

Dr. Daddy-O and Poppa Stoppa

Born in 1911, Vernon Lloyd Winslow was the first African-American radio announcer in New Orleans and was a professor at Dillard University (with a masters degree in education from Tulane). Although obits in both the *Times-Picayune* and *The Advocate* in 1993 state that Winslow was born and raised in Chicago, a 1986 interview and U.S. census records indicate that he was from Dayton, Ohio.

Winslow, whose radio stage name was "Doctor Daddy-O", graduated from the University of Chicago and the Chicago Art Institute. He also attended Morehouse College. He came to New Orleans in the 1940s to teach art at Dillard University, but a series of ambitious moves on his part propelled him into a whole different creative arena.



Vernon L. Winslow, aka Dr. Daddy-O

It was the late 1940s when Vernon Winslow wrote letters to three New Orleans radio stations, WJBW, WWL and WJMR, thinking to himself, "Why can't I be an announcer?"

He got a call from Station WJMR and was asked to come in for an interview. He was asked if he could write a radio program, and the person with the station was impressed with Winslow's ability to not only script shows but to come up with rhymed couplets in the hip dialect of black nightlife. That would be ideal for the types of rhythm and blues shows the station wanted to broadcast, featuring records such as Roy Brown's "Good Rockin' Tonight" that was recorded in New Orleans in 1947.



Unfortunately, though light-skinned, Winslow was still the wrong race for a radio announcer in the South at that time and place. His interviewer said, "Hell no, I can't put you on the air, they'd run me out of town." But, "can you write a script and teach a white person to talk the way you were talking to me?"

Winslow said, "OK" and his clever "hep" talk was provided for a white deejay, whom he coached, and that was how the "Poppa Stoppa" show was born. It was "my show," said Winslow in a 1986 interview in the *Times-Picayune*, "but I never could announce on it."

The first white "Poppa Stoppa," black slang for a condom, was the local disc jockey, Henry "Duke" Thiele, who was on the air from 1948 to 1952. "Duke" died in 1966 at the young age of 45. He was succeeded by New Orleans-born Clarence M. Hamann, Jr., who had been a Navy radio operator during WWII. Poppa Stoppa's show, which aired from 2 p.m. until sundown, began with his theme song, Joe

Houston's instrumental "Dig It". There were two other local "Poppa Stoppa" songs of note, "Poppa Stoppa Theme Song" (1950) by Dave Bartholomew and "Poppa Stoppa's Be Bop Blues" (1949) by Joe "Mr. Google Eyes" August. Hamann's song playlist was composed of New Orleans R&B (such as Lloyd Price, Fats Domino and Guitar Slim) and national rock 'n' roll hits. He also emceed and spun records at local sock hops (like the St. Anthony's Dance) and shows. Hamann is credited with giving Clarence "Ain't Got No Home" Henry his nickname, "Frogman".



"Duke" Thiele



Clarence M. Hamann in 1990

An ad in *Billboard Magazine*, May 3, 1952, read as follows:

"Clarence Hamann Jr., WJMR, New Orleans, La.; wants to thank the many disk distributors and manufacturers for their co-operation in helping make the "Poppa Stoppa" show a success ..."

Winslow once said, "Other stations were too dignified to play rhythm and blues." But that's what listeners wanted to hear. Winslow knew it wasn't the right way to go about it, but in the end it would all work out.

Vernon Winslow did not not have to wait very long. In May 1949, the Jackson Brewing Company of New Orleans was eager to market Jax Beer to black consumers, so Jax and Fitzgerald Advertising offered to sponsor a show for Winslow to emcee, titled "Jivin' with Jax," on station WVEZ. Jax was instrumental in pioneering broadcasting black

R&B artists, as well as the city's first African-American deejay, in New Orleans.

Dave Bartholomew, whose long partnership with Fats Domino is legendary, recorded the rollicking "Good Jax Boogie". Upon his induction to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Bartholomew was cited as a driving force in the transition from jump blues to R&B as "one of the Crescent City's greatest musicians and a true pioneer in the rock and roll revolution."

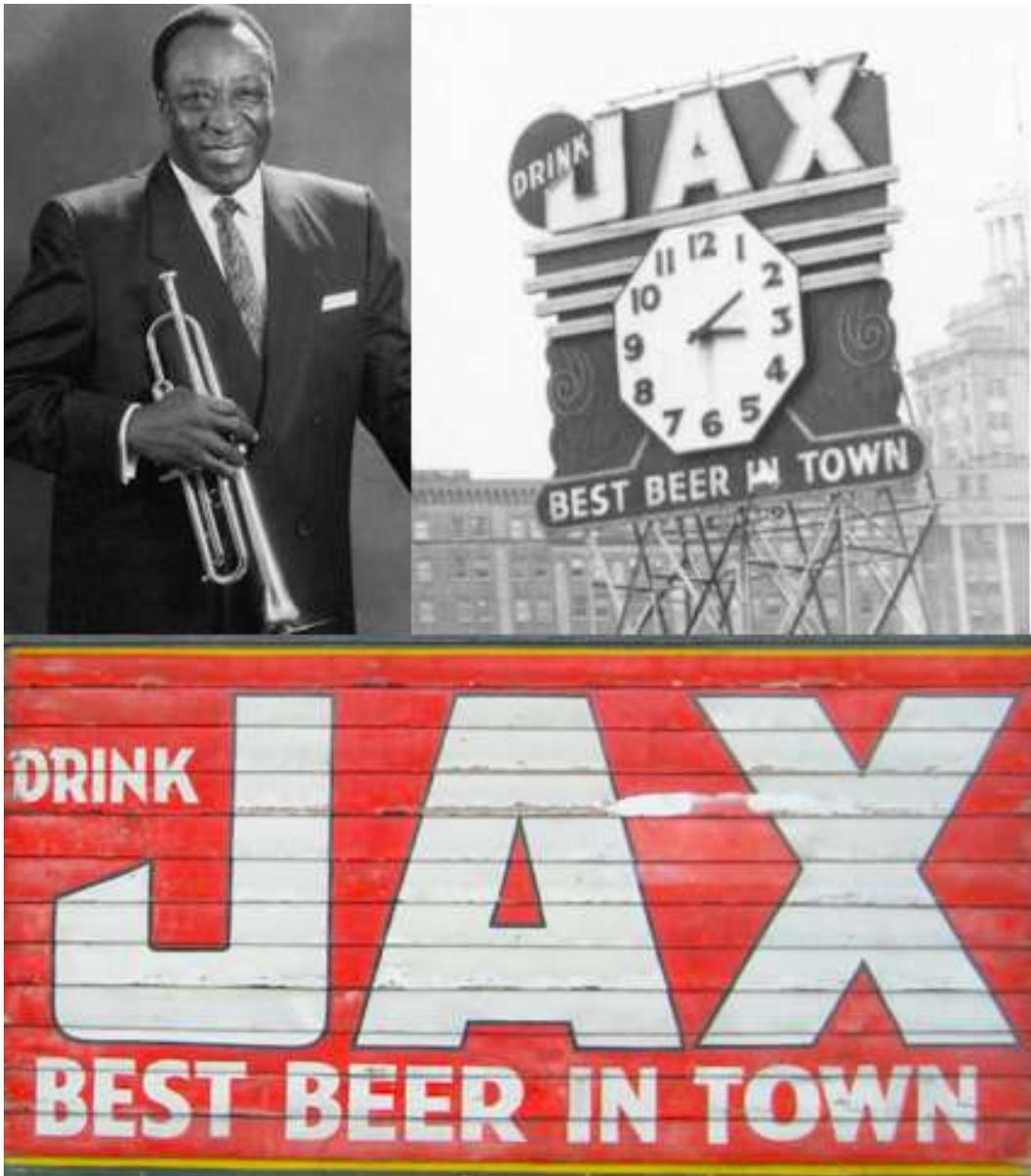


*Dave Bartholomew's "Good Jax Boogie" on 78 RPM,
from the collection of Ned Hémard*

Here is just a portion of the lyrics to "Good Jax Boogie":

"Hey everybody, let's jump and Jive.
Stop actin' dead
Cause we're alive.

And drink Jax Beer,
Drink Jax Beer,
Good Jax Beer,
Good Jax Beer.
Hello, mellow Jax,
Best beer in town!"



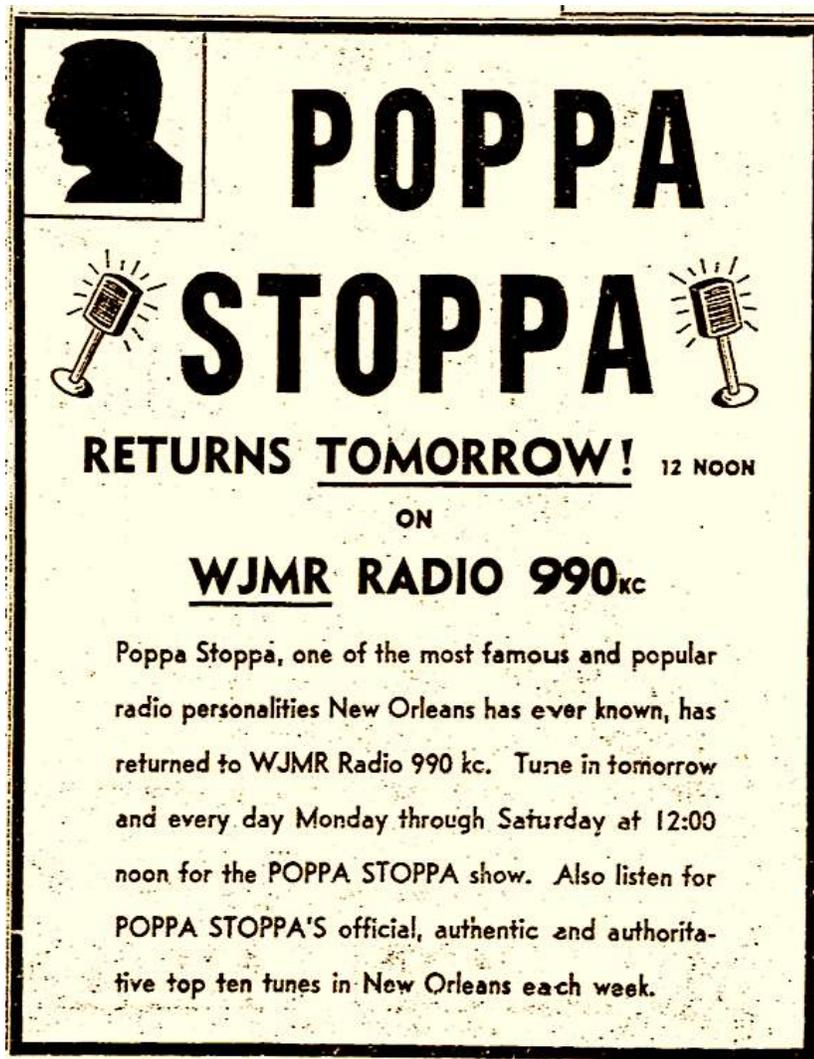
Dave Bartholmew and "Good Jax Beer," "Best Beer in Town"

With Winslow's broadcast for Jax Beer, New Orleans radio was officially integrated, and a local radio broadcasting icon was born. Billed by Jax as "New Orleans' first sepia disc jockey," Winslow would forever be known and loved as Dr. Daddy-O.

Poppa Stoppa continued broadcasting for WJMR (990) from the roof of the Jung Hotel on Canal Street. "Let's turn up ALLLLL the radios," he would proclaim. "It's the Poppa Stoppa Show, little BAAAABEEEE-babies and buddy-buddies." Between records, he would often exclaim, "Cow-a-bunga", an expression first popularized on the U.S. television

program *Howdy Doody* (1947 – 1960). The show's Chief Thunderthud first used it as a harmless expletive in 1953. It became surfer slang in the 60s until it resurfaced with the Ninja Turtles and Bart Simpson.

After the popularity of New Orleans R&B artists began to wane in the 1960s (many blame the Beatles and the British invasion), Hamann went to work at Station WBOK and became a popular soul disc jockey.



**POPPA
STOPPA**

RETURNS TOMORROW! 12 NOON

**ON
WJMR RADIO 990_{KC}**

Poppa Stoppa, one of the most famous and popular radio personalities New Orleans has ever known, has returned to WJMR Radio 990 kc. Tune in tomorrow and every day Monday through Saturday at 12:00 noon for the POPPA STOPPA show. Also listen for POPPA STOPPA'S official, authentic and authoritative top ten tunes in New Orleans each week.

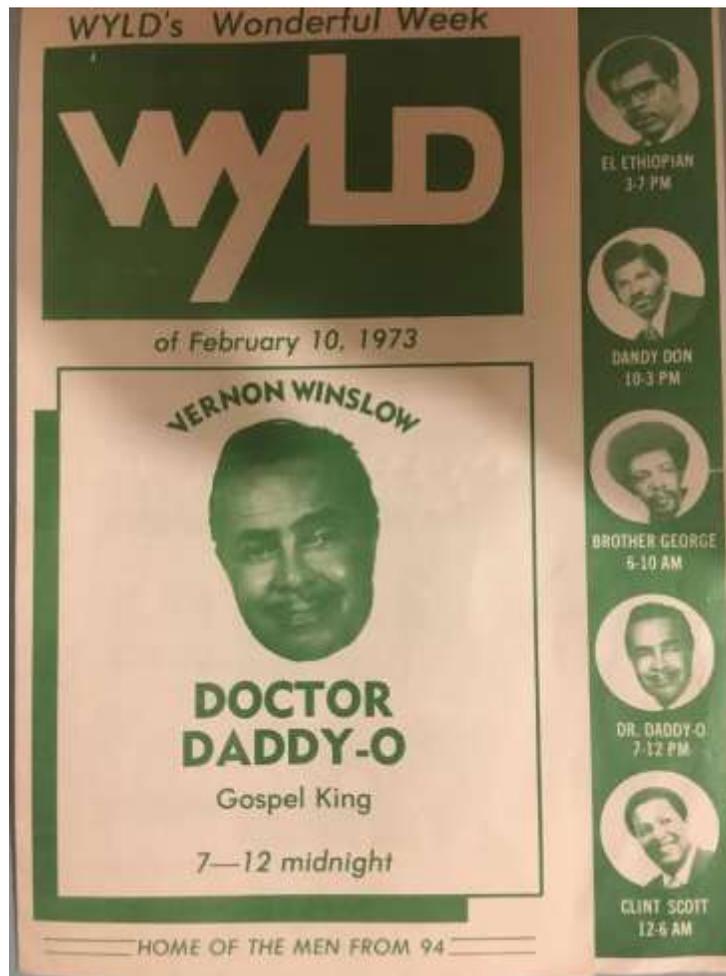
"Poppa Stoppa Returns" ad in the Times-Picayune, May 22, 1964

Ed Nunez hired Hamann as Poppa Stoppa in the early 1970s for his WNNR oldies station ("990 – The Center Aisle of Your Radio Dial"). Once again Dave Bartholomew answered the call and performed a wonderful jingle:

“WNNR-ruh
990 on your dial.
Poppa Stoppa is a winner.
Everybody dig his style.”

When WNNR switched to a contemporary R&B format circa 1978-79, Hamann made a move to Slidell radio station WSDL, where he spun oldies until his retirement in 1986. Clarence M. Hamann, Jr., died in 1999.

In the late 1950s, Vernon Winslow’s musical focus changed and he went to work for New Orleans radio station WYLD, where he stayed on and off the air for more than thirty years hosting a gospel program. Dr. Daddy-O was promoted as the “Gospel King”. He died in late 1993, but his legacy lives on.



1973 hit survey: Doctor Daddy-O, the Gospel King on WYLD, from the collection of Ned Hémard

WYLD (originally WMRY) went on the air in late 1949 as the city's first true black radio station, which broadcast from the Court of Two Sisters restaurant. The Crescent City's second black station, WBOK went on the air a year later on Jan. 1, 1951, with a focus on "popular, hillbilly and race music, special features and news," according to an article in the New Orleans *Item* a short time before the station's debut.

WBOK—Okey Dokey
WMRY—Ernie the Whip News
WBOK—News-Okey Doke Show
WJMR—Pappa Stoppa

7:30 A. M.
WWEZ—Market Basket
WJBW—Timekeeper

Radio station schedule, Times-Picayune, August 28, 1951



Mayor Victor H. Schiro visits Poppa Stoppa (Clarence Hamann)

Disc jockeys like Vernon Winslow and Clarence Hamann, though of two different races, were instrumental in promoting the quintessential New

Orleans R&B sound. Before Vernon Winslow made the scene, that sound would not have gotten the airplay it did since so-called "race" records were not played at first on local radio stations. "Like the Berlin Wall," Winslow "broke down the walls," Cosimo Matassa said – and others followed.

When you think of Ken Elliott (known as "Jack the Cat"), "Duke" Thiele, "Okey-Dokey" Smith, Larry McKinley (the voice of Jazz Fest and co-founder of Minit Records), Shelley Pope (dubbed the "Human Radio Station") or Clarence "Poppa Stoppa" Hamann, you must remember Vernon Winslow.

"Had things worked out for me in a way that my talent could support me, I would have been a painter," Winslow mused in a 1986 *Times-Picayune* interview. Although not a professional painter, Winslow was indeed a true artist, one who paved the way for other radio deejays and a profusion of New Orleans-styled rhythm and blues hits for years to come. And that's "All Reet"!

NED HÉMARD

New Orleans Nostalgia
"Dr. Daddy-O and Poppa Stoppa"
Ned Hémard
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