Jazz funerals in New Orleans and the surrounding parishes
Negro & White Funeral Bands

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Jazz funerals in New Orleans

Jazz funerals were a part of the custom in New Orleans for many 100s of years. The first account found in a newspaper was in 1867. There was controversy over the playing of 'peppy' songs as the band left the gravesite. This custom is still in use today. As a onlooker of a number of jazz funerals I did not think that it was anything out of place and the playing of 'peppy' tunes made me think of the joyous times I had when I heard the deceased play his wonderful music on his instrument and the joy he gave his jazz fans.

I marched' as a second liner in jazz funerals while in New Orleans and being somewhat hesitant to dance. I just walked as part of the second line.

A custom in Africa was to have participants of an event such as a funeral (Or any event) dancing, with live music. African art was closely related to activities and no concerts are heard in ancient Africa. One custom was incorporated when slaves came to New Orleans into funeral processions and an African inner circle of participates ringed outside this circle by others dancing. This custom was seen in Congo Square in New Orleans. This outer circle of natives became a straight line in New Orleans and became known as
the Second Line, the first line consisting of the band, the hearse and the family.

After the Civil War these practices merged with military band parades. The funerals in New Orleans were most often sponsored by benevolent societies. In Brazil, a country that had more slaves than America was mostly Catholic and the church did not welcome such activities at a funeral. Brazil had carnivals such as in New Orleans but not the funeral customs. New Orleans was the most foreign city in the U.S. In Mexico funerals were similar to the jazz funeral (not in style of music) and included music, parades and celebration. The funeral tradition is said to have begun prior to 1867 in New Orleans.

In Madagascar the people dance around the corpses tomb to live music. Flowers were an important part of funerals, especially in the Shanedar cave burials.

At Andrew Johnson's funeral his body was not embalmed, the undertaker closed the coffin and put flowers on the top of the coffin to stop the foul condition of the body, thus perhaps starting a tradition of flowers at a funeral.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe writes in his book 'Music in New Orleans':

'Funeral parades were peculiar to New Orleans alone among all the American cities....Latrobe thought such funerals may have grown out of the Catholic custom of the procession of the Host, which he said no longer paraded the streets....the funeral of Colonel MaCarty's body was preceded by twenty militia officer, mostly Creoles, and followed by a band, the clergy, flag bearers, etc..

By the 1830's the newspapers carried frequent notices for funeral parades. Military men, veterans of the Revolution or of the War of 1812, or simply members of any of the numerous militia companies, were usually buried with a parade. Masons were customarily requested to march for one of their deceased...similarly, fire companies, benevolent societies, mechanics societies, and kindred organizations all marched to bury their dead.

The return march following the burial was different. Here was a band, (this was New Orleans), and so it was only natural that they strike up a 'gay and lightsome air as they returned from the grave.' Mournful music to go, cheering music to return; it was a good a way as any to honor the dead.'
Definition of 'Second Line' - The Second Line is formed by any person wishing to be in the funeral procession as expression of their grief for the deceased and to honor his life. Often these are jazz fans who heard the deceased musical abilities.

Proverb 14:13 in Bible: 'Even the laughter the heart may be in pain and the end of joy may be grief.'

Photo showing 2nd Line behind band

Photo of long 2nd Line behind band. Notice the banjo player.
Military funeral for Captain Andre Callioux, 1st La. native Guard, in July 29, 1863. The Band in front playing backfire instruments followed by the hearse and then companies of soldiers (like a second line).

A band of backfire instruments

Jazz Funerals

The tradition of using jazz bands in funeral processions is very old. What is found in the New Orleans funeral procession is the appearance of the 'Second Line' and the playing of music after the 'body is let loose.' This use of brass bands for funerals was used by both white and black bands but soon was the established tradition in the black community. Many of the black musician had jazz funerals upon their death and few women were honored by a jazz funeral.

The tradition of playing lively music on the way back from an interment is clouded in mystery as to when it began. Funeral march music was used in ancient Israel. One comparison can be seen in modern times in the military
process when marching in review. A typical dress parade, as executed by an infantry regiment early in the Civil War was described thusly by a soldier:

'The troops are drawn up in line of battle and the order 'Parade Rest' given by each Captain to his command. The band 'starts off, that is, marches down and back in front of the regiment, playing slowly down and a quick step back.'

I am not suggesting that the military ceremony was the ancestor of Negro funeral tradition but only that parallels can be drawn from the past, perhaps this repeated military ceremony, observed many times in occupied New Orleans, did leave an impression on marching bands and their tradition.

How much influence did military band funerals effect New Orleans band tradition? New Orleans was occupied by Federal forces throughout most of the Civil War, the only Southern State occupied for such a long length of time. Its citizens were exposed to a large amount of military ceremonies not usual in other southern cities, and, New Orleans was exposed to the charisma of Patrick Gilmore. Unlike other southern cities, life was near normal in New Orleans during the war. New Orleans was always a festive city and its many celebrations continued. The many military bands with their reviews and concerts were assimilated into New Orleans cultural life and accepted as such. The festive nature of the Union musical activities fitted into the musical tradition of the city.

Plantation funerals of the slaves

On most plantations the owners allowed the slaves to conduct their own funeral services. The actual day of burial might not be held for weeks or months as the day appointed had to coincide with a break in the work schedule of the plantation.

In one plantation when a slave died their body was 'quietly disposed of in the burial grounds set apart for colored people, their graves marked, and then on different Sundays in the months of July and August, a sort of wholesale funeral service was held over all who had died in the few months previous.' A sermon would be said at the grave site along with prayers and always songs would be sung. These funeral services at time were markedly
African in nature, including marching three times around a grave, a practice seen in the funeral services in 'Surinam.

Sic: A separate grave site is seen on Magnolia Plantation in lower New Orleans. The Sanborn map shows this grave yard.

Funeral Ceremonies - Times Picayune - September 10, 1867

We witnessed several funeral processions yesterday-some without music, wended their way slowly and sadly towards the various 'God's Acres,' and the very horses attached to the hearse seemed to step lightly as though they feared to break the solemn stillness-others with flaunting banners and loud music, whose exultant strains would seem more fitted for some triumphal march than for funeral rites-marched with a swinging and elastic tread that would have done credit to the veteran soldiers who followed Jackson's fortunes in the valley.

We cannot but think such music entirely unsuitable on these sad and mournful occasions. How much grander and more appropriate the notes of some of the solemn but beautiful airs of Mozart, or even the Dead March itself, would sound. Exultant strains may well become marriage feats and such joyous festivals, but until we adopt the Irish ideas of wakes, and look upon death as a time for rejoicing and merry-making, let us accompany our dead to their last narrow abodes on earth with becoming reverence, and not with thoughtless gaiety. As is the custom, too, for bands on leaving the cemeteries, to launch out at once into the popular airs of the day: polkas, cotillions, waltzes, gallops, are played with an astonishing gusto, as though they had performed a most irksome and disagreeable duty, and needed something gay and lively to restore their spirits.

We have often thought how strangely these things must look and sound to those accustomed to see death the occasion for grief, and not for joy. It is impossible that such things should be and not excite our special wonder.
Brass Bands and Funerals in New Orleans

New Orleans was and is a musical city. It was known for its opera and its brass concert bands. It is also known for its 'jazz funerals.' This tradition of playing lively music on the way back from an interment is clouded in mystery as to when it began. The use of music at funerals goes back to Africa and Israel. One comparison can be seen in modern times in the military a process when marching in review. A typical dress parade, as executed by an infantry regiment early in the civil War was described by a soldier:

'The troops are drawn up in line of battle and the order 'Parade Rest' given by each captain to his company. The band 'starts off', that is, marches down and back in front of the regiment, playing slowly down and a quick step back.'

I am not suggesting that the military ceremony was the ancestor of New Orleans funeral processions but only that parallels can be drawn from the past. Perhaps this repeated military ceremony, observed many times in occupied New Orleans, did leave an impression on local marching bands and their tradition. It is not the exact parallel of a Negro funeral although it did, musically speaking, possess parallels of slow music going, fast music coming back.
An early slave funeral: Willie's home Journal-1856-reprinted Houma, Ceres newspaper:

Slave Funeral - The procession had moved, and its route led within a few yards of the mansion. There were at least one hundred and fifty Negroes arranged 4 deep, and following a wagon in which was placed the coffin down in the entire length of the line, at intervals of a few feet, on each side, were carried torches of the resinous pine, and here called light wood. About the center was stationed the black preacher, a man of gigantic frame and stentorian lungs who gave out from memory the words of a hymn suitable for the occasion. The southern Negroes are proverbial for the melody and compass of their voices and I thought that hymn, mellowed by distance, the most solemn and yet the sweetest music that had ever fallen upon my ear. The stillness of the night and strength of their voices enabled us to distinguish the air at the distance of half a mile.

The March and Religion

The march and religion have been closely associated since the days of ancient Egypt. Already we have seen how the Egyptians were the inventors of ceremonies, festivals, and transactions with the gods. Moreover, we have seen how other ancient societies after the Egyptians continued such practices. Most important, it was the Egyptians who were noted for their religious processions, such as the procession of Osiris, or Bacchus, in which the Egyptians women 'carried images, sang praises of their god and were preceded by a flute.

When these ancient civilizations used music in their procession-music which included both singers and instrumental marchers-it was used to gain
the attention of the population and to give honor to their gods, as well as to create emotional response from the watchers, it can be assumed (and also proven by the many paintings and other relics) that this processional music was not used to keep step or an even cadence, although it did set a precedent for music to be present while large bodies of people moved, thereby the stage for the military marching bands of later dates.

To give marching music further validity, Moses by Divine order, was ordered to make two trumpets of silver to be used for 'assembling together the people and for journeying the camps. Earlier, we had reference to Jewish funerals and their use of 'several hundred flute players leading the procession.'

The use of religious music by the early Christians has given us one of the largest bodies of sacred music in history. The pagans also used music in their ceremonies and in their processions. Socrates referred to the use of singing by heretics in the year 386 B.C.

Continuing from the Middle Ages, the un-orderly processional continued. This type of music was the opposite of the military march. It pleaded instead for mercy and forgiveness. Therefore, it was a processional that strived to emphasize its emotional content. However, as the Christians began to feel greater pressure from the Moslems, their music began to become more martial. The flagellants of Germany performed music which was filled with tortured feeling' at the same time, the hymns of the crusaders became very militant.

Thus, from the Middle ages to the present, we can see the use of the church hymns as a weapon of all ages. in the late 1890s, a strange duel phenomenon was seen: 1) An increased inclusion of militant styling in music, even though there was no major conflict in sights, and 2) The inclusion of religious feeling in military music, such as that evident in 'Onward Christian soldiers.'

The emotional value of using the march in conjunction with religion was ingrained in our fore-fathers' minds. Consequently, we began to accept this martial style as a proper way of worship as well as a parallel between the perils of war and the conflicts of the inner soul with god. This martial styling was adopted to such an extent that Pope Pius X in his 'Metu Proprio' of 1903 urged a return to the devotional beauties of the peaceful and serene Gregorian plainsong rhythm. The march, we can say then, had carried the holy word as well as military troops to all parts of the world.

The actual beginning of the military march is believed to have been in the music of the Lutheran Reformation. The rhythms were even, and our system of major and minor keys was further adapted. This steady, strong
accented march of the Reformation troops had its counterpart in the soldiers of Oliver Cromwell, who gave orders in cadence: 'fire in the name of the Lord.'

As an example of how the march has been incorporated with religious feeling would, of course, be Handel's 'hallelujah chorus' from 'The Messiah.' It is actually a great coronation march. Indeed, from the time in which even meter was commonly accepted—an indeterminate date which precedes even the Baroque Period during which the practice was a basic characteristic—most music from the adaptation of even meter had resembled march music.

Development of Jazz and the March

Tanner and Barry Ulanov, support a position on the subject of funerals and how they became the mode by which jazz developed from the dirge-like marches accompanying the procession to the cemetery.

Nor must we overlook the still-prevalent rendition of funeral parade music, which has been traced back to the 18th century when slaves under the French in the south, were allowed to bury their dead with bands accompanying the body to the cemetery, the band played indigo dirges. 'Just a Closer Walk With Thee' and untitled blues were given reverent renditions throughout the long march immediately ahead of the horse-drawn hearse. But since the services had concluded, and the phalanx of mourners was well out of earshot of the cemetery officials, the band would kick up the tempo with a military-like drum roll and stomp its way back to town, attracting hundreds of spectators along the way.

This jazzing of marches was achieved by the trick of shifting the accent from the strong to the weak beat and partly by allowing solo players to decorate the melody they were playing.

Brass bands provide continuity between early and contemporary music in New Orleans. As early as 1787, Governor Miro held a parade for a group of Indian Chiefs. From then on, any public occasion was reason for a parade complete with brass bands. Washington's birthday, political and patriotic gatherings, dedications and, especially, funeral. The architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe states in his 'Impressions' of 1819 that the funeral parades were 'peculiar to New Orleans alone among all American cities. From the time of the Battle of New Orleans (1815) to the civil War 1861-1865), Louisiana's military companies prided themselves on the quality of their brass bands. As these companies were generally formed by various communities - French, German, Spanish, Italians, Irish and Swiss—as well as by Americans, the musical rivalries were usually equated with national pride. The growth of
militarism during the Civil War and the Union occupation of the city in the 1860s firmly established the brass band tradition in New Orleans.

The jazz funeral-A New Orleans Tradition

Although the funeral procession is one of the duties of the traditional brass band, it is the ultimate ceremony central to the religious and musical contention of the New Orleans community. The ceremonial formula established prior to 1900, enjoyed great popularity for the future. Initially the jazz funeral was not as exclusively black custom but enjoyed a brief practice in the white community of New Orleans. During the jazz funeral revival in the 1950s, the custom was no longer isolated to one group but stressed instead the ceremony's symbolism of jazz history and tradition.

The band heads the cortege in the funeral and its performance is never indecent or inappropriate but adds a formal and decorum to the ceremonial farewell. The jazz funeral epitomizes the epitary of Christian death at the height of sadness over loss there is reason to rejoice in the prospect of eternal life. The music of the jazz marching band dominates the emotion of the funeral and thus burial becomes, not a fearful, private act but is a public occasion. Each band individualizes the arrangements of well known hymns and dirges to maximize the musical heritage of its members.

The basic jazz funeral consists of an assembly at a neighborhood lodge, with the band at the head of the procession of standard bearers and lodge members. A dirge is then played to set the mood of morning moving the procession to the deceased's church accompanied by familiar hymns and slow marches. After ceremonies the band leads the way to the cemetery playing dirges and hymns. Once at the grave site, the form a corridor for the hearse, and a drum roll accompanies this final procession known as the 'turning the body lose.' A solemn hymn of farewell ends the graveside music. The band retreats a respectful distance from the cemetery and begins playing spirited marches and popular songs, accompanied by celebration and spontaneous street dancing. This tribute is the final act of respect for the deceased provided a break to the solemnity of the occasion and emphasizing its social aspect. Most importantly the band reaffirms through music the Christian promise of everlasting life.
Notice the custom of jazz umbrellas

Umbrellas were used to kept away the hot sun on a long parade. The practice developed into a very artist touch with umbrellas becoming 'works of art.'

Description of Billie Pierce Funeral

October 3, 1974-Second Line Magazine

It is now 9 A.M. I am standing outside of Blandin's funeral Home where the band, Billie's friends, and a large crowd of spectators have gathered. They are waiting to start the last journey for Billie Pierce. The Olympia Brass band is forming and the casket is brought out. Now they are starting to play 'Just a closer Walk With Thee.' As we go out St. Claude Avenue and turn on to Laharpe Street the band plays 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye.' We enter N. Galvez Street where I see several neighbors standing on their porches weeping, some with their arms around others to comfort them. This is the block where Billie lived and the band slows down, then halts in front of 1619 Galvez.

Sounds of 'Savior Lead Me,' 'Nearer My God to Thee,' and the 'Westlawn Dirge' hang on the still air. Approximately two hundred people are waiting in front of Corpus Christi Church.

10:10 A. M. - The procession enters the church in step to 'The Old Rugged Cross,' then the band moves to one side and plays 'Just a Little While to Stay Here.' It brings tears to the eyes of many of us old timers. Sweet Emma Barrett is with the band, and the service begins.

My view is obstructed by people standing up in the pews. I know that times have changed but I cannot believe that even today is it considered proper, for any reason, to stand on the seat of a pew in a church.

Celebrating the Requiem Mass are auxiliary Bishop Harold Perry, S.B.D., Father Gene McKenna, S.S.J., and another priest also named McKenna. Rev. Mike Stark, who had known Billie, participates in the eulogy. The pews are filled, and people are standing three deep across the back of the church.
Narvin Kimball plays a banjo solo and sings the lovely spiritual, 'Where He Leads Me I Will follow' the muted trumpet of Milton Baptiste blends in and we are invited to sing with them. 'While Sweet Emma Barrett sings 'Just a Closer Walk with Thee' I see Mr. Booker T. Glass being escorted up the aisle. Although his eyesight is now failing, he is well known in jazz circles for his fine drum work with the Olympia Brass band, which now plays 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye.' We are about to start the long walk to the cemetery. The hundreds inside the church join the overflow outside. There must be over a thousand people in the procession.

Now, moving slowly with the funeral dirge, we turn into N. Johnson Street, continue on to Bayou Road, and then to N. Claiborne Avenue. To my surprise I hear the band start to play 'St. Louis Blues' - not is a 'hot' style, but low and mournful. This is the first time a funeral parade has ever been held for a female musician, and this great band is playing several songs from Billie's repertoire which is most unusual at a funeral.

The drum rolls very slowly, and the band plays 'Battle Hymn of the Republic,' followed by 'The Old Rugged Cross,' 'Precious Lord, Take My Hand,' and 'Sing On.' As more people join the procession the crowd swells. I cannot believe my ears. Never have I heard up-tempo tunes on the way to the cemetery, but the band is playing 'In the Rocket,' and some of the second-liners have started leaping and jumping as we move along. Several of the older second-liners with whom I had attended many funerals ask me why the up-tempo at this time. I answer that times change and that this must be the way Billie wanted it.

It is impossible for everyone to enter the cemetery, but I hurry through the crowd and work my way near the tomb where Billie will rejoin her beloved husband, DeDe Pierce. The band plays 'Precious Lord, Take my Hand.'

Billie is at rest. Playing 'The Old Rugged Cross' as it leaves the cemetery, the band now swings into the up-tempo numbers long associated with the return home.
Jack 'Papa' Laine

We used to play funeral marches and I got in that line and played funerals. Played for the Young Excelsior's Funerals, Crockett's Funeral and Workman Benevolent Assoc. Funerals. On funerals we played 'Rock of Ages.'

Coming back from funerals we played all kinds of stuff - ragtime, etc. until the band got a block away (Sic: From corpses house), then just drums, playing the cadence-long. long, short, short. long - 2 quarter notes, two 8th notes, one quarter note.) then stopped at house, carry out corpse, then played marches. Back home we played ragtime.

For funeral band I used 10 to 12 pieces. My band played all 'dead' marches.

Funerals had music for only a short time after I began playing. White men first played for funeral. White bands had been playing for funerals long before I started playing. Broekhaven played most of the funerals. Broekhaven played only 'straight' military marches coming back from the burial place, not any ragtime. Colored bands also played straight music coming back.

All funeral jobs were across the river on the Algiers, Gretna side. The bands of Broekhaven and Braun played the funerals on the New Orleans side. Bands on the east side or the river were: Broekhaven, Braun, Christian and Boehler.

Chris Kelly

Playing funerals was a steady source of revenue for many local bands, but Chris Kelly wasn't too interested in playing them since he had such a busy
playing schedule at night in the club. Still, Albert Jiles, when asked about funerals said: 'Yeh, I played funerals with Chris Kelly.'

Ike Robinson also played funerals and parades with Chris' Brass band. Robinson describes Kelly's Brass Band as a pick-up band:

'Kelly got a lot of pick-up brass band work for funerals. The regular price for a funeral was three dollars per man, but Chris would work for two dollars, if that was all the money collected by friends of the deceased. Kelly's Brass band played all head marches, hymns, such as 'What a friend We Have in Jesus,' 'Nearer My God to Thee.' Coming back Kelly's favorite was 'Oh Didn't He Ramble.'

His brass band usually had 10 to 12 men: three cornets, one clarinet, two drums, two trombones, one baritone and one bass horn. George Hooker played baritone and there was an old tuba player from the Excelsior Band. Joe Howard on a brass bass would play. George Lewis played clarinet and Clay Jiles on bass drum.

Kelly got a lot of pick-up brass band work for funerals. The regular price for a funeral was three dollars per man. Chris Jiles played in funeral bands with both Chris Kelly and Kid Rena. He also saw Kelly's funeral but said Celestin's was larger. This was probably was due to the fact that Celestin's popularity extended to white audiences in New Orleans and because his fame had a national reach, while Kelly was most popular with New Orleans black audiences.

Kelly's cornet was in the pawn shop at the time of his death and so a crepe draped bugle was substituted in the coffin. In the coffin, at his head and feet, were put jugs of wine. Kelly was about 40 years old at the time of his death and is buried in Chalmette National Cemetery. Chris Kelly was a well-liked man. His funeral stretched for at least three big blocks. There were crowds of thousands going to the Chalmette Cemetery.

More about Kelly's Funeral

Kelly's funeral was a protracted and colorful event, attended by almost every musician in the city. There may have been as many as twenty brass bands. The body was laid out at Chris' niece's house, at St. Anna and Villere and there, hundreds of friends, relatives and musicians came to pay their respects.
Chris Kelly would sometimes get together brass bands which would play in the rough style associated with the New Orleans brass bands. The kind of music he would play for funerals would put 'em in the alley' (Sic. reaching the people)

Joe Avery also recalls the wake for Chris Kelly and calls Chris the greatest blues cornet player in the city.

Ben Turner was at the Kelly funeral:

Chris Kelly was a well-liked man. That funeral stretched for at least three big blocks. Everybody was there. Must have been 100 or more musicians playing for his funeral. There were crowds of thousands going to the Chalmette Cemetery

Thirty years ago the wakes were often long and boisterous - when the greatest blues cornet player in the city, Chris Kelly died, still young in 1929, the wake lasted three days, every colored saloon and dance hall where he'd played sent a barrel of wine. A 100 musicians played for his funeral - but the musicians are older men now, respectful in the presence of death.

Papa John Joseph's funeral:

Many relatives, friends, and tourists turned out on a cold, windy morning to pay their last respects to Papa John. Musicians from various band turned out to give him a traditional jazz funeral. After the dirges, the band 'cut the body loose' and played the up-tempo numbers, like Papa John had done for others.

Sunny Henry: Describes a funeral:

The band is notified by the Grand Marshal, he notifies the leader or manager. The Grand Marshall is in charge of the music for the band. When they turn it over to him he has full possession of it. The club would choose which band they wanted. The meeting place? Any place that they tell you too meet, preferably near a corner bar. Might meet at church or funeral parlor. Usually meet about 8 or so blocks from the church, then march to the church. The order of the procession? Band in front, member next to us, then the hearse and things next to the members. The Grand Marshall of course leading the band. route figured out already. The route depends on where the body is.

Coming back from a funeral, Sunny said: 'Sometimes, some of the guys in the parade, they ask for them (Sic: the blues) things, you see, of course what they ask for, we play the blues. The march back was not at a breakneck tempo
but a comfortable walking pace - well you couldn't play too fast. Play in the
march tempo little faster than the dirge.'

At the turn of the century, bandsmen were paid $2.00 to $2.50 each for
a funeral, and by the 1950s they received $6.00 each, with a little more to the
leader.'

Manuel Perez:

Manuel Perez preferred to play written music while with the Onward. He
looked on brass band work as a test of reading skill and technical
execution, and he was famous for his solo playing in funeral dirges. He is
noted for his playing of the dirge 'Fallen Heroes.' The tune was nicknamed
'The Blimp.' by the Eureka Bandsmen because of its ponderous arrangement. The full band arrangement is given in Allen & Schaffer's book 'Brass Bands
& New Orleans Jazz.'

(Sic: The dirge was written by the famous march composer Karl King)
'Fallen Heroes' and Clarinet part for 'Westlawn Dirge' seen below:

Charters writes about Perez:
'Perez was probably the finest parade cornetist in New Orleans. He had a sharp, clipped attack, a good range, and a beautiful tone. When his brass band, the Onward, would play two band funeral he would take the Onward away from the church with the dirge 'Fallen Heroes,' with its beautiful cornet solo in the trio.'

**Louis Armstrong:**

The new look of the brass band was both a marching band playing the funeral marches and regular marches and playing a jazzed up tune on the way back from the funeral.

McDonald Cemetery was just about a mile away from where the Black Diamonds (my baseball team) was playing the Algiers team. Whenever a funeral from New Orleans had a body to be buried in the McDonald Cemetery they would have to cross the Canal Street ferryboat and march down the same road right near the ballgame. Of course, when they passed us playing a slow funeral march, we only paused with the game and tipped our hats as to pay respect. When the last of the funeral passed we continued the game.

The game was in full force when the Onward Band was returning from the cemetery, after they had put the body in the ground, they were swinging 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary.' They were swinging so good until Joe Oliver reached into the high register beating out those high notes in very fine fashion. He broke our ballgame up. Yea! The players commenced to dropping bats and balls, etc. and we all followed them. All the way back to the New Orleans side and to their destination. (Jazz Review, July, 1960)

**Willie Pajeud:**

Perez was one of the best 'funeral' trumpet players. The musicians in the Eureka Band, sometimes would turn around after a solo on 'Fallen heroes' and call out 'Hey, Manuel Perez.' This is a compliment of a high order.

**Eddie Richardson:**

At the time Richardson played in the Kid Rena Band it was the only job he had - jobs were scarce. He recalled that the two best known parading brass bands during this time were Rena's and the original Ouxedo Brass band. He said that the funeral repertoires of the two bands were much the same. The hymns played included 'Bye and Bye,' 'Over in the Gloryland' 'Sing On' and 'When the Saints go Marchin' In.
'Montudie' Garland:

There was always an excuse for a parade in New Orleans. We marched for elections, national holidays, and funerals. Those funerals were something. We usually started at Geddes and Moss Funeral Home where we would be hired by the club that the deceased brother belonged to. It was like burial insurance. He paid dues all his life-and when he died, a brass band would be hired to put him away.

My snare drum was muffled as we walked to the cemetery playing a dirge like 'Nearer My God To Thee' or 'Free as a Bird.' The ceremony at the grave was very brief. Then we'd strut from the cemetery. I'd flip on my snare and we counted out on 'Didn't He Ramble' or 'High Society.' The kids march behind us carrying water buckets in case the musicians got thirsty - that was the second line.

Willie Parker speaks of the hymns played at funerals:

'Oh, a hymn? Yes, sho', like 'Sing On' 'Gloryland,' 'Saints.' ' What a Friend We Have in Jesus,' and 'Nearer My God to Thee,'

George 'Happy' Schilling

Schilling played many funerals, most of them for volunteer fire companies over the river, especially in Gretna. The band played dirges. After the funeral, the band played 'I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You.'

Funerals played for at the graveside, one trumpet player would play 'Taps' while another trumpet player echoed the first, at a distance, then the band would move away for about a block, and played ' I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal, You' was the first number played. Continuing in the same vein, the procession returned to the originating firehouse, where beer was dispensed.

Maurice French

Played funerals in Laplace and Alexandria. The band played funeral hymns to the burial site and anything including 'Oh, Didn't He Ramble' on the way back. Funerals in Laplace were the same as in New Orleans.

French played funerals in Alexandria but the bands had only 7 04 8 pieces. 'French played for the funeral of Buddy Bolden.

Ray Lopez

Played few funerals with Laine's and Brown's band, recalling that white organizations would occasionally have a leading member buried with music;
the band played dirge-like music, but never played 'jazzy' going back music, as did the Negroes.

**Joe Rene**

The length of a funeral determined the price of funeral bands in the older times.

**Johnny Christian**

Go down to the funerals, play the funeral march walkin' slow. Then when they get down to the cemetery, they bring the coffin inside, put him away and come outside, and the drums would starts (scats) trumpet, get ready when all of a sudden you hear (scats out rhythm) Gone! Right from the cemetery go back where they came from. The white bands never played funerals.

**Punch Miller**

Buddy Petit, Kid Rena and Chris Kelly never played with the organized bands. They always got their band up together. Organized bands had their own men, didn't want anybody else. Myself, Kid Rena, Buddy Petit and Chris Kelly had plenty of work in the streets. They played for about 4 funerals a month in addition to Labor Day, Mardi Gras and the Fourth of July parades.

**Norman Brownlee**

Brownlee did see many funerals with bands in Algiers, saying that everyone in Algiers always walked to funerals, with the exception of those in the official funerals cortège. He often saw white bands, as well as colored, and says that he doesn't remember any band names, but that probably organizations such as the Woodmen of the World had bands. The white bands played only dirges. The colored bands were the ones which played jazz coming back from the 'last resting place of their friend.'

**Paul Barbarin**

Describing the black, shroud-like coverings sometimes worn by the horses which pulled the hearses. The order of relatives and officials in funeral processions; the old-time order was the same as the present. The band, if any, always led the entire procession members of the social and/or aid society to which the dead person might have belongs, if any, marched immediately following the band. Any organization a man belonged to would provide a band for his funeral. He might belong to more than one, so there would often be more than one band playing for him.
The first number played after the band and body departed company used to be 'Oh, Didn't He Ramble.' He heard funeral bands playing 'Bourbon Street Parade,' sometimes as the first number. Barbarin says that is not appropriate, not right to do. At a funeral the first number the band played, before they picked up the body and the rest of the procession was 'Bourbon Street Parade.' They should have played something like 'Sing On,' 'Lily of the Valley,' or 'We Shall Walk Through the Streets of the City.' 'The Saints go Marching In' would be appropriate to play after leaving the cemetery. He himself would play that first, or perhaps, 'Sing On.' He thinks the band should get further away from the cemetery before playing things like 'Bourbon Street Parade.' The bands of the past general played hymns on the way to pick up the body. 'Just a closer Walk with Thee' and 'Just A Little While to Stay Here' were used frequently. He thinks bands should play quietly on the way to pick up the body.

Ernie Cagnolatti
The old funerals were slower, because for one thing, horses were used to pull the funeral vehicles. If the person being buried was under twenty years of age, white decorations, including a white coffin were used - over twenty black was used. There were many more societies for burials then, there not being so many insurance companies, and all the members would turn out for a funeral or have to pay a $1.00 a fine, so there were many more in attendance. The men all wore blue suits and derbies. There were no policemen at funerals or parades. The difference between societies and pleasure clubs - societies are benevolent (burials, financial help, etc.). So that there are not many members of societies now because so many people get so much from insurance companies now. The insurance companies, however, do not have banquets, parades and other social functions. Many of the survivors of society members now take the money formerly used to get the band, instead of hiring a band to play for a funeral.

The band members stepped out, to begin a parade or funeral on their right feet and everyone remained in step.

George 'Kid Sheik' Colar
Colar estimates that sometimes during a month now the band plays three or four funerals, but they haven't played one for about a month.

Hypolite Charles
The first use of hymn tunes such as 'When the Saints go Marching In,' by jazz bands was around 1916-1918. Charles and Celestin were the first to do
it. They were playing a funeral for someone connected with an organization such as the Swells, the Odd Fellows or the Pythians (which buried with music), at Girod Street Cemetery, Celestin suggested they play 'The Saints' instead of 'Oh, Didn't He Ramble?' Catholic musicians were not forbidden to play funerals. Charles liked to play for Catholic funerals as they took much less time than a Protestant funeral. Paul 'Polo' Barnes told Richard Allen about a funeral with so many preachers that the actual burial had to be postponed until the next day.

**John Casimir**

Usually the band would meet at the hall. The club would be there forming, ready to leave after a while, to go to the church, undertaker, and get the body and then go to the church, make the rounds with that 'second line' and come on in. When you go from the hall to the undertaker, the first piece would be 'Westlawn Dirge' coming out with the body, but then the leader'd feel like pulling out you know 'Flee as a Bird' or 'Eternal Peace,' 'Last Rest' that's a good one there, that's a good old dirge. Played a funeral march coming out with the body, all kinds of funeral marches. You could play a hymn going to get it, but almost 'Just a Little while to Stay Here' or 'Lord, Lord, You Sure Been Good To Me.' Play a funeral march and bring him into the church, get ready for him and play a funeral march and bring him out of the church as long as you got that body, you got to play a funeral march. After they dismiss that body they play a hymn, when they come on they start to playing rags. The first hymn is played when the body is gone, dismissed. Afterwards they can play hymns or anything they want. After leaving the cemetery sometimes five or six numbers would bring them all in, because you hold a number for about two blocks. After you play the first hymn they leave the body, play the rag, may be 'Panama Rag' or the Blues, 'Joe Avery's number or 'Joe's Piece, anything you'd feel like, after you played the hymn.

**Morris French**

The biggest funeral French ever played was for 'Black Benny' Williams. All the bands played for that one. There were eight or ten bands. Henry Zeno had a big funeral too. Oscar 'Papa' Celestin had two fifteen-piece bands for his funeral. Punch Miller said that there were more brass bands when Black Benny was buried than there are now.

**Batiste Moseley**

The first funeral band Moseley ever saw was white, playing for a white funeral in Algiers. Moseley says the colored bands picked up the practice
afterwards, as far as he knows. Papa Laine, white band leader is mentioned. He was about 8 or 9 years old when he saw the white funeral band.

**Manuel J. Mello**

Jack Laine's band played all the funerals for the Davy Crockett fire Company across the river in Gretna, La. Fischer didn't play funeral processions. When Mello played for funerals with Jack Laine's Band, he used to stand behind a tombstone and play 'taps.' They would play 'Nearer My God to Thee,' just the first part, taking the body from the house to the hearse, from the hearse to the church, from the church to the hearse, and from the hearse to the burying.

Mello played a funeral for Jack Laine where the band consisted of: 'wire-faced Dago' Alessandro on tuba, his son, Manuel 'Little Wire Face,' Alessandro on alto with rotary valves, Brock on baritone; Joe Castro on alto, and Leonce on trombone. They 'tore them up going to where the fellow was laid out,' played, 'Nearer My God, To Thee' when he was brought out.

**Sherwood Mangiapane**

Remembers hearing parades and funerals with colored bands marching and playing mournful dirges to the cemetery, and coming back they would be knocking it out, swinging. He doesn't remember the names of the bands, but thinks he remembers seeing Papa Celestin who was one of the first fellows that he can remember seeing as well as 'Bebe' Ridgely.

**John C. Pope**

Pope played funeral parades on an average of two or three times a week. I guess that's been now 20 years since we stopped playing funerals. They don't use them at all now. All the organizations in Mobile, each one would have-when a member would die-they would, of course, use music. We'd play such music as funeral marches going out to the cemetery, coming back, we played records, popular music. In other words, I remember when we played 'So glad You'll Be Going, You Rascal, You' 'Bye You Blackbird,' and all those kinds of things.

**Joe Rene**

They made a picture of the funeral of 'Black Benny' Williams, Rene with 'Red Happy' Bolton were grand marshals The procession was seven blocks long, although Williams had only 'nickel insurance.' Rene explains that a
saucer was placed on the chest of the corpse to collect money to bury him. The Zulu Club was represented at the funeral. The second line was great, as Williams was from Perdido Street.

Casimir Tuxedo Band on parade - 1961

Articles on funerals

Brass Band funerals are fading out in New Orleans - (Advocate) - April 12, 1964.

An old, old way of death-the funeral brass band-is slowly trudging to its own grave way down yonder in New Orleans.

The spirit is willing but the ancient musicians are getting weak. You can always trade in a Cadillac hearse for a new one, but no new musicians are coming up to replace their elders.

So when the last musician blows the last dirge, a colorful anthem in American music will fade forever from the air.

It's an anthem that seems to have little relation to the nervous complexity of today's progressive jazz. but it is parent-perhaps grandparent-
to the child. The honest, straightforward rhythms and harmonies of the bands that have long played for funerals in the New Orleans area are a major part of the river of jazz that flowed north from this city.

Colorful Chapter

No chapter in American folk music is more colorful than the black-clad band marching at funeral gait and playing dirges to the graveyard. Then, the deceased, happily with his maker, the band returns exultantly with booming bass drum and compahing tuba as a long line of passersby and neighborhood children fall in behind shuffling, snapping fingers, swinging in rhythm beneath brightly colored parasols.

You have to look hard to find a band playing for a funeral nowadays, but the Eureka Brass Band was out for one recently on a warm spring day over the Mississippi in Algiers. The deceased, a shipyard worker, had passed away at 68 of a heart attack. He was a member of the Young Men's Benevolent and Protective Association of Algiers, which has a working agreement with the Eureka Band. His 50 cents monthly dues were paid up and he was entitled to a band at the club's expense if his family so desired. They did.

Aging Instruments

Shortly after noon the band began assembling. Out of the car trunks came with the old bass drum lettered 'Eureka Brass Band of N.O., La.' A Sousaphone dented and taped in several places, Oscar (Chicken) Henry, who has been a farmer, plasterer but always a musician during his 75 years, pieced together the same nicked, intricately engraved trombone he has been playing since 1927.

Henry has been called 'Chicken' since his WPA days, when admiring coworkers believed he knew more about poultry than anyone, in or out of government.

Formal Assembly

From the porch of the hall-a sagging clapboard building in need of paint-on aged honor guard of the Young Men's Association watch silently with penguin-like formality, their white gloved hands clasped behind them. Lapel badges on dark suits identified them as the 'Sick committee.' Behind them in the vestibule a sign chalked on a blackboard cautioned: 'Please do not mash cigarettes on the floor. It is not healthy.'
The band had been wondering if a drummer, Robert (some Few Clothes) Lewis, would turn up. Lewis, so named because of his limited wardrobe, couldn't make it. But the minimum of 10 musicians was present. They formed a circle, warmed up with a rollicking 'Oh, Lady Be Good' and then set off, out of step but in tune, for the funeral parlor.

New Orleans Tradition

The old musicians came down the dusty road playing more in tradition now, the old spiritual 'Just a Closer Walk With thee.' Peter Bocage, 75, a living antique of New Orleans jazz, blasted the notes on his trumpet. He had been taught by the grandfather of Willie Humphrey, 56, the band's clarinetist and youngest member present that day.

Down the road they came, out of the past, striding by the old frame houses, the weathered corner groceries and taverns with their shiny tin beer signs, the fat Negro woman sitting on a rusty tin chair on her porch fanning herself and tapping her foot, slowly. A delta-shaped jet fighter roared overhead but it was from another time and place. no one looked up.

New Orleans has a tradition of marching bands going back over a century. Emanuel Paul, 60, the Eureka's sax player, thinks the idea of bands at funerals was started by undertakers who thought if a band was marching in front of the cortege the horses hauling the hearse couldn't trot and thus wouldn't wear out as fast. Anyway it's an old custom.

Funeral ingredients

Englishmen, long attracted by the bohemian life of the French quarter, have been dedicated funeral goers. The necessary ingredients of a successful funeral, goes an old saying, are a body, a band and two Englishmen.

Some of the social clubs of the area have regular funeral insurance policies. If you've been a paid up member for a year, you get a hearse free; two years it may be a hearse plus embalming; three years the aforementioned and a limousine for the mourners. Eventually you rate a band. Sometimes they have to pass the hat to afford a band, delaying the funeral until the money is raised. The musicians union sympathizes, though, and charges much less for funerals, about $6 a man.

The Eureka Band reached the Greater Morning Star Baptist Church and played 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye' as the mourners filed in. Five ministers were to conduct the services. 'We may be a while,' said Bocage, easing himself down in a sunny spot on the side steps of the church. From an
open window drifted the sermon of one of the ministers and the answering
'Oh, yes!' of the congregation. It had a rhythm all its own and under the pews
you could see some of the mourners' feet tapping time.

'Why do I keep playing' said Bocage, a light-skinned little man who
looks and smiles like one of Walt Disney's dwarfs from 'Snow White.' 'Well,
my wife died several years ago and I got lonesome at home. Besides marching
is good exercise. I always sleep well after a funeral.

Chicken Henry, a fine featured man with shiny store teeth, stretched
out on the stoop, 'I was so sick one time they had to drive me down to the
funeral in an automobile. Playing that first song was better than medicine.'

Jack Willis, a trumpeter, looked impatiently at the sky. 'I've seen 'em
take three or four hours in the church and all the time it's fine weather. Then
when they bring the body out, it's rainin.'

Classified dirges

In the church, sisters of the congregation, dressed in white, fluttered
fans bearing a picture of Jesus on one side and advertisements for a funeral
parlor and life insurance company on the other.

He has run his race, he has reached his goal,' cried the fifth and last
minister. 'Yes, ooh yes!' shouted the congregation. Outside the band
reformed, hurrying from street corners where they had been lounging with
friends. Bocage pulled out the only music the band uses, age-yellowed squares
of cardboard bearing only numbers, no names, to keep rivals from purloining
Eureka's special dirges.

'Number 21,' called Bocage. 'Boon-boom-boom,' the bass drum rang
and the cortege moved off at funeral step. First the grand marshal, in black
with a sash of the Young Men's Association across his chest. Then the band,
followed by the honor guard, hearse and limousines.

Future seems dismal

The old musicians swayed from side to side as they walked. A shiny
aluminum bus shorted past, forcing the band to the side of the road, but they
played on. At the graveside, they struck up 'Just a Closer Walk With Thee'
but much slower this time.

Then it was time to go. They wheeled and strode out the iron cemetery
gate breaking into a rousing 'When the Saints go Marching In.

Children on their way home from school fell in line, twitching their
bony bodies in syncopation, Older people on street corners and porches
smiled slightly in the fading sun. A man in a tavern called out over the swinging door to a musician he knew.

By the time the band arrived back at the hall, they had probably marched three miles. But they had enough left for a brassy 'Sheik of Araby.'

'Will there be anyone left to play this music 20 years from now' said Emanuel Paul, 'Man, at the rate the world's going, there won't be any of us left in 20 years.

He laughed, packed up his saxophone and the musicians drove off for home, back over the river.

Old New Orleans jazz Musicians Funerals

Papa Celestin - Advocate - December 19, 1954

Final rites for Papa Celestin - Oscar (Papa) Celestin, who helped elevate jazz music from the honky-tonks of Basin Street to the respectability of the American living room, was buried today.

The 70-year old Negro trumpeter, who had delighted millions with his 'The Saints Come Marching In' and 'Didn't He Ramble' and other jazz numbers, died Wednesday of cancer.

A police-estimated crowd of 4,000 jammed in front of the church when the two-mile long funeral procession arrived for final services for the jazz pioneer.

Marching bands composed of many of the musicians with whom Papa played during a long and colorful career, accompanied the body as thousands lined the streets from the funeral home to the Mount Zion Methodist Church.

The elaborate procession was reminiscent of many of the Carnival parades papa had played and marched in for so many years.

The bands played slow funeral dirges, so unlike the rhythmic jazz Celestin helped nurture.

Another 2,000 crowded into the cemetery and braved chilling winds waiting for the long procession.

Funeral directors said it was the largest funeral they had ever handled and said it was unlike New Orleans would see it's like again since the city's last two jazz pioneers, Alfonse Picou and George Lewis, are Roman Catholics, whose religion frowns on such displays.

The bands beat out Papa's favorite hymn ''Just a Closer Walk With Thee' as the procession entered the church where Papa once played trumpet in the choir before he arrived as a kingpin in the world of jazz.

Members of his last band acted as active pallbearers. His widow survives.
Tears streamed down many of the faces of those attending the church services as the body was viewed for the last time before the casket was sealed.

An aged negro woman sat in the rear of the church with head bowed low and repeated, 'Papa's gone now, Papa's gone!'

The bands and Papa's Masonic brothers preceded the bronze casket into the cemetery as hundreds of photographers' flash bulbs illuminated the darkening scene. Police pushed the way clear for the casket and the minister.

Many of Papa's friends joined the band and sang as the casket was played at the grave site. A few wept as the Rev. Robert D. Hill started the rites with the intonation, 'Our help is in the name of the Lord.'

The bands were scheduled to play some of Papa's jazz favorites at graveside, but they were bypassed, probably because the procession arrived so late at the cemetery.

Celestin, along with Picou, Lewis and the renowned Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong and a few remaining others, stretched as links with the past when jazz was played only in the shadowed honky-tonks along fabled Basin Street. But they signaled their message with their gold-voiced trumpets and the world soon became aware that here was music in the making.

Papa's band will continue with trombonist Eddie Pierson taking Papa's place as leader.

Alphonse Picou - Advocate - February 7, 1961 - Picou rites will end with jazz A-la Dixieland.

A traditional Dixieland farewell will be given Thursday to Alphonse Picou at the funeral of the 82-year-old clarinetist who was one of the original developers of jazz.

The Negro musician died last Saturday. He had been in failing health for several months.

After services at a funeral home, the Eureka Brass Band will play dirges and hymns as Picou's body is transferred to a hearse. The 10-piece band, in which Picou once played, will continue its mournful music as it accompanies the funeral procession for a few blocks. Then, in accordance with tradition, the band will turn around and play lively Dixieland as the hearse continues to the cemetery.

Alphonse Picou - February 10, 1961 - (Advocate)

They buried Negro jazz clarinetist Alphonse Picou with music Thursday, and hundreds danced in the streets as two band blared forth a Dixieland farewell.
Oh! He was wonderful. Oh! he was good,' said Henry Glass, 72, Marshal of the Young Tuxedo Band, 'I loved his playing.'

Picou, 82, who worked as a tinsmith by day and played by night, was perhaps most famed as the originator of the clarinet solo in 'High Society.' Prominent in New Orleans jazz circles since 1894, he helped develop the distinctive New Orleans jazz style of clarinet playing.

His funeral - held five days after he died - was the biggest since bandleader Oscar (Papa) Celestine died a half dozen years ago.

Two 10-piece negro brass bands - the Eureka Band and the Young Tuxedo Band - accompanied the hearse from the funeral home playing slow, haunting dirges and hymns.

Coming back from the cemetery, they played the free-wheeling ragtime that Picou himself helped create at the turn of the century. An army of jazz fans and friends, Negro and white, danced down the streets in spring-like weather.

They formed a block of prancing humanity from sidewalk to sidewalk. Traffic halted. People ran from their homes.

George Lewis, the veteran New Orleans jazz clarinetist, was there, Walter Nelson, a musician friend carried Picou's clarinet as the hearse started and the bands began playing.

The bands played 'Free as a Bird,' 'You've got Eternal peace,' 'Just a Little while to Stay Here,' 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus.'


Picou was one of the last old Negro New Orleans musicians who still played the same pure happy simple jazz melodies and rhythms created here over a half century ago.

About a half-mile from the funeral home, the Eureka Band boarded a truck and drove to the graveyard. The Tuxedo Band turned back and struck up Dixieland tunes.

'Now the fun begins,' an old Negro woman shouted as she started dancing. Hundreds around her crowded the band and started dancing, too.


There were two funerals when they buried famed Negro jazz clarinetist Alphonse Picou.

They buried the 82 year-old musician Thursday and they all but buried the music played at his funeral. - old-time New Orleans jazz - the music he
helped create. When a Negro jazzman or lodge member dies in New Orleans a marching band is hired to play dirges and hymns to the graveyard. Going home, following the great tradition, the band cuts loose with ragtime. people dance in the streets.

It's an unforgettable sound. The music is the closest you'll come today to the pure, original jazz that began here a half century ago.

But it's dying. It has given way to swing, modern jazz, and rock 'n' roll. Picou, credited with composing the classic "Muskrat Ramble," helped develop the distinctive New Orleans jazz style of clarinet playing.

After Picou's funeral, the 10-piece band struck up bouncing tunes going back to the funeral home. The gay music drew people from nearby houses, stores, street corners. A pied piper army of old and young, white and Negro, danced along.

The band cut loose with 'Paidiol, AG,' 'Joe's Boogie,' 'Didn't He Ramble.' School children pecked from classroom windows. Customers in a beauty parlor ran out with pin curlers.

At Picou's funeral as in the old days, a grand marshal set the pace for the Eureka Band-one of two bands that played - to the graveyard.

The band played such hymns as 'Nearer My God to Thee,' and 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus.' but is was not church music. It was as if the blues had entered the music and taken over.


New Orleans jazzmen turned out to take clarinetist John Casimir to his grave yesterday with a jazz funeral parade.

The jazzmen who came to mourn Casimir with their music stretched out in a parade three blocks long, lining the route to 'pass the body' toward the graveyard in a jazz funeral procession.

Casimir, known for the mournful wail of his E-flat clarinet, died last Thursday at the age of 64.

As always, hundreds of spectators stood along the way or trooped along behind the bands, walking in the wake of their dirge.

But is wasn't the same this time, with Casimir in the hearse and his clarinet silent.

The march was a little shorter-only about six blocks from the funeral home-and the farewell concert at the cemetery was a little briefer-only hone song.

And the played without Casimir's primitive wail to imitate the cry of mournful women.
The trumpets spoke as the male mourner and the trombones answered as the male chorus. But nobody could do it on an e-flat clarinet like John Casimir, so nobody tried.

Alfred Williams - Advocate - May 5, 1963 - Jazz drummer laid to rest by brass band.

Drummer boy Alfred Williams was laid to rest Saturday in one of the truly ante-bellum traditions of this historic city-the Negro jazz funeral.

An open hearse, carrying the body of the Preservation Hall jazz drummer followed 11 members of the Eureka Brass Band-a band with which Williams played for many years.

Mathews (Fats) Houston, the grand marshal, led the band in 'Nearer My God to Thee' as the funeral left the Gertrude Geddes Willis Funeral Home. During the one-mile walk to the Progressive Baptist Church, where religious services were conducted, the band played the traditional 'Westlawn dirge,' and the Funeral March.

The band also played another song known only as 'Number 51.' It was unknown because the late Red Allen, who led the Eureka Brass band in the late 1940 and early 1950s, cut the titles off the cards of most of the standard hymns so the titles could not be stolen.

Williams, who was 63, died Tuesday at his home. He had not played music in over a year. He broke his hand shortly before the Eureka Brass Band journeyed to Washington for a 1962 jazz festival.

At the church Saturday his old band 'turned the body loose' as they put it. After the funeral service Williams was buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery.

Williams was known as the 'most dependable time keeper in the city,' never varying from is tempo which primarily was four-four.

He began his career at the age of 18 and during the 1920s played with the Sam Morgan Jazz Band, the Original Tuxedo Orchestra and A. J. Piron. During the years of the depression he went to El Paso, Tex., and organized his own band, returning to New Orleans in 1942

One of Williams' last recordings was made with Jim Robinson's Band for Atlantic's 'Jazz at Preservation Hall' series.

Alfred Williams - Advocate - May 6, 1963 - Orleans jazz drummer buried.

Alfred Williams was buried in a quiet ceremony in Mt. Olivet Cemetery Saturday, ending a jazz career which spanned almost four decades.

The drummer boy got a traditional Negro jazz funeral-small by New Orleans standards-with the Eureka Brass Band, with which he played for many years, leading the slow, halting-step procession.
'Nearer My God to Thee' echoed from the horns of the 11 aging musicians, with Grand Marshal Mathew 'Fats' Houston, derby in hand, leading the way.

The band choose one other traditional hymn, the 'Westlawn Dirge,' and two little-known pieces in a final tribute to the jazz drummer.

One was 'The funeral march,' the other was known only as 'Number 51.'

A member of the band explained that the late Red Allen, who led the band in the 1940s and early 1950s, cut the titles off the music cards on some of the hymns which were the band's specialties so the titles would not be stolen.

At the church, the band 'turned the body loose'-the term they use to describe the point in the ceremony where band and procession leave the funeral.

After services at the Progressive Baptist Church, the body was taken to the cemetery for burial.

A small crowd of newsmen, photographers, jazz enthusiasts and tourists followed the one-mile procession from the funeral home to the church.


Hundreds of Negroes and whites paraded, danced and sang wailing hymns Saturday in a final tribute to jazz trombonist William Matthews, the 'Wild bill' of Bourbon Street.

The George Williams set a slow, sad pace for the traditional funeral marched through uptown streets with offering of "Nearer My God to Thee,' A Closer Walk With Thee,' and 'What a Friend We Have In Jesus.'

Matthews, 65 years old Negro, died Wednesday. His music career stretched from the river steamboat days to the Bourbon Street jazz revival of the 1960s. He was one of this city's best known trombonist.

(Fats) Houston, a familiar figure in New Orleans jazz funerals, led the band in his black suit and black derby, a sash across his chest bore the words, Musicians Union, Local 496,' one of the groups responsible for continuing the jazz funeral tradition.

The 10-men Williams Band trailed behind Houston in black trousers, white short-sleeved shirts and cabbie-type caps.

Several hundred Negroes and whites marched along on the sidewalks, some strutting, some dancing, some singing the hymns.

Many carried cameras or tape recorders to preserve the sights and sounds of the slowly dying New Orleans tradition.
The procession went four blocks from the funeral home to the Baptist Church. There the pastor invited 'people of the races to enter our church to play last respects to brother Matthews.

It was the same church in which Matthews was baptized a few years ago. Several clergy men were there to say he had led 'a good Christian life.'

A Negro choir sang at the church. About 200 of the marchers, including a score of whites entered for the service. The rest waited outside or drifted away.

Matthews was carried in a gray casket covered with wild flowers.

The church was air conditioned for the hour-long services, and relief from the 90-degree temperatures that scorched the marchers outside.

After the church services and another short musical march, the band and the crowd went by car to the McDonoghville Cemetery across the Mississippi River for the burial services.

Matthews, who started his career as a drummer and ended it as a trombonist, played with the best jazzmen of the century-Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, King Oliver's Brass band, and Papa Celestine.

His last appearance was at a private Mardi Gras party in February.

The origin of the jazz funeral in New Orleans is not documented, but some authorities say jazz bands were first used to encourage the hearse drawing horses to walk better, thereby adding dignity to the funeral.

The bass drum, trumpets and clarinets are the basic instruments for the funeral.

Matthews was a member of the young Men's Olympian Club, one of several Negro fraternal organizations that guarantee a band for their members' funerals.

The fraternal groups estimate they have about 1,000 members, which could mean tourists and jazz buffs will have many more opportunities to watch or walk in the colorful funerals.


Jazz pianist Lester Santiago will be buried today. His traditional jazz funeral will be a milestone on the jazz world. It will be recorded in general release.

Santiago, an outstanding musician n the Creole tradition noted that the lacy elegance of his style and his rhythmic beat, died Monday of a heart attack. He was 55.

The jazz funeral parade will feature the Onward Band, which has been around since the turn of the century.
It was founded by the late Isidore Barbarin, father of Paul Barbarin, and has been continued by the son.

Santiago played with Paul Barbarin's Jazz Band for many years throughout the nation.

Santiago's last appearance was last Saturday night at Dixieland Hall on Bourbon Street, where he has played regularly for the past several years.

Grayson Clark, president of Nobility Records, a New Orleans firm specializing in traditional jazz recording in traditional jazz recordings, said as far as is known, today will be the first time a jazz parade has been recorded for general release.

'Previous recordings have been made for jazz archivists and private collectors,' said Clark.

'Lester was a very great New Orleans musician and we conceive a recording of his funeral parade as a tribute in a documentary fashion that will be a truly memorable event in jazz history.'

The musician's family approved the project.

Santiago recorded three numbers for Nobility. The last of them, featuring the great drummer Paul Barbarin, is being processed for release.

Santiago also was a composer and was best known for his 'Let's Take a Ferry Boat to New Orleans.'

The form of the New Orleans jazz funeral is unvarying. The band, or bands, led by a grand marshal, play mournful dirges en route to the cemetery and burst into a spirited number on the return. The jazz funeral is a vanishing tradition.

Avery 'Kid' Howard - March 31, 1966 - Times Picayune - Jazz funeral set Saturday.

A jazz funeral will be conducted Saturday at 12:30 p.m. for Avery 'Kid' Howard, one of New Orleans best known traditional jazzmen. Relatives said two marching jazz bands will participate in the funeral.

Papa John Joseph - January 27, 1965 - Dirges will mark funeral of Papa John

Traditional funeral dirges will mark the jazz procession to Olivet Cemetery here Wednesday when Papa John will be buried.

Born John Joseph, the 90 year-old bass player fell dead at preservation Hall Sunday night after playing the last solo of 'When the Saints go Marching In.'

'Papa John had played beside every known jazzman in the country, starting at the age of 14. A band of his colleagues will lead the funeral procession at 9 a.m. from Blandin Funeral Home, 1116 St. Claude. Included
will be Kid Thomas and Punch Miller, trumpets; Louis Nelson and Paul Crawford, trombones; Harold Dejan, saxophone, and Cie Frazier, drums.

**New Orleans jazz faces swan's song as dirges increase** - Advocate, March 16, 1969

All of the musicians playing New Orleans jazz are elderly, many in their 70s and 80s, and some, still playing even in their 90s.

In addition to Barbarin, Clarinetist George Lewis, Adolphe Alexander and Alcide 'Slow Drag' Pavageau were buried this year-each with a jazz funeral procession of his fellow jazzmen.

Lewis was called 'the Soul of New Orleans jazz,' Pavageau was grand marshal of the Eureka Brass Band.

They have joined other great innovator in New Orleans jazz: King Oliver, who taught Armstrong how to play trumpet, Papa Celestin and Kid Howard, whose jazz funerals were the largest every held.

The funerals are a curious mixture of grief, Negro spirituals, merriment and dancing.

They usually are held on Saturday, when most of the Negro community should be off from work.

After a service at the church, the casket is led to the cemetery by long lines of black-clad musicians, each band led by a colorfully plumed and feathered grand marshal. The bands play only slow funeral dirges and spirituals on the way to the grave.

After the burial, the bands form up outside the cemetery and break into 'When the Saints Go Marching In.' The peppy strains herald the beginning of merriment, with crowds of followers and curious surging and dancing.

By the time the bands played the even peppier 'Second Line,' the grief of the burial is no longer evident. The jazzman has been laid to rest and the remaining jazzmen are playing their music.

'This music's got to live on, it's American,' said Danny Barker, who once played with Cab Calloway and Benny Carter. And he is one who thinks it will, even if only in repetition.

'The best of everybody is on records-Jelly roll, Armstrong, the Rhythm Kings,' Barker says 'It'll all live on their records.'

New Orleans jazz great Adolph Paul Barbarin was accorded Saturday what was described as 'probably the largest funeral of its kind' by throngs of friends, fellow musicians and admirers.

Hundreds more lined the route of the cortege as it made its way from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church, 1730 St. Bernard Ave. to St. Louis Cemetery No.2 where the well known drummer was interred.

Mr. Barbarin, who was 69, died unexpectedly Monday night after leading his Onward Brass Band along part of the Proteus parade route. A native of New Orleans he had performed with Louis Armstrong, Red Allen, Sidney Bechet, Art Hodes and Pee Wee Russell. He and his brother Louis were co-leaders of the Onward Brass Band.

Following a Requiem Mass Saturday morning it became apparent that a good size crowd would be marching in the funeral procession, but no one had bargained for the masses that turned out.

'This is like Mardi Gras,' complained one woman.

Pete Fountain was glimpsed in the forefront of the procession and said he had 'never seen a jazz funeral as large as this.'

'In terms of people, this has got to be the biggest,' he said. 'I had to come up front-it was too crowded to walk back there,' he added, jerking a thumb crowd-ward.

Mrs. Barbara Byrnes, director of the New Orleans Jazz Museum, said Barbarin had been honored with 'probably the largest funeral of its kind.'

The procession moved very slowly up N. Claiborne Ave. and the closer it got to the cemetery the larger crowd became.

Barbarin was said to have asked for four bands at his funeral and he got them Saturday. Besides the Onward Brass Band, there was the Tuxedo Jazz Band and the Eureka and Olympia Brass Band.

At different point along the way, one or the other band would break into 'Just a Closer Walk With Thee,' or a somber-paced 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus.' The familiar cluster of black and multi-colored and festooned umbrellas bobbed rhythmically above the heads of the mourners while overcast skies threatened rain. At the cemetery several hundred more people were already staked out, cameras ready to record the funeral. But apart from the observers perched on the cemetery wall, it was doubtful whether any of the amateur shutterbugs got anything other than shots of people's heads.

The procession turned left off N. Claiborne onto Conti St. and had more than a little trouble getting into the cemetery. Again the problem was the unexpected amount of people.

'Some respect,' muttered one woman as a boy clambering onto a tomb dislodged the nameplate.
By the time Barbarin was interred more than 20 people could be counted sitting or standing on the tomb and those adjacent to it. The mourners, including Mrs. Barbarin, dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief, had trouble getting to the gravesite and negotiating their way out again, while on band kept wailing 'Walk With Me, Jesus.'

One man in the crowd near the tomb raised his voice in an impromptu sermon while two men, one wearing a cape, the other black satin and yellow goggles, stared at him.

Among the floral tributes at the tomb was a wreath of minute yellow, gold and white flowers in the shape of a drum, from the Musician's Union. There were also roses and red peppered carnations, one which Mrs. Barbarin clutched as she departed.

Traditionally, the departure from the cemetery signals a change in the selections played by the bands participating, and in their tempo, also. The music becomes happy and joyful.

After Paul Barbarin's funeral, the bands split up outside the cemetery. This reporter followed the Olympian Brass band, which began playing but soon stopped. It was explained that the crush of person around the band was too great; if a musician was pushed, he could easily cut a lip.

Kid Shiek, who plays trumpet for the Olympia Brass Band and the Storyville Ramblers said he thought the funeral might have been 'too much of a good thing.'

'The crowd, I mean,' he explained. His sentiments were echoed by a New Orleans police officer, who, when asked for an estimate of the number of people present, growled, 'Too many.'

George Lewis - Advocate - January 4, 1969 - Dixieland bands play clarinetist's funeral.

George Lewis, a master of the clarinet and one of the last of the old Dixieland greats, was buried Friday after a jazz funeral that included three Dixieland marching bands.

It was an old-fashioned funeral with the bands blaring mournfully to and from the church but breaking into a cheerful blat of music after leaving the cemetery.

Lewis might have flinched at some of the musical clinkers. He was a fussy man about his music. But it was an appropriate finale which he would have appreciated.

He was still a dominant figure in New Orleans jazz when pneumonia and flu ended his life last Tuesday at the age of 68.
Two of the marching bands, the Olympia and the Eureka, are both old bands at the traditional funeral style. The third was a pickup band of 10 of Lewis' admirers.

The crush of tourists and mourners outside the small Olive Branch Baptist church was so great the procession had trouble getting started. But it moved four blocks in rain to a busy street where the bands massed in double ranks to send the hearse on its way.

Then the musicians piled into pickup trucks and cars for the four mile drive. At the cemetery, they again took their places at the head of the procession.


Alcide 'Slow Drag' Pavageau would have recognized the scene. The Olympia Brass Band strutted and danced through the French quarter from the cemetery, blaring out 'When the Saints Go Marching In.'

Slow Drag had led many such funeral parades down Royal and Bourbon Streets, prancing and strutting ahead of the musicians, waving his famous dark umbrella high in the air.

Slow Drag would have recognized the procession but he was not leading it Wednesday. This time it was for him.

Slow Drag, who would have been 81 in March, died Sunday and was buried Wednesday in a small wall crypt in the old St. Louis Cemetery.

He was grand marshal of the Eureka Band, which also played in Wednesday's parade. Wednesday other members of the band took his place at the head of the parade.

Pavageau was the third of the city's old time jazz musicians to die during the past month.

Clarinetist George Lewis, called the 'Soul of New Orleans jazz' died Dec. 31 at the age of 88. Adolph L. Alexander was buried Jan. 5 after devoting 45 of his years to the clarinet and saxophone.

Joseph 'Sunny' Williams - April 6, 1969 - rainy day mars jazz rites for New Orleans trumpeter.

The traditional jazz funeral of trumpet player Joseph 'Sunny' Williams was marred Saturday by heavy rains, but his friends huddled inside a funeral home carport and paid him tribute with the music he had played for more than half a century.

Williams, who died last Tuesday at the age of 79, was leader of his own jazz band. During his musical career he played with Louis Armstrong, Red
Allen and Charley Hayes. Williams also marched with the Eureka and Tuxedo Brass bands of New Orleans.

Members of several of the city's fast-dwindling old-time jazz bands played under the carport of the Gertrude Geddes-Willis funeral home before the cars in the burial procession headed out for Williams' home town of Ama, La., where he was to be laid to rest.

It was in Ama that Williams made his musical career. He worked for the Central Railroad in 1955 and operated a barber shop until his death, also played a number of instruments in addition to his trumpet, including drums, tuba, clarinet and violin.

Williams was to have had a traditional jazz funeral complete with street parade, but the heavy rains that hit New Orleans Saturday morning prevented it, a funeral home spokesman said.

'It was a short funeral because of the rain,' the spokesman added, 'But the musicians came to play anyway because they like to come to these things. He (Williams) was an old-timer.'

Williams is the fifth of the old-time musicians who were in on the beginnings of New Orleans jazz to be buried this year prior to Williams, 69 year-old Paul Barbarin, organizer and leading spirit of the Onward Brass Band, died while leading his group in a Carnival Parade the day before Mardi Gras, Feb. 18.

Jazz Procession for 'Captain' John Handy - Times Picayune-January 14, 1971

A jazz procession, believed to be the first in that area, will be held in Pass Christian, Miss., Saturday, in honor of 'Captain' John handy, 70, a veteran New Orleans musician.

Funeral services will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at the Goodwill Baptist Church in Pass Christian for the jazzman, an internationally acclaimed alto saxophone player.

The jazz funeral procession, led by the Olympia Brass Band, will follow, and interment will be in Live Oak Cemetery.

Ernest 'Punch' Miller - December 8, 1971 - Jazz trumpeter buried Musicians lead procession.

They buried Ernest 'Punch' Miller here Tuesday. He missed quite a celebration.

Miller, a trumpet playing contemporary of Louis Armstrong, died Saturday. He was 73.
His fellow musicians gave him a sendoff worthy of his calling - a jazz funeral complete with a horse drawn hearse and a music and dancing procession through some of the city's Negro neighborhoods.

The funeral band, made up of musicians from the Onward and Olympia Brass groups and a few men off the riverboat Delta Queen, played 'Old 'Rugged Cross' and 'Just a Closer Walk with Thee' as Miller's casket was carried from Dominique's Funeral Home to the Willing Worker Baptist Church.

His fellow trumpeters Elvin Alcorn and 'Kid' Thomas, were there. So was Ernest Matthews, 62, who danced in the second line even though he had no feet and had to walk on pads strapped to his knees.

'I wouldn't miss one of these for nothing,' Matthews said.

Began in Crescent City

Miller began playing trumpet in New Orleans about the time Louis Armstrong was gaining popularity. A little after World War I he replaced Armstrong in the Kid Ory Band when Armstrong went to Chicago. A few years later Miller took the same trip and settled in Chicago himself.

He didn't come back to New Orleans until 1956 when he was ailing and said he had come home to die.

Instead, Miller got well and by 1961 he was playing his horn again on Bourbon Street and even made tours of the U.S. and Japan.

When they shoved his casket into the hearse for the trip to the cemetery, the band played 'Take Your Burdens to the Lord,' and the musicians waved goodbye as he was driven away.

As soon as the hearse was gone, the band broke into an up-tempo version of 'Didn't He Ramble,' and the second line dancers began their bouncing procession through the black neighborhood, drinking beer and wins and breaking into big grins.

That's how they do it in New Orleans. The dirges are played from the funeral home to the church, but when the casket is gone the jazz musicians and the second line dancers change their mood.

A jazz funeral is given to Mrs. Billie Goodson Pierce

Billie Goodson Pierce - October 4, 1974 - Jazz funeral lasts four hours. New Orleans brass band bids pianist farewell.

Throngs of jazz and blues enthusiasts danced and strutted through the streets of New Orleans behind the best of the Olympia Brass Band Thursday in a final salute to singer/pianist Billie Goodson Pierce.
Mrs. Pierce was entombed in a vault above her jazz trumpeter husband, 'Dede' Joseph la Croix Pierce, as hundreds of the couple's fellow musicians and admirers jammed St. Louis Cemetery No 2 on world famous Basin Street. She died Sunday night at age 67 after a long bout with emphysema. Her husband was killed by a stroke 11 months ago.

'I think she really wanted to die when Dede died' said her neighbor and relative Vera Pelllebon. 'It was all over for her then. She didn't care for herself anymore.'

The Olympia brass Band, its 15 members festooned with uniforms of black, red and gold and brandishing colorful parasols, led a four-hour procession to the cemetery from Corpus Christi Catholic Church.

At the funeral the Rev. Mike Stark, paraphrasing black spiritualist James Weldon Jones said: 'and God said, 'go down, death, go down. Go down there to New Orleans and find me Billie Pierce. 'she's borne the burden and heat of the day; she's labored long in my vineyards, and she's tired. She misses Dede. Go down there and bring her to me.' Auxiliary Bishop Harold Perry eulogized Mrs. Pierce at 'a great wife, a great musician and a great cook. She made the best gumbo in New Orleans. It was a gumbo worthy of Antoine's(French restaurant).'

Vibrant renditions a 'A closer Walk with Thee,' 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye,' The Battle Hymn of the Republic' and 'When the Saints Go Marchin' In,' shook the old black neighborhood where Mrs. Pierce lived and died.

In the 1950s Mrs. Pierce was paralyzed by a stroke and her husband was blinded with glaucoma. But they recovered enough to join a group at Preservation hall when It opened in 1961.

'Billie was the last of the old blues musicians,' said Allan Jaffe, a member of the Olympia Brass Band and owner of Preservation Hall, where the Pierces' made a comeback in the 1960s. 'But after Dede died last November, Billie found she couldn't make it anymore without him.

'She and Dede had a great appeal right from the beginning,' he said. 'They played with the Grateful Dead, Chicago, Canned Heat and pop music groups as well as with the great jazz bands.

'They played all the great halls in the United States and most of the ones in Europe, said Jaffe. I was with her when she died. It was a sad night.'

Mrs. Pierce was a native of Marianna, Fla. But was raised in Pensacola until she ran away from home at age 15 to work as an accompanist for blues singer Bessie Smith. She was working with a circus in 1929 when she broke down in Alabama and she hitched a ride with an eight-piece band in New Orleans where she met and married Pierce.
'Everybody loved her and she loved everybody.' said her neighbor, Mrs. Pellebon. We'd get up early in the morning and hear her play the piano and singing. We'd go over by the house, stand outside and listen. but there won't be any music coming from that house now.'

Jazz Funeral for Emile Knox - 1976

'Big' Jim Robinson - Times Picayune- May 5, 1976

A jazz funeral for him will begin Thursday at 10 a.m. from his home at 1125 St. Philip St. Participating will be the Olympia Brass Band and a second band made up of the late musician's friends. The procession will head to the Blandin Funeral Home at 1116 St. Claude Ave., and then to St. Mark's Missionary Baptist church at 1501 Ursuline St. Interment will be in Providence Memorial Park, 8200 Airline Hwy., Metairie.

Robinson loved the trombone and trombonists. It seemed unnatural to see him without a trombone in his hands. There is a story that is told that Jim slept with his trombone. It is of course fiction but that was the way Kid Rena found Jim one day when he needed a Trombonists:

'In 1940, Kid Rena desperately needed a trombonist for a recording session with Delta. Jim Robinson was found sleeping in front of a barroom, cradling his trombone in his arms, spent from a day of playing in parades.

They cut Jim Robinson loose at the Orleans Avenue entrance to Interstate 10. The funeral cars had to go on Memorial Park Cemetery in Metairie and the marchers couldn't be troops that far. But Robinson didn't go easily, He wouldn't leave 'his town.' Halfway up the highway entrance the hearse broke down. Hapless funeral directors peered vainly into its hood.

The crowd grew restless. 'Cut him a loose! they yelled. 'Cut him a loose! Let him go! By and by! But the hearse wouldn't budge.
Finally the bands, (Olympia Brass Bad and another pickup band) obedient to the crowd's will, cut loose, despite the stranded cortege, 'Oh Didn't He Ramble,' played the band, and the people danced and jived and whooped it up. Jim Robinson couldn't tear himself away from the fun.'

Ed Summers

The Toots Johnson Band (Baton Rouge) played the same kind of music New Orleans bands played. They played for lawn parties, dances, parades, funerals etc. the funerals were the same as the ones in New Orleans. Played on horse-drawn wagons for that purpose. there was also a 2nd line, the same as in New Orleans.

Jazz funerals - 'Perfect end to a death' - State Times Advocate-August 28, 1979

Jelly Roll Morton called it 'the perfect end to a death.' Pete Fountain had willed himself one, but the New Orleans jazz funeral-with roots traceable to African village customs and French martial bands-may be close to its own death.

Mobs of onlookers who often intrude on the mourners' grief have made the processions almost unmanageable and already hybrid versions of the funeral have made the traditional jazz processions-commonplace in the city's black neighborhood from pre-Civil War days until 10 years ago-almost extinct.

'They're getting to be scarce as Henk's teeth nowadays,' one jazz veteran said. 'It's got out of hand now,' another musician said. 'It's got to be a pompous show.'

Three years ago, several mourners at the funeral of Preservation Hall trombonist big Jim Robinson were knocked to the ground by crowding tourists and professional photographers snapping the flower bedecked casket.

But a more optimistic observer of the tradition, Theodore Justin of Blandin's Undertaking Co., said he has seen little decline in requests for jazz funerals.

'There has been a decline, but I don't know. I don't think they are giving up the interest,' he said. 'There are a lot of (social and pleasure) clubs that have jazz funerals and some guys request jazz funerals at their deaths-not just musicians. I like them myself.'

A jazz funeral starts with a mournful street procession from the funeral home to cemetery. The coffin-bearing hearse leads the way with mourners following in cars or on foot.

A jazz band-with grand marshal in formal dress, a white dove on his sashed shoulder and a derby held in the crook of his arm-takes up the rear
playing mournful dirges like 'A Closer Walk With Thee,' 'The Old Wooden Cross' or perhaps 'What A Friend We Have in Jesus.'

After the graveside service, the band leads the way back to the street with only a snare drum keeping time. Once a discreet distance from the cemetery, a trumpet toots a few clear, crisp notes and the band breaks into a jazzy unrestrained version of 'When the Saints Go Marching in' or 'Oh didn't He Ramble.'

Mourners, forgetting their grief in dances, open umbrellas to twirl in time to the music and crowds of kids 'second line' alongside in a centuries old celebration of the dead comrade's life.

Historians have found evidence of social clubs in Africa 400 years ago that guaranteed members a proper funeral. 'Social and pleasure clubs'-the most famous being the Zulus who parade on Mardi Gras Day-emerged in New Orleans during slavery years.

They flourished after emancipation, with burial rites being a fringe benefit of membership. Music at the ceremonies, historians said, may have roots in French martial music used in funeral processions.

'There is a dear friend of mine who died a year ago, and he always talked about having a jazz funeral when he passed,' Justin said. 'He said he liked to see people have fun.'

Louis Armstrong always claimed he gained a good part of his musical knowledge at jazz funerals.

Armstrong, who died nearly a decade ago, was buried in Queens, New York, cemetery without music.

It was Houston's distinctively solemn and stately slow-march that caught the eyes of photographers at New Orleans jazz funerals.

**Emile Knox** - Adocate - August 24, 1976 - Jazz drummer's funeral slated in New Orleans

Friends and family of musician Emile Knox plan a jazz funeral procession Wednesday for the drummer who died Friday.

Knox was a veteran of the Young tuxedo Olympia and Onward Brass Band. He had played backup to fellow New Orleanian musicians Paul Barbarin, Fete Fountain and Al Hirt.

The Young Tuxedo Brass Band plans to lead the funeral procession from Rhodes Funeral Home to the Corpus Christi Catholic church where a Requiem Mass will be said.

Band members playing slow funeral dirges to mourn the death will continue the procession to St. Louis Cemetery No. 2 on Basin Street. After the
body is 'set free', the band will switch to rollicking jazz numbers to celebrate Knox's life.

Knox taught himself how to play the snare drum as a youth and joined the Knights of Peter Claver Band. He played in the Zulu Mardi Gras parade when trumpeter Louis Armstrong was the king of the Zulus.

He has traveled extensively with numerous bands and once played for former President Richard Nixon.

April 22, 1978

Jazz funeral - New Orleans jazz musicians set the tempo Friday for the funeral procession of renowned black jazz pianist Joseph Jackson in Pass Christian. Miss Jackson was perhaps the last Dixieland jazz musician in the city. There was much singing, dancing and drinking as befits the tradition of the jazz band funeral.

Louis Cottrell - March 22, 1978 - Jazz funeral is set Monday for clarinetist Louis Cottrell

Clarinetist Louis Cottrell, the white-shirted, jolly man who led so many traditional jazz parades and funerals through the French quarter during his lifetime, will be buried Monday in a jazz funeral of his own.

Cottrell, the rotund leader of the Onward Brass Band, died Monday at 67.

Paul Lentz, director of the Heritage hall where Cottrell had played for seven years, said there would be a wake Sunday followed Monday by a jazz funeral procession.

'he taught me a lot - mostly how to be a gentleman,' said Pete Fountain, a fellow clarinetist. 'He was very easy going, but he still got it done. He was not a great technician like (Benny) Goodman, but I loved the warmth in him.
'That's a real gentleman, he's one of the few gentlemen in our business. Cottrell, born March 7, 1911, was initiated into Dixieland jazz by his father - drummer Louis Cottrell Sr. - who formed the Onward Brass Band in 1895.

After spending his early years in New Orleans with the Young Tuxedo Orchestra, Cottrell left for Texas to play with Don Albert's Band which was the first to call itself a 'swing' ensemble.

Lentz said Cottrell used the old fashioned 'Albert system' clarinet requiring more fingering, but producing a slightly lower, more woody and liquid sound.

Cottrell collaborated with Paul Barbarin, compose of bourbon street Parade,' in New Orleans in the 1950s. during the 1960s he was featured with Peter Bocage's Creole Serenaders.

Wearing white, short-sleeved shirts and a captain's hat. Cottrell led the Onward Brass Band in all types of jazz parades and funeral marches during his later years. He played at a jazz brunch at the New Orleans Hilton Sunday and complained of illness. He died the next day at his home.

'He thought he had an attack of virus the night before, but he still played,' Lentz said. 'He was extremely conscientious. There's no replacing that man.'

Garland beat goes on at jazz funeral - Times Picayune-January 31, 1980

It was a gray and gloomy Monday afternoon, and they'd all come to say goodbye to the old man they called Montudie.

And while there were tears and solemnity at this leave-taking, there also was joy.

When the 100 or more mourners left the chapel, many of them were smiling and moving with unmistakable beat in their step-almost as if Montudie himself was thumping out the beat.

Edward 'Montudie' Garland was a bass player-one of the first and best of his kind.

And those who came Monday afternoon said their farewell too Montudie with music, some of it sad and slow, some of it rousing and full of strut. It was New Orleans jazz, the kind of music Garland helped create and the kind he played right up until a few weeks before his death on Jan. 22, at the age of 95.

Trumpeter Milt Buckner provided the most moving moments, playing a slow and solemn solo of 'A closer Walk With Thee' with his horn muted.
Turk Murphy and his rowdy, red-coated seven-piece Dixie outfit from San Francisco were on hand to pay and play their tribute to the pioneer jazzman.

Vocalist Pat Yankee was with Murphy and she contributed a poignant 'Lonesome Road' in old-time New Orleans fashion.

The 20-piece resurrection Brass band, led by Gordon Mitchell, was there too, playing 'amazing Grace' with the ineffable New Orleans touch.

The same band, standing outside the chapel in the downbeat drizzle after the service ended, played an upbeat version of 'Just a Little while We Stay Here,' and inside, Murphy's band played 'When the Saints go Marching In' as a joyous recessional. It was all very appropriate.

**Jazz funeral set for Paul Barnes - Advocate, April 16, 1981**

A jazz funeral will be held Saturday for Paul Barnes, a saxophone and clarinet player whose diary supplied much of the information now known about music during the 1930s.

Barnes died at the age of 80 Monday following a long illness. In his long career, Barnes played with such famous jazz players as those headed by Louis Armstrong, Papa Celestin, King Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton.

It was Barnes' diary, kept during his years with Oliver, that supplied much of the information for historians and biographers about the music of the 1930s.

He kept a similar journal while playing with Morton, but it was lost.

'He was one of the few with a sense of history,' said jazz historian Dick Allen, who will read the eulogy at a Friday night wake.

**'Fats' Houston - Advocate - March 2, 1981 - 'Fats' Houston, New Orleans Jazz parade Leader, 70, dies.**

Matthew 'Fats' Houston, the portly parade marshal who became an unofficial symbol of New Orleans jazz parades, has died at the age of 70.

'He was one of the best,' said Harold Dejan, leader of the Olympia Brass Band which Houston led on parades until being sidelined by arthritis a few years ago.

A jazz funeral is planned for Monday morning with the Olympia leading the procession. Houston died Wednesday night.

It was Houston's distinctively solemn and stately slow-march that caught the eyes of photographers at New Orleans jazz funerals.

But he was known for the wide grin that he turned on when the musicians 'cut loose' the body and broke into raucus jazz for the 'second Line' home.
His presence helped bring about the revival of jazz in the 60s,' said Allan Jaffe, operator of Preservation Hall. 'Without men like Houston, the upswing of interest in jazz would have never happened.

Houston's fame as a parading jazz grand marshal brought him parts in two motion pictures - 'The Cincinnati Kid' and 'Live and Let Die.'

**August Lanoix jazz funeral will be conducted Saturday** - Times Picayune, November 20th, 1981

A jazz funeral will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday at Charbonnet-Labat Funeral Home, 1615 St. Philip St., for Preservation Hall string bass player August Lanoix, followed by a Mass of Christian burial at St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Harold Dejan's Olympia Brass band will lead the tribute procession to the interment site in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**August Lanoix** - Advocate - November 22, 1981 - Lanoix 'cut loose' with all that jazz.

It was a traditional jazz funeral with a difference Saturday when they 'cut loose' August Lanoix, a former string-bass player with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band who died last Tuesday.

Dejan's Olympia Brass Band went inside the cavernous sanctuary of St. Joseph's Catholic Church and stood beneath the towering marble columns to play for his last march.

Going inside added an unusual touch, occasioned partly by the size of the 2,000 seat, newly renovated sanctuary in the heart of town.

The echoing sounds of the 15-piece band reverberated against the 95-foot vaulted ceilings as they played 'In the Sweet Bye and Bye.'

The congregation joined them to sing a sprightly 'Amen,' background music to the blessing of the sacraments of the solemn Roman Catholic funeral mass.

Then, with the benediction said, four rhythmic bursts from the bass drum started the dirges for the recessional down the 12-foot-wide, tiled aisle of the 91-year old church.

Into the street, they played as the silver-and-black casket was lifted into the hearse. And in traditional fashion, marching in slow time, they led the procession down the heavily trafficked Tulane Avenue, away from the church.

While they play 'Just a closer Walk With Thee,' the hearse moved slowly passed the band, the musicians doffing their hats and reaching out for a final touch.
There they cut him loose - the last farewell - as the band broke into a raucous 'Saints Go Marching In' and 'Whopping Blues.'

Joyous dancing broke out in the street, with the second line celebrating the jazzman's 'victory over death.'

Burial was at St. Mary's Cemetery - too far away for the band to march. Lanoix, 79, had not played for several years, having retired from the Preservation Hall Jazz Band in the 1970s because of poor health.

A lifelong New Orleans resident, he began his musical career about 1919, when he took up the violin with a student jazz band.

He played it 'until violins became unpopular in jazz bands,' he later said. Among his performances with the instrument, however, were recordings with the Lewis James trio - one of the few examples of a New Orleans jazz string band.

He also recorded with Peter Bocage and played a variety of instruments with more than a dozen groups, including brass bands.

Jazz funerals were mostly for jazz musicians but occasionally they honor jazz ladies and special persons that have given a lot to jazz. Such is the case of Oliver Anderson better known as 'Pork Chop.'

*Advocate* - July 13, 1986 - 'Pork Chop'

They cut Oliver 'Pork Chop' Anderson loose with a traditional jazz funeral. Thousands of people marched to the sound of trumpets, trombones,
tubas and drums in a procession honoring a man whose family feared would be laid to rest in a potter's field.

Anderson died July 2 of cancer. He spent decades tap dancing on Bourbon Street, entertaining residents and tourists with impromptu steps and an infectious grin.

Anderson's body remained in a funeral home more than a week. His family lacked money for a funeral of any kind, more less a lavish send-off.

But scores of musicians, three grand marshals, and an estimated two thousand people, friends and neighbors, veteran second-liners and tourists, turned out Saturday. They marched under a hot sun down a broad, palm lined street to Our Lady of Guadeloupe Church.

'It would have been a tragedy if he did not have this kind of honor,' said E. J. Urso, president of Security Industrial Insurance Company, which owned the funeral home that donated its services. He said he was an LSU student to town for football games when he met Anderson in the 1940s.

When others learned of the family's desperation, donations poured in. Tony Reikmonenq, the nephew who took care of the dancer in his final days, said he spent an entire day taking telephone calls from people offering money.

'This city, full of love and compassion, opened up its heart,' said Rev. Charles Moran, who eulogized Anderson, 'and would not let that man go to his grave a pauper without saying a prayer and a thank you.'

It was quite a thank you.

New Orleans Police Capt. Wallace LeBan estimated the crowd outside the church at 2,000. I think that's a little on the light side.

New Orleans has a tradition of bands marching in funeral processions that goes back more than a century. In the procession brass players honed harmonies and drummers beat out rhythms that influenced the jazz that flowed up the Mississippi to the big cities of the North.

Twenty years ago, old-time new Orleans musicians feared the jazz funeral would become extinct.

'Will there be anyone left to play this music 20 years from now?' saxophonist Emanuel Paul said to AP reporter Sid Moody in 1964.

Wardell Lewis, 17, marched near the head of Anderson's jazz funeral Saturday. He ware a garnet shirt and pants. A gray sash hung across his chest.

Garnet and gray are the colors of the New Orleans Buck Jumpers Pleasure and Social club, an organization Lewis and a friend started four years ago.

Lewis, who will be a high school senior this fall, strutted and jumped, shaking two large feathered fans. He twirled, placed the fans on the ground,
and performed an intricate series of steps over them. Then he suddenly bent and swooped up the fans, stepping off in time with the band.

Trumpeter Greg Stafford, 33, the leader of the Young Tuxedo Brass Band, led his contingent into the procession from a small side street. He wanted to pay tribute to a man he said was "like a landmark in the city, the last of the few tap dancers we had left.

Ahead marched the Original Tuxedo Brass Band, some of its members bent by age, others hardly larger, and far younger, than the instruments they played.

A jazz funeral usually started solemnly, playing a dirge on the way to the cemetery.

The band would march from the grave playing a lively tune, a signal that they had 'cut loose' the deceased and it was time for life to go on.

Anderson's funeral began solemnly as well, but the tempo picked up on the way to the church.

'This is a traditional jazz funeral,' said Earnest Stewart, the gray-haired grand marshal of the Olympia Brass Band, 'but since he was an entertainer that makes it somewhat different.

The band started with 'Just a Closer Walk With Thee,' but we played at a faster tempo,' he said.

'It makes the family feel better,' Alfred Lazard, another of the marshals, said.

The pallbearers brought the dark brown coffin from the church. A spray of brightly colored flowers were woven through Anderson's tap shoes. His black derby hat, covered with dollar bills, sat in the center.

The hearse moved up the street slowly, paused under a small stand of trees, and they cut Anderson loose.

People in the crowd, danced, waved and yelled, 'bye Chop.' The band broke out in a lively tune, and the funeral procession drove away.

Jazz funeral send-off was musician's wish. - Times Picayune, October 12, 1986

To the stirring beat of 'When the Saints go Marching In', New Orleans musicians 'cut loose' one of their own with a traditional jazz funeral and spirited second-line Saturday.

Emanuel Sayles, 79, a banjo player who had been a mainstay of almost every Preservation Hall Jazz Band since it opened 25 years ago, was buried with the kind of send-off reserved for fellow musicians.

Sayles had specifically requested that the Olympia Brass band play his funeral but the band's ranks swelled to about 30, three times its normal size,
as friends and members of five bands joined to play for the Roman Catholic Mass.

There were six tubas adding an unusual bass foundation to the dirges and hymns, as well as the upbeat dance music during the second line after the beat of familiar dirges.

To escort the body out of the church, the bands played 'Red River Valley' and then accompanied the funeral procession six blocks to a city intersection, here they split away, sending the family on to the cemetery five miles away.

Members of Sayles' old band drove with them to play for the burial.

The others, forming two long lines on either side of the street, wailed 'Just a Closer Walk with Thee' as the hearse passed slowly through. One by one, member of the band reached out and touched the steel-colored hearse in a final gesture, burst into upbeat explosions and a solo trumpet blasted the opening strains of 'The Saints.'

Thomas Jefferson funeral - December 5, 1986

A traditional jazz funeral will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday at the Emile Labat Funeral Home, 1703 N. Claiborne Ave. The funeral procession will be led by members of Mr. Jefferson's band.

History of the Jazz funeral told by Danny Barker - Times Picayune, October 28, 1988

At 80, Danny Barker is the elder statesman of New Orleans jazz. The first funeral he saw was in 1917 in the 7th Ward, with his uncles, Willie and Lucien Barbarin, who were just a few years older. A reverend Winbush had died. 'And the Masonics turned out for him,' recalls Barker. 'Must have had 300 of 'em. They looked like an army, with the high plume hats like admirals wear.'

'They had four brass bands. My grandfather (Isidore Barbarin) was playing alto horn in Onward (brass band) . They had boundary lines between the 7th and 8th wards and you had to deal with roughnecks. Kids, you know? I saw all these cats with aprons on so I wondered where the dinner's gonna be. i didn't know nothin' about the Masonics. They looked like dressed-up waiters and my grandfather gave us one of those looks. He didn't have to say nothin.' so we followed at a distance. That was the first time I head Joe Oliver play. It was a grand affair.'

There have been many such grand affairs in a processional tradition that is anything but static. Until World War II, black burial societies charged modest monthly dues, and provided funds for a jazz funeral when an ordinary
person died. Today, with exorbitant burial costs, jazz funerals mainly occur when a musician dies. The artists generally perform for free.

'They make a mockery of funerals now,' says Barker. 'They'll dance a second-line right up into the church. I think it's disgraceful. Used to be. I don't care how notorious a man was, they'd stop playing that swing music a block before the funeral home and they'd move into muffled drums, playing a cadence up to the church and let people go in. Then the musicians rushed to the first barroom. Musicians see enough sadness. They know the service is gonna be an hour.'

Historian Al Rose, author of 'Storyville,' argues that the music played at funerals 'has deteriorated grossly. The tendency is toward more simplistic material. The tunes are riff tunes, where they were more melodic before. The last good music funeral I attended was for wild Bill Matthews in 1960. Eureka played the funeral. It's not only the bands, but the quality of funerals themselves-they don't have the kind of dignity they did before. That's largely as a result of tourists, and too much media.'

Media interest has intensified because there are fewer jazz funerals, and each one becomes a spectacle. Television teams and dozens of photographers hover outside the mortuaries, some taking pictures inside, waiting for the procession. when professor Longhair died in 1980, a documentary crew videotaped the entire wake, with the family's permission; however it triggered local news teams to enter the Majestic Mortuary on Dryades Street. Although Longhair (Richard Roeland Byrd) had acquired the status of a pop legend, the heavy media presence created a bizarre atmosphere at the wake.

The street parade the next day was one of the most chaotic ever. Thousands were packed so tightly outside the mortuary that it took 15 minutes for pallbearers to put the coffin in the hearse, and another 15 minutes before two brass bands, parading off in separate directions, siphoned crowds away, so the limousines could move.

Although purists like Barker and Rose bemoan a fading elegance, jazz funerals remain a dynamic presence in the city's cultural patterns. Each one is a piece of connective tissue, binding musicians, mourners and street celebrants to a common memory of music, with the artist-as-see-carrier of a living tradition.

Even as they become more rare, jazz funerals have also begun tapping more diverse cultural strands. Mardi Gras Indians, for example, are not associated with jazz-their idiom is in a more folkloric, percussive style-yet two of the most dramatic funerals honored George Landry, 'Big Chief Jolley' of the Wild Tchoupitoulas, and Percy Lewis, otherwise known as big Chief Pete of the Black Eagles.
At Chief Jolley's funeral in July 1980, DeJean's Olympia Brass Band played dirges as the procession moved along Constance street, while Chief Pete and a retinue of Indians paraded behind the casket, singing Indian chants. Two musics, two traditions carried over the street-the funeral melodies of the brass band, and the jangling tambourines and chants of the Indians swelling along the backstretch.

When Chief Pete died in November 1981, the funeral procession was something of an epic. Two marching clubs, the Scene Boosters and Mellow Fellows, moved behind the horse-drawn hearse, marching in carefully-sculpted cadences. A crowd of chanting Black Eagles practically sprinted as the horse pulled far ahead of the boosters. And then, bringing up the rear, the Dirty dozen Brass Band played 'Bye and Bye' in the slow tempo of a dirge. The marchers moved to the dirge, the Indians to their chants, and the spectacle went on through blocks and blocks of central city.

The tendency of late is for large numbers of musicians to turn out when a fellow artist dies. More than 50 performed in a long procession honoring saxophonist David Lastie in December. As changes in the funerals continue to unfold, what may appear to some as fading quality reveals an essence of renewal, growth and innovation to others.

Danny Barker recalls an ever rarer, death-defying practice. 'A woman had her husband stuffed. she had a special room in her house. Everybody knew Sadie Brown's old man was there. some Chinaman, like a taxidermist, took out all the body parts, oiled his skink, tanned him down and he stuffed him. This was in the 7th Ward, around 1914. I peeped in and saw Willie Brown. His eyes were kinda cocked. A lotta things happen. You see King tut? Willie Brown was probably stuffed 30 years. You know he looked good. King Tut was a lot older. It's the truth. Danny Barker don't lie.'

Marching Bands and Country Funerals

When asked about whether or not the tradition of having marching bands playing for funerals in the country or whether it was a New Orleans tradition only came up, it was said that it was a custom only in the city. This is not true. While there were some country towns (Point a la Hache, Donaldsonville and Thibodaux for example) did not have their town band play for a marching funeral, they did play for the funeral service, but, there was no need for procession as the cemetery was right next to the church. This was the placing in many of the country towns surrounding New Orleans. When the cemetery was further from the church or when the body might be
brought from another place, there were funeral processions and use of the brass band to play dirges, etc.

**Thibodaux**

Feb. 12, 1865 - funeral of Sylvere Navarre

'The fire department was out in full uniform and preceded by the St. Joseph Brass Band playing solemn music, his remains were followed to St. Joseph Cemetery by almost the entire population of the town.'

Feb. 28, 1885 - Death of H. D. Aucoin

'Buried in St. Joseph Cemetery, his remains having been followed to the tomb by the fire dept. in uniform and the Catholic Knights preceded by the brass band playing suitable music.'

In Lafourche Parish, in the town of Thibodaux, we read of the earliest band, the Philharmonic Band plays for a funeral - March 3, 1865

'Funeral of quiaropel-The Philharmonic Band promise to resuretate and discourse mournful strains on the occasion. The funeral procession will form out on Gulon's Common. The town constable will officiate as Grand Marshal and the town council Alderman and other dignitaries will honor the day with their presence. The Lafourche Militia Horse Marines, the Ugly Club, Chinese Pence society and other honorable bodies are expected to turn out en masse on the occasion.

Also: the funeral for Mr. Alfred St. Martin, a fireman. 'Funeral of Alfred St. Martin-fireman-the hearse, preceded by St. Joseph Band, playing appropriate music, preceded to St. Joseph church, followed by the members of his family, the mayor and members of the council.'

In the May 11th issue of the Thibodaux paper we find a brief statement stating that: 'Catholic funeral processions seem to be custom.'

On Oct. 26, 1872 in the Thibodaux newspaper:

'Funeral of Alfred St. Martin - fireman- The hearse, preceded by St. Joseph Band, playing appropriate music, proceeded to St. Joseph's c\Church followed by the members of his family, the mayor and members of town council.'

**Thibodaux** - April 17, 1875
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 bearers of Ascension Hook and Ladder Company.

**Thibodaux - May 11, 1878**

The Crescent Band, a band that plays for the funeral of Mr. Simon Braud. The funeral took place Wednesday morning, and the Ascension Hook & Ladder Company, of which the deceased was an honorary member, escorted the remains to the Catholic Cemetery, led by the Crescent Band.

The St. Joseph Band of Thibodaux plays for three funerals:

'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 Solomn Weinschench - funeral - Headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band.' (Nov. 5, 1881)

'Joseph Armand funeral - music furnished by St. Joseph and Crescent Brass bands combined.' (Nov. 5, 1881)

**Thibodaux - July 11, 1885**

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.

**Thibodaux - Nov. 22, 1890 - Judge Fancis Depaty 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 day. 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 the 7ioth ward. The deceased was a true and warm friend, generous to a fault, and had surround 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 Gouux, wife of our oldest and prominent druggist. To these and his many friends of the Pioneer extend its deepest sympathies.
Lockport - March 24, 1910

Funeral of Mrs. V. O. Prudhomme of Lockport. The ladies funeral was very largely attended, the Catholic Church being not large enough to accommodate the concourse. A brass bank escorted the remains to the grave.

Thibodaux Sentinel - Nov. 20 1919

Prof. Jos. Amedee, who had been sick for some time, died last Sunday evening at 7:10, age 32 years & 1 months. His funeral took place the following day at St. Joseph Catholic church, the last sad rites being attended in a body by the members of the Thibodaux Fire Department and the Thibodaux city Band, of which latter organization he was the leader.

Thibodaux - Oct. 26, 1872

Funeral of Alfred St. Martin - fireman - The hearse, preceded by the St. Joseph Band, playing appropriate music preceded to St. Joseph church followed by the members of his family. The mayor and members of council, Thibodaux fire company #1 and #2.'

Thibodaux - June 9, 1883

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 the Perseverance and Blue Bucket Fire Co's headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band. Deceased was an efficient member of Perseverance.

Thibodaux - Sept. 5, 1875

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. Joseph Brass Band 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.

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 Ammand 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 Armmand 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 inform dresses of the women presented a pleasing appearance.

**Napoleonville - Feb. 5, 1887**

Upon the announcement of the death of Mrs. Jones, Napoleonville Fire co. #1, at 10:30 the Independent Brass Band of Donaldsonville arrived, to convey in sweet harmony the body of one of its most ardent former admirers. The band in file and the firemen i guard, together with the many friends and relatives of the deceased, conducted the corpse to its final resting place amidst the soothing, sweet, yet doleful echoes of that lovely hymn 'Nearer My God to Thee,' executed with sweet pathos by the band.

**Thibodaux Sentinel - March 24, 1910**

Funeral of Mrs. V. O. Prudhomme of Lockport. The lady's funeral was very largely attended, the Catholic Church being not large enough to accommodate the concourse. A brass band escorted the remains to the grave.

**Donaldsonville**

**Donaldsonville Chief** of Sept. 8 1874 we find the following account:

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 relative, as attested by the large concourse that followed his remains to the tomb Thursday evening. The St. Joseph Brass Band 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.'

**Donaldsonville Chief-July 19, 1874**

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 no a band in the state that can excel the Silver Cornet in rapid mastery or faultless execution of a piece of music.
A country funeral - April 17, 1875 - 'Death of John F. Link:

About noon on Tuesday last, Mr. John F. Link departed this life after a long and painful illness from bronchitis, a disease with which he has been afflicted for a number of years. During the latter portion of last week, Mr. Link showed signs of convalescence, and it was hoped by his friends that he would recover at least his former health, but, alas their expectation were not to be realized. On Monday the patient suffered a relapse, and on Tuesday breathed his last, at the age of 50 years. He died calmly and was perfectly resigned to his fate, welcoming death as a happy release from the tortures of the ailment which made every respiration difficult and painful. The funeral took place Wednesday afternoon, and was largely attended. The procession formed at the residence of the deceased, at three o'clock, and moved to the Catholic church in the following order 1) The St. Cecile Brass Band, 2) Flag-bearers of Ascension Hook and Ladder Company, supported by a deputation from Phoenix fire company, 3) Ascension Hook and Ladder Co, drawing their truck, upon which was borne the coffin of the deceased member of the organization, 4) Members of Phoenix Fire Co. and a throng of citizens. The ceremonies at the church and at the tomb were solemn and imposing, befitting the mournful occasion, and as the last and burial rites were ended, a silent multitude of the dead man's friends turned away with a heartfelt sigh for his loss and a corresponding wish that his soul might find rest in the great hereafter.'

Donaldsonville Chief-May 11, 1887

The Crescent Band, a band that plays for the funeral of Mr. Simon Braud. The funeral took place Wednesday morning, and the Ascension Hook & Ladder Company, of which the deceased was an honorary member, escorted the remains to the Catholic Cemetery, led by the Crescent Band.

Donaldsonville Chief-Sept. 4, 1880

Death of Mrs. Wilkerson. Independent Band was present.

Donaldsonville Chief-July 23, 1881

Death of R. J. Duhe - funeral which takes place at 5:00 this evening. The St. Joseph Band will also attend.

Donaldsonville Chief-Nov. 5, 1881

Solomon Weinschenck funeral, headed by the St. Joseph Brass band (A Hebrew rite given)
Donaldsonville Chief-Dec. 22, 1883

'Mr. Casimir Martin, a well known colored citizen of our town, died last Tuesday morning, at the age of 54 years and was buried the same evening. He was a member of Blue Bucket Fire Co. and the funeral was conducted under the auspices of that organization. The long procession which followed the remains to the Catholic Cemetery was headed by the St. Joseph Brass band.

Donaldsonville Chief-July 11, 1885

John O’Malley funeral, was very largely attended. Phoenix Fire Co., of which the deceased was a member secretary, led the procession, headed by the St. Joseph Brass Band.

Donaldsonville Chief-April 5, 1890' - Death of Frederick Duffel

The obsequies were conducted by the sons of Veterans and that command leading the mournful process to the church and cemetery. carriages containing the children and nearest relatives of the deceased followed immediately behind the remains, then came the Phoenix Brass band, playing dirges.

Donaldsonville Chief - April 14, 1987

Brass Bands in the country parishes did play for funerals, but there are no accounts of the bands play 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 Gingryi 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 Gingryi 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. Thibautit, 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.

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 Band in rapid mastery or faultless execution of a piece of music (July 19, 1873)

The funeral is described in the obituary pages on July 19, 1873.

Death of Louis K Ferrier:

At an early hour last Sunday morning, Louis K Ferrier, son of Jos. L. Ferrier and E Leard, departed this life at the age of 221 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 man 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.

Donaldsonville Chief - June 20, 1885
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.

Donaldsonville Chief-Feb 2, 1924

St. Luke was one of two colored Catholic Churches (St. Joseph the other one at 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 after and also the blessing of the new edifice.

Donaldsonville Chief-June 25, 1932-Funeral of Edward Gibson.

Edward Gibson, a member of Claiborne Williams Orchestra and Brass Band for the past 19 years died at 40 years old. The funeral was at St. Pelus M. E. Church-largely attended by relatives and friends including members of the Claiborne Band in uniform. Gibson was rated a first class clarinet player.

Emanuel Sayles:

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 jazz tune coming back, but I wouldn't say it was a glamorous as New Orleans.

Baton Rouge

The Toots Johnson Band of Baton Rouge played the same kind of music New Orleans bands played. They played for lawn parties, dances, parades, funerals, etc. The funerals were the same as the ones in New Orleans. Played on horse-drawn wagons for that purpose. There was also a 2nd line, the same as in New Orleans.
Toots Johnson funeral

Thousands of white citizens of Louisiana and Mississippi will learn with real sorrow and regret of the passing yesterday morning of 'Toots' Johnson, well known Negro bandmaster at his home here—a death that brought to a close a colorful and happy life spent in the entertainment of others. 'Toots' will be laid to rest this afternoon at 8 o'clock, his own popular band furnishing the funeral music.

Joe Darenburg - They had funeral parades in Baton Rouge

Claiborne Williams Brass Band would play for funerals in Donaldsonville like in New Orleans but didn't have so much second line. They'd play a kind of jazz tune coming back, but I wouldn't say it was as glamorous as New Orleans.

Plaquemine Parish

There were lodges and burial societies in the country also. Mention is made about the country bands playing for them. Most of the men interviewed expressed the fact that there were very few marching funeral in the country. Sonny Henry also expressed this view:

'The funeral in the country: they'd leave church and go on back to the cemetery and come right back. (Sic: This was because the cemetery was on the church grounds.)

The Ironton Band played for country funerals

The Ironton band would play for funerals. If it was a band member they would play all the way to the cemetery, about three blocks. If it wasn't a band member or band fan, they would play for the undertaker, but not to the cemetery. They would make a circle from the undertaker and then as the hearse went to the cemetery they would start back to their homes. They would begin to play fun tunes, not the hymns they played on the way there. It wasn't an organized type playing, not military marching. They would just play instead of walking back to their houses. When they passed a house, one guy would be home and drop out.

Below are full concert band arrangements of 'Westlawn Dirge' and 'Abide With Me.' Smaller brass bands in New Orleans used only the main instrumental parts for their use.