



Frisco Cricket

Published by the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation

FALL 2007

HOW LONG?

by William Carter

15 years? 26? 40? More? Depends how you count.

According to the late Pete Clute, longtime ragtime pianist with Turk Murphy's Jazz Band, he and Turk once drove the 40 or so miles from San Francisco down the Peninsula to Stanford University to check out the Music Department Library. That would probably have been in the 1960s. Stanford was Pete's alma mater. (Pete and I met there in the early 50's...but that's another story.)

Murphy and Clute were sniffing around for an eventual home for their growing collections of arrangements, sheet music, and jazz memorabilia of every description. What they found was - not much. At that time, the Stanford Music Department library was in a lovely, creaky, rambling old house-like structure on a hill, known as the Knoll. Long on atmosphere but short on space or funding, it displayed more obvious concern with Ludwig von Beethoven and John Cage than with Jelly Roll Morton or Earthquake McGoon's.

Fast forward to 1981. A passionate trad jazz buff named Jim Goggin established a 501(c)3 non-profit called The San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation. In time, Jim's extensive collection of books, memorabilia, recordings, etc. went into a massive, cobweb-laced brick storage building adjoining the railroad tracks beside US 880 in Oakland. He and others privately dubbed this "the Cotton Club," because, early in the century, it had been a cotton

manufacturing plant, with large wall photos to prove it.

Around the time Goggin decided to retire, he donated the entire collection to Stanford University. At that point the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation slipped into limbo, along with the collection. Decades later, in the early 1990s, the Stanford Library decided to take what it could then manageably process - mainly books - and return ownership of the rest, from recordings and photos, to Jack Crook's bass saxophone, to a stack of unused event posters from Carnegie Hall, and (evidently) a few cocktail napkins - to the Foundation.

By then the dormant Foundation had been reactivated with a new board and fresh ideas. The returned Archive was gradually expanded with trad jazz materials from many sources, including taped interviews, recorded music and - perhaps most importantly - key items from the Murphy estate, including trombones, carefully kept business and publicity records, and over 600 hand-written band arrangements in seven parts.

Over the last 15 years your Foundation has expanded its public activities. Behind the scenes, a long term goal was to find a permanent repository, available to researchers and the public, for thousands of items documenting a significant American regional jazz phenomenon - the traditional jazz played in the Bay Area since the days of the Barbary Coast. To take one recent example, SFTJF was just given the

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entire original set of radio station KCBS tapes from the 1950s, made at Club Hangover and elsewhere, of the performances of dozens of nationally famous bands from Louis Armstrong and Earl Hines to Muggsy Spanier and Jack Teagarden. (Our discovery of this material near the San Rafael City Dump was described in an earlier issue of the Cricket.)

Fast forward again - to September, 2007. The Stanford Libraries, including the Music Library and the Archive of Recorded Sound, have entered a period of dramatic expansion. One of a handful of important sound archives in the U.S., Stanford's had long been hobbled by restricted space and such technical realities as the enormous number of person-hours needed to process pre-digital sound materials. Now the music and jazz collections are receiving special attention - including a spanking new, state-of-the-art, climate controlled, off-campus storage facility and fresh staffing. Stanford could be on its way to becoming the pre-eminent jazz research source in the Western U.S.

Your Foundation had spent 15 years looking throughout the Bay Area and beyond for a suitable

home for its valuable holdings. A clear commitment and long-term funding were key issues. Finally, this year, we reached the decision to donate the most valuable portions of our holdings to Stanford. The legal documents were signed in September. At this writing our curator, Clint Baker, is working closely with the head of the Stanford Music Library, Jerry McBride, on the massive physical transfer of thousands of items. Many of which - notably Turk's unique 7-part arrangements - will eventually be digitized for easier access to qualified researchers.

Most sincerely, we would like to thank our expanding network of members, friends, donors, well wishers - and especially Bay Area musicians - for their years of faith and support. In the long-running saga of the SFTJF archive, special thanks go to Bill Tooley, Chuck Huggins, the late Tom Ford, and Terry O'Reilly (we're sorry his alma mater had to lose this Big Game of the Archives but we're very glad his beloved UC Berkeley Library is counter-attacking with a new oral history program interviewing those who worked in Turk's bands). 

The Frisco Cricket

Issue No. 37

Published by the

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JAZZ FOUNDATION**

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San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation

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In an effort to help defray the costs of maintaining all the varied programs that SFTJF supports, including The Frisco Cricket itself, we're going to begin providing limited advertising space here. We want to be fair to everyone, so there are a few rules we'd like to follow:

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A GRANDFATHER STORY

by Alex Horvath

For the record, my entire name is Alexander Bela Horvath – but to this day, my family and even old family friends call me by my childhood nickname, Sandy. I was named after both of my grandfathers – Alexander Healy from Worland, Wyoming, and Dr. Bela Horvath, from Budapest Hungary. Strangely, I see myself as a mix of both men, with a peppering of both of my parents thrown in for flavor. I have my father’s intellect and sense of humor, which I’m sure he got from his parents. And I have told that I have my mother’s accepting nature and generosity – an absolute hallmark of her father.

My maternal grandfather, “Alec,” was a sheep rancher and businessman with a passion for jazz music and told stories of seeing and hearing the likes of Cab Calloway at New York’s famed Cotton Club. My paternal grandfather, “Nagy-papa,” was a governmental official in the Hungarian parliament who at one time served as the Minister of the Interior, a position which placed him in charge of the military, where he ordered resistance to the Nazis leading to his being put under house arrest for the remainder of World War II. Later, with my grandmother and father in tow, he was exiled by the communists to peasant villages. Then, my father was sent to work in a labor camp before escaping to Austria and, ultimately, the United States after the revolution of 1956. His sister, my Aunt Magda, had already left home and married.

I’m sure that I would have loved both men, but it is my maternal grandfather that I remember the best and had a special relationship with. Lately I have been remembering the time in January 1983, a year after my mother died, and nearly a year and a half after the death of my grandmother, when he came to Bolinas during a wild storm – only to ask to be driven back into San Francisco that same evening to see jazz great Turk Murphy and his band play at Earthquake McGoon’s club on Fisherman’s Wharf. “I haven’t seen Turk Murphy since 1939,” Grandfather said.

I got behind the wheel of the rental car that he had driven from the airport and we proceeded into the city. It was a dark, windy and rainy night as we maneuvered the coast road over Highway One, dodging the occasional landslide

blocking our path. Crossing the Golden Gate Bridge, I held tight to the car’s steering wheel as we were nearly blown into oncoming traffic. Finally, we arrived safely at Earthquake McGoon’s, which was about half full due to the inclement weather conditions.

No sooner had our drinks arrived than Turk Murphy fired up his band for another set. It was about 10 PM, and we had arrived an hour or so into the night’s performance. Grandfather beamed fondly at the band, tapping his feet to the music. We sipped on our drinks, and grandfather filled me in on the time in 1939, the year that my mother was born, that he saw Murphy and the Watters band play. Then, without warning, grandfather jumped up from his chair and walked quickly to the stage, waving his whiskey glass in the air.

“Turk! Turk! It’s me, Alec Healy!” Grandfather shouted from the floor. The bandleader shot him a confused look, then turned away and kept conducting the band.

Grandfather walked back to his chair, dejected. “He doesn’t remember me,” he said, placing an elbow on the table. It was the first and only time I ever saw him look sad.

We ordered another round of drinks and listened to music, grandfather no longer enjoying the scene. After a little while the band took a well-deserved break between sets. Since the hour was getting late, I excused myself to use the restroom before the long ride home to Bolinas. That’s where I encountered Turk Murphy – standing at a urinal doing his business. I waited for him to finish and introduced myself to him while he was washing his hands.

“Excuse me, Mr. Murphy,” I began. “You know that older guy who was yelling at you when you were on stage? Well, that is my grandfather – who for some reason thought that you would remember him from a performance back in 1939. We just drove here in the rain from Bolinas – and it would mean a lot to him if you could just drop by the table and say hello.”

We peered out of the restroom together and I pointed out the table where Grandfather was sitting. He looked alone and sullen. Turk Murphy agreed that he would do it, so I went back into the restroom to prepare for the trip home.

When I returned to the table, Grandfather's whole demeanor had changed. He was in an animated conversation with Turk Murphy. Grandfather introduced me to Turk, who pretended that we had never met. I played along and shook hands as if for the first time. The two gentlemen talked about music and all of the years that had passed. After a few minutes, Turk excused himself to get back to the band for another set.

After he had left, Grandfather told me about

how Turk Murphy had stopped by the table and asked him if he was Alec Healy. Grandfather said that he was surprised and delighted at the experience and couldn't wait to come back and see him again.

"But it was the strangest thing," Grandfather continued. "He must get around because he said that he recognized me from Bolinas!"



THE LAURELEYE SYNCOPATERS

From an email from Patrick Korte

INFO ON GRANDMA VIOLA FLYNN'S BAND

- Viola was born in 1909 , In 1926 "Vi" was 17 and Jessie was 16.
- After the 8th grade they went to business school Jessie (drums) and Viola (piano) for one year then they got a job.
- All the money that they earned went into the household.
- Extra money came from the band...so they would have spending money for clothes and entertainment, etc.
- Uncle George and Freddy Kingin would take them on the streetcar with drums!
- Marget Castle (Viola and Jessie's mom) made all their outfits.
- Uncle's made sure that they were far enough back on stage so that nobody would look up their skirts!!!!
- They needed help coming home with drums.
- Jessie would sometimes wind up in the the middle of the dance floor because the bass drum would inch its way and she would have to scoot up!
- Viola Castle married Gerald Flynn and took on his last name.



The Laureleye Syncopators, 1926. From left to right: Viola Flynn - Piano, Muriel Mang - Tenor, Pearl Lauh - Alto, Madeline Mang - Banjo, Jessie Castle (Great Aunt) - on the Tubs!!!

MAGNOLIA JAZZ BAND WEEKEND

Photos by Richard Ressman

Saturday evening, September 29 and Sunday afternoon September 30, were great successes with the reunion of the Magnolia Jazz Band Alumni, as can be seen in the photos below.



These and many more photos by Dr. Richard Ressman may be purchased online at www.photosurgeon.net

The Magnolia Jazz Band (from left to right) Clint Baker, Robbie Schlosser, Bill Carter, Jeff Hamilton, Charlie DeVore, Jim Klippert



Vocal duet by Charlie DeVore and Jim Klippert



Clint's tenor banjo



Dancers Don Froli and Marion Mills on Sunday afternoon at the beautiful California Ballroom in Oakland

PAPA MUTT CAREY

by Gene Williams and Marili Stuart
from *Jazz*, March 1943

Young Tom Carey had no desire to play music, and whenever one of his brothers wanted him to pick up an instrument, he always begged off. He hustled with a guitar, occasionally, but that was all, until he reached the age of eighteen. Then his resistance broke down, and he began fooling around at home with an old cornet.

New Orleans was full of music in those days, a few years before the first World War. Buddy Bolden was shut away in the state hospital at Jackson, but the ragtime music he'd started was going stronger than ever, with such great cornetists as Freddie Keppard and Bunk Johnson carrying on. Tom Carey, the youngest of a family of musicians, had heard them all from Bolden down.

And once he'd started on cornet, it was easy for him. In a few days he could play the blues, and began to work out a good style. But his first experi-

ence in a wagon band was something of a setback. His older brother Jack, well known as a trombone player and band leader, found himself short a cornet player for an advertising job. At the last minute, he called on his kid brother.

Everything went well enough until they met another band. The wagons stopped, and one of New Orleans' famous battles of music began. But the cornet player in the other wagon was Freddie Keppard; and that was tough luck. "No use denying a fact," Carey says today. "Freddie had it all over me."

But the crowd that gathered around the bandwagons included many friends of the Carey boys, for the meeting took place in their own section. So, after Keppard's whalemouth blowing had been acclaimed, one of Tom's friends started the cry, "Go it, Papa Mutt! Go it!" This was taken up by the others, Carey recalls, "So I got my little applause, too."

From that day, Tom Carey was Papa Mutt. And as Papa Mutt kept improving, he became a good solid musician, the kind of cornetist that kept the New Orleans bands swinging. He worked up a lot of freak tricks with mutes, too, and by the time Joe Oliver left for Chicago, Papa Mutt was known as the champion of that style.

Today, after living more than twenty years away from New Orleans, Papa Mutt is still emphatically a New Orleans musician. He loves to talk about the old days at home, and makes no bones about his preference for the old music. "I'm not ashamed of Dixieland," he says. "That's going to stand up as long as there's music. Just let some of these modern cats get off, and then set a Dixieland band behind them and see what people do..."

Sometimes Papa Mutt calls it Dixieland, sometimes jazz, sometimes ragtime; but it all means New Orleans music. "Ragtime," he explains, "was



Mutt Carey from the March, 1943 issue of *Jazz*.

the name of the music when it started out, and Buddy Bolden was the one who started it." Later—though not in New Orleans—it was rechristened "jazz," but the music was just the same.

Ragtime, jazz, swing? "Hell, that music was swinging all the way back in Bolden's time, and before him in the Holy Roller churches he got it from. You know, all those churches, like the Baptist and Methodist, got hot now and then—but the Holy Rollers were hot all the time."

Bolden? "I wish you could have heard that man play," says Papa Mutt. "You never in your life heard a man blow that loud." And not only loud, but fine jazz cornet, which would still be good today. All the bands in New Orleans played good and loud—so much louder than modern small bands, Papa Mutt says, that "it seems like I've been resting up, all the years I've been in California. That is, up to the time I went up to Frisco to play with Turk and the Watters band." There at the Dawn Club, Papa Mutt found a band

BOLDEN? "I WISH YOU COULD HAVE HEARD THAT MAN PLAY," SAYS PAPA MUTT. "YOU NEVER IN YOUR LIFE HEARD A MAN BLOW THAT LOUD."

playing New Orleans music as well as it could, and as loud. So he had to blow again, himself—and anyone who was there that night will tell you it was terrific.

Naturally, the factory volume of the New Orleans bands wasn't popular with everyone, even down home. Carey recalls the time a wealthy matron by the name of Mrs. Newman hired Joe Oliver and Kid Ory to bring their bands to a big party. Joe Oliver brought an all-star bunch, every man outstanding on his instrument, and they were all set to blast Ory out of the room.

Ory's band, on the other hand, was known as one of the softest in town. (Not that Johnny Dodds and the Kid and Papa Mutt didn't swing plenty, Papa Mutt explains; you don't have to

play loud to produce good ragtime music, it's the feelings that make it blend.) Besides, Ory's boys were a bit timid, and they began to play very quietly. Then came Oliver's all-stars with an opening blast that brought Mrs. Newman tripping into the ballroom, screeching, "Oh, Oh! Wait a minute! That's terrible, I won't stand for that!" Ory's band was the pride of the evening, and weeks later the boys were still squeaking, "Oh, that's terrible!" every time King Joe showed up.

This spirit of light-hearted competition was very strong in New Orleans, and must have been a prime factor in the extraordinary flowering of music there. Musicians tended to gather in rival cliques, and frequent cutting contests kept every man playing his best. Competing bands played the same tunes, in turn; and the judge of every contest was the crowd that always collected. Often, feelings ran so strong that when one band had cut another, they'd climb off the wagons and go to work with their fists. As Papa Mutt says, "If you couldn't blow a man down with your horn, at least you could use it to hit him alongside the head."

Papa Mutt left home for the first time in 1917 when he was twenty-five. Leading a four-piece band, he played the T.O.B.A. circuit with Billy and Mary Mack's traveling show, "The Merrymakers of Mirth." It must have been a pretty good little band. Johnny Dodds, who had often played with Mutt in New Orleans, was the clarinet player, and Steve Lewis the pianist. They didn't tame down their playing for the show, either—it was New Orleans ragtime music.

Joe Oliver, who had gone North the year before, was then doubling at the Dreamland and the Royal Garden in Chicago. But Virgil Williams, manager of the Royal Garden, wanted Joe's services all night long, so when Oliver heard that Mutt was coming to town with his show, he recommended him to the Dreamland. And when the Merrymakers left Chicago, Papa Mutt stayed behind, playing with Lawrence Duhe's band at the Dreamland and doubling at the Pekin, until the end of the war.

When Papa Mutt took Oliver's place and began to play his muted style, people said he played like Oliver. His revenge came several years later, when he was playing in San Francisco and the manager of the Pergola wanted him to bring his band there. Papa Mutt didn't want to leave a good job as featured cornet player to work in a dime-dance joint, so he gave Mr. Vance Joe Oliver's



Mutt Carey (front), playing with Lu Watters Yerba Buena Jazz Band, early 1940s.
From the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation Archives

address in Chicago. The Oliver band came out to the Coast, and that time it was Joe Oliver who was told, “You play like Papa Mutt.”

The war over, Carey went home to New Orleans, where he worked for some time with Wade Whaley’s band, a Dubois’ roadhouse in the Bucktown district. Although Prohibition went into effect just before he left Chicago, he found that New Orleans wasn’t letting the law interfere with fun (or business). Drinks were served openly while policemen turned their backs. The red light district, which had been broken up by wartime regulations in 1917, was doing business again a few blocks from its old location. The town was still wide open and even though many of the best musicians had gone to Chicago, there were enough left to produce a lot of good music.

But Chicago, too, was going strong as the Prohibition era moved into quick time. Joe Oliver,

who was doing better than ever, wired Papa Mutt’s friend Kid Ory to come up North and play with him. Ory left—but instead of going straight to Chicago, he headed for California first, to have a look around. In Los Angeles—a relatively small and undistinguished city in those days, before sunshine and movies were popular—Ory was offered a job at the Cadillac Cafe. He wired to New Orleans for a band in November, 1919; Papa Mutt, clarinetist Whaley, pianist Manuel Minetta, and drummer Alfred Williams packed up and left for the Coast, giving Californians almost their first taste of New Orleans music.

The Original Creole Band had dumbfounded the Californians’ unready ears as early as 1914 and three years later its drummer, Dink Johnson, got together with Jelly Roll Morton to form a “Dixie type” band which played successfully for some time near Los Angeles. But on the

whole, the kind of music that had been played in California and called "jazz" wasn't anything.

When Ory and his band came and stayed, Papa Mutt says, "People could sit down—they saw that what they'd been listening to was a lot of tin cans rattlin', and they fell for our music like a baby falls for milk." Kid Ory's band was a great success; it played in Los Angeles for a year, first at the Cadillac and then at the Dreamland, and then went north. The regular job there was at the Creole Cafe in Oakland, with a Sunday job at the Cliff House across the bay in San Francisco.

"Oh, we was big shots then," Papa Mutt remembers. "We cut into everything: the Wilshire Country Club, the Bel Air, all the best places. And we played lots of contests and battles of bands. Once we played against the Black and Tan Orchestra, and they let the Black and Tans go at 10:30."

Considering how many New Orleans men made records, reputations and often big money in the East, Papa Mutt thinks he may have made a mistake in staying in California. But he did come, and he stayed. And among the good things about this is that while he was playing with Ory in Oakland, he had the opportunity to make the first recordings of colored New Orleans jazz.

These were the now famous, and very rare, Sunshine records issued by the Spikes brothers under the name of Ory's Sunshine Orchestra. The Spikes, who owned a music store in Los Angeles, wanted to go into the record business. They wrote Ory to come down to L.A. and record some of their new tunes. The Kid came, with Papa Mutt and the Houston pianist Freddie Washington, who had replaced Minetta in Oakland.

The rest of the recording band was picked up around Los Angeles: Ben Borders for a drummer and the ex-Creole bandsmen Ed Garland and Dink Johnson for bass and clarinet respectively. Dink, of course, was a drummer by profession; but he knew enough about the clarinet to find his way around on it, and there was no better clarinetist available.

In the recording studio in Santa Monica, the band made four sides accompanying singers Roberta Dudley and Ruth Lee. The had to play just as the Spikes wanted, which didn't make them very happy. Except for *Krooked Blues*, later recorded by Oliver too, the tunes were all ordinary pops. Then they made two sides of their

own, with singing: *Ory's Creole Trombone* and *Society Blues*.

Ory's Creole Trombone was the Kid's own tune, and he played it as well then as he did a few years later with Louis. Papa Mutt played a fine lead. But Dink's clarinet was mediocre, and the recording apparatus was very primitive. The Spikes brothers lost money on their recording venture, and the disks were soon discontinued, and it wasn't until two years later, when Joe Oliver's first Gennett records appeared, that New Orleans jazz was moderately successful on wax. Virtually forgotten for many years, the Sunshine records have only recently come to be appreciated by collectors as fine

THE ORIGINAL CREOLE BAND HAD DUMBFUNDED THE CALIFORNIANS' UNREADY EARS AS EARLY AS 1914

musical and documentary examples of New Orleans jazz.

Besides making these pioneer records, Papa Mutt had the first band to play for a radio program on the West Coast. "Did we play jazz?" He laughs—"We couldn't help it, we didn't know anything different." Sometimes he played on Ory's jobs, sometimes Ory was the sideman and he the leader. More popular than ever, they were kept busy playing for parties and country club dances.

But by 1925, when Ory left to join King Oliver in Chicago, the scene had begun to change. Audiences which had first listened in amazement, then danced enthusiastically, to this new jazz music were turning to the big sweet bands. New Orleans musicians who stayed in the business had to adapt themselves to a new kind of playing. Papa Mutt had learned to read music when he first went to Chicago, so it wasn't hard for him.

Since then, he has played in straight dance bands and even what he appropriately calls "jitterbug" bands; but his trumpet style is unmixed with jive. Now fifty years old, he lives in Los Angeles, a respected official of A.F.M. Local 767. Near him lives Kid Ory, who came back to the Coast in 1930 and has only now returned to playing music after

years of outside employment. Papa Mutt is one of the very few New Orleans musicians of his generation—older than Armstrong, Bechet, Noone, and the rest—who have never been out of the music business for more than a few weeks. At present he is playing outside of L.A. with a five-piece band of his own, at the Garrigan Cafe in Oceanside.

But what Papa Mutt would like best, if it were commercially possible, would be to form a “Dixie type” band again and play New Orleans music—which is still the best, he thinks, for dancing and listening. And he believes that jazz can be played, profitably, in the average night club. “This jitterbug music they play nowadays,” says Papa Mutt, “that’s just for kids. No melody to it. A Dixieland band, now, that appeals to older folks, because it plays the melody and the rhythm is strong.”

There’s nothing so difficult about playing good jazz, as far as he can see—“You just got to have some understanding.” The swinging, jumping, jitterbug bands of today grew out of New Orleans music; they still have the swing, but little else. “Those boys just don’t understand how to play it,”

Papa Mutt remarks. “They don’t know how to play ensemble, and instead of playing melody, they’re always just running the chords.”

In the old days there was a police officer in Lost Angeles who always shouted, when he raided a place: “Every tub! Every tub!” Which meant very simply, every man for himself. “That’s what you need,” says Papa Mutt Carey. Get musicians with some understanding and a feel for the rhythm, so that each man can stand on his own feet with no music in front of him and work together with the others. That’s an every tub band, and that’s jazz music. ♪

*To play jazz it takes some musicians
and some instruments;
Some musicians, some instruments
and some Reverie.
The Reverie alone will do
If musicians are few.*

—Bepi Zancan, member, SFTJF
poem after Emily Dickenson

About the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation

What is the Foundation?

Created in 1981 as an archive of several thousand items relating to the jazz revival begun in San Francisco about 1939, the Foundation now seeks to enhance that collection and extend its uses. A wider aim is to help foster live, high quality traditional jazz, regionally and worldwide.

What does the Foundation do?

Current activities include archival preservation, supporting live events and broadcasts, collaborating with other jazz and educational institutions, and developing new products and media applications.

Although the Foundation lacks the funding to open its archive to the general public, other means are being found to make its resources available. For example, historic recordings and documents are being made available to radio stations; and consumer products such as posters, books and tapes are being publicly offered.

Who is involved?

You are. Membership is \$25 per year. Benefits include this quarterly newsletter, invitations to special events and availability of Foundation products (often at exceptionally low prices).

Join us!

Donations welcomed

The San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation accepts gifts and grants in many forms, including historical items which shed further light on the history of traditional jazz on the West Coast, such as recordings, music, newspaper clippings, photographs and correspondence. Contributions of materials or funds are tax-deductible under IRS ruling status 501(c)(3).

SF Jazz on the Web

The San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation has an ever-expanding web site. The site includes sound files and photos of many San Francisco (and other) jazz figures from the 1930s to the present. Please visit us at www.sftradjazz.org.

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