

LaQuinton "Marckus" Jones

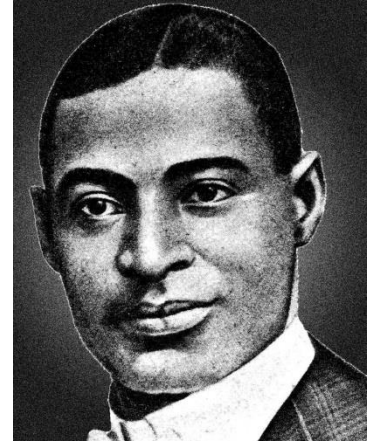
GE117: Composition 1

Charles "Buddy" Bolden

23 January 2012

### Charles "Buddy" Bolden

Charles "Buddy" Bolden was a *cornetist* whose place in jazz history is vague and nearly obsolete. He was said to have played the cornet, "loud, fat, and brassy." Thanks to the avid research done by archivist Donald Marquis, enough facts were recovered through newspaper accounts and other resources of the era to shine light on Buddy Bolden's life. Some people said he invented jazz; although that is a debate for historians, he was undoubtedly its first rock star.



Buddy Bolden was born on September 6, 1877 in New Orleans. His parents, Westmore and Alice Bolden, were middle-class, African-American citizens who had grown up during the Civil War. His birthplace was within walking distance to Uptown and the infamous Storyville. Young Buddy was exposed to the cultural renaissance in the city that was fired by freedom of expression and fueled by music. New Orleans was a melting pot with a heterophony of musical instruments and players. There were concert bands, funeral bands, dance bands, and brass bands that included: Blacks, Creoles, Irish, and European Jews. The city was filled with events and families of all races participated in the 1880s before the post-Reconstruction era introduced segregation to the city.

There were various accounts as to how Buddy Bolden became a musician: some said he attended Fish School for Boys, he learned at church, or he took coronet lessons from his neighbor who his mother was having an affair with at the time. What was proven to be true was that Buddy Bolden supported himself as a barber while perfecting his craft. He rehearsed with like-minded musicians in the back room of the barbershop while experimenting with a wide range of tunes.

Buddy Bolden's band included: valve-piston trombonist Willy Cornish, clarinetists William Warner, drummer Cornelius Tillman, guitarist Brock Mumford, and bassist Charles "Buddy" Bolden 2 James Johnson. Their sound was a dance beat called "Tin-Tin Type," named for the Tin Type Hall on Liberty Street in Uptown.

Charles "Buddy" Bolden was crowned King of New Orleans jazz around the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His style was emulated by future cornetist like King Oliver and Louis Armstrong. Buddy appeared at every significant event in the city: parades, baseball games, political parties, ship launchings, etc. Also Buddy Bolden published a gossip sheet in New Orleans that connected some of the city's most influential citizens to Storyville's vice and corruption. In retaliation for the publication, those involved attacked Buddy's music for its vulgar lyrics and raunchy rhythms.

Sadly, none of Buddy Bolden's songs or performances was successfully recorded. A recording by Oscar Zahn, who recorded him on an Edison cylinder, supposedly burned in Zahn's family shed in the 1960s. During the Labor Day Parade in 1907, Buddy Bolden snapped and went into a rampage. Later that year, he was committed to the insane asylum at the age of 29 by his mother and sister. While in the state mental asylum in Jackson, Buddy was diagnosed with schizophrenia, or Dementia Praecox. He remained in the asylum for 24 years until his eventual death on November 4, 1931.

Works Cited

Bolden, Buddy (Charles) – Jazz.com | Jazz Music – Jazz Artists – Jazz News

<<http://www.jazz.com/encyclopedia/bolden-buddy>>.

<<http://www.neworleansonline.com/neworleans/music/musichistory/musicgreats/buddybolden.html>>.