

THE RECORDINGS OF JULIUS „GEECHIE“ FIELDS

An Annotated Tentative Personello-Discography

Fields, “Geechie” Julius, trombone, born: Georgia, c. 1903.
Was raised in the Jenkins Orphanage, South Carolina, taught trombone by Gene ‘Buddy’ Aiken and Jake Frazier, did regular tours with the Orphanage Band, Settled in New York and worked for various leaders at John O’Connor’s Club (c. 1924). With Earle Howard’s Band at Strand Danceland (late 1926), rejoined Howard briefly in 1927. With Charlie Skeete (1929), Bill Benford’s Band (late 1929-30). Recorded with Jelly Roll Morton in 1928 and 1930; was once married to vocaliste Myra Johnson. Left full-time music in the 1930s, later became a boxing coach and trainer for an athletics club in New York. (John Chilton, Who’s Who of Jazz)

STYLISTICS

STYLE

Fields’ trombone style is – above all – known for his excessive and sometimes rather weird and “primitive” growl playing on Morton’s recordings. This fact obviously led many early researchers/listeners to the conclusion that – whenever a trombonist appeared playing growl outside of the Ellington band – it had to be Geechie Fields. Yet, on some of the few sides he played on outside of the Morton circle he plays in a very cultivated and elegant melodic style, although he is equipped to play powerful stomping in staccato in some later Morton titles. For my estimation, he yet belongs to the group of legato players when suited. Thus, he certainly was a versatile and strong player, unfortunately greatly overlooked in his abilities by the public.

For all his earlier assumed recordings with Clarence Williams we have found that this man most probably is George Washington – then with Charlie Johnson – or Henry Hicks in one case.

STONE

Very beautiful and cultivated tone, soft but powerful.

VIBRATO

Slow and wide vibrato when playing slow tempos.

TIME

He can play distinctly at the head of the beat on some sides, but is also able to use extraordinary off-beat timing in his “growl” performances.

PHRASING

His Western style is inventive and harmonically advanced. It is my – KBR’s – believe that Fields was urged by Jelly Roll Morton to play in a freakish “growl” style fashionable at this time, yet against his own stylistic concept. In these “growl” solos he pretends to play “primitive” and with that uses much off-beat phrasing, starting and ending his phrases unrelated to the measures. He masters this device with great authenticity.

This personello-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: **Geechie Fields**
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Geechie Fields*
- 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: (*Geechie Fields*)

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.

GEECHIE FIELDS

001 THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS SEVEN HOT BABIES		New York,	Jul. 13, 1926
Thomas Morris, Ward Pinkett – tpt; Geechie Fields – tbn; unknown – alt, clt, bar; Albert Happy Caldwell – ten; Marlowe Morris – pno; Lee Blair – bjo; Bill Benford – bbs			
35762-3	Lazy Drag	Vic 20483,	Frog DFG 1
35763-1	Jackass Blues	Vic 20179,	Frog DFG 1
35763-3	Jackass Blues	Vic 20179,	Frog DFG 1
35764-2	Charleston Stampede	Vic 20180,	Frog DFG 1

After Happy Caldwell's statements in Storyville 99 (see below) we might be certain of Thomas Morris, Ward Pinkett, Geechie Fields, Albert 'Happy' Caldwell, Lee Blair and perhaps Bill Benford on these sides.

Thomas Morris is the name-giving leader of the band. He plays first trumpet – i.e. the melody and the first part in the brass section – and he can be discovered playing solos in his own somewhat un-proficient way. For his solos see the structure of the recorded tunes below (Thomas Morris = TM). I assume that Morris' self-confidence as a musician was not very distinct, so that he engaged soloists of better quality than his own.

The much more elegant and securer soloist on trumpet is Ward Pinkett. His presence is documented in Laurie Wright's interview of Happy Caldwell, published in Storyville 99, but very sadly not continued as planned because of Caldwell's death not long after. For a time, Rex Stewart had been assumed to be on trumpet, but his style is much straighter and more in Armstrong's style than Pinkett's.

Geechie Fields is mainly known from J.R. Morton's Red Hot Peppers sides of June 1928 where he excels in off-beat growl solos. But what a wonderful legato trombonist he is here in the second chorus of his solo in 'Jackass Blues'. An unreckoned but very cultivated and elegant player who also knew how to play "freak". It really is a pity that he often has been misidentified in the past as the executioner for every "primitive" growl playing whose identity was not known.

Then there is an alto/baritone player doubling clarinet of whom I feel unable to propose a name. He is not Ernest Elliott as listed in any discography in the past. In my large investigation as to Ernest Elliott's assumed presence in so many recording sessions I have isolated his very special stylistic features, and these cannot be recognized here. So, he definitely is not present here! Even more so, Happy Caldwell in his interview does not talk of Elliott as participant at all. The two clarinet solos in 'Jackass Blues' display a very queer shaky vibrato – not Elliott's - strong uncertainties of tone and phrase and seem to be played by a man, whose main instrument is saxophone. But then: why did they make him play solo on clarinet? In Verse II of 'Lazy Drag' he plays his first saxophone part so retained – or reluctant – that the tenor sax of Caldwell is much to the fore, the alto only hardly audible and thus the melody (first part) nearly inaudible.

Only in 'Charleston Stampede' Albert 'Happy' Caldwell can be heard on tenor with his somewhat erratic style, beginning phrases and ending them in an absolutely not anticipated way.

The pianist is named as Marlowe Morris, not the noted swing pianist, Thomas Morris' nephew, of 'Swinging The Blues' fame, but – as Caldwell claims – Thomas Morris' uncle, obviously the swing pianist's father. (Rust*6 lists both persons under one single notation in his index.) And it is interesting to note how this player keeps very much in the background and is mostly nearly inaudible, only coming to the fore in take -3 of 'Jackass Blues'. He does not seem to have been an experienced player and no other recordings of him are noted. But the treble figures under the trombone solo certainly point to Mike Jackson's style.

Lee Blair with his dry banjo sound seems to be as given. He can also be heard on the J.R. Morton RHP of June 1928, together with Bill Benford, whose presence here, shortly before his sojourn with the 'Blackbirds of 1926' band touring Great Britain, and after his time with the June Clark band at 'Smalls' Sugar Cane Club', seems to be confirmed. He played a straight upright tuba, not a sousaphone.

Pinkett, Fields, and Blair, together with drummer Tommy Benford, later were in Bill Benford's Rose Danceland band from where Morton picked them for recording purposes.

Notes:

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

- Rust*2: Tom Morris, Ward Pinkett (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt, alt); Happy Caldwell (ten); Mike Jackson (pno); unknown (bjo); Bill Benford ? (bbs)

- Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris, Rex Stewart -c; Geechie Fields -tb; Ernest Elliott -cl, ts, bar; unknown -as; Mike Jackson -p; ? Lee Blair -bj; ? Bill Benford -bb

- Rust*6: Tom Morris, Ward Pinkett -t; Geechie Fields -tb; Ernest Elliott -cl-as-bar; Happy Caldwell -cl-ts; Marlowe Morris -p; ? Lee Blair -bj; Bill Benford -bb

- Storyville 99-88, Happy Caldwell: "The first electrical recordings I made were with Tommy Morris – I remember we had a microphone instead of those big horns. Ward Pinkett and Tommy were on trumpets, Geechie Fields on trombone and Marlowe Morris – he was Tommy's cousin, er no, his uncle, he was on piano. I remember we did Ham And Gravy (sic) and Jackass Blues. No, I never recorded with Rex Stewart at that time."

Tunes:

35762-3 *Lazy Drag* Key of F Victor
(Intro 4 bars ens)(Chorus 1 12 bars tpt TM)(Verse I 16 bars ens)(Verse II 16 bars sax breaks)(Verse II 16 bars bjo breaks)(Chorus 12 bars 2 tpt WP)(Chorus 3 12 bars bar)(Chorus 4 12 bars ens)(Coda 2 bars ens-ten HC)

35763-1 *Jackass Blues* Key of Bb Victor
(Intro 4 bars tbn GF - tpt WP)(Chorus 1 12 bars tpt TM)(Chorus 2 12 bars ens theme)(Chorus 3 12 bars tbn (*) GF)(Chorus 4 12 bars tbn GF)(Vamp 4 bars ens)(Chorus 5 12 bars clt)(Chorus 6 12 bars ens)

35763-3 *Jackass Blues* Key of Bb Victor
same as -1

35764-2 *Charleston Stampede* Key of Bb Victor
(Chorus 1 12 bars ens)(Chorus 2 12 bars ens)(Verse 16 bars ens)(Chorus 3 12 bars tpt WP)(Chorus 4 12 bars ten HC)(Chorus 5 12 bars bbs BB)(Chorus 6 12 bars ens)(Chorus 7 12 bars ens)(Chorus 8 12 bars tpt TM)(Chorus 9 12 bars tbn GF)(Chorus 10 12 bars ens)(Coda 4 bars ens)

Notable differences of takes (*):

35763-1 *first trombone solo chorus – pno nearly silent*
 35763-3 *first trombone solo chorus – pno playing prominent chimes-like treble notes behind tbn*

002 THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS SEVEN HOT BABIES New York, Aug. 17, 1926
 Thomas Morris, Jabbo Smith – tpt; Geechie Fields – tbn;
 Ernest Elliott – alt, clt; Albert 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

With slightly altered personnel this session carries on as before. 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 tbn GF)(Chorus 3 12 bars bjo)(Chorus 4 12 bars voc MJ)(Chorus 5 12 bars clt EE)(Chorus 6 12 bars tpt JS)(Chorus 7 12 bars 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 tbn GF)(Chorus A2 16 bars pno MJ, middle-break clt EE)(Chorus A3 16 bars () ens middle-break tpt JS)(Chorus B1 12 bars ten HC)(Chorus B2 12 bars tpt JS)(Chorus B3 12 bars 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*

EARLE HOWARD'S STRAND DANCELAND ORCHESTRA New York, c. 1927/28
 Bob Labell – tpt; Geechie Fields – tbn;
 Allan Jackson – alt, clt, vln; Johnny Russell – ten, clt;
 Earle Howard – pno, ldr; Arnold Canty – bjo; Ben Campbell – bbs; Leonard Reed - dms
No recordings

003 JELLY ROLL MORTON'S RED HOT PEPPERS	New York,	Jun. 11, 1928
Ward Pinkett – tpt; Geechie Fields – tbn; Omer Simeon – clt; Jelly Roll Morton – pno; Lee Blair – bjo; Bill Benford – bbs; Tommy Benford – dms		
45619-2 Georgia Swing	Vic V-38024,	JSP CD 324
45620-3 Kansas City Stomps	Vic V-38010,	JSP CD 324
45621-3 Shoe Shiner's Drag	Vic 21658,	JSP CD 324
45622-2 Boogaboo	Vic V-38010,	JSP CD 324
45623-1 Shreveport	Vic 21658,	JSP CD 324
45623-2 Shreveport	Vic 21658,	JSP CD 325
45624-2 Mournful Serenade	Vic V-38024,	JSP CD 324
45625 Honey Babe	Vic unissued,	not on LP/CD
45626 Sidewalk Blues	Vic unissued,	not on LP/CD

Nothing must be said about these generally known jazz classics. Geechie Fields does not play on "Shreveport" and the last two titles of this session are – and remain – unissued. What a great pity!

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948: Ward Pinkett (tp); Geechie Fields (tb); Omer Simeon (cl); Jelly Roll Morton (p); Lee Blair (g); Bill Benford (tuba); Tommy Benford (dm)*
- Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: *Ward Pinkett (tpt); Geechie Fields (tbn); Omer Simeon (clt); Jelly Roll Morton (pno); Lee Blair (bjo); Bill Benford (bbs); Tommy Benford (dms). Simeon, Morton, Tommy Benford only on 45623; Fields, Simeon, Morton, T. Benford only on 45624; Pinkett, Morton, T. Benford only on 45625.*
- L. Wright, *Mr. Jelly Lord: Ward Pinkett, t; Geechie Fields, tb; Omer Simeon, cl; Jelly Roll Morton, p; Lee Blair, bj; Bill Benford, bb; Tommy Benford, d. On 45623 Simeon, Morton, Tommy Benford only; on 45624 Fields is added to this trio; on 45625, Pinkett, Morton and Tommy Benford only.*

Notable differences of takes (from L. Wright, Mr. Jelly Lord and KBR):

45623-1: middle break in last C strain: dms stops on beat one;
45623-2: Middle break in last C strain: dms does not stop but continues playing on cymbal
45624: Since take -1 of this title is unissued no difference to take -2 can be determined.

004 JIMMY JOHNSON AND HIS BAND	New York,	Mar. 20, 1929
Louis Metcalf – tpt; Geechie Fields – tbn; (Ernest Elliott?) – clt; James P. Johnson – pno; Perry Bradford – voc		
148108-3 Fare Thee Honey Blues	Col 14417-D,	Chronological Classics 671

Very typical Louis Metcalf and probably Fields as known from Morton. And absolutely great James P! Geechie Fields here plays a most convincing blues chorus in a style obviously his own, and not determined by Morton or anybody else. Very jazzy and beautiful. Again, I would deny Ernest Elliott's presence on clarinet here. Although I cannot say that this player is the same one as on the foregoing Johnson session, his style is not what we know of Elliott now. The little flaws he plays – and also his phrases - seem to indicate, that he is a saxophone player in the first instance. (Geechie Fields most probably is not the trombone player on James P. Johnson's preceding recording session of 05 March 1929, if not in a case of alcohol abuse!)

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography 1948: no personnel*
- Rust*2: *Louis Metcalfe (tpt); unknown (tbn); unknown or Ernest Elliott (clt); James P. Johnson (pno); Perry Bradford (vcl).*
- Rust*3,*4,*6: *Louis Metcalf - c; prob Geechie Fields -tb; Ernest Elliott - cl; James P. Johnson -p; Perry Bradford -v*
- Brown/Hilbert, *James P. Johnson p 375: Louis Metcalf, cornet; probably Geechie Fields, trombone; Ernest Elliott, clarinet; Johnson, piano; Perry Bradford, vocal*

005 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' JAZZ KINGS	New York,	Aug. 26, 1929
Ed Allen – cnt; George Washington – tbn; Ben Whitted – alt, clt; Benny Waters – ten, clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Leroy Harris – bjo; Billy Taylor – bbs		
148940-2 A Pane In The Glass	Col unissued	not on LP/CD
148940-3 A Pane In The Glass	Col 14460-D,	Frog DGF 17
148941-1 Freeze Out	Col unissued	not on LP/CD
148941-3 Freeze Out	Col 14460-D,	Frog DGF 17

The personnel very probably is mainly recruited from the Charlie Johnson band of the period. Geechie Fields seems to have been listed here very early in research times because of this player's growl style. But tone, phrasing and the presence of other members of the Charlie Johnson band of the time point to George Washington.

Notes:

- Rust*2: *Ed Allen, Ed Anderson (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); Russell Procope, ?Alberto Socarras (clt, alt); Arville Harris (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)*
- Storyville 26: *Ed Allen, Ed Anderson (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); 2 unknown (clt, alt); unknown (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
- Lord, *Clarence Williams: Ed Allen, Ed Anderson (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); unknown (clt, alt); unknown (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)*
- Rust*3: *Ed Allen -Ed Anderson -c; Geechie Fields -tb; ?Russell Procope, another -cl -as; unknown -cl -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*
- Rust*4,*6: *Ed Allen, Ed Anderson, c; Geechie Fields, tb; ?Russell Procope, cl, as; Arville Harris, cl, ts; Clarence Williams, p; Leroy Harris, bj; Cyrus St. Clair, bb.*

006 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' JAZZ KINGS	New York,	Sep. 26, 1929
--	-----------	---------------

Charlie Gaines – tpt; George Washington – tbn;
 Ben Whitted – alt, clt; Benny Waters – ten, clt;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Leroy Harris – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs
 149056-1 Nervous Breakdown
 149056-3 Nervous Breakdown
 149057-1 Railroad Rhythm
 149057-2 Railroad Rhythm

Col unissued not on LP/CD
 Col 14468-D, Frog DGF 17
 Col 14468-D, Frog DGF 17
 Col unissued not on LP/CD

Gaines is now majority opinion but Ed Anderson is also suggested. The remainder of the band seems to have been recruited from the Charlie Johnson band of the time, although the brass bass could well be St. Clair instead of Taylor.

Notes:

- Rust*2: possibly slightly different from: Ed Allen, Ed Anderson (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); Russell Procope, ?Alberto Socarras (clt, alt); Arville Harris (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)
 - Storyville 26: probably: Ed Allen, Ed Anderson (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); 2 unknown (clt, alt); unknown (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).
 - Lord, Clarence Williams: Ed Anderson, poss Ed Allen (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); unknown (clt, alt); unknown (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)
 - Rust*3: probably: Ed Allen -Ed Anderson -c; Geechie Fields -tb; ?Russell Procope, another -cl -as; unknown -cl -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.
 - Rust*4,*6: Ed Allen, Ed Anderson, c; Geechie Fields, tb; ?Russell Procope, cl, as; Arville Harris, cl, ts; Clarence Williams, p; Leroy Harris, bj; Cyrus St. Clair, bb.

007 CLARENCE WILLIAMS AND HIS JAZZ KINGS

New York, Dec. 03, 1929

Ed Anderson – tpt; George Washington – tbn;
 Edgar Sampson – alt, clt; Arville Harris – ten, clt;
 James P. Johnson – pno; Leroy Harris – bjo; Harry Hull or Richard Fullbright – sbs;
 Eva Taylor – voc
 149665-2 Zonky
 149665-4 Zonky
 149666-2 You've Got To Be Modernistic
 146666-3 You've Got To Be Modernistic

Col unissued not on LP/CD
 Col 14488-D, Frog DGF 17
 Col unissued not on LP/CD
 Col 14488-D, Frog DGF 17

This is a session where there was much discussion about possible personnel. Leonard Davis had been suggested by Charlie Gaines, who in turn denied his own presence. But Davis seems to be far off the mark. As Gaines and Ed Anderson were the trumpet players of Williams' choice at the time, Anderson seems to be the best possibility. As trombonist George Washington very probably is present. Sampson is nominated on the grounds of an alto solo on "Take Your Tomorrow" by Jackson & His Southern Stompers, now identified as the Charlie Johnson band. Formerly Benny Carter had been considered as the soloist, but Carter denied ever having recorded or played with Williams. Sampson having been Carter's successor in the Johnson band sounds very Carterish here as he does on the above-named title. The source of listing Fullbright is unknown to the group and we therefore consider the possibility of James P. Johnson's bass player at the time, Harry Hull. Harris was frequently employed on reeds by Williams during this period and the tenor work is absolutely appropriate for him. It should also be kept in mind that Sampson and Washington were band mates in the Johnson band, and it was Clarence's use to hire two or more musicians from one band each.

Notes:

- Rust*2: unknown (tpt); Geechie Fields (tbn); Arville Harris, another (clt, alt); Prince Robinson (clt, ten); James P. Johnson (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); ?Richard Fullbright (sbs); Eva Taylor (vcl)
 - Storyville 26: Charlie Gaines, poss Leonard Davis (tpt); unknown (tbn); unknown (clt, alt); Benny Carter (alt); unknown (clt, ten); prob James P. Johnson (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); prob Richard Fullbright (sbs); Eva Taylor (vcl).
 - Lord, Clarence Williams: Leonard Davis and unknown (tpt); unknown (tbn); possibly 2 unknown (clt, alt); unknown (clt, ten); prob James P. Johnson (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); prob Richard Fullbright (sbs); Eva Taylor (vcl); Clarence Williams (dir).
 - Rust*3: Charlie Gaines - ?Leonard Davis -t; unknown -tb; Benny Carter, another -cl -as; unknown -cl -ts; James P. Johnson -p; Leroy Harris -bj; ?Richard Fullbright -sb; Eva Taylor -v.
 - Rust*4,*6: Leonard Davis, another, t; ?Geechie Fields, tb; ?Don Redman, cl, as; Arville Harris, cl, ts; James P. Johnson, p; Leroy Harris, bj; ?Richard Fullbright, sb; Eva Taylor, v.

008 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' ORCHESTRA

New York, Jan. 15, 1930

Ed Anderson – tpt; Henry Hicks – tbn;
 Ben Whitted or Cecil Scott, Russell Procope – alt, clt; Arville Harris – ten, clt;
 Clarence Williams – pno (1); James P. Johnson – pno (2); Cyrus St. Clair – bbs; Floyd Casey – dms
 403630-B Left All Alone With The Blues
 403631-A I've Found A New Baby

OK 8763, Collector's Classics COCD 29
 OK 8763, Collector's Classics COCD 29

The drum playing is restricted to cymbal crashes and could be anyone, although we list Casey. Harris is audible briefly on clarinet. The lead alto is not Socarras and Procope is a possibility. Both Anderson and Charlie Gaines were discussed for trumpet and Anderson seems more likely on comparison with Gaines' solo work during the period. The trombonist is uncertain: Rust gives Geechie Fields and George Washington has also been suggested. Hicks is a suggestion, because he was band mate with Anderson in Willie Lynch's band – later Mills Blue Rhythm Band – at the time of recording and on aural grounds compared with his contemporaneous work with the Jungle Town Stompers, the Musical Stevedores and Jasper Davis/Georgia Gigolos.

Notes:

- Rust*2: Charlie Gaines, ?another (tpt); unknown (tbn); Ben Whitted, ?Russell Procope (clt, alt); Arville Harris or poss Prince Robinson (clt, ten); ?Fats Waller (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (dms)
 - Storyville 26: Charlie Gaines (tpt); unknown (tbn); poss Ben Whitted (alt); poss Russell Procope (alt); Arville Harris (clt, ten); prob James P. Johnson (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (cymbal).
 - Lord, Clarence Williams: Charlie Gaines or Roy Eldridge (tpt); unknown (tbn); possibly Ben Whitted, possibly Russell Procope (if present) (alt); Arville Harris (clt, ten); prob James P. Johnson (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (cym); Clarence Williams (dir).

- Rust*3: *Charlie Gaines -t; unknown -tb; ?Ben Whittet, ?Russell Procope -cl -as; Arville Harris -cl -ts; James P. Johnson -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb; ?Floyd Casey (or anyone) -cymbal.*
 - Rust*4,*6: *Charlie Gaines, t; ?Geechie Fields, tb; ?Russell Procope, cl, as; Arville Harris, cl, ts; James P. Johnson, p; Cyrus St. Clair, bb; ?Floyd Casey, d.*

009 **JELLY ROLL MORTON AND HIS RED HOT PEPPERS** New York, Jun. 02, 1930
 Ward Pinkett, unknown – tpt; Geechie Fields – tbn;
 Happy Caldwell – alt, clt; Walter Foots Thomas – alt, bar; Joe Thomas – ten, clt;
 Jelly Roll Morton – pno; Lee Blair - bjo; Billy Taylor - bbs; Cozy Cole – dms

62182-1	Oil Well	Vic 23321,	JSP CD 323
62182-2	Oil Well	Vic unissued on 78,	JSP CD 325
62183-1	Load Of Coal	Vic 23429,	JSP CD 323
62183-2	Load Of Coal	Vic unissued on 78,	JSP CD 325
62184-1	Crazy Chords	Vic unissued on 78,	JSP CD 325
62184-2	Crazy Chords	Vic 23307,	JSP CD 323
62185-1	Primrose Stomp	Vic 23424,	JSP CD 323
62185-2	Primrose Stomp	Vic unissued on 78,	JSP CD 325

Nothing must be said about these generally known jazz classics. It only seems to be doubtful whether Caldwell really played clarinet and sax on this date.

Notes:

- *Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography 1948: Ward Pinkett, unknown (tp); Geechie Fields (tb); Eddie Barefield (cl); Joe Thomas, Walter Thomas (s); Jelly Roll Morton (p); Lee Blair (bjo); Billy Taylor (b); Cozy Cole (dm).*
 - Rust*2: *Ward Pinkett, unknown (tp); Geechie Fields (tbn); Albert Nicholas (clt, alt); Joe Thomas (alt); Walter Thomas (clt, ten, bar); Jelly Roll Morton (p); Lee Blair (bjo); Billy Taylor (bbs); Cozy Cole (dms).*
 - Rust*3: *Ward Pinkett, unknown -t; Geechie Fields -tb; ?Eddie Scarpa -cl; Joe Thomas -as; Walter Thomas -cl -ts -bar; Jelly Roll Morton -p; Lee Blair -bj; Billy Taylor -bb; Cozy Cole -d.*
 - Rust*4,*6: *Ward Pinkett, unknown -t; Geechie Fields -tb; Happy Caldwell -cl; Joe Thomas -as; Walter Thomas -cl -bar; Jelly Roll Morton -p; Lee Blair -bj; Billy Taylor -bb; Cozy Cole -d.*
 - *L. Wright, Mr. Jelly Lord: Ward Pinkett, unknown, t; Geechie Fields, tb; unknown, cl, as; Walter Thomas, as, bar; Joe Thomas, cl, ts; Jelly Roll Morton, p; Lee Blair, bj; Billy Taylor, bb; Cozy Cole, d, "He (Caldwell – KBR) also told Al Vollmer that he thought he recorded himself with Morton prior to the 1939 Bluebird dates, but when Al and I questioned him further on this in 1978 he had changed his mind."*
 - *Al Vollmer, Chicago Get-Together, Storyville 45: "Whilst on this session I should mention that when Happy Caldwell (sic – KBR) was here listening to records on 31 May 1972 he said that he had recorded with Jelly's Red Hot Peppers before this 1939 series. He remembered Ward Pinkett, Geechie Fields and the Thomas brothers. He recalled 'Primrose Stomp' and identified Geechie on this. He denied that he was the clarinet on 'Gambling Jack' and also said that he'd never played bass clarinet. He remembered Ernie Bullock well and said that the clarinet on 'Harmony Blues' could be Jerry Blake."*

Notable differences of takes (from L. Wright, Mr. Jelly Lord and KBR):

62182-1:	<i>Piano solo plays sixteen bars</i>
62182-2:	<i>Piano solo plays thirty-two bars</i>
62183-1:	<i>Morton plays his solo chorus in his accustomed manner</i>
62183-2:	<i>Morton plays the first 8 bars of his solo in sparse bell-like two-hand chords</i>
62184-1:	<i>Entry of piano solo: piano goes up and down</i>
62184-2:	<i>Entry of piano solo: piano plays same note five times</i>
62185-1:	<i>First bar of trumpet solo after scored reed passage: tpt hits same note 5 times before going up</i>
62185-2:	<i>First bar of trumpet solo after scored reed passage: tpt hits same note 3 times before going up – down – up</i>

010 **JELLY ROLL MORTON AND HIS RED HOT PEPPERS** New York, Jul. 14, 1930
 Ward Pinkett – tpt; Geechie Fields – tbn; Albert Nicholas – clt;
 Jelly Roll Morton – pno; Howard Hill – gr; Pete Briggs - bbs; Tommy Benford – dms

62339-1	Low Gravy	Vic 23334,	JSP CD 323
62340-1	Strokin' Away	Vic unissued on 78,	JSP CD 325
62340-2	Strokin' Away	Vic 23351,	JSP CD 323
62341-1	Blue Blood Blues	Vic 23681,	JSP CD 323
62341-2	Blue Blood Blues	Vic unissued on 78,	JSP CD 325
62342-1	Mushmouth Shuffle	Vic 23004,	JSP CD 323

Nothing must be said about these generally known jazz classics.

Notes:

- *Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography: Ward Pinkett (tp); Geechie Fields (tb); Albert Nicholas (cl); Jelly Roll Morton (p); Howard Hill (g); Pete Briggs (tuba); Tommy Benford (dm).*
 - Rust*2,*3,*4,*6: *Ward Pinkett (tpt); Geechie Fields (tbn); Albert Nicholas (clt); Jelly Roll Morton (pno); Howard Hill (gr); Pete Briggs (bbs); Tommy Benford (dms).*
 - *L. Wright, Mr. Jelly Lord: Ward Pinkett, t; Geechie Fields, tb; Albert Nicholas, cl; Jelly Roll Morton, p; Howard Hill, g; Pete Briggs, bb; Tommy Benford, d.*

Notable differences of takes (from KBR and L. Wright, Mr. Jelly Lord):

62340-1:	<i>Trumpet solo in first half of last chorus: trumpet ends solo in general style leading into ensemble half-chorus</i>
62340-2:	<i>Trumpet solo in first half of last chorus: trumpet holds tone C (tenth) for four bars (2 bars into ensemble half-chorus)</i>
62341-1:	<i>Entry of trombone solo: first phrase plays 6 notes before pause for breath</i>
62341-2:	<i>Entry of trombone solo: first phrase plays 7 notes before pause for breath</i>

011 **JELLY ROLL MORTON AND HIS RED HOT PEPPERS** New York, Jul. 14, 1930
 Ward Pinkett – tpt; Sandy Williams – tbn; Lorenzo Tio, Jr. – clt;
 Jelly Roll Morton – pno; Bernard Addison – gr; Billy Taylor - bbs; Bill Beason – dms

64313-1	Gambling Jack	Vic 23307,	JSP CD 323
64313-2	Gambling Jack	BB 2361-2-RB (CD),	JSP CD 325
64314-1	Fickle Fay Creep	Vic 23019,	JSP CD 323

Nothing must be said about these generally known jazz classics.

But this is not Geechie Fields as generally assumed! Storyville 116 contained the correct answers of the inherent questions and thus the solution of the inherent problems, but they did not find their way into Rust*6.

Although the most experienced late Mr. Johnny Simmen did not detect anything characteristic of Sandy Williams on these sides, I – KBR – hear Sandy Williams' boisterous phrasing and his strong but brittle tone.

I think that this personnel herewith is sufficiently cleared against all other discographic listings.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography: Ward Pinkett (tp); Sandy Williams (tb); unknown (cl); Jelly Roll Morton (p); Bernard Addison (g); Billy Taylor (tuba); Bill Beason (dm).*

- Rust*2: *Ward Pinkett (tp); Geechie Fields (tbn); unknown white (?) (clt); Jelly Roll Morton (pno); Bernard Addison (gtr); Billy Taylor (bbs); Bill Beason (dms).*

- Rust*3,*4,*6: *Ward Pinkett, t; Geechie Fields, tb; ? Eddie Scarpa, cl; Jelly Roll Morton, p, dir; Bernard Addison, g; Billy Taylor, bb; Bill Beason, d*

- L. Wright, Mr. Jelly Lord: *Ward Pinkett, t; Geechie Fields, tb; unknown, cl; Jelly Roll Morton, p; Bernard Addison, g; Billy Taylor, bb; Bill Beason, d,*

- Storyville 116-58, Johnny Simmen, Sandy Williams: "As long as 1947, Sandy told me that his first recording date had been with Jelly Roll Morton. He recalled the title 'Gambling Jack' and said that two sides were made on the date. He couldn't remember the title 'Fickle Fay Creep' but did remember the second title as "a slow performance on which I had a long solo." ... In 1961, Sandy called Bernard Addison, the guitarist on the date, and he confirmed the presence of Ward Pinkett, Sandy Williams, Billy Taylor, and Bill Beason. Sandy thought the clarinetist's name was Jo-Jo but Addison said the name was Tio, "a light-skinned coloured man from New Orleans, who, a few years later, died in New York." The trombonist here is certainly not Geechie Fields, by comparison with his other work, but I (J. Simmen – KBR) cannot detect anything characteristic of Sandy Williams."

Notable differences of takes (from L. Wright, Mr. Jelly Lord):

64313-1: Trumpet leading into low register clarinet: pause between end of trumpet and clarinet

64313-2: Trumpet leading into low register clarinet: trumpet play 4 high notes leading straight into clarinet

SOURCES

- Theo Zwicky, Louis – and some West Coast Friends, Storyville 29-184: "While speaking of Oliver, it may be of interest to note that George Orendorff deputised for the King himself one evening in Oliver's Orchestra at the 'Plantation' in Chicago when he was only seventeen. Oliver was having severe trouble with his teeth that night, George recalls, and he remembers Tommy Ladnier as first trumpet with Bert Cobb, Barney Bigard, Albert Nicholas, Paul Barbarin and Geechie Fields as present in the group at the time."

- Earle 'Nappy' Howard, Those Were The Days, Storyville 88-144: "During the winter of 1927 we went back into the Strand Danceland in Brooklyn. At Christmas-time, Julius "Geechy" Fields, our trombonist, was sick, so he sent Fernando Arbello in his place. Arbello was fresh off the boat from Cuba where he had been playing with the Havana Symphony Orchestra. In the spring, Fields returned, but his condition was worse and he collapsed and was put back to bed. We went to Maine and he went with us but, after a few weeks, he quit at his wife's insistence and went home. I think that was the end of his playing days, as I never heard from him again. I made some inquiries and was told that he was a sporting trainer, so this closed the musical career of Julius Fields."

K.-B. Rau

13 July 2019