

# CAJUN HONKY TONK

THE KHOURY RECORDINGS VOLUME 2



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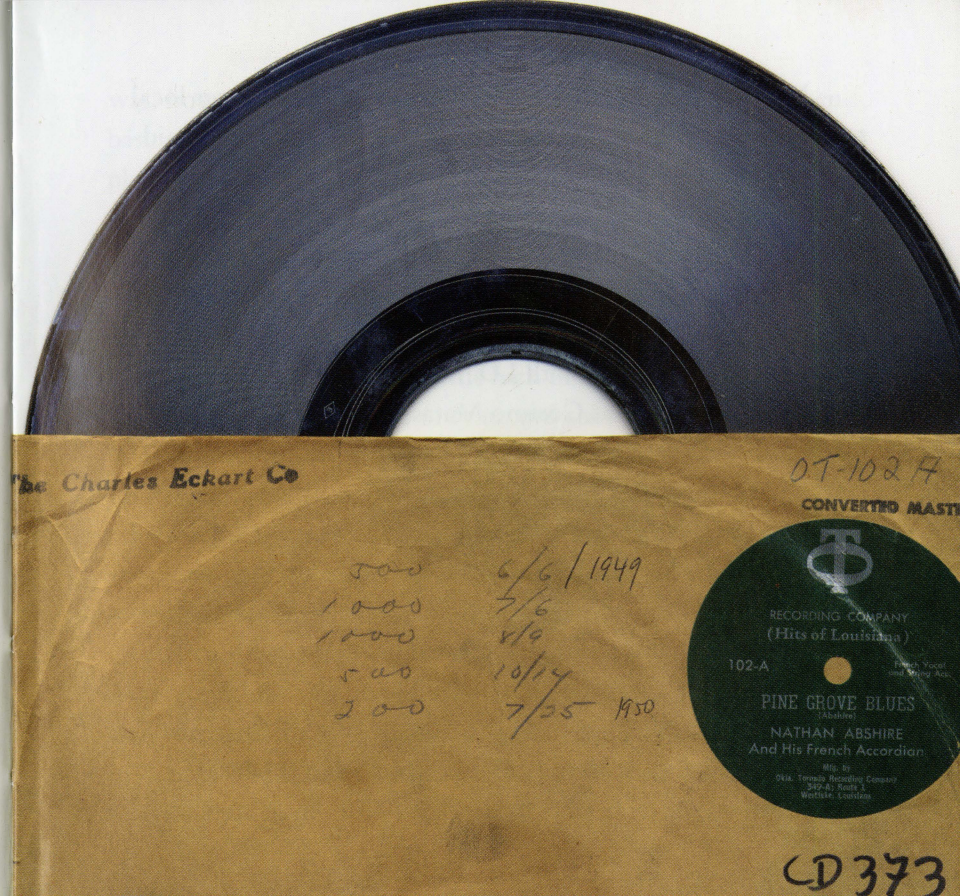
## *INTRODUCTION*

The remarkable resurgence in popularity of Cajun music in the dance halls and honky-tonks of southwest Louisiana during and after World War II was given a big boost by the flourishing local oil business, as well as the presence of several military bases in the area. Musicians were hard to find because many were serving in the military or working full time on oil rigs. However, many local Cajun musicians who had previously only played small house dances and parties came out of the woods and began playing in the many public dance halls, beer joints, and nightclubs—sometimes even five and seven nights a week. The demand for local music soon encouraged several local businessmen to put this music on records. They realized that the juke boxes, the radio and the general public demanded records. Instead of taking the musicians to the major labels as in the past, they began to record them locally and release the discs on their own imprints. The major record companies had largely given up



on recording regional and ethnic music during the war, largely due to a shellac shortage and difficulties producing enough national pop records.

Recording in those days was not as simple as today, with studios everywhere and in almost every garage! After World War II, recordings were made largely at radio stations since there were no studios as such in the Cajun country. In Lake Charles, La. KPLC had the disc cutter for making commercials or transcribing programs from network feeds. Masters were cut onto aluminum-based acetate-covered discs, which were then sent to a processing plant. In the case of Nathan Abshire's 1949 recording of "Pine Grove Blues" for example, the metal plating work was done by the Charles Eckart Co. on Santa Monica Blvd in Los Angeles. This firm in turn probably sent the metal parts (or masters) to a Los Angeles pressing plant to manufacture the discs, since there were no such plants in Louisiana. In those days the finished 78 rpm discs were usually shipped via Railway Express, which seemed to have handled these fragile shellac discs carefully!





Many of the bands also began broadcasting live over local radio stations, as had been the tradition since the early to mid-1930s. Once in the radio studio, the engineer on duty could easily make a live cut during the broadcast. However, I think most records were cut in an adjacent empty studio, after a program or even after the station went off the air. Some record producers, however, did take their artists all the way to New Orleans, as was the case with J.D. Miller who recorded Happy Fats and Doc Guidry at Cosimo Matassa's J&M studio.

It's hard to say exactly who was the first to jump on the local Cajun music recording bandwagon, but Bill Quinn in Houston, Texas (who recorded Cajun fiddler Harry Choates at his studio for his Gold Star label), was probably the first! That western swing-styled version of "Jole Blond" on Gold Star caused a sensation! Soon accordionists Nathan Abshire, Iry LeJeune, and Lawrence Walker followed, recording for Mr. Bozman and Khoury. By the time of World War II the accordion had almost completely vanished from the local music scene since its heyday in the late 1920s. Soon after the

war, however, various groups, which up to that time had been basically western-styled string bands, tried to find accordion players to join them due to overwhelming popular demand. The Pinegrove Boys had just taken on accordionist Nathan Abshire, who had made a few accordion sides in the mid-1930s. They approached Eddie Shuler about recording. However, Eddie was busy with Iry LeJeune and suggested to his friend George Khoury that he ought to try his luck in the record business!

Mr. Khoury had the only record shop in Lake Charles featuring black, hillbilly and French (or Cajun) music. The small store was located just around the corner from Shuler's radio repair shop, across the street from the busy railroad station in the black section of town. George Assad Khoury was born on July 17, 1908 in Sulphur, Louisiana and died in Lake Charles on January 9, 1998. His father was born in the Syrian Arab Republic and his mother in Louisiana. He was a man of small stature but with good business sense and liked the music he was selling. He had some cash to invest and decided to have a go at it!





*George Khoury*

So, in 1949 George Khoury took over the masters of the first recording session by Nathan Abshire which his friend Virgel Bozman had produced for his own OT record label—which stood for Oklahoma Tornadoes, the name of his band. That first record was “Pinegrove Blues” (heard on Arhoolie CD 373), and it became a local hit. Mr. Bozman, however, was not a very good businessman—George Khoury, by paying off his friend’s bills, apparently became the distributor and owner of this locally hot-selling record on the OT label. Realizing that he could easily start his own label, George Khoury soon started the Khoury’s label along with the smaller Lyric imprint. “Pinegrove Blues” was pressed from the original converted masters several times for a total of 3,200 copies, but according to Mr. Khoury most Cajun records never went beyond their initial press run of 500 copies.

This small pressing figure gives you a good indication as to how rare most of these records are. Many, if not most, were sold to juke box operators who were well aware of their patrons’ demands. I was lucky enough to buy a good stash of Cajun 78s dating from the late 1930s into the 50s from a former juke box

operator in Mamou, LA who had kept quite a lot of 78s in boxes in the back of his furniture store. Almost all the boxes were marked “French,” as Cajun music was generally referred to in those days. There was one lone box marked “Nigger” which contained some nice blues records from the 1930s. I asked the owner if by chance he had more of those but he told me that he had sold all his 78s to a carnival, who used them for people to shoot at! He only kept his “French” records because he liked them! Of course there were other occasions when I found some discs here and there, but by the early 1960s it was hard to find Cajun 78s in good condition.

In 1969 I visited Mr. Khoury in order to arrange for the re-issue of some of his classic Cajun recordings. We signed an agreement and I believe it was on that occasion that he gave me the metal masters for OT #102, which he had thankfully kept – especially in light of the fact that many pressing plants were notorious for not returning masters to their owners! On the sleeves of each metal master were noted the number of pressings made on each occasion of orders received.

When I visited Mr. Khoury I told him I had 78 copies of many of his discs, and he was very keen for me to help him re-issue them! I also sent him tapes in order for him to release the material on his own label, but he never got around to it and so left it in my hands. On the list of 78s I had sent to him I noted quite a few titles by Lawrence Walker and he sent this list back to me with a note on the side of the page: “Make this at once—will pay you for your trouble. Don’t let no-one have Evangeline Waltz! I would like for you to make the cover nice and attractive—for both LPs.” On the side of the titles of the second proposed LP he wrote: “Make me one mixed LP—and I would like to have Pine Grove on this LP. Name it Pine Grove!” I issued the first LP, (Arhoolie 5008) in 1969 and it eventually sold about 4500 copies. I released the second volume in 1973 (Arhoolie 5013) and it had sold about 3500 copies by the end of the LP era. Later I issued the material on two Arhoolie CDs (#373 & 427), which are still in print.

*Chris Strachwitz, 2012*





## ***HOW IT ALL BEGAN***

The more one considers the early developments in postwar Cajun recording, the more it becomes apparent that the hits and continuing evolution of the music took place largely as a result of record men outside of the South Louisiana area rather than within it. While Eddie Shuler, himself from Texas, began the first label in the area in 1944, it was purely as a vehicle for his own Western Swing band the All Star Reveliers. This band featured a number of musicians and may well have included some French items in its appearances, but no Cajun was recorded until “Joli Blonde,” which was a send up of Harry Choates’ left-field hit “Jole Blon.” This surprise seller had been a promising start for Bill Quinn’s new Gold Star label out of Houston, but it became so big that he leased it for national distribution to Modern Records in Los Angeles.



Jay Miller launched Fais Do Do Records during the same 1946 period, becoming the second South Louisiana label and the first to release true Cajun music. He secured Happy Fats' band for his inaugural releases and healthy sales were assured due to the string band's long term popularity in the area. Shuler's band soon recorded authentic French sides as Choates's popularity continued, and the fiddle-dominated sound of the 1930s would continue to evolve for several years. Miller did release the first two accordion records of the decade, but these received little attention as the out of state independents began to consider Bill Quinn's success, and Modern scored another big seller with Chuck Guillory's "Big Texas" featuring Papa Cairo in 1948.

Like Link Davis (who scored with the novelty "Big Mamou" in 1952), Virgel Bozman was an eccentric Texas bandleader who became fascinated by Cajun music. He had already recorded a Hillbilly record for Bill Quinn, "Grinding For My Darling" (GS 1324), which was virtually impossible to locate even when it was new. A 1945 contract for Bozman exists, so he may have had an unknown release on Quinn's earlier Gulf





label, or the sides could have become the later Gold Star release. Bozman revamped his band as the Oklahoma Tornadoes in 1947 with new musicians of the caliber of Cajun fiddler Floyd LeBlanc. Together they came up with a viable French-English novelty “La Prison.” Somehow Quinn failed to see the potential of the song and buried it on the flipside of “The Hokey Pokey”—a piece of pure corn by the Gold Star Trio. But the song still caught on as it was flipped over on the juke boxes in several regions, and copies show up today with mint “A” sides and plowed “B” sides. With the right promotion, the record had the ingredients to become at least a regional hit in the Hillbilly market. Bozman was not deterred and began to feature Cajun music more prominently, although he himself could not speak French outside the words that were scribbled on paper for “La Prison.”

Bozman approached Bennie Hess, another eccentric Texas Hillbilly musician who had started Opera records in Houston, to release his own recordings and convinced him to put out a series of genuine Cajun music of superb quality,



which Bozman is said to have produced during a brief business arrangement or partnership with Hess. Bozman already had ties in South Louisiana where his band traveled for appearances and the Opera records by LeBlanc, Charlie Broussard, and accordionist Iry LeJeune were distributed well as a result. Surprisingly, the release that sold the best was LeJeune's (who begged to accompany Bozman's group of musicians for the trip to Houston). His archaic "Love Bridge Waltz" became the first of the masters that Hess released in early 1948, and it sold in quantities large enough to qualify it as a hit in the Cajun area. Iry's intense vocals registered with the audience and Eddie Shuler of Goldband picked him up as his first artist other than The Reveliers, but released it on his Folk Star label for new talent. Shuler said that one early release sold 3500 copies. Cajuns took LeJeune to their hearts, making it feasible for other accordion musicians to consider approaching Jay Miller and even DeLuxe Records of New Jersey who were holding sessions in New Orleans and Crowley, and who were already recording the Hackberry Ramblers.

Nevertheless it cannot be said that LeJeune's music actually started the "Cajun Honky Tonk" style. His big contribution was that his success made it respectable to record the accordion again in a style rooted in the music of Amede Ardoin, a star of the distant 1920s and early 1930s. The much-loved Iry LeJeune remained in a category of his own until his untimely death in October 1955. Meanwhile, Opera put out a series of records from LeBlanc and Broussard during 1948 while Hess was entangled with Mercury for booting his own records! Like Hess, Bozman stories abound, including his siphoning gasoline out of customers' cars while they were at the Hilltop Club near his home and at one point driving an old car without a floor. He jokingly billed himself as the 'Arkansas Sinatra' and he would often play the fool's role in the band as the traditionally required comedian. But Eddie Shuler recalled that Bozman made contacts easily with his persuasive patter, 'gift of the gab' and salesmanship. He was also a fine Hillbilly artist in his own right and obviously loved South Louisiana music, working hard to make a success of his labels. By the outset of 1949, the





enthusiastic Bozman actually moved his wife and five children to 349-A Route 1 at Westlake in South Louisiana and set up his own OT 'Hits Of Louisiana' label to tap into the market directly. The rare Oklahoma Tornadoes record #OT 101 (included in this collection) is shrouded in mystery that reflects his initial indecision. The two songs were first recorded in English by Bozman but were cancelled and instead released with uncredited French vocals. The singer's identity is still subject to much speculation.

Meanwhile Ernest Thibodeaux had been playing at a small club in Jennings where the owner, aware of the new trend, asked him to find an accordionist. At Ernest's urging Nathan Abshire picked up the accordion after one prewar record and ten years of obscurity, and along with Thibodeaux soon formed the Pine Grove Boys (see Abshire's Arhoolie CD 373). The band rapidly became popular enough to secure a long tenure at Quincy Davis's Avalon Club in Basile, with Davis becoming Abshire's manager. Eddie Shuler became aware of Abshire, but as he was already recording LeJeune he

Oklahoma Tornadoes: (from left to right)  
Dudley Champagne, drums; unknown, steel;  
Floyd LeBlanc, guitar; Iry LeJeune, accordion;  
Ben Oldag, bass; Bennie Hess, guitar (at mic);  
Virgel Bozman, guitar.  
Probably Houston, 1947/8





introduced him to Bozman, who soon found an unexpected hit on his hands. The resulting "Pine Grove Blues" on OT 102 was very different from "Love Bridge Waltz" in that the approach was far more aggressive, with a heavy dose of blues in the mix over the drone of Abshire's accordion and Wilson Granger's fiddle. In today's parlance it had a new 'attitude'. It will always remain a unique and exceptional record, and even today a first listen to this record could not fail to grab the attention of any listener, favorable or not. One feels that Iry and the string bands could have coexisted, but the new sound from Abshire's band, followed by that of Lawrence Walker (who also emerged from retirement), delivered the knock-out punches that had the string bands on the mat in little over a year.

Bozman had soon pressed 3200 copies of "Pine Grove Blues," which translated into a lot of expenditure for a man described by those who knew him as 'poor as a church rat.' He has been seen as lacking vision, but who at the time could have known that OT 102 would result in the end of the string band era? Jay Miller likewise continued recording string bands, as

did George Khoury when he started his own label some time later. Bozman could have seen no reason not to record Floyd LeBlanc's exquisite classic "Orphan Waltz" (see Volume One, Arhoolie CD 427) and he even recorded Harry Choates on one of the best of his later records. Retaining his contacts back in Texas, he saw no reason to avoid Hillbilly music and even Blues if he hoped to build up a varied, viable catalog. He also tried a couple more hybrid French Hillbillies, knowing the potential of the mix. His own "Oklahoma Blues" (OT 104), with wonderfully strident mandolin and steel, is still pretty easy to find today which certainly indicates good sales. Altogether Bozman released eleven records while at Westlake, but we do not know the exact dates within the May 1949 to late 1950 time period, or when the rare follow-up by Abshire (OT 106) appeared on the market. Unfortunately there is a history of faulty pressings on East Texas and Louisiana labels from Gold Star to Miller's Fais Do Do label. OT 106 is virtually impossible to find (and play), and Bozman had to have lost considerable money with that release.



It is well known that Bozman formed a business agreement with businessman George Khoury, who had a record store and juke box distributorship on Railroad Avenue just around the corner from Shuler's repair shop. Shuler recalled that Khoury had the area to himself and soon observed the increasing demand for French music as more releases appeared. Having paid for an initial pressing of 500 for OT 102 on June 6, Bozman found that he had to order another 1000 copies exactly one month later. This could well be when he and Khoury arranged some type of a partnership. By the end of the year, or early in 1950, Khoury took it a step further and started his own label with Lawrence Walker's intense accordion music as his answer to Nathan Abshire. From the first release, Walker's band immediately became an important part of the new movement. Bozman ordered a final 200 copies of OT 102 on July 25, 1950, and returned to Beeville (south of San Antonio, Texas) at some point before the end of the year. Khoury took over Abshire for his label and retained the OT masters, those of Floyd LeBlanc (which he reissued) and probably everything else. Back in



*Eddie Shuler delivering records to Khoury's at Railroad Avenue. Early 1960s.*

Texas, Bozman continued with OT for three more releases before switching to an unlikely Hot Rod banner, with these later records probably appearing during late 1950 and most of 1951 and possibly early into the next year. All were pressed by Bob Tanner's plant in San Antonio, and pressing styles reveal

that these came out before the TNT label started in 1953 but after the demise of the earlier Tanner label. At the same time, Khoury briefly formed a Lyric label and released his first sides by Abshire. Three releases were planned in one block of numbers, which would be released at intervals in competition with the records that Bozman continued to put out. By early 1951 Khoury decided to concentrate almost entirely on Cajun music with accordion, while just a few Hillbilly records appeared on a blue Lyric label. An attempt has been made within these notes to put these transitional years in perspective as far as possible, in the absence of many firm dates. Were it not for the pressing information obtained by Chris Strachwitz, we would actually have none at all before 1951.

Extending from 1949 through the late 1950s, this collection attempts the same aims by including examples of the older fiddle styles and transitional records through the Cajun Honky Tonk Era. Simultaneously it makes nearly all the Cajun music recorded for Bozman and Khoury available on Arhoolie CD releases. We begin with Lawrence 'Blackie' Fruge's 1959



record, which illustrates later developments perfectly with the coexistence of accordion, fiddle, and steel guitar, each taking their own solos. This format has remained in place ever since, although for the most part the electric bass has replaced the drums since the early 1960s. When that instrument arrived it changed the texture of the music, ending the Honky Tonk era. Frue's escalating vocal lines on the waltz are exceptional in range and the instrumentation on both sides is highlighted by his sister Eula Mae's fine steel guitar playing. Eula Mae was



proficient on a number of instruments and taught Blackie's son Mike Fruge to play the steel guitar. Blackie told researcher Lyle Ferbrache that from an early age she could play almost any instrument she picked up. The session was produced by Eddie Shuler at a radio station in Jennings, LA—which is evidenced by its superior technical quality compared to those cut at his own back room studio. There are certainly few records from this date that are more vibrant with excitement than Fruge's.

For the record, the 1953 Lawrence Fruge TNT recordings were recorded by Shuler at the KPLC studios located in the Lake Charles Majestic Hotel, where many of Shuler's as well as Khoury's records were made. This record featured Lawrence Fruge Sr. on accordion; Joseph "J.U." Fruge, vocal/guitar; "Blackie" Fruge, fiddle; Louis Scott, steel guitar; and Eula Mae Fruge, bass. Unfortunately Blackie's Khoury's record sold poorly, and the later 1950s were lean years indeed for Cajun music. The last Khoury's releases by Abshire and Cleveland Crochet are exceedingly rare, and Fruge's was one of only a couple released after their departure. Crochet's 1960 "Sugar



Bee," featuring Jay Stutes, did give the music a shot in the arm (as had the appearance of Floyd Soileau's new Swallow label) and it reached the middle area of the charts, becoming Goldband's biggest hit. Our program continues with Crochet's original 1957 version of "Midnight Blues" which was unknown on Khoury's until recently, when one record of each speed was found (although the music has been familiar via a 1960s reissue on Lyric 1001 to exploit the band's new success). A remake of "Midnight Blues" was cut for Goldband at that time but the



original is far superior, being a tremendous blues highlighted again by Stutes' superb steel guitar. These two songs were among the first heard by Mike Leadbitter in England in the 1960s, resulting in their reissue on LP and the beginning of wider European interest in the music. Leadbitter also reissued

Nathan Abshire's 1956 "Boora Rhumba" under its correct "La Cucaracha" title. Featuring Dewey Balfa's vocal and Abshire's new band, this traditional Mexican song was translated into a fascinating and exotic piece that has escaped reissue since the LP of over 40 years ago. Because of its good sales, Abshire created a similar atmosphere with little Yvonne LeBlanc singing "Mama Rosin" for his next release, which would be Abshire's last good seller for many years. For two years Khoury's releases were reduced to a trickle, but this may have been partly because

Shuler was releasing so much during 1955-58 that there was plenty of product to fill Khoury's store shelves.

Back in 1950, as Khoury's first artist, Lawrence Walker departed from the sound of competitor Abshire's OT records by adding drums and dispensing with the bass, and with even rhythm guitar often not apparent. His early sound was sparse yet loud, punctuated by an insistent beat on the bass drum that could become almost hypnotic on the waltzes. These first records became the prototype for what might be called the Khoury's sound. Their success convinced Khoury to sign Abshire in 1951 and stick with this basic format for several years after abandoning the isolated hybrid and fiddle releases that had appeared during 1950. During the preparation of these notes time has been spent with musicians and researchers who have helped document personnel details for Lawrence Walker's Khoury's sessions. Being such a big draw, many musicians played with Walker, but some were not too slow to leave either. It has been said more than once that Walker was not an easy man to play for, and he was also a heavy drinker and womanizer.





He got really angry if someone made a mistake and would even go as far as to tune their instruments onstage. Needless to say, none of this diminishes his considerable talent and no accordion instrumental of the speed and diversity of melody of “Mamou Two-Step” (Khoury’s #601) and “Wandering Aces Special” (#606) had been heard before. Walker virtually always took his own vocals, but delegated them to Mitch David for Khoury’s #607, which places David as the fiddler for these first sides, probably with Valmont “Junior” Benoit, steel guitar



and either Simon Shexneider (Warren Storm’s father) or less likely Lawrence Trahan, drums. For his big 1951 session which included “Bosco Stomp”, E.J. Meaux, fiddle, and Lawrence Trahan, drums, were present with Demus Comeaux on rhythm guitar and again “Junior” Benoit on steel guitar.

Most of Walker’s catalog has seen reissue, but we include two excellent later Khoury’s recordings here. “Madam Sostan” comes from 1952 or early the next year, and there is a noticeably fuller band sound with more emphasis on the rhythm guitar and less on the drums. Walker always tried to keep up with the times, and even included two up-tempo English songs at sessions which anticipated his later Rock & Roll efforts. There is an electric guitar effect on 1955’s “Brunette Two Step”—his last record for the label—but I have become convinced during discussion that only steel guitar is actually present. Personnel for these dates are included with the title listings. Thanks are due to everyone who assisted and I do believe that the results are at least very close, although a little more doubt surrounds the later sessions. Some musicians were recalled playing on

gigs but are not heard on record. For example, both Johnnie Allen and Al Foreman, better known as Jay Miller's dependable session guitarist in later years, played steel guitar with Walker in the early 1950s but not on record. A year or two later, Walker would be the first to record for Floyd Soileau's Vee-Pee label: "Bon Ton Rouley" & "Osson Two-Step," which were recorded at KEUN radio station in Eunice where Johnnie Allen actually did accompany him on steel guitar. Allen told John Broven: "When I played with Lawrence we worked in Lake Charles, Rayne, Lafayette, Forked Island, Kaplan, Vinton and Basile. Basile was probably his weakest fan base, the other towns, his strongest." Later Walker appeared on LaLouisianne to tackle newer developments, with "Allons Rock & Roll" being the most successful.

One record credited to Sandy Austin appeared in 1951 on the revamped OT label. The credit hides the identity of fiddler Abe Manuel, who told Western Swing researcher Andrew Brown: "There were five Abe Manuels in Lake Charles. And man, I was getting everybody's bills. My credit wasn't all that



*Bradley Stuter, Dottie Manuel, Amos Comeaux (Como), Abe Manuel Sr., Wiley Barkdull. Lake Charles, 1954.*

good, but it wasn't that bad, either. I just said, 'Look, I've got to get off of the name Abe Manuel. Call me something else.' And somebody jumped up and said 'Sandy Austin.' I don't know how in the hell they wound up with 'Sandy Austin.'" Abe and his





returning to Crowley they were based at KSIG during 1948-49. Manuel was renowned as a top fiddler, which is apparent on “Scrambled Eggs”—another hybrid of stylings that can best be termed as a Cajun hoedown. It appears to be unique in the Cajun music repertoire, and was one of the last fiddle records of the era. Bozman recorded the band at the Corpus Christi Radio KWBW Studio during their long-term booking at a club in the area. Manuel remembered it taking place in 1951, and it would date from early in the year. The band could adapt to both

brother, guitarist Joe Manuel, started performing in their mid-teens, even working at times with the likes of Leo Soileau and Harry Choates. He recorded with Jelly Elliot’s band on the Magnolia label in New Orleans, and Joe Manuel recorded there the next year for Deluxe. After

Cajun and Hillbilly, and would travel around the country with Lefty Frizzell before returning to Lake Charles in later 1953 and cutting two excellent Cajun records for Jay Miller the next year (including “Hippy-Ti-Yo,” which would in time come to be regarded as a classic).

We have also included the first Westlake OT record credited to Virgel Bozman’s String Band (OT 101) which, as mentioned, is a pure Cajun record despite its English titles. Andrew Brown interviewed fiddler Wilson Granger (who had been thought to be present on the record) and specifically asked him about the details. Granger remembered recording a session with Bozman taking English vocals, but not what was issued. Andrew sent him a recording of the record and later called him to ask him if he had listened to it. Granger: “I sure did. It’s not what I thought. It’s my song (“Tell Me If You Love Me”), I’m the one that introduced Virgel to that song, but when we made that at KPLC, he sang that. And on that CDR, I don’t know who that it is singing. They’re singing in French. That’s not Virgel singing.” So that much is clear, but little else had been



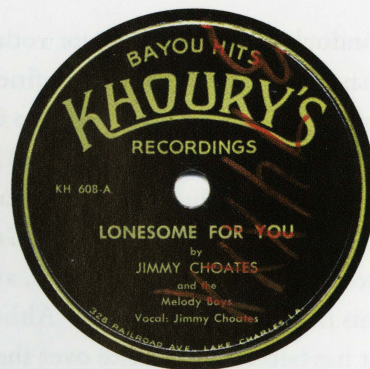
determined. Wilson does throw open another possibility: “I tell you what, he (Bozman) started playing some music with some boys from Sulphur, including Earl Reed. It might be him, I’m not sure. I don’t know what happened there. He liked that tune, and he made them words for it, but I don’t know what made him change his mind and have somebody sing on it (in French).” The pressing is low and it’s hard to compare, but there is a possibility that Floyd LeBlanc could be present, taking the vocal on the fine up-tempo “Tell Me If You Love Me.” Both sides

undoubtedly have different vocalists and “The Cameron Waltz” has a beautiful melody with fine fiddle. Bozman obviously changed his mind as to how to begin the label and decided that a genuine French record would be a better choice. By using English titles the main result was probably audience confusion and sales were moderate. His Gold Star 78 “La Prison” was first reissued on an Old Timey LP, and Chris Strachwitz used it in his film “J’Ai Été Au Bal.” Although not strictly a Cajun record, it has become a favorite over the years and so this entertaining song makes it to CD as an acknowledgement of Bozman and his considerable role in the development of French music.

Amusingly, and in contrast to his real life, he takes the role of the innocent Cajun boy who was doing fine until he went to Texas and met a Texas woman who caused him to go to jail.

Following “La Prison” we bring you a number of sides that were released by Khoury during 1950. The first is by Jimmy Choates, who had already recorded exuberant sides for Fais Do Do in 1948 with Blackie Dartez taking the vocals. Choates takes his own vocals here and while the format is firmly in the classic





Harry Choates format, he sings his fine songs with obvious commitment. The band was always versatile and Jimmy was proficient on guitar, but his hillbilly record on Khoury's #705 from the same year is very disappointing. The totally inadequate vocals, which Jimmy could have sung far better himself, are by Regis Seneca. Soon after this he would record "French Blues Parts 1 and 3" for a late Gold Star release. The details were in Bill Quinn's notebook, but a copy of the record has never been located. Bear Family's box set of the complete Fais Do Do and

Feature Cajun releases tells us that, with his brother Pete, Jimmy Choates continued to head a band but had to resort to day work while still making appearances in Houston, Beaumont, and all along the Gulf Coast. He also played as a sideman, as revealed in a 1952 photo in Bear Family's recent Sonny Burns CD where he is seen with Sonny's band in Galveston, Texas. Eventually he would have a few more releases, starting with an appearance on Goldband in 1960.

Both the Musical Four Plus One and Vincent & Cagley releases appear on Lyric using the same 600 series. The latter was Crawford Vincent and Will Kegley, who was still working and recording for OT in Abshire's band. Kegley's fiddle and possible vocal receive sparse backing, but with the fiddle and a piano dominating the sound. Crawford would have played rhythm guitar and Benny Fruge could well be the pianist. This record was one of the more popular of the early releases, and after an initial red label release on Lyric it was repressed as Khoury's #605. The Musical Four Plus One is among the most obscure releases and appears on Lyric 609, just preceding



Nathan Abshire's first release with the same elaborate black label style. The record immediately catches the ear with a fine electric guitar lead which participates throughout, making it unique among any Cajun record of that or probably any period. Indeed, even when the guitar began to be added to bands in the later 1950s it rarely took a lead role. We are entirely indebted to Lyle Ferbrache and his success in locating no less than three members of the band in 2005 and publishing their fascinating story in *Blues & Rhythm* #206 in February 2006. All too

often we assume that an artist or band with just one release was unsuccessful and survived maybe a figurative five minutes or less. In reality there were many more that never recorded at all, yet flourished on radio or at live appearances for many years. In the case of the Musical Four Plus One it was for more than ten years, a period of time in which they enjoyed great popularity. The original version of the band cut this elusive record in late 1950 or very early 1951: Ellis Thibodeaux, accordion; Eddie Duhon, fiddle; Cleadis Mott, electric guitar; Charles Delaney,





*Musical Four Plus One: (from left to right) Cliff Newman, Eddie Duhon, Cleadis Mott, Charles Delaney. (Ellis Thibodeaux not in picture).*

rhythm guitar; Cliff Newman, drums. They were as big as any band in Lake Charles and played to packed houses. Some bigger names went through the band including Sidney Brown and Crawford Vincent, who replaced Thibodeaux (the father of fiddle great Rufus Thibodeaux) and Newman respectively. At the beginning they secured a residency at the Blue Moon Club in Lake Charles, which initially sponsored Saturday afternoon appearances for them on KWSL. Their versatility and comedy skits helped to endear them to the audience (which they brought to the Blue Moon which never had much success with previous bands). They later enjoyed a nine year stint at the Clover Club, becoming a string band when Sidney Brown left. Cleadis Mott later played for twenty years with the Tune Toppers, recording for both Jin and J. D. Miller's Ringo label. Their full story is recounted in the Blues & Rhythm article. For their selection, Thibodeaux takes the vocal here while Duhon sings the flip side "Tran La Ezy" which can be heard on Arhoolie CD 427. Eddie Shuler handled the recording in a makeshift studio in Lake Charles and brought the reliable bassist Eldridge "Coon" Guidry



*Eddie Duhon*

along to augment the band. The bass lends an unusual flavor here as it weaves with the accordion and Mott's wonderfully supple guitar work and reinforces the brisk tempo that basically takes "Chere Ami Waltz" out of the waltz category altogether. We actually hear Shuler 'producing' here: Cleadis began to close the song and Eddie waved his hands above his head for them to continue playing because the record was not long enough. As a result Cleadis' guitar began to end the piece and then picked it up again!

It's been known that Shuler gave Khoury some assistance when he started Khoury's label, but the extent of his own recording activities in the early 1950s is not clear. Aside from his own band and Iry LeJeune's, most of Shuler's recording activities were for Khoury because Goldband and Folk Star's outputs were limited until 1954 (when he gave up the band and opened his own studio). Lyle Ferbrache thinks it likely that Eddie recorded most of the Cajun sides for Khoury, right up to our Blackie Fruge selections of almost 10 years later—as well as Phil Phillips' million-selling "Sea Of Love." Shuler did not



continue to work much with Bozman, coming to regard him as a “longhorn interloper” who also competed with his own band. But for the ever astute Khoury, who knew little to nothing about music or recording, it paid to work with both Shuler and Bozman in order to create product to stock his shelves and supply the juke boxes.

A couple of Khoury’s records are still more obscure in that they are not even in the regular number series, with the most logical speculation being that these were custom pressings. These are the Texas Melody Boys (Khoury’s #500, heard on Arhoolie CD #427), and Amar Devillier on Lyric #1, heard here. The latter can be dated because the label is identical to #609 discussed above and Abshire’s Lyric #610. Once again Lyle has come to the rescue with the information. I will quote his words that tell the unpublished story: “Amar was a poor sharecropper from around Eunice and I mean poor. (His son) Jerry said the last year they sharecropped his dad made 300 dollars for the year. They grew food and lived off of game they caught or shot. Amar is the one playing accordion on the



*Cleadis Mott and Charles Delaney*

record. The vocalist is Wallace LaFleur who also played with the Veteran Playboys. Jerry had no idea that his dad had a record out. He did remember going to school and telling the kids that his father was making a record at the radio station in Eunice. He was in the 6th grade and says the year must have been 1950. His father never had a band, so the band's name on the label was just made up for the record. Amar Devillier was born on the fourth of July, 1909. His life was cut short at 60 years. Jerry says that his mother put a gunny sack on the floor where you enter the house in order to wipe muddy feet (for) when coming in from the fields. His father had been duck hunting and upon entering the house he slipped on the burlap. Starting to fall he used his shotgun to break his fall and the gun discharged hitting him in the jugular vein. He died in Jerry's arms. Jerry himself is a world class Cajun harmonica player and was the first to play Newport in 1974." Jerry also played on Donny Jacobs "Street Walking Women" on Jin Records, which is well known to Blues collectors and those interested in South Louisiana music. Lyle continued: "I asked if there was any way he knew



who might be on the record and he replied that his father would play with friends Eston Bellows (who was on Austin Pitre's Swallow recordings) and Dennis McGee. Could Dennis McGee be on the recording?" I would say that the answer to this is a very possible 'yes' because Amar and his wife were living in Eunice at this time, where McGee worked as a barber. There is a video of Isom Fontenot playing accordion in which he mentions playing with Cyprien & Adam Landreneau and also with Amar "Tit Frere" Devillier, Jerry's father. Fontenot said his cousin,





*Amar Devillier and his wife, Dula (nee Guillory)*



Germain, also played fiddle with Amar. In light of this there is no certainty on personnel but there are distinct possibilities. As for the possibility of this being a custom record, somebody must have sponsored it as Devillier would not have been able to afford it. The recordings are true gems and certainly have an older feel than any of the other selections. Of additional interest is a distinct similarity between the melody of the "Durald Two Step" and "Diggy Liggy Lo"—written by Terry Clement in 1954. Clement said that he wrote the words and took the tune from an old folk song that his father knew.

The bands discussed above got their releases just before Khoury's new policies were adopted in 1951 with Abshire's arrival and the continuing success of Lawrence Walker. By this time nearly 20 Khoury's records had been released for the Cajun, Hillbilly and Blues markets. After a couple of Lyric releases, he reverted to Khoury's and used a blue label Lyric with odd numbers for a few Hillbilly releases. Thus Khoury basically only released Cajun music until 1953, and did not revisit Rhythm & Blues until 1958. At this point Khoury began

assigning record numbers in advance of the actual release, as many other labels had done. A well-known example was Lillian McMurry's Trumpet Records, where many planned releases never actually appeared. As in Trumpet's case it appears that a flurry of recording took place followed by little more for some period of time. Abshire's first block of recordings used Khoury's #610 through #612 with Walker's new batch at #615 through #617. These sessions were the first order of the day before new artists like Elise Deshotel and Shuk Richard followed. Since Nathan Abshire was basically illiterate, it is doubtful that he actually signed a contract for himself and for the band's name. At any rate there must have been some discontent on one or both sides with manager Quincy Davis, since he apparently would not even allow Khoury to use the name of the band, the Pine Grove Boys. Thus it seems that the next string of releases from versions of Abshire's band would appear on Bozman's re-launched OT label, followed by the Hot Rod releases.

The new sound continued with the recordings of Elise Deshotel and Shuk Richard, as Khoury's records became



ever louder. Many of the sides by these two bands were made available on *Cajun Honky Tonk, Volume One* (Arhoolie CD 427) and the remainder appear here. Deshotel's Louisiana Rhythmaires were very popular around Lake Charles and Deshotel together with family members had previously played with Nathan Abshire in venues including the Club Avalon. Deshotel's six song session, comprised of three vocals and three instrumentals, was the first in which Dewey Balfa took part on fiddle, as well as handling all the vocals. The instrumentals from the session were assigned as the "A" sides and are stomping accordion pieces dominated by Maurice Barzas. "Two Step De Avalon" in particular, with its wonderfully heavy handed drumming from Deshotel's wife Esther, seems to bring to mind a wild early morning encore near closing time at the Avalon Club. As is so often the case, personnel fluctuated and additional musicians would be added for recording sessions. In this case Atlas Fruge was added, though his astounding steel guitar playing and Balfa's fiddle are barely heard here. These two musicians are far better heard on the exceptional vocal pieces,



which represent essential listening. Since the release of Arhoolie CD 427 several researchers have been able to revise the line-up that was listed. Elise Deshotel was actually a guitar player from Basile who, with his wife on drums, formed the band with his brother Cleveland 'Cat' Deshotel on bass with Dewey & Rodney Balfa. Maurice Barzas came to serve as coleader on accordion through about 1951, but also fronted the Mamou Playboys during that time. He made two records on Swallow in the early 1960s where his son, Vorace Barzas, took two of the





From left: Elise Deshotel (guitar), Cleveland "Cat" Deshotel (fiddle), Atlas Fruge (lap steel guitar), unknown girl, unknown guitar player, Eldridge "Coon" Guidry (bass) at Radio station KSIG in Crowley, LA.





vocals. Although not present here, Cat, who also played fiddle, joined Abshire's band soon after Will Kegley left around 1953 and remained with him for many years.

Shuk Richard's

Louisiana Aces was another popular band on radio and live appearances when this

session took place late in 1951 or early the next year. Marie Falcon was the band's added attraction and one of very few female artists to appear during the era. As one might wonder because of her name, she came from Cajun music's first family, with the recordings of Joseph and Cleoma Falcon from 1928 through 1937 occupying a similar place to those of the Carter Family in country music. Through her own records Cleoma became French music's first female star. Two of Joe Falcon's brother's children were Marie and Helen. Helen became Johnnie

Allen's mother, which undoubtedly had a big effect on Johnnie's devotion to the music. Her sister, Marie Falcon, (who, like most Cajun vocalists, is not known for her subtlety), handles the vocals on all four songs. She strums her guitar stridently and sings at the top of her voice as loud as any male Cajun singer. The song "Chere Vere Naig" (Dear Old Man) is a high-intensity waltz made more effective as Eddie Duhon 'seconds' her vocal on fiddle. "The Wild Side of Life," which is heard on Volume One, was first recorded by Jimmy Heap for Imperial Records in January 1951 and became a big seller across Texas and much of the South. It was covered by Hank Thompson in December and released at the start of 1952, becoming a major hit. Marie's up-tempo recording includes a verse from the Heap version which was dropped from the slow-paced Thompson remake and everything suggests that she was covering Heap's regional hit. It's possible that this record inspired Jay Miller to write his sequel from the woman's perspective, which was eventually a hit for Kitty Wells. John Broven remembers: "I once interviewed Marie . . . I kept trying to convince her that

she was breaking new ground as a Cajun woman singer but she wouldn't have it, treating it all matter-of-factly."

After the Richard and Deshotel sessions, Lawrence Walker recorded new sides for release on Khoury's #623 & 624, concluding the block numbering system which Khoury then abandoned. Nathan Abshire should have been due for more recordings but was notably absent from the catalog. Hillbilly releases were restored to the label and some time after this the first datable record appeared with Jimmy Newman's mid-1953 original of "Cry, Cry Darling" on Khoury's #630, followed by Abshire's return at #631. It is Nathan Abshire and members of his band that, as the initial architects of the Cajun Honky Tonk sound, appropriately conclude our program. The elusive OT #106 is actually the first record by the Pine Grove Boys because after squabbles with Will Kegley in particular, the band was dismissed by the volatile Quincy Davis who instead used Earl Demary and His Musical Aces to back Nathan on OT #102. The follow-up was documented but had been sought for many years until Lyle Ferbrache finally turned up a copy quite

recently. The defects in the pressing have been considerably corrected and the music represents the original Pine Grove Boys at the very top of their form. However, "Pine Grove Blues" still stands alone and even Abshire has never fully recreated the atmosphere and spontaneous perfection of the original. One wonders what it might have been like had the original Pine Grove Boys been accompanying. We shall never know, but it would certainly have been quite different. Thus even Quincy Davis played a role in the music's development. He was also the one that insisted that a steel guitar be added thereafter to make it more up to date, bringing the genre to its new established format. Atlas Fruge, a steel guitar player of unique abilities, proved perfectly able to accentuate the drone achieved by Abshire's accordion and Kegley's fiddle, and their music was perfectly driven by Jim Baker's bass. All appear at their very best on OT #106 for "Lake Charles Two-Step," and it would have been a juke box natural but for the drastically overloaded bass and distortion. A waltz is virtually mandatory for any Cajun record and the very appealing "Mamou Waltz" shows Abshire



in great voice, often singing half a stanza and allowing the accordion to complete it. It should be added that Will's sister Ozide Kegley was recruited to play drums at appearances after the initial hit, but she did not appear on the OT records.

After Bozman took a heavy loss on OT #106, he finally recorded a four song session for Abshire's next two releases, OT #110 and #111. As excellent as these records are, the sound is somehow a little distant and the steel guitar is less distinct and not so obviously by Fruge. Bafflingly credited to "Double Accordion by Nathan-Abshire," OT #114 came out after Bozman's move back to Texas which could have taken place at any time between the end of the summer of 1950 and early 1951. There are no firm dates to go by, and some speculation has to come into play. What is documented in Galan Gart's ARLD is that Hot Rod was listed by trade papers as owned by Virgel Bozman and Bob Tanner, so Tanner co-owned Hot Rod and probably the last three OTs as well. In these records the music is recorded at hotter levels and Will Kegley's sister Ozide appears on drums, which excludes the



*Ozide Kegley*



possibility that they were just takes left over from Westlake OT sessions. Ozide was an excellent drummer, skillfully punctuating the music and kicking it along with each new verse. She did not subscribe to the hypnotic bass drum technique heard on Khoury's, and if for no other reason than that we should be glad of these records, which would come the closest to how the Pine Grove Boys actually sounded on stage. "Step It Fast" does just that and is a dynamic recording at the fastest tempo the band had so far recorded, with tremendous



bass from Jim Baker. The first Khoury's session matches or exceeds the tempo with tracks like "Choupique Two-Step" and "Iota Two-Step" and the main difference is the absence of a bass, which could have been at Khoury's direction. Also interesting is "Pine Grove Blues No. 2," which probably gives us the best idea of how the band tackled the original number on stage. These tracks can be heard on Arhoolie's Abshire collection (CD 373). Possible scenarios are that Abshire simply continued recording for Bozman after OT's move or that they





were done soon after the first Khoury's session following some sort of disagreement.

Certainly, the OT and the Hot Rods were competing with Khoury's own releases and Bozman was making a pest of himself. Ten titles involving the band were released out of San Antonio, of which two were credited to Abshire. OT #114 and "Chere Te Mon" (HR 103) have been reissued and the remainder is here (including an overlooked "Hathaway Two-Step" which Chris Strachwitz appropriately suggests is actually a 'One Step')! It is actually not too far from a 'March,' as Abshire strides out in top instrumental form with a fine steel break by Fruge and Jim Baker's usual bass runs. Other sides were credited to the vocalists, and we start the segment with a pretty amazing "Jennings Two Step" from Ernest Thibodeaux, who remembered asking Nathan at a session if he could take a couple of sides. Aurally from the same time is Wilson Granger's "Bayou Chico Waltz," it is barely noticeable that accordion is not present on either because the sound is so typical of the Pine Grove Boys at their best. There is a live performance atmosphere, with Atlas

Fruge up front as Bozman pressed the button and left them to it. The accordion returns for Tan Benoit's recordings but it is played by Benoit himself. Lyle comments: "Benoit played many instruments including the drums and accordion. He lived close to Ernest Thibodeaux and Will Kegley when they lived in Jennings and Ernest remembered playing with Tan. My best guess is that sometimes Nathan Abshire didn't make the radio shows and Tan would fill in with his accordion. Tan is the drummer on the Lionel Cormier record on Feature." His two sides were cut with all the usual band members at their loudest and best at KJEF Studio, Jennings, LA, although his vocals are less than exceptional. Hot Rod cross-coupled these four titles with drastic misspellings but they have shown up frequently enough to show that they got distributed well and were popular on the juke boxes. The label also released another Bozman coupling and a more unusual release by Cliff LeMaire, which would come into the French Hillbilly category. Lyle even found LeMaire, who said Bozman recorded him in New Iberia and that the date was "around 1950," which fits into our

scenario. Little more is known of Bozman's activities but there was one batch of 1953 records on TNT, all of which come from Eddie Shuler except the Aldus Roger release which Shuler had no knowledge of. The recording is primitive, and possibly originates with Bozman. Aside from that, there is a color picture of him from the 1960s with others at an unknown location which indicates that he didn't just 'disappear.' Hopefully more information will be recovered even at this late date.

Through all this the Abshire band was as busy as ever but there was a long gap in record releases before a poorly recorded coupling showed up on Khoury's 631 around the middle of 1953. Two more records appeared with the up-tempo "Point De Lou Two Step" (#645), released in December 1954, sounding like an old recording in Hot Rod format with Jim Baker obviously present on bass. "Texas Waltz" on the "A" side sounded newer. It was during this uncertain period that Will Kegley had to leave the band after he attacked Fruge, who also left. This was the beginning of a more stable time, with a new band that basically begins with "Lu Lu Boogie" (#647) and



“La Cucaracha” as Dewey Balfa settles in and Jake Miere joins on guitar and steel. While new questions will always appear as others are answered, Lyle Ferbrache and Andrew Brown have moved our knowledge a long distance forward with the publication of “Louisiana Music Vol. 1, No. 1.” It is dedicated entirely to the life and times of Nathan Abshire, complete with a listing of all of the Pine Grove Boys records until the end of their stay with Khoury and with much new personnel information. It is published in very high quality format by Andrew’s Pinegrove Press, with many unseen pictures, and this writer cannot recommend it too highly. Its greatest value is that the comprehensive essay finally brings Abshire to life as a human being when so little was known before—in large part, it has to be said, by his own choosing. Lyle is now considering the continuation of the story to cover the remainder of his career, which would serve to complete a much deserved tribute to a unique artist.

*Dave Sax, October 2011*





## TRACKS

### 1 ELTON TWO STEP *(instrumental)*

Blackie & The Moonlight  
Serenaders

Lawrence "Blackie" Fruge  
KH 725 (KH-554)

Lawrence "Blackie" Fruge *Guitar*  
Mayeuse Manuel *Accordion*  
Voylen (T-Boy) Esthay *Fiddle*  
Eula Mae Fruge *Steel guitar*  
Earl McFarland *Bass*

*Recorded at radio station in  
Jennings, La., c. 1959.*

### 2 LA ROBE BARRE

Blackie & The Moonlight  
Serenaders

KH 725 (KH-553)

*Same as above but add Lawrence  
"Blackie" Fruge, vocal.*

### 3 MIDNIGHT BLUES

Cleveland Crochet &  
His Hillbilly Ramblers  
Vocal by Voris "Shorty" LeBlanc  
KH 702, LY 1001 (R-1344-2)

Cleveland Crochet *Fiddle*  
Vorris 'Shorty' LeBlanc  
*Vocal/accordion*  
Jesse Lloyd 'Jay' Stutes *Steel guitar*  
Charlie Babineaux *Rhythm guitar*  
poss. Clifton Newman *Drums*  
1957

### 4 SHA MEON WALTZ

Cleveland Crochet & His  
Hillbilly Ramblers  
Vocal by Voris "Shorty" LeBlanc  
KH 702, LY 1001 (R-1344-1)

*Session details as above.*



**5 BOORA RHUMBA**

**(LA CUCARACHA!)**

Nathan Abshire &  
His Pinegrove Five

**KH 649 B** (*All copies pressed  
with reversed labels*)

Nathan Abshire *Accordion*  
Dewey Balfa *Vocal/fiddle*  
poss. Jake Miere *Steel guitar*  
Shelton Manuel *Drums*  
unknown *Maracas*

*Late 1955/early 1956*

**6 MADAME SOSTAN**

Lawrence Walker &  
His Wandering Aces  
Vocal by Lawrence Walker

**KH 624 B**

Lawrence Walker *Vocal/accordion*  
probably U.J. Meaux or  
Lionel LeLeux *Fiddle*  
Valmont "Junior" Benoit *Steel guitar*  
Demus Comeaux *Rhythm guitar*  
Lawrence Trahan *Drums*

*c. late 1952/early 1953*

**7 BRUNETTE TWO STEP**

Lawrence Walker &  
His Wandering Aces  
Vocal by Lawrence Walker

**KH 648 B**

Lawrence Walker *Vocal/accordion*  
probably Mitch David *Fiddle*  
Jr. Benoit *Steel guitar*  
Orcy "O.C." Vanicor *Rhythm guitar*  
Dub Higginbotham *Drums*

NOTE: Jr. Benoit is a different  
musician from Valmont "Junior"  
Benoit in the previous session.

*1955*

**8 SCRAMBLED EGGS (instrumental)**

Sandy Austin—The Fiddle  
Frenchman & His Cajuns  
(pseudonym for Abe Manuel)

**OT 113 A (OT-5)**

Abe Manuel *Fiddle*  
"Skillet" Garner *Steel guitar*  
Joe Manuel *Rhythm guitar*  
George Duhon *Bass*  
Crawford Vincent *Drums*

**SCRAMBLED EGGS cont.**

*KWBU Studio, Corpus  
Christi, Tx. c. early 1951*

**9 TELL ME IF YOU LOVE ME**

Virgel Bozman String Band  
& His Oklahoma Tornadoes  
**OT 101 B**

Uncredited French vocal  
(possibly Floyd LeBlanc),  
details unknown, see notes.

*Early 1949*

**10 BELLE ISLE WALTZ**

Jimmy Choates &  
The Melody Boys  
Vocal by Jimmy Choates

**KH 608 B**

Jimmy Choates *Vocal/fiddle*  
Pee Wee Lyons *Steel guitar*  
possibly Blackie Dartez *Rhythm guitar*  
Charles 'Pete' Choate *Bass*

*1950*

**11 LONESOME FOR YOU**

Jimmy Choates &  
The Melody Boys  
Vocal by Jimmy Choates

**KH 608 A**

*Session details as above.*

**12 CHERE PETITE BLUN**

**(CHERE PETITE BRUN!)**

Vincent & Cagley (Crawford  
Vincent & Will Kegley)

**KH & LY 605 A**

Uncredited vocal  
Will Kegley *Fiddle*  
Crawford Vincent *Rhythm guitar*  
possibly Benny Fruge *Piano*  
unknown *Bass*

**13 SHOE PICK WALTZ**

**(CHOUPIQUE WALTZ!)**

Amar Devillier &  
The Louisiana Jambileers  
**LY 1-A**

Amar Devillier *Accordion*  
Wallace LaFleur *Vocal/guitar*  
poss. Eston Bellows and/or  
Dennis McGee *Fiddles*

*Radio station KEUN,  
Eunice, La. Late 1950*

**14 DURALD TWO STEP**

Amar Devillier &  
The Louisiana Jambileers  
**LY 1-B**

*Session details as above.*

**15 TWO STEP DE KINDERGARDEN**

*(instrumental)*

Elise Deshotel &  
His Louisiana Rhythmaires  
**KH 620 A**

Elise Deshotel *Rhythm guitar*  
Maurice Barzas *Accordion*  
Dewey Balfa *Fiddle*  
Atlas Fruge *Steel guitar*  
Rodney Savoy *Second rhythm guitar*  
Esther Deshotel *Drums*

*KSLO, Opelousas, La.  
c. mid-late 1951*

**16 CHERE VERE NAIG**

*(Cher Vieux Neg=Dear Old Man!)*

Shuk Richard & The La.  
Aces with Marie Falcon  
**KH 622 B**

Marie Falcon *Vocal/guitar*  
Shuk Richard *Accordion*  
Eddie Duhon *Fiddle*  
Jay Dartez *Rhythm guitar*  
unknown *Drums*

*c. late 1951/early 1952*

**17 CHERE AMI WALTZ**

*(Dear Friend Waltz)*

Musical Four Plus One  
**LY 609 A**

Ellis Thibodeaux *Vocal/accordion*  
Eddie Duhon *Fiddle*  
Cleadis Mott *Electric guitar*  
Charles Delaney *Rhythm guitar*  
Eldridge "Coon" Guidry *Bass*  
Cliff Newman *Drums*

*c. late 1950*

**18 LA PRISON**

The Oklahoma Tornadoes  
feat. Virgil Bozman *(sic)*  
& Floyd LeBlanc  
**GS 1332 B**

Vocal by Virgil Bozman  
and ensemble  
Virgil Bozman *Vocal/rhythm guitar*  
Floyd LeBlanc *Fiddle*  
unknown *Steel guitar and bass*  
*Houston, Texas, Summer 1947*

**19 THE CAMERON WALTZ**

Virgel Bozman String Band &  
His Oklahoma Tornadoes  
**OT 101 A**

Uncredited vocal, unknown  
personnel and location  
*Early 1949. See notes.*

**20 JENNINGS TWO STEP**

Ernest Tipidoe French  
Band (Thibodeaux!)  
**HR 105 B**

Ernest Thibodeaux  
*Vocal/rhythm guitar*  
prob. Wilson Granger *Fiddle*  
Atlas Fruge *Steel guitar*  
Jim Baker *Bass*  
Ozide Kegley *Drums*

*Prob. KSIG Studio, 320 N. Parkerson  
Crowley, La. 1951/2*



**21 BAYOU CHICO WALTZ**

Wilson Granger

HR 101 (VB-2)

Wilson Granger *Vocal/fiddle*

Atlas Fruge *Steel guitar*

Ernest Thibodeaux *Rhythm guitar*

Jim Baker *Bass*

Ozide Kegley *Drums*

*Prob. KSIG Studio, 320 N. Parkerson*

*Crowley, La. 1951/2*

**22 HATHAWAY TWO STEP**

*(One Step?) (instrumental)*

Nathan Abshire & Band

HR 103 (2)

Nathan Abshire *Accordion*

Wilson Granger *Fiddle*

Atlas Fruge *Steel guitar*

Ernest Thibodeaux *Rhythm guitar*

Jim Baker *Bass*

Ozide Kegley *Drums*

*1951/2*

**23 IOWA TWO STEP**

Tan Benoit

HR 101 (VB-1)

Tan Benoit *Vocal/accordion*

Wilson Granger *Fiddle*

Atlas Fruge *Steel guitar*

Ernest Thibodeaux *Rhythm guitar*

Jim Baker *Bass*

Ozide Kegley *Drums*

*KJEF Studio, Jennings, La. 1951/2*

**24 GUEYDON WALTZ**

Tan Benoit French Band

HR 105 A

*Session details as above.*

**25 LAKE CHARLES TWO STEP**

Nathan Abshire &

His French Accordion

OT 106 B

Nathan Abshire *Vocal/accordion*

Will Kegley *Fiddle*

Atlas Fruge *Steel guitar*

Ernest Thibodeaux *Rhythm guitar*

Jim Baker *Bass*

*mid/late 1949*

**26 GRAND MAMOU**

Nathan Abshire &

His French Accordion

OT 106 A

*Same session as above.*

**27 TWO STEP DE AVALON** *(instrumental)*

Elise Deshotel & His

Louisiana Rhythmaires

KH 619 A

*Same session as track 15.*

“La Prison” produced by Bill Quinn in Houston, Texas. Other recordings were probably made at radio stations for George Khoury or Virgel Bozman in Lake Charles except where other known locations are noted.

Label abbreviations:

KH = Khoury

LY = Lyric

OT = O.T. (Oklahoma Tornadoes)

HR = Hot Rod

GS = Gold Star.

*A note on sound: OT 106 is a faulty pressing. It was cut low with very heavy bass. This defect and others found on various recordings have been corrected as far as possible without compromising the integrity of the music. The speed fluctuation heard on OT 113 is also on the record.*

## ***CREDITS AND THANKS***

I am especially grateful to colleagues Lyle Ferbrache, John Broven and Andrew Brown. Lyle's unceasing research has obtained information long thought to be lost and he also instigated the recent Box Set that collects every known Cajun recording released on Jay D. Miller's Fais Do Do and Feature labels. I was privileged to assist these colleagues on that project as they have likewise spent many hours giving their assistance for the present collection.

A special tribute is due to Johnnie Allen whose love and dedication to the people of South Louisiana and their music was manifested in the exceptional 272 page coffee table sized photographic collection of almost every musician from the area that one can think of. The book has been a delight and constant resource to myself and many others over the years.

By no means least, my thanks and appreciation is extended to Chris Strachwitz who has made this and so many previous releases possible. It would be daunting to estimate the amount of important music that he has preserved and recorded as Arhoolie has just celebrated their 50th Anniversary. Not only is this a daunting achievement but he must also be the most patient man in the world.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the following musicians, collectors and researchers who unselfishly gave of their time to assist in this project: Ray Abshire, Dewey Balfa, Vorance Barzas, Terry Clement, Charles Delaney, Jerry Devillier, Marie Falcon, Lawrence "Blackie" Fruge, Wilson Granger, John Khoury, Abe Manuel, Larry Miller, Cleadis Mott, Tina Pilone, Neal Pomea, Ann Savoy, Eddie Shuler, Ernest Thibodeaux, Al Turner and Crawford Vincent.



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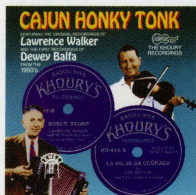
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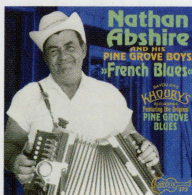
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**CD 327**  
**CAJUN HONKY TONK**  
The Khoury Recordings  
Volume 1



**CD 373**  
**FRENCH BLUES**  
Nathan Abshire and  
His Pine Grove Boys

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**1 ELTON TWO STEP**

Blackie

**2 LA ROBE BARRE**

Blackie

**3 MIDNIGHT BLUES**

Cleveland Crochet

**4 SHA MEON WALTZ**

Cleveland Crochet

**5 BOORA RHUMBA**

Nathan Abshire

**6 MADAME SOSTAN**

Lawrence Walker

**7 BRUNETTE TWO STEP**

Lawrence Walker

**8 SCRAMBLED EGGS**

Sandy Austin

**9 TELL ME IF YOU LOVE ME**

Virgel Bozman

String Band

**10 BELLE ISLE WALTZ**

Jimmy Choates

**11 LONESOME FOR YOU**

Jimmy Choates

**12 CHERE PETITE BLUN**

Vincent & Cagley

**13 SHOE PICK WALTZ**

Amar Devillier

**14 DURALD TWO STEP**

Amar Devillier

**15 TWO STEP DE**

KINDERGARDEN

Elise Deshotel

**16 CHERE VERE NAIG**

Shuk Richard

**17 CHERE AMI WALTZ**

Musical Four Plus One

**18 LA PRISON**

The Oklahoma

Tornadoes

**19 THE CAMERON WALTZ**

Virgil Bozman

String Band

**20 JENNINGS TWO STEP**

Ernest Tipidoe

French Band

**21 BAYOU CHICO WALTZ**

Wilson Granger

**22 HATHAWAY TWO STEP**

Nathan Abshire & Band

**23 IOWA TWO STEP**

Tan Benoit

**24 GUEYDON WALTZ**

Tan Benoit French Band

**25 LAKE CHARLES**

**TWO STEP**

Nathan Abshire

**26 GRAND MAMOU**

Nathan Abshire

**27 TWO STEP DE AVALON**

Elise Deshotel

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