

# THE RECORDINGS OF GUS AIKEN

## An Annotated Tentative Personnelo-Discography

AIKEN, 'GUS' AUGUSTINE, born: Charleston, South Carolina, 26<sup>th</sup> July, 1902; died: New York City, April 1973

Was unable to give exact age; his mother died when he was very young, he was subsequently raised in the Jenkins' Orphanage, Charleston, South Carolina. His elder brother Gene 'Bud' Aiken (trombone/trumpet) died on the 21<sup>st</sup> August 1927. Both brothers were given extensive musical tuition whilst at the Orphanage and later toured with the Orphanage Bands. Gus left the Orphanage several times during his teens, working with the Tennessee Ten (c. 1920), then joined the Green River Minstrel Show. Settled in New York c. 1921, joined Willie Gant's Band; from October 1921, toured with Black Swan Masters (directed by Fletcher Henderson). From spring of 1922 until late 1924 was featured with Gonzelle White's touring show (including tour of Cuba – 1923). From 1926 until summer of 1929 worked mainly in the Drake and Walker Show, also played in pianist Irving Puggley's Hot Six (1928) and recorded with Charlie Johnson (May 1929). From 1930 played briefly with various bands including: Charlie Johnson (1930), Mills Blue Rhythm Band (1930), Luis Russell (1931), Elmer Snowden (1932), Ellsworth Reynold's Bostonians (1933), Lucky Millinder (c. 1934). Regularly with Luis Russell from 1934, remained to work under Louis Armstrong's leadership, left in March 1937. In autumn 1937 joined band led by Alberto Socarras and worked in New York and Boston with that band until the early 1940s; with Buddy Johnson Band in 1944, then free-lanced in New York. Played briefly in Jimmy Archey's Band (c.1951), then formed own band which played residencies at Small's, etc., during the 1960s. (John Chilton, Who's Who of Jazz)

AIKEN, GUS

### 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 Gonzelle 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.

### STONE

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.

Personnel 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: Gus Aiken
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Gus 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: (*Gus 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.

GUS AIKENPart 1

001 **LAVINIA TURNER** Jazz Band New York, Mar. 1921  
 Lavinia Turner – voc;  
*(Gus Aiken)* – tpt; *Jake Frazier* – tbn;  
*Garvin Bushell* – clt; unknown – ten;  
*Willie Gant* – pno; *Will Splivey Escoffery* – bjo; unknown – bbs; *Joe Banks* - dms  
 69168 How Many Times ? PA 020544, Document DOCD-5447  
 69169 Can't Get Lovin' Blues PA 020544, Document DOCD-5447

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 009 and 011, although vibrato here is somewhat out of the line. Bushell did not take up alto until 1923 although listed playing it here in Rust. What can be heard here is a tenor sax.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: possibly Gus Aiken -c; Jake Frazier -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl -as; Willie Gant -p; ----- Spivey -bj; Joe Banks -d.  
 - BGR\*2: possibly Gus Aiken, cnt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt, alt; Willie Gant, pno; .... Spivey, bjo; Joe Banks, dms.  
 - BGR\*4: possibly Gus Aiken, cnt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt; unknown, clt, alt; Willie Gant, pno; .... Spivey, bjo; Joe Banks, dms.

002 **LILLYN BROWN** her Jazzbo Syncopators New York, c. Mar. 29, 1921  
 Lillyn Brown – voc;  
*Gus Aiken* (or *Ed Cox*) – tpt; *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

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 tpt playing (tone, vibrato, time) is within the limits of Gus Aiken as displayed in session 009 and 011. 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 Perkins -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.

003 **DAISY MARTIN** Five Jazz Bell Hops New York, Mar./ Apr. 1921  
 Daisy Martin – voc;  
*Gus Aiken* – tpt; *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 tpt playing (tone, vibrato, time) is within the limits of Gus Aiken as displayed in session 009 and 011. 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 -c; Jake Frazier -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl; unknown -as; Dude Finley -p; unknown -bj; unknown -d.  
 - BGR\*2: unknown, cnt; poss Charlie Irvis, tbn; unknown, clt, 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.

004 **LILLYN BROWN** her Jazzbo Syncopators New York, c. May 09, 1921  
 Lillyn Brown – voc;  
*Gus Aiken* (or *Ed Cox*) – tpt; *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! 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 tpt playing (tone, vibrato, time) is within the limits of Gus Aiken as displayed in session 009 and 011. 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 Perkins -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 **DAISY MARTIN**    Jazz Bell Hops    New York,                      c. Apr. 15, 1921  
Daisy Martin – voc;  
Gus Aiken – tpt; 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 tpt playing (tone, vibrato, time) is within the limits of Gus Aiken as displayed in session 009 and 011. 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 -c; Jake Frazier -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl -as; unknown -as; Dude Finley -p; unknown -bj; unknown -bb; ?unknown -d.  
- Rust\*4, \*6: probably Gus Aiken -c; Jake Frazier -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl -as; unknown -as; Dude Finley -p; unknown -bj; unknown -bb.  
- BGR\*2: Gus Aiken, tpt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt, alt; Dude Finley, pno; unknown, bjo; unknown, bbs; poss dms.  
- BGR\*3, \*4: Gus Aiken, t; Jake Frazier, tb; Garvin Bushell, cl, as; Dude Finley, p; unknown, bj; unknown, bb; unknown, woodblocks.

006 **LAVINIA TURNER**    Jazz Band    New York,                      c. May 17, 1921  
Lavinia Turner – voc;  
Gus Aiken – tpt; Jake Frazier – tbn;  
Garvin Bushell – clt; unknown – alt;  
Willie Gant – pno; Will Splivey Escoffery – bjo; unknown – bbs; Joe Banks - dms  
69232                      A-Wearin' Away The Blues                      PA 020572,                      Document DOCD-5447  
69233                      Sweet Man O' Mine                      PA 020572,                      Document DOCD-5447

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 tpt playing (tone, vibrato, time) is within the limits of Gus Aiken as displayed in session 009 and 011. Bushell did not take up alto until 1923 although listed playing it here in Rust.

Notes:

- Rust\*3, \*4, \*6: possibly Gus Aiken -c; Jake Frazier -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl -as; Willie Gant -p; ---- Spivey -bj; Joe Banks -d.  
- BGR\*2: possibly Gus Aiken, cnt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt; unknown, clt, alt; Willie Gant, pno; .... Spivey, bjo; Joe Banks, dms.  
- BGR\*3, \*4: possibly Gus Aiken, cnt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt; Willie Gant, pno; .... Spivey, bjo; Joe Banks, dms.

007 **KATIE CRIPPEN**    Henderson's Novelty Orchestra    New York,                      c. Jun. 1921  
Katie Krippen – voc;  
Gus Aiken – tpt; Jake Frazier – tbn;  
unknown (Buster Bailey?) – clt, alt; Edgar Campbell or Garvin Bushell – clt;  
Willie Gant or Fletcher Henderson – pno  
P-136-2                      That's My Cup Blues                      BS 2018,                      Document DOCD-5342  
P-137-1                      When It's Too Late (You're Gonna Miss Me, Daddy)                      BS 2018,                      Document DOCD-5342

Garvin Bushell in his "Jazz From The Beginning" does not comment on this session! Both Buster Bailey and Garvin Bushell dimly recall recording behind Katie Crippen. Bailey had in fact been in New York the past February, recording with Mamie Smith. One of the clarinetists doubles on saxophone, and Bushell did not take up sax until 1923 (Hendersonia p. 22). Only Rust \*3 lists Aiken and Frazier. Rust \*6 lists Willie Gant – pno. 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 009 and 011.

Notes:

- Rust\*3: probably: Gus Aiken -c; Jake Frazier -tb; Buster Bailey, Edgar Campbell, Garvin Bushell (2 -cl, one dblg as); Fletcher Henderson -p.  
- Rust\*4, \*6: unknown -t; unknown -tb; Buster Bailey, cl, as; Garvin Bushell, cl; Willie Gant, p.  
- BGR\*2: probably: Gus Aiken, cnt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Garvin Bushell, Edgar Campbell or Buster Bailey, clt and clt, alt; Fletcher Henderson, pno.  
- BGR\*3, \*4: unknown c; unknown tb; poss Garvin Bushell or Edgar Campbell -cl; poss Buster Bailey cl/sax; Fletcher Henderson -p  
- WCAllen Hendersonia, p22: unknown trumpet; unknown trombone; poss Buster Bailey, clarinet and sax; possibly Garvin Bushell or Edgar Campbell, clarinet; Fletcher Henderson, piano  
- Bushell/Tucker, Jazz from the Beginning, p.150: unknown t; unknown tb; Buster Bailey -cl -as; Garvin Bushell -cl; Fletcher Henderson -p (obviously from Rust\*4)

008 **DAISY MARTIN**    Jazz Bell Hops    New York,                      c. early Jul. 1921  
Daisy Martin – voc;  
Gus Aiken – tpt; Gene Bud Aiken or Jake Frazier – tbn; Garvin Bushell – clt;

Dude Finley – pno; unknown – bjo; unknown - dms  
 70012-B Won't Someone Help Me Find My Lovin' Man ? OK 8008, Document DOCD-5522  
 70013-B Everybody's Man Is My Man OK 8008, Document DOCD-5522

Tpt playing is in accordance to session 009, thus probably Gus Aiken. Garvin Bushell in his "Jazz From The Beginning" does not comment on this session!

**DB:** playing here is what I might expect from the player of 023 – 028 three years later.

Notes:

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

009 **EDDIE GRAY** J. P. Johnson's Harmony Eight New York, c. Sep. 1921  
 Eddie Gray - voc, uku;  
 Gus Aiken - tpt; unknown (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, trombones (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, trombones (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:

You've Got What I'm Looking For Key of Bb Black Swan  
 (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)  
Ukulele Blues Key of Eb Black Swan  
 (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)

010 **ETHEL WATER'S JAZZ MASTERS** New York, c. Sep. 1921  
 Gus Aiken – tpt; 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 011. It is easy to state that Aiken shows Johnny Dunn influences, but his personal style is much softer and he plays horizontal lines. Ethel Waters does not sing on this session. This session can be referential to other sessions checked.

**DB:** is not the technique here better, the pitching surer, the style more staccato and the sound tighter than 008 ? Aiken at mere age 17.

Notes:

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

011 **ESSIE WHITMAN** 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.

012	<b>ELIZA CHRISTMAS LEE</b>	Her Jazz Band	New York,	Nov. 02, 1921
	Eliza Christmas Lee – voc;			
	Gus Aiken – tpt; Jake Frazier – tbn;			
	Garvin Bushell – clt; unknown – vln;			
	Willie Gant – pno; Will "Spivey" Escoffery – bjo; Joe Banks – dms			
3677	I Ain't Givin' Nothin' Away		Gnt 4801,	Document DOCD-5627
3677-A	I Ain't Givin' Nothin' Away		Gnt 4801,	Document DOCD-5515
3678	Arkansas Blues		Gnt 4801,	Document DOCD-5627
3678-A	Arkansas Blues		Gnt 4801,	Document DOCD-5515

This trumpeter's style seems to fit with the trumpet player of sessions 018 – 022 and may therefore be Gus Aiken. His style is partly in 6/8<sup>th</sup> time and so quite out of the Johnny Dunn triplet style. Garvin Bushell in his "Jazz From The Beginning" does not comment on this session! The trombone player's style is comparable to that of sessions 018 – 022 and 009.

This personnel minus the violinist confirmed by Willie Gant in RR 30 p. 4!

**DB** : not really enough to judge but compatible with 008 and thus possibly same player as 018 - 022

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Gus Aiken, c; Jake Frazier, tb; Garvin Bushell, cl; unknown, vn; Willie Gant, p; ---- Spivey, bj; Joe Banks, d.

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Gus Aiken, tpt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt; unknown, vln; Willie Gant, pno; ---- Spivey, bjo; Joe Banks, dms.

| Gus Aiken November 1921 to c. 11 February 1922 on tour with Ethel Waters Black Swan Jazz Masters

013	<b>EDITH WILSON and JOHNNY DUNN'S ORIGINAL JAZZ HOUNDS</b>		New York,	May 19, 1922
	Edith Wilson – voc;			
	(Gus Aiken) – tpt; (Eugene Bud Aiken) – tbn;			
	unknown (Y-1) - clt; Will Tyler or Charlie Jackson – vln;			
	Leroy Tibbs – pno; Sam Speede – bjo			
80356-3	Mammy, I'm Thinking Of You		Col A-3634,	RST-1522-2
80357-3	Take It 'Cause It's All Yours		Col A-3634,	RST-1522-2

I really feel very uncomfortable in naming Dunn following Rust as trumpet player here. If it really is Dunn, he is very restrained and lacks his usual security. This man might also be a close pupil or good imitator of Dunn's style, but he lacks Dunn's full tone and attack and only plays a limited bunch of Dunn characteristics.

We hear a very restrained trombonist who certainly is not Flemming, nor is he Granstaff of the last issued session. This one here plays with a beautiful warm and smooth tone, but has to be left unknown for now.

Yet, I am inclined to think of brothers Gus and Eugene Bud Aiken as brass men here! They both had been members of the Black Swan Jazz Masters – together with Bushell – and were probably looking for employment in NYC at the time, having quit the band in early February 1922. My characteristics of these two brass players above would be fitting to the men stated (Gus Aiken's shaky tone and Bud Aiken's superb musician-ship). I am daring as to say that these two titles might be referential for the Aiken brothers!

The clarinet player plays in Elliott's style, but he is less powerful. He might well be a further developed and cleaned-up Bushell, back from his tour with Ethel Waters, but he probably is a man not heard before. He appears on later sessions and I'd call him Y-1 as long as we do not know his identity.

The violinist is much more prominent than Bushell on clarinet. He might be Will Tyler or even the violinist of the Black Swan Jazz Masters Charlie Jackson (Hendersonia p. 24).

Again we hear the distinct band pianist who may well be the later big band leader Leroy Tibbs.

The banjo player seems to try a copy of John Mitchell but fails rhythmically in his breaks in 'Take It 'Cause It's All Yours'. He may be sought among men like Sam Speede or other banjoists of these Harlem days.

**DB**: Agree soft attack and few notes for Dunn. Indeed this very like the Aiken on Waters Jazz Masters and other contemporary sides. BUT the label states Dunn and I can't find a reason to overrule such firm evidence. (Dunn's session of 24 Feb. 1922 also has a totally different Dunn-less personnel despite the label! KBR) MP3 extracts 'Birmingham Blues' and 'Mammy...' confirm to me, same player, same tone, similar phrase. Trombone not as powerful as 005 (presumed Aiken) but that may be balance. Elliott MP3 benchmark from Clara Smith 'Basement Blues' and 'Take It 'Cause ...', thus Elliott here. The rest can only be informed guesswork.

**MR**: Clarinet is in my opinion too good to be Bushell at this time. I doubt Gus Aiken. Compare Dunn's solo on 'Hawaiian Blues'.

Note:

- RR 73: "The next (this here! KBR) personnel was again from John Mitchell, on studying the record. He also named Brassfield as a second reed man, but I can hear only one clarinet. Garvin Bushell was back in New York by this time." RR 73 has May 20, 1922 as recording date!

- Bushell/Tucker p.155 leave this session uncommented. As I do not know in what manner Tucker interviewed Bushell and what he did play and ask, I am unable to judge whether Bushell did not comment because he was not on the session or, because he felt no need to correct the given data. Rust's personnel is listed here, but there is absolutely no comment as to approval or contradiction.

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Johnny Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; Garvin Bushell, cl; Will Tyler, vn; Dan Wilson or Leroy Tibbs, p; J. Mitchell, bj.

- BGR\*2,\*3: Johnny Dunn, cnt; Herb Flemming, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt; Will Tyler, vln; Dan Wilson or Leroy Tibbs, pno; John Mitchell, bjo.

- BGR\*4: Johnny Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott, cl; Will Tyler, vn; Dan Wilson or Leroy Tibbs, p; John Mitchell, bj.  
 - Godrich/Dixon/Rye\*4 list: Johnny Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott, cl; Will Tyler, vn; Dan Wilson or Leroy Tibbs, p; John Mitchell, bj.  
 - Archeophone 6006 liner notes: Johnny Dunn, trumpet; Herb Flemming, trombone; Garvin Bushell, cl; Will Tyler, violin; Dan Wilson or Leroy Tibbs, piano; Johnny Mitchell, banjo

014	<b>EDITH WILSON and JOHNNY DUNN'S ORIGINAL JAZZ HOUNDS</b>	New York,	Jun. 09, 1922
	Edith Wilson – voc;		
	(Gus Aiken) – tpt; (Eugene Bud Aiken) – tbn; unknown (Y-1) – clt;		
	Leroy Tibbs – pno; Sam Speed – bjo		
80382-4	He May Be Your Man (But He Comes To See Me Sometimes)	Col A-3653,	RST-1522-2
80383-4	Rules And Regulations "Signed Razor Jim"	Col A-3653,	RST-1522-2

The same comment as to the last session applies to this one! I am increasingly inclined to attribute these two sessions and the following one, to the Aiken brothers!

Listen to the trumpet solo in 'He May Be Your Man'! This is not Dunn, no way! And listen to the beautifully sophisticated and "modern" trombone! Bushell said about Bud Aiken: "Buddy was never boisterous, his playing is clean and never boisterous!" And very probably it is not Mitchell on banjo. This banjo sounds very different and is played by the man identified as Sam Speede otherwise. The violinist is not used anymore.

**DB:** Muted style on 'He May Be ...' very similar Gus but label evidence for Dunn and 'Rules And ...' more typical of him. Very little exposed clarinet and distant in the balance but I would hear the same player as 009 Elliott as on MP3 ex. Indeed nice trombone, not Flemming nor Granstaff but maybe less tailgate, more legato than assumed Bud Aiken on 005. Rest personnel must be guesswork..

**ADDITION** Jan. 28, 2014: Yes, K-B, initial relistening I think you are prob. correct and Bushell then on both 010 and 011. Very little exposed clarinet though on 010.

**MR:** Clarinet is not as good as on 009, Bushell? Cornet probably Dunn, for same reason as 009 ('Hawaiian Blues' as benchmark); piano could be Dan Rickson, who plays similarly on 'Hawaiian Blues'.

Note:

- RR 73: "By June, Will Vodery had replaced Brymn as orchestra leader at the Plantation, and he continued in that capacity for Lew Leslie for several years. Johnny Dunn was a member of the full orchestra, and also featured as a "star" soloist. Shelton Brooks was added to the show. John Mitchell continued to record for Edith Wilson, with bands not necessarily composed of men from the Vodery orchestra. He also appeared behind her in her stage and vaudeville appearances.

This next (this one! KBR) date was by a similar unit to the last, except no violin was present; it was not played to Mitchell (!).

The above personnel, incidentally, was once reported to me by Miss Wilson in a brief personal interview, as the band accompanying her on records."

- Bushell/Tucker p.155 leave this session uncommented. As I do not know in what manner Tucker interviewed Bushell and what he did play and ask, I am unable to judge whether Bushell did not comment because he was not on the session or, because he felt no need to correct the given data. Rust's personnel is listed here, but there is absolutely no comment as to approval or contradiction.

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: J. Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; Garvin Bushell, cl; Dan Wilson or Leroy Tibbs, p; J. Mitchell, bj.

- BGR\*2,\*3: Johnny Dunn, cnt; Herb Flemming, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt; Dan Wilson or Leroy Tibbs, pno; John Mitchell, bjo.

- BGR\*4: Johnny Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott, cl; Dan Wilson or Leroy Tibbs, p; John Mitchell, bj.

- Godrich/Dixon/Rye\*4 list: Johnny Dunn, c; Herb Flemming, tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott, cl; Dan Wilson or Leroy Tibbs, p; John Mitchell, bj.

- Archeophone 6006 liner notes: as above except Tyler omitted. (Johnny Dunn, trumpet; Herb Flemming, trombone; Garvin Bushell, cl; Dan Wilson or Leroy Tibbs, piano; Johnny Mitchell, banjo)

015	<b>TRIXIE SMITH</b> the Jazz Masters	Long Island City, NY,	c. Sep. 1922
	Trixie Smith – voc;		
	(Gus Aiken) – tpt; George Brashear – tbn; Julian Baugh – clt;		
	Fletcher Henderson – pno; unknown – bbs		
	Give Me That Old Slow Drag	BS 14127,	Document DOCD-5332
	My Man Rocks Me (With One Steady Roll)	BS 14127,	Document DOCD-5332

Although most playing on these sides is from written scores it might be assumed that – according to the proximity of record numbers – this is the same personnel as on the following session, and might thus comprise the players as listed above. Among them the clarinetist hitherto assumed to be a man called Clarence Robinson, but after Bo Lindström's find of an Ethel Waters interview in the 'Baltimore Afro-American' of June 16, 1922, this player's name probably is Julian Baugh.

Notes:

- Rust\*3: unknown – t; unknown – tb; unknown – cl -as; unknown – p; unknown – bb.

- Rust\*4,\*6: unknown t; unknown tb; unknown cl, ?as; ?Fletcher Henderson – p; unknown – bb.

- BGR\*2: unknown tpt; unknown tbn; unknown tb; unknown clt, alt; unknown pno; unknown bbs.

- BGR\*3,\*4: unknown, t; unknown, tb; unknown, cl; presumably Fletcher Henderson, p; unknown, bb.

- Bo Lindström, Oh Joe, Play That Trombone, Ethel Waters interview: "The present organization of her (Ethel Water's – KBR) Jazz Masters is composed of: Joe Smith, cornet; Fletcher Henderson Jr, piano; Julian Baugh, clarinet; George Brashear, trombone."

016	<b>LENA WILSON</b> the Jazz Masters	Long Island City, NY,	c. Sep. 1922
	Lena Wilson – voc;		
	(Gus Aiken) – tpt; George Brashear – tbn; Julian Baugh – clt;		
	Fletcher Henderson – pno; unknown – bbs		
	The Wicked Fives' Blues	BS 14129,	Document DOCD-5443
-2	The Wicked Fives' Blues	BS 14129,	Document DOCD-5602
	You've Got Everything A Sweet Daddy Needs But Me	BS 14129,	Document DOCD-5443

The trumpet player certainly is a follower of the Johnny Dunn style ubiquitous in Harlem at this time, playing in strong military style with its staccato phrasing and its sharp triple bugle calls. I could suggest this player to be Gus Aiken who was able to deliver convincing Dunn copies when required. The trombonist might be George 'Lorenzo' Brashear with his brash tailgate style. And then the clarinetist shows signs of the enigmatic Clarence Robinson of whom W.C. Allen says: "*An unidentified clarinetist, with a fine ensemble sense and a tone that reminds me of Johnny Dodds (I am sure, however, that it was NOT Dodds), whom I tentatively identify as Clarence Robinson.*" (Hendersonia, p.33/34)" Most recently Bo Lindström of Sweden has identified this clarinetist as Julian Baugh following an interview with Ethel Waters of the time (see below). The pianist may well be Fletcher Henderson as given by Allen, although no personal stylistic traits can be identified. The tuba player then might be one of a number of New York theatre musicians employed by band leaders like Eubie Blake. Chink Johnson might be a possibility. This session probably has the same personnel as Josie Miles' session of the same day for the same label!

Notes:

- Rust\*3: unknown - c; unknown - tb; unknown - cl; unknown - p; unknown - d.
- W.C. Allen, *Hendersonia*, p.47/48: "The next six titles are tentatively included as Henderson accompaniments, because of the use of the band name 'Jazz Masters'. The cornetist is not Joe Smith, however, but a weaker, less 'hot' man whom I cannot identify; the clarinetist also may be a different man than on the previous blues sessions."
- Rust\*4,\*6: unknown - c; unknown - tb; unknown - cl; Fletcher Henderson - p; unknown - d.
- BGR\*2: unknown - tpt; unknown - tbn; unknown - clt; unknown - pno; unknown - bbs
- BGR\*3,\*4: unknown - tpt; unknown - tbn; unknown - clt; poss Fletcher Henderson - pno; unknown - bbs
- Bo Lindström, *Oh Joe, Play That Trombone*, Ethel Waters interview: "The present organization of her (Ethel Waters' - KBR) Jazz Masters is composed of: Joe Smith, cornet; Fletcher Henderson Jr, piano; Julian Baugh, clarinet; George Brashear, trombone."

017 **JOSIE MILES**

Long Island City, NY, c. Sep. 1922

Josie Miles - voc;

Gus Aiken (or Joe Smith) - tpt; (George Brashear) - tbn; Julian Baugh - clt;

Willie Gant (or Fletcher Henderson) - pno; (Ralph Escudero) - bbs

424-2	If You Want To Keep Your Daddy Home	BS 14130,	Document DOCD-5466
425-1	You're Fooling With The Wrong Gal Now	BS 14130,	Document DOCD-5466

The trumpet player - whom W.C. Allen identifies as Joe Smith a little too hasty I think - might as well be the youthful Gus Aiken, a pupil of the Jenkins Orphanage of Charleston, SC. Many trumpet players in Harlem in the very early twenties definitely were under the spell of Johnny Dunn and copied him as well as they could. One of these was Gus Aiken who - on a couple of early recordings of Edith Wilson in 1922 - very probably has hitherto been mistaken for Johnny Dunn. But Aiken certainly excelled in playing in a closely imitated Dunn style, recognizable only by his softer tone and his looser inner rhythm (compare Edith Wilson's recordings of 1922 elsewhere on this website!). But, Joe Smith was a Dunn pupil as well and can be distinguished as such in his early recordings with Mamie Smith (compare Mamie Smith's recordings August 1922 to January 1923 elsewhere on this website). Yet, Smith is recognizably on his way to a very distinct own approach and smooth and rhapsodic style, away from the Dunn mould. Our man here - with his eighth triplets - for me is rather Aiken. The trombone player might well be Brashear and the clarinetist from my knowledge possibly Clarence Robinson, who was the only (?) real player in early Harlem to come closer to the Western players like Johnny Dodds or Jimmy Noone. But he is a very shadowy figure and only very little is known of him. Following Bo Lindström's book 'Oh Joe, Play That Trombone' this player's name should be Julian Baugh, member of Ethel Waters touring band of the time (see session above).

The sounds from the piano are very light and I therefore could well imagine this to be Willie Gant, following his own testimony below, which, by the way, would be his only possibility to have recorded with Josie Miles. Compare Katie Crippen's session of March 1921 where Willie Gant suddenly inserts a piano solo into a tune played by a very early Henderson recording unit with Henderson on piano ('Play 'Em For Mama, Sing 'Em For Me). Gant is much lighter and airy in his approach than the strongly founded Henderson.

A banjo player can not be detected on these sides as listed in early editions of Rust and BGR which are based on the below cited excerpts of Record Research. It should, yet, be added that Spivey or Splivey could only mean Will 'Splivey' Escoffery, banjo player of the June Clark band of 1925 ('Blue Rhythm Orchestra' and 'Gulf Coast Seven' on records) and schoolfellow of the young Duke Ellington.

When considering that this personnel heard might possibly not come from the Fletcher Henderson circle we lose the reason to suggest Ralph Escudero as tuba player, who, nevertheless, did not join the Henderson aggregation before January 1923. Lacking any stylistic idiosyncrasies of the tuba sounds we better list this player as unknown. (Sessions 013-1 above and 013-2 may be closely related!)

Notes:

- Record Research 30: "Following this recording adventure, Willie recalled doing several others behind different blues singers on various labels such as Okeh, Pathe and Black Swan with the "Leroy's" personnel. He believes that he may have recorded behind Lavinia Turner, Katie Crippen and Josie Miles, to name some." "Leroy's Band": Gus Aiken, trumpet; Garvin Bushell, clarinet; Jake Frazier, trombone; Gant, piano; Spivy or Splivy, banjo; and Joe Banks, drums.
- W.C. Allen, *Hendersonia*, p. 39: Joe Smith, cornet; prob George Brashear, trombone; poss Clarence Robinson, clarinet; Fletcher Henderson piano; poss Ralph Escudero, tuba. "Joe Smith is identified from his characteristic cornet breaks. The matrix numbers seem to place this somewhat later than the preceding three sessions (J. Moody, M. Straine, A. Copeland - KBR), and it may therefore actually be out of its proper chronological sequence, but is placed here because of Smith's presence."
- BGR\*2: Joe Smith, tpt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt; prob Fletcher Henderson, pno; --- Spivey, bjo; Joe Banks, dms.
- BGR\*3,\*4: Joe Smith, c; Jake Frazier, tb; poss Clarence Robinson, ct; prob Fletcher Henderson, p; poss Ralph Escudero, bb.
- Rust\*3: Joe Smith - c; Jake Frazier - tb; Garvin Bushell - cl; ? Fletcher Henderson - p; --- Spivey - bj; Joe Banks - d
- Rust\*4: Joe Smith - c; ? George Brashear - tb; ? Clarence Robinson - cl; Fletcher Henderson - p; ? Ralph Escudero.
- Rust\*6: Joe Smith - c; ? George Brashear - tb; ? Clarence Robinson - cl; Willie Gant - p; ? Ralph Escudero.
- Bushell/Tucker p. 156: personnels as by Bruyninckx/Rust\*3/Rust\*4. No comment by G. Bushell, which may indicate that he did not recognize himself and thus had no recollection to this recording session.
- Bo Lindström, *Oh Joe, Play That Trombone*, Ethel Waters interview: "The present organization of her (Ethel Waters' - KBR) Jazz Masters is composed of: Joe Smith, cornet; Fletcher Henderson Jr, piano; Julian Baugh, clarinet; George Brashear, trombone."

018 **LIZZIE MILES** her Creole Jazz Hounds

New York,

Jan./Feb. 1923

Lizzie Miles - voc;

unknown (Gus Aiken) - tpt; unknown (Bud Aiken) - tbn; unknown - clt;

unknown - pno; unknown - dms

42319-1	Four O'Clock Blues	Em 10586,	Document DOCD-5458
42319-2	Four O'Clock Blues	Em 10586,	Document DOCD-1012
42320-1	Aggravatin' Papa	Em 10586,	Document DOCD-1012

42320-2	Aggravatin' Papa	Em 10586,	Document DOCD-5458
42337-1	Tell Me Gypsy	Em 10603,	Document DOCD-5458
42337-2	Tell Me Gypsy	Em 10603	not on LP/CD
42338-1	You've Got To Come And See Mama Every Night	Em 10603,	Document DOCD-5458
42338-2	You've Got To Come And See Mama Every Night	Em 10603,	Document DOCD-5626

**DB** : not enough to judge but not anomalous with 023 - 028

Notes:

- Rust\*3, \*4, \*6: unknown t; unknown tb; unknown cl; unknown p; unknown bb; unknown d.
- BGR\*2, \*3: unknown tpt; unknown tbn; unknown clt; unknown pno; unknown bbs; unknown dms.
- BGR\*4: unknown t; unknown tb; unknown cl or ss; unknown p; unknown bb; unknown d.

019	<b>LENA WILSON</b>	Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools	New York,	c. early Apr. 1923
	Lena Wilson – voc;			
	Gus Aiken - tpt; Herb Flemming - tbn;			
	Perry Bradford - pno; Sam Speed – bjo			
1362-1	Deceitful Blues	Pm 12029,	Timeless CBC 1-073	
1362-2	Deceitful Blues	Pm 12029,	Document DOCD-5443	
1362-3	Deceitful Blues	Pm 12029,	Document DOCD-T002	
1363-1	I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me	Pm 12029,	Timeless CBC 1-073	
1363-2	I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me	Pm 12029,	Document DOCD-5443	
1363-3	I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me	Pm 12029,	Document DOCD-5627	

This is the first recording under the Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools sign. I have listened to it after checking the session of late May (see below), generally dated May/June 1923. Rust's personnel for this session is vague or even non-existent. With first delving into the matter it became apparent that there are some familiar figures present and the sounds heard easily give hints to Gus Aiken in his Dunn-derived style of the time, a very fluent and elegant trombone player who has to be Flemming in contrast to Gus Aiken's brother Bud, who very often teamed with his trumpet playing brother, but plays in a less exuberant style than Flemming, Flemming had been with Lt. Europe's "Hell-Fighters Band" in Europe in World War I, and he certainly had learned how to play a trombone with all of its tricks and finesse, and accordingly he did not have any competitor at this early time in Harlem. Bradford can be heard with his own busy tinkle-tinkle-plink piano and a banjo player trying to sound like John Mitchell, but without his expertise. Then the next day I happened to skim through Record Research 79 finding the notice below re this session by W.C. Allen which perfectly verified my assumptions. Bradford and Speed were easy to identify. There is no reed player on these sides! Comparison with other recordings by Edith Wilson suggests that Aiken plays at a couple of other instances where Dunn is listed. (There even are a couple of recordings listed as Dunn's Jazz Hounds where a Sam Wooding aggregation plays!) Gus Aiken obviously was able to play exactly in the Dunn manner, so much so that nobody in the past doubted Dunn's presence and tried to find out whether it was really Dunn or somebody else. But this might be the subject of a subsequent article! Recording date is from: The Rise and Fall of Paramount Records, Vol. 1, Third Man Records.

Note:

- Info from Walter C. Allen in 'Filling In Discographically', Record Research 79 p. 10: "Johnny Dunn or Gus Aiken, cornet; Herb Flemming, trombone; Garvin Bushell, clarinet; George Rickson ?, piano; John Mitchell, banjo. This personnel, with Dunn, is from John Mitchell after hearing the record. However, the cornetist does not sound at all times like Dunn's other work, and according to the NEW YORK AGE, May 5, 1923, Dunn along with Rickson and other members of the Plantation Revue troupe had already sailed for England by that date. WCA suggests Gus Aiken as a more likely candidate for cornetist – although Aiken was a regular member of the Gonzell White troupe which toured the country and was in Cuba from June to December, 1923."
- 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! KBR) "Speed", banjo; Bradford, piano. Johnny Dunn is definitely not on these sides. According to Bradford, Dunn was in Europe when they were made (No, not yet! KBR)."
- Rust\*3, \*4, \*6: "probably similar to Johnny Dunn – c; Earl Granstaff, Herb Flemming or Calvin Jones – tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott and/or Herschel Brassfield – cl-as; Leroy Tibbs, George Rickson or Dan Wilson – p; John Mitchell or Sam Speed – bj; possibly others." (take your choice! – KBR)
- BGR\*2: prob similar to: Johnny Dunn, cnt; Ralph Granstaff, Herb Flemming or Calvin Jones, tbn; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott and/or Herschel Brassfield, clt, alt; Leroy Tibbs, George Rickson or Dan Wilson, pno; Johnny Mitchell or Samuel Speed, bjo; possibly others.
- BGR\*3: Instrumentation and personnel unknown, presumably inc. Perry Bradford, p.
- BGR\*4: "prob. Johnny Dunn, c; unknown, tb; prob. Perry Bradford, p; unknown, bj."
- Bushell/Tucker p.157: no distinct comment by Bushell here, but "personnel as above?: Lena Wilson, v; Johnny Dunn, c; Earl Granstaff, Herb Flemming, or Calvin Jones, tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott, and/or Herschel Brassfield. cl, as; Leroy Tibbs, George Rickson, or Dan Wilson, p; John Mitchell or Sam Speed, bj; others?"

Discernible differences of takes:

1362-1	bars 7/8 of first chorus: trumpet break - trombone coming in at the end with 4 upward notes
1362-2	bars 7/8 of first chorus: trumpet break - no trombone coming in
1362-3	not inspected
1363-1	bars 15/16 of first chorus (after 4 bars intro and 8 bars verse): vocal break - no background noise bar 3 of ensemble chorus; bjo break with one tremolo
1363-2	bars 15/16 of first chorus (after 4 bars intro and 8 bars verse): vocal break - pno softly in background bar 3 of ensemble chorus; bjo break with two tremolos
1363-3	bars 15/16 of first chorus (after 4 bars intro and 8 bars verse): vocal break - no background noise bar 3 of ensemble chorus; bjo break with two tremolos

020	<b>LENA WILSON</b>	Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools	New York,	c. late Apr. 1923
	Lena Wilson – voc;			
	Gus Aiken - tpt; Gene Bud Aiken (or Herb Flemming)- tbn; Garvin Bushell - clt;			
	Leroy Tibbs (or Charlie "Smitty" Smith) - pno; Sam Speed - bjo			



1378-2	Here's Your Opportunity	Pm 12042	not on LP/CD
1378-3	Here's Your Opportunity	Pm 12042,	Document DOCD-5443
1379-3	Memphis, Tennessee	Pm 12042,	Document DOCD-5443

Rust lists this session under the same date as before - and with the same personnel - without paying attention to the large gap in matrix numbers. Furthermore there is a reed player here who is not on the session above. B&GR have separated sessions listed and list the reed player. Johnny Dunn had been to England early May until September 1923. So, as by this date it might have been Dunn here, but aurally this is the same trumpet player as on the foregoing session, thus Aiken. Gus Aiken plays very much in the Johnny Dunn style, but with a little more rhythmical freedom and a somewhat less brilliant tone, and - as Bushell expressed it - "*If that's Gus Aiken, he's playing Johnny Dunn's patterns note for note*". The trombone player lacks a bit of Flemming's brilliance and might therefore be Gus Aiken's brother Gene "Bud" Aiken, who - as always - plays in his no-nonsense style. The clarinetist might well be Garvin Bushell, as he belonged to this circle of musicians frequently engaged by Bradford, Dunn and cohorts. His technical ability is demonstrated in the first title where he on the spot repeats fast trumpet runs improvised by Aiken. Tone and vibrato are well in his range. The pianist shows nothing of Perry Bradford's characteristics (frequent treble figures), but plays in a simplified stride style, and might therefore be Leroy Tibbs, but might also be Charlie Smitty Smith of later Blue Rhythm Orchestra fame. The banjo player is Sam Speed with his straight four beat playing and his difficulties keeping time when playing arpeggios.

Recording date is from: The Rise and Fall of Paramount Records, Vol. 1, Third Man Records.

Note:

- Rust\*3, \*4, \*6: "*probably similar to Johnny Dunn - c; Earl Granstaff, Herb Flemming or Calvin Jones - tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott and/or Herschel Brassfield - cl-as; Leroy Tibbs, George Rickson or Dan Wilson - p; John Mitchell or Sam Speed - bj; possibly others.*"

- BGR\*2: *prob similar to: Johnny Dunn, cnt; Ralph Granstaff, Herb Flemming or Calvin Jones, tbn; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott and/or Herschel Brassfield, clt, alt; Leroy Tibbs, George Rickson or Dan Wilson, pno; Johnny Mitchell or Samuel Speed, bjo; possibly others.*

- BGR\*3: *Instrumentation and personnel unknown, presumably inc. Perry Bradford, p.*

- B&GR\*4: "*prob. Johnny Dunn, c; unknown, tb; unknown, cl; prob. Perry Bradford, p; unknown, bj.*"

- Bushell/Tucker p.157: *no distinct comment by Bushell here, but: "personnel as above?: Lena Wilson, v; Johnny Dunn, c; Earl Granstaff, Herb Flemming, or Calvin Jones, tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott, and/or Herschel Brassfield. cl, as; Leroy Tibbs, George Rickson, or Dan Wilson, p; John Mitchell or Sam Speed, bj; others?"*

Discernible differences of takes:

*As take -2 of the first title does not seem to be reissued, apparent differences cannot be stated!*

021 **LENA WILSON** Jazz Hounds New York, May 12, 1923

Gus Aiken - tpt; Herb Flemming - tbn; Garvin Bushell - clt;

unknown (Leroy Tibbs) - pno; John Mitchell - bjo

81009-1 Deceitful Blues

Col A-3915, Document DOCD-5443

81010-3 Memphis, Tennessee

Col A-3915, Document DOCD-5443

This trumpet player is a much more assured player owning a more brilliant tone than the musician in sessions 018 - 025, who probably is Gus Aiken on the strength of being named thus in Rust and Godrich/Dixon for some of the sessions. Considering that Aiken touring in South America for most of 1923 must have assembled a whole lot of instrumental power, it is not probable that the trumpet player in session 012 should be a better player than the one in 018 - 025. Furthermore is Aiken's presence in this session open to doubt because of the date problem.

**DB**: agree seemingly better player but there is some delicate mute work on 'Deceitful' not altogether unlike that on 023 - 028.

Note:

- RR 79-10: *personnel from John Mitchell. (Gus Aiken was in Cuba from Mid-May until End-December 1923, but this session probably has been recorded before his departure)*

- Rust\*3, \*4, \*6: *?Gus Aiken -c; Herb Flemming -tb; Garvin Bushell -cl; ?George Rickson -p; John Mitchell -bj.*

- BGR\*2, \*3, \*4: *prob Gus Aiken, cnt; Herb Flemming, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt; poss George Rickson, pno; John Mitchell, bjo.*

022 **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 Irvis 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 Phoools 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.

Note:

- Rust\*2 (corrected): Johnny Dunn, Gus Aiken (cnt); ? 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 - c; Bud Aiken - tb; ?Garvin Bushell - cl; Ernest Elliott - cl - ts; Leroy Tibbs - p; John Mitchell - bj.

- RR 73: John Mitchell, when interviewed by Harold Flakser and Carl Kendziora, Jr. named: Johnny Dunn, Gus Aiken, trumpets; Earl Granstaff, trombone; Hershal Brassfield and Rollen Smith, reeds; Perry Bradford, piano; John Mitchell, banjo.

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

Laurie Wright's statement as to Gus Aiken's departure to Cuba in Storyville 1996/7 p. 189 "*they had definitely sailed by the middle of May (Chicago Defender of 26/5/23)*" 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 Phoools Paramount session from May/June to late May.

**023 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:

- 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 014 and 015! But then Aiken delivers a perfect copy of Dunn's very personal style!

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

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*

## PART 2

The following body of record sessions do certainly not include Gus Aiken on tpt/cnt, as he was in Cuba with Gonzelle White's show from mid May (at last 25<sup>th</sup>) until mid December 1923. These sessions are nevertheless included as they were listed over the years as including Aiken.

The band touring Cuba for most of 1923 comprised the following musicians: Harry Smith, Gus Aiken – tpt; Jake Frazier – tbn; Harvey Lankford, Amanzie Richardson – reeds; prob. Arthur Ray – pno; Freddie Rastus Crump – dms (Storyville 1996/7, p. 189, 232)

- 024 **ETHEL RIDLEY** *Bradford's Jazz Phoools* *New York, Jun. 26, 1923*  
*Ethel Ridley – voc;*  
*unknown – tpt; unknown (Calvin Jones?) – tbn;*  
*unknown – alt; unknown – ten, clt;*  
*unknown (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 solo 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 from 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: probable personnel: Johnny Dunn, cnt; Calvin Jones, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt, alt; Herschel Brassfield, ten; Leroy Tibbs, pno; Samuel Speed, bjo.

- 025 **GULF COAST SEVEN** *New York, Aug 07, 1923*  
*unknown (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* *Col A-3978, Frog DGF 56*  
 81169-2 *Memphis, Tennessee* *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 Daddian 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 is definitely 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 180813: Bo Lindström has recently pointed out that the clarinetist listed as Clarence Robinson very probably was a man named Julian Baugh who was documented as Ethel Waters' clarinetist in 1922.

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 Speede!) could be the man because of the affinity to the early Snowden/Ellington band..

Notes:

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

- RR 75: Walter C. Allen's personnel: two unknown tpts; unknown, tbn; poss Garvin Bushell, poss Bob Fuller or Ernest Elliott, prob Perry Bradford, poss Sam Speed. (Gus Aiken was in Cuba from end of May until end-December 1923)

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

026	<b>MARY JACKSON</b>	Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoofs	New York,	Oct. 1923
	Mary Jackson – voc;			
	unknown – tpt; unknown – tbn; unknown – clt;			
	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

(Gus Aiken was in Cuba from Mid-May until End-December 1923)

Notes:

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

- Rust\*4,\*6: probably: 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.

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: prob Gus Aiken, cnt; Bud Aiken, tbn; Garvin Bushell, clt, alt; Leroy Tibbs, pno; Samuel Speed, bjo.

### PART 3

After careful listening the following sessions might or seem to include Gus Aiken on tpt/cnt. On almost all of these sessions one title – or more – are ended by the tpt on the ninth. This was my first matter of distinction. Then a rather narrow vibrato, often sounding like a bad embouchure, a time between northern and southern styles, sometimes rather square, and a continuing use of a straight (?) mute, sometimes varied (or added) by a plunger mute. On open horn he owns a rather velvety tone, not a brilliant one.

In most sessions Gus Aiken is obviously in company with his brother Eugene “Bud” Aiken, who plays a rather functional trombone in middle until upper register with sometimes adding passages of beautiful melodic playing (straight (?) solos, e.g. “Show Me The Way ...” Dec. 04, 1925)

027	<b>VIRGINIA LISTON</b>	her Jazz Trio	New York,	Jan. 07, 1924
	Virginia Liston – voc;			
	Gus Aiken – tpt; unknown ( <i>Ernest Elliott</i> ) – alt;			
	Porter Grainger – pno			
72258-D	I Don't Love Nobody		OK 8138,	Doc DOCD-5446
72259-D	'Tain't A Doggone Thing But The Blues		OK 8138,	Doc DOCD-5446

In our article ‘The Cornet Screamer’ in the Frog Blues & Jazz Annual Vol. 3 Michael Rader and I - together with our listening group - have attributed this session to trumpet player Gus Aiken’s mostly unrecognized and thus underestimated work. Lacking any clearly documented recordings of Aiken after his return from Cuba in December 1923 we found a whole series of recordings by an unknown trumpet player who most probably is our man Gus Aiken. This is the first recording by this “unknown” trumpet player in the row. The series runs up consecutively to Clara Smith’s coupling of July 30, 1927, and can even be continued for some few items. Aiken’s musical and technical development can easily be followed by the list in our article.

Today, just after finishing a long evaluation of clarinetist Ernest Elliott’s work on record, I detect that the reed man on this coupling with great certainty is Elliott himself, judging from the catalogue of stylistic devices he displays here, which are listed in my Ernest Elliott discography.

The pianist certainly is not Williams, but Porter Grainger, a much looser and virtuoso player than Clarence.

**DB** : I hear our man.

#### Notes:

- Storyville 15: unknown (cnt); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno). “The unknown cornet and alto players may be Thomas Morris and Bob Fuller respectively. The piano sounds somewhat unlike Williams’ normal style but we are satisfied that this is he.”

- Lord, Clarence Williams p77: unknown (cnt); unknown (alt); poss Clarence Williams or Porter Grainger (pno) “The unknown cornet and alto players may be Thomas Morris and Bob Fuller respectively. The piano sounds somewhat unlike Williams’ normal style, but the team (Storyville team – KBR) is satisfied that it is he. However, in view of the composer credits for both compositions, I think the possibility of Porter Grainger as pianist should be considered.”

- Rust\*3: ? Tom Morris –c; unknown –cl –as; Clarence Williams –p

- Rust\*4,\*6: unknown –c; unknown –as; Clarence Williams or Porter Grainger –p

- BGR\*2: poss Tom Morris, cnt; unknown, clt, alt; Clarence Williams, pno

- BGR\*3,\*4: unknown, c; unknown, as; poss Clarence Williams or Porter Grainger, p

028	<b>MATSON'S LUCKY SEVEN</b>		New York,	Jan. 1924
	Gus Aiken – tpt; unknown ( <i>John Mayfield</i> ) – tbn; Ernest Elliott (or <i>George Scott</i> ?) – clt, alt;			
	Charles Matson – pno; Sam Speede – bjo			
1654-1	Lawdy Lawdy Blues		Harmograph 915,	Frog DGF 71
1654-3	Lawdy Lawdy Blues		Pm 20306,	Rarities 14 (EP)
1655-1	Jail House Blues		Pm 20306,	Rarities 14 (EP)
1655-2	Jail House Blues		Harmograph 915,	Frog DGF 71

The very accomplished trumpet player has been found by our listening group very probably to be the vastly underrated Gus Aiken, at this time just back from his Cuba tour, and showing great chops and a rhythmic concept far away from his Johnny Dunn imitations of 1922. (As a Jenkins Orphanage alumnus he is not so far away from Jabbo Smith!)

Rust offers John Mayfield on trombone here and may be right. On succeeding recordings with Gus Aiken on trumpet he is often in company with his trombonist brother Gene Aiken. But Gene Aiken can certainly be excluded here of stylistic reasons.

On first hearing the clarinetist’s style is Elliott’s. And it may well be he on these sides. Yet I would like to give a hint to the note from Storyville 95 below. So, may there be another “Ernest Elliott” in the person of Mr. George Scott of Missourians and Cotton Club Orchestra fame?

Charles Matson is on piano and the banjo player’s style is absolutely in Sam Speede’s range.

The presence of the Aiken brothers has been suggested in FROG 71 by Richard Rains, and he seems to be quite right as to the trumpet player, in my opinion. In any case, this trumpet player here is the same man as on sessions 025 to 035.

**DB** : definitely our man.

#### Notes:

- Rust\*2: possibly: unknown cnt; unknown tbn; unknown clt,alt; unknown alt; (?) unknown ten; Charles Matson (pno, ldr); unknown bjo; unknown bbs; unknown dms.

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: 2 unknown –c; ?John Masefield –tb; ?Ernest Elliott –cl –as; Charles Matson –p –ldr; ?Sam Speed –bj.

029	<b>SARA MARTIN</b>	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 I 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

030	<b>GEORGE McCLENNON’S JAZZ DEVILS</b>	New York,	May 07, 1925
	unknown (Gus Aiken or June Clark) – tpt; unknown – tbn;		
	George McClellennon – clt, voc; unknown – alt;		
	Eddie Heywood – pno; unknown – bjo; unknown - dms		
73359-	Home Alone Blues	OK 8236,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8022
73360-	Anybody Here Want To Try My Cabbage?	OK 8236,	Jazz Oracle BDW 8022

This session has been listed as a probable Th. Morris item by Richard Rains in Frog Yearbook Vol. 1. My personnel do not follow R. Rains’ suggestions. E. Heywood is named on the label (L. Wright, OKeh Race Records). My suggestion is more Clark and only vaguely Aiken.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: unknown –c; unknown –tb; George McClellennon -cl -v; unknown –as; ?Eddie Heywood –p; unknown –bj; unknown -d.

031	<b>SARA MARTIN</b>	New York,	c. Nov. 05, 1925
	Sara Martin – voc;		
	Gus Aiken – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn;		
	unknown (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)

032	<b>SARA MARTIN</b>	New York,	c. Nov. 17, 1925
	Sara Martin – voc;		
	Gus Aiken – tpt;		
	Robert Cooksey - har; Phil Worde – pno		
73759-B	Forget Me Not Blues	OK 8292,	Document DOCD-5279
73760-A	Nobody Knows And Nobody Cares Blues	OK 8304,	Document DOCD-5279
73761-B	Give Me Just A Little Of Your Time	OK 8304,	Document DOCD-5279

Note the upward fifth jumps in the first title at various instances, which can be found in several recordings of this Gus Aiken list.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Bubber Miley –c; Robert Cooksey -h; ?Phil Worde -p.  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: unknown, cnt; unknown, tbn; unknown, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo

033	<b>LOUISE VANT</b>		New York,	Dec. 04, 1925
	Louise Vant – voc;			
	<i>Gus Aiken</i> –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

Except for the Clara Smith session of July 30, 1927, only for this recording session in this period Gus Aiken and his brother have been named as being present, although Gus Aiken with a question mark. Denying the question mark, I have taken this session as reference for Gus Aiken's style in lack of any other determined example.

Notes:

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

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

034	<b>ALBERTA HUNTER</b>	Perry Bradford's Mean Four	New York,	Jan. 1926
	Alberta Hunter – voc;			
	<i>Gus Aiken</i> – tpt; <i>Bud Aiken</i> – 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. 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 brother Eugene 'Bud' Aiken, and a possible third brother, Lucius Aiken. At this time, Gus Aiken – just like his brother(s) - was part of the touring band of the orphanage, and he absconded from the band – and school – duties 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 involving a single distinct trumpet player – together with a distinct sober, no-nonsense and very musical trombone man: Gene Aiken – which leads us through the years to the Clara Smith session of July 30, 1927, where Gus Aiken is documented 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 guess or identify.

On piano we unmistakably hear Perry Bradford, with some sort of boogie/blues rolling bass 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\*2,\*3,\*4: *unknown, cnt or tpt; unknown, tbn; unknown, clt; presumably Perry Bradford, pno.*

035	<b>ALBERTA HUNTER</b>	Perry Bradford's Mean Four	New York,	Jan. 1926
	Alberta Hunter – voc;			
	<i>Gus Aiken</i> – tpt; unknown ( <i>Ernest Elliott</i> ) – clt, alt;			
	<i>Perry Bradford</i> – pno			
73919-B	I'm Hard To Satisfy		OK 8294,	Doc DOCD-5424
73920-B	Empty Cellar Blues		OK 8315,	Doc DOCD-5424
73921-B	Double Crossin' Papa		OK 8294,	Doc DOCD-5424

It is Gus Aiken here again, showing good mute work and good technique all over. He has developed now into a first-class trumpet player. The reed man is different now from the former session, much more expressive and distinct, and with a good tone. We hear a player using a lot of jumping-trills. He displays a wide vibrato and is confined to quarter and eighth notes with up- and downward slurs as used by Ernest Elliott. So, after listening seriously a long time to Ernest Elliott's recordings, I tend to name him as a good possibility for this reed player heard here.

The unobtrusive but functional piano player probably is Mr. Bradford himself.

Trombonist 'Bud' Aiken is not on hand here and diminishes the 'Mean Four' to 'Mean Three'.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: *unknown -c; unknown -cl -as; unknown -p.*

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: *unknown, cnt; unknown, clt, alt; unknown, pno.*

036	<b>LOUISE VANT</b>	Perry Bradford's Mean Four	New York,	c. Jan. 15, 1926
	Louise Vant – voc;			
	<i>Gus Aiken</i> –tpt; <i>Bud Aiken</i> – tbn; unknown ( <i>Ernest Elliott</i> ) – clt, alt;			
	<i>Perry Bradford</i> – 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 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 very musical style, from which it is easily to recognize that he also performed 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 becoming a later trombone star, a career sadly 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 gained more experience on the keys in the course 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

037	<b>LOUISE VANT</b>	Perry Bradford’s Mean Four	New York,	c. Mar. 18, 1926
	Louise Vant – voc;			
	Gus Aiken – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn; unknown (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 do 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. Did she pay for it or was she an executive’s sweetheart? Her singing simply is awful.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl; ? Perry Bradford p  
- BGR\*2: poss Johnny Dunn or June Clark (or Bubber Miley), cnt; unknown, tbn; unknown, clt; pres Perry Bradford, pno.  
- BGR\*3,\*4: unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl; presumably Perry Bradford p

038	<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

039	<b>PERRY BRADFORD AND HIS GANG</b>		New York,	Apr. 21, 1926
	Gus Aiken – tpt; unknown (Charlie Green?) – tbn;			
	unknown – alt; unknown – ten;			
	Perry Bradford – pno; unknown (Sam Speede?) – bjo;			
	Perry Bradford, Gus Horsley, Bert Howell, unknown - voc quartet			
141992-2		Just Met A Friend From My Home Town	Col 14142-D,	Timeless CBC 1-073
141993-1		So’s Your Old Man	Col 14142-D,	Timeless CBC 1-073

This really is an unusual recording. Bradford obviously had great interest to feature the present vocal quartet of which he probably was a member. The band certainly is attributed a secondary role in the proceedings and it is to be asked what purpose Bradford pursued in recording exactly these two titles other than cash in on his own latest compositions. The results must have been disappointing, judging alone from the fact that the above mentioned CDs are the only reissues of these titles ever. I assume that sales figures of the original issues must have been diminutive. M. Rader assumes that the unfamiliarity of these two recordings featuring Bradford’s singing quartet is implied by collector’s lacking estimation.

But these sides certainly are musically rewarding.

The instrumentation definitely is: trumpet, trombone, alto sax, tenor sax, piano and banjo. There certainly is no clarinet as listed in Rust.

The Timeless CD booklet states June Clark as possible trumpet player, but I am sorry to say that there are none of June Clark’s characteristics heard here. It seems that June Clark is a favourite guess for unknown trumpeters from the Harlem scene of the mid 1920s for researchers and CD booklet writers, just as shown in my article on ‘Lem Fowler’s Favorites’ elsewhere in this issue. But I confess that I also thought of Clark’s presence here when compiling my article on this elusive musician some years ago (see the Frog Blues and Jazz Annual Vol. 4). Yet, the vibrato is different, the tone, the phrasing, the attack. Only the slightly irregular time might be in common with Clark. This trumpeter here certainly knows how to play written parts, and he is able to perform a hot lead part for a dance band. But there certainly were a whole lot of able and hot horn men in Harlem at the time. Without definite commitment I see the possibility of Gus Aiken’s presence here, just as on the next item. The stylistic similarity of the trumpet parts played both on this and the following recording – disregarding the identical arrangements – I did not recognize until working on this article.

The rather limited trombonist is difficult to classify as he only delivers simple ‘tailgate’ glissandos and no melodious trombone part as can be heard on the next item below. But he reminds me of Charlie Green on the Perry Bradford’s Jazz Phools of November 02, 1925, half a year earlier, where he performs in the rather crude style which is familiar from many Bessie Smith sides. And we know of him as a heavy drinker



who might easily have been in a state a being drunk here. At the time of this recording he was not with Henderson anymore, had also probably just left the June Clark band to hurry home to Omaha because of marital problems. But this is only 'educated' guess-work. The reed players only play written parts and are therefore impossible to determine. But the tenor sax man reminds me of Albert Happy Caldwell with his strong playing and sharp tone (see my article on 'Lem Fowler's Favorites' in this issue). Again, no definite identification from my side!

Easy to identify is Perry Bradford himself on piano with his right-hand arpeggios. Listen only to his accompaniment to the trumpet chorus in the first title.

To my ears the banjo part is comparable to what I know of Sam Speede, and it might easily be him. Gus Horsley as noted in the CD booklet should be ruled out now as a possibility after Han Enderman's article in N&N 72.

For the names of the four singers I am grateful to Han Enderman, whose statements I am gladly following (see N&N 72 p.18).

The instrumental parts played on this session obviously are identical to those of the following session, and it therefore seems feasible to assume a written arrangement, possibly from Bradford's hand.

Notes:

- Rust\*2,\*3,\*4,\*6: unknown -c; unknown -tb; unknown -cl; unknown -as; unknown -p; unknown -bj; unknown male quartet -v.

040 PERRY BRADFORD AND HIS GANG

New York,

c. May 10, 1926

Gus Aiken – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn; unknown – alt;

Perry Bradford – pno; unknown (Sam Speede?) – 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 -c; unknown -tb; unknown -bj; unknown male quartet -v.

The two Victor sessions of Monette Moore and Elizabeth Smith of Jan. 26, 1927 (matrices Vic 37572 – 37574) might possibly also have Gus Aiken on trumpet, although hitherto listed as possibly Thomas Morris.

041 CLARA SMITH Five Black Kittens

New York,

Jul. 30, 1927

Clara Smith – voc;

Gus Aiken – tpt; Bob Fuller – clt, alt;

Stanley Miller – pno

144527-2

Black Cat Moan

Col 14240-D,

Document DOCD-5368

144528-2

Strugglin' Woman's Blues

Col 14240-D,

Document DOCD-5368

This is the only session where Gus Aiken's presence is documented in the recording (Columbia) files. His name is not on the record label as I have been told. This recording has been made more than a year after the Laura Smith session which might be responsible for the very different tone.

DB: after careful relistening I think it between possible and probable. Nothing anomalous but no phrase or sound to make it totally firm.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Gus Aiken -c; Bob Fuller -cl; Stanley Miller -p  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Gus Aiken, cnt; Bob Fuller, clt, alt; Stanley Miller, pno.

042 **MARGARET WILLIAMS** New York, Jul. 10, 1928  
 Margaret Williams – voc;  
 unknown (*Gus Aiken*) – cnt; unknown - pno  
 400857-B Old Commandment Blues Part 1 OK unissued, *Document DOCD-5518 (?)*  
 400858-A Old Commandment Blues Part 2 OK unissued, *Raretone 24001 (LP) (?)*

One of these titles has been issued on LP Raretone 24001 (listing 400858-A (?), OCB Part II) and later CD Document DOCD-5518 (listing 400857-B OCB Part I), but from both issues it seems undefined which of the two titles/parts this is. LP and CD issues vary slightly in pitch and sound quality, although being identical. The trumpet player certainly is the same man as on the next session and might stylistically be Gus Aiken, although the LP sleeve cautiously names Joe King Oliver and Clarence Williams as possible accompanists, which in both cases seems ridiculous.

**DB** : the phrasing and delicate muted work suggests to me the same player allowing for more than a year.

Notes:

- Rust\*3: unknown -c; unknown -p. (*These are neither King Oliver nor Clarence Williams*).  
 - Rust\*4,\*6: unknown c; unknown -p.  
 - BGR\*2: prob King Oliver, cnt; prob Clarence Williams, pno.  
 - BGR\*3,\*4: unknown c; unknown, p

043 **BILLIE WILSON** New York, c. Jul. 11, 1928  
 Billie Wilson – voc;  
 unknown (*Gus Aiken*); unknown - clt  
 unknown - pno  
 GEX-2002-A Empty Bed Blues – Part 1 Ch, Spt 9285, Document DOCD-5518  
 GEX-2003-A Empty Bed Blues – Part 2 Ch, Spt 9285, Document DOCD-5518

Obviously the same trumpet player as on session before.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: unknown -c; unknown -cl; unknown -p.  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: unknown, cnt; unknown, clt; unknown, pno.

PART 4

The following sessions belong to a later period in Gus Aiken's musical life and have generally not been checked as to find distinctive solo work.

044 **CHARLIE JOHNSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** New York, May 08, 1929  
 Leonard Davis, Sidney de Paris – tpt; George Washington – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted, Edgar Sampson – alt, clt ; Ben Waters – ten, clt;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno; Bobby Johnson – bjo; Billy Taylor – bbs; George Stafford – dms;  
 Ben Waters – arr (1,2,3,4); Benny Carter – arr (5)  
 51298-1 Harlem Drag Vic test, Frog DGF 12  
 51298-2 Harlem Drag Vic V38059, Frog DGF 8  
 51299-1 Hot Bones And Rice Vic V38059, Frog DGF 8  
 51299-2 Hot Bones And Rice Vic test, Frog DGF 12  
 53600-1 Mo'lasses Vic uniss. https://audiooddties.wordpress.com

For many years Gus Aiken has been listed as member of the Johnson band on this session. But careful listening proves the presence of Davis and de Paris, not Aiken. After my files Aiken seems only to have been 'depping' (in 1930) in the Johnson band. The personnel of these sides definitely is as listed above.

**LAURA SMITH acc. band, Chicago June 1929 (St. 1996 p 229):**

Gus Aiken, Johnny Biggs – tpt; Jake Frazier – tbn;  
 Herbert Waters, Floyd Blakemore – alt; James Bradley – ten;  
 Jack Simms – pno; Ernest Meyers – bjo; William Burrell – bbs; Clifton Drake - dms

045 **KING CARTER AND HIS ROYAL ORCHESTRA** New York, Mar. 23, 1931  
 Wardell Jones, Shelton Hemphill, *Gus Aiken* or *Ed Anderson* – tpt;  
 Harry White, Henry Hicks – tbn;  
 Charlie Holmes, Theodore McCord – alt, clt; Castor McCord – ten, clt;  
 Edgar Hayes – pno; Benny James – bjo; Hayes Alvis - sbs; Willie Lynch – dms;  
 Dick Robertson - voc  
 151454 Swing It Col unissued not on LP/CD  
 151455-1 Blues In My Heart Col 2439-D, Frog DGF 38  
 151456-1 Minnie The Moocher Col 2439-D, Frog DGF 38

<b>046 MILLS BLUE RHYTHM BAND</b> (as Mills Music Masters)		New York,	Mar. 30, 1931
Wardell Jones, Shelton Hemphill, <i>Gus Aiken</i> or <i>Ed Anderson</i> – tpt;			
Harry White, Henry Hicks – tbn;			
Crawford Wethington, Theodore McCord – alt, clt; Castor McCord – ten, clt;			
Edgar Hayes – pno, arr; Benny James – bjo; Hayes Alvis - sbs; Willie Lynch – dms;			
Dick Robertson - voc			
E-35985-B	Straddle The Fence	Voc 1646,	HEP CD 1008
E-35986-B	Levee Low Down	Voc 1646,	HEP CD 1008
E-35987-A	Moanin’	Br 6156,	HEP CD 1008
 <b>047 LUIS RUSSELL AND HIS ORCHESTRA</b>		New York,	Aug. 28, 1931
Robert Cheek, Gus Aiken, Henry Red Allen – tpt; Dicky Wells – tbn;			
Henry Moon Jones, Albert Nicholas – alt, clt; Greely Walton – ten, clt;			
Luis Russell – pno; Will Johnson – grt; Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin – dms;			
Chick Bullock – voc			
70195-1	You Rascal, You	Vic 22793,	Retrieval RTR 79023
70196-1	Goin’ To Town	Vic 22789,	Retrieval RTR 79023
70197-1	Say The Word	Vic 22789,	Retrieval RTR 79023
70198-1	Freakish Blues	Vic 22815,	Retrieval RTR 79023
 <b>048 LUIS RUSSELL AND HIS ORCHESTRA</b>		New York,	Aug. 08, 1934
Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken – tpt; Rex Stewart – cnt;			
Nat Story, Jimmy Archey – tbn;			
Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – alt, clt; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ten, clt;			
Luis Russell – pno; Lee Blair – grt; Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin – dms;			
Sonny Woods – voc (1,2,6); The Palmer Brothers – voc (3)			
15571-1	At The Darktown Strutter’s Ball	Ban 33179,	Retrieval RTR 79023
15572-1	My Blue Heaven	Ban 33399,	Retrieval RTR 79023
15573-1	Ghost Of The Freaks	Ban 33367,	Retrieval RTR 79023
15574-1	Hocus Pocus	Ban 33367,	Retrieval RTR 79023
15575-1	Primitive	Ban 33399,	Retrieval RTR 79023
15576-1	Ol’ Man River	Ban 33179,	Retrieval RTR 79023
 <b>049 LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA</b>		New York,	Oct. 03, 1935
Louis Armstrong – tpt, voc; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tpt;			
Harry White, James Archey – tbn;			
Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – alt, clt; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ten, clt;			
Luis Russell – pno; Lee Blair – grt; Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin – dms			
60021-A	I’m In The Mood For Love	Dec F-5785,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60022-A	You Are My Lucky Star	Dec F-5785,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60023-E	La Cucaracha	Dec F-5735,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60024-A	Got A Bran’ New Suit	Dec unissued,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60024-B	Got A Bran’ New Suit	Dec F-5736,	Ambassador CLA 1901
 <b>050 LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA</b>		New York,	Nov. 21, 1935
Louis Armstrong – tpt, voc; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tpt;			
Harry White, James Archey – tbn;			
Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – alt, clt; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ten, clt;			
Luis Russell – pno; Lee Blair – grt; Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin – dms;			
Band – voc (3,4,5)			
60155-A	I’ve Got My Fingers Crossed	Dec F-5869,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60155-D	I’ve Got My Fingers Crossed	Dec F-5869,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60156-A	Old Man Mose	Dec F-5895,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60156-D	Old Man Mose	Dec Y-5051,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60156-E	Old Man Mose	Dec 622,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60157-C	I’m Shooting High	Dec F-5869,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60158-D	Falling In Love With You	Dec 622,	Ambassador CLA 1901
 <b>051 LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA</b>		New York,	Dec. 13, 1935
Louis Armstrong – tpt, voc; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tpt;			
Harry White, James Archey – tbn;			
Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – alt, clt; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ten, clt;			
Luis Russell – pno; Lee Blair – grt; Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin – dms;			
60227-A	Red Sails In The Sunset	Dec 648,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60228-A	On Treasure Island	Dec 648,	Ambassador CLA 1901
 <b>052 LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA</b>		New York,	Dec. 19, 1935
Louis Armstrong – tpt, voc; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tpt;			
Harry White, James Archey – tbn;			

Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – alt, clt; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ten, clt; Luis Russell – pno; Lee Blair – gtr; Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin – dms;		
60249-A Thanks A Million	Dec F-5868,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60249-B Thanks A Million	Dec 666,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60250-A Shoe Shine Boy	Dec 673,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60251-A Solitude	Dec 666,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60251-B Solitude	Dec F-5868,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60251-C Solitude	Dec unissued,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60252-B I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music	Dec F-5936,	Ambassador CLA 1901
60252-C I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music	Dec 672,	Ambassador CLA 1901
<b>053 LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA</b>	New York,	Jan. 18, 1936
Louis Armstrong – tpt, voc; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tpt; Harry White, James Archey – tbn;		
Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – alt, clt; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ten, clt; Luis Russell – pno; Lee Blair – gtr; Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin – dms;		
60362-A The Music Goes 'Round And Around	Dec F-5895,	Ambassador CLA 1902
60363-A Rhythm Saved The World	Dec F-5961,	Ambassador CLA 1902
60363-B Rhythm Saved The World	Swaggie (Dec)	
<b>054 LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA</b>	New York,	Apr. 28, 1936
Louis Armstrong – tpt, voc; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tpt; Harry White, Snub Mosley – tbn;		
Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – alt, clt; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ten, clt; Luis Russell – pno; Lee Blair – gtr;		
Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin – dms;		
61058-A I Come From A Musical Family	Dec F-5915,	Ambassador CLA 1902
61075-A Somebody Stole My Break	Dec F-5915,	Ambassador CLA 1902
<b>055 LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA</b>	New York,	Apr. 29, 1936
Louis Armstrong – tpt, voc; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tpt; Harry White, Snub Mosley – tbn;		
Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – alt, clt; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ten, clt; Luis Russell – pno; Lee Blair – gtr;		
Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin – dms;		
61059-A If We Never Meet Again	Dec F-6202,	Ambassador CLA 1902
<b>056 LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA</b>	New York,	May 18, 1936
Louis Armstrong – tpt, voc; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tpt; Harry White, James Archey – tbn;		
Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – alt, clt; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ten, clt; Luis Russell – pno; Lee Blair – gtr;		
Pops Foster – sbs; Paul Barbarin – dms;		
61106-A Lyin' To Myself	Dec F-6040,	Ambassador CLA 1902
61107-A Ev'ntide	Dec F-6040,	Ambassador CLA 1902
61108-A Swing That Music	Dec F-6066,	Ambassador CLA 1902
61109-A Thankful	Dec F-6066,	Ambassador CLA 1902
61110-A Red Nose	Br 02514,	Ambassador CLA 1902
61111-A Mahogany Hall Stomp	Dec F-6324,	Ambassador CLA 1902
<b>057 SIDNEY BECHET AND HIS NEW ORLEANS FEETWARMERS</b>	New York,	Apr. 28, 1941
Gus Aiken – tpt; Sandy Williams – tbn; Sidney Bechet – sop; Lem Johnson – ten;		
Cliff Jackson – pno; Wilson Myers – sbs; Arthur Herbert – dms		
063823-1 Swing Parade	Vic 27574,	Chronological Classics 638
063823-2 Swing Parade	Vic uniss. on 78	Media 7 MJCD 127
063824-1 I Know That You Know	Vic 27574,	Chronological Classics 638
063824-2 I Know That You Know	Vic uniss. on 78	Media 7 MJCD 127
063824-3 I Know That You Know	Vic uniss. on 78	Media 7 MJCD 127
063825-1 When It's Sleepy Time Down South	Vic 27447,	Chronological Classics 638
063826-1 I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None O' This Jelly-Roll	Vic 27447,	Chronological Classics 638
063826-2 I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None O' This Jelly-Roll	Vic uniss. on 78	Media 7 MJCD 127
Although we now are about 13 to 15 years after the sessions of part 3 of this investigation, there seems to be a distinct similarity to the Gus Aiken here. A rather husky tone, a not so distinct phrasing and articulation, a style following rather the Armstrong manner, yet somewhat restrained, not exuberant like his fellow-Jenkins alumnus, Jabbo Smith, yet obviously stemming from his descent from the Jenkins' Orphanage in Charleston, South Carolina.		
<b>058 ROY ELDRIDGE AND HIS ORCHESTRA</b>	New York,	Jun. 26, 1944
Roy Eldridge – tpt, ldr; Gus Aiken, John Bugs Hamilton, Robert Mason, Clarence Wheeler – tpt;		

Ted Kelley, Sandy Williams, George Wilson – tbn; Joe Eldridge, Sam Lee – alt; Franz Jackson, Hal Singer – ten; Dave McRae – bar; Tony D' Amore – pno; Sam (Snags?) Allen – gtr; Carl Wilson – sbs; Les Erskine – dms			
72297-A	I Can't Get Started	Dec 24117,	Chronological Classics 920
72298-A	After You've Gone	Dec 24117,	Chronological Classics 920
72299	Body And Soul	Dec 24119,	Chronological Classics 920
<b>059 BUDDY JOHNSON AND HIS BAND</b>		New York,	Oct. 04, 1944
Gus Aiken, Dupree Bolton, Henry Glover, Willis Nelson, Herbert Turner – tpt; Bernard Archer, Leonard Briggs, Gordon Thomas – tbn; Maxwell Lucas, Joe O'Laughton – alt; Jimmy Stanford, Frank Henderson – ten; Teddy Conyers – bar; Buddy Johnson – pno, voc (4), arr; Leon Spann – sbs; George Jenkins – dms; Ella Johnson – voc (1); Arthur Prysock – voc (3)			
72406	That's The Stuff You Gotta Watch	Dec,	Chronological Classics 1079
72407	One Of Them Good Ones	Dec,	Chronological Classics 1079
72408	They All Say I'm The Biggest Fool	Dec,	Chronological Classics 1079
72209-A	Fine Brown Frame	Dec,	Chronological Classics 1079
72410	If You Never Return	Dec unissued,	Chronological Classics 1079
<b>060 ANN LEWIS</b>		New York.	Feb. 19, 1949
Ann Lewis – voc; Gus Aiken – tpt; Tony Parenti – clt; Art Hodes – pno; Wellman Braud – sbs; Freddie Moore – dms		WNYC Jazz Festival,	
	Fish Out Of The Water		Jazz Unlimited JU 3 (LP)
	Jailhouse Blues		Jazz Unlimited JU 3 (LP)
<b>061 RUBY SMITH</b>		New York.	Feb. 19, 1949
Ruby Smith – voc; Gus Aiken – tpt; Lannie Scott – pno; Wellman Braud – sbs; Freddie Moore – dms		WNYC Jazz Festival,	
	Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out		Jazz Unlimited JU 3 (LP)
	Back Water Blues		Jazz Unlimited JU 3 (LP)
	Hit That Jive, Jack		Jazz Unlimited JU 3 (LP)

### **W.C. Allen, Hendersonia**

Augustus GUS AIKEN (cornet)  
b. Charleston, S.C., July 26 (1904?).  
Recorded with Lillyn Brown, Daisey Martin, Eliza Lee,  
Lavinia Turner (all 1921); with FH on Ethel Waters tour (Nov/21-Jan/22);  
then to Gonzell White (spring/21) until mid 1925 including tour to Cuba.  
Later with Drake and Walker troupe (summer/25-1927). (See CHIL p.1)

### **John Chilton, Who's Who Of Jazz**

b. Charleston, S.C. July 26, 1902  
d. New York City, April 1973  
Was unable to give exact age; his mother died when he was very young, he was subsequently raised in the Jenkin's Orphanage, Charleston, South Carolina. His elder brother Gene 'Bud' Aiken (tbn, tpt) died on the 21<sup>st</sup> August 1927. Both brothers were given extensive musical tuition whilst at the Orphanage and later toured with the Orphanage Bands. Gus left the Orphanage several times during his teens, working with the Tennessee Ten (c. 1920), then joined the Green River Minstrel Show. Settled in New York c. 1921, joined Willie Gant's Band; from October 1921, toured with Black Swan Masters (directed by Fletcher Henderson). From spring of 1922 until late 1924 was featured with Gonzelle White's Touring Show (including tour of Cuba – 1923). From 1926 until summer of 1929 worked mainly in the Drake and Walker Show, also played in pianist Irving Puggsley's Hot Six (1928) and recorded with Charlie Johnson (May 1929). From 1930 played briefly with various bands including: Charlie Johnson (1930), Mills Blue Rhythm Band (1930), Luis Russell (1931), Elmer Snowden (1932), Ellsworth Reynolds' Bostonians (1933), Lucky Millinder (c. 1934). Regularly with Luis Russell from 1934, remained to work under Louis Armstrong's leadership, left in March 1937. In autumn 1937 joined band led by Alberto Socarras and worked in New York and Boston with that band until the early 1940s; with Buddy Johnson Band in 1944, then free-lanced in New York. Played briefly in Jimmy Archey's Band (c. 1951), then formed own band which played residencies at Smalls', etc., during the 1960s.

### **John Chilton, A Jazz Nursery – The Story of the Jenkin's Orphanage Bands**

Aitken, 'Gus', Augustine (trumpet)  
Born: Charleston c. 1901. Died: 1973

Was also known as 'Spec'. Brother of Bud and Lucius. Played in band from c. 1912. Left to work in travelling shows. Toured with Fletcher Henderson in 1921, prior to working with Gonzelle White, Drake and Walker, and Charlie Johnson. During the 1930s worked with Charlie Johnson, Lucky Millinder, Luis Russell, Louis Armstrong, etc., often led own band during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.

### **Berry Kernfeld, The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz**

Aiken (Aitken), Gus (b Charleston, SC, 26 July 1902; d New York, April 1973). Trumpeter. He was brought up in the Jenkins' Orphanage in Charleston, South Carolina, where he received extensive musical tuition; he also toured with the orphanage bands. In about 1921 he moved to New York, and later toured with the Black Swan Masters under the direction of Fletcher Henderson. He recorded with Ethel Waters (1921), Pery Bradford (1923), Charlie Johnson (1930), the Mills Blue Rhythm Band (1930), Luis Russell (1931), Elmer Snowden (1932), and Lucky Millinder (c. 1934). He worked regularly with Russell from 1934 (remaining with the band under Louis Armstrong's leadership), then in 1937 joined a band led by Alberto Socarras. In 1941 he recorded four titles, including *Swing Parade* (Vic 27574), with Sidney Bechet. After a brief period with Budd Johnson (1944) he worked in New York as a freelance musician; he played with Jimmy archey (c. 1951), and in the 1960s led his own band. Aiken's elder brother Gene "Bud" Aiken (d 21 Aug. 1927), who was also a member of the Jenkins' Orphanage bands, played trombone and trumpet.

### **Garvin Bushell, Jazz from the Beginning**

p. 23: "I recorded with many different singers in 1921. On one date with Daisey Martin we had Gus Aiken on trumpet and Jake Frazier on trombone. For the two sides, I remember we were paid thirty dollars."  
 p. 28: "After I got off the tour with Mamie Smith I started working at Leroy's, at 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue. ... The band at Leroy's was sensational. We had Jake Frazier on trombone, Gus Aiken on trumpet, Charlie Jackson on violin, Willie Gant on piano, Bill Benford on tuba, and Joe Banks on drums. At different times we also had Buddy Aiken or Geechie Fields on trombone, and Steve Wright on drums. Willie Gant was the boss of the band; the pianist was always the leader in cabaret bands, because he had to play behind the singers."  
 p. 33: "In the fall of 1921 I went on tour with Ethel, opening in Washington and then going to the Standard Theater in Philadelphia. Our band had Gus Aiken on trumpet; his brother Buddy, trombone; Charlie Jackson on violin; Bill D.C. on baritone saxophone; Joe Elder, tenor; Raymond Green, xylophone and drums; and Fletcher, piano."  
 p. 151 (comment to *Ethel Water's recording of 'One Man Nan/...Changes Made'*): "The trumpet could be Luke Smith or Elmer Chambers. It's not Gus Aiken's style."

### **Storville 1998/99, p. 113**

"(Jimmy O'Bryant) is thought to have toured extensively with the travelling shows prior to settling in Chicago in the early 1920's. One of these shows was the "Tennessee Ten", c. 1920 – 21. This was under the direction of dancer 'U.S. Slow Kid' Thompson and at one time featured Florence Mills, whom he married. The show carried a six or seven-piece band which included at various times, a number of musicians who went on to make a name in jazz. Among these were, apart from O'Bryant, Horace Eubanks, Paul Barbarin, Ed Garland, Thomas Morris and Gus Aiken."

### **Storville 1996/97, p. 189**

"Gus Aiken was a member of Gonzelle White's 'Real Jazzers of Jazz' from at least May 1922. The show toured most of the time but was resident in New York in April 1923 and possibly early May. (Newspaper reports are sometimes delayed and refer to events which took place a week or more earlier than the edition of the paper which carries the report.) The *Courier* announced that the group was leaving for a 15-week tour of Cuba at the end of April and they had definitely sailed by the middle of May (CD 26/5/23 7/1). This means that the Perry Bradford Paramount session (matrices 1429/1430) either took place prior to that date, or did not include Aiken. The tour was highly successful and lasted somewhat longer than originally intended, and the group did not return to New York until mid December (letter from Harvey Lankford, saxophonist and manager CD 22/12/23 7/5). Other sessions in which Aiken could not have participated include the Gulf Coast Seven, Mary Jackson, and Ethel Ridley (both acc Perry Bradford's Jazz Phools). Other musicians who made the Cuba trip were Harry Smith, c; Jake Frazier, tb; Amanzie Richardson (female saxist) and Rastus Crump, d. Arthur Ray had been the pianist, but his presence on the tour is not confirmed."

"Gonzelle White continued touring after her return, but the first report giving personnel details is in the *Defender* (16/8/24) when Rastus Crump, Smith, Frazier, Gus Aiken, Johnnie Anderson, and Harry Smith are noted as still being with the show which was then a special feature at the Olympic Theater, Cincinnati with the 'Runnin' Wild' Show. New York personnel for recordings from this period may need re-assessing if any of the above are included. Amanzie Richardson had left by July as he was noted working elsewhere. Personnel when the show played the Olympic Theater, Chicago week 21 Sept. was Edward L. Lankford, Earl Frazier, Rastus Crump, Smithy Frazier, Curley Brooks, Gus Aiken, Harry Smith, Johnnie Anderson and Gonzelle (CD 20/9/24 7/3). By 11 October they were in Chicago with the same personnel (CD 11/10/24 7/3)."

"The group continued to tour with slightly revised personnel – that given in the *Defender* (all sic 5/9/25 8/6) includes Harry Smith, Ossey Gary, c; Jackie Frasher, tb; Bay Adams, Gonzelle and Lankford, sax; Buster Maten (previously as Moten); Rastus Crump, d."

### **Storville 87, p. 89**

"Barclay Draper : The first time I ever heard Gus Aiken was at the Standard Theater; he played with Gonzelle White. She had quite an act. Gus Aiken would stand on one side of the stage playing trumpet and another fellow, I don't know his name, but he played good trumpet, was on the other side of the stage."

### **Storville 1996/97, p. 231**

“Ethel Waters : At Regent Theater, Baltimore the week of 28 Nov with 7 Jazz Masters next week (Ad BAA 25/11/21). A review following week named the band as : Augustus Aiken, c; Eugene Aiken, tb; P. Bushell, cl; Joseph Elder, ts; Charles E. Jackson, vn; Hamilton Henderson, p; C. Mosby, bsx; Raymond Green, d. A photo of the band (BAA 2/12/21 p10) shows 10 men and adds 3<sup>rd</sup> sax and bj. Four un-named band members resigned rather than tour the south (BAA 10/2/22 11/3).”

**Hendersonia, p. 28**

“The four men who quit were the Aiken brothers, Garvin Bushell, and Charlie Jackson. They returned to New York, where Jackson joined Sam Wooding. The other three gigged for a while with Willie Gant at Leroy’s, but Gus Aiken soon left to join Gonzell White Revue which toured the U.S. and then spent several months in Cuba, and Bushell joined pianist Norma (sic) Thomas (a man) and his band on tour to the west coast and back. Elder, Henderson, Green and the bass sax player remained with the troupe.”

**Storville 1996/97, p. 219**

“Staying in Chicago, she (*Laura Smith*) was in the Drake & Walker show, ‘The Jailbirds’, at the Grand Theater the week of 3 June (CD 1/6/29 8 Ad). A review the following week (p8) lists the band as Gus Aiken, Johnny Biggs, c; Jake Frazier, tb; Herbert Waters, Floyd Blakemore, as; James Bradley, ts; Jack Simms, p; Ernest Meyers, bj; William Burrell, tu; Clifton Drake, d. One further engagement, at the Box Theater, Denver is noted accompanied by musician Isaah Martin (instrument not noted) (CD 9/11/29 10/8).”

**Storville 116, p. 67**

Johnny Simmen “Sandy Williams : ... This is also the best side for trumpeter Gus Aiken, who was rarely in good form on record dates but who enjoyed an enviable reputation amongst musicians.”

K-B Rau  
09-04-2016  
13-08-2018