

“The Cornet Screamer” – The Mystery of Gus Aiken’s Recording Career

Michael Rader, K.B. Rau with Dave Brown and Jörg Kuhfuss

For some reason, there has been less interest in the early jazz musicians active in New York than in their contemporaries who sought employment in Chicago. Much energy has been devoted to the discussion of personnel of such groups as Lovie Austin's Blues Serenaders while the personnel of various Perry Bradford groups have been quickly taken for granted and seldom been the subject of heated debate among discographers. More recently, things might be changing since there have been two attempts to document the work of cornet player Thomas Morris (Olivar 2003, Rains 2010) and one on the prolifically recorded clarinet player Bob Fuller (Wright 1999).

One reason for the concentration on Chicago might be migration patterns: New Orleans musicians tended to follow their audiences to Chicago, which offered more employment opportunities than the Crescent City, and New Orleans musicians tended to attract early researchers more than subjects from other regions.

The early jazz scene in New York was populated by musicians from other regions. Perhaps the dominant figure, certainly among horn players, was Johnny Dunn who came from Memphis, although certain elements of his playing are said to be due to influence from New Orleans (cf. Hillman 1976, p. 166). His work has been described as military-styled with a pronounced vibrato. Among the musicians accredited as his followers were Bubber Miley and Gus Aiken. Gus, also known as “Rice” is the main subject of this article in which we also give what little information is known about his trombone-player brother Gene or “Bud”. In it, we attempt to retrace their careers and to list and discuss their recordings.

Like a surprising number of other jazz musicians, the Aiken brothers were alumni of Jenkins Orphanage of Charleston, South Carolina. Perhaps the most widely known musicians to have come from the orphanage are the Ellington trumpeter “Cat” Anderson and 20s trumpet ace Cladys “Jabbo” Smith. Jabbo is said to have been influenced by Gus Aiken, but more of that later.

Augustine “Gus” Aiken was born on 26 July 1902 (New Grove Dictionary of Jazz) or the same day and month in 1899 (ship's manifesto, “St. Louis” arriving at Ellis Island from Liverpool on 12 September 1914), Walter C. Allen (1973) gives a date of “pre 1904” for his brother Eugene, “Gene” or “Bud”.

We know that a brother Lucius (born February 27 1896 according to the same ship's manifesto) was also an inmate of Jenkins Orphanage and trained to play music. Tommy Benford, the well-known drummer and another former Jenkins boy, remembers being in the band with three Aiken boys. A third Aiken brother was reported as still being alive in Charleston in October 1979 (Green, letter in Storyville 102, p. 207). Since we can assume that the ship's manifesto was based on official documents, the 1899 birth date seems most likely for Gus.

There is some confusion concerning the identity of the Aiken brothers: Mark Berresford claims that Gene's full name was Lucius Eugene and that he was born in 1897 and died in 1927 (Berresford 2010, p. 116). This would explain Gene's apparent absence from the Jenkins visit to the UK in 1914. The 1927 date is that usually given for Gene's death.

However Tommy Benford remembers three brothers and Jeffrey Green claims that the third Aiken brother, an “extremely elderly man” was still alive in 1979.

While Gus and Gene are most frequently called Aiken, orphanage records also use the spelling Aitken. Their father was Wm. Aitken, 33 Coming Street, Charleston S.C.. Records show that both Gus and Lucius entered the orphanage in 1903. They were pupils number 132 (Gus) and 133 (Lucius) (Green, letter in Storyville 102,p.207). Howard Rye, in Storyville(1987) , quotes contemporary reports on the Jenkins Orphanage Band in the UK of May to September 1914, which includes Augustus Aiken age 17 or 15, Lucas or Lucius Aiken age 19 or 18. Evidence thus suggests that there were only two Aiken brothers at Jenkins' Orphanage: Gus and “Bud”.

The Jenkins band was originally formed to raise money on the streets of Charleston for the upkeep of the orphanage. To teach the young boys music, the orphanage's founder, the Rev. Daniel J. Jenkins, engaged two local musicians, P.M. “Hatsie” Logan and Francis Eugene Mikell. The latter was to be active in the organisation of Jim Europe's military band and sired two sons, Otto and Eugene jr., later to become professional jazz musicians.

The band was billed as “Jenkins Orphanage Brass Band and Orchestra” and for a brief time also boasted a string section (a later version of the band is on film, cf.: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bopD0Ud75RU>). As it improved, it was sent out on tour and even hired out for shows. A former inmate, George Thayer, said his first job was playing for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a Broadway show. Other members of the band included Gus Aiken, the trombone player Jake Frazier and tuba player Bill Benford, drummer Tommy's brother.

The boys were each probably able to play several instruments. Jabbo Smith recounted “I guess everyone in the band could play trumpet, trombone, alto-horn, baritone-horn, and tuba if they needed to (Interview in William Ransom Hogan Archive, Tulane University NO, quoted in Chilton, 15).

Gus and Lucius (now assumed to be Bud) Aiken were part of the band from Jenkins which visited the United Kingdom for the Anglo-American Exposition from May to September 1914. The band's repertoire included the Poet and Peasant and William Tell overtures as well as Sousa and Pryor marches, implying that its playing did not predestine any of its members for playing jazz.

Although treatment of the inmates seems to have been humane by the standards of the day, it also seems to have been quite usual for boys to run away once they entered adolescence. A major incentive was the money they could earn as musicians: “The loose change that we were allowed to pocket was okay when you were a kid, and even at fourteen you could get buy, but when you were nearer seventeen most of the boys in the band wanted to get away and earn some real money. So pretty well everyone tried to run away from the Orphanage“(Tommy Benford quoted in Chilton 1980, p.27).

Gus Aiken was among those who absconded several times and from one outing he returned skilled in the arts of flutter-tonguing and growling on the trumpet.

Aiken is said to have influenced the rather younger Jabbo Smith, and the influence probably consisted of teaching such techniques. Jabbo was also influenced by Sidney de Paris, Louis Armstrong on a visit to Chicago with the Orphanage band, and, among his fellow inmates, trumpeter Horace Holmes who made few recordings, usually not in a prominent role, retiring from playing to run his own music store in the 1920s (cf. Chilton

1980, p. 56).

Little is known about the early career of either Gus or Gene Aiken. The earliest record to be found in the literature is a report on the 1920 Florida Blossom band, led by J.H. McCamon. Gus was one of the two “jazz babies, ... cornet screamers“ and Gene was described as “the eccentric laughing trombonist“ (Abott & Seroff 2007, p. 302). The other “jazz baby“ was Jimmy McClearey (sic), who recorded with R.M. Jones in 1929 and 1935. Judging by the personnel, which included alto and baritone horns, snare and bass drums, the Florida Blossom Band was a brass band, which played “everything possible“. Aiken seems to have been using the flutter-tonguing and growling techniques referred to previously for his role as a “jazz baby“.

Gus Aiken was a member of the Tennessee Ten touring band under U.S. Slow Kid Thompson. This was a six to seven piece band with Jimmy O'Bryant, Horace Eubanks, Paul Barbarin, Ed Garland, Thomas Morris and Aiken, and existed c. 1920/21 (Storyville 1998/99, p. 113).

In 1921, Gus Aiken was playing in a band led by Fletcher Henderson on tour with Ethel Waters. This period is recounted in Garvin Bushell's autobiography “Jazz From The Beginning“. Both Gene and Gus were members of the band. Bushell describes Gus as a good trumpet player. “(H)is brother, Buddy, played somewhat in the style of Jimmy Harrison. He was a good legitimate trombone player and whatever he thought of, he could play“ (p.35). Bushell mentions recording with Gus as a accompanist to Daisy Martin (p. 23). He also mentions the Aiken brothers' familiarity with such pieces as “The Poet and Peasant Overture“ or “Morning, Noon and Night“. The Jenkins musicians“were schooled on their instruments, and they could *play*“ (p 28).

Gus and Bushell were arrested for three days on a trumped-up charge, but never “booked“ (p.38). The Aiken brothers and Bushell left the Waters band with a fourth musician, Charlie Jackson, in Chicago, stopping to play a single gig with Earl Hines in Pittsburgh en route to New York. The two Aikens and Bushell gigged with Willie Gant at Leroy's for awhile, but Gus Aiken soon left to join the Gonzell White review (Allen 1973, p. 28).

It was with a Henderson-led band that Aiken apparently made some early recordings. It is fairly certain that he is playing the cornet or trumpet on the instrumental sides recorded under Ethel Waters' name and these serve as a point of reference for this period in his discography.

The earliest session has former Jenkins band member Jake Frazier on trombone rather than Bud, although the Aiken brothers seem to have played very many engagements together.

LAVINIA TURNER Jazz Band New York, Mar. 1921

Lavinia Turner – v;
unknown (*Gus Aiken*) – c; *Jake Frazier* – tb; *Garvin Bushell* – cl; unknown – as, cl; *Willie Gant* – p; *Will Splivey Escoffery* – bj;
unknown – bb; *Joe Banks* - d

69168 How Many Times ? PA, Per

69169 Can't Get Lovin' Blues PA, Per

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 the trumpet playing (tone, vibrato, timing) is within the limits of Gus Aiken as displayed in the Ethel Waters instrumental session and the November session with Eliza Christmas Lee , although vibrato here is somewhat out of the line. Bushell did not take up alto until 1923 although listed in Rust.

LILLYN BROWN her Jazzbo Syncopators New York, c. Mar. 29, 1921

Lillyn Brown – v;
Gus Aiken (or *Ed Cox*) – c; *Bud Aiken* or *Herb Flemming* – tb; *Garvin Bushell* – cl; unknown - as; *Johnny Mullins* – vn;
unknown – p; *Lutice Perkins* - d

41721-2 If That's What You Want, Here It Is Em, Or

41721-3	If That's What You Want, Here It Is	Em, Or	
41721-4	If That's What You Want, Here It Is	Em, Or	
41722-1	Ever-Lovin' Blues	Em, Mad	not on LP/CD
41722-2	Ever-Lovin' Blues	Em, Mad	
41722-3	Ever-Lovin' Blues	Em, Mad	not on LP/CD
41722-4	Ever-Lovin' Blues	Em, Mad	

Not listed as including Aiken by Rust and Godrich/Dixon. But according to Walter C. Allen Aiken recorded with L. Brown!
Otherwise the same notes apply as for the Lavinia Turner listed above and Daisy Martin session listed below

DAISY MARTIN Five Jazz Bell Hops New York, Mar./ Apr. 1921

Daisy Martin – v;

Gus Aiken – c; *Jake Frazier* – tb; *Garvin Bushell* – cl; unknown – ts/cms; *Dude Finley* – p; unknown – bj; unknown – d

7466-A Royal Garden Blues

Gnt, St

7466-? Royal Garden Blues

Gnt, St

7467-A Spread Yo' Stuff

Gnt, St

7467-? Spread Yo' Stuff

Gnt, St

The same comments apply as for the previous sessions. This is probably the Daisy Martin recording session that Garvin Bushell remembered.

LILLYN BROWN her Jazzbo Syncopators New York, c. May 09, 1921

Lillyn Brown – v;

Gus Aiken (or *Ed Cox*) – c; *Bud Aiken* or *Herb Flemming* – tb; *Garvin Bushell* – cl; unknown – as; *Johnny Mullins* – vn; unknown – p;

Lutice Perkins – d

41795-2 Bad-Land Blues

Em, Re

41795-3 Bad-Land Blues

Em, Re

41797-2 The Jazz-Me Blues

Em, Med, Re

The same note as under the previous Lillyn Brown session applies here.

LAVINIA TURNER Jazz Band New York, c. May 17, 1921

Lavinia Turner – v;

Gus Aiken – c; *Jake Frazier* – tb; *Garvin Bushell* – cl; unknown – as; *Willie Gant* – p; *Will Splivey Escoffery* – bj;

unknown – bb; *Joe Banks* – d

69232 A-Wearin' Away The Blues

PA, Per

69233 Sweet Man O' Mine

PA, Per

Same comments as for other Lavinia Turner sessions apply here also.

DAISY MARTIN Jazz Bell Hops New York, c. Apr. 15, 1921

Daisy Martin – v;

Gus Aiken – c; unknown (*Jake Frazier*) – tb; unknown – cl, as; *Dude Finley* – p; unknown – bj; unknown – d

7854-A Play 'Em For Mama Sing 'Em For Me

OK

7855-B I Won't Be Back 'Till You Change Your Ways

OK

See comments for sessions by Lavinia Turner which apply here also.

KATIE CRIPPEN Henderson's Novelty Orchestra New York, c. Jun. 1921

Katie Krippen – v;

Gus Aiken – c; *Jake Frazier* – tb; *Buster Bailey* – cl, as; *Edgar Campbell* or *Garvin Bushell* – cl; Fletcher Henderson – pno

P-136-2 That's My Cup Blues

BS, Pm

P-137-1 When It's Too Late (You're Gonna Miss Me, Daddy)

BS, Pm

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 3rd edition lists Aiken and Frazier. Rust 6th edition lists Willie Gant – p. 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 the Ethel Waters instrumental and Eliza Christmas Lee sessions.

DAISY MARTIN Jazz Bell Hops New York, c. early Jul. 1921

Daisy Martin – v;

Gus Aiken – c; *Jake Frazier* – tb; *Garvin Bushell* – cl; *Dude Finley* – p; unknown – bj; unknown – d

70012-B Won't Someone Help Me Find My Lovin' Man ?

OK

70013-B Everybody's Man Is My Man

OK

Trumpet playing is consistent with the next session by Ethel Waters, thus probably Gus Aiken, in embryonic form it hints at the player following Aiken's return from Cuba in 1924. Garvin Bushell in his "Jazz From The Beginning" does not comment on this session!

009 ETHEL WATER'S JAZZ MASTERS New York, c. Sep. 1921

Gus Aiken – c; *Bud Aiken* – tb; *Garvin Bushell* – cl; *Joe Elder* – as; Fletcher Henderson – p; C. Mosby – bsx

P-160 Frisco Jazz Band Blues

BS, Pm

P-161-1 Royal Garden Blues

BS, Pm

P-161-2 Royal Garden Blues

BS, Pm

P-162 Bugle Blues

BS, Pm

P-162-2 Bugle Blues

BS, Pm

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

ESSIE WHITMAN Jazz Masters New York, c. Oct. 1921

Essie Whitman – v;

unknown (*Gus Aiken*) – c; unknown (*Bud Aiken*) – tb; *Garvin Bushell* – cl; *Joe Elder* – ts, cl; *Charlie Jackson* – vn;
Fletcher Henderson – p; *John Mitchell* – bj

P-155-1	Sweet Daddy, It's You I Love	BS, Pm
P-156-2	If You Don't Believe I Love You	BS, Pm
P-156-3	If You Don't Believe I Love You	BS, Pm

The tpt player here is a Johnny Dunn disciple (see coda of last title) and therefore doubtful Aiken if compared with the post 1923 sessions. *Garvin Bushell* in his "Jazz From The Beginning" does not comment on this session! *Essie Whitman* told *John Steiner* that she was accompanied by a W.C. Handy band (*Hendersonia*, p.36). The above names are listed as possibles by *Rust*6* and *BGR*4*.

ELIZA CHRISTMAS LEE Her Jazz Band New York, Nov. 02, 1921

Eliza Christmas Lee – v;
Gus Aiken – c; *Bud Aiken* – tb; *Garvin Bushell* – cl; unknown – vn; *Willie Gant* – p; *Will "Spivey" Escoffery* – bj; *Joe Banks* – d

3677	I Ain't Givin' Nothin' Away	Gnt
3677-A	I Ain't Givin' Nothin' Away	Gnt
3678	Arkansas Blues	R-T
3678-A	Arkansas Blues	Gnt, Con

This trumpeter's style seems to fit with the trumpet player of the post 1923 sessions listed here and may therefore be *Gus Aiken*. His style is partly in 6/8th 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 the *Ethel Waters* session of c. September 1921 and the post-1923 sessions listed below. He is a more cultivated player than *Jake Frazier*.

LIZZIE MILES her Creole Jazz Hounds New York, Jan./Feb. 1923

Lizzie Miles – v;
 unknown (*Gus Aiken*) – c; unknown (*Bud Aiken*) – tb; unknown – cl; unknown – p; unknown – d

42319-1	Four O'Clock Blues	Em
42319-2	Four O'Clock Blues	Em
42320-1	Aggravatin' Papa	Em
42320-2	Aggravatin' Papa	Em

LIZZIE MILES her Creole Jazz Hounds New York, Feb. 1923

Lizzie Miles – v;
 unknown (*Gus Aiken*) – c; unknown (*Bud Aiken*) – tb; unknown – cl; unknown – p; unknown – d

42337-1	Tell Me Gypsy	Em
42337-2	Tell Me Gypsy	Em
42338-1	You've Got To Come And See Mama Every Night	Em
42338-2	You've Got To Come And See Mama Every Night	Em

not on LP/CD

LENA WILSON Jazz Hounds New York, May 12, 1923

unknown (*Gus Aiken*) – c; *Herb Flemming* – tb; *Garvin Bushell* – cl; *George Rickson* – p; *John Mitchell* – bj

81009-1	Deceitful Blues	Col
81010-3	Memphis, Tennessee	Col

(*Gus Aiken* was in Cuba from Mid-May until End-December 1923, but this session was possibly recorded before his departure)

This trumpet player is a much more assured player possessing a more brilliant tone than the musician in the sessions which follow, 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* was touring in Cuba for most of 1923 and must have accumulated a whole lot of instrumental power, it is not likely that the trumpet player on this session should be better than the one presumed to be *Aiken* in 1924 and thereafter. Furthermore is *Aiken's* presence in this session open to doubt because of the date problem. Accordingly *Aiken's* presence here is extremely in doubt.

Gus Aiken was a member of *Gonzell 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 (...) (*Storyville* 1996/97, p.189). Other musicians who played with *Aiken* in *Gonzell White's* band were *Coleman Hawkins*, *Harry White(as)* and *Rastus Crump* (d) (*Benford* 1982, p. 124).

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 (*Chicago Defender* 26/5/23 71). This means that the *Perry Bradford* Paramount session (mx 1929/1430) either took place prior to that date, or did not include *Aiken*. Other sessions in which *Aiken* could not have participated include the *Gulf Coast Seven*, *Mary Jackson* and *Ethel Ridley* (both acc. *Bradford's Jazz Phools*)(cf. *Storyville* 1996/97, 189).

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

Gonzell White continued touring after her return, but the first report giving personnel details is in the *Defender* (16/8/24) when *Rastus Crump*, *Harry Smith*, *Gus Aiken*, *Johnnie Anderson* are noted as still being with the show. *Aiken* had left by 5/9/25.

Barclay S. Draper recalls having seen Aiken during his membership of Gonzell White's company: "The first time I ever heard Gus was at the Standard Theater; he played with Gonzella White She had quite an act. Gus Aiken would stand on one side of the stage and another fellow, I don't know his name, but he played good trumpet, was on the other side of the stage"(Storyville 87, 89).

Draper also describes Aiken as "an established player much better than I" (Storyville 87, p.99) and hired Aiken for his own band in the 1930s.

While it is quite well-known that Earl Hines credited Joe Smith as an inspiration for his "trumpet-piano" style, Hines also credited Aiken (article originally published in "Jazz Hot" in the 1970s, now at: <http://www.riverwalkjazz.org/jazz-scenes/movers-shakers/>)

The following body of record sessions certainly do not include Gus Aiken on trumpet or cornet, as he was in Cuba with Gonzell White's show from mid-May (at latest 25th) until mid-December 1923. These sessions are nevertheless included as they were listed for years as including Aiken.

GULF COAST SEVEN		New York,	May 17, 1923
unknown – c; Bud Aiken – tb; <i>Garvin Bushell</i> – cl; Ernest Elliott – cl, ts; Leroy Tibbs – p; John Mitchell – bj			
81021-3	Fade Away Blues	Col	
81022-3	Daybreak Blues	Col	

PERRY BRADFORD'S JAZZ PHOOLS		New York,	May/Jun. 1923
unknown (<i>Johnny Dunn</i>) – c; Bud Aiken – tb; <i>Garvin Bushell</i> – cl, as; Charles Smith – p; Samuel Speed – bj			
1429-1	Fade Away Blues	Pm, Cx, Emb/Tri, Fam, Hg	
1429-2	Fade Away Blues	Pm, Cx, Emb/Tri, Fam, Hg	
1429-3	Fade Away Blues	Pm, Cx, Emb/Tri, Fam, Hg	
1430-1	Daybreak Blues (Original BugleBlues)	Pm, Cx, Emb/Tri, Fam, Hg	
1430-2	Daybreak Blues (Original BugleBlues)	Pm, Cx, Emb/Tri, Fam, Hg	
1430-3	Daybreak Blues (Original BugleBlues)	Pm, Cx, Emb/Tri, Fam, Hg	

Walter C. Allen lists Aiken for this session, which would only be possible if the session had been dated wrongly in the discographies.

ETHEL RIDLEY	Bradford's Jazz Phoools	New York,	Jun. 26, 1923
Ethel Ridley – v;			
<i>Johnny Dunn</i> – c; <i>Calvin Jones</i> or <i>Bud Aiken</i> – tb; <i>Garvin Bushell</i> – als, cl; <i>Herschel Brassfield</i> or <i>Ernest Elliott</i> – ts;			
Leroy Tibbs – p; Samuel Speed - b			
28234-2	Memphis, Tennessee	Vic	
28235-3	If Anybody Here Wants A Real Kind Mama (Here's Your Opportunity)	Vic	

GULF COAST SEVEN		New York,	Aug. 07, 1923
2 unknown – c; Bud Aiken – tb; <i>Garvin Bushell</i> – cl; Ernest Elliott – cl, ts; Leroy Tibbs – p; <i>John Mitchell</i> or <i>Sam Speed</i> – bj			
81168-2	Papa, Better Watch Your Step	Col	
81169-2	Memphis, Tennessee	Col	

MARY JACKSON		New York,	Oct. 1923
Mary Jackson –v			
Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools			
unknown – c; <i>Bud Aiken</i> or <i>Herb Flemming</i> – tb; <i>Garvin Bushell</i> or <i>Herschel Brassfield</i> – cl, as; <i>Leroy Tibbs</i> – p; <i>Samuel Speed</i> – bj			
70373	All The Time	PA, Per, Hg	
70374	Who'll Get It When I'm Gone ?	PA, Per, Hg	

Gus and Gene Aiken were in Ethel Waters' 1924 band and we later have reports of Gus in Drake and Walker shows in 1927 and 1929 (Storyville 2002/3, 161).

It is difficult to pinpoint the recordings made by Gus Aiken after his return from Cuba. We can be sure of his presence as one of Clara Smith's three Five Black Kittens on a session recorded on 30 July 1927, since his name is on file.

Several accompaniments to blues singers have been credited to Gus and we are indeed able to identify a cornet or trumpet player who recorded quite prolifically from 1924 to 1927 whose name the Godrich/Dixon blues discography frequently gives as Gus Aiken. The

attribution is said to be due to identifications from various musicians interviewed by the *Record Research* team in the 1950s (mail from Howard Rye to RedHotJazz mailing list, 23 February 2012).

The major problem is that the rather uncertain and shaky playing displayed by this musician is in stark contrast with Aiken's formidable reputation as a trumpet ace: he "enjoyed an enviable reputation amongst musicians". (Simmen 1984, p. 67). A possible explanation is that Aiken changed his style as a result of the trend towards Louis Armstrong. In an interview contained in "New Orleans Style" (Russell 1994), Pops Foster states: Gus Aiken was a good musician until he got to fool around with them mouthpieces trying to get those high notes Louis could make" (p.104). It is uncertain whether Foster was referring to the 1930s, when Aiken was a member of the Armstrong band's trumpet section or to the 20s when Armstrong's influence was first making itself felt. It is thus plausible that Aiken's lack of security was a result of his trying to adapt to the times, in particular improvisation techniques. Alternatively, he might have returned in poor physical shape. By the time of the session with Clara Smith, the shakiness was gone, but is it really the same trumpeter?

After careful listening the following sessions might or seem to include Gus Aiken on trumpet or cornet. On almost all of these sessions one or more titles is ended by the trumpet on the ninth or minor seventh. This is a distinctive trademark. Another is a rather narrow vibrato, often sounding like a bad embouchure, timing between Northern and Southern styles, sometimes rather square, and a continued use of a straight (?) mute, sometimes varied (or added) by the addition of a plunger mute. Furthermore, he frequently employs growl devices. On open horn he possesses a rather velvety, not brilliant, tone.

The first point of reference is the Louise Vant session of December 4, 1925, which Rust shows confidently as Bud Aiken on trombone, while there is a question-mark against Gus' name. Since the Aiken brothers played together frequently during this period, it seems reasonable to assume that it is indeed Gus. In the liner notes to Frog Spawn Volume 1 (DGF71), Richard Rains raises the possibility that the trumpet and trombone on the session by Matson's Lucky Seven (New York, January 1924) could be played by the Aiken brothers and from a comparison with the playing on the Louise Vant session, we would be inclined to agree.

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

The clarinetist/altoist in the January to March 1926 sessions is obviously the same man, but we are unable to attribute his playing to any known musician.

VIRGINIA LISTON	her Jazz Trio	New York,	Jan. 07, 1924
Virginia Liston – v;			
Gus Aiken – c;	unknown – as; Porter Grainger – p		
72258-D	I Don't Love Nobody	OK	
72259-D	Tain't A Doggone Thing But The Blues	OK	

The pianist is a more accomplished player than Clarence Williams and should therefore be Grainger as listed alternately.

MATSON'S LUCKY SEVEN		New York,	Jan. 1924
Gus Aiken – c;	Bud Aiken or Jake Frazier – tb; Ernest Elliott – cl, ts; Charles Matson – p; Sam Speede-bj		
1654-1	Lawdy Lawdy Blues	Pm	
1654-3	Lawdy Lawdy Blues	Pm	
1655-1	Jail House Blues	Pm	
1655-2	Jail House Blues	Pm	

The presence of the Aiken brothers was suggested in the notes to FROG 71 by Richard Rains, and he seems to be quite right. In any

case, this trumpet player here is the same man as on sessions from Jan. 1924 on.

The book on Joe Davis, "Never Sell A Copyright", mentions Gus on a session with Mamie Smith in about September 1924. The trumpet man here is his brother Gene who did in fact record quite a lot on both trumpet and trombone. The band as described here is in fact the Elmer Snowden band pictured in Perry Bradford's "Born with the Blues" (p.102).

SARA MARTIN Clarence Williams' Blue Five New York, c. Sep. 29, 1924
Sara Martin – v;
unknown (*Gus Aiken*) – c; unknown (*Bud Aiken*) – tb; unknown – as; Clarence Williams – p; Buddy Christian – bj
72857-B Things Done Gone Too Thick OK
72858-A Eagle Rock Me, Papa OK
72858-B Eagle Rock Me, Papa OK unissued ? not on LP/CD
This sounds like the same player. Compare the opening 'Eagle Rock' with the opening of Alberta Hunter's 'Everybody Does It Now' (below). The coda of 'Eagle Rock' is especially fine .

SIPPIE WALLACE Perry Bradford's Jazz Phools New York, Aug. 19, 1925
Sippie Wallace – v;
Gus Aiken – c; *Bud Aiken* – tb; unknown (*Rudy Jackson*) – cl, ss; *Perry Bradford* - p
73555-A Section Hand Blues OK
73556-A Palor Social De Luxe OK
The trumpet player has the same insecure manner of playing that can be heard on most of these listed recordings 1924 -1926. One of his 'trade marks' is to finish a tune with the ninth or the seventh as last tone. This device can also be heard here. The trombone player seems to be Bud Aiken with his gentle and melodious style. This clt/sop player could be the same man as on Sippie Wallace of August 20, 1925: Rudy Jackson.

SARA MARTIN New York, c. Nov. 05, 1925
Sara Martin – v;
Gus Aiken – t; Bud Aiken – tb; unknown (*Clarence Williams*) - p
73753-B Down At The Razor Ball OK
73754-A Mournful Blues OK
73755-B Georgia Stockade Blues OK
This session has always been listed as comprising June Clark, Jimmy Harrison and Clarence Williams. Yet these names definitely belong to Sara Martin's session of November 23, 1925. The styles of trumpet and trombone here are consistent with all other 1924/5 sessions listed here. Williams presence is at least very doubtful.

LOUISE VANT New York, Dec. 04, 1925
Louise Vant – v;
Gus Aiken –c; Bud Aiken – tb; Dan Wilson – p
73811-B Show Me The Way To Go Home OK
73812-A Save Your Sorrow For Tomorrow OK
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. If we ignore the question mark, this session serves as reference for Gus Aiken's style for lack of any other definite example.

ALBERTA HUNTER Perry Bradford's Mean Four New York, Jan. 1926
Alberta Hunter – v;
Gus Aiken – c; Bud Aiken – tb; unknown – cl, as; *Perry Bradford* – p
73903-B Everybody Does It Now OK
73904-B A Master Man With A Master Mind OK
73905-B I Don't Want It All OK

ALBERTA HUNTER Perry Bradford's Mean Four New York, Jan. 1926
Alberta Hunter – v;
Gus Aiken – c; unknown – cl, as; *Perry Bradford* – p
73919-B I'm Hard To Satisfy OK
73920-B Empty Cellar Blues OK
73921-B Double Crossin' Papa OK

LOUISE VANT New York, c. Jan. 15, 1926
Louise Vant – v;
Gus Aiken –c ; Bud Aiken – tb; unknown – cl, as; *Dan Wilson* – p
73924-B Just A Little Bit Bad OK
73925-B I've Learned To Do Without You Now OK
73926-A Want A Little Lovin' OK

LOUISE VANT Perry Bradford's Mean Four New York, c. Mar. 18, 1926

Louise Vant – v;
 Gus Aiken – c; Bud Aiken – tb; unknown – cl; *Perry Bradford* – p
 74055-A Pensacola Blues OK
 74056-A New Crazy Blues OK

LAURA SMITH New York, Apr. 01, 1926
 Laura Smith – v;
 unknown (*Gus Aiken*) – c; unknown (*Geechie Fields*) – tb; unknown – cl; ,unknown - p
 74083-A I'll Get Even With You OK
 74084-A If You Don't Like It OK

MONETTE MOORE New York, Jan. 26, 1927
 Monette Moore – v;
 Gus Aiken – c; *Ernest Elliott* – cl; unknown – bcl; unknown – fl; *Phil Worde* - p
 37572-2 Moaning Sinner Blues Vic
 37573-1 Hard-Hearted Papa Vic
 37573-2 Hard-Hearted Papa Vic

CLARA SMITH Five Black Kittens New York, Jul. 30, 1927
 Clara Smith – v;
 Gus Aiken – t; Bob Fuller – cl, as; Stanley Miller – p
 144527-2 Black Cat Moan Col
 144528-2 Strugglin' Woman's Blues Col

This is the only session where Gus Aiken is definitely listed in the Columbia ledgers. This recording was made more than a year after the Laura Smith session which might explain the very different tone, but again this seems to be Gus.

Chilton has Aiken playing mainly in the “Drake and Walker Show” from 1926 until the Summer of 1929, with an intermezzo in pianist Irving Puggsley's Hot Six (1928) Chilton, 1970, p. 2).

Gene Aiken died on 21 August 1927 (Chilton 1970, p.1).

The band for the Drake and Walker show “The Jailbirds“ of June 1929 is given as Gus Aiken, Johnny Biggs-c; Jake Frazier-tb; Herbert Waters, Floyd Blakemore - as; James Bradley-ts; Jack Simms-p; Ernest Myers-bj; Williams Burrel-tu; Claift Drake-d (Storyville 1997, p. 229).

MARGARET WILLIAMS New York, Jul. 10, 1928
 Margaret Williams – v;
 Gus Aiken – c; unknown - p
 400857-B Old Commandment Blues Part 1 OK unissued on LP/CD ?
 400858-A Old Commandment Blues Part 2 OK unissued on LP/CD ?

One of these titles was issued on LP and later CD, but from both issues it is uncertain which of the two titles/parts this is. LP and CD issues vary slightly in pitch and sound quality despite 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 accompanists, which in both cases seems ridiculous.

BILLIE WILSON New York, c. Jul. 11, 1928
 Billie Wilson – v;
 Gus Aiken- c; unknown – cl; unknown - p
 GEX-2002-A Empty Bed Blues – Part 1 Ch, Spt
 GEX-2003-A Empty Bed Blues – Part 2 Ch, Spt
 Obviously the same trumpet player as on session before.

Chilton claims that Aiken recorded with Charlie Johnson on 8 May, 1929, but the lead trumpeter is certainly Leonard Davis and there are only two trumpets present, the other of which is played by Sidney de Paris.

The following sessions belong to a later period in Gus Aiken's musical life and do not seem to have solo work attributable to him. Additionally to what is usually listed in the discographies, Frank Driggs thinks that Aiken replaces Shelton Hemphill and Pete Briggs

replaces Hayes Alvis on the first Mills' Blue Rhythm Band session of 30 January 1931. His evidence is a photo taken of the band at this time (Letter from Frank Driggs, Storyville 128, p. 86).

MILLS BLUE RHYTHM BAND

New York, 30 January 1931

Wardell Jones, Gus Aiken, Ed Anderson-tp; Harry White, Henry Hicks-tb; Caster McCord-cl, ts; Ted McCord-as, cl; Crawford Wethington-as, bs, cl; Edgar Hayes-p; Benny James-bj; Pete Briggs-sb; Willie Lynch-d; Dick Robertson-v.

E35985-B Straddle The Fence Voc
 E35986-A Levee Low Down
 E35987-A Moanin'

In 1931, Aiken joined the Luis Russell Orchestra which has making a transition from the New Orleans-influenced band of its glory days to a more conventionally-styled big band. Gus Aiken was a well-trained musician obviously suitable for precise section work.

LUIS RUSSELL AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York, Aug. 28, 1931

Robert Cheek, Gus Aiken, Henry Red Allen – tp; Dicky Wells – tb; Henry Moon Jones, Albert Nicholas – as, cl; Greely Walton – ts, cl; Luis Russell – p; Will Johnson – g; Pops Foster – sb; Paul Barbarin – d; Chick Bullock – v

70195-1 You Rascal, You Vic, HMV
 70196-1 Goin' To Town Vic, BB, HMV
 70197-1 Say The Word Vic
 70198-1 Freakish Blues Vic, HMV, EA

"Freakish Blues" has muted playing on trumpet which is not the usual soloist on this instrument, Henry "Red" Allen. According to John Chilton this is Robert Cheek playing a solo written out for him by Luis Russell.

LUIS RUSSELL AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York, Aug. 08, 1934

Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken – t; Rex Stewart – c; Nat Story, Jimmy Archey – tb; Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – as, cl; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ts, cl; Luis Russell – p; Lee Blair – g; Pops Foster – s; Paul Barbarin – d;

Sonny Woods – v (1,2,6); The Palmer Brothers – v (3)

15571-1 At The Darktown Strutter's Ball Ban, Mt, Or, Per, Ro, Voc, Imp
 15572-1 My Blue Heaven Ban, Mt, Or, Per, Ro, Voc, Imp
 15573-1 Ghost Of The Freaks Ban, Mt, Or, Per, Ro, Voc, Imp
 15574-1 Hocus Pocus Ban, Mt, Or, Per, Ro, Voc, Imp
 15575-1 Primitive Ban, Mt, Or, Per, Ro, Voc, Imp
 15576-1 Ol' Man River Ban, Mt, Or, Per, Ro, Voc, Imp

In 1935, Louis Armstrong had returned from Europe and initially fronted a big band led by Zilner Randolph. This band was based in Chicago and thus banned by Local 802 from fulfilling a contract Armstrong had for a four-month run at Connie's Inn. The ailing Luis Russell Band was hired in its entirety. None of the literature on Louis Armstrong makes more than a passing mention of Aiken during this period of his career.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York, Oct. 03, 1935

Louis Armstrong – tp, v; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tp; Harry White, James Archey – tb; Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – as, cl; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ts,cl; Luis Russell – p; Lee Blair – g; Pops Foster – sb; Paul Barbarin – d

60021-A I'm In The Mood For Love Dec
 60022-A You Are My Lucky Star Dec, Br
 60023-E La Cucaracha Dec, Br
 60024-B Got A Bran' New Suit Dec, Br

LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York, Nov. 21, 1935

Louis Armstrong – tp, v; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tp; Harry White, James Archey – tb; Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – as, cl; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ts,cl; Luis Russell – p; Lee Blair – g; Pops Foster – sb; Paul Barbarin – d

Band – voc (3,4,5)

60155-A I've Got My Fingers Crossed Dec, Br, Fonit, Pol
 60155-D I've Got My Fingers Crossed Dec, Br, Fonit, Pol
 60156-A Old Man Mose Dec, Br
 60156-D Old Man Mose Dec, Br, Fonit, Pol
 60156-E Old Man Mose Dec, Br, Fonit, Pol
 60157-C I'm Shooting High Dec, Br, Fonit, Pol
 60158-D Falling In Love With You Dec

LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA New York, Dec. 13, 1935
 Louis Armstrong – tp, v; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tp; Harry White, James Archey – tb;
 Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – as, cl; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ts,cl; Luis Russell – p; Lee Blair – g;
 Pops Foster – sb; Paul Barbarin – d
 60227-A Red Sails In The Sunset Dec, Br
 60228-A On Treasure Island Dec, Br

LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA New York, Dec. 19, 1935
 Louis Armstrong – tp, v; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tp; Harry White, James Archey – tb;
 Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – as, cl; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ts,cl; Luis Russell – p; Lee Blair – g;
 Pops Foster – sb; Paul Barbarin – d
 60249-A Thanks A Million Dec, Br
 60249-B Thanks A Million Dec, Pol
 60250-A Shoe Shine Boy Dec, Br
 60251-A Solitude Dec
 60251-B Solitude Dec, Br
 60251-C Solitude Dec, Br
 60252-B I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music Dec, Br, Fonit, Pol
 60252-C I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music Dec, Br, Fonit, Pol

LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA New York, Jan. 18, 1936
 Louis Armstrong – tp, v; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – tp; Harry White, James Archey – tb;
 Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – as, cl; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ts,cl; Luis Russell – p; Lee Blair – g;
 Pops Foster – sb; Paul Barbarin – d
 60362-A The Music Goes 'Round And Around Dec, Br
 60363-A Rhythm Saved The World Dec
 60363-B Rhythm Saved The World Swaggie (Dec)

LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA New York, Apr. 28, 1936
 Louis Armstrong – t, voc; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – t; Harry White, Snub Mosley – tb;
 Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – as,cl; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ts, cl; Luis Russell – p; Lee Blair – g; Pops Foster – sb;
 Paul Barbarin – d
 61058-A I Come From A Musical Family Dec
 61075-A Somebody Stole My Break Dec

LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA New York, Apr. 29, 1936
 Louis Armstrong – t, voc; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – t; Harry White, Snub Mosley – tb;
 Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – as,cl; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ts, cl; Luis Russell – p; Lee Blair – g; Pops Foster – sb;
 Paul Barbarin – d
 61059-A If We Never Meet Again Dec, Br, Fonit, Pol

LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA New York, May 18, 1936
 Louis Armstrong – t, voc; Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken, Louis Bacon – t; Harry White, Snub Mosley – tb;
 Henry Moon Jones, Charlie Holmes – as,cl; Bingie Madison, Greely Walton – ts, cl; Luis Russell – p; Lee Blair – g; Pops Foster – sb;
 Paul Barbarin – d
 61106-A Lyin' To Myself Dec, Br
 61107-A Ev'ntide Dec, Br, Od
 61108-A Swing That Music Dec, Od
 61109-A Thankful Dec
 61110-A Red Nose Dec, Br
 61111-A Mahogany Hall Stomp Dec

In 1937, Aiken joined a Latin band led by Alberto Socarras.

The next session is the most exposed confirmed solo playing by Gus Aiken. Of "When It's Sleepy Time Down South" Johnny Simmen writes: "This is also the best side for trumpeter Gus Aiken, who was rarely in good form on record dates, but enjoyed an enviable reputation amongst musicians". (Storyville116, p. 67)

SIDNEY BECHET AND HIS NEW ORLEANS FEETWARMERS New York, Apr. 28, 1941
 Gus Aiken – t; Sandy Williams – tb; Sidney Bechet – ss; Lem Johnson – ts; Cliff Jackson – p; Wilson Myers – sb; Arthur Herbert – d
 063823-1 Swing Parade Vic, HMV
 063823-2 Swing Parade Vic, HMV
 063824-1 I Know That You Know Vic, HMV
 063824-2 I Know That You Know Vic, HMV

063824-3	I Know That You Know	Vic, HMV
063825-1	When It's Sleepy Time Down South	Vic, HMV
063826-1	I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None O' This Jelly-Roll	Vic, HMV
063826-2	I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None O' This Jelly-Roll	Vic, HMV

Although we are now 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 of the 1920s. A rather husky tone, a not so distinct phrasing and articulation, a style following the Armstrong manner, probably stemming from his descent from the Jenkins' Orphanage in Charleston, South Carolina.

Subsequently, Aiken recorded mainly as a member of trumpet sections, e.g. Buddy Johnson or Roy Eldridge.

ROY ELDRIDGE AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York City, 26 June 1944

Roy, Eldridge, Gus Aiken, John Hamilton, Robert Mason, Clarence Wheeler-t; Ted Kelly, Sandy Williams, George Wilson-tb; Joe Eldridge, Sam Lee-as; Franz Jackson, Hal Singer -ts; Dave McRae-bs; Tony D'Amore-p; Sam Allen-g; Carl Wilson-sb; Les Erskine-d.
 72297-A I Can't Get Started
 72298-A After You've Gone
 72299- Body And Soul

BUDDY JOHNSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York City, 4 October 1944

Buddy Johnson-v;
 Gus Aiken, Lewis Dupree, Henry Glover, Willis Nelson, Ben Turner-t; Bernard Archer, Leonard Briggs, Gordon Thomas-tb; Joe O'Laughton, Maxwell Lucas-as; Frank Henderson, Jimmy Stanford-ts; Buddy Johnson-p; Leon Spann-sb; George Jenkins-d.
 72406 That's The Stuff You Gotta Watch
 72407 One of Them Good Ones
 72408 They All Say I'm The Biggest Fool
 72409 Fine Brown Frame
 72410 If You Never Return

Other sessions in which he can be heard in a solo capacity are radio sessions by Bessie Smith's niece, Ruby, and Ann Lewis made in the WNYC studios in February 1949.

ANN LEWIS

New York City, 19 February 1949

Ann Lewis -v
 Gus Aiken-t; Tony Parenti-cl; Art Hodes-p; Wellman Braud-sb; Freddie Moore -d.
 Fish Out of the Water
 Jailhouse Blues

RUBY SMITH

New York City, 19 February 1949

Ruby Smith-v;
 Gus Aiken-t; Lannie Scott-p; Wellman Braud-sb; Freddie Moore-d.
 Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out
 Backwater Blues
 Hit That Jive Jack

In these recordings, Aiken plays mainly muted, harking back to his blues accompaniments of the mid-twenties and displaying little Armstrong influence. In contrast to the other accompanists, Aiken is not interviewed.

Aiken continued playing after the war, including an engagement with Jimmy Archey's band in 1951, when he subbed for Henry Goodwin, by all accounts very ably despite a lack of familiarity with the repertoire. He subsequently had an own band which played at Small's Paradise during the 1960s. Major Holley, who first played in New York with an Aiken band, remembers him as a nice guy, very, very humble (cf. O'Neal 2009, p. 463). Since Holley left for Europe in 1950, this suggests that Aiken already had a band at Small's in the late 1940s.

There is little else to be found in print on Aiken, save that he seems to have had sympathies with the Marcus Garvey movement, although the source for this ((Vincent 1995, p. 142) states that Aiken retired early along with Tom Morris. Another interesting snippet is that Aiken was apparently given a trumpet as a gift by Florence Mills (Jet, 9 September 1954). The trumpet was stolen and Aiken offered a reward for its return. Whether the trumpet was given to him in acknowledgement of his instrumental skills or for more personal reasons, we can only speculate.

Aiken died on 1 April 1973.

In Gus Aiken we have the case of a musician with a formidable reputation, admired by such as Jabbo Smith, which is not borne out by the evidence we have on recordings. It is difficult to pinpoint definite recordings after his return from Cuba in late 1923 and the recordings we attribute to him are not of the quality we would expect. But if it was not Gus, who was it? It is very likely that someone of his reputation should have been asked to record. For whatever reason, we are no longer impressed by his recordings. He was later buried in the trumpet sections of big bands without the opportunity to shine on record and we only have the Bechet session and his accompaniments to Ruby Smith and Ann Lewis as evidence of his later playing. Beyond that we only have memories of his contemporaries recalling an important and influential jazz pioneer.

References:

- Abbott, Lynn & Doug Seroff (2007): *Ragged but Right: Black Traveling Shows, "Coon Songs," and the Dark Pathway to Blues and Jazz*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Allen, Walter C. (1973): *Hendersonia – The Music of Fletcher Henderson and his Musicians*. Highland Park: Jazz Monographs No. 4
- Benford, Tommy, interviewed by Peter Carr, Al Vollmer and Laurie Wright: *Have Drum , Will Travel*. Storyville 100, April-May 1982, 124-129
- Berresford, Mark (2010): *That's Got 'Em!: The Life and Music of Wilbur C. Sweatman*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Braford, Perry (1965): *Born with the Blues*. New York: Oak.
- Bushell, Garvin (1988) (as told to Mark Tucker): *Jazz From The Beginning*. New York: Da Capo
- Chilton, John (1970): *Who's Who of Jazz*. London: Bloomsbury Book Shop.
- Chilton, John (1980): *A Jazz Nursery. The Story of the Jenkins' Orphanage Bands*. London: Bloomsbury Book Shop.
- Draper, Barclay S. (1980): *his Life Story as told to David Griffiths*. Storyville 87, February-March 1980, 84-103
- Driggs, Frank (1986): *Letter in Storyville 128, December 1986, 86*
- Green, Jeffrey (1982): *letter in Storyville 102, August-September 1982, 207*
- Hillman, Christopher (1976): *Regional Characteristics in Early Recorded Negro Music*. Storyville 65, June-July 1976, 164-167
- Kernfield, Barry (ed) (1988): *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*. London: Macmillan.
- Olivar, John (2003): *Thomas Morris*. Chigwell: Storyville 2002-2003, 134-141
- O'Neal, Hank (2009): *The Ghosts of Harlem. Sessions with Jazz Legends*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Rains, Richard (2010): *Thomas Morris*. In Swinton, P. (ed.) *The Frog Blues and Jazz Annual*. Fleet: Frog Records. 91-107
- Russell, Bill (compiled and edited by Barry Martyn & Mike Hazeldine) (1994): *New Orleans Style*. New Orleans: Jazzology Press.
- Rye, Howard (1987): *Visiting Fireboys. The Jenkins' Orphanage Bands in Britain*. Storyville 130, June 1987, 136-142
- Simmen, Johnny(1984): *Sandy Williams – A portrait*. Storyville 116, December 1984 – January 1985, 48- 69
- Vincent, Ted (1995): *Keep Cool. The black activists who built the Jazz Age*. London & East Haven Ct.: Pluto Press.
- Wright, Laurie (ed. 1997): *Pieces of the Jigsaw*. Chigwell: Storyville 1996/97, p.189
- Wright , Laurie (1999): *Bob Fuller. A Chronology with Random Notes*. Chigwell: Storyville 1998/99, 221-230
- Wright, Laurie (ed. 1999): *Pieces of the Jigsaw*. Chigwell: Storyville 1998/99, p. 113
- Wright, Laurie (ed. 2003): *Pieces of the Jigsaw*. Chigwell: Storyville 2002/3, 161
- Recordings: Most of the recordings attributed to Gus Aiken are to be found on various Document CDs., The Clara Smith Session is also on Retrieval RTR 79030, the Matson's Lucky Seven Session is to be found on

Frog DGF 71, "Frog Spawn – the first batch"