

## JOHN GORDY EARLY ACTIVITY

Correlation with clippings book diary of Margaret Ruth Poe (1928-29)

May 1920-June 1921 plays classical pieces, etc at programs at Annunciation Academy, Pine Bluff; acts in play there, Dec 1921

April 1922 an Annunciation Academy program lists a piano performance by Mrs. John Gordy

May-June 1922 listed as class of 1922 Annunciation Academy, plays piano solo on several programs

Feb, 1923 appears on WOK radio, playing piano behind violinist Paul Hollenbach on the hit "Hot Lips"

The Sole Killers, northern Louisiana, January 1924

John Gordy, piano; Luke Lockhart, trumpet; Happy Hancock, banjo; Bill Hart, trombone; L C Hazen, clarinet; R Ed Schilling, drums/marimba

Dixie Melody Seven, Hot Springs, c. summer 1924

John Gordy , piano/director; Gilbert Bushong, sax/clarinet; Dick Dickerson, sax/clarinet; George Thein, sax/clarinet; Beau Ashford, trumpet; Luke Lockhart, trumpet; Lloyd Linton, trombone/manager; Hops Hoskins, banjo; Don Smith, drums.

Smith replaced that summer-fall by Warren Banks; Thein and Ashford leave.

Dixie Melody Seven, Como Roof, Hot Springs, Feb 21, 1925 (also played much in Southern and Northern Louisiana)

John Gordy, piano/director; Lloyd Linton, trombone/manager; Luke Lockhart, trumpet; Gilbert Bushong, reeds; Hops Hoskins

LLOYD WILLIAMS' CRUSADERS – El Dorado, Ark. March 27, 1926

Lloyd Williams, leader/trombone; Luke Lockhart, trumpet; Tommy Herbert, drums; Gene Gifford, banjo/violin; Harvey Campbell, sousaphone; T. Alford, reeds; Herc Rogers, reeds; John Gordy, piano/accordion

April 3, 1926 As above except Bob Kessler, sousaphone, replaces Campbell

May 22, 1926 as above, Pleasure Pier, Port Arthur

June 26, 1926 Willow Beach, Little Rock.

Lloyd Williams, leader/trombone; Gene Gifford, banjo/guitar; John Gordy, piano/accordion; H. Elbert "Slim" Lamar, violin/reeds; others, banjo; Charles Caldwell, drums/"novelties"

CLYDE FOLEY & HIS ORCHESTRA

Oct 30, 1926 DeSoto Gardens, Hot Springs National Park

Clyde Foley, banjo/vocals; John Gordy, piano; Berlyn Baylor, reeds; Frank Davis, reeds; Luke Lockhart, trumpet; Aubrey Stewart, drums

RAY MULLINS ORCHESTRA

April 30, 1927 Rio Grande Valley, Tx

John Gordy, piano/accordion/arranger; Ray Mullins, reeds/director; Gilbert Bushong, reeds/vocal/arranger; Bob Ellison, reeds; Gordon "Pepper" Tully, trumpet; Robert "Rudy" Bussell, banjo/vocals; Earl (Duke) Morris, basses; Bill "Dago" Switzer, percussion/vocals

BERLYN BAYLOR & his ORCHESTRA Hot Springs, Spanish Garden, June 1927

John Gordy, piano/arranger; Berlyn Baylor, reeds/leader; Cecil Hubbard, reeds; Frank "Pat" Davis, reeds; Luke Lockhart, trumpet; R O "Mush" Oliver, trombone; George Shirey, banjo/guitar; Eddie Lindblad, sousaphone; Warren Banks, drums

Band goes to Little Rock to Rainbow Gardens from end of summer till Feb 28, then goes on the road with Thelma Terry & her Playboys (this is where Margaret's 1928-29 diary begins, with the tour(s) with Terry).

Feb 11 last night in Little Rock at Rainbow Gardens

Feb 15 Bowling Green, KY

Feb 17 Oakdale, KY

Feb 19 Lafayette, IN [stint lasts several days, at least thru Feb 21 and possibly thru 23-24<sup>th</sup>]

Feb 25, 1928 Huntington, WV

Thelma Terry, leader/string bass; John Gordy, piano/arranger; Berlyn Baylor, reeds; Frank "Pat" Davis, reeds; Earl Gray, reeds; Delbert Fleming, trumpet; H C "Lon" Chaney, trumpet; H Wayne Smith, trombone; George Shirey, banjo/guitar; Buck Kelly, drums/vibes.

Feb 27 Knoxville, TN

Feb 29, Davenport, IA

March 1, Cedar Rapids, IA

March 7, Eagle Auditorium, Galena, ILL

March 8, Armory, Waterloo, IA

March 9, sorority dance, Iowa State, Ames, IA

March 10, 11 & 13, 14 Winter Garden, Sioux City, IA

March 12, Arkota Ballroom, Sioux Falls, SD

March 17, Armory Dance, Fort Dodge, IA

March 18, Danceland, Davenport, IA

March 21, Eagle Auditorium, Galena, ILL

**March 22, 1928 Top of Page 1 of 1928 diary corresponds to gig for a sorority dance at Hotel Orlando in Decatur, Illinois**

**March 23, Engineer's Dance at Bradley Hall, University of Illinois, Champaign ( middle of page 1 of diary)**

**March 24, plays Bradley Hall again (middle of page 1)**

**March 25 Recording in Chicago (corresponds to diary, page 1, bottom of page/page 2. Discographies and presumably Columbia files have always placed this recording as occurring March 29. Even though Margaret's diary is not dated, the chronology she lists would indicate the recording took place on March 25 – and that makes sense, because the band had played nearby in Champaign the previous two nights. On the 29th, they were in Jackson, Michigan**

**March 26-29 Jackson, Michigan. [corresponds to top half of page 3 in diary; I can't find an ads to confirm these dates, but Margaret's chronology implies these dates and it would fit]**

**March 30, Elks Club, Muncie, IN (corresponds to bottom of page 3 and top of page 4 in Margaret's diary**

**March 31-April 1, Green Lantern, Anderson, Indiana (corresponds to bottom half of page 4 of diary)**

**April 2-3-4 off days, in Anderson (corresponds to bottom half of page 4 in diary.**

**April 5 according to Margaret's diary, page 5, top, it looks as though band played in Cincinnati on this date (stayed in Greensburg, IN)**

**April 6 according to Margaret's diary, page 5, top-middle, band played in Indianapolis on this date**

**April 7, Athletic Park Pavilion, Richmond, IN band [corresponds to page 5, bottom, of Margaret's diary, in which she also notes that band recorded for Gennett that day**

**April 8, in Richmond for Easter Sunday, Margaret's diary, bottom of page 5/top page 6; according to diary, played in Farmland, IN that night**

April 9 Country Club, Evansville, IN

April 10, Elks Club, Evansville, IN

April 13, New Armory, Bowling Green, KY

April 18, Fairmount, WV

April 22, a week's engagement at Valley Dale, Columbus, OH

**(page 6-7 of Margaret's diary gloss over next few stops, then she goes to Chicago for a week while band is in Columbus, Ohio, then goes home to Little Rock)**

**(page 8 of Margaret's diary speaks of John arriving back in Little Rock from Columbus in the wee hours, April 30. Two days in Little Rock including gig listed below; on same page she speaks of month long stays in Dallas and Ft. Worth that are detailed below; then she mentions that Freddie Starnes wired John to lead band in Little Rock, where, she writes, they would stay for six months; see below)**

May 1 one nighter at Rainbow Gardens, Little Rock

May 3 1928 open at Dallas, Adolphus Hotel through May 31, with a single night in Shreveport, May 14

Band As above

June 2, open in Ft. Worth, Lake Worth Casino, as above, till end of month

Freddie Starnes' Rhythm Boys, Cinderella Gardens, Little Rock.

July 1928

John Gordy, piano/director; 2 musicians from Thelma Terry touring band – probably Buck Kelly, drums; and maybe Earl Gray, reeds; other unknown at this time

John Gordy & his Orchestra September 1928, Little Rock, theatre work, then:

From end of September into at least Mid-November, leads own band at Rose Room in Hotel, Lafayette, Little Rock

CHARLIE GAMBLE'S HILTON HOTEL ORCHESTRA

Charlie Gamble, leader/possibly trumpet; John Gordy, piano; possibly Bill Melquist, violin/director; Byron H "Bug" List, accordion; Gus Gilbert, trumpet; Howard Briggs, reeds; Harry Rinefort, reeds; Harold "Curley" Cordeman, banjo; Jack Connally, drums.

Waco, Hilton Hotel December 1928 **(corresponds to page 9 of Margaret's diary)**

Dec 31, dance at Thurber, Texas on way to Abilene **(mentioned page 9 of Margaret's diary)**

Abilene, Hilton Hotel and surrounding towns (Cisco, etc), early January 1929 **(corresponds to bottom of page 9 & page 10 of Margaret's diary)**

## LOUISIANA RAMBLERS

Feb 2, 1929 Jackson, Ms. **[corresponds to diary page 12, top half]**

Pat DeCuir, trumpet; Shockey Wilcox, trumpet; Bob DeCuir, trombone; Romaine Kimball, Mac Ferguson, Roy Young, reeds; John Gordy, Rhodes Cook, piano (one of the pianists may play accordion instead); Carl Shamburger, guitar/banjo/vocal; John Gilliland, tuba; Roger Boyd, drums. (vocal Trio B DeCuir, Shamburger and Gilliland)

March 4, 1929 Memphis, Crystal Garden Night Club, lineup probably similar to above (more research needed)

**[corresponds to diary pages 12-14]**

Note: The six month's stay that Margaret wrote about didn't happen. The band disappears from ads within a couple of weeks, replaced by a more commercial dance band. Curiously, Gordy is not listed among the Louisiana Ramblers musicians who deposited their transfer cards at the Musician's Union upon arrival. The list includes:

Billy Melquest, violin/director; Pat DeCuir, trumpet; Bob DeCuir, trombone; Roy Young, reeds; Machen Ferguson, reeds; Rhodes Cook, piano; Carl Shamburger, guitar/saxophone/vocals; Roger Boyd, drums; others uncertain.

It looks as though the Ramblers left Memphis in later April and headed to Texas (I found an April 29 blurb mentioning Rhodes Cook of the band passing through his hometown of Longview on route to Dallas. John Gordy may have stayed behind with another group, since he is listed as becoming a member of the Memphis local in the July issue of International Musician – but he didn't stay long. By the time that was published, he'd returned to Little Rock...

## JOHN GORDY & his ORCHESTRA

Little Rock, Rose Room Hotel Lafayette, July 1, 1929 thru...?

John Gordy, piano/director; Carl Shamburger, guitar/saxophone/vocal; others uncertain (more research needed)

**Jan 8, 1930 1930-31 diary entry; Margaret writes that she is going to see John in Kansas City. Assume that this is Jerry Johnson's band.**

**Jan 12, 1930 "I love everyone in the band, lots of cute kids"**

**Jan 13 "What a band You should hear it"**

**Feb 11; band leaves Kansas City**

**Feb 13, arrive in Shreveport.**

## JERRY JOHNSON & HIS ORCHESTRA

March 3, 1930, Washington-Youree, Hotel Shreveport

Jerry Johnson, violin/director; John Gordy, piano; Audrey Stewart, drums; Carl Cooley, basses; Austin Mansfield, banjo; Jerry Albright, reeds; Bruce Eidson, reeds/violin; Charles Morse (or Morris), reeds; John Floyd, trumpet; Gus Gilbert, trumpet; Ted Livingood, trombone

August 10, 1930 still at Washington-Youree

As above except Truett Jones, trombone, replaces Livingood

**AUG 15, Margaret writes in diary that band will leave Washington-Youree and Shreveport on Sept 1. Last entry**

## HOGAN HANCOCK & HIS ORCHESTRA

Dec 30, 1930 & Jan 3, 1931 San Antonio, Gunter Hotel

Hogan Hancock, trombone/leader; John Gordy, piano; Doyle Green(e), violin/guitar; Irvin Verret, trombone; Tommy Gonsoulin, trumpet; Claude Love, trumpet; Cliff Ramey, bass; Gene French, drums; Ted Skiles, trombone; Ken Gingling, reeds; Petie Bye, reeds; Duke d'Alessio, reeds.

Feb-March 1931, Houston, as above

John leaves band soon after; not sure where he is rest of '31, but by '32 he is working for Francis Craig & his Orchestra out of Nashville – and will be for years to come...