

# THE RECORDINGS OF JOHN MAYFIELD

## An Annotated Tentative Personnel-Discography

MAYFIELD, John, trombonist (previously known as 'Masefield') few biographical details known  
John Mayfield played trombone with Ford Dabney's Orchestra at the Roof (Ziegfeld's Follies) from c. 1921 on and was with Jack Hatton and his Novelty Band in 1922, but switched from trombone to reeds about 1925. Has returned to trombone in 1928 (NYA 7/7/28 7/3). In 1930 he played with Joe Jordan's musical production 'Brown Buddies'.  
Occasionally listed incorrectly as John Masefield. (Storyville 2002-3, p.198, Pieces of the Jigsaw)

### STYLISTICS

#### STYLE

John Mayfield plays a trombone style rooted in New Orleans tailgate style (there are phrases that remind me in Kid Ory) as well as in a more melodic and legato Northern style.

#### TOPE

He owns a strong and clear tone showing him being a legitimate and reading musician. He also likes to climb up into higher register of his instrument, sometimes.

#### VIBRATO

Close to no vibrato, thus vibrato extremely slow and with minimal altitude, if at all.

#### TIME

Exact and strong time, but without swing.

#### PHRASING

As he almost entirely plays in ensemble parts – and seldom only performs as an instrumental soloist – there are a few improvised solos only to judge his phrasing abilities. He mostly plays harmonic legato counter-parts to the other horn men. But when heard in soloistic portions he mixes legato parts when intermediate short staccato phrases.

This personnel-discography is based on RUST, JAZZ AND RAGTIME RECORDS 1897 - 1942.

Personnel 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: **John Mayfield**
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *John Mayfield*
- 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: (*John Mayfield*)

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.

MAYFIELD, JOHN

<b>001 FORD DABNEY'S SYNCOPATED ORCHESTRA</b>	New York,	Mar. 1922
Wesley Johnson, Pike Davis – tpt; ( <i>John Mayfield</i> ) – tbn; Herschel Brassfield - alt, clt; <i>unknown</i> – alt; unknown – ten; <i>Casey Cooper</i> or <i>Willie Carroll</i> – vln; Ford Dabney – pno, ldr; unknown – bjo; unknown – bbs; Mose Ross – dms		
1017-2	Sweet Man O'Mine	Par 20120 not on LP/CD
1017-3	Sweet Man O'Mine	Par 20120 not on LP/CD
1018-2	Bugle Call Blues	Par 20125 not on LP/CD, but held?
1018-3	Bugle Call Blues	Par 20125 not on LP/CD, but held?

Luckily, I own a copy of the 'Bugle Call Blues' recording. The item plays ten blues chorusses, the first seven of them containing the well-known four-bar military bugle calls in variations, followed by 8 bars of band ensembles with very prominent alto sax mainly playing long sustained chordal notes. These seven chorusses are succeeded by three chorusses played without the military call breaks, the second chorus of them being played in Bb minor, all other ones in Bb major. Pike Davis with his strong, short and peppery tone is the trumpet soloist, who might be relieved in the fifth chorus where the trumpet sounds softer and might thus be Wesley Johnson. Chorusses 6 and 7 certainly are Davis again.

The trombonist is buried in the ensemble and can thus not be identified. But at the bottom of the band sound a strong trombonist can be realized. Rust has John Reeves on trombone, but as for Mark Berresford's reference in Storyville 143 (see below) Reeves died on 7 April 1922 and he may or may not be on this session.

There are no improvisational efforts of the participating musicians. Thus, Herschel Brassfield's presence cannot be secured, but is very probable.

Notes:

- *Storyville 143-179, Mark Berresford: "To start the ball rolling, references to John Reeves with Sweetman from 6 August 1924 onwards, and with Ford Dabney on the May 1922 Paramount session can be deleted – he died 7 April 1922!"*

- *Rust\*2, \*3, \*4: Pike Davis, Wesley Johnson (tpt); John Reeves (tbn); Herschel Brassfield (clt, alt); unknown (ten); Casey Cooper, Willie Carroll (vln); Ford Dabney (pno, ldr); unknown (bbs); Mose Ross (dms)*

- *Rust\*6: Pike Davis, Wesley Johnson, t; John Reeves, tb; Herschel Brassfield, cl, as; unknown, ts; Casey Cooper or Willie Carroll, vln; Ford Dabney, p, ldr; unknown, bj; unknown, bb; Mose Ross, d*

<b>002 FORD DABNEY'S SYNCOPATED ORCHESTRA</b>	New York,	May 1922
Wesley Johnson, Pike Davis – tpt; <i>John Mayfield</i> – tbn; Herschel Brassfield - alt, clt; <i>unknown</i> – alt; unknown – ten; <i>Casey Cooper</i> or <i>Willie Carroll</i> – vln; Ford Dabney – pno, ldr; unknown – bjo; unknown – bbs; Mose Ross – dms		
1043-1	Doo Dah Blues	Par 20120 not on LP/CD
1043-2	Doo Dah Blues	Par 20120 not on LP/CD

Unfortunately, I do not have access on any of these takes, and therefore I am unable to comment.

Notes:

- *Storyville 143-179, Mark Berresford: "To start the ball rolling, references to John Reeves with Sweetman from 6 August 1924 onwards, and with Ford Dabney on the May 1922 Paramount session can be deleted – he died 7 April 1922!"*

- *Rust\*2, \*3, \*4: Pike Davis, Wesley Johnson (tpt); John Reeves (tbn); Herschel Brassfield (clt, alt); unknown (ten); Casey Cooper, Willie Carroll (vln); Ford Dabney (pno, ldr); unknown (bbs); Mose Ross (dms)*

- *Rust\*6: Pike Davis, Wesley Johnson, t; John Reeves, tb; Herschel Brassfield, cl, as; unknown, ts; Casey Cooper or Willie Carroll, vln; Ford Dabney, p, ldr; unknown, bj; unknown, bb; Mose Ross, d*

<b>003 THOMAS MORRIS PAST JAZZ MASTERS</b>	New York,	Feb. 1923
unknown, Thomas Morris – cnt; ( <i>John Mayfield</i> ) – tbn; unknown – alt; Charles "Smitty" Smith – pno; unknown – 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

This first session under Morris' name produced two titles: E Flat Blues No. 2 (key of Eb) and Original Charleston Strut (key of F / Bb / F).

"E Flat Blues" is a normal 12-bar blues with 2-bar introduction and a short coda. On chorus 2 and 3 we hear a muted trumpet/cornet solo. Then we have two ensemble chorus and again two chorus with breaks on bars 2 and 4 with someone shouting: "Hey!"

"Original Charleston Strut" (key in F / Bb / F) is a tune obviously derived from "Weary Blues" with five 12-bar chorus / verse in F (strain A), then three 16-bar chorus in Bb (strain B), and again three 12-bar chorus in F (strain A).

Composer credits for both numbers are "Morris".

Depart from RUST the personnel is: 2 trumpets, trombone, alto sax, possibly tenor sax, piano, banjo, brass bass and drums.

Now, what do we hear?

Both tunes bear a remarkable New Orleans flavour insofar as the tunes are known today as belonging to this city's tradition. "E Flat Blues" is very similar to a New Orleans brass band tune known as "Whoopin' Blues" as recorded by the Eureka Brass Band and the Young Tuxedo Brass Band in the fifties, and probably more often later on. And "Original Charleston Strut" is derived, as I have said, from "Weary Blues".

- Trumpets: It has first to be mentioned that "Lonesome Journey Blues" of April '23 is a solo piece for trumpet/cornet. (I shall further on only use the term trumpet for a trumpet or a cornet being heard. Thomas Morris is always listed to have played cornet! Yet, on a photo of him wearing a straw hat – on the Fountain LP and the Classics CD – he holds a trumpet as far as I can identify!) As I assume that the bandleader cum trumpet player spares such a feature for himself, it can safely be considered this to be a solo number for Mr. Morris, the band leader. Moreover, the trumpet cum mute style heard here goes well with other known Th. Morris recordings. So, this special trumpet sound is understood to be Morris'.

This solo trumpet player's – I'd call him tpt II – playing is opposed to the other trumpet player present, who plays mainly without mute throughout and in a rather "straight" style (tpt I). As you always have Bubber Miley and Thomas Morris listed as trumpeters in the discos (Bub Miley always played trumpet, not cornet!) I believe, that in the early days of discographical effort the "muted" player has been mistaken to be Miley and the other one accordingly to be Morris. Tpt I sometimes uses a straight-mute when playing third parts above Th. Morris (at the end of "Lonesome Journey Blues").

For me, though, it is absolutely clear, that the "muted" player – tpt II – is Morris playing second parts and solos, and the other trumpet player, whose identity I am unable to find out, is the lead man. And I never hear anything which reminds me of Miley! To my ears, Morris' playing is characterized by a lot of (mainly!) use of a mute (plunger?), the tendency to repeat short simple phrases three or four times in a row, a blues-oriented playing, frequent use of blue-notes and a rather unsecure tone and pitch. G. Bushell in his book "Jazz From The Beginning" attributes this latter quality to the lack of basic training: "Like Thomas Morris. He had some great ideas, but no lip – it just splattered all over the place." Further and most obvious examples of this lack of security you can hear on the sides by "Waller with Morris' Hot Babies".

Miley - throughout his career - played in that military derived, triplet dominated staccato style of Johnny Dunn, which was common in Harlem before the advent of Louis Armstrong in late 1924. But this is not the style by this player here!

Therefore, my conclusion is that Miley's name ought to be cancelled from the discos!

The New Orleans flavor crops up also when you listen to the first trumpet player who plays a strong swinging open lead on "Original", completely different from Morris' playing in the first tune. Although Morris does not play in that Johnny Dunn oriented "square" style as Miley used to do, he nevertheless is far apart from the "western" style of tpt I.

So, we have to leave the lead trumpet player - tpt I - as unknown.

- Trombone: Also, the trombone player plays in a New Orleans tailgate style completely different from Charlie Irvis' legato melodic playing. RUST 6th edition still lists him as Irvis, whereas I have somewhere seen John Mayfield of Clarence Williams Blue Five fame. This certainly is a much better possibility. Or is he somebody else, of whom I shall speculate below?

- Saxophone(s): I hear a legato playing alto saxophonist in a style uncommon for early Harlem music, who definitely is not Ernest Elliott! There may be a tenor saxophonist, heard only with difficulty, if at all, in the ensemble. In one two-bar break at the end of "Original Charleston Strut" there is a saxophone heard playing low notes in "slap-tongue" style. This could possibly be Ernest Elliott as listed, but I have to bear in mind that Garvin Bushell in his book JAZZ FROM THE BEGINNING says that he never (!) heard Ernest Elliott play saxophone. And he should have known! Later recordings will show yet, that he nevertheless did!

I am quite uncertain about the saxophone(s). To me it sounds like alto throughout both numbers. The break in A6 of "Original" could be played by alto as well as by tenor (I have asked a proficient alto sax player about this). It is in the range of either variant. So, do we have alto and tenor, or do we hear an alto that is played very low at some places, especially at the end of "Original", or is it someone playing a C-melody-sax? Saxophone players, please, comment! My conclusion: it is only alto saxophone throughout, and not Elliott.

- Piano: In the first number we can hear piano-"comping" which ascertains my conclusion for Charles "Smitty" Smith.

- Banjo: The style of the banjo player is typical Harlem of the first half of the twenties, doubling time in "E Flat Blues No. 2" as you can hear it in many recordings under Johnny Dunn's name, so, perhaps Sam Speed or John Mitchell?

- Tuba: The tuba player is listed nowhere, as far as I know. A surprise for this early time is his definite four-to-the-bar rhythm on "Original", which was absolutely uncommon in early Harlem music and again points to New Orleans jazz.

- Drums: The drummer then with his cow-bell breaks in paradiddle could be from either sphere.

These observations give rise to a provocative and most daring question: Can it be that some of Piron's men (tpt I, tbn, alt, bbs) were hired by Thomas Morris?

Can anybody tell me when the Piron band arrived in New York? Their earliest documented engagement in New York was in May 1923.

But, were they in New York already in February?

There was a strong link of the Piron band to Thomas Morris, as the Piron band was managed by Clarence Williams (see foto in P. Bradford, 'Born With The Blues', where the Piron band is named Williams' Jazz Kings!) and Williams used Th. Morris as trumpet player in his recording bands.

Engelbert Wengel from Frankfurt, Germany, a noted specialist for New Orleans Jazz, though, does not think that these men are from the Piron band, but he agrees with the New Orleans flavour.

#### Tunes:

E Flat Blues No 2 (Memphis Tennessee) (Morris) OK Key of Eb

(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)

Original Charleston Strut (Morris) OK Key of F / Bb / F

(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)

**KBR:** See my article in Names&Numbers 49.

**JK:** Strong "New Orleans" feeling. Morris is recognizable by his tone. ????? Piron musicians ???

**JOlivar:** I feel that Miley is present throughout the Past Jazz Masters sessions. The 2<sup>nd</sup> cornet's style on these early dates seems a logical progression of his musical development, as documented on the Mamie Smith sides of 1922. Miley had also experienced a musical revelation when hearing King Oliver in Chicago, in late 1921: I think this accounts for the "Western" influence detectable on some Mamie Smiths, and later on the PJs. Bubber would find his stylistic niche by the autumn of 1924 (at the latest), with refinement of the now-famous plunge and growl technique. Agree with and applaud KB's solid identification of Charles "Smitty" Smith on piano (in Names&Numbers 49) ... I had him listed as merely possible, by virtue of the exhortation "Play it, Mr. Smith" (010, 71582-B) leading to Rust's only "Smith" piano entry with associated musicians (Perry Bradford's Jazz Phools the same month, piano virtually inaudible). I'd recommend: Bubber Miley – cornet.

**JO:** Musically and lyrically, the shouted breaks in *E Flat Blues No. 2* are very similar to those in Johnny Dunn's *I Promised Not To Holler, But Hey! Hey!* (10-30-23; unheard versions in February and March were rejected by Columbia). While I'm not suggesting Dunn as second cornetist, the parenthetical title *Memphis. Tenn. Blues* might be significant (Dunn was from Memphis). This is not the same tune as Perry Bradford's contemporaneous *Memphis, Tennessee*, which it seems Dunn had already attempted with Edith Wilson (12-16-22, unissued).

**DB:** as received. I only hear Tom featured and the other cornet seems a less distinguished player so no overwhelming evidence for Bubber.

**MR:** As shown in the draft.

#### 004 THOMAS MORRIS PAST JAZZ MASTERS

unknown, Thomas Morris – cnt; *John Mayfield* – tbn; (*Happy Caldwell?*) – ten;  
Charles "Smitty" Smith – pno; *William 'Splivey' Escoffery* – bjo  
71531-C Lonesome Journey Blues

New York,

Apr. 1923

OK 4867,

Chronological Classics 823

This second session under Morris' name again produced two numbers: 'Lonesome Journey Blues' (key of G) and 'When The Jazz Band Starts To Play' (key of Bb / Eb / Bb). Composer credits for both numbers are "Morris".

In parts depart from RUST the personnel is: 2 trumpets, trombone, tenor sax, piano, banjo. NO brass bass and drums.

"Lonesome Journey Blues" again is a normal 12 bar blues, which is a solo number for the band leader. He plays a 4-chorus tpt solo, after which there are two 8 bar strains by the ensemble in call-and-response fashion.

"When The Jazz Band Starts To Play" is kind of a stomp tune of Morris' own authorship. The same tune has been recorded by Thomas Morris And His Seven Hot Babies with the title "Ham Gravy" in 1926. Verse II is very similar to the chorus of Charlie Johnson's recording of "Birmingham Black Bottom" (second strain), which might be a clue to Morris' assumed presence on this recording session.

Now again, what do we hear here?

The New Orleans flavour is gone in parts, just because there is no singing alto sax anymore, the four-to-the-bar tuba is gone, and the two tunes do not bear any particular New Orleans influence.

- Trumpets: Tpt II - Morris - plays "Lonesome Journey Blues" as his solo tune. There is no other trumpet soloist.

Tpt I plays lead trumpet throughout in the ensembles.

At the end of the second blues chorus in "When The Jazz Band ...." there is some confusion about the trumpet players. In my estimation, Morris, who soloed on open horn on the two preceding blues chorus, grabs his mute for the last two Verses II, whereas tpt I plays open horn further on.

- Trombone: The trombone player may be the same as before.

- Saxophone(s): The few instances where the tenor sax can be heard (at the end of 'Lonesome Journey Blues' and in a slap-tongue break and in ensemble in '... Jazz Band ...') its player shows a very different approach to reed playing than Elliott. There is no up- and down slurring, no thin and sour tone, no repeated phrases, instead a full-bodied tenor sax by a man whose main instrument the tenor probably was, and who obviously was under influence of the young Coleman Hawkins. And we have neither heard Elliott on tenor nor even slap-tongue playing as yet! Which makes me wonder whether Bushell's comment re Elliott's saxophone playing simply meant "tenor saxophone" – not alto, as we have sufficient proof of Elliott playing the alto! So: no Elliott here again!

As tenor player Happy Caldwell comes to mind as he was with Mamie Smith at the time, Hawkins' successor, and certainly under his spell!

Also, this would be Caldwell's style as performed later, also with Morris' Seven Hot Babies.

I have named Escoffery on banjo because of this player's style and because of Escoffery's membership in Charles Smitty Smith's band.

- Piano: In "When The Jazz Band ...." we can hear a pno solo, which stylistically fits exactly to what is played by Charles "Smitty" Smith in the pno breaks "Hold 'Er, Deacon" by the Blue Rhythm Orchestra (see my June Clark Discography). To my ears these 6 and 4 bars of soloing are sufficient proof of "Smittie's" presence.

- 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!

Tunes:

Lonesome Journey Blues (Morris) OK Key of G (or Ab ?)

(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)

When The Jazz Band Starts To Play (Morris) OK Key of Bb / Eb / Bb

(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

**KBR:** See my article in Names&Numbers 49. ADDITIONS 14-11: H. Caldwell and W. Escoffery (see above)

**JK:** "New Orleans" feeling gone. In my opinion the second trumpet player is Miley (compare 'Texas Blues Destroyers').

**JO:** Same as session 003

**DB:** second cornet stronger than 003 and some wa-wa. I think Bubber. Rest as received.

**MR:** Did Elliott actually play tenor or is this a case of default identification, i.e. any early NY reed player \*must\* be Elliott or Fuller?

005	<b>EVA TAYLOR</b>	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

Thomas Morris and Clarence Williams seem to be certain. The trombone player certainly is not Charlie Irvis and might be John Masefield 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.

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Tom Morris, cnt; prob Charlie Irvis, tbn; prob Ernest Elliott, clt, 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.

006	<b>EVA TAYLOR</b>	Clarence Williams' Blue Five	New York,	c. May 17, 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

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 the session.

The banjo player seems to be stiffer than Christian and does not have his ringing sound, but might 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 (cnt); prob Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt); unknown (alt); 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."

**007 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

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.

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 John 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

**008 SARA MARTIN AND 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

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 the Eva Taylor session of 17 May, 1923, generally assumed and listed as Charlie Irvis. On both sessions a largely identical trombone break is played which certainly is not Irvis'.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Thomas Morris (tp); 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."  
 - 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  
 - 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

**009 EVA TAYLOR Clarence Williams' Blue Five**

New York, c. Aug. 11, 1923

Eva Taylor – voc (2); Eva Taylor, Clarence Williams – voc duet (1);

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

Clarence Williams – pno, voc (1); Buddy Christian – bjo

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

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.

Notes:

- 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."
- 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
- 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

**010 CLARENCE WILLIAMS BLUE FIVE**

New York, c. Aug. 27, 1923

Thomas Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; (Sidney Bechet) – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

71797-A

Achin' Hearted Blues

OK 4966,

Hot'n Sweet FDC 5107

Now, this is some very interesting item. And I have my doubts whether we can find a convincing solution. Morris, 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.

And, as I am now (May 2021) convinced: it certainly is Charlie Irvis on trombone, and not John Mayfield!

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 concerns 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

**011 CLARENCE WILLIAMS BLUE FIVE**

New York, early Oct. 1923

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

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

71928-B

Tain't Nobody's Bus'nness If I Do

OK 4966,

Hot'n Sweet FDC 5107

71929-B

New Orleans Hop Scop Blues

OK 4975,

Hot'n Sweet FDC 5107

71930-B

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

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' tells 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."

A most interesting account of Bechet's soprano part in 'New Orleans Hop Scop Blues' can be found in Gunther Schuller, Early Jazz, p197. There is a fast-running and hastening banjo player who – in my ears – is not Buddy Christian. He largely uses double-strokes on his instrument.

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

**012 EVA TAYLOR & LAWRENCE LOMAX**

New York,

c. Nov. 10, 1923

Eva Taylor, Lawrence Lomax – voc duet;  
 Thomas Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop;  
 Clarence Williams – pno  
 72028-C Old Fashioned Love  
 72029-B Open Your Heart

OK 8114, Doc DOCD-5409  
 OK 8114, Doc DOCD-5409

Personnel seems to be as given in all sources. With Irvis Clarence certainly had a better and individual trombonist who was not yet with Ellington at this time. The music sounds a bit strange in comparison with all we have heard before.

Notes:

- Storyville 14: Thomas Morris (cnt); John Masefield (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)  
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p69: Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno) "Clarence is not mentioned on the label of this record, but perhaps Okeh omitted that purposely because this is a different kind of music than that associated with Clarence's name. Lomax, with the heavier voice, sings melody most of the time, with Eva taking the harmony part. The ensemble is subdued behind the vocalists, although Bechet is immediately recognizable."  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Tom Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Sidney Bechet (sop); Clarence Williams (pno)  
 - Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Tom Morris -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Sidney Bechet -ss; Clarence Williams -p

**013 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  
 72041-B Old Fashioned Love

OK 40006, Hot'n Sweet FDC 5107  
 OK 4993, Hot'n Sweet FDC 5107

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.

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 personnels, 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

**014 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  
 72061-B Mean Blues

OK 8171, Hot'n Sweet FDC 5109  
 OK 40006, Hot'n Sweet FDC 5109

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 undoubtedly, and the trombone player certainly is the same as before, thus Mayfield, and not Irvis at all!

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

**015 MATSON'S LUCKY SEVEN**

New York, Jan. 1924

Gus Aiken – tpt; John Mayfield – tbn; George Scott or (Ernest Elliott) – clt, alt;  
 Charles Matson – pno; Sam Speed – bjo  
 1654-1 Lawdy Lawdy Blues  
 1654-3 Lawdy Lawdy Blues  
 1655-1 Jail House Blues  
 1655-2 Jail House Blues

Harmograph 915, Frog DGF 71  
 Pm 20306, Frog Special CD  
 Pm 20306, Frog Special CD  
 Harmograph 915, Frog DGF 71

The very accomplished trumpet player has been found by our listening group very probably to be the vastly underrated Gus Aiken, at this time just back from his Cuba tour, and showing great chops and a rhythmic concept far away from his Johnny Dunn imitations of 1922. (As a Jenkins Orphanage alumnus, he is not so far away from Jabbo Smith!)

Rust offers John Mayfield on trombone here and may be right. On succeeding recordings with Gus Aiken on trumpet he is often in company with his trombonist brother Gene Aiken. But Gene Aiken can certainly be excluded here of stylistic reasons. This trombonist is much too simple or restrained to be Bud Aiken, and shows no resemblance to Jake Frazier of the Kansas City Five. Yet, he shows similarities with Kid Ory's style.

On first hearing the clarinetist's style is Elliott's. And it may well be he on these sides. Yet I would like to point to the note from Storyville 95 below. So, there may be another "Ernest Elliott" in the person of Mr. George Scott of Missourians and Cotton Club Orchestra fame! Charles Matson is on piano and the banjo player's style is absolutely in Sam Speed's range and mode.

The presence of the Aiken brothers has been suggested in FROG 71 by Richard Rains, and he seems to be quite right – in my opinion - as to the trumpet player. In any case, this trumpet player here is the same man as on sessions 025 to 035 of my Gus Aiken list elsewhere on this website.

Notes:

- *Storyville 95, p. 200*: “Reed-man George Scott told Johnny Heinz in 1950, or thereabouts, that he had made records with *The Missouriians, Clarence Williams, Viola McCoy, George McClenon, Original Cotton Club Orchestra, Elmer Snowden, Chas. Matson, Mamie Smith and Ma Rainey*. Johnny says that at the time George told him this (he wrote the artists down for John) he had barely heard of some of the names but, that in checking the list against the discographies subsequently, has noted that Scott is seldom listed but that Ernest Elliott is shown against all of the above at some time or another.”

- *Frog DGF 71, booklet*: unknown -cnt; unknown -tb; unknown -cl -as; unknown -as; unknown -ts; George Matson -pno -a; unknown -bjo; unknown -bb; unknown -d. “It might be Gus Aiken with his brother Bud the trombonist (Rust raises the possibility of the bucolic John Mayfield) but it is safer to say the personnel has yet to be identified.”

- Rust\*2: possibly: unknown cnt; unknown tbn; unknown clt, alt; unknown alt; (?) unknown ten; Charles Matson (pno, ldr); unknown bjo; unknown bbs; unknown dms.

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: 2 unknown -c; ?John Masefield -tb; ?Ernest Elliott -cl -as; Charles Matson -p -ldr; ?Sam Speed -bj.

Discernible differences of takes:

1654-1: Introduction: tpt starts lowly with phrase: quarter-note d, 3 eighth-notes bb – b – g, quarter-note a  
 1654-3: Introduction: tpt starts lowly with phrase: dotted quarter-note f, 2 eighth-notes d – g, quarter-note a  
 1655-1: Tpt-coda starts with sustained three-quarter (or whole-note?) eb  
 1655-2: Tpt-coda starts with dotted quarter-note bb, 5 eighth-notes c – d – eb – f – eb, quarter-note eb

Storyville 1998/9, p.192: “Buddy Christian, banjo player with The Clarence Williams Blue Five Okeh Jazz Band is playing with Charles A. Matson’s Dreamland Orch. On W. 125<sup>th</sup> St. New York City, every evening. They are a big feature and scoring a big success.”

016	<b>LAURA SMITH</b>	Clarence Williams’ Harmonizers	New York,	c. Aug. 01, 1924
	Laura Smith – voc;			
	Thomas Morris – cnt; <i>John Mayfield</i> – tbn; Ernest Elliott -clt;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; <i>Buddy Christian</i> or ( <i>Charles Bocage?</i> ) – 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

Morris and Williams are obvious. The banjo might be a bit too heavy to be Christian. Charles Bocage of the Piron band might be a reasonable alternate.

But the trombonist very certainly is not Charlie Irvis with his legato trombone, but would rather be John Mayfield of the early Clarence Williams stable with his simple portato style.

There is little clarinet to hear, but the square quarter tone 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)

- *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.”

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

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

017	<b>MARGARET JOHNSON</b>	Clarence Williams’ Harmonizers	New York,	c. Sep. 05, 1924
	Margaret Johnson – voc;			
	<i>Peter Bocage</i> or <i>Thomas Morris, Joe King Oliver</i> – cnt; <i>John Mayfield</i> – tbn;			
	unknown - ten;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; <i>Buddy Christian</i> or ( <i>Charles Bocage?</i> ) – 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

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 tenor saxophone but arranged passages of his part. And from what we can hear nothing substantial can be said about the reed man. He may not be Elliott, because nowhere in my Elliott investigation I found any reasonable evidence of Elliott playing tenor sax. Thus, this player must be someone else. Furthermore, I do not know of any documented recordings of Elliott playing tenor!

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. But we have to consider that Clarence Williams usually used Piron men when recording under the Clarence Williams’ Harmonizers name. So, John Lindsay might possibly be a possibility?

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.

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 9<sup>th</sup>."

- 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)

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

- Rust \*3, \*4, \*6: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; ? 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."

**018 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

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 sessions 016 - 018 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.

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

Notes:

- 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 cao 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)

**019 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

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, this is not Irvis!

Notes:

- 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)  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: 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)

**020 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; Buddy Christian – bjo; unknown – dms;  
 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

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 – thus portato - 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.

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)

Tune Structures:

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)

**021 DIXIE WASHBOARD BAND**

New York, Oct. 22, 1926

Big Charlie Thomas – cnt; unknown – tbn; (Prince Robinson) – clt, ten;  
 Clarence Williams – pno, tom-tom; (Leroy Harris) – bjo; Bruce Johnson – wbd;  
 Clarence Todd – voc; Cl. Williams – Cl. Todd – dialogue

W142856-3	King Of The Zulus	Col 14171-D,	Frog DGF 75
W142857-3	The Zulu Blues	Col 14171-D,	Frog DGF 75

Obviously, a recording companion to session #089 of our Clarence Williams bands list, but with some differences. Our group was unable to find a serious candidate for the trombone player. All Rusts from \*3 on list John Masefield, but Mayfield – his real name – did not have a vibrato as strong as the one heard here. But Tom Lord notes that he could be the same man as on Lucille Hegamin's session of Sep. 28, 1926, thus possibly John Revey of the Savoy Bearcats. But perhaps we should consider Joe Nanton? It was also very difficult to identify the clarinetist and the banjo player. Difficult also to answer who plays the tom-tom throughout, but considering that, whenever we hear the tom-tom, the piano is silent - and vice versa – it certainly has to be Clarence Williams himself!

Notes:

- Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: Author's assumption: Ed Allen, cnt; unknown, tbn; unknown, clt; unknown, p; unknown, bjo; unknown, wbd.

- Storyville 20: unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); Ben Whittet (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Ikey Robinson (bjo); Bruce Johnson (dms, wbd); Ikey Robinson, Clarence Williams (dialogue); Clarence Todd (vcl).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p187: unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); poss Ben Whittet (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Ikey Robinson (bjo); Bruce Johnson (dms, wbd); Ikey Robinson, Clarence Williams (dialogue); Clarence Todd (vcl).

- Rust\*2: Ed Anderson (cnt); Charlie Green (tbn); Ben Whittet (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Ikey Robinson (bjo); Bruce Johnson (dms, wbd); Clarence Todd (vcl); dialogue by Robinson and Williams..

- Rust\*2: Ed Allen (cnt); Ben Whittet (clt, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (?) (wbd).

- *Rust*\*3,\*4,\*6: ?*Louis Metcalf*-c; *John Masefield* -tb; unknown -cl -ts; *Clarence Williams* -p; unknown -bj; *Bruce Johnson* -wb; unknown tom-tom (1); *Clarence Williams*, *Clarence Todd* -dialogue (1).

K.-B. Rau  
20-05-2021