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Miller Nichols Library  
University of Missouri, Kansas City

## **Wilbur "Buck" Clayton Collection**

**SIZE:** 1.4 linear feet

**DATE RANGE:** The publication dates span from 7/31/1952 to 11/1/1987

**ACQUISITION:** Mrs. Clayton

**ACCESS:** This is a non-circulating collection. Listening stations are available in the archives.

**COPYRIGHT:** Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the Special Collections Librarian or other authorized agent.

**ACCEPTED BY:** Chuck Haddix and Ted Sheldon

**PROCESSED BY:** Andrew Hansbrough and Cody Kauhle

**SUPERVISING ARCHIVIST:** Kelley Martin

### **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:**

A seminal figure in the evolution of jazz, Wilbur "Buck" Clayton distinguished himself as an arranger, composer, trumpeter and band leader. Dapper and strikingly handsome with playful green eyes, trumpeter Buck Clayton first rose to national fame as the lead soloist with the first great Count Basie band that roared out of Kansas City in late fall 1936. Ironically, while Clayton's understated, bell-like sound is associated with the hard swinging Kansas City style, he actually spent little time in Kansas City. By the time he arrived at the famed Reno Club, a small dive on 12th Street, Clayton had already led a colorful career as a band leader, ranging from Los Angeles to Shanghai.

Born in 1911 in Parsons, Kansas, Clayton grew up in a musical family. Clayton's father, a minister, taught him the basics of music. Picking up the trumpet as a teenager, Clayton performed with the church band, featuring his mother on organ. He first heard the clarion call of jazz during a stopover by the George E. Lee band in Parsons. After high school, Clayton followed his muse to California, where he began his professional career.

In Los Angeles, Clayton joined Charlie Echols' 14-piece band, playing taxi dances and ballrooms. Clayton and other band members soon left Echols to join forces with Broadway producer Earl Dancer and work in movies. When Dancer, a chronic gambler, disappeared with the payroll, Clayton took over leadership of the group. Just 23 years old, Clayton led his new band to China.

In 1934, the Clayton band opened at the palatial Canidrome Ballroom in Shanghai, China, becoming one of the first bands to play the Orient. Madame Chiang Kai-Shek and other celebrities flocked to the Canidrome nightly to sway to a potent mixture of hot jazz and classical music performed by the band,

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decked out in tails. The Clayton band spent the next two years at the Canidrome, with a short jaunt to Japan. A melee with a former Marine that turned the dance floor into a roiling free-for-all cost Clayton the job at the Canidrome. Unable to find steady work in Shanghai, Clayton and what remained of the band returned to the United States.

Back in the Los Angeles, Clayton reformed the big band and played several seasons at Sebastian's Cotton Club and Club Araby. In the summer of 1936, Clayton left for New York to join Willie Bryant's band at the original Cotton Club. On his way east, Clayton stopped off in Kansas City and joined the Basie Band at the Reno Club, replacing Lips Page as star soloist. Clayton's solo excellence, arrangements and compositions bolstered the national rise of the Basie band. Clayton remained with the Basie band until he was drafted in 1943.

After his discharge in 1946, Clayton led a small group at Café Society and toured nationally with the Jazz at the Philharmonic. During the 1950s, Clayton toured Europe with his own group and freelanced with Joe Bushkin, Jimmy Rushing, Frank Sinatra and a host of other band leaders. Clayton recorded widely as a sideman and a leader, cutting a series of jam sessions for the Columbia label produced by John Hammond.

Sidelined by lip surgery in 1967, Clayton focused on composing and arranging for other groups. He returned to playing in the early 1970s and toured internationally with his own group. When his lip gave out for good in the late 1970s, Clayton returned to directing, composing and arranging, while teaching at Hunter College in New York. In 1987, Clayton formed a big band to perform his compositions. Clayton continued creating and leading his "Swinging Dream Band" until his death in 1991.

**SCOPE AND CONTENT:**

The Buck Clayton Collection contains 9 12” acetates, 2 7” 45s, 1 12” Reel, 15 7” Reels, 4 5” Reels and 2 Cassette tapes. These materials contain master copies of original recordings, interviews, and live recordings.

**COLLECTION DETAIL:**

#	Format	Date	Item Description	Org. Item #
<b>Box 1: Barcode #040-113293837</b>				
1	12" RD	7/31/1952	“Stars in Jazz.” NBC Orthacoustic Instantaneous. 12” acetate. 33 1/3 RPM.	CT 1143
2	12" RD	1953?	Buck Clayton w/ Mezz Mezzrow Orchestra. 12” acetate.	DB 22956
3	12" RD	1953	Buck Clayton w/ Mezz Mezzrow Orchestra. 12” acetate.	DB 22956
4	12" RD	1953	Buck Clayton w/ Mezz Mezzrow Orchestra. 12” acetate.	DB 22956
5	12" RD	1/4/1956	“Baby, Baby, All the Time” b/w “That Ol’ Feelin’”; Buck Clayton on Trumpet with Frankie Laine on The Arthur Godfrey Show. WCBS-TV. Rockhill Recording; 18 East 50 <sup>th</sup> Street.	

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			New York City. 12" acetate. 78 RPM.	
6	12" RD	1956	Benny Goodman Story – Music from the Universal Picture; “Down South Camp Meetin” b/w “Slipped Disc.” 78 acetate	1 of 3
7	12" RD	1956	Benny Goodman Story – Music from the Universal Picture; “Bugle Call Rag” b/w “One O’Clock Jump.” 78 acetate.	2 of 3
8	12" RD	1956	Benny Goodman Story – Music from the Universal Picture; “Slipped Disc.” 78 acetate.	3 of 3
9	12" RD	?	“Jazz Album.” 33 1/3 acetate.	
10	7" RD	1944-1946?	“Corsicana” b/w “Sunset Blues”. Composed by Buck Clayton and Hot Lips Page. 45 acetate.	
11	7" RD	1974	"Jingle Bells" – Marva Josie and Earl Hines; "White Christmas" – Earl Hines; sent to Buck from Hank O'Neal representing Chiaroscuro Records. 45 acetate.	CR 1974
12	12" OR	11/24/1968	<i>Pioneers of Jazz Riverboat Concert.</i> Buck Clayton Group.	#5
13	7" OR	11/24/1968	<i>Pioneers of Jazz Riverboat Concert.</i> Buck Clayton Group. Columbia Recording Studios.	#5 KR-709
14	7" OR	11/24/1968	<i>Pioneers of Jazz Riverboat Concert.</i> Buck Clayton Group. 1) “C Jam Blues”; 2) Medley: “You’re Nobody Till Somebody Loves You”; “All of Me”; “Things Ain’t What They Used to Be”; “Georgia Brown”; 3) Stompin’ at the Savoy; 4) “Theme.”	#5
15	7" OR	6/3/1967	Buck Clayton & Ben Webster Featuring Henri Chaix Quartet.	
16	7" OR	1958 & 2/11/1970	“Blues Too”/”I Can’t Get Started.” Performed by Buck, Ben, Teddy, Al Casey, Al Hall, and J.C. Heard Jazz Panorama, Radio Merseyside 2/11/1970. Steve Voce, Jenny Collins, Buck Clayton. Also: Buck, Jack Teagarden, Pee Wee, Lester, Don Ewell, Tom Bryant, Jo Jones at Newport 1958. “Muskrat Ramble”/ “Blues.”	
17	7" OR	5/11/1974	Humphrey Lyttelton Jazz Club	
18	7" OR	10/31/1974 11/4/1974	“Senior Song Time” – Liverpool Domestic Mission	
<b>Box 2: Barcode #040-113293846</b>				
19	7" OR	6/24/1976	Buck Clayton Interviewed by Ted O’Reilly. CJRT FM 91.1; Toronto, Ontario.	
20	7" OR	6/30/1974	1984 Kool Jazz Festival at Carnegie Hall in New York. “A Tribute to Count Basie” (2 of 4). 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> sets of the evening. 5) “Rompin’ at the Reno” (4:23) 6) “Kansas City Style” (5:13) 7) “Cherry Blossom” (6:47) 8) “Evenin” (7:35) 9) “Goin’ to Chicago (8:10).	#10
21	7" OR	NO DATE	Box Says: Jazz Festival at Sea Interviews: Jake Hanna, Ronnie Scott, Leonard Feather, Larry Berk (?)	

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			Reel Says: "Gordon Sinclair on Buck Clayton" Insert Says: Tape of Buck Clayton's Return to Toronto Canada at First Engagement After Seven Year Lay-Off. Phil McKeller.	
22	7" OR	NO DATE	T. Lee/ L. Stewart	
23	7" OR	NO DATE	Buck Clayton II: "S' Wonderful," "These Foolish Things," "(It's the) Talk of the Town," "Satin Doll," "Exactly Like You." Stereo Recording.	
24	7" OR	NO DATE	Buck Clayton III: "Sugar," "C' Jam Blues," "Sunday," "I Want a Little Girl (Partial)." Stereo recording	
25	7" OR	NO DATE	Tonemaster Reel for Buck. Sent from Great Britain. Mail Packaging included	
26	7" OR	NO DATE	<i>Buck Clayton at the Marquee Club.</i> Track 1: "In a Mellotone" "Cotton Tail" Track 2: "Jeep's Blues" "Me and Buck" "Sentimental Journey" "The Humphan (?) Buck."	
27	5" OR	7/31/1974	Extract from "Jazz Panorama" 3 3/4 I.P.S. W/ Mail Packaging.	
28	5" OR	NO DATE	Unidentified 5" Reel. Notes: Buck Clayton, Ross, "So I Went to the Devil," Original unedited.	
29	5" OR	NO DATE	Unidentified 5" Reel. Notes: Irish Recording Tape.	
30	5" OR	NO DATE	Unidentified 5" Tonemaster Reel from Ron Clough, U.K. Mail Packaging included.	
31	CASS	11/1/1987	Buck Clayton Big Band. <i>Fat Tuesday</i> Side 1: Fun City swinger; Beaujolais; Nancy's Fancy; Switch hitter; Beachwood Drive; Swinging Dream; Beachwood Drive; Sweet Cakes\ Side 2: Homeless; Metro Special; Winter Light; Swinging Dream; Fiesta in Blue; Angel in Blue; Rompin at the Reno; Parisian Mood; Yorkville; Cherry Blossom; Avenue C; [CD copy available in box.]	
32	CASS	NO DATE	Notes: "Duckie," "Springtime Rain," "So Pretty."	