

THE RECORDINGS OF BUDDY CHRISTIAN

An Annotated Tentative Personnelo – Discography

CHRISTIAN, 'Buddy' Narcisse J. Born: New Orleans, Louisiana, c. 1895; Died: c. 1958
Played in New Orleans from c. 1910, with various leaders at the Tuxedo c. 1912-13, then on piano with King Oliver at Lala's Café c. 1915-16. Moved to New York c. 1919, worked regularly on banjo and piano; with Lucille Hegamin c. 1921, June Clark c. 1923, took part in many of Clarence Williams' recording sessions during the 1920s. With Charles Matson Band in New York (1927), early in 1929 formed banjo-duo with Fred Jennings. No details of musical activity during the 1940s and 1950s, was a member of New York Local 802 until his death. (J. Chilton, Who's Who of Jazz)

CHRISTIAN, Narcisse J. 'Buddy' (p, bjo, g) Born N.O. about 1895. Died late 1940's
Another of the legendary Storyville "Professors", Christian also played in bands with Peter Bocage at the Tuxedo, 1912-13, and with Joe Oliver at Lala's Café, 1915-16. During the 1920's recorded extensively on piano with bands led by Clarence Williams and on banjo and guitar in smaller groups (sic! – KBR). (A. Rose, E. Souchon, New Orleans Jazz Family Album)

STYLISTICS

Buddy Christian's style is characterised above all by his very strict and even four-four rhythm. His rhythm is rock-steady and always urgent and driving, yet not hurrying. He mainly plays without any appoggiaturas and without any tremolos and up-and-down stroking. Christian inverts the chords to make the accompaniment melodic, while other banjo players known to have played with Clarence Williams, Leroy Harris and Ikey Robinson, play the simple line, i.e. no inversions (Robert J. Smith). This may be explained by Christian's professional piano playing. Christian's banjo to me – KBR – sounds like he had replaced the two upper strings with another pair of lower strings. This sound gives his performance a deep and voluminous character, yet not when playing in a trio (see session 020), where the sound is quite conventional.

(See also: 'The Banjo Players on Clarence Williams Records' by Robert J. Smith at the end of this list.)

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: **Buddy Christian**
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Buddy Christian*
- 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: *(Buddy Christian)*

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.

Narcisse 'Buddy' Christian was a New Orleans musician – on banjo/guitar and piano - of the earlier generation, who early-on found his way to New York. There he seemed to have worked in the Society band scene – as distinct from the jazz scene – as well as a solo entertainer on piano. He never was part of the established black big band scene of Harlem, New York. Two photos in the jazz literature show him with the band of Hughie Woolford, a noted "Society" band in the late 1920s. For the jazz public he became

famous for all his recordings as Clarence Williams' favoured banjo player until 1926/27, when his recording activity ended. Tom Lord notes four further press notices of his engagements and whereabouts, one of them as part of a banjo-duet.

BUDDY CHRISTIAN

001	IRENE GIBBONS AND JAZZ BAND	New York,	Dec. 05, 1922
	Eva Taylor – voc;		
	unknown – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;		
	<i>Julian Baugh</i> – clt; unknown – alt;		
	Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; unknown – dms		
80723-4	My Pillow And Me	Col A-3922,	Doc DOCD-5408
80724-3	That Da Da Strain	Col unissued	not on LP/CD
	<i>Composer credits: 80723 (Brymn, Smith and Williams)</i>		

The trumpet player plays straight melody only, throughout, and might be anyone. He may even be early Miley, not Morris. (JK hears the same trumpet player as on 'New Moon' of session 006 of our Clarence Williams list, thus perhaps Johnny Dunn, as some people say.) Certainly, Irvis on trombone, and very beautiful.

The clarinet player plays quarter and eighth notes only, shown as a characteristic of Elliott's style. In the middle break of the last chorus, we hear the first four notes played in pitch and then the next two (or four) notes played with slight downward slides, typical for Elliott's playing. But his smears and slurs are not there. Instead, the clarinet plays well pitched phrases unlike Elliott. So, the playing heard here is only slightly fitting and compatible with Elliott's documented style and his assumed presence. Judging on these features, I'd propose Ethel Waters' clarinetist of the time, namely Julian Baugh, identified by Bo Lindstrom of Sweden in his excellent book 'Oh Joe, Play That Trombone' on George Brashear, the Waters band's trombonist. This clarinetist of Ethel Waters' band of 1922 was for a long time mistaken as Clarence Robinson, who yet was no musician at all, but a dancer. The Waters band disbanded in New York in late 1922, and some of their players may have stayed in New York thereafter.

Alto sax is playing melody behind Eva Taylor. Banjo player Buddy Christian is assuredly given in the discos, and certainly right when compared with his later documented appearances on record. He plays a very strong four-four rhythm with power and pressure, without any gimmicks or rhythmic variations.

Notes:

- *Storyville 13: prob Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); unknown (woodblocks)*
- *Rust*3,*6: ? Tom Morris – c; Charlie Irvis – tb; Ernest Elliott - cl, as; Clarence Williams – p; Buddy Christian – bj; unknown - d*
- *T. Lord, Clarence Williams p27: prob Thomas Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Ernest Elliott - clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; unknown – woodblocks* “TKD lists: *Elmer Chambers or Charlie Gaines – tpt; Irvis – tbn; Don Redman – clt; Williams, Christian and unknown – dms. Goldman lists Th. Morris, Irvis, and Sidney Bechet – clt.*”
- *BGR*2,*3,*4: prob Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ernest Elliott, clt, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo; unknown, dms . (BGR*4 lists both titles as unissued. The issued ones are dated early January 1924.)*
- *Bo Lindström, Oh Joe, Play That Trombone, p.36: Julian Baugh*

002	IRENE GIBBONS AND JAZZ BAND	New York,	Jan. 06, 1923
	Eva Taylor – voc;		
	unknown - tpt; (<i>Charlie Irvis?</i>) – tbn; <i>Julian Baugh</i> – clt;		
	Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; unknown – dms		
80724-6	That Da Da Strain	Col A-3834,	Doc DOCD-5408
	<i>Composer credits: 80724 (Dowell)</i>		

The trumpet player shows J. Dunn influence, but he plays rather insecure and his identity must remain unknown. On trombone Irvis' characteristics cannot be recognized, and this player plays very restricted, other than Irvis on the session before. He also has to remain unknown.

Clarinet here again is smoother than Elliott. Elliott tended to play a lead part like a trumpet player, obviously derived from his practice of earlier years (Detroit 1919), where he played lead in Hank Duncan's Kentucky Serenaders. This clarinet player here plays a clarinet part, in his solo passages going back into second harmony part when joining the ensemble again at the appropriate places. This is not Elliott's style. I – KBR – see the possibility of Julian Baugh again, clarinet soloist of remarkable jazz potency of Ethel Waters' touring band of 1922 (see above). I do not hear an alto saxophone on this side.

Clarence Williams' presence on piano is doubted because the style heard is not his. The banjo is very strong and could well be Christian as at the fore-going session. Very interesting is the presence of a drummer on woodblocks – just as on the session before – because Clarence only hired a drummer only later in his recording career.

Notes:

- *Storyville 13: prob Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); unknown (woodblocks)*
- *Rust*3,*6: ? Tom Morris – c; Charlie Irvis –tb; Ernest Elliott -cl -as; Clarence Williams –p; Buddy Christian –bj; unknown -d*
- *T. Lord, Clarence Williams p27: prob Thomas Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; poss Clarence Robinson or Ernest Elliott - clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; unknown – woodblocks.* “Rust *3 says that Clarence Robinson may replace Elliott on clarinet. Rust's source for this is Walter C. Allen, who in his definitive 'Hendersonia' discusses the clarinet on Ethel Waters' 'That Da Da Strain' (Black Swan 14120-A) and states that the clarinetist plays the same ensemble part as on this record by Irene Gibbons.”
- *BGR*2,*3,*4: prob Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; poss Clarence Robinson, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo; unknown dms . (BGR*4 lists this as a remake session for both titles of early December 1923. Accordingly, 80723-4 or -6 might also stem from this session.)*
- *Bo Lindström, Oh Joe, Play That Trombone, p.36: Julian Baugh*

003 **BESSIE SMITH** New York, c. Jan. 1923
 Bessie Smith – voc;
 Bubber Miley – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Sidney Bechet – clt, sop;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate OK unissued not on LP/CD

It really is a shame that this item has never been issued and is thus lost for posterity. Any facts about this recording below, nothing more needs to be said.

Notes:

- Storyville 13: Joe Smith (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (clt/sop); James P. Johnson or Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p30: Bessie Smith's first record was 'I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate' with a background consisting of Bechet, Irvis, Miley and Clarence. CW mentioned that this record was the greatest she ever did but was not approved for issue because the (CW was hazy over the identity of the record company) did not wish to take a chance with the new style of Bessie. After it was rejected, CW remembered giving the master to Bessie. Its whereabouts is a mystery today." "Sidney Bechet seems sure that it was made for OK, but they already had so many blues singers – Virginia Liston, Sara Martin, Laura Smith and Mamie Smith – that they just didn't want anymore."
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: Bubber Miley –t; Charlie Irvis –tb; Sidney Bechet –cl - ss; Clarence Williams –p; Buddy Christian –bj
 - BGR*2,*3,*4: Bubber Miley – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Sidney Bechet – clt, sop; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

004 **THOMAS MORRIS PAST JAZZ MASTERS** New York, Feb. 1923
 unknown, Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; unknown – alt;
 Charles 'Smitty' Smith – pno; (William 'Splivy' Escoffery?) – bjo; unknown – bbs; unknown - dms
 71306-A E Flat Blues No. 2 (Memphis, Tennessee) OK 8055, Chronological Classics 823
 71307-B Original Charleston Strut OK 8055, Chronological Classics 823
 Composer credits: 71306 (Morris); 71307 (Morris)

An extended evaluation and discussion of these sides can be found under 'Thomas Morris' elsewhere at this web-site! Please, have a look! The style of the banjo player here is typical Harlem style of the first half of the twenties, doubling time in "E Flat Blues No. 2 and using triplets, as you can hear it in many recordings under Johnny Dunn's name, so, the player here perhaps is Sam Speed or John Mitchell? Or, possibly, Bill 'Splivy' Escoffery, an early friend and co-musician of Duke Ellington. He certainly is not Buddy Christian!

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography*, 1948: not listed
 - Rust*2: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); unknown (ten); Willie "The Lion" Smith (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
 - Rust*3: Tom Morris -Bubber Miley -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; unknown -ts; unknown -p; unknown -bj; unknown -d. Contrary to previous statements and suggestions, the pianist on these records is neither Willie "The Lion" Smith (who denies all knowledge of them and in any case was not in New York at the time) nor Clarence Williams.
 - Rust*4: Tom Morris -Bubber Miley -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; unknown -ts; unknown -p; unknown -bj; unknown -d.
 - Rust*6: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; ?Ernest Elliott, ts; ?Willie "The Lion" Smith, p; unknown, bj; unknown, d.

Tunes:

71306-A E Flat Blues No 2 (Memphis Tennessee) Key of Eb OKeh
 (Intro 2 bars ens)(Chorus A1 12 bars ens)(Chorus A2 12 bars tpt II muted)(Chorus A3 12 bars tpt II muted)(Chorus A4 12 bars ens)(Chorus A5 12 bars ens)(Chorus A6 12 bars ens, break voc bars 2 + 4)(Chorus A7 12 bars ens break voc bars 2 + 4)(Coda 1 bar tpts)
 71307-B Original Charleston Strut Key of F / Bb / F OKeh
 (Chorus A1 12 bars strain A ens break bjo bars 5+6)(Chorus A2 12 bars strain A ens break dms bars 5+6)(Chorus A3 12 bars strain A ens)(Chorus A4 12 bars strain A ens)(Chorus A5 12 bars strain A ens break tpt bars 5+6)(Chorus B1 16 bars strain B ens)(Chorus B2 16 bars strain B tpt II obligato tbn)(Chorus B3 16 bars strain B tpt II obligato tbn)(Chorus A6 12 bars strain A ens break alt (or ten ?) bars 5+6)(Chorus A7 12 bars strain A ens)(Coda 2 bars ens – dms)

005 **BESSIE SMITH** her Down Home Boys New York, Apr. 11, 1923
 Bessie Smith – voc;
 Ernest Elliott – clt (1,2);
 Clarence Williams – pno; (Buddy Christian?) – bjo (1,2)
 80949-3 Aggravatin' Papa Col A3877, Frog DGF 40
 80950-2 Beale Street Mama Col A3877, Frog DGF 40
 80952-3 Baby Won't You Please Come Home Col A3888, Frog DGF 40
 80953-2 Oh Daddy Blues Col A3888, Frog DGF 40
 Composer credits: 80949 (Turk and Robinson); 80950 (Turk and Robinson); 80952 (Warfield and Williams); 80953 (Russell and Herbert)
 Note: Last two titles of this session do not have Elliott and (Christian)!

Elliott's presence does not appear to be certain on these sides and Rust adds a question mark to his name. After first listening we hear Elliott's simple and dated – even for that time – rhythm, phrasing and choice of notes, but we do not hear his notorious smears/slurs of notes up or down and his therefore sour sounding tone. His playing here – if it is he - has better pitch than we are used to hear from him. His presence might therefore still be doubtful, but in respect of the sameness of vibrato I am convinced that it is he on these two sides. He might also have been asked to avoid his notorious smears by the recording authorities or even Miss Smith herself. They can nevertheless be heard in the clarinet solo in 'Beale Street Mama'. So, definitely Ernest Elliott!

On the other side I have to report some very unusual double-timing from Buddy Christian which makes me wonder if it is he! There also are some strange banjo figures in last chorus of 'Aggravatin' Papa' that are un-heard of in Christian's other recordings. And, I do not hear Christian's strong and powerful strokes, and the sound is not his as heard before. In 'Beale Street Mama' the banjo is silent for parts of the whole side, most interestingly when Clarence Williams is the sole accompanist, and Elliott silent. From this I'd suggest that Elliott brought a banjo player to the session who did not attune to Clarence Williams' conceptions and was therefore held off.

Notes:

- Storyville 13: prob Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
- Rust*3,*6: ?Ernest Elliott -cl; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj
- BGR*2,*3,*4: prob Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo
- T. Lord, Clarence Williams p40: probably Ernest Elliott - clt; Clarence Williams - pno; probably Buddy Christian - bjo
- E. Brooks, *The Bessie Smith Companion* p.9: "The first two numbers from this session are marred by the unsubtle clarinet of (probably) Ernest Elliott. There is little to be said in his favour except perhaps that he had the luck to be present on Mamie Smith's recording of 'Crazy Blues' (very probably not! - KBR) on 10th August, 1922 - the first of its genre. As the only horn on 'Aggravatin' Papa', he would have been the natural choice to provide the antiphony at the end of the vocal lines; fortunately someone's good taste prevailed and we find Bessie herself providing many of the responses at these points."
- *ibid.* p.11: "In 'Aggravatin' Papa', whilst the banjo is at least competent and stylistically acceptable, the clarinet seems to come from the world of the dance-band; its improvisations, if that is what they are, are unsubtle and stilted. The superficiality of Elliott's ideas in fact tempt one to argue that the aural breadth of Bessie Smith's voice make anything more than a piano unnecessary."
- *ibid.* p.11: "The quality of the accompaniment is much the same as in the previous piece ('Beale Street Mama' - KBR) except that the clarinet's wailing glissandi would be even more at home in one of the novelty records of the period."

006 **HARLEM TRIO** New York, Apr. 1923
 George McClennon - clt;
 unknown - pno; (Buddy Christian) - bjo
 71511-A Clarinet Laughing Blues OK 8072, Jazz Oracle BDW 8022
 Composer credits: 71511 (George McClennon)

As the alternate takes of this title obviously were recorded on different dates and with different personnel, I have installed an additional recording session for the hitherto un-reissued E-take (below). This is the first instance of McClennon on record. Why his trio performances were recorded under the name "Harlem Trio" I do not know. The CD booklet says that "these two sides were almost certainly recorded at different sessions". Close listening will reveal a very distinct difference of sound. The - E take in other cases marks the re-recording of a certain title some days after the initial attempt. So, this may apply to our recordings, too. But I hear distinct differences between these two takes which might even indicate that two different pianists and banjo players were involved: take - A is played in "simple" 12 bar blues changes whereas the piano player on - E uses enlarged and more fashionable blues changes. Furthermore, the pianist in - A plays a constant dotted quaver rhythm, boring and much less interesting and expert than the pianist in - E who plays a rhythmically varied and harmonically more modern and pleasing accompaniment, but still maintaining that dotted quaver rhythm, yet in a reduced manner. Yet the identity of Eddie Heywood, Sr. can not be recognized from his playing here compared to his later recordings. I therefore suggest that the session was repeated because of the inadequacy of pianist in take - A. The banjo player delivers a very functional and rudimentary beat without any embellishments. He is much more in the foreground in take - A than in - E and might even be different persons, in this case possibly Buddy Christian on take - A. It also is his banjo sound on this side/take. Thus, take -E might be recorded with some other banjo player.

Notes:

- Rust*2,*3: George McClennon (clt); Eddie Heywood ? (pno); unknown (bjo)
- Rust*4,*6: George McClennon -cl; Eddie Heywood -p; unknown -bj

007 **HARLEM TRIO** New York, Apr. 1923
 George McClennon - clt;
 Eddie Heywood, Sr. - pno; unknown - bjo
 71511-E Clarinet Laughing Blues OK 8072, Jazz Oracle BDW 8022
 Composer credits: 71511 (George McClennon)

For the evaluation of this alternate take of 'Clarinet Crying Blues' see my annotations above!

Notes:

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: not listed

008 **THOMAS MORRIS PAST JAZZ MASTERS** New York, Apr. 1923
 unknown, Thomas Morris - cnt; John Mayfield - tbn; (Happy Caldwell?) - ten;
 Charles "Smitty" Smith - pno; William "Splivy" Escoffery - bjo
 71531-C Lonesome Journey Blues OK 4867, Chronological Classics 823
 71532-B When The Jazz Band Starts To Play OK 4867, Chronological Classics 823
 Composer credits: 71531 (Morris); 71532 (Morris)

Again, an extended evaluation and discussion of these sides can be found under 'Thomas Morris' elsewhere at this web-site! Please, have a look!

The style of the banjo player seems to be a little more straightforward than that on the Feb. 1923 session. But this might also be caused by the bandleader's demands. I see the possibility that this is a different player. I have named Escoffery on banjo because of this player's style and because of Escoffery's membership in Charles 'Smitty' Smith's band. In the first title he only plays the after-beat throughout, while in the second title's first choruses he uses tremolos all along or up-and-down strumming. He again, certainly is not Buddy Christian!

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: not listed
- Rust*2: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); unknown (ten); Willie "The Lion" Smith (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
- Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris -Bubber Miley -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; unknown -ts; unknown -p; unknown -bj
- Rust*6: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; ?Ernest Elliott, ts; ?Willie "The Lion" Smith, p; unknown, bj

Tunes:

71531-C Lonesome Journey Blues Key of G (or Ab ?) OKeh
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(Chorus A1 12 bars tpt II tpt/tbn obligato)(Chorus A2 12 bars tpt II tpt/tbn obligato)(Chorus A3 12 bars tpt II tpt/tbn obligato)(Chorus A4 12 bars tpt II tpt/tbn obligato)(Chorus A5 12 bars ens)(Chorus B1 8 bars ten - ens) (Chorus B2 8 bars tpt - ens)
 71532-B When The Jazz Band Starts To Play Key of Bb / Eb / Bb OKeh

(Intro 4 bars ens)(Verse I strain A AA 16 bars ens)(Verse II strain B AA' 16 bars ens middle break tbn)(Verse II strain B AA' 16 bars pno 6 bars / middle break 2 bars ten / pno 4 bars / ens 4 bars)(Chorus A1 12 bars tpt II solo)(Chorus A2 12 bars tpt II solo)(Verse II - Banjo: The style of the banjo player seems to be a little more straightforward than that on the Feb. 1923 session. But this might also be caused by the bandleader's demands. I see the possibility that this is a different player. I have named Escoffery on banjo because of this player's style and because of Escoffery's membership in Charles 'Smitty' Smith's band.

There are neither tuba nor drums on this session!

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948: not listed*

- Rust*2: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); unknown (ten); Willie "The Lion" Smith (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris -Bubber Miley -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; unknown -ts; unknown -p; unknown -bj

- Rust*6: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; ?Ernest Elliott, ts; ?Willie "The Lion" Smith, p; unknown, bj

Tunes:

71531-C *Lonesome Journey Blues* Key of G (or Ab ?)

OKeh

(Intro 4 bars ens)(Chorus A1 12 bars tpt II tpt/tbn obligato)(Chorus A2 12 bars tpt II tpt/tbn obligato)(Chorus A3 12 bars tpt II tpt/tbn obligato)(Chorus A4 12 bars tpt II tpt/tbn obligato)(Chorus A5 12 bars ens)(Chorus B1 8 bars ten - ens) (Chorus B2 8 bars tpt - ens)

71532-B *When The Jazz Band Starts To Play* Key of Bb / Eb / Bb

OKeh

(Intro 4 bars ens)(Verse I strain A AA 16 bars ens)(Verse II strain B AA' 16 bars ens middle break tbn)(Verse II strain B AA' 16 bars pno 6 bars / middle break 2 bars ten / pno 4 bars / ens 4 bars)(Chorus A1 12 bars tpt II solo)(Chorus A2 12 bars tpt II solo)(Verse II

009 VIOLA McCOY	Bob Ricketts' Band	New York,	Apr. 26, 1923
Viola McCoy – voc;			
(June Clark) – cnt; unknown – tbn;			
(Ernest Elliott?) – clt; unknown – alt;			
Bob Ricketts – pno; (Buddy Christian?) or (John Lee?) – bjo; unknown - dms			
8355	Tired O' Waitin' Blues	Gnt 5151	not on LP/CD
8355-A	Tired O' Waitin' Blues	Gnt 5151,	Document DOCD-5416
8356	Gulf Coast Blues	Gnt 5151	not on LP/CD
8356-A	Gulf Coast Blues	Gnt 5151,	Document DOCD-5416

Personnels as given by Rust or BGR are far off the mark in my opinion. Ricketts on piano is certainly there and Buddy Christian on banjo might be correct. But Morris and Irvis certainly are not present.

The trumpeter/cornetist could be a youthful June Clark (this is my personal assumption or even guess!). This player's style cannot be attributed to any other early Harlem trumpet player of that quality. Judging from the similarity of this player's characteristics and June Clark's playing characteristics as recorded with the Blue Rhythm Orchestra and the Gulf Coast Seven of 1925 (see under 'June Clark' elsewhere in this website!) this man here could well be a youthful and developing June Clark. He certainly is not Thomas Morris! Just the same the trombone player is not Irvis. The little clarinet playing heard is compatible to that known of Ernest Elliott. Tone, vibrato, phrasing and time could be by Elliott, and so I list him as possible, but I am not convinced of his presence. But may this be George Scott, reed player with the early Cotton Club Orchestra, as he recalled in Storyville 95-200? What can be heard from the alto sax player is un-attributable. Or possibly the below noted Bennie Morton or the also noted ?Robinson?

As Bob Rickett is listed as band leader, it certainly must be him on piano. He strongly leads the band from the piano. The banjo could possibly be Buddy Christian here as listed, but certainly not Elmer Snowdon. And there seems to be a drummer as can be heard from the strong rhythm and a well-placed cymbal crash in the middle of 'Tired O' Waitin' Blues'. Yet, the band drags horribly at the end of the second title.

It should be added that: "In late 1922 Fess (Williams – KBR) made a deal with Dave & Tressie, a vaudeville dance act that needed a band. Williams furnished a seven-piece unit called the 'Ginger Snaps'. When they got on the road in Chicago they needed a trombonist and Fess' banjoist John Lee suggested they send to Louisville for Harrison. This would be pre-April 1923 and gave Harrison the chance to hear Louis – Oliver duets at the Lincoln Gardens in Chicago. The act was great in the middle west and the Dakotas. It was booked by Greenwald, who eventually wanted to bring it to New York. They played theatres mostly. When the act reached Flint, Mich. With personnel: Fess Williams – alto sax, Jimmy Palao – violin & tenor, John Lee, banjo, Anthony Spaulding – piano, Roy Green -drums, Harrison, trb; June Clark – trpt. ... They played the entire Midwest circuit and in 1923 headed for New York to try out in front of N.Y. bookers at Proctor's 23rd Street Theatre. The audition was a flop. The New York agents didn't dig the act. Fess (Williams – KBR) broke up the group." (Rosenberg/Williams Draft, George Hofer Papers, Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies, Newark, N.J.)" And: "June (Clark – KBR) ... started work at Arcadia Dance Hall (about April 1923) with Okie Anderson, piano, Benny Morton, clarinet, Mitchell, trom., Robinson, sax, Van Dyke, 2nd trumpet. Also played gigs and fairs" (Ibid). Thus, a band consisting of June Clark – cnt, ?Mitchell (Albert?) – tbn, Benny Morton – clt, ?Robinson (Prince?) – alt, Ricketts – pno, John Lee – bjo, could be considered for this session.

As Bob Ricketts belonged to the Clarence Williams agency, the musicians heard here might as well have been chosen from the Clarence Williams stable.

Notes:

- BGR*2,*3,*4: poss Tom Morris, cnt; poss Charlie Irvis, tbn; poss Ernest Elliott, clt; unknown, alt; Bob Ricketts, pno; Buddy Christian or Elmer Snowden, bjo.

- Rust*3,*4,*6: poss Tom Morris -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Ernest Elliott -cl; Bob Fuller -as; Bob Ricketts -p; Buddy Christian or Elmer Snowden -bj.

- Storyville 1998/99, p. 187: "The Defender (12/5723 7/2) reported her (Viola McCoy – KBR) recording for Gennett in New York (probably this one – KBR). Resting at Saratoga Springs after season of recording for Ge (CD 19/5/23 7/3)." (May this be a hint as to the trumpet player's identity? See Storyville 1996/97, p.212! – KBR)

Discernible differences of takes:

Because of the unavailability of the 'plain' takes of this session comparison was impossible!

010 EVA TAYLOR	Clarence Williams' Blue Five	New York,	c. May 04, 1923
Eva Taylor – voc;			
Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Ernest Elliott – clt;			
Clarence Williams – pno; (Buddy Christian) – bjo			
71499-A	Farewell Blues	OK 3055 (12"),	Doc DOCD-5408
71500-A	Gulf Coast Blues	OK 3055 (12")	not on LP/CD

Composer credits: 71499 (F. Schoebel – E. Ehrlich – L. Robbalo)

Thomas Morris and Clarence Williams seem to be certain. The trombone player certainly is not Charlie Irvis and might be John Mayfield, instead. Aural evidence supports Elliott's presence. For stylistic and sound reasons, I doubt Buddy Christian here. This player lacks Christian's ease and sounds wooden instead.

Notes:

- Storyville 13: Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt/alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
- Lord, Clarence Williams p48: Thomas Morris – cnt; prob Charlie Irvis – tbn; Ernest Elliott – clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo.
- Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris –c; ?Charlie Irvis –tb; ?Ernest Elliott –cl-as; Clarence Williams –p; Buddy Christian –bj.
- Rust*6: Tom Morris, c; ?Charlie Irvis, tb; ?Ernest Elliott, cl; unknown, as; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj.
- BGR*2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; prob Charlie Irvis, tbn; prob Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.

011 **EVA TAYLOR** Clarence Williams' Blue Five New York, c. May 17, 1923
 Eva Taylor – voc;
 Thomas Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;
 Ernest Elliott – clt; unknown – alt;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 71499-F Farewell Blues OK 3055 (12") not on LP/CD
 71500-F Gulf Coast Blues OK 3055 (12"), Doc DOCD-5408
 Composer credits: 71500 (Clarence Williams)

Certainly, Morris and Williams. Different from the session of May 04, 1923 it seems to be Irvis here, and the banjo player is more likely Buddy Christian.

Elliott – if it is he on this side – plays very restrained clarinet, at times reminding of Sidney Bechet. No wonder that Bechet has been listed as clarinetist in an early Bechet discography. Unfortunately, the sound of this title on my CD reissue leaves much to be desired, and it is hard to find out where the clarinet plays at all. An alto sax may play throughout this issued side. This player remains in the background and can therefore not be identified at all. What certainly makes Elliott's presence rather doubtful, as he usually is not restrained with his playing.

Notes:

- Charters/Kunstadt, Jazz A History of the New York Scene p 228: Tommy Morris, cornet; Charlie Irvis, trombone; "Sticky" Elliott, clarinet; Clarence Williams, piano; Buddy Christian, banjo;
- Storyville 13: Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt/alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
- Lord, Clarence Williams p48: Thomas Morris – cnt; prob Charlie Irvis –tbn; Ernest Elliott –clt; unknown –alt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian –bjo.
- Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris –c; ?Charlie Irvis –tb; ?Ernest Elliott –cl-as; Clarence Williams –p; Buddy Christian –bj.
- Rust*6: Tom Morris, c; ?Charlie Irvis, tb; ?Ernest Elliott, cl; unknown, as; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj.
- BGR*2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; prob Charlie Irvis, tbn; prob Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.

012 **THOMAS MORRIS PAST JAZZ MASTERS** New York, May 1923
 Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris – cnt; unknown – tbn; unknown – alt (or cms);
 Charles "Smitty" Smith – pno; William 'Splivy' Escoffery – bjo;
 71582-B Just Blues, That's All OK 8075, Chronological Classics 823
 71583-C Bull Blues (E Flat No. 1 Blues) OK 8075, Chronological Classics 823
 Composer credits: 715382 (Morris); 71583 (Morris)

Again, an extended evaluation and discussion of these sides can be found under 'Thomas Morris' elsewhere at this web-site! Please, have a look!

The style of the banjo player certainly is more straightforward than on the former 'Past Jazz Masters' sides, and swinging to a degree, but still not the light four-four on-the-beat strumming as used by Buddy Christian! There again is much tremolo-ing, here.

There are neither tuba nor drums on this session!

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: not listed
- Rust*2: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); unknown (ten); Willie "The Lion" Smith (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
- Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris –Bubber Miley –c; Charlie Irvis –tb; unknown –ts; unknown –p; unknown –bj
- Rust*6: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; ?Ernest Elliott, ts; ?Willie "The Lion" Smith, p; unknown, bj

Tunes:

71582-B Just Blues, That's All Key of Eb OKeh
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(Chorus A1 12 bars tpt II muted)(Chorus A2 12 bars tpt II muted)(Chorus A3 12 bars tpt II muted) (Chorus A4 12 bars alt)(Chorus A5 12 bars pno 4 bars / ens 8 bars)(Chorus A6 12 bars pno 4 bars "Play it, Mr. Smith" / ens 8 bars)(Chorus A7 12 bars tpt II - ens)(Chorus A8 12 bars tpt II - ens)(Coda 2 bars pno / ens)
 71583-C Bull Blues (E Flat Blues No.1) Key of Eb OKeh
 (Intro 8 bars ens)(Chorus A1 12 bars ens)(Chorus A2 12 bars ens)(Chorus A3 12 bars ens breaks in bars 2 + 4 tpts) (Chorus A4 12 bars ens)(Chorus A5 12 bars tbn - alt tpts obligato)(Chorus A6 12 bars ens breaks in bars 2 + 4 brass)(Coda 4 bars ens break

013 **EVA TAYLOR** Clarence Williams' Blue Five New York, c. May 30, 1923
 Eva Taylor – voc;
 Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Ernest Elliott – clt;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 71538-B Barefoot Blues OK 8073, Doc DOCD-5408
 71539-A Do It A Long Time Papa OK 8073, Doc DOCD-5408
 Composer credits: 71538 (Clarence Williams); 71539 (W. Benton Overstreet)

The trombonist shows no characteristics of Irvis, although playing a legato style. Because he plays a largely identical break as John Mayfield in Sara Martin's 'Blind Man Blues' of 01 Aug. 1923 – where he is generally acknowledged - this player should be Mayfield.

Thomas Morris and Clarence Williams are undisputed.

Stylistically the clarinetist seems to be Elliott (break in 'Barefoot Blues' with its smears, laughing clarinet in '... Papa'), although there is not much heard of the clarinet. There very probably is no alto player on this session.

The banjo player seems to be a bit stiffer than Christian generally, and does not have his ringing sound, but may as well be him.

Notes:

- Storyville 14: prob Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
 - BGR*2: Tom Morris, cnt; prob Charlie Irvis, tbn; prob Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo
 - BGR*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; prob Charlie Irvis, tbn; prob Ernest Elliott, clt; unknown, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo
 - Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris -c; prob Charlie Irvis -tb; Ernest Elliott -cl; unknown -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj
 - Rust*6: Tom Morris, c; ?Charlie Irvis, tb; ?Ernest Elliott, cl; unknown, as; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p49: Tom Morris -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; ?Ernest Elliott -cl; unknown -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj. Lord gives this session as on c. May 30, 1923! "All sources seem to agree on the personnel for Okeh 8073, except Goldman who lists King Oliver (tpt) and Sidney Bechet (sop), but this is disproven by aural evidence. A discography of Sidney Bechet by Robert McGarvey lists Bechet on clarinet. The same source suggests John "Masefield" as possibly the trombonist. Sometimes the clarinet is listed as Bob Elliott in earlier discographies."

014 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE

New York,

Jul. 30, 1923

Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Sidney Bechet – clt, sop;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

71706-B Wild Cat Blues

OK 4925,

Hot 'n Sweet FDC 5107

71707-B Kansas City Man Blues

OK 4925,

Hot 'n Sweet FDC 5107

Composer credits: 71706 (C. Williams – T. Waller); 71707 (C. Williams – C. Johnson)

Well, what do I have to say about these titles? They are both classics of their kind, known by everyone interested in classic jazz, and because of their exposed status in jazz there seem to be no doubts about their personnel. These are most probably Bechet's earliest issued recordings. And what a premiere they are. Bechet leaves only very little room to play and shine for poor old Thomas Morris, and it is amazing and anticipating how he is able to command musical proceedings. I simply wonder how this session happened. Did Bechet demand the first part to play, or did Clarence assign the melody to Bechet? And what did Morris say? Did he try to have the first part, and then leave the whole thing to Bechet, resigning? The atmosphere might not have been the very best on this recording session? As a person Bechet did not have the best reputation. Oh, yes, 'Wild Cat Blues' is one of Thomas Fats Waller's great early compositions.

The personnel is generally agreed upon and needs not be discussed, I think. So, this recording might be a model for Buddy Christian's performance and style.

Notes:

- Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p51: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Mayfield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "These next two sides are exciting indications of Blue Five things to come. Bechet is clearly present. He leads throughout both sides, with commanding breaks. Morris takes a second part on cornet. The personnel seems to be agreed upon by all sources except that Goldman and Davies suggest Irvis. The correct name for the trombonist accepted for this and some later sessions is now found to be Johns Mayfield rather than Masefield, as stated in previous discographies."
 - Rust*2: Tom Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
 - Rust*3: Thomas Morris -c; John Masefield or Mayfield -tb; Sidney Bechet -cl -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj
 - Rust*4,*6: Thomas Morris -c; John Mayfield -tb; Sidney Bechet -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj

015 SARA MARTIN Clarence Williams' Blue Five

New York,

c. Aug. 01, 1923

Sara Martin – voc;

Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

71711-B Blind Man Blues

OK 8090,

Doc DOCD-5396

71712-B Atlanta Blues

OK 8090,

Doc DOCD-5396

Composer credits: 71711 (Green - McLaurin); 71712 (Handy - Elman)

There is no doubt as to the players accompanying Miss Martin. In the intro of 'Blind Man Blues' Thomas Morris wants to show everybody who the trumpeter is, but Bechet immediately overshadows him.

The presence of John Mayfield, "who had been trombonist with Ford Dabney's Orchestra at the Ziegfeld Roof, and was part of the New Amsterdam Orchestra at its concert in November 1921" (Lord p. 55), obviously gives a hint to the trombonist's identity on session 010, generally assumed and listed as Charlie Irvis. On both sessions, a largely identical trombone break is played which certainly is not Irvis'.

Christian on banjo is very much in concordance with Clarence Williams' piano, and they both deliver a strong four-four rhythm without any embellishments.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: Thomas Morris (c); Charlie Irvis (tb); Sidney Bechet (cl & ss); Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian (bjo).
 - Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p56: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Mayfield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "There seems to be agreement on Mayfield as the trombonist. Bechet is very much in evidence, with his strong lead. He has to stay behind the vocalist --- just barely. He has most all of the fill-ins, even above the very straight vibrato-less trombone solo. Bechet makes even a harmony line sound so beautiful. Williams probably plays the piano, with straight chords."
 - Rust*3: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
 - Rust*4,*6: Thomas Morris -c; John Mayfield -tb; Sidney Bechet -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj
 - BGR*2: Thomas Morris, cnt; John Masefield, tbn; Sidney Bechet, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo
 - BGR*3,*4: Thomas Morris -c; John Mayfield -tb; Sidney Bechet -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj

016 MAMIE SMITH the Harlem Trio

New York,

c. Aug. 05, 1923

Mamie Smith – voc;

Sidney Bechet – sop;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo
 71725-B Lady Luck Blues OK 4926, Doc DOCD-5359
 71726-B Kansas City Man Blues OK 4926, Doc DOCD-5359
Composer credits: 71725 (C. Williams – W. Webber); 71726 (C. Williams – C. Johnson)

The above personnel is generally accepted and obviously correct. Although Record Research 57 with their experts list Porter Grainger on piano and unknown banjo, there definitely is an unmistakable Clarence Williams piano break in the second title! Buddy Christian's banjo blends beautifully with Williams' piano and delivers a steady and effective rhythm.

Notes:

- *Record Research 57: Sidney Bechet, soprano; unknown (Porter Grainger?), piano; unknown (banjo). "Bechet's presence is accepted by the experts on this subject, we believe. Grainger's presence assumed from composer credits on following sides, though Clarence Williams, piano; Buddy Christian, banjo; have also been suggested."*
 - *Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: Sidney Bechet (cl & ss); Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian (bjo).*
 - *Storyville 14: Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p57: Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
 - *Rust*3,*4,*6: Sidney Bechet -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj*
 - *BGR*2,*3,*4: Sidney Bechet, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*

017 **THOMAS MORRIS PAST JAZZ MASTERS** New York, Aug. 07, 1923
 Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris – cnt; unknown – tbn; unknown - clt;
 Charles "Smitty" Smith – pno; unknown – bjo; unknown - bbs
 71739-B Those Blues OK 4940, Chronological Classics 823
 71740-B Beaucoupe de Jazz (Lots Of Jazz) OK 4940, Chronological Classics 823
Composer credits: 71739 (Miley); 71740 (Morris)

Again, an extended evaluation and discussion of these sides can be found under 'Thomas Morris' elsewhere at this web-site! Please, have a look!

The banjo is straightforward and swinging, yet using up-and-down strumming and extended tremolos. Most discos list the banjo player as "unknown", and I'd like to leave him that. He decidedly is not Buddy Christian.

Notes:

- *Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: not listed*
 - *Rust*2: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); unknown (clt); unknown (ten); Willie "The Lion" Smith (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); unknown (bbs)*
 - *Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris -Bubber Miley -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; ?Ernest Elliott -cl; unknown -ts; unknown -p; unknown -bj; unknown -bb*
 - *Rust*6: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; ?Ernest Elliott, cl, ts; ?Willie "The Lion" Smith, p; unknown, bj, unknown, bb*

Tunes:

71739-B *Those Blues Key of F/Bb/F* OKeh
 (Intro 8 bars ens)(Verse I 16 bars AA ens middle break probably tpt I Miley)(Verse II 28 bars AA' ens)(Chorus A1 16 bars AB clt end break brass)(Chorus A2 16 bars AB ?tpt I Miley)(Verse II 28 bars AA' ens)(Coda 2 bars ens)
 71740-B *Beaucoupe de Jazz Key of F/Bb* OKeh
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(Chorus A1 16 bars AABA ens)(Verse I B1 16 bars AA' ens with tpt II lead middle break clt)(Verse I B2 16 bars AA' ens middle break tpt II)(Chorus A2 16 bars AABA ens)(Bridge 4 bars ens modulation to Bb)(Chorus C1 16 bars AABA ens)(Chorus C2 16 bars AABA ens tpt II lead)

018 **EVA TAYLOR** Clarence Williams' Blue Five New York, c. Aug. 11, 1923
 Eva Taylor – voc;
 Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Sidney Bechet – clt;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo;
 Eva Taylor, Clarence Williams – voc duet (1);
 71747-B Oh ! Daddy Blues OK 4927, Doc DOCD-5408
 71748-B I've Got The Yes! We Have No Banana Blues OK 4927, Doc DOCD-5408
Composer credits: 71746 (C. Williams); 71747 (C. Williams)

The personnel is obviously definitive. Amazing Bechet on clarinet here, not so far from the soprano sound-wise. The Blue Five seem to have settled by now with their personnel and appear to be a fantastic group in "Southern" style in New York. And again, Buddy Christian cares for a swinging dark banjo beat.

Notes:

- *Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: Sidney Bechet (cl & ss); Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian (bjo).*
 - *Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (clt/sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
 - *"The second side is played somewhat straighter than usual with this group, and this has led to some division of opinion as to whether there might be a change of personnel."*
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p58: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Mayfield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "Again it's Morris, Bechet, Williams and Christian for sure. There seems to be some doubt about the trombone. TKD quotes WCA, who suggests Irvis. However, most sources agree on Mayfield."*
 - *Rust*3: Tom Morris -cnt; ?John Masefield -tb; Sidney Bechet -cl -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj*
 - *Rust*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; John Mayfield -tb; Sidney Bechet -cl -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj*
 - *BGR*2: Tom Morris, cnt; prob John Masefield, tbn; Sidney Bechet, clt/sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*
 - *BGR*3,*4: Tom Morris, c; John Mayfield, tb; Sidney Bechet, cl; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj*

019 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS BLUE FIVE** New York, c. Aug. 27, 1923
 Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; (Sidney Bechet) – clt;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 71797-A Achin' Hearted Blues OK 4966, Hot'n Sweet FDC 5107
Composer credits: 71797 (C. Williams)

Now, this is some very interesting item. And I have my doubts whether we can find a convincing solution. Morris, Mayfield, Williams and Christian certainly are there. But is it Sidney Bechet on clarinet? The doubts as to Bechet's presence are well listed below in the Storyville 14 and Lord citations. JK (100 proof Bechet!), JO and DB of our listening group tackling Thomas Morris' recordings some time ago are certain it is Bechet. MR has his doubts, and KBR denies Bechet's presence. I – KBR – have a rather unconventional and devious idea where to look for this clarinet player, but this may be the subject of another most interesting investigation. I can only say that - to me - there is a good clarinet player here with a beautiful reedy sound trying to imitate Bechet, perhaps on Clarence's request? Bechet might have been away for a couple of days and would thus not be available for Clarence, so that Clarence hired a substitute for this session. But after hearing the clarinet on the last session above (014), I think that Bechet is the most probable player here.

Notes:

- Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); unknown (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "The clarinetist for this date has been listed previously as Sidney Bechet, however, we do not believe that this is he. The vibrato displayed by this man is as wide and fierce as that of Bechet, but the breath control and phrasing are certainly not Bechet's. There are some very awkward and angular phrases with breaks for breath in all the wrong places."
- Lord, Clarence Williams p59: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Mayfield (tbn); unknown (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "This side poses some questions. Only one side recorded? That's all that can be found. Another question concern the identity of the clarinetist. Sidney Bechet has often been listed as clarinetist, however we're not sure of it. The vibrato displayed by this man is as wide and fierce as that of Bechet, but the breath control and phrasing are certainly not Bechet's. There are some very awkward and angular phrases with breaks for breath in all the wrong places. For these reasons we prefer to leave the clarinetist as unknown. TKD also states that Bechet is not present – suggesting Elliott (Oh, no! – KBR). Again, the trombonist is in question, but Mayfield seems to be the man, although Goldman lists Irvis. The piano is probably Williams – playing a strong chordal accompaniment."
- J. Chilton, Sidney Bechet, The Wizard of Jazz p59: "Bechet is again on clarinet and is featured on the breaks that serve as an introduction. The band sounds more cohesive than on its previous recordings; cornetist Thomas Morris was rarely as bold and assertive as he is here. ...the outstanding feature of the recording is Bechet's work on clarinet, which effortlessly combines a scorching timbre and ingenious timing. His solo begins with a thrilling entry note, and there is no lessening of the tension throughout the next two choruses; these are full of complicated phrases, all of which are perfectly resolved. Bechet rarely used his technique to show off."
- Rust*2: Tom Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
- Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris (cnt); John Masefield or Mayfield (tbn); unknown replaces Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
- Rust*6: Tom Morris c; John Mayfield tb; unknown cl replaces Bechet; Clarence Williams p; Buddy Christian bj

020 EVA TAYLOR Clarence Williams' Blue Five	New York,	c. Aug. 27, 1923
Eva Taylor – voc;		
Thomas Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn::		
Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo;		
three band members – voc exhortations (1)		
71803-B Original Charleston Strut	OK 8089,	Doc DOCD-5408
71804-A If You Don't, I Know Who Will	OK 8089,	Doc DOCD-5409
<i>Composer credits: 71803 (Thomas Morris); 71804 (Chris Smith – Tim Brymn – Clarence Williams)</i>		

Tom Morris is generally agreed upon. The two rhythm players certainly sound a little different from earlier recordings, but still seem to be Williams and Christian. The absence of a clarinet or soprano may have altered sound conditions in the studio and increase their audibility. But it certainly is Charlie Irvis on trombone with his legato playing and his own 6/8th phrasing at instances. Some familiar voices can be heard at the end of the first title.

There is no reed player on these sides, and I wonder where Bechet had been on these days. He might have been away for a couple of days and would thus not be available for Clarence, so that Clarence renounced a reed player for this session – or did not find any suitable one as on the session before.

Notes:

- Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); poss Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
- Lord, Clarence Williams p60: Thomas Morris (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); prob Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "Morris is heard and the trombonist is felt to be Irvis. There is no reed man on this session, despite previous reports."
- Rust*3: Tom Morris -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; ?Ernest Elliott -cl -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj
- Rust*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj; Bechet omitted
- BGR*2: Tom Morris, cnt; poss Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ernest Elliott, clt/alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo
- BGR*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; poss Charlie Irvis, tbn; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

021 EVA TAYLOR Clarence Williams Trio	New York,	c. Sep. 29, 1923
Eva Taylor – voc;		
Sidney Bechet – sop;		
Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo		
71910-A Irresistible Blues	OK 8129	not on LP/CD
71910-C Irresistible Blues	OK 8129,	Doc DOCD-5409
71911-B Jazzin' Babies Blues	OK 8129,	Doc DOCD-5409
<i>Composer credits: 71910 (C. Williams); 71911 (R.M. Jones)</i>		

There is absolutely no doubt as to the participants to this session. Authoritarian Bechet here, very beautiful. And Clarence's simple but effective piano, strengthened by Christian's urgent but un-obtrusive banjo. But no brass men.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: Thomas Morris (tp); Charlie Irvis (tb); Sidney Bechet (cl & ss); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
- Storyville 14: Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)
- Lord, Clarence Williams p62: Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "Bechet plays as constantly as the rhythm instruments, from the introduction right through to the end. It is certainly Clarence on piano and Buddy Christian is assumed, as on most of the recordings of this period."
- Rust*3,*4,*6: Sidney Bechet -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Sidney Bechet, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

Notable differences of takes:

71910: As take -1 is not reissued comparison has not been possible.

022 **FANNIE MAY GOOSBY**

Fannie May Goosby – voc;

Thomas Morris – cnt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

71924-B I've Got The Blues, That's All

71925-B Grievous Blues

Composer credits: 71924 (Goosby - Brockman); 71925 (Fannie Goosby)

New York,

early Oct. 1923

OK8095,

Document DOCD-5511

OK8095,

Document DOCD-5511

Goosby sounds like a girl-singer, and not like a blues/song lady of standing. And Tommy Morris is remarkably un-certain. The rhythm plods along although we very probably have Buddy Christian here on his banjo. He is seated in the background and is thus not easy to be recognised. But he can be distinguished when Clarence Williams' left hand plays beats differing from his usual rhythm.

Notes:

- Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); Clarence Williams (pno)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p64: Thomas Morris (cnt); Clarence Williams (pno)

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; Clarence Williams, pno

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Thomas Morris -c; Clarence Williams -p

023 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS BLUE FIVE**

Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

71928-B 'Tain't Nobody's Business If I Do

71929-B New Orleans Hop Scop Blues

71930-B Oh Daddy! Blues (Oh Daddy! You Won't Have No Mama At All)

Composer credits: 71928 (Grainger - Robbins); 71929 (G. Thomas); 71930 (C. Williams)

New York,

early Oct. 1923

OK 4966,

Hot'n Sweet FDC 5107

OK 4975,

Hot'n Sweet FDC 5107

OK 4993,

Hot'n Sweet FDC 5107

These are the Blue Five with their classic personnel again, Bechet shining bright above the musical proceedings. Re Thomas Morris, it has to be said what Garvin Bushell in his 'Jazz from the Beginning' reports about him: "Many a black musician in the 1920s couldn't blow his nose. Like Tommy Morris. He had some great ideas, but no lip – it just splattered all over the place." Buddy Christian drives the band along like nobody's business – just as the first title suggests.

A most interesting account of Bechet's soprano part in 'New Orleans Hop Scop Blues' can be found in Gunther Schuller, Early Jazz, p197.

Notes:

- Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p64: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Mayfield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo). "Morris and Bechet are clearly present. Most sources agree on Mayfield as trombonist, although Goldman and Davies suggest Irvis, but often the personnels are so all-inclusive that it's hard to know if the records have been heard. Williams and Christian are assumed, and nothing is heard to suggest otherwise."

- Rust*2: Tom Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Rust*3: Thomas Morris -c; John Masefield or Mayfield -tb; Sidney Bechet -cl -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj

- Rust*4,*6: Thomas Morris -c; John Mayfield -tb; Sidney Bechet -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj

024 **ROSETTA CRAWFORD** King Bechet Trio

Rosetta Crawford – voc;

Sidney Bechet – clt, sop;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

71945-A Down On The Levee Blues

71946-B Lonesome Mama Blues

Composer credits: 71945 (Williams - Johnson); 71946 (Williams - Crawford)

New York,

c. Oct. 05, 1923

OK 8096,

Doc DOCD-5375

OK 8096,

Doc DOCD-5375

Miss Crawford owns a strong voice and a medium vibrato of little amplitude. She sings with convincing and permanent blues phrasing. The accompanying group is Clarence Williams' trio under Sidney Bechet's name, thus emphasising Bechet's sudden significance for the jazz scene in Harlem when joining the Williams stable.

Bechet accompanies the singer throughout with well-formed phrases and answers to the lyrics in his very own style. Williams on piano is boring, and even Buddy Christian's banjo is not able to liven things up.

This is Sidney Bechet's first label recognition as a bandleader, ever. Yet, this still is Clarence Williams' recording group playing here.

Williams and Christian are assumed only, but certainly correct. Christian's banjo sounds much lighter here than on all the other recordings we have heard. Is this another instrument or another player? Or just the acoustic situation of the recording studio? (On the photos showing Christian with the Clarence Williams Orchestra (see under 'Photos', below) Buddy Christian can be watched carrying two banjos at his side. Not being a banjo expert, I – KBR – would be interested to know whether he used different sounding banjos for big band or alternate trio purposes. This would possibly explain my personal doubts about Christian's presence on the trio recordings, sessions 024, 035, 037, 048, 049, 055, 058, 059, 066, and possibly others)

Notes:

- Storyville 14: Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p66: Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Sidney Bechet -ss -cl; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj

- BGR*2: Sidney Bechet, clt/sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

- BGR*3,*4: Sidney Bechet, ss; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, b

025 **SARA MARTIN AND CLARENCE WILLIAMS' HARMONIZING FOUR**

Sara Martin – voc;

New York,

Oct. 11, 1923

Thomas Morris – cnt; Sidney Bechet – sop;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 71961-B Graveyard Dream Blues OK 8099, Doc DOCD-5396
 71962-B A Green Gal Can't Catch On (Blues) OK 8099, Doc DOCD-5396
Composer credits: 71945 (I. Cox); 71946 (Williams - Martin)

Typical Thomas Morris and great Sidney Bechet above a very simple rhythm section with Clarence pounding chordal fours in the first title – and even eighths - and playing a strange barrelhouse-like arpeggio figure in the second. The banjo has its usual dark hue, again, but is much in the background.

Notes:

- *Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p67: Thomas Morris (cnt); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
 “All sources seem to agree on the personnel.”
 - *Rust*3,*4,*6: Thomas Morris -c; Sidney Bechet -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj*
 - *BGR*2,*3,*4: Thomas Morris, cnt; Sidney Bechet, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*

026 **MARGARET JOHNSON** Clarence Williams' Blue Five New York, c. Oct. 19, 1923
 Margaret Johnson – voc;
 Thomas Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 71972-B If I Let You Get Away With It Once You'll Do It All Of The Time OK 8107, Doc DOCD-5436
 71973-B E Flat Blues OK 8107, Doc DOCD-5436
Composer credits: 71972 (Rose - Frost); 71973 (T. Morris – C. Williams)

Thomas Morris, Sidney Bechet, Clarence Williams and Buddy Christian are certain. But, although I am certain that it really is Irvis because of tone, vibrato and legato playing, I miss his 6/8th phrasing here, which would make his identity clearer.

Notes:

- *Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p68: Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)* “All sources seem to agree on the personnel.”
 - *Rust*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Sidney Bechet -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj*
 - *BGR*2,*3,*4: Thomas Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Sidney Bechet, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*

027 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS BLUE FIVE** New York, c. Nov. 10, 1923
 Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 72040-B Shreveport Blues OK 40006, Hot'n Sweet FDC 5107
 72041-B Old Fashioned Love OK 4993, Hot'n Sweet FDC 5107
Composer credits: 72040 (A.F. Potter); 72041 (C. Mack – J.P. Johnson)

A most interesting account of Bechet's soprano part in 'Old Fashioned Love' can be found in Gunther Schuller, Early Jazz, p196. There are a couple of wrong notes from both cornet and trombone in 'Shreveport', but never from Bechet! The trombonist certainly is Mayfield. Williams on piano and Christian on banjo together pound their four-four rhythm as known. Remarkable are the number of wrong notes by cornet and trombone on the first title.

Notes:

- *Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p70: Thomas Morris (cnt); prob John Mayfield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)* “Most sources seem to agree with the personnel given, however Goldman and Davies in the all-inclusive personnel, suggest Irvis. TKD also suggests Irvis, although JHB (?) questions this. Certainly it is Morris and Bechet, and probably Williams and Christian.”
 - *Rust*2: Tom Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
 - *Rust*3: Thomas Morris -c; John Masefield or Mayfield -tb; Sidney Bechet -cl -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj*
 - *Rust*4,*6: Thomas Morris -c; John Mayfield -tb; Sidney Bechet -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj*

028 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS BLUE FIVE** New York, c. Nov. 14, 1923
 Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Sidney Bechet – clt, sop;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 72059-B House Rent Blues OK 8171, Hot'n Sweet FDC 5109
 72061-B Mean Blues OK 40006, Hot'n Sweet FDC 5109
Composer credits: 72059 (De Koven - Thompson); 72060 (B. Smythe – A. Gilham)

Again, we hear the Blue Five in their personnel of the day. Fantastic Bechet in all his breaks in 'House Rent Blues'. And listen to his retained and poetical playing in the last choruses of 'Mean Blues', very beautiful. Morris is undoubted, and the trombone player certainly is the same as before, thus Mayfield, and not Irvis at all! But still, there is our two-part rhythm section of Williams on piano and Buddy Christian in approved manner.

Notes:

- *Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p72: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Mayfield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (clt/sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)* “In this Blue Five session, the trombone is again the only point of disagreement, with the sources siding the same as previously. Sidney Bechet doubles on clarinet on this one.”
 - *Rust*2: Tom Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
 - *Rust*3: Thomas Morris -c; John Masefield or Mayfield -tb; Sidney Bechet -cl -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj*
 - *Rust*4,*6: Thomas Morris -c; John Mayfield -tb; Sidney Bechet -cl-ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj*

029 **GEORGE McCLENNON'S JAZZ DEVILS**

New York,

May 09, 1924

Harry Cooper – cnt; (John Mayfield) – tbn;
George McClennon – clt; Joe Garland – alt;

Clarence Williams or (Graham Jackson) – pno; Bernard Addison – bjo; Happy Williams – dms

72512-B Box Of Blues

OK 8143,

Jazz Oracle BDW 8022

72513-B Dark Alley Blues

OK 8143,

Jazz Oracle BDW 8022

Composer credits: 72512 (George McClennon); 72513 (George McClennon)

For this session Rust*6 lists this personnel: prob. Thomas Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; G. McClennon – clt; Bob Fuller – alt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; unknown - dms. The Jazz Oracle CD booklet follows this statement. Tom Lord's *Clarence Williams* (1976) lists the same with some reservations and the following statement: "*Rust is the only previous source to list this as a Clarence Williams session. His listing is undoubtedly a result of a Record Research (i.e. 66) article. Williams mentioned Morris and Irvis. Since Rust's listing (Rust*3? - KBR), it's felt that the identity of the cornetist is not absolutely certain. The alto player here is aurally the same man as on Virginia Liston's OK 8138 (January 7, 1924). The estimation of the date is from Rust.*"

Deviating from what I have written in my article on the recordings of George McClennon in Names&Numbers 67, I am caused to see – and hear – this recording session from a very different side:

- Having dealt with Harry Cooper's trumpet style of the early twenties I am convinced that he is our man on this McClennon session, harmonizing with his known appearances in style, tone, rhythm, use of mutes, and vibrato. This is not – as believed about 8 years ago – Thomas Morris. Recognizing this, it is only significant to check Cooper's association at this time: the Seminole Syncopators: he recorded with them in New York just two weeks earlier.
- And according to their personnel the alto saxophonist could well be the young Joe Garland who had been added to the Seminole Syncopators at about this time, when they went back home to Atlanta after their recording session of April 24, 1924 (above). Comparing our altoist here with Garland's style and performing on 'Sailing On Lake Pontchartrain' of the session of August 30, 1924 clearly shows corresponding of style, rhythm and performance. He cannot be compared with Prince Robinson as on the Virginia Liston session above, who is much more elegant and swinging.
- I believe to recognize the trombonist as John Mayfield – not Charlie Irvis! – of Clarence Williams Blue Five fame. He was not part of the Seminole Syncopators!
- The pianist might well be Clarence Williams, but as we probably find other members of the Seminole Syncopators below, he may also be their band-leader Graham Jackson. But: we do not hear this player's technical and harmonic tricks as heard on the August 30 session.
- The very busy banjo player very probably then is Bernard Addison with his double-strokes and arpeggiated parts. This certainly is not Buddy Christian!
- The drummer might accordingly also come from the Syncopators, thus Harry 'Happy' Williams. The cymbal sound seems to be identical. In my years-long researching the music of the Harlem bands I have recognized a couple of procedures recording-bands were put together, and here we might find just one of these: a young band coming from out of nowhere, leaving an impression on listeners passed on to band-leaders without a working band, but having a recording contract, and needing a band for a recording session. This might be exactly what had happened here. Unfortunately, we do not have proof that the Syncopators still had been in New York at this date. But the performance on record seems to prove.

Notes:

- Record Research 66: prob Tom Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); George McClennon (clt); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (?) (bjo); unknown (dms)
- Rust*2: Tom Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); George McClennon (clt); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (?) (bjo); unknown (dms)
- Rust*3: Tom Morris -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; George McClennon -cl; ?Bob Fuller -as; Clarence Williams -p; ?Buddy Christian -bj; unknown -d
- Rust*4, *6: probably: Tom Morris -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; George McClennon -cl; Bob Fuller -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj; unknown -d

030 **GEORGE McCLENNON'S JAZZ DEVILS**

New York,

c. May 14, 1924

Seymour Irick – tpt; John Lindsay – tbn;

George McClennon – clt; (Joe Garland) – alt;

Clarence Williams – pno; unknown – bjo; (Louis Cottrell) – dms

72524-B New Orleans Wiggle

OK 8150,

Jazz Oracle BDW 8022

72525-B Michigan Water Blues

OK 8150,

Jazz Oracle BDW 8022

Composer credits: 72524 (Peter E. Bocage – A.J. Piron); 72525 (Clarence Williams)

This George McClennon session is nowhere else assumed to include Irick but in the CD booklet of the Canadian Jazz Oracle CDBDG 8022 'George McClennon', and subsequently used in an article on Seymour Irick on the excellent website on www.yestercenturypop.com. I only very recently came into knowledge of this assumption. But having listened, I whole-heartedly have to agree to this very fine identification. This then makes me revoke my assignation of a larger part of this personnel to the Armand Piron band as published in my article on McClennon in Names&Numbers 67.

Before discussing this recording session, the reader is reminded that the Armand Piron band from New Orleans spent considerable time in New York in the hope of hitting the big time there. We know that Clarence Williams as A&R man for Okeh was busy to book the Piron band in New York. What would be more reasonable than that he tried to present the band on the Okeh label when the band was preparing for the Roseland engagement and connect them to other stars of his stable? From a photograph in Perry Bradford's book 'Born With The Blues' we know that Williams promoted the band under the name 'Williams' Ten Jazz Kings'. So, when you look at the titles recorded here and listen to the music it becomes quite obvious that musicians of the Piron band might be responsible here.

They certainly were in New York from November 1923 until June 1924 when they recorded for a couple of labels. In May/June 1924 they played a two-week engagement at Roseland Ballroom (the first coloured band there) and were an immediate hit. But they are also thought of being present from at least May 1923 on, when they had been engaged into the fashionable Cotton Club for some time. Clarence Williams, former business partner of Piron and his A&R man in New York, tried to find work for the band and also used their men for a couple of his own recordings, mainly under the 'Clarence Williams' Harmonizers' name.

With the Jazz Oracle booklet in mind, we have to look a little closer:

- Trumpet: Yes, this definitely is Seymour Irick, as first noted by the Jazz Oracle people on their George McClennon CD, possibly here trying to adept to a more Southern style.
- Trombone: If we accept all what is said above, it is easy to accept John Lindsay as trombonist here. Lindsay was trombone man in the Piron band at the time. This trombonist here plays a rather weird rhythmical figure in the repeated strain C of the recording which is not

typical for Lindsay I have been told, but – as his playing is nearly identical in all three strains – this seems to be written down for him or have been part of the used arrangement and may therefore not be used as a counter-evidence. He does not play this part in Piron's recording of 'New Orleans Wiggle'. A most remarkable trombone break is played in strain B of 'New Orleans Wiggle', as it appears identically in King Oliver's 'Chattanooga Stomp' of October 15, 1923. (For this very recording session Ed Atkins has invariably been listed by everybody as trombonist – although with a question-mark – but this similarity or even identity should be re-considered with regard to Lindsay's possible presence on the Oliver's, and not simply been explained as "common currency for New Orleans players" as by a very well-known discographer.) What we hear is entirely in Lindsay's limited range of trombone-playing in the Piron band.

- Alto sax: The alto player would accordingly then be Louis Warnick of the Piron band, if we kept the Piron relation. But his playing is definitely different from Warnick's style as known from the Piron sides. Particularly, Warnick continually displays a very short and fast vibrato with little altitude, what is not heard here from our altoist. Instead, I believe to hear the same manner of playing heard on George McClennon's session of May 09, 1924, thus five days before. And on this session, I assume the young Joe Garland to be the altoist. He just then was joining the Seminole Syncopators of Atlanta, then in New York (see my George McClennon article elsewhere on this website)

- Piano: The piano player can only be heard soloing in the short breaks in 'Michigan Water Blues'. These are straight renditions and played in perfect Clarence Williams style and rhythm. The tune is his own composition. Therefore – and because of the overall typical 4/4 pounding of both pianist's hands – definitely Clarence Williams!

- Banjo: The banjo player with all his "tremolo-ing" is very different from all I know of Charles Bocage of the Piron band (although he certainly could do it and even shows it somewhere on the Piron sides in a couple of breaks), and from Buddy Christian as well, so that I would like to leave him unknown. He sounds more like a New York man. He very often tremolos, starting on measures one – or three – of a bar which sounds a bit military or classical, what is rather uncommon for jazz banjoists of the time.

- Drums: The drummer can only be heard with a single cymbal crash at the end of the second title. But because of Cottrell being Piron's drummer he should be seen as a probability. The cymbal sound is compatible with Cottrell's on the Piron's, and it is Cottrell's habit to play woodblock on the C-strain or the last chorus of a tune.

Notes:

- *Record Research 66, p.5: probably Tom Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); George McClennon (clt); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (?) (bjo); unknown (dms)*

- *Rust*2: Tom Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); George McClennon (clt); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (?) (bjo); unknown (dms)*

- *Rust*3: unknown -c (possibly 2); ?John Lindsay -tb; George McClennon -cl; unknown -as; ?Clarence Williams -p; ?Buddy Christian -bj; unknown -d*

- *Rust*4,*6: ?2 -c; probably: John Lindsay -tb; George McClennon -cl; unknown -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj; unknown -d*

- *Jazz Oracle CD BDW 8022, CD-booklet personnel: possibly Seymore Irick; poss John Lindsay (tb); George McClennon (clt); unknown (as); poss Clarence Williams (p); poss Buddy Christian (bjo); unknown (d, woodblocks)*

031	SIPPIE WALLACE	Clarence Williams' Harmonizers	New York,	c. Jun. 13, 1924
	Sippie Wallace – voc;			
	<i>(Peter Bocage) – cnt; (John Lindsey) – tbn; (Lorenzo Tio, Jr.) – clt;</i>			
	Clarence Williams – pno; <i>Buddy Christian - bjo</i>			
72606-B	Sud Bustin Blues		OK 8177,	Doc DOCD-5399
72607-B	Wicked Monday Morning Blues		OK 8177,	Doc DOCD-5399
	<i>Composer credits: 72606 (A.J. Piron - Peter Bocage – Steve Lewis); 72607 (Spencer Williams)</i>			

Having heard Thomas Morris here in the past, I now believe this cornetist to be Peter Bocage of the Piron band. The trombonist certainly is not Irvis, but could be John Lindsey or Aaron Thompson instead. I am unable to hear a banjo. Clarence Williams is undoubted.

Just as with the foregoing session of Sara Martin we hear a soprano player who stylistically certainly is not Elliott, but a Bechet copyist. Or is it a clarinet again? There is no musical comparison between Elliott and this much better musician, whose name is unknown today. As before with Sara Martin, I see the possibility that this again is part of the Piron band, thus Bocage, Lindsey and Tio. Only that they are not on their homely ground.

And also consider the band name! It was Clarence Williams' custom to name his recording bands 'Harmonizers' when Piron players were employed! 'Sud Bustin Blues' has also been recorded by the Piron band.

Notes:

- *Storyville 15: Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); poss Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*

- *T. Lord, Clarence Williams p 93: Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); possibly Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno) "It seems to be the same group as on the Sara Martin session, ca. June 1, 1924, with the addition of a banjo. Certainly it is the same clarinetist, possibly Ernest Elliott. Here again, Bailey has been previously mentioned as clarinetist, but WCA points out that Bailey was not in New York at this time. It certainly doesn't sound like Bailey."*

- *Rust *3,*4,*6: Tom Morris, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; ?Ernest Elliott, cl; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj*

- *BGR *2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; poss Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*

032	THE FOUR SPADES		New York,	Jun. 24, 1924
	Lorenzo Tio – clt; Bob Fuller – alt;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – gtr, bjo			
81840-3	Squabblin' Blues		Col 14028-D	not on LP/CD but held
81841-3	Making Up Blues		Col 14028-D	not on LP/CD but held
	<i>Composer credits: 81840 (Sara Martin and Clarence Williams); 81841 (A. Thompson)</i>			

This very interesting yet still un-reissued recording features two distinct reed-men, a distinct clarinet player who sounds surprisingly uneven and stiff on the first title when compared to his extraordinary and beautiful playing on the second title, which certainly caused Tom Lord and others to identify this player as Lorenzo Tio Jr. of the Piron band. I see no reason to doubt this assumption, although I am heavily contradicted in our listening group. There is so much very beautiful and expert clarinet playing in pure New Orleans style on the second title, at a time when the Piron band sought for engagement in New York supported by Clarence Williams, that it seems to be negligent not to think of Tio here! Who else should be assumed under these circumstances?

The alto player certainly is not Elliott as given in the various Rust editions. The playing does not have Elliott's characteristics as listed in my Elliott investigation. Instead, I hear distinct parallels to Bob Fuller's saxophone playing on the Kansas City Five session of c. Nov. 1924,

here on tenor sax, but showing the same un-swinging, un-initiated and non-professional handling of the sax. Possibly these titles were Fuller's early or even first try-outs on the saxophone?!

There might be Buddy Christian on guitar on the first side, and on banjo on the second one. It is Christian's strong and urgent style and dark sound.

Notes:

- Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: Files as "Williams' Instrumental Four". (Possibly a Clarence Williams group?)

- Storyville 15: not listed

- Lord, Clarence Williams p94: poss Lorenzo Tio (clt); Ernest Elliott (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "Recent research and listening has turned up the following (this one – KBR) session. It is listed in the Columbia files as Williams Instrumental Trio (sic), which lists this date. Rust *3 suggests Bob Fuller as the clarinetist. However, I feel that it may be Lorenzo Tio. The piano is well in the background, but sounds like Clarence. The presence of Christian is surmised."

- Rust*2: Bob Fuller (clt); Ernest Elliott (?) (alt); Lemuel Fowler (?) (pno); Buddy Christian (?) (bjo)

- Rust*3: Bob Fuller -cl; Ernest Elliott -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj. (Entered in the Columbia files as Williams Instrumental Four)

- Rust*4: Lorenzo Tio or Bob Fuller -cl; Ernest Elliott -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj. (CBS fileslist this as Williams Instrumental Four)

- Rust*6: Lorenzo Tio or Bob Fuller -cl; Ernest Elliott -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

033 **LAURA SMITH** Clarence Williams' Harmonizers New York, c. Aug. 01, 1924
Laura Smith – voc;

Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Ernest Elliott -clt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Charles Bocage or Buddy Christian – bjo

72719-B Texas Moaner Blues OK 8157, Doc DOCD-5429

72720-B I'm Gonna Get Myself A Real Man OK 8186, Doc DOCD-5429

72721-B Has Anybody Seen My Man? OK 8157, Doc DOCD-5429

Composer credits: 72719 (Fae Barnes – Clarence Williams); 72720 (Baby Grice – Ruth Coleman); 72721 (Baby Grice – Ruth Coleman)

Morris and Williams are obvious. The banjo might be a bit too heavy to be Christian. But the trombonist very certainly is not Charlie Irvis with his legato trombone, but could rather be John Mayfield of the early Clarence Williams stable with his simple staccato style.

There is little clarinet audible, but the square quarter note phrasing and the downward smear in bar four of the introduction of 'Has Anybody Seen My Man?' are typically Elliott and seem to be proof of his presence.

Notes:

- Storyville 15: Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Tom Lord, Clarence Williams p97: Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "There is agreement on the personnel with the exception of the clarinet. TKD lists Buster Bailey, however Bailey was not in New York, and aural evidence suggests Elliott."

- Rust *3,*4,*6 Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

- BGR *2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

034 **MARGARET JOHNSON** Clarence Williams' Harmonizers New York, c. Sep. 05, 1924
Margaret Johnson – voc;

Peter Bocage or Thomas Morris, Joe King Oliver – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn;

unknown - ten;

Clarence Williams – pno; Charles Bocage or Buddy Christian – bjo

72789-B I Love You Daddy, But You Don't Mean Me No Good OK 8230, Doc DOCD-5436

72790-B Nobody Knows The Way I Feel This Mornin' OK 8262, Doc DOCD-5436

72791-B Absent Minded Blues OK 8262, Doc DOCD-5436

Composer credits: 72789 (Tom Delaney); 72790 (Tom Delaney); 72791 (Tom Delaney)

It is very seldom (if at all?) that we hear two trumpets/cornets in early Clarence Williams accompanying groups. But here, something unusual must have happened! Probably because of the presence of two cornets, Williams wrote some minor arrangements for the four horns present. This is the reason that we do not hear more of the alto saxophone than arranged passages of his part. And from what we can hear nothing substantial can be said about the reed man. He may be Elliott, but lacking any distinct elements of his style as listed in my Elliott investigation heard, the player might be someone else. In my ears this player here shows nothing of Elliott's style, and his instrument is tenor sax rather than alto. Furthermore, I do not know any recordings of Elliott playing tenor! But when compared to Elliott's alto playing on the succeeding Clara Smith session it becomes apparent that his skills on the saxophone had improved and become smoother by now, which would coincide with what can be heard here.

The second cornet surprisingly sounds just like Oliver, and has been suggested to be him in earlier years (see notes below!). And this is the unusual case here! Oliver spent some time in September in NY as guest of C. Williams, but nobody knows how long he stayed. He recorded with Butterbeans and Susie on Sep. 12 or 14. When hearing these sides for the first time I immediately felt that the breaks in 'I Love You Daddy' (at 1-23 and 2-32) with their sharp cornet tone and the typical phrases had to be Oliver. At that time, I did not know that he had been suggested before. Then in 'Absent Minded Blues' at 1-42 he can be discriminated again as Morris enters at about 1-47 (I have to thank Dave Brown for affirmation and sorting out the exact places where Oliver can possibly be heard). I do therefore not have any sincere doubts as to Oliver's presence on these sides! It has equally to be stated that there is absolutely nothing to suggest Bubber Miley on trumpet! Morris is undisputed, but here Peter Bocage's presence should also be considered as the first trumpet sounds somewhat more secure than Morris usually is. And Bocage was in New York and better equipped for playing from music.

The trombonist again is not Irvis and might rather be John Mayfield because of stylistic reasons and because he was frequently used by Williams at the time.

Clarence Williams undisputed. But we can certainly see again that statements or assertions of the participants of the recording sessions cannot be trusted in any case!

To me the banjo sounds more like Bocage than Christian, just like on the session above. It has to be regarded that Clarence Williams' recordings under the band name 'Harmonizers' very often – if not always – feature Piron musicians.

Notes:

- Storyville 15: Thomas Morris, Bubber Miley (cnts); Charlie Irvis (tbn); poss Ernest Elliott (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 98: Thomas Morris, Bubber Miley (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); poss Ernest Elliott (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "The session includes two cornets, with Morris credited as one. Davies lists the other as King Oliver. TKD (T. Keith Daniel – KBR) has a note that his personnel (which agrees with the one below (above – KBR)) is from Williams on hearing the disc, "however, some authorities, including BALR (who in the world is this? – KBR), believe that Joe 'King' Oliver is one of the trumpet men. It is possible that the session took place during his brief visit to New York. "WCA (Walter C. Allen – KBR) thinks the cornet is not Oliver. Clarence Williams (to WCA) identified the cornets as given, below (above – KBR). The alto is agreed upon by most as Elliott. The estimation of the date is from Godrich and Dixon. The preceding matrix is assigned to Ernest V. Stoneman, recorded September 4, 1924. The succeeding matrix is assigned to an unknown foreign-language item, recorded on September 9th."

- L. Wright, King Oliver p 42/43: "He stayed with Clarence Williams and Eva Taylor and went to see Jack Kapp to try and secure a recording contract, but to no avail. Whilst in town, the two old friends went down to Jersey City to watch the Harry Wills – Luis Angel Firpo fight (which Wills won) on Thursday, 11 September and, the following day, Clarence invited Joe to make a couple of sides backing Butterbeans and Susie, no doubt to help out with his train fare back to Chicago. The duration of Joe Oliver's stay in New York is not known, but it is unlikely to have been any longer than was necessary to complete the business he had in mind and, on his return to Chicago, he resumed leadership of the band at the Lincoln Gardens." (Oliver had an advertisement in the Chicago Defender which was issued on 6 September 1924 saying: "At Liberty. The celebrated King Oliver's Jazz Band 8 men playing 15 instruments. Open for engagements in or out of Chicago." This would mean that the advertisement had been ordered in the early days of September. As the exact recording date of this session has to be placed between 4 September and 9 September (see above), Oliver's presence might certainly be seen as possible – KBR)

- Rust *3,*4,*6: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; ?Ernest Elliott, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo
- BGR *2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; poss Ernest Elliott, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo
- Scherman, Eriksson, Bubber Miley discography: Thomas Morris, poss Bubber Miley (tp); Charlie Irvis (tb); poss Ernest Elliott (as); Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian (bj) "The above personnel, with definitely Bubber Miley on 2nd trumpet, is listed by Dixon-Godrich, Rust and Tom Lord in his Clarence Williams discography. Lord notes that "some authorities believe that Joe 'King' Oliver is one of the trumpet players", but we find this very unlikely. The more prominent of the two sounds like Morris. The other one is more in the background but could possibly be Bubber Miley."

035	CHARLES TYUS – EFFIE TYUS - HORACE GEORGE	Instrumental Trio	New York,	Sep. 06, 1924
	Charles Tyus, Effie Tyus –voc;			
	Horace George – voc, clt;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo			
	72795-A	Emancipation Day In Georgia	OK 8164,	Doc DOCD-5526
	72796-B	The Meal Is Low In The Barrell Blues	OK 8164,	Doc DOCD-5590
	Composer credits: 72795 (Horace George); 72797 (Horace George – Edward Stevens)			

This session is included because there is more than only Clarence Williams in the accompaniment. In Horace George we hear a singer who also used a clarinet in his appearances with his jazz band, obviously in vaudeville. His facilities on the instrument are rather limited, but he plays in a no-nonsense style. The pianistics displayed in the first title seem to be beyond Clarence's possibilities and thus, his presence on piano has to be doubted, at least for the first title.

The drummer listed for the first title becomes a banjo player in my ears, the more so as there definitely is one on the second title, clearly recognizable by his tremolo at the very end and last chord of the tune, but unlisted before! He might be Buddy Christian, but cannot be unequivocally identified. (See also session 024!)

The pianist on the last title rather sounds like Williams.

Notes:

- Storyville 16: 72795: Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (dms); 72796: Clarence Williams (pno)

- Tom Lord, Clarence Williams p99: 72795: poss Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (dms); 72796: Clarence Williams (pno) "Horace George is the clarinetist and vocalist. The Chicago Defender mentioned that he appeared with his Jazz Band at the Grand Theatre on May 7, 1921. The first composition is in quickstep tempo, with only chordal accompaniment by the piano, so it's difficult to tell his identity. Clarence is not credited on the label of 'Emancipation Day ...' so there is the possibility that he is not present. Effie Tyus was also a pianist, as shown in an ad for OK 8459 in the May 7, 1927 Defender."

- *ibid.*: "Okeh 8164 was advertised in the November 22, 1924 Defender ... "with Clarence Williams doing the piano accompaniment."

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Horace George, clt solos, voc; Charles and Effie Tyus, voc duet; Clarence Williams, p; unknown, d (1)

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Horace George, clt solos, voc; Charles and Effie Tyus, voc duet; Clarence Williams, p; unknown, d (1)

036	SARA MARTIN	Clarence Williams' Blue Five	New York,	c. Sep. 29, 1924
	Sara Martin – voc;			
	Gus Aiken – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn; unknown – alt;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo			
	72857-B	Things Done Gone Too Thick	OK 8203,	Doc DOCD-5397
	72858-A	Eagle Rock Me, Papa	OK 8203,	Doc DOCD-5397
	72858-B	Eagle Rock Me, Papa	OK 8203	not on LP/CD

Oliver back again home in Chicago and Armstrong not having arrived in New York, Clarence once again had to check for another brass team. And he immediately was successful in hiring brothers Augustus 'Gus' and Eugene 'Bud' Aiken on trumpet and trombone. As I have shown in the Frog Blues and Jazz Annual Vol. 3, these brothers made up a beautiful trumpet – trombone team as was fashionable in Harlem at the time. They both hailed from the Jenkins Orphanage in Charleston, SC where they gained the same musical tuition as Jabbo Smith did. Listen to Aiken's flexible trumpet tone, just like Jabbo's. We hear very competent trumpet playing and very beautiful trombone in dialogue. Lacking any distinct style of playing nothing can be said about the alto player, who might be anyone. Williams and Christian undisputed.

Notes:

- Storyville 16: unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p103: unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "The accompaniment is something of a puzzle. Morris, Irvis and Bailey have been suggested. However, it does not sound like them to me, and I prefer to leave them as unknown. WCA states that Bailey did not join Fletcher Henderson until October 5th or 6th, having been in Chicago with King Oliver until that time."

- Rust*3,*4,*4: unknown –c; unknown –tb; unknown –as; Clarence Williams –p; Buddy Christian –bj

- BGR*2,*3,*4: unknown, cnt; unknown, tbn; unknown, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

Notable differences of takes:72858: *as take B is not reissued comparison has not been possible*

037	LAURA SMITH	Clarence Williams Harmonizers / Instrumental Trio	New York,	c. Oct. 11, 1924
	Laura Smith – voc; unknown – clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian– bjo			
72897-B		I Can Always Tell When My Man Don't Want Me 'Round	OK 8169,	Doc DOCD-5429
72898-B		Lake Pontchartrain Blues	OK 8179,	Doc DOCD-1005
72899-B		Gravier Street Blues	OK 8179,	Doc DOCD-1005

Crucial characteristics of Elliott's playing and style cannot be detected here, and from what can be heard I would deny his presence on this session. The clarinetist plays in a harmonically and rhythmically simple style different from Elliott's. But: I also feel unable to find any elements of the great Lorenzo Tio's style, and would therefore also exclude him from possibility as expressed in Rust*4 and *6. This clarinetist is much too square rhythmically than would be expected from Tio! And: there is no cornet on the second and third titles as listed in the Storyville series Vol. 16.

Notes:

- Storyville 16: Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Thomas Morris (cnt) added on second and third titles.
- Lord, Clarence Williams p 105: Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "While these dates are not exact, it is interesting to mention that the Chicago Defender for October 11, 1924 mentions that Ernest Elliott, "clarinet and saxophone expert is featured with the big time act 'Frisco'", in Chicago.

- Rust*3: Ernest Elliott – cl; Clarence Williams – p; Buddy Christian – bj; with Tom Morris – c (2,3), all as shown

- Rust*4,*6: ? Lorenzo Tio – cl; Clarence Williams – p; Buddy Christian – bj

- BGR*2*3*4: Ernest Elliott – clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian– bjo

038	EVA TAYLOR	vocal duets with Clarence Williams	New York,	c. Oct. 17, 1924
	Eva Taylor, Clarence Williams – voc; unknown – cnt/tpt; Buddy Christian – bjo; Clarence Williams - kazoo			
72912-B		Terrible Blues	OK 8183,	Doc DOCD-5409
72913-B		Arkansaw Blues	OK 8183,	Doc DOCD-5409

This trumpeter/cornetist certainly is not Morris with his insecure and limited kind of performance. Because of the stylistic delivery and the time of recording (the Piron band was probably still in New York) I assumed Peter Bocage on cornet. If this should be correct the presence of Charles Bocage on banjo should be considered (see below). But stylistically the banjo part is Christian's with his steady 4/4 beat. Meanwhile Dave Brown convinced me that this player certainly is not Bocage. But we both find us unable to recognize the identity of this player.

Notes:

- Storyville 16: Thomas Morris (cnt); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p106: Thomas Morris (cnt); Buddy Christian (bjo) "The only question raised about the personnel come from TKD who states, who states "I cannot agree that the lumpen banjo is Christian's work." I think that the different banjo sound is due to the fact that he is the only rhythm instrument and must play a much stronger part in his situation."

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris –c; Buddy Christian –bj

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; Buddy Christian, bjo

039	CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE		New York,	Oct. 17, 1924
	Louis Armstrong – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop, clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo			
72914-B		Texas Moaner Blues	OK 8171,	Hot'n Sweet FDC 5109
	<i>Composer credits: 72914 (F. Barnes – C. Williams)</i>			

With Armstrong's arrival in New York we now enter the third period of Clarence Williams' Blue Five and affiliate band recordings (the first period dominated by Thomas Morris and the second – in my ears/eyes – as Clarence Williams Harmonizers, shaped by the presence of Piron's musicians).

We hear two of the greatest musicians of classic jazz together in one band – they worked together on only two occasions later in their lives – lead by a somewhat third-rate pianist. But the result is fantastic. And: here Armstrong recorded even earlier than with his New York leader and employer Fletcher Henderson. Clarence certainly must have had a sharp and keen eye and sense of business.

In my eyes the trombonist is everybody, but never Charlie Irvis. Irvis has a very distinct own legato style which cannot be heard here! I assume this man to be John Mayfield from the sessions before. The style certainly seems to be Mayfield's. His style is simpler and more staccato and not as individual as Irvis'. (Oh, I know! In every discography Irvis is listed, but I am certain it is not he!) But after all, he is not so bad and can be heard to advantage on these sides, just as on earlier sessions under this same name of this investigation. Yet, as this was the time that Clarence switched over to use Aaron Thompson, it faintly might as well be the latter. And the rock-steady rhythm again is produced by Clarence and his co-New-Orleanian Buddy Christian.

Gunther Schuller, Early Jazz p109, gives an analyses and transcription of Armstrong's solo on 'Texas Moaner Blues'.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: Louis Armstrong (c); Charlie Irvis (tb); Sidney Bechet (cl & ss); Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Storyville 16: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop, clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p107: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop, clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "Whilst in New York, Louis played on several sessions organized by Clarence Williams. Williams' musical skills were limited, but as a session organizer he was as shrewd as they come; wise enough to capitalize on the fact that the two greatest improvisers of the era, Armstrong and Sidney Bechet (both working in New York), could be brought together in a recording studio. Realizing that there was more than a possibility of up-staging, Williams took fastidious care in allocating an even amount of solo space to the two giants. To hear the musical thrust and parry of these two men, both pioneering the same concept of swing, is one of the great jazz listening experiences. Both

submerge individual aspiration during the ensembles, but come solo time and each is out to cap the other's performance. On 'Texas Moaner Blues' (the first of the series) Louis plays a gem of a solo and brings it to conclusion with a down ward run covering almost two octaves. Bechet, to combine power and invention, takes his chorus on soprano saxophone, and promptly inserts an ascending double octave glissando. He returns to clarinet for a final chorus, and again both masters pool their talents for a classic example of ensemble rapport." (Max Jones/John Chilton). It's hard to say enough about this historic and exciting association. The personnel seems to be agreed upon for this first recording except that Davies includes a washboard."

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop, clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

040 **VIRGINIA LISTON** Clarence Williams' Blue Five New York, Oct. 17, 1924
Virginia Liston – voc;
Louis Armstrong – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop, clt;
Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
72915-B Early In The Morning OK 8171, Hot'n Sweet FDC 5109
72916-B You've Got The Right Key, But The Wrong Keyhole OK 8173, Hot'n Sweet FDC 5109
Composer credits: 72915 (B. Higgins – W.B. Overstreet); 72916 (C. Williams)

These two titles have been recorded together with 'Texas Moaner Blues' on the same session. So, everything said about the above session also applies to these two titles. And again, it is not Irvis! But all our other combatants of earlier sessions. And Louis Armstrong!

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Armstrong (c); Charlie Irvis (tb); Sidney Bechet (cl & ss); Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Storyville 16: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop, clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p108: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop, clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop, clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop, clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

041 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE** New York, Nov. 06, 1924
Louis Armstrong – cnt; Aaron Thompson – tbn; Buster Bailey – sop;
Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo;
Eva Taylor – voc
72958-B Of All The Wrongs You've Done To Me OK 8181, Frog DGF 81
72959-B Everybody Loves My Baby (But My Baby Don't Love Nobody But Me) OK 8181, Frog DGF 81
Composer credits: 72958 (Payton – Smith - Dowell); 72959 (J. Palmer – C. Williams)

Armstrong is great as always. But the whole affair lacks Bechet, although Bailey works hard and is not un-effective. Aaron Thompson is even simpler than Mayfield, if it is Mayfield on the 'Texas Moaner Blues' session. Clarence Williams and Buddy Christian undisputed. Christian even is carried away in playing some seldom heard tremolos. Oh yes, and Louis Armstrong fluffs the very last tone of 'Everybody Loves My Baby'! And Clarence and Buddy are very much together on every beat.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Armstrong (c); Charlie Irvis (tb); Buster Bailey (cl & ss); Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Storyville 16: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Aaron Thompson (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo);

Eva Taylor – voc

- Lord, Clarence Williams p111: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Aaron Thompson (tbn); Buster Bailey (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc) "Bechet is sometimes credited with the soprano sax. It's easy to feel that it is he. Although the playing is forceful and accomplished, it is not as inventive, nor as swinging as Bechet's work. According to TKD, Bechet has denied his presence and suggested Bailey as the soprano. Bailey and Armstrong were both in New York with Fletcher Henderson at the Roseland. Most sources seem to agree now that it is Bailey. Aaron Thompson is a new name on trombone. His presence is acknowledged by most sources."

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Aaron Thompson (tbn); Buster Bailey (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo);

Eva Taylor – voc

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Aaron Thompson (tbn); Buster Bailey (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo);

Eva Taylor – voc

042 **JOSEPHINE BEATTY** Red Onion Jazz Babies New York, Nov. 06, 1924
Alberta Hunter – voc
Louis Armstrong – cnt; Aaron Thompson – tbn; Buster Bailey – sop;
Lil Armstrong – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo
9167 Everybody Loves My Baby Gnt 5594, Document DOCD-5424
Composer credits: 9167 (Jack Palmer, Spencer Williams)

Louis Armstrong had hardly appeared in New York just one month ago, joining the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra on third trumpet, and the most agile Clarence Williams had organised a recording band of Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Charlie Irvis, Buddy Christian, and himself to make some historic and exciting OKeh recordings of free-wheeling New Orleans jazz of eternal significance. And then again, just one month later, the Gennett officials had caught this band to record for their label, exchanging Armstrong's wife Lil for the piano chair – Williams, as leader of the original group 'Blue Five' could not be employed for contractual reasons – and Buster Bailey replacing Sidney Bechet.

Alberta Hunter must have had a respectable name at this point of her career, already, to be accompanied by this "all-star" band of the time. And she delivers a great vocal part in the proceedings, absolutely challenging the instrumentalists in this swinging band in this Spencer Williams classic. Miss Hunter mentioned that Clarence Williams directed these sessions (the Red Onion Jazz Babies, that is). And thus it seems to be obvious that Williams had Buddy Christian on the banjo chair, this probably also to straighten Miss Lil's rhythm a bit!

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Armstrong (c); Aaron Thompson (tb); Buster Bailey (cl & ss); Lilian Armstrong (Hardin) (p); Buddy Christian (bjo).

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Louis Armstrong, cnt; Aaron Tompson, tbn; Buster Bailey, sop; Lil Armstrong, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong -c; Aaron Tompson -tb; Buster Bailey -cl; Lil Armstrong -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

043 **JOSEPHINE BEATTY** Red Onion Jazz Babies New York, Nov. 08, 1924
 Alberta Hunter – voc
 Louis Armstrong – cnt; Aaron Thompson – tbn; Buster Bailey – sop;
 Lil Armstrong – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 9176-A Texas Moaner Blues Gnt 5594, Document DOCD-5424
 Composer credits: 9176 (Williams, Barnes)

And Alberta Hunter continues the exceptional recording format of before with a title that had also been recorded by the Clarence Williams Blue Five – the nucleus of the ‘Red Onion Jazz Babies’ - one month ago as an instrumental tune, with Sidney Bechet on soprano sax. The vocal version here has other merits than the earlier version, in that we hear Miss Hunter singing the words with the band in close “call-and-response” manner all over. Great Alberta Hunter and great Louis Armstrong and Buster Bailey.

The ‘Red Onion Jazz Babies’ recorded a second title ‘Of All The Wrongs You’ve Done To Me’ on this session, but without Alberta Hunter doing the vocals, and under the recording band name (see below).

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Armstrong (c); Aaron Thompson (tb); Buster Bailey (cl & ss); Lilian Armstrong (Hardin) (p); Buddy Christian (bjo).

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Louis Armstrong, cnt; Aaron Tompson, tbn; Buster Bailey, sop; Lil Armstrong, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong -c; Aaron Tompson -tb; Buster Bailey -cl; Lil Armstrong -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

044 **RED ONION JAZZ BABIES** New York, Nov. 08, 1924
 Louis Armstrong – cnt; Aaron Thompson – tbn; Buster Bailey – sop;
 Lil Armstrong – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 9177 Of All The Wrongs You Done To Me Gnt 5627, Chronological Classics 24-2
 Composer credit: 9177 (Peyton – Smith – Dowell)

This nice instrumental tune was recorded closing the above listed recording session.

It is interesting to note Buster Bailey playing the soprano sax in the above ‘ROJB’ sides, only. It is my suspicion that he was ordered to just replace the great Sidney Bechet’s work on soprano of the ‘Blue Five’ sides, here. And he does, but in his own way, and that would be on clarinet, which he uses from now – self-destined? - on these Clarence-Williams-organised sides.

And listen to Armstrong’s genial solo chorus on this side joking around with the stop-time rhythm of the band, and then finally delivering a great coda break. This all is the work of a “world champion” of trumpet playing in his youth! And even his wife Lil gets a chorus of her own.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Armstrong (c); Aaron Thompson (tb); Buster Bailey (cl & ss); Lilian Armstrong (Hardin) (p); Buddy Christian (bjo).

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Aaron Tompson (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt); Lil Armstrong (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo).

045 **MARGARET JOHNSON** Clarence Williams’ Blue Five New York, Nov. 25, 1924
 Margaret Johnson – voc;
 Louis Armstrong – cnt; Aaron Thompson – tbn;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 72996-A Papa, Mama’s All Alone Blues OK 8185, Doc DOCD-5436
 72997-A Changeable Daddy Of Mine OK 8185, Doc DOCD-5436
 Composer credits: 72996 (C. Williams – B. Higgins); 72997 (S. Wooding – B. Schafer)

Armstrong Ok! Thompson stylistically and technically is not on a par with Mayfield, but still better and more distinct as on the Red Onion Jazz Babies. Williams and Christian undoubted. But there is no reed-man with the band, unfortunately.

There is a 14-bars double-tempo ensemble passage in the second title that has a banjo player with an eighth-notes up-and-down rhythm all-through, which is very un-common for Mr. Christian as for my knowledge. Therefore, I have to note his name written in italics. I am not that certain of Christian’s presence, here. He certainly would have been able to play these double-time bars with strict downward strokes – and would have done so!?

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Armstrong (c); Aaron Thompson (tb); Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian (bjo).

- Storyville 16: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Aaron Thompson (tbn); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p113: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Aaron Thompson (tbn); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

“Even without a reed, it’s still the Blue Five. Otherwise, it’s the same personnel as the session earlier in the month with some beautiful accompaniment by Louis Armstrong.”

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong -c; Aaron Thompson -tb; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Louis Armstrong, cnt; Aaron Thompson, tbn; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

046 **RED ONION JAZZ BABIES** New York, Nov. 26, 1924
 Louis Armstrong – cnt; Aaron Thompson – tbn; Buster Bailey – clt;
 Lil Armstrong – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 9206 Terrible Blues Gnt 5607, Chronological Classics 24-2
 9207 Santa Claus Blues Gnt 5607, Chronological Classics 24-2
 Composer credits: 9206 (C. Williams); 9207 (Straight – Kahn)

Here we have the ‘Red Onion Jazz Babies’ in their pure form, again, without a singer, that is. And as on all these ROJB sides, Buddy Christian cares for a very strong four-four rhythm

Armstrong adds one of his early genial cornet solos in 'Terrible Blues', using one single rhythmical phrase and alternates it with the different notes of the changes. Lil Armstrong delivers a much more various piano part than Clarence Williams does in his 'Blue Five' recordings. Yet, these 'Blue Five' sides have an even stronger drive than the 'ROJB' ones.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Armstrong (c); Aaron Thompson (tb); Buster Bailey (cl & ss); Lil Armstrong (p); Buddy Christian (bjo).

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Aaron Tompson (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt); Lil Armstrong (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo).

047 **SIPPIE WALLACE** Clarence Williams' Blue Five New York, Nov. 28, 1924
 Sippie Wallace – voc;
 Louis Armstrong – cnt; Aaron Thompson – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 73007-B Baby, I Can't Use You No More OK 8212, Doc DOCD-5399
 73008-B Trouble Everywhere I Roam OK 8212, Doc DOCD-5399
Composer credits: 73007 (M. Matthews – S. Wallace); 73008 (H. Thomas – S. Wallace)

The personnel accepted as a whole. This session seems to be good proof for Armstrong's good-will and diplomacy concerning Bechet. Bechet plays soprano throughout this session, although listed on alto sax by Delaunay (see below).

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Armstrong (c); Aaron Thompson (tb); unknown (as); Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian (bjo).

- Storyville 16: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Aaron Thompson (tbn); Sidney Bechet (clt/sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, *Clarence Williams p114*: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Aaron Thompson (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "Bechet rejoins the Blue Five, with his original sound and way of bending notes. Now it's Sippie Wallace's turn with Louis behind her. Bechet's soprano has a prominent part in the accompaniment on both sides. Louis is there, of course, but muted."

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong –c; Aaron Thompson –tb; Sidney Bechet –cl -ss; Clarence Williams –p; Buddy Christian –bj

- BGR*2: Louis Armstrong, cnt; Aaron Thompson, tbn; Sidney Bechet, clt/ sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

- BGR*3,*4: Louis Armstrong, c; Aaron Thompson, tb; Sidney Bechet, ss; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj

048 **SIPPIE WALLACE** Clarence Williams' Trio New York, Dec. 02, 1924
 Sippie Wallace – voc;
 Sidney Bechet – clt, sop;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 73014-B I'm So Glad I'm Brownskin OK 8197, Doc DOCD-5399
 73015-B Off And On Blues OK 8197, Doc DOCD-5399
Composer credits: 73014 (H. Thomas – S. Wallace); 73015 (H. Thomas – S. Wallace)

This certainly was more to Bechet's liking: Not to have a lead instrument in front of him or by his side, but he himself being the lead player. Very beautiful playing by this grand-master. And very nice to hear him on clarinet on the second title.

Notes:

- Storyville 16: Sidney Bechet (clt/sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, *Clarence Williams p116*: Sidney Bechet (clt/sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Sidney Bechet –cl-ss; Clarence Williams –p; Buddy Christian –bj

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Sidney Bechet, clt/sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

049 **SIPPIE WALLACE** Clarence Williams' Trio New York, Dec. 03, 1924
 Sippie Wallace – voc;
 Clarence Williams – pno; (Buddy Christian?) – bjo
 73018-B He's The Cause Of Me Being Blue OK 8190, Doc DOCD-5399
 73019-B Let My Man Alone Blues OK 8190, Doc DOCD-5399
Composer credits: 73018 (S. Wallace – C. Williams); 73019 (Harry Stanton)

Now, there seems to be some uncertainty as to the instrumentation. It is banjo tremolo-ing in the first title – there is only piano playing the beat. And it is the same with the second title, so that Mr. Forrest's remark in Storyville 142 (see below) is not correct and thus superfluous. To my ears the tremolo-ing instrument is a banjo – proved by short instances of rhythm playing – and there is no other instrument heard than piano and banjo. But the kind of playing is most unusual for Buddy Christian, and so his presence may be questioned. See sessions 055 and 056 in comparison. As to Mr. Charles Forrest's note in Storyville 142-160 (see below), I would say that the sound of the tremolo-ing banjo is not that of a mandolin in my ears, but still that of a banjo, and I do not hear a third instrument active at this session. I'd suggest that Buddy Christian would have been asked to accompany Miss Wallace in this very way. Or else, that another musician had accompanied Miss Wallace – on banjo, still. (See also session 020!)

The band-name "trio" might just have been kept as in Sippie Wallace's session of November 02, 1924, above (session 048), only, that the expected musician (Bechet?) just did not show-up.

Notes:

- Storyville 16: Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, *Clarence Williams p116*: Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "It's still the "Trio" even though it's only Williams and Christian. The banjo sounds quite strong, taking predominance over the piano in the accompaniment."

- Storyville 142-160 (600): To my (Charles Forrest – KBR) ears, Sippie Wallace's OK 8190 has p / bj / md which makes sense of the accompaniment credit of 'Contralto Solo accomp. Clarence Williams' Trio. Anyone else agree?"

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Clarence Williams –p; Buddy Christian –bj

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

050 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE** New York, Dec. 17, 1924
 Louis Armstrong – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop, sarrusophone;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo;

Eva Taylor – voc

73026-B Mandy, Make Up Your Mind OK 40260, Hot 'n Sweet FDC 5109

73027-B I'm A Little Blackbird Looking For A Bluebird OK 40260, Hot 'n Sweet FDC 5109

Composer credits: 73026 (Clark – Turk – Meyer - Johnston); 73027 (Clark – Turk – Meyer - Johnston)

Well, what is there to say? The Blue Five in full flight, and Bechet on sarrusophone, a very peculiar reed instrument of the 19th century used for march music purposes. And here now, at last, we have Charlie Irvis on trombone! Phantastic music! And again, we have that beautiful and simple rhythm accompaniment of Williams' piano and Christian's dark ringing banjo.

Sidney Bechet plays a sarrusophone in 'Mandy'. As Tom Lord reports "*The story is that Bechet became fascinated by the sarrusophone in a music story and borrowed it only for the use on this record.*" It should be added that the 'sarrusophone' was a double-reed instrument for the French military music - invented in the middle 1800s - to strengthen the oboe and bassoon groups of the bands. They were built in various pitches.

Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz*, discusses Armstrong's solo on 'Mandy, Make Up Your Mind' at length, complete with notation.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Armstrong (c); Charlie Irvis (tb); Sidney Bechet (ss & sarrusophone); Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian (bjo).

- Storyville 16: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop/sarrusophone); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)

- Lord, *Clarence Williams p117*: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop/sarrusophone); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc) "*Clarence finishes up the year with a winner. It's one of his best-known recordings, with an exciting group. Irvis is acknowledged as trombonist, and it's definitely Armstrong and Bechet. The personnel is confirmed by Charles Edward Smith, supposedly from Clarence's files.*"

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop/sarrusophone); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop/sarrusophone); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)

051 **JOSEPHINE BEATTY** Red Onion Jazz Babies New York, Dec. 22, 1924

Alberta Hunter – voc; Clarence Todd – voc;

Louis Armstrong – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Sidney Bechet – clt, sop;

Lil Armstrong – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

9246 Nobody Knows The Way I Feel This Mornin' Gnt 5626, Document DOCD-5424

9247-A Early Every Morn Gnt 5626, Document DOCD-5424

Composer credits: 9246 (Delaney – Delaney); 9247 (Higgins)

Alberta Hunter again singing with fervour and passion in the first title, a little supported by the three brass men. 'Early Every Morn' then is Miss Hunter's tune, interrupted (?) only by the band in one-half chorus. And enclosing a spirited coda break from Armstrong.

The accompanying band still is the Gennett version of Clarence Williams' Blue Five – the original one with Irvis and Bechet - only, that Williams was fixed to Okeh by contract. His place at the piano is taken over by Louis Armstrong's wife Lil Hardin-Armstrong.

Notes:

- BGR*2,*3: Louis Armstrong, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Sidney Bechet, clt, sop; Lil Armstrong, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.

- BGR*4: Louis Armstrong, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; Sidney Bechet, ss; Lil Armstrong, p; Buddy Christian, bj.

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Sidney Bechet -cl -ss; Lil Armstrong -p; Buddy Christian -bj; Clarence Todd -v.

052 **RED ONION JAZZ BABIES** New York, Dec. 22, 1924

Louis Armstrong – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop;

Lil Armstrong – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo;

Alberta Hunter, Clarence Todd (as Beatty And Todd) – voc duet

9248-A Cake Walking Babies From Home Gnt 5627, Chronological Classics 24-2

Composer credits: 9248 (Williams – Smith - Troy)

This single title by the Red Onion Jazz Babies was recorded on the fore-going session (session 047) with a wealth of fire and drive and great jazz soloistic by all participants. Alberta Hunter only in duet with singer Clarence Todd, Hunter singing the first part (melody) and Todd singing a nice harmonic second part.

Again, this is the Gennett version of Clarence Williams' Blue Five with Lil Hardin-Armstrong at the piano.

This title was also recorded two weeks later by Clarence Williams Blue Five, even with more swing and drive, yet with Eva Taylor as vocaliste.

Notes:

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (clt, sop); Lil Armstrong (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo);

Clarence Todd and Josephine Beatty (Alberta Hunter) (vcl duet).

- Rust*6: "*Although Eva Taylor claimed to be the female vocalist on this side, the voice is unmistakably that of Alberta Hunter, who also recorded two solos sides accompanied by the Red Onion Jazz Babies at this session. (Taylor did sing on the Okeh version of this title, q.v. under Clarence Williams.)*"

053 **MARGARET JOHNSON** Clarence Williams' Blue Five New York, Jan. 08, 1925

Margaret Johnson – voc;

Bubber Miley - tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

73081-A Who'll Chop Your Suey (When I'm Gone)? OK 8193, Hot 'n Sweet FDC 5109

73082-B Done Made A Fool Out Of Me OK 8193, Hot 'n Sweet FDC 5109

Composer credits: 73081 (S. Bechet – R. Simmons); 73082 (T. Delaney)

For this session Louis A. seems not to have been on hand, and Clarence's second choice obviously was Bubber Miley. The trombonist certainly is not Aaron Thompson, but rather Charlie Irvis with his strong legato trombone. And what would have been more reasonable than that Miley brought his Ellington colleague along when they were free.

Christian's banjo rings very clear, here, and with a light sound, especially when played with these short eighth "ta-taddam" snippets in the first title.

Notes:

- Storyville 16: Bubber Miley (cnt); Aaron Thompson (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo);
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p122: Bubber Miley (cnt); Aaron Thompson (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "For the first session of the new year Clarence uses Bubber Miley, rather than Louis. According to WCA, Louis, in Fletcher Henderson's band, was still in New York and would stay there until late June, 1925. Perhaps Louis wasn't available, or perhaps Clarence didn't want to completely discard his former sideman. Bechet holds a strong lead on both sides, especially on the first composition, his tune, with its provocative title. Most sources have listed Irvis as the trombonist, however, Rust lists Aaron Thompson."
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: Bubber Miley -c; Aaron Thompson -tb; Sidney Bechet -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj
 - BGR*2,*3,*4: Bubber Miley, cnt; Aaron Thompson, tbn; Sidney Bechet, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo "This session is stated to have begun late on 7 January and continued into the early hours of 8 January."

054 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE

New York, Jan. 08, 1925

Louis Armstrong - cnt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Sidney Bechet - sop;
 Clarence Williams - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo;
 Eva Taylor - voc

73083-A Cake-Walking Babies From Home

OK 40321, Hot 'n Sweet FDC 5109

73084-B Pickin' On Your Baby

OK 40330, Hot 'n Sweet FDC 5109

Composer credits: 73083 (Williams - Smith - Troy); 73084 (P. Reynolds - B. James)

'Cake-Walking Babies' without any doubt is one of the hottest sides in classic jazz, with everyone in the studio swinging like mad. And listen to the glorious Bechet breaks, and then Armstrong blowing the roof off. A special detail: the three-quarter-rhythm he plays in the last bars of the item against the four-quarter rhythm of the band. Fantastic! Williams and Christian pound a hell of a rhythm to propel the band. Amazing.

'Pickin' On Your Baby' is Eva's tune, with Louis playing the melody in high register. There certainly were not many trumpeters at the time who could do this convincingly as Louis does.

Notes:

- Storyville 16: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p122: Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc) "The first side has the stomping excitement of Armstrong and Bechet playing together. The second side has a beautiful, almost straight, chorus by Louis, following Eva's vocal."
 - Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)
 - BGR*2,*3,*4: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)

055 CHARLES AND EFFIE TYUS Clarence Williams Trio

New York, c. Jan. 18, 1925

Charles and Effie Tyus - voc duet;

Buster Bailey - sop;

Clarence Williams - pno; (Buddy Christian?) - bjo

73113-A I'm Funny 'Bout My Cookin', Baby

OK 8200, Doc DOCD-5526

73114-A Cuddle Up Close, It's Winter Time

OK 8200, Doc DOCD-5526

Composer credits: 73113 (C. Tyus - E. Tyus); 73114 (Clarence Todd)

Soprano playing on these sides is so much outside of Elliott's stylistic delivery and reach that it is un-understandable, that his presence could ever have been assumed. This player seems to be a little at odds with a soprano sax in the first title, but gets accustomed to it in the second. And successively shows a style known from Buster Bailey on the Clarence Williams' Blue Five recordings of the months to come, so that I am not afraid of assuming him to be probably Bailey. A nice find, by the way. And it is soprano, not clarinet. But there might still remain the possibility of Lorenzo Tio, Jr. of the Piron band playing here.

Williams certainly is on piano. But there are traces in the banjo playing that I do not refer to Buddy Christian. But I am unable to name an alternate musician. (See also session 024!)

Notes:

- Storyville 16: poss Ernest Elliott (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); poss Buddy Christian (bjo)
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p 123: possibly Ernest Elliott (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); probably Buddy Christian (bjo) "For this (next) session with Charles and Effie Tyus, there is some indecision about the identity of the soprano and the banjo. However, Ernest Elliott and Buddy Christian seem to be the considered choices."
 - Rust *3,*4,*6: ?Ernest Elliott -cl; Clarence Williams -p; ?Buddy Christian -g
 - BGR *2,*3,*4: poss Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; prob Buddy Christian, bjo

056 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE

New York, Mar. 04, 1925

Louis Armstrong - cnt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Sidney Bechet, Buster Bailey - sop;

Clarence Williams - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo;

Eva Taylor - voc

73204-A Cast Away

OK 40330, Hot 'n Sweet FDC 5109

73205-A Papa De-Da-Da

OK 8215, Hot 'n Sweet FDC 5109

Composer credits: 73204 (Brown - Easton - Stewart); 73205 (C. Williams - S. Williams - C. Todd)

There is real "schmaltz" in the first title – a waltz - and everybody might have had a joyous time playing it. Great Louis again in the second tune, but I wonder where the third reed (alto) should be. I can only hear two sopranos, the first one played by Bechet, the second probably by Bailey, although Redman would not be impossible.

Notes:

- Storyville 16: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet, Buster Bailey (sop); Don Redman (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc) "There is some doubt as to the presence of the third reed."

- Lord, Clarence Williams p124: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet, Buster Bailey (sop); Don Redman (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc) "This session includes a waltz which he (Clarence Williams – KBR) recorded with this talented group. Most sources agree on their identities, except that TKD omits Redman and lists only two reeds. There is still some doubt as to the presence of the third reed. All reeds would probably be used on the first side. Armstrong's and Bailey's presence would indicate the possibility of Redman's presence, as he too was a member of Henderson's band."

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt/sop); Sidney Bechet (sop); Don Redman (clt/alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)

- BGR*2: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop/sarrusophone); Buster Bailey (clt, sop); Don Redman (clt, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)

- BGR*3,*4: Louis Armstrong, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; Sidney Bechet, Buster Bailey, ss; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj

057 **WILLIAM BAILEY**

William Buster Bailey – clt;

Clarence Todd – pno, Buddy Christian – bjo

6023-3 Papa De Da Da

6024-1 Squeeze Me

6024-2 Squeeze Me

New York,

May 20-27, 1925

Ban 1563,

Chronological Classics 904

Ban 1563,

Chronological Classics 904

Ban 1563,

Frog DGF 71

Composer credits: 6023 (Todd – Williams - Williams); 6024 (Williams - Waller)

Note: Frog DGF 71 has take -2, although naming -1 in the booklet!

These solo recordings of the young clarinet star of the Fletcher Henderson band, Buster Bailey, present him as an acknowledged classically trained musician without a real hot style, lacking off-beat and blues feeling. Instead, he featured a stupendous instrumental technique which could border boredom in a jazz sense. He is accompanied here by rhythm section of little-known pianist and composer Clarence Todd and banjo player Buddy Christian, both men being part of the Clarence Williams stable of the time.

There are some nice banjo tremolo breaks by Mr. Christian in the penultimate chorus of 'Papa De Da Da'. 'Fats Waller's 'Squeeze Me' is played in an almost straight rendering of the tune, with the last chorus only being performed as a jazz improvisation.

Notes:

- Rust*2: William Bailey (clt soli); Clarence Todd (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Rust*3,*4,*6: William Bailey -clarinet solos; Clarence Todd -p; Buddy Christian -bj

- VJM 162-10, Ron Geesin: "... there are two of William (Buster) Bailey's 'Squeeze Me' on Banner and affiliates. The one that was reissued on Frog DGF 71 is not -1, but -2. When the two takes were set up in parallel with synchronous starts in my digital multitrack programme, Pro Tools, the exercise revealed that Mr. Bailey played virtually identically for about half the total time and then broke away suddenly to be quite different. There is a unique 'laughing' passage on -2. This is a good example of his classically-trained accuracy contrasted with his improvisatory powers."

Notable differences of takes:

6024-1: Bars 3/4 of last chorus: Bailey plays a sequence of 4 eighth-notes d-c-bb-c, 1 quarter-note bb, 1 eighth-note -bb, 1 quarter-note g (approximately)

6024-2: Bars 3/4 of last chorus: Bailey plays a "laughing" phrase of several off-beat db

058 **VIRGINIA LISTON**

Virginia Liston – voc;

Clarence Williams – pno; (Buddy Christian) – bjo

73390-A Make Me A Pallet

73391-A You Can Dip Your Bread In My Gravy, But You Can't Have None Of My Chops

New York,

c. Jun. 02, 1925

OK 8247,

Doc DOCD-5447

OK 8247,

Doc DOCD-5447

Composer credits: 73390 (Perry Bradford); 73391 (Fred Longshaw – Mike Jackson)

Just as on session 045 I do not think that a mandolin is involved in the recording, but on both sessions it is the banjo player who plays not only chordal accompaniment, but also tremolos more than usual. But, as Buddy Christian has my regard for playing strict functional four-four rhythm, what we hear here and on session 045 is not what I expect from Christian. So, there possibly another banjo player might be playing? The banjo sound is completely different from that on the next session (Eva Taylor) where Christian is documented as present on the recording label. Thus, Buddy Christian's presence on these sides is doubtful, at least.

By the way: I do not hear a string-instrument sounding like a mandolin on any of these two sides, although the Rusts name such for the first title, and the BGRs for the second one. (See also session 024!)

Notes:

- Storyville 17: Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) (1); unknown (mandolin) (2)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p129: Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) (1) unknown (mandolin) "This time she is really accompanied by Clarence Williams, as piano phrase H-2 is heard on the second side. On the second side the unknown mandolin plays a strong role, making the piano hard to hear."

- Rust *3,*4,*6: Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj (2); unknown -mandolin (1)

- BGR *2,*3,*4: Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj (1); unknown -mandolin (2)

059 **EVA TAYLOR**

Eva Taylor – voc;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

73524-B Far As I'm Concerned

73525-B Get Off My Money Blues

New York,

Jul. 11, 1925

OK 8228,

Doc DOCD-5409

OK 8228,

Doc DOCD-5409

Composer credits: 73524 (Clarence Williams – Chris Smith – Tim Brynm); 73525 (Clarence Williams)

Eva Taylor as a solo singer, here, accompanied by her husband Clarence – Williams, that is – on piano and co-New Orleanian Buddy Christian on banjo

Both accompanists are documented on the label. But mind Christian's banjo sound in comparison to the sound heard on sessions 045 and 054. Here, in contrast to all earlier recordings, Buddy Christian seems to have used another instrument as before, as this banjo owns a much lighter and more metallic sound. It is interesting to note, that both accompanists speed up the pace considerably in the second title. (See also session 024!)

Notes:

- *Storyville 17: Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
- *Lord, Clarence Williams p133: Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
- *BGR*2,*3,*4: Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*
- *Rust*3,*4,*6: Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj*

060 CLARA SMITH her Band	New York,	Aug. 20, 1925
Clara Smith – voc;		
Bob Fuller – clt (2), alt (1);		
Stanley Miller – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo		
140859-3	My Two-Timing Papa	Col 14097-D, Document DOCD-5366
140860-1	Kitchen Mechanic Blues	Col 14097-D, Document DOCD-5366
<i>Composer credits: 140859 (Stanley Miller); 140860 (Stanley Miller)</i>		

Bessie's name-sake Clara Smith here.

No uncertainties re personnel here. Typical Fuller on the reeds in his own rather strange musical manner, pianist Stanley Miller playing many melodic bass figures, and beautifully simple four-four-banjo by Christian. Buddy Christian obviously plays his usual dark sounding banjo again – in contrast to his instrument used at the Eva Taylor session above (session 059).

Notes:

- *BGR*2,*3,*4: Bob Fuller, clt, alt; Stanley Miller, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*
- *Rust*3,*4,*6: Bob Fuller -cl -as; Stanley Miller -p; Buddy Christian -bj*

061 SIPPY WALLACE	New York,	c. Aug. 25, 1925
Sippie Wallace – voc;		
Bob Fuller – clt;		
<i>(Mike Jackson?)</i> – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo		
73574-A	I'm Leaving You	OK 8288, Doc DOCD-5400
73575-A	I'm Sorry For It Now	OK 8251, Doc DOCD-5400
73576-A	Suitcase Blues	OK 8243, Doc DOCD-5400
73577-A	I Must Have It	OK 8381, Doc DOCD-5400
<i>Composer credits: 73574 (Green); 73575 (Eddie Green); 73576 (George W. Thomas); 73577 (Thomas)</i>		

The clarinet playing would certainly fit into Bob Fuller's affected and strange jazz manner. And I am astonished that all below cited discographies list the clarinet player as unknown.

This session certainly is not a Clarence Williams session, but might be attributed to Bob Fuller as commented in Lord p. 134 (see below). It is certainly not Clarence Williams playing the piano here. Instead, intuitively I would opt for Mike Jackson playing the piano with those flowery right-hand figures. But the banjo player decidedly sounds like Buddy Christian. Unexpectedly, he uses some un-accustomed appoggiaturas in the second title.

Notes:

- *Storyville 17: unknown (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
- *Lord, Clarence Williams p 134: "To me (Tom Lord – KBR) the pianist sounds like a heavier blues pianist. Some descending runs behind the singer and the clarinet, especially on the first side, are harmonized in thirds – quite unlike Clarence would play. Buddy Christian has previously been listed as doubling on guitar on some side, but this is not so. The VJM listing suggests ?Jimmy O' Bryant as the clarinetist on 73576-A. TKD contains a note by WCA that this is possibly a Bob Fuller session."*
- *Rust*3,*4,*6: unknown -cl (2,3,4); Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj*
- *BGR*2,*3,*4: unknown, clt (2,3,4); Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*

062 CLARA SMITH Jazz Band	New York,	Sep. 25, 1925
Clara Smith – voc;		
Harry Cooper – tpt; Bob Fuller – clt, alt;		
Stanley Miller – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo		
141046-2	Alley Rat Blues	Col 14104-D, Document DOCD-5366
141047-1	When My Sugar Walks Down The Street	Col 14104-D, Document DOCD-5366
141048	You'll Never Miss Your Water	Col unissued not on LP/CD
141049-1	Disappointed Blues	Col 14126-D, Document DOCD-5366

Having heard the very assured and strong Harry Cooper on the 'Seminole Syncopators' and 'Cotton Club Orchestra' recordings (in my Harry Cooper listing, elsewhere at this web-site – KBR) it seems very strange to assume the same player here on these titles. Our player here is rather weak and reticent, although he certainly has a good feeling for jazz playing. But technically he certainly is not on Cooper's level. Yet, the Columbia recording ledgers show him as trumpet player here, and consequently I have to revise my original opinion. It is Harry Cooper. I had thought different.

The clarinetist is named as Bob Fuller, but his clarinet style does not show the gimmicks Fuller is known for. Instead, he plays some strong and full-bodied clarinet phrases and is adept on alto sax as well. And he uses chordal arpeggios which are not otherwise heard from Bob Fuller. But, just as with the trumpet player, the Columbia ledgers state Bob Fuller as clarinetist and alto sax player, and we again unexpectedly and surprisingly hear a developing musician: Bob Fuller.

Pianist and banjoist are as stated.

Notes:

- *Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: Harry Cooper, cnt; Bob Fuller, clt/alt; Stanley Miller, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Harry Cooper, cnt; Bob Fuller, clt, alt; Stanley Miller, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: Harry Cooper, t; Bob Fuller, cl, as; Stanley Miller, p; Buddy Christian, bj.

063 **CLARA SMITH** Jazz Band New York, Sep. 28, 1925
 Clara Smith – voc;
 (Jonas 'Sweet Papa' Walker?) – tbn; Bob Fuller – clt;
 Mike Jackson - pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 140945-5 I'm Tired Of Bein' Good Col 14117-D, Document DOCD-5366

The clarinetist with great certainty is Bob Fuller. The trombonist plays in a sparse, rudimental and rough style with tailgate elements. He sounds as to have come from Chicago or even farther South (Jonas Walker comes to mind). The pianist may be Mike Jackson, judged by his pianistic style (solid unobtrusive rhythm and some flowery right-hand figures). The four-four banjo without gimmicks would suggest Buddy Christian.

Notes:

- Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: Acc unknown tpt (sic - KBR); alt; p; bj.
 - Rust*3: unknown t, cl, p, bj.
 - Rust*4,*6: unknown tb; unknown cl; unknown p; unknown bj
 - BGR*2,*3,*4: unknown, tbn; unknown, clt; unknown, pno; unknown, bjo

064 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE** New York, Oct. 06, 1925
 Louis Armstrong – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Buster Bailey – sop;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo;
 Eva Taylor – voc
 73686-B Just Wait 'Til You See My Baby Do The Charleston OK 8272, Frog DGF 81
 73687-B Livin' High Sometimes OK 8272, Frog DGF 81
 Composer credits: 73686 (C. Williams – C. Todd – J. Simmons); 73687 (Belledna – Pinkard)

I have to confess that I have difficulties to hear a second soprano distinctly, and after intense listening I am convinced that there isn't any!. The soprano certainly is Bailey. If there would be another one, it is assumed to be Redman. But I think that Rust who listed Bechet, Bailey and Redman for the session of January 8, 1925 – which by the way has been refuted in Storyville 1996/7 p.240 -28 – forgot to cut Redman out of his personnels for this and the next two sessions. As we now know is Redman nowhere on these sides. But he still stayed in the later Rust editions. This then led to Tom Lord following Rust's statements. There is no second soprano here. But there is Armstrong playing softly under Bailey when he solos.

On trombone I believe to hear Irvis, although tonally there are similarities to Big Charlie Green, only that Green used to play not as legato as Irvis does here. Armstrong, Williams and Christian as given.

Notes:

- Storyville 17: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt/sop); Don Redman (clt or sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc) "It is difficult to determine whether some of the reed work might be soprano and clarinet or two sopranos."

- Lord, Clarence Williams p137: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt/sop); Don Redman (clt or sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc) "Louis Armstrong, Don Redman, and Buster Bailey returned to New York with the Henderson Orchestra, which was to stay in the city until approximately January 25, 1926. Clarence brought together another exciting Blue Five session. He continues the sound of cornet with soprano that he had inaugurated with Bechet, this time using Bailey and Redman. It is difficult to determine whether some of the reed work might be soprano and clarinet or two soprano saxes. TKD and Davies have listed Charlie Green as the trombonist. Goldman agrees. However, WCA adds his correction to TKD, indicating it is Irvis."

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt/sop); Don Redman (clt/alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)

- BGR*2,*3: Louis Armstrong, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Buster Bailey, clt, sop; Don Redman, clt or sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo; Eva Taylor, vcl

- BGR*4: Louis Armstrong, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; Don Redman, cl; Buster Bailey, cl/ss; Don Redman, cl or ss; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj; Eva Taylor, vcl

065 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE** New York, Oct. 08, 1925
 Louis Armstrong – cnt; Charlie Green – tbn; Buster Bailey – sop;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo;
 Eva Taylor – voc
 73694-B Coal Cart Blues OK 8245, Frog DGF 81
 73695-B Santa Claus Blues OK 8245, Frog DGF 81
 Composer credits: 73694 (L. Armstrong - L. Hardin); 73695 (C. Straight – G. Kahn)

This stylistically is un-mistakably Charlie Green on trombone now. Bailey very fluent, but poorly swinging and too much to the fore, and Louis in heroic fashion. Redman is not there as already noticed in the above session. It is Armstrong playing background when Bailey solos. Absolutely great Blue Five recordings. Probably Green was the best trombonist for this kind of band and music. And the three horn men were Fletcher Henderson colleagues at this time.

The whole band swings, driven by the two-men rhythm section of Clarence W. and Buddy Christian.

Notes:

- Storyville 17: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Don Redman (clt); Buster Bailey (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc) "It is possible that Redman plays only on the first side."

- Lord, Clarence Williams p138: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Don Redman (clt); Buster Bailey (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc) "... The same group returns, although Goldman lists Charlie Green on trombone. Here again the two reeds cause a little confusion. It is possible that Redman plays only on the first side. Sidney Bechet is quoted in TKD as saying that both he and Bailey are present, with Bailey playing the lead. This doesn't sound like Bechet to me, and no other sources mention him."

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt/sop); Don Redman (clt/alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)
 - BGR*2,*3: Louis Armstrong, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Buster Bailey, clt, sop; Don Redman, clt or sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo; Eva Taylor, vcl
 - BGR*4: Louis Armstrong, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; Don Redman, cl; Buster Bailey, ss; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj

066 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS' TRIO** New York, Oct. 16, 1925
 Eva Taylor, Clarence Williams, Clarence Todd – voc
 Louis Armstrong – cnt;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo;
 73721-A Santa Claus Blues OK 8254, Frog DGF 81
 Composer credits: 73721 (C. Straight – G. Kahn)

Very beautiful, soulful and melodious Louis Armstrong here, quite another side of his playing power. Clarence seems to be on piano, but he stops playing when singing. Thus, Buddy Christian is solely responsible for the rhythm part most of the time.

Notes:

- Storyville 17: Louis Armstrong (cnt); prob Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor, Clarence Williams, Clarence Todd (voc) “Although the label gives guitar in the accompaniment it is in fact banjo as shown. The piano is only heard in the introduction and this has been previously given as Dan Wilson, we see no reason why Clarence should not have been responsible.”

- Lord, Clarence Williams p139: : Louis Armstrong (cnt); prob Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor, Clarence Williams, Clarence Todd (voc) “This is the Clarence Williams Trio that performed on radio, stage, and in department and music stores. This record has only been reissued recently (probably because of the heavily featured vocal sound) despite some excitingly beautiful Louis Armstrong muted cornet work in the background. Although the label gives guitar in the accompaniment, it is a banjo as shown. The piano is only heard in the introduction and this has been previously given as Dan Wilson, we see no reason why Clarence should not have been responsible.”

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Dan Wilson (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor, Clarence Williams, Clarence Todd (voc)

- BGR*2: Louis Armstrong, cnt; Dan Wilson or Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.

- BGR*3,*4: Louis Armstrong, c; prob Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj

067 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE** New York, Oct. 26, 1925
 Louis Armstrong – cnt; Charlie Green – tbn;
 Don Redman – alt, clt; Coleman Hawkins – ten;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo;
 Eva Taylor – voc
 73738-A Squeeze Me OK 8254, Frog DGF 81
 73739-B You Can't Shush Katie (The Gabbiest Girl In Town) OK 8342, Frog DGF 81
 Composer credits: 73738 (C. Williams – T. Waller); 73739 (White – Creamer - Warren)

This is the last edition of Clarence Williams' Blue Five, and what an array of great musicians it comprises. Armstrong, Redman – clearly identifiable – and Hawkins come from the Henderson band. But the trombonist is Charlie Green again in my ears, stylistically and tonally. And this certainly makes sense, as Green was band-mate to the other brass men present in the Henderson band. And again, Williams and Christian make up the strong rhythm section.

Notes:

- Storyville 17: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Don Redman (clt/alt); Coleman Hawkins (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p140: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Don Redman (clt/alt); Coleman Hawkins (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc) “This was to be Louis' last recording session with Clarence Williams. He left Fletcher Henderson to return to Chicago in early November 1925. Along with Louis, Clarence had been using other musicians from Henderson's orchestra – Buster Bailey and Don Redman. This session introduces Coleman Hawkins as a Williams sideman. The personnel is pretty well agreed upon by all sources except that TKD and Davies suggest Charlie Green as the trombonist. Aurally, this is not so.”

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Green (tbn); Don Redman (clt/alt); Coleman Hawkins (clt/ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (voc)

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Louis Armstrong, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Don Redman, clt or sop; Coleman Hawkins, ten; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo; Eva Taylor, vcl

068 **BLUE RHYTHM ORCHESTRA** New York, Oct. 29, 1925
 June Clark – cnt; Jimmy Harrison – tbn;
 Buster Bailey – clt; Leonard Fields – alt;
 Charlie “Smitty” Smith – pno; Will “Splivy” Escoffery – bjo
 106358 Keep Your Temper PA 36364, Per 14545, Frog DGF 73

Because of the obvious correlation of this and the following sessions I have taken my liberty to discuss both sessions together under the following date.

Please, note, that ‘Keep Your Temper’ on Frog DGF 71 does in fact play the ‘Keep Your Temper’ of the Gulf Coast Seven session of Nov. 05, 1925. The Blue Rhythm Orchestra ‘Keep Your Temper’ has then been correctly reissued on Frog DGF 73 as shown here!

069 **BLUE RHYTHM ORCHESTRA** New York, c. Nov. 04, 1925
 June Clark – cnt; Jimmy Harrison – tbn;
 Buster Bailey – clt; Leonard Fields – alt;
 Charlie “Smitty” Smith – pno; Will “Splivy” Escoffery – bjo
 106381 Santa Claus Blues PA 36350, Per 14531, Frog DGF 71
 106382 Hold 'Er, Deacon PA 36364, Per 14545, Frog DGF 71

The quotations below make me conclude that these sides of the 'Blue Rhythm Orchestra' in fact are by 'June Clark's Creole Stompers', augmented by Buster Bailey on clarinet, if it is he. The below mentioned characteristics of the alto player and the piano player are easily recognized on the records, so that the personnel should be thus:

- June Clark: aurally the cornet player is the same man as on the Gulf Coast Seven and not? ---- Thomas or (presumably Big Charlie Thomas), as given in Rust, Jazz Records. Clark owns a fat tone and a very fiery approach and attack, although sometimes retarding the opening- notes of some phrases (lip trouble? or uncertainty what to play next?), whereas --- Thomas has a lighter tone, uses a more lyrical style with high interval-jumps, very much like L. Armstrong at that time. Furthermore, Clark owns a rather erratic approach to time/rhythm, which results in a kind of hectic succession of notes.
- Jimmy Harrison: interesting to hear Harrison's new concept of trombone-playing, like a second cornet as cited below. And mind his tone, vibrato, and attack, completely unlike any other trombone player at that time.
- Buster Bailey: although there is no source for this suggestion known to me, the style seems to be Bailey's. Bailey is not known to have been a permanent member of the group. But do we really know? There is no soprano-sax to be heard anywhere.
- Leonard Fields: this man's playing is exactly as cited below in 'Sources'. There is no soprano-sax to be heard anywhere. If the alto-player is indeed Len Fields, this should have some consequences to the personnels of Cl. Williams Blue Five of 12-15-1925 and ca. 01-22-1926 and Cl. Williams Stompers of 01-04-1926, maybe even to D. Ellington a.h. Orch. of 04-01-1926! Mentioning his name at the appropriate places in Tom Lord 'Clarence Williams' seems quite reasonable! (See my Leonard Fields listing!)
- Charles 'Smitty' Smith: Rust and all other discographies list Willie "The Lion" Smith as pianist. This pianist here shows nothing of "The Lion's" characteristics. The piano breaks at the end of 'Hold 'Er Deacon' with their simple "oom-pah" would exactly apply for "Smitty" Smith as quoted below. Therefore, and because Clark's piano player at the time was "Smitty" Smith I think that "Smitty" is much more probable than "The Lion". Maybe "the Lion's" name was listed in early discographic times because "Keep Your Temper" is "the Lion's" tune and "Smitty" was practically unknown!
- Will 'Splivy' Escoffery: Rust and all other discographies list Buddy Christian. To me Buddy Christian does not seem to be the banjo player on these sides, comparing this man's style to that more straight-forward approach of Buddy Christian on the Clarence Williams Blue Five or the Gulf Coast Seven session of Nov. 05, 1925 (see below). Most probably this man is the named "Splivy" Escoffery (see below) as mentioned in Jazz Information' No.II/16 of 1941 as regular member of the June Clark band. He plays in that Ragtime derived banjo style common in Harlem in the early days as opposed to the straight 4/4 "Western" style of Buddy Christian. William "Splivy" Escoffery, who is not listed in Rust 6th ed., may yet be found in the Rust's Artist index under "Spivey, -- (bj) having made recordings with Eliza Christmas Lee and with Lavinia Turner in 1921. He might even be the same man, who played banjo/guitar in Duke Ellington's first group at Armstrong High School in Washington DC in 1916, although named William Escoffery here (Lawrence, D. Ellington and his World, p. 12). Now, just look at the notes below re the personnels as listed in the various editions of Rust! That's what I would call some development!

Notes:

- *VJM VLP 5 (LP) Cover text: probably Louis Armstrong and another (cornets); Charlie Irvis (trombone); Buster Bailey (clarinet and soprano saxophone); unknown (alto saxophone); probably Clarence Williams or Dan Parish (piano); Buddy Christian (banjo),*
- *Rust*2: June Clark? (tpt); Jimmy Harrison? (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt, sop); Prince Robinson (ten); Willie "The Lion" Smith (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)*
- *Rust*3: ? --- Thomas -c; Jimmy Harrison -tb; Buster Bailey -cl -ss; Don Redman -cl -as; Clarence Williams or Willie "The Lion" Smith -p; Buddy Christian -bj*
- *Rust*4: June Clark or --- Thomas -c; Jimmy Harrison -tb; Buster Bailey -cl -ss; Prince Robinson -ts; Willie "The Lion" Smith -p; Buddy Christian -bj*
- *Rust*6: Charlie Thomas -c; Jimmy Harrison -tb; Buster Bailey -cl -ss -as; Prince Robinson -ts; Willie "The Lion" Smith -p; Buddy Christian -bj*

070 GULF COAST SEVEN

June Clark – cnt; Jimmy Harrison – tbn;
 Leonard Fields – alt; *Harrison Jackson* – clt, ten;
 Charlie "Smitty" Smith – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Joe "Jazz" Carson – dms
 141245-4 Santa Claus Blues
 141246-3 Keep Your Temper
Composer credits: 141245 (Straight and Kahn); 141246 (Smith)

New York,	Nov. 05, 1925
Col 14107-D,	Frog DGF 32
Col 14107-D,	Frog DGF 32

Comparing these titles to the Blue Rhythm Orch. titles above, this is the same band with a few changes.

- June Clark: same man as last session.
- Jimmy Harrison: same man as last session.
- Leonard Fields: same man as last session.
- Harrison Jackson: Rust and all other discographies list Prince Robinson. I hear alt and ten/clt on these sides. The style of the tenor sax player is rather pedestrian and shows nothing of Prince Robinson's style on the Washingtonians of Sep. 07, 1925 (4 forceful bars in middle of alto chorus) or of his playing later on. So, this man here, whose clarinet playing is a little better than his tenor playing, may be the said Harrison Jackson. He later became a lawyer.
- Charlie Smith: same man as last session.
- Buddy Christian: seems logical. This man's style is that more straight-forward and light approach of banjo playing on the Cl. Williams Blue Five of Buddy Christian.
- Joe "Jazz" Carson: you hear the appropriate cymbal-crashes at the right places which could have been executed by any drummer. There is no reason to doubt "Jazz" Carson, though. There seems to be some confusion about this drummer's name. The first Rosenberg/Williams draft names him as: "Jazz" Carson Williams. This then is changed to "Jazz" Joe Carson in the second draft, possibly after rechecking the name with June Clark. (*Louis Metcalf, RR46/4: "I remember Eddie Carson on drums (with Marge Creath in St. Louis! – KBR). He was Josephine Baker's father."*)
- I do not hear any tuba notes!

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!

Notes:

- 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.

071 SARA MARTIN	Clarence Williams’ Blue Five	New York,	Nov. 23, 1925
Sara Martin – voc;			
June Clark – cnt; Jimmy Harrison – tbn; Leonard Fields – alt;			
Clarence Williams – pno, voc (1); Buddy Christian - bjo			
73773-B	I’m Gonna Hoodoo You	OK 8270,	Document DOCD-5397
73774-B	Your Going Ain’t Giving Me The Blues	OK 8270,	Document DOCD-5398
73775-B	What More Can A Monkey Woman Do?	OK 8283,	Document DOCD-5398
<i>Composer credits: 73773 (Martin - Williams); 73774 (Martin - Williams); 73775 (Williams)</i>			

Rather solid foundation here. Clark declared this as his recording when interviewed about it in 1940 by Jazz Information. Clark and Harrison had already been band mates for two years in June Clark’s Creole Stompers and their partnership is clearly heard here, no doubt about it. The alto player of June Clark’s Creole Stompers at this time was Leonard Fields, a more legitimate than hot musician, but with immense technique, who joined the band in mid 1925 and stayed at least into 1926. His style can easily be identified by statements of fellow saxophonists quoted elsewhere on this website (June Clark).

Also, in late 1925 and early 1926 Buddy Christian was part of the June Clark Creole Stompers. So, here we seem to have an early example of the fact that, for recording purposes, Clarence Williams recruited his men from the most prominent bands at the time in Harlem. We will later see the same phenomenon with the bands of Duke Ellington, Savoy Bearcats, Charlie Johnson and a couple of others. While it may look a bit daring, we stick to the personnel above.

Notes:

- Storyville 17: ---- Thomas (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); prob Buster Bailey (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); prob Buddy Christian (bjo).
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p146: ---- Thomas (cnt); poss. Charlie Irvis (tbn); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); prob Buddy Christian (bjo).
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: ---- Thomas -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; ?Buster Bailey -as; Clarence Williams -p -v (1,2); ?Buddy Christian -bj.
 - BGR*2: ---- Thomas, cnt; poss Charlie Irvis, tbn; prob Buster Bailey, alt; Clarence Williams, pno, vcl(1,2); prob Buddy Christian, bjo.
 - BGR*3,*4: Thomas, c; poss Charlie Irvis, tb; unknown, alt; Clarence Williams, p, v(1,2); prob Buddy Christian, bj.

072 CLARENCE WILLIAMS’ BLUE FIVE		New York,	Dec. 15, 1925
‘Big Charlie’ Thomas – cnt;			
Buster Bailey – clt; Leonard Fields – alt;			
Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo;			
Eva Taylor - voc			
73837-B	Shake That Thing	OK 8267,	Frog DGF 81
73838-B	Get It Fixed	OK 8267,	Frog DGF 81
<i>Composer credits: 73837 (C. Jackson); 73838 (C. Williams)</i>			

Following John R.T. Davies this cornet player would be the enigmatic “Big Charlie” Thomas. The reader will certainly know how this man came into prominence and how he was identified – and on what facts. As a result of his thoughts and researches John R.T. made a beautiful CD on this matter, bringing together many titles, which were hitherto attributed to unknown cornet players. The whole compilation seems very feasible, only that the first three titles of the CD are the titles of session 066 (above), and exactly here we know of J. Clark’s presence. So, there seem to be two cornetists, sounding very much like Louis (June Clark was a close friend to Louis, and later on a member of his band team). Clark owns a fat tone, a strong vibrato continuing for the whole duration of a tone and a somewhat erratic time. “Big Charlie” contrarily has a rather light tone, retained vibrato and likes to play high interval jumps. But both players perform in the Armstrong manner. This player here (067) is the man we now identify as Thomas. His surname had been given by Eva Taylor, his assumed first name coming from an exhortation by Margaret Carter/Johnson on the Buddy Christian’s Jazz Rippers. It has to be conceded, that the name may be speculation in parts, but the identity of this beautiful cornet player can not musically be denied.

Clark had severe lip problems in late 1925, and it might have been the case that Williams engaged Ch. Thomas as a sub for Clark, but keeping on the other participants from Clark’s band: Leonard Fields on alto and Buddy Christian on banjo. It has to be added that Buster Bailey obviously was partly related to the Clark band as he participated in the two sessions under the name of “Blue Rhythm Orchestra”, aka the Clark band.

And mind the breakdown of the rhythm after Mr. Fields’ queer alto sax break in the last chorus of ‘Get It Fixed’!

Notes:

- Storyville 17: ---- Thomas (cnt); Buster Bailey (clt); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (vcl).
 “The unknown alto player has been listed previously as one Len Fields – a name unknown to us.”
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p147: ---- Thomas (cnt); Buster Bailey (clt); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (vcl).
 - Rust*2: unknown (cnt); Buster Bailey (clt); Len Fields (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); Eva Taylor (vcl).
 - Rust*3,*4: --- Thomas -c; Buster Bailey -cl; unknown -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj; Eva Taylor -v.
 - Rust*6: Charlie Thomas -c; Buster Bailey -cl; unknown -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj; Eva Taylor -v.
 - BGR*2: -- Thomas, cnt; Buster Bailey, clt; poss Len Fields, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.
 - BGR*3,*4: -- Thomas, c; Buster Bailey, cl; unknown, as; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj.

073 CLARENCE WILLIAMS’ STOMPERS		New York,	Jan. 04, 1926
Bubber Miley – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;			
Otto Hardwick – alt, bar, sop; Prince Robinson – ten, clt;			
Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Henry "Bass" Edwards - bbs			

73893-B	Spanish Shawl	OK 40541,	Frog DGF 81
73894-B	Dinah	OK 40541,	Frog DGF 81

Composer credits: 73893 (E. Schoebel); 73894 (H. Akst)

After relistening MR and KBR agree that we hear the Duke Ellington band with its contemporary personnel except Williams and (certainly) Buddy Christian. This would mean that the tenor player is not Hawkins. The tenor playing heard here is consistent with Prince Robinson's style. The instrument identified as oboe very certainly is a soprano sax played by Hardwick with Robinson on clarinet playing in close harmony.

Notes:

- *Storyville 17: Thomas Morris, and if a second trumpet, poss Ed Allen (tpt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); poss Otto Hardwick (alt); prob Coleman Hawkins (clt, ten, bar); poss unknown third (reed); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p147: Thomas Morris, and if a second trumpet, poss Ed Allen (tpt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Don Redman or poss Otto Hardwick (alt); poss Coleman Hawkins (clt, ten, bar); poss unknown third (reed); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
 - *Rust*2: two unknown (tpt); Charlie Irvis (?)(tbn); Don Redman (clt, sop, alt); Coleman Hawkins (clt, ten, bsx); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St.Clair (bbs).*
 - *Rust*3: Tom Morris, ?Ed Allen (if two present) -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; ?Otto Hardwick -as; ?Coleman Hawkins -cl, ts, bar; poss third reed – ?Don Redman -ss; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St.Clair -bb.*
 - *Rust*4: Joe Smith -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Don Redman -as -ss; Coleman Hawkins -cl, ts, bar; Clarence Williams -p; poss Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St.Clair -bb.*
 - *Rust*6: Bubber Miley -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Otto Hardwick -as -ss; Coleman Hawkins -cl, ts, bar; Clarence Williams -p; poss Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St.Clair -bb.*

074 BILLY AND MARY MACK	Clarence Williams' Trio	New York,	c. Jan. 11, 1926
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Mary Mack – voc; Billy Mack – voc (2,3,5);
 Charlie Irvis – tbn;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

73906-B	Oh! Me Oh! My Blues	OK 8339,	Document DOCD-5375
73907-A	You've Got To Quit Your Low Down Ways	OK 8274,	Selmerphone SHN-4028 (LP)
73908-B	Fetch It When You Can	OK 8274,	Document DOCD-5375
73909-B	How Could My Good Man Turn His Back On Me Now	OK 8296,	Document DOCD-5375
73911-B	You Don't Want Much	OK 8296,	Document DOCD-5375

Composer credits: 73906 (King - Mack); 73907 (Mack); 73908 (Mack); 73909 (Nelson); 73911 (Mack – Mack)

To my ears this trombone player definitely is Charlie Irvis with his distinct legato style, but very probably in a somewhat intoxicated form. Also, I would not doubt Buddy Christian's presence. Obviously, he uses his light-toned banjo here again, as in other trio accompaniments (see session 020). I do not agree with Storyville's remarks below.

Warning: Document DOCD-5375 carries the Mack's 'You Gotta Quit Your Low Down Ways' of 22 December 1936 – with possibly Albert Ammons on piano, and not the second title above!

Notes:

- *Storyville 17: unknown (tbn); Clarence Williams (pno); poss Buddy Christian (bjo). "The trombone is very weak and thin and the banjo sounds too stolid to be Christian although previously listed so."*
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p150: unknown (tbn); Clarence Williams (pno); poss Buddy Christian (bjo).*
 - *BGR*2,*3,*4: unknown, tbn; Clarence Williams, pno; poss Buddy Christian, bjo.*
 - *Rust*3,*4,*6: unknown -tb; Clarence Williams -p; ?Buddy Christian -bj.*

075 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE		New York,	c. Jan. 22, 1926
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Bubber Miley – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Otto Hardwick – alt;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Henry 'Bass' Edwards – bbs;
 Eva Taylor – voc

73957-A	I've Found A New Baby	OK 8286,	Frog DGF 81
73958-B	I've Found A New Baby	OK 8286,	Frog DGF 81
73959-B	Pile Of Logs And Stone (Called Home)	OK 8286,	Frog DGF 81

Composer credits: 73957 (S. Palmer – S. Williams); 73958 (S. Palmer – S. Williams); 73959 (M. Pinkard)

As will be seen more often later on, Clarence used to recruit good musicians from well-known bands, or even newcomers to Harlem. It will also be seen later that he used to hire two – sometimes more – musicians from a specific band, so to take advantage of their being used to know each other. So, just like in session 074, we have the whole Ellington band of the time here, except for Clarence and Buddy Christian on banjo.

The wind instrument players – including the tuba – are from the contemporaneous Ellington band. Miley with his individual growl style, Irvis playing "extreme" legato trombone, Hardwick singing on his alto, and 'Bass' Edwards playing the shortest tuba notes of them all. And Christian delivers a beautiful ringing and swinging banjo rhythm. What a beautiful jazz music! And listen to Clarence's extraordinary lively piano playing behind Eva Taylor in 73958-B.

Notes:

- *Storyville 18: Bubber Miley (cnt); prob Charlie Irvis (tbn); Otto Hardwick (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); allegedly Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p151: Bubber Miley (cnt); prob Charlie Irvis (tbn); poss Otto Hardwick or Don Redman (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); allegedly Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
 - *Rust*2: Bubber Miley, Tom Morris (cnt); Buster Bailey (alt); unknown (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Eva Taylor (vcl).*
 - *Rust*3,*4,*6: Bubber Miley -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; Otto Hardwick -as; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb; Eva Taylor -v.*
 - *BGR*2: Bubber Miley, c; prob Charlie Irvis, tb; Otto Hardwicke, as; Clarence Williams, p; poss Leroy Harris, bj; Cyrus St. Clair, bb.*
 - *BGR*3,*4: Bubber Miley, c; prob Charlie Irvis, tb; poss Otto Hardwicke or Don Redman, as; Clarence Williams, p; poss Leroy Harris, bj; Cyrus St. Clair, bb.*

- Scherman, Eriksson, Anderby, Wallen, *Bubber Miley Discography: B. Miley (tp), Charlie Irvis (tb), Otto Hardwick (as), Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris (bj); Henry "Bass" Edwards (bb)*. "Both versions of I've Found A New Baby, entirely different from each other in arrangement and tempo, were issued on Okeh 8286, the first (slower) one being credited to Eva Taylor, the second to Clarence Williams' Blue Five. Rust and Lord have prob Irvis, Hardwick or Redman, Harris and St. Clair. The sleeve of Fj-121 has the same and an unknown washboard. We are certain that the musicians are exactly the same as for the previous session but without the clarinet and tenor man. There is no washboard audible."

Notable differences of takes:

73957-A: slow tempo (ca. 120), tune starts with 6 bars intro/vamp, then Eva Taylor singing the verse, then the chorus
73958-B: fast tempo (ca. 160), tune starts with band playing the chorus, then verse, then chorus alto solo, then Eva Taylor singing the third chorus, then final chorus ens.

076 **BUDDY CHRISTIAN'S CREOLE FIVE** New York, c. Mar. 23, 1926
Harry Cooper – tpt; John Mayfield – tbn; Albert 'Happy' Caldwell – clt;
Charlie 'Smitty' Smith – pno, (cymbal)(3); Buddy Christian – bjo
Louise Vant – voc (1,2)
74057-A Sunset Blues OK 8311, Hot'n Sweet 151222
74058-A Texas Mule Stomp OK 8311, Hot'n Sweet 151222
74059-A Sugar House Stomp OK 8342, Hot'n Sweet 151222
Composer credits: 74057 (N. Christian); 74058 (T. Morris – N. Christian); 73059 (N. Christian)

Louise Vant performs as band singer here with Buddy Christian's Creole Five. This certainly is a beautiful band and it is worthy of note that no unequivocal and coherent personnel have been suggested up to now (Dec. 2016).

The cornet/trumpet player certainly – for all I know – is not Thomas Morris. Chris Hillman in his record review of the Herwin 107 LP 'New Orleans Sounds in New York 1924 – 1926' (Jazz Journal Oct. 1975) writes: "I am certain that the Creole Five cornetist is Harry Cooper." And I shall gladly follow Mr. Hillman's well-founded and correct identification. Comparison with what can be heard on the Seminole Syncopators and the Harry's Happy Four show us that Cooper is our man here.

But the other musicians obviously need new consideration. On trombone I hear the trombonist of Clarence Williams Blue Five of 1923, a man playing a partly legato and partly staccato style. He must be John Mayfield, and to my ears this is clearly recognizable. After repeated listening I hear a faint possibility this player to be Charlie Irvis on a bad day.

The clarinetist – ever since the advent of discography – identified as Bob Fuller to my ears is most probably Albert 'Happy' Caldwell, playing in a modernized Johnny Dodds derived style. The pianist shines in pure comping without any solo ambition, and only behind the singer he plays some three to four figures which I know from Charlie Smith, at this time pianist of the June Clark Creole Stompers at Smalls' Sugar Cane Club. This band recorded under the pseudonyms of Blue Rhythm Orchestra and the Gulf Coast Seven.

The strong banjo is played by the leader, Buddy Christian, banjo player and pianist from New Orleans. Only on 'Sugar House Stomp' 14 cymbal strokes can be heard at appropriate places – no other drum features – and it has to be asked whether a drummer was participating on this last title of the session or somebody of the recording staff, or perhaps one of the other band players. But, as the cymbal strokes are choked by hand, no other participating musician would have been able to fulfil this special task and still playing on his own instrument. Another listening (January 2025) leads me to conclude that in parts of this title the piano is inaudible behind the strong banjo beat, and here most – or all – cymbal strokes occur!

Notes:

- Rust*2: Tom Morris? (cnt); Jake Frazier? (tbn); Bob Fuller (clt); Louis Hooper or Mike Jackson (less likely Clarence Williams) (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); unknown (dms)

- Rust*3: ? Charlie Gaines -t; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; Bob Fuller -cl; Louis Hooper (or poss Mike Jackson) -p; Buddy Christian -bj; unknown -d; Louise Vant -v (1,2)

- Rust*4,*6: ? Tom Morris -c; ?Jake Frazier -tb; Bob Fuller -cl; ?Porter Grainger (part composer of the first two titles) or Louis Hooper or Mike Jackson -p; Buddy Christian -bj; unknown -d; Louise Vant -v (1,2)

- BGR*2: poss Tom Morris (or any one of the three cnts from earlier L. Vant sessions); poss Jake Frazier or Charlie Irvis, tb; Bob Fuller, cl; poss Louis Hooper or Mike Jackson, p; Buddy Christian -bj; unknown, d; Louise Vant, v (1,2)

- BGR*3,*4: poss Tom Morris, c; poss Jake Frazier or Charlie Irvis, tb; Bob Fuller, cl; poss Louis Hooper or Mike Jackson, p; Buddy Christian -bj; unknown, d; Louise Vant, v (1,2)

Tunes:

74057-A *Sunset Blues* Key of C OKeh
(A1 Chorus 12 bars blues ens)(B Verse 16 bars AA' ens)(A2 Chorus 12 bars voc + ens)(A3 Chorus 12 bars voc + ens)(A4 Chorus 12 bars voc + ens)(A5 Chorus 12 bars tpt + ens riff)(A6 Chorus 12 bars ens)

74058-A *Texas Mule Stomp* Key of C - Em - C OKeh
(Intro 8 bars ens)(A strain A 16 bars AA' ens)(B strain B 16 bars AA' ens)(C1 Chorus 16 bars AA' voc + ens)(C2 Chorus 16 bars voc + ens)(C3 Chorus 16 bars ens)

74059-A *Sugar House Stomp* Key of Bb OKeh
(Intro 8 bars ens)(A1 strain A 16 bars AA' clt + tbn)(A2 strain A 16 bars AA' tpt + ens)(B1 strain B 16 bars AA' ens)(B2 strain B 16 bars tbn)(C1 strain C 16 bars AB' ens)(C2 strain C 16 bars ens)(A3 strain A 16 bars ens)(A4 strain A 16 bars ens)

077 **SARA MARTIN** Clarence Williams' Blue Five New York, Mar. 24, 1926
Sara Martin – voc;
Bubber Miley – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Otto Hardwick – alt;
Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
74066-B What's The Matter Now? OK 8336, Document DOCD-5397
74067-B I Want Every Bit Of It, I Don't Like It Second Hand OK 8336, Document DOCD-5397
Composer credits: 74066 (Williams – Williams); 74067 (Williams – Williams)

Aurally the trumpet player here is Miley as suggested by some members of our listening team. In view of the fact that other members of the Ellington band were recruited for this session the presence of Miley is most probable. Irvis and Edwards were members of the Ellington crew, too, and so it seems feasible to suggest Hardwick as altoist although not much characteristic of his playing can be heard. But the romantic alto playing in the intro of the second side sounds very typical.

But: As I have just (19-11-20) been informed by Steven Lasker, there is no tuba on these sides. And he certainly is right. No wonder that the band is called 'Blue Five'!

Notes:

- Storyville 18: *unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); unknown (sax); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
- Lord, Clarence Williams p156: *unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo); poss Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
- Rust*3: *no personnel, but included in session accompanied by Eddie Heywood -p, with notation: The last two titles are reportedly accomp. by Clarence Williams' Blue Five.*
- Rust*4,*6: *unknown -c; unknown -tb; unknown -as; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj; ? Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*
- BGR*2: *poss Tom Morris, cnt; unknown, tbn; prob Buster Bailey or Don Redman, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; unknown, bjo; with prob Cyrus St. Clair, bbs. "Matrices 74066/67 may have been made on March 24, 1926."*
- T. Lord, Clarence Williams: *unknown (cnt, tbn, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo); possibly Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
- BGR*3,*4: *unknown, c; unknown, tb; unknown, as; Clarence Williams, p; unknown, bj; poss Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*
- Scherman, Eriksson, Anderby, Wallen, Bubber Miley Discography: *not listed*

078	SARA MARTIN	Clarence Williams' Blue Five	New York,	Mar. 25, 1926
	Sara Martin – voc;			
	Bubber Miley – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Otto Hardwick – alt;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs			
74072-A	Brother Ben	OK 8325,	Document	DOCD-5398
74073-A	The Prisoner's Blues	OK 8442,	Document	DOCD-5398
74074-B	Careless Man Blues	OK 8325,	Document	DOCD-5398
74075-A	How Could I Be Blue?	OK 8442,	Document	DOCD-5398
<i>Composer credits: 74072 (Williams - Waller); 74073 (Williams); 74074 (Todd); 74075 (Williams – Williams)</i>				

This still is a contingent from the Ellington band, but Irvis is uncertain here and the altoist could be anyone.

Re the note from Steven Lasker, 10-11-20 re tuba player Mack Shaw on next session: he distinctly is here as well (see characteristics of his style in Clarence Williams Stompers session of March 25, 1926)!

And we have the great four-four rhythm by Clarence and Buddy Christian again as on many sides before.

Notes:

- Storyville 18: *Bubber Miley or unknown (2)(cnt); unknown (tbn); Otto Hardwick (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
- Lord, Clarence Williams p159: *unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo); poss Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
- Rust*3: *? Bubber Miley -c; unknown -tb; Otto Hardwick -as; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*
- Rust*4,*6: *? Bubber Miley -c; unknown -tb; Otto Hardwick or Don Redman -as; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj; ? Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*
- BGR*2: *poss Tom Morris, cnt; unknown, tbn; prob Buster Bailey or Don Redman, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; unknown, bjo; with prob Cyrus St. Clair, bbs. "Matrices 74066/67 may have been made on March 24, 1926."*
- BGR*3,*4: *Bubber Miley, unknown, c; unknown, tb; poss Otto Hardwick or Don Redman, as; Clarence Williams, p; unknown, bj; poss Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*
- Scherman, Eriksson, Anderby, Wallen, Bubber Miley Discography: *Bubber Miley (tp), poss Charlie Irvis (tb), poss Otto Hardwick or Don Redman (as), Clarence Williams (p); poss Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris (bj); Henry "Bass" Edwards (bb). "Dixon-Godrich and Lord's Clarence Williams discography have Miley for the first, third and fourth title and a different, unknown (tp) for the Prisoner's Blues, unknown (tb) and Cyrus St. Clair (bb). Rust has ?Miley all the way and the rest as the others. We are certain that Miley plays on all four titles and that the brass bass player is the same as for the previous 1926 Clarence Williams recordings, "Bass" Edwards. Unfortunately, Miss Martin belts out her lyrics loudly and close to the microphone throughout the session, leaving little space for the musicians, but Bo goes with the Ellington front-line, while Goran E. is not sure about Irvis and Hardwick, thinking that the alto playing is too straight for the latter."*

079	CLARENCE WILLIAMS STOMPERS		New York,	Apr. 07, 1926
	Thomas Morris, Bubber Miley – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;			
	Don Redman – alt, clt, voc;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; Leroy Harris – bjo; Mack Shaw - bbs			
74090-B	Jackass Blues	OK 40598,	Chronological Classics	718
74091-B	What's The Matter Now?	OK 40598,	Chronological Classics	718
<i>Composer credits: 74090 (M. Stitzel – A. Kassel); 74091 (C. Williams – S. Williams)</i>				

Now, this seems to be some kind of 'All Star' unit from early Harlem, as - apart from the now usual Ellington contingent - we also have Don Redman from the Henderson band (unmistakable for his singing alone) and bandleader and previous C. Williams alumnus Thomas Morris. This seems to be the last of Clarence's recordings including Morris, the others dating from the period before 1925 and thus not discussed here.

This is a very interesting session! Two trumpet/cornet players are clearly distinguished. Miley plays lead and solo throughout on Jackass Blues (by the way, Bubber Miley always played trumpet, not cornet, despite all quotations in the discos!). The trombone introduction is very much in the manner of Irvis, and not Charlie Green. Listen to Henderson's Jackass Blues (Dixie Stompers, Apr. 14, 1926), where Green plays this intro in a completely different own style! The reed player is undoubtedly Redman, as is Williams on piano.

Williams started using a tuba on his recordings on January 04, 1926 with his first "Stompers" session. This player is named St. Clair in Rust and T. Lord, 'Clarence Williams'. Yet, the tuba player of the first two Williams sessions of 1926 clearly is Henry 'Bass' Edwards, obviously borrowed from the 'Savoy Bearcats'. 'Bass' Edwards plays the shortest tuba notes of all the jazz bassists of the time. Yet, we now know from St. Lasker that the player on this session here must be Mack Shaw. His characteristics are much different from 'Bass' Edwards'. His individual features are: a portato quarter-note started by a very short downward "jump" and followed by a tied very soft sustained same note. This same applies to all Williams' later recordings in 1926 up to December 10., when St. Clair takes over (OKeh 8443), again judging from tone and general approach.

In 2020 Steven Lasker informed me that Clarence Williams' tuba player on this session sounds just like Duke Ellington's tuba player on Ellington's Brunswick session of April 07, 1927. On listening it became apparent that Mr. Lasker is very probably right! Quite obviously, the instrumental stylistics of Shaw's playing are apparent here: tone, style and approach are the same. And, why should not Miley and Irvis have brought Shaw from the Ellington band when Edwards was unavailable (he was with the Savoy Bearcats then). And, - most interestingly - Williams does not use a tuba player until Dec. 10, 1926, when Cyrus St. Clair comes into the picture.

This probably is the earliest appearance of Leroy Harris, banjo player from St. Louis, and part of a large family of jazz musicians. His banjo sound is much lighter than Christians', and not as urgent. Yet still, he keeps a very strict four-four rhythm without varied rhythmical forms or gimmicks.

Notes:

- *Storyville 18: Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris (cnt); poss Charlie Green (tbn); Don Redman (clt, alt, vcl); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian (bjo); poss Bass Edwards (bbs).*
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p160: Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris (cnt); unknown (tbn); Don Redman (clt, alt, vcl); Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs).*
 - *LP, Clarence Williams Recordings 1926 – 1930, Fontana (Du) 682 088 TL: June Clark and unknown, trumpets, unknown trombone, Buster Bailey (?) and Don Redman, clarinets/altos, Clarence Williams, piano, Buddy Christian, banjo, unknown drums*
 - *Rust*2: Bubber Miley, Tom Morris (cnts); Joe Nanton (tbn); Buster Bailey (sop, alt); Don Redman (clt, alt, vcl); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs).*
 - *Rust*3: Bubber Miley -Tom Morris -c; ?Joe Nanton -tb; Don Redman -cl -as -v -a; Clarence Williams -p; unknown bj; unknown bb.*
 - *T. Lord, Clarence Williams: Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris (cnts); possibly Charlie Green (tbn), Don Redman (clt, alt, vcl); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian (bjo); possibly Bass Edwards (bbs).*
 - *Rust*4: Bubber Miley -Tom Morris -c; ?Joe Nanton -tb; Don Redman -cl -as -v; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian -bj; unknown bb.*
 - *Rust*6: Bubber Miley, Tom Morris, c; ?Joe Nanton, tb; Don Redman, cl, as, v; Clarence Williams, p; Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian, bj; Harry Edwards, bb.*
 - *Scherman, Eriksson, Anderby, Wallen, Bubber Miley Discography: Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris (tp), Charlie Irvis (tb), Don Redman (cl, as, vcl), Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris (bj); prob Cyrus St. Clair (bb). „Rust has ?Joe Nanton (tb) and unknown (bb). Lord’s Clarence Williams discography has poss Charlie Green (tb) and “Bass“ Edwards (bb), the sleeve of Fj-121 has unknown (tb), Ernest Elliott? (as) and St. Clair (bb). We all finally agreed that the trumpet players are Morris and an off-form Miley, after Goran E. had expressed some doubt about the latter at first. The trombonist is aurally Irvis, although he plays note for note the standard solo on Jackass Blues recorded by Charlie Green twice with Fletcher Henderson. The alto sax player is clearly Redman, who also doubles on clarinet. The brass bass man plays long notes and a more legato style than “Bass“ Edwards on the previous Clarence Williams and Sara Martin sessions with Miley and is probably St. Clair.“*

080 **BUDDY CHRISTIAN’S FOUR CRY-BABIES**

unknown vocal quartet (poss. same as above);

Porter Grainger – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

80034 Nina Lee

80035 Jonah’s Ridin’ On His Mule

New York,

May 25, 1926

OK unissued

not on LP/CD

OK unissued

not on LP/CD

As no tests of this session seem to have survived, nothing can be said about the music.

Notes:

- *Carey, McCarthy, Jazz Directory Vol 2: not listed*
 - *BGR*2: unknown vcl quartet acc by prob Porter Gainger, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*
 - *BGR*3, *4: vocal quartet acc by prob Porter Gainger, p; Buddy Christian, bj*
 - *Rust*2, *3, *4, *6: not listed*

081 **BUDDY CHRISTIAN’S FOUR CRY-BABIES**

unknown vocal quartet (poss. same as above);

Porter Grainger – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

80039-B Jonah’s Ridin’ On His Mule

80040-B Nina Lee

New York,

May 26, 1926

OK 8332,

RST JPCD-1521-2

OK 8332,

RST JPCD-1521-2

This seems to be the same aggregation as on the above sessions, only fortified by the nominal leader’s banjo. The music is four-part male choir singing, parts of it by a solo singer in exchange with the choir. Accompaniment is by Christian’s strong banjo together with a retained Porter Grainger on piano. There is little if no jazz content on these sides.

Notes:

- *Carey, McCarthy, Jazz Directory Vol 2: unknown personnel*
 - *BGR*2: unknown vcl quartet acc by prob Porter Gainger, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*
 - *BGR*3, *4: unknown vcl quartet acc by prob Porter Gainger, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo*
 - *Rust*2, *3, *4, *6: not listed*

082 **ELVIRA JOHNSON** Birmingham Darktown Strutters

Elvira Johnson - voc

Charlie Gaines – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Otto Hardwick – sop;

Mike Jackson – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

X-177 How Could I Be Blue?

X-178 Numbers On The Brain

Composer credits: X-177 (Wilson – Razaf); X-178 (Jackson – Lauria)

New York,

c. Jun. 17, 1926

Gnt 3337,

Document DOCD-5375

Gnt 3337,

Document DOCD-5375

We can apparently be quite sure of Gaines' presence on these two sides as documented in Tom Lord's 'Clarence Williams'. Gaines also provided insights into Williams' modus operandi: "Williams had contracts with a steady roster of musicians who were on call for recording sessions, both instrumental and blues accompaniments". I hear Gaines' straight and horizontal approach, more into rhythmic and staccato than melodic playing. He uses a cup mute here. There is no musical relationship to Big Charlie's playing here, but Charlie Gaines' horizontal phrasing as known.

There is a very agile soprano saxophone player on these sides who phrases much too "jazzy" to be Elliott, judging from everything we have heard from Elliott up to now. There really are no instances of anything I have written about his style in "Stylistics". This player belongs to a better and more modern class of musicians and resembles in part Buster Bailey of the Clarence Williams Blue Five period. He uses many rhythmic and melodic devices of the "Armstrong" period and does thus not belong to Elliott's pre-Armstrong school. As there are not many – if at all? – distinct soprano players around in New York/Harlem, the identity of this man should be searched for among tenor saxophonists

(Bb instrument!) of the time: Prince Robinson, Happy Caldwell and others come to mind. After relistening I believe that Otto Hardwick with his “singing” sound would be a well-suited candidate (28.06.2018)! Elliott may safely be excluded.

Charlie Gaines named Mike Jackson as pianist, not Clarence Williams. Musical proceedings here rather hint as to Mike Jackson’s presence here, not to Williams’! There is no Clarence Williams both-handed four-four rhythm, but a one-two-one-two rhythm as applied by stride pianists

The other musicians as above, but it has to be recognized that very probably Irvis had a bad day. Too much booze? Buddy Christian supplies his rock-steady four-four rhythm on banjo.

Notes:

- Rust*3: unknown -c; unknown -tb; Buster Bailey -ss; ?Clarence Williams -p; ?Buddy Christian -bj
 - Rust*4,*6: Charlie Gaines - c; Charlie Irvis - tb; ?Ernest Elliott - ss; Clarence Williams or poss Mike Jackson - p; Buddy Christian - bj
 - BGR*2: unknown cnt; unknown tbn; Buster Bailey, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo
 - T. Lord, Clarence Williams p 167: Charlie Gaines (cnt); prob Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ernest Elliott (sop); Clarence Williams or Mike Jackson (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) “There is not much agreement on the personnel. Ed Allen has been considered as the cornetist. However, Charlie Gaines, in an interview by Dave Goldenberg “talked about a number which had ‘horses and numbers’ in the vocal”. (This would be Numbers On The Brain.) The (Storyville – KBR) team lists Buster Bailey on soprano sax, Williams, and Christian. I (Tom Lord – KBR) have strong doubts about the identity of the reed player, and in view of the statement by Charlie Gaines, feel that Irvis, Elliott and Mike Jackson might be considered. According to WCA (W.C. Allen – KBR), Bailey was with Henderson on a New England tour. The estimation of the date is by the two sources mentioned above (Rust and Godrich/Dixon – KBR). The assignments of the adjacent matrices is unknown.”
 - BGR*3,*4: Charlie Gaines, c; prob Charlie Irvis, tb; Ernest Elliott, ss; Clarence Williams or Mike Jackson, p; Buddy Christian, bj unknown.”

083 **BESSIE BROWN**

New York, early Jul. 1926

Bessie Brown – voc;

Charlie Gaines – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Carmelo Jari – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

6706-1 What’s The Matter Now?

Ban 1833 not on LP/CD, but held

6706-3 What’s The Matter Now?

Or 698, Document DOCD-5456

6707-1 How Could I Be Blue?

Or 698 not on LP/CD

6707-2 How Could I Be Blue?

Or 698, Document DOCD-5456

6707-3 How Could I Be Blue?

Do 3781 not on LP/CD

Composer credits: 6706 (Williams – Williams); 6707 (Razaf – Wilson)

Most of the discographies do not suggest a name for the trumpet player, but our Clarence-Williams-research group of days-gone-by agreed in Charlie Gaines’ presence.

The trombonist plays much more retained than Irvis usually does, but tone, entirely legato playing, and some Irvis-like licks make his presence probable. Yet, because of Carmelo Jari’s decided presence here, James Reevey, trombonist of the Savoy Bearcats, might also be considered. This is the first appearance of reed man Carmelo Jari in the Williams stable. His rather unique and personal style and tone was identified by our team by comparison with the recordings of the Savoy Bearcats. He will be a familiar name with Williams personnels from now on until the Bearcats leave for an extended tour of South America in May 1927. (The second title of this session was also part of the Bearcats’ repertoire.)

The rhythm very probably is made by Clarence Williams on piano and the reliable Buddy Christian on his dark banjo.

Notes:

- Storyville 19: unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ben Whittet (clt); poss Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo).
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p173: unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo).
 - BGR*2: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ben Whittet, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.
 - BGR*3,*4: unknown, c; poss Charlie Irvis, tb; Bennie Moten, cl; Clarence Williams, p; unknown, bj.
 - Rust*3: unknown -c; unknown -tb; Ben Whittet -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bb; unknown -d.
 - Rust*4,*6: unknown -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; Bennie Moten -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj.

Notable differences of takes (from Lord p174):

6706-1: final bar of tune: tpt plays long held three-quarter note Bb.

6706-3: final bar of tune: tpt plays four eighth notes Bb–F–G–F and one quarter note Bb.

6707-1: this take -1 not reissued, therefore no comment possibly.

6707-2: two-bar clt break before final vocal chorus is played in high register.

6707-3: two-bar clt break before final vocal chorus is played in low register.

084 **MARGARET CARTER** Christian’s Jazz Rippers

New York, Aug. 1926

Margaret Carter – voc;

Big Charlie Thomas – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;

Happy Caldwell – clt; (George McClennon?) – clt, alt;

Mike Jackson – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

107041 I Want Plenty Grease In My Frying Pan

PA 7511, Timeless CBC 1-030

107042 Come Get Me Papa, Before I Faint

PA 7511, Timeless CBC 1-030

Composer credits: 107041 (Christian); 107042 (Christian)

Most unfortunately, Laurie Wright did not have the opportunity to continue his interview with Happy Caldwell published in Storyville 99. Thus, we do not know Happy’s possible statements as to this and the next session and have to rely on our own judgement and that of our listening companions. (Both this and the consecutive session have to be seen as one, following the sequence of matrix numbers and the recording company.) Both sessions have been reissued in John R.T. Davies’ famed ‘Big Charlie Thomas’ CD on Timeless and have therefore been – and still are – subject of much controversy. But, what do we hear:

Unequivocal is Buddy Christian’s presence as banjoist and probable organizer of the session.

On trumpet/cornet we hear the mysterious ‘Big’ Charlie Thomas as faintly remembered by Eva Taylor and on this basis identified in a remarkable series of recordings in Harlem in 1926. Against any contradiction I am sure of this player’s identity whatever his actual name might have been.

There is little heard from the trombone here, but the trombone break in the ensemble instrumental chorus of ‘I Want Plenty Grease ...’ is definite Charlie Irvis and has nothing in common with anything heard from Jake Frazier on record.

Both reed players play clarinet in the second title, exclusively in pre-set arranged simple riffs. There is no ad-lib by any of the clarinetists here. In 'I Want Plenty Grease ...' only one clarinet can be distinguished, playing ad-lib and with a distinct Dodds influence in his style. This stylistic element might lead to Happy Caldwell regarding Preston Jackson's statements as to his stylistic ambitions early on in Chicago. Only that he is much more secure here than on the October 1923 sides.

The other reedman delivers a restrained obligato to the musical proceedings, obviously on alto saxophone, without identifiable individual elements.

The pianist takes a back seat in little differential accompaniment, using modest treble figurations in his right hand or simply pounding four-four rhythm with both hands. This might be a hint as to Mike Jackson's assumed presence here which corresponds to what I know of Jackson's style.

Notes:

- Rust*3: Margaret Carter -v; probably Tom Morris -c; Jake Frazier -tb; Happy Caldwell -cl; Bob Fuller -ss; Mike Jackson -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

- BGR*2: Margaret Carter -v; unknown -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; unknown -cl; Bob Fuller -cl -as; Louis Hooper -p; Buddy Christian -bj.
- T. Lord, Clarence Williams: Margaret Carter (vcl); unknown (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); unknown (clt); Bob Fuller (clt, alt); poss Louis Hooper, or less likely Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo).

- Rust*4: Margaret Carter -v; probably Tom Morris -c; Jake Frazier -tb; Happy Caldwell -cl; Bob Fuller -ss; Mike Jackson -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

- BGR*3,*4: Margaret Carter -v; unknown -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; unknown -cl; Bob Fuller -cl -as; Louis Hooper -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

- Rust*6: Margaret Carter -v; probably Tom Morris -c; Jake Frazier -tb; Happy Caldwell -cl; Bob Fuller -ss; Mike Jackson -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

085 BUDDY CHRISTIAN'S JAZZ RIPPERS

New York, early Aug. 1926

Big Charlie Thomas - cnt; Charlie Irvis - tbn;

Happy Caldwell - clt; (*George McClennon?*) - cnt;

Mike Jackson - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo, voc

107043 South Rampart Street Blues

PA 8518, Timeless CBC 1-030

107044 The Skunk

PA 8518, Timeless CBC 1-030

Composer credits: 107043 (Christian - Fuller); 107044 (Christian - Williams)

These two sessions seem to be the only jazz sessions by Pathe Actuelle of Afro-American musicians in early August 1926 and can therefore be assumed to have been recorded in direct succession. Although there are known examples of changing personnel in the run of recording sessions in the history of jazz, we can consider both personnels identical. So, only this is to add here:

On 'South Rampart Street Blues' the clarinet soloist - who certainly is not the player assumed to be Happy Caldwell - plays in a distinct "freak" or even "gas-pipe" style, and it seems that both reed players are on clarinet now. Rust*6 names George McClennon as second reed man. Comparing these clarinet sounds with George McClennon's documented recordings at least show a most striking similarity. It is this "freak" player who commands all proceedings in the first title, the other clarinetist - Caldwell? - staying in the background. On 'The Skunk' the "freak" player plays the very simple melody, almost sounding like an alto sax because of his sharp tone. Caldwell - if it is he - obviously has difficulties to play a decent jazzy ad-lib part over the ensemble, possibly pre-set in parts. But this may be explained by the fast pace the band takes.

In this respect, Rust's possibility of George McClennon becomes quite reasonable and I am cautiously following. There is not any instance of Bob Fuller on these sides. But this would mean that most probably we also hear McClennon on the Margaret Carter sides, on alto in the first title and in the second one on clarinet together with Caldwell.

Charlie Thomas on trumpet/cornet is certain. Again, the trombonist is very restrained playing only ensemble parts as arranged.

The singer in 'The Skunk' seems to be Mr. Buddy Christian himself as he is accompanied by the two clarinets and the trombone, the trumpet/cornet starting his solo into the vocal. Buddy Christian was a most respected pianist in his New Orleans days, and it is thus not surprising that he recorded his own compositions here. 'The Skunk' is easily recognized as a composition for solo piano.

The band's pianist's only task is comping and delivering a simple chordal four beat rhythm.

Notes:

- Rust*2: pers. similar to: Tom Morris? (cnt); Jake Frazier? (tbn); Bob Fuller (clt); Clarence Williams (pno) definite; Buddy Christian (bjo); unknown (dms)

- Rust*3: probably Tom Morris -c; Jake Frazier -tb; Happy Caldwell -cl; Bob Fuller -ss; Mike Jackson -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

- T. Lord, Clarence Williams: unknown (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); unknown (clt); Bob Fuller (clt, alt); poss Louis Hooper, or Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo).

- Rust*4: probably Tom Morris -c; Jake Frazier -tb; George McClennon -cl; Bob Fuller -ss; Mike Jackson -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

- Rust*6: probably Charlie Thomas, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; George McClennon, cl; Bob Fuller, cl, ss; Mike Jackson, p; Buddy Christian, bj.

086 BESSIE BROWN

New York, c. Aug. 10, 1926

Bessie Brown - voc;

Ed Anderson - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Bennie Morton - clt;

Clarence Williams - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

6767-2 Ain't Much Good In The Best Of Men Nowadays

Or 716, Document DOCD-5456

6767-3 Ain't Much Good In The Best Of Men Now Days

Ban 1833 not on LP/CD, but held

Composer credits: 6767 (Hunter)

Certainly, a different accompanying group here than on session #079. The trumpet player's style bears strong similarities to King Oliver's style. Reportedly Ed Anderson, known for his similarity to the Oliver style, had come to NYC with Eubie Blake and had been recruited by Clarence for his stable in early 1926. It is also worth mentioning that Anderson is regarded by a couple of authorities to be the only trumpet on Oliver's Dixie Syncopators recordings of September 1928! Some in-securities in tone are in accordance with his recordings with Oliver. The trombonist with his extreme legato style certainly is Irvis. Later discographies list Bennie Moten on clarinet. We now know that this clarinetist's name was actually "Morton". And we know that he was part of 'Joe Jordan's Ten Sharp's And Flats', this band touring the New York circuit for most of 1926, being in good connection with Clarence Williams' company. His warm and soft tone on clarinet and alto sax may be distinguished on the very few records this band left behind. Clarence Williams employed him several times for recording purposes in 1926.

The banjo player is un-substantiated, but might well be Christian - with his "lighter" banjo (for trio purposes - see below), perhaps. And it is his style and drive!

Notes:

- Storyville 19: unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ben Whittet (clt); prob Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo).
- Lord, Clarence Williams p175: unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo).
- Rust*3: unknown -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; Ben Whittet -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj.
- Rust*4,*6: unknown -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; Bennie Moten -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj.
- BGR*2: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ben Whittet, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.
- BGR*3,*4: unknown, c; poss Charlie Irvis, tb; Bennie Moten, cl; Clarence Williams, p; unknown, bj.

Notable differences of takes (from Lord p175):

- 6767-2: Bar 31 of first vocal chorus (after vocal verse - bar 59 of tune): cnt phrase descending.
 6767-3: Bar 31 of first vocal chorus (after vocal verse - bar 59 of tune): cnt phrase ascending.

087 **BESSIE BROWN**

New York, c. Aug. 1926

Bessie Brown – voc;

unknown – tpt; unknown – tbn; Bennie Morton – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

6782-2

Senorita Mine

Or 716,

Document DOCD-5456

Composer credits: 6782 (Williams – Waller – Williams - Rector)

After close and repeated listening members of our team still disagree on the identity of the singer on “Senorita Mine”. Some believe her to be a different person from the singer on ‘What’s The Matter Now’ and ‘How Could I Be Blue’, others still think her to be one identical person. Lord, p. 178: “One fact indicating that this side (SENORITA MINE) is from a separate session is that the singer on this title is different from the singer on all the other titles from the three Bessie Brown sessions. Eva Taylor and her son Spencer, upon hearing tapes of these three Bessie Brown sessions, felt that SENORITA MINE was not sung by Bessie Brown, but by a white woman (whose name they couldn’t recall) who used to come around the CWMPC office for new material. Note this singer’s peculiar pronunciation of SENORITA (Seen-ee-or-ita: phonetic).” In fact, this girl singer owns a much deeper voice than her “name-sake” on the fore-going records. I therefore list her name above in italics.

It also must be said that the entire accompaniment seems to be scored, and that no decided statements to the identities of the musicians can be made. The trumpet player might be anyone, the trombonist as well. Against our early assumption (during the Clarence Williams evaluation some 15 years ago) I for now would like to favour Bennie Morton of the Joe Jordan band for tone and the lack of jumping trills – and not Carmelo Jari as before. The pianist may still be Williams, as well as Christian on – his lighter – banjo.

Note: info re matrix number from Björn Englund N&N 60!

Notes:

- Storyville 19: unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ben Whittet (clt); prob Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo).
- Lord, Clarence Williams p175: unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo).
- Rust*3: unknown -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; Ben Whittet -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj.
- Rust*4,*6: unknown -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; Bennie Moten -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj.
- BGR*2: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ben Whittet, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.
- BGR*3,*4: by unknown, possibly white, artist of no blues interest.

088 **THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS SEVEN HOT BABIES**

New York, Aug. 17, 1926

Thomas Morris, Jabbo Smith – tpt; Geechie Fields – tbn;

Ernest Elliott – alt, clt; Happy Caldwell – ten;

Mike Jackson – pno; (Buddy Christian?) – bjo; Bill Benford – bbs;

Mike Jackson – voc

36047-3

Georgia Grind

Vic 20180,

Frog DFG 1

36048-2

Ham Gravy

Vic 20179,

Frog DFG 1

36048-3

Ham Gravy

Vic 20179,

Frog DFG 1

Composer credits: 36047 (Williams); 36048 (Peer)

Morris, Fields, Caldwell and Benford are undisputed. The voice answering Mike Jackson in ‘Georgia Grind’ might then be Thomas Morris himself.

Being certain on Morris’ presence – how else – the big problem is: who plays second trumpet? Rust in all his early editions named Jabbo Smith, changing this name to Charlie Thomas in his 6th edition. This he obviously did following John R.T. Davies’ statement that it must be the mysterious person ‘Big’ Charlie Thomas, known as cornetist on some recordings of the Clarence Williams circle – a man who appeared out of the blue in New York in late 1925, recorded a couple of sides, and disappeared again without any further trace. His was a very beautiful cornet style with much Armstrong influence in it. John R.T. had isolated these recordings and discovered the identity of the cornetist, producing a very beautiful CD on the Dutch Timeless label in 1996. But he unfortunately also included three sides of Sara Martin with definitely June Clark on trumpet, and these sides by Thomas Morris of which we now know with the utmost probability that it is the very young Jabbo Smith on second trumpet, and not ‘Big’ Charlie Thomas. Marc van Nus of Almelo, The Netherlands, a friend of mine from the old days and a great trumpet player in the classic style himself, just recently told me of the days he had hosted Jabbo Smith in his home for several days in 1971. In the – among jazz musicians usual – “listening-sessions” Jabbo had denied his presence on the Buddy Christian Jazz Rippers, now believed to be the above noted “Big” Charlie Thomas. But when hearing the Morris’ Seven Hot Babies sides he had spontaneously remarked that it was he himself on trumpet. When comparing both players’ styles it becomes apparent that there are distinct differences of tone and style, Thomas with a crystal-clear cornet (?) tone and repeating phrases with large interval jumps, and Smith with a somewhat coated tone and rather flowing and partly chromatic linear phrases which find their correspondences in Jabbo Smith’s solos in the Charlie Johnson sessions of 1927 and 1928. On this basis I feel certain now of Jabbo Smith’s presence on second trumpet here, although I have to admit to being influenced for long by the very much-admired John R.T.’s claim that Charlie Thomas was the trumpet player here. I have changed my mind now.

On trombone we obviously hear the acclaimed Geechie Fields as before, vacillating between beauty and primitivity.

Comparing the clarinet solo in ‘Georgia Grind’ to Elliott’s solo in King Oliver’s ‘Tin Roof Blues’ (11 June 1928 Vocalion) I think that the alto-clarinet man on this session really is Ernest Elliott.

‘Ham Gravy’ - both takes – has Happy Caldwell playing the tenor sax solo in his own inimitable way. What a beautiful and individual – and unsung - tenor player Caldwell was!

The pianist is mostly inaudible, but plays a short solo in chorus A2 of the second title which distinctly is in Mike Jackson’s light style. In the A2 chorus piano solo of ‘Ham Gravy’ the right hand playing very much resembles the chimes-like phrases behind the trombone in take -3 of

'Jackass Blues' at the above session. Thus, we very probably hear the same pianist at both sessions. This certainly means that Happy Caldwell's naming Marlow Morris on piano at least is very doubtful. The banjo player has a stronger sound on his instrument and plays in a different style from Lee Blair's, thus must be listed as unknown, although I have a feeling that it might be Buddy Christian judging from sound and execution. And again, we hear the busy and agile Bill Benford on tuba, completing the gang of Jenkins Orphanage boys assembled here (Smith, Fields and Benford). The singer is documented as Mike Jackson in the Victor vaults. As he is known to have been a friend to Morris, he might just by chance have been in the studio and asked to do the vocal. Or may he possibly also be the pianist on both sessions?

Notes:

- Rust, Victor Master Book Vol. 2: 2c / tb / 2s / p / bj / bb; vocalist Mike Jackson
 - Rust*2: Tom Morris, Jabbo Smith (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt, alt); Coleman Hawkins (ten); Mike Jackson (pno); unknown (bjo); Bill Benford ? (bbs)
 - Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris, Jabbo Smith -c; Geechie Fields -tb; Ernest Elliott -as; Happy Caldwell -ts; Mike Jackson -p; unknown -bj; ? Bill Benford -bb
 - Rust*6: Tom Morris, Charlie Thomas -t; Geechie Fields -tb; Ernest Elliott -cl-as-bar; Happy Caldwell -cl-ts; Marlowe Morris -p; ?Lee Blair -bj; Bill Benford -bb; Mike Jackson -v (1)

Tunes:

36047-3 Georgia Grind Key of Eb Victor
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(Chorus 1 12 bars ens)(Chorus 2 12 bars m-tbn GF)(Chorus 3 12 bars bjo BC?)(Chorus 4 12 bars voc MJ)(Chorus 5 12 bars clt EE)(Chorus 6 12 bars o-tpt JS)(Chorus 7 12 bars m-tpt TM)(Chorus 8 12 bars voc - ens)

36048-2 Ham Gravy Key of Bb / Eb Victor
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(Verse 16 bars ens)(Chorus A1 16 bars ens, middle-break o-tbn GF)(Chorus A2 16 bars pno MJ, middle-break clt EE)(Chorus A3 16 bars (*) ens middle-break o-tpt JS)(Chorus B1 12 bars ten HC)(Chorus B2 12 bars o-tpt JS)(Chorus B3 12 bars o-tpt TM - ens)(Chorus B4 12 bars ens riff)(Chorus A 4 16 bars clt EE, middle-break brass)(Chorus A5 16 bars ens, middle-break bbs BB)

36048-3 Ham Gravy Key of Bb / Eb Victor
 same as -2

Notable differences of takes (*):

36048-2 Chorus A3 first two bars 2nd tpt JS alone, 1st tpt TM enters at end of bar 2
 36048-3 Chorus A3 full ens from beginning

089 MAMIE SMITH

New York, Aug. 27, 1926

Mamie Smith - voc;

Thomas Morris - cnt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Happy Caldwell - clt;

Mike Jackson - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

36069-1 Goin' Crazy With The Blues Vic LPV-534, Doc DOCD 5360

36069-2 Goin' Crazy With The Blues Vic 20210, Doc DOCD 5360

36070-1 Sweet Virginia Blues Vic 20233 not on LP/CD

36070-2 Sweet Virginia Blues Vic 20233, Doc DOCD 5360

These are very beautiful blues cum jazz recordings of the time. Morris, Jackson and Christian seem to be right, but I feel uncertain re the presence of Charlie Irvis on trombone and Fuller on clarinet. Irvis owns a very distinctive style which cannot be heard here in its entirety. Only on 'Sweet Virginia Blues' I would agree with Irvis. Yet, with repeated listening I get increasingly doubtful as to Irvis' presence! It all sounds like a box of bottles have been brought to the recording studio.

The clarinet is much retained and lacks Bob Fuller's fast vibrato. In view of the assumed presence of Happy Caldwell at these Victor recording sessions of Thomas Morris I would name him to be the clarinetist.

The pianist might well be Mike Jackson re his connection to Victor and Morris at this time. The banjo definitely sounds like Christian. Yet, with his "light" banjo.

Notes:

- RR 57/10: "Brian Rust suggest a personnel of Thomas Morris, cornet; Charlie Irvis, trombone; Bob Fuller, clarinet; Lem Fowler?, piano; Buddy Christian, banjo. As matrix bve-36071 is by a Thomas Morris group with the same instrumentation, the presence of Morris at least seems quite reasonable."

- Rust*3: Tom Morris - c; Charlie Irvis - tb; Bob Fuller - cl; Mike Jackson - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

- Rust*6: Tom Morris - c; Charlie Irvis - tb; Bob Fuller - cl; Mike Jackson - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Tom Morris - cnt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Bob Fuller - clt; prob. Mike Jackson or J.C. Johnson - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

Notable differences of takes:

36069-1: Bar 8 of ensemble chorus (chorus 2) tpt middle break (ca. 1:40): tbn enters with growled half note E on second beat

36069-2: Bar 8 of ensemble chorus (chorus 2) tpt middle break (ca. 1:50): tbn enters with clean note low E on fourth beat

36070: no alternate take reissued, so no comment possible

090 MAMIE SMITH

New York, Aug. 31, 1926

Mamie Smith - voc;

Thomas Morris - cnt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; (Happy Caldwell) - clt;

(J.C. Johnson) - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

36081-1 What Have I Done To Make Me Feel This Way ? Vic 20233 not on LP/CD

36081-2 What Have I Done To Make Me Feel This Way ? Vic 20233, Doc DOCD 5360

36081-3 What Have I Done To Make Me Feel This Way ? Vic LPV-534, Doc DOCD 5360

36082-2 I Once Was Yours I'm Somebody Else's Now Vic 20210, Doc DOCD 5360

This seems to be partly the same personnel as on the former Mamie Smith session with the exceptions of the clarinet player, who plays in a much more fashionable and modern style than Fuller, with interesting melodic phrases - unheard of by Fuller - especially in 'I Once Was Yours' and a completely different vibrato. Beautiful! Because of the time of recording and of Happy Caldwell's vicinity to the Thomas Morris circle I assume that this might be Caldwell on clarinet here. This clarinetist's style is much more "Western" and Dodds-influenced than Fuller's. Irvis' presence again doubted a little but nearer to Irvis than preceding Mamie Smith session. The pianist plays strong four-beat two-fisted rhythm other than Mike Jackson. Unfortunately, he cannot be heard in solo. So, it is impossible to judge whether he could be

J.C. Johnson as reported from his own testimony below. The banjo player may be Christian, but this man here doubles time in 'What Have I Done ...' which elsewhere is unheard of by Christian. So, his presence has to be doubted. But it is his light banjo sound!

DB: Indeed different clarinet. More fluid but not enough exposed to be able to identify. Trombone sounds here less standard Irvis but my guess is ... (who? K-B). J.C. Johnson is 3 years out in his memory but also probably he himself.

Notes:

- RR 57 p 11: "J.C. Johnson in the 'Melody Maker' (April 16, 1955) was reported as saying: "I played on records with Mamie, too. 'Been Some Changes Made' was one, I think, and I am sure she made four sides for Victor around '29". Similar comments were made by Albert McCarthy in 'Jazz Monthly'. Presumably J.C. Johnson was referring to the 1926 Victor session, while the 'Been Some Changes Made' session possibly remains to be discovered."

- Rust*3: Tom Morris – c; Charlie Irvis – tb; Bob Fuller – cl; Mike Jackson – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

- Rust*6: Tom Morris – c; Charlie Irvis – tb; Bob Fuller – cl; Mike Jackson – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

- BGR*4: Tom Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Bob Fuller – clt; prob. Mike Jackson or J.C. Johnson – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

Notable differences of takes:

36081-1: this take not reissued in any form, thus no comment possible

36081-2: first bar of introduction – tpt fourth note D is somewhat fluffed and unclear

36081-3: first bar of introduction – tpt fourth note D is clear and clean

091 BESSIE BROWN her Jazz Band

New York, Aug. – Sep. 1926

Bessie Brown – voc;

Big Charlie Thomas – cnt; Charlie Irvis or (Jonas Walker?) – tbn; Bennie Morton – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

6813-1 Nobody But My Baby Is Getting My Love

Ban 1859, Document DOCD-5627

6813-2 Nobody But My Baby Is Getting My Love

Or 771, Document DOCD-5456

6814-2 St. Louis Blues

Ban 1859, Document DOCD-5627

6814-3 St. Louis Blues

Or 746, Document DOCD-5456

Composer credits: 6813 (Razof - Williams)(sic – KBR); 6814 (Handy)

And again, a different accompanying group here from session #082 and #083.

Big Charlie Thomas seems to have been identified by John R.T. Davies some years ago (see Timeless CD CBC 1-030), but is still controversially discussed in collector's circles (see The FROG Annual Vol.1 2009). Our team prefers to follow John R.T.

Mr. Thomas performs a beautiful solo half-chorus in 6813-2. The trombonist lacks Irvis' soft legato sound and uses a harsh but essential sound/style.

There is that reliable rhythm section of Clarence Williams and Buddy Christian again.

Notes:

- Storyville 19: unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ben Whittet (clt); prob Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p175: unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo).

- Rust*3: unknown -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; Ben Whittet -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj.

- Rust*4,*6: unknown -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; Bennie Moten -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj.

- BGR*2: probably: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ben Whittet, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.

- BGR*3,*4: unknown, c; poss Charlie Irvis, tb; Bennie Moten, cl; Clarence Williams, p; unknown, bj.

Notable differences of takes (from Lord p.180):

6813-1: The first Bessie Brown vocal chorus is followed by 14 bars of Bennie Morton clt – ens.

6813-2: The first Bessie Brown vocal chorus is followed by 16 bars of cnt solo

6814-2: Bessie Brown ends final vocal with: „ ... die, Hey, Hey.“

6814-2: Bessie Brown ends final vocal with: „ ... die.“.

092 NEW ORLEANS WILLIE JACKSON

New York, Sep. 03, 1926

Willie Jackson – voc;

Clarence Williams – pno (3,4); Buddy Christian – bjo (1,2)

142588-3 Who'll Chop Your Suey When I'm Gone?

Col 14165-D, Document DOCD-5532

142589-1 Numbers On The Brain

Col 14184-D, Document DOCD-5532

142590-3 Hold 'Er, Deacon

Col 14184-D, Document DOCD-5532

142591-1 Charleston Hound

Col 14165-D, Document DOCD-5532

Composer credits: 142588 (Bechet and Simmons); 142589 (Jackson and Lauria); 142590 (Skidmore and Walker); 142591 (Williams and Waller)

Buddy Christian can be heard only on the first two sides with his beautiful dark banjo sound attributing his strong and equal rhythm.

Especially, I do like his one-two rhythm when playing a bass-note on 'one' and a chord on 'two'. But he also attributes some un-expected double-tempo breaks with up-and-down strumming that sound a bit below standard or amateurish in my ears (!). This may perhaps be explained by his spare banjo solo work, although we do not know anything about his usual musical activities.

Titles three and four are accompanied by Clarence Williams on piano, only.

Notes:

- Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: Buddy Christian, bjo. Clarence Williams, pno

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Buddy Christian, bjo (1,2); Clarence Williams, pno (3,4)

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: not listed

093 LUCILLE HEGAMIN Clarence Williams and Band

New York, Sep. 28, 1926

Lucille Hegamin – voc;

(James Reevey?) – tbn; Carmello Jari – clt; Otto Mikell – alt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo, gtr

W142695-2 Nobody But My Baby Is Getting My Love

Col 14164-D, Document DOCD-5421

W142696-2 Senorita Mine

Col 14164-D, Document DOCD-5421

Composer credits: 142695 (Williams and Razaf); 142696 (Williams and Waller)

Lucille Hegamin identified Buddy Christian as the banjo player. Certainly, the arpeggios played by Christian at the end of “Senorita Mine” suggest a rethinking about the instrument being played (see session 020 and others)!

It is definitely Carmelo Jari again, other players except Williams and Christian difficult to identify, but perhaps from the Savoy Bearcats, thus James Reevey on tbn and Otto Mikell on alto?

The alto player is a technical alert “legitimate” player with a sweet and silken tone. These characteristics must certainly lead us to Mr. Otto Mikell, son of one of the renowned Afro-American music teachers of Charleston, S.C., F. Eugene Mikell. And Otto Mikell was Carmelo Jari’s band colleague at exactly this time. So, this would make the presence of them both much more reasonable.

Leaves the trombonist, but there is so little to hear of him that any statement must remain vague. Yet, I still would like to name him as a possible contributor. James Reevey was trombonist of the ‘Savoy Bearcats’ at this time and would thus be a reasonable candidate for the trombone chair, here.

Buddy Christian plays a rather soft but dark instrument on the first title, reminding me of a guitar – or rather metal-guitar. And he delivers a very swinging rhythm. The banjo sound in the second title is Christian’s usual sound, again, but for the last eight bars it is the guitar sound of the first title, again.

Notes:

- Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: Author’s assumption: unknown tbn; unknown clt, alt; unknown ten; unknown p; Buddy Christian, bjo.

- Storyville 20: unknown (tbn); unknown (clt); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p184: unknown (tbn); unknown (clt); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo).

- Rust*3,*4,*6: unknown -tb; unknown -cl; unknown -cl -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

- BGR*2,*3,*4: unknown, clt; unknown, clt, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.

094 WILLIE JACKSON

New York,

Sep. 30, 1926

Willie Jackson – voc;

Porter Grainger – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

142707-3 Tain’t What You Pay To Get A Thing

Col 14218-D,

Document DOCD-5532

142708-2 Railroad Man Blues

Col 14218-D,

Document DOCD-5532

Composer credits: 142707 (Grainger); 142708 (Grainger and Jackson)

Willie Jackson’s vocal is just of what we would call the “Folk” manner.

And accordingly, Buddy Christian’s accompaniment loses his classic and strict simplicity, but adds un-needed up-and down strokes. Porter Grainger adds a heavy and dragging one-two bass-chord rhythm that does not liven things up. Both accompanists are much more interesting in the blues title, and the whole thing swings more, the piano being retained.

Notes:

- Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: Banjo and piano accomp.

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Porter Grainger, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo; prob own kazoo (1)

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: not listed

095 NEW ORLEANS BLUE FIVE

New York,

Nov: 02, 1926

Thomas Morris – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn; Happy Caldwell – clt, sop;

Mike Jackson – pno; Bobbie Leecan – gtr;

Helen Baxter, Thomas Morris, Joe Nanton – dialogue (3,4)

36895-1 My Baby Doesn’t Squawk

Vic 20364,

Frog DGF 1

36895-2 My Baby Doesn’t Squawk

Vic test uniss.

Frog DGF 1

36896-1 The King Of The Zulus

Vic 20316,

Frog DGF 1

36896-2 The King Of The Zulus

Vic test uniss.

Frog DGF 1

36897-1 South Rampart Street Blues

Vic 20653,

Frog DGF 1

36897-2 South Rampart Street Blues

Vic test uniss.

Frog DGF 1

Composer credits: 36895 (R.S. Peer); 36896 (Armstrong); 36897 (B. Fuller – B. Christian)

Thomas Morris and Joe Nanton – later ‘Tricky Sam’ – are documented in the Victor Master Book, Vol. 2, by Brian Rust. On clarinet we hear the same man again as on the preceding Margaret Johnson session. He shines with his Johnny Dodds inspired playing – if somewhat “light” in comparison – but far from Bob Fuller and without any reasonable doubt Happy Caldwell. The pianist delivers the simplest sort of chordal accompaniment and does not show any characteristics. Only in ‘South Rampart Street Blues’ he shows his facilities as a stride pianist. And these are compatible with what I know of Mike Jackson’s style. Re the guitarist: Richard Rains certainly is right as expressed in his article in Storyville 153 (see below). So, after relistening this certainly is Bobby Leecan on guitar here, but no Buddy Christian.

Notes:

- Rust, Victor Master Book Vol. 2: c / tb / cl / p / g / speech by Thomas Morris, Joe Nanton and Helen Baxter

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris (cnt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Bob Fuller (clt, sop); Mike Jackson (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo, gtr); Helen Baxter, Tom Morris and Joe Nanton (dialogue)(3,4)

- Richard Rains in Storyville 153, p. 88: “A further correction needs to be made to the published personnel of the New Orleans Blue Five. The guitarist is said to be Buddy Christian but aurally this is not so even though he is co-composer, with Bob Fuller, of ‘South Rampart Street Blues’. The guitar solos on both takes of ‘My Baby Doesn’t Squawk’ and of ‘South Rampart Street Blues’ are so strikingly similar to those of Bobbie Leecan on his Need More Band’s ‘Midnight Susie’ (5 April 1927) and on ‘Red Hot Dan’ by Thomas Morris’s Hot Babies (12 December 1927) as to rule out misidentification.”

Notable differences of takes:

36895-1: bar 3 of intro (ca. 0:05): tpt plays 1 eighth note D, 1 quarter note D, 2 eighth notes D, 1 eighth not C, 1 eighth note A, 1 eighth note F#

36895-2: bar 3 of intro (ca. 0:05): tpt plays 1 eighth note D, 1 quarter note D, 1 eighth note D, 1 eighth not C, 1 eighth note A, 1 eighth note F#, 1 eighth note D (low)

36896-1: bar 10 of strain A (ca. 0:11): clt break clt attempts to play triplet run, but fails after first triplet

36896-2: bar 10 of strain A (ca. 0:11): clt break clt plays downward d-minor arpeggio in eighth notes

36897-1: bar 15/16 of 2. Verse (after pno solo)(ca. 1:21) upbeat to sop solo: 1 quarter note F, 2 eighth notes G – Gb (bar 15), 1 half note F (bar 16)

36897-2: *bar 15/16 of 2. Verse (after pno solo)(ca. 1:21) upbeat to sop solo: 2 eighth notes F – F#, 1 quarter note G, 2 eighth notes G – Gb (bar 15), 1 half note F (bar 16)*

096	THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS SEVEN HOT BABIES	New York,	Nov. 12, 1926
Thomas Morris – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn; <i>Happy Caldwell</i> – clt, ten;			
<i>Marlow Morris</i> (or <i>Phil Worde?</i>) – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Wellman Braud – sbs; unknown (<i>Eddie King</i>) - dms			
36925-1	Blues From The Everglades	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1
36925-2	Blues From The Everglades	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1
36925-3	Blues From The Everglades	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1
36926-1	P.D.Q. Blues	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1
36926-2	P.D.Q. Blues	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1
36926-3	P.D.Q. Blues	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1
<i>Composer credits: 36925 (R.S. Peer); 36926 (Simpson - Henry)</i>			

This is Thomas Morris on trumpet here, very typical. And very obvious. On trombone we hear Joe Nanton, the new trombonist of the Duke Ellington band, who later gained the nickname ‘Tricky Sam’ for all the things he could do with a trombone and a mute. Nanton is easily to identify by his tone, his vibrato and the altitude of his playing which was not common in the jazz of 1926.

All editions of Rust list Ernest Elliott as reed player. But at no instance do I hear anything that fits to Elliott’s characteristics, and I therefore would like to exclude his presence. Technical devices heard are partly beyond Elliott’s abilities. And none of his “stylistics” can be detected, notably slight smears and changing pitch. Furthermore, there has been no session in my investigation on Ernest Elliott where he can be heard play a tenor sax at all.

Instead, I assume Happy Caldwell’s participating in this session when comparing the tenor sax playing here to the July and August sessions above. Tone, attack and style would be the same, and his clarinet style definitely is “Western” and has little in common with Elliott or Fuller. Furthermore, he certainly would have been on Morris’ list of preferred musicians.

The pianist strictly plays the chords, but he plays exactly with the band in arranged parts, and it may be asked whether he was the arranger of these two titles with their very complicated structures. Lacking identifiable features of style leaves the pianist unknown. I do not know on which basis Rust lists the given names, only that Mike Jackson is said to have been a friend to Morris. But I could also imagine Marlow Morris on these sides.

Rust lists Buddy Christian on banjo, and he certainly would have been first choice for a Morris recording session. From what I hear I would agree with Christian.

Untypical for Harlem bands of these days is the string bass. Rust lists later Ellington bassist Wellman Braud, and he may be right. Yet, this player does mainly strum his bass, so a comparison with Braud’s later – plucked - work with Ellington seems to be impossible. Therefore I feel unable to really identify this player out of my aural memory. It has to be added that there were very few string bass players in the Harlem bands at this period. Other string bass players of this period would have been Francisco Tizol or Harry Hull, but their styles are not documented.

And there is a drummer using his drum-kit (tom-tom, snare drum, and cymbal), but unfortunately not his bass drum, although the Victor people certainly would have been able to record this with their new electric equipment. There are no personal characteristics of drumming heard, but what can be heard is absolutely compatible with what is known from two recording sessions of a year later by ‘Thomas Waller with Morris’ Hot Babies’, where Eddie King, Victor studio manager, very probably plays the drums which he liked to do “much to the annoyance of most musicians” (L. Wright, Fats In Fact). May this be a clue as to Morris’ getting a contract with the Victor people? The title ‘Blues From The Everglades’ bears Ralf S. Peer, A&R man of the Victor company at this time, as composer credit. I can only state that I have never tried to analyse a more complicated or erratic structure of tune like this one before. When trying to retrace my analysis below the interested reader/listener might well come to different conclusions than I did. (Please, let me know, if you do!)

Notes:

- Rust, *Victor Master Book Vol. 2: c / tb / s / p / bj / b / d*

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris –c; Joe Nanton –tb; Ernest Elliott –cl, ts; Mike Jackson or poss Phil Worde –p; Buddy Christian –bj; Wellman Braud –sb; unknown –d

Tunes:

36925-1 Blues From The Everglades Key of Ab Victor
 4 bars intro(*) tbn JN / 6 strain A ens / 12 strain B1 ens - 2 breaks tpt TM – 2 breaks ten HC / 12 Chorus 1 ens - break ten HC / 12 strain B2 ens - 2 breaks tpt TM – 2 breaks clt HC / 10 chorus 2 ens 1 break clt HC / 8 strain C1 ens 4 bars double-time – end-break tbn JN / 8 strain C2 ens 4 bars double-time - end-break tbn JN / 8 strain C3 ens end-break clt HC / 8 strain C4 ens / 2 coda

36925-2 Blues From The Everglades: same as -1

36925-3 Blues From The Everglades: same as -1

36926-1 P.D.Q. Blues Key of Eb / F / Eb Victor
 railroad noises / 4 bars intro clt HC + bjo BC / 24 chorus 1 ens / 24 chorus 2 tpt TM – clt HC / 4 bridge ens modulation Eb – F / 14 interlude tbn(*) - ens / 4 bridge ens modulation F – Eb / 24 chorus 3 ens – clt+ tbn

36926-2 P.D.Q. Blues: same as -1

36926-3 P.D.Q. Blues: same as -1

Notable differences of takes (*):

36925-1: Intro: tbn starts in bar 2

36925-2: Intro: tbn starts loudly from beginning

36925-3: Intro: tbn starts very low at beginning so that sbs is heard strumming

36926-1: last bar of tbn-solo beginning interlude: 1 quarter note C, 1 eighth note A, 1 quarter note C

36926-2: last bar of tbn-solo beginning interlude: 1 quarter note F, 1 eighth note D, 1 quarter note F

36926-3: last bar of tbn-solo beginning interlude: 1 quarter note F, 2 eighth notes D C, 2 eighth notes F F

097	EVA TAYLOR	Clarence Williams’ Blue Seven	New York,	Nov. 16, 1926
Eva Taylor – voc;				
Tommy Ladnier - tpt; Jimmy Harrison – tbn;				
Carmelo Jari – alt, clt; <i>Arville Harris</i> – ten, clt;				
Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo				
80214-A	Candy Lips (I’m Stuck On You)	OK 8414,	Document	DOCD-5409
80215-A	Scatter Your Smiles	OK 8414,	Document	DOCD-5409

The absolutely great team of Ladnier and Harrison in the Henderson aggregation must have been a sensation in Harlem. And immediately Clarence Williams recruits them for his recording date. And again, we hear Carmelo Jari on alto and clarinet with his characteristic "bouncing trill" style. The tenorist may be Arville Harris, whose possibly first performance in the Williams stable this seems to be. The banjo player features a soft ringing banjo sound here, quite different from Leroy Harris' dry and light sound as recognised on Clarence Williams' Blue Seven sides of a month later. He thus very probably is Buddy Christian on these two sides - referring to the Lucille Hegamin sides of session 089 - although all discographies list Harris. And: it is the same sound s on the Edna Winston recordings below!

Notes:

- Storyville 20: possibly Ed Allen (cnt); poss Ed Cuffee (tbn); unknown (clt, alt); poss Arville Harris (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p190: possibly Ed Allen (cnt); poss Ed Cuffee (tbn); unknown (clt, alt); poss Arville Harris (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: Tommy Ladnier -t; Jimmy Harrison -tb; Buster Bailey -cl; Coleman Hawkins -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.
 - BGR*2: Tommy Ladnier, tpt; Jimmy Harrison, tbn; Buster Bailey, clt; Coleman Hawkins, ten; Clarence Williams, pno; Leroy Harris, bjo; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs.
 - BGR*3,*4: poss Ed Allen, t; poss Ed Cuffee, tb; unknown, cl, as; poss Arville Harris, ts; Clarence Williams, p; prob Leroy Harris, bj.

098 EDNA WINSTON

New York, Nov. 23, 1926

Edna Winston - voc;

Thomas Morris - tpt; Eugene 'Bud' Aiken - tbn; Happy Caldwell - clt;

Mike Jackson - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

36958-3 I Got A Mule To Ride Vic 20407, Document DOCD-5523

36959-2 Mama's Gonna Drop Your Curtain Vic 20424, Document DOCD-5523

36960-3 Pail In My Hand Vic 20424, Document DOCD-5523

36961-1 Peeping Jim Vic 20407, Document DOCD-5523

"Very beautiful, but unknown - or not yet identified - trombonist, one of the better players, probably the name known, but unlinked to any known recordings." This is what I wrote about the trombone player in my Thomas Morris list of some years ago. But now I know! In my very personal opinion there only was one trombonist of this stature in Harlem at that time besides Jimmy Harrison and Charlie Green. He was Eugene 'Bud' Aiken, brother of trumpeter Gus Aiken. 'Bud' Aiken also played professional trumpet and was very advanced for his time. Because of this, his trombone playing owed much to trumpet playing. Unluckily, Bud Aiken died on the 21st August, 1927, what very certainly made it impossible for him to develop into a very great trombonist and gain more prominence. Compare this player with the trombonist on the Perry Bradford and his Gang session of May 10, 1926. They certainly are identical.

Christian's presence might not be questioned in comparison to next E. Winston session, as I said before! This obviously is Christian's contemporaneous sound, light and ringing. Is this really Bob Fuller? Rather: Albert Happy Caldwell! Pianist probably is the tinkling Mr. Mike Jackson - with little left hand. He might possibly also be Perry Bradford.

Notes:

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Bob Fuller, clt; Mike Jackson, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Bob Fuller -cl; Mike Jackson -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

099 THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS SEVEN HOT BABIES

New York, Nov. 24, 1926

Thomas Morris - tpt; Joe Nanton - tbn; Happy Caldwell - clt, alt;

Phil Worde - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo; Wellman Braud - sbs; (Eddie King) - dms

36962-2 The Mess Vic 20364, Frog DGF 71

36962-3 The Mess Vic 20364, Frog DGF 1

36963-1 The Chinch Vic 20483, Frog DGF 1

36963-2 The Chinch Vic 20483, Frog DGF 1

Composer credits: 36962 (R.S. Peer); 36963 (P. Worde)

There is no question as to Morris' and Nanton's presence here. But is this really Bob Fuller on reeds? Out of my knowledge of Fuller I would say: No! In my ears this is Happy Caldwell again, the same player as at the session before. Only, that he plays an alto sax or perhaps a c-melody-sax here. But from Caldwell's own testimony (Storyville 99) we know that he started on clarinet, later played alto and c-melody-sax and later again switched over to tenor sax. So, for me this is Happy Caldwell with some certainty, possibly using his c-melody-sax for the melody in 'The Mess'. (This assumption then would postulate some further questions as to Bob Fuller's presence at all these Morris-led sessions of 1926! But of this later.)

The pianist is much more restrained and functional than Mike Jackson who plays with much right-hand flowery figures. Thus, possibly Phil Worde, if these two are the alternatives. The composer credit for 'The Chinch' would lead us to Phil Worde. In respect of Mike Jackson's presence at the studio on this date his participation may seem to be taken as granted although stylistic features do not point to him. Compare with Mike Jackson's soloing at the New Orleans Blue Five session, where his solo style is clearly audible. Nothing of it on these sides! So, Phil Worde probably is the right choice.

The rest of the rhythm section obviously is the same as before. On these sides, Buddy Christian's banjo has a rather un-usual very soft hue, and this may arise doubts as to his presence (see session 099).

Notes:

- Rust, Victor Master Book Vol. 2: c / tb / s / p / bj / b / d

- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; Joe Nanton -tb; Bob Fuller -cl, as; Mike Jackson or poss Phil Worde -p; Buddy Christian -bj; Wellman Braud -sb; unknown -d

Tunes:

36962-2 The Mess Key of F/D/F

Victor

4 bars intro dms EK / 16 strain A ens(*) / 32 strain B cms HC / 32 strain B ens at end modulation F - D / 16 chorus 1 ens - sbs WB / 16 chorus 2 ens - clt HC / 4 bridge modulation D - F / 16 chorus 3 ens.

36962-3 The Mess: same as -1

36963-1 The Chinch Key of F

Victor

4 bars intro ens / 16 strain A cms - ens / 16 strain A ens / 4 vamp ens / 8 strain B cms / 4 vamp ens / 8 strain B cms - ens / 16 strain A ens / 16 strain C cms - ens / 16 strain C tpt / 16 strain A clt(*) / 4 vamp ens / 8 strain B cms - ens / 4 vamp ens / 8 strain B cms - ens / 16 strain A ens.

36963-2 *The Chinch*: same as -1

Notable differences of takes (*):

36962-2: bar 13 of strain A: *tpt all alone, playing a row six F*
 36962-3: bar 13 of strain A: *tpt and clt playing together for 3 beats, then clt dropping out to switch instrument*
 36963-1: end of clt solo: *clt stops exactly before tpt coming in*
 36963-2: end of clt solo: *clt plays together with tpt for 1 bar*

100	ESTHER BIGEOU	Clarence Williams Blue Five	New York,	Dec. 21, 1926
		personnel unknown, presumably including Clarence Williams - pno		
80258		Midnight Stomp	OK unissued	not on LP/CD
80259		Zulu Blues	OK unissued	not on LP/CD

Lacking any recording ledger or any other documents this session must remain in absolute obscurity.

Notes:

- *Storyville 20*: prob personnel: *Ed Allen (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ben Waters (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris (bjo)*.
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p193*: possibly *Ed Allen (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ben Waters (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris (bjo)*.
 - *BGR*2*: prob *Ed Allen, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ben Waters, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris, bjo*.
 - *BGR*3,*4*: poss *Ed Allen, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; Ben Waters, cl; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris, bj*.
 - *Rust*3,*4,*6*: prob: *Ed Allen -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Benny waters -cl; Clarence williams -p; Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris -bj*.

101	CLARENCE WILLIAMS' JAZZ KINGS		New York,	Jan. 25, 1927
		Carmello Jari, <i>Bennie Morton</i> - clt;		
		Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs		
143348-2		Gravier Street Blues	Col 14193-D,	Frog DGF 14
143349-2		Candy Lips	Col 14193-D,	Frog DGF 14

This is a most charming recording and shows Clarence's feeling for what can be done with a personnel consisting of two clarinet players and a rhythm section. Very difficult to identify the reedmen. Judging from tone and sound (the harsh tone in the intro of 'Candy Lips' even suggests an alto sax) – and the fact that the first clarinet mainly plays straight (the music without improvising) – this player may be Carmello Jari. The second – improvising – player displays some characteristics of Bennie Morton, who probably was back in New York at this time. Soundwise it certainly is Buddy Christian on banjo with his typical ringing sound.

Notes:

- *Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series*: Author gives accumulated personnel without distinct deposition.
 - *Storyville 20*: possibly *Ben Whittet, Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)*.
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p195*: possibly *Ben Whittet, Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)*.
 - *Rust*2*: *Buster Bailey (?)*, *Ben Whittet (?)* or *Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)*.
 - *Rust*3,*4,*6*: ?*Ben Whittet, ?Bennie Moten -cl; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb*.

102	EVA TAYLOR	Clarence Williams Blue Five	New York,	Feb. 10, 1927
		Eva Taylor – voc;		
		Jabbo Smith – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;		
		Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian - gtr		
80412-A		I Wish You Would (Love Me Like I'm Loving You)	OK 8444,	Collectors Classics COCD-19
80413-B		If I Could Be With You	OK 8444,	Collectors Classics COCD-19

Jabbo Smith recalled this as his only date with Clarence Williams: "My first ever recording was with Clarence Williams when I was 17 years of age. Charlie Johnson's trombone player got me on the date!" Smith was with Charlie Johnson at the time, as was Irvis. So, it is our strong opinion that this is the first date using Johnson musicians, with the only exception session # 093 where we find Cyrus St. Clair for the first time. At this time, Clarence seems to have alternated between Buddy Christian and newcomer Leroy Harris. As Christian is also known to have been a guitar player (and expert pianist!), it seems appropriate to suggest him as guitarist here.

Notes:

- *Storyville 20*: *Jabbo Smith (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (gtr)*.
 - *Lord, Clarence Williams p197*: *Jabbo Smith (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (gtr)*.
 - *Rust*3,*4,*6*: *Jabbo Smith -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -g*.
 - *BGR*2,*3,*4*: *Jabbo Smith, cnt; prob Charlie Irvis, tbn; Clarence Williams, pno; unknown, gtr*.

103	EDNA WINSTON		New York,	Feb. 16, 1927
		Edna Winston – voc;		
		Thomas Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Albert Happy Caldwell – clt, alt;		
		Mike Jackson – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo		
37786-1		'Way After One And My Daddy Ain't Come Home Yet	Vic 20857,	Document DOCD-5523
37787-1		Joogie Blues	Vic 20654,	Document DOCD-5523
37788-1		Ever After On	Vic 20654,	Document DOCD-5523
37788-2		Ever After On	Vic 20654,	Retrieval RTR 79078
37789-1		Rent Man Blues	Vic 20857,	Document DOCD-5523

As before on several Victor sessions under Thomas Morris' aegis we certainly hear Happy Caldwell on clarinet with his distinct Dodds-ish style, and – other than the foregoing Edna Winston session – Charlie Irvis on trombone.

There is a very busy pianist's right hand that points to Mike Jackson. And the banjo sound is Buddy Christian's of the time.

Notes:

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Bob Fuller, clt, alt; Mike Jackson, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Bob Fuller -cl -as; Mike Jackson -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

Notable differences of takes:

37788-1: Band part in middle of tune: tpt plays first break of 3 clear quarter-notes ab – B - Ab

37788-2: Band part in middle of tune: tpt plays first break of 1 clear quarter-note ab, 1 half-note B, 1 quarter-note unsecure G

104 **SARA MARTIN** Clarence Williams' Blue Five New York, Apr. 09, 1927
 Sara Martin – voc;
 Charlie Irvis – tbn;
 Carmelo Jari – clt; (*Ben Whitted*) – alt;
 Clarence Williams – pno; *Buddy Christian* – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs
 80712-B Cushion Foot Stomp OK 8461, Collectors Classics COCD-19
 80713-B Take Your Black Bottom Outside OK 8461, Collectors Classics COCD-19
Composer credits: 80712 (Williams); 80713 (Williams – Green)

Our group is proud to have detected a hitherto unlisted banjo player, presumably Buddy Christian. Or Leroy Harris? But it's Christian's new light ringing sound. The clarinetist was said to be Benny Waters for years. We have been unable to find a source for this assumption and it has to be mentioned that Waters started as a saxophonist, soloing on clarinet only in later years. Tone and style might seem to belong to Arville Harris, but are much more even and solid. I - KBR – would therefore – after recent listening – nominate Carmelo Jari here, yet without his jumping-trills, but with his strong and voluminous tone. And: Jari was Williams' favourite candidate for clarinet at this time. The alto might belong to Ben Whitted stylistically, but this is not documented anywhere and only our vague suggestion. In April 1927 Irvis and St. Clair were with Charlie Johnson's band at Smalls' Paradise and might easily have brought Whitted – first alto sax with the Johnson band - with them to this recording session.

Notes:

- Storyville 20: Charlie Irvis (tbn); Benny Waters (clt); Arville Harris (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p203: Charlie Irvis (tbn); Benny Waters (clt); Arville Harris (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Charlie Irvis, tbn; Benny Waters, clt; Arville Harris, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs.

- Rust*3: Charlie Irvis -tb; Ben Waters -cl; Arville Harris -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

- Rust*4,*6: Charlie Irvis -tb; Benny Waters -cl; Arville Harris -as; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

Soloists ad-lib:

80712: CJ clt 16; CH o-tbn + CJ clt 16; ?BW alt 16; CW pno obl 16

80713: no instrumental solos

105 **MARTHA COPELAND** New York, Aug. 09, 1927
 Martha Copeland – voc;
Porter Grainger – pno; **Buddy Christian** – bjo, *voc train effects*
 144538-2 Hobo Bill Col 14248-D, Document DOCD-5372
 144539-3 Nobody Rocks Me Like My Baby Do Col 14248-D, Document DOCD-5372

Personnel documented by label imprints or company ledgers. Comment un-necessary. Buddy Christian seems to be the train effect vocalist as his "hisses" are synchronic with his banjo chords.

Notes:

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Porter Grainger, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Porter Grainger -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

106 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS' JAZZ KINGS** New York, Jan. 12, 1928
 Ed Allen – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;
 Buster Bailey – alt, clt; Coleman Hawkins – ten, clt;
 Clarence Williams – pno; *Buddy Christian* – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs
 145521-1 Dreaming The Hours Away Col 14193-D, Frog DGF 14
 145522-2 Close Fit Blues Col 14193-D, not on LP/CD
 145522-3 Close Fit Blues Col 14193-D, Frog DGF 14

And again, the Henderson reeds (without Don Redman who was not a soloist fitting into the Williams mode) plus the Williams rhythm team. Our group identified Buddy Christian here because of the banjo sound – bell-like, opposite to Leroy Harris' rather dry sound. And we certainly hear Charlie Irvis' legato style trombone and not the Miff Mole inspired staccato style of Ed Cuffee as always given. And what a most beautiful ride-out chorus they play in the first title!

Notes:

- Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: Author gives accumulated personnel without distinct deposition.

- Storyville 21: Ed Allen (cnt); Ed Cuffee (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt, alt); Coleman Hawkins (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p222: Ed Allen (cnt); Ed Cuffee (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt, alt); Coleman Hawkins (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Rust*2: Ed Allen (cnt); Charlie Irvis (?) (tbn); Buster Bailey, (?) Russell Procope or Albert Socarras, (clt, alt); Coleman Hawkins (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Ed Allen -c; Ed Cuffee -tb; Buster Bailey -cl -as; Coleman Hawkins -cl -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

Notable differences of takes:

145522-2: this take -2 not reissued, therefore no comment possible.

107 **WILLIE JACKSON** New York, Jan. 21, 1928
 Willie Jackson – voc;
 Porter Grainger – pno; Buddy Christian – gtr

145560-3 Kansas City Blues
 145561-2 T. B. Blues
Composer credits: 145560 (---); 145561 (---)

Col 14284-D, Document DOCD-5532
 Col 14284-D, Document DOCD-5532

This is the same singer as on session 092 under the name of 'New Orleans' Willie Jackson. He is much more on the blues side here than on his recent sides in this Buddy Christian list. He is listed to play guitar, and in fact, he does, but very much in the background and retained, so much so that he can only be suspected. He does not play a continuous rhythm as usually, but strums some un-recognisable figures behind the piano.

This thus is a very sad and disappointing final recording of a musician with such strength and musicality, who always thrilled me with his expert rhythm and chords/changes.

Notes:

- Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: Piano accomp. (Gtr inaudible.)
- BGR*2: unknown pno
- BGR*3,*4: Porter Grainger, pno; Buddy Christian, gtr
- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: not listed

OOO

PHOTOS:

Four photos are generally known showing Buddy Christian:

- Clarence Williams's Orchestra, instruments spread on the floor: B. Christian standing behind Clarence Williams (T. Lord, Clarence Williams, photo segment after page 278)
- Clarence Williams's Orchestra, instruments hold in hand: B. Christian sitting in front, banjo in hand (T. Lord, Clarence Williams, photo segment after page 278)
- Hughie Woolford's Orchestra: B. Christian with guitar and banjo. Photo claims: circa 1925 (Charters/Kunstadt, Jazz, A History of the New York Scene, page 39)
- Huey Woolford's Orchestra: B. Christian with guitar and banjo. Photo claims: early 'thirties, but is obviously from the same date and location as the photo before, not "ca. 1925"! (Storyville 87, p. 100, David Griffith, Barclay Draper)

SOURCES:

- Charters/Kunstadt, Jazz, A History of the New York Scene: King Oliver's Band at Pete Lala's, New Orleans, Louisiana: Joe King Oliver – cnt; Zue Robinson (sic, recte Robertson – KBR) – tbn; Jimmy Noone – clt; Buddy Christian – bjo, gtr; Bob Lyons – sbs; Henry Zeno - dms
- Hughie Woolford's Orchestra, New York: Wesley Johnson, Barclay Draper – tpt; Bill Green – tbn; Gregorio Felix (aka Felix Gregory), Alonzo 'Lonnie' Williams – alt, clt; Ramon Hernandez – ten, clt; Hughie Woolford – pno, ldr; Buddy Christian – bjo, gtr; James Drayton – sbs; --- Jenkins - dms

The Banjo Players on Clarence Williams Records

Clarence Williams used available musicians for his impromptu recordings. These recordings were usually made at short notice (i.e. the day before), and were not particularly arduous for the musicians involved. Several banjo players were working and recording locally, and it's my guess that the lack of written information regarding personnel for Clarence Williams records is that the other band leaders did not like their musicians making a few dollars on the side with Clarence Williams. It's mostly based on interviews that some musicians have been identified, but it's my contention that banjo players were not high on the priority list of interviewers who were mostly interested in the front men.

Therefore our main hope is that we can identify them by the individual styles. This is made more difficult by the fact that banjos were usually under-recorded, and the recording techniques make it difficult to differentiate between piano chords and banjo chords. Our real hope is to listen to recordings by established bands where the banjo player is positively identified in the recording company ledgers, and then to try and identify idiosyncrasies and styles on the Clarence Williams records.

Fortunately, Clarence Williams employed only a small selection of banjo players, viz. Leroy Harris, Buddy Christian, Ikey Robinson, and perhaps Fred Guy – all in 1926, and Goldie Lucas (who also played guitar) in 1927.

At this point it is necessary to explain the function of a banjo player in a jazz ensemble. The basic function is to play, on the beat, the chords on which the tune being played is based. For example. The first four notes of "The Saints" are F-A-Bb-C, and these are based on the chords F-F-Bb-F, the chord of F consisting of the three notes F-A-C, and the chord of Bb of the three notes Bb-D-F. The simplest banjo accompaniment will be to play these chords F-F-Bb-F. If, however, the banjo plays the chords thus: ACF-CFA-DFBb-FAC (called inversion) then the banjo player will be playing the tune. The chords can be inverted any way chosen, and thus improvise a new tune. In addition, the rhythm can be augmented by playing extra chords leading the beat, Finally the dynamics of the tune can be emphasized by playing some chords off the beat and missing the ones on the beat (syncopation).

Of the banjo players known to have played with Clarence Williams, Leroy Harris and Ikey Robinson play the simple line, i.e. no inversions, Buddy Christian inverts the chords to make the accompaniment melodic, Goldie Lucas uses leading chords in addition to playing on the beat, but doesn't invert any of the chords he plays. Charlie Dixon plays in a similar style to Goldie Lucas, but often inverts the chords to build up tension.

I have also suggested Fred Guy as one who possibly recorded with Clarence Williams. He plays in a similar style to Charlie Dixon

Clarence Williams plays melodically with his left hand. This is no problem when accompanying blues singers alone or in a trio, but larger ensembles need a more solid accompaniment, so Clarence Williams used banjo (later guitar), tuba, washboard in various combinations in order to give the front line a solid base.

Robert J. Smith

K. – B. Rau
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