



Bunk Johnson. Information

Number 14, Autumn 1999

The Swedish Bunk Johnson Society



EDITOR'S CORNER

It is very pleasing that Bunk is finally getting attention in New Iberia. With a proper grave, a Bunk Plaza and a Bunk Johnson Day we now can begin to imagine a statue. In this issue you'll find a touching story from Åke Sahlberg who spent the 7th of July in New Iberia and made it to the front page of *The Daily Iberian*.

After our last issue was published I got a letter from Bill Gottlieb informing me that we can now view virtually all 1600 of his classic jazz photos on line. Library of Congress has created a major site devoted to Gottlieb. The photos, taken between 1938 - 48, are crossindexed in a variety of ways. The quality is fabulous and the pictures of Bunk (five of them) are among the best ever taken.

Bill has made such a wonderful work and is such a nice person that I decided to feature him in this issue. The text is mainly from the much longer biography that you'll find if you go to:

www.jazzphotos.com or directly to
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wghtml/wghome.html>.

As you then are at LOC you might want to look in at their collection of old American sheet music. There are interesting things there if you are a jazz musician. //HH



PRES' RELEASE

This is my last column of this millennium. We hope to be able to continue running this little newsletter for some years yet. This year was the 50th anniversary of Bunk's passing away and I hope you all honoured it in a dignified manner. Myself, I did so together with Mike Hazeldine in Highgate (London) listening to Wally Fawkes, who didn't had the slightest idea of the very day (July 7th). But we did let him know it was the day Bunk died.

Åke Sahlberg, who takes his membership's responsibilities seriously, was in New Iberia on the very day. You'll see more of that in the following pages. Thank you, Åke, for being an excellent representative of the Society!

One of the very great events of this year (of this millennium, I think) was the launching of the very much awaited book on **Jelly Roll Morton** by Bill Russell. His labour of love that took about three decades to compile. It is a Masterpiece, indeed. See Floyd Levin's review in this number. I cannot recommend it enough. It is a **must** for every true lover of jazz. Also many

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thanks to **Karl Emil Knudsen**, a distinguished member, who took care of Bill's material and eventually published it. It is not only a fantastic book but it also has got lots of nice stuff about the great man Bunk as well. So I will make an urgent request: Buy it and read it. You will never regret it.

If that was the millennium's last book of tremendous importance, we have reason to believe that the first one in that class next millennium will be the book on Bunk by **Mike Hazeldine** and **Barry Martyn**. We all hope it will be finished within a not too distant future. I have read parts of it and I can assure you that it will be something extraordinary. And we hope Mike will come to Stockholm on January 8, 2000, our next Annual Meeting, to tell us about his findings.

Another great event that took place this year was the opening of the **Museum of Jazz** in Strömsholm, about 60 miles northwest of Stockholm. This is the third museum of its kind in the world (New Orleans and Kansas City being the other two). I think **Rolf Carvenius** and **Björn Bärnholm** (both distinguished members) have done a marvelous job. In a very short time they have succeeded in gathering a lot of real nice stuff. Currently, there is a "special corner" on **George Buck**, celebrating his 50 years as a record producer etc etc. Next year we can expect a "special corner" on **Bill Russell**, I am told. And of course some activities to honour **George Lewis**. I am very much looking forward to that. I must also mention the **Creole Cuisine** at the museum in its restaurant **Royal Garden Café**. Excellent. I visited it together with **Orange Kellin**, who has got a third of a century's experience of Cajun & Creole food in New Orleans. He was more than pleasantly pleased with what he was served.

Wishing you all a nice end to this millennium and let's face the new one with optimism and

resolution to let our dear old New Orleans music flourish for decades (millenniums) to come.

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THE ANNUAL MEETING 2000

WILL BE HELD ON THE 8TH OF JANUARY

COME TO THE SWEDISH JAZZ ARCHIVE



DILL PICKLES

Once again we can proudly announce that one of our members has been awarded The Louis Armstrong Memorial Prize by Trad Jazz Stockholm. Internationally well known trumpet player and arranger **Bent Persson** was one of three prize winners 1999. The other two were Frans Sjöström, bass saxophone player and radio producer from Malmö, and the young, talented banjo and guitar player Jacob Ullberger. Jacob is one of many young musicians from the northern parts of Stockholm guided into the field of traditional jazz by Bent.

A new book is on its way for release from University of California Press: "**From New Orleans to Texas and the Territories: Don Albert's Music & Life**" by Chris Wilkinson.

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Our member **George Buck** has bought the rights to **Sven Lange and his New Orleans Kids featuring Blue Marit** for his GHB label. (For further info see BJI # 6)

Member **John Chilton** has published his book on **Red Allen "Ride Red Ride"**. This gem is highly recommended.

Another book that we recommend, also by one of our members, **Brian Wood**, is **"The Song For Me - a glossary of New Orleans Musicians"**. It is a two volume book in A4 format, also available on CD-ROM.

One of our members, distinguished piano player **John Royen** from New Orleans was very nicely presented in a recent issue of **The Mississippi Rag**.

Philip R. Evans

Our member **Philip R. Evans** died July 23, 1999 in Bakersfield, California.

Phil, a noted author of early jazz greats is known as the ultimate researcher. He has been called "the best friend Jazz ever had" and each of his books have been declared the definite work on the subject. Everybody who's been around our President for some time has heard him express endless admiration for Phil's book on **Bix Beiderbecke**. Phil was respected by all for his honesty, compassion, diligence, talent and his marvelous sense of humor.

FOUND ON THE INTERNET

From a newsgroup on the Internet <dixielandjazz@islandnet.com> we quote the following:

I wonder if all of you are aware of the following

regarding our good friend **Floyd Levin**?

Floyd Levin has been voted "No. 1 Jazz Journalist" by readers of **Mississippi Rag** in their recent poll reported in the August issue of the magazine.

Also honored in this category were: **Whitney Balliett**, **Tex Wyndham**, **Dan Morgenstern** and **George Buck**.

Watch for Floyd's new book **"CLASSIC JAZZ - A Personal View of the Music and the Musicians"**, which is currently @ the publisher - **University of California Press**. It should be out soon.

From the **NYTimes Books in Brief** review section, November 7, 1999

LOUIS ARMSTRONG, IN HIS OWN WORDS

Selected Writings. Edited by **Thomas Brothers**. Oxford University, \$25.

By **TERRY TEACHOUT**

"Man, I'm a two-fingered blip on my portable typewriter," **Louis Armstrong** once told a radio interviewer. He carried it everywhere he went and put it to good use, eventually accumulating a body of writing that includes two books, dozens of magazine and newspaper articles, thousands of letters and a sizable cache of unpublished autobiographical manuscripts, most of which have since made their way into the **Armstrong Archives** at **Queens College**. **Thomas Brothers** has drawn on all these sources for **"Louis Armstrong, In His Own Words,"** in which the greatest jazz soloist of the 20th century proves to have been a savory prose stylist as well. **Armstrong's** grammar and punctuation may have been homemade, but he had a wonderfully personal voice (he wrote the way he talked) and a fine knack for storytelling. While none of this will surprise readers of **"Satchmo: My Life in New**

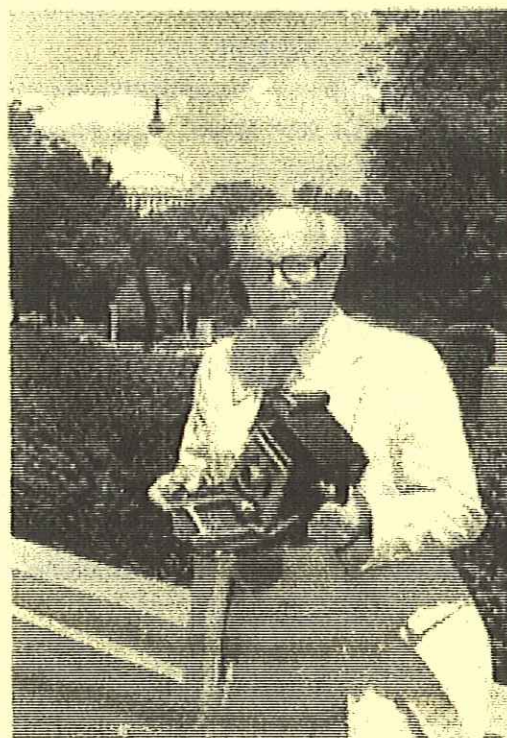
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Orleans," the most vivid of all jazz autobiographies, Armstrong was even more pungent when writing for friends, and the present volume contains reminiscences and reflections blunt enough to send eyebrows flying ("The Negroes has always connived against each other and they still do. They never will be like the Jewish people. I should say not. . . . The Negroes will pan another Negro because he is trying to have a little something half way decent"). Brothers, who teaches music at Duke University, is a skillful and sensitive editor, and though some of the pieces he includes have previously seen print, this is the first time they have appeared in authoritative texts in which Armstrong's flavorful orthographic peculiarities are scrupulously preserved. The only things wrong with "Louis Armstrong, In His Own Words" are that it does not contain more letters and is not twice as long. The additional articles listed in the appendix could easily fill a second volume.

We had planned to include a list of interesting jazz links in this issue, but found out in time that the Gota River Band already had done this rather gruesome research work. Visit their site at <http://listen.to/gotariver>. Ingemar Wägerman has done a great job and the site offers a lot of interesting links. More than something for everyone interested in traditional jazz.



MEET A PROMINENT MEMBER



[Gottlieb with his Speed Graphic camera, July 1997. Photographer: Jim Higgins].

William P. Gottlieb

"Gottlieb stopped photographing jazz musicians in 1948. No one has surpassed him yet" (The New Yorker).

Bill Gottlieb's interest in jazz resulted from a food poisoning incident in 1936. The day before the end of his sophomore year (Lehigh University), Gottlieb's fraternity house served undercooked pork, which caused him and several of his classmates to come down with trichinosis. While bedridden over the summer, Gottlieb was visited frequently by his high school buddy "Doc" Bartle, a classical pianist and an ardent jazz fan. Bartle shared his interest with Gottlieb, often bringing along Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington records when he visited.

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In 1938, Gottlieb's last year at Lehigh, he obtained a position at the Washington Post. Several months after he began working for the Post, Gottlieb volunteered to write a weekly jazz column for the Sunday edition of the paper. His request was granted, and he was paid an extra ten dollars a week to write the column, which became the first of its kind to be published on a regular basis in a daily newspaper.

Determined to illustrate his articles, Gottlieb traded in hundreds of records from his extensive collection--which consisted mainly of promotional records he had received for review--for a 3-1/4 x 4-1/4-inch Speed Graphic press camera, film, and flashbulbs.

Because Gottlieb did not get paid for illustrations and his photographic supplies were bulky and expensive, he limited each photo session to three or four shots. This approach was, of course, ideally suited to the discipline required by the Speed Graphic and the use of flashguns. Gottlieb's portraits are well-thought-out character studies, not candid or pictures selected from dozens of exposures. He was able to obtain memorable results because he knew the music, the musicians, and what he wanted each photograph to show.

By the age of twenty-two Gottlieb was known as "Mr. Jazz" in the Washington, D.C., area. In addition to his position at the Post, he had a half-hour interview show on WRC radio (an NBC outlet) and a thrice-weekly disc jockey job at WINX, a local independent radio station. On his radio shows, Gottlieb often had musical guests from the Earle Theater or the Howard Theater and would play music by the featured artists as well as music by those who influenced them. Other guests included jazz personalities such as Nesuhi and Ahmet Ertegun, the sons of the Turkish Ambassador to the United States. Ahmet Ertegun and Herb

Abramson founded Atlantic Records, while Nesuhi Ertegun became head of the sister international company. Gottlieb and the Erteguns were good friends, dining frequently at one another's homes. Nesuhi and Gottlieb practiced table tennis in the main ballroom of the Turkish Embassy and competed in the doubles competition of the National Table Tennis Championships.

In 1941 Gottlieb quit his job and enrolled as a graduate student in economics at the University of Maryland at College Park (a suburb of Washington). However, "Mr. Jazz" remained active in the jazz scene, continuing to write his weekly Post column and do radio shows.

Gottlieb was drafted into the Army Air Corps in 1943 and eventually served as both a photo officer and classifications officer.

After World War II, Gottlieb went to New York City to pursue his journalistic career. One of his first stops was the office of Down Beat magazine in the RKO building at Rockefeller Center. The staff was already familiar with Gottlieb's Post column and radio shows and offered him a position as assistant editor to Mike Levin. Gottlieb's primary duties were to write concert reviews and to compile a catchall column of jazz news from around the world; occasionally he illustrated articles he did not write. He was still not paid to be a photographer, yet he became better known for his photographs than for his articles.

"Through the Looking Glass" was a special feature in Down Beat that showed Gottlieb's fondness for reflecting his subjects in mirrors. A musician was placed in front of a dressing room mirror and then photographed to capture the interior of the room. In a portrait of Duke Ellington taken backstage at the Paramount Theater, Gottlieb photographed a reflection of

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the elegant Duke's extensive wardrobe, his collection of various creams and powders, and fan notes wedged into the mirror's frame.

In addition to working for Down Beat, Gottlieb submitted a monthly piece for the Record Changer. Four or five large photos were included in each issue as illustrations for his regular column. Intermittently, Gottlieb also published work in the Saturday Review, Collier's, and the New York Herald Tribune.

Many of Gottlieb's photographs were taken in New York City clubs on Fifty-second Street or "Swing Street," the block between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. The ground floors of brownstone houses had been converted into restaurants and nightclubs, notably jazz clubs such as Club Downbeat, the Famous Door, Jimmy Ryan's, the Three Deuces, the Onyx Club, and the Spotlite. Kelly's Stable, the Hickory House, and Birdland were located a short distance away. One could coddle an inexpensive drink--for maybe fifty cents--and go from club to club all night to hear world-famous jazz, from Dixieland at Jimmy Ryan's to the more contemporary sound at the Three Deuces.

Practical considerations came into play when Gottlieb was on assignment for magazines and newspapers. Since he usually did not know in advance whether his photographs would be published in a single column, two columns, or a half page, he produced images that were clear even when limited in size. He often focused on capturing one or two individuals instead of, for example, an entire orchestra. Gottlieb also favored vertical shots, which naturally reflect the shape of the human face and body.

Gottlieb joined the Stan Kenton Orchestra on its tour of Southern states in 1948. For nearly a week, he served as the band's photographer as it traveled hundreds of miles a day and

played numerous concerts. After the tour, Gottlieb retired from the jazz field. By the late 1940s the jazz scene in New York, and specifically Fifty-second Street, was starting to perish because of a recession in the music business and a newly issued entertainment tax.

Gottlieb himself grew tired of hanging out in nightclubs every night, as he explained in an interview: "Most important of all, I was really something of a square; I had a wife and children, and the joys of staying out until four a.m. with musicians, even those who were my idols, had evaporated, especially since I was often the only sober one there."

Gottlieb's career as a jazz photographer and journalist can be divided into three periods: his stint as "Mr. Jazz" in Washington, D.C., his post-war position at Down Beat, and finally, nearly thirty years later, his "retirement" in which he has made another career out of his earlier work. More than two hundred of his striking jazz photographs, along with personal recollections, are published in *The Golden Age of Jazz* (Simon and Schuster, 1979; Pomegranate Artbooks, 1995). The book earned an ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers) Award and is now in its eleventh printing. In 1997 Down Beat honored Gottlieb with its Lifetime Achievement Award--the first time the honor had gone to a photographer--and in that same year, the New Jersey Jazz Society honored him as the non-musician who did the most for jazz.

Concerning Gottlieb's photographs, Walter Schaap commented, "They are such wonderful photographs and so typical of the artist they represented that it stuck in my memory that this is what Coleman Hawkins looked like, and this is what Lester Young looked like, and this is what Louis Armstrong looked like, so that today, when I recall these musicians whom I

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knew, I think of them in terms of what they look like in Bill's photographs." A skilled craftsman, Gottlieb was able to capture the personalities of jazz musicians in a sensitive, storytelling manner. He preferred dignified depictions of serious artists at work, rather than posed portraits, and discouraged mugging and clowning. (An exception is the case of Cab Calloway, who was known for his flamboyance.) The photographs show a natural affinity for the artists' humanity and a genuine respect for their creative art. Gottlieb's work is an important contribution to the documentation of American culture during a period when jazz music thrived despite the Depression and World War II.

NEW BUNK RECORDS

Document Records of Austria has issued two CDs of interest.

1. Bunk Johnson and his Band. Live at the Stuyvesant Casino NYC 1947.
2. Bunk Johnson
 - with the Yerba Buena Jazz Band 1944
 - with Doc Evans Band 1947.

The sessions have all been issued before on NOLA, Good Time Jazz and Paragon respectively.

We are also told that **The San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation** is planning a CD of early Lu Watters recordings 1937 - 1943. Included on this CD will be three performances by Bunk with members of the Yerba Buena Jazz Band recorded at the Big Bear Tavern. The tunes are Riverside Blues, St Louis Blues and Ballin' The Jack. This record might very well be available as you read this.

A visit to New Orleans and New Iberia in July 1999

by Åke Sahlberg

50 years ago great Willie Geary Bunk Johnson died. He has played such an important role in my music life so it was not difficult for me to make up my mind to go to New Iberia to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his death. I wrote some short letters to persons that were involved or had interests in his life, saying that I didn't know if there would be any ceremonies but I would personally feel better to be in New Iberia on July 7, the day he left this earthly life, just to honour him that day. I sent these letters to Emily Evans, Harold Drob, Austin Sonnier and Bruce Raeburn. I had a faint hope to meet them there.

In New Orleans

Before my trip to New Iberia I spent one week in New Orleans, most of the time studying Bill Russell's huge material at the Historic New Orleans Collection. As far as I can see it was very wise that this institution was given the responsibility of taking care of Bill's material. They seem to be highly competent to catalogize and care for the material. They are nice and helpful. I talked to Nancy Ruck, curator of the Williams Research Center and the person who is responsible of the Bunk material. I am much grateful to another curator, Mr Mark Cave, who took forward the papers, letters and photos from the archive that I wanted to work with and even made copies of some parts.

It's true that Mike Hazeldine talked about Bunk's letters at one of our annual meetings some years ago but I had no idea that there were so many and so interesting. They are to and from Bunk, Bill, Gene Williams, Maude etc. And after having read some 50 or more one gets a more profound knowledge of the person **Bunk**. They show that Bunk's life was a

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struggle all the time and his economy was always poor. And he was worried that he was unable to send money from San Francisco, New York and other places to his family down in New Iberia. It is touching and even pathetic to read how sad he was when he couldn't send money for Emily's schoolbooks and dress and shoes for her graduation. It's true that they often write of the bad sides of his personality but I think Harold Drob is right in saying that Bunk was a nice and caring kind of person.

In many of his letters there is a begging for money ---often for money to a train ticket home to New Iberia! He doesn't seem to have been happy in San Francisco, New York, Boston and other cities --always longing for going home! He often found the climate too cold. I find one letter of this kind very confusing in which he asks Weeks Hall to buy him a bicycle as birthday present in Dec 1948. He even gave the address where to find it: Jones and Son. B F Goodrich Dealer. Confusing because I think Bunk had had his first stroke at that time. Anyway, for me it stands clear that these letters (I mean Bunk's and Maude's) are written by intelligent and even schooled persons.

I made copies of 20 letters and some highly interesting photos. You find one letter in this B.J.I. written on May 17 1942, that is just about three weeks before his first recordings, on Jazz Man, on June 11.

I spent two days at Tulane University. William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive has moved to another building just across the campus park to Joseph Merrick Jones Hall. Bruce was on holiday. I found some interesting photos of high quality, many of them taken by Bill Russel. It is now permitted to make copies but the high cost, \$ 25 each, made it impossible for me to order any.

I listened to an interview Bill had made with

Maude. I'm sorry to say surprisingly uninteresting, dealing most with her family relations before she met Bunk. (around 1928). Why not ask her e.g. about her stay in New York with Bunk in 1945 (or 1946)? But Maude's voice is fascinating (as Bunk's). It has a slow, singing, beautiful quality. I asked to get a copy but that was not allowed.

In New Iberia

On July 2nd I took a westbound Greyhound bus and after three hours I was the happy person to be in New Iberia. I had some days to walk around in the holy city and attempt to retrace the steps of Bunk and feel the air that he once had breathed.

The normal procedure for me in New Iberia is walking around to places with connection to Bunk ---The Shadows, and the houses he lived in --- 251 School Alley in 1939, 511 Providence St. in 1942. This house still exists and should be nominated to cultural monument! It all started here and I'm sure I heard Bunk play beautiful Selmer trumpet for Mary Karoley, and Dave Stuart, Gene Williams, Bill Colburn coming to pick up Bunk and take him to New Orleans and start everything. 638 Franklin Street is Bunk's address 1943 to 1949. Actually Maude moved to the house when Bunk was in San Francisco. The street has changed name to Malain Street and the house was, as we all know, pulled down in 1978, some short time after I had the good luck to spend a lonely night there. In a letter I suggested Bill to try to make a museum of the house but it was too late. Conrad's Rice Mill (Konriko) is another place I must go to and finally the holy tomb at St. Edward's cemetery. It's always very hot, 30 - 35°C , and the high humidity in this Mississippi delta land makes you sweat much but I always really enjoy myself.

But this year it turned out to be quite different.

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I was kind of transported in fine cars instead of walking. And it is true! Our Bunk society is not the only one in this world. There is another named:

BUNK JOHNSON / NEW IBERIA Jazz, Arts Heritage Festival. President:

Mary S. Bashay

Mary is an enthusiastic, idealistic, ambitious and very active person who has managed to get even high ranked persons interested in promoting and giving support to the great son of New Iberia. She is a happy kind of person who knows everyone and all her contacts are of course very important to get supporters to her projects. We went to the Court House and I was introduced to Judge Charles Porter who is one of the big supporters. I was even introduced to Mr Mike Davis, the new manager of Konriko. Mr Conrad himself, whom I met some years ago, is now dead. I showed Mike the classical photo of Bunk sitting on the loading platform. He was interested and will now promote the projects.

We went to the library to look up in the archive the Daily Iberian from July 7, 1949, the day of Bunk's death. (Thursday) First page article titled: " 'Bunk' Johnson, Louis Armstrong Teacher, dies " The first sentence of the article reads: " The fabled horn of Bunk Johnson is stilled in death." The paper one week later says: "No Dirge For Bunk Johnson At Funeral Here Saturday ". The first sentence: "There was no dirge played as the funeral cortege proceeded to St. Edward's Catholic Church here, no dirge from the church to the cemetery --- no ear-splitting cornets and wailing clarinets playing jazz pieces as the mourners came from the cemetery."

Mary has managed to arrange two Bunk Johnson Festivals. - in April 1998 and 1999. The programmes are really ambitious starting with a solemn assembly in the library, ribbon cutting, music by St. Edward's Church Angelic

Choir and then outdoor music, art exhibitions, gospel music, Memorial jazz mass in the church, music performed by different schools, etc. I saw the 1998 Fest on video. Harold and Pearl Drob had travelled from California and Harold held the introduction keynote speech. Emily and Roland Evans were there and Bunk's second daughter, Theresa Johnson Andrew, still living in New Iberia with her daughter Gloria Andrew. I must confess that I didn't know that Bunk had two daughters. They even had Bunk's second funeral with brass band and hearse and all that. (like Buddy Bolden some years ago.).

And I can tell you that Bunk's Plaza really exists.

We went to Lafayette to visit Austin Sonnier, the great authority of the jazz played west of New Orleans. The title of his last published book is " Second Linin', Jazzmen of Southwest Louisiana, 1900 - 1950 " You find articles about, among others, Bunk, Lawrence Duhe', Hypolite Charles and Harold Potler, who recently died and an interesting article about the Banner Orchestra, the best band in this Bayou area ---that included jazzmen as Bunk, George Lewis, Lawrence Duhe', Evan Thomas.

I'm sorry to say that Austin's health is not good, but fortunately he accepted our visit and we spent a really nice and stimulating afternoon together with his wife. Many thanks, Austin!

Harold Drob is recovering from a long illness. I was happy to hear his warm voice on phone from California, a voice that brought memories from his successful stay in Stockholm soon ten years ago. Who will ever forget that?

July, 7th 1999 At the grave.

Mr Paul Schwing is another prominent person

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in New Iberia. He is the Mayor of the Main Street. He drove me around to different interesting places and helped me a lot. He is the owner of a flower shop and he let make a beautiful wreath to the white ribbon with the inscription in golden letters : "The Swedish Bunk Johnson Society 7 / 7 1999," that I had brought from Sweden. Now I might have made a mistake. I chose natural flowers, not artificial because I always do so. But in just this case it might have been wiser to take artificial ones that don't wither.

At noon we assembled at the cemetery under the hot Louisiana sun. I held a speech -- around 15 min. I don't have to tell the readers of the B.J.I. much of it but I want to write down some words shortly:

In the 30's Bunk led a hard, troublesome and poor life. He remembered the time when he was a popular trumpet player and he dreamed of making a comeback. And the dreams suddenly seemed to come true when the book *Jazzmen* was published in 1939 and he got the chance to make recordings in 1942. When these records appeared in Europe after World War II the music struck us hard and deep and flooded into the blood of many young people. The music entranced us and a kind of passionate relationship was established that stayed in some of us all life long. We realised it was the real thing! And many orchestras were founded in the high schools in France, England, Sweden and other countries trying to play the traditional New Orleans music as heard from Bunk's records.

Then I pointed out his successes --- he played in San Francisco, New York, Boston, Chicago with his own band from New Orleans or with different groups in front of enthusiastic, admiring, applauding audience. --- he even met Louis Armstrong --- a very important person in this context. I didn't say much about the

economic problems he had all his life.

Finally it is a bit tragical and perhaps even typical for his life, that some years after his death his band toured Europe, and later even Japan, and "his" musicians were treated as kings and welcomed at the airports by brass bands playing New Orleans music learned from Bunk's records. Bunk would have loved the experience of being fully appreciated at last. Then I laid down the wreath on his grave --- thanking the great man for so many great music experiences he has given the world.

Photographers and a reporter from the *Daily Iberian* were present and the act was video-filmed.

"OH MR JELLY"

A Jelly Roll Morton Scrapbook

Compiled by Bill Russell

This book is probably the most eagerly anticipated volume in the history of jazz literature. It is the result of Bill Russell's arduous quest for the full details of Jelly Roll Morton's monumental achievements.

Back in 1929, I found a record by Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers, he told me. It was 'Shoe Shiner's Drag' and I liked it so much, I never stopped collecting. This was during the depression and I could buy records for a few cents each. After finding that first Morton record, I could not stop. Eventually I had every Morton recording.

Seven decades after Bill Russell heard his first Jelly Roll Morton record, his definitive Morton chronicle has finally been published.

Those who are aware of Russell's lifelong achievements as a journalist, scholar, musician and historian, acknowledge his position as the

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world's foremost authority on New Orleans jazz. He devoted most of his 87 years to explorations of the music's deeply shrouded history.

He assiduously shunned any praise and humbly refused recognition for a lifetime devoted to the perpetuation of traditional jazz. Bill was a gentle and selfless man with no interest in fame or financial gain. He modestly declined requests from journalists in the U.S. and Europe anxious to interview him.

His modest New Orleans French Quarter apartment had no telephone, no air conditioning and a door bell that didn't work. He fed stray animals, nursed fallen birds - and even kept a dish of corn flakes on the floor for mice that visited during the night. Unfortunately, Bill Russell, a beloved member of our jazz fraternity, died on August 9, 1992, just a month after finishing his book.

Since then, publisher Karl Emil Knudsen and his JazzMedia staff have faced the enormous task of transcribing hundreds of pages of text into computer files, inserting the many photos, indexing names, places and photos, proof-reading, etc.

Despite its seemingly lofty price, the book, beautifully printed on quality paper, weighing almost eight pounds, is probably the biggest bargain of the century. The 720 oversize pages are crammed with more than 100 photos most of which have never been previously published.

This is virtually a treasure trove of data - record labels, documents, correspondence, financial statements, clippings, advertisements, many pages of Morton's hand-written scores, an unfinished autobiography, and his will and death certificate.

Also included are early New Orleans recollections and intriguing details of Morton's

declining years by Russell's friend, the composer's music publisher, Roy Carew.

Fittingly, the title is an actual quotation by Morton from his 1926 Red Hot Peppers' recording of 'Smoke House Blues'. Following one of his signature piano breaks, he strikes a single treble key and self-approvingly holler: *Oh, Mister Jelly!*

With that exception, the remaining quotes are based on extensive interviews Russell conducted with one hundred of Morton's colleagues, admirers and friends. From these various perspectives a vivid image of the inexplicable pianist-composer-arranger-band leader comes into clear focus. (A chapter I wrote for Bill in 1981 about Jelly's first wife, Anita Gonzalez, appears on page 543.)

Jelly Roll died on July 10, 1941. He was a musical genius who claimed to have invented jazz. Perhaps his contention was hyperbolic; but his great compositions and recordings are valuable legacies and will always vitalize the music as long as musicians play jazz.

During the passing years, Bill Russell's comprehensive tome, "Oh Mr Jelly" will continue to illuminate the life of the enigmatic New Orleans jazzman, and will provide vital data for future generations of jazz historians to study.

Review by Floyd Levin.

KING TUT - AN INFLUENCE ON RECORDED JAZZ?

By Floyd Levin

The Los Angeles Times, during an ongoing series, "Stories That Shaped the Century", recently published a reproduction of their front page dated February 17, 1923. The headline of the lead story proclaimed:

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TOMB OPENED AT LUXOR
PHARAOH'S GLORY DAZZLING
EGYPT OF EXODUS YIELDS UP SECRETS
HIDDEN THIRTY CENTURIES AGO
TUTANKHAMEN'S SARCOPHAGUS, "ALL
GOLD", STANDS AS IN TIMES OF MOSES!

This fascinating news rapidly spread throughout the world and revived an intense interest in Egyptian lore that had been dormant since Napoleon's army shot the nose off the famous Sphinx in 1798.

After the tomb discoveries became known, King Tutankhamen, son-in-law of the legendary seductress Nefertiti, was familiarly known as "King Tut". He was not a major ruler, he had reigned only eight years. At the time of his death in 1350 B.C., he was less than 20 years old.

Of the 27 pharaohs buried at Luxor in the Valley of the Kings, only King Tut's crypt was found in its original state and had not been looted over the years. His sarcophagus was formed from a ton of gold. It was surrounded by a mass of precious objects - vases, urns and thousands of golden, alabaster, and jeweled treasures covered by the dust of thirty centuries. According to the 1923 story sent to the Times by cable, this was *one of the most wonderful sights ever witnessed by Egyptologists.*

The important finding profoundly influenced travel, women's fashions, hair styles, romantic novels and poetry. The primitive film industry responded with mummy horror films that continue to this day. Egyptian mania was additionally reflected in American popular music as Tin Pan Alley's tunesmiths leaped at the opportunity to prosper from the news.

Eddie Green, who wrote "A Good Man Is Hard

To Find", was among the first contributors to the Egyptian hit parade with "King Tut Blues". The tune "In A Tent" appeared on a Gennett recording just three months after the announcement of the Middle East discovery. It soon was followed by Warner's Black Aces' Okeh record of "The Camel Walk". "Purple Rose Of Cairo" was recorded by Piron's New Orleans Orchestra in 1924 and became a theme song of this popular Crescent City group.

Music stores around the country were suddenly deluged with sheet music and phonograph records bearing such exotic titles as: Egyptian Ella, Cairo Rag, Song Of The Sands, Desert Dreams, Desert Star, Desert Sands, My Desert Fantasy, Dawn In The Desert, Cleopatra Had A Jazz Band, etc.

These and scores of similar titles, soon pushed "Yes, We Have No Bananas" from the top ranking songs of the period. A number titled "The Sphinx" was on several record labels including an Edison release by Ross Gorman's Virginians in 1926. "Desert Blues" was recorded by Elmer Snowden in 1926 and by Jimmy Rodgers in 1929.

Nacio Her Brown composed "Love Songs Of The Nile". The bridge to Arthur Freed's lyrics, inordinately sensuous for the era, included: *My arms await you, come for a while, and I will sing you 'Love Songs Of The Nile'.*

Eight years after the exhumation, Walter Doyle wrote "Egyptian Ella", a bit of tongue-in-cheek sentimentality. Ted Weems made the first recording followed by Ted Lewis with an all-star band featuring Fats Waller, Benny Goodman, Muggsy Spanier and George Brunies. It was later recorded by the Milt Herth quartet. The lyrics spun the lurid tale about an overweight Brooklyn dancing girl who sailed to Egypt "to forget". *"She does a dance, and when she starts by the River Nile, the boys all take their*

Bunk Johnson.

sweethearts, and throw them to the crocodiles".

The opening of the child-king's tomb inspired several generations of songwriters. As late as 1938, Raymond Scott recorded his composition, "Egyptian Barn Dance". A year later, Spud Murphy's "Sand Dune" appeared on record racks. Sidney Bechet and his New Orleans Feetwarmers recorded "Egyptian Fantasy" in 1941.

So, it appears that the saga of King Tut, ranking highly among "The Stories That Shaped the Century" also had a compelling influence on the American musical scene. A casual perusal through and discography will reveal troves of songs based on that historical archaeological discovery.

HYPOLITE CHARLES - CORNET PLAYER

by AUSTIN SONNIER (with kind permission of the author)

Cornet player Hypolite Charles was born in Parks, Louisiana, on April 18, 1891. The son of a school teacher, he was encouraged in his interest in music by his father, Auguste, and upon organizing his own band prior to going to New Orleans his father joined him as a member. The other musicians in the band were Theophile Thibodeaux on trumpet, Hypolite Potier cornet, Simon Thibodeaux trombone and Gabriel Ledet on bass. He also played with the Vitale Band in Loreauville, Louisiana, with Jules Day on trumpet, Tom Vitale second trumpet, Louis Vitale on trombone and Pierre Vitale on bass. Auguste Charles often joined them on baritone horn. In 1908 Hypolite moved to New Orleans to study music with Eugene Moret, the brother of George Moret, leader of the Excelsior Brass Band. Within a year he was working with Manuel Perez at a dance hall on

Dauphine and Elysian Fields. In 1911 he joined the Silver Leaf Orchestra which was led by violinist Albert Batiste. Sam Dutrey played clarinet, his brother Honore was on trombone, Philip Nickerson played guitar, Jimmy Johnson who had been with Bolden, played bass, Willie Carter was on drums. The band played mostly for debutante balls and private parties along St Charles Avenue. Hypolite also began playing parades with the Excelsior Brass Band. While playing for funerals and parades the band would march all over town on streets that were rocky and full of potholes. Once, in the French Quarter, he stumbled over a large rock and cut his lip badly. After that he would not play in streets with bands that read music. He subsequently joined "Papa" Celestin's Tuxedo Brass Band and remained with it for a number of years. He joined the Maple Leaf Orchestra in 1919 and opened with them at the Washington Youree Hotel in Shreveport, Louisiana, on July that year. They came back to New Orleans in the fall, and a few months later Charles organized his own orchestra and started working at the Moulin Rouge. His group composed of Sonny Henry trombone, Joe Welch drums, Sam Dutrey clarinet, Emile Bigard violin, and Camille Todd piano. He had studied with Camille Todd in 1909.

When Armand J. Piron went on his second trip to New York, Charles Orchestra replaced him at Tranchina's with only one change in personnel, Robert Hall replaced Dutrey on clarinet.

Charles retired from playing music in 1925 when, after performing for a Sunday afternoon teadance, he suffered a ruptured spleen. He was confined to his bed for a year. After getting well he started selling life insurance in New Orleans, and continued to do so until 1940, when he turned his accounts over to Peter Bocage and returned to Parks to take over his father's grocery store.

The following interview took place during the summer of 1975 at Mr Charles' home in Parks, Louisiana.

Bunk Johnson.

Austin Sonnter: When did you play your first funeral job?

Hypolite Charles: I started playing for funerals when I began playing with Sonny ("Papa") Celestin's Tuxedo Band... Oscar Celestin. We used to call him "The Dog" because of the way he looked in the face. Kind of like a bulldog... real mean looking but one of the finest persons I know. It was a pleasure working with him. He was a real gentleman and he didn't go for all that foolishness like a lot of the other musicians did. Music was his business and he took pride in doing it that way. He was responsible. Know what I mean?

There was a lot of musicians, good ones too, that lived that bad life. All they did was stand on the streets and drink and had a lot to do with these women that would hang around the nightclubs. They had a lot of fun. They had a lot of fun, but they didn't live long. All that foolishness is not healthy for you. Well, Mr Celestin didn't go for all that. He was a respectable person.

Now we played quite a few parades for different lodges and social clubs. But the funeral processions were really something. That was an all-day affair sometimes. First, the band had to meet where the body was... at the dead person's house where all the family and friends would be. Then, when the time came, they would take the body out of the house and would all march to the church. No music, just the procession. Well, at the church is where it would all start. Sometimes there would be five or six preachers, and they all had to say something about the dead person. Man, that would take forever. While all of this was going on we would sit outside the church and wait. Some of the fellows who liked to take a little drink would walk over to a barroom and buy beer or something and wait there.

Now after all the ceremonies were over... that would sometimes take more than two hours... they would take the body out of the church

and we would all get together to start the march to the cemetery. Then the work began. You had to walk down these streets that had big holes and rocks all over the place. They didn't have no pavement like today, mister. And it was really hard to read from the little hymn book and watch where you were walking. I got hurt that way one time. Fell down and hurt myself real bad.

And those graveyards, some of them was a disgrace. Old, broken down tombs... trash. In fact, there was one that I remember was so bad the city or somebody went in there and cleaned everything out. Tore all the old tombs down and got rid of all the junk. They built a shopping center on that spot.

A.S. Do you remember the name of that cemetery?

H.C. No, I can't recall the name right now. But it was bad in those days. People just didn't have the money. I always had a job besides playing music. You had to do that to make ends meet. I worked for the largest bank in New Orleans and I also sold insurance. I gave Peter Bocage my job when I quit the insurance business to return to Parks.

Well, on the way to the graveyard we would always play slow pieces... hymns, to keep the funeral procession moving at a slow pace. People would hear the music and would come on the outside and stand on the street and watch. Some of them would join in the walk to the graveyard. They didn't have to know who was dead. That's the way it was back then.

Once in the graveyard, we would stand back and wait again. There was a bit more to be said over the body then it would be pushed into the tomb. When it was all over... ashes to ashes, dust to dust... we would assemble again and the person who hired us would give the word for us to lead them out of the graveyard. The drummer would play a roll and the lead trumpet player would start off with "Didn't He

Bunk Johnson.

Ramble". Then we would move out at a fast pace. Once we got out of the graveyard the hearse would go its way and the family would go their way or sometimes they would follow us for a few blocks.

We only played for a few blocks outside the graveyard because things usually got real bad with all the people by then. It was a disgrace the way some of them acted. The police would always have to be there to try and keep trouble down.

One thing you should know... The Tuxedo Band was the first one to play "When the Saints go Marchin' in" at a funeral. All the bands would play "Didn't He Ramble" and one day Oscar Celestin said that he wanted to play something different. The two of us looked through the music book and decided to try "When the Saints go Marchin' in"- It really went over big. Most of the other bands started playing it after that.

A.S. Did the band members go to the family's house after the funeral?

H.C. Oh, yes. Sometimes. If the person who died was a good friend or one of the fellows in the band family, they would invite you to go over to eat and drink something. That was done in respect to the dead. (A tradition of African origin that embraces rejoicing at death) That was like a big party but with no music.

At the wake, before the funeral, everybody would pay their last respect by staying with the body all day and all night... praying a lot. It would be a sad time. Then, after the funeral service and the burial was over everybody would meet at the house. All the neighbors and family would cook and bring a pot or something to the house. There would be any kind of food you could name and all the beer and whiskey you could drink. Just the family and close friends would be there. The musicians always tried to go because it meant a free meal.

A.S. Let's go back to Parks for a while. Did you ever play for parades or funerals there?

H.C. No. We never had music like that at funerals in Parks... not even in New Iberia. As far as I know, that was something that went on only in New Orleans. I don't know how it started, but I do know that they were doing it when I first went there in 1908.

We played for church fairs and outings in Parks. There were some real good musicians there too... the Thibodeaux brothers, Hypolite Potier, Beauragard Adam from Cade used to play around here a lot, my father Auguste Charles... all good musicians. Peter Carey used to come all the way from Lafayette to give music lessons and play.

There was a man in Parks called Lemon Ledet. I don't remember exactly what day it was, but he used to give a parade and outing once a year on Lemon Ledet day. That was his day. All the local musicians would get together and form a big marching band and parade all over town before going to the picnic ground. Parade on both sides of the bayou. We would just play marches. At the outing we would take turns playing music for people to dance all day long.

A.S. The story is that you became so good at playing the cornet you became leader of your own band at a very early age. Was it hard for you to deal with the older and more experienced musicians?

H.C. No problem at all. Most of us were related one way or the other. It was like one big family. In fact, they were all for me going to New Orleans and getting in the big-time music business there. It was special to them and they were all my teachers and wished me well.

A.S. Did you ever meet or hear Buddy Bolden?

H.C. I never did meet him, but Bolden was very popular in New Orleans. He played a lot of

Bunk Johnson.

blues and ragtime pieces. I played mostly in orchestras that played classical and dance music. Of course we did play blues and ragtime pieces too. My wife Rose, had an uncle by the name of Fritz who played guitar in Buddy Boldens band. She can remember when they would practise at his house, but she was just a little girl and didn't know any of the fellows.

A.S. What about Bunk Johnson? Did you know him in New Orleans?

H.C. Bunk was all over the place. Real popular. He was a little skinny fellow... just like a bird. His cornet style was different from the rest of us because he would play short phrases, and his notes were all short. Stacatto. He wouldn't hold them for their full value. His style was all his own.

When I went to New Orleans in 1908 I started taking music lessons with Eugene Moret who was the brother of George Moret. George was one of the best cornet players in New Orleans. He was also the leader of his own band - The Exelcior. He was a trained musician. Could read anything you put in front of him... and could play that jazz too. Well, that was a good start for me. From my association with the Morets I soon got to know all the best musicians in the city. Fellows that didn't go for too much foolishness. Know what I mean?... Oak and Vic Gaspard, Armand Piron, Camella Todd, Alphonse Picou, Arnold Metoyer, Sam Dutrey... all great musicians. I was lucky to even be able to keep up with them. That was pretty fast company.

Camella Todd was a concert pianist and a music teacher. She also played with the Maple Leaf Orchestra for a while. She was known and respected throughout the city. I also studied with her, and we became very good friends.

After a while I started playing here and there with different people, and in 1911, I was offered a job playing with the Silver Leaf Orchestra. That was my first big job. I was twenty years old

and learned a lot from those older fellows. Albert Batiste was the leader.

From there, I would say in 1919, I went with the Maple Leaf Orchestra. That was another one of the city's great bands.

A.S. It seems that most of your time as a musician was spent playing in reading bands. Did you get a chance to improvise much?

H.C. Yes. We improvised. But not much. Sometimes we would play a blues number or a dance piece that had sections to solo... Hot numbers. In the Tuxedo Band though, most of the tunes were played by ear and you could solo as much as you liked. That was the kind of band those "hot" players liked to be in.

I played with the Exelcior and the Tuxedo. By doing that I got a taste of both styles. You had to read to make it though. That was one of the things I learned when I first moved to New Orleans. Musicians that could read well got the high-class jobs.

PRESS STOP

Just as we were about to put this issue into the friendly copying machine we were reach by the sad news that **Harold Drob** is in very poor health and is now in a hospice care facility.

We send him our warmest thoughts.

Bunk Johnson.

Bunk Johnson Information is an international newsletter for members of the Swedish Bunk Johnson Society. It cannot be sold and should not be copied.

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Page 4



Lighthouse moving
away from danger
Page 5



Cajuns cinch
district title
Page 11

The Daily Iberian

160th Year, Number 150

<http://www.iberianet.com>

New Iberia, La.

Thursday, July 8, 1999

20 Pages • 2 Sections • 90¢

Swede marks Bunk's death

By NATHAN SAMPEY
Staff writer

The 50th anniversary of the death of jazz legend Willie "Bunk" Johnson, whose music is little known in the United States but is celebrated internationally, was honored Wednesday afternoon by local aficionados of Johnson's music, his granddaughter and one visitor from halfway around the world.

Ake Sahlborg, 65, a retired school teacher from Stockholm, Sweden, made his latest in a series of trips to New Iberia to commemorate the anniversary at Johnson's grave in St. Edward Cemetery. Johnson, who was a master player of the trumpet, died on July 7, 1949 at his New Iberia home at the age of 70.

ALSO GATHERED at the cemetery were Johnson's granddaughter, Gloria Andrew; New Iberia City Council member Louis Brown Jr., a former trumpet apprentice of Johnson; Mary Bashay, president of the New Iberia Bunk Johnson Society; and Jane Breaux, executive director of the Iberia Parish Tourist Commission.

The group honored Johnson's death, and his life, with a brief ceremony, highlighted as Sahlborg laid a wreath of muscadine vines, English ivy and white carnations on Johnson's grave. A poem, written by Bashay for the occasion, also was read in tribute to "Bunk."

Sahlborg, a retired English and German teacher in Stockholm, told his gathered audience of the beginnings of his own interest in Johnson's life and music, which began when he was 15 years old, just after World War II, with a radio airing of "Just A Closer Walk With Thee," as performed by Johnson and his band.

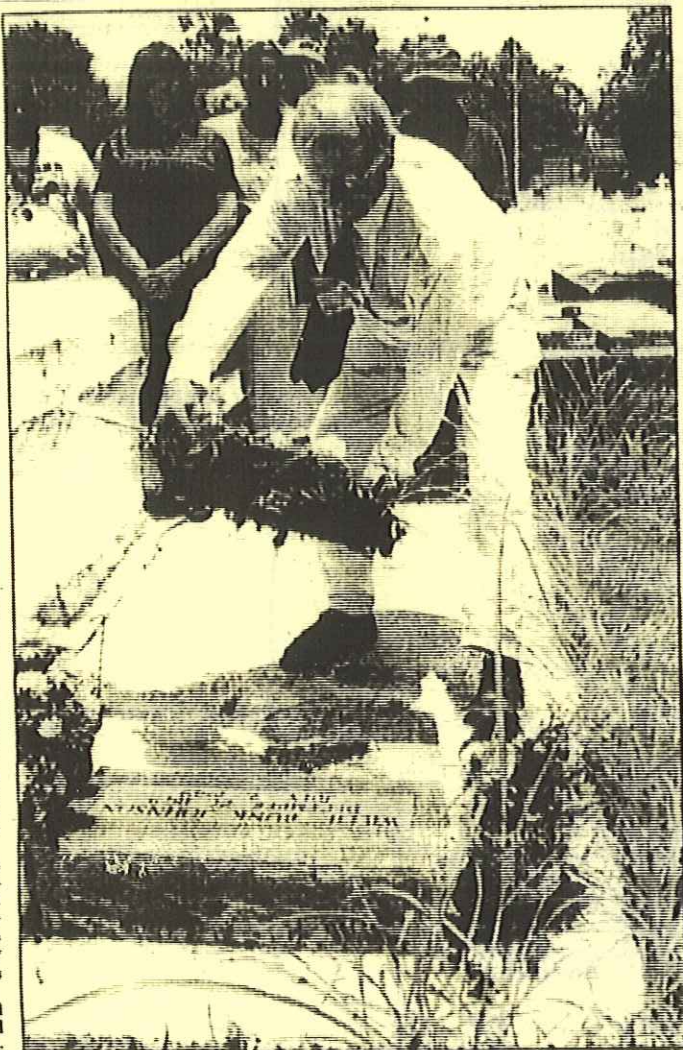
The music entranced Sahlborg and many other teens in his country, who would organize their own bands and attempt to play jazz-style music just like Johnson, even including the jazz master's mistakes, such as when he would stop playing mid-chorus to give signals to his band, Sahlborg said.

"That music has everything, you see," Sahlborg said. "It has melody, it has rhythm and it has strength when they play it."

SAHLBERG HAS made several trips to New Iberia in attempting to retrace the steps of his hero. He told of one such visit to the city in 1978, when he tracked down one of Johnson's former residences on the former Franklin Street, now renamed as Main Street.

Sahlborg said he convinced the owners of the boarded-up old house to let him spend the night there, which he did. When he left the next morning, Sahlborg said he took with him a doorknob and some scraps of old wallpaper as souvenirs.

Although the music and history behind "Bunk" Johnson is little



Bill Smith/Daily Iberian

Ake Sahlborg places a wreath at the grave of Willie "Bunk" Johnson in memory of the 50th anniversary of jazz great's death.

known here, Johnson's recordings earned him diehard fans in other parts of the world, especially in Europe and also in Japan. Sahlborg's own organization, the Swedish Bunk Johnson Society, is one of numerous such societies in Europe, all dedicated to the celebration of Johnson's music, Sahlborg said.

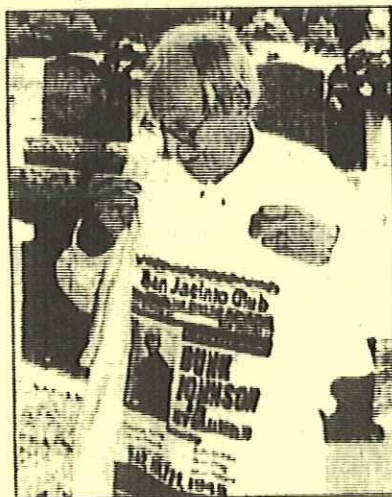
SAHLBERG SAID it was unfortunate Johnson never traveled to Europe, as did so many of his contemporary musicians.

There, Sahlborg said, he would have been "treated as a king," as many of those other transplanted jazz musicians were.

"It was very unfortunate for him that he didn't have that chance to go to Europe and really get the recognition he deserved for his talent," he said.

Reflecting for a moment, Sahlborg revealed why he travels thousands of miles across the Atlantic from busy Europe to New Iberia.

"I have the feeling Bunk has walked here," Sahlborg said with a smile. "It's holy for me."



Bill Smith/Daily Iberian

Sahlborg shows off one of his favorite souvenirs from New Orleans, a T-shirt marking Bunk Johnson's farewell show in 1945.

**BUNK JOHNSON/NEW IBERIA JAZZ,
ARTS & HERITAGE FESTIVAL, INCORPORATED**

Post Office Box 13627
New Iberia, LA 70562-3627

July 9, 1999

**Mr. Claes Ringqvist
Bunk Johnson Society
Stockholm, Sweden**

Dear President Ringqvist:

I am absolutely delighted to bid you and your membership special greetings on behalf of the Bunk Johnson/New Iberia Jazz, Arts & Heritage Festival. From what I have heard, your membership is a wonderful group of people who have done much to keep the legacy and memory of Bunk alive in Europe.

I am most honored to have been a hostess for your member Ake Sahlberg. He is a most gracious guest and I have enjoyed his visit so very much. We were so proud to have him visit on the 50th anniversary of Bunk's death. Please know that he was an excellent representative of The Society. As you may note from the newspaper coverage, he has also become a local celebrity. I believe that his visit to commemorate the 50th anniversary has done much good and will certainly help the New Iberia delegation of Bunk fans to advance our cause.

I trust that The Swedish Friends of Bunk and we(The New Iberia Delegation) can establish and maintain a long and fruitful correspondence. It was indeed a pleasure meeting and conversing with Mr. Sahlberg. As a result, many more people in New Iberia now understand the importance of Bunk and his legacy. Thank you and perhaps one day we can meet in person.

Sincerely,

Mary S. Bashay

Mary S. Bashay, President
Bunk Johnson Jazz Festival

B.

571. Providence St. #16
New Iberia, La.
5/17/42

Dear Mr. Russell. (1)

only a few lines to let you hear from me
and hope that these few lines will find you
well and also your dear family now I am in
the very best of health and my family
are the same now Mr. Russell I'm sending
you this letter thanking for all you
have been doing for me and can not
forget you and all of your good friends
and also my good friends now about my
trumpet Mr. Russell it was a real and a
great pleasure to me when the Express man
brought that fine Selmer Trumpet to me
Saturday morning it really made me feel
twenty years younger now I am able to
play you all some trumpet and I can
really go at my age now I am only a
real young man and at 62 years old
and think that the good good Lord will
let me make my other 62 years now that
is my prayer Every nite now Mr. Russell
you are wonderful and also your good
friend Mr. Wm. Rosenberg and I wish
to meet you all real soon now Mr. Russell
when you answer this letter please let
me know what date you are coming to
Iberia so I can be at home to meet
You over

(2)

now, Please, do, come, and, see, me, as, I, can, not
go, up, there, now, Mr. Russell, I, would,
like, to, try, to, catch, you, to, put, that, in
the, down Beat, and, also, in, the, jazz,
the, jazz, information, and, let, them
all, know, that, Bunk, Johnson, is, back,
in, the, game, with, all, great, news,
of, his, kind, and, have, them, to, that, I
can, really, go, to, town, on, trumpet,
and, I, am, a, trumpet, man, and, has,
been, a, king, once, in, life, and, to, be,
that, some, thing, again, because, I, can,
do, the, same, thing, twice, and, I, am,
as, good, as, ever, at, the, age, of, 62, years,
old, Born, 1879, Dec. 27, and, I, am, only,
a, young, man, now, I, do, not, know, really,
just, when, I, will, becom, old, now, the
only, thing, that, I, know, old, that, is,
my, clone, they, get, old, not, Bunk,
now, Mr. Russell, do, answer, this,
letter, at, once, by, return, mail,
Will, close, yours, very, truly, as, ever

Bunk, Johnson, Good, luck, to
you, all.

New Iberia La.

6/24/45.

Mr. B.F. Bales.

My.
Good friend.

Just a few lines to let you here from me. I'm well an do hope that this letter will find you, an your family the same, an you all are Enjoying the very best of health, an also my great dog star.

now my pal, you all must realy excuse me, for taking so long before writing you all, as you all do know, that I'm very slow in my writing, an take so long to answer a letter.

now old boy, I'm thanking you all, for my good kool cigarettes, that you sent out to me each time.

and I can not forget you all, as long as I live, an maybe they will become a day, that I will be able to do some real good favor for you all, an we can call it even steven.

now Bert, will you please write me at once, an let me know, if all of that mess is still going on with the union, or if it is all over with, about the colored an white musicans, playing together, an if they have settled every thing, an they will let them play, an be as one again, will you be kind enough to write me at once an let me know.

because I would like to come back, out to san francisco, an play again with you all, an put up our same band that we hade before,

and I know that we would, have a real good band in san francisco, an I'm real sure, that every one would like it, an much better then the other band, that we hade before,

now about the cigarettes, down here in new iberia la.
Bert it is only the white, that they will sell them to, an as for as the colored, they will not sell them any at all, now they save all of them for the white, an the white only.

an you do know, that the colored man, has a real hard time here to get a pack of cigarettes, plus a job of work, unless it is working out in the rice fields, and I dont go for that any more at my age 65 years old, so you write me real soon Bert, an you give all of my friends, my very best regards, an also my adress, so they can write to me once an a while;

so I will close, saying good day, an good luck to you an your dear Family:

Sincerly Yours,
Willie (Bunk) Johnson,
638 Franklin St.,
New Iberia La.

New Iberia La

7/31/45.

Dear

MR & Mrs:

Just a letter to let you here from me, an also my family, an we are all well, an do hope that this letter, will find you an your family the same, an you all are enjoying, the very best of health, when you all do receive this letter of mine.

now here is the first thing, That I want to do, I want to thank you all for what you all have done for me, an you kindness, it can not be forgotten, by me as long as I live.

an maybe some good day, I will be able, to do the same by you all, an by Mrs Star an her family too.

now my dear friends, I'm real glad that this war is all over, an I will try my very best, to get back out in san francisco, next summer, if the good lord he will say the same, because I would like to put up a real good band, now that is if the Union, will let us play together as before.

so I'm wishing that every thing, in the line of the Union, it is all settled by this time, for the white an the colored, to play together again once more in live, before our good lord calls me in.

now Burt an Gene, I Am to take an all new orleans band, to new york, next month, and I will open up, the stuyvesant casino, on sept the 14th 1945, for the whole winter, with a real hot band.

an after that job wind up, then I'm heading, for old sweet san francisco, all aloan, to see if we can get, our same band up again, an all of our same men as we had before, so will you please write me, an let me know, if every thing, is all over with the Union, about the white an the colored musicians, playing to gather again, an it is not over, do write me just the same an let me know.

now thanks a lots, for my kool cigarettes, because they are still hard to get here, now that is becouse, they do not like the poor negros, now that is that way, all down here in the south, not only here in new iberia la, but all over the state of louisiana, now no matter, who you is, or how great you are, that goes to all of the negros, as well as me, so I'm in the bunch too.

so you all must write me Burt, an I'm going to do the same, an will you or Gene, please give Ma Watters a buz, an tell here that, she will get a long letter from me, in a few days, an you also, give all of my friends, my best regards, an tell them that I'm taking, a band to new york, out of dear old new orleans, an please give them my adress, so that they can write me, now I will close, saying good luck an good day, to you all.

Sincerely Yours.

Willie(Bunk)Johnson, 638 franklin St
New Iberia La.

Willie (Bunk) Johnson,
638 Franklin St.
New Iberia La.

9/21/45.

Dear,

Mr. Bates an Family, Just a few lines to let you all here from me. I'm well an also my Family, an do hope that this letter will find you an your Family the same, an you all are Enjoying the very best of health.

and I'm also thanking you all for the koola cigarettes that I received a few days ago. an they hit me in the right time ole Pal.

now Bert here is what I would like for you to do for me after you all receive this letter of mine. as I'm leaving for new york this saturday coming with is the 22nd because I got to be in new york for the 24 th. an that time it is right at hand.

and I will meet my bunk in new orleans on the morning of the 22 nd. so I will have to leave here before day light to be in new orleans for to meet them that same date of the 22nd.

so here is just what I'm asking you to do for me. will you please give all of my friends my new adress. it is 68 Washington Sq South new york (12) N.Y.C. an they can write me some time when they will have a little spare time. an all so you or Gene. an will you give MA Watters a buzz an tell her that I ask you or Gene to let her know that I'm going to new york with an all new orleans band.

and I will open up at the Stayvant Casino on Friday nite the 28 th 1945 with my new orleans Dixie Land Band for the Big Dances we will work 5 nites a week an on Sundays we will play an after noon Dances from 2 to 6pm. so I will close saying good day an good luck to you all. an will write you all real soon. my best regards.

Bunk Johnson.
Answer soon.

Willie(Bunk)Johnson.
o/o
68 Washington Sq.So.
New York(12)City.N.Y.C.

10/28/46.

Dear Bert.

Just a few lines.to let you here from me.an also to let you know.that I received your fine letter.an it was real good.to here from you.an also your dear Family.

now ole pal.Im real well.an do hope that this letter.will find you an your dear Family the same.an you all are Enjoying.the very best of health.when you receive this letter.now Bert.I do have a real good band-out here in new york.

an Im playing some real good music.an it is dam hrad to beat.an Every body here in new york.they are all going wild.about my new orleans band.an we Even have your ole pal.Bill Colburns.he got in here one nite last week.an Im got him jumping just like the rest.

so by that.you know that Every thing.must be jam up here with me an my new orleans rag time band.now we can realy go.

an I would like very much.for you to here by band.but any way.Im planning on coming to San Francisco.next summer.an play with you all. ngw.that is if the Union.will let us play together again.

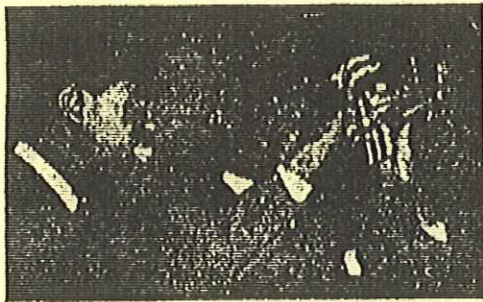
so you all take an work on that.an you write me an let me know at once.just what they say.about the white an colored.playing to gether.an if it is all right.then you all.can look to see me real soon in dear old Frisco.so do not fail to work on that ole pal.

now Bert.if this job do not run.all this wenter.here in new york.
~~I will be able to come out to San Francisco.before next summer an~~
be with you all.so you all must keep up the good work.

an you be sure to keep in tuch with me.so that I will know just to do.
about coming back out to San Francisco.to play with you all once more in life.now Bert.you can get the oct 20th.new yorker magizine.an you all can read about my band.then you all.can lookout for my band.latter in the time magizine also.then you all can see.just what Im driving at.
so you all be good.an write me real soon.an I will do the same.so good luck an good day.an you answer real soon Bert an Gene an Star.

Sincerly Yours.
Willie(Bunk)Johnson.
o/o 68 Washington Sq.So.
New York (12) City.
N.Y.C.
PHONE
COLUMBUS

6-2300.



LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND "BUNK" JOHNSON
(Student) (Teacher)

Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco

638 Franklin St.
New Iberia La.
1/16/47.

Sponsors:

Bob Best
Rudi Blesh
Harry Bridges
Bill Colburn
Alfred Frankenstein
Ray Geraldo
Don Hambley
Emella Hodel
Ted Lens
Hal McIntyre
Alice I. Rivers
H. Irving Rosenberg, Jr.
Sarah Sherman
Peter Tamony
Vernon White

Dear Burt An Jeanne.

Just a few lines. to let you all here from me. as I have been down.
with a real bad cold. an unable to write you all. so as my cold is
much better at this present time. I am now able to write you all.

first I want to thank you all. for your fine Christmas Greeting.
an I do wish you all the same. an I did think at one time. that I
would of been in San Francisco by this time Playing Music again.

but it seems like I am out of luck. as I cannot get any hearing at
all from Gene Williams. an I ware to Play for him. when he had got
a real good Dance Hall.

but maybe he has change his mind. about useing me at all. to play
for him. as he is still my Manager. an Im still out of work. an he
is useing another Band. to play for his Dancies. an it do appear
to me. that he is the Ory Band Manager. insted of Bunk Johnson Band.

but anyway. if he is Managing the Ory Band. I would like for him to
write me an let me know. so I can get me something to do. an get to
work on some good job too.

so if you should run across Gene Williams. will you ask him for me.
to please write me at once. an let me here from him. so I will know
just what to do. about looking up a job. for my self playing Music.
with some good Band.

now Burt. when you write me. will you please let me know. just what
is the whole set up is. about that Dance Hall Playing. an also the
Ory Band. that is Playing for him. at this Present Time.

an if you an Ellis should need me. you all can get me at once. as I
am out of a job. an no sign of getting one. with Gene Williams at al.
so you write me at once Burt. an let me here from you now I will
close saying good luck an good day to you all.

Sincerly Yours.
Bunk Johnson.

after 5 days return.
to 638 franklin st.
new iberia la.

AIR MAIL.

Mr B.F. Bales.
119 Germania St.
San Francisco (17)
Calif



after 5 days return to.
bunk Johnson.
o/o 68 washington sq. so.
new york (12) city. n.y.o.

air mail.

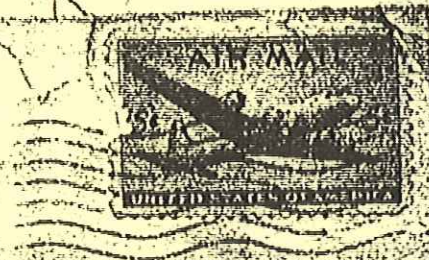
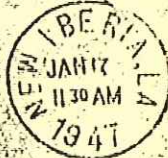


Mr Bert Bales.
119 Germania St.
San Francisco Calif.

AFTER 8 DAYS, RETURN TO

Willie (Bunk) Johnson.
638 Franklin St.
New Iberia La.

Air Mail.



Mr. B.F. Bales.
119 Germania St.
San Francisco (17) Calif.

Opening Reception for BunkFest Exhibit April 16, 1998

Welcome---Ms. Carla Hostetter, Iberia Parish Library director

Recognition of special guests---Ms. Mary Bashay,
president of Bunk Johnson/Ni Jazz, Arts & Heritage Fest, Inc.

Introduction of Mr. Matthew Polk---Ms. Susan Hester Edmunds

Mr. Polk's remarks

Mayor Ruth Fontenot

Introduction of Harold Drob---Judge Charles Porter

Mr. Drob's remarks

Ribbon Cutting---Public Officials and Bunk/Fest Committee

Reception to follow in exhibit gallery,
with music by St. Edward's Church Angelic Choir
under the direction of Mr. John Reedom

Acknowledgements:

The exhibit and opening were possible only through the cooperative work of many people including Mrs. Shirley Mann, Ms. Cassandra Raymond, Mrs. Gloria Jackson, Mrs. Shirley Simon, Mrs. Jimmie Kaye Porter, Ms. Kelly Porter, Ms. Shannon Jackson, Mrs. Anna Davis, Mrs. Grace Holbrook, Ms. Pat Kahle, Ms. Gaywynn Gaude, Ms. Keri Towery, Mr. Lionell Collins, Mr. Gilbert "Doc" Thomas, Mr. John Reedom, Mr. Freddie DeCourt, Judge Charles Porter, Mr. Lionell Collins, numerous volunteers from the Sugarland Optimist Club, and the Friends of the Library.

Bunk Johnson

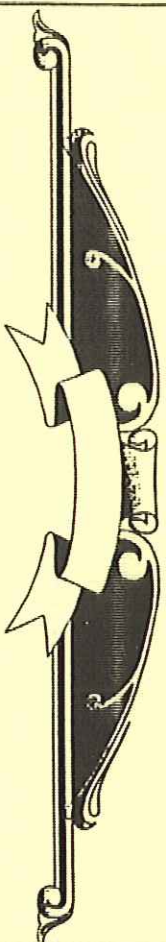


William "Bunk" Johnson died on July 7, 1949 in New Iberia. Nearly 50 years later, this jazz genius is remembered for his contributions not only to New Iberia, but to the international jazz kingdom.

Not only did Bunk Johnson play with a host of jazz greats with such giants as Buddy Bolden, Clarence Williams, Evan Thomas and Sidney Bechet, but he also was a friend and contemporary of legendary Louis Armstrong.

Bunk Johnson became a recognized jazz/cornet player in New Orleans, and moved to New Iberia after 1930, joining the New Iberia Banner Band led by Gus Fontenette. He also worked as a WPA school music teacher, trucker driver, gardener and laborer.

In 1942, Bunk Johnson made his first recordings when discovered by influential jazz writers. He became revered internationally for his traditional trumpet style and intuitive improvisations following performances in New Orleans, New York and San Francisco.



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, William G. "Bunk" Johnson was known internationally as a musician and one of the founders of jazz; and

WHEREAS, he lived in New Iberia for many years and his music and legacy have brought attention and honor to the City of New Iberia and its residents; and

WHEREAS, William G. "Bunk" Johnson played trumpet with a host of jazz greats including Buddy Bolden, Clarence Williams, Evan Thomas and Sidney Bechet and was a friend and contemporary of Louis Armstrong; Bunk became a recognized jazz trumpet/cornet player in New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, after 1930 he moved to New Iberia joining the Banner Band led by Gus Fontenette. He worked as a WPA school teacher (music), truck driver, gardener and laborer. In 1942 he collaborated with young jazz historians to retace the birth of New Orleans jazz; and

WHEREAS, Bunk launched a brief national and international recognition for his traditional trumpet style and improvisations following performances in New York, Chicago, New Orleans and San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, Willie "Bunk" Johnson died July 7, 1949 in New Iberia, Louisiana; and

NOW THEREFORE, I, Chip Loper, Mayor of the City of New Iberia in memory of this internationally known musician and honored citizen do proclaim

Friday, April 17, 1998

as

"Bunk Johnson Day"

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of New Iberia to be affixed this 18th day of March, 1998.

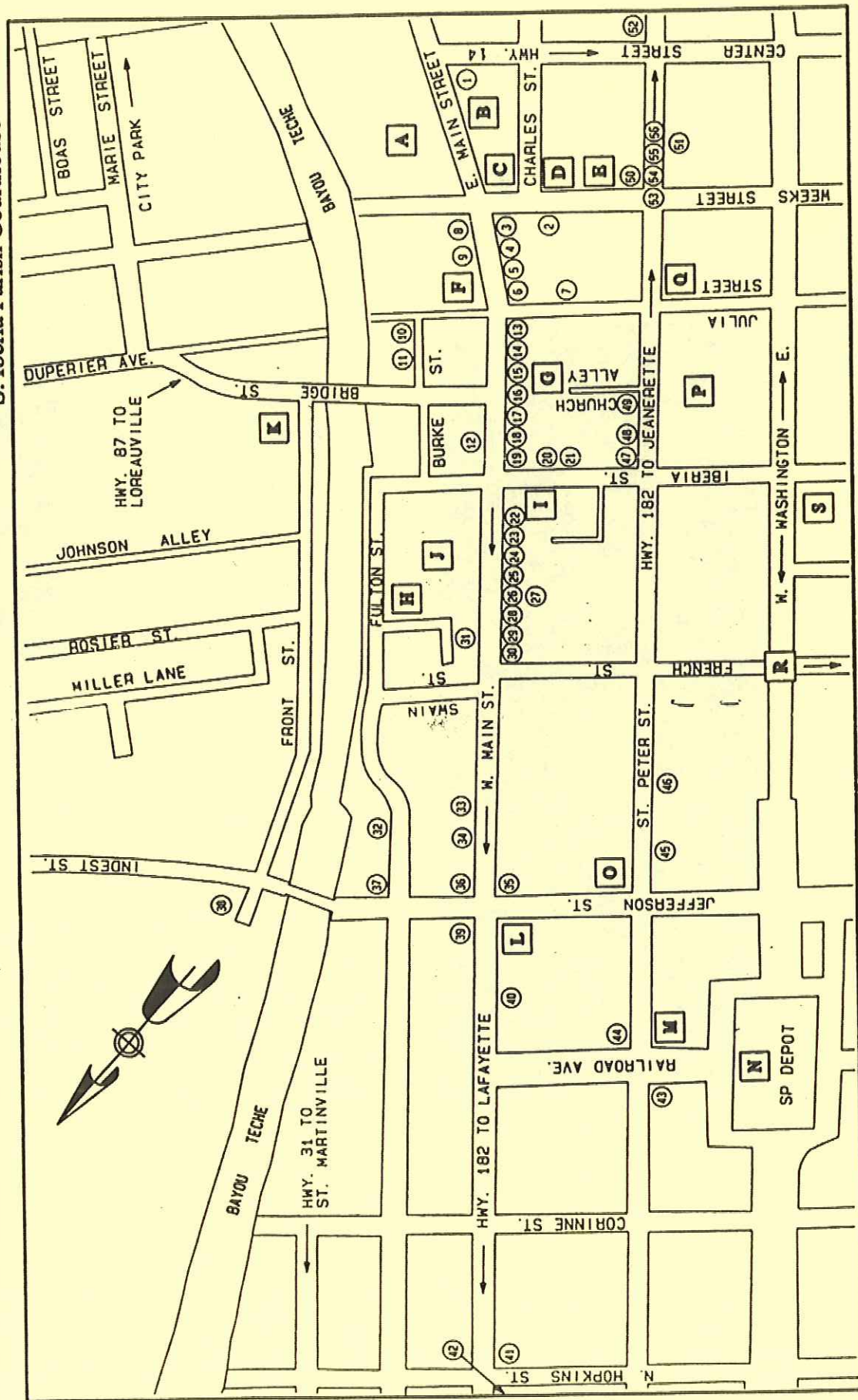
Chip Loper
Chip Loper, Mayor
City of New Iberia, Louisiana

Downtown Points of Interest

- A. Shadows-on-the-Teche
- B. Weeks Grove
- C. Old Post Office
- D. Congregation Gates of Prayer
- E. Hadrian Statue
- F. First Courthouse

- G. Site of Great Fire
- H. Steamboat Era
- I. Gougenheim Building
- J. Bouligny Plaza
- K. Mt. Carmel Academy
- L. Episcopal Church

- M. Erath Building
- N. Southern Pacific Depot
- O. Methodist Church
- P. St. Peter's Catholic Church
- Q. First Baptist Church
- R. Bunk Johnson Grave
- S. Iberia Parish Courthouse

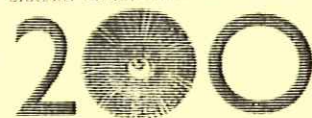


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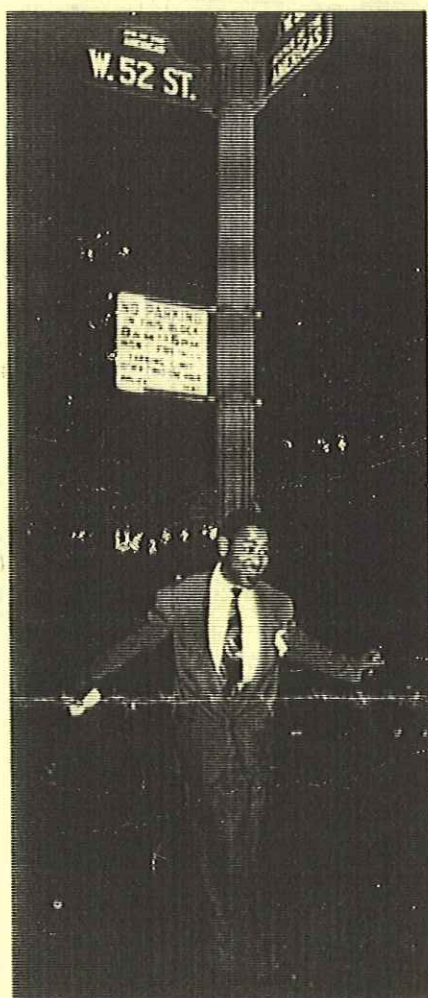
Vol. 58, No. 7

July 1999

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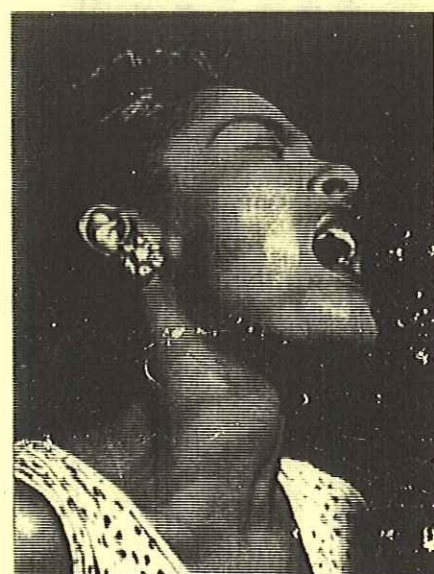


William P. Gottlieb

William Gottlieb Jazz Age Photos On-Line

More than 1,600 photographs of many of the greatest names in jazz are now available on-line in "William P. Gottlieb: Photographs from the Golden Age of Jazz." They can be accessed from the American Memory Web site of the Library's National Digital Library Program at www.loc.gov.

The William P. Gottlieb Collection (see *LC Information Bulletin*, Oct. 2, 1995) documents the jazz scene from 1938 to 1948, primarily in New York City and Washington, D.C. In 1938 Mr. Gottlieb began working for *The Washington Post*, where he wrote and illustrated a weekly jazz column — perhaps the first in a major newspaper. After World War II he was employed as a writer-photographer for *Down Beat* magazine, and his work also appeared frequently in *Record Changer*, the *Saturday Review* and *Collier's*. During the course of his career, Mr. Gottlieb took portraits of prominent jazz musicians and personalities, including Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Earl Hines, Thelonious Monk, Stan Kenton, Ray McKinley, Benny Goodman, Coleman Hawkins, Ella Fitzgerald and Benny Carter. This on-line collection presents Gottlieb's photographs, annotated contact prints, selected published prints and related articles from *Down Beat*. ♦



William P. Gottlieb

Billie Holiday (from *Down Beat*, 1947) and Dizzy Gillespie on 52nd Street in New York (ca. 1947) were just two of William Gottlieb's photographic subjects.