

Amede Ardoin

At PD Productions it seems we spend an awful lot of time trawling through the internet, books and documents that come into our possession from sometimes the strangest resources, one such trail led us to Amédé Ardoin, a man of incredible influence in his time and a life ending in violent tragedy.

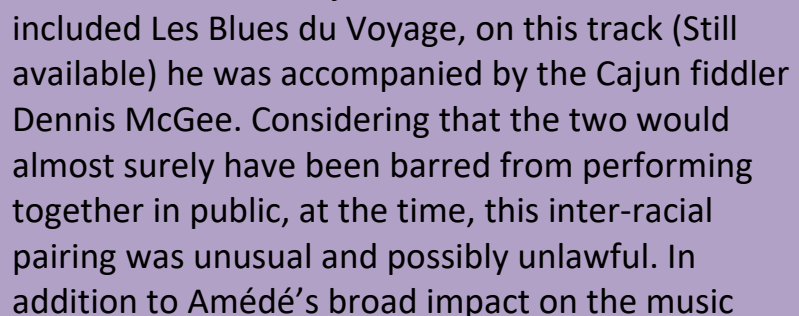


Amédé was primarily an accordionist, outstanding as a forerunner of both Zydeco and Cajun music, and as one of the first musicians in south Louisiana whose commercial recordings have dual significance in terms of important historic folklore and the emergence of Blues. Amédé's records are in the 78 rpm format, recorded between 1930 and 1934. At that time the word *Cajun* appeared in some song titles, but was not applied to the Cajun genre as a whole, at the time, the music was loosely known as French blues. The word Zydeco certainly didn't widely exist at this time, the phrase, *les haricots* or *les haricots sont pas salés* appeared in some black Creole songs and would eventually become by the 1950s Zydeco as a name for black Creole dance music. In our research we have discovered that Amédé's music has been classified as Cajun, zydeco and blues to mention just a few, scholars continue to argue about his definitive classification; one such document we have read suggests his music doesn't easily fit into ANY classification. Following a late night of reading, we were to discover he was acclaimed as a major talent of two-step, blues, (Whatever they are) and waltzes, greatly influencing an exhaustive list of styles, we'll refrain from comment; indeed his work remains relevant and even influential today.

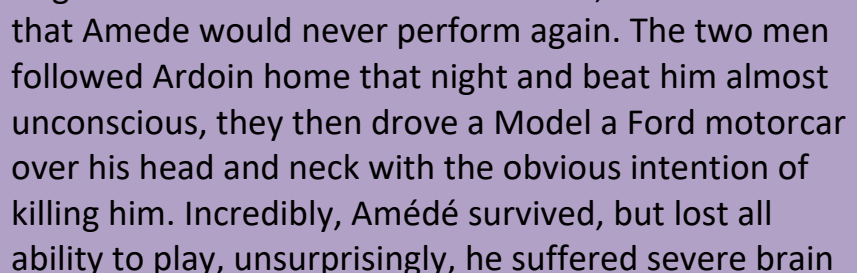
Amédé is believed to have been born in 1898. He was raised in a French-speaking black Creole farming community. He chose to reject his family's tradition of agriculture to pursue full-time musicianship. He performed at private house parties and public dances, there exists several stories of him hitchhiking with his accordion in a sack, playing whenever and wherever an opportunity arose.

In Amédé's skilled hands, the accordion and vest frottoir served as the prime instruments in the region's rich, hybrid and developing culture. His repertoire included such European song forms as the waltz and the two-step, Afro-

Ardoïn's music was heard beyond his somewhat limited performance circuit due to the records he made for Columbia, a major national label, these



Amédé's musical career was cut short by a horrific act of violence that left him severely injured. The story goes Amédé was playing at a dance, two people of such racism objected that in his temerity he asked someone to give him a rag to wipe his face. A white woman, without hesitation, opened her purse and handed him a handkerchief, that kind gesture would end his musical career. Her simple act caught the attention of two White men, who declared



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