"Brown Skin, Who You For?"
Another Look at Clarence Williams's Early Career
by
Lynn Abbott

Clarence Williams pioneered in the composing, publishing and commercial recording of blues and jazz. If this statement sounds overworked in 1993, previously untapped citations from surviving pre-1920 issues of The Freeman, a nationally-distributed weekly newspaper that catered to African-American entertainers, refresh it with specific information that fine-tunes the chronology and punctuates the significance of Clarence Williams's adventurous early career.

Clarence Williams recalled having ventured to Houston, Texas with "the Benbow Stock Company" in 1911. Jelly Roll Morton also claimed to have toured "on the Benbow circuit" during that time. African-American entertainment trailblazer
William Benbow kept a relatively high profile in *The Freeman*, and a brief bio can be assembled from collected citations: originally from Montgomery, Alabama, he had been managing and playing in minstrel shows and theater stock companies throughout the South since 1899, at least. New Orleans was one of his regular showstops, and in 1905 Benbow's Old Plantation Minstrels took out a ten-piece band from New Orleans. Around 1908 Benbow took New Orleans-born singer Edna Landry (or Landreaux) - Lizzie Miles's half-sister - for his wife and stage partner.

While Will and Edna Landry Benbow spent most of 1912 and 1913 in Texas, they mentioned neither Clarence Williams nor Jelly Roll Morton in their occasional reports to *The Freeman*. It has been said that Clarence Williams's early work in vaudeville was not as a pianist, but as a "black-face comedian." He was probably the "character man" identified in July 1912 *Freeman* correspondence from the Lockhart Stock Company, at the Star Theater in Shreveport, Louisiana:

The roster is as follows: T.W. Lockhart, sole owner; Harrison Blackburn, stage manager; Rag Time Jimmy, our challenge dancer; sambo, the twelve year old Wonder; Clarence Williams, character man; Ebby Poseman [sic], Ebbie Forceman, dainty soubrette; Baby Wilson, the female buck and wing dancer; Sterella [sic, Stella] Johnson, the creole wonder, and last but not least, Ada Lockhart, lady baritone soloist.

While appearing at that same Star Theater in Shreveport in October 1914, Will Benbow told *The Freeman* about a benefit show for the "unfortunate performers of the People's Air Dome of this city, who failed to get their salary." Members of the "illtreated company" included "Happy Lockheart [sic] and wife," Jessie Burney, and Clarence Williams. About a month later, on November 28, 1914, *The Freeman* ran this brief notice: "Clarence Williams and William Benbow are now in New Orleans working on a new act. Address 240 South Rampart street."

In New Orleans, Will Benbow became manager of the Poodle Dog Cabaret, and Clarence Williams became one of the Poodle Dog's featured entertainers. On January 9, 1915 Benbow initiated a column in *The Freeman* entitled "What's What Down In New Orleans." Running for five consecutive weeks, it survives as a unique, contemporaneous document of the local African-American cabaret and theater scene, with Clarence Williams in the middle of it.

In his first installment of "What's What," Benbow gave brief notice of activities at the Iroquis and Temple theaters, then listed the entertainers in various cabarets:

**Poodle Dog Cabaret**

**25 Cabaret**

**Pete Lallas Cabaret**

These three cabarets were among Storyville's pivotal jazz venues. Storyville historian Al Rose considers Pete Lala's "the real spawning ground... A noisy, brawling barn of a place, it featured music and dancing downstairs, heavy gambling in the back rooms, and assignations upstairs... Whatever claim Storyville might have had to have been the birthplace of jazz is associated with this building." Clarence Williams, who eventually became manager of Pete Lala's, was among the many New Orleans musicians who lent support to this consideration: "Talk about those jam sessions you have today! Why, you should have seen the sessions we had then... Pete Lala's was the headquarters, the place where all the bands would come when they got off work, and... everybody would gather every night and there'd be singin' and playin' all night long."

On January 16, 1915 Will Benbow informed readers of his "What's What" column that Israel W.
"Dad" James's stock company, with Tillie Johnson, had leased the Temple Theater: "We all wish Dad success with his white elephant. It's a hard nut to crack, Dad." At the 25 Cabaret, Louis Wade was "still whipping the piano," with Walter "Nukie" Johnson added to the roster of entertainers. Benbow was "still holding his own with that noisy bunch" at the Poodle Dog, including Clarence Williams with newcomers Arthur Bruce and Aimee Cook. Also, "Mrs. Lizzie Landry Miles, sister to Mrs. Edna Landry Benbow is in the city visiting relatives... Mrs. Edna Landry Benbow is featuring her own new song, the 'Home Blues' [a.k.a. "Lonesome at Home"], words and music by Mrs. Benbow, arranged by Fred Washington."

The January 23, 1915 edition of "What's What" noted the Temple Theater was "closed again, nothing doing." The Poodle Dog Cabaret was featuring Clarence Williams, Edna Benbow, Herbert Linzy [sic] and Jessie Burney. Elsewhere on the local scene, "Frank Ahaymon [sic] is playing some piano with the Robichan's [sic] Orchestra. Little Freddie Washington is still entertaining at the Willie Piazza Club."

Benbow's January 30 column identified members of the Young Olympia Orchestra: "Simon Merrars [sic], James Naane [sic], Buddy Petet [sic], Dave De Pass, John Merrara [sic], Alvin Robertson, Joseph Saturnin, Arnold De Pass, Mgr. These boys are hot as mustard." Also, "The Poodle Dog cabaret was surprised with a visit from the 25 cabaret bunch Thursday night... Those taking part in the entertaining were as follows: Ebbie Burton, Aggie Tansell, Alma Hugh [sic], Nuckie Johnson, Harry Bonner, Prof. Lewis [sic] Wade and his orchestra... The Poodle Dog cabaret is one of the leading places in New Orleans for pleasure. Wm. Benbow is the man behind the fun. Nuff sed."

In his final "What's What" column of February 6, 1915, Benbow acknowledged the Poodle Dog was "still holding its own with that noisy bunch of entertainers," but he went on to say, "It looks like dear old New Orleans is a resting place for performers, as there are so many idle performers here." Among them, he listed Edna Benbow, "Nukie" Johnson, Bruce & Bruce and Clarence Williams. Benbow closed on a cryptic note: "I am still down in N. O. fighting Red Bean - well, den."

Along with Clarence Williams, most of the musicians Benbow identified in his "What's What" column became legends on 1920s blues and jazz recordings. Among the less-remembered New Orleanians mentioned, Arthur and Beatrice Bruce organized the stock company that first took Sidney Bechet to Chicago in 1917. Louis Wade also made that trip. In a 1936 interview, Clarence Williams rated Louis Wade with the great New Orleanians "swing pianists," including Jelly Roll Morton and - himself. Wade would likely have made recordings, too, had he lived long enough. In November 1919, this obituary was respectfully submitted by Joe Loomis, "the New Orleans tenor":

Louis Wade, Jazz Piano Player, Dead

Editor The Freeman - I wish to announce to you the death of my teammate and partner, Louis Wade, the jazzing piano player, formerly of the Bruce Stock Company... He departed this life on the morn of Thursday, Oct. 30, 1919, at the home of his sisters in New Orleans. May he rest in peace.

Another New Orleanian in that early cabaret crowd, Beulah Henderson was acclaimed in a May 1913 Freeman ad as "America's Only Colored Lady Yodeler." Perhaps she was an inspiration for Clarence Williams's 1923 landmark composition "Yodeling Blues," which was commercially recorded twice that year, first by Sara Martin and Eva Taylor - Clarence's wife - with Clarence on piano, and then by Bessie Smith. In addition, Tillie Johnson, Willie Jackson and Edna Landry Benbow (as Edna Hicks) all recorded blues songs during the 1920s, and one of Willie Jackson's 1926 sessions was backed by Clarence Williams on piano.

By the summer of 1915, the coterie of local cabaret entertainers Will Benbow had chronicled was scattered across the South. The June 5, 1915 Freeman named Bruce & Bruce and Edna Benbow among the players at the Hippodrome Theater in Galveston, Texas. A report on August 8, 1915 found Will Benbow and "Nukie" Johnson at the
Dixieland Theater in Charleston, South Carolina.

Clarence Williams remained in New Orleans and, following Will Benbow’s lead, started promoting himself in The Freeman. This note appeared on July 24, 1915: “Clarence Williams, the composer of 'You Missed a Good Woman When You Picked All Over Me,’ is writing a couple of new songs entitled 'I Can Beat You Doing What You’re Doing Me' and 'Give It All to Me' which will be a big hit. Hello Ben Boe [sic], write me.”

It’s likely Clarence had been singing "Missed a Good Woman" during his tenure at the Poodle Dog Cabaret. An October 1915 report from the Crown Garden Theater in Indianapolis said Jessie Burney, who had performed with Clarence at the Poodle Dog, "scores nicely in her blues song 'Never Missed a Good Woman Until You Picked All Over Me.'"

Drawing from oral history, Al Rose has written that, during his early career in New Orleans, Clarence Williams "was less well known as a pianist than as a night club or cabaret manager, and as producer of some very special 'nights':"

In charge variously of a saloon on Rampart Street, and, at times, of the Big 25 and Pete Lala’s, he is still remembered as originator of the "Ham Kick." This was a kind of athletic contest in which a ham was suspended from the ceiling and any young lady present was privileged to try to kick it. If she succeeded in doing so the ham was hers, so long as she had "qualified" by demonstrating, as she was accomplishing the feat, that she was not wearing underdrawers."³

While the "Ham Kick" was not the sort of sport to invite contemporaneous press coverage, a note in the April 20, 1912 Freeman - probably submitted as a prank - from Richard & Fringle’s Minstrels in Texas, suggests it may have come into vogue before Clarence Williams got into the cabaret business: "Geo. Day, who is the founder of the 'Ham Kickers' Club,' is kept busy nowadays taking in new members. Foots (Billy) Watts is the latest one to join."

Clarence Williams told interviewers he started managing his own cabaret in 1913. He said his cabaret was:

... on Rampart Street right across from Union Station, a very rough place where the railroad fellows would hang out... The man who owned the place came to me and asked me to run it. He told me, "I'll furnish the liquor, and you furnish the entertainment and the girls."

Well, I put my brother in charge and hired a floorwalker six feet tall and carrying a police stick. I had the place cleaned and scrubbed and painted... It turned out to be a respectable place."⁹

If the Freeman documentation is any gauge, Clarence actually started managing his own cabaret in late-1915 or early-1916, after having schooled himself on Will Benbow’s management of the Poodle Dog. On February 5, 1916 The Freeman published this report under the headline, "Clarence Williams’ Cabaret":

Miss Georgia Davis is getting many tips for singing "Brown Skin." Miss Estella White is getting rich for her tips singing "I Can Beat You Doing Me."

Mr. Glen, our great singer, is cleaning up with "Don't You Let Love Die Like the Roses."

Mr. Adam Williams [Clarence’s brother?], our head waiter, is in such a rush with drinks he breaks ten and twelve glasses a night. Least but best [sic] is Miss Fanny Williams singing "You Missed a Good Woman When You Picked All Over Her."

When Clarence and Wilbur [?], get through playing good music. Nuff said...

Obviously, Clarence was using his cabaret entertainers to promote his new compositions. The
same February 5, 1916 report went on to announce Clarence's new partnership with violinist A.J. Piron, and to give the earliest-known public notice of their publishing house on Tulane Avenue:


A.J. Piron is best remembered as a post-World War I dance band leader and violinist. Before joining Clarence Williams in the publishing business, he was playing, among other places, in a local black vaudeville and moving-picture house. Blunders in the Freeman columns of December 1913 show that Piron, Buddy Christian and Louis Cottrell, Sr., who recorded with Piron during the 1920s, comprised the three-piece pit "orchestra" of the Rose Bud Theater, a 'handsome newly built theater situated on Dryades street, near Jackson avenue, in what is known as the Garden district..., the most fashionable and artistic residential and business section for colored people... This house has a new $1500 electric organ, and uses an orchestra that is second to none in our city. A.J. Piron is leader; N. Christain, pianist; L.A. Cottrell, trap drummer."

Williams & Piron's first big seller, "Brown Skin," was registered at the Library of Congress on October 11, 1915. The earliest sheet music version was published by "Special Agents: Dugan Piano Co., 914 Canal St., N.O." When the Dugan Piano Company advertised a sale on sheet music in the April 30, 1916 New Orleans Item, "Brown Skin" was listed among their "Hits" in stock. By this time, "Brown Skin" was known across race and class barriers, throughout the City.

On February 19, 1916, The Freeman reported, "Williams & Piron Get Great Praise":

The two only colored composers of New Orleans, La., Mr. Clarence Williams and Mr. Armond (sic) J. Piron, created quite a sensation last week when the police of New Orleans, La., gave their great yearly minstrel. In the minstrel Patrolman Paul R. Monau sang "Brown Skin Who You," [sic] and took seven encores, stopping the show. The orchestra took three encores, on "I Can Beat You Doing What You're Doing Me," a great number.

In that same February 19, 1916 issue, the Williams & Piron Publishing Company ran the first of several commercial "block" advertisements in The Freeman:

Three Real Song Hits!


Williams & Piron Publishers Company
1315 Tulane Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana

Three Real Song Hits

The March 11, 1916 Freeman carried an announcement which, in retrospect, is rather startling. It refers to a first wife whom Clarence apparently dropped from later reminiscences, and it describes an extraordinary, as yet unaccounted-for commercial recording:

Mr. Williams and wife, Mrs. George Darrell Williams [sic, Georgina Davis Williams] have their voices on the Columbia record together in their song "Brown Skin." Mr. Williams plays the piano and Mr. Piron assisted with the violin. Mrs. G. Williams sang "I Can Beat You Doing What You're Doing Me" alone. Her voice took fine... The records will be available in two week's time.

An extant copy of this recording - none has been found - would precede Mamie Smith's first Okeh release by nearly four years. Was it actually made available? At least one informant, the late New Orleans songster Lemon Nash, appears to have thought so. Interviewed by Dick Allen in 1960, Nash said, "I remember this [song by]
Clarence Williams. They claim that this guy was one of the first guys that recorded a record in New Orleans, Clarence Williams, so they say. He recorded this song about 'Brown Skin, Who You For.' Nash went on to tell "the life of this song:"

The girls used to pass on Rampart Street; the guys would ask, "Hey, Brownskin, who you for?" Sometimes, one of the girls, she might say, "I'm for you, Baby." ... Another girl might pass; they'd say, "Hey, Brownskin, who you for?" She'd say, "I'm for your daddy when your mother ain't home." So, Clarence Williams took it right from that. He started writing, and he wrote that song, "Brown Skin, Who You For."10

Although no one knew to ask about the possible existence of a pre-1920 recording of "Brown Skin," Clarence made a passing reference to it in Hear Me Talkin' To Ya:

Well, in 1916 I was sittin' in the studio one day by myself and somebody sticks a long envelope under the door. It was a check from the Columbia Record people for sixteen hundred dollars!... It was for a song called Brown Skin, Who You For? and the Columbia people had sent a representative down and they recorded it on a dictaphone and sent it up to New York. And a band recorded it there and the next thing I knew, I got this check... The news got around and, in the Mardi Gras, all the bands were playin' Brown Skin, Who You For? Canal Street was decorated with brownskin leather, and all the children were singin' it. Walkin' down Rampart Street, it was the biggest day of my life.11

In 1916, Mardi Gras Day fell on March 7. Allowing for the variable time-lag in Freeman reportage, Clarence and Georgia Davis Williams and A.J. Piron probably recorded "Brown Skin" and "I Can Beat You" for Columbia representatives some time during the previous month. There was no further mention of the record on March 18, 1916, when The Freeman gave out this account of Doings in New Orleans During Mardi Gras:

To begin with let's start with Brown Skin, the overwhelming song hit by Clarence Williams, the popular composer of color, and one of the foremost composers, producers and authors of the race. It will pay music lovers to keep an eye on this young man as merit is fast pushing him to the front ranks of the profession. His partner is Mr. Armand J. Piron... Their numbers are "Brown Skin," "You missed a good woman when you picked all over me," "I can beat you doing what you are doing to me" and "That ought to get it." His latest out promises to rival the popular "Brown Skin" if that can be possible, for every kid, white or black, every piano and every band, and in fact, every street organ is playing and singing "Brown," and on the arrival of the King Rex in New Orleans on Monday. The ovation seemed to be Brown Skin as the crowds demanded the bands all of them to play it again and again. The whole town is "Brown Skin" crazy, and all the whites and blacks are praising this latest hit.

Clarence is certainly some boy and his eyes wide open and with the assistance of his wife, Mrs. Georgia Williams, formerly Davis, secured a real live bunch of entertainers for his cabaret for the carnival. They are just as good as the rest and they are packing the cabaret nightly. The entertainers are as follows, so judge for yourself: Tommy Parker & Baby Mack, Lomax & Watts; Stella White; Georgia Williams and Clen Howard and Chas. H. Coffey, the topical talker.

Parker & Mack are featuring "Pigeon Walk Down in Arkansas," "Never Let the Same Bee Sting You Twice" and all the latest songs and dances.

Lomax & Watts are cleaning with "When I Leave the World Behind," by Miss Watts and beautifully rendered to the satisfaction of all. "Good Ship Rock and Rye" is put over cleverly by Mr. Lomax and other late numbers by the team that puts them in the front ranks.
Miss Davis and Mrs. White are always sure of showers of applause and appreciation in all their numbers.

Clen Howard gets his every night, and is a big hit with the patrons.

Chas. Coffey is getting his and getting by nicely. You know what that means. He says for you to look out for something real soon, as there is a nigger in the wood pile. He will tell you all about it later.

While the local dailies devoted several pages to "the arrival of King Rex" and other mainstream carnival events of 1916, coverage of African-American participation was limited to mention of a Negro from Birmingham who was arrested for picking pockets; then there was this editorial cartoon in the New Orleans Item:

The April 7, 1916 edition of the New Orleans Times Picayune carried an ad for the Columbia Graphophone Company's latest "dance-record," "Brown Skin" (See next page).

This ad was not for the Clarence Williams/Georgia Davis Williams/AJ. Piron collaboration that Clarence had expressed high hopes for in the March 11, 1916 Freeman; this was for an "extended play," instrumental version by Prince's Band, the Columbia Graphophone Company's most popular mainstream recording band, the band Clarence mentioned in Hear Me Talkin' To Ya. According to the Columbia files, it was recorded on February 14, 1916. Searching the Columbia files in an effort to trace Clarence Williams's 1916 recording of "Brown Skin," music historian Tim Brooks discovered this handwritten note on the back of the catalogue card for Prince's Band's recording:

On "Brown Skin"
Clarence Williams, piano
(wife) Georgia Davis, vocal
Mr. ___ Piron, violin
Despite obvious implications, there is no audible evidence that Clarence Williams's trio augmented Prince's Band on Columbia A5797.

In late-April or early-May 1916, Clarence Williams and A.J. Piron made an in-store appearance at the Maison Blanche Department Store on Canal Street. Perhaps this was in connection with Maison Blanche's highly advertised "Eclipse Sale" which took place on April 26, 1916. Just a few weeks earlier, by an account in the April 1, 1916 Times Picayune, a group of inter- renowned Tulane students had played in Maison Blanche to help raise funds for Tulane's new stadium:

The "six and seven-eighths" band, composed of the famous sextette, Edmond Souchon, Will Gibbens, Bob Reynolds, Charley Hardy, Harry Reynolds and Shields O'Reardon, and last but not least, "Midget" Harrison, representing the seven-eighths, made an extended tour of Canal Street Friday morning inflicting sweet music upon the donating public...

Having exhausted this means of revenue for the stadium, the band hired themselves to Maison Blanche and, establishing themselves firmly upon the main staircase, proceeded to charm the elusive jitney from pockets of the unwary shopper.

Clarence Williams and A.J. Piron were in Maison Blanche for a different reason - to promote "Brown Skin." The May 20, 1916 Freeman gave this report:

Hear ye! Hear ye! People owning a Victrola, graphophone, talking machine, pipe organ, brass band, string orchestra, plantation show, extravaganza, musical comedy, side show, circus or grind organ, can get the most popular music song hits of the day to fit any instruments known to the colored world (and Mexico) from the greatest, grandest, largest richest store in the South, meaning the veritable eclipse [sic] of commerce under our edifice below the Mason and Dixon line known to the
traveling public of the entire world that have traveled on or traded in or with the South. Mason [sic] Blanche, the first to produce the popular song hit, "Brown Skin," by Williams & Piron on records to fit any instrument using same. Without a doubt, you will have to crown these gentlemen for their talent. A song for the people of color that has made such an impression on the white people even more than on the ebony humble populace, and all day long the people of every nationality crowded the third floor of the largest store of the city to purchase records of the popular song, for it is a hit. Let's see if it was. The receipts of the day: Sold 976 records for graphophone, 210 music rolls for electric pianos, 41 orchestrations, 200 music rolls for the organ syndicate of New Orleans, by Dugans Co.,

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<th>Item</th>
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<td>976 records</td>
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<td>41 orchestrations</td>
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Total: $1300.00

It must be going some for one day's work, and some day's triumph for Messrs. Williams & Piron, who seemed at their best at the piano and violin, playing and singing this composition all day at the big store. Get it, for it is on sale any way you want it for the price address Mason Blanche, New Orleans, La.

This city is full of show folks, but all are working and looking fresh. At Williams' Cabaret are, Stella White, Georgie Williams, Worlds Davis, Clem Howard, Mabel Bailey and Chas. Coffey, singers; Williams & Piron, Davis & Haskins are in the orchestra.

"That Ought to Get It" is now ready and promises to be as good as "Brown Skin." So write the publishers for orchestration and professionals, Williams & Piron Music Co., 1315 Tulane avenue, New Orleans, La.

Available evidence - Clarence Williams's published reminiscences, the "Brown Skin" ad in the Times Picayune, notations in the Columbia files, the Prince's Band recording on Columbia A5797, and the collected Freeman documentation - is insufficient to conclude whether the record Clarence Williams and A.J. Piron were promoting in Maison Blanche was their own or Prince's Band's. The possibility exists that Clarence Williams and A.J. Piron's original version of "Brown Skin," featuring singer Georgia Davis Williams, was pressed on Columbia's uncatalogued "Personal Series" or through the Dugan Piano Company, Maison Blanche or some other local backer.

Apparently, Clarence Williams and Georgia Davis went separate ways at this point. While continuing in the cabaret business, Clarence became increasingly intent on pushing his songs, and he and A.J. Piron started making promotional tours. W.C. Handy recalled having taken them on trips "through the Delta" with his band, and he also used them in a special program "on the stage where Caruso had sung in Atlanta:"

We needed a powerful attraction to conquer Atlanta, and we felt we had it in our band, but just to make assurance doubly sure, we added Clarence Williams and Armand J. Piron... They... had come to Memphis in the interest of their catalogue, plugging in particular Brown Skin and I Can Beat You Doing What You're Doing Me. Williams cut capers with the piano stool and played and sang superbly. Piron contributed his fancy fiddling,12

Handy went on to say that Williams and Piron would have stolen the show, save for the "side splitting antics" of his drummer, Jasper Taylor. He said a review in the Atlanta Constitution gave us two front-page columns with a headline which said, 'At last we see the democracy of ragtime.'" Unfortunately, Handy gave few clues to indicate when this concert was held.

A Freeman correspondent for Tolliver's Big Show helped place the date of the Handy concert when he reported having opened in Atlanta on May 8, 1916 and enjoyed a "big, successful week" despite strong competition from the "Eighty-one Theater, Ninety-one Theater, feature pictures at
the Auditorium and W.C. Handy's Band, the Composer of the Memphis Blues." A review of that week's *Atlanta Constitution* confirms that on Thursday, May 11, 1916, at 8:30 p.m., W.C. Handy's Band took the stage at the Auditorium-Armory in Atlanta to "dispense a concert of ragtime from the boards that less than two weeks ago by Caruso."13

A one-column review of the concert, on page fourteen of the May 12, 1916 *Atlanta Constitution*, acknowledged, "Darktown had its 'grand opera' last night." Though the reviewer didn't mention seeing Clarence Williams and A.J. Piron on the program, he assured that show-stealing Jasper Taylor's "shoulders swayed, heels tamped (sic), fingers snapped in rhythm." Observing a wide range of social and racial classes of people in the audience, the reviewer surmised that, "The variety demonstrated the democracy of ragtime."14

W.C. Handy claimed he "had been instrumental in helping" Williams & Piron "get a listing with the five-and-ten-cent stores, a difficult assignment at that time."15 An ad for Williams & Piron in the July 15, 1916 *Freeman* gave first indication of their important new distribution agreement with Woolworth's:

4 Big Sensational Hits 4
That Ought To Get It
That New Dance Craze 'The Shivers'

BROWN SKIN
Biggest Sensational Hit of the South
I Can Beat You Doing What You're Doing to Me
Some Novelties
You Missed a Good Woman When You Picked All Over Me
Some Blues

Woolworth's ad.

Some time during, or just before, the summer of 1916, Clarence Williams assumed management of the Manhattan Cabaret, more commonly remembered as Pete LaLa's. On August 5, 1916, Clarence ran this ad in *The Freeman*:

**WANTED!**

First Class Entertainers, Male and Female
For the Manhattan Cabaret!

Must be good rag singers. Tickets will be placed for the right ones. A steady job with plenty of collection. Start all in first letter. The Manhattan Cabaret, Clarence Williams, Gen. Mgr., Cor. Iberville and Marais Streets, New Orleans, La.

Wanted!

In his autobiography, *Treat It Gentle*, Sidney Bechet recalled, "It was Clarence Williams started all that playing I did in dime stores."16 It was probably a "dime-store" tour Clarence had put together when he informed *Freeman* readers on August 19, 1916 that he was closing the Manhattan Cabaret "for a month's vacation... Will reopen on September 1, 1916." The notice explained:

Mr. Williams and his partner, Prof. Armand J. Piron, are going on a big tour for a month, demonstrating their new songs. These two men are the composers of the song "Brown Skin" (Who You For?). They are now publishing two of the best numbers they have written yet, entitled "I Wonder What It Means," great novelty song; and "If You Don't Want Me Please Don't Dog Me Round," a wonderful blues song. There is more melody in this one than any they have written. Watch for these two songs. Watch for the ad in the *Freeman*.

On their tour they are taking with them a seven-piece ragtime Creole band: Prof. Armond [sic] J. Piron, violinist; Mr. Henry Zeno, trap drummer; Mr. Zu Robinson [sic]; trombonist: Mr. Bachal [sic], clarinetist; Mr. Joe Oliver, cornetist; Kid Eddie, bass violinist; Mr. Clarence
Williams, pianist. This is one of the best orchestras in New Orleans [probably so]. Two singers are with them, Mr. Willie Jackson and Miss Alma Hughes, the two that certainly can put them over. Mr. Williams and Mr. Piron mean to make their number go.

Back home in New Orleans by mid-September 1916, Clarence apparently abandoned the cabaret scene in favor of theater appearances. On October 7, 1916 The Freeman reported:

Williams & Wade Stock Co., on their second week at the Lincoln packing and jamming them every night, featuring their season hit “Brown Skin” (Who You For), and also “If you don’t want me please don’t dog me ’round.” Same featured by Mrs. Lela Dudson [sic, Lelia Duson].

Mr. Clarence Williams is screaming them every night with “I can beat you doing what you’re doing.” Mr. Williams is carrying his Creole four orchestra with him: Mr. Henry Zeno, trap drummer; Mr. Sidney Basha [sic - the cabaret Bechet opened in New York in the early-1920s was called “Club Basha.”] Clarinetist; Mr. Lee Baxter, of Galveston, Texas, Trombonist; Mr. Clarence Williams, Pianist.

Mr. Williams would like to hear from all theatre managers.

Miss Ryan (Baby) Mitchell the child wonder and Miss Ada Harris, Mr. Harry Bonner, with his golden voice (the Crescent City favorite).

Mr. Basha is screaming ‘em every night with his sensational playing. All send regards to the Creole Band.

Basha says look out Louis Nelson I am coming.

Regards to Mack & Mach [sic].

That same issue of The Freeman carried an updated ad for Williams & Piron’s song hits:

Williams & Piron’s
Latest Song Hits, Just Off the Press

“Little Mamee”(Who You For).<br>“That’s Got To Get You”(the dance called the charivari, a new dance craze).<br>“Let’s Put It Down”(the new hit date).<br>“Let’s Do It”(you’re doing it).<br>“You’re A Good Woman”“When You’re Good To Me”(a great chorus song).<br>“It’s A Sin”(the original hit-date for the new hit-date).<br>“Talk To Me”(a hit-date for the new hit-date).<br>“When I’m With You”(a hit-date for the new hit-date).<br>“I Don’t Want You”(a hit-date for the new hit-date).

Williams & Piron Music Publishing Co.
1315 Tulane Ave.,
New Orleans, La.

Reports from various theaters and travelling shows during the Fall of 1916 reflect the increasingly widespread popularity of Williams & Piron’s song hits. Poodle Dog Cabaret veterans Bruce & Bruce had charge of the stock company at the Aldridge Theater, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in September 1916, when they noted, “Miss Viola Evans says I can beat you doing What You Doing Mr. Brown Skin, Who You For [sic], and stops the show with the German Blues.” Georgia Davis was at the Queen Theater in Chatanooga in September 1916 when this message went out: “Mr. Armond Perori [sic] of Williams & Perori Pub. Co., we are waiting for your next song. ’Mama don’t allow it and papa don’t want it here.” One month later, on a “swell bill” at the Douglass Theater in Macon, Georgia, Georgia Davis was “featuring ‘If You Don’t Want Me, Please Don’t Dog Me Around.”

On November 18, 1916 J.C. O’Brien’s Famous Georgia Minstrels reported from North Carolina, “Prof. G.W. Ayers’ band is still pleasing the people with his latest rag time music, such as ‘Brown Skin,’ ‘I Can Beat You Doing What You Doing Me,’ ‘Walking The Dog.’” Finally, correspondence from Chatanooga, Tennessee’s Queen Theater in December 1916 mentioned “Miss Pettiford singing ‘If You Don’t Want Me, Please Don’t Dog Me Around.”

The entry on Clarence Williams in the Biographical Dictionary of Afro-American and African Musicians draws on a June 30, 1917 Freeman report from New York City to identify Clarence as the 1917 musical director of Salem Tutt Whitney’s prestigious Smart Set Company. The “man behind the baton” in this report, however, was actually one Clarence G. (or G.
Clarence Wilson, a different character altogether from the hustling New Orleans musician-entrepreneur.

On January 27, 1917 a note from New Orleans's Iroquois Theater informed that someone named Ross was "singing a parody on 'I Can Beat You Doing What You're Doing Me,' and is a scream." Shortly thereafter, Clarence Williams and his new stage partner, Josephine Leggett, appeared at the Iroquois. The March 31, 1917 Freeman observed:

Clarence Williams, the song writer, and Josephine Leggett, are in their third week at the Iroquois, stopping the show nightly with their new act, "In the Music Shop." They were requested to keep it on another week. They are singing Williams' latest songs, "I Never Knew What the Blues Were Until You Went Away" and "Mamma's Baby Boy." ... Williams' new songs will be out soon. Watch the Freeman.

In that same report, Clarence and Josephine sent regards to Josephine's sister, Poodle Dog Cabaret alumna Lena Leggett, and her partner David Jones, a future namesake of the legendary Jones and Collins Astoria Hot Eight. Apparently, Clarence and Josephine's partnership did not last through the end of the year. The December 8, 1917 Freeman found Lena Leggett and David Jones "at the 91 Theater, Atlanta, Ga., with their musical act, and doing nicely":

Lena's sister Josephine, has joined them and formed a trio, which will be known as the Jones Leggett Trio. They will be in dear old New Orleans, their home, for Christmas... Hello Williams and Piron.

Clarence Williams once claimed to be "the first to use the word, 'jazz,' on a song." He was certainly among the first wave of composers and publishers to use the word in his advertising. An ad for Williams & Piron in the March 31, 1917 Freeman heralded:

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**FOUR ORIGINAL JAZZ SONGS!**

"Call Me Shake," a Southern Creole song.
"If You Don't Want Me, Please Don't Tell Me Around," the Original Blues Song.
"Long, Long Time Before You See My Face Again," a great jazz song and a sure hit.
"Brown Skin," the original Southern hit. By Jimmie Cox.

These numbers can be seen from all music dealers or direct from the publishers on receipt of 15¢ in postage. Ask to hear them.

Williams & Piron Music Publishing Co.
1315 Tulane Ave., New Orleans, La.

Four Original Jazz Songs

While the ad appears to associate composer Jimmie Cox with "Brown Skin," Cox was actually the composer of "Long, Long Time Before You See My Face Again."

On August 4, 1917 Williams & Piron advertised:

**TWO BIG JAZZ SONG HITS**

"Mama's Baby Boy,"


WILLIAMS & PIRON MUSIC PUB. CO.
1315 Tulane Ave., New Orleans, La.

Two big jazz song hits

Named in this ad as coauthor of "Mama's Baby Boy," banjo/guitarist Johnny St. Cyr recalled working for Williams & Piron on Tulane Avenue, "helping to fill orders, packaging and mailing music." St. Cyr said he "never got a dime" for "Mama's Baby Boy." A note in the September 15, 1917 Freeman said "Mama's Baby Boy" and a new title, "You're Some Pretty Doll," were "making a success on the Q.R.S. word rolls." The September 29, 1917 Freeman offered a description of "You're Some Pretty Doll:" "This number is full of jazz and harmony. Clarence says this is the best number that he has ever written. The reason he says this is because it is catchy and easy, enabling anyone to sing it." Other Williams & Piron titles announced through The Freeman in September 1917 were "I Never Knew What the Blues Were Until You Went Away" and "America They Are Both For
You," a "wonderful patriotic song by Armand J. Piron and Samuel J. Perrault."

Eva Taylor, who married Clarence Williams in 1921, told Storyville Magazine that Clarence and A.J. Piron "formed a vaudeville act, violin and piano. They travelled all through the South with different shows; many times they were stranded, but they were always able to keep their act together and did very well... They worked their way up to Kansas City, Missouri, and then played through Michigan."22

On March 23, 1918 a one-shot ad in The Freeman for Hambone Jones & His Country Girls, touring through the Southeastern States, named "Williams & Piron", the "originators of jazz", as its featured act:

Hambone Jones and His Country Girls

Featuring Williams & Piron popular song-writers, originators of Jazz music; John M. Mason, Aaron Gates, the clever boys; the latest and best songs; review of the season; Bar none, clean, classy. Atlanta, Feb 25th to Mar 6th, Savannah 14th to 24th; Charleston, 20th to April 8th.

Hambone Jones and his Country Girls

A note from Kansas City, Missouri in the August 17, 1918 Freeman listed Williams and Piron among the members of the Lyric Theater Stock Company there. Also in stock at the Lyric Theater was Edmonia Henderson, the "great coon... who sings the Jelly Roll [sic] Blues." Meanwhile, future blues recording star Virginia Liston became the Hambone Jones Company's featured entertainer. When the Hambone Jones Company played Chicago's Monogram Theater in September 1919, The Freeman noted:

Virginia Liston as a national "Blues" songster... can be accredited with making a hit without going too far in her songs. "The Royal Garden Blues" furnished an encore... Rosie Byrd, Georgia Bigsby and Louise Higgins were pretty and active in the choruses, especially in Clarence Williams' "Jelly Roll" song.

By this time, Williams & Piron were doing business in Chicago. Copyright cards at the Library of Congress indicate Williams & Piron had opened an office in Chicago some time before February 20, 1919.23 The first six months of The Freeman for 1919 were not microfilmed, and are presumably lost. An ad for Williams & Piron in the July 5, 1919 issue touted their "Jelly Roll" song as the "King of All Jazz Songs," and it gave the address of their new location:

8 -- Big Song Hits -- 8

King of All Jazz Songs

"I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None of This Jelly Roll."

"Yama--Yama Blues."

"You're Such a Cruel Papa to Me."

"Redskin Dixie Ball."

"You're Just Like a Mother to Me."

"Cinco--Sam Ain't No Woman, But He Sure Can Take Your Man"

Our Race Pride Special

"The Black Yanks Did Their Share."

"America, They're Both for You."

Send $1.00 and get them all. No stamps.

Williams & Piron

3129 State St.

Chicago, Ill.

8 -- Big Song Hits -- 8

The July 12, 1919 Freeman announced that Al Jolson, the 'white comedian is singing Clarence Williams' new song, 'Who Said So' at the Winter Garden in New York City." A note on August 23, 1919 informed, "Royal Garden Blues" is the latest hit recorded. The song is by Spencer Williams and Clarence Williams. The latter of the firm Williams & Piron Music Publishers, 3129 State street, Chicago and New Orleans, La." The next week's Freeman assured, "The Williams & Piron Music Company is doing a fine business in Chicago and New Orleans."

By September 1919, "Clarence Williams' 'Jelly Roll' song and the 'Yama Yama Blues' were "going awfully strong." An ad in the September 6, 1919 Freeman identified Williams & Piron's State Street location as the 'Home of Jazz':

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DECEMBER 1993

THE JAZZ ARCHIVIST

PAGE 13
If You're Looking for Jazz

Here it is

"Don't Tell Your Monkey Man," 15c. by Lule Johnson, writer of "Corrine," and Ted Kochler, writer of "Sweet Somebody of Mine." "Who Made You Cry?" (Sugar Babe), 15c; "Royal Garden Blues," 30c; by Clarence Williams and Spencer Williams, novelty one-step, good for opening or closing numbers.

Professional copies are ready for recognized artists. Others send in recent program.

Orchestration, 25c; songs, 15c; Royal Garden Blues, 30c.

Where Music is Sold.

Williams & Piron

Home of Jazz


By this time, A.J. Piron had resettled in New Orleans and was charting a separate career. The September 27, 1919 Freeman said Piron was "still a conspicuous figure in his home town." A correspondent for Irvin Miller's "Broadway Rastus" company reported on March 20, 1920:

Broadway Rastus, Irvin C. Miller's successful Review will soon be back above the Mason Dixon line, after a year's stay in the south, breaking all records and raising the standard of the entire theatrical world, south. The show Mr. Miller brings back will be styled "Broadway Rastus 1920." ... The music has been written by J.A. [sic] Piron, the New Orleans Jazz King, nuf said.

Back in Chicago, the October 18, 1919 Freeman gave notice that "The Royal Garden Blues," by Clarence Williams, has been accepted and will be played in "Zigfield's Follies." Another note on November 15, 1919 said, "The Williams and Piron Music Company is now dealing in player rolls at 3129 State street. The Royal Garden Blues continues to be the popular selection."

On November 22, 1919 The Freeman reported that mainstream "lyric writer" Alonzo Govern, "of the Leading Novelty and Publishing Company of America of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.," had opened...
an office in Chicago: "In speaking of the musical field he stated that Clarence Williams is the most progressive Colored music song dealer and song writer that has yet opened a business in Chicago and predicts that he will be a big winner." By the close of the second decade of the twentieth century, this was a fairly safe prediction.

End notes

7. "From Honkey-Tonk to Swing: An Interview with Clarence Williams," Orchestra World, (October 1936), p. 13. This article is among the clippings in the Nick LaRocca scrapbook in the Hogan Jazz Archive.
8. Rose, p. 115.
11. Shapiro and Hentoff, p. 57.
14. Brit Craig, "Elite of Darktown Sways to the Music of Catchy 'Rags', Atlanta Constitution,

May 12, 1916, p14.
15. Handy, p127.
17. Bechet, p145.
23. Lord, p454.

Acknowledgments:

This article is based, for the most part, on the findings of a joint research project in African-American newspapers, conducted by Doug Seroff and the author. It also shows the benefit of Doug Seroff's critical input and editorial assistance. In addition, Richard B. Allen, Tim Brooks and the staff of the Hogan Jazz Archive all gave valuable assistance.

Clarence Williams from 1925 Columbia catalog

The photo exhibit BRASS BANDS AT MID-CENTURY may be viewed Monday-Friday 8:30-5:00 and Saturday 9:00-1:00 at the Hogan Jazz Archive, 4th floor of the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, located by the Audubon stop of the Freret Street bus. For information phone (504) 865-5688. Saturday parking is free.

When Alden Ashforth left his studies at Harvard in 1950 and moved to New Orleans to immerse himself in its music, he became an avid follower of the city's black brass bands. During the following two years, in cooperation with David Wyckoff, he made the first recordings of such jazz luminaries as Billie & DeDe Pierce, Emile Barnes, Kid Clayton, Kid Thomas, and Percy Humphrey, as leader on the first recording of a regularly-organized brass band: the Eureka. Dr. Ashforth, who is engaged in writing a book for Oxford University Press entitled Traditional Jazz in New Orleans, currently divides his time between New Orleans and Los Angeles, where he is Professor of Music at UCLA.

Drawing from the collection of prints he has made available to the Hogan Jazz Archive, Dr. Ashforth has mounted this eight-panel exhibit comprising over fifty photographs shot on eleven occasions documenting six different bands, each uniquely characteristic of the period, which still retained strong elements of the past while presaging future stylistic change.

The oldest brass band, one of continuously changing membership but under the continuous
leadership of its founder Henry Allen Sr., had been founded over forty years earlier in 1907, within a year after Buddy Bolden played his last parade. Among the players shown at a funeral, and at a summer parade, are trumpeters Alvin Alcorn and Peter Bocage, clarinetist Willie Humphrey, trombonist Eddie Pierson and Louis Nelson, and bass drummer Paul Barbarin.

The city's premiere traditional, regularly-organized and regularly-rehearsing organization, the Eureka Brass Band, then at its musical peak, was being led by Percy Humphrey into the fourth of its nearly six-decade career. Its membership included Emanuel Paul on the tenor saxophone, and on occasion George Lewis playing the e-flat clarinet.

The Young Tuxedo Brass Band under e-flat clarinetist John Casimir included Wilbert Tillman, who forever changed the role of the sousaphone, and trombonist Joe Avery, associated with the origins of one of the most enduring standards of the brass band repertory. Then two decades old, the Young Tuxedo with evolving personnel has continued to the present day, the longest-lived of all New Orleans brass bands.

The Silver Leaf Brass Band, operating in the forties and fifties as a loose confederation under the aegis of drummer Abbie Williams, regularly included such first-rate players as trombonist Jim Robinson, trumpeters DeDe Pierce, Kid Clayton, and Kid Howard.

The brass band formed in the forties by bass drummer George Williams (shown on the cover of this flyer) boasted a stellar lineup including trombonists Chicken Henry and Bob Thomas, the popular trumpeter Ernie Cagnolatti, and veteran saxophonists Andrew Morgan and the recently deceased Ernest Poree.

Also included are photos of a 1952 pickup band with Thomas Jefferson, Kid Sheik and Emory Thompson (now Umar Sharif) as the trumpet section, and with Brother Cornbread as clarinetist.

Ancillary glass-case displays contain documentation of the early recording activity of New Orleans brass bands during a thirteen-year stretch enfoldmg the period of the photo exhibit; memorabilia; and pictures of local second-liners and a variegated collection of followers of brass band performances.

Assisting Dr. Ashforth in the mounting of this exhibit were Steven Teeter from UCLA, and of the Hogan Jazz Archive: curator Bruce Boyd Raeburn, Alma Williams, Dirk Van Tuerenhout, and Allan Sumnall.

Letters to the editor.

July 2, 1993

To the editor:

My experience as a professional musician, record executive, radio programmer, temporary resident of the United Kingdom, and lifetime resident of American society, all move me to comment on the statements reprinted recently in Ben Sandmel's Jazz Archive article, originally made by James Lincoln Collier. Mr. Collier makes the naive and factually ignorant statement that it was "simply not true that the Original Dixieland Jazz Band became the first jazz band to record only because of racist bias of the recording industry at the time."

The fact that they were an all-white group was merely a coincidence in Mr. Collier's estimation, evidenced by the fact that at least one Black artist had been allowed to record in some genre or another prior to that date, may several artists. This is an age-old white man's argument elicited in objections ranging from music to sports and affirmative action to so-called "reverse racism."

This is completely out of character with the legalized racism and institutionalized Jim Crow laws of America in 1917. We must ask the esteemed scholar and ourselves: what was it that allowed the ODJB, instead of a Black group, to make the first recordings of an undeniably Black American music form if not direct racist bias? Lucky opportunity? Better booking agent? Better lawyer? More aggressive A&R person?
The advantages white people enjoyed were better educational opportunities; the number of halls disallowing bookings for groups containing even one Black member; and murder, violence, prosecution and general harassment of Blacks seen associating with whites.

Mr. Collier further has the audacity to put forth that anyone wishing to maintain the segregationist ODJB "myth" is a mere propagandist. His assertion is far worse than propaganda. His is an attempt to rewrite history, through whatever motivation, racist revisionist subversion or just plain ignorance. This is actually Hitlerian in its totalitarian impulse to justify racism and ridiculous "race theories," past and present, by reinterpreting history to fit a current agenda.

It's unfortunate that such a respected jazz historian and biographer could continue to so blind to the blatant and rampant racism that continues to this day to plague the Black creators of this music. Racism, both overt and covert, permeates all aspects of the music industry, and society in general. The examples are infinite, manifold and omnipresent, in spite of whatever relatively recent and feeble civil rights legislation alleges to the contrary.

A few brief and undeniable examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black musical innovators</th>
<th>More successful and accepted white imitators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ferdinand Morton</td>
<td>Original Dixieland Jazz Band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Redman</td>
<td>Benny Goodman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bud Powell</td>
<td>Dave Brubeck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dexter Gordon</td>
<td>Stan Getz</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Big Boy&quot; Crudup</td>
<td>Elvis Presley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little Richard (he never received gold record)</td>
<td>The Beatles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howlin' Wolf</td>
<td>Eric Clapton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luther Vandross</td>
<td>George Michael</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Edition</td>
<td>New Kids on the Block (same producer)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This "phenomenon" abounds, crosses all musical genres, consists of egregious examples from the full historical span of recorded music, and is no less a factor in the popularity levels and opportunities for exposure of recording artists today. The music industry is segregated to this day into "Black Music" (formerly "Race Music") and "pop Music" divisions, forcing issues of "crossover" to be of ever-present concern, but only to Black artists. White artists are almost never concerned with crossing over to the Black market.

Mr. Collier's books on Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong also contain examples of racial and political insensitivity. It is obvious that his revisionist tendencies are out of touch with reality, damaging to the scope of understanding of the evils of racist oppression, historical and current, and completely unscholarly in research and conclusions. It is regrettable that he has allowed himself to come to these conclusions, especially in the light of the wealth of documented evidence to the contrary, and the endless demoralizing struggles that Black artists (originators and innovators of this jazz we all love so) have always faced and continue to face. It is further deplorable that he wishes to inflict them on the world community. Truth in the face of institutionalized racism is far from propaganda. Racism is racism, and truth is truth.

Peace,
Signed,
Ivan Bodley
Tulane Arts & Sciences 1986

Response to Bodley letter:
We thank Mr. Bodley for his passionate response to excerpts from a letter by jazz historian James Lincoln Collier appearing in Ben Sandmel's article on the Hogan Jazz Archive in the Spring 1993 Tulanian. (For the full text of Mr. Collier's letter, see the December 1991 issue of The Jazz Archivist.) Despite its somewhat modest circulation, we have always regarded the newsletter as a forum for the
exchange of ideas on the history of jazz, the objective being improved communication and an expansion of historical perspective. Toward that end, we welcome a range of opinions with the full realization that we are not in a position to resolve outstanding differences but with the hope that through better communication additional information may be brought forth for the benefit of all interested parties. One might therefore suggest that in the interest of improved communication and understanding, Mr. Bodley should take a look at Mr. Collier’s most recent book, *Jazz: The American Theme Song*. (Oxford University Press, 1993), in which the author tackles many of the issues raised above in much greater detail. Good scholarship requires debate, and we are united in our mutual desire to learn more about the history of jazz, which reflects virtually all the major problems pervading American society. This is precisely what makes such work so important and why both Mr. Bodley and Mr. Collier should be encouraged to pursue their respective paths to the truth.

Bruce Boyd Raeburn, Curator

My own findings, after having developed ways of locating non-verbal patterns in music and dance performance, have shown that African stylistic traditions have survived virtually intact in the speech, bodily communication, and musical styles of the Afro-American community. In the same way, the styles of Great Britain, western France, Italy, etc. have been carried on in America in their own communities. Of course, I know that your group knows these facts and (I’m sure) does not disagree with them. But from what you have been publishing, the impression must arise that since the blacks are outnumbered in the document field by the various white minorities of New Orleans, that they weigh less in the historical balance. Perhaps there’s a way around the problem — which I suggest in the friendliest manner I know how.

All the best to all my friends and that most wonderful of all American talents,

Sincerely yours,

Signed
Alan Lomax

Reply:

May 26, 1992

Dear Mr. Lomax,

Perhaps the best function of any publication, even this modest newsletter, is to promote dialogue. Your letter is gratefully received and, to the extent that it offers a corrective, we are glad to print it here. Your reminder of the importance of oral tradition is certainly well-taken: that tradition, in the form of hundreds of tape-recorded interviews, not to mention the thousands of sound recordings of the music itself, forms the very backbone of the Hogan Archive’s collection.

If certain recent articles in this organ have drawn conclusions based on the written record, it is certainly not a policy of the Archive or its editorial staff to foster such conclusions. While we are not a professional research journal, we are committed to publishing any pieces that present interesting information and are reasonably well 
researched. It would be ideal if we received in equal measure papers that argue on opposite sides of a polemical issue, such as the white versus black roles in the formation of jazz. But, as you so aptly point out, a balanced picture of such a development has proved elusive, primarily because of the intangible nature of the non-verbal record—of its relative inaccessibility to discovery, collection, and easy verbal description. This is seen in the still scant number of published studies that attempt to gain insight into the nature and ancestry of jazz by a close examination of the music itself. Gunther Schuller's pioneering studies of this type, and the descriptive techniques he has painstakingly devised to analyze jazz recordings, are models for all to follow. As for other non-verbal elements such as "speech and bodily communication," it is left for seasoned scholars such as you to point the way.

We continue to solicit contributions to our newsletter that will shed light, from whatever direction, on the subject of New Orleans music. And, in the spirit of your remarks, we will continue to publish as many rare photographs as limited space will allow, since these non-verbal images, bypassing verbal interpretation, speak directly to all with eyes to see. Thank you again for your interest and insight.

Editor