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## JAZZ—THE WORD

Alan P. Merriam and Fradley H. Garner

**T**he history of the word jazz is indeed a fascinating one. Various-ly derived from Africa, Arabia, the Creole, French, Old English, Spanish, the Indians, the names of mythical musicians, old vaudeville practices, associations with sex and vulgarity, onomatopoeia, and other sources, its real origin has been, and may well remain, a mystery. Yet a study of the problems that have been associated with it, and a tracing of the suggestions and viewpoints that have been advanced in the literature from 1917 through 1958, provide a real journey into the background not only of the word, but of jazz itself.

A number of summary articles concerning the word have appeared in the past, but for the most part these have added nothing new to the controversy which surrounds the word. Of more importance are the original suggestions which provided the material for such summaries; thus an article by Walter Kingsley in the New York Sun (1917) laid down some of the basic ideas concerning African and minstrel origins of the word which have been copied, either with or without acknowledgment of the source, time and time again. A series of articles in the Etude in August and September, 1924, while rehashing some previous suggestions, led to one of the most extended discussions of the problem which raged through several allied journals. A third set of articles, again stressing the African origin, was set off by an anonymous piece in the New York Times (1934) which led to numerous rejoinders and further suggestions. We have come to a point in the study of the word where it seems wise to review the past theories although even now it is probably impossible to decide surely which will ultimately prove to be correct.

### I

Folk Adaptations: As Derived from Personal Names. Perhaps the most fascinating theory of the origin of the word jazz involves folk adaptations which stem from the idea of the change or corruption of personal names. Associated with this point of view are certain folk-tales which have disseminated, apparently both by word of mouth and through the medium of the printed page, and which, in almost all their tellings, involve characteristics of plot and incident which are practically identical. The earliest printed appearance of one tale, so far as we have been able to discover, was in the Music Trade Review for June 14, 1919. The story, centering around a character named Jasbo Brown, is told as follows:

Chicago, Ill., June 9. Roger Graham, Chicago music publisher, has his own pet theory of the origin of jazz music and firmly believes it to be the true one. Five years ago, in Sam Hare's Schiller Cafe on Thirty-first Street, 'Jasbo' Brown and five other alleged musicians, members of what might have been called, with the aid of imagination, an orchestra, dispensed 'melody' largely for the benefit of Sam Hare's patrons.

Jasbo doubled with the piccolo and cornet. When he was sober Jasbo played orthodox music, but wrapped around three or four glasses of gin Jasbo had a way of making his piccolo produce strains of the wildest, most barbaric abandon. Strange to say, though, Mr. Hare's patrons, if they could help it, never allowed Jasbo to maintain sobriety while on the job. They liked the thrilling sensation of the piccolo's lawless strains, and when Jasbo put a tomato can on the end of his cornet it seemed as if the music with its strange, quivering pulsations came from another world.

Patrons offered Jasbo more and more gin. First it was the query 'More, Jasbo?' directed at the darky's thirst; then the insistence, 'More, Jasbo!' directed at the darky's music, and then just plain 'more jazz!' (Anon. 1919c:32)

This story was picked up almost immediately, apparently by the New York Telegraph and then by Current Opinion, less than two months after it first appeared. In the latter journal the following was printed, and it is of interest to note that within this short span of time the story had already been changed.

Other less erudite musical authorities are satisfied that jazz is purely of American origin. We find the New York Telegraph, Broadway's own gazette, for instance, giving the credit to Chicago.

' . . . And Chicago presents as Exhibit A, Jasbo Brown, a negro musician, who doubled with the cornet and piccolo. When he was sober. . . he played orthodox music, but when he imbibed freely of gin. . . he had a way of screaming above the melody with a strange barbaric abandon. One evening a young woman frequenter of the cafe where he held forth, tired of the conventional manner in which the music was played, called out, 'A little more Jasbo in that piece!' The cry was taken up, 'Jazz! Jazz!' and Jazz music was christened. (Anon. 1919b:97)

The next appearance of the story of Jasbo was published by no less an authority than the Lavignac Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du conservatoire (Singleton 1923:3327), which in 1923 translated it into French and reproduced, almost word for word, the original Music Trade Review version of 1919. It is undoubtedly from this source that Schneider picked up the story and, changing it a bit, reproduced it again.

C'était à Chicago, au café Schiller, tenu par un nommé Sam Hare, dans le 31<sup>e</sup> avenue. Il y avait là un nègre nommé Jasbo Brown, qui avait recruté un orchestre. Jasbo jouait du piccolo (le piccolo est un instrument aigu de la famille des bugles); il

jouait aussi du cornet à pistons, pour varier les plaisirs de ses auditeurs. Quand il n'avait pas bu, la musique de ses instruments était à peu près possible. Mais quand il avait absorbé quelques cocktails ou quelques verres de genièvre cela devenait de la musique exaspérée, quelque chose comme les cornets à bouquin de nos Mardi Gras d'autrefois. Et les clients du café raffolaient des sonorités désordonnées du piccolo de Jasbo. Plus c'était faux, plus ils étaient contents, et plus ils lui offraient des verres de genièvre. Et lui criaient: 'Encore, Jasbo!' et, par abréviation: 'Encore, Jazz!' (Schneider 1924:223-24)

A slightly different version, again, came a year later when Rogers shortened the story.

Then came Jasbo Brown, a reckless musician of a Negro cabaret in Chicago, who played this and other blues, blowing his own extravagant moods and risque interpretations into them, while hilarious with gin. To give further meanings to his veiled allusions, he would make the trombone 'talk' by putting a derby hat and later a tin can at its mouth. The delighted patrons would shout, 'More, Jasbo. More, Jaz, more.' And so the name originated. (Rogers 1925:219)

In 1926 the story was again elaborated, this time to account for the origin of the music as well as the word, and Jasbo was credited with being the master of several instruments instead of one.

Toute le monde est maintenant d'accord outre-Atlantique: c'est à Chicago, dans la 31<sup>e</sup> Avenue, au café Schiller, qu'est é S.M. le Jazz. Le propriétaire de l'établissement, un certain Sam Have (sic), avait engagé en 1915 un nègre: Jasbo Brown. Celui-ci jouait tour à tour, pour distraire les clients, de plusieurs instruments: piston, flûte, clarinette, hautbois. A jeun, l'artiste exécutait des mélodies agréables, mais lorsque les cocktails faisaient leur oeuvre, il soufflait dans un instrument, en saisissait brusquement un autre et en tirait des sons cacophoniques autant qu'ahurissants. Ce nègre, comme tous ses congénères, avait un sentiment puissant du rythme. Et ses improvisations d'homme ivre amusaient les consommateurs qui lui criaient: 'Allez, Jasbo!' Il eut bientôt de nombreux imitateurs à travers l'Amerique. Ils firent comme Jasbo. D'où l'abréviation 'jas', devenue 'jazz'. (Anon. 1926:144)

The story, in relatively the same form, has since been quoted by Hart (1932), Coeuroy and Schaeffner (1926), and Goffin (1932), among others, and in almost all cases uncritically. The first and, indeed, the only flat criticism came from Schwerke (1926:679), who wrote, in connection with the Jasbo story: "Le jazz n'a pas de date, et toutes les tentatives qu'on a faites pour lui en donner une sont sans portée. . . ." He further characterized it as "ridicule et fantaisiste."

But the story of Jasbo Brown was by no means confined to that particular gentleman, and its variations are quite as fascinating as the original. Thus Paul Whiteman (Whiteman and McBride 1926:122)

used the same family name but changed the surname of the central character, when he wrote:

There is also a legend that a particularly jazzy darky player, named James Brown and called "Jas" from the abbreviation of his name, was the source of the peppy little word that has now gone all over the world.

A year earlier Walter Kingsley had changed the name to Jasper and the date of the story to the early part of the nineteenth century, writing:

In the twenties and thirties of the last century there was a retired planter in New Orleans whose delight it was to entertain visiting show folk. He had a dancing darky of super-human vitality and joie de vivre who was his star exhibit whenever he threw a party. This hoofing phenomenon was named Jasper and the other slaves called him 'Jazz' or 'Jass' for short. Jasper could put life into a cemetery with his quaint steps, his songs, his mugging and clowning. His fame was carried far and wide by strolling troupers. Whenever a party showed up the old planter called in the sure-fire slave and shouted: 'Jazz it up, Jasper.' (Kingsley 1925:Editorial section, 3:1)

It will be seen that the story is here changed considerably, yet the element of the name and the incidents of an individual calling to a Negro performer and using his nickname remain the same; it is virtually certain that this story falls into the general Jasbo category. The Jasper version has also been cited by Osgood (1926a:17).

Still another variation of the first name has been suggested by Goffin (1932:44).

Le mot jazz, doit-il son origine à un musicien noir nommé Jess qui jouait d'une certaine façon saccadée, qui se popularisa au point que l'on dit communément To play like Jess, To play Jess par abréviation, puis jazz par déformation, c'est là l'explication que m'en donnèrent plusieurs nègres que j'avais interrogés.

This particular version has apparently never been used by other writers, although Goffin repeated the possibility in a later book (1946:62).

Although the versions relating to James, Jasper, and Jess never gained wide currency, two other variations from the original have been widely cited. In 1919 Grenville Vernon quoted an interview with James Reese Europe in the course of which Europe suggested the following:

I believe that the term 'jazz', . . . originated with a band of four pieces which was found about fifteen years ago in New Orleans and which was known as 'Razz's Band'. . . . It consisted of a barytone horn, a trombone, a cornet, and an instrument made out of the chinaberry-tree. . . . Somehow in

the passage of time Razz's Band got changed into 'Jazz's Band,' and from this corruption arose the term 'jazz.' (Vernon 1919:5)

This version was picked up almost immediately by the Literary Digest (Anon. 1919a:28) and later by both Hart (1932:245) and Nelson (Goffin 1932:45) at least as a possibility, but it remained again for Schwerke to ridicule the explanation:

Également ridicule et fantaisiste est la théorie (si toutefois elle mérite ce titre) suivant laquelle le mot jazz devrait son origine à un ensemble de quatre instruments qui se trouvait il y a quinze ans environ à la Nouvelle-Orléans, et que l'on connaissait sous le nom de 'Razz's Band' (c'est-à-dire, orchestre de Razz). . . . Le 'Razz's Band' passa par degrés des plus petits cafés de la Nouvelle-Orléans aux plus grands hôtels de cette ville, d'ou il gagna New York. C'est là qu' au bout d'un certain temps, Razz's Band fut métamorphosé en Jazz's Band! Il ne serait pas superflu, pour compléter l'histoire de nous dire pourquoi les habitants de New York trouvèrent la consonne 'J' plus agréable à leur palais que le consonne 'R'. Et l'on pourrait rapporter quantité de contes aussi fantastiques que les précédents, si toutefois ceux-ci ne suffisaient pas à montrer le caractère ridicule de ce qu'on a écrit sur le jazz et le peu de prix qu'on doit y attacher. (Schwerke 1926:679)

Osgood objected even more fully on the same linguistic grounds, remarking:

This is a good story and as an explanation ingenious enough, though there is no hint as to what reason there could be for the changing of the rugged R of Razz into the softer J of jazz; as a rule the progression is the other way, toward strength. Incidentally, that J at the beginning of jazz is not so soft; much harder than before any other vowel except O. Say jazz and jolt out loud and compare them with jelly, jib and juice. Had we (which we haven't) a soft G before A, as before E and I (geode, gin), 'gazz' would be a much more suggestive and correct spelling than jazz. (Osgood 1926a:14)

The final major variation in the story of Jasbo Brown was apparently first put into print by Vincent Lopez who changed the locale, the name, the instrument of the chief character, and the complexity of the plot.

I have been for a long time making a study both of the word 'jazz' and of the kind of music which it represents. The origin of the colloquial word jazz is shrouded in mystery. The story of its beginning that is most frequently told and most generally believed among musicians has to do with a corruption of the name 'Charles.' In Vicksburg, Miss., during the period when rag-time was at the height of its popularity and 'blues' were gaining favor, there was a colored drummer of rather unique ability named 'Chas. Washington.' As is a very common custom in certain parts of the South he was called 'Chaz'. 'Chaz' could not read music, but he had a gift for 'faking' and a marvelous sense of syncopated rhythm. It was a practice to repeat the trio or

chorus of popular numbers, and because of the catchiness of 'Chaz's' drumming he was called on to do his best on the repeats. At the end of the first chorus the leader would say:

'Now, Chaz!'

From this small beginning it soon became a widespread habit to distinguish any form of exaggerated syncopation as 'Chaz'. (Anon. 1924d:520)

Only two years later Osgood (1926a:15) examined Lopez's theory and found it seriously wanting:

Very pretty, indeed, though it will hardly stand examination. . . . Leaving out of consideration the chronological question as to whether the "blues" were already known when ragtime was "at the height of its popularity", (it is possible they may have been—in Vicksburg) analysis of the musical elements of the story make it improbable. Few popular ragtime numbers had "trios" to repeat, except marches (two-steps) like "The Georgia Camp-meeting", and when they were repeated there was little emphasis placed upon them. . . .<sup>2</sup>

In 1934 Bender, who supported an African origin for the word, also discredited the Chaz origin (Anon. 1934:19:6), as did Moynahan, who three years later wrote: "I dismiss with a leer the canard once attributed—wrongly, I am sure—to Vincent Lopez, that he had heard the word 'jazz' originated as a corruption of the name of a famous drummer called 'Chas'—short for 'Charles'" (1937:15). Despite such rejections of the story, however, it was cited by Hart (1932:245) and by Nelson (Goffin, 1932:45-46) without comment.

As in the more persistent Jasbo tale, the Lopez version itself gave rise to at least one variation which contains all the elements of the original story, changed and with a new name substituted.

If we may trust a mere story, the word 'jazz' comes from a band in a waterfront resort in Philadelphia, which used to have a Negro named Jack Washington playing the drums. This Negro had developed a rhythm so fierce that the band, as a joke, used to stop playing entirely and let Jack rage on the drums alone. When the time came for Jack to play his percussion solos, the sailors would cry in delight, 'Jack! Jack!'—and from this cry of theirs the odd name 'jazz' is derived. (Kool 1925:339)

An element emphasized in some versions of this general tale type is that of the individual who arises in his excitement to shout the magic words to the performer. It will be remembered that in a 1919 version a young woman is the moving character (Anon. 1919c:97). In a version given by Moynahan the cast of characters is changed to the well-known Dixieland Jazz Band, and the individual becomes an "old fellow."

The story usually doled out for popular consumption is the one about the Dixieland Jazz Band's job at the Booster's Club in

Chicago. The band, brought from New Orleans, was still unnamed when an old fellow in the audience, stirred to high excitement by their shrill, unprecedented style of playing, jumped to his feet and shouted; 'Come on, boys, jazz it up!' It makes a good story, even when the reciter goes on to explain that the word 'Jazz' was an old vaudeville (!) term, meaning 'to stir things up'. (1937:15)

The final story of this group is perhaps the most plausible of the lot; yet it has appeared, to the best of our knowledge, but once in the literature, in 1919.

Most people are aware of the fact that 'jazz' music originated in the South, but perhaps few know just how the name itself started. The Columbia Record gives the following explanation: There was once a trio of dusky musicians, one a banjo player, one a singer and the third a maker of melodies by means of an empty tin can. This unusual trio came to be called the Jassacks Band, the name being the popular inversion of the jackass, the famous solo singer of the Southern States. Soon the name, according to the proverbial lore for inaccuracy, was changed to the Jassacks and by the usual method of abbreviation developed finally into just plain jazz. (Anon. 1919e:50)

A final theory which does not involve the Jasbo story, but which fits generally into the name-deformation category, was advanced by Johnson:

The writer would like to add one more to the list of rather asinine theories on the origin of the term jazz. It is his opinion that the word was suggested by Negro preachers in their tirades on the wicked woman, Jezebel. (Johnson 1927:15)

It is difficult to tell whether Johnson was making a serious suggestion here, but in any case it seems hardly plausible.

The Jasbo tale type, it is clear, has had widespread dissemination both in the United States and in Europe, yet no matter what its locale its elements indicate that it stems from a single source, probably the 1919 issue of Music Trade Review. Although the central character is variously named Jasbo, James, Jasper, Jess, Razz, Chas, and Jack, and although the incident occurs variously in Chicago, New Orleans, Vicksburg, and Philadelphia, it is the same story in essential development in each of its tellings. Its validity is extremely doubtful, and it may be pointed out that, by definition, a folktale is a story concerning persons, incidents, and plot which even the tellers do not believe to be true.

Folk Adaptations: As a Minstrel or Vaudeville Term. The concept of the word jazz as deriving from the minstrel or vaudeville show was first advanced by Kingsley in 1917. Although he felt that the ultimate source of the word was Africa, Kingsley spoke of its application to vaudeville and thus set off a series of articles which ascribed the word to that source. He wrote:



Curiously enough the phrase 'Jaz her up' is a common one to-day in vaudeville and on the circus lot. When a vaudeville act needs ginger the cry from the advisers in the wings is 'put in jaz,' meaning add low comedy, go to high speed and accelerate the comedy spark. 'Jazbo' is a form of the word common in the varieties, meaning the same as 'hokum,' or low comedy verging on vulgarity. (Kingsley 1917:III,3:7)

Although this origin for the term was picked up and cited by others, Kingsley was the only one to spell the word as "Jazbo." When Whiteman used the idea, he said:

I am often asked, 'What is jazz?' I know of no better definition than that given by Lieut. Comm. John Philip Sousa, U.S.N.R.F. He derives the word from 'Jazzbo,' the term used in the old-fashioned minstrel show when the performers 'cut loose' and improvised upon or 'Jazzboed' the tune. (Whiteman 1924:523)

Finck clearly derived his version from Kingsley's original article but used the word "jazz," saying: "Just so in vaudeville, 'jazz her up' means 'put in pep and ginger.' Not necessarily speed, for an extremely popular jazz is the slow drag" (1924:527). We have already had occasion to refer to Moynahan's explanation that "the word 'jazz' was an old vaudeville (!) term, meaning 'to stir things up'" (1937: 15).

Hobson uses a still different spelling in referring to the word as a minstrel term: "Various sources for the word jazz have been suggested, including. . .the old minstrel-show term jasbo, meaning antics guaranteed to bring applause--when new numbers were flopping the backstage cry might be 'give 'em the jasbo' or 'jas it up'" (1939:94-95). Stannard uses the same spelling when he writes, "It seems likely that the word as a musical term derives from the old minstrel show backstage cry: 'Give 'em the jasbo' (meaning to introduce pep into an act)" (1941:83).

Another theory which refers indirectly, at least, to the minstrel origin was reported in Down Beat:

Mutual's Answer Man came up with what many jazz students have been waiting for: an explanation of the origin of the word jazz. . . .

. . .in pre-Civil War days, Georgia Negro men competed in strutting contests for their choice of cakes, and ladies, in cake suppers. The strutting contest became known as the Cake Walk, and the winner was dubbed Mr. Jazzbo.

Further research traced the word to New Orleans during the 1830s, when chasse beaux was a popular French expression denoting a dandy, or a hip Gallic Don Juan. (Anon. 1958a:10)

If the minstrel term, indeed, is to be assumed as the source of the word jazz, we are still faced with the problem of its own origin. There seems to be no clear explanation for this unless we agree

with Chapman's plausible French theory or with Kingsley as to its African origin, a problem which will be discussed below.

Translinguistic Theories. Probably the most persistent theory of the origin of the word jazz has been its ascription to Africa, a theory fully as widespread as—and more logical than—the series of Jasbo stories. Again, this began with Kingsley who wrote in the New York Sun:

The word is African in origin. It is common on the Gold Coast of Africa and in the hinterland of Cape Coast Castle. In his studies of the creole patois and idiom in New Orleans Lafcadio Hearn reported that the word 'jaz,' meaning to speed things up, to make excitement, was common among the blacks of the South and had been adopted by the creoles as a term to be applied to music of a rudimentary syncopated type. In the old plantation days when the slaves were having one of their rare holidays and the fun languished some West Coast Africans would cry out, 'Jaz her up,' and this would be the cue for fast and furious fun. No doubt the witch doctors and medicine men on the Congo used the same term at those jungle 'parties' when the tomtoms throbbed and the sturdy warriors gave their pep an added kick with rich brews of Yohimbin bark—that precious product of the Cameroons. (Kingsley 1917:III,3:6-7)

Kingsley's article was immediately picked up by the Literary Digest which quoted liberally from the Sun article on August 25, 1917, some twenty days after its original publication (Anon. 1917:28), and a year later it was quoted fully again in Current Opinion (Anon. 1918:165). It was partially quoted by Finck (1924:527), discussed at some length by Osgood (1926a:11-12), reworded but ascribed to Lafcadio Hearn by Newell (1928:351), by Nelson in 1930 and Goffin in 1932 (Goffin 1932:45), by Vizetelly (1934:22:6), and by various other authors.

Leaving aside Kingsley's somewhat curious juxtaposition of the then Gold Coast, the Congo, and the Cameroons, the major problem involved in this famous quotation is the ascription of the use of the term to New Orleans creoles by Lafcadio Hearn. A detailed reading of Hearn's collected works failed to reveal any mention of the word, and communication with Hearn scholars has been similarly unrewarding. Thus John Ball writes (1958): "After still further checking (and as I told you in Chicago, Carl Swanson, a Hearn collector from Lakewood, Ohio, has checked all his rare collection), I find no Hearn mention of 'jazz'." It is perhaps noteworthy that Kingsley never gave the source of his reference to Hearn, nor did any of those who used the Kingsley statement from the Sun. Unless Kingsley had personal communication with Hearn, or unless a letter or document has gone unnoticed, this particular line of investigation seems to lead only to a dead end. This circumstance is especially regrettable since Kingsley leaned so heavily upon Hearn as the source of his information.

Kingsley, however, is not the only scholar to attribute the origin of the word to Africa. Thus the New York Times reported in 1934:

Some interesting etymological discoveries in an eight-year survey conducted by Professor Harold H. Bender, head of the Department of Oriental Languages of Princeton University, and a staff of eleven associates in preparing the edition of Webster's New International Dictionary, are described. . . .

It took three years to track down the origin of the word jazz, and he had to write more than 100 letters seeking information on the word. He found it to have come from the West Coast of Africa with the slaves imported to Colonial America. It became incorporated later in the Creole patois as a synonym for 'hurry up.' (Anon. 1934:19:6)

A more elaborate theory includes the African origin, but traces the ultimate source to Arabia from whence it came through Africa to the Western Hemisphere.

I submit a few words on music and musical instruments in the Western Soudan, through whose portals Islamic culture filtered to the various West and Central African peoples, from whom America obtained not merely the word jazz, but much of what it stands for. . . .

The term jazz. . . is derived from the Arabic jaz', a term used in the oldest Arabic works on prosody and music, and meant 'the cutting off,' 'the apocoptation.' It passed with numerous other Arabic musical terms and customs, to the peoples of the West Coast of Africa, to be handed on, in the course of time, to America. (Farmer 1924:158)

Farmer, who wrote these words, reported that he had gathered his material during a period of research at Glasgow University during the years 1918-20. Vizetelly also held the view that the Arabic origin was the correct one:

If one accepts the African source as correct, it may do no harm to point out that in Arabic 'jaz' is vitriol; that one who allures or attracts is 'jazib,' and, by extension, 'jazibiyah' means 'charm, grace, beauty and loveliness'; also the power of attraction.

It may not be amiss to cite the fact that in Hausa, an African language that resembles Arabic, 'jaiza' is used to designate 'the rumbling noise of distant drums, or a murmuring as of discontented persons.' In Arabic, 'jaza' signifies 'compensation or reward; also, complaint or lamentation.' Arabic 'jazb' connotes 'allurement or attraction.' In Hindustani, 'jazba' expresses 'violent desire.'

Now, in view of the fact that the Arabs have always been known as great slave traders, is it not within the bounds of possibility that the term. . . ought to be labeled Arabic? (1934: 22:6)

Redway proposed a compromise which would ascribe the word both to Africa and Arabia.

The peoples of the North African coast are not Negroes; they belong to the Semitic family and their language is closely allied to the Arabic tongue. Many of the words of each are almost identical. For several centuries there were migrations of North Africans into Southwestern Europe, resulting in an intermingling of the two peoples. Southwestern Europe is very dark-skinned far into the Italian peninsula and even into Central Europe.

The African migrants into Europe carried their household words with them and implanted them in the speech of the people with whom they came in contact. As an instance, the prefix 'quad' found in a score of words in the Spanish peninsula is an Arabic word meaning 'water.' The river Guadalquivir is the Arabic 'Wadi-el-Kabir.' The imported African words were carried along wherever migrants from the Spanish peninsula went—in detail, into the West Indies, and they still retain their Arabic earmarks. I am inclined to believe, therefore, that both Dr. Vizetelly and Professor Bender are correct (1934:IV,5:2)

Finally, in this rather extensive train of derivations, there has been at least one writer who holds that the word is Creole without necessarily tracing its ultimate source to the West Indies, Africa, or the Arabic. Tamony said simply: "It is a Creole word and means, in general, to speed up" (Tamony 1939:5).

In respect to the Arabic origin of the word, the differences among the various scholars as to the meaning of the word "jaz" should be pointed out, as should the fact that some scholars insist the word is pronounced with an initial "h" sound although written as a "j" in the English orthography. The African origin of the word is perhaps more plausible, and yet inquiry from a number of Africans as well as scholars in African linguistics has failed to document its presence as a word, let alone as a word with similar meaning, on the Guinea Coast. While the necessity for further research is indicated here, the probability of finding a correlation between jazz and a like word in West Africa seems relatively dim.

One of the most plausible of the translinguistic theories derives the word jazz from the French "jaser," and this idea was most clearly expressed by Schwerke in 1926.

Le mot jazz est d'origine française et son application a la musique est la fidèle image de son sens literal. Il y a 250 ans, la civilisation française trouva un solide point d'appui dans les provinces (plus tard devenues États) de la Louisiane et de la Caroline du Sud. Dans les villes cultivées du Sud (la Nouvelle-Orléans et Charleston), le Français fut pour un certain temps la langue dominante, et, dans les plantations possédées par les Français, c'était la seule langue dont on usât. Les esclaves au service des Français furent obligés d'apprendre la langue de leurs maîtres, ce qu'ils apprennent, des inflexions et des modifications propres à leur race.

S'il faut en croire Larousse, le verbe français jaser signifie causer, bavarder, parler beaucoup. Dans la littérature française,

*jaser* s'applique souvent à une conversation animée sur divers sujets, alors que tout le monde parle ensemble; et, souvent aussi, *jaser* traduit plus spécialement un 'chuchotement badin sur de petits riens.' (1926:679)

This explanation of the word has been cited by Hart (1932:245), Hobson (1939:94), Stannard (1941:83), and Patterson (1947:53), among others, and seems to be relatively plausible. It should also be noted that the translation of *jaser*, "chatter," may have some vague connection with the idea held by Kingsley and others that jazbo and jazz have something to do with "speeding things up." We have previously cited the reference to the French *chasse beaux* (Anon. 1958a:10) which, as advanced by Chapman, also seems highly plausible though we have been unable to verify the reference further.

Two other translinguistic theories have been advanced: one by Charles Edward Smith, who wrote that "The word itself is not of African or French origin but is an old English word applied to Honky Tonk pianists as early as forty years ago" (1935:45), and the other reported by Vizetelly, who stated that "F. P. Vreeland traced it to the Africans, Indians and the Spaniards for the *New York Times* in 1917" (1934:22:6). We have been unable to trace the Vreeland citation even with the help of the *Times* itself.

In summary, the translinguistic theories devolve upon the origin of the term in Arabic, African, Creole, French, Old English, Indian, and Spanish vocabularies. The latter three can probably be dismissed as having little or no relationship to fact; the Arabic and African theories, while plausible, do not seem to stand up under intense scrutiny; the Creole remains unknown. The French origin for the word seems the most plausible and may well be the original source.

Onomatopoeia. An onomatopoeic source for the word jazz has been suggested only by Osgood who wrote: "Is it too far-fetched to suggest that the muffled booming of the great African drum was in itself the parent of the word; that, in other words, its origin is onomatopoeic?" (1926a:11-12). Without resorting to the obvious answer to the question, it may be stated that little credence can be placed in this source.

Vulgarity and Sex. The possible association of jazz with the sex act, for which the word is used as a synonym, has been suggested by a number of writers beginning, apparently, with Clay Smith who wrote:

If the truth were known about the origin of the word 'jazz' it would never be mentioned in polite society. . . . At fifteen and sixteen I had already made tours of Western towns including the big mining centres when the West was really wild and wooly. Like all adolescent boys let loose on the world I naturally received information that was none too good for me and was piloted by ignorant men to dance resorts. . . . These dance resorts were

known as 'Honky-Tonks'—a name, which in itself suggests some of the rhythms of Jazz. The vulgar word 'Jazz' was in general currency in those dance halls thirty years or more ago. Therefore jazz to me does not seem to be of American negro origin as many suppose.

The vulgar dances that accompany some of the modern jazz are sometimes far too suggestive of the ugly origin of the word. (Anon. 1924d:595)

Paul Whiteman also reported this possible source of the word, albeit somewhat regretfully. In speaking of Joseph K. Gorham he wrote:

He did not then note down the aggregation as a jazz band, though he undoubtedly knew the word as a slang phrase of the underworld with a meaning unmentionable in polite society. . . . Sometimes I have regretted the origin of the word because I think it probably has stirred up sentiment against the music. (Whiteman and McBride 1926:18,20)

Although Smith and Whiteman had done little more than hint at the connection between the word and the sex act, Smith, especially, received a sharp rejoinder from Osgood who commented: "This is an example of how dangerous a little knowledge may be. It is entirely true. . . that a certain obscene meaning long ago became attached to the word, but it is not the original meaning of it, nor is jazz alone in this respect" (1926a:17). Despite Osgood's vigorous denial, however, the relationship was later suggested by Tamony (1939:5), Standard (1941:83), and Goffin (1946:63,64), among others, and was flatly defined by Johnson in 1927: "Used both as a verb and as a noun to denote the sex act, . . . 'jazz'. . . has long been a common vulgarity among Negroes in the South, and it is very likely from this usage that the term 'jazz music' was derived" (1927:14-15). It may be noted here that Weseen, in his Dictionary of American Slang, gives "Jazz--Sexual intercourse; to have it" (1934:22) and Berrey, in the American Thesaurus of Slang, gives the word jazz under copulate (1947:342).

In this connection, also, Mencken connects the music term with the American folk use of jazz as a verb meaning to have sexual intercourse (1948:708-09), and Mathews says, ". . . but the plain fact is that to jazz has long had the meaning in American folk-speech of to engage in sexual intercourse" (1951:709). Mathews further indicates a possible line of research in connecting the word jazz with jasm which he cites as early as 1860 from the Massachusetts author Josiah Holland (*ibid.*:899). This in turn may be connected with the American dialect word gism which Read (1935:453) defines as "Strength, talent, Genius, ability. Cf. spunk. In various parts of the South, gism has the meaning 'gravy,' or 'cream sauce.' In the North, it is commonly used to mean 'semen.' In Maine and eastern New England the word is commonly pronounced chism, and the writer has seen it so spelled.—Ed." Read's source was Green (1897:85), who

noted, "Chism, n. Chissum. Seminal fluid," in 1897, although he may have traced it back as far as 1848. If the connection between gism, jasm and jazz is real, it probably leads away from the African or American Negro, but it also leads us up a blind alley inasmuch as jasm and gism cannot themselves be traced.

Although we have no satisfactory etymology for the word jazz in relation to its sexual meaning, nor information concerning the earliest use of the word in this connection, there is a certain degree of logic in the assumption that the music use of the term was derived from its sexual use. Here again is a field for further research.

Spontaneous Origins. The theory of a spontaneous origin of the word has been infrequently advanced, appearing but four times in the literature. The Outlook in 1924 said: "Some say that it is the Negro's reminiscence of his African tomtoms. According to one story, it was an illiterate Negro in a dancehall who coined the word; for when he was asked, 'What is that you are playing?' he replied, deprecatingly, 'Oh, it's jes' jazz'" (Anon. 1924a:382). Cecil Austin simply says, "'This band is certainly some jazz,' was a fairly common expression at the time, and two dollars a night and unlimited quantities of beer always proved a strong attraction to the musicians" (1925:258), and Coeuroy and Schaffner probe no deeper when they say, "Certains le font derivier d'une expression en usage dans les bouges de la Nouvelle-Orléans: Jazz them, boys (qui correspondrait a Hardi, les gars)" (1926:101). And finally, an anonymous writer quoted Joseph K. Gorham as saying, ". . .the word. . .means simply enough, and without any explanation or definition, the only thing it's possible for four such letters in such order, when pronounced, to convey—and that is just 'to mess 'em up and slap it on thick.' That's the verb 'to jazz.' The noun means just the same as the verb except that the noun implies the process and the verb the action" (Anon. 1919d:47).

## II

The question as to where, how, and when the word jazz was first used as applied to music is as much of a puzzle as its ultimate origin, with various writers holding widely different points of view.

Localities. Curiously, the earliest ascription, in 1919, of the word to a musical type, was said to have occurred in the San Francisco area; this assertion was made by Joseph K. Gorham, according to the Literary Digest, who said that the word was "common to the knowledge and frequent in the vocabulary of the Barbary coast" (Anon. 1919d:47). This point of view received support from Smith (Anon. 1924d:595), as previously cited, and from Tamony, who says:

Late in February, 1913, the San Francisco Seals went into training at Boyes Springs. . . . Mr. Slattery a sports editor had

heard the word jazz in craps games around San Francisco. It is a Creole word and means, in general, to speed up. . . . Mr. Slatery, with a sports-writer's sense of the striking, began to use 'jazz' as a synonym for 'ginger' and 'pep.' In a few days the novelty was taken up by other writers and the people around the camp, and was used in all descriptions. On the field the players were full of the old jazz, and there was jazz in the effervescent waters of the springs. Everything was jazzy, including the music Art Hickman played for the entertainment of the players and visitors. . . . The music he provided was his stylization of the ragtime of the day. It was an immediate hit. James Woods, manager of the Hotel St. Francis, heard Hickman while on a visit to Boyes. After Hickman opened at the St. Francis, national use of the word was only a matter of time. (1939:5)

A different use of the word, but still in San Francisco, was reported by Osgood.

Speaking of different meanings, Ferdie Grofe. . . tells of a peculiar use of the word jazz in San Francisco, which does not seem to have obtained anywhere else. Out there in the years just preceding the War there were certain large and popular cafés which maintained orchestras and also a regular pianist, and gave cabaret performances, limited, however, to singing by young women. Each one had a solo to sing and occasionally they joined in an ensemble. They did not sing their solos from the stage where the pianist was stationed. It was part of their duties to mingle with the guests and join them at table. Whenever one of them heard the pianist begin the prelude to her number, she would rise wherever she happened to be and sing, but when the pianist decided it was time for an ensemble, he would announce, "The next number will be jazz," and they would all troop back to the stage. There was no extra "pepping up" or rhythmic exaggeration in these choruses, and the word appears to have had no special significance as regards the music, simply meaning that it would be sung tutti instead of solo. (1926a:18)

This story has been cited by a number of writers, among them Nelson and Goffin (Goffin 1932:46).

Ludwig says that the word "was first used in this country by negroes working on the docks and levees in the South" (1922:78) and is apparently referring to its music connection. More specifically, Baby Dodds says, "The word 'jazz' as a musical term, was born in New Orleans" (Anon. 1945:5), and this is echoed by Darnell Howard, "The term 'jazz' then originated in New Orleans" (*ibid.*), and by Coeuroy and Schaeffner (1926:101). The New Orleans origin is expressly denied by Stannard who says "New Orleans musicians themselves were not familiar with the expression" (1941:83).

Finally, both Richard M. Jones and Bud Jacobson cite New York as the location of the first use of the word in connection with music (Anon. 1945:5).



Date of First Use. The oldest reference to the word jazz seems to be that advanced by Chapman who is reported to have "turned up a poster some 100 years old, with the word Jass on it" (Anon. 1958a:10). Other than this, we have Austin's statement that "the term 'jazz' in its relation to music dates from about this time [post Civil War]" (1925:258), while Clay Smith notes: "'Jazz' was born and christened in the low dance halls of our far west of three decades ago" (Anon. 1924d:595), which would place it about 1900. Osgood, referring back to James Reese Europe, whom we have previously cited, says, "It is possible that Lieutenant Europe correctly cited the first use of jazz as an adjective, for he places it about 1900-1905, ten years at least before the term 'jazz band' came into general use. . ." (1926a:14).

Richard M. Jones is quoted as believing that

The term 'jazz' originated in New Orleans during the early part of the century as a descriptive word. It wasn't until after the Original Dixieland Band added the word 'jass' to its title while recording in New York during 1913 or 1914 that the word spread into other bands. It was undoubtedly a press agent's idea that first gave the word its start during the ODJB recordings. However, the word, as a musical term, was first used in New Orleans upon the return of the ODJB from New York. The word then spread to other bands in other cities. (Anon. 1945:5)<sup>3</sup>

We have already had occasion to cite Tamony's date of 1913 for the word in San Francisco (Tamony 1939:5), and Darnell Howard cites the same date, saying:

I first heard the word 'jazz' used musically in reference to the Original Dixieland Jass Band. This was in 1913, and the ODJB had just recorded Livery Stable Blues. That same year, while I was playing with the John Wecliffe band in Milwaukee, the band's press agent erected a huge sign above the dance hall where we were playing. The large, flashy letters read: JOHN WECLIFFE'S JAZZ BAND. This caused quite a commotion, for the word 'jazz' at this time was a rather shady word, used only in reference to sex. This was Milwaukee; quite a few miles north of Chicago. The ODJB was already employing the word 'jazz' musically. They started their band in New Orleans. The term 'jazz' then originated in New Orleans. (Anon. 1945:5)<sup>3</sup>

Baby Dodds recounts the same general story, but dates it at 1914.

The word 'jazz' as a musical term, was born in New Orleans. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, playing at the Casino in the tenderloin district of New Orleans in 1914, first employed the term. The first time I came into direct contact with the term, though, was in 1919 when I joined Fate Marable's Jazz E Sazz Band on the Capitol Steamer or Steamer Sydney. The term definitely was used first in New Orleans, before Chicago. (Anon. 1945:5)

Still in reference to the ODJB, Jacobson was of the opinion that

Wilbur Sweatman. . . had a lot to do with originating the word 'jazz.' He wrote a short article for the Chicago Daily News in 1915 stating that he was the first person to use the term in a band. If so, the term undoubtedly started in New York. The ODJB might have picked up the term from the Sweatman Band while recording in New York, then upon returning to New Orleans, spread it around to other bands. I remember distinctly seeing the word used in Chicago in 1914; I don't believe it was any earlier. The two words, JAZZ BAND, were pasted on a high sign above the Arsonia Cafe where Art Arseth's Band was playing at the time. (Anon. 1945:5)

Another widely-quoted description of the first use of the word appeared in Jazzmen in 1939, where Charles Edward Smith wrote of the Tom Brown Band:

In June, 1915, however, they could and did take a job at the Lamb's Cafe in Chicago. . . .

They didn't have union clearance on that first Chicago job. According to Tom Brown it was an attempt by union officials to lowrate them that gave jazz its name. Jazz, or jass as it was then spelled, was a familiar word around 22nd Street where the red lights glowed, but it wasn't used about music. The story has it that the statement that jazz music was being played at Lamb's Cafe was a whispering campaign, the purpose of which was to smear the band. People were curious to know what 'jass' music was, and they came in droves to find out. Presently the new sign out front read: 'Added attraction—Brown's Dixieland Jass Band, Direct from New Orleans, Best Dance Music in Chicago.' (1939:46)

In Tom Brown's obituary in the New York Times in 1958, the same story is told:

Mr. Brown, a trombonist, said the term 'jazz music' was first applied to his band in Chicago in 1915. It was playing at the Lambs Club there and was attracting crowds with the music that originated in New Orleans.

He related how another band at the club became jealous and complained to the union. The union issued a statement saying that 'jazz music was being played at Lambs,' intending to discredit the Brown band.

Instead of hurting it, Mr. Brown said, the public streamed in to see what the music was all about. (Anon. 1958b:37:1)

The story has also been cited by a number of writers, among them Goffin (1946:64). Hart (1932:245), probably referring to the same story, says that "It was not until about 1915 that the word came into its present widespread use."

Although there are conflicting opinions expressed as to the early use of the word, it seems clear that the overwhelming support comes for a date sometime between 1913 and 1915 although earlier use may have existed in local areas.

Early Spellings. Although in fact the early spellings of the printed word are usually either "jass" or "jazz," Kingsley noted that it was "variously spelled Jas, Jass, Jaz, Jazz, Jasz and Jasz" (1917:III,3:6-8), and Vernon said that it was sometimes spelled "'jass' and sometimes 'jazz'" (1919:IV,5:1-2). Nelson, in 1930, included the various spellings "jaz, jass, jaz, jazz, jasz ou jazsz" (Goffin 1932:45), and Stannard says "The early spelling of the word was alternatively jas, jass and jaz" (1941:83). As noted above, however, very few of these alternative spellings have ever been used in the literature, and most are probably due to the inventiveness of the authors concerned.

Euphemisms and New Words for Jazz. So far as we can discover there have been three major attempts to substitute another word for jazz, as well as two other suggestions of an unorganized nature. The first of the major efforts was initiated by Vincent Lopez who was quoted in the Musical Courier in 1924.

Vincent Lopez, who is doing his bit at the next meeting of the League of Composers to clarify the situation, objects to the term 'jazz.' Being on the inside, he feels more strongly on the subject than most of us. . . . He insists that, jazz being dead, the name ought also be dead, or, at least, ought not to be hung on to what he calls Modern Music or Modern Popular Music.

This is a point for discussion—and we must say at the outset that we agree with Mr. Lopez, that the use of the word 'jazz' leads to a lot of misconception and misunderstanding, and that the progress of American music would be more rapid, that it would more readily gain universal acceptance and respect, and would take its proper place especially with the mass of our people, were the term by which it is to be called not suggestive of an unpleasant phase in our history from which we have happily escaped.

Jazz presents to the mind disorder. It is suggestive of things unpleasant, or atavistic leanings of which we are all properly ashamed, of borrowings from savages, of near-orgies that have quite properly been combatted by those who have care of the young and the morals of youth. The word has evil associations. . . . (Anon. 1924d:36)

Although the writer for the Courier agreed with Lopez as to the implications of the word and pointed out that jazz had changed a great deal since its early days, he did not agree to Lopez's term, "modern music," and suggested finally that the term jazz be kept "until it dies a natural death" (*ibid.*). Apparently nothing ever came of Lopez's suggestion for we do not read of it again.

Shortly thereafter, in July of 1924, Meyer Davis apparently offered a prize of a hundred dollars for a new name for jazz which "must. . . be at once both dignified and comprehensively descriptive" (Anon. 1924c:28). In the only report of this prize we have been able to find, editorial comment in the Musical Courier said:

. . . perhaps one should say that this attempt to get a better word than jazz for the expression of American popular music in its present stage of development is laudable. It is rather difficult, however, to see what difference the name makes; and it is still more difficult to believe that any such effort will actually change the name or prevent people from talking about jazz, as long as it is jazz, in the future just as they have in the past.

The thing to change is not the name but the music, and, in spite of what Mr. Davis has to say on this subject, and what others have said, jazz is still jazz. A bit better, certainly, than the weird 'ad libbing' of half a dozen years ago, but a perfectly obvious development from that style.

However, may someone win the hundred dollars—and here's wishing good luck to a lively and vigorous contest. (Anon. 1924c: 28)

Again the Davis contest apparently never came to a conclusion, or at least was not reported in the press, and the lucky winner and his word remain unknown.

In the meantime two unsolicited suggestions had made their way into print. The first was one from Clay Smith, in August of 1924, who said: "But why stigmatize what is good in the music by the unmentionably low word 'Jazz'? . . . Why not call it 'Ragtonia' or 'Calethumpia' or anything on earth to get away from the term 'Jazz'?" (Anon. 1924d:595). The second was proposed anonymously in the Musical Leader in December of 1924: the word chosen was syncopep which, said the writer, "represents an honest effort to provide something new within the limitations of its exponents. . . [It is a] new way of presenting old melodies" (Anon. 1924b:568). Although the author refers to jazz influence on classical music, it appears that he envisaged syncopep as the label for modern music, serious and composed or uncomposed—whether it was to apply directly to jazz as such is unknown.

This concern over a new word for jazz apparently disappeared by the end of 1924, and it was not until 1949 that a further attempt was made to find a substitute. This occurred probably primarily as a publicity stunt for Down Beat magazine which headlined its contest "New Word for Jazz Worth \$1000" and commented:

For years, musicians, writers, and critics have complained there is no word to describe the music of today. The term jazz has lost its significance. Swing just isn't swinging anymore. Be-bop refers to one restricted school. . . . The same situation existed back in the early 30's, when the word jazz had been applied to the music of the Ted Lewises and the Paul Whitemans and had lost much of its virility and color. . . .

Join the fun! Help select the word to replace outworn jazz! (Anon. 1949a:10)

In a succeeding issue S. I. Hayakawa, Marshall Stearns, John Lucas, and Stan Kenton were named as judges (Anon. 1949b:1), and on November 4, 1949, the twenty-six winners were announced:

- |                                    |                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1st Prize: CREWCUT (\$1000 winner) | 14. SWIXIBOP    |
| 2nd Prize: AMERIMUSIC              | 15. X-TEMPO     |
| 3. JARB                            | 16. RAGTIBOP    |
| 4. FREESTYLE                       | 17. BLIP        |
| 5. MOP                             | 18. BEATPOINT   |
| 6. NOVACLASSIC                     | 19. IDIOISM     |
| 7. PULSEMUSIC                      | 20. AMERITONIC  |
| 8. MESMERHYTHM                     | 21. IMPROPHONY  |
| 9. LE HOT                          | 22. SCHMOOSIC   |
| 10. BIX-E-BOP                      | 23. SYNCORHYTHM |
| 11. HIP                            | 24. BEATFELT    |
| 12. ID                             | 25. SYNCOPE     |
| 13. SOCK                           | 26. REETBEAT    |

In an editorial in the same issue (Anon. 1949c:1), it was said:

All of the judges concurred on one thing, that none of the hundreds of words which poured in could be accepted as a suitable substitute for jazz. . .

Probably now we will revert to the continued use of jazz with more satisfaction and with greater assurance. It might be nice to utilize 'crewcut' once in awhile, as a change of pace and to avoid monotony. But if any word ever replaces jazz it will have to be because, like Topsy, it 'just growed.'

#### CONCLUSION

We have reviewed here the various suggested sources for the word jazz revealed in the literature of the past forty-one years, and it is clear that the evidence for one is for the most part no better than for another. It seems to the present authors that the stories of variously named musicians probably have little basis in fact, while the original use of the word as a minstrel or vaudeville term leaves us only a little closer to the original source. The African and Arabic theories remain a possibility and deserve further research, while the English, Indian, and Spanish origins are fairly clearly unbased. The relationship to the French jaser remains a distinct possibility, given the French influence in the Southern United States and in New Orleans in particular, as does the early idea that jazz as a minstrel term involved notions somewhat similar to the French translation of that word. The reference to the French, chasse beaux, is indeed an intriguing one which should be vigorously pursued. The onomatopoeic and spontaneous origins are highly speculative at very best, but the association of the word jazz in its vulgar sense remains a distinct possibility.

The earliest associations of the word with music so far as locale is concerned refer, surprisingly, to San Francisco, a possibility which remains but which does not seem logical in view of our knowledge of the beginnings of jazz as a musical form. In any event it is

reasonably clear that the term came into wide usage in a relatively restricted period between 1913 and 1915. Most early spellings seem to be a figment of the imaginations of the authors who devised them, and suggestions for new words have been spectacularly unsuccessful.

We suggest the need for linguistic and philological research although we are not at all sure that the origin of jazz, the word, can ever be found.

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This article was originally published as a five-part series which ran in The Jazz Review from March through August, 1960 (Vol. III); it was somewhat popularized and the accompanying bibliography was never published. The present version goes back to the original manuscript with some slight editorial changes. Though some further material concerning the word "jazz" has been published since 1960, it has not been incorporated here. We are grateful to Nat Hentoff and Martin Williams, Editors of The Jazz Review, for permission to republish the article here.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. The references to Osgood in this paper are to his book, So This Is Jazz (1926a). Osgood's chapter dealing with the origin of the term jazz was published separately in American Speech (1926b); the same information is available in both places.

2. Rudi Blesh, an authority on ragtime, writes: "Early in 1897 the first instrumental number completely in ragtime and so titled rolled off the printing presses. . . 'Mississippi Rag,' by William H. Krell" (Blesh 1950:100-01). The first major ragtime success was Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag," published in 1899. From this point to the beginning of World War I the popularity of ragtime continually increased. According to Abbe Niles, "The first so-called 'blues' was Baby Seals Blues, which appeared in St. Louis, on August 3, 1912" (Handy 1949:13). This was followed in quick succession by other blues compositions: "Dallas Blues was published in Oklahoma City, on September 6, 1912. . . . Handy's Memphis Blues, in Memphis, on September 28, 1912. . ." (*ibid.*). We could thus date Lopez' reference to "Chaz" in Vicksburg, Mississippi (Anon. 1924d:520) as 1913, perhaps 1914.

3. Actually, the first recording by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band was made in New York City in January of 1917.

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