

**ORAL HISTORY T-0011b**  
**INTERVIEW WITH SAMMY LONG**  
**INTERVIEWED BY IRENE CORTINOVIS**  
**JAZZMEN PROJECT**  
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CORTINOVIS: What kind of a man was Fate Marable?

LONG: Oh, he was really a swell fellow and a very good musician. The difference with Fate from other piano players was that Fate gave the orchestra a better foundation. Lot of the men found that out when they went to play with other guys. [Later he added that Fate Marable was a pretty heavy drinker and that the Streckfuses who "had brought him along" used to lay Fate off every now and then, but would always take him back.]

CORTINOVIS: I discussed his many visits to New Orleans with him and he made the following comments:

CORTINOVIS: Did you ever play with any of the New Orleans musicians? LONG: Sure. When I played with Fate and with Dewey Jackson, we would only bring six pieces down the river and then when we would get to New Orleans, we would pick up three or four more. Willie Humphrey played clarinet for us. You know, he still plays with the Preservation Hall band, I saw him last summer. And George Foster played bass with us, too. Sometimes there would be two bands on the boat...ours and one from New Orleans. There was a Celestin's ["Papa" Oscar Celestin] Band and another one led by Sam Morgan. The first time I ever went to New Orleans was in 1925 with Dewey Jackson, who played trumpet. We played sweet music for dancing, 'cause that's what the people liked.

CORTINOVIS: Who else was in that band?

LONG: Well, there was Floyd Campbell on drums. He still lives in Chicago. Burrows Lovingood played piano. I think he's still in Chicago, too. George Foster was on the bass fiddle and Cecil White was on the bass horn. You know, Cap'n Joe [Streckfus] always liked heavy bass, always wanted two bases. When I went down with Fate in '27, we had Nat Storey on trombone, I played the alto horn, Floyd Campbell on drums, Shirley Clay on trumpet, a fellow named "Goat" Brown on guitar, and Cliff Cochran on sax and clarinet. The New Orleans men who worked with us on this trip were Manuel Perez on trumpet, Willie Humphrey on sax, and clarinet, and Sam Morgan on bass.

CORTINOVIS: Since New Orleans is supposed to be the birthplace of jazz, do you think that your playing was influenced by the New Orleans men you played with?

LONG: Well, they were rhythm men, but our fellows were really better musicians. Most of those guys couldn't read music, and our men could, and that's what made the difference.

Some of those guys had real style, though. You take Louis [Armstrong]. When I first heard Louie, he was with Kid Oliver. But I always thought that Norman Mason, who's passed now, of course, was a much better trumpeter, a much better musician, you know. But Louie did a lot by making the trumpet a solo instrument, just like Coleman Hawkins made the tenor sax a solo instrument. [Sammy Long played with quite a few famous jazzmen, including Bix Biererbecke and Pee Wee Russell. He remembers playing at the Westlake Park in St. Louis County with traveling jazz bands which included a lot of famous

CORTINOVIS: Did you ever play with Louis Armstrong?

LONG: Sure. When I was with Floyd Campbell in '27, the St. Louis promoter, Jesse Johnson, arranged what they called a "Battle of the Bands." This was two bands on the S.S. St. Paul "playing each other down" as we used to say. [He also mentioned the J.S.] The boats Long played on were the St. Paul, the President and the Capitol. He mentioned that the Capitol was enclosed and steam heated and that boat could go up to St. Paul where it was pretty cold.

CORTINOVIS: How did you learn to play music?

LONG: With the Pythian [Lodge] band. It was a kid band. Our parents paid 50(? a week and they gave you music lessons and taught you the fundamentals of music. Dewey Jackson did the same thing. On the taped interview. Long told me that he got interested in the saxophone when he first heard Ted Lewis. This time, he said, "It was during Prohibition, you know, and he [Ted Lewis] was playing, "I'll See You in Cuba," ...that meant that you could go to Cuba to get liquor."