James Fletcher Henderson (Smack)
- Band leader, pianist, composer, arranger
- Huge contributor to the progression of jazz
- Born in Columbus, Georgia, 1898
- Mother taught him how to play the piano at home
- Got a degree in Chemistry at Atlanta (Ga.) University
- Preferred football over music
- Associated with Black Swan record company
- Organized a band and recorded in 1923 under that label
(1924)
- Music was more welcoming amongst racial foibles prejudice for the shy character
- Played piano behind some singers and drifted to band leading
- By 1924 Henderson had enough experience to land a more regular job at the NYC Roseland Ballroom
- There they made a record run of 7 years consecutive years at one location on Broadway
- Prior to the Roseland his band's first important engagement was at the Little Club, or Club Harlem
- He was the owner of the house band at Roseland
- His first "band" records were made as early as 1921, but it took a couple of years for some of his familiar sidemen to fall into place, and by 1928 the seeds of Henderson's band had been sown... (Cook, 2005)
- Don Redman - April 1923
- Coleman Hawkins - August
- Early recordings were stiff and didn't show much jazz - they weren't exciting
- However, Hawkins' playing was always impressive.