

THE RECORDINGS OF MIKE JACKSON

An Annotated Tentative Personnel - Discography

JACKSON, MIKE, pianist, composer

No personal data known

STYLISTICS

STYLE

In general Mike Jackson was a song composer and theatre actor, presenting his songs on stages. It must be assumed that he accompanied himself then on piano. Following the fashion of the day, he played a soft and retained Harlem-Stride style, based on his practice as composer. This means that he does not employ a strong left hand for rhythm like his contemporaries Fats Waller, J.P. Johnson and others to imitate a band's rhythm section, but that he rather plays left-hand parts to supplement the melodic parts of his right hand but still accentuating measures 2 and 4.

TIME

His time is unobtrusive, neither hurrying nor dragging.

PHRASING

Mike Jackson's ad-lib playing is dominated by delivering a permanent sound basement for singers or instrumentalists. It is not aimed to play Stride style piano solos. Rather often he uses right-hand treble upward arpeggios, as part of his style I would name as "flowery".

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

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

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

When feeling certain without a musician's documented presence, I have not refrained from altering Rust's statements without using italics. In any case, my statements are open to discussion and I would appreciate any contribution - pro or contra!

As always in my discographies on this website I have written recording sessions with their headings, dates, titles and names of musicians in italics, whenever I am convinced that the eponymous musician of this discography is not part of the accompanying group of this session! Documented names of musicians if known – in recording ledgers or on record labels – are listed in bold letters.

This discography still is - and will certainly be - a work in progress for a long time, if not eternally. Yet, on the way to a definite discography of all jazz recordings before 1942 - which certainly will never be possible - it is intended to fill some gaps that have not been treated before.

MIKE JACKSON

001 **SIPPIE WALLACE**

Sippie Wallace – voc;

Bob Fuller – clt;

(*Mike Jackson?*) – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

73574-A

I'm Leaving You

New York,

c. Aug. 25, 1925

OK 8288,

Doc DOCD-5400

73575-A

I'm Sorry For It Now

OK 8251,

Doc DOCD-5400

73576-A

Suitcase Blues

OK 8243,

Doc DOCD-5400

73577-A

I Must Have It

OK 8381,

Doc DOCD-5400

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

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

Notes:

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

002 **CLARA SMITH** Jazz Band New York, Sep. 18, 1925
 Clara Smith – voc;
 unknown - tbn; Bob Fuller – clt;
 Mike Jackson - pno; Buddy Christian – bjo
 140945-5 I'm Tired Of Bein' Good Col 14117-D, Document DOCD-5366

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

Notes:

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

003 **CLARA SMITH** her Jazz Band (Bud Allen's Blues Trio) New York, Sep. 24, 1925
 Clara Smith – voc;
Teddy Nixon – tbn; **Prince Robinson** – clt;
Mike Jackson – pno
 141044-1 Onery Blues Col 14117-D, Document DOCD-5366
 141045-1 You Get Mad Col 14126-D, Document DOCD-5366

No uncertainties re personnel here. Nixon very academic, legato, smooth, very wide vibrato. Robinson fuller tone than Fuller, strong time, simple melody (mainly chord changes), not erratic, wide vibrato, as young saxophonist (not clarinetist). Jackson modest stride with melodic/flowery right-hand arpeggios.

Notes:

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Ted Nixon, tbn; Prince Robinson, clt; Mike Jackson, pno.
- Rust*3,*4,*6: Ted Nixon -tb; Prince Robinson -cl; Mike Jackson -p.

004 **BUDDY CHRISTIAN'S CREOLE FIVE** New York, c. Mar. 23, 1926
 Harry Cooper – tpt; John Mayfield – tbn; Albert 'Happy' Caldwell – clt;
 Charlie 'Smitty' Smith – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; unknown – dms;
 Louise Vant – voc (1,2)
 74057-A Sunset Blues OK 8311, Hot'n Sweet 151222
 74058-A Texas Mule Stomp OK 8311, Hot'n Sweet 151222
 74059-A Sugar House Stomp OK 8342, Hot'n Sweet 151222

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

The cornet/trumpet player certainly – for all I know – is not Thomas Morris. Chris Hillman in his record review of the Herwin 107 LP 'New Orleans Sounds in New York 1924 – 1926' (Jazz Journal Oct. 1975) writes: "I am certain that the Creole Five cornetist is Harry Cooper."

And I shall gladly follow Mr. Hillman's well-founded and correct identification. Comparison with what can be heard on the Seminole Syncopators and the Harry's Happy Four show us that Cooper is our man here.

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

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

The strong banjo is played by the leader, Buddy Christian, banjo player and pianist from New Orleans. Only on 'Sugar House Stomp' 14 cymbal strokes can be heard at appropriate places – no other drum features – and it has to be asked whether a drummer was participating on this last title of the session or somebody of the recording staff, or perhaps one of the other band players. But, as the cymbal strokes are choked by hand, no other participating musician would have been able to fulfil this special task and still playing on his own instrument.

Notes:

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

- Rust*3: ? Charlie Gaines -t; ? Charlie Irvis -tb; Bob Fuller -cl; Louis Hooper (or poss Mike Jackson) -p; Buddy Christian -bj; unknown -d; Louise Vant -v (1,2)
 - Rust*4,*6: ? Tom Morris -c; ? Jake Frazier -tb; Bob Fuller -cl; ? Porter Grainger (part composer of the first two titles) or Louis Hooper or Mike Jackson -p; Buddy Christian -bj; unknown -d; Louise Vant -v (1,2)
 - BGR*2: poss Tom Morris (or any one of the three cnts from earlier L. Vant sessions); poss Jake Frazier or Charlie Irvis, tb; Bob Fuller, cl; poss Louis Hooper or Mike Jackson, p; Buddy Christian -bj; unknown, d; Louise Vant, v (1,2)
 - BGR*3,*4: poss Tom Morris, c; poss Jake Frazier or Charlie Irvis, tb; Bob Fuller, cl; poss Louis Hooper or Mike Jackson, p; Buddy Christian -bj; unknown, d; Louise Vant, v (1,2)

Tunes:

74057-A *Sunset Blues* Key of C OKeh
 (A1 Chorus 12 bars blues ens)(B Verse 16 bars AA' ens)(A2 Chorus 12 bars voc + ens)(A3 Chorus 12 bars voc + ens)(A4 Chorus 12 bars voc + ens)(A5 Chorus 12 bars tpt + ens riff)(A6 Chorus 12 bars ens)
 74058-A *Texas Mule Stomp* Key of C - Em - C OKeh
 (Intro 8 bars ens)(A strain A 16 bars AA ens)(B strain B 16 bars AA ens)(C1 Chorus 16 bars AA voc + ens)(C2 Chorus 16 bars voc + ens)(C3 Chorus 16 bars ens)
 74059-A *Sugar House Stomp* Key of Bb OKeh
 (Intro 8 bars ens)(A1 strain A 16 bars AA' clt + tbn)(A2 strain A 16 bars AA tpt + ens)(B1 strain B 16 bars AA' ens)(B2 strain B 16 bars tbn)(C1 strain C 16 bars AB ens)(C2 strain C 16 bars ens)(A3 strain A 16 bars ens)(A4 strain A 16 bars ens)

005 ROSETTA CRAWFORD

New York, c. May 1926

Rosetta Crawford – voc;

Thomas Morris – cnt;

Mike Jackson – pno; (Charlie Dixon) – bjo

106858- Two-Faced Man

PA 7505, Document DOCD-1005

106859- Misery

PA 7505, Document DOCD-1005

From the piano I hear treble figures characteristic for Mike Jackson, who – by the way – was a good companion to Morris.

This certainly is Thomas Morris on cnt/tpt. The banjo playing does not remind me of Charlie Dixon as I know him from Henderson's recordings. But this is a completely different surrounding here. I still have my doubts.

Notes:

- BGR*2: acc by unknown orchestra

- BGR*3,*4: prob Thomas Morris, c; prob Cliff Jackson or Mike Jackson, p; prob Charlie Dixon, bj.

- Rust*3,*4: acc by unknown orchestra (sic)

- Rust*6: ?Tom Morris, c; ?Cliff Jackson or ?Mike Jackson, p; ?Charlie Dixon, bj.

006 MIKE JACKSON

New York, Jul. 02, 1926

Mike Jackson – voc, pno

The Sho' Nuff Blues

Vic unissued (test)

not on LP/CD

Talkin' Too Much

Vic unissued (test)

not on LP/CD

Since these two titles are unissued and no test pressings publicly known, nothing can be said about them.

Notes:

- B. Rust; Victor Master Book Vol. 2: not listed

- Rust*3,*4,*6: own p.

007 ELVIRA JOHNSON Birmingham Darktown Strutters

New York, Jun. 19, 1926

Elvira Johnson - voc

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

Mike Jackson – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

X-177 How Could I Be Blue?

Gnt 3337,

Document DOCD-5375

X-178 Numbers On The Brain

Gnt 3337,

Document DOCD-5375

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

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

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

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

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

Notes:

- Rust*3: unknown -c; unknown -tb; Buster Bailey -ss; ?Clarence Williams -p; ?Buddy Christian -bj

- Rust*4,*6: Charlie Gaines - c; Charlie Irvis - tb; ?Ernest Elliott - ss; Clarence Williams or poss Mike Jackson - p; Buddy Christian - bj

- BGR*2: unknown cnt; unknown tbn; Buster Bailey, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

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

008 MIKE JACKSON AND MABEL RICHARDSON Mike Jackson, Mabel Richardson – voc duet; Thomas Morris – cnt; Mike Jackson – pno 35738-1 Just Too Bad 35739 I'm Gonna Kill Myself	New York, Vic 20181, Vic unissued	Jul. 02, 1926 Document DOCD-5528 not on LP/CD
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Very nice call and response vocal duet of the 'Butterbeans And Susie' type. Clearly to hear is Jackson's sober piano style characterised by his right-hand flowery treble figures and left-hand stride bass.

Morris is very retained, but tone and attack – and his relation to Jackson – point to his presence.

Notes:

- B. Rust; Victor Master Book Vol. 2: acc by c and Mike Jackson -p.

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; own pno.

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; own p.

009 MANDY LEE Mandy Lee – voc; (Thomas Morris) – cnt; Willie Gant – pno 106990 Rounders Blues 106991 Wandering Papa Blues	New York, PA 7509, PA 7509,	c. Jul. 12, 1926 Document DOCD-5515 Document DOCD-5515
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Recent research causes me to identify Willie Gant as pianist here.

These musicians definitely sound like Thomas Morris and Mike Jackson. They show all their typical characteristics: Morris' uncertainty, weak fingering and embouchure, and Mike Jackson's flowery phrasing in the right hand and his modest stride style.

I really wonder why nobody did recognize both the accompanying musicians up to now!

Notes:

- BGR*2,*3,*4: unknown cnt; pno.

- Rust*3,*4,*6: unknown -c, -p.

010 THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS SEVEN HOT BABIES 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 35763-1 Jackass Blues 35763-3 Jackass Blues 35764-2 Charleston Stampede	New York, Vic 20483, Vic 20179, Vic 20179, Vic 20180,	Jul. 13, 1926 Frog DFG 1 Frog DFG 1 Frog DFG 1 Frog DFG 1
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After Happy Caldwell's statements in Storyville 99 (see below) we might be certain of Thomas Morris, Ward Pinkett, Geechie Fields, Albert 'Happy' Caldwell, Lee Blair and perhaps Bill Benford on these sides.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lee Blair with his dry banjo sound seems to be as given. He can also be heard on the J.R. Morton RHP of June 1928, together with Bill Benford, whose presence here, shortly before his sojourn with the 'Blackbirds of 1926' band touring Great Britain, and after his time with the June Clark band at 'Smalls' Sugar Cane Club', seems to be confirmed. He played a straight upright tuba, not a sousaphone. Pinkett, Fields, and Blair, together with drummer Tommy Benford, later were in Bill Benford's Rose Danceland band from where Morton picked them for recording purposes.

Notes:

- Rust, Victor Master Book Vol. 2: 2c / tb / 2s / p / bj / bb
 - Rust*2: Tom Morris, Ward Pinkett (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); Ernest Elliott (clt, alt); Happy Caldwell (ten); Mike Jackson (pno); unknown (bjo); Bill Benford ? (bbs)
 - Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris, Rex Stewart -c; Geechie Fields -tb; Ernest Elliott -cl, ts, bar; unknown -as; Mike Jackson -p; ? Lee Blair -bj; ? Bill Benford -bb
 - Rust*6: Tom Morris, Ward Pinkett -t; Geechie Fields -tb; Ernest Elliott -cl-as-bar; Happy Caldwell -cl-ts; Marlowe Morris -p; ? Lee Blair -bj; Bill Benford -bb
 - Storyville 99-88, Happy Caldwell: "The first electrical recordings I made were with Tommy Morris - I remember we had a microphone instead of those big horns. Ward Pinkett and Tommy were on trumpets, Geechie Fields on trombone and Marlowe Morris - he was Tommy's cousin, er no, his uncle, he was on piano. I remember we did Ham And Gravy (sic) and Jackass Blues. No, I never recorded with Rex Stewart at that time."

Tunes:

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

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

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

35764-2 *Charleston Stampede* Key of Bb
 (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

011 MARGARET CARTER

New York, early Aug. 1926

Margaret Carter - voc;

Big Charlie Thomas - cnt; Charlie Irvis - tbn;

Happy Caldwell - clt; (George McClennon?) - alt;

Mike Jackson - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

107041 I Want Plenty Grease In My Frying Pan PA 7511, Timeless CBC 1-030

107042 Come Get Me Papa, Before I Faint PA 7511, Timeless CBC 1-030

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes:

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

- BGR*2: Margaret Carter -v; unknown -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; unknown -cl; Bob Fuller -cl -as; Louis Hooper -p; Buddy Christian -bj.

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

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

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

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

012 BUDDY CHRISTIAN'S JAZZ RIPPERS

New York, early Aug. 1926

Big Charlie Thomas – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;
 Happy Caldwell – clt; (*George McClennon?*) – clt;
 Mike Jackson – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo, voc
 107043 South Rampart Street Blues PA 8518, Timeless CBC 1-030
 107044 The Skunk PA 8518, Timeless CBC 1-030

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

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

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

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

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

Notes:

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

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

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

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

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

013 THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS SEVEN HOT BABIES

New York,

Aug. 17, 1926

Thomas Morris, Jabbo Smith – tpt; Geechie Fields – tbn;
 Ernest Elliott – alt, clt; Happy Caldwell – ten;
 Mike Jackson – pno; (*Buddy Christian*) – bjo; Bill Benford – bbs;
 Mike Jackson – voc
 36047-3 Georgia Grind
 36048-2 Ham Gravy
 36048-3 Ham Gravy

Vic 20180,
 Vic 20179,
 Vic 20179,

Frog DFG 1
 Frog DFG 1
 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

014 MAMIE SMITH

New York, Aug. 27, 1926

Mamie Smith - voc;
 Thomas Morris - cnt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Bob Fuller - clt;
 Mike Jackson - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo
 36069-1 Goin' Crazy With The Blues
 36069-2 Goin' Crazy With The Blues
 36070-1 Sweet Virginia Blues
 36070-2 Sweet Virginia Blues

Vic LPV-534, Doc DOCD 5360
 Vic 20210, Doc DOCD 5360
 Vic 20233 not on LP/CD
 Vic 20233, Doc DOCD 5360

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

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

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

Notes:

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

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

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

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

Notable differences of takes:

36069-1: bar 8 of ensemble chorus (chorus 2) tpt middle break (ca. 1:40): tbn enters with growled half note E on second beat
 36069-2: bar 8 of ensemble chorus (chorus 2) tpt middle break (ca. 1:50): tbn enters with clean note low E on fourth beat
 36070: no alternate take reissued, so no comment possible

015 THOMAS MORRIS AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York, Aug. 27, 1926

Thomas Morris - cnt; Charlie Irvis or (Joe Nanton) - tbn; Happy Caldwell - clt;
 Mike Jackson - pno;
 Thomas Morris, Charlie 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, yet, might point to Charlie Irvis' presence.

The same applies to Happy Caldwell on clarinet. If it is Caldwell, 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. But all this would also apply to Bob Fuller, only that it is not Fuller's vibrato and style at all!

The piano player only plays simple chordal accompaniment and can therefore not be identified with any certainty, but this simple "pounding" also seems to have been one side of Mike Jackson's style.

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.

016 MAMIE SMITH

New York, Aug. 31, 1926

Mamie Smith – voc;

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

Mike Jackson – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

36081-1	What Have I Done To Make Me Feel This Way ?	Vic 20233	not on LP/CD
36081-2	What Have I Done To Make Me Feel This Way ?	Vic 20233,	Doc DOCD 5360
36081-3	What Have I Done To Make Me Feel This Way ?	Vic LPV-534,	Doc DOCD 5360
36082-2	I Once Was Yours I'm Somebody Else's Now	Vic 20210,	Doc DOCD 5360

This seems to be the same personnel as on the former Mamie Smith session with the exception of the clarinet player, who plays in a much more fashionable and modern style than Fuller, with interesting melodic phrases - unheard of by Fuller – especially in ‘I Once Was Yours’ and a completely different vibrato. Beautiful! Because of the time of recording and of Happy Caldwell’s vicinity to the Thomas Morris circle I assume that this might be Caldwell on clarinet here. This clarinetist’s style is much more “Western” and Dodds-influenced than Fuller’s. Irvis’ presence again doubted a little but nearer to Irvis than preceding Mamie Smith session.

The pianist plays strong four-beat two-fisted rhythm like the player at the session before. Unfortunately, he cannot be heard in solo. So, it is impossible to judge whether he could be J.C. Johnson as possibly reported from his own testimony below. But there is nothing to find musically what could point to any distinct musician.

The banjo player may be Christian, but this man here doubles time in ‘What Have I Done ...’ which elsewhere is unheard of by Christian. So, his presence has to be doubted. But it is his light banjo sound!

DB: Indeed, different clarinet. More fluid but not enough exposed to be able to identify. Trombone sounds here less standard Irvis but my guess is ... (who? K-B).

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

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

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

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

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

Notable differences of takes:

36081-1:	this take not reissued in any form, thus no comment possible
36081-2:	first bar of introduction – tpt fourth note D is somewhat fluffed and unclear
36081-3:	first bar of introduction – tpt fourth note D is clear and clean

017 ELIZABETH SMITH

New York, Sep. 06, 1926

Elizabeth Smith – voc, ukl (1);

Thomas Morris – tpt (2); Happy Caldwell – clt (2);

Mike Jackson – pno (2)

36097-2	No Sooner	Vic 20297,	RST JPCD-1526-2
36098-2	Gwine To Have Bad Luck For Seven Years	Vic 20297,	RST JPCD-1526-2

Once again, this is not Bob Fuller’s style at all. And again, I have to opt for Happy Caldwell’s presence here from all I can hear and recognize. He is much less erratic and much more tasteful than Bob Fuller.

(The first title only has ukulele accompaniment by Miss Smith herself.)

Notes:

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

- BGR*2,*3,*4: E. Smith, own u (1); Tom Morris -c; Bob Fuller -cl; Mike Jackson -p (2)

- Rust*3,*4,*6: E. Smith, own u (1); Tom Morris -c; Bob Fuller -cl; Mike Jackson -p (2)

018 EVELYN PREER

New York, Sep. 06, 1926

Evelyn Preer – voc;

Thomas Morris – cnt; (Happy Caldwell) – clt;

Mike Jackson – pno

36099-2	Make Me Know It	Vic 20306,	Document DOCD-5516
36099-3	Make Me Know It	Vic 20306,	RCA (F) FPM1 7049 (LP)

Note: Both takes listed as from LP/CD notes, but they seem to be identical.

Thomas Morris undoubted from my side. But the clarinetist seems to be Caldwell again.

This is typical light-handed piano playing by Mike Jackson with fast chromatic upward arpeggios. Very nice. And solid stride accompaniment. Beautiful piano performance!

Notes:

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

- BGR*2,*3,*4: E. Smith, own u (1); Tom Morris -c; Bob Fuller -cl; Mike Jackson -p.

- Rust*3,*4,*6: E. Smith, own u (1); Tom Morris -c; Bob Fuller -cl; Mike Jackson -p.

019 MANDY LEE

New York, Sep. 1926

Mandy Lee – voc;

Thomas Morris – tpt; Happy Caldwell – clt;

Mike Jackson – pno; (Buddy Christian) – bjo

6859-1	I Needs A Plenty Of Grease In My Frying Pan	Ban 1901	not on LP/CD
6859-2	I Needs A Plenty Of Grease In My Frying Pan	Ban 1901	not on LP/CD
6859-6	I Needs A Plenty Of Grease In My Frying Pan	Ban 1901,	Document DOCD-5515
6860-1	Crap Shootin’ Papa, Mama Done Caught Your Dice	Or 771	not on LP/CD
6860-6	Crap Shootin’ Papa, Mama Done Caught Your Dice	Ban 1901,	Document DOCD-5515

Thomas Morris and Mike Jackson are undisputed because of their stylistic features. But certainly, the clarinetist is not Bob Fuller, but very probably Happy Caldwell judging from his very strong, non-erratic and Dodds inspired style. There is nothing that reminds of Bob Fuller! The pianist shows distinct features of Mike Jackson, i.e. busy right hand in flowery figures (arpeggios).

The banjo player is not Elmer Snowden, again on stylistic reasons. Following Storyville 158 (see below) he might be Buddy Christian, but the banjo sound is not his to my ears and the many tremolos he plays are not Christian's attitude.

Notes:

- *Jazz Directory, Vol. Six: vcl with unknown acc.*

- *Rust*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; Bob Fuller -cl; Mike Jackson -p; ?Elmer Snowden, bj*

- *BGR*2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; Bob Fuller, clt; Mike Jackson, pno; prob Elmer Snowden, bjo*

- *Storyville 158, p.80: Composer of Mandy Lee's 6859 is Buddy Christian – might he be the unknown bj?*

Notable differences of takes:

Since there are no alternate takes reissued of any recorded title in any form, no comment is possible

020 MIKE JACKSON		New York,	Oct. 10, 1926
Mike Jackson – pno, voc			
36505-1	Alabama Mama	Vic 20482,	Document DOCD-5532
36506-5	Kissing Mule Blues	Vic 20482,	Document DOCD-5532

The Victor files say it's Mike Jackson here on piano accompanying his own vocal.

Notes:

- *B. Rust, The Victor Master Book Vol. 2: acc by own p.*

- *BGR*2,*3,*4: own pno.*

- *Rust*3,*4,*6: own p.*

021 MARGARET JOHNSON	Black And Blue Trio	New York,	Oct. 20, 1926
Margaret Johnson	– voc;		
Thomas Morris	– tpt; <i>Happy Caldwell</i> – clt, sop;		
Mike Jackson	– pno		
36846-1	When A 'Gator Hollers, Folks Say It's A Sign Of Rain	Vic 20333,	Document DOCD-5436
36846-2	When A 'Gator Hollers, Folks Say It's A Sign Of Rain	Vic uniss. on 78,	Document DOCD-5436
36847-2	Graysom Street Blues	Vic 20333,	Document DOCD-5436

Thomas and Mike Jackson are obvious on these sides. But again, the clarinetist definitely is not Bob Fuller. He shows definite similarities to Johnny Dodds' playing in tone, vibrato and phrasing. Much more than any other clarinet player in New York at this time. There is nothing that reminds of Fuller. Thus, I am convinced that we hear Happy Caldwell here. And from Caldwell's own testimony we know of his inclination towards Johnny Dodds. He plays very beautifully here!

Notes:

- *B. Rust, The Victor Master Book Vol. 2: acc by the Black And Blue Trio (c / cl / p).*

- *Rust*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; Bob Fuller -cl; Mike Jackson -p*

- *BGR*2: Tom Morris, cnt; Bob Fuller, clt; Mike Jackson, pno*

- *BGR*3,*4: Tom Morris, c; Bob Fuller, cl, ss; Mike Jackson, p*

Notable differences of takes (*):

36846-1: *bar12 of 3. Chorus (voc) upbeat to clt solo (ca.1:48): clt plays 1 quarter pause, 1 eighth note F, 1 quarter note F, 1 quarter note Bb, 1 eighth note G*

36846-2: *bar12 of 3. Chorus (voc) upbeat to clt solo (ca.1:48): clt plays 1 eighth pause, 1 eighth + half note F, 2 eighth notes*

022 NEW ORLEANS BLUE FIVE		New York,	Nov: 02, 1926
Thomas Morris	– tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn; <i>Happy Caldwell</i> – clt, sop;		
Mike Jackson	– pno; <i>Bobbie Leecan</i> – gtr;		
Helen Baxter, Thomas Morris, Joe Nanton	– dialogue (3,4)		
36895-1	My Baby Doesn't Squawk	Vic 20364,	Frog DGF 1
36895-2	My Baby Doesn't Squawk	Vic 20364,	Frog DGF 1
36896-1	The King Of The Zulus	Vic 20316,	Frog DGF 1
36896-2	The King Of The Zulus	Vic 20316,	Frog DGF 1
36897-1	South Rampart Street Blues	Vic 20653,	Frog DGF 1
36897-2	South Rampart Street Blues	Vic 20653,	Frog DGF 1

Thomas Morris and Joe Nanton – later 'Tricky Sam' – are documented in the Victor Master Book, Vol. 2, by Brian Rust. On clarinet we hear the same man again as on the preceding Margaret Johnson session. He shines with his Johnny Dodds inspired playing – if somewhat "light" in comparison – but far from Bob Fuller and without any reasonable doubt Happy Caldwell. The pianist delivers the simplest sort of chordal accompaniment and does not show any characteristics. Only in 'South Rampart Street Blues' he shows his facilities as a stride pianist. And these are compatible with what I know of Mike Jackson's style. Re the guitarist: Richard Rains certainly is right as expressed in his article in Storyville 153 (see below). So, after relistening this certainly is Bobby Leecan on guitar here.

Notes:

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

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

- *Rust*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; Joe Nanton -tb; Bob Fuller -cl, ss; Mike Jackson -p; Buddy Christian -g; Helen Baxter - Tom Morris – Joe Nanton -dialogue (3,4)*

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

Notable differences of takes:

- 36895-1: bar 3 of intro (ca. 0:05): *tpt* plays 1 eighth note D, 1 quarter note D, 2 eighth notes D, 1 eighth note C, 1 eighth note A, 1 eighth note F#
- 36895-2: bar 3 of intro (ca. 0:05): *tpt* plays 1 eighth note D, 1 quarter note D, 1 eighth note D, 1 eighth note C, 1 eighth note A, 1 eighth note F#, 1 eighth note D (low)
- 36896-1: bar 10 of strain A (ca. 0:11): *clt* break *clt* attempts to play triplet run, but fails after first triplet
- 36896-2: bar 10 of strain A (ca. 0:11): *clt* break *clt* plays downward d-minor arpeggio in eighth notes
- 36897-1: bar 15/16 of 2. Verse (after pno solo)(ca. 1:21) upbeat to sop solo: 1 quarter note F, 2 eighth notes G – Gb (bar 15), 1 half note F (bar 16)
- 36897-2: bar 15/16 of 2. Verse (after pno solo)(ca. 1:21) upbeat to sop solo: 2 eighth notes F – F#, 1 quarter note G, 2 eighth notes G – Gb (bar 15), 1 half note F (bar 16)

023 **MONETTE MOORE**

New York,

Nov. 09, 1926

Monette Moore – voc;

Thomas Morris – cnt; Albert Happy Caldwell – clt;

Mike Jackson – 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 trebble 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

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

New York,

Nov. 12, 1926

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

Marlow Morris (or Phil Worde) – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Wellman Braud – sbs; unknown (Eddie King) - 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

KBR: pno plays more sparsely than Mike Jackson does, therefore more probably Worde (boogie figures in P.D.Q.!). Bjo sound is not like Christian, in P.D.Q. Blues bjo plays arpeggio-like figures unheard of by Christian.

DB: as received and I think enough to firm Elliott but I don't know his tenor. No comment piano or banjo – not qualified.

Notes:

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

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

Tunes:

36925-1 *Blues From The Everglades* Key of Ab Victor

4 bars intro(*) tbn JN / 6 strain A ens / 12 strain B1 ens - 2 breaks tpt TM - 2 breaks ten HC / 12 Chorus 1 ens - break ten HC / 12 strain B2 ens - 2 breaks tpt TM - 2 breaks clt HC / 10 chorus 2 ens 1 break clt HC / 8 strain C1 ens 4 bars double-time - end-break tbn JN / 8 strain C2 ens 4 bars double-time - end-break tbn JN / 8 strain C3 ens end-break clt HC / 8 strain C4 ens / 2 coda

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

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

36926-1 *P.D.Q. Blues* Key of Eb / F / Eb Victor

railroad noises / 4 bars intro clt HC + bjo BC / 24 chorus 1 ens / 24 chorus 2 tpt TM - clt HC / 4 bridge ens modulation Eb - F / 14 interlude tbn(*) - ens / 4 bridge ens modulation F - Eb / 24 chorus 3 ens - clt+ tbn

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

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

Notable differences of takes (*):

36925-1: Intro: tbn starts in bar 2

36925-2: Intro: tbn starts loudly from beginning

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

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

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

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

025 **EDNA WINSTON**

New York,

Nov. 23, 1926

Edna Winston - voc;

Thomas Morris - tpt; unknown - tbn; Happy Caldwell - clt;

Mike Jackson - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

36958-3 I Got A Mule To Ride

Vic 20407,

Document DOCD-5523

36959-2 Mama's Gonna Drop Your Curtain

Vic 20424,

Document DOCD-5523

36960-3 Pail In My Hand

Vic 20424,

Document DOCD-5523

36961-1 Peeping Jim

Vic 20407,

Document DOCD-5523

Thomas Morris is definite. But the trombonist certainly is not Irvis, but a very beautiful, if unknown – or not yet identified – trombonist, one of the better players. His name might be known, but unlinked to any known recordings. On clarinet we hear the same man I have associated with the name of Happy Caldwell at the recording sessions above.

The pianist performs in a flowery style as heard from Mike Jackson. He plays tinkling right-hand treble figures all the time neglecting his left hand. He seems to have had some strong connection to the Victor company as he is listed almost exclusively on Victor recordings in 1926/27. He sometimes plays very retained and academic, but on other occasions with a very busy right hand as heard here. (This statement is to be seen with caution since some of his entries in the discographies on which my statement is based bear a question mark.)

Buddy Christian probably is on banjo. His instrument, yet, is much more present than on other recordings. This might, yet, result from his position the microphone. The style and sound is Christian's.

Notes:

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

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

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

- Storyville 153, p. 87/88: See Richard Rains' view on this matter!

026 **MIKE JACKSON AND MABEL RICHARDSON**

New York,

Nov. 24, 1926

Mike Jackson, Mabel Richardson - voc duet;

Thomas Morris - cnt; Mike Jackson - pno

35739-2 I'm Gonna Kill Myself

Vic 20181,

Document DOCD-5528

35739-3 I'm Gonna Kill Myself

Vic 20181,

Document DOCD-5655

Very nice call and response vocal duet of the 'Butterbeans And Susie' type. Clearly to hear is Jackson's sober piano style characterised by his right-hand flowery treble figures and left-hand stride bass.

Morris is very retained, but tone and attack – and his relation to Jackson – point to his presence.

Notes:

- B. Rust, Victor Master Book Vol. 2: acc. by c and Mike Jackson -p.

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

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

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

New York,

Nov. 24, 1926

Thomas Morris – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn; *Happy Caldwell* – clt, cms or alt;
 Mike Jackson – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Wellman Braud – sbs; (*Eddie King*) - dms

36962-2	<i>The Mess</i>	<i>Vic 20364,</i>	<i>Frog DGF 71</i>
36962-3	<i>The Mess</i>	<i>Vic 20364,</i>	<i>Frog DGF 1</i>
36963-1	<i>The Chinch</i>	<i>Vic 20483,</i>	<i>Frog DGF 1</i>
36963-2	<i>The Chinch</i>	<i>Vic 20483,</i>	<i>Frog DGF 1</i>

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

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

The rest of the rhythm section obviously is the same as before.

KBR: Morris undoubted. Nanton as well. But is this really Bob Fuller on reeds? Out of my knowledge of Fuller I would say: No! The pianist is much more restrained and functional than Mike Jackson who plays with much right hand flowery figures. Thus probably Phil Worde, if these two are the alternatives.

DB: as received.

MR: OK

Notes:

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

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

Tunes:

36962-2 *The Mess*: 4 bars intro dms EK / 16 strain A ens(*) / 32 strain B cms HC / 32 strain B ens at end modulation F - D / 16 chorus 1 ens – sbs WB / 16 chorus 2 ens – clt HC / 4 bridge modulation D – F / 16 chorus 3 ens.

36962-3 *The Mess*: same as -1

36963-1 *The Chinch*: 4 bars intro ens / 16 strain A cms – ens / 16 strain A ens / 4 vamp ens / 8 strain B cms / 4 vamp ens / 8 strain B cms – ens / 16 strain A ens / 16 strain C cms – ens / 16 strain C tpt / 16 strain A clt (*) / 4 vamp ens / 8 strain B cms – ens / 4 vamp ens / 8 strain B cms – ens / 16 strain A ens.

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

Notable differences of takes (*):

36962-2: bar 13 of strain A: tpt all alone, playing a row six F

36962-3: bar 13 of strain A: tpt and clt playing together for 3 beats, then clt dropping out to switch instrument

36963-1: end of clt solo: clt stops exactly before tpt coming in

36963-2: end of clt solo: clt plays together with tpt for 1 bar

028	NETTIE ROBINSON	<i>New York,</i>	<i>c. Jan. 15, 1927</i>
	<i>Nettie Robinson – voc;</i>		
	<i>Edwin Swayze – tpt; Bob Fuller – clt;</i>		
	<i>Willie Gant – pno</i>		
107311	<i>I've Got The Right Man Now</i>	<i>PA 7523,</i>	<i>Document DOCD-5517</i>
107312	<i>I Never Loved But One Woman's Son</i>	<i>PA 7523,</i>	<i>Document DOCD-5517</i>

This seems to be the same personnel as on Rosa Henderson's Vocalion session of July 02, 1926, although the pianist does not play Cliff Jackson's typical licks (broken rhythm or shifting of meter) and may therefore possibly be somebody else, yet a very strong stride piano player – not Mike Jackson who plays a very different right hand. Recent research (April 2021) on pianist Willie Gant unearthed Gant's recollection that he recorded for Pathé Actuelle in 1926/27 when he was leading a band in Harlem. This pianist's style of modified ragtime without modern and fashionable stride techniques of the time could well be Willie Gant's.

This is what our group said about this session in our Thomas Morris investigation some years ago:

KBR: aurally personnel seems to be right.

DB: as received but definite.

MR: Morris possible, Fuller doubtful.

Notes:

Record Research 30, p.4: "Gant reported recording several sessions during this period for Columbia, Pathe and Grey Gull with the band and also as a pianist with pick-up outfits. None of the recording are total solo endeavors and according to Gant these sessions were the last of his recordings. Owing to a lack of substantial statistical evidence these recordings are still in the realm of obscurity and are demanding of future research."

- RR 77-8: not listed.

- BGR*2: poss Thomas Morris, cnt; poss Bob Fuller, clt; poss Mike Jackson, pno.

- BGR*3,*4: prob Thomas Morris, cnt; prob Bob Fuller, clt; prob Mike Jackson, pno.

- Rust*3,*4,*6: prob Thomas Morris, cnt; prob Bob Fuller, clt; prob Mike Jackson, pno

029	LAURA SMITH <i>The Wild Cats</i>	<i>New York,</i>	<i>c. Jan. 15, 1927</i>
	<i>Laura Smith – voc;</i>		
	<i>Edwin Swayze – tpt; Bob Fuller – clt;</i>		
	<i>Willie Gant – pno</i>		
107313	<i>I'm Goin' To Have Seven Years' Bad Luck</i>	<i>PA 7520,</i>	<i>Document DOCD-5429</i>
107314	<i>When A Gator Hollers (Folks Say Sign O' Rain)</i>	<i>PA 7520,</i>	<i>Document DOCD-5429</i>

The pianist does not play Cliff Jackson's typical licks (broken rhythm or shifting of meter) nor Mike Jackson's light and flowery stride-style, and may therefore possibly be somebody else, yet a very strong piano player – not Mike Jackson who plays a very different right hand. Mind the consecutive matrix numbers of these four PA sessions – their recording date certainly should be checked and corrected!

My (KBR's) assumption – following recent research – is that Willie Gant may well be the pianist, not Cliff nor Mike Jackson.

This is what our group said about this session in our Thomas Morris investigation some years ago:

KBR: *aurally personnel seems to be right, though the trumpet player bears some similarity to Gus Aiken's style. ADDITION 160310: very probably Edwin Swayze*

DB: *I accept the personal although Tom sounds untypical at times – slurs – but he starts 'When A Gator' with his standard entry.*

MR: *Morris and Fuller both likely.*

Notes:

- RR 77-8: not listed.

- BGR*2: *poss Thomas Morris, cnt; poss Bob Fuller, clt; poss Mike Jackson, pno.*

- BGR*3,*4: *prob Thomas Morris, cnt; prob Bob Fuller, clt; prob Mike Jackson, pno.*

- Rust*3,*4: *? Thomas Morris, cnt; ? Bob Fuller, clt; ? Mike Jackson, pno*

- Rust*3,*4,*6: *unknown, c; unknown cl; unknown p.*

030 **ROSA HENDERSON**

New York,

Dec. 1926/Jan. 1927

Rosa Henderson – voc;

Edwin Swayze – tpt; Willie Gant – pno

107315 Slow Up, Papa

PA 7522,

Document DOCD-5404

107316 Hock Shop Blues

PA 7522,

Document DOCD-5404

This trumpet player here has all characteristics of Edwin Swayze as on the Vocalions above. If you listen you hear a style closely related to Joe King Oliver's playing.

The pianist might be Willie Gant, after recent research on this musician/bandleader, as on the entire Pathé session of c. 15 Januar, 1927.

Cliff Jackson as listed by Rust, yet not very distinct here, just as on the session before.

Notes:

- Jazz Directory Vol.4: *unknown accompaniment.*

- VJM 177, Bob Hitchens, *The Choo Choo Jazzers: "Sounds like L. Metcalf to me, and poss Louis Hooper. ... KBR (N&N77) notes that this tpt does not fall away in tone at the end of notes as Metcalf had done on earlier recordings. He suggests that Edwin Swayzee fits the bill. But we have not heard from L. Metcalf for 18 months during which time he has been active in Harlem. A young musician is bound to develop his style in these circumstances. In the absence of any reference to Swayzee's involvement from contemporary media or in personal reminiscences by those who were there, I see no reason revise this personnel. I do agree that the same trumpet is heard on Rosa's next two issued sessions and on that of c. January 1927 (by which time Swayzee was in the mid-west with Trent)."*

- BGR*2,*3,*4: *unknown cnt; unknown pno.*

- Rust*3,*4,*6: *? Cliff Jackson, p.*

031 **SADIE GREEN**

New York,

c. Jan. 15, 1927

Sadie Green – voc;

Edwin Swayze – tpt; Willie Gant – pno

107317 Alley Man (Haul My Ashes)

PA 7524,

Document DOCD-5511

107318 Don't Wear Your Welcome Out

PA 7524,

Document DOCD-5511

Here, we hear the trumpeter assumed to be Edwin Swayze with his sharp yet earthy trumpet playing derived from King Oliver (see 'Edwin Swayze' elsewhere on this website under "Soloists"). Very beautiful!

The pianist plays the melody along with the trumpet and is not as strong rhythmically as Cliff Jackson, thus possibly Willie Gant, whose characteristic is playing in a modified ragtime manner with "locked" hands. He does not use the typical stride left-hand with bass-notes on one and three and subsequent chords on two and four. I have earlier assumed this player to be Mike Jackson, but Jackson decidedly plays with independant hands, a moderate stride left-hand and a flowery right hand. Willie Gant recalled having recorded for Pathé Actuelle in 1926/27 during his period as bandleader at Harlem's 'Smalls' Paradise'.

Notes:

- BGR*2,*3,*4: *unknown cnt; unknown pno.*

- Rust*3,*4,*6: *unknown -c; unknown -p.*

032 **EDNA WINSTON**

New York,

Feb. 16, 1927

Edna Winston – voc;

Thomas Morris – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Albert Happy Caldwell – clt, alt;

Mike Jackson – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo

37786-1 'Way After One And My Daddy Ain't Come Home Yet

Vic 20857,

Document DOCD-5523

37787-1 Joogie Blues

Vic 20654,

Document DOCD-5523

37788-1 Ever After On

Vic 20654,

Document DOCD-5523

37788-2 Ever After On

Vic 20654,

Retrieval RTR 79078

37789-1 Rent Man Blues

Vic 20857,

Document DOCD-5523

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

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

Notes:

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

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

033 **LAURA SMITH** (Sara Lawrence)

New York,

Feb. 25, 1927

Laura Smith – voc;

Thomas Morris – cnt, speech; Mike Jackson – pno, speech		
7130-2 Don't You Leave Me Here	Ban 1977,	Document DOCD-5429
813-2 Don't You Leave Me Here	Or 894,	Document DOCD-5461
814-2 If You Don't Like My Potatoes	Or 894,	Document DOCD-5461

Against other suggestions of the past and depending on Bob Hilbert's comment below – and according to what can be heard – the above listed accompanists apparently are the right ones. John Olivar, author of a Thomas Morris discography published in Storyville 2002-3 (of which I have a lot of reservations!), sent the following interesting observations on these sides: *Thomas Morris or Tommy Ladnier – cnt; Mike Jackson or Lukie Johnson or James P. Johnson – pno. It's almost definitely Morris and Jackson in accompaniment. Laura during the cornet solo: "My my my, Thomas, Oh, Thomas." Laura during the piano solo: "Oh, play it, Mister Mike, Play it. Do it." I think Morris – a voice resembling that of the main speaker on the Who's Dis Heah Stranger (session 059) – and Jackson alternate with comments during the first chorus: TM: "What's That?" MJ: "Do you think I'm blind?" TM: "Who don't like potatoes?" MJ: "Everybody likes potatoes." TM: "My, my, my..."*

After my long-time assumption that Charlie Johnson might perhaps have been the accompanist on the Laura Smith Banner take of 'Don't You Leave Me Here' (Charlie Johnson's Original Paradise Ten recorded their first Victor session on this very day – having Thomas Morris in their ranks) I am convinced now that Mike Jackson is the pianist.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4: Tom Morris -c; Lukie Johnson -p (on Banner); ?Tommy Ladnier -c; James P. Johnson -p. This is probably a pseudonym, but for whom is unknown at present (on Oriole).

- Rust*6: Tom Morris, c; Lukie Johnson, p.

- BGR*2,*3: Tom Morris, cnt; Lukie Johnson, pno (on Banner); reportedly Tommy Ladnier, cnt; James P. Johnson, pno.

- BGR*4: Tom Morris, c; Lukie Johnson, p. "Although the singer calls the pianist 'Mike', it is believed that he is in fact Lukie Johnson."

- Storyville 154-148, Bob Hilbert: "Discographies list an intriguing item under the name of Sara Lawrence (Oriole 894)... Researcher Karl Kenziora recently turned up a copy of Oriole 894 by Sara Lawrence, with the titles 'Don't You Leave Me Here', control number 813-1, and 'If You Don't Like Potatoes', control number 814-2. The first title features the same vocalist and accompanists (although an alternate take) as Plaza matrix number 7130 by Laura Smith and was released under her name on Banner 1977, Domino 3948 and Regal 8304. The second title apparently was not released on the Plaza labels, but sounds as though it was recorded at the same session and with the same personnel as the first title. The pianist does not resemble James P. Johnson and is addressed by Ms. Smith as 'Mike'. The cornetist is addressed as 'Tom', but Tom Morris is a more likely choice than Ladnier. Mike Jackson has been suggested as the pianist. Interestingly, Rust in Jazz Records 1897-1942 (revised edition 1969, and fourth edition) lists the first title under Laura Smith's also name and gives the accompaniment as Tom Morris, cornet; Lukie Johnson, piano."

034 ALBERTA HUNTER	Camden, NJ,	Feb. 26, 1927
Alberta Hunter – voc;		
Mike Jackson - pno		
37688-2 I'll Forgive You 'Cause I Love You	Vic 20497,	Document DOCD-5424
37689-2 I'm Gonna Lose Myself 'Way Down In Louisville	Vic 20497,	Document DOCD-5424
37690-2 My Old Daddy's Got A Brand New Way To Love	Vic 20651,	Document DOCD-5424
37691-2 I'm Down Right Now But I Won't Be Down Always	Vic 20651,	Document DOCD-5424

This is the light-hearted and soft stride piano accompaniment as known from Mike Jackson.

Notes:

- B. Rust, *The Victor Master Book Vol. 2: Mike Jackson -p.*

- Rust*3,*4,*5: Mike Jackson -p.

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Mike Jackson, pno.

035 EVELYN THOMPSON	New York,	Mar. 30, 1927
Evelyn Preer – voc;		
Joe Smith – tpt; Happy Caldwell – clt;		
Mike Jackson - 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. But clarinet tone and vibrato heard in the second title might point to Caldwell.

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:

- BGR*4: not listed

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

Notable differences of takes:

Since there are no alternate takes reissued of the second title in any form, no comment is possible

036 EVELYN THOMPSON	New York,	May, 1927
Evelyn Preer – voc;		
Joe Smith – tpt; Happy Caldwell – clt;		
Mike Jackson - 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 Bacquet, but what I remember from Morton's Orchestra / Red Hot

Peppers of July 1929, where we hear a rhythmically wooden and rather antiquated clarinetist. What can be heard of the clarinet definitely fits to Caldwell's Doddsonian style.

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

Notes:

- BGR*4: not listed!

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

037 MAUDE MILLS

New York, Jun. 21, 1927

Maude Mills - voc;

Mike Jackson - pno

7348-1 Golden Brown Blues

Dom 4006, Document DOCD-T002

7349 Hard-Headed Mama

Plaza unissued not on LP/CD

7350-2 Black Snake Blues

Ban 6043, Document DOCD-5662

Note: Chronological Classics 674 lists Thomas Fats Waller as pianist on 'Black Snake Blues'!

'Golden Brown Blues' unfortunately could not be inspected. 'Black Snake Blues' clearly features Mike Jackson with his light and airy stride piano style. He owns a fashion to swing just like Dick Wellstood many years later.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4: unknown "novelty" group (sic), including p, with Jack Jones -v (1,2)

- Rust*6: "novelty" group, probably including Mike Jackson, p, unknown g, ?Jack Jones -v

- BGR*2: unknown "novelty" group (sic), with Jack Jones, vcl

- BGR*3: unknown "novelty" group (sic), Jack Jones, v (1,2)

- BGR*4: prob Mike Jackson, p; unknown, g (1); Jack Jones (prob Mike Jackson), v (2)

038 DIXIE JAZZERS WASHBOARD BAND

New York, Jul. 1927

Thomas Morris - cnt; Robert Cooksey - har, voc;

Mike Jackson - pno; Bobbie Leecan - grt; Eddie Edinborough - dms, wbd

107617 Memphis Shake

PA 7536, Document DOCD-5280

107618 My Old Daddy's Got A Brand New Way To Love

PA 7536, Document DOCD-5280

107619 Kansas City Shuffle

PA 7539, Document DOCD-5280

107619-2 Kansas City Shuffle

PA 7539, Document DOCD-5612

107620 Black Cat Bone

PA 7539, Document DOCD-5280

107620-2 Black Cat Bone

PA 7539, Document DOCD-5612

Mike Jackson nearly exclusively confines to pounding the rhythm both-handedly the simple oom-pah way. The few parts he comes to the fore show his light stride style as known. He plays one single solo chorus in the second title.

Notes:

- Jazz Directory Vol.2: unknown tpt; hca; p; g; wbd.

- Rust*2: Tom Morris (cnt); Robert Cooksey (hca,vcl); Phil Worde or Mike Jackson or Louis Hooper (pno); Bobbie Leecan (grt); Eddie Edinborough (wbd).

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; Robert Cooksey -h -v; Mike Jackson -p; Bobbie Leecan -g; Eddie Edinborough -d -wb.

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt; Robert Cooksey, hca, vcl; Mike Jackson, pno; Bobbie Leecan, grt; Eddie Edinborough, wbd, dms.

039 MAUDE MILLS

New York, Jul. 22, 1927

Maude Mills - voc; Jack Jones - voc ;

Mike Jackson - pno; unknown - grt

7348-5 Golden Brown Blues

Ban 6067 not on LP/CD

7349-5 Hard-Headed Mama

Ban 6067, Document DOCD-T002

Both titles could not be heard and inspected, although 'Hard-Headed Hannah' was issued on a very rare Document CD.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4: unknown -p, with Jack Jones -v.

- Rust*6: ?Mike Jackson, p, unknown g, ?Jack Jones -v

- BGR*2: unknown pno.

- BGR*3: unknown p; unknown g (1); Jack Jones v.

- BGR*4: prob Mike Jackson, p; unknown, g (1); Jack Jones (prob Mike Jackson), v.

040 JANE HOWARD

New York, Sep. 02, 1927

Jane Howard - voc;

Thomas Morris - cnt; Mike Jackson - pno

7489- Kissin' Mule Blues

Ban 6082, Document DOCD-5514

7490-2 Peepin' Jim Blues

Ban 6162, Document DOCD-5514

7491-2 Hard-Hearted Papa

Do not on LP/CD

7491-3 Hard-Hearted Papa

Ban 6092, Document DOCD-5514

There are piano parts I would not suggest to be played by Mike Jackson. If this is Jackson he plays much harder and heavier here than earlier on. There is little of his lightness and his charm on these sides. In particular when playing single tone bass parts he sounds as if drunk.

Most discographies query his presence here. So do I.

Notes:

- Rust*3: prob Tom Morris -c; Mike Jackson -p.

- Rust*4,*6: ?Tom Morris -c; ?Mike Jackson -p.

- BGR*2: prob Tom Morris, cnt; prob Mike Jackson, pno.

- BGR*3,*4: Tom Morris, c; prob Mike Jackson, p.

041 NASHVILLE JAZZERS

New York,

c. 1927

unknown – tpt; unknown – clt, alt; unknown – alt;

unknown – pno; unknown – bjo

102-A St. Louis Blues

VD/Mad 50001, Jazz Oracle BDW 8038

102-B St. Louis Blues

VD/Mad 50001, Jazz Oracle BDW 8038

Any hitherto issued personnel certainly is highly doubtful, and I wonder if there is a connection of this band to the Walter Bennett circle (see my article in N&N 52). There seems to be no link of Thomas Morris to the Grey Gull record family. There is not anything played by these musicians resembling what is known of the persons listed by name in the discographies. Thus, the musicians listed in Rust are pure uneducated guess-work! The very busy banjo player might be the bandleader?

DB: not Tom. He was far better than this certainly by this time.

MR: I have never doubted the Morris-Fuller personnel but will re-listen.

Notes:

- Rust*2: Tom Morris (cnt); Bob Fuller (?) (clt); unknown (alt); Mike Jackson (?) (pno); Buddy Christian (?) (bjo)

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Tom Morris -c; Bob Fuller -cl; unknown as; ?Mike Jackson -p; unknown bj

Notable differences of takes:

102-A Banjo player plays double-strokes in first chorus (tpt) from bar 4 on

102-B Banjo player plays sort of press-rolls in first chorus (tpt) from bar 4 on (press-rolls are a technique of drumming in classic jazz by playing a drum-roll from measure 4 to measure 1 – and measure 2 to measure 3 in a bar)

SOURCES:

- Tom Lord, Clarence Williams, p. 193: “Billy Jones, in the (Chicago) Defender for December 25th (1926 – KBR), reported that Mike Jackson was still at the Club Alabam in New York, singing ‘Numbers On My Brain’, ‘Wasn’t It Nice?’, and ‘Candy Lips’.”

Storyville 1996-97, p.227: “A brief note from Billy Jones says that Mike Jackson placed Elizabeth Smith with the Victor people and that she has recorded his new number ‘Honey That The Bee Forgot’, which she is also broadcasting (CD 9/10/26 7/4).

Jones was a friend of Jackson and plugged him constantly and usually knew what was going on, but there is no trace of this number in the Elizabeth Smith discography.”

Storyville 1998-99, p.114: “Mike Jackson, the radio artist and song composer, is now featured in a white Broadway show, with Mae West as star. The show is entitled “Wicked Age”. Jackson is featuring the song “Oh Baby, Liver Gravy”. He and Tom Morris, who is a piano and cornet wizard, also work in two numbers for Miss West, “Satisfied” and “Baby Kisses”. The company is down east breaking in and will open on Broadway, Oct. 10.” (PC 8/10/27 ¾) The following week the paper announced that the show had been in Washington, D.C. and was due for a run in New York. It then went into the Bronx Opera House, then to Brooklyn.”

K.- B. Rau
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