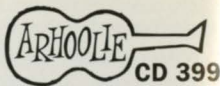


Luderin Darbone's
HACKBERRY RAMBLERS
"Jolie Blonde"



1. BLACK BAYOU RAG (2)
2. LOUISIANA WALTZ (2)
(vocal: Lennis)
3. JE VEUX MARIER (2)
(vocal: Crawford)
4. FAIS PAS ÇA (2)
(vocal: Lennis & Edwin)
5. CROWLEY WALTZ (2)
(vocal: Lennis)
6. STEP IT FAST (2)
7. VILLE PLATTE WALTZ (2)
(vocal: Crawford)
8. J'AI PASSE (2)
9. FRENCH HARP STOMP (2)
10. JOLIE BLONDE (1)
(vocal: Lennis)
11. COLINDA (2) (vocal: Glenn)
12. CAJUN RAG (1)
13. TE PETITE, TE MEON (2)
(vocal: Edwin, Glenn, & Crawford)
14. MERMENEAU STOMP (2)
(vocal: Lennis)
15. CAJUN TWIST (1)
(vocal: Glenn)
16. MADAME SUSTIN (1)
(vocal: Glenn)
17. PIPELINER'S BLUES (1) (*)
(vocal: Glenn)
18. TURTLE TAIL (1) (vocal: Edwin)

19. MA CHERE BEBE (1) (*)
(vocal: Lennis)
20. GRAND MAMOU (3) (*)
(vocal: Lennis)
21. TANTE NA NA (3) (*)
(vocal: Butch)
22. MA NEGRESSE (3) (*)
(vocal: Lennis)
23. MON BON VIEUX MARI
(My Good Old Man) (3) (*)
(vocal: Edwin & Lennis)
24. JOLIE BLONDE (3) (*)
(vocal: Lennis)
25. ALLONS A LAFAYETTE (3) (*)
(vocal: Lennis)
26. GRAND TEXAS (3) (*)
(vocal: Lennis)

THE HACKBERRY RAMBLERS:

1963 (Sessions 1 & 2): Luderin Darbone – fiddle; Lennis Sonnier – guitar & vocal; Edwin Duhon – piano, accordion, vocal, harmonica, & bass; Crawford Vincent – drums, triangle, and vocals; Glenn Croker – steel guitar, piano, and vocals; Johnny Parker – electric bass on session (1) only.

(continued inside booklet on page 7)

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LUDEKIN DARBONE'S
Hackberry Ramblers
"Jolie Blonde"



**Includes Previously
 Unreleased 1965
 Concert Recordings**



The Hackberry Ramblers, late 1940s.

Luderin Darbone's Hackberry Ramblers "Jolie Blonde"

The Hackberry Ramblers Celebrate 60th Anniversary of Playing Cajun Music

*Luderin Darbone and the Hackberry Ramblers are a pioneer Cajun string band who played their first dance in 1933. They were the first to make a hit with **Jolie Blonde** by recording it in western swing style two years later in 1935. Today, in 1993, Luderin Darbone and Edwin Duhon of the original Hackberry Ramblers are still playing their music and entertaining at festivals and dances. During the intervening 60 years the Ramblers have played thousands of dances and made many recordings. This CD celebrates Luderin Darbone and the Hackberry Ramblers' 60th anniversary of playing Cajun music by bringing you their best recordings from the 1960s, about the half-way mark in their remarkable career.*

Luderin Darbone

The Hackberry Ramblers' leader and fiddle player, Luderin Darbone was born on January 14, 1913, in Evangeline, Acadia Parish, Louisiana. His mother persuaded Luderin's conservative father, Ed Darbone, to buy him a fiddle for his 12th birthday and she herself bought Luderin a correspondence course. He was soon able to play tunes from the sheet music but says: "I couldn't express myself the way I wanted so I started playing by ear." His father was

an oil field worker and played a little accordion on the side. By the mid-1920s the family had moved to Texas and young Luderin often heard local fiddlers play at Saturday night house parties. On Sundays he would sit down and practice what he had heard the night before. Luderin's first public performance came at his graduating exercises at Orangefield, Texas, in 1931. Soon the family moved back to Louisiana, to Hackberry, where his father continued

to work in the oil fields.

Luderin recalls: "Across the street lived Edwin Duhon. He was just learning to play accordion and guitar and we immediately began playing together. He knew Cajun songs and I knew hill-billy tunes. The local dance hall featured a colored orchestra every other Saturday night where we learned such tunes as *Tiger Rag*, *High Society*, and *Eh La Bas*. We soon had a large repertoire, and after months of hard practice we developed our own individual style and decided it was time to start playing for local parties."

Soon Luderin and Edwin took on a third player, Lennis Sonnier, to play guitar and together they started playing in dance halls and over radio station KFDM in Beaumont which had a remote from Lake Charles every morning. They needed a catchy name and finally compromised on Hackberry Ramblers.

"Prior to this time all dance bands in the Cajun country, other than orchestras, featured an accordion, a fiddle, a guitar, and most of the time, the triangle or 'little iron' as it's called in southern

Louisiana. We didn't know how the people would react at our first dance — we were there to play with only a fiddle and two guitars, but to our amazement we were a smashing success."

In 1935 the band moved to Crowley to be more centrally located. They played dances in almost every town in southwest Louisiana and that same year made their first records in New Orleans for Victor's subsidiary, Blue Bird under the supervision of Eli Oberstein. With his marriage and the death of his father in 1939, Luderin gave up music for a time and went to work as an accountant for an oil company in Hackberry. After about a year, however, he reorganized the band and began playing again on weekends as a paying hobby. The band added a few more members, broadened its repertoire, and worked at the Silver Star in West Calcasieu for ten years after World War II. Luderin and his wife point with pride to their beautiful, comfortable home and tell you that every brick in it represents a tune played at a weekend dance.

By the early 1960s musical tastes were changing and the Hackberry Ram-

blers were once again considering retiring from the music scene.

Bob Pinson, who today heads the sound archives at the Country Music Hall of Fame library, played some 78s by the Hackberry Ramblers for me in the early 1960s when I was teaching high school in Los Gatos, California. We were both avid record collectors. I was knocked out by the wonderful sound of the swinging, lilting, loose fiddler, whose name was given on the label: Luderin Darbone. That lovely fiddle sound stuck in my head and in the spring of 1963, on one of my early recording trips to Louisiana, I stopped at a cafe in Hackberry and asked the waitress if she had ever heard of the Hackberry Ramblers. She said, "Sure, that's Luderin Darbone and you will find him on Darbone Street back in Sulphur, where you just came from." I thanked her and went back to Sulphur where I quickly found the house and after knocking on the door was greeted by Luderin in person! Apparently we had both arrived at the same place at the right time and he was delighted with the prospect of making his first album

after recording many 78 rpm singles in the 1930s and 40s. He also seemed happy about maybe not quite yet hanging up the old fiddle after all.

Luderin called his old friends Lennis Sonnier, whose piercing voice on the old Blue Bird 78s had also delighted my ears, and Edwin Duhon, to tell them about recording the next day. He also called several other friends who had been playing with him in recent years. The youngest in the band which assembled at Eddie Shuler's Goldband studios the next day was Johnny Parker, who played electric bass. Born in Sulphur in 1941 he worked as a mechanic but on weekends played with the Hackberry Ramblers. From Lake Charles came James Glenn Croker who played steel guitar, piano, and also sang. Born in 1934, he started on the French harp but later switched to guitar and got his first job with Eddie Shuler's band playing mostly Western music along with a few Cajun numbers. From Gueydan, La., came the son of a Cajun fiddler, Crawford Vincent. Born in 1921, Crawford learned to play fiddle and guitar and was working in a CCC Camp

when he met Luderin in 1940. He began playing drums and soon joined the Ramblers.

Lennis Sonnier, one of the original Ramblers, who joined the group in 1933, played guitar on the session. Born on February 25, 1917, in Vinton, La., he met Luderin through Ed Duhon. Lennis' father was a fiddler and when you hear Lennis sing you can tell there are many years of a strong tradition behind him. For years Lennis worked in the oil fields but on weekends he loved to play with the Ramblers.

Perhaps the most versatile member of the group, Edwin Duhon, was born in 1910 in Broussard, La. His father played "a little accordion and a little guitar" and they lived in the country. Though his parents never took him to any dances, young Ed heard music all around him anyway. He heard a good deal of Black music when he was in his teens. The family was living in Brussardville and on weekends he would hear the bands that played for house parties. They would use guitars, accordions, and a jawbone for rhythm which was played by scraping across

the teeth with a stick. "They were playing mostly French numbers but with a bit more Blues feeling — and rhythm — and they danced the same as the Twist today." He also heard white brass bands — old timers who would get together on Sundays, and of course he heard Cajun music at home. Later the family moved to Hackberry where Ed met Luderin and the two of them started playing together. Ed also worked in the oil fields but later became an electrician and in that capacity worked in South America and Panama for three years while the Ramblers had to do without him. In July of 1962 he was elected city marshal of Westlake but on weekends played with the Hackberry Ramblers. Edwin usually played piano with the group but also liked to play guitar, bass, accordion, French harp, and even the fiddle.

We recorded several songs at the studio and the next day met again at Luderin's house. I wanted to capture the acoustic sound of those old Blue Bird records. I had only one Capps omni-directional condenser microphone which I hung from the ceiling

and arranged the band in a circle around it with Luderin, the quietest, right under the mike. The album was well received in Louisiana and the band soon was playing dances again and quickly forgot any ideas of retiring! The record also attracted the attention of folk music fans around the world who were beginning to take an interest in the rich regional musical traditions from various parts of the United States. Among them was Barry Olivier, who had been presenting an annual Folk Music Festival on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley. In 1965 he invited the Ramblers to that festival. I recently discovered a tape in my vault recorded at that event, much of which I have included on this CD along with the content of the full album (Arhoolie LP 5003) plus a few previously unissued selections from the first studio date.

My best wishes go out to all the members of the Hackberry Ramblers, both past and present, and especially Luderin Darbone. May the band enjoy many more years of playing some of the finest Cajun music on this planet!

(Chris Strachwitz - 1993)

(Continued from booklet back)

1965 (Session 3): Luderin Darbone – fiddle and MC; **Edwin Duhon** – vocals, accordion, guitar, or bass; **Lennis Sonnier** – vocals and guitar; **Butch Ogea** – vocals and bass; **Maxie Sonnier** – snare drum.

- (1) recorded at Goldband Studio, Lake Charles, La., 4/13/1963
- (2) recorded at Luderin Darbonne's home, Sulphur, La., 4/14/1963
- (3) recorded at the 8th UC Berkeley Folk Festival, Berkeley, Ca. 6/24/1965
- (*) = previously unissued.

Recorded and produced by Chris Strachwitz
Cover by Wayne Pope
Cover photo © by Chris Strachwitz

Seventeen of the Hackberry Ramblers first recordings (1935–1948) are available on ARH/OT cassette and LP #127.

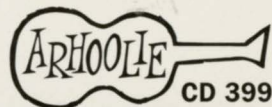
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Luderin Darbone's

HACKBERRY RAMBLERS

"Jolie Blonde"



Celebrating the RAMBLERS 60th Anniversary

1. BLACK BAYOU RAG (2)
2. LOUISIANA WALTZ (2)
3. JE VEUX MARIER (2)
4. FAIS PAS ÇA (2)
5. CROWLEY WALTZ (2)
6. STEP IT FAST (2)
7. VILLE PLATTE WALTZ (2)
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(My Good Old Man) (3) (*)
24. JOLIE BLONDE (3) (*)
25. ALLONS A LAFAYETTE (3) (*)
26. GRAND TEXAS (3) (*)



THE HACKBERRY RAMBLERS:

Luderin Darbone – fiddle; Lennis Sonnier – guitar & vocal; Edwin Duhon – piano, accordion, vocal, harmonica, & bass; Crawford Vincent – drums, triangle, and vocals; Glenn Croker – steel guitar, piano, and vocals; Johnny Parker – electric bass.

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