



Lionel Cormier

Lionel Cormier was born in Rayne, Louisiana, on February 26, 1913. His father, Arvilian Cormier, was an accordion player and Lionel soon learned to play the accordion. By the age of 12, Lionel was playing the accordion at family gatherings and house dances. He married Lizzie Bass on September 21, 1929. The couple had two sons, Lesa and Gene Nelson Cormier.

He and Lizzie moved to Gueydan, Louisiana, to work in the rice fields and then moved to Eunice, Louisiana, to work at the sawmill.

In 1935, Lionel and his wife and his young son, Lesa, settled in Elton, Louisiana. He worked at the large sawmill and continued playing his accordion for his own enjoyment and anyone who came to visit.

In 1947, Lionel, Emory LaPoint, Percy Fusilier, and Darbonne formed "The Elton Playboys", later renamed "The Sundown Playboys." Lionel cut his first record, "Sundown Playboy Special" and "Welcome Club Waltz" on a 78-rpm record in 1952. Other records followed such as: "Big Boy Bounce," "Louisiana Gumbo," "Cypress Inn Special," "Last Year's Waltz," "Waltz of My Heart," "Black Bayou Special," and "Riceville Special."

He and the band played shows on Radio Stations KJEF in Jennings, Louisiana, KSIG in Crowley, Louisiana, KPLC in Lake Charles, Louisiana, KSUL in Sulphur, Louisiana and on TV Station, KLFY in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Lionel died of a heart attack on the bandstand at the Bamboo Club in Lake Charles, Louisiana, on June 5 1971, while playing a Cajun Day benefit dance.

His son, Lesa Cormier, and grandson, Danny Cormier, are continuing the family tradition.