

*Mister "After you've gone", a forgotten trumpeter*

## **FRANK "FAT MAN" HUMPHRIES (tp,voc) 1913-1978**

*by Mario Schneeberger*

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late additions: 2016/04/27

### **Preface 2016**

Back in 2001 I have elaborated a study on Frank Humphries. Now, in 2016, I have decided to publish it on Internet.

The text is still from 2001, when I used a computer Sharp 3100. As with the breakdown of this machine all my entries got lost, I now have scanned the paper in order to present the contents in the original form. This is possible because in the meantime only few points have turned out to be wrong or questionable. These are listed here below.

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Introduction, page 1 to 3

Musical career (biography, band personnels, gigs, discography, solography) page 1 to 15

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### **Additions to the written text**

- Musical career, page 7: SLEEP and THERE'LL BE... may stem from 1945 (source of information unknown)
- Musical career, page 12, AFTER... and LONESOME...: Duke Parham is on piano; both titles are arranged by Eddie Durham (info from "Newark Swing City" by Kukla). Bruyninckx has a slightly different personnel, with Herbert "Duke" Parham on piano and possibly Don Byas on tenor, under the pseudonym Don Warren or Don Juan.
- Musical career, page 13, LAUGHING...: Daniel Gugolz thinks that Buddy Lucas, who worked for Jubilee, could be on tenor sax.



Mario Schneeberger collection



Dieter Hartmann collection



Roger Häner collection



Mario Schneeberger collection



Yvan Fournier collection

## Preface

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When I prepared a presentation of Joe Guy in 1993 I questioned if the fiery trumpeter on AFTER YOU'VE GONE by Lucky Millinder is really Frank Humphries, mentioned in the liner notes, and not as expected Joe Guy. Frank Humphries was unknown to me.

He apparently has not made jazz history, as he is missing in all standard publications except for Chilton's Who's who of jazz. Only the indefatigable Johnny Simmen has interviewed him and thus brought him to light. And Theo Zwicky's impressive collection of films and photos as well as his research work on band personnels fills many gaps in the picture of this forgotten artist.

Recently a jazz expert told me that he had never heard of Frank Humphries. This gave me the last kick to write this booklet. It is accompanying a presentation of Frank's music at the Jazz Circle Basel on June 7, 2001.

This booklet describes the musical career of Frank Humphries. All bands and recording sessions with his participation are mentioned. Tunes with solo by Frank are listed with matrix number and solos. The solos are noted as usual in solographies, with some minor specialties:

[ ]	melody
( )	obligato or short solo
-	collective improvisation or four-four
vom/vof/vog	vocal male/female/group
sp	speaking

## Acknowledgements

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Theo Zwicky

## Style

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Frank Humphries has admired Louis Armstrong and Roy Eldridge. He plays forceful and fiery or lyrical, in upper or lower registers. His tone is clear and rarely or never dirty. He may place a strong vibrato at the end of a phrase, sometimes whimpering like Roy Eldridge (e.g. AFTER YOU'VE GONE on Alamac). With mute he plays mostly smooth obligatos and is not easy to recognize (e.g. with Tab Smith except first session). Licks known from Howard McGhee appear sometimes, e.g. in LONESOME MOOD.

When compared to Joe Guy, his mate in the Millinder band, Frank has the clearer tone and binds the notes less than Joe Guy. But both show Eldridge's influence and are hard to distinguish. Joe Guy uses Gillespie licks, Frank not. Frank reminds often of Armstrong, Joe Guy

not.

As a singer he follows in Louis Armstrong's footsteps.

### Legacy

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Frank leaves us not more than two dozen recordings where he comes into prominence as gifted trumpeter or singer. He had the capability to write jazz history but the expectation did not materialize.

As a sideman he played a major role with Lucky Millinder only. Millinder gave him space to prove his musical competence and showmanship. On AFTER YOU'VE GONE he is featured throughout, and his trumpet solo is as impressive as Roy Eldridge's with Gene Krupa dating from 1941.

As a leader he was not to become a big name, maybe by lack of a hit tune or by lack of a electrifying "thing of his own", say personal style.

But he deserves more attention as he has created a few memorable if not outstanding solos, the most remarkable ones being, from my point of view:

LAZYBONES with the Washboard Rhythm Boys

AFTER YOU'VE GONE (on Hindsight) with Lucky Millinder

YOU LOVELY YOU and ALL NIGHT LONG with Tab Smith

LONESOME MOOD with his own band.

Generally his output with Millinder is very satisfying, whilst on the Tab Smith recordings only the first session meets the high expectations, the remainder representing rather anonymous contributions.

Of later recordings there are some fine contributions such as AFTER YOU'VE GONE or I CAN'T GET STARTED. Others are partly marred by "funny" vocals: LAUGHING AT LIFE has a rather boring vocal dialogue while the band swings like mad, and the Della Simpson sides live from the excellent tenor saxophone rather than from the foreground actors.

### Sources of information

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#### Main source:

Storyville (Johnny Simmen, interview with FH 1971/02)

Le Point du Jazz (Johnny Simmen, 1976/05 [updated version of 1971])

General discographies: Jepsen, Blues Records, Jazz Directory, Tom Lord, Bruninckx, Rust.

Liner notes: 3 LPs Tab Smith on Saxophonograph, 3 LPs Lucky Millinder on MCA, Alamac, Hindsight, CD Wynonie Harris on King/ace 457, CD Lucky Millinder on Classics 1026

Otto Flückiger/Kurt Mohr files

Theo Zwicky's photos and investigations on personnels and gigs

First Pressings 1952 & 1953 (Galen Gart)

Who's who of jazz (John Chilton)

Tenors Vol.1, 3 & 4 (Jan Evensmo)  
Lucky Millinder (Jazz Publications #5 by Kurt Mohr et al)  
Discographie critique (Hugues Panassié)  
The King label (Ruppli)  
AFRS Jubilee (Lotz/Neuert)  
The career of Jimmy Butts (Otto Flückiger)  
Count Basie (Chris Sheridan)

Foreword to the second, third and fourth edition  
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It happens as always: When the work is thought to be finished it really starts.

The first edition was made possible through the indispensable help of Dieter Hartmann who gave me Johnny Simmen's interview with Frank Humphries.

Then I received substantial additions by Otto Flückiger and also a lot of photos and personnels by Theo Zwicky. This led to the second edition.

Shortly afterwards Theo Zwicky sent further photos and a list of club dates, and Yvan Fournier placed the hitherto unavailable Abbey recordings at my disposal. This material was included in the third edition.

And then again Theo Zwicky sent new information, the most important being that the Vernon Stern Band - including Frank Humphries - takes off in 1932 and not in 1929 as thought hitherto. The present fourth edition is definitely the last one.

**FRANK "FAT MAN" HUMPHRIES**

Born: 1913/04/08 Gracey, Kentucky

Died: 1978/11/01, Nyack, New York

His brother Hildred plays saxophone

His nephew Teddy Humphries sings, plays piano and organ

His nephew Roger Humphries plays drums

FH moves to Pittsburgh, Pa.

**192X**

**ORIGINAL HUMPHRIES PLAY BOYS**

**Pittsburgh, 1928**

Frank Humphries(tp), Hildred Humphries(as), Stuff Johnson(p), Earl Norvell(dr).

Note: Some sources claim that Baron/Byron Garrison(bj) and Leroy Brown(2nd as) are added a few months later. It is believed that they join in 1931 only.

**1929-1931**

FH's activities during his brother Hildred's tenure with the KOMEDY CLUB ORCHESTRA (1929-1931) are not known.

**(New) HUMPHRIES PLAY BOYS**

**? Pittsburgh, 1931/?04**

Frank Humphries(tp), Hildred Humphries(as), Leroy Brown(2nd as), ... Testine(ts), John Graham(p), Mac Mans(b), Baron/Byron Garrison or Joe Westray(bjo), Earl Norvell(dr).

Note: Testine is the father of the young Testine Brothers, playing tenor sax and trumpet respectively. Baron/Byron Garrison is spelt Barron Gaston in some sources.

**HUMPHRIES' PLAYBOYS**

**New Kensington, Pa, 1931/05**

Pittsb. Cour. May 9, 1931 gives this personnel of the "new local band":

Dave Page, William Hickerson, Frank Humphries(tp), Hildred Humphries, Leroy Brown(as), Henry Jewell(ts), John Graham(p), Steve Washington(bjo), Earl Norvell(dr), Bert Taylor(vom), William Humphries(mgr).

**PITTSBURG HARLEMITE BAND**

**Pittsburgh, 1931/07≈**

Frank Humphries, Dave Page(tp), Bob Murray(tb), Hildred Humphries, Denny Washington(as), William "Biggs" Biggers(ts), George Horbe(p), Steve Washington(bj,g,vom), Ghost Howell(b,vom), "Biddy"(dr).

**HUMPHRIES BROTHERS' DOUBLING BAND****Pittsburgh, 1932**

Frank Humphries(tp,cl,ts), Hildred Humphries(as,tb,tp), Andrew Woods(bj,tp), Bill Comp(b,as), William Banks(p), Earl Norvell(dr).

**VERNON STERN BAND****Pittsburgh, 1932/07≈**

Frank Humphries, William "Chick" Hickerson, Dave Page(tp), Bob Murray(tb), Hildred Humphries(as), ... Baker(as), ... Fisher(ts), Alger Williams(p), ... Johnson(b). No drummer mentioned.

Note: FH claims he was with Vernon Stern in 1929. There is no evidence for that. The band did not exist before 1932. Hickerson is called Henderson in some sources. Fisher is probably Bud Fisher, 1931 with Dixie's Stompers of South Philadelphia.

**HUMPHRIES BROTHERS' BAND****Pittsburgh, 1932/09/25-27**

The band performs at the Fullertone Theatre in the "HEY MAN" revue. The personnel is unknown.

**JACK SPRUCE BAND****Pittsburgh, 1933-34**

Frank Humphries, Hardie Kelly, Dave Page(tp), Bob Murray(tb), Hildred Humphries, Denny Washington(as), William "Biggs" Biggers(ts), "Potentate"(p), Jack Spruce(g), Steve Washington(bj,g,vom), Ghost Howell(b,vom), "Biddy"(dr).

Recordings under the name of WASHBOARD RHYTHM BOYS, see below.

Note: Zwicky informs that the pianist is called "Potentate", not "Polen Tate" as spelt in some sources. Dave Page and Steve Washington participate for a short time only.

## Records:

**WASHBOARD RHYTHM BOYS****NYC, 1933/08/19**

Johnny Simmen gives this personnel:

Dave Page, Frank Humphries(tp), Bob "Gino" Murray(tb), Denny Washington, Hildred Humphries(as), William "Biggs" Biggers(ts), Steve Washington(p,vom,ar), George "Ghost" Howell(b,vom), "Biddy"(wb).

Rust gives another personnel, which Evensmo believes to be correct (Tenors Vol.1, Carl Wade p.120).

Eight titles are recorded for Domino et al, one has FH:

13840-1

LAZY BONES

[tp],vomSW-(vog),tpFH

Note: FH's solo ranks among his favorite solos.

FH says that all other trumpet solos are by Dave Page and all altosax solos by Hildred Humphries, the vocalist is Washington (not Howell).

**NEW HUMPHRIES BROTHERS ORCHESTRA****Pittsburgh, 1935-38**

Frank Humphries(tp,ts), Bob Murray(tb), Denny Washington, Norman Ball(as), Hildred Humphries(ts), Tom Drake(p), Arthur Orr(b), Leroy Jones(dr), Bessie Albert/Albear(vof).

Note: FH states that there are no changes of personnel during this period.

**HUMPHRIES BROTHERS' QUARTET****Pittsburgh, 1937 or 1938**

Photo with this personnel:

Frank Humphries(tp), Hildred Humphries(ts), Black Jack(p), "Nitty Gritty"(dr).

FH moves to New York

**1939****HAM WILLIAMS BAND****New York, 1939**

Incl. Frank Humphries(tp), Hildred Humphries(ts), Chuck Jefferson(p), Ham Williams(g), Rufus Simmons(b).

Note: Chuck Jefferson is probably the same as Freddie Jefferson.

**NYC, 1942/06-07**

FH joins **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**, together with his brother Hildred.

Note: Some sources say this was in 1940, not 1942. Further discussion follows in the section dealing with the photo from the "Paradise Club", 1942/summer.

**CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS ORCHESTRA****NYC, 1942/06-07**

Personnel at that time, reported by Johnny Simmen:

Frank Humphries, Roger Jones(tp), George Wilson(tb), Hildred Humphries, Jimmy Powell(as), Freddie Williams, unknown(ts), Raymond Tunia(p), Ham Williams(g), Jimmy "The Face" Butts(b), Christopher Columbus(dr).

Note concerning George Wilson(tb) / George Williams(tb):

FH and Jimmy Powell identify the trombone player from photos as George Wilson, Chris Columbus and Jimmy Butts say the name is George Williams. Both names stand for the same musician.



**CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS ORCH. "Paradise Club", Atlantic City, 1942/07**

Jimmy Butts gives this personnel:

Roger Jones, Frank Humphries(tp), George Williams(tb), Hildred Humphries, Jimmy Powell, Freddie Williams, Larry Belton(saxes), Freddie Jefferson(p), Ernie Williams(g), Jimmy Butts(b), Chris Columbus(dr).

Soon afterwards Ruby Thrower(saxes) replaces Hildred Humphries, who is drafted, and Raymond Tunia(p) replaces Freddie Jefferson.

**"Paradise Club", Atlantic City, 1942/summer****CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS & HIS SWING CREW**

Photo in the Theo Zwicky collection from the "Paradise Club", with this personnel:

Frank "Fat Man" Humphries, Roger Jones(tp), George Wilson or Williams(tb), Ruby Thrower(cl,as,bs), Jimmy Powell(cl,as), Freddie Williams(cl,ts), Raymond Tunia(p), Ernest/Ernie "(Big) Ham" Williams(g), Jimmy "The Face" Butts(b), Christopher Columbus(dr).

Note concerning the date:

It is not clear if the engagement at the Paradise Club took place in 1940 or 1942: Jimmy Powell told Theo Zwicky that he left Columbus early in 1942 to join Count Basie; the engagement was in summer 1940, not 1942. Chris Sheridan in his Basie Biography writes that Jimmy Powell joined Basie on 1943/02/08 only, and that he was coming from Fats Waller. Rust and Chilton agree on Jimmy Powell being with Fats in 1940-41; recordings were made on 1941/07/01 and 1941/10/01 including Jimmy Powell. But the Waller recordings of 1942/03/16 take place without Jimmy, so he has left by this time. Jimmy Powell's statements obviously conflict with Sheridan's, and Sheridan's with Chilton's and Rust's.

Christopher Columbus too says the engagement at the Paradise Club took place in 1940. But Jimmy Butts says it was in 1942/07. He also gives personnel for 1940; these are completely different from this one and do not include FH or Jimmy Powell. And FH himself says he joined Columbus in 1942, not 1940.

I think that 1942 is more probable. A personnel of 1942/06 for "Murrains", NYC, has not yet FH and Hildred, but the following one of 1942/07 for "Paradise Club", Atlantic City, lists them both, as reported by Jimmy Butts. They supposedly have joined in 1942/06-07.

**CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS ORCHESTRA****1940-41(-42)**

Freddie Williams gives the following collective personnel for the engagements at Annapolis, Maryland; at "Apollo" and "Murrains", NYC. In his opinion all these events took place in 1940-1941, while Jimmy Butts claims "Murrains" was in 1942.

George Taitt, Eddie Mullens, Frank Humphries, Bobby Williams, Teddy Smith(tp), Henderson Chambers, George Williams(tb), Jimmy Johnson, Jimmy Powell, Herman Flintall(as), Freddie Williams(ts), Larry Belton(bs), Freddie Jefferson, Clarence Johnson, Ray Tunia(p), Ham Jackson(g), Jimmy Butts(b), Chris Columbus(dr).

**between 1942/08 and 1942/10**

FH leaves **CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**, as reported by Jimmy Butts.

**NYC, 1942-45**

While his brother Hildred is in the army, Frank plays for a certain time with **IVORY JOE HUNTER, WYNONIE HARRIS, LOUIS JORDAN** and **DON REDMAN**. These engagements remain untraced. He also leads own bands.

FH joins **COOTIE WILLIAMS**. **between 1942/08 and 1943/early**

**COOTIE WILLIAMS** **1942/10-1943/06**  
Theo Zwicky has made up a list of engagements, one-nighters as well as longer stays, from advertisements in periodicals, covering Cootie's band's appearances between 1942/08 and 1943/06 when FH is at least partly present:

COOTIE WILLIAMS ORCHESTRA (with FH?) Apollo, NYC, 1942/10/16

COOTIE WILLIAMS & HIS BAND (with FH?) Apollo, NYC, 1943/01/22

Savoy Ballroom, NYC, 1943/03/05

COOTIE WILLIAMS ORCHESTRA (probably with FH)

Savoy Ballroom, NYC, 1943/04/02

COOTIE WILLIAMS ORCHESTRA (probably with FH) and SAVOY SULTANS

Apollo, NYC, 1943/05/14

COOTIE WILLIAMS & HIS SENSATIONAL BAND... (probably with FH)

Golden Gate Ballroom, NYC, 1943/05/29

COOTIE WILLIAMS & HIS ORCH. (probably with FH) and PAUL JACKSON ORCH.

Jolly Fellows Social Club, NYC, 1943/05/30

COOTIE WILLIAMS & HIS ORCH. (probably with FH) and PAUL JACKSON ORCH.

Golden Gate Ballroom, NYC, 1943/06/11

COOTIE WILLIAMS (FH may have left already)

Golden Gate Ballroom, NYC, 1943/06/25

COOTIE WILLIAMS (FH may have left already) and CAB CALLOWAY ORCHESTRA

**COOTIE WILLIAMS ORCHESTRA** **"Savoy", NYC, 1943/spring**  
including FH.  
Source: JR(?), 1943/07/01.

## Records:

**COOTIE WILLIAMS AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Brooklyn, NY, 1943/06/mid**  
 Cootie Williams, Ermit V. Perry, Frank "Fat Man" Humphries(tp), Ed Burke, unknown (prob. Jonas Walker or Ed Glover/Glower), Robert (Bob) "Mack" Horton(tb), Charlie Holmes(as), Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson(as,vom), Sam "The Man" Taylor, Lee Pope (or Bob Dorsey)(ts), Greely Walton(ts,bs), Fletcher Smith(p), Norman Keenan(b), George "Butch" Ballard(dr), Laurel Watson(vof), plus dancing groups.  
 Five titles are recorded for the movie "Film Vodvil, Series 1, No.2": GET HEP (wrongly titled WILD FIRE), THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE, unidentified tune, GIDDAP MULE and KEEP ON JUMPING. All trumpet solos are by Cootie. The other soloists are Ed Burke(tb), Sam Taylor(ts) and Fletcher Smith(p). o

Note: The movie is produced by B.K.Blake, directed by Harry Foster, copyrighted 1943/10/27.

Zwicky states that all previous personnels are wrong, and that WILD FIRE is in fact GET HEP. Brandnew is an article in the summer 2001 issue of the IAJRC journal with the correct information (except for "Fletcher Allen(p)" instead of Fletcher Smith, mentioned at one place).

**1943/06**

FH leaves **COOTIE WILLIAMS** to join **LUCKY MILLINDER**, where he replaces Milton Fletcher(tp).

Source: "JR?", 1943/07/01.

**LUCKY MILLINDER**

**1943/06-1944/04**

Theo Zwicky has made up a list of engagements, one-nighters as well as longer stays, from advertisements in periodicals, covering Lucky's band's appearances between 1943/06 and 1944/04 where FH is present:

**LUCKY MILLINDER** Casa Manana, Culver City, CA, 1943/07/06-1943/09  
 Engagement of at least 9 weeks.

**LUCKY MILLINDER ORCHESTRA** Hollywood Canteen, Hollywood, 1943/08/07

Lido Ballroom, NYC, 1943/10/10

**LUCKY MILLINDER, HIS VOCALIST AND ORCHESTRA**

**LUCKY MILLINDER & HIS BAND** Apollo, NYC, 1943/11/12

**LUCKY MILLINDER & HIS FAMOUS BAND AND SHOW** Apollo, NYC, 1944/04/07

## Records:

**LUCKY MILLINDER****Casa Manana, Culver City, Ca, 1943/07≈**

Personnel similar to the V-Disc recording session of 1943/08≈.

Several titles are recorded for AFRS Jubilee 37-39. There is much confusion about this and the following session. None of the consulted discographies gives complete and/or correct data. I have listened carefully to all available titles to identify identical versions. A complete listing is given hereafter, using the Lotz/Neuert notation and these abbreviations:

[A] = LP Alamac QSR-2425

[H] = LP Hindsight HSR-233

[K] = LP KayDee-6

MIL-4	[H]	AFTER YOU'VE GONE	[tpFH],vomFH,(drPF),tpFH,tpFH-drPF
MIL-5		ARE YOU READY	(not available)
MIL-6		BIG FAT MAMA	(not available)
MIL-7	[K]	BOOGIE WOOGIE (LITTLE JOHN SPECIAL)	asTS,ts,tpFH?,bsEP
MIL-8	[H][K]	CHEROKEE	no tp solo
MIL-9	[H][K]	CHINATOWN	[tpFH],vomFH,tpFH
MIL-10	[A][H]	JITTERS (GIT IT)	tp solo by Joe Guy
MIL-12	[K]	RHYTHM CHANGES	tp solo by Joe Guy
MIL-13	[H]	RUSTLE OF SPRING	no tp solo
MIL-14	[K]	ST. LOUIS BREAKDOWN	tp solo by Joe Guy
THA-1	[H][K]	DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE	no tp solo
THA-2	[H]	ROCK DANIEL	no tp solo
THA-3	[H][K]	I WANT A TALL SKINNY PAPA	tp solo by Joe Guy

Note: Lotz/Neuert and Tom Lord incorrectly give BOOGIE WOOGIE (I MAY BE WRONG) for MIL-7.

## Records:

**LUCKY MILLINDER****Same or similar date**

Same personnel.

The following titles are recorded: ROCK ME for Jubilee-75, the remaining titles possibly for Jubilee 36. All are listed below.

-	[A]	AFTER YOU'VE GONE	[tpFH],vomFH,(drPF),tpFH,tpFH-drPF
-	[A]	DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE	no tp solo
-	[A]	RHYTHM CHANGES	tp solo by Joe Guy
-	[A][H]	SLEEP	tp solo by Joe Guy
-	[A][H]	THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES MADE	tp solo by Joe Guy?
THA-4	[K]	ROCK ME	obbligato by Joe Guy?

Note: FH's solo over AFTER YOU'VE GONE ranks among his favorite solos.

Could FH be the soloist on THERE and ROCK?

## Records:

**LUCKY MILLINDER / SISTER ROSETTA THARPE acc.by LM L.A., 1943/08≈**

Joe Guy, Frank Humphries, Ludwig "Joe" Jordan, William "Chiefie" Scott(tp), Joe Britton, Gene Simon, George Stevenson(tb), Billy Bowen, Tab Smith(as), Mike Hedley, Sam Taylor(ts), Ernest Purce(bs), Ray Tunia(p), Trevor Bacon(g), George Duvivier(b), Panama Francis(dr), Sister Rosetta Tharpe(vof,g).

One title - SAVOY - is recorded as by LM for V-Disc. The trumpet solo is by Joe Guy.

Four titles are recorded as by SRT for V-Disc. No trumpet solo on ROCK ME, THAT'S ALL and ROCK DANIEL, the trumpet solo on TROUBLE IN MIND probably by Joe Guy.

Note: Personnel and recording date/location are taken from the liner notes of Classics CD 1026. Otto Flückiger confirms this personnel. Other sources give NYC, 1943/11/22 for the titles as by SRT, with a slightly different personnel.

## Records:

**LUCKY MILLINDER NYC, 1943/10/19**

Milt Fletcher, Joe Guy, Ludwig Jordan, Frank Humphries(tp), George Stevenson, Gene Simon, Joe Britton(tb), Tab Smith, Billy Bowen(as), Sam Taylor, Mike Hedley(ts), Ernest Purce(bs), Raymond Tunia(p), Trevor Bacon(g,vom), George Duvivier(b), Panama Francis(dr), Judy Carol(vof).

Three titles are recorded for Decca, no trumpet solo on SWEET SLUMBER.

71451	DON'T CRY BABY	[asTS],vofJC,tpFH?,(tsST),vofJC
71453	SHIPYARD SOCIAL FUNCTION	asTS,tpFH,tsST,(pRT)

Note: FH's solo over SHIPYARD ranks among his favorite solos. Other sources (Panassié, LP MCA) however say it is Joe Guy. Personally I think it is FH, who plays rougher than Guy. The solo on DON'T sounds similar to SHIPYARD, I think it is by FH.

**LUCKY MILLINDER ORCHESTRA****1943/12-1944**

Personnel changes, according to Otto Flückiger's files:

George Duvivier(b) is drafted in 1943/12, replaced by Al McKibbon. Chiefie Scott(tp), Ernest Purce(bs) leave for J.Lunceford in 1944/01 Billy Bowen(as) leaves and has own band in 1944/02 Dave Francis is replaced by George Jenkins(dr). (Down Beat 1944/03). Joe Guy(tp) leaves and joins O.Pettiford in 1944/04 Hot Lips Page and Freddie Webster(tp) join in. (Music Dial 1944/06). Ernest Leary(as,cl) is present. (Down Beat 1944/06).

**1944/05**

FH and others leave **LUCKY MILLINDER** to form **TAB SMITH's** group.

## Records:

**TAB SMITH****NYC, 1944/05/10**

Frank Humphries(tp), Tab Smith(as), Mike Hedley(ts), Raymond Tunia(p), Trevor Bacon(g,vom), Al McKibbin(b), Walter Johnson(dr), Margaret Watkins(vof).

Four titles are recorded for Decca/Coral:

72094	YOU LOVELY YOU	tpFH,vomTB-vog,asTS,tpFH,vomTB-vog
72095	I'LL LIVE TRUE TO YOU	vomTB-(tpFH)-(tsMH),asTS,vomTB-(tpFH)
72096	BROWN SKIN BLUES	(not available)。
72097	ALL NIGHT LONG	tpFH,asTS-tpFH,vomTB-(tsMH)-(tpFH-asTS)

Note: FH's solos over YOU LOVELY YOU, I'LL LIVE TRUE TO YOU and BROWN SKIN BLUES rank among his favorite solos.

**FRANK HUMPHRIES****1944/09≈**

FH forms a bigband.

Up to 1947 he works alternately with own bands and with Tab Smith.

**TAB SMITH / FRANK HUMPHRIES****1944-1953**

Theo Zwicky has made up a list of engagements, one-nighters as well as longer stays, from advertisements in periodicals, covering Frank's own and Tab's band's appearances between 1944 and 1953:

Elks Rendez Vous, NYC, 1944/05/20  
TAB SMITH AND HIS BAND with TREVOR BACON, feat. FRANK HUMPHRIES

Elks Rendez Vous, NYC, 1944/07/08  
TAB SMITH feat. FRANK HUMPHRIES/TREVOR BACON

Elks Rendez Vous, NYC, 1944/09/02  
TAB SMITH & HIS BAND with TREVOR BACON (probably without FH)

Apollo, NYC, 1945/01/26  
FRANK HUMPHRIES AND HIS BAND ("A Great New Band")

Lincoln Sq.Center, NYC, 1945/05/06  
FRANK HUMPHRIES "America's Great Trumpet Man"/TAB SMITH (Ace Sax Man)

Apollo, NYC, 1945/05/11  
TAB SMITH AND HIS BAND with BETTY (act.BETTI) MAYS, FRANK HUMPHRIES

FRANK HUMPHRIES AND HIS BAND  
Apollo, NYC, 1945/11/23

Savoy Ballroom, NYC, 1947/01/03  
WILLIE BRYANT and TAB SMITH (possibly with FH)

Club 845, Bronx, NY, 1947/03/22≈  
All Star Show feat. Willie Bryant [ ], FRANK HUMPHREY'S(sic) ORCH.

Club 845, Bronx, NY, 1947/04/04  
FRANK HUMPHREY'S(sic) ORCHESTRA "New Show!!"

FRANK HUMPHREYS(sic) AND HIS BOYS Club 845, Bronx, NY, 1947/04/11  
 FRANK HUMPHREY'S(sic) SWING BAND Murrains, Bronx, NY, 1949/12/31  
 FAT MAN HUMPHRIES AND HIS ORCH. Copa City, Jamaica, LI, 1950/10/07  
 "FAT MAN" HUMPHRIES AND HIS BAND "Extra Added Attraction" Murrains, Bronx, NY, 1951/09  
 FRANK HUMPHRIES AND BAND Apollo, NYC, 1953/10/16

Note: The list shows the spellings of FH's name: Humphries, Humphrey, Humphreys, sometimes Humpheries.

**FRANK HUMPHRIES ORCHESTRA "Savoy", NYC, 1944/09/25**

Personnel given by Theo Zwicky:

Frank Humphries(tp,vom), Henry Boozier, James ("Rex"?) Kerney, McKinley "Kenny" Dorham(tp), Jimmy Archey, John Holloway Jr., Richard Baker(tb), Rupert Cole, Luther Smith(as), Tommie Phillips, Shirley Greene(ts), Norman Thornton(bs), Richard Ellington(p,arr), unknown(b), Wallace Bishop(dr), Ramon Tunia, Elton Hill, Bill Doggett(arr).

**FRANK HUMPHRIES' ORCHESTRA "Savoy", NYC, 1944/10-1945/spring**

Frank Humphries, Kenny Dorham, Henry Boozier, James "Rex" Kearney(tp), George Stevenson, unknown(tb), Luther Henderson, Rupert Cole(as), Shirley Greene, John Hartzfield(ts), Norman Thornton(bs), Richard "Duke" Ellington(p), unknown(b), Wallace Bishop(dr) - replaced by George Jones after one week. Information probably from Wallace Bishop, reported by Otto Flückiger.

**Records:**

**TAB SMITH**

**NYC, 1944/11**

Same personnel as 1944/05/10.

Four titles are recorded for Regis/Manor.

S-1187-S	I WAS WRONG	(pRT), [asTS], vomTB-(tpFH)-(tsMH)
S-1188-S	ROSA LEE	(bAMK), asTS, vomTB-(tpFH)-(tsMH)-(asTS-tpFH)
S-1193	ONE HOUR MAMA	(not available)
S-1194	I HEAR YOU KNOCKING	(not available)

## Records:

**TAB SMITH****NYC, 1944/12/06**

Same personnel.

Four titles are recorded for Decca, two issued.

72603	LOVING YOU JUST THE SAME	(not available)
72605	SORRY ABOUT THE WHOLE AFFAIR	(not available)

**FRANK HUMPHRIES BIG BAND****1945**

Photo in the Theo Zwicky collection with this personnel, only partly identified:

Frank Humphries, Henry Boozier?, unknown, "Brazil", Rex Kerney? or Kenny Dorham?(tp), Jimmy Archey, Billy Kato, unknown?(tb), Rupert Cole, unknown(as), Don Warren?, unknown(ts), Norman Thornton(bs), Teddy Humphries(p), unknown(b), Roger Humphries(dr), unknown\*(vof), \*not Laurel Watson.

**TAB SMITH****"Savoy", NYC, 1945/09**

Bugs Hamilton(tp) replaces FH.

Source: JR(?), 1945/09.

**Chicago, 1945**

FH has a long engagement in the Porgy and Bess Show in Chicago.

**HUMPHRIES BROTHERS BAND****1945-1976**

Hildred comes back from the army in 1945. The brothers form a band again which will last up to about 1976.

Members at one time or another are: Frank Humphries(tp,sax), Hildred Humphries(sax,p,org), Raymond Tunia(p), Michael "Mike" Gregory(p), Malcolm Key(dr).

FH remembers to have played in these clubs, all of them catering to a black clientele:

Orchid Club, Scranton, PA

Bamboo Cafe, NYC

Piccadilly Club, Newark, NJ

Baby Grand, NYC

Club 421, Philadelphia, PA

845 Club, Brooklyn, NY

Golden Platter, Newburg

Franny's Supper Club, Nannet, NY (1970/07/17 to 1971/01/17).

Club Baron, Harlem, NY (1971/01/19 to ...).



## Records:

**FRANK HUMPHRIES' ORCHESTRA****1945/fall**

Frank Humphries, Henry Boozier, "Brazil", Rex Kearny or Kenny Dorham(tp), Eddie Durham, Jimmy Archey, George Stevenson Sr.(tb), Hildred Humphries, Joe Bishop(as), Johnny Hicks, Don Warren(ts), Norman Thornton(bs), Teddy Humphries(p), unknown(b), Roger Humphries(dr).

Two titles are recorded for Pick-Up:

SG-1	AFTER YOU'VE GONE	tpFH,vomFH,tpFH
SG-3	LONESOME MOOD	[tpFH],tsDW,[tpFH],tsDW,(tpFH)

Note: AFTER is arranged by Ray Tunia, LONESOME is composed by FH and arranged by Harry "Father" White. FH says that the tenor solo on LONESOME is by Don Warren. Evensmo gives 1947 as recording date, but 1945 seems to be correct.

## Records:

**TAB SMITH****NYC, 1945/11≈**

Frank Humphries(tp), Tab Smith(as,vom), Johnny Hicks(ts), Red Richards(p), Joe Brown(b), Walter Johnson(dr), Betty Mays(vof).

Four titles are recorded for Hub. No FH on SUNNY SIDE, but:

hu401	RIFFIN' THE BASS	bJB,vog-bJB,tpFH,tsJH,PRR,asTS,vog-bJB
hu402	DARLING YOU'RE ALL I NEED	[asTS],vomTS-(tpFH)-(tsJH),[asTS]
hu408	FAT MOUTH BLUES	(PRR),[asTS],vofBM-(tpFH)-(tsJH),asTS,vofBM

**FRANK "FAT MAN" HUMPHRIES COMBO****1947≈**

Photo in the Theo Zwicky collection with this personnel:

Frank Humphries(tp), Hildred Humphries(as), Jimmy Powell\*(ts), Horace Brown(p), unknown(b), Gene Brooks(dr).

\* Jimmy Powell is local musician, namesake of the better known saxophonist.

**FRANK "FAT MAN" HUMPHRIES COMBO****"Club Baron", NYC, 1947≈ or 1971**

Photo in the Theo Zwicky collection with this personnel:

Frank Humphries(tp), Hildred Humphries(as), Mike Gregory(org), Malcolm Key(dr).

**FRANK "FAT MAN" HUMPHRIES****"845 Club", Bronx, NY, 1947/03/02-04/19?**

Photo in the Theo Zwicky collection with this personnel:

Frank Humphries(tp), unknown(as), "Stretch" Ridley(ts), Horace Brown(p), unknown(b), Gene Brooks(dr).

**TAB SMITH****"Savoy", NYC, 1947/late**

Frank Humphries, Russell Green(tp), Tab Smith(as), Hal Singer(ts),  
 Johnny Williams(b), Walter Johnson(dr). No piano mentioned.  
 Johnny Williams joins in December 1947.

## Records:

**VIOLA WATKINS - FRANK HUMPHRIES AND ORCHESTRA****NYC, 1949~**

Viola Watkins(vof), Frank Humphries(vom), with unknown ts,p,b,dr. The  
 piano may be played By Viola Watkins.

Three titles are recorded for Jubilee, ALL ALONE and WRAP YOUR  
 TROUBLES IN DREAMS not available.

JR645                      LAUGHING AT LIFE                      (g),spFH-spVW,vofVW-vomFH-(ts)

Note: The tenor saxophonist and especially the bass player give a  
 remarkable performance. Who might they be?

LAUGHING is coupled with RED RIDING HOOD on Jubilee 5023. Some  
 sources say it is from the same session, but it is recorded at an  
 earlier date without FH.

## Records:

**FRANK HUMPHRIES AND HIS ORCHESTRA****NYC, 1950~**

Personnel unknown.

Seven titles are recorded for Derby, not available:

PRELUDE TO JANIE  
 BOPOLINK  
 BACK TO PITTSBURGH BLUES  
 ROSA LEE BLUES  
 IF I EVER HAD ANOTHER CHANCE  
 BIG CAT BLUES  
 SOMEBODY'S BEEN SLEEPING IN MY BED

## Records:

**FRANK HUMPHRIES AND ORCHESTRA****1950~**

Frank Humphries(tp), unknown(ts), unknown(bs), Herbie Nichols(p),  
 unknown(g), unknown(b), unknown(dr), Ted Humphries(vom).

Three or more titles are recorded for Abbey.

G755                      ANYTIME IS THE RIGHT TIME      ts,vomTH,ts,ts-bs,bs,vomTH  
 G756                      BIRMINGHAM BOUNCE                      (not available)  
 G757                      DOBY AT THE BAT                      vomTH-(vog-g),ts,vomTH-(vog)

Note: G755 and G757 are issued on Abbey 3016. Tom Lord however lists  
 G756 and G757 for this issue. Do some copies exist with this  
 coupling?

## Records:

**FRANK FAT MAN HUMPHRIES with THE 4 NOTES****1952**

Frank Humphries(tp,vom), The 4 Notes(vog), with unknown ts,p,g?,b,dr.  
Two titles are recorded for Jubilee.

JR28072 I CAN'T GET STARTED WITH YOU (p),vomFH-(vog-ts),tpFH-(vog)  
JR28073-1 LULUBELL BLUES tpFH,vomFH-(ts-vog),tpFH,ts-(vog),vomFH-(ts)  
JR28073-2 LULUBELL BLUES tpFH,vomFH-(ts-vog),tpFH,ts-(vog),vomFH-(ts)

Note: FH even prefers these performances to the ones of 1945 with his big band.

LULUBELL is composed by FH.

CD Westside WESM-539 contains two versions of LULUBELL BLUES and calls the tune LULUBELLE BLUES. The CD-only version is take 1 and the version on Jubilee & CD is take 2. The Jubilee record has no take number.

**1953/03/07**

FH's band begins a tour of one-nighters, backing **WYNONIE HARRIS, VARETTA DILLARD** and **LARRY DARNELL**, thru April 15.

## Records:

**WYNONIE HARRIS****Cincinnati, 1953/03/11**

Frank Humphries(tp), Cornelius Tate(tb), Rufus Gore, Robert Darby(ts), Walter Hiles(bs), Eddie Smith(p), Clarence Mack(b), Bill Warren(dr), Wynonie Harris(vom).

Four titles are recorded for King, SONG OF THE BAYOU not available, no solo by FH on the remaining titles THE DEACON DON'T LIKE IT, WASN'T THAT GOOD and MAMA YOUR DAUGHTER'S DONE LIED ON ME.

Note: Jepsen and Blues Records attribute the master K-9260 of MAMA YOUR DAUGHTER incorrectly to a title called WHAT SHALL I DO.

**Apollo Theater, NYC, 1953/10**

"The Apollo this week really 'has the blues' with **WYNONIE HARRIS, VARETTA DILLARD, THE THREE CHOCOLATEERS** and the **FRANK HUMPHRIES BAND** all under the same roof".

See also the advertisement in the photo section hereinafter.

## Records:

**FRANK HUMPHRIES & DELLA SIMPSON****1958/04?**

Frank Humphries(vom on TIME, tp on DON'T), Della Simpson(vof), with  
unknown ts,p,b,dr.

Two titles are recorded for Eagle (#1005 .. CO-5-9439). DON'T BE LATE  
is issued as by **DELLA SIMPSON AND THE RHYTHMITES**.

BurL 1005-3 DON'T BE LATE (ts),vofDS-(tpFH-ts),ts,vofDS-(tpFH-ts)

BURL 1006-2 TIME AND TIME AGAIN vomFH-vofDS-(ts-p)

Note: Although not indicated, it is evident that both sides are  
played by the same personnel, including a strong tenor saxophonist.  
The recordings may originate from 1952.

## MISTERY CORNER

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 1. FH claims to be present (and to play one of his favorite solos on MOONDREAM) in this session:

**SANDY WILLIAMS/TAB SMITH****NYC, 1946/06/03**

George "Pee Wee" Irwin(tp), Alexander "Sandy" Williams(tb), Tab Smith(as), Cecil Scott(ts,bs), Jimmy Jones(p), Roger "Brick" Fleagle(g), Sid Weiss(b), Denzil Best(dr).

Five titles are recorded by Sandy Williams for H.R.S. One of them, FROST ON THE MOON, is later remastered and reissued by Atlantic as MOONDREAM by Tab Smith.

1038/A802      FROST ON THE MOON/MOONDREAM      [asTS],tpPWI,[asTS]

Note: The trumpeter has a smooth, soft tone. He binds the notes, even over big intervals. Even if FH has similar moments, e.g. in LONESOME MOOD, this style is not typical for him. Could there be another MOONDREAM, hidden in obscurity, which features FH? Jepsen and Saxophonograph LP-511 also suggest 1949/02/15 or 1952/02 respectively as recording date, with different personnels. Both are wrong.

2. FH claims to be present in this and the next session:

**TAB SMITH****NYC, 1947/12**

Personnel from Tom Lord:

Frank Humphries, Russell Green(tp), Tab Smith(as), Hal Singer(ts), Red Richards(p), Johnny Williams(b), Walter Johnson(dr), Jimmy "Baby Face" Lewis(vom).

Two titles are recoded for Manor, both with possibly two trumpet soloists:

HS-1000    RIFFIN' AT THE SAVOY      tp1,asTS,tp2?,tsHS?,pRR  
 HS-1001    GOOD WOMAN BLUES      (pRR),vomFG-(tp1)-(asTS),tp2?,vomFG-(tp1)

Note: Johnny Simmen attributes the solo on GOOD to Frank Galbraith, "who also takes the vocal". Simmen has not inspected RIFFIN'.

**TAB SMITH****NYC, 1948/12**

Personnel from Tom Lord:

Frank Galbraith(tp) replaces Humphries.

Four titles are recorded for Manor. BULGING EYES not available, no trumpet solo on EVERY SUNDAY BEFORE MONDAY and THE RED RIDER.

F-1739      I'M WISE TO YOU BABY      vomJL,tsTS,gJL,asTS,vomJL-(tp)

Note: Johnny Simmen attributes the solos on WISE and RIDER to Frank Galbraith. RIDER however has no trumpet solo or obbligato.

3. FH reportedly has recorded with **IVORY JOE HUNTER**. No such recording can be found in the discographies.

- A Bessie Albert/Albear(vof)  
 Jimmy Archey(tb)  
 B Trevor Bacon(g,vom)  
 ... Baker(as)  
 Richard Baker(tb)  
 Norman Ball(as)  
 George "Butch" Ballard(dr)  
 William Banks(p)  
 Larry Belton(bs)  
 Denzil Best(dr)  
 "Biddy"(dr,wbd)  
 William "Biggs" Biggers(ts)  
 Joe Bishop(as)  
 Wallace Bishop(dr)  
 "Black Jack"(p)  
 Henry Boozier(tp)  
 Billy Bowen(as)  
 "Brazil"(tp)  
 Joe Britton(tb)  
 Gene Brooks(dr)  
 Horace Brown(p)  
 Joe Brown(b)  
 Leroy Brown(as)  
 Ed Burke(tb)  
 Jimmy "The Face" Butts(b)  
 C Judy Carol(vof)  
 Henderson Chambers(tb)  
 The Three Chocolateers(vog)  
 Rupert Cole(as)  
 Christopher Columbus(dr)  
 Bill Comp(b,as)  
 D Robert Darby(ts)  
 Larry Darnell(vom)  
 Varetta Dillard(vof)  
 Bill Doggett(arr)  
 Kenny Dorham(tp)  
 Bob Dorsey(ts)  
 Tom Drake(p)  
 Eddie Durham(tb)  
 George Duivivier(b)  
 E Richard "Duke" Ellington(p,arr)  
 Bud? Fisher(ts)  
 F Roger "Brick" Fleagle(g)  
 Milton Fletcher(tp)  
 Herman Flintall(as)  
 Dave "Panama" Francis(dr)  
 G Frank Galbraith(tp)  
 Baron/Byron Garrison(bj)  
 Ed Glover/Glower(tb)  
 Rufus Gore(ts)  
 John Graham(p)  
 Russell Green(tp)  
 Shirley Greene(ts)  
 Michael "Mike" Gregory(p,org)  
 Joe Guy(tp)  
 H Bugs Hamilton(tp)  
 Wynonie Harris(vom)  
 John Hartzfield(ts)  
 Mike Hedley(ts)  
 Luther Henderson(as)  
 William "Chick" Hickerson(tp)  
 Johnny Hicks(ts)  
 Walter Hiles(bs)  
 Elton Hill(arr)  
 John Holloway Jr.(tb)  
 Charlie Holmes(as)  
 George Horbe(p)  
 Robert (Bob) "Mack" Horton(tb)  
 George "Ghost" Howell(b,vom)  
 Frank Humphries(tp,cl,sax,vom)  
 Hildred Humphries(sax,tp,tb,p,org)  
 Roger Humphries(dr)  
 Teddy Humphries(p,org,vom)  
 William Humphries(mgr)  
 Ivory Joe Hunter(vom)  
 I George "Pee Wee" Irwin(tp)  
 J Ham Jackson(g)  
 Chuck Jefferson(p)  
 Freddie Jefferson(p)  
 George Jenkins(dr)  
 Henry Jewell(ts)  
 ... Johnson(b)  
 Clarence Johnson(p)  
 Jimmy Johnson(as)  
 Stuff Johnson(p)  
 Walter Johnson(dr)  
 George Jones(dr)  
 Jimmy Jones(p)  
 Leroy Jones(dr)  
 Roger Jones(tp)  
 Louis Jordan(ld)  
 Ludwig "Joe" Jordan(tp)  
 K Billy Kato(tb)  
 Norman Keenan(b)  
 James "Rex" Kearney or Kerney(tp)  
 Hardie Kelly(tp)  
 Malcolm Key(dr)  
 Komed Club Orchestra  
 L Ernest Leary(as,cl)  
 Jimmy "Baby Face" Lewis(vom)  
 M Clarence Mack(b)  
 Mac Mans(b)  
 Betty Mays(vof)  
 Al McKibbin(b)  
 Lucky Millinder(ld)  
 Eddie Mullens(tp)  
 Bob "Gino" Murray(tb)  
 N Herbie Nichols(p)  
 "Nitty Gritty"(dr)  
 Earl Norvell(dr)  
 The 4 Notes(vog)  
 O Arthur Orr(b)  
 P Dave Page(tp)  
 Hot Lips Page(tp)  
 Ermit V. Perry(tp)  
 Oscar Pettiford(ld)  
 Tommie Phillips(ts)  
 Lee Pope(ts)  
 "Potentate"(p)  
 Jimmy Powell(cl,as)  
 Jimmy Powell II(ts)  
 Ernest Purce(bs)  
 R Don Redman(ld)  
 Red Richards(p)  
 "Stretch" Ridley(ts)  
 S Cecil Scott(ts,bs)  
 William "Chiefie" Scott(tp)  
 Rufus Simmons(b)  
 Gene Simon(tb)  
 Della Simpson(vof)  
 Hal Singer(ts)  
 Eddie Smith(p)  
 Fletcher Smith(p)  
 Luther Smith(as)  
 Tab Smith(as,vom)  
 Teddy Smith(tp)  
 Jack Spruce(g)  
 Vernon Stern(ld)  
 George Stevenson(tb)  
 T George Taitt(tp)  
 Cornelius Tate(tb)  
 Bert Taylor(vom)  
 Sam Taylor(ts)  
 ... Testine(ts)  
 Sister Rosetta Tharpe(vof,g)  
 Norman Thornton(bs)  
 Ruby Thrower(cl,as,bs)  
 Raymond Tunia(p)  
 V Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson(as,vom)  
 W Greely Walton(ts,bs)  
 Bill Warren(dr)  
 Don Warren(ts)  
 Denny Washington(as)  
 Steve Washington(bj,g,p,vom,arr)  
 Margaret Watkins(vof)  
 Viola Watkins(vof,p?)  
 Laurel Watson(vof)  
 Freddie Webster(tp)  
 Sid Weiss(b)  
 Joe Westray(bjo)  
 Harry "Father" White(arr)  
 Alger Williams(p)  
 Bobby Williams(tp)  
 Cootie Williams(tp,ld)  
 Ernie/Ernest "Ham" Williams(g)  
 Freddie Williams(cl,as,ts)  
 George Williams(tb)  
 Johnny Williams(b)  
 Sandy Williams(tb)  
 George Wilson(tb)  
 Andrew Woods(bj,tp)