

# THE RECORDINGS OF EUGENE BUD AIKEN

## An Annotated Tentative Discography

AIKEN, Eugene L. "Bud" (trombone / cornet) born: Charleston, South Carolina (?), pre 1904, died: Saranac Lake, N.Y., Aug 21 1927  
Prob. raised in Jenkins Orphanage, Charleston. With FH on Ethel Waters tour (Nov. 21-Jan. 1922). Also played and/or recorded with Willie Gant (1921?), Bill Benford (1920's), Wilbur Sweatman (Sep/23), Perry Bradford groups (1923), own band (Capitol Palace Club (1924), Elmer Snowden (spring 1924), Percy Glascoe Plantation Orch. (Mar 1924 – Jun 1925), with recording behind Mamie Smith for Ajax); Charlie Johnson (fall 1925, on trumpet (rather trombone – KBR)); Louise Vant (Dec 1925); Lafayette Theater Orch. (1926?). He died after a long illness, presumably tuberculosis, since Saranac was a noted TB sanitarium. (John Chilton, Who's Who of Jazz, Walter C. Allen, Hendersonia)

Bushell/Tucker p.152: "Bud Aiken might be on trombone, since the playing is clean and not boisterous – Buddy was never boisterous. Same, p. 153: "This sounds like Buddy (Aiken) on trombone; I never heard Herb Flemming play with a mute.

Hoefler papers: "Garvin Bushell, who was working at Leroy's in late '22 said the only other trombonist who played like Harrison was Buddy Aiken, Gus Aiken's brother, a good legitimate player."

### AIKEN, EUGENE BUD

#### STYLE

*Gus Aiken plays a "Western" style trumpet, more like the trumpet players from New Orleans or Chicago than those from New York. That means: he plays with flexible rhythm (off-beat phrasing), mainly legato and in a fluent horizontal way without arpeggiated changes. His style is akin to Jabbo Smith's, yet not as exuberant and dramatic (both musicians were taught in the Jenkins Orphanage, Charleston, S.C.). BUT: He obviously was an expert in copying Johnny Dunn and is mistakenly taken for him in late 1922 and early 1923. After his half-year tour to Cuba with Gonzell White (June to December 1923) his style was as described above. To me Gus Aiken is one of the most underrated and neglected trumpet players of the classic period.*

#### TONE

*Not brilliant but rather husky.*

#### VIBRATO

*Aiken uses a rather wide, open and relaxed vibrato.*

#### TIME

*He plays with a lot of drive and knows how to use off-beat phrasing and is always swinging.*

#### PHRASING

*His phrasing is of beauty and with a lot of taste. No tasteless exhibition.*

This personnelo-discography is based on RUST, JAZZ AND RAGTIME RECORDS 1897 - 1942.

Personnels are taken from this source, but modified in the light of earlier or subsequent research or on the strength of my own listening, discussed with our listening group or other interested collectors.

- Documented, most certain and aurally absolutely obvious identifications are listed thus: **Bud Aiken**
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Bud Aiken*
- Not attributable identifications – although the musician in question might be an otherwise well-known person – are listed thus: **unknown**
- If a possible identification for an otherwise unknown musician is suggested by the author without the possibility to prove the factual evidence, it is listed thus: (*Bud Aiken*)

When feeling certain without a musician's documented presence, I have not refrained from altering Rust's statements without using italics. In any case, my statements are open to discussion and I would appreciate any contribution - pro or contra!

As always in my discographies on this website I have written recording sessions with their headings, dates, titles and names of musicians in italics, whenever I am convinced that the eponymous musician of this discography is not part of the accompanying group of this session! Documented names of musicians if known – in recording ledgers or on record labels – are listed in bold letters.

This discography still is - and will certainly be - a work in progress for a long time, if not eternally. Yet, on the way to a definite discography of all jazz recordings before 1942 - which certainly will never be possible - it is intended to fill some gaps that have not been treated before.

## EUGENE 'BUD' AIKEN

001	<b>LILLYN BROWN</b>	her Jazzbo Syncopators	New York,	c. Mar. 29, 1921
	Lillyn Brown – voc;			
	Gus Aiken (or Ed Cox) – cnt; Bud Aiken or Herb Flemming – tbn;			
	Garvin Bushell – clt; unknown - alt; Johnny Mullins – vln;			
	unknown – pno; Lutice Perkins - dms			
41721-2		If That's What You Want, Here It Is	Em 10366,	Document DOCD-5627
41721-3		If That's What You Want, Here It Is	Em 10366,	Document DOCD-5627
41721-4		If That's What You Want, Here It Is	Em 10366,	Document DOCD-5489
41722-1		Ever-Lovin' Blues	Em 10366	not on LP/CD
41722-2		Ever-Lovin' Blues	Em 10366,	Document DOCD-5627
41722-3		Ever-Lovin' Blues	Em 10366	not on LP/CD
41722-4		Ever-Lovin' Blues	Em 10366,	Document DOCD-5489

This item is not listed as including Aiken by Rust and Godrich/Dixon. But according to Walter C. Allen, Aiken recorded with Lillyn Brown! Garvin Bushell in his "Jazz From The Beginning" does not comment on this session! Accompaniment is mainly played straight, therefore impossible to discriminate personal styles. But trumpet playing (tone, vibrato, time) is within the limits of Gus Aiken as displayed in session 006 and 010. Vibrato could be the same as in later Aiken recordings. Ed Cox is a much tamer player as characterized by Garvin Bushell. Bushell did not take up alto until 1923 although listed playing it here in Rust.

Notes:

- Rust\*3, \*4, \*6: Ed Cox -c; Bud Aiken or Herb Flemming -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl -as; Johnny Mullins -vn; unknown -p; Lutice Perkind -d.  
- BGR\*2, \*3, \*4: Ed Cox, cnt; Bud Aiken or Herb Flemming, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt, alt; Johnny Mullins, vln; unknown pno; Lutice Perkins, dms.

002	<b>DAISY MARTIN</b>	Five Jazz Bell Hops	New York,	Mar./ Apr. 1921
	Daisy Martin – voc;			
	Gus Aiken – cnt; Gene Bud Aiken or Jake Frazier – tbn;			
	Garvin Bushell – clt; unknown – ten/cms;			
	Dude Finley – pno; unknown – bjo; unknown - dms			
7466-A		Royal Garden Blues	Gnt 4712,	Document DOCD-5660
7466-?		Royal Garden Blues	Gnt 4712,	Document DOCD-5522
7467-A		Spread Yo' Stuff	Gnt 4712,	Document DOCD-5522
7467-?		Spread Yo' Stuff	Gnt 4712,	Document DOCD-5602

Garvin Bushell in his "Jazz From The Beginning" does not comment on this session! Accompaniment is mainly played straight, therefore impossible to discriminate personal styles. But trumpet playing (tone, vibrato, time) is within the limits of Gus Aiken as displayed in session 006 and 010. Bushell is listed but did not take up alto until 1923.

Notes:

- Rust\*3: unknown -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; unknown -cl; unknown -ts; ?Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj; unknown -d.  
- Rust\*4, \*6: probably: Gus Aiken -t; Jake Frazier -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl -as; Dude Finlay -p; unknown -bj.  
- BGR\*2: unknown cnt; poss Charlie Irvis, tbn; unknown clt; unknown ten; poss Clarence Williams pno; unknown bjo; unknown dms.  
- BGR\*3, \*4: unknown, c; unknown, tb; unknown, cl; unknown, ts; unknown, p; unknown, bj; unknown, d.

003	<b>DAISY MARTIN</b>	Jazz Bell Hops	New York,	c. Apr. 15, 1921
	Daisy Martin – voc;			
	Gus Aiken – cnt; Gene Bud Aiken or unknown (Jake Frazier) – tbn; unknown – clt, alt;			
	Dude Finley – pno; unknown – bjo; unknown - dms			
7854-A		Play 'Em For Mama Sing 'Em For Me	OK 8001,	Document DOCD-5522
7855-B		I Won't Be Back 'Till You Change Your Ways	OK 8001,	Document DOCD-5522

Garvin Bushell in his "Jazz From The Beginning" does not comment on this session! Accompaniment is mainly played straight, therefore impossible to discriminate personal styles, but beautiful trombone parts at the end of first title therefore assuming Bud Aiken. But trumpet playing (tone, vibrato, time) is within the limits of Gus Aiken as displayed in session 006 and 010. Available CD reissue is too low-fi to judge. Bushell is listed but did not take up alto until 1923.

Notes:

- Rust\*3: Gus Aiken -t; Jake Frazier -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl -as; Dude Finley -p; unknown -bj; unknown -bb; ?unknown -d.  
- Rust\*4, \*6: probably: Gus Aiken -t; Jake Frazier -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl -as; Dude Finlay -p; unknown -bb.  
- BGR\*2, \*3: Gus Aiken, tpt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt, alt; Dude Finley, pno; unknown, bjo; unknown, bbs; poss unknown dms.  
- BGR\*4: Gus Aiken, tpt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt, alt; Dude Finley, pno; unknown, bjo; unknown, bbs; unknown woodblocks.

004	<b>LILLYN BROWN</b>	her Jazzbo Syncopators	New York,	c. May 09, 1921
	Lillyn Brown – voc;			
	Gus Aiken (or Ed Cox) – cnt; Bud Aiken or Herb Flemming – tbn;			
	Garvin Bushell – clt; unknown - alt; Johnny Mullins – vln;			
	unknown – pno; Lutice Perkins - dms			
41795-2		Bad-Land Blues	Em 10384,	Document DOCD-5489
41795-3		Bad-Land Blues	Em 10384,	Document DOCD-5627
41797-2		The Jazz-Me Blues	Em 10384,	Document DOCD-5489

Not listed as including Aiken by Rust and Godrich/Dixon. But according to Walter C. Allen Aiken recorded with L. Brown!

This session is not listed in Garvin Bushell's "Jazz From The Beginning" and he thus does not comment on this session! Accompaniment is mainly played straight, therefore impossible to discriminate personal styles. But tpt playing (tone, vibrato, time) is within the limits of Gus Aiken as displayed in session 006 and 010. Vibrato could be the same as in later Aiken recordings. Ed Cox is a much tamer player as characterized by Garvin Bushell. Bushell did not take up alto until 1923 although listed playing it here in Rust.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Ed Cox -c; Bud Aiken or Herb Flemming -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl -as; Johnny Mullins -vn; unknown -p; Lutice Perkind -d.  
- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Ed Cox, cnt; Bud Aiken or Herb Flemming, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt, alt; Johnny Mullins, vln; unknown pno; Lutice Perkins, dms.

005 <b>EDDIE GRAY</b>	J. P. Johnson's Harmony Eight	New York,	c. Sep. 1921
Eddie Gray - voc, uku;			
Gus Aiken - tpt; (Bud Aiken) - tbn;			
unknown - alt, clt; Walter Watkins - ten; unknown - flt;			
James P. Johnson - pno; unknown - bjo; unknown - bbs			
P-159	You've Got What I'm Looking For	BS 2020,	Document DOCD-1015
P-160	Ukulele Blues	BS 2020,	Document DOCD-1015

Gus Aiken is listed as trumpeter by Walter C. Allen as a possibility, but as June Clark is listed as trumpet player in many recordings by blues/vaudeville singers accompanied by J. P. Johnson's bands, it certainly seems to be wise to inspect all of these in this respect. But, just with the recordings of Alice Leslie Carter and Lavinia Turner, there is absolutely nothing what you can positively identify as a June Clark note. Only, that the cornettist/trumpeter plays securely with real drive and fire. After repeated listening I would like to see a rather faint possibility of Clark's participation!  
The trombonist certainly is not Charlie Irvis! But there is a prominent flute that has not been listed anywhere. On 'Ukulele Blues' banjo and tuba can clearly be detected in the last chorus.

Brown / Hilbert date this session as early November 1921, but the consecutive master numbers hint to September!?

Notes:

- Jazz Directory Vol. 4: James P. Johnson (p) with unknown personnel.  
- W.C. Allen, Hendersonia: poss Gus Aiken, trumpet; Bud Aiken, Jake Frazier or Charlie Irvis, trombone (sic); unknown alto; Walter Watkins, tenor sax; Johnson, piano; unknown bass and drums.  
- Brown / Hilbert, JAMES P. JOHNSON A Case of Mistaken Identity: poss. Gus Aiken, trumpet; Bud Aiken, Jake Frazier or Charlie Irvis, trombone (sic); unknown alto; Walter Watkins, tenor sax; Johnson, piano; unknown bass and drums (from W.C. Allen).  
- Rust\*2,\*3,\*4,\*6: not listed

Recorded Tunes:

<i>You've Got What I'm Looking For</i>	Key of Bb	<i>Black Swan</i>
<i>(Intro 4 bars ens)(Vamp 4 bars ens)(Verse 16 bars AB voc - ens)(A1 Chorus 32 bars ABAC voc - ens)(A2 Chorus 32 bars ens)(A3 1/2 Chorus AC voc - ens)</i>		
<i>Ukulele Blues</i>	Key of Eb	<i>Black Swan</i>
<i>(Intro 4 bars ens)(Vamp 4 bars ens)(A1 Verse 12 bars voc - flt/ens)(A2 Verse 12 bars voc - flt/ens)(B1 Chorus 16 bars AA voc - ens)(B2 Chorus 16 bars voc - ens)(B3 Chorus 16 bars (ens 12 bars / voc - ens 4 bars)</i>		

006 <b>ETHEL WATER'S JAZZ MASTERS</b>		New York,	c. Sep. 1921
Gus Aiken - cnt; Bud Aiken - tbn;			
Garvin Bushell - clt; Joe Elder - alt;			
Fletcher Henderson - pno; C. Mosby - bsx			
P-160	'Frisco Jazz Band Blues	BS 2037,	Chronological Classics 796
P-161-1	Royal Garden Blues	BS 2035,	Chronological Classics 796
P-161-2	Royal Garden Blues	BS 2035,	Document DOCD-1012
P-162	Bugle Blues	BS 2037,	Chronological Classics 796
P-162-2	Bugle Blues	BS 2037,	Document DOCD-1012

Bushell and Gus Aiken have confirmed their presence on this date (Hendersonia p. 37). The trumpet player's style fits with that of session 010. Ethel Waters does not sing on this session. This session can be referential for other sessions checked.

Notes:

- Rust\*3: Joe Smith -t; unknown -tb; unknown -cl; unknown -as; unknown -p; unknown -bb; unknown -d.  
- Rust\*4,\*6: Gus Aiken -t; Bud Aiken -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl; ?Joe Elder -cl -as; unknown -bsx; Fletcher Henderson -p.  
- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: not listed

007 <b>EDITH WILSON and JOHNNY DUNN'S ORIGINAL JAZZ HOUNDS</b>		New York,	Sep. 15, 1921
Edith Wilson - voc;			
Johnny Dunn - tpt; (Dope Andrews) - tbn;			
Garvin Bushell - clt; (Cordy Williams) - vln;			
Dan Wilson - pno			
79983-6	Nervous Blues	Col A-3479,	Archeophone 6006
79989-2	Vampin' Liza Jane	Col A-3479,	Archeophone 6006

The trombonist plays in a clean and functional way using tailgate slides only occasionally. Bushell names 'Bud' Aiken or Herb Flemming as alternatives. Both musicians' early styles have yet to be investigated and substantiated, but as to my knowledge I tend to presume Dope Andrews (compare early Mamie Smith sessions) here. The trombonist in the below mentioned photo of Edith Wilson and Original Jazz Hounds probably is not the same man as in the Mamie Smith photo of late 1920. This latter photo is said to show 'Dope' Andrews, he wearing a moustache and owning a straight not-too-strong nose, whereas the trombonist in the Wilson photo has a stronger somewhat downward pointing nose, and might therefore easily be Aiken, who shows a rather broad and flat nose when seen frontally.  
Dunn is easy to identify, as his ubiquitous staccato style is predominant. He displays his triple staccato phrases as well as - occasionally - his double-timing, and, in Nervous Blues, a strong 6/8 phrasing which was fashionable at the time and might probably be seen as the attempt of a legitimate musician (Dunn had been a member of W.C. Handy's band a couple of years) trying to emulate the Southern musician's "swing"

(triple phrasing with the middle triplet tone missing instead of equal eighth notes). He also shows a couple of other devices typical for his style as jumping-trills and forward-looking blues feeling.

DB hears identity of this player to J. Dunn in 'Vamping Liza Jane' of Sep. 15, 1921 and this assumption should therefore be considered as to Dunn's presence!

Bushell's unquestioned own presence on this session and the clarinet playing obviously show that it is certainly he. He is also pictured on the below mentioned photo of the band.

There is a prominent violinist who might be Cordy Williams as possibly identified on the photo.

The pianist probably is Edith's husband Dan as shown on the photo again and stated below. We hear him comping through the tunes, without any distinctive structure in his playing. This might be proof of a lesser quality of pianist and should be regarded as opposite to the piano playing heard in sessions 009 and the following.

When taking the band photo as shown in Driggs/Lewine 'Black Beauty, White Heat' p. 126 and Harrison 'Black Pearls' p.168 as reference it should be considered that these promotional photos were preferably made at the beginning of a singer's tour, and that it therefore probably shows an early state of personnel which might then be appropriate for this early session.

Notes:

- RR 73: "The Negro musical revue PUT AND TAKE opened at Town Hall, New York, on August 20, 1921. The score was by Spencer Williams, Tim Brymn and Perry Bradford, and the book by Irving C. Miller. One of the featured artists was Edith Wilson, backed by Johnny Dunn's Original Jazz Hounds. A photo of this band appeared in TALKING MACHINE JOURNAL, Nov. 1921; the men were not identified in the caption, but Len Kunstadt has obtained an identification as follows: Dunn, cornet; Dope Andrews or Bud Aiken, trombone; Garvin Bushell, clarinet; poss. Cordy Williams, violin; Dan Wilson, piano. Bushell has independently recalled recording with her. Perry Bradford in his book, (photo see D.D. Harrison, Black Pearls, p. 168) BORN WITH THE BLUES, tells how he got a recording contract for Edith Wilson. She made her first few records while with PUT AND TAKE, with some songs from the show (surely one of the earliest "original cast" recordings?" RR 73 has September 13, 1921 as recording date for first title.

- Rust\*3,\*4: Johnny Dunn -c; unknown -tb; ?Garvin Bushell -cl; unknown -vn; unknown -p.

- BGR\*2,\*3: Johnny Dunn, cnt.; unknown tbn; poss Garvin Bushell, clt; unknown pno; unknown vln.

- Bushell/Tucker, Jazz From The Beginning p.152: "Nervous Blues: Bud Aiken might be on trombone, since the playing is clean and not boisterous - Buddy was never boisterous. It might be Herb Flemming, too, who played down at Leroy's several times. Vampin' Liza Jane: Hear Johnny Dunn do that old Geechie call? ..... The Geechies brought that up from South Carolina. Someone would whistle it, and if a Geechie heard it he'd know there was another Charlestonian around. Pretty soon every jazz player on the East Coast picked it up. Another one was: (music with notes). Later they made it into a song, 'Organ Grinder's Swing'. But that was a Geechie whistle, too."

- Storyville 1996/7, p. 230: "A press release from Perry Bradford promoting Edith Wilson's 'Nervous Blues' and 'Vampin' Liza Jane' in the Chicago Defender of 8 October notes that she is accompanied by the "Original Jazz Hounds formerly with Mamie Smith on the Okeh" and goes on to mention how well Johnny Dunn plays on the record."

D.D. Harrison 'Black Pearls' p.176: "Johnny Dunn and the Original Jazz Hounds backed her, and Danny was at the piano on several of the early Columbia sides."

- Rust\*6: Johnny Dunn, c; unknown, tb; ? Garvin Bushell, cl; unknown, vln; unknown, p.

- BGR\*4: Johnny Dunn, c; poss. Bud Aiken, tb; Garvin Bushell, cl; unknown, vn; unknown,p.

- Archeophone 6006 liner notes: Johnny Dunn, trumpet; trombone ?; Garvin Bushell, clarinet; violin; piano

008	<b>EDITH WILSON</b>	Johnny Dunn's Original Jazz Hounds	New York,	Oct. 06, 1921
	Edith Wilson - voc;			
	Johnny Dunn - tpt; (Dope Andrews?) - tbn;			
	Garvin Bushell - clt; (Cordy Williams) - vln;			
	Dan Wilson - pno			
79993-6	Old Time Blues		Col A-3506,	Archeophone 6006
80014-4	Frankie		Col A-3506,	Archeophone 6006

This obviously is the same personnel as of the session before. Rust and Godrich/Dixon/Rye leave the violin out, but I believe to hear it throughout with long sustained notes in the range of the clarinet!

Notes:

- RR 73 p 3: see session 15 September 1921 above! In W.C. Allen's list these two titles are listed under the session of 15 September 1921, dated as Sept. 24 and Sept. 30 resp. Thus the above remarks apply to this session, too. Rust\*6 has the session sequence as shown here.

- Rust\*3,\*4: Johnny Dunn -c; unknown -tb; ?Garvin Bushell -cl; unknown -vn; unknown -p.

- BGR\*2,\*3: Johnny Dunn, cnt.; unknown tbn; poss Garvin Bushell, clt; unknown pno; unknown vln.

- Bushell/Tucker p.153: "Old Time Blues: That thing Johnny Dunn plays came out of the West, from Chicago or New Orleans: ..... They used to sing : ..... Later they changed it to 'Somebody done snagged the blue note'. That's probably from Joe Oliver or Freddie Keppard. Johnny may have heard them play it in Chicago. This sounds like Buddy (Aiken) on trombone; I never heard Herb Flemming play with a mute. Frankie: Overall, Edith's records are much better instrumentally than Mamie Smith's were. One of those clarinet breaks sounds like something I used to do."

- Rust\*6: personnel is Johnny Dunn, c; unknown, tb; ? Garvin Bushell, cl; unknown, p.

- BGR\*4: Johnny Dunn, c; prob. Bud Aiken, tb; Garvin Bushell, cl; unknown, p.

- Archeophone 6006 liner notes: (as before, but) violin omitted.

009	<b>ESSIE WHITMAN</b>	Jazz Masters	New York,	c. Oct. 1921
	Essie Whitman - voc;			
	(Gus Aiken) - tpt; (Bud Aiken) - tbn;			
	Garvin Bushell - clt; Joe Elder - ten, clt; Charlie Jackson - vln;			
	Fletcher Henderson - pno; John Mitchell - bjo			
P-155-1	Sweet Daddy, It's You I Love		BS 2036,	Document DOCD-5342
P-156-2	If You Don't Believe I Love You		BS 2036,	Document DOCD-5342
P-156-3	If You Don't Believe I Love You		BS 2036,	Document DOCD-5342

The trumpet player here in part is a Johnny Dunn disciple (see coda of last title), but his personal style is dominated by legato playing and he plays horizontal lines which may be proof of Gus Aiken's presence. Garvin Bushell in his "Jazz From The Beginning" does not comment on this session! Essie Whitman (to John Steiner) said that she was accompanied by a W.C. Handy band (Hendersonia, p.36).

Notes:

- Rust\*3: ?Gus Aiken, c; Bud Aiken, tb; Garvin Bushell, cl; ?Joe Elder, cl, ts; Charlie Jackson -vn; Fletcher Henderson, p; ?John Mitchell - bj.  
 - Rust\*4, \*6: probably Gus Aiken, c; Bud Aiken, tb; Garvin Bushell, cl; ?Joe Elder, cl, ts; Charlie Jackson -vn; Fletcher Henderson, p; unknown - bj.  
 - BGR\*2, \*3, \*4: prob Gus Aiken, tpt; Bud Aiken, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt; Joe Elder, clt, ten; Charlie Jackson, vln; Fletcher Henderson, pno; poss Johnny Mitchell, bjo.

010 GULF COAST SEVEN	New York,	May 17, 1923
Gus Aiken - tpt; Eugene Bud Aiken - tbn; Garvin Bushell - clt; unknown - ten; Charlie "Smitty" Smith - pno; John Mitchell - bjo		
81021-3	Fade Away Blues	Col A-3916, Timeless CBC 1-073
81022-3	Daybreak Blues	Col A-3916, Timeless CBC 1-073

Evaluation of this session and its personnel starts with a big disillusion and overthrow on my side! For a long time now, I was convinced that the trumpet player on this session had to be Johnny Dunn – and not Gus Aiken as listed – because stylistically it is so much in the Dunn mixture of heroic and military triplet phrasing and staccato power and because Aiken was expected to be far from New York at the time. Yet, a recently acquired pile of Record Research issues – No. 75! – brought unexpected clarity: it must be Gus Aiken on trumpet here! Storyville 1996/7, p. 189, 232 informs us that Aiken was in Cuba with Gonzelle White's show from mid-May (at last 25<sup>th</sup>) until mid-December 1923. This made me (KBR) doubt Aiken's presence on this session, the more so as his departure has not been exactly documented. But Walter C. Allen in Record Research 75 p.9 unpretentiously says: "*Aiken recalled recording Daybreak Blues and Fade Away Blues*". And: Johnny Dunn was in England from early May 1923 until September 1923 with Will Vodery's Orchestra. This certainly sets the matter straight and it has to be Aiken. But then Aiken delivers a perfect copy of Dunn's very personal style! So much so that Garvin Bushell in his 'Jazz from the Beginning' p. 158 says: "*That cornet has to be Johnny Dunn!*" And he should have known! (M. Rader's and my own article on Gus Aiken in the FROG Yearbook Vol. 3 denies Aiken's presence on this one and Bradford's session of May/June 1923 (P. B. Jazz Phools) and has thus to be corrected! Repeated listening after this most unexpected new situation certainly shows a much more flexible time of the trumpet player, a mellower tone and a jazzier phrasing, yet still remaining a very expert copy of Dunn's style.

As often when Gus Aiken can be heard on record, he is accompanied by a technically proficient and well tasted trombone player who plays in a no-nonsense and sober style, with good knowledge of harmonies and very melodious. This is Gus' brother Eugene 'Bud' Aiken who also used to play expert trumpet when required. Bushell says of him: "*Bud Aiken ... playing is clean and not boisterous – Buddy was never boisterous.*" And this is exactly what you hear on these titles. There seems to have been a custom of pairing trumpet and trombone players in the twenties. The Aiken brothers obviously are an example, as are June Clark and Jimmy Harrison, later Tommy Ladnier and Harrison, Rex Stewart with Herb Gregory, Bubber Miley with Charlie Irviss and Louis Metcalf with Tricky Sam Nanton. Rex Stewart vividly describes this custom in his beautiful book 'Boy Meets Horn' and 'Jazz Masters of the Thirties'.

In his book Garvin Bushell does not deny or even question his own presence on these sides. And aural evidence shows that he is the clarinet player. Insofar lately offered and issued personnels are probably correct. But the saxophone player imposes a severe problem. He does not show Elliott's tonal and phrasing characteristics and stays very unobtrusively in the background, appearing only in harmony with the clarinet in one chorus of each title. At other times he stays very much in the background and can only vaguely be heard. He does not play clarinet as listed! Bushell says: "*That's an alto saxophone in the middle duet. But I never heard Ernest Elliott play saxophone. Maybe it was Herschel Brassfield.*" In my (KBR) opinion a tenor saxophone is played on these titles. That Elliott also played saxophone cannot be denied following some documented recordings with Bessie Smith, King Oliver and others. And Elliott's recordings on alto (!) show a rather "sour" style which is not apparent here. Brassfield was in England at the time of this session, together with Johnny Dunn, as was Rollen Smith, so they must be omitted. This leaves an unknown tenor sax player who cannot be identified at the moment.

The very fundamental piano player is not Bradford as might be expected, and seems not to be Leroy Tibbs as well. If we are right to hear Tibbs on Edith Wilson's recordings of January and May 1922 and later, our man here shows nothing of functional band piano playing as by Tibbs, but delivers a steady and seemingly unstructured carpet of piano sound. Most interestingly Perry Bradford's Jazz Phools session of May/June 1923 comprises Charlie "Smitty" Smith as pianist. This man is documented as being the pianist of June Clark's band at "Smalls' Sugar Cane Club" and is perfectly characterised by Count Basie in his book 'Good Morning Blues' as a great "comper" which does not mean anything else but that he was great in accompaniment, not solo work. This is exactly what we hear. And so I would like to name Charlie Smith as probable piano player for this session. "Smitty" Smith can also be heard on Thomas Morris' Past Jazz Masters and June Clark's band aka Blue Rhythm Orchestra and Gulf Coast Seven of November 1925. Bradford is named by John Mitchell for this session, but Bradford's style is easy to identify and must be ruled out here.

This leaves the banjo player. And he is unmistakably the young and virtuoso John Mitchell with his dated banjo artistry, very much in the Johnny Dunn style of tremolos and double-time.

Walter C. Allen in his article on this session (RR 75) asks: "*Does anyone hear two trumpets on Col A-3916?*" This question certainly has to be denied, but there are instances in the tunes where Aiken plays muted trumpet breaks which are immediately carried on by the clarinet player playing growl, thus very much sounding like the trumpet.

The whole performance is so much in Johnny-Dunn-style and with Dunn personnel, that it must be concluded that Bradford had been surprised by Dunn's departure for England together with his trombonist in early May, although they had probably been firmly booked for the session. Luckily Bradford was able to find a perfect replacement in the Aiken brothers to retain the Dunn mode of playing and cash in on it. And it shows the very promising abilities of the Aiken brothers which later would not be accomplished, partly because of Bud Aiken's much too early death in 1927, and partly by Gus Aiken's way into mediocrity in later years.

#### Notes:

- Record Research 73, John Mitchell interview: Johnny Dunn, Gus Aiken, trumpets; Earl Granstaff, trombone; Hershal Brassfield and Rollen Smith, reeds; Perry Bradford, piano; John Mitchell, banjo.

- Record Research 75, Walter C. Allen: prob Gus Aiken, poss Bud Aiken, prob Garvin Bushell, poss Ernest Elliott, prob Perry Bradford, John Mitchell.

- Rust\*2 (corrected): Johnny Dunn (cnt); ?Herb Flemming (tbn); Herschel Brassfield (clt, alt); Bob Fuller (clt/sop); Perry Bradford or Leroy Tibbs (pno); ? Sam Speed (bjo).

- Rust\*3, \*4, \*6: Gus Aiken - c; Bud Aiken - tb; ?Garvin Bushell - cl; Ernest Elliott - cl - ts; Leroy Tibbs - p; John Mitchell - bj.

- Laurie Wright, Storyville 1996/7 p. 189 "*they had definitely sailed by the middle of May (Chicago Defender of 26/5/23)*". This has to be questioned after W. C. Allen's statements! This departure should be seen as after May 17, but is terminated by Allen as "*about June 1923*". And this would also change the recording date of the adjacent P. Bradford's Jazz Phools Paramount session from May/June to late May.

## 011 PERRY BRADFORD'S JAZZ PHOOLS

New York,

c. mid May 1923

Gus Aiken – tpt; Eugene Bud Aiken – tbn;

Garvin Bushell – clt; unknown – ten;

Charlie "Smitty" Smith – pno; John Mitchell – bjo

1429-1 Fade Away Blues

Pm 12041,

Timeless CBC 1-073

1429-2 Fade Away Blues

Pm 12041,

Frog DGF 56

1429-3 Fade Away Blues

Pm 12041,

Document DOCD-5353

1430-1 Daybreak Blues (Original BugleBlues)

Pm 12041,

Biograph BLP-12007(LP)

1430-2 Daybreak Blues (Original BugleBlues)

Pm 12041,

Frog DGF 56

1430-3 Daybreak Blues (Original BugleBlues)

Pm 12041,

Timeless CBC 1-073

This session obviously has to be seen in relation to the first Gulf Coast Seven session for Columbia, organised by Perry Bradford and certainly executed under his guidance. The two recorded tunes are Bradford's and the same ones as with the Gulf Coast Seven (see my article on the Gulf Coast Seven in Names&Numbers 69). And obviously and aurally the band personnel is the same, too. This then unquestioningly has to change the hitherto listed recording date(s). As Gus Aiken left New York for an extended tour to Cuba at last on May 25, this session has to be predated before this day (Dunn was in England by this date)! As Columbia's Gulf Coast Seven recording session of the same two titles seems to be better documented and dated May 17, 1923 I tend to date this latter Paramount session on the same day (same personnel!) or only on an insignificantly different date. The unknown saxophonist, who certainly is neither Brassfield nor Rollen Smith, who both were in England at the time together with Dunn, might possibly be found in the ranks of Gonzell White's 'Real Jazzers of Jazz', the band Gus Aiken was about to leave for Cuba with, namely Harvey Lankford or Amanzie Richardson. But this is only my own guess-work.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: Johnny Dunn or June Clark? (cnt); Jimmy Harrison (tbn); "Smitty" (clt); Herschel Brassfield (clt/alt); Charles Smith (pno); Samuel Speed (bjo)

- Rust\*3: Gus Aiken – c; Bud Aiken – tb; Garvin Bushell – Herschel Brassfield – cl-as; Charles Smith – p; Samuel Speed – bj.

- Rust\*4, \*6: Gus Aiken – c; Bud Aiken – tb; Garvin Bushell – cl-as; Charles Smith – p; Samuel Speed – bj.

- JAZZ INFORMATION 1-35 p.2: "Les Zacheis of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, writes that with the help of Dave Caughren he has obtained the correct personnel (sic!) of the Paramount/Claxtonola records by Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools. For 'Charleston South Carolina' – 'Hoola Boola Dance' (Claxtonola 40309) and 'Daybreak Blues' – 'Fadeaway Blues' (National 12255), also issued on other labels, this personnel was given by Perry Bradford himself: Gus Aiken, trumpet; Garvin Bushell, clarinet; Brassfield, clarinet and sax; (for other records, Bradford has given "Brass" Field, drummer; which is correct?) "Speed", bano; Bradford, piano. Johnny Dunn is definitely not on these sides. According to Bradford, Dunn was in Europe when they were made."

- Bushell/Tucker p. 158: Fade Away Blues: "If that's Gus Aiken, he's playing Johnny Dunn's patterns note for note. Day Break Blues: That's not Johnny (Dunn), but he sure plays like Johnny. This date puzzles me, because I don't recall Gus playing so much like Johnny. There's a saxophone in there, so there had to be two reeds."

- RR 75 p.9: "Aiken recalled recording Daybreak Blues and Fade Away Blues". Gus Aiken was in Cuba from Mid-May until End-December 1923. Johnny Dunn was in England from early May 1923 until September 1923 with Will Vodery's Orchestra.

Against our recent opinion, the above testimony obviously shows that Aiken was still at hand for these two sessions recording Fade Away Blues and Daybreak Blues! But then Aiken delivers a perfect copy of Dunn's very personal style!

Discernible differences of takes:

1429-1 first 4 bars of 5<sup>th</sup> chorus: clt plays very restrained trying to find his part which he hits on bar 5

1429-2 first 4 bars of 5<sup>th</sup> chorus: clt plays arranged part in harmony with tenor from the beginning

1429-3 first 4 bars of 5<sup>th</sup> chorus: clt enters on bar 3

1430-1 bar 9 of first strain B (after 4 12-bar blues chorus): clarinet in harmony with tenor

bar 1/2 of second strain B: tpt starts with short legato notes from first beat on

1430-2 bar 9 of first strain B (after 4 12-bar blues chorus): clarinetist struggles for finding his part

bar 1/2 of second strain B: tpt starts on second beat, short pause on first beat

1430-3 bar 9 of first strain B (after 4 12-bar blues chorus): clarinet in harmony with tenor

bar 1/2 of second strain B: tpt plays long legato notes with little jump in the middle from 1<sup>st</sup> beat on

## 012 ETHEL RIDLEY Bradford's Jazz Phoools

New York,

Jun. 26, 1923

Ethel Ridley – voc;

unknown – tpt; (Calvin Jones?) – tbn;

unknown – alt; unknown – ten, clt;

(Leroy Tibbs ?) – pno; unknown – bjo

28234-2 Memphis, Tennessee

Vic 19111,

Document DOCD-5353

28235-3 If Anybody Here Wants A Real Kind Mama (Here's Your Opportunity)

Vic 19111,

Document DOCD-5353

At this recording date Johnny Dunn was in England (early May until September 1923), as was Herschel Brassfield, and Gus Aiken was in Cuba until late December of that year! So, no one of these champions could have been in the studio! Therefore, Bradford had to hire musicians from other sources than before.

We hear a trumpet player whose identity draws a complete blank. He plays mainly straight but uses very short staccato phrases without variation when answering the singer's phrases in a Dunn derived style. No name may be attached with any probability. The trombonist Calvin Jones as suggested by W&GR\*4 – on what source I do not know – performed in a couple of pit bands in vaudeville obviously because he had a good musical education and was a reliable reader. His only documented appearance on record is with the Plantation Orchestra recordings in London of December 1926. Lacking any solistic appearances I am unable to detect any reference to our man here and would prefer to list him as unknown. In any case our man here plays a beautifully sounding and sonorous trombone, and he certainly is a musician of the first class. His style is smooth and very modern for its time. Certainly, Bradford might have recruited both men from one of the show bands working in Harlem at the time. Should any reader know the source of this suggestion, please, contact this writer! There are two reed players, one altoist and a tenorist doubling on clarinet. As Garvin Bushell in his book "Jazz from the Beginning" does not mention either Ethel Ridley nor Calvin Jones, he might as well not have been present on this session. Also, he does not comment on his possible presence on this session. It so seems that we might have to search for the reed players in the same circles as the brass men. The clarinet soloist plays simultaneously with the alto player and has thus to be the tenor player. This then would exclude Bushell's presence as Bushell only started playing alto in about July 1923 shortly before opening the Nest Club on October 18, 1923 with Sam Wooding's band. He did not play tenor sax and only used his clarinet very seldom when concentrating on alto (Bushell/Tucker JFTB p. 49 + 159).

Leroy Tibbs's presence has to be seen only as a possibility as he was part of this musical scene, but as we do not know any distinct musical features of his style we do not really know. Suggesting that this personnel comes from a working band outside of the Dunn stable, Tibbs' presence is highly doubtful!

The banjo player plays in a 6/8 "up and down" style unheard with Sam Speed or John Mitchell. His sounds are vaguely familiar, but I am unable to propose a name at the moment. Leroy Vanderveer of the Arthur Gibbs band of the time played a banjo of this kind and perhaps this might be a clue to the origin of the musicians?

We seem to have a contingent of one of the many pit-bands of Harlem here only that I am unable to find out their origin. As we have seen rather often now was it common use to hire groups of musicians out of working bands for recording purposes when the recording contract owner had no working band of his own.

I am still hoping to come across a Victor recording band approximately of this date that explains us their descent. The hitherto listed personnels, yet, seem to be pure guess work and seem to be completely wrong.

Notes:

- Rust \*3, \*4, \*6: Gus Aiken, c / Bud Aiken, tb / Garvin Bushell, cl, as / ? Ernest Elliott, ts / Leroy Tibbs, p / Samuel Speed, bj.

- BGR\*2, \*3, \*4: prob Johnny Dunn, c; prob Calvin Jones, tb; prob Garvin Bushell, cl/as; prob Herschel Brassfield, ts; prob Leroy Tibbs, p; prob Samuel Speed, bj.

- Bushell/Tucker p 158: no comment by Bushell on this session

**013 GULF COAST SEVEN**

(Elmer Chambers), Bubber Miley – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn;  
(Julian Baugh) – clt; Ernest Elliott – alt;  
Perry Bradford – pno; unknown (Elmer Snowden ?) – bjo  
81168-2 Papa, Better Watch Your Step  
81169-2 Memphis, Tennessee

New York, Aug 07, 1923

Col A-3978, Frog DGF 56  
Col A-3978, Frog DGF 56

The above cited remark from Walter C. Allen in RR 75 that Johnny Dunn was in England from May to September 1923, and can therefore not be present on this session, raises calamities. This, because Gus Aiken also cannot be the trumpeter as he was in Cuba at the time! And I was certain to hear Dunn as one of the trumpet players. So, Dunn and Aiken must be excluded.

There is a first trumpet player who leads the ensemble in the beginnings of the tunes. This man shows similarities of tone and rhythm with a clear diction to Fletcher Henderson's lead trumpet man Elmer Chambers. Hear his 6/8 time delivery of eighth-notes! Then there is a second man who seems to be Bubber Miley. He can be heard behind the first player adding fills and breaks and is possibly the man who plays the introduction of the first title. He starts the reed chorus with a typical growl tone and later plays the breaks in this chorus as well as the coda. The trumpet break in the last chorus of 'Papa, Better ...' might be shared by both men, Miley playing the second break. In 'Memphis, Tennessee' we hear both trumpeters, Miley in foreground in the first chorus. He is dominating the whole performance. Miley, by the way, recorded with Thomas Morris' Past Jazz Masters again on the same day for OKeh.

The trombone player possesses the same technique and taste as we have heard on the first session above, and therefore seems to be Bud Aiken. Bud did not accompany his brother on the Cuba tour, but stayed behind. He became a member of the Gonzelle White entourage some time later. I feel unable to follow Bushell's statement that this "is not Buddy's sound at all"!

The prominent clarinetist is listed as Buster Bailey in Rust\*2, but lacks Bailey's almost classical tone and owns a very distinct vibrato instead and a sharp diction. In any case, there is a certain New Orleans or even Doddsonian flavour to his playing. But Bailey also seems to be ruled out by the appearance of a slap-tongue break in the second title. And, as Walter C. Allen writes, "I doubt if Buster Bailey would have been in New York this early, although he had already recorded with Mamie Smith (according to his own recollection) in February 1921. He was primarily based in Chicago during this period." Bailey on his assumed first recordings with the Sunset Band (reissued on FROG DGF 28) of about the same time as this session, sounds like Bailey of later years and definitely is very different from our man here in question. He is not Bushell either (see below). Even with the help of Dave Brown and Michael Rader I have found myself unable to offer an appropriate name for this musician. ADDITION 140911: Allen, Hendersonia p. 33/34: "An unidentified clarinetist, with a fine ensemble sense and a tone that reminds one of Dodds (I am sure, however, that it was NOT Dodds), whom I tentatively identify as Clarence Robinson, is present on certain sessions. It does not sound like Garvin Bushell." ADDITION 181008: In Bo Lindström's recent book on trombonist George Brashear Bo presents his find of a personnel of the early Ethel Waters band that toured with Fletcher Henderson on piano in 1922.

Surprisingly he found out that the clarinetist was not Clarence Robinson – he a dancer and show manager, but never a musician – but that the band's beautiful Western style clarinetist was Julian Baugh from Greenville West, Mississippi. He is listed here instead of my earlier assumption of possible Clarence Robinson.

On alto we do probably hear Ernest Elliott with his "sour" sound caused by his continued down and upward slurs. He plays alto here, not tenor as listed (I do not know any instance Elliott playing tenor!). He is not Brassfield as listed before, because Brassfield was in England with Dunn and the Will Vodery band.

The pianist seems to be another person as on the foregoing session. He is very busy, plays a lot of notes in Dunn's double-time style which simply are not functional at any rate. He probably is Mr. Perry Bradford himself.

Whereas John Mitchell plays strict four-bar beat in ensemble and his artistic tremolo gimmicks in breaks, this banjo player does not refrain from tremoloing most of the time and even losing the beat in his solo breaks. So, Mitchell can be excluded, and Elmer Snowden (not Sam Speed!) could be the man because of the affinity to the early Snowden/Ellington band.

Notes:

- Rust\*2 (corrected): Johnny Dunn, Gus Aiken (cnts); ? Herb Flemming (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt); Ernest Elliott (clt/alt); Perry Bradford or Leroy Tibbs (pno); John Mitchell or Gus Horsley (bjo).

- Rust\*3, \*4, \*6: Gus Aiken, unknown - c; Bud Aiken - tb; ? Garvin Bushell - cl; Ernest Elliott - cl - ts; Leroy Tibbs - p; Sam Speed or John Mitchell - bj.

- Bushell/Tucker, Jazz From The Beginning: "There are a lot of bad notes in there, because we were reading. This is a pretty bad recording. Again, it sounds like Johnny Dunn to me on cornet. The clarinet doesn't sound like me; I never had that vibrato. This could be George Brashear on trombone, it's not Buddy's sound at all. The arrangement could be by Qualli Clark."

- Record Research 73, John Mitchell, interviewed by Harold Flakser and Carl Kendziora, Jr.: Gus Aiken (only !), trumpet; Earl Granstaff, trombone; Bob Fuller and Ernest Elliott, reeds; Perry Bradford, piano.

- Record Research 75, Walter C. Allen: two unknown tpts; unknown, tbn; poss Garvin Bushell, poss Bob Fuller or Ernest Elliott, prob Perry Bradford, poss Sam Speed.

**014 MARY JACKSON** Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools  
Mary Jackson – voc;  
unknown – tpt; unknown – tbn; unknown – clt;

New York,

Oct. 1923

unknown – pno

70373

All The Time

PA 032013,

Frog DGF 56

70374

Who'll Get It When I'm Gone?

PA 032013,

Frog DGF 56

Once again, the trumpet player cannot be Aiken and Johnny Dunn may have been back from England at this time, but do we really know the exact recording date? And stylistically it certainly is not Dunn! Instead I hear a trumpet player obviously uninfected by the ubiquitous Dunn style. He is much more playing in a Western style and bears some elements of Tommy Ladnier's style, using a mute throughout and displaying a wide vibrato.

On trombone we hear a very tasteful jazzy player with beautiful tone and execution, probably not belonging to the New York bunch of Dunn influenced players. He plays a legato style and uses high interval jumps. His origin might possibly be found in Chicago. Both brass men might even hail from the South! In any way this player is not Bud Aiken or Herb Flemming!

The clarinet player shows some elements of the fashionable clarinet style of the time as executed by Ernest Elliott or Bob Fuller, but plays much more functionally and with more taste. This man does not double on alto as listed in the discos.

The piano player plays a blues influenced style, with rolling basses at times, and should therefore also be searched for in a western surrounding! Jimmy Blythe and other Chicago pianists come to mind when looking for a hint. I am unable to hear a banjo player. If there is one, he is too restrained to give any hint and be identified.

It is thus my firm estimation that this accompanying band is of Chicago origin or had been recruited out of a touring band from the West. In any case, this group has nothing in common with the predominant Johnny Dunn school of New York which is omnipresent on New York recordings of the time. And imagine: this was the time when the Oliver band in Chicago was at the peak of their powers, but in New York musicians still stuck with Dunn's unswinging heroic military style!

Prior to this research project of the Bradford recordings we (our group of listeners Michael Rader, Dave Brown, K-B Rau) have attributed this recording as the work of Gus and Bud Aiken and consorts (see The FROG Blues & Jazz Annual No. 3, 2013). But more recent research and further gained knowledge of this music has brought the author to the above stated conclusions.

Note:

- Rust \*3: Probably Gus Aiken-c/Bud Aiken-tb/Garvin Bushell-cl-as/Leroy Tibbs-p/ Samuel Speed-bj.

- Rust \*6: prob Gus Aiken or Bubber Miley, c; Bud Aiken or Herb Flemming, tb; Herschel Brassfield or Garvin Bushell, cl, as; Leroy Tibbs p; Samuel Speed, bj.

- B&GR\*4: prob Gus Aiken, c; Bud Aiken, tb; Garvin Bushell, cl; Leroy Tibbs, p; Samuel Speed, bj.

- Bushell/Tucker p 158: no comment by Bushell on this session

- Schermann/Eriksson Miley Disco: "The above personnel is listed in Dixon-Godrich and seems very likely to us. Rust has Gus Aiken or BM on trumpet and also alternative names on tb and cl/as. Aurally, it is definitely not BM but very probably Aiken in our opinion (Aiken was in Cuba at the time! KBR)."

Notes:

- Rust\*3: probably: Gus Aiken -c; Bud Aiken -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl -as; Leroy Tibbs -p; Samuel Speed -bj.

L. Wright, Fats In Fact, p.20: "An advert in the Pittsburgh Courier of 29 March 1924 shows Thomas "Fats" Waller as the pianist with Eugene Aiken & Capitol Jazz Syncopators at New York's Capitol Palace Club."

015 **WILBUR SWEATMAN AND HIS ACME SYNCOPATERS**

New York,

Aug. 12, 1924

Leslie Davis, Eugene Bud Aiken – tpt; Calvin Jones – tbn;

Wilbur Sweatman – clt, bcl; Percy Green – alt; Ramon Hernandez – ten;

Duke Ellington – pno; Mike Danzi – bjo; Jerome Romy Jones – bbs; Maceo White – dms

9017 Battleship Kate

Gnt unissued

not on LP/CD

9017-A Battleship Kate

Gnt unissued

not on LP/CD

9018 She Loves Me

Gnt unissued

not on LP/CD

As no tests of this recording session seem to have survived and reissued, nothing can be said about the musical contents.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: Freddy Keppard (?)(cnt; John Reeves (tbn); Wilbur Sweatman (clt); George Rickson (pno); Clyde Johnson (bjo); Maceo White (dms).

- Rust\*3: 2 unknown -c; John Reeves -tb; Wilbur Sweatman -cl -ldr; George Rickson -p; Clyde Johnson -bj; Maceo White -d.

- Rust\*4: 2 unknown -c; John Reeves -tb; Wilbur Sweatman -cl -ldr; Duke Ellington -p; Mike Danzi -bj; Maceo White -d.

- Rust\*6: Gus Aiken, Leonard Davis, t; unknown, tb; Duke Ellington, p; Mike Danzi, bj; Maceo White, d.

- M. Berresford, That's Got 'Em!: Eugene Bud Aiken, Leslie Davis, t; Calvin Jones, tb; Wilbur Sweatman, cl, bcl, ldr; Percy Green, as; Ramon Hernandez, ts; Duke Ellington, p; Mike Danzi, bj; Jerome Jones, bb; Maceo White, d.

016 **MAMIE SMITH** her Jazz Hounds (Snowden's Orchestra)

New York,

Aug. 16-27, 1924

Mamie Smith – voc;

Horace Holmes – tpt; Jake Frazier – tbn; Ernie Bullock – clt;

Leslie A. Hutch Hutchinson – pno; Elmer Snowden – bjo; Bob Ysaguire – bbs; Norman Buster – dms, marimba

31669 Lost Opportunity Blues

Ajax 17058,

Doc DOCD 5360

31670 Good Time Ball

Ajax 17058,

Doc DOCD 5360

The band is obviously taken from Elmer Snowden's Orchestra of the time (see notes). There is a photo of this band (Snowden's Orchestra) in Perry Bradford's 'Born With The Blues' on page 102. This photo does not show Percy Glascoe (identification of shown musicians in Storyville 106/150). From that it seems likely that all since listed personnels are settled on a beat copy of this Ajax record in Walter C. Allen's possession (see notes). My own reference is Document DOCD-5360 and the source record for these titles obviously is not better than Allen's. So, I have to admit not to be able to discriminate one or two cornets/trumpets, but it sounds like two in the very first bars of 'Lost Opportunity Blues'. As Horace Holmes remembered the session and named himself as the only cornet I follow his statement. I hear trombone and a clarinet, no discernible saxophone. Whether it is Ernie Bullock (obviously the same man as listed with J.R. Morton's Red Hot Peppers of March 20, 1930 (?)) – who is on the photo – or Percy Glascoe who cannot be heard very favourably on several Lem Fowler sides in 1925/6, I cannot really distinguish. Comparing this clarinetist here with Glascoe of the Fowler sides I tend to name Bullock! The bass notes are very sharp cut like from a brass bass, not like those from a bass saxophone (the photo, by the way, shows Jackson doubling on baritone sax, not bass sax, which certainly is more appropriate for an alto player, as alto and baritone are pitched Eb). I have therefore added



Ysaquire on tuba as shown in the photo. Hutchinson was a well acquainted and respected pianist who unfortunately only made two other recordings in 1923 and 1927 (Rust\*6). He is heard very favourably here. The drummer can be heard playing the blocks and an occasional cymbal crash, together with some marimba accompaniment in 'Good Time Ball'.

Notes:

- Rust\*3: Horace Holmes or Gene Aiken (but hardly both) -c; Jake Frazier -tb; Ernie Bullock or Percy Glascoe -as; Alex Jackson -bsx; Leslie A. Hutchinson ("Hutch") -p; Elmer Snowden -bj; Norman Buster -d -marimba.  
 - Rust\*4,\*6: Horace Holmes or Gene Aiken, c; Jake Frazier, tb; Ernie Bullock or Percy Glascoe, as; Alex Jackson, bsx; Leslie A. Hutchinson, p; Elmer Snowden, bj; Norman Buster, d, marimba.  
 - BGR\*4: Gus Aiken, Horace Holmes - cnt; Jake Frazier - tbn; Ernie Bullock, Percy Glascoe - clt, sax; Leslie A. Hutchinson (Hutch) - pno; Elmer Snowden - bjo; Alex Jackson - bsx; Norman Buster - dms  
 - RR 57-10: "Horace Holmes (Jazz Music Vol. 15, No. 4) says that the Elmer Snowden band signed to accompany Mamie Smith. He recalled the two titles on Ajax 17058 but thought they were rejected, and gave the personnel of the Snowden band as: Holmes, cornet; Gene Aiken, trumpet; Jake Frazier, trombone; Ernie Bullock, Percy Glascoe, Alex Jackson, reeds; Leslie Hutchinson, piano; Elmer Snowden, banjo.  
 - RR 63-12: Walter C. Allen: "Ajax 17058 : no marimba on 31670. Instr. (tpt, tbn, clt, alt, p, bjo, bass sax) agrees pretty much with Horace Holmes' personnel. Bass sax man would be Alex Jackson; Clarinet, Percy Glascoe. My copy is so beat that I cannot tell whether or not two cornets are present, as Holmes claimed."  
 - W. Bryant's AJAX Records (Mainspring Pres, 2013) lists the following personnel "as per Snowden": Gus Aiken (trumpet), Jake Frazier (trombone), Alex Jackson (bass saxophone), Leslie Hutchinson (piano), Elmer Snowden (banjo). (No mention of alto sax, clarinet and drums! Did Elmer really listen?- KBR)

017 **WILBUR SWEATMAN AND HIS ACME SYNCOPATERS**

New York, Sep. 18, 1924

Leslie Davis, Eugene Bud Aiken - tpt; Calvin Jones - tbn;

Wilbur Sweatman - clt, bcl; Percy Green - alt; Ramon Hernandez - ten;

Edwin Stevens or Walter Hall or Claude Hopkins - pno; Clyde Johnson or Mike Danzi - bjo; Jerome Romy Jones - bbs

9083	Battleship Kate	Gnt unissued	not on LP/CD
9083-A	Battleship Kate	Gnt 5584,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8046
9084	She Loves Me	Gnt unissued	not on LP/CD
9084-A	She Loves Me	Gnt unissued	not on LP/CD

This certainly is nice ragtime-derived music with a good deal of jazz influence. Most of what can be heard is arranged and played from music, but solo offerings come from the leader himself - with absolutely no jazz phrasing - from the trombonist and from one of the trumpet men. M. Berresford in the booklet to the exemplary 2 CD reissue of many of Wilbur C. Sweatman's recordings writes: "Both the Gennett and Edison recordings of 'Battleship Kate' feature a fine trumpeter, who this writer (M. Berresford - KBR) believes to be either Eugene 'Bud' Aiken (better known as a trombonist but in fact an equally adept trumpeter) or Leslie Davis, a trumpeter known to be working with Sweatman at that time (could this be Leonard Davis?)." Given that both trumpeter's names are as listed I would suggest that Bud Aiken is the hot soloist playing second trumpet parts and the muted wa-wa solo (at 1.58 min.) in the middle of the item, and that the strong first/lead trumpet is Leslie Davis (who, by the way, is not Leonard Davis!).

My personnel above is from M. Berresford, 'That's Got 'Em!, The Life and Music of Wilbur Sweatman'.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: Freddy Keppard (?) (cnt); John Reeves (tbn); Wilbur Sweatman (clt); George Rickson (pno); Clyde Johnson (bjo); Maceo White (dms).

- Rust\*3: 2 unknown -c; John Reeves -tb; Wilbur Sweatman -cl -ldr; George Rickson -p; Clyde Johnson -bj; Maceo White -d.

- Rust\*4: 2 unknown -c; John Reeves -tb; Wilbur Sweatman -cl -ldr; Duke Ellington -p; Mike Danzi -bj; Maceo White -d.

- Rust\*6: Gus Aiken, Leonard Davis, t; unknown, tb; Duke Ellington, p; Mike Danzi, bj; Maceo White, d.

- M. Berresford, That's Got 'Em!: Eugene Bud Aiken, Leslie Davis, t; Calvin Jones, tb; Wilbur Sweatman, cl, bcl, ldr; Percy Green, as; Ramon Hernandez, ts; Edwin Stevens, Walter Hall or Claude Hopkins, p; Clyde Johnson or poss Mike Danzi, bj; Jerome Jones, bb.

018 **SARA MARTIN** Clarence Williams' Blue Five

New York, c. Sep. 29, 1924

Sara Martin - voc;

Gus Aiken - cnt; Bud Aiken - tbn; unknown - alt;

Clarence Williams - pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

72857-B	Things Done Gone Too Thick	OK 8203,	Doc DOCD-5397
72858-A	Eagle Rock Me, Papa	OK 8203,	Doc DOCD-5397
72858-B	Eagle Rock Me, Papa	OK 8203	not on LP/CD

Oliver back again home in Chicago and Armstrong not having arrived in New York Clarence once again had to check for another brass team. And he immediately was successful in hiring brothers Augustus 'Gus' and Eugene 'Bud' Aiken on trumpet and trombone. As we have shown in the Frog Blues and Jazz Annual Vol. 3 these brothers made up a beautiful trumpet - trombone team as was fashionable in Harlem at the time. They both hailed from the Jenkins Orphanage in Charleston, SC where they gained the same musical tuition as Jabbo Smith did. Listen to Aiken's flexible trumpet tone, just like Jabbo's. We hear very competent trumpet playing and very beautiful trombone in dialogue. Lacking any distinct style of playing nothing can be said about the alto player, who might be anyone. Williams and Christian undisputed.

**DB**: same player. Compare opening 'Eagle Rock' with opening A. Hunter 'Everybody Does It Now' (below). The coda of 'Eagle Rock' is especially fine and I rate this player quite highly, especially in mute.

Notes:

- Storyville 16: unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo)

- Lord, Clarence Williams p103: unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "The accompaniment is something of a puzzle. Morris, Irvis and Bailey have been suggested. However, it does not sound like them to me, and I prefer to leave them as unknown. WCA states that Bailey did not join Fletcher Henderson until October 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>, having been in Chicago with King Oliver until that time."

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: unknown -c; unknown -tb; unknown -as; Clarence Williams -p; Buddy Christian -bj

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: unknown, cnt; unknown, tbn; unknown, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

019 **WILBUR SWEATMAN'S BROWNIES**

New York, Oct. 10, 1924

Leslie Davis, Eugene Bud Aiken – tpt; Calvin Jones – tbn;  
 Wilbur Sweatman – clt, bcl; Percy Green – alt, sop; Ramon Hernandez – ten;  
 Walter Hall or Claude Hopkins – pno; Harry Batchelder – bjo; Jerome Romy Jones – bbs; Maceo White – dms;  
 unknown, unknown – voc (3)

9781-A	Battleship Kate	Ed 51438	not on LP/CD
9781-B	Battleship Kate	Ed 51438,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8046
9781-C	Battleship Kate	Ed 51438	not on LP/CD
9782-A	It Makes No Difference Now	Ed unissued,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8046
9782-B	It Makes No Difference Now	Ed unissued test exists	not on LP/CD
9782-C	It Makes No Difference Now	Ed unissued test exists	not on LP/CD

As at the former Sweatman session above I'd opt for Bud Aiken as trumpet soloist right after the vocal chorus of the first title and after the clarinet solo in the second title (at 2.38 min.). He very probably was a much better trombonist than a trumpeter.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: unknown (tpt); John Reeves (tbn); Wilbur Sweatman (clt); Vess Williams (alt); Dan Parish (pno); Ogese McKay (bbs); Maceo White (dms); ---- Bachlor (vcl).

- Rust\*3: 2 unknown -c; John Reeves -tb; Wilbur Sweatman -cl -ldr; Vess Williams – another -as; Dan Parish -p; unknown -bj; Ogese T. McKay -bb; Maceo White -d -v; ---- Bachlor -v(the latter is probably the banjoist). “These 1924 recordings have been repeatedly listed as featuring Freddy Keppard, but although ‘Battleship Kate’ features a fine cornet player, the style is not that of Keppard; it is known that Keppard did play with Wilbur Sweatman for a time, as did Duke Ellington – and Sidney Bechet – but exactly when has never been finally established. At any rate, it seems that no records were made while any of these important men were members of the Wilbur Sweatman band.”

- Rust\*4,\*6: 2 unknown -c; John Reeves -tb; Wilbur Sweatman -cl -ldr; Vess Williams – another -as; Dan Parish -p; unknown -bj; Ogese T. McKay -bb; Maceo White -d -v; ---- Bachlor -v(the latter is probably the banjoist). “

– M. Berresford, *That's Got 'Em!*: Eugene Bud Aiken, Leslie Davis, t; Calvin Jones, tb; Wilbur Sweatman, cl, bcl, ldr; Percy Green, as; Ramon Hernandez, ts; Walter Hall or Claude Hopkins, p; Harry Batchelder, bj, v; Jerome Jones, bb; Maceo White, d, v.

**020 CHARLIE JOHNSON'S PARADISE ORCHESTRA**

New York, c. Feb. 1925

Leroy Rutledge, Charlie Saunders – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn;

Ben Whitted, Billie Barnes – alt, clt; Elmer Harrold – ten, clt;

Charlie Johnson – pno; Bobby Johnson – bjo; Henry “Bass” Edwards – bbs; George Stafford – dms

2623- Don't Forget You'll Regret Day By Day Em 10854, Hot'n Sweet (F) FDC 5110

2624-1 Meddlin' With The Blues Em 10856, Hot'n Sweet (F) FDC 5110

In early 1925 the Johnson band played the NEST CLUB on 169 West 133<sup>rd</sup> Street. The only two existing photographs of the Johnson band were probably taken as publicity photos for advertising their engagement at this venue (see Driggs, Lewine ‘Black Beauty, White Heat’ p. 133. The band photo on the advertising sheet is a different photo to that in the middle of the page). Another source dates these photos as possibly from 1923. The personnel shown on these two photos has been identified by a couple of Harlem musicians in 1978 (see ‘Storyville’ 75, 77 and 82) with the exception of the trombone player, who nevertheless is Bud Aiken as by comparison with a photo of Snowden's Orchestra in Perry Bradford ‘Born With The Blues’ p. 102, where Aiken, who also played trumpet, is shown third from left.

According to the testimony of the musicians who identified the band members of the photos, this is the personnel of the first Johnson recording session. (The hitherto generally listed personnel for this session, as in Rust\*6, is the Johnson band personnel at the opening of SMALLS' PARADISE in October 1925 as listed in ‘Orchestra World’ of November 1925 and does thus not apply to this session.)

“Don't Forget You'll Regret” uses the same arrangement as the Henderson band of Oct. 13, 1924, thus probably a stock arrangement, only that Don Redman in the Henderson recording transposed the saxophone section behind the trombone in A2 to a clarinet section.

“Meddlin' With The Blues” might be an arrangement by Charlie Johnson himself or one of his colleagues, as it does not have an identifiable melody as with commercial stock arrangements. It is just a compilation of several different devices: the then fashionable minor strain as in Henderson's “The Gouge Of Armour Avenue” and the chordal arpeggios at the end of the tune, which certainly come from a pianist's mind. As this tune has not been recorded by any other band, it certainly is a Johnson original.

Notes:

- *DeLaunay, New Hot Discography 1948: Probably the same personnel as session of Jan. 24, 1928: Jabbo Smith, Sidney De Paris, Cliff Brazzington - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Ben Whitted - clt; Benny Carter - alt; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - gtr; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms*

- *Jazz Directory Vol. Five 1955: Probably similar personnel as session of Jan. 24, 1928: Jabbo Smith, Sidney De Paris, Cliff Brazzington - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Ben Whitted - clt; Benny Carter - alt; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms*

- Rust\*2: Probably: Jabbo Smith, Sidney De Paris - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Ben Whitted - alt, clt; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Gus Aiken, Leroy Rutledge - tpt; Regis Hartman - tbn; Ben Whitted, Alec Alexander - alt, clt; Elmer Harrell - ten, clt, vln; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms

Tunes:

2623-2 Don't Forget You'll Regret Day By Day Key of Ab Emerson  
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 32 bars AA' ens)(A2 Chorus 32 bars tbn + reeds)(B1 Verse 16 bars AA' ens)(A3 Chorus 32 bars ens + hot tpt)

arrangement: prob. stock arrangement / composer credit is:

2624-1 Meddlin' With The Blues Key of Ab / Db / Db m Emerson  
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 12 bars ens)(A2 Chorus 12 bars reeds)(A3 Chorus 12 bars tpt)(A4 Chorus 12 bars tpt)(B1 Chorus 16 bars ens)(B2 Chorus 16 bars ens)(Bridge 6 bars ens)(C1 Chorus (Db minor) 12 bars ten)(C2 Chorus (Db minor) 12 bars ens)(Coda 6 bars reeds)

arrangement: Charlie Johnson ? / composer credit is:

**021 SARA MARTIN**

New York, c. Nov. 05, 1925

Sara Martin – voc;

Gus Aiken – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn;

(Clarence Williams) - pno

73753-B	Down At The Razor Ball	OK 8283,	Document DOCD-5397
73754-A	Mournful Blues	OK 8427,	Document DOCD-5397
73755-B	Georgia Stockade Blues	OK 8427,	Document DOCD-5397

This definitely is not June Clark and Jimmy Harrison as given in all the discographies. I have attributed this trumpet playing to Thomas Morris first – and the trombone to Charlie Green, before finding out that these musicians very probably are Gus and Bud Aiken. Although Rust and Tom Lord give June Clark and Jimmy Harrison, this seems to be far off the truth when comparing these sides to the Blue Rhythm Orchestra or the Gulf Coast Seven and the following Sara Martin session of Nov. 23, 1925. This trumpet player here is more of the kind of Thomas Morris than J. Clark. There may be a slight possibility that it is June Clark on a very bad and calm day, maybe because Jimmy Harrison is not with him here as it certainly is not Harrison on trombone. But this man's playing lacks Clark's fire and his vibrato, and his phrases and time are rather straight and mainly on the beat.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: June Clark -c; Jimmy Harrison -tb; Clarence Williams -p.

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: unknown, cnt; unknown, tbn; unknown, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

Recorded Tunes:

Down At The Razor Ball Key of F OKeh  
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(A1 Verse 12 bars voc + ens)(B1 Chorus 16 bars ABCA voc + ens)(B2 Chorus 16 bars ens)(B3 Chorus 16 bars  
 voc + ens)(Tag 2 bars voc + ens)(Coda 2 bars ens)

Mournful Blues Key of C OKeh  
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(A1 Verse 12 bars bl voc + ens)(A2 Verse 12 bars bl voc + ens)(B1 Chorus 16 bars AA voc + ens)(B2 Chorus 16  
 bars voc (humming) + ens)(B3 Chorus 16 bars voc + ens)(Coda 2 bars cnt - ens)

Georgia Stockade Blues Key of C OKeh  
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(A1 Verse 12 bars voc + ens)(B1 Chorus 20 bars AA' voc + ens)(B2 Chorus 20 bars voc + ens)

022	<b>LOUISE VANT</b>	New York,	Dec. 04, 1925
	Louise Vant – voc;		
	Gus Aiken –cnt; Bud Aiken – tbn;		
	Dan Wilson – pno		
73811-B	Show Me The Way To Go Home	OK 8264,	RST-1526-2
73812-A	Save Your Sorrow For Tomorrow	OK 8264,	RST-1526-2

Only for this recording session in this period – and except for the Clara Smith session of July 30, 1925 - Gus Aiken and his brother have been named as accompanying musicians. And Gus Aiken only with a question mark. Denying the question mark, I have taken this session as reference for Gus Aiken's style in my investigation on this remarkable musician in lack of any other determined example (see Gus Aiken elsewhere on this website!). Gus Aiken still is under spell of the very influential Johnny Dunn. He is accompanied by his trumpeter/ trombonist brother Eugene 'Bud' Aiken, he himself a wonderful musician – hear his elegant trombone solo on the second title! They both alumni of Jenkins Orphanage of Charleston, SC. Dan Wilson is accepted as pianist without distinct knowledge of his style following Rust and BGR.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: ? Gus Aiken -c; Bud Aiken -tb; Dan Wilson -p

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: prob Gus Aiken -c; Bud Aiken -tb; Dan Wilson -p

023	<b>ALBERTA HUNTER</b>	Perry Bradford's Mean Four	New York,	Jan. 1926
	Alberta Hunter – voc;			
	Gus Aiken – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn; unknown – clt, alt;			
	Perry Bradford – pno			
73903-B	Everybody Does It Now	OK 8278,	Doc DOCD-5424	
73904-B	A Master Man With A Master Mind	OK 8278,	Doc DOCD-5424	
73905-B	I Don't Want It All	OK 8315,	Doc DOCD-5424	

Now, Bradford and Clark going separate ways, Perry had to look for a new trumpet player to fulfil his contractual commitments. Out of all the young and ambitious trumpet players around in Harlem he picked Gus Aiken from Charleston, SC. Aiken had been a pupil of Jenkins' Orphanage, where he spent some years together with his brothers Eugene 'Bud' and Lucius Aiken. At this time, Gus Aiken – just as his brothers - was part of the touring band of the orphanage, and he absconded from the band – and school – duties for several times. After some engagements in accompanying bands in 1921 Gus had developed into a very skilled copyist of Johnny Dunn and his trumpet style, which led to Aiken's engagement for recording purposes when Dunn was not on hand. I have found out a couple of recordings hitherto attributed to Dunn, where very obviously Aiken is responsible. He spent most of the year 1923 in Cuba as part of Gonzell White's travelling show. Back in New York in early 1924 his trumpet style seems to have changed drastically into a more "Western" swinging style, which may well have been caused by the rhythmical conception of Caribbean and Cuban music. (Michael Rader and I have published an article on Gus Aiken in the 'Frog Blues and Jazz Annual, Vol. 3.) In 1925 he teamed up with his trombone playing brother Gene Aiken to build a trumpet-trombone partnership, which obviously was very fashionable in Harlem in the mid 20s (see R. Stewart, Jazz Masters of the Thirties).

According to our research this session belongs to a series of sessions comprising one distinct trumpet player – together with a distinct sober, no-nonsense and musically playing trombone man: Gene Aiken – which leads us through the years to the Clara Smith session of July 30, 1927, where Gus Aiken is listed in the Columbia ledgers.

So, we apparently have Gus Aiken here, his brother Bud on trombone, and a rather weak reedman on clarinet and alto, whom I am unable to identify

On piano we hear unmistakably Perry Bradford, with some sort of boogie/blues style here, but also his often performed tinkle-tinkle-plink phrases.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: unknown t; unknown tb; unknown cl; ? Perry Bradford p.

- BGR\*4: unknown c (1,3); unknown t (2); unknown tb; unknown d; presumably Perry Bradford p.

024	<b>LOUISE VANT</b>	Perry Bradford's Mean Four	New York,	c. Jan. 15, 1926
	Louise Vant – voc;			

Gus Aiken –tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn; (Ernest Elliott) – clt, alt;  
Perry Bradford – pno

73924-B	Just A Little Bit Bad	OK 8281,	Doc DOCD-5353
73925-B	I've Learned To Do Without You Now	OK 8293,	Doc DOCD-5353
73926-A	Want A Little Lovin'	OK 8281,	Doc DOCD-5353

The Aiken brothers seem to have become – under Bradford's guidance -some sort of "house band" at Okeh's now, and we hear them both again here. Gus Aiken and the reed man (possibly Ernest Elliott) from the last session, and that beautiful trombone player Eugene 'Bud' Aiken with his musical style, of which it is easily to recognize that he also performs as a trumpet player. Listen to his noble and sophisticated performance in the last title! He certainly had listened to Harrison by now, and certainly was on his way to a later trombone star, which sadly was cut short by his early death in August 1927.

The pianist seems to be a bit better and stronger than Bradford, but it might as well be him, since he certainly did gain more experience on the keys in the run of time. In contrast to Rust and Godrich/Dixon I am unable to hear a banjo on these sides, and I am certain there isn't any.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: unknown c; unknown tb; ? Perry Bradford p; unknown bj  
- BGR\*4: unknown c; unknown tb; presumably Perry Bradford p; unknown bj

025	<b>LOUISE VANT</b>	Perry Bradford's Mean Four	New York,	c. Mar. 18, 1926
	Louise Vant – voc;			
	Gus Aiken – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn; (Ernest Elliott) – clt;			
	Perry Bradford – pno			
74055-A	Pensacola Blues	OK 8310,	Doc DOCD-5353	
74056-A	New Crazy Blues	OK 8310,	Doc DOCD-5353	

As it seems we have the same accompanying musicians here. Just listen and compare! Assured Gus Aiken here, beautiful full-toned and harmonically exemplary Bud Aiken, and again the last heard clarinetist, who might possibly be Ernest Elliott. And the boss on piano. But then there certainly remains the mystery as to how Miss Vant could have been elected to record five recording sessions for a renowned record company such as Okeh.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl; ? Perry Bradford p  
- BGR\*4: unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl; presumably Perry Bradford p

026	<b>LAURA SMITH</b>	Perry Bradford's Mean Four	New York,	Apr. 01, 1926
	Laura Smith – voc;			
	Gus Aiken – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn; unknown – clt;			
	Perry Bradford – pno			
74083-A	I'll Get Even With You	OK 8316,	Doc DOCD-5353	
74084-A	If You Don't Like It	OK 8316,	Doc DOCD-5353	

We still are with Okeh and hear some familiar sounds in the persons of the 'master' (Perry Bradford) himself together with brothers Gus and Bud Aiken. The only 'unknown' is the clarinet player.

Gus Aiken on trumpet is very assured now, and his brother Bud, a trombonist as well as trumpeter, shows a very remarkable development into a first-class trombone player, very modern for his time and obviously in the spell of the future trombone master of swing, Jimmy Harrison. Bud Aiken with his exceptionally modern improvisational style – reaching forward into stylistic regions of the 50s and 60s – will be heard and listed again on the hitherto unidentified recording session of Perry Bradford and his Gang of May 1926.

The clarinet player is not at all incompetent, but can stylistically not be identified. Bradford clearly is at the piano.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: no personnel listed  
- BGR\*2,\*3: unknown, hca; unknown, vln; unknown vln, gtr; pres Perry Bradford, pno. (Actually: tpt, tbn, clt, pno ! – KBR)  
- BGR\*4: unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl; presumably Perry Bradford p

027	<b>PERRY BRADFORD AND HIS GANG</b>		New York,	c. May 10, 1926
	Gus Aiken – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn; unknown – alt;			
	Perry Bradford – pno; (Sam Speed?) – bjo;			
	Perry Bradford, Gus Horsley, Bert Howell, unknown - voc quartet			
74164-B	So's Your Old Man	OK 8324,	Frog DGF 56	
74165-B	Just Met A Friend From My Home Town	OK 8324,	Frog DGF 56	

With this session we are on safer ground, having identified the brass players as the Aiken brothers – Augustine 'Gus' on trumpet and Eugene 'Gene' on trombone – some years ago, documented in the Frog Blues and Jazz Annual Vol. 3 by our listening group of David Brown, Michael Rader and myself.

Whereas sound quality of the last session – recorded by the Columbia people – is definitely on a great level, it is much worse here. (This may have added to my own being unable to associate the trumpet part with Gus Aiken in the past.)

Gus Aiken's trumpet part is very similar here to the session before, although faster in tempo and more brilliant in execution. Only the recorded sound leaves much to be desired. He is better here musically than on the previous session, probably due to his greater familiarity with these titles, which allows him to play more loosely.

Other than on the record above I feel very confident about the identity of the trombonist. It is Gus Aiken's brother Eugene 'Bud' Aiken, another alumnus of the Jenkins Orphanage of Charleston, SC. When researching Gus Aiken's recording career - as documented in the Frog Blues and Jazz Annual Vol. 3 – it soon became apparent that there was a certain trombone player who astonishingly often played in company with Gus, and this then had to be his brother Eugene, whose cultivated playing on trombone and trumpet became silent suddenly at about this time. Garvin Bushell said about him: "Buddy was never boisterous! ... Buddy played somewhat in the style of Jimmy Harrison." Re Bud Aiken I would like to cite my own words in N&N 72: Bud, a trombonist as well as trumpeter, shows a very remarkable development into a first-class trombone player, very modern for his time and obviously under the spell of the future trombone master of swing, Jimmy Harrison.

Bud Aiken with his exceptionally modern improvisational style (is) reaching forward into stylistic regions of the 50s and 60s. Exactly this can be heard here on this coupling, and it is unbelievably sad that Eugene 'Bud' Aiken only had a little bit more than a year to live, dying August 21, 1927. I wonder what beautiful things we did not get to hear! A really remarkable musician! The same beautifully developed style of his can be heard on the Laura Smith recording of April 01, 1926! At this time Jimmy Harrison was the trombone sensation in Harlem because of his trumpet derived style on the slide horn. He had listened intensely to the Oliver band in Chicago and transferred Armstrong's manner of playing second part to his mentor Oliver onto his own style. Bud Aiken developed a similar style, yet building on his own skill as a trumpeter.

The alto sax player is almost completely overshadowed by the great brass team. He can be best heard in the introduction and the ensemble verse of "Old Man" and in the coda of "Home Town". As this player is holding long notes most of the time without any jazz phrasing his identity is impossible to assume. There is no clarinet on this session.

On piano we definitely hear Mr. Bradford again, yet mainly pounding rhythm behind the ensemble, with only occasional "tinkle-tinkle-plink" phrasing. Obviously, the Okeh people placed the piano at the back of the studio. This position of the piano might prevent Bradford from taking an active singing part in the vocal quartet. But it is very difficult to distinguish whether there are three or four voices singing. The Okeh label only says "Singing" for this record whereas the Columbia label (above) states "incidental singing by Male Quartet".

Accordingly, I could imagine that there are only three men singing.

The banjo player might be the same as on the previous recording, thus perhaps – or probably – Sam Speede. He is much more to the fore here and certainly plays with vigour and virtuosity, delivering a great performance.

The vocal quartet might be assumed to be the same as before – possibly being a trio only?

It is my personal opinion that this is a great record because of the brass team (the Aiken brothers) and the banjo player.

Notes:

- Rust\*2,\*3,\*4,\*6: unknown cnt; tbn; clt; alt; pno; bjo; Perry Bradford vcl; unknown male quartet vcl

- Frog CD booklet: unknown cornet, trombone, clarinet, alto sax, piano, banjo, Perry Bradford vocal