

THE RECORDINGS OF WILTON CRAWLEY

An Annotated Tentative Personnelo-Discography

CRAWLEY, Wilton, clarinet, vocals, contortionist Born: Smithfield, Virginia, 18th July 1900; Died: Maryland, 1958
Brother of clarinet/sax player Jimmy Crawley. Family moved to Philadelphia where the brothers formed their own band. During the 1920s and 1930s Wilton Crawley enjoyed wide success with his own variety act. He is now chiefly remembered for the recording sessions that he made with Jelly Roll Morton. Performed in England, early 1930. (J. Chilton, Who's Who of Jazz)

"Wilton Crawley was a character. The way he played clarinet was standing on his head. He's keep screwing around in a circle while he was playing. That was part of his act on the stage. When we were cutting records for Victor, Crawley wanted to stand on his head to record. Mr. Watson of Victor said "No". Crawley was just nuts. He played clarinet like Ted Lewis, not too good."

(Tom Stoddard, Pops Foster – New Orleans Jazzman)

CRAWLEY, Wilton

STYLE

Crawley is deeply seized in the vaudeville tradition of clarinet playing, with slap-tongue, freak and gas-pipe playing. He mainly uses a strong and sharp attack. He owns a good technique, but uses it mainly for his gimmicks. OK, this is not the kind of jazz music I – and most other jazz aficionados – appreciate, but it certainly is one important part of jazz performance – at a whole – of the late 1920s. His clarinet style unites an approach to jazz phrasing with some devices of the animal world, such as hen's cackle and horses' whinnying, together with "gas-pipe" sounds and wa-wa notes and likes to bend down – or upwards - his notes obtrusively. He sometimes also uses slap-tongue practices.

TONE

Crawley has a strong and reedy tone. He plays almost entirely in a staccato manner.

VIBRATO

Like other clarinetists of his style, he displays a retained but medium fast vibrato.

TIME

He plays with attack and drive, yet mostly on the beat and thus hardly swinging in a jazzy way.

PHRASING

Crawley's phrasing – if he intends one in a jazzy way - is impeded by his style as described above. This would mean that he is not a jazz musician in a strict sense, but more of a vaudeville artist.

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

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.

WILTON CRAWLEY

001 WILTON CRAWLEY	New York,	May 31, 1927
Wilton Crawley – clt;		
Eddie Heywood – pno; Eddie Lang – gtr; John Trueheart - bjo		
80944-B	Crawley Blues	OK 8479, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
80945-B	Geechie River Blues	OK 8492, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
80946	Buffalo Strut	OK unissued not on LP/CD

Wilton Crawley displays his very typical mode of clarinet playing on these sides.

It is remarkable that a musician of Eddie Lang's stature – the more so among white contemporaries – is an integral part of such an ambiguous group of esteemed jazz musicians. (But this statement may possibly only be regarded from our position of nearly one hundred years of cultural development or the vanity of fashion.) His contribution to this kind of music is modest and elegant, but retained.

Pianist Eddie Heywood, recognisable by his frequent octave runs, plays with great taste and inventiveness.

John Trueheart, Chick Webb's guitarist and close friend for all his life, plays a retained rhythm part on these sides.

Notes:

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory*, Vol. 2: *clt solos acc. Eddie Lang (g); unknown (p)*

- Rust*2: *Clarinet soli with own vcl, acc by Eddie Heywood (pno); Eddie Lang (gtr)(1,2); John Trueheart (bjo)(3)*

- Rust*3, *4, *6: *Clarinet soli with own vcl, acc by Eddie Heywood (pno); Eddie Lang (gtr); John Trueheart (bjo)*

002 WILTON CRAWLEY	New York,	Jun. 04, 1927
Wilton Crawley – clt, voc;		
Eddie Heywood – pno; Eddie Lang – gtr		
80983-C	Irony Daddy Blues	OK 8479, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
80984-B	<i>She's Forty With Me</i>	OK 8492 not on LP/CD
80984-C	<i>She's Forty With Me</i>	OK 8492, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

Everything said about the former session is valid for this session, as well.

Notes:

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory*, Vol. 2: *clt solos acc. Eddie Lang (g); unknown (p)*

- Rust*2, *3, *4, *6: *Clarinet soli with own vcl, acc by Eddie Heywood (pno); Eddie Lang (gtr)*

003 WILTON CRAWLEY	Chicago,	Dec. 16, 1927
Wilton Crawley – clt, voc;		
<i>Jimmy Blythe</i> – pno; <i>Lonnie Johnson</i> – gtr (3,4), bjo (1,2)		
82078-B	<i>She's Nothing But Nice</i>	OK 8555, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
82079-B	<i>Crawley Clarinet Moan</i>	OK 8539, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
82080-A	<i>Love Will Drive Me Crazy</i>	OK 8539, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
82081-B	<i>Let's Pretend To Be Sweethearts</i>	OK 8555, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

For these Chicago recordings Crawley did not depend on his NYC accompanists. All discographies of the past avoid to name musicians for the rhythm section. Joel B. O'Sickey of the Jazz Oracle people hears and proposes Lonnie Johnson as the guitarist at this session, and he might well be right. But to name Johnny St. Cyr as a possible banjo player I cannot support, as his style is much less regular rhythmically than what can be heard here. Most interestingly, I hear a guitar on titles 3 and 4 – no banjo here – and banjo on titles 1 and 2 – with no guitar! This would probably mean that we have one person only for both instruments, thus probably Lonnie Johnson playing guitar and banjo. Did he play the banjo? I do not know, but he should have been able to do so.

The pianist immediately reminded me of Jimmy Blythe's style as performed on Gennett recordings with Johnny Dodds and Louis Armstrong, and I feel convinced of this matter to name him as a probable pianist. BGR*4 tells us, that both men – Lonnie Johnson and Jimmy Blythe – recorded together on 13 December 1927 for OK!

With 'Crawley Clarinet Moan' Wilton Crawley plays and sings a convincing minor blues, with feeling and without his regular vaudeville manners. Quite nice! All other titles are of the usual Wilton Crawley manner.

Notes:

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory*, Vol. 2: *clt solos acc. unknown (p); unknown (g)*

- Rust*2, *3, *4, *6: *Clarinet soli with own vcl, acc by unknown (pno); unknown (bjo); unknown (gtr)*

- CD booklet *Jazz Oracle BDW 8020: Wilton Crawley (clt, v); unknown (p); Lonnie Johnson (g); prob Johnny St. Cyr (bjo)*

004 WILTON CRAWLEY	Chicago,	Dec. 17, 1927
Wilton Crawley – clt, voc;		
<i>De Loise Searcy</i> – pno; <i>Lonnie Johnson</i> – gtr		
82090	<i>Jewels Of My Heart</i>	OK unissued not on LP/CD
82091-A	<i>Diamonds In The Rough</i>	OK unissued not on LP/CD
82091-B	<i>Diamonds In The Rough</i>	OK uniss 78, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

Obviously, we have Lonnie Johnson here on guitar again, like on the former session. The pianist stylistically is somebody else than the one of the former session. BGR*4 lets us know that pianist De Loise Searcy recorded the subsequent matrices on Okeh 8537 together with Lonnie Johnson. So, what would be more probable than this lady on piano? Her piano style is definitely different from Jimmy Blythe's above, and might well be heard here (try her on Lonnie Johnson's 'Kansas City Blues' parts 1 and 2).

Notes:

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory*, Vol. 2: not listed
- Rust*2,*3,*4: *Clarinet soli with own vcl, acc by unknown (pno); unknown (gtr)*
- Rust*6: *acc by unknown, p; Lonnie Johnson, g*

005 WILTON CRAWLEY Wilton Crawley – clt, voc; Harry Schoolfield – pno; Eddie Lang – gtr 400724-C Wishing 400725-B Old Broke Up Shoes 400726-A I'm Forever Changing Sweethearts 400727-B Put A Flavor To Love	New York,	May 31, 1928
	OK 8718,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
	OK 8589,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
	OK 8589,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
	OK uniss 78,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

Storyville 1996-97, p.133 names Harry Schoolfield as pianist on this Wilton Crawley session. The OK file cards noted something like "Harry Schoolfer" in almost illegible writing. Harry Schoolfield was pianist with the Martin Walker show in about 1921, while busy with Joe Joiners (sic) Syncopated Orchestra in Camden, N.J.. Against Mr O'Sickey's notation in the CD booklet that Crawley resumes the trio with his old cohorts Heywood and Lang I have to note that this pianist's modest style has minimal similarity to Heywood's style as performed here and may not be mistaken. Again, we are enjoyed by Eddie Lang's guitar.

Mr. Crawley sings very "bourgeois" here (is this really he?), while in the last title he unchains all his vaudevillian clarinet tricks.

Notes:

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory*, Vol. 2: *clt solos acc. Eddie Lang (g); unknown (p)*
- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: *Clarinet soli with own vcl, acc by Eddie Heywood (pno); Eddie Lang (gtr)*

006 WILTON CRAWLEY Wilton Crawley – clt, voc; unknown – pno; (Eddie Lang?) – gtr 401096-B Tall Tillie's Too Tight 401097-A Snake Hip Dance	New York,	Sep. 04, 1928
	OK 8619,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
	OK uniss 78,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

This now is Crawley's vaudeville voice again, presumed that he sang in a modified voice at the above session. Crawley's clarinet performance is a little more in the jazz mode than before. I strongly doubt Eddie Heywood's presence on these sides since his typical individual indications are non-existent – no fast octave runs! But I feel unable to name another name. And: where are all those beautiful Eddie Lang guitar licks and his soft sound audible on the former sides? Here also, doubts might be allowed.

Notes:

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory*, Vol. 2: *clt solos acc. Eddie Lang (g); unknown (p)*
- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: *Clarinet soli with own vcl, acc by Eddie Heywood (pno); Eddie Lang (gtr)*

007 WILTON CRAWLEY Wilton Crawley – clt, voc; unknown – pno; Eddie Lang – gtr 401100-A My Perfect Thrill 401101-B Shadow Of The Blues	New York,	Sep. 06, 1928
	OK 8718,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
	OK 8619,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

Well, this now is the Eddie Lang's sound again! While the Eddie Heywood style is still lacking. And Crawley plays a convincing blues again as 'Shadow Of The Blues'. It is interesting to hear Mr. Crawley play acceptably or even convincingly with blues material.

Notes:

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory*, Vol. 2: *clt solos acc. Eddie Lang (g); unknown (p)*
- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: *Clarinet soli with own vcl, acc by Eddie Heywood (pno); Eddie Lang (gtr)*

008 WILTON CRAWLEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA Wilton Crawley – clt, voc; Henry Red Allen – tpt; unknown – tbn; Charlie Holmes – alt; (Greely Walton?) – ten; Luis Russell - pno; Will Johnson – gtr; Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin - dms 56747-2 Snake Hip Dance 56748-2 She's Driving Me Wild	New York,	Oct. 03, 1929
	Vic V-38094,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8020
	Vic V-38094,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

Wilton Crawley in very uncomfortable company with a couple of juvenile stars of the Harlem scene, but Crawley manages to keep them under his control. (Hadt 't it been much better to leave him out?) And he concentrates on his hokum stuff.

This personnel is fixed for decades, with the exception of Jimmy Archey and Greely Walton, whose names appear in Rust*6 for the first time. From what can be heard of the trombonist, no assumption can be made as to his identity, the more so, as Archey did not join the Luis Russell aggregation until July 1930. That same must be noted on Greely Walton, although a smooth and professional tenor sax player can be detected who might well be Walton as from his tone.

Notes:

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory*, Vol. 2: *Henry Allen (tpt); unknown (tbn); Wilton Crawley (clt, vcl); Charlie Holmes (alt); prob another reed man; Luis Russell (p); Will Johnson (g); Pops Foster (bs); Paul Barbarin (d)*
- B. Rust, *The Victor Master Book*, Vol.2: *Clarinet solos acc by t / tb / 2s / p / g / b / d*
- Rust*2,*3,*4: *Henry Allen (tpt); unknown (tbn); Wilton Crawley (clt, vcl); Charlie Holmes (alt); unknown (ten); Luis Russell (pno); Will Johnson (gtr); Pops Foster (sbs); Paul Barbarin (dms)*
- Rust*6: *Henry Allen, t; ?James Archey, tb; Wilton Crawley, cl, v; Charlie Holmes, as; ?Greely Walton, ts; Luis Russell, p; Will Johnson, g; Pops Foster, sb; Paul Barbarin, d*

009 WILTON CRAWLEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York,

Dec. 02, 1929

Wilton Crawley – clt, voc;

(Jack Hatton) (1,3,4), unknown – tpt; unknown – tbn; Charlie Holmes – alt;Jelly Roll Morton (1,3,4) Luis Russell (2,4) - pno; *(Will Johnson)* – gtr (1), bjo; Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin - dms

57565-2 You Oughta See My Gal

Vic V-38136, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

57566-1 Futuristic Blues

Vic V-38136, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

57567-2 Keep Your Business To Yourself

Vic V-38116, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

57568-1 She's Got What I Need

Vic V-38116, Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

This recording session is a researcher's nightmare, believe me. Two important jazz musicians of the 1920s/30s have declared their presence on these sides, but their statements may be seen with utmost precaution. Charlie Holmes recalled his own presence at this session, but declared that "no Ellington men were present", and yet, Freddie Jenkins declared his own presence on the two last titles, together with Johnny Hodges. And both men were Ellingtonians. So, what is here to do? Well, let's try.

First of all: who of the musicians present are identifiable by their own specific characteristics?

And at this early point already, we must decide whether to believe in Charlie Holmes assertion that he recalled the session – what might perhaps be doubted, as he also played on the subsequent Crawley session and might have mixed them up being on one only of the sessions – and that no Ellingtonians were present, in fact. Alto sax solos are on titles 3 and 4 of the session only, and I (KBR) was certain in the past that this was Hodges. But we all know that both altoists' styles are remarkably akin, caused perhaps by their close boyhood friendship. Thus, I had to change my mind in favor of Holmes on alto. (There may be an alto sax together with the brass background on titles 1 and 2, and if so, the player also is Hodges or cannot be identified.) I (KBR) admit to believe in Charlie Holmes' statement!

Or we believe in Freddie Jenkins' statement "*Hey, that's me on there! What is this? ... and that alto sounds like Johnny Hodges! But that sure is not the Duke on the piano. What is this?*" Yet, he did not recognize himself on titles 1 and 2, but only on titles 3 and 4. And on these latter titles he also recognized Johnny Hodges. But as he thought to recognize himself on titles 3 and 4, what of title 1? For me, the trumpet heard on title 1 is the same as on 3 and 4, only a portion more hectic and hurrying, and exhibiting even more staccato triplets and jumping trills and technical brilliance but rhythmic weakness than on the latter sides. I have listened closely to Jenkins' solos of this time, and they are much more of the swinging way Armstrong had spread over the jazz world, although definitely a little bit leaning to the wooden ragtime rhythms displayed by the Crawley trumpet player, here – and the jumping-trills (listen to his solos in 'Tiger Rag Part 1' of 08 Jan. 1929 and 'Hot And Bothered' of 12 June 1930! I think Jenkins must have had something like that in his mind when 'recognizing' himself.) This might have brought the elderly Jenkins - when confronted by Roger Ringo with the above sides – to the conclusion that he himself must be the player. I (KBR) myself do not see any reason to recognize an identity of both players – the Ellingtonian and the Crawley man.

Did Freddie Jenkins really recognize his own performance on titles 3 and 4 only, leaving titles 1 (!) and 2 out? With all the below listed sources in mind and some short nights of thinking, I assume Freddie Jenkins' recollections as poor fantasy. I assume that Freddie recognized the stiff rhythm as his own, not recalling that Seymour Irick and Jack Hatton had that same manner – and Jenkins also to a certain degree – but forgetting his very clear diction on Ellington records of this time.

This trumpet player with his squeezed tone, his strange muted sound, and his square and un-swinging rhythm, but technical proficiency, must be searched for in another direction. And it is very interesting to note that Jenkins names two other trumpeters who might possibly be present, Lincoln Mills and 'possibly' Jack Hatton. Of Lincoln Mills we have recordings only as a member of the trumpet section of the bands of Tiny Bradshaw (1935), Claude Hopkins (1937), and Benny Carter (1939), and later with Gene Sedric in 1945. His style is fast-fingered, staccato, and very technical, but cannot be compared with the trumpeter's style here. Of Jack Hatton we only know that he was kind of a ragtime player of the late 1910s, very professional and of high technical proficiency, but un-recorded. I had assumed Seymour Irick to be our trumpet player here for a time - but had to cancel this, as Irick was killed by his wife in early 1929. Thus, I assume that Hatton must be the man heard on three of our four Wilton Crawley sides with some strong degree of probability. There is nobody on my records sounding quite like him, except, perhaps, Seymour Irick. Without any aural instances of his style and sound on disc or CD, I am unable to make a clear statement, but give Mr. Hatton my preference. Everything noted on his trumpet style in the books (see below) corresponds to what can be heard (see below). I have listened to most of the Ellington sides of 1929 and 1930, and I do not hear anything that would be comparable with our Crawley man. In case I am right with my assumption, Mr. Hatton's discovery here would be a major surprise!

Then, we still have a second trumpet player, who plays the accompaniment in title 2 and can be heard very presently with a strong and high trumpet shake in the last bar of the penultimate chorus and the first bar of the last chorus of title 4. This tone alone reminds me of Red Allen – but on this one single note, only. But, the star of the Russell band on this session, and one identifiable note only? Certainly no! It would be self-evident to look for this trumpeter in the Luis Russell Orchestra, as a couple of their musicians are on these sides. And then, Otis Johnson would be the only evident choice. He was a well-respected and strong section man, but also able to swing and get-off choruses. Only, from what we can hear in title 2 and 4, an identification is impossible.

Robert Cheek, as named by Charlie Holmes, was one of the many trumpet players in Harlem living a rather unpretentious musician's life in the big bands. He seems to have come to New York with Eddie Heywood and recorded with Eddie Heywood's Jazz Six as well as with Butterbeans and Susie in 1926. In the 1930s he was part of an exclusive number of big bands in the Harlem circle, yet as section player only, playing first trumpet with Luis Russell's band in August 1931. (This might have caused Charlie Holmes' mention, by the way.) He later recorded with Willie Bryant and his Orchestra and with Ovie Alston and his Orchestra. If it really is Cheek accompanying on 'Futuristic Blues', I'd not be surprised but sufficiently pleased. But there is very little material for comparison only on record, and thus a sufficiently based statement impossible.

And there is a trombone player present, rather in the foreground, who only plays noted parts, but with excellent sound and embouchure, and unfortunately, is not identifiable. He is not J.C. Higginbotham! Equally, he does not sound like Jimmy Archey.

The alto saxophonist is Charlie Holmes – from his own recollection – and being part of the Russell band musicians.

Definitely identifiable is pianist Jelly Roll Morton on titles 1,3,4. Luis Russell himself is given – and significant by the piano playing in titles 2 and 4. The piano duet in the last title is a very nice idea, and it is executed with musical humor and wit, especially the short breaks and the notes not played ... and the piano tremolo below Morton's solo on title 4.

Excluding any Ellington players, other men from the Russell band should be regarded. While preparing my Luis Russell list (elsewhere at this website) some months ago, I learned to esteem the clear, exact and swinging banjo/ guitar work of the unassuming Will Johnson, whose entire recorded work was done in the company of Luis Russell musicians. Under this aspect, I feel rather certain that he is our man here.

The banjo/guitarist player might well be Will Johnson of the Russell Band. A guitarist is not listed in the Victor Master Book, but Johnson doubles on guitar on the first side. While preparing my Luis Russell list (elsewhere at this website) some months ago, I learned to esteem the clear, exact and swinging banjo/ guitar work of the unassuming Will Johnson, whose entire recorded work was done in the company of Luis Russell musicians. Under this aspect, I feel rather certain that he is our man here.

Vigorous string-bassist George 'Pops' Foster is suggested by Charlie Holmes, he also a key-member of the Luis Russell band of the time.

And drummer Paul Barbarin, rhythm partner of Foster in the Russell band, is easily recognizable from snare-drum style and cymbal sound, and Pops Foster with his strong bass style. Together with the assumed presence of Charlie Holmes, we thus have a strong party of Luis Russell men on these sides.

Notes:

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory*, Vol. 2: probable personnel: Arthur Whetsel, Freddie Jenkins (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Wilton Crawley (clt); Johnny Hodges (alt); Jelly Roll Morton, Luis Russell (p); unknown (bj); unknown (g); Wellman Braud (bs); unknown (d)
 - Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography*, 1948: Wilton Crawley (cl) with Luis Russell & Jelly Roll Morton (p); poss Johnny Dunn (tp); Pops Foster (b); Paul Barbarin (dm)
 - B. Rust, *The Victor Master Book*, Vol.2: 2 t / tb / cl / s / p / bj / g / b / d
 - Rust*2: Freddie Jenkins, ?Arthur Whetsel (tpt); unknown (tbn); Wilton Crawley (clt); Johnny Hodges (alt); Jelly Roll Morton, Luis Russell (pno); unknown (bjo); unknown (gtr); Wellman Braud (sbs); unknown (dms)
 - Rust*3: 2 unknown -t; unknown -tb; Wilton Crawley -cl; Johnny Hodges -as; Jelly Roll Morton -Luis Russell -p; unknown -bj; unknown -g; Pops Foster -sb; ?Sonny Greer -d
 - Rust*4: ?Freddie Jenkins, unknown -t; unknown -tb; Wilton Crawley -cl; Johnny Hodges -as; Jelly Roll Morton -Luis Russell -p; unknown -bj -g; Pops Foster -sb; ?Sonny Greer -d
 - Rust*6: ?Freddie Jenkins, ?Robert Cheek, t; unknown, tb; Wilton Crawley, cl; Charlie Holmes, as; Jelly Roll Morton, Luis Russell, p; unknown, bj, g; Pops Foster, sb; Paul Barbarin, d
 - L. Wright, Mr. Jelly Lord, p.70: Freddie Jenkins on this session: "Freddy listened politely to the first two numbers, and then, on the third number, he suddenly turned and said: "Hey, that's me on there! What is this? ... and that alto sounds like Johnny Hodges! But that sure is not the Duke on the piano. What is this?" The fourth number brought the same reactions ... But even if I can't remember where I was, I know that's me on that record. No two people play exactly alike. I had certain phrases which were very individual, and they stamped my name over any solos I played."
 - Ibid: "On being played the above four sides, Charlie (Holmes - KBR) identified his work in places, but wasn't sure that all the alto work was his own. He clearly recalled the session and said that Wilton Crawley and Jelly Roll had each walked in accompanied by his own men and there was a real squaring-off between the two prima donnas; ... Charlie was sure that no Ellington men were present and suggested Robert Cheeks as one of the trumpets and Pops Foster on bass."
 - Jazz Oracle CD BDW 8020 booklet: 2 unknown (one of whom may be Henry Allen) (t); unknown (tb); Wilton Crawley (clt); Charlie Holmes (as); Jelly Roll Morton - Luis Russell (p); unknown (g, bjo); George 'Pops' Foster (sb); ?Sonny Greer (d)

Tunes Structures:

57565 *You Oughta See My Gal* Key of Eb tpt 1 / tbn / clt / ?alt / pno / bjo / sbs / dms Victor
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(Chorus 1 32 bars AABA tpt 1 lead + WC clt)(Verse 16 bars tpt + tbn)(Chorus 2 32 bars AABA JRM pno 24 - WC clt 8)(Chorus 3 32 bars AABA tpt)(Tag 4 bars tpt-WC clt-JRM pno)
 57566 *Futuristic Blues* Key of Eb tpt 2 / tbn / clt / pno / bjo / sbs / dms Victor
 (Chorus 1 16 bars ens)(Chorus 2 16 bars LR pno)(Chorus 3 16 bars WC clt + tpt/tbn background)(Chorus 4 16 bars WC clt + tpt / tbn background)(Chorus 5 16 bars WC clt - ens)
 57567 *Keep Your Business To Yourself* Key of Eb tpt 1 / tbn / clt / alt / pno / pno / bjo / sbs / dms Victor
 (Intro 4 bars tpt 3)(Verse 16 bars WC clt + tpt+tb)(Chorus 1 32 bars AABA WC clt)(Chorus 2 32 bars AABA JRM pno 16 - CH alt 14 - JRM pno 2)(Chorus 3 32 bars AABA tpt 3)(Chorus 4 32 bars AABA WC clt 16 - ens 16)(Tag 4 bars ens)
 57568 *She's Got What I Need* Key of Eb tpt 1 / tbn / clt / alt / pno / pno / bjo / sbs / dms Victor
 (Intro 6 bars WC clt + ens)(Chorus 1 16 bars AABA WC clt + ens)(Chorus 2 16 bars AABA WC clt)(Chorus 3 16 bars AABA tpt1)
 Chorus 4 16 bars AABA tpt1)(Chorus 5 16 bars AABA CH alt)(Chorus 6 16 bars AABA CH alt 8 - PF sbs 4 - CH alt 4)(Chorus 7 16 bars AABA JRM - LR pno)(Chorus 8 16 bars AABA JRM - LR pno)(Chorus 9 16 bars AABA ens + WC clt)(Chorus 10 16 bars AABA ens)

010 WILTON CRAWLEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York,

Jun. 03, 1930

Wilton Crawley - clt, voc;

Henry Red Allen - tpt; Charlie Holmes - alt;

Jelly Roll Morton - pno; Teddy Bunn - gtr; Pops Foster - bbs; Bruce Johnson - wbd

62188-2 Big Time Woman

Vic 23292,

Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

62189-1 I'm Her Papa, She's My Mama

Vic uniss 78,

Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

62189-2 I'm Her Papa, She's My Mama

Vic 23344,

Jazz Oracle BDW 8020

62190-1 New Crawley Blues

Vic 23344,

Jazz Oracle BDW 8022

62191-1 She Saves Her Sweetest Smiles For Me

Vic 23292,

Jazz Oracle BDW 8022

Note: The last two titles are enclosed in the George McClennon CD Jazz Oracle BDW 8022!

Here again, we have a contingent of the Russell band, lead this time by trumpet star Henry 'Red' Allen, together with Holmes on alto sax and Pops Foster also on tuba (yes, he could play this horn! Oh, yes, and he dared to!) But the whole affair drags a little, I fear. Pops Foster should have used his bass-violin, and should have had Barbarin at his side! And Teddy Bunn also does not contribute to a driving rhythm. Thus, we find a rhythm section with a "fumble-finger" style piano, arpeggiating guitar with some single-note lines, a tuba playing melodies, and a washboard without any bass-notes. This calamity is then overcome with the last title which sets the matter straight a bit. But it is most interesting to observe that a driving jazz man like Allen does absolutely nothing to incite some musical fire. This must have been "a sad night in Harlem", it seems. And also, it does not throw a favourable light on the pianist.

Notes:

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory*, Vol. 2: Henry Allen (cor); Wilton Crawley (clt, vcl); Charlie Holmes (alt); Jelly Roll Morton (p); Teddy Bunn (g); unknown (tu); unknown (wbd); unknown (cowbells)
 - Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography*, 1948: Washboard Rhythm Kings: featuring Wilton Crawley (cl & vo)
 - B. Rust, *The Victor Master Book*, Vol.2: WC-cl / t / s / p / g / bb / wb; vocalist Wilton Crawley
 - Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: Henry Allen (tpt); Wilton Crawley (clt, vcl); Charlie Holmes (alt); Jelly Roll Morton (pno); Teddy Bunn (gtr); unknown (sbs); Bruce Johnson (wbd)

Notable differences of takes:

62189-1: Middle-break of first chorus: Crawley plays a fast eight-notes run downward, starting on d and ending on Bb (Bb7)

62189-2: Middle-break of first chorus: Crawley plays some quarter-notes downward "chicken clamour" phrase d - c - bb

SOURCES:On Wilton Crawley:

- William Russell, "Oh, Mr. Jelly", Paul Barbarin, p. 313: "In New York, I finally made some records with Jelly, when he recorded with Winton Crawley. The guys were mostly from the Luis Russell band. Once, while we were recording, Crawley was playing his clarinet and his false teeth fell out on to the floor and made so much noise the man in the control room stopped the record. The guys all started laughing and it must have been ten minutes before any of them could play again. We had no special rehearsals for the recordings I made with Jelly. We went right to the studio (Victor's on 24th Street in New York) and played, that's all, Run over the tune once and, "Alright, let's go, take one."

- William Russell, "Oh, Mr. Jelly", Wilton Crawley, p.428: "In an article on Wilton Crawley in the December issue of Orin Blackstone's 'Playback' magazine, Ken Hulsizer discusses the personnels of Crawley's five Victor records and describes one of his stage performances at Washington's Howard Theatre, in the 1930s.

Crawley did a vaudeville act that consisted of a combined contortionist, balancing, juggling, and musical performance. He tied himself in knots, he balanced a lighted kerosene lamp complete with chimney on his head, and played the clarinet all the while. For a smash finish, he stood on his head and propelled himself across the stage into the wings while playing what sounded like a wild version of 'Tiger Rag' (on the clarinet).

Ken corresponded with Crawley's former manager, Harrison Smith, who remembered that Crawley performed a great part of his act before the microphone while recording. Morton started the band off and everything was going fine until Crawley came in for a clarinet solo. Startled by the strange sounds, Morton looked up from the piano just in time to get a load of Crawley tied in knots while recording his clarinet solo. "That's when Jelly fell out," Harrison said (and they had to scrap the recording).

For other accounts of Crawley's act, see the interviews by Harrison Smith, Manzie Johnson, and Paul Barbarin.

In 1948, Crawley was interviewed by Thurman and Mary Grove for 'Jazz Music' magazine. He was born in Virginia in 1900, became a headliner in Chicago in the 1920s, and recorded for Okeh. In 1928 he had a year's run on Broadway. In the 1930s he toured Europe but was only working local engagements in Baltimore by the late 1940s. He remembered the Victor records he made with Jelly Roll on a cold New York day in 1929. "Jelly came in dressed in a big fur coat, and you could hardly see him until he took off and finished hanging it over the edge of a door. He was a big talker, you know, and started right in as soon as he got his hands warmed up from the bitter cold outside."

- William Russell, "Oh, Mr. Jelly", Manzie Johnson, p.517: "I also worked with Wilton Crawley, the contortionist, who recorded with Jelly Roll, and I must tell you about the day when Crawley's band played in a state hospital for the insane. Well, Crawley the contortionist had a stage act, and on that day he went through his routine, which included him playing with three clarinets in his mouth, and all his corny jive. Afterwards, they had buses to take the people back to their rooms. Well, Wilton, he got in one of the buses. The driver, to check on his patients, was counting: "One ...two ...three ...four ...five ...six ...seven ...Who are you?" "I'm Wilton Crawley, the world's greatest cla ..." "Eight ...nine ...ten ..."

On Freddie Jenkins:

- Laurie Wright, Mr. Jelly Lord, p.70, "Our suggestions in 'Morton's Music' (1968) of 'possibly Freddie Jenkins' and 'probably Charlie Holmes' were taken up by Al Vollmer, with some interesting results. On being played the above four sides, Charlie identified his work in places, but wasn't sure that 'all' the alto work was his own. He clearly recalled the session and said that Wilton Crawley and Jelly Roll had each walked in accompanied by his own men, and there was a real squaring-off between the two prima donnas; Jelly saying the records would sell because 'he' was on them, and Crawley saying they would sell because 'he' was the star. Charlie was sure that no Ellington men were present and suggested Robert Cheeks as one of the trumpets and Pops Foster on bass. Later, various other musicians around New York to whom Al played the sides, suggested Lincoln Mills on trumpet.

Al then sent a tape of the sides to Roger Ringo who was a friend of Freddie Jenkins and had interviewed him for 'Storyville'. Roger played the sides for Freddie and wrote to me. I quote from his letter: "Freddie listened politely to the first two numbers, and then, on the third number he suddenly turned and said: "Hey, that's me on there! What is this? ... and that alto sounds like Johnny Hodges! But that sure is not the Duke on the piano. What is this?" The fourth number brought the same reactions. At the end of the music, which was chronological, Al Vollmer came on the tape to explain what the session was, what Charlie Holmes had said, and asked if Freddie could shed any light on the session. ... "Well, Freddie, what about it?" I asked. ... "Listen, Big Daddy," (Freddie always calls me 'Big Daddy') "Those days we'd play most of the night. And then we'd go to Cliff Jackson's, or some place else, and jam until morning. And, about the time we'd get home, the phone would ring, and some recording company would say that someone couldn't make a recording date that morning, and could you fill in. And away you would go. By the time the record session was over, it was time to go to work again. Now, how can I say in 1976 where I was on December second 1929 ... or who I was with? ... But even if I can't remember where I was, I know that's me on that record. No two people play exactly alike. I had certain phrases which were very individual, and they stamped my name over any solos I played. Sure, they could be duplicated to some degree, enough to fool an untrained ear. But the imitation would not fool the guy who originated the phrase. And no real professional musician wanted to copy anyone else. He had his own style to sell." ... "Now, I am sure I am right about me; and I think I am right about Johnny Hodges. But that applies only to the third and fourth numbers. In the first two the trumpet could well be Lincoln Mills or, possibly, Jack Hatton. Quite likely, the alto on those numbers was Charlie Holmes. The drums don't come through real clear on any of the numbers, and I would guess that Sonny Greer was not on any of them. If Sonny had been there the drums would have been clearer and busier. I don't hear Luis Russell on any of the numbers. Luis had a light, airy style, and most of this sounds like what we used to call 'fumble-finger' style. Jelly used that a lot. The trombone and bass don't suggest anything to me, but I'm wondering if the banjo - guitar could have been Wilbur Sweatman? I don't have any gut feeling about it, though." ... I have no knowledge of Wilbur Sweatman having played banjo or guitar well enough to have played on a recording date and must wonder if Freddie came out with the wrong name here. Possibly he meant Elmer Snowden? Either way, there is nothing distinctive on the sides to suggest anyone. ... Yet a third possibility for the unknown trumpet player is Sylvester Lewis, who told John Chilton that he recorded with Jelly Roll Morton and with Bessie Smith before joining Claude Hopkins. John adds that the trumpet work is not inconsistent with that attributed to Lewis whilst with Hopkins. It is possible that three, or even all four of the names offered here were actually present, but that only two played on any one title, and interviews with musicians suggest that this sort of thing happened more frequently than discographers normally allow!.

On Jack Hatton:

- Storyville 47-164, Harrison Smith talks to D. Stewart-Baxter: "I had several other orchestras, but the most important one I had was the great Jack Hatton. He worked like Louis Armstrong before we ever heard of Louis! His main trick was coming off the stand, mingling amongst the dancers, still playing; then he'd go up to the balcony, entertain the patrons in the balcony, and he'd always get back to the stand in time to hit that last note! We were doing numbers like 'Walkin' The Dog', 'St. Louis Blues' and 'Sown Home Rag'; but these were the tunes I was involved with most prominently in those days ... at that time at least."

- Storyville 87-90, Barclay Draper: *"Atlantic City seemed to be the place for bands in those days. Ethel Waters, Ethel Williams, and Snow Fisher were the entertainers at the Philadelphia House and Sam Wooding led the band there. What impressed me more than the two 'Ethels' though were two of the musicians in Sam's band. He had a trumpet player named Jack Hatton and also Big Charlie Green on trombone. Jack Hatton was a little different from other trumpet players, he made different sounds and he had different gadgets – they didn't call them mutes then – different tin-cans and plungers. Gig Green also had these gadgets and between them they had a vast array of different things that they put over the bells of their instruments, making odd and unusual sounds. Jack Hatton used to flutter-tongue on the trumpet and make sounds that came out like a laugh. Later I tried to copy this and I had some success with it. At that time Jack Hatton was considered one of the greater exponents of what jazz was at that time."*

- Storyville 101-170, Bobby Booker's Life Story: *"When I first arrived (in NYC – KBR)(c. 1922-23), Jack Hatton was playing at a place called the Garden of Joy, which was on 7th Avenue and 140th Street. He was a kind of trumpet player who liked all types of gimmicks; he had a hat and a derby, different kinds of mutes, he was quite an entertainer. He was in the Category of Johnny Dunn, but Johnny Dunn was internationally known, and he had, well, a different kind of air around him. They both played about the same kind of horn. Johnny Dunn was a sporting kind of guy, wore gloves and carried a cane as he walked down 7th Avenue."*

- Storyville 2002-03, p.171: Jack Hatton, trumpet. *Advert with photo for Carnival & Picnic at Manhattan Casino on 21 August. His band features John Mayfield, Maylon Hall, James P. Johnson, and Samuel Hodges. Hatton formerly with Happy Rhone, etc. (CD 19/8/22 p.9)*

- Garvin Bushell, Jazz From The Beginning, p. 18: *"The top trumpet player around 1919-20 was Jack Hatton. He was a member of the Clef Club who had been in New York most of his life. Hatton lit up Ford Dabney's Orchestra. He was very exciting, and played with a lot of power and flutter-tonguing. He also used buckets and plungers, slop jars, chambers, and everything. It was a lot of comedy. But he was sensational, and his impact on audiences was great as Johnny Dunn's was on record. Hatton's playing, and that of other New York musicians of the time, was different from the playing of men in Chicago, St. Luis, New Orleans, and Texas. New York jazz was nearer the ragtime style and had less blues. There wasn't an eastern performer who could really play the blues."*

- Ibid, p.114: *"Bunk was one of the few New Orleans musicians who could read. But he didn't play the New Orleans style I expected to hear. He played the way they used to all up and down the East Coast, in New York, or even in Springfield – he sounded more like Jack Hutton or Seymore Irick. It was a ragtime style of trumpet."*

- Laurie Wright, Mr. Jelly Lord, p.70, Freddie Jenkins: *"Now, I am sure I am right about me; and I think I am right about Johnny Hodges. But that applies only to the third and fourth numbers. In the first two the trumpet could well be Lincoln Mills or, possibly, Jack Hatton."*

After all this said I am now sufficiently convinced to be able to daringly name the first trumpet player – that one with the squeezed tone and the silly, square and stiff melodic rhythm in his style – as Jack Hatton from the late days of ragtime and the early days of jazz.

Trumpet players also assumed to be present on session 009:

Arthur Whetsol
Robert Cheek
Henry Allen
Lincoln Mills
Sylvester Lewis
Otis Johnson

K.-B. Rau
08-09-2018
14-06-2021
22-02-2022
26-05-2023