



Joe Falcon

Accordianist Joe Falcon and his future wife, Cleoma Breaux, were the first musicians to record Cajun music. Their song, “*Lafayette*,” better known as, “*Allons a Lafayette*,” was recorded in New Orleans, Louisiana on April 27, 1928.

Joe was born September 28, 1900, near Bayou Plaquemine Brulee just north of Rayne Louisiana. He began playing accordion at the age of seven. His career as a professional musician began some years later at a *fais-do-do* hall in Rayne when the regular band didn't show up and the dance hall owner insisted that Joe take their place.

As a young man, Joe was friends with accordionist Amédée Breaux of the legendary Breaux family and sometime accompanied him on triangle. Amédée's sister, Cleoma, a gifted guitarist and singer, became Joe's frequent accompanist and they married not long after the onset of their recording career.

“*Lafayette*” caused a sensation when it was released by Columbia Records in the summer of 1928. Thousands of copies were sold and Falcon became the first Cajun recording star, playing to packed dance halls in Louisiana and neighboring Texas. Joe and Cleoma recorded more material at sessions in New York in August 1928 and Atlanta in April 1929. After a hiatus caused by the onset of the Great Depression, the couple resumed their recording career in 1934, recording again in New York, then at New Orleans in 1936 and San Antonio in 1937.

Despite this success, Joe's career flagged in the late 1930s with the increasing popularity of fiddle-based country-and-western influenced bands. His music came to be considered old-fashioned and he stopped recording after his last session in 1937. Cleoma died suddenly in 1941. Joe died in Crowley, Louisiana on November 19, 1965.

*“Allons a Lafayette”* remains one of the most popular Cajun songs of all times.