THE RECORDINGS OF
THE GULF COAST SEVEN

A Tentative Personnelo-Discography

This personnelo-discography is based on RUST, JAZZ AND RAGTIME RECORDS 1897 - 1942.
Personnels are taken from this source, but modified in the light of earlier or subsequent research or on the strength of my own listening, discussed with our listening group or other interested collectors.

- Documented, most certain and aurally absolutely obvious identifications are listed thus: Perry Bradford
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Perry Bradford*
- Not attributable identifications – although the musician in question might be an otherwise well-known person – are listed thus: unknown
- If a possible identification for an otherwise unknown musician is suggested by the author without the possibility to prove the factual evidence, it is listed thus: *(Perry Bradford)*

When feeling certain without a musician´s documented presence, I have not refrained from altering Rust´s statements without using italics. In any case, my statements are open to discussion and I would appreciate any contribution - pro or contra!

As always in my discographies on this website I have written recording sessions with their headings, dates, titles and names of musicians in italics, whenever I am convinced that the eponymous musician of this discography is not part of the accompanying group of this session! Documented names of musicians if known – in recording ledgers or on record labels – are listed in bold letters.

This discography still is - and will certainly be - a work in progress for a long time, if not eternally. Yet, on the way to a definite discography of all jazz recordings before 1942 - which certainly will never be possible - it is intended to fill some gaps that have not been treated before.

THE GULF COAST SEVEN

Rust*6 identifies the four sessions issued under this name as follows: "*This is a pseudonym for Perry Bradford´s Jazz Hounds on the first session shown, according to the Columbia files. The remaining sessions probably were also made by Bradford bands, although they are not identified as such in the Columbia files*."
The basis of my work is Walter C. Allen´s article in Record Research 75, 'Filling In Discographically', of 1966, where he tries to define reasonable personnels for the first two sessions as listed below. In his comments he writes: "*You can see that there is much disagreement about these sessions. One outstanding lack of consistency is that two personnels for the first session name two trumpeters; and for the other, with two (in fact – KBR) trumpets, only one trumpeter is named. It is conceivable, of course, that the two records were confused or the notes transposed when John Mitchell´s identifications were reported to me."* This mistake apparently had found its way uncorrected into Rust*2, but it will be found corrected here!

001 **THE GULF COAST SEVEN** New York, May 17, 1923
Gus Aiken – tpt; Eugene Bud Aiken – tbn;
Garvin Bushell – clt; unknown – ten;
Charlie "Smitty" Smith – pno; John Mitchell – bjo

81021-3	Fade Away Blues	Col A-3916,	Timeless CBC 1-073
81022-3	Daybreak Blues	Col A-3916,	Timeless CBC 1-073

Evaluation of this session and its personnel starts with a big disillusion and overthrow on my side! For a long time now, I was convinced that the trumpet player on this session had to be Johnny Dunn – and not Gus Aiken as listed – because stylistically it is so much in the Dunn mixture of heroic and military triplet phrasing and staccato power and because Aiken was expected to be far from New York at the time. Yet, a recently acquired pile of Record Research issues – No. 75! – brought unexpected clarity: it must be Gus Aiken on trumpet here! Storyville 1996/7, p. 189, 232 informs us that Aiken was in Cuba with Gonzelle White´s show from mid May (at last 25th) until mid December 1923. This made me (KBR) doubt Aiken´s presence on this session, the more so as his departure has not been exactly documented. But Walter C. Allen in Record Research 75 p.9 unpretentiously says: "*Aiken recalled recording Daybreak Blues and Fade Away Blues*". And: Johnny Dunn was in England from early May 1923 until September 1923 with Will Vodery´s Orchestra.
This certainly sets the matter straight and it has to be Aiken. But then Aiken delivers a perfect copy of Dunn´s very personal style! So much so that Garvin Bushell in his 'Jazz from the Beginning' p. 158 says: "*That cornet has to be Johnny Dunn!*" And he should have known! (M. Rader´s and my own article on Gus Aiken in the FROG Yearbook Vol. 3 denies Aiken´s presence on this one and Bradford´s session of

May/June 1923 (P. B. Jazz Phools) and has thus to be corrected! Repeated listening after this most unexpected new situation certainly shows a much more flexible time of the trumpet player, a mellower tone and a jazzier phrasing, yet still remaining a very expert copy of Dunn´s style.
As often when Gus Aiken can be heard on record, he is accompanied by a technically proficient and well tasted trombone player who plays in a no-nonsense and sober style, with good knowledge of harmonies and very melodious. This is Gus´ brother Eugene 'Bud' Aiken who also used to play expert trumpet when required. Bushell says of him: "*Bud Aiken … playing is clean and not boisterous – Buddy was never boisterous*." And this is exactly what you hear on these titles. There seems to have been a custom of pairing trumpet and trombone players in the twenties. The Aiken brothers obviously are an example, as are June Clark and Jimmy Harrison, later Tommy Ladnier and Harrison, Rex Stewart with Herb Gregory, Bubber Miley with Charlie Irvis and Louis Metcalf with Tricky Sam Nanton. Rex Stewart vividly describes this custom in his beautiful book 'Boy Meets Horn' and 'Jazz Masters of the Thirties'.
In his book Garvin Bushell does not deny or even question his own presence on these sides. And aural evidence shows that he is the clarinet player. Insofar lately offered and issued personnels are probably correct. But the saxophone player imposes a severe problem. He does not show Elliott´s tonal and phrasing characteristics and stays very unobtrusively in the background, appearing only in harmony with the clarinet in one chorus of each title. At other times he stays very much in the background and can only vaguely be heard. He does not play clarinet as listed! Bushell says: "*That´s an alto saxophone in the middle duet. But I never heard Ernest Elliott play saxophone. Maybe it was Herschel Brassfield*." In my (KBR) opinion a tenor saxophone is played on these titles. That Elliott also played saxophone cannot be denied following some documented recordings with Bessie Smith, King Oliver and others. And Elliott´s recordings on alto (!) show a rather "sour" style which is not apparent here. Brassfield was in England at the time of this session, together with Johnny Dunn, as was Rollen Smith, so they must be omitted. This leaves an unknown tenor sax player who cannot be identified at the moment.
The very fundamental piano player is not Bradford as might be expected, and seems not to be Leroy Tibbs as well. If we are right to hear Tibbs on Edith Wilson´s recordings of January and May 1922 and later, our man here shows nothing of functional band piano playing as by Tibbs, but delivers a steady and seemingly unstructured carpet of piano sound. Most interestingly Perry Bradford´s Jazz Phools session of May/June 1923 comprises Charlie "Smitty" Smith as pianist. This man is documented as being the pianist of June Clark´s band at "Smalls´ Sugar Cane Club" and is perfectly characterised by Count Basie in his book 'Good Morning Blues' as a great "comper" which does not mean anything else but that he was great in accompanyment, not solo work. This is exactly what we hear. And so I would like to name Charlie Smith as probable piano player for this session. "Smitty" Smith can also be heard on Thomas Morris´ Past Jazz Masters and June Clark´s band aka Blue Rhythm Orchestra and Gulf Coast Seven of November 1925. Bradford is named by John Mitchell for this session, but Bradford´s style is easy to identify and must be ruled out here.
This leaves the banjo player. And he is unmistakably the young and virtuoso John Mitchell with his dated banjo artistry, very much in the Johnny Dunn style of tremolos and double-time.
Walter C. Allen in his article on this session (RR 75) asks: "*Does anyone hear two trumpets on Col A-3916*?" This question certainly has to be denied, but there are instances in the tunes where Aiken plays muted trumpet breaks which are immediately carried on by the clarinet player playing growl, thus very much sounding like the trumpet.
The whole performance is so much in Johnny-Dunn-style and with Dunn personnel, that it must be concluded that Bradford had been surprised by Dunn´s departure for England together with his trombonist in early May, although they had probably been firmly booked for the session. Luckily Bradford was able to find a perfect replacement in the Aiken brothers to retain the Dunn mode of playing and cash in on it. And it shows the very promising abilities of the Aiken brothers which later would not be accomplished, partly because of Bud Aiken´s much too early death in 1927, and partly by Gus Aiken´s way into mediocrity in later years.
<u>Notes:</u>
- Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: personnel unknown
- Carey, McCarthy, Jazz Directory, Vol. 4: "This group is generally considered to be connected with Perry Bradford and/or Johnny Dunn. Others have associated it with the Original Memphis Five. Definite information being lacking we merely give the basic details. It is possible that not all these records are by the same group of artists."
- RR 73: John Mitchell, interviewed by Harold Flakser and Carl Kendziora, Jr.: Johnny Dunn, Gus Aiken, trumpets; Earl Granstaff, trombone; Hershal Brassfield and Rollen Smith, reeds; Perry Bradford, piano; John Mitchell, banjo.
- RR 75: Walter C. Allen´s personnel: prob Gus Aiken, poss Bud Aiken, prob Garvin Bushell, poss Ernest Elliott, prob Perry Bradford, John Mitchell.
*- Rust*2 (corrected): Johnny Dunn (cnt); ? Herb Flemming (tbn); Herschel Brassfield (clt, alt); Bob Fuller (clt/sop); Perry Bradford or Leroy Tibbs (pno); ? Sam Speed (bjo).*
*- Rust*3,*4,*6: Gus Aiken - c; Bud Aiken - tb; ? Garvin Bushell - cl; Ernest Elliott – cl - ts; Leroy Tibbs - p; John Mitchell - bj.*
- Storyville 1996/97, p.189: Laurie Wright´s statement as to Gus Aiken´s departure to Cuba: "they had definitely sailed by the middle of May (Chicago Defender of 26/5/23)" has to be questioned after W. C. Allen´s statements! This departure should be seen as after May 17, but is terminated by Allen as "about June 1923". And this would also change the recording date of the adjacent P. Bradford´s Jazz Phools Paramount session from May/June to late May.

002 **THE GULF COAST SEVEN**		New York,	Aug 07, 1923
(*Elmer Chambers?*), *Bubber Miley* – tpt; *Bud Aiken* – tbn;			
(*Julian Baugh?*) – clt; *Ernest Elliott* – alt;			
Perry Bradford – pno; (*Elmer Snowden ?)* – bjo			
81168-2	Papa, Better Watch Your Step	Col A-3978,	Frog DGF 56
81169-2	Memphis, Tennessee	Col A-3978,	Frog DGF 56

The above cited remark from Walter C. Allen in RR 75 that Johnny Dunn was in England from May to September 1923, and can therefore not be present on this session, raises calamities. This, because Gus Aiken also cannot be the trumpeter as he was in Cuba at the time! And I was certain to hear Dunn as one of the trumpet players. So, Dunn and Aiken must be excluded.
There is a first trumpet player who leads the ensemble in the beginnings of the tunes. This man shows similarities of tone and rhythm with a clear diction to Fletcher Henderson´s lead trumpet man Elmer Chambers. Hear his 6/8 time delivery of eighth-notes! Then there is a second man who seems to be Bubber Miley. He can be heard behind the first player adding fills and breaks and is possibly the man who plays the introduction of the first title. He starts the reed chorus with a typical growl tone and later plays the breaks in this chorus as well as the coda. The trumpet break in the last chorus of 'Papa, Better …' might be shared by both men, Miley playing the second break. In 'Memphis, Tennessee' we hear both trumpeters, Miley in foreground in the first chorus. He is dominating the whole performance. Miley, by the way, recorded with Thomas Morris´ Past Jazz Masters again on the same day for OKeh.
The trombone player possesses the same technique and taste as we have heard on the first session above, and therefore seems to be Bud Aiken. Bud did not accompany his brother on the Cuba tour, but stayed behind. He became a member of the Gonzelle White entourage some time later. I feel unable to follow Bushell´s statement that this "*is not Buddy´s sound at all*"!

The prominent clarinettist is listed as Buster Bailey in Rust*2, but lacks Bailey´s almost classical tone and owns a very distinct vibrato instead and a sharp diction. In any case, there is a certain New Orleans or even Doddsian flavour to his playing. But Bailey also seems to be ruled out by the appearance of a slap-tongue break in the second title. And, as Walter C. Allen writes, "*I doubt if Buster Bailey would have been in New York this early, although he had already recorded with Mamie Smith (according to his own recollection) in February 1921. He was primarily based in Chicago during this period*." Bailey on his assumed first recordings with the Sunset Band (reissued on FROG DGF 28) of about the same time as this session, sounds like Bailey of later years and is definitely very different from our man here in question. He is not Bushell either (see below). Even with the help of Dave Brown and Michael Rader I have found myself unable to offer an appropriate name for this musician. ADDITION 140911: Allen, Hendersonia p. 33/34: " *An unidentified clarinettist, with a fine ensemble sense and a tone that reminds one of Dodds (I am sure, however, that it was NOT Dodds), whom I tentatively identify as Clarence Robinson, is present on certain sessions. It does not sound like Garvin Bushell."*
On alto we do probably hear Ernest Elliott with his "sour" sound caused by his continued down and upward slurs. He plays alto here, not tenor as listed (I do not know any instance Elliott playing tenor!). He is not Brassfield as listed before, because Brassfield was in England with Dunn and the Will Vodery band.
The pianist seems to be another person as on the foregoing session. He is very busy, plays a lot of notes in Dunn´s double-time style which simply are not functional at any rate. He probably is Mr. Perry Bradford himself.
Whereas John Mitchell plays strict four-bar beat in ensemble and his artistic tremolo gimmicks in breaks, this banjo player does not refrain from tremoloing most of the time and even loosing the beat in his solo breaks. So, Mitchell can be excluded, and Elmer Snowden (not Sam Speede!) could be the man because of the affinity to the early Snowden/Ellington band..
<u>Notes:</u>
- Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: personnel unknown
- Carey, McCarthy, Jazz Directory, Vol. 4: "This group is generally considered to be connected with Perry Bradford and/or Johnny Dunn. Others have associated it with the Original Memphis Five. Definite information being lacking we merely give the basic details. It is possible that not all these records are by the same group of artists."
- Record Research 73, John Mitchell, interviewed by Harold Flakser and Carl Kendziora, Jr. named: Gus Aiken (only !), trumpet; Earl Granstaff, trombone; Bob Fuller and Ernest Elliott, reeds; Perry Bradford, piano.
- Record Research 75: Walter C. Allen´s personnel: two unknown tpts; unknown, tbn; poss Garvin Bushell, poss Bob Fuller or Ernest Elliott, prob Perry Bradford, poss Sam Speed
*- Rust*2 (corrected): Johnny Dunn, Gus Aiken (cnts); ? Herb Flemming (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt); Ernest Elliott (clt/alt); Perry Bradford or Leroy Tibbs (pno); John Mitchell or Gus Horsley (bjo).*
*- Rust*3, *4, *6: Gus Aiken, unknown - c; Bud Aiken - tb; ? Garvin Bushell - cl; Ernest Elliott –cl - ts; Leroy Tibbs - p; Sam Speed or John Mitchell - bj.*
- Bushell/Tucker, Jazz from the Beginning: "There are a lot of bad notes in there, because we were reading. This is a pretty bad recording. Again, it sounds like Johnny Dunn to me on cornet. The clarinet doesn´t sound like me; I never had that vibrato. This could be George Brashear on trombone, it´s not Buddy´s sound at all. The arrangement could be by by Qualli Clark."

003 **GULF COAST SEVEN** New York, Nov. 05, 1925
June Clark – cnt; Jimmy Harrison – tbn;
Leonard Fields – alt; Harrison Jackson – clt, ten;
Willie 'The Lion' Smith – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Joe 'Jazz' Carson – dms

141245-4	Santa Claus Blues	Col 14107-D,	Frog DGF 32
141246-3	Keep Your Temper	Col 14107-D,	Frog DGF 32

Composer credits: 141245 (Straight and Kahn); 141246 (Smith)

This recording of the 'Gulf Coast Seven' – a Perry Bradford initiated band recording – actually is 'June Clark´s Creole Band' that also recorded under the name of 'Blue Rhythm Orchestra'.
ADDITION 25-05-25: This recording session causes me a not so small embarrassment in that I just recently discovered a mention of this session in 'The Lion´s' autobiography 'Music on my Mind', co-written by George Hoefer in 1964 (see below). After another close listening I have to state the following: Although Willie 'The Lion' Smith gives Buster Bailey as clarinettist for this session, I am decidedly certain that Bailey is not on it. Although he is the clarinettist on the 'Blue Rhythm Orchestra' sides – Bailey´s presence there is not documented anywhere, but still assumed only, yet rightfully, as I think - this clarinettist of the 'Gulf Coast Seven' lacks a whole lot of Bailey´s brilliant perfection and is of rather medium instrumental capacity. Furthermore, he only plays when the tenor sax is silent and therefore certainly is that same player. (The 'Blue Rhythm Orchestra' sides have no tenor sax! Bailey is known only to have played alto besides his clarinet!) This player´s performance might then well be the documented Harrison Jackson, tenorist of the June Clark band of this time. (He later concluded his musical activities and became a well-known Harlem lawyer.) The other reed-man on alto sax with certainty is Leonard Fields as on the 'Blue Rhythm Band' sides. Trumpet/cornet and trombone without any doubt are June Clark and Jimmy Harrison. Banjoist Buddy Christian might have been a contemporary replacement for Will 'Splivy' Escoffery, banjo man of the 'Blue Rhythm Orchestra', and drummer 'Jazz' Carson of this same band. Leaves the pianist! Willie 'The Lion' declares himself to be the pianist. By comparison with the documented pianist of the 'Blue Rhythm Orchestra', this may well be true. The 'Blue Rhythm Orchestra' pianist plays an 'oompa oompa' rhythm comping throughout, as described by Bill 'Count' Basie (above under 'Sources'). While our pianist here on these sides plays a perpetual and simple four-beat-to-the-bar rhythm with only a few fingers (thumbs and little fingers) on the first title, and a composed bass-line adjusted to the chord-structure of the second title, together with piano parts for the bridges and band parts. As this title is 'The Lion´s' composition, this piano parts most probably is a proof for Willie 'The Lion´s' presence on these sides. I therefore must revoke my claim of the past as it read:
"Again, this recording session decidedly does not include Willie 'The Lion' Smith on piano!" And I continued with the following statements that still are valid for this session, only, that not Charles 'Smitty' Smith is the pianist, but Willie 'The Lion' Smith:
"This session brings us a completely different personnel from all other 'Gulf Coast Seven' sides recorded, far from the Johnny Dunn stable of musicians – we are two years later now! As I have constantly observed during my/our large research project on the recordings of Clarence Williams (N&N 58 – 61) it was common among composers/publishers to hire musicians from working bands for their own units playing and recording their recent compositions/publications. But very seldom did they hire more than two musicians of one distinct band. Often partnerships of trumpet / trombone players were engaged as cited above. Maybe it was not wanted to transpose the distinct sound of a working band on to the recording unit with another leader´s name?! Not so Bradford. He engaged complete bands, even containing the band´s leader as a playing member. So, Bradford hired one of the hottest bands in Harlem of the year 1925, residing at "Smalls´ Sugar Cane Club" on 2212 Fifth Avenue, forerunner of "Smalls´ Paradise". He had a photograph made of this band with himself leaning on the piano ('Pictorial History of Jazz' p. 129 and 'Born with the Blues' p. 147) which obviously was intended as a promotional photo for further use as a Bradford recording unit. So, it seems that Bradford had future-plans with them. But only a handful of records resulted out of this combination, as I have shown in my comprehensive article on June Clark, which will be issued in the FROG Yearbook Vol. 4 later this year.

Yet, a most interesting point should appropriately be added here: The band – June Clark´s ! – recorded two titles of their very own repertoire in their own arrangement here. In all other instances of the Gulf Coast Seven output the tunes and titles are Perry Bradford´s! Although all other sources like Rust etc. list June Clark, cnt; Jimmy Harrison, tbn; Buster Bailey, clt, sop, alt; Prince Robinson, ten; Willie 'The Lion' Smith, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo; Bill Benford, bbs; 'Jazz' Carson, dms in this or other variants, the reader may be assured that my above listed personnel is the right one! The appropriate deduction will be found in the above-mentioned FROG Yearbook Vol. 4, to be issued later this year 2014."

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: personnel unknown

- Carey, McCarthy, Jazz Directory, Vol. 4: "This group is generally considered to be connected with Perry Bradford and/or Johnny Dunn. Others have associated it with the Original Memphis Five. Definite information being lacking we merely give the basic details. It is possible that not all these records are by the same group of artists."

- W.C. Allen, Hendersonia: "On November 5, 1925, Buster Bailey recorded two titles for Columbia with the Gulf Coast Seven, a Clarence Williams recording group; and about this same time, he recorded three titles in two sessions for Pathe/Perfect with a similar band labelled as Blue Rhythm Orchestra."

- D. Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: prob. June Clark, tpt; Jimmy Harrison, tbn; Buster Bailey, Prince Robinson, clt/sax; Willie Smith, p; unknown, d.

*- Rust*2: June Clark (?) (cnt); Jimmy Harrison (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt, alt); Prince Robinson (ten); Willie "The Lion" Smith (pno); unknown (dms)*

*- Rust*3,*4,*6: June Clark -c; Jimmy Harrison -tb; Buster Bailey -cl-ss -as; Prince Robinson -ts; Willie "The Lion" Smith -p; Buddy Christian -bj; ?Bill Benford -bb; "Jazz" Carson -d*

- Willie 'The Lion' Smith/ George Hoefer, Music On My Mind, p. 162: "My first original composition was called 'Keep Your Temper', and on November 5, 1925, Williams set it up for a recording on the old Columbia label. We had a good band with 'The Lion´s' piano, June Clark´s cornet, Jimmy Harrison´s trombone, Buster Bailey´s clarinet, Buddy Christian on guitar, Bill Benford on bass, and Jazz Carson playing drums. They called us the 'Gulf Coast Seven', for no other reason than Williams came from down around the Gulf of Mexico. First we did a tune by Clarence called 'Santy Claus Blues' and then we bore down on 'Keep Your Temper'. The sides came out and I don´t remember ever getting a chance to hear them. I recall damn well I didn´t see any other money besides the regular recording fee at that period. Such things as royalties were unknown in those days for jazz men."

Recorded Tunes:

Santa Claus Blues Key of Eb Columbia

(Intro 4 bars ens)(B1 Verse 16 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 32 bars ABAC tbn + ens, tbn middle break)(A2 Chorus 32 bars alt + ens, alt middle break)(A3 Chorus 32 bars ens, cnt middle break)(C1 ½ Chorus 16 bars AC ens, clt breaks)

Keep Your Temper Key of F / Bb / Eb / Bb Columbia

(Intro 8 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 32 bars ABAC alt + ens)(Bridge 4 bars ens)(B1 Chorus 16 bars AA´ (tbn 6 bars, reeds 2 bars, tbn 7 bars, ens 1 bar))(B2 Chorus 16 bars (ten 14 bars, ens 2 bars))(Bridge 4 bars ens)(C1 Chorus 32 bars AA´ (clt + ens 28 bars, ens 4 bars))(Vamp 2 bars ens)(B3 Chorus 16 bars (ens 6 bars, clt 2 bars, ens 8 bars))(B4 Chorus 16 bars ens, cnt middle break)

004 **THE GULF COAST SEVEN** New York, Oct. 19, 1928

Louis Metcalf – tpt; *Joe Nanton* – tbn;
unknown – alt; *Emmett Matthews* – sop, ten;
James P. Johnson – pno; unknown - dms;
Perry Bradford – voc (2)

147151-1	Daylight Savin` Blues	Col 14373-D,	Frog DGF 56
147152-1	Georgia´s Always On My Mind	Col 14373-D,	Frog DGF 56

For many years this coupling has been seen as an offshoot of the Ellington band of the da under Perry Bradford´s superintendence. The undeniable presence of Louis Metcalf, a seemingly familiar trombonist out of the Ellington circle and a fluent and secure soprano player: this must have been a unit comprised of Ellington men. But it is not that easy!

First: Louis Metcalf presence must be undisputed because of his very personal style of squeezed tone and individual phrasing. But second, the trombonist seems not to be as obvious as Metcalf. Very probably the man is Nanton, but there also are traces of Charlie Irvis in his playing which should not be disregarded.

The alto player has been listed as Johnny Hodges on the strength of the presence of prominent soprano playing. But here we have a real problem! The style is not Hodges´ at all! Neither on soprano nor on alto. The soprano can only be heard together with the alto, never together with the tenor. And when we hear the tenor, the soprano is silent. This urges us to the recognition that the altoist cannot be the soprano player. Above all the altoist can only be heard playing in harmony with the tenor and in free ensemble with the soprano. This means that the tenor player also plays the soprano! And the altoist is not Hodges nor the otherwise presumed Charlie Holmes because the altoist cannot be heard in solo, which would necessarily be the case if Hodges or Holmes would have been present – and because of stylistic unsuitability. Consequently - in lack of solo playing - it is impossible to identify the alto player. His ensemble playing certainly lacks the elegance and finesse of either Hodges or Holmes.

With Hodges out of the way and no clarinet at all on these sides there consequently is no need to identify Barney Bigard. And the tenor playing is much too crude to be by Bigard. This player obviously prefers soprano as his main instrument, he plays tenor only in harmony with the alto. This then makes us search for a distinct soprano player at the time in question. He may be found in Emmett Matthews, a singer and reed player who came to New York with Wen Talbert and his Orchestra in 1927 where he was engaged as a tenor player. In his "You Don´t Know Me, But .." p. 13 George Winfield recalls "*Emmett Matthews running across the stage playing his soprano*". Matthews owns a very extrovert style of music making as a singer and soprano player as shown in recordings under his own name in 1931 with singer Laura Rucker and in 1936 with a bunch of Fats Waller musicians. He also can be heard in Waller´s 'I Got Rhythm' of December 1935 rising his soprano over the big band in the finale.

On piano we probably hear James P. Johnson, the master, who at that time can often be found in Bradford-directed recording groups.

Th drummer does not show anything attributable to Sonny Greer who obviously was only named in conjunction with the assumed Ellington connection. It is sometimes possible to get a hint to a drummer´s identity from the pitch of his drums or cymbals. But then you need a reference recording which in this case is not existent. Also that Greer uses different cymbals.

But finally Bradford and his awful and off-pitch singing can be listed as unequivocal. This then is a weak element of the recording , indeed, but absolutely certain!

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: personnel unknown

- Carey, McCarthy, Jazz Directory, Vol. 4: "This group is generally considered to be connected with Perry Bradford and/or Johnny Dunn. Others have associated it with the Original Memphis Five. Definite information being lacking we merely give the basic details. It is possible that not all these records are by the same group of artists."
*- Rust*2: Bubber Miley (cnt); unknown (tbn); unknown (sop, alt); unknown (alt); unknown (pno); unknown (dms);P. Bradfoed (voc).*
*- Rust*3,*4,*6 have: Louis Metcalf - c; ? Joe Nanton - tb; Johnny Hodges –ss, as;? Barney Bigard – clt, ts; James P. Johnson – p ; unknown – dr; Perry Bradford – v. *6 has also: ? Sonny Greer – dr.*

All above listed titles have been reissued in recent times as follows:
Session May 1923: CD Timeless CBC 1-073 (Du)
Session August 1923: CD FROG DGF 56 (UK)
Session November 1925: CD FROG DGF 32 (UK), CD Jazz Archives No. 131 (F)
Session October 1928: CD FROG DGF56 (UK)
All titles were also issued on LP VJM VLP 45 (UK). 'Keep Your Temper' of Nov. 1925 can also be found on the very beautiful LP-set Columbia C3L 33 Jazz Archive Series "The Sound of Harlem".

The reader may allow me a remark as to the above research: As I have often acknowledged in conversation with collectors of 78 recordings is their knowledge of recordings outside of their own collection rather limited. Only a small handful of 78 collectors has and had been able to bring together a really comprehensive collection. Thus, the general collector´s ability and possibility to compare and to evaluate from the knowledge of the entirety of jazz and blues recordings had been rather limited. I also would like to add that I have sometimes observed a certain arrogance with 78 collectors as to LP or CD issues. This might have been the main cause of all the inadequacies and shortcomings of personal listings of the past. Through the inestimable efforts of a couple of dedicated people worldwide it has been possible recently to compile an extensive and comprehensive collection of all jazz and blues recordings with only very little gaps and impossibilities. We all have to thank people like John R.T. Davies, Johnny Parth, David French and producers John Wilby, Colin Bray, Paul Swinton, Karl Emil Knudsen, Michael Cuscuna, Scott Wenzel and others to enable us with their issues to get a complete oversight on the music we love. And thus gain better insights and bring record research a little further to a final discography.

As always, I have to thank my good friends Michael Rader and David Brown for their great help, advice, discussion and contradiction!
Sources that have been used are named at the appropriate places in the text.

K. - B. Rau
20-12-2017
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