needing financial help for expenses, the St. Joseph Brass Band gives a ball:

"The members of the St. Joseph Brass Band and their friends will amuse themselves at a ball to be given under the auspices of the band at Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band's Hall on July 7." (June 23, 1877)

1878

The St. Joseph Brass Band was considered one of the best brass bands in the State of Louisiana, this fact written about in the 'Chief':

"Donaldsonville has two of the best colored bands in the State - The Crescent and the St. Joseph. Both these organizations were out serenading their friends last week and included the editor of the Chief among the category. Many thanks." (April 20, 1878)

It was earlier stated that both the Catholic Church and the local fire department were sponsors of brass bands in many of the towns in Louisiana. Each year the town fire department would have a special day and the activities always included a fair and parade in which many brass bands participated. Such a day was held in Donaldsonville by the local firemen and it was addressed in the paper:

"Firemen's Holiday! Anniversary Celebration of the Phoenix Fire and Ascension Hook and Ladder Companies. An imposing Parade - Subsequent Festivities - A delightful day.

If our firemen could have had their weather made to order, it would have been difficult to have obtained a much finer day for their celebration than last Sunday proved to be. The sun was partially obscured and its heat modified by light clouds, and the only drawback to the parade was the dust that lay deep upon the streets.

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon the bands employed for the occasion arrived at the public square with their instruments in full blasts, and as the firemen and populace congregated, a scene of inspiring animation was
presented to the view such as can be witnessed here only on very rare occasions.

Ascension Hook and Ladder Company, followed by the Junior Hooks, first emerged upon the square in line, and soon Phoenix and Junior Phoenix followed suit. The assistant marshals rode off in a group, and shortly returned escorting the Grand Marshal, under whose direction the procession at once formed in the following order:

"Grand Marshal Elphege Glaudin attended by Aid Joseph Ferrier and Camille Mulere.
Phoenix Fire Co. No. a, led by the Independent Brass Band.
Ascension Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 led by the Crescent Band.
Ascension Junior and Phoenix Junior companies, led by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (May 18, 1878)

The St. Joseph Brass Band continued its activity by playing for a fair for the St. Mary Benevolent Association. The St. Joseph Brass Band "was in attendance and dispensed good music to add to the enjoyment of visitors." (August 7, 1878)

The St. Joseph Brass Band probably continued playing in the year 1889 but there is no mention in the Chief, although there is mention of other brass bands' activities. They probably didn't disband as they are mentioned frequently in the 1880 newspaper.

1880

It was customary to acknowledge gratuitous services that the St. Joseph Band and other bands usually performed. Thus the Fair committee sent a card of thanks to the Ascension Hook and Ladder:


The undersigned committee, charged with the management of the recent fair and ball given under the auspices of and for the benefit of Ascension Hook and Ladder Co., beg leave to express, on behalf of the entire company, their sincere thanks and deep sense of obligation to the kind friends, one and all, who contributed in any way toward the advancement and conduct of the entertainments. To the St. Joseph, Crescent and Silver Cornet Bands, whose valuable indispensable adjunct to our entertainment.

Respectfully,
Committee on Fair and Ball."
(Jan. 24, 1880)

The band again plays for the annual firemen's parade on May 9 and the following write-up appears in the May 22 paper:
"Firemen's Anniversary - The Annual Parade of May 9, 1880 - The Donaldsonville firemen in line, reinforced by Friends from Algiers.

The annual parade of Phoenix Fire Co. No. 1 and Ascension Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 of Donaldsonville took place on the 9th insts., and was a display that reflected much credit upon those organization.

The procession formed on the public square at a few minutes before 5 o'clock in the evening, a later start than usual being made by reason of waiting for the excursionists from Algiers, who were due at 2 p.m., but did not arrive according to appointment. When all was in readiness the signal to march was given and the column moved off in the following order:

- Grand Marshall and aids.
- Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band
- Phoenix Fire Co. Phoenix Juniors
- St. Joseph Brass Band.

(May 22, 1880)

Bands in the area all seemed to have plenty of work and often overdoes their energy playing for parades and fairs that are played in a row:

"Fair - Catholic Church grounds, May 9. The Independent and St. Joseph Brass Band, contributed to the interest of the festival by supplying good music, though there was a lack of this element Sunday and Monday nights, the bands having tired themselves out playing for the Firemen's Parade on Sunday." (May 22, 1880)

The Negro association of the Ascension Hook and Ladder Company give a benefit using the St. Joseph Brass Band as entertainment:

"Ascension's entertainment - The Fair & Ball of Ascension Hook and Ladder Co.

Last Saturday evening, the 27th the fair advertised to be given at Ascension Hook and Ladder Co's hall, under the auspices and for the benefit of that association, was opened by music from the Crescent Brass Band, and continued in operation until 10 o'clock tonight. The usual attractions were offered. In the main hall of the truck-house were the cake table, fancy table, punch table and a number of side tables, which in the smaller apartment on the right, where the hook and ladder truck is generally kept, stood the restaurant table from which the others were supplied. All were attended by polite and charming ladies, who exerted themselves with flattering success to supply the wants and contribute to the enjoyment of guests. Gumbo and coffee were prepared in the hall-yard, and the bar was located under an awning on the lot adjoining the hall on the lower side.

The attendance of visitors Saturday evening was very slim and the prospect for a successful fair was dubious. Sunday afternoon and evening,
however, matters brightened up considerably, although there was nothing like the number of guests the firemen and their friends had reason to expect. The St. Joseph Brass Band rendered handsome service by playing all afternoon and until a late hour in the evening, and the Silver Cornet Band kindly volunteered similar assistance, giving several tunes from the stage inside the hall." (June 3, 1880)

The Blue Bucket Fire Co. was a colored organization. The fire department was also a social organization in the 19th Century and held regular meetings and elected officers. They also sponsored brass bands and gave social activities to raise funds for fire trucks, hoses, etc. The St. Joseph participated in a number of activities of the Blue Bucket Co."

"Blue Bucket Excursion, accompanied by the St. Joseph Brass Band bound for Napoleonville to a grand 4th of July Celebration. Had a pleasant trip down, listening and dancing to the band's inspiring music."

and:

"Blue Bucket elections - St. Joseph Brass Band was present and serenaded the Company and the officers elected." (August 14, 1880)

The Blue Bucket Fire Co. took another excursion, this time to Gretna:

"Blue Bucket Fire Co's Excursion to Gretna
On Saturday the 21st., insts., the Blue Bucket Fire Co. of this town left here on a special excursion train bound for Gretna, accompanied by a considerable number of friends and pleasure seekers. The party reached Gretna safely, were cordially received by Good Intent Fire Co. No. 2 and other residents of the thriving town, and escorted to Good Intent's engine-house when an elegant lunch had been prepared, of which the excursionists partook with great relish.

A procession was then formed by the two fire companies, headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville and the Creole Field Band of New Orleans, with Scott Ellison, esq. as Grand Marshall. After parading on the principal streets of Gretna, the procession returned to Good Intent Hall and disbanded, and soon a grand ball was in progress in the hall which lasted through the night and afforded enjoyment to the participants." (August 21, 1880)

The St. Joseph and the Crescent Brass Band were both colored bands and at times were mistaken for each other. On one such occasion an article in the paper corrected the mistake:

"Correction Donaldsonville, Sept. 20, 1880 Editor Chief
I noticed in the published proceedings of the reception tendered the Hon. C. B. Darrall on the 13th insts., mention that the music for the occasion was furnished by the Crescent Brass Band of this place. In justice to the members of the St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville, I beg to state that they furnished the music for the day.

Chas. Shallowhorne,
Chairman Committee on Music."
(Oct. 8, 1880)

October being the time prior to elections, there was an active political campaign going on which meant jobs for brass bands. Each political rally usually had a brass band playing to draw the crowd:

"Grand Republican Rally - Republican Mass-Meeting will be held in the parish of Ascension. The St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville will be in attendance." (Oct. 16, 1880)

1881

The Band plays for three funerals, which were noted in the July 23rd and Nov. 5th issues of the Chief in 1881.

"Death of R. J. Duhe - Funeral which takes place at 5:00 this evening and the St. Joseph Brass Band will also attend." (July 23, 1881)

"Death of Solomon Weinschench - funeral - Headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band."(Nov. 5, 1881)
(Sic: This was a Hebrew rite)

"Joseph Armand funeral - music furnished by St. Joseph and Crescent Brass Bands combined." (Nov. 5, 1181)

We find a notation in the Sept. 10th issue of the chief that tells of the band playing for another fair:

"An enjoyable fair or collation was given in Donaldsonville on Saturday, Sunday and Monday last, under the auspices of the St. Joseph Benevolent Society, one of the oldest associations of its class in our town, comprising in its membership some of the best colored people of the community. This was the first entertainment the society had ever given, and in view of the dullness of the times and other unfortunate circumstances, the ladies who projected the affair have every reason to feel satisfied with its results. Music was furnished by the St. Joseph and Crescent Bands, and the efforts of these proficient organizations formed one of the leading attractions of the festival." (Sept. 10, 1881)
1882

Each year the band usually is hired or asked to participate in annual affairs such as the firemen's parade (May 20th) and the political convention or rally:

"Convention - Republican 3rd congressional district - Senator Kellogg arrived at Donaldsonville Wednesday at train and escorted to the hotel, headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (August 16, 1882)

"Kellogg and party at Lee Hotel - They were serenaded by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (Sept. 23, 1882)

Both the St. Joseph and Crescent Brass Bands performed at social and community activities and always were available for benevolent societies:

"The collation given by the ladies of the St. Joseph Benevolent Society. Music was furnished by the St. Joseph and Crescent Brass Bands and the guests were all pleasantly entertained." (Sept. 23, 1882)

The band plays again for the firemen, this time a picnic that was preceded by a procession to the picnic grounds:

"Picnic - Perseverance Fire Co. #2 - The firemen will march to the grounds, accompanied by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (Sept. 23, 1882)

1883

The band frequently was called on to play for affairs outside of Donaldsonville, frequently playing in Baton Rouge. (Claiborne Williams' son eventually moved to the Capital city and continued his father's band under his father's name). One such occasion was noted in the March 24th paper:

"We have persistently omitted to mention the visit of the St. Joseph Brass Band to Baton Rouge on the 3 inst. where it furnished music for the annual parade and celebration of Mizpah Lodge #2045, GVO of Odd Fellows. The celebration was a gratifying success, and the Baton Rouge papers all mentioned Donaldsonville's excellent colored band in complimentary terms." (March 24, 1883)

We also read in the Baton Rouge paper of March 5 that "Mispah Lodge #2045, GVO of Odd Fellows celebrate 3rd anniversary. Headed by the excellent colored Band from Donaldsonville, the members paraded the main streets."
The band is mentioned as playing for: "The Republican meeting at Blue Bucket Hall. The St. Joseph Brass Band was in attendance and furnished an excellent substitute for chin music." (March 29)

Another funeral is mentioned in the June 5th paper:

"Henry Langues, a young colored man residing in Chetimaches Street died Thursday and was buried last evening in the Catholic Cemetery. The funeral concourse was quite a large one, including delegations from Perseverance and Blue Bucket Fire Co's headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band. Deceased was an efficient member of Perseverance." (June 9, 1883)

In the July 21st paper there is mention of a "Parade and fair for Odd Fellows Lodge - music furnished by the St. Joseph Brass Band."

Finally we find an entry about a picnic played for by the Band in the St. Charles Herald:

"The picnic of the Camelia Lodge No. 13, was a grand success. There was a large attendance of people, notwithstanding the bad weather. Among whom was the Donaldsonville St. Joseph Brass Band, who serenaded the Herald and also treated Hahnville and the vicinity to some good music." (Sept., 1, 1883)

**1884**

In the 1880's the traditional activities continued with the customary pomp and circumstance. One such occasion was the installation of the Odd Fellow Lodge officers:

"Odd fellows Festival

The public installation and incidental entertainment given at Blue Bucket Hall last Saturday and Sunday evenings, under the auspices of Alphonse Lodge No. 2444, GVO of Odd Fellows, attracted a usually large attendance and was one of the most agreeable and successful affairs ever conducted by a colored organization in our town. The members of the lodge, in full regalia, marched from their meeting place of Railroad Avenue to the Blue Bucket Hall at 7 o'clock Saturday evening, headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (Feb. 9, 1884)

The band plays for another "Republican meeting at Blue Bucket Hall, the St. Joseph Brass Band was in attendance and furnished an excellent substitute for chin music." (March 29) The band accompanies the firemen to New Orleans for the parade and frolic:

"Firemen's Frolic - Parade of four in New Orleans. They were accompanied by the St. Joseph Brass Band marched to the depot to the aspiring music of that organization." (March 8, 1884)
While the next article does not mention the band by name it does state that a colored band from Donaldsonville was in attendance at a festival, which means either the St. Joseph or the Crescent. The St. Joseph had played many times for the Smoke Bend Community so most likely it would have continued the relationship. The article states:

"The Pape Vert Brass Band of St. James, numbering 15 members passed upon the tug Nellie this afternoon on their way to take part in the Catholic Fair at the Smoke Bend Chapel. One of the Donaldsonville Colored Bands is also in Attendance at the festival." (June 14, 1884)

The Band plays for the Blue Bucket Fire Co. for an excursion on August 31st:

"The Blue Bucket Fire Co. leaves on the 30th, on its excursion for College Point, St. James, on the steamer Nellie, and will return the night of the 31st inst. The trip and entertainment is given in celebration of the anniversary of the organization. The St. Joseph Brass Band will accompany the excursionists to and from their destination, and the Dugas String Band will furnish music for balls to be given on both nights on the grounds at the Point." (August 23, 1884)

1885

The Band is contracted to play for the annual Firemen's Parade and it is interesting that in the article the band is compared with the New Orleans colored bands:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville has made a contract to furnish music for the Lafayette Hook and Ladder Co. of New Orleans on March 1, and the boys are practicing some new pieces in order to be in proper musical trim for the important occasion. The St. Joseph is probably the best colored band in the state, outside of New Orleans and we have no doubt their music will give entire satisfaction to the members of Lafayette." (Feb. 7, 1885)

The Band plays for the annual Firemen's Parade as witnessed by a mention in the paper and also plays for a funeral for John O'Malley:

"John O'Malley - Funeral was very largely attended. Phoenix Fire Co. of which the deceased was a member and secretary led the procession headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (July 11, 1885)

The band plays for a Fair at the Blue Bucket Hall:
"Fair - Blue Bucket Hall. The celebrated St. Joseph Brass Band will be in attendance and will enliven the proceedings with its fine music." (Dec. 19, 1885)

There is another mention of the Band's trip to New Orleans and it again lauds the ability of the band:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville, undoubtedly the best colored musical organization in the State, outside of New Orleans, advertises for an engagement to furnish music for some Fire Co. on the 4th of March." (Dec. 19, 1885)

1886

After inserting an advertisement in the chief for sponsorship in the upcoming Firemen's Parade, the band is hired by the Lafayette Firemen:

"Responsive to the adv. inserted in the Chief, the St. Joseph Brass Band of this town has received and accepted a satisfactory proposition from Lafayette Hook and Ladder Co. of New Orleans to furnish music for that well-known organization on the occasion of the firemen's annual parade, March 4th. The St. Joseph was employed by the same company last year and its music gave the firemen such perfect satisfaction that they have made haste to secure the services of Donaldsonville celebrated colored musicians for another parade - The members of the band are now handsomely uniformed and present a much improved appearance besides supplying its first class music." (Jan. 9, 1886)

Interestingly the Chief prints an item stating:

"The White Fire Co's and Napoleonville have invited the colored company to parade with them on the occasion of their annual celebration May 13th. The St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville will probably be engaged to furnish music for the colored Firemen." (April 24, 1886)

The brass band participated in most of the social activities of the era. Sporting events usually warranted the use of brass band music. During the baseball season most games included a band and usually were followed by a dance on the ever present wooden pavilion either underneath the grandstand or on the parks grounds:

"Baseball - Lee Baseball team of Donaldsonville go to Plaquemine on the steamer Letcher to play with Viguets of that place, and a highly enjoyable trip on Capt. Maurin's staunch and pretty little boat is anticipated. The St. Joseph Brass Band will go along also, and their fine music will add considerable interest to the excursion." (May 15, 1986)
After the excursion, the paper wrote of the trip:

"Baseball excursion.

The Lees down the Viguets again - The excursion of the Lee Baseball Club to Plaquemine last Sunday on the steamer Lutcher was a very agreeable affair. The boat got away at 9:30 A. M. with about 40 passengers, and arrived at Plaquemine at half past three, landing at several points en route and facing a heavy head wind nearly all the way. Marching to the South End Park, led by the St. Joseph Brass Band, the Lees played an exciting match with the Viguets, winning the bout by the close score of 11 to 1.

The players formed in line behind the band and marched to the courthouse exchange, kept by the popular Gary Brothers, where they were invited by the proprietors to partake of cooling liquid refreshments that proved very acceptable after the violent exercise of the game." (May 22, 1886)

The band again plays for the yearly Firemen's celebration in Donaldsonville:

"Firemen's celebration. 12th annual parade of Ascension Hook and Ladder. The St. Joseph Brass Band in parade. The fine appearance of the handsome marshals, the pleasing contrast produced by the bright uniforms of the band, all combined to produce a spirited and pleasing spectacle as the procession moved." (May 15, 1886)

In 1886 the brass band was the medium for rendering dance music dances still being the traditional ones of the 19th Century such as gavottes, minuets, polkas, waltzes and the march movements:

"Quite a successful and enjoyable ball was given at Mr. Solozano's new hall, on Railroad Avenue last Thursday evening, the first of a series which it is proposed to continue during the summer. Music was furnished by the St. Joseph Brass Band and dancing was kept up until 3:00. Mr. Solozano has christened his new building St. Patrick's Hall. The 2nd ball next Thursday." (June 5, 1886)

In the July 8th of the Chief comes the first mention of Claiborne Williams as the leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band. Williams was 18 years old on this date:

"Claiborne Williams, the well-known leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band and Williams' Orchestra, went down to St. James last Sunday to participate in the parade and celebration of the Bee Hive Benevolent Association No. 1, a worthy colored organization of our sister parish."
Music for the parade was furnished by the association's own band, which is being coached by Williams, and considering the short time the organization had been practicing its effort of last Sunday was extremely satisfactory and creditable." (July 8, 1886)

The copies of the Chief are lacking between 1887 and 1896. There is an item in the Napoleonville paper. We read: "Firemen's parade - Thursday, May 12, 1887 - procession, headed by the Pelican Brass Band and the St. Joseph Brass Band presenting a handsome spectacle in their blue uniforms." (May 14, 1887)

Again the St. Joseph Band plays for the annual Firemen's Parade as read in the May 19th, 1888 Napoleonville paper.

The same Napoleonville paper mentioned the band in the May 23rd, 1891 paper. We read:

"The Pioneer inadvertently omitted to mention that the St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville, under the leadership of the highly respected Joseph Thompson, gave it a very complimentary and highly appreciated serenade on the day of the parade." (May 23, 1891)

We find the band mentioned again on May 1, 1896. In this small quotation it sounds as if the band had discontinued for a while and is in the process of reorganizing and improving - this process is not unfamiliar to a number of brass bands during this period:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band has shown wonderful improvement in the playing of late. Its music at the convention last evening was excellent." (May 1, 1896)

Whatever the case may be, the band becomes active and in the proceeding years regains its popularity. The band, on June 6th and 7th play for the French Settlement Fair:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band - French Settlement will give a fair at that place on Saturday and Sunday, June 6 & 7." (May 20, 1986)

The band, again in need of financial help give a picnic:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band gave a successful picnic at Tropet Place last evening. The attendance was quite large." (July 27, 1896)

1887

In the latter decade of the 19th Century the need for brass bands in parades continued. The St. Joseph plays for two such parades in early March:
"True Friends Mutual Benevolent Association annual parade (colored). The St. Joseph Brass Band will furnish music." (March 8, 1887)

"The St. Joseph Brass Band will celebrate its patron Saint's Day with a parade this evening by the band and its honorary members, to be followed by a ball tonight at True Friends Hall." (March 19, 1887)

Along with the Pelican Band of Napoleonville the brass band plays for the annual Firemen's parade:

"Firemen's parade - Thursday, May 12th. procession, headed by the Pelican Brass Band, and the St. Joseph Brass Band presenting a handsome spectacle in their blue uniforms." (May 14, 1887) Nap. Pioneer

The Brass Band besides playing for numerous parades and dances, plays for another funeral. We read of the funeral of Judge Dupaty:

"JUDGE FRANCIS DUPATY FUNERAL. It was with surprise and regret that the many friends of Dupaty learn of his death, which sad event occurred on Thursday, the 20th inst., after a brief illness, only having been confined to the room two days. The deceased was only 32 years and 7 months of age and was a native of this town. Although so young he had held a number of public positions, among which were town marshall, mayor and at the time of his demise was one of the justices of peace of this (seventh) ward. The deceased was a true and warm friend, generous to a fault, and had surrounded himself with a number of friends by his many good qualities of mind and heart. The deceased was a brother of Hon. Max Dupaty, our present Mayor and of Mrs. John Gouaux, wife of our oldest and prominent druggist. To these and his many friends of the Pioneer extend its deepest sympathies.

The funeral took place yesterday at St. Napoleon Church, and was attended by a large concourse of friends and acquaintances. The funeral was conducted under the Auspices of the Napoleon Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 of which he was an honorary member. The funeral cortege was headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (Nov. 22, 1890) Pioneer

The Pioneer failed to mention that the band played a serenade the day of the parade and corrects this oversight in the next issue of the 'Pioneer.'

"The Pioneer inadvertently omitted to mention that the St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville, under the leadership of the highly respected Joseph Thompson, gave it a very complimentary and highly appreciated serenade on the day of the parade." (May 23, 1891) Pioneer
The band continues playing serenades for special people. We read:

"On Wednesday evening the Hook and Ladder Company accompanied by the St. Joseph Brass Band tendered a serenade to their Godmother, Mrs. W. L. Phelps." (May 28, 1887)

1896

In the Donaldsonville Daily Times we find a number of articles on the Band. The first mention is a parade:

"McKinley Club (Republican) parade through city - headed by St. Joseph Brass Band." (July 6)

"10th annual commencement of St. Augustine School - overture - St. Joseph Brass Band." (July 14)

"The St. Joseph Brass Band gave a successful picnic at Tropet Place last evening. The attendance was quite large." (July 27)

While outdoor activities such as parades and picnics still required a brass band, the string band is emerging as the preference for dances. It was a common practice among brass bands to have within their membership musicians who would play for dances with the instrumentation of a string band. For a number of dances the St. Joseph Brass Band presented its 'String Band':

"THE BAZAAR CLOSED. The Receipts Were Between Three and Four Hundred Dollars.

The bazaar for the benefit of the Episcopal Church closed last night in a blaze of glory. The attendance was very large and by 10 o'clock every thing on the tables, accepting a few cakes was sold and these will be deposed of today. During the early part of the evening the Independent Brass and Reed Band gave a fine concert and later on the St. Joseph String Band played for the dancing which was kept up until after 2 o'clock this morning." (April 10, 1896)

The String Band plays for a 'Leap Year' dance by the young ladies of the town:


The Leap Year ball given by the young ladies of this city at Hook & Ladder Hall last evening, was by all odds the social event of the season and its many respects the most novel and unique function ever given here."
The ladies from the inception of the affair reversed the unusual ethics and played the masculine role. They issued the tickets, invited their escorts and paid all of the expenses. The novelty was at first a little odd to our young men, but it soon wore off and they entered into the spirit of the affair with a zest and earnestness that made it extremely enjoyable and amusing.

Last evening upon arriving at the hall they poised as wall flowers and sat demure and modestly about walling for the young ladies to ask them to dance and to take them for refreshments. For once they were robbed of the privilege of leaving the hall room for a social glass or a whiff of a cigarette as had been their custom at other halls in which they regard as lord.

The ball opened shortly after nine o'clock with a grand march led by Miss Jeanne Landry, who escorted Mr. Henry Comstock. About forty couples were in the march and it presented with it handsome ladies richly attired, and the manly beaux, a very pretty picture. Following this came a long list of dances, with an intermission after the twelfth for the purpose was the dancing order declared, to give the young ladies an opportunity to make proposals of marriage. Whether this advantage was taken by any of the ladies must remain a secret with the ardent lassies and the blushing swains.

Dancing was resumed again about midnight and it was not until 2 o'clock this morning that the ball was over.

The music which was excellent, was given by the St. Joseph String Band." (April 20, 1896)

The St. Joseph continues to play dances using the Brass Band or String Band probably depending on the budget of the client, a brass band possessing more musicians than the smaller string band:

"Impromptu dance - Hook & Ladder - Music - which was most excellent was furnished by the crack St. Joseph Brass Band's String Band." (June 11, 1896)

The concept of a dance in our day is different from the old days. The olden dances were more structured and considered activities of the complete participation of those attending. A good description is given in an article of June 25, 1896:

'THE MASONIC BALL The Even Last Evening a Most Brilliant Affair. THE PRETTY DECORATIONS. Beautiful Belles and Manly Beaux Make a Handsome Scene.

The grand ball of the F. and A. m. lodges of this city, White Castle and Plaquemine, at Hook and Ladder Hall last evening, was the great social event of the season. The attendance was very large and embraced the beauty and chivalry of this, Assumption Iberville Parishes. The costumes of the ladies were particularly handsome, and elegant, and the scene
presented during the height of the ball was a kaleidoscope of handsome ladies and noble men, and one that will not soon be forgotten by those who were present.

The decorations of the hall were unusually handsome and artistic, and the effect created was exquisite. The music stand was hidden beneath a cloud of foliage and plants interspersed with palms and flowers. From each corner of the room rose garlands of ferns that met in the center from which was suspended the fraternity's mystic symbol "G" worked in bright, colored flowers. On the walls were decorations of plants and flowers and the initials of the order "F" and "A. M." in flowers that almost covered the wood work from view. The scene under the shadow of the mellowed light was one of fairyland or a glimpse of Arcadia, and elicited exclamations of surprise and pleasure upon all sides.

The ball was opened at 9 o'clock with the grand march, led by Mr. William A. Terrio and beautiful Miss Irene Landry of this city, who guided the thirty couples in the march through some very pretty figures. At the termination of the march dancing began and was kept up until an early hour this morning. Music was furnished by the St. Joseph String Band." (June 25, 1896)

We find other mentioning of the String Band playing for affairs:

"Open air dance on lawn of Mr. Albert Esneault. It was 10:00 when, the St. Joseph String Band struck up a spirited march." (July 1, 1896)

The String Band probably plays for many more private parties than we read about in the paper. We do read about three of these in the August 8, 12, & 29 issues of the Napoleonville Pioneer:

"Brilliant party - dance given by Miss Felicie Esneault. The dance music was furnished by the St. Joseph String Band." (August 8, 1896)

"Grand social affair - residence of Mr. & Mrs. M. Goldstein on B. Lemann & Co. Perseverance Plantation. Dancing began almost immediately upon the arrival of the guests and was kept up until near 3:00 o'clock this morning, the music, which was excellent being furnished by the St. Joseph String Band of this city." (August 12, 1896)

The St. Joseph Brass Band serenades some of Donaldsonville's citizens:

"Moonlight social (Bayou Goula) residence of Mrs. J. L. Viallon. The dance music was furnished by the St. Joseph String Band of Donaldsonville." (August 29, 1896)
"The St. Joseph Brass Band was out last evening serenading some of our prominent citizens. (August 19, D. T.)

The band next plays for a leap year dance and in the next few days, a dansante:

"Leap year dance given by young ladies of Donaldsonville Hook and Ladder Hall Friday evening. At 9:30 the grand march was begun, led by Mr. William Terrio and Miss Loulie Israel followed by about 25 couples through the novel intricacies of the march. The music being furnished by the St. Joseph String Band." (Dec. 6, D.T.)

"Last nights dance - The soiree dansante given at Hook & Ladder Hall last night, by several of our popular young gentlemen did not attract a very large attendance of our fair sex on account of the inclemency of the weather. There were only 5 or 6 young ladies present and they had a most enjoyable time. The affair broke up at a late hour. The St. Joseph String Band furnished excellent music for the occasion." (Dec. 9 1896)

Still popular were the old time minstrel shows. While most minstrel troupes usually had their own bands, at times they would seek help from the band of the town in which they were playing:

"Kier, Adams and Gueday's Clipper Minstrels will parade Sunday noon, headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band. The performance will take place at night at 8'00 sharp, admission 24 cents, special seats for white people." (Dec. 17, 1896)

This last quotation, while interesting in its contents about the St. Joseph, is interesting also for its last sentence. Most activities of a similar nature were open to both black and white people, as the French Opera in New Orleans. While they did sit in separate sections, both races did share these traveling shows.

1897

There is little in the 'Chief' in 1897 about bands but we do read of the band in the Napoleonville Pioneer and the Donaldsonville Daily Times (D. T.).

"Farewell to bachelor hood - complimentary ball given at Hook and Ladder Hall last evening (Friday Jan. 8). Dr. J. T. Bringier - Music was furnished by the St. Joseph String Band. (Jan. 9)

The band plays for Claiborne Williams' Benevolent Society:
"True Friends Mutual Benevolent Association, a colored organization - parade and ball Monday April 11. The St. Joseph Brass Band will furnish music." (March 9, 1897) D. T.

The Williams' band has close ties to the Catholic Church and the True Friends Association and play for many of their functions:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band will celebrate its patron saint's day with a parade this evening by the band and its honorary members to be followed by a ball tonight at True Friends Hall." (March 19, 1897) D. T.

In the paper the next issue there is an item that expressed the results of the above mentioned activity:

"The ball of the St. Joseph Brass Band at True Friends Hall last night was quite a success." (March 20, 1897) D. T.

The St. Joseph Brass Band was respected for its artistic ability and while it was hailed as one of the best in the South after its trip to Marshall, Texas, it becomes one of the best period:

"The tournament of colored bands that was held at Marshall, Texas, resulted in the St. Joseph Band of this city winning first prize. This is quite a feather in the cap of this excellent band." (June 22, 1897) D. T.

"Open Air Dance, lawn of Mr. Albert Esneault, at Foubourg, La., Pipe by Jolly Crowd. It was 10 o'clock when, the St. Joseph String Band struck up with a spirited march. 50 couples." (July 1) D. T.

The band plays for the St. Augustine commencement and the paper states that the:
"St. Joseph Brass Band plays a well-executed overture." (July 6)

Again there is a call for the smaller musical group of the band, the string band to play for a small private get-together:

"A pleasant surprise was given Miss Alvine Von Lotten last night when about 30 of her friends took possession of her home and proceeded at once to have a most merry time. The surprises were accompanied by the Claiborne Williams String Band and dancing was indulged in until an early hour this morning." (Sept. 2, 1897)

The string band using Claiborne's name instead of the St. Joseph String Band plays again for a private party for Miss Poche:

"A pretty dance - In honor of Miss Maria Poche at Hook and Ladder Hall. The music was furnished by the Claiborne Williams String Band and
D. T.

"Last night’s dance - The soiree dansante given at Hook and Ladder Hall last night, but several of our popular young gentlemen, did not attract a very large attendance of our fair sex on account of the inclemency of the weather. There were only 5 or 6 ladies present, and they had a most enjoyable time. The affair broke up at a late hour. The St. Joseph String Band furnished excellent music for the occasion." (Dec. 11, 1897)

The band plays a serenade and gets a nice write-up in the newspaper about the band and its progress:

"Serenaded the Daily Times;

The St. Joseph Band, the best brass band that we have in this city today, during its parade in honor of its patron saint's day, last evening serenaded our office, its excellent music attracting a large crowd about the vicinity. This band shows constant improvement and its music last evening could hardly be improved on in either execution or time. The band during its parade serenaded Major Leche and other prominent citizens. In the lead of the band were its honorary members, composed of some of Donaldsonville's most highly respected colored men." (March 20, 1897)

One of the most popular card games was called 'progressive euchre' and parties were given on a much larger scale than a bridge game party as there was a dance following the Euchre party. While the complete brass band did not play (the situation did not call for a large musical group) a smaller group, the St. Joseph String Band, furnished the music:

"Progressive Euchre - during the same music was furnished by Claiborne Williams String Band that also played for the dancing at the conclusion of the games." (August 6, 1897) D. T.

The string band continues to play for smaller dances - next for a soiree dansante:

"Last night’s dance - The soiree dansante given at Hook and Ladder Hall last night, by several of our popular young gentlemen, did not attract a very large attendance of our fair sex on account of the inclemency of the weather. There were only 5 or 6 ladies present, and they had a most enjoyable time. The affair broke up at a late hour. The St. Joseph String Band furnished excellent music for the occasion." (Dec. 11, 1897) D. T.

Finally the Dec. 15th paper has an announcement of the traveling minstrel show using the Brass Band:
"Kier, Adams and Guedry's Clipper Minstrels will parade Sunday noon, headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band and the performance will take place at night at 8 o'clock sharp in True Friends Hall. Admission is 25 cents. Special seats for white people." (Dec. 15, 1897) D. T.

**1898**

The band was not mentioned in the 'Chief' during 1898 except for three items, both in April:

"The famous St. Joseph will furnish music at tonight's meeting. Mass meeting of qualified voters of Donaldsonville nominating candidates for municipal officers." (April 5, 1898)

"Mass meeting - Mr. Kline nominated, the committee headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band, preceded to the depot where they met and advised him." (Sic: He refused the nomination.) (April 6, 1898)

"The Brass Band plays for the annual Firemen's Parade with the Quezere's Field Band." (May 9, 1898)

We find no mentioning of the band from 1899 to 1905. I believe that some of this time Claiborne Williams was with the Billy Kersand Minstrel show and was traveling the country as musical director.

**1905**

The String Band plays for a dance at the Mohawk Club:

"Enjoyable impromptu dance at Mohawk Club Monday night. Sweet music was furnished by a portion of the Claiborne Williams String Band." (March 11, 1905)

The May 13 paper states that an "enjoyable subscription dance at Ascension Hall. Music was furnished by Williams Orchestra." (May 13) and "Fireman's parade - 2 brass bands the crack St. Joseph Brass Band furnished music for marching." (May 13)

We next read in the May 6, 1905, paper that the band plays for a political meeting at the Phoenix Opera House - its presence assuring a big turnout:

"Meeting - About bond issue at Phoenix Opera House. After music by the St. Joseph Brass Band the Chairman introduced the next speaker. The band was heard from again." (May 6 1905)

The band next plays for the unveiling of a public monument:
"Monument unveiled by Woodmen of the World; meeting at Masonic Temple and preceded by the St. Joseph Brass Band, marched to the cemetery." (May 13, 1905)

"Firemen's parade - 4 bands, 2 white, 2 colored. The St. Joseph Brass Band. (Sic: the St. Joseph Brass Band is the only one that is mentioned by name.)" (May 13, 1905)

The band performs for the "Smoke Bend Fair, benefit St. Francis of Ascension Catholic Church. Music will be furnished by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (June 17, 1905) The band plays for a dance of Terpsichorean Club that is mentioned in the same issue of the paper.

The final mention in 1905 is in the July 8th paper when the band plays in a parade on what was called "Flower Party - St. Joseph Brass Band - decorated vehicle." (July 8, 1905)

There is no mention of the band in the year 1906 but in 1907 they are mentioned quite a few times.

1907

The colored community in Donaldsonville was a socially active one and it was the colored citizens who instigated a Mardi Gras celebration. In the forefront of this activity were the St. Joseph Brass Band and its leader, Claiborne Williams:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band has asked permission from Mayor Chas. Martin to hold a Mardi Gras celebration in Donaldsonville and members are busy making arrangements for the affair which will be in the form of a parade of floats depicting different themes. The local businessmen are invited to enter in the procession any advertising device they may desire, and contributions to defray the expenses of the celebration will be greatly received by those having it in charge." (Jan. 12, 1907)

This first attempt at having a Mardi Gras is not successful (it will be in later years) and two articles appear in the next few issues of the 'Chief:'

"The committee of the St. Joseph Brass Band having in charge of arrangements for a Mardi Gras celebration in Donaldsonville has abandoned the idea and request the Chief to announce for the benefit of subscribers to the fund that they will not be called upon for the amounts of their subscriptions. While there will be no organized attempt at a parade on Mardi Gras, the committee states that the band would assemble and traverse the principle streets, and anyone wishing to join in the procession may do so." (Jan. 19, 1907)
Not having any kind of Mardi Gras celebration disappointed many of the townspeople and this is mentioned in the paper:

"Dull Mardi Gras - Not even a parade by the St. Joseph Brass Band which had been expected." (Feb. 16, 1907)

There were certain activities that the band always took part in such as the Firemen's Parade and traditional town functions. One such annual performance was their parading on their Patron Saints Day, St. Joseph's Day:

"Tuesday being St. Joseph Day, the St. Joseph Brass Band, fittingly celebrated the occasion with a parade through the principal streets of the town and a banquet at the True Friends Hall at night. During the course of the parade the band serenaded the newspaper office and a number of well-known citizens and businessmen." (March 23, 1907)

The band again plays for a town function was the dedication of the new high school that was sponsored "jointly by the parish of Ascension and the Town of Donaldsonville. At the appointed hour the procession formed in order. The St. Joseph Brass Band proceeded to school and for the program." (May 18, 1907)

The stature of the leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band, Claiborne Williams, often overshadowed the band. He not only led the band, but also smaller groups made up of personnel from the band; in addition he was the number one person in town when music was needed for any occasion. In a few years, the band would appear in print as the Claiborne Williams Band, as foreseen in the following item:

"Afros Bazaar at Ascension Hall. Claiborne Williams inimitable Band has been engaged for the occasion and will discourse sweet music throughout the evening." (April 17, 1907)

His career is intertwined with the St. Joseph Brass Band and whether it is a smaller group or the entire Brass Band is sometimes difficult to ascertain by the description in the paper.

On May 18 there are two items about the band in the chief - they play for the above mentioned school dedication and for the annual Firemen's Parade:

"Firemen's Parade - Bands - The Eureka Brass Band supplying martial music and the crack St. Joseph Brass Band furnished fine marching music." (May 18, 1907)

Being connected to the Catholic Church they are asked to play for the visiting hierarchy of the church:

"Visit of Archbishop J. H. Blenk. The St. Joseph Brass Band in procession." (June 1, 1907)
Finally the band plays for another political rally:

"Lambremont rally (Sic: State Senator) An enjoyable feature of the occasion was the stirring music rendered before, during and after the rally by the well-known St. Joseph Brass Band." (Oct. 5, 1907)

1908

The band continues to perform in parades and fairs during the ensuing year. When a man by the name of Hanson was a victor in his election, there was a celebration and parade in which the band participated:

"Victory celebration of Hanson ticket - The St. Joseph Brass Band furnished music at the meeting and for the parade with which the celebration was terminated." (Feb. 1, 1908)

The various social associations were an important part of the social scene - i.e., Woodmen of the World, Masons, etc. Thus an election of officers for the WOW was an important occasion and warranted celebration:

"WOW initiation - Formed a parade and marched through the principle streets of the town, with the crack St. Joseph Brass Band in the lead." (Feb. 22, 1908)

The band also plays for the annual Firemen's Parade in 1908 and is still referred to as the 'crack St. Joseph Brass Band.'

"Firemen's Parade - White Castle Boys Band, the St. Joseph Brass Band, the People's Brass Band of Napoleonville, the Eureka Brass Band and the Napoleonville Brass Band." (May 16, 1908)

The next entry of August 22nd is an important one. This is one of the last entries listing the St. Joseph Brass Band. The entry:

"Fair - benefit of the Societa Italiana di N. B. Conte de Toreno - leading Italian citizens of Donaldsonville entertainment, preceded by parades as mounted marshals and the crack St. Joseph Brass Band furnished music." (August 22, 1908)

1909

The band continues to play for functions of the Catholic Church and meets the train and Archbishop Blenk:
"When the noon train came in with his Grace Archbishop J. H. Blenk, the very Rev. Canon Cannon B. Branch met him at the station with all pomp and circumstances of his church. The banner with the St. Joseph Brass Band, following his grace carriage." (March 20, 1909) D. T.

1910

There is no mention in the paper about the St. Joseph Brass Band during the year 1909, and in the August 13th issue we read that Claiborne Williams and the Peerless Brass Band play for the Elks Fair and Parade. This is the first mention of this band and of the fact that Williams is the leader. The band continues to be active for many years. Many times the band is simply called the Claiborne Williams Brass Band as most people knew of Williams, the most famous musician in the town and in other areas of Southern Louisiana.

More and more the brass band is used only for parades and outdoor activities, seldom for dancing for which the string band and smaller groups, now called orchestras, are hired. The Elks Fair and Parade's first 1910 entry is the Claiborne Williams Brass Band. (August 13, 1910)

While Williams and other bands are mentioned, in 1911, there are no items about the Peerless or Williams Brass Band, but in 1910, there are more items about the Peerless Band then any other year and the articles, are longer and have more substance. The first mention in the paper is an important one as it is the first to tell about a series of concerts by the Peerless Brass Band that are to be given in the park, Louisiana Square:

"Band Stand for Louisiana Square - The Woman's Civic League is having a band stand constructed in the southeast corner of Louisiana Square at East Houma and Opelousas Streets. The structure is being erected by contractor Joseph Oubre of this city, who drew the plans, and will be octagonal in shape, with a seating capacity of 50 persons. It will have a corrugated iron roof and a brick enclosed basement 6 feet in height. Musical concerts will be given in the Square once a week throughout the summer by the Claiborne Williams Brass Band, under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League." (April 6, 1910)

Peerless Brass Band
(Cl.Wms Brass Band)

On August 13, 1910, appears the first reference to Claiborne Williams' Peerless Band. In an article dated February 10, 1911, there is mention of a new band, the Homer Brass Band, made up of members of the Peerless Band, but following that article, little is heard of them. Finally, the Peerless Band becomes the Claiborne Williams Brass Band.

"New Brass Band Organized
A new brass band has been organized by a number of well-known colored musicians of this city, many of who have previously been included
in the personnel of the locally famous Claiborne Williams Peerless Band. The new organization, which begins its career with a membership of 16, has been named the Homer Brass Band, after Harrison Homer, formerly the expert slide trombone player in the Williams Band, its leader is Morris Victor. The first public appearance of the band will be on Sunday Feb. 18, when a grand fair and masquerade ball will be given under its auspices at the hall of the Protective Brothers Benevolent Association. The entertainment will open at 12:30 o'clock p.m., and will be preceded by a street parade. Music for the ball will be furnished by the Bolo Orchestra, under the Leadership of Ray Percy Gibson." (Feb. 10, 1911)

Prior to a series of concerts that are given beginning in April of 1912, Claiborne Williams sends to the chief's editor a copy of the "Logical Point Waltz" that was published out of New Orleans:

"With the compliments of Claiborne Williams, a well-known colored musician of this city, and leader of the crack St. Joseph Brass Band and Peerless Orchestra, the Chief has received a copy of 'Logical Point Waltz' a tuneful melody composed by Claiborne's brother, George Williams. The latter is himself a musician of much ability and promise. For the past several months he has resided in Denver, Colorado, where he is meeting with success as a music teacher. The 'Logical Point Waltz' is dedicated to the city of New Orleans, and is published by a music house of that place." (March 16, 1912)

The bandstand is indeed built and is used for the first time at a Sunday afternoon concert. The paper mentions the dedication:

"New bandstand dedicated - The artistic bandstand erected in Louisiana Square by the Woman's Civic League was used for the first time last Sunday afternoon, when a concert was given by the crack Williams Brass Band of this city under the leadership of Claiborne Williams. A large crowd was present, and the program was greatly enjoyed. Concerts will be given by the Williams Band one evening each week throughout the summer, and the entertainments promise to prove very popular. Louisiana Square with its closely trimmed lawns, paved walks, comfortable iron benches and flowing fountain, is a pleasant spot in the afternoons and is frequented by many ladies and children, the latter especially finding the big playground an ideal resort after school hours." (May 11, 1912)

Each week there is an article in the paper announcing the concerts in the park:
"Band concert tomorrow (Sunday). The Peerless Brass Band, under the leadership of Claiborne Williams will give a concert from the bandstand in Louisiana Square at 5:00 tomorrow afternoon." (May 18, 1912)

"Weather permitting, Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band will give a concert in Louisiana Square at 5:00 tomorrow afternoon." (June 23, 1912)

These concerts at the park by the Peerless Brass Band were gratis but it was thought that the band should get some numeration and a benefit was arranged for this purpose:

"Band benefit - Arrangements are being made for an entertainment to be given at the Gondran Theatre Friday evening of next week, July 5, under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League, the proceeds of which will be turned over to Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Bands, in partial payment to the delightful music rendered by the well-known organization at the several band concerts given in Louisiana Square during the past 2 weeks, and which are to be continued throughout the summer. So far the band has furnished its services free of charge, and no demand has been made for any monetary recompense by the musicians or their leader, but it is not right nor reasonable to expect the band to continue to give concerts for the entire summer without remuneration, and in order to raise an amount that will in some measure recompense the members for their services, the Woman's Civic League, who have been instrumental in presenting the concerts, have hit upon the idea of giving an entertainment at the Opera House, which will afford everybody an opportunity to contribute to the worthy fund at small cost. The program will comprise moving pictures, songs by Mesdames Ferinard and Walter Lemann and G. P. Putman and Vaudeville specialties by little misses Anna & Clara Cobb, Agnes Landry and other talented amateurs. The performance will begin at 8:00 and the price of admission will be only 5 cents for children, and 10 cents for adults." (June 29, 1912)

As was custom, the next week's paper ran an account of the benefit:

"The entertainment given at the Gondran Theatre Friday night of last night of last week under the auspices of the Women's Civic League, for the purpose of raising funds to be presented to Claiborne Williams Brass Band in recognition of its gratuitous services in giving concerts in Louisiana Square throughout the summer months, was attended by a large audience, despite the inclement weather and proved a gratifying social and financial success. The receipts would no doubt have been considerably larger had the weather been more favorable, but under the circumstances the result achieved may be considered altogether satisfactory, and the ladies of the
Civic League and all who assisted them in staging the entertainment have every reason to feel satisfied with the degree of success that crowned their efforts. The League's share of the net receipts totaled $428.73 and this was supplemented by contributions aggregating $6,27 from members of the League, making a total of #35 that was turned over to Claiborne Williams, leader of the band, for distribution among the members of the organization. It is desired to further recompense the band for their services, and in order to raise a fund for this purpose the ladies of the Civic League will sell refreshments tomorrow at Elmer's Sanitary Pharmacy, serving all the beverages and confections ordinarily obtainable at that establishment. The usual schedule of prices will prevail." (July 13, 1912)

Five bands, including the Claiborne Williams Brass Band provide the music for the annual Fireman's Parade:

"Firemen's Parade - Napoleonville Brass Band, Homer Brass Band of this city (Donaldsonville), furnished music, with the St. James Brass Band and the crack Claiborne Williams Brass Band and the Smoke Bend Brass Band." (July 13, 1912)

The write-up in the August 10th paper again tells of the park concert and it is at this week's concert that the famous 'Logical Point Waltz' is premiered:

"Band concert Wednesday evening - weather permitting, Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band will give a concert in Louisiana Square at 7:00 Wednesday evening. enjoyable band concert.

The crack Peerless Brass Band under the leadership of Claiborne Williams, gave one of its delightful concerts in Louisiana Square last Monday night in the presence of a large and appreciative audience. A program of rag-time selections, was rendered in the faultless manner for which this excellent organization is noted, but by far the most enjoyable feature of the entertainment was the playing of the 'Logical Point Waltz,' composed by George Williams, a brother of Claiborne Williams in which a trombone solo by the former was introduced. This exquisite selection was rendered no less than three times, and so beautiful was the melody and so skillful its interpretation by the band, that each rendition was enthusiastically encored, the composer responding by playing 'Annie Laurie' and 'Swanne River,' both without accompaniment. He is a musician of exceptional ability and a composer of much promise, and the haunting strains of his beautiful 'Logical Point Waltz' are already being whistled and hummed all over the city. Williams has been living in Memphias and Colorado for the past several years, but expects to reside in Donaldsonville permanently hereafter, and will prove a notable acquisition to his brother's well-trained organization of colored musicians." (August 10, 1912)
As usual, the above concert was featured in the paper the next week:

"The band concert in Louisiana Square Wednesday night attracted the usual large audience and was greatly enjoyed. As on the occasion of last week's entertainment, the 'Logical Point Waltz' composed by George Williams made a hit with the big crowd and was enthusiastically encored. These weekly concerts are a source of much pleasure to our music-loving people, and constitutes a summertime attraction which few cities the size of Donaldsonville can boast." (August 17, 1912)

The Peerless Band next plays for two political meetings:

"Jones meeting a rousing success - The meeting was enlivened with music by Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band." (August 24, 1912)

"Morgan rally next Tuesday night - The meeting will be preceded by a concert by Claiborne Williams Brass Band and the speech making will be interspersed with musical selections by this crack organization." (August 24, 1912)

The concerts in the park proved to be very successful and they continued during the winter:

"During the winter, concerts will be given in City Park every Sunday afternoon by Claiborne Williams Brass Band. Of course, when the weather conditions are not propitious for each outdoor entertainment the concerts will be permitted." (Nov. 2, 1912

1913

The park concerts continue in 1913 having been a success the previous year and continue under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League:

"Band Concert Tomorrow - The weekly concerts given in City Park (sic: La. Square) last summer by Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band, under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League of Donaldsonville will be repeated this year, arrangements to this end having just been completed by the League. The first musicale of the season will take place tomorrow evening, from 5:30 to 7:30, and there will be a concert in the park one evening each week thereafter.

In order to raise funds to recompense the band for its services, the Civic League will give a subscription dance at Ascension Hall on May 22, and preparations for this function are under way. The amount to be subscribed by the gentlemen has been fixed at $2.00, which will entitle the subscriber to be accompanied by a female companion. Only gentlemen who have
been invited by the league to attend, and who have remitted the subscription fee, will be admitted to the hall, and the attendance of girls is limited to those who may have been invited by some eligible gentlemen or by the league." (May 17, 1913)

The next issue of the paper contains an article on selling refreshments at the concerts by the Woman's Civic League for the benefit of the concert fund and on August 9th we read about a 'Tom Thumb wedding for benefit of the Woman's Civic League band fund a success.' (August 9, 1913)

In the next weekly concert there was an: "extra large crowd. The Thursday night concert netted $25.00 for the Woman's Civic League." (August 16, 1913)

The weekly concert causes a controversy as to whether dancing would be allowed during the concerts. The paper prints the answer:

"Dancing in the park not prohibited - It having been currently reported that the children and young folk will not hereafter be permitted to dance in City Park on the occasion of the band concerts. The Chief is authorized by the Woman's Civic League to state that this report is erroneous. No edict has been issued against the terpsichorean pastime and the young people will not be interfered with as long as their frolics are conducted in an orderly manner. They are welcome to avail themselves of the facilities of the park at all times for innocent pleasure and amusement, says the league." (August 23, 1913)

1914

The band is very active in 1914 and one performance is for the benefit of the Lock Association. As the item in the paper says: "music will be rendered throughout the entertainment by the famous Peerless Orchestra under the leadership of Claiborne Williams." (Jan. 31, 1914)

The summer concerts continue and begin on Easter Sunday:

"The summer series of open-air band concerts in City Park, under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League, will be inaugurated Easter Sunday afternoon, when Claiborne Williams crack Peerless Brass Band will render a program of popular selections. Ice cream, cake, lemonade and other refreshments will be sold throughout the afternoon by the ladies of the league, for the benefit of the concert fund." (April 4, 1914)

The paper announces the "first band concert in City Park - Easter Sunday afternoon with Claiborne Williams Band" (March 21) and continues in each issue to publicize these concerts:
"Band concert May 17, first band concert of season. When a program of popular selections will be rendered by the crack Peerless Brass Band under the leadership of Claiborne Williams." (May 2, 1914)

"Band concert tomorrow - Everybody in Donaldsonville and all visitors to the city, are cordially invited to assemble in City Park at 5:00 tomorrow afternoon and enjoy the concert to be given by the crack Peerless Brass Band under the leadership of Claiborne Williams. The program will include many new and popular selections, and a pleasant afternoon can be spent listening to the music and strolling about the pretty park." (May 9, 1914)

The Peerless Brass Band must have been a very versatile band and their leader, Claiborne Williams, an open-minded musician willing to program the newest of popular music. In the next issue of the paper we read where his band will be playing "ragtime" music:

"Band concert in City Park. The summer series of open-air band concerts in City Park under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League was inaugurated with a delightful musicale last Sunday afternoon, when the Peerless Brass Band rendered a program of rag-time selections in the presence of a large gathering." (May 23, 1914)

The paper continues to publicize the band concerts in very positive fashion, encouraging participation:

"Band concert next Wednesday. A musical treat is in store for the public next Wednesday evening, when the crack Peerless Brass Band will give a concert in City Park between the hours of 6 and 8 o'clock. The program will include the newest popular selections." (August 1, 1914)

The band also plays for a number of fairs:

"Catholic Fair, May 30-31. Each evening a concert will be given outside the building by the Peerless Brass Band while the crack St. Joseph Commercial Institute Orchestra will discourse music inside the structure as the big Vega building at the head of Railroad Avenue." (May 23, 1914)

"South Louisiana Fair - Grand Parade - 9:30 a.m., Oct. 9th to Oct. 12th with the Peerless Brass Band of Donaldsonville and the Gonzales Silver Cornet Band." (Oct. 3, 1914)

The following week's paper announces the opening of the fair - "South Louisiana Fair opening, Gonzales Silver Cornet Band and the Peerless Brass Band." (Oct. 10, 1914)
In the next few years there is a lack of mention about brass bands. In 1915 the band concerts continue but it does not mention that they are scheduled on a regular basis and only one mention is in the July 24th issue stating "Weather permitting, there will be a concert in City Park by the Peerless Brass Band from 5 to 7:30 tomorrow evening, Sunday." (July 24, 1915)

In 1916 there are only a few mentioning of the band in the local papers. One is on June 24th - "Vigilant Fair program - Hose Co. big four day fair - music will be furnished by the Silver Bell Orchestra and Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band."
The band plays for two other engagements, one in Feb. and one in July:

"There will be a grand ball at Klotzville tomorrow, in celebration of the opening of the new hall. Claiborne's Band will furnish the music." (Feb. 26, 1916)

"A grand fair will be held at the Tip Top Hall, Saturday and Sunday, July 15, & 15 for the benefit of a Catholic Church. Everything usually found at first-class fairs will be in evidence; and everybody is promised a good time. Music by Claiborne Williams Band." (July 8th, 1916) Nap. Pioneer

We do find an item in the Thibodaux Comet of May 25th:

"Clicquot Club grand dance - Woodmen Hall. The Claiborne Band of Donaldsonville has been engaged to furnish music." (May 25, 1916) Comet
The 'Comet' on Sept. 14 writes" Third dance given by Clicquot Club. Claiborne's Band furnished exceptionally sweet music and entranced the participants." (Sept. 14, 1916)

In 1917 there are two items in the local paper:

"Grand fair benefit of Catholic Church in Tip-Top Hall June 23 and 24. The crack Claiborne Williams Band of Donaldsonville will furnish music for the occasion." (June 16, 1917)

"Italian Society celebration - benefit of Red Cross. A grand parade started at the hall at 3 p.m., led by Claiborne's Band." (July 21, 1917)

The Thibodaux Comet again mentioned the Claiborne Band in two items:

"Dance at Hall of Doilien Guillot, three miles above Thibodaux. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of Donaldsonville." (May 17, 1917)
"Dance, old Woodmen Hall. Music furnished by Claiborne's Orchestra after show at Grand Theater." (Dec. 13, 1917)

The lack of activity is most probably due to the First World War. During the war the bands in many Louisiana towns became inactive. In 1918 there is but two items in the paper:

"Colored citizens patriotic meeting. Stirring music was furnished by Claiborne Williams Band." (Feb. 2, 1918)

"Liberty Loan relic exhibition train - Promptly at 1:00 the Liberty Special left for Plaquemine. The Claiborne Williams Brass Band, which had furnished music during the stay of the train here, went along to enliven the trip to the next stopping place." (April 27, 1918)

1919

In 1919, once the war is over, the band is seen playing for dances and parades and the traditional affairs. We read the band plays for a "dance given last evening by the young folks of our town (Nap.) was a most successful affair. Claiborne's popular orchestra furnished the music," (April 26) and, the initiation for the Knights of Columbus Parade:

"K of C parade - Claiborne Williams Brass Band. To the tune of patriotic music the Knights and candidates marched down to the Catholic Church. After leaving church to the strains of music furnished by the Claiborne Williams Brass Band, marched to Ascension Hall." (June 21, 1919)

The colored citizens of Donaldsonville were very active in celebrating Mardi Gras and National holidays. Thus the 4th of July was observed with a parade:

"Fourth of July celebrated by colored people of Donaldsonville. A parade, headed by Claiborne Williams Brass Band marched up Railroad Avenue to Mississippi Street." (July 5, 1919)

The local papers do not have any mention of Williams' Band but we do read of his orchestra in the Thibodaux 'Comet':

"There'll be a dance tomorrow night in the Woodmen Hall under the auspices of the Midnight Club. Claiborne's Orchestra will furnish the music." (April 29, 1920)

"The Midnight Club of Thibodaux will have a dance tonight in the Woodmen Hall in Thibodaux when an enjoyable time is expected by the
young people. Claiborne Williams Orchestra will furnish the music which means something up to date." (July 14, 1920)

"The next dance of the Midnight Club will take place Thursday, July 29. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." July 22, 1920)

"The Midnight Club will give its next dance tonight even if the weather man is not giving what we consider a 'square' deal. Claiborne's Jazz Band will 'drive' dull cares away." (August 12, 1920)

The band travels to St. Tammany Parish and play for their fair and a number of items mention this in the local paper, the 'St. Tammany Farmer:

"Parish Fair - Professor Claiborne Williams and his 10 real musicians will be at the fair. This colored band is said to be with out an equal." (Sept 10, 1921) St. Tammany Farmer

"Fair, St. Tammany - you will hear all the time the harmony of the Claiborne Williams Band." (Oct. 1, 1921)

There is only one mentioning of the brass band in 1921

"Elks have a big day - parade - procession headed by Claiborne Williams Brass Band." (Feb. 12, 1921)

1922

The Peerless Brass Band again plays for the initiation of officers of the Knights of Columbus (April 29) and the Catholic Fair on Sept. 9-10 with music by "the Claiborne Williams Brass Band and orchestra." (August 26). More and more the Williams Orchestra is quoted in the paper as it plays for numerous music activities, and the brass band plays for parades and fairs:

"Big South Louisiana Fair opens Oct. 8th. Concerts by the Claiborne Williams Brass Band and Orchestra." (Oct. 7, 1922

1923

In 1923 the Williams Brass Band is mentioned frequently playing for a number of parades:

"Carnival Events - parade of King Progios - Two famous bands will be in the parade - the Jefferson College Band and the Claiborne Williams Band." (Jan. 6,1923)
"Carnival parade includes LSU Band as well as Jefferson and Claiborne Williams Band." (Feb. 3, 1923)

The following week, another item appears about the carnival parade and, having completed the program for a 'great Mardi Gras celebration' planned for next Tuesday,' the order and names of the bands are given:

"Three splendid bands, the LSU, Jefferson College and Claiborne Williams, will dispense music all along the line of March." (Feb. 10, 1923)

In the Feb. 17th, issue there is a review of the activities of Mardi Gras:

"25,000 people crowd city to see big Mardi Gras Parade - Chief of Police Dill and Officer E. A. Lawless on horseback leading to clear the streets, the mounted marshals following. Then came the LSU Band, cars carrying the carnival committee, the Jefferson College Band, the king in his car followed by his dukes on horseback, who were followed by Claiborne Williams Band.

The outstanding feature of the grand event was staged at the opening of the festivities, the coronation of the queen. At 8 o'clock Claiborne Williams' melodious orchestra struck up the melody, 'In the Springtime' to the sweet strains of which the king and his court entered the beautiful court room which was brilliant with hundreds of electric lights." (Feb. 17, 1923)

"Grand parade for Red Men Fair - One of the striking features of the parade will be a jazz band and a concourse of clowns. At the head of the parade will be Claiborne Williams Band." (April 14, 1923)

"Firemen's Parade in Donaldsonville. The parade will be headed by the Peerless Brass Band that will distill music along the entire way. At night there will be dancing at the pavilion and Claiborne Williams Orchestra will furnish the music." (May 12, 1923)

The band continues to play for parades and fairs:

"Big celebration in planned for 4th of July. Claiborne Williams celebrated band and orchestra will furnish music for the occasion and it is planned to have dancing at night." (May 19, 1923)

"Italian Society Fair - at Fair Grounds - parade headed by Claiborne Williams Band." (August 11, 1923)
"Italian Fair and parade - Headed by Claiborne Williams Peerless Band." (August 18, 1923)

"South Louisiana Fair - During the week there will be dancing. Claiborne William will furnish the music." (Oct. 6, 1923)

While the above item doesn't mention the brass band, in previous years Williams' Brass Band and Orchestra played for the parade, concerts and for dancing at the fair.

1924

In the Feb. 2nd issue they mention a colored band from Donaldsonville that plays for St. Joseph's Church. This is probably the Peerless Brass Band:

"St. Joseph's Choir, led by Miss Clothilde Chol, provided music for the mass and a colored brass band from Donaldsonville, the Corpus Christi uniformed rank of K of C Claver, escorted the archbishop and also provided music during the fair held in the afternoon. Blessing of new edifice." (Feb. 2 1923)

Politics and politicians are ever present - the band plays for a candidate for Governor:

"H. Bouananchand, candidate for Governor speaks at the courthouse. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band." (Feb. 9, 1923)

Yearly the band has played for the town Mardi Gras celebration:

"King arrives - Mardi Gras - LSU Band, next came Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band, followed immediately in the rear of the last float then came business floats, etc." (March 8, 1923)

Again this year the band plays for the Firemen's Parade:

"Firemen's Parade May 11 - Engaged the Claiborne Williams Brass Band for the parade and his orchestra for the dance." (May 3, 1923)

This parade is mentioned in the May 10th issue that states that the "Claiborne Williams Brass Band and the Italian Brass Band from Baton Rouge will be playing." (May 10, 1923)

In the follow-up issue of the paper they list the names of the bands that marched in the parade:

"Firemen's Parade: Three band furnished music for the parade: A band composed of white musicians from Baton Rouge, Germania of upper
Ascension and Claiborne Williams' Brass Band of this City." (May 24, 1923)

1925

The paper lists the bands that will participate in the annual Firemen's Parade:

"Among the bands engaged for the big Firemen's Parade on May 10 are the LSU Brass Band of Baton Rouge, under the leadership of Professor Guilbeau, and Prof. Perrino's Italian Band, also of the Capital City, Ferra's Band of New Orleans, and Claiborne Williams Band of this place. Negotiations are pending for the engagement of another band." (May 2, 1925)

The Italian Political Association sponsors a fair and dance and hires the band:

"Big Fair and dance at Fair Grounds. The procession was headed by the Peerless Brass Band. Music for the parade and festival on both days will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Band and Orchestra." (July 4, 1925)

1926

The band plays for the dedication of St. Catherine's Church, a new Catholic Church for the colored citizens of Donaldsonville.

"St. Catherine dedication - Solemn procession from Ascension Catholic Church to St. Catherine. The cross and the American flag, borne aloft, will lead the procession followed by Claiborne Williams Band at St. Patrick and Claiborne Streets." (Jan. 23, 1926)

"St. Catherine of Sienna Church - Initiation and parade...next in line came Claiborne's Band." (May 1, 1926)

One of the big occasions, especially for the young in Donaldsonville was the opening of a swimming pool. The band plays in the parade, from a local hotel, to the pool:

"Redmen open swimming pool with bathing revue; after lunch, will form in front of hotel and proceeded by Claiborne Williams' Band marched to pool." (June 5, 1926)

The band again plays for the annual Firemen's Parade:

As usual the band again plays for the South Louisiana Fair:

"14th annual South Louisiana Fair - Band concerts by Merle's famous concert band and Claiborne Williams famous Band and cornet solo by Prof. Michael Cupero." (Oct. 2, 1926)

1927

There are three items about the band in 1927: two parades one in which the band marches and the other the band rides in the truck, the way of the future in some parades: Later that year in Sept. the Firemen give a big anniversary parade in which the Williams Band takes part:

"Thousands cheer Firemen in big anniversary parade last Sunday. Visiting fire chiefs and many ladies from other cities in line. Six bands furnish music - the affair was a magnificent spectacle. The Claiborne Williams Brass Band lead Protective Hose Co. No. 4 in parade.

The celebration closed with a grand ball at the pavilion at the Fair Grounds that was largely attended by local people, as well as visiting firemen and visiting city officials. Music was furnished by Claiborne Williams crack jazz band, and the dancers tripped the light fantastic toe until an early hour the following morning. The ball was a grand affair and all those who attended had a most delightful time." (Sept. 25, 1927)

The yearly procession of the Feast of St. Amico engages the Claiborne Williams Band:

"Feast of St. Amico to be observed Sunday, April 24.

The Feast of St. Amico will be observed with the usual ceremony this year by the Italians of 'A' Bend and this city on Sunday, April 24th. There will be a grand procession in which the statue of St. Amico will be borne, leaving the chapel in ‘A’ Bend at 9:30 A. M., and marching up the river to Donaldsonville, to the strains of appropriate music furnished by Claiborne Williams Band." (April 16, 1927)

The band takes part in the Elks Initiation and Festival on July 3rd and 4th:

"Local Lodge of Elks to stage big initiation and festival on July 3-4 parade - Headed by Boy Scouts and Claiborne Williams Band." (June 25, 1927)
Riding a band wagon was not a new experience for bands of the 19th Century - it was usually pulled by a horse. To ride in a truck in a parade was a new experience one that was to be repeated many times in the future:

"Elks July 4th festival and fair - Parade - Claiborne Williams Band in one of Montero and Beonde's big trucks." (July 9, 1927)

The only mention in 1928 was of the procession for the celebration of the Feast of St. Amico that used a brass band for the occasion. While the paper calls the musical group an orchestra, in reality there probably were not orchestral instruments played but member of Claiborne Williams aggregation who played in all types of groups regardless of what a particular happened to be

"Celebration of Feast of St. Amico tomorrow - Claiborne Williams Orchestra furnished music for procession and dance." (April 14, 1928)

1929

In 1929 the colored people of Donaldsonville again give a Mardi Gras celebration with Claiborne Williams one of the driving forces behind this activity. The band is included in the parade:

"Colored people to stage Mardi Gras Festival - parade headed by Claiborne Williams Brass Band." (Jan. 26, 1929)

1930

The band plays for the minstrel show as it has before. Whether the same instrumentation plays for the show and dance is not given but probably the size was lessened for the dance:

"Minstrel performance and dance - True Friends Society at True Friends Hall, Feb. 10, Claiborne Williams Brass Band." (Feb. 8, 1930)

Mardi Gras is celebrated again by the colored citizens in 1930:

"Colored citizens to have Mardi Gras Parade, Claiborne Williams Brass Band in parade, Claiborne Williams is general manager." (Feb. 22, 1930)

The band didn't march, they rode in a big truck:

"Mardi Gras colored parade Then followed, in a big truck, Claiborne Williams Brass Band." (March 8, 1930)
The band plays in another parade later in March:

"Colored Knights and Ladies celebration and parade. The Pythians in street parade headed by Claiborne Williams Band, marched from their hall to the church and returned to Castle Hall." (March 29, 1930)

1931

The band plays for the carnival celebration in the town of Plaquemine:

"Plaquemine carnival season opened by Knights of Columbus - King Casey and royal subjects arrive - parade - Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Brass Band and Orchestra of this city." (Jan. 10, 1931)

In the Feb. 16th issue, the following week, the paper reviews the Mardi Gras activities:

"King Zulu hailed by his subjects on visit here.
The annual visit of King Zulu to Donaldsonville, his favorite city, on Mardi Gras day, staged by the colored people of this and neighboring communities under the leadership of Claiborne Williams, was made the occasion of a great and joyous demonstration on the part of his loyal subjects from this place and all parts of the surrounding country. Shortly after the hour of 12 o'clock noon, and his majesty, in an automobile, was driven ashore amid the cheers of the assembled multitude and taken to his chariot that was in waiting nearby parade formed in the following order:
  Mounted dukes and couriers
  Claiborne Williams, director of the parade, in automobile, with
  Paul Comes, W. E. Sullivan and Leon Charles Claiborne Williams
  Brass Band in one of Elroy Kocke's big trucks"

(Feb. 16, 1929)

The band again plays for the St. Amico Feast Day celebrations:

"Feast of St. Amico to be observed April 7.
The Feast of St. Amico will be observed by local Italians, headed by Tony Musco of ‘A’ Bend, on Sunday, April 7th. In pursuance of the annual custom that has been in vogue, the statue of the saint will be borne in solemn procession, headed by Claiborne Williams' Band from the chapel on the property of Tony Musco, in ‘A’ Bend, to the Ascension Catholic Church in this city, where high mass will be celebrated at 11 o'clock a.m. At night there will be a dance in ‘A’ Bend, beginning at 7 o'clock, music for which will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Band."

(March 30, 1929)
The feast of St. Amico is celebrated on April 27th in 1930 and the procession is enlarged to contain two marching bands:

"Feast of St. Amico to be celebrated April 27
A procession will from at the chapel at 9:30 o'clock in the morning of April 27th and will march slowly to Donaldsonville, carrying the statue of the saint to the Ascension Catholic church of this city, where a solemn High Mass will be said at 11 o'clock. The procession will be followed by two bands, Claiborne Williams Orchestra and Heim's Orchestra of this city. A big dance will be given at the St. Amico Hall at ‘A’ Bend Sunday night, commencing at 7 o'clock and lasting until midnight. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra of this city." (April 19, 1930)

The Williams Band plays for the South Louisiana State Fair beginning Sept. 28th:

"Opening day program of the South Louisiana State Fair, Sunday, Sept. 28th 10:00 A. M. Band concert by Claiborne Williams' Band." (Sept. 27, 1930)

The band again plays for the colored people's Mardi Gras celebration in Donaldsonville:

"Colored people again have Mardi Gras, Feb. 17, parade streets, martial music to be furnished by Claiborne Williams Band - Claiborne Williams as general manager." (Jan. 17, 1930)

In 1931 the procession for St. Amico contains two bands:

"Feast of St. Amico to be observed April 12th Music will be furnished by two brass bands - Claiborne Williams' and Heim's - both of this city." (April 5, 1931)

The band again plays for their annual 'gig', the South La. State Fair:

"Two Bands to furnish music at South Louisiana State Fair
Two of the bands that will be seen at the South La. State Fair, Donaldsonville, Sept. 27 to Oct. 4, will be heard over the radio next week in concerts broadcast from New Orleans.
Claiborne Williams' Band will go on the air from the WWL (Loyola) Broadcasting Station at 10 P.M., Thursday, Sept. 17, with a program that will last an hour." (Sept. 12, 1931)

1932

We must remember that while the brass band jobs are scarce and are of a specific nature, the Claiborne Williams Orchestra is getting a lot of work. About this time in the early thirties, the college and high school bands are beginning to organize and the town band is on the way out of popularity. So these future years of the Peerless Brass Band are less busy. In 1932 the band still participates in the local celebration of Mardi Gras:

"Mardi Gras - Claiborne Williams rides on float - Claiborne Williams Brass Band under the direction of Lawrence Hall and George A. Williams in a truck." (Feb. 13, 1932)

A strange celebration happens during the middle of May. It is called a "Beer Parade" with the coming of beer legally again to Donaldsonville and marks the end of prohibition.

"Big Beer Parade - Bands: Harmony Kings, J. M. H. Shot Band (Sic. Joseph Mistrettas' Band), the Claiborne Williams Band, the Black Devils, all of Donaldsonville and the Victory Band of Baton Rouge" (May 14, 1932)

The band again plays for the South Louisiana State Fair:

"Fair entertainment program completed - South La. Fair - Claiborne Williams Brass Band will furnish music." (August 20, 1932)

1933

The only item in 1933 about the band concerns its playing for the South La. Fair again:

"Fair parade - South Louisiana State Fair. Claiborne Williams Band occupied one of the trucks and also dispensed music along the route." (Oct. 14, 1933)

1934

A Mardi Gras celebration is again held in 1934 with the colored people still participating in this activity along with the band:
"Colored people to stage Mardi Gras celebration. Carnival parade, headed by Claiborne William Brass Band. Claiborne Williams will be general manager of the celebration." (Feb. 10, 1934)

In the next week's write-up in the paper, the band is called an orchestra and rides in a decorated truck. It gets hard to define the instrumentation of the group:

"Colored parade Mardi Gras - Claiborne Williams, local orchestra leader under whose management the celebration was staged (in a decorated car), another decorated truck with Claiborne Williams orchestra furnishing music." (Feb. 17, 1934)

1935

With Lent approaching the band plays for the arrival of Rex to Donaldsonville for Mardi Gras:

"Lent next Wednesday. King Rex visit Tuesday 1:30 - parade - Claiborne Williams Brass Band. Claiborne Williams in car, his band in truck next in line." (March 9, 1935)

The South La. State Fair begins on Oct. 23rd and the band plays a number of days for it. The paper gives a complete list of bands playing and times of performance. Claiborne Williams Band plays at 11:00 with the brass band and 9:00 p.m. for dancing, and throughout the week there is much music at the fair:

"Grand opening set for 23rd - South La. St. Fair - Claiborne Williams will furnish music. Dancing every night. 11:00 am - Claiborne Brass Band - 1:00 dancing in Pavilion - Joe Mistretta's Orchestra. 9:00 pm - dancing in Pavilion - Claiborne Williams Orchestra. Monday - Oct. 7 11:00 am - Claiborne Williams Brass Band Oct. 8 11:30 Claiborne Brass Band 8:30 - Dancing Pavilion - Claiborne Williams Oct. 9 11:00 am - music in front of grandstand by Claiborne Williams Oct. 10 - 11:30 - Claiborne Williams Oct. 11 - 12:00 Claiborne Williams Brass Band 9:00 - dance, Claiborne Williams Oct. 12 - 11:30 - Claiborne Brass Band Oct. 13 - 11:30 - Claiborne Brass Band 7:00 pm - dance - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Oct. 5, 1937)
1936

In 1936 the band has only two items in the paper:

"Annual ball of King Jolly Good Fellow. Claiborne Williams' Band will furnish music for the procession and play later for the dance." (Feb. 8 1936)

"Knights of Columbus stage big initiation - marched to Claiborne Williams Brass Band to Ascension Catholic Church." (May 2, 1936)

1937

The band continues to play for many religious services, this time for the St. Joseph Italian society:

"Mass for Christ the King. Members of the St. Joseph Italian Society march from hall to church, headed by Claiborne Williams Brass Band. After mass, march back to hall." (May 8, 1937)

"King Jolly due Feb. 6. Claiborne Williams' Band will furnish music for the procession and his orchestra will dispense music for the dance." (Jan. 30, 1937)

The State Fair again hires the Williams Band in 1937:

"South La State Fair - Claiborne Williams Band will furnish music from the grandstand." (May 29, 1937)


1938

The band again plays for the South Louisiana State Fair along with "Joseph Mistretta's Hot Shot Orchestra, Anthony Sotile Band and LSU Band and of course the Claiborne Williams Band." (Oct. 8, 1938)

The band next plays for the Donaldsonville High School Alumni Association affair. There is a "Thanksgiving Day Parade with the Claiborne Williams Brass Band and the C (Nov. 19, 1938) Claiborne Williams Orchestra plays for the dance after the football game."

1939
The band continues playing for the Mardi Gras celebration in Donaldsonville.

"King Jolly Feb. 3rd. Parade with Claiborne Williams Band." (Jan. 27, 1939)

A new movie theater opens for the colored people and the band is on hand for the dedicatory ceremonies:


The above item is the last mention of a brass band with Claiborne Williams as its leader; from the St. Joseph, to the Peerless, to the Claiborne Williams Brass Band - a long lineage of brass band music for the people of Donaldsonville.
DONALDSONVILLE BRASS BAND

The city of Donaldsonville had a very active musical scene and some of the best brass bands in the South. The earliest on record is in 1872.

1872

During the 1870’s the small towns were mostly responsible for their own entertainments. There were traveling minstrel and dramatic troupes that, in the case of Donaldsonville, usually came to town by riverboat and gave several performances before moving on to the next town. In-between traveling shows the town’s citizens had to amuse themselves. The center of this local entertainment was the local band. All forms of activities needed musical accompaniment. The leading citizens of the town took part in these entertainments, especially in the bands In Donaldsonville the mayor of the town, Paul Leche, was the leader of the band. Another of its members was the editor of the local newspaper. We see this cooperation in the activity of the local band that sponsors a dramatic club. We read:

"OUR NEW THEATRE. Opening Night - Crowded House - A Splendid Entertainment in a Beautiful Hall.

A very large and select audience assembled at the D. S. C. B. Hall last Saturday evening to witness the first performance of the new dramatic society organized by the members of the Silver Cornet Band of this town. Long before the hour announced for the lifting of the curtain had arrived, every seat in the house was filled, and many gentlemen were obliged to stand in the aisles and galleries. The tasteful manner in which the interior of the new theatre was fitted up, elicited much surprise and admiration from the assembled people, and the new drop curtain, which is a perfect gem and a credit to the painter's art, and the painted figures or statues at each side of the stage were especially eulogized and admired. All the auditors were on tiptoe of expectation when, after a tune by the Silver Cornet Band, the curtain rose and displayed the stage adorned with its beautiful scenery.

The first piece on the programme was Le Vagabond, a French drama in one act, with the following cast of principal characters; J. J. Claverie as Pierre Maillard, the vagabond; Mrs. A. Claverie as Marie, his wife; Dr. B. Claverie as Le Marquis, proprietor of a factory; J. J. Lafargue as Clement, overseer for the Marquis; Jules Gondran and Moise Levy as Julian and Jean, workman in the factory; Octave Terrio as M. Rocquart, Mayor of the village, and Miss Luticia Mollere as Marquerite, a school mistress, workmen, countrymen, and policemen, by other members of the society. We have not the space to comment upon the manner in which each person rendered the part assigned him or her, and to make special mention of a few would be injustice to the others. Suffice it to say that all did unexceptionally well, that no balks or mistakes were apparent, and that the drama was rendered throughout in such a manner as would reflect credit upon a professional troupe.
The second part of the entertainment was a two act English domestic drama, entitled *The Golden Farmer*, in which R. N. Sims appeared as the farmer; Morris Marks as *Harry Hammer*, the jolly, tipsy, rollicking auctioneer; Berand Lemann as Old Mobb, a cracksman; Wm. Klopman as *Wm. Harrey*, brother-in-law of the farmer; John A. Cheevers as *Jening Taitaher*, Ambitious though unlucky burglar and prigger of all sorts of other people's property, from a lady's neckerchief to a gentleman's watch chain and pocketbook; J. F. Parks as *Lord Fitzallen*; J. D. Israel, E. Meyer, M. Levy and L. Ferrier respectively as *John*, *Thomas* and first and second officers of the law; Mrs. J. Israel as *Elizabeth*, the golden farmer's trusting and affectionate wife; little Miss B. Tobias, a remarkably intelligent five-year-old young lady as *Louisia*, the farmer's daughter; Mrs. M. Blum as *Mrs. Hammer*, strong-minded consort of the free and easy auctioneer, who asserted her right to rule by locking him out in the street when he came home drunk; and Miss H. Levy as *Jenny*, a waiting maid. Of the rendition of this beautiful drama we may say the same as of the first; it was as near perfection as could be, and delighted and surprised every body." (Sept. 14th.)

The band next plays for a political rally and speech. After playing for the beginnings of the rally we hear a speech by Mr. Younger:

"Mr. C. A. Younger being called upon for a speech responded in an able address, forcibly depicting the issues of the campaign and urging zeal and energy for the triumph of Greeley and Brown and the State and parish tickets representing the Liberal cause. After the conclusion of the address, the club adjourned to Friday evening, when all necessary arrangements will be completed for the holding of a ratification mass-meeting at the Court House this (Saturday) evening. Both the Ascension Brass and the Donaldsonville Silver cornet Bands have been invited to attend this meeting, and it is to be hoped there is patriotism enough among the members of those organizations to induce them to accept the invitation. Their attendance will be a great help to the cause and will reflect credit upon themselves." (Sept. 14th.)

The Silver Cornet Band serenades the employees of the 'Chief.'

"We acknowledge with much pleasure the compliment of a serenade which was tendered the CHIEF last Saturday evening by that excellent musical organization, the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band. The band presented a fine appearance, their highly polished instruments flashing brilliantly in the light of the torches, and their splendid music filling the clear night air with delicious harmony, enchanting to the ear and soothing to the senses. The community may well be proud of the Silver Cornet Band, for it is one that will compare favorably with any in the State. We thank the gentlemen again for the honor bestowed upon the CHIEF, assuring them that nothing we can do to aid the objects of their organization shall be left undone." (Sept. 14th.)

The newspaper editor writes of hearing a brass band that turns out to be the "Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band": 
"Every evening as we sit in our sanctum worrying editorials out of ourselves or glancing over the newspaper strains of music come floating on the breeze, invading our privacy of the dept. We draw the inference that there is a brass band practicing somewhere in the neighborhood." (Sept. 16th.), -Chief

The band continues to practice and the paper writes, "That brass band still preserving toots every evening and its music grows more and more melodious." (Oct. 21)

The band must have continued to improve as it gets an invitation to play in New Orleans:

"Some one has told us that the Donaldsonville Cornet Band will go to New Orleans to participate in the Mardi Gras festivities and regale the citizens of the Crescent City with some genuine Donaldsonville music. As the Grand Duke of Alexis will probably be a listener, it is to be hoped their performances will be such as to carry the fame of this little burgh of ours faraway to the snowy Russia." (Feb. 3rd.)

This is actually the first Mardi Gras of modern times, the Duke was both the guest of honor and the reason for the celebration. However, the paper was mistaken and the band is not to go to Mardi Gras:

"It seems that the Cornet Band is to make an excursion to New Orleans on the 4th of March instead of Mardi Gras, as we had it last week." (Feb. 10th.)

The paper prints an article about the upcoming excursion on the 'Henry Tete.'

"EXCURSION - The steamer Henry Tete advertises to leave Donaldsonville at 8 o'clock to-morrow morning, arrive in New Orleans at five in the evening, and start upon her return trip at 5 P.M. Tuesday evening. This arrangement is made for the special accommodation of those who wish to visit New Orleans to witness the firemen parade on Monday, March 4th, and will no doubt be taken advantage of by a large number of people. We learn that the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band will be on board, and their music will add greatly to the pleasure and hilarity of the occasion. The passage for the round trip is placed at the remarkably low figure of five dollars for each person." (March 2nd.)

In the next week's paper there appears a report on the excursion:

"The party of excursionists who went down to New Orleans on the splendid coast steamer Henry Tete last Sunday and returned Tuesday night, or rather Wednesday morning, had a splendid time, and will long remember the trip as a pleasant episode in their lives. A combination of genial and attentive officers, superior accommodations and swift running power serves to make the Tete an extremely popular boat, and a trip up on her many times is a pleasure, consequently pre-eminently so when there is an excursion parted on board with a splendid cornet band. Upon her return Wednesday morning, the
Tete made her first run of the season down Bayou Lafourche, and will hereafter make two trips a week between Thibodaux or Lockport and New Orleans." (March 9th.)

Within weeks, we read that there is another band forming in Donaldsonville, and, indeed, in the near future there will be a number of bands in this city that once was the capital of Louisiana:

"We learned a few weeks since that several of the young men of town had taken steps toward the organization of another band and that brass instruments were sent for and received. As to how far or how successful the movement had progressed up to the present time we are uninformed, but hope the project will be carried out. With two bands, Donaldsonville will make quite a noise in the world." (March 23rd.)

The two bands that are spoken about in the paper are the DSCB and the Ascension Brass Band. Soon to form is the St. Cecile Brass Band sponsored by the Catholic Church, which research shows was a major influence in both the cultural and social atmospheres of Southern Louisiana and a driving force in the establishment of brass bands. The dominant religion in Louisiana was the Catholic Faith and its support of brass bands and social dancing allowed development of jazz music.

The St. Cecile Band was the most recent of the above bands (St. Cecile is the patron Saint of musicians. The spelling of 'Cecile' is given in various spellings in the newspaper account.) and plays for a religious ceremony:

"INTERESTED CEREMONY AT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH - The ceremony of blessing the instruments just received by the new church band, or St. Cecile Philharmonic Society, which was performed at the Catholic Church in this town last Sunday evening, was interesting and beautiful, as the large concourse of people who witnessed it will attest. An admission fee of 25 cents, was charged, but in spite of this the large church was filled with spectators. The exercises consisted of a short address in French from one of the attendant priests of the church; music by the St. Mary-Jefferson College Band, which has been invited expressly for the occasion; singing by the choir; blessing of the instruments by Father Cuppen and presenting them to the members of the Philharmonic Society. We can not close our notice of this ceremony without referring briefly to the St. Mary-Jefferson College Band, whose excellent music contributed so much to the interest of the occasion. The playing of this band, which numbers some twenty members - all students of the College from whence the organization derives its name - is really fine, and denotes careful and systematic training under an accomplished musician. We hope the members of the band will not soon forget their visit to Donaldsonville, for they were most cordially received and royally feted during their stay of nine hours, they having arrived here on the cars Sunday noon and departed aboard the steamboat W. S. Pike about 9 o'clock in the evening. They were entertained at the residence of the priests of the Ascension Church during the afternoon. When the ceremony that they had come to attend was concluded and an excellent supper had been served them, the band proceeded to the residence of Mr. Chas. F. Smith, whom they serenaded, and were invited in to dispense a few bottles of sparkling champagne. From
thence they went to the wharf to await the arrival of the Pike, but received and accepted an invitation from Mr. Marx Israel to spend the intervening time at his house, whence they repaired and whirled away a pleasant hour, discoursing fine music and receiving the gracious hospitality of the host in the shape of good things to eat and drink." (July 6th.)

Further evidence of the role of the church and brass band will be seen in the proceeding pages in which an account of each of the bands in Donaldsonville will be given. First is the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band.

**THE DONALDSONVILLE SILVER CORNET BAND**

As stated, the first mention of the Silver Cornet Band by name is in the paper of January 2, 1872. In the following six years it leads an active existence. We read where they travel to Thibodaux for an entertainment:

"The gallant firemen of Thibodaux will give an entertainment, or Fete Champetre, in the beautiful little town today and tomorrow, and we learn that the D.S.C. Band has been invited to be present to contribute their share towards making the affair what is undoubtedly will be a source of pleasant recreation to all who attend." (April 13th.)

The band again travels to Thibodaux to play at a local fair. The little town of Thibodaux was also a haven for brass bands, beginning with fife and drums back in Civil War times, followed by brass bands in the decade following the Civil War.

"There is to be a fair and concert in Napoleonville on the 1st of May and a fair in Thibodaux on the same day. The D.S.C. Band goes to the former place to participate in the festivities and astonish the natives with some first class music." (April 27th.)

A fair to be given by a local group is scheduled for June 9th:

"We knew it! Donaldsonville's turn for a public frolic has come at last, in the shape of a fair and ball to be given at the new hall of the Silver Cornet Band, opposite the public square in this town under the auspices of the Ladies Hebrew Association Sunday, June 9th." (May 18th.)

The D.S.C. Band, in anticipation of needs, has a hall constructed where they can get together for dances, meetings, entertainments, etc.:

"The Silver Cornet Band's new hall will be a decided ornament to the town." (May 25th.)

The band again travels to Thibodaux via Bayou Lafourche, which runs through both towns and affords a tranquil and pleasant trip aboard the steamer Tete:
"The Silver Cornet Band went down to Bayou Lafourche on the steamer Henry Tete this morning to Thibodaux; whither they have been invited to attend some sort of an entertainment - a concert, we believe. Under the hospitable care of the genial Capt. Joe of the Tete, they will have a pleasant ride, whatever may be their experience in Thibodaux." (May 25th.)

The D.S.C. Band prepares for the fair and ball at its hall:

"The new and spacious hall of the Silver Cornet Band is being rapidly prepared for the fair and ball of tomorrow, and we find it will be the scene of such a merry-making as Donaldsonville has never before witnessed." (June 5th.)

There is a lengthy account of the Grand Fair and Ball of the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association that the D.S.C. Band played. While it is a lengthy write-up, it is worth presenting here as it is an interesting account of a nineteenth century musical and social activity.

"Grand Fair and Ball - Given by the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Ass'n in the town of Donaldsonville, Sunday, June 9, 1872."

To say that the fair and ball given in this town last Sunday under the auspices of the ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society were successful is to describe them tamely; to say that they were splendidly successful, exceeding the expectations of every one in point of attainment afforded participants and the amount of money realized, is to be on the subject greater justice.

THE FAIR

The fair opened about 10 o'clock A. M. with a spirited tune from the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band, who stood upon the gallery fronting their new unfinished hall, adjoining the fair grounds, and thus made themselves heard all over town. People at once began to arrive and when we first visited the grounds about 11 o'clock a lively scene was presented to view. A spacious line of awnings had been erected along one side and partly across one end of the lot, and under this were numerous booths and tables, at each of which ladies were in attendance, and among which moved a constantly increasing crowd of visitors, some arguing with young ladies who solicited their names for chances in raffles, some discussing ice cream and other refreshments at the tables, some receiving letters at a dime each from the miniature "post office," some diving into the inevitable 'grab bags" carried about by precocious youngsters and drawing forth ludicrous prizes, all talking, all laughing ever and anon, all apparently enjoying themselves to the utmost. And there was little variation in this scene during the rest of the day, except that when the 'train arrived from New Orleans and the Henry Tete from down the bayou, bringing a fresh influx of visitors there was more talking, more laughing, more pleasant noise and confusion.
COMMITTEES

It may be well to state that much of the enjoyment afforded visitors and much of the success attained by the affair was due to the efficient arrangements made by the Executive Committee and the Committee on Fair Grounds.

THE TABLES, BOOTHs, ETC.

On the table nearest the main entrance - which was the handsomest on the grounds, and attended by Mrs. S. Weinsbeck, Mrs. Jos. Gondran, Mrs. M. Blum, Miss Baum, Miss V. Pforzheimer and Miss Alice McCormick - were exposed three splendid German silver instruments to be given to the band receiving the greatest number of votes, twenty-five cents being charged for each vote. This feature of the entertainment attracted more universal attention than any other and the voting all day was spirited. The contest lay between the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band and the Ascension Brass Band, and both had many friends. When the poll was closed at 7 o'clock in the evening a large crowd gathered around to watch the counting of the ballots and ascertain the result. Messrs. Perre Klopman, C. F. Smith, Alex. Levy, Chris. Kline, J. J. Claverie and E. W. Mason were selected to conduct the count, and they stuck to the somewhat lengthy task in spite of a heavy shower of rain that fell during its progress. At last the final result was announced; Total number of votes cast, 2480-; of which the Silver Cornet Band received 1536, and the brass band 804. This announcement was received with much enthusiasm by the Silver Cornet boys and their friends, and after a little presentation speech from Judge Mason, which was responded to on the part of the band by Mr. J. J. Claverie, they took the instruments their popularity had won, and bore them off in triumph.

On the same table with the musical instruments was a fine display of silverware, several pieces of which were voted to the most popular merchant, while the rest were raffled off. Mr. Marx Israel proved to be the favorite candidate in the voting for the silver set and his success was hailed with universal satisfaction. Miss Jacobs, daughter of the Jewish Rabbi, won a set containing six pieces of silverware, while Messrs. S. Weinschenk and C. F. Smith were the lucky winners of a splendid pitcher and a beautiful cake basket respectively.

Many other beautiful prizes were disposed of from this table at raffle, among which were dolls, bouquets, toy stoves, etc.

Next in order came the fruit stand, from which delicious fruit was sold at reasonable prices by those attentive ladies Mrs. B. Lemann and Mrs. Gus Miller.

Adjoining was the post-office, and here sat Misses Lelia Duffel, Alice Gondran and H. Levy receiving and dispatching delicate missives containing anonymous communications that excited much curiosity and amusement among recipients. The post-office booth was tastefully decorated, and the attractive personal appearance of the post mistresses contributed to make it a pleasant place of resort.

The punch and lemonade table adjoined the post-office, and those who loved the beverages received them from the fair hands of Mrs. L. Levy, Mrs. Chris. Kline and Mrs. Friedenthal.
Ice cream and cake stands came next, the frozen delicacy being dished up in pretty style by Mrs. M. Tobias, Mrs. Chas. Ilsley, Mrs. D. LeBlanc and Mrs. H. Kaufman, while the delicious cake was served by Mrs. Jos. Levy, Mrs. L. Loeb and M. Jos. Leomas.

Passing these tables, we next came to some fifteen or twenty others, spread in restaurant style, and most of them continually occupied by parities of hungry visitors discussing such nice things as roast turkey, chicken, duck, and other dainty and substantial eatables, washing them down with sparkling claret or champagne. Flitting around among these tables and serving up the eatables with their pretty hands, while their animated voices and rippling laughter filled the surrounding air with pleasant music, were the following young ladies, each of who deserves more special mention than space will allow us to give: (Sic: A long list of the names of these ladies (33), is not pertinent to this text)

Beyond the spot that these young ladies made so pleasant by their presence was the large restaurant table, over which the nice eatables wee handed by .

In the basement of the Silver Cornet Band's building, and on the opposite side of the grounds from the awnings, was the bar, which of course attracted a considerable number of the masculine portion of the crowd of visitors and relieved them of a considerable amount of small change. The bar-tenders were Messrs.

Mr. Wm. Klopman, secretary and treasurer of the society giving the entertainment, made himself conspicuous by his assiduous attention to the guests, contributing to enhance their comfort and enjoyment whenever opportunity offered.

MUSIC

A prominent and pleasant feature of the fair was the excellent music of the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet and the Ascension Brass Bands, both of which regaled the assembled multitude with enlivening tunes at frequent intervals during the day, attracting the applause and admiration of their numerous friends.

RECEIPTS, ETC.

From the secretary and treasurer we learn that the total receipts from the day's entertainment have amounted to $403, with about $300 yet to be accounted for. The total expenses do not exceed $1500.

We have omitted to refer to many visitors present who spent their money very freely, because our limited space would not allow us to do so. We will merely remark that Messrs. P. Klopman and J. J. Claverie cast several hundred votes each for the Silver Cornet Band, Mrssrs. C. F. Smith and R. T. Hanson performing a like service for the brass band.

About 8 o'clock in the evening a heavy shower of rain fell driving the crowd into the hall room and having the fir grounds almost deserted.

Presently the rain ceased, ladies and gentlemen went home and shortly returned in ball costume, the hall was lighted up and everything prepared for the opening of the ball. A piano had been placed upon the stage, and upon this instrument Mrs. Marx Israel
played accompaniments for two operatic songs that were finely rendered by Miss Ilivia Benedict, eliciting the hearty applause of the audience.

THE BALL

The ball began a little after 10 o'clock, and from that time until 3 in the morning the hall presented a dazzling scene of youth and beauty in bright array, "tripping the light fantastic toe" to the sole-stirring music of an excellent string band from New Orleans, whose services had been procured expressly for the occasion. The management of the ball was excellent, for which too much credit can not be given the following gentlemen, composing the Reception Committee and the Committee of Floor Managers: (Sic: List of name of Reception committee and Floor Managers)

TOILETTES

Many were the beautiful women and many the handsome dresses that whirled in the mazy dance, reminding the beholder of scenes of gorgeous splendor so oft described in fairy tales. We can not forbear mentioning some of the elegant toilettes, though it seems like injustice to many others to do so.

THE END

The ball room remained crowded and the interest in the dancing continued without abatement until within a few minutes of 3 o'clock in the morning, when the music stopped, the guests retired, and in half an hour afterward the hall that had been in a perfect blaze of light was draped in darkness.

Some of the visitors from New Orleans left for home on the Henry Tete, that steamer having laid at the wharf since 4 o'clock of the evening previous, others took the special train that left at 3 A. M., while some remained over night with friends here, leaving on the regular train Monday.

So ended the grand fair and ball, but they will live long in the recollections of all who attended them, and be remembered no doubt as the most uniformly pleasant entertainments ever held in Donaldsonville." (June 15th.)

There were two performances given on behalf of the D.S.C.Band: one, a tableau-entertainment, and the other, a performance by a theatrical troupe. The June 22nd. paper gives notice of the tableau:

"The 'Ladies of the Church Aid Society' in Donaldsonville propose giving a concert with tableau, on the 11th of July, 1872, at the hall of the D.S.C.Band. They solicit the kind assistance of the community on the occasion, and will be grateful for any contributions for the tables, which their friends may please to send them." (June 22nd.)

"The D.S.C.Band celebrated the completion of its new and elegant hall last evening by pouring forth their ...... (Sic: original text hard to read) in music in ...... Quite
a number of people were admitted to the hall and spent a pleasant half hour listening to
the excellent music of the band." (July 6, 1872)

The performance given for the benefit of the D.S.C. Band was well attended "by a
large audience, embracing many ladies, for the universal popularity of the band always
bring out our people in force to any entertainment given in their honor." (July 27th.)

The band is active in other cultural activities that are presented at its hall. They
organize a dramatic presentation:

"We learn that steps were taken at the regular meeting of the members of the
Silver Cornet Band, at their hall, last Sunday, for the organization of a Dramatic
presentation, the original members of which are to be taken from the band, others being
admitted upon application after the organization is fully effected." (August 3rd.)

There appears the following advertisement in the paper for the drama:

"We acknowledge with much pleasure the compliment of a serenade which was
tendered the Chief last Saturday evening by hat excellent musical organization, the
Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band. The band presented a fine appearance, their highly
polished instruments dashing brilliantly in the light of the torches, and their splendid
music filled the clear night air with delicate harmony, enchanting to the ear and soothing
the senses. The community may well be proud of the Silver Cornet Band, for it is one that
will compare favorably with any in the state. We thank the gentlemen for the honor they
showed upon the band." (Sept. 14th.)

In the spirit of comradeship, the D.S.C. Band gives a dinner and its details are
disclosed in another article in the paper:

"A SPLENDID DINNER - We had the honor to be an invited guest at a dinner
given the active and honorary members of the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band by its
leader and president, Mr. Chas. Gecks, last Sunday evening, at the band's new hall, and
the occasion will ever be one of pleasant memories. The dinner was prepared in the
highest style of the culinary art, and formed an Epicurean feast. A large attendance of
members took place, only two being absent, and, gathered around the festal board, they
partook of the bountiful repast spread by their worthy president amid general hilarity and
good humor. Champagne corks popped in all directions, and many toasts were drank in
the sparkling wine. Mr. Gecks proposed 'The Ascension Brass Band,' accompanying his
last remarks complimentary for the organization, and expressive of a desire to see perfect
harmony and friendship existing between its members and those of the D.S.C. Band. The
sentiment was loudly applauded and the toast drank with much gusto. The ladies of the
dramatic society, the citizens who had lent aid to the band association, the representative
of the Donaldsonville press and the members of the band individually and collectively,
were enthusiastically toasted in succession, and responses were given which invariably
enlisted applause. The financial prospects of the association were recently referred to, and
from the expressions of several men of prominence and means present, we feel assured
the D.S.C. Band rest upon a monied basis which precludes all possibility of its downfall. We regarded as a very great compliment indeed (in response to which we could hardly find words to convey adequately our obligated), that a special meeting of the band was called in the midst of the festivities and ourself elected an honorary member. After dinner was over, several parties were called upon to mount the stage and give declamations, songs, etc., and this sort of amusement was kept up until half past 9 o'clock in the evening, when every one left the hall, each with the conviction strong upon him that it had been many a day since he had attended a more pleasant affair than the elegant dinner given by Mr. Chas. Gecks to the members of the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band." (Nov. 30th.)

The brass band of small, country towns were not formed to make money, but as a civic organization to play for special functions of the town and on other needed occasions. They did need money for instruments, travel, uniforms and the like, and were always willing to play and help others in any charitable endeavor. Such is the case when they decide to help the town of Shreveport:

"The Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band Association have formed a laudable determination of giving a musical and variety entertainment in their fine hall for the benefit of the Shreveport sufferers, and it can not fail of receiving the liberal patronage of the community. An invitation has been extended to Ascension Brass Band to assist at the entertainment, and that organization has signified their acceptance. Due announcement will be given of the date of the affair, and of course it is expected that everyone is able to do so will attend." (Oct. 18th.)

This close association of the D.S.C.Band with the Ascension Brass Band is further shown as 'Mr. James Profit, secretary of the Ascension Brass Band desires us to express through the columns of our paper the thanks of the organization for the complimentary tickets to the dramatic entertainment of Saturday last sent them by the D.S.C. Band." (Dec. 21st.)

1873

The Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band (DSCB) like all brass bands of the nineteenth century, schedules a fair for financial purposes:

"The ladies and gentlemen who had been invited to assist at the coming Fair for the benefit of the D.S.C.B. Association met at the Hall last Sunday for the purpose of arranging necessary preliminaries to the entertainment. The assemblage was quite a large one, indicating the success of the projected Fair, and the proceedings were eminently satisfactory to all concerned. The band appeared upon the gallery of the Hall after the business of the meeting was over and played several airs." (Jan. 2nd.)
The two most popular white bands in Donaldsonville received many write-ups in the paper and the paper of January 11th stated that "both the Ascension Band and the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band held meetings (rehearsals) last Sunday." (Jan 11th.)

Many dances were smaller affairs and did not use a large musical group. Many just used a piano and were not publicized in the paper. Others, some with only small groups of instruments, being in the 'inner circle' of society in the town, were mentioned. The use of the D.S.C. Band Hall was popular, as with the following 'Calico Ball':

"Calico Ball at D.S.C. Band Hall - the music was excellent, being a harmonious blending of the tones of piano, violin and flute, each instrument manipulated by an experienced player." (Jan. 18th.)

In February, the band plays for an excursion, which, of course, was at the mercy of the weather. However, Donaldsonville and its environs were milder than many of the northern cities of the State:

"Pleasure excursion - Capt. Dalferes invited the Silver Cornet Band on a pleasure excursion - At Bayou Goula the brass band recently organized there saluted the boat with a tune, which was responded to by the Silver Cornet Band, the members of which went ashore and invited their Bayou Goula conferees to a fraternal 'smile' in an adjacent coffee house." (Feb. 1st.)

During February the band in Donaldsonville practices their concert music as there would be, in the spring, a number of fairs that required brass band music. The paper notes this practice:

"The three bands are practicing with might and main, in anticipation of the coming fairs, at which we may expect a feast of music among the other attractions." (Feb. 8th.)

The first fair the band plays is the Episcopal Church Fair:

"Episcopal Church Fair - The doors of the Hall (DSCB Hall) were thrown open to visitors at 4:00 Wednesday afternoon, the fact being made known by an enlivening air from the Silver Cornet Band." (Feb. 15th.)

Another band played at the fair mentioned above on Thursday, during the day. At 10:00 pm "the floor was cleared for a dance, the string band of the DSCB appeared upon the stage." (Feb. 15th.)

The paper mentions the band going to New Orleans for the Firemen's Day parade:

"We understand that the Silver Cornet Band has contracted with one of the New Orleans fir companies to furnish them music upon the occasion of the grand firemen's parade on the 4th of March." (Feb. 15th.)
The D.S.C. Band plays for a grand fair benefit for the orphans of St. Vincent Asylum in Donaldsonville:

"No more beautiful weather could be wished for than prevailed upon Saturday last, Feb. 22nd, the occasion of the opening or the grand fair given for the benefit of the orphans or the St. Vincent Asylum, located in this town." (Feb. 24th.)

THREE BANDS

"Three bands of musicians, the Silver Cornet, Ascension Brass and St. Cecile Brass Bands, were upon the grounds when the gates of the enclosure adjoining the Catholic Church were thrown open for the admittance of the public, about noon, and they alternately discoursed sweet spirited music to inform the people of the commencement of the festivities.

Soon the visitors began to gather, and the grounds to assume that bright and lively appearance always produced by the assemblage of a number of mortals lent the enjoyment, a portion of who are of the gentler sex. The festival excepting of course the concerts, was held.

In the open air, the booths and restaurant tables being protected from the glare of the sunlight by a temporary framework covered with canvas. There were two rows of booths, extending from either end of the new college building towards the entrance on Mississippi Street, and in persistence of the usual custom of the Chief, we will proceed to enumerate in their regular order all the booths, tables, etc., giving at the same time the names of the fair ladies and pleasant gentlemen who presided over each, and dealt out to the visitors such articles or edibles as were demanded of them respectively.

Beginning at the right of the gate, the first thing that attracted our attention was a little tent, erected for the purpose of giving exhibitions of a mysterious nature, of which the only particulars we can give consist of the fact that ten cents was the admission price. Morris Marks, esq. impersonated Blumenthal, Jeannette Blum and Annette Ray.

In the open space between the rows of booths was located a fortune wheel presided over by several young ladies. Upon most of the stands and tables were raffle lists to which all who wished could add their names, but in only one instance were visitors pressed to take chances, and this in the raffle of a beautiful cake, at ten cents per chance." (Feb. 25th.)

Many of the band musicians also played in the Donaldsonville Orchestra, which plays for a college fair:

"A most prominent and engrossing feature of the entertainment was the two concerts given in the college building, the first Saturday, the second Sunday evening. These were attended by nearly all the guests of the Fair, and proved eminently successful. Saturday evening concert consisted of an overture by the orchestra, Messrs. J. S. Claverie, A. Blauqui, Dr. A. Chaverie, and Octave Terrio; performances upon the piano by Misses L. Hanson, D. Biauqui, Mrs. E. Gaudin and Mr. Wm. Klopman; song by Mmes. D.
LeBlanc, A. Landry, Miss D. Mollere and J. S. Caverue; and a beautiful duet upon the piano and violin by Mrs. E. Gaudin and Mr. J. Claverie.

The second concert, Sunday evening, embraced the following: Overture by the orchestra, as before; piano performance by Miss L. Blanqui and Mrs. E. Gaudin." (March 1, 1873)

The annual Firemen's Day Parade was one of the most celebrated activities at this time in New Orleans and their parades presented numerous brass bands from the surrounding areas. A number of fire companies in New Orleans had to go outside the city to hire bands to march in this annual parade. The D.S.C. Band plays the parade in 1873, marching for Fire Company #22 of the Fourth District:

"The Silver Cornet Band visited New Orleans last Monday, and upon Tuesday appeared in the firemen's procession, leading company No. 22 of the Fourth District. It is a matter of gratification to us that the band compared favorably with any in the procession, and was the recipient of innumerable compliments from the spectators along the route of the parade. We heard several people's remark that our Donaldsonville Band had prettier instruments than any other on the street, the band members were the best dressed and its music inferior to none. The firemen belonging to company 22 expressed themselves delighted with the Silver Cornet Band, and declared their intention to engage it to play for them at the next annual parade, regardless of the price asked. The Silver Cornet Band is an institution Donaldsonville has more reason now than ever before to be proud of, for it virtually carried off the palm in a competitive display with some of the best musical organizations in the State. Its members were all delighted with their trip to New Orleans and the treatment they received at the hands of the 'boys' of engine Company No. 22." (March 8th.)

Town bands needed a rehearsal hall. Some used the hall of their local church or the town hall. Many constructed their own hall and gave entertainments to pay for it. The D.S.C. Band constructed its own hall and proceeded to schedule dances and entertainments to secure monies for its building and maintenance funds:

"The Silver Cornet Band propose to give a Fair in their elegant Hall on the 10th and 11th days of May next, the proceeds of which are to be applied to the liquidation of the indebtedness incurred by the Band for the building of the Hall. A meeting of the Committee of Arrangements and a number of invited persons was held in the Hall to-day, at which the Fair and its object was announced. It was given forth that the Band intends, so soon as its debts are paid, to devote the Hall to entertainments for charitable purposes, and this should induce all charitably inclined persons to contribute all in their power to make the coming Fair a success. We cannot doubt but that the members of the Catholic and Episcopal Churches of this place, bearing in mind the aid given their recent fairs by the members of the DSCB, will reciprocate by lending their encouragement to the Band's entertainment in May." (April 5th.)

Members of the band and the band's activities: A small item appeared in the papers stating that "We understand that a number of the members of the DSCB went off
in the woods somewhere one day this week and had a picnic. We are in possession of no particulars of the affair, but suppose of course the participants enjoyed themselves." (April 12th.)

In May, the band plays "three pieces, executed in their usual splendid style" at a dramatic presentation and gives a concert "Sunday with an overture, cornet variations by Mr. Chas. Gecks, accompaniment by the band." (May 15th.)

Within the months of April and May there developed a small feud or misunderstanding between the D.S.C. Band and the local Catholic Church, which was the sponsor of the St. Cecile Brass Band. A letter is published in the paper of April 5th in which the D.S.C. Band requests other bands participate in their fair. They request that the two churches, (the Catholic and Episcopal) support their endeavor to present a fair in their hall. A later letter indicates that the priest refuses them:

"We regret to learn that the priest of the Ascension Catholic Church has forbidden the St. Cecilia Band to play at the coming Fair of the DSCB, assigning as a reason that, being a church band, the St. Cecilia should not play in a hall devoted to theatrical performances. The presence of the St. Cecilia Band would have added to the interest of the Fair considerably, and would have been but a just return for the attendance of the Silver Cornet Band at the recent Fair for the benefit of the Catholic Church, therefore it is to be regretted that they are prevented from being present as an organization." (April 12th.)

This exchange continues, ending finally with the D.S.C. Band refusing, in turn, to play for a church benefit:

"The DSCB Association has addressed the following note to the Rev. Father Cuppens of the Ascension Church of the town, the same being published in the Leader of to-day:

"Father Cuppens - Your application to have us play at the celebration on the 22inst. has been received and duly considered by us, the majority voting in the affirmative, but the members of the minority who assigned as their reason for their refusal, the strong opposition of yourself to our association, which is unwarranted or in any manner justifiable, the number voting against playing being sufficient to prevent the band so doing.

D.S.C.B. Association.""

While no one will question the right of the association to decline the invitation of the Rev. father, no matter how ungrammatically or confusedly the declination may be framed, we feel confident many of their warmest friends even will deprecate the motives and bad taste that induced them to make the columns of a public journal the medium through which to make their refusal known, especially when the reason for such refusal is of the delicate and rather unpleasant nature evident in the present instance, and the person to whom the communication is addressed occupies a position to which so much respect is due. A private note, it seems to me, would have been in much better taste. We much
regret that circumstances should exist to produce ill feeling between a ruling minority of
the DSCB Association and the Catholic sect of the community, and hope that mutual
concessions and explanations will shortly ensue that shall tend to restore perfect harmony
for all time to come.” (June 21st.)

A responsibility in this era for a brass band was the playing of funerals. The
D.S.C. Band plays for the funeral of Mr. Louis Ferrier:

"One of the dirges played by the Silver Cornet Band at the funeral of Mr. Louis
Ferrier last Monday, was practiced by them for the first time the evening previous, yet the
universal comment was that it was played to perfection. There is not a band in the State
that can excel the Silver Cornet in rapid mastery or faultless execution of a piece of
music.” (July 19th.)

The funeral is described in the obituary pages on July 19th.:

"DEATH OF LOUIS K. FERRIER
At an early hour last Sunday morning, Louis K. Ferrier, son of Jos. L. Ferrier
and E. Icard, departed this life at the age of 21 years. Deceased had been suffering for
several months with a tumor on the neck, and death was a release from a life of incessant
bodily pain. The young men had been a resident of Donaldsonville for 5 or 6 years, and
was well known to nearly every inhabitant of the town. The funeral took place Monday
morning, from the residence of deceased's father, and was largely attended by the friends
and relatives of the young man and his family. The Silver Cornet Band accompanied the
procession to the grave, playing beautiful dirges they had learned for the occasion. The
scene at the grave was very affecting. The solos of the female mourners touching the
hearts of all present, and especially heartening was the poignant grief of the young lady to
whom the deceased had been betrothed. The sympathy of all was with her.” (July 19th.)

There was kinship and camaraderie between the town bands as well as friendly
competition. Many times they would help with the other band's benefit activities and
often would join together for concerts and entertainments. We see this cooperation
between the D.S.C.Band and the Ascension Brass Band as they give a joint concert in the
D.S.C. Band Hall:

"THE CONCERT
The entertainment given at the DSCB Hall, last Saturday evening, for the
benefit of the Shreveport sufferers, was by no means as great a success as such an affair
should have been, either in point of a meritorious performance or large attendance of
spectators. Unfortunately several of the ladies and gentlemen who had volunteered their
aid were unable to attend, and the corps of performers was reduced to a very slim
showing. However, these did their best, and considering the object of the entertainment
and the unexpected drawbacks met with, the audience was satisfied.

The Ascension Band played the opening piece from the gallery of the Hall, and
the Silver Cornet Band began the indoor exercises. Mr. J. J. Claverie sang a French
operatic ballad, his two children played a well-executed duet on the piano, Judge J. A. Cheevers read Poe's 'Raven' and an extract from 'Shamon O'Brien', and the bands filled up all the intervals with fine music. The audience was very appreciative and dispersed in high good humor at the close of the concert." (Nov. 8th.)

The above affords a good description of a nineteenth century small town entertainment and its extensive use of band music throughout the performance. The entertainment's proceeds were sent to Shreveport. An article in the New Orleans Times (reprinted in the Chief) tells of this donation:

"In the New Orleans Times of a day or two since appears a card from the Secretary of the New Orleans Howard Association, acknowledging receipt of $61.35 from the D.S.C. Band for the Shreveport sufferers. This amount was the proceeds of the concert given in the D.S.C. Band Hall two week ago." (Nov. 15th.)

The last mention of the D.S.C. Band in 1873 is of the band playing at the school fair:

"The attendance at the Sunday School Fair last night was quite limited, owing doubtless to the bad weather, but the receipts were nevertheless quite satisfactory. A large number of visitors will of course attend to-night, and there is no doubt the entertainment will be a successful venture. The Silver Cornet Band played several airs in the Hall at the opening hour, giving great elate to the commencement of the Fair." (Dec. 6th.)

1874

The D.S.C. Band Association sponsors a fair for the benefit of the band. These fairs were one of the mainstays in supporting charitable causes or organizations. The bands usually donated their services to all fairs and also sponsor fairs to raise money to support their own many gratis performances:

"The DSCB Fair - Sweet music from the Silver Cornet Band, stationed upon the gallery of their fine hall, announced the opening of the fair last Saturday afternoon, and a peep inside the building revealed a numerous bevy of ladies with pretty white aprons on, stationed at a score of neatly spread tables, awaiting the advent of the hungry multitude in order to furnish them with meat and drink, receiving in return their heart-felt thanks and shekels. There were no raffle lists to be poked under the visitor's nose at every step he made, no miniature bazaars where the unsuspecting stranger was way-laid and beseeched to invest all his wealth in articles of no earthly use to him, but there were a dozen tables at which those so disposed could sit down to a quiet lunch, and have all kinds of nice things served up by the most amiable and lovely attendants, for a very reasonable amount of Uncle Sam's paper currency. There were four large tables, from which the attendants procured the edibles, all the rest being small, of a size to accommodate parties of five or six visitors. Two of the large tables were tastefully decorated, presenting a pretty appearance. The left-hand room under the stage was where the manufacture of gumbo
was carried on, while the room to the right was devoted to the concoction of coffee and chocolate. Out in the yard, under a tarpaulin-covered sheds were situated the bar, the oyster-stand, and a restaurant table for colored people. The Fair continued until midnight on Saturday, and opening Sunday noon kept in full blast until the approach of Monday morning. The attendance of patrons was very good, considering the band state of the roads consequent upon the rain of Saturday night, and the proceeds seem to have been satisfactory to those most interested. Taken altogether, the entertainment was a very nice affair, and afforded much enjoyment to a goodly number of people." (Feb. 7th.)

The card of thanks appeared in the February 7th paper:

"The officers and members of the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band tender their heartfelt thanks and grateful acknowledgements to the kind supporters and patrons of the Fair given on Saturday and Sunday last, and beg to state that the net proceeds amounted to $434.85."

The band played for many excursions. One such trip was aboard the steamer Henry Tete to and from New Orleans:

"A huge and merry crowd it was that enjoyed a trip to and from New Orleans this week on the steamer Henry Tete. The Silver Cornet Band from this town was on board, and their fine music added much to the pleasure of the passengers. The band went down the Bayou on the Tete about eleven o'clock that night. Owing to the heavy fog, the boat did not leave here for New Orleans until noon of Sunday." (Feb. 21st.)

To accomplish all these charitable works, the D.S.C. Band at times enlisted the help of visiting entertainments such as traveling minstrels or show troupes, which would donate one of their performances for the benefit of a local club or organization:

"The Moncayo family of gymnasts, acrobats, wire walkers, rope dancers, etc. will give several performances, one of which will be for the benefit of the D.S.C. Band Association. The Silver Cornet Band will furnish the music for the entertainment." (Feb. 28th.)

The yearly firemen's parade is again held in New Orleans and the D.S.C. Band plays for the event:

"No resident of Donaldsonville could have witnessed the grand parade of firemen in New Orleans, last Wednesday, and marked the genteel appearance of the band which preceded the company, known as Pelican No. 4, without feeling a sense of pride that our town can boast such a fine organization as the DSCB. There is a kind of general impression on such occasions that nothing from the country can compete with city institutions, but our Silver Cornet Band was a decided exception to the rule. Not only were their instruments the handsomest in the entire procession, but the quality of their music was unexcelled, and the boys of Pelican No. 4 had no reason to be ashamed of their
'country band.' The gentlemen of the DSCB stood the fatigue of the long march bravely, and found time before returning home to see the sights of the Crescent City and visit the various places of amusement. May they maintain the DSCB and participate in the 4th of March processions for many years to come with as much credit as heretofore, is the sincere wish of the Chief." (March 7th.)

The band also plays for their local firemen's celebration and the write-up gives us a reliable account of a parade in a nineteenth century country town in Louisiana:

"Firemen's Parade - Phoenix No. 1 Turns Out - The Christening of the Eagles - The Dinner and the Ball.

Sunday morning last old sol arose from his couch in the East, with a bright and pleasing look upon his face, and a beautiful day was anticipated by everyone. About mid-day the countenance of the old gentlemen clouded slightly, but as this was probably caused by indigestion, it rapidly cleared up after dinner, and once more he smiled brightly upon us all.

At half-past three in the evening the sound of sweet music broke upon the air, and the Phoenix boys fell in, and started on their parade through town. The procession was headed by Mr. B. Lemann, who acted as Grand Marshall; he was followed by the DSCB, who were directly in front of the standard bearer, Mr. Chas. Oberkamp, and the officers of the company then came the engine drawn by the fire boys arrayed in their new and tasty uniforms, consisting of white shirts trimmed with black, pat-cut leather belts, straw hats and black pants, whilst on either side walked the foreman, Mr. Jos. Bileisen, and his assistants." (May 16th.)

In annual Catholic religious festivals and processions, bands played a very important part, this part being recognized by the church and expressed in this write-up:

"...the bull of the Pope was confirmed by many of this successors, especially by Pope Clement V, in the general council of Vienna, in France, in the year 1311, as it always falls on Thursday, the celebration of it in this place this year was postponed until last (the following) Sunday, owing to the impossibility of obtaining bands to play in the procession on week days (Sic: due to the fact that amateur brass band musicians usually worked during the day in their regular jobs) and also to the fact that many more persons could attend on the Sabbath than any other day. Even if we had the time and space it would be impossible to give a full description of the grand procession that turned out in honor of this occasion on Sunday last. We regret, however, that we can do no more than give a very brief and general account of the magnificent ceremonies and splendid parade on this day.

The procession was an immense one, nearly every member of the Catholic Church in this parish being in attendance. It was headed by the DSCB, numerous ladies of the church, following them; then came the St. Joseph Brass Band, who preceded the colored believers in the Catholic religion. The St. Cecile Band came next, and after them the remainder of the procession. The long line of devotees moved slowly through the streets to the music of the several bands, who on this occasion, as on all others, played splendidly, until they arrived at the corner of Houma and Opelousas Streets, where an altar had been erected, and here they stopped, and a short service was held by one of the..."
Rev. Fathers The line of march was then resumed, and after passing through the main streets in town, the church was arrived at, where the procession was dismissed. As we stated above, it is always customary for the Catholics to celebrate this fete with great splendor, but it is due to Rev. Father Cuppens to say that since he has taken charge of this church, the processions have been more numerous and more magnificent than ever before." (June 13th.)

A fair is given by the M.E. Church (a black sect of the Methodist church) in which the St. Joseph Brass Band plays (August 16th).

The final mention in 1874 is in the August 16th. paper when the D.S.C. Band plays for a private party:

"Private party which was given at the residence of Mr. Simon Levy Sunday night, and the Silver Cornet Band increased the enjoyment of the guests with some of their inimitable music." (August 16th.)

1875

To begin the year, the D.S.C. Band plays for the Ascension Hook & Ladder Fair along with the St. Cecile Band: "Some lively music from the bands - next day will be furnished by the Silver Cornet Band." (Jan. 2nd.)

The D.S.C. Band was unique in that it had its own hall and was governed by an association of its members. Like other brass bands of the day, the D.S.C. Band had a smaller ensemble that played for smaller affairs and dances. Most of these small ensembles were called "string band." Their instrumentation was not standardized and would depend on how many musicians the job required, who was available, and how big the hall. The string band was mostly hired for smaller private parties and dances:

"Phoenix Ball - New Years Eve - at DSCB Hall - the music unsurpassable, being furnished by the String Band of the DSC Band Association." (Jan. 2nd.)

The band decides not to march in the New Orleans firemen's parade, probably because it was on a weekday and band members had prior commitments. However, part of the band takes an excursion on the steamer B.L. Hodges, a trip marked by the actions of a thief:

"A young man who accompanied the members of the Silver Cornet Band to New Orleans on the steamer B. L. Hodges, Wednesday, brings information that a stateroom occupied by Messrs. G. Gauthreaux and L. Duffel was entered by a thief, who carried off a gold watch and chain belonging to the former gentlemen, and a small amount of money belonging to the latter. We sympathize with the young men for their misfortune." (March 6th.)

"The Silver Cornet Band received an invitation from Capt. McElroy of the steamer B. L. Hodges to make a trip to New Orleans on his excellent boat, to view the firemen's parade on the 4th, and after consultation, a majority of the members concluded to accept.
A few were prevented from participating in the excursion by reason of their business duties, but the others were ready at the wharf when the Hodge arrived from Plaquemine, Wednesday, and as the boat pushed off after landing, the strains of an enlivening air were borne upon the breeze, which found an echo - 'bon voyage!' - in the hearts of the numerous friends of Donaldsonville's best band. We can well imagine the nice time the excursionists have had on the hodge and in the city. They did not go down with the intention of participating in the parade- as they have done for two years past - but as mere looker-on. By the time this paper is issued they will probably have returned home, and we may be sure their friends will hear enthusiastic accounts of the pleasant incidents that have occurred during their visit to New Orleans." (March 6th.)

The band next plays for a school exhibition at Keating Academy as "the D.S.C. Band present-plays overture, and the occasional intermission enlivened by the music of the D.S.C. Band precluded tedium." (April 10, 1875) While the band didn't play for the New Orleans Firemen's Parade, it did play for the local fire department's parade. There was an advertisement in the paper for the parade.

The paper remarks that "Their fine music lent much éclat to the parade. Although the accomplished leader was suffering from neuralgia and every note blown upon his cornet produced a pang, he persisted in keeping his post and performing his self-imposed task." (May 15th.)

The band, on June 12th, plays for a grand ball at the local Grange:

"Grange Festival - Next Saturday night, June 12th., a grand ball will be given by Orange Grange No. 202 of the Patrons of Husbandry. In the Grange Hall, formerly Mr. Ben Allen's store, about seven miles above Donaldsonville, left bank of the river. The D.S.C. Band will be in attendance to open the festivities, and their string band will furnish music for the dancing. Tickets of admission for gentlemen are placed at the low figure of fifty cents each, ladies free. The reception room for ladies will be at the residence of Mr. Ben Allen, a few yards from the ball room, and every care will be taken to secure the comfort and enjoyment of guests. Refreshments will be furnished at moderate rates. This ball will certainly be a grand affair and Donaldsonville will be liberally represented among the participants in the festivities. The fun will commence at 6 P.M." (June 5th.)

The next occasion in which the band participates is a very interesting one. The band plays for the FETE CHAMPETRE as well as a musical contest:

"A Brilliant Festival - Baton Rouge Firemen Participate --Breaking Ground for the New Catholic Church--A Musical Contest -- The Baton Rouge Band Awarded the Medal. The Fete Champetere or Fair in and of the Catholic Church building fund opened in fine style Saturday evening and continued in successful operation during the advertised period of three days. The stands and tables were nicely arranged under tarpaulin-covered framework to the east and south of the beautiful kiosk that stands in the rear of the church, while the bar was located in a basement room of the college building to the West.
The tables were ornamented with bouquets of fresh flowers and the kiosk with festoons of evergreen and poses. At night light was furnished by scores of gaudy Chinese lanterns, which added greatly to the attractiveness of the scene.

Early Sunday morning a large delegation of Baton Rouge firemen, accompanied by the Independent Silver Cornet Band of Baton Rouge and a number of guests arrived at the landing in the spacious tow boat Ivy. The strangers were enthusiastically received by our two fire companies and escorted to the Fair grounds in procession, commanded by Chief Engineer Sims. Phoenix took the lead, headed by the D.S.C. Band; the Baton Rouge firemen, comprising the members of Independence Fire Co. No. 2, and delegations from Washington Steam Fire Co. No. 1 and Pelican Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 can next, headed by the Baton Rouge Band; Ascension Hook and Ladder Co. brought up the rear, lead by an extempore band composed of members of the St. Cecile and the late Ascension Brass Band. Arrived at the grounds, Chief Sims spoke a few words of welcome to the visitors and the procession disbanded. Half an hour afterwards the firemen were again summoned in line, two abreast - one a Donaldsonvillian, the other a Baton Rougeian - and marched around to the truck-house of Ascension Hook and Ladder Co., where a couple of barrels of fresh lager was tapped and several brief addresses listened to from representatives of the various organizations present. The remarks of the speakers were eloquent and appropriate, and elicited enthusiastic responses from the hilarious audience.

After an inspection of the truck-house and equipment, a visit was made to the Phoenix engine-house, and from here the line of march back to the fair grounds was again taken up. At 1 o'clock in the afternoon the Baton Rouge firemen dined with Father Cuppens, most of them having whetted their appetites by a stroll about town to "see the place.

During the afternoon occurred, with impressive attendant ceremonies, the breaking of ground at the spot where the corner-stone of the new church to be laid. A silver spade was used for the purpose, and this beautiful implement was afterward displayed upon one of the cake stands. Rev. Father Delacroix of Baton Rouge assisted Father Cuppens in this ceremony and also in celebrating mass in the church.

At four o'clock P. M. the Donaldsonville fire companies assembled at their respective halls and again marched to the scene of the fete headed by the D.S.C. Band, which organization was about to enter the contest for the gold medal. The bands expected from Plaquemine and Thibodaux did not arrive, so the Baton Rouge and Donaldsonville bands were the only ones competing for the prize. It was 5 o'clock when every thing was announced in friendliness. The judges chosen were, Rev. C. Delacroix of Baton Rouge, Rev. W. Viollier, assistant priest, and Mr. Felix Gauthreau, both of Donaldsonville. It was decided that the prize should be awarded for best execution. Our Donaldsonville band opened the ball with a fine operatic piece, charingly executed. The cornet solo of Mr. Chas. Gecks was truly beautiful, and received much applause. The Baton Rouge band followed with "the Spirit of the Times," given in such excellent style that it was at once conceded the D.S.C.B. had met foremen worthy their stell - or, their German silver, would be more applicable. After a brief intermission another operatic selection was given by the home band, "Robert le Diable," and it would be difficult for any band in the State to excel the manner in which it was rendered. This was followed by 'The Passion Flower' from the Baton Rouge organization, executed with such precision and spirit that the burst of applause that hailed its rendition was natural and merited. The contest up to this time
was announced as a tie, and each band played another selection, the Donaldsonville organization adhering to the difficult music of the operatic description, and their opponents still giving lively airs with a dash and vim calculated to carry the sympathies of a promiscuous assemblage, but not always preferred by those who thoroughly appreciate the beauties of music. There was considerable discussion among the judges, but it was finally announced that the medal had been earned by the Baton Rouge band, and the verdict was received with enthusiastic cheers by their friends. Hon. Morris Marks was delegated by Father Cuppens to present the medal, and this he did in a few well-selected remarks appropriately responded to by Mr. Mentz, leader of the band. This episode was succeeded by the presentation of a splendid silver service, consisting of pitcher, two goblets and salver, to the D.S.C.Band, on the part of Father Cuppens, Mr. Marks again acting as spokesman. Mr. Chas. Gecks responded briefly, expressing the thanks of his band for the beautiful gift.

The visitors remained with us until 8 o'clock P.M., when a cannon fired from the tug announced the hour of departure at hand. They formed in line and were escorted to the boat by the Phoenix and Ascension companies, the Baton Rouge band leading the procession, discoursing martial music. At the landing the parting cheers made the walk-in ring again, and as the tug steamed off the band on board struck up a lively air, which came to the ears of those on shore after the boat had disappeared in the darkness. If our Baton Rouge friends enjoyed their visit as much as our local firemen did their company, they will not be loath to come here again. The Donaldsonville firemen will gladly hail the first opportunity of accepting the pressing invitations tendered them to visit Baton Rouge.

Monday evening the ballot boxes in which votes had been cast for the lady's gold watch and gentlemen's tortoise shell memorandum book, were opened and the ballots counted. For the watch, the total vote polled was 5300, which at 10 cents a vote, brought $530. Miss Cecilia LeBlanc, niece of Felix LeBlanc, esq., proved the lucky candidate, who having received 1845 votes, the highest number given to any one competitor.

The contest for the memorandum book brought $86. Master Antoine Vives carried off the prize, polling 542 votes.

The fete closed at a late hour Monday night, and a summing up of receipts next day showed the handsome total of $1930, which is doing remarkably well in these dull times. The affair was well managed, and to the valuable assistance rendered Father Cuppens by the ladies and gentlemen who dealt out the refreshments much of the success is due. Our citizens have always responded liberally when called upon to encourage entertainments for the benefit of the Catholic Church and this last occasion has been no exception to the rule." (June 12th.)

The above is one of the best insights we have on the musical concerts and contests of the nineteenth century brass band movement.

After the loss of the musical contest to the Baton Rouge Band the Donaldsonville Band issued a challenge to the Baton Rouge musicians to meet in another contest. The newspaper carries this challenge and the details of it:

"A member of the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band went to Baton Rouge Tuesday morning, on the steamer W. S. Pike bearing a challenge to the Independent
Silver Cornet Band of that city to meet the D.S.C. Band in a contest which will fairly test and determine the relative musical merit and ability of the two organizations. We have not learned the exact wording of this challenge, but understand that it leaves time and place to the pleasure of the Baton Rouge organization, specifies that the same pieces shall be rendered as were played at the recent match in this town, the provides that there shall be three judges, one to be named by each band, those two to select a third. Our Donaldsonville Band is by no means satisfied with the decision given by the judges in the contest of two weeks since. The only fully competent musician among the referees protested warmly against awarding the medal to the band from Baton Rouge, insisting that our home organization, by their admirable execution of music much more difficult than that selected by their opponents, were fairly entitled to the victory. The bearer of the challenge returned Wednesday night, but the result of his mission will not be made public until after the SDCB holds a meeting to take cognizance of the response made by the Baton Rouge Band. We trust a contest may be arranged on the basis proposed, as there is much dissatisfaction concerning the match of the Fete Champetre, and a general belief exists here that the DSCB, guratively speaking, can 'waltz all around' our musical friends from the little city up the river." (June 12th.)

In the next issue of the paper we read that the Baton Rouge Band declines the challenge and the correspondence between the two bands is printed in the paper:

"A CHALLENGE AND A BACK-DOOR. The Baton Rouge Band declines a challenge from the DSCB. Through the kindness of Mr. Charles Gecks, we are enabled to place before our readers the full text of the correspondence between the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band and the Independent Silver Cornet Band of Baton Rouge that will explain itself:

The Challenge

D.S.C. Band Hall - June 6, 1875
For the officers and members of the Independent Silver Cornet Band of Baton Rouge:

Gentlemen - I herewith transmit for your consideration a copy of a resolution passed unanimously at a regular meeting held this 6th. day of June, respectfully ask a reply at your earliest convenience.
Respectfully, etc.
Octave Terrio, Secretary.

Resolved: That this band, feeling aggrieved at the judgment rendered at the late contest had at the Fete Champetre given by Rev. Father Cuppens at Donaldsonville on the 30th of May last, at which the Independent Silver Cornet Band or Baton Rouge was awarded the medal and declared the victor therefore, be it:

Resolved: That the president to be and is hereby authorized to challenge the said Baton Rouge Silver Cornet Band on the following terms and conditions, viz:
1 - That the same men who participated in the said last contest to participate in this.
2 - The same pieces of music to be performed as played at the said last contest by each band.
3 - The contest to take place within thirty days from the receipt of these resolutions.
4 - This contest to be decided by three professional musicians, who shall act as judges; each band being entitled to appoint one, and the third to be appointed by the other two judges.
5 - The Baton Rouge Band to have the choice to select one of the following places: Baton Rouge, Donaldsonville and New Orleans to have said contest.

June 12, 1875

The Response

Hall of the Independent Silver Cornet Band;
Baton Rouge, June 11, 1875

To the officers and members of the D.S.C. Band

Gentlemen, I herewith enclose a copy of resolutions unanimously adopted at a call meeting at the Independent S. C. Band

Respectfully Yours, etc.

Louis J. Kleinpeter,
Secretary.

Resolved: That the proposition of the D.S.C. Band be declined for the following reasons:
1 - There is no ground for the 'challenge' the contest cannot be renewed, because it was decided finally on the 30th May, 1875, and related to that particular event alone.
2 - If we consent to repeat the contest we have all to lose and nothing to gain that which has already been declared ours, 'fairly,' squarely and openly.
3 - The challenge implies a desire to impugn the honor and good name of the judges to whose arbitration we all consented before entering the contest: under the circumstances we lend ourselves to such a scheme.

a true copy;

Louis J. Kleinpeter,
Secretary

The Chief response to the above letter is published in the paper:

"If our Baton Rouge friends were desirous of announcing to the world that they feared the result of a contest with the Donaldsonville Band to be had before competent judges, they could hardly have selected more appropriate language for conveying the announcement than is contained in the above resolution. The first proposition, that 'there is no ground for the challenge,' is idle, and seems to indicate that the tenure by which the medal awarded in the recent contest is held is regarded as doubtful by the holders
themselves. The challenge was made in no captious spirit, but because the members of the Donaldsonville organization, supported by the judgment of nearly every musician in attendance at the late Fete Champetere, believed the award of a majority of the referees adjust and at variance with the relative achievement of the contestants - there is no intentions implied or expressed to ‘impugn the honor and good faith of the judges, but the intent to question the musical ability of two of them in unconcented, and if the Baton Rouge Band desires to champion and defend them from this imputation, the most effective mode of procedure will be to consent to a repetition of the contest before referees of undoubted musical capacity, and by the merit of their execution again with a victory, if they can. The Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band cares nothing for the medal so far as concerns its intrinsic value, but they have a reputation to maintain and they consider that it has been infringed upon by judges who, while honorable and conscientious in their verdict, lacked the talent and acquirement necessary to distinguish between fine execution of music and the production of the most noise. It does not appear from the challenge that the medal is to be re-contested for, and we do not believe that such should be the case; what they seek is an opportunity to vindicate the superiority of their musical capability and skill, and if the Baton Rouge organization refuses to grant this opportunity in the face of the argument added, but one construction can be placed upon their action. If resolution No. 2 in the communication of the Baton Rouge Band means that they would probably give another kind of answer to a challenge that stipulated for a pecuniary stake to be contested for, we have no doubt they can and will be accommodated in this respect to the extent of a few dimes - say enough to pay for lemonades all around and have a little something left. We hope the D.S.C.B. will renew their challenge, disavow any desire to deprive the I.S.C.B. of the trinket awarded at the Fete Champetere, and suggest a wager on the result that will overcome the objection of the Baton Rougeians that they have ‘all to lose and nothing to win.' (June 12th.)

Nothing appears in the next few issues of the paper and the challenge is lost in the passage of time. The D.S.C. Band continues to perform, with the next performance in St. James Parish:

"The members of the Silver Cornet Band were delighted with their trip to St. James on the Lee last Sunday, and also with the treatment they received at the fair at Cantrell Church. The officers of the Lee expressed surprise that Donaldsonville should have such a superior musical organization, and extended an invitation to the band to repeat the trip whenever they felt so disposed. At the fair their music was highly appreciated and courtesies were fairly showered upon the members. We imagine they must have carried the hearts of the ladies by storm, for when they came home nearly every man was sporting a large bouquet. Some of the members returned in carriages Sunday night, but the majority arrived by Monday's train." (June 26th.)

The D.S.C. Band had much pride in its organization, pride reflected by the local paper, The Donaldsonville Chief:
"The column in the New Orleans Republican which is devoted to short editorial items of a miscellaneous character would seem a dreary waste without the facetious references to 'country brass bands' and 'musical contest in the rural districts' that appear with almost daily regularity. If the Republican's funny man could develop half the capacity and wind for blowing on brass instruments that he does in blowing about them, he would be a valuable acquisition to any band." (July 6th.)

Another popular activity in the late nineteenth century was the outdoor picnic. Most picnics brought with them a brass band; the Phoenix Fire Co. hired the D.S.C. Band to play for its picnic:

"Phoenix picnic - The festive spirits of Phoenix Fire Co. had a picnic in the front yard of Mr. Aaron Jacob's Stella Plantation, two miles below town, last Tuesday, and a royal time they and their friends had upon the occasion. Leaving here at 9:00 in the morning, headed by the Silver Cornet Band, they proceeded to the appointed place and spent the entire day in a variety of amusement, such as leap frog, baseball, croquet, dancing, singing, eating and drinking and returned at sundown delighted with the days entertainment." (August 1st.)

Donaldsonville had a number of bands, both black and white, and each received space in the paper. The August 1st paper remarks that "The Ascension, Silver Cornet and St. Cecile Band were all practicing in town last night." Two other bands, besides those already mentioned, were beginning to practice; The Independent Brass Band and the Conway Field Band, who begin to get engagements.

1876

The D.S.C. Band receives an offer to play for St. Patrick's Day in New Orleans:

"The Silver Cornet Band has received an offer of an engagement to furnish music for some New Orleans society upon the occasion of the parade in commemoration of St. Patrick's Day, which occurs next Tuesday. If satisfactory arrangements can be made in the short time interviewing, the lads will go." (March 14th.)

The D.S.C. Band continues to host dramatic presentations in its hall and many times play for them along with other bands. We notice that the St. Cecilia Band now plays in the D.S. C. Band Hall, a place that it had been forbidden to play in earlier, a position that caused a conflict between the church and the D.S.C. Band:

"Dramatic play at DSCB Hall - at 7:30, the St. Cecilia Band struck up one of their soul stirring airs. After the performance of the English play there was an intermission of 20 minutes, and the Silver Cornet Band took advantage of the occasion to discourse several sweet airs. The playing of this band during the whole evening was indeed admirable, being unexcelled by any musical organization in the parish." (May 30th.)
The rest of the year there are no mentioning about the D.S.C. Band. There are articles on the Independent Brass Band, the St. Joseph, the St. Cecilia Band, and a few bands from outside the town, but not until February 24, 1877, do we see mention of the D.S.C. Band.

1877

In the February 24th. issue of the paper we read about the combing of the Independent and Silver Cornet Bands. One of the difficulties when there is an established band is keeping members. One of the major difficulties, especially in small country towns, was losing members when they move out of the parish. I think that this loss of members became a problem for the Silver Cornet Band as reported in the following article. Another problem is the unavailability of band members during the day due to working:

"A combination band, composed of members of the Independent and Silver Cornet Band organizations, practices nightly at the D.S.C. Band Hall, preparatory to a visit to the capital on the 4th proximo. Upon that day, the New Orleans Firemen have their annual parade, and our Donaldsonville musicians have an engagement to play for one of the leading companies - Mississippi #2 we believe. The Silver Cornet and Independent are both first-class bands, and an alliance of their best elements produces an organization that will be able to compete successfully with any of those of the metropolis." (Feb. 24th.)

The paper covers the engagement with two other items:

"The combination of Silver Cornet and Independent Band will leave for New Orleans today, to fill an engagement to play for Brooklyn Fire Co. #2 of Algiers in the grand annual parade of tomorrow. A number of persons from this town will visit New Orleans to witness the parade." (March 23rd.)

"The members of the Donaldsonville Band, which visited New Orleans to play in the Firemen's procession of Sunday last mostly returned on Monday, and report having enjoyed themselves greatly among the pleasant incidents of their stay in the city was a visit and serenade to Gov. Mitchells at the City Hotel, who received them with characteristic urbanity and consideration." (March 3rd.)

The D.S.C. Band Hall was 'rented' to minstrel troupe for a special performance thus securing additional revenue for the Band:

"Waverly Minstrels (New Orleans) performance at DSCB Hall." (March 3rd.)

Living in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the people did not have all the modern conveniences nor the many forms of entertainment we have today. One creative form of activity initiated by the bands was the serenade; on St. Joseph's Day the combined bands serenaded all those men whose name was Joe:
"Several balls and parties were given in town Monday evening, which was mi-
lent or St. Joseph's night. Among others were birthday parties at the residence of Messrs.
Joseph Hiss and Joseph Armand, Sr. The combination Silver Cornet and Independent
Bands turned out and serenaded all the Josephs they could find, including Messrs. Hiss,
Icard, Belleison, Ferrier, Israel and others." (March 24th.)

The D.S.C. band hall is rented to a group of colored excursionists:

"A large party of colored excursionists from New Orleans visited Donaldsonville
per special train last Saturday. They were accompanied by an excellent brass band and
most of the party in the greater portion of their time dancing in the DSCB Hall, which had
been engaged for the occasion." (June 9th.)

In our previous accounts of the D.S.C. Band, we read where there are problems
filling all the engagements, especially during the week. This and perhaps other difficulties
have arisen and the days of the D.S.C. Band are numbered. The combination of the
D.S.C.Band with the Independent Band mentioned earlier on this problem. The final
break-up is not announced in the paper but most probably the older members, having
devoted a number of years to the band, gradually either died or decided it was time to
hang up their horns. The remaining members went into other town's bands and the
D.S.C.Band Association was dissolved and its assets sold. This we can see in the next
few issues of the paper:

"The D.S.C. Hall has been seized and will be sold on the 25th inst., to satisfy
judgments in the suits instituted by Messrs. Simon and Rudolph Braud. The official
advertisement of seizure and sale is published in another column." (August 11th.)

The hall and other items of the D.S.C. Band go on auction and the D.S.C. Band
evolves into the Independent Brass Band:

"The sheriff made two sales at the Court-House this morning. One was of
undivided third of a town lot, seized in the suit of Augustine Proche vs. Frederick Baker.
The other sale was of a set of musical instruments and a silver water set, consisting of
pitcher, basin and two goblets, belonging to the late Silver Cornet Band, and seized in the
suit of Rudolph Braud against that defunct organization. Mr. Braud was the highest
bidder in each case, securing the instruments for $130 and the silver set for $60. This is
the set presented to the band at the Catholic Fete Champetre of the 30th of May, 1875,
upon the occasion of their musical contest with the Independent Band of Baton Rouge."
(Nov. 3rd.)

The paper had published notice of this above sale on Oct. 20th:

"On the first Saturday of November Sheriff will sell at auction the musical
instruments belonging to the late Silver Cornet Band to satisfy a judgment of the District
Court in the suit of Mr. Rudolph Braud against the Band." (Oct. 20th.)
The newspaper advertises for the sheriff’s sale of the DSCB equipment and from all indications the DSCB disbands. We do not hear from them until a new band is formed called the "Cofield Battery C cornet Band."

1879

The members of the Silver Cornet Band met a final time and decided to reorganize into a new band. The young men, in reviving the band, adopted a new name, the "Cofield's Battery C Cornet Band":

A New Band
The Cofield's Battery C Cornet Band

"At a meeting of the young men composing the new Silver Cornet Band, held Thursday evening, the 25th ultimo, it was decided to revive and reorganize the band; and at a second meeting, which took place the following Saturday evening, a proposition to adopt the name of Cofield's Battery 'C Cornet Band was unanimously carried, and the following officers were elected:

President, A. J. Reynolds
Vice Pres., Willie F. Stockmeyer
Secretary, J. M. Keating
Treasurer, Louis H. Stockmeyer
Leader, D. Ohlemeyer

We are glad to chronicle the reorganization of this excellent band, which attained a flattering degree of popularity during the few months of its previous existence by reason of the accommodating disposition displayed by that members in the matter of furnishing music for public entertainment and tendering their services to other organizations without distinction or partiality, and we hope to see it flourish and take high rank among the permanent institutions of our town. Mr. Cofield and the military company which bears his name will undoubtedly feel highly complimented by the new band's selection of a title."

(March 6th.)

1880

Following the tradition or policy of a new brass band, the Cofield Band began its career with the usual serenade:

Cofield's Battery C Cornet Band was out serenading exposition Sunday evening. It was by no means such 'a starry night for a ramble' as the familiar song describes, for the darkness was and the rain poured down in fistful showers, but the boys rambled nevertheless, and had a barrel of fun. They began by serenading Capt. Jones and Lieutenants Klopman, Lafargue and Earhart, whom they surprised at the Lee Hotel, and a jolly crowd soon formed, composed of representatives of both our local military companies, reinforced by Col. A. J. Bachemin of the Orleans Artillery, who opportunity
returned from a trip down Bayou Lafourche. Presently the entire party took up a line of march for the residence of Capt. R. Prosper Landry of the Cannoneers, where, after music by the band, all were invited to enter and partake of liquid cheer. Nearly an hour was spent in speech-making and toast-drinking, interspersed with music, when the party moved on to the quarters of Orderly Sergeant Bentley of Cofield's Battery, who was honored with a serenade that he highly appreciated. Mine host Lefèvre of the City Hotel was next assaulted, and capitulated in his usual handsome and pleasant way. A short time was agreeably spent at Monsieur Lefèvre's cozy house, and then the serenaders returned to the Lee, where the remainder of the better half of the night was whirled away with instrumental music, chin music, mirth and jollity galore. The new band was heartily congratulated upon its organization, and Lieutenant Klopman, with the princely generosity that always characterizes him volunteered to procure a new set of instruments at once to facilitate the progress of the members, leaving the question of refunding to him the money thus expended for future consideration. Besides the members of the band and officers of Cofield's Battery, Surgeon John E. Dufell, Lieuts. Jno. T. Noland and L. A. Landry of the Canoneers of Donaldsonville participated in the 'doings' of this merry party of serenaders, and contributed by their presence the hearty enjoyment of the occasion."

(March 13th.)

The band plays for 'a basket picnic a Donaldsonville for the Grasshoppers Baseball club. Gibson Grove.' (June 12th.)

The Cofield Band instruments were the instruments of the defunct S.D.C. Band. Being in bad shape and old, the new band receives new instruments:

"Cofield Battery Band - through the kindness of Lieut. Pierre Klopman of Cofield's Battery C, the band which has adopted the Battery's name received on last Sunday a new set of brass instruments, handsome in appearance and of first-rate quality, and as a consequence the playing of the organization evinces a marked improvement. Their old instruments were originally purchased by the noted Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band, and have been in constant use for nine years.

By way of celebrating their new acquisition, the band boys took a turn about town Monday night and serenaded Lieutenants Klopman and Lafargue and Orderly Sergeant Bentley. Capt. Jones was not visited because of sickness in his family. Lieut. Earhart received his share of music later in the week - Thursday night. We learn from a reliable source that Sergeant Bentley got wind of the intended visit of the band and made some modest preparations to entertain them that seemed to prove quite satisfactory to the visitors. Should there have been any shortcomings, however, we hope the members of the band will excuse them, as we hear the Sergeant is, for the time being, dragging out a miserable existence in state of single cussedness, his better half being absent on a visit to New Orleans.

Wednesday evening the Cofield Band attended the drill meeting of the Battery and played a number of tunes. The presence of the band increased the interest of the usual exercises, and we are glad to learn that this feature of the meeting is to be made permanent." (June 19th.)
For July 4th, while there was no formal celebration in the Donaldsonville area, the "Cofield Band played several national airs from the gallery of Phoenix Hall." (July 10th.)

The Cofield Band played for baseball games in and around Donaldsonville. Using a brass band to play for baseball games was not an unusual activity; it was practiced in a number of parishes:

"BASEBALL - Grasshoppers vs. Hancocks - The match game of baseball played between the Grasshoppers Club of Donaldsonville and the Hancock Club of the fifth ward, last Sunday proved quite an interesting contest as was anticipated, and attracted a considerable assemblage of spectators. The Grasshoppers, accompanied by the Cofield Band and a number of friends, crossed the river at Donaldsonville at 2 P.M., and proceeded to the Hancock Grounds, on the Clark Plantation, in two large wagons sent up for their accommodation by the courtesy of the members of the challenging club. More music from the band and then cordial good-byes were said and the Donaldsonville boys returned home in splendid spirit." (July 17th.)

The band also plays for the Cofield military drill night:

"Phoenix Hall is becoming a popular place or resort on the drill nights of Cofield's Battery, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The Cofield Battery Brass Band attends the meeting regularly and discourse sweet music and the young ladies and gentlemen present take advantage of favorable opportunity to indulge in the pleasures of the dance during the intermissions in the military exercises." (July 31st.)

In the year 1880 the brass band continues to play for dances:

"Surprise Party - Richard Ponds - The Cofield Battery Brass Band was in attendance and their music did much to enhance the pleasure of the occasion. The evening was whiled away with music, dancing, etc." (July 31st.)

The band plays again for the baseball game and its attendant activities:

"Baseball game - Cofield Battery Brass Band there playing music - team from New Orleans. Band met ferry boat and escorted to field by the band." (July 31st.)

The band, combining players with the Independent Brass Band, plays for the baseball game at Clark Plantation:

"Last Sunday afternoon baseball circles in this parish were enlivened by two interesting match games. The Hancocks received their guests in their usual courteous and hospitable manner. The Burnsides were accompanied by a brass band, and their music heightened the interest of the trip considerably." (August 21st.)

The Cofield Band is again joined by members of the Independent Brass Band as they play at the military drill:
"Phoenix Hall presented a lively appearance Wednesday night, on the occasion of the weekly drill meeting of the Cofield Battery. Besides the members of the Battery, who were in full uniform, there were present the officers of the Cannoneers of Donaldsonville, also in full uniform, the Independent and Cofield Battery Bands, and a large number of civilians, including many ladies. The pitcher won by the Battery in the competitive drill of the 29th ult., was placed in a conspicuous positioning the hall for inspection and was much admired. After some enlivening music from the consolidated bands, and a brief display drill by the Battery, a hop followed and the pleasures of the dance were enjoyed for a couple of hours." (Sept. 11th.)

Just like the earlier combining of the Silver Cornet Band with another band, the Cofield Band now combines with the Independent Brass Band to form a more complete instrumented band. This consolidation is announced in the newspaper:

"Consolidation of Bands - The following extract from the minutes of our leading musical organization will explain itself:

Donaldsonville, La., Sept. 30, 1880,
At a meeting of the Donaldsonville Independent and Cofield Battery Brass Bands held on the 23rd. inst., it was unanimously resolved, that both bands be consolidated and combined into one.
A resolution was offered that the Organization retain the name of Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band, and the same was adopted.
Thereupon the following officers were elected to serve for the ensuing year.
President and Leader - J. Arthur Claverie
Vice President - John F. Terrio
Secretary - William D. Park
Treasurer - Geo. S. Cire

We congratulate the members of both the Independent and Cofield Battery Bands upon the fusion accomplished in such a pleasant and satisfactory manner last week, and upon their judicious selection of officers. The new band, numbering more than twenty members, comprises talent that will make it one of the very best in Louisiana. With a few weeks' practice we believe it will not only excel any organization in the State, outside of New Orleans, but will compare favorably with the leading bands of the metropolis. The new Independent Band made its first appearance in public last Sunday afternoon, when it marched from Phoenix Hall to the wharf and back again, dispensing enlivening music in first-class style. Tuesday night the band serenaded Mr. P. Lefevre, the popular proprietor of the City Hotel, Mr. J. J. Lafargue, the genial host of the Robt. E. Lee Hotel, and were received with the hospitality which always characterizes those gentlemen in the treatment of their friends and guests." (Oct. 2nd.)

This evolution from the Silver Cornet Band, to the Cofield Brass Band, to the Independent Brass Band, proves that brass bands are still popular and still needed.
The Independent Brass Band (IBB)

1875

The beginning of the Independent Brass Band goes back to at least 1875 with the first entry in the paper of Sept. 9, 1875:

"Tilden and Nicholls Club meeting Thursday. The presence of the Independent Brass Band lent interest to the proceedings, and it is no undeserved disparagement of the distinguished orators of the occasion to say that the music was far superior to the speeches." (Sept. 9th.)

Like all bands of the nineteenth century, they play for the traditional functions, one of which is the excursion:

"The Independent Brass Band is off on a pleasure excursion, by invitation of the popular commander of the new coast Steamer Southern Belle. They went to Bayou Sara, intending to confine their trip to a visit to that place and return, but at the solicitation of Capt. McElroy they remained on board when the boat reached here last evening and will extend their voyage to New Orleans, whence they will return this evening." (Sept. 23rd.)

The Tilden club was a Black Republican Club, whose purpose was to attract the black vote. It was run by the Republican Party, which was headed by whites, thus the use of the IBB for political purposes:

"Tilden Club - The IBB was on hand, as usual, and relieved the monotony of poor logic with good music." (Sept. 30th.)

The Independent Band, however, was not political. We read where they play also for the Democrats:

"Democratic campaign - 1st Ward - and the aid of the Independent Band will be involved to rally the faithful and the doubtful." (Oct. 14th.)

The traditional serenade was also part of the IBB's activity:

"The IBB was out on a serenading tour Saturday night and discoursed sweet music before the residence of Messrs. Jos. Gondrau, R. J. Gruen, M. Keating, Armond Richard and H. S. Boudreaux, after which they visited the sugar house of the Peytain Plantation, just below town. The young musicians were well received everywhere and enjoyed themselves." (Oct. 21st.)
1876

The band again plays for a political meeting:

"Democratic meeting held at Buffel's Store, 1st Ward. The Independent Band was in attendance, and the unusually large attendance is doubtless attributed to this circumstance." (July 11th.)

Playing for political rallies or meetings was a regular activity for bands during this era:

"Democratic meeting held at LeBlanc's Store, Smoke Bend. The Independent Band was in attendance, as usual and its good music served to increase the audience and to augment the interest taken in the proceedings." (Oct. 28th.)

"Democratic - one mass meeting at old Machand Plantation. The Independent Band was present, and with good music, interesting speeches and plenty to eat, ample material for enjoyment was furnished to the people in attendance." (Nov. 11th.)

1877

The band held regular rehearsals which in those days were called a meeting, as the band was a social institution as well as a musical one:

"The young men of the Independent Band hold regular meetings for practice in their new quarters at the wharf house, and there fine music lends an additional charm to the balmy evenings. The band is in excellent form and steadily improving." (Feb. 2nd.)

The Independent bands combine with the Silver Cornet Band and rehearses for a visit to the Capital City, Baton Rouge:

"A combination band, composed of members of the Independent and Silver Cornet organizations, practices nightly at the DSCB Hall, preparatory to a visit to the capital on the 4th proximo. Upon that day, the New Orleans firemen have their annual parade, and our Donaldsonville musicians have an engagement to play for one of the leading companies – ‘Mississippi 2’ we believe. The Silver Cornet and Independent are both first-class bands, and an alliance of their best elements produces an organization that will be able to compete successfully with any of those of the metropolis." (Feb. 24th.)

The combined bands "leave for New Orleans to fill an engagement to play for Brooklyn Fire Co. #2 of Algiers." (March 3rd), "returned on Monday and report having enjoyed themselves greatly' and 'among the pleasant incidents of their stay in the city was a visit and serenade to Gov. Nicholls at the City Hotel." (March 10th) The combination of the two bands also play for parties on St. Joseph's Day and interestingly, "serenaded all the Joseph's they could find" in their home town of Donaldsonville." (March 24th.)
The band plays for the ever popular social activity, the picnic, for the Phoenix Fire Co. celebration on its fourth anniversary, a "picnic dinner at the firehouse." (May 12th)

The band plays for the Ascension Hook & Ladder third anniversary, celebrated with a parade in which the IBB marches. (May 26th), and a fair for the Catholic Church in which the "Independent Band and a band from New Orleans furnished excellent music." (June 5th.)

The Cannoneers plan a 4th of July celebration in which the band is one of the participants:

"The Cannoneers of Donaldsonville are making preparations for celebrating the Fourth of July with a grand and extensive demonstration, which it is stated, will be participated in by the Baton Rouge Zouaves and detachments of military organizations from New Orleans. The presence of Gov. Nicholls and other eminent visitors is also anticipated. The Cannoneers will display their new uniforms upon the occasion, and the members of the Independent Band will likewise be uniformed. The celebration will be looked forward to with much interest by the people of this vicinity." (June 16th.)

The band is solicited for a fair in St. James Parish:

"Services of the Independent Band have been solicited to furnish music for a fair to be held in St. James on the 30th June and July 1. The reputation of our Donaldsonville musicians is widespread and creditable." (June 16th.)

"Grand Fair is to be given on Saturday and Sunday next in St. James for the benefit of the public school fund of the parish. An entertainment for such an object deserves liberal patronage, and we hope all residents of Donaldsonville and Ascension who can make it convenient, will visit the fair. The Independent Band of this town has been employed to furnish music for the occasion and those who desire to accompany the band will probably be furnished transportation at small cost." (June 23rd.)

The newspaper covers the band trip to St. James:

"The Independent Band left early this morning on the steamer Little Minnie, bound for St. James, where they will attend the fair for the benefit of the public schools." (June 30th.)

The band, like all bands of this time, elect officers to run the band:

"The Independent Brass Band held its annual election at the hall of the organization Thursday night, and the following officers were chosen:

Leader - J. E. LaBlanc
Second Leader - Paul Leche
Secretary - J. M. Keating
Treasurer - George Cire
Warden - J. F. Terrio"
All of these have served a term in their respective positions excepting Mr. Paul Leche, who recently returned from College. (Sic; Leche-future mayor) Yesterday was the first anniversary of the organization of the band, and the event will be commemorated by an excursion picnic to take place today, at College Point, Parish of St. James, the Little Minnie has been chartered for the trip, and will leave at an early hour this morning with the picnic party, consisting of only the members of the band. The day will be spent in the amusement incidental to such frolics, and the party will return home to-night.

It is pleasant to know that the Independent Band is in a flourishing condition, both regarding its morale and pecuniary. May it celebrate many more birthdays, and may each successive anniversary find it more efficient and prosperous than the preceding one. The Chief wishes you a jolly time to-day, boys, and a safe return." (August 11th.)

The Cannoneers of Donaldsonville take part in 'target practice' and the Independent Brass Band and the Conway Field Band takes part.

"Pursuant to the order of Capt. Landry, the Cannoneers of Donaldsonville assembled at their hall at St. Joseph's Academy, Thursday evening of last week, and marched to Mr. Gervais Gauthreaux's place, about a mile below town, on the left bank of Bayou Lafourche, where they went into camp for the night. Next day the first target practice took place. The Independent Brass and Conway Field Bands furnished abundant music, and the occasional evolutions of the Cannoneers combined to make the occasion one of considerable interest to the goodly number of ladies and citizens who visited the grounds." (August 18th.)

Bands, at times, had problems with rehearsal places. The Silver Cornet Band built its own hall but the Independent did not have one. They moved from the wharf to an office opposite the town courthouse:

"The Independent Band has changed the location of its meeting room from the wharf to one of the small offices opposite the courthouse, where melodies are discoursed one or two evenings of each week to the edification of the neighborhood. Those good looking young gentlemen, Paul Leche and John Terrio, are 1st and 2nd leaders of the Independents." (Oct. 6th.)

The band, like others in Donaldsonville, often visit the surrounding parishes, especially St. James and Assumption. This time it is St. Joseph Parish:

"The Independent Brass Band will visit St. Joseph Parish tomorrow to furnish music for a church fair at Papa Vert Settlement." (Oct. 13th.)

Numerous times the bands of Donaldsonville, both black and white, play for funerals. The Independent Band plays for a funeral of one of its own, Mr. M. Keating:
"The Independent Band, of which Mr. Keating was an honorary member, led the procession and played mournful music on the way to the cemetery." (Nov. 18th.)

1878

The band has a benefit for itself at the DSCB Hall:

"Le Comple Comedy Co. entertainment at DSCB Hall for benefit of Independent Brass Band (Tuesday) but the attendance was smaller than at either of the preceding exhibitions." (Feb. 19th.)

The brass bands, as was stated earlier, could become string bands when using a certain number of its members, thus conforming to the accepted instrumentation of the era's string band ensemble. The string band instrumentation was better equipped to furnish the style of music appropriate to the new dance crazes:

"The Phoenix Hall - We are glad to say that the fourth anniversary ball of the Phoenix Fire Company, which took place at the DSCB Hall last Saturday night, was an eminently enjoyable and successful affair. The hall was just comfortably crowded with a gay throng of ladies and gentlemen, who will not soon forget the merry occasion. The entertainment began early in the evening and continued until daylight Sunday morning. The arrangements were admirable, and nothing was left undone which could contribute to the pleasure of the assembled guests. The Independent Brass Centennial String Band furnished delightful music, and palatable refreshments, liquid and solid, were dispensed in the little rooms beneath the stage and under a tarpaulin-covered shed in the yard adjoining the hall." (Feb. 19th.)

The band next plays for the annual Firemen's Parade:

"The Independent Brass Band of this town is engaged to furnish music for one of the New Orleans Fire companies on the occasion of the Firemen's annual parade next Monday, and will enjoy the honor of leading the cavalcade which is to receive Rex at the steamboat landing and escort him into the city. The Independent's have the musical capacity to do justice to any position which may be assigned them." (March 2nd.)

The final performance of the band in 1878 was for the 4th of July celebration in Baton Rouge:

"...At 3 P.M. a grand military parade occurred, the procession consisting of the Baton Rouge militia organizations, the U. S. troops, the Cannoneers of Donaldsonville and the cadets of the State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College. Music was furnished by the Independent Bands of Baton Rouge and Donaldsonville. At the conclusion of the march a review and dress parade occurred on the wide Boulevard at the head of which stands the grand old Capital ruin." (July 13th.)
1879

For an unknown reason there is only one entry in 1879, occurring on October 4th. - the band plays for a fair. I cannot find if the band is active during the rest of the year:

"Phoenix Fair - The Silver Cornet and Independent Brass Bands were present and their enlivening music did much to attract attendance and enhance the enjoyment of the visitors." (Dec. 4th.)

1880

We next read of the Independent Band when it plays for a school exhibition (Sic: exhibition - the name used for school graduation exercises):

"Mrs. Terrio's Exhibition - school. Cornet solos - Johnnie Terrio. Overture by Independent Band (The band also played during the program)." (Jan. 31st.)

In April the band is very busy - it plays for Mrs. LeBlanc's social affair and is listed as the Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band. It also plays for the Hebrew Benevolent Association a good example of the era's activity called an entertainment:

"L.H.B.A. entertainment - As might have been expected, the musical and dramatic entertainment given at Phoenix Hall last Saturday evening, under the auspices of the ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association, attracted a full house, and the audience was as satisfactory in all other particulars as it was...., being brilliant in appearance, liberal in its patronage of the ice cream and cake tables on the lower floor, and showing generous appreciation of the merits of the performers who appeared upon the stage. The program included overtures by the Centennial String and Independent Brass Bands, a trio from Jerusalem sang by..., An English farce in once act entitled 'A Cup of Tea,' a duet 'Cheerfulness'..., and Offenbach's operetta 'The Village Fiddler, or Leap Year.' The trio and duet were splendidly executed and both were heartily encouraged. After the performance the hall was cleared and the young folks enjoyed themselves a while." (April 17th.)

Many activities, including entertainments, political rallies, baseball games, usually ended up with a dance. The social aspect of the serenade was an important aspect of the activity as well as the advertising and exposure benefits. Every band played serenades and the Independent Band, closely related to the military, do the honors and play for some military dignitaries:

"Military Frolic - Sunday afternoon, the 18th inst., the members of Cofield's Battery C, accompanied by the Independent Brass Band, jumped into a couple of large cane carts kindly loaned them by Messrs. Hanson & Lemann and went down the river to pay a visit to their estimable friend and patron, Mr. J. C. Cofield. The merry cavalcade was led by a barouche containing Co. A. J. Bachemir. The band furnished an abundance of lively music on the way down and back, and the party veritably 'aroused the natives'
along the route. Arrived at Mr. Cofield's beautiful home, the visitors were cordially welcomed, and after a brief address by Capt. Jones, a serenade by the band and a display or drills on the spacious grounds in front of the residence the Battery and its friends were invited into partakes of refreshments provided for the occasion. After a most agreeable half-hour spent in social converse, the Battery reformed in line, the band gave a parting air, and the welcome intruders took their leave. Getting again into their vehicles, the parties were quickly conveyed back as far as the hospitable residence of the Gaudin brothers and their estimable relative Mr. Camille Mollere, where a delightful hour was spent, partaking of refreshments, dancing and chatting. The gentlemen and ladies of the house entertained their guests in their usual perfect manner and all regretted the arrival of the time to depart. The Battery marched back from Gaudin's, the carts having been sent home from there. Arrived at the Lee Hotel the musicians and soldiers took a parting 'smile' upon the invitation of Lieut's. Klopman and Lafargue, and then dispersed after having spent an afternoon and evening of the most unalloyed pleasure to all concerned.

(April 24th.)

After a meeting of the Independent Band, there was issued a musical challenge to other bands. It appeared in the paper of April 24, 1880:

"MUSICAL CHALLENGE.
At a meeting of the Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band held April 8, 1880, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:
Resolved, That the Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band Challenge any Amateur Band in Louisiana to play for championship or money, at any place to be agreed upon by both bands.
2nd That should any one wish to accept our challenge a letter addressed to J. A. Claverie, Leader D.I.B.B. will reach the Band.
3rd That these resolutions be printed in the Donaldsonville CHIEF.
A. Gingry
President.

a true copy
W. D. Park, Secretary

The Houma Courier comments on the challenge:

"The Independent Brass Band of Donaldsonville challenges any band outside of New Orleans for the championship or money. Bah! The Houma Band once sent a challenge of $500; but it was never accepted - no - never. (April 24, 1880),Houma Courier

Nothing further is heard of the challenge. The band continue its local activities, first with a dance for a friend:

"A most pleasant and enjoyable affair was the soiree which occurred at the residence of Widow Octave Terrio, in Donaldsonville, on the 20th day of May, in
commemoration of the twenty first birthday of that lady's oldest son, John F. Terrio, esq. There is no more popular young man than John in town, and his friends gathered in numerous arrays to attest by their presence the esteem in which their young host is held and the gratification it gave them to aid in celebrating an important epoch in his career. The party was a merry one, and the evening were swiftly away as the pastimes usual to such occasions. In addition to a number of our most attractive ascension beauties, there were in attendance Misses Addie McGrath and Florence Funke, two charming young ladies from Baton Rouge, whose presence enhanced the enjoyment of all, and especially of the young men. The members of the Independent Band were on hand to congratulate their comrade, and their sweetest airs were played in his honor. "(June 12th.)

An interesting article in the paper gives an excellent account and description of a band playing an evening of serenades:

"Serenade - Both the Cofield Battery Band and Independent Brass Band were out serenading their friends Thursday night and they appear to have had a very enjoyable time. The Cofield Band crossed the bayou and spent a pleasant evening at the residence of Mr. W. W. Buford, where they were cordially received and handsomely entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Buford and their charming sister, Miss Eleanor Sharp of Baton Rouge, who is here on a brief visit. The band played a number of pleasing airs, which were much admired. After recrossing the Bayou, the band stealthily proceeded to the residence of Lieutenant F. B. Earhart and paid him the compliment of an unexpected serenade, moving quickly away at its close, just as the lieutenant made his appearance at the front door to return his thanks. Peril rang out to the retreating figures, "much obliged, gentlemen!" The reply "You're welcome," came weirdly on the clear night air and all was still again, until the retreating musicians struck up the inspiring strains of "St. John" as they wended their way to their homes.

The Independent serenaded Capt. R. Prosper Landry, Mr. Bernard Lemann, Miss Ludivine Mailette, their good mother, Mr. Jno. Thibant, Lieut's. Pierre Klopman and Jos. Lafargue, Messrs. Elphege and Edonard Gaudin, Jno. Cire, Edgard Fortier and Aimée Richard, the compliment being understood to extend also to the families of the recipients named. Although invited to enter and partake of refreshments at several residences, the band declined. At Mr. Lemann's, however, a messenger with a box of cigars was sent after them, and Lieut's. Lafargue and Klopman insisted upon keeping the bar of the Lee Hotel open until the serenaders had completed their 'grand round,' when they were compelled by moral suasion to imbue sundry long lemonades and glasses of beer. It was a very pleasant tour to all concerned. The band was in fine play and fully sustained its reputation for beautiful music. We are informed that it was the intention of the Independents to honor the editor of the CHIEF with a serenade, but our absence from home Thursday evening deterred them from carrying out their purpose. We accept the will for deed and return thanks accordingly." (June 19th.)
"Fair - Catholic Church grounds - 9th. of May. The Independent and St. Joseph Bands contributed to the interest of the festival by supplying good music, though there was a lack of this element Sunday and Monday nights, the band having tired themselves out playing for the Firemen's Parade on Saturday." (May 22nd.)

The band, along with the Cofield Band, play for a picnic for the benefit of the Grasshoppers Baseball Club:

"Basket picnic at Donaldsonville for Grasshoppers Baseball Club. The Independent and Cofield Bands have been invited. At Gibson Grove." (June 12th.)

In August, the band, combined with the Cofield Band, plays at another baseball game. The paper states that "the Burnside were accompanied by a brass band, composed of musicians from both the Independent and Cofield Bands, and their music heightened the interest of the trip considerably." (August 21st.)

On July 4th. the Donaldsonville Cannoneers parade "with the Independent Brass Band and played several national airs from the gallery of Phoenix Hall, and then play for a birthday celebration for Pierre Klopman." (July 31st.) Again the paper of August 28th. states that "the Grounds Club and Burnside Club play at Clark Plantation, accompanied by a band composed of players from the Independent and Cofield Battery Band and played a game against the 1 and 2 men of the Hancock's." (August 28th.) The band plays next for the funeral of Mrs. Wilkerson. (Sept. 4th.)

The band schedules an entertainment for the 24th. of October and this activity is mentioned in the paper a number of times:

"On the 24th. of Oct. the Independent Brass Band will give an entertainment."

"Don't fail to provide yourselves with tickets for the Independent Band's concert and dramatic entertainment on the 24th. 50 cents."

"Among the attractions of the independent Brass Band's concert on the 24th. will be a 'mystic drill' by members of the band who belong to the best military companies." (Oct. 2nd.)

The band plays at for "office of Felix Reynaud's 22nd birthday," (Oct. 9), and upon the death of a Mr. Braud who "was an honorary member of the Independent Brass Band." (Oct. 2nd.)

As stated in the Silver Cornet Band write-up, it was in October of 1880 that the Cofield Battery C combines with the Independent Band. The paper notes this merger:

"Consolidation of Bands - The following extract from the minutes of our leading musical organization will explain itself:

Donaldsonville, La., Sept. 30, 1880
At a meeting of the Donaldsonville Independent and Cofield Battery Brass Bands held on the 23rd inst., it was unanimously resolved, that both bands be consolidated and combined into one. A resolution was offered that the organizations retain the name of Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band, and the same was adopted. Thereupon the following officers were elected to serve for the ensuing year:

President and leader - J. Arthur Claverie
Vice President - Leonard T. Duffel
Second Leader - John F. Terrio
Secretary - William D. Park
Treasurer - Geo. S. Cire

a true copy

W. D. Park,
Sect'y D.I.B.B.

(Oct. 9th.), Napoleon Pioneer

As stated, the article also appeared in the "Chief," in the issue of Oct. 2nd. The 'Chief's" article ends with a write-up after giving the same list of officers as above:

"We congratulate the members of both the Independent and Cofield Battery Bands upon the fusion accomplished in such a pleasant and satisfactory manner last week, and upon their judicious selection of officers. The new band, numbering more than twenty members, comprises talent that will make it one of the best in Louisiana. With a few weeks' practices we believe it will not only excel any similar organization in the State, outside of New Orleans, but will compare favorably with the leading bands of the metropolis. The new Independent Band made its first appearance in public last Sunday afternoon, when it marched from Phoenix Hall to the wharf and back again, dispensing enlivening music in first-class style. Tuesday night the band serenaded Mr. P. Lefevre, the popular proprietor of the City Hotel, Mr. J. J. Lafargue, the genial host of the Robt. E. Lee Hotel, and were received with the hospitality which always characterizes those gentlemen in the treatment of their friends and guests." (Oct. 2nd)

This same letter appeared earlier in the Chief and has been quoted. The combined bands play for a weekly meeting of the Donaldsonville Cannoneers, the last engagement of the combined two bands:

"Phoenix Hall presented a lively appearance Wednesday night, on the occasion of the weekly drill meeting of Cofield Battery. Besides the members of the battery, who were in full uniform, there were present the officers of the Cannoneers of Donaldsonville, also in full uniform, the Independent and Cofield Battery Bands, and a large number of civilians, including many ladies. The pitcher won by the Battery in the competitive drill of the 29th ult., was placed in a conspicuous position in the hall for inspection and was much admired. After some enlivening music from the consolidated bands, and a brief display drill by the Battery, a hop followed and the pleasures of the dance was enjoyed for a couple of hours. The brilliant assemblage then dispersed and after the ladies had been escorted home, the Battery reassembled and proceeded to the Robert E. Lee Hotel bar room, where they had been invited by Capt. Jones to 'Christen' their silver pitcher with
champagne. The Independent Band and the officers of the Cannoneers accompanied the party, and participated in the ceremony of 'wetting' the prize. It was 1 o'clock in the morning when the band and the file of the Battery dispersed to their home, but the officers of the Cannoneers and Cofield Battery kept up the fun an hour or so longer." (Sept. 11th.)

Finally, at a concert at Phoenix Hall, the new Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band plays the overture. (Dec. 11th.)

1881

The year begins as the band plays for the Firemen's Ball on January 1st and "music of the best order was furnished by 8 members of the Independent Band. Dancing was kept up until after 2:00."

The band next plays for an entertainment:

"Dramatic presentation - a few airs between acts by the independent Brass Band." (Feb. 5th.)

The band resumes its practice schedule in February:

"The Independent Band, we are glad to say, has resumed its practice meetings. During the past three months practice has been suspended, and the band's music has shown a perceptible falling off from its former high standards. The boys may be counted upon, however, to regain the lost ground right speedily." (Feb. 5th.)

The band, through a third party, gets an engagement for a fire company parade:

"Mr. Andrew J. Gingry visited New Orleans on behalf of the Independent Band this week and acquired for that excellent organization an engagement to furnish music for the St. Bernard Fire Co. #1 at the annual parade of the Orleans Fire Dept. March 4th. The contract calls for 12 musicians and the Independent's will select a dozen of their best members to fill the bill, and that they will do so to the eminent satisfaction of all concerned is a conclusion that admits of no doubt." (Feb. 5th.)

One of the members of that group is mentioned in the paper as having "purchased a fine stem-winding watch - price, one dollar." (March 6th.)

The paper reports on the trip to the parade:

"The Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band - or the dozen members of the organization selected for the occasion - went to New Orleans Thursday and furnished music for St. Bernard Fire Co. #1 at yesterday's parade. The boys have returned home, right side up with care, and express themselves well pleased with the trip, though the long march gave them rather more muscular exercise than they absolutely hankered for." (March 6th.)
In a follow-up article, the paper employs a bit of irony in expressing the rivalry between the Donaldsonville and Baton Rouge Bands:

"I don't believe I told you that I noticed the familiar faces of the Donaldsonville Brass Band in the firemen's parade on the 4th of March. They presented a nice appearance and of course, their music was, as usual fine. There was another band in that parade that looked both novel and amusing, as it advanced. I heard exclamation of surprise all around me, "What is it?" "Who are they?" "Where did they come from?" "Is it Dan Rice's Band?" I looked in their direction and saw what first appeared to be men with drums on their heads, but, also, no, I was obliged to acknowledge it was our Baton Rouge Band with immense black beaver hats on, and all arrayed in new black suits. Someone asked if they were in morning. Yet, in spite of their funeral appearance, they received many compliments for their splendid music." (April 2nd.)

One of the band members, a tuba player, is hired for the Spanish Fort Band in New Orleans:

"Mr. Leonard T. Duffel, the genial young man and talented musician who has for several years played the tuba in the Independent Brass Band of Donaldsonville, has been engaged as a member of the orchestra at Spanish Fort, the famous summer resort on Lake Pontchartrain, near New Orleans. His many friends in this vicinity will be glad to learn of his good fortune, and they know he has the capacity as a musician to hold his own with the accomplished performers everywhere." (April 23rd.)

We do not emphasize the lineup of each year's Fireman's Parade but do note the participation of bands from Donaldsonville that play in the parade. We read in the May 14th paper that this year there will indeed be bands from Donaldsonville who will play in the parade:

"The Independent Brass Band and the St. Joseph Brass Band play for the annual Donaldsonville Firemen's Parade." (May 14th.)

It is customary, when an excursion without a band of its own comes to town, for the town band to meet the excursionists and escort them to their hotel. The Independent Band did the honors this time:

"Excursion from New Orleans and marched to Lee Hotel, headed by the Independent Brass Band." (June 11th.)

Town bands often helped each other when there is a need for more bands, which usually occurred during a town fair. The Independents go to Napoleonville for such an occasion:
"Fair at Napoleonville - The Independent Band of Donaldsonville will attend on the closing day." (June 25th.)

The band next plays for another school closing exercise:

"Grand exhibition of Terrio's School. The Independent Band will fill up the interludes with some of the choicest selections from their repertoire." (July 23rd.)

At an August 4th meeting, the band elects officers for the year:

"D.I.B. Band - The annual meeting of the Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band, for the election of officers, took place Thursday evening and resulted in the re-election of all the former officers, with a single exception. Mr. J. Arthur Claverie, who formerly filled two positions as president and Leader, now occupies only the latter, Mr. Jon. F. Terrio succeeding him as President. The roll of officers is as follows:

President - Jno. F. Terrio
Secretary - W. D. Park
"Treasurer - George Cire
Leader - J. A. Claverie

After the election the boys adjourned to the Lee Hotel, where they pledged the new officers in liquid decoction of promiscuous kinds, and drank to the continued success of their flourishing organization. We learn that the Band intends giving some kind of a frolic in celebration of its anniversary, and a picnic on the banks of Bayou Corne seems to be favored by a majority of the members." (August 6th.)

They do have an excursion but the weather changes their plans and they go to Baton Rouge:

"Unfavorable weather having militated against their proposed excursion to Bayou Corne, the members of the Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band have decided to celebrate the anniversary of their organization by a trip to Baton Rouge to-morrow on the New Orleans Pacific Railway. The excursion train to be run by the railroad company will afford the band a favorable opportunity for their frolic, as it enables them to remain five hours in the Capital City and yet reach home at the reasonable hour of 8 P.M. We commend our musical representatives to the hospitable citizens of Baton Rouge as worthy devotees of the Enterpeau art and creditable specimens of Donaldsonville's young America; and we trust the boys will have a royal, roystering, rattling good time. We suggest to Leader Claverie that, after complimenting the newspapers by a serenade and giving Baton Rougeians a taste of the delightful music by the Independents know so well how to produce, it might be advisable to march the boys to the Garrison grounds at the upper line of the city where they will find an abundance of cool shade under the umbrageous oaks and drinking water from subterranean cisterns that requires no ice to give it a temperature grateful to the parched palate and torrid throat. We have no doubt Sergeant Ferguson, who is in charge of the grounds, will tender them a cordial welcome, and that our friend Prof. L. W. Conerly, who resides there, will do all that lies in his power to make their stay pleasant." (August 13th.)
Details of the excursion appear in the next week's paper:

A majority of the members of the Independent Brass Band, accompanied by members of the Grasshopper Base Ball Club and other residents of Donaldsonville, visited Baton Rouge last Sunday, taking advantage of the excursion given by the railroad company. The party spent five hours in the Capital City and enjoyed themselves greatly; though the base ballers were disappointed at finding that there was no nine in the city ready to give them a game. The band paraded the principle streets, serenaded the newspaper offices, and a short time previous to their departure were entertained at lunch by the Baton Rouge Independent Silver Cornet Band. When the excursionists took their leave this band escorted them to the river. The only thing that marred the return trip was a groundless rumor that a large fire had taken place in Donaldsonville, destroying Cheap Tony's and Goudran's stores, the Lee Hotel and other buildings." (August 20th.)

The Baton Rouge paper, the Advocate, reports on the excursion:

"The excursion from Donaldsonville yesterday was large and orderly. The train arrived on time, and the visitors interested themselves in taking a survey of the attractive points about the town. The Independent Brass Band, led by Mr. A. Claverie, complimented us with a serenade that was highly appreciated. Their band is certainly an ornament to their little thriving burg. The day passed in the most decorous and pleasant manner possible." (August 20th.)

The Baton Rouge paper, the Capitolian, states:

"The splendid amateur Silver Cornet Band of Donaldsonville Cornet Band, in their attractive gray uniforms, was among the visitors, and discoursed sweet music at intervals. They were conducted by their gentlemanly leader, Mr. A. Claverie, through whom the Capitolian nearby expresses grateful thanks for the serenade the band was kind enough to give it when on its way to the Capitol. This excellent band is one of the best in the State, New Orleans not accepted." (August 20th.)

A card of thanks from the Independent Brass Band of Donaldsonville to the Independent Silver Cornet Band of Baton Rouge appears in the August 20th issue of the "Chief." The paper states that "our band boys adopt this method of acknowledging the fraternal courtesies extended them by their conferees upon the occasion of the visit of the 'Dibbs' to Red Stick last Sunday." (August 20th.)

The weekly meeting of the band adjourned quickly because of the death of President Garfield:

The Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band met for practice Tuesday evening, but at once adjourned without transacting any business - because of the death of President Garfield - talk of funeral pageant." (Sept. 24th.)

That concludes the known activity of the band in 1881.
1882

The band marches for "Hook and Ladder for March 4th excursion. The Independent Band next plays for Lafayette Fire Company in procession of Fireman's Parade." (March 11th.) The next performance is a parade and dinner for the Phoenix Fire Co. No. 1. (May 20th.) The band plays for the Phoenix Fair and a challenge to other bands is issued and appears in the newspaper:

"A prize will be offered at the Phoenix Fair on the 27th, August to be contested for amateur brass bands, and the Independent Band of Donaldsonville challenges any and all similar organizations in the State to participate in the competition. If Baton Rouge, Thibodaux, College Point, Paincourtville, or any other locality in Louisiana has a band that is suppose to be 'some pumpkin' we hope it will be sent here to try conscious with our winds of summer." (August 12th.)

The band played for an excursion by the Cofield Guards and "the Independent Brass Band accompanied the arty and enlivened the trip with spirited music." (June 3rd.)

One of the State politicians is in town, and when the band hears about it, promptly gives him a serenade:

"The Independent Band met for practice last Tuesday evening and learning that Hon. J. H. Ackley was stopping at the Lee Hotel, the band went over and serenaded him." (August 26th.)

To end the year there is a special notice in the paper announcing a special meeting of the band on Dec. 9th:

"SPECIAL NOTICE

To members of the Donaldsonville
Independent Brass Band
A special meeting of the Donaldsonville Brass
Band will be held at Phoenix Hall.
SUNDAY EVENING, DEC. 8, 1882
At 4 o'clock. Matters of much importance will
be considered and the attendance of every
member is urgently requested
Jos. M. Keating, President
W. D. Park, Secretary.

1883

The New Year begins with a discussion as to the price the band will charge when it marches in the March 4th Firemen's Parade. This is written about in the paper:

"It is not decided yet whether the Independent Band will make its customary annual trip to New Orleans over the 4th of March next. An engagement to furnish music for Jefferson Fire Co. No. 22 was offered them, but the price demanded by the band was
so large that the terms have not been accepted. We understand that President Chiapella of Mississippi Fire Co. #2 has also made the Independent an offer, but at this writing no definite understanding has been reached. Some of the band boys would like very much to visit the city, but several of the leading spirit are not anxious to go." (Feb. 10th.)

The band does have a picture made which as yet has not surfaced in modern times:

"If the members or friends of the independent Brass Band wish to procure pictures of that well know and popular organization, they can do so by applying on board the Doremus Floating Photograph Gallery. The musicians are clad in their band uniforms and make an interesting group. The pictures are double cabinet size and are sold for $1.00 each." (Feb. 24th)

The band does get a position in the Firemen's Parade:

"The Independent Brass Band of Donaldsonville has contracted to furnish music for Mechanics' Fire Company No. 6 of New Orleans on the occasion of the approaching annual parade of the New Orleans Fire Department, March 4th. The band boys congregated on the Doremus Floating Photograph Gallery yesterday afternoon to have their picture 'tooken.' As we heard no crash of glass or explosion of chemicals, we suppose the camera stood the pressure and that a good looking group was portrayed on the negative. If the boys want to earn undying fame by having their handsome countenances and manly forms displayed among the beautiful paintings and other works of art that ornament the walls and galleries of the Chief establishment, we stand ready to gratify them." (Feb. 17th.)

The "Chief" receives a picture of the Band from the photographer:

"Thanks to Mr. Doremus, the photographer, for a copy of the Independent Band picture. The Floating Photograph Gallery will probably remain here only a few days longer and those wanting pictures should visit it at once. The craft has been removed to the point, just inside the bayou, where visitors will find it easy of access." (Feb. 24th.)

The band plays for the dedication of a new hall in town:

"Knights of Honor - Dedication of new hall - music by the Independent Band opened the proceedings." (March 31st.)

Having brass bands available for different functions was a necessity for towns of the nineteenth century. The bands were called upon to furnish music for almost every function or special occasion in the town. The band next plays some mood-setting music for a visiting lecturer:
"Lecture by Hon. William P. Miles. The Independent Band was in attendance and entertained the audience with music until the arrival of the lecturer. The closing item of evening programs the rendition of 'Home Sweet Home' by the band." (June 16th.)

The bands did many charitable performances and only asked that their presence he recognized. To emphasize this, the band refuses to play for an activity by the Hebrew Benevolent Association:

"Entertainment by Hebrew Benevolent Association - Drama and music. The only drawback to the play was the absence of music between the acts. The Independent Band was expected to be present, but on the day of the performance word was received that they would not appear because the band was not named on the printed program. The omission was of course due to an unintentional oversight, and the young men of the band are to be blamed. We think, for making such an accident a pretense for disappointing the ladies of a worthy benevolent Association in the manner they did. An effort was made to secure the Italian String Band from the Lee Hotel, but one of the members was out of town." (June 30th.)

The band next plays for the 4th of July celebration:

"4th celebration - noon-day exercise - reading of Declaration of Independence. Music by Independent Brass Band. Also - a concert and dramatic entertainment - overture by Donaldsonville independent Brass Band." (June 30)

Finally, on December 22nd., we read about another special meeting of the Independent Brass Band:

"An important special meeting of the Independent Brass Band is called for Sunday afternoon. Hour-4:00, place-Phoenix Hall. Every member is requested to be on hand." (Dec. 8th.)

This meeting didn't take place due to the late deadline of the paper which was past due when the band decision was made for a rehearsal plus a number of members had to work late." (Dec. 8th.)

1884

The amateur brass bands of the nineteenth century had difficulty keeping a full instrumentation because of several factors: key members moving, the work schedules, lack of financial help and differences on what jobs to take. We see that problem occurs with the Independent Brass Band when the meeting is rescheduled for the week of February 15th:

"Meeting next week - Independent Brass Band." (Feb. 15th.)
In the February 19th paper the following appeared:

"Reorganized - Nearly all the members of the Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band attended a meeting at the Peep-O'Day Hotel last Monday evening which had been called for the purpose of reorganizing the band. The object of the assembly was accomplished in a highly as satisfactory manner, the following officers being selected: Jos. m. Keating, President, James Fortier, Vice president, Wm. D. Park, Secretary, Geo. S. Cire, Treasurer, I. T. Duffel, leader. Another meeting took place Wednesday evening at the same place, and the boys indulged in some musical practice that recalled old times. It was decided that the band should meet at Phoenix Hall every Friday evening for practice. This will put them in fine trim anent the 4th of March, and we have no doubt they can if they wish easily secure an engagement to play for a New Orleans Fire Company on that anniversary. We note the reorganization of the D.I.B.B. with pleasure and hope to see it restored to its former high degree of excellence." (Feb. 9th.)

The band appoints a committee to seek an engagement from a fire Company:

"Messrs. W. D. Park, Joseph M. Keating and James Fortier have been appointed a committee of the Independent Brass Band to convey to the local fire companies a proposition from the band to accompany the firemen on their projected 4th of March excursion to New Orleans. We hear that the band will offer to furnish music for the trip down and back and escort the firemen to and from the engine house of their New Orleans hosts provided the fare of the musicians for the excursion he paid by the fire companies." (Feb. 16th.)

The paper of July 5, 1884, gives the names of members of a local string band. They are: Chas. S. Gray, James Fortier, Paul Leche, Dr. B. Claverie, Dr. Jno. S. Thibaut, Numa Thibaut and Paul Savoy." (July 5th.)

The band does not go to the Firemen's Parade in New Orleans nor will it accompany the local fire department on the excursion there, as the firemen take the St. Joseph Band. (March 8) The meeting of the band on February 16th must have been to determine what it would do and it decided not to go. (Feb. 16th.)

The band goes out on a serenade Friday evening:

"The Independent Band was out on a serenading tour last evening and the Chief was complimented with a tune. Thank you, Messrs. musicians." (March 8th.)

The band does play for the local firemen's parade; but must have had difficulty getting members to turn out as it combines with another band for the occasion:

"Firemen's anniversary parade - Donaldsonville Independent and Paincourtville Brass Bands combined. Also St. Joseph Band." (May 17th.)

A smaller group from the brass band, the Donaldsonville String Band, plays for the Firemen's Ball. These groups give a concert at Phoenix Hall:
"Concert at Phoenix Hall - Music by Independent Brass Band and the Donaldsonville String Band." (June 21st.)

The band next plays for an excursion on July 23rd:

"The Independent Band and a number of other residents of Donaldsonville boarded the Mable Comeaux here early Wednesday morning, bound for an excursion to the Gulf Shore at the mouth of Bayou Lafourche. The boat returned at 3:00." (July 26th.)

Finally on October 11th, the paper writes:

"Mustering in of Ascension Rifles. The presence and music of the Independent Band added no little interest and enjoyment of the occasion." (Oct. 11th.)

1885

The first mention of the band in 1885 is not until the month of May when they play for an entertainment/lecture:

"Entertainment/lecture - entertainment opened with a selection rendered in good style by the Independent Brass Band which had volunteered its services for the occasion. At the conclusion of the lecture, the Independent Band was again heard from, and the floor was then cleared for dancing. Music for dancers was supplied by Mrs. Gaudet."

(May 30th.)

Two things should be discussed: 1) The use of Mrs. Gaudet for dancing instead of a bigger group such as the brass band and, 2), the band plays for local functions but has a problem getting members, the older men not wishing to march in the long parades. This age problem is emphasized by the death of one of its own, Mr. Elphege Gaudin:

"Died. - At his residence on Perseverance Plantation, Parish of Ascension, La. on Thursday, June 18, 1885, at 2 o'clock P.M. Elphege Baudin, aged 61 years, 5 months and 3 days.

Mr. Gaudin had been very sick for some time anterior to his death and the fatal termination of his malady was not unexpected. One of the oldest and most generally esteemed and respected citizen of our parish, it is not surprising that his demise should occasion with proved regret and sorrow among all classes of the people. The depth and extent of this feeling were indicated, by the large attendance at the funeral, which took place yesterday evening. Delegations of the Ascension rifles and Ascension Hook and Ladder Company, of both of which organizations the deceased was an honorary member, were present in uniform and the Independent Brass Band furnished music for the sad procession." (June 20th.)

The band plays a serenade for Captain Nolan:
"Thursday evening the Ascension Rifles accompanied by the independent Brass Band marched down to the residence of Capt. John T. Nolan, the popular commander of the Rifles, and favored him with a serenade and the presentation of a handsome bouquet in honor of his birthday." (June 20th.)

The band has another serenade function on June 16th:

"The Independent Brass Band were out on a serenading tour on the night of the 16th inst., and did not fail to honor the Chief with a few of their choicest selections. Among them was a quickstep they had received but a day or two before which was written especially for them by that master musician, Prof. Ed. Petzech of Shreveport, who has the reputation of being one of the finest musicians in the South, and who was for years' teacher and leader of one of the first bands in the Prussian Army. In this composition he introduces the two songs, "Still I Love the Old Home, Mother," and "Irredeit" - the words of which were written by Mr. Reynolds of the Chief. The latter song has not yet been given to the public but will soon be issued by the firm of Evans and Brotter of Boston, Mass. Our boys are capable of appreciating and executing good music, and the smooth, harmonious and touching manner in which they rendered this superb melody showed how thoroughly they appreciated it. Since its recent organization the band shows marked signs of improvement and under the able leadership of Mr. L. T. Duffel, we are certain it will continue to do so." (June 20th.)

As usual, the 4th of July is celebrated by the Independent Brass Band:

"It was a 'glorious 4th' in Donaldsonville, celebrated by Ascension Rifles and the Independent Brass Band." (July 4th.)

As was the custom, when a band member marries he usually gets a serenade by the other band members. Such is the case with John Terrio:

"John Terrio married. The Independent Band visited their residence and serenaded the happy comrade and his lovely bride." (July 4th.)

The band, on July 5th, boards the Mabel Comeaux for an excursion:

"Last Sunday morning the steamer Mabel Comeaux landed at the wharf and took aboard the Independent Brass Band and they steamed away amid the music of the band." (July 11th.)

The band next plays for a "picnic and soiree dansante - music for the occasion was furnished by the Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band and they distinguished themselves." (July 25th.)

The band takes an interesting step when it (like bands in other parishes) begins a series of activities involving roller skates:
"Skating and dancing - We are requested to announce that the Independent Brass Band has secured from Phoenix Fire Co. the use of Phoenix Hall and the set of roller skates belonging to the Co. and will a series of entertainments once or twice a week, on evenings to be designated hereafter; consisting of skating from 8-10, and dancing from 10-11. The Independent Band will furnish the music and refreshments will be provided at nominal rates: Price of admission, 15 cents, use of skates 10 cents.

The first skating event takes place on August 6th.:

"The first skating assembly and soiree dansante of the Independent Brass Band's proposed weekly series took place at Phoenix Hall last Thursday evening and was a complete success. The attendance of young ladies and gentlemen was good and the evening’s programme of skating from 8 to 10 and dancing from 1 to 12 was carried out with much zest." (August 8th.)

In the August 15th paper, we see an article about the skating:

"Skating and Dancing - Another very successful and enjoyable assembly was held at Phoenix Hall, Thursday evening, under the direction of the Independent Band. The attendance of ladies and gentlemen was even larger than at the first entertainment, and the affair was a source of much enjoyment to all present. The programme was similar to that of the first assembly, to-wit; skating from 8 to 10 P.M., dancing from 10 to 12. There were six sets of dancers on the floor at one time, an indication of the large attendance. The Independent Band displayed gratifying improvement in the rendition of dance music and performed several new pieces - the music of which had just been received that day - in an exceedingly correct and spirited manner. Another skating and dancing assembly will be held next Thursday evening and weekly thereafter until further notice. Price of admission to hall, 10 cents, use of skates 15 cents for gentlemen, ladies free.' (August 15th.)

The skating/dancing affair continued to be a success:

"Thursday skating, etc. again - was even more largely attended than its predecessors and was an extremely enjoyable entertainment. The Independent Brass Band furnished music." (August 22nd.)

The skating rink was closed for a while because the band lost some of its members because of work:

"Rink reopened - Having acquired several new and valuable members to replace those who are called away from town during the sugar-making season, the Independent Brass Band will reopen the roller skating rink at Phoenix Hall, Thursday evening, Nov. 5th, and hold weekly skating and dancing assemblies thereafter. 10 cents admission, 15 cents rent on skates." (Oct. 24th.)
The rink, due to bad weather, does not open until the following week:
"Owing to the unfavorable state of the weather, the Independent Brass Band decided to order the reopening of the skating rink from last until this week, and also to change the assembly evening from Thursday to Friday. The first entertainment of the new series took place yesterday evening, and if adequate encouragement is extended the public there will be assemblies regularly each week henceforth. The programme will comprise skating and dancing, as before, and as the band has several new members and a repertoire comprising a number of new airs, their music will be a still more interesting feature of these affairs than has been the case heretofore." (Nov. 14th.)

1886

The year begins with an entertainment at Phoenix Hall for the benefit of Napoleonville Fire Co. No. 1 and includes both the Independent Brass Band and the Pelican Brass Band of Napoleonville:

"Entertainment for the benefit of Napoleonville Fire Company. The entertainment at Phoenix Hall, in this town, last Monday night, given under the auspices and for the benefit of Napoleonville Fire Company No. 1, proved one of the most successful affairs of its kind that has ever taken place here. Recognizing the worthiness of the object in view and desiring to show their sympathy with and good feeling for their assumption friends and neighbors, the people of our community turned out in force and combined their heartiest efforts to render the occasion all that its most sanguine promoters could have desired.

The ladies and gentlemen who were to take part in the dramatic representation, came to Donaldsonville on the steamer Letcher, Sunday noon, in order to have some time for rehearsal on Phoenix Hall stage and were accompanied by Mrs. William Simes, to who was assigned the general direction of the drama, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. S. Gray and Mr. P. Landry of the orchestra, as well as several others; but the main body of Assumption visitors, including the Pelican Brass Band of Napoleonville, arrived on the excursion trip on the Letcher Monday evening.

The audience that gathered in Phoenix Hall to enjoy the entertainment was one of the largest and finest the place has held. Every available seat was occupied early in the evening and many persons were compelled to stand throughout the entire performance.

The combined Pelican and Independent Brass Bands rendered several airs in find style, followed by an overture from the orchestra, composed as follows: C.S. Gray, first violin, leader; Mrs. C.S. Gray and Mrs. M.A. Gaudet, piano. Prof. J. E. LeBlanc, first violin, P. Landry, second violin; Dr. B. Claverie, violincello; Paul Leche, double bass; Jno. F Terrio, cornet. Their music was beautiful and elicited hearty applause." (Jan. 3rd.)

The band reopens the skating rink on Friday, January 29, and while still performing there, continue to participate in civic ceremonies such as the laying of the cornerstone:
"Laying of cornerstone of Confederate Monument at Baton Rouge - The Ascension Rifles and the Independent Brass Band took part." (Feb. 27th.)

The band next takes part in a Mardi Gras Ball at Phoenix Hall and their participation is noted in an advertisement in the February 27th paper. The attendance at the Mardi Gras Ball was small, as stated in the write-up in the March 13th issue of the paper:

"Mardi Gras Ball - We regret to say that the masquerade ball given at Phoenix Hall last Tuesday night, under the joint auspices of Phoenix Fire Company and the Independent Brass Band, was by no means as successful as had been hoped by its projectors. The attendance was small, comprising only about a dozen ladies and scarcely more than that number of gentlemen, hence it is not to be wondered at that the financial result of the affair was very meager, showing only a slight margin above expenses. It must be taken into consideration, of course, that many of our amusement loving people were absent from home, having gone to New Orleans to view the carnival pageants of Rex and Proteus, but there were more than enough left to have made the ball a brilliant success if the disposition to do so had not been wanting. Why any entertainment given by two such respectable and worthy organizations as the Independent Brass Band and Phoenix Fire Company should not be deemed worthy of countenance and patronage by this community, is more than we can say. The composition of the associations named and of the committee charged with the conduct of the ball were a guaranty that even the most fastidious guest would encounter nothing to offend the sensibilities. It has been a cause of unpleasant remark for several years past that none of the entertainments given by our fire companies are as successful as they should be, and the fact is a reflection upon the community that the citizens should labor henceforth to eradicate. In almost every other town the people are always ready and willing to aid their firemen, and balls or other festivals given by the volunteer fire fighters or for their benefit are nearly invariably brilliant social and pecuniary successes. Efficient fire companies are necessary to the welfare, safety and propriety of every town or village, but it is a hard task to maintain such organizations in a community which is prone to give them a cold shoulder, especially when they are in need of assistance and support. Without liberal aid Phoenix Fire Company has a poor prospect of meeting the payment shortly due on its handsome steam engine, and it would be a lasting shame to allow the apparatus to be taken away from the town after the flourish of trumpets with which its advent was greeted. Our firemen are friends in need and every man, woman and child ought to help and encourage them cheerfully whenever opportunity offers." (March 13th.)

The band continues serenading a number of friends and locations:

"The Independent Brass Band was out on a serenading tour last evening and favored a number of the friends of the organization with some fine music of a character attesting the commendable degree of proficiency the members have attained under the competent leadership of Mr. John F. Terrio. The Chief is much obliged to the band for
including the editor's residence and the printing office among the points of which inspiring melody was discoursed." (March 29th.)

As was customary before a dance or activity, the band would either march around the vicinity of the hall or play on the front porch or balcony of the hall to encourage people to come inside. The Independent Band also followed this tradition:

"The Independent Brass Band met on the gallery of Phoenix Hall Sunday before last and regaled the public in that vicinity with an enjoyable open-air instrumental concert, admission free. A novel and amusing episode of the entertainment was a sort of a musical duel between the Independent and the Conway Field Band, in which the former came off with first honors. The soldier boys drilling on the corner opposite the hall found it difficult work to keep in step while the battle raged." (May 1st.)

The band plays for another local entertainment:

"Smoke Bend Dramatic Club entertainment. The music of the Independent Band enhanced the interest of the occasion in no small measure." (May 22nd.)

Another Firemen's benefit is planned and the band participates. We find an advertisement of this activity in the June 12th paper:

The summer of 1886 was a very busy one for the Independent Brass Band. They play for the St. Joseph exhibition (June 26th) and for a dance for the baseball team:

"Ball of the Base Ballers - The music was supplied by the Independent Brass Band and proved a splendid accompaniment, that was praised unstintedly by all the dancers." (June 26th.)

The band participates in a dramatic/entertainment:

"Donaldsonville Dramatic Club play - The music of the Independent Brass Band enlivened the intermission and added no little to the interest and enjoyment afforded by the entertainment." (June 26th.)

The band takes a very interesting and, I think, important step when it adds some new instruments that it hitherto had not had - woodwinds:

"The Independent Brass Band is about to add 6 new instruments to its outfit; 2 clarionets, 2 French horns and 2 saxophones. The clarionets have already arrived and the other instruments will be here in a few days." (July 3rd.)

Including the clarinet and saxophone in the brass band was a bold step. It is one of the earliest known uses of woodwinds in traditional brass band instrumentation in the South:
A large advertisement appears in the paper for the musical/dramatic entertainment:

"Musical/Dramatic entertainment, Overture by Independent Brass Band - Saturday and Sunday. Procession to Cleveland Park led by Independent Band. The presence and the music of the Independent Band still further enhanced the interest and enjoyment of the occasion." (July 10th.)

The band plays for the fair in Paincourtville:

"The Independent Band has accepted an invitation to attend a fair and dramatic entertainment at Paincourtville, given for the benefit of the St. Elizabeth Catholic at that place. The fair opened today and will continue until Monday night. The band goes down Sunday evening." (July 10th.)

The band continues to be active playing for local fairs. They next play for a fair for the benefit of a local church:

"Fair and concert for benefit of St. Francis of Assisium Church. The sweet 'concourse' of sweet sound, rendered by the Independent Brass Band added harmony to the occasion." (July 24th.)

The band plays for arriving excursionists from New Orleans:

"Excursionists from New Orleans - Stay at Riverside Hotel - dance at Phoenix Hall - The Donaldsonville Independent Band will furnish music for the occasion." (July 24th.)

The Independent and Violet Brass Bands play for a Lodge benefit:

"A grand fair and ball benefit of Lancelot Lodge #38, Knights of Pythias Special performance of the Independent and Violet Brass Bands of Assumption." (July 31st.)

The band continues to have rehearsals and even extends invitations to friends to attend one of them:

"The Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band intend giving a public rehearsal next Tuesday evening at Phoenix Hall. Verbal invitations to attend will be extended by the members to their friends." (August 7th.)

Continuing its activity, the band greets another excursion at the train depot:

"Excursion of Juanita Benevolent Association of New Orleans to Donaldsonville. Met at Depot by the Independent Brass Band and repaired to Phoenix Hall where they danced away the time until dinner was announced." (August 7th.)
Following this item in the paper, we find no further records, as the issues of the Chief are missing. There is an item in the Napoleonville paper the "Pioneer," which mentions the band in 1887. In noting the death of George Cire (a member of the Independent Brass Band and its treasurer) the paper notes that the band organized eleven years ago. That would make the band's beginning in or around 1875-76. (August 21, 1887), - Nap. Pioneer

Also in the "Pioneer" an article appears about a band excursion:

"The Band Excursion - Their trip on the steamer Lafourche was most delightful.

The members of the Independent Brass and Reed Band, with some friends, reached home from their excursion down the bayou, at 4 o'clock this morning, and the trip is described as one of the most delightful the band ever made, thanks to the kindness and courtesy of Captain E. M. Charlet and Clerk Edward Nicols of the steamer Lafourche, on which the excursion was made, these gentlemen bending every energy to promote the comfort and pleasure of the excursionists. The members of the band were: Paul Leche, leader; Alex Poche, John F. Terrio, Paul Braud, Dick Landry, Frank Sims, August Heime, D. Ohlmeyer, Wm. A Terrio, Henry Terrio and James Von Lotten.

The steamer left the city wharf at noon on Tuesday and as soon as the party had secured their rooms and stored away their baggage, they repaired to the dining tables and did ample justice to the well prepared and generous meal. After dinner the party gathered on the shady side of the boat and passed the afternoon in singing, conversation, music by the band, and other diversions, varied by a visit to Messrs. Dugas and LeBlanc's Armeline Store by the band members upon an invitation from Mr. L. A. Landry, formerly of this city, but now employed at the Armeline Store. Yesterday morning the boat reached its destination about three miles this side of Thibodaux where the balance of the cargo was transported to flatboats and the steamer. Upon reaching the Hall Plantation the boat was tied up for three hours, taking on board 860 barrels of sugar and several pieces of machinery. The ladies and gentlemen took this opportunity to go over to Napoleonville, where, after strutting over the streets, they paid a visit to the Catholic Church. Upon returning to the boat the excursion party took supper, after which the band gave a concert much to the delight of the steamer's crew and the loungers on the levee; The ladies on board danced by the music. While the excursionists reached home somewhat tired they were nevertheless delight and profuse in their praise of Capt. Charlet." (June 3, 1891),- Nap. Pioneer

1896

We again read articles about the band in the Donaldsonville newspaper called the Daily Times. The first citation of the band is in the April 9th paper:

"Bazaar - The Independent Band will again be in attendance and discourse a fine program. (April, D.T.)"
The article that appears in the May 19th. Daily Times is the first appearance in a Donaldsonville paper, in of the new name of the band, which is now known as the "Independent Brass and Reed Band":

"Graduating class of St. Vincent - Music by Independent Brass and Reed Band which kindly volunteered their services." (May 19th.)

The paper is published daily and the next day, the 20th of May, a call is made for members to attend a band rehearsal:

"Band rehearsal tonight - Members of the Independent Brass and Reed Band are urgently requested to attend the rehearsal this evening without fail." (May 20th.)

One can see the gradual change from the brass band as the standard mode of musical ensemble to a smaller group. Smaller groups begin to be used as performers of dance music, and the brass band for outdoor activities and concert-type situations. Members of the band also play in the smaller groups, called either orchestras or string bands:

"The Phoenix Orchestra - There was no rehearsal of the Independent Brass and Reed Band last evening on account of several of its members having to attend a rehearsal of the Phoenix Orchestra. This orchestra, which is under the direction of Mr. D. Ohlmeyer, has been engaged to furnish the music at the entertainment given in Paincourtville on Sunday next for the benefit of Catholic Church there. Phoenix Orchestra is a fine one and our friends in Paincourtville are to be congratulated upon having secured their services. The Independent Band will rehearse tonight." (May 26th.)

The band schedules a rehearsal on June 3rd:

"There will be a rehearsal of the Independent Brass and Reed Band at Langbecker's Hall this evening. All the members are earnestly requested to be present." (June 3rd.)

The band, the next day, takes an excursion down Bayou Lafourche:

"Off on their excursion - the Independent Brass & Reed Band started this morning on their excursion down the bayou on the steamer Lafourche. The excursionists will return some time to-morrow evening." (June 4th.)

One of those accompanying and playing in the band is Mayor Leche:

"Mayor Leche is out of the city having accompanied the excursion of the Independent Brass & Reed Band." (June 4th.)
The band takes the excursion on the Steamer Lafourche and the review of the trip give us a good idea of what a nineteenth century excursion was like for its participants. The paper writes about the excursion while it is happening:

"The Independent Brass & Reed Band excursionists are expected back tonight unless the Lafourche is wrecked. They are stranded on some inhospitable land along the bayou." (June 10th.)


"It was an ideally congenial party, comprising the Independent Brass and Reed Band's annual excursion that boarded the handsome steamer Lafourche early on Tuesday morning. The party was welcomed as they stepped on the steamer's deck by its commander, Capt. P. A. Charlet, one of nature's noblemen who gave each of the excursionists a hearty hand shake and them metaphorically turned the steamer and all its hands over to the command of the party with the statement that while they were his guests the steamer and all its resources were at their disposal and their wish should be a law.

From that time unto the excursionists arrived home yesterday evening pleasure was uncontinued and joy and merriment reigned supreme. As the steamer moved slowly down the bayou the excursionists began to settle themselves and just in order the state rooms that had been assigned them and when this was done the steamer was inspected from stern to bow, the party being accompanied by the Captain and others in his employ, who explained about the workings of the machinery, the latter of which were peculiarly interesting to the young ladies, several of who became the Captain's special guests in the pilot house.

After taking breakfast that showed the marvelous resources of the culinary department, the excursionists gathered in the shady side of the steamer and whiled away the time listening to the music of the band and watching the roustabouts as they loaded and unloaded the freight at the various landings.

At 6 o'clock the steamer reached Elm Hall and the tourists were informed by Puser Nicolle that he would remain there for a couple of hours and if anyone wished to go ashore they would have an opportunity to do so. This was taken advantage of by the entire party to visit Napoleonville, a short walk from the landing. The little town was thoroughly inspected and then a visit paid to the pretty new courthouse through which the party was shown by the janitor. Shortly before 7 o'clock all were back on the steamer again and remained on deck engaged in singing and other amusements until near 11 o'clock when all retired for the night. During the morning Captain Charlet informed Mayor Leche that when the boat reached Plattenville that they should leave it for a visit to his home. Until the boat's return from Lockport, but while he was away he desired the Mayor to consider himself the commander of the steamer and he would find that all of his commands and wishes would be complied with.

The party was up at an early hour Wednesday morning and just as breakfast was finished the steamer reached Thidodaux and all went on shore for a couple of hours. The first place visited was the Empire Hotel of which Mr. J. E. Moseman is the proprietor,
and that genial gentleman took particular pleasure in showing the party over his handsome and well-managed house. Mr. Moseman extended to the entire party refreshments after which some of the crowd wended their way to the Catholic Church while the others strolled about the city until their leave of absence had expired when there was a hasty return to the boat that proceeded leisurely on to Lockport. But a short stop was made at the latter place and the steamer safely began her upward trip. On reaching Plattenville several of the young ladies got off and proceeded to Capt. Charlet's residence and escorted him back in state to the steamer. After supper on Wednesday evening the tables were reset a couple of hours later and ice cream and cakes were served by Capt. Charlet as a special compliment to his guests. Following this came music on the piano during which there was some promiscuous dancing enjoyed by the young ladies. It was a late hour that evening before all had retired for their last night's sleep upon the boat.

On Thursday as the boat passed the convict camp near Plaincourtville there was a burial going on. There had been three graves dug and a body enclosed in a rough plank box was being lowered in one of them. Just as the steamer passed by a count of the graves showed 21 had already been buried on the levee and it was said by Purser Nicolle that there were many sick in the hospital of which the excursionists caught a grand view.

The steamer was now fast approaching Donaldsonville, and the regrets were general that the pleasures of the last two days would soon be a memory only. Capt. Charlet was now corralled by the young ladies and each and everyone took him by the hand and thanked him personally, and through him every one of the employees for the many kindnesses and courtesies that had been shown the party and assured him that it would ever live as one of the most delightful events in their lives.

When the steamer was finally made fast to the wharf three cheers were given for the handsome steamer, her royal commander and all employed on her.

The ladies and gentlemen who composed the excursion were:........" (June 12th.)

The band concert and entertainment at St. Vincent are reviewed:

"The commencement concert and exercises of the St. Vincent Institute on Sunday afternoon next at the hall of the institute promises to be an interesting and meritorious affair, and one of the finest exhibitions of its kind ever given by the pupils of this popular notable school. The program arranged is of the greatest excellence and during the intermissions light refreshments will be supplied and music discoursed by the Independent Brass and Reed Band. The band has arranged a splendid program of both classic and popular music for this occasion." (June 9th.)

We read of a new band in the June, 29th. paper. In a later article the band is identified as the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band.

Excursions are very popular forms of entertainment and often very profitable for the bayou steamers. A Captain of one of these steamers inquires about the next band excursion:

"Captain Wm. Campbell of Steamer Paul Tulane, inquired whether the Donaldsonville Brass & Reed Band intend to make another excursion." (July 16th.)
The plans for a picnic of the Independent Brass and Reed Band is "postponed to the following Sunday, August 6th." (July 27th.)

1897

On January 20th the band has a rehearsal to prepare for a presentation at the Catholic Fair:

"A rehearsal of the Independent Brass & Reed Band is called for this evening in the upper room of the Bank of Donaldsonville building. All members are earnestly requested to be present." (Jan. 29th.)

The next day the paper writes "the Independent Brass & Reed Band, which will furnish music at the Catholic Fair, held a rehearsal last night." (Jan. 21st.)

The Independent Band is noted in the paper as enlarging, probably by the addition of new players for their new reed instruments:

"Fair opens today - The Independent Brass & Reed Band greatly enlarged and strengthened, will furnish the music." (Jan. 23rd.)

The Independent Band continues to perform and their engagement at the fair is called a success:

"Fair a success...The Independent Brass & Reed Band, under the directorship of Mr. Paul Leche, discoursed most excellent music and it can be said to have been one of the most attractive features of the fair." (Jan. 26th.)

The mayor of Donaldsonville is an accomplished musician and takes an active part in the Independent Band. The newer bands around town are composed of younger members and take an active part in more strenuous activities, while the Independent Band, whose members are older, does more concert-type work:

"Mayor Leche is working every night arranging new music for the Independent Brass and Reed Band. The Mayor takes the deepest interest in the band, and the members should show their appreciation by greater punctuality at rehearsals." (Feb. 12th.)

At a rehearsal on March 17th, new music is heard:

"The Independent Brass & Reed Band had a rehearsal last night and the music they played was new and excellent." (March 18th.)

The band continues to have difficulties getting members to rehearsal. Even the prestige of having the Mayor as leader doesn't seem to help:
"On account of a failure to obtain the attendance of members on last Wednesday night, the Independent Brass & Reed Band held their rehearsal yesterday under the direction of Mayor Paul Leche. Considerable new and excellent music was tried and the rehearsal was in every way a success. There are some excellent musicians in the band and they have in Mayor Leche a most through and effective leader." (March 29th.)

Planning an outing, Mayor Leche scouts for a good location:

"Mayor P. Leche and Messrs. J. J. Leche and W. A. Tearney - to Vacherie, St. James Parish, scouting for a picnic and fishing location for Independent Brass & Reed Band." (April 13th.)

The Independent Band next play for another funeral:

"Burial of Andrew Gingry...The Independent Brass and Reed Band preceded the hearse to the cemetery and played a mournful tender dirge as the body neared the tomb and while it was being lowered to its final resting place, the sorrowful melody bringing tears to the eyes of many." (April 15th.)

In August the band is still scheduling rehearsals:

"There will be a rehearsal of new music by the Independent Brass and Reed Band tonight." (August 14th.)

Still another rehearsal is mentioned in the September 30th issue of the paper:

"There was not a full attendance of members of the independent Brass & Reed Band on hand last night for rehearsal, but those that were there played some very sweet music. Mr. Jno. F. Terrio officiated as the leader." (Sept. 30th.)

An item appearing in the paper of October 11th mentions a Miss Stella Richards as a sponsor of the band. What this means is a mystery. She might be just a sponsor in spirit and not putting up money. Whatever, we know that the band is still active and has a group interested in them. The paper again publicizes the band rehearsal:

"There will be a practice meeting of the Donaldsonville Independent Brass and Reed Band tonight. As several meetings have recently come to naught of account of non-attendance of members, we trust that each member will make it a point to be present tonight." (May 24th.)

There is no indication in the paper if the rehearsal was well attended but there is mention of another rehearsal on December 15th:

"The Independent Brass and Reed Band will have a rehearsal tonight. Members are earnestly requested to be in attendance promptly." (Dec. 15th.)
1898

The band begins the year, 1898, playing for a fair for the Catholic Church:

"Catholic Fair January 8th and 9th. The Independent Brass and Reed Band will provide free music." (Jan. 4th.)

As usual, after the fair, the paper writes a small review of the activity:

"Catholic Fair...The Independent Brass and Reed Band, under the direction of its leader, Mayor Paul Leche, has furnished excellent music and has been one of the attractive features of the fair." (Jan. 25th.)

1899

The February 1st issue of the paper, having pictures of leading citizens, has a picture of James Von Lotten, a member of the Independent Band and the publisher of the newspaper." (Feb. 1)

Again there is a period of time when there are no copies of the town newspapers - between 1899 to 1905, and no mention of the band after February 1, 1899.

Other Town Bands

New Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band

1896

There is mention of a new band organizing in Donaldsonville:

"A new brass band.

A brass band was organized last evening in the Langecker Hall by the election of the following officers; Dedrich Ohlmeyer, president; John F. Terrio, leader; Lucas Litty, vice president, and Frank Sims, secretary. The band will be composed of the following gentlemen: Messrs. Wm. A. Terrio, Dedrich Ohlmeyer, Paul Braud, James Von Lotten, Felix Fortier, August Heime, Wm. D. Park and Dille Ohlmeyer. This band will be in readiness shortly to accept engagements for parades." (June 29th.)

This new band contains some musicians who are listed as members of the Independent Brass and Reed Band. It appears likely that this new band is made up of younger musicians along with some members of the Independent Band. The paper calls it the Donaldsonville Brass Band although it is called the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band in the above article. One of the first engagements for the band is for a cornerstone laying:
"The Donaldsonville Brass Band has been secured for the cornerstone playing ceremonies of the Masons on the 28th inst. It will be the bands first appearance in public." (July 23rd.)

The band is mentioned in the paper again as prepared to take different kinds of musical jobs:

"The Donaldsonville Brass Band is now in readiness to accept engagements for political and other meetings. The band, which is under the excellent direction of Mr. John F. Terrio, has now a repertoire of some 18 selections to which others are being constantly added." (Sept. 11th.)

John F. Terrio was in the Independent Band and at times took over the leadership. Now with the new band, a younger band, the band is looking for jobs.

The band plays for a political meeting on October 18th. the event is advertised in the Oct. 9th issue of the "Chief".

The year ends with the band playing a serenade:

"The New Band Serenades,
   The newly organized brass band, composed of some of the best and most genial and accomplished young men of our city, enthused with the happy gaiety and universal good feeling that pervaded the occasion, went serenading their numerous young lady friends and others Saturday night. Mayor Paul Leche, and some prominent gentlemen of the city, were given a complimentary serenade. Their music was really excellent, and was heartily enjoyed by those who were complimented as well as by those who heard it. At the residence of Misses Irene and Ella Landry they were invited in and royally entertained to refreshments of the best. While enjoying these refreshments the band resolved itself into a naming committee and bestowed itself the name of the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band. This name it is to be known by hereafter." (Dec. 27th.)

1897

The new band calls a rehearsal for March 8th that is carried by the paper:

"The unmarried young men, members of the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band are requested to cancel all previous engagements and to appear at rehearsal tonight. New music will be practiced." (March 8th.)

The paper remarks about how good the music sounded in a band rehearsal for the band:

"The newly organized brass band of which Mr. Jno. F. Terrio is leader, had a rehearsal last night, and the music that blasted out from each instrument proved
conclusively that if they are not performers of note they are undoubtedly sound musicians." (Nov. 24th.)

The new band acquires a new drum (a snare drum - then called a kettledrum):

"The new brass band of this city has received an elegant silver plated rim kettle drum. Look out for the noise now, Felix Fortier, who will tickle it, expects to make himself heard. The next practice meeting is fixed for tomorrow night, and members are requested to be on hand promptly at 7 o'clock." (Dec. 9th.)

Finally, on Dec. 19th, the paper prints the scheduling of another band rehearsal:

"The newly organized brass band will hold a practice meeting tomorrow afternoon at 3:00 turn out, and let's have a good practice." (Dec. 18th.)

1898

The January 4th issue of the paper announces a rehearsal of the band:

"The rehearsal of the Silver Cornet Band, which was fixed for tonight, and will be followed by a banquet at the Nicholls Hotel." (Jan. 4th.)

There is another band rehearsal mentioned in the paper and the item again stresses the need for all members to be present:

"The Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band will rehearse tonight at 7:30 sharp. Every member should be present." (Jan. 18th.)

The band notices of rehearsals are not heard of again until April 1st, some three months later. I assume rehearsals were held but are not, mentioned in the paper. The paper continues to again announce band rehearsals:

"The Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band had an interesting rehearsal last night and the members rendered some choice new music." (April 1st.)

The band next plays for an excursion:

"The Silver Cornet Band will make the round trip on the Grace Kent tomorrow evening at 5:00 from Donaldsonville to Burnside. An excursion party will accompany them. Round trip 25 cents. Bring you best girl, if she like music." (April 2)

The band plays for a mass political meeting at the court house:

"The Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band will furnish music for the mass meeting which is to be held at the court house tonight. (April 7th) Before the meeting and during
the proceeding the Silver Cornet Band discoursed some grand musical selections." (April 8th.)

The paper of August 25th. writes of a concert to be given by the "Independent Silver Cornet Band." I believe this band is the new band (Silver Cornet Band) we are writing about now, rather than the Independent Brass and Reed Band. However, whichever it is, we will note the activity of the band as it gives a concert:

"Band Concert
The Independent Silver Cornet Band deserved the thanks of the entire community for their commendable enterprise that gives so much pleasure to our citizens the open air concerts and citascope exhibition on the Boulevard on Thursday and Friday nights of each week. These concerts bring out large crowds and we are satisfied that we are not exasperating when we state that at least 1500 witnessed the performance last night.

The cornet playing of Prof. Baron was the event of the evening and the continued applause brought an encore in which the gentlemen excelled if possible his first effort.

The band was further strengthened last evening by the assistance of Mr. Frank E. Hubbard, of Plaquemine, and a good musician he is." (August 25th.)

The Friday night concert also received a write-up:

"A Grand Success
The open air concert on the Boulevard last night was by far the grandest success from a musical standpoint that has ever taken place in this city. Prof. J. A. Fourrier, whose fame as a musician is known and appreciated throughout Louisiana, was on hand and the manner in which he played the cornet was simply superb. His style was masterly and the expressions he gave the notes of melody were well rendered. It would be a waste of time to attempt to describe his playing. It cannot be done, at least by the pencil.

Prof. Fourrier is not only a master of the cornet, but he performs on the piano, violin and several other instruments. The band as a whole played excellently. Another feature of the concert was the citascope performance which was much enjoyed." (August 27th.)

The final write-up appears on August 30, 1898:

"The Boulevard Concert.
There has been but one thing that kept the people from enjoying the concerts to a great extent on Boulevard Street and that was the absence of seats, and a great portion of the citizens was unable to see the citascope on account of the immense crowd. This has at last been remedied, and circus seats have been provided that can conveniently seat 700 people. The seats are well fixed on the neutral ground, and the small fee of 10 cents for grown people and 5 cents for children will be charged.
The music of the Independent Silver Cornet Band is exceptionally fine and as the vitascope is now working to perfection it will pay any one to attend the meetings."
(August 30)

This ends the material on the Silver Cornet Band.

ASCENSION BRASS BAND
1872

The Silver Cornet Band was in existence in 1871 and in the paper of March 23, 1872, we read of another band forming. This is the Ascension Brass Band

"We learned a few weeks since that several of the young men of town had taken steps toward the organization of another band and that brass instruments were sent for and received. As to how far or how successful the movement had progressed up to the present time we are uninformed, but hope the project will be carried out. With two bands, Donaldsonville will make quite a noise in the world." (March 23rd.)

The band plays for the Catholic Procession held on June 8th:

"The Catholic Procession - The procession which paraded the principle streets of town last Sunday afternoon in commemoration of the anniversary of the Corpus Christi Festival was quite large in point of numbers and pleasing and attractive in appearance. It was headed by the Ascension Brass Band, which discoursed scared music in fine style, adding much to the interest of the occasion. Following in the wake of the band came numbers of young ladies, embracing many of the beauties of our town and parish, all handsomely dressed; the neatly attired orphan girls under the kind care of the sisters of the St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum; a dozen or so of young boys dressed in the custom of attendants upon the altar; the choir of the Ascension Church; the reverend father Cuppen, bearing the...... and accompanied by two attendant brethren of the holy cloth, over whose heads a canopy was spread, supported by six well known citizens of this place; and after these came a large number of persons of both sexes and colors, old and young, great and small. Numerous banners bearing scriptural pictures were borne by members of the procession, adding greatly to the imposing aspect thereof. Several prettily ornamented altars were erected in different parts of town by the inmates of the houses that they fronted, and before each one of these the procession came to a halt and all kneeled down while the priest uttered a benediction and the choir chanted a canticle, when the concourse would move forward again with measured tread, keeping time with the slow music of the band, some seventy-five or a hundred salutes were fired in front of the church and at the public square during the day and while the procession was in motion. Altogether the affair was a gratifying success, and attested the devotion of the Catholic portion of our people to the rites of their church." (June 8th.)

The Ascension and Silver Cornet Band play for the Hebrew Benevolent Fair and ball. The complete write-up is on page 9 of the D.S.C. Band write-up. Both bands also play for a town entertainment in the form of a tableaux.
The Ascension Band continues playing for town functions, the next mention is for the Johnson Institute:

"The Ascension Brass Band will hereafter regale the inhabitants of Donaldsonville with some of their excellent music, once every fortnight. They played at the Johnson Institute Thursday evening." (August 10th.)

The band plays at the same Johnson Institute the next Wednesday night. (Sept. 7th.) and both the Ascension and D.S.C.Band play for a political rally:

"Both the Ascension Brass and the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band have been invited to attend this meeting, and it is to be hoped there is patriotism enough among the members of those organizations to induce them to accept the invitation. Their attendance will be a great help to the cause and will reflect credit upon themselves." (Sept. 14th.)

Brass bands were involved in most political rallies, as their sounds attracted a crowd and covered over dead spots between speeches to bear the boredom. The band plays for another political meeting

"Meeting of 4th Ward Greeley & Brown Club was well attended, the stirring music discoursed by the Ascension Brass Band contributed in no small degree to swell the attendance and arouse the enthusiasm of the people present." (Sept. 21st.)

The band plays for two meetings of the Greeley and Brown Club:

"Greeley and Brown Club in the 1st Ward meeting. Several speakers and candidates on the fusion parish ticket went from Donaldsonville, accompanied by the Ascension Brass Band to attend the meeting, with the music of the Ascension Band were greeted with rounds of applause." (Oct. 5th.)

"Lively 1st Ward - Another enthusiastic Greeley and Brown mass meeting. A large number of people were present, about 2/3 of whom were colored, and the presence of the Ascension Brass Band, discoursing enlivening music, awoke the echoes of the surrounding country and aroused the enthusiasm and interest of the auditors." (Oct. 12th.)

The Silver Cornet and the Ascension Bands had a good relationship and many times shared presenting entertainments, such as the one below:

"The Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band Association have formed the laudable determination of giving a musical and variety entertainment in their fine hall for the benefit of the Shreveport sufferers, and it can not fail of receiving the liberal patronage of the community. An invitation has been extended the Ascension Brass Band to assist at the entertainment, and that organization has signified their acceptance. Due announcement will be given of the date of the affair, and of course it is expected that every one who is able to do so will attend." (Oct. 18th.)
The band continues to play for the Greeley and Brown meetings:

"A grand Greeley & Brown mass meeting and barbecue - A number of prominent speakers from Donaldsonville, accompanied by the Ascension Brass Band, will be on hand to edify the New River citizens with eloquent speeches and enlivening music." (Oct. 19th.)

The paper follows up the activity with the following:

"New River Barbecue - The Ascension Brass Band crossed the river from Donaldsonville on the steamer St. John at half past 6 o'clock in the morning, and in their new wagon, drawn by four mules, proceeded to the barbecue grounds, followed by quite a procession of people in buggies, and on horseback, discoursing enlivening music at frequent intervals, exciting the wonder and admiration of the natives along the way. At New River Lane they were met by a large accession to their followers, among who were Capt. Greathouse of the St. John and Mr. Felix Reynaud, the latter gentlemen bearing a beautiful silk flag that was presented to the band and borne to the scene of the barbecue in their wagon. Another tune from band - dinner was ready. Headed by the band people formed a procession and marched to the barbecue grounds. The band, accompanied by the speakers and other gentlemen, rode over to Mr. U. P. Landry's; a 6 mile distant to attend a ball at that gentlemen's where they were regaled with a light supper. Dancing kept up to a late hour, members of the band remained until 2 o'clock in the morning, and then repaired to Mr. Reynauds again, where they were accommodated until morning. Making an early start, they arrived in town at 10:00 Friday morning, and closed their frolic with an oyster dinner." (Oct. 26th.)

The new band wagon used by the band was given to them by some of the town's leading citizens:

"A number of leading citizens have clubbed together and purchased a fine band wagon for the Ascension Brass Band. The vehicle arrived last week and was presented to the band in token of the esteem in which they are held by the community, and as some return for the campaign service they are rendering. A handsome and deserved present." (Nov. 9th.)

1873

The year begins with a meeting on January 4th and the bands in town, including the Ascension, are practicing for the upcoming fair season. The Episcopal church sponsors a fair and plays on "Thursday - the fair opened at 4 P. M. and this time it was the Ascension Brass Band whose fine music gave notice of the opening." (Feb. 15th.)

The band did play a serenade on December 31st that was noted in the January 4th paper:
"It was our pleasure to accompany the Ascension Brass Band upon an extended serenading tour about town and vicinity Monday night. A number of well known residents were serenaded, among them Messrs. Fred Duffel, and others whose names do not occur to us at present. Several of the citizens serenaded invited the members of the band to partake of liquid refreshments, which were quite acceptable to the musicians, for long continued blowing of their instruments was dry work. The Ascension Band displays marked improvement was dry work. The Ascension Band displays marked improvement of late, and under the direction of its able leader Mr. Leon Lacroix, will take rank as a first class musical organization. The band has many friends and admirers, among whom we are nothing loth to reckon ourselves." (Jan 4th.)

The band, along with two others, play for the fair for the benefit of the Orphans:

"Three bands of musicians, the Silver Cornet, Ascension Brass and St. Cecil Brass, were upon the grounds when the gates of the enclosure adjoining the Catholic Church were thrown open for the admittance of the public, about noon, and they alternately discoursed sweet, spirited music to inform the people of the commencement of the festivities." (March 1st.)

The band takes a pleasure cruise to New Orleans on board the St. John:


In response to a kind invitation extended to the Ascension Brass Band by Captain Greathouse to take a pleasure excursion on the Steamer St. John to New Orleans and back, the members of this organization assembled at the wharf Monday morning and anxiously awaited the arrival of their favorite packet. About noon she hove in sight and at one o'clock landed at the wharf. The band went aboard, and after being very cordially received by the captain, went on deck, and as the boat backed out played a paring air to Donaldsonville. The next thing on the programme was dinner, and it was really surprising how a little 'blowing' affected the appetites of the Brass Band boys. After dinner the Band played at intervals of every quarter of an hour all along the coast, until night put a stop to their gayety.

In the meantime, it was a settled thing that we should have a dance aboard, but none of us knew what to do about the music. It is true we had a piano, but it alone would not suffice, and we must have a violin." (May 3rd.)

Once the St. John arrived in New Orleans, the Ascension Brass Band took in the city and all members met at 3:00 back at the boat landing to begin playing serenades: A most interesting sentence is in the below paragraph and while it may not be the first time that a band played live on a New Orleans street car, it is one of the earliest mentioning of this activity:
"At three o'clock in the evening we all went on the boat where we were interviewed by several of the leading citizens of the city, who stated that all the necessary arrangements had been made for our going out and serenading. They then left with the understanding that we should rendezvous at the Cosmopolitan Restaurant at nine o'clock. At nine o'clock we were promptly on the ground and after playing a tune for the proprietor of the Gem, who cordially invited us in and requested us to partake of his hospitality, we entered a street car, started up town, surprising the people of New Orleans by playing several tunes in the car, a thing hitherto not heard of in the city. An account of our serenade has already been given in the New Orleans papers so it is useless for us to give any further details. Suffice it to say that we were received at every place with the greatest hospitality, and treated by our hosts with that courtesy that is the attribute of only true gentlemen.

Our homeward trip was merely a repetition of Monday's excursion. We had music, dancing, cards, and flirtations all the way up, and when we landed in Donaldsonville again we were pretty well tired out. This trip will ever be remembered by all of the Brass Band boys as one of the most pleasant periods of their lives." (May 3rd.)

The band participates in the Catholic Church’s celebration of the 27th anniversary of Pope Pius Ninth's election celebration:

"This event was celebrated with great pomp in all the Catholic Churches in this country, and on Sunday last Donaldsonville witnessed one of the grandest processions in honor of this occasion, that has traversed its streets for years.

The procession formed in front of the church about five o'clock in the evening, and preceded up Mississippi Street headed by the Ascension Brass Band in their elegant band wagon, which had been tastefully decorated with evergreens and flowers by the fair hands of lady friends, and presented a very imposing appearance. At intervals of every ten or fifteen minutes the band favored the listeners with sweet, beautiful and well executed music." (June 28th.)

In the Nineteenth century, the citizens, not having the modern forms of entertainment and amusement, would create their own. One of the most popular was the impromptu or surprise party:

"SURPRISE PARTY - One of the most pleasant little affairs in which it has ever been our lot to participate was a veritable surprise party at the residence of Mrs. Andrew Gingry, corner of Railroad Avenue and Claiborne Streets, Wednesday night. The persons for whom the surprise was intended-being some young ladies from Baton Rouge who are here on a visit to relatives-were kept in profound ignorance of the intended event, the first initiation of its occurrence they received being the sudden appearance at the house of quite a numerous party of young ladies and gentlemen, a majority of the latter members of the Ascension Brass Band. The parlors and spacious hall were cleared of furniture, and in a half hour the music of the Ascension String Band was resounding and the dancing had begun. What with music, dancing, singing, chatting, eating cake, drinking lemonade and mile punch, etc., the time passed so rapidly and pleasantly by that no one took note of the
fleeting hours or became weary, and it was almost daybreak when the festivities came to a close and the guests departed for their homes." (August 2nd.)

The Ascension and Silver Cornet bands play a concert for the Shreveport sufferers:

"THE CONCERT. The entertainment given at the D.S.C.B. Hall, last Saturday evening, for the benefit of the Shreveport sufferers, was by no means as great a success as such an affair should have been, either in point of a meritorious performance or large attendance of spectators. Unfortunately several of the ladies and gentlemen who had volunteered their aid were unable to attend, and the corps of performers was reduced to a very slim showing. However, these did their best, and considering the object of the entertainment and the unexpected drawbacks met with, the audience was satisfied.

The Ascension Band played the opening piece from the gallery of the hall, and the Silver Cornet Band began the indoor concert." (Nov. 8th.)

1874

The Ascension Band has been organized for two years and celebrates this 2nd anniversary with a dance:

"On Saturday, the 31st inst., the members of the Ascension Brass Band will give their 2nd Anniversary Hop, at the spacious residence of Mrs. A. Gingry, corner of Railroad Ave. and Claiborne Street. The dainty invitations have just been issued, and the party promises to be quite an elegant and recherchée affair. It is now 2 years since the formation of the Ascension Band, and during that time the organization has steadily increased its popularity until it has become quite a universal favorite with the people of our parish." (Jan. 24th.)

We read that the 'hop' was a success and also read of the details of the dance:

"THE ASCENSION BAND'S HOP: - The grand ball or 'hop' given at the residence of Mrs. Andrew Gingry, last Saturday night, under the auspices of the Ascension Brass Band, and in commemoration of the second anniversary of the formation of that organization, was one of the finest affairs of the kind that has taken place in Donaldsonville since the war, as every one of the large number of persons in attendance will testify. Three large rooms and the spacious hall of Mrs. Gingry's house were cleared and tastefully decorated for the occasion, the band being assigned a position at the read end of the hall, from whence their excellent music could be plainly heard by all the dancers. Directly over the head of the musicians was a beautiful flag with the initials 'A.B.B.' upon it in gold letters, while in front of them and reaching across the hall was a stretch of white cotton upon which appeared 'Second Anniversary, Ascension Brass Band.' Likewise in golden letters. Above the doorways were tasteful festoon of evergreen, which added greatly to the general beauty of the scene when the rooms were filled with a brilliant throng of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen. The invited guests began to arrive
at 7:30 in the evening, and by 9 o'clock fully a hundred persons were present, and the festivities well under way. The music was the finest we have heard for months, the guests were all in the best spirits, and there were all in the Best spirits, and there was no flagging of interest in the dancing until about 3 A.M., at which hour the affair came to a close. Refreshments in the shape of cake and light cordials were passed around several times during the evening, and at midnight all were invited to partake of a wholesome lunch of ham sandwiches and coffee, an invitation that was responded to with a will. To the energy of the gentlemen of the invitation and arrangement committee, the endurance of the members of the string band, and the untiring efforts of the kind hostess to make the guests comfortable, was due in great measure the perfect enjoyment of the occasion. The great success of the hop demonstrates the widespread popularity of the Ascension Band, and it is to be hoped other entertainments like that of last Saturday evening will be repeated."

(Feb. 7th.)

The ball was a success and another is scheduled, with the approaching of Lent, this hop will be the last of the season:

"Another 'hop' will be given under the auspices of the Ascension Brass Band at the residence of Mrs. A. Gingry this evening, and we may safely predict it will be a nice affair. This will be the last ball of the carnival season as Lent begins next Wednesday." (Feb. 14th.)

With March 4th approaching, the time of the Firemen's Parade in New Orleans, the two bands take different ways to the city:

"The Ascension Band will visit New Orleans on the steamer St. John, leaving here on Monday. The Silver Cornet Band will take the train Tuesday, and will play for Pelican Hook & Ladder Co. #7 in the procession." (Feb. 28th.)

While the Ascension Band could have marched in the parade, it declines. They all had a great time on the trip to New Orleans:

"The members of the Ascension Brass Band had a jolly time during their visit to New Orleans, this week. There was dancing and music on the St. John on the downward trip, music and dancing of evenings in port, and dancing with music on the homeward journey. The officers of the boat exerted themselves to make the excursionists comfortable, and, as is always the case, succeeded admirably. Capt. McElroy makes an efficient and popular commander, while clerk Comstock has a reputation second to that of no river man for his genial qualities and gentlemanly deportment towards every body. From the big base (Sic: bass) horn manipulator down to the diminutive drummer, the Ascension Band all testify that they had a royal time of it and will long remember the excursion as a very pleasant episode in their career as individuals and an organization. The band was offered inducements to join in the Firemen's Parade in New Orleans, on the 4th, but declined." (March 7th.)
The band, ever active, ride to a friend's residence and spend a nice evening:

"Last evening the members of the Ascension Brass Band got aboard one of their big red wagon and repaired to the residence of Mr. Robt. Maurin, in the neighboring parish of Assumption, where they were most hospitably received and entertained. A number of the young ladies of the vicinity were present at the reception, and soon dancing was inaugurated." (July 19th.)

The band, along with the Cofield Band, play for a picnic for the benefit of the Grasshoppers Baseball Club:

"Basket picnic at Donaldsonville for Grasshoppers Baseball Club. The Independent and Cofield Bands have been invited. At Gibson Grove." (June 12th.)

One week later the band serenades Mr. Duffel:

"The Ascension Brass Band was out on a serenading lark last Sunday night. They first visited the residence of Mr. Thos. O'Malley, who was recently married, and treated him and his fair bride to several choice selections. Mr. F. duffel was then called upon and awakened from his quiet slumbers by the strains of witching music. Mr. Duffel fully appreciated the compliment, but at the same time, recognized the fact that the presence in his house of a beautiful young lady from New Orleans, had a great deal to do with influencing the susceptible young men of this organization to call upon him on this particular night. Before dispersing the old friend and supporter of the band, C. Kline, Esq., was startled from his couch by the sweet notes of the cornet and the loud rattle of the drum. Kline knows he deserved a serenade so was not at all surprised by the presence of the 'boys.' Although several members were missing the band played excellently, and every one was pleased to hear the familiar sound of their instruments once more." (May 30th.)

The length of the career of the Ascension Band turns out to be a very short one. For reasons not given, we see in a write-up in the June 5, 1875 issue of the Chief: "The late Ascension Brass Band." There is no indication of the band's demise in an August 1st mention:

"The Ascension, Silver Cornet and St. Cecile Bands were all practicing in town last night. The Ascension Band is introducing the favorite New York air 'Mulligan Guards.'" 

**Donaldsonville Brass Band**

1909

The year 1909 seems to be pivotal years for the music scene in Donaldsonville. The brass band disappears from dancing engagements and plays only for parades,
concerts, and excursions. The newly formed Donaldsonville Concert Band seems to be the 'last hurrah' of the brass band. We read of this band forming:

"Concert Band Projected. There is a movement on foot to organize a concert band here with the object in view of furnishing amusement to the members and affording pleasure to the public. The idea is to give open air concerts in Louisiana Square during the summer months, and all who care for this source of entertainment - which means practically the entire community - will hail the venture with enthusiasm.

Already twenty-five possible members have been subscribed and it is expected that several more will be obtained before the list is closed. Any one wishing to join the organization should communicate with Frank K. Sims, F. L. Trepagnier, or any of the other gentlemen interested in the movement. A meeting will be called shortly to perfect organization by electing offices and arranging the instrumentation." (Feb. 6th.)

The band gives a concert in Louisiana Square and the program played is given in the paper:

"The recently organized Donaldsonville Concert Band will give its first public concert in Louisiana Square on Easter Sunday, April 11th at 5:00 P. M. The band has been practicing faithfully for the past several weeks under the leadership of Director Frank K. Sims, and has attained a degree of proficiency that assures it a prominent place in the front rank of the amateur musical organizations of the State. The forth coming concert and all subsequent entertainments by the band will be open to the public and everybody is cordially invited to be present." (April 13th.)

The band plays for a concert in Louisiana Square. The audience includes members of an excursion from Crowley to Donaldsonville. (June 12th.). The band's first public concert was on Sunday, April 11th:

"The Donaldsonville Concert Band gave its first public concert in Louisiana Square last Sunday afternoon in the presence of a large and appreciative audience. The attractive program for the occasion was carried out in a manner that elicited the most favorable comment, and leader Frank K. Sims and the members of the band were the recipients of congratulations upon the successful and enjoyable nature of the entertainment." (April 17th)

On May 1st., the band plays for a firemen's convention. The item in the paper mentions this and calls the band the Silver Cornet Band with Prof. Frank K. Sims as the leader.

Following this final mention of a Concert Band, we see the numerous engagements of smaller groups called orchestras or string bands - later called jazz bands. There is no set instrumentation and the same groups would be called by any of a number of designations - all describing the same group and the same band. With the changing of the type of groups that plays the music for the dance, the dances also change - it has not been determined which comes first, the change of types of bands or the evolution of a
new style of dancing. From some of the articles we can see that the younger generation, as it does today, begins to dance what was then called a vulgar style of dancing. There begins a real attempt to stop the new trends. We read articles and opinions about how these new dances are corrupting the youth. From a Kansas City paper, we read an article reprinted in the Daily Times:(1909)

"Kansas City, Missouri - Dance Halls of this city in the future will have to bar the 'bunny hug,' the 'grizzly bear' and the 'turkey trot' styles of dancing. The recreation department of the board of public welfare ordered that such dances be eliminated here in the 'interest of the morale of the young people of the city." (Nov. 25th.)

The Mardi Gras balls of New Orleans also have the same opinions as stated above and also ban the modern dancing:

"The ruling spirits of the best society in New Orleans, can generally be relied on to do the right thing at the right time. The mystic organizations whose beautiful balls are a distinctive and indispensable feature of the annual carnival in Rex's Capital have given notice that the 'Turkey Trot,' 'Bunny Hug,' 'Grizzly Bear' and similar modern ramifications of the 'hocchee coочee' and can and will be strictly prohibited at these balls. Well done, merry gentlemen. It would have been a burning shame to mar the high social stands of the carnival ball by tolerating these ungraceful suggestive and disgraceful terpsichoreans." (Jan. 11, 1913)

One of the most popular dances of this era was the Tango. Its influence is seen in vaudeville and in movie theatres. The local theatre shows a film that includes the dance:

"College girl, a movie shown by the Grand Theatre; one of the features of which is the tango dance." (May 9, 1914)

Regardless of the articles in the paper, the tide cannot be turned and these dances become the basis of jazz band music.

ASCENSION BRASS BAND
2nd Edition
1882-1885

The Ascension Band may have been the second band referred to using the same name in the March 23rd article in the paper:

"We learned a few weeks since that several of the young men of town had taken steps toward the organization of another band and that brass instruments were sent for and received. As to how far or how successful the movement had progressed up to the present time we are uninformed, but hope the project will be carried out. With two bands, Donaldsonville will make quite a noise in the world." (March 23, 1882)
The first time the band's name appears in the paper is June 8th:

"The Catholic Procession - The procession which paraded the principle streets of town last Sunday afternoon in commemoration of the anniversary of the Corpus Christi Festival was quite large in point of numbers and pleasing and attractive in appearance. It was headed by the Ascension Brass Band, which discoursed sacred music in fine style, adding much to the interest of the occasion. Following in the wake of the band came numbers of young ladies, embracing many of the beauties of our town and parish, all handsomely dressed; the neatly attired orphan girls under the kind care of the sisters of the St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum; a dozen or so of young boys dressed in the costume of attendants upon the altar; the choir of the Ascension church; the reverend Father Cuppen, bearing the __"
Other Donaldsonville Bands

MIDNIGHT SERENADERS/HARMONY 6-7-8/HARMONY KINGS

There were new groups organizing frequently during the jazz age. The first mention of the Midnight Serenaders (also known later as the Harmony 6, Harmony 7, Harmony 8 and the Harmony Kings) is on July 26, 1924 when the band plays for a grand fair:

"Grand Fair - dance music will be furnished by the Midnight Serenaders Orchestra." (July 26th.)

1925

The band becomes a hit with the town folks and is hired for a number of music jobs. They play for an entertainment in Plaquemines:

"Entertainment in new Daigle Auditorium in Plaquemine. Music for the occasion was furnished by the Moonlight Serenaders under the direction of Dr. J. A. Richard, Jr." (Jan. 24th.)

The group begins an engagement at the new Rivet's Hall in Brusly St. Martin:

"Grand opening dance at Nick Rivet's Hall - Brusly St. Martin. Music for the occasion will be furnished by the Midnight Serenaders." (August 15th.)

Their popularity is evident by their securing many other jobs. They next play for another very popular dancing establishment, the Tip-Top Hall in Klotzville, La.:

"Dance at Tip-Top Hall, in Klotzville. Music will be furnished by the Midnight Serenaders of this city." (August 22nd.)

The band is also engaged to play at the Darrow Pavilion:

"Darrow Pavilion - grand dance. Music for which will be furnished by the Midnight Serenaders." (August 29th.)

They play again at the pavilion in Darrow:

"Grand dance at pavilion in Darrow (Sept. 7th)

A very busy band in late summer, they are engaged for a fair in Belle Rose, a town south of Donaldsonville:
"Big fair of Belle Rose for benefit of St. Jules Catholic Church. Music by Midnight Serenaders of Donaldsonville." (Sept. 5th.)

The final mention in 1925 is on September 12th. when they again play in the Klotzville Tip-Top Hall:

"Grand dance - Tip-Top Hall, Klotzville. Music will be by the Midnight Serenaders." (Sept. 12th.)

1926

The band begins the year of 1926 playing for a dance for the Firemen:

"Volunteer Hose Company at K. of C. Hall. Splendid music for the occasion was furnished by the Midnight Serenaders." (Jan. 30th.)

Traveling out of town, the band plays at Carbo's Hall:

"Sunday, Feb. 14 - Masquerade ball at Carbo's Hall on Bayou Lafourche, and grand carnival ball at Elks Home, Feb. 16. Music for both events will be furnished by the famous Midnight Serenaders." (Jan. 30th.)

The band next plays for a: "Firemen's dance/fair - music will be furnished by the Midnight Serenaders." (May 1st.)

In the traditional dance given by the Junior class for the Senior class of Donaldsonville High School, the Midnight Serenaders are chosen to provide the dance music:

"Juniors of High School (Donaldsonville) entertainment for Senior. Music for the dance was furnished by members of the Midnight Serenaders." (May 15th.)

The band is engaged by the Catholic School, St. Vincent's. The engagement is played by only some of the members of the band; perhaps because the school cannot afford to hire the complete band:

"Dance for Mother's Day at St. Vincent. Music for the dance was furnished by Messrs. Kocke and Gisclard of the Midnight Serenaders." (May 29th.)

The band plays for a banquet for the St. Joseph Commercial Institute:

"Banquet for St. Joseph Commercial Institute and St. Vincent Institute and dance to the strains of good music by the Midnight Serenaders." (June 5th.)

At the annual Fourth of July celebration the music at night, was "furnished by the Midnight Serenaders." (July 3rd.)
We do not see the name "Midnight Serenaders" again as they change their name to "Harmony Six." They begin playing under this name as early as August 7th when their new name is mentioned in the August 7th paper:

"Grand Theater, August 12th., benefit of the Donaldsonville Fire Dept. 'The Still Alarm' is the featured film. Music by the Harmony Six." (August 7th.)

It is not until the August 26th. paper that their new name is explained to readers:

"Midnight Serenaders now 'Harmony Six.' The 'Midnight Serenaders' Orchestra, composed of local musicians, has reorganized under the name of the 'Harmony Six' and the young musicians are now discoursing better and classier music than ever.

The boys gave a dance at the Knights of Columbus Hall last Sunday night which was largely attended. Over 40 young couples were on the floor and they danced to the heart's content. The splendid music rendered on that occasion is much talked about by Terpsichorean devotees.

Last night, the pavilion at Napoleonville, which had been closed for some time, was reopened with a dance for which the Harmony Six Orchestra furnished the music. The affair was largely attended, many young people going from this city.

Tonight the orchestra will play for a dance at Lake Verret. A number of people from here will attend.

Henry Kocke, Jr., was elected manager of the reorganized orchestra and Gordon Gisclard was appointed as manager of the dance wherever given." (August 26th.)

Under the auspices of the Harmony Six, "the hot pepper boys give a grand dance at K. of C. Hall." (August 7th.) There appears a write-up when they play for a dance in Napoleonville:

"Harmony Six dance at Napoleonville.

The Harmony Six orchestra of this place (Sic: Donaldsonville) gave a dance in the pavilion at Napoleonville last night, and the affair proved one of the most enjoyable special functions ever staged in that town. There was a large crowd in attendance, over 50 young ladies and gentlemen going from this city and vicinity. The excellent music furnished by the orchestra was much enjoyed and all participants had a delightful time. The members of the Harmony Six Orchestra, all of whom are young musicians from this city, deeply appreciate the generous patronage accorded their social function by the young people of this city and Napoleonville." (August 21st.)

The band plays again in Napoleonville, resulting in another successful dance:

"The Harmony Six Orchestra of this city gave a grand dance at the pavilion in Napoleonville last night. The affair was largely attended, many going from this place, and it proved a most gratifying success." (Sept. 4th.)
The annual South Louisiana State Fair, yearly given in Donaldsonville, engages the Harmony Six to play dance music:

"Luncheon and dance in honor of South Louisiana State Fair. Fair participants. After the repast there was a dance, for which music was furnished by the Harmony Six Orchestra." (Oct. 23rd.)

There is an announcement in the paper for a dance at K. of C. Hall on October 24th for which "the Harmony Six will furnish music for the event." (Oct. 23rd.) In the next issue, the paper writes about the dance:

"K. of C. Country Barn Dance Big Success.
The country barn dance given by Ascension Council No. 1087, Knights of Columbus, at their hall Thursday night, was a most gratifying success, both socially and financially. The attendance was very large and dancing lasted until long past the Midnight hour. Excellent music was furnished for the occasion by the Harmony Six Orchestra, and towards the close of the affair, the Stratokos Buena Vista Orchestra, composed of nine artists playing thirty instruments, after their engagement at the Grand Theater, rendered a few choice dance selections complimentary, and the orchestra of the Dubinsky Stock Company which is playing a week's engagement in the city, also played a few of the latest dance pieces as a treat to the dancers, all of which were greatly enjoyed by those in attendance." (Oct. 30th.)

The Harmony Six Orchestra is becoming the most popular dance orchestra in the area and in the next month or so will play many engagements. Their exploits are given in the paper:

"Wanted - You to attend the big Halloween party and dance at the K. of C. Hall tomorrow night at 8:00. Lots of fun for everybody. The Harmony Six will furnish the music. Sponsored by the Junior class of Donaldsonville High School." (Oct. 23rd.)

Besides the above small item, there appears a lengthier write-up in the October 30th paper:

"The Harmony Six Dispenses Good Music.
The Harmony Six Orchestra of this city played for a dance given at the pavilion in Napoleonville last night. The affair was largely attended and the music discoursed was of a high order and the young musicians were frequently applauded by the large crowd of dancers and other present. Tomorrow night this excellent orchestra will delight the terpsichoreans of this city at a dance and party to be given by the Juniors of the Donaldsonville High School at the Knights of Columbus Hall. Gordon Gisclard, the popular entertainer and assistant manager of the orchestra, promises a big time to the belles and beaux attending the dance. Dainty refreshments will be sold at moderate prices. The orchestra boys are gaining in popularity day by day and are much sought after by social clubs all over this section of the state." (Oct. 30th.)
The band plays for another dance on November 25th., and on December 17th., plays for a benefit dance:

"Dance for Christmas toy fund on Friday, Dec. 17 at Knights of Columbus Hall. Dance will commence at 8:30 and music will be furnished by the Harmony Six Orchestra." (Nov. 20th.)

Most of the social/civic clubs in the town of Donaldsonville, as in other late 19th century towns, sponsored dances. The Elks in Donaldsonville gave many dances and rented out their "home" for other dances. They give a dance with the Harmony Six providing the music:

"The 'good fellow' Elks will entertain at a dance Wednesday, Dec. 15th. Music will be furnished by the Harmony Six Orchestra." (Nov. 20th.)

It was traditional for the Elks to give dances on Christmas and New Year's Eve. This year they used the Harmony Six for their dance band:

"Dance at Elks Home on Christmas night and New Year's Eve. Music for both events will be furnished by the Harmony Six Orchestra." (Dec. 18th.)

The band is hired for a December 29th. dance by the K. of C.:

"Knights of Columbus entertainment on Dec. 29th. at Knights of Columbus Hall. The Harmony Six will dispense music for the occasion and several special selections will be rendered. (Dec. 25th.)

1927

The Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Daughters give an entertainment at the K. of C. Hall and follow it with a dance, using the Harmony Six:

"Music for the dance was furnished by the Harmony Six, who dispensed several new selections and the large number of young people who took part enjoyed themselves until a late hour." (Jan. 1st)

They play for another dance for Knights of Columbus Hall two weeks later:

"Harmony Six Dance Tomorrow at the K. of C. Hall
The Harmony Six will give a grand dance at the Knights of Columbus Hall tomorrow night. Snappy music will be discoursed on the occasion, including many new selections which will prove a real delight to Terpsichoreans. A good time is assured all those who attend.

The Harmony Six is composed of well known and enterprising local white musicians. They have dispensed music for many social functions here and elsewhere in
the past and their performances have always been of the highest order and have invariably given complete satisfaction. As a result the services of the artists are always in demand and they are kept continually on the go, filling engagements in this city and in neighboring places.

The dance tomorrow night promises to be fully up to the high standards of the functions given by them in the past and an enjoyable time is in store for all those who have the good fortune to attend." (Jan. 15th.)

There appears a story in the paper that sets to rest the rumor that the Harmony Six Orchestra is disbanding:

"Harmony Six Orchestra in Great Demand;
Erie Vial, shoe salesman in A. Netter's store, and member of the Harmony Six Orchestra, called at the Chief office Thursday and stated that the report which is being circulated to the effect that the orchestra has disbanded is erroneous and that the band is better organized and more active now than it has ever been before. He says that the organization was recently strengthened by the addition of a new member, in the person of Arnant Richard, a music drummer, and that the band recently received several pieces of the latest music and is better prepared than ever to fill engagements in this city and neighboring cities and towns. He reports that several bookings were made lately and that the orchestra is open for additional engagements." (Feb. 12th.)

The band plays for the Boy Scout dance given by the K. of C.:

"Knights of Columbus dance for Boy Scouts. Music for the occasion will be furnished by the Harmony Six Orchestra." (Feb. 19th.)

Another activity of the bands in the latter part of the 19th. century was providing music for the silent films. Most local bands, at one time or another, play for the films. The Harmony Six played at the Grand Theater for such an engagement:

"Blonde or Brunette, at the Grand Theatre.
The celebrated screen production, "Blonde or Brunette," featuring the famous picture artists, Adolphe Menjou as 'the man,' Greta Nissin, 'the Blonde,' and Arlette Marchal, the Brunette,' which was the opening offering at the big new $1,500,000 Saenger Theatre in New Orleans, with a seating capacity of 4500, and was shown to packed houses in that theatre for a whole week thereafter, was the attraction at the Grand Theatre in this city last night, and pleased and delighted the large and appreciative audiences which gathered to witness it. The picture is one of the grandest and most spectacular in the films today and excited wonder and awe wherever it is shown. It held the big audience at the Grand spellbound throughout and proved a rare and unusual treat to all those who had the good fortune to see it.

Special and exceptionally fine music in connection with the picture, was furnished by the Harmony Six Orchestra.
In order to emphasize to the general public the exceptional features of this great picture, Sidney Harp, manager of the Grand, arranged with the dry goods and millinery merchants of this city, to display in their show windows, dresses, shoes and hats of the latest styles, in combinations, suitable for ladies of blonde or brunette types, and all of the stores carried attractive displays, which were greatly admired and elicited much favorable comment.

The patrons of the Grand are profuse in their praise of Mr. Bloomenstiel, president of the local playhouse, for having brought to Donaldsonville, and permitted them to enjoy, a picture of such magnitude, so soon after it had regaled vast audiences at the Saenger, one of the finest picture theatres in the south." (Feb. 26th.)

The band has been increased to eight players and is now called the Harmony 8. They play a dance at Elks Home and Rivet's Hall on consecutive nights:

"All who love good music and who are in search of a wonderful time will get both in galore by attending the grand opening dance which will be given at Rivet's Hall, Brusly St. Martin, tonight. Splendid music will be furnished by the popular Harmony Eight Orchestra; and a three pound box of delicious Shirley Marie Chocolates will be awarded the most graceful dancing couple. Be there, everybody, and participate in the pleasures of the evening." (May 5th.)

Under the headline "Dances to be given here and elsewhere" we read:

"Hail, all ye lovers of the Terpsichorean art! Let your dancing feet lead you to the Elks' Home tomorrow night, and enjoy a real pleasant evening by tripping the light fantastic toe at the grand dance which will be given under the auspices of the Elks. Jazzy, peppy and sweet dance music will be furnished by the Harmony Eight Orchestra, and dancing will begin at 8 o'clock." (May 15th.)

The band next plays for a benefit performance for flood victims:

"Flood benefit - picture and dance, Grand Theatre Thursday. Dance at Elks Home. Music by the Harmony 6 Orchestra. Raised $103." (May 21st.)

The social club, the "Jolly Five' gives a dance using the orchestra:

"Jolly Five big dance Friday, May 27th. Music will be furnished by the Harmony 6 Orchestra." (May 21st.)

On the July 4th program held in Donaldsonville, the band (Harmony Six) plays for the dancing during the celebrations:

"There will be jitney dancing throughout the day and until late at night, music for which will be furnished by the Harmony Six Orchestra." (July 2nd.)
The Elks Club sponsor what is called a "World Fair," to be given in Donaldsonville on July 3rd and 4th. The bands playing are the Claiborne Williams' Band and the Harmony Six. (July 2nd.)

The Elks sponsor a dance and part of the activity is a musical contest between the Harmony Seven Orchestra and the Night Hawks of Napoleonville:

"Elks Dance and Musical Contest Pleases Big Crowd. One of the most delightful social functions of the season was the dance and musical contest given at the Elks' Home last night. The front of the building was brilliantly illuminated with vari-colored lights.

There were about eighty couples on the dancing floor, and many others in attendance, who gazed with admiration upon the entrancing scene and listened with rapture to the strains of the sweet music, while the grounds in front of the home were crowded with people, attracted there by the delightful music.

The feature of the function was the musical contest between the Harmony Seven Orchestra of this city and the Night Hawks of Napoleonville, who rendered selections for the dance, playing alternately.

This was the first affair of the kind ever staged in this city and it attracted keen interest, and the two orchesras vied with each other to furnish the very best music possible in order to win the contest. At 11:30 o'clock tickets were distributed among the dancers and they were asked to write thereon, over their signatures, the name of the orchestra which had pleased him or her best. The tickets were then counted by J. Clarence LeBlanc, Benny Casso and Leo Mattingly, and it was found that 30 votes had been cast for the Night Hawks and 29 for the Harmony Seven, and the former were declared the victors. The closeness of the contest indicates that both orchesras are very popular with the Terpsichorian artists of this community and that they are about evenly matched when it comes to dispensing dance music that pleases." (July 30th.)

The band plays for the St. Joseph Commercial Institute dance on Thursday, June 2nd., and for the Elks Flag Day dance on June 11th. They also play for the Flag Day ceremonies of the Elks June 11th. The Elks remain active in community affairs and stage a July 4th function using both the Claiborne Williams and the Harmony 6 Orchestra to furnish music for the affair:

"Local Lodge of Elks to stage big initiation and festival on July 3rd and 4th parade - headed by Boy Scouts and Claiborne Williams Band. Music day and night will be furnished by the Harmony Six and Claiborne Williams Orchestras, and there features will no doubt be a source of such pleasure to many." (June 25th.)

We read in the June 25th. paper that the band is going to furnish music for a dance at Rivet's Hall:

"The Harmony Six will furnish music for a dance to be given at Rivet's Hall in Assumption tonight. Frank Sims is a recent acquisition to the orchestra, which is now furnishing better music than ever before. The selections discoursed by them tonight will prove a teat to all those who have the good fortune to be present." (June 25th.)
The name of the band changes depending on how many musicians are to be playing. In this article they are called the Harmony Seven:

"Knights of Columbus picnic on the Amite River. The Harmony 7 Orchestra will be on hand and will furnish music for the occasion." (July 30th.)

The band travels to Gonzales for a dance and are called the 'Harmony Eight':

"American Legion Dance, Gonzales, August 18th. The American Legion boys of Gonzales are preparing for a big dance to be given at their home at Gonzales, on Saturday night, August 18, and the announcement is made that this will be one of the grandest affairs of the kind ever staged by the post. Music for the occasion will be furnished by the Harmony Eight Orchestra of this city and free transportation in Montero & Brande's trucks to all those from this city and vicinity who desire to attend the dance. The trucks will leave Donaldsonville on the 7 o'clock p.m. trip of the ferry.

The Gonzales Legionnaires attended in large numbers the fair and dance given recently by Bennett Babin Post of Donaldsonville, and it is but fair that the soldier boys and their friends of this city and vicinity should return the compliment by attending the Gonzales dance in large numbers." (August 8th.)

The band next plays for a Knights of Columbus picnic:

"A large number of members of Ascension Council, Knights of Columbus, and their friends and a number of members of Court Ascension, Catholic Daughters of America, enjoyed a most delightful and successful picnic last Sunday. The picnickers, some traveling in their own cars, and others in trucks generously loaned by Montero and Brande, B. Lemann and Bro. L. A. Frey and Sons and others, crossed the river on the 7 o'clock ferry and journeyed to Clay Bank on the Amite River. The Harmony Seven Orchestra accompanied the party and a piano was taken along. Tarpaulins were spread on the banks of the stream, others enjoyed dancing to the strains of sweet music furnished by the orchestra and dispensed on the piano.

The picnickers were provided with basket lunches, containing many good things to eat, and a large quantity of ice-cold pop was taken along and together they enjoyed a veritable feast." (August 13th.)

As with brass bands, occasionally there were musical contests between dance/and or jazz bands. The Harmony Six participated in a musical concert with the Night Hawks:

"Harmony Seven win Contest with Night Hawks:

At a big dance given in Thibodaux last night, at which a musical contest between the Harmony Seven Orchestra of this city and the Night Hawks of Napoleonville was featured, the former having received the greatest number of votes, were declared winners. The Night Hawks having won by a small margin (Sic one vote) over the Harmony Seven in the contest at a grand dance given at the Elks' Home two weeks ago,
the race between the two is now a tie and it is planned to stage another contest between them in the early future, which will decide the winner of this musical contest.

A large number of friends and admirers of the Harmony Seven accompanied them to the Lafourche city last night to cheer and vote for their favorite.

On the strength of the splendid showing made by them in last night's contest the Harmony Seven have secured two engagements, which is quite a credit to them." (August 13th.)

The second band contest is held between the two bands. This publicity idea brought patrons from the band's home city and increased the attendance at the dance - those from Donaldsonville most likely to vote for their home town band:

"Another musical contest between the harmony Seven Orchestra of this city and the Night Hawks of Napoleonville, will take place at a grand dance to be given at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Friday night, September 2nd. There will be plenty of harmony and lots of good jazz music and the contest will be decided by vote. Every person paying admission will be entitled to one vote. Each couple dancing will have the right of four votes. The price of admission will be 25 cents; gentlemen dancing will pay $1.

These popular orchestras have already participated in two musical contests, one in this city and the other in Thibodaux. In the former the Night Hawks were victorious by a small minority, and in the latter the Harmony Seven won out by a small margin which shows that both of the bands are very popular with the lovers of the Terpsichorean art in this city and Thibodaux, and that they are about evenly matched when it comes to dispensing dance music.

It is needless to predict that the event will attract a large number of enthusiastic friends and admirers of the respective bands and prove interesting and exciting." (August 27th.)

The two bands met again in September at the K. of C. Hall in Donaldsonville:

"Harmony Seven Win Third Musical Contest.

A crowd which packed the Knights of Columbus Hall in Mississippi Street to capacity, attended the dance and musical contest given last night by the Harmony Seven Orchestra of this city and the Night Hawks of Napoleonville. Music was played continually, each band alternating. The music was wonderful and excellent and was highly appreciated by the many people present, particularly those who danced to its sweet strains. Every 25 cent admission ticket entitled the holder to one vote in the contest and every $1-dancing ticket was good for four votes. At the conclusion of the dance the tickets were taken up and the votes counted by a committee, of which J. Clarence LeBlanc was chairman, and it was found that 129 votes had been cast for the Harmony Seven and 47 for the Night Hawks, thus giving the day to the former by a majority of 82.
This is the third contest participated in by these two popular orchestras; the first was in Donaldsonville and was won by the Night Hawks, and the second in Thibodaux went to the Harmony Seven.

The music played by these two orchestras is of the very highest order and dances given by them never fail to draw large crowds." (Sept. 3rd.)

The next mention is interesting as it gives some of the pieces that are played by the band:

"The Harmony Seven Orchestra will furnish the music for a dance to be given at the Elks' Home tomorrow night. The general admission will be 10 cents; gentlemen dancing, #1. Among the latest music that this orchestra is now playing is, 'I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover," "I Walked Home from the Buggy Ride," "Cause Horses Carry Tails," "Lonely," "Kinkajoy," and "I Wonder How I Look When I'm Asleep." (Sept. 3rd.)

Two other items are in the September 3d paper:

"The Harmony Seven Orchestra will journey to Luling tonight, to furnish the music for a dance at the big pavilion at that place." (Sept. 3rd.)

"Lee Fortier, employed at the Standard Oil Company Refinery in Baton Rouge, with his family, is visiting his parents in Fabourg La Pipe. Last evening he went to the Knights of Columbus Hall to hear the musical contest and he was induced by the members of the Harmony Seven Orchestra to 'sit in' and make music with them, and 'Tot' Thibodaux eagerly hurried home and secured his trombone, in order to complete the arrangement. Lee speaks very highly of the Harmony and music interpretation of the members of the Harmony Seven and, playing slide trombone in both the Stancola Brass Band and Orchestra, he is a competent judge of musical performance." (Sept. 3rd.)

The band is now playing consistently with eight players. This enlargement is because the most popular instrumentation of a jazz band in the latter years of the 20's is to use more saxophones. The band probably had: cornet, trombone, piano, bass, drum and three saxophones (or a clarinet and two saxes). The majority of popular orchestra in 1927 used three saxophones who doubled on clarinet, oboe, etc.

The band continues its busy schedule as it plays for a "dance tomorrow night at Corbo's Hall, Barton." (August 6), and the K. of C. picnic mentioned in the August 13th paper. On the September 24th issue we read that there is a "Fair and Dance for the St. Joseph Commercial Institute" and the Harmony Seven Orchestra has been engaged. As the K. of C. 'Observe Columbus Day, and after the banquet the Harmony Seven play for dancing." (Oct. 15th.)

In October they play the "grand opening dance at Grand Bayou," and the dance the band plays for the American Legion Armistice Day festival is deemed 'a big success.' " (Nov. 12) they also play for another dance at Grand Bayou (Nov. 12th.) and finally for a grand dance at Woodmen of the World's "grand dance in Vacherie." (Dec. 7th.)
The Feb. 4th paper mentions that the band plays for a "grand dance by the American Legion at Elks' Home" and for the dancing portion of "Fair for Donaldsonville High School on February 12th. (Feb. 4th.). They play for a "grand dance at the Elks' Home on March 19th (March 17) and for an "Easter Dance at the K. of C. Hall (March 31st.). They play again at the "K. of C. Hall for Knights of Columbus Dance."(April 14th.). On Sunday, April 15th., they play at the Grand Theater and are engaged to play at the "grand opening dance at Rivet's Hall in Bursly, St. Martin." (April 22nd.).

We find a column in the paper that lists all the dances "here and elsewhere":

"Dances to be Given Here and Elsewhere. Hail, all ye lovers of the Terpsicorean art! Let your dancing feet lead you to the Elks' Home tomorrow night, and enjoy a real pleasant evening by tripping the light fantastic toe at the grand dance which will be given under the auspices of the Elks. jazzy, peppy and sweet dance music will be furnished by the Harmony Eight Orchestra, and dancing will begin at 8 o'clock.

"A lovely time is in store for all the Terpsicoreanists who will attend the big dance to be given at Geismar tomorrow night, under the auspices of R. E. Warthen and A. Cobb. Delightful and up-to-date dance music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' jazz orchestra of this city, and dancing will begin at 8 o'clock, continuing until midnight.

"A red hot dance will be given at the Red Men's Hall at Welcome, St. James parish, tonight, with splendid music furnished by the Moro Syncopators. There will be plenty of new, peppy music; and a five-pound box of candy will be given away free to the holder of the lucky admission ticket. A delightful, pleasure-filled evening awaits all who attend - so be there, one and all.

"Listen, everyone! I delightful time is in store for all of you who will go to Grand Bayou Hall on Saturday, May 12th. - walk, ride, fly, it doesn't matter how you get there. The main thing is, be there - for a grand dance will be given on that date, May 12th., under the management of Howard Dupre; and you will all have a lovely time dancing to the strains of the sweet and altogether delightful dance music to be played by the Moro Syncopators. First-class turtle soup will be served at twenty-five cents a plate.

"All who love good music and who are in search of a wonderful time will get both in galore by attending the grand opening dance which will be given at Rivet's Hall, Brusly St. Martin, tonight. Splendid music will be furnished by the popular Harmony Eight orchestra; and a three-pound box of delicious Shirley Marie Chocolates will be awarded the most graceful dancing couple. Be there, everybody, and participate in the pleasures of the evening."(May 5th.)

Again on May 12th. they play at Rivet's Hall
"Grand dance at Rivet's Hall at Brusly St. Martin, Belle Rose, tonight - the Harmony Eight Orchestra. For pep, rhythm, harmony and jazz, they're right there with the latest." (May 12th.)

They again play at the Elks' Home:

"The dance given at the Elks' Home last Sunday night attracted a small crowd and all report having had a delightful time dancing to the sweet strains of the up-to-date dance music furnished by the popular Harmony Eight Orchestra. The music is said to have included all the latest selections of popular jazz and waltz, and the 'eight' played in their usual enjoyable and skillful manner." (May 12th.)

The name for a few weeks is changed to the "Pumpkin Center Jazzers." No reason is given but the paper writes two items with that name: There is a small town called Pumpkin Center near Hammond, La.

"Legion to stage barn dance at K. of C. Hall. Music furnished by the Pumpkin Center Jazzers." (May 19th.)

"Legion barn and picture, May 30th, K. of C. Hall. Music by Pumpkin Center Jazzers, formerly Harmony Eight." (May 26th.)

In the June 23rd. paper, the old name is used again:

"Scout jamboree proves big success - grand dance at night at K. of C. Hall. Music by the popular Harmony Eight Orchestra. Those brilliant musicians played all the modern, jazzy and peppy dance 'hits'." (June 23rd.)

At times the young people of the town would give an impromptu dance or a surprise party where there was no time to hire a band. The Harmony 8 furnish music for a surprise party for one of their friends:

"Surprise farewell party - for Miss Carmille Exhicios. Most of the time was spent most pleasantly dancing to the strains of Victrola selections and wonderful dance music voluntarily furnished by the Harmony Eight Orchestra of this city." (August 4th.)

The band plays again for the American Legion Post in Gonzales:

"American Legion Dance, Gonzales, August 18th. The America Legion boys of Gonzales are preparing for a big dance to be given at their home at Gonzales, on Saturday night, August 18th., and the announcement is made that this will be one of the grandest affairs of the kind ever staged by the Post. Music for the occasion will be furnished by the Harmony Eight Orchestra of this city and free transportation in Montero & Brande's trucks to all those from this city and vicinity who desire to attend the dance. The trucks will leave Donaldsonville on the 7 o'clock p.m. trip of the ferry." (August 8th.)
The barn dance given at the fair grounds for which the band played was a great success and well attended. Another barn dance is planned:

"Barn dance was given by Bennett Babin Post of the American Legion, and the Legion takes this method of thanking all for their co-operation and attendance which made the dance such a success. The receipts show 416 paid admissions. Music for the occasion was furnished by the ever-popular Harmony Eight Orchestra, who received many compliments on the excellent music rendered. First prize to the couple attired in the best country costume, was won by Curtis Bourdier of this city, and Miss Mercedes Ray of Houma. The prize for the best country costume was won by Miss Carrie Schaff of Donaldsonville, while the prize for the best waltz was captured by Clarence Falcon and Miss Elma Breaux of Donaldsonville. The judges were: Berney Picou, Mrs. Laura Rivet, Dr. Darcantel and Fred Landry Jr.

Another dance will be given by the soldier boys, in the open air pavilion at the fair grounds, on Saturday, August 25th., on which occasion prizes similar to those awarded at last Saturday's event will be offered.

Music will be furnished by the Harmony Eight Orchestra, a musical organization which has the swing, the pep and the harmony.

The boys are trying to raise money with which to build a Legion home and they should be given every encouragement, co-operation and support possible to the end that their laudable aim might be realized." (August 11th.)

They also play for a barn dance in Gonzales:

"Grand barn dance - American legion Hall in Gonzales. Delightful and up-to-date dance music was furnished by the popular Harmony Eight Orchestra of this city." (August 25)

The Legion Post has a "two-day festival on November 10th.and 11th. with music by the Harmony Eight Orchestra." (Oct. 30th.)

There are a number of jazz/dance orchestras playing in the Donaldsonville area with names like" The Moro Syncopators, the "White Elephants, "The Black Devils," and the "Melody Makers." The Harmony Eight play for a wedding reception at Corbo's Hall which is mentioned in the May 4th. paper.

The tone of the last article about the Harmony Eight (now six again) seems much more optimistic than others. Members of the band are not heard from again with the exception of Henry Kocke Jr. who joins the Harmony Kings, a new orchestra led by O. D. Denson, an exceptional cornet player. The last item:

"Harmony Six Orchestra to play at Bogalusa.

The Harmony Six Orchestra of this city, one of the finest musical organizations in the state when it comes to dispensing dance music, will journey to Bogalusa on July 3rd. to play for dances to be given in that city on that night and also on the night of July 4th. Last Saturday night the band played for a dance given at Smiling Acres, near Amite City, the property of Lee Lanier. Denson's band is composed of skilled artists who play
exceptionally good music. The orchestra is in great demand and is very seldom without an engagement, furnishing music for dances in this city and in all parts of the surrounding country.

The orchestra has several engagements which will keep it on the go for some time to come. The Harmony Six is composed entirely of white home boys. They practice regularly and keep in perfect trim. They also keep up with all of the latest dance music, which they are preparing to dispense on a moment's notice." (June 29th.)

The mention of O. D. Denson links the Harmony Six to the newly named Harmony Kings, as he is named leader of that group. He is a member of the Harmony Six and Harmony Kings and while many of the personnel change at this time, the new group is larger, containing nine musicians and becomes very active in securing jobs.

The Harmony Kings

1928

The Harmony Six evolves into the Harmony Kings and the first appearance of this new group, the Harmony Kings, is in the December 22nd., 1928, issue of the chief:

"Grand Dance at Grand Bayou next Wednesday night. Music by the Harmony Kings of this City." (Dec. 22nd.)

1929

In the May 4th. issue of the Chief, we see the next write-up about the Harmony Kings and the last appearance of the Harmony Eight:

"Grand dance for benefit of the American Legion. Music by the Harmony Kings Orchestra." (May 4th.)

The band next plays for the Catholic High School's Junior class dance. (May 25th.) Not until the November 9th issue do we hear next of the Harmony Kings. Most of the dance jobs seem to be given now to the White Elephants. The item compliments the Harmony Kings:

"American Legion Dance at Elks' Home. Music for the dance will be furnished by the popular Harmony Kings Orchestra of this city, who knows how to hold their own wherever they go, when it comes to play the very best music in the very best way. They are right there with the stuff, and the night of Monday, Nov. 11, will prove no exception to their general policy of rendering all the latest and most popular dream, waltz and jazz melodies." (Nov. 9th.)

In the following issue of the paper is mentioned the dance played by the band the week before:
"American Legion Dance last Monday night. Music was by the Harmony Kings Orchestra of Donaldsonville who as usual played all the most popular dance 'hits.'" (Nov. 16th.)

1930

The fair grounds of Donaldsonville next hires the band for an "open air dance - Sunday" (April 19th.). The band plays dances at the popular Elks' Home:

"Dance - Elks' Home tomorrow night by American Legion. Delightful music for the occasion will be furnished by the Harmony Kings Orchestra of this city, who are right there with the stuff when it comes to play jazzy, peppy, sweet and hot dance music." (May 3rd.)

It was customary to have dances after the graduation from high school on the same night as the closing exercises:

"Donaldsonville High School closing exercises next Thursday. Following the exercises there will be a big dance at Elks'. Music by the Harmony Kings Orchestra." (May 24th.)

The paper follows up in the next issue that indeed the "Jr/Sr reception dance" took place at the Elks' Home with "Music by the Harmony Kings Orchestra." (May 31)

While the next item doesn't name the Harmony Kings as the band playing, it does mention the names of some of them taking a dance job with a smaller combo:


1931

We find an advertisement for an Easter Dance for St. Vincent and St. Joseph Commercial Institute with music by the Harmony Kings. (Feb. 7th.) The American Legion Post "gives a big masquerade dance with music by the Harmony Kings." (Feb. 7th.)

In the next few weeks there are write-ups in the paper telling about the band's appearance on radio station WSMB of New Orleans. Local radio stations were beginning to broadcast local bands regularly each week:

"Harmony Kings Orchestra on Radio March 22nd.

The Harmony Kings, a crack orchestra of Donaldsonville, of which O. D. Denson is director, will play over radio station WSMB, in New Orleans, on Sunday, March 22nd., from 11:435 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. The members of the band, numbering ten, will go to New Orleans by automobile early in the morning."
Mr. Denson states that persons desiring the band to play special selections may make their request by telegraph, addressed to the radio station, before or between the hours above named, and they may, if they so desire, request that the selection be dedicated to a person or persons designated.

The Harmony Kings Orchestra is composed of good musicians and is one of the best bands in the state. It has played at many functions in this and other parts of the state and the splendid music rendered by it has trilled the many people who have had the pleasure of hearing it. The concert which it will render on the radio March 22, will no doubt be very entertaining and will prove a big advertisement for both the orchestra and the city of Donaldsonville." (March 14th.)

The following week, one day before the radio show, another write-up appeared about the bands’ upcoming radio show:

"Harmony Kings on Air Tomorrow, 11:45 to 12:15

The Harmony Kings, a splendid and very popular orchestra of this city, of which O. D. Denson is director, will leave tomorrow morning and will play a program of selections to be broadcast over radio station WSMB from 11:45 to 12:15 p.m. tomorrow. The band comprises ten members, all of whom are very good musicians - among the best in the state.

Persons desiring the band to play special selections tomorrow are requested by Mr. Denson to send their requests by telegram, addressed to the radio station, before or between the hours above named. Requests may be dedicated to any person or persons designated. People throughout this section and wherever the Harmony Kings are known are eagerly anticipating the concert." (March 21st.)

On March 26th., the paper reviews the radio concert with a lengthy article:

"The Harmony Kings of this city, who comprise one of the best and higher class orchestras of this section, delighted a vast number of people from this city and all parts of the state and country last Sunday when they rendered a musical concert which was broadcast from radio station WSMB, New Orleans, during the half-hour from 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Telegrams numbering more than two hundred, sixty-five of which were sent from this city, and all of which were wired by friends of the Harmony Kings, poured into the radio station, carrying requests for popular selections. The telegrams were sent from all parts of Louisiana and from Texas and other states. Those who desired to do so further requested that their selection be dedicated to some particular person.

The Harmony Kings plays as many of the selections as the half-hour permitted, sincerely regretting that they did not have time to play all the requests. They deeply appreciate all messages received, however, and assure their friends that every one of the requests will be given attention at future programs.

A splendid feature of the program was the singing of Henry Kocke, Jr., of this city, whose voice brought joy to all listeners."
So well rendered was the program last Sunday that the Harmony Kings were highly praised throughout the Country. And the enthusiasm with which their selections were heard, together with their high class music and the man telegrams received, have resulted in an engagement for the Harmony Kings to render programs which will be broadcast every Sunday, commencing in the early future.

Those comprising the Harmony Kings Orchestra and the instruments played by them are: O. D. Denson, Donaldsonville, leader and trumpet player; Marcel Riviere, Thibodaux, trombone; Raoul Landry, Klotzville, sousaphone; Ada LeBlanc, first saxophone and clarinet; Robert Picou, second saxophone and soprano saxophone; Guy Lejeune, Napoleonville, third saxophone and soprano; Charles Gisclard, drums, Henry Kocke, Jr., Singer, announcer and entertainer." (March 28th.)

The band, now advertised as "the famous radio broadcasting orchestra," next plays for the annual Easter dance at the K. of C. Hall, and on May 10th., plays on the radio again"

"Harmony Kings Orchestra on Radio Sunday, May 10th.

The famous Harmony Kings Orchestra of this city, of which O. D. Denson is leader, will broadcast another delightful program of popular melodies from station WSMB, New Orleans, during the half-hour from 11 to 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 10th. To all who know them, the name Harmony Kings means good music - music that thrills your heart and soul and sets your pulse a-tingle. Hundreds of people throughout the country heard with much pleasure the program broadcast by the Harmony Kings several weeks ago, and all are eagerly anticipating the joyous return of their music over the air. People are requested to telegraph the musicians and ask to have their favorite selections played, and if they desire they may have those selections dedicated to some person or person." (May 2nd.)

The paper reports the success of the above broadcast:

"Harmony Kings Render Selections Over Radio.

The splendid program of popular musical selections broadcast from station WSMB, New Orleans, last Sunday afternoon by the famous Harmony Kings Orchestra of this city, of which O. D. Denson is director, was heard with much interest by hundreds of people from this city and all parts of the country, all of whom thoroughly enjoyed the lovely music and the singing of Henry Kocke, Jr., a member of the orchestra.

More than one hundred telegrams were received by the orchestra from friends all over the country, requesting that some of their favorite selections be played and incidentally attesting the popularity of the band. Having only a half-hour in which to render their program, the members of the orchestra played as many of the selections as time permitted, regretting that they were unable to play all of the requests. They assure their friends of their deep appreciation of the telegrams, however, and are glad to announce that they will broadcast another program sometime in the near future." (May 16th.)
As in other towns, the fire department was very active in the social life of the community and in turn the townspeople were supportive of the firemen in their many activities, including endeavors to purchase new equipment and meet other expenses. They get behind the department when a new fire station is dedicated:

"New fire station of city dedicated with ceremony. After supper, dancing was enjoyed by a fair-size crowd of people, delightful music for which was furnished by the famous Harmony Kings Orchestra of this city, under the direction of O. D. Denson." (May 16th.)

The band next plays for a 4th. of July celebration on the Amite River: "Fourth of July celebration at Clay Bank on Amite - 21 miles from Darrow. Music by the famous Harmony Kings Orchestra." (July 4th.)

The band continues to play towns in the vicinity of the city:

"Barn dance tonight, given at Hebert Hall of Grand Bayou tonight, delightful music for the occasion will be furnished by the famous Harmony Kings Orchestra." (August 8th.)

1932

The band again plays for WSMB in New Orleans:

"The Harmony Kings, one of Donaldsonville's popular Orchestra, will broadcast a splendid program of popular dance music from station WSMB, New Orleans tomorrow afternoon, during the half-hour from 3 to 3:30. The program will be a very good one and will be worth hearing, and the Harmony King's music will be much enjoyed by all music lovers." (March 19th.)

The paper writes an article on the program and uses the leader's name in it. Denson's name will be used later as the name of the band. The band next plays for an American Legion meeting:

"Meeting of Bennett Babin Post 98 American Legion at Elks' Home. Music by the Harmony Kings Orchestra." (April 16th.)

Also in the same paper is the write-up of the band playing for the school students of Donaldsonville High:

"Donaldsonville High School Juniors entertain Seniors - Music furnished by the Harmony Kings of this city, at the Elks' Home." (April 16th.)

The band also plays for the Catholic High School:
"Junior/Senior Prom of Donaldsonville Catholic High. Music for the occasion will be furnished by the popular Harmony Kings of this city." (May 14th.)

On May 21st, the paper again mentions the engagement:

"Dance by juniors of Donaldsonville Catholic High School - St. Joseph Commercial Institute and St. Vincent Institution." (May 21st.)

There was in town the Tourist Amusement Hall, a place in which the Denson Band secures the position to furnish music:

"Peter Cooper manager of Tourist Amusement Hall, dance every Sunday night. Splendid music will be furnished by the Harmony Kings of this city." (May 28th.)

The Bennett Babin Post 98 of the American Legion sponsors another dance using the Harmony Kings as the band (June 18th.). On July 30th. and 31st. the band plays for a church fair:

"Church Bend Church Fair July 30th and 31st. Two grand dances, Saturday and Sunday. Splendid music for which will be furnished by the popular Harmony Kings of Donaldsonville. Those melody makers will render all of the latest and most popular dance selections." (July 23rd.)

As early autumn was the time for fairs, the band is hired to play for another fair on Sept. 17th and 18th:

"Bug fair at St. Elmo - Sept. 17th and 18th. Dancing will be enjoyed both nights on a large open air pavilion, delightful music for which will be furnished by the Harmony Kings of this city." (Sept. 3rd.)

1932

The band is not mentioned until Feb. 4, 1932, when it plays at Klotzville Hall "Grand dance, Klotzville next Friday. Splendid music will be furnished by the popular Harmony Kings of this city whose rhythmic melodies and red hot jazz selections will thrill the hearts of the dancers." (Feb. 4th.)

1933

The band must have been a favorite of the younger generation as it is engaged to play again for the High School dance:

"Graduating class of Donaldsonville High School dance at American Legion Hall. Splendid music furnished by the Harmony Kings of this city." (Feb. 11th.)

They play for the Catholic High School's Prom also:
"Catholic High School Junior/Senior Prom at Elks Home. Dancing was enjoyed to the strains of melodies played by the popular Harmony Kings of this city." (May 4th.)

The Elks are making preparations for their festival and state that "Saturday - a big dance with music by the Harmony Kings of Donaldsonville." (Sept. 23rd.)

The band again plays for a fair, this time in Duplessis:

"A big fair is being given at the K of C Home of Duplessis today and tomorrow, under the auspices and for the benefit of Prairieville Council No. 2657, K. of C. There will be dancing both nights, with good music by the Harmony Kings Orchestra of Donaldsonville, and in the restaurant regular dinners will be served." (Sept. 23rd.)

The band next plays for the Red Men supper/dance:

"Red Men give annual supper/dance. Music by the popular Harmony Kings Orchestra of this city." (Nov. 4th.)

1934

The next mention of the band is in the March 17th. paper as they "open the Tavern with music by the Harmony Kings." (March 17th.). They may have played steady at the Tavern, but the next mention is the Easter Dance of the K. of C.:

"K. of C. give Easter Dance at K. of C. Home. Music by Harmony Kings." (March 24th.)

Also in the March 24th. paper is another mention of the "Auspicious opening of 'The Tavern' with music by O. D. Denson's Orchestra'. This is the Harmony Kings but Denson's name is used. (March 24th.). In the March 31st. issue of the paper the K. C. dance is again mentioned in a lengthier item:

"Big dance for K. of C. Easter Dance. Music by the Harmony Kings Orchestra and many new dance numbers will be introduced. These dances are among the most popular spring social functions staged in this city." (March 31st.)

The Tavern does turn out to be a regular gig as mentioned in the item of April 21st.:

"Dancing every Friday night at Tavern - Music furnished by O. D. Denson's crack Harmony Kings." (April 21st.)

The band is next mentioned in the August 11th. paper:
"Dance at St. James High School for benefit of St. James Catholic church - Music by the Harmony Kings." (August 11th.)
They play again in early November:

"Dance at new Spillway Club. Music by Harmony Kings." (Nov. 3rd.)

1935

The band is not mentioned again in the newspaper until May 18th. of 1935:

"St. Joseph Commercial Institute Alumni Association Dance - Music by the Harmony Kings." (May 18th.)

It is not heard from again until Nov. 16th. of the same year when the "Denson classy orchestra" is engaged to play for the Elks big Thanksgiving dance (Nov. 16th.). The dance is deemed a success by the item in the November 30th paper, which calls the band again the Harmony Kings. (Nov. 30th.)

1936

It is not until May 16th. of 1936 that we again read about the Denson Orchestra: "Donaldsonville High School Prom at Elks - given by Juniors for the Seniors of Donaldsonville High School - Denson's Orchestra." (May 16th.)

In early October the band (most probably a brass band) plays for the fair. It is called the O. D. Denson's Orchestra.

1937

The next year, again in October, the band plays for the Fair:

"Dances at pavilion of fair...O. D. Denson's Orchestra...The music dispensed by this organization is excellent and includes all the latest numbers and greatly delights the lovers of the Terpsichorean art." (Oct. 16th.)

This is the last mention of the Harmony Kings and O. D. Denson.

**White Elephants**

The first mentioning of the band called the White Elephants is in the August 11, 1928, issue of the *Chief*. The group will become very popular in the Donaldsonville area and play for many dances and affairs. The article is brief and to the point:
"Elks musical contest and dance, Sunday, August 18th. The contestants will be two good orchestras: the Silver Leaf Orchestra (of New Orleans?), and the White Elephants."

The band plays again for an Elk's dance on a Saturday night, (Nov. 24, 1928), and again on Dec. 1st. The year ends with the White Elephants playing for a dance at Grand Bayou Hall, in Assumption Parish.

1929

The White Elephants is a typical jazz band of the twenties. They still play some waltzes and other 'old time' dances but specialize in the jazz sound of the times. They are popular because of this sound and being up to date on the latest jazz sounds. An orchestra, even a jazz orchestra of the 20's, still had in their repertoire waltzes and other dances as they had to please an audience that consisted of both young and old. We read of this versatility in repertoire in the Jan. 26th issue of the "Chief":

"American Legion grand dance -- wonderful dance music furnished by the White elephants who for dreamy waltzes, peppy jazz selections and tantalizing dance melody, will be right there with the stuff." (Jan. 26th.)

The group next play for a grand masquerade and dance at Carbo Hall in Barton (Feb. 2, 1929) and on May 4th play for a Firemen's celebration Anniversary and is now called the "famous White Elephants," their fame growing as a good jazz/dance band.

The White Elephants have become one of the most popular musical groups playing jazz music in the area. They are hired to play for the graduating class of the local Donaldsonville High School at the Elks Home (May 25th.). When the local swimming pool reopens in the spring, the Elephants are hired to play for the opening ceremonies. They are booked to play a dance one a week throughout the warm months of the year.

As we have read earlier a barn dance is not the old traditional use of the description but a new one depicting the style of dancing. The White Elephants, being a more 'modern' musical group are asked to play for the 'barn dance' (in the May 25th issue of the Chief).

Their fame is spreading and are requested to plays for a grand dance at Woodmen of the World Hall in St. James Parish. and for a wedding reception at Protector Hall. They also play for a bathing beauty contest while at the swimming pool job.

The band next fulfills an obligation to play for the St. James High School. The paper (June 15th.) gives the following account of the band:

"St. James High School - Closing exercises - White Elephants measured up to their usual standard in the lovely music which they played. They were filled with pep and the music which they played imparted their exuberant spirits to the crowd of people who attended the dance, and all present had a lovely time."

Their 'gig' at the local swimming pool is going well as they play to a large number of patrons and continue to grow in popularity (June 29th.).
The Elks and Legion hire the band for the 4th. of July dance and we read that:

"4th. of July dance at Elks Home by Elks and Legion. White Elephants Orchestra. The Elks home is an ideal place for dancing and the Elephants are an ideal band for furnishing just the right kind of music for dances - so everybody is dreaming of the wonderful time he or she is going to have the night of the 4th. of July." (June 25th.) (Sic: This dance was a huge success according to the July 6th issue of the paper)

The job at the swimming pool (according to the write-up in the paper of July 6th.) is drawing 'big crowds,' on Wednesday night of each week.

There is a lengthy article in the July 13th. paper about the Redmen's construction of a dancing pavilion at their Swimming Pool. We read the headlines: "Dancing Pavilion to Open at Local Pool Next Wednesday" and the article gives a great description of a dancing pavilion of this era. A dancing pavilion is a platform in which the floor has been sanded to accommodate the dancers who need a slippery surface to dance on. Various articles appear prior to the opening. These articles give us a very good account of not only the dancing pavilion but the way that publicity is handled during this era in American dance music:

"Wednesday, July 17th., will usher in a new era in the history of the Redmen Swimming Pool of this city, for it will witness the official "opening" of the dancing pavilion which the wide-awake members of Mohawk Tribe, Improved Order of Red Men, recently had constructed just back of the pool."

Being ever on the alert as to means of increasing the pleasure and amusement of the large crowds of people who went their way daily to the pool, those in charge have "hit" upon another very excellent plan which is sure to give general pleasure to all who go to the pool - that of having jitney dancing one night each week.

Hitherto, the feature night at the Red Men Swimming Pool has been Wednesday, when lovely musical programs were rendered by the famous and popular White Elephants Orchestra of Donaldsonville and brought joy to the hearts of all. Well, Wednesday will continue to be the feature night at the pool, but it will be quite a bit more so in the way of features. For besides being afforded the great pleasure of hearing the beautiful, tuneful harmony played by the elephants those who care to do so (and undoubtedly there are many who will eagerly anticipate the joy) will henceforth be enabled to enjoy dancing, which will commence at about 7:30 o'clock.

Now don't by any means get the idea that the place for dancing is a rudely constructed outfit, for it isn't. There is a platform 48x32 feet, very durably constructed and finished with a lovely surface which will make you feel as though your feet are treading on air. To one side of the platform has been built the bandstand which has been so constructed as to have the sound of the music carried straight to the dancers, as well as to those who wish to merely be present for the pleasure of hearing the music. The platform is uncovered and is so situated as to be right in the path of the cool breezes blowing from the Mississippi River.(July 13th.)
The big barn dance is well publicized and in searching for other novel ways to draw patrons, the swimming pool initiates jitney dancing. We read about this in an article in the July 20th paper:

"Jitney Dances Attract Large Crowd at Red Men Swimming Pool

More than four hundred people were present at the Red Men Swimming Pool of Donaldsonville last Wednesday night to herald the official opening of the jitney dancing which is to be held at that popular rendezvous every Wednesday night, and 'twas altogether a gala sight presented. So many people went in swimming and many were diving. The band, the famous and popular White Elephants of Donaldsonville, were at their best, playing all the most popular dance "hits." Many people enjoyed dancing and there were others who went to the pool that night only to enjoy the cool, invigorating freshness of the place, hear the music and watch the fun. And a lot of fun there was, too, so that not one of the large crowds present felt as though he or she was "left out" of it all.

One of the features of the Wednesday night entertainments which give unlimited pleasure to all present is the singing of Sam Montero, one of the home boys, whose voice is such as to bring joy to his audiences when he sings all of the latest and most popular selections.

He sings in accompaniment to the band, and his singing is always looked forward to by all." (July 20th.)

In August the band continues to fulfill their bookings. The Red Men Swimming Pool continues to attract crowds to their pool and dancing pavilion. In the August 10th. paper we read where they are going to present a 'barn dance' on August 21st. The White elephants continue to be the band that furnishes music for the dancers:

"Barn Dance at Red Men Swimming Pool.

The desire which is ever uppermost in the minds of the management of the local Red Men Swimming Pool - that of giving to the hundreds of people who go to the pool each week the very best there is in the way of amusement - has led those men to devise a clever idea which is sure to bring delight to the hearts of all. There will be unutterable joy in anticipating the event, and when the time arrives - why that joy will know no bounds.

On Wednesday, August 21, there is going to be a grand barn dance given at the pavilion which was recently constructed on the grounds in which the pool is enclosed. Overalls and gingham aprons will be worn, assuring all of comfort; splendid plans are being formed and worked out by the management, assuring all of a grand time; wonderful music will be furnished by the popular White Elephants Orchestra of this city - 'nuf said about that, for the name of the orchestra is sufficient to assure one and all of some of the best music they have ever heard.

The dances given at the Red men Swimming Pool each Wednesday night has been increasing in popularity every week, the cost being either the regular rats for jitney dancing or one dollar for the entire time. And right here we might say that the charges for dancing at the barn dance to be given on Wednesday, August 21, will be the same as usual on Wednesday night.
The surface of the dance floor has been treated and planed with an electric machine, so that it is now so smooth that you have to watch your step when you walk on it. And when you dance on it you feel as though you are floating alone on airy space.

Another improvement which has been added to the large number of pleasures and comforts at the local pool comprises comfortable seats which have been placed all around the dancing floor for the accommodation of those who wish to enjoy watching the dancing and hear the splendid music rendered by the Elephants." (August 10th.).

The 'barn dance' is again the heart of an article which appears in the August 17th paper that gives further information of a dance pavilion of this era:

"Big Barn Dance Next Wednesday, August 21st.

The young, the old, the frolicy, the sedate - they're all counting the days and even the hours which must elapse ere the dawn of that day toward which they have all been looking forward since the past few weeks, Wednesday, August 21st. No one will ask or even wonder why all the eager anticipation, for throughout this city and community and in all parts of the surrounding country the big topic of conversation has been and is the grand barn dance to be given at the open-air dancing pavilion at the Donaldsonville Red Men Swimming Pool

Now it is an established fact that any amusement given by the Red Men at their popular swimming pool always furnishes the utmost pleasure to all in attendance. Hundreds of people enjoy cool, invigorating "dips" in the lovely pool each week, for the water is delightfully stimulating and of a beautiful color which invites all to enjoy its freshness; the comfort of the onlookers is provided by a large number of comfortable benches which have been placed in convenient places about the grounds in which the pool is enclosed; there is a first-class lifesaver who insures the safety of all and leaves no cause of intimidation among those who go in swimming; the management is such as to operate the pool on the highest plan of perfection; and last, and there is no need to add by no means least, delightful music is furnished each Wednesday night by the famous and popular White Elephants Orchestra of this city, which comprises a number of local young men who are skilled musicians and are always right there with the stuff when it comes to rendering the latest and most popular musical selections in a manner which makes you feel as though you just can't keep your feet still and must get out on that wonderful open-air pavilion and enjoy dancing to those sweet strains of melody." (August 17th.)

The band continues to be used for dances as we read the following two items:

"Vaudeville and dance by Catholic Daughters of America - White Elephants." (August 24th.)

"Swimming pool - White Elephants " (August 31st.) (Sic. They continue to play there through Sept. 28th.)

The next article states that the White Elephants are from Donaldsonville. The band plays at "Corbo's Hall:
"Grand dance - Carbo's Hall, Barton. Music by White Elephants of this city, who always play the latest and most popular dance 'hits.'" (Nov. 23rd.)

1930

The new year of 1930 begins for the Elephants with a job for a judge's banquet:

:Judges banquet a brilliant affair - the baneuteers, to the strains of the inspiring music dispensed by members of the White Elephants Orchestra." (Jan. 11th.)

The band, as most dance bands during the Mardi Gras season play for a carnival dance:

"Carnival dance at Knights of Columbus Hall last Tuesday, by American Legion Music by the White Elephants." (March 8th.)

The local swimming pool reopens and in the May 3rd. paper we read:

"Swimming pool opens June 1. At night, grand dance on the pavilion erected last year near the pool, music for which will be furnished by the famous White Elephants of this city. A regular dance will be given on the pavilion every Wednesday night thereafter - Music will be furnished by the White Elephants." (May 3rd.)

After every public affair there seems to be a dance after the ceremonies. A new pump for the fire department is acquired and the paper relays this information:

"Dance - Knights of Columbus Hall for Firemen and general public. After ceremonies for the new pump, the dance will follow. Music by the White Elephants." (May 3rd.)

In July they play for a Dance at the Elks Home (June 7th.). They were to play for a Mohawk dance that was called off because of bad weather. They play for the annual Elks 4th. of July celebrations. Finally we read in the July 19th paper that there is a: "Big dance at Grand Bayou with music by the famous White elephants Orchestra. Gentlemen may dance by the jitney plan or they may pay one dollar and dance all they wish." (July 19th.)

They continue to play at the swimming pool the rest of the summer and also play for a dance for the Catholic Daughters of American (August 9th.). The swimming pool has added boxing as well as the band on Wednesday nights.

They are hired to play the dance music furnished for the customers at the South Louisiana Fair and we read, (August 23rd.) that the "White Elephants will disperse jazz and popular classical music for the dancers."

Ever the promoters, the Red Men Swimming Pool continues to come up with promotional ideas to draw crowds. The latest is a waltz contest:
"Waltzing Contest at Local Swimming Pool

At the regular Wednesday night dance given each week at the open-air pavilion at the local Red Men Swimming Pool; to be given next Wednesday night, September 18th., the feature of the occasion will be a waltzing contest to be conducted. There will be three judges, and the couple adjudged the best waltzes will be awarded a cash prize.

As usual at the Wednesday night dances, music will be furnished by the famous and popular White Elephant Orchestra of this city, who are always right there with the stuff when it comes to playing all the latest and most popular dance "hits." The Red Men's open-air pavilion is a lovely dancing place. Situated near the river, there is always a delightful breeze that adds so much to the pleasure of dancing, and the floor is ideal. Go to the dance next Wednesday night and waltz your way to that prize to be awarded." (Sept. 14th.)

They are well liked in Grand Bayou and are hired to play a dance on a Thursday night and have a steady job there on Saturday nights, until Lent. (Dec. 27th.)

1931

The band changes its name in 1931 to the "Melody Makers." and continue to play at the local swimming pool pavilion. We read no more of this group and they dissolve into history.

St. Cecilia Brass Band

The Catholic Church was the sponsor of many brass bands in Louisiana. In the Thibodaux area Father Menard when he opened new churches always sponsored a brass band for the new church. In Donaldsonville the Catholic Church sponsored the St. Cecilia Brass Band. We first read of this band in the March 23, 1872, issue. While it does not name the two bands, research shows that they were the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band and the St. Cecilia Brass Band. We read:

"We learned a few weeks since that several of the young men of town had taken steps toward the organization of another band and that brass instruments were sent for and received. As to how far or how successful the movement had progressed up to the present time we are uninformed, but hope the project will be carried out. With two bands, Donaldsonville will make quite a noise in the world."

The St. Cecilia Brass Band received their new instruments and in an elaborate ceremony the new instruments are blessed in a church service. We give below the first part of the article (it is quoted earlier in this book on page 251)

"INTERESTED CEREMONY AT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH - The ceremony of blessing the instruments just received by the new church band (Sic: the St. Cecilia Brass Band) or St. Cecilia Philharmonic Society, which was performed at the Catholic
Church in this town last Sunday evening, was interesting and beautiful, as the large concourse of people who witnessed it will attest. An admission fee of 25 cents, was charged, but in spite of this the large church was filled with spectators. (Sic: The charge of admission to a church service was an unusual way to raise money for the new band's expenses.)

The exercises consisted of a short address in French from one of the attendant priests of the church; music by the St. Mary Jefferson College Band, which has been invited expressly for the occasion; singing by the choir blessing the instruments by Father Cuppens and presenting them to the members of the Philharmonic Society." (July 6, 1872.)

The patron Saint of music is St. Cecilia and whose name the Catholic Band took as their own. To celebrate their Saint the Philharmonic Society gives a dinner and then serenades their pastor and Sister Cecelin of the convent:

"The St. Cecilia Philharmonic Society celebrated Friday of last week which was St. Cecilia's Day, by a dinner at the residence of Father Cuppens, back of the Catholic Church. The band also serenaded Sister Cecelin of the convent, and all together had a very pleasant time. We wish them many happy returns of the occasion and hope they may continue to improve as rapidly as they have done in the melodious art up to this time. (Nov. 30, 1872)

1873

The St. Cecilia Brass Band (St. CBB) plays for a "Grand Fair for the Benefit of the Orphans" along with the Ascension Br. Band and the Don. Silver Cornet Band. (March 1st.)

"....Three bands of musicians, the Silver Cornet, Ascension and St. Cecilia Brass Bands, were upon the grounds when the gates of the enclosure adjoining the Catholic Church were thrown open for the admittance of the public, about noon. and they alternately discoursed sweet spirited music to inform the people of the commencement of the festivities....." (Feb. 25th.)

It was customary for brass bands of the era to hold a fair or concert to raise money for their continued financial needs. These town bands played for many social and public functions without pay and needed the support of the citizenship to continue their existence. The Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band held a fair for their benefit and invited the St. Cecilia Brass Band to participate as was the custom and courtesy of other bands. The Catholic Church, the band's sponsor, did not want the band to participate due to religious beliefs about where the fair would be held. We read:

"We regret to learn that the priest of the Ascension Catholic Church has forbidden the St. Cecilia Band to play at the coming Fair of the D. S. C. B., assigning as a reason that, being a church band, the St. Cecilia should not play in a hall devoted to theatrical
performances. The presence of the St. Cecilia Band would have added to the interest of the Fair considerably and would have been but a just return for the attendance of the Silver Cornet Band at the recent Fair for the benefit of the Catholic Church, therefore it is to be regretted that they are prevented from being present as an organization."(April 12th.)

This was a regrettable situation and in a letter to the paper the D. S. C. Band answered the cancellation and for a while there was tension because of the priest's decision, which we find was later changed, or a new decision by a new priest was given as the St. Cecilia Brass Band did eventually play in the mentioned hall.

The Catholic Church traditionally held ceremonies and processions and this practice was continued and upheld in the Donaldsonville area. One such procession is held on Sunday, June 15th. and is given publicity in the May 31, 1873, paper:

"Sunday June 15th., will be the Catholic Anniversary of the Fete DeDien, and will be celebrated, weather permitting, by a procession similar to that which paraded the streets of town upon the same occasion last year. This will be led by the St. Cecilia band and the St. Mary-Jefferson College Band of St. James, which has also been invited to participate in the ceremonies." (Sic: rain did prevent the bands from participating)

Another opportunity for a procession and service is in the 27th. anniversary of Pius Ninth's Election. The account of the procession is a lengthy one and the St. Cecilia Band is mentioned in the middle of the article:

"After these came various ladies having banners with different inscriptions on them, and then came the St. Cecilia Band, who also regaled the ears of the hearers with choice pieces of music at brief intervals..."(June 28th.)

Archbishop Perche visits Donaldsonville to conduct the services of Confirmation and Communion. As would be expected a procession was formed to march into the church. We read:

"A procession was formed in the church yard just before the hour fixed for the opening of the services, which made it circuit of the grounds and then conducted his grace the Bishop into the church. This procession was headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band, followed by the candidates for confirmation and communion (numbering about sixty), the inmates of the St. Vincent Orphan Asylum under the care of the Sister of clary, a goodly number of children and adults, the Bishop under a canopy borne by four gentlemen, and the St. Cecilia Band bringing up the rear. The bands alternately filled the air with harmonious sounds, and as the procession marched slowly into the church, with banners whirling and bands playing, the scene was in spiriting in the extreme..."(July 19th.)

1874
The last day of May was celebrated by the Catholic Church in honor of the Virgin Mary. The St. Cecilia Band plays for this ceremony:

"Procession - Sunday being the last day of May a grand procession of all members of the Catholic Church filed around that edifice in honor of the Virgin Mary. St. Cecilia Band was in attendance and added to the attractiveness of the sight by playing numerous choice airs. Numbers of children took part in the parade, carrying wreaths which they afterwards deposited on the shrine of the virgin. The "Children of Mary," all lovely girls, robed in spotless white, took the lead, then followed the band and then various members of the congregation, conspicuous among whom was the tall and dignified figure of Rev. Father Cuppens.

The St. Cecilia Brass Band is one of the bands that play for the Fete Champetre for the Catholic Church. In the procession to the event in the paper of June 13 1784, we read that:

"The procession was an immense one, nearly every member of the Catholic Church in this parish being in attendance. It was headed by the DSCB, numerous ladies of the church, following them' then came the St. Joseph Brass Band, who preceded the colored believers in the Catholic religion. The St. Cecilia Band came next, and after them the remainder of the procession."

1875

On Jan. 2nd we read that the DSC band along with the St. Cecilia Band play for the Ascension Hook & Ladder Fair and the audience hears: "some lively music from the bands."

Upon the death of a Mr. John Link the band plays for the funeral:

"The procession formed at the residence of deceased, at three o'clock, and moved to the Catholic Church in the following order: 1. The St. Cecilia Brass Band; 2. Flag-bearer of Ascension Hook and Ladder Company,..." (April 17th.)

The bands of the era were usually supporting other band activities and traveled to near by towns to play for their events. The St. Cecilia band travels to Baton Rouge and joins the Local band for a fair and in the procession to the fair grounds. We read that: "Ascension Hook & Ladder Co. brought up the rear, lead by an extempore band composed of members of the St. Cecilia and the late Ascension Brass Band." (June 5th.)

Donaldsonville was blessed with a talented citizenship and possessed a number of bands as we read of them rehearsing:
"Donaldsonville had a number of bands, both black and white, and each received space in the paper. The August 1st paper remarks that "The Ascension, Silver Cornet and St. Cecilia Band were all practicing in town last night." (Aug. 1st.)

1876

Remembering the early conflict of the St. Cecilia band not being able to play at the DSC Band Hall, we read that they do indeed now play there.

The D.S.C. Band continues to host dramatic presentations in its hall and many times play for them along with other bands. We note that one of these bands is the St. Cecilia Band:

"Dramatic play at DSCB Hall - at 7:30, the St. Cecilia Band struck up one of their soul stirring airs." (May 30th.)

The band next plays in St. James Parish:

"The St. Cecilia Band left this place last Saturday for St. James in the Ascension Brass Band Wagon. They have been invited by the priest of that parish to attend some ceremonies to take place in his church." (June 20th.)

1877

The final entry for the St. Cecilia Brass Band appears in the Oct. 6, 1877 paper. Although a church sponsored band their activities are similar to other more secular sponsored bands:

"Last evening the members of the St. Cecilia Band were out on a serenading tour, and among the places visited was the chief office. We thank the young men for the compliment, and are gratified to note the prosperity and proficiency of their worthy organization."

Why bands come and go is due to a number of reasons. We do not hear of the St. Cecilia Brass Band after 1877. I am sure some of its members continue their musical career and join other bands.

Dutchtown Brass Band

One of the brass bands that was in existence around Donaldsonville was the Dutchtown Brass Band. We read of the first entry in the Sept. 19, 1896 paper:

"Dutchtown Brass Band play for meeting at Gonzales."

In the Oct. 6 1896 we read that the band plays for a "Big Democratic rally in Dutchtown—there will be music by the Dutchtown Brass Band."
One entry appears in the July 6, 1897 paper:

"Meeting of New River at Dutchtown to express thanks to Pres. Spellman and Pont. Levee Board - During the meeting excellent music was furnished by the Dutchtown Brass Band."

There is a period of about 10 years before we read of another Dutchtown Brass Band. In the Sept. 29, 1906 paper we read: "Vaudeville entertainment at Broussard Grove Church - Music by the Dutchtown Brass Band."

In 1907 there are three entries for the Dutchtown Brass Band:

"Jan. 26 - Lee Centennial Celebration at Gonzales - The Dutchtown Brass Band furnished music."
"May 4 - Fair at Corenrview - music will be furnished by the Dutchtown and French Settlement Brass Bands."
"Sept. 21 - Grand fair at Duplessis on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 28-29. The presence of the Dutchtown Brass Band on Sunday."

The brass band was used in church services and celebrations. We read of the Easter services at the church of the Sacred Heart.

"Easter services at the church of Sacred Heart marked the culmination of a series of Lenten services that were characterized by the largest and most pious congregation on record for this community. The Dutchtown Silver Cornet Band, under the leadership of P. S. Riehard, also rendered religious selections during the ceremonies." April, 25, 1908

Also in 1908 we find another entry in the March 7th issue:

"Celebration of victory for L. Klos ticket - Music for the occasion will be furnished by the Dutchtown Silver Cornet Band."

Finally in the Sept. 3, 1910 we read "Enjoyable entertainment, Dutchtown Dramatic Club benefit - Dutchtown High School. Music by the Gonzales Brass Band and Dutchtown Orchestra."

**Moro Orchestra**

In the late twenties (1927-1928) we read of a musical group called the 'Moro' Orchestra. In 1927 most of the dance bands were reading bands and rather using the name of a jazz band we read they are called syncopators. There are six entries in 1927:

May 5 - "Listen, everyone! A delightful time is in store for all of you who will go to Grand Bayou Hall on Saturday, May 12. Walk, ride, fly, it doesn't matter how you get there. The main thing is be there - for a grand dance will be given on that date, May 12,
under the management of Howard Dupry; & you will all have a lovely time dancing to the strains of the sweet and altogether delightful dance music to be played by the Moro Syncopators."

May 5 - "A red hot dance will be given at the Red men's Hall at Welcome, St. James Parish, tonight, with splendid music furnished by the Moro Syncopators. There will be plenty of new, peppy music; and a 5 pound box of candy will be given away free to the holder of the lucky admission ticket. A delightful pleasure-filled evening awaits all who attend-so be there, one and all."

Dec. 17 - "Big Christmas dance at Grand Bayou Hall, Dec. 25th. Good music will be furnished by the Moro Syncopators"

"Dance at Rivet's Hall in Brusly St. Martin tonight-Moro Syncopators."

"Christmas Dance, Corbo Hall tonight, Good music....Moro Syncopators."

Dec. 31 - "New Year's Eve dance at Corbo's Hall, Barton tonight-Moro Syncopators."

In 1928 we have a few more entries but this band didn't appear to be as busy as some of our other groups from Donaldsonville:

Jan. 7 - "Dance at WOW Hall in Vacherie-Moro Syncopators."

Feb. 4 - "Grand Dance at Simoneaux's Hall, White Castle tonight. Excellent music-Moro Syncopators."


April 21 - "Red Hot' dance in Bruly St. Martin tonight. Music-Moro Syncopators."

April 22 - "Big dance at Howard Dupres Hall at Grand Bayou tonight-Moro Syncopators."

The final entry is on May 19, 1928:

"Graduation dance at WOW Hall, St. James, tonight. Up-to-date music will be furnished by the popular Moror Syncopators.

Gaudet & Terrio
After the Civil war and well into the 1930's many dances, for various reasons, would not have a band but only a small ensemble. Many times it was just a piano player. Many dances, especially smaller ones and ones held in an individual's home used a piano and another instrument - either a violin, flute or perhaps a cornet. One of the more popular duos was Mrs. M. A. Gaudet and Mr. John Terrio. We have accounts showing that they played often as a duo while they often played with larger groups, with John Terrio played with many larger groups including brass bands. The records show that from about 1883 until 1885 the duo was active, playing for dances and other functions in and around Donaldsonville.

The first entry was mentioned in the Jan. 1st paper:

"Phoenix Ball - excellent music by Mrs. Gaudet and Mr. Terrio who are gaining an enviable reputation in local musical circles, and the tripping of twinkling feet to the harmonious cadences of piano and cornet continued through the night and until the near approach of dawn."

Many times they would add an instrument when the dance was in a larger building. Their next engagement the duo added Paul Savoi:

"Hook & Ladder Ball - About 9:00 were heard for the first time the enlivening and sole-inspiring strains drawn from the piano, cornet and violin by Mrs. M. A. Gaudet, and Messrs. Jno. F. Terrio and Paul Savoi." (Jan. 27, 1883)

The duo adds a violinist for their next dance engagement, as recorded in the Feb. 18th paper:

"The Mardi Gras ball - The masquerade ball given by Phoenix Fire Company Tuesday night, the 8th inst., was, in every particular, a success. The guests began to gather at an early hour, and by 9 o'clock the hall was filled with a merry throng of gay and grotesque manner. Music was soon heard, rising great amid strains, and such nimble feet were tripping lightly to its well measured symphony. Dance succeeded dance, and the long hours of night were whirled joyously away until the bright, tint in the glowing East admonished them that it was time to seek their quiet homes to draw their around their couch around their weary forms. The music was furnished by Mrs. M. A. Gaudet, pianist, and Messrs. John F. Terrio, cornetist, and Paul Savoie, violinist, and came up to their usual standard of excellence."

The duos as mentioned in the June 30, 1883 paper, play for the ball following a dramatic play presented by the Hebrew Benevolent Association Drama. The excursion was a popular form of entertainment and these excursion, whether by train, cart or boat most always was accompanied by music. It was difficult for the pianist as of course pianos cannot be taken along as easily as a cornet, violin, etc., but the captain of the Bella Israel ferry boat acquired a piano for an excursion. We read:
"Excursion up to Paincourtville - Capt. Miller had kindly furnished a piano on board Bella Israel ferry boat for the occasion and Misses Comstock, Gaudet, Mayor Allain and others were very obliging in playing the instrument whenever requested. Mr. John F. Terrio was on hand with his cornet and his performance on that instrument were a feature of the occasion. What moments sped pleasantly by. (Sic: the next issue of the paper there is an advertisement to sell the piano.)” (April 28, 1883)

On occasions where a large string band is warranted the duo enlarges and presents dance music using 6 musicians. The enlarged musical group plays for parts of the evening that include the drama as well as the dance. Such is the case in their next job recorded in the Oct. 30. 1883 paper:

"Concert and Ball of Terpsichore social club. The orchestra will be composed of the following players and instruments: Mrs. m. A. Gaudet-piano, Mr. John Terrio-cornet, Mr. Chas. S. Gray-violin, Mr. Paul Savoie-2nd violin, (add Dr. B. Claverie-violin/clarinet, Paul Leeche-viola.) "Imogene" a polka-murzurka was given for an overture, and Gounods' "Reverie" followed the first intermission, both pieces being splendidly executed. Mr. Gray favored the audience with a couple of violin solos during the intermission which were greeted with well-deserved applause."

Mrs. Gaudet would often play engagements as a solo pianist, both in concert situations and for a dance. We read of just this type of engagements in the Dec. 1, 1883 paper:

"Hop - TSC Music - M. A. Gaudet supplied the music for the occasion and her reputation as a skillful performer on the piano is ample assurance that this feature of the entertainment was all that could be desired."

Mrs. Gaudet again plays as the sole musician at a soiree and dansante as mentioned also in the Dec. 1st paper:

"Soiree & Dansante - H & L Hall - Mrs. Gaudet furnished the music which was consequently of the best order, and the graceful young dancers seemed impervious to fatigue as they moved through the mazes of the whirling waltz, the lively lancers, the roystering racquet and the veracious varieties."

In 1884 we find 11 items mentioning Gaudet, Terrio either playing together or joined by a few other musicians. Below is a list of their engagements as recorded in the local Donaldsonville paper:

Jan. 5 - TSC - Music by Mrs. Gaudet, Messrs. Terrio and Eisenberg.
Feb. 9 - The annual ball of Phoenix Fire Company No. 1 took place at the company's hall last Monday evening, the 31st alt., and although the attendance was not so large as had been anticipated, the affair proved a very pleasant one and the participants derived much enjoyment from it. Mrs. Gaudet and Mr. Terrio sustained their reputation
for furnishing first-class music, and the dancers responded to its enlivening strains until about 3 o'clock in the morning."

Feb. 16 - The DSC Tableaux grand fancy dress ball. Music was furnished by M. A. Gaudet-piano, accompanied by Mr. John Terrio on the cornet.

April 12 - Grand ball auspices of winners Athletic Club. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Mrs. M. A. Gaudet and Mr. John Terrio of Donaldsonville.

May 3 - DD & SC entertainment. Music will be provided by Mrs. Gaudet and Mr. Terrio, the old reliable orchestra.

May 10 - DDSC entertainment. Gaudet and Terrio - Overture and cornet solo between acts.

May 31 - Soiree at Phoenix Hall. Music by Mrs. Gaudet, Mr. Frank P. Sharp, Mrs. Albert Jumonville and Mr. John Terrio alternately.

July 5 - Gaudet & Terrio furnished music for DDSC Ball (Calico Ball) Thursday night.

Nov. 8 - Benefit for Napoleon victims of fire - Gaudet and Terrio. Ball. Music after entertainment.

Nov. 8 - Leap year hop - Phoenix Hall - Gaudet at piano, John Terrio to assist.

Oct. 3 - Musical/drama dance - Gaudet music.

1885

Mrs. Gaudet furnishes music for the next two entries on May 15th. The two entries were not played on the same date. (This is the date that the article appears in the local paper.)

May 15 - A delightful hop - H & L Hall. Mrs. Gaudet furnished music for the dancing and it is needless to say that this feature of the affair was all that could have been desired."

May 15 - "A German' at Phoenix Hall. Music was furnished by Mrs. M. A. Gaudet, our most popular pianist, and to the inspiring strains she produced merry feet kept time until long past midnight."

The musical team is together again as they play for a German at Phoenix Hall. A German is the name they used for a dance - a dance could be called a hop, or soiree or dansante - all meant that there would be dancing as the featured attraction:

June 5 - Another enjoyable hop. Music was furnished by Mrs. M. A. Gaudet and Mr. John Terrio, who sustained their well earned reputation for producing the finest music from piano and cornet respectively."

Mrs. Gaudet again plays for an impromptu gathering that turns into a dance:
"July 7 - Wednesday evening - impromptu soiree dansante. To the inspiring piano tones produced by Mrs. Gaudet's skillful fingers nimble young feet lilted in the many dances until a late hour."

Another impromptu hop occurred that the duo were in attendance, most probably as invited guests for a party among their friends and ended up providing music for the occasion:

"July 31 - Impromptu hop by jolly crowd - Phoenix Hall. Dancing kept up to the enlivening strains of the piano played by Mrs. Gaudet and of the cornet by Mr. J. F. Terrio."

The last entry is found in the Sept. 12th paper as Mrs. Gaudet furnishes music for two drama/entertainments, accompanied by Mr. Joe E. LeBlanc and shared the evening with the music of the Independent Brass Band."

**River Boats in Donaldsonville**

The arrival of the big steamers to Donaldsonville was awaited with great anticipation. They brought first class entertainment and music to a very culturally minded city. It speaks well of the city that the steamer's administration thought highly of the acceptance by the city for good entertainment that the steamers possessed. The steamers stopped at well-selected river front cities that would support a stop that would be profitable to the owners. Donaldsonville continued to be on the itinerary of the Streckfus steamer line and others. They could expect a good turnout in Donaldsonville. The boats left from the northern city of St. Paul to arrive at the port city of New Orleans for the winter months. Each time the steamers arrived they created a financial benefit for the city. The boat owners took out advertising in the local paper and in return the paper always had a very generous space in the paper for additional publicity for the arrival. Local clubs would book the steamer for an outing and a good time was assured by the great music that Streckfus insisted upon presenting. The orchestras that were featured were the most outstanding orchestras in early written jazz from all parts of the country.

Riverboats navigated the rivers down to New Orleans beginning in 1812 when a side-wheeler named the 'New Orleans' left from Pittsburgh, down the Ohio and on to New Orleans. The history of floating entertainment began with Eugene Robinson's *Floating Palaces, Museum, Menagerie, Aquarium, and Opera House* in the 1790's. From the very beginning showboat entertainment was clean, not risqué entertainment. The showboats stopping at Donaldsonville continued that reputation and presented good family entertainment. The Streckfus line was noted for their high standards in both music and entertainment. From the beginning the riverboats or 'showboats' would present to the river towns the most popular of entertainments only then found in the large cities of the East. They brought with them the popular culture of the times, usually the first glimpse of such stars that were only read about. There were traveling troupes whose itinerary included many small towns throughout the nation. The showboat's entertainment was family orientated. This reputation was tested in one river town and the account is interesting and
informative. While it is not the town of Donaldsonville is not the town depicted in the story, we can parallel that the entertainment brought by the Capital and other showboat to the city was of high moral standards as well as artistically presented.

"On this occasion the town got the usual New Sensation treatment, with flags, calliope, bands, parade and handbills. But that night, Capt. French gazed with incredulity as the crowd started to stream down the gangway into his auditorium.

They were all men! Slowly it dawned on the daughty captain what was going on, what kind of show the men expected.

Capt. French sidled over to the ticket window, whispered something to the man behind the wicket, and then marched into the near-filled theater. Climbing up to the stage, the captain walked to the center behind the footlights as ripples of applause began. The river impresario raised his big hands for silence.

"Men, I have been watching you," he began, making the most of his dramatic heritage. "I know what is in your hearts. There is not a lady among you, not a mother, wife, sweetheart, or sister."

You could have heard a gold toothpick drop. The captain took of his cap, and held it tenderly. "You think, though, that I do not know your reasoning out of which such thoughts are born; that you are going to see the kind of show that is the equivalent of the kinds of stories some men tell among themselves.

His voice dropped to almost a whisper. "You were never more mistaken in your lives." then ...."NOW EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU GIT UP AN' GIT OUT!" He bellowed, his voice echoing up and down the river bank in the still night air.

"You will find a man at the ticket office prepared to give you your money back. If you are men, go home and get your womenfolks.

I shall hold this show until ten tonight. If you return with your womenfolk, my troupe and I are prepared to give you the kind of entertainment we have always given up and down these rivers, and always will as long as I live. But if you are the kind of animals in pants that calls yourself men and ain't, then you'll git up and git. Get your money back, and don't ever show your face on French's New sensation again!"

Sheepishly, they all rose and weaseled out of the place - and not one of them asked for a refund. In about two hours, they were all back - with the womenfolks."

When William Chapman's 'Floating Theater,' was introduced it was given credit as the first showboat. He proved the showboats a sound business venture, an idea that was quickly spread but which bred charlatans who moved in with their medicine show, followed by a raft of gamblers, crooks, and fakes. The Civil War ended steam boating for the duration and fortunately puts an end to this excrescence.

Two special branches of show business took roots in showboats: vaudeville and the circus. Vaudeville meant the minstrel show. The famous Dan Rice floated a showboat; thus came onto the scene Captain French. He dominated showboating from 1878 to 1902.

Showboat entertainment continued to grow with more elaborate boats and more vivacious entertainment that is the way we find it during the Capitol era in Donaldsonville.
The first mention of the 'Capitol' visiting Donaldsonville is on Oct. 14, 1922. The article gives a good description of a riverboat of this era:

"MANY ON MOONLIGHT EXCURSION. A large number of people assembled at the wharf last Wednesday evening to see the magnificent and palatial steamer Capitol, which gave a river excursion from this point that night. The handsomely bedecked and brilliantly illuminated craft presented a picture of great beauty and elegance, which was pleasing to behold and the sweet music dispensed by the band was a treat to all those who had the good fortune to come within reach of its inspiring strains. The boat pulled out at 8 o'clock with over 200 people aboard. The majority being dancing couples, while many went to enjoy the music. The steamer went up stream as far as the Iberville parish line and returned to the wharf at midnight. The dance fans of this city and vicinity tripped the light fantastic tow to their hearts' content, while those who did not dance enjoyed themselves by walking along the promenade deck and listening to the sweet music, which they say was the best they had ever heard. It is said of the hand that of all the good bands that have played on the big excursion steamer capitol none equal the appregation of harmony syncopators that are now under contract for the winter social season at New Orleans. This wonderful ten-piece colored band is composed of ten selected artists, the best talent picked from the best bands that played on the excursions steamer's Saint Paul, J. S. and Washington this summer. This band is so peppery that the management of the boat is offering a grand prize to any human being that can remain absolutely quiet while listening to this mesmerizing music. The Capitol left shortly after midnight..."

The steamers that stopped at Donaldsonville include the Island Queen, the J. S. and in the 30's the President. The articles that mention these visits are in the portion of our book that speaks of the history of Donaldsonville.
Steamboat Excursion and Dance
ON PALATIAL
ISLAND QUEEN

Donaldsonville La., Monday, Nov. 18, 8:30 p.m.
QUEEN’S ROYAL PALM BAND

The Island Queen is the largest and finest inland water boat in the world. Fireproof and unsinkable.
Glass enclosed. Gorgeous ballroom. Spacious deck with comfortable chairs. Dance to the music of the South’s most popular band.

Adults $1
Children 25 Cents

Steamboats visited Donaldsonville often. The advertisements for their visit appear in the 'Chief' - The Island Queen on Nov. 16, 1929, the Capitol on October 20, 1934, and The S. S. President on May 13, 1939
A picture of the Stanocala Saxophone Band is found in the 'Chief' on Sept 26, 1925

GRAND THEATRE
DONALDSONVILLE, LA.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11

The Original Brown Saxaphone-Six

The Instruments Used by This Company Are the Finest Made, Being of Solid Gold and Valued at $10,000.

ADMISSION—10, 17 and 28 Cents.
DOORS OPEN AT 5 O'CLOCK P. M.

Vaudeville is the popular style of entertainment in the twenties. On January 11, 1925, the Brown Saxophone Six appear at the Donaldsonville Grand Theater.
Republican Rallies!

Republican mass meetings will be held in the parish of Ascension as follows:

Ashland Warehouse, 6th ward, Sunday, October 24, at 12 M.

Donaldsonville, Sunday, October 31, at 12 M.

Ex-Gov. H.C. Warmoth,
Hon. J. Henri Burch,
Hon. Chester B. Durell
and other distinguished speakers will be present to address the people.

The St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville will be in attendance.

Come One! Come All!!

The St. Joseph Band plays for a political rally, Oct. 16, 1880

Mardi Gras Ball!

A GRAND MASK AND FANCY DRESS BALL

WILL BE GIVEN

Mardi Gras Night, March 9th,

AT

PHOENIX HALL,

FOR THE BENEFIT OF

Phoenix Fire Company of Ascension and

DONALDSONVILLE INDEPENDENT BRASS BAND.

MUSIC BY THE FULL D. I. B. B. 20 STRONG.

ADMISSION:

Gentlemen, 60 cents. Ladies Free.

The management reserves the right of refusing admissions to objectionable parties.

Committee of Arrangements:

JNO. P. TERRIO, CHAIRMAN; AUG. BARTUELMY,
C. VARIANI; HENRY BRAUD.

The Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band plays for a Mardi Gras Ball on Feb. 27, 1886

GRAND THEATRE

DONALDSONVILLE, LA.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 22

Nazimova and Rodolph Valentino

In the Greatest of All Photoplays

CAMILLE

In classics of literature, stage and opera

Prices—10, 17, and 28c. Doors Open at 4 p.m.

Music by Claiborne's Orchestra

Claiborne Williams' Orchestra provides music for the silent movies - August 9, 1922
The two most popular aggregations of musical instruments in the latter decades of the 19th Century were the brass band and string band. Even the smallest of towns in America had a brass and string bands. In Louisiana we find evidence of this in the many newspaper accounts that mention their town's band with much pride and probably boast of their accomplishments.

A typical band activity was playing for the popular fairs given by the Catholic Church and other civic organizations. The St. Joseph Brass Band is very active in fund raising activity of the church.

Still another was the serenade. A brass band would congregate outside a leading citizen's house and play a serenade. A serenade was considered an honor for the one being serenaded, many times the editor of the town paper, who would always reciprocate with a mention in the next edition of the newspaper. The bands would also use the serenade to advertise its next public activity, usually an event to raise money to pay for new music, instruments or travel expenses to gratis jobs. Leading politicians were also in line for serenades; they in turn would hire the band for a political rally. The serenade was good advertisement:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band was out on a serenading tour last Saturday night, and the boys seemed to enjoy themselves immensely. They visited the residences of Hon. Pierre Landry, Squire Wilkinson, H. O. Maher, Esq., and the editor of the Chief, and met with cordial receptions. Mr. Maher was absent from home Saturday evening, and when he learned upon his return of the compliment that had been paid him by the band, he indicted the follow note, which has been handed us for publication:

'Donaldsonville, Nov. 8th, 1871. Frederick Cobb, esq., Pres. SJB: Dear Sir - On my return from the sugarhouse last night I learned that your Band had been around and had honored me with a serenade. I am sorry that I was absent and did not know of your intended visit, as I would have been happy to show my high appreciation of the honor conferred by your excellent band to so humble an individual as myself. Hoping that you will continue to receive the good wishes and praise of the public in the future as in the past, and that in a short time I will be able to show my appreciation of the merits of the St. Joseph Band in a substantial manner. I am, respectfully, your Obdt. servant, H. C. Maher." (Nov. 14, 1871)

The town of Donaldsonville was no exception to the tradition of brass bands, having at least four brass bands at one time. Although not a large town there was an
atmosphere in Donaldsonville that fostered musical cultural activities. In 1872 there were four bands of which the town newspaper the "Chief" boasted. We read:

"There was 'music in the air' Tuesday evening for the four bands of which our town boasts all held meetings for the purpose of practicing upon their 'toot horns'." (Nov. 9, 1872)

Three of these four bands mentioned in the above article are previously mentioned in earlier editions of the newspaper. On Feb. 3, 1872, the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Brass Band is mentioned; August 10, 1872, the Ascension Brass Band; and on Nov. 9, 1872, the St. Joseph Brass Band. The fourth band's name doesn't appear before the Nov. 9th date. The earliest band that could be the fourth would be the St. Mary Brass Band, mentioned later in the August 2, 1873, issue of the "Chief." The Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Brass Band and the Ascension Brass Bands are white bands; the St. Joseph Brass Band and the St. Mary Brass Band are colored/Creole Bands. The organizing of these early brass bands probably took place in the years after the Civil War, between 1865 and 1872 - so, in reality their history was in its early stages when we read about them in the 1872 newspapers.

We first hear of the St. Joseph Brass Band in the same Nov. 9, 1872, issue of the "Chief" when it and the Ascension Brass Band play for a political barbecue, one of the typical activities of a brass band in the latter part of the 19th Century:

"THE BARBECUE - The mass meeting and barbecue at 81 mile point last Saturday is reported by persons who attended to have been quite a success. A goodly number of people, belonging to both political parties, were present, and manifested great interest in the proceedings throughout. The ascension and St. Joseph Brass Bands went from Donaldsonville accompanied by speakers of liberal Republican persuasion, and a joint discussion of political questions took place between those which is said to have been well worth listening to. General Allen Thomas delivered one of the stirring addresses for which he is justly noted." (Nov. 9, 1872)

The St. Joseph Brass Band was a very active band, playing music for many fairs as well as giving their own pleasure excursions for the benefit of their band fund. These excursions would be either by boat, train or hay wagon. The May 17th issue wrote that "We have been compelled to defer an account of a pleasure/excursion of the St. Joseph Brass Band until next week which in consequence of precedence of other matters."

In May, July and August the band played for two church fairs:

"The Catholic Fair - Notwithstanding unfavorable weather the fair given last Saturday and Sunday and Monday for the benefit of the Catholic Church building fund was well attended, and proved a very successful entertainment. Father Cuppens and Weltke, assisted by a number of ladies and gentlemen who are always foremost upon such occasions, managed the affair admirably and contributed by every means in their power to the enjoyment of the guests. The Independent and St. Joseph Bands of Donaldsonville, and the St. Mary Jefferson College Band from St. James
furnished excellent music, the good natured rivalry existing between the organizations causing each to put its best foot forward." (July 6, 1973)

The excursion was a way of realizing some profit for the benefit of a musical organization. We read that the St. Joseph Band had given a pleasure/excursion. The paper writes: "We have been compelled to defer an account of a pleasure/excursion of the St. Joseph Brass Band until next week which in consequence of precedence of other matters." (May 17, 1893)

"Successful Fair - St. Mary Benevolent Association. The St. Joseph Brass Band in attendance during the whole time and the fair goers were highly pleased with their music," (May 31, 1873)

The band is active playing for the annual fairs, although the two listed are summer fairs, not fall ones:

"M. E. church fair: The Silver Cornet and St. Joseph Brass Band." (August 16, 1873)

In a very interesting article, the band combines an excursion and serenades in what is called a 'Frolic':

"A FROLIC - Saturday evening, two weeks since, the members of the St. Joseph Brass Band, having secured the fine large wagon of the Ascension Band for the purpose, visited the residence of Hon. C. N. Lewis, in the first ward, where they partook of a bountiful supper prepared for the occasion. On the way to their place of destination, the boys awoke the echoes of the surrounding country and brought the inhabitants to the roadside in gaping wonder, by playing several selections from their musical repertoire. Arriving at Mr. Lewis' they found that gentleman ready to receive them with his usual pleasant smile, and after a preliminary serenade they attacked the edibles with appetite sharpened by the long ride and of course enjoyed the repast hugely. Several hours were spent with their host in a most agreeable manner and then the members of the band again mounted the red wagon and returned home filled with a pleasant recollection of their frolic." (May 24, 1873)

Again in July the band plays for a church fair:

"The Catholic Fair - Notwithstanding unfavorable weather the fair given last Saturday, Sunday and Monday for the benefit of the Catholic church building fund was well attended. The Independent and St. Joseph Bands of Donaldsonville and the St. Mary Jefferson College Band from St. James furnished excellent music, the good natured rivalry existing between the organizations causing each to put its best foot forward." (July 6, 1873)
Bands of the 19th Century were sponsored many times by either the firemen of the town or the Catholic Church. Many times there was a close relationship between the firemen, who were mostly Catholic and the Catholic Church. Research has brought to light the role of the Catholic Church in sponsoring brass bands for its many church-related activities as well as for its many official functions. Such is the case when the Archbishop came to Donaldsonville:

"Archbishop Perche in Donaldsonville
The Services in Ascension Church
A Large Number of Confirmations and Communionists
The Departure of the Archbishop

The services at the Catholic Church last Sunday conducted by the Rev. Archbishop Perche, were interesting and imposing, and drew together the largest congregation that has assembled in the spacious sanctuary for a long while. So great was the crowd that there was only standing room left for those who came late, and but very little of that. A procession was formed in the church yard just before the hour fixed for the opening of the services, which made a circuit of the ground and then conducted his grace the Bishop into the church. This procession was headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band, followed by the candidates for confirmation and communion (numbering about sixty), the inmates of the St. Vincent Orphan Asylum under the care of the Sisters of Charity, a considerable number of children and adults, the Bishop under a canopy borne by four gentlemen, and the St. Cecile Band bringing up the rear. The bands alternately filled the air with harmonious sounds, and as the procession marched slowly unto the church, with banners waving and bands playing, the scene was in spiriting in the extreme." (July 19, 1873)

The St. Joseph Band was a proud and capable organization, with its pride sometimes turning into cockiness. This attitude was publicity criticized by other musicians:

"Advertisement: Mr. Editor,
As we have heard some of the members of the St. Joseph Brass Band state in public that there could not be any other band organized in this town unless it would join with them, because the money could not be raised to do so, we can assure you that if it had not been for Mr. Charles F. Smith, who was kind enough to lend them the necessary funds, which they have not been able to return, they could not now be in a position to slander others in public as they have done. Mr. Smith grew tired of waiting for the return of his money, and made them a present of the sum of $200.

Very respectfully,
St. Mary Brass Band Boys." (August 2, 1873)
A write-up about the previously mentioned fair for the benefit of the M. E. Church appears in the August 16th paper:

"HO! FOR THE FAIR  Let everybody attend - A grand concert to be given to-night in the Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band Hall.

The fair for the benefit of the M. E. Church is in full blast at the public square, and is succeeding beyond the expectation of the projectors. Despite the copious rain, the attendance has been large, and the visitors purchase of the good things offered for sale with commendable liberality. The fair opened Wednesday afternoon and will continue until Sunday evening. The Silver Cornet Band discoursed some of their splendid music at the opening, and the members were invited to a bounteous supper, which they partook of with great gusto. Thursday and yesterday (Friday) evening music was furnished by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (August 16, 1873)

1874

One of the occasions for a celebration for the colored people of Donaldsonville was the 11th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation:

"Emancipation,


Early in the forenoon of New Year's Day, the booming of a little cannon in the vicinity of the Court-House reminded us that the colored people were to have a meeting for the purpose of celebrating in appropriate manner the 11th anniversary of their freedom. About half past ten o'clock the St. Joseph Brass Band appeared on the gallery of the Court-House and struck up a lively tune, and from this time until the opening of the meeting they filled the air with melody at frequent intervals." )

One of the leading Negro politicians, P. B. S. Pinchback, made a visit to Donaldsonville and the St. Joseph Brass Band welcomed him:

"Republican mass meeting. P. B. S. Pinchback arrival on Steamer Natchez. The St. Joseph Brass Band was at the wharf when the steamer landed (Saturday night). Sunday morning the band embarked upon the Henry Tete for the old Marchand Plantation. The St. St. Joseph Brass Band played a prominent part in the proceedings, their patriotic music serving to interest the spectator 'between speeches'."

1875
As has been noted, a fair was one of the principle methods of fund-raising in the small towns of Louisiana. Brass band benefited from this tradition, often giving fairs in their own behalf to raise money. This was necessary since they frequently played gratis for public functions. The fair during this era had a benefit for the band that played as it always guaranteed copious free publicity for the sponsor in the newspaper.

"Another fair on the 25 & 26 days of April. A fair will be held in this town for the benefit of that worthy association of young colored men, the St. Joseph Brass Band. Tickets of admission will soon be ready for sale at 50 cents each, and we recommend everybody to purchase one. Donaldsonville has a deal of musical talent and it should be encouraged. The band have the best wishes of the Chief for the success of their coming Fair." (March 14, 1875)

Again, on the 18th of April there appears another item about the St. JBB Fair:

"There will be a grand fair given for the benefit of the St. Joseph Brass Band in this town on the 25 & 26 insts. The members of the organization deserve to be encouraged, and as this is the only time they have called upon the public for assistance we trust their entertainment will be literally patronized." (April 18, 1875)

The St. JBB Fair is postponed the first time because of heavy rains that had a devastating effect on the town of Donaldsonville:

"The fair which the St. JBB proposed giving for their benefit on the 25 & 26 insts. has been postponed by them to June 6 and 7, owing to the scarcity of money in the neighborhood and the general desperation among the merchants and planters caused by the recent heavy rains, high water and numerous over flows." (April 25, 1875)

Again on June 6th, the item about the St. JBB fair appears in the paper:

"Saturday and Sunday the 6 & 7 insts. the St. JBB will give a fair for their benefit. The band first intended holding their fair on the 25 & 26 of April, but postponed it until the present time owing to the high water and danger of overflow then existing. We trust their efforts will meet with the pechiary success anticipated." (June 6, 1875)

The St. Joseph Brass Band had an excellent reputation outside of Donaldsonville and Ascension Parish. It was often asked to play in surrounding parishes. On one such trip they traveled to St. James Parish and played for a 4th of July affair:

"The St. JBB accompanied by Hon. Pierre Landry, the Republican nominee for State Senator from this district, left for St. James at an early
hour this morning to attend a 4th of July celebration to be held in that parish. We fear they will have a uneuable trip through the mud and rain, but we hope the celebration will be a success and that our Republican band may make a favorable impression upon the St. James people." (July 4, 1875)

A follow-up story on the above trip explained the problems of travel when the weather was inclement:

"The St. JBB which had started for St. James early in the morning, to be present at a large meeting there, returned by the train at 12:30, preferring that mode of travel to riding in a wagon exposed to the weather."

The St. Joseph Band plays for a fair for the St. Mary Benevolent Assoc. The paper states that "The St. Joseph Brass Band was in attendance and dispensed good music to add to the enjoyment of visitors." (August 7, 1875)

In the August 1st issue of the paper we see that there is "a fair for the benefit of the 6th ward church. The St. JBB has been solicited to attend and will probably do so."

While it has often been thought that the custom of having bands at funerals was a New Orleans function, there were similar funeral processions in the country towns surrounding New Orleans and frequently in Donaldsonville. The St. JBB plays for such an affair:

"The death of Mr. Desire Fernander, a popular and estimable young colored man, has caused a deep feeling of sorrow among his numerous friends and relatives, as attested by the large concourse that followed his remains to the tomb Thursday evening. The St. JBB was in the procession and played dirges as the mournful cavalcade moved toward the Catholic cemetery, where the deceased was interred. Peace to his ashes." (Sept. 5, 1875)

1876

Brass bands in the 19th Century were utilized by the politicians at their rallies and speeches. Visiting politicians were met at the train or steamer depot and usually marched to the beat of the band to the place of gathering. At times, this arrival was at night and torch light processions were held. This type of activity was written about in the Sept. 23, 1876, paper:

"The campaign committee having secured from the State committee several hundred lamps, or torches, arrangements were made for a torch light procession Sunday night. As was anticipated, this event drew a large and expectant crowd. The procession formed on Crescent Place and moved on all the principal streets, there being about 200 torches in line and a large number of people following the pageant. The St. Joseph Brass
Band led the column and just behind them was a vehicle bearing a large, transparency inscribed as follows: 'Give us peace, with Hayes & Wheeler, Packard and Antoine.'

In Oct. the band plays for another political rally:

"Local Republican campaign - In yard of Landry school house, 1st ward. After a long march, enlivened by hearty cheering and inspiring music from the St. Joseph Band, the crowd dispersed." (Oct. 7, 1876)

When State political figures visited Donaldsonville the Band was again on hand:

"Kellogg, Packard Visit - Torch light procession at night. Horsemen were in the lead, followed by the St. Joseph Brass Band in their large wagon, a long line of footmen, with and without torches, followed the Conway Field Band occupying a position near the middle." (Nov. 11, 1876

1877

Most brass bands of the 19th Century also had under their wing a group of juvenile musicians who was aspiring future band members. Also, most small towns or settlements organized their own brass bands and would enlist the help of members of well-established brass band musicians to become their musical instructors. Thus the leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band, Albert Vives, is enlisted to train some young band musicians of nearby settlements:

"A musical spirit pervades the colored youth of this parish. A brass band was recently organized at Crevasac Settlement and another in Smoke Bend, while still another is spoken of in Donaldsonville. The organization first named has purchased instruments and Albert Vives, leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band is giving the members elementary instructions in the art of horn blowing." (April 7, 1877)

Brass bands in the 19th Century were the most popular source of music for both entertainment and other traditional activities. The St. Joseph Brass Band was called on many times to play funeral music and as earlier stated they did so on occasion, such as the funeral for Arnmand Degriuse:

"One of the largest funeral processions we have ever witnessed in this section passed through town, from the bayou ferry landing to the Catholic Church and cemetery, on Sunday last. The deceased was a much respected colored man, scarcely 21 years of age, named Arnmand Degriuse, resident of the 3rd ward, from where the cortege started. The St. Joseph Brass Band and a field band followed the hearse, alternately discoursing
mournful airs. Many members of some benevolent society were in the procession, and the neat uniform dresses of the women presented a pleasing appearance' (April 28, 1877)

Needing financial help for expenses, the St. Joseph Brass Band gives a ball:

"The members of the St. Joseph Brass Band and their friends will amuse themselves at a ball to be given under the auspices of the band at Donaldsonville Silver Cornet Band's Hall on July 7." (June 23, 1877)

1878

The St. Joseph Brass Band was considered one of the best brass bands in the State of Louisiana, this fact written about in the 'Chief':

"Donaldsonville has two of the best colored bands in the State - The Crescent and the St. Joseph. Both these organizations were out serenading their friends last week and included the editor of the Chief among the category. Many thanks." (April 20, 1878)

It was earlier stated that both the Catholic Church and the local fire department were sponsors of brass bands in many of the towns in Louisiana. Each year the town fire department would have a special day and the activities always included a fair and parade in which many brass bands participated. Such a day was held in Donaldsonville by the local firemen and it was addressed in the paper:

"Firemen's Holiday! Anniversary Celebration of the Phoenix Fire and Ascension Hook and Ladder Companies. An imposing Parade - Subsequent Festivities - A delightful day.

If our firemen could have had their weather made to order, it would have been difficult to have obtained a much finer day for their celebration than last Sunday proved to be. The sun was partially obscured and its heat modified by light clouds, and the only drawback to the parade was the dust that lay deep upon the streets.

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon the bands employed for the occasion arrived at the public square with their instruments in full blasts, and as the firemen and populace congregated, a scene of inspiring animation was presented to the view such as can be witnessed here only on very rare occasions.

Ascension Hook and Ladder Company, followed by the Junior Hooks, first emerged upon the square in line, and soon Phoenix and Junior Phoenix followed suit. The assistant marshals rode off in a group, and shortly returned escorting the Grand Marshal, under whose direction the procession at once formed in the following order:
"Grand Marshal Elphege Glaudin attended by Aid Joseph Ferrier and Camille Mulere.
Phoenix Fire Co. No. a, led by the Independent Brass Band.
Ascension Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 led by the Crescent Band.
Ascension Junior and Phoenix Junior companies, led by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (May 18, 1878)

The St. Joseph Brass Band continued its activity by playing for a fair for the St. Mary Benevolent Association. The St. Joseph Brass Band "was in attendance and dispensed good music to add to the enjoyment of visitors." (August 7, 1878)

The St. Joseph Brass Band probably continued playing in the year 1889 but there is no mention in the Chief, although there is mention of other brass bands' activities. They probably didn't disband as they are mentioned frequently in the 1880 newspaper.

1880

It was customary to acknowledge gratuitous services that the St. Joseph Band and other bands usually performed. Thus the Fair committee sent a card of thanks to the Ascension Hook and Ladder:


The undersigned committee, charged with the management of the recent fair and ball given under the auspices of and for the benefit of Ascension Hook and Ladder Co., beg leave to express, on behalf of the entire company, their sincere thanks and deep sense of obligation to the kind friends, one and all, who contributed in any way toward the advancement and conduct of the entertainments. To the St. Joseph, Crescent and Silver Cornet Bands, whose valuable indispensable adjunct to our entertainment.

Respectfully,
Committee on Fair and Ball."

(Jan. 24, 1880)

The band again plays for the annual firemen's parade on May 9 and the following write-up appears in the May 22 paper:

"Firemen's Anniversary - The Annual Parade of May 9, 1880 - The Donaldsonville firemen in line, reinforced by Friends from Algiers.

The annual parade of Phoenix Fire Co. No. 1 and Ascension Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 of Donaldsonville took place on the 9th insts., and was a display that reflected much credit upon those organization.

The procession formed on the public square at a few minutes before 5 o'clock in the evening, a later start than usual being made by reason of waiting for the excursionists from Algiers, who were due at 2 p.m., but did
not arrive according to appointment. When all was in readiness the signal to march was given and the column moved off in the following order:

- Grand Marshall and aids.
- Donaldsonville Independent Brass Band
- Phoenix Fire Co. Phoenix Juniors
- St. Joseph Brass Band.

(May 22, 1880)

Bands in the area all seemed to have plenty of work and often overdoes their energy playing for parades and fairs that are played in a row:

"Fair - Catholic Church grounds, May 9. The Independent and St. Joseph Brass Band, contributed to the interest of the festival by supplying good music, though there was a lack of this element Sunday and Monday nights, the bands having tired themselves out playing for the Firemen's Parade on Sunday." (May 22, 1880)

The Negro association of the Ascension Hook and Ladder Company give a benefit using the St. Joseph Brass Band as entertainment:

"Ascension's entertainment - The Fair & Ball of Ascension Hook and Ladder Co.

Last Saturday evening, the 27th the fair advertised to be given at Ascension Hook and Ladder Co's hall, under the auspices and for the benefit of that association, was opened by music from the Crescent Brass Band, and continued in operation until 10 o'clock tonight. The usual attractions were offered. In the main hall of the truck-house were the cake table, fancy table, punch table and a number of side tables, which in the smaller apartment on the right, where the hook and ladder truck is generally kept, stood the restaurant table from which the others were supplied. All were attended by polite and charming ladies, who exerted themselves with flattering success to supply the wants and contribute to the enjoyment of guests. Gumbo and coffee were prepared in the hall-yard, and the bar was located under an awning on the lot adjoining the hall on the lower side.

The attendance of visitors Saturday evening was very slim and the prospect for a successful fair was dubious. Sunday afternoon and evening, however, matters brightened up considerably, although there was nothing like the number of guests the firemen and their friends had reason to expect. The St. Joseph Brass Band rendered handsome service by playing all afternoon and until a late hour in the evening, and the Silver Cornet Band kindly volunteered similar assistance, giving several tunes from the stage inside the hall." (June 3, 1880)

The Blue Bucket Fire Co. was a colored organization. The fire department was also a social organization in the 19th Century and held regular meetings and elected
"Blue Bucket Excursion, accompanied by the St. Joseph Brass Band bound for Napoleonville to a grand 4th of July Celebration. Had a pleasant trip down, listening and dancing to the band's inspiring music." and:

"Blue Bucket elections - St. Joseph Brass Band was present and serenaded the Company and the officers elected." (August 14, 1880)

The Blue Bucket Fire Co. took another excursion, this time to Gretna:

"Blue Bucket Fire Co's Excursion to Gretna

On Saturday the 21st., insts., the Blue Bucket Fire Co. of this town left here on a special excursion train bound for Gretna, accompanied by a considerable number of friends and pleasure seekers. The party reached Gretna safely, were cordially received by Good Intent Fire Co. No. 2 and other residents of the thriving town, and escorted to Good Intent's engine-house when an elegant lunch had been prepared, of which the excursionists partook with great relish.

A procession was then formed by the two fire companies, headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville and the Creole Field Band of New Orleans, with Scott Ellison, esq; as Grand Marshall. After parading on the principle streets of Gretna, the procession returned to Good Intent Hall and disbanded, and soon a grand ball was in progress in the hall which lasted through the night and afforded enjoyment to the participants." (August 21, 1880)

The St. Joseph and the Crescent Brass Band were both colored bands and at times were mistaken for each other. On one such occasion an article in the paper corrected the mistake:

"Correction Donaldsonville, Sept. 20, 1880 Editor Chief

I noticed in the published proceedings of the reception tendered the Hon. C. B. Darrall on the 13th insts., mention that the music for the occasion was furnished by the Crescent Brass Band of this place. In justice to the members of the St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville, I beg to state that they furnished the music for the day.

Chas. Shallowhorne,
Chairman Committee on Music.

(Oct. 8, 1880)

October being the time prior to elections, there was an active political campaign going on which meant jobs for brass bands. Each political rally usually had a brass band playing to draw the crowd:
"Grand Republican Rally - Republican Mass-Meeting will be held in the parish of Ascension. The St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville will be in attendance." (Oct. 16, 1880)

**1881**

The Band plays for three funerals, which were noted in the July 23rd and Nov. 5th issues of the Chief in 1881.

"Death of R. J. Duhe - Funeral which takes place at 5:00 this evening and the St. Joseph Brass Band will also attend." (July 23, 1881)

"Death of Solomon Weinschench - funeral - Headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (Nov. 5, 1881)  
(Sic: This was a Hebrew rite)

"Joseph Armand funeral - music furnished by St. Joseph and Crescent Brass Bands combined." (Nov. 5, 1881)

We find a notation in the Sept. 10th issue of the chief that tells of the band playing for another fair:

"An enjoyable fair or collation was given in Donaldsonville on Saturday, Sunday and Monday last, under the auspices of the St. Joseph Benevolent Society, one of the oldest associations of its class in our town, comprising in its membership some of the best colored people of the community. This was the first entertainment the society had ever given, and in view of the dullness of the times and other unfortunate circumstances, the ladies who projected the affair have every reason to feel satisfied with its results. Music was furnished by the St. Joseph and Crescent Bands, and the efforts of these proficient organizations formed one of the leading attractions of the festival." (Sept. 10, 1881)

**1882**

Each year the band usually is hired or asked to participate in annual affairs such as the firemen's parade (May 20th) and the political convention or rally:

"Convention - Republican 3rd congressional district - Senator Kellogg arrived at Donaldsonville Wednesday at train and escorted to the hotel, headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (August 16, 1882)

"Kellogg and party at Lee Hotel - They were serenaded by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (Sept. 23, 1882)
Both the St. Joseph and Crescent Brass Bands performed at social and community activities and always were available for Benevolent Societies:

"The collation given by the ladies of the St. Joseph Benevolent Society. Music was furnished by the St. Joseph and Crescent Brass Bands and the guests were all pleasantly entertained." (Sept. 23, 1882)

The band plays again for the firemen, this time a picnic that was preceded by a procession to the picnic grounds:

"Picnic - Perseverance Fire Co. #2 - The firemen will march to the grounds, accompanied by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (Sept. 23, 1882)

1883

The band frequently was called on to play for affairs outside of Donaldsonville, frequently playing in Baton Rouge. (Claiborne Williams' son eventually moved to the Capital city and continued his father's band under his father's name). One such occasion was noted in the March 24th paper:

"We have persistently omitted to mention the visit of the St. Joseph Brass Band to Baton Rouge on the 3 inst. where it furnished music for the annual parade and celebration of Mizpah Lodge #2045, GVO of Odd Fellows. The celebration was a gratifying success, and the Baton Rouge papers all mentioned Donaldsonville's excellent colored band in complimentary terms." (March 24, 1883)

We also read in the Baton Rouge paper of March 5 that "Mispah Lodge #2045, GVO of Odd Fellows celebrate 3rd anniversary. Headed by the excellent colored Band from Donaldsonville, the members paraded the main streets."

The band is mentioned as playing for: "The Republican meeting at Blue Bucket Hall. The St. Joseph Brass Band was in attendance and furnished an excellent substitute for chin music." (March 29)

Another funeral is mentioned in the June 5th paper:

"Henry Langues, a young colored man residing in Chetimaches Street died Thursday and was buried last evening in the Catholic Cemetery. The funeral concourse was quite a large one, including delegations from Perseverance and Blue Bucket Fire Co's headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band. Deceased was an efficient member of Perseverance." (June 9, 1883)

In the July 21st paper there is mention of a "Parade and fair for Odd Fellows Lodge - music furnished by the St. Joseph Brass Band."

Finally we find an entry about a picnic played for by the Band in the St. Charles Herald:
"The picnic of the Camelia Lodge No. 13, was a grand success. There was a large attendance of people, notwithstanding the bad weather. Among whom was the Donaldsonville St. Joseph Brass Band, who serenaded the Herald and also treated Hahnville and the vicinity to some good music." (Sept., 1, 1883)

1884

In the 1880's the traditional activities continued with the customary pomp and circumstance. One such occasion was the installation of the Odd Fellow Lodge officers:

"Odd fellows Festival

The public installation and incidental entertainment given at Blue Bucket Hall last Saturday and Sunday evenings, under the auspices of Alphonse Lodge No. 2444, GVO of Odd Fellows, attracted a usually large attendance and was one of the most agreeable and successful affairs ever conducted by a colored organization in our town. The members of the lodge, in full regalia, marched from their meeting place of Railroad Avenue to the Blue Bucket Hall at 7 o'clock Saturday evening, headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (Feb. 9, 1884)

The band plays for another "Republican meeting at Blue Bucket Hall, the St. Joseph Brass Band was in attendance and furnished an excellent substitute for chin music." (March 29) The band accompanies the firemen to New Orleans for the parade and frolic:

"Firemen's Frolic - Parade of four in New Orleans. They were accompanied by the St. Joseph Brass Band marched to the depot to the aspiring music of that organization." (March 8, 1884)

While the next article does not mention the band by name it does state that a colored band from Donaldsonville was in attendance at a festival, which means either the St. Joseph or the Crescent. The St. Joseph had played many times for the Smoke Bend Community so most likely it would have continued the relationship. The article states:

"The Pape Vert Brass Band of St. James, numbering 15 members passed upon the tug Nellie this afternoon on their way to take part in the Catholic Fair at the Smoke Bend Chapel. One of the Donaldsonville Colored Bands is also in Attendance at the festival." (June 14, 1884)

The Band plays for the Blue Bucket Fire Co. for an excursion on August 31st:

"The Blue Bucket Fire Co. leaves on the 30th, on its excursion for College Point, St. James, on the steamer Nellie, and will return the night of the 31st inst. The trip and entertainment is given in celebration of the anniversary of the organization. The St. Joseph Brass Band will
accompany the excursionists to and from their destination, and the Dugas String Band will furnish music for balls to be given on both nights on the grounds at the Point." (August 23, 1884)

1885

The Band is contracted to play for the annual Firemen's Parade and it is interesting that in the article the band is compared with the New Orleans colored bands:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville has made a contract to furnish music for the Lafayette Hook and Ladder Co. of New Orleans on March 1, and the boys are practicing some new pieces in order to be in proper musical trim for the important occasion. The St. Joseph is probably the best colored band in the state, outside of New Orleans and we have no doubt their music will give entire satisfaction to the members of Lafayette." (Feb. 7, 1885)

The Band plays for the annual Firemen's Parade as witnessed by a mention in the paper and also plays for a funeral for John O'Malley:

"John O'Malley - Funeral was very largely attended. Phoenix Fire Co. of which the deceased was a member and secretary led the procession headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (July 11, 1885)

The band plays for a Fair at the Blue Bucket Hall:

"Fair - Blue Bucket Hall. The celebrated St. Joseph Brass Band will be in attendance and will enliven the proceedings with its fine music." (Dec. 19, 1885)

There is another mention of the Band's trip to New Orleans and it again lauds the ability of the band:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville, undoubtedly the best colored musical organization in the State, outside of New Orleans, advertises for an engagement to furnish music for some Fire Co. on the 4th of March." (Dec. 19, 1885)

1886

After inserting an advertisement in the chief for sponsorship in the upcoming Firemen's Parade, the band is hired by the Lafayette Firemen:

"Responsive to the adv. inserted in the Chief, the St. Joseph Brass Band of this town has received and accepted a satisfactory proposition from Lafayette Hook and Ladder Co. of New Orleans to furnish music for that well-known organization on the occasion of the firemen's annual parade, March 4th. The St. Joseph was employed by the same company
last year and its music gave the firemen such perfect satisfaction that they have made haste to secure the services of Donaldsonville celebrated colored musicians for another parade - The members of the band are now handsomely uniformed and present a much improved appearance besides supplying its first class music." (Jan. 9, 1886)

Interestingly the Chief prints an item stating:

"The White Fire Co's and Napoleonville have invited the colored company to parade with them on the occasion of their annual celebration May 13th. The St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville will probably be engaged to furnish music for the colored Firemen." (April 24, 1886)

The brass band participated in most of the social activities of the era. Sporting events usually warranted the use of brass band music. During the baseball season most games included a band and usually were followed by a dance on the ever present wooden pavilion either underneath the grandstand or on the parks grounds:

"Baseball - Lee Baseball team of Donaldsonville go to Plaquemine on the steamer Letcher to play with Viguets of that place, and a highly enjoyable trip on Capt. Maurin's staunch and pretty little boat is anticipated. The St. Joseph Brass Band will go along also, and their fine music will add considerable interest to the excursion." (May 15, 1886)

After the excursion, the paper wrote of the trip:

"Baseball excursion.

The Lees down the Viguets again - The excursion of the Lee Baseball Club to Plaquemine last Sunday on the steamer Lutcher was a very agreeable affair. The boat got away at 9:30 A. M. with about 40 passengers, and arrived at Plaquemine at half past three, landing at several points en route and facing a heavy head wind nearly all the way. Marching to the South End Park, led by the St. Joseph Brass Band, the Lees played an exciting match with the Viguets, winning the bout by the close score of 11 to 1

The players formed in line behind the band and marched to the courthouse exchange, kept by the popular Gary Brothers, where they were invited by the proprietors to partake of cooling liquid refreshments that proved very acceptable after the violent exercise of the game." (May 22, 1886)

The band again plays for the yearly Firemen's celebration in Donaldsonville:

"Firemen's celebration. 12th annual parade of Ascension Hook and Ladder. The St. Joseph Brass Band in parade. The fine appearance of the handsome marshals, the pleasing contrast produced by the bright uniforms"
of the band, all combined to produce a spirited and pleasing spectacle as the procession moved." (May 15, 1886)

In 1886 the brass band was the medium for rendering dance music dances still being the traditional ones of the 19th Century such as gavottes, minuets, polkas, waltzes and the march movements:

"Quite a successful and enjoyable ball was given at Mr. Solozano's new hall, on Railroad Avenue last Thursday evening, the first of a series which it is proposed to continue during the summer. Music was furnished by the St. Joseph Brass Band and dancing was kept up until 3:00. Mr. Solozano has christened his new building St. Patrick's Hall. The 2nd ball next Thursday." (June 5, 1886)

In the July 8th of the Chief comes the first mention of Claiborne Williams as the leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band. Williams was 18 years old on this date:

"Claiborne Williams, the well-known leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band and Williams' Orchestra, went down to St. James last Sunday to participate in the parade and celebration of the Bee Hive Benevolent Association No. 1, a worthy colored organization of our sister parish. Music for the parade was furnished by the association's own band, which is being coached by Williams, and considering the short time the organization had been practicing its effort of last Sunday was extremely satisfactory and creditable." (July 8, 1886)

The copies of the Chief are lacking between 1887 and 1896. There is an item in the Napoleonville paper. We read: "Firemen's parade - Thursday, May 12, 1887 - procession, headed by the Pelican Brass Band and the St. Joseph Brass Band presenting a handsome spectacle in their blue uniforms." (May 14, 1887)

Again the St. Joseph Band plays for the annual Firemen's Parade as read in the May 19th, 1888 Napoleonville paper.

The same Napoleonville paper mentioned the band in the May 23rd, 1891 paper. We read:

"The Pioneer inadvertently omitted to mention that the St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville, under the leadership of the highly respected Joseph Thompson, gave it a very complimentary and highly appreciated serenade on the day of the parade." (May 23, 1891)

We find the band mentioned again on May 1, 1896. In this small quotation it sounds as if the band had discontinued for a while and is in the process of reorganizing and improving - this process is not unfamiliar to a number of brass bands during this period:
"The St. Joseph Brass Band has shown wonderful improvement in the playing of late. Its music at the convention last evening was excellent." (May 1, 1896)

Whatever the case may be, the band becomes active and in the proceeding years regains its popularity. The band, on June 6th and 7th play for the French Settlement Fair:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band - French Settlement will give a fair at that place on Saturday and Sunday, June 6 & 7." (May 20, 1896)

The band, again in need of financial help give a picnic:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band gave a successful picnic at Tropet Place last evening. The attendance was quite large." (July 27, 1896)

1887

In the latter decade of the 19th Century the need for brass bands in parades continued. The St. Joseph plays for two such parades in early March:

"True Friends Mutual Benevolent Association annual parade (colored). The St. Joseph Brass Band will furnish music." (March 8, 1887)

"The St. Joseph Brass Band will celebrate its patron Saint's Day with a parade this evening by the band and its honorary members, to be followed by a ball tonight at True Friends Hall." (March 19, 1887)

Along with the Pelican Band of Napoleonville the brass band plays for the annual Firemen's parade:

"Firemen's parade - Thursday, May 12th. procession, headed by the Pelican Brass Band, and the St. Joseph Brass Band presenting a handsome spectacle in their blue uniforms." (May 14, 1887) Nap. Pioneer

The Brass Band besides playing for numerous parades and dances, plays for another funeral. We read of the funeral of Judge Dupaty:

"JUDGE FRANCIS DUPATY FUNERAL.

It was with surprise and regret that the many friends of Dupaty learn of his death, which sad event occurred on Thursday, the 20th inst., after a brief illness, only having been confined to the room two days. The deceased was only 32 years and 7 months of age and was a native of this town. Although so young he had held a number of public positions, among which were town marshal, mayor and at the time of his demise was one of the justices of peace of this (seventh) ward. The deceased was a true and warm friend, generous to a fault, and had surrounded himself with a
number of friends by his many good qualities of mind and heart. The deceased was a brother of Hon. Max Dupaty, our present Mayor and of Mrs. John Gouaux, wife of our oldest and prominent druggist. To these and his many friends of the Pioneer extend its deepest sympathies.

The funeral took place yesterday at St. Napoleon Church, and was attended by a large concourse of friends and acquaintances. The funeral was conducted under the Auspices of the Napoleon Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 of which he was an honorary member. The funeral cortege was headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band. (Nov. 22, 1890) Pioneer

The Pioneer failed to mention that the band played a serenade the day of the parade and corrects this oversight in the next issue of the 'Pioneer.'

"The Pioneer inadvertently omitted to mention that the St. Joseph Brass Band of Donaldsonville, under the leadership of the highly respected Joseph Thompson, gave it a very complimentary and highly appreciated serenade on the day of the parade." (May 23, 1891) Pioneer

The band continues playing serenades for special people. We read:

"On Wednesday evening the Hook and Ladder Company accompanied by the St. Joseph Brass Band tendered a serenade to their Godmother, Mrs. W. L. Phelps." (May 28, 1887)

1896

In the Donaldsonville Daily Times we find a number of articles on the Band. The first mention is a parade:

"McKinley Club (Republican) parade through city - headed by St. Joseph Brass Band." (July 6)

"10th annual commencement of St. Augustine School - overture - St. Joseph Brass Band." (July 14)

"The St. Joseph Brass Band gave a successful picnic at Tropet place last evening. The attendance was quite large." (July 27)

St Joseph String Band

While outdoor activities such as parades and picnics still required a brass band, the string band is emerging as the preference for dances. It was a common practice among brass bands to have within their membership musicians who would play for dances with the instrumentation of a string band. For a number of dances the St. Joseph Brass Band presented its 'String Band':
"THE BAZAAR CLOSED. The Receipts Were Between Three and Four Hundred Dollars.

The bazaar for the benefit of the Episcopal church closed last night in a blaze of glory. The attendance was very large and by 10 o'clock every thing on the tables, excepting a few cakes was sold and these will be deposed of today. During the early part of the evening the Independent Brass and Reed Band gave a fine concert and later on the St. Joseph String Band played for the dancing which was kept up until after 2 o'clock this morning." (April 10, 1896)

The String Band plays for a 'Leap Year' dance by the young ladies of the town:


The Leap Year ball given by the young ladies of this city at Hook & Ladder Hall last evening, was by all odds the social event of the season and its many respects the most novel and unique function ever given here.

The ladies from the inception of the affair reversed the unusual ethics and played the masculine role. They issued the tickets, invited their escorts and paid all of the expenses. The novelty was at first a little odd to our young men, but it soon wore off and they entered into the spirit of the affair with a zest and earnestness that made it extremely enjoyable and amusing.

Last evening upon arriving at the hall they poised as wall flowers and sat demure and modestly about walling for the young ladies to ask them to dance and to take them for refreshments. For once they were robbed of the privilege of leaving the hall room for a social glass or a whiff of a cigarette as had been their custom at other halls in which they regard as lord.

The ball opened shortly after nine o'clock with a grand march led by Miss Jeanne Landry, who escorted Mr. Henry Comstock. About forty couples were in the march and it presented with it handsome ladies richly attired, and the manly beaux, a very pretty picture. Following this came a long list of dances, with an intermission after the twelfth for the purpose was the dancing order declared, to give the young ladies an opportunity to make proposals of marriage declared. Whether this advantage was taken by any of the ladies must remain a secret with the ardent lassies and the blushing swains.

Dancing was resumed again about midnight and it was not until 2 o'clock this morning that the ball was over.

The music which was excellent, was given by the St. Joseph String Band." (April 20, 1896)
The St. Joseph continues to play dances using the Brass Band or String Band probably depending on the budget of the client, a brass band possessing more musicians than the smaller string band:

"Impromptu dance - Hook & Ladder - Music - which was most excellent was furnished by the crack St. Joseph Brass Band's String Band."

(June 11, 1896)

The concept of a dance in our day is different from the old days. The olden dances were more structured and considered activities of the complete participation of those attending. A good description is given in an article of June 25, 1896:

'THE MASONIC BALL The Even Last Evening a Most Brilliant Affair. THE PRETTY DECORATIONS. Beautiful Belles and Manly Beaux Make a Handsome Scene.

The grand ball of the F. and A. m. lodges of this city, White Castle and Plaquemine, at Hook and Ladder Hall last evening, was the great social event of the season. The attendance was very large and embraced the beauty and chivalry of this, Assumption Iberville Parishes. The costumes of the ladies were particularly handsome, and elegant, and the scene presented during the height of the ball was a kaleidescope of handsome ladies and noble men, and one that will not soon be forgotten by those who were present.

The decorations of the hall were unusually handsome and artistic, and the effect created was exquisite. The music stand was hidden beneath a cloud of foliage and plants interspersed with palms and flowers. From each corner of the room rose garlands of ferns that met in the center from which was suspended the fraternity's mystic symbol "G" worked in bright, colored flowers. On the walls were decorations of plants and flowers and the initials of the order "F" and "A. M." in flowers, that almost covered the wood work from view. The scene under the shadow of the mellowed light was one of fairyland or a glimpse of Arcadia, and elicited exclamations of surprise and pleasure upon all sides.

The ball was opened at 9 o'clock with the grand march, led by Mr. William A. Terrio and beautiful Miss Irene Landry of this city, who guided the thirty couples in the march through some very pretty figures. At the termination of the march dancing began and was kept up until an early hour this morning. Music was furnished by the St. Joseph String Band." (June 25, 1896)

We find other mentioning of the String Band playing for affairs:

"Open air dance on lawn of Mr. Albert Esneault It was 10:00 when, the St. Joseph String Band struck up a spirited march." (July 1, 1896)
The String Band probably plays for many more private parties than we read about in the paper. We do read about three of these in the August 8, 12, & 29 issues of the Napoleonville Pioneer:

"Brilliant party - dance given by Miss Felicie Esneault. The dance music was furnished by the St. Joseph String Band." (August 8, 1896)

"Grand social affair - residence of Mr. & Mrs. M. Goldstein on B. Lemann & Co. Perseverance Plantation. Dancing began almost immediately upon the arrival of the guests and was kept up until near 3:00 o'clock this morning, the music, which was excellent being furnished by the St. Joseph String Band of this city." (August 12, 1896)

The St. Joseph Brass Band serenades some of Donaldsonville's citizens:

"Moonlight social (Bayou Goula) residence of Mrs. J. L. Viallon. The dance music was furnished by the St. Joseph String Band of Donaldsonville." (August 29, 1896)

"The St. Joseph Brass Band was out last evening serenading some of our prominent citizens. (August 19, D. T.)

The band next plays for a leap year dance and in the next few days, a dansante:

"Leap year dance given by young ladies of Donaldsonville Hook and Ladder Hall Friday evening. At 9:30 the grand march was begun, led by Mr. William Terrio and Miss Loulie Israel followed by about 25 couples through the novel intricacies of the march. The music being furnished by the St. Joseph String Band." (Dec. 6, D.T.)

"Last nights dance - The soiree dansante given at Hook & Ladder Hall last night, by several of our popular young gentlemen did not attract a very large attendance of our fair sex on account of the inclemency of the weather. There were only 5 or 6 young ladies present and they had a most enjoyable time. The affair broke up at a late hour. The St. Joseph String Band furnished excellent music for the occasion." (Dec. 9 1896)

Still popular were the old time minstrel shows. While most minstrel troupes usually had their own bands, at times they would seek help from the band of the town in which they were playing:

"Kier, Adams and Gueday's Clipper Minstrels will parade Sunday noon, headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band. The performance will take place at night at 8"00 sharp, admission 24 cents, special seats for white people." (Dec. 17, 1896)
This last quotation, while interesting in its contents about the St. Joseph, is interesting also for its last sentence. Most activities of a similar nature were open to both black and white people, as the French Opera in New Orleans. While they did sit in separate sections, both races did share these traveling shows.

1897

There is little in the 'Chief' in 1897 but we do read of the band in the Napoleonville Pioneer and the Donaldsonville Daily Times (D. T.).

"Farewell to bachelor hood - complimentary ball given at Hook and Ladder Hall last evening (Friday Jan. 8). Dr. J. T. Bringier - Music was furnished by the St. Joseph String Band. (Jan. 9)

The band plays for Claiborne Williams' Benevolent Society:

"True Friends Mutual Benevolent Association, a colored organization - parade and ball Monday April 11. The St. Joseph Brass Band will furnish music." (March 9,1897)D. T.

The Williams' band has close ties to the Catholic Church and the True Friends Association and play for many of their functions:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band will celebrate its patron saint's day with a parade this evening by the band and its honorary members to be followed by a ball tonight at True Friends Hall." (March 19, 1897)D.T.

In the paper the next issue there is an item that expressed the results of the above mentioned activity:

"The ball of the St. Joseph Brass Band at True Friends Hall last night was quite a success." (March 20, 1897)D.T.

The St. Joseph Brass Band was respected for its artistic ability and while it was hailed as one of the best in the South after its trip to Marshall, Texas, it becomes one of the best period:

"The tournament of colored bands that was held at Marshall, Texas, resulted in the St. Joseph Band of this city winning first prize. This is quite a feather in the cap of this excellent band." (June 22, 1897) D. T.

"Open Air Dance, lawn of Mr. Albert Esneault, at Foubourg La., Pipe by Jolly Crowd. It was 10 o'clock when, the St. Joseph String Band struck up with a spirited march. 50 couples." (July 1) D. T.
The band plays for the St. Augustine commencement and the paper states that the "St. Joseph Brass Band plays a well-executed overture." (July 6)

Again there is a call for the smaller musical group of the band, the string band to play for a small private get-together:

"A pleasant surprise was given Miss Alvine Von Lotten last night when about 30 of her friends took possession of her home and proceeded at once to have a most merry time. The surprises were accompanied by the Claiborne Williams String Band and dancing was indulged in until an early hour this morning." (Sept. 2, 1897)

The string band using Claiborne's name instead of the St. Joseph String Band plays again for a private party for Miss Poche:

"A pretty dance - In honor of Miss Maria Poche at Hook and Ladder Hall. The music was furnished by the Claiborne Williams String band and the dancing was kept up until an early hour this morning." (Sept. 10, 1897) D. T.

"Last night's dance - The soiree dansante given at Hook and Ladder Hall last night, but several of our popular young gentlemen, did not attract a very large attendance of our fair sex on account of the inclemency of the weather. There were only 5 or 6 ladies present, and they had a most enjoyable time. The affair broke up at a late hour. The St. Joseph String Band furnished excellent music for the occasion." (Dec. 11)

The band plays a serenade and gets a nice write-up in the newspaper about the band and its progress:

"Serenaded the Daily Times;

The St. Joseph Band, the best brass band that we have in this city today, during its parade in honor of its patron saint's day, last evening serenaded our office, its excellent music attracting a large crowd about the vicinity. This band shows constant improvement and its music last evening could hardly be improved on in either execution or time. The band during its parade serenaded Major Leche and other prominent citizens. In the lead of the band were its honorary members, composed of some of Donaldsonville's most highly respected colored men." (March 20, 1897)

One of the most popular card games was called 'progressive euchre' and parties were given on a much larger scale than a bridge game party as there was a dance following the Euchre party. While the complete brass band did not play (the situation did not call for a large musical group) a smaller group, the St. Joseph String Band, furnished the music:
"Progressive Euchre - during the same music was furnished by Claiborne Williams String Band that also played for the dancing at the conclusion of the games." (August 6, 1897) D. T.

The string band continues to play for smaller dances - next for a soiree dansante:

"Last nights dance - The soiree dansante given at Hook and Ladder Hall last night, by several of our popular young gentlemen, did not attract a very large attendance of our fair sex on account of the inclemency of the weather. There were only 5 or 6 ladies present, and they had a most enjoyable time. The affair broke up at a late hour. The St. Joseph String Band furnished excellent music for the occasion." (Dec. 11, 1897) D. T.

Finally the Dec. 15th paper has an announcement of the traveling minstrel show using the Brass Band:

"Kier, Adams and Guedry's Clipper Minstrels will parade Sunday noon, headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band and the performance will take place at night at 8 o'clock sharp in True Friends Hall. Admission is 25 cents. Special seats for white. people." (Dec. 15, 1897) D. T.

1898

The band was not mentioned in the 'Chief' during 1898 except for three items, both in April:

"The famous St. Joseph will furnish music at tonight's meeting. Mass meeting of qualified voters of Donaldsonville nominating candidates for municipal officers." (April 5, 1898)

"Mass meeting - Mr. Kline nominated, the committee headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band, proceeded to the depot where they met and advised him." (Sic: He refused the nomination.) (April 6, 1898)

"The Brass Band plays for the annual Firemen's Parade with the Quezere's Field Band." (May 9, 1898)

We find no mentioning of the band from 1899 to 1905. I believe that some of this time Claiborne Williams was with the Billy Kersand Minstrel show and was traveling the country as musical director.

1905

The String Band plays for a dance at the Mohawk Club:
"Enjoyable impromptu dance at Mohawk Club Monday night. Sweet music was furnished by a portion of the Claiborne Williams String Band." (March 11, 1905)

The May 13 paper states that an "enjoyable subscription dance at Ascension Hall. Music was furnished by Williams Orchestra." (May 13) and "Fireman's parade - 2 brass bands the crack St. Joseph Brass Band furnished music for marching." (May 13)

We next read in the May 6, 1905, paper that the band plays for a political meeting at the Phoenix Opera House - its presence assuring a big turnout:

"Meeting - About bond issue at Phoenix Opera House. After music by the St. Joseph Brass Band the Chairman introduced the next speaker. The band was heard from again." (May 6 1905)

The band next plays for the unveiling of a public monument:

"Monument unveiled by Woodmen of the World; meeting at Masonic Temple and preceded by the St. Joseph Brass Band, marched to the cemetery." (May 13, 1905)

"Firemen's parade - 4 bands, 2 white, 2 colored. The St. Joseph Brass Band. (Sic: the St. Joseph Brass Band is the only one that is mentioned by name.)" (May 13, 1905)

The band performs for the "Smoke Bend Fair, benefit St. Francis of Ascension Catholic Church. Music will be furnished by the St. Joseph Brass Band." (June 17, 1905)

The band plays for a dance of Terpsichorean Club that is mentioned in the same issue of the paper.

The final mention in 1905 is in the July 8th paper when the band plays in a parade on what was called "Flower Party - St. Joseph Brass Band - decorated vehicle." (July 8, 1905)

There is no mention of the band in the year 1906 but in 1907 they are mentioned quite a few times.

1907

The colored community in Donaldsonville was a socially active one and it was the colored citizens who instigated a Mardi Gras celebration. In the forefront of this activity were the St. Joseph Brass Band and its leader, Claiborne Williams:

"The St. Joseph Brass Band has asked permission from Mayor Chas. Martin to hold a Mardi Gras celebration in Donaldsonville and members are busy making arrangements for the affair which will be in the form of a
parade of floats depicting different themes. The local businessmen are invited to enter in the procession any advertising device they may desire, and contributions to defray the expenses of the celebration will be greatly received by those having it in charge." (Jan. 12, 1907)

This first attempt at having a Mardi Gras is not successful (it will be in later years) and two articles appear in the next few issues of the 'Chief:'

"The committee of the St. Joseph Brass Band having in charge of arrangements for a Mardi Gras celebration in Donaldsonville has abandoned the idea and request the Chief to announce for the benefit of subscribers to the fund that they will not be called upon for the amounts of their subscriptions. While there will be no organized attempt at a parade on Mardi Gras, the committee states that the band would assemble and traverse the principle streets, and anyone wishing to join in the procession may do so." (Jan. 19, 1907)

Not having any kind of Mardi Gras celebration disappointed many of the townspeople and this is mentioned in the paper:

"Dull Mardi Gras - Not even a parade by the St. Joseph Brass Band which had been expected." (Feb. 16, 1907)

There were certain activities that the band always took part in such as the Firemen's Parade and traditional town functions. One such annual performance was their parading on their Patron Saints Day, St. Joseph's Day:

"Tuesday being St. Joseph Day, the St. Joseph Brass Band, fittingly celebrated the occasion with a parade through the principal streets of the town and a banquet at the True Friends Hall at night. During the course of the parade the band serenaded the newspaper office and a number of well-known citizens and businessmen." (March 23, 1907)

The band again plays for a town function was the dedication of the new high school that was sponsored "jointly by the parish of Ascension and the Town of Donaldsonville. At the appointed hour the procession formed in order. The St. Joseph Brass Band preceded to school and for the program." (May 18, 1907)

The stature of the leader of the St. Joseph Brass Band Claiborne Williams, often overshadowed the band. He not only led the band, but also smaller groups made up of personnel from the band; in addition he was the number one person in town when music was needed for any occasion. In a few years, the band would appear in print as the Claiborne Williams Band, as foreseen in the following item:

"Afros Bazaar at Ascension Hall. Claiborne Williams inimitable Band has been engaged for the occasion and will discourse sweet music throughout the evening." (April 17, 1907)
His career is intertwined with the St. Joseph Brass Band and whether it is a smaller group or the entire Brass Band is sometimes difficult to ascertain by the description in the paper.

On May 18 there are two items about the band in the chief - they play for the above mentioned school dedication and for the annual Firemen's Parade:

"Firemen's Parade - Bands - The Eureka Brass Band supplying martial music and the crack St. Joseph Brass Band furnished fine marching music." (May 18, 1907)

Being connected to the Catholic Church they are asked to play for the visiting hierarchy of the church:

"Visit of Archbishop J. H. Blenk. The St. Joseph Brass Band in procession." (June 1, 1907)

Finally the band plays for another political rally:

"Lambremont rally (Sic: State Senator) An enjoyable feature of the occasion was the stirring music rendered before, during and after the rally by the well-known St. Joseph Brass Band." (Oct. 5, 1907)

1908

The band continues to perform in parades and fairs during the ensuing year. When a man by the name of Hanson was a victor in his election, there was a celebration and parade in which the band participated:

"Victory celebration of Hanson ticket - The St. Joseph Brass Band furnished music at the meeting and for the parade with which the celebration was terminated." (Feb. 1, 1908)

The various social associations were an important part of the social scene - i.e., Woodmen of the World, Masons, etc. Thus an election of officers for the WOW was an important occasion and warranted celebration:

"WOW initiation Formed a parade and marched through the principle streets of the town, with the crack St. Joseph Brass Band in the lead." (Feb. 22, 1908)

The band also plays for the annual Firemen's Parade in 1908 and is still referred to as the 'crack St. Joseph Brass Band.'

"Firemen's Parade - White Castle Boys Band, the St. Joseph Brass Band, the People's Brass Band of Napoleonville, the Eureka Brass Band and the Napoleonville Brass Band." (May 161908)
The next entry of August 22nd is an important one. This is one of the last entry listing the St. Joseph Brass Band. The entry:

"Fair - benefit of the Societa Italiana di N. B. Conte de Toreno - leading Italian citizens of Donaldsonville entertainment, preceded by parades as mounted marshals and the crack St. Joseph Brass Band furnished music." (August 22, 1908)

1909

The band continues to play for functions of the Catholic church and meets the train and Archbishop Blenk:

"When the noon train came in with his Grace Archbishop J. H. Blenk, the very Rev. Cannon B. Branch met him at the station with all pomp and circumstances of his church. The banner with the St. Joseph Brass Band, following his grace carriage." (March 20, 1909) D. T.

Peeress Brass Band

1910

There is no mention in the paper about the St. Joseph Brass Band during the year 1909, and in the August 13th issue we read that Claiborne Williams and the Peerless Brass Band play for the Elks Fair and Parade. This is the first mention of this band and of the fact that Williams is the leader. The band continues to be active for many years. Many times the band is simply called the Claiborne Williams Brass Band as most people knew of Williams, the most famous musician in the town and in other areas of Southern Louisiana.

More and more the brass band is used only for parades and outdoor activities, seldom for dancing for which the string band and smaller groups, now called orchestras, are hired. The Elks Fair and Parade's first 1910 entry is the Claiborne Williams Brass Band. (August 13, 1910)

While Williams and other bands are mentioned, in 1911, there are no items about the Peerless or Williams Brass Band, but in 1910, there are more items about the Peerless Band then any other year and the articles, are longer and have more substance. The first mention in the paper is an important one as it is the first to tell about a series of concerts by the Peerless Brass Band that are to be given in the park, Louisiana Square:

"Band Stand for Louisiana Square - The Woman's Civic League is having a band stand constructed in the southeast corner of Louisiana Square at East Houma and Opelousas Streets. The structure is being erected by contractor Joseph Oubre of this city, who drew the plans, and will be octagonal in shape, with a seating capacity of 50 persons. It will have a corrugated iron roof and a brick enclosed basement 6 feet in height.
Musical concerts will be given in the Square once a week throughout the summer by the Claiborne Williams Brass Band, under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League." (April 6 1910)

**Peerless Brass Band**
*(Cl. Williams Brass Band)*

On August 13, 1910, appears the first reference to Claiborne Williams' Peerless Band. In an article dated February 10, 1911, there is mention of a new band, the Homer Brass Band, made up of members of the Peerless Band, but following that article, little is heard of them. Finally, the Peerless Band becomes the Claiborne Williams Brass Band.

"New Brass Band Organized

A new brass band has been organized by a number of well-known colored musicians of this city, many of who have previously been included in the personnel of the locally famous Claiborne Williams Peerless Band. The new organization, which begins its career with a membership of 16, has been named the Homer Brass Band, after Harrison Homer, formerly the expert slide trombone player in the Williams Band, its leader is Morris Victor. The first public appearance of the band will be on Sunday Feb. 18, when a grand fair and masquerade ball will be given under its auspices at the hall of the Protective Brothers Benevolent Association. The entertainment will open at 12:30 o'clock p.m., and will be proceeded by a street parade. Music for the ball will be furnished by the Bolo Orchestra, under the Leadership of Ray Percy Gibson." (Feb. 10, 1911)

Prior to a series of concerts that are given beginning in April of 1912, Claiborne Williams sends to the chief's editor a copy of the "Logical Point Waltz" that was published out of New Orleans:

"With the compliments of Claiborne Williams, a well-known colored musician of this city, and leader of the crack St. Joseph Brass Band and Peerless Orchestra, the Chief has received a copy of 'Logical Point Waltz' a tuneful melody composed by Claiborne's brother, George Williams. The latter is himself a musician of much ability and promise. For the past several months he has resided in Denver, Colorado, where he is meeting with success as a music teacher. The 'Logical Point Waltz' is dedicated to the city of New Orleans, and is published by a music house of that place." (March 16, 1912)

The bandstand is indeed built and is used for the first time at a Sunday afternoon concert. The paper mentions the dedication:

"New bandstand dedicated - The artistic bandstand erected in Louisiana Square by the Woman's Civic League was used for the first time last Sunday afternoon, when a concert was given by the crack Williams
Brass Band of this city under the leadership of Claiborne Williams. A large crowd was present, and the program was greatly enjoyed. Concerts will be given by the Williams Band one evening each week throughout the summer, and the entertainments promise to prove very popular. Louisiana Square with its closely trimmed lawns, paved walks, comfortable iron benches and flowing fountain, is a pleasant spot in the afternoons and is frequented by many ladies and children, the latter especially finding the big playground an ideal resort after school hours." (May 11, 1912)

Each week there is an article in the paper announcing the concerts in the park:

"Band concert tomorrow (Sunday). The Peerless Brass Band, under the leadership of Claiborne Williams will give a concert from the bandstand in Louisiana Square at 5:00 tomorrow afternoon." (May 18, 1912)

"Weather permitting, Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band will give a concert in Louisiana Square at 5:00 tomorrow afternoon." (June 23, 1912)

These concerts at the park by the Peerless Brass Band were gratis but it was thought that the band should get some numeration and a benefit was arranged for this purpose:

"Band benefit - Arrangements are being made for an entertainment to be given at the Gondran Theatre Friday evening of next week, July 5, under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League, the proceeds of which will be turned over to Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Bands, in partial payment to the delightful music rendered by the well-known organization at the several band concerts given in Louisiana Square during the past 2 weeks, and which are to be continued throughout the summer. So far the band has furnished its services free of charge, and no demand has been made for any monetary recompense by the musicians or their leader, but it is not right nor reasonable to expect the band to continue to give concerts for the entire summer without remuneration, and in order to raise an amount that will in some measure recompense the members for their services, the Woman's Civic League, who have been instrumental in presenting the concerts, have hit upon the idea of giving an entertainment at the Opera House, which will afford everybody an opportunity to contribute to the worthy fund at small cost. The program will comprise moving pictures, songs by Mesdames Ferinard and Walter Lemann and G. P. Putman and Vaudeville specialties by little misses Anna & Clara Cobb, Agnes Landry and other talented amateurs. The performance will begin at 8:00 and the price of admission will be only 5 cents for children, and 10 cents for adults." (June 29, 1912)
As was custom, the next week's paper ran an account of the benefit:

"The entertainment given at the Gondran Theatre Friday night of last night of last week under the auspices of the Women's Civic League, for the purpose of raising funds to be presented to Claiborne Williams Brass Band in recognition of its gratuitous services in giving concerts in Louisiana Square throughout the summer months, was attended by a large audience, despite the inclement weather and proved a gratifying social and financial success. The receipts would no doubt have been considerably larger had the weather been more favorable, but under the circumstances the result achieved may be considered altogether satisfactory, and the ladies of the Civic League and all who assisted them in staging the entertainment have every reason to feel satisfied with the degree of success that crowned their efforts. The League's share of the net receipts totaled $428.73 and this was supplemented by contributions aggregating $6,27 from members of the League, making a total of $35 that was turned over to Claiborne Williams, leader of the band, for distribution among the members of the organization. It is desired to further recompense the band for their services, and in order to raise a fund for this purpose the ladies of the Civic League will sell refreshments tomorrow at Elmer's Sanitary Pharmacy, serving all the beverages and confections ordinarily obtainable at that establishment. The usual schedule of prices will prevail." (July 13, 1912)

Five bands, including the Claiborne Williams Brass Band provide the music for the annual Fireman's Parade:

"Firemen's Parade - Napoleonville Brass Band, Homer Brass Band of this city (Donaldsonville), furnished music, with the St. James Brass Band and the crack Claiborne Williams Brass Band and the Smoke Bend Brass Band." (July 13, 1912)

The write-up in the August 10th paper again tells of the park concert and it is at this week's concert that the famous 'Logical Point Waltz' is premiered:

"Band concert Wednesday evening - weather permitting, Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band will give a concert in Louisiana Square at 7:00 Wednesday evening, enjoyable band concert.

The crack Peerless Brass Band under the leadership of Claiborne Williams, gave one of its delightful concerts in Louisiana Square last Monday night in the presence of a large and appreciative audience. A program of rag-time selections, was rendered in the faultless manner for which this excellent organization is noted, but by far the most enjoyable feature of the entertainment was the playing of the 'Logical Point Waltz,' composed by George Williams, a brother of Claiborne Williams in which a trombone solo by the former was introduced. This exquisite selection
was rendered no less than three times, and so beautiful was the melody and so skillful its interpretation by the band, that each rendition was enthusiastically encored, the composer responding by playing 'Annie Laurie' and 'Swanne River,' both without accompaniment. He is a musician of exceptional ability and a composer of much promise, and the haunting strains of his beautiful 'Logical Point Waltz' are already being whistled and hummed all over the city. Williams has been living in Memphis and Colorado for the past several years, but expects to reside in Donaldsonville permanently hereafter, and will prove a notable acquisition to his brother's well-trained organization of colored musicians." (August 10, 1912)

As usual, the above concert was featured in the paper the next week:

"The band concert in Louisiana Square Wednesday night attracted the usual large audience and was greatly enjoyed. As on the occasion of last week's entertainment, the 'Logical Point Waltz' composed by George Williams made a hit with the big crowd and was enthusiastically encored. These weekly concerts are a source of much pleasure to our music-loving people, and constitutes a summertime attraction which few cities the size of Donaldsonville can boast." (August 17, 1912)

The Peerless Band next plays for two political meetings:

"Jones meeting a rousing success - The meeting was enlivened with music by Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band." (August 24, 1912)

"Morgan rally next Tuesday night - The meeting will be preceded by a concert by Claiborne Williams Brass Band and the speech making will be interspersed with musical selections by this crack organization." (August 24, 1912)

The concerts in the park proved to be very successful and they continued during the winter:

"During the winter, concerts will be given in City Park every Sunday afternoon by Claiborne Williams Brass Band. Of course, when the weather conditions are not propitious for each outdoor entertainments the concerts will be permitted." (Nov. 2, 1912

1913

The park concerts continue in 1913 having been a success the previous year and continue under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League:
"Band Concert Tomorrow - The weekly concerts given in City Park (sic: La. Square) last summer by Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band, under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League of Donaldsonville will be repeated this year, arrangements to this end having just been completed by the League. The first musicale of the season will take place tomorrow evening, from 5:30 to 7:30, and there will be a concert in the park one evening each week thereafter.

In order to raise funds to recompense the band for its services, the Civic League will give a subscription dance at Ascension Hall on May 22, and preparations for this function are under way. The amount to be subscribed by the gentlemen has been fixed at $2.00, which will entitle the subscriber to be accompanied by a female companion. Only gentlemen who have been invited by the league to attend, and who have remitted the subscription fee, will be admitted to the hall, and the attendance of girls is limited to those who may have been invited by some eligible gentlemen or by the league." (May 17, 1913)

The next issue of the paper contains an article on selling refreshments at the concerts by the Woman's Civic League for the benefit of the concert fund and on August 9th we read about a 'Tom Thumb wedding for benefit of the Woman's Civic League band fund a success.' (August 9, 1913)

In the next weekly concert there was an "extra large crowd. The Thursday night concert netted $25.00 for the Woman's Civic League." (August 16, 1913)

The weekly concert causes a controversy as to whether dancing would be allowed during the concerts. The paper prints the answer:

"Dancing in the park not prohibited - It having been currently reported that the children and young folk will not hereafter be permitted to dance in City Park on the occasion of the band concerts. The Chief is authorized by the Woman's Civic League to state that this report is erroneous. No edict has been issued against the terpsichorean pastime and the young people will not be interfered with as long as their frolics are conducted in an orderly manner. They are welcome to avail themselves of the facilities of the park at all times for innocent pleasure and amusement, says the league." (August 23, 1913)

1914

The band is very active in 1914 and one performance is for the benefit of the Lock Association. As the item in the paper says "music will be rendered throughout the entertainment by the famous Peerless Orchestra under the leadership of Claiborne Williams." (Jan. 31, 1914)

The summer concerts continue and begin on Easter Sunday:

"The summer series of open-air band concerts in City Park, under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League, will be inaugurated Easter Sunday
afternoon, when Claiborne Williams crack Peerless Brass Band will render a program of popular selections. Ice cream, cake, lemonade and other refreshments will be sold throughout the afternoon by the ladies of the league, for the benefit of the concert fund." (April 4, 1914)

The paper announces the "first band concert in City Park - Easter Sunday afternoon with Claiborne Williams Band" (March 21) and continues in each issue to publicize these concerts:

"Band concert May 17, first band concert of season. When a program of popular selections will be rendered by the crack Peerless Brass Band under the leadership of Claiborne Williams." (May 2, 1914)

"Band concert tomorrow - Everybody in Donaldsonville and all visitors to the city, are cordially invited to assemble in City Park at 5:00 tomorrow afternoon and enjoy the concert to be given by the crack Peerless Brass Band under the leadership of Claiborne Williams. The program will include many new and popular selections, and a pleasant afternoon can be spent listening to the music and strolling about the pretty park." (May 9, 1914)

The Peerless Brass Band must have been a very versatile band and their leader, Claiborne Williams, an open-minded musician willing to program the newest of popular music. In the next issue of the paper we read where his band will be playing "ragtime" music:

"Band concert in City Park. The summer series of open-air band concerts in City Park under the auspices of the Woman's Civic League was inaugurated with a delightful musicale last Sunday afternoon, when the Peerless Brass Band rendered a program of rag-time selections in the presence of a large gathering." (May 23, 1914)

The paper continues to publicize the band concerts in very positive fashion, encouraging participation:

"Band concert next Wednesday. A musical treat is in store for the public next Wednesday evening, when the crack Peerless Brass Band will give a concert in City Park between the hours of 6 and 8 o'clock. The program will include the newest popular selections." (August 1, 1914)

The band also plays for a number of fairs:

"Catholic Fair, May 30-31. Each evening a concert will be given outside the building by the Peerless Brass Band while the crack St. Joseph Commercial Institute Orchestra will discourse music inside the structure as the big Vega building at the head of Railroad Avenue." (May 23, 1914)

The following week's paper announces the opening of the fair - "South Louisiana Fair opening, Gonzales Silver Cornet Band and the Peerless Brass Band." (Oct. 10, 1914)

In the next few years there is a lack of mention about brass bands. In 1915 the band concerts continue but it does not mention that they are scheduled on a regular basis and only one mention is in the July 24th issue stating "Weather permitting, there will be a concert in City Park by the Peerless Brass Band from 5 to 7:30 tomorrow evening, Sunday." (July 24, 1915)

In 1916 there are only a few mentioning's of the band in the local papers. One is on June 24th - "Vigilant Fair program - Hose Co. big four day fair - music will be furnished by the Silver Bell Orchestra and Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band."

The band plays for two other engagements, one in Feb. and one in July:

"There will be a grand ball at Klotzville tomorrow, in celebration of the opening of the new hall. Claiborne's Band will furnish the music." (Feb. 26, 1916)

"A grand fair will be held at the Tip Top Hall, Saturday and Sunday, July 15, & 15 for the benefit of a Catholic Church. Everything usually found at first-class fairs will be in evidence; and everybody is promised a good time. Music by Claiborne Williams Band." (July 8, 1916) Nap. Pioneer

We do find an item in the Thibodaux Comet of May 25th:

"Clicquot Club grand dance - Woodmen Hall. The Claiborne Band of Donaldsonville has been engaged to furnish music." (May 25, 1916) Comet

The 'Comet' on Sept. 14 writes" Third dance given by Clicquot Club. Claiborne's Band furnished exceptionally sweet music and entranced the participants." (Sept. 14, 1916)

In 1917 there are two items in the local paper:

"Grand fair benefit of Catholic Church in Tip-Top Hall June 23 and 24. The crack Claiborne Williams Band of Donaldsonville will furnish music for the occasion." (June 16, 1917)

"Italian Society celebration - benefit of Red Cross. A grand parade started at the hall at 3 p.m., led by Claiborne's Band." (July 21, 1917)

The Thibodaux Comet again mentioned the Claiborne Band in two items:
"Dance at Hall of Doilien Guillot, three miles above Thibodaux. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Orchestra of Donaldsonville."
(May 17, 1917)

"Dance, old Woodmen Hall. Music furnished by Claiborne's Orchestra after show at Grand Theater." (Dec. 13, 1917)

The lack of activity is most probably due to the First World War. During the war the bands in many Louisiana towns became inactive. In 1918 there is but two items in the paper:

"Colored citizens patriotic meeting. Stirring music was furnished by Claiborne Williams Band." (Feb. 2, 1918)

"Liberty Loan relic exhibition train - Promptly at 1:00 the Liberty Special left for Plaquemine. The Claiborne Williams Brass Band, which had furnished music during the stay of the train here, went along to enliven the trip to the next stopping place." (April 27, 1918)

1919

In 1919, once the war is over, the band is seen playing for dances and parades and the traditional affairs. We read the band plays for a "dance given last evening by the young folks of our town (Nap.) was a most successful affair. Claiborne's popular orchestra furnished the music," (April 26) and, the initiation for the Knights of Columbus Parade:

"K of C parade - Claiborne Williams Brass Band. To the tune of patriotic music the Knights and candidates marched down to the Catholic Church. After leaving church to the strains of music furnished by the Claiborne Williams Brass Band, marched to Ascension Hall." (June 21, 1919)

The colored citizens of Donaldsonville were very active in celebrating Mardi Gras and National holidays. Thus the 4th of July was observed with a parade:

"Fourth of July celebrated by colored people of Donaldsonville. A parade, headed by Claiborne Williams Brass Band marched up Railroad Avenue to Mississippi Street." (July 5, 1919)

The local papers do not have any mention of Williams' Band but we do read of his orchestra in the Thibodaux 'Comet':
"There'll be a dance tomorrow night in the Woodmen Hall under the auspices of the Midnight Club. Claiborne's Orchestra will furnish the music." (April 29, 1920)

"The Midnight club of Thibodaux will have a dance tonight in the Woodmen Hall in Thibodaux when an enjoyable time is expected by the young people. Claiborne Williams Orchestra will furnish the music which means something up to date." (July 14, 1920)

"The next dance of the Midnight Club will take place Thursday, July 29. Music by Claiborne Williams Orchestra." July 22, 1920)

"The Midnight Club will give its next dance tonight even if the weather man is not giving what we consider a 'square' deal. Claiborne's Jazz Band will 'drive dull cares away." (August 12, 1920)

The band travels to St. Tammany Parish and play for their fair and a number of items mention this in the local paper, the 'St. Tammany Farmer.:'

"Parish Fair - Professor Claiborne Williams and his 10 real musicians will be at the fair. This colored band is said to be with out an equal." (Sept 10, 1921) St. Tammany Farmer

"Fair, St. Tammany - you will hear all the time the harmony of the Claiborne Williams Band." (Oct. 1, 1921)

There is only one mentioning of the brass band in 1921

"Elks have a big day - parade - procession headed by Claiborne Williams Brass Band." (Feb. 12, 1921)

1922

The Peerless Brass Band again plays for the initiation of officers of the Knights of Columbus (April 29) and the Catholic Fair on Sept. 9-10 with music by "the Claiborne Williams Brass Band and orchestra." (August 26). More and more the Williams Orchestra is quoted in the paper as it plays for numerous music activities, and the brass band plays for parades and fairs:

"Big South Louisiana Fair open Oct. 8th. Concerts by the Claiborne Williams Brass Band and Orchestra." (Oct. 7, 1922)

1923

In 1923 the Williams Brass Band is mentioned frequently playing for a number of parades:
"Carnival Events - parade of King Progios - Two famous bands will be in the parade - the Jefferson College Band and the Claiborne Williams Band." (Jan. 6, 1923)

"Carnival parade includes LSU Band as well as Jefferson and Claiborne Williams Band." (Feb. 3, 1923)

The following week, another item appears about the carnival parade and, having completed the program for a 'great Mardi Gras celebration planned for next Tuesday,' the order and names of the bands are given:

"Three splendid bands, the LSU, Jefferson College and Claiborne Williams, will dispense music all along the line of March." (Feb. 10, 1923)

In the Feb. 17th, issue there is a review of the activities of Mardi Gras:

"25,000 people crowd city to see big Mardi Gras Parade - Chief of Police Dill and Officer e. A. Lawless on horseback leading to clear the streets, the mounted marshals following. Then came the LSU Band, cars carrying the carnival committee, the Jefferson College Band, the king in his car followed by his dukes on horseback, who were followed by Claiborne Williams Band.

The outstanding feature of the grand event was staged at the opening of the festivities, the coronation of the queen. At 8 o'clock Claiborne Williams melodious orchestra struck up the melody, 'In the Springtime' to the sweet strains of which the king and his court entered the beautiful court room which was brilliant with hundreds of electric lights." (Feb. 17, 1923)

"Grand parade for Red Men Fair - One of the striking features of the parade will be a jazz band and a concourse of clowns. At the head of the parade will be Claiborne Williams Band." (April 14, 1923)

"Firemen's Parade in Donaldsonville. The parade will be headed by the Peerless Brass Band that will distill music along the entire way. At night there will be dancing at the pavilion and Claiborne Williams Orchestra will furnish the music." (May 12, 1923)

The band continues to play for parades and fairs:

"Big celebration in planned for 4th of July. Claiborne Williams celebrated band and orchestra will furnish music for the occasion and it is planned to have dancing at night." (May 19, 1923)
"Italian Society Fair - at Fair Grounds - parade headed by Claiborne Williams Band." (August 11, 1923)

"Italian Fair and parade - Headed by Claiborne Williams Peerless Band." (August 18, 1923)

"South Louisiana Fair - During the week there will be dancing. Claiborne William will furnish the music." (Oct. 6, 1923)

While the above item doesn't mention the brass band, in previous years Williams' Brass Band and Orchestra played for the parade, concerts and for dancing at the fair.

1924

In the Feb. 2nd issue they mention a colored band from Donaldsonville that plays for St. Joseph's Church. This is probably the Peerless Brass Band:

"St. Joseph's Choir, led by Miss Clothilde Chol, provided music for the mass and a colored brass band from Donaldsonville, the Corpus Christi uniformed rank of K of C Claver, escorted the archbishop and also provided music during the fair held in the afternoon. Blessing of new edifice." (Feb. 2 1923)

Politics and politicians are ever present - the band plays for a candidate for Governor:

"H. Bouanchand, candidate for Governor speaks at the courthouse. Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band." (Feb. 9, 1923)

Yearly the band has played for the town Mardi Gras celebration:

"King arrives - Mardi Gras - LSU Band, next came Claiborne Williams Peerless Brass Band, followed immediately in the rear of the last float then came business floats, etc." (March 8, 1923)

Again this year the band plays for the Firemen's Parade:

"Firemen's Parade May 11 - Engaged the Claiborne Williams Brass Band for the parade and his orchestra for the dance." (May 3, 1923)

This parade is mentioned in the May 10th issue that states that the "Claiborne Williams Brass Band and the Italian Brass Band from Baton Rouge will be playing." (May 10, 1923)

In the follow-up issue of the paper they list the names of the bands that marched in the parade:
"Firemen's Parade: Three band furnished music for the parade: A band composed of white musicians from Baton Rouge, Germania of upper Ascension and Claiborne Williams' Brass Band of this City." (May 24, 1923)

1925

The paper lists the bands that will participate in the annual Firemen's Parade:

"Among the bands engaged for the big Firemen's Parade on May 10 are the LSU Brass Band of Baton Rouge, under the leadership of Professor Guilbeau, and Prof. Perrino's Italian Band, also of the Capital City, Ferra's Band of New Orleans, and Claiborne Williams Band of this place. Negotiations are pending for the engagement of another band." (May 2, 1925)

The Italian Political Association sponsors a fair and dance and hires the band:

"Big Fair and dance at Fair Grounds. The procession was headed by the Peerless Brass Band. Music for the parade and festival on both days will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Band and Orchestra." (July 4, 1925)

1926

The band plays for the dedication of St. Catherine's Church, a new Catholic Church for the colored citizens of Donaldsonville.

"St. Catherine dedication - Solemn procession from Ascension Catholic Church to St. Catherine. The cross and the American flag, borne aloft, will lead the procession followed by Claiborne Williams Band at St. Patrick and Claiborne Streets." (Jan. 23, 1926)

"St. Catherine of Sienna church - Initiation and parade...next in line came Claiborne's Band." (May 1, 1926)

One of the big occasions, especially for the young in Donaldsonville was the opening of a swimming pool. The band plays in the parade, from a local hotel, to the pool:

"Redmen open swimming pool with bathing revue; after lunch, will form in front of hotel and preceded by Claiborne Williams' Band marched to pool." (June 5, 1926)

The band again plays for the annual Firemen's Parade:

As usual the band again plays for the South Louisiana Fair:

"14th annual South Louisiana Fair - Band concerts by Merle's famous concert band and Claiborne Williams famous Band and cornet solo by Prof. Michael Cupero." (Oct. 2, 1926)

1927

There are three items about the band in 1927: two parades one in which the band marches and the other the band rides in the truck, the way of the future in some parades:
Later that year in Sept. the Firemen give a big anniversary parade in which the Williams Band takes part:

"Thousands cheer Firemen in big anniversary parade last Sunday. Visiting fire chiefs and many ladies from other cities in line. Six bands furnish music - the affair was a magnificent spectacle. The Claiborne Williams Brass Band lead Protective Hose Co. No. 4 in parade.
The celebration closed with a grand ball at the pavilion at the Fair Grounds that was largely attended by local people, as well as visiting firemen and visiting city officials. Music was furnished by Claiborne Williams crack jazz band, and the dancers tripped the light fantastic toe until an early hour the following morning. The ball was a grand affair and all those who attended had a most delightful time." (Sept. 25, 1927)

The yearly procession of the Feast of St. Amico engages the Claiborne Williams Band:
"Feast of St. Amico to be observed Sunday, April 24.
The Feast of St. Amico will be observed with the usual ceremony this year by the Italians of A Bend and this city on Sunday, April 24th. There will be a grand procession in which the statue of St. Amico will be borne, leaving the chapel in A Bend at 9:30 A. M., and marching up the river to Donaldsonville, to the strains of appropriate music furnished by Claiborne Williams Band." (April 16, 1927)

The band takes part in the Elks Initiation and Festival on July 3rd and 4th:

"Local Lodge of Elks to stage big initiation and festival on July 3-4 parade - Headed by Boy Scouts and Claiborne Williams Band." (June 25, 1927)
Riding a band wagon was not a new experience for bands of the 19th Century - it was usually pulled by a horse. To ride in a truck in a parade was a new experience one that was to be repeated many times in the future:

"Elks July 4th festival and fair - Parade - Claiborne Williams Band in one of Montero and Beonde's big trucks." (July 9, 1927)

The only mention in 1928 was of the procession for the celebration of the Feast of St. Amico that used a brass band for the occasion. While the paper calls the musical group an orchestra, in reality there probably were not orchestral instruments played but member of Claiborne Williams aggregation who played in all types of groups regardless of what a particular happened to be

"Celebration of Feast of St. Amico tomorrow - Claiborne Williams Orchestra furnished music for procession and dance." (April 14, 1928

1929

In 1929 the colored people of Donaldsonville again give a Mardi Gras celebration with Claiborne Williams one of the driving forces behind this activity. The band is included in the parade:

"Colored people to stage Mardi Gras Festival - parade headed by Claiborne Williams Brass Band." (Jan. 26, 1929

1930

The band plays for the minstrel show as it has before. Whether the same instrumentation plays for the show and dance is not given but probably the size was lessened for the dance:

"Minstrel performance and dance - True Friends Society at True Friends Hall, Feb. 10, Claiborne Williams Brass Band." (Feb. 8 1930)

Mardi Gras is celebrated again by the colored citizens in 1930:

"Colored citizens to have Mardi Gras Parade, Claiborne Williams Brass Band in parade, Claiborne Williams is general manager." (Feb. 22, 1930)

The band didn't march, they rode in a big truck:

"Mardi Gras colored parade Then followed, in a big truck, Claiborne Williams Brass Band." (March 8, 1930)

The band plays in another parade later in March:
"Colored Knights and Ladies celebration and parade. The Pythians in street parade headed by Claiborne Williams Band, marched from their hall to the church and returned to Castle Hall." (March 29, 1930)

1931

The band plays for the carnival celebration in the town of Plaquemine:

"Plaquemine carnival season opened by Knights of Columbus - King Casey and royal subjects arrive - parade - Music for the occasion will be furnished by Claiborne Williams Brass Band and Orchestra of this city." (Jan. 10, 1931)

In the Feb. 16th issue, the following week, the paper reviews the Mardi Gras activities:

"King Zulu hailed by his subjects on visit here.

The annual visit of King Zulu to Donaldsonville, his favorite city, on Mardi Gras day, staged by the colored people of this and neighboring communities under the leadership of Claiborne Williams, was made the occasion of a great and joyous demonstration on the part of his loyal subjects from this place and all parts of the surrounding country. Shortly after the hour of 12 o'clock noon, and his majesty, in an automobile, was driven ashore amid the cheers of the assembled multitude and taken to his chariot that was in waiting nearby parade formed in the following order:

- Mounted dukes and couriers
- Claiborne Williams, director of the parade, in automobile, with Paul Comes, W. E. Sullivan and Leon Charles
- Claiborne Williams Brass Band in one of Elroy Kocke's big trucks"

(Feb. 16, 1929)

The band again plays for the St. Amico Feast Day celebrations:

"Feast of St. Amico to be observed April 7.

The Feast of St. Amico will be observed by local Italians, headed by Tony Musco of A Bend, on Sunday, April 7th. In pursuance of the annual custom that has been in vogue, the statue of the saint will be borne in solemn procession, headed by Claiborne Williams' Band from the chapel on the property of Tony Musco, in A Bend, to the Ascension Catholic Church in this city, where high mass will be celebrated at 11 o'clock a.m. At night there will be a dance in A Bend, beginning at 7 o'clock, music for which will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Band." (March 30, 1929)

1930
The feast of St. Amico is celebrated on April 27th in 1930 and the procession is enlarged to contain two marching bands:

"Feast of St. Amico to be celebrated April 27
A procession will from at the chapel at 9:30 o'clock in the morning of April 27th and will march slowly to Donaldsonville, carrying the statue of the saint to the Ascension Catholic church of this city, where a solemn High Mass will be said at 11 o'clock. The procession will be followed by two bands, Claiborne Williams Orchestra and Heim's Orchestra of this city. A big dance will be given at the St. Amico Hall at A Bend Sunday night, commencing at 7 o'clock and lasting until midnight. Music will be furnished by Claiborne Williams' Orchestra of this city." (April 19, 1930)

The Williams Band plays for the South Louisiana State Fair beginning Sept. 28th:

"Opening day program of the South Louisiana State Fair, Sunday, Sept. 28th 10:00 A. M. Band concert by Claiborne Williams' Band." (Sept. 27, 1930)

The band again plays for the colored people's Mardi Gras celebration in Donaldsonville:

"Colored people again have Mardi Gras, Feb. 17, parade streets, martial music to be furnished by Claiborne Williams Band - Claiborne Williams as general manager." (Jan. 17, 1930

1931

In 1931 the procession for St. Amico contains two bands:

"Feast of St. Amico to be observed April 12th Music will be furnished by two brass bands - Claiborne Williams' and Heim's - both of this city." (April 5, 1931)

The band again plays for their annual 'gig', the South La. State Fair:

"Two Bands to furnish music at South Louisiana State Fair
Two of the bands that will be seen at the South La. State Fair, Donaldsonville, Sept. 27 to Oct. 4, will be heard over the radio next week in concerts broadcast from New Orleans.
Claiborne Williams' Band will go on the air from the WWL (Loyola) Broadcasting Station at 10 P.M., Thursday, Sept. 17, with a program that will last an hour." (Sept. 12, 1931)
1932

We must remember that while the brass band jobs are scarce and are of a specific nature, the Claiborne Williams Orchestra is getting a lot of work. About this time in the early thirties, the college and high school bands are beginning to organize and the town band is on the way out of popularity. So these future years of the Peerless Brass Band are less busy. In 1932 the band still participates in the local celebration of Mardi Gras:

"Mardi Gras - Claiborne Williams rides on float - Claiborne Williams Brass Band under the direction of Lawrence Hall and George A. Williams in a truck." (Feb. 13, 1932)

A strange celebration happens during the middle of May. It is called a "Beer Parade" with the coming of beer legally again to Donaldsonville and marks the end of prohibition.

"Big Beer Parade - Bands: Harmony Kings, J. M. H. Shot Band (Sic. Joseph Mistrettas' Band), the Claiborne Williams Band, the Black Devils, all of Donaldsonville and the Victory Band of Baton Rouge" (May 14, 1932)

The band again plays for the South Louisiana State Fair:

"Fair entertainment program completed - South La. Fair - Claiborne Williams Brass Band will furnish music." (August 20, 1932)

1933

The only item in 1933 about the band concerns its playing for the South La. Fair again:

"Fair parade - South Louisiana State Fair. Claiborne Williams Band occupied one of the trucks and also dispensed music along the route." (Oct. 14, 1933)

1934

A Mardi Gras celebration is again held in 1934 with the colored people still participating in this activity along with the band:

"Colored people to stage Mardi Gras celebration. Carnival parade, headed by Claiborne William Brass Band. Claiborne Williams will be general manager of the celebration." (Feb. 10, 1934)

In the next week's write-up in the paper, the band is called an orchestra and rides in a decorated truck. It gets hard to define the instrumentation of the group:
"Colored parade Mardi Gras - Claiborne Williams, local orchestra leader under whose management the celebration was staged (in a decorated car), another decorated truck with Claiborne Williams orchestra furnishing music." (Feb. 17, 1934)

1935

With Lent approaching the band plays for the arrival of Rex to Donaldsonville for Mardi Gras:

"Lent next Wednesday. King Rex visit Tuesday 1:30 - parade - Claiborne Williams Brass Band. Claiborne Williams in car, his band in truck next in line." (March 9, 1935)

The South La. State Fair begins on Oct. 23rd and the band plays a number of days for it. The paper gives a complete list of bands playing and times of performance. Claiborne Williams Band plays at 11:00 with the brass band and 9:00 p.m. for dancing, and throughout the week there is much music at the fair:

"Grand opening set for 23rd - South La. St. Fair - Claiborne Williams will furnish music. Dancing every night.
11:00 am - Claiborne Brass Band -
1:00 dancing in Pavilion - Joe Mistretta's Orchestra.
9:00 pm - dancing in Pavilion - Claiborne Williams Orchestra.
Monday - Oct. 7
11:00 am - Claiborne Williams Brass Band
Oct. 8
11:30 Claiborne Brass Band
8:30 - Dancing Pavilion - Claiborne Williams
Oct. 9
11:00 am - music in front of grandstand by Claiborne Williams
Oct. 10 - 11:30 - Claiborne Williams
Oct. 11 - 12:00 Claiborne Williams Brass Band
9:00 - dance, Claiborne Williams
Oct. 12 - 11:30 - Claiborne Brass Band
Oct. 13 - 11:30 - Claiborne Brass Band
7:00 pm - dance - Claiborne Williams Orchestra." (Oct. 5, 1937)

1936

In 1936 the band has only two items in the paper:
"Annual ball of King Jolly Good Fellow. Claiborne Williams' Band will furnish music for the procession and play later for the dance." (Feb. 8 1936)

"Knights of Columbus stage big initiation - marched to Claiborne Williams Brass Band to Ascension Catholic Church." (May 2, 1936)

1937

The band continues to play for many religious services, this time for the St. Joseph Italian society:

"Mass for Christ the King. members of the St. Joseph Italian Society march from hall to church, headed by Claiborne Williams Brass Band. After mass, march back to hall." (May 8, 1937)

"King Jolly due Feb. 6. Claiborne Williams' Band will furnish music for the procession and his orchestra will dispense music for the dance." (Jan. 30, 1937)

The State Fair again hires the Williams Band in 1937:

"South La State Fair - Claiborne Williams Band will furnish music from the grandstand." (May 29, 1937)


1938

The band again plays for the South Louisiana State Fair along with "Joseph Mistretta's Hot Shot Orchestra, Anthony Sotile Band and LSU Band and of course the Claiborne Williams Band." (Oct. 8, 1938)

The band next plays for the Donaldsonville High School Alumni Association affair. There is a "Thanksgiving Day Parade with the Claiborne Williams Brass Band and the C (Nov. 19, 1938) Claiborne Williams Orchestra plays for the dance after the football game."

1939

The band continues playing for the Mardi Gras celebration in Donaldsonville.

"King Jolly Feb. 3rd. Parade with Claiborne Williams Band." (Jan. 27,1939)
A new movie theater opens for the colored people and the band is on hand for the dedicatory ceremonies:


The above item is the last mention of a brass band with Claiborne Williams as its leader; from the St. Joseph, to the Peerless, to the Claiborne Williams Brass Band - a long lineage of brass band music for the people of Donaldsonville.