

THE RECORDINGS OF ERNEST ELLIOTT

An Annotated Tentative Name - Discography

ELLIOTT, 'Sticky' Ernest:

Born Booneville, Missouri, February 1893.

Worked with Hank Duncan's Band in Detroit (1919), moved to New York, worked with Johnny Dunn (1921), etc. Various recordings in the 1920s, including two sessions with Bessie Smith. With Cliff Jackson's Trio at the Cabin Club, Astoria, New York (1940), with Sammy Stewart's Band at Joyce's Manor, New York (1944), in Willie 'The Lion' Smith's Band (1947). Has retired from music, but continues to live in New York." (J. Chilton, *Who's Who of Jazz*)

STYLISTICS

Ernest Elliott seems to be a relict out of archaic jazz times. But he did not spend these early years in New Orleans or touring the South, but he became known playing in Detroit, changing over to New York in the very early 1920s. Thus, his stylistic background is completely different from all those New Orleans players, and has to be estimated in a different way. Bushell in his book "Jazz from the Beginning" says about him: "Those guys had a style of clarinet playing that's been forgotten. Ernest Elliott had it, Jimmy O'Bryant had it, and Johnny Dodds had it."

TONE

Elliott owns a strong, rather sharp, tone on the clarinet. There are instances where I feel tempted to hear Bechet-like qualities in his playing, probably mainly because of the tone. This quality might have caused Clarence Williams to use Elliott when Bechet was not available? He does not hit his notes head-on, but he approaches them with a fast upward slur or smear, and even finishes them mostly with a little downward slur/smear, making his notes to sound sour.

On saxophone his tone is thin and tinny, not reedy at any rate, but can also have a silken quality as on the Bessie Smith session of Sep. 28, 1927.

VIBRATO

His vibrato is wide and irregular and has a tendency to whine.

TIME

His playing occurs nearly always on the beat. There is no off-beat playing, everything very regular and possibly Ragtime derived. He does not swing.

PHRASING

Elliott uses mainly quarter and eighth notes, even in slow tempos. Very seldom can you hear sixteenth notes (as in Virginia Liston's *Night Latch Key Blues* of Oct. 25, 1924). Obviously because of his archaic background he plays like a trumpet player would have done. On Laura Smith's *Texas Moaner Blues* of Aug. 01, 1924 he accordingly plays mostly simultaneous with Thomas Morris, which gives the band a two-cornets-with-trombone sound. His melodies/phrases are very often influenced by Khlezmer playing, as often with clarinetists of the 1920s. Also, his melodies are confined to chord-notes with the occasional scale-derived note, but absolutely no chromatic run or phrase. He also uses occasional jump-trills. And sometimes he uses a laughing-clarinet effect as fashionable in the early years of jazz. Often Elliott repeats his rather simple melodic phrases several times in succession (just as Thomas Morris uses to do), which certainly can be seen as a lack of melodic imagination.

Ernest Elliott is not my favorite musician! He even does not belong to my favorite bunch of musicians, and to be honest, compared with the kind of musicians who followed Louis Armstrong and the swinging kind of jazz we are accustomed to nowadays, he is some example of old-fashioned, corny and square musician that – even in the twenties – had fallen out of time.

But, just as Alphonse Picou or Oscar Celestin were products of and represented an earlier period of jazz in New Orleans – before Louis Armstrong and his unmeasurable influence on our music, Ernest Elliott seems to stand for a time in the North-West when Afro American regional music there still was untouched by the miracles of swing, time and elegance coming from the South.

Ernest Elliott simply hailed from another world – music wise. First documents of his professional life as a musician are two photos of Hank Duncan's Kentucky Serenaders at Detroit's Hotel Elwood, 1919. The band consisted of violin, clarinet, trombone, piano, string-bass and drums, and might have been some sort of off-shoot of the Louisiana Five or other similar groups of the day with this kind of trumpet-less instrumentation.

This instrumentation certainly required other duties from the clarinetist than the duty of a New Orleans clarinet player. We do not have any recorded evidence what Elliott played in this context, but it can be assumed that he changed lead responsibilities with the violinist, the trombone playing merely a subordinate role as bass instrument. This then would have him play written or even ad-lib melodies in the style of the day or according to public taste. Obviously, he was not accustomed to play the clarinet part in a band that we know of from Johnny

Dodds and colleagues. If his peculiarities like tonal smears and slurs were part of the Detroit regional style of playing in the early twenties or perhaps even brought with him from Missouri, where he grew up in the last decade of the 19th century, is beyond my knowledge.

But with all his peculiarities and individualities he intruded into Harlem and its rapidly developing jazz scene as a living anachronism, living a musician's life in shadowy bars or taxi dance halls, never being part of the limelight people. Never commonly known or even renowned and celebrated, he survived the insecurities of times still playing his music with Willie 'The' Lion Smith in 1947.

What made him being invited and engaged to play such a lot of recording sessions in the twenties I do not know either. But jazz collectors of the late thirties and forties and early discographers obviously disliked his performances so much that they heaped almost every ugly and abnormal performance on clarinet heard on records on the responsibility of Ernest Elliott. It seems to have become an unextirpable habit in earlier days of discography to name Elliott or alternately Fuller when a clarinet player sounded dated and unswinging and corny. But nobody seems to have listened carefully and find out these players' distinct – and very different – characteristics. This would have been a pretentious and exacting task for somebody interested, but also very difficult and rewarding, and also tiresome.

I hesitatingly but gladly took the trouble to find out where we really hear Mr. Elliott on records, sorting out the impossibilities after analysing his musical means, methods and practices and compare them to anything hitherto assumed to be by Elliott. Of 107 recording sessions encompassing Elliott in their listed personnels I have sorted out 48 ones not to have Elliott at all, and 27 with his possible or even probable presence. This only leaves us about 29 items with his certain or rather certain presence.

Once again and as always, I have to thank my good friends Michael Rader, David Brown and Jörg Kuhfuss for their great help, advice, discussion and contradiction!

Sources used are named at the appropriate places in the text.

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

Personnels are taken from this source, but modified in the light of earlier or subsequent research or on the strength of my own listening, discussed with our listening group or other interested collectors.

- Documented, most certain and aurally absolutely obvious identifications are listed thus: Ernest Elliott
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Ernest Elliott*
- 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: (*Ernest Elliott*)

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.

- All recording sessions from the discographies comprising Ernest Elliott with their documented or assumed personnels have been listed. Only discographies or articles in the author's collection have been used.

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.

ERNEST ELLIOTT

<p>001 MAMIE SMITH <i>Rega Orchestra</i></p> <p><i>Mamie Smith – voc;</i> <i>unknown – tpt; unknown – tbn;</i> <i>unknown – clt; unknown – alt; unknown – ten;</i> Frank Banta - pno</p>	<p><i>That Thing Called Love</i></p> <p><i>You Can't Keep A Good Man Down</i></p>	<p><i>New York,</i></p> <p><i>OK/Phonola 4113,</i></p> <p><i>OK/Phonola 4113,</i></p>	<p><i>Feb. 14, 1920</i></p> <p><i>Doc DOCD_5357</i></p> <p><i>Doc DOCD-5357</i></p>
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Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! Very probably white studio band. See my Mamie Smith Discography.

<p>002 MAMIE SMITH <i>her Jazz Hounds</i></p> <p><i>Mamie Smith – voc;</i> <i>Addington Major – tpt; Dope Andrews – tbn;</i> <i>Bob Fuller – clt; Leroy Parker – vln;</i> <i>Willie The Lion Smith - pno</i></p>	<p><i>Crazy Blues</i></p> <p><i>It's Right Here For You (If You Don't Get It, 'Tain't No Fault Of Mine)</i></p>	<p><i>New York,</i></p> <p><i>OK/Phonola 4169,</i></p> <p><i>OK/Phonola 4169,</i></p>	<p><i>Aug. 10, 1920</i></p> <p><i>Doc DOCD-5357</i></p> <p><i>Doc DOCD-5357</i></p>
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Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! Not Dunn and most probably not Elliott, but Fuller! See my Mamie Smith Discography.

<p>003 MAMIE SMITH <i>her Jazz Hounds</i></p> <p><i>Mamie Smith – voc;</i></p>	<p><i>New York,</i></p>	<p><i>Sep. 12, 1920</i></p>
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Addington Major – tpt; Dope Andrews – tbn;
 Bob Fuller – clt; Leroy Parker – vln;
 Willie The Lion Smith - pno

7589-C Fare Thee Honey Blues OK/Phonola 4194, Doc DOCD-5357
 7590-B The Road Is Rocky (But I Am Gonna Find My Way) OK/Phonola 4194, Doc DOCD-5357

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! Not Dunn and most probably not Elliott, but Fuller! See my Mamie Smith Discography.

004 MAMIE SMITH her Jazz Hounds New York, Nov. 05, 1920
 Mamie Smith – voc;
 Johnny Dunn – tpt; unknown (X-1) – tbn;
 Garvin Bushell – clt; Leroy Parker – vln;
 Porter Grainger – pno; George Howell - dms
 7642-B Mem'ries Of You, Mammy OK/Phonola 4228, Doc DOCD 5357
 7643-B If You Don't Want Me Blues OK/Phonola 4228, Doc DOCD 5357

Bushell certainly recalled this as his first session and would surely have correctly remembered the personnel. Bushell himself is terrible. Dunn is very restrained on the first title but he livens up on the second title and might easily be identified by his style (staccato, triplets, etc). The trombone player probably is not the same as before (Andrews). He does play only faint tailgate style and is very retained. No name comes to mind as to this player could be. Yet, Bushell names Andrews. Lacking a name I would like to name this player as X-1 for later discriminating a whole bunch of unknown trombonists.

Notes: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- RR 57: personnel as given to Len Kunstadt and Bob Colton by Buster Bailey (RR 57) (Bailey gives Elliott) and Garvin Bushell (RR 57)
 - G. Bushell RR 57: "I made my first recordings for Okeh behind Mamie Smith. I believe it was Mamie's fourth record. Have to listen to it to make sure ... something with 'Mammy' in the title."
 - Bushell/Tucker, p.148: "I think this was 1921, not 1920. (Perry Bradford supplied dates for these Okeh sessions.) It could be Cutie Perkins on drums. Dope Andrews on trombone."
 - Rust*3: Johnny Dunn – c; ?Dope Andrews – tb; Garvin Bushell – cl; Leroy Parker – vn; Porter Grainger – p; ? George Howell – d
 - Rust*6: Johnny Dunn – c; ?Dope Andrews – tb; Garvin Bushell – cl; Leroy Parker – vn; Porter Grainger – p; ?George Howell – d.
 - BGR*4: Johnny Dunn – cnt; Dope Andrews – tbn; Ernest Elliott – clt; Leroy Parker – vln; Porter Grainger – pno.

005 MAMIE SMITH her Jazz Hounds New York, Nov. 06, 1920
 Mamie Smith – voc;
 Johnny Dunn – tpt; unknown (X-2) – tbn;
 Garvin Bushell – clt; unknown (Leroy Parker) – vln;
 Porter Grainger – pno; George Howell - dms
 7658-E Don't Care Blues OK 4253, Doc DOCD 5357
 7659-C Lovin' Sam From Alabam OK 4253, Doc DOCD 5357

After intense discussions with my listening companions I feel convinced that this clarinet player is not Elliott as maintained by Buster Bailey in RR 57, but again Bushell as on the session before. And DB asks: Why would Bushell not be present a day after Mamie Smith's session of the day before? But as Bushell's recollections (below) do not seem to be as reliable as I had hoped for after reading his book, he might as well have mixed up the sequence of clarinetists as told. RR 57 p 11: "In an interview with Len Kunstadt and Bob Colton, Garvin Bushell said: "Incidentally, I took Elliott's spot with Mamie and Bob Fuller took mine. Buster Bailey made some sides with Mamie while I was there. Coleman Hawkins came with Fuller; never heard any of the Hawkins sides." Stylistically it could certainly be Bushell rather than Elliott.

Certainly Dunn and very probably not Andrews.

This trombonist plays very boisterous and brash. His playing consists mainly of downward glissandos, very unlike Andrews more functional tailgate style before. Also different from the man on the former session. Therefore I'd name him X-2!

Fine rhythm here!

Notes: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- RR 57: personnel in part as given to Len Kunstadt and Bob Colton by Buster Bailey (RR 57).
 - Rust*3, *6: same personnel as last, but Ernest Elliott may replace Bushell
 - BGR*4: Johnny Dunn – cnt; Dope Andrews – tbn; Ernest Elliott, unknown – alt, clt; Leroy Parker – vln; Porter Grainger – pno; unknown - bjo.

006 MAMIE SMITH AND HER JAZZ HOUNDS New York, c. Oct. 12, 1921
 Mamie Smith – voc (1);
 Bubber Miley or (Ed Cox?) – tpt; Jake Green – tbn;
 (Mayland Hall) - clt; Leroy Parker or (George Bell?) – vln;
 Edward Gillem (Gilliam) – pno; Sam Walker or Curtis Mosby - dms
 70246-B Let's Agree To Disagree OK 4511, Doc DOCD-5358
 70247-B Rambling Blues OK 8024, Doc DOCD-5358
 70248-B Cubanita OK 8024, Doc DOCD-5358

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See my Mamie Smith Discography.

007 EDITH WILSON Jazz Hounds New York, Dec. 21, 1921
 Edith Wilson – voc;
 Johnny Dunn – tpt; Herb Flemming – tbn;
 Ernest Elliot – clt; Herschel Brassfield – clt, alt;
 Dan Wilson – pno; John Mitchell – bjo; Harry Hull - bbs
 80111-2 I Don't Want Nobody Blues Col A-3537, Archeophone 6006

The predominant clarinetist only possibly is Elliott because of Mitchell's comment and Elliott's characteristics. (Bushell was with Ethel Waters now – see notes below). He does not play tenor sax on this session as listed elsewhere. Because of the clarinet mess heard Elliott's characteristics can not definitely be recognized, and I have to follow MR's comment that the clarinet performances on these sides are too hectic to be characteristic Elliott. So, his presence has to remain in doubt.

There certainly is a second reed player who mainly plays clarinet together with Elliott, but at times he switches to alto playing long sustained notes thus probably fulfilling the requested function of a violin player, who is not present on this session. This second reed man was not named by Mitchell (see below) but may be Herschel Brassfield, one of the many enigmatic figures of this early period of Harlem jazz. Both clarinetists maintain a permanent background of squeaking and screaming without any relation to the melody lines of trumpet and trombone. The trumpet player here is again unequivocally Johnny Dunn with his very individual style as mentioned above.

On trombone is a different man now. Whereas the former player plays very functional well placed quarter notes to support the melody of the trumpet and occasional tailgate slides, this very trombonist here plays some sort of second trumpet part, using a lot of double-time phrases with good technique, thus showing a strong influence of Dunn. He is more restrained in playing power than the former man, but this might also result from another position in the recording studio. Herb Flemming has been listed on trombone here and this is probably right when compared to the playing of Bud Aiken in the Gulf Coast Seven session of May 1923. This here then might be a referential record for Flemming's early style: Johnny Dunn on trombone, so to say..

Piano is probably Dan Wilson as listed, although there is no individual style to detect. Banjo virtuoso John Mitchell is present on his own statement as is tuba player Harry Hull.

On this date Johnny Dunn's Original Jazz Hounds recorded their first coupling under Dunn's own name using the same personnel.

Note: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- RR 73: "During November, she and the band toured on the vaudeville circuit. An item in the New York CLIPPER (Dec. 7, 1921) stated that she had just returned with her band, the Original Jazz Hounds, and was under contract with Perry Bradford to make records for Columbia. The 'Jazz Hounds' name, in fact, was a Perry Bradford property and had previously been used with Mamie Smith on OKeh records – and Johnny Dunn and Bushell had been on several of Mamie's earliest records. Late in December, Edith Wilson and the band recorded again. Bushell was no longer in the band, being on the road with Ethel Water' Jazz Masters as part of the Black Swan Troubadours. A young banjo player named John Mitchell had come to New York from (I think) Baltimore, and joined the group in time for this his first record date. Personnel is as given by Mitchell on hearing the record, except that he missed the second reed player. Brassfield is suggested because Mitchell remembered him on other sessions."

- Rust*6: J. Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; E. Elliott, Herschel Brassfield, cl, as; Dan Wilson, p; J- Mitchell, b; Harry Hull, bb.

- Godrich/Dixon/Rye*4 list: Johnny Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; Ernest Elliott, cl; Herschel Brassfield, cl/as; Dan Wilson, p; Johnny Mitchell, bj; Harry Hull, bb.

008 JOHNNY DUNN'S ORIGINAL JAZZ HOUNDS

New York,

Dec. 21, 1921

Johnny Dunn – tpt; Herb Flemming – tbn; Ernest Elliot, Herschel Brassfield – clt;
Dan Wilson – pno; John Mitchell – bjo; Harry Hull - bbs

80113-1 Bugle Blues

Col A-3541,

Frog DGF 33

80114-1 Birmingham Blues

Col A-3541,

Frog DGF 33

As this is the same session as before, yet under another's name, the predominant clarinetist still only possibly is Elliott because of Mitchell's comment and Elliott's characteristics. He does not play tenor sax on this session as listed elsewhere.

The trumpet player on these two consecutive sessions is unequivocally Johnny Dunn with his very individual style as mentioned above, as is Herb Flemming on trombone.

Again we hear a second reed player who plays clarinet throughout together with Elliott. This second reed man was not named by Mitchell (see below) but may be Herschel Brassfield, one of the many enigmatic figures of this early period of Harlem jazz. Following Chilton (see above) Dunn did join the Vodery band not earlier than 1922. This then could mean that he did not have access to Vodery's men at this time, making Brassfield's – and tuba man Hull's – presence at least slightly doubtful! Both clarinetists maintain a permanent background of squeaking and screaming without any relation to the melody lines of trumpet and trombone.

Piano is probably Dan Wilson, Edith's husband and accompanist, as listed, although there is no individual style to detect. Banjo virtuoso John Mitchell is present on his own statement (his first record session, which certainly would have left a strong mark in Mitchell's memory), as is tuba player Harry Hull.

On this date Johnny Dunn's Original Jazz Hounds recorded their first coupling under Dunn's own name using the same personnel (see below).

Note: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- RR 73: "During November, she and the band toured on the vaudeville circuit. An item in the New York CLIPPER (Dec. 7, 1921) stated that she had just returned with her band, the Original Jazz Hounds, and was under contract with Perry Bradford to make records for Columbia. The 'Jazz Hounds' name, in fact, was a Perry Bradford property and had previously been used with Mamie Smith on OKeh records – and Johnny Dunn and Bushell had been on several of Mamie's earliest records.

Late in December, Edith Wilson and the band recorded again. Bushell was no longer in the band, being on the road with Ethel Waters's Jazz Masters as part of the Black Swan Troubadours. A young banjo player named John Mitchell had come to New York from (I think) Baltimore, and joined the group in time for this his first record date. Personnel is as given by Mitchell on hearing the record, except that he missed the second reed player. Brassfield is suggested because Mitchell remembered him on other sessions."

Johnny Dunn, cornet; Herb Flemming, trombone; Ernest Elliott, clarinet; possibly Herschel Brassfield, clarinet and sax; Dan Wilson, piano; John Mitchell, banjo; Harry Hull, tuba.

- Rust*3,*6: Johnny Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; Ernest Elliott, Herschel Brassfield, cl, as; Dan Wilson, p; John Mitchell, b; Harry Hull, bb.

- BGR*4: Johnny Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; Ernest Elliott, cl; Herschel Brassfield, cl/as; Dan Wilson, p; Johnny Mitchell, bj; Harry Hull, bb.

009 EDITH WILSON and THE ORIGINAL JAZZ HOUNDS

New York,

Jan. 21, 1922

Edith Wilson – voc;

(Johnny Dunn?) - tpt; unknown – tbn; unknown (cl-1) – clt;

Leroy Tibbs – pno; Sam Speede – bjo

80150-4 Wicked Blues

Col A-3558,

Archeophone 6006

80151-1 Birmingham Blues

Col A-3558,

Archeophone 6006

This is a personnel possibly akin to that of the Original Jazz Hounds session of February 24, 1922 (the "Sam Wooding" session) as assumed in VJM 153 (see below).

Predominant is the clarinet player with his squeaking and screaming clarinet, very stiff and military-like, who seems to be the same man as on the next session (May 19, 1922)! In 'Birmingham Blues' he plays some crazy up- and downward octave jumps, pure vaudeville, at the end of the first chorus, just before the instrumental chorus, and again at the very end of the tune. After RR 73 Mitchell thought it might be Bushell on clarinet, but the latter was still in Chicago with Ethel Waters! He will be found in the conscuting sessions, but he probably is a man not heard before. He appears on later sessions and should be called Y-1 as long as we do not know his identity. He also appears on the "Sam Wooding" Original Jazz Hounds session of Feb. 23, 1922.

We hear a trumpet player in the Dunn mould, but with his own variety of the ubiquitous Dunn style. But his tone is weaker than Dunn's, and he uses more "Southern" elements in his style than Dunn. As I have shown in the Frog Jazz & Blues Annual Vol.3 "The Cornet Screamer" was Gus Aiken very adept in copying Johnny Dunn's trumpet style and therefore his presence on this session could certainly be supposed. DB hears identity of this player to J. Dunn in E. Wilson's 'Vamping Liza Jane' of Sep. 15, 1921. This assumption then should be reason to question Dunn's presence on "Vamping Liza Jane".

The trombone player obviously is the same man as the following session, playing tailgate phrases and otherwise functional quarter notes with a loud and secure, but not very beautiful tone.

The piano player has a different style from Dan Wilson and plays very good and functional band piano, emphasizing the arrangement parts. Leroy Tibbs could be a very good assumption. But he might as well be Sam Wooding, if we assume that the accompaniment of this and the next session could have been recruited from Wooding's band. On banjo I assume Samuel Speede with his strong four/four playing, his dark banjo sound and his tendency to loose the beat when playing breaks. He does not solo permanently like Mr. Mitchell! And he is not on the following session!

Note: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- RR 73 "A new road show of PUT AND TAKE was to go on tour, opening Feb. 13, 1922, and sponsored by the Columbia Graphophone Co. (Chicago DEFENDER, Jan. 21, 1922). It was to include Edith Wilson and the Hounds (another paper referred to her "six piece Jazz Hounds"). They recorded again, this time Dunn's name was not on the record label, although he is plainly present (really? - KBR) - no doubt Columbia heard from Perry Bradford and him about this! Personnel is from Mitchell again." "WICKED BLUES, by the way, uses part of the same lyrics as Perry Bradford's classic CRAZY BLUES!" Allen dates this session as Jan. 21, 1922.

- Rust*6: J. Dunn, c; Earl Granstaff, tb; E. Elliott, cl, as; poss. Leroy Tibbs, p; J- Mitchell, bj.

- Godrich/Dixon/Rye*4 list: Johnny Dunn, c; Earl Granstaff, tb; poss. Ernest Elliott, cl; Dan Wilson or Leroy Tibbs, p; John Mitchell, bj.

- VJM 153 p.7: "The Johnny Dunn's Original Jazz Hounds session which produced 'Moanful Blues' / 'Put And Take' (actually recorded February 23, 1922 according to the Columbia Artist cards) has long been a puzzle to collectors, as it apparently is not by Dunn. The file card merely shows 'Original Jazz Hounds' and it has long been speculated that this session is the one referred to in the Chicago Defender of May 13, 1922 which stated that the Sam Wooding Orchestra had been recorded for Columbia. However, nobody has seemed to notice that the Edith Wilson session of January 20, 1922 has the same trumpeter, trombonist, clarinetist and banjoist heard on the February 23, 1922 session (the piano is too indistinct to pass comment). Intriguingly, the label credit shows 'Edith Wilson and the Original Jazz Hounds' - no mention of Dunn. We are not convinced that it's Sam Wooding's band on these sessions, and the Defender story could easily be publicity placement only. The clarinet, trombone and banjo all sound the same on both dates and like later Dunn sessions of that period, but any ideas as to who the trumpeter is?"

- Archeophone 6006 liner notes: same as above, except Granstaff, trombone, replaces Flemming; Brassfield and Hull omitted; Leroy Tibbs may be the pianist.

010 EDITH WILSON		New York,	Apr. 11, 1922
Edith Wilson - voc;			
unknown (Johnny Dunn) - tpt; unknown (Earl Granstaff) - tbn; unknown (Ernest Elliott) - clt;			
unknown (Dan Wilson) - pno; unknown (John Mitchell) - bjo			
Edith Wilson - voc;			
80304	That Thing Called Love	Col unissued	not on LP/CD
80305	Stingaree Blues	Col unissued	not on LP/CD

As these titles are unissued and no tests seem to have been found nothing can be said substantial about musical contents or personnel.

011 EDITH WILSON	her Jazz Hounds	New York,	May 19, 1922
Edith Wilson - voc;			
(Gus Aiken) - tpt; (Eugene Bud Aiken) - tbn;			
unknown (cl-1) - clt; Will Tyler or Charlie Jackson - vln;			
Leroy Tibbs - pno; Sam Speede - bjo			
80356-3	Mammy, I'm Thinking Of You	Col A-3634,	Archeophone 6006
80357-3	Take It 'Cause It's All Yours	Col A-3634,	Archeophone 6006

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See my Edith Wilson Discography.

012 MAMIE SMITH AND HER JAZZ HOUNDS		New York,	c. Jun. 10, 1922
Mamie Smith - voc;			
(Johnny Dunn) or (Bubber Miley) - tpt; Herb Flemming - tbn;			
Bob Fuller - clt; (Coleman Hawkins) - ten;			
George Bell - vln;			
unknown - pno; unknown - dms			
70729-C	Mamie Smith Blues	OK 4658,	Doc DOCD-5359
70730-A	Alabama Blues	OK 4658,	Doc DOCD-5359

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See my Mamie Smith Discography.

013 **MAMIE SMITH'S JAZZ HOUNDS** New York, c. Aug. 15, 1922
 (Joe Smith) – tpt; Cecil Carpenter – tbn;
 Herschel Brassfield – alt, clt; Coleman Hawkins – ten; George Bell – vln;
 Everett Robbins – pno; Sam Speed – bjo; unknown - dms
 70777-B Stuttering OK 8036, Doc DOCD-5359
 70778-C Those Longing For You Blues OK 8072, Doc DOCD-5359

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past!

014 **MAMIE SMITH'S JAZZ HOUNDS** New York, c. Aug. 22, 1922
 Mamie Smith – voc;
 Mamie Smith – voc (1,2);
 (Joe Smith) – tpt; Cecil Carpenter – tbn;
 Bob Fuller – clt, alt; Coleman Hawkins – ten;
 Everett Robbins – pno; Sam Speed – bjo; unknown - dms
 70790-B Got To Cool My Doggies Now OK 4670, Doc DOCD-5359
 70791-B You Can Have Him, I Don't Want Him, Didn't Love Him Anyhow Blues OK 4670, Doc DOCD-5359
 70792-A Strut Your Material OK 8036, Doc DOCD-5359

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See my Mamie Smith Discography.

015 **MAMIE SMITH'S JAZZ HOUNDS** New York, c. Aug. 30, 1922
 Mamie Smith – voc;
 Joe Smith - cnt; Cecil Carpenter – tbn;
 (Bob Fuller) – alt, clt; Coleman Hawkins – ten; George Bell – vln;
 Everett Robbins – pno; unknown - dms
 70809-A Wish That I Could But I Can't Forgive Blues OK 4689, Doc DOCD-5359

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See my Mamie Smith Discography.

016 **EVA TAYLOR** New York, Sep. 05, 1922
 Eva Taylor – voc;
 unknown band personnel, but possibly comprising
 Ernest Elliott – clt; Clarence Williams – pno
 64171 I Got To Cool My Doggies Now unknown label unissued not on LP/CD

As this item seems to be lost with great certainty, all that has to be said is below:

Note:

- Tom Lord, Clarence Williams p 24: "Len Kunstadt reported a visit with Clarence Williams in which he describes a test pressing in Clarence's possession. As reported by LK, the artist credit, date, title, and matrix number are shown below. Apparently he heard the test, as he describes a clarinet, whom Clarence recalls as possibly Ernest Elliott, "above the rest of the group", which LK doesn't list."

017 **MAMIE SMITH AND HER JAZZ HOUNDS** New York, c. Sep. 06, 1922
 Mamie Smith – voc;
 Joe Smith – cnt; Cecil Carpenter – tbn;
 Bob Fuller – clt; Herschel Brassfield – alt, clt; Coleman Hawkins – ten; George Bell – vln;
 unknown – pno
 70824-B Sighin' Around With The Blues OK 4767, Doc DOCD-5359
 70825-B That Da Da Strain OK 4689, Doc DOCD-5359

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See my Mamie Smith Discography.

018 **IRENE GIBBONS AND JAZZ BAND** New York, Dec. 05, 1922
 Eva Taylor – voc;
 unknown – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;
 (Ernest Elliott?) – clt; unknown – alt;
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; unknown – dms
 80723-4 My Pillow And Me Col A-3922, Doc DOCD-5408
 80724-3 That Da Da Strain Col unissued not on LP/CD

The clarinet player plays quarter and eighths notes only, shown as a characteristic of Elliott's style. In the middle break of the last chorus we hear the first four notes played in pitch and then the next two (or four) notes played with slight downward slides, typical for Elliott's playing. But his smears and slurs are not there. Instead the clarinet plays well pitched phrases unlike Elliott. So, the playing heard here is only slightly fitting and compatible with Elliott's documented style and his assumed presence, and for my taste it is too little to really assume Elliott. The player might also be someone quite different, and I have to admit to suspect someone else. But I would like to retain an assumed name as there is too little fact to support my thought. My listening companions strongly support Elliott's presence.

The alto sax man only plays the melody behind Eva Taylor.

The trumpet player plays straight melody only throughout and might be anyone. He may even be early Miley, not Morris. (JK hears the same trumpet player as on Eva Taylor's 'New Moon' of session September 1922).

Certainly Irvis on trombone, and very beautiful.

Notes:

- Storyville 13: prob Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo); unknown (woodblocks)
 - Rust*3,*6: ? Tom Morris – c; Charlie Irvis – tb; Ernest Elliott - cl, as; Clarence Williams – p; Buddy Christian – bj; unknown - d
 - T. Lord, Clarence Williams p 27: prob Thomas Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Ernest Elliott - clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; unknown – woodblocks “TKD lists: Elmer Chambers or Charlie Gaines – tpt; Irvis – tbn; Don Redman – clt; Williams, Christian and unknown – dms. Goldman lists Th. Morris, Irvis, and Sidney Bechet – clt.”
 - BGR*4: prob Tom Morris – c; Charlie Irvis – tb; Ernest Elliott - cl, as; Clarence Williams – p; Buddy Christian – bj; unknown - d. (BGR*4 lists both titles as unissued. The issued ones are dated early January 1924.)

019 MAMIE SMITH AND HER JAZZ HOUNDS

New York, c. Dec. 06, 1922

Mamie Smith – voc;

Joe Smith – cnt; Cecil Carpenter – tbn;

Bob Fuller – clt; Coleman Hawkins – ten; George Bell – vln;

Harvey Brooks – pno; Cutie Perkins - dms

71079-B I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None Of This Jelly-Roll

OK 4752,

Doc DOCD-5359

71080-B Don't Mess With It

OK 4752,

Doc DOCD-5359

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See my Mamie Smith Discography.

020 MAMIE SMITH AND HER JAZZ HOUNDS

New York, c. Dec. 08, 1922

Mamie Smith – voc;

Joe Smith – cnt; Cecil Carpenter – tbn;

Bob Fuller – clt; Coleman Hawkins – ten; George Bell – vln;

Harvey Brooks – pno; Cutie Perkins - dms

71085-A Mean Man

OK 4856

Doc DOCD-5359,

71086-B The Darktown Flappers Ball

OK 4767,

Doc DOCD-5359

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See my Mamie Smith Discography.

021 EDITH WILSON

New York, Nov. 22, 1922

Edith Wilson – voc;

(Johnny Dunn) – tpt; (Herb Flemming) – tbn; (Ernest Elliott) – clt;

(George Rickson) – pno; (John Mitchell) – bjo

80683 Dixie Blues

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

80684 He Used To Be Your Man But He's My Man Now

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

As these titles are unissued and no tests seem to have been found nothing substantial can be said about musical contents or personnel.

022 EDITH WILSON her Jazz Hounds

New York, Dec. 14, 1922

Edith Wilson – voc;

(Gus Aiken) or (Johnny Dunn?) – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn; (Ernest Elliott) or (Julian Baugh?) – clt;

George Rickson – pno; John Mitchell – bjo

80683-5 Dixie Blues

Col A-3787,

Archeophone 6006

80684-6 He Used To Be Your Man But He's My Man Now

Col A-3787,

Archeophone 6006

A stronger clarinetist than Bushell, but similar style and more staccato and mainly quarter notes, and might therefore be Elliott as listed. Yet, following Dave Brown's remark re the clarinetist (below) the presence of a man like Clarence Robinson should be considered! Possibly not Johnny Dunn, this might as well be his alter ego, Aiken. This player is rhythmically freer and more flexible than Dunn, and Aiken should again be considered. A functional trombonist again, different from Flemming and Aiken, so possibly the melodious Granstaff. The pianist is certainly different from Tibbs, less Harlem stride, more "southern" style. But certainly Mitchell on banjo.

Note: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- RR 73: Johnny Dunn, cornet; Herb Flemming, trombone; Ernest Elliott, clarinet; George Rickson, piano; John Mitchell, banjo.

“By October, the Plantation Revue was playing at the Winter Garden with the same stars, although some of the supporting cast had been replaced. The next (this one! KBR) recording used a different clarinetist; Mitchell verified the personnel.” Allen dates this session as Dec. 18, 1922.

- Rust*6: J. Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; Ernest Elliott, cl; George Rickson, p; J. Mitchell, bj.

- BGR*4: J. Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; Ernest Elliott, cl; George Rickson, p; J. Mitchell, bj.

023 EDITH WILSON

New York, Dec. 16, 1922

Edith Wilson – voc;

(Johnny Dunn) – tpt; (Herb Flemming) – tbn; (Ernest Elliott) – clt;

(George Rickson) – pno; (John Mitchell) – bjo

80735 Memphis Tennessee

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

80736 What Did Deacon Mose Do (When The Lights Went Out)

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

As these titles are unissued and no tests seem to have been found nothing substantial can be said about musical contents or personnel.

024 MAMIE SMITH

New York, c. Dec. 20, 1922

Mamie Smith – voc;

Joe Smith - cnt; Cecil Carpenter – tbn;

Bob Fuller – *clt*; Coleman Hawkins – *ten*; George Bell – *vlm*;
Harvey Brooks – *pno*; Cutie Perkins – *dms*
71112-B I'm Gonna Get You

OK 4781, Doc DOCD-5359

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See my Mamie Smith Discography.

025 IRENE GIBBONS AND JAZZ BAND

New York, Jan. 06, 1923

Eva Taylor – *voc*;
unknown – *tpt*; (Charlie Irvis?) – *tbm*; (Julian Baugh?) – *clt*;
Clarence Williams – *pno*; Buddy Christian – *bjo*; unknown – *dms*
80724-6 That Da Da Strain

Col A-3834, Doc DOCD-5408

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

Clarinet is smoother than Elliott here. Elliott tended to play a lead part like a trumpet player, obviously derived from his practice of earlier years (Detroit 1919), where he played lead in Hank Duncan's Kentucky Serenaders. This clarinet player here plays a clarinet part, in his solo passages going back into second harmony part when joining the ensemble again at the appropriate places. This is not Elliott's style. Therefore very probably not Elliott. I do not hear an alto saxophone.

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

Notes:

- Storyville 13: prob Thomas Morris (*cnt*); Charlie Irvis (*tbm*); Ernest Elliott (*clt*); Clarence Williams (*pno*); Buddy Christian (*bjo*); unknown (*woodblocks*)

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

- T. Lord, Clarence Williams p 27: prob Thomas Morris – *cnt*; Charlie Irvis – *tbm*; poss Clarence Robinson or Ernest Elliott – *clt*;
Clarence Williams – *pno*; Buddy Christian – *bjo*; unknown – *woodblocks*. "Rust *3 says that Clarence Robinson may replace Elliott on clarinet. Rust's source for this is Walter C. Allen, who in his definitive 'Hendersonia' discusses the clarinet on Ethel Waters' 'That Da Da Strain' (Black Swan 14120-A) and states that the clarinetist plays the same ensemble part as on this record by Irene Gibbons."

- BGR*4: prob Tom Morris – *c*; Charlie Irvis – *tb*; poss Clarence Robinson – *cl*; Clarence Williams – *p*; Buddy Christian – *bj*; unknown – *d*. (BGR*4 lists this as a remake session for both titles of early December 1923. Accordingly 80723-4 or -6 might also stem from this session.)

026 MAMIE SMITH

New York, c. Jan. 09, 1923

Mamie Smith – *voc*;
Joe Smith – *cnt*; Cecil Carpenter – *tbm*;
(William Thornton Blue) – *clt*; Albert Happy Caldwell or (Coleman Hawkins) – *ten*; George Bell – *vlm*;
Harvey Brooks – *pno*; Cutie Perkins – *dms*
71161-C You've Got To See Mama Every Night (Or You Can't See Mama At All) OK 4781, Doc DOCD-5359

For the last Mamie Smith sessions (Aug. 22, 1922 to this date) Elliott has always been listed as clarinetist. Elliott's presence has to be assumed although Fuller is documented for at least early 1923. It seems to have been an unextirpable habit in earlier days of discography to name Elliott or alternately Fuller when a clarinet player sounded dated and unswinging and comy. But nobody seems to have listened carefully and find out these player's distinct – and very different – characteristics. This would be a pretentious and exacting task for somebody interested, but also very difficult and rewarding, and also tiresome. Yet, this player shows a remarkable technical proficiency and fluency in contrast of what we know of Elliott. Against my listening companions I maintain my suggestion that the playing is much too fluent and technically pretentious to be by Elliott, and – because of William Thornton Blue mentioned by Happy Caldwell (see below) his presence in this band personnel should be thought of. What certainly would be some kind of little sensation, as obviously nobody has ever imagined this possibility. The clarinet style surprisingly sounds like that of a youthful Blue.

The tenor player seems to be somewhat weaker than Hawkins on the above recordings and Happy Caldwell might be the player on account of his own testimony below. Only, that Caldwell's memories seem not to be trustworthy as 1923 should be the year he replaced Hawkins with Mamie Smith, and not 1924 when he stayed on in New York. His recordings with Bernie Young were made in October and November 1923 (L. Wright, Trombone Man, p. 61), so that his time with Mamie Smith should have been earlier in 1923 when Hawkins left the Smith outfit, Caldwell returning to Chicago again after the Smith period to record with Young, and Joe Smith was not with Mamie anymore in 1924. (See also Th. Morris Past Jazz Masters session of April 1923!)

The coda of this title shows typical and certain Joe Smith on *cnt*! Although Walter C. Allen has hinted to Smith's possible presence on these Mamie Smith recordings as early as September 1964 (!), nobody seems to have been interested to check this remark. And it is so obvious!

Notes: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- Rust*3: personnel as above, but: Perkins omitted.

- Rust*6: Joe Smith and another *c*; ? Cecil Carpenter, *tb*; Buster Bailey or Ernest Elliott, *cl*; C. Hawkins, *ts*; ? Leroy Parker or ? George Bell, *vn*; ? Harvey Brooks, *p*; Cutie Perkins, *d*.

- Scherman/Eriksson do not list this session.

- BGR*4: Joe Smith – *tpt*; unknown – *tbm*; poss. Ernest Elliott – *clt*; Coleman Hawkins, unknown – *ten*; poss. Leroy Parker – *vlm*; poss.

Harvey Brooks – *pno*; unknown – *bjo*; unknown – *dms*

- Storyville 99 p 86: Happy Caldwell: "Hawk was with Mamie Smith before me, and when I joined we had Joe Smith on trumpet. Then we had Thornton Blue, who went with Cab, on clarinet, and Ernest Elliott was with us for a bit – I think he's still living, and he's much older than me. He was very tall and thin, and that's why we called him "Sticks. That was in 1924, when I got to New York."

027 ALBERTA HUNTER Henderson's Orchestra

New York, Feb. 1923

Alberta Hunter – *voc*;
Elmer Chambers – *cnt*; George Brashear – *tbm*;
(Jimmy Lytell?) – *clt*; Billy Fowler – *alt*;
Fletcher Henderson – *pno*; Charlie Dixon – *bjo*

1316-1	<i>Come On Home</i>	<i>Pm 12013,</i>	<i>Doc DOCD-1006</i>
1316-2	<i>Come On Home</i>	<i>Pm 12013,</i>	<i>Doc DOCD-5422</i>
1317-1	<i>You Shall Reap Just What You Sow</i>	<i>Pm 12021,</i>	<i>Doc DOCD-5422</i>
1317-2	<i>You Shall Reap Just What You Sow</i>	<i>Pm 12021,</i>	<i>Doc DOCD-1006</i>

It is surprising that the great expert on Harlem Jazz Walter C. Allen in his definitive Hendersonia lists Elliott on alto sax here, and Redman on clarinet, while Rust lists Redman on alto and Elliott on clarinet. After intensive listening I tended to follow Allen and name Redman as clarinetist on these titles, although the clarinet playing on the second title is quite different from what I know of Redman's style. The clarinet sounds very "Western" here, almost Jimmy Noone-ish with its beautiful low-register phrasing, which might yet be played as written. Yet, DB gave a hint to the consecutive matrix-numbers of this and the next session under A. Hunter's name which is accompanied by the Original Memphis Five and recorded possibly on the same day. And there we might possibly find and hear exactly this same clarinetist, namely Jimmy Lytell. This certainly can not be taken as fact for now, but thanks to Dave we now have a quite reasonable alternative. Out of my knowledge of Elliott I would like to deny his presence on saxophone on any of these two titles. This player seems to play mostly pre-arranged passages, only changing into ad-lib phrasing very scarcely, but whatever he plays, he never uses Elliott's upward or downward slurs that make Elliott's playing sound "sour". Because of this fact I tend to exclude Elliott on any of the reeds here. The man heard here might instead have been Billy Fowler, who is known to have recorded with Henderson and Redman at about this time (Hendersonia p 43). He shows an assured and expert alto playing, musical and sonorous, quite different from Elliott's. Chambers and Brashear, apart from Henderson himself and Dixon on banjo, may be the horn men here.

Notes:

- Rust*3: probably Howard Scott or Elmer Chambers - c; Teddy Nixon - tb; Edgar Campbell - cl; Don Redman - as; Fletcher Henderson - p; Charlie Dixon - bj.
 - W.C. Allen, Hendersonia p 49: prob Elmer Chambers - cnt; George Brashear - tbn; Don Redman - clt; Ernest Elliott - alt; Fletcher Henderson - pno; Charlie Dixon - bjo. "Late in February, Miss Hunter recorded 14 consecutive titles for the Paramount label. The first two were made with a six piece Henderson unit (confirmed by Paramount advertisements in the March 13, 1923, issue of the Chicago Defender). The cornetist sounds more like Chambers than Scott, although they are not always easy to distinguish (definite examples of their styles will be discussed later; the first definite Scott solos appear on an October 1923 date for Edison, page 81). The clarinetist could well be Redman, who has recalled recording behind Miss Hunter. These two titles, and the five below, are the only known accompaniments made by Henderson units behind this singer during the Redman period."
 - Rust*6: Elmer Chambers - cnt; George Brashear - tbn; Ernest Elliott - clt; Don Redman - alt; Fletcher Henderson - pno; Charlie Dixon - bjo
 - BGR*4: prob Elmer Chambers - cnt; prob George Brashear - tbn; prob Don Redman - clt; prob Ernest Elliott - alt; Fletcher Henderson - pno; Charlie Dixon - bjo

028	ALBERTA HUNTER Henderson's Dance Orchestra	New York,	Feb. 1923
	Alberta Hunter - voc;		
	Joe Smith - tpt; George Brashear - tbn;		
	(Jimmy Lytell?) - clt;		
	Fletcher Henderson - pno; Charlie Dixon - bjo		
1325-1	<i>Aggravatin' Papa</i>	<i>Pm 12013,</i>	<i>Doc DOCD-1006</i>
1325-2	<i>Aggravatin' Papa</i>	<i>Pm 12013,</i>	<i>Doc DOCD-5423</i>
1326-2	<i>I'm Going Away To Wear You Off My Mind</i>	<i>Pm 12019,</i>	<i>Doc DOCD-5423</i>
1327-1	<i>Loveless Love</i>	<i>Pur 11243</i>	<i>not on LP/CD</i>
1327-2	<i>Loveless Love</i>	<i>Pm 12019,</i>	<i>Doc DOCD-5423</i>
1328-2	<i>You Can Take My Man But You Can't Keep Him For Long</i>	<i>Pm 12020,</i>	<i>Doc DOCD-5423</i>
1329-2	<i>Bring It With You When You Come</i>	<i>Pm 12018,</i>	<i>Doc DOCD-5423</i>

Clarinet is much too smooth to be Elliott (nowhere his "negative" characteristics as listed in "Stylistics" above). But to this listener's ears it is not Redman either! He may instead be the below mentioned Edgar Campbell, but aural comparison with Ethel Waters' Black Swan session of late March 1923 does not support this possibility. As my listening companion DB has suggested for the Hunter session before this clarinet player may be the same one again as that of the intermediate session accompanied by the Original Memphis Five, and the matrix-numbers are not far apart. So, we might hear Jimmy Lytell here agyin.

The trumpet player seems not to be Chambers with his antiquated style, but rather the youthful Joe Smith just away from Mamie Smith's band and on the way to overcome his Johnny Dunn oriented style! Howard Scott's association with Henderson had to wait another year, and thus his presence is most improbable.

Notes:

- Rust*3: probably Howard Scott - c; Teddy Nixon - tb; Edgar Campbell or Don Redman - cl; Fletcher Henderson - p; Charlie Dixon - bj.
 - W.C. Allen, Hendersonia p 50: prob Elmer Chambers - cnt; George Brashear - tbn; Don Redman or Ernest Elliott - clt; Fletcher Henderson - pno; Charlie Dixon - bjo (see comment above!).
 - Rust*6: prob Elmer Chambers - cnt; George Brashear - tbn; Ernest Elliott or Don Redman - clt; Fletcher Henderson - pno; Charlie Dixon - bjo
 - BGR*4: prob Elmer Chambers - cnt; prob George Brashear - tbn; prob Don Redman or Ernest Elliott - clt; Fletcher Henderson - pno; Charlie Dixon - bjo

029	THOMAS MORRIS PAST JAZZ MASTERS	New York,	Feb. 1923
	unknown, Thomas Morris - cnt; John Mayfield - tbn;		
	unknown - alt; unknown - ten (if at all);		
	Charles "Smitty" Smith - pno; unknown - bjo; unknown - bbs; unknown - dms		
71306-A	<i>E Flat Blues No. 2 (Memphis, Tennessee)</i>	<i>OK 8055,</i>	<i>Chronological Classics 823</i>
71307-B	<i>Original Charleston Strut</i>	<i>OK 8055,</i>	<i>Chronological Classics 823</i>

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.. Identification of the other players may be found in my article on Morris' Past Jazz Masters in Names&Numbers 49 p22. The above listed personnel is the result of my research. It should yet be added here, that there is a good and prominent tuba player on these sides not listed by Rust. Also it seems strange that Rust excludes Willie The Lion Smith distinctly in *3 and later lists him in *6.

Notes

- Rust*2: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; unknown, ts; Willie 'The Lion' Smith, p; Buddy Christian, bj.
- Rust*3: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; unknown, ts; unknown, p; unknown bj; unknown d. "Contrary to previous statements and suggestions, the pianist on these records is neither Willie 'The Lion' Smith (who denies all knowledge of them and in any case was not in New York at the time) nor Clarence Williams."
- Rust*4: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; unknown, ts; unknown, p; unknown bj; unknown d.
- Rust*6: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; ?Ernest Elliott, ts; ?Willie The Lion Smith, p; unknown bj; unknown d.
- Bushell/Tucker, JFTB p 158: " But I never heard Ernest Elliott play saxophone. "
- See N&N 49 p 22

030	LENA WILSON Johnny Dunn's Jazz Hounds Lena Wilson – voc; (Johnny Dunn) – tpt; (Earl Granstaff) – tbn; (Garvin Bushell or Ernest Elliott or Herschell Brassfield) – clt, alt; (Leroy Tibbs or George Rickson or Dan Wilson) – pno; John Mitchell - bjo	New York,	Feb. 26, 1923
80875	I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me	Col unissued	not on LP/CD
80876	Humming Man	Col unissued	not on LP/CD

As these titles are unissued and no tests seem to have been found nothing can be said about musical contents or personnel.

Notes:

- Rust*3, *4, *6: acc by Johnny Dunn's Jazz Hounds: Johnny Dunn – tpt; Earl Granstaff, Herb Flemming or Calvin Jones – tbn; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott or Herschell Brassfield – clt, alt; Leroy Tibbs, George Rickson or Dan Wilson – pno; John Mitchell or Sam Speed – bjo; poss others
- Bushell/Tucker p.157: no comment
- BGR*4: Johnny Dunn, c; instrumentation and personnel otherwise unknown.

031	INEZ WALLACE Inez Wallace – voc; Elmer Chambers – cnt; George Brashear – tbn; Don Redman – clt; Fletcher Henderson – pno; Charlie Dixon – bjo	Long Island City,	c. Mar. 1923
560-2	Kissin' Daddy	BS 14147, Pm 12145,	Doc DOCD-5343
561-2	Go Get It	BS 14147, Pm 12145,	Doc DOCD-5602

Most of the above listed characteristics of Elliott's style are missing here. This player owns a different style from Elliott's: straighter and no 'sour' intonation, no whining, good pitch and straight ahead playing of good quality. This man sounds more like Redman, who is much better here in ensemble than in his rather busy and unswinging solos.

Notes:

- W.C. Allen, Hendersonia: probably Elmer Chambers – cnt; George Brashear – tbn; Don Redman or Ernest Elliott – clt; Fletcher Henderson – pno; Charlie Dixon – bjo „This date, and the next two with band accompaniment, were made with similar units, according to their ,sound'. The trumpeter could be Elmer Chambers, taking a characteristic solo on 'Go Get It'; the clarinetist sounds like a different man than Campbell on the next session (Ethel Waters late March 1923), and the names given above are logical guesses."
- Rust*3,*4: unknown t; unknown tb; unknown cl; unknown p; unknown bj.
- Rust*6: probably Elmer Chambers – cnt; George Brashear – tbn; Don Redman or Ernest Elliott- clt; Fletcher Henderson – pno; Charlie Dixon – bjo
- BGR*4: probably Elmer Chambers – cnt; George Brashear – tbn; Don Redman or Ernest Elliott- clt; Fletcher Henderson – pno; Charlie Dixon – bjo

032	HANNAH SYLVESTER Henderson's Orchestra Hannah Sylvester – voc; Joe Smith – cnt; George Brashear – tbn; Ernest Elliott – clt; Don Redman – alt; Fletcher Henderson – pno; Charlie Dixon – bjo	New York,	Mar./Apr. 1923
42374-1	Midnight Blues	Em 10625,	Doc DOCD-5343
42375-1	I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me	Em 10625,	not on LP/CD
42375-2	I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me	Em 10625,	Doc DOCD-5343

There is one of the reed players playing clarinet throughout. Stylistically he might be Ernest Elliott as assumed by my listening companions. I (KBR) would rather doubt Elliott's playing here, but I certainly feel undetermined. Some clarinet phrases sound like Elliott's up and down slurs, but probably Redman's clarinet style at the time was not so far away from Elliott's, so that judgement is almost impossible. It should yet be kept in mind that Henderson himself as well as Don Redman have named Ernest Elliott as participant of at least a few of these early Henderson blues accompaniments. As I have been unable to hear Elliott's playing on any of the afore-mentioned Henderson accompaniments, his only possible presence might be this one then. Although Bushell states in his book that he never heard Elliott play a saxophone, reality proves different (he can distinctly be listened to on alto sax on a lot of recordings). But I have as yet been unable to find an instance where he plays tenor sax, and this fact makes me think about his presence here.

The second reed man seems to play alto sax throughout and not tenor as given in the discos. In the second title it could as well be tenor holding long notes, but this could certainly be played on alto, too. In any case, alto would be much more significant if we assume it is would be Elliott here. It may be Redman, but it is impossible to make a distinct statement as to his presence. (The alto man does not play clarinet on this session.)

The trumpet/cornet player is much too hot for Elmer Chambers, and I would like to assume Joe Smith here. This would be the time shortly after his sojourn with Mamie Smith's band, a time when he had got rid of his Johnny Dunn influence and was developing into his own musical self. Rust*3 lists Howard Scott, but he did not join Henderson's band earlier than January 1924, although he recorded with him in October 1923. Brashear may well be the trombonist.

Notes:

- W.C. Allen, Hendersonia: Elmer Chambers – cnt; poss George Brashear – tbn; Don Redman and Ernest Elliott – clt and ten;

Fletcher Henderson – pno; Charlie Dixon – bjo

Rust*3: Howard Scott - c; Teddy Nixon - tb; Don Redman - cl; unknown - cl, ts; Fletcher Henderson - p; Charlie Dixon - bj

- Rust*4: ? Elmer Chambers – c; ? George Brashear – tb; Don Redman - cl; Ernest Elliott- cl, ts; Fletcher Henderson – p; Charlie Dixon – bj

- Rust*6: ?Elmer Chambers – c; ?George Brashear – tb; Don Redman - cl; Ernest Elliott- cl, ts; Fletcher Henderson – p; Charlie Dixon – bj

- BGR*4: Elmer Chambers – c; poss George Brashear – tb; Don Redman, Ernest Elliott - cl, ts; Fletcher Henderson – p; Charlie Dixon – bj.

033 LENA WILSON	<i>Perry Bradford's Jazz Phools</i>	New York,	Apr. 01, 1923
Gus Aiken - tpt; Herb Flemming - tbn;			
Perry Bradford - pno; Sam Speed – bjo			
1362-1	<i>Deceitful Blues</i>	Pm 12029,	Timeless CBC 1-073
1362-2	<i>Deceitful Blues</i>	Pm 12029,	Doc DOCD-5443
1363-1	<i>I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me</i>	Pm 12029,	Timeless CBC 1-073
1363-2	<i>I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me</i>	Pm 12029,	Doc DOCD-5443
1363-3	<i>I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me</i>	Pm 12029,	Doc DOCD-5627

Certainly not Elliott and no reed player at all, although listed in the past! See my Perry Bradford's Jazz Phools Discography (N&N 70).

034 MAUDE MILLS		New York,	c. April 1923
Maude Mills – voc;			
Elmer Chambers – cnt; George Brashear – tbn;			
Don Redman – alt, clt; (Ernest Elliott) – sax;			
Fletcher Henderson – pno; Charlie Dixon – bjo;			
Bob Ricketts – arr			
	<i>Tired Of Waiting Blues</i>	Em 10624	not on LP/CD
	<i>Triflin' Blues</i>	Em 10624	not on LP/CD

As no copy of these sides has been issued on LP or CD, the record could not be checked as to its personnel.

Notes:

- Rust*6: poss Elmer Chambers or Howard Scott – c; ? George Brashear – tb; Don Redman and ? another – as; Fletcher Henderson – p; Charlie Dixon – bj

- BGR*4: poss Elmer Chambers or Howard Scott – c; poss George Brashear – tb; poss Don Redman – sax; poss Ernest Elliott or Billy Fowler – sax; Fletcher Henderson – p; Charlie Dixon – bj

035 THOMAS MORRIS PAST JAZZ MASTERS		New York,	Apr. 1923
unknown, Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; (Happy Caldwell) – ten;			
Charles "Smitty" Smith – pno; unknown (Will 'Splivey' Escoffery) – bjo			
71531-C	<i>Lonesome Journey Blues</i>	OK 4867,	Chronological Classics 823
71532-B	<i>When The Jazz Band Starts To Play</i>	OK 4867,	Chronological Classics 823

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 with his comment re Elliott's saxophone playing (see below) 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.

Notes

- Rust*2: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; unknown, ts; Willie 'The Lion' Smith, p; Buddy Christian, bj.

- Rust*3: Tom Morris, Bubber Miley, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; unknown, ts; unknown, p; unknown bj "Contrary to previous statements and suggestions, the pianist on these records is neither Willie "The Lion" Smith (who denies all knowledge of them and in any case was not in New York at the time) nor Clarence Williams."

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

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

- Bushell/Tucker, JFTB p 158: "But I never heard Ernest Elliott play saxophone. "

036 BESSIE SMITH	her Down Home Boys	New York,	Apr. 11, 1923
Bessie Smith – voc;			
Ernest Elliott – clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo			
80949-3	<i>Aggravatin' Papa</i>	Col A3877,	Frog DGF 40
80950-2	<i>Beale Street Mama</i>	Col A3877,	Frog DGF 40
Note: Additional titles of this session do not have Elliott and Christian!			

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

Notes:

- Rust*3,*6: ?Ernest Elliott – clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 - BGR*4: prob Ernest Elliott – cl; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 - T. Lord, Clarence Williams p 40: probably Ernest Elliott – clt; Clarence Williams – pno; probably Buddy Christian - bjo
 - E. Brooks, *The Bessie Smith Companion* p.9: "The first two numbers from this session are marred by the unsubtle clarinet of (probably) Ernest Elliott. There is little to be said in his favour except perhaps that he had the luck to be present on Mamie Smith's recording of 'Crazy Blues' (very probably not! – KBR) on 10th August, 1922 – the first of its genre. As the only horn on 'Aggravatin' Papa', he would have been the natural choice to provide the antiphony at the end of the vocal lines; fortunately someone's good taste prevailed and we find Bessie herself providing many of the responses at these points."
 - *ibid.* p.11: "In 'Aggravatin' Papa', whilst the banjo is at least competent and stylistically acceptable, the clarinet seems to come from the world of the dance-band; its improvisations, if that is what they are, are unsubtle and stilted. The superficiality of Elliott's ideas in fact tempt one to argue that the aural breadth of Bessie Smith's voice make anything more than a piano unnecessary."
 - *ibid.* p.11: "The quality of the accompaniment is much the same as in the previous piece ('Beale Street Mama' – KBR) except that the clarinet's wailing glissandi would be even more at home in one of the novelty records of the period."

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

The trumpeter/cornetist could be a youthful June Clark (this is my personal assumption or even guess!). His style cannot be attributed to any other early Harlem trumpet player of that quality. He certainly is not Thomas Morris! Just the same, the trombone player is not Irvis. The little clarinet playing heard is strong and sounds to be "Western". There are none of Elliott's characteristic horrible pitch variations. What can be heard from the alto sax player is unattributable. As Bob Rickett is listed as band leader it must be him on piano. He strongly leads the band from the piano. The banjo could be Buddy Christian here as listed, but certainly not Elmer Snowden. And there seems to be drummer as can be heard from the strong rhythm and a well-placed cymbal crash in the middle of 'Tired O' Waitin' Blues'. As Bob Ricketts belonged to the Clarence Williams agency the musicians heard here might have been chosen from the Clarence Williams stable.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4,*6: possibly Tom Morris -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Ernest Elliott -cl; Bob Fuller -as; Bob Ricketts -p; Buddy Christian or Elmer Snowden -bj.
 - BGR*2,*3,*4: poss personnel: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ernest Elliott, clt; unknown alt; Bob Ricketts, pno; Buddy Christian or Elmer Snowden, bjo.

KBR: could be early J. Clark, just as B. Rickett's band recording, no sign of Irvis, bjo straight four-beat, sound reminds of Christian, there is a drummer!

JK: Not Morris, not Miley, same man as on 001.

DB: as received. Technically better E.coast cornet. Sounds more like 002 than 001 to me but probably different from both.

MR: The players here are almost impossible to identify due to the recording quality and comparative lack of solo playing.

038 LENA WILSON Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools	New York,	c. late Apr. 1923
Lena Wilson – voc;		
Gus Aiken - tpt; Gene Bud Aiken or (Herb Flemming)- tbn; Garvin Bushell - clt;		
Leroy Tibbs or (Charlie "Smitty" Smith) - pno; Sam Speed - bjo		
1378-2	Here's Your Opportunity	Pm 12042 not on LP/CD
1378-3	Here's Your Opportunity	Pm 12042, Timeless CBC 1-073
1379-3	Memphis, Tennessee	Pm 12042, Timeless CBC 1-073

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See my Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools Discography (N&N 70).

039 FLETCHER HENDERSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA	New York,	May 01, 1923
Elmer Chambers, Joe Smith - tpt; George Brashear – tbn;		
Don Redman, Ernest Elliott – alt, clt; Billy Fowler – ten;		
Fletcher Henderson – pno; Charlie Dixon – bjo		
1392-1	Beale Street Mama	Pur 11226 not on LP/CD
1392-2	Beale Street Mama	Pm 20226, Chronological Classics 794
1393-1	Don't Think You'll Be Missed	Pm 20226 not on LP/CD
1393-2	Don't Think You'll Be Missed	Pm 20226, Chronological Classics 794
1393-3	Don't Think You'll Be Missed	Pm 20226 not on LP/CD, but held

It seems that Elliott is the alto soloist in 'Beale Street Mama' because of tone, vibrato and stylistics. He is not the clarinetist! This is very probably Redman. Then there is this unusual tenor or c-melody saxophonist doing the breaks in the alto solo of 'Beale Street Mama' in Benny Krueger style. He is not the second alto player as Allen suggests, but a tenor/c-melody player owning tone, attack and technical

proficiency as only Hawkins might have had it in this early jazz days. And the saxophone sound definitely is Hawkins'. Hawkins is known for doing everything asked of him show-wise. But the recording date seems to be much too early for Hawkins participating. He very probably was in New York at this time free-lancing. If so, this Krueger imitation might have been a big joke for him. The second title is dominated by these 'Krueger' triplets, and it is obvious that the tenor/c-melody man is doing them. So, may it be concluded that Hawkins' personal record needs to be re-written!? Garvin Bushell heard him at about this time and recalled: "New York had never heard anything like him. He didn't, as was the custom then, play the saxophone like a trumpet or clarinet. He was also running chages then, because he'd studied the piano as a youngster. As for soul, he had soul, but it was less on the blues side. He had a lot of finesse." (Chilton, *The Song of the Hawk*, p.20)

Elmer Chambers is on first cornet and certainly Joe Smith on second, doing a crazy imitation of Hawkins' (?) Benny Krueger joke. Brashear may be on trombone and Dixon is definitely on banjo.

Notes:

- Allen, *Hendersonia* p 54: prob Russell Smith, Elmer Chambers – t; George Brashear ?– tb; Don Redman, unknown – cl-as; unknown, ts; Fletcher Henderson – p; prob Charlie Dixon – b. "Don Redman has heard these two titles and disclaimed his own presence, but the clarinetist at least sounds like his other work. The alto sax soloist is the same Benny Krueger-style man as on 'Long Lost Mama' (St. Louis Syncopators, late March 1923, *Olympic 1436-B*, as for Rust*6 probably not Henderson – KBR)"

- Rust*2: prob similar to: Joe Smith, Elmer Chambers and/or Howard Scott, tpt; Teddy Nixon, tbn; Edgar Campbell, clt; Don Redman, clt, alt; unknown, ten; Billy Fowler, bar; Fletcher Henderson, pno; Charlie Dixon, bjo; Ralph Escudero, bbs

- Rust*3: Joe Smith, Elmer Chambers and/or Howard Scott, tpt; Teddy Nixon, tbn; Edgar Campbell, clt; Don Redman, clt, alt; unknown, ten; Billy Fowler, bar; Fletcher Henderson, pno; Charlie Dixon, bjo; Kaiser Marshall, dms

- Rust*4: Russell Smith, Elmer Chambers – t; ?George Brashear – tb; Don Redman – cl-as; unknown, ts; Fletcher Henderson – p; Charlie Dixon – bj

- Rust*6: Russell Smith, Elmer Chambers – t; George Brashear – tb; Don Redman – cl-as; unknown, ts; Fletcher Henderson – p; Charlie Dixon – bj

Discernible differences of takes:

Beale Street Mama:

as take -1 of this title has not been reissued, nothing can be said about differences of takes!

Don't Think You'll Be Missed -1: last chorus bars 25/26 tpt breaks: each break starting with an upward triplet (the second somewhat fluffed)

Don't Think You'll Be Missed -2: last chorus bars 25/26 tpt breaks: first break with upward triplet, second break starting with eighth note and subsequent fourth note – no triplet here

Don't Think You'll Be Missed -3: as take -3 of this title has not been reissued, nothing can be said about differences of this take.

040 **EVA TAYLOR** Clarence Williams' Blue Five New York, c. May 04, 1923
Eva Taylor – voc;

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

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

71499-A Farewell Blues

OK 3055 (12"),

Doc DOCD-5408

71500-A Gulf Coast Blues

OK 12" unissued

not on LP/CD

Aural evidence supports Elliott's presence.

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

Notes:

- Lord, *Clarence Williams* p 48: Thomas Morris – cnt; prob Charlie Irvis –tbn; Ernest Elliott –clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian –bjo.

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

- Rust*6: Tom Morris – c; ?Charlie Irvis –tb; ?Ernest Elliott –cl; unknown –as; Clarence Williams – p; Buddy Christian –bj.

- BGR*4: Tom Morris – c; prob Charlie Irvis –tb; prob Ernest Elliott –cl; Clarence Williams – p; Buddy Christian –bj.

041 **BOB RICKETTS' BAND** New York, c. May 14, 1923

(June Clark?) – cnt; unknown – tbn;

(Ernest Elliott?) – clt, alt; unknown – ten;

Bob Ricketts – pno; unknown – bjo; unknown – dms

8368 Mean, Mean Mama

Gnt 5156,

Frog DGF 73

8369-A If You Want To Keep Your Daddy Home

Gnt 5156,

Frog DGF 73

This seems to be almost the same personnel as on the Viola McCoy coupling of April 26, 1923 above.

Clarinet/alto sax is possibly played by Ernest Elliott, bearing his above stated stylistic elements, yet not very apparent as he mainly has to play his written parts. There is another reed player on tenor sax.

The very prominent trumpet may be a youthful June Clark (my "educated" guess). We hear a second rate trombone player who is impossible to identify. The same applies to the banjo player and the drummer.

Notes:

- Rust*2: unknown, t; unknown, tb; unknown, cl/as; Bob Ricketts, p; unknown, bj; perhaps other section men.

- Rust*3, *4, *6: unknown, t; unknown, tb; unknown, cl; unknown, as; Bob Ricketts, p; unknown, bj; unknown, d

042 **HENDERSON'S HOT SIX** New York, May 16, 1923

Elmer Chambers – cnt; George Brashear – tbn;

Don Redman – clt; Ernest Elliott – ten, clt;

Fletcher Henderson – pno; Charlie Dixon – bjo; unknown – bbs

81019 Gulf Coast Blues

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

81020 Your Time Now

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

As these titles are unissued and no tests seem to have been found nothing substantial can be said about musical contents or personnel. It has, yet, to be stated that Elliott does not play tenor sax anywhere on any title listed in this investigation, and that his participation can thus positively be excluded!

Notes:

- Rust*3: not listed

- Rust*4, *6: Elmer Chambers - cnt; George Brashear - tbn; Don Redman - clt; Ernest Elliott - ten, clt; Fletcher Henderson - pno; Charlie Dixon - bjo; unknown - bbs

- Allen, Hendersonia p. 55: unknown personnel, presumably including usual small-group instrumentalists of this period.

043 THE GULF COAST SEVEN

New York,

May 17, 1923

Gus Aiken - tpt; Eugene Bud Aiken - tbn;

Garvin Bushell - clt; unknown - ten;

Charlie "Smitty" Smith - pno; John Mitchell - bjo

81021-3

Fade Away Blues

Col A3916,

Timeless CBC 1-073

81022-3

Daybreak Blues

Col A3916,

Timeless CBC 1-073

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See my Gulf Coast Seven Discography (N&N 69).

044 EVA TAYLOR 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

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

Thomas Morris and Clarence Williams are undisputed. The banjo player seems to be stiffer than Christian and does not have his ringing sound, but might as well be him.

Notes:

- 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 p 49: 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!

045 EVA TAYLOR Clarence Williams' Blue Five

New York,

c. May 18, 1923

Eva Taylor - voc;

Thomas Morris - cnt; Charlie Irvis - tbn;

(Ernest Elliott?) - clt; unknown - alt;

Clarence Williams - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

71499-F

Farewell Blues

OK 3055 (12")

not on LP/CD

71500-F

Gulf Coast Blues

OK 3055 (12"),

Doc DOCD-5408

Elliott - if it is he on this side - plays very restrained clarinet, at times reminding of Sidney Bechet. No wonder that Bechet has been listed as clarinetist in an early Bechet discography for this session. Unfortunately, the sound of this title on my CD reissue leaves much to be desired, and it is hard to find out where the clarinet plays at all. Listening to a much better copy held does not reveal a clearer insight, only that the very few notes played by the clarinetist do not give any hint to Elliott. Instead, this man only plays pre-arranged parts, mainly together or in harmony with the alto sax. Which certainly makes Elliott's presence rather doubtful as he usually is not restrained with his playing.

An alto sax plays a simple ostinato throughout this issued side. This player remains in the background and can therefore not be identified at all.

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

Notes:

- Charters/Kunstadt, Jazz A History of the New York Scene p 228: Tommy Morris, cornet; Charlie Irvis, trombone; "Sticky" Elliott, clarinet; Clarence Williams, piano; Buddy Christian, banjo;

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 48: Thomas Morris - cnt; prob Charlie Irvis -tbn; Ernest Elliott -clt; unknown -alt; Clarence Williams - pno; Buddy Christian -bjo.

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

- Rust*6: Tom Morris - c; ? Charlie Irvis -tb; ? Ernest Elliott -cl; unknown -as; Clarence Williams - p; Buddy Christian -bj. (The following session (this one - KBR) fits at this point in the discography, as pointed out by Tom Lord in his Clarence Williams discography. The personnel for the next two titles is undoubtedly the same as for the previous session (c. May 17, 1923 above - KBR), suggesting they were either all made on the same date or on two separate dates on consecutive days.)

- BGR*4: Tom Morris - c; prob Charlie Irvis -tb; prob Ernest Elliott -cl; Clarence Williams - p; Buddy Christian -bj.

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 48: 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!

046 THOMAS MORRIS PAST JAZZ MASTERS

New York,

May 1923

Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris - cnt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; unknown - alt, clt;

Charles "Smitty" Smith - pno; unknown - bjo

71582-B

Just Blues, That's All

OK 8075,

Chronological Classics 823

71583-C

Bull Blues (E Flat No. 1 Blues)

OK 8075,

Chronological Classics 823

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See N&N 49 p 25!

047 **HENDERSON'S HOT SIX** New York, Jun. 07, 1923
 Elmer Chambers - tpt; Ernest Elliott – alt, clt; unknown – ten;
 Fletcher Henderson – pno; *Charlie Dixon* – bjo; *Billy Fowler* - bsx
 81019-4 Gulf Coast Blues Col A3951, Chronological Classics 794

Clarinet playing throughout (clarinet solo!) has all Elliott's characteristics and seems well to be him (contrary to Redman's statement, but in my opinion!). There is no trace of Redman on this side, in case he is not on tenor sax!
 Trumpet/cornet is well in Chambers' capability. A trombone is inaudible and its presence – also numerically – unlikely. The other reedman - on tenor sax - stays in the background and shows no individual traces whatsoever. He is impossible to identify. Rhythm section seems to be as given.

Notes:

- Allen, *Hendersonia* p 65: *Elmer Chambers, cornet; poss a trombone; Don Redman, clarinet/alto sax; poss Ernest Elliott, alto/tenor sax; Fletcher Henderson, p, poss Charlie Dixon, bj; poss Billy Fowler, bass sax.* „I am certain that both sides ARE by a Fletcher Henderson pickup unit, from familiarity with his other work. Don Redman has also heard this record, and stated that it was a typical Henderson item of the day, with himself soloing on the clarinet and Chambers playing lead cornet. The low-register cornet breaks on 'Midnight Blues', however, do not sound typical of Chambers but more like Joe Smith, but I honestly cannot hear two cornets playing at once. The trombonist sounds like a different man than before, and may be Teddy Nixon whom Redman remembers; if present on 'Gulf Coast Blues', he is practically inaudible.”

- Rust*2: (all) unknown tpt, tbn, clt/alt, alt, pno, bjo, bbs. “Controversy still centres on whether this group is connected with the orchestra led by Fletcher Henderson. He may have been the pianist and/or arranger, but the band as a whole does not suggest his band of the period, or a part of it.”

- Rust*3: ?Bubber Miley- another- c; unknown - tb; Ernest Elliott- cl- as; unknown- as; unknown- ts; unknown- p; unknown- bj; unknown- bb.

- Rust*4: Elmer Chambers, c; ?George Brashear, tb; Don Redman, cl; Ernest Elliott, cl, ts; Fletcher Henderson, p, Charlie Dixon, bj; unknown, bb.

- Rust*6: Elmer Chambers, c; ?George Brashear, tb; Don Redman, cl, as, arr; unknown, as; unknown, ts; Fletcher Henderson, p, Charlie Dixon, bj; unknown, bb

048 **HENDERSON'S HOT SIX** New York, Jun. 11, 1923
 Elmer Chambers, Joe Smith -cnt; Teddy Nixon – tbn;
 Don Redman – clt; Coleman Hawkins – ten;
 Fletcher Henderson – pno; *Charlie Dixon* – bjo; *Billy Fowler* - bsx
 81071-2 Midnight Blues Col A3951, Chronological Classics 794

There are two reed players only present. The clarinetist is very probably Don Redman, and not Elliott as assumed earlier by part of our listening group. The tenor sax player has Hawkins' tone and approach – although not his later power - and there seems to be little doubt as to his presence. W.C. Allen does not list him for this session! As stated earlier did Elliott very certainly not play tenor sax.

I do not hear any alto saxist on this session.

The brass team has Chambers in first chair and obviously Joe Smith on beautiful muted second cornet. The trombonist may be Nixon as listed by Allen. The rhythm team is certainly the same as before.

It seems that we find part of Mamie Smith's earlier accompanying band here. According to the sources Hawkins was in New York off and on in 1923 and would probably have been engaged by Henderson for recording purposes from mid 1923 on, although he became a band member not before January 1924.

Which leaves me to state that I am not necessarily sharing Allen's opinions and statements, and that it seems to be an urgent task to examine all the early pre-Armstrong Hendersons!

Notes:

- Allen, *Hendersonia* p 66: *Elmer Chambers, poss Joe Smith, cornets; poss Teddy Nixon, trombone; Don Redman, clarinet/alto sax; poss Ernest Elliott, alto/tenor sax; Fletcher Henderson, p, prob Charlie Dixon, bj; poss Billy Fowler, bass sax.* „I am certain that both sides ARE by a Fletcher Henderson pickup unit, from familiarity with his other work. Don Redman has also heard this record, and stated that it was a typical Henderson item of the day, with himself soloing on the clarinet and Chambers playing lead cornet. The low-register cornet breaks on 'Midnight Blues', however, do not sound typical of Chambers but more like Joe Smith, but I honestly cannot hear two cornets playing at once. The trombonist sounds like a different man than before, and may be Teddy Nixon whom Redman remembers; if present on 'Gulf Coast Blues', he is practically inaudible.”

- Rust*2: (all) unknown tpt, tbn, clt/alt, alt, pno, bjo, bbs. “Controversy still centres on whether this group is connected with the orchestra led by Fletcher Henderson. He may have been the pianist and/or arranger, but the band as a whole does not suggest his band of the period, or a part of it.”

- Rust*3: ?Bubber Miley- another- c; unknown - tb; Ernest Elliott- cl- as; unknown- as; unknown- ts; unknown- p; unknown- bj;

unknown- bb. It has been suggested that Joe Smith is the second cornetist on the next (this one – KBR) title; one of the saxes plays as also.
 - Rust*4: Elmer Chambers, c; ? George Brashear, tb; Don Redman, cl; Ernest Elliott, cl, ts; Fletcher Henderson, p, Charlie Dixon, bj; unknown, bb.

- Rust*6: Elmer Chambers, c; ?George Brashear, tb; Don Redman, cl, as, arr; unknown, as; unknown, ts; Fletcher Henderson, p, Charlie Dixon, bj; unknown, bb

049 **ETHEL RIDLEY** Bradford's Jazz Phoools New York, Jun. 26, 1923
 Ethel Ridley – voc;
 unknown – tpt; (Calvin Jones?) – tbn;
 unknown – alt; unknown – ten, clt;
 (Leroy Tibbs ?) – pno; unknown - bjo
 28234-2 Memphis, Tennessee Vic 1911, Doc DOCD-5353
 28235-3 If Anybody Here Wants A Real Kind Mama (Here's Your Opportunity) Vic 1911, Doc DOCD-5353

Not Elliott although listed in the past! See N&N 70 p 32.

050 GULF COAST SEVEN	New York,	Aug. 07, 1923
<i>(Elmer Chambers?), Bubber Miley – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn;</i>		
<i>(Julian Baugh?) – clt; (Ernest Elliott) – alt;</i>		
<i>Perry Bradford – pno; (Elmer Snowden ?) – bjo</i>		
81168-2	Papa, Better Watch Your Step	Col A3978, Frog DGF 56
81169-2	Memphis, Tennessee	Col A3978, Frog DGF 56

On alto we do possibly hear Ernest Elliott with his “sour” sound caused by his continued down and upward smears. He plays alto here, not tenor as listed (I do not know any instance Elliott playing tenor!). He is not Brassfield as listed before, because Brassfield was in England with Dunn and the Will Vodery band.

Walter C. Allen’s remark in RR 75 that Johnny Dunn was in England from May to September 1923, and can therefore not be present on this session, raises calamities. This, because Gus Aiken also cannot be the trumpeter as he was in Cuba at the time! And I was certain to hear Dunn as one of the trumpet players. So, Dunn and Aiken must be excluded.

There is a first trumpet player who leads the ensemble in the beginnings of the tunes. This man shows similarities of tone and rhythm with a clear diction to Fletcher Henderson’s lead trumpet man Elmer Chambers. Hear his 6/8 time delivery of eighth-notes! Then there is a second man who seems to be Bubber Miley. He can be heard behind the first player adding fills and breaks and is possibly the man who plays the introduction of the first title. He starts the reed chorus with a typical growl tone and later plays the breaks in this chorus as well as the coda. The trumpet break in the last chorus of ‘Papa, Better ...’ might be shared by both men, Miley playing the second break. In ‘Memphis, Tennessee’ we hear both trumpeters, Miley in foreground in the first chorus. He is dominating the whole performance. Miley, by the way, recorded with Thomas Morris’ Past Jazz Masters again on the same day for OKeh.

The trombone player possesses the same technique and taste as we have heard on the first session above, and therefore seems to be Bud Aiken. Bud did not accompany his brother on the Cuba tour, but stayed behind. He became a member of the Gonzelle White entourage some time later. I feel unable to follow Bushell’s statement that this “*is not Buddy’s sound at all!*”

The prominent clarinetist is listed as Buster Bailey in Rust*2, but lacks Bailey’s almost classical tone and owns a very distinct vibrato instead and a sharp diction. In any case, there is a certain New Orleans or even Doddsian flavour to his playing. But Bailey also seems to be ruled out by the appearance of a slap-tongue break in the second title. And, as Walter C. Allen writes, “*I doubt if Buster Bailey would have been in New York this early, although he had already recorded with Mamie Smith (according to his own recollection) in February 1921. He was primarily based in Chicago during this period.*” Bailey on his assumed first recordings with the Sunset Band (reissued on FROG DGF 28) of about the same time as this session, sounds like Bailey of later years and is definitely very different from our man here in question. He is not Bushell either (see below). Even with the help of Dave Brown and Michael Rader I have found myself unable to offer an appropriate name for this musician. ADDITION 140911: Allen, Hendersonia p. 33/34: “*An unidentified clarinetist, with a fine ensemble sense and a tone that reminds one of Dodds (I am sure, however, that it was NOT Dodds), whom I tentatively identify as Clarence Robinson, is present on certain sessions. It does not sound like Garvin Bushell.*”

The pianist seems to be another person as on the foregoing session. He is very busy, plays a lot of notes in Dunn’s double-time style which simply are not functional at any rate. He probably is Mr. Perry Bradford himself.

Whereas John Mitchell plays strict four-bar beat in ensemble and his artistic tremolo gimmicks in breaks, this banjo player does not refrain from tremoloing most of the time and even loosing the beat in his solo breaks. So, Mitchell can be excluded, and Elmer Snowden (not Sam Speede!) could be the man because of the affinity to the early Snowden/Ellington band..

Notes: For this session Rust listed the following personnel in his successive editions:

- Rust*2 (corrected): Johnny Dunn, Gus Aiken (cnts); ? Herb Flemming (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt); Ernest Elliott (clt/alt); Perry Bradford or Leroy Tibbs (pno); John Mitchell or Gus Horsley (bjo).

- Rust*3, *4, *6: Gus Aiken, unknown - c; Bud Aiken - tb; ? Garvin Bushell - cl; Ernest Elliott - cl - ts; Leroy Tibbs - p; Sam Speed or John Mitchell - bj.

- Bushell/Tucker: “*There are a lot of bad notes in there, because we were reading. This is a pretty bad recording. Again, it sounds like Johnny Dunn to me on cornet. The clarinet doesn’t sound like me; I never had that vibrato. This could be George Brashear on trombone, it’s not Buddy’s sound at all. The arrangement could be by Qualli Clark.*”

- John Mitchell, interviewed by Harold Flaksler and Carl Kendziora, Jr. named (RR 73): Gus Aiken (only !), trumpet; Earl Granstaff, trombone; Bob Fuller and Ernest Elliott, reeds; Perry Bradford, piano.

- Walter C. Allen’s personnel in RR 75: two unknown tpts; unknown, tbn; poss Garvin Bushell, poss Bob Fuller or Ernest Elliott, prob Perry Bradford, poss Sam Speed

051 THOMAS MORRIS PAST JAZZ MASTERS	New York,	Aug. 07, 1923
<i>Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris – cnt; unknown – tbn; unknown - clt;</i>		
<i>Charles “Smitty” Smith – pno; unknown – bjo; unknown - bbs</i>		
71739-B	Those Blues	OK 4940, Chronological Classics 823
71740-B	Beaucoupe de Jazz (Lots Of Jazz)	OK 4940, Chronological Classics 823

Other than I have written in my article in Names & Numbers 49, where I have named Elliott as the possible clarinetist, I do not think now that we have Elliott on clarinet here. This player does not have the smears and slurs so typical for Elliott, our man here definitely has better pitch and is able to play sixteenth notes and runs. But I still maintain that he is a first-class player and very Dodds-ish. Unfortunately, no name comes to mind or has ever been assumed other than Elliott.

For the other players, see Names & Numbers 49.

Very probably not Elliott although listed in the past! See N&N 49 p 26!

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

There is no reed player on these sides, as has been heard a long time ago. So no need to discuss Elliott as listed in Rust*3.

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

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

Notes:

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

053 EDNA HICKS	Porter Grainger's Sawin' Three	New York,	late Dec. 1923
Edna Hicks – voc;			
unknown – tpt; Ernest Elliott – clt, alt; Porter Grainger – pno			
1629-2	Hard Luck Blues	Pm 12023,	Doc DOCD-5431
1629-3	Hard Luck Blues	Pm 12023	not on LP/CD
1630-2	I Don't Love Nobody So I Don't Have No Blues	Pm 12023,	Doc DOCD-5431
1631-1	Cemetery Blues	Pm 12089	not on LP/CD
1631-2	Cemetery Blues	Pm 12089,	Doc DOCD-5431
1632-2	Poor Me Blues	Pm 12089,	Doc DOCD-5431
1632-3	Poor Me Blues	Pm 12089	not on LP/CD

When listening to these titles it immediately becomes apparent, that they make a perfect example of Elliott's style and performance! But Rust *6 lists Hooks Tilford as reed man! So, where does this information come from? Can anybody tell me?

It has proved to be impossible to find out any connection between Hooks Tilford and Edna Hicks from any Storyville issue. Storyville 2002/3 features a list of Edna Hicks' documented engagements, but nothing is said of Hooks Tilford at the appropriate place. Tilford mainly was busy in the jug band scene of Louisville, Kentucky, but he also accompanied Ma Rainey on a couple of sides in 1925. It is not documented that he ever reached New York City, although this certainly cannot be excluded. Tilford's activities in 1923 are not documented anywhere. Comparison of Tilford's style as shown on Ma Rainey's 1925 recordings to these Hicks titles show remarkable differences which do not allow to list him as performer here. And certainly, this player definitely is not Don Redman!

On piano we certainly have Mr. Grainger, the group's leader, whose piano playing is absolutely compatible with Grainger's known style.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948/1963: Elmer Chambers (tp); Buster Bailey (cl); Fletcher Henderson (p).*
- *Jazz Directory Vol. 4: unknown cnt; unknown clt; unknown sax; Porter Grainger, pno.*
- Rust*3,*4: ?Elmer Chambers -c; Don Redman -cl; Porter Grainger -p
- BGR*2,*3: unknown cnt; unknown alt, sop; Porter Grainger, pno.
- BGR*4: unknown, c; unknown, ss (1,2), as (3,4); Porter Grainger, pno.
- Rust*6: ?Elmer Chambers -c; Hooks Tilford -cl; Porter Grainger -p

054 VIRGINIA LISTON	her Jazz Trio	New York,	c. Jan. 07, 1924
Virginia Liston – voc;			
Harry Cooper – tpt; Prince Robinson – alt;			
Graham Jackson – pno			
72258-D	I Don't Love Nobody	OK 8138,	Document DOCD-5446
72259-D	Tain't A Doggone Thing But The Blues	OK 8138,	Document DOCD-5446

Copying the Harry Cooper biography in 'Who's Who of Jazz' I learned of Cooper's first recordings with Virginia Liston in New York. This then caused my immediate listening to Liston's session of c. Jan. 07, 1924. And indeed, the trumpet player should well be Harry Cooper by his tone, his attack, his vibrato and his overall musical concept. Clarence Williams certainly is not the pianist, but the group's personnel is recounted by Harry Cooper naming Graham Jackson as pianist (see below). The altoist's sweet and smooth performance then has to be played by the young Prince Robinson, yet not on clarinet or tenor sax, but on alto sax. These musicians later formed the Seminole Syncopators on a permanent basis.

Our listening-group's earlier assumption as to the personnel of this session is as follows. We have to revoke this statement!

In our article 'The Cornet Screamer' in the Frog Blues & Jazz Annual Vol. 3 Michael Rader and I - together with our listening group - have attributed this session to trumpet player Gus Aiken's mostly unrecognized and thus underestimated work. Lacking any clearly documented recordings of Aiken after his return from Cuba in December 1923 we found a whole series of recordings by an unknown trumpet player who most probably is our man Gus Aiken. This is the first recording by this "unknown" trumpet player in the row. The series runs up consecutively to Clara Smith's coupling of July 30, 1927, and can even be continued for some few items. Aiken's musical and technical development can easily be followed by the list in our article.

Today, just after finishing a long evaluation of clarinetist Ernest Elliott's work on record, I detect that the reed man on this coupling with great certainty is Elliott himself, judging from the catalogue of stylistic devices listed in my Ernest Elliott discography compared with what can be heard here. The pianist certainly is not Williams, but Porter Grainger, a much looser and more virtuoso player than Clarence. Accordingly, this record does not belong to the long row of Clarence Williams recordings!

Notes:

- Storyville 15: unknown (cnt); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno). “The unknown cornet and alto players may be Thomas Morris and Bob Fuller respectively. The piano sounds somewhat unlike Williams' normal style but we are satisfied that this is he.”
- Lord, Clarence Williams p77: unknown (cnt); unknown (alt); poss Clarence Williams or Porter Grainger (pno) “The unknown cornet and alto players may be Thomas Morris and Bob Fuller respectively. The piano sounds somewhat unlike Williams' normal style, but the

team (Storyville team – KBR) is satisfied that it is he. However, in view of the composer credits for both compositions, I think the possibility of Porter Grainger as pianist should be considered.”

- Storyville 142-126, Ben Kragting Jr., Harry Cooper (1903-1961): “The band that accompanied Virginia Liston had Harry Cooper on trumpet, Prince Robinson on clarinet, piano player Graham Jackson, banjo player Bernard Addison and Happy Williams on drums.”
- BGR*2: poss Tom Morris, cnt; unknown, clt, alt; Clarence Williams, pno
- BGR*3,*4: unknown, c; unknown, as; poss Clarence Williams or Porter Grainger, p
- Rust*3: ? Tom Morris –c; unknown –cl –as; Clarence Williams –p
- Rust*4,*6: unknown –c; unknown –as; Clarence Williams or Porter Grainger –p

055 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 KansasCity 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 Missourians, Clarence Williams, Viola McCoy, George McClennon, 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

056 HAZEL MEYERS

New York, c. Jan. 1924

Hazel Meyers – voc;

Ernest Elliott – clt, alt; Porter Grainger – pno

31502 Mississippi Blues
 31503 The Man Ain’t Born Who Can Treat Me Like You Do

Ajax 17019, Doc DOCD-1005
 Ajax 17019, Doc DOCD-1005

These two titles – together with the following two titles by Clara Smith - show in an exemplary way Elliott’s style and performance both on clarinet and alto saxophone. They have been used as a measure for all recordings examined so far and will be used further on, although it has to be admitted that Elliott approved in later years. My description of Elliott’s “Stylistics” above is founded on these recordings. So, even without documented proof of Elliott’s presence here, we can be sure to hear him on these sides.

Porter Grainger is on piano.

Notes:

- Rust *3, *4, *6: Ernest Elliott, cl, as; Porter Grainger p

- BGR *2, *3, *4: Ernest Elliott, cl, as; Porter Grainger p

- W.R. Bryant, Ajax Records: Ernest Elliott (saxophone), Porter Grainger (piano). Accompanying personnel are listed on the labels.

057 CLARA SMITH

New York, Jan. 29, 1924

Clara Smith – voc;

Ernest Elliott – clt, alt; Charles A. Matson – pno

81508-1 Good Looking Papa Blues
 81509-1 You Don’t Know My Mind
 81509-4 You Don’t Know My Mind

Col 14026-D, Doc DOCD-5364
 Col 14013-D, Doc DOCD-5364
 Col unissued, Doc DOCD-T002

No doubt of Elliott’s presence here as he is documented on the record label. Everything said in my “Stylistics” proves right here. Charles Matson’s presence might be further proof for a connection of both men as shown above with ‘Matson’s Lucky Seven’.

Notes:

- all editions of *Rust* and *BGR* show the same accompaniment accordingly.

- *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*: Ernest 'Sticky' Elliott: "Good Looking Papa Blues (1924, Col. 14026D, which he recorded with Clara Smith, is an excellent example of Elliott's sensitive approach; he may be heard playing solo and obligato passages in a delicate, ethereal manner."

058 **IDA COX** Lovie Austin and her Blues Serenaders prob. New York, Feb. 1924
 Ida Cox – voc;
 unknown – tpt; unknown – tbn;
 unknown – clt; unknown – alt (ten?);
 unknown – pno; unknown – bjo
 1714-1 Blues Ain't Nothin' Else But! Pm 12212, Doc DOCD-5573
 1714-2 Blues Ain't Nothin' Else But! Pm 12212, Doc DOCD-5323

Of the reed players present on this session one plays clarinet throughout, very often in high register unheard of from Ernest Elliott and showing nothing of the stylistics I have found to be typical for Elliott. From my knowledge of Harlem clarinetists I'd say he is not Bob Fuller either. The other reed man plays an alto sax to my ears, not a tenor sax as listed in the various editions of *BGR*. But on alto we cannot hear any Elliott stylistics either. So, it seems that this is not an item of the Elliott list of recordings.

The trumpet player shows some influence from Bubber Miley, but is much too stiff and simple and unaggressive to be Bubber.

Nothing can be said about the very rudimentary playing of trombone, piano and banjo. So much so, that I cannot see or hear any references or relations to the group of musicians responsible for the various Ajax accompanying groups as Chris Hillman suggested (see below).

The whole aggregation seems to exist of second-rate musicians out of the vast number of musicians working in New York at the time who never had a chance to reach higher ranks and get their names known – if in fact this title was recorded in New York.

Notes:

- *Rust* *3,*4,*6: Tommy Ladnier-c; Jimmy O'Bryant –cl-ss; Arville Harris –cl-as; Lovie Austin –p; unknown –bj. Recorded in Chicago.

- *BGR* *2,*3,*4: unknown cnt; unknown clt; unknown ten; unknown tbn; unknown bjo; Lovie Austin pno. Recorded possibly in New York c. April 1924.

- *Storyville* 68 p 54: "Here we are quite confident that this is a New York recording in spite of being labelled thus. Chris Hillman suggests that this is similar to the groups recorded by Joe Davis for use on Ajax and other labels and, if this is so, suggests that Bubber Miley, Jake Frazier, Bob Fuller, Ernest Elliott, Louis Hooper, Cliff Jackson, and Elmer Snowden are among the names who might be considered."

059 **ETHEL FINNIE** Porter Grainger's Novel Three New York, c. Apr. 1924
 Ethel Finnie – voc;
 Joe Smith – cnt; (Ernest Elliott) – alt;
 Porter Grainger – pno
 31535 Don't Know And Don't Care Blues Ajax 17027, RST JPCD-1521-2

If we find Ernest Elliott on alto here, he must have been very retained on this session. We hear a couple of his characteristics, but not as much as usual, and this player could easily be another one, a legitimate player with better taste and better pitch. Elliott's presence cannot be definitely contradicted or excluded but is certainly very doubtful. Did he feel self-conscious in partnership with this beautiful and tasteful trumpet player/cornetist? And made this reach him better results and improve?

To list Joe Smith as cornetist here is what I would call a 'well educated guess', and I think it not to be off the mark. I believe to hear his smooth and soft tone together with remnants of his Johnny Dunn copying style of a year ago, mainly playing in the cornet's lower register, but already on his way to the style that made him famous - and the ladies moan and weep.

Grainger is documented on piano.

Notes:

- *Rust* *3: ? Joe Smith – cnt; ? Ernest Elliott – alt; Porter Grainger – pno

- *Rust* *4,*6: unknown, cnt; ? Ernest Elliott, alt; Porter Grainger, pno

- *BGR* *2: poss Joe Smith, cnt; poss Ernest Elliott, alt; Porter Grainger, pno; second unknown, alt; or one man playing both (now what does that mean? – KBR)

- *BGR* *3,*4: unknown, cnt; poss Ernest Elliott, alt; Porter Grainger, pno

- *W.R. Bryant, Ajax Records*: Porter Grainger (piano) with uncredited clarinet and saxophone (sic).

060 **KITTY BROWN** New York, c. May, 1924
 Kitty Brown, Leroy Morton – voc duet;
 unknown – clt; unknown – pno
 1782-2 He's Never Gonna Throw Me Down Pm 12223, Doc DOCD-5507
 1783-2 Keep On Going Pm 12223, Doc DOCD-5507

This beautiful clarinet player shows none of Elliott's short-comings – besides some smears - and plays a very tasteful clarinet accompaniment. He may be searched for in a group of seemingly Dodds-influenced players such as the mysterious Clarence Robinson.

The piano player is equally unidentifiable.

Notes:

- *Rust* *3,*4,*6: ? Ernest Elliott, clt; unknown, pno

- *BGR* *2,*3,*4 prob Ernest Elliott, clt; unknown, pno

061 **SARA MARTIN** Clarence Williams' Harmonizers New York, Jun. 04, 1924
 Sara Martin – voc;
 Peter Bocage (or Thomas Morris?) – cnt; (John Lindsey?) – tbn; (Lorenzo Tio, Jr.?) – sop;
 Clarence Williams – pno
 72592-B He's Never Gonna Throw Me Down OK 8154, Doc DOCD-5397

This possibly is not Thomas Morris as identified before but possibly Peter Bocage, and the trombone player definitely is not Irvis with his legato style! Instead he shows a somewhat dated staccato style using some triplet and sixth-eighth phrasing which is compatible with Aaron

Thompson's playing on the Red Onion Jazz Babies sides. But Clarence's relation to Aaron Thompson – then A. Russell Wooding's band manager and probably trombonist – did not begin until November 1924, the time of Thompson participating in the Red Onion Jazz Babies recordings.

Soprano playing has nothing of Elliott's characteristics and certainly the player is someone else trying to copy Bechet. Or is it clarinet? Because of the notes heard and what is said before I am tempted to assume the possible presence of John Lindsey and Lorenzo Tio here. Tio played clarinet and tenor sax in the Piron band and it would be very easy for him to switch over to soprano, the more so as Williams obviously was eager at the time to find a temporary substitute for Bechet – and he tried to provide possibilities to earn some money for the unemployed Piron men waiting for better times. But it still is not absolutely certain whether we hear a soprano here or a clarinet. What we can positively say is that we do not hear Elliott on this session.

I would follow Tom Lord in his suggestion as to banjo player or not (see below in the notes!).

Notes:

- Rust *3: Tom Morris - c; Charlie Irvis - tb; ? Ernest Elliott - ss; Clarence Williams - p; Buddy Christian - bj
- Rust *3,*4: Tom Morris - c; Charlie Irvis - tb; ? Ernest Elliott - ss; Clarence Williams - p; Buddy Christian - bj (some authorities say no bj used).
- Rust *6: Tom Morris - c; Charlie Irvis - tb; ? Ernest Elliott - ss; Clarence Williams - p;
- BGR *2: Thomas Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; poss Ernest Elliott, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo
- BGR *3,*4: Thomas Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; poss Ernest Elliott, sop; Clarence Williams, pno
- T. Lord, Clarence Williams p 92: Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); possibly Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno)

062 SIPPY WALLACE Clarence Williams' Harmonizers	New York,	c. Jun. 13, 1924
Sippie Wallace – voc;		
Peter Bocage or (Thomas Morris ?) – cnt; (John Lindsey?) – tbn; (Lorenzo Tio, Jr.?) – sop;		
Clarence Williams – pno		
72606-B	Sud Bustin Blues	OK 8177, Doc DOCD-5399
72607-B	Wicked Monday Morning Blues	OK 8177, Doc DOCD-5399

Just as with the foregoing session of Sara Martin we hear a soprano player who stylistically certainly is not Elliott, but a Bechet copyist. There is no musical comparison between Elliott and this much better musician, whose name is unknown today, but may be Lorenzo Tio again as with the session above..

Thomas Morris cannot be identified with certainty and this might as well be another player, possibly from the Piron band. The trombonist certainly is not Irvis, but could be John Lindsey of the Piron band instead. I am unable to hear a banjo. Clarence Williams is undoubted. In spite of the one-and-a-half week time interval this appears to be the same recording personnel, although not as lively and prickling as before, but this might also be caused by a different recording location and different placing of players.

Notes:

- Rust *3,*4,*6: Tom Morris, c; Charlie Irvis, tb; ? Ernest Elliott, cl; Clarence Williams, p; Buddy Christian, bj
- BGR *2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; poss Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo
- T. Lord, Clarence Williams p 93: Thomas Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); possibly Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno)

063 THE FOUR SPADES	New York,	Jun. 24, 1924
Lorenzo Tio, Jr. – clt; Bob Fuller – alt;		
Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo		
81840-3	Squabblin' Blues	Col 14028-D not on LP/CD
81841-3	Making Up Blues	Col 14028-D not on LP/CD

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

The alto player certainly is not Elliott as given in the various Rust editions. The playing does not have Elliott's characteristics as listed in "Stylistics" above. Instead I hear distinct parallels to Bob Fuller's saxophone playing on the Kansas City Five session of c. Nov. 1924, here on tenor sax, but showing the same unswinging, uninitiated and non-professional handling of the sax. Possibly these titles were Fuller's early or even first try-outs on the saxophone?!

Notes:

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 94: poss Lorenzo Tio (clt); Ernest Elliott (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "Recent research and listening has turned up the following (this one – KBR) session. It is listed in the Columbia files as Williams Instrumental Trio (sic), which lists this date. Rust *3 suggests Bob Fuller as the clarinetist. However, I feel that it may be Lorenzo Tio. The piano is well in the background, but sounds like Clarence. The presence of Christian is surmised."
- Rust*2: Bob Fuller (clt); Ernest Elliott (?) (alt); Lemuel Fowler (?) (pno); Buddy Christian (?) (bjo)
- Rust*3: Bob Fuller -cl; Ernest Elliott -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj. (Entered in the Columbia files as Williams Instrumental Four)
- Rust*4: Lorenzo Tio or Bob Fuller -cl; Ernest Elliott -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj. (CBS files list this as Williams Instrumental Four)
- Rust*6: Lorenzo Tio or Bob Fuller -cl; Ernest Elliott -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

064 LAURA SMITH Clarence Williams' Harmonizers	New York,	c. Aug. 01, 1924
Laura Smith – voc;		
Thomas Morris – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; Ernest Elliott -clt;		
Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo		
72719-B	Texas Moaner Blues	OK 8157, Doc DOCD-5429
72720-B	I'm Gonna Get Myself A Real Man	OK 8186, Doc DOCD-5429
72721-B	Has Anybody Seen My Man ?	OK 8157, Doc DOCD-5429

Morris and Williams are obvious. The banjo might be a bit too heavy to be Christian. But the trombonist very certainly is not Charlie Irvis with his legato trombone, but could rather be John Mayfield of the early Clarence Williams stable with his simple staccato style. There is little clarinet 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."
- Rust *3,*4,*6 Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo
- BGR *2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

064-1 HELEN GROSS Choo Choo Jazzers	New York,	Aug. 16-27, 1924
Helen Gross – voc; (Ernest Elliott?) – clt; (Sterling Conaway) – uke (1); unknown – kazoo (1); (Porter Grainger) – pno (2); unknown – speech, effects (2)		
31682	Death Letter Blues	Ajax 17067, Document DOCD-5477
31684	Crap Shootin' Blues	Ajax 17067, Document DOCD-5477

The titles have personnels as given above.

'Death Letter Blues' has a rather stiff clarinet player and ukulele and kazoo players. To identify Sterling Conaway as ukulele player is beyond my possibilities and his presence has to be questioned. I know him as a very busy banjo player in the Clef Club tradition – with many chords and glissandos – what can not be detected here. The ukulele accompaniment is far too sober and simple to be seen as by Conaway. What is the source of his name here?

Porter Grainger is not easy to be recognized and identified, and thus I have to question the reason for his being named. Fuller - if it is he - very stiff and uncreative here. Is this really Fuller on these sides? Only, if he wanted to be particularly simple on these sides.

Concludingly I would like to accentuate my opinion that almost none of the hitherto listed musicians are present: this clarinetist is much too primitive to be Fuller, Conaway plays in a very different manner, and only the pianist might be as named. After hearing session 028 I see the possibility of Ernest Elliott's presence on these two sessions.

Notes:

- RR 77/6, 86/6: not listed
- BGR*4: Bob Fuller, cl; prob Porter Grainger, p (2); unknown chimes & whistle(2); unknown kazoo (1); Sterling Conaway, uke (1); two unknown males, speech (2)
- Rust*6: Bob Fuller, cl; ? Porter Grainger, p; unknown chimes, whistle, kazoo where used; Sterling Conaway, uke (1); two unknown males, speech (2)

065 MARGARET JOHNSON Clarence Williams' Harmonizers	New York,	c. Sep. 05, 1924
Margaret Johnson – voc; Peter Bocage or Thomas Morris, Joe King Oliver – cnt; John Mayfield – tbn; unknown - ten; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian or (Charles Bocage?) – 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 9th.

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

- 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."

066 CLARA SMITH		New York,	Sep. 20, 1924
Clara Smith – voc;			
Ernest Elliott – clt, alt; Charles A. Matson – pno			
140052-1	The Basement Blues	Col 14039-D,	Doc DOCD-5365
140053-4	Mama's Gone, Goodbye	Col 14039-D,	Doc DOCD-5365

Elliott and Matson are documented on the record labels and are therefore to be taken for certain. All of Elliott's characteristics are here to be heard and studied. Matson's playing may serve as guide to his other recordings.

Notes:

- Rust *3, *4, *6: Ernest Elliott -cl, as; Charles A. Matson -p
 - BGR *2, *3, *4: Ernest Elliott, clt, alt; Charles A. Matson, pno

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

Crucial characteristics of Elliott's playing and style cannot be detected here, and from what can be heard I would deny his presence on this session. The clarinetist plays in a harmonically and rhythmically simple style different from Elliott's. But: I also feel unable to find any elements of the great Lorenzo Tio's style, and would therefore also exclude him from possibility as expressed in Rust*4 and *6.

Notes:

- Rust *3: Ernest Elliott – cl; Clarence Williams – p; Buddy Christian – bj; with Tom Morris – c (2,3), all as shown
 - Rust *4, *6: ? Lorenzo Tio – cl; Clarence Williams – p; Buddy Christian – bj
 - BGR *2, *3, *4: Ernest Elliott – clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 - Lord, Clarence William p 105: Ernest Elliott (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "While these dates are not exact, it is interesting to mention that the Chicago Defender for October 11, 1924 mentions that Ernest Elliott, "clarinet and saxophone expert is featured with the big time act 'Frisco'", in Chicago.

067-1 HELEN GROSS	Choo Choo Jazzers	New York,	c. Oct. 1924
Helen Gross – voc;			
(Ernest Elliott ?) - clt; unknown - pno			
31700	Bloody Razor Blues	Ajax 17071,	Document DOCD-5477
31701	Bloody Razor Blues	Ajax 17071	not on LP/CD

Same clarinet player as on session 024 and thus too primitive to be Fuller? He may possibly be Ernest Elliott. I hear some similarities to Elliott, but he very often starts his phrases with upward slurs to the first note. This is not here – except for the very last note of matrix 31700. On the other side the "sour" sound is apparent as is the very simple rhythm – he never plays eight notes, only quarter and half notes. This then would be hints to Elliott.

Also, the pianist is not Hooper. Piano playing reminds me of Clarence Williams!

Notes:

- RR 77/6, 86/6: Bob Fuller, clt; Louis Hooper, pno.
 - BGR*4: Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p.
 - Rust*6: Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p.

068 VIRGINIA LISTON		New York,	c. Oct. 25, 1924
Virginia Liston – voc;			
Ernest Elliott – clt; Clarence Williams – pno			
72937-B	Monkey Jungle Blues	OK 8247-B,	Doc DOCD-5446
72938-B	Night Latch Key Blues	OK 8196-A,	Doc DOCD-5447
72939-B	Any Day The Sun Don't Shine	OK 8196-A,	Doc DOCD-5447

The labels of OK 8196 list 'Clarinet by Sidney Bechet' and that of OK 8247 lists solely Clarence Williams as accompanist. These are very good examples of Ernest Elliott's 1924 style: some jumping-trills added to his earlier very sober quarter- and eighths-notes playing, but still his staccato rhythm and his bended smears up and down to the anchor-notes. And in 'Night Latch Key Blues' in the last bar of the vamp after the intro (i.e. bar six of the tune) a very sudden and hitherto never heard thirty-second-notes chordal arpeggio. In the sixth chorus a riff played in sixteenth-notes together with a succession of sixteenth arpeggios. Ernest Elliott really is developing. And beautiful Clarence on piano.

Notes:

- Rust *3: Ernest Elliott (not Sidney Bechet, despite the labels) -cl; Clarence Williams -p
 - Rust *4,*6: Ernest Elliott (not Sidney Bechet, despite the labels) -cl; Clarence Williams -p. (The label of OK 8247 gives the accompaniment as by Clarence Williams only.)
 - BGR *2: Ernest Elliott (not Sidney Bechet, despite the labels), clt; Clarence Williams, pno
 - BGR *3,*4: Ernest Elliott, clt; Clarence Williams, pno. The labels of Okeh 8196 credit the clarinet player as Sidney Bechet, but it is not Bechet in fact.
 - Tom Lord p.110 and L. Wright Okeh Race Records p.56: The label says: 'Clarinet by Sidney Bechet'! "(S. Bechet): "But the trouble with Clarence was that he would never give any of us credit on a date. I spoke to him about it and in the end he put my name on two dates: one of them I never played on at all (this one!), and the other -- that was a date with Virginia Liston -- he put down I played guitar (prob. Jan. 10, 1924). That's the reason why I left him in the end; and Louis, he had the same trouble, and he left, too."

069	CLARA SMITH	New York,	Dec. 16, 1924
	Clara Smith – voc;		
	Ernest Elliott – alt; Porter Grainger – pno; unknown - per		
140181-2	Steel Drivin' Sam	Col 14053-D,	Doc DOCD-5365
140182-1	He's Mine, All Mine	Col 14053-D,	Doc DOCD-5365

Typical and true Elliott here, even doubling the tempo on the second title, but his tone sounds even sourer than usual. Ground solid Porter Grainger. But the percussionist, who only beats some kind of anvil here – not the woodblocks - mostly in the wrong places, is a rhythmic disaster.

Notes:

- Rust *3: Ernest Elliott, alt; Porter Grainger, pno
 - Rust *4,*6: Ernest Elliott, alt; Porter Grainger, pno, with percussion effects on 140181-2
 - BGR *2: Ernest Elliott, alt; Porter Grainger, pno
 - BGR *3,*4: Ernest Elliott, alt; Porter Grainger, pno; unknown woodblocks (1)

070	CLARA SMITH	New York,	Dec. 20, 1924
	Clara Smith – voc;		
	(Don Redman), unknown – clt; Fletcher Henderson or Porter Grainger – pno		
140090	Broken Busted Blues	Col unissued	not on LP/CD
140200	Nobody Knows The Way I Feel This Morning	Col unissued	not on LP/CD

This record is unissued and test pressings apparently not existant. Neither side could be checked.

Notes:

- Rust*6: Cecil Scott, Don Redman, cl; Fletcher Henderson, p
 - BGR*4: Don Redman or Ernest Elliott or Buster Bailey – clt; Fletcher Henderson or Porter Grainger – pno

071	CHARLES AND EFFIE TYUS Clarence Williams' Trio	New York,	c. Jan. 18, 1925
	Charles Tyus, Effie Tyus – voc duet;		
	Buster Bailey (or Lorenzo Tio, Jr.?) – sop; Clarence Williams – pno; unknown (Buddy Christian) - bjo		
73113-A	I'm Funny 'Bout My Cookin', Baby	OK 8200,	Doc DOCD-5526
73114-A	Cuddle Up Close, It's Winter Time	OK 8200,	Doc DOCD-5526

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

Williams certainly is on piano. But there are traces in the banjo playing that I do not refer to Christian. But I am unable to name an alternate musician. Perhaps Charlie Bocage?

Notes:

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

072	JOSIE MILES	New York,	c. Jan. 26, 1925
	Josie Miles, Billy Higgins – voc;		
	Bob Fuller – alt (1,2), clt (3), sop (4); unknown – clt (1,2), alt (4);		
	Louis Hooper – pno; unknown – per, sounds (3)		
5327-1	Bitter Feelin' Blues	Ban 1498	not on LP/CD
5327-2	Bitter Feelin' Blues	Ban 1498,	Doc DOCD-5467
5328-2	Thunderstorm Blues	Ban 1498,	Doc DOCD-5467
5329-2	It's The Last Time I'll Be A Pastime For You	Ban 1499,	Doc DOCD-5467

'Bitter Feelin' Blues': There is a prominent alto sax player with a very fast vibrato, and I suggest this man as possibly Bob Fuller. This player is much too busy and technically accomplished to be Elliott. There are no Elliott's characteristics. This is a legato player, not Elliott's staccatos. There is a retained clarinetist with a larger vibrato, who also lacks any Elliott's characteristics.

'Thunderstorm Blues': Fuller might be clt, but has a very fast vibrato on these sides! These titles should be checked distinctly as to Fuller's presence. No second reed here! (Perhaps thesecond reed player is responsible for the "sounds"- cymbal crash, thunder, lightning and rain?)

'It's The Last Time ...': Intro alt and sop. The soprano player with his fast vibrato could be Fuller. The alto player should then be the rather mediocre clarinetist from the first side, who must remain unknown.

There certainly is no distinct indication of Ernest Elliott's presence on these sides!

Notes:

- Record Research #77: not listed
- Rust*3: unknown as; Bob Fuller -cl -as -ts; unknown ts; Louis Hooper -p
- Rust*4: Bob Fuller -cl -as; ? Ernest Elliott -as -ts; Louis Hooper -p
- Rust*6: Bob Fuller. cl, as; ? Ernest Elliott, as, ts; Louis Hooper, p
- BGR*2,*3,*4: unknown as; Bob Fuller -cl -as -ts; unknown ts; Louis Hooper -p

073 JOSIE MILES

New York,

Apr. 1925

Josie Miles - voc;

Bob Fuller - alt; unknown - ten/cms;

Louis Hooper - pno

5910-1 Low Down Daddy Blues

Ban 1534,

Doc DOCD-5467

The whole accompaniment is arranged for two sax players. Where the suggested names come from I do not know. From what I hear the identity of the second player (lower part - tenor sax?) is absolutely impossible to state. The first player certainly is Bob Fuller per vibrato. Hooper accepted.

Notes:

- Record Research #77: not listed
- BGR*4: Bob Fuller, unknown, as; Louis Hooper, p
- Rust*6: Bob Fuller - ? Ernest Elliott -as; Louis Hooper -p
- VJM 176, Bob Hitchens, Choo Choo Jazzers: "The second altoplays rather simply. Elliott was pretty good. Could it instead be Snowden on cms, more confident than on Ajax mx 31847, transposing and therefore keeping it simple?"

074 ORIGINAL JAZZ HOUNDS

New York,

Jul. 14, 1925

Thornton G. Brown - cnt; (Wilbur de Paris) - tbn;

(John Howell) - alt, clt; unknown - ten;

Perry Bradford - pno; Sam Speede (or Gus Horsley ?) - bjo

140760-1 'Fo' Day Blues

Col 14086-0,

FROG DGF56

140760-3 'Fo' Day Blues

Col 14086-0,

FROG DGF56

140761-2 1620 To 1865 (Uncle Eph's Dream)

Col 14086-0,

FROG DGF56

Certainly not Elliott although listed in the past! See N&N 68 p 7

075 ORIGINAL JAZZ HOUNDS

New York,

Aug. 11, 1925

Thornton G. Brown - cnt; (Wilbur de Paris) - tbn;

(John Howell?) - alt, clt; unknown - ten;

unknown (Quinton Redd?) - pno; Sam Speede (or Gus Horsley ?) - bjo;

Perry Bradford - voc; band - voc (2)

140840-2 I Ain't Gonna Play No Second Fiddle

Col 14094-D,

FROG DGF56

140841-3 Slow Down

Col 14094-D,

FROG DGF56

Certainly not Elliott although listed in the past! See N&N 68 p 7

076 ORIGINAL JAZZ HOUNDS

New York,

Aug. 12, 1925

Thornton G. Brown - cnt; (Wilbur de Paris) - tbn;

(John Howell?) - alt, clt; unknown - ten;

unknown (Quinton Redd?) - pno; Sam Speede (or Gus Horsley ?) - bjo

140846-2 Cannon Ball Blues

Col 14124-D,

FROG DGF56

140847-3 Vamping Lucy Long

Col 14124-D,

FROG DGF56

Certainly not Elliott although listed in the past! See N&N 68 p 7

077 MAGGIE JONES her Jazz Band

New York,

Sep. 17, 1925

Maggie Jones - voc;

Bob Fuller - clt;

Louis Hooper - pno; Elmer Snowden - bjo

140951-3 I'm A Back Bitin' Mama

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

140952-3 Dallas Blues

Col 14114-D,

Doc DOCD-5349

There has been some confusion about which take of 140951 had been issued or not. Earlier issues of Rust and BGR show 'I'm A Back Bitin' Mama' as recorded and issued from this date, recent issues have this title unissued, but re-recorded and issued on September 29.

As Elliott has been listed in the past for the September 17 session, only Dallas Blues is inspected here. Very certainly the clarinetist is Bob Fuller on this item. Elliott's presence can distinctly be excluded here.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4: Bob Fuller -cl -as; Ernest Elliott - as; Cliff Jackson -p; Elmer Snowden -bj

- Rust*6: Bob Fuller, cl, as; Louis Hooper, p; Elmer Snowden, bj
 - BGR*2: Bob Fuller, clt, alt; Ernest Elliott, alt; Cliff Jackson, pno; Elmer Snowden, bjo
 - BGR*3,*4: Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p; Elmer Snowden, bj, sax (1)

078	MAGGIE JONES	her Band (1) / her Jazzers (2,3)	New York,	Sep. 29, 1925
	Maggie Jones – voc; Bob Fuller – clt, alt; Louis Hooper – pno; Elmer Snowden – bjo, ten			
140951-4		I'm A Back-Bitin' Mama	Col 14127-D,	Doc DOCD-5349
140956-1		Single Woman's Blues	Col 14102-D,	Doc DOCD-5349
140957-2		Never Tell A Woman Friend	Col 14102-D,	Doc DOCD-5349

The first title is a re-recording of the September 17 session above. Nothing at any instance can be heard and identified as by Ernest Elliott. Instead, it is known by now that Elmer Snowden not only played banjo, but also the reeds. According to this fact it is apparent that Snowden is the tenor saxophonist, as the tenor can only be heard when the banjo is silent and vice-versa.

Hooper is undisputed by now, and Snowden can be identified by his banjo style. (His tenor performance is better than might be expected.)

Notes:

- RR 77: Fuller, Hooper, unknown tenor
 - Rust*3,*4: Bob Fuller – cl – as; Ernest Elliott – as; Cliff Jackson – p
 - Rust*6: Bob Fuller, cl, as; Louis Hooper, p; Elmer Snowden, bj
 - BGR*2: Bob Fuller – cl – as; Ernest Elliott – as; Cliff Jackson – p
 - BGR*3,*4: Bob Fuller – cl – as; Louis Hooper, p; Elmer Snowden, bj, as

079	CLARA SMITH		New York,	Nov. 10, 1925
	Clara Smith – voc; Ernest Elliott – clt, alt; Harry Stevens – bsx; Porter Grainger – pno			
141257-3		The Market Street Blues	Col 14108-D,	Doc DOCD-5366
141258-3		It Takes The Lawd (To Tell What's On My Mind)	Col 14108-D,	Doc DOCD-5366
141259		Caught You Triffin' Blues	Col unissued	not on LP/CD

All three accompanying musicians are named on the record label and their names can apparently be trusted. Only that Mr. Stevens does not play clarinet anywhere here.

What we hear on the first item is an improved Ernest Elliott on clarinet, more legato now than before, using some growl devices. On the second title he plays some corresponding alto sax, typical for Mr. Elliott.

In the intro of 'It Takes The Lawd' we hear alto, bass sax, piano, and obviously Clara Smith humming. This might have led to the bass saxophonist being listed as also playing clarinet. But definitely is there no clarinet parallel to Elliott on any title of this session, and the bass sax plays throughout both titles.

Porter Grainger is documented on the label.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Ernest Elliott – cl – as; Harry Stevens – cl – bsx; Porter Grainger – p
 - BGR*2: Ernest Elliott – clt, alt; Harry Stevens – clt, bsx; Porter Grainger – pno
 - BGR*3,*4: Ernest Elliott – clt, alt; Harry Stevens – bsx; Porter Grainger – pno

080	ALBERTA HUNTER	Perry Bradford's Mean Four	New York,	Jan. 1926
	Alberta Hunter – voc; Gus Aiken – tpt; unknown (Ernest Elliott) – clt, alt; Perry Bradford – pno			
73919-B		I'm Hard To Satisfy	OK 8294,	Doc DOCD-5424
73920-B		Empty Cellar Blues	OK 8315,	Doc DOCD-5424
73921-B		Double Crossin' Papa	OK 8294,	Doc DOCD-5424

The reed man is different now from the former Alberta Hunter session, much more expressive and distinct, and with a good tone. We hear a player using a lot of jumping-trills. He displays a wide vibrato and is confined to quarter and eighth notes with up- and downward slurs as used by Ernest Elliott. So, after listening critically a long time to Ernest Elliott's recordings, I tend to name him as a good possibility for this reed player here.

It is Gus Aiken here, showing good mute work and good technique all over. He has developed now into a first class trumpet player.

The unobtrusive but functional piano player probably is Mr. Bradford himself.

Notes:

- Rust *3, *4, *6: unknown c; unknown cl-as; unknown p.
 - BGR *2, *3,*4: unknown c; unknown cl/as; unknown p

081	LOUISE VANT	Perry Bradford's Mean Four	New York,	c. Jan. 15, 1926
	Louise Vant – voc; Gus Aiken – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn; unknown (Ernest Elliott) – clt, alt; Perry Bradford – pno			
73924-B		Just A Little Bit Bad	OK 8281,	Doc DOCD-5353
73925-B		I've Learned To Do Without You Now	OK 8293,	Doc DOCD-5353
73926-A		Want A Little Lovin'	OK 8281,	Doc DOCD-5353

The Aiken brothers seem to have become some sort of "house band" at Okeh's now, and we hear them both again under Perry Bradford's guidance. Gus Aiken and the reed man (possibly Ernest Elliott) from the last session, and that beautiful trombone player Eugene 'Bud' Aiken with his musical style, of which it is easily to recognize that he also performs as a trumpet player.

The pianist seems to be a bit better and stronger than Bradford, but it might as well be him, since he certainly did gain more experience on the keys in the run of time. In contrast to Rust and Godrich/Dixon I am unable to hear a banjo on these sides, and I am certain there isn't any.

Notes:

- Rust *3, *4, *6: unknown c; unknown tb; ? Perry Bradford p; unknown bj
- BGR *4: unknown c; unknown tb; presumably Perry Bradford p; unknown bj

082	LOUISE VANT	Perry Bradford's Mean Four	New York,	c. Mar. 18, 1926
	Louise Vant – voc;			
	Gus Aiken – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn; unknown (Ernest Elliott) – clt;			
	Perry Bradford – pno			
74055-A		Pensacola Blues	OK 8310,	Doc DOCD-5353
74056-A		New Crazy Blues	OK 8310,	Doc DOCD-5353

As it seems do we have the same accompanying musicians here. Just listen and compare! Assured Gus Aiken here, beautiful full-toned and harmonically exemplary Bud Aiken, and again the last heard clarinetist, who might possibly be Ernest Elliott. And the boss on piano. But then there certainly remains the mystery as to how Miss Vant could have been elected to record five recording sessions for a renowned record company such as Okeh.

These preceding three sessions have not been listed as containing Elliott in the discographies, but have been added by this author after repeated listening.

Notes:

- Rust *3, *4, *6: unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl; ? Perry Bradford p
- BGR *4: unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl; presumably Perry Bradford p

083	ELVIRA JOHNSON	Birmingham Darktown Strutters	New York,	c. Jun. 17, 1926
	Elvira Johnson - voc			
	Charlie Gaines – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; (Otto Hardwick) – sop;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo			
X-177		How Could I Be Blue?	Gnt 3337,	Document DOCD-5375
X-178		Numbers On The Brain	Gnt 3337,	Document DOCD-5375

There is a very agile soprano saxophone player on these sides who phrases much too “jazzy” to be Elliott, judging from everything we have heard from Elliott up to now. There really are no instances of anything I have written about his style in “Stylistics”. This player belongs to a better and more modern class of musicians and resembles in part Buster Bailey of the Clarence Williams Blue Five period. He uses many rhythmic and melodic devices of the “Armstrong” period and does thus not belong to Elliott's pre-Armstrong school. As there are not many – if at all? – distinct soprano players around in New York/Harlem, the identity of this man should be searched for among tenor saxophonists (Bb instrument!) of the time: Prince Robinson, Happy Caldwell and others come to mind. After relistening I believe that Otto Hardwick would be a well-suited candidate (28.06.2018)! Elliott may safely be excluded.

We can apparently be quite sure of Gaines' presence on these two sides as documented in Tom Lord's 'Clarence Williams'. Gaines also provided insights into Williams' modus operandi: Williams had contracts with a steady roster of musicians who were on call for recording sessions, both instrumental and blues accompaniments. I hear Gaines' straight and horizontal approach, more into rhythmic and staccato than melodic playing. He uses a cup mute here.

Charlie Gaines named Mike Jackson as pianist, not Clarence Williams. But there are not any musical hints as to Mike Jackson's presence here!

The other musicians as above, but it has to be recognized that possibly Irvis – if it is he – had a bad day. Too much booze?

Notes:

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

084	THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS SEVEN HOT BABIES		New York,	Jul. 13, 1926
	Thomas Morris, Ward Pinkett – tpt; Geechie Fields – tbn;			
	unknown – alt, clt, bar; Happy Caldwell – ten;			
	Marlow Morris or Mike Jackson – 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 1 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
(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 12 bars tpt TM)(Chorus 8 12 bars tbn GF)(Chorus 9 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

085 THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS SEVEN HOT BABIES

New York,

Aug. 17, 1926

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

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

Mike Jackson – pno; unknown (*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

086 THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York,

Aug. 27, 1926

Thomas Morris - cnt; Joe Nanton or Charlie Irvis - tbn; Bob Fuller - clt;

Mike Jackson - pno;

Morris - Irvis - dialog

36071-2 Who’s Dis Heah Stranger ?

Vic 20316,

Frog DGF 1

This single-title of the Thomas Morris band was recorded at the Mamie Smith session of the same day.

Morris certainly is undisputed, but the trombone player is more Nanton from tone, attack and phrasing than Irvis. Irvis’ tone is much smoother than the tone heard here and his presence on this recording date may be limited to his part of the dialogue, but might be questioned at all, if only the entry in the Victor Master Book would not exist. Perhaps he just came into the studio to greet his companions and was then sentenced to take part? Any way – what we hear played by these musicians seems to be very little controlled, and I assume that booze is responsible for bad phrasing and intonation heard. This might point to Charlie Irvis’ possible presence, but I still stick to my estimation that it is not Irvis at the Mamie Smith session above.

The same applies to Bob Fuller on clarinet. If it is Fuller, he must have been intoxicated to a degree, so that he was unable to deliver a better performance than what we hear in his “freak” solo behind the dialogue. And this, although he had developed into a fully accomplished clarinet player at that time and was much better than what can be heard here.

The piano player only plays simple chordal accompaniment and can therefore not be identified with any certainty.

Notes:

- Rust, Victor Master Book Vol. 2: c / tb / cl / p; speech by Thomas Morris and Charlie Irvis

- Rust*2,*3: Tom Morris (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Bob Fuller (clt); Mike Jackson (pno); with dialogue by Morris and Irvis.

- Rust*4,*6: Tom Morris, c, speech; Charlie Irvis, tb, speech; Bob Fuller, cl; Mike Jackson, p.

087 MONETTE MOORE

New York,

Nov. 09, 1926

Monette Moore - voc;

Thomas Morris - cnt; Albert Happy Caldwell or (Ernest Elliott) - clt;

Mike Jackson or (Phil Worde) - pno

36916-2 If You Don’t Like Potatoes

Vic 20356,

Document DOCD-5339

36917-2 Somebody’s Been Lovin’ My Baby

Vic 20356,

Document DOCD-5339

Although all the discographies list Rex Stewart as the cornetist here I have to express my strong doubts as to his presence here, this in the context of my compiling this list of all Stewart pre-Ellington recordings and consecutive re-checking the records. Having Stewart's stylistic and technical development in my mind I have to report that these sides are definitely below par with the before checked recordings, and they probably have to be adjoined to Thomas Morris just as on the following session.

After having listened into Happy Caldwell's clarinet work – mainly together with Thomas Morris – I am strongly inclined to assume Caldwell on these sides, too. Clarinet work here lacks Elliott's characteristics and shows fast downward arpeggios which I had attributed to Elliott assumed instrumental development earlier. I now am inclined to hear Happy Caldwell here on clarinet.

Comparing the pianistics to Phil Worde's playing on other sides above, I believe our pianist here to be Mike Jackson with his light left hand and his frequent flowery treble figures.

W.C. Allen, Hendersonia, p.213: "Trumpeter Rex Stewart reportedly recorded (according to Dixon & Godrich, 1969) four titles for Victor behind Monette Moore, on Nov. 9, 1926 and Jan. 26, 1927; and two titles for Cameo behind Viola McCoy, in March 1927. All these were made at times when the Wilberforce Collegians were presumably in Ohio, and when no New York engagements are documented. Of course he may not have been in the band all this time." This then would be a strong reason not to believe in Stewart's presence in other sessions of this time!

This is what I have written earlier in my Ernest Elliott list:

It is a joy to hear young Rex Stewart on cornet. It is only a pity that Stewart in later years did not relate his own encounters with Elliott. He does not mention his name at all in his publications. It seems that he was not impressed. But it's all there what makes Elliott at this time, everything from his "Stylistics", plus some later achievements (i.e. fast downward arpeggios and freak growl).

The piano player may be Phil Worde. I do not know on what basis. Does anybody know anything about him? But he plays a beautiful and unexpected single Bb (in C7) leading to F major just after Elliott's growl half-chorus in 'Somebody's Been Lovin' My Baby'. Very nice!

Notes:

- B. Rust, Victor Master Book Vol. 2: acc. by c / cl / p

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Rex Stewart –c; Ernest Elliott – cl; ? Phil Worde – p

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Rex Stewart, cnt; Ernest Elliott, clt; poss Phil Worde, pno

088 THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS SEVEN HOT BABIES

New York,

Nov. 12, 1926

Thomas Morris – cnt; Joe Nanton – tbn; unknown (Happy Caldwell?) – ten, clt;

Mike Jackson or Phil Worde – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Wellman Braud – sbs; unknown - dms

36925-1	Blues From The Everglades	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1
36925-2	Blues From The Everglades	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1
36925-3	Blues From The Everglades	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1
36926-1	P.D.Q. Blues	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1
36926-2	P.D.Q. Blues	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1
36926-3	P.D.Q. Blues	Vic 20330,	Frog DFG 1

At no instance do I hear anything that fits to Elliott's characteristics, and I therefore would like to exclude his presence here. Instead, I assume Happy Caldwell's participating in this session when comparing clarinet and tenor sax playing here to the session of 17 August 1926 of Morris' Seven Hot Babies. Technical advices heard here are partly beyond Elliott's abilities. And none of his "Stylistics" can be detected here. Furthermore has there been no session in this investigation were we heard Elliott play tenor sax at all. He very probably stuck to alto sax when playing saxophone.

Other musicians are taken from Rust and seem to be logical.

Notes:

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

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

Wellman Braud –sb; unknown -d

089 CLARA SMITH

New York,

Nov. 29, 1926

Clara Smith – voc;

Ernest Elliott – alt; Porter Grainger - pno

143155-3	Cheatin' Daddy	Col 14192-D,	Doc DOCD-5367
143156	Deep Down In My Soul	Col unissued	not on LP/CD

This is a very good item for comparison: Elliott has lost nothing of his earlier stylistics as listed above. All his characteristics are here, yet it has to be mentioned that his playing has become much more legato now. Keeping his musical characteristics over the years is sufficient proof that his presence on the sessions of 13 July and November 12 can safely be excluded.

Elliott's and Grainger's presence are documented on the record label.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Ernest Elliott –as; Porter Grainger –p

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Ernest Elliott, alt; Porter Grainger, pno

090 MONETTE MOORE

New York,

Jan. 26, 1927

Monette Moore – voc;

Thomas Morris – tpt; Happy Caldwell – clt; Ernest Elliott – belt; unknown - flt;

Phil Worde – pno

37572-2	Moaning Sinner Blues	Vic 20484,	Document DOCD-5339
37573-1	Hard Hearted Papa	Vic 20484,	Document DOCD-5339
37573-2	Hard Hearted Papa	Vic 20484,	Document DOCD-5339

I have listed these sides because of Caldwell's assumed presence at Evelyn Preer's session of 08 September 1926 and on the possible presence at the next session below. To be honest: Elliott's and Caldwell's presence on these sides is doubtful, but should not be doubted without intense listening.

These sides have been seen by our listening group as a probable Thomas Morris appearance. When hearing these sides I am very uncertain re the trumpet player. The octave upward jump in both takes of 'Hard-Hearted Papa' rather hints to Rex Stewart, but other insecurities let

me think of Morris. And – as we are in 1927 now – I think that Stewart would be much more developed and that Morris is the likely candidate here. In relation to the next session below I think it most probable that this man, yet, is Thomas Morris. Little can be heard of Happy Caldwell here, given that it is him on clarinet. The whole affair is arranged, presumably by the pianist, who plays according to the arranged passages. ‘Moaning Sinner Blues’ features no instrumental solos, but ‘Hard Hearted Papa’ has a bass clarinet solo at prominent place which probably is played by Elliott, judging from its very simple rhythmic structure and the use of dated slap-tongue technique. Referring to the following session of this same day the other clarinetist should then be Happy Caldwell. His clarinet is mainly coupled with the flute here, which gives the whole affair an airy and light sound compensated by the bass clarinet. There is strong piano accompaniment to the items, presumably by Phil Worde, who might have been Moore’s permanent accompanist at the time. There are no romanticisms as at the last Monette Moore session above, which I tend to attribute to Mike Jackson. This is what my listening companions had to say some years ago:

KBR: contrary to Moore’s session November 09, 1926, this tpt player here certainly is Morris and not Rex Stewart.

JO: Identification a bit difficult... I don’t know of any (other?) example of Fuller playing bass clarinet. I agree Morris is probable, especially on *Hard Hearted Papa* (correct tile).

DB: as received definite Tom. More likely a whistle than a flute.

MR: Morris and Fuller both likely.

Notes:

- *Rust, Victor Master Book Vol. 2: acc. by c / cl / b-cl / f / p*

- *BGR*2,*3,*4: Rex Stewart, cnt; Ernest Elliott, clt; unknown, bcl; unknown, flt; poss Phil Worde, pno*

- *Rust*3*4,*6: Rex Stewart –c; Ernest Elliott – cl; ? Phil Worde – p; unknown b-cl / f added*

- *VJM 177, Bob Hitchens, The Choo Choo Jazzers: “Rains confirms Tom Morris and possibly Mike Jackson and hears a flute. M. Berresford hears two B-flat clarinets, one doubling flute, plus a bass clarinet, which may be Bob Fuller. I hear a 2nd cl (poss E-flat) rather than a flute but accept that the flute is mentioned in the Victor files. I agree T. Morris is present as on next track. M. Berresford suggests Edgar Dowell or Phil Worde.”*

Notable differences of takes:

37573-1 bar three of introduction: tpt plays short eighth note upward jump G

37573-2 bar three of introduction: tpt plays dotted quarter note upward jump G

152 **ELIZABETH SMITH**

New York,

Jan. 26, 1927

Elizabeth Smith – voc;

Thomas Morris – cnt; Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller – clt; unknown – flt;

Phil Worde – pno

37574-2 Police Done Tore My Playhouse Down

Vic 21539,

RST-1526-2

The cornet player very probably is Thomas Morris after repeated listening, judging from tone, vibrato and flaws, just in the Monette Moore session above.

The clarinet player playing first part with his smears and slurs obviously is Ernest Elliott. But the clarinet soloist who also plays the coda certainly is a different man and might positively be Bob Fuller who plays a beautiful solo – and whose stylistic characteristics over the times yet have to be researched and identified.

Piano playing is compatible to what we had before and might therefore well be Worde (does anybody know anything about him?). This the same sober and simple piano accompaniment as the Monette Moore sides of the same day and should thus be Phil Worde.

I only would urgently like to know who that flutist is!

This is what my listening companions had to say some years ago:

KBR: same as session 074-1 Monette Moore. Certainly Thomas Morris.

DB: as 074-1 but no bs-clt or whistle/flute. I hear two clarinets

MR: Morris and Fuller again both likely.

Notes:

- *Rust, Victor Master Book Vol. 2: acc. by c / 2cl / f / p*

- *Rust*6: Rex Stewart –c; Ernest Elliott – Bob Fuller –cl; unknown –f; ? Phil Worde –p*

- *BGR*4: Tom Morris, cnt; poss Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller, clts; unknown, f; poss Edgar Dowell –p*

092 **EVELYN THOMPSON**

New York,

Mar. 30, 1927

Evelyn Thompson (Evelyn Preer ?) – voc;

Joe Smith – tpt; unknown – clt;

James P. Johnson – pno

E-4781 / 82 / 83 High Life Made A Low Life Out Of Me

Voc unissued

not on LP/CD

E-4784 Looking For The Sunshine, Walking Around In The Rain

Voc 15548

not on LP/CD

E-4786 Looking For The Sunshine, Walking Around In The Rain

Voc 15548,

Doc DOCD-5590

The clarinet player, who plays a probably pre-arranged part behind the cornet with very few exposed phrases, does not seem to be Elliott as none of his stylistic features can be detected here. Nor can there anything be associated to Fuller with any certainty.

The cornetist/trumpeter might well be the lyrical and smooth Joe Smith, and James P. Johnson is a good assumption judging from style and rhythmic impetus.

Notes:

- *Rust*3: Joe Smith –c; George Baquet –cl; ? James P. Johnson –p*

- *Rust*4,*6: unknown –c; Ernest Elliott or Bob Fuller –cl; unknown –p*

- *BGR*2: Joe Smith, cnt; G. Baquet, clt; poss James P. Johnson, pno*

- *BGR*3,*4: not listed!*

093 **CLARA SMITH**

New York,

Apr. 07, 1927

Clara Smith – voc;

Ernest Elliott – clt, alt; Clarence Parson – pno

144000-2 Troublesome Blues

Col 14256-D,

Doc DOCD-5367

144001-3 You Can’t Get It Now

Col 14256-D,

Doc DOCD-5367

Oh yes, everything is here what makes Elliott's identification easy and is put down in "Stylistics". And, above all, the musician's identities are documented on the labels. But it has to be stated that he really had developed by the time, which may be knowledgeable by his clarinet playing on the second title.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Ernest Elliott -cl -as; Clarence Parson -p
- BGR*2,*3,*4: Ernest Elliott, cl, alt; Clarence Parson, pno

094 MARTHA COPELAND	New York,	May 05, 1927
Martha Copeland - voc;		
Bob Fuller, Ernest Elliott - clt;		
Porter Grainger - pno; unknown - train-effects		
144097-3 Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues	Col 14227-D,	Doc DOCD-5372
144098-3 Mr. Brakes-Man (Let Me Ride Your Train)	Col 14227-D,	Doc DOCD-5372

As the three participants are documented on the record label it only leaves to see/hear what they play.

On 'Dyin' Crapshooter's Blues' the whole accompaniment is arranged throughout, Bob Fuller playing first part and Elliott second.

'Mr. Bakes-Man' again has Fuller playing first part clarinet, Elliott staying in the lower register. It has to be added that nothing typical for Elliott can be heard as he stays very much in the background.

Notes:

- Rust *3,*4: Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller - clt; Porter Grainger - pno
- Rust *6: Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller - clt; Porter Grainger - pno; unknown - whistle, train effects
- BGR *2,*3: Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller, clt; Porter Grainger, pno
- BGR *4: Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller, clt; Porter Grainger, pno; unknown whistle/train-effects

095 EVELYN THOMPSON	New York,	May, 1927
Evelyn Thompson - voc;		
Joe Smith - tpt; unknown - clt;		
James P. Johnson - pno		
E-4941 One Sweet Letter From You	Voc 15548,	Doc DOCD-5590

The clarinetist very probably is not Elliott of stylistic and technical reasons, although he was now able to play those downward arpeggios as heard here. I do not know the source for the assumption of George Baquet, but what I remember from Morton's Orchestra / Red Hot Peppers of July 1929, where we hear a rhythmically wooden and rather antiquated clarinetist, I feel unable to admit. So, I prefer to leave this player's identity as unknown.

Joe Smith and James P. Johnson might be alright, but I feel that the piano player is a bit below Johnson's musical quality.

Notes:

- Rust*3: Joe Smith -c; George Baquet -cl; ? James P. Johnson -p
- Rust*4,*6: unknown -c; Ernest Elliott or Bob Fuller -cl; unknown -p
- BGR*2: Joe Smith, cnt; G. Baquet, clt; poss James P. Johnson, pno
- BGR*3,*4: not listed!

096 FOWLER'S FAVORITES	New York,	Jul. 05, 1927
unknown - tpt; unknown - tbn;		
unknown - alt, clt; unknown - ten, sop;		
Lem Fowler - pno, voc; unknown - bjo; unknown - bbs; unknown - dms		
144627-1 Percolatin' Blues	Col 14230-B,	Frog DGF 66
144628-3 Hot Strut	Col 14230-B,	Frog DGF 66

It is certainly true what Mark Berresford says in his notes to the Frog CD: "'Percolatin' Blues" and "Hot Strut" are justifiably considered to be among the finest Harlem jazz sides of the 1920s". But this, and Lemuel Fowler's presence, are the only definite statements that can be made about this coupling!

I dare say after repeated listening and with all my newly gained knowledge of Ernest Elliott from this examination, that the clarinetist/ alto saxophonist is not Elliott at all. All Elliott's characteristics as stated in "Stylistics" are absent, although clearly present on the Clara Smith item in April of this same year!

Ernest Elliott was always listed as the clarinet player for this session, albeit with a question mark. We have a clarinet player here with a very jazzy style in the Harlem tradition. Listen to his technique and ensemble playing. This alone would certainly rule Elliott out!

But the strongest surprise is this player's alto style. In "Hot Strut" he plays a phantastic half chorus of alto sax which very much reminds me of Charlie Holmes. It is therefore not surprising that RUST*6 lists ?Charlie Holmes as additional alto player in his personnel. But nowhere in these items can you hear two altos, particularly not simultaneously! Ch. Holmes moved to New York in early 1927 (together with Harry Carney) and it is to be questioned whether he would have been engaged for a recording session at that early stage of his career, the more so for only one half-chorus. (Holmes' earliest recordings were with Oliver's Dixie Syncopators in November 1928 - his assumed and listed participation in James P. Johnson's Orchestra of June 1928 seems to be unfounded). Which leaves us with an unknown performer of some superb alto and good clarinet playing. Beautiful! I can only hope that in due course somebody might have the right idea to attribute the right name to this very good musician. The clarinet break in the coda of 'Hot Strut' rings some familiar bell in my mind. From where?

The FROG CD booklet proposes June Clark as a possible trumpet/cornet player. But this trumpeter here plays with a completely different vibrato, and his time is much more exact than that of Clark, but much less exuberant. He is exactly on the beat, sometimes even a little laid back, which caused me to suggest Clarence Wheeler, as employed on earlier Fowler recordings (at this time with Alex Jackson's Plantation Orchestra). Alternately I do tend into the direction of Leonard Davis with his big tone and very secure phrasing!

I am unable to come up with any likely candidate for the trombone. But it has to be considered that at that time Harlem was full of excellent musicians whose names not necessarily have become well known or can be attributed to hitherto unidentified players.

Whereas nobody had any suggestions as to the tenor saxophonist before, the Frog booklet now presents Benny Waters as tenor saxophonist, and this may well be correct. It has to be added that the tenorist also plays the soprano sax here. Happy Caldwell might also be a candidate here.

Fowler on piano obviously is right, and he may also be the singer as there is no piano behind the vocal.

Banjo, tuba and drums are played by unknown musicians who cannot now be identified.

Afterthought: After these observations and reflections the reader/listener might allow me a daring – and very personal – suggestion: What, if Lem Fowler, who obviously did not have a working band at the time of this recordings, had the chance to hire and use the newly formed Arthur Gibbs Orchestra, playing the Savoy and the Arcadia Ballrooms in New York for one year, summer 1927 to summer 1928! The personnel then would be: Leonard Davis – cnt (yes!); George Washington – tbn; Edgar Sampson (or Eugene Mikell) – alt, clt; Albert Happy Caldwell – ten; Fowler – pno; Paul Burnett – bjo; Billy Taylor – bbs; Sammy Hodges – dms. If this suggestion by any extraordinary happy occasion would turn out to be right – what very certainly is beyond probability – I certainly would not be surprised! But the personal and individual styles of the musicians do positively fit to my suggestion! (This suggestion came to my mind three months after my first setting of this evaluation – and very intense listening.)

My latest state of recognition is the following (see my article ‘A Case of Sudden Enlightenment’ in Names&Numbers 74):

FOWLER'S FAVORITES

		New York,	Jul. 05, 1927
Leonard Davis, cnt; George Washington, tbn;			
Eugene Mikell, alt, clt; Happy Caldwell, ten, sop;			
Lem Fowler, pno, voc (1); Paul Burnett, bjo; Billy Taylor, bbs; Sammy Hodges, dms.			
144627-1	Percolatin' Blues	Col 14230-B,	Frog DGF 66
144628-3	Hot Strut	Col 14230-B,	Frog DGF 66

Notes:

- Rust*2: unknown tpt; unknown tbn; unknown clt/alt; unknown ten; Lemuel Fowler pno/vov; unknown bjo; unknown bbs; unknown dms
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: unknown t; unknown tb; ? Ernest Elliott –cl –ss; ? Charlie Holmes –as; unknown –ts; Lemuel Fowler –p –v; unknown bjo; unknown bb; unknown d

- VJM VLP 18 cover text assumes a contingent from the Benny Moten band (they were in the East at around this recording date!)

- booklet to CD Frog DGF 66: ? June Clark, t; unknown tb; ? Ernest Elliott, cl-ss-as; ? Benny Waters, ss-ts; Lemuel Fowler, p-v; unknown bj; unknown bb; unknown d

Tunes:

144627-1 Percolatin' Blues (Fowler) Key of Bb / Eb Columbia 14230-D
 (Intro 4 bars clt – ens) (V1 Verse 16 bars AA' ens (tpt, tbn, clt, ten)) (V2 Verse 16 bars AA' clt/tbn 8 bars – clt 4 bars – tbn 2 bars – clt/tbn 2 bars) (A1 Chorus 32 bars ABAC tpt/ten 16 bars – sop/clt 16 bars) (A2 Chorus 32 bars ABAC voc – acc tpt/tbn) (V3 Verse AA' 16 bars ens (tpt, tbn, clt, ten)) (Bridge 4 bars ens modulation Bb to Eb) (B1 Chorus 18 bars AA' tbn) (B2 Chorus 18 bars AA' alt/ten in harmony) (B3 Chorus 18 bars AA' ens) (coda 2 bars cymbal)

144628-3 Hot Strut (Fowler) Key of Bb / Eb Columbia 14320-D
 (Intro 4 bars ens) (A1 Chorus 18 bars AA' ens (tpt, tbn, clt, ten)) (A2 Chorus 18 bars AA' ten) (V1 Verse 16 bars AA' ens) (V2 Verse AA' clt/ten 8 bars – tbn 8 bars) (A3 Chorus 18 bars AA' ens) (Bridge 4 bars pno) (B1 Chorus 16 bars AA' alt/ten 8 bars – ens/alt 8 bars) (B2 Chorus 16 bars AA' pno) (B3 Chorus 16 bars AA' ens) (Coda 8 bars ens – ten-clt – tpt – ens)

097 BESSIE SMITH

		New York,	Sep. 28, 1927
Bessie Smith – voc;			
Ernest Elliott – alt; Porter Grainger – pno			
144800-3	Homeless Blues	Col 14260-D,	Frog DGF 45
144801-3	Looking For My Man Blues	Col 14569-D,	Frog DGF 45

It is so nice to have a secure anchor place from time to time to compare and judge. This coupling is one such, and the listener is asked to hear Elliott's sound, tone, vibrato and phrasing and then compare with any recording listed above and below. Cast iron Elliott here!

Notes:

- E. Brooks, *The Bessie Smith Companion* p.130: "But in spite of her (Bessie Smith – KBR) sincerity, the performance is blighted by the all pervading non-jazz alto saxophone. Ernest Elliott's lack of empathy is epitomised by his quotations from 'Home, Sweet Home' which in this context are an affront to Bessie's veracity. Porter Grainger withers in the enervating atmosphere."

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Ernest Elliott –as; Porter Grainger –p

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Ernest Elliott, as; Porter Grainger, p

098 WILLIE JACKSON

		New York,	Dec. 12, 1927
Willie Jackson – voc;			
Ernest Elliott – clt, alt; J. C. Johnson - pno			
145299-1	Long Time Men	Col 14432-D,	Doc DOCD-5532
145400-3	Corn And Bunion Blues	Col 14432-D,	Doc DOCD-5532

Very easy here again! This is Ernest Elliott as described above, only that he plays more legato as before, but still antiquated and unswinging. The musician's names not documented on the record labels!

Notes:

- Rust*3: unknown cl –as; unknown –p

- Rust*4,*6: Ernest Elliott, cl, as; J.C. Johnson, p

- BGR*2: unknown clt; unknown alt; unknown pno

- BGR*3,*4: Ernest Elliott, cl, as; J.C. Johnson, p

099 BESSIE SMITH

		New York,	Feb. 16, 1928
Bessie Smith – voc;			
Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller – clt; Porter Grainger – pno			
145650-2	I'd Rather Be Dead And Buried In My Grave	Col 14304-D,	Frog DGF 45
145651	Hit Me In The Nose Blues	Col unissued	not on LP/CD

Let me guess: it's Elliott in the first clarinet part here, contrary to the Martha Copeland reording above (May 5, 1927). Or not?

Notes:

- E. Brooks, *The Bessie Smith Companion* p.135: "Presumably the dire high-register yelpings of the clarinets in the introduction are intended as references to Bessie's early 'fox' and 'dog' similes but they do not augur well and true to form, Elliott and Fuller proceed to trot out a pack of enervating harmonic clichés. Luckily however, after the introduction they confine themselves to background noises in the chalumeau register."

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller –cl; Porter Grainger –p

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller, cl; Porter Grainger, p

100 KING OLIVER AND HIS DIXIE SYNCOPATORS		New York,	Jun. 11, 1928
Joe King Oliver – cnt; Jimmy Archey – tbn;			
Ernest Elliott – alt, clt; Arville Harris – ten, clt;			
Clarence Williams – pno, voc; Leroy Harris – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs			
E-7388-A	Tin Roof Blues	Voc 1189,	Frog DGF 35
E-7389-A	West End Blues	Voc 1189,	Frog DGF 35
E-7390-A/B	Sweet Emmalina	Voc 1190,	Frog DGF 35
E-7391-A/B	Lazy Mama	Voc 1190,	Frog DGF 35

This session under King Oliver's name with a definite Cl. Williams band personnel probably was one further attempt to help Oliver regain his reputation as one of the 'Kings' of jazz. Those New Orleans musicians certainly must have been 'clanish'. This certainly was Oliver's date (Vocalion!) and Clarence copiled the recording band, only Archey being from Oliver's stable. The tuba player does not seem to be Cyrus St.Clair – perhaps an Oliver man?

But there obviously is no doubt as to Elliott's presence on alto and clarinet, although Clarence Williams' own testimony can not always be relied on. The clarinet solo on "Tin Roof Blues" and the alto solo on "Sweet Emmalina" probably are by Elliott. On the clarinet solo on "West End Blues" I do not feel certain whether it is by Elliott or Harris. But the very awful alto sax lead in chorus 1 of "Lazy Mama" certainly is by Elliott, and it does not swing at all. Here all Elliott's short-comings come to the fore.

All musicians seem to be identified, only that St.Clair's presence is a little bit doubtful.

Notes:

- Rust*2,*3,*4: Joe King Oliver (cnt); Jimmy Archey (tbn); Ernest Elliott (alt, clt); Arville Harris (ten, clt); Clarence Williams (pno, voc); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)

- Rust*6: King Oliver, c; Jimmy Archey, tb; Ernest Elliott, cl,as; Arville Harris, cl,as,ts; Clarence Williams, p,v,dir; Leroy Harris, bj; Cyrus St. Clair, bb

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 232: Joe King Oliver (cnt); Jimmy Archey (tbn); Ernest Elliott (alt, clt); Arville Harris (ten, alt, clt); Clarence Williams (pno, voc); ? unknown (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs) "WCA's (Walter C. Allen – KBR) thorough investigation lists three reeds, however I hear only two, the third listed by WCA being Russell Procope. Oliver is the only cornet heard. According to WCA, Jimmy Archey identified himself, and Williams' singing, but could not recall the others. Arville Harris was identified by Williams, and is consistent with known examples of Harris' playing tenor: Williams identified the clarinetist as Elliott. St.Clair doubted his own presence here, stating that he recorded with Oliver on Clarence Williams dates but not on Oliver dates, and thought the bbs was Buford, whom Oliver employed at the time. However, Paul Barnes stated that Buford returned to Chicago soon after breakup of the Oliver 1927 "Savoy" band. Williams named St.Clair for the bbs."

- L. Wright, "King" Oliver, p 92: Joe King Oliver, c; Jimmy Archey, tb; Ernest Elliott, as, cl; Arville Harris, ts, cl; Clarence Williams, p, v; Leroy Harris, bj; Cyrus St. Clair, bb "The personnel is based on Clarence Williams' own identification of the soloists on hearing the records and he named Archey (commenting that Oliver particularly liked him), Arville Harris, Ernest Elliott, himself on piano and vocal, Leroy Harris and St.Clair. Procope strongly denied to Brian Rust that he had ever recorded with King Oliver either under Oliver's own name or that of Clarence Williams. The presence of a second piano on the third and fourth titles has been suggested by a number of authorities who argue that the piano is much further from the mike than the voice and that aurally it is not Williams. However, as Keith Nichols points out, it is perfectly normal for a pianist who sings to reduce his volume at the piano as he starts to sing in order to hear himself."

Tunes:

E-7388-A Tin Roof Blues: 4 Intro pno / 12 Chorus 1 cnt JKO / 12 Chorus 2 cnt JKO – tbn JA / 12 Chorus 3 tbn JA / 12 Chorus 4 clt EE (or AH?) / 12 Chorus 5 ens

E-7389-A West End Blues: 8 Intro ens – tbn breaks JA / 12 Chorus 1 cnt JKO - saxes breaks / 12 Chorus 2 clts / 12 Chorus 3 tbn JA / 12 Chorus 4 clt AH (orEE?) / 12 Chorus 5 ens tbn breaks JA

E-7390-A/B Sweet Emmalina: 6 Intro ens / 32 Chorus 1 ens 16 – ten AH 8 – alt EE 8 / 16 Verse pno CW / 32 Chorus 2 tbn JA 24 – cnt JKO 8 / 32 Chorus 3 voc CW / 16 Chorus 4/2 ens – clt AH

E-7391-A/B Lazy Mama: 4 Intro ens / 32 Chorus 1 saxes / 32 Chorus 2 cnt JKO 16 – clt AH 16 / 16 Chorus 3/2 ens

101 ALBERTA JONES		New York,	Jun. 11, 1928
Anna Jones – voc; possible personnel:			
Joe King Oliver – cnt; Jimmy Archey – tbn;			
Ernest Elliott – alt, clt; Arville Harris – ten, clt;			
Clarence Williams – pno, voc; Leroy Harris – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs			
E-27688	Pennsylvania Blues	Voc unissued	not on LP/CD
E-27689	Tramping Blues	Voc unissued	not on LP/CD

As there seem to be no tests of these items found, nothing about them can be stated with certainty. The matrix numbers of these two titles follow consecutively after the originally assigned Brunswick matrix numbers E-27684-A, E-27685-A, E-27686-A-B, and E-27687-A-B of the King Oliver session before. The assumption of the listed personnel seems feasible therefore.

Notes:

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

- BGR*2,*3,*4: not listed

- Wright, King Oliver p 93: 'Pennsylvania Blues' (E-27688-A, -B) and 'Tramping Blues' (E-27689-A, -B) are both shown as Alberta Jones compositions and are shown as performed by "Alberta Jones, soprano with orchestra" and as "Test Masters".

- VJM 169 p 18: "Bernhard Behncke (Germany) noted an intriguing remark on p.93 of Laurie Wright's King Oliver book. It mentions unissued recordings by Alberta Jones, soprano with Orchestra of 'Pennsylvania Blues' and 'Tramping Blues' (matrix E-27688/9). These were recorded on the same date and place as the King Oliver session with a Clarence Williams group that produced 'Tin Roof Blues' etc., thus the "Orchestra" could be Oliver's recording band. Do tests survive?"

102 BESSIE SMITH

New York,

Aug. 24, 1928

Bessie Smith – voc;

Joe Williams – tbn (6); Bob Fuller – clt, sop (4), ten (3,5,6); Ernest Elliott – clt, alt (3,4,5);

Porter Grainger – pno

146887-2	Yes Indeed He Do	Col 14354-D,	Frog DGF 45
146888-2	Devil's Gonna Get You	Col 14354-D,	Frog DGF 45
146889-3	You Ought To Be Ashamed	Col 14399-D,	Frog DGF 45
146893-2	Washwoman's Blues	Col 14375-D,	Frog DGF 45
146894-2	Slow And Easy Man	Col 14384-D,	Frog DGF 46
146895-1	Poor Man's Blues	Col 14399-D,	Frog DGF 46

On 'Yes Indeed He Do' we hear the reed men both on clarinets, with Elliott playing first part in the intro, then leaving the field open for Fuller, who bears most of the following accompaniment with his fine and warm clarinet. Only at the end do we hear both musicians together again, difficult to discriminate. Judging from tone, loudness and vibrato, Elliott seems to lead the ensemble of 'Devil's Gonna Get You' on first clarinet throughout, but this again is difficult to discriminate. The rudimental arrangements seem to come from P. Grainger. On 'You Ought To Be Ashamed' it is very obvious from tone, vibrato and smears that Elliott plays the alto sax and Fuller the tenor. On "Washwoman's Blues" we hear Elliott again on alto, Fuller on soprano. Elliott with his antiquated time and phrasing and Fuller as the much better jazz man on soprano, unlisted up to now! 'Slow And Easy Man' has Elliott on alto again and Fuller on tenor. Fuller sometimes plays very high, which might lead to a sound of seemingly two altos. This is apparent here. 'Poor Man's Blues' has – apart from the great Joe Williams on trombone – Bob Fuller on tenor, again sometimes very high, and Elliott on clarinet.

Throughout this whole investigation nowhere have I found Ernest Elliott to play tenor sax. This session again is proof to this fact!

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography: Ernest Elliott, Bob Fuller (s); Porter Grainger (p)*

- Rust*3: Bob Fuller –cl-as; Ernest Elliott –cl –as –ts; Porter Grainger –p; with Joe Williams –tb as noted (6)

- Rust*4,*6: Bob Fuller –cl-as; Ernest Elliott –cl –as –ts; Porter Grainger –p; with Joe Williams –tb added

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Bob Fuller, clt,alt; Ernest Elliott, clt,alt,ten; Porter Grainger, pno; with Joe Williams, tb

- E. Brooks, *The Bessie Smith Companion* p.143: 1st title: "the trouble with the reeds is that although aiming for a New Orleans style polyphony, they can manage only a chaotic, pitch-doubling heterophony. The instrumental chorus is typical – they not only get in each other's way but sound alike too, in spite of the alternative instruments available at the session." 2nd title: "The discographies show Bob Fuller playing clarinet and alto saxophone and Ernest Elliott clarinet, alto and tenor saxophones at this session; it is a reflection of their lack-lustre performance that no one has bothered to identify which instruments are used on which sides."

- *ibid* p.144: 3rd title: "The chord sequence is uninspiring, the words and Bessie's line not varied enough, the reeds sound muddy with the tenor saxophone often out of tune and the piano languishes. ... Here with the oily timbre of the clarinet absent, it takes little effort to identify the reeds as tenor (Ernest Elliott) and alto (Bob Fuller) saxophones."

- *ibid* p. 145: 5th title: "But nothing she (Bessie! – KBR) can do in any way influences the reeds to abandon their worn-out phrases full of pitch and timbre collisions. It is true ion the instrumental chorus, the arranged lines prevent pitch collision but there it is their rapid vibratos and considerable imprecision which offends. Porter Grainger seems to have moved to another room."

- *ibid*. p. 146: 6th title: "... and a considerable amount of the credit must go to Joe Williams whose fine trombone has the vital effect of pushing the reeds into a subordinate role, one they are capable of coping with." "Even the reeds, relieved of their melodic and antiphonal duties are not unpleasing; their organ-like harmony, richer now, hangs as a stable backdrop in front of which Bessie and Joe Williams display their art. Williams can now be seen to be the flux necessary to join effectively the disparate talents of Bessie and the reeds. Not that they are blameless – that the performance falls short of the higher quality is due intirely to the saxophone's uncertain harmonies behind Bessie's first words and the unobtrusive tonguing of both reeds in the second chorus."

103 LAURA BRYANT Clarence Williams' Orchestra

Long Island City,

c. Jan. 1929

Laura Bryant – voc;

Ed Allen – cnt; Arville Harris – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno ; unknown – dentist drill noises

322-A	Dentist Chair Blues Part 1	QRS R-7055,	Frog DGF 49
323-	Dentist Chair Blues Part 2	QRS R-7055,	Doc DOCD-5376
323-A	Dentist Chair Blues Part 2	QRS R-7055,	Frog DGF 49
324-	Saturday Night Jag	Pm test,	Frog DGF 49
324-A	Saturday Night Jag	Pm 12870,	Frog DGF 49

Intensive listening very soon proofs Arville Harris' presence on these sides. Not any of Elliott's characteristics, but playing that we are accustomed from Harris.

Ed Allen and Clarence Williams are their reliable selves, and the dentist is a virtuoso on the drill!

Notes:

- Storyville 24: "The (Storyville – KBR) Team's opinion here favours Harris, although Elliott is suggested as an alternative on account of the blue playing."

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Ed Allen, c; Ernest Elliott, cl; Clarence Williams, p

- BGR*2: Ed Allen – cnt; Prince Robinson – clt; Clarence Williams – pno

- BGR*3,*4: Ed Allen, c; prob Ernest Elliott, cl; Clarence Williams, p

- Storyville 1998 p 170: Laura Bryant (nee Loretta Bryant) is most probably identical to Laura Smith

Notable differences of takes (from Lord p.274):

323- : "Um – Hum. Oh Lord. I ever get out o' here, I betcha I won't come back here no more."

323-A: "Uhhh. I ever get outa here, I never come back no more. MmMMM."

324- : Intro clt starts marking the beat, starts playing ad-lib in second half of second bar

324-A: Intro clt starts on second beat of third bar (no marking the beat earlier)

104 JIMMY JOHNSON AND HIS BAND

New York,

Mar. 05, 1929

Louis Metcalf – tpt; unknown – tbn;

Albert Happy Caldwell – ten, clt; unknown – clt;
James P. Johnson – pno; (Perry Bradford) – cymbal
Perry Bradford, Gus Horsley - voc
148015-1 Put Your Mind Right On It
148016-3 Sorry

Col 14417-D, Chronological Classics 671
Col unissued not on LP/CD

The trumpet player does not show any definite and unequivocal Metcalf characteristics, but from tone, rhythm and attack I believe that it really is Metcalf. The trombone might be Joe Nanton (the dirty tones!), Metcalf's band-mate and buddy from his time with the Ellington band. But unfortunately, too little can be heard from the trombone to really judge.

Throughout this side the clarinet mainly plays head-arranged parts. Therefore, a personal individual style almost cannot be discerned. There only are very few instances where the clarinet can be heard away from the trumpet and on its own. But here, everything that can be distinguished yet, is outside of Elliott's approach to clarinet playing. Attack, tone, vibrato and time are far better than what we know of Elliott, and in my opinion his presence has to be denied. As so often the assumption of Elliott as clarinetist seems to have come from the early days of discographical research as a mere esteem of someone who has not really listened and compared. What we really hear is the tenor saxophone starting together with tpt and tbn for a four-bar intro, then playing an eight-bar verse with the brass again. This tenor part at the beginning has typical Caldwell tone, rhythm and phrases. From then on it is always a clarinet – no tenor sax – with a distinct and clear Doddsish flavour, and I strongly believe that we have Happy Caldwell here. In the coda it is Caldwell on tenor again. In the third and fourth chorus there might be a second clarinet answering the brass riffs together with the first clarinet (Caldwell), but I must admit that this harmony part might also be played by the trumpet in a soft manner. I have therefore listed a possible second clarinet above.

The cymbal crash might have been the work of Perry Bradford as there are more similar isolated cymbal crashes with this sound on Bradford's recordings.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography 1948: no personnel*

- Rust*2: Louis Metcalfe (tpt); unknown tbn; clt; ten; James P. Johnson (pno); unknown dms; Perry Bradford (vcl), unknown vcl.

- Rust*3,*4: Louis Metcalf - c; unknown tb; Ernest Elliott - cl; unknown cl- ts; James P. Johnson -p; Perry Bradford and another v; someone hits a cymbal hard at the end of 148015-1 but there is no evidence elsewhere on this side of a drummer.

- Rust*6: Louis Metcalf - c; unknown tb; Ernest Elliott - cl; unknown cl- ts; James P. Johnson -p; Perry Bradford and another v; there is a cymbal crash at the end of 148015-1 but there is no evidence of a drummer elsewhere on this side.

- Brown/Hilbert, James P. Johnson p 375: Louis Metcalf, cornet; unknown, trombone; Ernest Elliott, clarinet; unknown, clarinet and tenor sax; Johnson, piano; Perry Bradford, Gus Horsley, vocals. "Someone hits a cymbal at the end of 148015-1 but there is no evidence elsewhere of a drummer. It has been suggested that Bradford hit the cymbal."

105 JIMMY JOHNSON AND HIS BAND

New York, Mar. 20, 1929

Louis Metcalf – tpt; Julius Geechie Fields – tbn; unknown – 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.!

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.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography 1948: no personnel*

- Rust*2: Louis Metcalfe (tpt); unknown tbn; 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

106 MARY DIXON

New York, Jun. 20, 1929

Mary Dixon – voc;

Ernest Elliott – clt; J. C. Johnson – pno

148725-3 Old Forsaken Blues

Col 14442-D,

Doc DOCD-5504

148726-3 All Around Mama

Col 14442-D,

Doc DOCD-5504

Oh yes, this is Ernest Elliott in person. After ten years of experience and development he still is his dated self. And it is not surprising that at the start of the Swing era these two sides seem to be his last appearance in a recording studio. He had fallen out of his time.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4,*6: ? Ernest Elliott - cl; J.C. Johnson -p

- BGR*2,*3,*4: prob Ernest Elliott, clt; J.C. Johnson, pno

107 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' WASHBOARD BAND

New York, Oct. 09, 1929

Charlie Gaines – tpt; (Ben Whitted?) – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Floyd Casey – wbd;

Margaret Webster - voc

W403045-C You've Got To Give Me Some

OK 8738,

Doc DOCD-5376

W403046-B I've Got What It Takes

OK 8738,

Doc DOCD-5376

This definitely is not Ernest Elliott although identified (?) by one of the participants of this session, but I feel unable to suggest or even assure Ben Whitted of the Charlie Johnson band here. As this is an attempt to find Ernest Elliott's recording work, I would like to leave this matter unsettled for now. There might be another opportunity to find it out.

Both Lord and the Storyville team suggest Gaines on the strength of the similarity of the trumpet playing to that on the Waller Buddies date of 1 March, 1929. Rust lists the clarinet as Ben Whitted (?), but Charlie Gaines suggests Ernest Elliott. According to information provided to Walter C. Allen by Helen Chmura the Okeh files list the singer as Margaret Webster.

Notes:

- Lord, *Clarence Williams p 300* : Charlie Gaines – tpt; unknown – clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Floyd Casey – wbd; Margaret Webster – v “Gaines confirms his presence (in an October 28, 1973 interview by David Goldenberg). Rust also lists the clarinet as Ben Whitted (?), however we prefer to list him as unknown. TKD states that “we are agreed that the clarinet is not Arville Harris, Bennie Moten, Buster Bailey, Cecil Scott or anyone else we associate with Williams. Goldman lists Scott as the clarinetist. Charlie Gaines suggests Ernest Elliott.”
- Rust*3: Charlie Gaines – tpt; unknown – clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Floyd Casey – wbd; ? Virginia Liston – v
- Rust*4: Charlie Gaines – tpt; Arville Harris - clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Floyd Casey – wbd; Margaret Webster – v
- Rust*6: Charlie Gaines – tpt; unknown – clt; Clarence Williams – pno; Floyd Casey – wbd; ? Virginia Liston – v
- BGR*3,*4: Charlie Gaines, t; unknown, cl; Clarence Williams, p; Floyd Casey, wb

So, here 'tis! Certainly the first investigation ever regarding the recorded work of one of the least liked musicians in jazz, Ernest Elliott. And as I said in the introduction: he is not one of my favourite musicians. But after my 50 years of collecting classic jazz I felt it necessary to put this controversial figure into his right surrounding and shape and give him a little limelight. We have had a mass of information about the greats, but only very few of the craftsmen in the background have been dealt with at all. And with the disappearance of the fantastic Storyville magazine even less people have tried to explore the hidden areas of the twenties and thirties. This investigation can be an attempt to give Mr. Elliott a little due recognition.

- Out of about 120 sessions checked for the presence of Ernest Elliott I separated a couple because the suggestion of Elliott had been downright ridiculous.
- Of the remaining 107 sessions 53 have been eliminated because after intense listening Elliott's presence was seen as obviously impossible. These are Nos. 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 009, 011, 012, 013, 014, 015, 017, 019, 020, 024, 025, 026, 027, 028, 029, 031, 033, 035, 038, 042, 043, 046, 048, 049, 051, 052, 058, 060, 061, 062, 063, 067, 071, 072, 074, 075, 076, 077, 078, 083, 084, 088, 092, 095, 096, 103, 107.
- On 20 sessions Elliott's presence appears to be possible or slightly possible. These are Nos. 010, 016, 018, 021, 023, 030, 032, 034, 039, 045, 050, 059, 065, 070, 073, 090, 091, 101, 104, 105.
- On 13 sessions his presence is probable. These are Nos. 007, 008, 022, 041, 044, 047, 053, 054, 055, 080, 081, 082, 085.
- On 11 sessions his presence is certain or rather certain. These are Nos. 036, 037, 040, 064, 068, 086, 087, 098, 100, 102, 106.
- On 10 sessions his presence is documented on the record labels or in company files. These are Nos. 056, 057, 066, 069, 079, 089, 093, 094, 097, 099. As a fact, these recordings have been used as references for Elliott's style and playing.
- The following sessions are not listed in any discography so far to contain Ernest Elliott in their personnel. They have been added yet according to my own listening experience, aural memory and judgement. Insofar, Elliott's presence can be seen as probable. These are Nos. 041, 054, 055, 080, 081, 082.

My listening companions were Dave Brown (DB) of Berlin/Germany and Michael Rader (MR) of Karlsruhe/Germany. My deepest thanks for their great advice, generous time spent on listening, and their deep affection for our music!

K.-B. Rau
March 13, 2015
Revised 24.07.2017

SOURCES

- J. Chilton, *Who's Who of Jazz*: Elliott, 'Sticky' Ernest: “Born Booneville, Missouri, February 1893. Worked with Hank Duncan's Band in Detroit (1919), moved to New York, worked with Johnny Dunn (1921), etc. Various recordings in the 1920s, including two sessions with Bessie Smith. With Cliff Jackson's Trio at the Cabin Club, Astoria, New York (1940), with Sammy Stewart's Band at Joyce's Manor, New York (1944), in Willie 'The Lion' Smith's Band (1947). Has retired from music, but continues to live in New York.”
- The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz: Ernest 'Sticky' Elliott: “(b Booneville, MO, Feb. 1893). Saxophonist and clarinetist. After working in Detroit with Hank Duncan's band (1919) he moved to New York, where he worked with Johnny Dunn, Mamie Smith, Clara Smith, and many other blues singers. He made a large number of recordings, and played in three sessions with Bessie Smith (1927, 1928). *Good Looking Papa Blues* (1924, Col. 14026D, which he recorded with Clara Smith, is an excellent example of Elliott's sensitive approach; he may be heard playing solo and abligato passages in a delicate, ethereal manner. Later he performed with Cliff Jackson's trio at the Astoria (1940) and with bands led by the pianists Sammy Stewart (1944) and Willie 'The Lion' Smith (1947), but thereafter retired from music.”
- Walter C. Allen, *Hendersonia*: Ernest 'Sticky' Elliott: „b. Booneville, Mo. Feb/1893. In Army service, WWI. Recorded prolifically with singers and bands between 1921-1930 – see index to Rust. Supposedly on some FH recordings before that band was playing in public, c. 1923. Very little contemporary information was published on him; had his own Syncopated Jazz Band, Lincoln Theater, NY, (Sep/20), and featured with sax in vaudeville act with 'Frisco' (Billboard, Sep. 20/24; unclear whether latter was Frisco Lou Chiha, or comedian Joe Frisco.)”
- 78 Quarterly 7 p.69: Lizzy Miles 1914 – 1918:
Apr. 24, 1917 Members of our company are: J.C. Miles, Ira Walker – cnt; J. Russ. Jackson – tbn; Earnest Elliott (sic) – clt; Geo. Walker – baritone, vln; Lawrence Baker - ?; Clarence Walker – bbs; Harry Smith, Cosgo Cropp – dms

Jul. 07, 1917 Members of our company at present are: Ira Walker, Harry Smith, Kosgo Kropp, H.A. Quick, Clarence Walker, Ben Coy, Earnest Elliott (sic), James R. Jackson, Roy Mays, Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Miles. Some happy family, and we expect to enlarge some with the addition of another clarinet and slip horn soon.

- Bushell/Tucker, *Jazz From The Beginning* p 181: "Elliott, Ernest (b. 1893). Clarinetist and saxophonist from Missouri who moved to New York ca. 1919-20, and made many recordings in the 1920s, including sides with Mamie Smith, Eva Taylor, Thomas Morris, Johnny Dunn, and Bessie Smith. In the 1940s he worked in small groups with Willie 'The Lion' Smith and Cliff Jackson."

- Ibid. p 13: "There were some great black clarinet players with circuses in those days. Percy Glascoe from Baltimore was one, and Fred Kewley from Detroit was another. Outside of players in the Jenkins' Orphanage Band, Kewley was the best black clarinet player in the country. In Tampa I heard the Pensacola Kid. Uncle Charlie brought me to a night spot and said, 'I'm going to take you down and let you hear a clarinet player.' Those guys had a style of clarinet playing that's been forgotten. Ernest Elliott had it, Jimmy O'Bryant had it, and Johnny Dodds had it."

- Doctor Jazz Magazine 226 p 18: "Zijn (George Lorenzo Brashear – KBR) paspoortaanvraag van 16 juni 1923 geeft aan dat hij van plan was om in Frankrijk en Spanje te gaan spleen met bassist Leslie Sumner "King" Edwards. Interessant is hierbij dat klarinettist Ernest Elliott deze aanvraag ondersteunt."

- *Storyville 2002/3 p 162*: "Is cl/sax with show 'Frisco' in Chicago." (CD 11/10/24 6/3)

- Ibid. p 154: "And that high G – it couldn't be Ernest Elliott, because I never heard him go up to a high G in my life!"

- Ibid. p 158: "That's an alto saxophone in the middle duet. But I never heard Ernest Elliott play saxophone. Maybe it was Herschel Brassfield."

- *Storyville 48 p 228*: "John Chilton's Who's Who places him (Sammy Stewart – KBR) playing organ at the Golden Gate Ballroom, New York, in early 1940, and by 1944 he led a group at Joyce's Manor, with Ernest Elliott (clt, sax), Clarence Moore (vln), Eddie Gibbs (gtr), Ted Fields (dms) and his own piano."

- *Storyville 95 p 200*: "Reed man George Scott told Johnny Heinz in 1950, or thereabouts, that he had made records with The Missourians, Clarence Williams, Viola McCoy, George McClennon, 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."

- *Storyville 99 p 86*: Happy Caldwell: "Hawk was with Mamie Smith before me, and when I joined we had Joe Smith on trumpet. Then we had Thornton Blue, who went with Cab, on clarinet, and Ernest Elliott was with us for a bit – I think he's still living, and he's much older than me. He was very tall and thin, and that's why we called him "Sticks. That was in 1924 (sic), when I got to New York."

- *Storyville 2002/03 p. 162*: Ernest Elliott is cl/sax with show 'Frisco' in Chicago. (CD 11/10/24 6/3). In trio at Paul Meere's Night Club 138th and Lenox with Leonard Smith, p; Alonzo Bellows, d. (PC 27/9/30 8/5).

PHOTOGRAPHS

- *Storyville 1998/9 p 221* L. Wright, Bob Fuller: "I know of no photo of him (Bob Fuller! – KBR) but it is perhaps interesting to note that a photo of Mamie Smith's Jazz Hounds on page 125 of *Black Beauty White Heat* identifies the clarinet player as Ernest Elliott. Elliott's nickname was 'Sticky' and when I tried to find the origin of this from New York musicians I was told that he was a very tall guy with legs like sticks. I queried the identification in the photo with Frank Driggs, who did not respond to my query, and I still wonder if this might not be Bob Fuller rather than Elliott." (Wright is certainly right here. It is Fuller on the photo. He can also be viewed on the cover side of *Record Research 077*. This then has to have some consequences as to the clarinetist of Mamie Smith's recording sessions of August and September 1920.)

- L. Bjorn / J. Gallert, *Before Motown* p 19: Hank Duncan's Kentucky Serenaders, Hotel Elwood, Detroit, 1919: left to right: George 'Egypt' Robinson – dms; unknown cook; Jimmy Harrison – tbn; Ernest 'Sticky' Elliott – clt; unknown manager?; Hank Duncan – pno; unknown – vln; *Littleton 'Litt' Smith* – sbs. The large man in dark suit sitting in front of the piano might be the landlord or manager of the hotel.

- *Jazz Information 2 – 12 p 18*: Hank Duncan's Kentucky Serenaders, Hotel Elwood, Detroit, 1919: left to right: George 'Egypt' Robinson – dms; Jimmy Harrison – tbn; Hank Duncan – pno; Ernest 'Sticky' Elliott – clt; unknown – vln; *Littleton 'Litt' Smith* – sbs. This photo from same day and location as before.

- J. Milan, *Detroit – Ragtime and the Jazz Age*, p.58: photo of same location, but ca. 1920, shows Alabama Jazz Band. Different personnel than before, but possibly same string-bass player, Littleton Smith. Not Elliott on this photo.