

THE RECORDINGS OF KATHERINE HENDERSON

An Annotated Tentative Name-Discography

Wife of tuba player Cyrus St. Clair

This personnel-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: Katherine Henderson
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Katherine Henderson*
- 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: (*Katherine Henderson*)

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 following statements and the resulting list of recordings only reflect the opinion of this writer/listener and are open to discussion. More so, discussion is eagerly invited. Corrections, amendments and controversial opinions are much appreciated.

Record Research 43, Len Kunstadt, The Lucille Hegamin Story: "*Lucille Hegamin is a phenomena (sic) as she began her career back in the days when the words Jazz and Blues were non-existent, and in the years to follow she made the transition between the minstrel song and the blues/jazz song. Mrs. Hegamin was and still (1961 – KBR) is a refined blues singer in the W.C. Handy tradition. As far as seniority is concerned Lucille was the second blues songstress of her race to make blues recordings. Only the late pioneer, Mamie Smith, preceded her by a short 3 months back in 1920.*"

After having researched, relistened and rechecked the recorded output of Mamie Smith and Edith Wilson, one fundamental problem concerning the discography of Lucille Hegamin became apparent: all (?) instrumental accompaniments are played from arrangements without soloistic exposure, except for a few solo breaks which nevertheless might also have been arranged and prefixed. Thus, the identities of the participating musicians are almost unrecognisable by comparison. The more so, as we do only know little of the personal styles of these early Harlem musicians. Identifying alternate takes are very difficult for the same reasons, but also, as Miss Hegamin adheres close to the published words, calling out no ad-lib interjections like other vaudeville/blues singers do.

KATHERINE HENDERSON

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| 001 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE ORCHESTRA | New York, | Apr. 27, 1927 |
| Ed Allen – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Arville Harris – ten, clt; | | |
| Clarence Williams – pno; Leroy Harris – bjo; Floyd Casey – dms; | | |
| Katherine Henderson or (<i>Eva Taylor</i>) - voc | | |
| E-4861; E-23235 Baltimore | Br 7017, | Frog DGF 37 |
| E-4862; E-23236 Baltimore | Br 7017, | Frog DGF 37 |
| E-4857; E-23237 Take Your Black Bottom Dance Outside | Br 7017, | Frog DGF 37 |

This personnel is listed uniformly by all accessible sources and so our group generally agrees. Even so, DB is utterly convinced that this singer is Eva Taylor (see Storyville 14/40 and 16/22 on the matter).

Notes:

- Storyville 21: Ed Allen (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Arville Harris (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Floyd Casey (dms); Katherine Henderson (vcl).
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p207: Ed Allen (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Arville Harris (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Floyd Casey (dms); Katherine Henderson (vcl).
 - Rust*2: Ed Allen (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Arville Harris (clt, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Floyd Casey (dms); Katherine Henderson (vcl).
 - Rust*3: Ed Allen -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Arville Harris -cl -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris -bj; Floyd Casey -d; Katherine Henderson -v.
 - Rust*4,*6: Ed Allen -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Arville Harris -cl -as or ts; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris -bj; Floyd Casey -d; Katherine Henderson -v..
 - BGR*2,*3,*4: Ed Allen, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Arville Harris, clt, ten; Clarence Williams, pno; Leroy Harris, bjo; Floyd Casey, dms; Katherine Henderson, vcl.

Discernable differences of takes (from Lord p208):

- E-4861: Weak vocal entry „Dance Got ‘Em ...“
 E-4862: Stronger vocal entry „There’s a Dance Got ‘Em ...“

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| 002 | KATHERINE HENDERSON | Clarence Williams and his Orchestra | Long Island City | Sept. 1928 |
| | Katherine Henderson – voc; Ed Allen – cnt; Ed Cuffee – tbn; Arville Harris – clt; Clarence Williams - pno | | | |
| 235-A | West End Blues | QRS R-7024, | Frog DGF 48 | |
| 236-A | St. Louis Blues | QRS R-7024, | Frog DGF 48 | |

Everybody seems clear, but there remain some doubts as to the presence of Ed Cuffee on tbn.

Notes:

- Storyville 23: Ed Allen (cnt); Ed Cuffee (tbn); Arville Harris (clt); Clarence Williams (pno).
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p253: Ed Allen (cnt); Ed Cuffee (tbn); Arville Harris (clt); Clarence Williams (pno).
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: Ed Allen -c; Ed Cuffee -tb; Arville Harris -cl; Clarence Williams -p.
 - BGR*2,*3,*4: Ed Allen, cnt; Ed Cuffee, tbn; Arville Harris, clt; Clarence Williams, pno.

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|-------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 003 | KATHERINE HENDERSON | Clarence Williams and his Orchestra | Long Island City, | c. Oct. 1928 |
| | Katherine Henderson – voc; Joe King Oliver – cnt; Ben Whitted – clt, alt; Ben Waters – ten; Clarence Williams – pno; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs | | | |
| 256-A | Lonesome Lovesick Blues | QRS R-7032, | Frog DGF 48 | |
| 257-A | Have You Felt That Way? | QRS R-7032, | Frog DGF 48 | |
| 258- | What Can You Do Without Me? | QRS R-7054, | Frog DGF 48 | |

The clarinet solo is more blues inflected than Arville Harris’ work, so most likely Whitted, who was capable of good blues playing. The tenor is not really prominent and the brass bass might not be St. Clair.

Notes:

- Storyville 23: Joe Oliver (cnt); Benny Moten (clt, alt); Ben Waters (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p256: Joe Oliver (cnt); unknown (clt, alt); Ben Waters (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).
 - Rust*3: King Oliver -c; Ben Whitted -cl; Arville Harris or Ben Waters -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.
 - Rust*4,*6: King Oliver -c; Ben Whitted -cl; Ben Waters -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.
 - BGR*2: King Oliver, cnt; Benny Moten, clt; Ben Waters, ten; Clarence Williams, pno; Leroy Harris, bjo; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs.
 - BGR*3,*4: King Oliver, c; unknown, cl, as; Ben Waters, ts; Clarence Williams, p; Leroy Harris, bj; Cyrus St. Clair, bb.

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| 004 | KATHERINE HENDERSON | Clarence Williams and his Orchestra | Long Island City, | c. Nov. 1928 |
| | Katherine Henderson – voc; Joe King Oliver – cnt; Arville Harris – clt, alt; Ben Waters – ten; Clarence Williams – pno; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs | | | |
| 273-A | Do It Baby | QRS R-7041, | Frog DGF 49 | |
| 274-A | Mushy Love | QRS R-7054, | Frog DGF 49 | |
| 275- | If You Like Me | Pm 12840, | Frog DGF 49 | |
| 275-A | If You Like Me | QRS R-7041, | Frog DGF 49 | |

The musicians in the listening group recognise pitching problems here. Harris is struggling out of tune on clarinet, this probably caused by an out of tune piano which forces the reedmen to lower their pitch. This may explain the previous suggestion that there is an additional clarinet player on the first title only. The tenor sax might be Waters.

Notes:

- Storyville 24: Joe Oliver (cnt); poss Ben Whitted (clt); Albert Socarras (alt); poss Ben Waters (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p261: Joe Oliver (cnt); poss Ben Whitted (clt); Albert Socarras (alt); poss Ben Waters (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).
 - Rust*3: King Oliver -c; Ben Whitted -cl; Arville Harris or Ben Waters -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.
 - Rust*4,*6: King Oliver -c; Ben Whitted -cl; Arville Harris, Albert Socarras -as; Ben Waters -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.
 - BGR*2: King Oliver, cnt; Benny Moten, clt; Arville Harris, ten; poss unknown, sax (1); Clarence Williams, pno; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs.
 - BGR*3,*4: King Oliver, c; poss Ben Whitted, clt; Albert Socarras, as; poss Ben Waters, ts; Clarence Williams, p; Cyrus St. Clair, bb.

Notable differences of takes (from Lord p262 and KBR):

- 275- : Second chorus, bar 16 (bar 66 of tune): second bar of cornet break: 2 long held notes G - F
 275-A: Second chorus, bar 16 (bar 66 of tune): second bar of cornet break: sequence of 2 quarter notes a – G, 2 eighth notes G – Gb, 1 quarter note F.

K.-B. Rau
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